

ZEBRA COUPLE

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INT. LOW-ECONOMIC APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Twenty-four-year-old starving artists LUNA KING, black, and ALEX PFEIFFER, white, cuddle on the comforter of a double bed.

The bed sits on the floor of this sparsely and cheaply furnished room, lit by a bare overhead bulb.

LUNA

What time's the wedding?

ALEX

Three o'clock. But there's a thing at my parents' first.

LUNA

I'll get a pattern and make a dress.

ALEX

I need dress shoes.

EXT. QUIET, LEAFY SUBURB - DAY

Wearing his new dress shoes and only suit, Alex makes his way to the bus stop, where he waits.

LATER

As the bus drives off, Alex walks Luna through his childhood neighborhood.

LUNA

When was the last time you visited?

ALEX

Couple of years. It's a whole different world here.

LUNA

It's pretty.

LATER

Luna and Alex turn onto a block of identical ranch houses.

In the front yard of the first house, LOUIE VALENTINO, 50, spots them, abruptly stops landscaping.

ALEX

(neighborly)

Hi, Louie!

As they pass, Louie glares at them with deep-seated hate.

It takes Alex a few moments to realize the problem.

He keeps walking Luna up the block.

ALEX

I forgot what it's like here.
Good thing I met you at the bus
stop.

Luna doesn't say anything.

Alex turns them onto the walkway leading to his parents' front door.

EXT. POOR URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The neighborhood is undergoing gentrification. Luna and Alex exit a new health food store, start strolling arm in arm.

A TALL BLACK MAN leans his whole torso out the window of a fast-moving car.

TALL BLACK MAN

(rage)

BOY, GET OFF HER ARM!

The car disappears down the avenue. Luna and Alex keep walking, but disengage.

EXT. QUIET, LEAFY SUBURB - STRIP MALL - DAY

Luna and Alex hold hands as they window-shop. Luna, clearly the only black person for miles, wears a beret.

Approaching them is a group of eight white TEENAGERS, three girls and five boys.

BOY 1

Since when do they allow niggers
in these stores!?

One GIRL snatches Luna's beret.

Alex steps toward the Girl, but the Teens are too many, and eager to beat them unconscious.

TEENS

...Don't put that hat on, it's
got nigger on it...Let's find a
noose and a tree and string this
nigger bitch up...

(to Luna)

...Go back to fuckin' Zululand...

(to Alex)

...Fuckin' race traitor!...

The Teens inch closer.

As they're about to pounce, Alex opens the door of the shoe store beside them, shoves Luna inside, follows her.

The Teens stand inches from the store windows, snarling insults and threats:

TEENS

...Nigger bitch!...Get some
rope!...We're gonna lynch your
ass?...Fuckin' baboon!...

Boy 2 starts to open the door, but stops when he sees the STORE MANAGER dialing 911.

BOY 2

(to Alex, Luna and
Store Manager)

We'll be back for all three of
you!

Having "defended" their neighborhood, the Teens proudly, confidently saunter away.

EXT. POOR URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Luna and Alex are back in her neighborhood. As they walk, she takes his arm.

A black HOMELESS MAN, gray-haired but tall and wiry, walks in the opposite direction.

As the Homeless Man passes Luna, he bumps her shoulder hard.

Alex angrily turns to the Man. The Man's ready to go, fists up like a boxer, eyes narrowed with hate.

MAN

Go for it! GO FOR IT!

Alex glares at the Man. Luna tries pulling him away.

MAN
(inching closer)
C'mon, boy! C'MON!

Luna finally manages to pull Alex away.

MAN
GET OUT THE MOTHERFUCKIN' HOOD,
WHITE BOY! STOP STEALING OUR
WOMEN!

Luna checks that the Man's not following.

She and Alex walk on silently, her hand no longer on his arm.

LITTLE LATER

Luna and Alex approach her apartment building.

ALEX
It's bullshit! We can't even walk
down the street without being
fucked with.

LUNA
If you can't handle it, maybe we
shouldn't be together. You only
make it worse by letting it get
to you.

Alex is hurt by her suggestion they should no longer go out.

SLOW FADE OUT.

SLOW FADE IN:

EXT. QUIET, LEAFY SUBURB - PARK - DAY

Alex and his white wife, JOANNA--wearing matching wedding bands--
-talk and laugh with another white couple, JIMMY and SHARON.

SUPER: A Few Years Later

JOANNA
\$113 for the average ticket!
Outrageous!

JIMMY
My grandparents use to go to
concerts in Central Park where
seats were \$1.50 and \$2.00.

SHARON

Yeah, but what was minimum wage then?

Alex spots a middle-age Black Woman, a home health aide or cleaning woman, beelining to the bus stop. She stares straight ahead, not looking at anyone, not wanting trouble.

At the bus stop she removes a book from her bag, and starts reading it, eyes glued to the page.

Alex, after watching her a while, looks back at his wife, Jimmy and Sharon talking.

Deep in thought, he no longer hears what they're saying.

Eying the Black Woman alone at the bus stop, afraid to look at anyone, he's filled with sadness and remorse.

EXT. URBAN PLAYGROUND - DAY

Luna and KWAME, her black husband--also sporting identical wedding bands--shoot the shit with TIA and MICHAEL, another black couple.

KWAME

They're playing at the Garden.

TIA

(disapproving)

Yeah, at two-fifty a seat.

MICHAEL

They're worth it--I'm going.

Luna spots a rare WHITE GUY nervously rushing through the neighborhood.

The White Guy keeps his head down, eying only the sidewalk in front of him, not engaging anyone, lest he invite trouble.

Luna looks back at her Black Husband and the other Black Couple.

While there in body, in spirit she's left the conversation.

She watches the White Guy disappear in the distance, her expression one of sorrow and regret.

THE END