

# **PRECIOUS**

by

Geoffrey Fletcher

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**Shooting Script**

1.16.08

A line at a time, the following quote appears over a black screen.

Every blade of grass has its Angel  
that bends over it and whispers,  
"Grow, grow."

The Talmud

FADE IN:

1987

1 EXT HARLEM STREET - DAY

1

A COLD WIND blows a bright red scarf tangled high on a street lamp.

An iron waste bin is blown sideways into an intersection. A stray dog investigates it briefly, urinates and then moves on.

A book bag drops onto the pavement.

Visible from the waist down, a LARGE YOUNG WOMAN in a disintegrating leather jacket turns the waste bin upright and then maneuvers it onto the sidewalk.

Once finished, her thick hands wipe each other until they stop abruptly.

Here, for the first time, we see her PLUMP, YOUTHFUL, VACANT AFRICAN AMERICAN FACE. It is 16-YEAR-OLD PRECIOUS JONES. Something inside the bin has caught her attention.

Precious gazes down upon a soiled and tattered paperback book as the breath from her nostrils steams. The title of the book staring back up at her is unintelligible.

She pushes debris aside to get to it.

The book plunges deeper into the trash, as if trying to flee.

The sound of an ONCOMING CAR approaches.

Precious pins the book against the bottom of the bin as the sounds of the oncoming car close in.

Precious finally comes up with the book. Its title is still unintelligible. When she flips it over, however, the letters on the cover, which are facing us now, make sense. They read CRYSTAL STAIR: SELECTED WORKS BY LANGSTON HUGHES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The car sounds incredibly close.

Precious looks sharply to her left.

AN EERIE SKID precedes an eerier THUD! Precious, almost hit, falls back on to the pavement as her book skips across the intersection and down into a drain.

She lays on the sidewalk pressed against the base of the street lamp with her eyes closed.

The car reverses, skids, stops for a sec, shifts and SCREECHES off.

The garbage bin, overturned yet again, rocks side to side until settling, to a stop.

An ambulance eases up to the intersection.

When the stoplight changes, the ambulance motors past Precious in no hurry. A moment later, its sirens BLARE and it speeds off into the distance.

The stray dog returns, re-investigates the garbage bin, and turns to Precious. He licks her face. Tom Cruise walks up to her.

Precious' still vacant eyes finally open to see Tom, and the red scarf falling from the street lamp towards her. Tom gives her a hand up.

TOM

(flirtatious)

What's your name girl?

Precious blushes.

TOM

What's your name?

Precious still blushing, looks on the ground.

FADE TO BLACK.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

My name is Precious Jones. I wanna take tap dance lessons. Mama said we can't afford it.

A SCHOOL BELL RINGS.

R2 INT. INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL 111/HALLWAY - DAY R2 \*

The end of a final wave of students head to class. \*

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Plus she say who wanna see me  
dancing anyway. I goes to I.S. 111.  
In Harlem. New York. Today I was  
almost late. That'd a been a  
problem.

Precious scurries behind them donning the red scarf and  
lugging her book bag. \*

3

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

3

Precious sits in the last row behind 26 children half her size, 3 years younger and mostly African American. Noise and projectiles fill the air.

MR. WICHER -A FRAIL MAN IN A BOW TIE AND TWEED COAT, stands at the head of the class trying to establish order.

MR. WICHER

Class, would you please turn to  
page 122 ...Class! 122!

Precious' book stays closed as the other students find the page.

TWO BOYS in front of Precious giggle boisterously at some private joke.

Mr. Wicher looks annoyed but accustomed to this.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I like maff but I don't say nuffin'  
-don't open my book even. Just sit  
there.

The giggling boys continue their shenanigans.

MR. WICHER

Boys?

The boys finally open their books.

MR. WICHER

Page 122 please.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Everyday I tell myself something  
gonna happen, like I'm gonna break  
through or somebody gonna break  
through to me -I'm gonna learn,  
catch up, be normal, sit in the  
front ...someday.

The giggling flares up again. Precious sneers at the boys.

MR. WICHER

Today we are going to review  
Monday's assignment. Would anyone  
like to begin?

The boys get louder.

CONTINUED:

Mr. Wicher looks at them helplessly.

MR. WICHER

Boys! ! !

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I like Mr. Wicher. I pretend he my husband and we live in Weschesser, wherever that is. I can see by his eyes Mr. Wicher like me too. I wish I could tell him all the pages in my book look the same to me, but I can't..

BOY# 1

Excuse you?!

The entire class cries, "OOOOOH". Mr. Wicher looks scared.

BOY # 1

Nobody 'spect us to learn nuffin no way. Now I'm tryin' to have a motherfuckin' conversation back here if you don't mind Mr. Bitcher, I mean, Mr. Wicher.

The boys fallout slapping hands.

The class turns to Mr. Wicher in unison to see what he will do.

MR. WICHER

I want to see you boys after class.

BOY# 2

Sorry Mr. Wicher but you ain't my type. Grow some tits.

MR. WICHER

Just be quiet.

Mr. Wicher tries to carry on throughout the boys' unrelenting defiance. Other students are continually distracted by the boys. Precious looks bothered the most as Mr. Wicher's soft voice loses the battle.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I feels sorry for Mr. Wicher. He do his best but he ain't got no voice. He scared too. I feels sorry for him.

The boys break out in RIOTOUS LAUGHTER until ...

3

CONTINUED: (2)

3

CRASH! A desk slams against the floor. The boys whirl around to see two large hands take hold of them and snatch them out of their chairs.

Precious has had enough.

PRECIOUS

Shut up motherfuckers, I'm trying to learn something! Hard enuff wiffout you stupid clowns carryin' on!

BOY# 1

(trembling)

...sorry Precious.

BOY# 2

(trembling)

We cool.

Precious shoves them down in their seats and huffs.

PRECIOUS

Stupid asses... Go on 'bout cha lesson Mr. Wicher. They ain' gonna give you no more trouble today.

Precious turns her desk upright and sits back down. Mr. Wicher looks grateful.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I'm like the polices for Mr. Wicher. Tha's why I can't be late to maff.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. Someone is outside the classroom.

Mr. Wicher waves her inside.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN, A SKINNY WOMAN IN HER THIRTIES WEARING A DARK SKIRT SUIT enters, squints to find Precious, points briefly and then whispers something to Mr. Wicher. Precious rolls her eyes.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Now dis ...

Mrs. Lichenstein sends Precious an oversized grin and beckons to her.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

Claireece ...

3

CONTINUED: (3)  
Precious sighs.

3

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
What this bitch want? Claireece ...  
Only motherfuckers I hate call me  
Claireece.

Precious gathers her belongings. The other children watch every move in silence. When she reaches the front of the class ...

PRECIOUS  
You gonna be okay Mr. Wicher?

MR. WICHER  
(forcing a smile)  
Of course Precious. Thank you.

An unconvinced Precious grins sadly as Mrs. Lichenstein motions for Precious to step out ahead of her.

Mr. Wicher looks abandoned. The door closing behind Precious might as well be to a prison cell block. Noise inside the classroom returns immediately.

R4

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

R4

Precious heads off down the wide hallway in silence.

\*

R5

INT. MRS. LICHENSTEIN'S OFFICE - DAY

R5

Precious waits among plants, plaques, pictures and file cabinets while Mrs. Lichenstein sits across from her reading from a file.

Mrs. Lichenstein closes the file and sets it on the desk between them.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
Are you pregnant? You're sixteen,  
still in junior high school and  
pregnant with your second child.  
Correct Claireece? Claireece are  
you pregnant again?

Precious stares at the file without responding.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
Do you have any thoughts about your  
situation?

Precious shrugs her shoulders.

R5 CONTINUED:

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
Claireece?

Precious doesn't respond.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
(beat)  
Claireece, I'm talking to you.

Precious doesn't respond.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
Claireece?!

PRECIOUS  
Am I in trouble?

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
What?

PRECIOUS  
Am I in trouble?

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
...No.

PRECIOUS  
(beat)  
Then I don't want to miss no more  
of maff class.

Precious starts to rise.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
(firmly)  
Sit down Claireece.

Precious sits and sighs.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
(beat)  
You know what I think? I think we  
should have a parent-teacher  
conference - me, you and your mom.

PRECIOUS  
My muver is busy.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN  
Well maybe I could arrange to come  
to your house.

R5 CONTINUED: (2)

PRECIOUS

My muver wouldn't like that.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

Well then Claireece, I'm afraid I'm going to have to suspend you.

PRECIOUS

For what?

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

You're pregnant.

PRECIOUS

That ain't fair. I ain' done nuffin! I doose my work. I ain' in no trouble. My grades is good...

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

Your attitude is one of total uncooperation and that won't help a thing...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Now I heard everything. Nosy ass white bitch mad 'cause she can't come over my house. I don't be coming to this bitch's house in Weschesser. I'll be damned. I done heard everything. White bitch wanna visit. Then I thought about Mr. Wicher all alone up against the fools in his maff class ...

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

I'm not the enemy here. If there's something going on at home that you would like to talk about, you should feel free to do so here. If you find that the added stress of caring for your child is affecting your concentration, that would be helpful to know.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

Now according to our records, your mother also looks after the child. Is that correct?

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

No kids on her pictures. Maybe she jealous. I still don't say nuffin.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

Are you in contact with the father?  
(beat)  
Is he at all involved in your child's care?

No answer.

R5 CONTINUED: (3)

R5

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

Fine! If that's the way you wanna  
play it, we can do this all day.

The hand on Precious' lap makes a fist.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Thas when I knew I'd never get back  
to maff class ...Lawd I hate this  
hoe.

Precious lunges from her chair and reaches over the desk.  
Mrs. Lichenstein vaults backwards in terror and tumbles to  
the floor.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

SECURITY! SECURITY!

R6 INT. MRS. LICHENSTEIN'S OUTER OFFICE AREA - DAY

R6

\*

Precious bursts out of Mrs. Lichenstein's office and walks to  
the exit. Mrs. Lichenstein's distant voice still cries for  
security.

R7 INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

R7

\*

Precious heads down the hall without looking back. Mrs.  
Lichenstein's CRIES are still audible.

\*

8 INT. PRECIOUS' APT 444 LENOX AVE. - DAY

8

A faucet runs.

Precious stands over the sink washing dishes. A moment later,  
a WOMAN'S VOICE speaks over the sound of a TELEVISION.

MARY (O.S)

You get my cigarettes?

Precious freezes. Her HEART BEATS loudly.

PRECIOUS

(delicately)

No Mama, I dropped some of my  
thangs on the way to school.

A SCREECHING CAR echoes distantly.

MARY - INCREDIBLY LARGE, OILY SKIN, ILL-FITTED WIG AND HOUSE  
DRESS sits on the couch with her back turned to Precious.  
This woman looks as if she is one with the furniture.

8

CONTINUED:

8

A cigarette smolders between her fingers as she watches "THE PRICE IS RIGHT" on television.

Precious, still waiting for the other shoe to drop, looks momentarily relieved and returns to the dishes until ...

CRACKKKK!

A thick glass ashtray smashes into Precious' head.

Precious falls and lands ...

9

INT. PRECIOUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

9

...onto a bed completely naked.

CARL KENWOOD JONES, A LARGE AND NAKED MAN MUCH MORE THAN TWICE HER AGE falls on top of her and gyrates.

Moments later...

PRECIOUS  
(softly)  
Daddy?

An enormous hand muzzles her.

Precious lays there impassively as her vacant eyes fixate on a long crack in the ceiling.

As we drift towards the crack it seems to widen -to open into another world where...

10

EXT. RED CARPET - NIGHT

10

Blinding flashbulbs pop everywhere.

Precious walks the red carpet with Tom Cruise. They head toward the entrance of the theatre stopping occasionally to sign autographs. Both sport matching sunglasses. The paparazzi is going wild.

THUNDER RUMBLES. Precious removes her sunglasses and searches the sky.

A LIGHTENING CRACK ROARS. Rain starts to fall as ...

11 INT. PRECIOUS' BEDROOM -NIGHT 11

Drops of water seep from the crack in the ceiling accompanied by the sound of distant THUNDER and MASCULINE GRUNTS morphing into...

MARY (O.S.)  
(at the top of her lungs)  
I SAID I'M HONGRY YOU FAT LITTLE  
PIGGY CUNT BITCH!!! Git your  
Jezebel ass up and git to dinner  
'fore I give you something to cry  
about.

12 INT. KITCHEN 444 LENOX AVE. - DUSK 12

Eyes closed with ashes and tears on her face, Precious lays still on the floor. Her hands are still wet from the dishes.

GOOOSH! 2 gallons of water splash down on her. Her eyes spring open.

Mary stands over Precious with a large dripping pot in her hands. She drops it on the floor and returns to the couch to watch another program.

MARY  
...I ain' gon' say it again.

13 INT. KITCHEN - LATER 13

Pots and pans sizzle on the stove.

Precious, now wearing a dry T-shirt, tends to dinner meticulously until ...

ANNNNT! The sharp sound of a BUZZER rings.

Mary and Precious turn to the door in unison.

MARY  
Tell them assholes to stop ringing  
my bell.

Here is our first good look at Mary. She wares way too much make up.

Precious wipes her hands and heads for the door though Mary sits much closer to it.

13

CONTINUED:

13

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

No one ever ring the bell but crack  
addicts. I hates crack addicts.  
Give the ghetto a bad name.

Precious presses TALK on the intercom.

PRECIOUS

Stop ringing the goddam buzzer  
motherfucker!

Precious heads back to the dishes until ...

ANNNT! The buzzer again.

Precious returns to the intercom.

PRECIOUS

Stop ringing the goddam buzzer.

ANNNT!

PRECIOUS

Stop it!

ANNNT!

PRECIOUS

Stop it!

MARY

Press LISTEN stupid.

Precious sighs and presses LISTEN.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

It's Sondra Lichenstein for  
Claireece and Ms. Mary Johnston.

Precious' face goes blank. Mary looks alarmed and mutes the  
television.

MARY

Who that Precious?

PRECIOUS

White bitch from school.

14

EXT. 444 LENOX AVE. - NIGHT

14

Mrs. Lichenstein stands by the buzzer bundled up. THUMPING  
RAP MUSIC FROM A CAR passes behind her.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:  
She bounces lightly to the beat.

14

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Lord, where is crack addicts when  
you need 'em...

15 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. - NIGHT

15

Precious and Mary still try to sort this out.

MARY  
What she want?

PRECIOUS  
I don't know.

MARY  
Ask her stupid.

Precious presses TALK.

PRECIOUS  
What you want?

Precious presses LISTEN.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN (O.S.)  
I want to talk to you about your  
education.

MARY  
Eighty-six that bitch.

Precious looks unsure.

16 EXT. 444 LENOX AVE. - NIGHT

16

A young man exits the building smoking a cigarette. Mrs. Lichenstein puts her hands together, dramatically pleads for a smoke and gets one.

She puts it in her mouth and lights hers to his. Bouncing to stay warm, she nods in gratitude as the man walks off.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
This bitch crazy. 'Sides, my muver  
don't want to get cut off welfare  
and that's what Mrs. Lichenstein  
comin' to visit result in. It's  
hard to believe a hoe dis retarded  
sposed to educate somebody.

17 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. - NIGHT

17

Precious presses TALK.

PRECIOUS

Git outa here Mrs. Lichenstein  
'fore I kick your ass.

ANNNT!

Precious presses LISTEN.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN (O.S.)

Claireece I am so sorry about  
today. I only want to help you. I  
...Mr. Wicher says you're one of  
his best students and that you have  
an aptitude for math -or at least  
potential.

(beat)

I've called a Mrs. McKnight at  
Higher Education Alternative / Each  
One Teach One. It's an alternative  
school.

(beat)

Claireece, are you listening?

Precious looks at her mother. Mary clearly finds this all  
bizarre.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN (O.S.)

Claireece, did you hear me?

Precious presses TALK.

PRECIOUS

Yeah.

Precious presses LISTEN.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN (O.S.)

I've called Ms. McKnight at Each  
One Teach One. It's located on the  
nineteenth floor of the Hotel  
Theresa on 125th Street. That's not  
too far from here.

Precious presses TALK.

PRECIOUS

I know where that is.

Precious releases the button.

17 CONTINUED:

17

PRECIOUS

Bitch.

Precious presses LISTEN.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN (O.S.)

The phone number is 555-0831. I told them about you. Call or drop in, nineteenth floor.

PRECIOUS

I heard you the first time.

MRS. LICHENSTEIN

Listen Claireece... If you go down tomorrow.... Look, they have just started their semester. You may be a day or 2 late... Give it a try.

18 EXT. 444 LENOX AVE. - NIGHT

18

Mrs. Lichenstein bounds off into the night with her cigarette.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I don't know what an alternative school is but I feel I want to know...

19 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. -NIGHT

19

Precious leans against the refrigerator glowing.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

My heart is all warm...Mr. Wicher say I'm a good student.

There is silent movement behind Precious.

Mary approaches quietly wielding a skillet.

Mary swings for a head shot but Precious easily sidesteps the blow.

The refrigerator takes the hit and a new dent.

Precious stares calmly at her mother.

Mary almost looks ashamed.

Still aglow, Precious grins absently at her mother and then leaves the kitchen.

19

CONTINUED:

19

Mary watches her go and then struts back to the television speaking to herself.

MARY

School can't help none. Go down welfare. Who she think she is?

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

(beat)

Think she cute now right? Shoulda kept her mouf shut. Uppity now cause he give her more childrens than he did me. Should've kept her damn mouf shut. Stupid little pig. Who she think she is? What I'm sposed to do for cig'rettes now?

20 INT. PRECIOUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

20

Precious, now dressed for bed and still beaming, pulls the covers to her chest.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

21 EXT. HARLEM CITYSCAPE - DAWN

21

The sun rises into the sky. The shadow of a tree draws shorter as does that of an open gate.

22 PRECIOUS' BEDROOM - DAY

22

The clock on the night stand reads 8:29.

We drift back to find Precious sitting on the side of her bed fully dressed with neon yellow leggings and her red scarf as she stares at the clock.

Various sheets of colored construction paper display Precious' handprints on the wall. Their sizes increase progressively and end beside a poster of Cyndi Lauper.

When the clock reads 8:30, Precious stands, looks in a mirror, sees a pretty blond white girl and leaves the room.

23 INT. PRECIOUS' APT - DAY

23

Precious heads for the front door.

MARY

Where you going?

DUNK, CLINK, CLONK, CLANK -Precious opens 4 locks with swift precision.

MARY

You hear me talking to you?!

Precious leaves slamming the door behind her.

24

EXT. 444 LENOX AVE. -DAY

24

We track with Precious as she exits her building. RUBY, A DARK-SKINNED HEAVY-SET LITTLE GIRL WITH A "NATURAL" HAIRSTYLE WHO COULD EASILY PASS FOR A YOUNGER PRECIOUS, trails Precious. A naked blond armless Barbie doll dangles by it's hair from Ruby's hand.

RUBY

Precious when we gon' play?

PRECIOUS

(without turning around)

Ain' you s'posed to be in school?

RUBY

You said we was gon' play.

PRECIOUS

See, thas jus exackly why we ain' gon' be playin'. I never said nuffin like it.

RUBY

Why not?

PRECIOUS

Cause you a mess. Look at ya' -no style, no friends, no mama, no daddy.

RUBY

So?! I ain' the only one.

Precious stops abruptly and turns around.

PRECIOUS

What you say?!

RUBY

...nuffin.

PRECIOUS

Thas what I thought.

Precious heads away into the distance.

RUBY

I check in wif you tomorrow Precious.

PRECIOUS (O.S.)

You do that.

25

EXT. STREET - DAY

25

Precious walks gazing upward.

Street lamps pass beneath the sky as autumn leaves fall from nowhere.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I'm lookin' up. Lookin' out for a piano to fall, a desk, couch, TV, Mama maybe? Always somethin' in the way. Alternative. I'm gon' see all about it.

BOY'S VOICE

Watch where you goin' Orca!

Precious looks down to find three skinny boys, each much smaller than she, taunting her.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Then my mind come back down to Earf.

2ND BOY

Shut up fool, she gon' eat you.

The boys burst out in laughter slapping hands and grabbing their crotches.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Boyz always been little things that laff and grab they selves -cept for when I's real big and pregnant wif my first baby. Then boyz don't say nuffin. They stand out the way real quiet like I'm Queen of England...

Pointing at her leggings, the boys erupt some more.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Still, I wonder...what could I wear that boyz don't laff?

Precious crashes to the ground. The boys look surprised a moment and then howl harder than ever.

PRECIOUS

I always be fallin like that when my mind be wanderin. Mama say I gonna fall to my death one day. Wonder what that be like?

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19.

25 CONTINUED: 25  
The boys continue to taunt her from above. Precious stares into space as if they aren't there.

CUT TO:

26 INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY 26  
Precious in Black leotards, fishnet stockings and patent leather shoes tap dancing away. She finishes her number as Tom Cruise walks into frame clapping. Tom gives her a hug and a friendly lick on the ear.

27 EXT. STREET - PRESENT - DAY 27  
Precious continues to stare into space as a dog licks on her ear.

28 EXT. 125TH STREET - DAY 28  
Precious walks amongst a crowd of people and stops to stare at the Hotel Theresa, a beautiful pre-war building.

29 INT. HOTEL THERESA - DAY 29  
Precious enters the lobby. An older black man in a blue uniform sits in a chair reading the Daily News through thick glasses.

He doesn't move, react, speak to or look at Precious as she passes him.

Precious glances back at him as she reaches the elevators, presses the button and waits.

The elevator doors open. Precious steps inside and turns around. Her eyes widen and time slows down. The sound of WIND rises.

Moments later, Precious snaps out of her daze and hastily pushes button 19.

The doors close.

30 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY 30  
Precious rises....5....8....14....15....and....

DING! 19.

The elevator doors fly open.

31 INT. HOTEL THERESA 19TH FLOOR - DAY

31

Precious steps out to find an AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN IN HER EARLY 30'S WEARING HER HAIR IN "CORNROWS".

She sits behind a desk while speaking on the phone.

CORNROWS

Why do you say that shit when you don't mean it Trey? I'm not playing with you and I know that wasn't your damn sister neither....because you don't have one...Fine. Yeah, whatever.

Cornrows slams the phone down, mumbles and looks over a file.

PRECIOUS

This the alternative?

CORNROWS

(looking up)

The what?

PRECIOUS

This the alternative?

CORNROWS

What exactly are you looking for?

PRECIOUS

(pointing)

Well what is this here?

CORNROWS

This is Higher Education  
Alternative / Each One Teach One.

PRECIOUS

I'm looking for alternative school.

CORNROWS

This is an alternative school.

PRECIOUS

What alternative is?

CORNROWS

What are you asking me?

PRECIOUS

Alternative. The lady from my other school tell me to come here to Hotel Theresa, nineteenth floor, it's "alternative" school.

CORNROWS

Each One Teach One is an alternative school and an alternative school is like a choice, a different way to do something.

PRECIOUS

Oh.

CORNROWS

You need your discharge papers from your old school saying they have formally discharged you or we can't allow you in the program.

PRECIOUS

I got kicked out 'cause I was pregnant.

CORNROWS

You still need formal discharge papers or we can't let you in. It's the law.

PRECIOUS

Mrs. Lichenstein ain' say all that.

CORNROWS

Oh you're the one Mrs. Lichenstein called about.

PRECIOUS

What she say?

CORNROWS

(searching papers)

Are you Claireece P. Jones?

PRECIOUS

Thas me.

CORNROWS

Well the principal at I.S. 111 already sent your discharge papers and stuff over.

31 CONTINUED: (2)

PRECIOUS

What stuff?

CORNROWS

Your academic record.

Suddenly, Precious looks very concerned.

CORNROWS

Are you all right?

Precious looks both angry and disappointed.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I thought this was new start. File  
and tesses chase me to the grave.

CORNROWS

Claireece?

PRECIOUS

Huh?

CORNROWS

We had to have certain information  
before we could accept you into the  
program. So really, their sending  
your records over was just a way of  
speeding things up for you.

PRECIOUS

Can I start today?

CORNROWS

Yup. The only other thing we need  
right now is income verification.  
Are you currently receiving AFDC?

PRECIOUS

No...My muver get AFDC for me and  
my daughter.

CORNROWS

Oh, you've had amniocentesis?

PRECIOUS

Huh?

CORNROWS

You said your mother has custody of  
you and your daughter?

31 CONTINUED: (3)

31

PRECIOUS

Not this baby! I got another one  
'sides this coming.

CORNROWS

Oh I see. Your mother has custody  
of you and your daughter so you're  
on her budget.

Precious nods.

CORNROWS

Okay, well I need a copy of your  
mother's budget and a current phone  
or utilities bill, okay?

PRECIOUS

I got to go get all that now?

CORNROWS

No, relax. We're just gonna give you  
a few tests -test your reading and  
math level, see where to place you.

PRECIOUS

What's the difference?

CORNROWS

Well, to enter G.E.D. classes a  
student should be able to read on  
an eighth-grade level. They should  
score 8.0 or better on the TABE  
reading test.

PRECIOUS

I was in ninfe grade at I.S. Ill.

CORNROWS

(smiling)

Then you should have no problem.

Precious doesn't look as convinced.

CUT TO:

32 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

32

ECU - SHEET OF PAPER

Precious neatly writes CLAIREECE P. JONES on the top of the  
page.

(CONTINUED)

32

CONTINUED:

32

Precious sits alone behind a smattering of empty desks in a bright classroom.

She looks over her test, exhales and starts to write.

DISSOLVE TO:

33

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

33

A TICKING CLOCK accompanies ...

...misspelled words

...eraser shreds

...tapping feet

...sweat

...giant letters

...tapping thumb

...tapping pencil

...frowns

...giant numbers

...eraser shreds

...sighs

BZZZPFFT!

Precious looks up sharply.

A square fluorescent light in the ceiling blinks and buzzes as if struggling to stay alive.

We tilt down from the blinking light to find that we are in a different place ...

34

INT. DIFFERENT CLASSROOM - DAY

34

A YOUNGER PRECIOUS with uncombed hair sits with her back to us in a bright pink dress. She is at the very back of the classroom.

34

CONTINUED:

34

The many children seated in front of her are all blurs that gradually fade into darkness while raising their hands.

As we drift towards young Precious, the stains on her dress become more apparent.

As we continue drifting, the PLAYGROUND VOICES OF OTHER YOUNG CHILDREN ECHO out...

GIRL # 1 (O.S.)  
...What that on your dress  
Precious?

GIRL # 2 (O.S.)  
She don't say nuffin'. She don't  
talk to nobody.

GIRL # 1 (O.S.)  
She nasty.

GIRL # 3 (O.S.)  
When the last time yo head was  
combed?

Precious mumbles something to herself.

GIRL # 4 (O.S.)  
...What?! Shut up Precious. You  
talk funny. You was better when you  
was on mute.

BOY  
Here come the wide load...

Boys makes a lengthy FARTING sound triggering a CHORUS OF LAUGHTER.

Our drift finally lands on a puddle of urine at her feet.

GIRL # 5 (O.S.)  
Teacher! Teacher! Precious  
peeded herself again!

GIGGLES fill the air. A small pencil falls into the puddle making a large ripple.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - PRESENT

Precious' pencil point has broken but she still holds the pencil as if about to write.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Precious sits with an absent look on her face and a bead of sweat on her temple. A moment later, a shadow moves over her test.

ADMINISTRATOR (O.S.)  
Claireece, do you need another  
pencil?

The administrator stands over Precious waiting for an answer.

ADMINISTRATOR  
Claireece ...

Precious looks up to her blankly.

ADMINISTRATOR  
Are you finished?

Precious nods absently.

The administrator gently takes the test from Precious' desk and leaves.

Precious lingers pensively in the back of the room.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
There has always been something  
wrong wif the tesses ...

36

EXT. STREET - DAY

36

Precious walks with her hands in her pockets watching the pavement pass beneath her.

PRECIOUS (V.O. CONT.)  
...The tesses paint a picture of me  
wif no brain. The tesses paint a  
picture of me 'an my muver -my  
whole family as less than dumb just  
ugly black grease to be wiped away,  
punished, caged up, kilt, changed,  
finded a job for.

Precious leaves us behind.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Sometimes I wish I was not alive. I  
be O.K. I guess.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

37 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. APT, BATHROOM - DAY 37

...A hand shuts off a shower .

...A toothbrush lands in a mug .

38 INT. PRECIOUS' BEDROOM - DAY 38

...A hairbrush lands on a dresser.

...Thick hands remove a red scarf from a drawer.

...The clock on the night stand reads 8:29.

Precious sits on the side of her bed fully dressed with red leggings and her red scarf staring at the clock with a notebook in her hands.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Today is first day. I been tessed.  
I been incomed eligible. I got my  
medicaid card, proof of address,  
self, pencil, notebook -alla dat  
shit.

When the clock reads 8:30, she stands, turns to a mirror, sees a pretty blond white girl and leaves the room.

39 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. KITCHEN - DAY 39

...Precious stares into the refrigerator.

...Precious stares into the freezer.

Finally, she closes the door.

PRECIOUS

MA! !!

No answer.

PRECIOUS

MA! !!

MARY (O. S. )

What?!

PRECIOUS

I need some money.

MARY (O. S. )

For what?

39 CONTINUED:

39

PRECIOUS  
Sumthin' to eat. My head hurt.

MARY (O. S. )  
(beat)  
How much you need?

PRECIOUS  
Five dollars.

MARY (O.S.)  
(beat)  
Come and git it then.

The air changes. Time stands still.

A look that is both childlike and gray comes over Precious' face.

40 INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - DAY

40

Large panties fall to the floor from beneath the sheets.  
Mary's knees widen beneath the covers.

41 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. KITCHEN - DAY

41

A frozen Precious stares across the apartment for a brief eternity.

Finally, she dashes for the front door, throws open the locks and bolts out of the apartment slamming the door behind her.

MARY (O.S.)  
Where you going?!

42 EXT. STREET - DAY

42

Precious walks briskly.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
The other day I cried, felt stupid.  
Guess what...Fuck that other day.  
Thas why God or whoever make new  
days. Still hungry tho.

Precious stops and looks up at something.

Before her stands a fast food restaurant with a giant sign atop it that says KICKIN FRIED CHICKEN.

Precious looks around, takes a deep breath and steps inside.

43

INT. KICKIN FRIED CHICKEN - DAY

43

Precious approaches the counter with a strained "nonchalance".

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN IN A HAIR-NET waits behind the register.

Precious sets her notebook and pencil down on the nearest table.

WOMAN

What you want baby?

PRECIOUS

Give me a basket please.

WOMAN

Sides?

Precious' eyes wander from the fry bin all the way over to a refrigerator towards the back.

PRECIOUS

Ain't sure. still thinkin'.  
Watchin' the weight you know.

The woman chuckles and then leaves for the chicken.

The digital clock on the wall reads 8:53.

Precious whirls around to see A YOUNG MAN CIGARETTE IN HIS MOUTH spraying the door with glass cleaner and then wiping it from the bottom up.

Precious turns back around to find her server selecting pieces of chicken from a huge tray with large silver tongs.

The clock on the wall reads 8:54.

Precious turns to the door again to find the young man still cleaning it.

Precious turns back around to see her server returning with a basket of chicken.

PRECIOUS

Potato salad! Thas it.

The woman nods, sets the chicken on the counter and heads back towards the refrigerator in one fluid motion.

43 CONTINUED: 43  
The young man wipes the top of the front door and looks to be about finished.

44 EXT. KICKIN FRIED CHICKEN - DAY 44

Precious bursts out of the restaurant with the bucket under one arm and sprints off down the block.

A SCREAM from inside follows.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
REGGIE!!! GET HER!!!

A second later, Reggie, the young man who cleaned the glass, dashes out after Precious.

Precious looks back while sprinting and scarfing down pieces of chicken at a remarkable rate.

Across the street, SHEILA, Reggie's pregnant girlfriend, screams at him.

SHEILA  
Reggie, where you been? I've been paging your tired ass all night.

Reggie stops dead in his tracks. Shit! Busted. He lights up a cigarette, about faces and prepares for her rant.

SHEILA  
Nigga, I knew that was you. And who you running after, some fat bitch. Get your ass over here.

Precious turns the corner of 126th street and onto Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard still devouring chicken.

A SKINNY DISHEVELED MAN sitting on a standpipe calls out to her.

SKINNY MAN  
You gon catch indigestion Mommie.

45 EXT. HOTEL THERESA - DAY 45

Precious finishes off the chicken at the exact moment she reaches the Hotel, stuffs the bones and basket into a trash bin and dashes into the building.

46 INT. HOTEL THERESA ELEVATOR 46

Precious looks at her watch and then freezes as if something terrible has just dawned on her.

47 INT. KICKIN FRIED CHICKEN - DAY 47

Precious' notebook and pencil sit on the table where she left them.

48 INT. HOTEL THERESA ELEVATOR 48

Precious looks crestfallen. A glance at her watch makes it worse.

48 CONTINUED: 48  
Her stomach GROWLS. She suddenly looks unwell.

49 INT. HOTEL THERESA 19TH FLOOR - DAY 49

The elevator doors open. Cornrows speaks on the phone while picking her nails. Several lines are ringing. She waves from behind her desk as Precious walks by.

CORNROWS  
(on the phone)  
...What else would get away with clouding your mind, messin your heart and leaving the goddamn toilet seat up? Wait a minute girl....

She decides to grab a line.

CORNROWS  
Each One Teach one, hold please.

She pushes another line.

CORNROWS  
Each One Teach One, hold.

She goes back to her conversation.

CORNROWS  
Yeah, I'm back.

Precious exits.

A49 INT. HOTEL THERESA HALLWAY - DAY A49

Precious, nauseous, makes her way down the hallway.

B49 INT. HOTEL THERESA HALLWAY OUTSIDE MS. RAINS ROOM - DAY B49

Precious lunges for a trash bin into which she promptly vomits.

She quickly catches her breath. Wipes her mouth and looks 10 feet away at a brightness coming from an open doorway. Her HEART BEATS loudly.

Precious stands up. She seems to be there for a considerable spell.

A blur of a young girl darts into the room from the other end of the hall without looking at her.

B49

CONTINUED:

B49

MS. RAIN, PETITE, AFRICAN AMERICAN, BEAUTIFUL, THIRTIES,  
ALERT EYES enters the hallway looking at her watch and then  
up to Precious.

MS. RAIN  
You alright?

Precious doesn't respond.

MS. RAIN  
Are you in the A.B.E. class?

PRECIOUS  
Yes.

MS. RAIN  
This is it.

Ms. Rain looks at her watch, beckons Precious with one arm  
and disappears inside.

MS. RAIN (O.S)  
Time's a wastin'.

B49

CONTINUED: (2)  
Precious still doesn't move.

B49

Ms. Rain appears again.

MS. RAIN  
You in or you out? This door closes  
in thirty seconds.

Ms. Rain disappears again.

Precious' feet finally transport her into the bright doorway.  
Its blinding light envelopes her completely.

50

INT. CLASSROOM -DAY

50

Ms. Rain's desk sits before six smaller ones situated in a  
semi-circle. Four of them are occupied by girls roughly  
Precious' age:

RHONDA JOHNSON -AFRICAN AMERICAN, STOCKY AND EVEN TALLER THAN  
PRECIOUS, RITA ROMERO -LATIN DESCENT, MEDIUM BUILD, FRIENDLY  
FACE AND DRESSED ENTIRELY IN BLACK, JERMAINE HICKS WIRY,  
LEAN, SEATED AND DRESSED LIKE A BOY and CONSUELO MONTENEGRO -  
LATIN DESCENT, PETITE GLOWING AND GORGEOUS. She twirls her  
hair incessantly with slender painted fingertips.

A seventh desk sits well apart from the others back beneath  
the windows.

The girls all stare up at Precious blankly as she enters the  
room. Precious looks to be in a mild state of shock as she  
gazes around from the girls to Ms. Rain to the clouds outside  
the windows.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
First thing I wonder is where is  
everybody -the boyz, the noises  
...this feel like a Sunday school  
or crazy house...or something like  
bof' but different. Smell different  
too.

Precious' eyes land on the lone desk in the rear of the room.

MS. RAIN (O.S.)  
Have a seat.

Precious looks from the distant desk to one up front and then  
back to the distant desk.

She sits with the other girls delicately, as if she were a  
visitor in a complete stranger's home.

50

CONTINUED:

50

Ms. Rain finishes marking the roll sheet, places the cap on her pen and holds up a notebook identical to the one Precious left at the Kickin Fried Chicken.

MS. RAIN

Does everyone have her notebook?

Precious sucks her teeth in self-disgust as she looks around to find that all the other girls have theirs.

JO ANN ROGERS -CAREFREE, CUTE AND SMUG, then breezes into the room with an air of insubordination.

MS. RAIN

It's 9:07. Jo Ann you're late.

Jo Ann points into her mouth, which is full.

JO ANN

(chewing)

I had to. Most important meal of the...

MS. RAIN

Starting tomorrow, this door will be locked at 9:00.

Jo Ann rolls her eyes and sits beside Precious.

MS. RAIN

Class, today we have some new people so let's just...

JO ANN

Ooh! Hold up! wait up! Hold up! I found something!

MS. RAIN

I beg your pardon Jo Ann!

JO ANN

2000 'pologies Miz Rain but I jus' want to say, do anyone need an extra notebook I foun' in the chicken place?

PRECIOUS

It's mine!

JO ANN

Okay hoe. I found your Cadillac too. It's parked out front.

CONTINUED: (2)  
Jo Ann rolls her eyes.

PRECIOUS

I leff it! I did! I leff it at the  
Kickin Fried Chicken on Lenox tween  
one-two-seven and one-two-six this  
morning.

JO ANN

...Alright girl, I was just fuckin'  
with you.

Jo Ann returns the notebook to Precious.

MS. RAIN

Mind your mouth in here Jo Ann.

JO ANN

What I say?!

MS. RAIN

Just watch the language.

Jo Ann shrugs her shoulders, looks down and then turns her  
eyes to Precious' stomach.

JO ANN

(quietly)  
When you due?

Precious looks down and shrugs her shoulders.

MS. RAIN

Since we have more new people than  
old people today, let's just go  
back to square one and get to know  
each other. State your name, where  
you were born, your favorite color,  
something you do well and why  
you're here.

CLASS

What?!

Ms. Rain points to the blackboard where each of the 5  
questions are written neatly to the side.

MS. RAIN

I'll start. My name is Blu Rain ...

CLASS

What?!

CONTINUED: (3)

JERMAINE

Thas your real name?

MS. RAIN

That's my for real, hope to die if I'm lying name.

JERMAINE

Your first name Blue?

MS. RAIN

Yes it is. My favorite color is purple...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Off da bat sumthin' different wif dis lady. She like to sing. I wish I could sing. Go to church. Sing on a choir. Mama say ain't no God. Dis lady remind me Mr. Wicher but more a man and like Miss Lichenstein 'cept not a cuckoo. Dress like she ride in out the village too.

MS. RAIN

...What do I do well? I sing pretty well. And I'm here because a good friend used to teach at this school. She was out one day and asked me to substitute for her. When she quit, they asked me if I wanted the job. I said yes and I've been here ever since. Rhonda?

RHONDA

My name Rhonda Patrice Johnson. I was born in Kingston Jamaica ...

Precious looks her over.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Big redbone girl big like me but don't talk funny like how coconut head peoples do.

RHONDA

My favorite color is blue. I cook good. My mother usta have a restaurant on Seventh Ave. Before she got sick, she taught me everything. I'm here to bring up my reading so I could get my G.E.D.

Rhonda turns to Rita who sits beside her.

CONTINUED: (4)

RITA

My name is Rita Romero. I was born right here in Harlem. I'm here because I was an addict and dropped out of school ...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Skinny Spanish girl seem a little sad but maybe jus quiet. Could be bofe. I check into it.

RITA

...and never got my reading and writing together. My favorite color is black but I guess you could tell that.

JO ANN

What do you do good?

MS. RAIN

Well. What do you do well Jo Ann?

Jo Ann points to herself as if to say, "Me?!" and Ms. Rain shakes her head and points to Rita.

RITA

(softly)

I'm a good mother, a very good mother.

Jermaine is next in line.

JERMAINE

My name is Jermaine. My favorite color...

RHONDA

Tell us where you born first.

JERMAINE

(mildly annoyed)

I was born in the Bronx, still live there...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

What the hell is going on in here? Is she a man? What kinda school is this? I don't know here. Jermaine, which I don't have to tell you, is a boy's name.

JERMAINE

...Red is my favorite color. Usta be blue. I'm a good dancer if I do say so. A friend told me about Each One / Teach One. I came here to get away from bad influence.

RITA

You come to Harlem to get away from bad influence?

50 CONTINUED: (5)

JERMAINE

I'm afraid so.

JO ANN

Can I go Miz Rain?

MS. RAIN

When it's your turn Jo Ann.  
Consuelo?

CONSUELO

(still twirling her hair)  
Favorite color? Why I'm here?  
What's alla dat shit?

MS. RAIN

It's just a way of breaking the ice  
-a way of getting to know each  
other better...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Ooohhh, dis pretty Spanish  
girl, coffee cream color wit  
long ol' good hair. She look  
nice but got some attitude.  
Ain' like she tha first tho.

MS. RAIN

...by asking nonthreatening  
questions that allow you to  
share yourself with the group  
without having to reveal more  
of yourself than might be  
comfortable ...

MS. RAIN

...You don't have to do it if you  
don't want to but you do have to  
watch your language.

CONSUELO

I don't want to.

MS. RAIN

You don't want to do what,  
participate or watch your language?

CONSUELO

The first part.

Precious is next.

MS. RAIN

Claireece?

Precious doesn't respond.

MS. RAIN

Claireece?

CONTINUED: (6)

PRECIOUS  
(softly)  
Could I skip too Miz Rain?

MS. RAIN  
(beat)  
Certainly. Jo Ann?

Precious exhales looking astoundingly grateful and then turns to Jo Ann.

JO ANN  
I'm Jo Ann.  
(waving enthusiastically)  
Hi! My favorite color is  
fluorescent beige. My ambition is  
to have my own record layer.

Ms. Rain and the class look confused.

RHONDA  
Where were you born and why are you  
at this school?

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Jo Ann like the spotlight and  
can't sit still. Teacher  
don't need no outside  
policin' tho. She ain'  
'fraid. I wonder what is a  
record layer anyway.

JO ANN  
I was born in King's County  
Hospital. My mother moved us  
to Harlem when I was nine  
years old. I'm here to get my  
G.E.D., then, well I'm  
already into the music  
industry. I just need to take  
care of the education thing  
so I can move up.

MS. RAIN  
Well, that's everyone. Welcome  
to...

PRECIOUS (O.S.)  
I could...Could I...go?

Surprised, Ms. Rain and the class turn to Precious. She is visibly uncomfortable and seems as if trying to hide in plain sight.

MS. RAIN  
Okay Claireece.

The air is sucked out of the room.

CONTINUED: (7)

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Everybody looking at me now.  
Everybody see me. I wish for back  
of class again...

The distant desk vanishes over Precious' shoulder.

PRECIOUS (V.O. CONT'D)  
...then I think, never that again.

Precious exhales.

PRECIOUS  
My name Claireece Precious Jones. I  
go by Precious. I was born in  
Harlem. I like yellow 'n I had a  
problem at my old school so I come  
here.

MS. RAIN  
(beat)  
Something you do well?

Precious thinks for a moment and then shrugs.

PRECIOUS  
...Nuffin.

MS. RAIN  
(softly)  
Everybody is good at something.

Precious shakes her head.

MS. RAIN  
One thing?

PRECIOUS  
(looking down)  
I can cook and...

The room waits.

MS. RAIN  
And?

PRECIOUS  
I never...

The room continues to wait.

50

CONTINUED: (8)

50

PRECIOUS

Well ...I never talked in class  
before. I guess now I could do that  
too.

MS. RAIN

(beat)

How does it make you feel?

Precious looks around but seems to be searching inside more  
than anywhere else.

After a moment...

PRECIOUS

...Here. It make me feel ...here.

The class is quietly taken aback.

Precious smiles as if having just made it ashore from a ship  
lost at sea.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

51

EXT. HARLEM STREET - DAY

51

Precious walks off alone still beaming from the new world she  
has discovered.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Before, I got A minus in English  
and never say nuffin', never do  
nuffin'. But Miz Rain say we gonna  
read and write in our notebooks  
every day. Thas sumthin' seeing how  
we can't really do none of those  
things and then I think maybe this  
ain' tha class for me. But when Miz  
Rain see the worry on my face, she  
look at me and start to talk in  
Chinese...

The ghostly image of Ms. Rain appears on the sidewalk ahead  
of Precious. It is a glimpse from back in the classroom. Her  
voice ECHOES.

51 CONTINUED:

51

MS. RAIN (V.O.)  
The longest journey begins with  
a single step...

Ms. Rain vanishes and Precious shakes her head.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
...Whatever the fuck that spozed to  
mean. This school different, okay.  
But this not Star Trek neitha'.

Precious continues into the distance.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Complicated, complicated -Chinese  
journeys, 2 books, write 'n you  
don't know how? Dawg ...

52 INT. CLASSROOM - ANOTHER DAY

52

Ms. Rain writes the letter A on the board and then hands the  
chalk to Jermaine. Jermaine writes B and then hands it to  
Consuelo. Consuelo writes C and hands it to Rhonda. Rhonda  
writes D and hands it to Rita.

Rita takes a step and starts to cry. She drops the chalk. It  
shatters on the floor.

MS. RAIN  
We're all in this together Rita.  
Class?

ALL BUT RITA  
E!

Rita picks up the largest shard of chalk from the floor and  
writes E on the board. She hands the chalk to Precious and  
Precious writes F.

The entire class sits simultaneously and then giggles at  
their synchronicity.

MS. RAIN  
This is just the beginning. Why  
don't we try by ourselves? There  
are 26 letters in the alphabet.  
They all have a sound. These  
letters make up all the words in  
our language. Please open your  
notebooks, write the date and then  
let's write the alphabet.

The girls begin to write.

52

CONTINUED:

52

Precious soon sets her pencil down, moves her hands to her stomach and looks faint. She gathers herself, catches her breath and trudges on.

MS. RAIN (O.S.)

This is going to be painless ...

53

INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

53

Precious and Ms. Rain sit close together over a small table looking down at a large colorful children's book.

MS. RAIN

...I just want you to read a page from this book.

Precious looks up at her blankly and then back down at the book with trepidation.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Sure lady, right after I get voted president.

MS. RAIN

Precious?

PRECIOUS

I can't do that Miz Rain.

MS. RAIN

C'mon Precious. Give it a try.

Precious looks mortified and starts breathing heavily.

RAPID MONTAGE - DOOR SLAMS, MOANS, PANTING, PLATES BREAKING, MEAT SIZZLING, ZIPPERS, GRUNTS, SQUEAKING BED SPRINGS, LAUGHTER, SCREAMS, A RAZOR SLICING YOUNG FLESH, SWEAT and DAYTIME TELEVISION all assault her mind's senses.

Ms. Rain speaks with a dire look of concern on her face but no words come out.

She places a hand on Precious' shoulder and the kaleidoscope of sounds sucks away into the air. The words from Ms. Rain's mouth finally register.

MS. RAIN

Precious. Honey are you okay? Try to relax. Should I call an ambulance? 911? Your moth ...

PRECIOUS

NO! !!

53

CONTINUED:

Ms. Rain jumps.

MS. RAIN

What is it?

PRECIOUS

The pages ...

Ms. Rain looks down perplexed.

PRECIOUS

(defeated)

They all look alike to me. Always did.

MS. RAIN

(beat)

The words or the pictures?

PRECIOUS

The words.

Ms. Rain sighs. She sits back for a moment and looks as if she's processing more than just the tragedy of this particular situation but what is that of countless others.

In a decisive, almost militaristic movement, Ms. Rain sits up again.

MS. RAIN

I think I understand you Precious but I still want you to try. You're going to have to push yourself.

Precious looks back down at the page. There are people of various colors on a beach.

MS. RAIN

What do you think the story is about?

PRECIOUS

Peoples at the beach?

MS. RAIN

That's right.

Ms. Rain points to the letter A. It is the first word on the page.

MS. RAIN

Do you know what that is?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PRECIOUS

Yes. A.

Ms. Rain points to the next word.

MS. RAIN

Do you know that word?

PRECIOUS

No. I don't.

MS. RAIN

Do you know the letters.

Precious nods. Ms. Rain points to the letters ...

PRECIOUS

D, A, Y.

MS. RAIN

Do you know that word?

Precious shakes her head.

MS. RAIN

Day. That word is day.

Ms. Rain points to the next word.

MS. RAIN

What's that word?

PRECIOUS

Ate.

MS. RAIN

Good! Almost! The word is 'at'.

Ms. Rain points at the next word.

PRECIOUS

The!

Ms. Rain points to the next word.

PRECIOUS

...Beach?

MS. RAIN

'Shore'. That word is 'shore'.  
That's almost like 'beach'. Very  
good. Can you read the whole thing?

53 CONTINUED: (3)  
Precious nods.

53

PRECIOUS  
A-Day-at-the-Shore.

Amazed the words that escaped were from her very own mouth,  
Precious' jaw drops. She whirls to Ms. Rain.

Ms. Rain smiles.

We ease away from the office as the two of them continue  
working down the page.

54 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. - NIGHT

54

Precious enters the apartment. Mary sits on the couch  
watching "THE COSBYS."

MARY  
Bring your fat ass in here!

Precious suddenly looks exhausted.

MARY  
Where you sneak your ass off to  
this morning?

Precious doesn't respond.

MARY  
You hear me talking to you! Where  
you sneak your ass off to this  
morning?!

PRECIOUS  
School! I was at school!

MARY  
You lying whore!

PRECIOUS  
Am not!

MARY  
You is! The welfare done called  
here, saying they is removing you  
from my budget 'cause you not in  
regular attendance in school.

PRECIOUS  
Mama, I tole you I got kicked out.  
I been home mostly every day for  
two weeks.

CONTINUED:

MARY

You didn't say nothin' 'bout no damn school today.

PRECIOUS

Mama, I tole you dis morning I was goin'to school.

At a loss but still angered, Mary turns back to the television slowly. Precious starts for her room until...

MARY

I ain' had no breakfast.

Precious stops, sighs, heads to the sink and starts washing her hands.

Mary talks to Precious while watching television.

MARY

...Need to forget school. Need to git your ass on down to welfare.

Precious dries her hands and reaches for a pan.

PRECIOUS

I'm gonna get stipend for school and then...

MARY

Fool fuck a stipend. What's that? I said take your ass down to welfare.

Precious stops everything with the pan in her hand.

PRECIOUS

Now?

MARY

No stupid. Got to be there at 7 in the A.M. if you gonna talk to anybody...

Precious shakes her head, huffs and turns on the stove. Mary then presses the mute button on the remote and whirls around with a cold cigarette between her fingers.

MARY

-Oh you too good for that? Is that what you is now, too good for welfare?

(beat)

54

CONTINUED: (2)

54

More white folks on 'ssistance than there is niggas Miss Onassis. Other ones got trust fund welfares from 'sploitin po dumb asses like yo dumb ass for centuries ...Man on TV say let's end 'Firmative Action. Fine wit me. And while we at it, let's take out son-in-laws, country clubs, white motherfuckers and then call it a day.

Precious turns to her mother looking surprised but pensive. Mary's eyes are still fixed on the TV.

MARY

Now hurry yo ass up. I'm gon die of starvation over here. Then where you be at then?

CUT TO:

55

INT. 444 LENOX AVE. - LATER - NIGHT

55

A picturesque plate of pork chops and mashed potatoes.

Precious delivers it to the couch with a fork and knife.

THE APARTMENT HAS TRANSFORMED INTO THE PRISTINE WORLD OF THE TV SITCOM THEY WERE WATCHING. Precious and Mary are well-dressed and done-up like TV stars.

MARY

What you gon' have?

PRECIOUS

I ain' hungry. I ...

MARY

Yes you is.

PRECIOUS

But Mama I ...

MARY

Sit your ass down.

Precious sighs and joins Mary on the couch.

Mary hands Precious the plate and silverware.

MARY

Jus make mine after you done. This gon' get cold if it sit.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

PRECIOUS

But I thought you said you was  
hongry?

MARY

Do what I say don't say what I say.  
Now eat bitch!

Precious starts eating slowly. Mary lights her cigarette.

MARY

...Best feed like a pig and not a  
cow so's you can git yo ass back to  
the stove. If I croak off  
starvation, where in the world you  
be at then?

Precious eats reluctantly.

CUT TO:

56 INT. KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

56

Pots and pans sit drying on the counter.

Precious wipes her hands on a dishcloth.

The room is quiet and empty now.

Precious stares blankly out of the window.

...She goes to the television, presses the remote and sits  
down. "THE COSBYS" is still on. Tired and full, she turns the  
TV off. She watches Mary's face snoring rhythmically but with  
extremely unpleasant noises. Finally, she backs away and goes  
to her bedroom.

57 INT. PRECIOUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

57

Precious falls back across her bed with her arms spread.

She stares up at the crack in her ceiling...

A hand darts into frame, touches Precious' side and then  
quickly withdraws. Precious ignores it. The hand returns for  
another jab. Precious restrains a grin. Finally the hand  
tickles her fiercely.

57

CONTINUED:

57

She giggles uncontrollably. The hand belongs to Tom Cruise. He wears a leather jacket with a cherry red motorcycle helmet tucked under one arm. The helmet has a golden bow stuck on its crown.

...Precious chases him out of frame for some revenge tickling as they both laugh quietly.

...The helmet falls to the floor with a bounce.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

...Claireece, would you like to talk about your home life?

58

INT. CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

58

Precious sits on a small couch in a modest office containing 2 bookshelves, several plaques and 2 file cabinets.

MS. WEISS -40's, CAUCASIAN, CONSERVATIVELY DRESSED sits across from Precious with a clipboard on her lap and glasses low on her nose. A strap hangs down from the glasses and snakes around the back of her neck.

PRECIOUS

What do you want me to say?

MS. WEISS

Whatever comes to mind when you think about your home.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Seem like inquiring white bitches always want to know.

PRECIOUS

I wish I had a TV in my room.

MS. WEISS

(beat)

Is that all?

PRECIOUS

No... My muver is a like a whale person for the couch. She says I eat alla time, but then she always makin' me eat... and then call me a fat mess.... She says apartment is little because of me.

58

CONTINUED:

She only leaves the house to play the number. Sometimes I feel I could just sit there wif her everyday wif the shades drawed, watch TV, eat, watch TV, eat. Can we talk about something else now?

MS. WEISS

Of course. I want to learn more about your father anyway.

PRECIOUS

I don't know much more than you do Miz White...

MS. WEISS

Weiss.

PRECIOUS

He say he the original man like Farrakhan be saying but little do he know about it. He give me this baby comin and my other one before. Thas all I know. Don't see him. Don't need to I guess.

MS. WEISS

(quickly)

What did you say your father gave you?

PRECIOUS

(catching herself)

...Nuffin.

MS. WEISS

Yes you did Claireece. You said your father gave you...

PRECIOUS

No I didn't neitha. If you heard that, then you heard sumthin' else cause I ain' said nuffin like it!

Ms. Weiss' wariness looks unmoved.

PRECIOUS

Now whas next?

MS. WEISS

Um...How about your first child? You haven't spoken much about her...

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (2) 58  
Precious turns to Ms. Weiss. A DOORBELL RINGS ...

59 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. APT. - DAY 59

TOOSIE, A WOMAN IN HER LATE 50'S RADIATING A TOUGHNESS OF PRIOR GENERATIONS, enters the apartment in a business-like manner with MONGO, A SMALL, DISTRACTED AND OBVIOUSLY HANDICAPPED CHILD. Toosie has a bag of groceries in her other arm.

Precious watches TV beside her mother. Both appear as if they've just woken up. Mary attempts to put on her wig and make up.

Toosie gives Mongo to Mary, whose eyes never leave the television, and then hands the groceries to Precious, who takes them directly to the kitchen as Toosie leaves without a word.

PRECIOUS (O.S.)

Mongo?

MS. WEISS (O.S.)

Excuse me?

PRECIOUS (O.S.)

Mongo? Thas short for Mongoloid.  
She got Down Sinder.

MS. WEISS (O.S.)

You mean she has Down Syndrome?

PRECIOUS (O.S.)

Alla dat.

The child seems only mildly aware of what is going on.

The DOORBELL rings again. Precious opens the door. A HISPANIC WOMAN IN HER THIRTIES with an attache case enters.

As the woman steps inside, we see that Mary has finished tidying herself.

Mary and the woman exchange small talk while Precious listens. Mary has never seemed so congenial.

PRECIOUS (O.S.)

My grandmover Toosie, brangs Little Mongo over on days social worker come so it look like Mongo live wif us. Then my mama get the check 'n food stamps for me 'n Little Mongo. But it's my baby. Little Mongo is money for me, not her!

60

INT. CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

60

Precious continues speaking to Ms. Weiss from the couch.

PRECIOUS

...Sometimes I see vampires too.  
They come for me sometimes and they  
say that I am one of them. They  
say, "Precious, you belong wif us."

MS. WEISS

How do you respond to them?

PRECIOUS

I say, "Check wif my muver." After  
that, they just look at me and go  
down through the floor. The family  
downstairs is vampires so that's  
where they should go.

Ms. Weiss looks up from her clipboard and over her glasses.

Precious reflects a moment and then looks up.

PRECIOUS

I'm going to the doctor now too.  
It's nice. Miz Rain, she fall out  
when she finded out that I ain'  
been to no doctor. Whole class  
scream 'preenatal' at me. They  
don't know I had my first baby on  
the kitchen floor wif my muver  
kicking me upside my head. I mean,  
who would believe?

Precious snickers reminiscently a moment and then turns to  
Ms. Weiss.

PRECIOUS

Them the kind of thangs you mean  
when you say talk about whatever  
come into my mind?

Ms. Weiss looks up and nods through a perplexed daze.

61

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

61

Precious rides lost in thought.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I still don't know why I said all  
them thangs. I know I wasn't  
s'posed to. Just tired.

61 CONTINUED:

61

Tired of lying I guess. Hope mama don't find none of it out. She kill me for real cause that be tha end of them welfare checks.

62 EXT STREET - DAY

62

The girls burst into frame followed by Ms. Rain and Cornrows and then bound up a large number of steps leading into THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.

63 INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM PERMANENT EGYPTIAN ART COLLECTION 63

Led by a spirited guide and trailed by Ms. Rain and Cornrows, the girls scrutinize colossal tombs, various artifacts, hieroglyphics and photographs.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Miz Rain brang us out to see some real old stuff. Thangs and stuff before TV's was made, before Mr. Abraham Lincoln, before Miz Harriet Tubman -maybe some stuff before Miz Weiss even.

Precious and Rita fearfully enter the Tomb of Perneb. 2 steps in, Rita grabs Precious hand tightly.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Before we turn tha corner in a mummy tomb, Rita grab hold of my hand. No one in my life ever do that. Ever.

(beat)

How Rita do it wiffout a thought?

Rita and Jermaine study a sphinx.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Guide lady smart. Say dis the first civilization of the Earf. Black folks, first!

Jo Ann poses like an Egyptian hieroglyphic. Consuelo examines her nail polish.

64 INT. CLASSROOM -DAY

64

Ms. Rain writes briskly across the blackboard.

As she makes her way across the frame, a barrage of letters and numbers peel off the board, fly across the room, converge and enter Precious' forehead.

64

CONTINUED:

64

Just before the letters and numbers reach Precious, lifelike holographic images flank them. They are SPINNING PLANETS, FLYING PTERODACTYLS, STAMPEDING ELEPHANTS, EMMETT TILL, MLK, JFK, MALCOLM X, CIVIL RIGHTS MARCHERS, FIRE, TIDAL WAVES, A VOLCANIC ERUPTION, CONTINENTS, MATHEMATICAL EQUATIONS, LIGHT BULBS AND THE INVERTED WORDS "JANIE", "SULA" AND "CELIE" ...

A few letters, numbers and images try to reach Jo Ann but most just bounce off of her and fall away. Consuelo bats a few mathematical symbols off as if they were flies.

Finally we land on Precious as she confidently stabs her hand into the air to answer a question.

65

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

65

Precious rides on one of the side seats towards the back while wearing her red scarf.

The New Yorkers surrounding her are all men of various backgrounds. All wear the exact same suits and raincoats.

Precious looks up to find two of the businessmen staring down at her.

We pan from them and around the bus to find all of the other passengers studying Precious in silence as well.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I liked'd that museum so much I went back by myself... Peoples ...They only look when my belly big. They minds all made. But do they know? No. They do not know that I am a girl for flowers and thin straw legs?

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

If other peoples could see that the way I do, they would see that I am a real person inside.

Our long circular pan finally lands on Precious' seat but sitting there now is the pretty blond white girl from Precious' bedroom mirror wearing Precious' clothes.

The bus grinds to a stop.

A man smiles at Precious and steps off the bus.

The original Precious takes the abandoned newspaper from his empty seat and tries to read it.

65

CONTINUED:

65

Precious stops to watch two "society" ladies in hats and gloves push antique buggy style baby carriages along the sidewalk.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Miz Rain say the longest journey begin wif a single step. I wonder what step they journeys begin on. Mama always talk about how there be all different types of welfare. I want filfy rich white folks welfare. Mama crazy but Mama not stupid.

Precious continues observing pensively as the ladies pass a bearded and bedraggled elderly white man laying on the street in tattered clothes.

As Precious studies him, her expression changes ever so slightly.

Enormous handwritten letters forming "NOT STUPID" overtake her face as we DISSOLVE TO the PAGE upon which she wrote it.

66

INT. HOTEL THERESA CLASSROOM - DAY

66

Precious writes in her notebook. All of the other girls do the same.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I am happy to be writing. I am happy to be in school. I am happy to know my baby coming soon. Don't see the sense in pretending I am not pregnant anymore. I am also thinking about lil Mongo a lot. Miz Rain say we gonna write everyday, that mean home too.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

And she gonna write back everyday. Thas great.

Precious looks up to find Jo Ann tapping her pencil, looking around annoyed and literally at a loss for words.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Mama say this new school ain' shit tho. Say you can't learn nuffin' writing in no book. Gotta git on that computer you want to make some money. But Mama wrong about that.

66 CONTINUED:

66

I is learning. Gonna read to dis  
baby too and hang colors on its  
walls.

We close in on Precious writing as we hear her whisper the  
following.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Listen Baby, Muver love you. Muver  
not dumb. Listen:

PRECIOUS (CONT'D)

(in a whisper)

A B C D E F G H I J K L P M N  
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z.

PRECIOUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Thas the alphabet. Twenty-six  
letters in all. Them letters  
make up words. Them words  
everything.

Precious looks up from her page gazing in an otherworldly way.

One by one, the other girls stop what they're doing and stare  
at Precious curiously.

Their eyes turn downward in unison.

CLOSE ON Precious' legs.

A gush of water pours down between them as if it were a tidal  
wave.

67 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

67

SILENT MONTAGE

...The wheels of a speeding gurney waggle to remain straight.

...Fluorescent lights stream by overhead.

...Name tags dangle from the chests of attendants pushing the  
gurney.

One we see belongs to a handsome African American Male nurse,  
JOHN MCFADDEN. He is constantly looking down with a  
reassuring smile.

...Covered in sweat, Precious screams without our hearing a  
sound.

68 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

68

...Two rain drops dance atop a puddle outside .

...Water drips from a tree limb .

69 INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

69

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
His name Abdul Jamal Louis Jones.  
He healthy. His muver love him.

John, the nurse who helped gurney Precious in, again stares down warmly at her. This time with Abdul in her arms.

69A INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - NIGHT

69A

Precious sleeps peacefully. It is still raining outside. Ms. Rain crochets in the corner.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

70 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

70

We are close on Precious. Her eyes focus intently and occasionally dart up and down.

Nurse John is doing the same thing.

His hands lay on top of Precious' with their palms touching.

We glimpse both of their searching eyes again.

Suddenly, Precious whips her hands over and SLAPS the back of John's before he can pull them away.

PRECIOUS  
I win.

JOHN  
That hurt girl.

PRECIOUS  
Get to X-Ray.

JOHN  
(leaving)  
Maybe I will.

PRECIOUS  
You gon have to if you don't practice.

JOHN  
Alright.

70

CONTINUED:  
John exits.

70

The girls from class ogle him from another part of the room as he leaves and then nudge and bicker with each other for pole position to hold Abdul.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Dear Miz Rain, All the years I sit  
in class I never learn, but now I  
got baby again by my fahver.

Behind the girls, Precious sits up in bed writing in her journal.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I wish I had a boyfriend like other  
girls and then I'd feel right that  
I have to quit school. I love my  
baby but want school too.

Precious closes her book. Jo Ann backs away from the others, takes the notebook and then leaves.

Rhonda returns Abdul to Precious. The remaining girls embrace Precious one at a time and then file out of the room.

71

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

71

As the girls stream into the classroom, Jo Ann sets Precious' notebook on Ms. Rain's desk.

Ms. Rain opens it immediately.

72

INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

72

Ms. Rain writes at her desk.

MS. RAIN (V. O. )

Dear Precious, I am glad you love  
your baby.

MS. RAIN (V.O.)

I think a beautiful young girl like  
you should have a chance to get an  
education. I think your first  
responsibility has to be to  
yourself. You should not drop out  
of school ...

73

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

73

Precious reads from her journal.

73 CONTINUED:

73

MS. RAIN (V.O. CONT'D)  
Come back to class. We miss you.  
Love, Ms Rain.

Precious immediately writes back.

PRECIOUS(V.O.)  
Dear Miz Rain...

74 INT. MS. RAIN APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

74

Ms. Rain sits on the corner of bed reading Precious' journal.

PRECIOUS (V.O. CONT'D )  
Social worker ask me if I want to  
give Little Mongo and Abdul up for  
adoption. I could kill her. She  
never help before. Now she want to  
take my kids away? If she take  
Abdul, I won't have nothing nomore.

75 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

75

Jo Ann bounds into the room with the journal in her hand,  
swipes an apple from Precious' tray and takes a bite.

Precious snatches the journal and opens it quickly.

MS. RAIN (V.O.)  
Dear Precious, It seems the  
opposite to me. If you keep Abdul  
you might have nothing. You are  
learning to read and write, that is  
everything. Come back to school  
when you get out of the hospital.  
You're only seventeen. Your whole  
life is in front of you.

CUT TO:

TOOSIE paces Precious' hospital room briskly while holding  
Abdul and lecturing Precious fiercely.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Dear Miz Rain, Grandmover come  
visit and say only a dog will drop  
a baby and walk off. Say later not  
even a dog.

Precious' grandmother continues her sermon. Precious sighs.

75 CONTINUED:

75

MS. RAIN (V.O.)

Dear Precious, You are not a dog. You are a wonderful young woman who is trying to make something of her life. I have some questions for you. 1. Where was your grandmother when your father was abusing you? 2. Where is Little Mongo now? 3. What is going to be the best thing for you in this situation?

76 INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

76

Ms. Rain sits at her desk reading with her pen ready.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Dear Miz Rain, Lot of questions you ask. No muver, no grandmuver and father rape me years. Little Mongo wif my grandmuver. Best for me to stop breaving sometimes I think. I want to be a good mother too tho.

Ms. Rain writes immediately.

MS. RAIN (V.O.)

Dear Dear Precious, Being a good mother might mean letting your baby be raised by someone who is better able than you to meet the child's needs.

77 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

77

Precious writes while breast-feeding Abdul.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Dear Miz Rain, I is best able to meet my child's need.

The page turns.

78 INT. MS. RAIN'S CLASS ROOM - DAY

78

The page falls. The students are all at their desks reading. Ms. Rain writes the following.

MS. RAIN (V.O.)

Dear Precious, When you are raising a small infant you need help. Who is going to help you? How will you support yourself? How will you keep learning to read and write?

79 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. APT. - DAY 79

We drift towards Mary, at one with the couch, watching television. One hand holds a cigarette while the other mines an enormous bag of potato chips elbow-deep.

Her greasy mouth remains occupied with either a cigarette, a potato chip or both at all times.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
The welfare help Mama, it help me.

MS. RAIN (V.O.)  
Dear Precious Miss, When you get home from the hospital, look and see how much welfare has helped your mother.

79A INT. HOSPITAL LOUNGE - DAY 79A

Nurse John and Precious sit quietly. Nurse John hands her an envelope. Precious opens the envelope to find a beautiful card. It reads, "God Bless you." There is a \$20 bill inside. She looks up at him, teary eyed and grateful.

80 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY 80

Precious, now wearing her jacket, packs up her things, takes Abdul and heads out of a spotless room with her child in one hand and two bags in the other.

81 INT. LIVERY CAB - DAY 81

Precious rides holding Abdul.

MS. RAIN (V.O.)  
You could go further than your mother. You could get your G.E.D. and go to college. You could do anything Precious but you have to believe it. Love, Blu Rain.

82 EXT. 444 LENOX AVE. - DAY 82

Precious heads into the main entrance holding Abdul and her bags as snowflakes start to fall.

83 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY 83

Ruby plays alone with her broken Barbie doll. Precious passes her without a word. Ruby springs to her feet to trail her.

CONTINUED:

RUBY

Hi Precious. You back? That your  
new baby? What it's name? Can I  
hold it? ..Precious?

Ruby can only watch as Precious disappears into the  
stairwell.

83 CONTINUED: (2) 83  
Signs on the elevators read "OUT OF ORDER".

84 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. STAIRWELL - DAY 84

Precious climbs the stairs growing short of breath holding Abdul, her bags and her coat folded over one arm.

Once on the landing, she searches for her keys while trying to balance Abdul and everything else.

After turning several locks, she pushes into the apartment...

85 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. - CONTINUOUS 85

...looks up and ducks.

MARY

Bitch!!!

CRASH!!! A flying vase barely misses Precious and Abdul and then shatters against the wall.

Abdul WAILS.

PRECIOUS

MAMA! ! !

SMASH! A plant comes next.

Precious barely dodges that one too and she drops everything but Abdul.

PRECIOUS

MAMA! ! !

MARY (O.S.)

YOU RUIN MY LIFE YOU FAT LITTLE  
SLUT!!!

Mary charges into frame to ram Precious and Abdul like a bull.

Precious sidesteps the charge as Mary leaves a huge indentation in the wall knocking over a side table and a potted plant in the process. She grabs her shoulder in pain.

Precious backs away around the living room to flee.

Mary hurls what's left of the plant at Precious from down on the floor.

85

CONTINUED:

85

Precious turns her back to shield Abdul. The pot strikes her in the back. ABDUL SCREAMS louder. Dirt covers Precious.

PRECIOUS  
STOP IT MAMA! YOU GON CRAZY?!!!

As Mary gets to her feet ...

MARY  
FIRST YOU STEAL MY HUSBAND, THEN  
YOU GET ME CUT OFF THE WELFARE YOU  
STUPID-MOUTH BITCH!

PRECIOUS  
I AIN'T STEAL NUFFIN FROM YOU MAMA!  
YOUR HUSBAND RAPE ME AND I NOT  
STUPID!

MARY  
YOU IS! YOU IS TOO! YOU IS AND YOU  
ALWAYS GON BE NUTHIN BUT STUPID TIL  
THE DAY YOU DIE! YOU HEAR ME?!!  
STUPID!!!

Tears well in Precious' eyes.

PRECIOUS  
SHUT UP MOMMA! I NOT STUPID! I AM  
NOT STUPID! DON'T SAY THAT!

Mary GROWLS and charges Precious again.

Precious turns the TV over between them. Electrical sparks fly as it hits the floor. There is a banging at the door.

NEIGHBOR (O.S.)  
Mary, leave that chile alone. Stop  
beating that girl Mary.

Mary trips and crashes down on top of the overturned television.

Precious dashes out of the apartment with only Abdul as Mary struggles to get up.

MARY  
I'M GON KILL YOU PIG!

PRECIOUS  
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DIDN'T  
ALREADY. YOU CRAZY BITCH!

86

INT. 444 LENOX AVE. HALL OUTSIDE PRECIOUS APT - DAY

86

Precious dashes out of the apartment with tears in her eyes, dirt on her clothes, no coat and Abdul SCREAMING IN HER ARMS.

A little OLD WOMAN stands in the hallway shaking her head in disgust.

MARY (O.S.)  
YOU HEAR ME PRECIOUS! GET YOUR BIG,  
BLACK ASS BACK IN HERE!

86

CONTINUED:

86

Precious looks back, trips on the landing and tumbles down a flight of steps cradling and shielding Abdul all the way.

THUD! A hard floor abruptly halts Precious' descent.

She checks Abdul immediately.

He is smiling.

A DOOR OPENS followed by GRUNTS and a CRASH. Precious looks up to find the broken television tumbling down the steps towards them.

At the last second, Precious manages to roll them both out of the way as the television crashes to the landing shattering some more.

87

EXT. 444 LENOX AVE. MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

87

Precious bursts out of the stairwell with blood streaming down her nose and Abdul in her arms. Ruby dashes to intercept them.

RUBY

Precious what happened?

Ruby places herself between Precious and the door while moving. Precious however, is in a big hurry.

RUBY

Precious, could I see your baby now?  
I just wanna see.

Precious shows no sign of slowing down. Ruby looks concerned.

RUBY

Precious, what's wro...

Precious knocks Ruby out of her way and to the floor without losing stride.

Ruby lands hard and CRIES loudly.

88

EXT. 444 LENOX AVE. - DAY

88

Abdul still in her arms, Precious heads away from the building under dressed.

The falling snow has thickened considerably.

As she makes her way into the distance, Precious walks into the snowstorm carrying Abdul.

89 EXT. STOREFRONT CHURCH - DAY 89

She hears the sound of a choir. She approaches the Church Basement where the voices are coming from.

Precious stares through the window where Choir members are praising The Lord.

90 INT. 444 LENOX AVE. APT. - DAY 90

Mary barrels into Precious' bedroom yelling and screaming as she turns the place upside down.

She rips down Precious' handprints along with her Cyndi Lauper poster. She then picks up a brush and hurls it into Precious' mirror, shattering it to pieces.

91 INT. STOREFRONT CHURCH - DAY 91

Precious, with Abdul in her arms, is singing along with the Choir, happier than ever. Tom Cruise joins in clapping, the stray dog that licked Precious in the beginning at his side.

92 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY 92

Precious sits on the steps of a hospital. Snow still falling. She looks confused.

93 INT. HOSPITAL -DAY 93

Precious steps out of an elevator wet from the snow and still splattered with dirt. She approaches a desk with urgency.

PRECIOUS

I need to see Nurse John. Where  
Nurse John at?

NURSE

He's on break. He'll be back soon.  
Have a seat.

Precious sits on one of a row of chairs by the wall. She tries to settle Abdul as he starts to CRY.

The skinny Nurse's legs approach and stop in front of Precious.

NURSE

Hey...You don't remember me do you?

CONTINUED:

Precious looks up to find A SOUR-LOOKING WOMAN glaring down at her.

NURSE

I delivered your last one.

Precious pauses as if searching for a response to satisfy this woman.

Precious looks away. The nurse doesn't leave.

NURSE

You know I'm sorry to see you back here.

(beat)

I remembered hoping that you would have learned from your mistakes.

PRECIOUS

You don't know me bitch. Get lost 'fore I kick your ass.

The nurse finally starts away.

PRECIOUS

Bitch?

The nurse turns around.

PRECIOUS

I ain't make no mistake unless it was being born.

DING! The elevator doors open.

John steps off between Precious and the nurse.

Precious starts to rise and John motions for her to stay seated. He sits beside her.

JOHN

What happened?

PRECIOUS

My Mama kick my ass again. I ain' giving Abdul away. And I ain' gonna stop school ...I just...ain't.

John looks concerned.

Precious speaks with great resolve as if forcing herself to believe her words.

93 CONTINUED: (2)

93

PRECIOUS

I'm gonna get Little Mongo back too.

(sighs)

I don't hardly even know what she look like now. Don't matter tho.

That don't matter.

John looks on heavy-hearted.

94 EXT. HOSPITAL - DUSK

94

Precious is dressed in a hospital gown and draped in a wool blanket. It is still snowing. John holds an umbrella over Precious and a bag in one hand as he escorts her out onto the driveway and into a large gray van.

John places the bag in the van, hugs Precious, closes the door and then waves as the van pulls away.

Precious turns to watch him recede into the snow through the back window.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Nurse John say lots of people get out of hospital wif no place to go. His eyes look worried tho ...Wonder what next? Scared now.

95 INT. VAN - NIGHT

95

Precious rides in darkness cradling Abdul. She looks up frightened, taking in the others sitting around her. Shes hold Abdul closer. The dark swallows her whole.

DISSOLVE TO:

96 INT. ARMORY - NIGHT

96

Bare light bulbs hang from the ceiling.

Precious lays on a bed breast feeding Abdul and staring up at the ceiling while covered in a blanket.

We sail away to find they are surrounded by scores of rudimentary beds, many of which are filled with other women of varying ages.

CONTINUED:

A BUG LADY lies next to her with unkempt hair and sores on her skin.

BUG LADY

(murmuring)

...Put your bags in bed with you.  
Put your bags in the bed with you.  
Put 'em in. Tuck 'em in bed with  
you...

The skinny woman on the other side sits up and grabs herself feverishly as if there were bugs all over her.

AN ENORMOUS AND FEROCIOUS-LOOKING WOMAN IN HER FORTIES steps up, snatches the blanket off of Precious and Abdul and walks off.

BUG LADY

Give the chile back her blanket!

FEROCIOUS WOMAN

Fuck you. I ain' giving back shit.

The woman walks away.

Physically and emotionally spent, Precious sighs and then lifts her bed's top sheet, beneath which is a plastic-covered mattress.

She then wraps the sheet around Abdul and herself and hunkers down.

Precious rocks Abdul gently as her eyes wander around the cavernous armory.

PRECIOUS

(humming)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P, Q  
R S T U V, W X Y Z.

(singing softly)

Now I know my ABC's, tell me what  
you think of me.

Precious kisses Abdul on the head.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Miz Rain say I was moving through  
the vowel 'n consonant sounds  
faster than even Rhonda Johnson  
was. Maybe could've even caught up  
to Jermaine. Maybe ...

FADE OUT.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: (2)

96

FADE IN

97 OMITTED

97

98 INT. ARMORY - LATER

98

Precious sleeps soundly.

Something nudges her slightly.

When she finally opens her eyes ...

Abdul is gone! So is her bag.

Precious springs up in a panic turning in every direction.

PRECIOUS

Where my baby?! Where my baby at?!

The Bug Lady casually points to the exit.

The large ferocious woman heads for the exit with Abdul in one arm and Precious' bag in the other. She looks down at Abdul making "baby" faces and sounds.

Precious dashes after her but winces in pain grabbing her pelvic area along the way.

The Bug Lady follows Precious as a speed walker might.

Precious snatches Abdul and promptly knees the ferocious woman hard in the gut.

The ferocious woman MOANS as she falls to the ground.

Precious continues kicking and stomping her without abandon.

The bug girl observes stoically. Abdul WAILS.

As she trounces the woman, Precious' eyes fill with a rage we haven't yet seen.

Finally, two other women pull Precious away while she still kicks at the woman.

The ferocious woman, now bloodied, falls over on her back with her eyes closed and her mouth hanging open.

99 EXT. HARLEM - DAY

99

A bright morning skyline stretches over the Hotel Theresa.

A99 INT. ELEVATOR - HOTEL THERESA - DAY A99

Ms. Rain, at work a little earlier than usual this morning, looks great, and ready for another day.

B99 EXT. LOBBY EACH ONE TEACH ONE - DAY B99

Ms. Rain enters the lobby. The window of the entry door has been smashed. She opens the door with a look of trepidation.

100 INT. MS. RAIN'S CLASSROOM - DAY 100

Ms. Rain steps into her classroom carrying two bags. She removes her sunglasses.

The sight before her stops her in her tracks. She drops her bags immediately.

It is Precious, sleeping on the floor with Abdul in her arms. Her hand is cut and bleeding pretty bad.

Ms. Rain looks incensed.

101 INT. SMALL OFFICE - LATER - DAY 101

Precious sits rocking Abdul with a bandaged hand.

Ms. Rain, still fuming, sits on the other side of the office dialing a phone number from a list on the wall.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I can tell by Miz Rain's face that  
I ain' gonna be homeless no more.  
Only I ain' so sure where I'm gon  
end up tho.

MS. RAIN

(sternly)  
Yes I'll hold.  
(grumbling while on hold)  
Safety net huh? What damn safety  
net?! A newborn child! A NEW BORN!  
In this fucking day and...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Thas the one time I heard Miz Rain  
curse.

MS. RAIN

Excuse my language Precious.

Precious nods.

101

CONTINUED:

101

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

I feels really sorry for her. She  
just a ABC teacher, not no social  
worker. But she all I could think  
of.

Rhonda, Jermaine and Consuelo appear in the doorway.

RHONDA

Hi Precious!

JERMAINE

What happened?

101 CONTINUED: (2)  
They start for Abdul immediately.

101

Ms. Rain stops them just as quickly.

MS. RAIN

Good morning girls. Tell the others  
to start writing when they come in.  
Whichever one of you is older is in  
charge until I get back. And  
Consuelo, I know that is not you.  
So here is \$20.00.

Ms. Rain digs into her purse to find the money. She hands it  
to Consuelo.

MS. RAIN

Go get something for Precious to  
wear. Quick! And bring me back my  
change.

The girls nod and leave.

102 INT. DOORWAY BETWEEN MS. RAIN'S OFFICE AND CLASSROOM - DAY 102

Rhonda and Jermaine head off down the hall.

RHONDA

How old you is?

JERMAINE

Same age as you.

RHONDA

When your birthday?

JERMAINE

When yours?

RHONDA

I asked you first.

JERMAINE

So ...

103 INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

103

Ms. Rain still waits on hold until ...

MS. RAIN

Well why didn't you tell me that  
before!!! I'm sitting here half the-

103

CONTINUED:

103

Ms. Rain slams the phone down, shakes her head, finds another number on the wall and then dials again while speaking to Precious.

MS. RAIN

Before this day is up, you will  
have a place to live Precious.

Ms. Rain suspends her frustration with a brief smile as she waits for the other end of the line to pick up.

104 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

104

Jo Ann saunters in.

The other girls are writing already.

Rhonda is at the head of the class displaying unusually good posture.

RHONDA  
(looking at her watch)  
Jo Ann, you late.

JO ANN  
You ain't the teacher.

RHONDA  
I am today. Miz Rain busy wif  
Precious.

JO ANN  
(thrilled)  
Alright!!!  
(concerned)  
How Precious?

105 INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY

105

Ms. Rain hangs up the phone.

She looks tired.

PRECIOUS  
They have ...something. It's an  
immediate opening and it's in  
Queens.

Precious looks concerned.

PRECIOUS  
Queens?

MS. RAIN  
Yeah. Queens ...What do you think?

PRECIOUS  
(beat)  
I don't really know Queens.

MS. RAIN  
Me either. You should stay in  
Harlem...long as we can anyway.

105

CONTINUED:

105

Ms. Rain takes an organizer from her bag, looks for another number and picks up the phone.

MS. RAIN

I have this West Indian friend whose boyfriend is a council member.

(with uncertainty)

We'll see what they can do...

106

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

106

Precious exits the girls bathroom carrying Abdul. She sports a new sweat suit.

She pauses before entering Each One Teach One Reception Area and observes Ms. Rain speaking on the phone for a moment. Suzanne, the school's administrator stands by.

MS. RAIN

...C-L-A-I-R-E-E ...

WOMAN'S VOICE

Hey Precious.

Precious jumps and turns around to find Cornrows passing by.

PRECIOUS

Hi Miss Lisa.

CORNROWS

(still moving)

How you been?

PRECIOUS

Good. How you been?

CORNROWS

I don't know... I went to see that movie Barfly last night... That piece of shit was depressin...Cute kid.

PRECIOUS

Thanks.

Ms. Rain still on the phone.

MS. RAIN

I have the information on my desk.  
Can you hold one second?

Ms rain places the call on hold.

106 CONTINUED:

106

MS. RAIN  
(to Suzanne)  
I think I may be onto something.  
(to Precious)  
Come on Precious.

Precious and Ms. Rain walk back to her classroom.

107 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

107

Ms. Rain and Precious enter the classroom as the girls write studiously. Rhonda supervises in a staid manner. Clearly she is enjoying her new appointment.

107

CONTINUED:

107

RITA

How do you spell "Aquarius"?

JO ANN

What you want to spell that for?

JERMAINE

A-Q-U-A-R-I-U-S.

RITA

Is that right?

JERMAINE

Of course it's right. I'm one of  
'em.

CONSUELO

I wonder can you spell "boy" then.

JERMAINE

I wonder can you spell "slut" then.

CONSUELO

Maybe, but I bet Miss Lisa can.

108

INT. MS. RAINS OFFICE - DAY

108

Ms. Rain picks up the line holding.

MS. RAIN

Yes Brenda. Thank you.

Ms. Rain hangs up the phone, turns to Precious and exhales.

MS. RAIN

They can take you. Tomorrow...at a  
place here in Harlem.

Precious looks relieved.

MS. RAIN

You just need somewhere to stay  
tonight.

(beat)

You don't snore do you?

Precious smiles.

109

INT. MS. RAIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

109

Precious sits at a small kitchen table in a modest but cozy and craftily-decorated apartment. Fresh flowers adorne her table.

She breast feeds Abdul and drinks from a tall glass of grape juice. Ms. Rain clears the table of plates and take-out containers.

WHITNEY HOUSTON IS PLAYING LOUD. KATHERINE, A SEXY BLACK WOMAN who it seems has just awoken, descends the stairs. She's not in a good mood.

KATHERINE

Honey, how many times did I tell  
you about the music?

She stops in mid sentence when she sees precious. Her mood changes.

KATHERINE

(warmly)

You must be Precious. Hi.

Katherine bends down to admire Abdul.

MS. RAIN

Precious, this is my wife  
Katherine.

Precious looks confused. She spits her drink out. A lot of which lands on Abdul.

She wipes Abdul.

PRECIOUS

Huh?

MS. RAIN

I said that this is my wife  
Katherine.

Precious' mouth is agape.

PRECIOUS

...Oh...

109 CONTINUED:

KATHERINE  
(smiling at Abdul)  
What's his name? He's adorable.

PRECIOUS  
This Abdul.

KATHERINE  
He looks just like you.

PRECIOUS  
Thanks.  
(beat)  
Y'all really married?

MS. RAIN  
Yes Precious. Very much.

Precious still looks confused.

CUT TO:

110 INT. MS. RAIN'S APARTMENT

110

The ladies lounge around the living room. Ms. Rain and Katherine hold glasses of wine. Precious still looks as if she's trying to keep up.

KATHERINE  
...Ask yourself. Just ask yourself;  
if Ronald McDonald were running the  
show and the price of hamburgers  
skyrocketed, wouldn't you be  
suspicious?

MS. RAIN  
I just think you should finish the  
book.

KATHERINE  
Who's gonna read it?

MS. RAIN  
Nobody if you don't write it.  
Precious writes everyday. You  
should try it.

KATHERINE  
What do you write about Precious?

PRECIOUS  
I don't know. Stuff in my life.  
Abdul.

110

CONTINUED:

110

(beat)

How come y'all don't like McDonalds?

MS. RAIN

Katherine was just drawing a comparison so that her point could be more easily understood...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Together, these homo ladies talk like TV channels I don't watch. I'm glad Abdul here to listen in on 'em tho cause I know they smart.

MS. RAIN

It's called an analogy. For example, my uncle Clayton used to smoke like a chimney and drink like a fish before he got saved.

An Etta James tune begins ...

CUT TO:

Ms. Rain and Katherine, high from the wine, spin each other lazily in a playful dance.

Precious sits watching carefully. She lifts and smells the gardenias from the table.

Precious starts to pour a bottle of wine into her glass.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Mama say homos is bad peoples ...

A hand intercepts the bottle. It is Ms. Rain's. She then pours it into her own glass and takes the bottle with her as she returns to Katherine.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

...But homos not who rape me, homos not who let me sit up in school 16 years and learn nuffin and homos not sell crack to peoples in Harlem. I wonder what Oprah have to say about that?

Ms. Rain looks over to Precious.

MS. RAIN

You okay Precious?

Precious nods.

PRECIOUS

Y' all watch Oprah?

Ms. Rain gives her a loving smile.

(CONTINUED)

110

CONTINUED: (2)

110

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Miz Rain the one who put the chalk  
in my hand, make me queen of ABC's.

110 CONTINUED: (3) 110  
Precious smiles back with gratitude and great affection.

111 EXT. MS. RAIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 111

Ms. Rain and Katherine continue dancing in the window as Precious observes.

The evening cityscape sparkles around them.

A111 INT. ADVANCEMENT HOUSE: PRECIOUS' ROOM - DAY/NIGHT A111

MONTAGE: WINTER INTO SPRING AS PRECIOUS AND ABDUL SETTLE INTO THEIR NEW HOME.

112 INT. HOTEL THERESA CLASSROOM - DAY 112

Streamers hang from the walls. Various handwritten versions of "Congratulations Precious", obviously written by the girls, stretch across the blackboard in uneven-sized letters. Precious stands beside Ms. Rain holding a small trophy and a check. The other girls flank them standing very straight. All wear big grins.

FLASHPWOOWF!

Nurse John, without his uniform, has just taken a picture of everyone.

The girls go straight for the cookies and punch waiting atop an orange tablecloth on Ms. Rain's desk. They begin a Soul Train Line and dance around the desk as Nurse John approaches Ms. Rain to converse.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

After I settle in halfway house, I work my hardest to memorize letter sounds, write in journal and read smaller and fatter books. Then I find out Mayor's office give me Literacy Award and check for progress. Everybody at the party, Nurse John, Cornrows and the staff stop in too, but they need to get back to they desks before too long. Whole operation can't stop just cause Miss Precious get a trophy. Even Ms. Katherine shows.

John discreetly beckons Precious over to the side as she blows into a noisemaker. Both she and John dance in high spirits.

112

CONTINUED:

112

John hands Precious a giftwrapped present. She shakes it and then opens it.

It is a leather bound journal with blank pages. Precious flips through it.

112

CONTINUED: (2)

112

PRECIOUS  
Thanks Nurse John.

They exchange a familiar, moderately complicated handshake.

JOHN  
You're welcome. What are you gonna  
do with your award money?

PRECIOUS  
I owe the chicken place for a  
bucket that I swiped last year.  
Thas first. After that, get some  
thangs for Abdul.

JOHN  
You know Blu?

PRECIOUS  
Miz Rain?

JOHN  
Yeah.

Precious holds up two intertwined fingers.

PRECIOUS  
Like dis.

JOHN  
Well she has, has she uh...got a  
man?

PRECIOUS  
...No.

JOHN  
Well I was hoping you could put in  
the good word.

PRECIOUS  
The good word...wif Ms. Rain?

JOHN  
Yeah, that's what I'm trying to  
say.

PRECIOUS  
You ain't her type.

John looks confused.

113 INT. HOTEL THERESA CORRIDOR - DAY 113

Precious leads John down the hall by the hand.

She stops in front of Cornrows' desk as Cornrows converses on the phone while picking her nails.

The previously illegible sign on her desk now reads "EACH ONE TEACH ONE".

CORNROWS  
(on the phone noticing  
Precious)  
Hold on girl.

Cornrows lowers the phone and waits for Precious to speak.

PRECIOUS  
Miss Lisa this Nurse John. Nurse  
John this Miss Lisa.

Cornrows looks up at John.

Precious heads back to the party. Nurse John and Cornrows watch her curiously.

PRECIOUS (O.S.)  
Y'all work it out.

Nurse John and Cornrows turn to each other.

JOHN  
Hi ...How are you?

Cornrows looks him up and down then hangs up the phone without looking.

CORNROWS  
I get off at 4.

114 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 114

The room is empty except for Ms. Rain standing on a chair taking streamers down.

Precious appears in the doorway and studies Ms. Rain a moment as if seeing her for the first time.

Ms. Rain steps down from her chair looking tired.

Precious enters the room.

114

CONTINUED:

114

PRECIOUS

Miz Rain?

MS. RAIN

Precious, I thought you went home.

PRECIOUS

Not yet. I forgot to say thank you for my party.

MS. RAIN

You're welcome. It was my pleasure.

Precious just watches her.

MS. RAIN

Was there something else?

PRECIOUS

I ...No...

MS. RAIN

(beat)

Are you sure?

PRECIOUS

Well, I was thinking...

MS. RAIN

Yes?

PRECIOUS

You talk to us girls in the class when we be working out problems and thangs and stuff, right?

Ms. Rain speaks to Precious while picking up around the room.

MS. RAIN

Mm hm...

PRECIOUS

Well, who do you talk to?

Caught off guard, Ms. Rain looks at Precious curiously.

PRECIOUS

(quickly)

Or you probably don't have no problems so...

MS. RAIN

Everybody has those Precious.

(CONTINUED)

114

CONTINUED: (2)

114

PRECIOUS

Ms. Rain, some folks just got it made in the shade.

MS. RAIN

It only looks that way. Yes, I talk to people all the time for support.

PRECIOUS

Oh, okay...I didn't have nobody to really speak wif for a long time. I know how that be sometimes so thas why I asked cause almost evrybody need a little help once in a ...

Ms. Rain abruptly stops what she's doing. Precious looks alarmed.

MS. RAIN

What on earth are you talking about?

PRECIOUS

(confused)

Well ...only that -well, evrybody need a little help once in a ...

MS. RAIN

What?!

PRECIOUS

(scared)

I jus ...

MS. RAIN

You just what?!

PRECIOUS

(terrified)

I just thought that if you might need some ...

MS. RAIN

Precious?!

PRECIOUS

(trembling)

...Yes.

MS. RAIN

You've helped me already.

(CONTINUED)

114

CONTINUED: (3)

114

Precious looks both confused and relieved. Ms. Rain sits while motioning for Precious to do the same.

PRECIOUS

(sitting)

Me? I never...

Precious stops as Ms. Rain looks away as if gathering her thoughts.

Finally...

MS. RAIN

Last night I had a conversation with my mother, and that never happens cause our relationship is.... complicated. We don't speak, and when we do, it always ends in a fight about my filthy misguided existence. Most times I feel terrible for days afterwards wondering whether all the hateful things she said are true. Those days I just feel like...like...

PRECIOUS

Nuffin?

MS. RAIN

...Yeah. I didn't feel so bad this time though.

(beat)

Cause this time I thought about how strong you've had to be and then I decided that I had nothing to be ashamed of and that my mother was wrong about me, my dad and 5 or 6 hundred other things. You ask if you can help me? Baby, you already have.

PRECIOUS

...For real?

MS. RAIN

That's the for real, hope to die if I'm lying truth. Now shouldn't you be out the door?

PRECIOUS

I jus help you finish up first. I got some time.

114 CONTINUED: (4)

114

MS. RAIN  
(standing)  
Suit yourself.

Ms. Rain motions to the other end of a long folding table. Precious takes hold of it and they carry it across the room together.

As we watch from a distance...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Some folks got a light around them that shine for other peoples. I think maybe some of them was in a long tunnel before. And in that tunnel, maybe the only light they had was one that was inside of them and then -even long after they escaped that tunnel, they still be shining for everybody else. Thas Miz Rain to me.

115 INT. ADVANCEMENT HOUSE: PRECIOUS' ROOM - DAY

115

Precious' trophy sits on the windowsill beneath a thin a layer of dust.

A stack of books sit on her bureau.

Colorful letters and numbers hang on the wall. Beneath them hang postcards featuring Zora Neal Hurston, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou and Oprah Winfrey.

Abdul sleeps in his crib.

Precious makes her bed.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
In a book I read, a lady escaped to a 1/2 way house. And the lady, she asked the people there just what a 1/2 way house was. They tole her, you is 1/2 way between the life you had and the life you want to have ...Thas nice. That also mean I can't stay here forever and that there is still a ways to go. It be something to get apartment of my own.

116 EXT. ADVANCEMENT HOUSE PARK GROUNDS - DAY 116

A larger Abdul steps towards us with Precious behind him wearing a cotton dress that looks vaguely like one Ms. Rain might wear.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Abdul nine months old and walking!  
Smart too. I been reading to him  
since the day he was born almost.  
Barely talkin' and he countin' .

R117 INT. ADVANCEMENT HOUSE/POOL - DAY R117 \*

Precious plays with Abdul in the shallow end of the community swimming pool. \*

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Mama, Daddy, I.S. III and 444 Lenox  
Avenue already seem like a past  
life or some old bad dream. I wish  
I could have started out from here  
but still wif Abdul and poor Mongo.

118 INT. ADVANCEMENT HOUSE: PRECIOUS' ROOM - DAY 118

Precious looks out of her open window with a glass of water in her hand.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

PRECIOUS  
Come in...

Precious closes her window.

The door to her room opens. CHELSEA, A 30-SOMETHING SOCIAL WORKER steps in looking slightly uncomfortable.

CHELSEA  
Precious ...you have a visitor.

PRECIOUS  
Thas Rhonda. She always early.

Precious rises.

118 CONTINUED:

118

PRECIOUS  
I should've said 4 'cause then that  
way...

CHELSEA  
It's not Rhonda.

Precious stops.

119 INT. ADVANCEMENT HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

119

Precious descends a staircase to a long corridor clearly deep  
in thought every step of the way.

She stops momentarily to straighten her clothes.

When she finally reaches a day room at the other end of the  
hall, she looks through its window for a moment.

Mary sits inside crushing and dwarfing the couch upon which  
she waits. She looks frail. Her wig is half combed. She's  
nervous. Her sweaty hands crumple her cigarette package.

Precious covers her nose a moment, lowers her hand, readies  
herself and then steps into the room.

120 INT. DAY ROOM - DAY

120

Once inside the room, and for the first time, Precious' soft  
face looks like stone.

Mary looks up with a brief but quickly fading smile that is  
pathetic, apologetic and grim.

Precious waits.

The air is thick without a single word between them.

Finally, Mary looks down.

MARY  
Your daddy dead.

Precious looks surprised for a moment but still composed.

Mary waits for a response.

PRECIOUS  
...Is that all?

MARY

No.

(beat)

Carl ...Carl had that AIDS virus.

A previously unseen woman sitting across the room looks up from behind a newspaper.

Precious stays stone-faced until she finally GASPS as the aftershock of the revelation hits her squarely.

The man across the room collects his hat and coat and leaves.

INSERT -GLIMPSES OF CARL REMOVING HIS BELT, CARL THRUSTING ON TOP OF PRECIOUS, PRECIOUS FOLLOWING ABDUL TAKING EARLY STEPS.

We return to the dayroom as Precious opens her eyes and lifts them to Mary slowly.

PRECIOUS

... You got it?

MARY

Got what?

PRECIOUS

The AIDS virus.

MARY

No.

PRECIOUS

How you know?

MARY

We never did, you know...

PRECIOUS

No, I don't know Mama.

MARY

We never did what you got to do to get it.

PRECIOUS

He never been wif you?

MARY

Yeah...but not like faggots, in the ass and all, so I know.

Precious is speechless. It looks as if some of her anger has suddenly been displaced with pity.

120

CONTINUED: (2)  
Precious sighs.

120

PRECIOUS

You better go to the doctor Ma.

Mary looks up delicately.

MARY

You welcome back home.

PRECIOUS

I'm home here.

(beat)

I better go see 'bout Abdul and do  
homework.

Mary doesn't move as Precious leaves.

Mary sits staring at the floor at the far side of the room.

121

INT. ADVANCEMENT HOUSE: PRECIOUS' ROOM - DAY

121

Precious enters, takes Abdul from his crib, holds him closely  
and sits on her bed.

Moments later, a TAPPING on the window draws her attention.

Precious rises to find Tom Cruise hurling pebbles up at her  
window in a leather jacket.

A MOTORCYCLE sits a few feet away from him.

He beckons her.

She stares down at him with solemn eyes.

Tom finally mounts his bike and vanishes into thin air while  
revving its engine.

Mary then crosses the frame where he was.

Precious turns to Abdul and kisses him on the head.

DISSOLVE TO:

122

EXT. STREET - DAY

122

Precious walks over the crest of a hill deep in thought with  
her hands in her pockets. The constant HUM of the city seems  
lower than usual as Precious' FOOTSTEPS make the most  
prominent sound.

122 CONTINUED: 122  
From this distant view, it appears as if she is almost walking in place.

123 INT. HOTEL THERESA CLASSROOM - DAY 123

Ms. Rain stands before the blackboard with a piece of chalk in her hand pointing to the word "unrelenting", which is written behind her.

Consuelo is missing and TWO NEW GIRLS, AISHA, INDIAN AND FROM GUYANA AND BUNNY, VERY THIN WITH BAD TEETH have joined the class.

MS. RAIN

Rita, what do I mean when the author describes her protagonist's circumstances as "unrelenting"?

RITA

I don't know Miz Rain.

MS. RAIN

C'mon Rita, think about the question before you just give up like that...

Ms. Rain's voice trails off as we find Precious lost in thought.

124 INT. CLINIC - DAY 124

Precious waits in a small gray office.

A FEMALE COUNSELOR WITH SYMPATHETIC EYES carrying a file sits across from her.

Her eyes say everything.

The counselor places a hand on top of Precious'.

125 INT. HOTEL THERESA CLASSROOM - DAY 125

All the girls write in their journals except for Precious, who again looks preoccupied.

Ms. Rain watches her.

MS. RAIN

Precious?

Precious doesn't respond.

CONTINUED:

MS. RAIN

Precious?

The entire class looks up at Precious.

Ms. Rain waits for a response.

MS. RAIN

Precious, bring your journal to me.

Precious waits a moment and then shakes her head without looking up.

Ms. Rain goes to her desk and picks up the journal without resistance.

The words "Why me?" sit alone on the page with lines crossed through them. Ms. Rain returns the journal to Precious' desk still opened to the same page.

MS. RAIN

Precious, would you come to my office for a moment?

Precious doesn't respond.

The class still watches curiously.

Ms. Rain, steps back, sits on the edge of her desk and folds her arms.

MS. RAIN

Preci-

PRECIOUS

Nurse say I am H.I.V. positive.

The air changes sharply.

Everything stops.

Precious exhales.

PRECIOUS

I don't have nuffin to write today  
and I don't hate no one. Not even  
my muhver. My head is all dark  
inside so I don't have nuffin to  
write today...Maybe nuffin never.

Rita rises, walks to Precious and embraces her. Tears well in Precious' eyes.

125

CONTINUED: (2)

125

Still trying to stay composed, Precious wipes her face.

Ms. Rain rises, walks to Precious and rubs her back as she looks around to the other girls who are still stunned.

RHONDA

Your baby okay?

The class waits on pins and needles. Precious doesn't answer at first and just looks down until ...

PRECIOUS

Yeah. He good...Won't bress feed him no more to be safe.

MS. RAIN

(to Precious)

One time in your journal you told me that you had never really told your story.

(softly)  
write.

Precious' eyes well up some more.

She wipes her face again.

PRECIOUS

What for? How?! I feel like I am drowning inside a giant river Miz Rain. Thas what...

Precious stops herself abruptly as if being overwhelmed by a sense of futility.

MS. RAIN

I think telling your story will get you over that river Precious ...

Precious erupts hurling her journal sharply across the room. It bounces hard off the blackboard and stops abruptly on the floor facedown.

PRECIOUS

FUCK YOU! YOU DON'T KNOW NUFFIN  
WHAT I BEEN THROUGH!!! I NEVER HAD  
NO BOYFRIEND! MY DADDY SAY HE GONNA  
MARRY ME BUT HOW HE DO THAT,  
FUCKING ME ILLEGAL? I NEVER BEEN NO  
CHILD! NOT EVEN ONE DAY!!!

The class looks shocked. Precious' wet eyes are filled with fury.

125

CONTINUED: (3)

125

A moment later, Ms. Rain walks calmly across the room, retrieves the journal and places it back on top of Precious' desk.

MS. RAIN

Open your notebook Precious.

PRECIOUS

(exasperated)

I'm tired Miz Rain!

MS. RAIN

I know you are but you can't stop now. You gotta fight through this. You still have to live your life and do the best you can with the hand you've been dealt. If not for yourself then for the people who love you.

Precious HUFFS cynically.

PRECIOUS

Nobody love me. Thas a lie.

MS. RAIN

People do love you Precious.

PRECIOUS

Please don't lie Miz Rain! Love?! Me?! Love rape me, beat me, call me animal, get me sick and make me feel wurfless. I had enough love.

MS. RAIN

That wasn't love. There are people in this room who love you. Your child loves you too. Is that clear Precious? Now if Rita decided to just give up? Would you let her?

Precious doesn't answer.

MS. RAIN

Would you?!

PRECIOUS

(reluctantly)

No.

MS. RAIN

And why not?!

125

CONTINUED: (4)  
Precious doesn't answer.

125

MS. RAIN

Because you love her...as much as  
she loves you.

Precious looks to her side and finds Rita smiling  
reassuringly through her crooked teeth.

MS. RAIN

Now the rest of the world can judge  
you, cheat you, beat you, dismiss  
you and abandon you all it wants  
but we won't let you give up and  
that's the only thing that matters.  
Some people have less than that on  
their side and still manage to keep  
going.

(beat)

It's up to you.

Precious thinks a long moment, wipes her face and exhales.  
She doesn't move for what seems like ages.

The whole class watches her until Ms. Rain motions for them  
to continue working. Finally, Precious takes hold of her pen,  
opens her journal, sighs deeply and starts to write again.

126

EXT. PARK - DAY

126

Our young ladies and Ms. Rain are seated around a picnic  
table eating, laughing, talking and writing in their journals  
all at the same time. Precious has found friends.

As we watch Rhonda ...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Some things is hard to say and  
maybe not your business no way but  
Rhonda's brother rape her for years  
and when her muhver fine out, she  
throw Rhonda out her house.

As we watch Rita smiling...

126

CONTINUED:

126

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Rita's daddy kill her muhver in  
front of her eyes and Rita been out  
on the street selling herself since  
she 12.

As we watch Jermaine laughing...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Jermaine say mens beat her and then  
rape her for what she is. Muhver  
throw her out the house when she  
fine out that she different from  
other girls.

As we watch Ms. Rain.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Miz Rain still a sort of mystery,  
but a nice one like the sun.

As we watch the group from a distance...

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Miz Rain right too. These girls is  
my family now. They visit me at  
hospital when I had Abdul and even  
take up a collection when Mama kick  
me out. They got love in they eyes  
and in they hearts for me, same as  
I got for them.

127

INT. CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

127

Ms. Weiss speaks from behind her desk as Precious sits on the  
couch beside her backpack looking bored.

MS. WEISS

...You know you can use your  
notebook between sessions  
Claireece.

PRECIOUS

I do.

MS. WEISS

I mean you can use it specifically  
for trying to recover certain early  
memories.

Precious nods mechanically.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Tired of this lady asking me questions. Miz Rain say talk anyway but Miz Weiss just a spy for the State who write reports on me undercover. Reports go in file. File say what I could get, where I could go and if I could get cut off and kicked out of Advancement House.

MS. WEISS

(beat)

What are you thinking?

PRECIOUS

Nothing.

MS. WEISS

Oh I doubt that Claireece. It seems like you're always thinking about something.

PRECIOUS

I don't know. It's sort of hot in here I guess.

MS. WEISS

It is, isn't it? As a matter of fact, I'm going to get myself something to drink. Would you like something to drink Claireece?

PRECIOUS

A soda sounds nice ...please.

MS. WEISS

What kind?

PRECIOUS

I don't care.

MS. WEISS

Oh c'mon, you must.

PRECIOUS

Orange.

MS. WEISS

Okee Dokee.

Ms. Weiss collects some change, grins at Precious and then steps out of the room leaving her purse open on the desk.

127 CONTINUED: (2)

127

MS. WEISS

Back in a jiffy.

The moment the door closes, Precious dashes across the room for the file cabinet behind Ms. Weiss' desk.

Precious searches the drawers in the cabinet and rifles through the files.

128 EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

128

Ms. Weiss inserts several pieces of change into a vending machine and presses a button. A can of Soda CLUNKS down through the bowels of the machine.

129 OFFICE

129

Pouring through the "J" files, Precious stops at Jones and then first goes for "P". She sees nothing, sucks her teeth, thinks a moment and then looks for "C".

130 HALLWAY

130

Ms. Weiss saunters back towards the office whistling softly with 2 sodas in her hand.

131 OFFICE

131

Precious finally finds the file with her name on it and looks up as FOOTSTEPS sound outside the door.

Ms. Weiss steps in.

Precious is now seated on the couch again with a corner of her file protruding from her bookbag.

Ms. Weiss hands Precious her soda.

PRECIOUS

Thank you.

MS. WEISS

You know your mother's been calling here wanting to come visit.

PRECIOUS

Really?

MS. WEISS

Would you like her to come to a counseling session with you?

131 CONTINUED:

131

PRECIOUS

I don't know. I never really  
thought about it before.

MS. WEISS

Well that's just one more thing to  
consider before I see you next  
week.

Ms. Weiss smiles at Precious. Precious smiles back.

132 INT. ADVANCEMENT HOUSE: PRECIOUS' ROOM - DAY

132

Jermaine rocks Abdul's crib with one hand while looking at  
the file with Precious as both girls sit cross-legged on  
Precious' bed.

Precious reads carefully.

PRECIOUS

'I have just finished a session  
with Claireece Precious Jones, an  
eighteen-year-old African American  
female. According to her teachers  
at Each One Teach One where she  
attends school she is a pen-, phen-

JERMAINE

... 'phenomenal'

PRECIOUS

...success. Having made strides so  
tre-men-tremendous in the past  
year, she was given the mayor's  
award for outstanding achievement.  
She seems actively en...engaged in  
all aspects of the learning  
process. However, her TABE test  
scores are disappointingly low... '  
Not to Miz Rain! Not to Miz Rain!

(continuing)

'She scored 2.8 On her last test.'  
So what! Miz Rain-

JERMAINE

Get a grip and gon' read the report  
and don't get all emotional about  
what this silly hoe got to say.  
Anyway, if your shit wasn't dope  
you wouldn't be standing up here  
readin' -what, what's her name  
(looks up on the page)

132

CONTINUED:

132

Ms. Weiss. What Ms. Weiss got to say.

Precious continues.

PRECIOUS

'She will need at least an 8.0 Before she can enter G.E.D. Class and begin work toward her high school e-q...equivalency.'

Surprised and impressed, Jermaine double takes on Precious.

JERMAINE

...Nice.

PRECIOUS

Thanks.

(beat)

'Abdul is the client's second-born child. He's from all outwhere...

JERMAINE

'outward'...

PRECIOUS

'Appearances, a healthy and welladjusted toddler. Precious attends to his needs a-s-s-i-d-u-o-s-l-y...

Precious and Jermaine look at each other. Both are at a loss...

PRECIOUS & JERMAINE

Whatever.

PRECIOUS

... 'and with great affection and ee... '

JERMAINE

'eagerly'

PRECIOUS

... 'seeks any and all information on child rearing. The time and resources it would require for this young woman to get a G.E.D. or into college would be considerable'...

Precious stops reading abruptly and hands the file to Jermaine. Jermaine looks at Precious oddly.

(CONTINUED)

132

CONTINUED: (2)

132

PRECIOUS

Finish reading this ...I know  
what's coming.

Jermaine pauses and then continues reading the file as  
Precious rises and paces the room.

JERMAINE

'Although she is in school now, it  
is not a job readiness program.  
Nonetheless, Claireece is capable  
of going to work. In January, her  
son will be two years old. In  
keeping with the new initiative on  
welfare reform, I feel Claireece  
would benefit from any of the  
various workfare programs in  
existence. Despite her obvious  
intellectual limitations she is  
quite capable of working as a home  
attendant.'

PRECIOUS

I don't want to be no motherfucking  
home attendant! I wanna be...

JERMAINE

Hush! 'My rapp-o-r-t with Precious  
is minimal. Although I am not sure  
with whom, she evidently has access  
to counseling services provided by  
Each One Teach One. She has a  
history of sexual abuse and is  
H.I.V. positive.'

PRECIOUS

She say she not put that in my  
file! Bitch!

JERMAINE

That's the bitch's job, to get the  
mofuckin' goods on you!

(continuing)

'The client seems to view the  
social services, AFDC, as taking  
care of her forever.'

Jermaine sets the file down and looks up at Precious.

PRECIOUS

(beat)

That file do show one thing -that

132

CONTINUED: (3)

this hoe don't know nuffin wurf  
knowing about Claireece Precious  
Jones.

132

PRECIOUS

I'm getting my G.E.D., a job, and a  
place for me and Abdul, then I go  
to college. I don't want to 'home  
attend' nobody!

JERMAINE

You better put this shit back  
before you get in trouble. We talk  
about it with Ms. Rain in the  
morning.

133

INT. ADVANCEMENT HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

133

Precious hurries into a room carrying Abdul. The sign on the  
door says "DAYCARE".

Precious dashes out of the room alone.

WOMAN'S (O.S.)

And don't be coming back late for  
his bad ass neither.

134

EXT STREET - DAY

134

Precious marches to school with her bookbag and red scarf.  
She clearly has a lot on her mind.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Miz Weiss just part of the gang but  
definitely not cool. And social  
worker look at me like I am ugly  
freak who did something to make my  
own life like it is. I guess I am  
trying to figure out just what has  
happened to me while Miz Weiss just  
hell bent on making me go wipe old  
people's asses.

Precious crosses the street.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Got to sort dis out quick tho 'fore  
Abdul's next birthday -coming up fast.

135

INT. HOTEL THERESA CLASSROOM - DAY

135

The whole class writes until Ms. Rain looks at her watch  
and...

135

CONTINUED:

135

MS. RAIN

Time is up. Does anyone want to share?

The only hand up belongs to Precious'.

MS. RAIN

Okay Precious.

PRECIOUS

I don't really want to read all I wrote, I jus' wanna kinda say what it is I'm writing about and how it came about.

AISHA

What happened?

PRECIOUS

Well, to make a long story short, the counselor at Advancement House quizzing me about Mama and Daddy etc., etc. But it's really about workfare. She want to send me out as home attendant.

RHONDA

How you know?

PRECIOUS

Cause I stole my file from Advancement House and read it.

The class GASPS.

JO ANN

Next time get mine's too.

PRECIOUS

All this 'What you wanna be?' And 'You can talk to me.' They ain' no motherfucking therapists on our side, they just flunkies for the 'fare. I wanna work, but not for no motherfucking welfare check in Central Park -displacing brothers and sisters who really got jobs cleaning up 'cause I'm there working for free.

Jermaine speaks while slouched in her chair with her feet crossed and arms folded.

JERMAINE

And what kinda shit is it for someone like Precious to have quit school before she get her G.E.D. to work at some live-in job for some old-ass crackers. She'll never make a rise she get stuck in some shit like that!

MS. RAIN

Sit up straight Jermaine and watch your language. Both of you. Please.

Jermaine reluctantly sits up.

MS. RAIN

Now I see your points, but is stealing...

PRECIOUS

Miz Rain, If I didn't steal that file I wouldn't know what I was facing!

MS. RAIN

You read the whole thing by yourself?

PRECIOUS

Yeah...basically.

JO ANN

Rhonda home attend. Say old bitch would ring a bell when she want Rhonda in the night!

JERMAINE

Rhonda used to have to go all the way out to Brighton Beach where she work for them people.

PRECIOUS

The people had her there all day and night - 'on call' they call it. But you only get pay for 8 hours so that's 8 X \$6.37

(referring to her notebook)

= \$50.96 a day, but then you is not really getting that much cause you is working more than eight hours a day. You is working 24 hours a day and 50.96 divided by 24 is...

CONTINUED: (3)

(referring to her  
notebook)  
\$2.12 by my count.

JO ANN

Rhonda say old bitch would ring a  
bell - a actual bell -when she want  
Rhonda in the night!

PRECIOUS

Home attendants usually work six  
days a week. I would only see Abdul  
on Sundays? When would I go to  
school?

(beat)

Am I gonna hafta go be home  
attendant like Rhonda was?

MS. RAIN

No! So stop worrying about it.  
We'll cross that bridge when we get  
to it. Trust me -no, trust  
yourself. My concern now is that if  
this Ms. Weiss is someone you're  
working with and can't trust, she's  
out! We gotta find somebody else.

PRECIOUS

(beat)

Well, I just write in my notebook  
till I get wif some kinda therapist  
I can trust. Actually that always  
help me more than talking to her.  
Plus, I'm going to start going to  
meetings wif Rita for insect  
survivors.

BUNNY

Incest.

PRECIOUS

That's what I mean.

BUNNY

Well it ain't what you been saying.

PRECIOUS

What's the big deal?

BUNNY

One's where your family molest you,  
the other is like a roach or bugs.

135 CONTINUED: (4)

135

MS. RAIN

Precious, have you ever had your hearing tested?

PRECIOUS

No. I never really had nothing tested...nothing like that. Glasses is what I really want so my eyes don't hurt when I be reading at night.

The sound of a RUMBLING BUS ENGINE accelerating leads us to...

136 INT. CITY BUS - DAY

136

Rita looks out the window of a moving 102 bus and then steps across the aisle and sits beside Precious who stares out the window pensively.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Rita and me on our way. I look at subway map sometimes and wonder where I be if I go to the end of the line. Jermaine say there be a white boy wif a baseball bat when you get off. Rita say it's not true, or if it be true, it's only part true.

The bus comes to a stop and the girls dash out the back door.

137 EXT. UPPER WEST SIDE SUBWAY EXIT - DAY

137

Precious and Rita climb up out of the subway.

138 EXT. STREET - DAY

138

Precious and Rita walk with Precious looking around as Rita hums quietly.

139 INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

139

In a simple meeting room, women of all different ages, colors and strata sit in a large circle.

IRENE, A GORGEOUS SLENDER BLOND WITH LUSTROUS HAIR AND SPARKLING EYES stands.

CONTINUED:

IRENE

Hello and welcome to our Tuesday night beginner's meeting...My name is Irene. I am an incest survivor...

Precious looks utterly amazed. Her jaw drops. From here, the women's voices are so faint that they are barely audible as we hear Precious' thoughts.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

This girl look like a movie star and she in here too?! All kinda women in here. Princess girls, big girls, old women, young women, white women, lotta white women.

IRENE

It started when I was about 4 or 5 years old with him fondling me. By the time I was 12, he was having intercourse with me 3 or 4 Times a week...

A montage of other women standing and speaking follows. As the women talk, Precious' face fills with the wonder of seeing the world through the window of a spacecraft headed for re-entry.

CANDACE, SIXTIES, WHITE speaks next.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

What am I hearing?! What in the world?! One hour and a half women talk. How can this happen to so many people?

CANDACE

....I didn't remember what my father did to me for so many years until after he died...

CAITLIN, 20's, WHITE speaks.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

And these is just the ones that come out to the meeting. What about the rest? Do I pass them in the street and do not know?

CAITLIN

...I am a proud lesbian. But it's the only thing I'm proud of. I was confined to a mental institution for 14 years....

Finally, Precious stands.

She looks around as if seeing from the top of a mountain.

Finally she clears her throat and then ...

PRECIOUS

I was raped by my father and beat by my mother ever since I could remember anything at all. Raped and beat by both.

139

CONTINUED: (2)

139

The worst part about it...the part even worse than them doin' it...was how shamed I felt during the times when my father was raping me and it felt ...good. Anyway, I see a girl and always think I know how easy or bad she have it just by lookin'. Now I wonder if everybody go through sumthin' -sumthin' that leave a shadow in they life.

(exhales)

Never said alla that before...

Precious looks around the room to find herself surrounded by understanding eyes.

PRECIOUS

Anyway, thas all I'd like to say for today. Thank y'all for letting me share...

Irene nods and Precious sits. Rita squeezes her hand. Another woman stands up to recount her story. Precious looks aglow.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

Everything is floating around me now. Like geeses from the lake. I see flying. Feel flying. Am flying. Far up...Thank you Rita for getting me here on time.

140

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE MEETING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER 140

The group slowly emerges. A table with a nice arrangement of cookies stands next to a coffee maker and soda machine.

Irene chats with Candace over a cup of coffee. Precious and Rita talk with TWO OTHER YOUNG WOMEN, MIRIAM, BLACK 20's LONG PRETTY DREADLOCKS and LISA, WHITE 20's.

PRECIOUS

...How you get your hair like that?

MIRIAM

Oh, you like it? I do yours one day if you want. That's what I do - fix people's hair and makeup.

Miriam hands Precious a card. Precious reads the card carefully and puts it away with care.

PRECIOUS

Thank you Miriam.

(CONTINUED)

140

CONTINUED:

140

RITA  
(to Precious)  
Do you want another hot chocolate?

Precious smiles and shakes her head no. Rita gets up.  
Precious watches her go as Miriam and Lisa chat.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
Rita ask me do I want another hot  
chocolate. I do but I don't want to  
be greedy, even if her boyfriend do  
give her money.

Precious looks around at all of the other girls.

PRECIOUS (V.O.)  
I'm alive inside. A bird is my heart.  
Mama and Daddy didn't win. I'm  
winning. I'm drinking hot chocolate  
on the Upper West Side with girls -  
all kind who love me. How does a  
stranger meet me and love me?

Rita returns with two cups of hot chocolate. She gives one  
to Precious.

Precious thanks Rita with her eyes.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

R141

EXT. MRS. WEISS'S WAITING AREA - DAY

R141

\*

Precious, wearing her new scarf and glasses, sits in the  
waiting room holding a book in her hands. Abdul plays among  
the little children in the kids area behind her. Crumpled  
wrapping paper lays beside her. The book's first page reads:

\*  
\*  
\*

CONGRATULATIONS PRECIOUS! I'M SO PROUD OF YOU YET AGAIN.

LOVE, MS. RAIN

Sheila and Ruby walk in and sit down beside Precious. Ruby  
has a black eye. They sit in silence for a few moments,  
waiting for their turn.

\*  
\*  
\*

SECRETARY  
(O.S.)  
Sheila Hewitt, Ms. Rubenstein is  
ready for you.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

R141 CONTINUED:

R141

SHEILA  
(To Ruby)  
Go on back there!

\*  
\*  
\*

RUBY  
But there are no kids there I can  
play with.

\*  
\*  
\*

SHEILA  
Do you want me to knock your other  
eye out! Just sit there and shut  
up then! I'm going to talk to this  
lady before my shit gets cut off!

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Sheila heads up the stairs toward the offices. Precious  
closes her book. Its cover reads: Chrystal Stair: Selected  
Works by Langston Hughes.

\*  
\*  
\*

SECRETARY  
(O.S.)  
Clareece Precious Jones! Mrs.  
Weiss is ready for you.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Precious stands up and looks down at Ruby, sulking in her  
chair. She leans down, gives her a big hug and tenderly  
fixes Ruby's hair.

\*  
\*  
\*

Precious walks off toward the stairs, but stops when she  
passes a mirror hanging on the wall. Within the reflection,  
she sees her true self for the first time.

\*  
\*  
\*

R141 CONTINUED: (2)

R141

\*

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

One day Miz Rain ask us to write  
about our ideal self...I wrote that  
I would be light skinned and small  
wif wavy swing-job hair.

She heads up the stairs toward the offices.

\*

PRECIOUS (V.O.)

\*

(beat)

Miz Rain read all that and then say  
I am beautiful like I am. I never  
believe her before but somehow,  
today, this moment -can't say why,  
I do. Just now...The inside I  
thought was so beautiful is a black  
girl too.

\*

R141 CONTINUED: (3) R141  
Precious turns around to find that Ruby has grabbed her arm.  
She then reaches up and hugs Precious tightly.

Through the embrace, Precious finds herself facing the many mirrors on display by the old man on the folding chair. In her reflections, she sees the skinny white girl who she has frequently imagined herself as gradually transform into the real Precious one by one.

142 EXT. STREET - DAY 142

We tilt down upon a stately pre-war building bathed in stark wintry light.

MS. WEISS (O.S.)

Perhaps we should begin by talking  
a little bit about the abuse.

143 INT. CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY 143

Mary looks worse than ever. Her hair and clothing are disastrous. She rocks somewhat anxiously on the edge of her seat like a desperate salesman looking to close a deal.

MARY

'Buse?

MS. WEISS

Yes Ms. Johnston. Abuse.

MARY

There was no drugs in ma house! No drugs! 'Cause Precious know damn well I whoop her ass bright blue if she bring some drugs in ma...

MS. WEISS

I'm referring to inappropriate acts of a physical and sexual nature involving Precious.

MARY

Why'nt you say dat? Dat?! Okay.  
When it first start?

MS. WEISS

Yes. According to Precious' files she has had two children by your boyfriend, the late Carl Kenwood Jones, who is also her father?

CONTINUED:

You've been calling here saying you want to be reunited with your daughter and grandson and that you want them to come home. Well I think you'd better explain just what happened in that home.

Precious waits nervously.

MARY

...Well, I, Precious b'long at home cause I'm a good mother. She had everything. I done tole her that. Pink 'n white baby carriage, little pink bootie socks, dresses; everything I put on her pink. Precious, she so smiling and healthy. A day don't go by I don't throw her wheeling in the air. I take her up and down 125th Street. Me 'n Carl loved Precious. I dreamed of the day we was gonna you know, git married, git house wif grass, color TV's in all the rooms. Precious, She born about the same time as Miz West son that got kilt. You remember him don't you Precious?

Precious looks at a loss.

MARY

He born summertime 'bout same time as you.

PRECIOUS

I was born in November...far as I know.

MARY

Yeah yeah thas right. My little Scorpio chile! Scorpio's crafty. I ain' sayin' they lie, jus' you cain't always trust 'em.

Precious looks embarrassed beyond embarrassment.

MS. WEISS

Ms. Johnston, when did the abuse happen, how often, where? And, when were you first aware of what was going on?

MARY

When? I don't know when it start.  
When I remember it? She still  
little. Yeah, around three maybe. I  
give her a bottle. I still got milk  
in my bresses but not from her but  
from Carl sucking. I give him  
tittie, Precious bottle. Hygiene,  
you know?

MS. WEISS

(floored)

Excuse me?

MARY

Huh?

MS. WEISS

You mentioned something about  
hygiene in connection with...

Ms. Weiss can't go on.

MARY

I bottle her, tittie him. Bottle  
more better for kidz. Sanitary. But  
I never git dried up 'cause Carl  
always on me. It's like that you  
know. Chile, man -a woman got bofe.  
What you gonna do? So we in bed. I  
put her one side of me on pillow,  
Carl on other side of me. Ms. Weiss  
looks as if she's stopped  
breathing. I think thas the day IT  
start. So he on me. Then he reach  
over to Precious! I say Carl what  
you doing! He say shut your big ass  
up! This good for her. I say stop  
Carl stop! I want him on me! I  
never wanted him to hurt her. I  
didn't want him doing anything to  
her. I wanted my man for myself -to  
sex me up, not my chile. Me God  
damn it! So you cain't blame all  
that shit happen to Precious on me.  
I love Carl, I loved him. He her  
daddy but he was my man!

Mary can't help but to shoot a look of anger at Precious  
while Ms. Weiss pauses to regain her composure...

LONG DISSOLVE TO:

144

INT. CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

144

Precious nods reluctantly.

MARY

Lady from Each One Preach One  
say she got poems too. In fact...

PRECIOUS

That's enough Mama. That's ...  
enough.

(beat)

You know, I didn't realize what you  
was until this day -even after all  
those thangs you did. Maybe I  
didn't know no better or maybe I  
just didn't want to but I finally  
see you crystal clear for the first  
time.

(beat)

I forgive you too.

Mary smiles warmly and nods confidently to Ms. Weiss.

PRECIOUS

...but I'll never see you again.  
Not even if you dead.

Mary's expression drops. Precious turns to Ms. Weiss as Mary  
starts to spring up from her seat.

PRECIOUS

(without looking at her)

Stay down Mama.

Mary sits obediently. Precious turns to Ms. Weiss.

PRECIOUS

I forgive you too. I can tell right  
now that you ain't qualified for  
dis kind of mess.

Precious thinks a moment and grins a grin that seems much  
older.

MS. WEISS

...Precious? I was thinking we  
might...

PRECIOUS

I took the TABE test again. This  
time it's 7.8. Last time it was  
2.8.

144 CONTINUED:

144

According to the test, I'm reading  
around 7th or 8th grade level now.  
High school level next. College  
after that.

MS. WEISS

...Why congratulations Precious.  
That's ...

Precious stands abruptly, startling both women. She takes a  
step towards her mother. Mary winces. Ms. Weiss looks  
concerned.

MS. WEISS

Precious, perhaps it's best if you  
remain seat...

Precious leans and kisses Mary tenderly on the cheek, turns  
and gently touches Ms. Weiss' shoulder.

Precious takes a good look at them both, smiles and leaves  
the room.

MS. WEISS (O.S.)

Precious?!

145 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

145

Ms. Weiss calls after her. Precious keeps walking.

MS. WEISS (O.S.)

Precious!

Precious doesn't stop.

146 INT. CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

146

The women run to the window.

They see Precious burst out onto the street.

147 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

147

Precious walks down the crowded street carrying Mongo and  
Andre. She is happy and filled with hope. Tom Cruise is there  
chatting up another young girl... she pays him no mind. \*  
\*  
\*

DISSOLVE TO:

148 DEDICATION

148

...for precious girls everywhere.