

JAHZID JOHNSON

JAHZID@GMAIL.COM

JASONJOHNSON484@GMX.COM

MYA WASHINGTON'S RESIDENCE

MALACHI OPENS THE DOOR OF HIS RESIDENCE, ALLOWING DEVAUGHN TO ENTER...

MALACHI

What's up?

DEVAUGHN

So what's the verdict?

MALACHI

Two years, Dev.

DEVAUGHN

You serious?

MALACHI

Hey, it's better than eight.

DEVAUGHN

What the fuck though? I thought Mike was one of the best lawyers in town?

MALACHI

He is, that's how I got two. Dev, I'm telling you, the judge had a fucking hard-on for me. That nigga wanted to throw the book at me. Trust me. I'm lucky to get two. With [good behavior], I'll be out in sixteen months.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, but you shouldn't have to do no time. These motherfuckers want to put niggas in jail for nothing.

MALACHI

Hey, I did the crime, right?

DEVAUGHN

When do you have to report?

MALACHI

Sunday morning.

DEVAUGHN

Sunday? This Sunday? Forty-eight hours from now? (Malachi nods his head) That's fucking crazy.

MALACHI

What can I do? I ain't got no choice.

DEVAUGHN

Fuck that. We could leave, Mac. We could bounce to Montana right now. (Malachi laughter) I'm serious, they ain't going to be able to find you out there.

MALACHI

Come on, Dev. Two hood niggas in Montana? We'd stick out like black lips.

(Laughter)

DEVAUGHN

Mac, we could go?

MALACHI

Dev, I'm good. For real, it'll be fine. We know niggas that's doing twenty years right now. I gotta do a year and a half. I'll handle it.

DEVAUGHN

This has been a shitty day across the board.

MALACHI

What else happened?

DEVAUGHN

Selise.

MALACHI

Uh-oh. What did she do now?

DEVAUGHN

She's pregnant, Mac.

MALACHI

Nigga, get the fuck out of here!

DEVAUGHN

You see my face, right? Do you see any playfulness on my face right now?

MALACHI

Dev, you serious?!

DEVAUGHN

My alarm was set for six, because you know, I gotta be at work by seven, right? Six forty-eight, I get

a text like, "We gotta talk."

MALACHI

Oh, shit.

DEVAUGHN

I'm thinking to myself, "*Why the hell do we have to talk at seven o'clock in the morning?*" Well, guess what? We're going to be parents, my nigga.

MALACHI

So she told you everything this morning?

DEVAUGHN

No, I just came from her house right now. I had to wait all day just find out what we had to talk about.

MALACHI

Goddamn. That's crazy, Dev.

DEVAUGHN

Wasn't I just telling you that I was deading that? I haven't laid a finger on that girl in over a month. I was gone, Mac. Now this shit. And, on top of all that, you gotta go away now too. So I'm saying, it's been a shitty day.

MALACHI

Is there a chance that it isn't yours?

DEVAUGHN

No, it's mine. Nobody is dumb enough to mess with Selise's crazy-ass but me.

MALACHI

(Laughter)

Yeah, you really know how to pick them, my dude.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

MALACHI

Well, check this out, at least for tonight, you're going to forget all about it. Being that this is my last night out, I'm trying to burn downtown up. On my mother I'm trying to drink until every chick that I see looks like Rhianna.

DEVAUGHN

(Snigger)

Be careful with that shit. You're going to wind up in the same boat that I'm in.

MALACHI

(Laughter)

No, see, the difference is, I don't have no issues with rubbers. Unlike your stank-ass that don't have no problems playing Russian roulette with these hoes!

DEVAUGHN

I'm saying, what's a better way to die, Mac?

(Malachi laughter)

A BRIEF MONTAGE OF SCENES BEGINS SHOWING MALACHI, DEVAUGHN, AND A FEW OF THEIR FRIENDS ENTERING A NIGHTCLUB NAMED "CONCEITED". WHILE INSIDE, THE SCENES SHOW THE GUYS DRINKING AND DANCING WITH VARIOUS WOMEN. THE MONTAGE ENDS WITH MALACHI CONVERSING WITH A FEMALE CHARACTER NAMED TABBY

[Malachi and Tabby are both intoxicated. Tabby speaks with slightly slurred speech. All dialogue is spoken over loud music]

MALACHI

So what's your favorite place to eat?

TABBY

My kitchen.

MALACHI

Oh, for real? That's a great answer. But, yo, you have to let me take you out for your birthday?

TABBY

You want to take me out?

MALACHI

Hell yeah. It's your birthday!

TABBY

Well, I'm never gonna turn down free food.

MALACHI

Good. Because I would feel crazy-hurt if you turned me down.

TABBY

(Playfully Mocking Malachi)

Crazy-hurt, huh?

MALACHI

Yeah, girl. Maaad hurt. Because you're fucking beautiful. For real. Your eyes are mad hurtful.

TABBY

(Confusion)

Hurtful?

MALACHI

Yeah, because it's hurting me how beautiful they are. (Tabby laughs loudly) Yo, I'm not even joking. Have you seen yourself lately?

TABBY

I looked in the mirror before I came out tonight. Does that count?

MALACHI

Were you as amazed as I am right now?

TABBY

(Playful)

Maybe.

(Devaughn enters scene)

[Tabby cannot hear the following dialogue]

DEVAUGHN

Mac, I'm not trying cock-block, but I gotta bounce. I gotta be at work by seven.

MALACHI

(Dejected)

Damn, nigga. And I was just getting to know this girl right here.

DEVAUGHN

Get her phone number. Tell her you'll call her tomorrow.

MALACHI

Nigga, for what?!

DEVAUGHN

Oh, shit. My bad.

MALACHI

Yo, it's her birthday. I wanna take her out. Can you stay up for like an hour? We'll go right here to the spot?

DEVAUGHN

Check it, I'm gonna have JoJo drop me off, and he can hold my car. Call him when you ready to be picked up. Alright?

MALACHI

Yo, I fucking love you, Dev!

DEVAUGHN

I got you. Just don't do no dumb shit.

MALACHI

Come on, my nigga. You know me?!

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, I do know you, nigga. (Malachi laughter) I'll holla at you tomorrow.

MALACHI

Alright.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

LATER, DEVAUGHN IS NOW HOME, LYING IN BED WHEN HE RECEIVES A TEXT MESSAGE...

(Malachi reaches for his phone;
Following dialogue is listed as text
messages)

Selise

R u awake?

Devaughn Response

What up?

Selise

Can u come over tomorrow?

Devaughn

Call u when I get off work

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

LATER THAT MORNING, MALACHI WAKES UP SLIGHTLY CONFUSED AS TO WHERE HE IS UNTIL HE SEES TABBY ASLEEP NEXT TO HIM. HE GENTLY TAPS HER ARM TO AWAKEN HER...

MALACHI

I'm sorry to wake you up, sweetheart. I just want to know if I can use your bathroom.

TABBY

(Groggy)

You woke me up to ask me to use my bathroom?

MALACHI

Yeah. I'm sorry, I just ain't wanna startle you if I got up.

TABBY

(Playful)

No, you can't use my bathroom.

MALACHI

For real?

TABBY

Boy, go.

SCENE CHANGE TO MALACHI RE-ENTERING TABBY'S BEDROOM...

MALACHI

Good morning.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

It would be if I was still asleep.

MALACHI

(Snigger)

Listen, um, I don't want you to think that last night was on some bullshit. I know it probably looks like a nigga just wanted to get some, but, that's not the case.

TABBY

It was for me.

MALACHI

Word?

TABBY

I wanted to get laid on my birthday. I haven't gotten any in a while and you seemed harmless.

MALACHI

(Slight confusion)

So is it like, you don't care not to ever see me again?

TABBY

(Confusion)

What does that mean?

MALACHI

Was this a one-night stand?

TABBY

You got what you wanted, right? Why would you care?

MALACHI

Nah, that's what I'm saying. It's not like that. I know that you don't really know me, but I would like to change that.

TABBY

You wanna get to know me?

MALACHI

I'm not bullshitting. Look, I'm not trying to have you think that I'm crazy or something, but, I feel like there's something different about you. I don't want you to think that I look at you like some broad who I smashed the one night that I went out. I don't look at you like that.

TABBY

You don't?

MALACHI

No.

TABBY

So what's my name then?

(Brief pause)

MALACHI

I'm not even gonna bullshit you. I don't remember.

TABBY

I thought so.

MALACHI

Do you remember mine? (Tabby slowly shakes her head) Do you have one night stands on the regular? (Laughter from Tabby) I mean, it kinda feels like you've done this before.

TABBY

And what makes you think that?

MALACHI

You just got a cold demeanor. I don't mean no harm when I say that. I ain't calling you no hoe or nothing.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

Well, I would hope not.

MALACHI

Nah, not at all.

TABBY

So what about me is so different?

MALACHI

I don't know, it's just something about you. I don't remember a lot from last night, but, I know that last night was real. I didn't just put on my shit and bounce.

(Brief pause)

MALACHI

You have amazing eyes. You're beautiful.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

(Slightly dismissive)

Thank you.

MALACHI

Look, I don't want this to be awkward. If you want me to go, I'll go.

TABBY

My name is Tabby.

MALACHI

Tabby. Word. Mine is Malachi. But my friends all call me Mac.

TABBY

Why do they call you Mac?

MALACHI

It's a long story. I'll tell you later.

TABBY

So what do you do, Malachi?

MALACHI

I really don't do anything right now. But, it's a reason for that. I mean, it's not a good reason, but there is a reason.

TABBY

(Confusion)

So what's the reason?

MALACHI

Today is my last day of freedom. I have to report downtown tomorrow at seven a.m.

TABBY

Are you serious?! For what?!

MALACHI

Don't wig out. I didn't do anything to anybody but myself! I ain't no monster or nothing. Please believe that because it's the truth.

TABBY

And how long are you gonna be away?

MALACHI

Two years.

TABBY

(Snigger of disbelief)

You had me going for a second.

MALACHI

What do you mean?

TABBY

All of this talk about me being different. Boy, you just wanted to get some before you went to jail.

MALACHI

No! I get it, okay? I could see why you would think that. But that's really not it, Tabby. I'm telling you, I'm being sincere. What I gotta do to prove it to you?

(No response from Tabby)

MALACHI

Look, last night was cool, but I ain't beat for sex. I can get that shit anywhere. I'm standing here trying to get you to believe me. My intention wasn't to just get pussy before I go away. I got a lot of time to spend with hand, you understand what I'm saying?

(Brief pause as Tabby glares at Malachi)

TABBY

So what did you do? Tell me the truth.

MALACHI

Back in the day I ran with a group of niggas who stole cars. The car that I took had rocks in it. I couldn't prove that the shit wasn't mine.

TABBY

Why are you stealing cars? And how long have you been stealing cars for?

MALACHI

I don't do it anymore. This happened four years ago.

TABBY

So why are they just locking you up now?

MALACHI

Because my lawyer has been fighting the case for forever. The night that it happened, I got arrested, I went to court the next day, and the judge hit me with the vehicular theft charge. I thought that the shit was over, but then I got hit with the drugs later. We've been trying to fight that charge ever since. I've never sold drugs a day in my life, and I ain't never been a drug-head.

TABBY

I wanna feel bad for you, but you're stupid for stealing cars in the first place.

MALACHI

Tell me about it. I'm a felon for some shit I ain't even do. I took the grand theft auto charge like a gut-punch, but I did that. I've never denied that. The drug charge is the part I'm not trying to play with.

TABBY

So what are the two years for?

MALACHI

I copped. If it would've went to trial, I would've gotten seven to ten. There's no way I could prove to a white-ass jury that them drugs wasn't mine. Plus, I admitted that I stole the car. They woulda put me away as quick as a nigga who touches kids.

But fuck all of that, Tabby, I just want you to know that I'm telling you the truth.

TABBY

(Slight sarcasm)

So what are you doing with your last day of freedom?

MALACHI

I don't really have no plans. Hang with my moms for a while. Kick it with the fellas. I don't really know.

TABBY

I have some running around to do this afternoon. Why don't you come back around six and we'll have dinner? I'll cook something for you.

MALACHI

Alright, cool.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

LATER THAT AFTERNOON, DEVAUGHN AND MALACHI ARE HANGING OUT TOGETHER WHEN THEIR FRIEND, JOJO, COMES TO VISIT THEM...

(Malachi opens the door for JoJo then goes back to the living area. JoJo closes the door and follows Malachi)

JOJO

Yo, y'all won't believe what (Interrupted)

MALACHI

Damn, Jo. Why do you always smell like weed?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah! Motherfucker had my car for three hours last night and it smelled like you was growing a fucking farm in there! Pothead-ass nigga!

MALACHI

You know that you're supposed to smoke the L, not wash with it, right?

JOJO

Yo, when did y'all niggas become the weed police? It grows from the earth, so calm down. Y'all niggas be on some god-complex shit.

DEVAUGHN

Nigga, you can't spell "god-complex".

MALACHI

(Laughter)

Yeah, for real.

JOJO

Whatever. Mac, where we going tonight?

MALACHI

Huh? What do you mean?

JOJO

What do you mean, "*What do I mean?*" Where are we going tonight?

MALACHI

I'm not going anywhere, Jo. I gotta report at seven in the morning.

JOJO

So what? It's your last night out, we gotta shut the city down.

MALACHI

Nah, Jo. I'm done, dog.

JOJO

Come on, Mac. Yo, me and Mino got a couple hoes coming out tonight. You gotta come out.

MALACHI

Jo, seven am, fam. What do you not understand about that?

JOJO

Dog, all you're gonna do is sleep when you get in the box anyway. What difference does it make?

MALACHI

Jo, I'm not going. Period.

(JoJo gives Malachi a sigh of frustration, then exits the scene)

MALACHI

(To Devaughn)

So, yo, I gotta talk to you.

DEVAUGHN

What's up?

MALACHI

Dev, I need your help with Tabby.

DEVAUGHN

Who is Tabby?

MALACHI

The girl from last night. Yo, Dev, this girl is for real. I really dig her.

DEVAUGHN

Okay. And?

MALACHI

Yo, you ever just have a feeling about something? You can't put your finger on it, but, it just feels like the right thing to do?

DEVAUGHN

Did you tell her about the situation?

MALACHI

Yeah. But, that's where I need your help.

DEVAUGHN

With?

MALACHI

I need you to be around her for me. I'm talking about staying in contact with her. Dev, I'm serious about this chick. If you're around her, she won't forget about me.

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

Mac, I'm not seeing it.

MALACHI

Okay, you and her become cool, right? It'll make it so that she doesn't get caught up with no other niggas. I'm gonna be gone for a while, so I'm not tripping about her getting her shit off, right? I just don't want her to fall in love with a nigga before I get to shoot my shot. You understand what I'm saying?

DEVAUGHN

So what do you mean by, "*Be around her?*" How am I supposed to do that? She don't even know me.

MALACHI

I'm gonna chill with her tonight, so I'm going to make sure that I mention your name a couple times. I'm not trying to have you on some dumb shit, I just know that you'll hold me down while I'm gone. Because I get the feeling that she ain't trying to come see a nigga in prison.

DEVAUGHN

But again, how am I supposed to be around her? Is she going to be cool with me having her number?

MALACHI

Nah, nigga, I need you to go check on her. Not all of the time, but, you know from time to time on some pop-up shit. If you she gets cool with you, you'll be an influence on her as far maneuvering serious niggas out of the picture.

DEVAUGHN

I mean, I can't promise you nothing, Mac. I can't make the girl like me.

MALACHI

I know, I know, but, trust me, just do what you can do. It'll work out.

A MONTAGE OF SCENES BEGINS SHOWING MALACHI AND TABBY HAVING DINNER. THE NEXT SET OF SCENES SHOW MALACHI WAKING UP, BRUSHING HIS TEETH, AND SHOWERING. THEN BEING DROPPED OFF AT BRIDGEBURY COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY BY DEVAUGHN. THE MONTAGE ENDS WITH MALACHI BEING WALKED INTO A CELL AND THE ELECTRONIC DOOR CLOSING

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

DEVAUGHN WALKS UP THE STEPS TOWARDS TABBY'S DOOR, THEN RINGS HER DOORBELL. SHE MOMENTARILY ANSWERS...

TABBY

Can I help you?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, are you Tabby?

TABBY

And you are?

DEVAUGHN

You don't know me, but, my name's Devaughn. I'm Mac's friend.

TABBY

(Confusion)

Mac?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, Malachi.

TABBY

Oh.

DEVAUGHN

My bad for just popping up, but Mac asked me to come over and talk to you.

TABBY

Why?

DEVAUGHN

They locked him up yesterday.

TABBY

I know. He told me.

DEVAUGHN

He was wondering if you had any plans to go see him.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

Come in.

Scene change to the inside of Tabby's
Residence...

DEVAUGHN

Look, I'm gonna keep it real with you. Mac is afraid that he might lose you. He asked me if I'd be your homie until he comes out.

TABBY

(Confusion)

My homie?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, like, stop by every once in a while and check on you. If there's anything that you need, I can make sure that you get it.

TABBY

As far as what?

DEVAUGHN

Anything. Look, Mac really likes you. To be honest, I think the nigga's tripping a little bit. But, hey, what can I tell him? Anyway, he basically wants me to be an extension of him, for you. That's why I stopped by. Because you could tell me to go to hell right now, and I'll leave you alone. It all comes down to what you feel.

TABBY

How I feel about what?

DEVAUGHN

About Mac. Are you feeling him, or was he just one night to you?

TABBY

I mean, Malachi is cool. He's a nice guy. But, it's not like I'm his girl or something. I barely know him.

DEVAUGHN

Would you go see him?

(Brief pause as Tabby contemplates)

TABBY

I don't know. I mean, he's throwing a lot on me. You don't think?

DEVAUGHN

I know. You ain't ask for this. You ain't ask for me to be here. All you did was meet a nigga at the club, right? I get it. For whatever reason, Mac thinks that there's something special about you. I know it sounds crazy, because I think the nigga is crazy, but he's my man and I gotta hold him down.

TABBY

But I don't understand. What's so special about me? He said that when he was here, and I looked at him like he was crazy.

DEVAUGHN

You never felt that way about somebody? You liked them but you didn't know why?

(Brief pause as Tabby contemplates)

TABBY

No, not really.

DEVAUGHN

Alright. My bad for disturbing you. I'll let him know what's up.

(Devaughn begins to exit the apartment)

TABBY

Hold on, wait. (Devaughn stops, then turns around)
He told me that he got locked up for stealing a car that had drugs in it? Is that true?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

TABBY

And he was never into drugs at all?

DEVAUGHN

Who? Mac? No.

TABBY

Were you stealing cars too?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

TABBY

Why didn't you get caught?

DEVAUGHN

Because I'm not stupid.

TABBY

(Slight chuckle)

And what was your name again?

DEVAUGHN

Devaughn.

TABBY

Is he a good guy, Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

Who, Mac? I trust him with my life.

TABBY

I'm talking about women. Does he treat women well?

DEVAUGHN

Mac ain't no chicken-hawk. The other night was what it was, but, that's not a regular occurrence. He don't be on everything moving.

TABBY

So you're saying that I should believe that there's really something special about me?

DEVAUGHN

I can't tell you what to believe. All I can say is that Mac is a stand-up dude. I'm not gonna sit here and try to gas you. You seem smart, so I'm just gonna tell you the truth.

TABBY

You two are honest, I'll give you that.

DEVAUGHN

Shit, honesty is all we got.

TABBY

If I was to go see him, how would I go about that?

DEVAUGHN

There's a number that you can call to make an appointment. I can give it to you if you want?

TABBY

Even if I decide to go see him, that doesn't mean that I'm going to wait two years for him.

DEVAUGHN

I ain't saying that you have to. All I'm saying is to spend some time with him. See what he's about.

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

The ball is in your court, Tabby. Ain't nobody gonna put any pressure on you. I'm gonna let you go, I gotta go get with this girl. I appreciate you letting me come through.

TABBY

I'll take that number, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

Alright, cool.

SELISE'S APARTMENT

AFTER DEPARTING FROM TABBY'S RESIDENCE, DEVAUGHN DRIVES OVER TO VISIT SELISE...

SELISE

Why have you been curving me?

DEVAUGHN

Ain't nobody been curving you. I've just been busy.

SELISE

Busy? Too busy to talk to the mother of your child?

DEVAUGHN

You on that kinda shit that makes wanna leave, Selise. I'm here. You want to talk, what's up?

SELISE

I would like to have a conversation about what's going on with us. Devaughn, I'm pregnant. I know that you know that, but, I need you to understand what that means.

(Devaughn glares at Selise, then removes himself from his seat and begins to exit the apartment)

SELISE

Where are you going?

DEVAUGHN

Selise, you're trying to play me like I'm stupid. I ain't got time for that.

SELISE

Yo, what are you talking about?! I just telling you what's on my mind!

DEVAUGHN

If you want to have a conversation, then we can have a conversation. But I'm not going to sit here and listen to you tell me that I ain't shit because I didn't return a phone-call. I been busy, that's all it is.

SELISE

Can you please sit down?

(Devaughn slowly walks back to where he was seated, and sits)

SELISE

Devaughn, I'm stressed out. This has been the only thing on my mind since I took the pregnancy test. I'm not trying to come at you, but it feels like you don't think that this is as important as I do.

DEVAUGHN

Why? Because I cancelled a call? Selise, sometimes, I be busy, and I can't talk on the phone. But I'm here, right? You see me right now, right? So don't tell me that I don't be around.

SELISE

Fine, Devaughn. Whatever.

DEVAUGHN

Selise, I didn't come here to argue with you. This is wack, we're adults. What's up?

SELISE

What do you want to do? Are you trying to be around, or not?

DEVAUGHN

What do you mean? Are you asking me if I'm trying to be a deadbeat?

SELISE

I'm asking what you want. I can't assume that you're going to be around. I just need to know, so that I can do what I need to do.

DEVAUGHN

Selise, let me ask you a question? Why would you fuck me if you thought that I was capable of being a deadbeat? You must not respect me if you even have to ask me if I would be around for my kid?

SELISE

You're taking this way too far. I never said shit about not respecting you. If I didn't respect you, I would've never put your dick in my mouth. I'm not some cheap slut out here killing myself for dick, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

I'm not saying you're a slut. I'm just saying that I take shit personal if you think I'm trying to be a deadbeat. I've never been built like that. And you should know that.

SELISE

I haven't heard from you. What else do I have to go off of?

DEVAUGHN

I'm here now.

SELISE

So how do we go about this? How involved do you want to be? I have a doctor's appointment next week. Do you want to go?

DEVAUGHN

When is it?

SELISE

Next Wednesday at ten-thirty.

DEVAUGHN

I'll be at work then. If you can schedule your next one in the afternoon, I'll definitely try to come through.

SELISE

I'll see what they have open.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

Would you mind buying a crib?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I'll buy a crib. I got that. What else do you

need?

SELISE

Everything. I'm gonna do a registry at Sonny's. I'll print out a copy for you...Look, I'm sorry if I came off bitchy. Hormones, you know? I'm a little emotional right now.

DEVAUGHN

You're always emotional.

SELISE

Well, it's about to be even worse for the next nine months.

DEVAUGHN

(Playfully looks at ceiling)

Lord help me now.

(Selise laughter)

SELISE

Did Mac go in?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I drove him to Wyoming. He's out there chilling with the buffaloes and shit.

SELISE

You're stupid.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, he went in.

SELISE

Are you okay?

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?

SELISE

Are you okay? Mac is your boy, and now he's not here. Are you okay?

DEVAUGHN

I'm good. I'll be up there to see him in a few days.

SELISE

How long is he gone for?

DEVAUGHN

Two years.

SELISE

I know that you talk to him a lot, so, if you need someone to vent to, I'm here.

DEVAUGHN

(Playful)

You trying to be close, Selise?

SELISE

I mean, we're gonna be parents, right? I don't want us to be at odds. It doesn't have to be that way. Let's be cool?

DEVAUGHN

We are cool. I don't have no beef with you.

SELISE

It doesn't always seem like that.

DEVAUGHN

Our relationship wasn't based off of friendship, right? We both knew what it was.

SELISE

What does that mean?

DEVAUGHN

I didn't look at you as a friend. I looked at you like (Interrupted)

SELISE

Like a piece of ass?

DEVAUGHN

I'm saying, you didn't see me the same way?

SELISE

No. But I understand you, Devaughn. I see what you're about. That's why I never tried to sweat you about it, because I already knew how you felt.

DEVAUGHN

So you're saying that you liked me this whole time?

SELISE

You're really acting like you didn't know that?

DEVAUGHN

I didn't.

SELISE

You probably didn't care enough to figure it out. But, yeah, now you know. Girls don't sleep with a guy just because he has a dick. Nine times out of ten, it's gonna be feelings involved.

DEVAUGHN

So you never had nobody that you just wanted for dick?

SELISE

No.

DEVAUGHN

Word? Damn, Selise, how many dudes you been with? (Selise glares at him) I'm asking a question.

SELISE

The nigga I lost my virginity to, my ex-boyfriend, and you.

DEVAUGHN

(Surprise)

For real?!

SELISE

How many niggas you think I been with?!

DEVAUGHN

Nah! I just...I just didn't (Interrupted)

SELISE

Oh, so you think every girl in the hood got a "Now Hiring" sign on her vagina, huh?

DEVAUGHN

I just be thinking that chicks be on the same shit that niggas be on.

SELISE

(Confusion)

Yo, what kinda hoes are you hanging out with?!

DEVAUGHN

I'm saying, (Selise laughter) Why are you laughing at me?

SELISE

I wanted a boy at first, but now, I kinda want a girl. Just so you can see what niggas is *really* like!

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?

SELISE

You think girls be on the same shit that guys do, right? So you think your daughter is going to be the same way? (No response from Devaughn) Tell me I'm wrong!

DEVAUGHN

We having a boy, fuck that. You're trying to give me a fucking heart attack up in here.

(Selise laughter)

BRIDGEBURY CORRECTIONAL AND REHABILITATION FACILITY

DEVAUGHN IS SEATED IN A LARGE ROOM AS HE'S WAITING TO MEET WITH MALACHI...

(Malachi enters the scene and embraces Devaughn)

MALACHI

What's good, boy?!

DEVAUGHN

What's up, brotha?

(They take a seat)

DEVAUGHN

You holding up alright in here?

MALACHI

Yo, the food is even worse than I remembered!
(Chuckle from Devaughn) But it's cool though, I'm good.

DEVAUGHN

Good.

MALACHI

What's up with you? What you been up to?

DEVAUGHN

Working. You know how that go?

MALACHI

You look tired, Dev?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, man, I'm trying to catch every hour that I can at work. Selise is serious about this baby shit.

MALACHI

How she doing? Is the baby okay?

DEVAUGHN

So far so good. She had her first appointment a few days ago. The doc said everything was everything.

MALACHI

Good, good. You and her alright?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, we good. We get along.

MALACHI

You hitting it again?

DEVAUGHN

Nah. We ain't about shit but the baby.

MALACHI

Hey, maybe that's a good thing, you know? You was ready to dead her before.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. I was wrong though. She's smarter than I thought, you know?

MALACHI

Oh, so you like her now?

DEVAUGHN

Come on, dog.

MALACHI

Dev, I'm not judging! Look, if you and her are getting deep, then that's good. Y'all gotta know each other so y'all know how you're going to parent.

DEVAUGHN

We cool, and that's good. But that's that. She's trying to be you and shit.

MALACHI

What'chu mean?

DEVAUGHN

She thinks that I'm looking for a friend because my man is gone. (Malachi laughter) Like I'm gonna be in her crib singing Trey Songz to her and shit. (Continued laughter from Malachi) She be bugging sometimes.

MALACHI

She got a good heart though, Dev. That's good, bro. It's only a few chicks like that out here.

DEVAUGHN

I ain't complaining.

MALACHI

So, come on, give me good news. Tabby's okay?

DEVAUGHN

She's fine.

MALACHI

When was the last time that you spoke to her?

DEVAUGHN

The other day. I don't want to gas you or nothing, but, she said she was thinking about coming up to see you.

MALACHI

Word?! That's why you my dog, Dev! She wasn't having that shit at all when I was over at her crib! How did you get through to her?

DEVAUGHN

I just kept it real with her. I was honest. So you gotta be the same way when you talk to her. Because I got her thinking that we ain't on some bullshit.

MALACHI

Word.

DEVAUGHN

Mac, I'm serious.

MALACHI

Nah, I got you, I got you. I'm gonna keep it real.

THE SCENE NOW CHANGES TO MALACHI WORKING IN A LAUNDRY ROOM. HE QUICKLY FOLDS A SHEET, THEN CALLS FOR THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER...

MALACHI

(Loud)

CO?!

(The officer enters the scene)

MALACHI

I'm done in here. Can I go to the gym now?

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER CHARACTER

Nah. No gym today. Warden locked it down.

MALACHI

(Dejection)

You serious? Why'd he do that?

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER CHARACTER

Why you think? (Malachi shakes his head in frustration) The library is open though. I can give you a few minutes in there?

MALACHI

Shit, I'll take that.

SCENE CHANGE TO MALACHI LOOKING AT SOME OF THE BOOKS IN THE FACILITY'S LIBRARY. HE GRABS ONE OF THE BOOKS AND SITS DOWN AT ONE OF THE EMPTY TABLES. HE IS MOMENTARILY APPROACHED BY AN OLDER INMATE...

INMATE CHARACTER

What's up, young brother?

MALACHI

What's good, OG?

INMATE CHARACTER

You mind if I take a seat?

MALACHI

Nah, go ahead.

The inmate sits down. There's a brief pause in dialogue as they both begin reading their literature...

INMATE CHARACTER

What'chu reading there?

MALACHI

Some Windows shit. It's some computer shit.

INMATE CHARACTER

I see. You into computers?

MALACHI

A little bit. I like to mess around with them.

INMATE CHARACTER

My name is Darryl. Yours?

MALACHI

Malachi. My people call me Mac though.

DARRYL

Nice to meet you, Malachi. That's a strong name you got there.

MALACHI

I guess.

DARRYL

It's biblical. Did you know that?

MALACHI

Oh. Okay, cool.

DARRYL

Do you know anything about the bible?

MALACHI

I mean, I used to go to church with my mom's, but, not really.

DARRYL

Did you enjoy going to church?

MALACHI

Nah, not really. (Snigger) My mom's made me go, you know?

DARRYL

Does your mother still go?

MALACHI

To church? Sometimes.

DARRYL

My apologies to ask so many questions. I'm always curious to find out why young brothers like yourself don't like church.

MALACHI

I'm not saying that I don't like it. I just don't go.

DARRYL

Why is that? (Playful) Jesus too heavy for you?

MALACHI

Nah, I just, it just doesn't interest me.

DARRYL

What if I told you that I could make it interesting for you?

MALACHI

What'chu mean?

DARRYL

Do you know where the laundry room is?

MALACHI

Yeah, I work in there.

DARRYL

Good. There's a room next to the laundry room that we hold meetings every other day. Tell the CO you want to go to the "Right Path Fellowship". They won't turn you down. Come on and check us out. If nothing else, it'll get you out your cell of an extra hour out of the day.

MALACHI

You serious?

DARRYL

Oh, I'm serious, young brother. Tomorrow, five o'clock.

SCENE CHANGE TO THE NEXT EVENING, WHEN ONE OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS' APPROACHES MALACHI'S CELL...

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER CHARACTER

(Cell-door opens)

Washington, come with me.

Malachi follows the correctional officer to a room where different inmates are conversing...

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER CHARACTER

Listen to what these brothers are saying. Learn something.

Malachi enters the room, and is

signaled to sit down by Darryl.
Malachi sits and begins to listen to
an inmate speak...

MALE INMATE CHARACTER

I couldn't control it, you know? It was my anger. It could be something small, but I would just snap. So, uh, one night, me and my girl were having an argument. And I don't know what made it become so heated, but, it went from us sitting on the couch, to us having a full-out fist-fight. It's like, I was outside of myself, watching myself, beat the hell out of my girlfriend. The woman that loved me. Next thing that I know, I'm sitting in the back of a squad-car, and the cops are talking to me, but I'm not hearing anything that they're saying. The officer showed me pictures of what I did to my girlfriend's face. You could barely recognize her...So, when I got here, I was looking to get into a fight, because subconsciously, I'm thinking, "*If someone kicks my ass, then it'll make up to what I did to her.*" There isn't a day that goes by that I don't regret what I did. I've sent countless letters apologizing, but she never responds. So, when I met Darryl, and he told me to come here, I figured that maybe this is the best path to forgiveness.

DARRYL

Hey, it is, brother. It is. He'll forgive you, you know? You're on the right path. If you take one step towards him, he'll take two towards you.

(The other inmates respond in agreement)

AFTER THE MEETING, MALACHI IS CONVERSING WITH DARRYL...

DARRYL

I'm glad you decided to come through, young brother.

MALACHI

I wasn't at first. I didn't want to hear about Jesus for an hour. But, this wasn't what I thought it was going to be. It was crazy to hear some of these stories.

DARRYL

What are you in here for, Malachi?

MALACHI

Possession.

DARRYL

Drugs?

MALACHI

Yeah. But it wasn't what you're thinking though.

DARRYL

I'm not thinking anything. You tell me.

MALACHI

I stole a car that had drugs in it.

DARRYL

And why did you feel a need to steal that car?

MALACHI

I can tell you that I did it for the money, but...

DARRYL

It wasn't about the money, was it?

MALACHI

Nah. I don't think so. Niggas was just young and stupid.

DARRYL

Listen, young brother, I'm going to put it to you like this. This fellowship isn't about telling you how great Jesus Christ is. These meetings that we have, are for perspective. You've been living your life one way since you were born, and unfortunately, it's gotten you here. We just want to offer you another way to live. A life that's going to be more fulfilling.

MALACHI

And what's that?

DARRYL

Learning the teachings of god, and his son, Jesus Christ. Have you ever read the bible before?

MALACHI

No.

DARRYL

Never felt the need to, right?

MALACHI

Basically.

DARRYL

Here. (Hands Malachi bible) Do a favor for me? Just read the first page. Don't worry if there are things in it that you don't understand at first. Understanding comes with time. But just give the first page a look-over. Do it with an open mind, and I promise you, you'll get the feeling.

MALACHI

And if I don't feel anything?

DARRYL

Then all you've lost is time. And that's a blessing in this place.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

DEVAUGHN ENTERS THE LIVING AREA TO RETRIEVE HIS RINGING CELL-PHONE...

((DEVAUGHN))

Hello?

((TABBY))

Devaughn? This is Tabby.

((DEVAUGHN))

What's good?

((TABBY))

I'm going to see Malachi on Saturday.

((DEVAUGHN))

Good. He'll be looking forward to seeing you.

((TABBY))

I'm holding you responsible for this.

((DEVAUGHN))

Me? What'chu mean?

((TABBY))

I was ready to leave Malachi where he was. I don't see myself having a relationship with an inmate.

((DEVAUGHN))

I didn't see myself showing up at your house either. I thought Mac was crazy for even asking me. But I want him to be happy. He thinks that you can lead him to that.

((TABBY))

And what if I disappoint him?

((DEVAUGHN))

Then that's on him.

((TABBY))

I'll let you know how it goes.

((DEVAUGHN))

Alright.

TIME PASSES TO THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND. MALACHI AND TABBY ARE CONVERSING...

MALACHI

I'm happy to see you.

TABBY

Oh, yeah?

MALACHI

Yeah. I didn't think that you would come.

TABBY

I wasn't going to. But then your goon showed up to my house. (Malachi laughter) He made me think about it.

MALACHI

Dev is a righteous goon though.

TABBY

He's honest. I like that.

MALACHI

Hey, honesty is all we got.

TABBY

That's what he said.

MALACHI

Well, regardless of what got you here, you're here. And I thank you for coming. I know that this isn't an easy place to come to.

TABBY

It's not.

MALACHI

I know. That's why I really appreciate that you're here.

TABBY

So are you rehabilitating in here?

MALACHI

I might be.

TABBY

You might be?

MALACHI

I've been the reading the bible lately.

TABBY

Really? What makes you want to read the bible?
Because you're in here?

MALACHI

Nah...Well, yeah. But, I never saw the use for it on the outside. One of the older cats in here gave me a reason to read it.

TABBY

And what was the reason?

MALACHI

So I never come back here again.

TABBY

That's a pretty good reason.

MALACHI

Yeah, I thought so too.

TABBY

What's it like in here?

MALACHI

It's bad. It's not somewhere any normal person would want to be.

TABBY

Are you gonna make it? Two years is a long time.

MALACHI

Well, right now I'm looking at fifteen months on G.B...Good behavior.

TABBY

And you're gonna be on your best behavior, right?

MALACHI

For sure. I ain't got no choice. I don't want to be in here. I want to be outside, shackled up with you.

TABBY

Yeah, you say that.

MALACHI

It's true. You still don't believe me, do you?

You're waiting for the hook, aren't you?

TABBY

The hook?

MALACHI

Yeah, like you think that I'm playing you? Are you playing hard to get, or do you genuinely keep a wall up?

TABBY

Hard to get? You already got between my legs.

MALACHI

A drunk night, on your birthday. That doesn't count for much.

TABBY

It does for me. I don't do that regularly.

MALACHI

What I mean is, your heart wasn't in it. I'm still trying to get you to believe that I'm worth your time.

TABBY

I'm here, aren't I?

MALACHI

You are...Have I told you that you're beautiful?

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

You know that I'm not here for conjugal, right?

MALACHI

(Chuckle) (Sarcasm)

Stop it. I'm not allowed those kinda visits anyway.

TABBY

Why not?

MALACHI

They're not having that here. You only get one conjugal if you get married while you're in here. And that has to be approved by a board.

TABBY

That's a lot.

MALACHI

Tell me about it.

TABBY

Do they have activities for you to do?

MALACHI

Well, I work in the laundry room. And I've been meeting with the brothers in the fellowship too. It passes the time.

TABBY

The fellowship?

MALACHI

Yeah, it's like a meet-up for all the inmates who want to learn more about god.

TABBY

What do you learn when you go?

MALACHI

A little about god, and a little about the other brothers in the fellowship.

TABBY

So you're making friends?

MALACHI

You could say that. Tabby, some of the stories that these dudes tell, are off the chain. This one guy is in here for walking into a jewelry store, smashing one of the glass counters, and walking out with a handful of diamonds.

TABBY

That plan doesn't sound very thought out.

MALACHI

It wasn't. But hey, none of us are perfect, right?

TABBY

I guess.

MALACHI

So, can I ask you a question?

TABBY

Go ahead.

MALACHI

What do you do?

TABBY

"What do I do?" You mean for a job?

MALACHI

Yeah.

TABBY

I work at the hospital.

MALACHI

Oh, word? Are you a nurse?

TABBY

No. I work in the billing department.

MALACHI

The billing department? How does that work?

TABBY

Mostly insurance companies. If you go to the hospital, and you have insurance, I'm the one who bills your insurance company for your stay.

MALACHI

And how do you do that? Like how much are you allowed to charge them?

TABBY

You don't want to know.

MALACHI

Really? It's like that?

TABBY

It is.

MALACHI

What's the most you've ever billed an insurance company?

TABBY

Six million dollars.

MALACHI

Six million dollars?! What?! Are you serious?!

TABBY

You think a hospital stay is cheap?

MALACHI

Nah, but, six million dollars?!

TABBY

Anytime that a person is in the hospital for a longer period of time, the bills are going to look like that.

MALACHI

Does that hospital give six million dollars' worth of care?

TABBY

Of course not. But, that's what they're coded to charge. It's complicated.

MALACHI

Wow.

TABBY

So tell me about good behavior? What does that mean?

MALACHI

Oh, uh, don't get into fights. Don't do anything to get put in solitaire. Don't have issues with the C.O's. That kinda stuff.

TABBY

So you haven't fought anyone?

MALACHI

Nah. This place is tame. This ain't a max.

TABBY

A max?

MALACHI

Yeah, max-security. That's where all the killers and rapists be. This facility is more non-violent offenses. Most of the dudes in here are hustlers, computer geeks that caught doing stuff online, or dudes like me who boosted stuff.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

So no one's getting raped in the shower?

MALACHI

Nah, I don't know nothing about that. (Chuckle from

Tabby) You're into some dark stuff, huh?

TABBY

I always hear, "*Don't drop the soap.*" So I always thought that was a thing.

MALACHI

Nah, not in here. Dudes in here are just trying to get home. It's not like Great Wall.

TABBY

Great Wall?

MALACHI

Yeah, Wallenburg. That's the max that I was talking about. That's the place where shit ain't a game. You really gotta watch your back in there.

TABBY

You were in there before?

MALACHI

Yeah, I did a stint there when I did my first bid.

TABBY

So this place is like a vacation?

MALACHI

Nah, I wouldn't say that. It's still jail, but it's not as bad. It's weird though because the food is worse here. You would think the opposite.

TABBY

The food is bad?

MALACHI

Jail food is always bad.

TABBY

Can you have people bring you food?

MALACHI

Nothing cooked. I can get Oodles, crackers, stuff like that. But you can't fry some chicken and bring it in to me. Yo, I might chop my arm off for some fried chicken right now.

TABBY

(Snigger)

Poor thing. Bread and water?

MALACHI

Basically. Whatever they're calling meat today. (Chuckle from Tabby) So, can I ask you something?

TABBY

Go ahead.

MALACHI

This isn't going to be the last time you come see me, is it?

TABBY

I don't know. I might come back.

MALACHI

(Playful)

Yeah, so you like me, huh? (Chuckle from Tabby)

It's cool. You don't have to fight it. We both know.

TABBY

Don't press your luck.

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

THE NEXT AFTERNOON, TABBY LETS DEVAUGHN INTO HER APARTMENT...

DEVAUGHN

How'd it go?

TABBY

It was fine.

DEVAUGHN

Did you see him, or was it over the phone?

TABBY

I sat with him.

DEVAUGHN

Oh. Cool.

TABBY

Did you know that he's reading the bible?

DEVAUGHN

Every nigga locked up reads the bible.

TABBY

No, it seems deeper than that. He's going to a fellowship.

DEVAUGHN

That's probably something that he's gotta do while he's in there. Mac ain't never been on some Jesus shit.

TABBY

He seemed serious to me.

DEVAUGHN

He's trying to come home. They might have some sympathy for him if they think he's found god.

TABBY

Yeah, but that's disingenuous. I hope that he's not doing it for that.

DEVAUGHN

I haven't spoke to him about it. We just never been on some god shit.

TABBY

I used to go to church when I was younger. I liked it too.

DEVAUGHN

So why'd you stop going?

TABBY

I don't know. I got older, and...I don't know.

DEVAUGHN

You believe in all that stuff? Jesus and all that?

TABBY

When you're in it, it's not about believing. You feel it. You feel like he's with you.

DEVAUGHN

Okay.

TABBY

You're not about that, huh?

DEVAUGHN

I ain't got time for that. Two weeks ago, a little girl got shot two blocks down from my crib. She was six. She was the sister of a dude that owed a nigga some money. They couldn't find him, so they popped her. God wouldn't let some shit like that happen. God, should never be passive to some shit like that.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

Says a man who used to steal people's cars?

DEVAUGHN

And I was wrong too. Strike me down with the same motherfucker that killed that little girl. (Tabby slowly nods her head) Did you enjoy the visit though? Was he honest with you?

TABBY

He was. I still don't understand what makes me so special though.

DEVAUGHN

Why do you care? Mac thinks that you're special, you can't just believe him?

TABBY

How do I know that he doesn't just want someone to come home to? How do I know that he's sincere?

DEVAUGHN

Because you gave it up to him and he stayed. He's really trying to get to know you. Other niggas would've left your crib, told his boys that you was a hoe, and went about the rest of their day. Mac asked me to come to your crib. That don't seem sincere to you?

(No response)

DEVAUGHN

Oh, I get it. You're the scorned type, huh? What a nigga do to you?

TABBY

What are you talking about?

DEVAUGHN

It seems to me that you got skeletons. Like you're afraid of niggas now. You fell in love with a nigga, and he broke your heart, didn't he?

TABBY

You really think that I'm the victim type? Like I'm not strong enough to believe that all men aren't assholes?

DEVAUGHN

I ain't saying that you ain't strong. It just seems like you're smart enough to know if Mac is sincere or not.

TABBY

Some men really know how to play a game on you.

DEVAUGHN

Bingo. What happened to you?

TABBY

Nothing.

DEVAUGHN

Don't trust me yet? It's fine. You'll get there one day.

(Begins to exit scene)

TABBY

When was the last time Malachi had a girlfriend?

(Brief pause as Devaughn
contemplates)

DEVAUGHN

It's been a while. I think the last girl was this broad named Monica. Or some shit like that. They was together for a couple of months, but it didn't last long.

TABBY

Why did they break up?

DEVAUGHN

Because Mac didn't know if he was going back to jail, and she ain't wanna deal with it.

TABBY

Has he ever cheated on anyone?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

TABBY

Why did he cheat?

DEVAUGHN

It's what niggas do.

TABBY

Are you for real?

DEVAUGHN

It's the truth.

TABBY

You know that you're not helping his case, right?

DEVAUGHN

I'm just being honest with you. There's never a reason to cheat. Dudes don't move like y'all do. If we ain't happy, we could bounce. We just don't because we like to play both sides.

TABBY

So you've cheated too?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, not really because I never had no real girlfriend like that. If I was messing with a chick, then I was probably messing with another.

TABBY

So you've never been really serious with anyone?

DEVAUGHN

Nah. But Mac ain't like me. And the cheating thing was just that one time.

TABBY

But why though? Why do men cheat? What is it that your girl doesn't do?

DEVAUGHN

Nothing. But you can't be every woman. I could be with somebody that I like, but it don't mean that I don't want to see your titties too. It's just what it is.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

Devaughn, I was just starting to like you too.

DEVAUGHN

I'm just stating the facts, you know?

TABBY

So if you did decide to be serious with someone?
Do you think you could be faithful?

DEVAUGHN

I would try to be. I don't wanna be a chicken-hawk
forever. There are girls who I ran through that
would call me a bozo right now if they saw me.
That's not cool.

TABBY

So you regret it?

DEVAUGHN

No, I don't regret it. It probably just shouldn't
have happened.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

I'm not going back to see Malachi.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, don't do that! Don't blame Mac for my
bullshit. Those are my faults.

TABBY

Yet Malachi is your best-friend. He's around you
all of the time. He vouches for that.

DEVAUGHN

Because we're not perfect. Not for nothing, but you
banged Mac the first night that you met him.
Somebody would be wrong to call you out your name

though, right?!

TABBY

Yes!

DEVAUGHN

Why? Because you're not that type of girl, right?! Prove it. (No response) What if god was one of us, right? (Tabby laughter) You see? Mac's a good dude, Tabby.

TABBY

You're supposed to say that.

DEVAUGHN

Am I? Because I ain't got time for bullshit. I wouldn't be here if he wasn't.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

I was with this guy. We were together for three years. I loved him. A lot. I would've married him. But I found out that he was cheating on me for the last two years of our relationship. It's devastating when you think that you know someone, then you find out that they weren't the person that you thought at all. Malachi asked me if I keep a wall up. Yeah, I do.

DEVAUGHN

When did all of this happen?

TABBY

We broke up five months ago.

(Devaughn slumps his head in disappointment)

DEVAUGHN

This is recent? (Tabby slowly nods) Damn.

TABBY

So yeah, the cheating thing stings a little bit.

DEVAUGHN

I get it. But there ain't no more issues with me and Mac with that. I mean, shit, I got a baby on the way.

TABBY

What?! Are you serious?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. This girl is like four and a half months.

TABBY

I thought you said you didn't have a girl?

DEVAUGHN

I don't. She ain't my girlfriend.

TABBY

Friends with benefits?

DEVAUGHN

Friends with benefits.

TABBY

(Shakes head)

Are you on good terms with her?

DEVAUGHN

We're getting there.

TABBY

Is this your first kid?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah...I can change. Shit, I have to. My kid is gonna be better than me, you know?

(Tabby slowly nods her head)

TABBY

It will be.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

DEVAUGHN OPENS THE DOOR FOR SELISE TO ENTER...

SELISE

What's up?

DEVAUGHN

What's good?

SELISE

I just came from Sonny's. I did the registry.

DEVAUGHN

What's a registry?

SELISE

Devaughn, you know what a registry is. It's when a pregnant woman picks out a list of everything that she needs for her baby. Then people go out and pick up the stuff that's on her list.

DEVAUGHN

Oh. I ain't know it was a called a registry.

SELISE

Here, (Shows registry to Devaughn) I underlined the crib for you. They have it in stock. You just have to pick it up.

DEVAUGHN

Selise, that crib is four-hundred dollars. You're bugging.

SELISE

Devaughn, that's the safest crib that they make. You want your baby to be safe, right?

DEVAUGHN

My man at work said that he got his son's crib for one-fifty. I'm trying to do that.

SELISE

Why are you trying to be cheap? Your friend's child isn't our child.

DEVAUGHN

Selise, I don't have four-hundred dollars that I can just go and buy a crib right now.

SELISE

Alright, we can go half then. Cool?

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

(Playful)

I had to get knocked up by a broke nigga! (Devaughn glares at her) I'm kidding. It was just a joke.

DEVAUGHN

So who else is supposed to buy stuff on this list?

SELISE

Anyone can. Friends, family, anybody who wants to. My mom is going to pick up a few things, and my auntie is too. It's mainly for when I have a baby-shower.

DEVAUGHN

When is that going to be?

SELISE

I don't know. It's gonna be after I know what I'm having.

DEVAUGHN

When are you going to find that out?

SELISE

On the 19th of next month.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

So have you told your parents about the baby?

DEVAUGHN

Nah.

SELISE

Why not?

DEVAUGHN

I don't have parents.

SELISE

Stop playing, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

Do I look like I'm playing?

SELISE

You really don't have parents? (Devaughn slowly shakes his head) What happened to them?

DEVAUGHN

My mom's is gone, and I don't have a dad.

SELISE

What do you mean, "*Your mom is gone*"? You don't mean that she died, do you?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

SELISE

(Apologetic)

When did she die?

DEVAUGHN

When I was ten.

SELISE

So who did you grow up with?

DEVAUGHN

I was in foster care on and off for a while.

SELISE

Are you serious, Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

Why would I lie?

SELISE

So what happened with foster care? Did you get placed somewhere?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I bounced from there. I was homeless until I met this dude named Alvin. He let me stay with him

until I was old enough to find a job.

SELISE

How did you meet him?

DEVAUGHN

He would go running every morning. He ran past the bench that I was sleeping on. He saw me and was like, "*You're too young to be sleeping outside. Where are your parents?*" I told him I ain't have none.

SELISE

And he let you stay with him?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, Alvin was cool like that. He was like a dad to me.

SELISE

Is he still around?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, he was a teacher at Garvey. But he got offered a better job on the west coast. He moved out there a few years ago.

SELISE

Y'all don't keep in touch?

DEVAUGHN

We email sometimes. He's around when I need him to be.

SELISE

Why didn't you ever tell me any of this, Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

I never thought about it.

SELISE

But what's up with your mom's family? You don't have anybody around from her side?

DEVAUGHN

She only had one brother. And that nigga's been locked up since I was like five. Her parents died before I was born.

SELISE

I feel so bad for you, Devaughn. You don't have any family.

DEVAUGHN

I got Mac. He's family.

SELISE

Yeah, but, he isn't here right now.

DEVAUGHN

He's still family.

SELISE

Well, you have family here too. I know that this wasn't what you asked for, but I'm here for you too.

DEVAUGHN

I know. I appreciate you.

TIME LAPSE TO LATER IN WEEK. DEVAUGHN HAS JUST RETURNED HOME FROM WORK WHEN HIS CELL-PHONE RINGS...

((DEVAUGHN))

Hello?

((AUTOMATED FEMALE VOICE))

"You have received a call from a resident at Bridgebury Correctional Facility. To accept this call (Interrupted)

(Devaughn presses the cell-phone digit)

((MALACHI))

Hello? Dev? Hello?

((DEVAUGHN))

I'm here, Mac. What's good?

((MALACHI))

What's up, boy? How are you?

((DEVAUGHN))

I'm good, brotha. How about you? How are you holding up?

((MALACHI))

I'm alive, fam. I'm breathing.

((DEVAUGHN))

You good in there? You got enough on the books?

((MALACHI))

I'm good on that. I appreciate you looking out for me.

((DEVAUGHN))

You already know.

((MALACHI))

How's the baby? Selise is alright?

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah, she's cool. The baby is good so far.

((MALACHI))

Beautiful. That's a blessing.

((DEVAUGHN))

Yo, Mac, you spoke to Tabby?

((MALACHI))

Nah, I don't have her phone number. I forgot to ask for it when she came up here.

((DEVAUGHN))

I'll give it to you.

((MALACHI))

Ask her if it's cool that I have it first. I don't wanna be running up her phone bill.

((DEVAUGHN))

Alright. Yo, you have to hear this though.

((MALACHI))

What happened?

((DEVAUGHN))

You gotta be careful with her, Mac. She's fresh off heartbreak. She was messing with some nigga for a couple years. But he was playing her most of the time that they was together. Mac, they broke up five months ago, fam.

((MALACHI))

You serious?

((DEVAUGHN))

You gotta be easy with her. I don't think she's over it. Dead-ass.

((MALACHI))

Yo, how do you be finding all of this stuff out?! I feel like I'm walking in quicksand when I talk to her. She be smooth as butter with you!

((DEVAUGHN))

I told you, I'm just honest with her. She's coming around though. Keep working on her.

((MALACHI))

Dev, she looked so good when she came up here. I was like, "*Damn, I want you girl.*" Thank god for hands, you know?

((DEVAUGHN))

Hell yeah.

*(Automated Voice: You have
one-minute left.)*

((MALACHI))

Alright, Dev. I'm out. But yo, I love you, boy. I'll call you again soon.

((DEVAUGHN))

I got a letter going out tomorrow.

((MALACHI))

I'm waiting on it.

TIME LAPSE TO LATER THAT WEEK. THE SCENE BEGINS WITH MALACHI AND DARRYL CONVERSING IN THE COURT-YARD...

MALACHI

How are you, O.G?

DARRYL

I'm here, young brother. And don't call me O.G. I ain't no gangster.

MALACHI

My bad. It don't really mean gangster anymore. It's a respect thing when you (Interrupt)

DARRYL

Speak to someone old! I get it. (Malachi laughter)

I ain't as old as I look now.

MALACHI

(Playful)

I mean, you do have a few gray hairs up there.

DARRYL

They tell me that's wisdom.

MALACHI

Is it?

DARRYL

Just bad genes if you ask me. (Chuckle from Malachi) So did you think about what I asked you?

MALACHI

I'm sorry, refresh my memory?

DARRYL

You're too young to have a bad memory.

MALACHI

I used to smoke a lot of weed. (Darryl shakes his head) Don't judge me.

DARRYL

Hey, I ain't never been god.

MALACHI

So what did you ask me?

DARRYL

I asked you to think about speaking in front of the fellowship. Everyone talks about their experiences but you.

MALACHI

I don't know. I just feel like it's better if I just watch and learn.

DARRYL

The process doesn't work as well if you don't participate.

MALACHI

I do participate. I'm there almost every day.

DARRYL

I'm talking about sharing. You know what I mean.

MALACHI

I mean, I don't really have much to share. My life is my life, you know? I was born, I grew up a little bit, and I started doing dumb shit. Now I'm here.

DARRYL

Dumb stuff is easy to get into, isn't it?

MALACHI

You have no idea, fam.

DARRYL

Are you done with the dumb stuff?

MALACHI

Absolutely. People work hard for the things that they have. You go to work every day, just so you can have a nice car. Then here I come, some kid who doesn't respect nothing, ain't trying to be nothing, and I take it from you. Just so I can get a few dollars. That's why the drugs were in that car. Just so I could be taught a lesson. This is the last place that I ever wanted to be.

DARRYL

God works in mysterious ways, young brother.

MALACHI

So you think that was god?

DARRYL

I do. You're very bright, Malachi. God needed to show you that you were not born to be a follower. You weren't born for upheaval.

MALACHI

What makes you believe, Darryl? What makes you think that god is real? Do you see why it could look like a sham?

DARRYL

Sure, I can see it. I've heard the arguments. I've been asked the questions. For me, I know that he's real. (Pats chest) I feel it. I hear him. I know that's he there. It's a powerful thing, young brother.

(Brief pause)

DARRYL

I'll tell you what. Here's something that I've never shared in the fellowship. I've been lying to the other brothers. They all think that I'm in here for drugs. I'm in here because I beat and raped my ex-wife.

MALACHI

You're kidding me?

DARRYL

Nope. I thought that she was having an affair. When I confronted her about it, she told me that she was. She told me the other man was better than I'd ever be.

MALACHI

What?!

DARRYL

I got so angry, Malachi. I hit her, and she fell to the floor. I started ripping off her clothes, and as I'm on top of her, I'm screaming at her to call him. *"Call him and tell him what I'm doing to you!"* It was a terrible night. I didn't need drugs, or, alcohol or any of that. Rage was my addiction. A woman that I loved since I was seventeen years old, and I violated her in a way where she can't stomach being in the same room as me...The sick part about it was, she wasn't even having an affair. She said it to test me.

MALACHI

Wait! She wasn't having an affair?!

DARRYL

No. I was the only man she had ever been with. Ever, Malachi. And look what I did to her. The mere thought of her being with another man led me to madness. I punched her, I slammed her head against the floor. Then I raped her. She was my wife, young brother.

MALACHI

(Quietly)

Goddamn.

DARRYL

I need forgiveness. Everyday. I need to be forgiven for what I did to that woman. And for what I did to myself. God has forgiven me, Malachi. He's let me know that even though I was an evil man, he's still there to watch over me. He still loves me. I don't even love myself half of time. That's why I know that he's real because he hasn't forgotten about me...He's never too far away, young brother.

(Darryl stands up from the bench and exits the scene)

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

SCENE CHANGE TO DEVAUGHN AND TABBY CONVERSING...

TABBY

Do you want food or not?

DEVAUGHN

Give me a pork-fried rice.

TABBY

What size?

DEVAUGHN

Small.

(Tabby completes the call for food,
then disconnects the line)

TABBY

You're a pain in the butt.

DEVAUGHN

It ain't like you had a menu.

TABBY

Chinese food is the same anywhere you go.

DEVAUGHN

Not always.

TABBY

I'm done with you.

(Chuckle from Devaughn)

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

So let me ask you a question?

TABBY

Go ahead.

DEVAUGHN

Do you want kids?

TABBY

Of course.

DEVAUGHN

Why you ain't have any? In the past?

TABBY

I miscarried.

DEVAUGHN

Oh word? My bad. (Tabby shrugs shoulders) Were you serious with the guy? (Tabby slowly shakes her head) Why not?

TABBY

It just wasn't like that.

DEVAUGHN

Was this the same dude from your last thing?

TABBY

No, this was years ago. I was like twenty-two, I think.

DEVAUGHN

Oh.

TABBY

You scared?

DEVAUGHN

Hell yeah. I don't want to be, but I can't help it.

TABBY

It's natural. You'll be fine.

DEVAUGHN

It's easy for you to say.

TABBY

Everybody is scared at first. Trust me.

DEVAUGHN

You were scared?

TABBY

Of course.

DEVAUGHN

Because you miscarried, does it scare you that it could happen again?

TABBY

You can't think like that.

DEVAUGHN

Shit. I would think like that.

TABBY

Good thing you aren't pregnant.

(Slight chuckle from Devaughn)

(Brief pause)

TABBY

Devaughn, you have to make sure you take care of your child's mom. People always say, "*Make sure that you're there for the baby.*" But the parents should be there for each other too. Both of you share the same job, so why not work together?

DEVAUGHN

It's up to her, Tabby. If she's cool, I'll be cool too.

TABBY

What happens if she's not cool?

DEVAUGHN

Then I'm leaving her ass alone. Not the baby though. I wouldn't walk out on the baby.

TABBY

That's exactly what I'm saying. Devaughn, you helped her get pregnant. It's easy for you to walk away.

DEVAUGHN

I just told you. I'm not (Interrupted)

TABBY

I'm not talking about the baby. Listen to what I'm saying. I'm talking about your child's mother.

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

I don't see it, Tabby.

TABBY

I'm saying, try to make things easy for her. Things will get tough the further the pregnancy goes. Little shit might start to stress her out. Raising the baby will be a lot easier if you two just work together.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

TABBY

You two were never together, right?

DEVAUGHN

In a relationship? No.

TABBY

So it's safe to assume that you don't know a lot about each other, right?

DEVAUGHN

I mean, we ain't best friends or nothing, but we know stuff. We've been talking a lot more now.

TABBY

That's good.

DEVAUGHN

Selise is cool. She has a good heart, but I just got tired of her. I get like that sometimes. Sometimes I be on some bullshit.

TABBY

You got tired of what? Sex?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

TABBY

So, she's boring?

DEVAUGHN

Kinda.

TABBY

Why?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know. It's just like...Yo, she would tell me to come through, and sometimes I'd be like, "*Nah, I'm good.*"

TABBY

And guess what? Now she's pregnant. See how life works?

DEVAUGHN

I know. If I ain't have bad luck, I wouldn't have any at all.

TABBY

How did you meet? You must've saw something that made you want to take her home?

DEVAUGHN

We met at my man's old spot. She was there with some of her girlfriends. Her titties was out a little bit, and she kept flirting with a nigga, so I was like, *"Cool. She's down to get it."*

TABBY

It was that easy?

DEVAUGHN

I mean, yeah.

TABBY

So if it's that easy, why would you want it?

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

What'chu mean?

TABBY

I don't understand why girls throw themselves at men and y'all just go. All you think about is sex, and you don't think about the consequences that could come from it.

DEVAUGHN

Shit. Ain't no disputes there.

TABBY

That's why I can't see Malachi thinking that I'm so special. A girl isn't special if she gives it up to you the first night.

DEVAUGHN

Why do you think that?

TABBY

Because it's true.

DEVAUGHN

No, it's not. You know why a chick will feel like a hoe if she gives it up fast? Because women will look at her like that. Dudes don't give a fuck.

TABBY

Yes, y'all do. Devaughn, you even said that Malachi could've went and told all of your boys that I was a hoe. That came out of your mouth.

DEVAUGHN

But he didn't. He asked me to come over and talk to you so that you wouldn't forget about him. You know why? Because he ain't give a fuck. Some dudes will look at a chick that way, but that's not all dudes. A lot of motherfuckers don't give a fuck. Was the Mac the only dude you had a one-night stand with?

TABBY

Yes.

DEVAUGHN

So you never slept with a dude on some quick shit?

TABBY

Not on the first night.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I'm not saying that. I'm saying, have you ever slept with a dude faster than you wanted to?

TABBY

Yeah.

DEVAUGHN

Did you not get a call back?

TABBY

What do you mean?

DEVAUGHN

Did the nigga call you back after y'all smashed?

TABBY

Yeah, he called me back.

DEVAUGHN

Exactly. Because he ain't give a fuck. Selise gave it up quick too, I still called her again. She'd text me and we'd talk. And it wasn't always about sex either.

TABBY

If it wasn't always about sex, why did you get bored?

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

Shit, that's a great question.

TABBY

I bet you won't be bored anymore?

DEVAUGHN

Shit. (Laughter from Tabby) Probably not, right?

Scene change to after the Chinese food has arrived. Devaughn and Tabby are conversing as they eat...

DEVAUGHN

So let me ask you something else?

TABBY

What?

DEVAUGHN

Do you feel like it's easier to talk to me, more than it is to Mac?

TABBY

What do you mean?

DEVAUGHN

You're just as comfortable with Mac, as you are with me, right?

TABBY

I don't know.

DEVAUGHN

What do you mean, "You don't know?"

TABBY

I've spent more time with you. We've talked more.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, but you had sex with him. That shit don't bring the wall down a little bit?

TABBY

No. (Picks food from shirt) Not if you can't remember what you did.

DEVAUGHN

You don't remember anything?

TABBY

I remember leaving the club. I remember peeing when I got here, and I kind of remember us talking. That's about it.

DEVAUGHN

Wait. You don't feel like Mac took advantage, do you?

TABBY

Oh, no. It's nothing like that.

DEVAUGHN

Good. A man of mine caught a charge for going home with a drunk girl. That shit didn't end well.

TABBY

I realize that Malachi is a good guy. He didn't have to want to get to know me. He could've left and never spoke to me again.

DEVAUGHN

He was talking about you like you invented water and shit the next day. (Tabby laughter) I looked at him like he was nuts when he asked me to come here.

TABBY

I still feel like I'm crazy for letting you in.

DEVAUGHN

You probably are. I probably would've told me to fuck off.

TABBY

Well, it was a first for me...I guess it was kind of sweet, if you look deep enough into it.

DEVAUGHN

It's only because he trusts me. He wouldn't have asked none of the niggas that we be around. Them niggas is all apes.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

Some friend you are.

DEVAUGHN

Hey, honesty is all I got.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

TIME LAPSE OF A FEW WEEKS. DEVAUGHN OPENS THE DOOR FOR SELISE...

DEVAUGHN

What's up?

SELISE

Can I come in?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

SELISE

(Enters apartment)

My bad for coming unannounced. I wanted to bring you something.

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

You wanted to bring me something?

SELISE

Yeah. Here.

(Selise hands Devaughn a bag)

DEVAUGHN

What is it?

SELISE

Open it.

(Devaughn opens the bag. He pulls out a piece of baby-apparel)

DEVAUGHN

This is for the baby?

SELISE

Read the front of it, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

(Reciting front of clothing)

"My dad is the best dad a boy could ever ask for."
(Looks at Selise in confusion) How did you know it's a boy?

SELISE

Because the nurse told me.

DEVAUGHN

Wait, you found out what it is?

SELISE

We're having a boy, Devaughn!

DEVAUGHN

Are you serious?

SELISE

I'm serious. It's a boy.

(Devaughn sits down, still in shock,
looking at the baby-apparel)

SELISE

Are you happy?

DEVAUGHN

Is he healthy and all that?

SELISE

He's good. I'm eating good. I'm not drinking, or
smoking. I've stopped, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

You don't smoke weed no more?

SELISE

We ain't gonna act like I don't miss it. (Chuckle
from Devaughn) But I'm not doing none of that while
I'm pregnant.

DEVAUGHN

You're showing more now.

SELISE

No shit! I can barely fit my other clothes!

DEVAUGHN

Have a seat. I want to talk to you about something.
(Selise sits down) Before Mac went up, he met this
girl. They did some shit a few nights before he
left, but he really digs her. He asked me if I'd
go over to her crib and become cool with her so that
she wouldn't forget about him.

SELISE

(Confusion)

And you actually went over there?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

SELISE

Why? That's mad creepy.

DEVAUGHN

It's not creepy. We're cool. She's a good person, Selise. I want y'all to meet.

SELISE

Why?

DEVAUGHN

Because. She could be Mac's girl.

SELISE

Devaughn, Mac is locked up. He's not coming home for a while.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, no shit, Selise. I'm saying that she's a good person. She got a good head on her shoulders.

SELISE

So why do you want us to meet?

DEVAUGHN

Because I'd like for us to kick it. We're thinking about going up to see Mac together. You could come too?

SELISE

Why do you want me to come?

DEVAUGHN

Because I want him to see your stomach. That type of shit makes you feel good when you're caged up.

SELISE

You gotta let me know when you're going.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

You've never asked me to go anywhere with you before.

DEVAUGHN

I'm wrong for that.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

Do you want to see the ultrasound pictures?

DEVAUGHN

Hell yeah.

BRIDGEBURY CORRECTIONAL AND REHABILITATION FACILITY

MALACHI ENTERS THE ROOM WHERE DARRYL'S FELLOWSHIP IS BEING HELD. HE TAKES ONE OF THE SEATS...

DARRYL

What's up brothers? So I have some good news, and some bad news. Bad news first? Alright. Brother Charles wasn't on the best of terms with his celly. I guess they had it out and Brother Charles is now going to spend the next month in solitaire. (Reactions of disappointment throughout of the group) Send a few prayers his way. He's going to need them...Now on to the good news. You folks won't see Brother Ibrihim anymore. He got approved for work-release yesterday morning. (Clapping reaction throughout room) That's a blessing. Praise god...Alright, I want to discuss something a bit heavier than when we discussed on Monday. Before I do, would anyone like to share their thoughts?

(Darryl looks at Malachi, then slowly nods his head)

MALACHI

Alright, um, Brother Darryl. I'll share something.

DARRYL

It's about time, Malachi. What's on your mind, young brother?

MALACHI

Alright...Um...You know, the hardest part of this jail shit, is making people believe you're a better person than for what they put you in here for. I stole a car. It had drugs in it. The cops pulled

me over, and when they searched the car, I couldn't make them believe that the drugs weren't mine. I met a woman the day before my last day out. From the second that I met her, there was something different about her. I can't even explain what it is, or, why I felt the way that I felt. I just knew. I want this girl, Brother Darryl. There's something in me that makes me believe that she's special. But every time that I talk to her, I feel like all she sees, is this. This place. These walls. The feeling of despair. I'm wearing this place like cologne and she can smell it. I want her to believe that I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make her think that I'm worth her time. But I have no idea where to start.

DARRYL

All you have to do is take that step, young brother. God will help you get there. He'll help you become the man that she needs you to be. And once you become that man, she'll know.

(Responses of agreement from the other characters)

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

TABBY ENTERS THE LIVING AREA AND PICKS UP HER RINGING CELL-PHONE...

((AUTOMATED FEMALE VOICE))

"You have received a call from a resident at Bridgebury Correctional Facility. To accept this call please press one."

Tabby follows the directions, then is connected with Malachi...

((TABBY))

Hello?

((MALACHI))

Hey, Tabby. How are you doing?

((TABBY))

I'm fine. How about you? You alright in there?

((MALACHI))

I'm alright. How's everything been going?

((TABBY))

I'm okay. Tired, but okay.

((MALACHI))

You got a lot going on, huh?

((TABBY))

Work. My job is a headache.

((MALACHI))

I could imagine.

((TABBY))

You behaving in there?

((MALACHI))

About that. Is there, uh, any chance that you'd come see me soon? I'd like to talk to you about something.

((TABBY))

What do you want to talk about?

((MALACHI))

I don't have enough time to get into it right now.
That's why I'd like to see you.

((TABBY))

Okay. I'll come see you.

((MALACHI))

Really? You'll come again?

((TABBY))

Why are you surprised?

((MALACHI))

I know you don't really like coming up here. I
figured you'd wouldn't wanna come again.

((TABBY))

No. There's something on my mind as well.

((MALACHI))

Really?

((TABBY))

Mm-hm. We'll talk about it.

((MALACHI))

Well, shit, I'm looking forward to it.

((TABBY))

Good.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

DEVAUGHN OPENS HIS DOOR...

JO-JO

What's good, Dev?

DEVAUGHN

What's up? Come in.

JO-JO

(Enters residence)

Why it's been so long since you hit a nigga? Damn, you act like you too good for niggas since Mac left.

DEVAUGHN

You sound like a girl, fam.

JO-JO

(Sarcasm)

Word, Dev?

DEVAUGHN

What's going on? What you came here for?

JO-JO

Yo, how's Mac doing? I sent him a letter but he hasn't written back yet.

DEVAUGHN

You'll get it. Sometimes shit gets held up. You know how that go?

JO-JO

Facts. He's good though?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. He's holding up.

JO-JO

Yo, I seen Selise the other day. Her belly's getting big, my nigga.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, I know. The baby will be here before you know it.

JO-JO

And everything is on the up and up, right?

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?

JO-JO

With Selise. She's good, right? It ain't no bullshit involved, right?

DEVAUGHN

I don't see it, Jo.

JO-JO

I heard some things. But you and Mac are two are the smartest niggas I know. So I know you ain't

going for the bullshit.

DEVAUGHN

You heard some things about what? Selise?

JO-JO

A nigga told me that she was messing with another nigga from up the block at the same time that she was fucking with you. So I just wanted to make sure she ain't playing no games. You seem like you're really embracing this fatherhood shit. But don't trip though. This nigga that told me ain't a real reputable nigga. So it could be some silly shit.

DEVAUGHN

Who told you?

JO-JO

This nigga named A-rab. But he's a seedy nigga. I don't really trust him like that.

DEVAUGHN

And when did he tell you all that?

JO-JO

I was with a few of my Northside niggas at Boom-box the other night. That's where I seen him. He asked about you and Mac. That's when he started telling me shit.

DEVAUGHN

Have I ever met the nigga before?

JO-JO

Who, A-rab? Yeah, I think you met him at that cook-out last summer. Remember when Salaam had

that cook-out for his birthday? That nigga A-rab was there.

DEVAUGHN

And he's the nigga that Selise was messing with?

JO-JO

Nah, he's saying that it's another nigga. But he ain't say his name.

DEVAUGHN

Alright. I'll ask her about it.

THE NEXT AFTERNOON, DEVAUGHN OPENS HIS DOOR AND ALLOWS SELISE TO ENTER THE RESIDENCE...

DEVAUGHN

Look, I'm going to ask you something, and I need you to keep a thousand.

SELISE

I always keep it a thousand with you.

DEVAUGHN

Was there any time when we was doing whatever, that you was doing the same with another nigga?

SELISE

(Confusion)

What?

DEVAUGHN

I'm asking you if you was fucking with someone else

while you was fucking with me?

SELISE

Devaughn, I wasn't out here hoeing around. You was the only nigga that I was with.

DEVAUGHN

On your life?

SELISE

On our son's life!

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

(Irritation)

Why, Devaughn? What did you hear?

DEVAUGHN

Don't worry about it. If you wasn't doing shit, then there ain't shit to discuss. I'm not tripping. I believe you. I just heard something and I wanted to make sure it was phony.

SELISE

But what did you hear though? That I'm fucking mad niggas or something?

DEVAUGHN

A nigga told one of my boys that you was laid up with another dude. It wasn't some blown-up shit. It wasn't like you was slutting or nothing.

SELISE

But I'm saying, you must've believed it enough to ask me.

DEVAUGHN

Selise, I had to ask you. I don't know what you feel comfortable telling a nigga. You might not tell me if you had niggas in the stash.

SELISE

Devaughn, I don't have niggas in the stash. I'm not like that.

DEVAUGHN

I said I'm not tripping. I believe you. I don't be believing shit that I hear on the streets. That's why I brought it to you directly.

SELISE

I get it, Devaughn. But I don't want you thinking that it's like that. It's not!

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

There was only one other nigga. His name is Tito, but I never did anything with him. All we did was talk. And I mean talk. I can show you the text messages.

DEVAUGHN

I don't care, Selise. It don't matter. You're telling me the truth, right? I believe you. Even if y'all did shit, that's your business. I just don't want no questions with the baby.

SELISE

Devaughn, don't even go there! There are no questions with the baby.

DEVAUGHN

I ain't saying that the baby isn't mine. I'm saying, if you wasn't sure, you would tell me, right?

SELISE

So you want a DNA test? Is that what you're saying?

DEVAUGHN

I don't need no test. If you was only with me, then I believe that.

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

You still talking to this nigga?

SELISE

Who? Tito? No. I told him that I was pregnant, and I had to stop with all of that.

DEVAUGHN

Alright...Can I ask you a question?

SELISE

Go ahead.

DEVAUGHN

Why didn't you do anything with him? I'm not saying that makes you a hoe, because it don't. So don't answer it with that. I'm just asking on some real shit.

SELISE

I didn't want to mess with him. I told you before that I had feelings for you.

DEVAUGHN

What made you have feelings for me? What made you like me?

SELISE

You're a good person, Devaughn. You're not like all of these simple-ass niggas out here. You go to work every day. You obviously know how to take care of yourself. You're smart. And when I'm around you, you're never disrespectful, or treat me like an asshole.

DEVAUGHN

Why you ain't ever tell me how you felt?

SELISE

For what? I never felt that you cared to know. I told you all of this before.

DEVAUGHN

But, I'm (Interrupted)

SELISE

I'm saying, if I would've told you, would things have changed?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, I wouldn't have been trying to smash like that. I'm not trying to fuck with your feelings, Selise. That shit ain't cool.

SELISE

But that's the thing, if we weren't fucking, then I would've never seen you. That's the opposite of what I wanted.

DEVAUGHN

Look, I'm sorry if I hurt you in the past. I wasn't trying to play you.

SELISE

Well, you knocked me up. So now you're stuck with me.

BRIDGEBURY CORRECTIONAL AND REHABILITATION FACILITY

TIME LAPSE TO THE FOLLOWING WEEKEND. TABBY HAS ARRIVED TO VISIT MALACHI IN THE VISITOR'S ROOM...

MALACHI

I like your hair like that. It's pretty.

TABBY

I haven't decided if I like it yet.

MALACHI

You should like it, you paid for it.

TABBY

I just wanted something different.

MALACHI

That night that we met in the club. You had your hair all of the way down. You looked incredible like that.

TABBY

Ugh.

MALACHI

Why you say that?

TABBY

That shit was disgusting the next morning. I still have no idea how I got liquor in my hair. (Malachi laughter) I was a mess.

MALACHI

Thank you for coming up here again.

TABBY

You're welcome.

MALACHI

You said you had something on your mind. I want you to go first.

TABBY

No, you go first.

MALACHI

Alright, well, let me ask you a question? Have you

ever wanted to have a relationship with god?

TABBY

Yeah.

MALACHI

Really?

TABBY

I used to go to church when I was younger. I went with my mother every Sunday up until I was fourteen.

MALACHI

What made you stop going?

TABBY

My mom got sick and she couldn't physically go anymore.

MALACHI

Was she able to get better?

TABBY

No. She passed when I was seventeen.

MALACHI

I'm sorry, Tabby.

TABBY

It's okay.

MALACHI

If you heard that there was a church that was really worth your time. Would you check it out?

TABBY

Yeah.

MALACHI

You would?

TABBY

Yeah. I would.

MALACHI

That's good.

TABBY

Malachi, what's going on? Are you serious, or is this something that would play into good behavior?

MALACHI

Oh, no, Tabby. This ain't a game. I'm serious about this. Yo, I've been reading the bible every day. I've been attending the fellowship sessions three times a week. I actually shared for the first time this week.

TABBY

Shared what?

MALACHI

My feelings. What's was going on the inside.

TABBY

And what was going on the inside?

MALACHI

I don't want to ever come back here again. You know, up until I started messing with the brothers, I never cared about being an asset to society. I never cared about the consequences that came with acting up, or lashing out. As long as my boys accepted me, nothing else mattered.

TABBY

Our friends are influences on us.

MALACHI

Yeah. Hell yeah! But my actions, and all that loyalty got me in here. The number of jobs that I've had in my life, is lower than the times that I've been locked up. That's silly, right?

TABBY

You serious?

MALACHI

I've had two real jobs. This is my fourth time being locked up. If you count Juve.

TABBY

Wow.

MALACHI

I'm not a bad dude, Tabby. I've just made dumb decisions in the past. When I was eighteen, I got a job doing construction. It was tough, but had I kept with it, I'd be set right now. So I get off work one day, I meet up with Dev, and our boy Jo-Jo tells us that we could make some real money

boosting cars for this Dominican dude. It took me all of thirty seconds to tell Jo-Jo that I was down. Dev didn't even want to do it. He only did it to help me. I knew it was wrong, and I had a feeling that at some point, I'm going to get caught. So Brother Darryl is like, *"Maybe you don't make good decisions. But there's someone up there watching over you that can help you with that."* I told him about you. He said, *"What do you have to offer her? What makes you think that you're someone who she should even want to be around?"* I'm tripping because I can't even answer the question. So what I'm saying is, I won't bother you anymore. I'll tell Dev to leave you alone. It's going to be a minute until I have my shit together. I can't even really be there for you if you go through some shit. I just met you that night, and shit felt different. It was like tunnel vision.

(Brief pause, Tabby sits back in her seat)

TABBY

And I was just starting to like you, Malachi.

MALACHI

For real?

(Brief pause)

TABBY

You've always made bad decisions, right? I've done the same thing when it comes to guys. I never pick the right guys. I applaud you for trying, Malachi. I can see that you're sincere about wanting to change.

MALACHI

I don't want to be in here anymore. And I got mad time left.

TABBY

I'm not special, Malachi. And I'm not different. Our first night together should've proved that to you.

MALACHI

But I don't care about that, Tabby. That's not a stain on your character. It was your birthday and you partied a little bit. I still feel like there's something different about you.

TABBY

What, Malachi? What is it? What's so different about me?

MALACHI

I told you that I was coming here and you cooked me dinner. You knew my situation and you didn't judge me. The hell with our first night, I was more concerned with our last. You're not trying to be with a dude who's in jail, yet, you still come here when I ask you to. You don't have a reason to come here. There's no reason for you even to wanna talk to me. But you're still sitting right here, with me. What else do you need to hear? You're special.

TABBY

I like Devaughn. He's easy to talk to.

MALACHI

He is, right? That's my brother right there!

TABBY

Don't tell him to stop coming around.

MALACHI

Okay.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

What happens if Devaughn doesn't want to join you on your path of getting closer to god?

MALACHI

Oh, he won't. But, I know Dev. He'll come around.

TABBY

So will I.

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

TIME LAPSE OF A FEW WEEKS. DEVAUGHN HAS COME TO VISIT TABBY...

TABBY

Remember a while back when I told you that Malachi was getting closer to god? (Devaughn nods his head) It wasn't for good behavior. He emailed me yesterday. He wants to get baptized.

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

Baptized?

TABBY

I went to see him a few weeks ago. He's serious, Devaughn. He's really trying to change his life. They have a fellowship group inside the jail, and before he was just sitting in on meetings. Now, he's an actual member. (Confused look from Devaughn) One of the men in the fellowship told him about this church on the other side of town. Malachi asked me if I go one Sunday and check out the service.

DEVAUGHN

Are you gonna go?

TABBY

I'm considering it. (No response from Devaughn)
Would you wanna go with me?

DEVAUGHN

Where? To that church? (Tabby nods her head) Nah, I'm good.

TABBY

It might be a good church, Devaughn. You might be glad you went.

DEVAUGHN

That shit isn't real, Tabby. Dev is doing all this for the board. He wants to get out of there. He could get work-release in a few months if he plays his cards right.

TABBY

Devaughn, he's not doing this for work-release. I know it's hard to understand, but, the feeling that you get when you learn the word is real. It's not fake.

DEVAUGHN

I ain't saying it's fake. I'm sure Mac believes in what he's doing. But he's doing it to get out of there.

TABBY

What if he isn't?

DEVAUGHN

I know Mac, Tabby. He's not falling for all of that "*Holy Spirit*" bullshit. It's all nonsense, and he knows that.

TABBY

You really think that he would get baptized if he didn't believe in it? He would take it that far?

DEVAUGHN

You've never been to jail before. You have no idea what niggas would do to get out of there.

TABBY

But let's say that he was serious about it, would you meet him half way?

DEVAUGHN

What do you mean half way?

TABBY

Would you think about accepting god as well?

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

What are your thoughts on all this?

TABBY

I think it's good. I commend him if he's serious about trying to get his life together. Having something to believe in is a good thing.

DEVAUGHN

So if this nigga comes out and he's a Jesus-freak, you're cool with that?

TABBY

There's a lot of worse things that you could be.

DEVAUGHN

This is gonna fuck things up.

TABBY

What do you mean?

DEVAUGHN

I mean, you're into that shit. I can tell. If he comes out, and tells you that he was just using that as a tool for freedom, you're going to think that he's, uh...What's that word that I'm looking for?

TABBY

Disingenuous?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah! Disingenuous. You're going to look at him like that, and that's not how he is.

TABBY

The one respect that I've always given both of you is that you two have always been honest with me. If Malachi is using that to get out, why wouldn't he just tell me that? All y'all have is honesty, right? Why would he start lying now? (No response from Devaughn) If he is playing a roll, then yeah, I would think that he's disingenuous. You can't act disingenuous, Devaughn, either that's your nature, or it isn't. When he calls you, find out what's going on. You know that he'll keep it real with you.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

THE NEXT EVENING, SELISE HAS COME TO VISIT DEVAUGHN...

SELISE

So listen, I'm not trying to scare the hell out of you, but my mom wants to meet you.

DEVAUGHN

Your mom wants to meet me?

SELISE

Yeah.

DEVAUGHN

Why?

SELISE

Because she would like to meet the father of her grandson.

DEVAUGHN

Oh.

SELISE

She doesn't want the first meeting to be in the delivery room.

DEVAUGHN

Wait, I'm supposed to be in the delivery room?

SELISE

Yes, Devaughn. You don't want to see your son be born?

DEVAUGHN

Selise, I'm nervous. My bad.

SELISE

Why are you nervous?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know shit about kids. I don't know what I'm doing.

SELISE

Nobody knows what they're doing when they first have kids. We'll learn together.

DEVAUGHN

Why are you so confident about the shit? How come you aren't nervous?

SELISE

Because what am I going to do? He's coming. He'll be here in three months. Maybe less than that.

DEVAUGHN

What did you tell your mom about me?

SELISE

That you're his father.

DEVAUGHN

So...Does she think that we're together?

SELISE

No, she knows that we're not together. She's just glad that you're stepping up.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

So are you gonna meet her?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

SELISE

Okay. Don't trip. My mom is cool.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

So what did you want to talk about? (Sarcasm) What rumors did you hear about me now?

DEVAUGHN

Don't do that. It ain't about that.

SELISE

I'm teasing. What happened?

DEVAUGHN

Yo, I think Mac's being brain-washed in there.

SELISE

(Confusion)

Huh?

DEVAUGHN

Remember how I told you about that girl, Tabby?

SELISE

Yeah.

DEVAUGHN

He told her that he wants to be baptized.

SELISE

Baptized? Who? Malachi?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. I mean, that shit probably ain't true. I'm thinking this nigga is just trying to get the fuck up out of there.

SELISE

I could see that.

DEVAUGHN

Mac ain't trying to be no Jesus-freak, Selise.

SELISE

I wouldn't think so.

DEVAUGHN

See? I be tripping for nothing.

SELISE

Have you asked him about it?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, not yet.

SELISE

But where is that coming from? All of the sudden he told that girl that he wants to get baptized? Is she into Jesus like that?

DEVAUGHN

Nah. She used to be, but that shit was when she was a kid.

SELISE

So where did Malachi get that from?

DEVAUGHN

There's some crazy-ass fellowship in there. I guess he's going to the meetings, or some shit.

SELISE

Why would he want to go to those meetings?

DEVAUGHN

So he could get right with the board. They could grant Mac work-release if he has his shit together.

SELISE

Oh. So he's doing it to get out early?

DEVAUGHN

That's what I'm thinking.

SELISE

Oh, so it ain't serious then. He's just doing what he has to do.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. I was getting worried for nothing.

PHONE CONVERSATION

DEVAUGHN & MALACHI

((DEVAUGHN))

Hello?

((AUTOMATED FEMALE VOICE))

"You have received a call from a resident at Bridgebury Correctional Facility. To accept this call (Interrupted)

(Devaughn presses the cell-phone digit)

((DEVAUGHN))

Mac?

((MALACHI))

Dev! What's up, boy?!

((DEVAUGHN))

What's going on, brotha? How you doing in there?

((MALACHI))

I'm good, fam. I'm trying to get right in here.

((DEVAUGHN))

You keeping your head up?

((MALACHI))

I'm maintaining.

((DEVAUGHN))

Good.

((MALACHI))

How's my nephew? Selise staying healthy? He's good?

((DEVAUGHN))

Everything is everything, fam. We're good.

((MALACHI))

Good, good! How far along is she now?

((DEVAUGHN))

Six and a week.

((MALACHI))

Damn, Dev! It's almost time. She's not far from nine.

((DEVAUGHN))

And I get more nervous by the day. (Malachi laughter) I'm sweating over here, fam.

((MALACHI))

Nah, nah, you good, brotha! You're gonna be a hell of a father! You got that wrapped up.

((DEVAUGHN))

I hope so. So what's up with you, Mac? You staying sane in there?

((MALACHI))

I was until the other day. I was getting a cut, and the barber was like, "*You know you got a gray hair, my G?*" (Devaughn laughter) Dev, I almost fell out the chair, fam! The hell am I doing with gray hairs?

((DEVAUGHN))

Look around you, Mac. That place is the damn definition of gray hair.

((MALACHI))

That's facts. But I'm cool though, Dev. Yo, I got into this fellowship with some of the brothers in here.

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah, I heard. Tabby told me that you're trying to get baptized? The hell is going on in here? (Malachi laughter) I'm looking at her like the day that Mac gets into Jesus is the day that I turn into

Michael Jackson. (Malachi continued laughter) You just trying to get out of there, right?

((MALACHI))

(Hesitation)

Uh...Well...You know how it is, Dev. I'm just trying to maintain, bruh.

((DEVAUGHN))

I knew it, Mac. I knew what it was. Do you get to see the board at all?

((MALACHI))

Not until next month. But, hopefully they'll see that I've been straight in here. I've been working, and doing chores for the CO's. I'm keeping it together with the hopes that they'll let me do work-release.

((DEVAUGHN))

You can get furloughed on work-release, right?

((MALACHI))

Full weekends, Dev, facts. And if they grant me good-behavior, I can get out immediately. I won't have to wait to be recommended.

((DEVAUGHN))

Just keep doing what you're doing, Mac. I know it's tough in there but you'll get work-release. You'll get that shit.

((MALACHI))

Yeah, I'm trying.

*(Automated Voice: You have
one-minute left.)*

((DEVAUGHN))

Yo, Mac, you got Tabby thinking this god shit is real though. You're going to have to let her know what you're trying to do. You could lose her if you don't play it straight.

((MALACHI))

Nah, she understands. She knows what it is. You know how I handle mine. We're good, Dev.

((DEVAUGHN))

Say no more.

((MALACHI))

I love you, boy! I'll see you soon.

((DEVAUGHN))

Alright, Mac. Hold your head.

A MONTAGE OF SCENES BEGINS WITH TABBY WALKING INTO A CHURCH CALLED DIVINE TRUTH & KNOWLEDGE. VARIOUS SCENES SHOW THE PASTOR SPEAKING TO THE CONGREGATION, THE CONGREGATION SINGING, AND A WIDE SHOT OF THE CONGREGATION PRAYING. THE MONTAGE ENDS WITH A SCENE OF TABBY APPROACHING THE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH

TABBY

Pastor Dutton?

PASTOR DUTTON

Yes, sister.

TABBY

My name is Tabby. This was my first service here. I was wondering if there was any way that I could speak to you for a few minutes.

PASTOR DUTTON

Is everything alright, young sister?

TABBY

Yes. Um, something is happening with a friend of mine, and I just wanted to get your advice. I know you don't know me like that, but (Interrupted)

PASTOR DUTTON

Well, it's nice to meet you, Tabby. Thank you for coming. After service ends, I always have a brief meeting with my church-staff. Give me a few minutes and we'll talk, okay?

TABBY

Okay. Thank you.

SCENE CHANGE TO TABBY AND PASTOR DUTTON CONVERSING IN HIS OFFICE...

PASTOR DUTTON

I know Darryl Mercer. He's a good man. Had some anger issues that he needed to get rectified but, he has a good heart, and a strong mind. I'm glad that's able to mentor Malachi.

TABBY

Malachi is taking well to everything. He's actually the one that asked me to come here.

PASTOR DUTTON

And why did he want you to come?

TABBY

Darryl told him that you're legit. You actually believe what you teach. You stand for your beliefs. That's what Malachi is looking for.

PASTOR DUTTON

I see. What are you looking for?

TABBY

The same. I guess.

PASTOR DUTTON

You guess?

TABBY

There are parts of me that feel like I don't deserve to be here. I used to go church when I was younger, but then I stopped.

PASTOR DUTTON

What turned you away?

TABBY

My mother got sick and didn't have the strength to attend anymore. She was the reason that I went.

PASTOR DUTTON

How long ago was this?

TABBY

Oh, I was fourteen when she first got sick.

PASTOR DUTTON

Is she still with us?

TABBY

No.

PASTOR DUTTON

My condolences, Tabby.

TABBY

Thank you.

PASTOR DUTTON

Did you enjoy the service today?

TABBY

I did.

PASTOR DUTTON

You said that you feel that you don't deserve to be here. Why is that?

TABBY

You don't turn your back on god. I figured that he's probably still angry with me.

PASTOR DUTTON

Oh, Tabby. You are aware that the lord forgives, right? All you have to do is be transparent with him. He knows that we're not perfect, trust me. (Tabby nods her head) I'd like for you to consider joining us here on a Tuesday evening, if you're available? We hold women's bible study meetings on Tuesdays, headed by Sister Narid. It might do you

some good. You should check it out?

TABBY

Okay.

PASTOR DUTTON

Tell me more about Malachi. What is he looking to do with his life after his release?

TABBY

He said he wants to do whatever it takes to become an asset to society. That's been a bit of an issue for him.

PASTOR DUTTON

How old is he?

TABBY

I think he's twenty-six.

PASTOR DUTTON

Okay.

TABBY

He's a good guy, Pastor. That's why I want to believe him.

PASTOR DUTTON

Are there doubts?

TABBY

Well, men are weird creatures sometimes. (Chuckle from Pastor Dutton) You never know what to believe.

PASTOR DUTTON

Have you known him for a long time? (Tabby shakes her head) So you're flying on faith, huh?

TABBY

I guess that you can say that.

PASTOR DUTTON

Well, if it was his idea for you to come here, he can't be all bad.

TABBY

I'm gonna hold you to that.

PASTOR DUTTON

(Chuckle)

I like you, Tabby.

TABBY

Would I be able to give Malachi your information so that he can write to you? He says that Darryl said that you're a better life-coach than he could ever be.

PASTOR DUTTON

(Chuckle)

I'll tell you what, I'll write to Malachi, if you come to the women's bible study on Tuesday?

TABBY

Okay. I'll come.

PASTOR DUTTON

Good. I'll give you my card. Malachi can write me

whenever he'd like.

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

THE NEXT EVENING, MALACHI AND TABBY ARE CONVERSING OVER THE PHONE...

((TABBY))

So you punked out?

((MALACHI))

Nah, I ain't punk out. I just...I gotta be sensitive with Dev. He's not going to come around as (Interrupted)

((TABBY))

Honesty, huh?

((MALACHI))

I'm saying, it'll be better when I talk to him face to face.

((TABBY))

You're scared, aren't you?

((MALACHI))

Tee, I'm not scared. I'm just (Interrupted)

((TABBY))

I understand. If Devaughn's not ready for where you're going, it's going to put a wedge in your friendship.

((MALACHI))

Nah, never that. Dev and I are too close for that.

That's my brother. Neither of us are tripping.

((TABBY))

It's a lifestyle change, Malachi. If you're serious about this, you're going to have to let go of some of your people that you used to hang around.

((MALACHI))

Oh, nah, I get that. But not Dev though. I want Dev to see the light with me. That's why I have to take baby-steps with him. He's not going to come around right away. I'm going to have to work on him.

((TABBY))

If you say so.

((MALACHI))

Is he coming to see you anytime soon?

((TABBY))

I don't know. Devaughn doesn't call, he just shows up.

((MALACHI))

Dev has always been like that. I'll tell him to call you first.

((TABBY))

I thought that you put him up to that.

((MALACHI))

Why did you think that?

((TABBY))

In case I'm here with another guy.

((MALACHI))

Oh. Nah, Tee, I wouldn't do that. If you're talking to other dudes, I can't hate. I mean, I'm in here right now. I can't keep you from dick.

((TABBY))

Yeah, but I would hope you know that dick isn't what I'm looking for.

((MALACHI))

So what are you looking for?

((TABBY))

(Sarcasm)

A man who isn't incarcerated!

((MALACHI))

Oh shit! Ouch, girl!

(Chuckle from Tabby)

((TABBY))

You asked. (Sarcasm) Sorry you asked, aren't you?

((MALACHI))

A little bit, yeah. (Laughter from Tabby) Well, again, there's nothing that I can do about you talking to dudes while I'm in here. I just gotta eat that.

((TABBY))

Or send your goon after them?

((MALACHI))

For what? So Dev can end up here with me? Nah, I'm good.

((TABBY))

You know I'm not talking to anyone.

((MALACHI))

I don't know that. But I appreciate you telling me.

((TABBY))

Malachi, you really think I'm talking to other men?

((MALACHI))

Tee, it's not my business what you do. I just don't want to be knowing about it.

((TABBY))

(Mocks Malachi)

"You just don't want to be knowing about it." You clearly skipped English class, didn't you?

((MALACHI))

Yeah, I did. That's facts.

((TABBY))

Well, you know now because I'm telling you.

((MALACHI))

What are you telling me?

((TABBY))

That I'm not...Wait, are you listening to what I'm

saying?

((MALACHI))

(Playful)

Obviously not if I asked you what you meant.

((TABBY))

Bye, Malachi. (Laughter from Malachi) I hate you.

((MALACHI))

My bad! My bad. I'm sorry, you have my full attention now.

((TABBY))

I didn't have it before?

((MALACHI))

Nah, you did. You always have my attention.

((TABBY))

So I have a question?

((MALACHI))

What's that?

((TABBY))

Do you take care of yourself in there?

((MALACHI))

What'chu mean?

((TABBY))

You know what I mean.

((MALACHI))

Are you asking if I beat my dick in here?

((TABBY))

Yeah. I want to know.

((MALACHI))

Why do you wanna know?

((TABBY))

Do you think about me in there? Where do you do it?
When you're in the shower?

((MALACHI))

Nah, I can't. I don't get enough time in the shower.
And I'm in a cell with two other dudes. That's an
unwritten rule in here. You only do if you don't
have cellies.

((TABBY))

Stop it.

((MALACHI))

I'm serious!

((TABBY))

Don't they turn the lights out? You can't do it
then?

((MALACHI))

It's not what you're thinking. Dudes is mad close
to each other. It's not comfortable. I haven't
found a spot yet. But, when I do, hell yeah, I'll
be thinking about you.

((TABBY))

(Sarcasm)

Poor thing.

((MALACHI))

Do you think about me when you do it?

((TABBY))

You know, it was so cold out today. (Laughter from Malachi) I don't know what's up with this weather.

((MALACHI))

It's like that, Tee?

((TABBY))

I gotta get ready to go out to the store. Be good in there. Write to Pastor Dutton. I'll come see you soon.

((MALACHI))

Alright, cool. Have a good night.

SELISE'S APARTMENT

SELISE OPENS THE DOOR FOR DEVAUGHN TO ANSWER...

SELISE

What's up?

DEVAUGHN

(Quietly)

Is your mom here?

SELISE

Yeah, she's here. Come in. (No response from Devaughn) Devaughn, it's fine. Come in (Devaughn enters the apartment) Don't worry, she's cool.

They enter the living area where
Selise's mom, Amirah, is seated...

SELISE

Mom? This is Devaughn. Devaughn, this is my mom,
Amirah.

AMIRAH

Hello, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

Hello, Miss Amirah.

SELISE

(To Devaughn)

Sit down.

(Devaughn slowly sits down)

AMIRAH

So how are you doing, Devaughn? I've heard a lot
about you.

DEVAUGHN

(Glances at Selise)

You have?

AMIRAH

Yes. Selise filled me in about the situation.

DEVAUGHN

Okay.

AMIRAH

You're serious about being a father, right?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. Absolutely.

AMIRAH

Good. I want my grandson to have both of his parents in his life. Selise wasn't afforded that opportunity. And unfortunately, it seems like having a father is a luxury now.

SELISE

(To Amirah)

Well at least I had you. Devaughn never knew his dad, and his mother died when he was young.

AMIRAH

I'm sorry to hear that. Your father wasn't around?

DEVAUGHN

No. I never met him.

AMIRAH

That's a shame. Well, I'm glad that you're handling your responsibilities as a man. What do you do for work?

DEVAUGHN

I work at UPS.

AMIRAH

Oh. You're a delivery driver?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I work in the warehouse part. I load up the trucks.

AMIRAH

Oh. Okay. Have you been there for a long time?

DEVAUGHN

Three years now. I think.

AMIRAH

Well that's a stable job. That's good. Do you feel like you and Selise can get along for the sake of this baby?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, me and Selise are cool. I mean, we communicate, we're not nasty to each other. We'll be alright.

AMIRAH

So why aren't you two together?

SELISE

We're not rushing anything. We're working on really building our friendship.

AMIRAH

(Glares at Selise)

So if you weren't friends, why were you sleeping together?

SELISE

Because we're adults, and that's our prerogative. Neither of us wanted something complicated.

AMIRAH

And you agree with this, Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

It was more me than anything. Selise was stand-up with her feelings from the beginning. I was the one bringing up the rear.

AMIRAH

And why is that?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know. I've always been hesitant to get serious with a woman.

AMIRAH

And this is your first child?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

AMIRAH

Are you going to stay here with Selise after the baby is born?

SELISE

We haven't discussed that yet, Mom.

AMIRAH

Don't you think that's a conversation that you need to have?

SELISE

We will. The baby isn't here yet.

AMIRAH

(To Devaughn)

Are you always this quiet?

DEVAUGHN

I'm not much of a talker.

AMIRAH

Well, that's not always a bad thing. (Glares at Selise) It can keep you out of trouble.

SELISE

Hey, it's hereditary, isn't it?

AMIRAH

I guess. (Stands up) I need to check on the food. Are you eating with us, Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

Oh, um, no, I gotta get back to my place. But, I'll take a rain-check?

AMIRAH

You sure? Dinner is going to be good.

DEVAUGHN

I'm sure. But thank you for the invite. I appreciate it.

AMIRAH

Okay.

(Exits scene)

SELISE

(Quietly)

You uncomfortable?

DEVAUGHN

A little.

SELISE

You should stay though. She's just like this in the beginning.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I gotta go. But we can do it again one day though.

SELISE

Alright.

Selise walks Devaughn to the apartment door...

SELISE

(Quietly)

Listen. I didn't ask my mom to ask you any of those questions. This wasn't no set up or nothing.

DEVAUGHN

I'm not tripping. I don't think she likes me though. She doesn't like me, does she?

SELISE

I don't know. I'll find out later. But don't worry, it doesn't matter if she likes you, I do. I'm the one you have to be around.

DEVAUGHN

I didn't even think about what we're doing after the baby comes.

SELISE

We'll figure it out.

DEVAUGHN

Alright. I'll hit you later.

(Selise nods her head)

PHONE CONVERSATION

DEVAUGHN & TABBY

((TABBY))

You met her mom? How did that go? Were you scared?

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah because I ain't know how she was going to paint me. I ain't know if she thought that I was just some dude trying to bang her daughter.

((TABBY))

Well, you were. But, you're doing the right thing. That's good.

((DEVAUGHN))

Why does it feel weird that I can't remember that shit anymore, Tabby? I mean, she's pregnant now, and I can't even remember when it wasn't about that.

((TABBY))

Wasn't about what?

((DEVAUGHN))

About her being pregnant. It went from us messing around, to us being parents. That shit is wild weird.

((TABBY))

I mean, you can't act like you're surprised that the relationship changed. Babies are always going to change the dynamic. You can't just go back to sleeping together.

((DEVAUGHN))

But we haven't though. We ain't even done shit since before she got pregnant. All that stopped.

((TABBY))

You see her differently now?

((DEVAUGHN))

I don't know. Shit is confusing.

((TABBY))

Is there anything about...Wait, what's her name again?

((DEVAUGHN))

Selise.

((TABBY))

Selise, that's right. Is there anything about Selise that makes you want more than just co-parenting?

((DEVAUGHN))

What'chu mean?

((TABBY))

There's no part of you that wants to explore a relationship with her?

((DEVAUGHN))

A relationship? You mean like being with her?

((TABBY))

Yeah.

(Brief pause)

((DEVAUGHN))

I don't know. (Confusion) Are we supposed to do that because she's pregnant? What am I supposed to

do?

((TABBY))

Do you like her?

((DEVAUGHN))

Do I like her? What'chu mean?

((TABBY))

Do you like her? Do you think there's something special about her, like Malachi thinks that there's something special about me?

((DEVAUGHN))

Oh...Uh...Nah, I don't know. I mean, Selise is cool. She's a good person. I like her more that I've gotten to know her. But am I in love with her? Nah, not at all.

((TABBY))

I'm not talking about being in love. I'm saying, do you think that you could build something with her?

((DEVAUGHN))

Um...

((TABBY))

Oh my god. Devaughn, listen. You know how you come over and you talk to me about stuff?

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah.

((TABBY))

So why don't you do the same with her? Have her come to your place and just talk to her. I mean, if y'all ain't sleeping together, it should be easy to talk. Get to know her on a personal level.

((DEVAUGHN))

But we have talked though.

((TABBY))

Take out all of the nights that y'all had sex, right? Have you ever spent more than two hours with her?

((DEVAUGHN))

Without sex?

((TABBY))

Yes.

((DEVAUGHN))

Nah...Damn, Tabby. We've never spent two hours together without sex.

((TABBY))

Devaughn, she's going to be the mother of your child. Think about how sad that is.

(Brief pause)

((TABBY))

I went to the church last week. I also went to the women's bible study too.

((DEVAUGHN))

You turning into a Jesus-freak now?

((TABBY))

Stop saying that.

((DEVAUGHN))

And Mac put you up to that?

((TABBY))

He didn't put me up to anything. I wanted to go.

((DEVAUGHN))

Alright.

(Brief, awkward pause)

((TABBY))

(Sarcasm)

What, Devaughn?

((DEVAUGHN))

Nah, nothing.

((TABBY))

I'm crazy because I want to go to church?

((DEVAUGHN))

I ain't say you was crazy!

((TABBY))

Yeah, but you got quiet. I know why you got quiet.

((DEVAUGHN))

Listen, I'm not judging. Whatever you want to do with your life, is your business. I'm just your boy, I ain't hating.

((TABBY))

So why don't you come with me? Malachi really wants you to attend too.

((DEVAUGHN))

Mac knows better.

((TABBY))

What's your deal with church? Why can't you go to one service?

((DEVAUGHN))

This shit isn't real, Tabby. Jesus, and all that. That shit don't exist.

((TABBY))

How do you know if you've never been there?

((DEVAUGHN))

Been where?

((TABBY))

Been to church. You say it's not real, right? How do you know that?

((DEVAUGHN))

I don't wanna talk about this. I don't wanna say some shit that's going to offend you. (Playful) Since you love Jesus now.

((TABBY))

Oh my god.

((DEVAUGHN))

(Sarcasm)

I don't think you're supposed to say that when you love Jesus.

((TABBY))

I'm gonna smack the shit out of you, Devaughn. (Laughter from Devaughn) How can you hate something that you know nothing about?

((DEVAUGHN))

Who says that I don't know about it?

((TABBY))

You clearly don't.

((DEVAUGHN))

Look, I'll put it to you like this. I've been to church. I saw a preacher preach about how much he loved Jesus. And how we should love Jesus. All while he was fucking three of ladies in the church who weren't his wife. And stealing from the collection plates and buying a bunch of bullshit.

((TABBY))

That's one bad preacher. Not every preacher is like that.

((DEVAUGHN))

Just most of them?

((TABBY))

That's not true, Devaughn.

((DEVAUGHN))

So you believe in all those mega-churches? And them preachers being millionaires? All that shit seems right to you?

((TABBY))

It doesn't. But it's not about that. You can't control what other people do. They'll be judged when their time comes.

((DEVAUGHN))

Judged by who? God?

((TABBY))

Yes.

((DEVAUGHN))

Tabby, you're too smart for all of this. I've never understood that. It be the smartest people who eat that shit up.

((TABBY))

So that should tell you something, Devaughn.

((DEVAUGHN))

It does tell me something. It tells me that you can get people to believe in anything. Even the smart ones.

((TABBY))

Wow, you are so jaded. You definitely need to be sprayed down with holy water.

((DEVAUGHN))

Nah, I just see through the bullshit. Come on, Tabby. Look at some of the stuff in the bible. Adam and Eve? Really? So, you're telling me that snakes can talk back then, but they can't talk now?

((TABBY))

It's a metaphor, Devaughn. Shouldn't you be smart enough to know that?

((DEVAUGHN))

I'm not living my life to a metaphor.

((TABBY))

Who said you had to?

((DEVAUGHN))

You. And Mac if he's serious about this shit. You can't get closer to god without reading the bible, right? It's just a book with stories. None of it is real.

((TABBY))

All you're doing is deflecting.

((DEVAUGHN))

What does that mean?

((TABBY))

You're only giving me reasons why you think it's

bullshit. But guess what? Malachi doesn't think that it's bullshit. He's trying to change his life. You, of all people, should be championing that.

((DEVAUGHN))

Yo, I want Mac to change his life. I hate the fact that this nigga is locked up. Mac ain't the dude for that. All of these other bum-ass niggas that we hang with and Mac is the one doing time. It's stupid. So you're wrong, I am championing it. He just don't need Jesus to do that shit.

((TABBY))

So what does he need?

((DEVAUGHN))

He needs a good job, and a stable environment.

((TABBY))

And how is he going to achieve that when he comes home? He'll be coming home to the same shit that got him locked up. At least the word is strong enough to guide him through all of the bullshit. Do you know how hard it's going to be to find a good job with a felony on his record?

((DEVAUGHN))

(Sarcasm)

So, if he prays enough, god will find him a job?

((TABBY))

I hate you right now. (Devaughn laughter) I'm so mad that you think this is funny.

((DEVAUGHN))

Look, if that's what you and Mac want to do then that's cool. That's y'all business. I'll just be

here over being a heathen, chilling.

((TABBY))

What happens if it effects your relationship with Malachi?

((DEVAUGHN))

It won't. Mac knows the kind of dude that I am. He understands that I have his back.

((TABBY))

Okay.

((DEVAUGHN))

Why? Has Mac said something about it?

((TABBY))

Nope.

((DEVAUGHN))

You sure?

((TABBY))

Yup. All he told me was that he knew that you weren't going to be easy to convince. He knows how you feel.

((DEVAUGHN))

Oh, alright.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

DEVAUGHN OPENS THE DOOR FOR SELISE...

DEVAUGHN

What's up? Come in. (Selise enters) Your stomach gets bigger every time I see you.

SELISE

(Sarcasm)

Yeah, that's what happens when you're pregnant. My back is killing me.

DEVAUGHN

Well have a seat. You want something to drink or something?

SELISE

(Takes a seat on sofa)

No. I'm good. What's up? Why did you want to see me?

DEVAUGHN

You have somewhere have to be, or did you have to time for a minute?

SELISE

I'm here. What's good?

DEVAUGHN

I've been thinking, right? Selise, I think that we should talk.

SELISE

About?

DEVAUGHN

Us. I was talking to Tabby, right?

SELISE

You talk to her a lot?

DEVAUGHN

It wasn't supposed to be like that at first. But, I guess we got kinda close.

SELISE

Y'all are close now?

DEVAUGHN

We not wild close, but we talk a lot.

SELISE

How come you don't talk to me the way that you talk to her? (Sarcasm) I mean, I'm only your son's mother.

DEVAUGHN

Well that's why you're here. I figured we could talk.

SELISE

Okay, good. What do you want to talk about?

DEVAUGHN

Alright, so, Tabby asked me about us. And then she was like, *"Did you ever spend time with her when y'all weren't doing shit?"* And I was like, *"Damn, I don't think we have."*

SELISE

I know. That's because it was all about sex to you.

DEVAUGHN

But it's not anymore though.

SELISE

I know.

DEVAUGHN

It's about the baby now. It ain't about that anymore.

SELISE

I get it.

DEVAUGHN

So, I'm saying, if it ain't about sex, then why aren't we able to talk and kick it, you know?

SELISE

I never had a problem talking to you. You seemed like you never wanted to talk to me.

DEVAUGHN

My bad, Selise. I wasn't trying to make you feel used or nothing like that.

SELISE

I guess I can't be mad. I was the one who started it. I asked to come home with you. You didn't put a gun to my head.

DEVAUGHN

It's easy to get caught up when you're doing shit. It's like sex becomes the bigger priority then getting to know a person.

SELISE

You're right.

DEVAUGHN

I never had girls who were just friends that I wasn't doing shit with. You and Tabby are the only two. It takes time to adjust, you know?

SELISE

So the only reason that we're doing not anything is because I got pregnant?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, because I was going to stop before you told me about it anyway.

SELISE

You were going to stop what?

DEVAUGHN

I wasn't going to call you to smash anymore.

SELISE

Why not? You didn't want me anymore?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I just felt like neither of us was really looking for that anymore.

SELISE

Why did you feel like that?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know, it was just some shit that I was feeling. (No response from Selise) Am I wrong?

SELISE

I don't know, Devaughn. I can't make you want me.

DEVAUGHN

It's not about that though.

SELISE

It is about that. You're telling me that you didn't want me anymore. How else am I supposed to take that?

DEVAUGHN

I'm not taking shots at you, Selise. It ain't like that.

SELISE

Okay, so, it's whatever then.

DEVAUGHN

See? That's what I'm talking about. We're never on the same page. How are we supposed to raise a baby if we can't see things eye-to-eye?

SELISE

So you're saying you don't wanna be around now?

DEVAUGHN

I swear to god. Selise, that's not what I'm saying. Listen to what I'm telling you. It wasn't like I was trying to play games with you. Why would I keep asking you to smash if I was feeling like you didn't want that either?

SELISE

So what made you feel like I didn't want you anymore?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know. That's the vibe that I was getting. Am I wrong?

SELISE

No, you're not wrong. I didn't want that anymore.

DEVAUGHN

So why are you fighting me on this then?

SELISE

I'm not fighting you on anything. I'm just saying what it is.

DEVAUGHN

Can we be really real for a second?

SELISE

I'm always real, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, you say that.

SELISE

You're telling me that I'm not real with you?

DEVAUGHN

Obviously I feel different if I had to come that conclusion myself, Selise.

SELISE

What conclusion?

DEVAUGHN

That you didn't want to smash anymore. You never said that when we was doing what we were doing.

SELISE

Devaughn, you knew why I didn't say anything.

DEVAUGHN

No, I didn't. All you said was that you liked me. That was it.

SELISE

That's the answer though. I liked you, Devaughn. If I say to you, *"I don't wanna fuck anymore. I want to be something more."* You wouldn't have stayed around.

DEVAUGHN

I'm saying, that's what I'm trying to make up for now.

SELISE

Make up for what?

DEVAUGHN

Because you're a good person. I would've been wrong to walk away.

SELISE

Not good enough. I couldn't even make you like me.

DEVAUGHN

That's every girl though. I'm not like that, Selise.

SELISE

What do you mean?

DEVAUGHN

You've said you had boyfriends in the past, right?

SELISE

Yeah.

DEVAUGHN

I've never had a girlfriend. Not a real one. I had chicks that I might've talked to or hung with on some smash shit. But I ain't never had no girl that I was like, "*Yo, that's my girlfriend.*"

SELISE

Get out of here, Devaughn!

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?!

SELISE

Don't sit here and tell me that you never had a

girlfriend! I'm not beat for that!

DEVAUGHN

Beat for what?! Why would I lie?

SELISE

Devaughn? You're telling me that you never had girls in school?

DEVAUGHN

I dropped out. I told you that.

SELISE

You never told me that you dropped out.

DEVAUGHN

I told you that I met Alvin. He let me stay until I was old enough to find a job. I dropped out at fifteen because I started working.

SELISE

Okay, so you were working when you was younger. That doesn't mean that you couldn't have had a girlfriend.

DEVAUGHN

Why would I lie about that? What's the point?

(Brief pause)

SELISE

So how come you never wanted a girlfriend?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know.

SELISE

Have you ever liked a girl? And I'm talking about really liking someone?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, when I was like eighteen.

SELISE

Who was the girl?

DEVAUGHN

Some broad who was a waitress at the place across from my old job. But I was too young for her. She wouldn't give a nigga a chance.

SELISE

How old was she?

DEVAUGHN

I don't even remember.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

It's hard to believe you never had a girlfriend, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

Why?

SELISE

You probably been with a bunch of hoes, haven't you?

DEVAUGHN

I've had my fair share, but none of them were girlfriends. You know my niggas, ask them. Ask Jo-Jo, or Shyheem, or Mino. They've never heard me talk about a girl as my girlfriend.

SELISE

So when you were younger and you were staying with Alvin, he never talked to you about women?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, Alvin was like scarred or something. He was divorced before I lived with him. He never played around with women like that. He never even bought a girl to the house. When I got older he told that he would fuck with hookers and meet them at hotels. I'm looking at him like, *"Why you just couldn't bring them home? It was your house."* He was still holding on to the shit that his ex-wife did to him.

SELISE

What did she do to him?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know, he never wanted to talk about it. I get the feeling that she was on some bullshit, but, who knows?

SELISE

I forgot you never had family like that. Okay, I

can see it. I believe you. Wait, but, Alvin was a teacher, wasn't he? He was cool with you dropping out?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, you would think he'd riff about that. But Alvin never pushed me about shit. He would ask me what I wanted to do, and I'd make the decision. He was the most supportive dead-beat I ever met. (Selise laughter) Nah, real shit. Alvin was great, but he didn't give a fuck about what I did.

SELISE

Maybe he felt that you were smart enough to make your own decisions?

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

And look how that turned out.

SELISE

(Chuckle)

He did something right. I mean, you have your own house. You have a car. You have a stable job. You pay your bills. Alvin wasn't half bad at parenting, I guess.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, Alvin was cool. I was lucky that he was there. He taught me how to save money.

SELISE

You probably have good credit, don't you?

DEVAUGHN

It's alright. It's not perfect, but, it's not

terrible.

SELISE

My mom tried to teach me about credit, but I still fucked it up.

DEVAUGHN

(Snigger)

Yeah, it ain't hard to do.

SELISE

So, back to this girlfriend thing. What was it about that girl that you liked from that place compared to everyone else?

DEVAUGHN

I couldn't get her. You want something more when you can't have it.

SELISE

Ain't that the truth? Well, I always said that I wanted to know more about you. I guess I got my wish, huh?

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

You regret it now, don't you?

SELISE

No. It just makes me sad.

DEVAUGHN

Why does it make you sad?

SELISE

You've never had a woman in your life that you actually trusted. Someone that you could be yourself with.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I'm myself with everybody.

SELISE

No. I'm talking about someone that you could tell secrets to. Someone who you weren't scared let shit go with.

DEVAUGHN

Why is that important though?

SELISE

What do you mean? You don't want a woman who you could be close to? (Sarcasm) Not have to be so damn macho all of the time?

DEVAUGHN

I'm not trying to be macho all of the time.

SELISE

(Sarcasm)

Yeah, right.

DEVAUGHN

I'm not.

SELISE

So when was the last time that you cried?

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

The last time I cried?

SELISE

Yeah. When was the last time that you went through something that was really sad?

DEVAUGHN

Mac going away. I ain't cry, but that shit was sad as hell.

SELISE

You miss him?

DEVAUGHN

Of course. That's my nigga.

SELISE

Would you miss me if I wasn't around?

DEVAUGHN

(Playful)

Of course. You my nigga.

(Selise laughter)

SELISE

Oh, I'm your nigga now?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. That's good, right?

SELISE

No, Devaughn! I don't want to be your nigga.

DEVAUGHN

Why?

SELISE

Because I want to be more than that.

DEVAUGHN

Wait. You still like me?

SELISE

What world do you live in?!

DEVAUGHN

Yo, you're wild confusing sometimes. I thought that's how you felt before. I ain't know you still felt that way.

SELISE

Yes, I still feel that way, fool! (Chuckle from Devaughn) I'm carrying your baby. I want to us to be a family.

DEVAUGHN

We're already a family.

SELISE

Not really. Some family we are when you can have any girl that you want up in here.

DEVAUGHN

I ain't worried about no other girls, Selise.

SELISE

Yeah, but you could be.

DEVAUGHN

But I'm not.

SELISE

Okay, so, then worry about me? How about that?

DEVAUGHN

I do worry about you.

SELISE

Yeah, because of the baby!

DEVAUGHN

And I'm wrong for that?!

SELISE

No, but can you please give a fuck about me?! I'm saying, Devaughn, I understand that you don't know love, but let me try to make you feel something. I'm a good woman, I know how to take care of you.

DEVAUGHN

Selise, I don't (Interrupted)

SELISE

Devaughn, just spend time with me like you're doing right now. I promise you, the more time you spend with me, the more you'll start to trust me. I can make you happy. And you already know what it is in the bedroom. (No response from Devaughn) Wait! Hold up! I'm not good in the bedroom now?!

DEVAUGHN

I didn't say that!

SELISE

You got wild quiet, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

I ain't even say anything.

SELISE

You didn't, Devaughn!

(Brief pause)

SELISE

So my pussy ain't good now?!

DEVAUGHN

It's fine, Selise.

SELISE

Fine?! It's fine?!

DEVAUGHN

I ain't mean it like that.

SELISE

Okay, so, it's been awhile and you forgot, right?
I don't know how because it ain't been that long,
but that's fine, I get it.

DEVAUGHN

You're tripping right now.

SELISE

I'm not tripping! So I'm not number one?!

DEVAUGHN

Number one what? In bed?

SELISE

Yes, Devaughn!

DEVAUGHN

It's not about you being number one. I ain't sweating that. It's just...

SELISE

It's just what?!

DEVAUGHN

It got a little boring towards the end.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

My pussy is boring, Devaughn?! For real?!

DEVAUGHN

I shouldn't have said nothing.

SELISE

No, I'm glad you did, Devaughn. Now I know how you really feel.

DEVAUGHN

Come on, Selise, don't bullshit with this. The last time that we fucked you weren't climbing up walls. I know you felt it too. I ain't sitting here tripping, I know I wasn't taking you there. Come on, be real?

SELISE

So, basically, you weren't trying your best to please me?

DEVAUGHN

Did I ever give you an orgasm?

SELISE

Yes, you did.

DEVAUGHN

The last time that we did it?

SELISE

I don't know. I don't remember.

DEVAUGHN

Then apparently I didn't if you don't remember. Am I the best you were ever with?

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

I'm not, right?!

SELISE

(Deep breath)

Okay. You're right, Devaughn. Maybe we both didn't always bring our A-games.

DEVAUGHN

My bad, Selise. I should've been better. Real shit.

SELISE

So then be better.

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?

SELISE

Be better. You're not worried about other girls, right? I damn sure ain't had sex since our last time, so, be better.

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

I don't see it, Selise.

SELISE

I wanna fuck, Devaughn! Is that clear enough?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, Selise, we can't. That's weird.

SELISE

It's weird?!

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. The baby is in there. He can feel that stuff, can't he?

SELISE

Devaughn, your dick isn't *that* big.

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

Word, Selise? For real?

SELISE

You making it seem like you can reach where he's at!

DEVAUGHN

I'm not talking about that. Yo, I hate you right now! (Selise laughter) He can feel when you do stuff, right?

SELISE

He doesn't know what's going on! He's not even full term yet.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, but, I'm saying, I (Interrupted)

SELISE

Forget that I said anything.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I'm not (Interrupted)

SELISE

Come here.

DEVAUGHN

Huh?

SELISE

Hurry up! Come here.

Devaughn approaches Selise. She takes his hand and places it on her stomach...

SELISE

You feel that?

DEVAUGHN

What is that?

SELISE

He's moving.

DEVAUGHN

Wow. Selise, there's really a baby in your stomach.

SELISE

No shit, Devaughn!

DEVAUGHN

Does it hurt when he moves?

SELISE

No.

DEVAUGHN

(Sits down beside her)

Look, I can't make any promises to you, but, I'm here.

SELISE

Promises about what?

DEVAUGHN

About us.

SELISE

About us being together?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

SELISE

Devaughn, you don't even wanna fuck me! How are we gonna be together?

DEVAUGHN

Look, I don't know shit about pregnancy. Alright? I don't know if he can feel us fucking. It just seems weird.

SELISE

It's whatever.

DEVAUGHN

No, it's not whatever. I'm (Interrupted)

SELISE

I'm almost seven months pregnant, and I can't move like that. So if I was boring to you before, it's going to really boring now. So, let's not talk about it.

DEVAUGHN

I can't deal with you.

SELISE

I'm only going off of what you said!

DEVAUGHN

Selise! I'm telling you that I'm trying to be with you. Or at least work on trying to get there. I'm giving you what you want, and now you're like nah. You don't make any damn sense!

SELISE

(Sarcasm)

Well, I'm pregnant, so I'm allowed. (Devaughn playfully shakes his head) Why would you want to be with me if I'm boring, Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

You're taking that way too far. I'm not saying that it was trash, I'm just saying that (Interruption)

SELISE

It is trash if it's boring.

DEVAUGHN

No, it's not trash. Selise, we did shit for a while. I kept coming back, right? I'm only talking about it being boring towards the end.

SELISE

So what do I need to do?

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?

SELISE

What do I need to do to make things less boring?

DEVAUGHN

Make a nigga feel wanted. Not just like some, "*Come over to my crib*" shit. I'm talking about making me feel like you really want me.

SELISE

And how am I supposed to do that?

DEVAUGHN

The way you did when we first met. You was on me that first night. I was like, "*Damn, this girl wants me.*" It felt good.

SELISE

Yeah, but I was drunk though?

DEVAUGHN

So I gotta get you liquored up to tell me what you really feel?

SELISE

Well then you have to do the same thing, Devaughn. Shit, I want to be wanted too. The only thing I ever got from you was, Yo, come (Interruption)

Devaughn softly grabs Selise's face and kisses her...

(Brief pause after the kiss)

SELISE

What was that about?

DEVAUGHN

I'm trying to show you that I'm serious.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

So no bullshit?

DEVAUGHN

No bullshit.

BRIDGEBURY CORRECTIONAL AND REHABILITATION FACILITY

A FEW WEEKS HAVE PASSED. MALACHI IS ASLEEP IN HIS CELL WHEN HE'S AWAKENED BY A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER...

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER CHARACTER

Washington! Wake up!

MALACHI

(Groggy, sits up)

Huh?

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER CHARACTER

Get dressed. You're coming with me.

MALACHI

Alright.

Malachi accompanies the officer to one of the offices inside the facility. He enters the office...

FEMALE CHARACTER

Are you Malachi Washington?

MALACHI

I am.

FEMALE CHARACTER

Have a seat. (Malachi sits down) My name is Wendy Leer. I'm your behavioral-advocate for Bridgeville County. How are things going?

MALACHI

I'm fine. Thank you.

WENDY

How is your time going so far?

MALACHI

It's going.

WENDY

You're in for possession?

MALACHI

That's the charge.

WENDY

What have you been doing with your time?

MALACHI

Working, mostly. I clean from time to time when the CO's need help. And I joined the Brothers' Fellowship as well.

WENDY

Oh, good. You joined Darryl's group?

MALACHI

I did.

WENDY

Good. Are you serious about it?

MALACHI

I am. The warden is allowing me to be baptized on Thursday.

WENDY

Which priest?

MALACHI

His name is Pastor Dutton from a church called Divine, Truth & Knowledge.

WENDY

Where is that located?

MALACHI

It's off of Steinmetz.

WENDY

When did you get Warden Graves approval?

MALACHI

Last Thursday.

WENDY

Good. That'll go a long way with the Board.

MALACHI

Do they still allow work-release?

WENDY

Of course. You just have to be approved.

MALACHI

How does a person get approved?

WENDY

The Board will look into your charges, and your

time here, and make sure that you're doing what you need to do to rehabilitate yourself. That's why the fellowship will help your cause. The Board loves to see our inmates exploring a spiritual path.

MALACHI

What's the process like?

WENDY

You'll meet with three members of the board and they'll ask you questions. If they like your answers, you'll be approved for work-release.

MALACHI

Do you have to have done a specific amount of time to get approved?

WENDY

It all depends on your charges. You're doing a two-year house, right?

MALACHI

Right.

WENDY

Then, probably three to four months.

MALACHI

Okay, good.

WENDY

You'll pass a drug test, right?

MALACHI

Absolutely.

WENDY

Good. Okay, Malachi, I'll go ahead and submit a request date for your board-hearing and you'll hear from me when I get an answer.

MALACHI

Great. Thank you.

WENDY

Have a good day.

MALACHI

You too.

PHONE CONVERSATION

MALACHI & DEVAUGHN

((MALACHI))

Yo, do you think your job will hire me even though I got a felony?

((DEVAUGHN))

It ain't gonna hurt to ask. I'll find out tomorrow morning.

((MALACHI))

I just had a meeting with my advocate. I'm getting a hearing for the work-release board soon.

((DEVAUGHN))

That's what I'm trying to hear.

((MALACHI))

I gotta find a job though, Dev.

((DEVAUGHN))

Don't worry about that. Even if my job don't hire you, we'll find you somewhere that does.

((MALACHI))

Where though? Who's gonna hire me with a [Felony] on me, fam? Other than McDonald's, or Walmart, or some shit.

((DEVAUGHN))

Are you telling me that Mickey's ain't better than sitting in a cell all day? At least you get to eat food that the rats ain't touch first.

((MALACHI))

That's facts.

((DEVAUGHN))

I'll have Tabby look around for you. She went to the church for you, she won't have a problem trying to find a job for you.

((MALACHI))

Yeah, let me know what she says when you talk to her.

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

THE NEXT EVENING DEVAUGHN ARRIVES AT TABBY'S RESIDENCE...

DEVAUGHN

Mac told me to chill with the showing up unannounced. Why didn't you tell me it bothered you?

TABBY

I didn't think about it until he asked me. It doesn't bother me, just don't come over if I'm sleeping.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

TABBY

So what's up?

DEVAUGHN

There's a chance that Mac could get approved for work-release. He's gonna have an issue with the background check though. Do you know anyone other than Mickey's that hire someone with a felony?

TABBY

Walmart.

DEVAUGHN

Them too.

TABBY

He better apply at Walmart. You can't be on a high-horse when you have felony charges on your background.

DEVAUGHN

He knows that. He's just looking for something

different.

TABBY

I'll look around.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

TABBY

How's the baby?

DEVAUGHN

So far so good.

TABBY

She about ready to go?

DEVAUGHN

She's getting close.

TABBY

Are you ready?

DEVAUGHN

Hell no. (Chuckle from Tabby) You know I ain't ready.

TABBY

Lord only knows.

DEVAUGHN

I'm nervous, Tabby.

TABBY

That's understandable. You'll adjust eventually.

DEVAUGHN

I've never even held a baby before.

TABBY

Which hospital is she delivering at? Clinton & Green?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

TABBY

They have classes for first time parents. They'll walk you through everything.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

TABBY

I ordered something. It should be here in a few days.

DEVAUGHN

What did you order?

TABBY

A couple outfits. Nothing crazy but I thought they were cute.

DEVAUGHN

Wait, you bought shit for my baby?

TABBY

Yeah.

DEVAUGHN

Damn, Tabby, you didn't have to do that.

TABBY

I wanted to.

DEVAUGHN

I appreciate that. Thank you.

TABBY

Don't thank me, you haven't seen the clothes yet.
You might hate them.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, not at all. I wasn't expecting you to get
anything.

TABBY

I know. What are you gonna name him?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know. Selise ain't thought of one yet.

TABBY

You don't want to name your first son?

DEVAUGHN

I want his middle name to be Malachi. She can have
the first name.

TABBY

Really, Devaughn? (Sarcasm) Are you gonna get Malachi's face tattooed on you too?

DEVAUGHN

If something happened to him, yeah.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

Y'all are like children.

DEVAUGHN

He'd do the same thing. That's just man shit.
(Playful) You wouldn't understand.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

I guess.

DEVAUGHN

So, if Mac gets work-release, you know he could get furloughed, right?

TABBY

What's furloughed?

DEVAUGHN

He'll be able to spend weekends outside of the jail.

TABBY

Really? They'll let him do that?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, that's why we're trying to get him to work-release.

TABBY

Oh.

DEVAUGHN

Would it make you feel different if you were able to see him on the weekends?

TABBY

What do you mean, "*feel different*"?

DEVAUGHN

Mac gets that you ain't trying to be with him while he's locked up. But if he could see you on the weekends, y'all could spend time together.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

And we could go to church.

DEVAUGHN

(Glares at Tabby, Tabby laughs)

Yeah, Tabby.

TABBY

Still not open to that idea, huh? (No response from Devaughn) I get it. You still need some time, huh? Okay. Well, listen, like I told Malachi, I'm not making any promises. I'm not in a rush to be with anyone. I enjoy being single.

DEVAUGHN

I hate when y'all do that.

TABBY

Do what?

DEVAUGHN

Say that bullshit about being happy when you're single. You know damn well you aren't more happy being alone, then being with a nigga that treats you right. If you had someone to hold you, and take care of you, and do the shit that you like, you'd take that over being single. Get that bullshit the fuck up out of here.

TABBY

You don't understand. Every guy that I've been with has been on some real bullshit. Either they were cheaters, or abusive, or (Interrupted)

DEVAUGHN

Mac ain't niggas from your past, Tabby.

TABBY

I'm not saying that he is, but we're not gonna sit here and act like Malachi has a lot going for him. I have my own place, my own car, my own money, and experience. I bring a lot to the table. Malachi doesn't right now.

DEVAUGHN

So do I. I have a car, I have a stupid-ass house payment, and I have a decent job. That shit don't mean nothing. It's just wallpaper.

TABBY

(Confusion)

Wallpaper?

DEVAUGHN

If you and Mac get together, right? Lets say you end up together for twenty years. What difference does it make where you started from? Mac might be a broke nigga now, but he isn't gonna be forever.

(No response from Tabby)

DEVAUGHN

I can't sit here and tell you why you should want this nigga, Tabby. You have to see that shit for yourself. Either you think he's worth your time, or you don't. And right now, you probably don't. It's cool though, shit was a long shot anyway.

TABBY

What do you mean?

DEVAUGHN

You was always honest about what you felt. It wasn't like you were gonna magically believe that this nigga is the truth. Shit takes time. I get it. Mac just felt like it was crunch-time because you could meet anybody at any second.

TABBY

I'm not rushing into a relationship, Devaughn. Malachi is a good guy, I do like him a little bit, but I can't just say, "*Yeah, Malachi, getting to know you doesn't matter. Let's be together.*" I don't work like that. Would I like to spend more time with him? Sure. But I can't get caught up over

a man who I don't really know.

DEVAUGHN

But I'm saying, are you willing to talk to him? If he gets out, and shows you that he's real, would you give him a chance?

TABBY

Maybe. It all depends on what things are like after he gets out.

DEVAUGHN

All together?

TABBY

Yeah. Work-release isn't going to be enough. I need more time than a weekend.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

TABBY

So what do you get out of this, Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?

TABBY

Best case scenario, Malachi and I do get together. What does that do for you?

DEVAUGHN

What do you mean, "*What does it do for me?*" Mac is my man. I get to see him happy. He's never been happy with a girl before. Not long term anyway.

TABBY

He's never been happy with a girl before?

DEVAUGHN

Mac has had girlfriends in the past, but he's never been in love before. He's never been with someone who kept his attention long enough to be serious to him. Maybe you're different.

TABBY

Well, I am different. I'm not like the majority of these knuckle-headed girls out here.

DEVAUGHN

Every girl says that.

TABBY

Yeah but Malachi isn't chasing every girl, is he?

DEVAUGHN

(Snigger)

Point taken.

TABBY

How did you and Malachi meet?

DEVAUGHN

Through my boy, Jo-Jo. We were in foster care together. Jo got out and started to going to school. He met Mac there. He told me how cool Mac was. When I met him, we just clicked up.

TABBY

How long ago was this?

DEVAUGHN

When I met Mac? I don't know, ten, eleven years ago.

TABBY

And you been tight ever since? (Devaughn nods his head) Where were you the night that the car thing happened?

DEVAUGHN

I don't remember. I know that I ain't talk to Mac much that day. I found out he got locked up through some girl, I think. I don't know.

TABBY

Malachi said he wishes that you would've been there that night.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, shit would've been different.

TABBY

Why do you say that?

DEVAUGHN

Because he wouldn't have got arrested.

TABBY

Why? You would've stole the car?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I would've checked everything. Mac didn't think to look through the car to see what was in there. I would've took it to the garage, checked it out, then drove it to the dock.

TABBY

How long were y'all stealing cars?

DEVAUGHN

Maybe a year. But it's not like you're thinking. We ain't do it all of the time. We would get a call, and then, you know. That shit wasn't every day. Mac just had bad luck.

TABBY

Well if you knew to take it to a garage, why didn't he?

DEVAUGHN

He says that he wasn't thinking. When you're boosting cars, you're not thinking wild rational. You're trying to get to where you're going so you can get the fuck up off of the road. It don't take long for a person to realize their shit is missing. From the point that they call the police, it's crunch-time.

TABBY

Y'all didn't take them in the middle of the night when people would be asleep?

DEVAUGHN

Hell no, it's minimal traffic at that time, and cops be out. A stolen car would stick out like a white girl in a room full of Mexicans. We'd be out around eight, nine o'clock looking for cars.

TABBY

Y'all were out of your minds for even *trying* to steal cars.

DEVAUGHN

That's facts. You do dumb shit for money when you're young. On my mother I wouldn't do that shit now for a million dollars.

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

So you gave up your life of crime, huh?

DEVAUGHN

Hell yeah, Mac is gone right now because of it. I got a baby on the way, I'm not fucking around with no dumb shit.

TABBY

Good.

A MONTAGE OF SCENES BEGIN SHOWING MALACHI'S BAPTISM CEREMONY. AFTERWARDS, MALACHI IS CONVERSING WITH PASTOR DUTTON

PASTOR DUTTON

So what are they telling you?

MALACHI

I may be able to get approved for work-release. If I can get work-release, I can get a furlough.

PASTOR DUTTON

Oh, so you may be able to attend Sunday service if they grant you work-release?

MALACHI

If they grant me the furlough, then yes.

PASTOR DUTTON

Beautiful. And if you are granted a furlough, who would you be staying with?

MALACHI

My friend Devaughn.

PASTOR DUTTON

And you'll stay out of trouble staying with Devaughn, right?

MALACHI

Trust me, Pastor, I'm done with the nonsense. I'm never trying to come back here again.

PASTOR DUTTON

Good.

MALACHI

Pastor, I was wondering. You wouldn't need any help at the church, would you?

PASTOR DUTTON

What do you mean?

MALACHI

I'm trying to find a job, but I just feel like I'm hampered by this felony. Everyone is telling me McDonald's, or Walmart, but I (Interrupted)

PASTOR DUTTON

Don't want to work at McDonald's or Walmart. I get it. I'll tell you what, I ask around the church and let you know. I know one the members of the

congregation owns a restaurant. We'll get you straightened out.

MALACHI

Thank you, Pastor. I really appreciate all of your help. You've stuck your neck out for me and I won't forget it.

PASTOR DUTTON

All praises due to god. I'm just the vessel. I know that you want to change your life, and you've already taken the first step by accepting Jesus Christ as your lord and savior. He'll be the light that lead towards good. Just stay on the path.

MALACHI

I will. I see it, Pastor. Through Brother Darryl, and yourself, and the other brothers in the Fellowship, I realize that there's a void in my life that I was always trying to fill. My father was absent for most of my life, and I think it had an effect on me as far as people that I surrounded myself with.

PASTOR DUTTON

It happens, Malachi. I came from a single parent home myself.

MALACHI

Really?

PASTOR DUTTON

Oh, yeah. My father died when I was an adolescent. He was into drugs and it got him killed. My mother had to raise my two brothers and me on her own. I know what you're going through, Malachi. I understand the pain. But you also need to understand that things happen in life, and god has a plan. You stay strong in your faith and it'll get

you through any hardships that might come your way. You've been looking to fill a void, and unfortunately it's gotten you here. But, through the grace of god, you've found the error in your ways, and you're walking toward him. That's all that matters.

MALACHI

I feel different, Pastor. I don't want to sound corny, but waking up every morning just feels different. I enjoy going to the fellowship, and trying to get other brothers to come. I don't know how to explain it, but it just feels different. I know that it don't make a lot of sense.

PASTOR DUTTON

You're a part of something, Malachi. It feels different because it is. You haven't even been to the church. Just wait until you get there.

MALACHI

I can't wait to come.

PASTOR DUTTON

We can't wait to have you. Just keep doing what you're doing. Stay into your bible, keep yourself clean as far as the distractions in here, and most important, stay positive. God's got your back.

(Malachi nods his head)

ANOTHER MONTAGE OF SCENES BEGINS SHOWING MALACHI AT HIS HEARING WITH THE REHABILITATION COUNCIL. THE SCENES SHOW MALACHI ANSWERING QUESTIONS FROM THE COUNCIL MEMBERS. AFTERWARDS. MALACHI IS SITTING IN THE LOBBY AWAITING THE RESULTS

Malachi is approached by Wendy
Leer...

WENDY

Okay, Mr. Washington. The board has informed me
that you'll be approved.

MALACHI

Really?! I got approved?!

WENDY

That's correct.

MALACHI

Yes, god is good! Thank you, Ms. Leer.

WENDY

Don't thank me, you did all of the work. But make
sure you thank your pastor for the letter that he
wrote. That's what really pushed it over the top.

MALACHI

Oh, I will. Trust me.

WENDY

I tell all of the inmates that work-release isn't
immediate. It'll take a few days to get you
processed. Since today is Tuesday, you're probably
looking at next Wednesday or Thursday before you
get in there. And that's if they have a bed open.

MALACHI

Alright.

WENDY

Congratulations, Mr. Washington. Keep yourself together and you won't have to see me again.

MALACHI

Thank you. And you won't. I can promise you that.

UPS FULFILLMENT CENTER

TWO WEEKS LATER, DEVAUGHN IS AT WORK WHEN HE RECEIVES A CALL ON HIS CELL-PHONE...

((DEVAUGHN))

Hello?

((AMIRAH))

Hello, Devaughn. This is Amirah, Selise's mother. I just wanted to let you know that Selise's water has just broken and we are headed to the hospital right now.

((DEVAUGHN))

Her water broke?! I thought we had a few more weeks?

((AMIRAH))

Babies come when they want, Devaughn.

((DEVAUGHN))

I'm on my way. I'm leaving work right now.

((AMIRAH))

See you soon.

LATER THAT AFTERNOON, DEVAUGHN IS IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM WITH SELISE. DEVAUGHN IS HOLDING HIS SON AS SELISE SLEEPS. THE NURSE ENTERS THE ROOM...

NURSE CHARACTER

Can I take him to the nursery for a bit for Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

(He places the baby in the bed-cart)

NURSE CHARACTER

He's so precious.

DEVAUGHN

Thank you.

NURSE CHARACTER

I'll bring him back in a little while. We want to see if we can get him to nurse for you guys.

DEVAUGHN

Okay.

Devaughn exits the room and walks downstairs to the lobby...

((TABBY))

Hello?

((DEVAUGHN))

What's good?

((TABBY))

I'm at the store, what's up?

((DEVAUGHN))

I just wanted to tell you that the baby came.

((TABBY))

The baby came?! What?! Isn't it early?

((DEVAUGHN))

Hell yeah, he's two weeks early. They're checking him every forty-five seconds, but he's doing okay though.

((TABBY))

Aww! Congratulations, Devaughn.

((DEVAUGHN))

Thank you.

((TABBY))

What did she name him?

((DEVAUGHN))

Tayshaun.

((TABBY))

Tayshaun. I like Tayshaun. Did you learn how to hold him?

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah, Selise taught me. He's so little, Tabby. It's crazy right now.

((TABBY))

What time are visiting hours?

((DEVAUGHN))

I think until like eight or nine.

((TABBY))

Well find out so I can come see him tomorrow.

((DEVAUGHN))

Alright. Cool.

((TABBY))

Have you talked to Malachi yet?

((DEVAUGHN))

Nah, he hasn't called yet. If he calls you, tell him what's up.

((TABBY))

I will.

After the call, Devaughn goes back to Selise's room. He enters and sees Selise and Jo-Jo conversing...

SELISE

There you are.

DEVAUGHN

I had to make a call real quick. (To Jo-Jo) What's up, Jo?

JO-JO

Congratulations, fam! I had to come see my nephew!

SELISE

Where is he, Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

They took him to the nursery. They said they'd bring him back later. (To Jo-Jo) But we could go see him in the nursery though?

JO-JO

Let's go.

Devaughn and Jo-Jo exit the room and walk over to the nursery where Tayshaun is located...

DEVAUGHN

That's him. (Pointing) Right there.

JO-JO

Wow, Dee! Your son is here, bro! I can't believe it. He's beautiful though.

DEVAUGHN

Good looking.

JO-JO

So he came early?

DEVAUGHN

Selise was at the crib, chilling. All of the sudden, he was like, "*I'm ready right now.*"

JO-JO

(Chuckle)

He's on his own time. Just like his father.

DEVAUGHN

That's facts.

JO-JO

Mac call you?

DEVAUGHN

Not yet.

JO-JO

He's gonna go crazy when he finds out.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

JO-JO

Everything smooth with you and Selise? Y'all good?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, we're good.

JO-JO

Good. (Quietly) Dev, I don't mean no harm, but one of my girls knows how to administer a DNA test. She said we could get one from CVS or something. I'm saying, it wouldn't hurt to be sure, right?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, Jo. I believe Selise. We're good.

JO-JO

Say no more.

LATER, DEVAUGHN IS NOW BACK IN THE ROOM WITH SELISE...

DEVAUGHN

How are you feeling? You alright?

SELISE

Do I look alright? I just pushed a baby out of my vagina. My body feels stupid.

DEVAUGHN

That shit looked painful. Thank the lord I never gotta go through that.

SELISE

Yeah, men are punks.

DEVAUGHN

You ain't pregnant no more though. That's a good thing, right?

SELISE

Yeah. (Calls for nurse) ((Yes?)) Can I have some ice water, please? ((Sure thing. Be right in.))

DEVAUGHN

I would've gotten it for you.

SELISE

Why? That's her job.

DEVAUGHN

Do you want me to go somewhere so you ain't gotta eat hospital food?

SELISE

Yeah, but I don't know what I want yet. I'll let you know. What time are they bringing the baby in?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know. Soon probably.

(The nurse enters the room)

NURSE CHARACTER

Here's your water, hon.

SELISE

Thank you. Do we get to see the baby soon?

NURSE CHARACTER

Yes, within the next half hour or so. We have to watch the preemies a bit more to make sure everything is okay. You'll have him shortly.

SELISE

Thank you.

NURSE CHARACTER

Devaughn, are you staying with Selise tonight? I can bring in blankets and such if you need them?

DEVAUGHN

(To Selise)

You want me to stay?

SELISE

Yes, Kelly, bring him some blankets please?

KELLY

(Chuckle)

No problem. I'll be back in a sec.

(Exits room)

SELISE

I'm mad that you was trying to leave.

DEVAUGHN

I wasn't trying to leave, I was just asking. Your mom is coming back, right?

SELISE

Not until the morning. I told her to go to work. She was getting on my nerves.

DEVAUGHN

What does she do?

SELISE

Home health care. She stays with some lady who's like eighty. She sleeps most of the night, and my mother watches over her.

DEVAUGHN

Oh. I was thought she was coming back tonight.

SELISE

Even if she was, Tayshaun is your son, not hers. I want you here.

DEVAUGHN

I'm not going nowhere. Except to get you food.

SELISE

Ooh, you know what I want? McHale's.

DEVAUGHN

McHale's? Of course you had to pick a spot on the other side of town.

SELISE

They deliver, don't they?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know.

SELISE

Where's my phone? (Looks around the bed for her cell-phone) Fuck! I think my mom took it.

DEVAUGHN

Why would she take your phone?

SELISE

Because she, (Lifts herself up) oh, here it is. Hold up. ((Hello, do you guys deliver...Oh. Okay thank you.)) He said they deliver within a five-mile radius. What the hell is that about?

DEVAUGHN

You have their number in your phone?

SELISE

Hell yeah! Their food is amazing.

DEVAUGHN

I never had McHale's.

SELISE

(Playful)

You're bugging. You better get your shit together.

DEVAUGHN

Call them back and place your order. I'll go pick it up.

(Knock on room door, Kelly enters)

KELLY

Guess whose back?! Selise, we want to see if he'll latch on. Can you give it a shot?

SELISE

Okay.

KELLY

Here are the blankets, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

Thank you. (To Selise) I'm going down to the car. I'll call you when I get over there and you can tell me what you want.

SELISE

Okay. Thank you.

DEVAUGHN HAS NOW ARRIVED AT MCHALE'S RESTAURANT. HE ENTERS THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PLACES AN ORDER FOR SELISE. AS HE IS WAITING, HE EXITS THE BUILDING AND GETS BACK INTO HIS CAR...

(Devaughn places a call from his cell-phone)

((MALE-VOICE))

Hello?

((DEVAUGHN))

Al, what's up, it's Devaughn?

((ALVIN))

Hey, Devaughn! How are you, son?

((DEVAUGHN))

I can't complain. How are things out there?

((ALVIN))

I won't be out here much longer. I'm taking a professor position in Colorado.

((DEVAUGHN))

No shit? Congratulations.

((ALVIN))

I appreciate it. Gotta go where the money is, right?

((DEVAUGHN))

That's facts.

((ALVIN))

How are things though? You still in Bridgebury?

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah, I'm still here. There's something that I want to tell you though.

((ALVIN))

What's that?

((DEVAUGHN))

I have a son, Al. He was born earlier this morning.

((ALVIN))

You had a son?! Are you serious?!

((DEVAUGHN))

His name is Tayshaun. He came two weeks early but he's here. He's doing alright.

((ALVIN))

Holy shit, Devaughn! Congratulations, son!

((DEVAUGHN))

I'll send a few pictures to your phone. You're a grandfather now.

((ALVIN))

Hey, once I get settled in Denver, I'm gonna fly you out. Are you and his mother together?

((DEVAUGHN))

We're working on it. It's a process, you know?

((ALVIN))

Well, either way, it's a blessing. I'm here if you need me.

((DEVAUGHN))

I appreciate it. Good luck in Colorado.

((ALVIN))

Hey, Devaughn? Listen, if you ever get tired of the city, reach out. I spent a few weeks in Denver interviewing and I think you'd like it. It always good to have options, you know?

((DEVAUGHN))

I gotcha, Al. I'll keep it mind.

((ALVIN))

Send those pictures.

((DEVAUGHN))

Will do.

LATER THAT EVENING, DEVAUGHN AND SELISE ARE CONVERSING...

DEVAUGHN

I spoke to Alvin earlier.

SELISE

Alvin?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, the dude who took me in. I told you
(Interrupted)

SELISE

My bad, I remember now.

DEVAUGHN

Would you ever consider leaving here?

SELISE

Leaving where? Bridgebury?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

SELISE

Hell yeah. I'd love to move to Florida.

DEVAUGHN

Florida?

SELISE

Yeah. The weather out there is ridiculous. It be warm in the wintertime.

DEVAUGHN

You don't see all of the hurricanes that they be getting?

SELISE

Devaughn, it's like sixty degrees in December. I'll take a little rain for that.

DEVAUGHN

A little rain? (Chuckle from Selise) You're bugging.

SELISE

Devaughn, look how beautiful this little boy is.

DEVAUGHN

(Playful)

I hope you remember that when he does something to piss you off.

SELISE

(Caressing her finger over
Tayshaun's abdomen)

We did something right, didn't we?

DEVAUGHN

What time are you going home tomorrow?

SELISE

We're not going home tomorrow. They like to watch preemies for an extra twenty-four hours.

DEVAUGHN

Oh.

SELISE

Did you take off work tomorrow?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I gotta go in.

SELISE

But we have that class tomorrow morning?

DEVAUGHN

Take notes for me. I'll come here right after I get off.

SELISE

Yeah, but I'd rather you be here.

DEVAUGHN

(Lays back in chair)

I gotta go to work. I'll be back right after though.

SELISE

What time do you get off?

DEVAUGHN

Around three.

SELISE

Around three?

DEVAUGHN

There's a truck that has to get loaded at a certain time. Sometimes it's done before three o'clock, sometimes it takes longer.

SELISE

So you can't leave until it gets done?

DEVAUGHN

Right.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

Why did you ask about leaving before?

DEVAUGHN

Alvin took a job in Colorado. He said I'd really like it out there. I figured it would be something to talk about.

SELISE

You want to move to Colorado?

DEVAUGHN

No. But I'm saying, it's always an option.

SELISE

Colorado is cold though, isn't it?

DEVAUGHN

Selise, you're from New York. Stop it.

SELISE

Just because I was born in the cold, doesn't mean I want to stay in the cold!

DEVAUGHN

Like I said, it was just an option.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

I'm saying, if the schools are good out there, we could talk about it.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

A FEW DAYS LATER, DEVAUGHN IS RESTING IN HIS BEDROOM WHEN HIS CELL-PHONE RINGS...

((AUTOMATED FEMALE VOICE))

"You have received a call from a resident at Bridgebury Correctional Facility. To accept this call (Interrupted)

((DEVAUGHN))

Mac?

((MALACHI))

What's good, boy?! What's going on?

((DEVAUGHN))

What's up, Mac? How are you?

((MALACHI))

I'm good, brotha! Tell me the good news, fam!

((DEVAUGHN))

You talking about your nephew? He's here, Mac. He's almost a week old.

((MALACHI))

Yo, I'm so hype right now! I can't wait to see him! I'm sorry I missed his birth, my dude. You know I wanted to be there for that.

((DEVAUGHN))

It wasn't like you wasn't trying to be.

((MALACHI))

Is he good, Dev? All ten fingers and toes and all that?

((DEVAUGHN))

He's good. He came early, but he's here.

((MALACHI))

That makes my whole day, Dev. Things are getting stupid up in here.

((DEVAUGHN))

What happened?

((MALACHI))

They caught some cornball with weed the other day. I'm like, "*Fam, you made it to work-release. You left the jail just to go back for bud?*" Dudes is bugging up in here, Dev. Then, on top of that, we all got in trouble because of him, so they locked down the phone, and the gym, and all that.

((DEVAUGHN))

Niggas is stupid.

((MALACHI))

That's facts! We just got phone privileges back last night. I've *been* wanting to call you. Dudes get on my nerves.

((DEVAUGHN))

So when are you gonna hear about the furlough?

((MALACHI))

Well that's what I wanna talk to you about. My moms don't live in Bridgebury County anymore.

((DEVAUGHN))

Moms moved away?

((MALACHI))

She only moved like twenty minutes out, but she's out of the county now. I can't furlough outside of B-County. You think I could crash with you?

((DEVAUGHN))

Hell yeah. You ain't even gotta ask. What I gotta do?

((MALACHI))

You're gonna get a phone-call from the manager here. His name is Bob Steckle or something. He's going to ask you questions, and run a background check on you. Once all that comes back, I'll get approved for weekends first. After I show them that I can behave, they'll let me stay out three days of the week.

((DEVAUGHN))

Word. So, look, about the job, right?

((MALACHI))

Don't even sweat that, I'm good. Tabby got me the hook-up. I'm gonna be working in a kitchen at that Italian spot of Lennon. It's just washing dishes and all that for the time being, but these clowns are approving it. Plus, I get meals during the day.

((DEVAUGHN))

Oh, you're set then, Mac. That's what I'm trying to hear.

((MALACHI))

Word! Yo, Dev, dudes be in here bragging about leaving to see their girls. I'm sitting here watching Sci-Fi flicks on some stupid stuff. (Chuckle from Devaughn) Like, what the hell is a hobbit anyway?

((DEVAUGHN))

(Snigger)

At least you got television though.

((MALACHI))

It's whatever though because I just need you to talk me up a little bit when this guy calls you.

((DEVAUGHN))

It's a done deal, Mac. Tell dude to call my phone. If I'm at work, I'll get back at him asap. You good on your books?

((MALACHI))

Nah, I'm out. But it's (Interrupted))

((DEVAUGHN))

I'll put you on in a few minutes. You need something for your stomach in there. They have vending machines and all that?

((MALACHI))

They have to because the food is killing young black men in here, Dev. (Devaughn laughter) For real, bro. They called themselves giving us meatloaf yesterday, but I swear on my mother that stuff was pet food.

((DEVAUGHN))

It wouldn't surprise me. I remember O.G. Ron telling me they legit served him dirt from the courtyard. (Malachi laughter) Nothing is surprising.

((MALACHI))

So where's the baby right now? Wait, Dev, what's his name?

((DEVAUGHN))

Tayshaun.

((MALACHI))

Tayshaun? Like the boy that used to run with the Pistons?

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah. It was Selise's choice. I picked the middle name though.

((MALACHI))

What's his middle name?

((DEVAUGHN))

What you think, nigga? Malachi.

((MALACHI))

No, you didn't, fam!

((DEVAUGHN))

Hell yeah. You know what it is.

((MALACHI))

I love you for that! On my life, boy!

((DEVAUGHN))

It's family, that's all.

((MALACHI))

I needed that, Dev. I've been hurting a little lately because things have been moving so slow. Waiting for this board meeting, then waiting to get to work-release. Now waiting to get that furlough.

Time has been killing me. But your son coming into world makes all that worth it. Yo, Dev, he's not gonna need for anything. Once I get straight, Uncle Mac got him.

((DEVAUGHN))

Say no more.

((MALACHI))

They're calling me back, Dev. I'm gonna call you in a few days though. Kiss the baby for me.

((DEVAUGHN))

Alright, Mac. I got you.

SELISE'S APARTMENT

DEVAUGHN OPENS THE DOOR, ALLOWING TABBY TO ENTER...

TABBY

Is that him?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

Devaughn closes the door, then moves closer to Tabby so she can see Tayshaun, who Devaughn is holding...

TABBY

Awww! Look at his little hands! He is so precious!

DEVAUGHN

Thanks.

TABBY

Selise let you keep him by yourself.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, she's just taking a nap.

TABBY

Oh. Y'all staying together now?

DEVAUGHN

I've been coming over every day to help out.

TABBY

Wait, this isn't your place?

DEVAUGHN

Oh, nah. This is Selise's place. My house is about ten minutes from here.

TABBY

Oh. Did you tell her that you invited me over?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, she knew.

(Tayshaun begins to cry)

DEVAUGHN

He's hungry. You can come in the living room.

They enter the living area. Devaughn
grabs a bottle of milk from the coffee
table...

TABBY

Wait. Can I feed him? Do you mind?

SELISE

Yeah, you just gotta wash your hands. Selise be
tripping.

TABBY

No, she's right. Where's the bathroom?

DEVAUGHN

You can use the kitchen. It's right there.

TABBY

Okay.

DEVAUGHN

(To Tayshaun)

It's okay, baby. She's coming. Just hold on, we're
gonna feed you.

Tabby re-enters scene. Devaughn
gently passes Tayshaun to her, and
she begins to feed him...

TABBY

(To Tayshaun)

Hi, sweetheart. My name is Tabby. It's so nice to meet you. (To Devaughn) He has your nose.

DEVAUGHN

That's what Selise said.

TABBY

She's right. You don't see it?

DEVAUGHN

Not really.

TABBY

No, he definitely has your nose.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

Are you sleeping at all?

DEVAUGHN

We do every other night.

TABBY

What do you mean?

DEVAUGHN

We trade nights to wake up when he has to feed.

TABBY

Oh, okay. Y'all are working together. Way to go, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

I told you I'd be cool.

TABBY

I know.

(Brief pause as Devaughn focuses his attention on the television)

TABBY

Are you changing diapers?

DEVAUGHN

I ain't got a choice.

TABBY

I like Selise.

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

You would.

(Tabby laughter)

TABBY

I can't get over how precious he is. You're so lucky, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

Lucky? You haven't changed his diapers yet.

TABBY

Stop it. It takes two minutes then it's over.

DEVAUGHN

Mh-hm.

TABBY

The joys of parenthood.

DEVAUGHN

I can't wait 'til you have a baby so I can rag on you about changing diapers.

TABBY

I don't mind changing diapers.

(Selise enters the scene)

SELISE

Devaughn, why do you have the TV up so loud?

DEVAUGHN

Selise, this is Tabby. Tabby, Selise.

SELISE

Oh, I didn't even see you. I'm sorry.

TABBY

It's okay. Your son is amazing.

SELISE

He is, right? Thank you.

DEVAUGHN

(To Selise)

I work in a loud-ass warehouse all day. My hearing is shot. My bad.

SELISE

(Sarcasm)

God, why are you so old already?

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

What? I can't hear you.

SELISE

(Chuckle)

I'm gonna hurt you. (To Tabby) You hungry?

TABBY

No, I'm fine. Thank you.

SELISE

What do you want to eat?

DEVAUGHN

You got cheese & bread?

SELISE

I think so.

DEVAUGHN

Grilled cheese.

SELISE

I just made grilled cheese for you the other day?

DEVAUGHN

You asked me what I wanted, right?

SELISE

Why do you want the same thing?

DEVAUGHN

I like grilled cheese. Wait, you have bacon?

SELISE

I don't eat pork. You know that.

DEVAUGHN

My bad. I forgot about that.

SELISE

What do you want to go with it?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know. Whatever you wanna make.

SELISE

I have tomato soup, I think.

DEVAUGHN

Hell yeah, that'll work.

SELISE

Okay.

(Selise exits scene, Devaughn looks
over at Tabby who is smiling)

DEVAUGHN

What happened?

TABBY

She's cooking for you?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

TABBY

Aww! You guys are a little family, aren't you?

DEVAUGHN

I think so.

TABBY

Good for you, Devaughn. She's nice.

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

Yeah, she's alright.

TABBY

Just alright, huh?

(Selise re-enters scene)

SELISE

(To Devaughn)

I thought that there was more bread than this.
(Shows bag of bread, almost empty) If you wanna go
to the store, I'll make it.

DEVAUGHN

I'll go to the store. What else do you need?

SELISE

Hold on, let me check.

(Exits scene)

TABBY

(To Devaughn)

Do you burp him right after he's finished eating?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, I'll do it. He'll gag on you.

TABBY

It's okay, I'm not afraid of that. Just give me a
towel.

DEVAUGHN

(Points to sofa)

It's right by that pillow right there.

TABBY

This blue towel?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

(Brief pause as Tabby begins to
gently tap Tayshaun)

DEVAUGHN

You already ate? You not hungry?

TABBY

No, I had a big lunch.

DEVAUGHN

You feel like coming to the store with me? It's not
far.

TABBY

Where? Foodsaver?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

TABBY

I hate Foodsaver.

DEVAUGHN

That's facts. They're cheap though.

TABBY

I know, but there's always a million people in there.

DEVAUGHN

I know. Sometimes I go in before work. It don't be nobody in there.

TABBY

What time is that?

DEVAUGHN

Five.

TABBY

That's what time I set my alarm for.

DEVAUGHN

I be in and out though. It's better than waiting in the line for eighty-seven years when you get off work.

TABBY

That's true. You know they just built that other supermarket on Cortez?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, but that shit is all the way on the other side of town.

TABBY

Better than Foodsaver.

(Selise re-enters scene)

SELISE

(To Devaughn)

You're almost out of orange juice.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

And I need flower too.

DEVAUGHN

Bread and flower. That's it?

SELISE

Yeah, I'll go tomorrow if I need something else.

TABBY

Selise, I know that you don't know me like that, but if you ever need a sitter, I'd watch Tayshaun. I'm not crazy or nothing. Devaughn trusts me.

DEVAUGHN

That's facts.

SELISE

Okay. I'll let you know. Thank you.

TABBY

You're welcome. (Looks at Devaughn) It'd be nice for you to take Selise out every once in a while.

SELISE

It would be nice, Tabby. (Sarcasm) (To Devaughn) Thank you!

DEVAUGHN

(Playful)

Wait, I gotta take you out too?

SELISE

I swear to god I'm gonna kill you.

(Devaughn laughter)

BRIDGEBURY CORRECTIONAL WORK-RELEASE FACILITY

MALACHI IS AWAKENED BY ONE OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS...

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Washington?! Wake up. You gotta see Strabler.

MALACHI

(Confusion)

Who's Strabler?

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Your manager. Let's go.

Malachi follows the correctional

officer into a corridor that leads to offices. He enters an office and is greeted by Kevin Strabler...

KEVIN

Have a seat, Malachi. (Malachi sits) (To Correctional officer) Chambers, did Dawkins see the nurse last night? He needs to take his meds three times a day.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER CHAMBERS

I just came in. I'll check the rec and let you know.

KEVIN

Do me a favor and bring him in here in ten minutes.

CHAMBERS

You got it.

(Exits scene)

KEVIN

(Looks at paperwork)

Malachi Washington?

MALACHI

Yes, sir.

KEVIN

When was the last time you met with Clarissa?

MALACHI

A week ago, I think? She said she was waiting on paperwork.

KEVIN

Your advocate is Devaughn Trotter, correct?

MALACHI

Correct.

KEVIN

(Writing on paperwork)

You've served seven months so far, right? Give or take?

MALACHI

Yes, sir.

KEVIN

Two-year sentence?

MALACHI

Yes, sir.

KEVIN

When do you begin working?

MALACHI

I'm supposed to start this coming Sunday.

KEVIN

What's the name of the place?

MALACHI

Morticino's.

KEVIN

On Lennon Street?

MALACHI

Yes, sir.

KEVIN

Hmm, nice place. (Continues to write on paperwork)
Are you serving?

MALACHI

No, uh, kitchen duty.

KEVIN

What is your schedule going to be?

MALACHI

I haven't gotten one yet. The GM told me that we'd
go over it on my first day.

KEVIN

Are you going to be working forty hours?

MALACHI

Not to start. He said he'd start me around twenty
in the (Interrupted)

KEVIN

I'm putting you down for forty. Thank me later.

MALACHI

(Confusion)

Okay.

KEVIN

What time do you start on Sunday?

MALACHI

One o'clock.

KEVIN

Alright. (Writing on paperwork) Tell me a little about the church you're affiliated with?

MALACHI

Oh, it's Divine Truth & Knowledge. It's on Grayson Street. The pastor is (Interrupted)

KEVIN

Are you going to be attending every Sunday?

MALACHI

Yes, sir. If I'm allowed?

KEVIN

Good. (Writes on paperwork) Okay, this is how it's going to work. Once you receive your schedule, bring it to me and we'll figure out your out time. You're allowed two hours before work, and three hours to return after your shift. So since you start at one, you'll be allowed out no earlier than eleven a.m. Let's say you work until five pm, you are to be back here by eight p.m. You follow?

MALACHI

Absolutely.

KEVIN

I'm going to approve your furlough request. Your furlough will start on Saturday morning, eight a.m. You're to be back by ten p.m., Sunday night. Since you work Sundays, your return time will follow your schedule unless you get off earlier than the allotted time. So, if you work Sunday and you get off at five, your return time is still ten p.m. If you work until nine, it would be midnight. Got it?

MALACHI

Yes, sir.

KEVIN

Do you have any questions?

MALACHI

So it's the same allotted time during the week, right?

KEVIN

Yes, same rules apply.

MALACHI

I just want to say thank you, Mr. Strabler. I really appreciate being given the leniency.

KEVIN

About that. When you return from the furlough, you are to drug-test immediately. I don't need to tell you what happens if you fail the test, do I?

MALACHI

Not at all. It's crystal clear.

KEVIN

That includes alcohol as well.

MALACHI

I'm not a drinker.

KEVIN

Good, don't become one.

MALACHI

I won't. As far as church on Sundays, the service starts at eight o'clock. Would I be allowed out to attend?

KEVIN

You'll be furloughed. You won't need allowance.

MALACHI

I'm sorry. I didn't put two-and-two together.

KEVIN

Again, don't fail the drug test and you'll be fine. If you don't do anything stupid, we'll talk about longer furloughs after a while.

MALACHI

Thank you.

KEVIN

Any questions?

MALACHI

I'm good.

KEVIN

Okay. We're done here.

MALACHI

Thank you, Mr. Strabler.

[Time lapse to the following weekend]

DEVAUGHN PULLS HIS VEHICLE UP TO WHERE MALACHI IS STANDING. MALACHI ENTERS THE VEHICLE. THEY QUICKLY EMBRACE THEN DEVAUGHN BEGINS DRIVING...

MALACHI

Dev, you don't know how good it feels to be out, fam!

DEVAUGHN

I'm sure it does, Mac.

MALACHI

First off, good looking for getting up so early on a Sunday morning! I know you wanted to sleep in.

DEVAUGHN

Come on, dog. You know I was picking you up for your first day out.

MALACHI

Yo, I couldn't even sleep last night. I was like, "Yo, I get out of here tomorrow!"

DEVAUGHN

It was worth staying up, right?

MALACHI

That's facts. I'm trying to talk to my cellies, they were like, *"Yo, Mac, go to sleep and leave us alone!"*

(Laughter)

DEVAUGHN

(Chuckle)

You can't help but be excited.

MALACHI

That's facts!

DEVAUGHN

So you trying to do breakfast?

MALACHI

Nah, actually, I'm trying to hit the church, Dev. I gotta do it so I still look good for these jail-people.

DEVAUGHN

(Slight confusion)

Okay.

MALACHI

Dev, just come with me? Yo, it's not gonna be one of those eight hours services. It's in and out.

DEVAUGHN

I'm gonna drop you off, Mac. I gotta get back to Selise's crib.

MALACHI

Oh, because of the baby! Dev, I forgot about the baby! Damn, I'm an idiot, fam! Yo, I gotta work after church, but if I get off early, I'll be coming through to meet him.

DEVAUGHN

Alright. If you don't see him tonight, you can see him next weekend.

MALACHI

Nah, I'm trying to see him tonight. It just depends on what time I get off. They give you three hours, right? So if I get off at six, I ain't gotta be back until nine. So I'll hit you when I get out.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

DIVINE TRUTH & KNOWLEDGE

DEVAUGHN DROPS MALACHI OFF AND HE ENTERS THE CHURCH. HE QUICKLY SITS DOWN IN ONE OF THE PEWS LOCATED IN THE BACK OF THE CHURCH. PASTOR DUTTON IS SPEAKING TO THE CONGREGATION...

PASTOR DUTTON

And it makes you lose hope in humanity! It cuts my soul to see the stories about the devil making people, walk into the lord's place of greeting with machines guns, or explosives, with evil intentions! The devil wants us to believe that there is no good in people! The devil wants us to

believe that this world is a latten place, where people aren't to be trusted! Where you have to, constantly watch over your shoulder. Where you have to, be aggressive to your fellow man, or woman, for no tangible reason! We have to live in fear! We need to teach our children to live in fear! (Brief pause) But you know what we don't have to fear? Our lord and savior Jesus Christ! (Congregation responds in agreement) There's no need to fear the hope that he gives you! (Congregation responds in agreement) There's no need to fear the strength that he gives you! (Congregation responds in agreement) There's no need to fear the power that he gives you! (Congregation responds in agreement) He's walking by your side, every day, telling you, there's no need to fear that man! He's walking by your side, telling you, there's no need to fear that woman! He's letting you know that it's going to be okay! Just believe in me, and I will teach you, *not* to hate that man! I will teach you, *not* hate that woman! *Not* to fear what you don't know, or don't understand! Just believe, brothers and sisters! (Raises voice) Because he's standing, right, here!

(Congregation loudly responds in agreement)

PASTOR DUTTON

Now, before we get to the music, y'all know I love the music, right? (Laughter from the congregation) Amen. There's something, or, someone that I'd like to bring your attention...You know, sometimes in life, we lose our way. Sometimes in life, the devil tricks us into believing that loyalty, is more important than morals. We all fall victim to it. I've fallen victim to it. I'm sure that you have as well. But we have good hearts. We all have our short-comings. But we have, good hearts. (Congregation responds in agreement) Right now there's someone seated in this church, who's going through a hard time. He, came from a broken home. He, never had a chance to know the real and true

power of the lord's blessings. He never understood that he's living for something greater than himself. But he has a good heart, brothers and sisters. He's made a few mistakes, but god isn't judging his wrong-doings, he's judging his heart. (Congregation responds in agreement) I won't say his name because I don't want to embarrass the young brother. (Laughter from the congregation) But just know, that when you feel like life is beating you down. When you feel like life has it out for you. Just know, that god is watching over you, like he's watching over me, like he's watching over this young brother that I'm speaking of. So hold your head up, young brother! (Looks at Malachi) Welcome home. The lord has your back. (Congregation responds in agreement) Let's get to this music, y'all!

AFTER THE SERVICE CONCLUDES, MALACHI APPROACHES PASTOR DUTTON. THEY EMBRACE, THEN BEGIN TO CONVERSE...

PASTOR DUTTON

Did you follow me earlier?

MALACHI

Absolutely! Thank you, Pastor.

PASTOR DUTTON

You're very welcome, Malachi.

MALACHI

Thank you for accepting me, knowing I'm not all right yet.

PASTOR DUTTON

No, being all right doesn't matter. None of us are perfect human beings. You have to want more, Malachi. You have to demand more from yourself, and

the others that you choose to surround yourself with.

MALACHI

I understand, and I'm definitely going to do better. I have to head to work. But I'll get with you.

PASTOR DUTTON

You better. And it's good to see, young brother.

MALACHI

You too.

Malachi exits the church and is greeted by Tabby. They embrace, then begin conversing...

TABBY

Did you hear Pastor talking about you?

MALACHI

I did.

TABBY

Did you enjoy the service?

MALACHI

Absolutely. Did you?

TABBY

I did.

MALACHI

Good.

TABBY

So how are you out?

MALACHI

I got furloughed. They're allowing me to be out on the weekends.

TABBY

Oh. That good behavior thing, huh?

MALACHI

Pretty much. And a bunch of, "*Yes sirs*", and "*Thank you sirs*" too.

TABBY

(Snigger)

So where are you headed?

MALACHI

I have to go to work.

TABBY

You're working?

MALACHI

Yeah. That's the whole point of work-release.

TABBY

Where are you working?

MALACHI

It's an Italian restaurant on Lennon.

TABBY

What are you doing there?

MALACHI

I'm going to be working in the kitchen washing dishes and stuff. It sucks but, they're overlooking my charges.

TABBY

How did you get that job?

MALACHI

Pastor Dutton called a favor in for me.

TABBY

That's a blessing.

MALACHI

Absolutely. That's why I made sure to come today. I want him to know that I'm serious about getting right.

TABBY

Good.

MALACHI

Tee, look, I would love nothing more to talk with you, and see your beautiful face all day, but I gotta go if I'm gonna get there on time.

TABBY

How are you getting there?

MALACHI

I'm gonna catch the train.

TABBY

No, you're not. Come on, I'll give you a ride.

MALACHI

You sure?

TABBY

Let's go.

SCENE CHANGE TO TABBY'S VEHICLE...

MALACHI

I didn't even see you in there.

TABBY

I was in the front. I was sitting between two big ladies. (Malachi chuckles) They were nice though. Loud, but nice.

MALACHI

Loud too?

TABBY

I swear the woman to my left screamed, "*Praise Jesus*", twenty-seven different times, right in my ear. (Malachi laughter) I can't hate though, she was into it.

MALACHI

Yo, Pastor has a way with words. That man was born to be a speaker.

TABBY

I agree. You feel it though.

MALACHI

That's facts.

TABBY

So you're going to be okay with washing dishes all night?

MALACHI

It's just a start. It's temporary. I'm already thinking that I'm gonna hate it. But, it's a million times better than being locked up.

TABBY

So work-release isn't the same as jail?

MALACHI

Oh, no. It's a lot better than being in the main building.

TABBY

What makes it better?

MALACHI

When you're in the jail, you're sitting in a cell twenty-three hours a day. Depending on if you work or not. But you're cramped with two other dudes in this crazy small space. In work-release, the only

time you're in a cell is when you go to bed. Other than that, it's a big room where you can watch television, or play cards, or read. The only thing you can't do is go outside. But if you're furloughed or you work, you're good with that.

TABBY

Do you have to use the toilet in your cell?

MALACHI

They don't even have toilets in the cell. It's like a restaurant-bathroom where the doors close and all that. It's great. You actually get privacy.

TABBY

That's good.

MALACHI

Thank god for work-release. I mean, I still hate it because I'm locked up but it's a lot better than the facility time. It's a blessing.

TABBY

I understand.

MALACHI

So, Tee, tell me how cute my nephew is.

TABBY

Your nephew?

MALACHI

Devaughn's son, Tayshaun.

TABBY

Oh. He's adorable. You haven't seen him yet?

MALACHI

Nah, this is my first day out.

TABBY

Yeah, you have to see him.

MALACHI

I plan to. I have three hours to get back once I get off of work. So if I don't get off too late, I'll definitely go see him.

TABBY

You know Devaughn and Selise are together, right?

MALACHI

Are they? (Snigger) Devaughn won't say, "*Yo, that's my girl.*"

TABBY

He said that he never had a girlfriend before. Is that true?

MALACHI

Nah, I don't think so.

TABBY

You don't think so?

MALACHI

Well, hold up, if you're talking about a real girlfriend. Like, "*I can't be with nobody else*

because this is my girl." Then, yeah, that might be true. Dev has never said to me, *"Yo, Mac. This is my girl."* Wow, that's crazy now that I'm thinking about it.

TABBY

So he was actually telling the truth?

MALACHI

I think he was, Tee. I honestly don't think that's he had a real girlfriend before.

TABBY

Well he does now. I personally think that Selise is in love with him.

MALACHI

Really? You met Selise?

TABBY

Yeah.

MALACHI

Oh. You like her?

TABBY

We didn't talk that much, but she was nice to me. I think that she's a bit jealous that Devaughn talks to me though.

MALACHI

That's not surprising. That's Selise for you.

Tabby pulls her vehicle up to

Morticino's Italian Restaurant...

MALACHI

Thank you for the ride, Tee. I'm glad that I got to see you today.

TABBY

You're welcome.

MALACHI

Take care of yourself, beautiful.

(Begins to exit the vehicle)

TABBY

Malachi?

MALACHI

Huh?

TABBY

I'm really happy to see how hard you're trying. I actually think that I was wrong about you.

MALACHI

Nah, it's not real yet. This is my first day out. Once you see me do this consistently, then you'll see that I'm sincere.

TABBY

No, I know you are.

MALACHI

Do you?

TABBY

You haven't cursed once since you were baptized.

MALACHI

You actually noticed that? (Tabby nods her head)
Thank you, Tee. I've been trying hard not to.

TABBY

When are you furloughed again?

MALACHI

Next weekend.

TABBY

Next Saturday night, you're having dinner with me.
(Slightly playful) I'm not asking.

MALACHI

(Chuckle)

Cool. I'll see you.

TABBY

Have a good night.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

AFTER LEAVING WORK FOR THE EVENING, MALACHI IS NOW AT DEVAUGHN'S
RESIDENCE...

DEVAUGHN

You want a beer or something?

MALACHI

Nah. I can't drink. They're running my piss, fam.

DEVAUGHN

Alcohol shows up in your urine?

MALACHI

Nah, I gotta take a piss test, and that thing that you blow into.

DEVAUGHN

A Breath-a-lizer?

MALACHI

Yeah, that stupid thing.

DEVAUGHN

Damn.

MALACHI

So Tabby said something that's wild to me. She said that she thinks Selise is in love with you.

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

What? In love with me?

MALACHI

Yeah. It's bugged out, right?

DEVAUGHN

She was with Selise for fifteen minutes. How'd she get all that?

MALACHI

Women be knowing, Dev. They can feel that kinda stuff. You probably can't see it because you're so cold on these chicks. I'd put my money on Selise being soft on you.

DEVAUGHN

She had a baby and her emotions are all over the place. That's all it is.

MALACHI

You're not feeling that, huh? Selise ain't the one that you would lock down?

DEVAUGHN

We got a kid together, she's already locked down. I'm stuck with her for the rest of my life, Mac.

MALACHI

(Chuckle)

So what's the issue then? I mean, why not let her love you?

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

Nigga, you've met Selise! (Malachi laughter) You know she's crazy.

MALACHI

Dev, I'm saying, how long are you gonna run? What are you waiting for?

DEVAUGHN

Run from what? What'chu mean?

MALACHI

If it ain't Selise, cool, I'm not hating. I'm just saying, if it's true what Tabby is saying, why not take Selise at her word?

DEVAUGHN

As far as what?

MALACHI

Be with her. Dev, look, she might be crazy, but you can't act like you ain't either, because you painted them walls knowing how she is.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, I'll give you that. You know I ain't shit. (Malachi laughter) Look, Selise is Tayshaun's mother, right? We have to be around each other for the rest of our lives, right? Why should I rush to make her, whatever? She ain't going nowhere.

MALACHI

So if she meets another dude tomorrow, you're cool with that?

DEVAUGHN

I mean (Interrupted)

MALACHI

Dev? It's me, bruh. It's Mac. You know we always keep it a million. If y'all are together, I'm cool, I just want you to be happy.

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

Yo, what did they do to you in there, Mac?! (Malachi laughter) You alright, bruh?

MALACHI

I can't want my man to be happy? For real?

DEVAUGHN

You honestly think that Selise is the right chick to settle down with?

MALACHI

There could be a dude sliding in the DM's right now. Newborn and all, you're cool with that?

(No response from Devaughn)

MALACHI

Dev, you're not cool with that, fam.

DEVAUGHN

Alright, so, we've been talking.

MALACHI

Talking?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, talking. I'm saying, I'm debating if I wanna take it there, Mac. Selise be liking drama and I don't want no parts of that shit.

MALACHI

So tell her that! Maybe becoming a mom will settle

her a little bit. You never know.

DEVAUGHN

Selise ain't changing, Mac.

MALACHI

She's a mom now, she has to.

DEVAUGHN

Like hell she does. Mac, we know a bunch of crazy broads who shouldn't be responsible for children.

MALACHI

That's facts, but that doesn't have to be Selise though.

DEVAUGHN

Why you never told me you like Selise so much?

MALACHI

It's not like that.

DEVAUGHN

You're definitely caping for her a little bit.

MALACHI

You have a baby together now. If you gotta deal with a crazy broad, it might as well be the one girl that your son came from. That's all I'm saying.

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

So you wouldn't think I'm crazy for messing with her?

MALACHI

I think you could do a lot worse, fam.

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

What's up with Tabby?

MALACHI

(Slight frustration)

I don't know, Dev. Sometimes she'll say something and I feel like, "*Yeah, she's feeling me.*" But then, when she looks at me, I feel like she's looking right through me. Does that make any sense?

DEVAUGHN

Hell yeah. That's how I was looking at Selise at first.

MALACHI

Word! Dev, yo, I know I put her in a weird spot, but what else was I supposed to do?

DEVAUGHN

Mac, you gotta give her time. Check it, she don't wanna date a nigga on the inside, so she fights with herself about it because she does like you. You just gotta keep it pushing.

MALACHI

Dev, we already smashed, fam. It's like, *"I'm still here. Why can't you see that I'm sincere?"*

DEVAUGHN

Because you're locked up.

MALACHI

Right! So then say, *"Yo, leave me alone."* Dev, she tells me that I'm incarcerated so, *"I don't want to mess with you."* But she was coming to see me, and spending thirty dollars a week so we could talk on the phone. So when you say, *"I'm not there"*, it looks like you're lying your lips off.

DEVAUGHN

So call her out on the bullshit.

MALACHI

I can't! Because then she'll get defensive, and run back behind that annoying wall she has up.

DEVAUGHN

So then leave her alone. Look at you, you're all shook up. A girl can't be that special if she's playing the same fucking games that all these other broads is playing.

MALACHI

But I like her, Dev.

DEVAUGHN

I get it, but what other choice do you have? You been in the box for seven months, just for a chick to keep you dizzy while you're in that bitch? I like Tabby, she's cool, but, she ain't worth the drama, Mac. (No response from Malachi) Let her go.

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

LATER IN THE WEEK, TABBY ALLOWS DEVAUGHN TO ENTER HER APARTMENT...

DEVAUGHN

What's up?

TABBY

(Closes apartment door)

How's Tayshaun?

DEVAUGHN

We had to take him to the doctor the other day.
Selise didn't like the way he was breathing.

TABBY

(Concern)

Is he okay?

DEVAUGHN

He seems to be cool. They want see him again
tomorrow though.

TABBY

I hope he'll be okay.

DEVAUGHN

Me too. So what was up?

TABBY

I haven't heard from Malachi all week. Have you
spoke to him?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, he's fine.

TABBY

Why hasn't he called me?

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

I ain't gonna lie to you, Tabby. Mac feels like he has to fall back.

TABBY

What does that mean?

DEVAUGHN

We talked on Sunday and he felt like he was putting too much on you. He gets that you not trying to be with a nigga in jail. Why get your hopes up for something that you know isn't going to be real?

TABBY

So what are you saying? He's not going to call me anymore?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know. He ain't tell me all that.

TABBY

(Snigger of frustration)

I don't know why I even try with guys.

DEVAUGHN

What 'chu mean?

TABBY

If that's the way he felt, he should've told me that. I took him to work on Sunday, he had ample time to say that. I invited him over for dinner this Saturday.

DEVAUGHN

Why?

TABBY

What do you mean why?

DEVAUGHN

Tabby, you've made it clear that you ain't ready for Mac. You said weekends weren't enough. You even told me that he didn't have much to offer you. What was he supposed to do?

TABBY

You told him all of that stuff?

DEVAUGHN

He asked me if I knew what you wanted. I told him that you needed time because you wasn't really trying to date a nigga that's incarcerated.

TABBY

I was coming around though, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

Did he know that?

(Brief pause; no response from Tabby)

DEVAUGHN

What was he supposed to do?

(Brief pause)

TABBY

So he thinks that I'm playing mind games?

DEVAUGHN

He thinks that you're fighting yourself. But you don't really need to do that because Mac ain't going nowhere. If you liked him, you'd tell him that. He don't have to mind-read, you're a vocal chick.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

When are you going to talk to him again?

DEVAUGHN

I gotta pick him up Saturday morning.

TABBY

What's his work-schedule?

DEVAUGHN

He doesn't work again until Monday. But he'll be

out Saturday.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

I still want him to come over on Saturday. I'll tell him what he needs to know then.

DEVAUGHN

Alright. What time?

TABBY

Five.

DEVAUGHN

Alright. I'll bring him by.

DEVAUGHN'S VEHICLE

THE NEXT EVENING, DEVAUGHN IS DRIVING TO HER APARTMENT...

SELISE

Does asthma run in your family?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know.

SELISE

Shit. I always forget about that!

DEVAUGHN

So they're saying it's asthma?

SELISE

It could be. They don't know. That's why they want to run tests.

DEVAUGHN

When?

SELISE

Tomorrow morning.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

Are you gonna be able to come?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. I'll just go to work after they run the test.

SELISE

Okay.

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

You always keep it a hundred with me, right?

SELISE

Yeah?

DEVAUGHN

So I need you to keep it a million with me?

SELISE

(Sarcasm)

Lord, Jesus. What happened?

DEVAUGHN

The way you feel about me? Is it like, you like me,
or is it deeper than that?

SELISE

Devaughn, you know how I feel about you.

DEVAUGHN

Don't do that, don't close up. It's just a
question.

SELISE

I've told you seventeen different times that I want
to be with you.

DEVAUGHN

And I get that, but if it was deeper than that,
would you tell me?

SELISE

Deeper than what?

DEVAUGHN

It was deeper than you just liking me?

SELISE

What's deeper than that?

DEVAUGHN

Love.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

Are you asking me if I love you?

DEVAUGHN

No, I'm asking if you would tell me.

SELISE

You think I'm in love with you, Devaughn?

DEVAUGHN

That's not what I'm saying. I'm asking if you would
(Interrupted)

SELISE

Why do you wanna know?

DEVAUGHN

Because I wanna know if that's something that you
would be open enough to tell me. You say you always
keep it a thousand, right? Do you?

SELISE

Why do you think I love you?

DEVAUGHN

Selise, you're not hearing what I'm saying. I'm not asking if you love me. I'm asking if you would tell me.

SELISE

Would you tell me?

DEVAUGHN

I (Interrupted)

SELISE

Hell no, you wouldn't tell me.

DEVAUGHN

So you're just blatantly not going to answer my question?

SELISE

It would all depend.

DEVAUGHN

On?

SELISE

How much I meant to you. I'm not saying that shit if a nigga doesn't love me back.

DEVAUGHN

So you're afraid?

SELISE

I'm not afraid, I just (Interrupted)

DEVAUGHN

It's cool, Selise. You gave me your answer.

SELISE

Where did that come from?

DEVAUGHN

It ain't come from nowhere. I was just wondering.

SELISE

So you're trying to show me that I don't keep it a hundred with you?

DEVAUGHN

I'm not trying to show you anything. Yo, why do you think that I'm evil or something?

SELISE

What do you mean?

DEVAUGHN

You always think that I be doing some spiteful shit. I've never even treated you like that.

SELISE

I never said anything about you doing some spiteful shit.

DEVAUGHN

Selise, you always make me out to be some

terrible-ass person. (Selise chuckle) It's not even like that.

SELISE

Look, I be passive-aggressive sometimes. My bad, okay? I'm sorry. I don't think you're a terrible-ass person.

DEVAUGHN

(Playful)

Passive-aggressive. Where'd you learn that from?

SELISE

I seen it on Law & Order: SVU. (Chuckle from Devaughn) Don't judge me.

DEVAUGHN

I'm not judging you.

SELISE

So what if I did say I love you? How would you respond?

DEVAUGHN

(Playful)

"Word? Yo, I gotta go."

(Laughter from both characters)

SELISE

(Sarcasm)

You're an asshole! See?! That's why I say the shit that I be saying, because you make it a point not to open up.

DEVAUGHN

I have opened up.

SELISE

No, you haven't.

DEVAUGHN

I did. I told you stuff that nobody knows.

SELISE

Does Mac know everything that you told me?

DEVAUGHN

Well, yeah, but that's because he was there.

SELISE

So tell me something Mac doesn't know.

DEVAUGHN

I can't. Mac knows everything.

SELISE

Malachi knows every single thing about you, Devaughn?! I doubt that!

(Brief pause as Devaughn
contemplates)

DEVAUGHN

Okay, check it. Mac doesn't know that I stole a couple candy bars when I was little. I stole them shits from the corny store not far from the group home I was in. I got banned from going there.

(Chuckle)

SELISE

How old were you?

DEVAUGHN

I was seven, I think. I ain't sure.

SELISE

That is the weakest secret ever, Devaughn!

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?

SELISE

I thought you were gonna tell me something good.

DEVAUGHN

You said tell you something that Mac don't know.
I don't think I ever told Mac that.

SELISE

(Sarcasm)

That's so disappointing.

DEVAUGHN

Well if I'm so wack, why don't you tell me a secret?

SELISE

Okay, I'll tell you one.

DEVAUGHN

Go ahead.

SELISE

There's something that I want to try, but I'm too scared to do it.

DEVAUGHN

What? Roller coasters?

SELISE

Hell no, I love roller coasters!

DEVAUGHN

Word?

SELISE

Hell yeah! We went to Shadow-Nights like two years ago. Yo, trust me when I tell you that we had a blast!

DEVAUGHN

I want to go to Great Adventure in Jersey.

SELISE

I went there.

DEVAUGHN

Did you like it?

SELISE

Of course.

DEVAUGHN

Word. I wanna go.

SELISE

We can go this summer?

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

SELISE

I wanna go to Hershey Park too.

DEVAUGHN

Hershey Park? What's that?

SELISE

(Surprise)

You've never heard of Hershey Park before?!

DEVAUGHN

Nah, what is that?

SELISE

It's where they make all the candy bars that you like to steal. (Laughter from both characters) I heard the whole place smells like chocolate.

DEVAUGHN

Word?

SELISE

Yes! But it's got roller coasters though!

DEVAUGHN

That's in New York?

SELISE

No, it's in Pennsylvania.

DEVAUGHN

Damn, that's far.

SELISE

It's not that far. It's like three or four hours.

DEVAUGHN

That's far though.

SELISE

Anyway. I definitely love roller coasters.

DEVAUGHN

That's cool.

SELISE

Do you?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, I just can't look down because I don't like heights.

SELISE

I get that.

DEVAUGHN

That shit be freaking me out.

SELISE

So you'd never ride a hot air balloon?

DEVAUGHN

Oh, hell no. No way.

SELISE

You're so boring, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

No disputes there.

SELISE

You gotta live life a little bit. Stop letting your fears overcome you.

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

When the hell did you become an English class philosopher and shit? And you can't talk because you can't even tell someone you love them.

SELISE

No, I told you that I wouldn't if I felt the person didn't feel the same.

DEVAUGHN

You had ex-boyfriends, right? Did you tell them?

SELISE

I only said it to one of them. And he said it first.

DEVAUGHN

(Playful)

Scaredy-cat.

SELISE

(Chuckle) (Playful)

Negro, please! You can't even say you like someone!

DEVAUGHN

Yes, I can. I like you.

SELISE

You know that's not what I'm talking about
Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

I know what you're talking about. I like you,
Selise. That's real shit.

SELISE

You're only saying that because you know that I
feel the same way.

DEVAUGHN

No, I'm not. (Playful) Unlike you, I'm gonna say
I love you when I'm ready.

SELISE

No you're not.

DEVAUGHN

Yes, I am. I'm grown, Selise. I ain't afraid to say
some shit.

SELISE

Are you saying I'm not grown?

DEVAUGHN

See? There you go again. I'm not putting words in your mouth.

SELISE

Devaughn, when you say, "*I'm grown*", you're implying that you the person that you're speaking to, isn't!

DEVAUGHN

(Mocking Selise) (Sarcasm)

I'm "*implying*"? Yo, look at you using college-vocab. I ain't even hit high school, Selise. I'm impressed.

SELISE

Yes, Devaughn, I'm smart, okay? I like being smart, and using job-interview vocab when I can. Get used to it.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, that's good. I want Tayshaun to be smart. At least he gets it from one of us.

SELISE

Stop it, Devaughn. You're smart too. I mean, you must be smart, you knew to knock me up.

DEVAUGHN

That's wasn't planned, Selise.

SELISE

Either way. Better me than any of them any trifling hoes you ran through.

DEVAUGHN

One, I didn't run through any trifling hoes. Two, why do all you women say that? Women always think that niggas be messing with sewer-rats before they met them. It's not like that.

SELISE

I didn't say that any of your chicks were sewer rats, I just (Interrupted)

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

I believe the term was, "*Trifling hoes.*" Do I have that, right?

SELISE

It's a term of endearment, that's all.

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

Okay.

(Brief pause)

DEVAUGHN

Oh. So, what was the secret you were going to tell me?

SELISE

What secret?

DEVAUGHN

The secret that (Interrupted)

SELISE

Ohhh! Okay, so, I'm not saying that I definitely want to do it, but, I'm curious.

DEVAUGHN

And what's that?

SELISE

The back door thing.

DEVAUGHN

What back door thing?

SELISE

The back door, Devaughn!

DEVAUGHN

What back-door? The only back-door that I know of is when someone is talking about sex.

SELISE

That's what I'm talking about, fool!

DEVAUGHN

Oh, word? You've never done it before?

SELISE

No. I heard it hurts like hell!

DEVAUGHN

Oh.

SELISE

You've done it to a girl before?

DEVAUGHN

Once or twice.

SELISE

(Sarcasm)

Once or twice? You nasty.

DEVAUGHN

Why am I nasty? I never did it to a girl who didn't ask me to first.

SELISE

Did you use condoms?

DEVAUGHN

For that back-door shit? Yeah, for sure.

SELISE

Good.

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

I'm not that trifling.

SELISE

(Sarcasm)

Good, because I was never gonna let you touch me again. Oh, wait, I forgot. You probably don't want to touch me because I'm boring!

DEVAUGHN

I can't stand you.

(Selise laughter)

TABBY'S RESIDENCE

SCENE CHANGE TO THE FOLLOWING SATURDAY EVENING. DEVAUGHN AND MALACHI ARRIVE AT TABBY'S RESIDENCE. SHE OPENS THE DOOR AND ALLOWS THEM TO ANSWER...

TABBY

It's kinda weird to see you both of you at the same time. I'm so used to only talking to one of you at one time.

MALACHI

I know, right? Now you get the full effect of the dynamic duo.

TABBY

Wow. That was kinda corny.

MALACHI

That was, right? My bad.

DEVAUGHN

(To Tabby)

I'm not staying long. I just wanted to say what's up. And that you're crazy.

TABBY

Why am I crazy?

DEVAUGHN

I heard through the grapevine that you think that my baby-moms is in love with me. That's not what it is.

TABBY

(To Malachi)

Can't keep a secret, huh?

MALACHI

Nah, I'm a snitch.

(Laughter from Devaughn and Tabby)

TABBY

(To Devaughn)

Yes, she is. If she's not saying it, she's too afraid to.

DEVAUGHN

What makes you think that?

TABBY

As a woman, you can tell. You know when another girl is in love with her man. I saw it just by the way that she was talking to you.

DEVAUGHN

That's crazy.

TABBY

She denied it, didn't she?

MALACHI

Of course she did. She's not gonna tell Dev that. You're right, she is afraid.

DEVAUGHN

And that's the corny shit. Why you can't say it? If that's what you feel, then say that shit.

TABBY

So you can say what? *"Thanks."* Or, *"I'm not there yet."* A girl's not going for that.

DEVAUGHN

Did you ever tell a nigga that you loved him?

TABBY

Yeah. I told you how I felt about my ex.

DEVAUGHN

Did you have to say it first?

TABBY

I said it first. Yeah.

DEVAUGHN

Do you regret it?

TABBY

Do I regret what?

DEVAUGHN

Telling him how you felt?

TABBY

Yeah. (To Malachi) Because now I'm afraid to admit my feelings.

DEVAUGHN & MALACHI

(Unison)

Don't be.

MALACHI

Word.

TABBY

I can't help it. It's human nature.

DEVAUGHN

(To Malachi)

Call me whenever you're ready.

MALACHI

Alright.

DEVAUGHN

(To Tabby)

What did you cook?

TABBY

Food.

DEVAUGHN

(To Malachi) (Sarcasm)

Thank god, Mac. I thought she was going to feed you the old tire that's in her trunk.

MALACHI

It's better than jail food.

(Devaughn laughter)

TABBY

(To Devaughn)

Are you staying for dinner?

DEVAUGHN

Nah. I just wanted to give my man a ride through. I'm out.

TABBY

You sure? (Playful) I mean, I didn't make grilled cheese but you might like what I cooked just the same.

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

If you ain't make grilled cheese, then I don't even know why I'm talking to you right now.

(Malachi laughter)

TABBY

(To Malachi) (Sarcasm)

Now I see why you got caught. You went to jail just to get away from him, didn't you?

MALACHI

(Playful)

I mean, you're not lying.

DEVAUGHN

Word? (Malachi laughter) Y'all have fun. I'll see you later.

MALACHI

Good looking, Dev.

(Devaughn walks to the exiting door)

DEVAUGHN

Tabby?

TABBY

What?

DEVAUGHN

Don't get pregnant.

(Devaughn & Malachi laughter)

TABBY

I think you're confused, Devaughn. I'm Tabby, not Selise.

(Malachi laughter)

DEVAUGHN

Damn. Cold-blooded. (To Malachi) Hit me.

MALACHI

Alright.

Later in the evening, Malachi and Tabby are conversing as they eat dinner...

TABBY

So what does it feel like to be furloughed?

MALACHI

It's a blessing. I couldn't be more thankful.

TABBY

How do you keep yourself sane in there?

MALACHI

I'm kinda used to it, unfortunately. This isn't my first go-around. If I end up doing the whole two years, I'll have spent over six years of my life in jail.

TABBY

How long are they allowing you be on work-release?

MALACHI

Until my sentence is done. As long as I don't act up.

TABBY

And you aren't going to act up, right?

MALACHI

Absolutely not. Pastor would knock me out.

TABBY

And he'd have a right to.

MALACHI

No debate there.

TABBY

Can you still get good behavior now that you're on work-release?

MALACHI

I'm not sure yet. I don't see the judge until September.

TABBY

But once you do, what are your chances?

MALACHI

Good, from what I'm told. But we'll see.

TABBY

How are you doing at the job?

MALACHI

(Shrugs shoulders)

It's a job.

TABBY

You don't like it?

MALACHI

It's a lot of dishes. (Chuckle from Tabby) No, for real, Tee. I'm serious. It's mad dishes.

TABBY

It's a popular place.

MALACHI

Yeah, I know. The food is good though.

TABBY

They feed you?

MALACHI

They do. They're good with that.

TABBY

So do you get paid to work there?

MALACHI

Of course.

TABBY

Well I didn't know. I didn't know if the county would take your earnings.

MALACHI

They take a small chunk of it, but, I see a check.

TABBY

Where do you keep your money?

MALACHI

In my bank account. I opened one up when I was working the construction job.

TABBY

Oh. Good.

MALACHI

So how is everything going with the women's studies? Do you enjoy it?

TABBY

Mm-hm. The women are really nice. Crazy, but nice.

MALACHI

Crazy?

TABBY

Yeah. Some of the stories that they tell are ridiculous.

MALACHI

I can only imagine.

TABBY

Miss Francy is a seventy-year old woman who thinks she's twenty-five. (Malachi laughter) I'm

serious. Before she got serious about god, her favorite singer was Future.

MALACHI

(Laughter)

What?! Yo, that's crazy!

TABBY

She said gospel music is too slow for her. The other ladies have been trying to feed her gospel artists that she could get into.

MALACHI

Is it working?

TABBY

I don't know. I don't even ask anymore.

MALACHI

That is hilarious.

TABBY

But they feel like a family though. That's the part that I really like.

MALACHI

Yeah, I feel that too. The way the members of the church interact with each other. It's a good place to be.

TABBY

I agree.

MALACHI

I was really skeptical at first, you know? I thought all of this Jesus stuff was fake. But, I understand the power of it now. I see what's been missing from my life.

TABBY

That's good.

MALACHI

You feel the same way?

TABBY

I realized that god wasn't mad at me. I stopped going because I couldn't see my mom not being there with me. It scared me to go without her.

MALACHI

You weren't ready at the time.

TABBY

I wasn't. And I was too young to understand why I should've kept going. But the first time that I went to this church, I knew it. I knew it was where I was supposed to be.

MALACHI

Brother Darryl, and Pastor Dutton, these are real dudes, Tee. Pastor isn't looking for people to join the church so he can get money out of them. He came to the jail every time that I asked him. He could've blew me off, or, believed that my intentions weren't true. But he didn't. He got me a job not knowing if I'd even work hard or not. That's a good man right there.

TABBY

He is, I agree. But like Sister Turner told me, follow the message, not the messenger. Pastor Dutton is a regular man, like you're a regular man, like Devaughn is a regular man. He has his flaws and he makes mistakes just like everybody else. So as much I like Pastor Dutton, because I do really like him. I'm following the reason for the message more. You get what I'm saying?

MALACHI

Yo, that's crazy, Tee. It's amazing that you just said that. I never even thought of that.

TABBY

It's just what I believe to be real. So how did your baptism ceremony go?

MALACHI

It was real cool. Pastor did the service, and the brothers from the fellowship were the witnesses. Pastor said it was a joyous occasion. I was just happy that I felt so free. For that fifteen minutes, being in jail never popped into my mind. I felt like god took me away from that place. If only for a short time.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

Malachi, you're sure about this, right? You're absolutely sure that you want to do this?

MALACHI

What do you mean? Do what?

TABBY

Get closer to god. I see what you're doing, but are you a hundred percent sure that you want to go all of the way? Because you're going to have to be honest with Devaughn about everything.

MALACHI

I know, Tee. I wanted to have the conversation the other night, but, we started talking about other things and I (Interrupted)

TABBY

Yeah, like me?

MALACHI

We did talk about you. Yeah.

TABBY

And that's when you decided that you were no longer going to call me?

MALACHI

Yeah, I thought about it.

TABBY

You didn't think about it, you did it. I didn't hear from you all week.

MALACHI

Tee, you gotta understand. I like you. I really like you. I think about you a lot. So, to me, when you say that you're not messing with me because I'm (Interrupted)

TABBY

Malachi, wait. Okay, look, I know that I haven't been as honest with you as you seem to have been with me. I've never been in a situation where I liked a guy who was locked up. A cousin of mine waited for her boyfriend to get out of jail for years. And it wasn't a week that he was out that he was already cheating on her. Now, I know that you aren't him, but that situation still put a bad taste in my mouth.

MALACHI

That's real. I can understand that.

TABBY

And I told myself, "*Never would I be with someone who was dumb enough to get arrested and put in jail.*" But I met you, and at first, it really was a one-night stand for me. You were just some guy that I took home for my birthday.

MALACHI

I figured that.

TABBY

But then Devaughn showed up. And for the first time I met a man who was genuinely honest with me. And he didn't want anything from me...You're smiling?

MALACHI

I can't front, Tee. I'm kinda hype my plan worked. (Chuckle) My plans never work! (Snigger from Tabby) That's on my mother!

TABBY

So what made you think that I'd trust Devaughn?

MALACHI

I didn't. But, Dev is honest. He's stupid honest. Even when it makes him look bad. I knew you didn't trust me, so, if you could see that Dev vouches for me. Maybe you'd believe that I was honest too.

TABBY

So you're telling me that Devaughn is always that honest?

MALACHI

Oh, yeah. Always. Even when you don't want to hear it. And trust me, I didn't always want to hear it. So I vouch for it a hundred percent.

TABBY

So why aren't you as honest as Devaughn is?

MALACHI

That's a great question. I don't know...But, with you? I haven't lied about anything, Tee.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

(Soft)

I like you, Malachi. It scares me.

MALACHI

There's no reason to be scared of me, Tabby.

TABBY

It's easy for you to say that. You're not in my

head.

MALACHI

I'm not your ex-boyfriends. I didn't do whatever they did to you. We had sex the first night, and we shouldn't have. I'm trying to make up for that.

TABBY

Make up for what?

MALACHI

Because you don't really remember that night, do you?

TABBY

No.

MALACHI

I do. So I'm trying to go back to that first night and do it the right way this time.

TABBY

How do you remember everything? I was under the impression that you were as drunk as me?

MALACHI

I was, but I hold liquor well. I was fast & furious with the drinking back in the day. I can be drunk and be mad functional.

TABBY

That's scary.

MALACHI

I know. That's why I'm not gonna drink anymore.

TABBY

You can't drink, they're testing you.

MALACHI

Nah, I was done before that. I told Dev the first time he came to see me, I'm done with the dumb stuff. All of it. I'm gonna be the first dude in line to take those tests when I go back. I want them to know that I'm focused.

TABBY

That's good.

MALACHI

Tee, I get that you're nervous about getting back in a relationship after what your ex did. That's why I'm not trying to rush you into anything. But I'll be out every weekend. And eventually, I'll be able to leave Fridays too. So anytime that you wanna see me, you can see me. I'm not trying to put any pressure on you. I'm trying to do these seventeen months and be out. I'm not trying to do anything with you but build.

TABBY

Build, huh?

MALACHI

Build, Tee.

TABBY

So if I took all of my clothes off right now, you're telling me, "*Build*", is not going out the window?

MALACHI

You're not going to take all of your clothes off

though.

TABBY

Be hypothetical with me.

MALACHI

I'm not pushing for sex, Tee. Come on, you gotta give me more credit than that.

TABBY

I'm not saying that you are, I'm just asking how far you want this to go.

MALACHI

Of course I want you to take all of your clothes off right now. I haven't had sex in three-hundred years. (Chuckle from Tabby) But I'm not beat for that. I'm not going to play myself. You're not going for that. You're barely going for me to call you baby. You think I'm gonna take that chance? I'm finally getting you comfortable enough to tell me what you really feel. I'm not sacrificing any of that.

TABBY

What makes you like me, Malachi? What makes you want to be with me?

MALACHI

Your eyes are amazing. Your smile is amazing. Physically, you're incredible. You're loyal. You're smart. You're confident. You're a nice girl. And even though you act like you hate men, you really don't. That's your defense mechanism. And I get it because dudes are stupid. You held me down by coming to see me, and talking to me on the phone, making my day better when you weren't even sure what you really felt about me...I'm saying, you want me to keep going?

(Brief pause)

MALACHI

What do you want, Tee? How do you want this to go?

(Brief pause as Tabby contemplates)

TABBY

I don't know what I want...I like when you come around, but then when you're not around, I don't miss you. And that's not because I don't like you, it's because in the back of my mind, I know that I shouldn't like you.

MALACHI

Why? Because I'm locked up?

TABBY

No, because you remind of my ex.

MALACHI

(Slight frustration)

Tee, I'm not (Interrupted)

TABBY

You're not my ex! I know that. That's why I feel like an asshole. But I can't help it. When I first met my ex, he was charming, and he was interesting, and he was easy to talk to, and you're all of those things too. So it's scary to me.

MALACHI

I'm not gonna hurt you like he did, Tee.

TABBY

You can't say that. You can't predict the future.

MALACHI

So you want me to lay off you? You want me
(Interrupted)

TABBY

No. I don't want you to lay off of me, or stop
calling me, I'm just not ready to be in a
relationship yet.

MALACHI

Okay. That's real, Tee. I respect that. But all I'm
asking is when you're ready to be in one, can I be
your first pick?

TABBY

You already are my first pick.

(Brief pause)

MALACHI

Cool. Thank you.

TABBY

Don't thank me, Malachi.

MALACHI

No, I appreciate you, Tee. I really do. You helped

me get through a hard time. Sitting in a cell all day is wack. Being told when to eat, when to go outside, when to use the phone, when to wash your butt, it's corny. When I was in the main facility, I'm cellied with a dude who's looking at eleven years. My other celly is waiting at B-Ville, until they ship him to Wallenburg. Once he gets to the Wall, he's gotta do six years there. Dudes get thrown in a cell and forgotten about. The one celly next to mine, went in when his daughter was four. She's seventeen now. And she doesn't like going to see him because her mom tells her that he's institutionalized. But what do you expect? He's spent all of his adult life in jail. And we all did the crimes, so I'm not saying that anyone should feel sorry for us. But, Tee, the drugs weren't even mine, sweetheart. How do you get rehabilitated for something that you ain't even do?

TABBY

You don't.

MALACHI

I'm just saying all of this to say that these last seven months have been the hardest months in my life. When I was younger, I didn't care as much because I didn't see the good in life. Being locked up was like a badge of honor. Especially on my block because I'd see pictures of my boys with "Free Mac" shirts on. And Dev coming to see me all of the time. But I'm grown now, and I'm tired. I'm so tired of living like life doesn't mean anything. Brother Darryl and Pastor are demanding me to get my act together. I never had that before. And you are too. You saying that you don't want to be with someone who's locked up is cool, because it makes me want to fight to be better.

TABBY

And that's good, but why aren't you doing it for yourself? You keep mentioning Darryl and Pastor, and me, which is good. It's great that you have people to keep you motivated. But you have to do

it for yourself, Malachi. You're trying to do the right thing, and I'm sure that they see it, the way that I do. But, you have to want better for yourself. Not for others.

MALACHI

I do want better, Tee. I want this. I want what you have. I want what Dev has. Y'all have your own places, and your own cars, and you're completely independent. I want that, and it frustrates me that I don't have it. But I understand that the only way that I'm going to get it is if I bust my ass. So that's what I'm doing. I'm washing dishes and doing kitchen work until I'm able to take care of myself. And through god, I'll keep going.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

You're tired of living bad, I'm tired of being damaged. It's crazy what a person can put you through. I wasn't this broken before I met my ex. Now, I feel like a shell of myself.

MALACHI

Why though, Tee? Why are you still holding on to all of the pain?

TABBY

Because I don't know how to let it go.

MALACHI

Yes, you do. It's just trust. You trust Dev, and I think you're starting to trust me. That's how you let go, you talk about it. You just have to face it. I know what you're going through because I'm going through it right now. The county is making me face my stuff directly. Your situation ain't the

same, but it's not that far apart. You just have to face those demons that your ex put on you. That's the only way that you're going to get over it.

TABBY

But I hate talking about it. I hate having to re-live it.

MALACHI

But you won't have to re-live anymore once you get it off you. (No response from Tabby) Look, Tee, talk to me. I'm here, right? I'm not going anywhere until you tell me to leave. Tell me what you're going through.

TABBY

No, I don't want to tell you anything.

MALACHI

Why?

TABBY

Because I don't want to tell you stuff that's going to change the way that you see me.

MALACHI

I don't care about that. You're going through a hard time, that's not going to change the way that I see you...Yo, in one of the fellowship meetings, one of the brothers was talking about how he suffers from depression. And the way that you're talking, kinda sounds the things that he was saying. You think depression could real to you?

(Tabby slowly nods her head)

MALACHI

He cheated on you, and it messed you up. What else did he do?

(Brief pause)

TABBY

(Deep breath) (Slight frustration)

I hate talking about this.

MALACHI

I get that, but you'll feel better. Just trust me, Tee.

TABBY

Before I met Jamal, I never cared about being in love.

MALACHI

What's his last name?

TABBY

You don't know him.

MALACHI

You'd be surprised. Tell me his last name.

TABBY

McTaft.

MALACHI

McTaft? (Brief pause; contemplation) Yo, did he

used to work at the deodorant factory back in the day?

TABBY

Oh my god, you do know him.

MALACHI

Nah, not like that. He used to run with some dudes that I used to kick it with back in the day.

TABBY

Who?

MALACHI

Jamal was real cool with this dude named Faheem. This was all back in the day.

TABBY

I know Faheem. We used to hang out at his grandmother's house from time to time.

MALACHI

Word? Faheem used to sell weed back then. I met him through Dev. Dev used to get high every couple of hours.

TABBY

(Snigger)

Really?

MALACHI

Yeah. But then he got the UPS job and he had to quit. (Tabby slowly shakes her head) Anyway, through Faheem I met Jamal. We was never cool or anything, but I know him. I seen him around.

TABBY

Ugh. I have to get out of this small-ass town.

MALACHI

That's facts. Hold up though, I remind you of Jamal? (Confusion) Really? We're nothing alike.

TABBY

Your personalities are similar. You're just not as animated as him. You ever see Jamal tell a story?

MALACHI

Nah.

TABBY

He actually acts out every part of the story that he's telling. He was crazy. (Snigger from Malachi) When we first got together he was so nice to me. He (Interrupted)

MALACHI

Pardon me for interrupting. How'd y'all meet?

TABBY

At the DMV. I had just passed my driver's test, and I had to sit next to him while I waited for paperwork. He just started talking to me.

MALACHI

Got it.

TABBY

Jamal had a lot of issues, but he was a nice guy. I fell hard for him. And the problem with that is,

when you fall for someone, you overlook all of their issues. So, he was really sweet, but he was a pathological liar. He was easy to talk to, but he had a drug addiction. He was very romantic, but he would always tell me how fat I am. Or, how I needed to cook better. Or, how he had been with other girls who were better sexually. This was every day.

MALACHI

Wow.

TABBY

You love someone, so you get caught up in that feeling. But what you don't see is how all of that stuff is eating away at who you are as a person. It makes you feel like you aren't adequate. Jamal was extremely jealous too. So he didn't want me hanging with my friends or family. I pushed a lot of people away because of him, so he became the focal point of my life. The funny thing is, he went out of his way to make sure that I put him first, just for him to turn around and leave me.

MALACHI

He left you?

TABBY

Yeah. For another girl that he was with for a month and a half.

MALACHI

Damn.

TABBY

I'm waiting around for him to propose, while he's out sleeping with the next girl.

MALACHI

So even with all of those issues, you still would've married him?

TABBY

(Snigger of frustration)

Yeah.

MALACHI

Wow. What does it feel like to love someone that much?

TABBY

Tiring. (Malachi slowly nods head) Let me not say that. That's sounds really jaded. It's a high. You can't even describe the feeling. It's amazing when it's good.

MALACHI

But you're afraid of that feeling though, because things ended so bad, right?

TABBY

You don't feel like you'll ever get over it.

MALACHI

You'll get over it, Tee. I can help you with that.

TABBY

How?

MALACHI

All I have to do is make you believe that you're still the same person you were before you met Jamal.

TABBY

But I'm not the same person.

MALACHI

Yes, you are. You're just hurt. Imagine if you didn't feel what you feel every day. You'd be happy, right?

TABBY

Probably.

MALACHI

So, there you go, you're still the same person. You have the ability to be happy, you just aren't right now. You gotta let yourself out of that mental jail. Trust me, I know about jail!

TABBY

It's easy for people to say that. Don't you think if I could let all of this stupid stuff go I would? I don't want to be damaged. I don't want to be broken.

MALACHI

You don't trust yourself enough to let everything go, Tee.

TABBY

And that's what being in love with a damaged person does to you.

MALACHI

But it's over though. He's gone. When was the last time you seen Jamal?

TABBY

I don't know. It's been a while.

MALACHI

If you saw him right now, and he told you that he was right, would you take him back?

TABBY

No.

MALACHI

See? You're not that damaged. If you would've said yes, then we'd really have to have a conversation.

TABBY

No, I'd never be with him again. I could never trust him.

MALACHI

How did you find out that he was cheating on you?

TABBY

He told me.

MALACHI

He just came out and told you?

TABBY

We were fighting. I said something that was kinda mean, and he said, "*That's why I fucked a girl last weekend!*" Later he tried to back-track and say it wasn't true but I knew that it was.

MALACHI

Was it the same girl that he left you for?

TABBY

I don't know. I never met the girl. I saw Faheem two weeks after he left. He told me that Jamal had already moved in with another girl.

MALACHI

That's crazy. Wait, did y'all live together?

TABBY

He didn't technically live here, but he was here all of the time.

(Malachi shakes his head in frustration)

MALACHI

I never knew Jamal was that much of a bozo. I mean, I ain't know him like that, but he never had a rep for being crazy.

TABBY

Because he didn't show that side to anyone but me. Faheem thinks he walks on water or something.

MALACHI

It's crazy the mask that people put on. I know Dev's faults, but he's honest about them. Everybody knows what Dev's about. And he would say the same about me.

TABBY

Yeah, but you two are honest. I told you, Jamal wasn't.

MALACHI

Well I just want to know that I'm always going to be honest with you. I'm serious about that.

TABBY

I know.

Later in the evening, Malachi and Tabby are watching a movie on the sofa...

MALACHI

(Lightly caresses Tabby's face)

You're dosing off. You tired, huh? (Tabby nods her head) I'll call Dev and tell him to come get me.

(Brief pause as Malachi reaches for his cell-phone)

TABBY

Wait. Tell him not to come. You can stay here and we can go to church in the morning.

MALACHI

You sure?

TABBY

Yeah.

Last scene shows the camera pans to Tabby's bedroom, as she and Malachi are asleep together

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

THE NEXT MORNING, MALACHI AND TABBY ENTER DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE...

MALACHI

Help yourself if you want anything to drink or anything.

TABBY

How are you gonna offer me something when this isn't your place?

MALACHI

This is Dev's place. Which means it's my place too.

(Tabby shakes her head)

Malachi walks upstairs to Devaughn's bedroom. He enters the room but finds it empty. He enters the guest bedroom and gathers clothes. He then walks into the bathroom to shower. As Tabby is waiting downstairs, Devaughn and Selise enter the residence...

[Selise is holding Tayshaun's car-seat]

DEVAUGHN

(Surprise)

What's up?

TABBY

Good morning. Malachi wanted to shower before church. He came to get clothes.

DEVAUGHN

Oh, okay. How was last night?

TABBY

It was fine. (To Selise) Good morning, Selise.

SELISE

Good morning.

TABBY

How's the baby doing?

SELISE

He's fine.

TABBY

Is his breathing better?

SELISE

He's getting there.

TABBY

Good.

DEVAUGHN

Mac's in the shower?

TABBY

I think so.

DEVAUGHN

(To Selise)

I'll be right back.

(Exits scene)

(Selise sits down on chair adjacent to sofa, and lightly lies Tayshaun's car seat down next to her)

SELISE

So you got Mac serious about church, huh?

TABBY

No. Jail got him serious about church.

SELISE

Oh. True.

TABBY

Devaughn told me that Tayshaun wasn't breathing correctly?

SELISE

Apparently it's something that preemies go through. I don't know, that's what the lung doctor said. He seems to be good now though.

TABBY

That's good...So, not that it's any of my business but, what has you guys up so early?

SELISE

Breakfast. I'm acting like a chunky-butt and wanted breakfast. (Chuckle from Tabby) (Sarcasm) And since Devaughn didn't want to cook for me, we're going out for it.

TABBY

Devaughn is dropping the ball.

SELISE

You're right, he is! (Sarcasm) I can't stand his ass sometimes!

SCENE CHANGE TO MALACHI & DEVAUGHN...

DEVAUGHN

What happened last night?

MALACHI

She finally opened up, Dev. Yo, do you remember Jamal? He used to run with Faheem and them?

DEVAUGHN

The weed dude, right?

MALACHI

Yeah.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, I remember him.

MALACHI

That's her ex.

DEVAUGHN

Faheem is Tabby's ex?

MALACHI

No, Jamal.

DEVAUGHN

Oh. Why'd she wanna date silly-ass Jamal for?

MALACHI

I don't know. Apparently he was the second-coming of Sam Cooke when they met. But he gamed her something ridiculous. She's all shook up now.

DEVAUGHN

You still trying to let it go?

MALACHI

I can't! I got her open now. Well, not open, but she really let a lot of stuff out last night.

DEVAUGHN

I was laughing when I got your text because I was like, *"Mac ain't playing. He's definitely trying to unplug that pipe."*

MALACHI

Nah, fam. None of that. It didn't even come up.

DEVAUGHN

Wait, you slept in her bed?

MALACHI

Yeah.

DEVAUGHN

And nothing happened?

MALACHI

I can't make it about sex, Dev. She's scarred. I gotta walk through all that.

DEVAUGHN

And that's what you want?

MALACHI

I feel like I'm close, Dev. I feel like if I can keep pushing, I can get her.

DEVAUGHN

Even with all the bullshit that you're gonna go through?

MALACHI

She's not broken. She's just scared.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

MALACHI

Yo, I thought you was sleep up in here. I was like, "*Damn, Dev ain't here?*"

DEVAUGHN

I stay at Selise's on the weekends to help out with

Tayshaun.

MALACHI

Oh, okay. That makes sense. Where y'all headed to now?

DEVAUGHN

Breakfast. You trying to go?

MALACHI

Yo, come to church with us and we can hit breakfast afterwards?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, you got that Mac.

MALACHI

Why you don't wanna come to church?

DEVAUGHN

I ain't got time for that, bruh.

MALACHI

Dev, check it, you know I ain't care about none of that back in the day. I know you think it's some BS, but it's not. It's real, fam.

DEVAUGHN

Mac, you're happy. That's good. I'm glad. But I ain't there.

MALACHI

Why not? Why you can't open up for a minute? I'm telling you, you feel the difference.

DEVAUGHN

It's not real, Mac.

MALACHI

Dev, it's very real.

DEVAUGHN

Like I said, you got it. I'm glad you're happy.

MALACHI

Don't do that, Dev. Don't blow it off like I'm crazy. I'm trying to tell you what going on right now.

DEVAUGHN

I'm not saying you're crazy. I'm not even blowing it off. I'm saying, if that's what you believe, cool. I'm just not into that.

MALACHI

I'm saying, give me one reason why you don't think it's real. Tell me something that's gonna make me see the light.

DEVAUGHN

Mac, stop. You already got baptized, fam. I'm not trying to make you see any light. I'm just not rocking with that religious stuff. That's your life, you're good.

MALACHI

I'm not good because my brother is telling me I'm crazy.

DEVAUGHN

I never said you (Interrupted)

MALACHI

Dev, hear me out. Fam, I sat in a cell, twenty-three hours a day, pissed off at the world because of a mistake that I made. Nothing gave me any hope. I felt useless, bro. Then I met Brother Darryl and he gave me something that I never had. A sense of purpose. Dev, I ain't gotta tell you how hard it is out here, you already know. Sometimes it's a struggle just getting up in the morning. But since I started reading the bible, I see things with more meaning now, Dev. I get things now. I was stupid before. You know that, you've was there!

(Selise and Tabby are shown standing outside of the room, listening to Devaughn and Malachi's conversation)

DEVAUGHN

Mac, listen to me. You ain't gotta tell me anything. I'm good, fam. For real. You've made a decision, and that's good. You're good. I'm happy for you. I just don't want no parts of that.

MALACHI

But you're not telling me why.

DEVAUGHN

Because it's not real. Mac, people are blowing up churches. People are walking into stores and shooting shit up. Niggas is being killed on the regular. Nothing is happening. You don't think if there was a god he would end all of this shit?

MALACHI

How do you know that he's not?

DEVAUGHN

The fuck is he waiting for, Mac? Shit is bad out here. Not to mention to us. Cops have been killing us for years, nobody does anything about it. You want me to believe in some being in the sky is watching over us, and is okay with letting people die like that? Shit is mad senseless, Mac. It's stupid.

MALACHI

Dev, I'm not saying that I know what the plan is. All I'm saying is that it's real. I'm telling you, it's real, fam. I know. When my head got dipped in that water, I never felt anything like that before. For the first time in my life I felt pure. I felt like I was better. Why wouldn't you want that feeling?

DEVAUGHN

I did feel that. I felt that feeling when Selise had Tayshaun.

MALACHI

That's facts. I can dig that. But imagine having the feeling every day.

DEVAUGHN

I do have it every day. I look at my son, Mac.

MALACHI

That's what I'm saying! God blessed you, Dev! The past is whatever with Selise, y'all went through it. But it's better now. You have a beautiful son, and a woman who's in love with you. Tabby ain't the only one who sees that.

(Selise glares at Tabby; Tabby shrugs her shoulders)

MALACHI

Not that it didn't before, but your life has a much bigger purpose now because you're a father. Something neither of us had. That's god, Dev. That's his power, fam. He put something on you that's bigger than what you know.

DEVAUGHN

(Slight dismissive)

Okay, Mac.

MALACHI

Really, Dev? Why are you blowing this off? This is me! Dog, you know me, look at what this has done for my life! I'm happy, Dev! That's on my mother!

DEVAUGHN

Again, I'm good with that. I want the best for you, Mac. If you feel like god is your calling or whatever, cool. I'll never hate because you're my man. You stand for what you believe in, right? Then hell yeah, talk that shit! Tell everybody about Jesus. Just not me because I don't need it. I'm cool.

(Brief pause)

MALACHI

Dev, you're not seeing it. I'm telling you though, I'm gonna pray for you. You'll get it eventually.

DEVAUGHN

You're gonna be late for church, Mac.

(Brief pause)

MALACHI

Alright. I'll get with you later?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

MALACHI

Alright.

Malachi walks to the door and sees
Selise and Tabby standing outside of
it...

MALACHI

For real? Y'all serious right now?

SELISE

You was taking mad long!

MALACHI

Dev, they was standing outside of the door
listening.

DEVAUGHN

Of course they were. They're women. Women are
nosy-ass creatures.

MALACHI

(To Selise)

Where's the baby?

SELISE

Right there. He's still asleep.

MALACHI

(To Tabby)

You ready?

TABBY

Yeah.

MALACHI

I'll see you, Selise.

SELISE

Bye.

Malachi and Tabby exit down the
stairwell. Selise enters the
bedroom...

SELISE

You wanna talk?

DEVAUGHN

No.

SELISE

You wanna eat?

DEVAUGHN

Hell yeah.

SELISE

Okay.

SCENE CHANGE TO TABBY'S VEHICLE...

TABBY

You okay? (Malachi slowly nods) No, you're not. You wanna talk about it?

MALACHI

No.

TABBY

He'll come around, Malachi.

MALACHI

No, he won't. I know Dev. He doesn't see it.

TABBY

It takes time for everyone.

MALACHI

Nah. Normally I don't have convince Dev. If I ask him to do something, he doesn't give me a hard time about it. This is different. He doesn't want it.

TABBY

It's one conversation. Don't get discouraged, it takes time. (No response from Malachi) You two mean the world to each other. He'll come around.

Malachi quietly looks out of the window...

DEVINE TRUTH & KNOWLEDGE

LATER IN THE MORNING, MALACHI AND TABBY ARE LISTENING TO PASTOR DUTTON SPEAK...

PASTOR DUTTON

And you can tell when someone is not giving their all. You can tell, by the way that they carry themselves, they're missing the truth! It's our job, brothers and sisters. It's our job to bring them in from cold, the way that god brought us here today. Can I get amen? (Congregation responds) Let us pray.

Pastor Dutton begins to give prayer. Tabby grabs Malachi's hand and holds it while the prayer is being given. After the prayer is over Tabby continues to hold on to Malachi's hand...

TABBY

(Quietly)

I know Devaughn might not believe, but know that I do. I believe in you.

(Malachi nods his head)

AFTER THE SERVICE HAS ENDED, MALACHI AND TABBY ARE CONVERSING WITH PASTOR DUTTON...

PASTOR DUTTON

Not everyone is ready to accept, young brother. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink. They have to be thirsty on their own. You stay on the path that you are, and he'll see it eventually. It took some time for you to see it, didn't it?

MALACHI

It did. It definitely did.

PASTOR DUTTON

Don't give up on him. Give him time.

MALACHI

Thanks, Pastor.

PASTOR DUTTON

(To Tabby)

How's women's study going?

TABBY

I don't miss a Tuesday.

PASTOR DUTTON

Wonderful. I have to say, it brings so much joy to my heart to see young people like yourselves reach out to the father. A lot of younger people don't always seek out his hand. It's so humbling to see you two here every Sunday. Please keep coming, and being an influence on the younger kids. They always see the older folks here, but, to see some strong

young brothers and sisters has an effect.

MALACHI

We'll be here, Pastor.

(Tabby nods her head)

PASTOR DUTTON

Good.

Scene Change to Tabby's vehicle...

TABBY

What do you want to do now?

MALACHI

I think I wanna try to work with the kids, Tee. What Pastor said just hit me. The kids seeing us will have an effect, right? Do you know if they have anything for the kids?

TABBY

Yeah, they have bible study for the kids on Wednesdays.

MALACHI

No, I'm talking more like a group though. I don't really know enough about the bible yet, but I'm thinking, who would be better to sit down with the kids then me? I mean, I'm in jail right now. The problem is that me and Dev didn't really have that growing up. Dev's mom went to church sometimes, but, it didn't have an effect on him because I don't think he had someone that can make the word resonate with him. Talking to the kids, and telling my story might stop them from doing the same dumb stuff that I did. (Laughter from Tabby) Why are you

laughing? Does it sound stupid?

TABBY

All that I asked you was what do you want to do now?

(Laughter from both characters)

MALACHI

Yo, my bad, Tee. I'm tripping. I just keep hearing what Pastor said today.

(Brief pause as Tabby turns the ignition and starts the vehicle)

TABBY

We shouldn't have been listening to you and Devaughn's conversation earlier. That was all Selise. (Chuckle from Malachi) But I'm glad that I heard it. You're serious about this. It's real to you.

MALACHI

Tee, I've been telling you that!

TABBY

Yeah, but I needed to hear you say it to Devaughn. That's what I was waiting for. (Malachi slowly nods his head) You knew this might happen, right?

MALACHI

I gotta get him to see it, Tee. Yo, Dev is the one constant in my life. That man has my back regardless of whatever. I gotta get him to understand.

TABBY

He understands just fine, he's just not ready, Malachi. You can't force it.

MALACHI

I know, but what happens if he doesn't come around?

TABBY

Then maybe you guys won't be as tight as you were.

MALACHI

Nah, Tee. That's not it. That can't be it.

TABBY

Malachi, Pastor said it today, "*Sometimes you gotta sacrifice.*" If you're serious about this, sometimes you have to sacrifice.

MALACHI

I'm not sacrificing Dev, Tee.

SELISE'S APARTMENT

MEANWHILE, DEVAUGHN IS HOLDING TAYSHAUN WHEN SELISE ENTERS THE SCENE AND SITS IN THE CHAIR ADJACENT TO DEVAUGHN. THERE'S A BRIEF PAUSE AS SELISE WATCHING DEVAUGHN INTERACT WITH TAYSHAUN...

SELISE

Devaughn, I'm saying, it wouldn't hurt to go to church one time. (Devaughn glares at Selise) I'm saying, I've never seen you and Mac argue before!

DEVAUGHN

We wasn't arguing, that's just us riffing. We do

that. I'm already over it.

SELISE

Yeah, but he's not gonna be.

DEVAUGHN

There's nothing I can do about it. I don't believe in any of that, and if I went there, it would only be because Mac is there, and that ain't the right reason to go.

SELISE

I don't wanna see you and Mac break apart.

DEVAUGHN

We won't. Mac ain't going nowhere. He can be about Jesus all he wants. That's my man, and it's means something, and Mac know that.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

I don't know. I've seen people walk out of other people's lives because of religion. It can happen, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

So what do I do? Participate in some shit that I don't believe in just to make Mac happy? I can't do that, Selise. And Mac would know that I'm bullshitting.

SELISE

But you don't have to bullshit it. What if you actually listened to what they're saying?

DEVAUGHN

So you believe in this shit too now? You think Jesus came down and gave us Tayshaun?

SELISE

No, we had sex, and we didn't use condoms.

DEVAUGHN

That's not what I'm saying, Selise.

SELISE

I get it. I really do. I'm not into all of that either, I just don't wanna see some shit go down between you and Mac.

DEVAUGHN

I'm not worried about it, so don't trip.

SELISE

Okay.

(Brief pause)

SELISE

(Playful)

I love seeing daddy hold his baby. (Snigger from Devaughn) So, since everyone already knows, I might as well just come out and say the shit...I can't front, Devaughn. It's true. I do love you. (Slight chuckle from Devaughn) What?!

DEVAUGHN

Why you just ain't say that shit before?

SELISE

Because I was afraid to!

DEVAUGHN

Why?

SELISE

Because I thought that would be too much pressure on you. We have Tayshaun, and you're trying to help Mac, and you're working all day. I just didn't wanna put too much on you.

DEVAUGHN

You be tripping for no reason...Look, I don't even know what this love shit is, but I'm trying to get there. I ain't gonna sell you dreams or no shit like that. I'm just gonna be real with you. But I'm not gonna fuck around with your heart. I'm not gonna do that.

SELISE

I love when you're here.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, me too.

SELISE

You're not just saying that because of Tay-Tay, right?

DEVAUGHN

(Playful)

I'm saying, a little bit.

(Laughter)

SELISE

I hate you!

(Continued laughter from Devaughn)

CRYSTAL BEAR THAI CUISINE

LATER THAT AFTERNOON, MALACHI AND TABBY ARE CONVERSING WHILE THEY EAT...

TABBY

You trust me, right?

MALACHI

Yeah.

TABBY

You'll be fine.

MALACHI

Okay. If this food is trash, this is gonna be all your fault.

TABBY

The food isn't trash. Like I said, you'll be fine.

MALACHI

Okay. So what got you into Thai food?

TABBY

The ladies at my job. They brought me here for lunch the one day. I really liked the food.

MALACHI

I didn't even know this place existed.

TABBY

That's because you're used to being in the hood all day.

MALACHI

That's facts. I do wanna see other places though. One of the dudes in work-release was talking about going to Niagara Falls. I never been there.

TABBY

It was okay. It's pretty, but it's just a lot of water.

MALACHI

Oh, you went?

TABBY

Yeah.

MALACHI

When did you go?

TABBY

When I was in college.

MALACHI

You went to college?

TABBY

Yeah, I went to college. Why does that surprise you?

MALACHI

No, my bad. I didn't mean for it to come off like that. I've never hung with someone who went to college.

TABBY

(Confusion)

You've never hung with anyone who went to college?

MALACHI

I grew up around people who didn't really aspire to go to college, if you catch my drift.

TABBY

So who did you grow up with?

MALACHI

A lot of dudes that wanted quick ways to get money.

TABBY

So, criminals?

MALACHI

Nah, my dudes weren't criminals. They might've grazed the legal line a little bit, but they weren't bad dudes though.

TABBY

So no one said to you, "*Hey Malachi, stealing cars might not be a good idea?*" No one had that conversation with you?

MALACHI

No, not really. But we weren't stupid, we knew it was a bad idea. But when someone says tells you they're willing to pay you money, it's a resource you wouldn't have had otherwise.

TABBY

So how much were you being paid?

MALACHI

It all depends on the car. But it probably averaged out to a G a car.

TABBY

A thousand dollars for every car you stole?

MALACHI

That's an average. Some were more, some were less.

TABBY

Wow. So how did you find out about the drugs?

MALACHI

What do you mean?

TABBY

The drugs that were in the car?

MALACHI

Oh! The cops pulled it out. You know how there's a compartment next to the gear-box? Between the driver and passenger seats? (Tabby nods her head) He pulled it out of there.

TABBY

You saw them pull it out?

MALACHI

Nah, I was talking to the other cop at the time.

TABBY

So how do you know that they didn't plant it?

MALACHI

I don't. But, it didn't matter, how was I gonna fight it?

TABBY

Well, at least you only got two years. Better than then the other amount they were trying to give you.

MALACHI

Yeah, I know. One of my cellies said I was stupid for copping. He was like, "*Why admit to something you didn't do?*" I was like, "*I don't wanna spend the next seven years of my life in here. You bugging!*"

TABBY

That's an opinion. You did what you had to do. How many years does he have?

MALACHI

Oh, he had some crazy number like twelve or something.

TABBY

So, if you (Dialogue is interrupted by the ringing of Malachi's cell-phone)

MALACHI

Hold on one sec, Tee. ((Hello...Yeah, this is him...Uh, yeah, I can do that. What time...Okay, I'll be there...Thanks)) I'm sorry, Tee. That was my boss' wife. They're asking me to come in.

TABBY

Oh. We have to leave now?

MALACHI

She said whenever I can get there, so we'll leave after you're done eating.

TABBY

Well, I'm finished.

MALACHI

You have half your plate there?

TABBY

I can box this. It's fine.

MALACHI

I'm not in a rush, Tee. Finish your food.

TABBY

Malachi, they need you. It's fine.

MALACHI

Well, I don't really want the weekend to end yet. I've had a nice time with you.

TABBY

I'll pick you up when you get off.

MALACHI

Don't you have to work in the morning? (Tabby nods her head) I don't know how long they're gonna keep me. I don't wanna keep you up.

TABBY

How are you getting back to the jail? Doesn't Devaughn work in the morning too?

MALACHI

Yeah, but he doesn't mind taking me back. It's family.

TABBY

Text me when you have an idea of what time you're getting out. I'll let you know from there.

MALACHI

Okay.

PHONE CONVERSATION

DEVAUGHN & TABBY

((DEVAUGHN))

What it is?

((TABBY))

Hey. Have you heard from Malachi? I texted him but he hasn't gotten back to me.

((DEVAUGHN))

He said he thinks he'll be done around ten.

((TABBY))

Ten? That's kinda late.

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah, I know. Somebody called off at his job. They needed help.

((TABBY))

Yeah, he was with me when they called. Are you picking him up?

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah.

((TABBY))

What time does he have to be back to the jail?

((DEVAUGHN))

One.

((TABBY))

In the morning?

((DEVAUGHN))

Yeah. It's three hours from when he gets off work.

((TABBY))

Oh. Do you mind if I pick him up and drop him off to you?

((DEVAUGHN))

When he gets off?

((TABBY))

Yeah. There's something that I want to talk to him about. We can even take turns if you want? I can get him next weekend so you don't always have to make that trip.

((DEVAUGHN))

You seem to be wanting to spend a lot of time with him. You softening up now?

((TABBY))

Yeah. I am.

((DEVAUGHN))

Are you gonna tell him you're feeling him?

((TABBY))

He knows.

((DEVAUGHN))

You sure?

((TABBY))

(Sarcasm)

Yes, I'm gonna tell him, Devaughn.

(Devaughn laughter)

((DEVAUGHN))

Good. He'll be happy to hear that.

DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE

LATER THAT EVENING, DEVAUGHN IS BROWSING ON HIS LAPTOP WHEN HIS DOORBELL RINGS...

DEVAUGHN

What's up?

TABBY

Hey.

DEVAUGHN

Come in. (Tabby enters) Everything cool?

TABBY

Is Selise here?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, it's just me. Well, my man is Jo-Jo is here, but he's upstairs sleep.

TABBY

(Confusion)

He comes to your house to fall asleep?

DEVAUGHN

It's family shit. What's good though? You still picking Mac up, or no?

TABBY

That's what I came to talk to you about.

DEVAUGHN

What happened?

TABBY

I wanna get your opinion on something.

DEVAUGHN

What's good?

TABBY

Can we sit down?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah. My bad.

(They enter the living area and take seats)

DEVAUGHN

You want something to drink?

TABBY

No, thank you.

DEVAUGHN

So what happened?

TABBY

You said Malachi had three hours before he has to go back, right?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

TABBY

I don't know what to do, Devaughn.

DEVAUGHN

About?

TABBY

So Malachi was with me last night, right?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

TABBY

We were lying in bed together, and we started cuddling. (Devaughn nods his head) And I was waiting for Malachi to start something. But he never did.

DEVAUGHN

He knows that you ain't going for that. I told you, Mac ain't that kinda dude. He ain't beat for that.

TABBY

But what if I want something to happen?

DEVAUGHN

Do you want something to happen?

TABBY

I don't know...I don't know how it's going to make me feel.

DEVAUGHN

Then don't trip. Why be confused? Mac ain't gonna do shit until you tell him that it's cool. Don't worry about it.

(Brief pause as Tabby contemplates)

TABBY

Is it a better idea if we don't do anything? I'm asking from Malachi's point of view. Will he feel led on if something happens?

DEVAUGHN

Tabby, listen to me, stop tripping. You're making this shit way more complicated than it needs to be. Mac ain't gonna feel led on if you break him off some. This nigga's gone without it for damn near a year, he ain't tripping. If you have to fight yourself, then there ain't no reason to do shit. (No response from Tabby) Let me ask you a question. I got rubbers upstairs, you want them?

(Brief pause, then Tabby shakes her head)

DEVAUGHN

Right, because you ain't ready yet. Mac ain't going nowhere. Do it when you're ready.

TABBY

(Playful)

Do you *not* want your boy to get laid?

DEVAUGHN

Hell yeah I want Mac to get laid! But I ain't trying to have you play yourself for it. You ain't ready. Don't fuck around and regret some shit. That's corny.

(No response from Tabby; Brief pause)

TABBY

I'm so afraid to let go, Devaughn. Seriously, it's terrifies me.

DEVAUGHN

You gotta get over that shit at some point. Especially silly-ass Jamal. Come on now.

TABBY

You know Jamal too, huh?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, he's a fucking bozo.

TABBY

Ain't that the truth?

DEVAUGHN

Yo, Mac is twice the dude that Jamal is. It ain't even close.

TABBY

Do you still talk to Faheem?

DEVAUGHN

I seen him a few weeks ago.

TABBY

How is he?

DEVAUGHN

The same. Faheem's a clown too. Niggas don't wanna do shit with their lives. Fah been selling weed since eighty-eight and shit, like that shit is a career. (Chuckle from Tabby) Anyway, look, I'll get Mac tonight and take him back. Take the week to get your shit together. You're smart, you'll figure it out.

TABBY

No, I wanna see him.

DEVAUGHN

So you're gonna pick him up? (Devaughn's cell phone rings) Hold up. (Looks at phone) This is Mac now. ((What it is...Yeah...Hold on)) (To Tabby) What do you want me to tell him?

TABBY

I'll pick him up.

DEVAUGHN

((Tabby's gonna come get you first, then you bring you back here so I can take you back...Hold on))
He asked if you want something to eat.

TABBY

Oh. Um, okay.

DEVAUGHN

What do you want?

TABBY

A cheesesteak sounds good.

DEVAUGHN

Hell yeah, that shit do sound good. ((Mac, grab two cheesesteaks, fam. One for me too...Oh, and for this nigga Jo too. So get three. I'll give you the money when you get here...Oh word...Alright...Alright then.)) He said he'll be ready in forty-five minutes.

TABBY

Okay.

DEVAUGHN

He said you can tell him what you want on the sandwich when you get there.

TABBY

Okay. So explain how this thing works with your boys coming over, then falling asleep.

DEVAUGHN

My crib is like a safe-house. It's quiet. My niggas

come here when they girls be acting up, or, when they can't take their kids anymore. When they wanna smash side-checks. It's all family shit.

TABBY

"Smash side-chicks?" Really, Devaughn? (Sarcasm)
I swear that you're the devil.

DEVAUGHN

You told you? Jesus?

TABBY

Stop it! (Laughter from Devaughn) You really get kick out of making fun of our beliefs, don't you?

DEVAUGHN

Nah, it's not funny, but it's funny though. Tabby, Mac was an atheist back in the day. He ain't wanna hear shit about no damn god. I blame this shit on you.

TABBY

On me?!

DEVAUGHN

Yeah! He meets you, y'all do shit, then he goes to the pen and finds god. Your vagina must be the Holy Ghost. (Laughter from Tabby) Word to my mother that shit is true.

TABBY

How would I lead him to Jesus when I did the most ungodly thing possible?

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?

TABBY

I had a one-night stand with him! That's the opposite of what a Christian is supposed to do.

DEVAUGHN

(Sarcasm)

Well, god forgives.

TABBY

You keep playing with the lord and he's gonna strike you down. Just watch.

DEVAUGHN

I know. He knows I ain't shit.

TABBY

Did Selise say anything about me? I think I upset her with the whole love thing.

DEVAUGHN

She ain't worried about that. She did come out and admit that shit though.

TABBY

What?

DEVAUGHN

That she loves me.

TABBY

Did she? What did you say?

DEVAUGHN

(Impersonates song by Teddy
Pendergrass)

"Think I gotta let it go!" (Tabby laughter) *"Looks
like another love TKO!"*

TABBY

(Sarcasm)

I hate you!

(Devaughn laughter)

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, she said the same thing.

TABBY'S VEHICLE

MALACHI ENTERS TABBY'S VEHICLE AFTER BEING LEAVING HIS JOB FOR THE
EVENING...

TABBY

You smell like onions.

MALACHI

My bad. It's Jo-Jo's fault. He likes extra onions
on his cheesesteak.

TABBY

Eww.

MALACHI

I know. He's definitely a heathen.

TABBY

What do you want to do?

MALACHI

We're going back to Dev's right?

TABBY

I want to take you somewhere. But we gotta drop the food off first because I do not want my car smelling like onions.

MALACHI

(Chuckle)

Cool. I'll take a shower before we go back out so I don't stink.

TABBY

It's fine. How was your night?

MALACHI

Long. On my mother I don't wanna see another dish, fork, spoon, or pot and pan ever again.

TABBY

You have dishwashers, don't you?

MALACHI

Yeah but there's only two and dishes come back every twenty-seven seconds. So I spend a lot of time washing them myself.

TABBY

It makes the time go by fast, doesn't it?

MALACHI

(Sarcasm)

If you say so...Tee, look, I just wanna say thank you for this weekend. You pretty much spent the whole weekend with me and I appreciate you for it. (No response from Tabby) Did you have enjoy yourself with me this weekend?

TABBY

I did.

MALACHI

Good.

Tabby pulls her vehicle in front of Devaughn's Residence...

MALACHI

You coming in?

TABBY

No, I'll wait here.

MALACHI

Alright. I'll be right back.

Scene change to Malachi conversing with Devaughn...

MALACHI

This sandwich got me smelling like straight onions. I hate Jo for this.

DEVAUGHN

You better than me. I woulda told him to pick the
shit up himself.

MALACHI

Where is he?

DEVAUGHN

Upstairs, talking to some girl.

MALACHI

This dude. Yo, Tabby's outside. We're gonna go
somewhere real quick but I'll be back in a minute.
I ain't trying to stay out because I know you gotta
work in the morning. I'll wrap it up, alright?

DEVAUGHN

You good. Don't rush yourself back. This your last
night out.

MALACHI

I appreciate it. I'll be back in a minute.

DEVAUGHN

Alright.

BRIDGEBURY MEMORIAL GROUNDS

SCENE CHANGE TO MALACHI AND TABBY WALKING THROUGH THE CEMETERY. THEY
APPROACH A HEADSTONE WITH A LARGE CROSS ON THE TOP OF IT...

(Brief pause as both characters look
at the headstone)

MALACHI

Minerva Tavares?

TABBY

(Slowly nods head)

Yeah. This is my mother.

MALACHI

Oh, this is your moms? (Tabby nods her head) Oh, wow.

TABBY

I come here sometimes when the job gets on my nerves, or, life gets me stressed. It has a calming effect on me...It's quiet here, I can think. I mean, I can think in my house too, but this is different. I know it's just a tombstone, but I feel like she's here.

MALACHI

Y'all were really close?

TABBY

Yeah.

MALACHI

When she passed, it must've, like, (Interrupted)

TABBY

I've never gotten over it. I'm not gonna lie, she died thirteen years ago and I still cry sometimes. It's silly, but...

MALACHI

That ain't silly, Tee, that's real. It doesn't matter how long she's been gone, you're always gonna miss her.

TABBY

Before she got sick, she used to always drag me to this garden store she liked, or the market on Edwards, and I used to hate going because we'd be there all day. (Slight chuckle from Malachi) And she would always say, "*Tastalina, you're gonna miss these trips when I'm gone.*" And I do. Sometimes I just go to the garden store and walk around. I think the lady that works there thinks that I'm crazy. (Chuckle from Malachi) I think that's why I stayed with Jamal. Because he was the first person that I really got close to after my mom passed. Obviously, the relationship was different, but I hadn't let anyone in since she had died. It's not about what Jamal did to me, it's the fact that I let him take her place. I know you think that I'm blaming you for Jamal, but I'm not, I'm blaming myself. Do you get what I'm trying to say?

MALACHI

(Nods head)

Yeah. It's crystal. Yeah.

(Brief pause)

TABBY

I'm not easy to deal with, Malachi. I'm sure that you've realize that. But if you give me time, I think I'm worth the wait.

MALACHI

Oh, I don't *think* you're worth the wait, I know.

Obviously, I got time, Tee. I'm here.

Brief pause in dialogue as Tabby steps closer to Malachi and hugs him. They embrace for a short while. Afterwards, Tabby kisses her hand, then touches the gravestone. They begin walking back to her vehicle...

MALACHI

So wait, what's your real name again?

TABBY

Tastalina.

MALACHI

Where did your mom get that from?

TABBY

Just call me Tabby.

MALACHI

(Chuckle)

Bet.

SCENE CHANGE AS THEY ARRIVE BACK TO DEVAUGHN'S RESIDENCE...

MALACHI

Can I see you again next weekend?

TABBY

When do you work?

MALACHI

Tomorrow, Wednesday and Thursday.

TABBY

What time tomorrow?

MALACHI

I think I start at eleven.

TABBY

How are you getting there? Isn't Devaughn at work then?

MALACHI

The train is about a twenty-minute walk from the facility. I'll be good.

TABBY

I was thinking that I'll come pick you up Saturday. We'll do a day trip and go to Niagara Falls.

MALACHI

Oh, word?! I thought you ain't like it though?

TABBY

It might be different this time. I'd be going with someone that I actually wanted to be there with.

MALACHI

(Chuckle)

Alright. It's a date.

TABBY

Be safe.

MALACHI

You too. I'll see you soon.

TABBY

Okay.

Malachi exits Tabby's vehicle and enters Devaughn's residence. He walks into the living area and sees Devaughn and Selise asleep on the couch. He gently wakes Devaughn...

MALACHI

(Playful)

Don't y'all look like such a cute couple! You know it's god's work, right? (Devaughn glares at Malachi) (Malachi laughter) My bad to wake you, but I'm ready when you are.

DEVAUGHN

(To Selise)

You staying here?

SELISE

Where else am I gonna go?

DEVAUGHN

Home.

SELISE

I'm not taking the baby out again. You're stuck with us.

DEVAUGHN

(To Malachi)

Where'd y'all go?

MALACHI

To the cemetery.

DEVAUGHN & SELISE

(Unison)

The cemetery?

MALACHI

She showed me where her moms was buried at.

DEVAUGHN

Ohhh.

MALACHI

Yeah, it's heavy, dog.

DEVAUGHN

(To Selise)

I'll be back in like an hour or so, alright?

SELISE

Alright.

DEVAUGHN

Hit me if you need something. (Stands) (To Malachi)
I'm gonna take a piss and grab my keys.

MALACHI

Alright. (Devaughn exits scene) How's Tay doing?
Is he good?

SELISE

He's fine. I'm sure he'll be up soon.

MALACHI

You gotta feed him every couple of hours?

SELISE

Whenever he's hungry. And he has no problem letting
us know.

MALACHI

(Chuckle)

I'm sure. You know he's going to stubborn like his
pops, right?

SELISE

Don't remind me.

MALACHI

I don't mean no harm, Selise, but out of all the
girls that Dev was around, I'm glad he's serious
with you.

SELISE

For real? You mean that?

MALACHI

That's facts. You care about Dev. I could see it.

SELISE

I love him.

MALACHI

Word.

SELISE

I can't make no promises, but I'll work him on the church.

MALACHI

He'll see it when it's time.

SELISE

You sure about that?

MALACHI

I've learned that god don't make mistakes.

SELISE

(Nods head)

Okay.

SCENE CHANGE TO DEVAUGHN'S VEHICLE...

DEVAUGHN

Niagara Falls? Word?

MALACHI

Yeah, Dev. I never been there, I really wanna see it.

DEVAUGHN

I thought you couldn't leave the county though?

MALACHI

I'm not supposed to, but as long as I don't get caught doing nothing stupid, I'll be alright.

DEVAUGHN

You did it, Mac. You got her. How does it feel?

MALACHI

Nah, I ain't got her yet. I can tell she's not ready to open up all the way. But she's trying, and I'll take that.

DEVAUGHN

Word.

MALACHI

Yo, Dev, you and Selise? That's crazy, fam.

DEVAUGHN

What'chu mean?

MALACHI

You got a family, Dev. You gotta girl that loves you, a beautiful son, yo, you're blessed.

DEVAUGHN

I got a crazy girl, and an infant who's running

through diapers like cash in the titty bar.
(Malachi laughter) But, yeah, that's my family.

MALACHI

But Selise loves you, Dev. She's serious about you.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, she told me.

MALACHI

She told you?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, she admitted it.

MALACHI

How do you feel about it? You're cool with it?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know how I'm supposed to feel. I never had
no girl tell me that before.

MALACHI

It's scary, right?

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, because Selise is already crazy. (Chuckle
from Malachi) I'm hearing that love makes broads
even crazier.

MALACHI

Maybe so, but Selise ain't nothing you can't
handle. You'll be alright.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah.

MALACHI

We're getting older, Dev. I'm feeling there's more to life than being on the block all day. I mean, don't get me wrong, I love my people, but, I don't know, I want more, you know?

DEVAUGHN

I spoke to Alvin the day Tayshaun was born.

MALACHI

For real? How's he doing?

DEVAUGHN

He's cool, he's in Colorado. He told me it might be a place worth looking at.

MALACHI

You trying to move to Colorado?

DEVAUGHN

I don't know. I mean, NY is home, but, I don't know if I wanna stay forever, Mac. I'm thinking about breaking loose.

MALACHI

Is Selise down?

DEVAUGHN

She said we can talk about it.

MALACHI

Oh, she's down.

DEVAUGHN

I think she's thinking the same thing.

MALACHI

Wow, Dev. Colorado is far, fam.

DEVAUGHN

Yeah, I know. But sometimes it's good to get out the hood though.

MALACHI

Yeah, you're probably right.

DEVAUGHN

So tell me, Mac. What's really it about Tabby? What hooked you?

MALACHI

Her eyes, Dev. I know that sounds stupid, but those eyes. It's something about her eyes that hooked me.

DEVAUGHN

So it wasn't about the pussy?

MALACHI

Nah, it wasn't. Yo, honestly, it wasn't even that amazing. But she was drunk though, so that could be it too.

DEVAUGHN

That's facts. And now that she's into you, she'll

burn it down.

MALACHI

Word. I'm really ready for that. (Laughter from both characters) You know I'm ready for that. But, I don't know, it was the eyes, then the way that smiled at me. It was over. I woke up the next morning praying she wasn't psycho.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, Tabby ain't psycho. She don't come off like that.

MALACHI

On my mother I'm ecstatic about that! You never know with women sometimes.

DEVAUGHN

Word.

MALACHI

What do you think, Dev? Give it to me, you think we're alright?

DEVAUGHN

You and Tabby?

MALACHI

Yeah. Yo, Tabby ain't even her real name, fam. It's Tastalina.

DEVAUGHN

(Confusion)

What?

MALACHI

Yeah. Tastalina. I think Tabby said it was the city that her grandmother was born in. Something like that.

DEVAUGHN

Thank god for Tabby.

(Malachi laughter)

MALACHI

Word.

DEVAUGHN

Tabby is cool. She's real. She ain't for the bullshit. But you said it, Mac, she's scarred. I've been told broken girls ain't no joke.

MALACHI

I hear you. Trust me, the cellies be telling me wild stories about girls they dealt with. They did a number on these chicks, which turns around and makes them sharks to new dudes. But Tabby ain't that broken, she just doesn't trust nobody. When we was at the cemetery, she told me what her mom dying did to her. It's nothing nice, Dev. It shook her whole core up. It takes years to get through that. I can't do anything but respect it.

DEVAUGHN

I'm still mad that Jamal is her ex though. I could've told her that nigga was a waste of space.

MALACHI

That's facts. But you know how small this town is.

DEVAUGHN

Word.

MALACHI

I know you think that she might not be worth it,
but I'm (Interrupted)

DEVAUGHN

I'm not saying she ain't worth it. I'm just saying
that there might be other chicks out here who
aren't as scarred.

MALACHI

Nah, that's real, but I've come so far with Tabby.
I'm ready to make this thing serious, Dev.

DEVAUGHN

Then say no more.

(Brief pause)

MALACHI

Dev, look, I ain't mean to press you about church
earlier. I just want you to know that it's not a
sham. It's a real thing. I feel it for real.

DEVAUGHN

I know you do.

MALACHI

I know that you don't care to understand it, but
if you gave it a chance I think you'd see it. You're
smarter than me, Dev. I know you'd feel it.

DEVAUGHN

Mac, you my man. Nigga, I'd take a fucking bullet for you. It doesn't even matter that I'm a father now. You know why? Because you my man. All I care about, is you being good. You're on that Jesus shit now, good, I (Interrupted)

MALACHI

You made your point, Dev.

DEVAUGHN

Nah, Mac, hear me out. Look, we all got a purpose, right? We're all here for a reason. Maybe your purpose was to get right spiritually. You gotta do time, Mac. If Jesus, or the bible, or whatever, makes the time easier for you to deal with, then who the fuck am I to tell you what's real and what's not. I might rag on you a little, but I know you believe it. I'm cool.

MALACHI

Yeah, but I don't want you to play the sidelines. It makes me trip because I'm like, "*Damn, first time in my life that Dev don't rock with me on something.*"

DEVAUGHN

But I am rocking with you. I'm good that you're standing for what you believe. I just don't want to be recruited, Mac. I want to live my life the way I choose. Not what some being has chosen for me.

MALACHI

Dev, we're not living for anything, fam. Not you. You have a family now. But Jo, and Shy, and Mino, all these dudes are doing the same thing that there were doing before I went up. Which was the same thing that they were doing the first time I went

up. Nothing is changing, Dev.

DEVAUGHN

So be the light to them. Lord knows them niggas is all followers anyway. Maybe not so much Shy, but Jo and Mino? You could definitely get them niggas to go to church. They listen to you.

MALACHI

And that's cool, but it would be much better if you went as well. But, I'm not gonna crowd you. You're a grown man, and I respect it. Just know when you're ready for the lord, he's ready for you.

DEVAUGHN

I know, Mac.

Devaughn pulls his vehicle up to the steps of Malachi's Work-Release Facility...

DEVAUGHN

You got some time yet, you don't need any food before you go in?

MALACHI

Oh, nah, I'm good, fam. I had a big dinner at work. I'm still full.

DEVAUGHN

Word.

MALACHI

Check it, I'm gonna hit you tomorrow. I think I work until six. I'll see where you're at afterwards.

DEVAUGHN

Alright then.

(Malachi exits the vehicle)

MALACHI

Yo, we might not see eye-to-eye on our paths but, regardless, you're my man. I love, boy.

DEVAUGHN

You already know, Mac.

MALACHI

I'll see you soon.

DEVAUGHN

Word.

Malachi closes the passenger-side door and taps the top of the vehicle. He walks into the facility, and the main door closes behind him. He gives Devaughn a slight hand-salute then walks out of scene. Devaughn puts the vehicle in drive and drives away. The last scenes show Malachi sitting on his bed, reading the bible. While Devaughn takes a seat on his bed, removes his shirt, turns off the light, and lies down next to Selise....

FADE OUT:

THE END