

Talib Kweli, If

[Hook 2x]

It wasn't for this, it wasn't for that
Ohh, best believe a better world

[Talib Kweli--talking over chorus]

Yes, ladies and gentleman
You do have Kenn Starr in the house, Asheru
Talib Kweli...

[Kenn Starr]

If it wasn't for the way that we live
Too many single mothers raisin' our kids
Too many brothers caged in the Pen
Engagin' a bid, enslaved by the pigs
If it wasn't for crooked cops that pop shots grazin' our wig
That sends slugs reckless, plus these thugs with a death wish
That take your life for the ice that flood in your necklace
The blood of the helpless and innocent (and innocent)
If it wasn't for so-called friends that turned Benedict
Snakes in the grass and crabs in the lake
Cuz I'm black and its late, getting' harassed by the Jake
Blasted with eight times five, plus one
Lethal deposit, reach for your wallet, they bust guns
That's why I trust none and I keep to myself
I can't blame cats that pack heat in they belt
And quick to clap, never givin' in
If it wasn't for this and that
It'd be a better world that we livin' in

Hook 2x

[Asheru]

If it wasn't for a mic check I wouldn't have a check at all
Nowadays you can't live that way
The markets way too unstable, there's too many pimp labels
Playing rappers like a ho, manhandlin' the dough
Demandin' them to go on a track to bring the loot back
Now you playing for the team and the captain, that's cream
You got the dream to push a mean two-seater
With a diva riding shotgun, just to say you got one
You make the songs, but labels only want the hot ones
Send you back to the drawing board, until you got some
Now I guess we got problems
Even your all-creative mind ain't enough to try and solve 'em
The doors revolvin', younger cats are starvin'
They want it more than you, might go to war with you
To reap the heap of dough that's at the end of the rainbow
You can't be mad, man, that's how the game go

Hook 2x

[Talib Kweli] (talking)

(yeah, c'mon!)

(yea, here we go, yeah!)

I'm about to show you what this black power is
Red, black, and green on the wrist how I live
In the cold world where we bust off the black llamas
Every winter where we lose more son to black mommas
If hip-hop got seasons, right now its spring
Like when everybody selling death, "kiss the ring" (yeah!)
You know how it goes, people change color like autumn
Kids learn through experience, fuck what a teacher taught 'em
Puff a relief for boredom; rough will release a quarter
And the parents who paid enough attention to at least ignore 'em

Blowing up mics, throwin' up signs
To help niggaz you confusin' it with cryin'
The winners write the history books
Mystery looks past prisoners of war, that's what my listeners are for
Turn the tide on this fuckery, ride on this fuckery
You shoulda never let me in the industry, you're stuck with me

Hook 3x