

Rapper's College

Script

Written by

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Based on the Novel: A Rapper's College

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## The Writer

For years I worked with children in the Indianapolis area who suffered from dyslexia. It is a disability that impairs both reading and writing. A Rapper's College is a dedication to the struggle that effects nearly 30 million people's lives everyday, which includes many successful musicians and artists.

A Rapper's College is an inspiring story about a young man who struggles to overcome his battle with dyslexia while making it through the challenges of his personal life and those of the music industry.

CHARACTERS:

1. VICTOR HARVEY MASON (VICTORIOUS) RAP ARTIST, 20'S
2. YOUNG VICTOR
3. DR. YAHYA ABDUL-KARRIEM (DYSLEXIC TUTOR, PSYCHOLOGIST)
4. SHANTEL MASON (VICTOR'S MOTHER), MID 40'S
5. YOUNG SHANTEL MASON
6. MALCOLM MASON, SR. (VICTOR'S FATHER), LATE 40'S
7. MALCOLM MASON (VICTOR'S OLDER BROTHER)
8. MALCOLM MASON'S ATTORNEY
9. LIL' MALCOLM (Young Malcolm Mason)
10. TEENAGE LIL' MALCOLM
11. DEJA MASON (VICTOR'S YOUNGER SISTER), TEENAGER
12. BEAST (CLARENCE FISCHER, VICTOR'S HEAD GUARD), 30'S
13. WILLIAM "BASE" LOUIS (PRODUCER)
14. TYLER WAYNE FERGUSON "TY" (MANAGER)
15. MICHELLE HART (PUBLICIST, PERSONAL ASSISTANT)
16. J.J. CAMERON (VICTOR'S RECORDING COMPANY)
17. MICHAEL CAMERON "MC" (VICTOR'S RECORDING COMPANY)
18. POLICEMEN (2)
19. DIRECTORS OF MUSIC VIDEO (1)
20. IVIANA ALEXIS ROE (MODEL)
21. IVIANA'S ATTORNEYS (2)
22. VICTOR'S ATTORNEYS (2)
23. JUDGE WHO SENTENCES MALCOLM TO PRISON

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24. JUDGE ROSLIN (SENTENCES VICTOR)
25. JAIL GUARDS (4, 2 separate ones for Malcolm and Victor)
26. DJ MONCREW
27. EXTRA DJS (2)
28. THE FANS AND THE CROWD (LARGE NUMBER)
29. RISING KING (CHRISTOPHER ERVINE-BROWN)
30. NURSES (2)
31. WOMEN'S GOSPEL SINGING GROUP
32. A MASS CHOIR
33. PALLBEARERS (2)
34. TEACHERS (3)
35. MOVERS (2)
36. Bus Driver
37. R & B SINGER/ARTIST ROC-A-FELLA
38. GIRL DEJA IS HAVING SEX WITH
39. FIVE RADIO/MEDIA ANNOUNCERS WITH DISTINCT VOICES
40. VICTOR'S PERSONAL PRISON GUARD
41. MEN WHO ASSAULT VICTOR IN PARKING GARAGE (4)
42. INTERVIEWER AT CLOTHING GIVEAWAY
43. EXTRA MEN SEEN WITH VICTOR PURPOSE UNIDENTIFIED (2)
44. MAN OR WOMAN WHO HANDS VICTOR HIS COLLEGE DEGREE AS HE WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE
45. PROSTITUTES IN GHETTO (2)
46. DRUG DEALER (1)

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47. ROUGH GROUP USED IN FIRST GLIMPSE OF GHETTO SCENE
48. EXTRA CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM (5)
49. EXTRA STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION (10)
50. DEAN OF HIGH SCHOOL WHO GIVES VICTOR DIPLOMA
51. CAMERA MEN
52. FAMILY & FRIENDS AT MAMA'S GRADUATION PARTY (10-15)
53. DIRECTOR OF MUSIC VIDEO 'BASH EM'
54. UNDERGROUND ANNOUNCER
55. VICTOR'S MAID

## SCENE 1:

*THE CURTAIN OPENS...VICTOR IS STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE. THE LIGHT SHINES DIRECTLY ON HIM AND SURROUNDING HIM THERE IS DARKNESS. HIS APPEARANCE REFLECTS THE MUSIC THAT RAISED HIM. BOTH HANDS ARE BEHIND HIS BACK. HE RAISES HIS HEAD AND SPEAKS.*

VICTORIOUS: I was born with dyslexia. I understood nothing from reading and struggled with writing. For years I was confused by letters that were similar in shape. I couldn't remember the sequence of the letters. They thought I had vision problems. They thought I couldn't see. But the problem went deeper than that. It was in my brain.

(Voice grows louder and body gains strength with each sentence!)

Now, after spending almost a decade in the rap industry, with the struggle, I finally broke it. I stand here today holding a college degree in my hand.

*HE REMOVES ONE HAND FROM BEHIND HIS BACK. HE HOLDS A DEGREE HIGH ABOVE HIS HEAD.*

This is my story.

*LIGHT GO OFF AND Exits stage (LEFT)*

## SCENE 2

*(THE CROWD) IS POSITIONED IN FRONT OF A STAGE AND THEY ARE SCREAMING OUT VICTORIOUS. IN THE BACKGROUND VICTOR'S VOICE CAN BE HEARD BUT HE CANNOT BE SEEN.*

VICTOR'S VOICE: I can hear the crowd shouting my name. The adrenaline starts moving through my veins. I feel my heart beating faster and faster. I pray...God give me the power and strength to perform. I hear the music...that's my cue.

*BEAST APPEARS, MOVING THE CURTAIN OUT OF VICTORIOUS' WAY. HE RUNS THROUGH THE CURTAIN AND STOPS RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE CROWD WITH A MICROPHONE IN HIS HAND. AS HE APPEARS THE CROWD GOES WILD AS HE BEGINS TO LIP RAP. AS THIS HAPPENS VICTOR'S VOICE STATES:*

VICTORIOUS: They scream out my name at the top of their lungs. They helped make me, so I want to give them what they came for. I bust out the rhymes quick and fast...but not so fast they can't understand what I'm saying. I slow down. (ALL ACTIONS SLOW) I make the words flow like the waves of the sea. I speed up. (ALL ACTIONS SPEED UP) I slow back down. (ALL ACTIONS SLOW) I make them roll like wheels on a car. I make them go deep. I make them go far. With their hands in the air, they rock their bodies back and forth to the beat.

*EXPLANATION: WHEN VICTOR SAYS THE WORDS SLOW DOWN SO DO THE ACTIONS OF THE ACTORS...WHEN HE SAYS THE WORDS SPEED UP...THE ACTORS SPEED UP THEIR ACTIONS...CREATING A "MATRIX" SCENE. VICTOR'S VOICE CONTINUES:*

VICTOR'S VOICE: I was born to do this. When I was a boy, mama told me I was special. She told me I was going to make a difference in people's lives. And so, when it happened...when I finally became famous...it was no surprise.

*LIGHTS OUT, SCENE CHANGE*

### Scene 3

*DOOR SLAMS (LOUD)  
LIGHTS*

*THE SCENE OPENS IN A LIVING ROOM WITH A KITCHEN NEAR BY, IN A MEDIUM SIZED HOME IN THE 1990'S. SHANTEL MASON IS SITTING AT THE KITCHEN TABLE WITH HER FACE IN HER HANDS (CRYING). SHE CAN CLEARLY BE HEARD.*

*THE YOUNG VICTOR IS SITTING IN FRONT OF THE TELEVISION SCREEN WATCHING A MUSIC VIDEO IN THE LIVING ROOM (POSITIONED NEXT TO THE KITCHEN. HE IS PLAYING WITH SOME TOYS. SUDDENLY HE HEARS HIS MOTHER CRYING. YOUNG VICTOR WALKS INTO THE KITCHEN AND APPROACHES HIS MOTHER CAUTIOUSLY. HE WALKS SLOWLY OVER TO HER AND PLACES HIS HAND GENTLY ON HIS MOTHER'S SHOULDER.*

SHANTEL MASON: *(She looks at him intently, still crying).* Come here, Vick. *(She holds Victor close to her and squeezes him tight as if not to let him go).* Daddy's gone baby. He left us. He's not coming back. You hear me?

*(FREEZE FRAME)*

VICTOR'S VOICE:

It took me two years to understand what she meant by that. That's how long it took me to finally stop looking for him. Then, soon after, mama told us we had to move to the "ghetto." Up until that point we'd lived on what I knew as the good side of town. I had never heard the word "ghetto". I didn't know what it was. I would soon learn quickly it was no where I wanted to be.

*LIGHTS OUT, SCENE CHANGE*

#### SCENE 4

*The scene opens with Malcolm Mason, Jr. and Young Victor playing basketball in what appears to be their suburban backyard next to a "ghettoized" street (DARKENED). They are dribbling the ball and shooting hoops when Young Victor stops and asks Malcolm about the ghetto.*

Young Victor: *(Innocently)* How big is the ghetto, Lil' Malcolm?

Malcolm Mason: It's as big as yo' head fool. *(laughs)*

*Just then Young Victor swipes the ball out of Malcolm's hands and the ball rolls onto the ghettoized part of the street (lightened) to show the transition they made from suburbia to the city. It rolls into the hands of a rough looking group of people, walking down the street, sharing joints and having a good time. They exit the stage with the ball in their hands. Malcolm and Young Victor watch them as they walk off with their ball, but do not approach them. Another ball rolls onto the stage. Lil' Malcolm picks it up and Young Victor watches on as he resumes his game while Victor's Voice states:*

VICTOR'S VOICE: Little Malcolm was in his own world. He was like a pit-bull at times. Teachers talked about him at school, saying aside from sports, he was good at nothing. Because I was his brother, they harassed me as well.

*The light dims on Lil' Malcolm as Young Victor arises from the sidelines of the basketball court and suddenly walks into a classroom setting. Before he enters he is stopped by a teacher standing at the entrance. She holds a ruler in her hands and puts it into his chest to stop him.*

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TEACHER: And just where do you think you're going?  
Aren't you Malcolm's little brother?

YOUNG VICTOR: Yes.

TEACHER: Don't you think for one minute you're going to  
come in my room acting like him either.

YOUNG VICTOR: (INNOCENTLY) Yes, ma'am.

*YOUNG VICTOR CONTINUES INSIDE THE CLASSROOM AND SITS AT HIS SEAT, FACING THE AUDIENCE. HE REMOVES HIS PENCILS AND OTHER NEEDED ITEMS TO BEGIN HIS SCHOOL WORK. THE AUDIENCE MUST SEE THE STRUGGLE ON HIS FACE. FOR, HE HATES SCHOOL BUT KNOWS HE MUST GO. WHILE HE DOES THIS VICTOR STATES:*

VICTOR'S VOICE: But they had no reason to be intimidated by me. I wasn't like Lil' Malcolm. I hadn't been through what he'd been through. My dad didn't abuse me like he did Malcolm. He didn't push me around and hit on me like he did him and my mother. Once he almost did it to me, but mama intervened.

## SCENE 5

*IN THIS SCENE MALCOLM MASON, SR., SHANTEL MASON, AND YOUNG VICTOR ARE ALL IN THE KITCHEN EATING SPAGHETTI OR SOME OTHER DINNER ITEM. YOUNG VICTOR SUDDENLY SPILLS THE FOOD ALL OVER THE KITCHEN FLOOR.*

MALCOLM MASON: Look at you! You are so stupid. Now, pick it up. Pick it all up. You clumsy ass boy! (He stands up and grabs Young Victor by the shirt with one hand while raising the other in the air.)

YOUNG VICTOR: I'm sorry, daddy!

MALCOLM MASON: I ain't yo' damn daddy, boy!

*JUST AS MALCOLM BEGINS TO STRIKE YOUNG VICTOR ACROSS THE FACE SHANTEL MASON ARISES FROM HER SEAT AND GRABS HIS ARM, PREVENTING THE STRIKE. SHE LOOKS AT HIM INTENTLY IN HIS EYES AND SAYS:*

SHANTEL MASON: Not this one, Malcolm! I'm not going to let you hurt this one.

VICTOR'S VOICE: Mama knew something daddy didn't realize. He'd ruined Lil' Malcolm. She wanted to make sure he didn't ruin me too.

MALCOLM MASON: *(Shaking her hand off of him, looking at Young Victor)* Garbage ain't mine anyway! *(He storms off the set angrily)*.

VICTOR'S VOICE: The truth was, I was his. At least that's what mama said. He just didn't want me to be. I never understood why he didn't want me to be his. I often wondered what happened to my father and how he became so bitter. From what I understood, he was raised in a middle-class, church attending family. His life was decent. He was good at school; and especially good at basketball.

#### SCENE 6

*Victor's Voice continues to speak of his father while the scene changes. Malcolm Mason, Sr. is seen playing basketball in his 70's basketball school uniform.*

VICTOR'S VOICE: His high school awards and trophies grossed our living room shelves. His dream was that of a typical boy's dream at that time...to be in the NBA. He played so good he was one of the first African-Americans to receive a scholarship to a university. *(AT THIS MOMENT MALCOLM MASON, SR. WILL STOP PLAYING BASKETBALL AND PICK UP A COLLEGE T-SHIRT TO SYMBOLIZE HIS ACCEPTANCE AND SCHOLARSHIP. HE PUTS THE T-SHIRT ON AND CONTINUES PLAYING BASKETBALL, VICTOR CONTINUES)* He was recognized by all as a great athlete.

VICTOR'S VOICE: Unfortunately, it all ended when mama, Shantel Mason *(AT THIS POINT A YOUNGER LOOKING SHANTEL MASON ENTERS STAGE RIGHT AND GAINS MALCOLM'S ATTENTION)* his girlfriend at the time became pregnant with Lil' Malcolm. *(AS SHE MAKES IT TO THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE, HE NOTICES HER AND STOPS PLAYING BASKETBALL. HE SPEAKS TO HER.)*

MALCOLM MASON, SR.: Looking mighty fine today. *(He follows her off stage left.)*

VICTOR'S VOICE: But a night with Shantel Mason changed his life forever.

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AS MALCOLM MASON, SR. RE-APPEARS AFTER A FEW MOMENTS ON THE STAGE, HE CONTINUES SHOOTING HOOPS UNTIL A VISIBLY PREGNANT SHANTEL MASON APPROACHES HIM CAUTIOUSLY FROM BEHIND (STAGE RIGHT) AND TAPS HIS SHOULDER AS HE REACHES UP FOR A SHOT. HE NOTICES SHE IS PREGNANT AND PLACES HIS HAND ON HER STOMACH. THEY MAKE EYE CONTACT. SHE NODS. HE PLACES THE BASKETBALL DOWN (SYMBOLIC OF HIM PUTTING HIS DREAMS DOWN) AND WALKS OFF STAGE LEFT WITH HER. AS ALL OF THIS HAPPENS VICTOR STATES:

VICTOR'S VOICE: Daddy had to lay his dreams down. As he said it, his dreams were shattered. He often spoke of how his life went downhill from there. According to him, Lil' Malcolm was the blame for it all. But Lil' Malcolm didn't have anything to do with him keeping his pants up.

Mama said my grandparents made him marry her in order to save them from the church's judgment. So they got married shortly before giving birth to Lil' Malcolm. (*Marriage music is heard for a brief moment*).

After that, Daddy had to immediately start working and that pushed his dreams even further way. Then, he snapped completely. He became a heavy drinker. And with this came verbal and physical abuse.

If any one of his children expressed the slightest interest in sports, he was sure to take it to the extreme, trying to turn his dream into theirs.

Lil' Malcolm was his first victim. I remember watching dad make him practice for hours in our backyard. Malcolm would be tired and sometimes hungry.

AS VICTOR SPEAKS AN OLDER MALCOLM APPEARS WITH LIL' MALCOLM IN THE BACKYARD PRACTICING BASKETBALL. HE DRINKS A FORTY OUNCE AS LIL' MALCOLM RUNS BACK AND FORTH FROM END TO END TIREDLY.

VICTOR'S VOICE: Lil' Malcolm didn't like basketball as much as my dad did, but he had all the skills. Still, daddy didn't care. He commented on Malcolm's tiredness without sympathy.

MALCOLM MASON, SR.: Boy, pick up yo' damn feet...keep movin'!

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Lil' Malcolm: I'm tired, daddy.

MALCOLM MASON, SR.: If you don't pick up yo' damn feet. Let's go!

*JUST THEN SHANTEL MASON APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY AND PLEADS WITH MALCOLM TO STOP PRACTICE.*

Shantel Mason: Please, Malcolm. That's enough. Let the boy come in and have dinner.

MALCOM MASON, SR.: Woman, mind yo' business. I know what I'm doing. I'm trying to make a star athlete here! (*SHANTEL MASON RETREATS AS THE TORTURE CONTINUES.*)

VICTOR'S VOICE: Mom would plead and plead with him to let Lil' Malcolm come inside for dinner, but he wouldn't listen. All that practice paid off though. Malcolm was the best player on his school team. Then, something happened. When Malcolm got to high school, he started snapping on daddy. One day during practice he lost all self-control.

### SCENE 7

*The scene continues from Scene 6 with Malcolm Mason Sr. and Jr. still on the basketball court. Senior gets up to show Lil' Malcolm how to shoot the ball. Senior tells him to shoot a certain way in order to guarantee a score. But when he shoots himself, he misses.*

MALCOM MASON, SR.: Like this. You see? You have to hold the ball like this. (*He shoots and misses. Lil' Malcolm laughs innocently. He hears Lil' Malcolm and walks up to him as if to fight him.*) You laughin' at me, boy? Are you laughin' at me?

Lil' Malcolm: (*Ignores him at first, but then gains courage and speaks loudly.*) Hell yeah, I'm laughin' at you! (*He pushes his father away from him. Malcolm Mason, Sr. is in complete shock at this.*) I hate basketball and I hate you! (*Lil' Malcolm runs off stage.*)

*Lights Off and MALCOLM IS HEARD RUNNING AWAY (STAGE LEFT)*

### SCENE 8

LIL' MALCOLM RE-APPEARS AS BIG MALCOLM MASON. HE IS NOW GROWN UP, WALKING DOWN THE STREETS OF THE GHETTO SELLING DRUGS AND PLAYING GAMES WITH PROSTITUTES. VICTOR'S VOICE NARRATES:

VICTOR'S VOICE: When Malcolm ran away he joined a gang. Because he was busy doing drug deals and stuff he was barely at home anymore. When he was, he caused trouble. Then he started getting in trouble with the law. (*JUST THEN A POLICEMAN WALKS UP TO HIM ON THE STREET AND ATTEMPTS TO HANDCUFF HIM, BUT MALCOLM BREAKS AWAY AND RUNS OFF STAGE LEFT.*) It was more than my parents could handle. The following year, though, he got into some real trouble.

MALCOLM MASON RE-APPEARS STAGE RIGHT, APPROACHING ANOTHER DRUG DEALER ON THE STAGE FOR A DRUG DEAL.

MALCOLM MASON: Yo, what up man? (*He warmly greets the other actor for a drug deal, but the drug dealer is hesitant AND looks suspicious.*) I called you the other day and I couldn't get a hold of you.

DRUG DEALER: (*Pulls out a gun and demands Malcolm give him all his money.*) Give me all yo' money, man. Drop it right now or I'm gon' drop you!

MALCOLM MASON: After all I done for you...you gon' hold me up? What you doin' man? Huh? What you doin'?

*Just then Malcolm realizes the drug dealer is close enough for him to reach out and try to grab the gun from him. He does this and for a while there is a struggle. A gun shot is heard as the drug dealer pulls the trigger but it is facing away from them both. As Malcolm is still holding on to the drug dealer's gun trying to get it away, he reaches for his own, pulls it out and shoots the drug dealer in the side. The drug dealer falls to the ground. When he falls to the ground, Malcolm walks up to him and shoots him again in the head (angrily). He looks around, tucks both guns away, and runs off stage left.*

VICTOR'S VOICE: That year, my brother shot somebody at point-blank range. He was caught not long after that right on mama's doorstep.

## SCENE 9

*WHEN THE SCENE OPENS, MALCOLM IS BEFORE A JUDGE WITH AN ATTORNEY. HE IS CLOTHED IN AN ORANGE JUMPSUIT AND IS HANDCUFFED. MALCOLM MASON SR., A PREGNANT SHANTEL MASON, AND YOUNG VICTOR ARE SITTING IN THE COURTROOM AWAITING THE JUDGE'S DECISION.*

JUDGE: Young man, do you realize what you've done? You're only a teen and you've already shot and killed a man. I'm afraid what you'll do when you become a man. So I'm going to put you away for a real long time. I want you to turn around and look at your family because you won't be seeing them for a real long time. I am sentencing you to 60 years in prison.

*MALCOM MASON TURNS AROUND AND LOOKS AT HIS FAMILY. SHANTEL MASON BEGINS TO CRY. HE THEN BEGINS TO CRY. AS THE JUDGE SENTENCES HIM TO 60 YEARS IN PRISON, SHANTEL MASON LOSES HER SELF-CONTROL.*

*SHANTEL MASON: No, please, judge! Please don't take my baby away from me. He's just a boy! He didn't know what he was doing. Please, my boy! Don't take him away from me. (IN TEARS AND HOLDING HER CLOTHES SHANTEL FALLS DOWN ONTO THE FLOOR. MALCOLM MASON, SR. STRUGGLES TO HELP HER UP.)*

JUDGE: Ma'am, tell that to the family of the one he shot and killed.

*SHANTEL MASON RISES FROM THE FLOOR AND STANDS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE FACING THE CROWD. SHE WIPES HER TEARS AND LOOKS OFF INTO THE CROWD FOR A MOMENT AND EXITS, LEAVING EVERYONE ELSE BEHIND.*

VICTOR'S VOICE: Mama was so overcome with grief she disappeared for days. Dad took care of us while she was away.

*Lights Out, Scene changes as Victor speaks:*

Victor's Voice: I spent most of my adolescent life feeling sorry for mama. She had been through so much. She was born to a mother who gave her up for adoption when she was only two months old. Years after that, she was moved from home to home before finally marrying someone that would abandon her again.

I wanted to grow up and become somebody for her. I wanted to give her and my baby sister a better life. I wanted to give her the life I felt she so desperately deserved. And I knew I could give it to her if I became rich. Before they took Lil' Malcolm away he introduced me to this thing called rap.

### SCENE 10

*FLASHBACK: IN THIS SCENE YOUNG VICTOR AND LIL' MALCOLM ARE SEEN IN Lil' Malcolm's BEDROOM PLAYING RAP MUSIC, DANCING AND PRETENDING TO RAP, HAVING A GOOD OL' TIME WHILE VICTOR'S VOICE NARRATES:*

VICTOR'S VOICE: I learned a lot about the rap artists of my time just by listening and watching him. Mama and daddy didn't want us listening to that type of music because they called it "Devil's Music." So Lil' Malcolm and I would close the door, and in secret we would listen to the radio. We pretended to be rap artists and danced trying to be as quiet as possible.

MALCOLM MASON: See, see, see you can take anything and give it a rhythm...even stuff at school. See, listen: Now where can we begin, see  $5 + 5 = 10$ , why would it be anything else my friend, now double that, it's  $10 + 10$  and that means twenty is the beginning. Now they say all I'm good at involves a ball, but I've got more, I'm standin' tall, it's in my brain, I just don't use it 'cause I'm so insane!

*(Both Young Victor and Lil' Malcolm begin laughing. They give each other a high-five and continue playing the music on the radio.)*

VICTOR'S VOICE: School was a hard concept for me. But when Malcolm told me I could take any information and give it a beat or rhythm to help me remember I started doing just that. It helped a little. So when Malcolm went to jail *(For a brief moment the light is taken off the two playing and is shown on an older Malcolm handcuffed and off to prison, exiting stage left WITH GUARD.)* it broke my heart.

*(NOW THE LIGHT SHINES BACK ON LIL' MALCOLM'S ROOM. ONLY THIS TIME YOUNG VICTOR IS THERE ALONE.)* So I immediately went to his room and got all his stolen tapes. *(Young Victor is seen taking all the tapes and hiding them in his*

*shirt for the moment and exits into the backyard where he hides them and begins listening to one on a tape-recorder.)*

Victor's Voice: Instead of doing my school work I came home and listened to the rap artists of my time...Ice Cube, Public Enemy, Easy-E, and Bone Thugs N' Harmony. I digested their every word. I listened to them over and over again, stopping and playing back in an effort to remember their every word. *(He moves his head up and down to the beat of the music. Music can be played for a brief moment for the audience to understand.)*

*YOUNG VICTOR NOW ARISES FROM THE BACKYARD SEAT AND WALKS ONTO THE GHETTO STREETS FROM STAGE RIGHT. HE STILL HAS HIS MUSIC ON HIS EARS, BEE-BOPPING. WHILE WALKING DOWN THE STREET HE RUNS INTO A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE BREAK DANCING TO A SONG BEING PLAYED ON THE RADIO. AS HE LOOKS ON, HE REMOVES HIS HEAD PHONES AND JOINS IN THE HYPE OF THE CROWD.*

Victor's Voice: As I grew older, mama found out I was sneaking off to dance and rap instead of doing my school work. *(AT THIS MOMENT SHANTEL MASON IS SEEN PEEKING IN ON THE TEENAGE VICTOR STANDING IN THE FRONT OF THE DANCING ON THE STREETS.SHE APPROACHES HIM AND TURNS HIM AROUND TO FACE HER.)*

SHANTEL MASON: *(STERNLY AND SLOWLY)* Get yo' ass home right now, and finish your homework! *(VICTOR AND SHANTEL MASON WALK OFF STAGE TOGETHER AND HE RE-APPEARS IN THE KITCHEN OF A SMALL APARTMENT BUILDING, ATTEMPTING TO COMPLETE HIS HOMEWORK.)*

VICTOR'S VOICE: But there was nothing she could do to keep me away from my music. *(Victor looks around hesitantly before pulling out one of his headphones.)* Hip-hop was in me. After a while, she knew there was no stopping me.

*Without him knowing it, Shantel Mason can be seen by the audience peering at Victor being rebellious, listening to his music. But she just shakes her head at him. Victor continues narrating:*

VICTOR'S VOICE: I could spit out my own rhymes. I could free style and flow like a person who was reading it from a piece of paper, only there was no paper and no words to read.

*VICTOR ARISES FROM HIS SEAT AND HOMEWORK TO FREESTYLE. SHANTEL MASON LOOKS ON IN SYMPATHY. AND HOLDS HER HAND OVER HER MOUTH, LAUGHING AT HER SON WHO THINKS HE IS A RAP ARTIST.*

Young Victor: Uh, uh...see, I'm like a little jerk 'cause she said get to work, and I'm like chirk, chirck, (coughs), I hate homework! I wanna fly through the sky with my new Air Jordans, and be like look this work it ain't really workin', 'cause my head is spinnin' and the page is grinnin' 'cause after an hour I'm still at the beginnin', help me now, save me please, 'cause gettin' A's is far from me. The teacha thinks I'm dead as dead, 'cause every time she looks, I'm staring straight ahead. Mama said get yo' butt to school, I'm callin the FEDS, 'cause it's against the law, that's what they said. But after all these years, if it still ain't workin', get some sense, 'cause it still ain't worth it. Peace!

*AS VICTOR SAYS THE RHYME ABOVE HE MAKES IT BACK ON TO THE STREETS AND JOINS A GROUP OF STREET RAPPERS. HE STARTS RAPPING AND RHYMING WITH THEM AFTER REMOVING HIS HEADPHONES. THE GROUP MAKES A SPACE FOR HIM INSIDE THE CIRCLE AND EGGS HIM ON AS HE SAYS THE RHYME ABOVE. VICTOR CONTINUES NARRATION AS THIS SCENE PLAYS ON:*

Victor's Voice: It wasn't long before people I didn't know began to marvel at me. They wondered how I could rap like that at such a young age. At school, I'd failed almost everything. But I had an extraordinary ability to produce music off the top of my head. I was introduced to battles and performing on the streets at a young age and it wasn't anything mama could do to stop me. It wasn't long before I was performing at small events around town. (*JUST THEN THE LIGHTS GO OFF OF THE GROUP AND ARE CASTED ON AN IMPRISONED MALCOLM WRITING TO YOUNG VICTOR AS VICTOR'S VOICE CONTINUES:*) Throughout those years, Malcolm wrote to me from jail, stating he was proud of me and what I was doing, but that I needed to take my talent all the way to the top of the musical charts. I was glad he said that, because I could forget about making it on the top charts for anything else...especially, academics.

## **SCENE 11**

*SCENE 11 OPENS WITH YOUNG VICTOR IN HIS SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM SURROUNDED BY OTHER CHILDREN. THE OTHER CHILDREN*

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ARE PAYING ATTENTION. HOWEVER, AS USUAL YOUNG VICTOR IS LOOKING AROUND AND DOING EVERYTHING ELSE EXCEPT WHAT HE SHOULD BE DOING BECAUSE HE IS ILLITERATE.

TEACHER PASSES OUT PAPERS AND EXPECTS ALL STUDENTS TO BEGIN ON THE ASSIGNMENT. IT IS QUIET FOR A MOMENT AS MOST CHILDREN BEGIN, HOWEVER, YOUNG VICTOR BEGINS HUMMING.

TEACHER: (Looks up from desk) Victor, get busy.

Young Victor looks around at the other children before picking up his pencil and attempting to begin on an assignment he can't read. So he begins to make an airplane with it instead. THE TEACHER NOTICES AND WALKS OVER TO HIS DESK AND SNATCHES THE AIRPLANE OUT OF HIS HANDS RUDELY.

TEACHER: If I see you making paper airplanes again I am going to get your mother on the phone immediately. That is strike one, sir.

YOUNG VICTOR LOOKS UP IN FEAR. THE TEACHER HANDS HIM ANOTHER SHEET AND WALKS BACK TO HER DESK, PRETENDING TO BE BUSY WITH SOMETHING ELSE. YOUNG VICTOR PICKS UP THE SHEET, BUT IT TOO EMBARRASSED TO SAY HE NEEDS HELP. SO HE STARTS MAKING BEATS ON HIS DESK. THE OTHER CHILDREN LOOK AT HIM AND BEGIN TO LAUGH. THE TEACHER GETS UP AND WALKS OVER TO HIS DESK AGAIN. SHE STANDS IN FRONT OF HIM COLDLY.

TEACHER: If you did your work half as well as you made beats on your desk you'd be an A student!

AS THE TEACHER WALKS VICTOR TO THE PHONE AND PRETENDS TO MAKE A PHONE CALL TO VICTOR'S MOTHER, YOUNG VICTOR LOOKS AT THE OTHER STUDENTS. THEY ARE MAKING FACES AT HIM AND BEING RUDE WHEN THE TEACHER TURNS HER BACK. VICTOR NARRATES:

Victor's Voice: I couldn't argue with that. She just didn't understand what was going on with me. I was fortunate to get a third grade teacher who actually cared.

THE LIGHTS DIM FROM THE CLASSROOM SETTING AND SHOWS ON A PLEASANT LOOKING TEACHER STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE.

At first, she thought I had vision problems.

*SHE CARRIES A BAG AND PULLS OUT A MAGNIFYING GLASS AND AS A DETECTIVE, SHE HOLDS IT UP TO HER EYES, SYMBOLIC OF HER TAKING THE TIME TO INVESTIGATE VICTOR'S SITUATION.*

But after she realized it wasn't that, she suspected it was something more.

*The Teacher PUTS THE MAGNIFYNG LENS AWAY AND walks over and meets Shantel Mason on the stage and pretends to discuss her discoveries IN A FILE.*

She told mama she thought she discovered why it was difficult for me to read and write...it was Dyslexia. It affected my reading and by default screwed up my writing.

*TEACHER HANDS SHANTEL MASON A FILE AND AND TOGETHER THEY WALK OFF STAGE LEFT DISCUSSING THE SITUATION QUIETLY. JUST AS THEY EXIT SHANTEL MASON TURNS AROUND AND LOOKS AT YOUNG VICTOR STILL SITTING IN CLASS, AS VICTOR NARRATES:*

And when that file was placed in my student information folder that's when I began hating school because after that, every teacher that saw that file assumed wrong things about me. They thought Dyslexia had to do with vision problems and so I was placed in the front of the classroom.

*AT THIS MOMENT THE TEACHER GETS UP AND MOVES VICTOR TO THE FRONT OF THE ROOM. SHE PLACES HIS ASSIGNMENT IN FRONT OF HIM AND DEMANDS HE GET TO WORK. SHE RETURNS TO HER DESK AND KEEPS A CLOSE EYE ON VICTOR.*

Some thought it meant I had behavior problems, so they kept a close eye on me, expecting me to misbehave. Mama was the only one who saw my frustration developing.

## **SCENE 12**

*THE SCENE CHANGES TO INSIDE THEIR SMALL APARTMENT. YOUNG VICTOR IS NOW TRYING TO COMPLETE HIS HOMEWORK. HE STOPS AND BEGINS TO CRY. SHANTEL MASON APPROACHES HIM FROM BEHIND AND PLACES HER HAND ON HIS SHOULDER.*

SHANTEL MASON: Do you know why I named you Victor?

YOUNG VICTOR: (Crying) No, mama.

SHANTEL MASON: (She holds on to him) Look at me. I named you Victor because you are Victorious. Do you hear me? It

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doesn't matter what they say about my baby or how they treat you. I know what's in you. You are Victorious. And one day you are going to stand so tall. (*She gives him a heartfelt hug before the lights dim.*) *Victor's Voice narrates:*

VICTOR'S VOICE: I barely graduated from High School. My teachers passed me because of pity and popularity. They were sorry for me. I walked across the stage and accepted that piece of paper, still not knowing how to clearly read or write.

### SCENE 13

*WHEN THE LIGHTS APPEAR AGAIN GRADUATION MUSIC PLAYS AS THE NOW ADULT VICTOR IS SITTING AMONGST CLASSMATES READY TO RECEIVE HIS HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. HE WAITS (BORED) TO HEAR HIS NAME CALLED.*

DEAN OF HIGH SCHOOL: Victor Harvey Mason

*APPLAUSE ARE HEARD AS VICTOR GETS UP AND RECIEVES HIS DIPLOMA AND WALKS TO CENTER STAGE, FACING THE AUDIENCE. AS HE BEGINS TO PERFORM, THE LIGHTS DIM ON THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION SCENE.*

VICTOR: (ANGRILY HOLDING UP DIPLOMA) Wow! So this is what I get for all them years of tears, crying for fear to begin the school year. This is what I get for not doin' a damn thing and this is what they gave me for clippin' my wings. I couldn't fly, even though I tried. I tried to fly with the rest of them guys, but they said goodbye as they soared so high, above me, academically, it didn't matter if I tried. I always died when they gave me the test, it laid me to rest, but they still let me pro-gress 'cause they was sick of seeing my ass repeat the class.

*Victor exits stage left, throwing diploma to the ground.  
LIGHTS DIM AS VICTOR NARRATES:*

Victor's Voice: I was asked to perform at an Open-Mic night at a local restaurant. Some call it luck, others say I was blessed. But it was there I performed and earned the attention of a well-known music director, Styles, who later introduced me to a producer, by the name of William "Base" Louis. He heard me once and put my demo on the radio. I

don't even remember what happened after that. My life was never the same after people heard me on the radio.

#### SCENE 14

*A LOUD MUSICAL BEAT COMES ON AS VICTOR, NOW APPEARING A SUCCESFUL RAP ARTIST APPEARS IN A SUIT WITH GOLD OVERLAYING HIS BODY. HE WALKS DOWN CENTER STAGE AS HE IS SURROUNDED BY WOMEN, FANS ASKING FOR HIS AUTOGRAPH AND BEAST WARDING AS MANY CAMERA MEN AS POSSIBLE FROM GETTING TOO CLOSE TO HIM. VICTOR NARRATES:*

Victor's Voice: In the first year of my career I went platinum, selling over five million copies on my first album, entitled *I Got It For A Million*. From there I went on to receive musical awards for Best Rap Artist. For twelve straight weeks my songs were number one and two on the Billboard Chart. I was featured on the cover of just about every magazine, including Forbes as the most successful musical artist in the shortest amount of time, earning over \$120 million in the first six months of my career. No one had ever done that. What I have achieved at 27 years old, most people will never achieve in their lifetimes. I AM VICTORIOUS!

*THE ENTOURAGE EXITS STAGE LEFT (LIGHTS DIM.)*

VICTOR'S VOICE: The life of a rap artist is amusing. I know, because I live it. Hardly is there ever a dull moment. One moment, I'm attending an Awards Ceremony with a Top Model, in the next moment, the same model is suing me on claims I assaulted her at an after-party. One moment, I'm posing for the camera and answering questions patiently and in the next moment I'm breaking the cameras because they got too close to me. Now even though my life is really busy I still make time for family. Today, mama graduates from college. I make it just in time to see her walk across the stage. Afterwards, we meet everybody back at mama's condo for a little celebration.

#### SCENE 15

*SCENE OPENS WITH GUESTS MINGLING, EATING, DRINKING, AND HAVE A GOOD TIME. THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY FLOWERS. VICTOR AND BEAST ENTER STAGE LEFT AND SPEAK WITH A FEW GUESTS BEFORE MAMA INVITES VICTOR INTO HER PRIVATE QUARTERS.*

SHANTEL MASON: Come on in here, boy. To be honest, I didn't think you would make it. *(She turns around gives her son the warmest hug.)*

VICTOR: Now, you know I wouldn't miss this for the world, mama.

*She walks over to her closet and puts her cap and gown away before returning to the bedside where Victor is sitting. She takes a deep breath and looks at Victor calmly.*

VICTOR: I'm so proud of you, mama.

*SHANTEL MASON LEANS IN FOR ANOTHER HUG.*

Shantel Mason: Well, it wouldn't have been possible without you. You know that already, I don't have to say it. If you hadn't given me the money I wouldn't have been able to do this...so thank you. It was the best gift you could've given to me...the gift of knowledge. *(smiles)* I just wish you would consider it for yourself.

*Victor shakes head.*

Shantel Mason: I won't go into that though. I know you don't like it. By the way, thank you for the flowers. They were delivered this morning. *(grins)* Now I just have to figure out where to put them all.

*Both chuckle.*

Shantel Mason: I want to talk to you about something, Victor. *(She places her hand on Victor's knee.)*

*(Freeze Frame)*

Victor's Voice: I knew what it was. It was the same thing all the time. On stage, I was a hardcore rap artist, straight from the hood. I played the part of someone overcome by the indulgence and pleasures of sin. I was a delinquent...unruly and untamed. Mama didn't like this image so every opportunity she got she talked to me about my soul. She told me my music wasn't doing anything, but showing young men how to repeat the same mistakes committed by men for generations. But mama didn't understand what sold records. Only sin sold. But every time I listened to her anyway because I loved her. I respected her.

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Victor's Voice: Mama, come on, please. I don't really need to hear this...not right now.

Shantel Mason: I'm not getting ready to talk to you about what I normally do. I wish I could, but it's something else this time.

Victor: (*Shocked*) Really? What is it? (*Concerned*)

Shantel Mason: Deja came in yesterday and said she wanted to talk to me about something. So I said, okay, baby girl, what is it. And she reached out and gave me the biggest hug. And when I looked she had tears in her eyes. I asked her what was wrong. And that's when she told me she didn't want to hurt me, but that she was gay.

Victor: WHAT?!?

*IMMEDIATELY VICTOR RISES FROM HIS SEAT FURIOUS. HIS HANDS ARE BALLED UP AND HE PACES THE FLOOR.*

Victor's Voice: It wasn't that I was homophobic at all. I was used to being around homosexuals in this industry. It didn't bother me at all. But I knew mama's belief system; and Deja knew it too. It wasn't something mama was able to accept just yet. So why did she feel the need to share that with her? It would only break her heart. And because mama's heart had already been broken so much in life I wanted to whoop Deja's ass for sharing that with her.

*VICTOR WALKS TO DOOR GETTING READY TO OPEN IT UP TO CONFRONT DEJA IMMEDIATELY. MAMA STOPS HIM.*

Shantel Mason: Victor, please calm down. Remember this is my graduation party and we do have guests. At least, you can wait until they leave. Come sit down.

Victor: She too damn grown for me, mama.

Shantel Mason: (*As Victor sits down, Shantel slaps him on the back of his head.*) Watch your mouth in my house, Mr. Rap Star. Besides, I'm tired of fighting with my children. (*Shaking head.*)

Victor: What do you mean, mama?

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Shantel Mason: You know for years I fought with you about your career and this rap thing you do. But God let me know it was okay to accept you for who you are despite it. So I did and now look. Look at the good that came out of that. Maybe I just have to accept Deja the way she is.

(Freeze Frame as Victor's Voice narrates:)

Victor's Voice: I wasn't used to this. Mama raised us with an iron fist and she was always ready to tell us right from wrong. But what was happening to the warrior inside of her? Any other time she would be mad as hell. Was she changing?

Shantel Mason: I've cried and prayed and cried and prayed over you all night and day. And ya'll still do ya'll thing. So, you know, it ain't nothin' left for me to do at this point but to just let go. Let you all make your mistakes, fall on your butts and learn your own lessons.

*AS SHANTEL SPEAKS MANY OF THE GUESTS EXIT STAGE LEFT. AND SOON ONLY DEJA, BEAST AND A COUPLE OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS HANG AROUND.*

Victor: Well, you can do what you want, mama. Regardless, I love you, but I'm not about to stand by and watch Deja do whatever she wants around here because she is not grown. I'll take care of it.

Shantel Mason: *(Calls behind him just as he exits)*. Victor, go easy on her please. *(But Victor has already left. She takes a deep breath)*. I shouldn't have said anything about it anyway.

*Victor walks out of the bedroom into the living room where Deja is sitting. He approaches her impatiently.*

Victor: Yo, I need to talk to you.

Deja: Excuse me? *(Looks around)* Are you talking to me?

Victor: Yeah, I'm talkin' to you.

*Deja takes her time and gets up. They walk a few feet from the rest of the family. The light shines on them and is dim on the rest of the stage.*

Deja: What's up? Why are you talkin' to me like that? I haven't even seen you in a while.

Victor: What's up is you tellin' mama you 'spose to be gay now.

Deja: So what, V.

Victor: So what? So what? Deja, you are so freakin' selfish. You know how mama feel about stuff like that.

Deja: Look, I don't know who you think you are. But that conversation was between mama and I and I ain't got tell you nothin' so peace. *(Deja attempts to walk away but Victor pushes her back up against the wall.)*

Victor: I'm not finished talkin' to you.

Deja: *(Looks down at chest)* Wait a minute. I know you just didn't put yo' hands on me? Oh, I get it. You think just 'cause you BIG MR. ENTERTAINMENT you can do whatever you want? You ain't shit.

Victor: *(In shock)*. What did you just say to me?

*At this point, Victor loses his self control. He grabs Deja by the neck and pushes her up against the wall. He tries to remove his belt, but Deja kicks him in the private area. He falls to the ground. SHANTEL MASON AND THE GUESTS ARISE AND SURROUND THEM. BEAST ATTEMPTS TO HELP VICTOR UP BUT VICTOR WANTS TO BE LEFT ALONE.*

Deja: I will kill you if you ever put yo' FUCKIN hands on me again! *(She walks off stage ANGRILY.)*

*SHANTEL MASON EXITS INTO HER ROOM AND LAYS DOWN ON HER BED AS THE GUESTS, VICTOR AND BEAST LEAVE OFF STAGE AS WELL.*

Victor's Voice: All I wanted was to discipline her for her outright disrespect to me and mama. I wanted her to see she wasn't as strong as a man and therefore, should stop acting like one. But, I went too far too soon. It was the first and last fight I would be in with my sister.

## SCENE 16

*THE SCENE OPENS WITH VICTORIOUS IN A RECORDING STUDIO, HE IS RECORDING 'I GOT IT FOR A MILLION' THE REMIX. WILLIAM "BASE" LOUIS IS PRESENT WITH HIM.*

VICTOR'S VOICE: This morning I am up, bright and early recording the remix for 'I Got It For A Million' in my own home studio.

BASE: Take it from the top, dog.

*THE OUTRO COMES ON AND VICTORIOUS PICKS UP THE HEADPHONES. THE AUDIENCE CAN HEAR THE OUTRO AND THE CHORUS PLAYS. THEN VICTOR BEGINS TO LYRICIZE.*

VICTOR: So I'm like Dillinger, Capone, Muhammad Ali, Victorious I certainly be. I'll make her dance 'til she drop her pants, scream ooh wee. What's the matter, you mad? Scratch yo' ass, get glad, 'cause ain't nobody got it like this. Ain't nobody spent no money like Victory-is. Everything that you see, yes it belong to me. I don't rent, don't lease, cause it belong to me, matta fact, mothafucka, don't you owe me? While you wish you could (bleep) every girl in the world, every girl in the world wanna be in my world. Only want the best 'cause I deserve the best. Gotta be at least a double D in the chest. Nothin' paid by the month in a while, no complaints, no bitchin', this is my lifestyle. I got twenty one day, spent half on this, spent a milli on that and a milli on this. Spent anotha million here, another million there. Then I took the rest and blew it over there.

(Chorus: I got it for a million dollas, yeah, a million dollas, a dozen 'scalades for a million dollas, I gotta gold rang for a million dollas, yeah, a million dollas, a dozen 'scalades for a million dollas, I gotta chain-ga-lang for a million dollas, ahh, now let me hear you holla!)

Victor: What? I'm a hustla. A semi-automatic held by a gangsta, electric guita played by a rocksta, flow so hard, flow so smooth. You givin' up yo pussy 'cause you know my rap tunes. Yeah, it's all about the cash flow, all about the money flow. About being Santa Clause and gettin' more ho' ho's. Bitch is the name of this game, but I'm hooked on the money and I'm hooked on the fame. Slide the Hen this way and the Black, young fella, cause I just spent a milli on my own wine cella. Just like a machine, I can spit out that green, horsepower, manpower, this is Victor's hour.

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Betta then the rest cause I put them to rest. And yes, it's true, I can certainly dress. Armani, DG, and a Boss Vest, when it comes to burnin' money baby who's the best?

(Chorus)

Victor: Don't need to put on a show, 'cause I am the show. Don't need to return 'cause I get returns. I'm rich, bitch, too slick, quick. And yes, my balls are certainly thick. They hang down to the flo' like my money bags. Like the girls, like boys, make they pants sag. I'm too hot, too fast, slow down, get cool, makin' money has become my number one rule. You got twenty-fo's fool, these twenty-eights fool. I don't role hydraulic 'cause I roll angelic, switchin' lanes in my heavenly Benz. Then I pull up to my house with the electric fence. No wonder yo' girl wanna suck on me. She see the car, and the house, and the TV screen. She see me pull out a mill and blow it on the wheels, she see me doin' great things, wearin' hundred dolla jeans. When I fly through the air it's in my own Jet Air. When you call me, I'm like Michael baby, I'll be there. Remember the Notorious! Hands down Fabulous! Shout out Ludicrous! I'm Victorious!

Light Dim.

### SCENE 17

Victor's Voice: The following morning I have to arise early again for a music video shoot.

Lights are still dim as the scene is changing to that of a music video set.

*TELEPHONE RINGS*

*VICTOR PICKS UP AND TY FERGUSON, HIS MANAGER, IS ON THE OTHER LINE.*

*TY: YO, YOU UP?*

*VICTOR: YEAH.*

*TY: YOU AIN'T UP. YOU NEED TO GET UP RIGHT NOW 'CAUSE I'M ON MY WAY.*

*VICTOR: I'M GETTIN' UP, I'M GETTIN' UP.*

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Victor's Voice: Ty, my manager calls me to make sure I'm preparing to leave for the shoot. I can't help but be thankful for him. I couldn't have chosen a better person to manage me. He's always on top of things. I've known him since high school. When I became successful mama told me to surround myself with trustworthy people. In order to do that she told me to find people I knew *before* I became famous. She said it would be too late if I went looking after.

*SCENE OPENS WITH VICTOR, TY FERGUSON, AND BEAST WALKING ONTO A MUSIC VIDEO SET. ONE OF THE DIRECTORS WALKS UP TO VICTOR AND GREETES HIM. AFTERWARDS, VICTOR IS LED TO AN AREA (DRESSING ROOM) WHERE HE PUTS ON AND TAKES OFF DIFFERENT SETS OF CLOTHING, WHILE SOMEONE PLACES MAKE UP ON HIS FACE. THE DIRECTOR MONITORS THIS.*

Director: Turn this way and do this. That's good. Make your head move like this.

Victor's Voice: Making videos is such an annoying task. And if it weren't for the revenue it brought me, I would say to hell with it. I have to change my wardrobe for a shot that will only last a fraction of a moment. And even though I know he's here to help make this video a success the director is getting on my nerves the most. My face is covered in make up. I just can't wait until it's over and I can take all this shit off.

## SCENE 18

*IN THE OPENING SCENE VICTOR, IVIANA ALEXIS ROE, AND THEIR ATTORNEYS ARE SEATED IN A BUSINESS OFFICE. THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO SETTLE MATTERS BEFORE THEY REACH A JUDGE AND THE ASSAULT CASE LEAKS INTO THE PUBLIC'S EYE ANY FURTHER.*

Victor's Voice: The following week my hearing takes place. I'm being sued on allegations of sexual assault. In all honesty I don't know how I got here.

Iviana's Attorney: Iviana, in your own words, can you explain what happened that evening?

Iviana: We were sitting on a sofa, having a few drinks...talking and laughing. After about twenty minutes I became a little tipsy. Victor took full advantage of it.

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Victor's Attorney: Excuse me, can we stick to the facts, please?

Iviana's Attorney: The fact is...your client took advantage of mine. And I would appreciate it if you would refrain from interrupting her.*(Looks at Iviana)*. Please continue.

Iviana: He began kissing and rubbing me all over my body. I asked him to stop, but he didn't. Instead, he led me to a closet and tried to remove my clothing. He hoisted me up on the counter and that's when I scratched him. He backed off and I was finally able to get away.

Victor's Attorney: How did he lead you to the closet, Miss Roe? Did he hold a gun to your back?

Iviana's Attorney: Any more smart comments from you and we can just walk away from this meeting and appear before a judge. And I don't think you want that.

*(Freeze Frame)*

Victor's Voice: But she was lying. I thought Iviana was a beautiful woman. I was glad to be with her and I thought we were having a good time. The truth was, she started kissing all over *me*. I thought to stop her because I knew she was drunk, but then she started whispering all kinds of nasty things in my ear. My hormones took over. We found a private room, away from the guests and went inside. We began removing each other's clothing. And as I hoisted her up she scratched me on the back of my neck, ran out and told the guests I'd assaulted her. She and I both knew that truth.

Victor's Attorney: I would like to speak with my client in private.

*Both get up and walk a few feet away from the meeting area.*

Victor's Attorney: I'm going to be honest with you. This is a losing battle. Nine times out of ten, women win cases like this.

*VICTOR IS HOLDING A WATER BOTTLE THAT IS LATER THROWN ACROSS THE STAGE.*

Victor: *(ANGRILY)*What does this bitch want?

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Victor's Attorney: Five million and an apology.

Victor: (Furious) Five million dollars? What the fuck, man! I knew all she wanted was money. This is madness.

Victor's Attorney: I know. I know. (*Scratches head*). But you know what? It's already leaked out into the media. If we want to stop this from going any further we have to settle. You can do what you want, but I'm telling you...at this point, we have to act fast.

VICTOR'S VOICE: In the end, she got what she wanted: five million dollars and an apology.

### SCENE 19

*SCENE 19 OPENS WITH VICTOR ENTERING HIS HOME STUDIO THROUGH STAGE LEFT. HE IS STILL DISCOURAGED FROM THE HEARING. HE SITS DOWN AND PLACES HIS HEADPHONES ON. HE TURNS ON AN OUTRO, MIXES SOME SOUNDS AND COMES UP WITH A NICE BEAT. HE TRIES TO START RAPPING BUT STOPS. HE TRIES AGAIN BUT STOPS AGAIN. HE IS FRUSTRATED. HE BEGINS TO CRY. HE NARRATES:*

Victor's Voice: I couldn't take it anymore. All the stress had gotten to me.

*HE TURNS OFF THE MUSIC AND THROWS THE HEADPHONES ACROSS THE STUDIO. THEN HE LOSES CONTROL. HE DESTROYS THE ENTIRE STUDIO. HE STOPS, LOOKS UP AND TAKES OUT A JOINT. HE BEGINS TO SMOKE IT. SOON HE ARISES, GETS UP AND PLACES THE HEADPHONES BACK ON HIS EARS. THE OUTRO COMES ON.*

VICTOR: Every song and every piece of music invoke some type of feeling; whether good or bad. They tell what the artist is feeling inside at the moment and those feelings, often called spirits, transfer to the listeners. This song was never meant to make it to the shelves, but somehow it did. It was about flirty girls. I made it on Iviana's behalf.

Victor: Yo, listen to me and understand me, understand me girl, you just another flirty girl, why you fuckin' wit my world? Flirtatious, bodacious, flip-the-script, became suspicious, you turned malicious...well, forget you and

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forget this! I shoulda saw through yo' pretty face. When you stepped out the caddy, I felt so tazed, in a daze, and I wanted a taste, damn, I felt like Adam and Eve, and yo' pussy was the fruit that I wanted to eat. Smooth skin, brown eyes and looks to kill. I thought I was dreamin' damn was this for real? Everything done from ya head to ya toes. All night I touched, I squeezed. Don't act like you don't know. Hell no, I didn't treat you like a regular ho'. But you was whisperin in my ear all night, I think you want to do me and I thought that the moment was right. You teased me, you took me, you tricked me, you nooked me. Like a Fly Trap, you entrapped, you'll mishap, relapse, collapse, and when it's all over someone will hopefully slap your being right off the map! So you say you just playin' with me? Makin' me hard lettin' me touch ya' damn titties. Bitch, that ain't cool and it sho' ain't funny. Damn! I was just anotha motha-fuckin' dummy.

Victor's Voice: Because I can't read and write clearly...it is important that I record my rhymes in the studio for later use. I also carry around a portable recorder with me to record rhymes as they pop into my head. After I'm finished recording I clean up the mess I made earlier.

*VICTOR REMOVES HIS HEADPHONES AND BEGINS CLEANING UP HIS MESS. AFTERWARDS HE WALKS TO HIS ROOM. ACROSS THE STAGE IS HIS MOTHER'S ROOM. LIGHT SHINES ON BOTH AREAS AS SHANTEL PICKS UP THE PHONE TO CALL VICTOR. AS VICTOR ENTERS HIS BEDROOM FROM THE STUDIO HE ANSWERS THE CALL.*

*PHONE RINGING*

*VICTOR PICKS UP*

*Shantel Mason: Hey sweetie.*

*VICTOR: How you doing, mama?*

*Shantel Mason: I'm good. I'm thinking of you. Is everything okay?*

*Victor: Fine, mama.*

*Shantel Mason: I wanted to tell you I just saw on T.V. that woman dropped all those charges against you.*

*Victor: I know, ma.*

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Shantel Mason: Yeah. I'm real happy to hear that. I knew she would. I prayed about it. I said: "Now, Lord. You know my baby didn't do that. Please make a way for her to drop those charges." See? God works in mysterious ways.

Victor: Yeah, he does ma.(changes subject.) How's Deja doing?

Shantel Mason: Well, now she says she wants to move out.

Victor: What? (Surprised)You have to be kidding me.

Shantel Mason: She says she wants to move out now. I told her: "Go right ahead and don't let the door hit you on the way out!" She's seventeen, V. I already told you. I'm done fighting.

Victor: I can't believe this little girl.

Shantel Mason: The way I see it is "a hardhead will make a soft behind some day." She's got to learn.

Victor: Mama, I want to apologize for what happened between us at your graduation party.

Shantel Mason: Please, child. I forgave you both the moment it occurred. Both of you are as crazy as I don't know what. You belong together. Just promise me that you won't stop loving her. I watch her. I know she hears us when we talk to her. We just don't see the results yet. She's like a piece of meat right before it goes into the oven.

Victor: (grins) How so mama?

Shantel Mason: Well, you know how you season meat right before it goes into the oven? You don't taste the goodness of the seasoning until it comes out. Right now, she's just being seasoned. We'll see the results later. I'm sure of that.

Victor: Whatever you say, mama.

Shantel Mason: Have you talked to Malcolm lately?

Victor: (Sits up very attentive) No, I haven't.

*Shantel Mason: He's so proud of you, V. You should go see him.*

Victor's Voice: Just hearing mama mention Malcolm made me excited. I pulled my calendar up on my phone and realized I had more than enough time to go visit him before I went on tour.

Shantel Mason: You know he loves you so much, V. I love you too. And so does Deja. We all do.

Victor: Yep, I love ya'll too mama.

Shantel Mason: I was thinking about you the other day as I looked at my graduation gown and hat. Do you know what I was thinking?

Victor: Nope.

Shantel Mason: I was thinking, now this boy went and paid for my education. Why can't he pay for his own?

Victor: (whining) Come on, ma. I don't want to hear this right now.

Shantel Mason: You never want to hear it, V. But it's the truth. I want you to realize who you are. I want you to get knowledge in you. Just listen to me. Do you remember why I named you Victor?

Victor: Yes, mama; because I'm Victorious.

Shantel Mason: That's right. And I didn't name you that because I thought it would make a cool name for a rap artist either. This life you're living right now is not Victorious, V. It's only a bridge to something more.

Victor's Voice: I didn't argue with mama. I just listened and still did my own thing. (Light Dim)

## **SCENE 20**

*THE SCENE OPENS IN A PRISON MEETING ROOM, WITH GUARDS STANDING AT THE DOORS. VICTOR ENTERS STAGE LEFT AND AWAITTS HIS BROTHER'S ARRIVAL. THE DOOR BUZZES, OPENS AND IN COMES MALCOLM.*

VICTOR: *(Arises from seat and excitedly wraps his hands around his brother. For a moment, they embrace each other.)*  
Look at this fool comin' through the door! (grinning)

Malcolm: What up, dog.

GUARD: That's enough. Break it up. You got 35 minutes.

Malcolm: *(Turns around and looks at guard)* Yeah, whatever man.

GUARD: Make it twenty-five.

*THEY BOTH TAKE THEIR SEATS AND MALCOLM LEANS IN TO VICTOR.*

Malcolm: They ain't nothin' but bullies around here.

Victor: Yeah, anyway. Look like you been liftin' weights all day up in here.

Malcolm: Ain't shit else to do, man.

Victor: (grins)

Malcolm: Look at you though. *(He reaches out and squeezes Victor's arms.)* Look like you trying to do a little something ya self.

Victor: I've been doing a little lifting. I have to.

Malcolm. Yeah. *(Changes subject)* So I hear that bitch dropped all them charges against you, huh?

Victor: Yeah. But I had to pay for it.

Malcolm: Yeah?

Victor: Yeah, man. I had to give her five million.

Malcolm: *(Surprised.)* All hell naw!

Victor: Yeah.

Malcolm: I'll be damned.

Victor: Yep, I had to give her five million dollars. But that's okay 'cause I'll get it back. More importantly, I'm

going to destroy her name. She ain't gon' be able to get no business in this town no where. I'm gon' make sure of that.

Malcolm: So what's going on with Deja? Mama told me ya'll got into it or something like that.

Victor: Yeah, she gon' break mama's heart and tell her she gay. You know what I'm sayin? Why mama gotta know all that? She don't have to know all that? So I was like, look, she need a ass whoopin' 'cause she gettin' too grown for me.

Malcolm: (laughs)

Victor: She too grown. I got right up in her face and I was like, look, you need to keep yo' business to yo' self. Then, she started talkin' all smart and stuff. I was like: "hell naw." So I was gettin ready to give her a good ol' fashion you know what. 'Cause to me, if you actin' like a man than fight like one. So then she kicked me in my balls. (Malcolm laughs). I mean, it wasn't a little kick either. She intended to send my ass to the hospital with that one.

Malcolm: (laughing) You know you so crazy. I ain't mad you tho'. I see where you comin' from, but uou gotta change your approach.

Victor: Yeah.

(Freeze Frame)

Victor's Voice: We talked about my success as a rap artist and despite it, what a bitch it could be. We discussed my future plans. I told him I thought of starting my own record company. I also told him what mama wanted me to do...go back to school. He smiled. He told me that he'd gone back to school while in prison and had earned his GED. I was in shock at that. Malcolm always hated school.

Malcolm: (Stuttering) See, see, see, what you gotta understand is that knowledge is power. It's power, man. See, see that money you got? People take that away everyday. But what you got inside you, can't n-n-nobody take that away.

Victor: (grins) What the hell you is now, a scholar?

Malcolm: I'm serious man. Victor, listen to me. All jokes aside...you gotta understand. You got that disability. *(Victor shifts in his seat. He is getting annoyed)* That's why you don't like school. But you gotta get passed it somehow. You got the m-money...do somethin' 'bout it now.

Victor: (Annoyed) Man, I ain't thinkin' about school.

Malcolm: Why not? Why not? Why ain't you thinkin' about it? *(Victor is now visibly angry. Malcolm notices.)* Aw, don't tell me you think you've arrived, lil' bro. Don't tell me you think you done got to the top and it ain't nothin' else to do. 'Cause if you thinkin' that you really are crazy.

Victor: (Attitude) I know.

Malcolm: You know? Man, I know you ain't come up in here today with a attitude about what's right. M-m-mama's right. You runnin' away. You ain't doin' nothin' but runnin' away. Victor: (Angry) Look at you, man! You sittin' up in here, all locked up and shit tryin' to tell me what the hell I need to do. Man, I'm rich. I don't need to go back to school. Look at this chain. *(Holds it up)*. You see this? This right here cost me \$10 G's man. And I paid for it...cash. And I ain't have to have no crazy ass teacher give me a A to get it.

Malcolm: *(Nods head slowly, looking straight at Victor, not taking his eyes off of him.)* I'm proud of you. You earned it. You right. I'm locked up. This is my cage. *(He looks around)* But look at you...you locked up too, nigga. And yo' cage is larger than mine.

Victor's Voice: At that moment, there was nothing I could say. He was right. I'd locked my own self up and thrown away the key when I denied myself knowledge. The truth was, I'd thought about getting some help and returning to school many nights. When I sent mama, I really wished I had the guts to send myself. But the dyslexia...it hindered me. It was like a ghost that came to haunt me whenever I thought about picking up a book.

Guard: Meeting time over. Let's go Malcolm.

*MALCOLM AND VICTOR BOTH RISE AND EMBRACE EACH OTHER BEFORE MALCOLM STEPS TO Victor AGGRESSIVELY AND POINTS HIS FINGER INTO THE TEMPLES OF HIS HEAD.*

Malcolm: GET IT! Quit walkin' around here actin' like you know every god-damn thing and get your education!

*MALCOLM WALKS THROUGH THE DOORS THROWING UP A GANG SIGN.*

Malcolm: 'Til I die motha-fuckas (*Directed at Guards*).

## SCENE 21

*THE SCENE OPENS WITH VICTORIOUS ON TOUR. HE IS AT THE UNDERGROUND, A PLACE WHERE RAP ARTISTS ARE INVITED TO RELAX, UNWIND, AND SHARE THEIR MUSIC IN A CASUAL ATMOSPHERE. THERE IS A MEDIUM SIZED CROWD PRESENT.*

Victor's Voice: I love going on tour. I get to go to places I've never been before and meet new people. I especially looked forward to visiting the Underground, where I got my beginnings.

*ANNOUNCER: (As Victorious and his crew (see below) enters from stage left) Y'ALL VICTORIOUS IS HERE! (APPLAUSE)*

*VICTOR, TY, BEAST, MICHELLE, AND EXTRA MEN ENTER THROUGH A V.I.P. DOOR. VICTOR IS ESCORTED ONTO THE STAGE. HE TAKES THE MICROPHONE FROM THE ANNOUNCER AND GREET'S THE GUESTS, BEFORE BUSTING OUT THIS RHYME:*

Victor: Uh, here we go. Yo, so I came down here and 'bout to give you a piece of Deven, my Island. I came to give you a show, you knew betta then to bring ya ho, who was wet on her way to the show, she took her bra off 'cause she wanted me to know, her titties was double dees, and I didn't need to say please to get to see them breast-a-seas. Ha! Ha! I ain't mad, she thought she made me made. She tried to take my pride, but I knew it would subside, after I gave her a piece of the pie. She lied. Y'all know who I'm talkin' about, mad 'cause she got fied and died, runner up cause she wouldn't put up, I had to shut her up, I stuffed her mouth with bucks, she took the money and ran, so much for YES SHE CAN adds, 'cause ya rep abandoned yo' ass. I may have bitches across the globe, but please don't suppose, impose, or dispose, anything about me, because you see, I'm intelligent as can be and I respect only those who respect

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me. Plug ya ears all you hatas, 'cause I'm bout to get gangsta. When I'm flyin', I'm spyin', and tryin' to keep the dough, you know. 'Cause every ho' wanna get down low and hell naw, I ain't gon' say no. So thugz, playas, wanna be gangstaz, go home and make some babies tonight. In the morning tell her it'll be alright, cause can't nobody hit that shit like you and ten years later, she'll still wanna get which you. Listen, I got the money. I ain't gotta act funny with my money. I got plenty of cash, enough to roast ya ass. And when I'm done, you'll be callin' me bad, like Michael Jackson, baby, I'm bad, too bad, so sad, yo' ass, can't be like Victorious' ass. Come on up here sweetie, 'cause if you got it my name is Needs-be and I will supply all your needs according to what God said biblically. So leave the Underground, hype and wired, 'cause I got a new joint comin' out and it's called 'Don't Get Fired'. It's about that greedy wench, who came up with all that shit, about me touchin' on her tits, and yeah, some parts to that story are true, like the part when she said: "I'd like to "F" you." But hell, I'm movin' on, singin' my song, walkin' down the hall, scratchin' my balls, not worried about tomar. I try not to think too far into the futar, because I know that some things will simply pass over me, so I can continue to be all that God wants me to be, and I know you might want to edit this piece, but please, remember, you heard it from me, in all reality, for now, I'm on my way to get some chow, 'cause I'm hungry as hell, after spittin' out that long rhyme. I know you can tell, with my skinny ass arms, and six pack waste, now it's time for me to bust out of this place! Peace.

*THE CROWD GOES WILD WITH APPLAUSE. AS THEY APPLAUD THE ANNOUNCER APPROACHES VICTORIOUS AND ASKS HIM IF HE WOULD ACCEPT A MONETARY GIFT FOR ALLOWING AN AMATEUR TO BATTLE HIM. HE WHISPERS THIS IN HIS EAR AND HE ACCEPTS.*

ANNOUNCER: And now the moment y'all have been waiting for. Our glorious, wondrous, Victorious has accepted a challenge. (*The crowd roars*). I would personally like to thank Victorious for coming all the way out and gracing us with his presence and his wonderful skill. And now he has accepted a battle against our own, Rising King. Give it up, give it up y'all. (*The crowd roars*).

*VICTOR TAKES A GLASS OF WATER AND DRINKS IT.*

Victor's Voice: I didn't mind. Besides, I was offered an extra \$4 grand. Out of all the pros of visiting the Underground, I enjoyed returning to my past, battling those who may become future well-known artists. I liked to see what was out there and was always up for a challenge.

*AS RISING KING APPROACHES THE STAGE THE CROWD BOOS. THE ANNOUNCER STANDS BETWEEN RISING KING AND VICTORIOUS. HE EXPLAINS THE RULES.*

Announcer: Okay, y'all know the rules. I flip this coin whoever calls it goes first. You have two minutes. Ready? Victorious?

Victor: Heads.

*THE ANNOUNCER THROWS THE COIN UP AND IT LANDS TAILS. THIS MEANS RISING KING WILL GO FIRST. THE BEAT COMES ON.*

RISING KING: Yo, yo, so I'm like, wondrous, glorious, Victorious who? I knew I wouldn't have to get prepared for you. For so many reasons, number one, done and over is your season, number two, somebody shoulda told you fool, everybody knows down here I make the rules. So you might as well fly away, die away, 'cause you wastin' my time whicha damn rhymes. Is that a tear? Are you cryin? Actually, glad I got to meet you, ya shorter than I thought. You must be a size six, and ya claim ya dick is so thick. What you mean to say is its too short and you cum so quick, before the bitch can get a chance to suck ya dick. Did you think I was talkin' about Iviana Roe? Hell yeah, motha-fucka, you know we ain't gon' let that shit go; you rapist, you harasser, you god-damn bastard. Excuse me, I had to vent, that's my cousin, you heard. I want you to hear every damn word. Your rhymes are absurd. Comin' up in here with all ya crew, and ya million dolla shoes, ain't nobody studdin' you down here. So they call ya name, you say you can't be tamed, but look at you standin' here right now all hot, like the little engine that could not, would not, and should not, come up against the mighty Rising King. You brag about all ya flings, while you treatin 'em like things, but you don't understand, you the ho', you the foe. And one day you'll realize, with ya dumb ass, you'll never pass, this black ass, lyrically, mentally, physically, and educationally what? Oh, now you surprised? You thought you was gon' come up here and demoralize, undermine, and pulverize? I don't think so. I won't be easily handing over the victory,

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because you see, I'm loud as can be, talented and skilled. No one can throw me, show me, but you can blow me. And when I stick it in ya mouth it'll come out ya ass and when they see you they'll know you been had by the Rising King who lives on Dereon Ave. So go back to ya little Island where you can go back and try again. 'Cause at the Underground, you gon' hear a sound, and it's not a rushing mighty wind, it's not a storm, it's not a tempest, it's the Rising King, me, ya worst enemy, a nightmare come true from the very beginning.

*THE CROWD APPLAUDS AND SCREAMS OUT RISING KING. VICTORIOUS TAKES A GLASS OF WATER AND APPROACHES CENTER STAGE. HE NARRATES:*

VICTOR Voice: The thing about battles is you have to remain calm and keep your cool while the other person is dissing you like hell. Feeling embarrassed is only natural, but I'm not going to lie, this sucker made me mad. He had the upper hand because all my business was out there thanks to daytime television. I didn't know anything about him. I would have to make something up based on his appearance and who he called himself. I was going to go easy on him, until he mentioned Iviana. It was on now.

Announcer: Alright, Victorious. Two minutes. Drop it.

Victor: Yo, here we go. Just wonderin', why do you call ya self the Rising King when you come up on the stage looking like a dope fene? And don't Kings normally where bling? Look at ya hair, dawg, look at ya eyes, dawg. You look like you been in a brawl, lost, got bossed and tossed across riVer-Ictorioss. Wonder why people like you wanna battle me, with ya land-of-the-lost shoes and ya stanky booty. You smell like dead animals, waste, and what? Am I on a stage or in a garbage dump? Look fool, you might as well go in reverse, cause I'm about to bury yo' ass with this next verse. I was thinkin' maybe I would go easy on you, but you had to bring up that Iviana fool. You say it's yo' cousin? Damn, the whole family must be buggin. You must be two-faced and fake, just like that bitch when she tried to take and brake and shake up my race. Well fuck you and fuck her, you're both better off as my janitors. And when it's all said and done you'll still have to make a buck as imposters because you'll never make it on this roster. With ya lame ass rhymes and her looks, only skin deep, will fade with time. You're a liar just like she got fired. And if I'm a

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size six your dick must be the length of the circumference of my wrist. But you probably don't know what that is, especially since you prolly didn't make it pass the fifth. So what you say you gon' do to me? Listen, I'll take ya tongue, rap it round ya neck, tie it round your feet and balls, make you fall, and make you have a wreck, just like ya rhymes tonight. You knew betta than to step on this stage, especially since you need to be somewhere makin' minimum wage. I got money for this, what did you get? You gotta baby mama that say you a nit-wit, and you drive a piece of shit, a hoopty, can't get no coochie, and while you talkin' about my ladies and how I treat my babies, shut yo' mouth, while you walkin' around here with Scabies. The truth is you live with ya mama and you're trailer park trash, jerkin' off wishin' you had some ass. Woo-wee, please remember the next time you battle, make sure you take a breath-a-lyzer, breath reviver, cause I feel like I've been talkin' to a corpse laying in a bier. You're a loser, a shmoozer, a drug-abuser. You spend long hours at the bar, dreamin' dreams of goin' far, you'll never get passed Dereon Ave, so keep ya ass away from the Underground, cause this is my past time, my heart, my sound. This is where I started and where you'll never be found. You say you're the Rising King, but I'm the King of this game, and a hundred years later, it'll still be the same.

*THE CROWD GOES BALLISTIC. IT TAKES A COUPLE MINUTES TO CALM THEM DOWN. THE ANNOUNCER DOES HIS BEST TO CALM THE CROWD DOWN BUT THEY DO NOT LISTEN UNTIL VICTORIOUS ASKS THEM TO.*

Announcer: And the winner is...Victorious!

*THE MUSIC COMES ON AND THE ANNOUNCER TAKES VICTOR'S HAND IN HIS AND RAISES IT HIGH. AFTERWARDS, VICTORIOUS WALKS OFF THE STAGE WITH HIS CREW AND EXITS STAGE RIGHT.*

## SCENE 22

*THE SCENE OPENS WITH VICTOR, MICHELLE, TY, BEAST AND THE BUS DRIVER ON THE BUS. THEY ARE HEADING TO ANOTHER CITY FOR A TALK SHOW GIG WHEN VICTOR RECEIVES AN EMERGENCY PHONE CALL FROM DEJA.*

*TELEPHONE RINGS*

VICTOR PICKS UP. DEJA'S VOICE CAN BE HEARD BUT SHE CANNOT BE SEEN.

Victor: Hello?

Deja: Victor (crying). Victor.

Victor: Hello? Deja?

Deja: Yeah, it's me.

Victor: (Stands up.) What's going on? What's wrong?

Deja: (crying) I'm at the hospital.

Victor: Why? What's wrong?

Deja: Mama had a heart attack.

Victor: (Tells the bus to pull over). What happened?

Deja: Victor, I don't know. I just came home and she was lying on the kitchen floor. I called 911.

Victor: (Tells the bus driver to turn around and head back home. Everyone looks around because they don't know what's going on. Victor turns to them briefly.) Something is wrong with my mom! We gotta go back. Deja, where's mama right now?

Deja: She's in the emergency room. V, they're trying to bring her back.

Victor: What?!? No! No! (Screams and falls down on the floor of the bus.)

The Lights go off as the scene changes.

Victor's Voice: When we got back it was too late. Mama was already gone.

### SCENE 23

THE SCENE OPENS IN A HOSPITAL MORGUE. SHANTEL MASON IS LYING ON A HOSPITAL BED WITH A COVER OVER HER FACE. VICTOR, TY, BEAST, DEJA, AND MICHELLE WALK INTO THE ROOM SLOWLY. A NURSE WALKS OVER AND PEELS BACK THE SHEET REVEALING HER FACE. VICTOR WALKS SLOWLY UP TO HIS MOTHER, LEAVING THE

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REST BEHIND HIM. DEJA CAN BE SEEN CRYING IN MICHELLE'S ARMS.

Victor's Voice: My whole career is based on words and putting them into lyrical expression people can hear and appreciate. I had the talent to take any situation, form it into words and give it rhythm. But at this moment, I had no words as I stared down at my mother's cold, lifeless face.

Victor: (*Screams at the top of his lungs while grabbing on to his mother's sheet. He loses his balance. And Beast struggles to hold him up.*) MAMA! MAMA! MAMA!

Victor's Voice: She was gone...just like that.

### SCENE 23

THE NEXT SCENE OPENS AT SHANTEL MASON'S FUNERAL HELD AT A CHURCH. THERE ARE SEVERAL GUESTS. IT OPENS WITH PEOPLE STANDING NEAR THE CASKET AND VIEWING HER. VICTOR AND DEJA ARE SEATED CLOSE BY.

Victor's Voice: I'd once heard people say that there is no pain that compares with that of losing a child or mother. Now, I knew it was true. I can't even begin to describe what was happening in my mind. How was I supposed to survive without the one person that held my life together? How was I supposed to continue living without my heart? I got up to stare at her cold, lifeless face.

Victor rises out of his seat and stands over his mother. He is in tears. Beasts approaches him from behind and places his hands on his shoulders. Victor hangs on to him as well.

Victor's Voice: I would never see that face smile again. I would never be able to feel the warmth radiating off her body again.

AS THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS CONTINUE WITH THE FUNERAL, A WOMEN'S GOSPEL GROUP SINGS ONE SONG IN THE BACKGROUND. THEY TAKE CENTER STAGE AND PERFORM ONE SONG (ANY SELECTION). WHEN THEY ARE FINISHED VICTOR CONTINUES NARRATION:

VICTOR'S Voice: Without my asking, Michelle and Ty took it upon themselves to make funeral arrangements for mama. They arranged for her favorite gospel groups to show up.(*They approach from stage left and greet Victor.*) They even

arranged temporary release for Malcolm to come. I just wished mama was alive to see it all.

*Malcolm enters stage left and walks down the center aisle where he will view his mother one last time. He is in a nice suit, but his hands and ankles are still handcuffed. The guards escort him in. As he walks up to his mother's casket, he stops. He cries. Victor approaches him and they embrace each other as they stand over their lifeless mother. Malcolm is then taken and exits stage right.*

*The Light Go off as the scene changes.*

Victor's Voice: We took mama back to her home town and buried her there. The train of her funeral stretched for miles. On our way back home, Deja started giving me trouble.

#### **SCENE 24**

*VICTOR, DEJA, AND BEAST ARE ALL SITUATED IN THE BACK OF the LIMO ON THEIR WAY BACK TO VICTOR'S HOME FROM THE FUNERAL. BUT DEJA HAS OTHER PLANS.*

Victor: *(To the Driver)* Take us home, please. *(He loosens his tie and sits back in the car.)*

Driver: Yes, sir.

Deja: I wanna go back to mama's condo.

Victor: You're coming home with me.

Deja: *(Rudely)* I need to get some clothes. *(To the driver)* Take me to mama's condo, please.

Driver: Yes, ma'am.

Victor: *(To the Driver)* We're all going to my crib. *(To Deja)* Deja, don't worry about your clothes. Just come home with me for now. Besides, we'll go back there next week and get everything. You can get your stuff then.

Deja: I want it now!

Victor: *(Takes deep breath)* Deja, please don't start...I don't feel like arguing today.

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Deja: So then let me get my stuff.

Victor: Deja, I'm not ready to go back to mama's just yet. Kay? And I don't think you are either.

Deja: Don't tell me what I'm ready to do. You are not my daddy!

Victor: You know what? I'm not tryin' to be yo'-- *(He stops himself and takes a deep breath. To the Driver)* Take us straight to my house, please.

Deja: *(Angrily)* I hate you! *(She sits back in the seat and folds her arms.)*

Victor: That's fine too. *(Tries to remain calm)*

Victor's Voice: Taking Deja in was going to be a long, long, *long* journey...for us both.

## SCENE 25

*THE SCENE OPENS WITH VICTOR SITTING ON HIS MOTHER'S BED. HE IS GOING THROUGH HER THINGS, helping to pack them up. DEJA IS ALSO SEEN COMING IN AND OUT AND TAKING THINGS ALONG WITH THE MOVERS(2). VICTOR NARRATES:*

Victor's Voice: One of the hardest things to do when a loved one dies is to go back through their things after the fact. It's funny...you feel them there...you smell them there, but they are not there. I had no other purpose for being here than to monitor. I wanted to make sure the movers were handling mama's things properly. As I was packing up mama's closet I found a box with pictures in it. I stopped as I was overcome emotionally by her graduation pictures. Then, I came upon another picture that looked like it had been taken fairly recently of my father. When I turned it over I realized it had been taken only a month ago. Why hadn't mama showed this to me? I hadn't heard from my father in years. Then, I did something stupid. I picked up my phone to dial mama. I forgot she was dead. I forgot I was standing in the middle of her room packing up her stuff.

*TELEPHONE RINGS*

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*THERE IS NO ANSWER AND IT GOES THROUGH TO SHANTEL MASON'S VOICEMAIL. VICTOR INSTANTLY REMEMBERS HIS MOTHER IS DEAD. HE BREAKS DOWN ON HER BED CRYING. HE CRAWLS INTO HER BED AND WRAPS HIMSELF IN HER COVERS. THE LIGHTS DIM.*

Victor's Voice: That wouldn't be the last time I forgot mama was dead.

The next few weeks came from hell. I shut down all my business engagements to adjust my life. I also had to focus on Deja. I took full custody of her, moved her in, and she fought against it every step of the way. Shantel Mason's Voice: You need to love her, V. No matter what. Victor's Voice: I was trying, mama. But Deja was like me, when I told her to do some thing, she nodded yes, and then did whatever the hell she wanted. After moving her in, she snuck out several times and each time Beast would volunteer to go out and find her. She was always over some girl's house. She would come back kicking and screaming.

## **SCENE 26**

*IN THIS SCENE VICTOR IS SITTING COMFORTABLY IN HIS LIVING ROOM AS BEAST struggles to BRING DEJA BACK THROUGH THE DOOR. SHE IS KICKING HIM AND PUSHING HIM AWAY FROM HER.*

Deja: Get ya' hands off of me.

Beast: I wouldn't have to have them on you if you would come through the door like a lady.

Deja: Get yo' damn hands off me!

Victor: *(Stands up.)* That's enough.

Beast: That's enough? Is that all you can say? That's enough? Man, if you don't get yo' ass over here and help me.

*Deja tries to push her way back through the door, but Victor grabs her out of the way. Beast closes the door just in time and stands in front of it, refusing to move out of her way. Deja gives up and goes and sits on the couch.*

Victor: *I owe you, man.*

Beast: *You damn right. (He exits stage right, wiping his face off with a handkerchief.)*

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VICTOR WALKS CALMLY OVER AND SITS NEXT TO AN ANGRY DEJA ON THE COUCH. FOR A MOMENT THERE IS SILENCE. Victor narrates:

Victor's Voice: I knew Beast wouldn't be willing to continue finding Deja and bringing her back when she decided to run away. So I was going to have to humble myself and have a heart to heart with her.

Victor: Deja. *(No answer)*. Deja. *(Still no answer.)* Deja!

Deja: WHAT?

Victor: Why do you keep running away?

Deja: 'Cause I don't want to be here, duh.

Victor: Where you gon' go? Who else is going to take you in?

Deja: V, you left us a long time ago. Remember that? You walked out on us *(starts crying)* so I learned to get along without you. I don't need you.

Victor: Deja. *(Feeling sympathy, he moves in to hold on to her.)*

Deja: *(Crying)* Get away from me. Just get away from me!

Victor: I'm sorry, Deja. I didn't mean to hurt you. I just had to do my thing.

Deja: *(Crying)* Yeah, okay. Well, now I'm just doing mine. I'm doin' my thing now.

Victor: Deja, come here.

VICTOR MOVES IN TO HOLD ON TO DEJA AND DEJA STRUGGLES TO GET HIM OFF OF HER. BUT VICTOR WILL NOT LET GO. SHE CRIES OUT TELLING HIM TO REMOVE HIS HANDS FROM HER BUT HE REFUSES. THE MORE SHE TRIES TO GET AWAY THE TIGHTER HE HOLDS ON. HE HEARS MAMA'S WORDS: LOVE HER. SHANTEL MASON'S VOICE: LOVE HER, VICTOR. DON'T GIVE UP. LOVE HER.

SO HE REFUSES TO LET HER GO UNTIL SHE CALMS DOWN. HE BEGINS TO CRY HIMSELF. AS SHE HEARS HIM CRYING SHE STOPS

*STRUGGLING AND SOON WITHOUT REALIZING IT THEY ARE EMBRACING EACH OTHER. TOGETHER THEY FALL ASLEEP ON THE COUCH.*

*THE LIGHT GO OFF.*

## SCENE 27

*IN THE NEXT SCENE VICTOR IS SEATED AT A TABLE EATING BREAKFAST. THE MAID WALKS IN AND BRINGS HIM A GLASS OF JUICE. DEJA JUST AWOKE AND SOON WALKS IN AND SITS DOWN AT THE TABLE.*

Victor: Good morning.

Deja: Mornin'.

Victor: Did you have a good rest?

Deja: It was alright. *(She appears MORE calm and relaxed than ever. She sits in front of Victor).*

Victor: So what was up last night? What was you feelin'?

Deja: I don't know *(shrugs shoulders)*.

Victor: Yeah. *(Leans in and takes Deja by the hand.)* Listen to me, I'm yo' big brother. It's going to always be that way. I can't replace mama. But I'ma do everything in my power to be there for you from now on. I'm sorry...I'm sorry for everything.

Deja: *(Begins crying)* Thank you, V. I just...I just felt like...dang! We used to be straight homies, you know what I'm sayin? And then you left and went off and did your thing. I mean I was behind you 100% and I wanted you to make it. But I missed you.

Victor's Voice: This was the Deja I was used to and hadn't seen in a while. The talkative, expressive Deja. She was opening up to me again. I was grateful.

Deja: I was like, dang...I just lost my dog. And then everywhere I go they be like...is you Victorious' sister? And I be like, dang, is that all I am? All I am is Victorious' sister to you?

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Victor: Yeah (Nods head).

Deja: And folks be like, yo D, can you get me some tickets to yo' brother concert and shit like that? And I be like, fuck you, I ain't even got no tickets, you know what I'm sayin? Leave me alone.

*THEY BOTH GRIN.*

Deja: And then...my heart. (She begins crying again). Now, mama...my heart is gone. V, I just...I feel like I did that.

Victor: What?

Deja: I feel like I caused her so much pain.

Victor: I caused double the pain you caused, Deja. But we can't go around thinking like that. Mama loved us and we both know she wouldn't like us thinking we caused anything to happen to her.

*AT THAT MOMENT, VICTOR RISES FROM HIS SEAT AND PLACES IT NEXT TO DEJA, WHERE he sits and THEY EMBRACE EACH OTHER.*

Victor: We're going to make it through this, Deja. We're going to make it through this.

Victor's Voice: That I was sure of, but I didn't know how long it was going to take. Even after having a heart-to-heart with Deja she continued to test the waters. I told Deja she could use any of the vehicles except for my line of '83 Cadillacs. On this day I went to the garage and found one of them parked in a different place. I immediately confronted her about it.

## **SCENE 28**

*VICTOR WALKS INTO HIS LIVING ROOM WHERE DEJA IS SITTING COMFORTABLY LAUGHING AND TALKING WITH A FRIEND ON HER CELL PHONE. VICTOR APPROACHES HER AND GRABS THE PHONE AWAY FROM HER FACE.*

Deja: V!

Victor: Don't V me. You took one of my caddies out?

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Deja: Oops! I'll go get the keys. *(She immediately arises and disappears for a moment. When she comes back she is dangling the keys in her hands.)* Here you go! Now can I have my phone back?

(Freeze Frame)

Victor's Voice: At that moment I remembered what Ty said he did when his kids got out of hand. He put them on punishment. That's what I would do.

Victor: No, you're on punishment. No cell phone and no car for two weeks.

Deja: Punishment? What?

Victor's Voice: Yep, I got her. I was beginning to regain my control over my house and my manhood.

*VICTOR WALKS OFF STAGE WITH HER PHONE IN HIS HANDS. DEJA DROPS TO THE COUCH AND FOLDS HER ARMS. LIGHTS OUT.*

## SCENE 29

*IN THIS SCENE MICHELLE AND VICTOR ARE HAVING THEIR WEEKLY BUSINESS MEETING.*

Victor's Voice: A few months went by after mama's death before I felt the energy to continue where I left off as far as business goes. I arranged a meeting with Michelle, to get things in order. After discussing things, I brought up some other things I wanted her to explore for me.

Victor: Right after mama died I was going through her things and I found this picture of my father. I want you to see if you can look him up for me.

Micelle: Sure, no problem. *(She picks up the picture and turns it over.)* Hmm, this was taken recently.

Victor: Yeah, I know. That's what interests me. I haven't spoken to him in so long.

Michelle: Sure, I'll check it out for you.

*MICHELLE GETS UP AND GIVES VICTOR A HUG BEFORE EXITING THE STAGE. VICTOR NARRATES:*

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Victor's Voice: In our next meeting, a few weeks later, Michelle came back with a lot of information on my father. It turns out he took over his father's church, remarried and was raising a whole new family.

### SCENE 30

*SIMILAR TO SCENE 29 IN THAT BOTH VICTOR AND MICHELLE ARE IN THE SAME PLACE MEETING AGAIN, JUST HAVE ON DIFFERENT ATTIRE TO REFLECT THE DIFFERENCE IN TIME.*

MICHELLE: I actually found a lot of information online about him. *(She turns the computer screen to Victor, showing him his father's church website.)* See? Here's his church. And this *(pointing and clicking)* is his family.

Victor's Voice: I couldn't believe my ears or my eyes. This joker had went off and completely formed a new life.

*DEJA WALKS BY AND LOOKS AT THE SCREEN, EATING A BOWL OF CEREAL. SHE NON-SHALANTLY COMMENTS THAT SHE LOOKS NOTHING LIKE HIM AS MAMA OFTEN COMMENTED.*

Victor: So where is he now?

Victor's Voice: In the following week I asked Michelle to make arrangements for Beast and I to fly down on a Saturday so I could confront this joker. I was going to invite Deja, but after she referred to him as simply a sperm-donor, I didn't bother making her come. On Sunday morning I planned to pull up right in front of his church, get out, and blast him. I planned to walk right up to him and give him a piece of my mind. But then, something happened.

*THE CAR PULLS UP IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH WITH VICTOR IN THE BACKSEAT. BEAST GETS OUT TO OPEN THE DOOR, BUT VICTOR DOESN'T MOVE. HE SEES HIS FATHER STANDING ON THE STEPS OF THE CHURCH WAVING AT MEMBERS AS THEY COME IN. HE IS HAPPY AND STRONG.*

Victor's Voice: Something came over me. Perhaps, it was disappointment. Perhaps, it was anger. Maybe it was the shock of seeing him after all these years.

Beast: Are you getting out?

Victor: No. *(Takes the door in his hands and slams it shut. He then tells the driver to take them back to the airport.)*

Victor's Voice: It just wasn't worth it.

### SCENE 31

*IN THIS SCENE VICTOR AND ROCK-A-FELLA ARE IN HIS HOME STUDIO RECORDING A NEW SONG. DEJA IS SITTING IN THE BACKGROUND LOOKING AT A MAGAZINE.*

Victor's Voice: In the following month, I felt the urge to return to the studio. I had taken a long vacation from everything and was anxious to get back to recording music. So I began working on a new single, entitled *Rodeo Man*. I partnered up with the talented R & B artist, Rock-A-Fella.

Chorus: Rodeo man, Rodeo man, Can I be ya Rodeo man? Romeo man, Romeo man...lady can you please, take me, make me ya Romeo man, I wanna be yo' man, won't you please take my hand?

Rock-A-Fella: (sings) So I see you don't like the playas. You brag how you a playa hata. You wanna man that don't play 'em. Ya very clear, ain't shamed to defame 'em. Well, I wanna get close to you, and I don't like her and her and her too. I'm a one-woman type of man, not a pimp, ain't lookin' for a ho' I can't stand. I'm lookin' for that kind of romance. The kind that makes you wanna dance. Like a song I want you to ya feet, I wanna take ya somewhere so our lips can meet. I'm tryin' to be close to you and I wanna be ya Romeo Man.

Chorus

Victor: I don't need to fake it to make it. Cause I made it and I aced it, now I'm tryin' to shake it. People see me and they want me to be every god-damn thing that they see on TV. They argue when I'm wrong or right, based on what they saw on Entertainment tonight. I'm telling you, from what I can see, you a damn fine woman and a wife to be. I don't see you just as a baby mama. I want you to have my kids and call me papa. I like you and the way you swingin' ya hair. That's why I want you to be in my damn world. I can see myself growin' old with you, makin' a family, havin' kids, grandkids too. I wanna show you off to all my homies. I wish my mama was here to behold and see, the lady

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that I want to have my first baby, like a jewel, just glossed, shining radiantly. As you can see I'm not representin' most niggas, who want more than one pussy, go figga. Damn, I wanna sweep ya to ya feet tonight, take you somewhere real expensive and nice. Take me to ya daddy, I ain't afraid to meet, take ya, buy ya nice clothes, don't need a receipt. Then I take you back to the house, and play Rodeo all night, sing it loud, Rodeo, Rodeo, not on no ho, Romeo, Romeo, goes down low. Rodeo, Rodeo, curlin' toes, I'm Romeo, so be my Julieto.

Victor's Voice: I'm sure if mama could hear this she would say (Shantel Mason's Voice): 'Bout time you made something sweet, boy.

*AS THE SONG ENDS ROCK-A-FELLA AND VICTOR CONTINUE TO MAKE BEATS AND CONVERSATE WHILE VICTOR NARRATES. THE LIGHTS DIM. :*

Victor's Voice: In the following months, I appeared on the Montgomery Talk Show and did a couple concerts. Yes, it was back to business as usual. Deja finally settled down and started respecting me a lot more after I started enforcing discipline. Knock on wood. We argued less and did more things together. I even started attending her basketball games. She was just as good as I remembered her being. But one evening as I laid down on my bed I heard a disturbance coming from my pool house.

### SCENE 32

*THIS SCENE OPENS WITH VICTOR LYING DOWN COMFORTABLY ON HIS BED. THERE IS A PICTURE OF SHANTEL MASON GRADUATING THAT IS HANGING ABOVE HIS FIRE PLACE. HE LOOKS AT IT BEFORE LOUD MUSIC DISTURBS HIS PEACE. HE JUMPS OUT OF THE BED.*

Victor: What in the hell is that SOUND?!? (He looks around frantically. It stops. Just as he lies down it starts up again.) Is it coming from the pool house?

*VICTOR PUTS ON HIS SLIPPERS AND WALKS TO THE POOL HOUSE. HE REALIZES THE MUSIC IS COMING FROM INSIDE. AS HE BEGINS TO KNOCK ON THE DOOR THE MUSIC STOPS AGAIN. AS HE WALKS BACK TOWARD THE HOUSE IT STARTS UP AGAIN. SO THIS TIME HE WALKS BACK TO THE DOOR AND KNOCKS. NO ONE ANSWERS SO HE OPENS UP THE DOOR AND WHEN HE DOES HE SEES A GIRL BOUNCING ON TOP OF*

DEJA. SHE IS HAVING SEX IN the POOL HOUSE WITH ANOTHER GIRL. VICTOR SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT.

Victor: (Yells) Get out! Everybody get out right now!!!

SOON A GIRL COMES STUMBLING OUT OF THE POOL HOUSE WITH HER CLOTHES BARELY ON. SHE WALKS OFF THE STAGE QUICKLY AND DEJA FOLLOWS CLOSE BEHIND. SHE IS SCARED.

DEJA: (Sadly) Victor, I'm sorry.

Victor: You damn right you are. Come on let's go. You gettin' ready to pack up your stuff and get out of my house. I'm done with you! (He walks back toward the house, but Deja tries to stop him.)

Deja: Victor, please. I'm sorry.

Victor: No, you know what Deja? I've had enough. You're going to live with aunty.

Deja: No! Victor! (As she begins to cry Victor looks at her intently.) Please, I'm sorry. I don't want to go live with her.

Victor: Well, you don't want to live with me either because you are not following my rules.

Deja: You're just homophobic...that's all! You don't like gay people.

Victor: Deja, don't even try that shit with me. Look at me (He grabs her by her shoulders). That isn't it at all. If you're going to be gay, you are going to be gay. I love you regardless. But you are so disrespectful with it. You don't see me around here fucking girls, do you? And this is my house. I can do anything I want to in my house. But I know you're here so I'm not going to do that. Do you understand? I don't want to know your sexual business. You my lil' sister.

Deja: I'm so sorry, V. (She holds on to him.) It won't happen again...I promise.

Victor's Voice: I gave in. I let her stay.

**SCENE 33**

*THE SCENE OPENS WITH MICHELLE AND VICTOR AT THEIR WEEKLY BUSINESS MEETING. EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE GOING WELL. AT THE END OF THE MEETING MICHELLE ASKS VICTOR IF THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE HE WOULD LIKE HER TO START WORKING ON. HE CAN HEAR HIS MAMA'S VOICE saying: GET YOUR EDUCATION.*

Michelle: So we have a new color-coded calendar with all the dates on it of where you'll be performing. So I'll make sure I give you a copy of that. *(She places papers in her suitcase as she is preparing to leave.)* Is there anything else you want me to take care of for you?

Shantel Mason's Voice: Get your education, Victor. This is just a bridge to something more.

Victor: *(Hesitates.)* Uh, yeah. Actually there is. *(In a low voice)* Can you look up tutors for me?

Michelle: I'm sorry. What did you say?

Victor: *(Takes a deep breath.)* Tutors...can you find me a tutor?

Michelle: *(Puzzled and shocked)* What kind of tutor?

Victor: *(Head down, in a low voice)* For my disability.

Michelle: I'm sorry...what did you say?

Victor: You're not making this easy for me, Michelle.

Michelle: *(Grins)* I'm sorry, V. I just can't hear you. You have to speak up.

Victor: I have dyslexia.

Michelle: I know that.

Victor: I know you know that. What I'm trying to say is...I want a tutor. Can you find me one?

Victor's Voice: It took a lot for me to finally say this. I needed Michelle to meet me half way.

Michelle: Of course I will. I'll find you a damn good one. *(She gets up and walks off stage. Midway, she turns around and smiles at Victor.)* I'm proud of you. *(She exits stage)*

Victor's Voice: A few weeks later she returned to tell me she had good news and bad news. The bad news was that she'd called a few universities for recommendations and no one could help her. Obviously, tutors who specialized in dyslexia were rare. The good news was that she'd found twenty-five independent tutors and was scheduled to interview them all. A couple months later, during our business meeting, she announced she'd finally found the one.

### SCENE 34

*THE SCENE OPENS UP WITH VICTOR AND MICHELLE TOGETHER AGAIN, SITTING IN his home. SHE is anxious to SHARE THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TUTOR WITH HIM. She hands Victor a file folder with the tutors information in it.*

Victor: Give me the run down. *(He opens the folder and busts out laughing at the picture.)* Is this him? *(He holds it up and laughs, allowing the audience to catch a glimpse.)* It's Black Santa. *(He continues grinning).*

Micelle: Ha! Ha! Very funny! Get serious. *(Michelle snatches the picture and folder away from him.)* Quit acting like you belong in kindergarten. His name is Dr. Yahya Abdul-Karriem.

*MICHELLE CAN HARDLY GET THE REST OF HIS NAME OUT BEFORE VICTOR IS LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY AT HIS NAME.*

Victor: This has gotta be a joke, Michelle! *(He continues laughing as Michelle looks on seriously.)* Seriously? Dr. Yahya?

Michelle: Victor, don't let the name and appearance fool you. He's got eighteen years of experience in teaching people with dyslexia under his belt. He knows what he's doing.

Victor: Okay, okay, okay. Where's he from?

Michelle: Jamaica.

Victor: Okay, and how much is he asking for?

Michelle: Victor, I really want to talk to you more about him before we get into costs.

Victor: Just tell me how much.

Michelle: Well, I offered him \$80 grand a year.

Victor: W-wait a minute...did you just say? Oh, hell no! Find somebody else.

Michelle: Victor, he's coming all the way from another country for God's sake.

Victor: And...did you say a year? How long is it going to take him to do what he has to do exactly?

Michelle: Well, he said it could take up to a year or two, depending on how serious the case is.

Victor: Depending on...no, I'm not doing this. I don't give a damn if he's coming all the way from China and has a hundred years of experience. I'm not payin' \$80 grand for this. Teachers don't get paid that much.

Michelle: First of all, he is a tutor. And besides that, you paid \$20,000 on a watch last week. A freakin' watch!

Victor: Yeah, well, that was on something I wanted too.

Michelle: Victor, you make nearly \$100,000 a week off of downloads alone.

Victor: It doesn't matter.

Michelle: (*Chuckles in disbelief.*) He's one of the best educators in the world, Victor. It took me several weeks just to get an interview with him. And all you can do is laugh at his name and rap about having to spend a fraction of your earnings on this. Call me when you're ready to stop bull-shitting around! (*She gets up, grabs her briefcase, stuffs the folder inside and walks off stage.*)

Victor: What are you so upset about?

MICHELLE IGNORES HIM AND CONTINUES TO WALK OFF STAGE. THE LIGHTS DIM.

**SCENE 35**

VICTOR IS SEEN LAYING ACROSS HIS BED AND LOOKING UP INTO HIS MOTHER'S PICTURE.

VICTOR'S VOICE: That night, I lay on my bed thinking about what Michelle said. This was not as important to me as the day I heard mama's voice and mentioned it to her. So then why was I up thinking about it? *(Takes a deep breath.)* I was mentally tired. I was tired of carrying around a recorder with me. Tired of having Michelle, Ty, Beast, or Deja read every damn thing for me. Malcolm was right. I was living in a cage. I had to break free. I couldn't afford to go back and forth with this any longer. I had to make up my mind. I called Michelle immediately.

VICTOR GETS UP AND PLACES A CALL TO MICHELLE EARLY IN THE MORNING. THE TELEPHONE RINGS. THE LIGHT SHINES ON MICHELLE'S BEDROOM. SHE PICKS UP THE PHONE HESITANTLY.

MICHELLE: HELLO?

VICTOR: MICHELLE?

MICHELLE: YEAH, THIS IS SHE. WHO IS THIS?

VICTOR: IT'S VICTOR.

MICHELLE: *(LOOKS AT CLOCK)* VICTOR, WHAT TIME IS IT? OH MY GOD, IT'S 2:00 A.M. WHAT DO YOU NEED?

VICTOR: I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW I'M SORRY. YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND HIRE THE YAHYA GUY OR WHATEVER HIS NAME IS.

MICHELLE: OKAY, V. I'LL TALK TO YOU LATER.

VICTOR: OKAY, PEACE.

MICHELLE: BYE. *(SHE HANGS UP THE PHONE AND THROWS THE COVERS OVER HER HEAD.)* CRAZY ASS!

Lights dim.

Victor's Voice: I was sure I'd made the right decision. A few days later, Dr. Yahya arrived and was ready to meet me at my home.

### SCENE 36

*THE SCENE OPENS UP WITH VICTOR, NICELY DRESSED SITTING IN HIS LIVING ROOM, AWAITING DR. YAHYA AND MICHELLE'S ARRIVAL. HE HEARS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR AND ADJUSTS HIS TIE. HE WALKS OVER TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT UP. MICHELLE AND VICTOR EMBRACE EACH OTHER BEFORE MICHELLE FORMALLY INTRODUCES DR. YAHYA ABDUL-KARIEM.*

Dr. Yahya: It's very nice to meet you, young man. I've heard a lot about you. I've listened to your music. Very nice. Very talented.

Victor: It's very nice to meet you, as well. I'm very thankful that you would come so far to do this for me.

Dr. Yahya: Well, it was my pleasure. I'm looking forward to it. We've got a lot of ground to cover.

*DR. YAHYA, MICHELLE, AND VICTOR ALL WALK INTO THE LIVING ROOM AND BEGIN CASUALLY CONVERSING. WHILE VICTOR NARRATES:*

Victor's Voice: Dr. Yahya agreed to relocate to Deven for as long as it took to get the results I wanted. I agreed to meet with him three times a week for an hour each session. But our first meeting didn't happen because I forgot. The second meeting didn't happen either. I accidentally scheduled it during the Indianapolis Circle City Classics in which I was scheduled to perform. The third meeting didn't happen because I just wasn't feeling it.

### SCENE 37

*THE SCENE OPENS UP WITH TY, MICHELLE, AND VICTOR SITTING IN HIS LIVING ROOM AND DISCUSSING BUSINESS.*

Michelle: So how have your sessions been going?

Victor: My what?

Michelle: Your tutoring sessions.

Victor: Oh, haven't gotten around to that yet.

Michelle: What do you mean? You're on a schedule.

Victor: I know. I just. I've been missing them.

Michelle: You've been missing your sessions? How?

Victor's Voice: I couldn't help it. I'd gotten cold feet again and decided I didn't want the tutoring. All of a sudden I felt lazy and uninterested.

Ty: How can you miss sessions that take place in your own house, man? That's pretty stupid.

Victor: Fuck you. *(Ty laughs)* To be honest, I'm just not feeling it anymore.

Michelle: Victor, let me remind you that you've already invested \$80 grand in this man.

Victor: I know. I know.

Michelle: This isn't like a piece of candy. You can't just pick it up and put it back down again, Victor.

Ty: Yeah, like you did with those girls last night.

Victor: Why don't you shut the fuck up, man. *(Grins)*

Michelle: This isn't a joke, Victor.

Victor: I know. I'm going to go. I just have to find time for it.

LIGHTS DIM.

### **SCENE 38**

*SCENE 38 TAKES PLACE IN THE DINING ROOM OF VICTOR'S HOME. THIS IS WHERE HE HAS NEGLECTED TO MEET DR. YAHYA THE PAST FEW TIMES. DR. YAHYA IS WAITING. HE TAKES OUT HIS PHONE AND PLACES A CASUAL PHONE CALL. AS HE IS SPEAKING VICTOR WALKS IN LATE.*

Victor's Voice: I finally made time to make it to the first session. I was a little late when I arrived, but hey, at least I arrived.

Victor: Yo' what up, Dr. Yahya. Let's begin the session!  
*(He comes in and takes a seat, but Dr. Yahya is on a phone call. He places his finger up for Victor to wait a moment. Victor is rude as he begins making beats on the table. Soon after Dr. Yahya ends the call and turns his attention to Victor.)*

Dr. Yahya: Hello.

Victor: Sup? So we gon' get started or what?

Dr. Yahya: Uh, no we're not going to get started.

Victor: What you mean?

Dr. Yahya: Just what I said.

Victor: *(Victor looks around)* Look, man. I didn't come to play no games. Let's get the show on the road cause a bro' got somewhere to be...okay?

Dr. Yahya: *(Grins, gets up and grabs briefcase)* I tell you what, young man. When you're ready to show up for a session on time and give me your undivided attention then you call me and I'll come. *(As he walks out of the dining room, Victor jumps in front of him.)*

Victor: Wait a minute...what the hell did you say to me?

Dr. Yahya: I said when you are ready to meet with me then you can call me.

Victor: Now, you listen to me, Dr. Yahya or whatever the hell your name is...I run this shit around here. I say when it starts and when it stops. Now, get yo' ass back in there and do yo' damn job!

Dr. Yahya: Mr. Mason, we had an agreement. You have broken your side of the agreement several times now. Three times I have traveled nearly an hour to your estate and you were not present. Now, I will come when you call. I'm sorry. Now, excuse me. *(He exits stage left).*

*VICTOR IS IN COMPLETE SHOCK AT HOW DR. YAHYA HAS SPOKEN TO HIM. HE YELLS:*

Victor: Yeah, I'm sorry too. I'm sorry I'm gon' have to fire yo' ass.

Lights Dim.

### SCENE 39

*IN THIS SCENE VICTOR IS IN HIS STUDIO, ANGRY. HE LISTENS TO HIS SONG CALLED 'BASH 'EM' AND MIXES UP THE LYRICS.*

Victor's Voice: I was furious that Dr. Yahya would speak to me in such a way. Didn't he know who I was? I stepped into the studio to vent as I normally did.

Victor: Bash 'em, smash 'em, crash 'em, dash 'em, do what you gotta do to get ahead of 'em. Give 'em up, tear 'em up, shake 'em up, wake 'em up. Tear these motha-fuckas up! Make a tremble, make 'em shake, make 'em have a earthquake...tell 'em what you come to take! Tell 'em what you come to break! Introducing, the glorious, wondrous, damn right Victorious! Keepin' it tight, keepin' it right, gettin' what I want all night. I'm bad so I shut up. I put 'em up and fuck you up. Keep yo' jacket and yo' shoes, don't nobody want from you. Fake ass nigga, flake ass nigga. Stir yo' face and make a chocolate shake, nigga. Let the bling, bling blind ya while I swing, swing on ya. Watch where you going, fool, watch what you doin' fool. Takin' people's spotlight, stealing other's copyright. Cause you ain't got yo' own, right? Nitpickin' here, undercover, pickin' there. Nitpickin' here and every god-damn where. You make me mad as hell, I know you can tell. On the stage talkin' about yo' flat-chested dames, hell yeah, motha-fucka, I'm destroyin' yo name. I come to get my money, bitch, I got my receipt. Come to get my show back, nigga, take a seat. Now, shut yo' mouth, talkin' all that mess fo' I make yo' ass take yo' final rest!

*THE OUTRO PLAYS ON AS VICTOR NARRATES:*

Victor: I couldn't understand what was going on with me. I was so confused. At this point in my life, I didn't know what was going on. I was on an emotional roller coaster. On the outside I appeared to be okay; but on the inside, I was torn up. I'd just lost the biggest part of my heart and I

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felt alone and unstable. If it weren't for my family and friends I wouldn't have made it.

For my birthday, Ty and Michelle invited a lot of my friends over. We had a good time eating, hanging out by the pool, and playing cards.

#### SCENE 40

*IN THIS SCENE FAMILY AND FRIENDS HAVE GATHERED OVER VICTOR'S HOUSE AND ARE EATING, CONVERSATING, AND HAVING A GOOD TIME. VICTOR, BASE, AND A FEW OTHER EXTRAS ARE SEATED AROUND A TABLE PLAYING POKER. THEY HOLD CIGARS IN THEIR MOUTHS.*

Base: So you know *Big Time* is doing pretty well now.

Victor: So I heard. I'm glad about that. I'm not ready to leave and start my own company just yet anyway.

Base: Yeah. I heard they signed on a couple new artists who'd won some battles at the Underground.

Victor: (Shocked) Really? You sure about that, man? That seems pretty rare.

Base: Naw, for real. I heard his new dude 'bout to get signed on. He calls him the Rising King or something like that.

*At that moment, Victor's cigar falls out of his mouth. The name rang a bell. He battled him at the Underground himself. Victor picks up his cigar and places it in his mouth.*

Victor: I can't believe that shit.

Base: What's wrong? You got beef with him or something?

Victor: (Lying) Naw, man. It ain't nothing.

Victor's Voice: But it was something. How could my record company be so quick to sign people on; and especially somebody like Rising King? This was an insult to me. Of course, they didn't know what happened between us...but still. Rising King? He didn't have no skills. I'd told him he would never make it on this roster. But he'd done it. A

month later, he was signed on to *Big Time*. And with each new song he put out he became more popular. He began talking to the media about our clash at the Underground and as usual, they blew it out of proportion. People placed a recording of the battle online. Many made comments and statements about us being rivals; soon after we were both called in to speak with J.J. and Michael Cameron, top execs at *Big Time Records*.

#### SCENE 41

*THE SCENE OPENS WITH J.J. CAMERON SEATED AT A LARGE DESK IN A LARGE OFFICE ROOM AT BIG TIME RECORDS. MICHAEL CAMERON IS SEATED ON THE SIDE OF THE DESK. VICTOR AND RISING KING ARE BOTH SEATED IN FRONT OF THE DESK.*

J.J. Cameron: I notice all this shit in the media didn't start 'til we signed you on, man. (Speaking to Rising King) What are you tryin' to do?

Rising King: I ain't tryin' to do nothin'.

Victor: I don't even know why I'm here.

Michael Cameron: Both of you are here because we've been hearing a lot of shit lately in the media about you both talkin' shit about each other.

J.J. Cameron: We don't need any negative publicity right about now. Now, both of you are some real talented brothers. We need to work together.

Michael Cameron: Yeah, now this is just a little warning for you both...you need to come together...talk about your differences and move on together in the same direction. We're a team.

Victor's Voice: Rising King just sat there looking stupid, refusing to make eye contact with me. We wouldn't be moving in the same direction anytime soon. I knew he had something up his sleeve. A few months later, Michael Cameron let him go. They said it was too much of a risk to keep him on the label. They said they'd rather keep me anyway: somebody they knew they could trust. Rising King didn't waste anytime...he was immediately signed onto another record company. And that's when he really let loose. He came out

with this song about Iviana and I. He spread gossip through his songs about me and tried desperately to defame me.

#### SCENE 42

*IN THIS SCENE RISING KING IS IN HIS OWN STUDIO RECORDING MUSIC.*

RISING KING: Look at this fool, look at this fool  
(laughter) breakin' all the rules, thinkin' you so damn cool, but you a god-damn fool! Rising King, on the scene, comin' up so mean, yeah, he said I was a dope fene and imposta but now I'm knockin' his ass off his own rosta. This must be one of them fake ass niggas, OMG!!! Would you look at this fake ass g? Talkin' about ya don't rent and you don't lease, and how you don't return, 'cause they return to me, but I seen ya bills, that's why you so damn cheap. And a dozen 'scalades for a million what? You gotta be kiddin, for a million what? I told you I was gonna rise. I'm comin up. I was comin' up and you would have to shut up and put ya motha-fuckin hands up. Cause ain't no shame when I blast ya name. And I show them how you can be tamed, defamed, renamed, blamed, and put to shame. You don't need to put on a show 'cause you are the show? But if you the show than I need my money back yo', go and spend it on some hoes and risk going to jail, watchin' them bitches shake they tails. Time for me to deliver ya mail, this is the Rising King and I'm bustin outta hell!

Vicor's Voice: Ridiculous. It was just plain ol' ridiculous. He was basically taking my lyrics and turning them against me. Not cool at all. This guy was trash. And he was really starting to aggravate the hell out of me. But what made me even more angry was when he mentioned Deja in one of his songs called *Revenge*.

Rising King: I'll get you back, jack, revenge is a switch. 'Bout to turn it on and get wicha quick. And I'll make you wish you neva got rich, wicha house, car, and the gay little bitch. Takin ya money, cars, and all that shit, when I introduce my rhymes to ya itty, bitty dick. Offended 'cause you got suspended, now your time on the radio has ended and I'm descendin on top of ya head. Why you playin' dead? Why you turnin' red? Mad 'cause you ain't got no head. Yeah, I cut that shit right off the top, holdin' on to ya bitch's romp, as she prefers to be on top. Ya made a song about her double dees and now these double dees is

between my knees. This is the Rising King and I know how to take that thing and make it sing, nigga my props it's time for you to bring.

Victor's Voice: (angry) That was the last draw. I got in my car and drove to the place where I knew I could find him.

*AS RISING KING CONTINUES TO MIX MUSIC A CAR CAN BE HEARD IN THE BACKGROUND SPEEDING OFF. IT STOPS AND THE DOOR SLAMS. A FEW MOMENTS LATER VICTOR APPEARS IN THE RECORDING STUDIO AT STAGE LEFT WHILE RISING KING IS RECORDING HIS MUSIC. RISING KING LOOKS UP AND SEES VICTOR STANDING THERE. HE REMOVES HIS HEAD PHONES. HE LOOKS AROUND NERVOUSLY.*

Rising King: Ay, how the hell you get in here, man?

Victor: Don't worry about it.

Rising King: What you want, man?

Victor: I came to give you yo' props!

*Just then, Victor looks down and notices a chair in front of him. He reaches down and picks it up. He throws it across the stage and it hits Rising King. Rising King falls to the floor and Victor jumps on top of him and begins beating him in the face. Blood splatters everywhere. It is visible to the audience. When Victor is done he gets up and walks out as if he were only paying Rising King a friendly visit.*

*Police sirens.*

Victor's Voice: When the police came to my home to arrest me, Deja looked on just as mama did when Malcolm was being taken away. Damn. What had I done?

### **SCENE 43**

*IN THE NEXT SCENE VICTOR APPEARS BEFORE JUDGE ROSLIN WITH HIS ATTORNEYS. SHE ENTERS STAGE LEFT AND APPROACHES THE BENCH. SHE SITS DOWN AND LOOKS AT VICTOR. SHE TAKE HER GLASSES OUT AND VIEWS HIS FILE. SHE LOOKS UP AT HIM AGAIN.*

Judge Roslin: Mr. Harvey-Mason. This isn't your first time being in trouble with the law, now is it?

Victor: *(mumbles something unidentified)*

Judge Roslin: I'm sorry...what was that?

Victor: *(With an attitude)* No.

Judge Roslin: You have a sexual harassment charge in your file. *(She picks up the file and examines it.)* Hmm, it appears it was dropped for whatever reason. *(She looks up at Victor)* You're quite the *bad boy*, aren't you?

Victor: *(Mumbles something unidentified while Attorneys try to shush him.)*

Judge Roslin: You know what? I don't think I like your attitude.

Victor: *(In a low voice)* I'm not a boy.

Judge Roslin: I'm sorry? What was that?

Victor: *(Being shushed by attorneys, but refuses to listen).* I said I'm not a boy!

Judge Roslin: Oh really? So what do you call these charges, Mr. Mason? Things *real men* do? *(smirks)* Listen, I'm not a fan of yours at all. I think your music is garbage. And as far as I'm concerned...so are you.

Victor's Voice: At that moment, I lost the feeling in my legs and was beginning to lose my self-control. My father had called me garbage years ago.

Judge Roslin: I'm sentencing you to three years imprisonment and fining you the maximum charge. When you are finished, you will do community service and receive some form of intense counseling.

Victor: *(outraged)* Do you know who I am? This is some crazy shit!

Judge Roslin: Mr. Mason, you are the only thing crazy in this courtroom. Get him out of here!!!

Victor's Voice: My attorneys tried to get me to calm down, but it was no use. The police wrestled me to the ground as

I tried to approach the bench. They shoved my face into the ground.

Victor: Get off me!!! Get off me!!!

Guard: Not until you calm down, Mr. Mason.

Victor's Voice: Beast and Ty stood up. But there was nothing either of them could do.

#### SCENE 44

*THE NEXT SCENE OPENS WITH VICTOR IN HIS JAIL CELL IN THE BACKGROUND. HE IS STANDING LOOKING AT HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR IN HIS JUMPSUIT. IN FRONT OF HIM THERE ARE FIVE MEDIA ANNOUNCERS WHO COME AND TAKE CENTER STAGE.*

Victor's Voice: After I got dressed I stood in the mirror looking at myself. Not believing my eyes. Boy, if Malcolm could see me now.

Announcer 1: In other news, Victorious, a.k.a, Victor Harvey-Mason, a well-known rap artist, who just recently received a nomination for Best Male Artist has now been convicted on battery charges. Sources say around 11:00 p.m. Victorious walked into a record studio and attacked another up and coming artist, Rising King, a.k.a Christopher Irvine-Brown, Jr. While the reasons for the attack are being debated, sources say the two artists were known as rivals since they were children. The judge sentenced Victor to three years in prison. This conviction comes only a year after a previous case involving Victorious, in which Iviana Roe, a previous runner up on National's Next Top Model, sued him for a rape charge."

Announcer 2: America, America, what is going on with these rap artists? As if the industry hasn't taken enough blows already... Victorious, a.k.a Victor Harvey-Mason, just got a nomination for Best Male Artist and now he's being convicted for battery. What message is he sending to today's youth? Did he finally get what he deserved for Iviana Roe? Speak up, America. It's time to let these fools know. Hit me up.

Announcer 3: In other news we've given Victorious a new name. We're now calling him *Bad Boy*, apparently after Judge Roslin, presiding over his present case, called him that.

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Bad Boy was not happy about it. In fact, he had to be wrestled to the ground after hearing the sentence. Manager and friend, Tyler Ferguson called it an abuse of power. He spoke to us stating that he suspected the judge was punishing him for his past sexual harassment charge with Ivaiana Roe instead of the present charge. The bad boy's paid over \$100,000 in fines and is expected to pay a lot more. His case is being appealed.

Announcer 4: I am so tired of these artists walking around like they own the whole damn world. I'm tired of them walking around like they are untouchable; going back and forth; arguing like kids. Then somebody ends up gettin' shot over a toenail. I'm tired of famous people period. But Victorious did beat the hell out of Rising King though! Ha! Ha! I heard he got that \*igga eatin' through a tube. Hit me up, 222-RANT.

Announcer 5: The delay in conviction for well-known rap artist, Victor Harvey Mason, a.k.a Victorious, has brought questioning and speculation again to America's justice system. Sources say after going back and forth as rivals for months, around 10:30 p.m., Mr. Mason walked into a recording studio and attacked another rap artist, Christopher Ervine-Brown, Jr. a.k.a, Rising King. After severely injuring him, it wasn't until a few weeks later he received only house arrest. And several more weeks went by before Mr. Mason finally received a court date and was finally found guilty of his crime. Christopher Brown's family is now suing Mr. Mason and wants to know why it took so long for justice to be served.

Victor's Voice: That night I laid my head down on the stiffest pillow of the flattest, hardest bed I'd ever had to lay on. I ran my fingers along the cold wall of my jail cell. I was in complete darkness and silence. I couldn't see my own hand in front of my face. At home, I went to sleep in front of my huge, flat-screen television. I knew it was going to be hard for me to go to sleep like this. I laid my head back and tried to sleep, but I ended up tossing and turning all night. I took Deja in determined to show her what a real man was and ended up crashing off course, just like Malcolm; just like our father I'd left her again. I cried as I held on to the pillow that night wishing it was her.

THE LIGHTS DIM.

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**SCENE 45**

*IN THIS SCENE VICTOR IS ESCORTED FROM HIS JAIL CELL TO A MEETING ROOM WHERE HE MEETS WITH HIS ATTORNEY.*

GUARD: (Knocks on the cell) Your lawyer's here.

*VICTOR GETS UP AND IS ESCORTED TO THE MEETING ROOM WHERE HIS ATTORNEY IS WAITING FOR HIM. THEY EMBRACE EACH OTHER.*

Victor's Attorney: How are you doing in here?

Victor: I hate it. Bored as hell, man.

*THEY TAKE THEIR SEATS.*

Victor's Attorney: I know. Ty and I are working as much as we can to get you out of here as soon as possible. We're arguing that maybe the judge was holding the previous case against you at the sentencing.

Victor: Sounds good.

Victor's Attorney: Oh, and before I forget, Michelle said to give you this. *(He reaches in his pocket and pulls out a card.)*

Victor: What is this?

Victor's Attorney: It has the number and address of Dr. Yahya Abdul-Karriem? I believe that's his name, I'm not sure how to pronounce it.

Victor: What? Is she still throwin' this dude's name up in my face? *(Throws the card back.)* You tell her I'm not thinkin' about that shit right now.

Victor's Attorney: Well, now wait a minute. She and I were discussing the fact that he has a psychology degree. He might be able to "counsel" *(holds up quotes)* you and that could get you out of here sooner.

Victor: How much sooner?

Victor's Attorney: Maybe a year. Besides, you've already paid him. She wanted me to remind you of that.

Victor: Okay, so call him.

Victor's Voice: I thought about it. Michelle was right. I had already paid this dude. Besides, I'd be killing two birds with one stone if I let him do what I originally hired him to do, help me with my dyslexia. And if we called it "counseling" I could get out of here sooner. At this point, I would do anything to get out and back to my life.

The Lights Dim.

#### SCENE 46

*IN THE NEXT SCENE VICTOR IS SEATED, WAITING ON DR. YAHYA TO ARRIVE. HE IS BITING HIS NAILS BECAUSE HE IS A LITTLE ANXIOUS.*

Victor's Voice: Today, Dr. Yahya arrives. It would be my first time seeing him since our run-in. I'd had more than enough time to think about what I wanted to say to him after all this time. And since, my getting out of here early was in his hands, I figured the first thing I would do was sincerely apologize for my behavior.

*DR. YAHYA IS ESCORTED IN BY A GUARD. THE GUARD TELLS HIM IF NEEDS ANYTHING HE WILL BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR. THE DOOR CLOSES. VICTOR STANDS UP AND HOLDS OUT HIS RIGHT HAND FOR DR. YAHYA TO SHAKE. DR. YAHYA shakes his hand before WARMLY EMBRACING HIM. Victor is shocked.*

DR. YAHYA: Well, now, how are you doing, young man?

Victor: Fine.

Dr. Yahya: And orange, right? *(He smiles)* Just joking. *(He places his brief case down on the table and they both sit down across from each other.)*

Victor: First things first. I want to apologize for my behavior.

Dr. Yahya: It's alright. Everything's alright. We just got off on the wrong foot that's all. So let's just start over.

Victor: I can handle that.

Dr. Yahya: Good. I'm glad to hear that. I'm Dr. Yahya Abdul-Karriem. And you are? *(He holds his hand out for Victor to shake it. He does.)*

Victor: *I'm Victor Harvey-Mason, b.k.a. Victorious.*

Dr. Yahya: *Very good, then. Nice to meet you, Victor.*

VICTOR AND DR. YAHYA CONTINUE TALKING AND MAKING HAND GESTURES AS THOUGH THEY ARE CARRYING ON A CONVERSATION AS VICTOR NARRATES:

Victor's Voice: In the first and second sessions the only learning that took place was about each other. We talked...man to man. Dr. Yahya was born Jonathan Sanderson and was raised in Jamaica by a well-to-do family. He entered college at age 17 and became a doctor in the field of psychology and speech therapy. His family ostracized him for his conversion to Islam at age 19. He married the love of his life at age twenty-one and had a son. He named his son Carl, after his grandfather. When his son was six, Dr. Yahya noticed some abnormalities with Carl's reading and writing ability. Later, he discovered it was Dyslexia. This is when Dr. Yahya began to explore the world of dyslexia for himself. With training, he became an instructor and began not only educating his son, but other children in his family and community. A few years later, a tragedy hit. He lost his family in a terrible storm. From there, he relocated and continued teaching in Jamaica.

#### SCENE 47

*IN THIS SCENE VICTOR WAITS FOR DR. YAHYA AGAIN. THIS TIME HE IS OVER HALF AN HOUR LATE AND VICTOR BEGINS PACING THE FLOOR.*

Victor: Where is this man at, yo?

*JUST AS HE GETS UP TO LEAVE, DR. YAHYA COMES IN WITH A TV ON WHEELS.*

Victor: What the hell is this?

Dr. Yahya: I thought you might enjoy a movie today. Warden let me borrow this from the TV room. I brought popcorn.

VICTOR LOOKS ON IN SHOCK AS THEY BOTH TAKE THEIR SEATS AND DR. YAHYA CRACKS UP AT ALMOST EVERY SCENE. HE PATS VICTOR ON THE BACK.

DR. Yahya: Relax, Victor.

Victor's Voice: How could I? This man had gone in and taken the TV out of the TV room on our behalf? Was this dude crazy? The only thing I could think about was how angry the other inmates must be once they found out the TV was gone. I sat there watching him laugh at almost every scene wondering when the hell the tutoring was going to start.

#### SCENE 48

THE FOURTH TIME THEY MEET, DR. YAHYA COMES IN THE ROOM AND OPENS UP HIS SUITCASE. VICTOR IS SURE THEY ARE GOING TO START THE TUTORING and expects him to pull out something academic. BUT DR. YAHYA BRINGS OUT A BOARD GAME instead. FOR A FEW MOMENTS THEY PLAY, BUT THEN VICTOR GETS UP AND WALKS TOWARD THE WINDOW.

DR. Yahya: It's your move.

VICTOR IGNORES HIM.

Dr. Yahya: It's your move.

VICTOR IGNORES HIM AGAIN.

Dr. Yahya: Is there a problem?

Victor: Yeah, man. When we gon' start the tutoring? I didn't come here to play no damn games.

Dr. Yahya: Neither did I, Mr. Mason. Neither did I. But at least you know how it feels when somebody plays games with you.

VICTOR TURNS AROUND AS DR. YAHYA STANDS UP AND BEGINS PUTTING THE PIECES AWAY.

Victor: What are you talking about?

Dr. Yahya: What am I talking about? Hmm, what am I talking about? Let's see...how many times did you stand me up, Mr. Mason?

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Victor: I don't know... 'bout two or three times.

Dr. Yahya: Several, Mr. Mason. *(He walks over and stands in front of Victor.)* I left my home country of Jamaica to come here and tutor you. Once I was here, I traveled nearly an hour to your estate three times and each time you weren't there. The fourth time, you wasted nearly an hour of my time before you finally decided to walk through the door. You didn't think I forgot about that, did you?

Victor: What? Is that what all this is about?

Dr. Yahya: Knock, knock, Mr. Mason. *(He begins knocking, literally, on Victor's head. Victor steps back.)*

Victor: Man, get yo' damn hands off me.

Dr. Yahya: Listen, Mr. Mason. Do you hear that?

Victor: Hear what?

Dr. Yahya: The sound of revenge. *(He grins).* Mmm...*(licks lips)* tastes good too. You wasted my time. Now, I have wasted yours.

Victor: You're crazy.

Dr. Yahya: Yep. *(He grabs his suitcase and hat and proceeds to the door. Before opening it up he turns around and speaks to Victor one last time.)* I think you're finally ready to begin your sessions, Mr. Mason. *(He looks around).* I guess this will be your college...this prison. Yes, this will be the rapper's college. *(Exits stage left).*

*Lights Dim.*

#### SCENE 49

*THE SCENE OPENS UP WITH VICTOR WALKING THROUGH THE DOOR TO THE MEETING ROOM, WHERE DR. YAHYA. IS ALREADY WAITING TO MEET HIM. HE IS WRITING: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER ON THE BOARD.*

Victor's Voice: Finally, Dr. Yahya was on time for the first time. When I walked in the room he was writing 'Knowledge is Power' on the blackboard.

Dr. Yahya: Good afternoon. Please sit down, Mr. Mason. (*He walks over and gives me a pencil and piece of paper.*) Mr. Mason, write what I have written on the board on your piece of paper.

Victor's Voice: Was this a joke? Why should I have to write this down? I hadn't written anything in so long I forgot which hand I was good at writing with. So for a moment, I struggled between hands as he continued writing other things on the board.

Victor: Why do I have to copy that down?

Dr. Yahya: Just do it, please. Is there a problem?

Victor: No, I just...I don't know why you want me to copy that down. You think I can't copy it or something?

Dr. Yahya: (*Turns around and looks at Victor.*) Victor, I never said you couldn't do anything. I just need you to copy down what you see on the board.

Victor's Voice: When I finally found the hand the pencil was most comfortable in it instantly triggered all kinds of thoughts and flashbacks I wasn't prepared to have. I grew angry as I sat there unable to copy what I saw legibly. I felt helpless. I broke the pencil and threw it clear across the room.

Dr. Yahya: (*Turns around in shock.*) Mr. Mason, what just happened?

Victor: (*Breathing abnormally, staring straight ahead.*) I hate this. I'm leaving.

*AS VICTOR GETS UP AND WALKS TO THE DOOR DR. YAHYA APPROACHES HIM FROM BEHIND. HE STOPS.*

Dr. Yahya: Is that what you do? Is that how you handle your fears? You walk away from challenges instead of facing them head on. Are you a coward, Mr. Mason?

*VICTOR IGNORES HIM AND CALLS FOR THE GUARD. HE IS ESCORTED OUT OF THE ROOM AND DOES NOT RETURN.*

Dr. Yahya: It's not going to go away. The fear will only go away when you realize you are more powerful than the thing that makes you afraid.

*AS THE LIGHTS DIM ON DR. YAHYA AND THE MEETING ROOM, VICTOR APPROACHES CENTER STAGE AND SITS DOWN. HE CURLS UP, HOLDING HIS LEGS AND ROCKS BACK AND FORTH AS VICTOR NARRATES:*

Victor's Voice: For weeks, I stayed away from Dr. Yahya and his sessions. Weeks turned into months. And as weeks turned into months my anger turned into bitterness. I got depressed. For days I didn't eat. The guards tried to get me to eat, but I wasn't hungry. When I did eat, it came back up. The prison physician said he couldn't find anything physically wrong with me. I could tell I was losing weight though. My cheeks were sinking into my face. And my arms were getting smaller. I wasn't only losing weight. I was losing my sense of manhood in this place.

#### **SCENE 50**

*IN SCENE 50, DEJA AND MICHELLE BOTH COME TO VISIT VICTOR IN JAIL FOR HIS BIRTHDAY. MICHELLE EMBRACES VICTOR AND LEAVES DEJA BEHIND TO SPEAK WITH HER BROTHER IN PRIVATE.*

Victor's Voice: For my birthday, Deja and Michelle came to see me. I was so grateful to see my little sister I didn't know what to do.

Victor: How's my lil' sis?

Deja: I'm good.

Victor: Yeah?

*THEY BOTH SIT DOWN AFTER EMBRACING EACH OTHER FOR A WHILE.*

Deja: Yeah, but why didn't you tell me your girl was crazy as hell?

Victor: Who, Michelle?

Deja: Yeah. She don' moved in and ere'thang. I can't even take a piss without her knowing.

Victor: *(laughs)* Just what yo' sneaky ass need. *(laughs)*.

Deja: I see you done lost weight.

Victor: Yeah, a little bit.

Deja: Look like a lot, V.

Victor: Yeah, I'm just not hungry.

Deja: Well, you need to start eatin' 'cause you look like you 'bout to disappear.

*Both grin.*

Victor: Alright, I'll start eatin' just for you.

Deja: Sounds good.

Victor: You a bad girl, you know that?

Deja: I know. I'm related to the *bad boy* (*pointing at Victor.*)

Victor's Voice: Seeing Deja in high spirits made me so happy. I thought she was angry at me. I thought she was holding my incarceration against me. But she was alright. She was happier than ever.

### SCENE 51

*IN SCENE 51, THE GUARD KNOCKS ON VICTOR'S CELL. HE HAS AN UNNAOUNCED VISITOR. VICTOR WONDERS WHO IT MUST BE. HE HAS NEVER HAD AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR BEFORE. AS THE GUARD LEADS HIM TO THE MEETING ROOM, HE SEES WHO IT IS...DR. YAHYA. HE WALKS IN ENRAGED.*

Victor: Man, didn't I tell you I would call you when I was ready to start the tutoring?

*THERE IS A LONG PAUSE AS DR. YAHYA THINK ON HOW HE SHOULD RESPOND TO VICTOR.*

Dr. Yahya: Actually, no you didn't. And besides, that's not what I came here for. Please sit down, Mr. Mason.

*VICTOR TURNS AROUND AND LOOKS AT THE GUARDS BEFORE TAKING A SEAT IN FRONT OF DR. YAHYA.*

Dr. Yahya: I have a message for you. *(Dr. Yahya pulls out a piece of paper and unfolds it. He begins reading it.)* Dear V., this is your brother, Malcolm. Just a minute. *(Dr. Yahya reaches into his pocket and pulls out his glasses. He puts them on and continues reading.)* You now you ass is crazy as hell. Wy you fuck that boy rising shit up like that Ha ha that's okay tho I know you wud say his ass dezervd it. You don't take no crap. he lucky he aint dead. Wach yo back cuz you know I aint there to help kick them niggas ass for you in whatever I love you in everything I'm real proud of you getting the tuta I didnt know who this boy was but when he toll me he was yo tuta I was like damn wow I'm shocked to see you did what me in mama been wantin you to do for a long time now Mama wud be so happy if she saw yo ass but not bein in jail She would be mad at that but happy you gettin school in all I heard that new joint standin strong That's aite. How you comin out wit new shit and yo ass in jail bitch Dang I wish I could see you Be good nigga. This is yo brother repprezintin that otha side til I die motha fucka R.I.P. Shantel Mason. Malcolm.

*FROM THE MOMENT VICTOR HEAR'S MALCOLM'S NAME HIS HEART IS SOFTENED WITH EACH WORD. BY THE END OF THE LETTER HE IS CRYING LIKE A BABY.*

Victor's Voice: I was humbled. I could barely move. That was my brother reaching out to me in the best way he knew how.

*DR.YAHYA REMOVES HIS GLASSES AND CAREFULLY PLACES THEM BACK INTO HIS POCKET. HE PASSES THE LETTER TO VICTOR. VICTOR TAKES INTO HIS HANDS AND LOOKS DOWN AT IT. HIS TEARS FALL ONTO THE LETTER. DR. YAHYA GETS UP AND PLACES HIS HAND ON VICTOR'S SHOULDER.*

Dr. Yahya: I'm here to help you, son. I want you to know that.

Victor: Can you write back to him for me?

Dr. Yahya: No. But if you let me teach you, you will write back to him for yourself.

Victor: Okay. Okay. Let's do it.

Dr. Yahya: Then, let's get started.

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Victor's Voice: Malcolm's letter was all the encouragement I needed in order to begin my learning with Dr. Yahya. For a whole four months I attended his rigorous sessions without interruption. I did everything he told me to do. I listened. And with hard work and consistency, I'd gone from not being able to read and write at all to reading and writing on a third grade level. My writing improved very quickly. Before I knew it I was writing full paragraphs.

## SCENE 52

*IN SCENE 52 VICTOR IS SEEN WRITING ON A PROJECTOR. WHAT HE WRITES IS PROJECTED ONTO A LARGE SCREEN FOR THE AUDIENCE TO SEE. AS HE WRITES HE ALSO READS SHOWING THE PROGRESS HE HAS MADE FROM NOT BEING ABLE TO WRITE KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.*

Dr. Yahya: Write, Mr. Mason. Write whatever comes to your mind. Say it as you write it.

Victor: Knowledge is power. (*Victor writes Knowledge is power.*) I love reading and writing. (*Victor writes I love reading and writing.*)

Dr. Yahya: Good, Mr. Mason. Now, let me try. I'm going to say something and I want you to write it down. Ready?

Victor: Yes.

Dr. Yahya: I am infinite. I am powerful. I am strong. I am man. I am woman. I am animal. I am a child. I am an elder. There is no height I cannot reach and no depth I cannot touch. I am as wide as the Universe and as tall as the stars. I can fly. I can swim. I can run. I can jump. I can do anything. I ain't no punk. And these words that I write they said I couldn't produce but it was always in me to pursue! I am Victorious.

Victor's Voice: I was so busy concentrating on my writing, I didn't even realize I had successfully written it all. When I looked behind me at the projection screen, I was amazed.

*AS DR. YAHYA SAYS THESE THINGS AT LEAST TWICE...AMAZINGLY, VICTOR WRITES OUT EACH SENTENCE AS IT IS SAID WITH SOME INVENTIVE SPELLING. NEVERTHELESS, ALL THE SENTENCES ARE*

THERE. DR. YAHYA WALKS TO VICTOR AND EMBRACES HIM. FOR HIS WORK IS DONE.

### SCENE 53

THE SCENE OPENS WITH VICTOR READING TO DR. YAHYAH OUT OF AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY BOOK. HE IS READING A CHAPTER DR. YAHYA HAS SELECTED AND SUMMARIZED FOR HIM TO READ ON HARRIET TUBMAN.

WITH HELP FROM DR. YAHYA HE IS READING ALMOST SUCCESSFULLY ON HIS OWN. DR. YAHYA STOPS HIM OCCASIONALLY TO ASK HIM IF HE UNDERSTANDS WHAT HE'S READING.

Victor: Yes. I get it.

Dr. Yahya: Good, keep reading.

VICTOR BEGINS BUT THEN STOPS SUDDENLY.

DR.YAHYA: Is something wrong?

Victor: No, I just think my brain size is increasing.

Dr.Yahya: No, the dumb brain cells are just being replaced with smart ones. I am reversing the effect of dyslexia on your mind, Mr. Mason. You are feeling the result.

AS VICTOR CONTINUES READING, VICTOR'S VOICE NARRATES:

Victor's Voice: My new ability to read and write sparked my interest in every thing legible. I wanted to read everything and I wanted to copy everything down. Every word I read opened a new door for me. Dr. Yahya brought me a journal that I wrote in every day. Every thought became a writing project for me. It was amazing to write things down and go back and be able to read them again.

Victor: *(Stops reading for a moment)* I just remembered I have something to show you. I've been working on Malcolm's letter.

Dr. Yahya: Well, read it to me.

VICTOR WALKS OVER AND PLACES THE BOOK HE IS READING DOWN ON THE TABLE. HE PICKS UP HIS JOURNAL AND WALKS TO CENTER

*STAGE. HE BEGINS TO READ HIS LETTER, WRITTEN TO MALCOLM TO THE AUDIENCE.*

Victor: Dear, Malcolm. What's up? I got your letter. I was so grateful to hear from you. I wanted to write back to you right away, but I couldn't. Dr. Yahya said if I let him teach me how to read and write then I could write you back sooner or later. Your letter encouraged me to do what mama wanted me to do for years. So I listened to Dr. Yahya and he helped me bust out of my mental cage, Malcolm. And soon, I'll be out of this physical one. And as soon as I am, I'm coming to see you. R.I.P. Shantel Mason. Love, Victor.

Dr. Yahya: Very good, young man. Let's send it off.

Lights dim.

Victor's Voice: Once I learned how to read and write a whole new world had been opened up to me. Everywhere I went I could now read the signs and things posted on the walls. I felt like my new knowledge made room for me to become a new man. It worked in my favor. I was released a year early because of my improvements.

#### SCENE 54

*IN SCENE 54 VICTOR'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS GREET HIM AS HE WALKS THROUGH THE DOOR OF HIS HOME FOR THE FIRST TIME AFTER BEING IMPRISONED FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS. HE IS EMBRACED BY ALL.*

Victor's Voice: I was never so grateful to be out of jail and to be free. When I got home I expected a huge crowd and sure enough, everybody was at my house waiting for me. It never felt so good to be around good company. I never ate so much food in all my life and it never tasted that good. My music never sounded so good in my ears and I was never so happy to be surrounded by the people I loved.

#### SCENE 54

*VICTOR, TY, AND BEAST ARE WALKING IN A PARKING GARAGE BACK TO THEIR CAR FROM A BUSINESS MEETING WITH BIG TIME RECORDS. THE MEETING WAS SUCCESSFUL AND THEY ARE LAUGHING AND HAVING A GOOD TIME WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN THEY ARE ATTACKED.*

Victor's Voice: A few months later, it was back to business as usual. I'd put a funny little adolescent song out to deter people's minds from my recent prison release and booked a few talk show gigs. Ty, Beast, and I were just coming back from a meeting with Big Time Records when all of a sudden we were attacked.

Attacker 1: Get down on ya knees and get ya hands in the air, all you motha-fuckas!

*INSTANTLY, ALL OF THEM OBEY THE ORDERS.*

Attacker 2: *(Sees Beast reaching for his gun and grabs it fast.)* What you gon' do wit this? *(The attacker takes the gun and swipes Beast across the face with it. He tumbles to the ground and musters back up to his knees. The attacker knocks him down again.)*

Attacker 3 walks up to Victor and punches him in the stomach and begins beating him in the face. Both Attacker 3 and 4 begin beating Victor. When it is all over Victor can barely walk.

## SCENE 55

*IN THIS SCENE TY IS SEEN LEAVING OUT OF VICTOR'S HOUSE, STATING HE HAS TO GET HOME. BEAST AND TY ARE SEATED ON THE LIVING ROOM COUCH. DEJA GIVES BEAST SOME ICE AND BEGINS WRAPPING GAUZE AROUND VICTOR'S BRUISED ARM.*

Victor's Voice: I was lucky I made it out of that alive. I was lucky to still have my life.

Beast: This dude is crazy man. If he ain't forgot about what you did to him after all this time he ain't gon' forget. I'm tellin' you. I've got a wife and kids at home. I can't live like this, man. You gon' have to do something or I quit. *(Beast gets up and exits.)*

Victor's Voice: Beyond the shadow of a doubt it was Rising King's boys who did this to us. Beast was right. If I intended to be around to raise Deja and not leave her again, I was going to have to settle this somehow. I knew I would have to confront him. And so, I did.

## SCENE 56

*RISING KING IS BEING INTERVIEWED BY A NEWS ANCHOR WHILE SEVERAL PEOPLE ARE ALL AROUND, GREETING EACH OTHER, PASSING AROUND HOT CHOCOLATE AND PREPARING FOR THE COAT GIVEAWAY. HE HAS A PATCH OVER HIS RIGHT EYE FROM VICTOR'S ATTACK ON HIM. VICTOR SEES THIS AS THE OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO CONFRONT HIM AND SO HE DOES.*

Victor's Voice: The day I confronted Rising King was the day I took my second step to becoming a real man. It was cold outside and snowing. We happened to be in the same place at the same time. Several important people from all over the city had been invited to appear and take part in a charitable event. We were asked to hand out winter clothing to several homeless people in the city. As my crew and I walked through the doors we saw Rising King being interviewed. This was the safest time to confront him.

*VICTOR WALKS OVER AND STANDS IN FRONT OF THE INTERVIEWER.*

INTERVIEWER: Excuse me.

Rising King: Yeah, excuse you. What are you doing? There you go barging in again.

Victor: Look, dude...you and I...we gotta squash this shit right now. We been beefin' for some years now. And when I look around I still can't believe it's been that long. I'm sorry about what happened between Iviana and I. I'm sorry for what happened between you and I. I wish I could take it back. But I can't. All I know is, I'm ready to move on with my life.

Victor's Voice: I was calling it truce. I didn't care what anyone else thought about it. It was because of me Rising King would never be able to see out of his right eye again. Enough damage had been done.

*VICTOR PUTS HIS HAND OUT FOR RISING KING TO SHAKE, BUT AS THE CROWD LOOKS ON RISING KING SIMPLY WALKS AWAY from him, BUMPING INTO VICTOR'S SHOULDER INTENTIONALLY as he passed by.*

Victor's Voice: I never heard or seen Rising King again after that day.

**SCENE 57**

*IN THIS SCENE VICTOR AND DR. YAHYA ARE STANDING IN FRONT OF VICTOR'S HOME. DR. YAHYA IS GETTING READY TO GO BACK TO HIS COUNTRY.*

Victor's Voice: Today, Dr. Yahya leaves us. He is getting ready to return to his country. For his job here is complete.

Victor: I wish you didn't have to go *(walking up to Dr. Yahya.)*

Dr. Yahya: Ah, but I must. My job here is complete...but yours is just beginning.

Victor: I know. Thank you for everything.

Dr. Yahya: I want you to keep reading and writing, Victor. It is very important that you do.

Victor: You are saving the world, man.

Dr. Yahya: One word at a time.

*(DR.YAHYA LEANS IN AND EMBRACES VICTOR. HE HOLDS ON TO VICTOR FOR A MOMENT before releasing him.)*

Victor's Voice: For a moment, I felt like I was saying goodbye to my dad. I held back my tears. I was really grateful for this man. He'd changed my whole life.

Dr. Yahya: You're not done yet, Mr. Mason.

Victor: What do you mean?

Dr. Yahya: If you stop here you haven't gotten as far as your mom wanted.

Victor's Voice: Instantly, I remembered what he was talking about...college. Mama always wanted me to go to college. But more importantly, I wanted to go back.

And my first time stepping onto a college campus was in the middle of July. It was the first day of the beginning of my life. I kept thinking how proud mama would be to see me

enrolling myself at the same university she graduated from years later.

### SCENE 58

*VICTOR ENTERS STAGE LEFT INTO A COLLEGE SETTING. HE LOOKS AROUND BEWILDERED AS THERE ARE EXTRAS WALKING AROUND as college students. They are looking at him BECAUSE THEY RECOGNIZE HIM AS the famous RAP ARTIST, Victorious. BUT VICTOR IS IN HIS OWN WORLD.*

Victor's Voice: Two years later all eyes were on me as I walked onto the stage to receive my degree in Music. As I stood there wondering how a person who once hated school as much as I did turned out to be such a good student, I realized this was only the beginning of how far my skills would take me. I AM VICTORIOUS!

*VICTOR NOW WALKS TO MID-STAGE, CLOTHED WITH A GOWN AND A GRADUATION HAT AFTER HE IS GIVEN A COLLEGE DEGREE. HE APPROACHES CENTER STAGE AND GIVES ONE LAST PERFORMANCE.*

*THE OUTRO COMES ON AND THE CROWD CHEERS VICTORIOUS ON. THE CROWD THEN ENCOURAGES THE AUDIENCE TO BECOME APART OF THE CROWD AS VICTORIOUS RAPS HIS FINAL TUNE:*

Victor: This one didn't make it to the shelves, ya'll. They said it was too suggestive. I wonder why. Uh, here we go. What ya'll think uh this? What ya'all think uh this? It ain't enough of us...it ain't enough of us. What it suppose to be...ain't what it seemed to be. What y'all think uh this? What y'all think uh this? Wonda why it ain't neva what it seemed to be. You wanna be everything plastered on the TV. What if the whole show was wonderfully rigged, cause they created what they wanted you to dig. So you grew up to be exactly, as a matter of factly. And the fame and the fortune came so gladly. Everything, so many things all for free. Not so easy when the world given to you at eighteen. Grew up in the projects, called a reject, mama tried to protect, now it's time to reflect. Now I'm the nigga that wrecks? All the awards and the charts I brought down, but I still bring the stage down at the Underground. And it don't have to be about them ho's. And it don't have to be about makin' that do'. All it's gotta be about is what's supposed, imposed, disposed, then repoed. I'm talkin 'bout the truth that's made lame. The one that you tried so desperately to defame. What ya'll think uh this? What

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y'all think uh this? Of the little boy who couldn't accomplish. The boy who never knew his daddy wasn't his. Words escaping off the page, while the pen was jerkin, and what the teacher did wasn't workin. Somebody had to turn the switch off. Then that somebody had to turn the switch on. And when it came on I made this song. From procrastination to emancipation, now it's time for me to make a declaration. I got the knowledge and the tools, now it's time to get prepared to use, the machine in my head that was so confused now powers me on like an electric fuse. It's always hidden in books never on TV, the things they want to say in privacy. This knowledge is power, it ain't up for refute, the written word will be your parachute.

Lights Dim and curtain closes.

THE END