

MOLLY

Tom might have a point.

SHEMEKA

And you.

PETER

Hey!

SHEMEKA

Sorry, seems the Gin in my drink has suddenly stopped being so damn calming.

MOLLY

The endangered species list works. It brings awareness to what needs to be saved; the African Lion, the Black Honey Buzzard, African Elephants--

JAQUAN

Is it everything Black or everything from Africa that they're killing?

SHEMEKA

Both.

MOLLY

The Blue Whale, the Bengal Tiger. I'm just--

JAQUAN

Equating the lives of animals to Black people.

MOLLY

I'm equating the lives of everything to each other. The planet doesn't value us more than it does the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid. We do that.

---

TOM

Start

Black boys need to be listed as an endangered species. How do we do that?

JAQUAN

We don't, so stop saying that. We're not animals. It shouldn't take being called an endangered species for cops to stop shooting Black boys. For them not to shoot me.

## Polar Bears, Black Boys & Prairie Fringed Orchids

PETER

Black Lives Matter. Isn't that to remind us that lives of Black people have value. That's what the endangered species list does. It reminds us that those lives matter and we can't kill them to the point of extinction. *(looking at Molly)* Sometimes I do listen.

SHEMEKA

Animals. It protects animals.

*(JAQUAN launches into the exact same imitation of a Western Lowland Gorilla that Peter performed earlier. This should be beat for beat. He jumps from one piece of furniture to the next. He apes his way to MOLLY and begins grooming her. JAQUAN grabs MOLLY up in his arms. MOLLY is rigid from fear and confusion at JAQUAN'S actions. She breaks free of his hold.)*

JAQUAN

Black boys aren't animals so excuse me if I stop listening to non-people of color debate about putting them on the endangered species list.

PETER

White people?

JAQUAN

Yes, white people. Stop trying to decide what's best for us when you don't even know us.

PETER

Last I checked. I live in Harlem around a lot of Black people.

JAQUAN

Black people have been living in Harlem for over a hundred years. What took you so long to get here? White people aren't moving to Harlem to be our neighbors. You're moving to Harlem to push us out.

TOM

I'm white.

JAQUAN

I'm glad you finally remembered.

**Polar Bears, Black Boys & Prairie Fringed Orchids**

TOM

My thoughts are just as valid as yours. I've been with you since the first Black Lives Matter hashtag.

JAQUAN

Let's leave this alone, Tom.

TOM

No.

JAQUAN

This is not the place. You don't want what I'm feeling.

TOM

Most times I'm in the room making more noise than you. You got me biting my tongue all night long listening to Shemeka talk shit about me being with a Black man or you being with a white one or you just being with a man. I'm still not sure which one she's mad about?

SHEMEKA

His being with a white one.

TOM

So you're not a homophobe just a racist.

JAQUAN

We should call it a night. Peter and Molly thank you for the evening.

TOM

Yes, don't forget to thank the white people.

JAQUAN

You're a fucking piece of work.

TOM

And you're a fucking piece of something else. You don't get to tell me that my voice isn't needed. I spent ten minutes arguing with our Uber driver over his dumb ass civil rights comment. You probably sent him a tip and gave him four stars. Sometimes I get tired of being more Black than you.

JAQUAN

You get tired of being more Black than me? Arguing with our Uber driver over the Civil Rights Movement doesn't make you more Black.

## Polar Bears, Black Boys & Prairie Fringed Orchids

JAQUAN (cont'd)

Knowing who Hattie McDaniel and Ethel Waters is doesn't make you more Black. Being more Black than me would have had you knowing we were being killed before you tweeted your first Black Lives Matter hashtag. Being more Black than me would have had your drug addicted ass pulling eight to ten years instead of working through your feelings at a high-end health spa. Being more Black than me would never give you the freedom to just walk through the front door of some white people's house that you've never met before. You get tired of being more Black than me? I get tired of you trying to grab a hold of something you'll never understand. You've gone from shooting up crystal meth into your arms to shooting up Blackness into it. Black Lives Matter is not a drug for you to get high off of. You know all the talking points. You know all the stats, but you don't know shit about being Black. You get tired of being more Black than me? I get tired of waking up next to the wrong person.

End

---

*(The drink alarm DINGS.)*

*(TOM walks over to the bar and picks up the timer. He stares intensely at it. He puts it down and picks up an empty glass and drops three ice cubes into it.)*

MOLLY

Please don't do that.

*(TOM lifts a bottle and fills the glass with gin.)*

JAQUAN

It's his six month bluff. Another way of tying our relationship to his sobriety. He won't do it.

*(TOM raises the glass in a toast.)*

TOM

To the endangered Black man.

*(TOM pours the drink down his throat. He refills the glass and pours another one down his throat.)*

PETER

Tom.