

CORNER PIECE

Written by

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EXT. NEWARK - NEW JERSEY NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

MOM (30) African-American plus-size woman, Mom is firm at times with good reason, yet she's a sensible loving woman, walks with her daughter, AISHA SIMS (9 Her family calls her Isha) innocent, carefree, and sheltered from the world outside her neighborhood. They hold Jehovah Witness Watchtower publications as they walk to the corner. Aisha bounces with excitement.

MOM

Isha, do you want to knock on the door at the next house?

AISHA

You know I do, Mommy.

Aisha's siblings lag behind; HORUS SIMS (13), older brother who is always upset about something, has his arms folded with his head down trying not to be seen. JUNIOR SIMS (12) the prankster, walks behind NAIMA SIMS (11) prissy and bossy, tickling the back of her neck. Naima hits the back of her neck thinking a bug is on her. Junior laughs at her reaction.

HORUS

Man, Look at Isha.

JUNIOR

She always showing off for Jehovah.

NAIMA

Working hard to make sure she gets into that Paradise.

They all crack up. Mom stops and turns back to them with a look that makes them shut up.

MOM

Naima, you go with her.

Aisha skips up the stoop as the boys laugh. Naima begrudgingly steps forward.

NAIMA

Why can't Junie or Horus go?

Mom shoots her a look. Naima continues moving slowly toward the stairs.

NAIMA (CONT'D)

(Under her breath)

Field Service is so stupid. These people don't care about Jehovah.

MOM
Boys come with me.

As Mom and the boys walk to the next house, they see balloons peeking out of the backyard of the house Aisha and Naima are visiting.

MOM (CONT'D)
Looks like Debra is having a party.

EXT. DAISY'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Beaming, Aisha knocks enthusiastically. DAISY (9), stylish cute girl, opens the door.

DAISY
Aisha.

AISHA
Hi Daisy--

Daisy
You're early, Reesee's party
doesn't start until 4 o'clock--

Aisha attempts to hand a WATCHTOWER to Daisy, but Naima rushes up and takes it from Aisha.

AISHA
We're not allowed--

NAIMA
Thanks, Daisy, see you later.

Daisy
Okay.

NAIMA
Bye.

Daisy closes the door.

AISHA
Why did you do that Naima? I didn't
get to give her the Watchtower.

Naima hands the Watchtower back to Aisha.

NAIMA
She's not buying a Watchtower!
Here take it.

EXT. NEWARK NEW JERSEY NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - DAY

Aisha and Naima wait for their Mom and brothers on the sidewalk in front of the house next to Daisy's. The boys walk downstairs in front of Mom.

Mom
How did it go girls?

Aisha
I didn't--

NAIMA
She did really good.

Mom
(With pride)
Nice job.

NAIMA
(with fake sincerity)
Mommy, I think we might see them at the Kingdom Hall next week.

MOM
I doubt that Naima. Debra's having one of her big parties.

AISHA
Yeah, it's Reese's birthday party today. Daisy invited us--

Naima gives Aisha a pinch on her back out of their mother's view, to stop her from talking.

AISHA (CONT'D)
Ouch, Naima.

Aisha slaps Naima on the arm.

NAIMA
Why you hit me Isha? I didn't even do nothing to you.

AISHA
Mommy Naima pinched me--

MOM
You two stop fighting. Naima you the oldest, you need to be a role model for your sister, instead of trying to hurt her.

NAIMA
I'm sorry Mommy.

MOM
Apologize to your sister.

NAIMA
I'm sorry Aisha.

AISHA
I'm sorry too Naima.

Aisha reaches to hug Naima. Naima allows Aisha to give her an awkward side hug. Mom looks at her watch.

MOM
I think that's enough field service
for today.

Aisha's siblings sigh in relief.

AISHA
(disappointed)
Awe, just one more house, please,
Mommy?

MOM
Next time you can do the first one
on the block. Now head to the
house, your father should be there
by now. I need to stop by the
store.

HORUS
Mommy.

MOM
Yes?

HORUS
Could we go to Reese's party?

Mom thinks for a moment takes a deep breath.

MOM
No, son. It's a birthday party
right?

HORUS
Yes.

MOM
We are Jehovah Witnesses, we don't
celebrate birthdays.

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

If it was just a fun get together I would let all of you go, but it's not.

Mom turns to leave.

AISHA

Mommy, can I come with you?

Mom stops turns back facing Aisha, Horus, Naima and Junior.

MOM

No.

AISHA

Awe Mommy please, I want to help you

MOM

Isha, I said no. I know exactly why you want to come with me. I'm not buying you anything, so you need to go with your brothers and sister home.

Mom turns and starts walking in the opposite direction.

MOM (CONT'D)

I'll be home in a few minutes.

NAIMA

Let's go Isha.

Mom walks off and turns the corner. The kids turn and walk in the opposite direction.

EXT. NEWARK -NEW JERSEY NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - DAY

Horus, Naima, and Junior walk ahead of Aisha.

NAIMA

How are we going to Reese's party now that Mommy knows about it?

HORUS

I already asked Mom if we could go play ball, let's continue with the same plan.

Naima looks back at Aisha who is waving at strangers.

NAIMA

Wait, what are we going to do about Isha?

JUNIOR

Yeah, now that she knows about the party.

Junior in deep thought.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

I know, just tell Mommy Isha is going to play with you and Tiffany.

NAIMA

That's not gonna work.

HORUS

Don't be stupid Junior! They won't believe Naima is volunteering to take Isha anywhere.

JUNIOR

Knowing Mommy she is going to make you take her, because of the fight the two of you had.

HORUS

That could work. That's my little bro always thinking on the spot.

Naima, Horus and Junior stop walking. Horus and Junior slap hands.

HORUS (CONT'D)

Give me five, on the black hand side, up high, down low, too slow.

They laugh, as they stand waiting for Aisha to catch up to them.

JUNIOR

Isha come on, we need to tell you something.

Aisha runs up to Horus, Naima and Junior.

AISHA

What is it?

JUNIOR

Look Isha, Reese is having a birthday party today and we are all going.

AISHA
Mommy said we can't go...and
(Aisha points to the sky)
Jehovah, remember.

NAIMA
Shut up with all that.

HORUS
Yeah, we need a break from Jehovah.

NAIMA
You're going with us to the party,
because you know too much already.

JUNIOR
When we involve you, you don't tell
Mommy and Daddy.

HORUS
Isha, it's going to be fun.
Reesee's family throws the best
parties on the block. His mom goes
all out for his birthday.

JUNIOR
Isha remember around this time last
year I gave you some cotton candy?

AISHA
Yeah.

JUNIOR
That was your first time having
cotton candy.

AISHA
Yes, and?

NAIMA
That was from Reesee's birthday
party. They have everything
including cake.

HORUS
We know how much you love cake and
ice cream.

AISHA
Count me in! What do I have to do?

NAIMA
Just don't tell Mommy and Daddy.

Junior puts his arm around Aisha's neck, Naima and Horus join in real close.

JUNIOR
Now if you do say anything to Mommy
and Daddy, remember you will be
telling on yourself--

HORUS
And Mommy and Daddy go to work on
Monday--

NAIMA
And you will be left alone with us.
Got it?

Aisha nods her head yes and does the gesture of locking her lips and throwing out the key.

JUNIOR
Exactly.

Naima, Horus, Junior and Aisha continue walking home in harmony.

EXT. NEWARK-NEW JERSEY FRONT PORCH SIM'S HOUSE - DAY

Parked in front of the Sim's two family home is a 1978 beige Thunderbird.

Horus see the car and stops in his tracks.

HORUS
Rudy's home.

AISHA
Yay, Daddy's home.

Aisha rushes up the stairs to enter the house.

INT. SIMS' HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Aisha, Naima, Junior and Horus enter the livingroom. The livingroom is cozy with a floor model television complete with antenna, a full couch, coffee table, late 1970's vintage record player cabinet in the right corner next to the television and two signal chairs that match the sofa.

THE SIBLINGS

Hi Daddy.

AISHA

Daddy!

DADDY (33) a tall slim African-American cool guy with a cigarette in his mouth feels the back of the television.

DADDY

Hi baby girl. Honey who was watching TV?

Aisha hugs him.

AISHA

Nobody daddy.

DADDY

I felt a little heat coming off that TV.

Mom enters the livingroom with grocery bag in hand, she hears Daddy talking to Aisha.

MOM

Rudy leave them kids alone, the TV wasn't on.

Horus takes the grocery bag.

HORUS

Mommy could we go to the park now?

DADDY

Did all of you finish your chores?

JUNIOR

Yes, Daddy we--

Horus exits to kitchen.

MOM

I checked the chores already. I told you I got off of work early for my doctor's appointment. We just finished doing field service.

Horus returns from the kitchen.

HORUS
I put the chicken in the
refrigerator.

MOM
Thank you son. Go on outside, look
out for each other. Make sure dark
don't catch you and don't even
think about going to that birthday
party.

HORUS
Yes Mom.

JUNIOR
We're just going to the park.

Junior grabs a basketball, Horus opens the door. Naima
follows Junior. Aisha sits next to Dad.

DADDY
Who's having a birthday party?

AISHA
It's Reese's birthday.

DADDY
Oh Debra's son. Shit that woman
knows how to party.

AISHA
Can you take us to the party Daddy?

DADDY
You have to ask your mother.

MOM
I already told them no.

DADDY
Well there you go baby girl.

Mom blocks Naima from leaving.

MOM
Naima hold up. Now I know you
aren't going to the park with the
boys.

The boys give their mother a hug before rushing out the door.

NAIMA
No, I was going to Tiffany's house.

MOM
Are you asking me or telling me
you're going, Ms. Priss?

NAIMA
I'm asking and Isha can come with
me if that's okay.

MOM
Oh, this is a new Naima asking to
take Isha with you.

NAIMA
I felt bad about earlier.

Naima gives her mother a hug.

MOM
I'm proud of you. Both of you can
go.

AISHA
Can you and Tiffany teach me double-
dutch?

Naima grabs a jump rope and heads towards the door. Aisha
jumps up.

DADDY
Isha, baby before you leave go get
your daddy a beer.

Aisha runs into the kitchen.

MOM
Naima, be patient with your sister.
I know it will take her some time
to catch onto jumping double-dutch,
but she will get, and it will be
because you're teaching her.

Naima smiles in agreement with her Mom. Aisha returns with
beer in hand. Naima behind Mom's back gesture to Aisha to get
a move on.

DADDY
Thank you baby girl.

Aisha gives Daddy a hug. Daddy puts his lips to her ear.

DADDY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Tell me if any of those
motherfuckers act up out there.

Aisha steps away from her father giving him a smile and nodding yes. The girls exit.

EXT. AISHA'S- FRONT PORCH- DAY

TIFFANY (11) Sassy pretty girl walks up to Naima and Aisha.

TIFFANY
Naima, you ready to go to Reese's
party?

NAIMA
What you think?

Naima stashes the jump rope on the side of the steps. The girls walk away.

TIFFANY
You know Reese likes you?

NAIMA
No, he doesn't he likes you.

AISHA
We are not allowed to have
boyfriends.

NAIMA
Isha shut up. You know Junior has a
crush on you?

TIFFANY
Yeah. I like your bother.

AISHA
Or girlfriends.

NAIMA
Isha mind your business just walk
ahead of us.

Aisha with her arms crossed walks ahead of Tiffany and Naima.

EXT. DAISY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

The party is packed with children and adults. Blue and white decorations are everywhere: balloons, table clothes, streams, noise makers etc. Horus and Junior play Twister. Naima and Tiffany enter from the side gate. Aisha paces back and forth.

NAIMA

Isha, get your behind in here.

Taking a deep breath, Aisha rushes into Daisy. Aisha is frozen in a daze.

AISHA

This is a birthday party?!

Aisha takes in the festivities.

DAISY

You want to play with me?

AISHA

Yeah, I'll play.

Daisy walks Aisha near to the refreshment table.

DAISY

Aisha look at my Summertime Barbie set. Did you get one?

AISHA

No.

Daisy pulls Aisha to the ground for a good old fashion doll playtime.

DAISY

Here you could play with Cowgirl Barbie.

Aisha takes the doll in amazement.

AISHA

Wow, I love her clothes.

DAISY

Don't take her jacket off, I just found it yesterday. It was lost for a long time.

AISHA

I could make a jacket like this for my Betty Doll.

DAISY
I've never heard of a Betty Doll.

AISHA
She has Barbie's face and body, but
her head falls off a lot.

DAISY
How could you make a jacket.

AISHA
It's easy, I use old socks--

Aisha holds the doll's golden hair up to see it sparkle in the sunlight. Just then Reese's Mom MS. DEBRA(28-30) beautiful African-American woman, stylish and colorfully dressed walks by carrying a big white rectangle box.

Aisha locks eyes on the box.

AISHA (CONT'D)
What's in that box?

DAISY
Birthday cake.

AISHA
Cake? I love cake!

DAISY
It's from Supreme Bakery. All our
birthday cakes come from Supreme.

Daisy's voice fades into the background, as Aisha becomes mesmerized. Aisha gets up with the doll in her hand and makes a beeline for the cake table.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Do you think you can teach me how
to make clothes for my Barbie?

The party freezes, Aisha maneuvers through people with ease. Everything snaps back into motion when she reaches the table.

AISHA
Ms. Debra, do you need help cutting
the cake?

MS. DEBRA
No sweetie. We're not doing Happy
Birthday for a few minutes yet.

AISHA
So in three *Minutes*, we cut the
cake?

MS. DEBRA
Child, go play.

Aisha steps away from the cake table. Aisha continues eying the cake box. Once Ms. Debra walks off, Aisha returns to the table. She inhales deeply nearly touching the white frosting with her nose.

AISHA
Oh, man!

EXT. AISHA'S DAYDREAM - DAY

With candles blown out, the cake is the center attraction on the table. Ms. Debra cuts the cake. Aisha is seated in the birthday throne.

MS. DEBRA
Aisha, you get the first slice because you're such a sweet, pretty, and smart little girl. You are my favorite child that's why you can pick any part of the cake you want.

AISHA
I would like a corner piece, please.

Ms. Debra begins to cut a small corner slice.

AISHA (CONT'D)
Ms. Debra, we can go a little bigger.

MS. DEBRA
Of course.

AISHA
It is a sheet cake, ya know.

EXT. DAISY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Naima looks under the table, Aisha lies on the ground partially under the cake table. Lost in her thoughts, Aisha smiles, talks to herself, and pantomimes eating cake.

NAIMA
Isha, we have to leave soon, it's
getting late.

Naima's voice snaps Aisha back into reality.

AISHA
We can't go! I haven't got cake
yet.

Aisha comes from under the table to standing near Naima.

NAIMA
Go get Reese, to ask his mom to
cut the cake.

Naima points to REESEEE (12) the birthday boy dressed in a light blue linen short set, he's playing twister with Horus, Junior, Tiffany and a bunch of other kids. Reese takes a spin on the wheel.

AISHA
I will.

NAIMA
Go now, the sun will be down soon.

AISHA
I'm going.

NAIMA
Hurry up! I am not trying to get in
trouble messing with you.

AISHA
Then go! I want cake and you're not
gonna fuck this up for me, I'm on a
mission Naima--

NAIMA
Ooo I'm telling Mommy you said the
F word.

AISHA
No you're not, you'll be telling on
yourself. Ha! Now back up off of
me, there is Birthday Cake and I'm
getting my share.

Aisha nervously walks towards the older kids lined up to the Twister Wheel waiting for their turn. Reese is on the Twister Board bent over with his right and left hand on red. Aisha squats down next to Reese. Reese is holding his balance as Tiffany is reaching for her spot on the board.

Aisha taps Reese's shoulder. Reese is sweating, he turns to Aisha.

REESEE

What?

AISHA

Could you ask your mom to cut the cake?

REESEE

I'm in the middle of the game.

Now Horus is reaching for his spot on the board.

HORUS

Aisha you have to get in line to spin the wheel.

Aisha stands up defeated. Aisha scans the party in search of Mrs. Debra. Aisha sees Ms. Debra near the backdoor of the house laughing with friends and smoking a cigarette.

AISHA

I'll do it myself!

Confidently, Aisha beelines to Ms. Debra.

AISHA (CONT'D)

Excuse me, Ms. Debra, don't you think it's time to cut that birthday cake? It's getting late and...

MS. DEBRA

Child don't ask me again about that cake. I already told you we will get to it when I'm ready.

Ms. Debra turns Aisha around and gently guides her away.

MS. DEBRA (CONT'D)

Now take yourself over there and play.

Ms. Debra returns to dancing and talking to her friends.

MS. DEBRA (CONT'D)

These neighborhood children, child think they live in my house.

Unamused, Aisha walks back to the cake table. She pulls up a chair and sets it right next to the cake. She sits down arms folded. She talks to the cake as if it were her therapist.

AISHA

(To the cake)

What the hell is wrong with Reesee,
cut the cake already. These two are
torturing me so much? Who invites
children to a birthday party, just
to not give them birthday cake?
This is all Satan's doing.

Aisha closes her eyes and starts to pray.

AISHA (CONT'D)

Oh God Jehovah please hear my
prayer. I promise if I get a corner
piece of cake, I will forever be
good.

Daisy now stands over Aisha.

AISHA (CONT'D)

In your name Jehovah, amen.

DAISY

Are you praying to the cake?

AISHA

What?! No. I was praying to
Jehovah.

DAISY

What?

AISHA

Who prays to cake?

DAISY

What are you saying?

Aisha

Only a sinner would say something
like that.

DAISY

What?

AISHA

You're Godless, I'm wasting my time
trying to explain to you.

DAISY

(annoyed)

Your sister was looking for you.

Aisha jumps up and looks to the sky to see the sun has shifted and is now behind her.

AISHA
What, she better not have left me?

DAISY
I really want you to show me how to make Barbie clothes. I have some old stocks.

AISHA
I have to get home, but--

DAISY
The party isn't over. Why do you have be home so early?

IN SLOW MOTION, Aisha looks back at the cake.

AISHA
Cake!

DAISY
Before you go could you just teach me how to make culottes shorts? Could you cut these into culottes for me?

STILL IN SLOW MOTION, Daisy reaches in her jumper pocket to pull out a pair of red socks. Daisy's voice fades into the background.

DAISY (CONT'D)
I want to make a tube top for a full outfit.

Aisha searches for an escape route through the crowd like a scene from Mission Impossible. She moves in on the cake, and with both hands, she grabs a chunk of the corner, then dashes for the exit.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Aunt Debra!!!

CROSS CUT

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET / SIMS' HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - SUNSET

Aisha runs down the street holding the cake.

Mom stands on the porch.

Aisha takes bites and licks her hands.

Mom looks at her watch as she slowly turns back to the front door.

Aisha then looks up to see the street lights are still off. She picks up her pace.

Mom has now reached the door she opens it and reaches her hand inside to hit the front porch light switch.

Streets lights come on one by one.

Aisha is still eating cake and licking her hands.

Mom's hand hits the light switch.

Aisha out of breath grabs the jump rope from the stash spot.

Mom turns back to the front porch to find Aisha.

Aisha's back is to her Mom. She licks the last of the cake icing off the back of her hand.

MOM

You just made it girl. Get up here.

Aisha walks up the stairs sweaty.

MOM (CONT'D)

What is that on your face?

AISHA

Ice cream, from Tiffany's house.

MOM

Where is your sister and brothers?

AISHA

At Reese's birthday party.

EXT. DAISY'S HOUSE - SIDE GATE - SUNDOWN

Mom walks down the street as she sees Naima, Junior, and Horus exit the side gate of the party. Naima, Junior and Horus are walking laughing discussing the events of the day as they walk right into their mother.

INT. SIMS' HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - SUNDOWN

Aisha sits on the couch next to her father drinking beer; watching TV, laughing, and eating a candy bar.

