

TWENTIES
"Pilot"

by

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INT. WEST HOLLYWOOD - MORNING

Morning sex is in session. Two people are enjoying each other's bodies and each other's company before they've had a chance to brush their teeth. Lust is in the air.

As the expensive sheets fall to the floor we quickly discover that our lovers are two WOMEN.

One is in her twenties. Black. The kind of black that's not mixed with anything. Her skin tone would have relegated her to the cotton fields back in the day. The sides of her head are shaved and the rest of her hair is natural. So natural it's starting to lock. She's a Taurus in every sense of the word - stubborn as hell, never wrong, and loyal to a fault.

This is HATTIE.

The other woman is mixed with a lot of things. Her ethnicity is ambiguous and so is her sexuality. But from this vantage point she looks like your typical LIPSTICK LESBIAN. She's in her mid-thirties, but if she told you she was in her late twenties you'd believe her. She has mommy issues and possesses the kind of beauty that sneaks up on you when you're not paying attention.

This is AUDIE.

By this point they've both climaxed, a few times, and they're ready to take on the day.

HATTIE

You're my favorite.

AUDIE

I better be.

HATTIE

Why can't you just be sweet?

AUDIE

You want me to be sweet or do you want me to be myself?

HATTIE

I want you to be a sweeter version of yourself.

Audie smiles and kisses her. Hattie hops out of bed and throws on a Pattie Labelle t-shirt and sweatpants.

AUDIE

What do you have going on today?

HATTIE

I'm gonna try to get some writing done.

AUDIE

Take the words "try to" out of the sentence.

HATTIE

You're right.

AUDIE

My two favorite words.

Audie hops in the shower. Hattie watches her lather up. This is her favorite part of the day.

HATTIE

Are you sure you can't come to Cinespia?

AUDIE

There's nothing I'd rather not do. I hate that hipster shit. And I don't love "All About Eve".

HATTIE

That's blasphemous.

AUDIE

I prefer "Little Foxes" or "Human Bondage".

HATTIE

Young Bette.

AUDIE

Yeah, I like her when she still had something to prove.

The idea of Audie liking people before they're sure of themselves doesn't faze Hattie.

HATTIE

Can you give me a ride home?

AUDIE

You gotta wait for me to do my lotion regimen.

HATTIE

Can you make an exception and just slap on some Jergen's?

AUDIE

No, I can not. You know I gotta do a layer of petroleum jelly and then a coat of shea butter.

HATTIE

Okay fine, but can you please hurry up?

As Audie rinses off, we --

CUT TO:

EXT. TOLUCA LAKE - STREET - DAY

Audie pulls up in front of Hattie's apartment building.

Only to find Hattie's belongings scattered on the front lawn.

There's a large pile of RETRO JORDANS, another pile of CONCERT TEES, a pile of BOOKS and an old LAZY-BOY. These are her most prized possessions.

Hattie jumps out of the car and tries to figure out what the fuck is going on.

HATTIE

What the fuck?

AUDIE

Were you late with your rent again?

HATTIE

Yeah, but I'm always late. I was gonna pay it tomorrow.

AUDIE

You can't just pay your rent when you feel like it.

HATTIE

Can you not come at me right now?

Hattie starts collecting her t-shirts.

HATTIE (CONT'D)

You gotta be a heartless bitch to throw a vintage "Waiting To Exhale" t-shirt on the street. I got this in Tokyo.

Audie starts gathering Hattie's stuff and tries to fit as much as she can in her trunk.

AUDIE
I can store most of it at my
apartment.

Hattie just stands there in a daze.

AUDIE (CONT'D)
Hattie?

She snaps out of it.

AUDIE (CONT'D)
I have to get to work, but I can
store half of it at my place and
the other half I can put in my
storage unit.

HATTIE
Thank you.

AUDIE
Of course.

Audie walks over to Hattie and kisses her on the cheek.

AUDIE (CONT'D)
Don't worry, something great always
happens after you hit rock bottom.

HATTIE
So this is rock bottom?

AUDIE
I would hope so.

Hattie plops down in her Lazy-Boy.

AUDIE (CONT'D)
You want me to drop you off
somewhere?

HATTIE
No. I just want to sit here. And be
alone with my thoughts.

AUDIE
You sure? That sounds really
depressing.

HATTIE
I know. I just wanna lean into it.

EXT. HATTIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - A FEW HOURS LATER

Hattie is still sitting in her Lazy-Boy. She's drowning in her feelings, while reading something by James Baldwin.

After a beat her phone BUZZES. An image of her MOTHER pops up. She rolls her eyes.

HATTIE

Hey, Ma - how you doing?

HATTIE'S MOTHER

I've been better. Your aunt tried to come for me yesterday.

HATTIE

What?

HATTIE'S MOTHER

She came to my house talking crazy. She needs to be in a mental institution.

HATTIE

That's why I stopped talking to her a long time ago.

HATTIE'S MOTHER

Uh huh. Well I'm bout to follow suit.

Then --

HATTIE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

And your cousin got shot in his good leg last week.

HATTIE

Which cousin?

HATTIE'S MOTHER

The Muslim one.

HATTIE

He's not Muslim, he just doesn't eat pork.

HATTIE'S MOTHER

Well whatever he is, he got shot by somebody and his mother asked me to go see him at the hospital, but I don't know him like that. And you know I don't like hospitals.

HATTIE
Yeah, I know.

HATTIE'S MOTHER
How you doing?

HATTIE
I'm fine.

Hattie looks up and realizes she doesn't have a roof over her head. She's the opposite of fine, but she doesn't feel like hearing her mother's mouth.

HATTIE'S MOTHER
You still messing with that
straight bitch?

HATTIE
Audie's not straight.

HATTIE'S MOTHER
She bisexual?

HATTIE
She doesn't believe in labels.

HATTIE'S MOTHER
She don't believe in race either.
What is that bitch? I can't tell if
she's Hindu or Puerto Rican.

HATTIE
Why do you care?

HATTIE'S MOTHER
Cause I wanna know.

Just then a fuel efficient car pulls up. Finally. Hattie's two best friends have come to save the day.

HATTIE
(hurried)
Alright ma, I gotta go - the girls
are here. Alright, I love you too.
Bye.

The driver is MARIE.

She's a biracial beauty that does everything by the book. She works on the corporate side of Hollywood so she's bilingual. She's fluent in "older white male" and can still hold court in a beauty salon in Compton.

The lovely lady in the passenger seat is NIA.

She's a Trinidadian goddess with brown skin and a ponytail that goes down to her booty. She is a lady in every sense of the word. In short - she's the reincarnation of Diahann Carroll.

They hop out of the car and rush over to Hattie as if she just survived a plane crash.

MARIE
This is what you get.

HATTIE
Really, Marie?

NIA
Are you okay?

HATTIE
Thank you, Nia. I'm fine.

Marie just stands there, arms folded, shaking her head in disbelief.

MARIE
Where's your Lil girlfriend?

HATTIE
Don't put "Lil" in front of it.

MARIE
Why didn't she stay with you?

HATTIE
She had to go to work.

MARIE
You could've been raped or killed.

HATTIE
In Toluca Lake? Who's gon rape me, a dentist?

NIA
This is crazy.

MARIE
No, this is what happens when you don't pay your rent on time.

Nia holds up a vintage ottoman covered in dirt.

NIA

Oh my gosh. This is the first ottoman I reupholstered for you. Now it's ruined!

Marie calls someone on her phone.

HATTIE

Who you calling?

MARIE

Chuck -- so he can come help us pack up the rest of your shit.

HATTIE

We're not packing up shit tonight - we're going to Cinespia. I'm ready to get my life from ALL ABOUT EVE.

MARIE

You just got evicted and you're tryna go sit on the grass and watch a movie?

Hattie looks at her.

HATTIE

Yes, bitch.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIE'S PRIUS HYBRID - CONTINUOUS

Marie's driving with both hands on the wheel paying extra close attention to the road.

Hattie's in the passenger seat with her aux cord plugged in - trying to find the perfect song to brighten her mood.

Nia's in the backseat using her iPhone camera as a mirror to make sure not a hair on her head is out of place.

They're the new-age version of THE SUPREMES.

MARIE

Why did Audie have to rush to work? Doesn't she work for herself?

HATTIE

She works for a lot of people actually. She runs people's websites and shit. She can't just not show up cause I got put out.

MARIE

How hard is it to make a website?
And who even has websites anymore?

NIA

Marie, be nice.

MARIE

Telling a woman to be nice is
sexist.

NIA

Not if another woman says it.

MARIE

Hattie, I just want to be helpful.

HATTIE

No, you want me to be alone so you
can be the only one with a boo.

MARIE

I want you to have a boo. I just
want her to be a lesbian.

HATTIE

Sexuality is fluid.

As Marie and Hattie have a mini stand-off, Nia interjects as she usually does.

NIA

So are you guys just gonna act like
you don't see this engagement ring
on my finger?

They both turn to look at her hand. The conflict free diamond sparkles as she wiggles her fingers.

HATTIE

Who proposed to you?

NIA

I did.

MARIE

Oh Lord.

NIA

I bought it as an early birthday
present for myself.

HATTIE

Wait, is this like that black chick
in Atlanta that married herself?

NIA

No, it's a promise ring, Foolie.

HATTIE

What are you promising?

NIA

To remain a virgin until I find
"The One."

MARIE

But you're not a virgin.

NIA

Aren't I though?

MARIE

No, you aren't!

HATTIE

You told us you lost your virginity
to a light-skinned dude named
Chauncey when you were in high
school.

NIA

But my hymen wasn't compromised.

HATTIE

It still counts.

NIA

Then I'm promising to remain
celibate until I find a love like
my favorite couple.

HATTIE

Is this the same couple from your
secret vision board?

NIA

Yup.

MARIE

I still don't understand why we
can't see it.

NIA
 A vision board is like a birthday
 wish - if I show it to you my
 visions won't come true.

Marie rolls her eyes.

HATTIE
 Just tell us who the couple is?

NIA
 Nope.

HATTIE
 Dwayne and Whitley?

Nia shakes her head.

HATTIE (CONT'D)
 Halle Berry and Sam Jackson in
 "Jungle Fever?"

NIA
 Hell no!

As they pull up to HOLLYWOOD FOREVER, they see the long line
 of WHITE HIPSTERS, waiting for the gates to open. The hunt
 for a parking spot begins.

MARIE
 Look, I have a man.

NIA
 We know.

HATTIE
 We know.

*

MARIE
 And I didn't have to use a vision
 board to get him.

With that - Hattie rolls her eyes and finally finds the
 perfect song. A beat later - we hear the voice of an angel.
 Literally and figuratively.

HATTIE/MARIE/NIA
 (mouthing all the words)
 Everyone falls /in love sometimes /
 sometimes it's wrong/ sometimes
 it's right/ for every win/ someone
 must fail/ but you'll find your
 point when / when you exhale...
 yeah, yeah / say -

As our three girls bob their heads to the beat and sing SHOOP, SHOOP, SHOOP - we get a glimpse of what pure joy really looks like.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - LAWN - NIGHT

"All About Eve" is underway - and we've reached the critical point in the film where Margo starts to worry if her man is catching feelings for Eve. As Gary Merrill charms his way back into Bette Davis' arms, our girls look up at him adoringly.

MARIE

Why are we always the only black people here?

HATTIE

Cause black people don't like being outside.

NIA

I wonder if I could date a white guy?

HATTIE

You need to date whoever's willing to put up with yo crazy ass.

NIA

Just because I'm a firm believer in safe sex does not make me crazy.

While Hattie and Nia bicker Marie DISCREETLY grabs Nia's phone. *

*
*

HATTIE

Having dudes take STD tests and then bring you the printed results with the doctor's signature at the bottom is a little crazy.

NIA

I don't see the problem?

MARIE

Of course you don't. And one day you'll blink and be forty and realize you're still childless and alone.

NIA

Don't put that into the Universe!

HATTIE

Yeah, don't do that. Words have power.

MARIE

You're right, but actions are more powerful.

Marie hands Nia back her phone only to find she has messaged two RANDOM GUYS on her behalf. Nia quickly investigates the guys Marie said "hi" to.

NIA

These guys look ratch!

Nia sucks her teeth and starts speaking in her native Trinidadian tongue.

NIA (CONT'D)

But what de ass is dis?! Allyuh rhelly playing up in my phone wit these chupidee fellas. Allyuh have no broughtupsy?

It's half English, half French. Either way it sounds beautiful.

NIA (CONT'D)

I can't believe you did that.

MARIE

I'm just tryna help.

HATTIE

Everybody doesn't want your help, Marie.

MARIE

But you need it.

HATTIE

Actually I don't.

MARIE

So you don't need somewhere to live?

HATTIE

That's not help. That's me needing a favor. There's a difference.

MARIE

I have to talk to Chuck about that.

HATTIE

No, you don't. We all know who wears the skinny jeans in that house.

MARIE

Fine, but I still need to make him feel like he has a choice in the matter.

HATTIE

Fair enough.

MARIE

But if you're gonna stay with me you need to let me help you get a job. Cause you can't turn into the house guest that never leaves.

HATTIE

Cool, but I don't want some stressful nine to five that's gonna take me away from my writing.

MARIE

You need to take whatever you can get! Seriously. You just got put out.

HATTIE

I'm aware.

MARIE

My friend runs Ida B.'s production company and I heard she's still looking for an assistant.

HATTIE

I keep forgetting all you black execs know each other.

MARIE

Yeah, cause there are seven of us. Now do you want me to put in a good word for you or nah?

NIA

I love Ida B. She's on my vision board as well.

HATTIE

Nah, I'm good on that.

MARIE

Hattie, you've been out here for three years and what do you have to show for it?

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*
*

HATTIE

A few dope scripts.

*
*

MARIE

If they were that dope they would've come across my desk by now.

*
*
*
*

HATTIE

Shade.

*
*

MARIE

No, that's a read. Look, your scripts are okay, but they're not great. So while you work on making them great why don't you crawl up under somebody that has the career you want.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

HATTIE

I don't want Ida B.'s career. "Cocoa's Butter" is an awful show.

*
*

MARIE

No it's not!

*

NIA

I love that show.

HATTIE

No you don't. Y'all could barely get through last season.

MARIE

That's not true.

HATTIE

What do you like about it?

NIA

I like that it's about black women trying to find love.

MARIE

I'm just glad it exists.

HATTIE

Those are not good reasons to like a show.

NIA

I know, I wish it were better.

HATTIE

A lot of black girls I talk to don't like it. But nobody wants to say that shit out loud. It's our secret shame.

MARIE

We have to support black shit.

HATTIE

No, we should support good shit that happens to be black.

MARIE

If you don't interview for the job you can't stay with me.

*
*
*

HATTIE

Fine, I'll stay with Nia.

*
*

NIA

Sorry, boo. You know I don't like being on Marie's bad side.

*
*
*

HATTIE

Ain't this a bitch.

*
*

MARIE

Update your resume and email it to me asap. And there better not be any typos - Ida hates that.

*
*
*

HATTIE

I don't care what Ida hates.

*

CUT TO:

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INT. MARIE AND CHUCK'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Marie and CHUCK are cuddling in their king-sized bed.

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Chuck is the product of an upper-middle-class black family. He's clean-shaven, has a great body, and needs everyone to like him. Because of his privileged upbringing - he's a little bit of a white frat boy trapped in a black man's body.

MARIE

She won't be here that long, I promise.

CHUCK

I like Hattie a lot, but you know if she's here it's not gonna help with our dry spell.

MARIE

We have sex in the morning anyway and Hattie doesn't wake up until noon.

CHUCK

Maybe that's why she can't keep a job.

MARIE

I know. But I got her an interview with Ida B.

CHUCK

When's she going to meet with her? *

MARIE

Tomorrow.

CHUCK

I hope she don't roll up in there wearing that faded "Waiting to Exhale" t-shirt. *
*
*

MARIE

It's vintage. *

CHUCK

Ida don't care. *

MARIE

Good point. *

Marie gently grabs his junk.

MARIE (CONT'D)

So you're good if Hattie stays?

CHUCK

(moaning)

Uh, yup. She can stay here as long as she needs to. *

Marie gives Chuck a passionate kiss. He leans into it. Pretty soon, his hands grab her ass, and they make their way up to her breasts.

The kiss morphs into their usual morning quickie.

Chuck flips Marie over. Judging by the look on her face this is his go-to position.

MARIE

Well, if you're gonna do that, I need some lube.

CHUCK

We're out of the blueberry stuff.

MARIE

I told you to buy some the last time we were at The Pleasure Chest.

CHUCK

I'll just use spit.

MARIE

Saliva grosses me out. You know that.

CHUCK

You don't have to look at it.

MARIE

Chuck not today, okay. Not today.

And just like that the moment has passed. No morning sex today.

*
*

CUT TO:

*

INT. YOUR YOGA STUDIO - DAY

YOUR YOGA STUDIO is a small yoga spot. There are only three rooms and each teacher has their own vibe. Nia's vibe is black and eccentric. D'Angelo plays in the background while she teaches white and black hipsters how to find their center.

NIA

Now as we bring this beautiful session to a close, I want you all to empty your minds and become one with your breath.

The Students lay on their mats and do exactly as they're told.

NIA (CONT'D)

I'm giving all of you one giant mental hug right now because you stayed in the room, you checked your fears at the door, and you weren't afraid to push yourselves. That's all a yoga instructor can ask for. Thank you so much for being you. And I hope to see all of you back here on Wednesday. And I do mean all of you. Because if less than five people show up, I don't get paid. Namaste.

The Students start filing out one by one. A few of them wish her happy birthday on their way out. Nia thanks each one of them by name as they leave. She bends down to grab her things and checks her phone.

She has an alert from BUMBLE: Nia clicks on the alert and sees a message from a CUTE BLACK GUY that reads:

"According to your profile, you don't date guys that eat meat and they have to be at least six feet tall. Unfortunately, I'm 5'10 and I love a good lamb chop.

If I was a little bit taller and didn't love chicken, I'd totally try to get at you. But I'm not, and I do - so I'll stand down."

Surprisingly, this makes Nia smile, and she types back - "Well there's always an exception to the rule."

He responds - "Wanna grab coffee real quick?"

She takes a deep breath and types, "Sure."

CUT TO:

INT. MARIE AND CHUCK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Hattie sits on the couch watching YouTube videos.

She's currently sucked in to an old video of Whitney Houston being interviewed by Arsenio Hall. Stevie Wonder sits next to her on the couch moving his head from side to side.

Arsenio is obviously smitten with Whitney - even though at this time in her life she's secretly dating his best friend, Eddie Murphy. Arsenio asks if she can remember the first song she ever sang. Rather than just telling him the name of the song - she leans her head back and starts singing, "Guide Me Great Jehovah" - the audience is in a trance. So is Hattie.

Whenever Hattie is feeling lost in the world, vintage Nippy is her North Star.

Her phone BUZZES - it's Audie.

Audie: Hey babe, what ya doing?

Hattie: Writing.

Audie: Are you telling the truth?

Hattie: Nah, I'm watching Nippy videos tryna figure out where it all went wrong.

Audie: Good luck with that.

CUT TO:

INT. ZARA - FITTING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Hattie is trying on clothes while Marie is on her phone flagging e-mails she doesn't feel like answering right away.

Nia is doing her best to separate the clothes that are working from the clothes that aren't.

Hattie is currently looking at herself in a pair of ripped jeans and a button up shirt with a pocket square for flare. She looks amazing.

NIA

How are we feeling about the pocket square? Is it too much?

HATTIE

I like it.

NIA

Jacket or no jacket?

MARIE

No jacket. You don't wanna look desperate.

Hattie turns around and notices that the pants are too feminine for her taste.

HATTIE

These jeans are a little too tight.

NIA

They fit perfectly.

HATTIE

I know - I don't want them to.

NIA

Fine.

Nia DARTS out of the room to find a bigger size.

MARIE

You need to be there on time. And by that I mean you need to be fifteen minutes early.

Hattie struggles to take the jeans off.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Shower her with compliments. Tell her how much you love her earlier work.

HATTIE

Her earlier work is a struggle, but okay.

MARIE

Steer clear of her personal life. No one knows if she's gay or straight or somewhere in between.

HATTIE

She's as gay as the day is long.

MARIE

Please don't say that tomorrow.

HATTIE

Of course. I'm not an idiot.

MARIE

Oh and just FYI I told my friend you're a big fan of "Cocoa's Butter."

*

HATTIE

Why would you do that?

MARIE

Because you need a job and I was laying it on thick.

Nia pops back in with another pair of jeans for Hattie to try on. Hattie tries them on and likes them right away.

HATTIE
This is it right here.

MARIE
Yeah, that's cute.

Nia stands back and smiles, admiring her work.

HATTIE
Now who's gon' pay for this?

MARIE
You don't have enough money to pay
for this outfit? *

HATTIE
Oh I was rich this morning but then
auto-pay hit my account and now I'm
broke again. *

Silence.

HATTIE (CONT'D)
I'll let y'all figure out who's gon
pay for what while I get in line. *

Hattie exits.

MARIE
Why is she such a hot mess? *

NIA
She's just in a valley right now.

MARIE
Well, she needs to hurry up and get
out of it.

NIA
It took you a while to get out of
yours. Remember when you and Chuck
went on that break and you
accidentally cut your bangs too
short?

MARIE
Yeah, that was a dark period.

NIA
But you got through it.

MARIE
Barely.

They both look at themselves in the mirror.

NIA
Your blowout looks good.

MARIE
Thanks, Ni.

NIA
I'll pay for the shirt, you pay for
the jeans.

MARIE
The jeans are more expensive.

NIA
I know.

Nia exits the dressing room - leaving Marie all by her lonesome. Marie glows from the compliment Nia just gave her.

Then she looks at herself a little longer and sees a woman who appears to have her shit together, but deep down she's not sure if she's happy or just pretending to be.

Then she smiles at herself, shakes out her hair, and struts out of the fitting room.

INT. IDA B.'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

We're in a beautiful three-story house somewhere in Encino, California.

POSTERS with PREDOMINANTLY BLACK CASTS line the walls. Fresh flowers are on every table top. Statues of elephants are littered throughout the house and the color red is everywhere.

Hattie sits on a white couch. Constantly checking to make sure she's not sweating through her shirt.

Then a LATIN WOMAN steps into the room to say:

LATIN WOMAN
Ida will be with you in just a
moment. She's wrapping up a call.

HATTIE
Cool. Thank you.

Hattie gets up and starts walking around the living room. It feels more like a museum than it does a place to kick up your feet and watch TV. Expensive art hangs on the walls.

Hattie gets really close to what looks like a Basquiat to see if it's real. She quickly realizes it is.

Then she peruses the framed photos on the mantel. No family. No special someone. Just pictures of Ida and famous people she's worked with and photos of her at award shows. It's clear that career is this woman's main focus. That razor sharp focus has served her well.

Then Hattie hears a voice:

IDA B. (O.S.)
Giving yourself a tour I see.

Ida's deep voice startles her. She turns around to see a stunning woman who looks half black and half Cherokee. Ida is a walking persona. Her beauty is intimidating and her charisma is disarming. Everything about this woman is calculated.

She shakes Hattie's hand.

IDA B. (CONT'D)
I'm Ida.

HATTIE
I know.

IDA B.
I know you know. I just think it's weird to shake someone's hand and not introduce yourself.

HATTIE
That makes sense.

IDA B.
Of course it does. Have a seat.

Hattie sits down in a big chair in front of the couch.

IDA B. (CONT'D)
Not there.

Hattie quickly gets up.

IDA B. (CONT'D)
That's my chair. You can sit on the couch.

HATTIE
My bad.

IDA B.
All good, sis.

Something about Ida calling Hattie "sis" makes her feel at ease. Like they've known each other for longer than thirty seconds.

IDA B. (CONT'D)
So you wanna be my assistant?

HATTIE
That's the job, right?

IDA B.
Yeah, but that doesn't mean you want to do it.

HATTIE
I definitely want to do it. I'd love to learn from someone like you. You've accomplished so much in your career. It would be an honor to watch you work.

IDA B.
Well you wouldn't have too much time to sit around and watch me. I've got a lot on my plate. I don't even have time to put gas in my car.

HATTIE
Which one?

IDA B.
Is that a joke?

HATTIE
I saw a Tesla out there. You're obviously not putting gas in that.

Ida smiles. There's something about Hattie she likes.

IDA B.
How old are you?

HATTIE
Twenty four.

IDA B.
Wow. You're a child.

Hattie rolls her eyes.

She hates it when people say that to her. As if her twenty four years on this planet haven't meant anything.

IDA B. (CONT'D)

What do you want to do?

HATTIE

I want to write for television.

IDA B.

Comedy or drama.

HATTIE

Comedy.

IDA B.

You think you're funny?

HATTIE

Uh yeah.

IDA B.

The last time I sat down with a comedy writer I couldn't stop laughing.

Awkward silence.

HATTIE

Well, I laugh a lot when I watch your shows.

IDA B.

Let me guess - you're a big fan of "Cocoa's Butter."

*

HATTIE

How could I not be? It's a phenomenal show.

IDA B.

What did you like the most about last season?

HATTIE

I love when the main girl realizes no one is gonna love her until she learns to love herself. That really touched me.

IDA B.

That happens every season.

HATTIE

Well, it's done so beautifully I can't help but be moved each time.

IDA B.

You're so full of shit.

HATTIE

Excuse me?

IDA B.

Being my personal assistant isn't just a regular job. It means you're in my home. You're in my space. I have to trust you, completely.

HATTIE

I know that.

IDA B.

So I'm gonna do my research.

Ida pulls out her phone and reads.

IDA B. (CONT'D)

"Cocoa's Butter" is a show about black people for white people" - does that sound familiar to you?

*

Hattie starts to remember.

HATTIE

Oh my God.

IDA B.

Don't call on Him now. You're the one that tweeted it.

HATTIE

Yeah, like six years ago.

IDA B.

I did a deep dive.

Ida finds another shady tweet.

IDA B. (CONT'D)

"Cocoa's Butter" is all style and no substance."

*

HATTIE

Dammit. When did I say that?

IDA B.
I could keep going.

HATTIE
Please don't.
(then)
Look, I'm sorry.

IDA B.
Don't apologize. Just be honest.

HATTIE
Okay fine. I think the show's boring. And to be honest you could use your platform for a lot more than showing black women wearing fly outfits and trying to find the perfect vibrator.

IDA B.
Well, when you get a platform you can do whatever you like with it. And I have a feeling ten years from now you'll be sitting in a chair just like the one I'm sitting in. In a house your boring show paid for and some girl twenty years your junior will be sitting across from you telling you how to do your job.

HATTIE
From your lips to God's ears.

IDA B.
Lupita will see you out.

HATTIE
The actress?

IDA B.
The maid.

As Lupita comes back into the living room, we --

CUT TO:

INT. MARIE AND CHUCK'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Post dinner. The lights have been dimmed, candles have been lit, and Kendrick Lamar is in the background rapping about God and what it means to be a free black man.

Everyone sits around the table, including BEN, Marie's co-worker. He's the OJ of executives, and LAUREN - his well-meaning white girlfriend.

MARIE

I can't believe you tweeted that.

HATTIE

I can't believe she stalked my twitter page.

NIA

I know!

MARIE

She did what any woman in her position is supposed to do.

LAUREN

What happened?

BEN

Ida found some shady tweets Hattie wrote about "Cocoa's Butter".

*

LAUREN

Oh my God I love that show!

Everyone cuts their eyes at her. She cowers.

HATTIE

It's cool, I ain't want that job no way.

MARIE

You wanna know what your problem is?

HATTIE

I don't actually.

MARIE

You don't know what you want.

HATTIE

I want to be a writer.

MARIE

That can't be true, because if you did you would be writing every day. If you wanted to be a writer you'd be at the WGA reading scripts cover to cover.

(MORE)

MARIE (CONT'D)

If you wanted to be a writer you wouldn't be tweeting shady shit about a popular black show you could potentially work on.

HATTIE

Don't talk to me like I'm a child.

MARIE

Then stop acting like one!

NIA

Sisters! We are not doing this on my birthday! Both of you need to take a breath.

Marie and Nia do as they're told. Everyone looks a little shell shocked.

CHUCK

Ben and I are gonna go check on something in the kitchen.

NIA

Thank you.

The guys exit. Leaving Lauren in the lion's den.

LAUREN

Honey, do you need any help?

BEN

Nah, we got it.

LAUREN

Okay.

Awkward silence. Then --

HATTIE

Marie, has anybody ever told you in every relationship there's a human and a monster.

MARIE

No, I haven't heard that.

HATTIE

Most monsters haven't.

Marie can't help but chuckle at that.

HATTIE (CONT'D)

You can come for me when it's just the three of us, but don't do it in front of your co-worker and his random white girlfriend.

LAUREN

I'm not random.

NIA

Marie, say you're sorry.

MARIE

I'm sorry.

NIA

Hattie?

HATTIE

Me too.

Marie leans over to Nia and whispers --

MARIE

Let me borrow a pad?

HATTIE

(under her breath)

No wonder you're being such a bitch.

MARIE

Me being a bitch ain't got nothing to do with me being on my period.

*

NIA

Sorry, I'm in the panty liner phase.

LAUREN

No need to whisper. We're all ladies here.

Lauren holds up a tiny pink DIVA CUP. The Girls stare at it as if it were a foreign object.

MARIE

A diva cup?! Bitch, I just started using tampons.

*

*

INT. MARIE & CHUCK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

*

Lauren sits on the toilet as she prepares to go into her tampon tutorial.

LAUREN

I can't believe you guys don't use Diva Cups.

HATTIE

I can't believe you guys don't bless your food.

The camera is focused on our three girls. We can hear Lauren, but we don't see her.

LAUREN (O.C.)

Okay, so don't worry about inserting it correctly the first time. It's a lot like sex. It'll hurt at first, but once you get the hang of it --

HATTIE

We get it.

LAUREN (O.C.)

Marie, you might want to loosen up when you try this. The more tense you are, the more painful it'll be.

MARIE

Wow, this really is like sex.

LAUREN (O.C.)

Do you want to try it standing or sitting?

MARIE

Sitting.

HATTIE

Good choice.

Lauren and Marie switch places.

LAUREN

Okay first you want to fold it into a little triangle so it's easier to insert.

Marie folds it.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Hold the cup in your - are you right-handed, or left-handed?

MARIE

Right-handed.

LAUREN

Okay, hold it in your right hand and slowly insert it. Do you have any lube?

MARIE

No, we're out.

Marie closes her eyes and tries to insert the tiny cup into her vagina while everyone looks on. Then she quickly realizes.

MARIE (CONT'D)

You know what - I don't need an audience for this. Can ya'll wait outside?

The girls awkwardly bump into each other as they try to escape the cramped space as quickly as they can.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIE AND CHUCK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lauren and Hattie flank Nia as she leans against the bathroom door.

NIA

The coffee was going great. We were laughing. He was flirting. His beard was perfect. I could see he was wearing Invisalign which I appreciated.

HATTIE

Nice.

NIA

And then this foolie asked if we could split the check.

HATTIE

Ah hell nah. Who goes dutch on a first date?

LAUREN

Maybe he was broke.

NIA

Then we should've went for a walk
in the park. Don't ask me to go on
a date you can't afford.

LAUREN

Going dutch isn't that crazy.

NIA

It is if you're Trini.

HATTIE

Why does everything go back to you
being Trini?

NIA

Because my mother and all my
aunties taught me what it meant to
be a lady. And I was raised to date
a real man - not some boy that
can't afford to pay for my coffee.

Just then -- Marie opens the door causing Nia to lose her
balance and she FALLS FLAT ON HER BACK onto the bathroom
floor. She grabs the back of her head in pain.

NIA (CONT'D)

Shit!

The girls quickly kneel down to check on her. Then we hear
the faint sounds of two baritone voices singing Stevie
Wonder's version of "Happy Birthday." As the candles light up
her beautiful face, the girls join in on the serenade.

Nia looks at the twenty-five candles and smiles. The pain
from her recent fall quickly melts away. She takes a moment
to make a very specific wish and blows them out with one big
breath.

INT. NIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nia is in a pair of silk pajamas with her hair in big pink
rollers. She's even more stunning without makeup. She's
currently trying to find something under her bed. After a
moment, she finds what she's in search of.

It's her VISION BOARD. Which is a mixture of celebrity photos (Diahann Carroll, Sarah Jessica Parker), inspirational quotes ("Fall down seven times, get up eight," "Faith and Fear cannot exist in the same space"), and an old headshot of Nia from when she was a kid. She had white bows in her hair, stars in her eyes, and a heart full of anticipation.

Nia climbs on her bed and stares at it. She gently touches the pictures as she ponders what the future holds. Then her eyes finally land on the MYSTERY COUPLE.

IT'S A PICTURE OF MARIE AND CHUCK. In the photo, they're laughing on a beach in color-coordinated bathing suits. They're the perfect image of black love. Nia looks at the photo, longingly.

CUT TO:

EXT. IDA B.'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Hattie rings the bell. Lupita answers. Ida walks up behind her.

IDA B.

What are you doing here? Don't make me get my Pitt.

HATTIE

Please don't.

Ida steps outside.

HATTIE (CONT'D)

There aren't a lot of black women doing what you're doing and you've opened a lot of doors for women like me. As artists we have the right to express ourselves however we want. Instead of celebrating your show, I threw shade at it, and for that I'm deeply sorry.

IDA B.

Are you done?

HATTIE

Yes.

IDA B.

What's the point of speaking your mind if you're just gonna apologize for it?

Hattie doesn't respond.

IDA B. (CONT'D)

You're right. The show could be better. I just thought that's what black women wanted. And I pride myself on knowing what black women want. Your tweets hurt. But at least you were honest.

HATTIE

Is there any chance I could still be your assistant?

IDA B.

Hell no. I gave that gig to a chipper white girl.

Hattie hangs her head in defeat.

IDA B. (CONT'D)

But we do need a writer's PA.

HATTIE

So I'd work longer hours and make less money?

IDA B.

Yup.

HATTIE

I'll take it.

IDA B.

Great. You start tomorrow. Lupita will email you the details.

HATTIE

The maid.

IDA B.

No, the actress.

HATTIE

Oh.

IDA B.

I'm kidding.

Ida goes inside and closes the door. Hattie stands there for a beat. Then a huge smile appears on her face. She just got a job on a scripted TV show. It's a show she can't stand and she won't be making any money - but this is definitely a step in the right direction.

EXT. IDA B.'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We see Hattie's beat up SMART CAR sitting in front of Ida's MASSIVE MANSION in the background. It's a visual representation of where Hattie wants to be versus where she is right now. Damn, she has a lot of crawling to do.

INT. HATTIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Hattie sits in her car for a beat. She grabs her phone and goes to her FAVORITES.

Her Mother is at the bottom of that list. She calls her anyway.

HATTIE

Hey ma, how you doing?

HATTIE'S MOTHER

You know how I'm doing. I talked to you yesterday. How you?

HATTIE

I'm great. I just got a job.

HATTIE'S MOTHER

Thank you, Jesus. I hope you got a job writing on "Power".

HATTIE

No, I told you I'm not black enough to write for that show.

HATTIE'S MOTHER

Uh huh.

HATTIE

I'm gonna be a writer's PA on "Cocoa's Butter".

HATTIE'S MOTHER

I can't stand that show.

HATTIE

Neither can I.

HATTIE'S MOTHER

Alright, well at least you got a job - so maybe you can stop begging me for money.

(then)

Is that it?

*
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HATTIE
Yeah, that's it.

HATTIE'S MOTHER
Love you.

HATTIE
Love you too.

Hattie hangs up and takes a deep breath. Wishing God had placed her in someone else's womb. Then she tries to start her car. With no luck. Her tank is EMPTY.

HATTIE (CONT'D)
Dammit!

Hattie text: Audie, can you bring me some gas?

Audie: Sorry, I'm working late. But I'll make it up to you I promise ;0)

She goes to text Marie, but then thinks better of it and texts Nia instead.

Hattie: Nia, can you bring me some gas?

Nia: You need to get Triple A...

Then -

Nia: I'll be there in fifteen minutes.

Hattie smiles and plugs in her aux cord.

"Hopeless" by Dionne Farris starts to play as she reclines her seat.

As Dionne serenades Hattie, we --

FADE TO BLACK.