

Grace.

**It's March 14, 2020. Today is the day after Breonna Taylor's death.**

**“There are two living, breathing, and loved black lives in the space. Take care of them.”**

**-Crislyn Fayson**

**MS.PEACE**, a black 28 year old woman, sits still in front of her computer screen. Her Zoom screen is on, her glasses are resting in her hand, and a notebook sits in front of her blank and open. She's staring at the wall.

*A moment.*

**GRACE**, a black 19 year-old girl pops up on the screen, her head down, writing in a notebook. She looks up quickly, taking in the room, and gets to writing again. She huffs.

**Grace**

Where is everyone?

**Ms. Peace**

Oh! Good morning Grace.

**Grace**

Am I the only one here?

**Ms. Peace**

Yes. You're the only one who decided to come today.

*Beat.*

**Ms. Peace**

How are you?

**Grace**

I'm ready to take the test.

**Ms. Peace**

Did you get to speak to your mother or sister yesterday?

**Grace**

Ms. Peace.

**Ms. Peace**

We're you able to get any rest?

**Grace**

Ms. Peace I'd really just want to take the test, and go.

**Ms. Peace**

Okay. I hear you. Here you go.

*A click of a button.*

**Grace**

Thanks.

*Grace turns her "video" off.*

**Ms. Peace**

Take your time.

*Boom!*

*Stacey, a white girl, pops up on the screen, looking in the Zoom Room.*

**Stacey**

Oh! Ms. Peace, there's class today?

**Ms. Peace**

It was optional. I wanted to give each of you time for yourselves today.

**Stacey**

Right, right...with the whole grieving process and everything. Did anyone come to class?

**Ms. Peace**

So far it has only been, Grace.

**Stacey**

*Grace* is here today?

*A beat. Grace unmutes.*

**Grace**

Yes.

**Stacey**

*Girl...*you are *so* strong. When I heard the news that lady was dead, I just could not believe it. I, literally, had to stop what I was doing and like... take a hard look at *our world?! That's why I didn't come today Ms. Peace, I was completely shocked that any of this happened!*

*A beat.*

**Ms. Peace**

Well Stacey, That's good you're taking the time you need-

*Grace still unmuted, says to herself.*

**Grace**

Liar.

**Stacey**

What?

**Ms. Peace**

I said Stacey, that's good you're taking the time you need.

*Beat.*

**Stacey**

Thank you Ms. Peace. That reminds me there won't be, like, *any* change on my grade, since I'm not taking the test today, right?

**Ms. Peace**

No, your grade will not change. It will stay the same.

**Stacey**

Great! I will see you next week then.

**Ms. Peace**

Bye Stacey-

**Stacey**

Oh, Grace?

*Beat.*

*A shallow breath.*

**Grace**

Yes.

**Stacey**

*(condescendingly)* Try to get some rest okay, that *poor lady's* death had an impact on all of us-

**Grace**

Her name is Breonna Taylor! Breonna. Taylor. Say. Her. Name!

**Stacey**

Right...Goodbye.

*Stacey leaves.*

*Ms. Peace takes her glasses off, staring at the wall.*

*A beat.*

**Ms. Peace**

Grace?

*The sound of breathing is heard.*

**Ms. Peace**

Grace?

*Grace lets out a scream. Her screen black and lighting up yellow.*

*A moment.*

*Grace's screen turns on.*

**Grace**

What the hell?!

Why the hell did she need to miss class?!

She doesn't care about what happened to Breonna Taylor!

She doesn't even know what happened to her!

But she cares about a test grade?!

A black woman dies, and she hears no class today.

A woman dies, and you don't even know her name...

Stacey can walk around and act sorry all she wants too...

But *we* have to deal with the truth!

I feel like I can't breathe...

**Ms. Peace**

Breathe Grace, breathe.

*Grace stares down at her notebook.*

*A beat.*

*She begins to inhale and then exhale.*

*She does it again, much fuller now.*

*Ms. Peace joins her, inhaling and exhaling.*

*They are now inhaling and exhaling together.*

**Ms. Peace**

*(Ms. Peace feel free to make this your own)*

Good, Grace.

Inhale and Exhale.

Inhale and Exhale.

Inhale and Exhale.

*They take the last breath together.*

Inhale and Exhale.

**Grace**

Ms. Peace I thought if I came to class today, that maybe this feeling inside of me would stop. I wanted to get over it. I wanted to push forward. But I couldn't.

**Ms. Peace**

Grace, you are one of the strongest, most diligent students I have ever had. You work hard, and always are adding to every conversation in class. You make your mother and sister very proud. They've imbedded in you to never give up, and you don't. But know that stopping to take a moment *isn't* giving up. You can breathe baby, it's a reminder that we are still living. You don't have to keep going, give yourself *grace*. Today is a day we all need to breathe together. Today is a day we all need to scream like a crazy person in a Zoom room!

*Grace smiles lightly.*

**Ms. Peace**

And call out the liars when we see em' ...

**Grace**

You heard me say that?

**Ms.Peace**

Mhmm...

**Grace**

Well...I wasn't lying...

*Ms. Peace and Grace laugh. The air lightens.*

How are you doing Ms. Peace? I know this isn't easy on you.

**Ms. Peace**

It isn't. It isn't at all. But I am here with you... and I am so thankful to be here with you. I am holding on to everything I have right now a little tighter. That's all I can do.

*A beat.*

We're gonna be alright, believe me. We just need to remember to-

**Grace**

To breathe.

**Ms. Peace**

Yes.

**Grace**

I will do that.

**Ms.Peace**

Good.

**Grace**

I'm gonna finish my test now Ms. Peace.

**Ms. Peace**

You know what, I'm going to go ahead and end class here.

**Grace**

What? Ms. Peace I can finish the test-

**Ms. Peace**

I know you can, but it'll be here for you next week. We'll pick back up then.

*Grace huffs.*

*Ms. Peace chuckles.*

**Ms. Peace**

That's it Grace, just keep breathing...

**Grace**

Okay...I'll see you next week.

**Ms. Peace**

I'm here if you need anything.

**Grace**

Thank you...I'll call you later on today.

**Ms. Peace**

I'll be looking forward to it.

**Grace**

Bye, *Ms. Peace.*

*A beat.*

**Ms. Peace**

Bye, *Grace.*

*Their screens go black.*