

Family Affair

“Sit down Wakati.” Diety looks into his eyes intensely and exhales. “Listen...” she hesitates, “Future - he’s your brother, not your cousin.” Wakati’s eyes widen. “Y’all have the same dad,” she pauses, anticipating Wakati’s reaction.

“How? How is he, my brother?” Wakati asks in disbelief as he shifts in his seat resting a forearm above one knee, an elbow above the other, and his hand covering his mouth.

“I’ll tell you how I found out,” Diety replies.

It was autumn, eighteen years ago; about two months before your father and I were to be married. We were living at one of your father’s family’s homes near Los Angeles. Your father was always first to wake up, but this day he slept later than usual.

“Kaye? Kaye?” I chanted to his semiconscious body. “It’s time to wake up,” I said while shaking your father. “We have a lot to do today.” I paused for a moment and studied him.

Kaye yawned like a lion roars, it scared me. “I’m up, my eyes are just closed,” he said. I watched him roll onto his back and stare out the massive window in front of our bed. I remember him having a strange look on his face as he watched the trees sway in the wind. Something was bothering him, I could tell. I didn’t want to press him on the issue right after he woke up, so I went to the kitchen and made breakfast.

“Hurry up and get ready,” I said while exiting our room.

“Busy night huh?” I asked your father as he entered the kitchen.

“Uh-huh,” he grunted followed by taking his seat. My back was turned to him as I prepared our breakfast, but I could feel him watching me – I could feel him watching us.

“So, are you excited?” I asked exposing my smile, your father loved to see me smile. “The bakery opens in like forty minutes, if we hurry up and eat, we can be the first ones there.” I told him as I placed a mountain of food and a tall glass of orange juice in front of him.

“Yeah,” he replied before inhaling a plate of eggs, potatoes, sausages, and pancakes. He didn’t look bothered anymore. He looked like he was experiencing bliss as he ate his breakfast. “Later tonight after we meet with the wedding planner...” he paused and took three big gulps of orange juice, “...I’m taking you to this new spot I found out about. Their food is fire.”

“Man!” Kaye said as he dropped his fork and knife on his plate. “That was bomb babe.” He waited for me to finish then took our plates to the sink.

After breakfast, your father and I started our day of pre-wedding errands. “Oh, we need to get some groceries so stop by the store before we go home,” I told him.

After a long day of errands, we headed home and got ready for the restaurant your dad told me about during breakfast. “Dress up cause’ dis’ a fancy restaurant,” he said while unlocking our front door and carrying two armfuls of groceries.

Periodically throughout that day, it seemed like your father was in a trance. He looked like he was in deep thought, and he wouldn’t speak or even look at me. At moments it felt like he was looking through me. During our drive to the restaurant, Kaye goes into another trance. His eyes remained trained on the road; he didn’t seem present. When we arrived at the restaurant and took our seats I asked, “What are you thinking about Kaye? Seems like you’ve been in your head all day.”

“Nothing,” he replied nonchalantly. I knew something was up, because that was obviously a lie, and your father rarely lied. He was hiding something; I could feel it in my bones.

“How are you guys doing this evening?” a waiter asked, “can I start you off with any appetizers or are you ready to order?”

“Can I get a bottle of your finest wine,” Kaye replied as he studied the menu. “We’re still looking.”

“Of course, of course, sir, take your time,” the waiter said before leaving our table.

“This is nice,” I told Kaye while examining the environment. “How’d you find out about this place?”

Your father had taken us to Providence, a high-end restaurant on Melrose Avenue. It was a restaurant for rich and famous people. Kaye smiled his sinister smile, “You know me. I know people,” he chuckled. I assumed someone he worked with told him about Providence.

“Whatever Kaye,” I said smirking faintly.

“So, what you gonna get?” He asked me as he thumbed through the menu pages.

“The sushi looks pretty good,” I replied. “What about you?”

“Hmm, I don’t know,” he said followed by a slight delay. “Either the Norwegian King Crab or the Liberty Farms Duck Bre-”

A loud disturbance coming from the restaurant's entrance interrupted your father. All the patrons in the restaurant began directing their attention toward the ruckus. A tall, heavy man in all black was arguing with the restaurant’s security. The two yelled back and forth for about a minute then the man in all black howled, “Shut the fuck up blood!” Everybody gasped when the man in all black knocked out the security guard. He punched him one time. I can still see that poor man’s unconscious body falling to the floor. The man in black then entered the dining area -

where we were seated. He was carrying a black and silver gun, I'm not sure what kind it is. A few seconds later four of his friends entered the restaurant, they had guns too. They locked us in the restaurant and started robbing everyone. I looked up at your dad. He looked composed. Everyone was freaking out, including me, but he was calm. He studied the man in black's face for a long time. I wondered what he was thinking, but I was too afraid to speak.

The man in all black walked to the center of the restaurant with his gun in his right hand. What's strange is that the man in black was the only one not wearing a mask. I looked up at Kaye again, he was still analyzing the man in black.

"I think I know who that is..." Your father tells me, his eyes still trained on the man. He pulled me closer to him, though we were already close.

"Where - the fuck - is Kaye Akilizuri!" The man in black demanded at the top of his lungs.

Kaye lowered his head and pushed my head down. Luckily, your dad requested booth seating. So, we were kind of secluded in a corner of the restaurant. Because of this, the man in all black couldn't see us.

"Oh shit," Kaye whispered. I could tell he was concerned now. I remember seeing the front of his shirt go in and out because he was breathing heavier, but his face was still calm. I think it was for show. I think he just didn't want me to see him afraid. He looked at me, "Everything's gonna be alright okay." Then he kissed me.

"Why are they looking for you?" I queried meekly; my eyes watered as I began to sob. He tells me that the guy in black is Chris Scarver, one of his recently fired employees. We kept our heads down and watched the table adjacent to us be robbed of their belongings.

An assailant approached us with a bag in one hand and a gun in the other. Kaye put his arm in front of me. The thief threw the bag of valuables on our table and then pointed his gun at your dad's brain. We were separated by the table. "Run me dat," the thief demanded. He did a summoning gesture with his gun. "I need yo' phone, yo' wallet, and yo' jewelry. Put it in the bag!"

We both began removing our jewelry. Kaye appeared unphased. He took out his phone and placed it in the bag, and I did the same. After I put my purse on the table the thief shouted, "Yo'? You think I'm playin' blood?! I'll blow yo' fuckin' head off," now visibly irritated. "Run me yo' wallet!" He demanded again and moved closer to Kaye.

"It's in her purse," Kaye said aggravatedly with a gun in his face. "Look," he commands.

I opened my purse and showed the thief our wallets. They matched, his and hers. The thug then nodded in agreement. "Okay," he said. He gathered our belongings and then moved to the next table.

Kaye embraces me, he assures me everything will be okay. "They just want money," he said. He whispered in my ear, "He didn't recognize me," sounding a bit relieved. I was relieved too, briefly.

Chris grabbed a waitress and brought her to her knees. I guess he got tired of waiting so he traumatized a young girl. "If I don't see Kaye Akilizuri in the next five seconds I'ma shoot this girl in the face." He said placing the gun in between the petrified waitress' eyes.

"I have to go Diety. I love you," Kaye tells me as he tries to leave the booth. I didn't want him to go so I held his arm, I tried to pull him back to me. I tried.

"Five!" Chris yelled as the girl begged for her life. "Four!"

Kaye yanked his arm away from me. “Right here!” Chris turned around to see Kaye walking toward him with his hands in the air. I followed from a distance; I was scared. “What’s going on Chris? You don’t need to be doing this.” Your dad said trying to de-escalate the situation.

“They took my baby girl man!” Chris shouted; it looked like he was about to cry. “You owe me. You owe me!”

“Who? Who took your daughter?” Kaye stepped closer to Chris.

“CPS,” Chris shed a tear and sniffled. “They took my baby girl man,” he said softly.

I began to cry for Chris and his daughter. I could see the pain in his eyes, I could almost feel it. Chris analyzed Kaye for a moment then aimed his gun at your father’s chest. “This is your fault,” he said wiping tears from his face. “You gon’ pay me,” he told Kaye. “Aye, yo’! Bring me the phones!”

“Chris, have you been taking your medication?” Kaye asked with his hands still in the air.

Chris scoffed. His four accomplices met him and Kaye at the center of the restaurant. Each thief dropped a bag of valuables at Kaye’s feet. “Take out your phone,” Chris demanded. Kaye followed his directions. “Alright, now unlock your phone and send me one hundred thousand dollars.”

Kaye laughed at the request, “I don’t just have a hundred k laying around Chris.”

“Yes – you do!” Chris countered.

“No – I don’t.” Kaye reassured him, “most of my assets aren’t liquid. I can send you forty-five k, but it’ll take a couple days to go through.”

“Fuck!” Chris shouted. He contemplated for a moment then asked Kaye, “How much can you send me right now - no wait time.”

“I could probably send like seven k without raising any alarms,” Kaye replied.

“Seven k?” Chris repeated. His tone sounded defeated. “How I’m gonna get my daughter back with seven k?” My heart broke for Chris when he said that.

“That’s the best I can do Chris,” Kaye said sincerely. “My bank throws flags for unusually large withdrawals.”

“The best you can do huh? Alright send the seven k,” Chris’ face grew angry. I could tell something bad was about to happen. Kaye looked back at me, he smiled and nodded his head. He wanted to let me know he’d be alright.

“Boom. I sent it,” Kaye said simultaneously showing Chris the transfer confirmation on his phone’s screen.

I could see Chris’ hand muscles flex. He was about to shoot your dad. I ran to your father “Nooooo!” I screamed.

“Boom.” Chris taunted, simultaneously pulling the trigger. The restaurant patrons screamed as Kaye fell to the floor. Chris and his accomplices ran out of the restaurant. I caught Kaye before he hit the floor. I dropped down and held him, yelling for help and crying hysterically. My tears fell on his face.

“Diety,” he said weakly, yet his face was still composed. He could barely speak, “I’m sorry,” he whispered.

I continued sobbing. “It’s okay. You’re gonna make it, you’re gonna make it,” I say less sure each time.

“I’m not gonna make it,” Kaye said, choking on his own blood. A pool of blood formed beneath us. I can remember the feeling of my butt, thighs, and calves being soaked in blood.

“Diety... promise me something,” Kaye said looking up at me.

“Anything,” I replied, kissing him on his lips.

“Make sure my boys are close...” He told me as his eyes began to close.

“Boys?” I asked confused, face covered in blood, tears, and snot. I was only pregnant with you at the time, so I thought the blood loss might be making him delirious.

“Kim is pregnant...” Those were his last words.

“My little sister?!” I asked his corpse. I started shaking him when he didn’t reply, “Kaye?! My little sister?!” I couldn’t believe he was actually dead. I couldn’t believe he’d gotten my sister pregnant. But he *is* dead, and Future *is* his son, just like you. So, you see, Future is your brother, but he is also your cousin because his mom is my sister.