ABSOLUTELY BROKEN

Written by Ross

FADE IN:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN

The room is almost completely dark.

A thin blade of gray morning light struggles through the curtains, barely illuminating the wreckage of what should be a peaceful bedroom.

On the floor, beside the bed, and next to a BABY BASSINET sits PETE.

Not sleeping. Not resting. Just sitting there.

He is positioned awkwardly against the side of the bed, one leg stretched out, the other bent beneath him. His shirt is twisted around his waist. His hair is matted with sweat. His eyes are open, fixed on absolutely nothing.

He looks like a man whose body has finally surrendered to exhaustion but whose mind refuses to let him go.

There is something terribly unsettling about the stillness of him.

His face is drawn tight, the skin beneath his eyes dark and swollen. His jaw is clenched so fiercely that the muscles along his temples twitch. His lips are dry, cracked, and slightly parted as he struggles to regulate his breathing.

He has been crying, although he would never admit it.

Or perhaps he hasn't cried at all.

Perhaps he has reached that terrible place where even tears require more energy than a person has left to give.

His right hand rests against the carpet. The fingers are curled into a fist, the knuckles pale from the pressure. Every few seconds, his hand tightens involuntarily, as though he is physically restraining something inside himself.

RAGE.

Not the explosive kind. Not the kind that produces shouting or broken furniture.

This is something much uglier.

A slow, poisonous anger that has been accumulating for almost a month IT has begun to feel like a permanent part of his body.

Pete stares toward the bedroom door which suddenly is covered by the shadow of a body. This is ANISSA, his wife. She is barely able to mutter his name..

ANISSA (O.S.)
Pete...

Pete ignores her. Anissa attempts to try again this time offering a bit more power to her weakened voice..

ANISSA (CONT'D)
Pete..

Despite her attempt, this time it sounded weaker than the last. Pete slowly locks eyes with his wife.

She looks as though she has been crying for days.

Perhaps she has.

Her eyes are swollen and bloodshot, the delicate skin beneath them bruised with exhaustion. Her eyelids are heavy, almost reluctant to remain open. Her cheeks are blotchy, her nose raw and reddened from wiping away tears. There are faint, irregular tracks of dried tears along her face.

Her hair hangs loosely around her shoulders, tangled and lifeless. Some strands cling to her forehead. Others fall across her cheeks, partially concealing a face that seems to have lost its ability to express anything other than sorrow.

She is wearing an old nightshirt, several sizes too large, hanging from her shoulders. The fabric is creased and twisted, as though she has spent the entire night sitting, standing, pacing, and lying down without ever finding a comfortable position.

Her body looks depleted.

Her shoulders slope inward. Her neck seems strained from carrying the weight of a head she can barely hold upright. Her arms hang heavily at her sides. Her hands are dry, trembling slightly, with the fingers loosely curled.

She has the appearance of someone who has been fighting an invisible war without food, without sleep, and without the luxury of surrender.

There is something especially heartbreaking about her mouth.

Her lips are pale and chapped. They part slightly as she tries to gather enough strength to speak.

She looks at Pete.

He looks back at her.

Neither says anything.

The baby sleeps peacefully between them, an innocent witness to a marriage that appears to be coming apart one miserable morning at a time.

Anissa shifts her weight against the doorframe.

She looks down at Pete on the floor.

For a second, it seems she might say something important.

Something honest. Something that explains their wrecked state.

Instead, she swallows.

Her voice emerges thin and hoarse.

ANISSA (CONT'D)
I am going to make me something to eat..**would you like anything?**

Any color in Petes face drains away. He looks deep into the pupils of his wife.

PETE
(matter of fact.)
I don't want anything to eat. *I would like some help with the baby.*

ANISSA
(barely)
I am doing the best I can.

PETE
(elevated voice)
The best you can? Sleeping in the living room night after night while I watch our crying child is the best you can do?

Anissa seems instantly defeated.

ANISSA
Please don't yell at me Pete.
You'll wake the baby.

PETE
I’m not yelling and why do you give a damn? If she wakes I'll be the one taking care of her.

ANISSA
I will help, I just need the space right now. *Damnit Pete I have lost everything.*

PETE
You have not lost everything...We are not invisible. We are very much here. You need to snap out of this. ***I can’t do it by myself.***

ANISSA
(matter of fact; elongated)
And like i said, I just need a little more time.

PETE
You said that last week..and the week before that.

Anissa starts to shake.

ANISSA
(emotional)
I am trying Damnit. ***For Godsakes I am trying.***

PETE
(matter of fact)
You’re not trying at all..**And I CANNOT do this alone.**

The baby starts crying.. Anissa is instanty affected by the sound. She grabs her ears and makes a face as if the sound of a bullhorn is right at her ear.

Pete rises in order to tend to the baby.

Anissa’s head pain increases before she removes her hands from her hair and runs into another room.

WE MOVE IN on Pete who turns to the doorway with a blank look on his face...