Death of a Boy

Aja LaGrand Blount

Prelude

May 20 – Midnight

The rain pelted against the window pane of the blind-less bedroom window, rinsing the grime and dirt from it. For hours now, the rain had been coming down non-stop. Initially, the sounds of the welcoming patter presented itself as a soothing tune from a familiar song. But as the eye of the storm unleashed a drone of raindrops on the planet earth, the addition of the lightning and thunder rattled the souls of the night-crawlers.

David, sitting with his back to the wall, faced the blind-less window, watching the raindrops appear smeared upon the glass. The downpour made it hard to see anything beyond the rain itself. This had to be one of the biggest storms the area had experienced in some time.

None of that matter the moment David’s stomach grumbled, loudly and painfully.

Pulling his legs to his chest, he calculated the hours in-between the last time he’d eaten. The hours had seemed like days once realizing that he hadn’t ate since lunchtime. That revelation increased the grumbling inside of him. Usually, he could pat his belly and that would quiet its cravings. Over time, that failed to do the trick. At this point, the only thing that would release his stomach from his back was for him to fill it with some food.

A series of soft moans filled the quietness of the house. In his room, the murmurs evaded his ear drums. It appeared his mother was having another one of her sexual escapades in the living room From time to time, she would entertain her guests in the living room, and upon the bottom of whatever bottle they’d explored, the festivities would casually take place on the raggedy sofa.

Like before, the series of soft moan systematically grew into outright wails of pleasure, mocked screams of delight, and intense cries of satisfaction.

David removed his holey socks, balled them into one, and stuffed them into the visible, empty door knob space with it. That didn’t lessen the excitement of the time his mother was having.

Inhaling his hunger, his stomach turned into a tighter knot. As he regarded his living conditions, he couldn’t see how he would continue to live like this. He was thirteen years old, staying with a woman who didn’t know the meaning of being a mother.

Outside of providing a roof over his head, and a room to call his own, she declared that he was on his own to obtain the necessities of life. Let her tell it, *All my job consisted of was to give you life, a roof over your head, and a room to call your own. Other than that, I have other things I have to do*.

Many times, he tried opening her eyes to his needs. As a growing boy, he needed food, clean clothes, and adequate living conditions.

She laughed in his face. “If you need all of that, you better start getting it yourself. Because mama has needs as well, and taking care of a child I didn’t want isn’t one of them.”

David had heard that story too many times before. Where it went in one ear and out the other, it did sting his heart when he thought about it. Even now, with his stomach in his back, he wanted to push it into the foreground of his mind, but it wouldn’t go. Its stubbornness plagued him.

He snatched his socks from the door, placed them upon his feet, and stood up. He had to find him something to eat. Sitting in his empty bedroom wouldn’t get it. This wasn’t a four-star hotel where room service wheeled a cart of food to the assigned room upon being called. This couldn’t even be compared to a homeless shelter. At least, at a shelter, the patrons were well-fed and clothed properly. Not at Clarice’s. It was get it by any means. And that’s what David saw fit to do.

Creeping out of his room, he hesitated upon seeing the man behind his mother, gripping her hips and thrusting hard into her body. Embarrassed by the activity, he dropped his head. The grumbling of his stomach snapped his head up, and set his feet in motion.

Looking away from his mother’s sexual escapades, David bolted towards the door. His mother watched his every step as she massaged her love button. The man behind her grunted loudly, paying David no attention as he silently closed the door behind him. His task surrounded getting his money worth. And as he done so, Clarice bellowed out a brand-new song as she brought herself to climax.

Outside, David prepared himself for the journey ahead of him. It was raining hard. Unlucky for him, the rain hadn’t slowed down to accommodate his hunger. It actually appeared to have increased since he stepped outside. Nevertheless, he wouldn’t let some rain deter him from finding something to chew.

Jumping off the porch, he crossed the street, rounded the house on the corner, and hopped on the bike sitting under the porch. Riding off with his head down, he peddled as fast as he could despite his weak nature. The desire for food propelled him to find some inner strength, and after locating it, he used it for all it was worth.

Making it to Uptown Humble Park, he rode down the alley behind a building known for having good scraps in their trash bin. He hopped off the bike, flipped open the trash bin’s top and leaped in head first.

The first bag he ripped into contained some old lettuce, sour tomatoes, and the trimming associated with making salads. He tossed the bag to the side. Like a hound dog, his nose directed him to the bag to his right.

Digging into it, his fingers drove into a half-eaten baked potato as he ripped open the trash bag. He devoured the buttered potato with a hint of sour cream, tossing it to the side. Licking his fingers, he went back into the bag for seconds. He found a barely eaten Porterhouse steak. Thanking God, he chomped down on the tough meat and the greasy fat. For a second, he felt like a king sitting on a throne. His mother would have never fixed him a steak, let alone bought one in the first place. Whenever she got her food stamps, they were quickly sold for only God knows what.

David pushed the depressing thoughts from his mind, as he continued to dig into the trash bag to find chunks of chicken breasts. Without reprieve, he stuffed the dry chicken in his mouth, afraid someone may appear and try to take it.

The rain picked up yet again.

Within the brief moment of finding food, he had forgotten about the rain drenching him. He knew he should get out of it before it soaked him to his core. Yet, he simply turned his head upward, gaped his mouth open, and allowed the raindrops to fill his mouth. He hadn’t expected to find anything in the dumpster to drink so what better way to quench his thirst than by nature itself.

Full from the feast, he leaped from the trash bin, hopped back on the bike, and returned it back across thestreet where he found it.

“What are you doing taking that bike?” the baritone voice questioned.

David had no idea where the man came from. Usually, he would take the bike, return it, and no one would know. But this time, he’d been caught. His first instinct was to run. Except, something in him spun him around to face the man.

The man shook his head upon his eyes meeting David’s. “Don’t let me catch you taking that bike anymore,” he said, climbing the back porch to the back door.

David, blowing out his fear, rounded the house, crossed the street and entered his house, only to find his naked mother laying on the couch waiting on him. She sat up, put her cigarette out, and picked up the belt on the table.

Standing to her feet, her large breasts swayed freely from side to side. The nappy hair covering her love below looked awful, and in desperate need of some grooming. Taking her entire body in, the stretch marks on her stomach looked a mess. He could have thrown up.

Clarice wrapped the belt around her hand. “So, you think you grown, huh?” She rounded the broken table separating her from her son.

David shook his head.

“That gots to be it when you walk out of here in the middle of the night like you are.” She closed in on him.

He remained frozen, not caring about her plans to whoop him. He had to do what he had to do. Had he waited for her to feed him, he would have starved to death.

“What do you have to say for yourself?” she asked, scratching under her exposed breasts.

“I needed something to eat,” he stated, watching the belt in her hand.

She grabbed him by the front of his wet shirt. “You needed something to eat, huh?” She cocked her arm back, taking a whack at his back. The dull sound of the leather belt hitting the wet clothes pissed her off. “Take these fucking clothes off,” she demanded, pushing him away from her.

When he didn’t move fast enough, she took a swing at his head with the belt. He ducked, feeling the wind swooshing by his head. He came out of the shirt first. The wetness of it caused it to became tangled around his arms.

Clarice went on the offensive, took a wide swing at him, and connected with his wet, bare back. He howled from the initial stings of the assault.

“Don’t holla and scream now, muthafucker! You should have thought about that before leaving my damn house like you grown.”

David escaped the shirt, but couldn’t flee the ferocious beating his mother intended on bestowing upon him. He blinked back the tears. There was no need to cry. He had to do what he had to do. That’s what she told him to do, and now that he done it and she knew about it, that presented a problem.

Her arm grew tired quickly. Punishing him compared to working out in her book. She hadn’t worked out a day in her life, and she really hadn’t intended on starting any time soon. However, she needed him to get the bigger picture. He wasn’t grown, and couldn’t go about doing things as he saw fit.

She glared at him with happiness in her eye. “I bet that’ll keep that ass in line. Now go to your room!” She ambled over to the broken table for another cigarette. “I’ll teach you what it means to be grown.”

David picked up his shirt, and limped towards his room. Just as he closed his bedroom door, a knock came to the front door. He expected it to be the man from across the street; but once Clarice answered it full of glee, he knew it was one of her late-night friends.

In pain and agitated, David stuffed the hole in the door with his shirt, hating the circumstances he had been born into. Clarice laughter blared throughout the house. The man smacked her on the bare backside. There was another giggle and some passionate kissing taking place.

David flopped down in the corner farthest from the door. “I have to find a way to get out of here. This isn’t how I’m supposed to live. Staying here will be the death of me. And I can’t go out like that.”

Chapter One

May 20 - 8 a.m.

After being able to fall asleep, David did get a good night’s rest. Waking up later than usual, he hoped he’d gotten up before his mother. He wasn’t in the mood to hear her ranting. Listening carefully, he didn’t hear her moving about.

Peeking through the doorknob hole, he noticed the empty couch. She must have retired to her bedroom. That was a good thing. That gave him ample amount of room to maneuver how he wanted.

Coming out of his bedroom, he cut hard towards the front door and out the house on a mission. Standing on the front porch, he observed the quietness of the neighborhood. He didn’t know what time it was but it had to be later than normal. As he looked across the street, there wasn’t a car parked out in front. That meant the owner of the house had already left for work.

Hopping off the porch, that gave him an idea.

Trotting alongside his house, he dipped down the alley, and came upon the house in question. He carefully unlatched the gate and entered the backyard. No one protested to his being there. He latched the gate, and stood there for another minute. When he received no reaction, he raced up to the house and knocked on the backdoor. No one answered. No one answered because no one was home.

David pulled out an old, bent credit card, and slid it into wedge of the door. The card caught the lock exactly where he needed it to and presented him with an all-access pass to the house.

Once inside, he raided the refrigerator first to snack on some fruit. His stomach grumbled upon seeing the full refrigerator. Never had he seen such a thing at his house. In the midst of his excitement, his stomach dropped, and he felt the need to use the bathroom.

Rushing to find it, he plopped down on the toilet to relieve himself. Considering he blew up the commode, he might as well shower and find some fresh clothes to put on.

Showered, he walked through the house with a towel wrapped around his waist. Going through each room, he finally found a closet with some clothes that fit him. Throwing the towel away, he dressed in some brand-new threads before admiring himself in a full-length mirror. Feeling refreshed, he returned to the kitchen to fix him a bowl of Cookie Crisp cereal. He ate three big bowls before he slurped down the remaining milk.

Glancing up, the clock on the wall displayed 9:15 a.m.

David, sitting the bowl in the sink, exited the same way he entered. Except, he wouldn’t return home. Now that he donned in a new outfit, he was going to school. He had to show up and let them see him in his glory. He could never say that they ever had.

He slid into school amidst his fellow classmates rushing to and from class. Upon his arrival, a number of students, mostly girls, gave him a once over, while others done a double-take. They, boys and girls alike, couldn’t believe what they were seeing.

David was known for being the dirty one, having nappy hair, and not coming to school. Him showing up in the first place was a shocker, but for him to have clean clothes and a pleasant appearance surprised them.

David paid them no mind.

At the other end of the hall, he spotted one of his best friends. Cupping his hands together, he called out her name. His screams were drowned out by the large body of students talking among themselves. Determined, he charged through the crowd seeking to get within an earshot of Crystal so she could hear him.

Halfway down the hall, David watched Crystal turn the corner, and disappear from sight. Simultaneously, he felt an aggressive bump from his right. It almost knocked him to the ground. Instinctively, he spun towards the aggressor and pushed back. The guy bounced off the locker ready to fight.

David instantly recognized the guy from the pictures at the house he’d just left. He cracked a smile.

“I don’t see shit funny, punk. You broke in my house and stole my clothes.” The guy’s mother had just bought him the clothes the weekend before. They were for when he went off to summer camp.

“You fucking crazy, dude!” David countered. “My mother bought me this shit for my birthday.”

“Yeah right!” the guy exclaimed. “Yo hoe ass mama ain’t bought you shit. Them clothes right there is mine.” He moved in to grab David by the collar.

David smacked his hand, dipped to the left, and landed a flush left to the guy’s jaw. Before he knew it, he tagged the guy several more times, knocking him out.

The guy’s friends looked to defend their friend but the teachers were stepping out in the hallway. The bell had rung, and they were set to close their doors.

One teacher, Mrs. Baltes, surveyed the commotion, and detected some tension. As she fully turned to examine the possible altercation, she caught a glimpse of the guy laying on the floor unconscious. She sprinted towards the group.

David attempted to flee.

Mrs. Baltes grabbed him by the shirt, and had to alert the other teachers to the incident. “Mr. Wiley!” she screamed. “Little Mr. Thrine here decided to come to school to pick a fight.”

“No, I didn’t!” David explained, trying to break free from her grasp. “I came to finish out the last week like everyone else.” He looked down at the guy waking up. He wasn’t a tattle-tell so he couldn’t tell her that the guy started the fight.

Mr. Wiley helped the guy to his feet. “Are you alright, son?”

The guy scanned the crowd, wondering what happened. “I guess. What happened?” he asked.

“David!” a young male voice screamed.

*Kenyada!* David recognized the voice, seeking to locate it.

Mrs. Baltes tightened her grip on his shirt. “Don’t even think about it. You’re going to the principal’s office so he can call your mother.”

David didn’t care about them calling his mother. They didn’t have a phone for them to call. That didn’t mean they didn’t have a number for someone who could relay the message. That, he didn’t want.

He jabbed Mrs. Baltes in her side, forcing her to let him go. She grunted, loosened her grip on his shirt, and reached for her side. By the time she realized him slipping away, he had broken free and was running full speed down the hallway.

Unable to command him to stop, she flopped her arms at her side and concluded that he was a lost cause anyway.

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

Around noon, David walked through Uptown Humble Park without a destination in sight. Patting his pockets, he didn’t have two copper pennies to rub together. Outside of him being fresh from head to toe, he was still broke, and at that point, hungry.

Walking passed the Humble Park Ice Cream stand didn’t make it any better. The smell of grilled hamburgers, hot French fries, and freshly whipped shakes simply made his mouth water that much more. He craved for a mere five dollars so he could purchase something to eat.

Instead, he rushed pass the establishment with his head held down. This shouldn’t be how his birthday played out. He should have a loving set of parents, and all the amenities that came from them providing for him. But he didn’t have that. He had a mother that only cared about her needs opposed to her son’s. If he had to guess, she wouldn’t truly care if he ran away and never came back. That would surely give her the time alone she longed for.

Mulling it over, he pondered actually making that happen. If he could get away, he didn’t know where he would go. For the time being, at least, he had somewhere to call home. It wasn’t much. He didn’t have a bed to sleep on, a clean change of clothes, nor a box of cereal to call his own; however, the roof over his head kept him from getting wet, and the bedroom was his. In those terms, he should be grateful for what little he had. Whereas, he wasn’t. At the tender age of 13, he wanted more out of life.

A truck pulled alongside him as he walked down the street, kicking a rock. He slightly glanced at the truck, unable to see anyone but the driver. The driver looked over at David and pointed. In that instance, Clarice’s head sprung from the man’s lap as she wiped at her mouth.

There was a flash of insanity in her eyes.

David’s legs locked up. He was stuck. For a second, a piece of him was glad she spotted him. Maybe now, she would put him out so he could really fend for himself. Maybe she would get out of the truck, beat him down, and go to jail so the state could take him. Sadly, he was running these scenarios through his mind, unsure of what would happen. The truck pulled to the curb, and Clarice clambered from the truck, trying to fix her bra. David could tell she had been performing some sexual act by the way she pulled at her clothing. He looked upon her approach, and a sickening feeling overcame him.

*How does she expect me to respect her when she doesn’t respect herself?* he asked himself.

Clarice ambled within a foot from her son, and without warning, smacked the side of his milk-chocolate face, leaving a hand print.

David wanted to cry. The stinging from the slap awakened him to the life he would continue to have under his mother’s reign. What he couldn’t understand was why she acted like she cared so much when she previously said she didn’t. Her actions confused him.

“You must think shit is sweet, little boy. Why aren’t you in school?” she asked, looking him up and down. She hauled off and punched him in his mouth. “Who clothes you got on?” she asked.

He sucked on his bottom lip, tasting the blood from a small cut in his gums.

“Boy, you hear me talking to you.” She pretended to take another swing at him. Instead, she grabbed the front of his shirt, and pulled her to him.

He turned away. The unsavory scent of musty balls and a filthy ding dong coated her breath.

“Look at me when I’m talking to you,” she demanded, moving in closer so he could get a full effect of her tart breath. “If you want to run these streets, steal and not bring nothing home to mama, you have shit fucked up. Steal something else and not bring me shit and I’m gonna beat the skin off that ass. Do you understand?”

David nodded.

“Where you get this shit from anyway?”

Holding his breath, “From down the street.”

She’d forgotten about him not being at school. “You see something mama would like?”

He shrugged, not having cared enough to look. “Well, when you go back, find out. I need some new panties, maybe some lingerie and a better bra.”

He looked down at her big jugs.

“Yeah, they big, but find what you can.” She shoved him away. “Now don’t let me catch you walking these streets again.”

He watched her walk off, climb into the truck, and disappear into the man’s lap again.

“This bitch,” he muttered, crossing the street, “didn’t even have the decency to tell me Happy Birthday.”

Crushed, he cut through the alley, and got that feeling in his stomach again. Approaching his favorite dumpster, a man appeared from the rear door, looked around then tossed a hefty trash bag into the bin.

The man eyed David for a second before returning in the building.

David, glad that the man didn’t say anything to him, slinked pass the door to make sure it was close. The word *Farmer’s Market* was stenciled upon the door. He wasn’t sure if that meant what he assumed it meant; but, he would take it for what it was.

He peeked inside of the dumpster to see what it had for him. The locks to the rear door of the Farmer’s Market clicked. In a hasty retreat, David shot down the alley.

The same man exited, and tossed another bag of trash into the trash bin. Through his peripheral, he noticed David bending the corner at lightning speed. Seeing no damage in that, the man returned inside to carry on with his day.

David, on the other hand, slowed halfway down the block, depleted of the little energy he formerly had. He instantly acquired a headache. He also began to feel light headed. He needed to get home so he could lay down.

As he neared the rear of the house, he could hear his mother screaming and cussing. Clearing the side of the house, he shook his head when finding his mother verbally assaulting the woman from across the street.

“Don’t be mad at me cause you’re a lousy bitch, and the man you married ain’t shit either.”

The woman smiled pleasantly as she rounded the front of her car. Not once did she defend the accusation nor the man she married. Seconds later, the man pulled up, and parked behind his wife’s car.

Clarice crossed the street, spitting venom with her words. “Here this little dick bastard is right here. Bitch ass nigga put a baby in me then left me for my best friend. You think you can turn that hoe into a housewife while leaving me with a baby I didn’t want.”

David’s mouth dropped to the ground. The man across the street was his father. And the woman he married and had two kids with was his mother’s ex-best friend. That meant that the bike he used from time to time was his little brother’s. His headache transformed from a minor throbbing to him having a mind-numbing heartache. Disturbed by the news, he hurried into the house, slammed his bedroom door behind him, and slid down the wall in tears.

His young feelings were destroyed. Staring at the bare walls, he didn’t know what to do to service them. He wanted out of this hell-hole. At the very least, he wanted to go to sleep. But, with his mother coming in hooting and hollering, him getting a wink of sleep wouldn’t be in his projected future.

Chapter Two

May 20 - 3 p.m.

After a good hour and a half, Clarice’s anger had subsided to a minimum. That gave David the quietness he yearned for. Taking it in stride, he desperately sought to get some rest. But as soon as he drifted off into a deep slumber, his mother was back at it, yelling at someone knocking on her door.

He jumped up when hearing it was Crystal and Kenyada. “David!!” Clarice shouted, reaching for the pack of cigarettes on the broken table.

David rushed pass her, afraid to look her in the face. She eyeballed him, and intentionally blew smoke into his face on his way to the door. She sucked her teeth. The older he got, the more she despised him.

“I should have aborted your funky ass if I’d known you would grow up to look just like your daddy,” she spat, pulling on the cigarette.

David ignored the remark. What was he to say? He’d known of her hatred for him for some time. That wasn’t anything new. What was, his friends stopping by to see him. As he stepped outside to greet the only two friends he had, he closed the door behind him. Immediately, he saw the worried looks on Crystal and Kenyada’s face.

“What?” David asked.

Crystal looked to Kenyada. “We heard what happened at school. You good?”

“Yeah,” he responded, figuring it wasn’t important to talk about.

“Rumor has it,” Kenyada began, “you and Mrs. Baltes got into a scuffle. You hit her and she got you kicked out of school for good. She even supposedly said something about pressing charges.”

 David had no recollection of such action. Looking up the street, he suddenly expected a train of police cars to ride down on him, and haul him off to jail. However, there wasn’t a Humble Park police officer in sight.

Crystal seen a change in David’s mien. “David, you know we’re here for you, whenever, you need us.” She’d told him that many times before; but, she also knew that he was so headstrong that he wouldn’t ask for their assistance.

He glanced into her face, understanding what she implied. “I’m good, Chris.” He walked in between the two of them, and leaped from the porch. “I know there’s something else to talk about.”

Kenyada followed David, suggesting they head to the Ice Cream stand to celebrate his birthday.

David’s face lit up at the sound of that. “That sounds nice.” His mouth overflowed with water. He could taste the cold dessert before having it in his hand. He took off, purposely leaving Crystal and Kenyada.

“Hold up, David!” Crystal yelled, laughing at his eagerness.

Kenyada watched David, and wondered what was really going on. He’d heard about the guy he beat up, and the reason for the fight. They, both him and Crystal, knew times were hard for him; yet, they never would imagine it being so hard that he’ll break into someone’s house to steal their clothes. Nevertheless, that’s what appeared to have happen, because the clothes he donned were brand new, and they hadn’t seen them before.

*Maybe he held onto them so he could wear them for his birthday.*

It was wishful thinking on Kenyada’s part. Maybe too much wishful thinking. He’d known for far too long that David’s mother refused to put forth the effort to take care of his needs. During the times when David needed the necessities, it was him or Crystal giving him what he needed.

To see him dressed in a clean set of clothes, bathed, and presentable informed them that he had done what the guy said he’d done.

While David led the way to the Ice Cream stand, Kenyada bumped Crystal. “What can we do to truly help him?” he asked, keeping his eye on David.

“I don’t know. I really don’t. It’s evident that he’s doing these things people are saying he’s doing. What I don’t understand is why he’s doing them. He doesn’t have to. He could come to us.”

“It has to be because he doesn’t—"

David stopped abruptly, turned around, and caught them in full conversation about him. “What’s up, you two gonna beat me there or what?”

They caught up with him. Still, the conversation bothered Crystal. She had to ask David about what he did. Pulling him to her, she slid her arm underneath his. “I want to ask you something.”

“What?” he asked, looking into her eyes.

“Did you really break into Brad’s house and steal his clothes?”

David pushed her arm from underneath his. “Why you ask that?”

Crystal peeped his defensive demeanor. “If you did it or not, it’s not gonna change anything with us. We just want to know why you done it. We want to help.”

David stormed off, heading back towards his house. “There’s nothing you can do for me. It’s my mess. I’ll deal with it.” He hung his head in defeat.

“David. WAIT!!” Crystal exclaimed. “Where are you going?”

“I have something to do,” he mumbled, lying to them and himself.

Kenyada ran up behind him and wrapped his arm around him. “Come on, you don’t have shit to do. You gonna celebrate your birthday with us.”

David had totally forgotten about it being his birthday. Crystal’s questions and the events of the morning moved in such a dark cloud that he didn’t feel comfortable under the bright lights of nature’s sun rays.

Crystal pinched the inside of David’s arm. “You gonna act like that with me?” she asked, intertwining her fingers with his.

He smiled in her face. “I see you won’t let me.”

“Why should I?” she asked. “We’re all we got.”

David appreciated the kind words. He softly bumped his head against hers.

Kenyada patted him on the back. “Let’s go get this ice cream, potna.”

Entering Uptown, they stood on the curb watching a white Bentley Flying Spur cruise by. Upon laying his eyes on it, David fell in-love with the car. He watched it cruise down the street until it pulled over, parking in front of the Farmer’s Market.

Crystal tugged on David’s arm, guiding him into the street. David, however, couldn’t take his eyes off the exotic car. He could see himself behind the wheel, and basking in the attention he would receive when bending the corners of Humble Park in it.

The driver climbed from the Bentley in a tailored suit.

Crystal, catching David in a daze, ran the tip of the chocolate-dipped ice cream cone over his nose. “Boy, you better take this before it melts.”

David grabbed it, and walked towards the Farmer’s Market. “I want to get a closer look at that car,” he whispered, leaving his best friends to catch up.

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

Aloysius Farmsworth clambered from the Bentley Flying Spur, slid into a Tom Ford suit jacket, then nudged the car door shut. Buttoning the middle button of the jacket, he stopped short of stepping on the curb when noticing his lawyer pull up. He stepped onto the curb, and calmly stuffed his hands in his pants pockets as he waited for her to join him.

Raven Fox, a short, midnight-black stallion, stepped out of the white Bentley Continental GTC V8 S rocking a white Tom Ford Dress with black stitching, Chanel heels, and carried a black Canali briefcase. As the car door slammed shut, she flashed a glossy white smile as she stepped onto the curb.

“Louis, you’re looking quite dapper today.”

Returning a Colgate smile, he was in awe of how stunning she looked. “If I didn’t need your representation, I would think you were attempting to try me.”

She waltzed pass him. The swaying of her hips from side-to-side gave him a up close and personal peep show. “I am your type, ain’t I?” she giggled. “Isn’t that why you employed me so you could keep me within arm’s length and possibly get the panties,” she flirted.

He grabbed the door for her and inhaled her elegant perfume. “I wouldn’t say all that. But since you bring it up,” he angled himself where she couldn’t enter, “I may as well get a whiff of what you’re cooking.”

She seductively licked her lips. “This is a cup of coffee that may be too strong for you, Aloysius.”

She hardly addressed him by his real name. And when she did, it meant stand down. He cleared the doorway, giving her enough room to enter.

“That’s mighty kind of you, boss.” She playfully rubbed the side of his face.

He openly glanced at her backside stretching the expensive fabric hugging her body.

“Don’t get your eyes poked out exploring the ideas filling your mind, Louis. Your wife wouldn’t appreciate you looking at another chocolate woman like that.”

*Low blow.* Aloysius had been many things in his lifebut a man under a woman’s rule had never been one of them. He didn’t know what it was about Raven. The magnetic surge of energy looming between them was strong. And for the life of him, he couldn’t discern why the matter wouldn’t take form. *Like attracts like,* he surmised.

Aloysius’ attention diverted, momentarily, to the three kids strolling down the street eating ice cream. One, in particular, eyed the Bentley Flying Spur with a different type of look in his eye.

“Hey, little man. You like that car?”

David nodded, as he licked the vanilla ice cream.

“I just bet you do,” Aloysius stated, entering the Farmer’s Market.

“Why you messing with them kids, Louis?” Raven asked, keying in the briefcase’s security code, and unlocking it.

“You have to remember that I was once the kid with that hungry look in my eye. I used to see the older guys with everything they had, and it took me seeing those things that put me in the mind to acquire them.”

Raven pulled a stack of papers from her briefcase, and set them on the table. “It’s only a car.”

“Is that why you drive one?” he asked, pulling out a chair at the round table.

“Actually,” she put her glasses on, “you bought the car.”

“What about the expensive threads you wear on a daily?” he asked, looking her up and down.

“You buy those too?” she replied, separating the stack of papers into two piles. “What are you trying to insinuate, Louis?”

“Nothing,” he replied. “I’m simply pointing out the obvious. If they’re only material things, why do you take them, if, they don’t mean anything to you.”

She glared up at him. “I’m not a materialistic person, Louis. You know this. That doesn’t mean that I don’t like looking good in whatever I put on my back or drive.” She fished out an ink pen. “It just so happens that my boss is generous enough to pay me more than my worth, lavish me with expensive gifts, and make sure I’m seen in the best light possible.” She clicked the pen. “If it was up to me, I wouldn’t have bought Tom Ford anything, spent a quarter million dollars on any car nor turn old liquor stores into private restaurants just so you could have a place to meet daily.”

Aloysius smirked. “Spoken like a true attorney. What would you have done?”

She turned a stack of papers around, and sat the pen on top of it. “I would have done,” she pointed to the *x,* “exactly what I’m doing. Making sure you keep the money coming in so you can spend it how you long to.”

He scribbled his name. She flipped the page, and pointed to the *x* at the bottom of the page.

The door of the Farmer’s Market opened with Moses Bay waltzing in.

“Good Afternoon, Mr. Farmsworth and Ms. Fox.”

“Cut the formalities, Chancellor,” Aloysius retorted, signing his name seventeen more times. “You’re late!”

“A man like myself is never late, baby. I’m always on time. I would like to say, you’re early.”

“The early bird gets the worm,” Aloysius replied, handing Raven her pen back.

“That’s all I have for you to sign at this moment. Once I get everything in order, this merger will take us to the next level. The competition won’t take too kindly to the amount of money draining from their pockets.”

“Whose fault is that?” Moses interceded.

Raven packed up. “That depends on who you ask,” she expressed, clicking the briefcase closed. “I’ll see you gentlemen in a couple of days.” She walked up to Aloysius and planted her hand on his shoulder. “If you have any questions, give me a call.”

“I’ll give you a call, alright,” he joked.

Moses laughed. “Raven, why don’t I ever get the *call me anytime* invitation?”

“Bye, Moses! And, PLEASE, don’t feed into Louis’ nonsense,” she explained, exiting the establishment.

Aloysius turned his attention to Moses. “Is Patricia here yet?

“Patricia!” Moses screamed.

“Yes, sir!” the older lady responded, coming from the kitchen. “Good Afternoon, Aloysius. How are you today?”

“I’m fine, Patricia. What we have on the menu today?

“Some collard greens, mashed potatoes with brown gravy, corn bread and grilled turkey legs. For dessert, a chilled strawberry-covered cheesecake. To wash that down, I have a fresh pitcher of iced tea. Is there anything else you would like?

“No,” he replied. “That’ll do just fine.”

Moses rounded the bar against the left wall and poured himself a Hennessy on the rocks. “This weekend, we need to get with AG and Israel to go over a few things.”

“Like what?” Aloysius asked, curiously.

“I’m hearing the books from two spots hasn’t been correlating as they should. We’re gonna need them to get that in order.”

Patricia set a plate full of greens, mashed potatoes and gravy, two pieces of cornbread, and two turkey legs, in front of Aloysius. He thanked her.

“Let me know if you need anything else,” she said, facing Moses. “Are you hungry, Moses?”

“No, ma’am. I’ll let you know before you go.”

“I’ll fix your plate anyway and put it in the microwave.”

Aloysius bit into the turkey leg, thinking about what Moses had just said. “How long have you known about the books not adding up?”

“It just came to my attention. Sheri noticed the discrepancies a couple of weeks ago. She pointed it out when I popped up for my routine check last week.”

Aloysius washed some greens and cornbread down with the Iced Tea. “There’s no need to wait. Get Albert and Israel in here now. We’re about to get to the bottom of today.”

Chapter Three

May 20 - 8:30 p.m.

Sheri sighed heavily while stripping from her day’s outfit. “This has been one hell of a day, baby.”

Jeremiah, sitting on his side of the king size bed, slipped off his sneakers, and set them together to his left. “I can’t believe she blurted that shit out like that. We talked about how to handle the situation but she’s too stupid to do what’s best for him and her.”

Sheri unclasped her bra to free her 36C’s. “Baby, you have to understand the severity of the situation. We should have known this day would come. She’s an unstable creature. And it will only get worse.”

“And I saw him behind the house last night,” Jeremiah stated, almost forgetting that.

“Doing what?”

“Returning JJ’s bike.”

Sheri walked away from the bed towards the master bath. “You should just buy him one. It is his birthday, you know.”

“Yeah, I know, but I ain’t buying him shit. She’ll only sell it or let it get stolen.”

From inside the bathroom, Sheri replied. “I don’t think so. I’m sure he’ll appreciate it, and cherish the gift.”

Jeremiah didn’t see it that way. He knew Clarice. The bitch in her wouldn’t allow David to fully enjoy a bike being given to him for whatever reason. She was retarded like that. And if he did buy the bike, she would want something too.

“Naw,” he concluded. “I’ll pass.”

The shower sprinkler doused Sheri’s body. As she lathered up, she recalled the meeting she had with Moses during his surprise visit. She hadn’t wanted to bring it up but she had no choice. Her silence would have painted a red flag across her forehead. She refused to allow someone else’s mess up to affect her job.

All in all, she felt like she’d snitched on her husband. That was a feeling she couldn’t live with. She loved Jeremiah with all her heart, and despite taking her best friend’s baby daddy and turning him into her husband and father of her kids, she still had to do what was right by Aloysius’ money.

Rinsing the Madina soap from her back, she turned off the water and stepped out. No matter how much she hated how the truth came out, it was something Jeremiah would have to own up to when the time came. For now, she wouldn’t bring it up to him. Even still, that decision posed a conflicted reality for her.

As the bookkeeper for Aloysius’ illegal businesses, her duty as bookkeeper was to make sure the bottom line remained steady. When she received the payments from the whore houses, gambling spots, or drug locations, it was her business to calculate the funds from each establishment, and log those numbers into the system. Once that was done, the computer ran the numbers through the prescribed equation by taking what each establishment should have done based on the variables at each location. At a click of the button, the totals filled the last row of boxes at the end of each spreadsheet, either equaling the stipulated amount or failing to match it.

When the numbers didn’t match, it was her job to advise the Operational Director of the issue. However, it just so happened that the Chancellor popped up at the Currency Center for his usual surprise visit.

Toweling off, Sheri wandered into the bedroom, and over to her side of the bed. Squeezing a large amount of lotion into her hands, she massaged the Jergens into her skin.

Jeremiah, in only a pair of boxers, laid on top of the covers, staring at the ceiling. His mind was many of miles away from his bedroom. The things that ran through his mind informed him that the man he was today hadn’t stemmed from the things he done in his past. He was the man he was today because he had to be that man. Whereas, he didn’t want to be.

“Jerry, I think I’ll buy him a bike since you don’t want to.”

Jeremiah slowly careened his head into her direction. “What?” he asked, not fully catching her statement.

She paid close attention to her elbows as she rubbed the lotion in. “I said I’ll buy him the bike if you don’t want to.”

He grabbed a hand full of her sewn-in mane, and pulled her towards him. “So, you think you gonna go against what I said?” he asked, climbing on top of her.

She looked up at him, seeing the anger in his eyes. “No, baby!” she exclaimed, seeking to calm the situation. “I’m not doing that. That’s your son, aside from how you and Clarice get along. And you should do that for him.”

He lowered his face to hers. “And if I don’t, you will take it upon yourself to do it, huh?” He slipped in between her legs.

“Not if you don’t really want me to.”

Jeremiah’s little friend eased itself out of the boxer hole as it grew to full attention. “Didn’t I tell you that I wasn’t buying him shit?”

“Yes, you did,” she stated, feeling the tip of Jeremiah at her opening. She grabbed it and guided it inside of her.

He hissed, sliding in to the hilt. “Then why would you defy what I said?”

“I’m not,” she retorted, closing her eyes. “I only want to make you happy.” The slow strokes opened her up.

Jeremiah increased his speed. He nibbled on her earlobe. “When I tell you what I want.” He placed her right leg on his shoulder. “Don’t ever question that nor come up with any bright ideas.” He cupped her left leg and put it on his shoulder. “My word is bond. Do you hear me?” He thrusted deeply into her womb.

“YES!” she moaned, biting her bottom lip. She pulled his face to hers, kissing him. Breaking the kiss, she begged and pleaded, “Please fuck me, baby!”

Kissing her, he bit her bottom lip, and deep-sea dove into her well. That splash gave her everything she wanted and more.

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

 May 20 - 10 p.m.

David scooted the dining room table chair up to the dining room table to feast on the medium rare porterhouse steak swimming in A1 steak sauce, a deliciously dressed baked potato, a buttered stick of corn-on-the-cob, and a host of fried butterfly shrimp. His mouth watered as he picked up his fork and steak knife.

Leaning in to cut a chunk off the steak, a sharp shrill resonated from his left and bounced off the four walls of the dining room. Ignoring the sounds, he shoved the steak into his mouth, dug his fork into the baked potato and sliced through the sour cream, bacon bits, and soft potato filling. Tasting it was like a slice of heaven.

The loud screams penetrated his eardrums once again.

He declined the noises power over him. His mind would remain centered on the lovely meal before him. Yet, they were becoming overwhelming and unsettling. How did his mother expect him to eat in peace when she was doing so much hollering? Getting up from the table, he reached for another piece of his porterhouse, also taking a big bite from the corn-on-the-cob.

The screams, attacking his eardrums, transformed from a pleasurable tone to a heart-wrenching, barbaric expression of madness. The uproar jolted David from his sleep.

Rolling onto his back, he exhaled when realizing he’d been dreaming about the exquisite dinner at a table, in peace. Slapping the hardwood floor, he sat up, and absorbed his mother’s moans. The bestial sounds of her sexual escapades upset his stomach.

Snatching off his socks, he balled them up, and stuffed them into the door hole. That did nothing to keep the screams out. They simply grew louder and louder.

“Whose pussy is this?” the man inquired, smacking Clarice on her backside.

“This your pussy, baby!” she sung, adding flair to their session.

David, however, had heard enough.

“Oh! YES, baby! I’m coming,” Clarice crooned.

The man grunted thunderously. Lowering his head, he pumped inside of Clarice with an eager attempt to get his nut off as well.

“Come on, baby. Nut in me,” Clarice insisted.

That drove the man overboard. “I’m COMING!” he cried out, gripping her slim hips.

Clarice grinded her loveliness on the man’s joystick, draining him of his seed.

“Baby, I really needed that,” the man explained, sliding out of her.

“That’s what I’m here for,” she replied, rolling from underneath him. Climbing to her feet, she darted towards the bedroom door, and slowly opened it. As she sought to catch her breath, she wiped the beads of sweat from her brow. “Baby, don’t get too relaxed,” she declared, peering over her shoulder. “Mama will be right back.” She smiled. “Let me grab something to drink and my cigarettes.”

David was standing in the hallway, staring at her naked body as she walked out of her room.

“What the fuck you looking at, you little perverted ass bastard?” she asked, running her hand across her forehead. “Your nasty ass was listening to me fuck, wasn’t you? “

David shook his head.

“Yes, you was, bastard.” She lunged him; her flabby breasts swung from left to right.

Ducking her approach, he broke towards the front door with her hot on his trail.

“I know your muthafucking ass bet not leave this house.”

David had every intention of jerking that door open, and bolting down the street. He didn’t care what she had to say. He wouldn’t be sticking around for her to put her sweaty mitts on him. Feeling the wind from her wild blow, he yanked the door, squeezed through the small opening, and fled her offensive attack. That didn’t stop her from following him outside.

Completely naked, sweating and panting, Clarice stood on the porch, screaming at the top of her lungs. “You got to come back, bitch. And I’ll be waiting.”

A car rode pass, and tooted its horn.

“Man, fuck you!” she spat, adding a finger to second her verbal assault.

Her date appeared at the door. “Baby, let him go and come back inside. Big daddy need some attention.”

Instantly, Clarice soften, and spun on her heels. “And big mama damn sure knows how to make big daddy happy.”

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

Out of breath, David slowed as he neared Crystal’s house. He hadn’t wanted to run to her but he didn’t have anywhere else to go. She said she would always be there for him, and he really wanted to believe that. He also believed that he would have a mother that would love him, provide for him, and nurture him how mothers supposed to, too.

Nevertheless, that’s not what he had. He had a mother that didn’t give a shit about him, in any capacity. If she wasn’t showing him how less of a person she thought of him, she had no problem verbalizing it as well. The woman had many issues, and let her tell it, he was at the root of them all.

David tapped on Crystal’s bedroom window. Nothing happened. Tapping on it again, he thought he seen the curtains move but she hadn’t come to the window. Accepting that as she didn’t want to be bothered, he slinked through the backyard, and into the alley.

Walking pass an empty trash can, his stomach grumbled. The memory of the ice cream cone from earlier returned. As he thought about it, his stomach done a back-flip. He knew what that meant. He had to shit.

With Crystal being unresponsive, and his mother on a war path, he had to do the next best thing. Rounding the side of a trash can, his stomach bubbled. He could feel his guts boiling over. Unbuckling his pants, he was ready to cop a squat in the alley. But, a Humble Park police cruiser cruised by, bringing that thought to an end. Then, he had to think about it. How would he wipe his behind if he took a dump in the alley?

Looking around, he observed the rear of the houses in his close proximity. All of them were dark. Patting his back pocket, he searched for his trusty credit card. Locating it, he needed to choose a house to break into so he could take a dump.

He closed his eyes, spun around in a 360-degree circle, and pointed in front of him. Opening his eyes, his finger directed him to a single-family home with a car parked in the backyard. The gate was already open. He looked around for a second option. The other houses in the vicinity didn’t fare so well in comparison to his original pick.

Pulling out the credit card, he crept into the backyard, by the car and up to the back door. He tried the knob to make sure it was lock. Finding that it was, he worked the wedge and popped the door open. Holding the door knob, he eased the door open, and slid in. The fire alarm chirped upon him entering the house. The chirp halted his progress.

Suddenly, he was spooked.

The house was quiet. All the lights were off, and he had no idea where the bathroom was. His stomach dropped, urging him to find it regardless. Clutching his stomach, he slipped pass the kitchen table, out of the kitchen, and into the living room. The house was so dark, he could barely see anything in front of him. Sliding over to the wall, he let the wall direct him deeper into the house. His hand rammed into a door frame on the wall. Patting around the door frame, the doorway was clear, meaning the door was open.

A distorted snore escaped the bedroom across from his location.

Dipping into the open doorway, he used his hands to navigate his way around the room. He knocked over something causing it to fall into the bathroom sink. That made quite a loud noise.

The snoring stopped.

David didn’t know what to do. His legs locked up. He was in a stranger’s house trying to use the bathroom. His stomach done another backflip. He willed his legs to move. Just as he did, the nightstand lamp in the bedroom sprung on. Turning towards the light, his shadow illuminated outside the bathroom. He was frozen in that spot, staring into the bedroom.

The nightstand draw was yanked open, and the .357 resting inside came out to play.

Hearing the gun being cocked, David sucked in his stomach, spun away from the bathroom, at, about the same time the first shot rang out. The shot drove into the drywall, merely inches in front of him. Blinking back his fear, he took off and traced the path that brought him to that point. He cut through the kitchen, and out the backdoor without closing it. Breathing uncontrollably, he definitely grasped the need to find another toilet. Because, as he peered over his shoulder, trying to use that was too dangerous.

Chapter Four

May 20 – Midnight

Returning to Crystal’s window, David’s nervousness forced him to pound on the glass a little too hard. The shaking of the glass quickly awoken her. She snatched the curtain back, knowing it was him. Raising the window, she stepped away from it and climbed back in her bed.

David closed the window, glad to be in a safe environment.

“What you doing out this time of night?” she asked.

He sat on the floor next to her bed. “My mama woke me up with her screams. We got into it because she thought I was listening to her have sex.”

She rubbed the top of his head. “Are you hungry?”

Of course, he was hungry. What kind of question was that?

“A little,” he stated, trying to minimize the obvious. “And I have to use the bathroom.”

“Go ahead. You know where it’s at.” She threw the covers to the side. “I’ll make you a sandwich, and get you some chips.”

In her half bath, David blew the commode through the floor, splashing doo-doo everywhere. The ice cream had done something to his insides. He couldn’t be sure what, but whatever it was gave him the runs.

Finishing up, he washed his hands, and re-joined Crystal. She had a turkey and cheese deli sandwich, a bag of Doritos, and a glass of lemonade on her desk. He devoured it within a minute tops.

She rolled over. “If you want something else, let me know.”

“I’m good.” He’d emptied the contents of his stomach, and refilled it with a good sandwich, he couldn’t ask for much more than that.

“Alright,” she responded. “You know where the covers are. I’m going back to sleep.”

Within minutes, she was out cold. In the meantime, David made a pallet with some old quilts. He didn’t mind sleeping on the floor, considering his bed had always been made of wood. To have the luxury of some cover only made sleeping on the floor that grander. But, he couldn’t sleep.

No matter what he tried, he couldn’t get comfortable. His mother’s words crept into his mind, haunting him. He wondered how she could treat him so harshly. And if that wasn’t terrible, how could she allow him to stay across the street from his father, and not tell him.

He pulled the quilt over his head. It smelled of Crystal, so fresh and so clean. That disturbed him. Actually, it made him mad. *What have I done to be treated so unfairly?* He sat up to sit against the wall.

Crystal, with her head under her covers, let out a soft snore. For a brief second, he listened to her sleep until his mind traveled elsewhere. Pulling his legs to his chest, he rested his head on his arms. Closing his eyes, he thought of the life he would have if he had a different mother and father. Would he have clean clothes and bedding for his friends to use upon spending the night over his house? Would he be able to offer those same friends something to eat any time they were in need of it?

Thinking about that changed his perspective on how he viewed his overall predicament. And the more he tried making sense of his chaotic existence, he found himself privy to the harsh reality that he was the only one who would care enough to change it.

Rising to his feet, he raised the window, and climbed out of it. He couldn’t use his friends because he lacked the necessary means to have what they had. Somehow, someway, he would have to get what he needed without the assistance of anyone feeling sorry for him. At the core of him, it didn’t feel right going to others for help. He was an able-minded human being, and as long as he had breath in his lungs, he would have to use his mind to acquire any and everything he longed for.

The Bentley Flying Spur came to mind.

Smiling, he cut through the alley, approached one of the houses he had to choose from before, and pulled out the credit card. Sliding the card within the wedge, he made entry into the house. It was time to start getting everything he needed out life, starting with whatever he could find in this house.

May 2 - 11 a.m.

Jeremiah ripped open the wrapper for the urine analysis cup and sat it on the table in front of him.

Angela, a good earner, sat across from him, legs crossed, playing with the tongue-ring in her mouth. Her cocoa butter stick complexion glowed in the dimly lit room.

“Why you keep giving me these stupid drug test?” she asked. “I don’t do drugs. I suck dick, and is very good at it. Why don’t you test those skills, since you like testing shit?” She smirked.

Jeremiah scooted the cup across the table. “You know I can’t fraternize with the girls.”

“That’s a damn lie. You just don’t want to fuck with me. I heard about you. You like it rough.” She leaned forward. “So, do I!” She clacked the tongue-ring on her front teeth. “You can pull my hair, smack the shit out of me, and choke me until I’m blue in the face. I’m with all that shit.”

Jeremiah had to catch himself. Under normal circumstances, he would have taken her up on the offer. Yet, he had to remain professional with her. She wasn’t the most stable one of the bunch. That didn’t mean she wasn’t good at what she did. The girl had skills. He’d heard all about them. And where he had wanted to test her out, the incident with her slicing one of the security guards for fucking one of the other girls revealed that dealing with her had other implications.

“Can you please piss in the cup and bring it back?” he said, holding fast to his duties.

She grabbed the cup. “You sure you don’t want to join me.”

“I’m absolutely sure,” he replied, sucking his teeth.

“It’s your lost,” she explained, gliding out of the office, and putting an extra twitch in each step.

Kris, the head bitch, appeared at the door. “How many you doing tonight?”

“Five,” he responded, thinking about the girls he had on his roster.

“Names?” she asked, sparking up a cigarette, and leaning her plump body against the door frame.

From memory, he rattled off four names. “Shirley, Brook, Amy and Shay.”

“I’ll send them in as soon as I find them.”

Angela returned with her cup half full, and set it on the table. “It took me a minute to get you off my mind so I hope you’re not mad at me for taking too long.”

Jeremiah glanced at his watch. In three minutes, he’ll know the results of the drug test.

Angela sat down, and gaped her legs open. The camel toe puffing through her jeans made him wonder. Except, he couldn’t be doing that kind of wondering. He already knew what dealing with her entailed.

Shirley and Brook stopped by his office. He came from under the desk with two drug tests. Neither one of them resisted taking them. They both sashayed to the restroom, and returned the cups half-full.

“Thank you!” He pulled the tab off of Angela’s. It read negative. Looking up at her, “You good. I’ll see you next time.”

“You can see me tonight.” She wouldn’t let up.

The white girl Amy waltzed in. “What’s good, Jerry?”

He handed her a drug test. She gave him a second glance, hesitating to take it. Sensing her delay, he glared at her, curious to what her issue was.

“What’s good, Amy? You dirty?”

“Naw, it’s not that.”

“Then, what is it?” he asked.

She lied. “I was in the middle of something.”

“And the faster you piss in this cup, the sooner you can get back to that.”

She reluctantly picked it up, and headed towards the bathroom. He watched her amble off as if she knew she would fail the test. Failing that test had consequences. She knew that. By the look on her face, she didn’t want to suffer those consequences.

Angela rose to leave. She stopped, peeked over her shoulder, and blew him a kiss. “You know where to find me. I’ll be waiting.”

Paying her no mind, he could hear Shay loud mouth coming down the hall. She loved being the center of attention. If it wasn’t about being seen, it was about being heard. When she wasn’t trying to get all the clients for herself, she was hating on those who had her but didn’t want her anymore. She strutted into his office like she owned the place.

“What’s up, Jerry? You called for me.”

Without saying a word, he sat the drug test on the table.

“Boy!” she yelled, going to close the door.

Amy stopped her, and handed Jeremiah the cup. “We good?”

“We’ll see in three minutes. I’ll find you if there’s any problems,” he answered, returning his attention to Shay.

She closed the door behind Amy. “What you doing calling me in here to piss in a cup? That’s not what we talked about.”

“I have to call you in here to take it. And everyone has to know that I called you in here to take it. That’s how it works. You think I can let you get away with everything.”

In a school-girl voice, “No, honey. I don’t expect you to do that.” She pulled the bra straps off her shoulder. “I’m sorry, baby. I don’t know what I was thinking.” She pulled her boy short up into her crotch. “Let me make it up to you.”

“Not right now,” he said, sitting upright. “I have shit to do. That’ll have to wait.”

“Come on,” she pleaded. “Give me five minutes of your time.” She rounded the desk, seeing a bulge in his pants. “He’s willing to give me five minutes.” She dropped to her knees and placed her hands on his knee.

Jeremiah breathed in his cravings. Slightly glancing at his watch, he still had some other business to take care of at the other spot. If he spent most of the night here, he wouldn’t make it in time to conduct the drug tests there. Shay caressed his hardness through his jeans. He pushed her hand away.

“Come on, baby. It’s been a minute since you let me suck on him. I’m fiending for some of that dick.”

He stood, giving her the idea that he’ll let her have what she wanted. She went for his zipper. He smacked away her hand. She was persistent. He went across her cheek with an open hand left.

“Didn’t I tell you to stand down?”

She wouldn’t let up. He’d smacked her before. Taking the left in stride, she had one thing on her mind. She wanted to taste his meat.

He went into her jaw with a half-balled fist. Her head bumped the edge of the table. Still, the love tap wouldn’t deter her.

“You about to give me this dick,” she commanded.

“What I’m about to give you is an ass whooping. That’s what I’m about to do.”

By the time the seriousness in his voice registered, she’d taken a series of sledgehammers to the face. She blinked back stars, wishing someone stopped playing with the lights. After the fifth or sixth blow, all she remembered was wanting to reconsider her needs, wants, and desires.

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

May 21 - 7 a.m.

Clarice stepped out on the porch in her robe to smoke a cigarette. She’d been running her one-hundred dollar an hour empire all night, and closed down shop an hour ago to find that David hadn’t come home yet. She expected him to sneak in during one of her session, however, he hadn’t.

“He must think I’m playing with him,” she mumbled, putting the cigarette between her lips, and pulling hard.

Across the street, Sheri walked her two sons to the car, and shuffled them in the back seat. Over the roof, she noticed Clarice eyeballing her. She knew this wouldn’t be a nice confrontation. Instead of pretending they weren’t the best of friends any longer, she figured time would have healed Clarice’s wounds. Yet, it hadn’t.

Clarice ogled Sheri rounding the rear of her car. “This bitch right here,” she muttered, flicking the cigarette butt into the grass. “Hey HOE!” she shouted, waving her hand high in the sky.

Sheri climbed into her car, and caught a glance of Jeremiah pulling up behind her. As he clambered out, David came strolling down the street with a book bag in his hand. Jeremiah had never seen David with a book bag, knew he didn’t own one, and automatically assumed he stole it from somewhere. The father in him wanted to approach him about it.

Before he could make a definite decision, Clarice stormed up to him, grabbed David by the collar, and smacked him upside the head.

“What the fuck is your problem, you funky bitch?” She punched him in the back of his neck.

He struggled to break free.

“Where you think you going?” she asked, kicking at his legs.

He separated himself from her. “Will you stop?” he asked, holding the book bag in front of him. “Please chill out!” he pleaded. “I got something for you. Remember them panties you wanted. I got two brand new pair for you. They lace too.”

She calmed down. “You get me a bra? “

“Not yet, but I’m working on it.” He backed up their sidewalk.

“What else you got for me?” She eyed the bag.

He had to think quick, because, that’s all he had for her. Everything else in the bag was his.

“Some jewelry,” he said. “You like jewelry, don’t you?”

Her hand caressed her neck. “A girl loves jewelry, son.” She was flattered.

“Well come on and let’s go inside so you can see what I got.”

Clarice’s entire attitude changed. For once in her life, she was happy that he was her son.

Across the street, Jeremiah seen a totally different scene playing out. *That boy will grow up to be fucked up just like his mother, and there’s nothing I can do about it.* Turning to go in the house, he subsequently made the decision that it’ll be best to keep his two cents to himself.

Chapter Five

May 21 - 9:30 a.m.

The rear entrance of the Farmer’s Market opened with Moses exiting with a trash bag in his hand. Lifting the trash bin’s lid, he tossed the bag inside, and turned to return inside. Mid-way through his rotation, he spotted the little boy from the other day wandering down the alley. His head was down and his hands were in his pockets.

Watching the little one carefully, Moses called him over.

The little fellow stopped, removed his hands from his pockets, and studied Moses from afar.

“Come here,” Moses insisted, waving the kid over.

Cautiously, the kid approached Moses.

“What’s your name, kid?”

“David.”

“Why aren’t you in school?”

The incident between him and the kid at school trickled to the forefront of his mind. “Got kicked out for fighting.”

“Fighting for what?” Moses longed to know.

“I was accused of stealing.”

Moses found the accusation interesting. “Did you?”

“Did I what? “

“Did you steal whatever they accused you of stealing?”

David pondered his response. To admit that he had stolen would solidify him as a thief. Yet, if he lied, that would make him a liar. In his book, he’ll rather be a thief rather than a liar.

“Yeah, I stole it. But I didn’t have a choice. It was my birthday and I needed some new clothes to wear.”

Moses nodded, appreciating the honesty. “I take it you’re still wearing the stolen clothes?” he asked, noticing the wrinkles in those he wore.

David looked down, and nodded.

Patricia appeared at the door with another trash bag.

“Moses, I need your help with something.” She glanced over at David. “Hey, little fellow.”

“Hi”

“You hungry?” she asked.

His stomach screamed *Yes!* but his mind planned to downplay his hunger.

Before he could respond, she invited him in so she could fix him some breakfast. Moses motioned for David to step inside. In doing so, he entered the rear entrance of the Farmer’s Market, unaware of what to expect.

As Moses locked the door behind them, David stood close to the door, and stared into the state-of-the-art chef’s kitchen. Inside the small area, skillets were placed on the stove, bowls were removed from the cabinets, and eggs were being cracked.

Moses urged David further into the kitchen area.

“How many eggs you want?” Patricia asked David.

“I don’t know.”

She glanced his way, not expecting that answer. “How many does your mother usually make you?”

“None.”

Patricia’s head snapped in David’s direction, then Moses.

Moses ambled over to David, and leaned on the counter in front of them. “Who is your mama?”

“Clarice Thrine.”

Patricia sighed, knowing what kind of woman Clarice was. It all made sense to why he hadn’t gotten an egg made. Clarice had no time to make eggs. Her time and energy went into turning tricks, and putting powder up her nose.

Moses directed David to follow him. “Let’s go into my office and have a talk. Patricia will bring your food when it’s done.”

David shyly wandered behind Moses, unclear of how to feel. He’d told them who his mother was and they had fallen silent. The looks they exhibited hadn’t been those of delight to hear her name. However, their facial expressions told him that they knew just how unfit she was. How was he to look at these people that already knew he was in a losing situation?

In Moses’ office, Moses gestured for David to sit down.

David inhaled the fresh scent of leather, and a burning incense. He had never been in an office like this before. The theme surrounded the clashing of several dark colors with the dark stained wood accentuating the decor.

Moses pulled a Monte Cristo cigar from the box on top of his large desk, and snipped the end of it. “How old are you?”

David stared into Moses’ eyes, picking up on him having a lazy eye. “Thirteen.”

“What are your plans for this summer?”

David shrugged his shoulders. “I haven’t thought about it.”

Moses tried reading David. “Where was you headed?”

David thought about the jewelry in his pocket. “To sell some jewelry.”

“Is it stolen? “

David lowered his head, indicating with his silence that it was.

“Let me see it.”

David reluctantly pulled it out, and placed it on the desk.

Moses reached over and grabbed it. “This isn’t gonna get you much,” he said, trying to untangle the tarnished gold chain, and bracelet. “Is this all you got?”

David pulled out two rings, and another bracelet. He was now upset that he’d given his mother the best of what he had. Had he kept that gold link chain, ankle bracelet, and diamond rings, he would have a good selection for a buyer to choose from.

Moses reclined in his oversized leather chair. “How much you want for this stuff?”

“I don’t know,” he replied, unaware of what it was truly worth. “I want whatever I can get for it.” Not telling him what he really wanted.

Moses sought to test David. “I’ll give you $50 for everything.”

“What are you gonna do with it?” he asked, looking around the office.

Moses watched him check out the antique pictures on the walls, the expensive lamps, and artifacts topping off the theme inside the office.

“What difference does it make if you want to sell it?”

David regressed momentarily, thinking about the $50 offer. According to the merchandise, he expected to get at least $100 for all of it. He had no idea where that amount came from. That was the number that stuck in his head.

“I think I’ll do better taking my goods elsewhere. $50 is too low.”

Moses held back his smile. “What are you looking to get?” he picked up the tangled necklace. “This necklace is tarnished, and knotted. The same goes for the bracelet. $50 is a good price for this stuff, considering its condition.”

David stood. “Give me $100, and I’ll give you this stuff. BUT, I’ll bring you something even better tomorrow.”

Moses smiled, “And how do you expect to do that?” curious to David’s response.

Hesitating, “I can’t tell you that.”

Moses put a flame to the cigar. Taking a huge toke, he blew the smoke to his right. “I’ll give you the $100 but I need you to sit down. I have a better business proposition for you.”

“Business proposition?” David asked, confused to the meaning.

“Yeah, and it consist of offering you a job.”

Patricia knocked on the door, and entered without waiting for admittance. She crossed the office, and sat David’s breakfast on Moses desk.

“Here you go, honey. If you want anything else, let me know.”

David examined the plate full of freshly prepared food, and couldn’t take his eyes off of it. For a moment, he was afraid to consider it was his. He figured this had to be a trick.

Patricia sensed his hesitation. “Go ahead, honey, and eat. There’s more where that came from.”

David looked up at her. In return, he received a soothing look.

She took a step closer. “There’s no need to worry here, sweetie. You’re in good hands.”

That’s all he needed to hear. He grabbed the plate, and devoured the food immediately.

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

May 21 – Noon

Sheri strolled into the Farmer’s Market, removed her sunglasses from her face and stuffed her clutch underneath her arm. As she adjusted her eyes, she zoomed in on David sweeping behind the counter.

Moses stepped out of his office, then gestured for Sheri to step inside.

Crossing the sitting area, she couldn’t keep her eyes off of David. *What is he doing here?*

Patricia rounded the corner, waved at Sheri, and checked on David.

For the first time, David looked up, and seen Sheri. Her presence gave him a headache. He clenched his teeth, flexed his jawline, and tightly gripped the broom handle. The hurt little boy in him wanted to give her a good whack upside her head. Except, he couldn’t allow his mother’s hatred for her affect him. She hadn’t done anything to him, besides take his father away. Even then, he couldn’t see it being all her fault. His mother had a perfect way of pushing people away.

Patricia felt the slight tension looming. Interceding, she gave David another task to do. “Don’t worry about getting that trash up. Get ready to throw those trash bags sitting by the back door in the dumpster out back.”

David heard her; yet, he didn’t move. Patricia took the broom from him. His eyes still remained glued to Sheri.

Moses stepped out of his office again, and snapped his fingers. Sheri snapped out of her trance, and rushed into his office.

Patricia softly patted David on the shoulder. “Come on, baby. Let me show you how to unlock the back door.

In Moses’ office, he zipped up the money pouch, and handed it to Sheri. “Louis wants to speak with you.”

That notice startled her. “Why?” The fearfulness in her voice she couldn’t hide.

“You’ll find out soon enough.”

Sheri’s heart skipped two beats; her hands instantly began to shake, and her palms became clammy. This was a first. She’d never had to speak with the Premier before. Her dealings with anyone of the upper echelon solely surrounded her brief interaction with Moses: The Chancellor and Aloysius’ righthand man. To be required to speak with the boss worried her. The door to Moses’ office opened, and Aloysius casually walked in. She was speechless. The Tom Ford suit fitted his 5’9½” frame perfectly. The masculine scent escaping his skin mesmerized Sheri to the point she crossed her legs to hide her astonishment.

Moses rose to greet his boss/best friend. “What’s up?”

Aloysius embraced the Chancellor, while staring down at Sheri. “Everything is everything,” he replied, breaking the embrace. “How are you?” he asked, addressing Sheri.

“I’m­—" Her tongue dried suddenly. Swallowing hard, “I’m great. How about you?”

“That depends on why the bottom line for a few of your husband’s spots aren’t adding up.”

Sheri didn’t want to come off defensive, nor defend her husband’s account. Whatever her husband had done wouldn’t and couldn’t affect what her job consisted of.

“Sir, I have no clue to why the numbers were off.” She planted both feet on the floor. “I stumbled across the discrepancy, and I reported it. Regardless of who runs the spots, that’s what my job consists of.”

A light knock came to the office door. Aloysius reached for the handle to open it. David stood on the other side, fragrantly ogling Aloysius.

“Who are you?” Aloysius asked.

Moses rose. “That’s Clarice’s kid. I hired him to clean up around here.”

“Clarice?” he questioned, zeroing in on Sheri. She looked away. “But, isn’t—"

“Yeah,” Moses jumped in, rounded the desk and hurried passed Aloysius. “What’s up?” he asked David.

“Ms. Patricia wanted to know what you wanted for lunch.” He looked into Moses’ face, then Aloysius.

“I’ll be there in a second,” Moses insisted, trying to shoo him away.

Aloysius wanted to have a word with the new hire.

“Hold up, lil daddy.”

David, half-turned, stopped, then looked back at Aloysius. “Yeah?”

“Come in. Let me holler at you for a minute. You the kid I seen yesterday admiring my car.”

The Bentley Flying Spur popped into David’s mind.

Aloysius dismissed Sheri for the time being. “We’ll thoroughly discuss this matter at a later date. If you find any more issues, report it immediately.”

“Yes, sir,” she replied, before leaving the office.

Aloysius strolled around Moses’ desk, and sat in his chair. Moses sat where Sheri once was, and David stood just inside the door. A bout of nervousness overcame him.

Aloysius grabbed a fresh Monte Cristo cigar from the box on Moses’ desk, and sniffed it. “Moses, what brings lil daddy to us?”

“Some stolen jewelry,” Moses answered.

“Whose stolen jewelry?”

Moses turned to David.

David shrugged.

“I’ll assume it’s not my jewelry,” Aloysius stated, firing up the cigar.

David watched Aloysius puff on the cigar, curious to how the cigar tasted.

Aloysius eyed David closely through the smoke lingering around his head. “How is your mother?” he asked David.

Once again, he shrugged.

“That’s expected. She’s never been the one to remain consistent. But how are you managing under her roof?”

“As best as I can.”

“Hence, the stolen jewelry, right?” Aloysius asked.

David nodded, not liking the grilling.

Aloysius glanced at Moses. “How long will we have lil daddy with us?”

“For the summer.”

Aloysius returned his gaze to David, pulled on the cigar and had a question. “What are you seeking to take from this experience?”

David’s countenance revealed that he had no idea what Aloysius referred to.

“Let me rephrase the question so you can get a better understanding. What drives you to want this job?”

“Money!” David said flat out.

“Money?” Aloysius questioned, inhaling the cigar smoke. “What do you expect to do with the money earned?”

“Buy stuff.”

“Stuff like what?”

David wasn’t seeing the purpose for this line of questioning.

“What are your needs?”

David shrugged.

“If I gave you five dollars right now, what would you buy with it?”

“Something to eat,” David answered, having a taste for an Oreo blizzard.

“That’s a necessity, along with clothing and shelter. I take it you don’t get the basics in your household, and that’s why, at your age, you want to work to make money.”

“Something like that.”

Aloysius gave him a confused look. “Please elaborate,” he requested.

“On what?” David asked, not knowing what elaborate meant.

“Tell me what else you want to purchase with the money made.”

A clear picture of the Bentley Flying Spur popped up. “I don’t know. I guess there’s a lot of things I want to buy.”

Aloysius put the cigar in the ashtray. “Shouldn’t you be in school right now?”

“Yeah, but I got kicked out for fighting.”

“Interesting,” Aloysius said, getting to his feet and rounding the desk. “This is what I’m gonna do for you.” He placed his hand on David’s shoulder. “When you’re not cleaning up around here, I’m gonna take you with me so you can learn a few of life’s lessons. How does that sound?”

David shrugged.

Aloysius laughed. “And the first lesson is this: talk to me using words, not body gestures. Shrugs is a shoulder exercise, not a form of communication.”

Moses snickered.

David didn’t find that funny; but, felt it wasn’t a stab at his innocence either. Instead of getting upset about it, he decided to roll with the flow, and accept Aloysius challenge.

Aloysius patted him on the back. “If that’s cool with you, I’ll be seeing you later, lil daddy. But for now, go tell Patricia to fix us some hamburgers and French fries. Me and Moses has some things to talk about.”

“Is that it?” David questioned.

Aloysius chuckled. “Yeah, that’s it, lil daddy.” He turned to Moses. “I think I’m gonna like him a lot. Maybe a little bit more than I like you.”

That made them both burst out in laughter.

Chapter Six

May 21 – 3p.m.

Shemeka, the tallest girl from the group, intentionally bumped Kenyada’s arm as they walked down the street. When he didn’t pay her any mind, she pinched his side to gain his attention.

He pulled her to him, and wrapped his arm around her waist. “What’s up with you?” he asked, letting his hand fondle her behind.

“You already know,” she cooed. “I’m trying to spend some alone time with you.”

Kenyada smiled, knowing he wanted the same thing. He’d been trying to get with her for a while now. All the times they were supposed to hook up, something arose which hindered that. Today was different.

The group, consisting of Kenyada, Shemeka, and two of her classmates, laughed and giggled about the days’ events at school. By this being the last week of school, everyone was gearing up for the summer and what the hot months could bring. While some had no plans at all, others had their minds set on relaxing and spending as much time as they could be having fun.

They walked passed the Farmer’s Market.

Shemeka slowed, then pointed into the establishment. “Look, Ken. There’s David.”

Looking himself, Kenyada waltzed up to the window and tapped on it.

David glanced up and saw his best friend smiling back at him. Nodding, he turned to see Moses exiting his office, wondering who was stupid enough to be beating on the storefront’s window.

“That’s one of my best friends,” David retorted, giving him a *can I go* look.

“Tell him not to beat on that window like that. But you can go ahead and kick it with your friends.”

David raced to put the broom up, and sped out of the restaurant quickly to join Kenyada and the young ladies.

Slapping fives with Kenyada, “What’s good?” David asked.

“It looks like you,” one of Shemeka’s friends said, flashing her pretty smile.

David gazed into her grey eyes, admired her evenly toned light-skin and inviting stare.

Kenyada stood to her left, urging David to go for it.

“I see you’re getting yourself together,” the girl said, strolling up to him. “If you don’t know me, my name is Zion.”

“How … It’s nice to meet you, Zion.”

Everyone chuckled at his stuttering. Kenyada had never seen his friend like this. Usually, he’d showed more versatility with how he responded to the ladies. Even with him having less than others, he didn’t let that determine how he would carry himself.

“We’re about to go to my house to chill. You want to come with?” she asked, reaching for his arm.

Tensing up, he had to mentally tell himself to relax. *There’s nothing to be afraid of.*

Zion picked up on his nervousness, and thought it was cute. “You don’t have to be afraid of me.” She moved in closer, intertwining her hand with his.

The physical contact got him a little excited.

“Come on y’all. Let’s go!” Shemeka yelled, guiding Kenyada down the street.

The third wheel dismissed herself, and headed home to be alone since she didn’t have anyone to play with. That didn’t bother Shemeka or Zion. Shemeka whispered into Kenyada’s ear, and told him about all the things she wanted to do to him. In return, he nibbled on her ear, and got her ready to do everything she bragged about doing.

David walked behind them, holding Zion’s hand. He was unable to come up with anything to talk about.

 That gave her all the time she needed to do all the talking. “I’m interested in getting to know you, David. I’m glad I ran into you.” She swung their arms in the air. “I’ve always liked you, and now I get to show you how much.” She kissed him on the cheek.

David didn’t know how to react. *You always liked me. You’re two years older than me. You could have anyone from your class. What does she mean she’s always liked me? She probably never noticed me until now.* Still, he continued to let her do all the talking.

“I hope you don’t have a girlfriend because I’m hoping me and you could be more than friends.”

David looked at her, and seen a sincere glare that matched her words. He pulled her closer.

“I’m sure we can make some kind of arrangement.”

Kenyada and Shemeka playfully climbed Zion’s front steps, laughing and pulling at one another’s clothes. Zion opened the door. Shemeka, pulling Kenyada, rushed inside and left David to close the door behind them. Shemeka directed Kenyada to the downstairs spare bedroom so they could have some privacy.

David gave his best friend a thumb up.

Zion stood at the base of the stairwell, and held her hand out. “Come on, David. I want to show you my room.”

Grabbing her hand, the sweatiness of his palms informed her of his excitement. She smiled at him and hooked her index finger with his.

Rounding the corner upstairs, they entered her room. “This is my room,” she stated pointing to the bed. “Please have a seat.”

Before he could sit, she climbed on top of him, grabbed his face, and went in for a sloppy kiss. He struggled to get into the groove of her aggressiveness. She ripped at his clothes, and hers alike. He’d never been pounced on like this before. Actually, he’d never been in this position before. He was a virgin.

“Take my bra off,” she instructed.

He had the hardest time getting it unlatched. His hands were trembling from fear of breaking it. Finally getting it, her young jugs smothered him, giving him more than a mouth full.

She attacked his pants, searching for the muscle she so truly desired. She yanked his pants over his knees, and down to his ankles. As he stepped out of them, she stepped back, and stripped to her birthday suit.

David’s excitement stretched to full stature upon seeing her nakedness.

Zion blushed, approached him and climbed back on top of him. She grasped his hardness, ready to guide him inside of her.

“Wait!” he exclaimed. “Shouldn’t we use a condom?” he asked, wanting to be smart about this.

She slid him inside of her. “You don’t need a rubber, baby. You’re my man now. And this is your water park to play in.”

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

May 21 - 5 p.m.

Aloysius’ attorney, Raven Fox, set the original Request for Funds down on the conference table, and took off her glasses. “Louis, this is a good request for funds. The City Council is looking to start a Master Mind Alliance kids camp for the summer. This would be perfect to invest in.”

“Give them the money then.”

Raven chuckled. “You haven’t asked how much they’re asking for,” she pointed out, flipping to the last page.

He irresponsibly waved off the notion of needing to care, and changed the subject.

“Izzy, where are we with evening out the books?”

Izzy, formally known as Israel Towers, the Operational Director or “Overlord”, was one huge man to reckon with. He’d acquired his desirable position by being the more aggressive one when he didn’t have to be. But what was more important was his business sense. Unlike most burly men, he was more brains than brawn, and very knowledgeable in business management. It was his money conscious outlook that won Aloysius’ vote.

“As of now, it’s being investigated. It makes no sense to start the blame game until we get some hardcore facts surrounding the suppose discrepancy.”

A knock came to Aloysius’ office door.

“Yeah!” he screamed.

Patricia cracked open the door slightly to peek her head in. “Sir, you have Council member Monroe Farley here to see you.”

Aloysius glared at Raven.

“I told him to stop by to pick up the paperwork on his way home.” She studied his countenance. Something was bothering him. She had no clue what it was. “I hope that doesn’t pose a problem, Premier.”

“No, Counselor.” His demeanor changed. “That doesn’t pose a problem at all. Let’s not keep Mr. Farley waiting.”

Monroe Farley, a man in his late 50s, leaned his pudgy frame against the bar, and nursed the stiff shot of Avion Tequila Patricia served him. Seeing Aloysius’ approach, he downed the liquor, and used the back of his hand to wipe at his salt-and-pepper goatee. The stinging of the tequila in the back of this throat instantly caused a few hairs to sprout upon his chest. He could feel them maturing as he watched Aloysius’ approach.

“Good Afternoon, Councilman. It’s such a pleasure for you to stop by,” Aloysius recited, shaking Monroe’s hand.

“I would like to say the pleasure is all mines. When Raven suggested that I stop by to pick up the paperwork for the Master Mind Alliance camp proposal, I couldn’t head home until I had that paperwork in hand.”

“I’ve always wanted to do something along those lines,” Aloysius stated, while making his way behind the bar. “I just haven’t been able to dedicate the appropriate amount of time for it. But the thought is the cause of it all, and that energy has been placed in the atmosphere, where, it was picked up by yours truly.” He poured Monroe another shot, along with one for himself.

Raven handed Monroe a copy of the Request for Funds Form.

“Thank you, for yet, another successful business venture.”

“This is what we’re here for,” Aloysius stated, watching Israel make his way to the door.

Monroe sipped the Avion then set the glass down. “This is some strong stuff you got here. Did you have your hand in concocting this wonderful blend yourself?”

Aloysius had to laugh at that. “No, I wish I had. From the moment I tasted it, I knew it would be my favorite drink.”

“I’m having the same sentiments exactly.”

Raven excused herself, retrieved her possessions, and cut out unnoticed, leaving Aloysius and Monroe alone to talk.

“So,” Aloysius began, refilling Monroe’s glass. “What else does the City Council have on its agenda this summer?”

Monroe placed the glass to his lips to refrain from answering the question. Gulping a small amount of liquor, he let it wash away the City Council’s real intentions down his throat.

Collecting himself, “Seriously, Aloysius. The things we’re seeking to accomplish keeps getting bigger and better. With the implementation of this summer camp for the kids, we are looking to expand it to net adults as well. But we have to start with the kids first.”

Aloysius’ cellphone vibrated on his hip. “Excuse me, councilman. Let me take this.” He put the phone to his ear, and was surprised by what he heard. “What?” he asked, looking at Monroe. “I’m in the middle of something but take care of that immediately. And AG, keep me abreast of the situation.”

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

May 21 - 5:45 p.m.

David and Kenyada strolled towards David’s house, recapping the sexual experiences of the day.

“I know that wasn’t you up there doing all that screaming?” Kenyada asked, jokingly.

“Hell naw. I was the one putting it down,” David lied.

“I just bet you were, playboy. I just bet you were.”

“What? You don’t think so?”

Kenyada noticed the front of an expensive car parked in front of David’s house.

Paying more attention to the car than David house, he barely made any sense when responding. “I’m not saying that—"

David peeped the grille of the black Rolls-Royce protruding boldly pass the stop sign. As they neared the side of the house, two men stood outside of the car, talking. David remembered the one guy from the other night on the couch with Clarice. He had no idea who the other guy was.

Making it to the corner, the two guys stopped talking, and eyed David and Kenyada. The guy David knew acknowledged him with a nod, then returned his attention to the other guy.

“Judah, this isn’t a good look. You got me—"

A trail of cars pulled up, cutting the man off. Out of the BMW which stopped directly in front of the Rolls-Royce, a big, brown-skinned football-built man leaped out with a Ruger 10mm in his hand.

The man David recalled seeing before rushed him and Kenyada towards the house.

The driver of the Rolls-Royce jumped from behind the wheel, and tried to cuff his piece behind his leg. The passenger from the BMW hopped out, and trained a Russian AK47 upon him. That calmed the driver down. He calmly slinked back behind the steering wheel.

Simultaneously, the passenger-side door of a GMC Sierra sprung open, and another Russian AK47 wielding gunman drew down on the familiar man. “That’s far enough.”

The giant man moseyed up the two men, eyeballing him.

“This is a strong showing of disrespect, Solomon. “

Solomon Crawford, a longtime rival of Aloysius, blinked his blue eyes as if he didn’t see the big man hawk-eyeing him. His pale, light-skin was flushed with blood. Judah, the man next to him, cautiously observed the gunmen leveling the Russian AK in their direction.

Solomon glanced at his Franck Muller. “I guess it’s time for me to go, isn’t it?”

He started towards the rear of the Series II Ghost.

The big man signaled for the gunman to stop Solomon’s progression. “Drake!” he called out, nodding his head towards Solomon.

Drake, with his face covered and in full tactical gear, leveled the AK at Solomon. Adjusting his face to the cheek-piece, he tightly gripped the pistol grip, and secured a good feel for the forward vertical grip. “You just insist on being disrespectful, don’t you?”

Solomon glared over at the reason for him being there. “You see what you started?” Walking around Judah, Solomon approached the big man. “Big AG, this isn’t called for. I simply came to talk some sense into my little cousin.”

“That wasn’t part of the agreement,” Big AG replied, holding the Ruger in front of him. “Neither of you should have crossed Park lines. And now that you have, there will be consequences.”

Solomon peered over his shoulder at Judah, and shook his head. Facing Big AG, “So what now, are you gonna shoot me?”

“Naw, not right now. The boss wants you escorted across Park lines this time. Next time, there will be nothing to talk about.”

Judah could be heard breathing a sigh of relief.

“But this isn’t the end. You will be summoned to answer for violating the agreement.”

Solomon spun away from Big AG and towards the rear of the Ghost. “Get your dumb ass in the car,” he demanded, trying not to appear shaken by the gunmen wielding assault rifles.

Big AG climbed into the driver’s seat of the BMW, and backed up. The driver of the Ghost pulled in behind the BMW, with the two GMC Sierra’s bringing up the rear. And just as quickly as they drew down on Solomon and Judah, they were escorting them across Park lines without further incident.

Chapter Seven

May 22 - 8 a.m.

Monroe arrived at his office an hour earlier than normal. Stepping in his office, he grabbed a seat behind his desk, and set the signed Request for Funds form in front of him. He stared at Aloysius’ signature, waiting for its disappearance.

The John Hancock maintained its position, cementing the beginning of the Master Mind Alliance camp for kids. Monroe exhaled. The relief produced from getting one step closer to something dear to him compelled him to want to celebrate.

An office door down the hall slammed shut, shaking the interior of Monroe’s office. He leaped to his feet, and crossed over to the door. Quietly opening it, he peeked into the hallway, finding no one there. Stepping into the hallway, he crept along the wall towards the office door he believed was the one that caused all the noise.

As he neared, he heard two voices going back and forth in a defensive tone. Monroe stopped, leaned into the wall, and focused on what was being said. The muffled voices eluded him grasping a clear indication of what the topic of conversation surrounded. However, the two individuals embarked within the heated debate was his fellow Councilmen Maya Green and Milton Slay.

Hearing the two of them engaged in the early morning dispute seemed awful odd. From what he apprehended, the two of them hadn’t been too fond of one another. Somewhere between the show they put on for everyone, and the events that led them to the office this morning, some form of bond had been molded behind closed doors, similar to the door separating them now.

A loud crash resonated inside the office. It didn’t sound like a crash from a struggle. It did, however, sound like the contents of the desk being thrown to the floor purposely.

Monroe slithered closer to the office door, and placed his ear upon it. Soft pants and slurps filled the air. Monroe couldn’t believe his ears. Two entrusted Council board members were having an affair in the office space reserved for business. Both individuals were supposedly happily married, with kids and a prosperous career. Yet, based on the sounds permeating from inside the office, the happiness they searched for started and ended with the time they were able to spend with each other.

Monroe barged into the office to reveal his new-born knowledge of the affair.

Maya, a tanned, chestnut-brown, big beautiful woman, kneeled before Milton leaning against the desk as she performed fellatio on him. With his eyes closed, he allowed his muscle to absorb the saturated saliva coating his lower extremities. As she worked her tongue, Milton gripped the edge of the desk to hold on for dear life.

“Excuse me,” Monroe said, strolling up behind Maya on her knees. “Is this how we conduct ourselves at work?”

Maya struggled getting to her feet. Getting to one knee, she cleaned the accumulated build-up from the corner of her mouth, and ran to the left corner of the office.

Milton pulled up his pants, stuffed his hard-on into his boxers, and rounded his desk. “Do you know how to knock?”

“I did,” Monroe lied. “You were too busy to hear me.”

Maya, facing the corner of the office, buttoned up her shirt, and tried to collect herself. When she turned to face Monroe, she had one of the most embarrassed looks on her face. She couldn’t maintain eye contact with him. Her humiliation wouldn’t let her.

Beyond the fact that Monroe caught them in the act, he shouldn’t have been able to. She clearly expressed that it wouldn’t be a good idea to cross that line at work. But Milton had it in his mind that they wouldn’t get caught. Her first mind told her that they would. And as sure as she had the thought, it happened. Monroe barged in, caught her with a dick in her mouth, and now he stared at her with contempt in his eyes.

She felt so small.

Milton didn’t attempt to fix his clothes. He preferred to put Monroe out so he could get back to business. Except, Monroe wasn’t in a hurry to leave.

“How long has this been going on?” Monroe asked.

“None of your damn business!” Milton snapped. “This isn’t your concern.”

Monroe faced Maya. “How would this look if your husband found out? He’s crazy about you, and you would hurt him like this.”

Maya felt a sharp pain slice through her heart. Monroe was right. Her husband deserved better. What kind of woman was she to cheat on him? They’d come so far in life as husband and wife for her to throw it away for some temporary relief.

She walked towards the ajar door with her head down. Milton watched her. “Where do you think you’re going?”

“To my office,” she muttered, leaving Monroe and Milton alone to pick up the pieces.

“You have some nerve busting in my office like that,” Milton voiced, buckling his belt under his pot belly.

“That’s not cool, Milton. You two shouldn’t have crossed that line. What about the good woman you have at home?”

Buttoning up his shirt, “Let’s not worry about what I got at home. Like I said, this is none of your business. Why are you so concerned about where I stick my dick?”

“Actually, I’m not. But how are we supposed to have a working relationship when you two are having an office affair?”

Milton busted out laughing. “A working relationship, Monroe? Is that what you call this?”

“What else should I call it?” he asked, closing the office door. “We are a team, a unit. We are supposed to have this city’s best interest at heart.”

“The only person’s interests we have at heart is Aloysius Farmsworth,” he spat. “Why can’t you see that?”

“What is there to see? he questioned, ambling over to Milton’s desk. “We have been blessed to have him as our own personal investor. Without him, we wouldn’t have the funds to accomplish most of the stuff we’ve set out to do.”

“That’s BULLSHIT!” Milton countered, anger filling his eyes. “You may be good with his dictatorship but I’ve grown tired of it. We need to be free from his reign.”

Monroe stood upright, jacking his slacks. “I see what this is. You’ve set out to fill Maya’s head with your antics.”

“This is about the truth.” Milton rounded his desk, coming face-to-face with Monroe. “This is about obtaining the control the City Council should have always had.”

Monroe scratched the top of his head. “I take it that you’ll be proposing a plan before the board prior to implementing whatever it is you’re wishing to do.”

Milton smiled. “I’ve already brought it to one board member, and now I’m presenting you with the opportunity to say yay or nay.” He slid his hands in his pocket. “So, Councilman Farley, what would it be?”

Monroe stared Milton squarely in his eyes, and shook his head. “I don’t bite the hand that feeds me. So, I’m voting against the proposition. Good luck getting that other vote.” And with that, he left Milton standing there to look ridiculous.

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

May 22 - 10 a.m.

Solomon had tossed and turned all night, wrestling with the way he’d been handled by Aloysius’ Chief of Security. After finally falling asleep, he was awakened by the sounds of a vacuum cleaner running in the sitting room next to his bedroom. He rolled over, and looked at the clock.

It was 10 o’clock in the morning.

Normally, he would have been up at seven, out of the house, and just now heading home to wake his wife. She was the one who loved to sleep in. Whereas, the tables had turned.

Climbing from the California King, he slipped his feet into his house slippers, and headed towards the master bath. Washing his face and brushing his teeth, he was startled by his wife’s emergence beside him.

Jumping, he held the hot rag over his mouth. “Why do you do that?” he asked, wiping the excess water from his face.

“You would think you would be smarter than you are. We’ve been married for too long for you to not have figured out how to keep your eyes open.”

“I never expect to be snuck up on in my own home.”

She lightly licked her bottom lip. “Is that why you allow it to take place in the streets?”

His mien changed.

“Yes, I know about that,” she stated, twirling the bottom of the robe from in front of her legs. “How could you be so stupid to violate that agreement?”

“Ramiah, it wasn’t like that. Judah—"

“Will be the death of you, if, you keep letting him be the reason you do dumb shit,” she voiced, finishing his sentence for him.

“You don’t understand.”

“No,” she snapped. “YOU don’t. We’ve worked too hard getting to this point for you to allow Judah to mess it up.”

“I need you to listen.”

“NO!” she screamed, twirling the robe in front of her. “I need you to listen to me,” she said, getting in his face. Her Ice Breaker breath tickled his nose. “Sit back and relax, I’m gonna handle this. Stay IN Forrest Park. If I hear of you crossing Park lines again, I’ll put a bullet in your ass myself.” She twirled away from him.

Solomon loved his wife’s fervor; but, she had it all wrong when disrespecting him. He quickly grabbed her slender arm, turning her back around. “Don’t let that tongue get you in some shit you can’t get out of.”

Ramiah, a dark-chocolate woman of African Descent nearly a quarter of an inch taller than Solomon, jerked her arm away, and rudely eyed him as if he was a servant. He sought to regain his dominance by reaching for her again. She evaded his grasp, and stuck him with a left jab to the mouth.

“You need to stop playing with me, Solomon. We both know you wouldn’t be the man you are if it wasn’t for me,” she explained.

He patted his lips. There was no blood. That didn’t hinder the hostile glare he shot at her.

“And if you keep trying me, I’m gonna show you why I’m not to be fucked with,” she continued, twirling away from him as she walked out of the bathroom.

Solomon, hating that he’d lost his cool, leaned up against the counter, and hung his head in defeat. *I have to prove to her that I got what it takes to stand on my own two feet.* He turned towards the mirror, bobbing his head. *Yeah, you got it, buddy! Now get ready to show her that you got it.*

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

May 22 - 1 p.m.

From Wednesday afternoon to Sunday night, the Farmer’s Market was opened to the public from noon to 8 p.m. During those days, Patricia led a qualified number of chefs, waitresses, and maintenance crews when working the ins and outs of the busy restaurant.

An hour after opening, the place was already packed. A single file line snaked from the counter to the front entrance and outside onto the sidewalk. This was a normal occurrence each and every week the Farmer’s Market opened its doors. Aside from the restaurant’s operations, it would always remain a place where Aloysius and his crew met to conduct business. And this day was no different.

Aloysius, accompanied by his wife, Zebina, rushed into the establishment amidst the lunch rush, and split the crowd of the hungry patrons.

Patricia noticed their arrival, and instantly picked up that something was wrong. Upon Aloysius entering Moses’ office, David raced into the dining area with a confused look on his face. Patricia really comprehended that something heavy was in the air.

“David!” she shouted, calling him over. “Baby, take care of these orders while I go have a word with Louis.” She darted straight to Moses’ office, and entered without knocking.

Aloysius cut his eyes at her for the intrusion, releasing his hand from the gun on his waist. “Not right now, Tricia.”

Moses looked at Raven, who in turn glanced over at Albert. None of them had ever heard Aloysius speak to Patricia in that manner before. For him to call her Tricia signified that he was upset, and not to be questioned.

Patricia closed the door, and left Aloysius to run his business.

Aloysius gestured for his wife to sit down with the others. Sitting wasn’t in his near future. His mind worked better with his feet in motion. He stripped his frame of the Tom Ford suit jacket, and laid it behind his wife.

“AG, tell me where we are with carrying out sanctions against Solomon.”

Albert Givens, “Big AG”, jacked his Levi’s. That action bared his dress socks. “It’s kinda tricky when it comes to the sanctions.”

“Tricky?” Aloysius inquired, unsure of how to absorb the word. “What’s so tricky about it? This fool violated the Park Lines Agreement. It clearly states in the fine print that he nor I can get caught on one another’s turf.”

Raven interceded with her legal opinion. “However, it does expound on the occurrence having to be detrimental to the safety and liberty of the area. From all we know, he stood outside of his car talking to his cousin. There’s nothing in the agreement that prohibits that.”

Aloysius shot her a *shut the fuck up* look. He wasn’t trying to hear that.

“What’s the point of the agreement if he or I can make a showing on the one another’s turf?” Aloysius asked.

Moses lit up a cigar. “Sounds to me that there’s no reason. And since there isn’t one, we need to make an appearance of our own.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea,” Zebina interjected, looking up at Aloysius. “That’s what they want you to do.”

“Meaning?” Raven asked, probably the only one who disliked Zebina.

Zebina rose to her feet. “Solomon is smart, and those he employs is even smarter. But there is one person behind him that’s even smarter than all of them put together.”

Moses tapped the large monitor to his left showcasing the security feed around the establishment. “And she just walked in with two members of her security detail.”

Zebina broke towards the door before anyone could move their feet. Aloysius was right behind her.

The entire atmosphere of the restaurant shifted upon Ramiah’s entrance. The addition of Zebina’s stone expression as she waltzed into the dining area concocted a recipe for disaster. Zebina waltz right up to Ramiah, and stood a mere foot away from her. Aloysius stood to her right, with Big AG to her left.

“Why are you here?” she asked Ramiah.

Ramiah didn’t blink at Zebina’s infiltration of her personal space. She simply locked eyes with her, smiled, and said, “It’s good to see you too, little sis. It’s been a long time, hasn’t it?”

Chapter Eight

May 22 - 1:30 p.m.

Farmer’s Market had fallen completely silent. The patrons of the restaurant stood in suspense, waiting to see what would transpire between Zebina and Ramiah. Those who knew better slipped outside, and observed the festivities through the window.

David, standing next to Patricia, kept his eyes on Aloysius’ movement. This would be the first time in his life where he seen a man stand by his woman in her time of need. That intrigued him. *What made him take on that role, instead of leading the pack?*

Patricia, seeing it from a different perspective, loathed this had to happen. This wasn’t the time or the place for this type of altercation. The long-standing feud between Aloysius and Solomon had been quiet as of late. She hoped it would have stayed that way. Nonetheless, the scene currently underway circumvented what had been.

She pulled David closer to her in case they would have to make a hasty retreat. David glanced up at her, after feeling her heart thump loudly within her chest. Her worn expression glared down at him. He looked off, unable to withstand the unhappiness plastered across her face. He focused on the altercation itself.

Zebina tried to keep her cool. Ramiah’s marching into their headquarters applied a detrimental ingredient when it came to the type of relationship they shared.

For years, they have been two estranged siblings who preferred to have no dealings with one another. The hatred they possessed for one another traveled deeper than the pure African bloodline they were birthed from. It was darker than either of their dark-chocolate skin, and taller than their almost six-feet-tall frames. For them, the contempt surpassed the reality of the love they should have shared as sisters.

Unfortunately, there was no love lost because there was definitely none shown. And the past they had was just as irrelevant as those wanting to suppress the truth about the world’s history.

At thirty, Zebina had taken what they experienced and learned a lot. The most valuable lesson stemmed from an incident some ten years ago when she first arrived in the states.

Ramiah, the first of the family to travel across the pond, originally touched down in the states under the umbrella of a student visa. When she called home, she told stories of the American life that painted a glorious picture of the new land, and that appealed to Zebina’s interest of wanting to experience it.

Whereas, upon arriving, Ramiah immediately sought to introduce her to a life that she had no plans of living. She longed to introduce her little sister to the world of prostitution, and use her as a toy to appease some of the wealthiest men. The proposition consisted of downright embarrassing sexual acts, being a prized show-piece on a man’s arm, and/or giving any particular man a child, if he desired.

Zebina was devastated. She couldn’t discern why her sister would fathom such a position for her. Her coming to the states had been to better herself, not sell herself short for the sake of a dollar. She felt betrayed. She was in a country she had no knowledge of, and because her sister wished to degrade her, they had a falling out which left her unsure of how to proceed. That’s when she met Aloysius. Upon meeting, they instantly fell in-love, got married, and became partners in life.

On the flip side, Ramiah went about getting herself situated with the new man in her life, who just so happened to be Aloysius’ rival. In Zebina’s eyes, that hadn’t been coincidental. Needless to say, that wasn’t the end of that. Prior to Zebina walking down the aisle to Aloysius, he came clean about his brief relationship he had with Ramiah.

“Baby, it was one of those things that just happened,” he said.

“Louis, things don’t just happen. Please don’t think I’m that naive. What was the nature of the relationship?” she asked, assuming she could imagine the details.

“Initially, it was strictly business. But I began liking the time we spent together. She was different.”

“Yeah,” she interrupted, thinking about how she could have ended up at Aloysius beck and call had she went along with Ramiah’s plans. “She’s different alright. But I figured that,” she retorted, explaining what her sister asked of her.

“WOW!” was all he could say.

Zebina reflected upon that moment as she stared into her sister’s eyes. “Why are you here?” she asked, intruding upon Ramiah’s personal space.

Ramiah didn’t blink at Zebina’s infiltration. She simply locked eyes with her sister, and smiled. “It’s good to see you too, little sis. It’s been a long time, hasn’t it?”

“Not long enough,” Zebina replied, shifting her weight to her right leg. “You still haven’t answered the question.”

“Peace,” she responded. “I came here to keep the peace.”

Zebina regarded Ramiah’s top two security members beside her, and couldn’t see how their presence spelled peace. Micah and Anina didn’t know the definition of peace. They loved to get the job done, without any option of negotiating. Their being there wasn’t to keep the peace. Their presence stipulated that if Ramiah couldn’t verbally get confirmation of a renewed peace treaty, they would get it their way.

Israel and two leaders of the security team slinked in behind Ramiah and her two bodyguards.

Anina unconsciously went for her weapon. A strong male hand stopped her and relieved her of that weapon. Her ego was slightly bruised. Yet, she stared into his face, destined to make him pay for that mistake later on.

Aloysius sought to command everyone’s attention. “Why did he really send you?” he asked, stepping forward.

Outside of what transpired behind her, Ramiah’s attention remained centered upon her purpose for coming. She hadn’t expected this to be easy. Nothing she ever had to overcome in life had been easy. Slightly tilting her head, she wouldn’t let this little bump in the road deter her from the ultimate goal.

“Aloysius, you of all people should know that Solomon didn’t intend on breaking the Parks Line Agreement. It’s that—"

“He thought he could slip across the line, conduct a little business and disappear into thin air without being seen,” Aloysius expressed, feeling Zebina rubbing up against him.

“Not exactly. It’s a bit deeper than that,” she explained. “It deals with the whore his cousin frequents on the regular.”

Aloysius recalled where the incident took place. The whore she referred to was Clarice, David’s mother. Whenever she’s involved, it made for an undesirable situation.

“And I should be impressed because,” he retorted, not caring about Clarice and her tricks.

“The whore requested that Judah set up shop at his house so she could benefit from his drug dealing operation. Because of the Agreement, Judah understood that wasn’t a good idea. Still, he ran it by Solomon, who quickly attempted to diffuse that instance, which led him violate the Park Lines Agreement. And,” she looked around, “bring me across Park Lines to plead his case.”

Aloysius nodded at Drake, who handed Anina her gun back. Zebina slid off when seeing her husband soften up. That’s not what she expected of him. He should have dismantled Ramiah and her henchmen to send Solomon a clear depiction of what it meant to violate any agreement they had set in stone. His desire to be lenient displayed the disparity of how they viewed the circumstance.

Aloysius, peeking over his shoulder, felt his love creeping away. Even without her by his side, he had to stand firm with how he proceeded.

“This is how we’re gonna play this, Ramiah. The required sanctions will be applied heavily until a formal sit-down can be scheduled. During that time, make this your final time setting foot in Humble Park. Because the next incident will entail some consequences that won’t be too favorable for you,” he looked at Anina and Micah, “or your detail.”

Stone-faced, Micah and Anina peered into his face, and wished he could live up to those words now. They dared him to buck.

Ramiah, on the other hand, understood the philosophy of being outnumbered, and knew it would be in their best interest to stand down. It wouldn’t be smart to play with the fire burning. She would let Aloysius make his point so they could leave in one piece.

“Mr. Farmsworth, I always admired you for your gentle nature. And now is no different. We appreciate your understanding, and please, don’t worry, from here on out, the agreement will be adhered to.” She twirled to her right.

Micah stepped back to clear a path to the front entrance.

Israel stood beside the door, while Drake and Abel wandered outside onto the sidewalk, hands on the weapons tucked.

Ramiah burst through the ajar door, with Micah and Anina in tow, over to the Diamond Black Rolls-Royce Phantom Sedan. As Anina held the door for Ramiah, she peered pass her at Aloysius exiting the Farmer’s Market.

“With the agreement having been violated, there’s no reason why it shouldn’t get funky around this bitch.” Ramiah said as she clambered into the rear of the Phantom, and pulled out her phone.

Solomon answered on the first ring. “How did it go?”

“Exactly how I expected it to. It’s time to take it to the next level.”

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

May 22 - 6 p.m.

David entered Zion’s half-bath to relieve himself, and squinted at a white stain in his underwear. Scratching at it, it flaked, then fell to the floor. Inspecting his penis, around the tip of it, a dry thick, yellowish film coated his skin, and this was something he hadn’t experienced before.

He aimed his genital at the toilet, having to fight through the thick, yellowish secretion to urinate. For some reason, he expected relieving himself to burn; but, it didn’t.

Shaking off the excess urine, he shuffled over to the sink to splash some hot water on the tip, washing off the yellowish film. Drying it off, he washed his hands, and rejoined Zion.

She laid on top of the comforter in her bra and panties, smiling at him. “I’m so glad you came back. I been thinking a lot about you.” She climbed off the bed, over to him, and went for his pants button. “I been missing you.” She pushed his pants to his ankles, and fell to her knees.

David held his eyes tightly as he felt the warmness of her mouth swallowing the ridges of his member. For a brief second, her mouth mimicked the wetness he felt yesterday when sliding in and out of her love box. Yet, a whole minute had passed and he hadn’t erupted as he had when on top of her. In his book, that was good.

She even noticed it. That simply pushed her to apply her skills a lot more. She wanted to taste him oozing down her throat, apart from the salty taste tingling her taste buds. *I wonder why he didn’t wash himself off after using the bathroom?* she asked, swallowing the saltiness anyway.

David sensed a surge within him building, and he didn’t know what to do about it. He wasn’t sure if Zion would be cool with him blasting off in her mouth, and he didn’t want to disrespect her when he didn’t know her views on it.

He tapped her on the shoulder. “I think I’m about to nut.”

She hummed a word or two he couldn’t comprehend, picked up her speed, and lathered his love stick with more spit.

He grabbed a hand full of her short hair, and yanked it. That didn’t stop him from exploding at the same time. Short spurts of semen escaped his rifle, flying through the air like a spent missile, and onto her face. One spurt shot her in the eye, and glued her eyelid together.

Thirsty to taste him, she shoved his joint back in her mouth to suck him dry. In the interim, his knees buckled, and he went down like a sack of laundry.

Zion was on top of him like a hungry calf sucking on her mother’s titty. David didn’t have much time to recover. She was craving him inside of her. Before he could lay flat upon his back, she’d inserted him into her, and gripped his limpness with her internal walls.

David found it hard to catch his breath. Gasping for air, he pushed Zion’s head away from his face as she attempted going in for a kiss.

She stopped grinding, and looked down at him. “Damn baby, I can’t get a kiss.” His rejection killed her mood.

Regulating his breathing, he stared up at Zion’s bigger- than-normal breasts for a fifteen-year-old, and underwent an intense arousal that stabbed Zion’s walls.

“Um,” she moaned, rotating her hips. “That’s more like it,” she exclaimed, placing her hands on his chest. “I love the way you feel inside of me. Don’t you?” she asked, going in for another kiss.

Giving her what she wanted, David got that feeling in his lower region again. He wondered why it kept coming so fast. Palming her behind, his aim was to slow her down. He attempted to ease her off the pedal. That didn’t work. She intertwined his hands, pushed them over his head, and intentionally rode him to his climax.

Underneath her, David quivered; his muscles spasm as if he was in the middle of a seizure.

Zion locked her lips upon him. “Baby, I think I’m falling in-love with you.”

Love. What was that? David had never heard that word before. Her saying it sounded creepy. Why would she express such a feeling like that for him? They’d just met, and had sex twice. That type of admission presented a scary scenario for a young male like him. He didn’t know what to make of it. While he wanted to question her about it, she was currently engrossed in riding him until her well ran dry.

She kissed the side of his face and neck. “Tell me you love me, David,” she requested, biting his neck.

A tinkling sensation attacked his side. He didn’t know how it would sound.

“Say it,” she demanded, licking his earlobe.

“I . . . love. . . you,” he finally mustered.

She slid her tongue into his mouth, showing how much she loved him as well.

Yet, David didn’t feel right saying it. He knew he didn’t mean it. The words exhibited no emotion. And he knew he’d only done it to please her. *I shouldn’t have done that,* he told himself. It was too late now. There was no taking it back. He’d said it; she’d heard it, and she would never forget it. That would be one mistake he’ll have a hard time playing down.

She slid off of him, and cuddled up next to him on the floor. “Baby, do you really love me?” she asked, catching him off guard.

Sensing the need for another lie, he looked her in the eyes, and nodded.

“Then tell me again,” she requested.

He pulled her face to his. “Baby, I love you more than you know,” he expressed, and kissed her.

Pulling him on top of her, she sought to top his concession. “But not as much as I love you,” she asserted, inserting him back inside of her.

David had no problem leaving it at that. He was glad that she shut up about it.

Chapter Nine

May 23 - 6 a.m.

Sheri was up early lying in bed unable to stop thinking about the possibility of her husband being responsible for the missing money in the whore houses account. As she held the sheet over her chest, the sounds of Jeremiah’s snoring irritated her. She nudged him. That only stopped him for a brief second. A second later he was right back at it. She outright pushed him, and that rolled him. That also woke him.

“What’s your problem?” he asked, rolling onto his back.

She sat up, propping the pillows against the headboard behind her back. “We should talk.”

He rolled over, and laid his head on her lap. Massaging her legs through the sheet, he closed his eyes, wanting to go back to sleep.

“What would you like to talk about?”

“The missing money from the whorehouses,” she blurted out.

His eyes shot open. “What missing money?” he asked, unaware that there had been a discrepancy with the account.

“A couple of weeks ago, while calculating the deposits, the projections didn’t add up to the deposit.”

“It should have,” he retorted, shutting his eyes again.

“But it wasn’t. And I reported it to Moses during his surprise visit. He took it to Aloysius and he questioned me about it.”

Jeremiah sat up, swinging his legs over the side of the bed. “You should have come to me.” His voice was cold.

“And how do you think that would have gone?” she asked. “You would have assumed I was accusing you, and who knows what kind of reaction I would have received.”

He shot to his feet, fuming from the insinuation. “And you call this what? Isn’t this similar to an accusation that I’m responsible?”

“No,” she replied. “This is me telling my husband what’s been bothering me.”

“Bothering you?” he questioned. “It should bother you since you went behind my back to consult the boss, and his second-in-command,” he screamed.

“Please lower your voice, Jerry. There’s no need to yell.”

He leaned forward, placed his fist into the mattress, and stared his wife directly in the eyes. “You have no idea what you’ve done.”

“I am very much aware of what I had to do, Jerry. If I didn’t report it, it would have reflected upon my work. I can’t let that happen.”

“So, you decided to throw your husband under the bus for the sake of your job, huh?”

Sheri had a perfect answer for the question, but the presentation of the said question caused her wheels to turn. On one hand, she comprehended the real nature of the question. On the other, the message behind it surely construed something different.

*Did he just admit to stealing the money?*

She glanced at him, afraid to ask but absolutely in need to know the answer.

Jeremiah climbed on the bed, and towards her. “I should have known the day would come when you would cross me.”

Sheri shoved the sheets to the side. “What the hell is that supposed to mean?”

He climbed off the bed. “You know exactly what it means, Sheri. What, you didn’t think a time would come when Karma would bite you in the ass?”

“You have some nerve, Jerry. I’m not the one living across the street from my child, and not giving two fucks about his well-being. If you want to play this game, let’s play it right.” She clambered from the bed, and slid into her slippers. She covered her mid-section with the t-shirt she had on. “Let’s be clear. I didn’t pursue you. I didn’t want to marry you nor have your kids. Those were things you wanted so you could shit on Clarice.”

He laughed. “You can’t be serious. Everything you have is what you wanted. You’re acting like you didn’t have a choice in the matter. You spread your legs, and let me bust nuts you in for the purpose of you getting pregnant. You wanted two kids so I gave you two. You wanted a ring,” he looked at her ring finger, “so I gave you what you wanted.”

“You think you’ve done me a favor?” she asked, acting like she would remove the 3-carat diamond ring.

He rounded the bed, keeping a watchful eye on her movements. “We can fix this little problem, if, that’s what you want.”

Her hands dropped to her sides, as she watched his.

“What does that supposed to mean, Jerry?”

“Just how it sounds. You don’t have to be here if you don’t want. You can grab your shit, and beat your feet. I’ll never hold you anywhere you don’t want to be. As a matter of fact, when you leave, try going across the street to see if your best friend will take you in.”

She took a swing at his head. “You fucking bastard. I fucking hate you!”

He dodged the wild swing, moving in to secure his arm around her neck. “Or, I could choke the life out of you, blame you for stealing Louis’ money, and call it a day.” He kissed the side of her face. “Is today a good day to die, honey bun?”

“No,” she whispered, swallowing her pride.

“That’s what I thought!” he exclaimed, pushing her onto the bed. “Now, I’m gonna have to teach you about accusing me of stealing.”

Unsure of what he would do, she attempted to get up on her hands and knees as quick as possible. That feeble attempt came to a crashing halt with him jumping on her back, and ramming his hands in between her legs. It was a good thing she had panties on or else he would have dug right into her snatch. Still, that didn’t mean anything. He yanked them out of her behind, ripping them into pieces.

“Please, JERRY!” she screamed. “Don’t do this. I’m on my period!”

“Who cares about you being a once a month bleeding ass bitch?” he rhetorically asked, plunging his harden tool into her rectum. “This is about you learning how to handle shit from now on.”

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

May 23 - 8 a.m.

David left Zion’s house with a lot to think about. He had no clue what to do with her. As far as he could see, they were two teenagers embarking on an experiment where they explored their sexuality. Her experience may be more advanced than his but he could change that soon enough. That wasn’t what was bothering him. It was her declaration of love that unveiled the mistake, possibly on both parts.

For him, there had never been one utterance of the word towards him in his life. Not by his mother, never by the man who stayed across the street, or by anyone else for that matter. He wanted to assume that his best friends’ actions resembled something similar to what love was, but, he couldn’t fall upon that for an accurate depiction.

All in all, he was stumped on how to feel.

Arriving at home, he needed to grab his book bag before his mother got up so he could take it with him to work. The last thing he wanted for her to wake up, find it, and steal its contents. That would throw all of his hard-work down the drain.

Entering the house, he was stopped instantly by the graphic scene playing out before him. Clarice kneeled before two naked men snorting a white substance off each of their swipes, then shoving it in her mouth. Having to leave, David felt sick to his stomach at how his mother carried herself. How did she expect him to respect women when she didn’t have the decency to respect herself?

Intentionally slamming the door, he jumped off the porch, cutting through the grass-less yard. As soon as he set foot on the sidewalk, he spotted Crystal coming his way. Something in him shined brightly at the sight of her. He couldn’t say the same for the look on her face. She displayed a look of disgust about something. As they neared one another, he cracked a smile. She didn’t return the gesture. His heart thumped triple time in his chest, leaving him curious to what the problem was.

“What’s up, why the long face?” he asked.

She cocked her head to the left to admire the passion mark on his neck. “I see you’ve been busy.”

He had no idea what she referred to. He’d known Zion had been sucking on his neck; however, he had no recollection of her leaving a suck mark. He reached for his neck.

“Don’t worry, David. You can’t rub it off nor can you wash it off.” She was clearly upset.

He was at a loss of words. What could he say to the girl that had been his best friend since grade school. How was he ever gonna understand her anger if he didn’t know what triggered it?

“You can’t say anything, can you?”

“What am I supposed to say?” he asked, unaware he’d done anything wrong.

A Glacier White Bentley Mulsanne Mulliner cruised down the street, and stopped in front of them. Crystal cut her eyes at the car, trying to keep her anger focused on David. David, however, paid more attention to the car than his best friend. When the passenger-side window rolled down, and David seen Aloysius behind the steering wheel, every event of that morning disappeared.

“What’s good, lil daddy?”

David looked at Crystal, who readjusted her book bag on her shoulders. Turning to Aloysius, “I stopped by to get my bag before going to work. I’m on my way to the Market in a few minutes.”

“You won’t be working today. You’re riding with me.”

*Riding with you?* David couldn’t imagine that. *In that?* he asked, looking at the clear coats of gloss sparkling under the morning sun.

Crystal, without saying a word, sighed, pivoted, and headed in the opposite direction.

David felt torn between what he wanted to do and what he needed to do. The more he accessed what he needed to do, the farther she traveled away from him. He thought about calling out for her, telling her to come back so they could talk. Whereas, he continued watching her stroll down the street. Not once did she look back.

“Come on, lil daddy. We got a number of things to do. You riding or what?”

David let Crystal’s walking away answer the question for him. He slid onto the soft, Linen-colored leather seats, and attempted to settle in. The plushness of the interior made that worthwhile; yet, it posed a difficulty for him also. He didn’t know how to conduct himself in such an atmosphere. All his life, he’d been subjected to the bare minimum. Even when able to acquire more than the necessities, his mother shattered that thought with her rendition of him needing to get it on his own. After getting used to sleeping on wood floors with no covers, having no food in the house to eat, or a single bar of soap to wash his behind, the pleasure of sitting in such an elegant vehicle made him nervous. “You good, lil daddy?” Aloysius asked, sensing David’s edginess.

David looked over at him, and nodded.

“Lay back then, lil daddy. Today is the day your lessons begin. Are you ready?”

*No,* he told himself. To Aloysius, he nodded that he was.

Aloysius let the Bentley glide down the street. At the stop sign, he noticed two men exiting Clarice’s house with Clarice standing at the door, unconcerned about the world seeing her exposed body hanging out the robe.

Aloysius tooted the horn, gained her attention, and shifted the car into park. “Let me holla at your mother right quick,” he stated.

The two men dispersed when noticing Aloysius.

Clarice leaned against the door frame, and halfway pulled the robe over her big breasts. “What may I do for you? she asked, trying to sound seductive.

“Nothing,” he said flat out. “Actually, let me rephrase that.” He paused. “There is one thing you can do for me.”

She cocked her leg open, giving him a full view of her worn-out box.

“And it has nothing to do with that,” he countered, disgusted at the sight of her nakedness. “But it does entails assisting me in other ways.”

She stood upright, tugging at the bottom of the robe. “And what is that?”

“Get control over those you attract.”

“What does that supposed to mean?” She was confused.

Aloysius turned to walk off. “It’ll come to you, hopefully sooner than later.”

“Whatever,” she spat, entering her house and slamming the door.

Aloysius pulled away from the house, stopped by the barber shop to get David a haircut, upgraded his attire, and let him see how it felt to have a bank-roll in his pocket. Best thing of all, he talked to him about how a man should carry himself. That returned David to the day he witnessed Aloysius stand by his wife, while letting her lead while he followed.

“Is that why you stood to the side yesterday instead of taking control of the situation?” David asked.

Aloysius smirked. “At times, a man has to know when it’s best to listen, opposed to when to act. In that moment, there was no need for me to act because I know the history between Zebina and Ramiah.”

David nodded, looking down at the bulge in his pocket.

Aloysius steered the Bentley in front of the Ice Cream stand, and parked it in the middle of the street. “That’s like the situation between you and that little girl this morning. I can see you like her and she likes you. I also figured that the hickeys on your neck didn’t come from her. So, you have to see that those visible marks hurt her, even when you don’t see how or why. Does that make sense?”

David shrugged.

“Don’t worry about it right now. It’ll all make sense in due time. For now—" His cell phone rang. Looking at it, “If you don’t mind, see if they’ll make me a banana and strawberry shake.”

Smiling, David knew they would. He was Aloysius Farmsworth.

Meanwhile, Aloysius answered the phone. “This is Louis.”

It was Raven. “I received a call about the merger.”

A Ford F-150 pulled alongside Aloysius’ Mulsanne. The barrel of a Mac-11 peeked over the railing of the bed, and a storm of rounds showered the Bentley Mulsanne with 9mm rounds.

Aloysius, sitting comfortably in his luxurious car, gave the gunman an easy target; one the Mac-11 took full advantage of. The gunman dumped an undisclosed number of rounds into the Bentley and Aloysius, understanding that he needed to thoroughly complete his task. Seeking to go the extra mile, the Mac-11 disagreed when it jammed. At that time, that wouldn’t matter. The job was done so the F-150 sped off.

David, hiding on the side of the Ice Cream stand, zeroed in on Aloysius’ bullet-ridden body, and seen no way for Aloysius to have survived that attack. Based on how his body was positioned, he possibly may have taken the brunt of the rounds penetrating the expensive frame.

That had to hurt. The violence associated with the act made it painful for those who witnessed it. To live through it was something else.

David’s curiosity helped him inch closer to the car. From his vantage point, Aloysius was a dead man. He wasn’t moving, and showed no signs of calling for help. He merely laid into the center console, with mouth wide open and a steady stream of blood dripping from his hand.

*Yep,* David thought. *He ain’t making it through that one.*

Chapter Ten

May 23 - 4 p.m.

Ten minutes to four, all Humble Park operations were suspended until further notice. The news of Aloysius being gunned down was the talk of Humble Park. No one would have forecasted anyone being courageous enough to attempt, let alone pull off a hit on Aloysius.

It was truly a sad day.

Humble Park’s beloved businessman, investor, and caregiver had unfortunately come under fire, and at that time, no one knew whether he was dead or alive. Many speculated that he suffered death based on the number of rounds the witnesses recounted. Yet, there had been no confirmation.

Many of the residents, business owners and associates of Aloysius took to the streets, lighting candles and releasing balloons in the air. While some gathered for a moment of silence, others were at a loss of words regarding their feelings. Some secretly applauded the person who pulled it off. They loathed the self-proclaimed mayor of Humble Park that much.

Aloysius had a reputation that, at some times, preceded him. Where many knew him as the business mogul and primary investor within Humble Park, it was his rise to the top that perplexed the majority at times.

Years ago, prior to the rebuilding of Humble Park, Aloysius participated in the destruction of the area with his heroin empire. For almost a decade strong, he fed his product to the community, turning good citizens into zombies. And it got him rich.

While many only seen how he destroyed the neighborhoods, they refused to acknowledge how he subsequently transformed Humble Park into a force to be reckoned with. They didn’t want to give him credit for personally financing the rebuilding of homes, schools and establishing safe areas for the kids. They failed to recognize the opening of several different kind of stores, restaurants, shops, gas stations, or establishments the community yearned for.

It would seem the majority only remembered his destruction. When maintaining that light of him, they automatically inferred that when those shots erupted, cutting into his frame, and possible killing him, there will be many more to follow before it was all said and done. When thinking in those terms, the community as a whole seen every progressive step taken forward shifting in reverse, and sending them back to the hell-hole they derived from.

As dedicated citizens, they had every right to feel that way, especially when those close to Aloysius paraded around the streets of Humble Park wielding Russian assault rifles.

From the moment the news spread, Moses kicked things in gear. He didn’t have a minute to waste. Someone had gunned down his best friend as if he was a mangy dog. That was unacceptable. A huge show of force had to be shown. There was no other way to combat this.

Everyone was called to the Farmer’s Market to formulate a course of action. The ambience inside the place held a depressed overtone. There was nothing to say. Everyone knew what their job consisted of, and they knew how to go about doing it. But that didn’t lessen their desire to know the status of Aloysius’condition. That had to be the only missing link within their equation. Had it been known that he was dead, the mourning could start, along with the bullets flying. But considering there was no definite answer regarding his predicament, they were on edge.

Then, the phone rang.

Raven stared at it, letting it ring for a third time before picking it up. “This is Raven Fox, attorney for Aloysius Farmsworth’s estate.”

It was the hospital.

“I understand,” she recited, then dropped her head. A tear streamed down her face.

Everyone looking at her feared the worse.

“I will get down there as soon as I can.” She softly placed the cordless phone on the counter, and stared at it. Patricia broke out in tears, concluding that her friend had been violently killed.

Raven glanced up Moses with tears in her eyes. As much as she wanted to refrain from breaking down, she couldn’t stop it. Wiping at her face, she gave off the impression that he’d died. With surmising that themselves, the sounds of clips being released and slammed into the handguns and rifles overshadowed the crying taking place. It was retaliation time. A drastic shift was taking place.

Raven felt it. It momentarily overcame her, making her want to grab a gun and let off the whole clip. Yet, she refrained from such acts, knowing she needed to calm the rage-crazed crew before they got out of hand. Clearing her throat, she called for everyone’s attention. The murmurs, Patricia’s sniffles, and the scratching of metal against metal subsided.

“As all of you know, that was the hospital calling.”

“What did they say?” Drake asked, eager to know Aloysius’ status.

Raven held her breath, recalling what the doctor told her. “He’s barely hanging on to life.” She broke out in tears.

The entire room gasped, relieved to hear that he still had a chance.

Wiping snot from her nose, “He’s undergone a number of surgeries, and have to endure many more before they’ll know his fate.”

“It doesn’t matter,” Big AG voiced. “He’s alive. Dude is a fighter. He’ll pull through.”

David’s voice cut into the conversation. “Yeah, but at what cost?”

All eyes zoomed in on him.

“What’s that, lil man?” Big AG questioned.

“It’s easy to say that just because he’s alive. But he’s alive at what cost? Because the man I seen didn’t have much thread to hold onto.”

His depiction altered the mood yet again.

Moses waved David over to him, and whispered in his ear. “I suggest you go home. Don’t worry about work. It’ll be best if you stay away from the Market for a while.”

David looked up at Moses, with concern in his eyes.

Moses pushed him along. “Go ahead and get out of here.”

The small crowd parted for him. David stopped at the door to glanced back at those who supposed to have Aloysius’ best interest at heart. Sadly, that’s not what he seen. What, in turn, stared at him was a group of incompetent fools. A bunch of brainless individuals who couldn’t have taken the time to learn all they could from Aloysius.

In the brief time he got to spend with him, David digested Aloysius’ wise insight. It fulfilled him, and unlocked something in him. He couldn’t discern what that something was but it made him want more of it. Whereas, he couldn’t see getting it from any of them. And that was a shame.

Exiting the Market, David looked up and down the street, and had to wonder. *Will I ever find another man like Aloysius anywhere?*

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

May 23 - 8 p.m.

The night was young.

David had nowhere to be, nowhere to go, nor anyone he wished to be with. He always had the opportunity to chill with Zion; however, he hadn’t been able to figure out how to handle her. He wasn’t trying to get caught up in an emotional tornado, without first seeking to figure out how he really felt about her.

That brought him to terms of what Aloysius said about Crystal. If it was true that she liked him, and was truly upset about the passion mark, why hadn’t she put forth the effort to tell him? *This is a field I’m not fully prepared for.* Seeing he’ll have to learn on the fly, he picked his head up to find Crystal strolling down the street.

Leaping to his feet, he met her halfway. “I’m glad you came back,” he stated, going in for a hug.

She pushed him off of her. “Please don’t touch me, David. You disgust me. How could you lose your virginity to that nasty girl?”

“What?” he asked, not knowing what else to say.

“Yeah, I know all about it. She’s running around bragging about how she broke you in, and how you’re her little boyfriend. Is that how you want to be remember?” She slapped him. It wasn’t hard but the sting caught his attention.

The thoughts rambling through his mind scattered every which way but straight.

“Who told you this?” he asked.

“No one should have told me, David. You should have given me the pleasure of hearing it from you, or better yet, you should have lost your virginity to me.” She pointed at her small chest. “I’m the one who has loved you since grade school.”

There goes that *love* word again. Why does girls throw that word around like it’s a Frisbee?

“How was I to know that you liked, I mean loved me, Crystal? The vibe I got was that we were best friends, and that’s it.”

“Yeah, dummy. All lasting relationship start off with a man and a woman being best friends.”

“Who told you that?” he had to ask.

“Who cares, idiot?” she snapped back. Tired of trying to drill the reality of the situation into his head, she ran off. She wanted to get as far away from him as possible.

“Crystal!” he screamed. “Hold on!!” He wouldn’t let her get away this time.

She didn’t stop, look back or seem interested in what he had to say. She rounded the corner, and headed home. Her pillow awaited her tears.

David needed answers. Taking off after her, he cut through someone’s yard, hopped a fence, and made it to her house in record time. Kenyada was closing the front door as he turned into their yard.

“YADA!” he shouted.

Kenyada peeked out. “What’s good?” he asked, stepping out.

“I need to talk to Chris.”

“Bro, she doesn’t look too good right now. Her emotions are fired. Give her some time.”

David paced back and forth in their front yard. “Come on, fool. Let me in to talk to her.”

“I can’t stop you from trying, bro. I’m just not gonna get in the middle of it.”

“So, you knew she had feelings for me, and didn’t tell me.”

“It wasn’t my place to tell you. You could have figured that out on your own.”

“This is so messed up,” David recited, brushing pass Kenyada.

Kenyada wasn’t in the mood to hear the screaming back and forth so he dipped to Shemeka’s house.

David eased through the house, seeing no one was home but Crystal. With Kenyada outside, it would be just him and her listening when they aired out their dirty laundry.

Not even considering knocking, he simply barged in.

Crystal, laying on her stomach crying, jumped up when he entered. The pillow in her hand soared through the air. “Get the hell out of my room!”

“Crystal, I’m sorry. I never knew the extent of your feelings. I want to make this right.”

*What am I saying?* he questioned himself.

“You can’t make it right. You’ve already slept with the nasty girl.”

David stepped in the room, and closed the door behind him. “I have to make this right, Chris. Please give me a chance to make this right.”

She sat on the edge of the bed, glaring menacingly at him. “You had all the chances you are gonna get. GET OUT OF MY ROOM!”

“I’m not leaving,” he retorted, standing his ground.

She lunged from the bed, clawing at his face and neck. “I hate you,” she spat, missing majority of her attempts. “Get away from me.”

David rushed her, and wrapped his arms around her. She fought him. He didn’t care. He would make this right. This was the time to act, not to stand by and listen. He’d done the listening already. His ultimate goal at this point was to get her to understand that he knew he messed up and needed to fix it.

She fell into his chest. Her tears soak his shirt. “Why can’t you just leave?”

“It wouldn’t be right if I left. You’re hurting and need me here to console you, especially since I’m the reason behind your pain.”

She hated him for being so understanding. He shouldn’t be. His job was to be a dick, and turn his back on her like dudes did. Looking up at him, she bit the inside of her lip.

He leaned in to kiss her. She didn’t fight him. She didn’t turn away. Instead, she parted her lips, and kissed him back. He loosened his hold on her. She wrapped her arms around his neck. He pulled her closer to him. She groaned as their tongues caressed the other.

Cupping her behind, he scooped up her small frame, and set her down on the bed. She laid upon her back, and willingly spread her legs. Grappling with his shirt, she wanted him to take her. For years, she’d dreamed of this day. Removing his shirt, she worked on her pants. While she stripped, he stepped out of his new pants, and freed his Willie.

Crystal’s eyes bulged outward, as she grabbed the girth of his sword. “I never knew it was this big,” she proclaimed, pulling him to her.

He motioned for her to lay back. Scooting back, she got comfortable upon the pillows, spread her legs, and gave him a scary but inviting smile. The apprehensiveness in her eyes exhibited how afraid she was when actually giving herself to him. Still, as he climbed on top of her, she grabbed his protruding tool, and guided him towards her wetness.

“Please take it slow,” she insisted, feeling him break her mold. She hissed at his intrusion; her hand applied pressure to his stomach. “Wait,” she suggested, easing him out of her. David looked down on her, and for the first time in life, seen the most beautiful girl he’d ever laid eyes on. Going in for a kiss, he took her mind off of the pain associated with the act, while gliding his tool halfway inside of her.

She bit his lip, dug her nails into his back, and clamped her legs around his.

“Are you okay?” he asked, sliding another inch inside of her.

“Yes,” she moaned, taking all of him.

“You still mad at me?” he asked, getting into a nice groove.

She tried stifling her pleasurable moans but nothing would do the trick. “No, baby. I can never stay mad at you?” Kissing over her neck, up to her ear, and over her face, he asked, “You still hate me? “

She dug her nails into his back as he dove deeper inside her. “No, David!” she screamed, delightfully. “I love you!!” she professed.

That’s all he needed to hear. With that, he took her first sexual experience to the next level, and she went from being his best friend to the girl who would forever be his ride or die chick.