

will street

February 6, 2023

SCENE ONE

The play begins with the title track for the show, James Fauntleroy's "Is it Morning Yet." The lights come to a slow rise at the end of the song. The commotion of the market begins. QUINTERIUS enters with the first wave of people dressed in his uniform for the day—a lazily put together Santa Clause costume—beard and all.

He has his backpack slung over one arm. He sets it down against a wall. He gets his bell, checks his phone for the time. He starts a-ringing and trying his best to produce more than a half-smile. Every two people or so, he gets a donation. Enter MONALISE, rather scantily clad considering the cold December weather—luckily she didn't forget her leg warmers.

QUINTERIUS

I know that ain't who I think it is!

MONALISE

God damn it...Quinterius is that you?!

QUINTERIUS

And you know it is, mama! What's up witcha?

MONALISE

The devil is a fucking liar. Check your email again, ain't no way they put me with—

QUINTERIUS

Quinterius Quantrell motherfuckin' Quinn!

MONALISE

Since when did yo' Black ass start working for the Alliance? Matter-of-fact, when did you come out? What the fuck are you doing here?

QUINTERIUS

Come out? Girl whatchu talkin' 'bout? I'm an *ally*.

MONALISE

Fuck you.

QUINTERIUS

That's not the Christmas spirit, is it?

(to child)

Merry Christmas little man, thank you for the donation.

Is it Morning Yet?

MONALISE

Ugh, you are so aggravating!

QUINTERIUS

Shouldn't you be happy for me? I got a job!

MONALISE

Happy for you? Nigga—you disappeared six months ago! Ghosted a bitch for no good reason! I come to find out you got six kids by three different fuckin' people—

QUINTERIUS

No good reason? I got put in jail Mo-Na-Leese. That happens when you sell stolen iPhones. Did you know that, Monalise?

MONALISE

And what about the six fuckin' kids?

QUINTERIUS

Uh, no need to judge me because I'm sexually prosperous. You should try it out sometime.

(to old woman)

Thank you grandmama, have a good day now.

(to Monalise)

Would you mind ringing your bell, please? We weren't given bells to treat them like neglected toys, Mo-Na Leeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

Monalise begins to ring the bell painstakingly loud.

QUINTERIUS

Damn Monalise!

MONALISE

(to passing families)

Merry Christmas!!!!

QUINTERIUS

See that's why you ain't got nobody Monalise Margaret! You so god damn mean and spiteful! Yeah I got six kids, but what the fuck that got to do with you?! Word? Word? First time seeing a nigga in months, you wanna do me like this?!

MONALISE

It's a holly jolly Christmas!

QUINTERIUS

You know I got auditory hypersensitivity Monalise!

MONALISE

Oh how could I be so insensitive?

She begins to ring the bell painstakingly quiet.

Is it Morning Yet?

QUINTERIUS

God you get on my fuckin' nerves.

A little girl with her mother drops a dollar in the bucket.

LITTLE GIRL

Merry Christmas Mrs. Claus!

MONALISE

Merry Christmas little one.

LITTLE GIRL

Merry Christmas Santa!

QUINTERIUS

Yeah man, Merry Christmas, man.

The little girl and her mother exit. Radio silence between the two. They exchange fleeting, but obvious glances.

QUINTERIUS

Look, I get why you're upset, aight, but--

MONALISE

I don't want to hear it Quinterius. I don't have the emotional bandwidth for it right now.
(to families)

Merry Christmas...Merry Christmas....

QUINTERIUS

I'm sorry.

A beat.

MONALISE

(sudden anger)

You fuckin' broke my heart, Quinterius!

A scared young man intending to give a donation is stuck between the two poles that are Monalise and Quinterius. They realize the situation and give the young man a smile. He drops his dollar in and rushes into the store.

MONALISE

(tearful)

I let you stay at my house, I-I fed you...I let you drive my Kia fucking Century...

QUINTERIUS

You think I'm proud of that shit?

MONALISE

And you got the audacity to flash that broke up snaggatoof fuckin' smile at me like nothing fuckin' happened?! You had me thinkin' I found the one or some shit—but no, no, I'll never find the one. I'm not like your babies' moms, I'm not like, I'm not like—

QUINTERIUS

Don't that say that shit Mona—don't you dare say no dumb shit like that. You're more woman than any of them.

MONALISE

You're right. I'm going to be alone forever.

CHILD runs up to Quinterius and hugs him.

QUINTERIUS

Ay, my man, fuckin' relax aight? Mr. and Mrs. Claus are trying to find closure right now, okay? Ain't nobody teach you to keep your hands to your fuckin' self, huh? Fuck!

CHILD

I'm getting my father.

QUINTERIUS

Your father? I don't give a fuck about yo' motherfuckin' daddy.

The child runs into the store.

QUINTERIUS

Look, Mo—I don't how many times I can say sorry! How do you think I felt, huh? You know I got fucked up memory—I-I couldn't remember your number from jail. What the fuck did you want me to do? Shit, you never wrote me. I was there for half-a-fuckin' year and I didn't hear from nofuckinbody.

MONALISE

Don't make this about you.

QUINTERIUS

How could I not? I went to fuckin' jail. *Jail*, Monalise.

MONALISE

We were together for a year and you never told me about your kids?! That's...that's betrayal, Quinterius—

QUINTERIUS

I didn't want you to know I was broke, okay?! There, I said it! Yeah, I fucked up and I don't know if you noticed, but you demand a certain type of a motherfucker. A, a, fuckin' money man! You know how many child support checks I skipped out on for you?! To buy you fucking surf and turf from Outback and shit.

MONALISE

How many?

QUINTERIUS

What?

MONALISE

How many checks did you skip out on for me?

QUINTERIUS

So many I got locked up for it!

MONALISE

I thought you got locked up for selling stolen iPhones. Lying! Again!

QUINTERIUS

God damn it what do you want from me?! I loved you—I—I— love you so much so I was willing to go down for the shit. You taught me shit about myself I never knew, alright?! I—I—I did everything I could to show you that sort of love back. I bought them fuckin' legwarmers didn't I? You know what? Fuck it. I don't even know why I'm sayin' all this shit. I'm just here to get my fifteen a hour and go home—that's it. And Imma do it in peace.

(to child)

Merry Christmas.

A moment of silence. Complete catharsis.

MONALISE

I'm sorry, okay. I just—I've never been looked after like that. Held so, so, tenderly and kissed so passionately and cared for so specifically it's—it's like I lost somebody that God made for me. I was hurt—I am hurt. I'm sorry I didn't consider the circumstances—I'm so sorry, but you lied to me.

QUINTERIUS

I was just scared to lose you Mona. So, so scared.

MONALISE

I know.

QUINTERIUS

I thought about you everyday—in the cell, on the yard, getting my ass beat for stealing Young Pauly Paul's honey buns. I thought about that smile, that walk—

MONALISE

It's more of strut, but—

QUINTERIUS

Girl, shut up.

They both wipe away tears as silent forgiveness fills the air.

QUINTERIUS

Whatchu doing out here? Didn't you have a good job at the Post Office?

MONALISE

Yeah, but they found out about...you know. So, I'm here...

Is it Morning Yet?

QUINTERIUS

Wit' broke ass Quinterius.

Sweet, shared laughter.

QUINTERIUS

You still single?

MONALISE

Boy if you don't stop.

QUINTERIUS

You know you still love me girl.

MONALISE

Whatever.

QUINTERIUS

All that cryin' and shit and I still can't get no play.

MONALISE

You might get a little bit.

QUINTERIUS

A mighty little bit is all I need.

Enter Child and PARENT.

PARENT

You wanna say that again, asshole? Say hi to Facebook!

QUINTERIUS

I really don't have time for this shit man, I really don't.

PARENT

No. No. No! You're such a big man, huh? So big that you think you can talk to a kid like that?

QUINTERIUS

Get out of my face, man.

PARENT

No, I'm gonna get up in your face.

(to Monalise)

What kind of sick shit is this?

MONALISE

Why, it's Mrs. Claus lovebug!

QUINTERIUS

Ay man, you should really watch your fuckin' mouth, who do you think your talking to?

Is it Morning Yet?

PARENT

You see, Facebook? This is Babylon's takeover!

MONALISE

I'm gonna call the cops.

PARENT

Call 'em! I'll wait. Maybe you'll repeat what you said to my child to them. What's your name? Show me your I.D.

QUINTERIUS

Nigga fuck you! You ain't the poe-leece!

As Quinterius and the Parent argue, Monalise reaches for her phone and slides her hand down her leg warmer.

PARENT

Fucking faggot motherfucker!

The parent reaches for Quinterius' beard and tries to snatch it off. Almost as quick as it happens, Monalise grabs a crowbar out of her legwarmer and hits the parent over the head with it. Quinterius and Monalise double take at the body then each other.

QUINTERIUS

Oh bitch, I love you.

MONALISE

I love you too, nigga!

They come together in sweet embrace.

LIGHTS.

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