

The House with the Purple Door
an original screenplay by
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FADE IN:

INT. CHARLES HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A worn-down Zenith TV holds the attention of 12-year-old TASHA CHARLES (Black). She's the very definition of tween.

OPRAH
Have you ever perceived yourself as being weird in any way?

PRINCE
Yeah.

OPRAH
Yeah?

PRINCE
Yeah. Understand, everything's relative. Not weird to me.

OPRAH
And you're living in Minneapolis, of all places.

PRINCE
Minneapolis, yeah. I will always live in Minneapolis.

OPRAH
You will always live here? Why?

PRINCE
It's so cold, it keeps the bad people out.

The interview FAST FORWARDS a few seconds. Plays again.

OPRAH
Okay, so people think you're strange. They think you're weird. What do you want them to know?

Prince - excuse me, The Artist Formerly Known As Prince - pauses for a beat.

PRINCE
The music.

The sound of the FRONT DOOR opening breaks Tasha's trance. She ejects the VHS labeled "TAFKAP", hides it under a couch cover, turns off the tv and tip toes her way to

INT. CHARLES HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

SUPER: SUMMER 1997

Modest. Comfortable. Replete with the trappings of yesteryear, faded wallpaper and all.

Tasha sneaks past her mother, LORRAINE (Black), early 40s. Dressed in nurse scrubs, Lorraine nods in and out of sleep at the kitchen table, while "talking" on the phone.

Tasha moves to the sink full of dirty dishes. Pretends to wash as TARIQ (Black), 15, enters. He sports a wave cap and a Bone Thugs N Harmony t-shirt.

Tasha rushes Tariq for the PLASTIC BAG in his hands. Before she can retrieve the Ebony magazine with PRINCE's sexy mug on the cover from the bag, Tariq grabs it and dangles it above his head.

TARIQ

Kiss my Converse and it's yours.

TASHA

Quit playing, Tariq.

TARIQ

Kiss 'em.

Tasha makes it clear she won't be doing that.

TARIQ (CONT'D)

(re: magazine)

You must not really love your boy.

TASHA

Take that back!

TARIQ

Then Kiss. My. Converse.

TASHA

I'ma tell Mommy you're playing Shonuff again.

TARIQ

Go ahead, fool. She can't hear you.

Tasha reaches for the magazine again. Tariq holds it up higher.

TASHA

Ugh, I hate you!

The "h" word does the trick. Lorraine wakes with a quickness.

LORRAINE

What did I tell you about using that word?

TASHA

But --

LORRAINE

Uh uh. You know what to do.

Tasha reluctantly removes a DOLLAR BILL from her pocket.

TASHA

(hesitant)

Tariq started it!

LORRAINE

Tasha?

She hands the dollar to her brother. Tariq happily accepts it.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Thank you. What were you two carrying on about anyway?

Tasha positions herself in front of the magazine, blocking it from her mother's view. Lorraine needn't know the real cause of their skirmish.

TARIQ

Like Tasha needs a reason.

TERRENCE CHARLES (Black) 45, the nerdy head of the house, enters. He heads for the phone, like so much habit.

TERRENCE

(on phone)

Let me have her call you back.

Terrence hangs up the phone.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

(to kids)

I can hear you two all the way downstairs, which means my patients can hear you, too.

*

TARIQ

Nobody's even down there.

LORRAINE

Not at the moment but now that your father's working from home, y'all

(MORE)

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
 need to learn how to make friends
 with peace and quiet.

TERRENCE
 What's all the fuss anyway?

LORRAINE
 You know your kids, Terrence. Always
 fighting over something.

TARIQ
 In the famous words of not Prince,
 "I'm a lover, not a fighter."

TASHA
 Tariq started it.

TARIQ
 How many times you gonna recycle
 that tired line?

TASHA
 When you stop starting shi...schtuff.

TERRENCE
 (to Lorraine)
 Tell me the summer's almost over.

LORRAINE
 I would but I try not to lie to my
 husband.

Lorraine and Terrence kiss - and not the pecking kind. The
 embarrassing to your kids kind.

TASHA
 Could y'all maybe not do that at my
 birthday party?

LORRAINE
 Oh. I'm sorry, honey.

Lorraine kisses Terrence again - this time, with tongue.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
 That better?

TASHA
 You disgust me.

TERRENCE
 Black love is alive and well, Tasha.
 Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

TASHA

Y'all don't really have to be at my party.

LORRAINE

And leave a bunch of horny teens to horn for themselves? I don't think so.

TERRENCE

You two have been cooped up in the house all day. Why don't you go outside and play?

TARIQ

"Play?" That's cute, Pops.

Tariq accidentally drops the Ebony magazine. Peeping the cover, Lorraine throws a disapproving look at Tasha.

Tariq picks the 'zine up. He and Tasha make their exit, entering the

LIVING ROOM

Tasha gut punches Tariq, grabs the mag and runs to

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tasha shuts the lockless door, sits on the floor and pushes her back against the door to keep it closed.

Tariq tries to push his way in but it's no use.

TARIQ (O.S.)

You're welcome, bamma!

Seconds later, HIP HOP blares from Tariq's room. Tasha is finally safe.

Now, we see her room in its entirety. Purple walls. A provocative Prince poster hangs prominently. It'd be a Prince shrine if her mother would allow it.

Tasha moves to her dresser, opens the top drawer and retrieves something from the very back: Prince's Emancipation 3 disc album.

A 1997 calendar hangs above the dresser. Two days in the current month (June) bear importance: "My 13th Birthday" and days later, "Prince Concert!"

At her desk, Tasha listens to one of the Cds in her discman while cutting out Prince pictures from the Ebony magazine. She glues the pictures onto BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS.

INT. CHARLES HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Birthday invitations in tow, Tasha, now wearing homemade daisy dukes, laces up her roller skates. Lorraine approaches.

LORRAINE

Un uh. I know you're not going outside in them rags you're passing off as shorts.

TASHA

Okay?

LORRAINE

It's not a trick question, Tasha. Go change.

TASHA

Can I get a birthday gift clue first?

LORRAINE

You want to know the quickest way to get on your mother's nerves today?

Tasha sighs. She knows her mother's not playing.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Here's a clue: quit trying to be so grown!

EXT. SUBURBAN MARYLAND - DAY

A tree-lined street populated with ramblers. Tasha roller skates in the middle of the idle street.

QUICK CUTS

- Tasha rings a doorbell. She places an invitation in the tear of a screen door.

- Tasha kisses an invitation addressed to Christian. She places it in the mailbox of a Rambler house.

- BRIELLE (Black), 15 going on grown, opens the invitation addressed to her brother, Christian. She rolls her eyes.

- More DOORBELLS. A few KNOCKS on doors. Invitation, invitation, invitation.

EXT. BONIFANT HOUSE - DAY

The front door is open, as it usually is.

Tasha skates up to the house. She eyes a PINK CRUISER wrapped in a bow perched by the door.

INT. BONIFANT HOUSE - DAY

MRS. BONIFANT (Black, 50), a beautiful and impeccably dressed woman, sits on the couch, smoking a cigarette. She looks lost in thought. Her back faces Tasha.

TASHA

Hi, Mrs. Bonifant. Nice bike.

Mrs. Bonifant doesn't respond. Something is off and Tasha can feel it. She waits a beat before moving toward the stairs.

TASHA (CONT'D)

I'll see myself upstairs.

Still no response as Tasha climbs out of view.

INT. ANGIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Luxurious, especially for a kid, but ANGIE BONIFANT (Black), 13 with Afro puffs, only counts the pictures on her walls as precious collateral - PERM and RELAXER magazine ads, of beautiful Black girls and women.

TASHA

Good day, bad day?

ANGIE

Bad day.

TASHA

I'm sorry.

Instead of offering a response, Angie draws her attention to the birthday party invitation in her hand and the Prince image pasted on it. "SLAVE" is written on Prince's face.

ANGIE

He goes by "Slave" now?

TASHA

It's a declaration of emancipation.

ANGIE

Pretty sure that's not what we learned in history class. I don't know, Tosh. It's a tough sell.

TASHA

So is project silky silky smooth, but you don't see me over here killing your no-lye dreams.

ANGIE

It's project PCJ. Keep up.

TASHA

We're getting those Prince tickets.
Trust.

ANGIE

We? It's we now?

TASHA

Who else would I go with?

A beat as Angie stares Tasha down.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Girl, please. My parents would rather
lock me up forever and ever, Amen,
than let me go anywhere with a real,
live boy.

ANGIE

You mean, a boy who's not your
brother.

TASHA

Never mind all that. Why didn't you
tell me you got a new bike?

ANGIE

It just came today. My dad sent it.

TASHA

Does that mean he's back?

ANGIE

I don't know but as you can see, he
ain't here.

A beat.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Sorry if my mom served an attitude.
She gets like this whenever we hear
from him.

TASHA

Don't apologize. Strategize! Help
me pick out my birthday look?

Tasha picks up Angie's Polaroid 600 camera and hands it to
her. She points and clicks as Tasha poses.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Prince tickets for me?! You shouldn't have.

CLICK.

ANGIE

How about, "I'm totally surprised but this is what I asked for, so I'm only pretending to be surprised."

Tasha strikes that pose. CLICK.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Give me tears of joy.

Tasha fake cries tears of joy. CLICK.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Now party like it's 1999!

Tasha dances up a storm. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

TASHA

Our lives are gonna change this summer.

ANGIE

Promise?

Angie holds up her pinky finger. Tasha lifts hers up and they pinky swear.

TASHA

Promise.

INT. CHARLES HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Charles family chows down.

LORRAINE

You know what I heard on the way home? A new song by that Kevin. Kevin Campbell.

TARIQ

Tevin, mom.

LORRAINE

What?

TARIQ

His name is Tevin.

LORRAINE

Isn't that what I said?

TARIQ

You said Kevin with a "k." It's Tevin
with a "t."

LORRAINE

What he is, is a nice young man.
You still like him, don't you, Tosh?

TASHA

I mean, I guess.

Lorraine exchanges a pleasant look with Terrence.

LORRAINE

Good to know.

TASHA

(re: her parents'
look)

No. No. Please don't.

TERRENCE

Don't what?

TASHA

Get me his album.

LORRAINE

We won't, not when the radio is free
99.

TASHA

Good, 'cause I already told you what
I want for my birthday: tickets to
see The Artist Formerly Known As
Prince.

LORRAINE

I thought you were joking.

TASHA

Do you know me at all?

LORRAINE

That man's music with his sexed up
lyrics and nasty songs, is
inappropriate and nasty.

TARIQ

You said nasty twice.

TASHA

He's an artist.

LORRAINE

He's a grown man with a perm.

TASHA

Dad?!

Tasha turns to her dad; gives him a "do something" look.

TERRENCE

How was work last night, honey?

TARIQ

(relieved)

Thank you.

LORRAINE

You don't want to know.

TERRENCE

That bad?

LORRAINE

One of my patient's - you know the kind - had the nerve to ask me how to spell her baby's name. Named it Teaguineathea or something.

TERRENCE

By my count that makes, what, 10 this month alone?

TARIQ

Whoawhoawhoa, you mean there's 10 babies out there with that ugly name?

LORRAINE

The 10th teenage girl to deliver at the hospital this month.

TARIQ

Oh. Right.

LORRAINE

It's an epidemic. It's like there's something in the water.

Tasha is about to drink from her glass of water, but she decides against it after hearing her mom.

TASHA

So... can I go to the concert?

TARIQ

Dang, Tosh. Don't you ever give up?

TASHA
Was I talking to you?

LORRAINE
Don't make me say it again.

TARIQ
(to parents)
Can I tell her already?
(off their confusion)
Please let me just tell her.

Tariq turns to Tasha.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
You know you were adopted, right?

TASHA
I hate you!

INT. TERRENCE'S STUDY - NIGHT

A study that doubles as an office. Psychology degrees cover the walls. Books and magazines on the subject take up the rest of the space. A desktop computer sits prominently.

Tasha and Tariq are seated on an old couch that's seen better days. They wait as Terrence presses the PLAY button on the VCR.

TASHA
I said I was sorry.

TERRENCE
I heard you. So did Tariq.

TASHA
So why am I the only one apologizing?

TERRENCE
Humor me, please. And don't even think about leaving this room until the tape is finished.

TARIQ
What if we have to pee?

TERRENCE
Do you have to pee?

TARIQ
Not right now.

TERRENCE
Then don't worry about it.

With that out of the way, Terrence locks the cabinet where the tv and VCR rest, presses play and leaves the room.

YANNI LIVE AT THE ACROPOLIS fills the TV screen.

TARIQ

Joke's on him. I actually like Yanni now. Sampled him and everything.

Tasha is less than thrilled.

EXT. CHARLES HOUSE - FRONT STEPS - NIGHT

Tariq sits on the steps, writing in a black and white composition book. This, while staring at the house across the street. He doesn't hear Tasha sneak up on him.

TASHA

Whatchu doing?

Spooked, Tariq quickly shuts his composition book.

TARIQ

Damn, Tasha! Don't sneak up on me like that.

TASHA

You're writing a song about her, aren't you? She don't wanna hear your whack rhymes, Tariq.

TARIQ

Shouldn't you be in bed?

TASHA

It's 9:00.

TARIQ

That's when annoying ass sisters named Tasha go to sleep.

TASHA

It's not my fault Brielle's out of your league.

TARIQ

And Christian's not?

TASHA

Ugh, I --

TARIQ

I'm sorry, what?

TASHA

I said, I can't stand your punk as...

Tariq holds his hand out, ready for a crisp dollar bill. Tasha gestures locking her mouth and throwing away the key. She leaves Tariq by his lonesome. He returns to writing in his composition book.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tasha tries her hardest to ignore the expletive-laced hip hop blaring from Tariq's room as she marks an "X" on her calendar. One day closer to her birthday.

She then pins the Polaroids that Angie took next to her Prince poster.

TASHA

(to poster)

Good night, Prince.

A beat before Tasha BANGS on the wall. The music grows louder.

EXT. THE HORIZON - DAY

The sun rises and sets several times over.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON

Tasha's wall CALENDAR, filled with "X"'s populate up until June 15, the day before her birthday.

EXT. CHARLES HOUSE - DAY

The finest paper boy that ever lived, CHRISTIAN (Black, 15), rides by on his bike.

Tasha, standing just outside the open door, locks eyes with him. Time almost stops. Christian throws The Washington Post in her direction. TWACK! It lands smack dab in Tasha's face, but he doesn't notice.

TASHA

Nice throw!

Tasha picks up the newspaper.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(to self)

Nice throw? Ugh.

INT. CHARLES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Tasha sits next to the PHONE, willing it to ring. Her stomach growls loudly. Terrence reads the newspaper.

TERRENCE

Starving yourself isn't going to make the phone ring any faster.

TASHA

Don't be dramatic, Daddy.

The phone RINGS. Tasha SCREAMS with excitement. She composes herself before answering.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Purple Party Hotline, who's calling?

A beat.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(to Terrence)

It's for you.

Terrence answers the phone.

Tariq enters.

TARIQ

(re: phone)

I got next.

TASHA

Nope.

TARIQ

'Scuse you?

TASHA

I need the line open, Tariq. I'm expecting calls.

TARIQ

You gonna be waiting a long time.

Terrence finishes his call.

TERRENCE

I just got a referral for a new client.

TASHA

Tariq's trying to hold up the phone on purpose.

TERRENCE
Cool, Dad. That's great.
Congratulations.

TASHA
Daddy, this is serious.

TERRENCE
What's the problem now?

TARIQ
People have better things to do than
RSVP to your lame party.

TERRENCE
How many people did you invite?

TASHA
20...5. 30?

TARIQ
You don't even know that many people.

TASHA
I only turn 13 once.

TERRENCE
For which your mother and I are very
grateful.

Lorraine enters.

LORRAINE
What are we grateful for?

TASHA
Your beloved, precious daughter.
And 30 of her closest friends.
(off Lorraine's look)
I'm very popular.

A beat as Tariq waits for one of his parents to jump in.

TARIQ
You're just gonna let her lie like
that?

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hip hop music blares.

The room is messy, except for the space reserved for Tariq's
"studio" - namely, a keyboard and an MPC player.

Over the music, Tariq somehow hears a loud BANG on the door. He cracks the door open.

TARIQ

Go away.

TASHA

I have something you want.

Tariq closes the door on Tasha.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(yells over music)

Fine, I'll tell Brielle not to come to my party!

Tariq stops the music. His door swings open. In walks Tasha.

TARIQ

I'm listening.

TASHA

There's good news and there's better news. The good news? Brielle's coming to my party.

TARIQ

Cool cool cool.

TASHA

The better news, you can have for free. I think I know what mom and dad got me for my birthday.

Those were the wrong words. Tariq attempts to push Tasha out of his room, but she refuses to leave.

TASHA (CONT'D)

But maybe you know for sure?

TARIQ

Here's what I know: you're a bammafied bamma.

TASHA

(on fake phone)

Hey Brielle, did you know my brother leaves dookie streaks in his briefs?

TARIQ

You wouldn't. You don't have the balls.

TASHA

Try me.

A staring match ensues. Tariq is the first to break.

TARIQ

I don't know, okay! Mom and dad would never trust me with that intel.

TASHA

You're right.

TARIQ

They already said no. Just take the "1" and move on.

TASHA

Do you remember that time you begged Mommy and Daddy for a Sega Genesis? You opened all of your gifts then had a fit cause you thought they didn't get you one. Then you found out Daddy hid it behind the couch?

TARIQ

1990. Best Christmas ever.

TASHA

A girl can dream.

TARIQ

You know what? There was one thing they told me.

TASHA

Yeah?

TARIQ

You're adopted.

Tariq pushes Tasha out of his room.

INT. BASEMENT - JUST OUTSIDE TERRENCE'S STUDY - DAY

Bored, Tasha sits outside of her father's study. Her ear is close to the door. She listens in on a therapy session.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tasha sits by the phone, willing it to ring. It doesn't.

CUT TO:

Hours later, worry strewn across her face, Tasha still sits. The phone barely RINGS. She answers it with a quickness.

TASHA
 (on phone)
 Purple party hotline... Oh. No,
 this is 495-0090...Yes, I'm sure.

Tasha hangs up.

CUT TO:

Hours later still, Tasha now sleeps by the phone.

Terrence enters; carries Tasha out of the kitchen...

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

...and into her bed. He pulls the covers up to her chin and pecks her on the forehead, waking her.

TASHA
 Daddy?

TERRENCE
 Yes, baby girl.

TASHA
 What if nobody shows?

TERRENCE
 Don't worry. They'll show. Night.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha stares at her wall calendar. Today is her big day.

INT. CHARLES HOUSE - DAY

QUICK CUTS

- Tasha, decked out in a purple outfit, admires herself in a long mirror. She mimics the surprised look that Angie captured in the Polaroid, now taped to the mirror.

Tariq peeks on.

TARIQ
 You're a girl dressed like a guy who
 dresses like a girl. You realize
 that, right?

Annoyed, Tasha shuts her bedroom door.

- Terrence hangs purple streamers in the basement. Purple decor galore.

- Tariq readies his DJ equipment.

- Lorraine comes through the front door with a boxed BIRTHDAY CAKE in hand.

INT. CHARLES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lorraine rests the cake on the counter.

LORRAINE
Where's the birthday girl?

Tasha giddily runs to her mother.

TASHA
Can I see it?

LORRAINE
And break tradition? Not until it's
time to make a wish, you know the
rule.

Lorraine pauses to look at her daughter. Hugs her.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
My little girl's growing up.

TASHA
Are you gonna cry?

LORRAINE
No. Maybe.

TASHA
See this, what you're doing? Can
you not do this when my friends are
here?

LORRAINE
You mean love up on you and hug you
and kiss you?

TASHA
Yes. That. None of that.

LORRAINE
Girl, you don't know how good you
have it.

INT. CHARLES HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Tasha hurries down the stairs. She finds her father hanging up the last of the purple streamers.

TERRENCE
What do you think?

TASHA

It's perfect. Thank you, Daddy.

TERRENCE

Anything for my little princess.

Tasha saunters over to Tariq who's setting up his DJ booth, microphone and all.

TASHA

Ready?

TARIQ

I was born ready. I rock the mic steady.

TASHA

Nope, no rapping. You promised.

TARIQ

That doesn't sound like something I'd do.

TASHA

Tariq, for real. My friends are gonna be here any minute.

TARIQ

Chill out, fool. You're dealing with a professional. By the way, everyone should refer to me as DJ Beltway.

TASHA

Mom!

TARIQ

Why you always gotta go calling Mommy? That's why nobody likes you. You'll be lucky if anybody comes.

That was a low blow, but Tasha suppresses her anger as Lorraine arrives.

LORRAINE

I heard my name.

TASHA

False alarm.

LORRAINE

(to Tariq)

Good. It's your sister's birthday.

(MORE)

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Be the well-behaved older brother I know you can be.

(to Tasha)

And it may be your birthday, but I still expect you to be on your best behavior.

The doorbell RINGS.

TASHA

They're here!

Tasha runs upstairs. Seconds later, Tasha runs back down, Angie trailing behind her. Angie hands Tasha a gift.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(re: gift)

For me? You shouldn't have.

Tasha flashes Angie one of the looks she practiced earlier.

ANGIE

You've been practicing. Nice.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)

Happy Birthday, Tasha.

Tasha turns around to the boy of her dreams: Christian. His sister Brielle stands next to him, but Tasha doesn't even see her.

TASHA

Christian. I didn't know you were coming.

TARIQ

You're welcome!

CHRISTIAN

My bad. Was that invite just for my sister?

TASHA

No, I mean, you didn't RSVP.

CHRISTIAN

We live across the street.

An awkward beat.

ANGIE

(to Christian)

Make yourself at home.

Christian and Brielle walk off as Angie taps Tasha on the shoulder as if to say, "Get it together, girl!"

CUT TO:

LATER

Tasha, Angie, Christian and some out of place looking Tweens and Teens, including WIRED KID, play musical chairs.

WIRED KID

Where's the Hawaiian Punch? He said there'd be Hawaiian Punch.

ANGIE

(whispers to Angie)
How do you know him again?

TASHA

I don't.

Tariq Djs. The music STOPS. People are eliminated, or, like Brielle, eliminate themselves out of sheer boredom.

Brielle saunters over to Tariq; simply stares at him. He can't tell if she's flirting, or...

TARIQ

What?

BRIELLE

Nothing.

TARIQ

I just --

BRIELLE

What?

TARIQ

Nothing.

And with that odd encounter, Brielle walks off.

TARIQ (CONT'D)

(calls after Brielle)
Beltway! They call me Beltway.

TASHA

Music, Tariq!

Tariq returns to Djing.

Now, the game is down to two people - Tasha and Wired Kid. The music STARTS... then stops.

To Tasha's dismay, Wired Kid wins.

WIRED KID
 (to no one in
 particular)
 Can I have some punch, please?

With a quickness, the LIGHTS CUT OUT. A MATCH flares.
 Lorraine carries Tasha's BIRTHDAY CAKE to a table.

Everyone sings Happy Birthday - the Black version. We see
 the cake decoration for the first time. It features an image
 of TEVIN CAMPBELL. Tasha, none too pleased, blows out the
 candles. Sprinkled CLAPS.

Terrence cuts the cake, hands Tasha the first slice.

ANGIE
 Mrs. Charles, can Tasha open her
 gifts now?

LORRAINE
 We haven't even had the cake.

ANGIE
 I know, but...

LORRAINE
 What do you say, birthday girl?

TASHA
 Yes!

Lorraine sets up a chair in the middle of the room for Tasha.
 She sits and her friends occupy the floor surrounding her.

Lorraine hands Tasha a gift to open.

LORRAINE
 Who's it from?

TASHA
 Brielle.

Tasha opens the gift, revealing a framed GLAMOUR SHOT of
 Brielle.

BRIELLE
 I signed it.

LORRAINE
 How...thoughtful.

TARIQ
 I'll put that away for you.

Tariq swoops in and grabs the photo from Tasha.

ANGIE

This one's next!

Angie hands Tasha the gift marked "From Mommy and Daddy."

TERRENCE

Let's save ours for later. I'm sure your friends don't want to see you open a gift from your parents.

ANGIE

Yeah, we do.

Tasha removes the ENVELOPE attached to the gift. She opens the card the way you open a card when you expect money, or Prince tickets, to fall out. Only, it's empty.

Tasha then tears open the gift, revealing a purple HELMET and KNEE PADS. Wtf?

TERRENCE

This way when you skate, you'll be safe and stylish.

Tasha jumps out of her chair.

LORRAINE

Sit, honey. We'll hand you the rest of your gifts.

Ignoring her mother, Tasha goes hunting around the room. Searches every nook and cranny.

TASHA

(to Angie)

Help me find the tickets.

Angie does as told.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(to parents)

Hot or cold?

TERRENCE

What game is this?

LORRAINE

I have no idea.

TASHA

The couch!

Tasha and Angie look behind the couch. Nada.

TASHA (CONT'D)
There's no tickets back there.

LORRAINE
That's what you're looking for?
Tasha, we already told you, you're
not going to see Prince.

A beat as Tasha realizes her mother is telling the truth.
She tears up.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
(mouths to Terrence)
Is she crying?

Yep. Tasha's crying. Terrence goes to comfort Tasha.

TERRENCE
Okay. It's okay. Tariq, why don't
you play some music?

Tariq is too busy laughing to obey his father's command.

TASHA
It's not funny!

LORRAINE
Tariq, you're not helping.

Adding fuel to the fire, Tariq starts to take pictures of
Tasha.

TARIQ
Say cheese.

CLICK. Wrong move. Tasha shoves her brother. He falls
into his equipment. His MPC player crashes to the ground.
There's no mistaking that it's broken.

TASHA
I hate you!

The room is completely quiet. Tasha runs upstairs.

WIRED KID
Now can I have some Hawaiian punch?

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Lorraine pushes back the shower curtain to reveal Tasha
crouched in the tub, crying.

TASHA
I hate him.

LORRAINE
You don't mean that.

TASHA
I. Hate. Him.

LORRAINE
Say it one more time, Tosh. Watch
what happens.

Tasha knows better than to test her mom.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
Take a minute, then I want you to
march your behind downstairs. Your
friends are waiting.

TASHA
You mean Daddy's former patients?

Tasha wasn't supposed to know who those kids were. Lorraine
isn't sure how to respond.

TASHA (CONT'D)
I only wanted one thing.

Tasha closes the shower curtain.

TASHA (CONT'D)
(behind curtain)
Go away!

LORRAINE
Okay, Tosh. Party's over.

INT. LORRAINE AND TERRENCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Terrence gets dressed for bed. Lorraine is too riled up to
do anything other than pace the room.

LORRAINE
She's possessed. Clearly, there's a
little white girl trapped inside of
her 'cause there is no way in hell
Tasha would talk to me like that in
her right mind.

TERRENCE
That's the thing, she's not in her
right mind, she's a teenager.

LORRAINE
We didn't go through this mess with
Tariq.

TERRENCE

He's a different creature.

LORRAINE

It's more than that, Terrence.

Terrence stares at his wife. She's hip to his look; stops pacing.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

What?

TERRENCE

Just looking at my secret-keeping wife.

(off her confusion)

What do you have against Purple Rain?

LORRAINE

This is what happens when little girls listen to fast ass music. Got her thinking she can talk to us any ol' kind of way.

TERRENCE

Bit of a stretch, don't you think?

LORRAINE

Says the man who quoted Tipper Gore.

TERRENCE

No, I merely pointed out that Prince made that dirty lyrics list of hers. And that was ages ago.

LORRAINE

Are you gonna back me up on this or what?

TERRENCE

You realize, this isn't about the music.

LORRAINE

I'm not asking for a therapy session, Terrence.

TERRENCE

Of course not, Lorraine, that would be unethical.

LORRAINE

Terrence?

Terrence SIGHS audibly. Guess that's a yes.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Just don't make me out to be the bad guy. I'm always the bad guy.

TERRENCE

That's because you're so good at it.

LORRAINE

I mean it. It's different coming from you. Tasha listens to you.

TERRENCE

Come on, woman.

Terrence heads for the door.

LORRAINE

It's the middle of the night.

TERRENCE

No time like the present.

LORRAINE

(turned on)
Savage.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tasha addresses her Prince poster.

TASHA

What if you're the only one who understands me?

She climbs in bed.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Good night, Prince.

Two seconds later, Lorraine and Terrence barge in. Tasha immediately sits at attention.

TERRENCE

Who were you talking to?

TASHA

No one, Daddy.

A beat.

TASHA (CONT'D)

What's going on?

TERRENCE

Your mother and I are concerned.

TASHA
 Bootcamp. That's your best option.
 You can also ship Tariq to Abu Dhabi.
 I'm cool with either option.

LORRAINE
 Your brother's not going anywhere.

TASHA
 Oh.

LORRAINE
 Until you learn some humility and
 how to treat your brother with
 respect, no Prince. Hand 'em over.

TASHA
 What?

LORRAINE
 All the Prince stuff. Let's have
 it.

TASHA
 Dad?

TERRENCE
 Tasha --

TASHA
 You can't do this!

TERRENCE
 It's just for a little bit, pumpkin.

Lorraine and Terrence collect all the Prince paraphernalia they can find, save for the poster on the wall which Tasha now guards with her body.

LORRAINE
 Fine. Keep the poster.

TARIQ (O.S.)
 You forgot something.

Tariq enters, hands his parents Tasha's VHS tape marked "TAFKAP."

LORRAINE
 Thank you, Tariq.

TASHA
 (to Tariq)
 I ha --

LORRAINE

Don't you dare.

As their parents exit, Tasha flips Tariq the bird. She slams the door shut behind them.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE TASHA'S BEDROOM

TERRENCE

That went better than I thought.

Tasha SCREAMS.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha lies awake in bed. Looks like she barely slept.

There's a KNOCK at her open door. She's too slow to answer the knock, but when she finally looks, she sees a discman and a CD on the floor. It's labeled: PLAY ME. Tasha does exactly that.

VOICE 1

Tasha's party was lame.

VOICE 2

I will never go to another one of
Tasha's parties for as long as I
live, so help me God.

(whispers)

Is that how you wanted me to say it?

VOICE 3

She must be so embarrassed. I would
be. Like, I would just die.

VOICE 4

Michael Jackson is way better, anyway.
Wasn't that whole debate settled
forever ago?

ANGIE

How is she?

TARIQ

(whispers)

Stick to the script. I mean --

ANGIE

You said you would tell me how she's
doing.

TARIQ

I meant after.

ANGIE

Tasha! Call me, girl!

That's it.

Tasha glances at her wall calendar. The Prince concert date mocks her.

EXT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tariq opens his door. He looks down to find the discman and CD on the floor. The CD now reads: I still hate you.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tasha saunters into the kitchen, where her parents eat breakfast.

LORRAINE

(to Tasha)

Oh, good. I was about to slip a mirror under your nose.

TASHA

Morning, Daddy.

Lorraine and Terrence exchange a look over Tasha's disregard of her mother's comment and presence.

TERRENCE

Morning, baby girl. Guess who made his world famous, awesome blueberry pancakes?

TASHA

I'm not hungry.

TERRENCE

You sure? I got the edges crispy, just the way you like 'em.

A beat.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

You know you can't resist my awesome blueberry pancakes.

TASHA

(to Lorraine)

Why does he keep saying "awesome"?

LORRAINE

(suggestive)

Good morning, Mommy.

Tasha still ignores her mother.

TERRENCE

Isn't that what you used to call them?

TASHA

Yeah, when I was like 12.

LORRAINE

So, the day before yesterday?

TASHA

If this is your way of apologizing --

TERRENCE

We were only trying to help, sweetie.

TASHA

By bringing psychos to my party?

TERRENCE

What did I tell you about using the "p" word?

LORRAINE

We don't owe you an apology.

TASHA

So, I'm still grounded?

LORRAINE

Unless you're ready to apologize.

TASHA

Tariq ruined my party and I'm the one who has to say "I'm sorry?"

LORRAINE

(sotto to Terrence)

Talk to your daughter, please. Or are you only comfortable dealing with other peoples' children?

That was a low blow but Terrence ignores it for Tasha's sake.

TERRENCE

Baby girl, it's not too much to ask you and your brother to get along, is it?

Fresh out the shower, Tariq enters with a towel wrapped around his waist.

TARIQ

We're out of lotion. Not that liquidy stuff, the good kind.

TERRENCE

Check our room. There's some on the dresser.

As Tariq turns to leave...

LORRAINE

Tariq, your sister has something she'd like to say to you.

A beat. Tasha has no clue what her mom wants her to say.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

You can start with "I'm sorry."

TASHA

I can't talk with his nipples all up in my face.

TERRENCE

Walking away.

Terrence actually walks off.

TARIQ

What you trying to say about my nips?

TASHA

Does no one else see this?

LORRAINE

Tell your brother you love him before your father leaves us all.

Tasha giggles at the thought of saying those words. Tariq does, too, but Tasha's giggle grows into an almost maniacal laugh. She laughs so much, she starts to cry. And cough. It's a weird combination.

EXT. CHRISTIAN AND BRIELLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Still recovering from her laughing fit, Tasha KNOCKS on the door. Brielle answers.

BRIELLE

Yeah?

Tasha looks over her shoulder to her parents watching from their house across the street.

TASHA

My parents want me to be on some
sorry for existing kick.

(off Brielle's
confusion)

Just act like we're cool?

BRIELLE

But we're not.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)

Who's at the --

Christian joins Brielle.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Oh. Hey.

TASHA

Christian. I wasn't expecting you.

BRIELLE

He lives here.

CHRISTIAN

Where's Tariq?

TARIQ

At home.

CHRISTIAN

Oh.

An awkward beat.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

'Sup?

Tasha takes a second to gather herself.

TASHA

I, Tasha Charles, have been a bad
girl. I should be purified in the
waters of Lake Minnetonka.

CHRISTIAN

What?

TASHA

Play along.

Tasha waves to her parents, who wave back.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 The beautiful ones? They hurt you
 every time.

A beat.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 In summation...
 (loud)
 Sorry!

And with that, Tasha scurries off. Brielle and Christian
 watch her run away.

BRIELLE
 I think y'all together now.

EXT. CHARLES HOUSE - DAY

Tasha runs back to her house...

LORRAINE
 See? That wasn't so bad, was it?
 ... and runs inside.

ANGIE
 On three. One, two --

INT. HAIR SALON - DAY

There's a busyness to this sacred Black space.

ANGIE
 Three!

On three, Angie and Tasha INHALE deeply. Tasha COUGHS on
 the exhale (from all the chemicals in the air).

TASHA
 It burns!

ANGIE
 No it doesn't.

TASHA
 Tell that to my nose. It's like
 sniffing gasoline.

ANGIE
 Yeah, only better.

TASHA
 This isn't some kind of test.

ANGIE

You don't know my mom like that.
Being here means something.

TASHA

Whatever. I'm just happy to be out
the house.

A wet-haired Mrs. Bonifant approaches.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(whispers to Angie)
Good day, bad day?

ANGIE

We're here, aren't we?

MRS. BONIFANT

Did you pick out a style yet, Angie?
She's squeezing us in today so make
sure it's something that's quick and
easy to press.

And thus crasheth Angie's dreams.

ANGIE

I thought I was getting a perm.

MRS. BONIFANT

Your hair is fine the way it is.

ANGIE

If you really believed that, you
wouldn't have a perm.

That line hits Mrs. Bonifant like a ton of bricks. And this
is a black salon so, yes, every woman is staring at Angie
and her mom right now, ready to judge.

MRS. BONIFANT

That's different.

ANGIE

Why?

A STYLIST approaches Mrs. Bonifant in the nick of time.

STYLIST

Ready?

MRS. BONIFANT

Yes.

The Stylist ushers Mrs. Bonifant toward her salon chair.

And judge, the women do.

MRS. BONIFANT (CONT'D)
Tasha, help her out, would you?

Tasha and Angie take to a seating area filled with hair magazine.

ANGIE
She's gonna make me work for it.

TASHA
What?

ANGIE
If I want a perm, my mom's gonna make me earn it.

TASHA
Hate to break it to you, Ang, but you can't exactly "earn" straight hair. You're either born with it, you creamy crack what the good Lord gave ya, or you get busy killing horses.

ANGIE
So you just 'gon laugh at my pain?

TASHA
Pretty much.

ANGIE
Whatever happened to, "Our lives are gonna change this summer?" Or was that just a thing you said?

TASHA
I meant what I said.

ANGIE
You sure?

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha stares at her calendar. The Prince concert is a mere 3 days away.

She then bangs on the wall - a plea for Tariq to turn down his loud music.

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM - SAME

Hip hop blasts.

From outside, Tariq crawls into the open window. He can hear Tasha's banging. He turns down the music, and opens his locked door to yell:

TARIQ
Stop banging!

INT. CHARLES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lorraine has a stack of bills in front of her. She's clearly stressed, as opposed to Terrence.

LORRAINE
What about the credit union? There
enough in there?

TERRENCE
Should be.

LORRAINE
Can you find out, please?

Terrence saunters to Lorraine. Puts his hands on her shoulders.

TERRENCE
We'll be fine.

Lorraine shrugs him off.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)
Six months. I asked for six months
to try and make this work.

LORRAINE
I remember, Terrence. I was there.

TERRENCE
And as much as I want it to, my client
roster doesn't magically grow
overnight.

LORRAINE
It's hard enough getting adults in
that hot seat. Maybe your
specialization is the problem.

Terrence realizes that Tasha is hiding near the entrance to the kitchen.

TERRENCE
Tasha?

Tasha reveals herself.

TASHA
How'd you know it was me?

TERRENCE
Lucky guess.

TASHA
Keep guessing.
(off their confusion)
I did the laundry, folded the clothes
and mopped the floor downstairs.

LORRAINE
You did?

TASHA
(proud)
Uh huh.

TERRENCE
That's great. What did we do to
deserve --

LORRAINE
Terrence, can you call the credit
union and check on the account please?

Terrence peels off to do exactly that. Tasha hovers, waiting
for more of a response.

TASHA
So I was wondering...

LORRAINE
No one gets rewarded for doing the
things they're supposed to do, Tosh.
Not even me.

TASHA
What if I washed dishes for a week?

INT. BASEMENT - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Lorraine rummages through a mound of clean, unfolded clothes
that rest on a folding table. Tasha is with her.

TASHA
I could mow the lawn.

Lorraine ignores Tasha, pulls out a clean pair of scrubs
from the heap.

TASHA (CONT'D)
Clean the attic? We do have an attic,
right?

She moves to the ironing board. Tasha follows.

TASHA (CONT'D)
Are you even listening?

LORRAINE
Nope.

TASHA
You're no fun.

LORRAINE
Thank you.

TASHA
That wasn't slang for cool or
anything.

LORRAINE
And yet I'm taking it as a compliment.
Hand me those, would you?

Lorraine points to a pair of white hose in the pile. Tasha hands them to her.

TASHA
What are these?

LORRAINE
Compression socks. Help with
circulation. When you're on your
feet all night, they're a God send.

TASHA
Like I said, no fun.

LORRAINE
Speaking of which, unless you want
another Yanni fireside chat, you and
Tariq need to find something to do
this evening while your father and I
work.

TASHA
Like...?

LORRAINE
Maybe you could hang out with Brielle?
You two seemed to hit it off at your
party.

TASHA
She's alright, I guess.

LORRAINE

What, no match for Angie?

TASHA

I just think she's more Tariq's type.

LORRAINE

Well, it wouldn't hurt to have another friend.

Lorraine lunges for something in the clothing pile that catches her attention: crumbly tissue...inside of Tasha's barely A cup bra.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Tasha Elizabeth Charles.

Embarrassed, Tasha snatches the bra out of her mother's hands.

TASHA

Don't tell Daddy.

LORRAINE

And miss out on disciplining you myself?

TASHA

Please? He'll add this to my file.

LORRAINE

Your what?

TASHA

Nevermind.

LORRAINE

Your father's a psychologist, Tasha, not an FBI agent. File?

TASHA

I said, nevermind.

LORRAINE

Tasha, you're better than this.

TASHA

Oh my God, it's not that serious!

LORRAINE

I'm not talking 'cause I like the sound of my voice.

TASHA

It's tissue, mother.

LORRAINE

Daughter, you're in such a rush to grow up but you don't know what the world has to offer.

TASHA

I would know if you let me, Lorraine.

From the look of it, this is the first time Tasha has called her mother by her first name, a no-no for all Black children.

Lucky for Tasha, the doorbell RINGS.

TASHA (CONT'D)

I'll get it!

Saved by the bell, Tasha runs off.

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tariq and Christian play a video game. Tasha watches on.

TERRENCE

Knock, knock.

Terrence enters.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

Your mother went down for a nap. I have an appointment with a new client so Tariq, watch your sister. And Tasha, listen to your brother. Hey, Christian.

CHRISTIAN

Hi, Mr. Charles.

Christian's PAGER goes off. He checks it.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Bye, Mr. Charles.

Christian stands to leave.

TARIQ/TASHA/TERRENCE

You're leaving?

Tasha, Tariq and Terrence stare Christian, willing him to stay and keep the peace.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, is that cool?

TERRENCE

You just got here.
Aren't you hungry?

CHRISTIAN

No.

TARIQ

Thirsty?

CHRISTIAN

Not really.

TERRENCE

You sure? I was going to suggest
you kids order a pizza.

Terrence takes a \$20 bill out of his pocket; hands it to
Tariq.

CHRISTIAN

Thanks, but I gotta get going.

TARIQ

Punk. You're just afraid I'm gonna
beat you.

CHRISTIAN

More like my mom. She's raising me
to be a "good Caribbean boy" by making
me work 27 jobs.

TARIQ

Oh.

CHRISTIAN

You didn't hear that from me.

A beat.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

For real, don't tell her I said that.
Let Tasha play. She got next anyway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Music videos babysit Tasha and Tariq. Seated on the couch,
they look at the tv screen instead of each other.

TASHA

You blow on the cartridges all the
time.

TARIQ

Not in the middle of a game. It took me forever to get to that level.

TASHA

I said I was sorry, gosh!

Tasha stares daggers at Tariq. He can feel her glare. It drives him crazy.

TARIQ

What?!

TASHA

I thought I saw...never mind. Your skin's probably fine.

Tariq immediately looks at his skin. What is it?

TASHA (CONT'D)

No, it's definitely dry. I can see it from here. Surprised you're not itching.

TARIQ

Maaaan.

TASHA

You should take care of that.

TARIQ

I'm not about to wake Mom up over some dry skin.

TASHA

Well, put a sweatshirt on or something. Brielle's gonna be here any minute.

TARIQ

You mean Angie?

TASHA

No, I mean Brielle.

TARIQ

You didn't say she was coming.

TASHA

Weird. I thought I just did. Unless you want me to call her and --

Tariq jumps up. He heads out the living room.

INT. LORRAINE AND TERRENCE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lorraine is fast asleep.

The door creaks open. Tariq tip toes his way to the dresser. Tasha follows suit, but Tariq is none the wiser.

Tasha searches high and low for her confiscated Prince music. As she checks under the bed, Tariq trips over her and crashes to the ground.

TASHA
Shh!

TARIQ
Shhh!

TASHA
Shhhh!

Lorraine tosses in the bed. Frozen, Tasha and Tariq watch her. After a beat, they hurry out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

TARIQ
What the hell, Tosh.

TASHA
I was just --

TARIQ
Trying to play me for a fool? News
flash: You can't play a playa.

The doorbell RINGS. Tariq walks to the front door. Tasha follows. He opens the door to find Angie. Not Brielle.

TASHA
(to Tariq)
You were saying?

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha rummages through her closet. Angie assists.

ANGIE
You don't think that's weird?

TASHA
No.

ANGIE

If you marry Christian and Tariq marries Brielle, that means your brother is gonna be your brother in law.

TASHA

Let's be real, Tariq's never gonna get with Brielle.

They both laugh.

Tasha shows off an outfit.

TASHA (CONT'D)

What do you think?

ANGIE

Go like this.

Angie pushes her elbows to her mostly flat chest, to push her breasts together. Tasha follows suit but the desired effect doesn't work.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Makeup?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

With her mom's foundation makeup in hand, Tasha walks past Tariq's bedroom, on her way to her own. Tariq's door swings open.

TARIQ

Tasha, come here.

TASHA

Nope.

TARIQ

It'll be quick.

TASHA

Kind of in the middle of something, Tariq.

TARIQ

I know about the CD in the back of your dresser.

Well, damn.

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha glances over a lyric-littered page in Tariq's composition book.

TASHA
I don't get it.

TARIQ
What don't you get?

TASHA
You can't expect me to say this.

TARIQ
And turn my music into cheesy spoken word? Of course you're not going to say it, you're gonna rap it.

Tasha simply stares at Tariq in disbelief.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
Fine, sing it, whatever.

TASHA
I know you wanna be the 17th member of Bone Thugs, but leave me out of it. Angie's waiting.

TARIQ
Do it and I'll put in a good word with mom and dad.

Tasha pauses for a beat; contemplates the offer.

TASHA
You would do that?

TARIQ
Or, I can tell them about you know what.

Tasha sighs. Tariq knows he has her.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
Ready?

Tariq cues up a beat. Presses record. Signals Tasha to begin.

INT. TERRENCE'S BASEMENT OFFICE - DAY

Terrence is in the middle of a session with a MALE PATIENT, 9, and PARENT.

PARENT

I miss the sound of his voice.

(loud)

Hear that? I miss the sound of your voice!

TERRENCE

You are aware that he can hear you?

PARENT

I'm fresh out of tactics, Doc. And the slap in the face is, this is a choice. He can easily open his mouth and speak.

TERRENCE

If he wanted to.

PARENT

That's the thing. Why doesn't he want to?

TERRENCE

That's what we're here to find out.

Suddenly, the sound of a HIP HOP BEAT enters the room. Terrence does his best to ignore it.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

Why don't we begin by --

Tasha's muffled voice dominates the track. It's distracting, to say the least. Terrence is thrown off his game. He pauses, waiting for the music to stop. It doesn't.

PARENT

By...?

TERRENCE

Right. Sorry. Why don't we begin by --

EXPLETIVES tumble out of Tasha's mouth. Taken aback, Terrence jumps out of his chair.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

Would you excuse me?

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Terrence barges in to find Tasha and Tariq huddled around a microphone. Seconds later, Angie tumbles in.

ANGIE

In...coming.

A beat as Terrence angrily stares at his children.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tasha and Tariq watch Yanni Live At the Acropolis yet again, in silence. Angie, perplexed, watches as well.

ANGIE

(to Tasha)

I feel like I understand you a lot better now.

INT. LORRAINE AND TERRENCE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lorraine emerges from the bathroom, dressed and ready for work. She looks around frantically for her makeup.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - SAME

Brielle applies the last touch of makeup to Tasha's face.

BRIELLE

One thing's for sure: you needed my help.

ANGIE

Are you almost done?

BRIELLE

Patience, Angie. Greatness can't be rushed. Besides, it's not like you have somewhere to go.

ANGIE

You don't know that.

TASHA

She's right.

Brielle hands Tasha a mirror so she can admire her new look.

BRIELLE

What do you think?

TASHA

I said make me look older, not...

BRIELLE

Radiant, magnificent, smoking?

TASHA

Dated.

Angie snickers.

BRIELLE

Damn, are y'all always so...in sync?

Tasha and Angie share a look of confusion.

BRIELLE (CONT'D)

Don't ask me for any more favors.

ANGIE

There's gotta be another way to get you into that concert 'cause this ain't gonna cut it.

Lorraine busts into the room. The girls are startled.

TASHA

Mom!

Lorraine eyes her foundation. Grabs it.

LORRAINE

You know better than to take my foundation, and without asking?

ANGIE

Can she use it?

LORRAINE

Fashion Fair is not a toy. This stuff is expensive.

ANGIE

Sorry, Mrs. Charles. It won't happen again.

LORRAINE

Thank you, Angie, but Tasha can speak for herself.

TASHA

Can Tasha go to Angie's for dinner?

LORRAINE

Another day. I'm off to work. I'd like you to come with me.

TASHA

Why?

LORRAINE

Can't a mother want to spend some quality time with her newly teenage daughter?

ANGIE
(whispers to Tasha)
It's a trap. Don't answer.

TASHA
Daddy told you, didn't he?

LORRAINE
Told me what?

TASHA
About dinner. Angie invited me over
for dinner.

LORRAINE
Oh.

ANGIE
Bye, Mrs. Charles.

Tasha and Angie run out of the room.

BRIELLE
You're welcome!

INT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

From the couch, Tasha and Angie remove their respective empty plates from their laps.

Next to them, Mrs. Bonifant watches a soap opera on tv. A commercial comes on.

Tasha and Angie hurriedly position themselves in front of the tv.

TASHA
What happened to your hair?

ANGIE
You don't like it.

TASHA
It's not that I don't like it, it's
just...nah, girl. I hate it.

ANGIE
I just wanted it to sway.

MRS. BONIFANT
Okay.

TASHA

Well, look no further than PCJ no
lye relaxer. It's the name that
mothers trust.

ANGIE

Thanks, non-paid spokesperson!

Tasha and Angie conclude their "commercial" standing back to
back with folded arms and cheesy smiles.

They wait for a response.

MRS. BONIFANT

The answer's still no.

Angie sighs.

INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

Tasha is on her way out the door.

TASHA

We'll come up with some more ideas.

ANGIE

That was the best one yet.

TASHA

So, we'll think of something better.

ANGIE

Promise?

TASHA

Promise.

INT. CHARLES HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Terrence is on the phone when Tasha walks in.

TERRENCE

(on phone)

I understand. Completely agree.
Sure. Take care.

The sound of the dial tone stops Terrence. He hangs up the
phone.

TASHA

Hi, Daddy.

TERRENCE

Tasha, where have you been?

TASHA

At Angie's. It's not like you let me go anywhere else.

TERRENCE

That's because you're on punishment. Tasha, you can't just walk off and go any place you like.

TASHA

I wasn't at any place, I was at Angie's. Where else would I go?

TERRENCE

I found this.

Terrence reveals Tasha's Emancipation CD - the one she hid in her dresser.

TASHA

(sotto)

Tariq.

TERRENCE

It fell from your dresser when I was putting your clothes away.

TASHA

Oh.

TERRENCE

Is that all you have to say for yourself?

TASHA

Tariq listens to all kinds of crap and you don't say anything to him.

TERRENCE

We're not talking about Tariq.

TASHA

We should. You and Mommy let him get away with everything.

TERRENCE

It wasn't Tariq I heard cursing up a storm today.

TASHA

This is weird. Are you playing Mom? If so, you're not very convincing.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

The Oprah interview with Prince that opened the script plays in the background while Tasha rummages through old PHOTOS on the floor.

Lorraine creeps up on Tasha. Tasha doesn't even bother to stop the video.

LORRAINE
(re: video)
How did you...

It's too late to even ask.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
Tasha, it's 2 o'clock in the morning.

Tasha doesn't respond. She continues to rummage. Lorraine sits down next to Tasha, moves her hand down Tasha's face, nicking her eye in the process.

TASHA
Mom, what the -- you just scratched
my cornea!

LORRAINE
I thought you were sleep walking.

Lorraine sees a baby picture of Tariq atop the pile of mess. Picks it up.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
Did I ever tell you when your brother
was born, he came out looking like
an old man? He was 3 days overdue
and when I laid eye on him...I was
embarrassed. Your father could care
less. All he saw was his first born.
It was love at first sight.

A beat.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
Tasha, why don't you go back to bed?

TASHA
You think I don't know what's going
on, but I do.

LORRAINE
I'm trying to get you to go back to
sleep.

TASHA

Is it true? Am I adopted?

LORRAINE

What?

TASHA

It's true, isn't it? I'm adopted and now, thanks to you, I'm going blind in one eye.

Tasha wipes the eye her mom scratched.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Maybe it's a good thing - the adopted thing, not the blind thing. I don't want to be anything like you.

LORRAINE

Is this what you do now, say a bunch of silly things you don't mean?

TASHA

Then why take everything I say so seriously?

Lorraine holds Tasha's hands in hers.

LORRAINE

The moment you were born, you didn't cry. The doctor did everything she could before whisking you away. It was the longest three minutes of my life. Then you let out this ridiculous laugh. Stunned everyone. It was like you had been here before. And you were the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

TASHA

Why doesn't anyone believe me? Why don't you ever believe me?

LORRAINE

Tasha, what are you --

TASHA

I don't know who you want me to be, but I know I'm not who you think I am.

And with that, Tasha walks away toward her bedroom.

INT. LORRAINE AND TERRENCE'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Lorraine climbs into bed. Terrence stirs awake.

LORRAINE

I treat her different. I know I do.

A beat.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

All this time I've been asking myself,
who am I if I don't have Tasha's
back when I should have been asking,
who am I if I don't believe her?

EXT. CHARLES HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

A giddy Tasha does cartwheels in the yard. Angie follows suit.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

From the window, Tariq watches Tasha cartwheel across the lawn. This, while his parents eat breakfast.

TARIQ

Shame... Shame.

Lorraine and Terrence ignore Tariq's comment.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha hugs her newly returned Prince items now resting on her bed. She couldn't be happier.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Getting ready to listen to music, Tasha looks at her wall calendar. The latest Xs indicate the Prince concert is two days away.

TARIQ (O.S.)

Tasha, come quick!

The RADIO is playing loudly in Tariq's room. We can make out the VOICE of a DJ. Something the DJ says catches Tasha's attention.

She runs into Tariq's room.

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tasha hovers over the radio.

DJ (V.O.)

That's right, we're hooking The Artist Formerly Known As Prince's biggest fan up with two tickets to his Jam of the Year tour this Friday.

DJ 2 (V.O.)

Everyone knows Prince's favorite color is purple, but is it yours? If you're a true fan, let the world know by painting the town purple. And by town, we mean your crib.

DJ (V.O.)

Make it something our street crew can't miss. And if you're lucky enough to get a knock on your door from one of us, tell us why you're Prince's biggest fan and the tickets are yours.

DJ 2 (V.O.)

Hey, you said his name. I don't think you can say his name.

DJ (V.O.)

My bad, TAFKAP.

Tasha SCREAMS.

TARIQ

Don't say I never did anything for you.

TASHA

(to Tariq)

I'm so happy I could kiss you!

TARIQ

Please don't.

Tasha opts for a hug instead.

TASHA

Thank you thank you thank you!

INT. ANGIE'S BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

Tasha breaks open two PIGGY BANKS.

Tasha counts the COINS and BILLS spread out on the floor, while Angie simply combs her hair.

TASHA

Seven dollars and 59 cents? I thought you said you had dough.

ANGIE

What do you call all that?

TASHA

Pocket change. You can't even buy a CD with this.

ANGIE

I still don't get how this thing works. You purple-up your house and...?

TASHA

And we get to see Prince.

ANGIE

Do you know how many houses are in this city? What station did you say it was? How are they supposed to clock all the purple houses? And what if you live in an apartment?

TASHA

You're asking way too many questions. Can we please go?

ANGIE

Just a few more.

(off Tasha's look)

I heard that if you brush your hair 100 times a day, it'll grow.

TASHA

Pretty sure that's a white girl thing.

ANGIE

No, it's not.

TASHA

It's like common knowledge.

ANGIE

Whatever. I bet your man does it. AND he got a perm. How do you think he keeps them edges laid?

TASHA

Oh my God, Angie.

ANGIE
(still brushing)
97, 98, 99...100. Okay. Let's go.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Angie hops off her bike. Tasha roller skates up behind her. There's no bike stand so Angie hides her bike behind some potted plants.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Tasha and Angie enter, doing their best to look inconspicuous.

A STORE ASSOCIATE approaches the girls.

STORE ASSOCIATE
Cool skates.

TASHA
Thanks.

STORE ASSOCIATE
Unfortunately, you can't wear them
in the store. Safety hazard.

Brielle steps on the scene.

BRIELLE
There you are, darlings. Come along.

STORE ASSOCIATE
Are these your kids?

BRIELLE
Have they been giving you a hard
time?

STORE ASSOCIATE
Not at all, Ma'am, it's just...

The Store Associate looks down at Tasha's skates.

BRIELLE
We'll only be a minute.

PAINT AISLE

The three peruse the aisle.

ANGIE
(to Tasha)
What's she doing here?

BRIELLE

She just saved your ass. You're welcome.

TASHA

Thanks, but you're late.

BRIELLE

Kinda last minute notice there. I didn't exactly have time to prepare. Again, you're welcome. Now, do wanna tell me what this is all about?

ANGIE

Not really.

TASHA

Can you keep a secret?

BRIELLE

Maybe. Maybe not. You take a chance either way.

ANGIE

It's to win two tickets to see Prince. Happy?

BRIELLE

Who gets ticket number two?

ANGIE

That ticket's got my name all over it.

BRIELLE

Says who?

ANGIE

My best friend, that's who. Right, Tosh?

TASHA

Shh. Or do you want to get caught?

BRIELLE

We're paying customers.

ANGIE

Right, Tosh?

TASHA

Can we focus on the task at hand?

Tasha skates ahead; grabs a canister of purple paint.

ANGIE

Whoa whoa whoa, you can't just pick
a color all willy nilly.

TASHA

It's purple.

ANGIE

But is it the right shade of purple?

TASHA

What's it supposed to say, Prince
approved?

ANGIE

(reads label)

"Barely Lilac." Girl?

Angie searches for a more apt shade.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Royal. We're going with this one.

Together, they grab two cans of paint off the shelf.

They head to the registers.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Tasha, Angie and Brielle laugh their way out of the store,
paint in hand.

They put down the paint as Angie fishes out her bike. Only,
it's not there.

ANGIE

My bike!

EXT. TREE-LINED STREET - DAY

Tasha and Angie walk side by side, lugging two cans of paint
between them. Exhausted, Angie drops her side, causing Tasha
to drop hers. An empty-handed Brielle shakes her head at
them.

TASHA

We're almost there.

ANGIE

Tell that to my arms.
(to Brielle)
Do you have a mirror?

Brielle hands Angie her pocket-size mirror.

TASHA
Seriously? You're worried about
your hair right now?

ANGIE
Don't question how I grieve.

Angie freaks out at the sight of her hair. It's a mess.

Tasha grabs the mirror out of Angie's hands and gives it
back to Brielle.

TASHA
I need you to focus.

ANGIE
My mom's gonna kill me.

TASHA
You'll be fine, Angie. You barely
rode that thing.

ANGIE
All the more reason why she's gonna
kill me. My Dad got me that bike.

Completely disinterested in this back and forth, Brielle
lights a cigarette.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
My mom will find a way to make this
about you know what. I'll never get
a perm.

TASHA
Angie, you're missing the point.

ANGIE
Unless the point is me and you are
going to see Prince if you win those
tickets --

BRIELLE
When she wins the tickets. And the
choice is clear, right Tosh?

TASHA
You're making me choose?

ANGIE
You shouldn't have to.

Angie begins to walk away.

TASHA
Where are you going?

ANGIE
Home, to get this punishment over
with.

TASHA
You're not gonna tell your Mom where
we were, are you?

ANGIE
Is that all you care about?

TASHA
No. It's just, we're so close. I
don't want to lose focus.

ANGIE
We? Please. This was never about
us.

TASHA
What are you talking about? Of course
it was.

ANGIE
Tasha, you only care about one thing.
I hope he's worth it.

And with that, Angie walks off.

BRIELLE
I thought she'd never shut up.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha hides the cans of purple paint deep in her closet.

LORRAINE (O.S.)
Tasha!

She quickens her step as her mom's voice draws near.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
There you are. Food's on the table.

Lorraine is too quick. As she approaches Tasha, she can
sense that something is up.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

TASHA
Nothing.

And then - she sees it.

LORRAINE

What the --

Lorraine lunges into the closet.

TASHA

Mom, no!

She sees the cans of purple paint.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Oh, hell.

LORRAINE

Excuse me?

TASHA

I mean...shit.

LORRAINE

Did you think that was a better alternative?

TASHA

You're making me nervous.

LORRAINE

I can't make you nervous if you don't have anything to be nervous about.

(re: paint)

What's that for?

Tasha remains silent.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

I asked you a question.

TASHA

Nothing, gosh.

Lorraine pauses. Something has caught her nose. She sniffs the air.

LORRAINE

What's that smell?

Lorraine gets close up on Tasha. She sniffs her shirt.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Have you been smoking?

TASHA

No!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tariq and Terrence are seated at the dinner table, waiting for Lorraine and Tasha.

Lorraine enters. Tasha is two steps behind her.

TASHA
I said I was sorry.

LORRAINE
You're sorry you got caught.

Tariq grabs his plate and readies to leave the table. He knows some shit is about to go down.

TERRENCE
Sit.

Tariq does as told.

LORRAINE
Did you know about this, Tariq?

TARIQ
Know about what?

LORRAINE
(to Terrence)
What did we do to deserve two liars
for children?

TARIQ
What did I do?!

TASHA
We have to sneak to be able to do
anything around here. We're like
prisoners.

TARIQ
We?

TASHA
You know why we stay cooped up in
the house? 'Cause otherwise Mom
gets suspicious about everything.

TERRENCE
Tasha, don't talk to your mother
like that.

TARIQ
Can somebody please fill me in?

TASHA
That's the problem with this family.
Nobody talks about anything, unless
it's something bad about me.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tasha looks at herself in the mirror for a long beat. Even the knock at the door fails to break her concentration. She simply yells:

TASHA
Be right out!

She continues to look at herself in the mirror.

TASHA (CONT'D)
Think, Tasha.

Another KNOCK.

TASHA (CONT'D)
Just a minute!

Tasha hunkers down now. She's practicing what she's going to say to win the Prince tickets.

TASHA (CONT'D)
People don't always like him. Or
understand him. But Prince doesn't
care what anybody thinks about him.
He's...free. And that's exactly how
I want to be.

Another KNOCK. Tasha is full on angry now. She yanks open the door wide enough for Tariq to poke his head in.

TASHA (CONT'D)
I said --

Tariq turns off the light, then yells:

TARIQ
Candyman, Candyman, Candyman!

...and quickly leaves. Tasha SCREAMS and struggles to exit but the door won't budge. Tariq pulls the door shut on the other side. We can hear him laughing.

EXT. CHARLES HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

The front door is illuminated by a small exterior light. Near it rests two cans of purple paint and two brushes. But Tasha stands alone. She looks around for signs of Angie. She's a no show. Tasha will have to do this alone.

The front door opens. Tariq walks out.

TARIQ
You still going through with this?

TASHA
If you're here to change my mind --

TARIQ
Like you would listen to anything I
have to say.

TASHA
For once, you're absolutely right.
You wouldn't understand anyway.

TARIQ
Try me.

A beat.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
You act like you're the only one
with a dream, Tasha.

TASHA
Are you gonna grab a brush or what?

TARIQ
I thought Angie was supposed to help.

TASHA
It's just me.

TARIQ
So...what's your strategy?

TASHA
I'm gonna start with the door, genius,
then --

TARIQ
Mom doesn't have to work tomorrow,
which means she can be up at any
time. Dad likes to be in his study
by 8, 8:30. That gives you about an
hour, give or take.

TASHA
I know what I'm doing.

TARIQ
Really, 'cause it looks like you
haven't thought this through.

TASHA
Everything's under control.

TARIQ
Fine. You don't need my help, then.

Tariq opens the door to go back inside.

TASHA
Wait. I'm listening.

TARIQ
I'll create a diversion. Keep Mom
and Dad in the house and away from
the windows as long as I can. The
rest is up to you.
(off Tasha's look)
What?

TASHA
Thank you.

INT. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DAY

The radio plays low volume. Tasha hovers next to the radio, anxious to hear about the purple door contest. She can barely contain her excitement.

Tasha quickly grabs a spatula and points it at an approaching Tariq, who's in the middle of devouring a bowl of cereal.

TARIQ
What are you doing?

TASHA
I was about to ask you the same thing.

TARIQ
(re: cereal)
I'm a growing man. You should go
back to sleep.

TASHA
I can't. It's like Christmas morning.

Tasha returns her focus to the radio.

TARIQ
They don't announce winners this
early.

TASHA
How do you know?

Tasha peeks out the kitchen window, hoping to see a radio station van drive by.

TARIQ
Maybe don't do that either, unless
you wanna get got.

Tariq closes the curtains.

TERRENCE (O.S.)
What's for breakfast?

TASHA
Daddy!

Terrence joins them.

TASHA (CONT'D)
We were gonna surprise you and Mommy
with breakfast in bed, but...you're
already up, so...grits and scrambled
eggs?

TERRENCE
Sounds good to me. Is this a team
effort?

TARIQ
Sure.

Terrence crosses to the window. Tasha and Tariq hold their breath as he opens the curtains.

TERRENCE
Much better.

He doesn't notice a thing.

The phone RINGS.

TASHA
I'll get it!

Tasha rushes to the phone.

TASHA (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Hello. She's asleep right now, can
I take a message? Mr. Charles?

TERRENCE
(mouths)
Telemarketer?

Tasha nods her head "yes." Terrence nods his head "no."

TASHA
He'll have to call you back, Mr.
Ziegler.

Tasha hangs up the phone.

TERRENCE
I thought you said it was a
telemarketer.

TASHA
It was.

TERRENCE
With the same last name as our
neighbor, Mr. Ziegler?

TASHA
Weird, right?

The phone RINGS again. Tasha answers, again.

TASHA (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Charles residence. No, my parents
aren't home. Thanks for calling.

Tasha hangs up.

Another RING. Tasha moves to answer it, but Terrence stops her.

TERRENCE
(on phone)
Hello? Oh, Mrs. Bonifant. No, you
didn't wake me.

Tasha and Tariq both saunter to the window. They use their bodies to block their father's view of outside, then watch intently as he "uh huh"s and "I understand"s his way through the conversation.

Terrence hangs up the phone.

A beat as we

CUT TO:

EXT. CHARLES HOUSE - DAY

Lorraine, dressed in her pajamas, SCREAMS as she and Terrence take in their newly painted house.

The color purple extends beyond the freshly painted door. The shutters are purple, random bricks are purple.

Tasha really put her foot in this.

Onlookers point and stare.

LORRAINE
Our house is purple.

TERRENCE
Tasha, tell me this isn't about what
I think it's about.

TASHA
We'll paint it back, I swear. That
was part of the plan.

LORRAINE
We?

TARIQ
(sotto)
Shit.

On Tariq, who's been slowly walking backwards to remove
himself from this conversation.

LORRAINE
Tasha?

TASHA
You always assume the worst of me.

LORRAINE
And for once, I wish I didn't have
to.

TASHA
You're not even gonna ask him, are
you? Go ahead. Ask Tariq what he
knows.

TARIQ
Hey, my hands aren't purple.

Onlookers interrupt with points and stares. Angie, Brielle
and Christian are among them.

BRIELLE
Damn, Tasha.

TERRENCE
Everyone, this is a private, family
moment. Would you please...

Terrence gives the universal symbol for skedaddle.

Tasha runs inside the house.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tasha turns on the radio. Tariq, Terrence and Lorraine follow her into the kitchen.

TARIQ

Tasha, stop.

TASHA

I'm winning those tickets.

LORRAINE

What the hell is going on?

TARIQ

You're not gonna find it.

TASHA

I thought you were on my side.

TARIQ

You're not gonna find it because it doesn't exist.

A beat. Tasha doesn't understand what's going on. Neither do her parents.

TARIQ (CONT'D)

There is no contest. I made the whole thing up.

Stunned, Tasha marches off to her bedroom. We hear the door SLAM.

Seconds later, a strange Woman stands at the front door.

HOA LADY

Hi, I'm from the Home Owners Association. Is this a bad time?

The look on Terrence and Lorraine's faces say it all.

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tariq has his ear against the wall. On the other side of it lies Tasha's room. Tariq knocks lightly against the shared wall, waiting for a response.

TARIQ

Tasha? Tasha?

A BOOM from the other side of the wall sends Tariq crashing back.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Standing on a step ladder, Terrence removes leftover streamers from Tasha's birthday party.

Lorraine descends the stairs and joins him.

LORRAINE
(re: streamers)
I didn't know those were still up.

TERRENCE
Just getting the last of 'em. How
is she?

LORRAINE
Quarantined in her bedroom. With
any luck, she'll stay there for the
rest of the summer.

TERRENCE
And Tariq?

LORRAINE
I don't know. I don't know anymore.

An R&B song croons on the RECORD PLAYER. Whatever song it is, Lorraine is feeling it.

Terrence leads Lorraine into a slow dance. She allows herself to give into the music for a moment.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
How are we gonna pay for this?

TERRENCE
Shh. Dance with me. Please?

TASHA (O.S.)
I said, get out!

The two stop dancing.

LORRAINE
We're awful parents.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha is curled up on her bed. Tariq slowly enters.

TARIQ
Your door is open. Your door is
never open.

A beat.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
 You're not even gonna stop me?

Tasha turns her back so that it now faces her brother.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
 I deserve that.

Tariq sits on the edge of Tasha's bed.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
 Hit me.

A beat.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
 Come on, hit me. Hard as you can.

Tasha doesn't budge. She continues to ignore her brother.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry, Tosh.

TASHA
 Leave.

TARIQ
 Fine, but just tell me you hate me
 so we can get back to normal.

TASHA
 I don't care enough about you to
 hate you.

And with that, Tariq leaves Tasha be.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

- Tasha and Tariq scrub the front door of the house.
- Tasha cleans the kitchen and cranes her neck to the front door, where Lorraine turns a disappointed Angie away.
- Tasha looks at her calendar. Tonight's the night she's been waiting for.
- Tasha and Tariq repaint the front door. Lorraine supervises.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wrapped in a towel, Tasha enters her bedroom. She finds a CD on her bed that reads: "Play me. Pretty please."

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tasha's on the phone with Angie.

ANGIE

Hey.

TASHA

Hey.

ANGIE

Are you still grounded, or is that a stupid question?

Silence from Tasha.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Got it. Then allow me to be the bearer of good news.

TASHA

Oh my gosh, you --

ANGIE

Girl, no. That would have been the first thing I said. I got another new bike.

TASHA

Really?

ANGIE

I know. And it's the exact same one I used to have.

TASHA

That's great!

ANGIE

I guess.

TASHA

You guess?

ANGIE

I told my mom the truth and she still got me a new bike. Didn't even get in trouble or anything.

TASHA

So she just did it out of the kindness of her heart?

ANGIE

That's what scares me.

TASHA

Well, maybe she... yeah, I got nothing.

ANGIE

Why are we on the phone? Can't I just come over?

TASHA

The way things are looking, I'll be grounded till school starts.

ANGIE

Damn. They really got your behind.

TASHA

Yep.

A beat.

ANGIE

I haven't forgotten what tonight is.

TASHA

Neither have I.

Lorraine enters. Dressed in scrubs, she's fresh from the night shift.

TASHA (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

Tasha hangs up the phone.

LORRAINE

Hi, honey.

Tasha walks past her mother, and completely ignores her.

INT. TERRENCE'S STUDY - DAY

Terrence is at the computer, typing away. Lorraine paces as he attempts to work.

LORRAINE

She's miserable.

TERRENCE

Miserable is a strong word.

LORRAINE

She's miserable, Terrence.

TERRENCE

Okay, yes. She's miserable.

LORRAINE

You say that like we can't do something about it.

TERRENCE

I'm all ears.

LORRAINE

I didn't say I have any suggestions. That's your area of expertise.

TERRENCE

Is it?

Lorraine gives Terrence a look.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lorraine knocks on Tasha's door.

Brielle enters, carrying several plastic bags of SYNTHETIC HAIR.

BRIELLE

These are your options: box braids or cornrows. I'm getting paid either way so what'll it be?

TASHA

What?

BRIELLE

Your mom said you needed a pick me up. Or your dad. Actually, I don't remember which one. They're both kinda lame.

Brielle sits down.

BRIELLE (CONT'D)

Where's your little sidekick? You know, the artist formerly known as your best friend?

TASHA

We're still friends.

BRIELLE

I'm kidding, chill.

TASHA

Did you see Tariq on your way in?

BRIELLE

I mean, he let me in.

TASHA

I'm not supposed to say but, he likes you. A lot.

BRIELLE

Aww. Bless his heart.

TASHA

Made you a song and everything.

BRIELLE

Interesting...

TASHA

I told him he doesn't stand a chance, though.

BRIELLE

Is it any good?

TASHA

I don't know.

BRIELLE

Look no offense, but your brother's not my type. Gives good gifts, though. He can keep those coming.

TASHA

He buys you gifts?

BRIELLE

Where do you think I got this shirt from?

TASHA

I don't understand. Why accept them if you don't like him?

BRIELLE

Do you not know anything about boys?

TASHA

He really likes you.

BRIELLE

Yeah, I got that part.

TASHA

No, he really, really likes you. Do you know how cheap he is? The fact that he bought you something, more than one thing --

BRIELLE

Are we gonna keep talking about your loser brother or can I get to braiding?

TASHA

He's not a loser.

BRIELLE

You've called him worse.

TASHA

Yeah, but I'm his sister.

BRIELLE

Whatever.

Brielle pulls out a pack of hair.

BRIELLE (CONT'D)

(re: hair)

Have you decided?

TASHA

Yeah.

Tasha moves to her door, signals for Brielle to walk through it.

BRIELLE

Eww. Looks like you got the bamma gene too.

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tasha stands at Tariq's open door.

TARIQ

Where's Brielle?

TASHA

She had to go.

TARIQ

Damn.

Tariq waves Tasha into his room. She enters, cautiously.

TARIQ (CONT'D)

I finished it. That song I made for her. Wanna hear it?

She doesn't really want to hear it, but Tariq plays the song anyway. It's hip hop meets R&B. And it's really good.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
Think she'll like it?

Tasha shakes her head "no."

TARIQ (CONT'D)
You're probably right.

TASHA
You're too good for her, Tariq.

TARIQ
What is that, some kind of reverse
psychology?

TASHA
Nope. Just the truth.

That's the nicest thing Tasha has said to Tariq in a long
time. They both know it.

TARIQ
What I said before about you and
Christian --

TASHA
Christian's cool and all, but I'm a
one guy kind of woman.

TARIQ
You moved on already? Damn, slick.
What's his name? Need me to beat
him into submission right quick?

Tasha can't help but laugh.

TARIQ (CONT'D)
For real, though. Who is he?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tasha watches tv. Tariq joins her.

TARIQ
You should go.

TASHA
Okay...

TARIQ
You're not missing that concert.

TASHA
Tariq, I'm not falling for another
one of your --

TARIQ

I sneak out the house all the time.

Tasha sits back down.

TASHA

I'm listening.

TARIQ

Say "I hate you."

TASHA

About that --

TARIQ

Just say it. Loud.

TASHA

(screams)

I hate you!

TARIQ

Now, run to your room then retrace your steps. Quietly.

Tasha marches toward her bedroom, slams her door. She quietly retraces her steps and re-joins Tariq on the couch.

TARIQ (CONT'D)

One last thing.

TASHA

Aren't you forgetting something? I don't have a ticket.

Tariq hands Tasha TWO PRINCE TICKETS.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

TARIQ

You forget how much you hate me.

TASHA

I don't know what to say.

TARIQ

No time. You gotta go.

TASHA

Okay, but unless you can Cinderella a car right quick...

Tariq looks at his wrist watch; uses his hand to countdown from 5 to 1, then opens the front door.

There's nothing for a few seconds, then...

A bright LIGHT. It comes from a VIDEOCAMERA manned by a Cameraman who follows the every move of a hungry, code-switching BEAT REPORTER (Black male, early 20s).

BEAT REPORTER

We are live at the residence of a very special fan whose dying wish is to see the one and only Prince in concert.

TASHA

Dying?! I'm not dying.

Astonished, Beat Reporter side eyes Tariq then turns to her Camera Operator.

BEAT REPORTER

Cut!

Camera Operator stops recording. Tasha looks at her brother.

TASHA

(to Tariq)

Who are you?

EXT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Standing on the lawn, Tasha looks up to Angie's bedroom window.

TASHA

(loud whispers)

Angie? Angie!

Angie appears at the window.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Angie, please? It's important.

INT. ANGIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The walls are bare. Gone are the countless perm ads.

The first thing Tasha sees, however, is Angie's hair - or, lack thereof. Angie wore her hair natural before, but now it's short. Super short.

ANGIE

Don't say a word.

Tasha does as told.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Okay, say something. Anything.
Just, not about my hair.

TASHA

I --

ANGIE

I-got-tired-of-waiting-for-my-mom-to
say-yes-so-I-went-and-relaxed-it
myself, okay!

TASHA

I can tell.

ANGIE

Tosh, it was awful. I felt like my
scalp was gonna burn off.

TASHA

Looks like part of it did.

ANGIE

I thought the more it burned, the
straighter my hair would get... until
it started falling out.

TASHA

Oh, Angie.

ANGIE

It's okay 'cause I'm gonna grow it
back longer than before and then
I'll get a professional to perm it
and...I look like a boy, don't I?

TASHA

Project silky didn't turn out so
smooth, but let's not go crazy. Do
you see any boys in here?

A beat.

TASHA (CONT'D)

I said, do you see any boys in here?

ANGIE

No.

TASHA

Thank you. Bet you'll never go
through all this trouble for a perm
again.

ANGIE

You still don't get it.

TASHA

That you're not happy to be nappy?
I think you've made your case.

ANGIE

I like my hair fine. I just wanted
something different. Something I
chose. For me. And yeah, I may be
bald but that doesn't hurt as much
as losing my best friend.

TASHA

We're still best friends. Aren't
we?

ANGIE

I don't know.

TASHA

I'm sorry, Angie.

ANGIE

You should be. Could have saved my
scalp.

TASHA

I should have been there. I would
have been dying!

Tasha laughs.

ANGIE

I'm thinking maybe my mom was right
about the whole hair thing. Don't
tell her I said that.

Mrs. Bonifant enters, revealing a low cut natural, just like
Angie's.

MRS. BONIFANT

Too late.

TASHA

Whoa. You look like twins.

MRS. BONIFANT

I wanted my daughter to know how
beautiful she is, no matter what her
hair looks like.

Angie and her mother hug.

MRS. BONIFANT (CONT'D)
Since your father left, I haven't quite been myself. But that's no excuse. You deserve all of me.

A car horn HONKS.

TASHA
Can we maybe speed this up?

ANGIE
Girl, don't act like you have somewhere to be.

TASHA
We kinda do.

MRS. BONIFANT
Why don't I give you girls a minute?

She exits. Tasha reveals the Prince tickets to Angie. They SCREAM in unison.

ANGIE
That should have been the first thing out your mouth. How'd you get the tickets?

TASHA
I'll explain on the way.

EXT. BONIFANT HOUSE - NIGHT

Standing outside of the parked news van, Beat Reporter smokes a cigarette. He tosses it to the wayside as Tasha and Angie approach.

BEAT REPORTER
Finally. We don't have all night.

ANGIE
Uhh, who the hell is she?

TASHA
Our ticket to freedom, courtesy of Tariq.

ANGIE
Tariq? Your brother Tariq?

TASHA
That same one.

BEAT REPORTER

This is the last time I listen to
your brother.

Tasha and Angie (albeit, hesitantly) hop in the van. Mrs.
Bonifant runs out the house and runs after the vehicle.

INT. TERRENCE'S STUDY - NIGHT

Terrence types at his computer. Lorraine runs in.

LORRAINE

Have you seen Tasha?

TERRENCE

Isn't she with Tariq?

LORRAINE

Have you seen Tariq?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Terrence is on the phone. Lorraine stands by, eagerly
awaiting an update.

TERRENCE

(on phone)

Please call us if you hear anything.

He hangs up the phone.

LORRAINE

What did she say?

TERRENCE

She saw Tasha and Angie take off
with a man in a news van.

LORRAINE

Oh my God. You see? You see! Did
she get the license plate number?

Terrence shakes his head "no."

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

I'm calling the police.

Tariq appears out of thin air. He's heard everything his
parents said.

TARIQ

So, funny story...

INT. TOYOTA PREVIA - NIGHT

Tariq sits in the back. Terrence is behind the wheel and Lorraine rides shotgun. They ride in complete silence, until...

TARIQ

Tasha's fine, she's with my boy Dom.

LORRAINE

And who is he?

TARIQ

A friend, I just told you.

TERRENCE

That we've never even met.

TARIQ

It's not like Tasha's alone. He dropped them off.

LORRAINE

Them?

A beat. This is clearly new information.

TARIQ

I didn't mention that before. My bad.

LORRAINE

If Tasha doesn't come back home in one piece...

TARIQ

I don't get why this is a big deal.

LORRAINE

No, you wouldn't. Because you're a kid, Tariq, just like your sister. But you're older and as a big brother, it's your responsibility to set a positive example for your sister. Instead, you trick her into thinking the world is safe for little girls.

TERRENCE

Don't put that on him. Tariq's only 14.

TARIQ

I'm 15, Dad.

TERRENCE

That's our job.

LORRAINE

So now I'm a bad mother?

TERRENCE

Keeping her safe is one thing, but making it so our children are afraid to come to us in another.

LORRAINE

Maybe if I had help disciplining them --

TERRENCE

Tasha doesn't need saving.

LORRAINE

Is that what you think I'm trying to do, save Tasha?

TERRENCE

You're telling me it's not?

LORRAINE

I want her to use her brain. To make smart, informed decisions.

TERRENCE

Then let her.

EXT. ARENA PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Beat Reporter and Cameraman setup shop outside the arena entrance as the Charles's Toyota Previa pulls up.

Lorraine and Tariq hop out of the car. Terrence calls after them.

TERRENCE

I'm right behind you!

Lorraine and Tariq quickly approach a bored SECURITY GUARD. Tariq does his best to hide from Beat Reporter's sight.

SECURITY GUARD

Tickets?

LORRAINE

I don't have one.

SECURITY GUARD

Ma'am, the concert's sold out.

LORRAINE

You don't understand. My 13 year old daughter's in there. Alone.

TARIQ

I told you, Angie's with her.
(off Lorraine's look)
I mean, she's all alone.

SECURITY GUARD

If you want in, you're going to have to buy a ticket like everyone else.

A beat.

LORRAINE

(to Tariq)

Run!

Lorraine runs inside the arena. A surprised Tariq follows suit. The Security Guard takes off after them, while barking into a walkie talkie.

INT. ARENA - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Security Guard off their tails, Lorraine and Tariq pow wow before they enter.

LORRAINE

This place is huge. Tasha could be anywhere.

TARIQ

She's over here. I mean, I think I know where she is.

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

Tasha and Angie are chanting and singing along with a massive crowd while Prince serenades them. Tasha is having the time of her life.

Tariq and Lorraine enter. Lorraine is taken aback by the sights and sounds. On stage, Prince is but a dot from where they're standing but his power is unmistakable.

It doesn't take long for Tariq to spot Tasha. He points her out to his mother.

Tasha finally notices their presence.

TASHA

There's a box in my closet.
(MORE)

TASHA (CONT'D)

It's got all the Prince stuff I could get my hands on. It's yours if you want it. Just tell my family: it was worth it.

ANGIE

(over music)

What?!

Tasha looks over and sees that her father has now joined Lorraine and Tariq. They approach her.

TASHA

I'll watch anything Yanni's ever done, clean the house from top to bottom and kiss the ground that Tariq walks on, but I'm not sorry.

TERRENCE

We know.

TASHA

I know I broke the rules but I'm fine. See? I'm safe and I'm happy and --

LORRAINE

Stop talking.

ANGIE

The jig is up.

Lorraine grabs Tasha by the hand and ushers her out of the seat.

Angie, Tariq and Terrence follow Lorraine.

Still leading the way, Lorraine elbows her way through the crowd; inches closer to the stage.

TASHA

Haven't you ever done anything crazy?

Lorraine looks for assistance from Terrence - to prop Tasha up on his shoulders. Tasha has a clear and unobstructed view of the stage. She's so happy, she could die.

LORRAINE

Is it everything you hoped and dreamed it would be?

TASHA

Better.

Together, they all take in the sounds of Prince. They dance and let loose.

Lorraine pauses for a second to address Tariq.

LORRAINE

By the way, Tariq: You're grounded.

She returns to dancing, just as happy as can be.

EXT. ARENA PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The crowd has died down substantially. Tasha, Angie and Tariq wait for Lorraine and Terrence to pull up with the car.

ANGIE

It was pretty cool what you did,
Tariq.

TASHA

Yeah.

TARIQ

Tasha would do the same for me.

TASHA

No, I wouldn't.

ANGIE

She's right, she wouldn't.

They laugh.

TASHA

Hey, I love my brother.

A beat.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(to Tariq)

Should you pay me a dollar?

TARIQ

Don't be a bamma.

Suddenly, a BIKE HORN sounds. A slim, VEILED MAN dressed in white rides past on his bike. Something about the man's demeanor seems very familiar. Tasha and Angie share a knowing look. Was that...?

TASHA

Nah.

ANGIE

Nah.

EXT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mrs. Bonifant stands in the open doorway of her home, her arm wrapped around Angie. They both wave to Tasha, as she gets back in the parked Previa.

INT. CHARLES HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A back to school commercial plays on the TV.

Tasha turns off the TV and makes her way to the

KITCHEN

Tariq hovers over the sink, washing dishes and wearing long, yellow gloves.

Tasha scoots him out of the way to collect the garbage from underneath the sink.

TASHA

You look good in gloves.

TARIQ

(playful)

Shut up.

Terrence joins the kids, just as Lorraine, dressed in usual scrubs, walks through the front door.

Terrence plants a big KISS on his wife's lips.

LORRAINE

Look what I got.

Lorraine removes an envelope of PHOTOS from her purse. Gives half to Tasha and the other half to Tariq.

TASHA

My birthday pictures.

Tasha flips through the pictures.

TASHA (CONT'D)

These are all of Brielle. Tariq, you didn't take any of me.

TARIQ

Yeah, I did.

Tariq hands Tasha a picture of her looking angry and upset. Hands her more. Varied states.

TASHA

You really captured the moment.

TARIQ
It's a gift, really.

TASHA
Thanks, Tariq.

Tasha hugs her brother. The gesture is a far cry from where they began not long ago.

A beat.

TASHA (CONT'D)
What?

LORRAINE
Just wondering what 14 is gonna look like.