

Masking Our Blackness
by
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CHARACTERS:

Darryl - Black-American, male, 24 to 35.

Simon - Black-American, male, 24 to 35.

Cara - Black-American, female, 24 to 35.

Richard - Black-American, male, 24 to 35.

Samaria - Black-American, female, 24 to 35.

SETTING:

The home of Darryl and Samaria in Anywhere, USA.

It's new year's eve of the previous year the play is being performed.

AT RISE:

*(The couple, DARRYL and SAMARIA and their friends
RICHARD, SIMON, CARA gather around to welcome
in the New Year.)*

DARRYL

Ten seconds to midnight everybody!

SIMON

Let's do this.

EVERYBODY

10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

*(DARRYL and SAMARIA kiss, and both start singing
Aud Lang Syne. SIMON and RICHARD exchange high-
fives. CARA celebrates.)*

CARA

We made it! We made it everybody! Happy New Year! Happy 2020!

DARRYL

Happy New Year!

RICHARD

Happy New Year, Brotha'.

SAMARIA

Resolutions! Resolutions, everyone! We are a just few seconds into a brand new year and that means brand new hopes and band new dreams for everybody. Who wants to go first?

CARA

I resolve to lose my last ten pounds of post baby weight.

(Everyone cheers their support.)

SAMARIA

Hold up. You ain't never had a baby.

SIMON

She meant post eating weight.

RICHARD

She also meant twenty-five pounds.

CARA

Damn. I thought I was with friends, but y'all ain't stealing my joy. I'll be attending Zumba classes on Mondays and Fridays. Taking Hip-Hop Ab classes every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, with that fine ass instructor Malik--

DARRYL

(dismissing CARA'S resolution)

Good luck. NEXT!

SIMON

I resolve to--

CARA

Can a Sistah finish?

SIMON

My bad. What else you got?

CARA

Not to get shot and killed by the police.

RICHARD

Are you serious?

SIMON

She can't be serious.

SAMARIA

Girl, I was with you right up to Hip-Hop Ab classes. Seeing Malik's fine ass three times a week is a resolution any woman can keep.

DARRYL

(warning SAMARIA)

Careful, Baby. Careful.

SIMON

None of us should be trying to make that resolution.

RICHARD

I give you until February.

CARA

To drop ten pounds?

RICHARD

No, until you get shot and killed by the police. My boy Tyrone made that same resolution last year. Six hours into the new year he was shot twenty-two times by one cop. Who has a real resolution? One they can actually keep.

SIMON

I resolve to no longer purchase articles of clothing that make me appear suspicious or threatening. I also resolve to cross the street whenever a white woman is approaching me.

DARRYL

So she won't think you're going to try and steal her pocketbook.

SIMON

You feel my pain, Brotha?

(SIMON and DARRYL exchange high-fives.)

RICHARD

Every Black man has felt that pain.

SAMARIA

I don't see you giving up your Timberlands.

CARA

And saggin'. Your pants haven't been around your waist since the third grade. You've been considered suspicious and threatening ever since you turned eight.

SAMARIA

That's that school to prison pipeline.

SIMON

Wearing black or grey hoodies can get your ass shot. I'm saying good-bye to all that. I was recently approved for a Brooks Brothers' credit card.

EVERYONE, BUT SIMON

Brooks Brothers?

SIMON

It came in the mail three days ago. I got a seventy-five dollar limit.

SAMARIA

If you got a Brooks Brothers credit card in your pocket, why are you still dressed like a member of the Wu-Tang Clan rather than Ben Carson?

SIMON

Well, you see. What had happen was--

DARRYL

What had happen was-- You walked your Wu-Tang Clan looking ass up into Brooks Brothers and they thought you were there to rob the place.

SIMON

Not at all. Four people rushed to assist me as soon as I walked though the door.

RICHARD

Since when do security guards measure your inseam? That was stop and frisk, Man.

CARA

So why are you still dressed like what Fox and Friends would call a drug dealing thug?

SIMON

There was a slight issue with the credit card.

EVERYBODY, BUT SIMON

They didn't believe it was yours.

SIMON

Identity theft is a big problem these days.

SAMARIA

Why not pull out your driver's license and prove it was you?

SIMON

Hell no. With four security guards surrounding me? Remember the video of the brother pulling out his driver's license during a traffic stop? The cop shot his ass twenty-two times.

RICHARD

That was my boy Tyrone. His dash cam video went viral! Two million views.

DARRYL

Y'all need to do better with these resolutions.

SIMON

We haven't heard from Richard.

(Everybody looks at RICHARD)

RICHARD

I stopped making resolutions three years ago.

SAMARIA

I remember that resolution.

CARA

That was the year you was trying to bring sexy back.

RICHARD

I was trying to train for the New York City Marathon.

CARA

All I know was by April a brotha' had it going on.

SAMARIA

You were looking Michael B. Jordan kind of sexy.

CARA

Chadwick Boseman kind of sexy.

*(CARA and SAMARIA exchange Black Panther salutes
with each other and fall out in laughter.)*

CARA

Wakanda forever!

SAMARIA

Wakanda forever!

DARRYL

(warning SAMARIA)

Careful, Baby. Careful.

SIMON

Why did you stop training for that marathon?

RICHARD

White women.

DARRYL

Permit Patty?

SIMON

Central Park Karen?

DARRYL

Barbecue Becky?

RICHARD

All of the above. They kept calling 911 and reporting a Black man running through the neighborhood. It was my neighborhood before they moved in with their yoga mats. I'm done with resolutions. You can keep all that hope for a safer tomorrow.

SAMARIA

Don't bring us down, Richard. I think Darryl has a way for all of us to get through the new year without being shot and killed by the police. Honey, tell everyone what your New Year's resolutions are.

(DARRYL opens a large wooden box that sits on top of a table.)

DARRYL

I resolve not to get stopped and frisked every time I walk down the street. I resolve not to get pulled over for a broken taillight on my brand new car. I resolve not to get tased while shopping for toiletries at Walmart.

(DARRYL leans into the wood box and places a white mask over his face. He returns to an upright position and has been transformed into a Caucasian man.)

SIMON

Who invited the white dude?

CARA

I think it's Darryl.

SAMARIA

No, it's white Darryl. Doesn't he look wonderful?

(SAMARIA reaches into the wooden box and places a white mask over her own face and is transformed into a Caucasian woman.)

SIMON

(shocked at Samaria's transformation)

What the fuck?

SAMARIA

We can drive through Texas without getting pulled over.

CARA

What about swimming pools? Can you go to a pool party without being thrown down to the ground?

SAMARIA

You can go to any swimming pool that you want to. You can even put our head underneath the water.

CARA

Give me one of those.

RICHARD

I want one too.

(RICHARD and CARA rush to the wooden box and pull out two white masks and place them over their faces. They are both transformed into Caucasians. SIMON stares at the unfolding scene.)

RICHARD (cont'd)

I have a sudden desire to watch Seinfeld.

CARA

Something is telling me to put peas in my macaroni salad, and to leave my chicken unseasoned.

(SAMARIA pulls out two hand mirrors from the wooden chest and hands one to CARA. They both admire their new reflections.)

SAMARIA

Look at us. Have you ever felt prettier?

CARA

Never. We have good hair.

RICHARD

What's this feeling I'm having?

DARRYL

White male privilege, Bro'. Demanding proof that someone lives in your apartment building. Arguing with a cop and still making it home alive.

RICHARD

I think I could get used to this.

SAMARIA

Darryl and I have been wearing our masks outside for a week. No labels. No judgements.

DARRYL

Not considered suspicious. Not considered a thug. We got the bathroom code from Starbucks without buying coffee. We actually brought in our own coffee.

SAMARIA

94483 is the override code to every bathroom inside a Starbucks. It spells out W H I T E on the bathroom keypad. Only we get to use it.

(DARRYL and SAMARIA exchange a low five in celebration.)

DARRYL

Down low!

(All four begin relishing the experience and fully slip into their new whiteness.)

CARA

It's beautiful being white.

RICHARD

Totally beautiful.

EVERYBODY, BUT SIMON

Totally!

(SIMON goes to the wooden box and searches for his mask.)

SIMON

There's not one in here for me, Darryl. Samaria is there another mask?

DARRYL

Who is that?

SAMARIA

There's a colored man in our house.

CARA

Somebody call 911.

RICHARD

We'll be dead by the time 911 arrives. Let's give him some money or whatever he's looking for. *(to SIMON)* Do you need money for drugs?

SIMON

Nigga, it's me.

(The four respond in horror at the word.)

CARA

He must be one of those rappers. (beat) Are you Drizzy Drake?

SAMARIA

I don't feel safe.

RICHARD

I feel threatened.

DARRYL

I have a gun over there in that drawer and I've taken lessons on how to use it.

SAMARIA

Don't tell him where your gun is.

CARA

I'm sure he came here with his own. (beat) Didn't you, Drizzy Drake?

SIMON

Why y'all trippin'? You two was just talking about Wakanda forever.

(DARRYL rushes over to the gun's hiding place. He pulls it out and aims it at SIMON.)

DARRYL

I'm standing my ground. You're all my witnesses. I'm standing my ground.

EVERYBODY

You're standing your ground.

SIMON

Man, have you lost your mind? It's me, your Boi. It's Simon. Where's my mask? Just give me a mask.

(SIMON frantically searches the box for his mask.)

CARA

I think he's looking for a knife. Kill him. Kill him before he kills us. Kill him.

SIMON

Y'all completely caught up in this white bullshit. Just find me a mask.

SAMARIA

Shoot him.

RICHARD

Shoot him, Darryl.

CARA

Shoot Drizzy Drake, Darryl.

ALL EXCEPT DARRYL & SIMON

Shoot him. Shoot him. Shoot him. Shoot him. Shoot him. Shoot him.

(DARRYL fires his gun seven times. SIMON drops to the floor.)

DARRYL

I had no choice.

EVERYBODY, BUT DARRYL

You had no choice.

DARRYL

I warned him.

EVERYBODY, BUT DARRYL

You warned him.

DARRYL

You heard me.

EVERYBODY, BUT DARRYL

We heard you. You had no choice. You warned him.

SAMARIA

It was the hoodie.

*(RICHARD lifts his mask and returns to his Blackness.
Not liking the reality of seeing his dead friend, he
quickly lowers his mask and returns to Caucasian.)*

RICHARD

He had a gun.

CARA

He was being aggressive.

DARRYL

They always get away.

ALL

We had no choice.

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY