

BLOOM

by

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EXT. INNER CITY PROJECTS - NIGHT

Boarded row houses with cracked street pavements. Drug dealers and addicts own the night.

Two teenagers walk toward a house-party with thumping rap music. DARNEL, 16, never seen a day out of the hood, reads over a crumpled piece of paper. JEFF, 16, street wise kid.

JEFF

Son, you being stupid as hell. You just need to chill. Just simply plant the seed.

Darnel is busy with his read.

JEFF

You listening to me? Clips' battles are no joke. I heard a youngin' got shot for his raps being too weak. At least let me see the rhymes.

Jeff tries to take the paper away but Darnel pockets it.

DARNEL

You know I'm sensitive about my shit.

JEFF

Do you even got the two hundred to put up?

Darnel pulls out a wad of cash with a twenty on top. Jeff snags it and flips through the George Washington's underneath.

JEFF

Nah. You out of your mind.

DARNEL

Jeff, am I raw or nah?

JEFF

Come on son, you talking suicide bomber shit. Yes, I believe in you. But I'm not willing to die for you.

DARNEL

Have I ever lost? Am I raw or nah?

Darnel hands Jeff the crumpled paper. Jeff looks it over, and cracks a brief smile. His faith has been restored. Darnel snatches the paper and the cash back.

DARNEL

Exactly. Raw.

JEFF

Your delivery better not be weak though. Yo, for real.

DARNEL

What were you talking about planting a seed?

JEFF

Just show your face and tell people you can rhyme. Then next week maybe they'll let you flow. You easing your way in there. Not rushing shit.

DARNEL

I feel you. But ain't nobody got time for that.

They stop in front of the boisterous house. A few TATTOOED TOUGH GUYS stand outside, eyeing the boys.

JEFF

Don't just barge in there acting like you know what's going on like you always do. If the vibe ain't right, Darnel, just plant the fucking seed. Don't be stupid.

Darnel nods to the tough guys as he walks into Jeff's living nightmare. Jeff hesitantly follows.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

A Hip-Hop beat blares from a stereo. A marijuana cloud of smoke occupies the congested room, as a vibrant CROWD OF PEOPLE encircle TWO MC'S in the middle of a rap battle.

JAY SLAYEM, you wouldn't want to cross paths with him anywhere let alone a dark alley, stands offensively close to his RIVAL.

JAY SLAYEM

Put the bezel to your temple, pull the trigger, down a nigga goes until he trembles. Step up to my face and I'll erase your entire mental. I'd have your brains on the carpet. Prayin' to your mama sayin' "I wish Jay-Slayem would just drop it"

The crowd goes crazy. The rival glares at Jay Slayem, who's busy boasting to his friends. The rival pushes him.

CLIPS, 22, tattooed, permanent aggravated face, squeezes in between them before the fight breaks loose.

TORI, 18, Clips' prize of a girlfriend, stands behind him.

CLIPS

Aight, aight, ya'll niggas better
cool that shit to zero before I put
one in both of ya'll motherfuckas.

The rappers calm down and regroup with their respective crews.

CLIPS

Up next, we got my mans Kid Ruckus
and --

DARNEL

Me.

Darnel steps inside the small circle. The thugs look like
New York skyscrapers the way they tower him.

DARNEL

I got next.

CLIPS

Aye young, who's lil brother is this?
Don't this nigga got like after school
activities to partake in? The fuck?

DARNEL

I'm D-Block. And I don't want to
battle Kid Ruckus, I want you.

Darnel holds up his wad of money. The crowd becomes wild
with wonder. Tori chuckles.

TORI

You got two hundred for this, Darnel?

Darnel puts his money away and looks at Clips: *You ready?*
Clips calms the crowd down.

CLIPS

Looks like Lil homie saved a year's
worth of lunch money for me. Aight,
imma let 'em have it. Fifteen seconds
is all you got. Get comfortable.
I'll give you last.

(to DJ)

Drop that beat, bruh.

A hard beat plays. The crowd sways back and forth.

CLIPS

Rollin' in my spot with his chest
out.

(MORE)

CLIPS (CONT'D)

Cock my forty-five, blow his chest out. Thought he'd prove a point coming to my people. The only point he'll weigh on is my desert eagle's.

The crowd roars. Darnel catches a glimpse of Jeff. Jeff face screams: *This was a mistake.*

CLIPS (CONT'D)

Parents on the lookout, young boy missin'. Chances he's alive? Nah, suicide mission. Ain't nobody snitchin' 'cause my team's hard. Duckin' Fed questions like we playin' dodge-ball. Stick you for your shoes, barefooted, send you cryin' to your mama. Find me in her room, jeans crooked, I'm your new fatha'.

The crowd goes berserk. Tori didn't appreciate the comment.

Clips gets handshakes from everyone and then points his finger at Darnel like a gun, and pulls the trigger.

The beat commences. All eyes are on Darnel, like a pack of hungry wolves waiting for their prey to slip up.

DARNEL

Cut the beat. I'm going acapella.

The beat stops. Darnel looks back at Jeff. Jeff urges him to go on: *Don't fuck this up.*

Darnel slowly exhales... then.

DARNEL

The world is like a jungle and love's the undetectable virus running its way through it.

Everyone exchanges confused looks.

DARNEL

But it's manageable, I risk the inevitable fumble of my heart to pursue it. Can you view it? The void you left when you graduated? Who cares if I feel emasculated, I'll bare the indignity for you, my lady. I loved you in that yellow dress you use to wear, and with your mellow, messy bun up there.

Darnel circles the top of his head as he looks up at Tori.

DARNEL

How about in drama class when you sunk our boat? I swear girl we can play Titanic, I'll be your Jack you can be my Rose. I can't promise that we'll mesh, we'll bond, or we'll click together. But what's love without danger, stranger? And I promise you -- I can treat you better.

The room drowns in a dangerous silence. Darnel looks straight into Tori's eyes. Tori smiles and looks down, blushing.

Clips evaluates the situation.

EXT. INNER CITY PROJECTS - NIGHT

Shoes gone, Darnel limps down the street. Jeff helps him.

JEFF

You're stupid, son. So damn stupid!

With his free hand, Jeff holds Darnel's crumpled piece of paper and reads.

JEFF

"Fuck with me, you know I stay strapped. Cock my shit back, lay your ass flat like a doormat" -- What happened to this?!

DARNEL

I should listen to you more often.

JEFF

Now you want to consider what I had to say? You ain't shit for timing.

DARNEL

Nah man, I'm straight. I was raw.

JEFF

You got all your shit taken. You ain't get her number, her address, nothing. How are you straight?

With a black eye and bloody nose, Darnel looks up at his friend with a smile.

DARNEL

I planted the seed.

FADE OUT