

# 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