

## Tears from my fears of my triggers

(Play-excerpt)

### Characters

**Cushion** (Constance): Hat on backwards, baggy pants, shirt, low self-esteem

**Robbi** (Corinne): Hot tempered, snappy impulsive, hat to the side, shirt ties around waist, baggie pants, suspender's, large T-shirt.

**NayNay** (Rene): Vest, pants, t-shirt a little snug, confident, loud, stands up for others

**Element** (Ella): Scarf on head, properly fitted dress, shy, soft spoken.

**Kyle** (Kelvin): Soft spoken, baggy clothes, braids, tattoos.

**Tank** (Tavis): Militant, loud, pushy, skinny jeans, black beret.

**Babbs** (Anthony): Big guy, slow, stutter's, clothes too small.

**Word** (Warren): Skinny, flashy clothes, jewelry, outspoken.

**Stage Manager**: black suit, hat, white shirt, tie

**Old lady**: Homeless clothing, shopping bag.

### Scene

At the left side of stage, kitchen, table, four chairs, counter, knife on counter. Females lounging around drinking tea. At right of stage, wide screen TV, couch, chair, guys watching sports.

**Stage Manager**: (walks to center of stage) Good afternoon ladies and gents. I just want to bring your attention to the guys for a moment. You will notice they are wearing clown faces. Though, it is only make-up, it represents their true stories. You see, that make-up represents the old lives these guys once lived or what they witnessed in others. (*Walk to right of stage behind guys.*). I must inform you before hand, what you witness now would be what you would have witnessed had you seen these guys before their transformation. So, with that said, I will let then take it from here. guys, if you would please. (*Leaves stage*).

**Word**: (*Role eyes*) Damn, Cushion, you gonna bring me that damn beer or what? Am I gonna have to get up off my ass and get it my damn self? Shit. I swear, Cushion, if it wasn't for word junior, I would have left you sorry worthless ass a long time ago.

**Cushion**: (*Downcast eyes*) I'm sorry honey, 'coming.

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

**Cushion**: Why don't you stop acting like that Word? We're having a good time and you Don't have to keep calling her names, putting her down like you do.

**Word**: And why don't you stay out of my business, Nay? Aint nobody talking to you.



**NayNay:** *(Staring across the room at Word)* All right, watch your mouth, Word. I wouldn't be in your business if you wasn't putting my girl down like that. As a matter of fact, why don't you make me shut up?

**Word:** Tank, holla at you girl, man. How you gonna let her get at yo boy like that?

**Tank:** Man, you know Nay once you get her started. If you don't want none, I suggest you don't start none. Come on man, we watchin' the game anyway.

**Word:** And yo woman runnin her mouth. It get it though, you a ho' just like her. Y'all belong together.

**NayNay:** *(charge across stage)* Who you calling a ho, punk? You a ho. *(stand in front of Word)*.

**Word:** Come on Nay. Move out o my way. *(Tries to look around her)*.

**NayNay:** *(poke him on forehead with finger)*. Or what? What you gonna do?

**Word:** T, man, why don't you get your girl? This shit aint cool, man.

**NayNay:** Why don't your tough ass get me? I seen how you be staring at my ass, lusting Over me and shit. Yeah, I know all about your lil' nasty ass.

**Word:** You trippin Nay. Aint nobody looking at you.

**NayNay:** **Bullshit.** You's a damn lie. You sayin' I aint good enough to look at?

**Cushion** *(Cross stage, hand invisible beer can to Word)*. Here you go baby. I'm sorry for taking so long. It wont happen again now, can we just stop all of this arguing?

**Word:** *(Snatch beer out of Cushions hand, jump to feet, point)*. The hell you just say? You keep yo punk ass outta my damn business, you here me? *(Kick Cushion in ass when she turn around)*.

*(NayNay swing on Word, he leap out of way, tank grab NayNay, wrap arms around her)*.

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

**NayNay:** *(Frown on face, kick out at the evading, smiling Word)*. This asshole thinks this Shit is funny. You better tell his ass something about that disrespectful shit. I'm Cushion. I don't have to take his shit, and I'm not.

**Tank:** Okay baby, you right. *(Walk NayNay back over to where the other girls are, step back to couch)*.

**Robbi:** *(Shake head)* Girl are you alright.*(help Cushion to seat)*. I don't know why you take his shit.

**NayNay:** Because her ass is silly, that's why.

**Element:** *(Glance over then back down at hands, in whisper)*. That's not right.

**NayNay:** *(Nose flaring, breathing heavy)* You damn right that aint right. His ass lucky I don't kick him in his funky ass. *(Plop down on seat)*.

**Element:** I mean you calling Cushion silly; it aint right to say it. *(Glance over at NayNay back at her hands, kneading her dress)*.

**NayNay:** Don't star 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. She's our friend.

**Babbs:** *(Looking sad, tears in eyes)* That wasn't cool, hitting on your girl like that Word. My mama say...

**Word:** The hell with what yo mama say boy with yo stuttering ass. I don't give a damn



what yo mama say. She aint my damn mama. If I wanna kick my woman in the ass, I'm gonna kick that ho in her ass and she gonna like it too. Yo' fat stuttering ass aint got no business in mine; just like Nay aint. You need to be concerned about your own retarded ass girl. That's what you need to be worried about.

**Kyle:** Can we just watch the damn game? Shit. *(Look left then right)*. Aint that what the hell we're here for? Damn.

**Tank:** Kyle is right y'all. Lets everybody chill out.

*(TV goes up louder, sound of Football game heard)*

**Kyle:** Run the damn ball man!

*(Tank, Word jump to their feet, shout at TV)*

**Kyle:** That's what I'm talkin' about. That's how you run a damn football. *(Hi-five Tank)*.

**Robbi:** *(Still looking down at hands)* One of these days, something bad is going to happen to your man for what he does to you. That aint right for nobody to do to somebody else.

**Cushion:** *(Brush hair back from Robbi's face)*. Its all right Robbi, Word doesn't mean Any harm. He probably just got excited over the game. He's not usually like that.

**Robbi:** *(Looks up, caress the side of Cushions face)*. Girl, when a guy gets excited over a stupid sports game, he may yell, scream and do a little ugly dance but he never hits his girl, let alone kicks her. What's next? I'll tell you what's next; if you don't stop it from happening now because, obviously, he's too stupid to stop on his own, it's going to escalate into something more damaging and I don't want to see you hurting like that.

*(Cushion clears throat, look down at hands in lap)*

**Robbi:** *(Frowns, looks down at Cushion)*. Cush, tell me he's not hitting you on a regular basis.

**NayNay:** *(Frown)*. Cush, if he's hitting you, I want you to tell us right now.

**Cushion:** *(Glance over at guys, quickly look away, nods head)*. Once...

**Robbi:** He did ?

**NayNay:** *(Jump to feet)*. I knew that little bastard wasn't right. I told Tank about his ass. That's fucked up.

**Element:** *(Surprise look)*. How come you didn't 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? Word hit me one time because he was drunk and I deserved it because I broke one of his rules.

**NayNay:** Rules? What the hell do you mean rules, Cushion? How the hell is he gonna Rule you up like that and his punk ass don't even know how to follow rules his damn self? I told him not to break my rule by coming over my house but he



didn't listen to that. So, I should have the right to hit his ass. That's what you're telling me, right?

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

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

**Cushion:** (*Grab NayNay by the wrist, pull her down on seat next to her*). Please, Nay, Don't let Word hear you. Besides, when he hit me didn't hurt. I just went on with my day after it happened. Y'all acting like y'all aint never been hit by your man before for getting out of place.

**NayNay:** Yeah, you're right. It did happen to me before. (*Robbi raised her eyebrows*). This boy I was gong out with in school slapped me for looking at another boy and I just about kicked his ass all the way to his momma's house, with him screaming and crying.

**Robbi:** Good for you Nay but it never happened to me.

**Element:** Me either.

**NayNay:** Now that's a damn shame. If this crazy ass girl (*Thumbed toward Element*) has a man that aint never hit her before you can find one too. No offense El; I'm just making a point.

**Robbi:** Kickback Nay, Cushion is already taking shit from that idiot over there. Putting her down aint helping any.

**NayNay:** I cant stand his sorry ass. I wish he would hit me. I'll stab his ass.

**Cushion:** (*Loudly*) Nay, stop it.

**Word:** (*Lean out, look over frowning*) What the hell? Cushion, yet yo ass over here, now!

**Cushion:** (*Stand, cross stage*). Coming.

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

**NayNay:** (*Leap to her feet*). Damn that. No the hell he aint. (*Cross stage*).

(*Robbi and Element cross stage, never saw NayNay grab knife from counter top*).

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

**NayNay:** (*Slap Word on back of head*). Hit her and I will stab your ass. If you ever hit her again I will kill you, asshole.

**Kyle:** Damn!

**Babbs:** Whoa!

**Tank:** (*Leap to feet, stand next to Word, holding NayNay's hand with the knife in it*). Hold down now Nay. You aint gotta cut him.

**NayNay:** And his ass aint gotta be hitting my friend either. I aint going for no shit like that. I'm telling you, Tank, I will stab his punk ass if he does it again, now get off me. (*Snatch her hand away*)

**Word:** Ho, you got me fucked up. This girl belongs to me.

**NayNay** (*Raise knife*) okay, you know what? I'll show yo ass a ho. I'll show you exactly what this ho can do.

**Tank:** (*Grab NayNay*) Hold down Nay, he didn't mean it.

**Word:** (*Frowning*) The hell I didn't. I meant every bit of it. Now, you gonna put that punk bitch in check or am I gonna have to do it? Ant nothing fouler than a rude



ass foul mouth ho who aint got no respect for the rules.

**Tank:** *(Point finger at Word)* Watch your mouth now Word. You in my house and I aint about to let you get off on my girl like that, man.

**NayNay:** Then let me go, I'll get off on his ass.

**Word:** Yep. Spoken like a true ho but you so sorry, just like your girlfriend, you aint about to do shit so, just gone back in the kitchen and sit yo ho ass down somewhere. As a matter of fact, why don't all you ho's go 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:** Shut yo punk ass up. Did I say you could cry? *(Slap her on head).*

**Babbs:** *(Crying, tackle Word)* That aint right.

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

**NayNay:** 'Bout time. Kick that ass. He deserves it.

**Cushion:** *(Crying, yelling)* Stop, please!

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

**Kyle:** *(Surprised)* What the hell man? What are you doing with a knife, Word?

*(Cushion jump to her feet at the same time Word lunged forward at Babbs, sinking his knife in her stomach)*

**Element :** *(Screams)* No! *(Falls to her knees)*

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

*(Robbi catch Cushion, Word ease knife out, go to stab Babbs, NayNay plunge knife in his back. Word drop knife, fall to the floor)*

**Stage Manager:** *(Walk to center of stage)* Well folks, as you can see, your anger can get the best of you if you don't get it in check before it's too late. You wouldn't want to be responsible for something like what happened here. Two deaths and one arrest. Luckily for one of those people involved, it took two weeks for her business to be cleared up and she was cleared on self-defense but NayNay returned with a different perspective and a little bitterness. See for yourselves. *(Walks off at right of stage).*

**Element:** *(Crying)* I miss her still

**Robbi:** *(Hug Element)* I know honey. We all miss Cushion but we have to be strong for her.

**Kyle:** Yeah, for the both of them. We need to be strong for Word junior.



**NayNay:** (*Twist up corner of mouth*) I'll be strong for him but not for his daddy. If it wasn't for him, we wouldn't be shedding tears over such a senseless beautiful lose and I wouldn't have to report to a probation officer for the next ninety days so, to hell with his ass.

**Kyle:** (*Frown*) Uh un, Nay, don't blame your actions on Word. He didn't make you stab him you did that shit on your own.

**NayNay:** Yeah, I did and you could have stopped him from abusing my friend but you didn't so I did, now you can call it whatever the hell you want to call it. I don't care.

**Tank:** Come on Nay. That aint no way to act. We lost two friends.

**NayNay:** You may have lost two but I only lost one friend. I told you before that I didn't give a shit about that no good ass woman abuser. I can't understand why you protected him instead of Cushion. She was the one being abused. Shit, that doesn't make you any different than *your* friend.

**Tank:** I stayed out of their business Nay, just like you should have (*Wipe away tear*). and now they're both gone. You killed Word and...

**NayNay:** (*Frown, slap Tank*) Don't you ever say that to me again. Even though it shouldn't have happened, his ass got what he deserved.

**Babbs:** (went to hug Element, Robbi would not let her go. He shook his head and took a step back) This is crazy man.

**Kyle:** (*Rub Babbs shoulder*) I know big man, I know. It's too sad, man.

**Robbi:** Come on y'all, as sad as it is, we still have celebrate Cushions and we should start an awareness campaign in her honor. Hopefully, we can enlighten girls out there on what signs to look for in abuse and hopefully deter guys from doing it in the first place. Maybe this will change their minds and they learn themselves before going out and hurting someone else, especially the ones who they claim to love.

**Stage Manager:** (*Walk to front of stage*) Well folks, that'll do it but hold your applause, please. I think you'll find it interesting to hear what these fine actors have to share with you next.

(*Actors take center stage*)

**Word:** (*Step out*) I found it extremely hard and difficult playing the role of Word because that *character* was a direct emulation of who my father was, who eventually ran off and left my mother but not before he broke her spirit beyond repair, in how he treated her, not only in front of me and my siblings but also in front of her friends and strangers. Apparently, he had a need for control of his women but could not control his alcohol, that controlled his every waking moment, which was his explanation for degrading my mother for all those years. I saw him years later, in a night club, of all places, probably looking for another female to control. When I saw him, he seemed to have forgotten all about how he treated the mother I love. I just wanted to bash his head in but if I did so, I would be no better than he was in how he treated my mother. I just walked away from him, like he did me and never looked back. If he shed any tears over the way he treated my mother, I never saw them. He was my fear of my outer triggers. This is why I can now



remove his clown face, rid myself and my mother from my face. *My name is Warren Smokefield, on my mother's side.*

**NayNay:** (*Take center stage*) I would just like to say, even though I am the opposite and not totally like the character I played, low self-esteem but rather, I'm calmer and definitely not loud and challenging, I've always been a person who spoke up and a champion for other women but to be truly honest, that is what tired me somewhat, to stand up for others like Cushion, who refused to stand up for themselves. Many times, I cried over that tug-of-war whether to stop trying. I soon developed tears of fear for my triggers that made me cry, which were my inner emotions and my outer triggers for those people who held control over others because I wanted to treat them the same way; as you saw in my response to Word but I realized earlier on, that I mustn't treat even the evil persons in such a manner and I also realized some women can't stand up for themselves without an advocate like me. So, for those Cushions and people like Word, stop and take a look at the damage you're doing, not only to yourself but to other people as well before it is too late. No man needs to control or abuse a woman and no woman has to take that abuse. *I remove my clown face for all of you. My name is Rene.*

**Cushion:** (*step up*) I actually did suffer from low self-esteem issues for a long point in my life. I always felt that my peers were always smarter than me; no matter where I went or how many new friends I met, I just felt less than. It did not help that other kids called me names and made fun of my skin color when I was a little girl. I soon developed into a withdrawn person with issues of being around other people. When I got in high school, it didn't help there either when I was labeled the one who would be less to excel. I shed tears of fears of my inner and outer triggers that I accepted that I would never be better than any of the other kids I met but I realized, I didn't have to be better than anyone else. I could be me and love me. So, for that reason alone, I wipe away my old clown face because I am a better me and I would like to inform you all, those who made me believe I could not, I did not set out to prove you wrong because that is failure in itself but, today, you are all wrong. I am a successful entrepreneur who owns and operates a multimillion dollar a year business who most of you support in one way or another. I am comfortable in my skin. *My name is Constance Myers.*

**Robbi:** (*Step up*) For reasons that I failed to discover and were not associated with ADHD, I have always been an impulsive person and did things on a whim. I was very impatient, mainly to hurry to go nowhere. Often times, I would have this mad rush within, only to discover that what I was rushing to was and would always be there when I arrived, no matter when that was. My impulsiveness and rushing for nothing, as I grew up a tomboy, was the catalyst that shaped me as a laid back female today. I feared my inner triggers in knowing that if I had not slowed down to see and enjoy what life had to offer, it would end too soon. That is why I am able today to rid myself of this old clown face. The old me. *My name is Corinne Peabody.*

**Babbs:** (*Step up*) even though those initials, Babbs, stood for big Anthony, Barbara's baby son, they played a part to who I eventually turned out to be throughout most



of my life...a third wheel, something that I grew to hate because it made me feel like I was less than. Whenever I went out somewhere, it was usually with one of my older brothers and his girlfriend. For a long time, I feared my internal triggers of sadness because I thought that was what my life was going to be like for me forever...a third wheel and never have my own individual identity. This would be the biggest reason for telling my poor mother, at an early age, you don't have to worry about me. I can take care of myself. When the first opportunity presented itself for me to have father a baby, I jumped right in but boy did I have it all wrong. I was young and did not give anything a single thought. Of course no one grows into adulthood being a third wheel unless they want to be. Had I took the time to realize my brother was not only older but he had a license to drive, a girlfriend with a car and I simply did not. So, for all of my foolish, undeveloped thinking, I now take off my clown face. Enjoy your rides when you are third wheeling it because once you get behind the wheel of your own independence, you'll have to be responsible for it. *My name is Bernard Anthony Berry.*

**Element:** (*Step up*) It was scary for me at times to know that even when I slept, my mind never stopped thinking of things I could do or create. I would wake in the middle of the night, writing down ideas that I thought of in my sleep and no matter how much I tried to force myself to stop thinking and creating, it never worked so, I learned to go with the flow of Gods gift to me. I remove my clown face to bring in the new understanding of my gift. *My name is Ella.*

**Kyle:** As a male, I learned on my own or believed, men weren't meant to be criers or to have soft feelings for anything but the truth of the matter is, I also learned that I have a fragile heart and soul. Whenever the occasion arises, my heart fills with warmth, my eyes of tears. I would just like to say to all the stone-hearted guys, I remove my clown face for you in hopes that, from this moment on, you truly open your hearts and no longer refuse to feel and express your inner emotions other than barbarism. *My name is Kelvin Bonner. My fear for you is that you are afraid to let your emotions fly.*

**Tank:** (*Step up*) Because I always talked loud and was too into myself and my own image, I often failed to truly recognize what was happening with my own friends around me, often times in my own house. I was so close to them yet so far. I would ask that if you have friends that you care about, don't be like I was, be a different me. Get to know them and learn when something is affecting them. This is why my clown face is able to be removed today. I have regrets of not being attentive to my friends and family but give them my all today. *My name is Tavis Ralford and if you love your friends, give them the attention they need and deserve..*

**Stage Manager:** (*Step up*) Well folks, I certainly must confess, I definitely have experienced all of those things you just heard collectively, shed tears over the fears of my triggers, *internally* with sadness, boredom and plenty of madness in my lifetime; *externally* people and different places affected those triggers once seen by my eyes; *sensory*, sight, when I saw and tasted alcohol. You see folks, I allowed myself to become a shortsighted drunk, shortsighted because I only saw what I wanted to see



and if it was not alcohol and my way, I couldn't see it happening. Now, sure, I'm filled with remorse and empathy for others who witnessed my alcoholism. Because of my attachment to alcohol, sorry Mr. Warren, I feel for those who are still shortsighted and feel they have to have it their way. My guilt now is far more heavy upon this recovered alcoholic and certainly outweighs those ways I thought I needed in my life before. I take my hat off to it all and hope that none become alcoholic.

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