

Does a beating justify love?

Bernard Mersier

**Character breakdown: Characters can be doubled****Narrator****Teenage Monica**

African-American. She's a strong-minded young lady with her eyes set on graduating high school, ignoring the fact boys only want her because she's the school virgin.

**Teenage Deena**

African-American. She's Teenage Monica's outgoing friend, trying her best to get Monica to understand she can still graduate, and have fun while doing it.

**Teenage Jason**

African-American. He's an arrogant basketball player with his eyes set on sleeping with Teenage Monica on the night of the prom.

**Teenage Craig**

African-American. He's the star player of the basketball team, and an all around gentleman, who doesn't like disrespect shown towards women.

**Gwen**

Teenage Monica's protecting mother. She knows her daughter can make her own decisions, but she reminds her, she's always there to help.

**Monica**

She's no longer the strong goal-oriented woman from high school, becoming a victim of domestic violence.

**Deena**

She's still Monica's friend, but she's ashamed of how she turned out in life.

**Craig**

He no longer has respect for women, and has become a full blown alcoholic, and woman beater.

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

*Standing beside the lockers in the empty hallway is TEENAGE MONICA and TEENAGE DEENA.*

*Teenage Monica is wearing some baggy jogging pants and a sweater, while Teenage Deena is wearing something casual.*

TEENAGE DEENA

What are you wearing to prom?

TEENAGE MONICA

I won't be attending.

TEENAGE DEENA

Why? You only get one prom.

TEENAGE MONICA

Should I be impressed?

TEENAGE DEENA

It's not about being impressed. It's about enjoying one last night with the people you know.

TEENAGE MONICA

Uh huh. Like I said, I won't be attending.

TEENAGE DEENA

I know why.

TEENAGE MONICA

Why?

TEENAGE DEENA

You're scared of leaving your comfort zone.

TEENAGE MONICA

What is my comfort zone?

*Teenage Deena uses her palm as a scanner, starting from Teenage Monica's head all the way down, letting her know her appearance is what she's talking about.*

TEENAGE DEENA

These baggy clothes. You're scared to reveal your body.

*Teenage Monica looks at her confused.*

TEENAGE MONICA

Why should I reveal my body, when I already get enough attention?

*Teenage Deena breaks out laughing.*

TEENAGE DEENA

What attention?

TEENAGE MONICA

I'm the only virgin in the graduating class. Need I say more?

TEENAGE DEENA

As long as you know it's not your looks.

TEENAGE MONICA

Ugly women tend to say stuff like that.

TEENAGE DEENA

I'm far from ugly. Come with something better.

TEENAGE MONICA

If you were worth the time, I would.

TEENAGE DEENA

Whatever. You're going, right?

TEENAGE MONICA

Why are you so pressed?

TEENAGE DEENA

Going to prom without my best friend wouldn't seem right.

TEENAGE MONICA

Uh huh.

TEENAGE DEENA

Seriously. You know we do everything together.

TEENAGE MONICA

I'll think about it.

TEENAGE DEENA

Girl, stop playing. You know you'll be there.

TEENAGE MONICA

I said I'll think about it.

TEENAGE DEENA

What? You'd prefer sitting at home staring at the walls.

*Teenage Monica is silent.*

TEENAGE DEENA (CONT'D)

My point. When do you wanna go look for a dress?

TEENAGE MONICA

I'll figure it out.

TEENAGE DEENA

I hope you don't pick something tacky.

TEENAGE MONICA

As long as I don't let you pick it, I'll be fine.

TEENAGE DEENA

What are you saying?

TEENAGE MONICA

Nothing, hotbox.

TEENAGE DEENA

(Laughs)  
Oh, I'm a hotbox?

TEENAGE MONICA

And my best friend.

TEENAGE DEENA

Whatever.

*The two make their way off stage.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

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

*Faint laughter and talking can be heard in the boy's locker room, where TEENAGE CRAIG and TEENAGE JASON sit on the bench in their basketball jerseys and shorts.*

TEENAGE CRAIG

Who do you have lined up for prom?

TEENAGE JASON

I don't know. There's so many to choose from.

*Teenage Craig looks at him confused.*

TEENAGE CRAIG

Living in that fantasy world again?

*Teenage Jason looks at him confused.*

TEENAGE JASON

Fantasy? Look at me.

*He flexes his muscles, and Teenage Craig looks at him not impressed.*

TEENAGE CRAIG

So?

TEENAGE JASON

What female can resist these guns?

TEENAGE CRAIG

Apparently a lot, considering you don't have a date.

TEENAGE JASON

Hater. Why did you ask?

TEENAGE CRAIG

Just wondering.

TEENAGE JASON

I do have my eye on Monica.

*Teenage Craig releases a sarcastic laugh.*

TEENAGE CRAIG

Is that right?

TEENAGE JASON

Who doesn't? But unlike them, I'll be the one taking her to prom, and her virginity.

TEENAGE CRAIG

You think so?

TEENAGE JASON

I don't have to think what I know.

TEENAGE CRAIG

I doubt either scenario happens.

TEENAGE JASON

Oh, let me guess. You'll be the one to do it.

TEENAGE CRAIG

I'm not saying that.

TEENAGE JASON

Good. You don't have a chance with her anyway.

TEENAGE CRAIG

What makes you think that?

TEENAGE JASON

You don't have the three things.

TEENAGE CRAIG

What are the three things?

*Teenage Jason prepares to display what he's about to name off.*

TEENAGE JASON

The body. The looks. And the money.

TEENAGE CRAIG

Money?

TEENAGE JASON

Money makes women open their legs faster than you can flash it.

TEENAGE CRAIG

I believe you're using the wrong word. Money doesn't make women respond the way you're claiming.

TEENAGE JASON

They're all the same, Bro. Don't get it twisted.

TEENAGE CRAIG  
Monica isn't that way.

TEENAGE JASON  
What makes you so sure?

TEENAGE CRAIG  
With a woman like Monica, you need the one thing you  
don't have.

*Teenage Jason places his hand up to his ear.*

TEENAGE JASON  
I'm all ears.

TEENAGE CRAIG  
The manners of a gentleman.

*Teenage Jason breaks out laughing.*

TEENAGE JASON  
Women these days don't know what a gentleman is. All  
they know is money, and they'll use their body to get  
it.

TEENAGE CRAIG  
So...why is Monica still a virgin?

TEENAGE JASON  
I haven't put my game down, yet.

TEENAGE CRAIG  
Even with this so-called "Game" you claim to have.  
Nothing will happen.

TEENAGE JASON  
Are you sure about that?

TEENAGE CRAIG  
I don't have to think what I know.

*Teenage Jason extends his hand for a bet.*

TEENAGE JASON  
Put something on it.

TEENAGE CRAIG  
I'm not betting on that.

TEENAGE JASON  
Because you know I'll win?



TEENAGE CRAIG

No. I don't view women as objects to bet on.

*Teenage Jason pulls his hand back.*

TEENAGE JASON

You're admitting I'm right?

TEENAGE CRAIG

Think what you want.

TEENAGE JASON

I'll tell you how good it was.

TEENAGE CRAIG

You can't tell me what you'll never know.

TEENAGE JASON

Watch.

*Teenage Craig makes his way off stage.*

TEENAGE JASON

He hates the fact I'm right.

**END OF THE SCENE**

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

*A bookshelf filled with books rests behind Teenage Monica's bed, along with a computer desk off to the side.*

*Teenage Monica is laid across the bed reading over a book, taking down notes.*

*GWEN comes into the room wearing something casual.*

GWEN

Have you decided on a dress?

*Teenage Monica places her book to the side sitting up on the bed, sighing.*

TEENAGE MONICA

What is it with you and Deena?

GWEN

What?

TEENAGE MONICA

What's the big deal about prom?

GWEN

You don't consider this day important?

TEENAGE MONICA

Dancing with a bunch of people you barely speak with. Guys trying to get you drunk after the dance, so they can have sex with you. No. I don't consider it important.

GWEN

Is that the real reason?

TEENAGE MONICA

Why wouldn't it be?

GWEN

I was thinking it's because you don't have a date.

*Teenage Monica scoffs, looking at Gwen offended.*

TEENAGE MONICA

You don't think I can get a date?

GWEN

I know you can get a date because you're beautiful like your mother. I just find it strange you don't wanna go.

TEENAGE MONICA

There's more important things to think about.

GWEN

You need to have some fun at some point in your life. You can always stay focused on your dreams, but have some fun. Don't end up alone, relying on a toy for satisfaction.

*Teenage Monica laughs.*

GWEN (CONT'D)

Go have some fun. Your goals will get accomplished.

TEENAGE MONICA

...I'll go.

GWEN

You'll probably end up meeting the one.

TEENAGE MONICA

I doubt it.

GWEN

Girl, just go have fun.

TEENAGE MONICA

Okay.

GWEN

I love you.

TEENAGE MONICA

I love you, too.

*Gwen walks out the room.*

*Teenage Monica sits sighing shaking her head.*

TEENAGE MONICA (CONT'D)

Nothing will happen that'll change my life.

**END OF THE SCENE**

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

*In the rented hall, students are dressed up enjoying themselves dancing to the music playing.*

*Teenage Monica comes on stage wearing a fitted powder blue dress with her hair down. She makes her way over to the table picking up a cup prepared to pour some punch, and Teenage Jason comes over wearing a black Tuxedo taking the cup from her, causing her to look at him confused.*

TEENAGE MONICA

Can I help you?

TEENAGE JASON

A woman with your beauty shouldn't pour her own punch.

TEENAGE MONICA

What?

TEENAGE JASON

This is a job for a gentleman.

TEENAGE MONICA

You're treating me nice, because?

TEENAGE JASON

I always liked you.

TEENAGE MONICA

Don't give me that. This devastating body has you acting up.

TEENAGE JASON

I was thinking---

TEENAGE MONICA

You would take my virginity tonight?

*He clears his throat embarrassed, followed with a nervous laugh.*

TEENAGE JASON

Why would you say that?

TEENAGE MONICA

Considering everyone in school knows I'm a virgin?  
That alone fits perfect with this goofball look on  
your face.

He fixes his clothes, clearing his throat again.

TEENAGE JASON

I'll be honest with you. My limo is outside. After  
the dance, we should go for a ride. Have a drink or  
two. Maybe go down by the water---

TEENAGE MONICA

And give you some, right?

TEENAGE JASON

I was thinking---

TEENAGE MONICA

This conversation is over.

*She gets ready to walk away, and he grabs her  
arm.*

TEENAGE JASON

Don't act like you don't want me, girl.

*She breaks out laughing.*

TEENAGE MONICA

If I wanted you, I could have you. Since that's not  
the case, you can let my arm go, please and thank  
you.

*Teenage Craig walks on stage wearing a black  
suit walking over to the two, standing behind  
Teenage Jason.*

TEENAGE JASON

Don't tease me, slut. You can play that innocent role  
with everybody else, but me.

*She snatches her arm away.*

TEENAGE MONICA

You got the wrong one. Get yo trifling self away from  
me.

*He gets ready to grab her again, and Teenage  
Craig grabs him by the back of the neck making  
him fold over.*

TEENAGE CRAIG

What's the problem? She said leave her alone.

*Teenage Jason is bending forward with a look of pain on his face and in his voice, trying to break the grasp.*

TEENAGE JASON

What's wrong with you, man?

TEENAGE CRAIG

The fact that you're bothering her, is bothering me.

TEENAGE JASON

And you care---

*Teenage Craig squeezes harder.*

TEENAGE CRAIG

This conversation is over, right?

*Teenage Jason shakes his head yes, and Teenage Craig lets him go, followed with a push.*

TEENAGE CRAIG (CONT'D)

I think you need to find another girl you believe is easy.

*Teenage Jason gathers himself looking at Teenage Craig confused.*

TEENAGE JASON

When did you start caring about her? You had the same thoughts of---

TEENAGE CRAIG

Doing to you, what you're thinking about doing to me. Get moving.

TEENAGE JASON

I'll get you.

TEENAGE CRAIG

Yeah, okay.

*Teenage Jason walks off stage.*

*Teenage Craig focuses his attention on Teenage Monica.*

TEENAGE MONICA

I had that under control.

TEENAGE CRAIG

You probably did.

TEENAGE MONICA

I did.

TEENAGE CRAIG

A little extra help never hurts.

TEENAGE MONICA

Thanks.

TEENAGE CRAIG

No need for that. Enjoy the dance.

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

TEENAGE MONICA

Wait. Why did you help me?

*He turns looking at her.*

TEENAGE CRAIG

Two important things about women all men should know. One, she already knows if she wants you. And two, if she doesn't show you interest, it's best to leave it alone.

*Teenage Monica loves his reply, but she doesn't let it be known.*

TEENAGE MONICA

Out of all these girls, you decided to rescue me?

TEENAGE CRAIG

I'm just making sure what I want is safe.

TEENAGE MONICA

And what is that?

TEENAGE CRAIG

You'll know if you give it to me.

*He walks off stage.*

*Teenage Deena walks on stage wearing a soft pink fitted dress, walking up behind Teenage Monica*

*tapping her on the shoulder.*

TEENAGE DEENA  
Sexy, sexy.

*Teenage Monica doesn't respond, standing in a  
trance.*

TEENAGE DEENA (CONT'D)  
Hello?

*Teenage Monica turns around.*

TEENAGE MONICA  
Huh? Hey, what's up?

TEENAGE DEENA  
What's wrong with you?

TEENAGE MONICA  
Nothing. Just a little stunned.

TEENAGE DEENA  
Are you sure?

TEENAGE MONICA  
Yeah. Let's get on this floor.

*The two mingle in with the other people  
beginning to dance.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

NARRATOR (O.S.)  
After the prom while in the parking lot, Teenage  
Monica and Teenage Deena come close to being victims  
of rape by Teenage Jason and his friends. Luckily for  
them, Teenage Jason comes to the rescue, but  
unfortunately...he gets his ankle broken in the  
process.



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

*Teenage Craig lies on the hospital bed wearing a hospital gown, with his ankle wrapped up.*

*Gwen and Teenage Monica are standing beside his bedside. Teenage Monica is still wearing her dress, and Gwen is wearing something casual.*

GWEN

Thank you for helping my daughter.

TEENAGE CRAIG

Any man would've done the same.

TEENAGE MONICA

You and I know that's a lie. The only way any other man would've helped me is if they knew I'd give it up.

*He does a slight chuckle.*

TEENAGE CRAIG

That's true.

GWEN

Regardless of the fact, I appreciate what you did. Your parents taught you well.

TEENAGE CRAIG

The thanks would go to my grandmother. She's the one who taught me the rules of life as far as how to treat a female.

GWEN

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you.

TEENAGE CRAIG

No offense taken. My grandparents were forced to raise me because of my parent's domestic violence issues.

GWEN

I'm sorry to hear that.

TEENAGE CRAIG

I'm fine with it. The situation helped me become a better man.

GWEN

At least you didn't let it hold you down. Well, I'll leave you two alone. Thank you, once again.

TEENAGE CRAIG

Not a problem.

*Gwen walks out the room.*

TEENAGE MONICA

I would've never thought that about your parents.

*He takes a deep breath, exhaling sharply.*

TEENAGE CRAIG

Yeah. My alcoholic father beats on my mother, and my mother feels she can't find love in another man.

TEENAGE MONICA

Why does she feel she can't move on?

TEENAGE CRAIG

She feels since he's the only man she's been with, there's no point in trying to move on.

TEENAGE MONICA

She's in denial of the truth, believing love is blind.

TEENAGE CRAIG

Indeed. Watching those two growing up, I came to the conclusion I'll never take a drink.

TEENAGE MONICA

That was a wise choice.

TEENAGE CRAIG

Do you think so?

TEENAGE MONICA

If that's what made you the man you are now, yes.

TEENAGE CRAIG

Thank you.

TEENAGE MONICA

You're welcome. Can you tell me what you meant when you said you wanted something from me?

TEENAGE CRAIG

Truthfully?

*She stares at him blushing, chuckling with a soft crush.*

TEENAGE MONICA  
Duh.

TEENAGE CRAIG  
I wanted us to grab something to eat, and have a nice conversation getting to know each other better.

TEENAGE MONICA  
That's it?

TEENAGE CRAIG  
That's it.

TEENAGE MONICA  
You're in the hospital because you wanted to go on a date?

*He laughs, trying to hold back from smiling.*

TEENAGE CRAIG  
And get to know you better.

TEENAGE MONICA  
Why didn't you just ask me out?

TEENAGE CRAIG  
...Good point.

TEENAGE MONICA  
What have you learned?

TEENAGE CRAIG  
When my ankle heals, hopefully when I ask you out on a date you'll accept.

TEENAGE MONICA  
I'll be waiting.

TEENAGE CRAIG  
Really?

TEENAGE MONICA  
Why wouldn't I, and you're in here because of me?

TEENAGE CRAIG  
I'll hold you to those words.

*She leans down giving him a kiss.*

TEENAGE MONICA

Just make sure you ask.

*She makes her way out the room.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

ACT IScene VI

*Teenage Monica and Gwen are sitting on the sofa in the living room talking.*

TEENAGE MONICA

What do you think about Craig?

*Gwen takes a sip from her tea.*

TEENAGE MONICA (CONT'D)

Well?

GWEN

He seems like a good man. I appreciate him helping you.

TEENAGE MONICA

But?

GWEN

It's something about his story.

TEENAGE MONICA

What about it?

GWEN

I can't put my finger on it, yet.

*Teenage Monica shakes her head, sighing.*

TEENAGE MONICA

Oh my God.

GWEN

What?

TEENAGE MONICA

How is it you can find something negative in everything? You nagged me about going. I was almost raped, and because of that, a good man is in the hospital. Now, here you are searching for negativity. Why?

GWEN

I'm not looking for negativity.

TEENAGE MONICA

Yes you are. He's a nice man, but it's something

about him I can't place my finger on. I can't win with you. I believe I met someone who possibly cares about me, and doesn't want sex. If I would've stayed at home, you would've complained. What do you want from me?

GWEN

It doesn't matter what I want. I'm just sharing my thoughts.

TEENAGE MONICA

Considering I came up just fine without a father figure, I don't see how his situation is any different from mine.

GWEN

You two are completely different. Despite your father wasn't in your life, you had me. I made it my point to make sure you didn't come up like me. If that's the scenario you wanna use to make yourself feel comfortable, you go right ahead. I'll keep my thoughts to myself.

TEENAGE MONICA

That would be a first.

GWEN

And it won't be the last. Technically, you're grown. It's time for you to learn things on your own.

TEENAGE MONICA

I'm glad you recognize it.

GWEN

Don't think for a second I won't be here to protect you.

TEENAGE MONICA

I know you will. I just wanna give this a try.

*Gwen smiles trying not to cry, placing a hand on her shoulder.*

GWEN

My baby girl grew up so fast.

*Teenage Monica stares at her trying not to cry.*

TEENAGE MONICA

I'll always be your baby girl.

*They embrace in a hug.*

GWEN

My baby girl. I hope this works out for you.

TEENAGE MONICA

Thank you.

**END OF THE SCENE**

**END OF ACT I**

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

NARRATOR (O.S.)

Time goes by and Monica and Craig end up married, expecting their first child.

*Craig is sitting on the bed in their nicely furnished bedroom wearing a wife beater and shorts watching the basketball game with a look of anguish, rubbing the ankle he had broken.*

*Monica walks in wearing a two piece business suit, and we can see her five month stomach poking out. She walks over to Craig giving him a kiss on the cheek.*

MONICA

How's my baby?

*You can tell he's bothered not just from her kissing him, but the fact she's in his presence.*

CRAIG

I'm okay.

MONICA

Are you hungry?

CRAIG

Nope.

MONICA

What's wrong?

CRAIG

Just leave me alone.

MONICA

What's with the attitude?

*Brushing him off, she goes over to the closet.*

CRAIG

It's bothering me watching my career I couldn't pursue.

*She turns looking at him.*



MONICA

What are you talking about?

CRAIG

Not being in the NBA.

MONICA

Baby, I understand your pain. Sadly, there's nothing we can do about that.

CRAIG

I should've let what was about to happen go down.

*She becomes offended, staring at him as if he's not the man who said he'll always love and respect her.*

MONICA

Are you serious?!

*Craig doesn't respond.*

MONICA (CONT'D)

I figured you'd turn out this way!

*She walks out the room, and Craig gets up following her, stopping her on the steps.*

CRAIG

Turn out like what?!

MONICA

Nobody asked you to intervene!

CRAIG

You're so stupid!

MONICA

Watch my stupid ass walk out the door.

*She snatches away ready to walk away, and he grabs her again.*

CRAIG

Where are---

*She slaps him hard across the face.*

MONICA

Don't put your hands on me! You know damn well---

*He backhands her, knocking her down the stairs, and she lands at the bottom not moving, moaning in pain.*

CRAIG

What made you think you could talk to me crazy?! I'm the man in this relationship! You better remember that from now on! You hear me?!

*She doesn't respond or move.*

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Mo, get up! I'm hungry, and you need to get up and cook!

*She still doesn't respond as he makes his way down the stairs.*

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Mo, if I have to tell you one more time.

*He sees blood leaking through her pants as she moans in pain.*

CRAIG (CONT'D)

My baby.

*He runs off stage.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

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

*Monica is on the hospital bed exhausted, wearing a hospital gown.*

*Deena is standing beside her bed wearing something casual.*

DEENA

What happened?

MONICA

I don't wanna talk about it.

DEENA

You don't wanna talk about it? You just lost your baby, and you don't wanna talk about it?

MONICA

We got into it.

DEENA

And he had to put his hands on you?

MONICA

Who said he put his hands on me? I said we got into it.

DEENA

Let me guess. You tripped over your own feet and fell down the steps?

MONICA

That's exactly what happened.

DEENA

Are you comfortable with that lie?

MONICA

Of course I'm comfortable because it's not a lie.

DEENA

Does he still go to that bar you told me about?

MONICA

Yeah.

*Craig walks in wearing the same outfit.*

DEENA

Mo---

CRAIG

How's she doing?

*Deena turns her head looking at him sucking her teeth.*

DEENA

I'll see you when you get back to work. All of a sudden I feel sick.

*Deena walks off stage.*

*Craig walks over to Monica trying to hold her hand, and she snatches away.*

CRAIG

I know what you're thinking. There's nothing I can say that'll justify my actions.

MONICA

You damn right, there's nothing you can say. I lost our first child because you relapsed about helping the woman you claim to love.

CRAIG

That's my fault. I was watching the game---

MONICA

And you decided to take it out on me for a decision you made?

CRAIG

I know sorry won't cut it.

MONICA

Do you understand my child is gone? Why would I want anything to do with you?

CRAIG

Because you still love me the same as I love you.

MONICA

If that was true, our child would still be in the process of coming into this world.

*He gets down on his knee grabbing her hand.*

CRAIG

I know you don't want anything to do with me. And I know no matter how much I apologize, it won't change the situation. But I swear on my life...I'll never do this again.

MONICA

The man I love would've never done this.

CRAIG

I am the man you love.

*She begins crying.*

MONICA

I can't believe you.

CRAIG

All I'm asking is for one more chance.

MONICA

Craig---

CRAIG

Just say yes. I'm begging you. Say you'll stay.

**END OF THE SCENE**

ACT IIScene III

NARRATOR (O.S.)

Months go by, and at first, Craig was back to the man Monica knew and loved. ...It didn't last long.

*Monica is standing over the stove wearing something casual humming a tune, cooking dinner.*

*Craig staggers in drunk wearing his construction uniform holding a bottle, making his way to the table taking a seat.*

CRAIG

What's cooking?

*She turns around walking over to him with a smile.*

MONICA

Roast. Macaroni, green beans---

CRAIG

Okay, whatever. When will it be done?

*She clears her throat.*

MONICA

It'll be ready in a matter of minutes. I'm waiting for the roast to get done.

*He shakes his head disappointed, taking a swig from the bottle.*

CRAIG

You've been here all day, and my dinner ain't ready yet?! What the hell were you doing?!

*She takes a step back, nervous.*

MONICA

I had to clean the house before I started on dinner.

*He takes a swig, and then slings the bottle across the room.*

CRAIG

You know after a long day, I want my meal hot and ready! I don't wanna hear excuses!

MONICA

Craig---

CRAIG

Craig what?! Craig what?! That's not putting a meal in front of me!

*He gets up grabbing her by the wrist, causing her to shriek in fear.*

CRAIG (CONT'D)

My meal ain't ready because you were with another man!

MONICA

Craig I swear---

*He slaps her across the face.*

CRAIG

Shut up! I smell another man on you! You wanna be with another man?! I'll make sure he wants the lights off!

*She screams as he slaps her a few more times, before throwing her into the wall.*

*She continues crying with her hands over her face as he takes his belt off, wrapping it around his knuckles.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

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

*Monica is sitting at her cubicle wearing a two-piece business suit with her head low typing on the keyboard. She pauses making sure her hair is covering the bruise on the right side of her eye.*

*Deena walks in wearing something casual, walking over to Monica placing a hand on her shoulder.*

*Monica jerks in fear, slowly turning around.*

DEENA

Are you okay?

*Monica laughs nervously, making sure the bruise on her face doesn't get revealed.*

MONICA

I'm fine. I didn't get a lot of sleep last night. You know how it is when the husband can't get enough of what you got?

*Deena moves Monica's hair to the side.*

DEENA

When does the wife get enough of her husband beating her?

*Monica moves Deena's hand.*

*Deena walks over to an empty cubicle grabbing a chair placing it beside Monica taking a seat.*

MONICA

I don't know what you're talking about.

DEENA (CONT'D)

Girl, everybody knows. Nobody in here is blind. He's no longer the loving high school sweetheart you fell in-love with.

MONICA

He...he's under a lot of stress. I'm the woman of the house, so I should uphold my job as far as keeping the house clean and having dinner ready on time. I lack in those areas from time to time, so we have our



altercations.

DEENA

Mo, you can't honestly sit here making yourself believe what just came from your mouth.

MONICA

It's the truth. I don't do my part.

DEENA

So, a beating justifies it?

*Monica doesn't respond.*

DEENA (CONT'D)

I can relate to your situation.

MONICA

What do you know about my situation?

*Deena pulls the neck part of her shirt down, just enough to see the scar on her chest from being stabbed.*

*Monica covers her mouth.*

MONICA (CONT'D)

What happened?

DEENA

I was like you. Thinking it was love, and nothing else in the world mattered. Thank God I survived. I told myself, there's no love in the world worth me losing my life. When are you going to realize that?

*Monica shakes her head in denial.*

MONICA

It'll never go that far with us.

DEENA

That's the same thing I said. I kept saying this can't be the man I love doing this.

MONICA

We love each other.

DEENA

He loves knowing his grip is so tight, you'll never leave. Can you honestly tell me why you love him?

*Monica doesn't respond, shaking her head.*

DEENA (CONT'D)

Don't let what happened to me or worse happen to you. You're a very beautiful intelligent woman. There's a man who'll actually love you without putting a bruise on your face to express it.

*Deena walks off stage.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

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

*Monica is sitting on the sofa wearing the same outfit looking at old pictures of her and Craig, wiping the tears from her face.*

*Craig staggers in drunk wearing a basketball jersey and shorts, holding a bouquet of roses, leaning up against the door.*

CRAIG

Baby, I'm home.

*She sniffles, wiping her eyes, placing the pictures down.*

MONICA

Hey.

CRAIG

I know I was out of line last night, and there's nothing I can do or say to make you forgive me. But I have something explaining I'll never do you wrong again.

*She turns her head looking at him, pointing at her bruise.*

MONICA

You think roses can heal this bruise because you thought I was with another man? Do you think roses can heal the inner scarred tissue you embedded in me, due to lack of trust?

*She lowers her head.*

*Craig walks over to her kneeling down, placing the roses next to her.*

CRAIG

I understand what you're saying.

MONICA

What happened to the man I love? The man I gave my heart without a doubt of taking it back.

CRAIG

It's my fault you lost him. I lost myself somewhere, and by doing that, I also lost my real true love.

That's why I have this.

*He pulls out a ring box opening it, revealing a diamond ring.*

*She covers her mouth shocked.*

MONICA

Oh my God.

CRAIG

This day marks our anniversary.

MONICA

Craig---

*He places a finger to her lips.*

CRAIG

Don't say anything. Just know from here on, I'll never hurt you again.

*Tears fall from her eyes, hugging and kissing all over his face...and then the look of joy turns sour.*

MONICA

What's that smell?

CRAIG

What smell?

*She pushes him back.*

MONICA

Unless you're searching for your inner woman, which I highly doubt. Why are you wearing perfume?!

*He clears his throat.*

CRAIG

Baby, I don't know what you're talking about.

MONICA

Right! So all these scratches on your neck, along with this big ass passion mark mean what?!

*She picks up the roses hitting him over the head, before standing up walking away.*

*He stands up with an exposed look.*

CRAIG

Baby, let me explain. I was with the fella's playing ball and got all scratched up from defense. The smell is from the women they tried hooking me up with, trying to give me hugs, but I told them I have a wife. I wanted to fight the fellas, but I decided to let it go.

*She stops, turning around looking at him.*

MONICA

You're so full of it! Why can't you be a man for once, and fess up to what you did?!

*His look turns serious.*

CRAIG

Is that what you wanna hear?

MONICA

It's not about what I wanna hear. It's about telling me the truth.

CRAIG

Okay. I was with another woman tonight. Actually, I've been with a different woman for the past few months. You won't do anything about it because you know better. Get that ass upstairs, and get in bed.

MONICA

You're a worthless excuse of a man. You know what? As much as this is about to hurt me because I wish it didn't happen. I'm glad you knocked me down the stairs so I could lose our child. It would've killed me watching our child see his father turnout to be a worthless duplicate of his father!

*He charges at her, and she kicks him between the legs, making him drop to the floor in pain.*

MONICA (CONT'D)

You're so predictable. I'll be back to collect my things, but my heart you can keep. Let it remind you of a good woman you ruined because you weren't built to handle her.

*She makes her way off stage.*

CRAIG

Monica! Monica, get back here! I'm killing you! I swear to God, I'm killing you!

**END OF THE SCENE**

ACT IISCENE VI

*Monica and Gwen are sitting on the sofa talking, while Monica wipes the tears from her eyes.*

MONICA

I can't believe this.

GWEN

I tried telling you it was something about him.

MONICA

Mama, it's not time for that.

*Gwen turns looking at her.*

GWEN

How many times do you have to get smacked in the face before you realize the truth? Do you enjoy getting smacked in the face with everything, but the truth?

MONICA

How can you say that at a time like this?

GWEN

The same way you took those beatings. The same way you lost your child. Baby, I love you to death. How can you not listen to a person that's been around the world more than once?

MONICA

You know that old saying, "Love is blind"? I'm a product of that.

GWEN

(Laughs)

That's not what you're a product of. You're a product of stupidity.

MONICA

Mama, come on.

GWEN

You're a tad bit on the stupid side. You loved that he was prince charming to the rescue. The good looks and I guess sex. How was the sex? I heard those tall boys---

MONICA

Mama, please.

GWEN

(Laughs)

I'm sorry. But what you thought was love back then was nothing more than spur of the moment. You told me to let you handle it on your own, and I did. Do you remember what I told you my mother told me?

MONICA

You told me a lot of things she said.

GWEN

A real man never puts his hands on a woman. A real man loves his woman for more than just an object. He loves her for being a woman in general.

*Monica sighs, shaking her head.*

MONICA

What do I do now?

GWEN

Are you happy you're still alive?

MONICA

Yes.

GWEN

Then that's all that matters. Everything else from here on out is your new beginning.

MONICA

Thanks.

GWEN

No need to thank me. I should've stepped in sooner before it went this far.

MONICA

There's no one to blame but myself. He said the signs when he told me about his parents, I just didn't expect him to go through the same phase. Hell...we're reliving his parent's relationship.

GWEN

You don't feel like I let you down?

MONICA

Mama, I let myself down. I remember when I asked him



why his mother couldn't move on, and he said because his father was her first love. ...Look at what's happening to me.

GWEN

I feel I should've done something.

MONICA

Being here for me now is the best thing you can do.

GWEN

I love you, baby.

MONICA

I love you, too. You don't mind if your baby stays here for a few days?

GWEN

No matter how old you get, this will always be your home.

*They give each other a hug.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

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

*Craig is on the sofa appearing to be asleep, with a liquor bottle resting on the table.*

*Monica comes in trying to creep towards the stairs.*

*She gets to the steps, and he sits up grabbing the bottle from the table, taking a sip.*

CRAIG

It's about time you came home.

*She turns around looking at him.*

MONICA

This is not my home. That feeling left a long time ago. I was just naive and didn't hand over the keys.

*He takes another sip, standing up.*

CRAIG

This is your home! Now, like I told you before! Get up those stairs! Get in the bed, and take what I have to give you!

MONICA

At one point I loved you, and didn't wanna lose you. My eyes are open now, realizing it was neither of those reasons. I was afraid to not love you, for what you might do to me. I didn't wanna leave because I knew you would torment me until I came back. But, here's something I know you're not expecting to hear. I'm no longer your recyclable object. I'm about to get my few things and start a new life...without you!

CRAIG

You think it's that easy?! You think you can come in here all high and mighty without repercussions?!

MONICA

There's nothing you can do or say that'll knock me down.

CRAIG

If I come over there and go upside your head you'd get knocked down.

MONICA

You do what you need to do.

*She starts to walk up the stairs, and he runs over grabbing her, causing her to turn around pushing him back, followed with a slap across the face.*

MONICA (CONT'D)

Don't you ever put your hands on me again! I'll be damn if I continue being your punching bag! You put another finger on me, and one of us has to go!

*A sinister smile spreads across his face.*

CRAIG

One of us has to go?

MONICA

That's what I---

*He hits her with enough force to make her break her neck on the rail, falling to the floor dead.*

CRAIG

Get up! I've done worse than this!

*He kicks her a few times.*

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Monica?

*Deena is knocking on the door.*

DEENA (O.S.)

Mo, are you in there?

*Craig looks around in fear, before running off stage.*

*Deena comes in wearing something casual. When she sees Monica lying motionless, she quickly runs over to her.*

DEENA (CONT'D)

I told you!

**END OF THE SCENE**

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

*Some jazz music is playing in the partially crowded bar. Craig is sitting at the bar taking shots, and with each shot he shakes his head in sorrow.*

CRAIG

I can't believe I did that.

*Deena walks in, walking up behind Craig.*

DEENA

You're a worthless bastard.

CRAIG

(Drunk)  
Who is that?

DEENA

Don't even look at me until I say so.

*She pulls a snub nose out, cocking it, placing it to his head, and everybody in the bar screams, dropping to the floor.*

*He tries turning around, and she presses the gun harder against his head.*

DEENA (CONT'D)

Didn't I tell you don't look at me until I tell you to look at me?

CRAIG

What do you want?

DEENA

I want you to see what it feels like being helpless. If I had the time, I'd beat yo ass. But for now, savor these last few moments of whatever this is you called a life.

CRAIG

Listen. I didn't mean---

DEENA

You meant it. You meant every bruise you put on her. Every ounce of her dignity you took, leading to your complete wish, taking her life.

CRAIG

I didn't mean to kill her. She said something hurting my pride.

DEENA

Pride?! You have the audacity to say you have pride?! What kind of man beats on a woman, and then turns around saying he has pride?!

CRAIG

I honestly can't tell you.

DEENA

I know what to tell you. Turn around and look at me. These eyes filled with hate will be the last thing you see.

*He turns around with tears pouring down his face, staring into the barrel of the gun.*

CRAIG

I guess I deserve this.

DEENA

You deserve a beating! You deserve a destroyed soul, with the scars to go with it! That's what you deserve!

CRAIG

Can I say one more thing?

DEENA

What?

CRAIG

I really did---

*She fires a round, and he falls over dead.*

*Everyone screams as she takes his seat, picking up one of his shots tilting it back.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**END OF ACT II**

**THE END**