

“A NEW KIND OF RELATIONSHIP”

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FADE IN.

INT. MARIA'S BATHROOM – LIGHTS ON – NIGHT.

MARIA has just entered in from a night out.

She is at her bathroom sink, LOOKING into the mirror with tears in her eyes

MARIA

(In anger and sadness.)

Another one... Another man who can't realize a good woman... Another failed attempt at finding Mr.
Right.

(She screams)

Another one!

She LOOKS down as if she is looking down the sink drain.

MARIA

(To God.)

God, I know you have a perfect man out there for me, but father, I can't find him. I am so sick of
being hurt over and over, and lied to by these men. I just need some assistance in the man department.
Please help me out, because this is just not working for me.

The house phone rings.

MARIA

(Answers the phone.)

Hello?

Oh, hey Olivia!

Just got back from a date with Bryan.

I know, you keep telling me he is the wrong one. But, its over for us now anyway!

We can get lunch tomorrow, and I can tell you all about it.

All right.

Yup, I'll talk to you tomorrow.

She HANGS UP the phone.

MARIA

(She takes a deep breath.)

I can't deal with this stress.

(She goes to her bedroom and gets in the bed.)

Lets hope for a better tomorrow.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MARIA'S BEDROOM – DAY.

MARIA'S cell phone rings.

It's OLIVIA.

MARIA

(Awakes from sleep, and grabs cell phone off of her nightstand next to the bed.)

Hello?

Yeah, I know we're meeting for lunch.

Huh?

It's twelve o'clock?

Takes a LOOK at her alarm clock to see the time.

MARIA.

Oh!

(Smiles)

I'll be there in like fifteen minutes.

She quickly GETS OUT of bed, THROWS on a sweat suit, and BRUSHES her teeth. Then, she HEADS for the door to meet OLIVIA.

CUT TO.

EXT. METROPOLITAN AMERICAN DINER AND BAR – PARKING LOT - DAY – NEXT.

MARIA PULLS IN the parking lot, and PARKS next to OLIVIA'S car.

She ENTERS the restaurant, being GREETED by the waiter at the stand.

MARIA.

Hello, I'm here to meet somebody.

(Spots Olivia)

Oh, there she is!

The waiter nicely POINTS her into the direction of OLIVIA'S table.

OLIVIA.

(When she spots Maria walking to her table, she rises.)

Hey Maria!

They each KISS both sides of the cheek.

OLIVIA.

Sit down.

They both TAKE a seat.

OLIVIA.

So, what's up? Tell me about the date.

MARIA
(Sighs)

Where do I start? When he picked me up, he was looking good. I really was expecting a nice night. So, we get in the car, he pulls off. As soon as he pulls off, his phone would not stop ringing! And, he didn't answer. He looks at who's calling, and then just turns back. Now, his phone kept on ringing, so, I told him to just answer it, and he's like, "Oh no! It's nobody important." So, I'm like, "if it's not important, why do they keep calling you?"

(To Olivia.)

I know it was a female. And I understand that he may have friends, but, no, no, no. Friends don't call your phone like that!

OLIVIA.
So, please tell me you ended it?

MARIA.
Oh, yeah. That phone kept ringing, so, I just said I'm gone! I got out of that car, and i just said deuces!

OLIVIA.
So, was that the end of it?

MARIA
(Chuckles.)
I wish. After that, my phone rung off of the hook for the whole night. But, I finally answered it. I said, "You better have a damn good reason for calling my phone like this!" And he's all, "baby, i would never do that to you. I would never have another female calling my phone like that." And, i think all of that was a bunch of B S, so I hung up.

OLIVIA.
Yeah, girl, i think you handled that right.

MARIA.
I'm not a fool, and before you think you're going to play me like that, I will drop kick yo' ass to the curve.

(She says smiling)

But, seriously Olivia, I'm tired of these men doing us good loyal girls like this.

OLIVIA.
Well, you already know what I say, a good man is just a mile away. You'll find him. We both will.

The SERVER ARRIVES, and the ladies TURN their attention to him.

SERVER.
Good afternoon. Welcome to Metropolitan American Diner and Bar. What can I get for you ladies to drink?

OLIVIA.
I'll have a margarita.

MARIA.
Same here!

The server WRITES down the orders, and GOES to get the drinks.

OLIVIA.
So, what you going to do now?

MARIA.
I'm not really sure. I guess I'll have to wait for Mr. Right to come. In the mean time, I'll just have to focus on my career.

OLIVIA.
Yeah, well, in due time, both me and you will find the guy we're looking for. We just got to be patient.
The server COMES with their drinks.

SERVER.
Here you ladies go.

He HANDS them their drinks.

OLIVIA.
Thank you.

MARIA and OLIVIA TAKE their drinks.

SERVER.
Now, have you ladies decided what you would like to eat?

MARIA.
Um...
(Looks at menu)
Yes, I would like the sesame glazed tuna with tempura broccoli.

SERVER
(Writes down order)
(Turns attention to Olivia.)
And for you ma'am?

OLIVIA.
Can I have your herb encrusted Scottish salmon.

SERVER
(Writes down order.)
Okay. I shall have your meals shortly.

The SERVER WALKS away from their table.

There's a pause between the two for two seconds.

MARIA.

So, anyway, I've decided to just focus on my career. The boss is really drilling me and the other employees, so, I'll just give my all to my , and give up on looking for now. These men are really messing with my nerves, you know?

OLIVIA.

Yeah, I know what you're saying. It'll be Okay though. Like I said, in due time.

About five minutes into their conversation, in WALKS a group of three men. One who is African American, dressed in a kango hat and a p coat. (DERRICK). FOLLOWING him is a man of a light skinned complexion (JAMES), and a man of a dark skinned complexion (EZIEKIEL). MARIA NOTICES DERRICK at the front desk, and she GLARES for a while.

OLIVIA.

Maria? Maria?

MARIA

(Shakes her head getting out of her daze)

Oh!

(Giggles)

Girl, I'm so sorry.

OLIVIA

(laughs)

What were you looking at?

MARIA

(She looks at Derrick.)

Him!

OLIVIA.

(She looks at him, and then looks back at Maria.)

Girl, you can't. Not now!

MARIA.

I know. But girl, he is cute.

She GIGGLES and LOOKS back at him.

At that moment, the WAITER at the front desk DIRECTS the men to their seats. They PASS MARIA.

DERRICK.

(While passing, he looks at Maria)

How you doin'?

MARIA quickly LOOKS back at OLIVIA, and STARES at her in surprise.

OLIVIA
(She laughs with her hand in front of her mouth)
I think he noticed you.

MARIA takes a DEEP BREATH.

MARIA.
He is cute.

CUT TO.

INT. METROPOLITAN AMERICAN DINER AND BAR – DAY – CONTINUED.

DERRICK, JAMES, and EZIEKIEL WALK to their table being GUIDED by the waiter.

DERRICK
(Talking to James and Ezekiel.)
Hey, yo bro's?
Did ya see her? She was gorgeous!

JAMES.
True story bro, and her friend wasn't half bad either.

They get to their seats, once they are seated, the waiter GIVES them their menus.

WAITER.
I will give you gentlemen a minute to decide on your drinks.

The waiter WALKS away.

EZIEKIEL
(To James and Derrick)
Hey yo!
Why don't y'all send em something to drink?

DERRICK.
True that brotha man! Let's look at these menus.

Both DERRICK and JAMES LOOK at the menus, SCANNING for a nice, sweet, romantic drink.
JAMES comes across red wine.

JAMES.
Hey, yo Derrick! We can send them red wine.

DERRICK.
Facts bro. That's as sweet as it gets.

DERRICK LAUGHS.

DERRICK SPOTS another WAITRESS WALKING near where they are seated.

DERRICK

(Puts his hand out to the waitress in a "I need you gesture.")
Excuse me ma'am!

WAITRESS.

Yes?

DERRICK.

Can I order one thing of red wine for those ladies right over there?

DERRICK POINTS toward MARIA and OLIVIA.

WAITRESS.

(Takes a quick glance at the woman he points to, then turns back to Derrick)
Oh, yes sir you can. Shall I tell them you sent it?

DERRICK.

Yeah, but tell them it came from me and my partna right here
(Puts his arm over James)
And I appreciate it.

WAITRESS

(Smiles)
Of course sir!

For the next five minutes, the men SIT quietly AWAITING for the WAITRESS to bring the ladies their wine. When the WAITRESS finally GETS to the ladies table, She PRESENTS the bottle of red wine. MARIA and OLIVIAS table is four tables away from JAMES, DERRICKS, and EZIEKIELS.

WAITRESS

(Before presenting the bottle of red wine)
Excuse me ladies?

MARIA and OLIVIA LOOK UP.

MARIA.

Yes?

WAITRESS.

Those men right over there
(She points to Derrick and James)
The man in the hat and the light skinned fellow, they wanted me to bring you this.

She PRESENTS the bottle of red wine.

MARIA and OLIVIA both LOOK at each other with a SHOCKING SUPRISE upon their faces.

OLIVIA.

Oh

(Giggles)

Well tell them we said thank you!

WAITRESS.

Of course!

MARIA LOOKS down.

OLIVIA.

(To Maria)

What's wrong Maria?

MARIA.

(She looks at Olivia.)

I've been screwed over by this one and that one. You know, even though, I may find attraction in a man, I just don't know if I can trust. Those guys sending us wine, yeah, that's cool. But, I really look at it as a waste of time.

The WAITRESS WALKS to EZIEKIEL, DERRICK, and JAMES TABLE.

WAITRESS.

The ladies wanted me to tell you thank you!

DERRICK.

No, thank you! Have a good day!

The WAITRESS SMILES, and then WALKS AWAY.

DERRICK is STUCK STARING at MARIA, and MARIA is stuck staring at DERRICK, while they each SMILE at one another. MARIA then LOOKS down, in disbelief.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. METROPOLITAN AMERICAN DINER AND BAR – DAY - LATER.

MARIA and OLIVIA WALK out of the door to the parking lot. They WALK to OLIVIAS car.

MARIA.

I had a good time. Thank you for inviting me! I needed to talk to somebody before i went crazy.

OLIVIA.

You already know Maria. I don't need you going crazy on me
(Laughs.)
Well, look. I'll give you a call sometime tonight.

MARIA.
Okay, I'll talk to you later then.

They part ways. OLIVIA gets in her car, and PULLS OFF.

MARIA WALKS toward her car, PASSING the front entrance, almost BUMPING into DERRICK, JAMES, and EZIEKIEL as they come out the entrance..

DERRICK.
Oh!
(He laughs while lightly grabbing her arm.)
Be careful.

MARIA LAUGHS in shyness.

JAMES.
Hey, yo Derrick. We'll see you later bro.
(Tapping Ezekiel on his chest)
Come on Ezekiel!

DERRICK WAVES to JAMES and EZIEKIEL as they make their exit. DERRICK is still HOLDING MARIA'S arm as there is a silence between the two.

DERRICK
(Shakes his head trying to get out of his daze.)
Uh, I'm sorry.

He LAUGHS and RELEASES her arm.

MARIA.
Oh, no it's okay.

She tries to WALK away.

DERRICK.
Um! Hold on Ms.

She TURNS back.

MARIA.
Yes?

DERRICK.
What's your name?

MARIA.
Maria
(She puts her hand out for a handshake.)
And yours?

DERRICK.
Derrick. Why haven't I seen you around town before?

MARIA.
I'm barely in town. I'm either at work or home.

DERRICK.
Oh, okay.

MARIA RUSHES to her car.

MARIA
(As she leaves)
Well, I'll see you later.

MARIA PULLS off, and DERRICK is stuck standing with a smile on his face.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MARIA'S CAR – DAY - LATER.

She makes a phone call to OLIVIA.

MARIA
(With phone to her ear, as she waits for Olivia to answer.)
Olivia?

OLIVIA.
Hey Maria, what's up?

MARIA.
I bumped into him!

OLIVIA.
Who?

MARIA.
The guy in the hat back at the diner.

OLIVIA
(Giggles)
What happened? Did he romance you? I seen how he was looking at you.

MARIA

(Laughs)

Girl, he grabbed my arm so light, and was like, "be careful." It felt so good hearing him say that. His voice was so deep, I could tell he was a different kind of guy. It seemed that way anyway. Just that quick display of his personality, just seemed so good.

OLIVIA.

Okay. Did you get his name?

MARIA.

Yeah, it's Derrick. But, I got nervous, so i hurried to my car. I thought he was very attractive when i first saw him, and yeah, I wanted to talk to him, but, I don't know. Just when we were face to face, it just seemed like I didn't know what to do.

OLIVIA.

How did he seem?

MARIA.

He seemed chill. I don't know, but chemistry was definitely drawn between us. Something about him just felt different.

OLIVIA.

Well, that's good! Maybe all men are not dicks after all.

MARIA

(Laughs)

I didn't say all that now! Who knows, this guy could be a player like the rest of them.

CUT TO.

INT. DERRICK'S CAR - DAY – NEXT.

DERRICK RIDES with the music low. He is listening to Joe's CD, titled "My Name is Joe," on the last track, "I wanna Know."

DERRICK

(Voice over)

Maria. Maria, Maria, Maria. There's something about you. You just seem different.

DERRICK'S cell phone rings, it's JAMES and EZIEKIEL. EZIEKIEL'S cell phone is on speaker, and in the middle of the two front seats.

EZIEKIEL

(Laughs)

Yo, bro! What's up? How was it my man?

DERRICK.

What?

JAMES

(Laughs)

Ain't no what man! You know what we talking about. With the little shorty back at the diner. What happened?

DERRICK.

Man, let me tell you now brotha, she was something serious. I mean, y'all seen how she looked, but yo, I'm not even talking about that. Her voice? sweet like cherry pie.

(Laughs)

Her walk, astonishing! She was all that.

EZIEKIEL

(Laughs)

My man! I could tell she was feeling you from the beginning. You get the digits?

DERRICK

(Sighs)

Nah. She was in a rush for some reason. But, it's cool. By the grace of God, I'll see her again.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. PARK – DAY.

MARIA is JOGGING. While she is JOGGING, a man STOPS her.

DANIEL

(Stops her in a sigh, from jogging also.)

Excuse me?

(Takes a deep breath.)

You're beautiful. What's your name?

MARIA

(Catches breath.)

Maria. Yours?

DANIEL.

Daniel. And may I say, it is lovely to meet you. You from around these parts?

MARIA.

Yeah. Right around the corner actually. Just enjoying this beautiful weather.

DANIEL.

Smelling the flowers?

(Laughs)

No, I'm kidding. So, no disrespect, but are you single?

MARIA SMILES.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIA'S HOUSE – AFTERNOON – AFTER HER JOG.

MARIA ENTERS into her house. She gets a call from OLIVIA.
MARIA ANSWERS.

MARIA.
Hey Olivia!
(Sits on the couch)
I have something to tell you!

OLIVIA.
Well, now I'm in suspense!
(Giggles.)
What is it?

MARIA.
I met this guy while I was on my jog. Olivia, he was so handsome. We're going on a date this weekend.

OLIVIA.
Oh, well okay. Well make sure you tell me how it goes. You think he's different from Bryan?

MARIA.
I hope so. I can't deal with none of these losers anymore, I need something new. A real man. A man who doesn't mind opening the door for me, or doesn't mind pulling out my chair.

OLIVIA
(Giggles.)
You sound like a girl from back in the day. Our parents time.

MARIA.
Well, yeah, back then, men were sincere. Men didn't mind being faithful and keeping their women happy. Nowadays, men just want to be players for some unapparent reason. I don't know.

OLIVIA.
You right though. Men have become worthless. Not worthy of any of us good women. But, maybe this new guy takes the cake.

MARIA.
I sure hope so.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. RESTARAUNT – NIGHT.

MARIA and DANIEL SIT across from each other in a booth.

DANIEL.

So, beautiful. How long have you been single?

MARIA.

Only a little while now. I just ended a relationship that was about a month long.

DANIEL.

Oh! Are you ready to be out with a guy already? I know some people need time to heal their heart.

MARIA.

Oh, no, I'm okay. I'm a very fast healer.

(Laughs.)

But, how about yourself? How long have you been single?

DANIEL.

(Wipes his hands with a paper towel that is found on the table.)

Well, it's actually been a while. Some years now.

MARIA.

You're attractive. How come?

DANIEL.

I don't really know. I just never been the dating type. But, I'm trying to change my ways. A mans got to find love, right?

MARIA

(Smiles)

Yes, he does.

At that moment, DERRICK, EZIEKIEL, and JAMES WALK into the diner. As soon as they do, MARIA NOTICES DERRICK. As, the waiter WALKS them to their seat, DERRICK NOTICES MARIA. He APPROACHES.

DERRICK.

Um? Maria right? How's it going?

MARIA

(Lightly giggles)

It's going fine. How are you doing?

DERRICK.

Oh, me? I'm fine. Just been working.

DANIEL COUGHS up, and EXTENDS his hand to SHAKE DERRICK'S hand.

DERRICK
(To Daniel)
Oh, my apologies.
(Shakes his hand)
How you doin'?

DANIEL.
I'm doing well.

MARIA is nervous.

MARIA.
Oh, um. Daniel, this is Derrick. Derrick, Daniel.

DERRICK.
It's nice to meet you Daniel. You guys enjoy your meal.

He EXITS from the table.

DANIEL.
Who was that? A friend?

MARIA.
Not even, more like an acquaintance.

DANIEL.
Oh, Okay. He seems cool.

MARIA.
Yeah, he does.

CUT TO.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE – NIGHT – AFTER MARIA AND DANIELS DATE.

A knock on the door comes. OLIVIA answers.

It's MARIA.

OLIVIA.
Oh, hey Maria. Wasn't expecting you. How'd the date go?

MARIA.
Excellent. But guess who showed up?

MARIA GOES to SIT on the couch.

OLIVIA.
Who?

OLIVIA SITS down beside her.

MARIA.
Derrick!

OLIVIA.
Oh
(Laughs)
What happened?

MARIA.
He came over to me. He was looking good Olivia! I don't think he expected me to be there with a guy though. It's like he just came over to where I was, and didn't even notice Daniel.

OLIVIA.
(Smiles.)
That's love
(Giggles)
Kidding. What did he say?

MARIA.
Nothing much. Just a casual, "how have you been." That was all. When he noticed Daniel, he did his greeting, and then he went to his seat.

OLIVIA.
Sounds like he didn't want you there with another man.

MARIA.
You think?

OLIVIA.
Oh, yeah. He was having a conversation with you, and then he notices you're friend, and then he leaves? He didn't want you there with him. But, never mind that. The date was good?

MARIA
(Smiles)
Yes. It was everything I imagined. Good conversation, great eye contact, and he even opened the door for me! It was good! We're going out next weekend too.

OLIVIA.
Well, hopefully he's the one.

BACK TO.

INT. RESTARAUNT - NIGHT – NEXT.

DERRICK, EZIEKIEL, and JAMES sit at their table, with food in front of them.

DERRICK is not EATING his food and JAMES and EZIEKIEL notice.

EZIEKIEL
(To Derrick)

Bro! What's up? you ain't eating your food.

DERRICK

(Shakes his head to come back to reality.)

My bad man, It's just I seen that girl again. And, I don't know why, but, it just didn't feel right seeing her with another guy.

EZIEKIEL.

Yeah, I seen her too bro. I know what you saying. You was feeling her the other night, and it's hard to get her out of your mind.

(Laughs)

I know the feeling homie. Seeing her with another guy just feels wrong to you. I get it.

DERRICK

(Shakes Ezekiel's hand)

You feel me?

EZIEKIEL.

Fa sho.

DERRICK goes back to EATING his food while still in thought.

CUT TO.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY – NIGHT.

DANIEL and MARIA are bowling.

They are in the middle of a game. MARIA is beating DANIEL by three strikes.

MARIA HITS another strike, and RAISES both of her hands in a victorious manner.

DANIEL COVERS his mouth with one hand as he is seated.

DANIEL.

Damn, you know, a heads up would've been nice.

(Chuckles.)

I didn't realize you were a professional.

DANIEL PASSES MARIA as he goes up to bowl.

DANIEL PICKS UP a bowling ball.

DANIEL
(To Maria)

You ready for this? I know its over, but, I can still bring some points to my name.

DANIEL LAUGHS, TURNS TOWARD the pins, and GETS in a bowling stance. He then ROLLS the ball, only to get a gutter.

MARIA GOES to give him a HUG.

He HUGS her back.

DANIEL.
What's this for?

MARIA.
I thought you might need a hug after that gutter. I feel bad.

MARIA releases DANIEL from the hug with a grin, and goes back toward her seat.

DANIEL LAUGHS toward MARIA loudly.

DANIEL TURNS back to bowl.

DANIEL
(To himself)
Okay, Daniel. She's a smart, kind....

DANIEL LOOKS back to MARIA and SMILES

MARIA SMILES and WAVES at him and then, he TURNS back to the pins.

DANIEL.
And a beautiful girl. Yes, the game is over no matter if I strike or gutter, but, let's shoot for a strike.
He ROLLS the ball only to hit 2 pins.

He then PLACES both of his hands on his forehead. MARIA WALKS to him, and gives him a HUG.

MARIA.
Oh, it's okay. Maybe next time.

MARIA GIGGLES.

DANIEL.
You want to get something to eat? I'm pretty hungry.

MARIA.
Sure. After winning a game like that, I need something in my stomach.

MARIA SMILES at DANIEL.

CUT TO.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY – NIGHT – NEXT.

MARIA AND DANIEL are SEATED at a table for two, with food in front of them.

DANIEL.

Beautiful, that was a good game. Who taught you to play?

MARIA.

My father. He was, what you call a legend when it came to bowling. Nobody could touch him.

MARIA LAUGHS.

DANIEL LAUGHS along with MARIA.

DANIEL.

So, how is he? Your father I mean?

MARIA.

Oh, goodness. I haven't seen my father in so long. It's been some years now.

DANIEL.

Why?

MARIA.

I got into a huge argument with my mom about dropping out of college, and he took her side. So, I got my things and left. I had money to get a place, so, that's what I did.

DANIEL.

Wow!

(Pauses.)

When are you going to see them again? You don't want it to be too long. I had a grandmother that I loved dearly, and although these are two different situations, cause me and my grandmother were always on good terms, still fact, when she passed away, I was hurt! And you never know when someone's last day on this earth will be.

MARIA.

(Nods her head.)

Right...

MARIA THINKS.

CUT TO.

EXT. MARIA'S PARENTS HOUSE - NOON.

MARIA KNOCKS on the door, and ASHLEY answers.

ASHLEY
(While opening the door.)
(Squints her eyes.)
Maria?
(Once the door is completely opened, she yells in excitement!)
Maria!

ASHLEY gives MARIA a big HUG.

ASHLEY.
It's been too long.

MARIA.
I know sis. It's good to see you too.

MARIA and ASHLEY RELEASE one another.

MARIA.
Where's mom and dad?

ASHLEY.
In the kitchen, come on, I'll take you to em. They'll be so happy to see you.

ASHLEY LEADS MARIA to the kitchen.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIA'S PARENTS HOUSE – KITCHEN – DAY – NEXT.

MOM is STANDING, facing FRED as he SITS at the kitchen table.

MOM.
Well Fred? you know what?

MOM turns her head to the kitchen entrance to see ASHLEY.

MOM.
Oh, hey honey. You're dad is...

MARIA WALKS into the kitchen after ASHLEY.

MOM.
(Rushes toward Maria to give her a hug.)
Awe, honey, it's been too long!
(Releases Maria)
How have you been dear?

MARIA.
I'm good mom. Just miss you guy's. I wanted to come see you.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIA'S PARENTS HOUSE - DINING ROOM – DAY – NEXT.

MARIA has took her coat and shoes off.

FRED.

So, how's it going sweetie? What have you been up to?

MARIA.

Nothing much daddy. Just working, that's all my life consists of nowadays.

FRED.

I understand. We've been missing you. It's good to have you back. Since you've been gone, we haven't been doing too much. A trip here or there, but, it's not the same without you being there with us.

MOM.

Oh!

MARIA TURNS to look at her MOM.

MOM GOES into the kitchen drawer, GATHERS some photos, and then she WALKS to MARIA.

MOM.

Maria, look! We've got photos from the Adirondacks.

She SHOWS a picture of her, FRED, and ASHLEY on a boat fishing. FRED has a gigantic fish in his hand, while he SMILES with some cool glasses on.

MOM.

Your father thought he was the man after he caught that fish.

MOM and MARIA TURN to look at FRED while he SMILES.

FRED.

What? I was.

MOM.

Listen to him!

MOM then turns back to the photos. She goes to the next, which is MOM and FRED standing on a beach.

MOM.

And here, we were at Costa Rica just living it up.

(Turns to face Maria.)

Maria, it was fascinating.

MOM GATHERS the photos all back into a pile.

MOM.

You can look at more a later. But, what about you? what have you been up to?

MARIA RETURNS to her seat.

MARIA.

As I said before, nothing much. Just working.

ASHLEY.

Have you met any guys?

MARIA

(Smiles)

Yes, I have sis. And he's wonderful. His name is Daniel.

FRED.

Well, don't keep us in suspense dear, when do we get to meet this fella?

MARIA

(Blushes)

I'm not sure dad, I don't know if he's the one my family needs to meet yet. We still have to hang out more before I decide on that.

FRED.

Well, whenever you feel ready honey, we'll be ready to meet him.

MARIA TURNS to ASHLEY.

MARIA.

But, then sis, I met this other guy. And every time I see him, I don't know, I just feel butterflies.

ASHLEY

(Chuckles.)

Oh, have you guys hung out yet?

MARIA.

No, not yet. We haven't even really talked. But, we did get each others name, and he seems like a cool person.

FRED.

Well, tell us about him?

MARIA.

I don't really know much about him yet daddy. But, one thing is, He's black.

FRED SITS back in his chair and then COMES FORWARD.

FRED.

Oh, well you can toss getting involved with this guy out the window. No daughter of mine is going to be involved with a hoodlum.

MARIA.

Daddy, you're generalizing!

FRED.

Well, dear, you should know why, I haven't been given anything to make me think differently.

MOM TURNS to FRED.

MOM.

Oh, Fred stop it! Their not all the same.

(Turns to Maria.)

But, Maria! You're father is somewhat right. Why waste your time trying to figure out if this guy isn't the same? I say, just stick to getting to know this Daniel fella. He sounds okay by what you said.

MARIA.

Yeah, I guess you're right. Why waste my time?

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. PUTT PUTT GOLF CENTER - AFTERNOON.

MARIA and DANIEL.

MUSIC PLAYS.

MARIA and DANIEL GO PLAY putt putt golf. DANIEL is up at the golf ball, it is his turn. DANIEL LOOKS at MARIA as he is about to hit the ball. He SMILES at her and WINKS his eye. He HITS the ball, and both him and MARIA notice that the ball has gone near the hole. DANIEL RAISES his hands with joy. MARIA CLAPS her hands giving him applause.

CUT TO.

EXT. PUTT PUTT GOLF CENTER - AFTERNOON – NEXT.

DANIEL STANDS where the golf ball was hit. He TAKES POSITION, and then HITS the ball lightly, and he scores. He JUMPS with a BEND of his knees, and then RUNS to MARIA, PICKING her up, and WALKING in a circle, happily.

CUT TO.

EXT. PUTT PUTT GOLF CENTER – AFTERNOON – NEXT.

MARIA is up at the golf ball, It is her turn. She LOOKS at DANIEL as she GOES to stand in her position. She SMILES, POINTS at DANIEL, and then she swings for a hit. The golf ball goes sideways, and she is embarrassed by the shot. DANIEL SMILES at MARIA, as he walks to her, clapping his hands in applause.

CUT TO.

EXT. PUTT PUTT GOLF CENTER – AFTERNOON – NEXT.

MARIA is up to putt again. She gets in position, only to make another bad hit.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. RESTARAUNT - AFTERNOON.

MARIA and DANIEL are out to eat. As they EAT, each of them share LAUGHTER and good conversation.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MOVIE THEATER – NIGHT.

MARIA and DANIEL are enjoying a movie. As the movie plays, DANIEL keeps LOOKING over to MARIA, with a SMIRK. He then, PUTS his arm around her in a shy manner. MARIA SMILES.

MUSIC ENDS.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. DOWNTOWN – DAY.

MARIA is JOGGING near a lot of buildings and stores.

While she is on her JOG, she has her headphones in her ears, and she is in a good mood. She JOGS by a door to a small building. The door is glass, so, it is able to be seen through. As she JOGS past the building, she happens to SEE DANIEL with another woman. DANIEL is HOLDING this woman as if they are in a relationship.

MARIA STOPS, PULLS her headphones off of her ears, and MAKES an entrance into the building.

MARIA
(As she enters)
Daniel? Daniel is that you?

DANIEL TURNS to the front entrance, as he NOTICES MARIA'S voice.

DANIEL.
(He is in silence.)
Um... Maria?

MARIA.
Daniel, what are you doing? Who is this?

DANIEL is SILENT.

MARIA
(Yells)
Daniel, who the hell is this!

An EMPLOYEE who is close by, WALKS to the front entrance.

EMPLOYEE
(To Maria)
Ma'am! Keep it down please.

MARIA
(Turns to the employee)
I'm sorry.
(Turns to Daniel)
This was a mistake!

She EXITS the building.

DANIEL FOLLOWS after her.

DANIEL.
(As he exits the building.)
Maria! Maria, stop! I can explain!

MARIA TURNS around to face DANIEL.

MARIA.
Why even bother? It's obvious you are in a relationship. Have a nice life!

MARIA WALKS AWAY as DANIEL is left STANDING.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE – NIGHT – RAIN – LATER.

MARIA KNOCKS on OLIVIA'S door. She is sad.

OLIVIA ANSWERS.

OLIVIA.
Oh, hey Maria! What's up?

MARIA is SILENT.

OLIVIA.
What's wrong?

MARIA.
I knew he'd be the same.

She begins to CRY.

OLIVIA
(Hugs Maria.)
Daniel? What happened?

CUT TO.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE - OLIVIA'S KITCHEN – NIGHT – LATER.

OLIVIA is FIXING MARIA a hot cup of tea, with lemon in it. She TURNS to SIT across from MARIA at the kitchen table.

OLIVIA.
You know what Maria? I thought he would be a bad choice from the beginning. All these losers are the same.

MARIA.
I just thought I had found a good one. He sure knew how to play it, taking me out on nice, sweet dates. Dazzling me, talking to me like I was the only woman on the planet. He's a jerk!

OLIVIA GOES to the stove to fix MARIA her tea.

OLIVIA.
You just can't trust men. And, now, I'm convinced that trying to prove that statement wrong, is a total waste of time. All these men just want to play childish ass games.

OLIVIA brings MARIA her tea.

OLIVIA
(Hands Maria the tea.)
This will make you feel better.

MARIA TAKES the tea.

MARIA.

Thank you Olivia. Best friends always know what will make you feel better.

SHE SMILES and then SIPS the tea.

OLIVIA

(Sits)

That's the job of a best friend.

(Laughs)

So, what now? We can't trust men. And, I believe, that all the men that we give opportunities will do the same thing.

MARIA.

Well, I say, just forget it for now. When, and if, the right man comes along, that's when we can open our hearts. But, only a little bit. You give these men too much and they'll hurt you. So, as I said a couple of months ago, I'm just going to be staying to myself. Work. That's all that matters to me.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MARIA'S PARENT'S HOUSE – DAY.

MARIA and FRED are SITTING in the living room.

FRED.

Maria, I'm sorry. You know, since my days, the fellas forgot how to be men! They talk the talk, but they can't walk the walk. That's just how it is.

MARIA.

I know dad. And, I'm tired of giving men tries. So, for the time being, I just need to focus on myself. Making my life better.

MOM COMES from the kitchen and SITS next to MARIA.

MOM.

You know what darling? I think that's a very good idea. Just focus on you and making your life better. You know, they say when you're not looking for love, love will find you.

MARIA.

But, see mom, that's the thing. I was going on a jog when I met Daniel. So, I was in no way looking to meet anybody.

MOM.

Sometimes that's just the way it goes.

MARIA SITS BACK on the couch.

MARIA.
I guess so...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN. INT – BANK (MARIA'S JOB) – DAY.

Music plays.

She WORKS hard. She's WRITING, READING, and STUDYING paperwork.

CUT TO.

EXT – PARK – AFTERNOON.

MARIA JOGS.

CUT TO.

EXT. DOWNTOWN – AFTERNOON – CONTINUED.

MARIA JOGS.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIA'S JOB – AFTERNOON.

MARIA MEETS people, and she HANDLES bank affairs. Everybody at work is impressed with MARIA.

CUT TO.

EXT. OUTSIDE - DAY.

MARIA JOGS.

Music ends.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MARIA'S JOB – NOON.

JEREMY CLAPS his hands to draw everybody's attention on the floor. He STANDS by MARIA'S desk.

JEREMY.

Okay, ladies and gentlemen. These last couple of weeks, I've been noticing a few things. All of you

have been working extremely hard, and handling bank affairs left and right. I'm proud of you, and I know now that I hired the right team. Give yourselves a round of applause. Everybody!

EVERYBODY GIVES themselves a ROUND OF APPLAUSE and SMILES while doing so.

JEREMY JOINS in on the applause.

JEREMY.

(Says with excitement.)

Yeah! You're doing well. Good job! But...

It goes silent.

DANIELLE

(Peaks into the next desk over.)

I knew it was too good to be true.

JEREMY.

Now, everybody's doing good, and I want you to keep doing that, but, there's somebody in this office who's been giving their job one hundred and ninety nine percent. And that's Maria!

MARIA is surprised. She SMILES SHYLY.

JEREMY

(To Maria)

Maria, you have been handling bank affairs like a pro. You've been making connections, you've been helping people arrange their money, and you've been helping people deal with loss of their finances.

So, I'm promoting you to floor supervisor. Now, this doesn't mean you get to leave what you do currently. You just got to make sure others are doing their jobs as well. You have to help when your assistance is needed, but, you still do what you've been doing. Congratulations. And meet me in my office after work.

(Turns to everybody raising his hands in praise)

Good job everybody!

JEREMY TURNS, and WALKS to his office. MARIA has a smile on her face.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. NIGHT – LIQUOR STORE - LATER.

MARIA is on the phone with OLIVIA as she WALKS to the entrance.

MARIA.

So, yeah, I got some incredible news I have to tell you.

I'm coming as soon as I leave the liquor store.

It's so good I had to come and get us some champagne to toast.

I'll call you when I'm close.

MARIA HANGS UP the phone.

CUT TO.

INT. LIQUOR STORE – NIGHT – CONTINUED.

MARIA STANDS in a aisle looking at champagne.

MARIA.
Hmm... What do I want?

She BROWSES over a couple of bottles of wine, when she gets a TAP on her shoulder.

DERRICK.
Excuse me?

MARIA TURNS to face DERRICK.

DERRICK.
(Smiles)
I thought it was you! How you been?

DERRICK EXTENDS his hand.

MARIA.
(Shakes Derrick's hand)
Hi. I'm good.

DERRICK.
That's good. We got to stop meeting like this.
(Laughs)
But, it's good to see you again.

MARIA SMILES.

DERRICK.
So, what you doing?

MARIA.
Came to get a bottle of champagne. I got promoted today.

DERRICK.
Oh, you did? Congratulations! Well, why don't you stop looking! And let me take you to get something to drink instead?

MARIA
(Stays silent for a while.)

Um...I guess. Yeah, we can go.

DERRICK

(Smiles)

All right. Come on, let's get out of here.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. A LOW PACED BAR – NIGHT – NEXT.

Jazz music playing.

DERRICK and MARIA SIT across from one another, with a glass of champagne in hand.

DERRICK

(Smiles at Maria)

Is it good?

MARIA

(Grins)

Yeah, it's good. How's yours?

DERRICK.

It's good. Very beneficial to my taste buds.

They both LAUGH.

DERRICK.

So, beautiful, tell me about your promotion?

MARIA.

Well, it was unexpected really. When he said I had a promotion, I was in shock! I didn't expect that.

DERRICK NODS.

DERRICK.

So what did you get promoted to?

MARIA.

To a floor supervisor.

DERRICK NODS his head.

MARIA.

What my job is, is to make sure everybody's doing their job. I also help out anybody who needs help.

DERRICK

(Smiles)
So, you kind of like the boss?

MARIA LAUGHS.

MARIA.
I guess I am.

DERRICK.
Well, that's what it is. Congratulations. Are you ready for this kind of promotion? You the floor supervisor. This means you in charge.

DERRICK LAUGHS.

MARIA.
Yeah, I'm ready. I know it's going to be a lot of work, but, with God's assistance, I can do anything.

DERRICK.
Oh, you believe in God?

MARIA.
Yes. He's the leader of my life.

DERRICK.
That's good to know. He's the leader of my life too. So, tell me, you're a very beautiful woman, why are you single?

MARIA.
Cause these men are all the same. They play games, and I don't have time for games. If I was interested in games, I would go buy me a ps4.

DERRICK
(Laughs.)
I understand. But, you know, I never really been a game player.

DERRICK and MARIA SMILE at one another.

R&B music plays.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE – NIGHT – LATER.

MARIA KNOCKS on the front door.

OLIVIA
(Opens the door.)

I thought we were going out?

MARIA.

(Walks in.)

I know, I'm so sorry I didn't come, but, I seen that guy from the diner.

OLIVIA.

Who? That guy Derrick?

MARIA.

Yes. I told him about my promotion, and he took me out to get a drink to celebrate.

(Walks to the living room.)

Olivia, he knows exactly what he's doing. I can tell he knows how to treat a woman.

OLIVIA

(Sits.)

Well, don't keep me in suspense. What happened?

MARIA.

He was so sweet Olivia. The eye contact was amazing. The conversation kept flowing. And, I can't even tell you how many times we smiled tonight.

MARIA BLUSHES.

OLIVIA

(Smiles)

Okay, okay. So, is he single?

MARIA.

Yes, he is. He said that he's been really focused on his work, and has just been chillin.

OLIVIA.

So, have you decided to jump back on the market for him?

MARIA.

Really, Olivia, its too soon to say. I still don't trust men, and I don't know if he knows it or not, but, if he wants me, he'll have to show me. Actions speak louder than words.

CUT TO.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – DERRICK'S LIVING ROOM – NIGHT – LATER.

Jazz music playing.

DERRICK.

(Holds a can of beer)

So, fellas? Listen, the date? Was incredible! She's one of a kind for sure. Her voice, delicate! Her personality, incredible! This girl really has it all, man.

JAMES.
So, what happened bro?

DERRICK.
(Sips beer.)

Man, I seen her at the liquor store getting some wine, and I'm like "what you doing?" And, she says, "I got promoted today." So, I'm getting something to drink." And, I'm like, "let me get you something to drink instead." So, we went to a nice little chill spot downtown, and we celebrated.

EZIEKIEL SMILES and NODS his head.

EZIEKIEL.
You like her?

DERRICK.
Look, bro, all I'm going to say, is she's one of a kind. I could see her being the one to meet mom dukes. And, you know, meeting mom dukes, ain't something that just any woman can do.

DERRICK LAUGHS.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. AN AQUARIUM – MORNING.

DERRICK and MARIA are in the section where the discus fish are.

DERRICK.
Look at these guys Maria!

MARIA WALKS over, next to DERRICK, and EXAMINES the discus fish.

MARIA.
Interesting. I like the different colors!.
(Laughs)
Their so distinctive!

DERRICK
(Laughs)
Yeah. Intriguing!

DERRICK LAUGHS

Music plays.

They continue to view the discus fish. DERRICK LEANS against the glass, as he TALKS and SMILES at MARIA. MARIA has her arms folded, as she SMILES and TALKS.

Music lowers in volume.

DERRICK.
Come on Maria! Let's go look at something else.

MARIA.
Okay, lets!

They WALK off.

MUSIC STOPS.

CUT TO.

INT. THE AQUARIUM – DAY – NEXT.

DERRICK AND MARIA STAND BY THE CATFISH.

MARIA FREAKS OUT.

DERRICK.
(Laughs and reaches for Maria)
What's wrong? You never seen a catfish before?

MARIA.
I have, but they are big. I never really been to an aquarium before. The most I seen of this fish is in a magazine.

DERRICK.
You serious?
(Walks up to the catfish and inspects.)
These little buddies are what my grand mother used to cook up.

MARIA.
Are you serious? Are they good?

DERRICK.
Good ain't the word. Magical! Lucky charms aren't the ones.
(He points at the catfish and looks at Maria.)
Catfish! Magically delicious!

MARIA LAUGHS.

DERRICK.
I'm serious. You eat fish?

MARIA.
Yeah.

DERRICK.
I'm going to cook you some cat fish. You gunna fall in love!
(Laughs)
Come on. Let's go look at something else.

MARIA is STUCK looking at a catfish that is looking at her.

DERRICK.
Maria!
(Laughs)
You coming?

MARIA.
Oh!
(Laughs)
I'm sorry. This little guy is creeping me out. Yeah.

They WALK away.

CUT TO.

INT. THE AQUARIUM – DAY – NEXT.

MARIA and DERRICK STAND by the Killifish.

MARIA EXAMINES.

MARIA.
Now, this looks like a friendly fish.

DERRICK
(Walks up next to Maria and Examines.)
Yeah, they sure do.
(Looks at Maria.)
You think they really kill?

MARIA.
(Laughs.)
I don't know! Maybe? They look friendly though.

MARIA gets cold and FOLDS her arms.

DERRICK.
You cold?
(Takes jacket off)
Here, take this!

MARIA.
Oh, no. You'll get cold!

DERRICK.

Beautiful, I'll be okay. Don't worry about it.

DERRICK PUTS the jacket on MARIA. After he puts the jacket on her, he HOLDS her for a couple of seconds.

DERRICK

(Takes his hands off of Maria.)

Ooh, I'm sorry. I was in the moment. My apologies.

MARIA.

What are you apologizing for? I didn't shake you off of me.

DERRICK SMILES.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. ART GALERY – AFTERNOON.

DERRICK and MARIA are dressed up nice. DERRICK is wearing a suit, and MARIA is wearing a dress.

They are STOPPED at a painting.

MARIA.

Derrick, look at this! Interesting isn't it?

DERRICK

(Examines the portrait.)

Yes, it is. What the hell is it though?

MARIA

(Laughs)

I don't know. It brings a sense of feeling to me though.

Music plays.

CUT TO.

INT. ART GALLERY – AFTERNOON - NEXT.

DERRICK and MARIA LOOK at another portrait.

They SMILE and DERRICK touches her with a friendly touch.

Music ends.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. ART GALLERY – AFTERNOON - NEXT.

MARIA and DERRICK stand by DERRICK'S car.

DERRICK

(To Maria)

So, Maria? You got any plans tonight?

MARIA.

No, not really. Why? What's up?

DERRICK.

I was thinking, how would you like to taste catfish tonight?

MARIA.

Sure. I'm not doing anything else. Why not?

CUT TO.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – NIGHT – NEXT.

DERRICK and MARIA SIT next to one another, eating their catfish.

DERRICK.

Is it good?

MARIA

(Takes a bite of her catfish.)

Yeah, it actually is. I can't lie and say that I didn't believe that it would be worst. But, it's actually good.

DERRICK.

I knew you would like it. My grandmother gave me the recipe, and I remember anybody that she would let try her famous catfish, they'd fall head over heels for this fish.

MARIA.

Well, yes, its very good.

DERRICK.

That's excellent!

MARIA.

And might I say, it's pretty filling too.

MARIA LAUGHS.

DERRICK.
Always is. Here...
(Takes Maria's plate.)
Let me get that for you.

DERRICK TAKES his, and MARIA'S plate to the sink.

He then GOES to SIT next to MARIA.

R&B music plays.

DERRICK.
(Takes Maria's hands.)
So, Maria. I can't lie to you. I'm attracted to you. Everything about you. Your pretty, spontaneous.
All the good things.
And I hope I'm not wrong for this. But...

DERRICK KISSES MARIA.

MUSIC ENDS.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MARIAS' PARENTS HOUSE - MORNING.

MARIA, MARIAS' MOM, and FRED.

MARIA.
So, mom and dad, I got something to tell you. You remember that guy I was telling you about?

FRED.
Which one dear?

MARIA.
The black guy.

FRED.
Yes, I do. What about him? Don't tell me, he ended up in jail?

MARIA.
(Giggles while tapping Fred's shoulder.)
No dad, I told you that he's not like that. But, what I have to tell you, is, and don't get mad daddy. But, me and him are talking.

The room goes silent.

MOM
(Comforting Fred)
(To Maria)

Oh, okay sweetie. Well, if he makes you happy.

MARIA.

Mom, he does! He's so sweet! You know, I thought Daniel was a good guy, but mommy, Derrick has it all!

FRED

(Folds newspaper and sets it aside.)

Baby, are you sure he's the right one? I just am a little skeptical about this. I'm not a racist or anything, but, seeing the black men that I have, you have to understand where I'm coming from.

MARIA.

I do dad.

(Grabs Fred's hand lightly and smiles)

But, please believe me when I say, he is a good man.

FRED

(Stays silent for five seconds.)

I want to meet this guy! Bring him by, and let me see what he's like.

MARIA.

(Smiles)

Okay dad. I can do that.

CUT TO.

EXT. MARIAS' PARENTS HOUSE – AFTERNOON.

MARIA and DERRICK walk up the stairs to the porch.

DERRICK

(Stops and grabs Maria's hands.)

Maria? I'm nervous!

MARIA SMILES at DERRICK.

MARIA.

Don't be! My mom and dad will like you. There nice people. Just be yourself.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIAS' PARENTS HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – MORNING – NEXT.

Camera set on FRED'S face.

FRED.

So! You're Derrick huh? Maria's told me very little about you. Where you from?

DERRICK

(Looks at Maria, and then turns back to Fred)

Well, sir. I'm from New York City, born and raised.

FRED

(Grabs cup of coffee off of end table.)

New York City huh? What did you move here for? To start a new posse?

MARIA.

(To Fred)

Dad, I told you he's not like that.

DERRICK

(To Maria)

It's okay Maria.

(Turns to Fred.)

I'll answer him. Well, sir, the reason why I came here, was because, I know that jobs are more available in this state.

FRED

(Takes a sip of his coffee)

Oh, really? Okay. What do you do?

DERRICK.

I am a surgeon.

FRED

(Sits back on the couch.)

Oh, a surgeon?

(Turns to Maria.)

You didn't tell me that Maria.

(Turns back to Derrick)

How long have you been a surgeon?

DERRICK.

For quite some time actually. I came here about two years back. As soon as I got here, I jumped into searching for a job immediately.

FRED.

Okay. So, you're not a thug?

DERRICK

(Laughs)

Me? never. Now, yes I may have been raised in badder areas, but, I did not obtain thug! I feel thugs, they finish last. And, as I said previously, I'm a surgeon. I don't know many thug surgeons.

FRED.

Okay. Just want to make sure. You know, Maria is my daughter, and I have to be sure that she gets the very best.

DERRICK.

And sir, that is totally understandable.

FRED.

Yeah, I believe it is! That's why I said it!

MARIA.

Daddy? Can you please stop! Derrick is a nice man, you need to just give him a chance to show you.

DERRICK

(Turns to Maria, then turns to Fred.)

Sir? Would it be okay if we went out to eat? Just me and you. So, we could get to know one another better?

FRED.

I don't think that would be necessary.

(Rises from his seat.)

It was nice meeting you Derrick.

FRED TURNS to WALK to his bedroom.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIAS' PARENTS HOUSE - MARIAS' PARENTS BEDROOM – MORNING – NEXT.

MARIA'S MOM WALKS into the bedroom. FRED is SITTING on the bed.

MOM.

Fred! What was that?

FRED.

Honey, I don't want her seeing this man. I don't trust it.

MOM.

And, why don't you trust it? Because he's black?

FRED

(Opens eyes wide)

Uh, yeah! You see how these black people operate. He's probably just putting up a front for us. When he leaves, he's probably going back to the projects. Deal drugs or something.

MARIAS MOM GRUNTS and TURNS to WALK out of the room.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIAS' PARENT'S HOUSE - MARIAS' PARENT'S LIVING ROOM - NEXT.

MARIAS' MOM WALKS into the living room.

MOM.

Derrick, I apologize. Fred can be a little...

(Thinks of the word.)

Um, how you say, disturbing.

DERRICK.

Oh, that's okay ma'am. I understand.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. MARIAS' PARENT'S HOUSE – AFTERNOON – LATER.

MARIA and DERRICK SIT in MARIA'S car, which is parked in front of MARIAS' parents house.

DERRICK.

I don't think you're dad likes me very much.

MARIA.

I know, sometimes he can be a jerk! I'm sorry.

DERRICK.

Oh, no, it's not your fault. I just got to work harder to convince your pops that I'm a good guy.

(Pauses.)

Why do you think your pops was acting like that?

MARIA.

To be honest with you Derrick, it's because your African American.

DERRICK LAUGHS.

DERRICK.

Well, that's making a generalization. What, have all the black men that he's met been into thug activities?

DERRICK LAUGHS.

MARIA.

Really Derick, and don't laugh. He's only seen a few black people in his life, but, every one that he has seen has been into, like you said, thug activities. And then, the movies don't help.

DERRICK

(Laughs.)

I don't mean to laugh, but, I can see where he's coming from than. He got to lighten up though.

MARIA.

I know. Just give me some time, I'll work on him.

MARIA SMILES.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. DERRICKS' MOM'S HOUSE – AFTERNOON – LATER.

DERRICKS' MOM, TIA, DERRICK, and MARIA SIT in the living room. DERRICK and MARIA sit next to each other.

DERRICKS MOM

(To Maria)

So, young lady, you're the one that has been taking so much of Derrick's time?

MARIA

(Looks at Derrick, and then back to Derricks mom.)

Um, I guess you could say so! And ma'am, may I say, it is an honor to meet you!

DERRICKS MOM.

It's good to meet you as well.

TIA

(Cuts into the conversation)

(To Maria)

Hey girl! My name is Tia.

TIA PUTS her hand out for a handshake.

MARIA SHAKES her hand.

TIA.

So, when did you meet my brother?

MARIA.

Well, we met a couple of months ago, but, I'd say we really started talking earlier this month.

TIA.

Okay.

(Tia smiles at Derrick.)

And does he treat you right?

DERRICK.

Sis, you know I'm a gentlemen. I treat her good.

DERRICK GRABS MARIA'S hands gently.

MARIA

(Smiles at Derrick, and then turns to Tia.)

Well, yes Tia, he's very good to me. Treats me like a queen.

TIA.

Oh, okay girl! As long as he doing things like mama taught him.

DERRICKS MOM.

I'm sure he knows what he's doing Tia, leave them alone!

(Laughs, and then turns to Maria.)

Well, look dear, it was great to meet you, but old mama getting tired.

(Turns to Derrick.)

Derrick?

DERRICK.

Yes, Mama?

DERRICKS MOM.

Help your old mama get to her bedroom!

DERRICK RISES.

DERRICK.

Yes, ma'am.

DERRICK HELPS his MOM to her bedroom.

TIA.

(Looks at Derrick and Mom, and then turns back to Maria.)

So, Maria? What do you really want from my brother?

MARIA.

What are you talking about?

TIA.

I'm not stupid. You seem like the kind of white girl to date white boys. So, what are you seeing my brother for? Is it his money?

MARIA.

What? No! Derricks a nice guy.

TIA.

Maria, I think you might want to just stick with your own kind. Keep things simple. Black girls don't like it when white women talk to their men.

DERRICK comes from his MOM'S room.

DERRICK.
What's going on ladies?

DERRICK SITS next to MARIA.

TIA
(Looks at Maria, and then turns to Derrick.)
We was just getting to know each other better! Want to see what your new *girlfriends* like!

MARIA SMILES at DERRICK with a tilt of her head.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MARIA'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM - NOON.

MARIA and DERRICK WATCH TV.

MARIA and DERRICK CUDDLE.

DERRICK.
So, beautiful? Did you like my family?

MARIA.
Yeah. You're mom was sweet...

DERRICK.
Yeah, that's my mama!
(Laughs)
But, you know something? When we were there, I just started thinking, and beautiful?
(Grabs Maria's hands and looks at her.)
I'm falling for you!

MARIA.
(Pauses.)
(Smiles.)
Well, luckily. I'm falling for you too.

They KISS.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. BIRD PARK – MORNING.

Romance music plays.

DERRICK and MARIA VIEW different kinds of birds. While they are doing so, they share LAUGHTER, and they are very affectionate. DERRICK PULLS out a camera, and TAKES pictures of MARIA as she STANDS near a tree full of birds.

MARIA POSES.

DERRICK.
(Before taking a picture.)
There you go baby. Looking good!

DERRICK TAKES the picture.

MARIA POSES some more for DERRICK.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIAS' PARENTS HOUSE – DINING ROOM - NIGHT.

MARIA and DERRICK SIT next to one another, HOLDING hands, TALKING and LAUGHING. FRED and MARIAS' MOM are DOING dishes together, and they are able to SEE DERRICK and MARIA. FRED LOOKS at them in disappointment.

CUT TO.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM – NIGHT.

DERRICK and MARIA SIT by the fireplace on top of a blanket TALKING, LAUGHING, and SMILING.

CUT TO.

INT. DERRICK'S MOM'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON.

DERRICK, MARIA, DERRICKS' MOM, and TIA.

They are all WATCHING a movie. TIA SEES that DERRICK and MARIA are CUDDLING, and ENJOYING each others company. She ROLLS her eyes at them.

Music ends.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MARIAS' PARENTS HOUSE – DAY.

MARIA WALKS into FRED'S bedroom as he WATCHES TV.

MARIA

(In anger)
Dad!

FRED RISES from his pillow.

FRED.
What's going on?

MARIA.
Tell me what's wrong with Derrick?

FRED.
What are you talking about?

MARIA.
Mom told me what you said! Dad, just because he is black, doesn't mean anything. I told you from the beginning, Derrick is a nice man. He works a good job, he handles his business, and he knows how to treat me! Isn't that what you want for your daughter? Or do you want me giving my time to men like Bryan or Daniel?

FRED.
Of course not!

MARIA.
So, tell me, why do you have a problem with Derrick?

FRED
(Rises from bed.)
Baby, it's just because I don't trust him...

MARIA
(High tone)
What is there not to trust! Dad, you know absolutely nothing about him!

FRED.
Honey, all I see on TV is these black people acting like thugs. Then, the black men I come across act like thugs as well. I don't want my daughter involved with a man like that.

MARIA.
Dad, you can't make assumptions about this man. You don't know him. I promise you dad, he is not like the black men that you are used to.

FRED.
I'm sorry Maria, my mind is made up. I don't agree with you seeing this man.

MARIA.
Well, that's not your decision to make, now is it? I'll see you later dad.

MARIA WALKS out of the bedroom.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – DERRICK'S DINING ROOM – NIGHT – LATER.

Music playing. KEM-TONIGHT.

DERRICK and MARIA SIT across from one another.

SETTING. White sheet laying across the dining room table, rose pedals on the floor around the table, candles lit. Three candles on the table. A bottle of champagne on the table, both MARIA and DERRICK have a wine glass and a plate of food in front of them.

DERRICK

(Takes a sip of wine.)

So, how is it Maria? The food I mean.

MARIA.

It's good. You're grandmother taught you how to cook right?

DERRICK.

Yeah, she did. She taught me everything I know.

MARIA.

Well, remind me to tell her thank you when I meet her.

DERRICK

(Smiles)

Definitely. So how's work going? I know you got the big promotion. Is it everything you expected?

MARIA.

Yeah, it is. It's just a lot of work. I have to do my job, but, also make sure everybody is doing theirs as well. It's a lot of responsibility, but, I'm making the boss proud, so, I guess I'm doing it right.

DERRICK.

I know you are beautiful! I have complete faith in you.

MARIA.

Well, thank you Derrick. I try my best.

DERRICK

(Lightly laughs.)

Well, you're succeeding, and that's a fact!

MARIA.

So, Derrick? Who taught you how to make this big set up?

MARIA LOOKS around the room.

DERRICK

(Laughs)

You like? I learned this all by myself. I guess, I was born with the gentlemen trait, you know? I get a thrill out of making my lady happy! Whatever I can do.

DERRICK TAKES MARIA'S hand.

MARIA.

Well, it's sweet Derrick! I never had a man do this before.

DERRICK.

That's cause I'm a new kind of man!

(Laughs.)

Different from what you're used to.

MARIA.

You're right about that! But, look I got to tell you something. My dad, he doesn't like you.

DERRICK.

I kind of had that guess, but, why not?

MARIA.

Because of your skin color. He just thinks that all black men are the same, it's ridiculous.

DERRICK.

(Thinks for a while.

Maria, I got to get your dad on my side. You got to set something up for me and him to just sit down and talk.

MARIA.

I've been thinking the same thing. That's what I'm going to do. I'm just going to tell him that he needs to meet me for a coffee, and then, you'll surprise him, because, I know my dad. He will not be up for meeting up with you.

DERRICK.

Well, that's cool beautiful. Just tell me when!

MUSIC ENDS.

CUT TO.

INT. COFFEE SHOP – AFTERNOON.

FRED is SEATED at a table for two. He has a cup of coffee in front of him.

DERRICK WALKS into the coffee shop, then to the counter. He places his order, and waits for the server to make his coffee. She FINISHES, and HANDS it to DERRICK. FRED WATCHES

DERRICK.

DERRICK WALKS to the table FRED is SITTING at, and SITS.

FRED.
Derrick?

DERRICK.
Hello sir.

FRED .
Where's Maria?

DERRICK.
She's at home. She thought it would be nice to just let us have some man time.

FRED.
Man time huh?

DERRICK.
Yes, some man time. I just think there's a lot we need to discuss.

FRED.
I'm afraid not Derrick! I think she may have led you astray.

FRED RISES from his seat and EXITS.

DERRICK SITS quietly with frustration on his face.

HE PULLS out his cell phone and CALLS MARIA.

MARIA ANSWERS.

DERRICK.
Hello? Maria I can't understand your father at all.

MARIA.
What happened?

DERRICK.
He just left. I walk over to him, and he just gets up and walks out. I don't know Maria, getting your father on my side might be out of the question.

MARIA
(Sighs.)
Let me call him. I'll call you back.

MARIA HANGS UP.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIA'S HOUSE – AFTERNOON – NEXT.

MARIA MAKES a phone call to FRED.

FRED ANSWERS.

FRED.
Hello?

MARIA.
Dad! Why are you acting like this? Derrick is a good man. Don't you think everybody deserves a chance?

FRED.
Maria, I told you how I feel. And nothing is going to change my mind.

MARIA.
Well, dad, that's really selfish of you.

MARIA HANGS UP.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – NIGHT – LATER.

MARIA KNOCKS on the door.

DERRICK
(Opens the door.)
Hey Maria. I wasn't expecting you.

MARIA WALKS into DERRICKS house, and then TURNS to look at him.

MARIA.
I can't stand my father.

DERRICK.
What happened?

DERRICK LEADS MARIA into the living room, and then SITS.

MARIA.
I went to see him about acting so rude when you met him at the coffee shop.

DERRICK.
Okay, and what did he say?

MARIA.
I can't change his mind. He told me that there's no way. But, you know what? It doesn't matter. I don't need his permission on who I can date.

DERRICK.
Okay. As long as you say so, I still like you!

DERRICK LAUGHS.

MARIA.
Yup. My mind is made up. You're a pretty cool fella. I could work with you.

MARIA LAUGHS.

CUT TO.

INT. DERRICKS' MOM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM – MORNING.

DERRICK, DERRICKS' MOM, and TIA.

DERRICK.
Ma, I'm going through something.

DERRICKS MOM.
What's wrong?

DERRICK.
Maria's father doesn't like me. And it's making me sick. I don't know what to do. I like Maria a lot, but, can we really have a relationship with her dad not liking me?

DERRICKS MOM.
Of course you can. You don't need any body to make your relationship work besides you and her.

TIA.
Why doesn't he like you Derrick?

DERRICK
(Sighs.)
Because I'm black.

DERRICKS MOM STANDS up in anger.

DERRICKS MOM.
Oh, hell no! These ain't the old days!

TIA STANDS up and tries to calm their mom down.

TIA.
Damn it, Derrick! You know how mama gets.
(To mom)
Mama, it's Okay.

DERRICKS MOM.
What the hell is wrong with that guy?

DERRICK.
It's these movies. They portray us as bad, and the few black men that he has seen are bad.

DERRICKS MOM.
I don't care! He should know that everybody is not the same. You can't judge a book by its cover.

DERRICK.
That's what I was hoping to explain to him when I met with him, but, you see how that worked.

DERRICKS MOM.
You need old mama to talk to him?

DERRICK
(Thinks.)
Nah ma, that makes me seem like a baby.
(Laughs.)
I don't need this man thinking that.

DERRICK LAUGHS.

DERRICKS MOM.
Well, okay Derrick. You just let me know if you need me.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MARIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM – NIGHT.

MARIA and DERRICK sit on the couch, and WATCH TV. They CUDDLE under a blanket.

The door bell rings, and MARIA goes to ANSWER it. It's MARIAS' MOM and FRED.

MARIA, followed by her MOM and FRED, WALK into the living room. When DERRICK SEES them, he STANDS up from his seat.

DERRICK.
Hello!

MARIAS' MOM.

Hello Derrick. I came by to see you.

DERRICK.

Oh.

MARIAS' MOM.

Maria told me that Fred was very rude to you today, and he has something to say!

(Marias' mom turns to Fred)

Go ahead!

MARIAS' MOM TAPS FRED on his back, and he takes a STEP forward.

FRED

(Grunts)

Derrick, I'm sorry. It was wrong of me to act the way I did, and I hope you can forgive me.

DERRICK.

Of course I can. I like your daughter a lot, and I would like to have a good relationship with her parents.

MARIAS' MOM.

And Derrick, that's what you'll get. From the both of us!

DERRICK.

Okay.

(Extends hand to shake Fred's hand.)

Put it there?

After five seconds, FRED EXTENDS his hand.

FRED.

Put it there!

CUT TO.

INT. JAMES HOUSE - LIVING ROOM – NIGHT.

DERRICK, TYRONE, JAMES, and EZIEKIEL.

The basketball game is on, and each of the guys have a bottle of beer in their hands.

EZIEKIEL

(To the TV)

Damn, Lebron! How you miss that shot?

(Turns to the guys)

Can y'all believe that man? That shot was clear as day.

TYRONE

(Sips beer.)

He getting a little too big for his britches.

JAMES
(Laughs and tips his beer bottle to Tyrone.)
Ain't that the truth.

DERRICK.
He going to get it back though, that's a fact. He just messed up. You know my man LeBron not about no games man. You better ask somebody.

DERRICK LAUGHS.

DERRICKS phone rings and he ANSWERS.

It's MARIA.

DERRICK.
Hello?
Oh, hey baby.
Nothing, just watching the game with the fellas.
Tomorrow morning? Yeah, we can meet for breakfast.
10:30?
All right, that sounds good.
Yup, I'll see you tomorrow.
Okay baby.

DERRICK HANGS UP the phone.

After a long silence in the room.

JAMES.
(To Derrick)
So, who was that?

DERRICK.
That lil thang I met at the diner.

JAMES.
Sounds like something more than just a lil thang. You holding out on us?

DERRICK.
Na' man, nothing like that. I just kind of want to take my time with introducing this one, you know?
You seen her before though. That's good enough!

DERRICK LAUGHS.

TYRONE.
Bullshit man. What's the deal? Was she a man before?
(Looks at James and Ezekiel.)

You know them transvestites be out here nowadays.

Everybody LAUGHS.

DERRICK.

Of course not bro. You know ain't no fishy shit going down with me. It's just, you know, everybody be surprised when they find out that we talking.

EZIEKIEL.

Why they be surprised?

DERRICK.

She a white girl.

JAMES.

That's it? We don't care about that man. You date who you want to date. As long as you happy with her, than I'm happy for you bro.

TYRONE.

She white? My nigga, you sure it's going to work out between ya? You know how them white folk could be.

DERRICK.

Tyrone, you only saying that shit because you been locked up before. Kill that noise. She ain't nothing like those officers that your bad ass had to deal with. She good, trust me.

EZIEKIEL

(Looks at Derrick)

Well, when we going to formally meet her? You know we got to do our background check on shorty. Make sure she good for you.

DERRICK.

I don't know yet. But y'all gunna meet her. Y'all my Y G's ain't y'all?

JAMES.

Facts.

EZIEKIEL.

Most def.

TYRONE

(Pauses.)

For sure bro.

DERRICK.

Then it's only right.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – DAY.

DERRICK and MARIA stand by the front door.

DERRICK.

So baby, tonight I've invited my friends to come and meet you.

(He takes her hands.)

I just feel like it's about that time that you meet the fellas. I'm starting to really feel like you might become a permanent part of my life, and, I just want to advance our relationship to the next level. I think it's about that time.

MARIA SMILES and then a knock comes on the door.

DERRICK

(Releases Maria's hand.)

Oh! That's them now.

DERRICK OPENS the door.

DERRICK.

Hey guys, come on in.

DERRICK MOVES aside to let the guys make their entrance. EZIEKIEL is the last one to come in the door, and he CLOSES it behind him.

JAMES

(Looks at Maria, while talking to Derrick with a smile.)

So, is this the lucky lady?

MARIA BLUSHES.

DERRICK.

Yeah. Maria, I'd like you to meet James, Eziekiel, and Tyrone.

EZIEKIEL.

It's nice to meet your acquaintance Maria.

MARIA.

Yours as well.

MARIA SHAKES EZIEKIEL'S hand.

CUT TO.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM – DAY – NEXT.

Everyone is sitting.

MARIA.

I've been a cook at Keg's steakhouse for about three years now.

JAMES.

Oh, so, you like getting down in the kitchen then huh?

MARIA.

Yeah, I've always loved cooking. It's a passion of mine.

JAMES.

Okay. What's your specialty?

MARIA.

Like the name says, steak.

(Laughs.)

My steak is incredible.

DERRICK.

One of these days, you got to let me try it.

MARIA

(Takes Derrick's hand.)

Definitely.

TYRONE.

So, Maria, is this your first interracial relationship?

MARIA

(Looks at Derrick, and then back to Tyrone.)

Yes, it is.

TYRONE.

Why did you want to try something new, rather than what you're used to?

MARIA.

I mean, really it's never crossed my mind. But, when I think about it, Derrick just came across as a different type of man.

TYRONE.

How so?

MARIA.

I mean, usually, I fall for the guy's who are jerks. Don't know how to talk to women, don't know how to treat women. But, Derrick, he's just different.

EZIEKIEL.

Ya damn right!

EVERYBODY except TYRONE LAUGHS.

DERRICK ARISES from the table and WALKS over to TYRONE.

DERRICK
(Taps Tyrone on shoulder)
Yo, let me holla at you real quick!

TYRONE ARISES, and FOLLOWS DERRICK into the hallway.

DERRICK.
Tyrone, what's with all the damn questions?

TYRONE.
Nigga, I'm trying to make sure that she ain't playing you.

DERRICK.
Yo Tyrone, cut that out man, I told you, she cool. Why are you asking her about interracial relationships? That don't concern you bro!

TYRONE.
That cracker ain't never been with no nigga bruh. You need to get you a black shorty, keep it in the family nigga!

DERRICK.
Look man, I already told you numerous times that that's not my stelo no more. You need to get that through your head b. Ain't no, "keep that in the family," nigga. You my mans right? So respect my shit.
If I want to date a white girl, than that's my business.

TYRONE.
All right b, you right. But when that bitch become a pig like the rest of them white folk, just remember you said that!

TYRONE WALKS out of the house in anger.

DERRICK WALKS back to the living room to his seat.

DERRICK.
My bad, you know how he can be man.

JAMES.
Them damn jails changed that man.

EZIEKIEL.
He always been like that. That's just him. What was ya arguin' about?

DERRICK.
Nothing, you know how he is though.

MARIA TURNS to DERRICK.

MARIA.
I didn't say anything wrong did I?

DERRICK
(Grabs Maria's hand.)
No baby. Everything you said was perfect. A man would be an idiot to be mad at you about anything that you said. You know you good.

DERRICK SMILES at MARIA.

MARIA.
Why was he asking me all of those questions?

DERRICK.
Baby, he's a weird man. I don't want you to worry about it though.
(Turns to Ezekiel and James)
Let me walk y'all out.

EZIEKIEL.
I know what that mean!
(Laughs)
Come on James. Let's get out of here.

DERRICK
(As he arises.)
(To Maria)
He playing baby. He's a jokester.

MARIA smirks.

They WALK to the front door.

DERRICK.
Yo bro's? Talk to Tyrone for me.

JAMES.
Why? What's going on?

DERRICK
(Looks at Maria, then back to James.)
You know how that man is about white people. Think they all pigs.

EZIEKIEL.
Is that what y'all was talking bout? Maria being a pig?

DERRICK.
Yeah.

EZIEKIEL.

Yeah, I'm a talk to him. I think she all right. I ain't going to let him tarnish your relationship man.
That's a fact.

DERRICK

(Shakes Ezekiel's hand)

Good look bro.

(Turns to James.)

What you think about her, man?

JAMES.

She good peoples! Keep this one around. She might be good for you.

DERRICK

(Nods his head to James and Ezekiel.)

All right man, I'm a holla at y'all.

EZIEKIEL and JAMES walk out the door, and DERRICK MAKES his way back to the living room to SIT next to MARIA.

DERRICK.

So, what you think of the guys baby?

MARIA.

They're nice. That Tyrone's a little suspicious to me though. I don't know, just watch out. He sends me a vibe of trouble.

DERRICK.

Yeah, Tyrone's something else

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – NIGHT.

DERRICK and MARIA sit at the dining room table across from each other with little food left on their plates. MARIA COOKED her famous steak.

DERRICK

(Rubs his stomach)

Baby, this is delicious. I'm mad that you made me wait this long to try your steak. It's incredible.

DERRICK SMILES at MARIA.

MARIA.

Well, thank you babe. I've been perfecting my craft for quite some time now.

DERRICK LAUGHS.

DERRICK.

Baby, you silly.

(He wipes his hand with a paper towel that is placed near his plate)

But, listen baby, I got to talk to you.

MARIA.

Yes?

DERRICK.

(Takes Maria's hands, and holds them passionately.)

Baby, we've been talking for a long time now, and I feel like our bond is getting stronger. You the only woman I think about, and, I just feel like you should know, that my feelings for you are getting stronger.

A smile blossoms on MARIA'S face.

DERRICK.

Baby, I know that our relationship is strong. But, I'm ready to be your man. And for you to be my woman.

There is a three second pause.

MARIA.

Derrick, it's not even a question. Yes, I will be your woman.

They share a passionate kiss.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – DERRICK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUED.

DERRICK and MARIA CUDDLE in a blanket while they watch TV.

MARIA.

Derrick? I keep thinking about Tyrone. I don't trust him .

DERRICK.

Baby, I told you don't worry about it.

(He sits quietly for two seconds.)

But, I will admit...

MARIA

(Squints eyes.)
Admit what?

DERRICK
(Laughs)

Baby, you know I ain't admitting nothing like that. I'm going to always be faithful to my baby.

(Kisses Maria.)

Nah, but for real, I'll admit, that not everybody is a fan of our relationship. But, guess what? I don't care about none of that.

MARIA.
Who's against me being with you?

DERRICK.
I don't like to think about it, but, I'm going to tell you. Tyrone!

MARIA.
So, he is against our relationship?

DERRICK.
It's because of all the problems he's dealt with, with the law. He's got a problem with white people, but he's going to have to get over that.

MARIA.
I'm nothing like those people at the jails.

DERRICK
(Cuts Maria off)
I know that baby. You sweet. Like cherry pie!

DERRICK LAUGHS.

DERRICK.
But, baby there's more.

MARIA.
Who else?

DERRICK.
I don't think my sister cares for you that much.

MARIA.
Tia?
(Says sarcastically)
Hmm. I wonder why!

DERRICK.
Because you're white baby.

MARIA SIGHS.

Derrick.

But, don't worry about it. They're going to have to learn to deal with it. Because at the end of the day, Adam and Eve were made for each other. Eve wasn't Adam's sister nor his friend. So, if I'm with you, you ain't going nowhere! Especially not because of some little inconvenience.

MARIA.

I know you got me Derrick.

There's a short pause.

MARIA.

But, they're not the only ones though.

DERRICK.

Who else is against us?

MARIA.

My dad.

DERRICK

(Laughs)

Baby, I already know that. I could tell your dad was not my fan from the beginning. But, hey, he gunna have to deal with it.

(Derrick holds Maria from behind while smiling.)

Cause you mine now!

(Laughs and releases Maria.)

Nah, I'm kidding. But, I ain't worried about anything or anyone. They can't break us. Our relationship is too strong.

MARIA SITS UP and turns the light on that is on the desk, and then LOOKS at DERRICK.

MARIA.

Derrick, you better mean that! You are the first man that I've met whose treated me right.

DERRICK

(Lifts his chin while grinning at Maria.)

Baby, you know I ain't going nowhere. I'm here to stay. Now come here and give me some kisses.

DERRICK gets on top of MARIA and PECKS kisses on her FACE.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. OLIVIA'S HOUSE – DAY.

OLIVIA CALLS MARIA.

MARIA ANSWERS.

MARIA.
Hello?

OLIVIA.
Hey Maria. Guess who I just ran into?

MARIA.
Who?

OLIVIA.
Bryan!

MARIA
(Grunts.)
Oh, you saw that jerk! What did he want?

OLIVIA.
To talk to you. He wouldn't tell me the reason, but, he seemed sincere. You still seeing Derrick?

MARIA
(Giggles.)
I'm actually dating him now.

OLIVIA
(Surprised.)
What? And you didn't tell me? When did y'all make it official?

MARIA.
Last week. We were at his place, and he popped the question. When he asked me, I felt as if my Hercules finally swooped me off of my feet.
(Laughs)
Well, you know what I'm saying.

OLIVIA.
I'm happy for you Maria. You remember that day we went to get breakfast at Metropolitan's? The day after you and Bryan broke up?

MARIA.
Yeah, I remember.

OLIVIA.
That was the day you first met Derrick. Maria, I don't know what Bryan wants with you, but, I truly believe that God had you meet Derrick for a reason. Don't let Bryan back in. He will always be a jerk.

MARIA.
Olivia, I know Bryan was my love for a long time, but, once you lose me, I'm officially lost. There's no

getting me back, period! My dad always told me, I'm a jewel, and I should be taken care of seven days a week, twenty four hours a day. And Derrick does that. I'm not leaving him for a jerk.

OLIVIA.

Okay, so you know. You could still call him though. Maybe you left a slipper at his house or something.

OLIVIA and MARIA LAUGH.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIA'S HOUSE – DAY.

MARIA MAKES a phone call on her house phone.

She's CALLING BRYAN.

The phone rings.

BRYAN.

Hello?

MARIA.

Hey Bryan. It's Maria. You said you wanted me to call you?

BRYAN

(Says with joy)

Oh, it's so good to hear your voice.

MARIA

(Annoyed)

What do you want Bryan?

BRYAN.

I just wanted to talk. I miss you.

MARIA.

I don't know why! Call that woman who was calling your phone. Bryan, I have a man now. There's no need to call me. Good bye!

MARIA HANGS up the phone.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. MARIA'S JOB - NOON.

BRYAN WALKS in the front door with two fast food bags of Popeye's. He SEE'S MARIA in the

break room. It has a glass surrounding.

BRYAN WALKS to the break room door being stopped by JEREMY.

JEREMY.
Well – well - well. Hello Bryan.

BRYAN.
(Points two fingers at Jeremy and winks)
Hey Jeremy! Long time.

JEREMY.
Yes, it has been a long time! What you doing here Bryan?

BRYAN
(Laughs.)
What do I always come for? To surprise my baby with lunch.

JEREMY OPENS the door to the break room and PEAKS in.

JEREMY.
(To Maria.)
Maria? Did you bring lunch today?
Okay!
(Turns back to Bryan.)
Sorry buddy, seems she already brought something to eat.
(Puts hand on Bryan's shoulder and walks him to the door)
Now look, she told me not to allow you to visit her any more. I know what you did Bryan, and although we shared many laughs when you would come, she's a prize. Her new guy, what's his name?
Derrick. Derrick, that's right, Derrick is bringing her lunch now.

They finally ARRIVE to the front door and JEREMY opens it.

JEREMY.
So, Bryan, unless your coming for bank affairs. Don't come at all. Thank you!

JEREMY POINTS out the door, while SMILING at BRYAN.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIA'S HOUSE – NIGHT - LATER.

MARIA and DERRICK are LAYING on the couch together, WHILE THE TV is on.

MARIA.
So, Derrick, guess who came to my job today?

DERRICK.
Who?

MARIA.
Bryan.

DERRICK
(Sits up.)
What the hell he want?

MARIA.
He came to surprise me with lunch.

DERRICK.
And did you tell that bastard you got a new man bringing you lunch now?

MARIA.
I didn't have to.

DERRICK RAISES his chin.

MARIA.
Jeremy did it. I guess he stopped Bryan before he could bother me and told him the deal.

DERRICK.
(Laughs.)
Jeremy, that's my man. I know he'll settle it.

The doorbell rings.

MARIA.
Oh, I'll get it.

MARIA RISES from the couch, and walks to the door, she collects the flowers from the delivery man.

DERRICK
(Calls from the couch)
Who is it baby?

MARIA has a bouquet of flowers.

MARIA WALKS back in the living room, and SITS next to DERRICK.

MARIA.
Someone sent me flowers.

DERRICK.
Did they send a card?

MARIA
(She looks, detects a card, and opens it.)

Oh, yeah. Here it is. "From Bryan. Just to let you know I miss you."

DERRICK LOOKS confused.

DERRICK.
Bryan? Let me see those.

DERRICK TAKES the flowers, and goes to throw them away.

DERRICK
(Walks back to the living room.)
That settles that. Baby, do me a favor?

MARIA.
Anything babe!

DERRICK.
Call him and tell him you got the flowers. Tell him to come by.

CUT TO.

EXT. MARIA'S HOUSE – NIGHT – NEXT.

BRYAN pulls up and parks in MARIA'S driveway. He TURNS off all of his lights and exits the car. He STANDS by the front bumper.

BRYAN
(Calls Maria's phone.)
Hey. I'm outside.
Okay, I'll see you in a minute than.

He HANGS UP the phone.

About five minutes later, DERRICK OPENS the front door, and walks out wearing a black hoody. He APPROACHES BRYAN.

DERRICK
(Calls out to Bryan.)
Yo, you been calling my shorty nigga?
(Walks to Bryan and jacks him up onto his car.)
Yeah, she told me. And look, I'm a tell you this shit only once, so listen good. I left my street days alone, but, it's niggas like you who bring em back. So, I want you to leave my shorty alone, all right?
And all will be well. So get in your car, and go on your merry way. I don't want there to be no problem, and I don't think you do either. So be gone.

DERRICK LETS BRYAN go, and WALKS back inside MARIA'S house as BRYAN PULLS out of her driveway.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN. INT - GROCERY STORE - DAY.

MARIA has a shopping cart. As she is WALKING down the aisle, she SEE'S TYRONE. She SLOWS DOWN, and STOPS as she gets closer to him. TYRONE is STOPPED at the dairy section.

MARIA.
Tyrone?

TYRONE TURNS to look at MARIA, and then TURNS back to the dairy section.

TYRONE
(Whispers)
Not this bitch.

MARIA notices how TYRONE is acting.

MARIA.
Is there a problem?

TYRONE
(Grunts and turns to face her.)

Hell yeah, there's a problem! I don't think you the right one for Derrick. I think you need to go back to your little suburbs and fuck with them white boys, cause you not supposed to be wit' a nigga. We do shit different.

MARIA
(Backs up away from Tyrone)
Hold on, is this the reason why you left the house the other day?

TYRONE
(Steps closer to Maria.)
Yeah, bitch! Now get the fuck out my face!

MARIA WALKS away in fear.

CUT TO.

EXT. DERRICKS HOUSE – DAY - LATER.

MARIA PARKS her car, and WALKS on the porch in terror. She WALKS into DERRICK'S arms.

DERRICK
(Grabs Maria.)
Whoa, baby! What's wrong?

MARIA
(In a panic.)
He talked to me like I was a piece of meat. Derrick, I think he was going to hit me.

DERRICK
(Releases Maria and looks her in her eye.)
Who?

MARIA.
Tyrone.

DERRICK.
My boy Tyrone?

MARIA.
Yes, Derrick, I was so scared.

DERRICK.
Hold on.
(He brings Maria to a seat on the porch)
Sit down baby. Now what happened?

MARIA.
I walked up to him just to say hi, and he just blew up on me.

DERRICK.
What he say?

MARIA.
He told me I wasn't the one for you. And he called me a bitch Derrick.

DERRICK
(Rises from his seat.)
That's what the fuck he said to you? All right baby, go in the house, I'll be right back. I'm bout to see
this motha fucka!

DERRICK WALKS off the porch, and to his car.

CUT TO.

EXT/INT. TYRONES HOUSE – NIGHT – LATER.

DERRICK'S car is parked across the street. He WALKS on TYRONE'S porch to his door. He has a black skully on, he's dressed in all black, he has gloves on, and he has a pistol in hand.

DERRICK
(Rings the door bell)
Hey, yo! it's Derrick! Open up bro!

TYRONE OPENS the door.

TYRONE.

Yo, what up bro?

DERRICK
(Angry face.)

What up nigga! I heard you bumped into Maria earlier. What was that about?

TYRONE.

Fuck is you talking about? I ain't see that bitch today.

DERRICK.
Oh, so now she a bitch nigga?

DERRICK SHOOTS TYRONE in his chest, PUSHES him in the house completely, and CLOSES the door behind himself.

DERRICK
(As Tyrone is falling)

You supposed to be my mans nigga? And this what the fuck you do? Talk to my lady disrespectful?

DERRICK SHOOTS TYRONE in the leg.

TYRONE.
Damn, Derrick! Over a bitch? You going to kill me over a bitch?
(He spits toward Derrick.)
Fuck you and that bitch faggot!

DERRICK.
Oh, that's ya word? Well then die slow pussy.

DERRICK KNEELS next to TYRONE, PUNCHES him in the face, GOES in his pocket, TAKES his cell phone, his wallet, and then goes to EXITS, but STOPS.

DERRICK.
(Turns to Tyrone.)
I loved you nigga. But, I love Maria more.

DERRICK SHOOTS him in his other leg, OPENS the door, WALKS out, CLOSES it behind him, and makes his EXIT.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – MORNING.

JAMES and EZIEKIEL RUSH to DERRICK'S front door and KNOCK hard.

DERRICK
(Opens the door)

Yo! What's up man? Why y'all banging on my door? Got me thinking its 5 O!

DERRICK LAUGHS.

JAMES and EZIEKIEL WALK into DERRICK'S house.

EZIEKIEL.

Yo, bro, did you hear? They found Tyrone dead. Somebody shot him.

DERRICK.

Word? Damn. I knew that nigga was going to end up dead or in jail. They know who did it?

JAMES.

Man, them coppers don't know shit. I guess the nigga that killed him shot Tyrone at the door. Made a quick get away.

DERRICK.

Damn, that's crazy, bro. We tried to talk him down numerous times though. He should of listened.

JAMES.

That's a fact. But, yo, we just wanted to let you know man. What's good with the day though?

DERRICK.

About to go to Marias' dad crib. We got a lot of haters against our relationship. We got to settle this shit now!

EZIEKIEL.

Her dad don't like you?

DERRICK.

Nah, he's only been around negative black people.

JAMES.

That don't mean he should judge people though. Cause the Derrick I know is a cool ass dude.

JAMES SHAKES DERRICK'S hand.

DERRICK.

You already know man. But look, I'm a finish getting ready. Just holla at me later.

JAMES.

All right bro.

EZIEKIEL.

Fa sho.

JAMES and EZIEKIEL WALK out the door, and DERRICK CLOSES it behind them.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. FRED AND MARIAS' MOM'S HOUSE – MORNING – LATER.

FRED and MARIAS' MOM are sitting in the dining room having a cup of coffee. They hear somebody WALK into their house. It's MARIA and DERRICK.

MARIA and DERRICK WALK into the dining room to FRED.

MARIA.
Daddy, we need to talk!

FRED.
About what sweetie?

MARIA.
About Derrick.

FRED STANDS up out of his seat.

FRED
(To Derrick)
What did you do to my daughter got damn it!

DERRICK HOLDS his hands out in defense.

MARIA
(Grabs Fred's arm)
Daddy, he didn't do anything.

FRED
(Sits down in his chair.)
Oh, okay. Then what is it?

MARIA.
It's what you just did! Daddy, I feel like ever since I met Derrick, you have not liked the idea of me and Derrick being together. And over a stupid reason. Because of the color of his skin!

FRED.
Baby, I just don't want you to be hurt.

DERRICK
(In anger)
I told you, Fred, I would never hurt her!

FRED.
And how the hell am I supposed to believe that? From the words that are coming out of your mouth? Hitler said words, Saddam Hussein said words, but those were words of destruction. Words don't mean

anything to me!

DERRICK

(Steps closer to Fred)

Well, than, how about you stick around to find out instead of judging me over opinions!

MARIA GRABS DERRICK lightly and PULLS him back.

MARIA.

Baby, why don't you go sit in the living room, and just let me handle this. You're getting worked over.

DERRICK

(Takes a breath)

Yeah, you're right baby.

MARIA and DERRICK WALK to the living room.

MARIAS' MOM STOPS MARIA and DERRICK.

MARIAS' MOM.

Hold on you two!

MARIA and DERRICK TURN to her.

MARIAS' MOM.

Both of you stay in the living room. I'll handle this.

MARIA.

Thanks, mom.

MARIA and DERRICK WALK to the living room.

MARIAS' MOM TURNS to FRED in anger.

FRED.

What I do?

MARIAS' MOM.

Frederick, that is your daughter! When we decided to have her, you told me that you would make sure our baby had everything. Well, she has a man that makes her happy. So, what are you doing? If Maria is happy, you need to leave her alone. If she dates a black man, Arabian man, or any kind of man, as long as he makes her happy, you should be happy for her. This is exactly what drove me away from my dad. You remember? He wouldn't accept you, and that made me drift away from him. Don't let that happen to our daughter. I know you love her.

FRED

(Thinks for five seconds.)

You're right honey. I love her, and I don't want to push her away.

CUT TO.

INT. MARIAS' PARENT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM – MORNING – CONTINUED.

MARIA and DERRICK are SEATED on the love seat. FRED WALKS into the living room.

FRED

(Approaches Derrick.)

Derrick, you have to understand, that as a father, I only want the best for Maria. And if that is you, than, I accept. As long as you keep a smile on her face.

DERRICK.

And sir, all I want to do is keep her smiling. Can we shake on it?

DERRICK STANDS and EXTENDS his hand for a hand shake.

FRED SHAKES DERRICK'S hand while SMILING.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT/INT. DERRICKS MOM'S HOUSE – MORNING - NEXT.

DERRICK and MARIA KNOCK on the front door. TIA ANSWERS the door.

TIA.

Hey bro!

TIA WALKS into the living room, guiding DERRICK and MARIA.

TIA

(Turns around to Derrick.)

So, what brings you by Derrick? Mom ran down to the grocery store to grab a few things.

DERRICK.

That's cool. I'm here to see you actually.

TIA.

Oh. Okay. Well, what's up?

DERRICK.

Well, first of all, you can drop the good girl act. Maria told me how you were acting towards her.

MARIA looks shy.

TIA.

(Looks at Maria with surprise)

And how exactly is that?

DERRICK.

Stop acting dumb sis, you know how you were acting. Like, she's not good enough for me.

TIA

(Laughs.)

She said that?

(Looks at Maria)

You said that?

MARIA.

Yes, I did Tia.

TIA

(Looks around the room, and then to Derrick)

Well, since it's already out in the open, I guess I might as well tell you myself. Derrick, I don't think she's good enough for you.

DERRICK.

Oh, really? Well, who's good enough for me than? Is it the females who call themselves bitches? Or maybe it's the ones who rather get welfare instead of getting a job. Or maybe, just perhaps, it's the ones who rather play the block than do anything real with themselves. Is that the woman who you are referring to sis? Cause if it is, you could miss me with that shit. Maria is nice, has a good job, and treats me like her man. Why the hell can't you just be happy for me? I mean damn sis!

TIA.

Derrick, I just think you can find better.

MARIA.

You realize I'm right here in your face right? I hear everything you're saying.

TIA

(High tone)

And who said I gave a damn?

DERRICK

(Holds hand toward Tia's chest)

Hold on, watch your mouth when you're talking to her, all right? I get you my sis, but, you know damn well my lady is to be respected at all times. I don't give a fuck!

TIA.

Well, fine than big bro! Have her. Just don't say I told you so when shit back fires in your face.

DERRICK.

Whatever sis.

(To Maria)

Come on baby, let's get out of here.

DERRICK TAKES MARIA'S hand, and WALKS out the front door.

CUT TO.

INT. COMEDY CLUB – NIGHT – CONTINUED.

Music plays.

They both are laughing and bonding.

CUT TO.

INT. RESTARAUNT – NIGHT.

They are ENJOYING some sea food. DERRICK has lobster tail, fried shrimp, and fries. MARIA has shrimp scampi, clams, and fries. They are TALKING, LAUGHING, and BLUSHING.

CUT TO.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – AFTERNOON.

DERRICK, MARIA, JAMES, and EZIEKIEL are WATCHING a scary movie. DERRICK and MARIA share a blanket. MARIA has the blanket up to her neck. She is scared. DERRICK NOTICES, and SNUGGLES with her.

CUT TO.

INT. DERRICKS MOM'S HOUSE – DAY.

DERRICK, MARIA, DERRICKS MOM, and TIA are having dinner. TIA is uncomfortable with DERRICK and MARIA being there.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE – DAY.

DERRICK is SITTING on his living room couch, FLICKING through TV stations in a slouch. Bored!

A knock comes at the door.

DERRICK
(From couch)
I'm coming!

(He rises from his seat, and walks to the door.)

Who is it?

TIA.
It's your sister Derrick!

DERRICK

(Opens the door.)

Sis, listen, if you came to talk about Maria, I don't want to hear it. You know how I feel about her, and ain't nothing, or nobody changing that.

TIA.

It's not that. You're my big brother, and I love you. So, if you say that that's the woman for you, than okay.

DERRICK

(Smiles)

Word? What changed your mind sis?

TIA.

Dad wasn't in my life. Only my big brother was, whenever I had a problem, you were the only man there for me, so, if you found love brother, I'm happy for you. And I'm sorry I didn't respect your relationship from the beginning.

DERRICK

(Smiles)

You know you going to always be my little sis. I just want you to be happy for me. I love you sis.

TIA.

I love you too.

DERRICK and TIA HUG.

TIA WALKS out the front door, and DERRICK CLOSES it behind her. Then, he MAKES A CALL to MARIA.

MARIA

(Answers the phone.)

Hey sweetie!

DERRICK.

What's up baby, what you doin'?

MARIA.

Nothing, really, just relaxing.

DERRICK.

Well, baby, guess what?

MARIA.

What?

DERRICK.

Tia came by.

MARIA
(Not interested)
(Sighs.)
What did she want?

DERRICK.
She said she's okay with the relationship.

MARIA
(Brightens up.)
Oh! What changed her mind?

DERRICK.
She said she realizes I'm happy, and that's all she wants for me. She thanked me for always being there when our father wasn't, which was all the time.

MARIA.
Well, that's good honey. All I want is for everybody to be happy.

DERRICK.
Me too baby. So listen, let's go out to eat later. I got something I want to talk to you about.

MARIA.
Okay, baby, I'll see you tonight.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. RESTARAUNT – NIGHT - LATER.

DERRICK and MARIA.

DERRICK and MARIA SHARE a glass of wine after dinner.

DERRICK.
So, baby, how was your food?

MARIA.
It was delicious babe. Thank you.

DERRICK.
Baby, I'll do anything to keep a smile on your face.

MARIA SMILES.

DERRICK.
But, baby, listen. I asked you here tonight, cause I want to tell you something...

MARIA.

What's on your mind Derrick?

DERRICK.

I love you, and I just want you to know, that as long as you allow me too, I'm going to be there for you until the end of time. I never met a girl like you before, and I'm very happy that God placed you in my life.

MARIA

(Smiles)

I'm thankful too honey.

DERRICK

(Takes Maria's hands)

And there's no other woman who could take your place baby. We got everybody on our side now, and they realize that as long as I make you happy, and you make me happy, then all is perfect.

(Kisses Maria)

I love you!

DERRICK and MARIA KISS passionately.

FADE OUT.

The end.