

SOMETHING MORE

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INT. RAY AND EBONY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dinner cooks on the stove. RAY, 33, moves between a skillet and a pot. The SHOWER runs down the hall.

A PHONE DINGS.

Ray glances toward the counter.

EBONY'S purse sits there, partially open. Her phone partially visible inside.

Another DING.

Ray tries to ignore it.

Then he opens the purse slightly to get a clearer look at the phone.

DANNY: *Hopefully I get to see you soon.*

Ray stares at the message longer than he should.

The shower shuts off. He closes the purse and returns to the stove.

A few minutes later, EBONY, 31, enters, still drying the ends of her hair.

EBONY

Okay now, it smells good in here.

RAY

Don't sound so surprised.

Ebony reaches for the lid on the pot.

Ray catches her hand.

RAY (CONT'D)

Don't even think about it.

EBONY

I was just looking.

RAY

You were about to taste it, burn your mouth, then blame me because it's hot.

Ebony rolls her eyes and walks toward her purse.

She takes out her phone.

She smiles as she starts typing.

Ray watches her.

RAY (CONT'D)

What's got you cheesing so hard over there?

EBONY

Just one of my friends.

RAY

One of your friends...or your ex-boyfriend?

Ebony stops typing and looks over at Ray.

EBONY

Excuse me?

RAY

It's Danny that got you over there cheesing, right?

She looks at her purse. Then him.

EBONY

You went through my phone?

RAY

No. I saw the message pop up.

EBONY

My phone was in my purse.

RAY

It was open.

Ebony grabs her purse.

EBONY

Wow. Your mother would be so disappointed.

She heads toward the bedroom. Ray follows.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She drops her purse onto the bed.

RAY

What's that supposed to mean?

EBONY

You're the one that's always saying how your mother taught you not to go through a woman's purse. So what makes it okay for you to stick your ashy hands in there now?

RAY

First of all, I didn't go through your raggedy purse. I only glanced at your phone screen.

(A beat)

Maybe I shouldn't have. But I'd rather talk about why this man thinks he's seeing you anytime soon?

Ebony opens a drawer and starts adds some folded clothes in.

EBONY

He's coming into town.

RAY

And?

EBONY

And nothing. We still talk sometimes and he just wanted to catch up.

Ray watches her.

RAY

We've had this conversation before. Every time shit gets weird between us, somehow Danny pops back up. And then you call him your friend like I'm supposed to forget that's somebody you used to fuck.

(beat)

And we both know that he would jump at the first opportunity to get with you again.

EBONY

You don't know what you're talking about.

RAY

I know what that text said. And more importantly, you knew exactly why seeing his name would piss me off.

Ebony walks past him.

INT. HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ray follows.

EBONY

It's not like we're messing around,
so what's the problem?

RAY

I never said you were. But when I
asked who had you smiling, you said
"a friend." Why didn't you say his
name?

Ebony stops and looks at him.

EBONY

Because I knew you'd do this.

RAY

Do what? Get pissed off that my
girlfriend is smiling at some shit
that her ex is sending to her
phone?

EBONY

No. Acting like I belong to you
just because another man is talking
to me.

RAY

You're my girlfriend. What the fuck
are you talking about?

EBONY

I know what I am. I just think it's
funny how serious you get about
this relationship the second
somebody else enters the picture.

She heads toward the kitchen.

RAY

What are you talking about?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ebony grabs a glass from the cabinet.

EBONY

Danny sends me a few messages and suddenly you're ready to beat your chest about your *girlfriend*. Where's all this certainty the rest of the time?

Ray catches what she's getting at.

RAY

Oh, so that's what this is really about. Because I haven't proposed to you yet.

EBONY

I didn't say that.

RAY

You didn't have to. Every time you're pissed at me, somehow we end up right back here.

That gets under her skin.

EBONY

Maybe because we've been together for five years, Ray. Five fucking years.

RAY

Yeah, and I've told you why I'm not ready.

EBONY

No. You've given me excuses. There's a difference.

A beat.

EBONY (CONT'D)

Five years, and I'm still the one bringing up marriage. And every time we talk about it, there's another reason why now isn't the right time.

Ray walks away.

Ebony follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

EBONY

Now you wanna walk away?

RAY

I'm trying not to say something
fucked up.

EBONY

That's never stopped you before.

Ray turns.

RAY

Fine. You don't get to use the fact
that I haven't proposed as
permission to keep another nigga
around for attention. It makes you
look pathetic.

EBONY

Fuck you, Ray. I don't need your
permission to talk to anyone.

RAY

And that's exactly why I haven't
married you.

Silence.

Ebony glares at him.

EBONY

There it is. A new reason.

RAY

Nothing new.

EBONY

Bullshit. First it was money. Then
it was we argued too much. Then we
needed to communicate better. Now
it's what?

RAY

All of those things matter.

EBONY

No. You just keep moving the damn
goal post.

Ray shakes his head.

RAY

You know what? Just because we've been together for five years doesn't mean I'm supposed to marry you no matter what's happening between us. Unlike you, I want to make sure I'm ready to step into that before I just do it.

EBONY

And unlike you, I don't need five years or more to figure out what the fuck I want. And I'm damn sure not gonna keep sitting here feeling like I have to audition for a position when I'm already playing wife every fucking day.

RAY

I'm not going to let you pressure me to take any steps that I'm not ready to take.

Ray walks away.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He starts putting lids on the untouched food. Ebony enters behind him.

EBONY

Maybe that's why talking to Danny doesn't feel like this big deal to me.

Ray stops.

RAY

Here we go.

EBONY

You asked why I still talk to him. I'm telling you. It's just conversation. There's no pressure, no expectations, none of this shit.

Ray looks at her.

EBONY (CONT'D)

There's nothing at stake with him. I don't have five years invested in Danny.

(MORE)

EBONY (CONT'D)

I don't lie in bed next to him
wondering if I'm wasting my time.

Ray drops the lid onto the counter.

RAY

You think you're wasting your time
with me?

EBONY

I wonder sometimes.

Ray scrunches his face.

RAY

So then why are you still with me?

EBONY

Because I love you, Ray.

A beat.

EBONY (CONT'D)

If I didn't, I would've left
already. I wouldn't give a damn
whether you proposed. But I'm tired
of having to convince myself that
maybe next year you'll finally know
what the hell you want.

A beat. There's a brief silence.

EBONY (CONT'D)

So what are we doing, Ray?

RAY

What do you mean?

EBONY

Us. What are we doing? Clearly
you're not happy. I'm not happy. So
where do we go from here?

A beat.

RAY

I don't know.

Ebony looks away.

EBONY

Of course you don't.

Her phone RINGS on the counter.

They both look toward it.

DANNY CALLING.

Ebony looks at Ray.

Ray stares at the phone for a moment, then back at her.

RAY
 Guess I'm not the only one who
 needs to figure out what they want.

He walks away.

Ebony watches him go.

Her phone continues to ring.

She looks down at Danny's name glowing on the screen.

Her hand hovers over the phone.

CUT TO BLACK.