

**Keith Nesbitt**

**Play**

**Facing The Old You**

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## Facing the old you

(play)

When the poor decision is made to become a domestic abuser, or the recipient of abuse, the stakes rise to astronomical levels for both parties. The children are affected, as well as the entire household, the bills, work, school, extended family and friends. Strangers can also be affected by witnessing the ugliness of domestic abuse.

While domestic violence is such a broad and long ranging spectrum, this play only display's just some of the things, like a bad attitude or an unwillingness to seek or accept help, that can cause abuse and it's far reaching consequences to take hold of any individual who allows him/herself to succumb to its debilitating weakness on any level.

####

## Facing the old you:

### **Characters:**

**Cushion:** Hat backwards, blue jeans, flannel shirt, sneakers low self-esteem

**Robbi:** Motherly type, hat to the side, sweats, large t-shirt, sneakers sweater tied around waist.

**Nay Nay:** Vest, black slacks, tan blouse, tan shoes, confident, hot tempered.

**Element:** Scarf on head, dress, no shoes, shy, soft spoken

**Kyle:** Baggy clothes, braids, tattoos, soft spoken

**Tank:** Militant, speaks his mind, dressed in black skinny jeans, shirt, and beret

**Babbs:** Clothes too small, boots, big guy, slow, stutters

**Word:** Skinny, outspoken, loud, bully, flashy clothes, jewelry

**Stage manager:** (Sharon, female) Black suit, shoes, hat, cane, white shirt

**Old lady:** Homely dressed, shopping bag

### **Act 1:**

**Scene:** At left of stage, kitchen table, four chairs, refrigerator, counter, knife on counter.

Females sitting at table chatting, drinking tea. At right of stage: wide screen TV, couch, chair, and guys sitting on couch watching game,

one of the guys sitting on chair. Coffee table in front of them with bowls of chips and beers on it.

**Stage manager:** *(walks to center of stage)* Good afternoon ladies and gents. I would like to bring your attention to the guys for a moment. You will notice they are all, ladies as well, wearing clown makeup. Though, it is only makeup, it truly represents who they use to be. You see, that make up represents the old life they once led or what they witnessed in others. *(Walk to right of stage, stand behind guy's)* Now, it is my duty to warn you beforehand, what you are about to witness is what you would have witnessed before these fine individuals transformation. So, with that said, guys, if you would, please? *(Exit's Stage).*

*(Guys on couch shoving one another, shouting at the TV over the game, word and Babbs ragging on one another)*

**Word:** And if you would take your big ass to the gym, any gym, and actually do some damn exercise all of us could fit on the damn same sofa...

**Babbs:** If...if...if...you...you. yooou...you wasn't so cheap, you would buy a big en...enough couch...

**Word:** If your big ass wasn't so damn big, my couch wouldn't look so small, fat boy...

**Kyle:** *(laugh)* He got you on that one, word. You are cheap *(Kyle stand up from chair, squeeze between Babbs and Tank on couch)*

**Word:** Shut the hell up Kyle. This aint even my damn sofa, fool...

**Tank:** (*shake head*) you brothers need to stop disrespecting one another like that. 'Calling each other out of your given name. Your mama's didn't raise you two like that.

**Word:** (*look over at Tank, shake his head*) look whose talking, Mr. I wanna change my *real* name to Malcolm X name...

**Tank:** Brothers, let's just watch the game, huh? Don't get mad at me, Word, because your Eagles are getting their butts kicked all over that field...

**Word:** True that but they wont be down for too long. Let me hear you speak your piece when the game is over and we'll see who gets the last laugh. (*Look over toward kitchen*) damn Cushion, you gonna bring me that damn beer, or what? (*Shake head again, look back at game*). I'm telling you, dog, that girl gets on my last damn nerve...

**Tank:** And I'm telling you Word, watch the name calling, man. It's not necessary to describe another human being that way. That's verbal abuse my brother...

**Word:** Man, shut that shit up. You always gotta be somebody's politically correct with that militant shit...(*look over at Tank*)

**Tank:** (*Look at Word*) ask yourself, brother, what right do you have to call anyone else a name other than their own and if Cushion is *getting on your nerves*, why do you stay with her? Obviously, you're easily irritated. Why not let her go and find someone else who is more compatible with you and your standards? Or, are

you just keeping her under siege because you can?

**Word:** And why don't you stay the hell out of my damn business? What are you, her spokes person all of a sudden? For your damn information, *Tavis*, my damn standards aint all that damn high...

**Tank:** Oh, they're not?

**Word:** (*mimics Tank*) Oh, they're not? No, they're not. They aint above my head but they damn sure aint below my chin either, where Cushion ass is. I got a damn right to be irritated if I want to...

**Tank:** Oh, is that a fact? What right is that, brother? Because I can tell you, your right is wrong for everybody involved. You have a right to take care of the family you created, treat your woman fairly, I'll give you that but, your woman also have a right to be treated fairly and to walk out that door if she isn't.

**Old lady:** (*Old lady walking, looking around the stage for something*)

**Word:** (*Roll eyes at Tank, flip him the finger*) Cushion, damn, you gonna bring me that goddamn beer or what? Am I gonna have to get up off my ass and get it my damn self? Shit. I swear, girl, if it wasn't for Warren junior. I would have left your sorry worthless ass a long time ago...

**Cushion:** (*downcast eyes, snap up when Word call*) I'm really sorry honey, coming

**Old Lady:** (*Snatch head in Word's direction, race over, eager to serve him, stand next to end of couch he is sitting on, cover mouth with one hand, while holding plastic*)

*bag in crook of other arm, extends arm to hand Word invisible beer)*

**Tank:** That's not right, calling the sister names, man *(shake head while looking at Word, then look back at game)*

**Word:** And it aint right you keep getting in my damn business either, nigga...

**Tank:** Alright, brother, watch your mouth. I'm not going to be your ninja...

**Tank:** Your ass will be one if I say you one...

**Kyle:** Word, you need to chill man. I didn't bring you up in this brothers house so you can disrespect him like this. Karma is gonna be a mother when it comes to visit...

**Word:** *(frown, look at Kyle)* 'The hell you mean karma? I aint did shit for no damn karma to pay me no visit...

**Kyle:** *(Look at Word, stand up, look down at Word)* that's what you think. Dig this, Word, *Karma could look like your mama...*

**Word:** *(Word start to get up, Tank grab his arm, stop him)* Alright fool, watch your mouth. Don't be talking about my mama. That's a good way to get your head busted down to the white meat...

**Tank:** Chill out, Word. It's just a poem, man. I think you should listen to the brother. *(Word ease back on the couch staring up at Kyle)*

**Kyle:** *Karma could look like your mama...in-law, the law stops by adds plenty of spice to your life, destruction (Kyle point to his own head) when you don't expect it, travels long distances, covers distance when you neglect it, on a mission to be with you,*



*holidays and birthdays, the way you serve... karma, pow! Is what you (point at Word) deserve, karma, the avenger of those you offended, tended, not to care about others welfare, servant of drama, karma, causing you trauma, Boom bam, it slams you in concrete, uniquely, hard blow in tow, karma, rides with plenty of cash for that ass, don't need no ticket when you act wicked...*

Everything you've been saying has karma written all over it, Word. The way you talk to people, the way you address people, the way you interact with others, it's all wrong, man...

**Word:** *(turn up corner of mouth)* shut your mouth, Kyle. Your ass is just like everybody else, always trying to keep the Word down. I roar because, unlike you idiots, I have something to say. *(get to feet, shove Kyle back, face others)* You brothers dig this shit...

*Inside the halls of my walls dwells a man eating roar (Glance at Kyle then back) untamed, filled with flames around my brain, ready to vibrate the night (pound fist in hand) tightening swells, when it yells it roars, to the shores of every door and window... pain, oh the pain, the pain, they say, as they try to keep my roar in chains, boxed in, nailed shut and dropped to the ocean floor, but never will I allow my roar to be swept away in foul weather, feathered, tethered, roped to my throat it floats out to a roar (lean upper body back, spread arms out, roar loudly).*

**Babbs:** Well, wrong is wrong, Word, it's what you do, looking like snaggletooth...

**Word:** Fool, that was weak. Shut your ass up...

**Kyle:** I believe in solitary confinement, Word, whether you do or don't, that's where you're going to find yourself with that attitude of yours because that's what's going to get you into trouble, then you're going to be crying...

*Lose my mind solitary confined, confine me is where you can find me, deep in a mine, dark all around me, now nobody can find me out, gotta get out, run about, cold in here, mold in here, boring in here, asking the lord in here, please forgive me, free me, let me be free, can't find my mind in here, I hear running water...away from me stays from me, wait for me, I want to run toward the water, locate my family who lives by the water, they forgot about me, I'm solitary confined in here...*

**Word:** (look at others) Y'all trying to tell me I can't treat my own woman the way I wanna treat her, even though I buy her clothes and everything? That woman almost make me turn into a damn beast sometimes (*pound chest, face Kyle, use hand gestures throughout his poem*) That woman Almost made me, lose my mind, but I found my mind in the lost and found, the mainframe of my brain, by way of the milky way, from the big to the little dipper, Almost had me thinking, all of this time I didn't have any friends, no family tree who care about me, Almost sending me to the floor looking at doors, my eyes adore the doors I see from the floor, Almost none ever opens for me, still I, want to free these things, those things, that thing, thoughts from my mind, Almost, its too fly to give you(Poke Kyle in the chest,

*point over at Cushion) that kind of time, blowing my mind one day at a time, Almost, I feel like I'm winning, I'm always loosing, Almost, had me turn into a beast. (look from the others to Kyle and back, count on fingers) Now, all I need is two things, to be free to be me and for you idiots to stay the hell out of my damn business.*

**Kyle:** And you're a fool because you're the only one who can control your own attitude, keep yourself in check, not her or anyone else. We're just trying to help you out but you have to make the decision to change...beast...

**Word:** That's right and y'all need to stay the hell out of my damn business. How about changing that? I make my own choices. I'm a grown ass man and I don't need nobody else telling me what the hell to do or how to live my life.

**Tank:** *(stand up, face Word)* Brother, like the brother said, all we are trying to do is to prevent something we recognize from happening before it gets worse so, let me lay threads on the state on you...*though they are made with less than a penny on the dollar, sewn by many fingers as they continue to holler, I wear these clothes as if I own them whole, but they are not mine to own, they belong to the state, I am just borrowing them through time, no fees, dividends or interest rates, not even a rebate, I must wear these clothes because this is the fate I have sewn...* many men, my brother, have gone to the state penitentiary because they could not let go of the type of attitude you're working with...*(guy's sit back on the couch,*

*have quiet discussion among themselves).*

**Old Lady:** *(race over to kitchen area with the ladies)*

**Nay Nay:** *(gesturing with hands as she recite her poem to Cushion)*

*Words unspoken leaves you stroking, wondering what the heck, what the hey,  
expression of the day, words are not hard to find when you get on your grind,  
speak your mind, meet your needs, keeping them in fuels the flame in your  
brain, leaving you feeling lame, makes you wonder what would have happened  
had you spoken those words, joy? You'll never know because you would not let  
your words flow, words unspoken is the token for nothing gained.*

*Why the hell do you even take his shit, Cushion? (Shaking her head)*

**Cushion:** *(Look at Nay Nay like she is sad, clutch heart with both hands, recite her*

*poem) Heart of my soul, you stole the heart of my soul. Now it belongs to you  
and I am not blue. At the highest height, deepest depth, deep, no dept owed. I  
loved my way to the top of your mountain of love, In love with your treasures,  
buried. I cannot measure heaven, levels my love for you, to the very floor of  
you like scattered, battered, braised, raised flowers over the horizon, earth  
blooming, bloomed, boomed into beautiful opulence, radiance, radiant, stands  
alone, high on your throne, heart of my soul, sweet like gold, the honey bees  
honey smoothly flows through the heart of my soul, evenly through the soul of  
my heart. That's the poem Word wrote for me and I love it...*

**Nay Nay:** Are you serious? *(The others acted as though they were gagging after the poem)* Damn a poem, what about him treating you like he does?

**Cushion:** Nay, would you please just stay out of my business? You're going to make it worse on me...

**Old Lady:** *(shrug shoulders, shake head)*

**Nay Nay:** *(Raise eyebrows)* Did you just... *(Look at others then back at Cushion)* did she just tell me to stay out of her business? Stay out of your business?

**Old lady:** *(nod head)*

**Nay Nay:** *(gets animated)* Hell no, I will not stay out of your beeswax. We may not have come out of the same mother but we are sisters, girl, all of us are *(wave hand over others, point at self)* do you think I like hearing that jerk talk to you like that, like you are a nobody, huh?

**Cushion:** No

**Old Lady:** *(shake head, frown, and glance over at Word and back)*

**Nay Nay:** You damn right I don't. None of us do...

**Robbi:** Nay is right, girl. Nobody likes verbal or any other kind of abuse

**Old Lady:** *(nod then shake her head)*

**Robbi:** *(take Cushions hand in hers, look at her)* Cushion, listen honey. We're only trying to save you honey from god knows what but something is not right. I hate to recite this poem to you about your man but it needs to be recited and you need

to hear it because it describes him to a T... (*Cushion pulls her hands up to her ears, Robbi pull them back down*)...

*When the mask comes off you want to start things, test things, testing everything, throwing things, act like a thing, always wanting to climb in a ring, instead of putting rings on my fingers I have rings around my eyes, evidence that I have been crying over you, you used to be strong in love with me, everything was done so carefully, softly and gently, you were sweet to me, even wiped my feet for me, we used to knock together now you knock my feathers, level me, what I do for you is no good for you, always a debate when the mask comes off (Robbi kiss Cushions hands then let them go)*

**Cushion:** (*Look around at others*) I know but I love Warren. Nobody has ever loved me the way Warren does...

**Old Lady:** (*frowns turn up the corner of her mouth, shake head*)

**Nay Nay:** (*Nearly leap out of chair, hold on to back of it*) what, you call that mess love? Him cursing at you like you are a dog? That aint no love. Shit, that aint even puppy love or liked. Dogs get more love than that...

**Cushion:** I know but...

**Nay Nay:** No Cush, you have to demand respect (*Pound fist in hand*) for yourself, your son, your home, your family, everything, girl...

**Cushion:** (*look confused*) Demand respect?

**Nay Nay:** Hell yeah. You are a good woman girl and if you do not demand respect from your man he will just run all over you. You deserve to be treated better. Tell her. (*Look at others*)

**Old Lady:** (*Nod head in agreement*)

**Others:** (*agree by nodding*)

**Cushion:** (*Looking around at others, shaking her head, suck her teeth*) No, Warren treats me fair. He tells me that every day. I mean, I can't complain. He's the one who pays all of the bills and everything. If it wasn't for him I wouldn't even have no place to live and nobody to love me...

**Old Lady:** (*Clasp hand to forehead, clutch heart with free hand, look up and raise hands like she is asking God for help*)...

**Word:** Man, y'all are trippin'. Hell, if y'all don't like the way I get down then, get the hell out. I can watch the game by my damn self. Then I'll have enough room on my couch (*looked over at Babbs*)...

**Tank:** Man, you so foul you can't even think straight. You don't even know what you're talking about half the time...

**Word:** Oh, really?

**Tank:** Really. This is my house, not yours...

**Babbs:** B...bee...be coo...cool, Wor.... Word...

**Word:** Fool, shut your stuttering ass up. Cushion, where the hell my beer at? I aint gonna

call you no more.

**Cushion:** *(Spring to her feet)* Here I come, baby. *(Look over toward Word then back at ladies)* Please, don't say anything.

**Word:** *(Shake head at guys)* I swear that woman is an idiot to no end...

**Nay Nay:** *(watch Cushion as she hurry off toward Word, glance over, stare at Word, shake her head)* I swear, he needs that ass kicked. *(Yell over to Word)*. Word, why don't you stop acting like that? We're having a good time. There is no need for all of that nastiness...

**Word:** *(Look passed Cushion over at Nay Nay)* Why don't you shut up and stay your ass out of my business, Rene? Aint nobody talking to you...

**Nay Nay:** *(Stand up)* Alright, Word, watch your mouth. If you wasn't putting your business out there I wouldn't be all up in it. As a matter of fact, why don't you make me shut up if you think you're so damn tough...

**Word:** *(Look over at Tank)* Tank, holla at your woman, man. How you gonna let her get at your boy like that?

**Tank:** Man, word, you know Nay once she gets started. If you don't want none don't start none. Come on man, we watching the game anyways...

**Word:** Yeah and your woman is running her mouth. I get it though, you a ho' just like her. Y'all belong together...

*(Kyle and Babbs look at one another)*



**Kyle:** Come on Word, that's not cool, man...

**Nay Nay:** (*Charge across stage*) who the hell are you calling a ho' punk? You a ho'.

(*Stand in front of Word*)

**Word:** (*Trying to see around Nay Nay, she keeps moving in his way*) Come on now, Rene, move out the way so I can finish watching the game...

**Nay Nay:** (*Poke Word with her finger on the forehead*) or what? What are you going to do? If you wanted to watch the game you wouldn't have called me no ho'...

**Word:** T, I'm telling you man, you need to get your girl. This shit aint cool...

**Nay Nay:** Why don't your tough ass get me? I saw how you be staring at my ass, lusting over me and shit, when you think I'm not looking. Yeah, I know all about your li'l nasty ass...(*Tank frown at Word*)

**Word:** You tripping, Rene, aint nobody checking you out...

**Old Lady** (*frown at Word, shake her head, poke out her lips*)

**Nay Nay:** Bull shit. You are a damn liar. (*Point at Word*) You saying I'm not good enough to look at? (*Tank raises eyebrows, look at Nay Nay*)

**Cushion** (*lightly bump Nay Nay aside, hand Word can of beer that was sitting on the coffee table in front of him*) Here you go baby. I'm sorry for taking so long. It won't happen again. Now, can we just stop all of this arguing, please?

**Old Lady:** (*Shake head, mimic Cushion, roll her eyes upward*)

**Word:** (*snatch beer out of Cushions hand, jump to his feet, point finger in her face*) The

hell you just say, Connie? You keep your punk ass out of my damn business, you hear me?*(Cushion cowers away from Word, he shove her away, throw beer can at her, it hit her on head, old lady press hand on head as if she was the one who was hit with the can, the rest of guys leap up from couch, Nay Nay swing on Word, he step back out of way, Tank grab her, wrap arms around her, hold her back)*

**Old Lady:** *(Dance around, boxing air, as if it were Word she was punching on)*

**Tank:** Come on Nay, don't be like this...

**Nay Nay:** *(Frown on face, kick out at Word, he dances out of her way, smiling as if there was a joke being told)* Fuck him. This asshole thinks this shit is funny. You better tell his ass something about that disrespectful shit, Tank. I am not playing with his ass. I'm not Cushion and I don't have to take his shit either.

**Old Lady:** *(turn down lips, agree with Nay Nay, stop dancing around and boxing)*

**Tank:** Okay baby, you're right. *(Hustle Nay Nay and Cushion back over to the others, walk back toward the guys shaking head as he sits back on couch with the others)*

**Robbi:** *(shakes head, help Cushion to her seat)* that's a darn shame. Girl, are you alright? That's what I meant in that poem earlier. I don't know why you have to keep taking his shit...

**Old Lady:** *(Pretends to help Robbi get Cushion seated)*

**Nay Nay:** *(Nose flaring, breathing heavy)* because her ass is silly, that's why...

**Element:** *(Glance over at Nay Nay, slight frown then look down at her hands, speak in low voice)* This isn't right. This whole thing is beginning to get out of hand.

Everyone is fussing and yelling at one another, calling each other names. It's not right...

**Nay Nay:** *(Still breathing heavy, look over at Word then back)* you damn right that aint right. His ass is lucky Tank pulled me away. *(Plop down on chair).*

**Element:** No, I mean, what he does isn't right but neither are you by calling Cushion silly. That's not right to say. *(Glance up at Nay Nay, then back down at her hands, knead her dress).*

**Old Lady:** *(nod head in agreement)*

**Nay Nay:** Don't start El. I don't need to hear your shit, too. You know Word aint right. *(Cross one leg over the other)*

**Element:** I know but neither are you by calling Cushion names. That's not helping anything. If anything, you're no better than Word. Cushion is our friend. We're supposed to stand by her side no matter what. *(Glance up at Nay Nay then quickly look back down at her hands)*

**Nay Nay:** No matter what? we're supposed to stand by her side while that idiot talks shit to her, push her around like she's an old cart? *(Stand up, put hands on her hips, facing Element but looking down at Cushion, who was being held by Robbi)* that's supposed to be right, just because we stand by her side and watch the shit happen and don't do anything, while he has his way? *(Sit back down, stare over at Word)* You girls got it messed up. He's going to make me hurt him.

**Babbs:** *(Looking sad, tears in eyes, as he stares at the TV)* that wasn't cool hitting on your girl like that Word. My mama says...

**Word:** The hell with what yo' mama say, boy, with yo' stuttering ass. I don't give a damn what yo' mama have to say about nothing, she aint my damn mama. If I wanna kick my woman in her ass then I'm gonna kick that ass and she gonna like it, too. Your fat stuttering ass aint got no business in mine, just like Rene aint. You need to be concerned about your own retarded ass girlfriend. That's what the hell you need to be worried about.

**Kyle:** Can we just watch the game? Shit *(look left then right and back at the TV)*

**Tank:** Kyle is right, y'all. Lets everybody chill and get back to the game. Word, you cool, man?

**Word:** Yeah, y'all stay the hell out of my damn business and I'm gonna be real cool and nobody better not recite another damn poem to me, either, or everybody is getting the hell out of my damn house...

*(Tank and Kyle look at one another, shake their head)*

**Babbs:** This is Tanks house, Word...

**Kyle:** Word...

**Word:** What?

**Kyle:** Nothing. I just said, word, you know, like, word up? I was just agreeing with...

**Word:** Kyle? Shut the hell up. You talk too damn much.

**Tank:** *(Turn TV up louder with remote)*

**Kyle:** *(Shake fist in air, shout at TV)* Run the damn ball man!

*(Tank, Word jump to feet, root for their teams)*

**Kyle:** That's what I'm talking about. That's how you run a football *(High five Tank, after he and Word sit's back down)*

**Robbi:** I hate to say it, Cushion...

**Nay Nay:** Just say it Robbi, damn. You always hate to say something but end up saying it anyways, shit. It can't be any worse than what's already been said so far...

**Robbi:** *(glance over at Nay Nay, continue to rub Cushion's shoulders)* One of these days something bad is going to happen to your man for what he does to you, girl. What he does isn't right to do to another human being...

**Cushion:** *(Cushion lean away from Robbi, brush Robbi's hair away from her face)* It's ok Robbi. Word doesn't mean any harm. He probably just got over excited over the game is all. He's not usually like this...

**Robbi:** *(Rubs the side of Cushions face, old lady rubs the side of her own face)* Girl, when a guy gets excited over a stupid game, he may yell, scream and do a little ugly dance but he never hits his woman, let alone throw something at her...

**Nay Nay:** What's next? I'll tell you what's next if you don't stop it from happening *right now*, because obviously he's too much of an idiot to stop on his own; it's going to escalate into something more damaging and irreversible and I don't want to

see you hurting like that.

**Old Lady:** *(Dab eyes with back of hand)*

**Robbi:** *(frowns at Nay Nay's words, look into Cushions eyes)* Cush, tell me Word is not hitting you on a regular basis, not that one time isn't enough...

**Old Lady:** *(shakes head)*

**Cushion:** *(Cushion look down at her hands, clears her throat, glance over at Word, quickly look back, nod head)* Once...

*(all of the girls show their surprise)*

**Robbi:** He did?

**Nay Nay:** *(Jump to feet)* I knew that bastard wasn't acting right behind closed doors. I told Tank about his ass. That's messed up.

**Old Lady:** *(pretends to snap bat over knee, throw it on floor, stare at Word, fist clinched)*

**Element:** *(slightly frowning)* Why didn't you say anything before, Cush? You could have come and stayed with me and Babbs. We have plenty of room in our apartment.

**Cushion:** Can we just drop this, please? Word hit me one time because he was drunk.

Besides I deserved it. I broke one of his rules...

**Old Lady:** *(look surprised, lean back, look at Cushion)*

**Nay Nay:** Rules? What the hell do you mean, rules Cushion? How the hell is he going to put rules on you when his li'l funky ass cant even follow rules his damn self? I told him not to come over to my house but he couldn't wait to break that rule, could he? Hell no, so, I should have the right to hit his ass, right?

**Old Lady:** *(nod head)*

**Cushion:** That's different, Nay...

**Nay Nay:** No the hell it aint either. A hit is a damn hit and I'm about to hit his ass...

**Cushion:** *(grab Nay Nay by her arm, pull her back down on seat on other side of her)* Please, don't let Word hear you. Besides, when he did it, it didn't hurt. I just went on with my day after it happened. You all are acting like you haven't been hit by your man before, for getting out of place...

**Old Lady:** *(put finger up to lips)*

**Nay Nay:** Yeah, you're right. It did happen to me before. *(Robbi raise eyebrows, look surprise, cover mouth with one hand)* this one boy I was going out with in school slapped me for looking at another boy and I didn't *just go about my business*, I near about kicked his little ass all the way to his mama's house, while he screamed and cried and couldn't wait until we got there because he needed somebody to get me off his butt...

**Robbi:** Good for you, Nay but that never happened to me before...

**Element:** Me either. I wont stand for it but still, Robbi, you shouldn't condone that.

**Nay Nay:** Now, that's a damn shame. If this crazy ass girl *(point at Element)* has a man that have never hit her before, you can find one too, girl. No offense El, I was just trying to make a point...

**Old Lady** (*Pump palms of her hands out in front of her, nodding her head in agreement*)

**Robbi:** Kick back, Nay, Cush is already taking enough mess from Word. Putting her down isn't helping any...

**Nay Nay:** Yeah but I can't stand his ass. I wish he would hit me. I will stab his ass...

**Cushion:** Rene, come on. You don't sound any better than him talking like that. That boy you beat up in school was just as bad as what Word does to me. I mean, he doesn't beat on me like that but what you did is still abuse, just like you're saying what Word does. Both are abuse and both are wrong...

**Word:** (*look over at women*) What the hell are you over there yapping your mouth about, Cushion? Get your ass over here!

**Cushion:** (*stand up, cross stage*) Coming!

**Old Lady:** (*dip head, raise shoulders like she'd been hit on the head*)

**Element:** (*snatch head in that direction*) See, Nay, you got the girl in trouble. Now he's just going to hit her again...

**Nay Nay** (*leap to her feet*) Damn that. No the hell he's not. (*Crosses stage*).

**Old Lady:** (*look over at Word, file in behind Nay Nay, march in step, Robbi and Element follow behind the two, never saw Nay Nay pick up knife from counter*)

**Word:** (*Get to feet, grab Cushion by front of shirt*) Didn't I tell your dumb ass not to interrupt my game? (*Raise hand to strike her*)...

**Old Lady:** (*cover mouth with hand, close eyes tight*)...



**Nay Nay:** (*Slap Word on back of head before he could strike, holding knife up so Word could see it*) You hit her and I'll stab your ass. If you ever hit her again I will kill you nigger (*Tears begin to flood Nay Nay's eyes, the females scream after seeing the knife, the guys jump to their feet*)...

**Kyle:** Damn!

**Babbs:** Whoa, Nay!

**Tank** (*stand next to Nay Nay, grab hand knife is in*) Hold on now, Nay, you aint gotta cut him...

**Nay Nay:** Yeah and his punk ass aint gotta be hitting my friend either. I'm not going for no shit like that. He's not a damn man. Real men do not hit women. How can he call hisself loving somebody he feels he have to hit on? (*Point knife at Word.*) Your ass need to go to jail before something bad happens to you. I'm telling you Tank, I will stab his ass if he does it again now, get the hell off of me (*Nay Nay wiggle out of Tank's grip, turn to walk off*)...

**Word:** (*let go of Cushion's shirt, step back after seeing the knife, Push Nay Nay when she turn her back*)...

**Robbi:** (*Step between Word and Nay Nay, who spun around, arms stretched out between the two*) Stop it Word, you two don't need to be fighting...

**Word:** (*Reach around Robbi, grab Cushion by shirt again*) Ho, you got me fucked up. This is my broad. She belongs to me and she does what the hell I tell her ass to

do, right? *(looks at Cushion)*

**Cushion:** *(lowers head, hands clasped together in front of her)* Yes...

**Word:** Good girl now, the rest of y'all get the hell out of my damn house...

**Old Lady:** *(frown, turn to leave, hang head down)*

**Babbs:** You can't kick us out. This aint your house, Word...

**Old Lady** *(Raise head, turn back, smile)*

**Nay Nay:** *(turn back around)* you know what, motherfucker? You think I'm playing with your ass? I'll show you exactly what this ho' is about *(Raise knife)*

**Tank:** *(wrap arms around Nay Nay's body, hold her back)* Hold down now Rene. Word didn't mean what he said...

**Word:** *(Frowning at Nay Nay)* the hell I didn't. I meant every damn word I said to your ho. Now, are you gonna put her punk ass in check or am I going to have to? Cause aint nothing fouler than a rude ass, foul mouth ho who aint got no respect for a mans rules...

**Tank :** *(Spin body around, hold Nay Nay with one arm, point at Word with free hand)*  
Watch your mouth Word. I'm not about to stand here and let you get off on my woman like that, man. Have some respect...

**Old Lady:** *(Point at Word, mimicking Tank)*

**Nay Nay:** *(Struggle to get free)* Let me go Tank, I'll teach his ass some respect myself...

**Old Lady:** *(swing at Word, miss, stumble, gather herself, keep fist up in front of her)*

**Word:** Yep, spoken like a true ho. 'Sorry just like your man. You aint about to do shit.

Why don't you gone back in the kitchen and sit yo ho ass down? As a matter of fact, why don't all of you ho's get in the kitchen and make us something to eat?

*(shove Cushion to the floor, laugh)* That's where my dog belongs, at my feet...

**Cushion:** *(Cling to Word's leg, crying)*

**Word:** *(Nudge Cushion with his foot; slap her on her head, she cover head with arms)*

Shut the hell up. Did I say you can cry?

**Babbs:** *(scream out, tackle Word and drive him to the floor)*

*(Kyle, Tank trying to pull Babbs off of Word)*

**Nay Nay:** It's about damn time one of y'all got some balls. Kick his ass. He deserves every bit of it *(Nay Nay hovering over the fight, the old lady doing the same)*

**Cushion:** *(Crying, screaming)* Stop, please, stop. Don't hurt him *(Element and Robbi holding her back)*

**Word:** *(Scramble to his feet, pull out knife)* You done went and messed up now, fat boy. You don't put your damn hands on the Word...

**Kyle:** *(Surprised, as he and Tank pull Babbs up from the floor)* Word, what the hell man? What are you doing with a knife?

**Cushion:** *(Pull away from Element and Robbi at the same time Word lung at Babbs with the knife, sinking the knife in her stomach)*

*(The whole place erupts into screams)*

**Element :** *(Falls to knees, screams uncontrollably, pound floor, jump to feet, Tank hold her back as she went for Word) Nooo! Cushion...*

**Robbi:** *(catch Cushion as she begins to fall, ease her down to floor and rest her head on legs, rub her face)...*

**Word:** *(Crying) See what the hell y'all made me do?*

**Nay Nay:** *(Full of rage, as word ease knife out of Cushion and go for Babbs, Nay Nay stab him in back, Word drop his knife, fall to the floor)*

**Old Lady:** *(Looks frightened, worried)*

**Element:** *(breaks free from Tank pull out cell phone) I'm calling the police...*

**Nay Nay:** No you're not.

**Old Lady:** *(shakes head, frowns)*

**Element:** I have to. We can't just stand here and let them die *(old lady shakes head again)*

**Kyle:** *(checking Word then Cushion's pulse) I think they are already gone, El...(Old Lady lower head, Element cry out again, the others cry)*

**Element:** *(begins to punch in 911)*

**Nay Nay:** *(snatch Elements phone away) Give me this damn phone, girl, we don't need no damn police in our business. For what, so they can come and shoot us dead?*

**Old Lady** *(nod head, pretend to shoot)*

**Element:** How can they do that when you already beat them to it? You're the reason this

shit escalated in the first place, something that should never have happened.

Now you want to continue to cover it up? No way am I going to stand by and let this continue to happen. You killed us all with that stunt you pulled...

**Nay Nay:** *(Sneer at Element)* Bitch, your ass don't have a choice *(Slap Element across face)*...

**Element:** *(Scream out, draw hand up to her face, mouth trembling)*

**Tank:** *(Grab Nay Nay, she push him away)*

**Kyle:** Come on, Rene, chill out baby girl. You need some help...

**Nay Nay:** *(Frown, point at self)* Oh, I need help, you little freak?

**Robbi:** This has gotten way out of hand, Rene. We need to call the police...

**Nay Nay :** *(Frown at Robbi)* Out of hand? Shit, it got out of hand when that idiot started putting his damn hands on Cushion. Now look what the hell happened...

**Kyle:** And what, now you're just going to pick up where he left off? That's not cool.

Aint none of this shit cool. Domestic violence aint even cool, for that matter and it doesn't matter who's doing it, it aint right...

**Nay Nay:** You damn right it's not right and if you knew that, why didn't you stop Word from abusing Cushion? I'm sure you knew about it...I'll tell you why, because your ass is sorry just like he was. You don't sit by and let something like this take place, nobody should...

**Kyle:** You're right, Rene...

**Nay Nay:** It's too late now. The damage is done...

**Kyle:** It's never too late...

**Police:** (*rush in yelling, pointing guns*) everybody down! Get down on the floor, lay on your stomach, spread your legs apart, place your hands behind your head, interlock your fingers (*everyone did as they were commanded*)

**Nay Nay:** (*look over at Element, forgot she snatch phone before she could make call, frown, look at phone lying next to her hand, locked eyes with Robbi, Robbi look away, turn lip up at back of Robbi's head*)

**Old Lady:** (*turn up lips, walk out with hands behind her back*)

(*Nay Nay is led away in hand cuffs, Word and Cushion are taken away on stretchers, others milling around hugging one another crying.*)

**Stage Manager:** (*takes center stage*) Well folks, as you can image, your anger can get the best of you if you do not seek help, get it in check or handle it with what I like to call; **Rejecting :Anger, Embracing: Happiness.** You will not want to be responsible for something like what took place here today. 'Two deaths and one arrest. Luckily for one of those involved, she was cleared on the basis of self-defense, but something of this magnitude can take a life time to repair, some times even longer and we should never forget two lives have been lost because of domestic abuse.  
(*walk off stage*)

**Act 2:**

Act two takes place in the historic Boston Commons area of downtown Boston.

**Scene:** The large grassy Commons ground stretches across acres of land, where people are scattered about in various capacities, engaged in multiple activities, ranging from picnicking, Frisbee toss, softball throwing, rollerblading, biking, jogging, walking and a few other assortment of individuals were just enjoying the great peace and tranquility the grounds and sun have to offer. Some sat on park benches, children skipped rocks across the pond, and others tossed bread in the water and fed the ducks and swans. The Commons was guarded by the historical statues of soldiers past, high above on their individual perch; even the Buffalo soldiers were blessed to have a place on the grounds, large buildings across the street on all sides. Then, a scream silenced the joyful noise and serenity. What transpires afterward will be a sequence of issues and individuals dealing with their old self...*(woman screams, people stop to listen, to locate the source)*.

**Stage Manager:** *(race to center of stage, study faces of people, goes from person to person, trying to locate the victim of what she is sure was a random act of wrongdoing by an individual who struggles with his/her past, shuffles*

*a group of individuals to center of stage, pulls Word from crowd, smile at him then suddenly raise voice) What to you sir, may I ask, does Empathy mean to you?*

**Word:** *(Confused at first then looks toward audience, looks back at others, locates Cushion, hugs her) This is the face of my victim (waves hand at others, audience) you were all my victims. As I have done to one, I have done to all. I have delivered selfish acts of random violence and for that, I am ashamed to have done (looks upward) today, I take full responsibility for all of my actions and I shall never repeat my past. I shall serve mankind fully and totally until my dying days. Though, I cannot ask for your forgiveness of my past deeds, I ask for your patience of this person who was once a fool. (Cushion appears frighteningly surprised, takes a step back, Word follows, takes her hand, pulls her into his embrace, pushes her away into a spin, trails after her. The two dance across stage, crowd follows, began dancing themselves, clapping joyously, spinning, twirling and shouting for the redemption of all victims, while praising Word for his turnaround. Word stops, reaches deep down in his pockets, remove every coin and note, clasp his treasures in the hands of Cushion, crowd gather around the two) May the good lord bless the remainder of your days with joy, laughter, safety, good health and all of the treasures your arms can carry (Word race off)*

**Stage Manager:** *(nod head vigorously, watch as Word run off, turn to others) Yes!*



That's it. *(Raise up on toes, glance over others as though she is looking way out yonder)* I say for your sake, you are not all bad people, but the wrong choices you once made should be addressed now *(raise hands as though she is conducting an orchestra)* Open your hearts and minds and allow remorse to seep through your very soul. Allow redemption to floss your victim, your past, your present and yourself *(face Babbs)* To you, sir, I ask, what does remorse truly mean to you?

**Babbs:** *(springs forward)*

**Stage Manager:** *(step back, spread arms out to sides)* stand back folks, this is a live one

**Babbs:** *(glare at stage manager with empty look on face, turn to others, immediately fall to knees, begin crying profusely, apologizing for all of his past wrong deeds, two others, a man and a woman, got down on their knees and cried with him, patting his back and shoulder, telling him he is forgiven for his unknowing ignorance, old lady comes to join them, they help him to his feet, he goes around shaking hands with his forgivers, vowing silently to be a better person, walk off)*

**Stage Manager:** *(assist old lady to front of stage)* **Insight**, madam, if you would be so kind to enlighten us all as to what this word means to you *(tiptoe around the woman, glaring at her curiously)*

**Old Lady:** There! *(points here and there, glancing toward the sky, face contorts. The visions of all that she had done wrong in her past, which brought her to this point in her life, to a dead end, appeared before her. She looks back, scan the*

*faces of the others, saw in those faces all the pain she had caused, the meanness she dished out, the hurt, ugliness and pain, it was all there, all the things she had been in her past, when she was a little girl, a teen, a young lady, a woman, she struck the face of them all, point at them) I know who you all are. You are me, the old me, the wrong me. The root of you shall never grow in me again, you are forever cut down from my blood stream. I declare, from this day on...no more! (Pumps fist in air, steps back)*

**Stage Manager:** *(stands before others, points) And you madam, you there, step forward and explain yourself, please. Reveal that old Criminal you once held in high regards and unleashed onto unsuspecting communities. Explain to us all how you were such an unabashed verbal and physical abuser (steps back)*

**Nay Nay:** *(evil look on face, shove the stage manager back, as though the stage manager was the proper authorities, shove small boy to floor, laugh hysterically, pull out gun, wave gun in air, force everyone on floor) Nobody moves unless I tell you to. Now, all of you dirt bags take off all of your jewelry, cash, any electronics you may have and drop them in the bag (pull out pillow case) and if anybody have on a pair of size 7 1/2 Air Jordan's, I'm going to need them too. Do it! (race off with bag of goodies but before she could get away she was apprehended by the police, they draw weapons, put her on ground, others get*

*to their feet, look on as she is led away)*

**Stage Manager:** *(looking on happily, suddenly spin around, point at Tank with tip of cane)* and you, sir, would you kindly explain to all the world what your **Internal Triggers** were? Let them fly now, as you allowed in your past, when you were the old you.

**Tank:** *(muscles way through crowd, pushing and shoving anyone in his way, including small children, little girls, and old ladies, looks out at audience, pump fist in air)*

**Stage Manager:** *(mimics Tanks every move)*

**Tank:** *(goes on tyrant, move across stage aggressively)* rah! rah! rah! *(Pounds chest with fist, run in circles, leap in air, grab Kyle, strike him to floor, kick him)*

**Stage Manager:** *(pull Tank away from Kyle)* you, sir, were a mad man, angry and foul *(shove Tank away, help Kyle to his feet, turn to audience)* Kind ladies and gentlemen, I give you the pure evidence of a former internal trigger, which caused anger of an individual to seep out of its core and commit a crime against an innocent victim; abuse at its finest, a mad man of long ago but has now dealt with his ugly anger issues, anger that he alone allowed to build up inside and waited for *any* victim to trigger that anger into actions, left them all behind and is no longer troubled by them. We should all fall down on our face and thank him at once, for leaving his troubles behind *(crowd get down on their knees, stage*

*manager continues, holding on to Tank and Kyle)* For showing us all how not to act, how not to loose control over self, how not to target innocent people, let alone anyone you deem an enemy, how not to react negatively and aggressively toward another individual and feeling blessed for those mistakes we once made are tools we use to learn from so we may enrich others of mistakes that should not be made. Sir, if you would, kindly tell us all, so that we can get a better understanding of how we should turn our very own life around, when was it that you felt a change in your life was needed?

**Tank:** *(walk over, sit on park bench)* Well, I'll tell you when. One day, I looked in the mirror at myself, this was after I had already driven all of the people out of my life who loved me, the very ones who I claimed to have cared about and love, and I said to myself, no more. I just refused, from that day on, to be that same old person I once was. I just could not allow that old anger to take over me any longer, to just go out and be abusive like I was. The truth of the matter is, I had no more loved ones left who wanted to be around a guy like that. They just walked out of my life, just like that and that was a turning point where I was hurting. I was going crazy without them. The reason I acted the way I was was because I always felt like a failure and things never went my way so, I figured I would unleash that pain and anger on everybody else because I did not want to be mad all by myself. It

took me a long time to wake up, for my family and friends to desert me for me to realize I had been wrong all that time I was being a complete fool, very selfish. Now, I channel my energy in other area's, positive areas, where I can be more productive and affective. I went out in the street; this time, it was to see all the harm I'd done to others, by watching others do the same as I did. I committed right then and there to never be the person I use to be and to assist those who needs help. I started with the first person I saw doing what I used to do and began driving home some points that individual would have never seen through his own mental blindness.

**Stage Manager:** Scary, isn't it, folks? *(scan faces in crowd, shout)* **External trigger!**

*(Walk from end to end of crowd, until Kyle made his way to the front).*

**Kyle :** Pardon me, excuse me, pardon me, thank you. *(Walks across stage to four story brick building, glide fingers over outer wall, smile as he remembers, step back from building, look up).*

**Stage Manager:** *(mimics Kyle).*

**Kyle:** *(hears car horn, turn, wave at 1978 Cadillac Coup De Ville, passerby, friend from old neighborhood stops by, two guys speak briefly, friend offer Kyle marijuana and beer, Kyle reach for items, stage manager shouts)*

**Stage Manager:** Stop, don't do it! That is your old external trigger trying to reel you in; get you back, old habit, trouble. Leave it be...

**Kyle:** *(recoils, remembers sight of old friend, neighborhood, type of car he drove, the bad things he and his friend used to do, so much pain and harm, devastation, they are all in sight, within reach, he push old friend away, friend run off)..*

**Stage Manager:** That's it, run away. Run far and fast away you old nasty external trigger. They mean us no good, no good at all. We must all run away from them, until we learn just how to deal with and refrain from returning to them. Be afraid to return. *(call out)* Sensory, oh Sensory Trigger, please come out and address yourself. Color you bad, boy or girl, where are you now? You must no longer hide and be afraid. Please bless us with your presence.

**Robbi:** *(Stumbles out of crowd, appears to be intoxicated, ragged coat, dance across stage beating on a drum, shouting noisily, do back flip)*

**Stage Manager:** *(race over, examine Robbi up close, and glide hand over Robbi's body without touching her).* Yes, yes, that's it. Show your true self. Help us all to understand, expose that beast that once lived in you, sense it, be it *(dance around).*

**Robbi:** *(glide across stage, tap dance then suddenly stop, smell air, close eyes, licks fingers as if she can taste those old savory sensory triggers on her finger tips, eyes spring open, slowly turn, stare off in the distance, race off)*

**Cushion:** *(lead in addressing others with some guidelines of how to conduct ourselves,*

*all facing audience*) There is nothing funny about abuse of any kind, nor on any level, if you can see it, you can report it. When two people come together in a union, it is not meant for one to dominate the other...

**Nay Nay:** It is to love and cherish one another...

**Cushion:** You must demand respect from your partner...

**Word:** Give respect...

**Babbs:** Care for one another...

**Tank:** Have fun with one another...

**Element:** Be happy...

**Kyle:** What's the sense in being in a relationship otherwise? There is no need for any individual to be anyone else's punching bag...

**Cushion:** One of the worst cases of abuse is staying in an abusive relationship...

**Word:** It should never be a question of will you be loved by someone else if you leave an abusive relationship because there will always be someone else who will treat you how you should be treated. True happiness does not always come within a relationship between two people but you can always find happiness being single. It is far better to be single than to be in an abusive relationship. The days of ownership of another human being are long gone.

**Nay Nay :** Obviously, you're not being loved by your abuser so, why stay?

**Old Lady:** Never be afraid to redefine yourself after you've taken a fall (*hugs Nay Nay*)

**Kyle:** Lastly, you must never dish out any level of abuse or accept it in any way.

Abuse is not love. Abuse is hatred of self.

**Stage Manager:** Did you happen to notice the bag lady? Well, even though she did not speak a single word until the end, her part was a very vital piece to the abuse syndrome that plaques the world on a daily basis. You see, she use to be one of those millionaire folks who thought, because of her money, she could abuse others in every way possible. For that, karma was very favorable to her. Not only did she find herself in an abusive relationship because of blind love but that old karma also caused her to loose everything she once owned. She lost her fortune, her freedom for a while and a bit of her mental state of mind left her as well. That's what happens folks, karma. It delivers a punch and sometimes you can never get back, no matter how much you try so, a word of advice, leave that abuse business out of your relationship. If you can taste any part of that old you, smell it, feel it, see it or hear it you are too close to it. if you cannot control your anger, you must let it go all together and do not pass it on to others. Refuse to be an abuser of others and a waster of time and remember, let no one hold you accountable for your actions before doing so first. Face then release that old dirt you once were and learn a brand new you, a cleaner you.



*(Boston Commons came back alive with more life, laughter and understanding, without any further chaotic screams, only shouts of joy and happiness)*

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