

SPARKLE

Written by

Mara Brock Akil

Based on the Original Screenplay by

Joel Schumacher

[PRODUCTION DRAFT LOCKED WHITE PAGES]

September 20, 2011

OVER BLACK WE HEAR:

A soulful voice, crooning. All of a sudden the voice and music disappears with dramatic punctuation. Cut to:

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*

1 INT. DISCOVERY CLUB - NIGHT

1

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A tight CLOSE UP of a sweaty, overweight young male vocalist (think Cee Lo), who is holding his expression for dramatic affect. Then he suddenly belts out the hook a cappella. The captured CROWD erupts. We are in:

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE #1

This is a cramped, storefront club where the young folks go. The stage is simple, barely enough space for the HOUSE BAND and the man at the mic, BLACK, who continues to rip through his song, having fun with the crowd.

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2 INT. DISCOVERY CLUB - BACKSTAGE AREA/KITCHEN - NIGHT

2

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TAMMY "SISTER" ANDERSON (28), a beautiful woman who exudes sexy, has her hand on her hip and her lips pursed-- some call this black woman sass. And she is giving all of this attitude to her younger sister, SPARKLE ANDERSON (19), who is equally beautiful, but hides herself in modesty.

SPARKLE

Sister, please.

SISTER

No. I am not going on after a troll who just sang himself cute.

SPARKLE

Pretty please.

SISTER

I don't know why I even let you talk me into coming down here. I think I'm the oldest sardine in this can.

SPARKLE

You don't look it.

SISTER

That's true. But it's your song, you go out there and sing it.

SPARKLE

You're the singer in our family.

SISTER

You sing.

SPARKLE

Yeah, but you know how to keep
people's attention.

Just then they both see a GOOFY GUY just staring at Sister.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

See? People want to see you talk.
Imagine how you will blow them away
when you sing.

Just then Black finishes to a rousing APPLAUSE. Then cutting
through the applause, we hear the announcer, RED.

RED (V.O.)

Black, ladies and gentleman. We'll
keep the applause going. Next up--

SPARKLE

Please, I just want to hear my
song.

RED (V.O.)

Sister Anderson. This is her first
time at the Discovery Club, so make
her feel welcome.

SPARKLE

Please. I went over everything
with the band.

Black walks into the backstage area.

*

BLACK

(smiling at Sister)

You really want to do this?

Sister smiles back, slips her arms out of her sweater and
spins it around, now showing ample cleavage. The smile on
Sisters face says it all, what competition their was is over.
Black swallows hard.

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STAGE

Sister steps on the stage and pulls the mic close to her
lips.

*
*

SISTER

(to crowd)

Thank you.

Just those two words coming from her lips instantly catches the attention of the crowd and JEREMIAH "STIX" WARREN (25), a charming, young lady killer who has big dreams and a bigger smile. Sister nods to the pianist. The band starts to play. Sparkle carves out a good place to watch. She catches Stix's attention too. They smile at each other. Sister's first note commands that all eyes and smiles are on her.

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MUSICAL PERFORMANCE #2

Sister sings a song about a woman choosing a guy to love in the vain of Solange's "I Decided." It's an upbeat, catchy Motown-style song. Sister has the attention of the crowd, but she wants more:

SISTER (CONT'D)
 Alright, we got that part down.
 (starts clapping)
 Now give me a soul clap.

Sparkle is horrified until she sees the entire place starting to clap.

SISTER (CONT'D)
 Don't lose my beat. I need my
 beat. That's it.

Sister jumps back into the song. The added touch with her vocals instantly picks up the energy in the song and the vibe in the room. Sparkle joins in, relieved. And Stix loves watching the crowd enjoy Sister. He makes his way toward the:

MAKESHIFT BACKSTAGE/KITCHEN AREA

*

Stix stands next to Black.

BLACK
 So what you think, Mr. Manager? We
 gone do some business?

STIX
 You got to lose some weight.

BLACK
 My belly helps me sing.

STIX
 TVs are getting bigger and clothes
 are getting smaller. You were made
 for radio.

BLACK
 Man you cold.

BACK ON STAGE

Sister finishes her song to great APPLAUSE. Sister winks at Sparkle.

RED
Give it up for Sister Anderson.

Red is mesmerized by her butt in a pencil skirt.

RED (CONT'D)
Oh, sorry about that, I got lost.
(the crowd laughs)
Next up on stage is a pretty
talented drummer from Harlem trying
to make it here in Motown...

*

Sparkle heads to the:

MAKESHIFT BACKSTAGE AREA

Sister steps off stage and smiles at Black. He smiles back and bows his head as if addressing the Queen.

BLACK
Feminine, lets say...

*

Black glances down at Sisters cleavage.

*

BLACK (CONT'D)
Charm. Mandatory group
participation. Nice touches. See
you next week?

*

*

*

SISTER
Maybe, maybe not.

Sparkle runs up and hugs Sister hard.

SPARKLE
You were great!
(breaks hug)
But we have to go. We have five
minutes to catch the last bus.

STIX
(to Sister)
Excuse me.

SISTER
I don't date younger men.

STIX
No, I'm not--

SPARKLE

I'm sorry but we have to go.

Sparkle snatches Sister and heads out of the club. Stix looks up to find Black smiling at him.

BLACK

Bird in hand.

*
*

ANGLE:STAGE

*

The Harlem Drummer is making musical magic. He hits a cymbal and the sound turns into..

*
*

3 OMITTED

3 *

4 INT. BUS - DETROIT DOWNTOWN - DRIVING - NIGHT

4

... The sound of the bus door opening to let the girls on. Sparkle collapses in the seat. This is when she allows herself to truly reflect on the evening. She starts laughing.

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*

SISTER

What are you laughing about?

SPARKLE

They loved my song.

SISTER

They loved me.

SPARKLE

Of course they did.

(Sister is touched)

Because you were singing my song.

Sparkle laughs and Sister playfully shoves her away.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

That was fun.

SISTER

Yes it was.

SPARKLE

Next time though, get through the first verse and hook before you do your soul clap, because--

SISTER
Uh, Miss Thing, 'next time'?

SPARKLE
Yeah, I have a lot more songs.

SISTER
Well, then you better get a lot more confidence and sing them yourself. Because slavery is over.

SPARKLE
Really? You're not going to sing anymore?

SISTER
No. Now assume the position.

Sparkle, a bit disappointed, positions her body to block the view of any other passengers so Sister can change out of her clothes into more casual attire. After a beat, Sparkle, looks out of the window and sees the Legend Theater marquee lit up with Marvin Gaye's name shining brightly. Thinking "one day" she smiles to herself.

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5 EXT. ANDERSON HOUSE - MORNINGSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT 5

It's a red brick Tudor that sits on a wide, tree-lined street, typical of this middle-to-upper-middle-class neighborhood. Sparkle and Sister run up to the side of the house, shoes in hand, and tap on the side door. After a beat, it opens. DOLORES "DEE" ANDERSON (24), their darker half-sister, is there dressed for bed, including curlers.

*
*
*
*

DOLORES
Y'all late... and she's up.

The girls walk softly through the door, and quickly up the stairs.

*
*

6 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - DOLORES'S ROOM - NIGHT 6

The girls hear their mother coming and cut into Dee's room. The girls muffle their laughter. Then nanoseconds later their mother EMMA ANDERSON (late 40s), who is also dressed for bed with curlers, taps on the door.

*
*

EMMA (O.S.)
What are y'all doing in--

*

She walks in just as Sparkle and Sister slip under the covers of Dolores's bed, hiding their street clothes.

Emma sees all three of her daughters huddled together on Dolores's full size bed.

EMMA (CONT'D)

My babies.

(then)

But y'all don't love each other that much. Sparkle, Sister, curl your hair and get to bed. We have church in the morning.

She leaves then comes right back in:

EMMA (CONT'D)

And Dolores, shut that window. My heater ain't on for the fun of it.

She leaves again. Sparkle and Sister muffle more giggles.

DOLORES

Y'all heifers sneak out and I get fussed at?

They muffle more laughter. Dolores shakes her head.

7 INT. NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

7

The fifty-plus choir marches center aisle to their seats as the organist plays a soulful gospel song and REVEREND BRYCE leads his congregation into their morning prayer. Sitting in one of the back pews is Stix. He taps his cousin, LEVISON "LEVI" WARREN (28), to look up. They talk in whispers.

STIX

Six churches, six Sundays and six dollars later I find her.

Stix points out Sister to Levi as she passes by. Levi smiles.

LEVI

Man, that's who you've been talking about? That's Tammy Anderson, she got two fine sisters too, and they all can sing.

STIX

Is that right?

LEVI

But their mama is crazy...

An older church Saint shushes them to be quiet. Stix leans back in the pew counting his new found blessings. Levi keeps his eyes locked on Sister. The Choir loads into their seats, but remain standing until Emma, their choir director, motions for them to sit. *

8 EXT. NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH - DETROIT STREETS - DAY 8

The congregation pours out of the front doors of the church right onto the heart of Detroit's black epicenter.

Emma's walking with SISTER CLORA (40s) and her sparring buddy and best girlfriend MS. SARA WATERS. *

SISTER CLORA
How's the new house?

EMMA
Lovely. We're all settled in now. *

MS. WATERS
(teasing to Sister Clora)
Well, we sure are glad to see those white folks haven't changed her, huh Clora?

SISTER CLORA
Or have they? Heard you got a new color TV too. *

Emma smiles at their teasing. *

MS. WATERS
Must be nice, our lives are still in black and white.

EMMA
Going to stay that way if you keep letting that girl of yours eat up your pay check. *

Emma and Clora share a laugh while Ms. Waters gives Emma a look, then something catches Emma's attention. Her eagle-eye finds Stix approaching Sparkle. *

ANGLE ON: Stix and Sparkle. He makes her nervous... in a good way.

STIX
You were at Discovery a few weeks ago?

SPARKLE

Shhh.

She nervously looks around.

STIX

(catching on, covering)
Bible study is at your house this
week, right?

SPARKLE

(stiff)
Right.

STIX

(teasing)
You're bad at this. Just act
natural.
(then reaching out to
shake her hand)
Stix.
(off her look)
I don't know you well enough to
tell you my real name, so it's
Stix.

SPARKLE

Sparkle.

STIX

Touche.

SPARKLE

No, that's my name.

STIX

(wicked smile)
Well then, I'll see you at Bible
study, Sparkle.

He walks away, as Sparkle smiles to herself.

ANGLE ON: Emma and Ms. Waters. Emma keeps her eye on Sparkle. *

EMMA *

Sara, who's that talking to my
baby?

Sara turns around to look.

MS. WATERS

Nineteen ain't a baby anymore,
Emma.

(off Emma's look) *
(MORE) *

MS. WATERS (CONT'D)

No need in eye-balling me, I tell the truth. It's in my contract as your friend. And I'm telling you, you hold on too tight to this one, she'll be unmarried and back on your doorstep just like Sister.

*

EMMA

It's just temporary.

*

MS. WATERS

New York just spit her right on back out, huh?

*

EMMA

How about you worry about marrying off your big-butt daughter and I'll worry about mine.

*

Just then Sparkle walks up with TUNE ANN, an overweight and lively young lady about Sparkle's age.

TUNE ANN

Mama, I need some money. They selling plate dinners in the church basement and they're going fast.

Emma holds in her laugh.

*

MS. WATERS

(to Emma)

Don't. Just don't.

*

Ms. Waters walks off with Tune Ann. As Emma lets out a laugh Dolores pulls the car up front. Sister walks up just as they are loading into the car. Emma takes over driving.

*

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9

INT. CAR - DETROIT STREETS - DRIVING - DAY

9

They pull off and stop at the red light. Stix walks across the street in front of them. Sparkle notices him and Sister notices her.

*

*

SISTER

He's cute.

Sparkle smiles. As the light turns green and they drive off, Sparkle looks back at Stix.

*

10

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

10

CLOSE ON: COLOR TV SCREEN

On *The Smothers Brothers Show* is the famous black comedian, SATIN STRUTHERS. He is mid-rant about how stupid black people are rioting their own neighborhoods and how, although he looks like a black person, his personality is white. We hear group laughter from the room before we turn around to see that we are in: the Anderson Living Room.

Gathered in the living room of well-appointed furniture and a new Sony Triniton color TV are a few of the YOUNG ADULTS from church, including Sparkle, Dolores, Stix, Levi and Tune Ann. During one of the group laughs, Sparkle catches Stix's eyes and he gives her a smile back. Emma sits closest to the TV. *

LEVI

(to Emma)

Excuse me, Ms. Anderson. Where is your bathroom? *

EMMA

Down the hall, second door on your right. *

LEVI

Thank you.

Levi heads down the:

HALL

But he passes the second door on the right and finds Sister sitting near the open door of her bedroom-- the third door on the left.

LEVI (CONT'D)

You're not coming to Bible study?

SISTER

Haven't you heard? I'm a heathen. Don't want to sit in there and be a hypocrite.

EMMA (O.S.)

The other door to the right. *

Levi turns around to see a stern-faced Emma, and disappears into the bathroom. Emma goes back to the: *

LIVING ROOM

She finds everyone now watching the British rock band, CREAM, perform "Sunshine of Your Love" on the *Smothers Brothers Show*. Sparkle is blown away by these funky white boys. *

EMMA (CONT'D) *
 That's "funky," huh? Makes you
 want to dance.

Emma starts dancing and the group starts snickering. Sparkle *
 is embarrassed. Dolores is amused.

DOLORES
 Get it, Mama.

EMMA *
 (still dancing)
 Oh yeah, I'm going to get it. And
 you will too. Because you start
 off dancing and the next thing you
 know you have a baby you can't
 feed.

They laugh.

EMMA (CONT'D) *
 I know you don't believe me. But I
 can tell you when he said "I'll
 soon be with you, my love, to give
 you my dawn surprise" he wasn't
 talking about making her french
 toast.

They laugh again.

EMMA (CONT'D) *
 I'm just telling you the truth.
 This kind of music is going to lead
 you to a bad end. Now open up your
 Bibles. *

She cuts off the TV. The crowd moans in disappointment. *

EMMA (CONT'D) *
 Hey now, the deal was color *
 television for an hour Bible study. *
 I lived up to my end of the bargain *
 now it's your turn. *

As they open their Bibles, Sister walks into the room. *

SISTER
 Reverend Bryce is on the phone and
 says that they need you to come
 check the books. They're not
 adding up.

Emma exits to the back. Sister turns the TV back on. *

ON THE SCREEN

CREAM is still performing "Sunshine of Your Love." Emma rushes back in with her coat and purse. *

EMMA *

Oh no. All these hormones can't be in here unattended.
(turns TV off)
Everybody out.

As everyone starts to leave, Stix is slow to move. Sparkle hangs back, hoping Stix will approach her. He doesn't make a move. She smiles awkwardly, hoping he will get the message. Stix's smile is corny and oblivious.

SPARKLE
(finally getting up)
Well, good night.

STIX
Good night.

She shyly exits to the back of the house, leaving Stix with Sister. She shakes her head.

STIX (CONT'D)
What?

SISTER
(exiting to back of house)
Why are all the cute ones stupid?

STIX
Wait, I was hoping I could talk to you.

Stix looks at the last few people heading out the door, then back to Sister who is headed down the hall. Emma turns her head and Stix ducks out of sight. Emma checks the room one last time-- it's empty. *

EMMA *

(calling out)
Okay girls, I'm gone. Sparkle, do the dishes. Dolores, study. Sister, pretend you're grateful to be back and clean something.

Emma exits. After a beat, Stix re-emerges. He starts down the: *

HALLWAY

He looks for Sister. And then hears a beautiful PIANO MELODY. He follows the sound to the:

11 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - PIANO ROOM - EVENING 11

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE #3

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He finds Sparkle behind the keys of a beautiful, black baby grand piano. He watches her SING and lose herself in her SONG about what it feels like to have feelings for someone and not knowing what to do with them. It's entitled "Hooked On Your Love." She glances at the pages of her journal that sit on the piano. She sees Stix and stops.

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*

SPARKLE

What are you still doing here?

STIX

That was beautiful.

She's stunned and happy to see him. She removes her glasses, subconsciously adjusting her clothes and hair.

*

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SPARKLE

It still needs a lot of work.

STIX

That's your song? You wrote that?

SPARKLE

Only if you thought it was good.

STIX

It's phenomenal.

SPARKLE

Then I wrote it.

They share a slight laugh/smile.

STIX

Did you write the song your sister sang at Discovery Club a few weeks back?

SPARKLE

Yeah. She kind of made it her own. But--

STIX

(excited)

Wait a minute, wait a minute. You wrote that song?

(MORE)

STIX (CONT'D)

You wrote the one you were just singing? And you wrote the ones that are in here?

Stix looks in her journal. Sparkle closes it.

SPARKLE

Yes.

*

STIX

What are you guys doing with your music?

SPARKLE

Nothing.

STIX

Why not?

SPARKLE

Because my mom would never let me. Plus I'm not the singer in the family-- Sister is, then Dee. I just sing in the choir because I don't want to sit by myself in church.

STIX

No offense, but I'm just hearing a bunch of excuses.

SPARKLE

Excuse me?

STIX

I don't mean to be rude. I'm passionate. Especially when it comes to music. That's why I'm here. I'm staying with my cousin Levi. I'm from Kansas City. We have a nice jazz scene down there, and I was managing a few acts around town.

(then smiling)

But the money is in Motown. I want to be the next Berry Gordy. I figured his stomach doesn't growl like mine anymore and maybe he's leaving a lot of steak and potatoes out there.

SPARKLE

(laughs)

You're making me hungry.

He laughs with her, then:

STIX
Do you mind if I hear the song
again?

SPARKLE
I've never really performed for
anybody.

SISTER (O.S.)
What are you doing here?

Sister, her attitude and Dolores have entered the room. *

STIX
(to Sparkle)
Does she know the song?

SISTER
I don't tap dance for nobody.
Besides I'm a model. *

Dolores laughs. *

SISTER (CONT'D)
What?

DOLORES
You have to be paid to model, to be
called a model.

SISTER
You're just mad because your hair
is nappy.

SPARKLE
You guys, don't do this. *

DOLORES
I'd rather have nappy hair and a
brain than have to depend on what's
between my legs to survive.

Without warning, Sister lunges after Dolores. They start
wildly swinging at each other. It's kind of comical. Stix
laughs. Sparkle, upset, pushes him.

SPARKLE
Don't laugh, help me.

Sparkle and Stix pull them apart.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

Stop it!

STIX

You guys are sisters. Act like it.
Now Dolores, you apologize to her.

DOLORES

Man I don't even know you and you
trying tell me...

*
*

STIX

Just do it and save your lip.

SISTER

She got a lot of it.

STIX

(then to Sister)

Hey. Just because you're light and
bright don't make you right. Your
sister is beautiful. All of you
are. And you have something
special. Something real special.
You're fighting and you should be
together, singing, making music.
Girl groups are hotter than ever
right now. You could take over and
you're up here tearing each other
down.

The girls absorb his words.

STIX (CONT'D)

(then smiling)

Now kiss and make up.

Yuck.

SISTER

Men always turn everything into
sex.

*

DOLORES

You would know.

(everybody cuts her a
look)

Okay, okay, I'm sorry. You just
leave yourself wide open-- Oh God,
I did it again.

Sparkle covers Dee's mouth, then smiling to Stix:

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SFX: DOOR SLAM

Fear strikes everyone.

CUT TO:

EMMA

*

Walking through the house.

BACK TO:

12 OMITTED 12 *

13 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT 13

Stix manages to fall out a nearby window just as Emma enters
to find Sparkle and Dee sitting at the piano. *

EMMA

*

Dolores, I figured if you can do
calculus you can balance the
church's books. Come on, get your
coat. *

Emma walks over to the open window that Stix jumped out of,
Sparkle looks like she's going to faint. *

EMMA (CONT'D)

*

What is with you girls letting out
my heat? *

Emma closes the window and walks out, Dolores follows her
back out of the house. *

EMMA (CONT'D)

*

(then calling out)
My house isn't clean! I want it
clean when I get back.

Sparkle, reflecting on Stix, smiles to herself and gently
closes the lid on the piano keys. *

A14 EXT. ANDERSON HOUSE - NIGHT A14 *

Stix hides himself and watches as Dee and Emma get into the
car and pull off. *

14 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SPARKLE & SISTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 14

This is really Sparkle's room. You can tell by the younger, more innocent decor. Sister, who recently moved back by evidence of her still living out of her suitcases, brushes her hair. Sparkle, who is already in bed, watches.

SPARKLE

Why won't you unpack?

Sister doesn't answer.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

If you want, I'll move in with Dolores so you can have your room back.

*
*

SISTER

No. I really don't plan on being here that long.

SPARKLE

You said that two months ago.

That stung a little bit, but Sister doesn't comment. Instead she turns out the light and gets in bed with Sparkle.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

SISTER

Don't ever be sorry for telling the truth, Spark.

SPARKLE

Why won't you tell me about New York?

SISTER

Good night Spark.

*
*

Sparkle knows not to push.

*

SPARKLE

Good night.

After a beat, there's a TAP on the window.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

(scared)

Did you hear that?

The girls jump up. They quickly realize it's Stix throwing rocks at the window..

*
*

SISTER

Your Romeo is out there.

*

Sister gets back in bed while Sparkle opens the window. She can't help but blush even while scolding him.

SPARKLE

You can't come throwing rocks at my window. My mother has a gun.

*

STIX

There's an underground club tonight. The kind songwriters don't want to miss. You have to hear the music they play-- stuff that's not making it on the radio. Come with me.

*

(sees her worry)

I promise I'll get you back home safe and sound.

*

*

Sparkle turns to Sister.

SPARKLE

He wants me to go hear music with him.

SISTER

You've snuck out of the house for less.

*

15 INT. UNDERGROUND CLUB - NIGHT

15

The music hits our ears first, it fills this dark, sweaty box full of YOUNG PEOPLE. The perfect storm for girls and boys to dance real close together and very suggestively. In the middle of dance floor are Sparkle and Stix. He pulls her hips in his direction, but she's shy about letting loose. Her eyes dart around the room-- she's in awe of all the young couples embracing, grinding, kissing and feeling each other up as they dance to the sexually charged music.

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*

*

STIX

I'm not going to bite.

SPARKLE

How do I know that?

*

STIX

Guess you just going to have to trust me.

*

*

He gently pulls her to him and she finds his rhythm. They *
let their bodies lead them to where they want to go.

16 EXT. UNDERGROUND CLUB - NIGHT 16

Stix and Sparkle pour out of the club drenched from dancing up a sweat. They both notice that steam is escaping their bodies and head. They share a laugh.

STIX

I better dry you off before getting
you home.

He reaches out for her hand and she takes his, smiling.

17 EXT. DETROIT DOWNTOWN - VESPA SCOOTER - DRIVING - NIGHT 17 *

Sparkle rides on the back of Stix's Vespa scooter. She conservatively holds Stix around his waist. She takes in the thriving downtown scene-- it's all too perfect. She sees her *
and Stix's reflection in his rearview mirror, squeezes him *
tighter around his waist and a smile creeps across her *
face... and his.

18 OMITTED 18 *

19 EXT. ANDERSON HOUSE - A FEW HOUSES DOWN - NIGHT 19 *

It's late, the kind of late when you don't want to let go of *
a magical night. Stix and Sparkle are a few houses down *
sitting on the curb bathed in moonlight, actually Sparkle is *
sitting on Stix's jacket. They're mid-discussion. *
*

STIX

I think your lyrics are too safe.
Unlike the music we heard tonight.
You dug it, because it was in your
face, real, telling you the truth.
Times are changing. I don't think
the metaphorical lyrics are going
to fly anymore.

(off her reaction)

You were impressed by my big word,
weren't you?

SPARKLE

(smiling)

I was.

STIX

In the spirit of telling the truth,
may I tell you another truth?

SPARKLE

I wouldn't want you to lie to me.

STIX

Then why do you lie to yourself?
About not wanting to sing?
If you're writing these songs and
you can sing, why aren't you
singing them?

*
*

SPARKLE

I'm no Diana or Aretha.

STIX

You're right, you're Sparkle.

SPARKLE

Look, my mother used to sing
professionally. She tried to break
out on her own and it almost killed
her. So thank you, but I know the
realities of this business. I'm
just doing this for fun.

*
*
*
*
*

STIX

What are you afraid of? Your mama
or your own voice?

(that hit a nerve)

Okay, maybe you'll be just like
your mother and never reach your
goal, but don't fall short of it
because you can't even admit you
want it.

*

Sparkle takes a beat:

SPARKLE

Okay, I want to be better than
Diana. I want to be a star.

She's never said that out loud and it feels scary and
exhilarating at the same time. She chuckles, embarrassed.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

But you don't say that in this town
because you end up sounding like
everyone else.

STIX

Only if you believe you're like
everyone else.

Sparkle looks at Stix differently. She really likes him. A
car passes which reminds her of the time; she gets up and so
does he. *

SPARKLE

Thank you. I had a great time
tonight. And in case I never make
it back out of that house, thank
you for making me tell the truth.

STIX

You're welcome.

Awkward pause. He goes in to kiss her. Sparkle is clearly
nervous. They kiss. It's sweet. He looks lovingly into her
eyes as he tenderly breaks the kiss. *

STIX (CONT'D)

Can I make you a star?

SPARKLE

What?

STIX

Do you want to be a star?

SPARKLE

Yes. I want to be a star.

STIX

I don't believe you. Say it again.

SPARKLE

(laughing)

Yes. I want to be a star.

STIX

Okay, the first thing you have to
do is write another song for your
sister. *

Sparkle's smile slips.

STIX (CONT'D)

Something where she can work the
crowd. And you have to get over
your fear of singing because you
and Dee have to back her up.
Everybody loves a good girl group. *

He's putting a stake in her heart and he doesn't even know it. He's doing what he does best-- getting what he wants.

STIX (CONT'D)

Of course, you're going to tweak your lyrics. Make them raw, more relatable.

(then excited)

Legend Theater here we come. But first you have to win Cliff Bells.

SPARKLE

Cliff Bells? You have to be invited to compete in their talent contests.

STIX

I'll work on that. Then after we win Cliff Bells, we work the rest of the high-brow clubs, build your name and make them pay. They love you more when you make them pay. Then the next time a big act needs an opening act at The Legend, they'll call up the clubs and ask who's at the top of the list-- and there you and your sisters will be. And when you're backstage at The Legend, you'll see Mr. Gordy and other record execs-- and boom, you get a record deal.

SPARKLE

You got it all figured out.

STIX

Yep. Now you go get your sisters and I'll go get Cliff Bells.

SPARKLE

And you'll be our manager?

STIX

Yep.

SPARKLE

Then you manage to get my sisters.

STIX

(grabs her hand)

Do I have you?

SPARKLE

I don't think it really matters
until you get my sister. Good
night.

Sparkle walks toward her house and never looks back. Stix is flummoxed, but not enough to stop her. He picks up his jacket, watches her take off her shoes and disappear down the block. *
*

20

INT. NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH - CHOIR ROOM - SUNDAY MORNING 20

The sun shines brightly through the room where the choir disrobes. Stix is there talking to Sister and Dee. Sparkle is nearby disrobing and listening.

SISTER

Cliff Bells? I'm not getting up
there embarrassing myself. And
didn't Marvin get booed out of
there? *

STIX

It made him better. And now he's
traveling the world and making
millions.

SISTER

Mr. Gordy is making millions--

STIX

However much it is, it's enough to
get him out of his mama's house.

That got Sister's attention.

SISTER

You don't have to be rude about it.

DOLORES

I don't really know if you were
asking me. You never really looked
my way, so our eyes never got to
dance, but I'm in. Just to be
clear, I'm in it for the money.
Medical school is expensive, so no,
you won't be getting twenty
percent. Fifteen max. When I get
accepted into Meharry Medical
School, you will have to replace
me.

(MORE)

DOLORES (CONT'D)
 And if you pretend I don't exist
 going forward, I will turn my
 sisters against you. Other than
 that, sounds like fun.

Sister glances over at Sparkle who is exiting the room.

SPARKLE
 I'll wait for you guys outside.

Sister turns back to Stix.

SISTER
 I'll let you know. My first day at
 Freeman's is tomorrow.

*
 *

STIX
 That ain't going to make you no--
 Fine, let me know.

Stix rushes out and catches Sparkle in the

HALL

STIX (CONT'D)
 What's your problem?

SPARKLE
 You used me to get to my sister.

STIX
 Sparkle, c'mon, you're not ready.
 Everything I said the other night,
 I believe. But you said it
 yourself that Sister's the better
 performer.

SPARKLE
 Well, let me know what she says.

Sparkle walks off.

21 EXT. LAFAYETTE'S CONEY ISLAND - 1 WEEK LATER - LATE NIGHT 21

*

Sister and Levi sit at a table. It's quiet at Coney Island,
 just them, the waiters, another couple and a small black and
 white TV droning on in the background.

*
 *
 *

LEVI
 How did you like the movie?

*
 *

SISTER

Who doesn't like Sidney Poitier?
But next time you talk about
picking someone up make sure you
have a car.

*
*
*
*
*
*

LEVI

I'm saving up for the right one.

*

SISTER

How you call yourself picking up
someone from work and don't have a
car Levi?

*

Sister laughs to herself.

SISTER (CONT'D)

Taking me out on a date on a bus,
lucky I like you.

*
*
*

Sister pulls her cigarettes out of her purse and lights up.

*

LEVI

Look, I don't know how else to be
than myself-- I'm a straight
shooter. I like you and I want to
be your man.

*

She laughs.

LEVI (CONT'D)

I'm not like all the other guys who
just want to do you.

(off her look)

I heard about your reputation, even
before you went to New York. But I
think it's what guys say when they
see something so beautiful and they
know they can't have it-- it's
easier to make it something they
wouldn't want by trying to tear it
down.

*

Even though she never looks his way, she's listening.

*

LEVI (CONT'D)

I see your beauty-- in and out.
And I want to earn it. So just
tell me what you need to fall in
love with me, I'll do it. 'Cause
really, whether you believe me or
not, I'm already in love with you.

She finally stops, takes a drag and turns to him.

SISTER
I've heard so much, it all sounds
like BS to me.

LEVI
(smiles)
Then I better roll up my sleeves a
little higher then.

SISTER
(looks down at his pants)
Hopefully not as high as your
pants.

LEVI
That's the style.

SISTER
Change it.

As they share a laugh, the waiter delivers their food. Levi
waits until he leaves, then pulls a ring box out of his
jacket and puts it on the table. *

SISTER (CONT'D) *

What's this? *

LEVI *

Take a look. *

Sister opens the ring box and finds a folded piece of paper. *

She looks at Levi, shakes her head, smiles and unfolds the *

paper. Its a magazine tear of a beautiful diamond ring. *

LEVI (CONT'D) *

One day, that's going to be yours. *

I promise. *

From out of the quiet of this romantic moment they hear one *

pair of hands clapping. They turn and see the famous *

comedian, SATIN STRUTHERS, dressed in his tailor-fitted suit, *

cuff links and a Leica camera hanging casually around his *

neck. Also with him are a couple of BEAUTIFUL WOMEN and his *

right hand man HAM. *

SISTER *

Oh my God, it's-- *

She pulls herself together. Levi is pretty jazzed too. *

SATIN

Brother that is some of the
smoothest shit I've seen in a long
time. You see this cat Ham? What's
your name brother?

LEVI

Levi.

SATIN

Here I been buying these women the
real deal when all I had to do is
put a picture in a box. I'm bout to
get me some scissors and some
magazines and be like my boy Levi
here...

Satin turns his fingers into scissors.

SATIN (CONT'D)

Clip, clip, clip, Hussies!

Satin and his hangers on begin to laugh, Levi does not find
him funny at all. Satin walks over to Levi and Sister.

SATIN (CONT'D)

Can I see.

Sister hands him the photo, we can see that Satin is clearly
more interested in Sister than he is the picture and so can
Levi.

SATIN (CONT'D)

That's nice, real nice. You got a
good man here.

He hands the picture back to Sister then looks at Levi.

SATIN (CONT'D)

I used to come here too when I was
struggling back in the day. Good
cheap food. Nice meeting you Levi.

Satin walks back over to his entourage, we can see by the
look on his face that Levi's moment has been crushed.

LEVI

I better get you home.

Sister and Levi get up to exit. As they head out the door *
 Sister turns back to look at Satin and flashes her *
 mischievous smile. Satin lifts his camera and snaps a photo, *
 freezing the moment in time. OFF THIS PHOTO: *

CUT TO: *

22 OMITTED 22 *

23 INT. EMMA'S DRESS SHOP - DAY 23 *

CLOSE ON A PHOTO of EMMA dolled up as a sexy background *
 singer. Definitely a different time. *

SPARKLE (O.S.)
 She was so pretty.

MS. WATERS (O.S.)
 Hard to believe it's the same
 woman, huh?

PULL OUT to see we are in: EMMA's Dress Shop *

It's a small storefront that sells very ladylike dresses.
 The CUSTOMERS are mostly women from the church. Given the
 few SEAMSTRESSES busy working, it's clear the dresses are
 designed and made on site. Sparkle looks at pictures with
 Ms. Waters across the checkout counter.

SPARKLE
 I mean, she's still pretty.

MS. WATERS
 No she's not. She's mad all the
 time. Can't be pretty and mad at
 the same time.

Sparkle points out a HANDSOME CHOCOLATE MAN holding a
 trumpet.

SPARKLE
 Oh, there's Dee's daddy.

MS. WATERS
 Here's a good one of you and
 Sister's daddy.

She shows Sparkle another picture. It's of a YOUNG EMMA *
 hugged up with a SUAVE LADY'S MAN who looks white. He has *
 drum sticks in his hand.

MS. WATERS (CONT'D)

Cute, but no good.
 (then lifting Sparkle's
 chin)
 Got to watch out for those cute
 ones. They make a lot of promises.

This last statement settles on Sparkle, just as EMMA walks up
 with the top half of a black mannequin. *

EMMA *

Going to be the first store in
 Detroit to have these. *

SPARKLE *

She's pretty mama. *

MS. WATERS

(teasing; holds up
 picture)

Look what I found. The other,
 nicer you. *

EMMA *

(snatches it)

Sparkle, go on to lunch.

(then to Ms. Waters)

And you come on so I can stretch
 some fabric across your ever-
 expanding behind.

Sparkle grabs her purse from behind the counter and exits.

24

INT. RECORD STORE - SAME TIME - DAY

24

It's packed with DREAMERS, LOVERS OF MUSIC and YOUNG PEOPLE
 just wanting to hang out and hook up. It's alive with the
 creative spirit. It's part of the reason everyone is saying
 Detroit is the place to be. James Brown's "I Got That
 Feeling" is playing. Stix enters and starts browsing through
 the stacks of records. He picks out a couple records that he
 likes and heads to a listening booth. He spots Sparkle in
 the fourth booth down, smiles to himself and walks over. He
 taps on the glass, flashes a smile and waves. Part of her is
 happy to see him, while part of her is still mad. She
 returns to what she was doing without smiling or waving back. *

Stix tries to open the booth but it's locked, he speaks
 through the glass. *

STIX *

Come on. Talk to me. *

Sparkle continues to ignore him. *

STIX (CONT'D)
I got Cliff Bells.

*
*

25 EXT. RECORD STORE - STREET - DAY

25

Sparkle exits the record store and Stix is two clicks behind her. She unwraps a sandwich and starts to shove it down her throat.

*
*

STIX
What are you doing?

SPARKLE
(stuffing her mouth)
I only get an hour for lunch.

STIX
Sparkle, I know I hurt your feelings. And I'm sorry. But I'm only trying to do what's best for us.

He takes the remaining half of sandwich.

STIX (CONT'D)
And hopefully you'll be performing in a few nights, so you won't be needing the other half of this.

SPARKLE
So now I'm fat? You really have a way with words.

Sparkle snatches the rest of her sandwich from him and walks away. He smiles, then calls after her:

*

STIX
I signed you up for this Thursday night. Eight o'clock. I'll be waiting.
(then to himself)
Hope you make it.

Stix walks away defeated.

26 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SPARKLE'S ROOM - NIGHT

26

Sparkle writes in her journal while Dolores, already in hair rollers, hot combs her hair. Sister enters, smiling and holding an envelope.

*
*
*

SISTER
I got my first check.

SPARKLE
Let me see.

Sparkle looks at the check.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)
Ninety-six dollars? For two weeks
of standing on your feet, kissing
rich white women's butts?

Sister collapses in a chair. *

SISTER
I'm never going to get out of here. *

Sparkle looks at her hopeless sister. She looks at Dolores
mischievously, Dolores quietly eggs her on. They see their
opening. *

SPARKLE
Stix said we could make anywhere
from five hundred to a thousand
dollars a night if we won Cliff
Bells' talent contest. *

Sister thinks for a beat, then bites. *

SISTER
Are you sure that's what you want
to do?

SPARKLE
Yes.

SISTER
Okay, I'll do it.

Sparkle excited, moves suddenly and the hot comb burns her. *

SPARKLE
Ow! Thank you. *

SISTER
That's all well and good, but how
are all of us at the same time
going to get past Mama for at least
three hours?

27 OMITTED

27 *

28 OMITTED

28 *

29 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

29

The sisters, made up a bit and with coats on, hover over their passed out mother. Sparkle leans in to check if she's still breathing.

SPARKLE
(to Dolores)
How much did you give her?

SISTER
Look, I know me and Mama don't get along, but did you kill her?

DOLORES
(not sure)
I'm darn near a doctor. I did it right. She's fine. But let's go and get back. It's supposed to wear off in three hours.

SPARKLE
Oh God, help us.

They exit.

30 EXT. ANDERSON HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

30

Levi is waiting for them. He smiles big when he sees Sister, who reciprocates coyly. The girls get in the car. Levi puts EMMA's car in neutral and lets it roll out of the driveway, then starts the car and pulls away from the house.

*
*
*

31 EXT. CLIFF BELLS - A LITTLE LATER - NIGHT

31

*

Stix is out front with half of black Detroit. This is clearly the place to be tonight. He checks his watch. It's 8. He looks up and sees Sparkle, her sisters and Levi approaching. He smiles. Sparkle sees him and smiles back.

SPARKLE
Surprised?

STIX
Not at all.

They all enter. Stix pulls up the rear and says a silent "thank you" to God.

32

INT. CLIFF BELLS - NIGHT

32 *

Once inside, Sparkle absorbs the new world like a sponge. On stage is another GIRL GROUP performing.

SISTER

We come a dime a dozen, don't we?

STIX

(to Levi)

I'm going to get the girls signed in and backstage.

LEVI

Go get 'em, baby.

Sister flashes a seductive smile at Levi and follows Stix and her sisters through the club.

Levi hangs back and soaks up the scene. He smiles, happy. After a moment, Satin, with his ever present camera, a COUPLE OF FINE WOMEN and Ham walk over. Levi's mood changes as Satin notices him.

SATIN

You're picture in a box brother, right? I don't forget a face. I'll forget your name in a minute--

*

LEVI

Levi.

SATIN

Fellas, this is-- see I forgot already.

Satin and his cronies laugh. Levi knows he's fucking with him, but laughs along. Stix walks up.

STIX

They're all set.

LEVI

I'd like you to meet Satin Struthers.

STIX

(shaking his hand)

You're a funny man.

SATIN

Thank you.

LEVI

This is my cousin. He manages my girlfriend and her sisters. They're performing tonight.

SATIN

I hope they're good. I'm looking for a group to open up my next show.

The club owner, MR. DANIELS, approaches Satin.

MR. DANIELS

Satin, it's a pleasure to see you again. We have a nice table for you up front.

SATIN

Come sit with us.
(Levi and Stix follow;
then to Levi)
I only have one extra seat. It's probably best I talk to the manager than the boyfriend.

Stix heads to the table with the group and Levi stands back and seethes. This man has won twice.

ON STAGE

The Girl Group performs. They have the crowd captivated. Sister notices the lead singer using all of her womanly ways to work over the crowd. They finish to roaring APPLAUSE. A black Master of Ceremonies by the name of BUDDY comes on stage.

BUDDY

Whoa, they were amazing. It's my birthday tonight and I'm going to wish for that thick one's attention and a quick divorce.
(crowd laughs)
Oh hey, I see we have Mr. Satin Struthers in the audience tonight.

The people in the club murmur and stretch their necks to get a look at him. Stix is happy to be in the mix. Satin snaps a picture of Buddy, then:

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Coming next to the stage is another girl group. Everybody wants to be the Supremes.

(MORE)

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Well, let's see if this group of
sisters can give Diana and the
other two a run for their money.

In the wings, the sisters remove their coats, revealing their
best church dresses in a similar shade of blue. Except for
Sister who is wearing a sexy slinky dress that she clearly
got when she was in New York.

DOLORES

What the hell is that?

SISTER

You want to win this money don't
you?

BUDDY

Please welcome Sister and her
Sisters!

SISTER

Now go on out there and sing the
hook a couple times.

SPARKLE

What? Sister this ain't what we
rehearsed!

SISTER

I know what I'm doing, just go.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE #4

The band begins playing the intro to Sparkle's "Hooked On
Your Love." Sparkle and Dolores do as they were told,
singing the hook. The crowd is not impressed and begin to
heckle.

HECKLER

Where'd y'all get them dresses?
This ain't Sunday school.

People LAUGH. Although the girls press on, you can see the
panic in their eyes. Stix drops his head in his hands as a
laughing Satin looks on:

SATIN

Get this man a drink. He's gonna
need it to get through this.

From backstage Sister looks on, waiting one more beat to make
her entrance. She spots Satin in the audience and smiles.

Sister moves like honey in hot tea onto the stage and all motion slows down, sound seems to evaporate from the building. Sister steps to the mic and the sound from her mouth feels like a thousand feathers landing softly on bare skin.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Although it's the same song Sparkle sang for Stix in her house, this time around it's Sister's own raw and sexy version. The crowd loves it. Sparkle and Dolores love it. They follow wherever their sister leads. We see them enjoy the effect they're having on the crowd-- okay, the effect Sister is having on the crowd. Sister seduces the men to fall in love with her and the women to want to be her. She plays with Satin and Levi, almost foreshadowing what's to come of them. Satin lifts his camera to take a photo, but finds himself too intrigued by Sister to follow through. He's already hooked on her. The club is going crazy and singing along, especially Stix. Levi is the only one in the building not happy.

*
*

33 INT. CLIFF BELLS - STAGE - LATER - NIGHT

33 *

ALL of THE ACTS, are on stage with Buddy.

BUDDY

And the winner of Cliff Bells's talent contest is...

*

Sparkle and Stix both look like they are going to faint.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Sister and Her Sisters!

The sisters embrace. Stix runs on stage to congratulate them. When Sparkle sees Stix, she hugs him tightly and says:

SPARKLE

You were right. She's amazing. I could never do that.

They share a kiss while everyone celebrates around them, then suddenly we hear the SONG "Jump" which bleeds over the next several scenes.

BEGIN MUSICAL PERFORMANCE #5 MONTAGE:

*

34 EXT. CLIFF BELLS - NIGHT

34 *

The girls are getting in the car. Levi is driving. Stix, like a coach, excitedly follows them and reminds them what they need to do.

STIX

This was nothing. I'm telling you
I can have you booked all over this
city. Diana better watch out.
Sister, you were amazing. Amazing!

(then)

Sparkle, we need more of your
songs. The kind we talked about.

*

SPARKLE

Okay.

STIX

We need something hot. Something
to make the people pay to see us.
Can you do that?

SPARKLE

I can do that.

STIX

We need--

SISTER

We need some new dresses Mr.
Manager.

*

*

*

DOLORES

We need to get home before Mama
wakes up. I'm not trying to die.

Stix taps the car.

STIX

Levi, be careful driving. You have
my future in this car.

Sparkle beams as they drive off. "Jump" drives us to:

35 OMITTED

35 *

36 OMITTED

36 *

37 OMITTED

37 *

38	INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT	38	*
	Stix is talking fast and running game in the pool hall.		*
	STIX		*
	Daddy don't need a new pair of		*
	shoes-- got those. Daddy need		*
	three new pretty dresses-- six ball		*
	corner pocket.		*
	He sinks it. He grabs the money on the table. His opponent		*
	is not happy. "Jump" is now heard LIVE at:		*
39	INT. CLIFF BELLS - NIGHT	39	*
	We now see the girls in beautiful, new, sexy dresses		*
	PERFORMING "Jump." They have the crowd's attention. Their		*
	CHEERS and excitement give Sister permission to work the		*
	crowd with her brick house of a body. As the camera moves		*
	past the back of the crowd it seamlessly reveals the girls		*
	still singing "Jump," but their dresses, while still sexy,		*
	have changed completely.		*
A40	INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT	A40	*
	Stix is playing the same opponent and still talking mess.		*
	STIX		*
	I want to thank you for your		*
	involuntary contribution to the		*
	Stix incorporated wardrobe fund.		*
	Stix sinks the eight ball.		*
	STIX (CONT'D)		*
	You were impressed with my big		*
	words weren't you.		*
	Stix's opponent throws his pool cue down in anger as Stix		*
	picks up his money.		*
B40	INT. CLIFF BELLS - NIGHT	B40	*
	The girls perform "Jump" in their new and more revealing		*
	dresses. They are even better and more polished than before.		*
	The club is standing room only and now a fire hazard.		*
40	OMITTED	40	*

41 INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT 41

Stix is back talking mess and running game.

STIX
Eight ball side pocket. Enough
said!

*
*
*
*

He sinks it. He grabs the money on the table. His opponent swings on him. Stix deftly whips his butt.

42 INT. CLIFF BELLS - NIGHT 42 *

The sisters are on stage in dresses even sexier than the ones before. We catch them at the tail end of their performance of "Jump." These sisters are so polished they could be the next Supremes. They end "Jump" to a thunderous APPLAUSE.

*
*
*
*

END OF MONTAGE:

*

43 INT. CLIFF BELLS - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 43 *

The girls are there with Stix.

DOLORES
We need more money. Or Mr.
Manager, you need to book us at a
better club.

STIX
Just relax, I'll talk to him.

Just then Levi enters, flowers in hand. He goes straight to Sister.

LEVI
Tonight was the best I've ever seen
you.
(remembers Dolores and
Sparkle)
All of you.
(back to Sister)
But you were amazing.

He leans in to kiss her, she pulls back coyly.

SISTER
You'll mess up my lipstick.

He's not offended. He hands her the flowers, she smells them.

LEVI

As much as I would love to mess it up, I have to get to work.

STIX

Since when did you have a graveyard shift?

LEVI

Since I got a woman that needs things.

Sister returns his smile. Levi opens the door to find Satin there about to knock.

STIX

Satin, I didn't know you were in the house tonight. Sparkle, Dolores, this is Satin Struthers.

SATIN

Pleased to meet you.

SPARKLE

Pleased to meet you.

DOLORES

(not as impressed)

Hi.

STIX

And this is--

SISTER

We know each other.

Levi doesn't like the flirtatious eyes Sister and Satin are making.

STIX

Great, y'all catch up. I got some business to tend to.

Stix exits.

SATIN

First I want to say I enjoyed your performance.

SISTER

Thank you.

SATIN

And secondly, I wanted to give you
this.

*
*

He hands her a jewelry box and she unconsciously hands the
flowers back to Levi.

*

LEVI

Wait a minute, brother--

SISTER

Oh my God.

Levi looks down and sees the ring. He's not sure, but it
looks like the one he showed Sister the picture of, or maybe
better. He looks at the flowers in his hands. Everyone but
Sister and Satin are uncomfortable.

*
*
*

SATIN

Some friends of mine are having a
party tonight. Thought you might
like to go along with me. We could
celebrate your success and get
better acquainted.

(then)

Of course, that invitation extends
to all of you.

SISTER

Levi's on his way to work and my
sisters have to get home.

Levi, crushed hands the flowers to Sparkle. As Levi exits the
club in anger it's almost like the band is playing traveling
music for him.

*
*
*

SATIN

I'll wait for you outside.

*
*

Satin exits.

*

SPARKLE

How could you do that to Levi?

SISTER

Levi's a grown man. He didn't say
nothing, why should I?

*
*

DOLORES

Don't listen to her, she's darn
near thirty and not married.

SISTER

Shut up.

SPARKLE
But Levi loves you.

SISTER
Spark, when you see a train that's
finally going to get you where you
trying to go, you can't wait to
live. You have to jump on it.

*

44 OMITTED

44

*

DISSOLVE TO:

*

45 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

45

The TV show Julia fills the screen. It's Sunday dinner.
Sparkle sets the table while REV. BRYCE sits at the end with
the best view of the TV, so he wastes no time when dinner's
served.

*

*

REV. BRYCE
You sang lovely today, Sparkle.
It's like you were singing with a
brand new voice.

SPARKLE
Thank you, Reverend Bryce. But if
you don't mind me asking, how can
you hear me? I've never had a
solo.

REV. BRYCE
You can always hear one of God's
angel's sing. In the choir... and
at Cliff Bells too.

*

Sparkle is about to pee her pants. EMMA enters to see the
fork shaking in Sparkle's hand.

*

EMMA
What are you doing, having a
seizure over there? Set the table.
Reverend Bryce has to get back to
the church.

*

EMMA exits back to the kitchen.

*

REV. BRYCE
I won't tell your mama if you can
get me a table for my birthday.

Dolores reaches between Rev. Bryce and Sparkle to place a dish on the table.

DOLORES
You'll have a nice table for four
at the front.

REV. BRYCE
More like the middle so I blend in.

Rev. Bryce smiles triumphantly as Emma re-enters with Ms. Waters and the final dish. *

EMMA *
Dinner's ready. Reverend, will you
please bless the food?

SPARKLE
Sister's not here yet. She said
she was coming.

EMMA *
Those who do, do.
(then)
Reverend?

REV. BRYCE
Please bow your heads.

They, including Tune Ann and Ms. Waters, settle in their seats and hold hands to pray.

REV. BRYCE (CONT'D)
Our Father in Heaven, for this meal
you have given, we want to say
thank you. Bless the ones who
prepared it. And Lord as we share
it, will you stay with us and be
our guest of Honor. Not just at
this meal, but God in our waking,
God in our speaking, God in our
playing, God in our digesting, God
in our working, God in our resting.
In a world where so many are
hungry, may we eat this food with
humble hearts. In a world where so
many are lonely, may we share this
friendship with joyful hearts.

Tune Ann, believing the prayer is over, breaks the chain of hands and says a soft Amen, while reaching for the biscuits. She realizes that Rev. Bryce is not done. She rolls her eyes and rejoins the prayer.

REV. BRYCE (CONT'D)

May this food so fresh and
fragrant, call forth reverence for
you in our souls. As you give this
strength to our perishable limbs,
so give us grace for our immortal
lives. And let's not forget the
blessings on this family. For all
the days they've had together and
all the days to come. For the joys
and sorrows that bind us all ever
closer. Lord, we thank you. Amen.

EVERYONE

Amen.

SATIN (O.S.)

No wonder black folks can't get
ahead--

Everyone looks up to find Sister who looks gorgeous hand-in-
hand with Satin. *

SATIN (CONT'D)

It's not because we're lazy-- It's
because we're so busy praying over
a new horse and buggy, by the time
black folks get to Amen the horse
is dog food and the buggy is now a
car we can't afford because we're
too busy praying.

No one laughs. After what seems like forever, Sister
recovers. *

SISTER

Mom, this is Satin. *

EMMA

Pleasure. *

SATIN

All mine, Ms. Anderson. All mine. *

Dolores leans into to Sparkle and whispers. *

DOLORES

Two dollars say he doesn't make it
to dessert. *

SPARKLE

Five says he doesn't even get food
on his plate. Look at Mama's face. *

EMMA

Sister, you and Mr. Struthers have
a seat, you're late.

As they head to their seats, Sister introduces Satin to
everyone else, including Sparkle and Dee who play along.

SISTER

...And this is Reverend Bryce.

SATIN

Nice to meet you Reverend.

REV. BRYCE

Saw you on the TV. You were pretty
hard on the folk here in Detroit
after the riots.

SATIN

I was just telling the truth. Shows
a lack of intelligence to burn down
and loot their own neighborhood.
That just makes no sense.

REV. BRYCE

People are angry.

SATIN

At white people. So go tear up
their shit. Sorry, excuse me.
Hail Mary.

DOLORES

That's Catholic.

SATIN

It's still Christian, right? Look I
understand, but I'm just trying to
get black folk to look at it from a
different perspective that's all.

REV. BRYCE

Burning and looting your own
neighborhood may be misguided, but
at least those people out there are
trying to fight to change the
system. With all due respect,
you're just trying to make a dollar
off their pain, brother.

Satin's anger is subtle but present. CRUNCH.

SATIN

Well, you would know better than I
about making money off of people's
pain-- you pack them in every
Sunday and give them a show. The
difference between me and you is
that you collect your fee in the
pews and I make sure I get mine at
the door.

The room falls silent with discomfort. CRUNCH. Ms. Waters
cuts Tune Ann a look to stop, but she only chews quieter.
Emma cuts Sister a look. Sparkle leans into Dolores.

SPARKLE

Definitely not making it to
dessert.

SATIN

Food looks delicious Ms. Anderson.
(off her non-response)
Well, I guess now is as good a time
as any to ask for your daughter's
hand in marriage.

Emma looks to Sister.

SISTER

Surprise.
(blushing)
He asked me last night. Got on one
knee, said he couldn't live without
me.

EMMA

You want to get married to this
man? The way he's disrespecting
our house? The Reverend?

SISTER

He's a comedian. He was trying to
make us laugh. Mama, he's a good
guy. He even goes to church
sometimes.

SATIN

Granted it's to get material, but
I'm there.

SISTER

(to Satin)
Stop.
(then to Emma)
He tithes.

EMMA

I think enough of you to introduce
you to doctors and dentists and
accountants, but no, you want to ho
yourself out to a coon.

SPARKLE

Mom!

Satin cuts Emma a look-- he wants to slap the shit out of
her. But on a dime, smiles.

SATIN

I'm probably more of a Sambo. I do
coon it from time to time. But
Sambo is my go-to.

EMMA

(to Sister)

Think better of yourself.
I know you're getting older and
worried about who's going to marry
you. But honey, get older, don't
get desperate.

SISTER

Desperate? I'm doing a whole lot
better than you ever did. Oh wait,
just keeping a man would be a whole
lot better than you did.

REVEREND BRYCE

Okay ladies, that's enough.

DOLORES

Maybe this is a conversation--

SISTER

No Dee. Me getting a good husband
is not about me, it's about her.
It's not my fault she got knocked
up at sixteen and still wants folks
to think that she's the perfect
mother-- raised some good girls.

(then looking Emma dead in
her eye)

Sparkle's gonna follow up behind
you and be a little church mouse
and make dresses, and if she's
lucky, be a preacher's wife. You
are going to be a doctor and I'm
just supposed to marry one.

(MORE)

SISTER (CONT'D)

Funny thing is maybe I could've
snagged one had she sent me to
school like you two, but I was
raising her kids and picking her up
out of her own vomit.

Emma boils.

SISTER (CONT'D)

I was desperate years ago. Right
now I'm just trying to get the hell
up out of here and get something
besides a color TV and half a room.

The two women stare each other down. The room is silent,
then:

TUNE ANN

Foods getting cold.

Sister wipes away the tear that escaped.

SATIN

We should probably go. Thank you
Ms. Anderson for what looks like
would have been a really good
dinner.

EMMA

(to Sister)

You leave my house, there's no
coming back.

Sister gets up and exits. Sparkle follows.

SATIN

For those who care to come, we're
having a June wedding.

Satin gets up from the table.

46 OMITTED

46

47 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SPARKLE & SISTER'S BEDROOM - DAY

47

Sister packs up her suitcases in minutes. Sparkle
uncomfortably watches for a beat, then:

SPARKLE

Are you still going to be a part of
the group?

SISTER

Not what was on my mind, Spark, but
yeah. Yeah, sure.

Sister marches right back out with her bags. Sparkle on her
heels to the:

HALLWAY

Where Dee is there to meet them.

SPARKLE

Dee? Don't just stand there. Say
something.

Dee hugs Sister.

DOLORES

Congratulations.

Sister breaks and cries a little with Dee, then quickly
regains her composure and kisses Dee's forehead, then
Sparkle's. And with that Sister leaves with Satin. We watch
the tears swell in Sparkle's eyes.

48 OMITTED 48 *

49 EXT. ANDERSON HOUSE - A FEW HOUSES DOWN - NIGHT 49

Sparkle sneaks out of the house and makes her way down the *
street. Stix is waiting on his scooter when Sparkle runs up *
and hugs him. He kisses her on the top of her head.

STIX

Where you want to go?

SPARKLE

Anywhere.

Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell's "You're All I Need To Get By"
creeps in as they take off down the street.

50 EXT. DETROIT DOWNTOWN - VESPA - DRIVING - NIGHT 50

The SONG continues to score this romantic and soulful moment.
While the city lights pass in the background, Sparkle holds
on to Stix tightly. She lays her head on his back and the
two of them fall deeper in love.

51 INT. SATIN'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

51

Satin sits at the table with his eyes closed. Sister carefully carries something over to him that we don't see. *

SISTER
Okay, open them.

He opens them to see a simple cup of coffee.

SISTER (CONT'D)
(proud)
Your cup of coffee, sir.

They laugh. She straddles him in the chair.

SISTER (CONT'D)
I take care of my man.

He kisses her.

SATIN
I appreciate it, baby. But papa needs to wake up a little faster and a little stronger.

He pulls out his cocaine. He opens her hand and lays a line in it. He snorts right out of her hand.

SATIN (CONT'D)
Stick out your tongue.

She does and he takes her residue hand and slowly drags it across her tongue.

SATIN (CONT'D)
Wait 'til you see what it does when we make love.

They begin to make out right at the breakfast table.

52 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

52

Stix, still clothed, is laying across the bed. He fluffs a few pillows, then:

STIX
What are you doing in there? Hurry up.

Then through the closed bathroom door, we hear:

SPARKLE (O.S.)
Stop rushing me, please.

The door opens and Sparkle steps out in a beautiful dress.
More fabulous than the others. She's beaming. Stix enjoys
the sight of her. *

STIX
Beautiful.

SPARKLE
Not too sexy?

STIX
Well, let me see. Model it for me.

She works the room back and forth like a model, then gets shy
and starts to act silly. They share a laugh. *

STIX (CONT'D)
Now take it off. *

SPARKLE
Someone once told me that they love
you more when you make them pay.
Your currency is time and I need
more of it.

STIX
Look at you putting me in my place.
But I still need you to take the
dress off.

SPARKLE
Stix, for real. Don't pressure me.

STIX
(laughs)
Girl, you got mad quick. I need you
to take it off, so you can keep it
nice. I thought you could wear it
when you and your sisters...

(then big and full of
excitement)
Open up for Aretha Franklin at The
Legend!!!! *

SPARKLE
What?!

STIX
Baby, you're opening up for
Aretha!!

SPARKLE
Don't lie to me Stix!

STIX
I ain't lying!

Sparkle lets out a scream. And they jump up and down and scream in celebration. Someone in another room knocks on the wall. *

MAN #1 (V.O.)
Give it a break will ya! *

Sparkle falls into his arms, they laugh. *

STIX
You are really going to have to dig deep and pull out the best song you've ever written.

SPARKLE
I have it already. I wrote it the night you first kissed me.

STIX
I can't wait to hear it. *

SPARKLE
You will the night I open up for Aretha Franklin. *

She sits on his lap and gives Stix a loving kiss. *

53 INT. SATIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

53

The girls practice their routine. They are working hard on the dance steps. Sparkle bumps into Dolores and the three sisters share a laugh. Sister sniffs as though she's catching a cold. *

DOLORES
You catching a cold? *

Sister is about to tell a lie but before she can, Satin pokes his conk-askew head out the bedroom door. *

SATIN
Y'all ain't got to go home, but you know the rest.

The mood changes instantly. Satin crosses to the bar to pour himself a drink. They make "oops" faces to each other.

SISTER
They were just leaving.

Sparkle and Dee gather their things.

SISTER (CONT'D)
(to Satin)
Baby, can you give them some cab
fare?

SATIN
You the one with all the money.
About to open up for Aretha
Franklin. If I had any sense, I'd
be living off of you.

Feeling awkward, Sparkle laughs out of needing to lighten the
mood.

SATIN (CONT'D)
You think I'm funny?

SPARKLE
Yeah.

SATIN
So you're laughing along with those
white folks I "coon" for?

SPARKLE
No.

SISTER
Satin.

SATIN
(stays on point)
Well you should. That's how I pay
for all this heat you're sucking up
around here.

SPARKLE
Satin, I'm--

SISTER
Just go.

Satin exits. Once gone, Sister gets money out of her purse.

SISTER (CONT'D)
Here.

DOLORES
Everything okay?

SISTER

Fine. Men are just like babies,
cranky when they're hungry and
sleepy. Which is exactly what we
need. Sleep. We have to open up
for Ms. Franklin tomorrow.

Sister gives them one of her confident smiles, making them
smile too. They say their goodbyes and leave. Sister closes
the door and her smile fades.

54 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 54

Sparkle and Dee sit with Emma watching TV. Emma drinks from a coffee mug. *

DOLORES

You want some more tea, Mama?
(no response)
Mama?

They take a closer look and she's knocked out. The girls tip
toe down the hallway, leaving Emma on the couch with the TV on. *

55 INT. LEGEND THEATER - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 55 *

Sparkle and Dolores are dressing as Sister enters.

DOLORES

Uh, hello? Today ain't the day to
be fashionably late.

SPARKLE

You have time. Stix says Ms.
Franklin's running late. Not even
here yet.

Sister drops her coat and sits at the makeup mirror.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

I'm a little worried though,
because that's going to cut it too
close getting back home...

Sister removes her hat. There is a huge welt and black and
blue marks on the side of her face.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

What happened to your face?

SISTER
It ain't nothing.

DOLORES
Did he do that to you?

SISTER
I had an accident.

DOLORES
Oh, so what? You tripped and hit
his fist?

SISTER
Get out of here.

DOLORES
What?

SISTER
You heard me. Get out of my face.

DOLORES
He's beating you and you're mad at
me?

SISTER
Get out!

Dolores leaves. Sister sits down again and reaches for her makeup. Sparkle watches her sister carefully unfold a dollar bill. Inside is a small heap of white powder. She scoops the white powder onto the open matchbook, brings it to her nose and sniffs hard. She rubs what's left on her finger across her gums.

SPARKLE
What are you doing? Sister, please
tell me that's not--

SISTER
We got to open up for Aretha
Franklin tonight, right?

SPARKLE
Right.

SISTER
Yeah well, Sister can't fly on one
wing.

56 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 56

Emma wakes up from her deep sleep, a bit disoriented. *

She looks for the girls and sees they are gone.

57 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SPARKLE & SISTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 57

Emma snoops and eventually finds some of Sparkle's *

performance dresses sandwiched between her mattresses.

58 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT 58

Emma dials the phone. *

EMMA *

Sara, tell that daughter of yours
to stop eating and tell you where
my daughters are performing
tonight.

INTERCUT:

59 INT. MS. WATERS KITCHEN - NIGHT 59

Ms. Waters is on the phone and, as predicted, Tune Ann is
eating.

MS. WATERS

Where are the Anderson sisters
performing tonight?

Tune Ann has no way out.

HOST (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, live at the
Legend Theater, please help me *

welcome, Sister and Her Sisters!

CUT BACK TO:

60 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 60

Emma doesn't need the info anymore because there they are *

right there on her TV.

EMMA *

I'll be damned.

61 INT. LEGEND THEATER - STAGE - NIGHT 61 *

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE #6 *

The dresses, the heels, the way the girls move their bodies to the music makes mouths drop open. But when they open their mouth to sing "Giving Him Something He Can Feel," it shocks sexual electricity through The Legend Theater. Not because they are singing upbeat, but because their lyrics drip with passion. Stix has to loosen his tie. He sees that Sparkle is singing directly at him. She's shed a skin and is becoming a woman right before his eyes. He laughs to himself - she wrote the hell out of this song. It's so palpable it feels almost better than having sex. Clearly the sisters are getting everyone in the mood, especially Sister as she commands the stage. Satin, who has a scar on his face, watches intensely as Sister seductively works the crowd like we've never seen her before. Everyone there knows this is a life changing moment for the girls and they love bearing witness to it. Standing ovation. *

62 INT. LEGEND THEATER - BACKSTAGE LOUNGE/BAR - LATER - NIGHT 62 *

The after party is in full swing. PERFORMERS, WANNABEES and BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE mingle and try to get close to the girls to say "Congratulations." The girls greet people with excitement, but there's a cloud present. Stix enters with LARRY ROBINSON.

STIX

Ladies, I want you to meet Larry Robinson of Columbia Records. *

The girls say "Hi."

LARRY

Oh look at that, they say 'hi' in harmony.

DOLORES

(to Stix)

Didn't you say something about Berry Gordy? No offense, Mr. Robinson.

LARRY

(smiles)

None taken.

STIX

Dee, Mr. Robinson is a senior A and R at Columbia in Los Angeles. *

(MORE)

STIX (CONT'D)

He's set up an office here to find some talent. He wants to talk to us about a record--

LARRY

Can I share it? Will you let it be my news?

STIX

By all means.

LARRY

(to girls)

You were fantastic. Fan-tas-tic. I want to sign you. I'm going to sign you. Let me go back to my first thought-- want to sign you. But because I'm an impulsive guy, I can't. I have to stop and count to twenty. Not literally, but here's the deal, I got to see what you look like waking up next to me in the morning.

DOLORES

Stix, what is this?

LARRY

It's an expression-- I need to see you in the light of day-- another expression. Look, the point is I need to see you again before I sign you. It'll be fun. You'll get dolled up, prepare a new song, I'll invite some of my colleagues and you wow us.

(then to Sister)

It's all your fault. I'm not sure if you guys can really sing or if I just couldn't keep my eyes off you.

He tries to get a closer look at her, but Sister turns her face.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Oh you're a coy one, I like that. It works on many levels.

(then to Stix)

Great, so I'll see you next week.

Larry turns around to exit and bumps into Satin.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Wow, there's a line to get in here.
Excuse me.

Stix crosses over to shake Satin's hand.

STIX

Your lady was once again--
incredible.

SATIN

You all were. Congratulations.

Sparkle and Dolores don't respond. Stix notices the tension but the fresh scar on Satin's face distracts him.

STIX

You been fighting?

SATIN

I got a new cat.

STIX

That's a big ass cat.

(then)

You guys better get out of here.

Your cab is out front.

(whispers in Sparkle's
ear)

I saw you up there singing to me,
teasing me.

SPARKLE

You said you wanted better songs,
something hot.

STIX

Girl, you better stop.

(kisses Sparkle, then)

You guys were incredible but I have
to run and see if I can talk to
Berry and get us a bidding war.
Satin.

SATIN

Stix.

Stix exits, leaving the girls there with Satin.

SATIN (CONT'D)

Come on baby, let's go celebrate.

Sister starts to get up, but Sparkle and Dolores stand up between them.

SATIN (CONT'D)
(laughs)
What? Y'all her bodyguards now?

DOLORES
We're big ass cats.

This time Satin doesn't laugh, he looks Dolores right in the eyes.

SATIN
I'll step outside so you all can talk.

Satin exits.

DOLORES
Come on, let's get out of here.
Mom will let you back in the house.

SISTER
You guys, really. I fell.

DOLORES
You said Mom used to fall a lot too. You even picked her up a few times.

SISTER
It was one time.

SPARKLE
Too many. Sister, look at me.
(Sister doesn't)
Tammy.

Sister looks up.

SISTER
Don't call me that.

SPARKLE
You told me one time that you don't have to make the right decision all the time, but you have to make the right decision at the right time.

Sparkle holds out her hand.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)
Walk out here with us.

Sparkle holds it out for a long time and eventually Sister takes Sparkle's hand. They walk out of the dressing room.

BACKSTAGE

Sister looks across the room and sees Satin holding court. After a beat he feels Sister looking at him. He raises his glass of champagne in a subtle toast to her and smiles. Sister smiles back.

CLOSE ON: SISTER AND SPARKLE'S HANDS. We see Sister's hand slip gently out of Sparkle's.

Time stands still as Sparkle and Dolores watch their sister disappear into the crowd and head over to Satin.

63

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

63

Sparkle and Dolores sneak into the house barefoot, only to find their bags packed and their mother on the couch.

DOLORES

Mama, I'm sorry.

SPARKLE

I'm sorry, too.

EMMA

Was my life not enough of a cautionary tale for you? You think I'm just a mean Mama, I won't let you follow your dreams. Well, then I'll be mean because I will never encourage you to drive your life right into hell.

*

DOLORES

To be honest, I can take it or leave it. But we are close to getting a record deal. They're saying Sister could be like Diana Ross and Sparkle is a good songwriter.

EMMA

I made it real simple in this house. Respect, education and having a relationship with the Lord. You can't do that, it's time to go.

*

The girls are silent, then almost a whisper:

SPARKLE

Why would the Lord give me this
gift if I wasn't supposed to use
it?

EMMA

What?

SPARKLE

All I think about is music.
Everything I hear, see, feel turns
into a song. Sometimes I try to
turn it off, but I can't. And I
know the Lord loves me and He
wouldn't torture me with something
I want to do, can't help but do.
So I figured--

EMMA

That I was wrong?

SPARKLE

That I had a gift.

EMMA

You can have a gift. It's how you
use it. You want to promote good
or promote more fast-tailed girls
having illegitimate children?

(she then reads from
Sparkle's journal)

Giving him something he can feel.
To let him know this love is real.

SPARKLE

Mama, that's private.

EMMA

(tossing it in a nearby
trash can)

No, it's trash.

Sparkle gets it out of the trash.

SPARKLE

No, it's not.

(then)

We were wrong for disrespecting you
and the rules of your house. So if
you want me to go, I'll go. But I
can't stop now, Mama. I'm too
close.

Emma looks at Sparkle's uncontrollable shaking hand. Emma takes a moment to look at her two daughters in disgust, then gets up. *

EMMA *

You go. You get the record deal, you would move out anyway. But if you don't get it, and you want to live here? This little dream of yours is over, you hear?

Sparkle nods "yes." Emma exits. Tears drop down Sparkle's face. Dolores gently puts her hand over Sparkle's to make it stop shaking. *

DOLORES

I'm proud of you.

64

INT. SATIN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

64

Sister stirs awake in the big king sized bed. When she looks up, she sees Satin sitting on the floor (conk askew) taking a photo. He smiles at her.

SISTER

What are you doing?

SATIN

I always do this. You look like an angel.

SISTER

Thank you.

SATIN

(hands her his notebook)
Will you please read this for me?
Tell me what you think.

SISTER

(smiling)
This is some new material?

SATIN

Things are changing. More black folks can come into the theaters. White folks don't mind it so much. I ain't trying to lose that white money, but I think this will help me bridge the gap. Get some of my black audience back.

(MORE)

SATIN (CONT'D)

Ham got me a spot over in one of those black clubs to try this out. I need to know if it's any good.

SISTER

I'm honored.

She slides out of the bed and into his arms. She starts kissing him. With each kiss she says:

SISTER (CONT'D)

Elated. Happy. Thrilled. Horny.

They go at it passionately, then Satin pulls back laughing and handing her the book.

SATIN

Now, please. You know I want what I want, when I want it.

SISTER

(getting up)

Okay.

SATIN

(smacks her butt)

That's how I got you.

She turns back to him, picks up his camera and takes his picture then flashes her beautiful smile.

SATIN (CONT'D)

Tell me the truth, okay?

Satin watches her walk out of the room.

65

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

65

Satin is on the stage performing the new material and bombing. Sister laughs the loudest and often alone. Satin presses on and just as he is about to give the punch line on the next joke, we hear someone loudly call out:

LEVI (O.S.)

Insert joke here! Because this joke ain't got none!

The place roars with laughter. We see who it is. It's Levi sitting in a big booth with a couple of SEXY WOMEN and his ENTOURAGE. He's clearly the man now. Levi catches Sister's eye. She looks away to Satin, and Satin looks at Levi laughing at him. Satin drops the mic and charges after Levi.

Ham and Sister successfully intercept him. Levi's crew stands up and reach for their guns. Levi never flinches.

LEVI (CONT'D)

What? You like my powder, but not my sense of humor? Nice seeing you, Tammy. How bout some traveling music for Mr. Satin Struthers?

The band kicks into high gear, people laugh, Satin pulls away from him and exits with Sister.

66 INT. SATIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

66

The club music continues as we watch Satin chase Sister around the thrashed apartment with a belt. She throws a glass at his head and nearly misses. He climbs across the table to get to her.

67 INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS - RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

67

*

Stix is up pacing the floor. He goes to check his watch but sees Dolores instead. She's sporting a new, short cropped Afro. The look on his face is priceless.

STIX

What the hell is going on with your head?

DOLORES

The man said he wanted us dolled up. Plus I need something low maintenance when I go to medical school. Haven't gotten off the wait list yet, but I have to think in the affirmative.

STIX

Not today, Dee, not today.

A flustered Sparkle enters as Stix is running out.

STIX (CONT'D)

Thank God you're here.

SPARKLE

Where are you going?

STIX

I'll be right back. Wait here for Sister.

Stix runs out. Dolores catches Sparkle looking at her hair.

DOLORES
So, what do you think?

SPARKLE
We were taught that if you don't
have anything nice to say, don't
say anything at all.

DOLORES
No, I want to hear it.

SPARKLE
I have to go to the bathroom.

DOLORES
Don't avoid me. Tell me what you
think.

SPARKLE
I'll be back.

*

DOLORES
I'll come with you.

SPARKLE
I'm just going to the bathroom.

DOLORES
Great, then I'll watch you pee.
You're not going to disown me.

68 INT/EXT COLUMBIA RECORDS LOBBY - DAY

68 *

Stix runs up to a WOMAN WEARING A WIG, we can tell its
raining outside.

*

*

STIX
This is going to sound really bad,
but you'll have the opportunity to
save my life.

WOMAN WITH WIG
Okay.

STIX
I'll give you fifty dollars for
your wig.

WOMAN WITH WIG
How do you know this is a wig?

STIX
Haven't I been rude enough?

69 INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS - WOMEN'S LOUNGE - DAY

69 *

Dolores walks in to find Sister already there, applying make up to her bruised and battered face. It's worse this time. Dolores and Sister stare at each other through the mirror.

SISTER
I told you not to bring her.

SPARKLE
I tried--

SISTER
Not hard enough.

SPARKLE
I'm sorry--

SISTER
Lock the door.

Sparkle, very nervous, locks it.

DOLORES
What's going on in here?

Sister doesn't respond. Dolores takes a closer look at her face and notices Sister is out of it.

DOLORES (CONT'D)
What else is he pushing into you besides his fists?

SISTER
Just stay out of my business. I'm fine.

DOLORES
You're just going to let him kill you?

SISTER
It's not that bad. It's nothing make up can't cover up. Sparkle, did you get that face powder I needed?

Sparkle goes into her coat pocket and pulls out a small package.

DOLORES

You give that to her and you're
going to wind up looking just like
her.

Sparkle tries to put the package back in her pocket. Sister
reaches for it.

SISTER

If we're going to sing for this
man, I need my make up.

SPARKLE

(to Dee)

I didn't know what to do. She's
sick with it and she's sick without
it.

SISTER

Aww hell. Just give it to me.

DOLORES

(to Sparkle)

All you're worried about is getting
that record deal. You're not
thinking about her right now
because you're so busy using her
like everybody else.

SPARKLE

That's not true. That's my sister.
I love her.

DOLORES

Then flush it down the toilet.

Sparkle hesitates. Disgusted, Dolores goes to take it from
Sparkle, but Sister snatches it.

SISTER

Don't. Give me that!

The girls struggle but the package falls to the floor. A
small glass vial breaks and white powder spills out. Sister
drops to the floor after it. She scoops what she can, sniffs
it, then looks to her sisters. They watch. Stunned.

KNOCKS on the door rattle them, except Sister.

STIX (O.S.)

What are you guys doing in there?

SISTER

Don't open it.

HALLWAY

Stix is there with the lady's wig in his hand.

SPARKLE (O.S.)
We'll be out in a second.

Larry walks up with the RECEPTIONIST.

CAPITOL RECEPTIONIST
They're in there.

LARRY
Use the key.

The Receptionist steps past Stix to unlock the door.

STIX
What's going on?

LARRY
You tell me. My receptionist says
your lead singer is beat up and
drugged up in the bathroom.

STIX
Sister? She's not even here yet.

The Receptionist opens the door to the:

BATHROOM

They find Sister disheveled being held up by Dolores, while Sparkle is trying to clean up the mess with paper towels.

LARRY
Like I said, I need to see them in
the light of day.

It's over and they all know it.

After a beat, they hear a woman's blood-curdling SCREAM.
Everyone comes to attention, then we see a SECRETARY (white woman) running through the office distraught.

SECRETARY
They shot him. Oh my God, he's
dead!

Several church members are present, glued to the TV to see the coverage of Dr. King's death. There are a lot of tears.

71 OMITTED 71 *

72 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SPARKLE & SISTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 72

Sparkle is asleep. She's stirred awake by the tapping on her window. Sparkle wakes, looks out the window and sees a soaked Stix.

73 EXT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT 73 *

Sparkle, now with a coat over her nightgown and an umbrella for cover, walks up to Stix. She shares her umbrella.

SPARKLE

Stix, what's going on?

STIX

I'm leaving.

Her chest heaves.

STIX (CONT'D)

And I want you to come with me. We can go to the courthouse, get married, then leave if it makes it easier.

SPARKLE

I hope that wasn't your proposal, 'cause I imagined something different.

STIX

Baby, we got to get out of here. People are trying to destroy what we've built. You and me started this thing.

SPARKLE

We'll put the group back together when Sister gets well. They wanted us once, they'll want us again.

STIX

It's over.

SPARKLE

One minute we couldn't have the group without her. Now that she's sick, just toss her out?

STIX

I'm saying you can't just replace the lead. That's like the Supremes getting rid of Diana. We have to start over. And not here. Detroit is dying. All these riots. Heard Motown is even moving to California.

SPARKLE

You're talking about going to California?

STIX

I'm talking about anywhere we can live our dreams. So yeah, why not California?

SPARKLE

I can't leave, Stix.

STIX

Would she stay and do the same for you?

SPARKLE

(fighting back)

I guess that's what makes me, me.

Stix thinks for a moment. It's hard, but necessary.

STIX

Then you stay.

SPARKLE

Don't make me choose between my family and you, Stix.

STIX

I'm not making you do anything.

Stix starts to walk away.

SPARKLE

Stix, don't leave me.

STIX

I asked you to come with me.

Sparkle can't seem to move her feet.

STIX (CONT'D)

You coming?

She stares at him a beat, then finally shakes her head no.

STIX (CONT'D)

Your mother really did a number on
you.

He turns and walks down the street, leaving Sparkle standing
in the rain.

74 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SPARKLE & SISTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 74

Sparkle lies awake. A lot is on her mind. You can still see
the raindrops in her hair. There's a soft knock at the door.
It's Dee.

DOLORES

You up?

SPARKLE

Yeah.

Dolores takes a seat on the edge of the bed.

DOLORES

I can't sleep either, thinking
about her. You too?

SPARKLE

(lying)
Yeah.

DOLORES

We have to get her out of there.

SPARKLE

Yeah.

75 INT. SATIN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

75

QUICK CUTS OF:

Dresser drawers full of lingerie flying open.

Dresses being snagged from the closet.

Jewelry being dumped into a suitcase.

Sister sits on the edge of the bed smoking a cigarette,
seemingly not fazed.

SISTER

You two are funny. You can pack the bed if you want, but I'm not going anywhere.

We quickly discern that Sparkle and Dolores are taking their sister by force.

Sparkle returns out of the closet with Sister's performance dresses.

DOLORES

She doesn't need those dresses.
She needs clothes.

Sparkle rushes back into the closet. Sister laughs and takes a drink from her glass. Sparkle throws some dresses in the suitcase and closes it. Dolores snatches Sister up by her arm and Sister bites her. Dolores screams.

DOLORES (CONT'D)

Did you just bite me? You're crazy!

Dolores dexterously flips Sister around, twists her arm behind her back and begins to walk her towards the door.

SPARKLE

Don't hurt her.

DOLORES

You didn't say anything when she bit me. Just get the rest of her stuff and come on.

Just as Sparkle runs back into the closet, Satin enters the room. Satin assesses the situation. He then tosses some drugs on the bed.

SISTER

They call themselves saving me. I told them I wasn't going anywhere.

SATIN

(calm)
Y'all better get the hell out of my house.

SPARKLE

(to Satin)
We're sorry we brought this chaos into your home. But our sister is sick. We just want to help her get well.

(MORE)

SPARKLE (CONT'D)
 She's not listening to us, but
 maybe if you told her to go, she
 would--

And the next thing we know Sparkle is flying across the room because Satin has slapped the you know what out of her.

Everyone takes a beat to absorb what just happened. For the first time Sister can see this man for the sick person he really is. With a blink of an eye Sister charges Satin. Dolores is a nanosecond behind her and even Sparkle finds her legs and tries to help. As they fight their way through the apartment to the:

LIVING ROOM

It looks like the girls are getting the best of him until he charges the girls and they scatter around the room. They fight like hell until it all comes to an abrupt end. Mid-swing, Satin falls to the floor. Sparkle and Sister look up to see that Dolores has a bloody fireplace poker in hand. They watch as Satin takes his last breath.

*
*
*
*
*

SPARKLE (CONT'D)
 (first to thaw out)
 Oh my God, oh my God.

Dolores is frozen speechless just holding the poker.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)
 Is he dead?

Sister gently takes the poker from Dolores.

SISTER
 You guys get out of here.

SPARKLE
 No, we should--

SISTER
 Get out!

That scares an already frightened Sparkle and springs Dolores into action-- with the expertise of a trained doctor, she drops and start to pump the chest of a lifeless Satin.

SISTER (CONT'D)
 Dee, he's dead!

Dolores starts to give him mouth-to-mouth.

SISTER (CONT'D)
 Dee, stop it!

DOLORES
He's not dead!

Dolores resumes mouth-to-mouth. Sister gets down on the floor with Dee and pulls Dee's chin to make her face her.

SISTER
He's dead. Now what I need you to do is go.

A tear drops out of Dee's eye. She knows the gift that her sister is giving her. Dee's hands slip from Satin. She then gathers Sparkle and starts to walk out... Then Sparkle starts to break.

SPARKLE
Mama was right. If I hadn't been too scared to sing by myself, we would have never been a group. He would've never gone after you, and you wouldn't be here, or--

Sparkle breaks completely.

SISTER
I would love to hug you right now and help you understand that this is not your fault, but I can't. You have to go. Get her out of here, Dee.

Dee and Sparkle walk gently out of the apartment, as Sister picks herself off the floor.

BEGIN MUSICAL PERFORMANCE #7 MONTAGE

*

CROSS FADE TO:

76 INT. SATIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

76

Sister sits on the edge of the couch sipping on a drink and dragging on a cigarette. She looks through some photos Satin had taken of her in their short time together (from performing on stage to their private moments). You can tell he loved her because she's beautiful in every frame. Detectives walk through the house, Satin's body is still lying on the floor. A slow soulful voice fills our ears with Gospel. Emma's voice scores the moment with the her choir, over the following MONTAGE:

*
*
*

Sister being handcuffed.

Satin's body being rolled out in a body bag by the
PARAMEDICS.

77	EXT. SATIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT	77	
	Sister being put in the back of a SQUAD CAR. Her affluent NEIGHBORS look on.		
78	OMITTED	78	*
79	INT. POLICE STATION - BOOKING AREA - NIGHT	79	
	Sister is being finger printed.		*
	Sister takes a different kind of photo now, her mug shot.		
80	OMITTED	80	*
81	INT. NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS - DAY	81	
	Emma stands alone singing, this is how she expresses her emotions, her voice makes her pain palpable. The choir makes it real.		* * *
	END OF MONTAGE SEQUENCE		*
82	OMITTED	82	*
83	INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY	83	
	Emma and Sparkle return from a long day at church and see suitcases. Emma looks up to find Dolores sitting next to them. Emma's heart is in her throat. Sparkle smiles and hugs Dee.		* * *
	SPARKLE I love you. I'll let you two talk.		
	Sparkle exits, leaving Emma and Dee alone.		*
	DOLORES With all that's been going on I couldn't find the right time to tell you, Mama.		
	Emma takes a seat to absorb the blow.		*

DOLORES (CONT'D)

I got accepted to Meharry's Medical School. A lot of it is covered by scholarships, but I have to go early to do some research to get it. I found out the day Dr. King died and now I have to be there tomorrow.

EMMA

(finds a smile)

The haircut worked, huh?

DOLORES

I guess it did.

EMMA

(laughing)

Maybe I'll get one of those Afros and get some good luck of my own.

(then)

Congratulations.

DOLORES

Thank you.

Tears are in Emma's eyes.

DOLORES (CONT'D)

Don't cry. We've done enough of that.

EMMA

These are happy tears-- happy that maybe I did something right.

DOLORES

I always complained about how you never let us do anything. Thank you for that kind of love. And sorry I called it something else. I love you.

They hug.

84

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - SPARKLE & SISTER'S BEDROOM - DAY

84

Sparkle lays on the edge of the bed on her stomach twirling a gardenia in her hand, the same kind Sister would wear during her performances. She hears a CAR DOOR SHUT, looks out the window and sees...

85 EXT. ANDERSON HOUSE - DAY

85

Dee sits in the back of the taxi while the driver puts her bags in the trunk. The taxi backs out of the driveway. Sparkle sees Dee in the back of the taxi before it pulls off and disappears down the street.

86 INT. JAIL - VISITATION - DAY

86

Sparkle and Sister across from each other, for the first time ever Sister does not look good. She's lost weight, her hair is a mess and she's clearly weak from withdrawals. *

SISTER

So Dee left? That's good.

SPARKLE

Yeah.

SISTER

(smiles to herself)

You know it's funny, we always knew we would have to replace one singer in the group. Now you have to replace two. I know Stix is fit to be tied.

SPARKLE

Stix is gone.

SISTER

You two broke up?

SPARKLE

Yeah. He's in California.

SISTER

When did this happen?

SPARKLE

The day we lost the record deal.

Sister computes that for a moment.

SISTER

Don't come back here.

SPARKLE

Stop being dramatic, of course I'm coming back.

SISTER

You do, I won't come out. It'll be a wasted trip. Because I'm not going to let you crawl up in here and die with me.

SPARKLE

I'm the only one who comes to visit you and I'm not going to leave you in here by yourself.

SISTER

I got in here by myself.

SPARKLE

No you didn't--

SISTER

Yes I did. This certainly ain't the time for me to be lying to myself. Don't you think I did enough of that already?

Sparkle has no rebuttal. Sister gets up.

SISTER (CONT'D)

Please don't come back here.

(then calling out)

Guard.

(back to Sparkle)

I hope you hear me trying to save your life. Don't come back here, Sparkle.

Sister follows the Guard, leaving Sparkle completely frustrated.

*
*

87 OMITTED

87 *

88 INT. RECORD STORE - DAY

88 *

It's a new day, Sparkle is where she feels most at home, listening to music in the record store booth. Sparkle looks up and sees a tanned Stix in front of her. He steps into the booth.

*
*
*
*

STIX

I'm looking for a singer.

She takes a beat to digest his presence.

*

SPARKLE
My family is fresh out.

*

STIX
Sparkle--

SPARKLE
When did you get back?

STIX
A few days ago.

SPARKLE
A few days ago? I must've been out
when you called. Or when you came
by to say you're sorry to hear
about Sister.

Sparkle begins to pack up her stuff.

*

STIX
I've never been good with sorrys...
or saying goodbye.

SPARKLE
(chuckles to herself)
You want to hear something funny?
When you first left I didn't think
I would be able to live without
you. Used to look out my window
and wonder, "Will I get through
this second?" Can you imagine a
person so unhappy they don't know
if they're going to live through
the next second?

Stix tries to touch her. She catches his hand and looks him
right in the eye.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)
Well, I got through the seconds and
the minutes and the days and the
weeks and the months and now I'm
doing just fine without you.

Sparkle exits the booth and makes her way to the exit, Stix
follows.

*

*

STIX
You don't get to be this mad. I
asked you to come with me-- as my
wife.

SPARKLE

No. You don't get to think that was romantic!

Stix looks around and can see people noticing. *

STIX *

Sparkle, you want to lower your voice. *

SPARKLE *

No, I don't. I've been lowering my voice for way too damn long Stix. *

SPARKLE (CONT'D) *

You don't just ask a girl to up and leave when you want her to. We talk about it, we decide to together, then we go-- you don't give me five minutes to leave my life to run up behind you.

STIX

Listen, I'm sorry.

SPARKLE

Now you want to say you're sorry?

STIX

I'm not talking about going to California. Remember that night I made you admit you wanted to be a star?

(she does)

Then I told you that you needed your sister in order to do so. I knew I was hurting you, but I was so hungry to get something going, I took the easy way. Put a pretty girl group together-- let Sister do her thing. I should've believed in you, Sparkle. Look, I saved up some seed money to develop you the right way and I came back to see if you would sing again?

SPARKLE

And what do I have to sing about? *

She walks off, leaving him behind this time.

89 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

89

Sparkle watches *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Diana Ross and The Supremes are performing "Love Child." It's the first time we have seen Sparkle smile in a while. After a beat, Emma enters the room in her robe, walks by the TV and just turns it off mid-performance. *

EMMA *

Curl your hair, get to bed. We have church in the morning.

Emma exits and Sparkle just sits there, numb. *

90 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

90

It's a building that saw better days a long time ago. The LANDLORD, an older white man, leads a wide-eyed Sparkle up some dark, run-down stairs.

LANDLORD

I have another building not far from here more suited for someone like you, but this is what you can afford.

He opens up the door to a one-room apartment with dingy walls and one set of windows. Sparkle smiles.

SPARKLE

I'll take it.

91 INT. SPARKLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

91

Sparkle has decorated it sweetly with flea market finds. She fills a tea kettle and places it on her hot plate. A mismatched china tea cup sits nearby waiting to make itself useful. She returns to unpacking and opens up another box. It is filled with her used journals. She opens one up and turns to the last song entry. The date was: APRIL 7, 1968. The title is "Flying On One Wing." She reads her notes... then almost unconsciously HUMS A NEW LYRIC. She blindly searches for a pen in a nearby drawer, while still reading, then she starts writing some new lyrics. We watch her write, scratch out, write some more and smile to herself... until the TEA KETTLE WHISTLE scares her out of her moment. She laughs out loud-- one for being so scared, two for having rediscovered a lost love.

92 INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS - LOBBY - DAY 92 *

Sparkle enters the lobby full of confidence in a cute skirt and blouse with Sister's flower in her hair. She approaches the receptionist's desk.

CAPITOL RECEPTIONIST
Hi, how may I help you?

SPARKLE
I'm here to see Larry Robinson.

CAPITOL RECEPTIONIST
Do you have an appointment?

SPARKLE
No.

CAPITOL RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry, you need an appointment.

SPARKLE
Okay, may I speak with his secretary?

CAPITOL RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry, she's busy right now.

SPARKLE
Okay, I'll wait.

Sparkle goes over to the waiting area and takes a seat. The perfect song scores the following moments. *

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

93 INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS - LOBBY - DAY 93 *

Sparkle sits in a new outfit, same flower hairpin and a different seat. She's nonplussed. *

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

94 INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS - LOBBY - ANOTHER DAY 94 *

Sparkle, in a new outfit sitting on the same bench, but different spot reading a magazine. *

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

95 INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS - LOBBY - ANOTHER DAY 95 *

Another outfit. She finishes reading another magazine. *

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

96 INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS - LOBBY - ANOTHER DAY 96 *

Sparkle is there back in her original blouse, but worn differently. She's asleep. Then:

CAPITOL RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
Mr. Robinson will see you now.

When she opens her eyes she sees the attitudinal receptionist standing over her. Sparkle smiles.

97 INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS - LARRY'S OFFICE - DAY 97 *

Larry is on the phone when Sparkle enters. She takes a seat and listens to him drone on about an artist's album.

LARRY
Hey, hey. Let's just admit we
wasted a lot of money. Salvage
what we can salvage and make
jambalaya out of the rest. Great,
talk to you soon.

He hangs up.

LARRY (CONT'D)
I have two minutes-- go.

SPARKLE
Okay then let me not waste them on
why I need you, that's obvious.
Let me tell you why you need me.

*

LARRY
That's a big set-up, I hope you can
deliver.

Sparkle rattles off confidently:

SPARKLE
I'm beautiful. I can sing. And I
write hits. Sometimes two and
three a day. I've been kissed--
twenty songs about that alone.
I've been in love-- another twenty-
two.

(MORE)

SPARKLE (CONT'D)
 My heart's been broken-- thirty.
 Plus I'm a virgin so I have about
 eighty on what making love will be
 like.

Larry swallows hard and smiles.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)
 I don't know my daddy, I have a
 complicated relationship with my
 mother-- tack on another fifty. I
 think the war sucks, flowers are
 pretty in the rain and it's really
 hard to follow your dreams. But
 you have to follow them because you
 just might write a song that will
 save somebody's life. I've got a
 great song about that-- because
 right now, I'm trying to save my
 own.
 (catches her breath)
 So can we do business?

He's impressed.

98 INT. YMCA - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

98

Sparkle enters and all the MEN hanging out give her their
 full attention. She walks humbly to a YMCA WORKER at the
 desk.

SPARKLE
 I've come to see Jeremiah Warren.

YMCA WORKER
 No women are allowed upstairs.

SPARKLE
 Can you call him down?

A99 INT. YMCA - STAIRS

A99 *

Stix descends the stairs and sees Sparkle. He lights up. He
 walks over to her.

STIX
 Hi.

SPARKLE

I met with Larry Robinson today.
Says he's willing to come see my
show, but I don't have a show. He
says I have one shot at this.

*
*
*
*

A beat, then Stix smiles.

*

STIX

Then we better make it count.

*

Sparkle returns the smile.

*

99 OMITTED

99

*

100 INT. LEGEND THEATER - STAGE - DAY

100

*

Stix is there talking with the LEGEND MANAGER. He looks back
at all the seats.

*

STIX

So five thousand and fifty seats.
And the last showcase charged five
dollars a ticket?

LEGEND MANAGER

*

Yeah, but there were a lot more
acts, who all came with their own
cheering section. You'll be lucky
to get anybody to spend the time,
let alone the money, to come out
and see the third member of a
group. But hey, it's still fifteen
thousand.

STIX

I'm talking about renting on a
night that you guys are dark. You
weren't going to make any money
anyway.

LEGEND MANAGER

*

Still have to turn the lights on.

STIX

And the light switcher costs--

LEGEND MANAGER

*

Fifteen thousand.

He's not budging and Stix knows it.

101 INT. BAKERS CLUB - NIGHT

101 *

Levi, dressed in a nice suit, is eating a meal for a king when Stix is escorted to his table. The two old buddies hug.

STIX

You were meant for the good life.

Levi laughs to himself and points for him to have a seat.

LEVI

I'm sorry I had to go on and eat.
Something's come up, so let's skip
the "how you doings" and get to it.

STIX

I would like to borrow twenty-
thousand dollars to produce a
concert for Sparkle.

LEVI

Twenty-thousand dollars? You
better put her in a park somewhere.

STIX

More like The Legend. They're
willing to give me one of the dark
nights in the theater. I make most
of my money up-front by pre-selling
the tickets. If I sell five
thousand fifty seats at five
dollars I have your money plus
twenty percent interest.

*

LEVI

(waves down their waiter)
And when you don't?

STIX

I give you what we do make and then
I'll get the rest to you when she
signs her record deal. She's going
to get that.

LEVI

You mean like they did the last
time?

Ouch. The WAITER approaches the table.

LEVI (CONT'D)

My friend would like a steak,
medium.

STIX

Well done.

LEVI

Medium.

(then to Stix)

Burnt is not a flavor. *

STIX

I'm telling you, Sparkle has more talent than anybody I have ever seen. *

LEVI

Agree to disagree.

STIX

I'm not begging. Okay, maybe I am. She's good, Levi.

LEVI

Any remaining money after the concert night is at forty percent interest and within six months.

STIX

That's bookie terms.

LEVI

Trust me, that was cousin terms.

Stix holds up his water glass.

STIX

To Sparkle.

They toast to seal the deal. Stix flashes his smile and it kicks in the perfect song that scores the moment of what he is feeling and propels us through the MONTAGE: *

102 INT. SPARKLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 102

Sparkle, her glasses on, is engrossed in writing music. *

103 INT. RECORD STORE - DAY 103

Stix passes out concert handbills and talks up any and everybody to come to Sparkle's show.

104 INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY 104

Stix passes out concert handbills and talks up any and everybody to come to Sparkle's show.

105 INT. NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH - SANCTUARY - EVENING 105

It's clearly choir rehearsal. Stix is addressing the attentive group of fifty plus. When he's done, he passes out concert handbills. *

106 OMITTED 106 *

107 INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 107

Emma and Ms. Waters watch TV when they hear the DOORBELL. *

Emma gets up to answer the door. It's Sparkle on the other side of the screen door standing in her waitress uniform. *

SPARKLE

Hi Mom.

EMMA

Hi.

After an awkward beat:

SPARKLE

May I come in?

Emma turns back into the house, leaving the door open. Sparkle takes that as a "yes" and steps in the house and into the: *

LIVING ROOM

Ms. Waters is happy to see Sparkle and gets up to hug her.

MS. WATERS

Hey Sparkle. You look good. A little skinny, but good. How are you doing?

SPARKLE

Fine, and you?

MS. WATERS

I'm always good.

SPARKLE

I came by to let you know I'm
performing at The Legend Theater
this Tuesday night.

*

MS. WATERS

Well you know, I know. Tune Ann is
singing back up for you.

SPARKLE

I was talking to my mother, Ms.
Waters.

MS. WATERS

Did you hear her, Emma?

*

Emma doesn't respond, she keeps her eyes on the TV.

*

SPARKLE

I have a flyer for my show.

She shows her mother the handbill. Sparkle sets it down on
the coffee table.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

It's my own concert. I'm not
opening up for anybody. Just me.
(no reaction)

I would really love it if you would
come.

Emma laughs at something on the TV, completely ignoring
Sparkle.

*

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

(leaving)

Bye.

Sparkle exits the house and can be seen out of the front
window walking down the walkway.

*

MS. WATERS

How many times you going to keep
making the same mistake?

Emma continues to watch Sparkle through the front window.

*

109

INT. JAIL - VISITATION - DAY

109

Sister peeps through the small glass window in the door as she waits for the GUARD to unlock it. She sees Emma sitting by herself at a table. Sister approaches her and quietly takes a seat. The two women study each other. Emma sees the peeled skinned around Sister's fingernails. She's either been biting them or more fighting or both. Sister sees her mother's tired eyes.

*

*

*

SISTER

You look tired.

EMMA

I am.

*

SISTER

I'm in the middle of a card game
and I'm winning. What do you want?
Because I know it's not to see me.

They stare at each other, then softening:

EMMA

Was I really that bad?

*

Instead of answering right away, Sister lights a cigarette, takes a drag and then blows out the smoke. It's too much time to sit in judgement, Emma starts to cry-- tears streak her face. Sister looks at her mom lovingly, smiling even.

*

SISTER

I always hated to see you cry. But
I never tried to stop you, because
I thought that's when you were the
most beautiful.

EMMA

(cries harder, snorts)
Now you just lying to me.

*

SISTER

Well, not when you cry like that.

They share an awkward laugh. But Emma never meets Sister's eyes. She's too vulnerable. Sister cups her mother's face, then gently wipes away a few tears.

*

SISTER (CONT'D)

One day you're going to stop
worrying about what people think
about you and finally see all the
love there is for you.

Their eyes finally meet.

EMMA

You should get in the habit of
taking your own advice.

Sister's eyes swell with tears. The two women share another
look and see themselves in each other.

110 INT. LEGEND THEATER - MONDAY NIGHT - NIGHT

110

Just the stage light is on, Sparkle stands near it in the
middle of the stage. It's quiet, Stix is sitting alone in the
house seats.

SPARKLE

We can't do this, Stix.

STIX

Hey now, come on, have a little
faith.

SPARKLE

It's all to much, I mean look at
this place Stix. We can't pull this
off.

Stix can see Sparkle's hand shaking. He jumps up on the stage
and gently puts his hand over hers.

STIX

You're going to be fine.

SPARKLE

What if I'm not? If I stay on the
other side of this dream, I will
always have hope and wonder, but if
I walk out here tomorrow and fall
on my face, what do I do then?

STIX

Close your eyes.

SPARKLE

Stix, I'm not trying to be
dramatic, I'm trying to be real
with myself...

He interrupts her.

STIX

Close your eyes.

She closes her eyes. And he begins to sing Marvin Gaye's
verse from "Your All I Need To Get By" softly in between his
dialogue. *

STIX (CONT'D)
You got to meet God halfway on this
one. See what He has already given
you. See the place filled with
people standing on their feet
begging you for an encore. See the
sweat on your brow, feel hot from
the blood rushing through your
body, your heart pumping. See the
smile on your face.

We stay tight on Sparkle as she stands there and visualizes.
A smile slips across her face.

STIX (CONT'D)
Now open your eyes.

She does and sees Stix standing there with a small lit
birthday cake. She melts upon sight and beams. *

STIX (CONT'D)
Make a wish.

Sparkle closes her eyes and takes a minute to make a wish,
then blows out the sparkler candle. *

SPARKLE
Ask me what I wished for. *

STIX
What did you wish for?

SPARKLE
That you would ask me to marry you
again. But a lot better. And with
a ring.

STIX
Did you peek?

SPARKLE
What?

STIX
At your gift?

He hands her a box. She opens it and finds a candy ring.

STIX (CONT'D)

Tomorrow our lives are going to change for better or for worse. And whatever it is, I just want to be with you. Of course if it's better, you get a better ring. And if it's worse, this ring will be dinner for the next few nights.

They share a laugh, then:

SPARKLE

See, even you aren't so sure.

STIX

I'm sure.

They share a kiss. Then as soon as it's done, Sparkle re-lights her candles.

STIX (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

SPARKLE

Making another wish.

She makes a wish then blows the candles out again.

STIX

What did you wish for?

SPARKLE

This one has to stay a secret.

*

DISSOLVE TO:

111 OMITTED

111 *

112 INT. LEGEND THEATER - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

112 *

A happy Sparkle is now dressed and admires herself in the mirror. She turns to Tune Ann.

SPARKLE

What do you think?

TUNE ANN

I think I'm proud of you. I think I'm happy to share this moment with you. And I think you look--

(then)

Oh Lord, are you bleeding?

Sparkle turns back to the mirror to see her nose is now bleeding and it's soiled her dress.

*

SPARKLE

Oh God, look at my dress!

*

Tune Ann yells out the door:

TUNE ANN

Somebody get me a warm towel!

(then to Sparkle)

Honey, we need to get your head back.

SPARKLE

Look at it, it's ruined.

*

TUNE ANN

We have to stop the bleeding.

*

EMMA (O.S.)

Well, then maybe you can wear this one.

*

Sparkle turns at the sound of her mother's voice.

SPARKLE

Mama?

TUNE ANN

I'ma go check on that towel.

Tune Ann exits, leaving mother and daughter a bit awkward.

EMMA

I don't want to get all mushy, okay?

*

SPARKLE

(tears falling)

Okay.

EMMA

I just want to help you get dressed.

*

SPARKLE

Okay.

Emma moves to Sparkle.

*

EMMA

Dolores always said lean forward and pinch.

*

Sparkle does as she's told. Emma takes her handkerchief and pinches Sparkle's nose with it. As Emma counts to twenty, we hear Stix as he counts to twenty-four.

113 EXT. LEGEND THEATER - NIGHT

113

The camera floats down past the marquee that reads "One Night Only SPARKLE" and finds Stix in front of the Box office talking to the house manager as people make their way in. He hears a voice calling out and sees Levi in his CITROEN.

114 INT. LEVI'S CITROEN - NIGHT

114

Stix is sitting in the back of the car with Levi.

STIX

Brother, I know you ain't never made this much money in such a short period of time for doing nothing.

LEVI

I got to admit, looks like you were right.

STIX

Looks like?

They share a laugh, Levi is clearly impressed.

LEVI

Okay, okay. Man how you get all them people come see a no name singer?

STIX

You can always count on church folk Levi. There's bout two hundred and twenty seven in the choirs and you can times that by ten, cause every everybody wants to buy a ticket to see their child, grandchild, sister, brother, girlfriend or boyfriend sing on the Legend stage.

Levi shakes his head and smiles.

LEVI

Congratulations.

STIX
Thanks for taking a chance on us
man.

LEVI
No problem. That's what family is
all about, helping each other.
Right?

STIX
Right.

LEVI
Look man I'm not gone beat round
the bush. I got myself in a bit of
a jam and could use your help.

STIX
I owe you.

LEVI
I'm glad you think that way because
I need to legitimize my money, so I
can start spending more of it. I'm
looking to get half of Sparkle.

Stix takes a moment to let this digest.

STIX
Sparkle's not for sale, man.

LEVI
But you already put her up for sale
when you asked for my money.

STIX
You want more interest?

LEVI
No, in fact I want you to keep the
money. See it as an investment in
her future.

STIX
Look man, I made a deal with you
and I'm going to pay you back.
Ask for front row seats, don't ask
a man for his balls and you expect
him to hand them over.

Stix goes to get out of the car, but it is locked by one of
Levi's HENCHMAN.

LEVI
Let's go for a ride.

STIX
Really Levi? You're doing this?

The car takes off.

115 INT. LEGEND THEATER - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 115 *

Sparkle's nosebleed is gone. Her make up is repaired and she's wearing her mother's dress, that's quite revealing in the cleavage area as well as the high split on the side.

EMMA *

Beautiful.

SPARKLE
(looking at herself in the mirror)
You don't think it's too much? I mean, not enough?

EMMA *

If you're going to go out there, you have to give them something they can feel-- or at least imagine feeling. Plus, Sister said to make it sexy so you can't run and hide.

SPARKLE
You went by to see her?

Emma's smile is subtle but present, Sparkle can see that she's near tears. *

SPARKLE (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

EMMA *

Nothing.
(then)
You know, you were right, you do have a gift. And it's not just singing. You believed in yourself when I have tried to stop you at every turn. And that takes a lot of faith.

SPARKLE
Thank you.

Sparkle hugs her mother.

EMMA

Don't ever lose that. Some of us
are still trying to find it.

*

SPARKLE

Promise.

(then)

You're staying, right?

(Emma doesn't want to
disappoint her)

You have to stay.

*

Just then Tune Ann barges in.

TUNE ANN

Did you change the music order?

SPARKLE

What?

Emma slips out.

*

TUNE ANN

The conductor asked me if we were
starting with "Giving Him Something
He Can Feel" and I said I didn't
know. Ask Stix. He said he
couldn't find him so he was asking
me.

SPARKLE

We discussed it, but I didn't say
we were doing it.

TUNE ANN

You don't want to open with your
new stuff?

SPARKLE

(flustered)

Where's Stix?

TUNE ANN

Haven't seen him.

SPARKLE

Where did my mom go?

TUNE ANN

(noticing Sparkle)

You look great, girl. A little
cold, but great.

The STAGE MANAGER enters.

STAGE MANAGER
We're ready for you.

SPARKLE
Oh my God! Where is Stix?!

TUNE ANN
What are we singing?

116 INT. LEGEND THEATER - STAGE - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT 116 *
Buddy from Cliff Bells is on stage. *

BUDDY
Good evening, ladies and gentleman,
and welcome to...
(pauses dramatically)
AN EVENING WITH SPARKLE!

CHEERS, APPLAUSE and WHISTLING.

117 INT. LEGEND THEATER - WINGS OF BACKSTAGE - NIGHT 117 *
Sparkle, Tune Ann and the two back up singers adjust
themselves as they wait to be called to stage.

SPARKLE
Did you find Stix?

TUNE ANN
Will you stop worrying me? You're
not the only one who has to go out
there and sing.

SPARKLE
I can't do this without him.

TUNE ANN
You're going to have to, the
curtain is going up.

Panic is all over Sparkle's face, then:

STAGE MANAGER
Places please.

TUNE ANN
What are we singing?

STAGE MANAGER
Five, four, three, two--

118 INT. LEGEND THEATER - STAGE - NIGHT 118 *

The curtain rises and Sparkle is sitting at the piano. No fanfare. Just her. She looks like a scared rabbit, then she notices all the familiar faces in the crowd including Reverend Bryce, Ms. Waters, Bible Study group, Red, and more. Sparkle is overwhelmed. *

SPARKLE

Always make a wish before blowing out your birthday candles because wishes do come true. My mother was able to make it out tonight. Thank you Mommy. *

We discover that Emma has found a seat to enjoy her daughter's show. She's mushy now. *

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

This is for Sister. It's called "Flying On One Wing." *

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE #8 *

Sparkle plays a piano intro, then begins to sing a raw and soulful ballad akin to Adele's "One And Only." It's just her piano and her voice. It is beautiful and the audience melts. She's got them in the palm of her hands. The rest of the band kicks in to boost the song, but never overpowering her.

119 EXT. ALLEY - LEVI'S CITROEN - NIGHT 119 *

Sparkle's voice floats soulfully over the night as Levi pulls a gun to Stix's head. Stix, although sweating, shakes his head no. Levi clicks the gun. The bullet wasn't in that chamber.

120 INT. LEGEND THEATER - NIGHT 120 *

Sparkle still sings her song. And with a dramatic flair, Tune Ann and the back up singers emerge out of the darkness. They kick the song up a notch. The audience likes musical drama. Sparkle pulls them in like a vocal mystic, converting souls.

121 EXT. ALLEY - LEVI'S CITROEN - NIGHT 121 *

Levi is about to click the gun.

LEVI

This is just business.

STIX

Not for me, so stop playing around
and just kill me.

LEVI

You're willing to die over some
chick?

STIX

If anybody understands the love a
man has for a woman, it should be
you. It makes us do some stupid
things, doesn't it?

(then reaching for door
handle)

I'm going to go see my baby sing.

Stix goes to exit and one of Levi's goons reaches for him.
Stix turns and glares at him.

LEVI

Let him go.

Stix gets out of the car, walks cool for a minute, then
starts running.

122

INT. LEGEND THEATER - AUDIENCE - SAME - NIGHT

122

*

As Sparkle, her back-up singers, band and string orchestra
continue to hypnotize the audience with her new sound, the
New Hope Baptist Choir, two hundred strong, emerges from the
darkness and shakes the building with the power of their
voices. The Legend Theater goes wild. But the choir doesn't
take over, it's Sparkle who continues to drive this song with
her raw and beautiful voice. They love her. She ends the
song to a more than enthusiastic crowd. Sparkle absorbs the
moment and looks to the wings and sees Stix smiling and
clapping.

*

SPARKLE

There he is.

(then)

Y'all want to meet my man?

Crowd HOOTS and HOLLERS. She gestures for Stix to step on
stage. He does.

SPARKLE (CONT'D)

He's a good man. I recommend every
woman get her one.

LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE.

She throws him a kiss and he throws her one back and steps back into the:

WINGS

Stix runs right into Larry Robinson.

LARRY

Let's meet tomorrow. I want to sign her.

STIX

Sure, we'll come by after our meeting at Motown in the morning.

LARRY

(smiles)

Why put off tomorrow what you can do over dinner tonight?

STAGE

Sparkle then gets up from behind the piano and moves to center stage and puts her microphone on it's stand.

SPARKLE

Okay, now it's time to get to know the other side of me.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE #9

*

The band kicks up the music and Sparkle begins singing her next SONG-- an upbeat hit in the vain of Cee Lo's "Fool For You." She lets herself go and sings it with a power, energy and sexual intensity that begins to infect the audience. As she settles her voice into the new material, there is no question that Sparkle was right-- times and music are changing. And it's obvious that the audience is willing to change with her. The audience is on their feet. Emma is also on her feet, cheering. We fade out on her amazing performance and night.

*

THE END

*