

SHVONNE LATRICE PRESENTS

SHE

Gave
HER ALL *to the*
HOOD'S FINEST 5
WACKO RELOADED

SHVONNE LATRICE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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CAMARIH

THE NIGHT BEFORE...

The sound of light knocking on my hotel room door jolted me from my sleep. I wasn't really asleep though, because I was anxious about tomorrow. Even the softness and plushness of these bed sheets at the Waldorf Astoria in Beverly Hills couldn't make me drift off quite like I'd wanted to.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

The knocking sounded off again, making me grab my iPhone to check the time. Seeing it was 1 a.m., I threw the covers off, swung my feet off the side of the bed, and put on a deep frown as I checked on my sleeping baby in his travel crib before padding to the door.

This suite I was in wasn't the smallest in the least, and because of how tired I was, despite my inability to actually fall asleep, I was hating having to travel through it at the moment.

Peering through the peephole, I spotted sexy Tony. He wasn't dressed up, only in a zip up hoodie, white t-shirt, black Adidas track pants, socks, and slides. Like always, a watch adorned his wrist, and I licked my lips at his side profile as he looked off.

"Camarih." He spoke my name in his deep voice. The scowl he wore out of irritation made me giggle, so I finally opened the door.

"Houston, you ca—"

Before I could even finish my sentence, he'd come into the room, gripping my body tightly in his strong arms, and pressing his pillow soft lips against mine. His tongue snaked its way into my mouth, and I reciprocated as his big hands grabbed roughly at my ass. Although I had on

a silk nightgown, I could feel every grope and grasp. We were only kissing, but I was already moaning into his mouth as he backed me further into the room. The door was heavy as hell, so it shut itself as Tony and I paid attention only to one another in the very dim hotel suite.

“I missed yo’ ass.” He groaned lowly, swooping me up with ease and wrapping my legs around his body. That alone had me ready to do whatever it was he wanted me to.

“I missed you too,” I whispered back, feeling the seat of my panties become damper by the second.

“How much you miss yo’ nigga?” He sucked hard on my neck while using one hand to hold my body up against the wall, and the other to rub against my pussy with the perfect amount of pressure. “Damn, I got you wet already.” He chuckled sexily in between sucking my neck, making me cum somehow. “Answer the question.”

“I’ve been thinking about you being in my throat all day.” I spoke honestly and smirked when he gave me a look.

With the quickness, he let me down to my knees, and I got right to helping him get his dick out. He snaked his fingers through my golden curls as I began to tease the thick tip with my tongue. Slowly, I took more of him into my mouth, allowing the head to hit the back of my throat.

“I like when you do that shit.” He peered down at me. “Look at me,” he ordered, and I obliged as he glided in and out of my mouth. He bit down on his lip, moaning softly, which was so sexy to me. “You a nasty bitch, huh?” Tony growled as I went harder, letting my saliva coat his dick as I bobbed on it.

For a moment, I used my hand to satisfy him, while working my tongue on his balls, and then came up to get back to work. His moans got louder, so he took me off, picking me up swiftly and carrying me to the bed as we kissed.

Throwing me down onto the bed, Tony finished undressing, making sure I didn’t move. When completely naked and looking like a piece of artwork, he hovered over me, tonguing me down as he ripped my panties and tore off my thin gown.

“I should be waiting until I’m married for this,” I whispered jokingly. “This is bad luck, Houston, for us to see each other before tomorrow.”

He put my legs over his forearms, spreading them widely as he suckled my bottom lip.

“I ain’t seen yo’ ass all fucking day. I couldn’t wait.” He forced his way inside of me before I could reply.

I’d been getting this dick for a while, but every time, it had me paralyzed upon first entrance. Tony was very well endowed and knew exactly how to work it on top of that. He could fuck me for ten seconds and I’d cum... hard. It was a mixture of the dick size, stroke game, my obsession and love for him, and how fine he was.

He started slowly, and it felt so good that I could only stare him in the eyes as I cried softly, digging my nails into his shoulders. Already I was about to let one go, and he knew it, which was why he watched my face with anticipation. His rhythm, along with that length and girth, caused me to explode, soaking his rod and the sheets under me.

“Mmm.” I whimpered, as he placed his palms flat to the bed with my legs over his forearms, in order to lock me in place while he beat it up. Because I was wet, you could easily hear every single time he plunged into me.

“Trying to make me moan like a bitch, Camarih,” Tony stated before groaning softly out of pleasure as he pounded between my legs while biting his bottom lip.

Moments later, I was releasing yet again, body trembling as Tony tended to my erect nipples. He trailed his kisses downward until his head was between my legs, and in one motion, slid out of me to begin eating my pussy. He hadn’t even been sucking my clit for long, and I was already on the verge of an explosion.

Although I loved him and he was to be my husband, I hated how addicted to his sex I was.

His large hands roamed my body, gripping my breasts firmly as he ate my pussy, which was drenched the way he liked it. He moaned and groaned like he was basking in a five-star meal, and seeing his handsome face between my legs was too much to bear.

“Don’t fucking move,” he demanded, keeping my legs open since my knees tried to come together as I came again.

Propping myself up on my elbows, I watched him in amazement, caressing his soft, kinky hair as he went to town on my middle.

“Ahh, baby.” I sniveled loudly, feeling like I was going to black out as I wound my hips against his face, resulting in me finishing so violently that my thigh was able to slip from his binding grasp.

“Fuck, I love making yo’ fine ass cum.” Tony rose up on his knees, staring at me somewhat evilly, which was a turn on.

Although I was spent, he flipped me over in a millisecond, smacked and grabbed my ass cheeks so hard that it made me bite my lip, and then positioned my hips in the air so he could enter me. My body collapsed after some good, hard pumps, doggy-style, but Tony didn’t let up. He came right down with me, slipping his hand around to toy with my clit while he beat it up.

My voice box disappeared as tears slipped from my eyes due to the euphoric feeling.

“Houston...” I called his name once I found my vocal cords.

Our skin clapped together loudly as hell, all the while gliding against one another due to the sweat we’d accumulated. Tony sucked on the side of my neck while fucking me with his immaculate stroke game, and I was so wet I could feel the dampness on my inner thighs.

“You know you gon’ be my bitch forever, right?” He gripped the front of my neck, brought my body up some with his, and pounded me so hard my lips parted, but no sound was available. “Shit.” He grumbled lowly to himself, and in order to hear it again, I started throwing it back how he liked.

Soon, we were moaning together, one of his hands grabbing at my ass, and the other around the front of my neck as he hammered my pussy from the back. I looked over my shoulder to see his pulsing abs, his sexy chisled body covered in tattoos, and the sight made me release just as he came inside of me.

Before I could even catch my breath, he put me onto my back, laid in between my legs, and started to tongue me down nastily.

“I love you, Houston.”

“I love you too,” he replied as he pinned my hands above my head, kissing my lips, cheek, neck, and breasts.

“You better always love me.”

“Why wouldn’t I?” He stopped to look down into my eyes, so I shrugged. “You weird as fuck. One minute, you the type to curse me out and acting ghetto. Next, you freaky as fuck, deep throating my dick, then now you acting shy in front of yo’ nigga.”

I giggled.

“So.”

“I like that weird shit though. Feels like I got three bitches.” He chuckled huskily when I rolled my eyes.

“Well you only have one, and after tomorrow, I’m the only one you’re ever gonna have. I’m gonna be the only sex you get, and you’re gonna see me all the time.”

“Same shit I do now.” He got off me. “You trying to scare me or some shit?”

“No, just making sure you know.” I turned on my side to admire his side profile since he was on his back. My baby boy looked just like him. “You sure you want to get married?”

“Nah, I don’t. I just wanna get married to yo’ ass.”

“Why?” I lowered my lids.

I admit I was afraid he would change his mind and leave me standing there at the altar like a fool. No, he hadn’t done anything to make me feel this way, but if you knew Tony Wacko like I did, he wasn’t exactly what one pictured as the marrying type. On the flip side, he was everything a woman would want in a husband: a provider, made me feel safe, the dick was amazing, he was smart, a hustler, great father, and treated me like a hood princess.

“Yo’ pussy is good, you can cook, I like being around you, you fine, ass is fat, titties are perfect, that face you make when I’m fucking you, and how yo’ little voice be trembling and shit when I’m killing the pussy—“

“Oh my gosh.”

“You gave me a baby, and a bunch of other shit.” He smirked at me, and I blushed like an idiot. “Bitch like you ain’t supposed to be a girlfriend for long. Knowing what a nigga knows, if you was another nigga’s hoe right now, I would wife you first date.”

My heart fluttered at his words, even though he called me a bitch... and a hoe.

“Bitch *and* hoe?”

“Woman.” He turned to face me, embracing my body and kissing me gently. “The only *woman* I acknowledge other than my fucking mama and sister. Rest of these hoes is bitches,” he explained seriously, making me smirk. “Damn, after tomorrow, I’m gon’ have a legal contract saying I’m yo’ nigga for life and can kill any muthafucka that tries to get in yo’ fucking face.”

“Houston, that’s not what marriage means.” I chuckled.

“That’s what that shit mean to me.” His serious expression switched to a grinning one before he added, “Shit, I’m excited as fuck. I’m gon’ get a new choppa to celebrate.”

He was insane. I never knew anyone whose day could be improved by beating someone up or shooting at them, until I met Houston Terranova.

“Please don’t—”

“Fuck you doing up, opening doors for niggas at this time of night?”

“I saw you through the peephole, baby.”

“Nah, before that, you hopped yo’ ass up and came straight to the door, not even knowing who the fuck I was. Keep flirting out here in these fucking streets, Camarih.”

Laughing, I replied, “Flirting? I would never.” I nuzzled my body closer into his.

“I know. Yo’ ass ain’t crazy; plus, the pussy is molded to this dick. I’d know if anything in them walls was out of place.”

“You’re so vulgar,” I said just before we started to kiss hungrily, still hugging.

We talked for a little more before going to have a bath together and brushing our teeth. He hovered over our baby’s crib for a few minutes, watching him sleep, then kissed us both before heading to the door to go back to his room. I didn’t want him to leave, but I kept that to myself. I was so clingy with him, and I was never the clingy girlfriend type.

“Houston, wait!” I got out of the bed to catch him. “Never mind,” I stated as he towered over me, awaiting my next words.

A sexy smile spread across his face before he brought me in, using only one arm. The Hermés cologne he wore was still embedded in his hoodie, smelling oh so nice.

“You don’t want a nigga to leave, huh?”

“No, that’s not it,” I lied.

“Aye,” he made me look up into his eyes, “I told you I don’t mind that clingy shit with you. If you ain’t on my dick, that mean you on another nigga’s shit.” He pecked me softly, sending chills down my spine.

We kissed for a few seconds more, and then he scooped me up bridal style to carry me back to the bed as I cheesed like a child. He put me in the bed and kissed me deeply.

Then he went down and pecked my pussy through my panties before saying, “I love you,” to it.

“Houston, get out!” I smacked his shoulder as he laughed, standing upright and leaving.

Moments later, I drifted off with a smile on my face.



HELLO, MRS. HOUSTON TERRANOVA....

“Wow, Camarih, you look perfect.” Jilly smiled at me as she held my son in her lap. I grinned at them both.

“Thank you.”

“Yes, girl. I would marry your ass,” Rubie added, rubbing her small pregnant belly as the room laughed.

My son began to whine, so I looked his way and blew him a kiss, causing him to stop and giggle cutely.

“He is such a little ham.” Jilly kissed his plump cheek as Shanece, the stylist, and makeup artist made sure I looked nothing less than perfect in the mirror.

“I know. He wants all of my attention, all the time.”

“He’s been watching his mama closely ever since she gave him to Jilly,” Shanece commented.

After a few minutes, I was ready to go, so I got down from the elevated step I was on and allowed the stylist to pull my veil down over my face.

Tony and I were getting married at this huge gated mansion in Bel Air. We almost got married at our home, but Tony didn’t want all these muthafuckas in his house; his words, not mine.

My wedding planner, Tia, let me know that everyone was waiting for me, so my friends left out to go partner up with Tony’s groomsmen to walk down the aisle.

“You ready?” My father smirked at me when I met him at the end of the hall.

I kind of didn’t want him to walk me because our relationship wasn’t repaired just yet, but I figured he was better than nobody. Tony was gonna have one of his Crip homies do it, so I preferred my dad.

“Of course.”

I took a deep breath, and once the soft, angelic music began to play and everyone was in their places, I started down the aisle. Tony stared at me intensely, waiting, and it made me simper to see how into me he was. The way he looked at me, I'd only ever seen such an expression in those romance movies. He looked so handsome in his all-white tux with the royal blue bowtie, giving him that thuggish gentleman appeal.

"I got her, nigga," Tony let my dad know, and nodded for him to go sit down.

As soon as Tony freed me from my father, his hands were all over me, as he brought me into his body to kiss my neck.

"Houston, stop." I nudged him off as everyone snickered at his fresh ass.

The priest smiled at us both and began speaking over the wedding.

After a few words, he said, "If there is anybody here that objects to—"

"Skip that part, cuz," Tony let him know.

"It's just procedure—"

"I said skip that shit. Don't nobody in this muthafucka object to shit."

"If—"

"Skip it." Tony unbuttoned the single button of his pure white tuxedo jacket to show the priest his gun locked in his waist. To say I was ashamed was an understatement. Thankfully, the priest moved right along.

"The bride would like to say a few words to her groom before we officiate." The priest nodded toward me with a sympathetic smile. I could tell he wondered why I wanted to marry someone like Tony.

"I just want to say, Houston, that I love you. You are everything I just knew I didn't want until I met you. Even though you're the complete opposite of me, we somehow fit perfectly together. I'm blessed to have met you, because you've shown me what it feels like to be loved by somebody and for someone to care about you more than themselves. I'm so in love with you, and every day, I fall deeper in love.

"I will always be there for you, no matter what happens. I will never not love you or care for you, and I can't wait to be your wife." I sniffled a little bit.

The whole time I spoke to Tony, he just stared at me, making me even more nervous. He kept my hands in his, but I couldn't read his face. I could hear some of the guests tear up, but I kept my eyes on my groom.

"Okay, Camarih, repeat after me—"

“Let me say some shit first.” Tony cut in on the priest.

“No, you don’t have to. It’s okay.” I shook my head. Tony was a loose cannon, and you just never knew what he was going to say or do. This shit he wanted to say was not a part of the plan. Only I was supposed to have custom vows.

Ignoring me, he took a deep breath. “I don’t really get into all this lovey-dovey type shit, but I think it’s important as fuck you know how much a nigga loves you.

“When I first saw you at that Chinese food spot, if a nigga had said we’d be here right now, I probably would’ve busted him in his shit for wishing this type of bullshit on me. I only wanted a fucking donut that day, but the smell of the chow mein and shit, next door, reeled me in.” I shut my eyes, hoping he wrapped this up, because I felt like it was going left.

“Anyway, I love everything about you, how *nice* yo’ ass is, how fucking corny you are, our conversations, and that muthafuckin smile that can light up a damn room. Even better is when I’m the reason behind that fucking smile.

“I knew I loved yo’ ass when I realized just knowing you was happy as fuck had me in a good ass mood. No matter what the fuck went down that day, if when I got home to you, you had that corny ass grin on yo’ face, all was straight with a nigga. Niggas be on some forever type shit because they know life is gon’ be a wrap one day, but on my mama, if this life shit was eternal, I would still fuck with you the way I do and wife yo’ ass.” Letting go of my hands, he pulled me into him and lifted my veil.

“Houston—” My voice was almost inaudible, because his words had hit me deeply, and I was still dizzily wrapped up in them.

“I love kissing you.” He pecked me. “I love fucking you, and when I’m not with you, I miss yo’ ass. I’m obsessed with you, and knowing I can’t have you forever for real for real, beyond death doing us part and shit, fucks with me. It just shows you how greedy a nigga is for you.” He kissed all over my lips and neck as he talked.

“Baby...” I whimpered softly. This shit was unexpected, especially from Tony.

Not caring about the tradition of keeping my veil over my face until the end anymore, I reciprocated the kiss, and everyone stood there silently watching until we finally parted ways.

“Aye, y’all don’t let this once in a lifetime soft shit fool you muthafuckas into thinking I won’t bust a cap in you niggas.” Tony faced the wedding party. “Come on, cuz, finish.” He looked to the priest.

The priest had us repeat the traditional vows, exchange rings, and then we got to kiss again. The whole wedding party cheered for us as we started back down the aisle, but Tony stopped to pick up our son from Jilly.

Everyone went to a large room we’d set up as the reception hall, while I changed into my reception dress, then they all spread out to allow Tony and I our first dance.

The lights lowered, and first we danced to “It’s Whatever” by Aaliyah, and lastly to “For Real” by Amel Larrieux since Tony wanted one slightly upbeat song. He originally suggested “Gangsta’s Paradise” by Coolio, but I said hell no. What the fuck?

I smiled up at him, and like usual, he kept his cool, delivering a soft kiss to my lips whenever we made eye contact.

We finished our dance, cut the cake, and chilled with everyone for a little bit, before changing clothes and then heading to the airport to board the private jet for our honeymoon in Milan.

“Your vows were so perfect, baby. Did you write that down?” I asked as we relaxed in the rounded bed on the jet. Baby Houston was fast asleep with his adorable self, in his portable crib next to us.

“Nah. Some cornball ass nigga I saw hanging around the studio wrote it for me.” He looked to me as my jaw dropped. “I’m fucking with you, Buttascotch. But nah, I ain’t write shit. I wasn’t expecting to speak. I was just in the fucking moment. Hearing you be all on my dick in yo’ speech had a nigga in his feelings. I feel human when I’m with yo’ ass ’cause of how much shit I feel for you.”

“Aww, baby, I loved it.” I caressed his face as I talked softly against his lips. “I love you so much,” I added lowly in between pecks as he started to undress me.

Today was nothing short of perfect...

CAMARIH TERRANOVA

PRESENT DAY...

Grabbing some gloss from my purse, I spread it across my lips then fluffed out my curls. I was at the doctor for my usual gynecologist checkup and had just put my clothes back on.

When I heard the doctor re-entering, I got back onto the examination table, checking the time on my Rolex. It was my favorite one because it was a Plain Jane. All the other ones Tony got me were decked out in diamonds and brought about too much attention for everyday wear.

“Okay, Mrs. Terranova. Usually, if anything is wrong, we will call you, and if everything is fine, we would just send you a three year appointment card in the mail—”

“Okay—”

“However,” she opened the folder in her hand and moved closer toward me, “why didn’t you tell me you were pregnant?”

“’Cause I’m not,” I replied quickly.

“Yes you are, honey. We had you pee in a cup when you first arrived and—”

“I know I peed in the cup, but maybe they got it mixed up, because I am not pregnant.”

“You’re making it sound like it’s impossible. You’re young, sexually active, and very healthy, Mrs. Terranova. You’re not far along at all, about two and a half weeks, so that is probably why you didn’t know yet.”

“Right, well thank you.” I climbed down slowly, still shocked.

I didn’t know why I was surprised considering everything my doctor said was in fact true. Also, Tony and I fucked like rabbits.

“Since you’re surprised, I will let you go today, but I want you to make an appointment so I can look at the baby as soon as possible, okay?”

“Okay, I will.”

After offering a half smile, I tread out of the room and eventually the building. I felt weird at first, hearing that I was pregnant, but then a part of me was excited. My son was already a handful, so being with child while handling him would surely be a full load, but I loved being a mommy more than anything. I simpered at my thoughts as I started my car to head home.

I was pulling into the roundabout driveway about forty-five minutes later and spotted Jilly’s car. She’d been here to watch my son while I went to the doctor. Usually, I would take him places like that with me, but he didn’t like being in his stroller or carrier for long anymore. When he was awake, he wanted to be out and in your business, just like his damn daddy.

As soon as I entered the house, I followed my son’s version of talking to the den to see him in the middle of his toys, making a lot of noise.

“Oh my gosh, you’re back. He is so bad.” Jilly laughed, hopping up to hug me as if I were saving her life.

“No he is not.” I put my purse down, chuckling before I picked him up. Like always, Houston lit up upon seeing me, excitedly waving his little arms up and down as I kissed his fat cheeks. “Mommy’s baby isn’t bad, huh?” I cooed at him.

“Let’s see... he pulled my hair, kept flipping over his food bowl, and was screaming angry baby words at me as he banged on his highchair. When I pretended to cry like you suggested, he laughed.” Jilly placed her hand on her hip as her left eyebrow went up.

I tried not to snicker at Jilly’s pain.

“I’m sorry. Whenever I pretend to cry, he calms down.”

“Yeah, for you, same way Tony only acts like he has sense, *for you*.”

We chortled in unison before I said, “Very true.”

I took my son to the kitchen to feed him, and he cooperated perfectly, causing Jilly to comment on it, which was hilarious. She helped keep him occupied with some of his learning flash cards, while I prepped dinner, and then after a little conversation, she left.

By the time the dinner was done, I had gotten my son to sleep, so I took a hot bubble bath, spread lotion over my body, and then wrapped myself in a silk robe to brush my teeth at the beautiful marble double sink.

“Just in time.” Tony entered our bathroom, coming up behind me to caress my frame. “I was hoping Baby Cuz would still be up.”

“Why?” I quizzed after spitting out the mouthwash and drying my lips. “The later in the night he stays up, the harder it is to get his little unruly ass to go to sleep.”

“Unruly? He ain’t fucking unruly. He just showing you what the fuck a real nigga is supposed to be like.”

“A real nigga?” I looked to Tony through the mirror and laughed at how dead serious he was. “He is a baby.”

“Baby real nigga. Just ’cause cuz want his respect, y’all act like he’s bad. Cuz gon’ be just like his daddy.” He hugged my body from behind and kissed the side of my neck.

“His daddy is crazy.”

“His mama likes that shit though.” He pressed his dick against my ass, making my body respond thermally.

Tony ran his hands up my silk robe, slipping one between my legs.

“You want another baby?” I quizzed.

“One day,” he replied, making me face him before he picked me up to carry me from the bathroom. His response bothered me a tiny bit. “You smell so muthafuckin good.” He pressed his lips between my breasts since the robe was open a little bit.

“One day like when?”

“I don’t know.” He brushed it off, laying me back on the bed to kiss all over me.

“You don’t know when you want to have a baby, but you’re currently trying to fuck me? Will you be using a condom?” My words caused his head to pop up from planting kisses on my chest, as he stared me in the eyes, face riddled with confusion. “I didn’t think so, nigga.” I tried to get up and from under him, but he snatched my bicep roughly, keeping me in place.

“Fuck is yo’ problem, Camarih?”

“Nothing. Let me go.”

“I’m not letting go of shit. Answer the muthafuckin question ’fore you piss me off. Running yo’ fucking mouth like I’m one of these pussy ass

niggas. Act like you know.” He spoke sternly, eyes warning me much more than his words as he hovered over me.

“You don’t want another baby with me.” I frowned.

“I ain’t say that shit. You asked if I wanted another one, and I said one fucking day, now yo’ ass is going off about some bullshit.” He stared at me, so I looked off before a tear rolled down my cheek. “Camarih.” He turned my head using my chin. “What the fuck is wrong with you? What did I say?”

“I want you to be happy about it. You weren’t happy the first time, and you’re not gonna be happy this time.” I looked down into my lap, twiddling my thumbs.

Getting down on his knees so he could look up into my face, he asked, “Happy about wha—” He stopped himself and rose to his feet before sitting beside me. “Come here.” He pulled me into his lap. His strong arms always felt nice wrapped around my body. “I *was* fucking happy the first time.”

“No, you told me to get rid of him.”

“I said that shit because I was pissed at you for telling me you was fucking with another nigga. You remember that bullshit.” I smirked subtly, causing him to add, “Exactly. But I had feelings for you, even though a nigga ain’t want to, and knowing you was having my baby had me low-key elated as fuck.”

“Really?”

“Really. Shit, the fact that I nuttied in you and put a baby in you meant I had 100 percent opportunity to murk any nigga who tried to fuck with you, and all rights to stalk yo’ ass.” Placing his big hand on my flat stomach, he said, “I love yo’ ass; you feel that shit. I love my son, and I love this one too.”

“I know. Just wanted to be sure you wanted this.”

“What I always tell you?”

“That I wasn’t meant for them other niggas. I was meant for you.”

“That’s some real shit. My wife, my rider, my baby.” He kissed me gently after every name. “You know a nigga hate that even though we in this shit forever, forever ain’t really forever.”

He was definitely getting some pussy tonight and some sloppy deep throat.

“We’ll be together after death too.” I pecked his lips. His cologne danced up my nose, making me smile softly.

“Yep, even if only one of us is dead.” He gave me a look to let me know what was up, causing me to laugh. “I’m serious as a muthafucka, Camarih. If I’m dead, you dead too.”

I chortled loudly, making him eventually do the same, even though I believed he told no lies.

“I hope it’s a girl.” I cheesed.

“We can prepare that ass for the nunnery if it is.”

“No, Houston!” I laughed heartily as he smirked.

“You so fucking beautiful, Buttascotch.” He pressed his nose to mine before we pecked.

“Thank you.”

I watched him as he kissed my collarbone while groping my bare thighs tightly. His teeth dug into his bottom lip as his eyes wandered over my body in this very short and thin garment. He finally regained eye contact with me, and we got right to passionately kissing as his hand ran up under the robe.

“I think we—”

“Nah, no more talking. We about to fuck.” He promptly cut me off, and I obliged.



I’D BRUSHED, flossed, and rinsed with Listerine before showering, and now I was stepping out, feeling refreshed. I had a lot to do today, but I wasn’t stressed about it. I loved what I did for a living and loved even more the fact that I worked for myself.

“Aight.” Tony spoke to me as soon as I emerged from the bathroom into our large bedroom.

“When will you be back?” I quizzed.

I hated when he worked long hours and when I would fall asleep before he came home. I even tried setting alarms for myself to wake up before he got here, but I was always too tired. I would just feel and smell him when he slid into the bed with me.

What I loved was that he always came home. It baffled me when I would see women who were in relationships with men in the music business, saying how it was normal for their nigga to not come home or to

go missing for days. It may have been normal for them, but I would kill Tony.

“Shooting for before nine p.m.” He was in the doorway, but as he replied to my question, he made his way back over to me. Slipping his arms around my body, he hugged me tightly, kissing my lips then nuzzling his face into my neck. He felt strong and smelled good as hell, like usual. “I meant what I said last night,” he spoke lowly.

“I know.” I gave him a half smile when he pulled back some to peer down into my face. We shared another kiss, this time much deeper, and then he was out of the door.

Moments after, as I spread some of my own product all over my body, I was still smiling about our encounter. An hour later, I was dressed and went to get my baby, who was already ready to go, before heading downstairs.

I pulled his stroller from the closet and then went to the kitchen to get some of his snacks to put in my baby bag, when I spotted yellow roses, three Chanel shopping bags, and a Bvlgari bag. I secured my baby in his stroller and then opened my gifts, reading the card after it all.

Thank you for cuz #2 - T.W.

I chuckled reading what Tony had written before putting it back up. It felt good to know he was excited about this baby and had been about our first one.

After putting away my gifts, except the Bvlgari one, which was a beautiful platinum diamond band that I wanted to wear right now, I left the house.

The first stop was by the warehouse where my products were being shipped. I went by there every single day except weekends, because we didn't ship anything out past Friday. I always wanted to be sure everything was packaged perfectly and with care.

I didn't want people who'd been supporting me since day one to think now that I'd gotten a little money in the bank, I didn't care about quality. That was also why I tested each batch that was made for two weeks before I would post on my website that it was restocked. Yes, it was a lot of extra work, but it kept my customers happy and kept the money rolling in.

I still couldn't believe that my take-home money after re-investing into my business was \$85,000 a month. In the fall and winter months it was even higher since more people wanted to stay moisturized during that time. I saved fifty percent of my take-home, and then the rest was for bills, my

baby's needs, and then a little bit shopping. But most of my shopping was done with Tony's money, so I was saving more than intended each month.

After the warehouse, my son and I had some lunch, and then I went to my spa to do some facials.

"Girl, I wish I could take you home with me." My client Whitney sighed as I walked her to the front to get checked out.

"Don't be so selfish. Other ladies need me too." I chuckled as she playfully rolled her eyes.

My spa had grown from day one. I had a receptionist, a plush lounge area, and a big ass security dude named Avery, thanks to Tony. Because he was famous, and I guess I was too now, unfortunately, he didn't want people just having access to me.

"Dana, who is that?" I asked my receptionist about the young girl seated on one of my blue lounge couches. I knew for sure Whitney was my last client.

"Oh, she said she was here to speak with the owner. I'm sorry. I can ask her to leave."

"No, it's fine." I waved the suggestion off. "You can clean up my station and then go home."

"Okay. Thank you, Camarih!" She hugged me and then rushed to the back. Dana was sweet, too sweet, which was a lot coming from me.

"Hi, may I help you?" I moved closer to the girl. She was very pretty with deep chocolate skin, perfect brows and lips, and her hair was freshly braided up into individuals. She was extremely skinny though.

"Yes, sorry. I wanted to speak to someone about an internship here?" The girl shot up, smiling. She was tall, about five feet ten, so she hovered over my five-foot-four stature.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I don't do internships."

"Oh." Her previously chipper tone was now nowhere in sight. "Are you sure? I really need an internship, and this was where I wanted to do it. I love all of your products and have been trying to get a facial here, but you're too expensive and never have any openings that aren't four months out."

"What kind of degree are you trying to get to where an internship at a facial spa would suffice?"

"I'm in cosmetology school, well, to be an esthetician; I want to do waxing. However, my instructor said we need to find an internship at a

beauty parlor of some sort.”

“I see. Well I’m sorry…”

“Kai.” She stuck her hand out.

Shaking it, I continued. “Well I apologize, Kai, but I don’t need any help around here.”

“Okay. Well if you change your mind, I can do whatever. I will clean, run errands, anything. I truly admire you, not just how you handle business but your personal life as well. Your husband is sexy.”

“I was liking you until that last part.”

She laughed, and I gave only a subtle chuckle because I wasn’t joking.

“Oh, don’t worry about me. He wouldn’t even look my way.” She smirked. “Well since you can’t offer me an internship, do you have any products I can buy off of you?”

“I do.” I walked her to the pretty blue see-through fridge I kept the ones for sale in.

I stood there watching as she picked out the ones she wanted to buy, then I walked her over to the counter to ring them up. I gave her a fifteen percent discount since I felt bad.

“Thank you so much, Camarih. Oh my gosh. I can’t believe I bought these directly from you. This was my last, but it was worth it.”

“Oh wow.” I laughed.

“Can I have a photo?”

“No, I’m sorry. I don’t take photos with people I don’t know, babe. I’m nobody anyway.”

“Alright,” she responded sadly.

“You know what, okay.” I came around the corner to take the picture with her. “Come back here next Wednesday. You can be my assistant.”

I realized sometimes I did need someone to run and get me lunch or stop at the store to get something for my baby. Yeah, I could ask Dana, but occasionally, the lounge area would be full of patrons that she needed to tend to, and at the same time, I would have an hour facial to do. So it’d be nice to have that third person to do all that and maybe help Dana when needed.

“Are you serious!” Kai exclaimed.

“I am. Just be sure to bring two forms of I.D. and have your social security card so we can run a background check, as well as some documentation from your class.”

“Of course! Thank you so much, Camarih! I swear I will work my ass off, even though I won’t be getting paid! Just write me a glowing review!”

“I got you. Bye.” I chuckled.

I nodded for Avery to escort Kai out, and by that time, Dana was done. I went to my office to collect my things and baby, then locked up my shop.

HOUSTON “TONY WACKO” TERRANOVA

ONE WEEK LATER...

I was in the lounge room of my office building, getting high as shit with the homies. Nah, we wasn't doing that blunt sharing shit; everybody had their own smoke. I ain't play that, and the way these muthafuckas be crying over females and bullshit these days, I wouldn't be too surprised if they were out here sucking dick. So I damn sure wasn't about to have their asses toking on my blunt.

As I blew smoke out, my phone started buzzing, and I saw it was Jilly. Taking another hit, I tapped the green answer button and put the phone to my ear as these niggas conversed about bullshit.

“What?” I asked.

“Did you see or hear?”

“See or hear what, Jilly?”

“Nala's interview with RapTown?”

RapTown was a huge ass radio station out here in Los Angeles. I fucked with the owner because he played Eitan's shit first and fucked with us before anybody else. Nala had done an interview with them a week ago, and I guess they'd finally uploaded it.

“Nah, I haven't peeped it yet. Why?” I leaned back, sinking into the comfortable ass couch in here. “Aye, y'all quiet the fuck down!” I barked at Eitan and Abel who were yelling like some muthafuckin hyenas. When high, they were two of the most annoying niggas in the universe.

“I’m gonna send it to you so you can see for yourself.” Jilly quickly hung up before I could protest, and seconds later, it seemed, she’d texted me the YouTube link.

I clicked it then turned the volume up, causing Abel and Eitan to completely stop their stupid ass conversation finally.

“So you know what everyone wants to know right, Nala?” The female host Marie grinned at Nala in a conniving manner.

“No, what’s up?”

“What’s up with you and your boss? I know y’all have been working together for a long while now, but it can’t just be business.”

“It is just business, and he’s married now. He loves Camarih.”

“See she said now?” The male host Zane chimed in with his big husky ass. Turning more her way, he asked, “Now Nala, any man with even a smidgen of eyesight can see how fine you are, including married ass Wacko, so you’re telling me y’all ain’t never smashed?”

There was silence, too much fucking silence, making everybody sitting in the room with Nala roar with laughter and comments.

“Wait, no!” Nala tried to defuse things, but her ass was grinning like a fucking clown.

“No girl, you hesitated too long. It’s obvious you and him are fucking,” Marie giggled like she’d found a gold mine.

“No, we’re not still fucking; that’s done and over with. I have a boyfriend,” Nala’s dumb ass replied.

“Oh shit!” Abel put his fist to his mouth, as Eitan stared with his eyes wide and mouth hung open.

“Close yo’ fucking mouth, gay ass. And Abel, get yo’ Yogi bear ass up and get to the fucking studio.” I ashed my blunt.

I was pissed as fuck with Nala, Rubie’s supposed PR ass, and them fucking radio hosts. I was praying like fuck Camarih didn’t see that shit before I got a chance to get to the crib and holla at her ass. I knew it seemed far-fetched that Camarih wouldn’t catch wind before I got home, but she wasn’t one of them females that stayed on social media all day. It was rare as fuck to catch Camarih just surfing Instagram or whatever the fuck else.

Abel, Eitan, and I bounced, and about forty-five minutes later, we were all at the studio. Abel needed to be here to help Rahim with recording Nala, but Eitan’s ass had no reason to be around; his ass was just nosy.

“What?” Eitan looked to me as we entered the studio off King Boulevard.

“Fuck you come for?”

“I wanna see you rip this bitch up for her response.” He laughed.

“And what about yo’ bitch? She’s supposed to be coaching Nala’s ass on how to handle them types of fucking questions, but her bubba gump shrimp lip ass dropped the fucking ball.” I whipped my phone out. “Matter fact, call her ass and let her know to be in my office tomorrow morning for a chat.” I started to go into the studio room Nala, Rahim, and now Abel were in, working.

“Come on, man, she’s pregnant and—” Eitan stopped when I halted my steps to stare him down. “Aight, I got you. I’ll catch you later.” He shook his head before leaving. Nigga knew damn well the last thing I gave a fuck about was a pregnant bitch that wasn’t mine.

“Sup.” Rahim turned in his chair to slap hands with me when I entered the room.

I nodded my head to him then locked eyes with Nala, who was in the booth.

Pressing the talk button so she could hear me in there, I said, “Bring yo’ ass out. I wanna chop it up with you.”

Looking like she was about to shit herself, she nodded and replied, “Okay.”

I left the studio room, and by the time I got to the end of the hall near the back, I saw Nala coming my way. I slipped into another room, and she was right there behind me.

“You think you funny?” I got in her space. If I were shorter, we’d be nose to muthafuckin nose. I wanted to put hands on this hoe, but she was one of my top artists that I needed to sell.

“N-no. I told them it was old news, Tony!”

“Nah hoe, what you should’ve said was that it never fucking happened! You took yo’ monkey ass on that fucking show, talking like we had some real shit going on! I fucked you and yo’ throat, nothing else!” I barked, making her jump as she stared up at me, on the verge of crying them same old side hoe tears. “Got it looking like I was cheating on my bitch to fuck on you.” I turned my lip up in disgust at the thought. “Swear to God I could choke you the fuck out right now, Nala.”

I was fuming.

“Tony, I’m sorry. Whatever you want me to do to fix it, I will.” She put her hands in prayer mode. “I just don’t want you to be mad at me. I lov—” She stopped herself because if she continued that sentence, I was gon’ knock her head between this wall and the back of this old ass couch.

“Make this the last muthafuckin time I have to step to you about this bullshit, Nala. If you in love, get over the shit quick, fast, and in a fucking hurry. Because if my wife tries to leave me over yo’ stupid ass stunts, I’m killing you, yo’ nigga, yo’ son, yo’ stork shaped ass baby daddy, and that fat ass cat you love so much.”

“Okay.” She nodded repeatedly, tears flowing down her face in abundance.

“Clean yo’self up and get back to work. If I hear one damn voice crack on that beat, I’m slapping you the fuck up, on my mama.”

Nala quickly left out and tread to the bathroom to fix herself, while I went back to the studio and waited. I chopped it up with the homies until she returned, and by the time it was 11 p.m., she was done recording, so we all left.

She was lucky that damn track was perfect, because my hand was itching to backhand a bitch. And if her nigga had an issue with it, I was slapping his ass the fuck up too.

When I got home, it was midnight, but I heard my son’s voice, along with Camarih’s, as I neared our bedroom. I made sure to wash my hands in the bathroom next door before entering.

“Look, you made it, baby.” Camarih sat up, holding our baby. “I think he wanted to stay up for you.” She half smiled.

“Thank you, cuz, I appreciate it.” I quickly took him, hugging his small body tightly before kissing his fat cheeks. “You was good for ya mama today?”

“Yes, he was, but he messed up three onesies with his food.” Camarih grinned as she looked up, watching me hold him.

“Come on, cuz. You can’t be walking around with my face and name, pulling that baby shit. You’s a real nigga, baby. You gotta move different.” I talked to him as I carried him to his bedroom. I could hear Camarih chuckling in the distance.

Sitting in the chair in Baby Cuz’s room, I told him about the time I did my first drive-by, and like clockwork, he was knocked by the time I

finished. I put him down in his fly ass crib, cut on that little spinning light up shit he liked, and then went to shower and brush my teeth.

"I saw the interview," Camarih let me know as soon as I hugged her body from behind in our humongous ass bed.

Fuck.

"I don't know why she said that shit on there. Yo' dick sucking lip ass homegirl is supposed to make sure shit like that don't happen."

"Houston." Camarih turned to face me. "I'm not mad about what she said, because it's true kind of, but I don't like that she's basically in love with you and around you so much."

"It's work, Camarih, you know that shit. And it wasn't true what she said. If she wanted to be honest, she would've said 'yeah, I used to be one of his hoes'. Make shit clearer. She made it sound like I wasn't busting on her face and leaving her to clean the shit up her muthafuckin self."

"Houston!"

"I'm being honest."

"I know, but I think that you need to cut back on the time you spend with her. She likes you a lot, and the more time you hang with her, the more —"

"I don't hang with her ass. I be in the studio with a bunch of other muthafuckas, Camarih."

"So it's never just you and her?"

"Nope," I lied. "And even if it was, shit wouldn't happen." Sitting up, Camarih shook her head while looking off. I sat upright as well before making her straddle my lap as I adjusted myself up against our headboard. "Buttascotch, I am not gon' fuck that bitch, I swear."

"I know that, Houston. How would you feel if I worked with some nigga I used to have sex with?"

"That's why every nigga who has fucked you is dead."

Slapping my shoulder, she replied, "I'm serious, and don't say that."

"Shit is true. But to answer you, I wouldn't like it, and the bullshit wouldn't happen. If it did, I would kill cuz."

"Exactly, yet I'm supposed to be okay with you working with Nala? What if you get drunk? Or too high? Or are out of state?"

"No fucking circumstance would make me cheat on yo' ass, for one, and secondly, nothing would make me fuck that hoe again."

“So what you’re saying is you’re not going to slow up on the time you spend with her? You have to be at every studio session she has? All her video shoots? All—”

“I don’t go to them all, and you know that shit. I go to a few, just to check up on shit, same way I do with all my artists. Just like you be at that warehouse checking on yo’ stock, I gotta do the same fucking thing, Camarih.”

“All I hear is that you don’t give a fuck about what I’m saying.” She tried to get up from my lap, but I stopped her ass, bear hugging her body.

She kept fighting, so I eventually had to pin her ass on her back, keeping her wrists in my grasp.

Hovering over her, I growled through clenched teeth. “Calm yo’ crazy ass down ’fore I nut the fuck up on you. If you want me to pull back from that bitch, I’m gon’ do it, but I can’t completely stay away from her. I gotta see her muthafuckin ass sometimes, to work with her ass. But on my son, you don’t got shit to worry about, not with her ass and not any other bitch. When I’m drunk, I’m gon’ come fuck you. When I’m high, I’m gon’ come fuck you, and when I’m far away from yo’ ass, I swear to God I’ll fly to you before I fuck another female.”

“What about when I’m full term, fat, and immobile?” She pouted, making me chuckle before kissing her.

“I’m gon’ roll yo’ big ass over and fuck you.”

Giggling, she nodded and said, “Okay.”

“Aight?”

“Aight.”

I let her wrists go then wrapped my arms around her body, kissing her lips while saying, “You don’t be fat when you pregnant, Buttascotch. You be fine as shit, just with a belly; a pretty ass belly at that.”

Caressing the side of my face and spreading her legs more for me, she whispered, “I truly believe you wouldn’t cheat on me, Houston, but if you do anything with her, I don’t care how small, I will never be able to forgive you. And if I can’t forgive you, I can’t be with you. I won’t care if I’m pregnant, lost my business, or whatever else, I will be gone.”

“I know that. That’s why I love you. But understand some shit. I would never lose you, that little nigga in the next room, or this one inside you over anybody or anything.”

“I believe that.”

“Also, understand that if you did try to leave me, I’m gon’ stalk you and make yo’ life miserable as hell until you realize you love my ass. And any muthafucka that looks yo’ way is as good as dead. That’s if a nigga is even bold enough to try.”

“Some will try.”

“’Cause you fine as fuck.”

“We both know you’d rather be with me than stalk me though.”

“Always.”

“Stay home with us tomorrow.”

I had a bunch of shit lined up, but instead, I just replied, “I got you.”

Her beautiful ass, corny smile was bright as fuck at my response, so clearing my schedule and shit would be worth it.

JOY BRIXTON

“**M**s. Brixton, how are you feeling today? You look great!” my therapist, Joanie, inquired as she sat across from me in her decked-out office. It had a bright color scheme, I guess to keep the atmosphere from coming off as depressing.

“I’m doing great,” I half lied. I’d been here for two months, and I only felt slightly okay because I was cut off from the world.

It all came to a head a few months ago, when I broke down over Tony marrying Camarih. When it first happened, I was doing fine, and I guess because it just seemed so unreal to me. It wasn’t like I attended the wedding or anything, and their private asses didn’t post photos, so out of sight, out of mind.

Camarih did a simple post of their hands with their wedding rings saying *Forever Love* and not a damn thing else. However, that all ended when Camarih finally shared a wedding photo of them kissing at the altar, well after the damn wedding, months after. I guess seeing actual evidence of the marriage was too much for me. My homegirl wanted to check public records for the certificate well before that photo appeared, but I was too afraid to do so, fearing the certificate would actually show up, proving the marriage to be valid.

Anyway, after peeping that picture, I had a full-on breakdown. I called Tony’s phone two hundred times, and he didn’t answer once. I sent him about the same amount of texts, and when they started turning green instead of the usual blue color, I knew he’d blocked me. That caused me to have a panic attack and hyperventilate to the point where I ended up hospitalized. After that, I knew I had to get some help, so fast forward, and here I was

completing a sixty-day voluntary psychiatric treatment. It was nice for me because I had no phone or television, just books.

“Good. Today is your last day, so it’s nice that you feel like you’ve improved. Let’s do a couple quick tests before you leave.” Joanie cleared her throat.

“Sure.”

“How do you feel when I say the name Tony?”

Truthfully, it made my heart race in my chest, my skin get steamy hot, my hands clam up, and my pussy wet, but I wouldn’t admit that. Nope. I’d been holding up pretty well. And shit, maybe once I got some of that fresh Los Angeles air, I would feel different.

“I feel... nothing.”

“Perfect, perfect.” She checked something off. “The name Houston make a difference?”

“Nope. It’s just a city in Texas.” I joked, and Joanie nodded approvingly. “Camarih?”

“Nothing.”

“Wow, Joy, this is great. I remember when you first got here, we couldn’t say any of those names without you bursting into tears.”

“Don’t remind me.” I bit down on my lip, pushing the thoughts of Tony to the back of my mind so a tear wouldn’t fall and so my stomach would stop being queasy.

Joanie did a few more routine exercises with me, and then I was free to collect my things from the room I’d been staying in while here. After hugging and saying goodbye to everyone I’d gotten close with, including this girl named Klaude, I left out.

I spotted Carter climbing out of his Mercedes Benz to open the door for me. He looked fresh in his long-sleeved white shirt, blue jeans, and some simple Gucci sneakers. I could smell his cologne even from where I was standing, and I could also see he’d gotten a fresh line-up. His Rolex sparkled and shined as I moved near him, offering up a soft but seductive smile.

“Damn, you look amazing.” He took my duffel bag from me, placed it in his back seat, then hugged me.

I’d be lying if I said his embrace didn’t feel nice. I even closed my eyes to enjoy his cologne. Still, he wasn’t Houston Terranova.

“Thank you.” I pulled back to allow a gentle peck from him. Even though it’d been a little over a year since we’d been dating, kissing him was still awkward for me.

We got in his car, and he drove for a little bit, not saying a word and just glancing at me. There was music playing, some rap which I believed to be by Da Baby.

“You hungry? I can take you to eat. I was thinking maybe we could grub, shop, and then see a movie or something. It’s a lot of shit out.” Carter finally broke the silence.

“That sounds nice, actually, but I’d like to be able to have a nice hot bath first. It was only showers at the facility.”

“Yeah, of course. Whatever you want.” He reached for my hand and kissed the back of it. How were he and Tony related? Carter was such a gentleman and treated me like a queen, yet Tony saw me as nothing but a bed buddy. “What you over there thinking about?”

“Just the fact that you and Tony are so different. Like, I cannot believe you guys are first cousins. You’re so good to me, and he doesn’t even know the first thing about how to treat a woman.”

“I mean...” Carter made a face, not finishing his sentence.

“What’s that face for?”

“I wouldn’t say he doesn’t know; he makes Camarih pretty happy. And from what I’ve seen, he be doing some romantic shit for her.”

“A few expensive gifts? Please.” I threw my hand up.

There it was, my heart seemingly beating out of my chest at the thought of my love being in love with Camarih. What the fuck was wrong with me? I hadn’t touched this man or been alone with him in ages, yet my feelings for him hadn’t dwindled a bit.

“Yeah, gifts, but I’ve seen them together, and at the wedding, his vows were pretty legit.” Carter glanced my way. “Baby, I’m just saying that sometimes it takes a certain person to make a man or woman act right.”

“So what are you saying? I wasn’t right for him? I wasn’t as good as Camarih, so he dogged me out?”

If this man weren’t driving right now, I would have taken off on him.

“No, hell no, and you know damn well that’s not what I’m saying. If I thought you weren’t good enough, I wouldn’t be on you the way that I fucking am. He loves Camarih, so she sees a different side of him. Same

way I have deep feelings for you, so you get a different side of me than women have in the past.”

“Whatever. I don’t want to talk about it anymore.” I began searching the car with my eyes. “Where is my phone?”

“Oh, I ain’t bring it because—”

“Why the fuck wouldn’t you bring my damn phone? I’ve been without it for two fucking months, and you didn’t think I’d want it as soon as I got out of there?”

“Nah, I wasn’t thinking about that shit, baby. All I was focused on was picking you up. Ain’t like I carry your phone with me at all times.”

“I cannot believe your stupid ass forgot my phone.” I huffed and puffed as my right leg bounced repeatedly.

“Hold on, who you calling stupid?”

“You! It’s like you can’t do anything right! I try and try to get over Tony and be with you, but you never quite cut it!” I ran off and felt horrible right after spilling my true feelings. Carter was dead silent as he sped down the street, nearing my place. “Carter, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that.”

“Nah, you did.”

“I didn’t. I swear I’m just—”

“Actions speak louder than words, Joy, and your actions have been showing me constantly that the only nigga you want is my no-good ass cousin; well, no good when it comes to you.

“When the fuck are you gonna get it through your head that he don’t fuck with you, huh?” Carter’s lids lowered, and I could see the anger flowing through his supple brown face. “He don’t wanna be with you, no matter how long you sit around waiting for his ass. No matter how many panic attacks or how many times you try to off yourself, he ain’t never gon’ have a place in his heart for you.”

“That’s not true. You know nothing of our relationship.”

Chuckling, Carter replied, “You think he’d have Camarih getting her womb scraped out every five months? You think he’d be telling his homies to try Camarih’s head game out? That nigga wouldn’t even let me get Camarih out of a burning building, yet he don’t give a fuck about me hanging around you. Nigga even supports me dating you.”

Carter’s rude comments had caused the tears sitting in my eyes to fall. I didn’t want to admit that what he was saying was true. But shit, he could be

wrong. Yes, Tony may have treated me a certain way in front of them, but they didn't know what it was like when we were alone.

"Fuck you. Don't ever talk to me again."

"Joy—"

"Bye, asshole!" I shot out of the car, got my bag from the back seat, and then slammed both of his doors before switching off into my humble abode.

Hell, Carter had done me a damn favor. I didn't want his ass anyway. I knew sooner or later he would want sex, and I wasn't trying to give it to him. Because once we crossed that line, I would for real have to kiss any type of relationship with Tony goodbye, and I just wasn't ready for that.

Married or not, he was destined to be mine. I was a woman of God and lived my life right, so I was 100 percent sure God hadn't brought Tony into my life just for him to ride off into the sunset with Goldilocks.

Getting into my condo, I slammed the door and stormed to my room to throw down my bags. I quickly fished my phone from my nightstand, shaking my head at dumb ass Carter, and then put it on the charger. Lying down since I was too exhausted for a bath now, I began to sob.

No, I didn't love Carter, but the thought of whatever it was we had, being over, did make me sad.

***Me:** I'm sorry, can you come back over so we can talk and spend the day together?*

***Carter:** I'm straight. Have a good life Joy.*



JUST TWO DAYS LATER...

Since I'd been holed up in that facility, I wanted to get out and exercise. Before I got super depressed over Tony and Camarih's relationship, I used to always go to hot yoga.

I attended the 9 a.m. class, and afterwards went to the vegan smoothie place next door for a little pick me up. I didn't want to go home, so once I got it, I took a seat at one of the cute orange tables outside to enjoy it and the beautiful LA weather.

"Hey, I think I know you." A dark-skinned girl with curly blond hair stopped by my table. She too looked familiar.

“You do?” I frowned since looking up at her gave the sun the opportunity to blind me.

“Yeah, your name is umm... Joy.” She sat down across from me, grinning.

“How exactly do you know me? I’m not famous or anything so...”

“You’re famous on social media, kind of.”

“Mmm, yeah, I guess, but it’s more of a local thing. What’s your name?”

“Angel.” She set her Prada bag next to my Chanel and put a spoonful of her açaí bowl into her mouth. “You date Tony Wacko, don’t you?”

“Are you trying to be funny? I don’t play games,” I let her ass know right away. I may have been on a new wave, sort of, but I was still the same Joy that would beat a bitch’s ass. I’d only lost one fight in my life, and that was only because I’d underestimated Camarih’s bitch ass.

“No, no!” She giggled. “That’s just pretty much how I know you, no offense. I know he has a woman, but I always felt like you were who he really wanted.”

Her comment shocked and flattered me at the same time.

“That’s the first time I’ve heard that.”

“Well whenever I hear someone discussing him, they say the same thing. He just likes Camarih because he can walk all over her.”

“My thoughts exactly,” I lied. After that ass whooping I got in the parking lot from Camarih, I knew damn well Tony wasn’t walking all over anything. “And because she trapped him.”

“That too. I bet her little fake sweet ass was so happy to be having his baby.” Angel rolled her eyes.

“Yeah.” I stared her down for a few. “Well it was nice talking to you.” I started to get up.

I despised Camarih, but I had to admit that bashing her with some random felt weird and hater-ish. One thing I wasn’t was a hater; I just didn’t like the bitch.

When she met Tony, I was obviously his woman. Hell, I was right there by his side, but her hoe ass had hood stars in her eyes and fucked him anyway. That was what hoes did, slept with a man no matter what he had going on. Then she fucked him raw at that and got pregnant, just like the whore she was. I laughed when she tried to play that sweet, peaceful role, because deep down, she’s a home wrecking hoe.

“Wait! I wanted to talk to you about something more serious.”

“Serious?” I adjusted my purse on my shoulder.

“Yes. I know how I can help you. We can break them up easy, and he will be right back with you.”

Laughing, I sat back down and said, “I would love to hear this.”

“You don’t believe me?”

“No, I don’t. Tony is not the normal nigga that you can just play, and Camarih is so up his ass, it’s gonna take a lot.”

“Well no matter how slick a nigga is or how in love his wife is, it’s rarely strong enough to survive an outside baby.”

“Outside baby? Tony has a baby on the way?” This was bittersweet. It was sweet because I knew for sure Camarih’s crazy ass would leave him, but bitter because this would be yet another baby with another bitch that wasn’t me. Shit, I was just barely over the fact that Tony Wacko had *one* child.

“He *could* have a baby on the way.” Angel smirked, shoving more food into her mouth.

“Girl, if you don’t go somewhere—”

“No, listen. All we have to do is spread the rumor. It will get to Camarih eventually, and then we will let her handle the rest.”

I pondered for a second. Maybe it wasn’t such a bad idea. Word of mouth was very strong, and if enough people said the same thing, then others would start to believe it; that was just human nature.

“Okay, but we need a name. We can’t just say a baby is on the way with no mama. I’m not saying me because Tony will hurt me. How about you? He doesn’t know you.”

“Eh, he kind of does.” Angel frowned.

“How?”

“From the business; I sing.”

“Oh—”

“Hmm, and I don’t have many friends, at least not ones I could trust not to spill the beans and get us fucked up. Do you have someone that Tony doesn’t know?”

“No. I fucked with him for like five years. He knows everyone I kn—” Suddenly, a person came to mind... Klaude. She and I had become pretty cool; plus, she was naive and checking herself out in a couple weeks. Her body was crazy nice, but her face could use some work, especially her top

row of teeth. It didn't matter what she looked like though; we just needed a dummy for this plan. "Actually, I do know someone who would be perfect."

"Oh good!" Angel clapped.

"Wait, what the hell are you getting out of all this?"

"Let's just say I don't like either one of them, *and* I'd love for you to take him from her."

"Good enough for me." Hell, I just wanted my boo back, and yes, I would settle for the old relationship we had, as long as Camarih was history.

"Cool. Put your number in my phone. We'll need to communicate frequently."

Smiling as I typed in my number, I felt deep down in my soul that this would work. Camarih would crack like an egg if she thought Tony had a baby on the way. And I'd be right there to let him know I'd never leave him, no matter what.

RAHIM CAMBRIDGE

THE VERY NEXT DAY...

“**H**ow’s your food?” I asked Dallas as she sat across from me at Ocean Prime. Even after being together for a year and some change, I still found the way she kept herself up sexy.

“It’s so good, but everything here is good.” She drank some of her wine. “You in a rush?” she asked, I guess because I checked the time on my watch.

“Oh nah, not really, but I have to go pick my daughter up after this. I don’t want it to be too late, because she’ll be asleep, and I’ll have to disturb her.”

Now that I was making a whole lot of money and shit, Amara let me move her out here to Los Angeles, but only after she found a law firm that would give her the same position but higher pay. I let her choose whatever house she wanted, just because she agreed to live out here, then gave her a car on top of that, just as an extra thank you. She left the shit parked and hadn’t touched it since the day I brought it over, but I didn’t care.

“Tonight? It isn’t your weekend though.” Dallas’s brows furrowed out of confusion.

“Yeah, but Amara’s birthday is this Saturday, so she’s leaving day after tomorrow to Madrid.”

“Oh wow, that sounds so nice! I know she’s so excited. What made her choose Spain?”

“She’s always wanted to visit, so I got her and her friends a private plane and hotel room since her birthday was coming.”

Dallas choked on her wine a little bit then replied, “You paid for this trip? Why are you paying for her birthday trips?”

“What you mean, why?” I felt my lip flip up. “That’s my child’s mother, I love her, and it’s her birthday.”

“Oh, you love her, huh?”

“You know what the hell I mean, Dallas. I love her as Ahmira’s mom, not like what you thinking.” I lied my ass off.

I definitely still loved Amara. No matter how much I tried not to think about her or tell myself that I wasn’t in love with her, the truth of the matter was that if she asked me to be her husband again, I would. No way in hell I would be buying her a crib, a car, and this expensive ass luxury trip to Europe if I wasn’t in love. However, I couldn’t say any of this to Dallas for obvious reasons.

I loved Dallas, but at the end of the day, she wasn’t Amara, and there wasn’t a single minute that went by where I didn’t regret ruining a marriage I was perfectly happy in. But Amara was through with my ass and had no problems reiterating that any time I needed reminding.

“Whatever.” Dallas rolled her eyes at my explanation. “And she makes good money. Why does she need you to pay for her travels?”

“She doesn’t need it; it was a gift. She didn’t even want to take the trip, but I convinced her. It’s just a birthday vacation, baby. You act like I’m going with her.”

Sighing, Dallas looked off before focusing back on me and sipping more of her red wine.

“I’m sorry. It’s just ever since I caught you in the bathroom on the phone with her, I just feel like there is still something between you two.”

Touching her hand, I said, “There isn’t, and that shit happened years ago. I love her in a platonic way, and like you even told me, she held me down until I got to where I needed to be. Don’t you think she deserves this? She don’t ask me for nothing and never has.”

Dallas nodded.

“Yeah, she does deserve it. She was good to you. Ugh, I hate when I do things like this, especially because, since we’ve made it official, you’ve given me no reason to worry.”

“Thank you.” I sat back now that I had murdered the last few pieces of my porterhouse. “Can a brother get some points for that?”

“Yes, and something else too.” She touched my hand, making me smile.

We ordered our desserts, polished that off, and then Dallas offered to pay the bill as an apology for how she acted. After that, we bounced, and it was like I was in a race to get her home so I could head to Amara’s.

“Aight. I should be back in about forty-five minutes.” I kissed Dallas right after pulling up to my spot.

“Okay and— damnit!” She shouted because when she turned her head, her earring flew off into the back seat. She unbuckled her seat belt to reach for it, and by then, I had realized something, but it was too late. “What is this?” She held up a small black Chanel shopping bag.

“A gift.” I took it.

“What kind of gift?” She snatched it back from me and tried to reach inside, but I stopped her.

“Fuck are you doing? Don’t open this. It’s a bracelet, nothing huge.”

“Fuck you, Rahim.” Dallas shoved me and pulled the lever on my door to get out of the car.

“Dallas! Dallas, what the fuck is yo’ problem! We just had a whole conversation about this shit back at the restaurant!” I yelled out of my passenger side window since she’d shut the door already.

“Something is just not right, Rahim!” She spun around on her heels to yell at me. “The trip, the bracelet—and I know by the way you snatched that shit from me that it was expensive! So go! Go to your ex-wife’s house! I hope she gives you some pussy, because I won’t!”

I said nothing as I watched Dallas switch up to the front door of my house, use her key, and then go inside.

After mulling over my thoughts for a few minutes, I sped out of my driveway and headed to Amara’s. Her crib was only fifteen minutes away, and in LA, that was nothing. Shit, a muthafucka fifteen minutes away was damn near next door in this big ass traffic ridden city. By saying that, Amara’s house was almost as big as my mansion.

I pulled into her driveway and hopped out after grabbing the gift. I checked my appearance in my side mirror then went to ring the doorbell. Yeah, my ass was ringing the doorbell of a house I bought because Amara changed the locks on this shit as soon as the deal was closed. She refused to let me have a copy too.

“Hey.” Amara answered in her nightgown. I could smell her signature Gucci floral perfume.

“Sup. You sprayed that on for me?”

“Nigga, I wear this to bed every night. It hasn’t been that long since we’ve broken up that you’ve forgotten.”

“I know. I’m messing with you.” I moved closer. “Can I have a hug? Damn.”

“A light one, and only because you did something nice for my birthday.” She draped her arms around my torso to embrace me from the side. Wow.

“Anyway, this is for you.” I handed her the small Chanel bag, and her face lit up which had me feeling myself.

“Rahim, no. Spain was more than enough. I even looked up our suite to see you spent ten thousand dollars a night for us to stay there.”

“Just take it. I already got it, and I’m pretty sure I can’t return it.”

Smirking, Amara finally replied, “Okay, fine. Did you want something to drink before you take Ahmira?”

“Yeah, I do.” I’d just had dinner, so I surely didn’t need anything to drink, but anything Amara was offering, I was willing to take.

We got into her spacious kitchen, and I sat down at her nice ass table while she made some tea. That wasn’t really what my ass was expecting, but I’d take it.

While she dolled it up, adding all the fixings, I took in how clean and upscale her furniture was. She paid for the majority of it, and I only contributed here and there because I wanted to, not because she’d asked or needed me to. She never needed me.

“Dallas doesn’t mind all these nice gestures?” Amara set the mug in front of me then sat down at the table as well with her cup.

“Nah, why would she?”

“I’m just asking because you’ve spent a lot of money on me, and I don’t want her thinking I’m requiring anything of you. I want to be sure I’m not causing any issues with your relationship.”

Amara’s words pissed me off, and I didn’t know why. I guess I wanted her ass to be jealous or want to come between Dallas and me, because it would show she had feelings for my ass still. But seeing her so calm and talking like she wanted Dallas’s and my relationship to prosper had me heated.

“So what you want, me and her to be in love and get married or something?”

“If that’s what you want. I don’t really think about it.” She shrugged.

“Wow.” I laughed. “So you just doing fine over here, huh? Me and my girl aren’t even a factor in yo’ life.”

“Why are you upset, Rahim? You should be happy I’m not bothered by your new relationship that you started before the ink on our divorce papers was even dry.”

“Oh, so you are bothered.” I snickered.

“No. I’m just stating facts. She was already your girlfriend by the time the divorce was signed and sealed. Why the hell would I be bothered by that when you cheated on me with multiple women during our marriage? I wasn’t surprised you had a new woman on your arm before we dissolved our union.”

“We ain’t even been divorced that fucking long, Amara. You should feel some type of way. Just like I would be pissed if you got a new man.”

“Newsflash, Mr. Cambridge. The person who fucked up the relationship is always remorseful, mad, and jealous.” She finished her tea and reached for mine, but I moved it from her reach before sipping some. I didn’t really mess with tea, but whatever she’d done to it had it tasting good as hell.

“If you ain’t jealous, then it means you never loved me.”

“I did love you, a lot.” She had her back to me as she turned the sink on to wash her mug.

“Then why you don’t give a fuck about me being with another female!” I hollered, temper boiling over.

“Because you are not a man to be jealous over!” She turned to face me after abruptly shutting the running water off. “You lied, you cheated, you even went as far to tell a bitch you barely knew that I was your fucking sister! Who in their right mind would be envious over a man like that?”

Damn.

“Then why the fuck you marry me in the first place!” I shot up from my seat.

“I married somebody else! This rich, lying, philandering, music producer is not the nigga I fell in love with! I thought you were someone else, so I fell for you and accepted your proposal. But when the money started coming in, and the fame, your true colors showed.”

“Baby, I told you the shit was a mistake.” I came from behind the table I was seated at and around the marble island in the middle of the kitchen, to be closer to her. “I don’t even know why I cheated on you, but what I do know is I love you, and I’m willing to do whatever the fuck I need to, to get you back.”

I was pleading my ass off as I stared down into her beautiful ass face. She just looked at me, not really giving off an expression I could read. Finally, she glanced away momentarily before regaining eye contact with me, folding her arms across her chest.

“Rahim, you cheated on me because I’m a strong, independent, woman, and you’re a little boy. You want a woman that needs you and is impressed by the things you dangle in front of her.”

“Bullshit! Dallas has her own fucking money!”

“She does, but she’s desperate for love, and you see that. You play on women’s weaknesses. With Shanece, it was her sadness over her dying husband you played on. Phoebe was a bottom feeding ghetto bitch who wanted your status and money, then now Dallas, who craves your attention and acceptance. I didn’t need anything from you but to be a good husband and father, but that’s not enough for a nigga like you. I don’t need your money, I don’t need you to save me, I don’t need you to make me feel pretty or like I’m good enough.

“So what I suggest you do is go collect your daughter and take her home with you to that woman who suits your tastes, because it is not me.” Amara started toward the exit of the large kitchen.

“None of what you said is true. I ain’t no little ass boy either!” I barked after her.

“Tell me, Rahim, does Dallas know you still love me, or are you pretending that you’re being kind to me as the mother of your child?” When I just stared at her, face contorted, Amara added, “Exactly, little boy. I will bring Ahmira down since you seem to be stuck.”

I was stuck, just like she said, and by the time I snapped out of my thoughts, Amara was bringing our daughter into the kitchen with her bag. Since she was asleep, we exchanged goodbyes quietly and then I left out, still on ten.

Driving home, I kept thinking about how Amara talked to me. That, coupled with the fact that I didn’t know how to convince her to take me back, had my head hurting.

When I got home, I put my daughter in her bedroom since she was already in her pajamas, then I went to my own room. To my surprise, Dallas was awake, watching TV in the dark. We didn't speak to one another as I undressed and changed into some boxers for bed.

Sliding in on my side, I touched her hand, saying, "I'm sorry about earlier. You were right. I shouldn't be purchasing that type of shit for my ex."

Dallas looked down at my hand resting on top of hers for a second, then over into my eyes.

"I'm not trying to be a nag or seem crazy. I just want you to know there is a fine line between being a good baby daddy and being her man."

"I know. I think because of how I did her, I'm trying to make up for it in my own way."

Part of that was actually true. I was mainly doing all that shit because I loved Amara and was trying to slither my way back into being her husband, but a small part of me was trying to patch up all the hurt I caused her. Seeing her cry and hearing how she felt when she found out about all my indiscretions cut me deeply. I didn't like seeing her like that, all broken and shit, especially because she was usually so strong.

"That makes sense. I think the trip was a nice gift, but in the future, maybe tone it down to a nice purse through the mail or courier."

"Yeah, that sounds like a smarter way to move." I smirked before leaning over to kiss Dallas.

Maybe if I actually tried focusing on my relationship with Dallas, I could make this shit work. The more I harped on my marriage with Amara, the harder it would be for me to actually get over her ass and try something new with somebody. Hell, Dallas and I had been together for over a year, and I still saw her as nothing more than a homegirl I loved, as far as the feelings department. So shit, starting now, I was gon' for real try to move forward.

Let's see how *not* jealous Amara would be about that shit.

NEHEMIAH VAN BUREN

Jilly was in the shower, so I slipped into the bathroom and opened the glass door, making her look my way. When she saw I'd stripped down to nothing, a wide smile covered her face as I neared her, clearing some of the steam.

"Can I help you?" she quizzed playfully, rolling her neck like she always did.

"Most definitely." I picked her up, forcing her legs around my body before sliding inside of her. "Shit," I mumbled, pecking her neck and lips as I glided in and out of her walls.

"Babe!" She cried out the nickname she'd given me.

I kept up the slow strokes for a little bit, kissing her passionately in between pumps, but then I eventually put her against the shower wall to hammer her shit. When she came, I took my time tonguing her down while running my hands all over her wet, shapely body.

Jilly was so damn fine to me, and even though I'd been fucking her for a minute, I couldn't keep my hands off her. Jilly and I fucked at least three times a day, and that was when we were busy.

"Fuck!" I growled, letting off inside of her. My knees buckled as she dug her nails into my back, shaking a little bit.

Jilly's pussy was addictive as hell.

We kissed for a little bit, and then I pulled out, placing her to her feet slowly, and making sure she found her balance before I let go. We washed off twice then got out to brush our teeth in the double sinks.

Once we were done flossing and rinsing with mouthwash, Jilly said, "You know if you get me pregnant, you're going to have to tell my brother."

“I think he’ll catch on when you’re belly swells up.” I pecked her before walking into the bedroom, which was right outside of the bathroom door.

Following me, she replied, “No, my brother would need to know *before* my belly swells up. Soon as I pee on the stick, you’d have to go tell him.”

“Why me? The fuck?”

“Because I’m not going to do it. My brother is crazy.” She added the last part as if no one was aware of how wacko Tony’s ass was.

“No shit, Jilly. But he’s yo’ brother, so if you get pregnant, you let him know and—”

“No. I said what I said. If you knock me up, you’re calling him, choosing a time to meet face to face, and telling him yourself.”

“Well I told you I ain’t doing the shit.”

“Then I’m not fucking you anymore.” She reached up to tap my nose before walking to her closet.

“Nah, you know what? I got you. Since you’re scared and shit, I will tell your brother for you. Punk ass.”

Laughing, she replied, “Reverse psychology doesn’t work on me, especially with this because I *am* scared of my brother.”

Fuck.

Jilly chuckled when she saw my face, making me smirk at her before I finished getting dressed. As I sprayed on my Gucci cologne, she checked her fine ass self out in the mirror. Going behind her, I kissed her neck while hugging her body into me.

“I can’t wait to get you pregnant.”

“I know.” She raised one of her perfect brows before looking up and over her shoulder at me. I pecked her lightly since she had some shit all over her lips, and then we parted ways.

Today I had to meet with this female rapper Roxie about doing her music video. Her label had reached out to me, and to be honest, even though I’d gotten a pretty big name in the industry since working with Tony and *Make A Killing* for a while now, I was surprised.

Roxie was big shit and well seasoned. She’d been big well before I came on the scene, so working with her was a damn honor. The shit low-key made me nervous because I didn’t want to mess up. But shit, if I could work with Tony Wacko, who was the king of putting niggas under pressure, I was sure Roxie would be a piece of cake.

She invited me to her crib, which I was apprehensive about, but after she explained that that was where she recorded, I felt more comfortable. I didn't want my girl thinking I was on some bull, and more importantly, I didn't want her off-kilter ass brother thinking it either. Nigga told me straight up, without cracking a smile, that he'd murder me if I fucked over his baby sister. And with rumors swirling that he took out Stallion plus his crew, yet was never even arrested for it, I wasn't trying to test the waters. We wouldn't even speak on the disappearance of Jilly's ex, Vernon.

After Roxie's security let me in, I parked behind a G-Wagon, which I assumed was hers since I'd seen it on her Instagram, and then I sent her a direct message saying I was outside. We'd only communicated through email and direct message because I didn't feel comfortable with other females having my number, except for Star. And if it weren't for my baby boy, her ass definitely wouldn't have it either.

RoxieBaby: *Okay, coming!*

I hopped out the whip, and by the time I got to her double doors, she opened it, wearing a white tube top and some thin gray shorts that could pass for panties. Roxie was thick as homemade peanut butter too. She was light to caramel, wore her hair in a pink, short cut, and had slanted eyes with full lips. Her breasts were obviously fake, but she still looked good as hell from head to toe. She wasn't really my speed because I liked my women a little more toned down, but for fucking purposes only, she was definitely a go.

"Hey, thank you for coming and being on time." She hugged me, which I didn't expect.

"No problem, and of course I'd be on time. This is business. What kind of people yo' ass be working with?" I let her close the door behind me as I took in my surroundings. Her crib was crazy. I had a decked-out ass condo for now, since Jilly and I wanted to get a house together later, but this shit right here was vicious.

"You'd be surprised who I've worked with." Roxie walked in front of me so that I could follow her, and I had to tear my eyes away from her ass eating up them thin ass shorts. She had on fuzzy socks with the fit.

"How much this spot cost you?" I quizzed as we entered her back patio where she had two pools, two jacuzzis, and a cabana.

"A little over twenty million." She gestured for me to have a seat under the cabana. She then started pouring some pink drink that had a flower

floating in it.

“Damn, I bet. I think I want something like this for me and my girl, but I’m trying to get married first.”

“Oh, you do have a girl. Uh, Jilly, right? She’s Wacko’s little sister.”

“Yeah, she is, but she’s a stylist too.”

“Excuse me. Take up for your boo then. I didn’t mean it like that. It’s just how most people know her.”

“For now.” I nodded, and Roxie stared at me before we both chuckled.

“So you’re going to get married, huh? It’s rare to see men in our age group want marriage.”

“I know. I didn’t before I met her.”

“Oh, you were with that girl with the fire ass body before.”

“Damn, you know all my fucking dating history, huh?”

Giggling, she replied, “Not like that. I’d actually heard of Star before you because of her fitness shit on social media, and then when you got big, I noticed you guys had the same child on your pages.”

“I see. Just making sure you wasn’t stalking me or nothing. I ain’t want any problems with Mac.”

Mac King was her producer, and he was also her nigga. He was a big ass messy dude who swore he was from the hood in Los Angeles, but none of the street niggas ever heard of him before he got famous. He stayed talking shit and pressing music industry niggas from behind a screen, that were from ‘his city’ except Tony Wacko and anybody signed to *Make A Killing*. I guess his ass knew better and knew Tony put the music shit second; he was a hood nigga first.

“Yes, he’s wild.” She drank some of her pink drink and then lifted the carafe to offer me some, but I shook my head. “Okay, so I want something crazy for my video. You know I’m known for the weird shit. Well, for this song in particular, I want it to be like in a world of robots.” She polished her drink off as I pulled my notebook from my bag and began to write. “That’s so cute you use an actual pen and paper, not your phone or laptop.”

“Yeah, this shit helps to have it on paper versus my phone. It’s a habit of mine, but it works.”

“It does. Your videos are always on point. That’s why I told my manager to holler at you.”

“Oh, having me do the video was yo’ idea? I thought it was the label.”

“Nope, me. And I’m big time, so my label does whatever the fuck I say at this point.”

“Oh, I believe you.”

“So,” she got up, “in the video, I think we should get some kind of metallic paint or something because I want to be a robot but sexy, so I don’t want any kind of armor on or anything.”

“Yeah, hell nah. Part of your career is how you look, so we definitely want to show off yo’ figure and shit. The whole theme of the video can be like pink and purple, including the robot suits, but everyone else will be certain colors, and you’ll be a totally different one so that you’ll stand out.” I spoke and began writing, but when I looked up, Roxie was smiling.

“Yes, I love that.”

“Aye, what you doing?” I picked my head back up from writing again to see Roxie stripping completely naked. She looked better without clothes for sure.

“I’m about to swim in one of my pools. Damn, nigga. You ain’t ever seen a naked bitch before?”

“I seen plenty, but they usually warn my ass before I look up seeing ass and titties.”

“Yeah. I guess this does need a warning label.” She winked before turning away from me to walk to her pool. When I realized I was watching her every step like a hawk, I snapped myself out of it. “Where are you going?” She came up from under the water when she saw me pack my shit up and start walking to go back inside.

“I have to be somewhere, and I pretty much have everything that I need to start making some calls. I will hit you with the time and locations so we can make sure everything is cool with your schedule before I book it.”

“Okay, sounds good. Can’t wait.” She showed me her warm smile before swimming off.

After this shoot, I was never talking to her ass again; way too much fucking temptation.

I felt like my ass could breathe again when I got back in my car, so after a few moments of just thoughts running rampant, I pulled off, headed to Star’s spot.

Speaking of Star, ever since her ass came through on her word and put me on child support, she’d been living lovely. She always made her own money selling them fitness programs and shit, but with my eighteen

thousand dollar a month child support checks, plus her extra fame due to being my baby mama—which meant more programs sold—baby girl was living lavishly.

I hated to think she was using that child support money for shit she wanted, but there was no way for me to prove that. And as crazy as Star had been, there was a time where we were in love and I fucked with her, so seeing her keep herself fly didn't bother me as much as it would bother the next nigga in my situation.

When I was about ten minutes away, I dialed her up through my car.

"Hello?" A male voice answered, almost making me crash my whip because I had to double check what my car screen read.

When I verified it had Star's name, I asked, "Who the fuck is this?"

"Oh, my bad; hold on."

Before I could stop him, I heard his ass walking briskly and then Star grab the phone.

"Hey, Nehemiah."

"Who the fuck was that?" I hissed, almost rear ending the truck in front of me that kept braking unnecessarily.

"What did you call me for?"

"You know what the fuck I called you for. I always hit you when I'm close and about to pick up Timothy."

"Okay, see you soon."

"Star—"

The phone beeped, letting me know her stupid ass hung up, so as soon as the traffic light turned green, I floored it. When I got to her new house, I noticed no cars were in the driveway. Assuming that nigga who answered her phone took her shit for a drive, I climbed out the car and made my way to the door. Star's crib wasn't no shit like what Roxie had, at all, but it was nice as hell for a normal person.

I realized I'd been on her porch waiting, wallowing in my thoughts for a long ass time, so I rang the doorbell again. Again, too much time went by and no one answered the door, so I whipped my phone out to call her.

"Hey, what's up?" Star's voice came through the speaker.

"Star, where the fuck you at? I'm outside yo' shit to get Timothy."

"Oh dang, my bad. Timothy and I are on the way to my friend's house out in Calabasas."

“Why the fuck would you take my muthafuckin son any damn where when you know it’s my time to have his ass!”

“I forgot! Don’t fucking yell at me!”

“How the fuck you forget when I just talked to yo’ ass about ten minutes ago! And you was at home!” I was ready to choke her out, and I wasn’t the type of nigga who’d put his hands on a female.

“Nope. I was gone already.”

Her stupid ass was lying because I heard the nigga walk through her crib to hand her the phone.

“So why you ain’t mention being gone when I *just* fucking called?”

“I told you I forgot.”

I could hear the wind blowing from her riding or driving in a car.

Inhaling deeply, I chanted some calming words in my head so I wouldn’t talk to the mother of my son like she had a fucking tail.

“Star, bring my fucking son back tonight, and I will come get him.”

“No. Calabasas is too far, and traffic is a bitch. You can come get him in the...” She stopped to respond to that same nigga who’d answered her phone earlier. After giggling at him, she continued. “You can come get him tomorrow afternoon when I’m back.”

“You got a nigga I’ve never met around my son?”

“Stop being jealous and worry about the niggas creeping around that hoe you call a girlfriend.”

“Star—”

Click.

I was gon’ have to take her crazy ass back to court. Only reason I didn’t want to was because my income had tripled since the last time, and I was afraid she’d get more money in child support.

I never thought I’d say this, but I was low-key starting to hate Star’s ass.

CAMARIH

I fastened the buckle on my sandal heels and then got up to put my watch on my wrist before grabbing my purse. I was about to meet Shanece at the mall to buy an outfit for an event that *Make A Killing* was having. I felt I had enough clothes and shoes, some stuff with the tags on it still, but Tony insisted that I go.

He just enjoyed spoiling me, and I couldn't say I hated it. It wasn't an every single day thing, but a few times a month, he would splurge on me. Sometimes he'd go all out, like when he bought me a Rolls-Royce truck with orange interior. I didn't drive that shit for a month, but now I couldn't stay out of it. The way it drove alone was worth the price.

Walking out of the bedroom, I texted Shanece to let her know that I was leaving, and before I got to the den to get my baby, I could hear Tony talking to him.

"See this? Now yo' shit is clean again." He held up our baby's tiny Jordan shoe. "You can't let these hoes and hating ass niggas see you with dirty ass kicks." He slipped the sneaker onto him as I chuckled softly, not wanting him to hear me as I peeked around the corner. "Now you be good today, aight, cuz? I heard about you wilding in these streets." He pecked his cheek. "You yelled at yo' aunt Jilly, you pulled her hair, you hit Rubie's big lipped ass in the ear, which I ain't tripping too much off of, but her big ass is pregnant. Then you scratched Shanece's gums. You can't hit females that you cool with, cuz. Now them hoes that's busted, over five feet eleven, and be popping hot shit like you won't box they fucking head, by all means, slap her ass the fuck up—"

“Okay, Houston!” I had to make myself known. “And he didn’t mean to do those things to Jilly and my friends. He just got excited.”

Whenever my son got happy, he did things, and sometimes it resulted in him pulling your hair or hitting you. As long as you didn’t tickle him or do anything to make him laugh or get excited, you’d be fine. I mean, he was smiling and giggling when he did all that to them, so of course he meant no harm.

“Nah, cuz just know when he being disrespected, so he acts accordingly.” Tony picked our baby up from the couch and kissed his face. “Aight, little nigga, have fun, and if you see any of them hoe ass niggas eyeing ya mama, throw up on her muthafuckin ass.”

“Houston!” I laughed, taking my baby and straightening his little hoodie. I put him in his stroller that was already set up and waiting, thanks to his daddy, then I kissed Tony before I left.

I got to Shanece about twenty minutes later, and she came right out once I arrived, so we were on our way to Rodeo Drive.

“You’re gonna be nice today, Houston?” She looked into the back seat at my son. “He is so cute. Look at him, smiling like he’s sweet.”

“He is sweet, Shanece.”

We both laughed at my statement, but I was serious. I didn’t care what anybody said. My baby was a good little boy. He gave *me* no problems 90 percent of the time.

When we got to Rodeo, we started at the top where Fendi and Louis Vuitton were, then made our way down the street, looking and shopping for stuff we liked. Our last stop was Chanel since we were on our way back and it was on the other side of the street. I found a purse there, two actually, but I refused to get them both. I just could not justify spending ten grand on two measly purses. I didn’t care how rich I was.

“Mmm, he’s cute,” Shanece let me know as we waited for the sales associate to bring her the jacket she wanted to see.

“Yeah, but he’s a little short for my liking.” I eyed the man who’d come up the stairs of the Chanel store.

“Well, your man is abnormally tall, so yeah, I bet he is short to you. He gotta be like six feet even.” Shanece eyed him with her champagne in hand.

“You’re acting like my man is six feet eight. He’s a couple inches shorter than that. Plus, aren’t you married?” I laughed.

“I am. I wouldn’t trade my nigga for him. I’m just commenting on what I see.” She shrugged one shoulder before we giggled. “And a couple inches shorter than six feet eight is big as fuck, shawty.”

“Whatever.” I waved her off with a half smile.

Looking him over some more, she added, “I’ve seen him before.”

“You have?”

“Yeah, he’s famous for sure.” She squinted her eyes. “I wanna say he’s been up at Scene Magazine headquarters a couple times, but he wasn’t the artist.”

“Hmm.” I watched the dark-skinned brother with fresh braids study a pair of heels. When he looked our way, we both awkwardly turned and couldn’t help but to laugh.

“Ah Bah!” My son yelled angrily, and I realized his stroller was facing the other way.

When he was awake, he liked to keep an eye on me. If he couldn’t see me, he would first get angry then cry if that didn’t locate me. If someone was holding him, unless it was his father, he stared at me while in their arms the entire time, until I got him back.

“He is just like his damn daddy, always having to make sure he knows where you are.” Shanece laughed as I turned my baby’s stroller so he could see me. Like always, he locked his eyes right on me, trying not to doze off.

“You are such a little tyrant.” I cooed, making him half smile, exposing his one dimple, the only thing he inherited from me.

About ten minutes later, I felt a presence nearing us from behind, so I turned a little, expecting to see the sales associate, but it was old boy.

“Good afternoon, ladies.” He smiled, drowning us with the scent of his heavy cologne.

Just by looking at him, the way he carried himself and his clothing, I knew he had some money on him. He was flashier with the brands than my Tony, so I knew he had less money than Tony. You would never see my husband in a full-on Gucci outfit. He always said that was broke nigga shit. He’d have a few pieces on but never the whole shebang.

“Afternoon,” Shanece and I spoke in unison.

“Y’all doing some shopping I see.” The man licked his lips.

“Yes, a little.” Shanece nodded, sipping her drink.

“Shopping for clothes and niggas too, huh?” He kept his eyes on me, flashing his smile that was covered with diamonds.

“No, absolutely not. Just for clothes and whatever other *material* items we like.” I made sure to clarify.

“I see.” He eyed me for longer than I wanted. “This your baby, huh?”

“Maybe.”

He laughed.

“I already know who your nigga is just by looking at him. He don’t look nothing like you; all Wacko.”

“Okay, I apologize for the wait, Mrs. Bias. We had a hard time locating the jacket.” The sales associate returned to assist Shanece.

“Well, umm...” I raised a brow.

“Mac.” The guy stuck his hand out for me to shake.

“It was nice meeting you.”

“Damn, you want me to leave?”

“I mean, you can stay here if you want to, it doesn’t matter to me.” I got up since the associate was ready to ring us up. Mac looked me over lustfully from head to toe. He then shook his head in disbelief, running his tongue over his lips.

“I just want you to know that if you ever feel like that nigga ain’t appreciative, you can hit me up.”

“Nigga, please. It’s not that easy. You know whose girl I am, and you thought you could spit that weak shit to me, and my knees would knock?” I laughed, and Shanece joined me as I handed my card to the associate to go process. “You don’t have enough money, game, swag, or height for me to even let you see the color of my panties. Also, my man would kill you if he knew you were simply breathing my same air right now.”

“He really would,” Shanece added.

“My bad.” He smirked, throwing his hands up and walking off slowly but making sure to get another full look at me.

“Damn, girl. Why you have to talk to him like that? Had his corny ass smiling to save face.”

Shanece and I guffawed together at her statement because of how true it was.

“My watch was bigger than his. Come on now.”

Again, we laughed loudly together.

A little while later, the associate came out with our bags. I noticed she had two for me when I’d only gotten one purse. If her ass charged me for

both the purses I liked, at five grand apiece, she and I were about to have it out.

“Cora, I only got one bag,” I let her know in a sweet tone.

“Yes, I know, honey.” She looked around for a moment and then pointed to Mac before saying, “He got you the other one.” The look in her eyes let me know that she was impressed by my ‘game’.

“Oh, well no, I don’t want it.”

“Why not? It’s a free bag, girlfriend, and one of our most expensive!”

“I only take gifts from my man. And I cannot walk in the house with a free bag.”

Tony wasn’t one of those rich niggas who just let his woman buy whatever with his money without checking things. He didn’t care what I bought myself, but he was surely going to ask to see the receipt for his records and check his statement. He budgeted everything and wanted to know where every single cent of his was going. So if he saw a purse but no receipt, we’d have an issue. Plus, I didn’t want shit from that nigga Mac.

“Oh, but he paid for it already.” Cora appeared to be afraid, and when I looked around, I saw Mac had left.

I took the shopping bag, and as and we walked out of the store, I saw him on the phone, smoking.

“Here.” I reached it out to him.

“You sure you wanna do that? I know you wanted both.”

“No. I wanted the one I got. Take this.”

“Nah. I wanna go to sleep tonight knowing you got something I bought you.”

“Oop!” Shanece’s messy ass commented.

Smiling up at him, I walked right to the nearby trashcan and slammed the fresh Chanel shopping bag into it, causing everyone who was in eyeshot jaws to drop. Without another word, I pushed my baby’s stroller and walked off with Shanece, leaving his whack ass stunned.

“Girl, maybe he wants to die,” Shanece said. “Are you gonna tell Wacko?”

“No!”

“Why, Camarih? You remember how he reacted about the check from Stallion.”

“Yes, and where is Stallion now because of it?” I bucked my eyes as we got closer to the place we planned to have lunch at.

“True. What if he finds out?”

“He won’t. I threw the gift away, and I doubt I will see homeboy again.”

“Are you sure? I told you I’ve seen him somewhere, and I’m sure he’s in the music business.”

“Well if I do see him again, I’m sure I will be with Houston, and I doubt he will try anything with him on my arm.”

“He for sure won’t.” Shanece shook her head as we followed the chipper white girl to our table. “But what if you’re not with Houston?”

“If I’m not and he pulls something again, I will tell.”

“Cool.”

I knew my man was crazy, and although Mac was annoying, I wasn’t trying to get him killed. I also wanted to make sure my man stayed out of trouble so he could stay out of jail. So for now, Mac was in the clear, but if he persisted with his forwardness, I would be forced to let Tony know.

And Tony didn’t give a fuck. It could be something as simple as another man breathing on my neck, and he would murder him. Especially now that I was his wife, he felt like he had a legal right to murk any man that looked my way.

Just as I started scouring the menu and discussing options with Shanece, my phone buzzed, showing I had a notification from Instagram. Once I unlocked it, I saw it was a direct message.

MacKing: *I’ve never wanted a woman as bad as I want you.*

MacKing: *You gon’ be mine.*

What the fuck was wrong with him?



ABOUT THREE DAYS LATER...

KNOCK! KNOCK!

“Come in!” I shouted, doing work on my computer.

“Hi, boss. Your lunch is here.” Kai entered, holding my meal I’d ordered from this fresh food cafe nearby.

“Thank you. It’s a lot of food, so if you’re hungry, you can have some,” I offered. “Just get a plate and some utensils from the break room.”

“Okay, thank you!” Kai rushed out while I used the bathroom within my office. By the time I came back out, she was walking in. “You are so nice, Camarih.” She looked at me for a little bit as I fixed her plate.

“Thanks.”

“For real. Usually, girls that are as pretty as you and have what you have are rude, entitled, and bitchy.”

“I’ve heard that before. I guess I’m just not a mean person, so what I look like can’t change that. Or as my man says, I don’t know how pretty I am.”

“I think it’s a bit of both. You’re perfect.” She sat down across from me after taking her plate that I’d put food on.

“I am definitely not. No one is except God.”

“Well you’re close. I guess what I mean is I aspire to be like you some day. You’re smart, you have a beautiful family, a fine man, your own business, and might I add that this spa is so pretty and upscale. Even the break room area is plush.”

“I know. I love it.” I ate some of my food. “Thanks for the compliment. I guess it’s good to hear because it reminds you to be thankful for all the blessings you take for granted sometimes.”

“True.” She ate some of her food. “You know, funny enough, before I got this internship, I tried to work at The Pink Cherry.”

“What? Why? You’re in school.”

“I am, but money was tight, so I needed a job. All the rich niggas frequent that place, and if you make the right moves there, you can get paid a lot.”

“Yeah, that is true. Some of the ladies that work there live pretty nicely for what they do.”

“My point exactly. I didn’t get the job though because your man didn’t like my looks.”

“Huh? No, I’m sure that wasn’t it. You’re a beautiful girl.”

“I know, but he told his hiring manager I was too skinny. And everyone knows that if Tony Wacko wouldn’t fuck you, you can’t work at The Pink Cherry.”

“Excuse me?” I perked up.

I knew her little ass didn’t say what I think she said.

“Oh, no. I didn’t mean to offend. It’s just a known fact. The hiring manager, Sean, told me that. He claimed Tony said it himself, and it’s a

requirement. That's why Sean has to take your picture and show Tony, then they call and let you know what he says."

How didn't I know this? This nigga had me fucked up.

"I see."

I refused to sweat or show panic in front of people when they told me things like this. I wanted to save face, and I also wanted to save my energy for Tony.

"Yeah, I heard when he bought the place, he fired all the girls that didn't fit. But luckily, my mama slipped at some superstore in Colorado while on vacation and got a huge settlement, so she was able to afford my schooling."

I just nodded because I was done with my food and this conversation.

Hours later, I was finished with my last facial, Kai had cleaned the place, and I'd double-checked the sales with Dana, so I locked up. I headed straight home, texting Tony on the way to see when he'd be there. He told me around 9 p.m., and it was already 7:45 p.m.

By the time I got home, it was 8:25 p.m., since I had to stop by Jilly's to get my baby. I fed him, bathed him, and then played with his cute self until he passed out. I decided to take a hot bath because I had plans for Tony, and while spreading my line of body butter on my skin, I heard him come into the bedroom.

I slipped into the lace thong that was barely there, along with the matching see-through bra. They both were a vanilla color, and so was the short robe to match what I threw on. I tied my curly golden locks up into a messy bun with tendrils at my nape and temples, then stepped out. I didn't need perfume because my body butter was just the right volume.

I spotted Tony sitting on the loveseat in our room, in a t-shirt, cloth sweats, and socks, with his shoes already off and next to him. His cologne was in the air, and he was occupied by his phone, so I started his way.

"Hey," I spoke.

"Sup." He gave me his attention very briefly, so I removed the robe, tossed it on the arm of the couch, and continued past him. "Aye, aye." He grabbed my wrist.

Yeah, nigga.

"Yes?"

"Where you going?" His eyes ran amuck over my body in a salacious manner. His big hands graced my hips lightly as he pulled me between his

legs.

“Excuse me, nigga. Do I know you?” I attempted to leave from his space.

“Nah, and you ain’t gotta know me to know a nigga wants to eat it up.” He brought me back to him with the swiftness, rising up and bringing me closer while squeezing my ass and pressing his lips to my neck. His comment turned me on for some reason.

“Is that how you talk to the bitches that work for you at The Pink Cherry?”

“What?” He stopped kissing on me to look down into my eyes. “I don’t talk to them hoes.”

Sucking my teeth, I rolled my eyes.

“So it’s not true that if you wouldn’t fuck them, they can’t work there?” He chuckled, licking his sexy lips. “What the fuck is funny, Houston?”

“Shut yo’ ass up talking crazy. Yeah that’s true. So the fuck what? Ain’t like I’m breaking them hoes off; it’s just a requirement.”

“So you work in a club full of bitches you would fuck!”

“Yeah.” His voice was so nonchalant that I had to take a moment to be sure I was hearing the right words.

“Let me go. You’re stupid.”

“Camarih, if niggas don’t wanna fuck them hoes, they ain’t gon’ pay up. So yeah, it gotta be bitches I would stick my dick in working for me. Bitches I would fuck ain’t the same as bitches I would be with. When I see they ass, I think, is this is a bitch I would take to the motel and nut on or nah?”

“Let me go!” I barked. He never knew what to say.

“I’m being honest, and I ain’t letting yo’ ass go.” He sat down, taking me with him so I that was straddling his lap unwillingly. “Buttascotch.” He bear hugged me, pecking the corner of my mouth. “It’s business. I don’t even kick it with them hoes. I peep the photo Sean shows me and that’s it. I may do a walk through, but I don’t be shooting the shit with them bitches. And even if I did, you know I’m only fucking you.”

“For now.”

“Forever. You remember that expensive ass event where you wore that frilly ass dress and had me sounding like a bitch in front of eighty people?” He referred to our wedding.

“Would you hire me?”

“Let me see. Stand up.” He let me out of his lap, so I rose up. He used his fingers to direct me to spin around, as he made faces like he was thinking. “Nah.”

“What! Why!” I reached for my robe to cover up, but he stopped me.

“‘Cause I’d want you to my fucking self. I’d rather take you home, nut *in* you, and call you my bitch.”

“You’re so romantic.” I chuckled, caressing the side of his handsome face as he held my hips, kissing my stomach. “And you’re just saying that.”

“How so? Ain’t that what the fuck I did?”

“Yeah, I guess so.” I smirked, realizing it.

“Come here.” He got up and led me by the hand to the wide full-length mirror in our bedroom. Standing behind me, he said, “Look at yo’ ass.”

“I’m looking.”

“Perfect.” He started to unfasten my bra then took it off. We made eye contact in the mirror as he continued. “These are perfect.” He grabbed my breasts, sending chills down my spine. He then ran his hand down my flat stomach before going around to grab my ass. Coming back in front, he slipped his hand into my panties. “Pussy is perfect.”

“Mmm.” I cooed, feeling him toy with my clit.

“I love yo’ ass.” He made me cum slowly, and I trembled. “Look at me in the mirror,” he instructed, and I followed directions. His free hand toyed with my nipples as he sucked on my neck in between words. “I would never cheat on you.”

“Ah.” I whimpered softly, feeling his finger push inside of me.

We kept eye contact in the mirror as he used his finger to make me cum. When I did, he added another finger, causing me to dig my nails into his forearm.

“See how sexy yo’ ass is when you getting fucked?” He made me look while he stroked my walls with his magical fingers in the mirror.

“Oh-I—” I stammered softly. I didn’t know what to say or how to explain why this felt so good. And the way he spoke, the tone and everything, made this shit feel even better.

“One of my favorite things about you is the face you make when I’m making you cum.” As he said that, he fucked me harder with his fingers, causing my juices to overflow right over his whole hand it seemed.

“Ahhhh.” I cried softly as my body gyrated in his embrace. These panties were ruined.

Slipping his fingers out of me gently, he pushed my underwear down just enough, then released himself to slide into me from behind.

Gripping my shoulder with one hand, he began pounding me while being sure I didn't close my eyes and kept them on him through the mirror. You could hear our sex bouncing off of the walls because I was so wet, and he was fucking me so hard that our skin had it's own beat.

"Damn," he groaned lowly. "You my bitch, and I love you. I would never let another female get this shit." He talked as I came again. Scooping me up from behind, he growled in my ear, "You understand?" as he walked me to the bed.

"Yes." I sniveled, preparing myself for the hurting he was about to put down.

What were we talking about again? I always forgot.

SHANECE BIAS

“O h my gosh.” I panted as my leg shook violently from exploding. Wade had his head between my legs, putting his lovely tongue to work. I never thought I’d meet another man who could make me feel the way Paul did in bed, but sadly, Wade had surpassed him.

Paul was no prude in the bedroom, and neither was Rahim, but Wade was just on a whole other level. He was insatiable, for one, and could go all night long; plus, there was nothing he wouldn’t put his mouth on.

“Good morning,” he whispered in his sexy voice as he trailed his tongue up my stomach. He chuckled softly when I just looked at him. I was too out of breath to speak. “Well I’m guessing you’re telepathically saying good morning and that you love me.” He put his lips to mine and then climbed out of bed.

“I do love you... a lot.” I finally found my voice as I turned on my side. I was sweating and couldn’t wait to take a shower.

“I love you too.”

I watched Wade gather his toiletries for a shower and then pick his clothes out for work. He was now the *district* manager of the Waldorf, *and* he’d bought into it now, so he was part owner. I couldn’t believe how much damn money that hotel made, but then again, the price of them rooms were outrageous.

“Do you?” I quizzed.

I asked to make it sound as if I was being playful, but I really wondered.

We’d been married for almost seven months now and had been having sex even longer with no protection, yet I still hadn’t fallen pregnant. I didn’t want to waste anytime having children after my situation with Paul, because

I regretted not giving him a baby. Even still, now that I was married to Wade and loved him with all my heart, having had a child with Paul would've been nice.

However, no matter how much sex Wade and I had, even when I timed it to be during my ovulation, nothing happened. I'd taken many pregnancy tests, and every single time they came back negative. I was tired of getting excited when my period was late, only to find out that it was actually just... late.

By saying that, I wondered if my husband was starting to have second thoughts about staying married to me. And I was too afraid to see a doctor, fearing they'd tell me something was wrong and that I was barren.

"Of course, and I always will." Wade winked before slipping into the bathroom.

I swam through my thoughts while he bathed, and by the time he was out, I'd picked my clothes for the day. I was having brunch with my friends, then it was off to a light morning at work, which meant no meetings and just computer work, so I was excited about that. I could relax in my office all day, snack, and surf the Internet in between handling business.

I brushed my teeth, then took a hot bath, and after I was somewhat dry, I spread some of Camarih's products on. She told me it was good to use while I was still damp because the scent would linger, and it'd be more moisturizing.

Coming out of the bathroom in my silk robe, I saw Wade putting on his suit jacket, readying to leave. He looked so nice in his suits and always smelled even better.

My husband was beyond handsome with that deep chocolate skin, low cut hair, and solid build. He deserved a baby to call his own and to pass those genes down to, so your girl was going to give it to him.

Just as he and I kissed, I heard the cabinet door in the kitchen slam. The house was large as hell, but you could still hear every little thing.

"Oh God." I rolled my eyes. "When is she going to leave?" I asked, referring to his ex-wife, Cheri.

Yep. That bitch was still living here but in the back house.

"Soon, she promised me." Wade gave me a soft smile before pressing his forehead to mine.

"Wade, I told you I would only move in if she was gone. This is weird... us living with your ex-wife."

“We are not living with my ex-wife. My ex-wife is living in the back house of a main house that I own. Her name isn’t even on the deed.”

Sighing, I shook my head.

“Make sure she is gone within the next month or two, or we are going to have to move. Then, she’ll have no choice but to bounce.”

“Yes ma’am.” Wade left the bedroom.

I picked out an orange halter-top, some light blue vintage Levi’s, and my orange colored Hermés sandals, before tying my fresh braids up into a bun. I spritzed on some of my perfume, added a touch of jewelry, and then grabbed my Chanel before going downstairs.

“Good morning, Cheri.” I entered the kitchen to see her cooking.

Cheri was a chef and could cook her ass off. This was the only reason I could tolerate her. No, she wasn’t a bitch, and no, she never tried to get Wade back, at least not to my knowledge, but she was his ex and didn’t need to be living with us. I didn’t give a damn if she was in the guesthouse behind us. I wanted her out and for us to have some true privacy.

“Good morning, Shanece. You look so pretty, girl. I remember when I used to dress up, but as I got older, I stopped caring.”

“You’re only thirty-seven.” I smirked, grabbing a water bottle from the fridge.

“Exactly, so if a nigga can’t take me as I am, then he can bounce.”

Cheri was a very pretty girl, but she was right, she didn’t really dress up. Her dolling up was a pair of jeans, flat boots, and a button up top. I was the complete opposite, making me wonder what Wade ever saw in her besides her pretty face. She was quite skinny, but not in alarming way, with perfect brown skin, a full head of curly hair, and big brown eyes. In my opinion, she was no match for me.

“I feel you.”

“Hey, did you want some food before you leave?”

“No, I’m going to have brunch with my friends, so I want to be nice and hungry for that.”

“Oh.” She looked disappointed in my decline of her offer. She’d made a lot of food, but she always did this. “Well I will just wrap this up and take it down to the shelter then.”

“Sounds good to me.” I started to walk off again, but she began talking.

“Why don’t you ever invite your friends to the guesthouse?”

“For what? To meet you?”

“Well, yes, we’re family and—”

“Wait, wait.” I made a complete about face and fully entered back into the kitchen. “Cheri, we are not family. I am married to your ex-husband; in what way does that make us family?”

“Well, you know Wade and I are very close, so anyone he chooses to date is like a sister to me.”

“Look, you’re nice and all and make great food, but we are not like sisters. I don’t really have an interest in being close with you like that, no offense. You’re cool, but you’re my man’s ex. I don’t want to be buddies with a woman who knows what my nigga’s dick is like.”

Cheri just stared at me.

“I think you’re being jealous for no reason, Shanece. Wade loves you, and he and I are like best friends.”

“No, he and I are best friends now. Also, I am not jealous at all; I’m the one with the ring. Now if you could be so kind as to speed up your moving process, I would really appreciate it. It’s getting quite crowded around here.” With that said, I turned on my heels and switched out. Cheri didn’t say another mumbling word, thankfully.

Family...? Bitch, please.

I arrived at this place named Ysabel in West Hollywood, twenty minutes later, and checked my car in with the valet. When I entered the restaurant, I spotted Camarih, Rubie, and Jilly already seated in the bohemian inspired middle area of the restaurant. I greeted everyone with a hug before sitting down in the empty seat left for me, which was next to Rubie and across from Camarih and Jilly.

“Dang, we thought you had flaked.” Rubie rubbed her big belly. She was due to give birth any day now, and probably shouldn’t have been out.

“No, Wade’s and my ‘roommate’ held me up. She had the nerve to say she and I were family.”

“What?” Camarih frowned. “How so?”

“Exactly. The bitch is crazy. She claims that since she and Wade are bffs, she and I are like sisters.”

Silence hung over the table before the ladies burst into laughter.

“Umm, yeah. Get her ass out of that house immediately. That hoe is insane.” Rubie drank some of her juice.

The waiter noticed the addition to the party, so she came over to take my drink order. I was already stressed, so I got a breakfast cocktail.

“Nothing to drink?” I looked at Camarih.

“No, it’s too early.” She smiled before asking, “What?” when I squinted my eyes out of suspicion.

“Nothing.”

“So wait, your husband’s ex lives with y’all? Why?” Jilly piped in. She’d been silent before as she studied the menu, but it was now down and closed, so I guess she knew what she wanted.

“Yes. Our home is huge, but she stays in the guesthouse out back.”

“For free, right?” Camarih clarified.

“Absolutely free. She does buy groceries and cooks a lot though, which I admit is nice because she can throw down. However, I can cook too, and her food is not worth the extra company.”

“I hear that.” Rubie shook her head. “I couldn’t imagine having Holli in the house with Eitan and I.”

“Girl, don’t nobody compare to Holli.” Jilly giggled, and we followed suit.

Holli had been cool for a while, but lately, for some reason, she’d started to cause a little bit of a stir. Maybe it was hitting her that Eitan was serious about Rubie. I didn’t quite know what caused the change in her, but I was hoping it subsided quickly.

“Trust me, I know. I just ignore her for now.” Rubie shrugged.

We continued talking about all kinds of things, never allowing silence to take over the table. I always enjoyed hanging out with them, especially over food.

“So how are you doing outside of ex wifey drama?” Camarih asked as we stood outside of the restaurant, waiting for the blonde-haired valet woman to bring our cars. Jilly and Rubie had already left in theirs.

“I’m okay. So are you going to admit to me that you’re pregnant, or are you going to keep pretending it’s too early for a drink?” I half smiled, making Camarih roll her eyes with a smirk.

“I’m not pregnant,” she lied. “What do you think, I’m just some baby factory?”

“No. I think you and Wacko live in a fuck factory.”

We both roared with laughter.

“What about you and Wade? No baby yet, huh?”

“No, and we’ve been trying a lot, trust me. I don’t know what the hell is wrong with me.”

“What did your doctor say?”

“I haven’t gone yet.” I refused eye contact with Camarih, but I could feel her gaping at me.

“Shanece—”

“I know, damn. I don’t want to go and she confirms that I can’t have children or something. My whole life would be ruined.”

“No it won’t. Wade is obsessed with you. He won’t care.”

I looked over at Camarih as if to say ‘child, please’.

“Yes he will. That’s why he and Cheri didn’t last because she didn’t want children. She wanted to focus on her career. At least she could have babies and was just refusing, but I can’t have them physically.”

“You don’t know that, Shanece, which is why you need to go. And I didn’t know he divorced her because of that.”

“Well, he didn’t say that, but whenever we talk about it, he is sure to mention how she wasn’t interested in kids and how because he was an only child whose parents died when he was nineteen, he wanted a big family.”

“You can always adopt—”

“I’m not adopting anything, Camarih. If I can’t have children, I will divorce him. I won’t hold him back.”

“Relax, Shanece, and go see a doctor first. Okay?” She peered into my eyes seriously just as the valet appeared with her Rolls-Royce truck. My G-Wagon appeared right behind it.

“Okay.”

“And call me right after!” she yelled, sliding into her car.

I nodded and then proceeded to my truck. Before pulling out, I dialed up my gynecologist and made an appointment. I didn’t want to go, but I knew it was inevitable. Wade wasn’t tripping now, but eventually, he would want answers as to why his young and seemingly healthy wife hadn’t gotten pregnant yet. And the fact that Camarih was popping them out like popcorn would not help my case either. I shook my head as I waited for the doctor to answer, thinking about how Camarih was lying about being pregnant to keep from hurting my feelings. She was so sweet.

“Hi, yes, this is Shanece.”

“Oh, Mrs. Porter!”

“Umm, it’s Bias now; Shanece Bias.” My heart sank a little hearing that last name.

I'd scrubbed it from everything because seeing it behind my first name still hurt. I would forever miss Paul no matter how much I loved Wade. Paul was just a huge part of my life, and he hadn't been dead long enough for me to be used to living without him. Don't get it twisted though, I was head over heels in love with my husband.

"Oh, I am so sorry. I am just used to calling you that. How can I help?"

"I'd just like to make a routine checkup appointment."

"Sure thing. When would you like to come in, Mrs. Bias?"

Lord, I know I haven't always been right, but please let there be nothing wrong with me.

EITAN WRIGHT

C urrently, I was in the middle of a show, well more like in the middle of the one song of the night. Tony wanted it to be the collaboration I did with Holli, so at the moment, that's what was blasting over the club.

I was way too big for club shows, but this shit was paying me forty thousand dollars just to show up, half ass one song with Holli, and then pop free bottles and eat free food.

"Damn." I laughed as the crowd let out a deafening cheer once the song ended.

"Ooooh!" They shouted when Holli grabbed my dick before switching off stage.

I followed right behind her ass, grabbing her arm to make her face me.

"Why the fuck you do that?" I hissed.

"Calm down, baby daddy. It was just to give the folks a good show." She adjusted the tiny ass bra she had on that barely covered her breasts.

"I told you I don't like that type of shit. I got a girl."

"Don't nobody wanna be with you, nigga. This is just for marketing. People like the thought of us possibly messing around. It's more interesting than you being boo'd up with some knock off Ryan Destiny PR girl."

I shook my head, irritated as hell before walking off.

I changed my shirt and then headed to the VIP area where Holli already was, along with Wacko, Camarih, Shanece, her husband Wade, Dallas, Rahim, and Nehemiah. Abel was there too, and with a bunch of bitches surrounding him.

I wished Rubie had come, but she was too tired due to being pregnant, and didn't like going out in public unless she had to because she swore she looked like an elephant. She didn't at all, and I wasn't just saying that because she was my girl. It bothered me that she declined to come though, because it seemed anytime her friends hit her line, being out was no issue.

I dapped everybody up then stopped to make myself a drink; I needed it.

"Can you make me one too?" A familiar voice spoke softly to me, and when I looked to my left, I saw Frida.

Damn... she looked good. I already knew how much finer she'd gotten from social media, but seeing her in person only confirmed the shit. She wore this tight ass red dress with her hair straightened, and she smelled sweet. Her skin looked nice and soft, causing memories of the nights I spent between her legs to plague my mind.

"Yeah, I got you." I picked up the cup and filled it with ice.

"Not too much juice. I like it to hit hard."

Her words caused my dick to perk up a tiny bit, but I played it cool, pouring the liquor and juice into the clear glass before handing it off to her.

"What you doing here?"

"I invited her." Holli appeared, swaying her body to "KOD" by J. Cole as she rested her arm on Frida's shoulder.

"Y'all are cool?" I frowned. Frida knew how much I hated Holli, and I assumed she hated her too, for me.

"I mean, we kept running into one another, so it just naturally happened. You two have fun." Holli winked and then pranced off. I looked back over my shoulder at her for a moment, then focused back on Frida.

"Wanna dance?" Frida peered up at me.

"Nah, I can't. I'm in a relationship as you know."

"It's just a dance, and from the looks of things, your girl isn't even here." Frida briefly scanned the VIP section.

"Yeah, she's pregnant and at the tail end, so she's not feeling up to this vibe."

"I mean, if this was *my* man's show, I would be here."

There was a silence as we looked one another over, while J. Cole rapped rapidly over the beat.

"Come on, Frida, don't start that type of shit. I love Rubie, and she always supports me. This is one time."

"Don't start what shit?"

“Trying to fuck with me when you know I have a girl.”

“She did it to me.” Frida shrugged then moved closer. “And I highly doubt you don’t miss this pussy.”

I covered my face with my free hand, rubbing my eyes while chuckling. I had to chug down my drink while I thought of what to say in response to that.

“Anyway, thank you for coming to my show. There is plenty of alcohol, and if you’re hungry, the food is on the house, so order up.” I turned to walk off so I could go sit with the homies.

Grabbing my forearm to stop me, Frida said, “My number hasn’t changed.”

I simply gave a closed-mouth smile before treading off.

I stayed at the club until 1 a.m., and then we all left as a unit. I saw Holli and Frida get into the same car and just shook my head as I turned my music up before speeding off. It was a little after 1:30 a.m. when I got home, so I went straight to the bedroom to undress.

Climbing into the bed ass naked, I got behind Rubie and started to caress her thighs while kissing her neck.

“Move, E.”

“Come on, Rubie.”

“Why did you wake me up when you know how hard it is for me to even fall asleep?” she snapped, catching me off guard.

“Baby, my bad. I wasn’t thinking. I just saw you and—”

“Yeah, I know you weren’t thinking. I’ve been uncomfortable for months, yet you somehow forgot that I can barely get any sleep. Do you see me?” She threw the covers off to expose her perfectly round belly. When I leaned over to kiss it, she said, “I’m sorry.”

“It’s aight. I’m sure I would be irritated too if I had this attached to me and somebody woke me up.”

We chuckled in unison.

“Ugh, I swear I love this baby, but I am ready for it to get out. I feel like none of my organs are where they’re supposed to be, and I pee all day long.”

“It’s almost time. Just remember how quiet it is around here for now.”

Giggling, she replied, “Okay. That is the bright side, huh?”

“Yes.” I took in how beautiful she looked. Rubie already had some big lips, but being pregnant made them bigger. She looked like a chocolate

Bratz doll with her perfect ass. “Anything I can do to help you fall asleep?”

“Cuddle?”

“Come on.” I sunk down under the covers, and she came with me, lying her head on my chest. She threw her leg across mine while I caressed her belly. Not but ten minutes later, she was knocked out.

I started to doze off myself shortly after, but I heard my phone going crazy on the nightstand. Reaching for it, I saw it was a text from Frida. Shaking my head, I tapped the message to open it. I already knew it was a photo, but because of how small it was on the lock screen preview, I couldn’t make out anything.

Upon opening the text message thread, I saw it was a picture of her naked from the front, and then she sent another from the back. My dick was making a tent under the covers within seconds of seeing that shit, so I locked my phone and dropped it onto the nightstand.

Frida’s ass needed to chill out. The last time I had to deal with something like this, I caved, and I could not do that to Rubie, especially not while she was carrying my baby.



TONY, Rahim, Abel, and I were in the studio listening to the playback of my new song. I kept my eyes on Tony’s ass, making sure he was feeling this shit. I appreciated how much of a perfectionist he was, but sometimes I just wanted to take my ass home and chill, not sit up in the fucking studio all day like a slave.

“I like it. You finally catching on to this rap shit, cuz.” Tony turned the music down.

“I been caught on, fuck you mean?” I replied, making everybody chuckle.

“Nah, you used to be in that booth chasing the beat but never catching that muthafucka. I fuck with this though. I also think you need to do another collaboration with Holli. That old ass song y’all did a minute ago is still in the Top 100 on Billboard. It’s been almost two fucking years.”

“Aye, no lie, I still hear people playing that shit,” Rahim agreed.

“Clubs too. And the crowd went crazy the other night seeing y’all up there,” Abel added his two cents.

“Nah, man. I ain’t trying to work with Holli again. Rubie don’t like that shit.”

“Man, tell Rubie if she wanna keep herself laced in all that shit she like and stay laid up in that big ass crib, she better get the fuck over it. This is business.” Tony frowned.

“Yeah, it’s business, but Holli be doing disrespectful shit like grabbing my dick on stage. That ain’t cool,” I complained.

“That’s because you never got that hoe in line like you was supposed to. These bitches gon’ always be like a dog to a bone when it comes to some dick, but as long as they know not to take that shit to the next level, then it’s straight.

You think a bitch I used to fuck on would ever walk up and grab my dick?” Tony quizzed.

“Hell nah.” Rahim, Abel, and I spoke in unison before laughing.

“You muthafuckin right, hell nah. She know I’ll shoot her ass.”

And he would too. That was the crazy part about it.

“Then her shot up ass would get fucked up by Camarih.” Rahim spoke facts.

“Well Rubie is not gon’ be cool with it, so I’m passing.”

“Nah, you not passing. I told you this is where the money is, nigga. Now, if you too pussy to be able to choke a bitch out and let her know she ain’t getting dickd down, then that’s on you. But you getting on another muthafuckin track with Holli.”

“Or what?” I twisted my face up.

“Or I’m gon’ knock you the fuck out, cuz,” Tony shot back damn near before I even finished speaking. “Have you in that booth singing Rolling on a River remix, black eye and all, bitch.”

“Aight! Aight! E, just do the damn song. Tony is right. You need to put ya foot down with Holli and any other woman that’s trying to mess around while you with Rubie.” Rahim put his hand out.

“I mean, unless you actually trying to fuck her.” Abel shrugged, eyebrows raised.

“Man, what? Shut yo’ ass up!” I barked at him.

“I just don’t see why a bunch of rich niggas like y’all wanna be tied down. You see me. I be getting my grove on.” Abel did a little dance in his seat.

“And saying shit like ‘getting my groove on’ is why the only females you can fuck is ones who breath smell like pussy farts.” Tony looked over at him, disgusted, as we chortled loudly and heavily.

“Man, fuck y’all.” Abel waved us off.

We threw some more jokes his way, played my song again to be sure everything was copacetic, and then I left.

On my way home, I saw my car phone ringing, and it was Holli.

“What?”

“Damn, that’s how you answer the mother of your child?” She sucked her teeth.

“Holli, what the fuck do you want?”

“Haleigh is sick, I think, because she won’t eat any food and keeps crying.”

“I don’t hear her crying.”

“Because I had to go in another damn room. She’s been non-stop with it for the past hour.”

“Past hour? What the fuck?” I felt my brows furrow. “Aight, I’m on my way. Get back in the room with her. You shouldn’t be leaving her alone.”

“Okay, see you soon.”

Click.

Shaking my head because I wasn’t in the mood to see Holli, I made a U-turn, heading in the direction of her place. After parking, I got out, noticing another car in the driveway along with hers.

Holli had a nice house of her own now in Woodland Hills, not too far from me, which was good for occasions like these.

I rang the doorbell, and a couple minutes later, the door came open.

“Frida?” I stepped inside.

“Hey, let me get Holli for you.” She shut the door with her free hand, the other holding a glass of white wine.

She walked off, wearing the tiniest jean shorts, and a top that tied behind the neck. I didn’t know if it was because Rubie wasn’t fucking me or if I just really wanted to fuck Frida, but yet again, she had my dick hard.

“Oh, hey, baby daddy.” Holli returned with Frida, holding her own glass of wine.

“Is Haleigh in her room?” I started to the stairs.

“Oh no, she left somewhere with my mama. She stopped crying once she saw grandma.”

Then it hit me that Holli's ass had lied. Holli was an aight mother, but most times when she had our daughter, she pawned her off to her mama, who lived here occasionally... I think. I wasn't sure really.

"For real, Holli? It's late. I been at the fucking studio all day. I don't have time for these games."

"Sit down." She walked over, shoving me onto the couch. "You need to relax. Seems like you haven't had any fun in a while."

"I don't need fun." I tried to get up, but Frida pushed me back down, straddling my lap.

"Feels like you need something." She referred to my dick hardening under her.

"Frida, move." I spoke calmly, feeling like I was about to nut in my jeans. She'd begun untying her top, and I knew if I saw her titties, I would crack.

"When was the last time you had a threesome, baby daddy?" Holli drank some of her wine, rubbing my head while Frida started to unbuckle my jeans.

I hated Holli's ass, but her pussy and sex game had always been good. Fucking her and Frida at the same time would have me busting unlimited nuts.

Just when I felt myself losing control, my phone rang in my pocket. I reached for it just as Frida put her hand in my boxers, while Holli tried to lift my thermal top, and saw it was Rubie calling. That sensual feeling vanished almost immediately as I put Frida to the side and hopped up.

"I gotta go. Holli, I'm not fucking playing with you. Frida ain't even like this, and you got her acting a fucking fool like you. Don't pull this shit no more!" I hollered as I buckled my jeans and redid my belt. When I caught a glimpse of Frida, she was fixing her shirt, looking embarrassed.

"Or what? Seems like you wanted it. That dick was harder than I'd ever seen." Holli pursed her lips and raised her brows, making that face bitches did when they had some tea to spill.

"Frida, baby, please stop hanging with her ass. You better than this."

"Am I, Eitan?" She got up from the couch and grabbed her purse.

"Yeah, you are."

"Oh, okay, and that's why you accused me of being a hoe the whole time we dated, then cheated. Yeah, it must be because I'm worth so much." She walked toward the door to leave, so I followed her.

“Bye, baby daddy!” Holli shouted.

“It’s Eitan, and I meant what the fuck I said, Holli.” I shut the door behind myself then jogged to catch Frida. “Aye, Frida. I know I said it already, but again, I’m sorry.”

“Okay, cool.” She unlocked her car.

“I’m serious. Just because we didn’t work out don’t mean you ain’t a good woman. I was just already in love with Rubie before we even started. I should’ve left you alone, but I liked you and couldn’t. Don’t blame yaself, because you never had a chance. It ain’t like you and Rubie started at the same level; she had a head start... a big ass one.

“I swear though, had there been no Rubie or no connection with Rubie, I would be with you.”

I felt like I was betraying my girl saying this, but I couldn’t have Frida acting foul over my actions.

“Thanks.” She wiped her tears, so I brought her into a hug.

“You forgive me?”

“A little.”

We chuckled.

“Please stop hanging with Holli. She ain’t no good. She’s using you to break up Rubie and I.”

“What if I want you two to break up?”

“Frida—”

“I love you, Eitan.”

Kissing her forehead, I replied, “Text me when you get home so I know you made it. Go straight home.”

She nodded with a smile before hopping into her car. I closed her door for her then went to my own shit.

Immediately, I started it up and went straight home.

Per usual, Rubie was asleep, so this was now a month I’d gone without sex. This shit was a true test of my fidelity.

JILLY TERRANOVA

I finished slicing up some strawberries to put on top of the waffles I'd made for myself and Nehemiah, then scooped the eggs and sausage onto the plate with it. Once I had the food down, along with the glasses of orange juice, I texted him to come downstairs and eat. The condo we'd gotten was a nice size, so I wasn't about to try to yell, and I definitely wasn't about to go upstairs to get his ass.

"Damn, you whipped it up." Nehemiah walked into the kitchen, rubbing his hands together.

Today he was 'off' in a sense, since all he had to do was edit, no meetings or actual shoots. I remembered him saying shooting the video was the easy part though, and editing was where all the work came from, which was why for that he charged by the hour.

"I did, and just for you."

"Why? What you do?" He sat back, eyeing me after saying a prayer over this lovely meal.

"Excuse you? I didn't do anything. I just knew you'd be home all day, so I wanted to make some breakfast for you. I made your lunch for today yesterday, since I know editing takes up a lot of your time. You order too much fast food when you're off."

"Okay. Damn, mama." He shoved some food into his mouth.

"Nigga, if I was your mama, you'd be way more attractive."

He laughed subtly while chewing, adding more food to his fork.

"Why you do my moms like that, Jilly? But you right, you fine as fuck."

"I know." I batted my eyelashes.

Once Nehemiah swallowed his food, he leaned over to plant a kiss on my lips. We ate for a little while more, just enjoying my cooking.

“What’s the plan for today?” he finally inquired.

“I have to go see Nala so we can put together some outfits for her press tour she’s going to be on for two whole weeks. I’ve never made so many phone calls and sent so many emails to get the latest designs and outfits sent to me. Tony will be happy to know it was all free though, because of her status.”

“Damn, ain’t that a fucking perk.”

“I know. You get the same treatment; you just never want the stuff.”

“Right.” He shoved more food into his mouth, swallowed, then sipped some juice. “That’s it?”

“No. After her, I’m going to meet with that actor, Ahmad Drake. Can you believe he wants to hire me to be his personal stylist? That means I would be handling outfits for all of his events. Man, that check plus the checks I get for Make A Killing’s artists means I’m really about to be balling.” I giggled, but I noticed Nehemiah just looking me over as he took another gulp of his juice. “You okay?”

“I thought I told you I didn’t want you working with that nigga.”

“I... I thought you were joking, babe.”

“Where in that conversation did it come off like I was joking, Jilly?” He frowned, sitting back again so I could see his exposed chest. That brown skin that lay over those pecks and abs was lickable, even in a moment like this.

“Because why wouldn’t you want me working with him? So what he’s young and attractive. Do you honestly think I’m going to fuck him?”

“Nah, you not gon’ fuck him. I know that shit for sure. What I don’t want is you spending time with him. If you his personal stylist, that means you gon’ be traveling and shit when he needs you.”

“And?”

“And you got a nigga, so it’s inappropriate for you to be vacationing and having alone time with another dude. What the fuck? Why do I have to explain this shit so elaborately?”

“Calm down, first of all. Second of all, I would not be having alone time with him. I will be styling him and most likely in a room full of others.”

“So today when you see Nala, it’s gon’ be other people there?” When I was silent, he added, “Exactly. You want me spending long hours working

with other females?”

“You have no need to. You’re a—”

“That’s not what I asked you. It’s plenty of shit I could do within my job description that would require extended time periods spent with the client.”

“Obviously I don’t, Nehemiah, but we’re different. You’re a man and have less self control than a woman.”

“Fuck out of here.” He rose up since his plate and glass was empty. “Do not work with that nigga,” he warned before walking it to the sink.

“Or what, nigga! You ain’t my fucking daddy!” I shot up, making the chair I was seated in fall back.

Getting in my space, he replied, “Or I’m leaving you the fuck alone.”

“Why! It’s a damn job! So I can’t do my job because you’re insecure!”

“Insecure? How the fuck am I insecure? I’m basing this shit off of yo’ track record!”

“What?”

“You was married and met me while working. Next thing you know, I’m fucking you behind yo’ nigga’s back!” Silence. “Jilly—”

“No, you know that *was* not and is not the same situation. I fucked with you because what I had at home was less than I deserved, and I thought you were different. But I see maybe you’re just like him; a stupid jealous asshole.” I turned to leave, but Nehemiah grabbed my wrist. He made me face him and took my hands into his.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean for that to come out the way it did. I love you, and hell yeah I’m gon’ get jealous. I know what we got is different from what you and Vernon shared, but still, just respect my wishes as yo’ man and don’t work with him.”

“Nehemiah—”

“And it has nothing to do with you and more to do with me being a nigga and knowing how we are. You’re a beautiful ass woman, smart, got an addictive personality, and *a lot* of sex appeal. It’s damn near impossible for a nigga not to want you after being around you for even an hour or two, let alone days at a time. I know if you work with his ass, he’s gon’ be into you, and I can’t fathom the thought of you traveling with a muthafucka that likes you.”

I pondered for a few and began to understand his angle.

“Okay. I will cancel the meeting and let him know I’m unable to take on the job at this time.”

A huge grin spread across Nehemiah's face, before he kissed then hugged me tightly. I wanted this job so badly for more reasons than one, but I didn't want to make my man feel uncomfortable behind my selfishness.

Nehemiah sat with me as I polished off my food, and then I went to grab my purse since I was already dressed, before leaving to Nala's place.

I got to her house in less than an hour, which was good for midday in Los Angeles. She lived in a beautiful, large home in Woodland Hills. I honestly enjoyed going to her house *almost* as much as my brother's spot in Hollywood Hills. Camarih always had some good hot food ready, and I got to see my little chunky bad nephew, so their house had that edge over Nala's.

I passed her luxury cars sitting in the roundabout driveway and rang the fancy doorbell attached to the side of her double doors. While I waited, I reluctantly sent off that email to Ahmad.

"Good afternoon, Miss Terranova." Nala's maid Karen answered the door for me.

"Good afternoon. Is Nala ready for me?" I smiled.

"Yes, come in." Karen widened the door then closed it behind me. "May I offer you something to drink or snack on?"

"Do you have iced tea? And maybe some Lays chips?"

"Coming right up. Nala is in her dressing room waiting for you, per usual. Would you like me to escort you?"

"No thank you, Karen."

"Okay. I will be in with your snack shortly."

I gave Karen a subtle smile and then pranced through this bomb ass mansion to Nala's dressing room. The room was just a big ass one she'd decorated, filled with all the free clothes, shoes, purses, and jewelry she'd acquired.

I heard her singing some song as I neared the door, which made me simper. Nala had a beautiful voice, and she could work with any type of song. If the track required soft vocals, she could do it, and if it needed some belting or church singing, she could do that too. My brother had an eye for talent, and because people knew that from looking at Nala, Eitan, and even Holli's psycho ass, everyone wanted to be down.

"Wow, I like that one!" I walked in.

"Really? Thank you." Nala got up from the vanity she was seated at.

She wore a pearl colored robe and had her dark hair cut into a cute, blunt bob. Nala was beautiful, but it wasn't enough to convince my brother. I didn't blame him either; Camarih was a way bigger catch. She wasn't only fine as hell, but she really loved my brother yet didn't take any shit from him. And I just loved how opposite they were.

"Yes, and you're welcome." I set this heavy shit down and pulled a free rack that I saw so I could start hanging stuff up for her to get a better look.

"I hope your brother likes it too."

"I don't even think he will care, honestly."

"What! Why!"

I'd been occupied with pulling out the clothes and shoes, but her over the top reaction to my statement made me look over my shoulder at her.

"I was joking. I just meant, because of how good you sound, I don't think the lyrics or whatever beat Rahim makes will matter."

"Oh." She giggled nervously, obviously realizing she was doing too much. How was this girl still into Tony?

About twenty minutes later, I was done with my snack Karen delivered, and had everything spread out, so once Nala pointed to the things she liked best, we started to try it on.

"Hold on. I am so sorry, girl. Let me get you out of this." I began helping her out of the Vivienne Westwood dress she was in.

Once she had it off, I double-checked the size. I could barely get this thing to fasten around her frame, and I was worried the wrong size had been sent. We didn't have enough time for it to be replaced, and if she didn't wear this six-thousand-dollar dress in the public, I was sure they'd want to be paid for it. Furthermore, Tony would have my head.

"Everything good?"

"I umm, I got your size, but I guess this stuff runs small. Shit." I felt like I was about to panic. I'd researched the brand thoroughly, so I didn't know how this had happened. "Fuck! I have to try to call and see if I can get a bigger size before—"

"It's not your fault, Jilly."

"Then whose is it?" I dug through my Dior tote for my iPhone.

"I've gained a few inches."

"You have? Why? I mean, not why, but more so, what the fuck?" I frowned, turning to face her.

Somberly, she stepped down off the platform we always had her on when doing fittings. In her bra and underwear, she took a seat.

“I’m pregnant.”

“Oh my gosh, congrats!” I beamed, plopping down in between my tote bag and her. “Wait, why aren’t we happy?” This had better not been Tony’s baby. Camarih wouldn’t have a chance to kill Nala, because I would.

“Because I’m in the height of my career, and I don’t need another baby. I already have my son who is still little.”

“Do you want it though?”

“Yes and no.”

“Okay, well explain.” I honestly wouldn’t have cared usually, but I wanted to be sure she hadn’t been fucking my brother.

“Yes, I want it because it’s my baby and I’ve always wanted more kids. However, I don’t want it because... because it’s just not how I planned for a second child to happen.”

“People get pregnant unexpectedly all the time, Nala, but—”

“It’s not so much that it’s unexpected. It’s the fact that it’s not with the person I imagined it would end up being.”

“It’s Pete’s, right?” I referred to her boyfriend.

Nala and Pete had been dating for the past year and a half. They seemed to really be in tune with one another. He was a normal dude but *very* nice looking. He was dark skinned, had luminous short curly hair, green eyes, and the build of a Greek god. He wasn’t as tall as my brother, not many people were, but he was a little over average height, I assumed, probably about five feet ten. He really catered to Nala, and it was nice seeing her happy with someone instead of moping about like Eeyore over my brother.

“Yes, who else’s?” Nala’s brows dipped a little.

“No one. So whose do you want it to be?” Nala looked at me knowingly, so I huffed. “Nala, come on. You cannot be serious. My brother hasn’t messed with you in fifty-leven years, and he’s married now. Stop stressing over something that will never happen.”

It killed me how she wanted my brother, who treated her like shit, when she had a fine ass man who loved her dearly.

“How do you know it will never happen? I mean, I know he loves Camarih, but that doesn’t mean he always will.”

“And if he even tries to stop, she will kill him.” I took her hand. “Nala, he will always love Camarih. You don’t know them like I do. It’s more than

them being physically attracted to one another and sharing a baby. They have something that will take more than a few arguments, financial issues, side hoes, and whatever else to break.”

Nodding, Nala replied, “I understand. I can see that too.” Sighing, she got up. “Don’t change the dress. I will drop the pounds. I’m scheduled to get an abortion tomorrow.” She was now back on the platform.

“You’re going to abort it because it’s not Tony’s? What does Pete think?”

“He doesn’t know, and it doesn’t matter; it’s my body. Come on now, Jilly, I have to get back to work soon.”

I said nothing and resumed styling her as best as I could like that conversation didn’t even happen.

An hour and a half later, I was leaving, making a list of things that did fit and what didn’t, although she said it would, come time to wear it. I hoped she didn’t get an abortion for such a foolish reason, but then again, I needed her ass to be able to rock all that shit I’d ordered. I was a horrible person at times.

As I stepped out into her big driveway, I saw Pete climbing out of his Yukon truck.

“Sup, Jilly.” He nodded his head up.

“Hey, Pete.”

“Aye, let me ask you something.”

I froze for some reason like he was the police and I were a criminal.

“Yeah, sure, but I have somewhere to be.”

Chuckling, he responded, “I won’t hold you long.” Slipping his hands down into his dark blue jean pockets, he asked, “Yo’ brother still fucking my girl?”

“Tony?”

“How many brothers you got?”

“Hell no! He is married and to someone he loves very much.”

“Love and marriage don’t mean shit to niggas when some pussy is in the room.”

“Well it does to him.” I felt my mouth twist up.

Although shorter and thinner than this nigga, I was ready to box him over my brother. Plus, I knew if he hit me, Tony would kill him.

“My bad, chill out. I just wanted to know. I feel like Nala is pregnant, but she’s been acting strangely, so I thought maybe the baby belonged to

someone else.”

“I don’t know anything about her being pregnant, but what I do know is that she ain’t fucking my brother.”

Nodding, Pete replied, “I appreciate the info. Have a good day, beautiful.”

“Uh huh.” I waved him off, making him laugh as we walked in opposite directions.

I threw my bag into my passenger seat then hopped in behind the wheel. I was still simmering, thinking about this stuff with Nala. I was trying to like the girl, but Camarih was my sister, and I wasn’t about to be buddy-buddy with some woman who obviously wanted her man.

As I turned my Range Rover on, I saw my phone light up with an email; it was a response from Ahmad Drake. I quickly tapped it to read.

Please please do not do this to me. I need a fire stylist and you deserve the exposure. If I said anything to offend you or cause this switch, I apologize. I can pay more if needed.

Locking my phone, I took a few more moments to think. Did Nehemiah really have the right to stunt my career like this?

After driving a few blocks, I pulled over and replied, letting Ahmad know I would be down for the cause. Nehemiah would get over it.

TONY WACKO

A FEW DAYS LATER...

I'd pulled up in front of the studio, parking my Grand National in my usual spot. You damn right I still whipped this muthafucka. I kept it in good ass shape, and it was a part of me. It got me a lot of fucking places, well, before I had the funds to push the Maybach or Bentley truck I owned.

Just as I was about to pocket my work iPhone, I saw Jilly's name pop up, so I answered. If she was hitting this line, that meant it wasn't no dumb shit and was about business.

"What?"

"Dang, that's how you answer your phone?"

"Aight, I'm hanging the fuck up."

"Wait!" She laughed. "Okay, listen, I have something to tell you. Well, actually, I have two things to tell you, but they're connected so—"

"Jilly, hurry up." I shook my head as I waved angrily for some nigga to cross the street since he was eyeing my whip like a fucking weirdo.

"Okay, so I did the fitting with Nala the other day, and only like two outfits fit out of the eight she needs."

"You telling me the bitch got fat?"

"I mean, yeah, but she gained weight because she's pregnant." I shut my eyes at that revelation because this was not the fucking time. "But she's not going to keep it; she already told me. She even promised she would be able to get in the outfits. She doesn't want the baby because..."

“Because what?” I was irritated that muthafuckin quickly.

“She doesn’t want to keep the baby because it isn’t yours.”

“All I wanna know is will the hoe fit the shit once she gets that muthafucka sucked out.”

“Houston! Did you hear what I just said? And how could you say something so cruel?”

“How is it cruel? That bitch don’t want her baby, so I wanna know will she fit that shit we got for free! I ain’t her fucking nigga or kinfolk, so I couldn’t care less what she does with her pussy or womb.”

Jilly knew me better than a lot of niggas, so for her to act like I was supposed to give a fuck about Nala’s personal life threw me. That bitch had been dick dizzy since the first time I nuttied on her titties. Fuck I look like getting all up in arms just because she was still on that same shit? Long as she knew me and her would never fuck around ever again, I didn’t really give a damn how she felt and what she wanted out of life. If you gave these hoes an inch of sympathy, they would take that shit and run with it.

“I forgot you only care about Camarih.” Jilly sighed.

“I care about you too. Now answer the fucking question. Is this shit gon’ cost me?”

“No. I talked to the designers, and they said they would be willing to give us new sizes, but it has to be picked up... in New York.”

“Okay, so handle it.”

“I am!” She hung up.

I dialed Nala, and she answered before it even rang once it seemed like.

“Hey—”

“Come down to the studio.”

“Okay.”

I deaded the line and then went inside of the studio building to see what was up. I’d just signed a new artist named Brooklen, who was basically a hybrid of Nala and Holli. She couldn’t outsing Nala, shit, barely anybody could, but she was a bit better at this rapping shit than Holli. She looked better too, even now that Holli’s teeth were fixed up.

“Hey, boss!” Holli’s ass shouted.

“What the fuck I tell you about yelling now that you got them big ass teeth in yo’ mouth? Old saber-toothed tiger ass.”

“You wrong as fuck.” Rahim laughed along with Abel and some random hoes in here.

“Really, Tony? When I had fucked up teeth, you talked about me, and now that I have fixed teeth, you talk about me. How—”

“Go home. You should be done recording for the day.” I set my shit down in my designated chair. “Y’all hoes gotta get the fuck out too.” I directed my words toward the three bitches chilling in here.

“Abel?” One of them looked to him as if he was supposed to step in. Of course, he shrugged, munching on some chips.

“I said for y’all hoes to get the fuck up out my shit. I’m counting to twenty, and I go by fives.”

They all hopped up, and two of them rushed out, but the third was lagging. Per usual, she was the ugliest one in here. It was always them unfortunate T-Rex looking ass hoes causing issues.

Walking past me and stopping, she said, “I don’t know why you had to come through here causing problems. We was just chilling, not even bothering nobody.”

“And I don’t know why the fuck you got morning breath in the evening, KRS-One. Take yo’ funky breath ass on somewhere ’fore I kill you and all that muthafuckin bacteria swimming around in yo’ mouth.”

As soon as I mentioned her halitosis, that ashy ass hand flew up over her mouth. By the time I finished my insult, she was hightailing it out of the studio.

“Damn man, she was a for sure fuck.” Abel groaned.

“You looking forward to fucking females with bad breath?” Rahim turned to look at him as I sat down.

“I wasn’t gon’ kiss the bitch. She got a fat ass, and I wanted to hit and get some head, nothing more.”

“No way in hell would I let that hoe put her stank ass mouth on my dick.” I turned my lip up at Abel. All the money this nigga had but he was still fucking bottom of the barrel ass hoes. “Shit, if I pulled my dick out and saw her *across the room* with her mouth open, I’d shoot her ass.”

Rahim and Abel doubled over in laughter.

“You cold blooded, but aye, I feel you. I wouldn’t want her topping me off either.” Rahim shook his head with a disgusted expression.

“Hello, gentlemen.” Brooklen entered the room wearing some little ass shorts and a top that showed her stomach. The bitch was fine as fuck, which was a good thing because sex sold.

Brooklen was brown skinned, thick, hella short, with long coily ass hair and hazel eyes. But as sexy as she was, she wasn't Camarih.

My wife was the prettiest bitch *I'd* ever seen, on God, and had a body that could make a nigga nut too quick if she was riding it. The cherry on top was her personality. I loved everything about her corny ass, which was why I didn't understand how she thought I would smash any of these bitches I worked with when I had her.

"You ready to get in the booth? Time is money. I don't like too many takes," I let Brooklen know.

"I got you." She purposely switched by, and I admit I looked. Her ass was fat, and I wouldn't be a nigga if I didn't look. It was my duty to look.

"Aye, get to work and quit watching these hoes!" I barked at Rahim's and Abel's looking asses, who got right to setting shit up for Brooklen while smiling hard.

A few moments into her recording, Nala showed up, so I told her to stay in the hallway. After letting Abel know how I wanted Brooklen to do the next verse, I tread out of the studio room, closing the door.

"How are you?" Nala smiled widely for some reason as she stared up at me. I was leaning against the wall, looking down at her.

"Fuck you telling my sister you wanna have my baby for?"

"No, I wasn't saying it like that. I was just expressing that I want to have a baby with a man I love. I love you, but I know it's not like that between us... at least not for you." She waited as if I was gon' correct her. "And I'm not in love with Pete, so—"

"You know if Camarih hears the shit you say, I'm gon' kill you, right?" I asked calmly, enjoying the sight of the fear soaring through her fucking body.

"Yes. I promise I will do better with my words." She was already crying.

"Jilly said them fucking designers will change the sizes and shit for you, but she gotta fly out to pick the shit up."

I noticed Camarih trying to FaceTime, but I knew if I answered, she'd see Nala's ass right here and pitch a fucking fit.

"Oh, okay. This will not happen again. I don't even know how I got pregnant because we always use condoms—"

"Bitch I don't give a fuck about none of that shit. If you wanna have one hundred babies by that nigga, by yourself, or even by some Area 51 alien

muthafuckas, it don't matter. If you murder every baby you get pregnant with from now until you croak the fuck over, it don't matter. Just quit the Romeo and Juliet bullshit 'fore I kill you.

"A nigga has been trying real hard not to put two in ya muthafuckin dome because you make me so much money, but you cutting it close as shit. Let just one of them singles, albums, or concert tickets not sell, and I'm knocking yo' fucking block off with no warning."

"I know." She looked down sadly. As I was about to walk off, she asked, "So you really signed that girl Brooklen?"

"Why wouldn't I? You know she dope."

"She's aight, if that's what kind of music you're into. She's a bit weird for my taste."

"Good thing you don't run shit and yo' fucking opinion don't matter."

"She wants to fuck you, you know that, right?" Nala called out to my back since I'd started away.

"And?"

"I mean, do you really want another bitch around that's trying to fuck you? Or are you fucking her already?"

"Worry about who yo' nigga is fucking and less about Camarih's." I knew that shit would sting her stupid ass, and by the look on her face, it worked.

"Tony—"

"Get out. I'm yearning to slap you the fuck up."

"Hey, I was planning to get a procedure done this Thursday, so can I reschedule my recording session?" Her voice trembled. Hoe was a certified crybaby.

"I don't give a fuck, Nala. Talk to Rahim and Abel about that," I replied dryly, not even looking back and slipping into the room.

I sat back down in my seat and lit one up, watching Brooklen as she sang on the current track. By the time it was 8:30 p.m., she was finished, so she came out to listen. Halfway through the song, she got up off the couch and began doing this extra ass performance. One thing Nala had right was the bitch was weird, but she was sexy and had talent. And shit, muthafuckas liked weirdos these days.

"Aight, shit sounds good. Abel, just do what you gotta do to put that sparkle on the shit, and then after I hear that one, we can put it to work. It needs to be ready by the time the company party happens."

“Oh, it’ll be done well before.” Abel nodded, packing his shit up.

As Rahim and Brooklen did the same, I went to take a seat on the couch, opening my laptop to reply to some emails. I then remembered that Camarih FaceTimed me earlier, so once them niggas left the room, I dialed her back.

“Yes?” She picked up. She had on a facemask, and from what I could tell, her famous silk robe.

“You look so good to me right now. I can’t wait to come home and lay up with yo’ ass.” I sat back, thinking about the shit as I inhaled on my second blunt.

“Whatever.”

“Camarih, why the fuck you be testing me? You want me to beat you, huh?”

She let out a suppressed giggle, showing she didn’t want to laugh at my statement.

“Why didn’t you answer me when I called the first time? Hours ago?” I could see the attitude in her face, even with all that shit slathered over it.

“Because I was busy.”

“You answer me any other time. And when it’s an important meeting, you usually text me beforehand so I know.”

I looked off, knowing she was right.

“I had to chop it up with Nala.”

“I thought today’s session was with that new girl?” Camarih sat up.

“It was, but I had to get at Nala about some shit.” I stared at Camarih, and she stared back at me, expecting more information. “Her ass is pregnant, and she didn’t say shit to Jilly, so her press tour outfits don’t fit. But the hoe promised she gon’ get an abortion and be able to wear it, so I’m hopeful.”

“You’re hopeful she has an abortion?”

“I’m hoping the bitch don’t cost me unnecessary money. I don’t give a fuck what she does with her body.”

“Did you say this to her?”

“Fuck you think?”

“Good.” Camarih giggled. “I don’t want her thinking you care about her.”

“Why you call me?”

“I wanted to show you what your son did, but it’s too late. I will show you the photos.”

“You bet not still have a fucking attitude when I pull up. I’m trying to chill and fuck.”

“Houston.” She shook her head. “Well if you get here before eleven p.m., I won’t be upset. You have to agree to a movie too. After eleven p.m., I’m going to sleep and with the baby.” She hung up, making me chuckle, even though I wanted to wring her fucking neck for hanging up in my face. That snappy shit turned me on and pissed a nigga off at the same fucking time.

“So you do smile,” a voice called out, and when I looked up, Brooklen was in the doorway with a smirk. I thought her ass had left.

“Fuck you listening to my phone calls for?”

“I wasn’t. I came at the tail end.” She moved further into the room.

“Y’all are cute.”

“Nah, you can’t sit down. Go home.”

“I want to, but I need a ride.”

“Call Uber.” I finished sending the email I needed to and ashed the blunt.

“I would, but I don’t have a credit or debit card unfortunately. I only carry cash, and they don’t take that.”

“Walk.”

“It’s late, Tony. Please just give me a ride. I promise this will never happen again. My man was supposed to pick me up, but he got held back at work.”

I laughed.

“You hoes say whatever to get fucked.” I rose up.

“Excuse me?”

“You heard what the fuck I said. Get yo’ ass up and come the fuck on before I change my mind.” I started out and hit the lights before she could even exit the room.

Once she was out of the studio, I locked it up, then walked right to my car, stepping down off the curb. Sticking my key into the truck, I lifted the hatch.

“Thank you again, Tony.”

“Get in.” I nodded down to the trunk, causing her to laugh. I joined her for a second then ceased it. “Hurry up or I’m gon’ leave yo’ ass.”

“You have a perfectly good front seat here!”

“That shit is reserved for my bitch. Now if you want a ride, get yo’ stupid ass in the trunk.”

“You cannot be serious.”

“Aight, I’m out.” I started to close it, but she stopped me.

“Is it even enough room for me in here? I’m thick.”

“Yeah, yo’ big ass can fit.” My statement made her jaw drop, and if I wasn’t annoyed by her ass right now, I would’ve laughed.

Brooklen’s body was tight, but I wouldn’t dare let her ass know that shit. If I did, she’d only try harder to get fucked down, then she’d be another artist of mine on my kill list.

“Big? Never.”

Like the thirsty for dick ass hoe that she was, she crawled into the trunk. After I made sure all the latches were clear, I slammed that shit down, giving it a slight tap before rounding the whip and sliding in on the driver’s side. I texted her to ask for her address, and she sent it pretty quickly to be cramped up in such a small space.

Turning my music up, I popped some candy into my mouth and sped off. She ain’t live too far, so we got to her crib in about fifteen minutes. When I pulled onto her street, nearing her spot, I saw a group of niggas chilling on the sidewalk. Pulling over to park, I made sure my gun was locked in my waist then got out to release the trunk.

“Brook?” One of the niggas frowned, nearing my car as he watched Brooklen climb out.

“Nah, cuz, stay up on that sidewalk like you know what’s good for you,” I let him know.

“Nigga, what—oh shit... you Tony Wacko.” He put his fist to his mouth, glancing back at his homies who started coming closer. None of them niggas stepped down though, so they knew what the fuck was up.

Celebrity status didn’t mean shit to a nigga like me. I’d still beat yo’ ass and splatter yo’ shit same way I did before my name rang bells. Niggas knew that shit too, in every hood of LA.

“Thanks again, Wacko.” Brooklen smiled up at me once she was out of the trunk.

“Aye, why my girl in yo’ fucking trunk?” the initial nigga quizzed, trying to put on for his homies. I knew her ass lied about her nigga being at work.

“Because that hoe do whatever the fuck I tell her to, cuz.” I moved closer in case he wanted to move something. He was elevated on the sidewalk, but since I had his ass in height, we were eye to eye.

“Don’t you got a—”

WHAM!

Before he even got the chance to try to be disrespectful to my girl, I turned the lights out on his ass. He fell back onto his homies like a bitch fainting at a Chris Brown concert, as Brooklen tried to wake his mark ass up. Without saying shit else, I got in my car and took my ass home. I had a deadline.

By the time I was in the house and reactivating the alarm, it was 10:55 p.m. I darted up the fucking stairs and into the bedroom. As soon as Camarih saw me, a devious smirk spread across her perfect ass face.

“Thought a nigga wasn’t gon’ make it, huh?” I removed my hoodie as she chuckled. “Shit, I can’t wait to fuck you.”

“Where are you going?”

“To shower and brush my teeth.”

“No, give me a kiss.”

I frowned, but then it hit me; her ass wanted to be sure I wasn’t trying to wash some bitch off. Coming closer to the bed, I kissed her a couple times. She started to undo my Hermes belt and jeans, but when I didn’t stop her, she shoved me away lightly.

“Exactly.” I tread to the bathroom.

I took my shower, then brushed, flossed, and rinsed with Listerine before going to see my son in his bedroom. Shit somewhat bothered me that he was asleep when I left and asleep when I got back. Then I missed the FaceTime call over Nala’s ass. I should smack that bitch next time I see her.

“See what he did.” Camarih handed me her phone as soon as I came back into the bedroom.

I looked at the photo on the screen, seeing my son with what looked like Camarih’s body butter mixture all over his little ass hands, feet, top of his head, and parts of his face.

“How the fuck he get like this?” I got in the bed with her, laughing and handing her the phone back.

“I left the mixture bowl on the nightstand, and his little ass crawled to it, making a mess.”

“Take this off.” I started opening her robe.

“No. Let’s watch a movie. You promised.” She cut the TV on and shut the lamp off.

“Camarih, come on, let’s fuck first.” I kissed on her neck as she snickered.

“No, because I’m going to fall asleep. Move, Houston, you promised.”

Irritated, I sat with my back against the headboard as Camarih started the movie then cuddled up to me, allowing the comforter and sheets to cover our laps.

She, of course, wanted to watch *The Notebook*. I’d never seen the shit before and didn’t want to. I’d heard about what this shit did to muthafuckas, but she was my fucking wife already, so I was gon’ chill.

Halfway through the movie, I felt my dick getting harder every time I glanced over at Camarih. She smelled good as fuck and had now put her sexy ass legs on top of the covers. I could see half of my name that she had tattooed on her inner thigh, skin glistening and shit. She had no bra on, so her nipples were poking through that fucking silk robe.

“I could never be away from yo’ ass like this,” I threw out there, referring to the movie. I was hoping my statement got me some pussy.

She pecked me, and that soon turned into some freaky ass tongue kissing. Next thing I knew, I was in them guts while the rest of that fuck ass movie played in the background.

Mission accomplished.

RUBIE BAILEY

“Oh my gosh!” I screamed in pain, feeling like I was going through some type of exorcism. When Camarih told me the whole process of giving birth was an indescribable pain, I wasn’t expecting this shit. I wanted to kill myself. “I am not having another baby!” I cried hysterically.

“Rubie, relax, baby.” Eitan had the nerve to say, rubbing my head.

“Relax? Are you the one about to push a human out of your dick!” I barked.

I couldn’t believe I ever slept with his ass. I didn’t love him; I hated him. Matter fact, once this baby got out, if I was still alive, I was breaking up with his stupid ass. Relax... he’s got some fucking nerve.

“Okay, Miss Bailey, we’re ready,” the doctor let me know.

I’d been in pain all day long, now here I was with my legs cocked open to go with it.

“I want a C-section,” I replied.

“It’s way too late, Miss Bailey. This baby is coming out now. Okay, give me one good push.”

What had I ever done wrong for God to make me experience this? Giving birth right now only made me hate men even more. Had Adam’s old gullible ass not ate that damn apple like God had told him not to, women would not even have to deal with such pain. Yet again, men had fucked up, and women had to suffer for it. Assholes. I was now a lesbian.

“Ahhhh!” I screamed, giving my first push.

“That was great! Another one!” my doctor hollered.

There were three nurses in here with her, all looking at my poor formerly beautiful vagina being ripped open by some human that would cost me hundreds of thousands of dollars to take care of, and have the nerve to get smart with me down the line.

“Arrgghhhh!” I clenched my teeth together to give a second and eventually third and a half push before, finally, my son was out and crying loudly.

He was so small, but even from here, he was cute. The nurse brought him over to me once Eitan cut the umbilical cord, and as soon as I looked down into his face, my heart melted. I didn’t care how smart he got with me; I would never be able to yell at such a cute face.

They removed him from my arms, moments later, to clean him up, and while he was gone, the nurses did the same to me. My body felt like it was still in shock from such a traumatic event.

Once the nurses fixed me up and wheeled me back to my room, one of them gave me a spray bottle to let me know I could use that after I went to the bathroom at anytime, since I couldn’t use tissue to wipe right now.

“He’s returned.” The nurse smiled, giving my baby back to me. We decided to name him Elijah, giving him a Hebrew name like his father.

“You are the cutest.” I kissed his small rounded cheeks as Eitan looked on.

“Looking like pops, that’s why.” He touched him.

“Not even.” I allowed Eitan to peck me.

Now that I wasn’t in as much pain, I was realizing I was in love with him again.

We spent some time with our baby, and about two hours later, my father showed up. Eitan had texted him from my phone earlier, and he said he’d be here as soon as possible. When he entered, Eitan rose to shake his hand briefly before sitting back down.

“Oh wow.” My father beamed, looking down at his grandson after kissing my forehead. “He’s got those good Bailey genes.”

“I know!” I giggled. “And mixing that with Eitan’s, he’s perfect.”

“Mhm,” my dad responded lowly. Turning to Eitan, he questioned, “Are you happy to be a father?” as he sat down in the free chair across from us. Eitan moved his chair to be back next to me now that my dad was out of the way.

“Yeah, I am, definitely.”

“Oh wait. This isn’t your first, correct?” My dad loosened a button on his Brooks Brothers suit jacket.

“Nah, I have a one-year-old daughter named Haleigh.”

“Where is her mother?”

Oh no, no Dad. I already knew he had a motive and was about to grill Eitan hard. He’d met him before, but he didn’t know all he knew now when that last meeting happened.

“Her mother and I aren’t together. She and I weren’t together ever, really; we were just cool.”

My father squinted his eyes, staring at Eitan and letting me know he didn’t like what he was hearing.

“So you had a child with a woman that you had no interest in being with for the long haul?”

“Daddy, do—” I was cut off when he put his hand up to me without even making eye contact. All of his attention was on Eitan.

“It was an accident, Mr. Bailey. Trust me. My plan was to only have kids with a woman I love.”

“So was this situation with my daughter an accident or something done on purpose?”

“Nah, it wasn’t an accident; I love her.”

“Okay, so where is her ring?”

“Daddy!”

“Be quiet, Rubie.” Finally, my dad glared at me, showing he wasn’t fucking around.

“We just ain’t got around to it—”

“We?”

“I mean *I* haven’t had the time to propose the way I want to with all that’s going on. Rubie was pregnant, my career has me busy a lot, and so does hers.”

My father nodded, taking Eitan’s words in.

“Let me tell you two things, son; one, never make a child with a woman you don’t intend to marry—”

“It was an accident.”

“No, it was carelessness from you sleeping with a woman with no protection. I know sex is great, and even greater when a woman doesn’t require a commitment from you. You’re young, and you’re rich, but the

quickest way young men like you go broke is by spreading their seeds all over the world.

“My second thing I wanted to say is this is the last child you will have with my daughter, without a filed marriage certificate.”

“I don’t plan on having another one before that.” Eitan stared right back at my father, showing he wasn’t afraid.

“Good to know.”

“I’m going to get something to eat. You want anything?” Eitan stood.

“Yes. Anything you get is fine.” I half smiled, hoping he wasn’t upset with me. He probably thought I put my dad up to this.

“Aight.” He kissed me gently, took the baby from me since he was sleeping, and put him in the clear crib, then left the room.

“Daddy, why did you do that! This is supposed to be a happy moment!”

“It is a happy moment. But Rubie, I love you and refuse to allow a daughter of mine to become some rapper’s baby mama.”

“I’m not just his baby mama. He loves me.”

“I’m sure he does, but until you have a ring, papers, and the rights to his shit if he dies, you’re just his baby mama. You think if homeboy died right now his stuff would go to you simply because he loved you?”

“I didn’t say that. I’m just trying to explain to you that he and I are in love. Eitan is not like these other rappers who glorify mass child producing and being unfaithful. He loves and respects me.”

“The same guy who made a song talking down on you?”

“He was angry.”

“I’ve been angry at your mother, and I never once talked to or about her in that way. When you love somebody, you do not treat them badly just because you’re angry, Rubie.”

He was making me so mad. If he wasn’t my dad, twice my size, and if I wasn’t in all this paralyzing pain, I would jump across the room on his meddling ass.

“You don’t get it.” I folded my arms and looked away angrily.

“No, baby girl, you don’t get it. I’m a man, Rubie.” He walked over to sit in the chair next to me that Eitan had once been in. “Look at me.” I did as he asked, so he continued. “I want you to be married for love, but also because you have a child now, and you need to secure his future. “

“I have my own money.”

“You do, and I am proud of that, truly. But just because you have money does not give Eitan a get out of jail free card on his responsibilities. Marriage is something that ensures he cannot prance off, leaving you with all these burdens. And if he loves you like you both claim he does, he will marry you as soon as possible, and not after another baby is born.” My dad got up. “I mean it, Rubie Bailey. The next time you end up pregnant, it better be within wedlock.”

“Okay! Can we get back to admiring my adorable baby now?”

“Of course.” He smiled.

By the time my dad left, Eitan had come back with some food from Tendergreens. I was so happy and starved at the same time. It was quiet as he set up everything for me on my tray table, and then he sat down, doing the same for himself.

“I’m sorry, baby.” I spoke up, eating some of the piping hot mashed potatoes.

“For what?”

“My dad. And I swear I did not tell him to say any of that stuff. I’m fine; I know we will be engaged and married soon.”

Eitan said nothing as he ate some of his dish. I just stared at him, wondering why he didn’t respond at all.

Finally, he said, “You don’t need to apologize for that shit. Plus, he’s right.”

“He is?”

“Yes. I love you, and I know ain’t nobody else out there for me. Out of respect, I should have already asked you to be my wife.”

Now I felt foolish for apologizing.

“Oh.” I ate some more of the potatoes. “But we’ve been too busy.”

“When are we not gon’ be busy? We’re young as fuck. We ain’t retiring soon, right?”

“Right.” I giggled. “If you agree with him, then why do you seem upset with me?”

“I’m not upset with you or him. I’m embarrassed.”

“Embarrassed?”

“I shouldn’t have needed another nigga to tell me something like that. Shit, how Wacko propose and get married before my ass?”

We laughed in unison.

“Yeah. I’m still baffled that Tony Wacko has a wife. If I wasn’t at the wedding myself, I wouldn’t believe it.”

“Shit, same. I’ve known the nigga for ages it seems. The girlfriend and baby shit was shocking in itself, but the marriage took the cake, no pun intended.”

“Yes, I know! If I had a dollar for every time someone asked me if Camarih was really his wife.”

We chuckled together before it slowly dissipated.

“Don’t trip though, baby.” He nodded, chewing some of his salad. “I’m gon’ do some good shit for you.”

“Okay.” I simpered.

Even though my dad was way too aggressive and mean to my baby for my liking, I guess his little speech worked in my favor.

I knew Eitan loved and only wanted me, but at the end of the day, he was a rapper, and they were accustomed to a certain lifestyle. I didn’t want him changing down the line, leaving me high and dry with no ring and multiple crumb snatchers. A marriage was definitely wanted and needed.



JUST TWO WEEKS LATER...

I smiled subtly as I watched my Keurig finish making my decadent hot chocolate. I could not wait to down it while watching some television. I’d just gotten Elijah to fall asleep, and I wanted to take advantage of it before he woke up and was attached to me again. Breastfeeding was so damn painful, and I didn’t know how women did it without crying and screaming.

I heard the doorbell sound off throughout our house, making me freeze up, hoping it didn’t wake the baby. Yes, the doorbell was soft, but my son seemed to wake up over the smallest thing. If you bit a crunchy cookie a little too hard, his little eyes would fly open.

Grabbing my cute pink mug, I pranced to the door and looked at the camera to see Camarih. I was just thinking of her this morning because I wanted a facial... no, *needed* a damn facial.

My once beautiful, supple, dark skin felt like it was made of concrete at the moment, since I hadn’t done my usual skincare routine once I hit seven

months. Lately, it'd just been a quick wash and moisturize, nothing fancy. And now that little Elijah was actually here, I was lucky to get more than a hot towel on my face during a quickie shower.

"Hey!" I beamed.

Camarih smiled back, looking as beautiful and moisturized as ever. I felt drier all of a sudden. She had on some jeans that fit her thick figure, a sleeveless lace Wolford bodysuit, and some Cult Gaia heeled sandals. Her perfume was sweet, like always, mixing nicely with the familiar smell of one of her butters. Her golden curly hair was slicked back into a perfect ponytail, and she wore no makeup, but she didn't need it. Frankly, I couldn't tell the difference.

"Hi, how are you feeling?" She put her Birkin on her arm so that she could hug me.

"Um, I'm feeling like someone pulled all of my insides out then put them back in but not where they go."

"Sounds about right." She chuckled, and I followed suit, shutting the front door behind her.

"Oh my gosh. You look so pretty and smell so nice. I miss the days when dressing up and stuff was the normal. These maternity tights are gonna be worn the fuck out." I pointed down.

"Girl, I understand. I hated having to dress up at first when Houston was born, but Tony wanted me to come to events, and I'll be damned if I was gonna be looking bummy in front of them hoes who like him."

"I know that's fucking right!"

We giggled and chatted some more as I led her to the baby's room so she could see. We discussed him for a little longer, then went to the kitchen since we were both hungry. I had some roast chicken in the crockpot since last night, but that was for my man, so I made us some spaghetti really quickly.

I put together our plates then grabbed two water bottles from the stainless-steel fridge, before joining Camarih at the table.

"So I did come over to see you and the baby, but also for Tony."

"For Tony?"

"Yes. He's been waiting for the magazine shoot and interview questions that you're supposed to send over for the Gangstar Girlz. The issue they're supposed to be in drops this summer."

"Oh my gosh." I dropped my fork.

“Yeah, he was about to come over here, but I told him I would talk to you.”

“Thank you so much. He would kill me!”

“Yes. He’s pretty upset.” Camarih twirled the noodles around her fork.

“So do you have the questions?”

“I will.” I chuckled nervously.

“Will? Rubie, you were supposed to send this months ago! Who’s Who magazine is hard to get into, and they fill up quickly. If they don’t get those questions in time, they will ask any and everything. You know Tony doesn’t like any drama or scandals attached to the artists.”

“I know, I know. I got so distracted with being pregnant, I just didn’t do it.”

I was so disappointed in myself, but more importantly, I was afraid I couldn’t get these questions done and perfected in time. I forgot the deadline on the paper that the interviewer, Debbie, sent. If it had passed, that meant it was open season on the Gangstar Girlz. This already happened with Nala, and they ended up exposing the fact that she’d fucked Tony before. Only reason he didn’t murder me then was because of Camarih. He legit said he didn’t care that I was pregnant and by his friend; he was coming to kill me.

“Babe, if anybody understands, I do, but you’re going to have to pull it together or get someone to take your place until you can get back to work.”

“No, no, I don’t need anyone’s help. I will have everything done and sent over soon, watch me.” I smiled.

Camarih looked concerned, but she just nodded.

A few hours later, she was gone, and my baby was awake. While feeding him, I logged into my company email to find the contract Debbie had sent over. The deadline had passed two weeks ago; in fact, the day after Elijah was born.

Fuck.

Picking up my cell phone, I dialed Debbie’s number, praying that she would work with me as a fellow woman.

“Debbie of Who’s Who Magazine.”

“Hi, Debbie, this is Rubie Bailey. How are you?”

“I’m great. Congrats on the baby.”

Okay, this is good so far.

“Thank you. So hey, because of all this baby stuff, I kind of forgot about the questions list.”

“Oh yeah, I understand. Unfortunately, the deadline has passed. We’ve already drafted our own questions for the ladies to do the interview this weekend.”

“I can have it sent before then.”

“I’m sorry, Rubie. If their magazine issue was later, then it’d be fine, but we have strict timelines here.”

“Damn, when is the next issue?”

“Just one month after this one, so in July.”

“When would the deadline be?”

“Next week.”

“Perfect! Let’s reschedule—”

“Can’t, Rubie. That slot is already filled by another artist, as well as the slots after that.”

“Okay. I will try to see if the person after will be willing to switch. Would that be okay?”

“Uh, sure, I guess. But we’d need that switch done as soon as possible.”

“Absolutely. Who is the artist?”

“It’s the rapper Big Dane, but you can contact his manager at Mark Vegas Management.”

My heart almost stopped hearing her say that. Mark Vegas hated my fucking guts, and I knew there was little to no chance that he would do me a favor.

Tony was going to fucking murder me. And I was realizing juggling a job, motherhood, and a relationship was much harder than I’d predicted.

RAHIM

Dallas and I were chilling courtside, watching the Lakers play against the Memphis Grizzlies. I remember wishing to be able to sit this close back in the day, and now it was normal for me. I felt safer courtside because rabid fans and fangirling niggas weren't all in my face.

"You good?" I looked over at Dallas. I had something planned and felt off.

"Yep. I'm always good when I'm with you." She leaned over, and we shared a kiss.

Nodding, I offered up a half smile then took a big gulp of my beer while watching the game. It was a good one, making me slightly lose track of time. Finally, about an hour later, it was half time, aka go time.

"Hey." I grabbed Dallas's hand. "I want you to know that I love you, and I really appreciate you sticking by me. I know it hasn't been easy dating me with all the ex-wife drama."

"No, it hasn't, but I knew you were worth it." Dallas simpered. "What brought this little speech on?"

"Well..." I reached into my pocket and then swiftly got down on one knee. Like I knew, everyone around seemed to tune in to the point where the cameraman was now broadcasting us on the large elevated TV.

"Rahim!" Dallas's eyes widened before she briefly did a scan of the stadium to take in who all was watching.

"Dallas, I love you, and I didn't know if I was ready to do this again, but I am... with you. I've learned a lot in my last marriage and realized that it was something that was preparing me for you, the woman I truly love; the only woman I think I've ever loved. So I want to know, will you continue to

shine a light in my life by becoming my wife?” I swallowed hard after lifting the top of the ring box.

“Yes, of course!” Dallas responded quickly, and I slipped the large diamond ring on her finger. It was way bigger than the one I’d gotten for Amara, obviously because my funds were different then.

We kissed as everyone in here cheered loudly as hell. By the time I got up to sit back next to her, the game was ready to resume.

For the remainder of it, we held hands, her nuzzling up to me and checking her ring out here and there. My phone was already blowing up, so I knew this whole event had made it to the blogs, plus Dallas had taken several photos of her big ass diamond ring.

The rest of the game, I felt more relaxed, excited even, but not really for the reasons one may think.

When the game was over, we left—a little bit before, actually, to beat the crowd. Like I said, I didn’t really want to be bothered by fans or aspiring musicians when I was trying to have some leisure time.

“Oh man, baby, I was not expecting this.” Dallas, again, admired her ring as I drove.

“I know. I wanted to do something special for you.” I smirked and then checked my phone at the red light. I had a lot of notifications from Instagram and a few text messages from artists I was working with, but nothing else.

“Well this was perfect. I have never had a man treat me this well.” Dallas and I made eye contact, her blushing.

“That’s what I’m here for.” I leaned over to kiss her.

Since we were in a celebratory mood, I took her to eat at Cecconi’s since she loved Italian food. Per usual, we were seated immediately due to my celebrity status, and given a complimentary bottle of wine once they’d figured out the good news.

Dinner was pleasant, but still I had no missed texts or calls from the person I was expecting to be blowing me up by now. I was so focused on it that, for half of the dinner, I wasn’t even listening to what Dallas was saying.

We went straight home after the restaurant, and before we were even through the door of my home good, the both of us were stripping down. Dallas was unbelievably sexy to me, so I was surely paying attention to the sight of her naked body.

Laying her down on the bed, I sucked her lips then made my way down until I had her thighs on top of my shoulders. I began flicking my tongue over her clit, causing her to arch her back and moan softly.

“Rah...” She cooed, rubbing my curly hair as I sucked her bud passionately.

She was beyond wet, and when she spread her legs wider, I went deeper with my tongue, lapping her juices up and suckling her clit with the utmost pressure.

“Shit.” I grumbled when she came again.

My dick was standing at attention, so even though I wanted some head, I couldn’t wait any longer to feel the inside of her walls. Flipping her over, I positioned her ass in the air and wasted no time wrapping up.

“You need that?” She looked over her shoulder just as I’d finished rolling it down.

“Uh... nah, I guess not.” I hesitated but then removed it since I couldn’t really get around this shit; she was watching me.

Raw, I slid inside and gripped the fuck out of her hips to keep from cumming. Once I’d gathered my damn self, I started to stroke her slowly, caressing her toned back and smooth brown ass cheeks. The strokes were nice and slow, keeping it all at a steady pace so I wouldn’t bust quick. Once Dallas creamed down the shaft of my dick, I held her hips tightly and began beating it up.

“Oh fuck!” she screamed out, burying her face into the comforter and gripping it tightly.

“Ah!” I tossed my head back, hammering as hard as I could, enjoying the feeling of her unbelievably wet pussy welcoming me.

“I love you, Rah!” she screamed again.

“Mmm.” I growled, pumping faster and harder to the point where I knew one of us would have marks on our skin. “Fuck!” I barked louder than I wanted as I pulled out and nuttled all over her lower back. It was so much that I knew if I’d let that off inside of her, she’d be pregnant with about seven damn kids.

“Rahim, what the fuck!” she hollered angrily.

My knees were weak, and I was low-key dizzy, so I couldn’t even register the fact that she was mad right away.

“Let me get you a towel.” I stumbled off, exhaling heavily.

Once to the linen cabinet, I grabbed a throwaway towel and entered into the en suite to wet it with warm water. I came back out into the semi-dark bedroom where Dallas was still in the position I left her in, and cleaned the small of her back.

“Why did you do that?” She whined, getting out of the bed and storming toward the bathroom now that she was cleaned off.

“Do what?” I followed.

“Nut on me!”

“Where else was I gon’ put it, Dallas? I didn’t have a towel, and you told me not to use a condom. I wasn’t about to bust all over my expensive ass sheets and bedding!”

“You could’ve *not* pulled out!”

She started the shower, pulling out the bottle of soap she planned on using for tonight.

“Nah, ’cause then you’d be pregnant.” I lifted the toilet top to pee.

“And? You want me to be your wife, so what’s wrong with me being pregnant?”

“Don’t you want to get married first?” I frowned, shaking my dick then flushing.

“I mean, I guess, yeah.” Her voice was calmer now, the shower running in the background. “I’m sorry. You’re right. I am not trying to have a belly in my wedding photos.”

“I know you’re not.” I chuckled, pulling her closer for a kiss.

“I don’t want this to be a long engagement.”

“It won’t be. I promise.”

We shared another kiss then got in the shower together for round two. After brushing our teeth, we crawled into bed for some sleep. However, I didn’t pass out until I checked my iPhone again to see no messages.

Bullshit.



THAT WEEKEND... AROUND 7 P.M....

It was my time to get my baby girl again, so I was racing over there to her. I barely parked well before I was out of the car and ringing Amara’s doorbell.

“Hey. Sorry, I was taking a nap.” Amara answered the door to let me in.

“Why? Been working a lot?” I walked in.

“Yes, and because I have something to do tonight, so I wanted to be well rested.”

I noticed she had on a robe, specifically the one she always put on when she did her makeup.

“Where you going tonight?”

“Just for a meal.” She walked off, and I trailed her.

“A meal with who, Amara?”

“Why, Rahim?”

“What the fuck you mean, why? And the way you acting so damn secretive, it must be a nigga!”

“Whether it’s another man or a female friend, or whatever I choose, it is none of your business!”

“It is my business!”

“No!” She whipped her body around so that we were face to face. “It is not your business! We are no longer married and haven’t been for quite some time now! Stop acting like I am still with you!”

That last sentence kind of hurt.

“Ain’t nobody acting like nothing. Don’t even flatter yourself.” I glanced off, shaking my head. “Did you hear about my news?”

“Your new—oh, your engagement? Yes, I did! I meant to text you to say congrats, but I’ve been so busy. Congratulations though!”

“Congratulations?”

“I know this is kind of whack of me. I was planning to send champagne and a cheese basket. I already told Dallas congrats on Instagram and that I would send it soon.”

Hearing she’d spoken to Dallas and was seemingly genuinely happy about this shit had me pissed off. That coupled with her possibly going on a date had my blood pressure through the roof I was sure.

“Wow, aight. Go get my fucking daughter.”

“What the hell is wrong with you? You need to seriously get checked out to make sure you’re not bipolar. And watch your mouth. Yu don’t speak to me the way you speak to them industry hoes.” Amara left me standing there at the bottom of the stairs while she went to get Ahmira.

They returned hand in hand, my baby girl holding her doll and wearing her Princess Tiana backpack. She was so beautiful, with her deep mahogany

skin she got from me, and seeing her with her mother had me in disbelief that I fucked this shit up for a bitch like Phoebe. Shanece *might* have been a mere consolation prize had she allowed our relationship to blossom, but it never did, so I would never know. I didn't care to know either; I just wanted Amara back.

"Daddy!" Ahmira jumped up and down, so I scooped her to peck her cheek.

"Wait, you telling me you're my daughter? A little girl as pretty as you?" I bucked my eyes as she nodded bashfully. "Oh wow. I'm so lucky."

Amara laughed as she watched us.

"You're gonna have her being conceited when she gets older."

"That's perfect." I chuckled, and Amara joined me.

We stared at one another for some awkward seconds before she inhaled sharply and said, "Well, she's due back Monday evening." Placing her hand on Ahmira's back, she said, "Have fun, sweetie, and don't give Daddy and Dallas a hard time, okay?" She pecked her round cheek.

"Okay, Mommy. Okay."

Amara walked us out, and I buckled Ahmira in the back seat of my Mercedes truck. When I got in the front seat, I received a text.

Amara: *If you continue to fight with me every time you come over, I will make it so my mother does the exchanges with you. She's moving out here, her and my father.*

Me: *Get over yourself.*

The last people I wanted moving out here were Amara's meddling ass, hating ass, nose in the air having ass parents.

Throwing my phone into the passenger seat, I started the car and sped off.

"Baby girl." I looked into the rearview at my daughter as I entered the freeway.

"Yes, Daddy?"

"Does ya mama have friends?"

"Of course!" She brushed her doll's hair.

"Friends that look like her or like me?"

"She has Tisha, but she doesn't look like you or Mommy. And then sometimes Gabe, who kind of looks like Mommy because he is bright. He is bigger and taller than Mommy though." She spoke so candidly, not even realizing what she was revealing to me.

“Shit.” I grumbled because I’d almost rear-ended this car in front of me when the name Gabe came from my daughter’s mouth.

Ahmira called light-skinned people bright. That was a step up because she used to call them white people. Amara was mortified when she found out Ahmira had told her whole class that her mother was a white woman.

“Gabe? He come over a lot?”

“Just when school is out.”

Aka, the weekend.

“Humph.”

When Ahmira and I got home, I gave her a bath, and then we ate the casserole that Dallas had made. That shit was so good I had three helpings.

Afterward, I assisted my daughter in brushing her teeth, then Dallas and I read her a story until she passed out.

“Dinner was good, babe.” I started to undress once Dallas and I were in the bedroom.

“Thank you. I made everything from scratch!”

“Aye, so why you ain’t tell me you and Amara talk?”

“Talk?”

“Yeah, on Instagram.”

“Oh, I thought you knew. It’s not like we try to hide it. We comment on one another’s photos, like them, and sometimes message one another on our story posts.”

I knew none of this, and for some reason, it infuriated me.

“I just don’t see why you ain’t say shit, and why you feel the need to be so cool with her ass.”

“I didn’t say anything because, like I just said less than a minute ago, I thought you knew. And why wouldn’t you want us to get along? You’d rather have your ex-wife and new soon to be wife at odds? That would only make life harder for you.”

In a normal circumstance, I would love for my ex and new one to be cool and cordial. But not when I was actively trying to get my wife back. I didn’t need her spilling the beans to Dallas, which would result in me getting dumped and being left single. I was never the type to jump ship unless I had another ship to leap onto.

“You right. I just don’t want her trying to poison your mind. She and I didn’t exactly break up amicably.”

“I know, and trust me, baby, I will not allow any mind poisoning.” Dallas walked over and kissed me before prancing to the bathroom, closing the door.

Pulling out my phone, I went onto Instagram and checked Amara’s page. She’d posted a photo of her outfit for the night, which was a skintight dress, showing her flawless body, and some tall ass pumps. Her hair hung down her back, and she had on that red lipstick I liked. I scanned the comments briefly for any sign of a Gabe, then swiped out.

I saw she posted a story, so I clicked it. When a picture of a bouquet of roses popped up, I almost lost it. Nothing else was added to her story after that.

Going out to my texts, I typed up a message.

Me: *Who the fuck is Gabe? My daughter mentioned this nigga. You bet not have no nigga around Ahmira without my permission!*

Me: *You got me fucked up!*

Placing my phone on the nightstand, I proceeded with my night. Until about 2 a.m., I checked my phone constantly, but I’d gotten no fucking reply.

Amara had shit twisted.

NEHEMIAH

“Come out wider for me on this shot,” I told my cameraman, Corey.

At the moment, we were shooting Roxie’s video, and the shit was panning out way better than I’d imagined. Roxie was the first female artist I had that didn’t need much direction, which I guess was because she was a seasoned artist. But I’d worked with plenty of females in the industry that had been working for at least five years, and they still needed you to tell them every damn move to make like a Sim.

“Whew, how was that?” Roxie inquired after I yelled cut. She was a bit out of breath from dancing.

“So far, so good. Everybody can take a break while I watch the footage back. If everything is straight, we can move on to the last scene of the night,” I announced.

“Okay. Make sure you let me know. I want it to be perfect for you.” Roxie switched past me. She was completely naked, only covered in metallic paint.

“She likes you.” Corey smirked.

“Roxie? Nah, she has a man, a man who is here with us, right now, by the way.”

“Man or not,” he shook his head, pulling the footage onto this computer so I could see, “she likes you. You’re lucky as hell. The director gets all the females, but the cameraman don’t get shit.”

“You can have them, bruh. I got a girl, and a fine one at that.”

“Yeah, Jilly is—”

“Chill out.” I elbowed him then pointed to the laptop so he could continue pulling that shit up for me.

“It’s gon’ be a little minute due to the scene length and the horrible ass WiFi.”

“Aight. I’m gon’ see if I can find a drink.” I pressed on, heading to the area set up for the crew and cast members to eat.

Remembering that we did in fact hire a bar, I took my ass right over there to order some vodka straight.

As I sipped it, I eyed the room, waiting for Jilly to text me back. Mac, Roxie’s boyfriend, and I made eye contact before he started my way.

“Fuck,” I mumbled. I ain’t have nothing against Mac, but he was a shit starter, as I’d explained already. I’d rather keep my distance from his ass as much as I could.

“You got some skills, playa.” He nodded to me, taking a swig of his own drink.

“Thank you. I appreciate it.”

“I knew when I made the beat to this shit, it was gon’ be a hit like it was. My baby girl got flows, so when you put us together, magic happens.” He threw his arms out, cheesing.

“I see that.”

“You think y’all got some magic?”

“Who is y’all?” I frowned, jerking my neck back a little.

“You and Roxie, nigga. Who else?”

“Nah, we don’t have no magic. I’ve never even worked with her before this.”

“Chill, homie. You act like I asked if you fucked her.” He stared at me with a conniving smile as I sipped my drink, shaking my head at his ass.

“Have you?”

“No, I haven’t. I’m in a relationship.”

Laughing heartily, he replied, “Since when does a damn relationship matter, especially in this business?”

“Well I ain’t like the rest of you niggas. I’m faithful.”

“Rest of us niggas? Wacko included?”

Where the fuck did that come from? The latter part of his question was so out of left field that, for a few seconds, I tried to backtrack and figure out what I’d said to bring about such a question.

“What does Wacko have to do with anything?”

“Well you said ‘the rest of you niggas’ insinuating that all men in the industry fuck around, excluding you.” He peered into my eyes seriously, drinking some of his dark liquor. “So I’m curious, does Wacko cheat on Camarih?”

“Why, bruh?”

“You know why, nigga. Don’t play stupid. She fine as hell, and if homie is cheating on her, then I wanna try to slide up and see what’s good.”

I chuckled, setting my now empty cup onto the table.

“I suggest you leave that shit alone before you end up dead. Wacko is already off, but he really off when it comes to Camarih. And what about Roxie? She know you out here trying to smash other women?”

“Hell nah she don’t. I’m trying to wife Camarih though, so if she’ll fuck with me, I won’t give a fuck what Roxie finds out.”

“Well then you’d better keep your transgressions on the low, ’cause you and Camarih ain’t happening.”

“Come—”

“Nah, man, kill that shit. And if you bring it up again, I’m snitching on yo’ ass. Now we both know if I do that shit, you good as dead, my nigga.”

Snickering lowly, Mac just stared at me. Even though he tried to keep his cool, I could see the hesitance in his eyes. He may have been a big fool who liked to start shit, but he knew very well that Tony would beat his ass or kill him.

Tony wasn’t one of them niggas who asked questions or tried to get to the bottom of shit when it came to Camarih. If he even dreamed that you tried to fuck with her, he’d pull up on you.

“Hurry this fucking shoot up so we can all go,” was the last thing Mac said before walking off, staggering a little bit.

I got another drink, and by the time I was finished, Corey had stepped inside to let me know the footage was ready. It only took a couple minutes for me to see it was good, so I informed everybody that they could start preparing for the next scene. I noticed Mac was nowhere to be found, before Corey let me know he’d bounced, which was perfect. He was a distraction, and I had a feeling he was jealous of his girlfriend, despite how successful and popular he was in his own right.

Just thirty minutes later, everything was set up, and Roxie, along with her people, were done with wardrobe and makeup. Only an hour had

passed, and we were finished with the scene, which I was elated about. I was ready to take my ass home and relax with my girl.

“Hey, Nehemiah. Do you think you can give me a ride to my house? Mac was supposed to drive me, but he left.” Roxie caught up to me. She was now fully clothed in black tights and a hoodie from one of her past concerts.

“Later, nigga.” Corey smirked as he walked to his car, letting me know he’d heard what Roxie had asked.

“Uh... one of your friends can’t take you home?”

Roxie’s jaw dropped slightly before she let out a breathy chuckle.

“Wow. I didn’t realize giving me a ride home would be such a hassle. But sure. I will try to find out if one of these video girls can drive me and find out where I live.”

“Aight, wait.” I tapped her shoulder so she’d turn back to face me. “I’ll drive you, my bad.” I was letting Corey’s comments get to me.

“Thank you.”

I led her to my whip and helped her put her bag in the back seat before opening the passenger side door for her. Taking a deep breath, I hopped in.

“Is this common?” I quizzed once we were on the road.

“Is what common?”

“For him to bounce on you when he knows he’s your ride.”

“I mean, I wouldn’t say it’s common. He’s done it before, yes, but only when he was drunk, like tonight. He’s easily angered when drunk.”

“Like most people.”

Chuckling, she confirmed. “Yes, like most people.”

I glanced her way, and she was staring out of the window like she was thinking.

“Sorry about what I said earlier when you asked for a ride. You cool. I was tripping.”

“It’s fine. I’m sure you think I want to sleep with you or something.” She finally turned to eye me while we were stopped. “I admire that, actually, the fact that you would turn down driving me home in order to stay faithful. You’re a rare breed, Nehemiah.”

“I don’t think I’m rare. I just think females look in the wrong places. Broke niggas will cheat, so imagine if that same nigga got money, success, and females throwing pussy at him twenty-four-seven? You got to find a dude who got sense whether he got racks and fame or not.”

Roxie nodded when I briefly looked her way.

“Mac used to be great like you, but he just changed, especially recently. It’s like he’s worse, so I’ve been trying to think if there was something I did.”

“Don’t think that, because it ain’t it.” I pulled through the gates of her big ass house.

“Why else would he be like this?” She turned her body to face me now that I had put the car in park.

“Because he’s immature.” I didn’t want to say because he actually thought he could have Camari. “There are plenty of niggas out there who would love to have you and would show it.”

It got quiet for a moment before she reached over to caress my facial hair.

“I wish it was you.”

“Well—”

“I know.” She turned to get her bag in the back after unbuckling her seat belt. “But if things change, let me know.” She pulled the lever of my car door and hopped out.

I waited until she was safely inside and shook my head before leaving. Roxie was beautiful, way too beautiful to be throwing herself at niggas, because it was hard to turn her down. But I loved Jilly, I wanted to be with Jilly, Jilly was crazy, and lastly, Tony would murk me if I cheated on his sister. Wasn’t like I wanted to anyway. I would never ruin something solid for a nut.

I got home twenty minutes after midnight and went straight to the shower. Jilly was in the living room watching TV, so when I got out, I put on my night clothes then joined her on the plush couch.

“What you do all day?” I kissed her, throwing my arm along the back of the couch.

“Why?”

“What you mean, why? Because I want to know. I legit ask you this every day.”

“Oh, right.” She giggled nervously. Why was she nervous? “I went to work.”

“Okay, with who? You usually tell me all this shit over breakfast, but I had that five-a.m. call time.”

“I went to work with Nala again.”

“You okay?” I frowned.

If anyone knew my girl like I did, they were well aware that she was talkative as fuck. She never gave short responses; she always followed it with a detailed explanation, no matter how simple it was.

“Yes, I’m okay.” She kissed me slowly. “Are you okay?” She straddled my lap. Although she was acting weird, her pulling off her thin strapped pajama top put my mind elsewhere.

“I’m great now.” I rubbed up and down her bare back then came to the front to squeeze her breasts.

She had no panties on under her tiny pajama shorts, so I moved them to the side and revealed my dick through the boxer’s slit.

“Mmm.” We cooed together as Jilly dug her nails into my shoulders. I had to shut my eyes for a moment because that was just how good this shit felt.

“I fucking love you, Jilly,” I let her know, watching her face twist as she glided up and down on my dick.

Biting her lip, she leaned back some while I kept her from falling, and wound her hips on me.

“Baby.” She whimpered, releasing already.

I just let my eyes roam her body as she kept going, ignoring the fact that she had cum once. Gripping her hips, I took control, slamming her down onto my shit until she came again, body shaking and trembling right along with her sexy voice. Pulling her in, I held her body while we tongue kissed, before lifting her and turning her back to me. Like clockwork, Jilly sat on it, putting her legs on the outside of mine so I could go deeper.

“Fuck,” I groaned, watching her perfect ass as it bounced in my lap.

I kissed down her spine, basking in the feeling of her walls, and once she’d let her juices flow twice, I hugged her back into my chest to pound her shit hard.

Moments later, we were moaning together, loudly as hell but not giving a fuck, letting off seemingly at the same time.

“Mmm.” Jilly fell back onto me, licking her lips while we both attempted to catch our breath. She threw her arm around the back of my neck while my hand caressed the front of her body as we pecked.

After a minute of just kissing and touching, we got up, cleaned ourselves in the bathroom, then hopped in our comfortable ass bed together.

“You know you the best I ever had?” I admitted as we lied together in the dark.

“Yes.”

“What you mean ‘yes’?”

“Just what I said.” She pressed her chin into my chest so we could make eye contact. “I know I’m the best you’ve ever had. I can tell by the faces you make, like you can’t believe how good it feels.”

That’s exactly what I be thinking while we fucked, so it was weird that she’d called it.

“You just like yo’ cocky ass brother. I was just trying to pump you up by lying anyway.”

“Yeah right!” She laughed, pecking me slowly. “I love you.”

“I love you too.” It got quiet then I asked, “If I tell you something, you promise to keep it a secret? Even from Tony?”

“What is it?”

“Promise me first.”

“Uh, okay.”

“Jilly, for real. You cannot say shit, or I will never forgive you for it, do you hear me?”

“Okay, okay! What is it?”

“You know that music producer Mac King?”

“Yes. His girlfriend is the artist you just did a video for, right? Roxie?”

“Yeah. Well anyway, he kind of pressed me at the video shoot earlier about getting with Camarih.”

“What!” Jilly sat up to stare down at me.

“Remember what you promised, aight?”

“Why would you make me promise not to tell something like that? I have to! She’s my brother’s wife.”

“Yeah, and your brother is also crazy as shit and won’t hesitate to kill the nigga. Is that what you want?”

“I don’t give a fuck about Mac King.” She frowned at me as if she thought I was a fool for even thinking she cared.

“I don’t either, but yo’ brother ain’t fucking Superman. What’s gon’ happen if he get caught up in this shit? He going to jail, and you never gon’ have him again.”

Jilly’s scowl slowly dissipated, as my words seemed to seep into her mind.

“Ugh!” She fell back onto her pillow, looking up at the ceiling. “Why did you even tell me?”

“Because you my girl, and I thought I could talk to you as a friend too.”

Glancing over at me she replied, “You can, it’s just that’s my brother and I don’t like hearing stuff like that.”

“Me neither. He’s my friend and put me on. But you and I both know how he is, especially when it comes to Camarih.”

“If Mac gets caught on his own, Tony will kill him either way.”

“I’m not gon’ let it get that far. I promise.” I kissed her forehead, bringing her to lie on my chest.

I didn’t know why I said that shit, as if I could control the situation, but I just wanted to calm Jilly down so she wouldn’t squeal.

“K.” She snuggled up to me.

We switched the subject and just chatted until we dozed off.

Around 2 a.m., I got up to take a piss but peeped my phone light up and the Instagram message ringtone go off. Grabbing my phone on the way to the bathroom, I saw it was a message from Roxie.

RoxieBaby: Can’t sleep, are you awake?

I started to type but then erased the whole message. Locking the phone, I peed, washed my hands, then took my ass back to bed. I wasn’t falling into any traps I would later on regret.

CAMARIH

SOME ODD DAYS LATER...

“I had to FaceTime you.” Jilly walked through my house, and as she neared the kitchen, I could hear my baby yelling angrily.

Upon entering, I saw he was slamming his little fists on his highchair, his bowl of food was flipped over and had stained his onesie, and he was going off in baby talk. I’d never seen him act like this.

“Oh my gosh,” I mumbled.

“See, you and my brother thought I was joking about his little ass.” Jilly stopped right in front of my son as he continued to throw a fit.

“Houston!” I called out, and the way his little face froze with his tiny lips parted was comical. He recognized my voice, so it made him look around a bit for me.

“Your mommy caught you.” Jilly turned the phone so he could see.

“What are you doing, baby?” I asked him as he reached to touch the phone. When he realized he couldn’t actually get ahold of me, he started to cry. He was so cute, looking just like a baby version of Tony. “Awww—”

“No, don’t fall for this, Camarih.” Jilly looked into the phone as I chuckled.

“I will be home soon. I just have a quick errand to run beforehand. So I will feed him when I get there.”

“Okay. Let me tighten this bun before I pick his hair pulling ass up.”

“Leave him alone, okay?”

“Just hurry up, please!” she joked... I think.

We got off the phone, and once I was done with some computer work, I shut it down then locked up.

The sales of my products had been through the roof, and my facial spa stayed booked. I even had celebrities trying to come in now, which was bittersweet for me.

Celebrities, even people that I didn't really see as celebrities, like social media models, always wanted some free shit. They thought they could promise to promote and I would offer services for no charge. Nope. I was very skilled, one of the best at what I did, and if you wanted to experience it, you were gonna pay no matter who you were.

I'd contemplated doing the whole free thing in exchange for promotion, but Tony reminded me that my business and products worked for themselves at this point, and I had magic hands worth paying for. And he was right.

I locked up the shop, said bye to Avery, who was the guard Tony hired for my spa, and then left. I was going to stop by my mother's home, just to check it out.

I'd sold all of her furniture since she was serving prison time, and now I'd put her house on the market. The realtor advised that I have it cleaned and put in staged furniture to make it sell quicker, so I had that done today. I wanted to look it over just to see how it came out before the photo shoot tomorrow.

I parked in the driveway and then got the key so I could let myself in. My mouth fell agape, seeing the house, because it looked so clean and nice. Even though it was in the hood, I knew we'd be able to sell this place for a great price. My mama would be mad she didn't have a house to stay in *if* she was released from jail in fifteen years, but I didn't care about that bitch's feelings or thoughts.

It took me about half an hour to look at the entire house, but once bad memories started to resurface, I decided to leave.

“Fine ass Camarih,” I heard a man say as I locked the screen door we'd added to the home.

Looking over my shoulder, I saw Marcel. Marcel was Driz's best and only *true* friend he trusted. He and I never did talk much because Driz kept me away from his lifestyle as much as possible, which included his hood ass homies. He always told me the same niggas smiling in your face would

be the same ones trying to smash your girl. Not that he thought Marcel was shady in particular; he was just explaining his reasonings for keeping me distant from his small circle.

I only knew of Marcel because, on a couple occasions, I'd seen him with Driz when Driz brought me lunch at work or when he was dropping some money off to me. But hanging out? Never. However, I knew he was close with Driz because he'd told me so, *and* because he allowed Marcel to even be in my presence, if you will, although for a short time.

Seeing Marcel was a bit of a shock to me at the moment, because I'd pushed that part of my life with Driz to the back of my head.

"Marcel?" I acted as if I didn't remember him all the way. He looked the same, but his baby face was covered in facial hair.

"Yeah, of course." He came into my mother's yard as I descended the porch steps. "Damn, okay." He laughed because when he tried to hug me, I stuck my arm out for a handshake instead.

"No offense. I just don't think a hug is appropriate." I chuckled to ease the tension.

"No worries. I know we was never cool or close like that."

"Yeah. What are you doing over here in Leimert Park?" I frowned. He and Driz seemed to never leave Watts.

"I just got out of jail and needed a familiar face, so I started looking for you. A few people told me ya moms lived here."

"Oh. Well it was nice seeing you." I half smiled and turned to walk to my car.

"Damn, this you?" He pointed to my Rolls-Royce Cullinan.

"It is." I put my purse in the passenger seat, which he took notice of, along with my watch and clothes. His eyes squinted as he focused back on me, looking me over like he was trying to recognize me.

"Oh shit, you with that Wacko nigga." He pointed.

"Married him." I showed the ring on my finger.

"Uh huh." He ran his tongue over his molars. "Anyway, I was thinking we could get something to eat, you know, catch up. I feel like you the only other person who knew Driz like that and—"

"Look, Marcel, it was nice running into you, but I can't go to lunch. I'm sorry."

"Why not? You don't eat with jail birds?"

“Umm, no, I don’t, actually, but that’s not why. I have a man, and I can’t go eat with you.”

“Damn. I heard that nigga was psycho, but he that crazy to where you can’t eat with another nigga platonically?”

“Yes, yes he is.” By the look on Marcel’s face, I could tell he didn’t expect me to say ‘yes’. “And plus, I don’t know you like that, so it’s not really a need for us to catch up. We were never friends. I was Driz’s girlfriend, and you were his homie, co-worker, or whatever.”

“Damn. That nigga must be beating yo’ ass.”

“Do I look like I’m getting my ass whooped, or do I look well taken care of?” I cocked my head, and Marcel opened his mouth, but no sound followed. “Thought so. Enjoy the rest of your evening, Marcel. Keep Driz’s memory alive.” I rounded my truck to get in on the driver’s side.

“Oh, I will, since you moved on so quickly.”

Pausing, I turned to face him.

“Excuse me? I waited a long ass time after Driz was dead and gone to date someone else. And who I’m with now wasn’t even—you know what, why am I explaining to you? I don’t even know you like that. And if I was so grimy to the point where I moved on so quickly, why the fuck were you looking for me and trying to have lunch?”

“I—”

“Exactly. Pick a lane, negro, and stay in it.” I got in my car and slammed the door.

I heard him apologizing and trying to make me stop reversing, but I kept on, speeding off to get home.

When I got to my house, I found Jilly and Houston in his bedroom playing. I went to sit down on the mat with him while he matched the shapes with the corresponding openings incorrectly, but it was cute how determined he seemed.

“He’s calm now.” Jilly sighed, kissing his fat cheek. He paid her nor me any mind while he continued to play.

Jilly and I talked for a little bit, then I gave her some money for watching him and for emotional suffering, before she left.

My baby still gave me no attention, but twenty minutes after Jilly was gone, he turned to me, standing up and placing his small hands on my thigh for a little balance.

“No, I’m not picking you up. You only want my attention when you’re hungry, sleepy, or want to be cuddled. When you wanna play, you like to be alone or with Daddy.” Just looking at me, he began frowning, digging his soft nails into my thigh. His hands were so tiny that it didn’t hurt in the slightest—it only tickled. “You’re just like your daddy, trying to scare somebody, but nobody is scared of you, because you’re little.” I used one of my fingers to shove him lightly, making him fall into the sitting position.

He stared at me and then started to cry. He was so adorable that I almost cracked.

“Mama!” He cried like his little life was over.

“What did you say?” I scooped him up to kiss his face.

His cries immediately stopped as he lied on my shoulder while I cuddled him. He was so ridiculous, but I was just happy he called me ‘mama’.

I gave him some food, a warm bath, then snuggled with him until he passed out. He looked so innocent and sweet in his crib; however, I was still going to look into some baby behavioral classes.

I checked my iPhone because I was about to take a long, hot bubble bath and would not be available for a minute. My heart dropped seeing Mac had spam liked damn near all of my photos, excluding ones with Tony or solely of Tony. I quickly blocked him, heart thumping in my chest while I did it, hoping Tony nor one of them messy ass blogs hadn’t witnessed this.

I was trying to save this man’s life, but it was clear he wanted to die.



I’D GONE to Jamba Juice off Slauson, getting something for both Tony and I, so now I wanted to deliver it to him. We both loved Jamba Juice, but really I wanted an excuse to see him. I didn’t necessarily need an excuse, but if he knew I showed up just because, he would brag about how much I loved him, and I didn’t want to hear it.

I put my baby into his fancy stroller gently, not wanting to wake him up. He’d finally gone to sleep, just before I got the smoothies, and I wanted him to stay that way. Once he woke up, he’d either be clinging to me, which I loved, or restless, which I hated, especially now that he could walk and stand.

I didn't even know his ass could walk, until one day when I put him on the couch so I could clean up a mess he made. I saw him moving out of the corner of my eye, and when I looked over, he was getting down off the couch and starting toward me. He *did* fall, but got right back up, astonishing the hell out of me.

"Oh, hi." Nala spoke to me when I entered the studio room.

No one was in here but her. However, I knew Tony had either been here or was close by because only he, Eitan, and I had the key.

"What are you doing here?" I asked. Nala was never rude to me, but after I beat her ass some time ago, she acted as if I was the Queen of England.

"I just finished a song, so I'm waiting for Hou—Tony to listen to it and give me his thoughts."

"You don't need to be here for that. He can listen on his own and give you his thoughts at another time," I stated strictly. I caught that she almost called him Houston, irritating me.

It pissed me off that I couldn't stop her from being in love with Tony. Even if he never saw her or worked with her again, she would still love him. Killing her would be the only thing that would help, but she wasn't worth me going to jail over. And knowing her, she'd still love him from the grave.

"Yeah, true, but we were both here already, so I figured—"

"Buttascotch." Tony appeared in the doorway, hugging me from behind and kissing my neck.

"I was letting Nala here know that she can go home and you'd email your thoughts on her song later." I looked back and up at him.

He pecked me, letting me go as he responded, "She already here though, so it's no point in me wasting extra time." He sat at the mixer, readying the song for playback. When I turned to leave, he asked, "Aye, where the fuck you going?"

"I'm leaving, since clearly you'd much rather spend time with this hoe."

"Camarih, sit yo' ass down. This muthafuckin song is three minutes and some change. Once the shit is over, her ass is gon' bounce."

"Eh, I'll pass." I pushed the stroller out, making sure the tray of smoothies in the lower compartment didn't fall.

"Camarih, don't fuck with me," was all he said in an authoritative tone, and it was enough to make me turn around. Tony was unpredictable, so I

didn't want to chance it. Nala's ass looked afraid for me.

I went to sit down and sipped my smoothie until this whole debacle was over. When Nala finally left, Tony turned in his swivel chair to stare at me. He looked angry, so I was kind of scared but couldn't show it.

"What?" I finally asked.

"What I tell you about acting stupid over these hoes?" He stared at me, waiting on an answer. Why was he so intimidating? At the same time, it made me feel hot all over.

"I told you to pull back on the time you spend with her, and you said you would. So why is it that y'all are here alone, boo'd up?"

He laughed angrily, showing he was frustrated.

"For starters, don't nobody tell me what the fuck to do. You my wife, so I respect ya input, but I'm gon' do whatever the fuck it is that I need and want to do, especially when it's about my money. Secondly, wasn't nobody boo'd the fuck up. I don't even know what that stupid shit means. Sounds like some gay shit, and if it is, I'm gon' pop you in ya muthafuckin mouth."

"Like y'all are each other's boo!"

"How the fuck am I her boo when you my wife!"

"Ugh!" I growled at men's stupidity in general. "And I wish you would pop me in my mouth, nigga!" I barked, having a delayed reaction.

Tony got over to me at lightening speed, hovering over and almost pressing his nose to mine.

Snatching my Jamba from me, he asked, "If I make that wish come true, what the fuck you gon' do about it?"

"Give me back my drink!"

"I'll pour this shit over yo' fucking head right now."

"You bet not!" I growled. "Ahhh!" I screeched, feeling the ice-cold smoothie shower over me. Tony even shook the Styrofoam cup to be sure it was completely ridden of its contents. "You asshole! You dumped that over your pregnant wife! I hate you!" I swung on him, but he caught my arms, laughing.

Pinning me across the couch so that I was lying on my back, he kissed me slowly.

"I'm sorry, baby." He snickered in between pecks. I was trying to wiggle from his embrace, but he was too strong. "You was talking too much shit. It was either slap you the fuck up or douse you."

"Let me go so I can clean up!" I whined, about to cry.

He let me go, so I ascended slowly.

“Camarih! Camarih!” he shouted, because as fast as I could, I grabbed his untouched smoothie, snatched the top off, and threw that shit right into his face.

When his jaw dropped, I doubled over in laughter. Leisurely, he started getting up off the couch, so I ran, but his crazy ass chased me.

“Stop, Houston, you started this!” I screamed, running down the hall of the studio. When he caught me before I could exit altogether, I felt like a victim being captured by a serial killer.

He picked me up, pinned me to the wall with my legs around him, and then we started to kiss passionately. The smoothies were all over us, including on our lips, as we tongued one another down.

“You fucking crazy. That’s why I’m in love with you,” he said.

Same reason I was in love with him...

SHANECE

Currently, I was sweating bullets waiting for my doctor to come into the exam room. She'd ran some tests at my last appointment and was now about to have a talk with me about the results.

"Please God, don't let there be anything wrong with me. Amen." I prayed out loud, symbolizing a cross using my fingers when I was done.

Suddenly, I heard a knock, and the nurse peeked in with a smile. It wasn't a good news type of smile, more like a 'this is my job' type.

"Hello, Mrs. Bias. Dr. Jennis will see you in her office now."

"Oh... okay. I just assumed she would come back in here."

"Nope. For these types of consultations, she always speaks to her patients in her office. I can show you the way."

"No, I haven't forgotten where it is. Thank you."

I climbed down off the table and grabbed my Dior bag sitting in the seat. I checked my phone to see I had a few missed calls from Paul's mother, and then some flirty texts from my husband that made me smile softly. He deserved a woman who could have his children.

I left the examination room, went down the hall, and made a quick right until I saw Dr. Jennis's name on the door. I knocked lightly, then waited for her to say 'come in'.

"Oh, Mrs. Bias, good. I was afraid someone else was knocking." She rose from her seat and gestured for me to sit down across from her.

"Nope, just little old me." I chuckled nervously, descending into the comfy magenta chair, hugging my purse.

"Alright." She opened my folder and studied the contents for a few seconds as I swallowed lump after lump. "So, per usual, everything looks

great. I'm sure you already knew this. You've stopped taking birth control a while ago, so that's wonderful. You don't really want to try to have a baby right after you stop because your body may not respond well. So that's not something you have to worry about. You are in perfectly great shape to have a baby." She smiled after closing the folder.

"Okay, so why hasn't it happened?"

"You've been actively trying with no luck?"

"Yes, Dr. Jennis, that—" I remembered I didn't explain to her my troubles when I got tested. I kept it somewhat discreet, saying I just wanted to be sure everything was alright. "That's the reason I even came to get these tests. You see, my new husband and I are trying to get pregnant and haven't been successful. I haven't even had a miscarriage."

"Really?" Her lids lowered as she rested her chin on the top of her balled fists. "Well like I said, Mrs. Bias, your body is in perfectly good health. You shouldn't be having any issues getting pregnant nor carrying the baby to full term."

"Then what the hell is going on? We don't have much time."

Chuckling, Dr. Jennis replied, "Sweetheart, you're still in your twenties, and in this day and age, women are having babies even in their forties, so I wouldn't worry about time. And men can have children until they're old as dirt."

"I know, but I want them now. His ex wife didn't have any kids with him, and I know it's why they're broken up."

"I think we should have your husband come in so we can run some tests on him. It could be that his sperm count is very low or very inactive. If we have a test done, we can see what's going on with it."

"Oh, alright. Well I will let him know and then give you a call to see what time is best. But do you honestly think it could be him?"

"It's possible. And his ex wife never got pregnant, did she?"

"Nope, not even once."

Dr. Jennis shrugged one shoulder. "So it surely could be him."

"But she didn't want them, so maybe she was just taking the right steps to prevent it."

"Could be, but I didn't want kids either; however, I somehow have four of them." She pointed to her family photo before we both shared a laugh.

"Wow, how do you have four of them and not even want one?"

“Child, I wish I knew. And I was doing everything to prevent it. I’m a damn doctor, and I still couldn’t pull it off. I guess God and my husband had other plans for me.”

I giggled, nodding.

I finished up with Dr. Jennis and headed home, stopping for a green juice on the way. When I arrived, I smelled an aroma of barbecue, so I knew Cheri was in the kitchen cooking. I rolled my eyes but definitely took my ass in there to see what she was whipping up. I was starved.

“Oh, hello.” Cheri turned to look at me.

“Hi, what’s that?” I sat at the bar.

“Making short ribs, mashed potatoes, corn, and string beans. I also have some sweet bread on the side.”

Damn!

“Oh... sounds cool.” I pretended not to be amazed. “Thanks for cooking again. You can slow up though because I have some recipes I want Wade and I to try.”

“Of course, anytime. And sure thing, Shanece. I will stay out of your kitchen.”

I gave her a fake closed mouth smile then left out. Once in my room, I took a hot bubble bath, and by the time I was spreading some lotion on, I heard Wade in the bedroom on the phone. It was obviously a boring business call, so I took my time until I heard him end it.

“Damn you smell good,” he commented as soon as I slid out of the bathroom and into the bedroom.

“Do I?” I moved his way. He looked so handsome in his semi-unbuttoned dress shirt and slacks.

“Yes.” He welcomed me into his lap. “What scent is that?”

“It’s from Whipped, and the scent is Honey Butter.”

“Oh, Camarih’s shit. I love it.” He kissed my neck, hugging my body tightly. “I missed you all day.”

“I missed you too.” I lifted his head, stared into his eyes for a few moments, and then pecked his lips. “I went to see a doctor today.”

“About what?”

“About our conceiving issues.”

“Oh yeah? When did this happen? And what she say?” He frowned a little bit.

“I went for the first visit to take the actual tests some weeks ago, then she told me the results of it today. She let me know that everything is good, and I’m perfectly healthy for conceiving, carrying, and childbirth.”

“You know I could’ve told you that for free, right?” He smirked with his handsome self. There was nothing like a chocolate brother, a tall one at that.

“Shut up.” I giggled bashfully. “Anyway, she wants us to go back down there and get some tests done on you, just to try to—”

“Nah, I’m not doing that.”

“Wade, it’s just a test to check on your sperm count.”

He briskly moved me from his lap and repeated, “I’m not doing that, Shanece. I hope you didn’t tell her I would.” He finished unbuttoning his shirt, exposing the wife beater under it.

“I mean, no, I didn’t, but I did give her the impression that we’d come down and have you checked out.”

“Well like I said, I won’t be going.” He removed his belt then proceeded to loosen his pants.

“Why not? Aren’t you the least bit curious as to why we haven’t gotten pregnant? We’re both young, seemingly healthy, and we fuck at least once a night on a busy day, so—”

Coming closer to me, he kneeled down, taking my hands into his.

“Baby, it’s because of the stress. I bet you didn’t tell your doctor my ex-wife basically lived with us, did you?”

“No.”

“Exactly. Having her here has you stressed the hell out, and that’s probably why shit ain’t popped off yet. Soon as she’s gone, watch you stay pregnant.” He kissed me.

“I mean, maybe that is it, but I still think you should see Dr. Jennis to be sure—”

“Shanece, I’m not going.” He rose to his feet and started toward the bathroom.

“Wade—”

“I ain’t going! Don’t ask me again!” he snapped, making me jump even though he was all the way in the doorway of our en suite.

Before I could even reply, he slammed the door and started the sink water to brush his teeth.

I sat there thinking about his anger and words for a little bit, then got up to go eat them ribs Cheri cooked. I could smell it and now the garlic

mashed potatoes all the way up in the room. Plus, this scented butter I got from Camarih's brand smelled like food too, making my senses tingle even more.

"Just in time! Want me to make you a plate?" Cheri offered as soon as she saw me.

"No—sure, go ahead." I wasn't in the mood to be independent right now.

Cheri happily piled the food onto one plate, then another for herself. When done, she brought them both and grabbed two waters before sitting with me. I usually would've spoke up about her going to eat in her own spot, but I wasn't in the right state of mind to be Regina George.

"I didn't mean to eavesdrop, but I did overhear the little tiff you and Wade just had."

"Cheri, please, let's just eat in silence."

"Okay." She munched on some of the ribs. "What do you think?"

"It's great, but you already knew that. You're a professional chef."

"True, but that doesn't mean everything I make is going to be to someone's liking." She simpered, but I didn't reply. "I know you don't want my opinion or advice, but I'm pretty sure Wade got a vasectomy while we were married." She bit another rib, watching me.

"What? No he did not. Why would he do that when he wants children?"

"He does? That's news to me."

I wiped my mouth with a napkin and sat up straight.

"How is it news to you? *He* wanted children, you didn't. Isn't that why your little relationship blew up?" I frowned at her lying ass.

"No. Is that what he told you?" She laughed. "I tell you, men will say anything to their new woman to paint themselves in a great light." She placed down her rib, ate a scoop of mashed potatoes, and then sipped her water like she was purposely making me wait. "Mr. Bias and I separated and eventually divorced because *he* didn't want children. At first he pretended to, saying we should work on our careers first and down the line, once settled, we would make babies. Well, we defined our careers, but the baby making never came. Then he admitted he got a vasectomy to me, after we tried to have a child for a year but came up short like you two."

I didn't want to believe this bitch, but the way Wade acted had me conflicted. Why would he get so angry? What was the harm in checking his sperm count? He was a young, healthy man, so I was sure there would be

no issues. And if there were, we could figure something out, unless that problem was a damn vasectomy. If he went in for these tests, my doctor would be able to see he had a procedure. Was that why he got so up in arms and declined to go?

“That’s a lie, Cheri, and you know it.”

“I know you have no reason to believe me, so I will leave it be then.” She got back to chowing down like she was dog in an eating contest.

I watched her for some time but then got up to leave. I wasn’t hungry anymore.

When I walked into the bedroom, I saw my husband shirtless and in bed while reading a newspaper. I could smell his soap, which was nice.

“Cheri made ribs.” I spoke softly, turning off the overhead light since he had the lamp on.

“I had a big lunch, so I’m okay. That food is too fattening anyway.” He spoke dryly, keeping his main focus on the paper.

Getting into the bed next to him, I asked, “Is there a reason you don’t want to go see my doctor? You can be honest.”

“I just think it’s unnecessary. I don’t need some medical professional to tell me what I already know. There is nothing wrong with us, and like I said, once Cheri is gone, you will be relieved, and your body will be more accepting to pregnancy.” Still, his demeanor was stoic, and his eyes were on the paper.

I said nothing, just slinked under the covers and turned my back to him. Grabbing my phone, I checked it to be sure I had no email replies from the people I’d conversed with about work, and then I prayed before trying to dozing off.

About fifteen minutes later, I heard Wade turn the lamp off and then snuggle up behind me, kissing the nape of my neck and caressing my breasts through the nightgown I wore.

“No, Wade, I’m not in the mood.”

“Shanece, come on.” He exhaled heavily like he was irritated. “Please tell me you ain’t mad about that fucking appointment.” When I didn’t respond, he said, “Aight.”

I could feel him turning his back to me as well, and we fell asleep separately, something we hadn’t done since we’d gotten together damn near.



I WAS AT MY VANITY, straightening my hair because I was about to go visit the Museum of Ice Cream with Camarih, Rubie, and Jilly. Camarih had scored some tickets, which were hard to get, so I was excited to go. I'd wanted to attend for years, and now I would finally have the chance.

Just as I ran the straightener down the last piece, my phone started to ring. When I saw Paul's mother's name pop up, I covered my mouth. I'd forgotten to return her calls from a few days ago, and now I was afraid to answer.

Turning off the straightener, I picked up.

"Hi, Mrs. Porter. I am so sorry!"

"Oh, it's okay, sweetheart. I was starting to think you were ignoring me." Her small voice came through.

"No way. You know I love you. You're still my second mother." I smiled in the mirror. I hadn't worn my hair in anything but braids for years, so this straight look was new for me. "I was just at the doctor when I saw your calls, so it slipped my mind to return them."

"Good to hear that you still love me. Is everything okay, sweetheart?"

"Yeah, umm... yeah, everything is good. How about with you?"

"Just fine. I was wondering if we could meet up for lunch or dinner so that I could run something by you."

"Sure, but what is it about?"

"I'd rather talk to you about it in person. How's next Wednesday?"

"I have to check out my calendar. I don't have much free time during the week because of my job, so when I go into work Monday, I will see which time frames I have free and call you back."

"You always did love that job more than anything." She snickered softly, but I didn't find her comment funny.

"Well I wouldn't say more than anything, but yes, it is important. I worked hard to get to the position I'm in now. I will be the CEO of Scene Magazine by next year."

"I'm sure you will, Shanece."

Her tone was something I didn't care for at all. It was like she was taunting me, trying to show that I cared about my career goals more than I cared for her son. That was an ongoing argument between Paul and I for the duration of our marriage.

It wasn't that at all. I did love my job, but when Paul got sick and lost his, I realized I needed to go harder. If I didn't, we wouldn't have been able

to live comfortably like we did nor take advantage of health insurance. So yes, there were certain nights I couldn't stay by his side or nurse him throughout the day. Did I regret it? At times, yes, of course, because I didn't have him anymore, but I knew that I had to do what I had to do so he and I could have a place to sleep, food to eat, medical, and cash to pay our bills.

"I'll talk to you soon, Mrs. Porter."

"Mhm." She hung up.

I didn't know what the hell she wanted to talk about, but I was hoping like hell I didn't have to make an enemy out of her. I wasn't lying when I said I loved her. I did. And the last thing I wanted was to butt heads with my dead ex-husband's mama.

EITAN

“Finally, he’s asleep,” Rubie whispered as we looked over our son, Elijah’s, crib.

Homie had been crying and fussing all damn day, so it was nice to see him knocked out. I never thought I’d say this shit in one million years, but I actually enjoyed being a father. It was cool to think about the fact that you’d have people still here on earth, carrying along your bloodline after you were gone.

“I know, thank God.”

Rubie looked over her shoulder at me, pecking my lips deeply. Making her face me, I wrapped my arms around her sexy body, groping her ass cheeks roughly. I hadn’t fucked her in I didn’t know how long, so I was craving everything about her.

I’d fucked a lot of women over my twenty-nine years, but there was nothing better than sex with a female you were in love with. Not to mention, Rubie was the sexiest and most beautiful woman I’d ever seen. From her deep chocolate skin, to those thick lips and the shape of her body, I wouldn’t change a thing.

“Okay, don’t get ahead of yourself.” Rubie pulled away, peeling my arms and hands from her frame.

“Rubie—” I grabbed her wrist.

“Eitan.” She yanked away, cutting the bedroom light off so that the nightlight and baby carousel could illuminate the room.

Following her out, I hugged her from the back.

“You feel what you just did to me.” I let my extremely hard dick prod her ass.

“I’m sorry, baby.” She chuckled. “It’s not time yet though. Once the six weeks are up, I have to go and see my doctor, then we can do it after he clears me.”

By the time she finished talking, we were in our own bedroom. I kept my hold on her before collapsing onto the bed. Putting her on her back, I got in between her legs, pinning her wrists down.

“There’s gotta be something we can do in the meantime, Rubie. I’m backed the hell up, and I’m about to leave the state for a couple shows this weekend.” I kissed on her collarbone as I talked.

“So what you’re saying is if you don’t get something from me, you’ll get it out of state?”

“Nah, that’s not what I’m saying, I—”

“Then what the fuck are you saying?” She snatched her wrists from my grasp. “I don’t see the point in bringing up the fact that you’re about to leave the state, while mentioning how backed up you are.”

“Aight. I see how that shit came out, but I only brought it up because I ain’t gon’ see you for that time. You won’t come with me, so I’m gon’ be super backed up when I return.”

“Go jack off then, Eitan.”

Sighing, I rolled off of her and onto my back. Like nothing happened, Rubie went to brush her teeth and wash her face before getting back into the bed, but under the covers. She made sure the baby video monitor was working, then laid on her side to go to sleep. I tried to follow suit, but I was horny as fuck.

Sitting up since I couldn’t doze off, I reached for my water bottle on the nightstand to drink it down. I was hella thirsty for some reason—literally and metaphorically.

As soon as I put the empty bottle back down, my phone lit up. Scooping it, I saw it was from Frida’s ass again. Tapping it to open, I spotted another freaky ass pict—nah this shit was a video. Glancing at Rubie to be sure she was asleep, I went to the bathroom outside of the bedroom we shared and shut then locked the door.

I sat down on the closed toilet top then pressed play on the video. I saw it was Frida playing with her pussy, and my dick went straight in the fucking air. Reaching down into my boxers, I got right to stroking my shit as I watched. Literally, in fucking minutes, I was busting into the stack of tissue I’d grabbed just in time and feeling bad as well.

Rubie would kill me if she knew what the fuck I'd just done. She did tell me to jack off, but I doubt she meant to a video of my ex.

Dropping my iPhone onto the bathroom rug, I stood, pissed, flushed the semen-covered tissue, and then washed my hands as if my ass was about to do surgery. After making sure there was no evidence of what I'd just done, I went back to the bedroom to sleep pretty soundlessly.

I needed to block Frida's ass... but I didn't.



“WHAT YOU THINKING?” Rahim turned down the new song Holli and I did together.

“I like it. You think it's gon' do the same numbers as our original track?”

“Better. It sounds better, y'all flows are tighter, and you got more fame than before,” Tony let me know, and everyone nodded in agreement.

“Well then my work here is done.” Rahim got up.

“Damn, Dallas got yo' ass on a time schedule or something?” Abel inquired, packing his stuff too.

“No, fool, but we do have to be somewhere together tomorrow, so I'm not trying to be tired.” Rahim shook his head, throwing his Gucci backpack on his back and checking the time on his AP.

“Where y'all gotta be at?” Tony quizzed. I knew that nigga well, so I was sure he was being an asshole, making me chuckle subtly.

“To look at some venues, if you must know.”

It was quiet for a hot second before we all started to laugh loudly as fuck.

“Bitch got you looking at venues already? You just proposed to that hoe like a week ago.” Tony lit a blunt.

“She ain't a bitch or hoe, my nigga.”

“Bitch look like a fucking hoe to me.” Tony blew smoke out nonchalantly.

“And this is why none of y'all muthafuckas are invited to my damn wedding.” Rahim pointed to all three of us.

“I ain't even do shit!” Abel and I said simultaneously, while still laughing at Rahim's anger.

“You ain’t gon’ be there either, nigga. Soon as ex-wifey call, saying to bring yo’ ass home, you gon’ be right there sucking her titties to fall asleep.” Tony inhaled on the blunt as we all doubled over in laughter.

Rahim didn’t seem too angry about that comment, almost like it was true. And shit, it was. The only person who couldn’t see where Rahim wanted to be was Dallas.

“Bye, niggas,” was all he said as he bounced.

Abel was right behind him, promising me he’d have the mixed version of the track for Holli and I to listen to and approve soon.

When they left, I just sat there thinking. Tony chuckling at his texts brought me out of my inner thoughts, and I could tell by the bright look on his face that he was chatting it up with Camarih.

“Let me ask you some shit, Wacko.” I spoke up.

“Bet not be no gay shit.” He put his phone down, inhaling on his weed suspiciously.

Chuckling, I replied, “Nigga, calm yo’ ass down. It ain’t no gay shit. When have I ever came at you with some gay shit?”

“Never, ’cause you know it’d be lights out for yo’ ass.”

“Nigga, if I was gay, you wouldn’t even be my type.”

“Fuck out of here. I’m everybody’s type, bitch.”

“Nah, you just Camarih’s type. I’d be into a corporate type nigga.” I stroked my beard. Tony stared at me for a minute like he was worried about me.

“This fame and shit is getting to yo’ head. See, now you gay.” He blew smoke out. “And you damn right I’m Camarih’s type. I’m the only muthafuckin type she got. When they ask her fucking preference, it ain’t men or women, she just say Houston.”

We both chortled heavily at his stupid ass.

“Muthafucka, just let me ask you my damn question.” Why the fuck were he and I even talking about this shit? Had me sounding gay for nothing. “What did you do for them six weeks after Camarih had the baby?”

“Minded my fucking business.”

“Tony, I mean in the bedroom.” He just looked at me. “Aight, Rubie ain’t let me touch her in months. We stopped fucking completely once she was about eight and half months, and now that she’s out of commission, I can’t get shit.”

“Damn, cuz.” He put out the blunt. “Camarih and I fucked right up until Baby Cuz was ready to roll out. After that, it was just a lot of head on both of our parts. Now don’t ask me shit else about sex with my bitch.”

“The same nigga who gave me a review on Joy’s sex game.”

“Yeah, ’cause she was just one of my hoes. Camarih ain’t.”

“I just don’t know what the fuck to do. I know if I ask her for some top she gon’ bite my damn head off. Seems like every damn thing I say is the wrong thing.”

“Hold the fuck up.” Tony waved his hand in the air. “Nigga, you be asking for head?”

Before I could answer, he began laughing hard as fuck. I hadn’t seen him laugh this hard in a minute. Asshole.

“Yeah, I mean, I don’t ask like that, but I suggest it here and there.”

“No female wants to suck a dick attached to a bitch nigga that gotta ask for some head. I can see yo’ hoe ass now getting cussed the fuck out, passing her ‘yes or no’ notes to get yo’ dick sucked.”

“Man, fuck you. I just be like ‘you should give me some head, baby’.” I tried to explain, but it sounded worse out loud, causing Tony to cackle even harder.

“Nah, you doing it all wrong, cuz. When she chilling on the bed or whatever, you walk up on her ass, dick already out, and just put that shit in her face.”

This nigga. I didn’t know if I should trust Tony, because he wasn’t the most conventional muthafucka. The shit he did, only *he* could get away with.

“That shit works?”

He gave me a look, so I nodded. At this point, I was willing to try anything to get some action.

Around ten minutes later, Tony and I left since it was a little bit before 9 p.m. I got home at about 10 since it was an accident on the freeway, causing shit to come to a complete stop. When I got in the crib, I checked on my son to see he was asleep, which made my ass happy that he wouldn’t be interrupting.

I went to the bathroom to take a shower, and when out, I wrapped a towel around my waist. As soon as I got to the bedroom, I dropped it, making Rubie look up from some papers she was reading.

“Eitan, what are you doing?” She grinned as I neared her, dick poking straight out basically.

Like Tony said, I got as close to her as I could, dick damn near grazing her perfect lips. I got harder reminiscing about the times she’d sucked me off with those. Rubie jerked her neck back, looking up at me in disgust.

“What?”

“Why did you walk up on me like I’m one of your hoes?”

I let out an exasperated sigh, backing up a little bit.

“It wasn’t meant to be that, baby. I just need something from you.”

“Need?”

“Yes, need. I haven’t had to jack off in forever, but I did recently. Just some head is all I’m asking for.” I knew Tony’s antics wouldn’t work for my ass. I felt like a fool for even trying that bullshit.

“Eitan, there are only two weeks left. You can hold off. And then when that time is up, it’s going to be that much better because we’ve been without it so long.” Rubie showed off her pretty smile.

“Just do it for me this once, and I will leave you alone until you come back from your checkup.” I held her hands in mine.

“It seems like all you care about lately is having sex. You haven’t once asked me how I feel, how my day was with the baby and trying to work, or anything. You leave early and then strut through here late, after the baby has been put to sleep, begging for some sexual activity. You don’t even deserve it.”

“I’m out working when I leave! Shit, how you think you stay in this big ass house with all this shit in it! That nice ass car you drive, and all the other shit you got is from me working long ass hours!” I shouted, hotter than fish grease.

“And I appreciate it all! But if that means all I am to you is something to fuck when you come home, then I don’t want it! You used to actually spend time with me, but now it’s all about when you can fuck me, or how you can get your rocks off during my waiting period!” She threw the covers off of her lap, slammed down the top of her laptop, and smashed her papers on it to pick up and carry. “Also, I have my own fucking money, asshole!”

“Rubie—”

“No! You don’t love me, because if you did, you would be more attentive to my feelings instead of only focusing on what you *need*! I just had a fucking baby! I created a human! My body is not the same; it has

been traumatized and needs time to heal! Does that even matter to you? Or do you just care about getting some head?"

"I wasn't thinking, baby. I'm sorry."

"Yeah, well what's new? How about you try making me your wife or at least fiancée, instead of putting so much focus on my vagina and other holes." With that said, she left the bedroom. I wanted to go after her ass, but I had nothing to say.

I did care about all that shit, but it was hard to focus without getting any sex, I wasn't gon' lie. Rubie was beautiful, and having to look at her, be around her, and spend time with her without fucking, was hard as hell. Just feeling her skin would have my dick so hard it was painful.

Shit.



THAT WEEKEND... LAS VEGAS, NEVADA...

"Set was dope." Rahim dapped me up when I got backstage. Tony and Abel followed suit.

"Hellooo, I was up there too, for a little while, not just my baby daddy." Holli piped in. Rahim and Abel congratulated her, but Tony ignored her comment, per usual.

"I think y'all both did great." Frida appeared, making my stomach drop. When we made eye contact, it was like she knew I'd watched that damn video of her.

"Thanks. I'm about to go change." I quickly walked off toward the dressing room.

When I got in, I removed my shirt to dry some of this sweat off of me. I would have to take a shower at my hotel room before that damn after party. No way was I about to be in there sweaty and dirty as fuck.

Grabbing my phone from my bag, I sat down and dialed Rubie. She didn't answer, so I tried again but on FaceTime. Like before, she didn't pick up, so I texted her ass then slipped my phone into my pocket.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

The taps on the door jolted me a tiny bit.

"Come in!" I shouted, eyes covered by my hands out of frustration.

“Hey, you okay?” Frida’s voice caused me to uncover them.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m straight. Aye, you can’t be sending me them photos and videos, Frida, for real. My girl knows my password, and I don’t want her seeing that shit.”

“I’m sorry.” She kept coming closer after shutting the door. She had on this little ass dress, showing off her small but still sexy frame, and that supple vanilla complexion. “Did you like what I sent though?”

“Frida.”

“Just a simple question.” She sat down next to me on the butter leather couch.

“I’m a man, and you sent me a naked picture, plus a video of you playing with yourself. What you think?”

She giggled shyly.

“I knew you would enjoy it. While I filmed the video, I thought about the time we fucked on the kitchen floor. You remember? You made me cum so many times, especially when you showed me no mercy doggy-style.”

I dropped my head slowly, trying to remove the memory from my head.

“Frida—”

“Damn, seems like you remember too.” She pointed to my dick pitching a tent, yet again.

I was about to respond, but she touched it, causing me to almost release in my jeans. Smoothly, she began unbuckling my belt then pants, dropping down onto her knees. I wanted to stop her, but that warm mouth was on my shit before I could speak.

“Fuuuuccckkk,” I grunted lowly. I hadn’t felt shit like this in a minute.

I palmed the back of Frida’s head as she bobbed up and down, covering my dick in saliva, and sucking like she meant it.

“Mmm,” she moaned, going in.

When I looked down at her pretty face, I felt my dick grow even more. In return, she sucked harder, snaking her tongue everywhere while massaging my balls.

“I’m ’bout to nut. Move,” I instructed her.

She mumbled ‘no’ as best as she could while still performing on my dick, and next thing I knew, I was nutting in her mouth. My body gyrated as she slowly slid her mouth off, licking the tip clean.

“You look much more relieved, baby.” She leaned down to peck my lips before switching to the small bathroom in here to clean her mouth.

She returned with a warm paper towel to clean me off, because I was still out of breath.

“Frida, you gotta go, baby.” I straightened myself up, now back in my right mind.

“What? Why can’t we ride back to your room, fuck, and then hit the after party?”

That sounded amazing.

“Because we can’t. I shouldn’t have even let you do what you just did.”

“Eitan—”

“Frida, I’m dead ass. I got a girl, and I love her. You gotta go. Ride with Holli or something, but you not coming with me.”

The look on Frida’s face was bothersome, but I had to be stern. It was either that or lose my girl, and the latter wasn’t happening. After a few more seconds of a stare-off, Frida snatched up her bag and left my dressing room.

I didn’t know why the fuck I did what I just did, but Rubie was to never find out. I would make sure of the shit.

JILLY

“**A**lright, Miss Terranova, if everything looks good, just go ahead and sign.” Ahmad’s manager, Melissa, smiled.

“I already had a lawyer read through it, so I’m ready.” I grabbed the pen and began to sign in the highlighted areas.

“Perfect. So here is your initial check, and then once you start working, of course you will get them constantly. As you know, it will be paid out once a month, depending on how many stylings you do and how high profile the event or setting you style for is.” Melissa handed me an envelope.

I didn’t want to seem too anxious or overly excited, so I slipped the check into my Dior tote bag and then finished talking with her. As soon as I left that damn building though, I almost ripped that envelope to pieces, trying to get it open. My eyes bulged out of my head when I saw it was for one hundred thousand dollars. I kept reading it over, making sure I hadn’t gone cross-eyed and added some zeros in there.

My ringing phone made me jump, so once I had my purse in the car, I answered it.

“Hello?”

“Hey, Jilly, I heard you were my official stylist now,” Ahmad replied.

“I am, sir, so you’re about to be fly now.”

“Damn, I wasn’t fly before?”

“I mean, you were doing aight, but now that you got me, you’re about to be on some other shit.”

“I like that.”

It got quiet, so I inhaled sharply before saying, “Well, I will see you soon. I have a few errands to run.”

“Can’t wait.”

I hung up the phone and took another deep breath. I felt bad about lying to Nehemiah and taking this job, but this was a lot of money on the line, and my career would only go up from here if I took this opportunity. I wasn’t going to stay the same just because my man thought I’d cheat on him. Yeah, Ahmad was handsome, sexy, and balling, but he wasn’t Nehemiah.

After giving myself that mental pep talk, I dropped my phone into my bag, turned on some music, and then left the parking structure.

I got home a whole ass hour and a half later because of all the fucking LA traffic, so as soon as I walked in, I showered.

When I got out, I noticed Nehemiah still wasn’t home, so I started to make dinner, which was going to be fried fish, hush puppies, and a salad. He absolutely loved that meal, and since I was sneaking around, I wanted to butter him up. I knew eventually he’d find out because Ahmad wasn’t exactly small time, but for now, I wanted to keep it a secret.

Dinner was finished an hour later, with Nehemiah coming in just as I was turning everything off.

“I smell something amazing.” He came up behind me in the kitchen, dropping his black bag and hugging me from behind.

“Baby, get that dirty ass bag out of the kitchen,” I whined.

He kissed my neck and cheek a few times then did as he was told.

“Aight, you brat.”

I washed my hands then made our plates, setting the table up nicely; I even lit a candle. It was scented, but it was subtle, so it wouldn’t interfere with the aroma of our meal.

Nehemiah entered the dining area after he’d changed clothes and cleaned his hands. We said grace then began eating.

“It’s good?” I quizzed with a smirk.

“You know it is.” He shook his head. “Cocky ass.” He ate some more, grabbing the ketchup bottle to squeeze a pile of the condiment onto his plate. “What you do today?”

Why the fuck did he always ask me that like we were some old married couple?

“Why, Nehemiah?”

“Because I always ask that, and I like to know what my girl has been up to all day. Why you been acting suspicious?”

“How have I been acting suspicious?”

“You used to run your mouth ’til the damn sun came up when I asked about your day. However, lately, you keep shit short or want to know why I want to know.”

“Oh, sorry. I just did some styling for the new artist Tony signed... umm, Brooklen,” I fibbed.

“Oh, okay. She’s dope as fuck. I can’t wait to shoot a video for her.” He shoved food in his mouth, but since I didn’t reply, he looked up from his plate to see my death stare. “Not even like that, baby.” He chuckled.

“What the fuck is so funny? And why does that hoe have you so excited to make her damn video?”

“Excited because her music is good as hell, not because I wanna smash her. You know damn well I only want to fuck you, Jilly.”

“Let me even think you want a piece of that whore, and I will have my brother kill you.”

“Damn, you’d let Tony kill the man you love, the man you wanna spend the rest of yo’ damn life serving and loving, over that?”

“Shut up.” I laughed. “Ain’t nobody serving shit. But if you cheat on me, yes, I will let him kill you.”

Nehemiah stared at me, wearing a smirk. It slowly faded though like some thoughts had taken over. When he realized the switch in his expression, he simply said, “That’s cold.”

Had his ass cheated? He thought I was joking, but I would for real let my bro light him up if he fucked me over.

We finished dinner, and I got the bed ready then brushed my teeth while he showered. He entered the room with just a towel, but dropped it, coming over to me to remove my nightshirt. Climbing under the covers together, we started to kiss hard as he groped at my body passionately, making my pussy wet.

“Wait, I have to tell you something.” I turned my head so he’d stop kissing me.

“What?” I felt his hard dick stabbing my inner thigh.

“My body feels weird, and I’m pretty sure I’m pregnant.” I came right out with it.

“You took a test?”

“No, but I know my body, and I can feel something going on in it; something like a baby.” I stared at him as he seemed to be lost in his thoughts. “Hello?”

“Oh shit, sorry. I’m just trying to process it.”

“Are you happy? Mad? What—”

“You keeping it? Ah! What the fuck?” he yelled when I slapped the shit out of him.

“Did you seriously ask me that! What the fuck is wrong with you!” I shouted, about to get out of the bed, but he snatched me back with the quickness.

“Jilly, calm down! I didn’t even fucking mean it like that! I just wanted to be sure we was on the same fucking page!” He hovered over me, keeping my forearms in his hands so I wouldn’t hit him.

“Yeah, well what page are you on, fuck boy!” I frowned hard, ready to knock him out.

“You should know that already. I love you.” He pecked me slowly. “If I minded having a baby with you, I wouldn’t be fucking you period, or living with you, or none of the other shit we got going on. I just wasn’t trying to be excited about some shit that wasn’t gon’ happen.”

“Why wouldn’t I keep it, Nehemiah? You’re so stupid!”

“I don’t fucking know, Jilly. You ain’t the most predictable, and you know that shit. Every time I think I got you figured the fuck out, you come up with an Allen Iverson juke on my ass.”

I smiled a little before we both chuckled, kissing. He finally let me go so I could hug his neck.

“I’m sorry I slapped you. I thought you were trying to tell me to get rid of it.”

“Never.” He shook his head. “I hit the jackpot knocking you up.”

I simpered, caressing his hair before we started to peck one another again.

“We should get married.”

“No. I want you to ask me when you want to, not because of a baby. You have to want it regardless of a child.”

“I’ve wanted to marry you since I first saw your ghetto ass in that trailer on the set of Nala’s video.”

“Did you now? Because I do know you had an interest in Nala.”

“Wow, that was for like a second, and that was pure lust. It was different with you. I wanted you in another way.” He nibbled on his lip, making himself comfortable between my legs.

“Well if you ask me properly, I just might think about it.” I let him press his lips to mine then added, “But ask my brother first.”

“What? Why the fuck I gotta ask him? Ain’t it customary to ask the father? He dead, so I get a free pass.”

“No, Nehemiah. Just ask him, please? He’s going to say yes, threaten you, and then send you on your way. But it’ll be better for him to give his blessing.”

Nehemiah gave me a look then said, “Aight, I’ll ask him.”

After that, it was no more talking, just love making.



THE TIMER on my iPhone went off, so I checked the pregnancy test I’d taken. A small smile covered my face when I confirmed my suspicions about being pregnant. I’d never been pregnant in my entire life, so I knew something was off with my body.

Taking a photo, I sent it to Nehemiah then washed my hands. I grabbed an electronics wipe to clean my phone, just as he replied.

Babe: *You was right... damn. <3*

Babe: *I can’t wait.*

Me: *Me either :)*

Babe: *I love you.*

Babe: *Don’t forget to go pick up Timothy.*

I rolled my eyes before replying to say ‘okay’.

Nehemiah and I had been serious for some years now, but I still stayed in my place when it came to his son he had with his ex. However, now that I was pregnant and we were planning to marry, we discussed that it’d be a good idea for me to be more active with certain things like picking him up from Star, driving him to school when he spent the night, and occasionally taking him to some doctor’s appointments. I didn’t mind any of that, and when he was here, I always cooked his meals, made his lunches for school, bathed him, and even read him bedtime stories, especially when his father had to work late.

Today, Nehemiah had a lot of work to do, and he didn't want to reschedule with Star because she would make a huge deal out of it. She'd already been playing games with his visitation time, even though it was set in stone by the courts, so anytime he actually couldn't come or was late, she threatened him and would keep the baby for weeks.

I truly didn't understand her nor what her endgame was. After I beat her ass a minute ago, she kind of calmed down and left us alone. But it was almost like she'd realized Nehemiah and I were the real deal, so she was back on her bullshit again. I had no problem wearing her ass out however many times I needed to though.

I pulled up in front of Star's nice ass house that my man had purchased for her, and threw my truck in park.

It was funny to me how she bragged on social media about not needing a man for shit, how she never asked her child's father for anything, and how independent she was, but that wasn't even the case.

Nehemiah bought her house, paid the bills, got all new furniture for Timothy, new furniture for her, and anytime maintenance on the house was needed, he paid for that too. Granted, Star did have her own money, because her little fitness brand was in fact popping, but the bitch was a fraud and far from the independent woman she claimed to be. I just wished my man was petty enough to blast her, but he never would, so of course people bought what she was selling.

"Who are you?" Some big light-skinned dude answered the door.

He was shirtless, messy fat, and really tall. However, despite his current appearance, I could see that he might have been cute at one point in his life. His demeanor screamed bum though.

"Jilly. Who the fuck are you?" I snapped back, making him smile.

"I'm Dre, Star's man." He stuck his hand out to me, but I ignored it.

"Dre? I've never heard of you."

Really, Star? All that working out just to have a butterball ass boyfriend? Homegirl fell all the way off, because this was a humongous downgrade from Nehemiah. She had to have been on drugs.

"Don't need to." He looked me up and down lustfully.

"Anyway, can you move so I can come in and get Timothy?"

He said nothing, just stepped back to allow me into the house. His strong cologne made me want to throw up, and I wasn't sure if it was my natural reaction or the embryo in my body.

“Oh... she’s giving him a bath right now. I can give yo’ little fine ass a tour if you want.”

“No, and should you be complimenting me when you have a girlfriend?”

Dre chuckled, licking his lips.

“How that gay ass nigga Nehemiah bag you?”

“Same way he bagged your bitch before you did. Only difference is you will never even have the chance to touch me.”

“Fiesty.” He laughed slowly, making it obvious he was high out of his mind. “Well fuck you then. Stay right here and wait for her. But if you change your mind, just know I can *change* ya life.”

“Work on changing your own life first because the sight before me is tragic—ugh what the fuck!” I swatted him when he leaned down with his lips poked out like he planned to kiss me.

Chortling loudly, he skated off, bottom of his feet looking like tar. For about twenty minutes, I stood right in the foyer waiting, until I finally saw Star coming down with Timothy and his little backpack.

“Jilly! I—” Timothy stopped himself as he made eye contact with his mother. Clearly, her hating ass had told him not to be nice to me. He loved me though, and once we got away from her, we’d have some fun.

“Hi, baby, are you ready to go?” I knelt down to be eye level with him once Star placed him to his feet.

“I guess,” he replied dryly, giving his mother yet another look. Kids told everything, even when they didn’t say a word.

“Okay.” I took his small hand into mine. “So he will be back Monday evening.”

“Actually, you need to maybe talk with your man a little more because it’s Tuesday evening this week. I’m going to be out of town starting tonight and won’t be here Monday.”

“Oh well, my bad. And speaking of talking to men, maybe you should talk to yours because he propositioned me.” I cocked my head.

Star stared at me, anger all up and through her face. I could tell she wanted to maul me.

“You’re a damn lie. You think everybody wants you, Jilly, but no one does, not even Nehemiah.”

“I mean, if you want to believe that, then go right ahead. Your man wants me, and so does your baby daddy.”

Glaring at me, she moved closer then asked, “How come he hasn’t asked you to marry him? Hell, you ain’t even pregnant. He got me pregnant quickly, so your pussy must be trash.” She cackled at her own joke as I smiled softly, ready to end all that shit.

“Oh, that’s what I forgot to tell you. Nehemiah and I are having a baby, but unlike you, when I give birth, it won’t be out of wedlock. I’ll send you a picture from the proposal because you won’t be allowed at the wedding. Bye, bitch.” I tugged her son to the door. I could feel the heat and steam coming up off of her, which made me grin.

I buckled Timothy in the back seat, then got in on the driver’s side.

“I’m hungry,” he called out.

“Okay. Want some homemade cheeseburgers?” I quizzed, looking into the back seat. “It’s okay, baby. We can be friends; I won’t tell your mommy.”

Timothy looked worried, but eventually, he nodded happily with a smile.

“Yeah, Jilly’s cheeseburgers!”

“Okay, coming right up!” I sped out of the driveway, feeling good about reading Star.

TONY WACKO

Sean: Too bad she doesn't dance. Send her on her way? Name is Klaude.

I checked the text that Sean, the hiring manager at *The Pink Cherry*, had sent me on my business phone. Cuz knew to only hit me up for specific reasons and never no bullshit.

Attached to the message was a photo of some bitch with a fire ass body and a less than okay face. It didn't matter though, because her body was fucking crazy.

Me: Nah put her on as a club hostess and then a waitress at the waffle spot.

I quickly replied to that shit. That hoe couldn't swing around the pole but niggas would still roll through if they knew she'd be working their table. *The Pink Cherry* made a lot of money before I'd acquired the shit, but now it was making me millions.

After renovating and then adding that waffle house attachment to it, I couldn't keep the shit empty. And the fact that muthafuckas knew that was where I proposed to Camarih, made it an attraction. Everybody wanted to see where I gave her, her ring and all that shit. Niggas was weird, but if it got me paid, I didn't give a fuck.

Sean: Aight cool.

I pocketed my phone after checking the time and then got up to shut down the studio. I had somewhere to be, and the shit needed to be handled properly and promptly.

Once I locked up, I hopped into my Bentayga, lit a blunt, and then sped off. Took me about an hour to pull up to Dirko's crib. Parking my shit in his luxurious ass driveway area, I popped some gum and then hopped out.

Not wanting to ring his doorbell or knock, I broke in, making my way through his house to find his ass. His crib was massive, but it stayed dirty, looking fucked up, and smelling like old dog shit. The outside stayed clean though, with the lawns all manicured and shit like them white folks do. But he had too many parties, always drug fueled, so the inside was another fucking story.

"Aye, nigga, wake the fuck up." I slammed a couch pillow down onto Dirko's head hard as fuck once I'd entered his lavish but filthy ass den.

"Damn, man, fuck," he mumbled, trying to sit up with his high ass. It still 'til this day amazed me how he was able to pull off making them records and performing, even though he was a full-blown ass cokehead.

"Get you some water or something, muthafucka, because I got some shit to holla at you about, and you bet not miss a fucking word," I stated sternly, hands in the pockets of my joggers as I waited.

"Aight. You can sit down."

"I ain't sitting down on this shit. All them damn swamp pussies and dicks you don' had on this fucking furniture, hell nah. And hurry the fuck up."

Dirko chuckled as he struggled to his feet, walking to the big ass cooler in here to get a drink of water.

"I don't be having no dicks on my couch, man." He sipped it, still chuckling.

"So I'm only gon' say this shit to you once, cuz. Quit that fake gang banging shit you be doing on social media."

From day one, Dirko made it clear that one of the reasons he wanted to sign to me was to build his street credit. I thought the stupid muthafucka was joking, but clearly, he wasn't. He'd always done small shit to allude the fact that he was affiliated with the LA gang life, but now the nigga was doing too much.

Not only was it a problem because I didn't fuck with fake niggas, whether it was business or personal, but also because the shit wasn't a good look for a nigga of my caliber to have an artist fake banging. LA was my city, and any nigga I was endorsing would respect the street code. Dirko wasn't doing that shit; matter fact, he was straight up being disrespectful to

my city *and* me. I didn't play that shit, and if them niggas that was really about that life he claimed to be into didn't kill his ass first, I would.

"Ah man, I just be—"

"I don't give a fuck what you *just* be doing. You ain't part of that shit. You not even from LA, cuz. Fuck wrong with you?"

"Nah, I know, but I think that persona boosts my shit up."

I made my way over to where he was so he could understand every fucking thing I was saying clearly.

"Cut the shit out, or the only thing they gon' be boosting is yo' ass into a casket. Yo' name is already hot in the hood, meaning if niggas see you, they won't hesitate to light yo' ass the fuck up. And if I catch you myself, I'll make yo' ass disappear, but after I embarrass the fuck out of you.

"You not hard, nigga; you a muthafuckin R&B singer. Stick to what the fuck you know, 'fore you fuck around and get smoked like the little weak ass piece of salmon yo' ass really is."

"Aight, I hear you." He nodded.

"And brush yo' damn teeth, twice a fucking day. Every time I come to this muthafucka, yo' shit is smelling like clapping ass cheeks."

"No the fuck it don't!" He laughed, but it slowly went away when I stared his ass down with a stale expression.

I was serious as fuck about that funky ass mouth of his. It was to the point where no matter what the fuck he asked me, I had a rude ass, irritated response. How he got hoes baffled me. Just goes to show females would deal with anything if a nigga had money.

That breath was also why I never let him talk to Camarih, especially in close proximities. If he made my bitch pass out or got that permanent monkey dick smell on her clothes and hair, I'd have to kill his ass.

"I'm leaving. I listened to yo' shit today, and it's a go. So we gon' drop it, then depending on how it does, we'll move forward with a line-up of promotion. Alejandra will hit you up."

"Okay. Cool, boss." He walked back to his couch to try and sit down, but I yanked his ass up by his collar.

"Go brush yo' damn teeth and that tongue too." I shoved him toward the exit of the den.

While he went to the bathroom, I let myself out so I could bounce.

I wanted to run by *The Pink Cherry* like always, just to see how shit was running. I would never be one of them dumb ass owners who let managers

and shit handle every fucking thing. That was how businesses and shit went under.

“Hey, Tony, just in time. Klaude is actually here still. She said she could work tonight. I didn’t know what area you preferred her in for the day.”

Sean caught up to me before I got to my office on the third floor of the club. I had this shit added, equipped with floor-to-ceiling windows everywhere so you could see the beautiful city of Los Angeles easily.

“Where she at?” I paused.

He put up one finger then rushed to his office before waving for who I assume was Klaude to come on. She walked out looking just like her pictures, in a skimpy ass outfit. Thick was an understatement. She had a belly too, but as good as her body looked, it didn’t even matter. Niggas would much rather fuck a bitch with a stomach than some skeletor ass female. I knew this hoe Klaude was about to make me a lot of bread.

Soon as she saw me, she cheesed widely as hell, biting her lip a little bit like she couldn’t help the shit.

“Hey, Wacko.” She waved, placing one hand on her wide hip.

“She can’t work today because her paperwork and shit gotta be processed. Plus a background and drug test.” I ignored her greeting and spoke directly to Sean. Looking to her, I pointed and asked, “Who the fuck is that?”

“What?” She cocked her head.

“That big, protruding, twisted, ass front tooth in yo’ mouth is distracting as fuck. Don’t roll up on niggas cheesing and shit without introducing his ass too.” Focusing back on Sean while Klaude tucked her lips, I said, “No work until her shit comes back clean.”

“I can do a free work day today, just to get a feel for the place and patrons.” Klaude looked up at me with a closed mouth smile this time.

“Oh, so you a dumb hoe.” I peered down into her now shocked face.

“Huh?”

“Only dumb ass females work for free. Either that or you got an ulterior motive, and I’m gon’ tell yo’ ass right now, I ain’t the muthafucka to try, play, or fuck with in any way, shape, or form.”

Sean stood off to the side, waiting on her response just like I was.

“No. I was just trying to help and be nice.” She shook her head repeatedly. That lustful stare she was giving up minutes ago had now switched into a caught bitch. I couldn’t care less what the fuck she was

doing here; the bitch was fine from her neck to her ankles, and she could make me some cash.

“Well I’m mean, so I don’t like that nice shit. Nice means you a hoe, and hoes get slapped the fuck up. You see the connection?” When I spoke, she squinted her eyes like she was trying to understand. “You and Ced get the fuck out and stay out until yo’ shit is processed.” I didn’t offer her a chance to respond before I gave Sean a look to handle it and walked off.

“Who is Ced?” Sean called out.

“That fucking tooth,” I threw over my shoulder.

Slipping into my office, I powered up the computer so I could print the reports. I liked to take the shit home where I could study it in peace.

While the printer did its thing, I looked out over the club through one of my interior windows, liking how everything looked. Sean was good at what he did, mainly because he did exactly what the fuck his ass was told. He was one of them stuffy corporate muthafuckas that liked being around hood shit. It was beneficial for us both.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

“Come in, the fuck?” I frowned.

Nobody ever bothered me while I was here because there was no fucking need to. I didn’t socialize with the hoes that worked here, not even the bartenders, and Sean’s ass knew better.

“Hey, sorry to bother you, but your sister is here to see you.” Sean peeked in.

“My sister?” I didn’t know what the fuck was going on, but if Jilly came through here and at this time, it must’ve been important as fuck. I checked my waist to be sure I had my heat on me, because if Nehemiah pulled some bullshit, I was pistol whipping cuz tonight. “Send her in.”

“Sure thing.” Sean left out but returned almost right after. When I saw Brielle enter, I wanted to backhand her ass.

“Thanks.” She nodded to Sean as he shut the door.

“You got two and a half seconds to explain why yo’ ass is here.”

“Before you think anything negative, I want to say that I am not here to try to rekindle anything we had. No, I will never stop loving you, but I’ve gotten over the idea and hopes that we’d be together.”

“Why the fuck is you here?” I reiterated, not caring about that romance novel she was spitting.

“While I’ve been away, I’ve really changed my life around. I got a better job, got married,” she showed me her ring, “and most importantly, I’ve grown closer to God.” She cleared her throat, pressing her fingertips into her small purse that she held at the front of her body. “During my journey of trying to live my life according to His will, I’ve thought a lot about my mother and how she died.”

“If you don’t wrap this shit the fuck up...” I pulled my papers from the printer and put it into a fresh folder.

“I am going to confess to her murder; I’m going to turn myself in.” She inhaled sharply, waiting for me to reply.

“Nah, you not.” I shut the computer off.

“I understand we had a deal, but I talked it over with God and my husband, and we’ve decided it would be right.”

I laughed and shook my head.

“Wow.”

“Wow, what?”

“Yo’ husband is willing to let you get locked up for life? He must really love yo’ ass.”

“He does, and he wants my soul to be with God when I go. The only way that can happen is if I make this right by doing the time.”

I nodded as I headed toward the door she was standing by. Brielle was fucking tripping. I didn’t give a damn if the hoe died or went to jail, but if her confessing would come back on me, then that was a muthafuckin problem.

“I’m glad you got all that shit figured out, but I suggest you go back to wherever the fuck you came from, and move the fuck on.”

“Tony—”

“I meant what the fuck I said. You do or say anything to take me away from my wife and kid, you and yo’ nigga gon’ be greeting God a little sooner than you’d like.”

“I don’t care what you say, I am going to—argh!”

With the quickness, I gripped her frail ass neck, squeezing hard as fuck. Her pretty hazel eyes bulged out of her head as she stared me down with so much fear that the shit was hilarious. I watched, pulling a candy from my pocket, unwrapping it, and shoving it into my mouth, using my free hand. When I felt like two more seconds would cause her stupid ass to go brain dead, I let go, making her collapse to the floor.

Squatting down, I gripped her jaw and asked, “You feel where the fuck I’m coming from?” She just gaped at me, breathing hard, so I gripped her jaw tighter, causing her to wince.

“Yes,” she whimpered.

“Get up. Go.” I roughly grabbed her bicep to make her stand, then shoved her ass past the threshold of the door.

I locked up my office using the code, no keys, as Brielle rushed down the stairs. Quickly, I shot Sean a text to let his ass know Jilly was the only muthafuckin sister I had, and if he let that bitch in again, I was gon’ split his shit on sight.

The club was still jumping, so I made my way down the steps to leave. I was gon’ walk straight through, no bodyguard needed, because muthafuckas knew not to come at me. As I passed the bar, I heard a familiar female voice in a bit of distress.

“Okay, thank you, now please let me by.” Brooklen frowned up at some nigga who kept trying to touch on her.

“I love all your mixtapes. I can’t wait until your mainstream shit drops.” He grinned down into her face as she unsuccessfully tried to pry her arm from his ashy ass grip.

Making my way over, I said, “Aye, nigga, you gotta get the fuck out.” I then waved for one of the security muthafuckas to come escort him.

“Nah, just let me get an autograph fro—”

WHAM!

The nigga had the nerve to reach up and touch my shoulder as he responded like we were cool, so I slapped the dog shit out of his ass, making him spin like a two-time ice skating champion. Just as he slumped, security caught him, dragging his ass out.

“Thank you, Tony—”

“Move.” I cut Brooklen off, darting to her nigga who was standing here the whole fucking time. “Yo’ bitch is my merchandise, so the next time I see you standing the fuck around while another muthafucka messes with some shit that makes me money, I’m knocking yo’ ass out.” I spoke through clenched teeth, as the music blared over the club.

“Aight, aight.” He nodded repeatedly, I guess hoping I didn’t shame his ass like I just did cuz a minute ago. He was already privy to this heat from the last time we spoke.

I turned to leave, but when I saw Brooklen still there with her drink, I said, "Take yo' ass home. You got shit to do tomorrow."

"Okay!" She replied obediently as I continued through the big ass club and left.

I was going to get some food from the waffle house portion of The Pink Cherry, but I was sure Camarih had cooked, so I changed my mind. And when I got home, it was confirmed.

In the oven was a plate for me, covered with foil. She'd piled it up just enough so that a nigga was stuffed when I finished, and after putting my plate and drinking glass up, I brushed my teeth then showered.

I checked on my son, kissing his cheek, then went to get in the bed with Camarih. Pressing my lips to her shoulder, I inhaled the scent of her glowing, golden skin, and her hair. My hands ran all over her fucking body, which prompted her to wake up.

"You're back." She turned to face me and smiled softly.

"Yeah." I hugged her tightly, pecking her lips before nuzzling my face into her neck. "I swear I hate every hoe in the world except you. You my favorite bitch, Buttascotch." I knew my speech was slurred because that big ass dinner had me on my way out.

"Your only, and I better be." She giggled subtly, rubbing my head as we embraced.

"I love yo' ass. I'm happy I found you. I think about you all fucking day like a bitch," I mumbled, dozing off with the scent of her neck making me drowsier. I woke back up for a quick second and pulled back to see her staring at me. "Fuck you watching me for?"

"I wasn't. We're cuddling, and I was just admiring you." She grinned. "Go back to sleep." She put her leg around me.

I tried to stay awake, but the shit was hard. I was tired, plus she smelled good and felt good as fuck. No wonder Baby Cuz wanted to be up under her to fall asleep sometimes. My little nigga had the right idea.

As I drifted off, I felt her ass kissing my lips like she always did when I was passing the fuck out.

RUBIE

THE NEXT DAY...

“Hello?” I answered my ringing cell phone as I changed my son’s diaper.

I felt like I was running on fumes and needed a break, but there was no time for that. Tony was already on my ass about keeping up with my work, which I promised him I could start back doing as soon as possible, so there was no way I could backpedal and ask for time off now. Plus, I didn’t want it. Just because I had a baby didn’t mean I was going to slow up.

“Miss Bailey, how are you?”

“I’m fine, Mark. What is it?”

“You sound frustrated. Is this a bad time?” he asked sarcastically. He knew damn well he didn’t care about whether or not this was a bad time for me.

“Mark, please.”

“I just wanted to check up on you and see what stage you’re in on holding up your end of the deal.”

Mark allowed me to take his slot for the magazine so Tony wouldn’t kill me, but of course, only if I did something for him. My stupid ass promised that I would be able to get Miko from the Gangstar Girlz to enter into a publicity stunt relationship with that rapper Mark was managing. Miko and I weren’t even close, it was always business, so I didn’t know why I even

agreed to this shit. But I needed that slot in order to keep my job, so I promised.

“I will be talking with her today, and then I will contact you once I square away the details.” I picked my son up from the changing table to kiss his cheeks.

“Okay, great. I will be waiting, Miss Bailey, but not for too long.”

“Yep, bye.”

Since my son was asleep now, I put him into his carrier and left his bedroom. I then heard Eitan’s daughter Haleigh crying in her room, so I set the carrier down and rushed to her. As soon as she saw me, with her cute little self, she stopped whining, but tears still streamed her small face.

“Aww, it’s okay, baby. Your mommy will be here soon, okay?” I rocked her on my hip.

Holli was so damn annoying. She was supposed to come last night but never showed. She claimed she was sick and didn’t want it to affect her baby, but really, she was in the club because a bunch of people filmed her and posted it.

I didn’t know why famous people thought they could lie about certain shit. Did she really think she could hit the club in secrecy? Not to mention her ass was doing the most, including but not limited to twerking, taking bottles of cognac to the head, and even did an impromptu performance. I shook my head at my thoughts, wondering how Eitan had gotten her pregnant outside of the obvious.

I gave Haleigh a bath then dressed her up. I made her a snack, and while she ate, I messaged Holli to see where the hell she was. Of course I got no response, but I did see she was on social media posting her view of the Chanel store she was shopping in. I called her a few times but then realized I had to leave so I could meet up with Miko. I wasn’t planning to have two babies with me for this shit, so I was pissed!

It was 3 p.m. when I got to this place named Gracias Madre in West Hollywood, so I was thirty minutes late. Thankfully both babies were knocked out, so I carefully grabbed them from the car after handing valet my keys.

“Oh, hey, Rubie, I’ve been calling you.” Miko got up to take the carrier holding Haleigh from me.

“Thank you, and sorry, girl. I was driving and couldn’t answer. I apologize for being late.”

“It’s okay. I see you’re on baby duty today.”

“I am.” I adjusted myself just as the waiter approached.

“Anything to drink for you, ma’am?”

“Just a ginger soda, please. Thank you.” When he walked away, I said, “I wish I could have a cocktail like you.”

Chuckling, Miko replied, “You will soon. I can’t wait to have a little baby like you.”

“You want mine? He’s a handful.”

We chuckled in unison for a little bit.

“I would happily take him, but I think you’d miss him too much and ask for him back.”

“You’re right.” I pulled out my notebook from my bag. “So the reason I wanted to see you today is because I have a business opportunity for you that would really boost yours and Keyana’s careers.”

“Wow, really?”

“Yes.” I chuckled airily. “You know Big Dane?”

“Yeah, of course.”

“Well, I think it’d be a great idea for you guys to like... pretend to be a couple. It could start with a song, then a video, and so on. It would bring a lot of exposure to you both, including Keyana.”

“What did Tony say about this?”

“Umm, I thought I would bring it to you first and then to him. I wanted to be sure you would even want to do this. I mean, you’d be the one in the so-called relationship.” I ran off with a lie. I hadn’t asked Tony because my ass was scared. He hated Mark, and I doubted he wanted anything to do with one of his artists.

“Oh, I see. I appreciate that, Rubie.” She finished her drink. “So you really think this would be good? I mean, he is handsome, and I like his songs, so it wouldn’t be too farfetched, right?”

“Right. So is that a yes?”

“Yeah, it is.” She chuckled excitedly. “Just make sure Tony is okay with it first.”

“Girl, of course! I’d be a fool not to clear it with him!”

My lunch date with Miko was over an hour and a half later, and it was just my luck that both babies had woken up. Luckily, I was able to give Haleigh a snack and some juice, while I breastfed my son, which kept them on calm while I drove through this thick ass traffic all the way back home.

Me: *Your stupid ass baby mama still hasn't gotten her kid.*

I texted Eitan.

My Love: *I'm sorry baby. I'm gon' call her again.*

Me: *Thank you babe.*

I sighed and just stared out of the window as I sat in my driveway, thinking about how I was going to convince Tony to allow Miko and Big Dane to hook up. I felt like I was constantly dropping the ball with my career, and it made me feel like shit. I was positive that the only reason Tony hadn't fired me was because his wife was my best friend. Honestly, I was on the verge of being depressed.

I took the kids inside of the house and then started to prepare dinner. But of course, as I finished washing my hands, I heard the doorbell sound off.

Checking the camera, I saw Holli admiring her nails, which were a different color from last night, so she must've gotten them done today while out shopping.

"Wow, so you are alive." I answered the door.

"Girl." She waved me off and started to come in, but I blocked her.

"Holli, this is my house, so when you come over here, you show me some respect. I kept your fucking daughter all damn day, even though I had business to tend to, so don't you dare come in here waving me off like I work for you."

"Dang, my bad, girl." She chuckled.

Frowning still, I looked her over but then moved so she could come all the way in.

"Haleigh is playing in her room. I'm making dinner, so I don't know if you want to stay until it's done so she can eat."

"Yeah, I guess I can do that."

I nodded and then left the foyer to go back into the kitchen. I noticed Holli was following me, so I rolled my eyes to myself.

"Would you like some wine?" I offered.

I hated Holli, yes, but I knew I would have to deal with her for as long as I was with Eitan. Hell, even if I wasn't, because our babies were siblings. I didn't have any brothers or sisters myself, so I wanted my son to be close to his, even if they weren't mine necessarily.

"Yeah. You got some D'USSÉ?"

“That’s in the bar area. All I have is wine in the kitchen, which is why I offered that.”

“I guess some wine would be good. I like red if you have it.”

“Okay.”

I cleaned my hands then went to get a glass for Holli before rinsing it. Using the electric bottle opener, I popped the cork then filled her glass halfway.

“Can I have more, please?” Her lip went up.

“No. You have to drive Haleigh home.”

“Girl, I can take down a bottle of Hennessy and still walk a straight line.”

“Then do that at home, but here, this is all you’re going to get when you have to drive.”

“Fine.” She rolled her eyes, taking the glass.

“You’re welcome.”

I started chopping up some potatoes as Holli drank her wine, scoping out our kitchen.

“You know, I used to really want Eitan, but I realized I was no competition for you.”

“Is that right.” I didn’t make eye contact with her. I just started seasoning the potatoes I’d laid out on the baking tray.

“Yep. You’re pretty, you apparently can cook, and you’re not jealous, even though he’s a sexy, talented, and much-loved rapper.”

“Well if he wasn’t any of those things, he probably wouldn’t have any money.”

Holli chuckled.

“True. But I don’t know. I’m just a bit more possessive, I guess. I couldn’t allow my man to be around his exes so much. You trust him though, so that’s cute.”

“Wait, what? What exes is he around?” I let the oven door close on its own as I turned back to face Holli.

“Oh, you didn’t know Frida be around?” She covered her mouth. I made a face, so she continued. “Yeah. I guess they’re like best friends. She be at the club performances, the studio occasionally, and she even went to the show in Las Vegas.”

Eitan hadn’t mentioned any of this shit. Wait, what the hell was I doing? This was Holli, and that bitch was known to be a damn liar.

“Holli, I think I would know if Frida was around Eitan that much. He can’t do shit without it being reported somewhere on social media.”

“Alright.” She threw her hands up after gulping down the rest of her wine. “I’m just telling you what I saw. I’m sure they will pop up on the blogs soon. And when they do, I want you to tell me you love me.”

“Girl, shut up.” I shook my head and continued making dinner.

I was happy when Holli left to go play with her daughter, and soon as dinner was done, I wrapped that shit up for their asses to go.

I bathed my baby, fed him again, then rocked him until he passed out. I couldn’t wait to have a shower myself, and I felt like a new woman once I had.

When I heard Eitan come in, I rushed down to greet him, jumping in his arms.

“Damn, what I do?” He held me up.

“Nothing. I just missed you.” I kissed him. “Are you hungry?”

“I am.”

“Okay, come on.” I let him place me to my feet and then led him to the kitchen. I prepared our plates, and he grabbed us some juice before we sat at the breakfast bar to eat.

“This shit is so good, baby.” Eitan nodded happily as he chewed the food, making me smile.

“I’m glad.” I shoved some of the tender chicken into my mouth. “You know you can tell me anything, right?”

He paused.

“Uh, yeah... why?”

“I’m just making sure you know that you don’t have to hide things from me.”

“I wouldn’t.” He ate some more.

“I know.” I watched him eat for a little longer then asked, “So have you been hanging around any exes lately?”

He choked, banging his balled-up fist onto his chest before drinking some of his juice to make it go down.

“What? What exes? I work with Holli, and I told you Wacko wanted us to do another song together—”

“No, I know. I was wondering about Frida. Holli said she’s been coming around you.”

“Holli is a fucking liar, Rubie.”

“She is, isn’t she? I’m sorry for even asking. That’s what happens when you leave me with her for too long.”

We laughed in unison.

The rest of dinner was pleasant, so he helped me clean the plates and put up the leftovers, then we went to the bedroom. While he showered, I lied down, checked a few emails, then said my prayers.

Just as I was drifting off, he got into the bed and on top of me after turning me onto my back.

“Wake up.” He kissed all over my face, lips, and neck as he rubbed up my thighs.

“Not tonight, Eitan.”

“Please, Rubie.” He begged me with his eyes and his words.

“Okay.” I nodded, letting him remove my panties.

In no time, he was pushing his way inside of me. Slowly, he rocked in and out of my body, getting me wet as we tongued each other down.

“Fuck. Wait, wait, baby.” He clenched his teeth.

“Wait, what? I’m not doing... anything.” My words trailed off as he came.

Eitan had never in life finished that quickly. I was frozen as he trembled from releasing.

“Baby, I’m sorry.” He breathed heavily into my neck after collapsing.

I tried to keep quiet, but instead, I burst into laughter.

“I cannot believe you came in less than a minute, Eitan. What the fuck?” I cackled loudly.

“Man.” He smacked his teeth, rolling off of me. “We ain’t fucked in forever, and I forgot how good yo’ shit was. I wasn’t prepared.”

“It’s okay. I still love you.” I cuddled up to him, pecking his lips before lying on his chest.

“Don’t tell this shit to no fucking body, especially Camarih. She tells that nigga Tony everything.”

“I won’t, I won’t.” I snickered.

“Rubie!”

“I’m not!” I laughed. “Cross my heart and hope to die, no one will ever know about this. Okay?” I sat up to look down into his eyes, and he nodded.

Light chuckles escaped my mouth, so he nudged me, saying, “Get off me.”

When he turned his back to me, I just hugged him from behind until we fell asleep.

RAHIM

I ashed the blunt I was smoking and then got out of the car so I could head inside of my crib. I'd been working nonstop all week, so this evening I planned to chill, eat, and play some damn video games.

However, to my chagrin, when I entered my spot, I heard Dallas talking to someone else. It was a female's voice, and I already knew it was that damn wedding planner.

When I proposed to Dallas, I expected us to have a lengthy engagement, despite me telling her otherwise. I figured by that time, I would be all for it and ready to do this shit. Right now, I wasn't quite over my wife, so I wasn't trying to enter into another union that would make me lose her forever.

I knew this shit sounded foul, but I actually did love Dallas as a friend and would have no problem marrying her if Amara didn't exist. With Amara here, I wasn't able to fall in love with any other woman in that type of way.

Dallas was everything a nigga could want; beautiful, intelligent, a go-getter, understanding, crazy good pussy, and anything else you could imagine. But at the end of the day, she wasn't my ex-wife.

"Hey, what's all this?" I peeked into the den.

I'd repeatedly explained to Dallas that I didn't want her holding her damn wedding meetings in here. This was where I drank and chilled, like I planned to do tonight.

"Hey, baby. So which flowers do you like? Janet says the pale violet ones, but I think the tweedia is so much prettier." Dallas grinned up at me, waiting for a reply.

“Huh? I don’t know. Get whatever you want. Shit, get both.” I watched as Janet and Dallas got back to talking for a little bit. “Aye, Dallas, come here for a second.”

“Oh, sure. Be right back, girl. Did you want some more champagne?” she offered Janet.

“Yes, thank you.”

I walked out and heard Dallas’s heels following me.

“Baby, I told you not to have yo’ meetups with Janet in that room, remember?” I spun around to face her once out of Janet’s earshot.

“I know, but it’s so much space in there, and with the bar, mini fridge —”

“Yeah, that’s in there because that’s my chill room. I’m tired. I want to relax in there by myself and just kick it. Can y’all please move that shit? Or even better, can y’all call it a night? It’s six p.m. already.”

“Call it a night? No, the wedding is this summer, Rahim. We don’t have much time as it is. Thankfully, Janet is willing to sit up all these long hours to get the job done.”

Taking her hands in mine, I said, “Or we can push the wedding back. I mean, what’s the rush? Don’t you think it’s better for us to have more time to get shit perfect than to just hurriedly do all this and it not be exactly what we want?”

“Yes, that would be better, but I want to marry you as soon as I can.” She took her hands from mine to hug my neck. “So just deal with all this for now, and soon enough, it will be over, we will be married, and you won’t have to worry about any of this crap.”

“Dallas—”

“Honey, just go watch TV in our bedroom or one of the guest bedrooms, please.”

Shaking my head, I tread off toward the staircase to head up.

Pissed wasn’t the fucking word. At the moment, I didn’t even want to be here.

I hopped into the shower for a good scrub down, then brushed my teeth once out. I stood in my room, wearing only a towel, trying to hear if Janet was still around. When I witnessed Dallas laugh, I knew they were still in my damn cave, maxing and relaxing.

Sitting on the edge of my bed, I started to think, then whipped out my iPhone to call Abel.

“Hello?” He picked up, music blasting in the background.

“Aye, where you at?”

“Pink Cherry.”

“All that money Wacko paying you, you giving it right back to him, 'cause you stay in that muthafucka.” I laughed.

“I know, but shit, it’s hard not to. It be the prettiest and finest females working here.”

“So true.” I pondered for a couple seconds. “How long you gon’ be up there?”

“Couple hours. I just got here like fifteen minutes ago.”

“Aight, cool. I’m gon’ meet you there in a little bit.”

I got off the phone with Abel and quickly dressed. After making sure I was fly, I spritzed on some of my cologne then bounced without saying a word to Dallas. She didn’t care anyway. The only thing she gave a fuck about these days was that damn wedding.

It took me about forty-five minutes to get to *The Pink Cherry*, and since I was well known as Rahim and as one of Tony’s people, it took me no time to get inside and find the section Abel was sitting in.

We dapped one another up, and I got a look at all the females he had in his section. It was only five of them, but all five were fine as hell. Tony’s ass knew what the fuck he was doing when he hired 99 percent of these women. He was hitting niggas right in their pockets with these females.

“I’m surprised you came out.” Abel inhaled on the blunt as some girl danced in front of him.

“Me too, but I needed it. Tried to go home and chill, but I couldn’t even do that shit.”

“Why?”

“Dallas and all these damn wedding plans. Every time I look up, her and that damn planner are in my cave with shit everywhere.”

Abel laughed heartily to the point where he started to choke on the smoke.

“Shit, hearing all this makes me happy I’m a fucking bachelor.”

“I’m starting to wish I was one,” I mumbled, but Abel still heard me because he looked my way.

“I mean, you ain’t married yet. Plus, you a grown ass man. You can do whatever you want.”

“I know that shit.”

I bobbed my head to “Lottery” by K Camp as I watched one of the dancers come toward me. She had on some slinky gold panties with the matching pasties covering the nipples of her perky titties. Her skin was a supple dark chocolate, and the shape of her body came straight from the fucking heavens. Her dark hair hung down her back and brushed against me as she turned around and began to dance in my lap. My hands went right to her hips, touching her smooth skin.

I finished my drink as she continued to move her body against my dick, getting me hard, and once the song went off, I felt like people could see my shit poking through my pants.

“Want another one?” she asked, looking over her shoulder at me.

“What’s your name?”

“My real name or my stage name?” She grinned, showing off her pearly whites.

“Real one.”

“Trish.”

“Nice to meet you. Why don’t you call it a night?”

“I haven’t made the money I’m trying to make yet, so I can’t call it a night. But if you want another dance, I got you.”

“How much you was looking to make?”

“Between six and seven thousand dollars *after* giving the club their cut.”

“I got it. Come on.” I tapped her leg. She hesitated to get up, staring at me with her mouth agape. “Let’s go.” I chuckled.

“Okay. I need to get my bag, so wait for me. And I need the seven thousand dollars cash to pay the club when I go back there?” She put her hand out, so I counted out the amount and pressed it into her hand. She gave me an impressed look as she closed her hand up.

“Aight. I’ll be around back.”

I let Abel know I was leaving, and his ass was excited because he already knew why. Leaving out the club, I got my Lamborghini from valet and pulled around back to wait for Trish. When I saw her come out, I climbed from my car to get the passenger door for her, handed her, her cut of the money, then got back inside to speed off.

“I love this car, Rahim.”

“Thank you. And you know me, huh?” I glanced her way.

“Who doesn’t know you? Quit acting like you don’t realize you’re famous. Plus, you just blew fourteen thousand dollars.”

“Nah, I was joking.” I chuckled, and she followed suit.

We made it to the Viceroy Hotel, which was in Beverly Hills, and it took me seconds to book a room.

“This a nice ass hotel,” Trish commented when we got up there.

“Only the best for pretty females,” I spoke honestly, making her blush slightly.

Dropping her bag, she tossed her arms around my neck, and we got right to kissing. I didn’t bother turning the lights on as I backed her to the bed while pulling her dress up. Once it was off, I tugged on her panties, taking in the sight of her naked body as she laid across the bed. As I removed my shirt, she sat up to unbuckle my jeans, and before I knew it, my dick was in her mouth.

“Mmm,” she moaned, bobbing up and down on it. I didn’t know why this head felt so good; maybe because I could legit feel the back of her throat. She was a professional at this shit.

“Oooh shit, chill out.” I moved her head, making her laugh. She almost made me nut.

I slipped my tongue into her mouth while spreading her legs wide as I slowly descended to my knees. Allowing her thighs to rest on my shoulders, I sucked her clit, enjoying how she sounded when she moaned.

“Rahiiimmm.” She cried out as she came.

I lapped her juices up, keeping her thighs apart by palming the inner area, and ate her pussy hungrily until she violently released again. Coming up for air, I removed my jeans and boxers completely, then got on top of her.

I didn’t know what I was thinking, but I slid in it raw. It was like I wanted to cheat in the worst way possible.

Trish and I both moaned deeply at the feeling, and I gave her a few slow strokes before I started tearing her up. Her nails dug into my back as I hammered her pussy, which felt beyond amazing.

“Fuck!” I growled loudly, going harder to the point where I could hear her juices flowing.

Moments later, I was pulling out and nutting on her stomach. I kissed her until I caught my breath then went to get a towel to clean her off with.

We chilled for a minute then ordered room service before going for another round and passing out.



JUST TWO DAYS LATER...

Ever since I'd fucked with Trish, I couldn't stop thinking about it. Every time Dallas talked to me, I felt like shit for *not* regretting what I had done. When I fucked around on Amara, I could barely look in the mirror, but this time I almost felt... proud.

"Where are you going?" Dallas asked as I walked toward the door. She was at the top of the stairs.

"I have to go to a conference at Ahmira's school," I lied.

"Oh, right. I scheduled a cake tasting for today, but I will reschedule it."

That was all Dallas's ass talked about. We never had normal conversations anymore. Everything was about the wedding, and I was tired of the shit. But as soon as I complained about it, she would jump to the conclusion that it was because I didn't want to get married. So the only thing I could do was try to keep our conversations to a minimum.

"Aight."

"What day is best for you, babe?"

"Whatever day, Dallas, just not today." I quickly left out, but felt my phone buzz once I was in my car.

Dallas: Why the attitude?

I chose not to reply and left.

I ended up at Amara's place just twenty minutes later, and was happy to see no extra cars. I'd been trying to catch that nigga Gabe over here for the longest, but I'd been unsuccessful. Ringing the doorbell, I waited for a little bit before Amara answered.

"Hey, Rahim, are you okay?"

"Yeah, can I come in?"

"I mean, sure, but why the unannounced pop up?" Amara held her robe closed.

Barging in, I asked, "Why you ain't got no damn clothes on under that? Who here?"

“Nobody is here, and be quiet. Ahmira is sleeping.” She shut the door. “Why do you always come over here so hostile? I try to work with you and be understanding, but all you do is fight me.” She ran off as she switched her perfect body toward the large kitchen. I followed like a child being enticed with a piece of candy.

“Because you got some nigga you fucking around my daughter.”

“Gabe is a co-worker, and yes, he came over a couple times for work, nothing more.”

“So you ain’t dating him.”

“No, I am not dating *him*.”

The way she said ‘him’ made my blood boil.

“Then who the hell are you dating, Amara?” I felt like a damn fool. This whole time I’d been on Gabe’s bumper, and he wasn’t even the nigga chasing my wife.

“None of your business right now. If it starts to get super serious, I will let you know before he meets Ahmira.” She grabbed her bowl of fruit that I guess she was in the middle of preparing when I came over.

“What’s his name?” I asked as she skated past me with the bowl and a glass of water.

“Rahim.”

I trailed her to the living room where she had the TV paused on some show. We both sat down, and I just stared at her as she paid me no mind, eating her fruit and enjoying whatever this crap was. She looked content... happy, while I was emotionally suffering.

“Amara.”

“What, Rahim? And why did you even come over here? It’s not your time to get Ahmira, and it’s late, so I know you’re not trying to take her somewhere.” She looked my way, shoving another grape between her sexy lips. “Rahim, get up!” she shouted when I laid my head in her lap.

“I’m here because I miss you,” I finally responded, head still in her lap, enjoying that same perfume she’d been wearing since we were married. I missed the smell of it lingering in our bedroom.

I heard her sigh after pausing the show again.

“Rahim, baby, you have to understand that we are no longer married. We tried, and it did not work.”

“It *did* work, I just fucked it up. But if I hadn’t done what I did, we’d be married still. You’d probably be pregnant again.”

“Well, unfortunately, you chose to sleep with other women, so here we are. Can you get up now?”

“No.” It got quiet before I added, “Amara, I love you. I swear if you give me another chance I will be perfect.”

“I don’t trust you, Rahim, so I can’t be with you.”

“Let me date you at least then. Overtime, you’ll trust me, and then we can get remarried.”

She laughed.

“You sound desperate.”

“I am desperate. I love you.”

“I know, you’ve told me twice already.” She sighed. “You wanna know what I think?” She leaned over some so that I could see her. To make it easier, I turned onto my back to stare up into her pretty ass face.

“What?”

“I think you’re just getting scared because your wedding is coming up. It’ll all go away soon, and you will be happily married again.”

“Not unless I’m married to you.”

“Rahim, if you didn’t love Dallas, you wouldn’t have asked her to marry you. I think you’re just used to me, and you’re afraid of something new.”

“She ain’t nothing new. I’ve been with her for a minute now. Amara, I already cheated on her, and we haven’t even gotten married. If I loved her, why would I do that?”

“You did the same to me.”

“Nah. With you, the shit just happened, and I was being dumb. This shit though, it was like I deliberately went out looking for another female to fuck. It’s no way I would have left *you* at home to go sex another woman, when I could do it to you.”

“Rahim, I hope you didn’t tell me that to convince me to be with you. All it did was prove to me that you’re still immature. You hop from woman to woman, never taking anytime for yourself to learn from your mistakes. When is the last time you were single?”

“Like... three weeks before I met you.”

“Exactly. You’d only been broken up with the girl before me less than a month.”

“So if I mature, you’ll marry me?”

I smiled when she shook her head.

“I won’t promise you anything, but I can tell you that the man you’ve been since you moved away from Ahmira and me, is not a man I would ever even *think* about being with.”

“I’m gon’ be different, for you, watch.”

“Go home, Rahim.”

“Can I have a kiss?”

“No, fool. Go kiss your fiancée.”

I sucked my teeth as I sat up. I didn’t want to leave just yet, so I watched a couple episodes of the show that had her so enthralled, pretending I was interested. By the sixth one, she kicked my ass out for real, so I went home.

I changed into some boxers and then got into the bed with Dallas.

“That was a long conference,” she said.

I thought she was asleep.

“It actually was, but then I took Amara and Ahmira out to dinner, just to let Ahmira have some time with us both. She hasn’t had that in a minute, excluding her birthday parties.”

Turning to face me, Dallas responded. “I guess that was nice. But it may be good for her to *not* see that and get used to it, so she won’t expect you two to be together.”

“She’s a child. She don’t need to get used to anything like that right now.”

“I understand.”

Dallas kissed me, sliding her hand down my chest and into my boxers.

“Not tonight. I gotta be up early tomorrow.” I pecked her, removed her hand from my bottoms, and turned my back to her.

I wasn’t too sure how I was going to get rid of Dallas, but I didn’t care as long as I ended up with Amara.

NEHEMIAH

I stopped the video playing on my computer and asked, “So what you think?”

Roxie smiled brightly before replying, “I love it so much. It’s crazy how editing can make things seem so much cooler than it really is.”

“I told you.”

“You did. I felt so stupid filming some of these scenes, but you were right, that it would look dope once everything was put together.”

“See? You gotta trust the professionals.” I saved the video then shut the computer off.

“Well you are definitely easy to trust.” She looked me over, and I simply nodded.

“Uh, is it okay if I use your bathroom before I leave?”

“Yeah, of course. You didn’t have to ask that.”

Roxie’s house was huge, and she had so many damn bathrooms that it was hard to remember the closest one.

I finally found the one right outside of her studio room and relieved myself. I washed my hands, and when I got ready to get my shit from the room, I heard some sniffing. Taking my time, I slowly entered to see Roxie looking at her phone with tears streaming her cheeks. This was awkward as hell, and as badly as I wanted to soundlessly grab my bag and slip out, I knew I couldn’t.

“Hey, you aight?” I sat back down, cocking my head some so that I could see her face.

“Yes.” She wiped her face quickly, making it obvious that she didn’t even know I was back in the room. “Oh my gosh.” She looked away,

embarrassed. "I know this is weird."

"What happened? You were just cool a few minutes ago. Don't tell me you crying because I had to piss." I joked to lighten the mood.

"No." She chuckled, finally facing me. "Today has been a bad day, but I put on a mask when you came to hide it all."

"Oh, may I ask why it's been a bad day?"

"My boyfriend told me we need to take a break."

"Mac?"

"I only have one boyfriend, Nehemiah, so yes, Mac. And to make things worse, a so-called friend of mine said it's because he's trying to get with some girl."

It bet not be Camarih.

"Oh damn. Well sounds like to me you dodged a bullet. I been told you, you could do better."

"Yes, but all the guys who are better than him are taken."

"Not all of them. You just have to look harder, and like I said, maybe not in this industry."

"But men who aren't in this industry don't understand my life and complain too much. They're also very jealous."

"There's a nigga out there who will understand and won't be jealous, Roxie. He may not show up in the next month or so, but he exists."

She stared at me for a little bit and then just started crying hard as hell. I tried to recall what I'd said, because it didn't seem bad enough to be making her cry.

"I know I look like a fool, but I love him." She bawled, causing me to pull her into a hug. We were in separate chairs, so it placed a barrier between us, thankfully. "And the only other man I would even think about trying something with is... you." I didn't say anything, so she asked, "If you were single, would you date me?"

"I probably would, but I'm not single, and I won't be single anytime soon." I made it clear.

Initially, Roxie wasn't a woman I'd fuck with seriously, but after getting to know her, it was possible... if I was single.

"Can you stay and have some food with me?"

"Roxie—"

"Please, it's just food. I don't have any friends, and the ones I do have aren't true friends. They only hang around me because I have money and

success. Please.”

She looked so damn sad that I nodded to agree.

After Roxie cleaned herself up, she had her chef make us an early dinner. I actually had somewhere to be, but luckily, I didn’t schedule it so I could be there at any time.

Eating dinner with Roxie wasn’t as bad as I thought. We literally just had some cool conversation. Plus, the food was hella good and free. Last time I had a meal that fire, it cost me four hundred dollars. We ate dessert too, and once that was completely gone, I left.

Heading straight to my next destination, I made it there a little after 8 p.m. and said a prayer before exiting the car. Entering the studio on MLK, I heard Tony’s voice and that new artist Brooklen’s as well.

“Hey, hey.” I knocked on the archway of the door since it was open.

“What?” Tony frowned.

“Damn, you can’t say hi?”

“No. What you want?”

“Hi, Brooklen. Is it cool if I have a moment with the boss here?”

“She was bouncing anyway.” Tony nodded for her to leave, and she did, even though it was obvious she wanted to stay.

“Okay.” I sat down, feeling nervous since Tony was watching me with a scowl. “I’m just gon’ come right out with it.”

“Today, hopefully.”

“Yeah, of course.” I chuckled, but when he didn’t, I stopped. “You know I love your sister, a lot. I think I’ve loved her since the first time I saw her —”

“What the fuck is this, a poem? If you don’t hurry the fuck up so I can lock this muthafucka up and get home to my bitch.”

“I wanna get married to her, but I wanna make sure it’s cool.”

“You wanna know if it’s okay with another grown ass man? So you a bitch ass nigga.”

“Nah, *she* wanted to make sure it was cool.” I corrected myself.

“Oh, so you don’t give a fuck what I think then?”

Was this a trap?

“Well, nah, it’s—”

“Let me see the ring.”

“I haven’t gotten it yet. I just made the appointment with the jeweler, so I won’t be able to pick out the ring until tomorrow.”

“When you get the ring, I wanna see the shit, and I will let you know then if it’s cool. Aight?”

“Aight.”

“Get out.”

I nodded, getting up and leaving the room as quickly as I’d come in, laughing. Whipping my phone out as I walked to the car, I decided to text Jilly.

***Me:** He wants to see the ring before he approves.*

When I saw she replied with the crying laughing emojis, I just shook my head at her.

I drove straight home, and while I took a shower, Jilly ordered pizza since that’s what she was craving. I was still on cloud nine every time I thought about the fact that she was having my baby.

Putting on some nightclothes, I went downstairs to the den where Jilly told me the food would be. After getting situated, I let her choose something to watch so we could eat.

“Tomorrow, I can’t pick up Timothy.” She sighed.

“Why?”

“I have an appointment.”

“For the baby? Why you ain’t tell me?”

“No, not for the baby, for work. I umm, it’s a new artist that wants to hire me.”

“Who?”

“You wouldn’t know them.”

“I wouldn’t know them?” I pointed to myself. “I’ve made videos for literally half the music industry. Who is it?”

“It’s a secret.” She giggled, but that shit was suspicious.

“Jilly—”

“Anyway, I cannot go. Plus, her little man was flirting with me the last time I went, and I didn’t like that.”

Hearing that Star’s nigga was not only parlaying in a house I bought and with my son but also flirting with my woman, had me forgetting about the shit I originally wanted to know.

“Flirted how?”

“Just complimented me, told me he could change my life, and called you out of your name.”

“Why you just now telling me, Jilly, what the fuck?”

“Because it is not a big deal! Men hit on me all the time. Do you tell me every time a girl calls you handsome or flirts with you?”

“No, because it never happens,” I lied. I knew Jilly, and that question was a fucking trap. She was more like Tony than she realized.

“It better not be happening. Let me find out some hoe is complimenting you and offering you sex!” she growled.

“Why you mad when I just said it never happens!”

“I don’t care!”

“Aight, hold up.” I put my plate down. “This ain’t about me. This is about the fact that my baby mama’s nigga was flirting with you. This ain’t no random man on the street.”

“Fine, next time I will tell you.”

“Nah, it won’t be a damn next time.”

“Ooh.” Jilly cooed, getting into my lap.

“Jilly, no, I’m not feeling it.” I tried to stifle my laughter as she kissed on my neck.

“Your dick disagrees with you.” She pointed out the fact that my mans was already hard.

“Welp, shit, he wins.”

We both chortled, before I started removing her clothes.



THE VERY NEXT DAY...

Thankfully, I was able to meet the jeweler earlier than scheduled so that I would be able to get the ring for Jilly *and* pick my son up. I was close as hell to telling Star I would be late, but it wasn’t worth all of the damn drama she would cause over it.

Some days I couldn’t believe that I had actually planned to spend the rest of my life with that woman. Come to think of it, I never really told myself I would marry her, but I did love her and thought, at the time, that I would be with her for life. Meeting Jilly was a huge blessing, and I had to remind myself to thank God for that shit. Had it not been for her, I’d probably be two more kids in with Star’s ass and miserable.

I got out of my car and called Star as I neared her door so that she could hurry up. By the time I hung up, I saw her pulling the door open, wearing an attitude already.

“Hey, wait. Let me talk to you before he comes out.” I stopped her. She’d let me know Timothy was using the bathroom and she’d go check on him.

“What, Nehemiah?” She folded her arms, poking one of her hips out. Like always, Star’s body was crazy nice. Her brown skin was always smooth looking, and she kept her hair done, no matter what.

“Relax. I wanted to talk to you about a couple things regarding yo’ man. For starters, I’ve never met this nigga in my life, and you already got him staying here with my son.”

“He’s not staying here. He’s not here right now, is he?”

“Shit, I don’t know. Is he? If so, I wanna talk to him too.”

“Well he ain’t, okay! He’s at work. And you’re always busy, so I am not going to put my personal life on hold until you can schedule us in.”

“You a damn lie. You’ve never once asked me to meet this nigga. Shit, you’ve never even mentioned him. He just happened to answer yo’ phone when I called. Bottom line, I don’t want him around Timothy until I meet him and approve.”

“I didn’t approve of Jilly.”

“You had no reason to *disprove* of Jilly.”

“Oh, and you have reason to when it comes to Dre?”

“Who the fuck is—see, I don’t even know his damn name! And yes, yes I do. Jilly already let me know he was trying to get at her.”

“Oh, please! She is not even his type!”

“Jilly? Jilly is every nigga with eyes’ type!”

“You must really think you got something with that girl!” She laughed. “Anyway, she’s lying. I will let you know when it’s a good time for you to link up with Dre.” She walked off.

“It needs to happen before he’s around Timothy again!” I shouted at her back, but she ignored me.

Finally, Star returned with my son, but he didn’t run to me like he usually did.

“Say hi to your daddy, Timothy.” Star shoved him toward me lightly, as I kneeled down to be his height.

“Yeah, man. What’s wrong with you?” I jokingly punched his stomach.

“Hi, Daddy,” he finally said somberly.

“What’s wrong, Tim?”

He simply shrugged, and when I looked up at Star, she did the same in return. Sighing, I picked him up, said my last few words to his psycho mama, and then bounced.

“Ice cream!” Timothy shouted from the back seat. He’d been quiet the whole ride until now.

“Okay, let’s get you some. It’s the weekend, so you deserve it.” I pulled over in front of the ice cream parlor.

Monitoring traffic, I got out of the car and then pulled him from the back seat before locking my Lamborghini truck. Hand in hand, we entered the ice cream place and both got sundaes. I usually would’ve driven him home to eat it, but I wanted to see what was bothering him before we saw Jilly.

“This is good. Thank you, Daddy.”

“You’re welcome.” I leaned over to kiss him. “You doing okay?” I quizzed, and he nodded. “Why didn’t you speak to me when you saw me?”

“Because.”

“Because what?”

“I’m angry.”

“Angry why? What I do?” I frowned, wondering what he was talking about. I knew he was a kid, and kids were strange, but my son and I never had issues. It was always us against Star if anything.

“Because you’re not gonna be my daddy anymore.”

“Huh? I’m gon’ always be yo’ dad, even when you get to be my age.” I rubbed his head. “Why you say that?”

“Mommy said you and Jilly have a new baby coming, and that you weren’t gonna be my daddy anymore.” He finally looked up at me. I had to take a deep breath so I wouldn’t rage out and kill his mama.

“Listen,” I put my ice cream cup down onto the table, “Yes, Jilly and I are going to have a baby, but you and that baby are gonna be brother and sister or brothers. I’m gonna be both of y’all’s dad.”

“You promise?”

“I promise. I put it on my life, and everything I love—”

“Even your car?”

Yes.” I chuckled. “I put it on my car. I love you way more than I do any of my cars or anybody in my life. You understand?”

“Yes.” He nodded happily.

“Don’t let anybody, not even your mama, tell you that I won’t be around you or love you, okay?”

“Okay.”

I could see how quickly his mood changed, and I tried to remain calm while he finished his treat. Soon as we were done, I headed right back to Star’s house.

“Stay right in here, aight?” I looked to my son from the front seat, and he nodded before tuning back into his kiddie iPad.

Star emerged from the house with a confused expression after I’d texted her, so I exited the car, locking it as I met her at the steps of her front door.

“What?” She shrugged in an irritated manner.

“Why the fuck you tell Timothy I wasn’t gon’ be his dad no more?” This was the first time in a long time that I wanted to hit Star.

“Oh.” She twiddled her thumbs. “I was angry when I said that, but I explained that to him! I don’t know why he still went and told you!”

“Because he’s a child, Star! You can’t say shit like that! And what the fuck would possess you to even utter those words to him!”

“What the fuck would possess you to go and get that bitch pregnant! It wasn’t enough that you left me for her, you had to buy a condo together, and now she’s gonna have a baby! You’re just erasing everything we had!”

“Star, I get that you’re upset about this shit, but you gotta get over it. You and I are done with. We were done with before Jilly even came into the picture. Had you not been pushing me away and toying with me like you owned me, maybe we could’ve lasted. However, that is not what happened, and I have moved on. I’ve been with Jilly for a minute now.

“I try with you and try to show you respect, because of the love we used to share and my son, but you making the shit hard for me. I don’t give a fuck what you say; it’s no way you love me this damn much. This is all a pride thing for you.”

I was basically pleading with her ass to give the bullshit up. I was tired of this shit, mentally and physically.

“You don’t—”

“Star, all I have to say is keep that nigga away from my kid until further notice, and quit putting shit into Timothy’s head. Everything else, you gon’ have to work out in therapy, with yo’ man, or at a retreat or something. The time limit on me giving a fuck has run out.”

“Get the fuck out of my driveway!” Star screamed, tears welling up.

Shaking my head, I took my ass back to the car and floored it out of her damn driveway.

When I got home, Timothy was asleep, so I laid him down on the couch in the den so that he could wake up once Jilly was done with dinner. I could smell it when I walked in, so I guess whatever she had to do ended early.

“Did you tell Star you were pregnant?” I stood in the doorway of the large kitchen.

“Shit! You scared me.” Jilly covered her chest with the oven mitt. “I didn’t mean to, but she said some rude things to me, and I had to let her know.”

“Jilly, I would’ve preferred to sit her down and tell her something like that. You know she’s still sensitive to the subject of us being together.”

“Okay, and? It’s not like we got together six months ago, Nehemiah. It’s been a couple years now. Why are you still protecting her feelings? Do you wanna be with me or her?”

“You know the answer to that already. What are you even talking about?” I shook my head, getting heated.

“Okay, well right now, it kind of seems like you don’t know.” She turned the oven off. “Just keep in mind, you only have room to care about *one* woman’s feelings, not two. So think about whether you want to protect Star or have a relationship with me, because both of those cannot co-exist.” Jilly left the kitchen, not giving me a chance to say anything.

I hated when her ass was right.

CAMARIE

*You see my face all over that Fendi design... Soon as niggas press you, boy,
you throw up peace signs...*

Tony held my hand in his as he escorted me through the back of the club and to the stairs. Pulling me in front of him, he planted his big hands lightly on my waist to carefully guide me up the winding staircase to be sure I didn't fall.

It was cute how protective he was of me, and no, this wasn't just because I was pregnant. Anytime we went anywhere that was crowded, he acted like my damn bodyguard. And if there were a lot of stairs or anything potentially dangerous, he would always guide me.

The club was currently going crazy to "Yikes" by Nicki Minaj, and it was amazing how packed it was in here. Just seeing how many people were in attendance let me know my man was making a lot of money just off *The Pink Cherry* spot alone.

"Wow, baby." I grinned up at him once we reached the top, entering the VIP section where our people were.

"I know, right." He pecked me a few times, then gave me a long one.

We greeted everyone then sat down to talk and just relax for a little bit. Everyone was here except Jilly. She had to be up early, and she didn't mind watching the baby for us, especially since I'd put him to sleep before dropping him off. Tony and I would be getting him back before the night was over, however.

"You want a dance?" I offered Tony.

He nodded, so I got up to dance for him to the Nicki Minaj track, but my little twerk session lasted about ten seconds because his ass was hating. I knew I shouldn't have done that little trick with my ass, where I made each cheek move. He liked it at home.

"Nah, fuck that. Too many niggas is looking." Tony yanked me so that I sat down in his lap while laughing.

"You just told all these muthafuckas yo' ass is a freak. I already know I'm gon' have to shoot a nigga before I leave." Tony had his arm around my body, holding me in his lap, as he spoke into my ear.

I cupped my knees and tried to dance while sitting on him, but he wasn't going for that either. I just laughed and gave up.

"I knew that was going to happen." Shanece giggled.

"I feel like I haven't been out in forever!" Rubie shouted to me over the music, even though she was sitting right in between Shanece and I. Eitan was on the other side of Tony, with Rahim.

"That's because you haven't been. You've been in the house, being a mommy." I slid out of Tony's lap to be eye level with my friends.

"Yes, and working. I feel like I have two kids sometimes." She nodded toward Holli, who was clearly drunk off her ass, dancing freakily and like she was one flick away from falling over.

"Ew, she's so trashy." Shanece shook her head, sipping her cocktail.

"I know. I have no idea what Eitan was thinking when he slept with her." Rubie shook like she had the chills, causing us all to laugh.

"I'll be right back, aight?" Tony ran his hand across my stomach as he whispered in my ear then kissed it. That turned me on for some reason.

"Don't rub me like that, Houston; people will know." I gave him a look. My pregnancy was still a secret to most, so I didn't want him rubbing my midsection, especially in a place like this where people frequently sent things to those blogs.

"I'll rub on yo' ass however the fuck I want." He leaned me back against the couch to kiss me. "You my bitch, ain't you?"

"Yeah." I nibbled on my lip as I stared up into his handsome face, which was so sexy, even in this dark ass club.

"Act like you fucking know then." He let me up before rising from the couch and walking off somewhere with Eitan.

My girls and I continued to enjoy ourselves, and I got my twerk on since Tony wasn't around when "Ain't My Fault" by Trouble came on. But

when I noticed his homeboys watching, I stopped, making my friends and I chortle loudly.

We were having a good time until I saw thirsty ass Isis come into the section with a tray of drinks. Yes, her busted, bum ass still worked here. Tony was going to have her fired after I beat her ass, but because I felt bad for her baby, I told him not to.

I paid her no mind as she delivered drinks to the people up here who'd ordered. Most of them were Tony's hood ass homies and a few ladies they had with them.

"Hi, Camarih." She stopped in front of the table Rubie, Shanece, and I were seated behind.

"Hello." I kept it short and dry. I guess she saw that as an invitation because she sat next to me.

"How are you? You look great."

"Thank you, and I'm perfect." I kept my attention forward but felt her staring down the side of my face.

"It's good to see you. I feel like I haven't in a long time, unless you count social media."

"I'm glad you're satisfied with what you see then." I offered a fake smile before looking away again, swaying to the music playing.

Out of my peripheral, I saw her mouth open like she wanted to speak but was hesitant.

"I heard something, and I feel like me seeing you is a sign that I should tell you."

"Isis, please get back to work."

"I overheard some girls in the backroom talking, and they said Tony got one of the waitresses here pregnant."

I laughed.

"You have always been a dumb bitch, willing to believe any little fairytale told to you. Was the bitch who said this the same one that made you believe Prince actually loved you?" I cocked my head.

I knew my words were harsh, especially for someone like myself, but I hadn't forgiven Isis for all she'd done to me.

"Fine, Camarih, but if you want to one day wake up from the spell he has you under, the girl I heard talking's name is Laria." Isis pointed her out behind the bar. "You can ask her yourself."

“Bitch, get yo’ long head ass up out my seat and get back to work.” Tony appeared, looking scary as hell with his tall ass.

Isis shot up like her ass was on fire.

“Sorry, sorry, boss.” She hugged her drink tray to her body to move quickly.

“These hoes ain’t been smacked the fuck up enough.” He fussed as I rubbed his back, stifling my laughter. Rubie, Shanece, and everyone else nearby didn’t hold back.

“Baby, you’re so rude.” I smirked.

“I’m not rude. That hoe was in my fucking seat while on the clock. She lucky I ain’t backhand her ass.”

I kissed the corner of his mouth, and soon enough, he gave in, pulling me into his lap. For the next thirty minutes or so, we danced, kissed, and Tony felt me up, per usual. I did have Isis’s comments on my mind, and just to be sure, I wanted to find Laria.

“I’m going to go pee.” I got up from Tony’s lap, but he stood up too. “No, I can go alone.”

“Nah, you can’t. Either you can pee with me in that fucking stall, or you can pee in this cup right here. If you choose to stay here, I’m shooting whoever I think is looking at yo’ pussy.”

“Houston!” I whined like a child. “Nothing is going to happen to me if I go pee alone.”

“Why you wanna pee alone all of a sudden? We married. We don’t do shit alone no fucking more.”

I realized I couldn’t get away with that damn excuse, so I just waved it off and sat back down. Tony sat back next to me, making himself another a drink as the festivities continued.

While he wasn’t paying attention, I convinced Shanece to go down and ask Laria some questions. I wanted to know tonight and knew there was no way I could break away from Tony. And if he found out what I was doing, he would have a fit.

“Okay, what did she say?” I asked when Shanece returned. I checked on Tony since he was next to me, and he was embroiled in a conversation with his friends.

“All she said was that she’d heard it from someone else who works here but doesn’t know her name.”

“What?” I frowned, causing Shanece to shrug.

“Her ass is lying.” Rubie rolled her eyes.

“I asked how did she not know her own co-worker’s name, and she said she’s pretty new, and didn’t feel comfortable asking the girl her name since she was on her way out.”

I rolled my eyes, shaking my head out of annoyance.

“What’s wrong with you? What I do?” Tony asked softly, hugging my body while kissing my neck. That quickly, I was horny.

I said nothing, just pulled back some to kiss his lips.

When we left the club, it was 1 a.m., so we stopped by Jilly’s to get my baby and then went home. After putting my son in his bed, Tony and I made sandwiches to eat.

“Let’s get in the jacuzzi.” He picked me up.

“Baby, no, not in this dress!” I shouted as he walked me through the house and out to the backyard.

Once outside, he started to undress me until I was butt naked. He removed all of his clothing as well then helped me down into the nice warm jacuzzi water. It was even better when he turned the jet bubbles on.

Wrapping my legs around his body and my arms around his neck, I enjoyed the sight of his sexy face, small tattoos scribbled above his eyebrows. I hated face tattoos, but it never took away from Tony’s looks; it was either because they were so tiny or because he was so damn fine. My thoughts prompted me to plant a kiss on his lips.

“You so beautiful,” he spoke, rubbing his hands up and down my back as we held one another.

“Did you hear the rumor about you at the club?”

“Course not.”

“Apparently, one of the girls that work there is having your baby.” I looked down into his eyes.

“Where they come up with this shit?” He kind of mumbled, almost to himself.

“That’s all you have to say?”

“Pretty much. Fuck else am I supposed to say?” He sniffled sexily. Everything he did was sexy.

“I don’t know. Maybe something like it’s not true.”

“But you already know that though, so it’s a waste of both of our fucking time for me to say that shit, right?”

“Right.” I nodded.

“I only got one baby on the way, and that’s my other son in here.” He touched my stomach under the water as he crashed his lips against my neck.

“Son? It could be a girl.”

“Nah. I heard cuz Crip walking last night when I put my ear to ya stomach.”

“Houston, no you did not!” I laughed, as he gave me an alluring grin before nibbling on his lip.

“I did. I woke up in the middle of the night, wondering what the fuck it was.” He continued as I guffawed loudly at his lying ass. “Our third or fourth one will be a girl.”

I simpered down at him as he spun around slowly, still holding me.

“You know I love you, Houston.”

“I do.”

“You know how much?”

“I’m pretty sure a lot, because I’m that nigga.”

I sucked my teeth as he adjusted his grip on my body, holding me tighter.

“Yes, a lot.” I touched his face. “I think you know just how much I love you, and that one of my worst fears would be living without you.” He was silent as he listened to me intently. You could only hear the jet bubbles in between my sentences. “So... don’t take advantage of that, okay?”

“I’m not gon’ fuck up, Camarih,” he replied, and I was happy he understood what I was saying. “Our shit ain’t gon’ ever be like that, with me doing whatever the fuck I want and you taking me back.” He pinned me against the wall of the jacuzzi tub. “I love you. I love being around you, and when I’m not around you, I’m thinking about the next fucking time I will be.”

“Really?” I blushed as he kissed me very deeply.

“Hell yeah. And I think way too highly of myself, you, and what we got to be slanging dick to these hoes. Plus, the pussy hit different when you know that’s yo’ bitch.”

“Hou...” My words trailed off as he slid inside of me, stretching me it seemed. His hands held tightly onto the sides of my thighs as he glided in and out of my walls.

“As much as you love yo’ nigga, I love you way more than that,” he let me know as he pounded between my legs at the perfect pace. I’d already released twice. “Only difference is, I’ll kill you if you give this shit away.”

I felt like my eyes had rolled into the back of my head because of how good this felt.

We started to kiss hungrily and nastily, but as he fucked me harder, I couldn't keep up due to my moaning. His hands had a good grip on my ass, as he dug deeply inside of me, fucking me nice and hard. My nails scraped against his skin, as my arms laid against his strong biceps covered in tattoos. He held me up with ease in the warm jacuzzi, giving it to me like it was his last time, and I creamed again and again down his shaft.

No matter what, I was never leaving my nigga; he was mine for life. All the better, he'd never give me a reason to.



I'D JUST FINISHED DOING my tenth facial of the day, and now it was time for a break. I was so exhausted, and wished I could just go home and take a nap. Not only was I doing extensive facials, but I was pregnant and had my son here at work with me. Thankfully I was able to sit during some parts of the facial to give myself a nice little break.

Leaving the spa room in order for Dana to clean it so it'd be ready for my next appointment in an hour, I went to my office. Unlocking the door, I slipped inside to see my baby was still knocked out. I'd been watching him via the video monitor in the spa room.

I always locked my office because I didn't trust it to be open with people coming in and out, despite my office being all the way in the back and off limits. People were weird, and my baby was cute. I chuckled at my thoughts as I grabbed my purse.

"Hey, boss. Thanks for letting me go home early today." Kai peeked in. "I went ahead and cleaned the lobby and stuff since Dana was doing the room."

"Okay, thank you, and you're welcome."

We left from the back area together, with me pushing my son's stroller. I kept his stroller covered, using the top, just to shield him from the sun and nosy people who wanted to snap photos of him when we were out.

"Oh, boss, this is my boyfriend, Theo." Kai locked her arm with a big, tall dude. He looked familiar for some reason, but I was sure I'd never seen him before.

“Hi.” I gave him a nod.

“What’s up? You got a nice spot here.” He looked around using his eyes only.

“Thank you.”

I noticed Theo and the security, Avery, made eerie eye contact, before Theo and Kai turned to leave. It wasn’t a friendly eye contact; it was almost as if they were old enemies. Weird.

“When did she get a boyfriend?” Dana asked, sitting back down behind the check-in counter.

“I don’t know. Then again, it’s not like we know much about her in that way.”

“True. Most people mention their boyfriends or husbands constantly though, don’t they?” Dana frowned.

“No, only you do that.” I half joked as we both laughed.

“Did you want something from the cafe across the street?” I offered Dana.

“Whatever you get; you always pick good stuff.”

“No, that’s Houston. I copy him a lot.” I smirked. “You, Avery?”

“I’m aight. Thanks though.”

I hurried across the street to get two Chinese chicken salads and two oat milk chai lattes. I juggled it all as I made my way back to the shop, but someone spoke to me as soon as I got onto the sidewalk.

“I said did you need help?” my father repeated. I noticed he had a beige folder under his arm.

“No.”

“Camarih, let me hold something before you drop it.” He took the drink tray from me then held the door to the spa open.

Exhaling sharply, I went inside, gave Dana her stuff, and then tread back to my office with my dad on my heels.

He and I still had a strained relationship. I didn’t think we would ever be close, because I couldn’t bring myself to forget how he treated me. I thought I could, but it was harder than I thought. And I knew now he was only so nice to me because I made great money, and my husband made even greater money.

“How can I help you?” I finally asked once I was seated behind my cherry wood desk with my salad and chai ready to be devoured. I kept glancing in the stroller to see if my son had woken up yet.

“I wanted to talk to you about a business I’m trying to open.” He grinned.

“Why?”

“Why what?”

“Why do you want to involve me? I don’t understand what I would have to do with your business venture.”

“Well.” He opened the folder on my desk since he was seated on the other side. “I want to open a mechanic shop, and I just need a little start-up money.”

“Go to a bank.”

“Why when you can loan me the fifty thousand dollars?”

“I’m not loaning you anything. You’re the same man who would throw a fit if I asked for five dollars, and hound me until I gave it back to you on the rare occasions that you loaned it to me.”

“That was the past.”

“It’s not that far in the past, only a few years ago.”

“Okay. How about that husband of yours? Can he loan it to me?”

“Wow, you want a thug to loan you some money? Houston is the exact type of guy you claimed to not want me with. You felt they would never amount to anything but a jail bird or corpse.”

“I was referring to Driz.”

“What’s the difference in the two?”

He sighed before saying, “I had a different mindset then. Now I see things in a whole new light.”

“No, you’ve only changed your mind because you know he is well off.”

“Did you get a prenuptial agreement?”

I frowned as I chewed my salad.

After swallowing, I replied, “Why?”

“I’m curious. You’re saying I’m only after him for his money, but what about you?”

The nerve.

“No, we did not sign one, but it was his idea.” I raised a brow.

Tony was the one who said we wouldn’t sign one. He explained that if pigs flew and we decided to divorce, it would most likely be his fault, so he’d want me to be well taken care of.

“I see. Give me his number and—”

“No. If you want a loan, be a grown up and go to a bank. Stop trying to leech off of my husband and I.”

“Cam—”

“You know, I was really trying to see if we could repair our relationship. I was hoping I was wrong about why you all of sudden wanted to be around me, but I see I wasn’t. I need you to go, and don’t come back around.”

This man hadn’t said a word to me since my wedding, and then now, all of sudden, here he was, asking for some coins. I even tried calling and texting him for the past few months, and he either never responded, or if he picked up, he acted like I was bothering him. Eventually, I stopped.

“Baby—”

“Do not come back around me, or I will have Houston take care of you, and that’s a promise.”

My father stared at me, looking extremely hurt. I almost caved and told him to forget what I just said, but it was the right thing to do. Yes, I wanted my father around and to love me, my mother too, but the fact of the matter was, they didn’t. They only loved me when it suited them best, and that was not the type of people I wanted in my life or my son’s life.

“Just know that I do love you, Camarih.”

I watched his ass leave, and got right back to work like nothing had happened.

SHANECE

“**W**hat does she want to talk about?” Camarih asked. I had her on speakerphone as I did my makeup at my vanity.

“I have no idea, but she’d been blowing up my phone, so it must be important,” I replied, referring to my ex mother-in-law.

Today, I was having an early dinner with her to discuss whatever it was she couldn’t tell me over the phone. I ran through all types of scenarios in my head, but none of them seemed plausible.

“Well she can’t have too much to say. You’re not married to her son anymore.”

“Exactly.”

I chatted with Camarih until I was finished beating my face, then we hung up.

I decided on a jean skirt, my Tom Ford sandal stilettos, and a white sleeveless crop top. My hair was still straightened, which had become my new signature look, so after combing that down, I put on some earrings and perfume then left.

Yris, Paul’s mother, wanted to meet at Ruth’s Chris. I remember she loved this restaurant, and every time we celebrated her birthday out here, it was there.

I parked my car in the structure then made my way up the ramp and into the place to check in. The hostess led me to the table where Yris was, and upon seeing me, she beamed, hugging me tightly.

“How are you, sweetheart?”

“I’m great, Yris, thank you.” I chuckled, sitting down across from her at the booth table. The waiter immediately came over to take my drink order.

“How are you?” I questioned once she was gone.

“I’m doing okay. I mean, I’m as good as anyone who has lost a child can be.”

“I know. I couldn’t even imagine. Losing Paul was extremely hard for me, so I know with him being your baby it had to hurt.”

“Yes.” Yris nodded, just as the waiter delivered my cocktail. She put in an order for the appetizer and sent the young lady on her way. “So, other than that, how have things been at home? I know you got remarried rather quickly.”

I opened my mouth, but no words came out because I didn’t quite know what to say.

“Yes, I agree it was quick, but it doesn’t mean I forgot about Paul or don’t love him.”

“Of course, honey. I know that. I will admit, Paul’s father and I were a bit upset at first though. Then you didn’t even invite us to the wedding.”

“I didn’t think you’d want to come for those reasons. I felt like you wouldn’t want to fly out here to watch me marry another man so soon after being a widow to your son.”

“You’re right, we wouldn’t have come, but it would have been nice to have that offered to us.”

I nodded, feeling like a child being scolded.

“Again, Yris, I apologize. I wasn’t thinking, and this is my first time being a widow. I didn’t know the protocol. And don’t think I was out looking for a man, because I wasn’t. Wade, he came into my life, and it just happened.”

Yris stared at me, eyelids low like she was computing the words I’d just spewed. Why was I so nervous? I guess because she was making me feel guilty.

The appetizer arrived during the stare down, and I was so happy to have something to calm my stomach. This cocktail only seemed to be making shit worse.

After we gave our dinner orders, the waitress had left us alone again, unfortunately.

“So, Shanece, I take it that this new marriage is a happy one and here to stay?”

“Yes, of course. I love Wade, and we’re doing really well,” I half lied. I did love Wade, and for the most part, we were doing well, until I brought up

that damn doctor's appointment. Now we acted like two platonic friends who kissed because they had to, and skipped the sex.

"I figured. Although your marriage to another man was done rather promptly after my son's passing, I know you're not a woman who makes rash decisions."

"Thank you."

"The reason I asked you to come here tonight is because you received a lot of things in my son's will, including money and stuff that is worth a nice amount of change."

"Yes." I felt my brows dip because I didn't truly understand where this conversation was headed.

"Well I talked it over with Sir, and we both think that it should all be returned now that you have a new husband."

"Huh? What does my new husband have to do with any of this?"

"Honey, the things in Paul's will were left to you as a widow, someone single and in need. You are married and to a man who does quite well for himself; I looked him up. The stuff in Paul's will should go to someone who needs it."

"Like who?"

"Like his parents."

"You guys have money, so what would be the difference?"

"The difference is that Sir and I are his blood relatives, and you are not, Shanece."

"I was his wife, so again, what is the difference?"

"The difference is, now that he is dead, you are no different from a friend he had during his lifetime."

"Are you crazy? We got married. I was more than just a friend, which is why I got everything."

"Watch your tone, Shanece. I may not be your mother-in-law anymore, but you will show me respect. Yes, you married him, but you produced no children. So once he died, so did your connection to him."

Her words cut me deeply. I literally felt a pain in my chest from hearing her say my connection to Paul was dead along with him.

"That is not true." I felt tears welling up. "Just because we didn't have a baby does not mean what he and I had is erased."

"Shanece, sweetheart, I did not mean to upset you, truly. I just have to do what's best for my son and my family. Unfortunately, you bore him no

children, and you don't need his things anymore, so just give them back. Please."

"No, I will not give them back."

"Have you spent the money?"

"That is none of your business."

Yris chuckled while shaking her head, then leaned in some. "Have you spent the money, Shanece? It's a simple question. He's my child, and I'd like to know where his money went."

"I have not spent it yet, and I will not give it back. Nor will I give you the things he left me."

"Alright." She finished the last sip of her wine. "I tried to do this the easy way, but I guess we can take it to court."

"No judge in their right mind will go against a dead man's will. Paul wanted me to have those things, and as his wife, it was my right. You can waste money on legal fees all you want, but the outcome will be the same as the one you're getting right now."

"I guess we will find out."

I was starved, so I wasn't about to leave. We sat there in complete silence, eating that appetizer and eventually our food. I was surprised when she paid for everything, and even said 'goodbye' before she walked off.

The whole drive home, all I thought about was our conversation; how bad she made me feel for remarrying, and then throwing dirt on the union Paul and I had. Yris and I had always gotten along well, but I guess me moving on to Wade had put a bad taste in her mouth.

I understood that was her baby, and she was angry for him, but I didn't do this shit on purpose. She was acting as if I left the damn funeral and hit the club, looking for niggas.

Wade came into my life and swept me off my feet. He was extremely good looking, well off, intelligent, compassionate, good in bed, and touched my heart in ways no man ever had. I could tell by the way he treated me that I was everything to him, and that was a wonderful feeling that any woman would fall for.

My thoughts gave me an idea, so when I got home, I immediately put dinner on then took a bubble bath. When out, I put on some body butter and a tinge of perfume. Slipping into some La Perla lingerie, I topped it with a robe, then set up the dining room with candles. When dinner was done, I put out the fine dining set, before putting the dishes out to look like a feast.

I heard Wade's keys in the large doors, so I picked up the champagne flutes I'd just poured, and rushed to meet him as soon as he walked in.

"Oh... what's going on?" he inquired, shutting the door behind himself slowly.

"I thought we could have a nice night together. We haven't been as close as usual." I handed him the flute and gushed when I saw him smirk.

"That sounds nice. Smells good in here too."

"It should. Come on." I led him by his free hand to the dining room, and stepped down inside once there.

"Wow, baby. You did all of this shit just because?" He whipped his head in multiple directions.

I guided him to sit down then took a seat adjacent to him.

"Yeah, in a way. I want you to know that I love you very much. I don't like when we're at odds."

"Me neither." He leaned over to kiss me passionately.

We prayed over the feast then piled up our plates. I wasn't that hungry since I'd eaten at Ruth Chris, but I could nibble.

"Honey, I know you think having a baby can be at anytime, but I want you to understand that women don't have long. And I don't want you looking elsewhere for a new wife, all because I couldn't give you a child."

"Shanece." He put the fork down then dabbed his mouth with the cloth napkin. "I know about the time limit, but like I said, I'm not worried about that. You will be pregnant soon, and even if you don't get pregnant, which I highly doubt, I would not end our marriage because of that."

"Isn't that why you left Cheri?"

"Yes, amongst other things. But you're not Cheri, and you need to remember that shit."

I nodded, allowing him to eat some more while I sipped the champagne.

"Can I ask you something and you be very honest with me, Wade?"

"Always."

"Did you have a vasectomy?"

"What? Why would you ask me some shit like that, Shanece? If I had one, why would I be actively trying to impregnate you?"

"To make me happy?"

"You honestly think I'm that type of dude to try to play you with something as serious as that?" He frowned. I could tell I'd angered him. He was right.

“No, you wouldn’t. I’m sorry. Cheri told me you had one, and I guess I was just so up in arms about you not wanting to see a doctor that I let it get to me.”

“Cheri told you what?”

“That you had a vasectomy.” I watched as he scooted his chair back roughly, shot up, and threw down his napkin. “Wade, where are you going!”

“To talk to her ass!” He stormed out the den, hit a left, and started toward the back so he could get to the guesthouse.

“Honey, wait!” I chased after him.

Wade was on go, however, and by the time I caught up to him, he was banging on Cheri’s door so hard I thought it would fall off the hinges.

“What the hell!” Cheri came to open up, and Wade wasted no time barging in.

I was right behind him, eyeing the bowl of popcorn and the sweet candle she had lit. Wade had shook up her little chill session.

“Why the fuck did you tell my wife I got a vasectomy!” Wade roared down into Cheri’s face. If he hit her ass, this would be all my fault.

“It’s not that big of a deal, baby!” I tried to save Cheri’s life.

“Shanece, be quiet,” he warned me without looking.

I shut up because I didn’t know what he would do. I’d only seen Wade mad once, and it wasn’t *this* mad, so I wasn’t sure how he reacted to being provoked.

“I did not tell her that! What are you even talking about?” Cheri lied, causing my eyes to buck and lips to part.

“You did too!” I hollered.

“I would never say anything like that! She’s the one who told me she believed you had one because of how mad you got about the sperm count appointment! Now how would I know about that unless she told me!”

When Wade looked to me for an answer, I said, “Oh my gosh. Are you fucking serious right now? She’s at the house all of the time! She overheard us! You can hear a mouse piss on cotton in that damn house!”

“I stay all the way in the kitchen, cooking. When have I ever been up the stairs and outside of your bedroom door listening?” Cheri raised a brow, folding her arms. Since Wade wasn’t looking her way, she wore a smug look that I was ready to punch off.

“Wade, I did not say that. She told me you got a vasectomy. She even claims the reason you guys broke up is because you didn’t want children

and she did. She said you led her on like you're doing me, knowing you got a procedure."

Without a word, Wade stormed from the guesthouse.

"You can go too, liar." Cheri laughed.

WHAM!

I hit her right in the eye, causing her to dodder a bit, tripping over the coffee table.

Leaving in a hurry, I went to find my husband, who was already upstairs in our en suite, preparing for a shower.

"Wade, I know you don't believe what she said, right?"

"I don't know what to believe, Shanece." He wouldn't look at me.

"Wade," I moved further into the bathroom, "I am your wife. Why would I make this up? She told me those things to break us up."

He inhaled deeply.

"It's just she ain't ever lied while we were married, not to that extent." He finally made eye contact.

"Wow. Okay, well since you don't know who to believe, maybe we should get a divorce and you can remarry her." I turned around to leave, but he grabbed my arm. I promptly snatched away to get my duffel bag, with him trailing me.

"Shanece, stop!" He spun me around to face him, using my bicep. "I'm sorry."

"You should be! You know I would not make something up, no matter how badly I want her ass out."

"I know." He brought me into a hug. "But I'm also sorry for making you deal with my ex-wife the way you have been. I should've had her out before I even moved you in here."

"That's what I wanted."

"It's just hard when you've been with someone for so long, to toss them to the side."

"Trust me, I know." I looked up into his eyes. "But it has to be about just you and me now; it can't be a threesome."

"You forgive me?"

"Yes."

"I'll go to the appointment, but I'm letting you know right now that nothing is wrong with either of us."

"How do you know?"

“I just do. God put you in my life for a reason, and one of them is to bear my children. He makes no mistakes, so there was logic behind us not making babies with our previous spouses.”

“What if it just never happens?”

“If it never happens, we will find another way, like adopting, or maybe we won’t. I married you because I loved you, not to see how quickly you could reproduce. I’m not a damn king who needs heirs as soon as he says ‘I do’.”

He laughed, and I joined him before we kissed slowly.

As I looked up at him and him down at me, sharing coy smiles, it just solidified that I had done nothing wrong in choosing to marry him. We were in love, and our union didn’t feel wrong or rushed in the slightest.

“So you’re going to put her out before I beat her ass, right?”

“Let me handle it all.” He winked.

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

I wanted to go finish the food I’d made, but Wade had other plans for me in that shower, and I wasn’t going to complain.

EITAN

A FEW DAYS LATER...

“I wanna thank everybody for coming out to see ya boy tonight!” I smiled after speaking into the mic, liking the sight of all the screaming fans in the audience. It was about fifteen thousand people in here, which was wild. I still remember performing in small ass karaoke clubs where I could see every face in the audience. “But before I let y’all go, I wanna share something special. Y’all know I got a beautiful girlfriend named Rubie.” I glanced to see her on the side of the stage, and laughed when her eyes got wide. She immediately started shaking her head ‘no’ while the crowd roared. “We just had a perfect little boy, so I think we can all agree that it’s time to ask her something, right?”

Again, the audience went insane as I waved for Rubie to come on. She was frozen, but Camarih, Jilly, and Shanece pushed her out far enough to where everyone saw her and she couldn’t retreat.

“Eitan...” She said my name lowly.

Ignoring her, I handed the mic to my deejay, reached in my pocket for the ring I’d bought her, and knelt down.

“Rubie, I’m sure you already know what I’m about to ask you. But before I do, I want you to know that I love you, baby. From the time I first saw you outside the studio in South Central, I’ve been infatuated with you. Then when I got to know you and realized how good of a person you were, it was no surprise that I fell in love. I want you to know you’re the only

person in the world for me, and I couldn't even fathom or imagine being with somebody else. So would you marry me?" I opened the ring box, and her already glossy eyes lit up.

"You know, once this gets on my finger, you can't change your mind, right?" She joked, making the whole stadium laugh.

"I don't plan on changing my mind."

"Then yes."

I hurriedly slipped the ring on her finger, happy that it fit perfectly. Rising to my feet, I wrapped my arms around her shapely frame before engaging my lips with hers.

With Rubie still by my side, I got my mic from the deejay, did my outro speech, and then went to the back. I usually did meet and greets for my shows, but lately, the fans had been getting out of hand, so I cancelled those.

Now that the show was over, instead of an after party, I wanted to clean up, take my soon to be wife out to dinner, then get her back to the hotel suite for some sex that would last longer than a minute.

"I can't believe you did that. It was so unexpected." Rubie sat down on the couch in my large dressing trailer. It was decked the fuck out.

"I know. I figured you thought I would do it at home or while we were out to eat."

"Did you plan this, or was it random?"

Just as I was about to respond, a text message popped up on my phone, which was sitting on the vanity area in here. Since I was standing, I peered over it to peep who it was.

Frida: *You are such an asshole.*

Frida: *I hate you.*

Rubie calling my name snapped me from my thoughts.

"Oh, nah, I planned it. I wanted to do it in a way that would show everybody how I felt about you." I neared Rubie, towered over her, and pecked her gently.

"I like that." She eyed her ring. "I can't wait until my dad finds out. He swore up and down that you were like every other cheating, lying ass, commitment-phobe rapper. I told his ass, and I knew I was right."

I chuckled sheepishly as I watched the happiness that covered Rubie's beautiful cognac colored face.

I still couldn't believe I had allowed Frida to give me head. I loved Rubie with everything in me, and I knew if she found out, she would think otherwise. I didn't know how to explain to her that although I let that shit happen, it meant nothing and had nothing to do with her or my feelings for her. That's why the shit had to stay a secret, forever. I at least needed to get her down the aisle first. Having my baby *and* being my wife would make it harder for her to just bounce on me.

We left the building and got into the black truck that drove us here so we could get back to the hotel. While Rubie was on the phone with my mama, checking on the baby, I had to decline four of Frida's calls.

Me: *Aye, chill out.*

I shot her a text, finally, once Rubie hung up.

Grabbing Rubie's hand, I pulled her closer to me, and for the rest of the ride, we just kissed. We got to the hotel in under twenty minutes since it was a little late, and I took her up to the suite, allowing her to go in first so she could see what I'd paid to have set up in here.

"Eitan." She gasped, looking at all of the red bouquets and the roses sprinkled on the large bed. There was a bucket of ice with champagne, strawberries, a few gifts, and some soft music playing.

"I'm guessing you like it." I hugged her body from behind. She smelled so good and felt even better.

"I do." She turned to face me, so now we were chest to chest. "I just want to say thank you."

"This is nothing. You deserve it."

"No, not this specifically, but for coming into my life. You showed me what it's like to be with a real man and not a boy. I don't know what I did for God to give me you. You're sexy, successful, great in bed, and most importantly, faithful. And I know it's been hard to deal with me and not giving you sex for such a long time, but you hung in there. Sometimes I think you're too good for me."

Why was she saying this shit to me now? Why couldn't she have said the shit before I fucked up? Maybe it would've kept me from doing so.

"No, I'm surely not too good for you. It's the other way around. I'm just happy you agreed to marry me."

Rubie smiled brightly, and like always, I couldn't help but to bask in how beautiful she was.

I dimmed the lights, because I was ready to fuck right now. I originally planned for dinner first, but I couldn't wait.

I got Rubie out of her dress, and as she laid on top of the roses on the crisp white bedding, my dick grew harder and harder. I got undressed as fast as possible before joining her in the bed.

My hands wandered all over her body, just before I tugged her lacy underwear down then unhooked the clasps of her bra. Twirling my tongue around her erect nipples, I felt between her legs as she moaned, waiting for her juices to flow. The shit took no time, so I licked and sucked all down her body until I was face to face with her clit.

"Baby." Rubie massaged my head as I let my tongue work between her folds.

She hadn't let me touch her like this in a long ass time, and it was obvious by how my dick was responding. No matter who I slept with or got head from, nothing compared to her.

Rubie came, her back arched and moaning loudly as fuck. Her voice emanating pleasure sounded new to my ass damn near.

I felt her body tighten as I latched my mouth onto her bud, sucking with the perfect amount of pressure, while using my fingers to penetrate her. Freezing up, Rubie released yet again, causing her whole body to gyrate.

"You wet the damn bed." I chuckled, placing soft kisses on her stomach as she attempted to catch her breath.

She smiled at me before we kissed then put me onto my back. Watching her mount my dick almost made me nut, and I had to shut my eyes as I entered her tight, wet pussy.

"Mmm." She cooed softly, putting her small hands on my chest for leverage as she began to ride me.

"Damn." I watched her, not being able to help my hands touching every part of her.

She exploded again, but when she got herself together, she sped up her motions. I held tightly onto her hips as she grinded on me, about to make me nut before I wanted to. Pressing the back of my head into the pillow, I gave myself a pep talk, but when I opened my eyes to see Rubie's pretty ass face with those nice ass lips, I knew the end was near.

"Ahh." Her moans got louder as I began to fuck her back. She came twice, making her shit so wet it was impossible for me to keep going.

"I'm about to nut, fuck!" I growled.

Rubie got off just in time and started to suck my dick, causing my damn toes to curl. This shit was insane right now. Gripping a handful of her soft hair, I guided her faster, fucking the back of her throat, and moments later, I was cumming hard. The shit was so hard I almost ripped out the patch of hair I was holding of hers.

“You lasted much longer this time.” Rubie pecked my abs. “Seems like you’re back to normal.”

“I told you not to bring that shit up no more.” I shook my head as she giggled.

“You said not to tell anyone, and I haven’t.”

“Yeah right. I feel like Camarih’s ass know; she was looking at me funny.”

Rubie laughed heartily as I got out of the bed to head to the bathroom so we could shower. Once it was on, I returned to scoop Rubie up. We bathed together, and went for another round doggy-style, then got out to brush our teeth and head to dinner.

I felt so damn relieved, after fucking Rubie, that it was amazing. It was wild as fuck how sex with her, specifically, could improve my damn day.

By the time we got back to the hotel, it was 1 a.m., so Rubie opened the gifts I bought her, and then we just chilled in the bed until we fell asleep.

AROUND 3 A.M....

“Eitan, get up.”

I felt someone shaking me, and when I opened my eyes, I saw Rubie propped up on her elbow, next to me.

“What?” I frowned, irritated because I was tired beyond belief.

“Why is Frida calling at three a.m.?” Rubie’s face was full of confusion. It wasn’t like she was angry; it was more like she didn’t understand.

“I have no idea. I hope she aight.” I shrugged, taking my phone from Rubie. I pretended to check something before locking it and placing it on the nightstand closest to me.

“I didn’t know you still talked to her.”

“I don’t. That’s why I said I hope she’s okay.” Rubie didn’t say anything, and when I glanced her way, she was just staring. I couldn’t read the expression she wore though. “What?”

“Nothing. It’s just weird that Holli says she’s around a lot, and now she’s calling you at these types of hours, knowing you’re in a relationship and you have a baby. What if Elijah was here and that woke him up?”

“I don’t think she cares about any of that, Rubie. But don’t let Holli or Frida infiltrate what we got going on. Both of them want what we got.”

“I know.” She finally laid down on my chest with a smile. Internally, I let out a sigh of relief.

Frida was doing way too damn much.



ONE WEEK LATER...

I’d been traveling for the past week, doing short appearances on the west coast, but now I was back. Of course that meant I had to be right back in the studio. Tony didn’t want me to get lazy now that I was such a hot commodity, and I agreed, so we needed to keep cranking out good material to solidify my position in the music business. The last thing I wanted was to be some couple-hit wonder or be remembered as a fad.

“I really like this one.” I bobbed my head to the third beat Rahim played for me.

“Wacko said you would, but I wanted to let you tell me that.” Rahim nodded and started moving around on the computer.

As I replied to a text message, I felt a hot ass substance being thrown onto me.

“What the fuck!” I hopped up from my seat to see Frida with a big ass steel pot of what looked like chili. “Are you fucking serious!” I roared at her.

Instead of responding, she dropped the pot and charged my way, swinging on me and fucking me up. The chili was still scalding hot, and some of it had gotten in my eye, so I could barely see.

“Come on, man. What the fuck!” Rahim shouted, snatching Frida back as she moved wildly in his embrace. She had tears coming down her cheeks.

“I fucking hate you!” She screamed her damn head off.

“Bitch, fuck you!” I barked back, taking a page out of Tony’s book. I was the maddest nigga right now that she had ruined my damn two-

thousand-dollar *light* colored sweater with that nasty ass chili. “I told yo’ ass what it was! You knew I had a girl, and you still wanted to suck my dick! How is that my fault!”

“Eitan, chill out!” Rahim yelled just as Frida broke from his hold on her. She started hitting me again, but Rahim stopped her, yanking her back from me.

“I wish I never fucking met you! All you do is play with people and use them whenever you see fit!” Frida cried.

“Had it not been for me, yo’ ass would still be in the fucking hood, driving a bucket! I upgraded yo’ ass! Be happy I let you keep all that shit instead of snatching it back!”

My words infuriated her, I could see it through my one good eye, but I didn’t give a damn.

“Frida, you gotta go. Like right now,” Rahim told her.

“I’m not going no fucking where!”

Just then, Tony came into the room, smoking a blunt.

“What’s all this shit?” He frowned, especially when his eyes landed on me covered in chili.

“She came through here acting a damn fool, throwing food and shit! Now her ass won’t leave!” I shouted.

“Aye, take that shit somewhere else.” Tony looked to Frida as Rahim struggled to keep ahold of her.

“Fuck you, nigga! I’m not—”

“Bitch, watch yo’ fucking mouth ’fore I put this blunt out in that tattered ass weave.” Tony got right in her face. “Let this hoe go, Rahim. I want her to pop some shit.” Rahim reluctantly let her go, but Frida did nothing, to my surprise. “Get yo’ damn pot, and get the fuck up out my shit, or you gon’ fuck around and get smoked.”

Rahim picked the big pot up, and Frida snatched it from him, gave me an icy glare, and then attempted to storm out, but Tony snatched her purse.

“What are you doing!” She hollered as Tony dug out her wallet and took some cash from it.

“You gotta pay for this fucking carpet area you ruined. Now get the fuck out.” He gave her back her shit before she switched on.

“Stupid bitch,” I mumbled to myself, still in disbelief.

“And you, nigga, stop fucking with these hoes if you can’t control ’em.” Tony shook his head before sitting down at the mixer.

“She crazy! How the fuck I’m gon’ control her?”

“If I have to tell you, that means you the type of muthafucka that needs to be faithful at all times. ’Cause had that hoe thrown some chili on me, her muthafuckin ass would’ve been part of the next batch.”

This nigga was crazy, talking about making some damn chili out of a human. And the look on his face as he inhaled the blunt let me know he was deadass.

“*You* cheated on *Rubie*?” Rahim had the nerve to pipe in with a perplexed expression.

“Asks the nigga who cheated on the wife he know he can’t live without.” I flashed him a scowl before leaving the room to get some paper towel. I wanted to get *some* of this shit off before getting in my damn car.

I didn’t care about Frida at all, but I did care about Rubie finding out. And with the way Frida was behaving, it was starting to catch my girl’s attention. If Rubie did learn of my infidelity, my whole fucking world would end.

JILLY

I watched from backstage as Ahmad Drake did an interview with this popular TV host Michaela. He was doing so well, but most importantly, his attire was on point.

I loved working for Ahmad because he was cool, never fought me on my suggestions like a lot of people, and the pay was super great. The only downside was I couldn't even come home to my man to brag about it, because he would kill my ass if he knew I was working for Ahmad. But I figured once I'd been styling him for a while, I could break it to Nehemiah and he would see nothing was going on between my client and I. Plus, I was pregnant, so this nigga couldn't go too far, or my brother and I would kill him. I smiled thinking about how much of a genius I was.

"You did so good!" I congratulated Ahmad when he stepped backstage. He caught me off guard when he hugged me, lifting me from the floor.

"Thank you. And you were right about this Saint Laurent suit. I kept peeping myself in the monitor, and I was fly." He winked after he put me down.

"Well is there anything else you need me for? If not, I can go ahead and leave."

He waved for me to follow him, so I did. Once we got closer to his dressing room, out of earshot for most, he began talking.

"I'm a little hungry and was wondering if you'd come eat with me. It'll be my treat."

"Uh..." I was starving because I hadn't eaten since breakfast, due to his busy schedule today and having to make sure his outfits looked exactly how

I'd pictured them. On top of that, I was pregnant, so I felt like a complete glutton anytime food was mentioned. "I can't. I should get home."

"Where do you live?"

"West Hollywood."

"That's going to take you a while, especially with all of the traffic. Why don't we eat, and by the time we finish, traffic will have died out, and you can breeze home."

That sounded smart to me.

"Sure, okay." I nodded.

"Great. Let me call the car to come around and then get my things." He kissed my cheek.

Standing there, I adjusted my Chanel purse then texted Nehemiah that I would be home late. Just when my phone buzzed, Ahmad came from his dressing room, telling me to come on, so I dropped my phone back into my bag.

"So where are we headed?"

"To this great steakhouse inside of my hotel."

"Oh, I think I saw it when I brought your outfits to you this afternoon." I'd never been so excited to eat.

The black truck drove us around to the side of the hotel, which was the entrance to the Rose Steakhouse. Ahmad opened the door for me, and after talking with the hostess, we were taken to a private table in back of the restaurant. Ahmad ordered a bottle of wine for us, but I just got a sparkling water to keep my stomach settled.

"I'm surprised a woman like you doesn't drink." He smirked, sipping his red wine.

"Woman like me?" I raised a brow, moving back some to allow the appetizers to be set down. He'd ordered chicken dumplings and some kind of shrimp that had me salivating just at the smell.

"Yes. You seem very free spirited."

"I am free spirited. I'm just not in a drinking mood. I feel like alcohol throws me off of my game sometimes, and I want to be focused." I conjured up a whole lie. I drank like a fish usually, but it wasn't worth something happening to my baby.

"I feel you. So you told me you live in West Hollywood, a luxury apartment?"

“No. My boyfriend and I own a condo off of Crescent Heights.” After I replied, Ahmad’s brows went up.

“Crescent Heights, huh? So you were already rich before I hired you, I’m guessing.”

“I was making great money, yes, but my boyfriend is a music video director.”

“Who?”

“Nehemiah.”

“Ah, yes, I have heard of him. Didn’t he used to date some girl that has a fitness line or something?”

“He did, but a long ass time ago. I’ve been his girl for a while now.”

“Feisty.” Ahmad laughed, making me calm down some and join him in it.

We both ordered steak, mashed potatoes, and asparagus for dinner, then preordered some cheesecake to have later on.

“So there is no special woman in your life, Ahmad?” I munched on my food. It was so good. No wonder this shit was expensive.

“No, not at the moment. I haven’t quite found what I need.” He stared at me knowingly.

“I am very sure you will come across it soon. You’re a good-looking guy, you’re rich; I mean, I’m surprised the girls aren’t falling all over you.”

“They are, but not the ones I would bring home to my mama.”

“I see.” I smiled. “Would you excuse me? I have to pee.” I hopped up before he could say anything and rushed off as if I knew where the bathroom was.

I actually did have to pee, but I wanted to get out of that conversation we were having. It was making me feel bad for lying to Nehemiah when he specifically told me Ahmad would start to like me.

A waitress I saw located the bathroom for me, so I hurried to it. I drained my bladder, which was beyond euphoric, and then wiped before flushing, using my foot. As I came out to wash my hands, I noticed someone standing against the door. I almost jumped out of my skin seeing Star’s crazy ass.

“Hi, Jilly.” She laughed.

“What the fuck is wrong with you? What are you doing all the way out here?”

“I followed you early this morning when you skipped out of the house.” She shrugged one shoulder as if her ass didn’t sound insane.

“Star, it is literally six thirty p.m. Why the fuck are you still following me? Who trails someone all day?”

“Someone like me.” She came around to my other side. “I noticed you were having dinner with a new boo.”

“He is not a new boo. He’s one of my clients.”

“Wow, you eat dinner at romantic places with all of your clients? Or just the tall, fine ass ones?”

“No. It’s a lot of traffic, and we were both hungry. You know, with me pregnant and all, I can’t exactly go long periods without food.” I taunted her, using some soap to clean my hands.

“Right. yeah. Well I wonder what Nehemiah will think about his pregnant girlfriend having a late night dinner and drinks with Ahmad Drake.”

“Star—”

“Oh my gosh, Jilly, you look like you’ve seen a ghost.” She burst into a deep cackle. “Looks like I hit the sweet spot with that comment. Now let’s see... Which picture should I shoot over to my baby daddy?”

“You stupid bitch.” I tried to grab her phone, but she held it up in the air. She was taller than me, so there was no way I’d reach it.

I thought about punching her, but I didn’t want to fight anybody this early in my pregnancy. I remembered Camarih telling me how many nights she stayed up crying after miscarrying, and I knew I couldn’t handle it.

“This one is good.” She showed me the picture where Ahmad was helping me out of the car with his hand at the small of my back.

“Star, do not send him that, please.” I dried my hands.

“Why would I do you any favors, Jilly? You came in and stole my man, breaking up my family... seems like I owe it to you.”

“A man cannot be stolen, Star.” I stared at her, and she stared back at me, unconvinced. “Fine. What do you want?”

“For you to get an abortion.”

“Are you fucking crazy? There is no nigga in the world I want that badly, not even Nehemiah.”

Star rolled her eyes.

“Well then I guess he’s going to get these pictures.”

“Fine then, Star, send them if you want to.” I played it cool, even though I was shaking in my heels.

“Okay, how about you just break up with him and tell him he and I have a connection that you two could never have.”

“If I would agree to that, then I wouldn’t care if he saw the photos, you dummy.” I sucked my teeth and then darted for the door to leave.

“You’re gonna regret this, bitch!” she shouted, but I waved her off.

During the rest of my dinner with Ahmad, I was on edge. I couldn’t even really enjoy my dessert and was happy when that black truck had taken me back to get my car at the hotel.

“Don’t forget next week,” Ahmad reminded me as he stood at the entrance of the hotel while I waited for valet.

“I won’t.” I half smiled.

Finally, the valet guy appeared with my Range Rover, so I gave him a tip and then fled home. When I got there, it was a quarter until nine. I sniffed my clothes and hair, making sure none of Ahmad’s strong cologne had seeped in.

I entered the condo soundlessly, removing my heels once inside. Creeping up the stairs, I breathed quietly, listening for any sound of Nehemiah or Timothy. It was pretty early for Nehemiah to be asleep, but I was sure Timothy was knocked out.

Finally, I turned the knob to our bedroom, and the sight before me was shocking.

“Where you been?” Nehemiah asked, climbing out of the bed.

The room had rose petals everywhere, and it was clear he’d set it out for me for some reason.

“I told you I would be h-home late.” I set my bag on the dresser near the door before shutting it.

“I texted you back and asked could you try to get here on time.”

“Oh shit, I’m sorry. I saw you replied, but I got sidetracked and then forgot to check my phone again.”

“You been out all night and forgot to check and see if I replied?” His brows furrowed. His sexy face was in distress. I could see the redness peering through his brown skin due to his anger.

“Time just flew by me, and I didn’t realize it.”

I wasn’t sure if Star had tattled yet, because it was hard for me to read the room. Right now, it appeared like Nehemiah was only angry about me

missing his grand gesture.

“What was you doing?”

“I was working, what else?”

“Working for who? Because I hit Tony up, so I know it’s none of his artists.”

“You do know that I work with other people, ones who aren’t connected to Tony Wacko, right?” I began removing my clothes. I needed a bath.

Sitting down on the chaise, Nehemiah sighed, watching me undress.

“Jilly, you can’t do shit like this.”

“I texted you—”

“Yeah, a vague ass text saying you’d be home late. Then when I hit you back, I don’t get a response! Had I done that shit, you’d be calling yo’ brother to murk me!”

That was facts.

“I know. I’m really sorry, baby.” I came his way, only in my bra and panties. “And the room looks beautiful.”

“No it don’t,” he replied sadly. “Shit looked better three hours ago.”

I lifted his head by his chin to make him look into my eyes as I stood over him.

“What was all of this for?”

“It don’t matter no more. I’m not in the mood.” Again, he dropped his head.

I got down onto my knees so I that I could see his face that way, since he wouldn’t cooperate.

“How can I get you back in the mood?”

“I don’t know, Jilly. I’m irritated. Go do whatever you was about to do.” He stood up.

I let him step over me and go to the bed where he began clearing the roses off. I felt like a horrible person.

After a while, I got up to take a shower since it was quicker than a bath, then brushed my teeth. When I came back out into the room, it was all cleaned up, except for the one bouquet on the nightstand nearest me.

Picking it up, I sniffed the flowers, then got in the bed next to Nehemiah, still holding them.

“Baby, I’m sorry. I really didn’t know I was gone that long.” I stared at the side of his face. His attention was on the TV, which was the news at the moment.

Since he didn't say anything, I put the flowers back on my nightstand then slipped my hand under the covers and down his boxers.

"Jilly, nah." He tried to move my hand, but I swiftly dipped under the comforter.

"Nah, what?" I asked, still fondling him.

Quickly, his dick hardened, even though he was trying to stop me, but I put him in my mouth. He tossed the covers back some to look down at me as I sucked slowly but sloppily.

"Jilly." He breathed heavily. "Fuck."

I reached to toy with his balls while still sucking him, but harder and faster. When his dick was reminiscent of steele, I knew he was about to cum, so I got up and slid down on him. His eyes widened at the feeling, making me smile evilly as I rocked my hips. His moans reached an octave I'd never heard before, and just as I released, his fingertips dug into my skin while he exploded.

"You forgive me?" I leaned down in his face to suck his lips while he was still inside.

"You know I do."

Chuckling happily, I got off of him to clean myself, pee, and then brush my teeth yet again. He came to do the same, then I got back in the bed.

"What are you doing?" I asked when he went to get something out of his top drawer.

"What I planned to do when you stood me up."

"I didn't stand you up, baby. I didn't know." I watched him as he walked over to my side of the bed.

"I wanted to give you this." He kneeled down, showing me a ring sitting inside a ring box.

"Is this what I think it is?"

"Yeah."

"So my brother approved?"

"Yes, Jilly." He chuckled. "He said it looked expensive so it was cool for me to ask you. Only then did I tell him about the baby."

"Yay!" I tried to grab the ring, but Nehemiah moved it from my grasp, making my smile fade.

"Let me ask you."

"Okay." I straightened up, excited.

"Jilly Terranova, will you—"

“Yes! Now put it on!” I screeched, while Nehemiah laughed, shaking his head.

He slipped the ring down onto my finger and then kissed me slowly. I pulled him into the bed with me so that he was in between my legs.

“I love yo’ crazy ass.”

“I love you too.” I giggled.

As we tongued one another down, his phone began ringing, so he paused to look at it on his side before rolling off me. He grabbed it from his nightstand, checked it, then put it back down.

“Come here.” He tugged me over.

“Who was that?”

“Just Star.” He planted pecks on my neck.

“For what?”

“I don’t know, Jilly. I didn’t answer. I’ll call her back sometime tomorrow.”

I could not let that whore ruin what I was building with Nehemiah, but I didn’t know how to make her ass go away.

LATER IN THE WEEK...

“I definitely prefer the gray one versus the blue.” I stood behind Ahmad as he looked himself over in the mirror.

“Why?” he quizzed.

“Blue looks a bit dingy to me, and not as debonair. The gray screams wealthy, successful, and mature.”

“You’re right. I don’t know why I question you; you’re the professional.”

“Exactly.”

I started to help him out of the jacket, just as his phone rang.

“Excuse me.” He stepped down off the elevated stool.

I watched as he spoke lowly on the phone, frowning here and there, then again looking worried. I tried to appear as if I was minding my own business, but it was hard for a nosy bitch like myself.

As I began hanging up some of the stuff he’d already tried on, Ahmad finished his conversation and hung up. Sitting down, he looked stressed, letting me know whomever was on the other side of that phone call had delivered some bad news.

Usually I stayed out of clients' business, which was a lot for someone like me, but I saw Ahmad as a friend. He was one of my favorites because he was always respectful, he listened, and most importantly was on time. A lot of my celebrity clients were full of themselves, often rude, and arrived hours late to appointments with me as if I didn't have a life of my own, but would be on speakerphone allowing me hear all the dirty details of their personal lives as I couldn't use it against them.

"Hey, are you okay?" I finally inquired, sitting down next to him.

For a little bit, Ahmad ignored me, still staring down at the marble floors of the room in his house where we did most of his fittings.

"Jilly, we're cool, right?" He finally spoke, turning to look at me slowly. His hooded brown eyes gave off an intense stare.

"Yes, I'd like to think so."

"So I can trust you?"

"Yes, of course. Is everything okay?" Now my ass was nervous.

"That was my publicist, and she basically told me in so many words that my image is in jeopardy because of my personal life."

"Your personal life? I don't understand."

Inhaling and promptly exhaling, Ahmad closed his eyes before regaining eye contact. He turned his body more toward me to open up.

"Jilly, you don't get a specific vibe from me?"

"What kind of vibe? Ahmad, I'd just wish you'd tell me. I'm not that smart sometimes."

Tittering softly, he said, "I'm gay."

"Oh shit!" I covered my mouth. "No, I didn't mean to say that, I umm —"

"It's cool. Anyway, I keep that part of my life secret. I'm not necessarily in the closet, because I don't sleep with or date women at all, but I'm also not public with it."

No wonder this nigga knew more brands than me. No wonder he was talking about how he hadn't found what he was looking for in women. I felt slightly embarrassed at the fact that I was sure he was starting to like me.

"So what, your publicist doesn't want you to be gay?"

"Well she believes it'll ruin my career if it comes out. The media and fans are starting to get suspicious because I've never had a girlfriend or any type of romantic relationship in my decade old career. I used to chuck it up

to me being too young, but I'm thirty-two now, so I'm starting to get the side-eye."

He was right. Before I'd even started working for him, I'd heard his name come up a few times. No, he was never called gay or anything, but people always wondered why such a good-looking, young, talented man didn't have a woman in his life. I just thought he had a bunch of hoes he was secretly smashing, and didn't see any of them as worthy of accompanying him to a red carpet yet. But now, it all made sense.

"I see. I can't believe that even in two thousand twenty, your career would be ruined."

"Right but being black *and* gay is not as accepted in Hollywood as people try to make it seem."

"Wow, I'm so sorry, Ahmad. Is there anything I can do to make you feel better? I bake really good chocolate chip cookies."

"That sounds amazing." He laughed. "But there is something you could do for me, and I'd even be willing to pay you for it."

"Uh, what is it?" I knew it wasn't sex because the nigga just told me he liked dick, but what in the world could I do for him that would cause for compensation?

"Would you be willing to pretend to date me? I would pay you ten thousand per event, and you know I do a lot of those. Literally, all you'd have to do is show up to those events and be seen out with me leisurely a few times. I'll pay for your clothes, hair, makeup, and everything."

"Ahmad, I'm in a relationship with another celebrity. How would that work?"

"You guys aren't all over the media like your brother and his wife, or Eitan and his wife. Maybe just say you guys broke it off. I'd be willing to pay him, too, if required. I just really need you to do this for me, Jilly, please."

"I don't know—"

"Please, Jilly, as my friend."

Shit. Shit. Shit.

TONY WACKO

Just as I finished a call, I saw Camarih come out of the bathroom in her favorite: a short ass silk robe. She smelled good, and her scent was already in the fucking air.

“Come here.” I gripped her wrist when she came by me to get that little shit she used to tie her hair up.

“What?” She giggled as I brought her between my legs.

Untying her robe, I slipped my hands inside it to hold her hips. Her stomach was protruding slightly, but her shape was still on point, like always.

“Look who’s starting to show up.” I kissed her small round pudge.

“I know. I can still conceal it at the moment, but not for long.” She caressed the back of my head as I listened. “Hear anything?”

“Yeah, what I usually fucking hear. Cuz in there Crip walking.”

“Stop saying that, Houston!” She laughed. “It’s a girl watch.”

“Then her ass a muthafuckin dike. I know the Crip walk pattern when I hear it, and cuz in there hittin’ that shit.”

“Okay, get away from me.” She grinned, stepping back to close her robe.

“I’m about to bounce, but when you get done with your day, come eat with me at the club.” I walked to the door of our bedroom.

“Why?”

“Because yo’ nigga wanna fucking eat with you, is that cool? Fuck you mean why?”

“No, baby, it’s just usually when you leave this late, you’re pretty busy for the whole day.”

Getting in her face, I pinned her to the wall as she giggled shyly.

“Well today, I’m not.” I kissed her. “I’m never too busy for you. You remember that shit, aight?”

“I know. I was joking, daddy.” She hugged my torso, tilting her head for another kiss.

“Why you have to talk like when I’m about to leave? My dick is hard.”

“It can’t possibly be hard, Houston, I only—wow.” She stopped when I put it against her leg to show her ass I wasn’t fucking around. “You are such a nasty freak. How do you get hard that quick?”

“Because I love you, you fine as fuck, and you talking that shit I like.” I pressed my lips to her neck after every reason, making her chuckle sensually.

“Go. I have to get the baby ready, and I don’t have time for a nap this morning, especially if you want me to be available to eat later.”

“The Pink Cherry. Text me when you about to come so I can wait outside in the lot for you.”

I never let Camarih pull up on her own, because niggas were thirsty as fuck. Just the thought of them eying my bitch made me grit my teeth. So before she even stepped her pretty ass out of the car, I wanted to be right there with my shit on my waist, letting muthafuckas know it wasn’t a wise decision to salivate.

“I know, I know.” She half smiled, pecking me once more before sitting down at her big ass make-up station.

I couldn’t wait until she moved that shit into one of the guest bedrooms. At the moment, it was being renovated to input all the shit she wanted, but it’d be done in the next fucking couple weeks, thankfully.

Like normal, I always started my day with hitting the studio to check on everything. Today I was going especially because Brooklen had just finished a new track, and I wanted to hear the shit. I didn’t like the hoe, but then again, a nigga ain’t really like nobody. However, I couldn’t deny her ass had talent. Her first song that we dropped went right to the fucking top and stayed there for weeks. Shit was still there in the top, but at number eight.

Because of that, she was booking shows nonstop, and we’d filmed her music video quickly as hell. This was a first because, usually, new artists ain’t pop like that, so you wasn’t about to waste money on a muthafuckin

video for the song. But shit, Brooklen came with that fucking heat, and I wasn't mad about the shit.

"What's good?" Rahim stood up when I entered the studio room to dap me up.

I had another studio in the building where my office was, but shit recorded in there didn't feel the same. I felt like all hits needed to be recorded here in the fucking hood.

"Sup." I sat down after slapping hands with both Rahim and Abel.

"Sorry. I was in the bathroom." Brooklen walked in, lighting up at the sight of me.

I ain't say shit, just nodded for Abel to play the song of hers they'd just finished up. He started it, and while it was playing, a few of the homies rolled through to chill. I wasn't tripping because niggas were usually respectful, especially when my ass was in this muthafucka. So if I needed them to shut the fuck up, they would.

By the end of the song, it was a full house, including a couple artists like the Gangstar Girlz, Nala, Holli, as always, Carter, and even Dirko and his long titty bitch.

"That shit was dope as fuck," I said excitedly, already seeing dollar signs as I looked at Brooklen.

"Really? I'm glad you like it. I have another song ready whenever you want me back to record."

"Shit, as soon as possible. I just have to look at everybody's schedule. But you and Rahim make a good ass team." I looked to Rahim.

"Same shit I said." He replied with a smile before slapping my hand.

"Then let me edit it up, make it sound all shiny and shit." Abel started working on his computer.

"I think for yo' shit, it needs to be straight through hits, no fillers." I looked up at Brooklen since she was standing over me.

"I agree. I got all day if she wanna get back in tonight," Rahim offered as Abel put on some music for everybody in the studio to listen and chill to. Niggas were already rolling up and pulling out red cups.

"Yes, I do!" Brooklen nodded excitedly. I just took her ass in for a moment, liking her work ethic. She was about to be rich as fuck and have me even wealthier than I was.

"Hey." Nala walked over, standing right next to Brooklen since she was near me.

“What’s up?” Rahim and Brooklen replied together, but I declined to speak back. I just looked at her, waiting for her to speak.

“So, Rahim, I finished my song, and I’m ready to record it.” Nala stared at him.

“Aight, well I’m thinking either tomorrow or the day after that. I will hit you to confirm though.” Rahim moved around on his phone, checking his schedule.

“Why not right now?”

“Well, tonight, Brooklen is gon’ do another track.” Rahim nodded.

“Oh, I think you can push that back. I’m priority. She’s still a nobody.” Nala gave a fake ass smile to Brooklen.

“Nah, it don’t work like that. She already got the spot, and he’ll hit you like he said when he knows what day he can fuck with you.” I interjected.

“I just think—”

“And I don’t give a fuck what you think, nor did I ask. Go sit yo’ extra ass down ’cause you about to piss me the fuck off,” I stated strictly, pimp hand itching to backhand her ass across this mixer.

Nala just looked down at me like she was two seconds from crying, and then made an about face to go sit down.

For the next couple hours, we all kicked it, then Brooklen got back in the booth to lay another track down. That shit was heat too, which had everybody in the studio hype. Nala was the only one acting like she was unfazed, with her hating ass.

Anytime a bitch on the team had a good song or I showed them any type of attention, her ass didn’t like them.

“Oh, we got a visitor.” Abel paused the unedited track while we listened back.

I turned in my chair to see who it was and spotted Brooklen’s bitch ass boyfriend.

“Turn that shit back on, Abel. Fuck wrong with you? Don’t ever pause some shit unless I tell yo’ muthafuckin ass to,” I let him know, annoyed as fuck that he stopped some shit for that moist ass nigga in the doorway.

“Aye, can I talk to you, Wacko?” Brooklen’s boyfriend asked.

“Wait until I’m done listening, nigga. And don’t sit down; stay where you at unless you want a problem,” I spoke, only looking at him through my peripheral. The song was done a couple minutes later, so after lighting my blunt and taking a toke, I asked, “What?”

“Yesterday night, Brooklen was here until midnight. And now she was back in here bright and early, and still here even though it’s six p.m.” I just looked at him, still smoking, so he added, “What I’m trying to say is, she needs to come home with me right now; spend some time.”

“Fuck is you, a housewife?” I asked seriously. What kind of nigga was this, coming to his bitch’s job crying like a hoe over quality time?

“Look, I’m trying to be cordial about it, so don’t piss me off,” he had the gall to say.

He must’ve forgotten who the fuck he was talking to. I guess when I clocked his ass, it did more damage than I thought. I was noticing when he had a crowd, he was bold, but when it was on the low, his true bitchmade personality came out.

When I started laughing, everybody in the studio followed suit. Brooklen was seated, watching with her eyes wide.

“Well first off, I don’t take threats from niggas that’s pigeon toed. And secondly, I wish the fuck you would pop some shit. I’m not the nigga you playground gangstas wanna fuck with.” I inhaled on the blunt again, chuckling a little bit, because him threatening me was hilarious.

“Like I said—”

I hopped up with the quickness, making a few people jump, even though I wasn’t coming for them.

“And like I said, bitch, take yo’ ass on somewhere ’fore you start some shit you can’t finish. I would hate to embarrass the fuck out of you in front of yo’ bitch.”

Backing up some, he said, “Come on, Brooke, we leaving.”

When she hopped up, I said, “Sit yo’ ass down.” And like a good doggy, she sat her ass back down on that couch.

“For real, Brooke? What the fuck?”

“I told you long time ago that bitch do whatever the fuck I tell her to. And if I wanted to hit, I could’ve been did it. Yo’ hoe been throwing that pussy at me since I met her. Lucky for you, I’m married and not attracted to hoers that look like they bark while you fucking ’em.” I took one last inhale on the blunt while people chortled heavily, and blew the smoke right in his face. Since I was finished, I ashed it right on the dirty ass collar of his shirt. “Toss this for me, cuz.” I held it out.

He stared at me, looking like he wanted to say something, but he knew better. Opening his hand, he allowed me to drop the blunt into it like the

bitch nigga that he was. I tapped his face hard as fuck, then told him to get his ass on, which he did.

Just as I was about sit down, Camarih told me she was done with work for the day and on her way to *The Pink Cherry*.

“You out?” Rahim asked.

“Yeah, y’all finish the song. I’ll be back tomorrow to hear the shit.” I left out, reading an email from Alejandra, my assistant.

Soon as I got outside, I felt a presence behind me, and I turned to see it was Nala.

“You fucked her, huh?” she asked, mouth all twisted like she was about to steal off on my ass. I actually wanted her to so I could fuck her ass up.

“Why?” I felt my face contort out of irritation.

“It’s a simple yes or no question. I already know you did, because of how attached she is and how she listens to everything you say over her man.”

I almost brushed her off but decided to toy with the hoe.

“She look like a freak, so I probably would’ve fucked her. But I got my wife, who I love, so I’m not really interested in these other hoes.”

I knew me saying that shit would hurt worse than me hemming her ass up by her neck like a nigga so badly wanted to.

“I know you have!” she shouted, looking stupid as fuck, as I stepped off the sidewalk to get in my car.

“Aye, I know who I haven’t been fucking though.” I smiled at her, and her face said it all. “That pussy was too clingy for my liking. Take yo’ ass on somewhere ’cause in a minute, I’m gon’ hit yo’ nigga up and tell him come get his hoe off my dick.”

She yelled something, but by that time, I was in my whip with the music up, speeding off. I wasn’t about to have my girl waiting because of Nala’s thirsty ass.

I got to *The Pink Cherry* half an hour later, and thankfully, I didn’t see Camarih’s car yet. Had she been there already, waiting for me, I would’ve slapped Nala the fuck up next time I saw her.

I parked on the side where the entrance to the waffle house section was, and saw it was pretty packed, even though the club wasn’t open. After inspecting everything, including the bathrooms to be sure they were pristine, I washed my hands then went to sit at my designated table to wait for my girl.

As I read the menu, knowing damn well I was gon' fuck with the same shit, I felt somebody sit across from me.

"Hey, I never see you here this early." That hoe Klaude smiled.

"Nah, get yo' ass up, and wipe the fucking seat off. I don't want my girl sitting on whatever the fuck is crawling around in yo' draws." With her jaw damn near on the table, Klaude just stared. "Bitch, I said get the fuck up." Before I even got those words all the way out, her ass was up and going to get a rag. "Make sure the shit is new!"

Moments later, she came back with a fresh rag to wipe the booth seat down.

"I'm—"

"Shut up." I cut her off.

Without another word, she finished cleaning and drying the booth, just as Camarih texted me. I hopped up to go outside to get her and my son, who we left in his carrier.

"Hi." Camarih beamed as I took the carrier from her, kissing her soft ass lips. I could smell her scented body butter, and that shit alone had my dick swollen.

"Give me this. You too fine to be holding this heavy ass shit."

Chuckling, she replied, "Stop trying to butter me up for sex."

I said nothing as I watched her walk in front of me, wearing these black pants that looked like tights, one of them tops that tied behind her neck, and them sandal shoes with a heel, showing her pretty ass feet. Her golden hair blew lightly in the fucking wind, and when I realized my ass was mesmerized, following her like a fucking puppy, I whipped my head around to be sure no other niggas were doing the same.

I held the door open for her and then led her to the table.

"Wait. Let me check it out before you sit down. That hoe Klaude and that nigga Ced sat here before you." I pointed Klaude and that tooth out as she walked by.

"Houston!" Camarih clenched her teeth. "She heard you. And who is Ced?"

"So. Fuck I care if she heard? And Ced is that one big ass tooth she got in the front. I know you seen that nigga, Camarih." I nodded to Camarih as she laughed, to let her know it was okay to sit, then I sat across from her, placing Baby Cuz's carrier in beforehand. "You feel okay?"

"Yes. I don't have much morning sickness anymore."

“Nah, I meant yo’ pussy.”

“What?”

“I just told you that dirty hoe sat there. I’m trying to make sure nothing don’ snuck up in you.”

“Houston!” Camarih laughed. “No, I am fine!” She bucked her eyes like always when she wanted me to be quiet.

“You got my son in there. I don’t want him having to fight off that hoe’s pussy roaches ’cause you playing.”

“The fact that you’re serious.”

“Fuck it. Sit on this side.” I waved for her to do what I said.

Breathing heavily, Camarih got up and sat next to me with her menu. When she turned to face me, I grinned, making her do the same before I kissed her sexy lips.



A WEEK AND A HALF LATER...

“Okay, you ready to spend the day with daddy?” Camarih held my son on her hip.

“Yeah, he ready. Come on, cuz.” I took him, pecking his fat cheek.

“Alright. Remember, no vulgar language in front of him, Houston. He can talk.”

“This nigga don’ said one muthafuckin word and now you acting like he a damn orator.” I shook my head.

“He is smart, Houston, and—”

“You just do yo’ shit, shop, enjoy yaself with them hoes—”

“Friends, Houston. Don’t call my *friends* hoes, especially not in front of him.” She put her purse on her shoulder.

“Whatever. Deuces.” I pecked her, taking my son with me.

“Bye! No smoking either!”

Once outside, I buckled Baby Cuz into his carseat, making sure it was exactly right, then hopped in. We had a cool conversation on the way to the studio, and he let me know how his mama be tripping, which I agreed with.

As I pulled up to the curb of the studio, parking in the same spot I always did, I saw two dirty ass hood rats outside.

Rolling down the passenger window, I hollered, “Y’all bitches get the fuck from in front of my shit ’fore I shoot y’all ashy asses!”

“Fuck you!” one of them said as they walked off, stepping down in front of my car to cross the street. “Ah!” They jumped then ran when I hit the gas to run that hoe over.

“Stupid ass bitches,” I mumbled, throwing my shit in park.

“Bitches,” someone that sounded like Baby Cuz repeated. I almost got a fucking crook in my neck from turning to look in the back seat at him so abruptly.

“Nah, cuz, don’t say that.”

“Bitches.” He said the shit again, and I couldn’t help but to laugh. When he saw that shit, he laughed too.

Hopping out the whip, I opened the backdoor on his side and squatted down.

“Aye, cuz, don’t say that shit no more, aight? I mean, if it’s just me and you, we straight but yo’ mama gon’ have a fit if she hear that, feel me?”

When he just looked at me with a smirk but didn’t say it again, I made his hand into a fist then dapped him up.

I prayed like hell this was a one-time thing.

CAMARIE

“Okay, baby.” I laid my son down in his plush stroller that was really like a damn bed.

I’d fed him, and now he’d finally dozed off. I kissed his little cheeks, then covered him up just as someone knocked on my office door.

“Oh, sorry,” Kai whispered softly, closing the door behind herself. “I just came to let you know that I’m about to go order lunch for everyone. Did you still want the same thing?”

“I do. Thank you.”

Kai stared at the stroller, smiling for a second, then asked, “What made you decide to start bringing that cutie to work? He’s been here every day with us now.”

“Well, my sister-in-law usually babysits him for me, but he was acting too bad around her. He misses his father and I when we leave, so he turns into a little tyrant.”

“I couldn’t imagine; he looks so sweet.” Kai gushed. “Your sister-in-law is Jilly, right?” she asked as I walked toward the door to leave my office.

“Yep. Houston only has one sister.”

Looking like she was thinking about something, she simply replied, “Oh, okay. Well, see you in a little bit.”

I paid her no mind as she left out to go get lunch for all of us. Walking to the sink, I turned on the water, and while I checked the temperature, Dana walked over to me.

“Hey, boss. Your next appointment is here.” She smiled.

“Okay, thank you. The room is prepared, right?”

“Sure is!”

“Alright. I will hit the light when I’m ready for them.” I rinsed the soap from my hands.

As I dried them, I went to my spa room to make sure it was in fact clean like Dana said. I then prepped the bed, and once I had my facial gloves on, I used my elbow to press the button that would let Dana know to send in the next person.

“This shit is dope,” a deep voice called out as the door opened. I saw it was Mac, and my heart dropped.

“You need to go. This is my place of business and—”

“I know; I’m here for my facial.”

Standing from my seat, I said, “You do not want a damn facial, Mac. You need to get out.”

“I booked an appointment, paid my deposit, and now I want what I paid for.” He sat on the bed, removed his shirt, and then laid back.

I stormed out, listening to him laugh, and went to the front desk where Dana was typing away on the computer.

“Hey, Dana. What’s the name of my next client?”

“Mackenzie King.” She read it aloud after clicking around on the mouse.

Frustrated, I went back to the spa room and shut the door. I turned on some soft music to set the mood, dimmed the lights, and then turned the steam on so it could open up his dusty, crusty, dirty, thirsty ass pores. I then changed my gloves.

“So it says you just want a hydrating facial today, is that correct?” I read the clipboard with his information, making sure I took into account what he was allergic to.

“That’s right. You know a brother gotta keep his skin glowing.”

“Yes, and it’s definitely looking a little dingy right now.” I started cleansing his face as he chuckled subtly.

He didn’t say anything as I went through the steps of the facial, but he did look at me very often. I was happy to put those damn eye covers on his face when I began doing a few extractions. Then forty-five minutes later, his ass was free to go.

“Wow, baby, that shit felt good as fuck.” Mac sat up, just looking at me. “You so sexy to me. You fine as hell, got a pretty ass smile, and I love how well kept you are. Even yo’ spa is upscale. Saw yo’ Rolls Royce parked around back too.”

“Yeah, daddy bought it,” I made sure to say.

“Let me take you out.”

“Even if you didn’t have that crooked Angelica Pickles mouth, I still wouldn’t let you take me out. Now, you need to leave before my man finds out what you’re trying to do.”

Getting down from the spa bed, he responded while chuckling, “Oh yeah? And what he gon’ do?”

“Hmm, let me call him and find out.” I reached for my phone, but he stopped me, gripping my forearm. “Exactly, and do not ever touch me again.” I snatched my arm.

“Like I said before, if he messes up, call me. I want you bad.” He backed away and then left the room.

Feeling dirty from him touching me, I cleaned up, sanitized, and straightened everything so it’d be ready for the next client and by that time Kai was here with the food.

She, Dana, and I ate lunch together, but since Kai finished first, she got right back to work, cleaning up the front area, then making more fruit water and chilling champagne for the people who would be in the lobby. I liked for my clients to know they were in a high-end establishment and to be comfortable.

“Who was that Mackenzie person? He looks familiar.” Dana drank some of her tea.

“Music producer.”

“Oh shoot. He goes by Mac King. I knew he was somebody, because he clearly has money. He left you a five thousand dollar tip.”

“He did?”

“Yes! When he paid, he said he wanted to put a tip for you but in cash. I gave him the tip envelope, and he pulled a band of cash out, telling me it wouldn’t fit.”

“You can have it.”

Dana choked on her food a little bit but then asked, “I can? It’s five racks, Camarih.”

“I know, and I don’t need it, especially not from his ass. And I’ve learned my lesson on taking money from men who like me.”

“Oh yeah. Wacko is crazy.” We laughed in unison as I got up to throw my trash away.

Even my breakroom was nice and immaculate. I had a cleaning service come in every morning at 4 a.m., and it always smelled good too, because I'd been working on a line of air fresheners and had been using it here. I wanted to see how clients responded, and like I thought, they always mentioned how good it smelled, either to me, my employees, or on my Yelp reviews.

"He is. Well I'm about to go clean up. I think my last one of the day is in fifteen minutes." I checked the time on my Patek watch.

"Hey, before you go, I wanted to tell you something." Dana turned in her chair, looking over her shoulder at me as I stood at the break room door.

"Okay."

"My friends and I went to The Pink Cherry a couple nights ago, and we overheard a couple of the girls who work there chatting about Tony having a baby on the way by one of them."

That damn rumor was still alive and well?

Rolling my eyes, I replied, "Oh, I've heard that bullshit, and that's exactly what it is... bullshit."

"I figured, but I just didn't feel right not telling you. In my eyes, even though you're my boss, you're my friend."

"Well I appreciate it, but I promise it's a lie. Houston has no children on the way." I wasn't ready to expose my pregnancy yet. I had about one more month before it was obvious.

"I believe you. He loves you too much and swears no woman can hold a candle to you."

Dana's words made me smile and remember that what she said was true. For a moment, I doubted my faith in Tony, but her comment made me remember that he would never cheat, for one, and definitely wouldn't plant his seed in one of them hoes.

Leaving the breakroom, I went into my office to check on my baby. He was still asleep, so I just watched him, while texting back and forth with my husband and friends. I also placed a reminder in my phone to have more of my products delivered, because every time a client came, they stocked up. Then I had patrons coming just for my products who were cleaning me out. Not to mention, my website stayed with heavy traffic.

Soon enough, it was time for my last facial, so I locked my office back up and went to handle my business. The client was one my favorites,

Barbara, who'd been coming to me since I was just an employee at *Angel Skin*. Time always flew by quickly when I did her facials.

"Girl, I swear I look younger than I am." Barbara checked herself out in the mirror. She was right. She was only fifty-five but looked thirty-five.

"And it's all thanks to you."

"That and the fact that black don't crack."

"Exactly." We shared a heavy laugh as I escorted her out.

Like always, she bought a couple things for her face and body, then checked out with Dana. Kai had gone home after restocking and cleaning the lobby, so while Dana went to clean the facial rooms, I brought my baby out into the lobby where I'd be for a minute, then went to lock the door. Just as I shut the front door, a woman appeared, staring at me through the glass.

"We're closed, I'm sorry," I expressed.

"It's not about a facial. Can you please let me in?" I looked to Avery, my security, and he gave me a nod to say it was fine, and he'd be there to handle it if needed. I trusted him since Tony did, so I let her in.

"Sorry. I meant to come by earlier, but I just couldn't get away from those damn promotional interviews." The girl talked to me as if we were old friends. She *did* look familiar.

Shutting the door behind her, I questioned, "What can I help with?"

"Right." She took a deep breath, looking around my shop. "Wow, this place is beautiful and smells so good... just like you." Her eyes finally landed back over here. It was like she was examining me.

"Okay, you can go—"

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry." She closed her eyes to take a deep breath. "My name is Roxie, and I came here to talk to you about my man."

Oh, she was that rapper Roxie.

"Excuse me?"

"My boyfriend, or now ex-boyfriend somewhat, has been messing around with you—"

"No, not unless your boyfriend is my fucking husband, you got the wrong one, sweetie. And you better not be talking about Houston Terranova."

Was this the pregnant hoe? I was ready to wring her ass like a fucking dishtowel. Her eyes darted down to my fists balled at my sides, so she backed up some. I then remembered the pregnant bitch was supposedly a Pink Cherry waitress, so I relaxed.

“Wait, no, no, I am not dating him, nor do I even know Tony like that,” she quickly let me know with her hands up. “My man’s name is Mackenzie, but he goes by Mac King, a producer. However, from the looks of things, it doesn’t seem like you’re returning his feelings.”

“No, I’m not.”

“It’s just, why would he break up with me if he wasn’t getting anywhere with you? And I tracked his phone here earlier.”

“Sounds like you need to be asking your man that and not me. But I am happily married and not interested in being involved in you guys’ bullshit.”

“I know but—”

“There is no but. My nigga is insane, do you understand? He will kill all of us if he even thinks your man *wonders* about me.”

“Yeah, I heard Wacko is off.”

“So don’t come back around here with this shit, okay? Or I will be forced to fuck you up.”

“Ye-yeah, okay.”

Avery opened the door to allow her to leave, then he laughed lowly at me.

“What?” I gazed up at him.

“You funny. I swear you’re one of the nicest people I know but crazy, just like your husband.”

“I’m not crazy, just don’t fuck with me.”

“Right.” He chuckled, and I did the same as I got back to work.

It was definitely time for me to let Tony know about Mac and his antics. I just knew his pursuit of me was on the low, but if he had his girlfriend coming to try and check me, that meant he was louder and prouder about it than I thought.

The last thing I wanted was for what Roxie thought to get into the wrong person’s hands, and then for that person to hand it over to Tony. Everyone knew my husband was a shoot first, ask later when it came to me, and I didn’t want to be responsible for yet another dumb nigga’s death.

Lord, help me.



JUST TWO DAYS LATER...

Today, Tony and I were taking our son to the zoo. I'd been wanting him to see animals for the longest, but Tony was giving me a hard time. Finally, I was able to convince him, and I was so excited for my little baby to see everything.

Tony paid for us to have a private tour of the zoo, and I felt like that was best. The less people, the less likely he would end up punching, embarrassing, or pistol whipping somebody. To prevent anything from happening, it needed to just be the three of us plus the tour guide, and I was even worried about him.

"Alrighty, are we ready to roll!" The older white man, Alan, who would be taking us through the zoo, shouted, clapping his hands.

"Yes! Aren't we, baby?" I peered over the stroller to look down at my son who just smiled when he saw my face. We had his stroller bed positioned upright so he could see.

"Chill out with all that weird shit, cuz." Tony frowned at the sun beaming down on him. I elbowed his ass to make sure he was nice.

Alan just laughed, I guess finding Tony's response funny.

We started to walk and first stopped by where the big giraffes were. Alan talked to us about them for a little bit, throwing in cool facts here and there. I looked down at my baby, and his little eyes were wide out of amazement, as he talked a mile a minute in baby gibberish.

"You look nice today." Tony grabbed a handful of my ass and kissed on my neck, ignoring Alan.

"Thanks, baby." I smirked.

Tony got behind me to hug my body as Alan continued to talk, and even though I wanted him to pay attention, his embrace felt too nice for me to nudge him off.

For the next hour, we looked at a whole bunch of animals and even got to feed some of them lettuce. They even had African honey badgers, which we learned were mean and violent as hell. Tony liked those, and it was the only time he actually listened to Alan's speeches on animals.

For the others, of course, Tony didn't want to participate, which I found hilarious. He did, however, remove our son from the stroller so he could get a somewhat closer look at some of the animals. My little baby was so excited.

We took a break to eat lunch, use the bathroom, and so I could change my baby's diaper. After that, we were back on for the last thirty minutes.

"Okay. Last stop, which is my favorite, the gorillas." Alan parked.

We got out of the little truck we'd been riding in, to get a closer look at the gorillas, while Alan explained their history.

"They're so big, huh, baby?" I had my son on my hip, pointing to the large animal that was standing near the gate.

"Would you like to feed it some leaves?" Alan offered, walking over to me with a bucket of leaves.

"Hurry this shit up. I don't like the way cuz is looking at me." Tony glared at the huge gorilla. Oh Lord. "Give me my damn son 'fore this nigga try to eat him." He took our baby from me as I chuckled.

Tony put our son in the stroller, while I fed the gorilla a few of the leaves.

"See, he's friendly." Alan laughed, I guess still thinking of Tony's comments.

"Yeah, he too friendly." Tony walked up next to me. "Quit feeding him that shit. I don't like the way this nigga looking at you." Tony snatched the leaves from me. "Fuck on somewhere." He threw them in the gorilla's face rudely.

"Baby, he's just an animal!"

"I don't give a fuck what this shit is! Flirting with my bitch like I ain't right here." Turning to Alan, he continued. "Aye, cuz, take us back to where the fuck we came from 'fore I shoot his big back ass, and knock you the fuck out for condoning this bullshit," Tony fussed.

"Oh my gosh." I shook my head as I went to check on my baby.

Alan's smiled disappeared, and as we tread back to the truck, me pushing the stroller, the gorilla roared, prompting Tony to whip back around.

"Who the fuck you talking shit too, cuz?" Tony swiftly pulled his gun out, which I didn't even know he had or how he'd gotten it past security.

"Houston!" I screeched as he charged toward the gate with it.

"Sir!" Alan shouted, voice trembling, so it was obvious he was afraid.

Rushing over, I tugged on his arm as he held the gun out, right at this poor gorilla. Intelligently, the gorilla turned away, running off to do something, hopefully it wasn't to go get his gorilla homies.

“That’s what the fuck I thought.” Tony tucked his gun in his waist and walked back toward the truck with me. “Fuck you looking at, nigga?” He sneered at a gaping Alan, who damn near flew to the driver’s seat afterward.

We rode in silence for a little bit before I said, “I cannot believe you almost shot that gorilla.”

“Told you if I see a nigga even look at you, it’s a wrap. And cuz was talking shit.”

“He’s a harmless animal, Houston.”

“That big muthafucka wasn’t harmless, trying to make you his bitch right in front of me. That shit got me tight.”

I pinched the bridge of my nose, trying to hold in my laughter, but I couldn’t. He was so serious right now. His handsome face was covered with a sexy frown, as his chest rose and fell.

“You are crazy.”

“Told you hood niggas don’t go places like this, Buttascotch, but yo’ ass don’t listen. Old disrespectful ass animals.”

“I’m sorry, baby.” I used his chin to turn his face toward me then kissed him. Looking at my son in his carrier, I cooed. “Daddy is insane, huh? Isn’t he?”

Hopefully that gorilla wasn’t traumatized. This would be our very last zoo trip as a family. Plus, I was sure we were banned.

RUBIE

I said a little prayer before I got out of my car to go inside of the building where Tony's office was located. It was huge, and he only used a few of the floors then leased out the rest, which I thought was smart.

We called it the Make A Killing headquarters, but he never officially named it that. It was just where all official business was done, including meetings and any new contract signings.

I waved to the receptionist, Anita, as I pranced by to get on the elevator, holding my son's carrier. I'd breastfed him in the car, so he was passed out, milk wasted, with his cute self.

It seemed like I made it up to where Tony's office was, quicker than usual. Using my fingerprint to get onto the floor, something Tony implemented so he could track every single person who came in, I made it through a pair of steel doors.

"Good afternoon, Rubie." Alejandra smiled.

I remembered when her ass was all rude and snobby. But something went down between her, Camarih, and Tony a minute ago, and ever since, she was the assistant from heaven.

"Afternoon. I'm here for my one fifteen p.m. appointment."

"Yes, I see it here. He should be ready for you soon. Would you like something to drink?"

"Sparkling water with lemon, please."

"Of course." Alejandra switched off.

She didn't dress as slutty anymore either. When she first came around, her clothes would be so damn tight, I knew exactly what she looked like

naked. Now she dressed more appropriately, rocking clothes that were actually her size.

She returned with my water, and I'd only taken a few sips before she let me know Tony was ready and escorted me to the back.

Upon entering his office, I was relieved to see he wasn't in here already. I needed a little more time to prep myself for this conversation. I was hoping he went along with things, because I was sick and tired of Mark Vegas blowing up my damn email and phone.

Inhaling sharply, I cupped my knees nervously, liking the scent of Tony's cologne that was in the air, even though he wasn't here.

"My bad." He walked in, going straight to his desk. He was wearing a Nike tracksuit, simple but clean, and I could still tell he was rich.

"No worries. I will make this quick." I watched as he stood behind his desk, looking at some papers. His head slowly popped up, and he gave me a look. "Oh, sorry. I didn't know you were ready." I rose from the soft couch, leaving my son on it, and sat in the chair right across from Tony's desk. "I have a great PR proposal for Miko. You know who Big Dane is?"

"Yeah." He folded his arms, looking down at me. He was still standing.

"What if we put he and Miko in a relationship. They're both hot right now, and that would drum up a lot of publicity. If they—"

"No." He sat down.

"Wait, what? Why?"

"Because I don't fuck with his people, so I'm not about to help them get money." He powered on his computer. "You know that old whopper head ass muthafucka you used to work for is his manager, right?"

"Yeah, I know that. But see, this is just business, and—"

"It's never just business, D."

Yes, he called me D. I still hadn't outgrown the DSL nickname.

"Tony, if you just think about it, I'm sure you will—"

"No, Rubie. And since when do yo' ass try to make fake ass relationships?" He frowned, looking at me with an accusatory expression. Did he know? Now I was afraid.

"Usually, I don't, but I just think in this particular case, Miko and the Gangstar Girlz would really benefit from this."

"Well get back to the fucking drawing board, because it's a no. And don't try to pull no dumb shit by hooking them up behind my back, because I'll shoot you and yo' nigga for trying to play me."

I believed him.

“Fine.” I huffed, getting lost in my thoughts of how I was going to hold up my end of the bargain with Mark. I was such a failure.

“Why you so hung up on this shit? And don’t lie.” Tony leaned back in his chair.

I looked into his eyes and realized I was more afraid of him than what Mark’s ass could do to me. Then again, I didn’t know what Mark had planned for me. But it couldn’t be worse than making an enemy out of Tony Wacko, right?

“Okay, but don’t get mad.” I kept my eyes locked on him as he waited. “I promised Mark I would do this if he switched spots with me in that magazine. I didn’t have the questions ready on time and didn’t want to risk another leak of information like with Nala, so I needed more time, which meant a later shoot. Mark had that later shoot, but gave it to me, as you obviously know.”

Tony squinted his eyes at me as he stayed leaned back in his chair, lips tucked in and his hands clasped at his waist. Every time he moved, a whiff of his cologne hit me. Next thing I knew, he was chortling heavily. His smile was rather bright and inviting, despite his devilish personality.

“You got the spot, so tell him to kick rocks.”

“Huh?”

“You ain’t got to come through because he already delivered, Rubie. Go on about yo’ fucking business.”

“But what if he wants revenge?”

“Revenge like what? Who the fuck is Mark Vegas?”

“He—”

“Ain’t shit but a bitch ass nigga who gon’ fuck around and get his block knocked off if he tries anything that interferes with my bread.”

Suddenly, a smile came across my face. I guess there was some good in working for a hood nigga like Tony. With him as my reinforcement, I felt safe enough to blow Mark off.

“Well then, problem solved.” I grinned, hopping up to put my folder in my bag.

“Aye, but since you was making deals and shit behind my back,” he kept his eyes on the computer, clicking around, “I—”

“Please don’t fire me. I—”

“Ain’t nobody about to fire yo’ muthafuckin ass. Camarih wouldn’t fuck me for months if I did. I ain’t losing nuts over no fucking body,” he explained irritably. I kept my laughter inside because I knew he was serious right now. “Get Big Dane over here.”

“Like for a meeting or to be signed?”

“The latter.” He ate a cherry Jolly Rancher.

“I don’t know if I can—”

“I’m not asking you, DSL, I’m telling you. And don’t ever try to play me by feeding me some bullshit, especially when it’s in regards to my fucking artists. We clear?” I nodded, about to turn my back to him so I could collect my things. “Aye.” He stopped me.

“Yes?”

“Rubie, you good as fuck at yo’ job, just stop thinking so fucking much.”

“I think I could be better.”

“Nah, you are better. You just ain’t displaying the shit. Get it together. You got it.”

“Thank you.” I simpered in disbelief but felt slightly better about myself at the same time. Tony didn’t compliment anyone other than Camarih, so to hear him say those things made me feel good.

“Get out.” He picked up his office phone and started dialing, so I left, grabbing my baby on the way.

For the rest of the afternoon, I ran errands, breastfed *again*, and made a couple phone calls. I had some interviews lined up for Nala, Eitan, Holli’s whack ass, and Dirko, so I wanted to be sure it was still set. I also had to schedule each of them in so I could go over everything and take my time with it. After Nala and the mixup with the Gangstar Girlz, I was making sure I was on top of everything. But shit, now I had to figure out how to poach Big Dane, and after Tony’s speech, I couldn’t drop the ball.

I was finished with all my work for the day around 5 p.m., so I went home, cleaned my baby, fed him again, then put him down to nap and started to work on dinner. My father was coming over, and I wanted tonight to be a success between he and Eitan.

“Let me have a look at it,” my dad requested, referring to my new diamond ring. He’d gotten here about thirty minutes ago, and dinner was almost ready.

“Beautiful, huh?” I stuck my hand out for him to get a better view of it.

I couldn't wait to show him after all the shit he talked when my son was born. For once, I was right, and he was completely wrong.

"Wow, that is very nice. I'm surprised." He removed his glasses, putting them back into his jacket pocket.

For as long as I'd known my dad, he always dressed in full on suits. I think I saw him wear a pair of jeans once, but that was back in the nineties when I was a little child, and I couldn't even confirm it. It was something I admired about him though, and thought was pretty cool. He looked like money, smelled like it too, and I guess that's because he was a baller.

"Why are you surprised?" I went to check on the chicken in the oven. My dad was seated at the counter top bar in my kitchen, while I prepared dinner for he and Eitan.

"I just didn't think he'd blow that amount of cash on a ring for you. However—"

"Daddy—"

"*However*, I'm happy he did. It shows that he took my words seriously, but that most importantly, he's taking you seriously."

"Okay, so you like him now?" I cheesed, hands clasped together out of hope.

"I think he's okay. I will like him once I see a marriage certificate."

"Oh my goodness." I shook my head, pulling out my good plates, silverware, and glasses.

"You know how many people get engaged but never go through with it? So no, Rubie, I will not be satisfied just because he asked you. It's a step in the right direction, but he hasn't reached the destination yet."

"Thank you for that." I pulled the food out of the oven, closing it with my knee. "All I ask is that you be nice to him tonight."

"I'm never disrespectful."

"No, but you were rude to him, and I didn't like it. You don't know him like I do. He's very sweet, loving, and just a great man. He doesn't deserve the way you talked to him, Daddy."

My father just looked at me and then chuckled.

"Even now that you're grown up, you still find a way to get what you want out of me."

We laughed.

"Good. Be nice. I love him."

"I will."

My dad helped me set the food and dinnerware out on the table. By the time we had everything set up, Eitan had come home. I made he and my father a drink, and then went to freshen up, hoping my dad kept up his promise.

When I came back into the dining room, they were smiling, having normal conversation, so that was good. We prayed over the meal and then began passing the dishes of food around to put onto our plates.

“Rubie, I was telling Eitan that he did a great job picking out your ring.” My dad chewed his food.

“I’m glad he approves. It took a lot of research, time, and especially money to get that for her.” Eitan nodded.

“And I love it.” I simpered at Eitan, who leaned over to kiss me.

“I’m happy you finally asked my baby girl for her hand in marriage, Eitan. You know she’s a great catch and what a lot of men look for in a wife. She’s beautiful, intelligent, can cook,” he pointed to the food, “ambitious, has her own money, and dotes on the man she loves.”

“I agree. She’s all that. And I appreciate you stepping to me because I needed that wake up call. I was putting it off for reasons that really shouldn’t have mattered,” Eitan expressed.

My dad obviously liked his response because he just smiled and nodded.

Dinner was nice, and I was so elated to see the two men I loved most, outside of my son, get along.

My father left around 8 p.m., so while Eitan got ready for bed, I fed my baby’s hungry ass since he woke up, and then his father and I read him a story so he’d fall asleep for the night.

We retired to our own bedroom, and while Eitan got in bed, his bottom half covered by the bedding, I started to undress.

Sitting down at my vanity, I removed my jewelry and then reached for my makeup wipes. When I looked in the mirror, I spotted Eitan watching me like a hawk.

“What?” I smiled.

“Nothing, just looking at you.” His back was against the headboard.

“So you just like looking at me?”

“Yeah, I do. Actually, I love looking at you. Come lay down.”

“I will, but I need to have a shower first.”

“Hurry up, please.”

Standing from my vanity, I trashed the makeup towelettes and then went to have my shower. Once out, I put on lotion, did my face routine, then brushed, flossed, and rinsed with mouthwash, before returning to the bedroom.

I slid into the bed, and Eitan slinked under the covers while facing me. He pulled me closer to him so that our noses touched, then pressed his lips to mine slowly.

“Are you okay?” I quizzed, touching his face. He looked like something was bothering him, and I noticed it even at the dinner table.

“Yeah... why?”

“You seem off, like you’re worried about something.”

“Nah, I’m good. I just want you to know that I love you.” He hugged me tighter.

“I know that.” I kissed him. “I love you too.”

Again, he just looked at me with that unreadable expression.

“So that means you would never leave me, right?”

“What reason would I have to leave you, Eitan, I—”

“If something happened, hypothetically, you wouldn’t leave me, right?”

I frowned, not understanding why he wanted to know this. Had he done something? My heart began to thump in my chest at the thought.

“What did you do?”

“I didn’t do anything, Rubie. I’m just asking you a question. I know I would never leave you, and I want to know that you feel the same.”

“No, I would never leave you.” I caressed his face again. “I love you, and I agreed to be your wife, so that should tell you that I’m in this for the long haul.”

“We should get married at the courthouse.”

“Uh... don’t you want a wedding? I want a wedding and for my father to walk me down the aisle.”

“We can do both, baby.” He rubbed up and down my back slowly, while looking deeply into my eyes. “Let’s get married now, and you can still continue with the wedding plans as normal. Only thing is, we’ll be official already.”

“Why right now?”

“Why wait? I want you to be my wife right now.”

“You sure?”

“Positive.”

“Okay, but we can’t tell my dad.”

“Aight, cool. I’ll have everything set up for this week.”

I was surprised he wanted to get hitched so quickly when it seemed to take him ages to propose. But I wasn’t going to question it too much, because I was ready to be his wife years ago. I guess my dad’s talk with him had really done a number on his ass.

Eitan kissed me hungrily, and soon enough, our tongues were introduced as he got on top of me and in between my legs.



WEDDING BELLS & ALARM BELLS...

“I cannot believe we did that.” I sat in the passenger seat of Eitan’s Phantom, staring down at my ring.

“I know.” He leaned over to kiss me.

“Mommy and Daddy are married, Elijah.” I looked into the back seat at my son who was asleep, per usual.

All he did was sleep, wake up to be fed, shit himself, and then knock back out. I guess he was living the life. He was the cutest thing too, having my deep complexion and his father’s handsome features.

“So what you wanna do to celebrate?”

“Honestly, I just want to go home and relax together all day. We’re usually separate and working for the majority of the day. It’ll be nice to actually be together for a full twenty-four hours.”

Nodding with a smirk, Eitan replied, “Cool, I’m with that.” Pulling off into the street, he asked, “You gonna cook, or should we order some food?”

“I really want some pizza, but I’m trying to lose these last ten pounds of baby weight, so maybe I shouldn’t.”

“Nah, get what you want. You deserve it. And you look perfect to me like always.” He took my hand into his as he continued to drive.

Sinking down in the comfortable seat, I peered out of the window with a smile. How did I get so damn lucky? The only thing I would change about Eitan was that he hadn’t come into my life to sweep me off my feet and steal me away from Armonn sooner.

We were home by 3 p.m., and Eitan ordered the pizzas right away while I got the baby settled. I'd pumped specifically for this day, so we were able to open a bottle of wine to enjoy.

While we waited for it to come, we just talked and kissed, nothing too much, and it was perfect. Plus, the sex was being saved for tonight, and I was positive it would be epic. A couple hours in, our son was ready for bed, so I bottle-fed him and put him to sleep for the night, before returning to the den with my husband.

"Should I post my wedding band?" I inquired as I lay on Eitan's chest. We'd been binge watching this show on Netflix. I hadn't realized how something so small could be so fun if you did it with the right person.

"Why not?"

"I don't know. I guess I was afraid my dad would see, but he doesn't use social media. The closest thing to a social media account that he has is that Bailey Furniture account, and I'd bet my life he's not running it."

"Hell nah he not. Homie is a damn multi millionaire, probably a billionaire. Some nigga making fifteen dollars an hour is running that shit."

"So true." We guffawed in unison before sharing a kiss. "Okay, I'm gonna post. I already sent it to Camarih, Shanece, and Jilly in group text anyway."

I sat up to take a nice photo, and my acrylics were fresh, so the picture was perfect. I posted it to my story instead of my feed, just in case that social media guru working for my dad came lurking on my page, and captioned it 'Mrs. Wright'.

Locking my phone, I laid back down on Eitan, and we got right back to watching TV. About fifteen minutes into a new episode, we heard the doorbell, so Eitan agreed to meet the pizza guy to collect our food while I got the plates.

My phone chimed as I got up, so I grabbed it on the way out of the den area. I saw it was an Instagram notification, so I unlocked it with my face as I tread the long way to our kitchen; this house was so damn big. I finally made it, getting the plates, and then checking the message.

Holli: *I see you forgave him for fucking Frida. I did always like how hard you rode for my baby daddy.*

Me: *Girl bye. He hasn't talked to her in forever.*

I shook my head as I left the kitchen, plates in hand. But again, I felt my phone buzz and sound off, letting me know another message had come. I

was praying it wasn't sent by the baby mama from hell.

Holli: *If forever means during his show in Las Vegas, then you're right.*

She sent a video right after, showing tiny ass Frida walking to a dressing room with Eitan's name on it. Maybe he wasn't even in there; however, the nigga told me he hadn't seen hide nor hair of this hoe since we'd gotten back together years ago.

I picked up the pace until I made it back to the den where Eitan had the pizzas out on the coffee table.

"You ready?" He smiled up at me, but it faded when he saw my expression.

"Did you sleep with Frida?"

"What? No. Where did you even get that shit?"

"So you haven't had any type of contact with her? Haven't been around her at any point since the last time y'all were boyfriend and girlfriend?"

Standing, he responded, "Baby, no. I told you. Who is feeding you this shit?"

Staring up into his face, I felt tears drips from my eyes and ski down my cheeks. His angry face switched to a mixture of astonishment and sympathy. He tried to thumb my tears, but I stepped back, putting the plates down next to the open pizza boxes.

"I know she was at your show in Las Vegas, Eitan, so that's one lie right there."

"No—"

"Stop it before you piss me off even more. I already have proof she was there, so don't even try to say otherwise."

Licking his lips, he exhaled. "Aight, she was there. Holli brought her there, but umm, nothing happened. She wanted it to, and I blocked it."

"You're lying." I started to cry. I couldn't believe this shit, and now not only did I have a baby with him, I was married to his—"This is why you wanted to get married so soon."

"Rubie, baby, I'm not lying. I—"

"Yes the fuck you are! I know when you lie because, after you speak it, you hang onto every word the person says in response! I've been fucking with you for years, dumb ass. I know you!" I hollered.

"I'm not lying, Rubie. I ain't fuck her!"

"Okay, so if I hit this bitch up right now, she's gonna tell me y'all haven't messed around? If you'd lie about something as simple as seeing

her, I'm sure you'd lie about sexing her!"

Of course his ass did it. I wasn't fucking him, and he was acting like his life depended on sex during that time. We even had a whole blow up about it.

"Aight, aight! She came to my dressing room, and she gave me head, but that was it, baby. She did that, and then I haven't touched her since."

"You say that like it's okay." I chuckled out of anger. "But no, it's fine. We can just get an annulment, and we'll have to work something out with Elijah as far as you seeing him. He can't really spend the night with you because he's breastfed—"

"Hold on, hold on, ain't nobody getting an annulment, Rubie. Yeah, I fucked up, but nah, we not doing all that."

"Excuse me? What the hell would make you think I'm going to stay with you? In fact, I'm leaving tonight." I hurried out of the den, and Eitan was right behind me.

Bursting off into the bedroom, I grabbed a duffel bag from my walk-in closet and began shoving just anything in there, couldn't even say what it was. I was distraught and felt like I was having an out-of-body body experience at the moment.

Eitan dropped down onto the floor with me, embracing my body tightly from behind as he apologized, all the while removing everything I'd put into the bag.

"Rubie, you not about to leave—"

WHAM!

I slapped him across the face and then just took off on him. He was able to grip my wrists and then pinned me to the floor of my closet. Feeling exhausted and like my whole life was a lie, all I could do was bawl my eyes out.

I could not believe he had done this to me. I loved him, and I thought he loved me too. I thought he was different and put him on a pedestal when it came to his peers. For him to cheat on me while I was healing from giving birth to his child, made it hurt even worse. He didn't love or care about me enough to put his own desires to the side for a measly month and a half, when I'd been fucking him whenever and however for years. I was embarrassed. I'd not only posted my wedding band, but during our entire relationship, I'd publicly praised him for the man he'd been to me, even to my own father. This had to be a nightmare.

I cried and cried until I fell asleep, and when I did wake up a little in the middle of the night, I realized I was in bed, and Eitan was holding me like he didn't want to let me go. Barely able to see or think straight, I passed back out.

As quickly as we got married, we were about to be divorced.

RAHIM

We 'bout to shake in this bitch... Frosted Flake on the wrist... The gang ain't playin' and shit...

I took a hit of the blunt between my fingertips as I sat in the VIP section of *The Pink Cherry*. It was thick in our area, with all the homies and just about the whole roster of *Make A Killing*, with the exception of Eitan and his new wife. The club was vibing to “Shake The Room” by Pop Smoke, drinking, dancing, and just enjoying the night.

I glanced to my right to see Wacko and Camarih seated in the corner of the VIP with her legs across his lap. They were kissing hard as hell like they were two seconds from fucking right here in front of everybody. Shit was like none of us were here, and it reminded me of how sometimes they'd go MIA together. I'm talking deactivating social media, turning phones off, and everything for days. Shit like that was unheard of in this day and age where social media was people's lives.

When I saw his hand go under her skirt, I knew that was my cue to look the other way.

One thing I knew for sure about that nigga Tony was that he loved the fuck out of his wife. And shit, I loved mine too. I admit I felt a tinge of jealousy when I saw them together, because it only reminded me that I'd fucked up with Amara and wasn't sure if I'd ever be okay with us never being together, or worse—her moving on.

“Baby, are you listening?” Dallas's voice pulled me from my thoughts of Amara.

“Yeah, I am. It’s just the music is so loud.” I kissed the corner of her mouth, making her smile.

“I said all the invitations have been sent, I have my dress, you have your tux, and everything is set. We just need to compromise on the reception food. I want something classy, and you want... well, something less classy.” She chuckled.

I just looked at her, seeing how beautiful she was. I just didn’t get why she was trying to have wedding talk here in the damn strip club.

“We can discuss it tomorrow, okay?” I touched her leg, and she nodded. “Can you order us some food?”

“Yeah, sure. Wings and fries?” She got up, and I nodded to say ‘yes’.

Once she was too far away to see me pull my phone out, I did just that, shooting off a text.

Me: *Just wanted to tell you goodnight and that I love you.*

I locked my phone and picked my head up to see Nala refilling her glass with something to drink. As she sipped it, her eyes cut to Tony and Camarih, who were still all over each other but had taken a short break from sucking face.

“Aye, you better not let Camarih catch you looking. You know she crazy.” I snapped my fingers at Nala.

She looked down at me, snickering, before taking a seat beside me.

“Thank you, because I am not in the mood to fight.” She took another sip. “I don’t know why I can’t get over him, Rahim, but trust me, I want to.” She glanced my way. “I’ve begged God to help me get over him.”

Damn... deep. Hearing her say that made me feel bad for giving her a hard time in my head.

“I know. Trust me, I know all about that shit.” I huffed just as my phone buzzed.

Amara: *As long as you’re engaged, do not send me things like that. It seems like you never learn. Goodnight.*

Shaking my head, I pocketed my phone.

“Oh yeah, wifey,” Nala simpered. Her smile went away before she asked, “Do you know if she’s pregnant again?”

“My wife?”

“No, negro, Camarih. I heard about a new baby, and I didn’t know if it was her or someone else.”

“I don’t know shit about that, but if there is a baby coming, I’m one hundred percent sure it’s with Camarih.”

My words seemed to bother Nala, and thankfully, Dallas had returned with the food so I could stop talking to her ass.

Dallas sat back down, so we started eating immediately, and thankfully, Nala got up to go mingle, I guess.

In the middle of me smashing this food, the deejay played Eitan’s new song, so our whole section plus the club of people got extra hype. Too bad the homie wasn’t here to witness how many people fucked with his music.

“My favorite part is the beat.” Dallas nudged me, making me smile. Shit like that was why I enjoyed being with her.

“Thank you.” I pecked her.

We finished our food, and the hostess we had for the night came to clean it up. Like clockwork, I spotted Trish enter our section, and my heart sank like the damn Titanic.

“Hey!” She greeted me excitedly after speaking to a few other people in our area. Before I could even say anything, she was in my lap.

“Aye, aye.” I barely let her ass touch my legs as I lifted her right back up into the standing position. “This is my *fiancée*, Dallas.” I gestured toward Dallas, putting emphasis on the word *fiancée* so Trish would catch on.

“Oh shit, girl, I’m sorry. It’s not even like that. Rahim is just cool.” Trish giggled.

“You’re fine.” Dallas waved it off coolly, surprising me.

“Camarih would’ve had her ass in a headlock by now.” Tony spoke to me lowly. I didn’t even know he was by me until he said something.

I laughed as he fixed up his drink then went back to his little corner with his wife.

“Let me know if you guys want any drinks from the bar. I’m working the area while Ashley is on break.” Trish cleaned up a couple used glasses. When we made eye contact, she winked at me, so I nodded to say thank you for not putting me on front street.

We celebrated at the club for a few more hours, but since closing time was 2 a.m. and it was already 1:15, Dallas and I left. Not to mention all my close friends were gone, including Tony, who crept out at midnight with Camarih.

“That was so much fun. I like partying with you and your friends.” Dallas sighed in a satisfied manner as I drove us home.

“Yeah, it was fun. I love that you can chill with them.”

It was true. That was another thing I liked about Dallas; she understood my job and also knew the importance of me having to go out to the club sometimes, even if it was just for fun.

“Well I love you, so it’s only right for me to love the people you surround yourself with.” She reached for my free hand, gripping it tightly.

I didn’t really have anything to say, so it stayed silent for the rest of the ride as we listened to some music. Dallas loved Nala’s songs, so whenever we were in the car together, that was usually what she wanted to hear.

“Shit, I’m tired.” I huffed as we entered the house.

Dallas started up the stairs as I put the alarm on, and once it was set, I followed right behind her.

“You know I love Nala’s music, but her, not so much. I’m a Camarih fan.” She began to change into her bedclothes.

Chuckling, I replied, “She’s harmless.” I removed my watch.

“Of course you’d say that.”

“Nah, she is. And I’m a Camarih fan too.” I smirked.

“Good.” She switched to the bathroom.

As soon as the door shut, I pulled my phone from my pocket and sat down on the loveseat in our room. I needed to send a text.

***Me:** I know what you mean, Amara, and I have learned. I’ll show you.*

I double-checked to be sure Dallas wasn’t coming out of the bathroom, then I locked my phone up so I could put on my boxers and knock out. Tomorrow would be a long ass day.

THE NEXT DAY... BREAKFAST WITH A SIDE OF TRUTH...

I ordered delivery early this morning so that I could have breakfast ready for Dallas. When I heard her heels in the foyer, I quickly rushed the plates to the table so that it’d be set when she walked into the kitchen.

“Wait, you can cook?” She frowned, looking around for some kind of evidence that this was takeout, I assume.

“Nah, I called it in.” I smirked, pulling a chair out and gesturing for her to sit down.

“Wow, well thank you.” She slid into the seat, opened the fabric napkin, and then prayed.

I sat down and prayed too; however, I was finished before her. I waited, smelling her perfume and seeing how put together she was.

Her clothes were flawless, and so was her hair and all that makeup she liked to put on but didn’t need. I just knew once Dallas and I made things official, her appearance would fall off, but I was wrong. Seated adjacent to me was the same woman I’d met at the studio the day I planned to work for Cope.

“How is it?” I asked as she shoved a forkful of the eggs into her mouth.

“Good. Where is this from?”

“Can’t tell you that.” I laughed when she hit my arm.

“Oh, I almost forgot. Did you call the hotel to see if they’d be able to accommodate my sister and her family? She’s flying in, and I didn’t think her staying here with us would work. She has a lot of kids and—”

“Dallas, I want to talk with you about something.” I cut her off.

“Okay. Is something wrong?”

“I don’t really know how to answer that. But let me just say what I have to say, and we’ll go from there.”

“I’m listening.” She stopped eating and dabbed her mouth, turning to face me a little more.

“I love being with you, I really do. And honestly, you’re one of the best women I’ve ever dated. Shit, I wanna say you’re one of the best women out there period.”

“Rahim, what is this? I definitely foresee a *but* somewhere in this.”

“There is no ‘but’. What I just said is a fact. I have nothing to say that would negate that. It’s just something I wanted you to know.” I stared at her, and she frowned a little bit, showing she was puzzled. “I also want you to know that I can’t get married to you.”

“What? You cannot be serious right now! We’ve paid for everything, sent invites, I—what the fuck? The wedding is in two damn months, Rahim! When the fuck were you going to tell me this? The day of?”

“No, right now. I will reimburse you for everything you—”

“Why can’t you marry me? What is the problem? Maybe we can fix it before the day comes.”

I hated to see her basically begging me like this. It just solidified my decision to not go through with this. I didn’t deserve her emotions because I

didn't have true feelings for her. I liked her, for sure, and enjoyed my relationship with her, but she and I could never be the real deal as long as I loved Amara as deeply as I did.

"Honestly, Dallas, I wish we could. What I wouldn't give to be able to tell you I love you and want to marry you, but I don't."

"So now you don't love me?" She started to cry.

"I do love you, but I'm not in love, no. I care about you, yes, but you deserve a man that is *in love* with you."

"I cannot believe this. What the fuck am I going to tell my family and friends that have invites in their damn mailboxes?" She sobbed. "Why are you doing this?"

"I know right now this seems horrible, but I promise you gon' look back and thank God that you didn't marry me, Dallas. I'm in love with my ex-wife, and I always have been. No matter what I do or who I try to date and replace her with, the shit won't go away."

If Nala felt even a percentage of what I felt for Amara when it came to Tony, I understood her ass. I'd dealt with a lot of hard shit, but I recently learned nothing was harder than trying to get over a person you were in love with.

"Because you don't try! You constantly chase her, so of course the feelings won't go away!"

"Dallas, I have tried, baby, I swear."

"No, you—"

"I am miserable!" I hollered. She wasn't understanding, and it was pissing me off. "Do you get that? I am fucking miserable not being with her ass. I haven't been happy for years, Dallas... years. No matter how many accolades I acquire, no matter how much money is in my bank account, no matter how beautiful and perfect the woman in my life is, how many cars I get, when I lay down at night, I am miserable as fuck because she ain't mine. The only time I feel anything is when I see my baby girl, and she's a portion of Amara, so that makes shit worse."

My words seemed to get through to Dallas because she calmed down a little bit.

"She doesn't even want you," she replied, breathing heavily to show her anger. "You're going to break up with me and run your ass over there, but she won't even take you back. So then you'll be single."

It was like she was trying to scare me into being with her.

“That’s very possible, but I’m not breaking shit off with you in hopes of getting Amara back. I’m doing it because you deserve better. I would prefer to have something next to me in bed than to be alone until my wife takes me back, but that would be shady. That’s the old Rahim. The mature Rahim is letting you go, even though he knows how scary the thought of being single is.”

“You don’t mean any of this. You’re just afraid because the wedding date is approaching.”

“Dallas, that stripper that sat in my lap last night? I fucked her, and yes, it was after I proposed to you.”

WHAP!

Dallas slapped me as soon as the last word leapt from my lips.

Standing up so quickly that her chair fell back, she bent down into my face and said through clenched teeth, “Fuck you, Rahim. You’re nothing but a bitch ass nigga who uses people until there is nothing left. I hope you die alone and broke.”

“Dallas, I didn’t mean to—”

“To what? Break my heart? Cheat on me? Embarrass me in front of my family and friends? String me along? Lie to me about your true feelings for your ex?” When I didn’t say anything, she continued. “Yeah, I thought so. Don’t you ever in life speak to me again, Rahim Cambridge.” She slammed her ring onto the table and left out just like that.

“Fuck!” I bellowed, banging my fist onto the table.

I listened as Dallas talked all under my clothes, calling me every disrespectful name she could think of, while packing I guess. I just heard her voice moving around my house a lot. Finally, after what seemed like forever, she came into the kitchen.

“I got as much of my shit as I could, but seeing as I don’t have a place to stay because I thought this would be my home, I can’t get everything.”

“You can stay here until you find a spot, Dallas. I got seven bedrooms.” I looked over my shoulder at her since she was in the doorway.

She just stared at me and then chuckled, running her tongue over her perfect teeth like she was contemplating hitting my ass again. Without another word, she turned her back to me and bounced.

For the next twenty minutes or so, I stayed seated, wallowing in my thoughts, but then went to get my key fob so I could leave.

I drove straight to Amara's place, and since it was Saturday, I was sure she was home.

"Rahim. It's not a good time." She answered the door.

"Why? And where is Ahmira?"

"Ahmira is with my parents. They wanted to take her toy shopping." She smiled at the thought.

"Oh, cool. Why can't I come in?"

"Everything okay, Amara?" A man's voice called out just before his face appeared.

"Yes, everything is fine. Donnie, this is Ahmira's father, Rahim." Amara widened the door so we could shake hands. I did it, but I was paralyzed on the inside and had a horrible pain in my chest.

"Nice to meet you, Rahim." Donnie smiled. "Baby, I'm going to get back to making the food." He kissed Amara's cheek.

I could tell she was uncomfortable showing affection in front of me, and I was uncomfortable seeing the shit.

"Rahim, I—"

"So how serious is it?"

"We're just friends right now, but I do like him a lot." She peered up into my eyes with her pretty brown ones.

"I see." I fidgeted a little bit, feeling off. "He called you baby, so it just seemed like it's serious."

"Rahim, what did you come over here for?"

"Can I at least come in and talk to you? I promise it won't be any arguments or bullshit."

I watched Amara weigh the pros and cons in her head, before she stuck her arm out to non-verbally welcome me in.

We walked to the back, and she let me in her office. It was only now that I'd realized I'd never been in here. I literally got her the house and had only been to the kitchen, den, and Ahmira's bedroom. Come to think of it, I'd never been in Amara's bedroom.

"Okay, what's up?" She shut the door and sat down on her couch. I went over and sat next to her.

"Amara, I love you, baby."

"Here we go." She rolled her eyes, sighing along with it.

"No, listen to me, for real." I took her hand, just as she turned to face me again. "I've always loved you, always wanted to be with you for the rest

of my life, but I've never been more in love with you than I am right now."

"Really? Why?" She gave me the black woman eyebrow raise, filled with skepticism. "And what about your damn fiancée?"

"Because I've been without you. And I was honest with Dallas. Told her I loved you and couldn't waste her time like that."

"Hmph. So that's what it takes, huh, you being without me to realize you love me so much? I swear, you ain't shit, Rahim."

"Yeah, it did take that. I haven't been myself since the day you told me you didn't want me anymore, for good, in Las Vegas. I tried to move on, but I can't."

"So you expect me to just get back with you after what you did? Please."

"No, I don't, because I know you're not that type of woman. But all I can ask is that you open the door to give me a chance. I don't care who you talk to or date in the meantime; just let me be one of them. And you gon' be the only woman I'm focused on from this day forward, I promise you. I put that on Ahmira."

Her face changed when I mentioned my daughter. I never put anything on her, so the fact that I did meant that I was serious.

"Rahim, I don't know." She took her hand from me to cover her face. "You just went way too far. Telling Shanece I was your sister was probably the most hurtful thing anybody has done to me. It was especially hurtful because it came from you, not only the man I loved, but a man I thought had my back and was my best friend. And for you to push me to the side for a fling, not even a woman you fell for, is just hard to get over."

I nodded, feeling like shit. I definitely didn't deserve another chance, but I wanted one and felt like I needed it to even be myself again.

"That was a nigga I don't know." I got down onto the floor to look up at her. "But just let me try, Amara, please. That's all I'm asking. If you can't fuck with me even after I try, I'll respect it, but I'm just begging for a chance. Let me take you on a date."

She chuckled.

"A date?"

"Yes. I'm willing to start from scratch."

"Okay, one date, but I hope you know I'm not sleeping with you."

"I wouldn't even expect that shit. It's only our first date."

She laughed and rose to her feet, so I did the same, before slipping my arms around her body for a hug. Unbeknownst to her, I closed my eyes to bask in it.

“Amara?” I heard Donnie call her name.

“I love you, baby,” I said softly before she pulled away to let me out of her office and leave.

I meant everything I’d told Amara, but I was hoping I actually made it out on top.

NEHEMIAH

JUST DAYS LATER...

I'd gotten a fresh haircut, so I was checking myself out in the mirror, making sure I looked good from head to toe. Once I approved of what I saw, I went to get my cologne to put on.

"Well what do you think?" Jilly pranced out of her walk-in closet to show me her outfit.

It was a short red dress with a split in it, and her shoes were barely there, showing off her sexy feet. Her brownish-gold hair was slicked back into one ponytail, bringing more attention to her pretty face. Even her skin was glowing, and I could already smell her floral perfume, which my ass loved.

"Wow, baby. You ain't have to do all this shit. Remember, tonight ain't about you." I walked over to her, circling her frame so I could get a good look at what belonged to me. Damn.

"I do not look that good." She laughed.

"Nah, you actually do. You about to get all the attention so don't say anything to me if it causes a problem." I kissed her lightly so I wouldn't fuck up her lipstick.

"I won't. I like being the center of attention anyway."

We chuckled as we left the bedroom, heading downstairs and out to the car. I opened the passenger side door for her, and after I saw she was in safely, I shut the door then got in on my side.

“You feeling okay tonight?”

“Yes. Thank you for asking. I threw up once in front of you, and now you worry all the time.”

“I know. I can’t help it. I thought you were going through an exorcism when the shit happened.” I pulled out of our space and drove off.

“Shut up.” Jilly ran her fingers through her ponytail. “I was thinking we should buy a house now that we’re going to have a baby.”

“The condo is huge though.”

“Yeah, but condos are for childless people. We need a home, something we can make our own and give our baby memories in.”

Glancing at her, I replied, “I like that idea. I guess we should start looking now since baby Van Buren is already cooking.”

“I know.” She touched her stomach. I put my hand on top of hers at the red light, making her smile at me.

Finally after being in traffic for almost an hour, we arrived at the venue where the party was.

Roxie and her label were throwing this big ass album release shindig. I usually didn’t get invited to shit like this, but she and her people wanted me to come. The music video I did for her was still being talked about, and she even got a best music video award for it, so her people were kissing my ass at the moment.

Valet got my keys, and then I helped Jilly out of the car carefully before we started toward the entrance. I gave the bouncer my name, and after he checked it off, we were let inside. The venue was like a big ass banquet hall in a sense, with yellow lights, marble floors, and a gold theme. Although music was playing, and loudly, nobody was really dancing like that. The affair was too classy for twerk sessions, but chill enough to get drunk and eat.

“Oh, there’s Roxie, baby. Let me introduce you, and we can say hi.” I took Jilly by the hand over to where Roxie was. I saw no sign of Mac, so I guessed they were really through. “Hey, Roxie. Congrats on the album and the award.” I smiled at her.

“Nehemiah, you came!” She hugged me but then jumped back sort of when she saw Jilly and us holding hands.

“This is my fiancée, Jilly.” I pointed.

“Nice to meet you, Jilly.” Roxie shook her free hand.

“So how is—”

“I have to go tell my manager something, but I will find you later.” Roxie cut me off mid-sentence and dashed away, leaving the people she was just conversing with before I got here looking crazy.

“Okay, let’s get you some food.” I walked off.

“That was weird. Is she always like that?” Jilly wanted to know.

“No, not really. She’s usually chill. But maybe she’s having a bad night or something.” I shrugged.

“It didn’t seem like she was having a bad night the way she pounced on you. Her mood was fine until she saw me.”

We made it to the self-service food area and began looking over the dishes being offered up.

“Baby, you know damn well that’s not true.” I kissed her temple.

“Nehemiah, she was like a child on Christmas morning when she saw you, and then all of a sudden, she and I made eye contact, now she has to go.”

“Jilly, please, let’s just enjoy tonight. I don’t want to go back and forth about whether or not Roxie is in a bad mood. And you know damn well you don’t care if she doesn’t like you.”

Nodding at the woman serving the food to put chicken onto her plate, Jilly said, “No, I don’t care, but if you’re going to be working with her again, she needs to get it together, or you won’t be doing any more of her videos.”

We started toward the table with my name on it plus my guest.

“What? I’m not gonna stop working with somebody just because you don’t like them—”

“Correction, *she* doesn’t like me. Why would you want to do business with someone who doesn’t like your woman?”

“Aight, you got me there. I wouldn’t want to work with them. But this conversation is pointless, Jilly. She never expressed that she didn’t like you, so let’s drop it.” I sipped my water.

“Well, we will see. And if her not liking me has anything to do with you, we’re going to have a huge problem.”

“Pregnant and mean as fuck.” I shook my head, chuckling.

Jilly and I chilled, finally talking about something other than Roxie for the next hour or so. The food was okay, but I could tell it was some uppity shit, and I wasn’t too fond of it.

“I’m going to go to the restroom.” Jilly got up.

“Okay. You want me to walk with you?”

“No, I will be okay. Don’t go anywhere while I’m gone though. I don’t want to look stupid sitting alone when I return.” She smiled, causing me to laugh.

“I got you.”

While Jilly pranced off and out of the humongous room the main party was in, I took my phone from my pocket to busy myself.

“Are you having a good time?” I heard Roxie’s voice. I’d seen her across the room the whole night, and only now did she come over to speak. Maybe Jilly was right.

“Good time? I don’t know if I could call it that, but it’s chill. I expected the food to have a little more weight and seasoning though.” I put my phone down to be polite.

Giggling as she descended into the empty chair, Roxie responded, “I know, but just remember, I had no control over that. The label paid, booked, and ordered everything here except my outfit.”

“Aight, good. I was worried for a second,” I joked.

She was quiet but then exhaled softly. “You know, I didn’t think you would bring her.”

“Her? You mean my girl?” I wrinkled my forehead. She spoke as if she were my wife and Jilly was my mistress I’d brought to a family barbecue.

“Yes. You know how I feel about you, so bringing her to my event was a bit rude, don’t you think?”

I was kind of slouched in my seat, but Roxie’s words made me straighten up.

“Hold on, Roxie. I told you I was in a relationship and that she was it for me. You don’t have the right to be tripping off of me bringing her anywhere I go. I never gave you the impression that there was something between us.”

“Oh wow, so you don’t have any feelings toward me?”

“No, not in that way. I think you’re a beautiful girl and that you’re cool as hell, talented, but that’s it,” I stressed, wanting her to catch on.

The last thing I wanted was some drama with her and Jilly, when I wasn’t even feeling her in that type of way. If I was gone have issues over a female, I at least wanted it to be one I’d messed with or planned on messing with.

“I could’ve sworn you said if you were single, you’d date me.”

“I told you I *probably* would, and the only reason I even said that shit was because I felt bad for you in the moment.” When I realized I was getting angry and saw the sadness mixed with a little dismay on her face, I sighed. “Roxie, I didn’t mean it like that. I just—”

“It’s fine.” She got up abruptly, taking her flute of champagne with her. “You enjoy the rest of your night, Nehemiah.”

I let my head fall back, irritated with myself for stooping so damn low.

“You okay?” Jilly stood over me so that my view of her was upside down.

“Yeah, I am.” I picked my head up. “Let’s go. I’m bored, tired, and hungry.”

“Okay, me too.”

We left out hand in hand, and I definitely spotted Roxie looking our way. I saw in her eyes that she was angry with me still for what I’d just said moments ago.

This would be the last damn time I tried to make friends with one of these females I worked with. I didn’t like drama of any kind, but especially the type that would possibly fuck with my personal life.



AROUND 7 P.M.... A NEW DAY...

I stood outside Star’s spot and rang the doorbell for the third damn time. I was here to get my son, Timothy, and as usual, she was fucking with me. Just as I was about to call her phone again, she opened the door, wearing lingerie. Her bra and panties were purple, see-through, and had yellow butterflies in certain places.

“What are you wearing?”

“You caught me in the middle of a job.” She walked away from the door, showing me her underwear was a thong.

Star had one of the nicest bodies I’d ever seen naked, borderline perfect, but not better than Jilly’s. Jilly was more petite and softer, but I liked it... loved it. Just thinking about her had me ready to get home and try some things.

“A job? You own a fitness company. How is wearing that part of your job?” I closed and locked her door.

“Okay, I meant a side hustle. This lingerie company hired me as an ambassador for obvious reasons.” She gave me a look. “So I have to take some photos in this.”

“Well, yeah, you’re definitely the perfect candidate for some shit like that.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“It means your body is extremely nice, so you can sell the shit well.”

“You don’t have anything to say about me posting pictures in this online?”

“No, why would I?”

“I remember back in the day, you wouldn’t even want me filming myself at the gym in biker shorts.”

“Yeah, because you were my girl. Now, that ain’t got nothing to do with me. That’s yo’ man’s problem. As long as you ain’t doing anything that will reflect badly on my son, then I’m good.”

“I’m single now, actually.” She seemed to be waiting for me to reply to that, but when I didn’t, she inquired, “So if Jilly wore this on social media, you wouldn’t care?”

“I would, but that’s my girl. Star, can you just go get Timothy, or should I do it?”

“I’ll get him, relax.” She went up a few of her stairs before looking back over her shoulder. “You know, it’s crazy how loyal you are to her, when she doesn’t give you the same in return.”

“Okay.”

“Fine, if you don’t believe me, ask her about her boo Ahmad.”

“Who the fuck is Ahmad?”

“Ahmad Drake. I saw them out to dinner looking very cozy, to the point where I almost texted you to see if y’all had broken up. I just knew your little Jilly couldn’t be cheating on you. But I remembered we’re not cool, so I didn’t hit you up.” Star continued up the stairs to get Timothy, leaving me dumbfounded.

“Hey, man.” I scooped my son up when Star returned with him. Thankfully, she had covered up.

“Have a good weekend with daddy and his *girlfriend!*” Star kissed our son before looking at me and laughing.

“Fuck you.”

“Ooh, Daddy!” Timothy’s eyes widened. “Say sorry to Mommy!”

“I’m sorry, Mommy.” I looked to Star, making sure my face let her know I wasn’t in fact sorry.

She kept the smug expression she was wearing, offering up a finger wave as I made my way out.

Timothy said he was hungry, so even though I was in a rush to get home to Jilly and find out what the hell Star was talking about, I stopped. He wanted a McDonald’s Happy Meal, so that’s what I bought him, and while waiting for his food in the drive-thru, I got a text from Star. It was a series of photos of Jilly and Ahmad getting in a car, getting out of the car, and going to eat at some restaurant. I was livid but had to keep my cool for my kid.

When we got home, I allowed Timothy to eat in his room, which I never did, and then went right to my bedroom to find Jilly. She was in the bathroom, putting some mask on her face.

“Aye.” I leaned in the doorway.

“Hey, baby.”

“You work with Ahmad or nah?”

The face she made when she turned away from the mirror to look to her right, at me, gave me the answer.

“Yeah, I am, but—”

“Jilly, I specifically told you not to work with his ass, and you told me you wouldn’t!”

“I know, but it was a lot of money on the line. Plus, it was gonna give me a boost in my career!”

“So your career and money is more important than our relationship I see.”

“No, it is not, but I didn’t see how me working for him would interfere with us, just because you *think* he will like me!”

“It ain’t no fucking think! I’m a nigga, and I know how we roll! You are a very attractive girl, Jilly. I know how niggas think!”

“We are friends, Nehemiah, and—”

“Friends that go out to dinner late at night!” I saw her freeze upon hearing my words. “Yeah, you ain’t think I knew that, huh? Where else you let him take you or do to you, Jilly?”

“Excuse me! Do not talk to me like that! We were hungry, and I didn’t want to sit in traffic while starving, so we decided to get a bite to eat while the traffic died down.”

“I bet that was his idea.” Again, she just stared at me. “And look at you, falling for the oldest tricks in the damn book! I at least thought he’d have to dig deep to scheme on you, but it looks like it was easy!”

“Fuck you, asshole! I told you he is my friend and—”

“Whatever. Keep being friends, and keep working for the nigga until he pulls his dick out on you, if he hasn’t already.” I stormed from the bathroom, snatching my keys back off of the dresser.

“Where are you going!” Jilly followed after me.

“Don’t worry about it. Call up Ahmad and see where he going, since you seem to care more about his ass than being with me.” I slammed the bedroom door in her face and rushed down the stairs.

“Nehemiah!”

I heard her repeatedly calling my name, but I knew if I kept talking to or looking at her, I might say something I’d regret.

The picture of her at that dinner table with him was fucking with me something serious. Jilly didn’t have the best track record as far as fidelity went, so all I was feeling like right now was Vernon number two. I could only imagine the shit she was telling him when she came home after getting fucked by me all night. I was probably her *friend* at one point too.

Once in my car, I sped off. I’d thought about taking Timothy with me, but he would be good with Jilly. She may have been a cheater, but she was a good person and mother figure.

Mother figure... now I was wondering if that damn baby was mine. Nah, she started working for him after she got pregnant. But how did I know that? I didn’t even know when she began being his stylist, with her lying ass. Shit.

After a minute of cruising, I ended up driving between the gates of Roxie’s mansion. This was the first place I thought to go, thinking about Jilly and her *friend* Ahmad.

Climbing out of my car, I rang Roxie’s doorbell, and after a couple minutes, she opened the door.

“Nehemiah? I’m confused.”

“I know. I just wanted to see if I could come in and talk.”

“Umm, sure.” She welcomed me in and closed the door behind me.
“What did you want to talk about?”

I picked her up, putting her legs around my waist, making her smile seductively. Carrying her up the stairs, I let her direct me to her bedroom, then put her down on her large bed. I removed her dress and damn near drooled at the sight of her body, as if I hadn’t seen it before.

“Damn,” I mumbled.

Giggling, she used her pointer finger to tell me to come get on the bed with her, so I did, spreading her legs wide and feeling my dick get hard.

Just as I got ready to kiss her, I dropped my head.

“What’s wrong?”

“I can’t.” I rolled off then sat on the edge of the bed to put my face into my hands. “Fuck!”

“Why, is something wrong?” She gripped my shoulders from behind and peered around to see my face.

“No, nothing is wrong, especially not with you. This just ain’t me.”

Roxie got off of the bed and put her dress back on as she stood in front of me.

“Not a cheater, huh?”

“Nah. It’s never really been my thing, but I especially can’t do it to Jilly, no matter how much I want to right now.”

Roxie smiled softly.

“Even though it’s probably annoying, and even though I was really in the mood to fuck you, I admire that.”

“I want to apologize for what I said at your party last weekend. I really ain’t mean for it to come out that way. I was just trying to explain that the only reason I admitted to possibly dating you, if I was single, was because I saw how sad you were. I still meant what I said, but I just wouldn’t have said it had you not been upset. I would’ve kept it to myself.”

“I see.” She rubbed the side of my face as she looked down into my eyes.

Taking her hands, I added, “But I’m with Jilly, and I love Jilly. I don’t want to be with anybody else but her. That’s who I’m made for and vice versa, same way you’re made for somebody. It ain’t me though. You understand what I’m saying?”

“Yes.” She nodded. “Thank you for always pumping my head up. It’s helped me in getting over Mac because I know I can find better. Seeing you

and how you love Jilly, gives me hope.”

Together, we chortled.

“Okay, good.” I got up. “Sorry for all this. I shouldn’t have come over here.”

“I’m glad you did.” She got back onto her bed. “I guess I will see you around.”

“Yeah, I think we work well together.”

“I agree. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight.” I left her bedroom and eventually her house.

I drove right back home but sat in the car for about twenty minutes before heading inside. I took my ass up the stairs, checked on Timothy, who I realized Jilly had put to bed, then I went back into the bedroom I shared with her to see her putting that long hair into a braid. When I first walked in, we made eye contact, but she promptly focused back on the TV.

“Can you cut the light back off please?” She finished her braid and got under the covers.

“Yeah.” I hit the switch then walked over to her side of the bed to take a seat. “I’m sorry for what I said to you, baby, but you have to understand where I’m coming from.”

“I do, Nehemiah, but you have to realize that Ahmad won’t be the last man to need or want my services. I can’t turn down every job that involves the male species. Same way I don’t expect you to not shoot videos for women.”

“You’re absolutely right. I guess it’s because of how we started, it has me on edge a little bit.”

“You are not Vernon, and Vernon was definitely not you. How can you not see the vast difference between you?”

“I know. I know.” I shook my head at myself. “I was wrong for trying to control who you work with due to my own insecurities, but lying to me, Jilly, and then going out to eat with him late at night, ain’t cool.”

“It’s not, and I’m sorry. But I promise you, it was innocent. You know I’m not easily swayed or manipulated, so if I was eating with him, there was good and valid reasoning.”

“Yeah, but I just think all the unnecessary time spent with him should be cut out. I can guarantee he is going to start liking you if you hang with him outside of work.”

“I can guarantee he won’t.”

“No you can’t—”

“He’s gay, Nehemiah. He admitted it to me, so contrary to popular belief, I am not his type.”

“Oh... shit.”

“Yeah, but don’t say anything. He told me this in confidence. I hadn’t planned to tell you, but since you’re so gung-ho on thinking he will try to make a move, I decided to.”

That was a huge ass relief.

“You forgive me?”

“Of course. Do you forgive me?”

“Always.” I leaned closer to her for a kiss. “I love you.”

“I know you do.”

“Jilly, come on, man.”

“Okay. I love you too, sexy.”

“Oh, I’m sexy?” I pulled the covers off of her and stood up to start undressing.

“You are, very.” She removed her nightgown.

When I was naked, I slid her panties off and got on top of her.

“Well I got some sexy shit to show you?”

Smirking, Jilly cut the TV off, using the remote, just before I slipped my tongue into her mouth and my dick inside of her body.

Tonight was crazy, but in a weird ass way... much needed.

CAMARIE

“So what are these types of nails called?” Rubie asked me. She’d come over, so I had my nail lady and her assistant make a house trip to hook us up.

I’d been getting my nails done by Grace for years now, and because of me, she’d been able to get a shop in a better location and have higher prices, although she still charged me the original fee.

I always posted my nails on my story, and people always asked who I went to. After a while, Grace was popping, so her thank you to me was making house visits whenever I wanted.

“It’s an après set,” I replied.

We were seated in the den that was set up specifically for me. The other one was for Tony, and we used it much more since it had a bar and all that manly stuff. I still enjoyed mine because it was girly and so relaxing to be in. It was a perfect spot to put my baby to sleep when he was cranky.

“I’ve never had this before, but I think I like it better.”

“Yes. It’s the only thing I get now. It lasts much longer and just looks cleaner in my opinion.” I watched as Grace filed away at my nails, glancing at Rubie here and there. “How are you lately?”

“I’m okay.”

“Just okay? You recently got married; I would think you’d be happy. Is something wrong with work?”

“Nope. Work is perfect.” Rubie let out an exasperated sigh then said, “Eitan cheated.”

“What? Are you sure? Don’t believe what these hoes tell you, Rubie.”

“He admitted it to me. He told me he got head from his ex Frida when he had a show in Vegas.”

I admit I was surprised because Eitan was all about Rubie. He loved her so much that what she was telling me was hard to believe, even though I knew she was being honest.

“I can’t even picture him doing that to you.”

“Me either. I’ve been waiting to wake up from a nightmare. I feel so dumb because I trusted him too much. I had way too much faith in him, when he’s a rapper; they all cheat.”

“Did he say why he did it? This is just out of character for him.”

“Because he wasn’t getting it at home. He’s such a fucking pig.” Rubie frowned hard as she watched Grace’s assistant Hannah work on her nails.

“Wo—”

“Hey, ladies!” Jilly came in. She was the only person who had a key to our house and her fingerprint in the unlock system.

“Hey!” Rubie and I said in unison. I gave her a look, letting her know we’d finish the conversation later.

“Ooh this is some bougie shit right here, getting your nails done in the house?” Jilly plopped down onto my cream colored couch.

“Shut up.” I laughed.

Jilly, Rubie, and I talked for the duration of the nail visit, and as soon as Grace and Hannah left, I got my baby situated then made us a late lunch to eat.

“Who the hell is she talking about?” Jilly showed me her phone screen. The three of us were relaxing in my den, just chit chatting on a full stomach.

What I saw on her phone was Joy’s story post. She’d typed ‘Wow my ex is having another baby’ with a laughing emoji. I frowned, wondering who she was talking about because, one, Tony wasn’t her ex. He was just fucking her. And two, no one knew about me being pregnant yet. I planned to tell next week.

“I don’t know.” I shrugged as Jilly allowed Rubie to read it. “Wait, maybe she’s referring to that rumor going around at The Pink Cherry.”

“What rumor?” Jilly perked up, and so did Rubie.

“Somehow, a rumor is going around that Tony impregnated one of the girls who work there.” I waved it off. “But we all know that is a lie.”

“Yeah, it is. They’re probably talking about Nala.” Jilly scrolled on her phone like she hadn’t just dropped a bomb.

“Nala?” Rubie and I inquired at the same time.

“Yeah. She got pregnant by her boo, well ex-boo now, and she said she wished it was Tony’s, but since it wasn’t, she got an abortion.”

I felt sick to my stomach hearing this.

“Tony knows she said this?” Rubie asked just what I was about to.

“Yeah, I told him. He said he didn’t care what she did with that baby; he was more worried about wasting money.” Jilly giggled, but I didn’t find shit funny.

The nigga had told me everything but that little part about the hoe wishing the baby was his. I had really been trying to leave the whole Nala shit alone because it was business, but that bitch was doing way too much. It was one thing to like my man, you couldn’t help the shit, and as long as you kept it to yourself, I wouldn’t care. I couldn’t control who liked him, but going as far as aborting a baby because it wasn’t his was some other shit.

“Well, ladies, I have to get somewhere.” I rose up.

“Oh, okay.” Rubie stood as well, picking up her son’s carrier on the way. He was adorable and so well behaved.

“Where are you going?” Jilly quizzed as she slipped her feet into her Fendi slides.

“An errand. I will talk to you two later.” I rushed out and headed up the stairs to get my son. He was knocked out the entire time I bundled him up. He had a lot of hair now and looked even more identical to his father.

We left the house, and I made a trip to Tony’s main studio, which was in the hood. I sure did drive my damn Rolls-Royce, because I knew no one would bother it. Everybody knew whose girl I was, and unless they were contemplating suicide by proxy, then they wouldn’t fuck with me.

I put Houston in his stroller and then entered the studio. It was about 7 p.m. at the moment, so the streetlights were on outside. Making my way down the hallway, I heard a few voices, so when I stepped in, I smiled, seeing Rahim, Abel, and then that new artist Brooklen.

“Where is Houston?” I asked after Rahim, Abel, Brooklen, and I exchanged greetings.

“Oh, he went to get the food. He’ll be back in a second.” Abel checked his watch.

“Alright.” I went to sit down on the couch, parking my baby’s stroller to the side of me. I kept him covered up.

“I don’t think we’ve ever formally met,” Brooklen spoke. She was on the couch next to the one I was seated on.

“No, I guess not, but nice to meet you.”

“You too.” I felt her staring at me, so I knew there was more to come. “You’re so beautiful; you look just like your pictures on social media.”

“Thank you.” I chuckled. The men were wrapped up in their own conversation, playing the music low, which I appreciated since my baby was asleep.

“I use your products too, and they smell so bomb.” Brooklen cheesed. “You know you and Tony are a cute couple. It must be nice to have a beautiful, smart woman, and it must be nice to have a handsome, rich, smart, and protective man.”

Turning to face Brooklen, I smiled and said, “Thanks again. I know you don’t know me well. However, I want to make it clear that Houston is a married man. So whatever you think might happen—it won’t. You can try, because I am sure you will, but all that’s going to happen is he’s going to embarrass you. Then on top of that, if I find out that you tried, I’m going to beat your ass on sight. The only pussy he’s interested in is mine, which is why he put this big rock on my finger.

“Now what I suggest is that you forego trying to get a taste of that dick, which belongs to me, and prevent a very terrible ass whooping. But whatever you decide, just know the outcome will be the same; you wishing you knew what that dick was like, while I’m home riding it. You can do that with or without your teeth.” I got up. “Have a goodnight, Brooklen, and I wish you much success so that my man can keep getting them coins. I need a new whip and some diamonds.” I winked at her as I pushed my son out of the studio room, leaving that thirsty bitch dazed and confused. I heard Rahim and Abel snickering like schoolgirls at her expense.

I decided to wait in the hallway to get away from Brooklen, and after about five minutes, I saw Tony step in. Of course, puppy dog Nala was right behind him, with her pitiful ass.

“Hey, baby, what you doing here?” Tony came to kiss me, and the only reason I let him was because that hoe was watching.

“Can I help you? Take this damn food and keep walking, bitch, before it’s round two!” I snapped when Nala just stood there like she needed Tony

to escort her into the studio room.

“Aye aye, what the fuck!” Tony shouted when I pulled one of his guns from the rear waist of my jeans. I brought it just in case that bitch was here.

“Ah—“ Nala screeched at the sight of the firearm, but quickly shut up out of fear just as Tony snatched it from me.

She hurried off after Tony gave her the big brown bag before tucking the gun.

“Camarih—”

“Why the fuck is she with you? We had a whole conversation, and you promised to cut down time with this bitch, but now y’all going on food trips together? You got me fucked up!”

“No, you got me fucked up, coming in here yelling and shit. Calm yo’ ass down.” Tony spoke through clenched teeth as he towered over me. “I left to get the food, and the bitch followed me. I ain’t think it was that muthafuckin deep. Ain’t like I drove and allowed the hoe in my fucking car; I walked, and she walked too. You know damn well I’m not fucking that hoe. And after you beat her ass in front of all them people, she ain’t tried shit.”

“Oh right, she’s over you, but she went and got an abortion because the baby wasn’t yours. You know what? You might as well be with the bitch because it seems like you just can’t stay away.” I started to leave since I felt tears coming up.

“Aye, bring yo’ ass back over here.” Tony put his arm around my torso and brought me into him so that he could hug me tightly. “It’s not that fucking serious, Camarih. You already know where my head is at, so why you even worried about her ass? I haven’t done shit with the bitch in years, and I’m not interested in doing shit.” He pulled back some to look down into my eyes before he kissed me. “I love the fuck outta you, girl. A nigga is all about you twenty-four-seven.”

“Make her leave,” I whimpered. “Or I’m gonna go beat her up right now.”

He laughed for a second, looking oh so fine.

“Aight. But look,” he gripped my jaw, while his other arm had my body locked against his, “make this the last time you come in my shit talking crazy, you hear me? I love you, but I’m still crazy as shit and still liable to slap a muthafucka up. You remember who the fuck yo’ nigga is before you roll through here on some bullshit.”

“Yes, daddy.” I kissed his neck, making his fine ass smirk and nibble on his lip.

He kissed me again, nastily, still holding my jaw, then said, “Now I wanna eat ya pussy.” I felt my clit thump, even though I was still mad at him. “Go in that room and wait for me while I put this hoe out.”

“Okay.” I did just what I was told, taking the stroller with me, and minutes later, Tony joined me, eating my pussy so good I came five times back to back.



MAC WAS able to get his secret of liking me out in the open, even though I’d blocked him. One of those nosy blogs reposted a picture of me, and he just had to comment saying ‘she’s so damn sexy’. Of course, they ran with that, reposting it and tagging Tony all in the comments. It was a nightmare when it first happened, and although Tony didn’t reply or comment, he let me know he had plans for Mac.

My man wasn’t an internet gangsta, meaning anytime someone had an issue with him and stated it publicly, which was rare, he’d never respond. He’d just get at them in person. I found that to be very sexy for some reason. I guess because it just proved how much of a real nigga he was, unlike these social media thugs. The only time he commented on anything was when I would post a photo. He’d always say something funny or super freaky. My thoughts made me simper at how much I loved him; however, that wouldn’t put a stop to tonight.

Now that Tony was aware of Mac’s affections for me, I was going to give his ass a taste of his own medicine. He continuously brushed off my feelings toward Nala, so I wanted him to see how it felt to know your significant other was in the presence of someone who had professed their admiration for them.

Yes, I knew I was treading in dangerous territory, but that evening in the studio had me reeling still, and I couldn’t get the fact that Nala actually had an abortion for such a foolish yet lovesick reason. She had deeper feelings for my man than I thought, yet Tony still believed it was cool to be alone with her.

“Hello?” I answered my phone when I saw Rubie’s name.

“I’m outside.”

“Okay, see you soon.” I hung up then walked over to the mirror to inspect my look.

Tonight I wore a short gold Saint Laurent dress, with some gold Tom Ford sandal stilettos. The dress was already tiny, but it had a split on the side. Thankfully, my stomach was still passing as being flat, so I looked good.

My makeup was flawless, and I made sure to use some of my Fenty Trophy Wife highlighter to keep the gold theme. I even put some of it on specific areas of my body to give it more of a glow. That along with my gold diamond Rolex, diamond Cartier bracelets, and gold Chanel earrings had me looking like the trophy I was.

Tonight I was going to the concert of this rapper named Soo. Mac had slid into my DM’s from his backup profile and invited me. He let me know I’d have VIP seats and backstage passes. Initially, I told him to fuck off, but after Tony’s latest stint with Nala, I messaged Mac again to let him know I was down to go. And since Eitan had fucked over Rubie, she was accompanying me tonight.

Jilly came through on watching my son while I went to ‘dinner’, and Rubie’s father agreed to watch hers. We were about to have some fun and make our niggas very upset. I couldn’t tell Jilly where I was really going because, although she was like my sister, she told Tony any and everything.

I took a photo of myself in the mirror and then sent it off to Shanece. She wanted to come but wasn’t feeling well. I told her ass she was probably pregnant, but she felt otherwise.

Shanece: *You look soooooo fine! He is going to kill you.*

Me: *Good.*

Shanece: *Lol! Keep me updated. Then again you may not have to, because I might see your face on a milk carton.*

I laughed at her text then tucked my iPhone into my black and gold Chanel clutch. I used some of the perfume from my own line *Whipped* that I would be releasing soon, and then I was out the door.

“Damn, you look nice.” I got in the car, taking Rubie in.

She wore a short orange dress that perfectly complemented her supple chocolate skin. Her hair was slicked back into a bun with a side part, showing off her dangly Dior earrings.

“So do you! I cannot wait to turn up!”

“Same, girl.”

We listened to some music on the way to the venue and parked around the back in the VIP lot like Mac had instructed. We were then taken inside and to our section, which had a great view of the stage. Someone even took our snack orders.

“You actually came.” Mac entered our area. “I’m Mac King.” He introduced himself to Rubie. I was with Shanece the last time.

“Nice to meet you, Mac, and thank you for the invite.” Rubie smiled.

“No problem at all. Y’all look great.” He rubbed his hands together and then looked at me while licking his lips. “So I will see you backstage when the show is over, right?”

“Yep.” I smiled.

This nigga really thought he was about to fuck me.

“Girl, you ain’t shit,” Rubie commented as soon as Mac left, causing us to cackle heavily.

“I know. Okay, so no posting until after we are at home. I don’t want them to find us. Deal?”

“Deal.” Rubie agreed, slipping her phone into her Bottega pouch just as I put my phone up as well.

By the time our small snacks and juices came, the concert was in full effect, and Rubie and I were having the time of our lives. Soo always had bangers, so just about every song he did, Rubie and I were up out of our seats dancing and singing along. Having a VIP booth made it even better because it was like we had a private show and with plenty of space.

It was 9:30 p.m. when the concert was over, so Mac came to get us so we could go backstage. He said it was food back there and gifts for us both. Rubie and I went and got to meet Soo, who was drooling over us. He gave us signed albums, and then we let him be so he could sign autographs and take photos with his fans.

Mac then walked me and Rubie to a secluded room that had a bunch of different kinds of food, drinks, and desserts. My pregnant ass was salivating at the sight.

“I just have to check on something, beautiful, but wait right here for me, okay?” Mac came over to me as I made a plate. “This is for you though.” He pulled an orange Hermès bag from the brown closet in here and handed it to me before leaving the room.

“Is that what I think it is?” Rubie’s eyes widened.

“Let me see.” I put my plate down to unbox the gift, and yes, it was a pretty Birkin 25 with crocodile leather. “What the hell!” I laughed.

“Damn, and it has that croc shit, so it was at least six figures.”

“I know. I’m going to put it back in the closet.”

“Give that shit to me!” Rubie stopped me.

“Eitan will kill you!”

“Fuck him!”

I laughed as Rubie boxed it back up so that she could take it with her. We finished making our plates and then sat down to eat, chatting about how I was going to make my escape without having to hang out with Mac alone.

POP! POP!

Suddenly, two gunshots rang out, and we heard a bunch of commotion, with people screaming and definitely running. Scared as hell, Rubie and I hopped up, dropping our food. I rushed to the door to peek out, and Rubie was right there by me, looking afraid.

I spotted Tony barging through and people running, making way for him like he was Moses and they were the Red Sea.

“Aye, man, what the fuck—”

WHAM!

Tony had cut Mac’s sentence clean off by going across his face with his gun. He didn’t say one word before he did it either.

I shut the door, scared as hell, but then when I heard more commotion, I cracked it again to see.

“Oh my gosh!” A couple different people hollered, and when my eyes finally landed on what they were referring to, I almost pissed my lace panties.

There Tony was, beating the dog shit out of Mac backstage, hitting him constantly, going back and forth between his gun and his fist. He was dressed in black cloth sweats, a black hoodie, Nike socks, and them hood nigga slippers, aka corduroy slippers.

“You complimenting the wrong nigga’s bitch, cuz,” Tony let him know angrily as he pulverized the poor man.

“Arrgghhh!” Mac clutched his stomach when Tony stood up and kicked him hard as hell in his abdomen.

“Where the fuck is my bitch!” Tony growled, whipping his head around as people stood there afraid, including security, and while Mac laid out on

the floor. I would've thought he was dead had he not been groaning and yelping.

When Tony looked this way, I quickly shut the door and locked it.

"Did he see you?" Rubie questioned, looking like a deer in headlights.

"Umm, I don't know."

"Bitch, I'm scared, and he's not even my nigga!" Rubie whispered.

I tried to keep a relaxed demeanor, but on the inside, I was close to shitting myself. I knew Tony would be angry, but I figured he'd hem me up when I got home and then I could dick suck my way out of it. I never planned for him to find my location then come through here like a hurricane.

BOOF! BOOF!

"Ahhh!" Rubie and I screamed loudly like two heroines in a slasher film.

"Open this muthafuckin door before I Swiss cheese yo' ass, Camarih!" Tony hit his fist on it.

"No!" I shouted back. He must've been out of his mind if he thought I was opening that damn door.

BOOF! BOOF! BOOF!

Next thing I knew, the door was dislodging from the hinges, and Tony stood there looking like Jason Voorhees. Rubie and I hollered like he was Jason Voorhees too. His fist was bleeding profusely, and he looked deranged.

"Bring yo' ass on before they call the fucking police." Tony darted in, grabbed me up, and threw me over his shoulder.

Rubie mouthed, "I'm gonna miss you," as he carried me out.

"How she look now, cuz?" Tony stood over Mac, with me hanging over his shoulder. "Let me know when you wake the fuck up." Tony walked off. "Bitch ass nigga. Get the fuck out my way. Move. Hurry the fuck up," he ran off to different people as he made his way outside and threw me into the passenger seat of his car. He hit the locks when he saw me try to get out, unlocked it just in time to get in himself, then sped off.

"Slow down!" I shouted, knowing this was the end for me.

However, Tony said nothing, just kept his eyes on the road with a rather calm expression, which I was sure was the same expression Ted Bundy wore during his reign of terror. To make it worse, he had his gun sitting in

his lap. Even though he always drove with it like that, him being upset with me made it terrifying.

The whole ride home, we said nothing as he drove crazily, making me use my imaginary brakes.

Finally, by the grace of God, we made it home safely. Tony threw the car into park after driving on our roundabout driveway and into the large garage.

Brushing the tip of his nose with his pointer finger, he said, “You want me to beat on you and kill niggas all day, don’t you?”

What kind of question was that? I had to remind myself my husband was psycho.

“No! I just wanted you to see how it felt for someone you love to be around a person that likes them!”

“That ain’t the same shit!”

“You’re right, it’s not! At least Mac just expressed his attraction to me, you’ve slept with Nala, she aborted a baby because it wasn’t yours, and has made it clear she’s very much in love with you! Yet you spend alone time with her, *after* you promised you’d stop!”

“I don’t spend alone time with that bitch! Ever! Unless it’s about some business shit! You act like I’m taking that hoe on dates!”

“You’re saying every single time you’re with her, it’s about music? No, it’s not. You make me look stupid, still hanging out with her when she proudly disrespects our relationship by vying after you!”

“She don’t disrespect shit. If she did, I’d slap the shit out of her ass!”

“She does. You just do not realize it because you’re a man, and men are fucking oblivious! Why do you think she followed you to the taco shop, Houston! It wasn’t because she needed fresh air!”

“Lower yo’ fucking tone, Camarih, because I’m feeling like I need to shoot you.” His face was straight, with not a smile or smirk in sight. “I’m not used to muthafuckas hollering at me; my reflexes got a mind of their own.”

“You don’t care about me, because if you did, you wouldn’t do what I told you bothered me.” I felt tears welling up. “While me and your baby are at home waiting for you, you’re spending unnecessary time with one of your hoes! I might as well be a single mom since Nala is more important to you than us!” I tried to get out of the car, but he snatched my ass back so quickly, I felt like my skeleton was still at the door.

“Don’t you ever say no shit like that again, or I swear to God, I will bust yo’ whole shit up. You really fucking trying me ’cause I’m in love and got a soft spot for yo’ ass, but you pushing it,” he warned me. I nodded to let him know I understood because I was sure I’d peed on myself. Finally, he let me go.

WHAM!

I slapped him across the face as hard as I could and darted from the car, into the house, and up the stairs. I went into my son’s room to look for him, but remembered he was with his aunt thankfully. I guess Tony had me so frazzled that my damn memory bank was shot at the moment.

Realizing my mistake, I rushed into Tony’s and my bedroom, locking the door.

I felt like I was still in an eighties murder film, waiting for him to come up here and do damage to me. But as time passed, he never showed, so I took a bath, brushed my teeth, and then got in the bed.

I passed out but couldn’t sleep that well, which was always the case when Tony and I fought. I hated being at odds with him; it was strange for me. He was my best friend and the person I always looked forward to talking to, so knowing we were enemies right now kept me up.

I checked the clock to see it was now 1 a.m., and my stomach dropped, thinking he was somewhere fucking a hoe. The last thing I said to him about being a single mom had really done a number, because I’d never seen him be so angry with me and threaten to hit me seriously.

Getting up, I walked to one of the large windows of our bedroom and looked through the beautiful curtains into the backyard. There Tony was, seated on the edge of the huge cabana by our two pools and jacuzzis. He was smoking and wearing the same black joggers, the matching hoodie with the shirt visibly hanging out the bottom, black Nike socks, and those corduroy slippers.

I put on my Louis Vuitton house shoes, left the bedroom, then headed down the stairs and out into the big backyard to find him. When I got somewhat close, I slowed down my steps. His side profile was so handsome and gangsta, that tattoo above his eyebrow being my second favorite. The one of my name on his neck was number one.

Twiddling my thumbs as I got close enough to smell his Hermès cologne, I decided to say something.

“Baby, are you coming to bed?” I asked softly, not sure of what he would say or do.

“In a little bit,” he replied, not even looking up at me.

I sat down next to him on the edge of the comfy cabana. He didn’t appear to be angry like I’d suspected. He appeared to be... sad. I’d only seen him look like this once since I’d known him.

“What’s wrong, Houston?” I rubbed the back of his head, getting closer so that our legs were touching. “I’m sorry I hit you.” I kissed his face.

He didn’t say anything at first, but he finally blew smoke out and said, “Thought I had this shit all figured out, but clearly, I don’t.”

“What do you mean?”

“Being a father and husband, Camarih.”

“You do have it figured out. Why would you think—” I stopped when I remembered what I’d said in the car. “Houston, I didn’t mean what I said. I was just angry and trying to guilt you into not hanging around Nala anymore.”

“Nah, you meant it.”

He hadn’t looked at me once, so I got off of the cabana and squatted down in front of him.

“Houston, if you weren’t a good father and husband, I would not be with you, and you know that. I also wouldn’t be having another baby for you. I wouldn’t care how much time you spent with me or us, because I’d be more focused on moving on.

“I love being married to you, baby, and *Baby Cuz* loves you so much. Babies can’t fake it, and the way he acts when he sees you shows how much he loves you.” I felt tears trickling down my cheeks. I felt horrible. “The way you go MIA for days, deactivating social media just to be with us when you have multiple businesses, says a lot about you as a husband and father. I couldn’t ask for a better partner.”

Houston was great and always put me and his son first. I didn’t care what anyone else thought of him. Yes, he was crazy, but he was also loving, protective, extremely clever, and selfless beyond belief. So hearing him say he was bad at what he was best at, and because of me, made me feel like shit. He was perfect to and for me.

He was quiet for a while, so I kissed him. Ashing the blunt, he decided to speak up.

“I apologize for the Nala shit. I was trying to make shit work because of business, but if it’s gon’ fuck us up, then I’m gon’ have to let her ass go. None of this shit is more important than you.”

It was good to hear him say that last part, even though I already knew it.

“No, don’t do that. I don’t want you getting rid of people because of me. You took her from nothing and made her into a huge star. No other label should be able to reap those benefits just because you have a crazy wife.” I chuckled, and when he smirked, I felt a sense of relief.

“Aight, so look.” He brought me up into his lap so that I was straddling him. “I’m gon’ go out of my way to be sure I’m never alone with her ass.”

“That’s all I want.”

“You looked fine as fuck tonight.” He squeezed my ass and kissed me. “Did that nigga touch you?”

“No, but you already beat him pretty badly.” I giggled, even though I kind of felt bad for Mac. He looked a mess getting beat up like that. “Lay back.” I gently pushed Tony’s shoulder, so he laid onto the cabana bed.

Removing my gown, I tossed it to the side then reached down into his sweats for his dick, which was already hardening. We both chuckled at the fact, with his fresh ass. Lifting up a little, I allowed him to move my panties to the side, and then I slid down as best as I could. Tony’s dick was not only lengthy but thick, so I pressed my hands into his broad chest as I forced my way down. The pain mixed with pleasure made me cum immediately.

“Fuck. I wanna record this shit, but I’ll kill a muthafucka if they get a glimpse.” He bit his lip, gripping my ass and hips roughly as I rode him, before spanking me hard. I knew he’d leave a handprint on my ass; he loved doing that.

I came a few more times before he flipped me over, put my ass in the air, and murdered my pussy from the back while pulling my hair. This was why I was so crazy about him.

SHANECE

Today I would be working from home, so I decided to dress pretty comfortably in some tights and a tube top. I had my signature individuals back in my head, so my hair was taken care of.

I'd been feeling pretty sick, so I wasn't in the mood to be in my office, stuffed into some dressy attire and dealing with a bunch of entitled music managers and artists. So today I would just handle my overloaded ass emails finally.

I heard the doorbell ring just as I put some lotion on my hands. Making my way out of the bedroom, I wondered who it could be since Camarih said she wouldn't be here for another fifteen minutes. When I looked out through the door, I spotted Cheri and rolled my eyes so hard I was surprised they didn't get stuck.

"Yes?" I opened the door, but only a little.

"I thought I would bring you a peace offering." She held up a tray of muffins that smelled like heaven. I could tell they were banana nut, and if I didn't pull myself together, I would be drooling in any minute.

"No thank you. Did you get everything out of the guesthouse yet?" I raised a brow.

Ever since that little blow up we had, which resulted in me punching the shit out of Cheri, Wade had been strict with his ex-wife. He made her ass rent a condo since she claimed finding the perfect house was what was taking so long. She tried to scheme her way out of that, but my man wasn't having it, thank God. So, for the past week, she'd been moving her stuff, with the help of a moving company, to her new condo, which was a good

forty-five minutes away. That wasn't too far for Los Angeles, but it was far enough to where she wouldn't be popping up randomly.

"I have, yes. I'm on my way out with the last of everything, but I did make these for you this afternoon. I do want to apologize for lying. I guess I was still a tad bit jealous of Wade moving on and so quickly in my opinion. However, I do think we're even since you blacked my eye, Shanece."

"I did, huh?" I laughed. She pretended to be amused as well, but I could see that she was still salty about walking around like a pirate for a while. "I'm actually not in the mood for muffins, but have a nice life, and put your key under the mat." I slammed the door.

She called my name a few times, but I acted as if I didn't hear it. She wasn't about to rope me in with her good ass food any longer. I'd been missing her lasagna, since after I hit her she hadn't been cooking for us any longer, because Wade told her she wasn't allowed in the main house. But I'd just gotten a great recipe from Camarih, and when I made it, it was just as fire.

I cleaned up the kitchen a little bit, taking out my teapot since Camarih said she had a concoction that would help me with my nausea. When I was finished, I heard her at the door, so I let her in then checked under the mat to get the key Cheri left.

"So this magic tea is going to make me feel better?" I sat at the bar in my kitchen as Camarih washed her hands.

"Yep. I always drank it during that period of morning sickness. Both of my pregnancies had me sick as a dog, but this always mitigated it."

"Camarih, I am not pregnant. I threw up a couple times, but that is it."

Truthfully, I was too afraid to take a pregnancy test, just for it to come back negative. For some reason, I felt like taking a new pregnancy test would be my last-ditch effort, and if it showed I wasn't pregnant for the hundredth time, my marriage would be over. No matter what Wade said, I knew he wanted children, ones directly related to him, and shit, so did I. All I kept thinking was that God was punishing me for not having a child with Paul and cheating on him.

"Well we don't know if you are. But that's why I stopped by the store to get some tests." She held up a plastic bag.

"What the hell! No, I am not taking one!"

"Yes you are, and when it comes back positive, I want a back massage." She dropped the bag onto the counter, looking at me.

“Right now?”

“Yes. While you’re drinking your tea, we can wait for the results.”

Sucking my teeth, I snatched the bag and went into the half bathroom right outside of the kitchen. I paced for a little bit, looking in the mirror every now and again. Finally, I just said a prayer to God, begging for forgiveness of my sins and asking that He please bless me with a child.

Feeling a little better after talking to Him, I peed in one of those small mouthwash cups, and then submerged the test in it. Washing my hands, I dried them then left out to have some tea with Camarih while we waited.

“Wow, this is really good!” I frowned in astonishment at the cup of tea as if it were a person. “It does settle the stomach some.”

“Told you.” Camarih took a sip of hers.

We talked to pass the time, mainly about that viral video of Tony beating the brakes off of Mac. Mac didn’t want to press charges because it would take away from his street credit. I knew this just because nothing was a secret in the music industry. Mac King was a fake gangsta who unfortunately ran across a real gangsta. He knew snitching or going to the courts would ruin his whole tough guy persona.

“Yes. He needs to stick to fucking with these other rappers who are fake thugs.” I laughed. “Has he flirted with you since?”

“Girl, hell no. Would you?” Camarih grinned.

“Nope, but I wouldn’t have tried in the first place knowing how off Tony is, especially regarding you.”

We both shared a chuckle, just as I checked the time on my Rolex. I saw the five minutes had passed, so after making eye contact with Camarih, we gulped down the last of our tea and went into the bathroom to check the test.

“What does it say?” she inquired.

“You look for me.”

Camarih happily trotted over, took some toilet tissue to cover her fingers, and then pulled the test from the cup. While she read it, I emptied the cup into the toilet, flushing it, and then I trashed the cup.

“Someone is going to be a mommy.” She showed me the test, with the window reading pregnant.

“Oh my gosh.” I covered my heart in disbelief. “Let me take another to be sure.”

Camarih giggled and left me alone to try again. I was happy she got so many. Five more tests later, I finally believed that I was pregnant. Lining them all up, I snapped a photo and sent it off to Wade.

Wade: *Told you all we needed was to get Cheri out of the house.*

Wade: *All that stress free sex is what did it.*

Wade: *I love you.*

I simpered at his text then showed Camarih what he'd said.

"Wait, so Cheri is gone for good?" Camarih asked.

"Yep! She got the last of her shit this morning. Bitch tried to bait me with her good ass food again, some muffins, but nope! I have never been happier to never have to see someone's face again."

"Hmm, let's go snoop in her house."

"Why? She took everything."

"True, but maybe there are some things she left. I just want to go see if the bitch is crazy."

Chortling like mischievous children, Camarih and I left out of the back once I grabbed the key I'd taken from under the mat and put on the kitchen counter. I unlocked the front door of Cheri's place, and we stepped inside to see an empty house.

"Told you nothing is here." I looked around. I hadn't been anywhere past the living room because I had no reason to visit this bitch.

Camarih toured the whole empty house, looking in her bedroom, the closet, the linen cabinets, bathroom, medicine cabinets where Cheri left some old prescription bottles, and then her extra bedroom, which was pretty much a ghost town. Last was the kitchen, and since the fridge was still there, we looked around. While I checked the cabinets and drawers, Camarih looked under the sink.

"Shanece, come here!" She called out to me, looking in the small trashcan that was basically built into the area under the sink. She'd pulled it out.

"Ugh, Camarih, don't reach in there!" I turned my lip up, seeing her put the empty package of nuts that Cheri had clearly used for the muffins to the side. She then picked out package with a lavender and white swirl kind of effect on it. Holding it up, she allowed me to read it, and I did, confused on what Cheri was doing with all this Plan B. When it finally hit me, I looked to Camarih, who had clearly already figured it out.

“She was putting this shit in your food, Shanece.” Camarih dropped it back into the trashcan.

“What the fuck,” I mumbled. All the times she cooked for me and I ate it, I had no idea.

This whole time, this bitch had me stressing, thinking I couldn’t reproduce, and she had been fucking with my body. I wanted to murder her. Thank God I turned down those damn muffins earlier, or she might have harmed the baby I was carrying now, since I was surely too far along for the Plan B to work.

When I got ahold of her ass, she was gonna wish she was fucking dead.



JUDGEMENT DAY...

Currently, I was seated in a stuffy room with my husband next to me for support. Across from me was Paul’s mother, Yris, and his father, Paul Sr., or better known as Sir. To my left was my lawyer, who was across from Yris’s lawyer, and at the head of this long brown table was a damn arbitrator.

Yep. This bitch had taken me to ‘court’ over Paul’s will because she felt I no longer deserved his money and things because of my remarriage.

My lawyer assured me that I had nothing to worry about, and I believed him. What bothered me about this wasn’t the fact that I may lose all of Paul’s things; it was the bond I’d lost with his parents. Yes, I had my own parents, although they didn’t live in Los Angeles, but I loved Yris and Sir too. It hurt me to see them on the opposite side of this table.

“Arbitrator Morris, my client here feels that Mrs. Bias, formerly Mrs. Porter, should not be able to benefit from the will of her late husband for a plethora of reasons,” Yris’s lawyer explained.

“What exactly are those reasons?” the arbitrator replied.

“Well, for starters, they have no children, and Mrs. Bias has a great job making well over six figures a year, so it’s not as if she needs the money for herself or childcare. On top of that, her husband is a wealthy hotel chain district manager, so even if she didn’t have the job she has, her new husband is more than capable of handling her financial needs.”

The arbitrator put his hand up to stop Yris's lawyer from talking, and then turned to my lawyer.

"Although what Mr. Myn is saying is true, we have to uphold the deceased party's will. Paul Porter strictly stated that he wanted everything he owned and any monies due to him to go to Mrs. Bias and any children that he may have. As we know, there are no children, so she does get everything. The fact that my client makes great money, does not have a child by the deceased, and is married to a wealthy man is irrelevant."

I squeezed Wade's hand, which was in mine, letting him know I liked what my lawyer had said.

"The will was written by the deceased without knowledge of his wife's infidelities," Mr. Myn pointed out, and shock took over me. I had no idea Paul's parents knew about my trysts with Rahim. My lawyer looked at me, puzzled, because I hadn't divulged that to him. I didn't think it would matter because I didn't know Paul's parents knew.

The lawyers continued to go back and forth as I sat there feeling upset, ashamed, and saddened.

"Okay, well I've heard enough at this point. Regardless of any infidelities, the will stands as it is. There was no prenuptial agreement between the two, and the same way the deceased took measures to protect the what if of a child, he could have done the same for any infidelities. However, he did not, so what he put in the will is what we have to honor." The arbitrator spoke up, making his decision.

He talked to us, giving some information we'd need for the outcome of this case, and then we were free to go. I knew this would happen, so I wasn't shocked; I was more surprised at the fact that my cheating was well known news.

"Congrats, baby." Wade kissed me as we walked through the parking lot to our car.

"Thank you." I smiled, seeing Sir open his car door for Yris. "Give me one second. I'll be to the car in a little bit," I told Wade and then made my way to the Porter's vehicle. "Can I say something?" I looked down at Yris who was in the passenger seat with her window cracked.

Sighing dejectedly, she unbuckled herself and got out of the car.

"What, Shanece? You won. Be happy and go on somewhere."

"I'm not happy I won, Yris. I'm not happy that you two seem not to like me anymore either." I gestured toward Sir, who was still seated in the

driver's side of the car. "Is it because of the cheating?"

"Why, Shanece? I thought you loved my son?" Yris's brows dipped.

"I did... I do love him. It was a complicated thing, but I regretted it and still do. Paul and I were having issues, his illness was making him an asshole, and it just tore us apart."

"That's no excuse."

"You're right, it's not. I'm just explaining how the affair came to be. If I could go back in time, I would've handled my loneliness in a much more mature way. Not once since the day I met Paul have I not loved him. I made a stupid decision, acting on my emotions."

Yris's scowl softened eventually.

"I guess I forget sometimes how young you two were when all of this was going on. I'm still upset with you for what you did, but mainly because you're better than that, Shanece. Stepping out on your marriage is not the Shanece I know or have grown to love."

Wiping my tears, I nodded sadly.

"I agree. That was a bad time for me, Yris. I hadn't been myself for a long time, and I was blaming everyone else, including someone who is now my best friend," I referred to Camarih, and me putting the fact that I'd fucked Rahim on her.

Yris pulled me into a hug, just as Sir got out of the car to do the same.

"We love you, Shanece," his deep voice cooed, soothing me for some reason.

As we released one another, I said, "I will give you Paul's money and his things. I haven't spent any of the cash. However, I do want to keep a few sentimental items to remember him by."

"That'll be just fine." Yris nodded, embracing her husband from the side.

"Okay. See you soon." I walked a few steps. "Just out of curiosity, how did you find out about the affair?"

"I ran into Keira, and she blurted it out. She claimed she thought I knew already and that it was old news."

Keira. That bitch always found a way to fuck some shit up, even years later.

"Of course." I laughed, and they followed suit before we said our goodbyes again.

I went to get in the car with Wade, buckling my seat belt and giving him a kiss. As he drove off, I ran down to him what had just happened and my decision to just give them everything, with the exception of a few things that meant too much to me.

“That was cool of you. That’s why I love you, Shanece.” He glanced away from the road for a second.

“I love you too.”

“Well we can still celebrate, so where would you like to eat?” He made a left turn.

“Before we eat, I want to visit Cheri.”

“Cheri? Why?”

“I feel bad for hitting her, and I’d like to apologize in person,” I lied.

“Uh, we can’t eat first?”

“Nope. I want to eat and then be able to go straight home to celebrate in another way.” I knew mentioning sex would have him doing whatever I wanted. Men were too easy.

“Sounds like a plan.” Wade smiled, falling right into the trap. I tittered at that fact, but he thought it was a sensual one.

Since traffic was light at the moment, a rarity, we got to Cheri’s place in thirty minutes instead of what usually would’ve been forty-five. Wade called her to make sure she was home, and then she buzzed us through. It was a nice rental community, with big ass homes next to one another. After Wade parked, I couldn’t get out of the car quickly enough.

“Hey, guys. What brings you over here?” Cheri came out of her house to greet us in the grass.

“Oh, Shanece just wanted to—”

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!

I hit Cheri right in her face and kept on going as she backed away, trying to catch her balance.

“Get off of me!” she screamed, falling in her doorway.

“Shanece! Shanece, what the fuck!” Wade growled, tugging at me to get off of his ex-wife.

I pounded that bitch’s face like a butcher tenderizing meat, until blood touched my fingers. Finally, Wade yanked me off, holding my body tightly as Cheri screeched and cried.

“You stupid bitch! I know about the Plan B! Be lucky I don’t fucking kill your hating ass!” I hollered as Wade threw me into the car.

He rushed back to Cheri to get her into the house, so I used that as an opportunity to exit the car. Unfortunately, before I could hit that hoe again, Wade caught me and carried me back to the vehicle, but this time he got in too, on his side, and drove off.

“Why did you do that shit, Shanece? What the fuck!” he barked, speeding out of the community.

“I found out she was putting Plan B in my food, Wade! That’s why I wasn’t getting pregnant! I was eating that bitch’s food almost every damn day!”

“You fucking serious?” His voice was calmer now. At the red light, he shut his eyes and sighed. “Fuck, baby. I’m sorry. This shit is all my fault. I should’ve been made her move the fuck out.”

“No, it’s not your fault. You didn’t know she was fucking crazy.” I caressed his back as he looked out of his window in distress.

We shared a kiss, and when the light turned back green, he drove off, going a normal speed now.

“I think we should sell the house and get something new that’s ours. This current crib got too many old ass memories, and I shared that house with Cheri. You deserve a place that doesn’t have her spirit in it.”

“We don’t have to do that ba—”

“Yeah, we do. It’s only right.”

“Okay! I will start looking as soon as we get home, but after we eat at Javiers.”

“No, after we eat at Javiers, we going home to fuck, then you can start looking.”

“Oh my gosh.” I laughed, pecking his lips quickly so I wouldn’t block his vision.

“First we need to get that blood off yo’ hand so them people at the restaurant won’t think we’re crazy.”

We simpered before he took my clean hand in his, just to hold.

Today was a pretty good day, and now that I had my little munchkin growing in my tummy, I was sure there were plenty more good days to come.

EITAN

I'd been calling and texting Rubie all day for weeks now, but like usual, she wasn't responding to me. The morning after our big blow out, she packed her shit, took the baby, and went to live with her pops. I'd seen her, but only for a short period each day so that I could be with my son. And while I held him, she wouldn't say one word to me or even look at my ass for that matter.

My phone vibrated in my pocket, so I quickly grabbed the shit to see what was up. When I saw it was Rubie, my heart rate sped up, until I read what her ass had said.

Wifey: *I want an annulment.*

Me: *Baby I'm not agreeing to no damn annulment*

Me: *You don't even have grounds for an annulment anyway.*

Wifey: *Stop sending things to my father's house.*

Me: *Then answer when I call.*

I waited for a little bit, but Rubie never replied. I didn't know how to go about getting her back, because this experience was new to my ass. The only time I'd had a girlfriend other than Rubie was when I dated Frida. And when Frida left me, I cared, but not enough to be trying to win her back since I wanted Rubie's ass anyway.

I couldn't ask any of the homies for advice either. Rahim clearly didn't have the juice, because that nigga had been trying to get his wife back for years, with no success. I didn't have time for that type of shit.

As for Tony, he gave out tips that only his ass could use. I was sure he'd tell me to drive over there, put a gun to her pop's head *and* hers too, throw out a couple bitches and hoes, and then make Rubie talk. I guess that shit

worked for his ass, because it was true to his personality. I think people would be able to see I was faking the funk, resulting in an unfavorable outcome for me.

Nehemiah was cool, but he never did shit, so how could he help me? Abel would just tell me the shit was a blessing in disguise and to come with him to the club to fuck on some hoes.

“Fuck.” I got up and went to put on my shoes.

Grabbing my keys, I pocketed them, along with my phone, and left the crib. Getting into my Lamborghini truck, I made the drive all the way to Rubie’s father’s house. I remembered the code from us visiting prior, so I typed it in and entered through the gates. Parking, I gave myself a pep talk because I saw her dad’s car here, and I knew he was gon’ have some shit to say.

I rang the doorbell as soon as I was close enough, then folded my arms to give off a sense of seriousness to whoever answered the door.

“Eitan, what can I do you for?” Her dad Ronald answered the door.

I was surprised to see him in something other than a three piece suit. Even the times I’d come over with Rubie, he was dressed up. Now he wore a collared polo shirt and track pants. Shit was weird.

“Hey, I need to speak with Rubie.”

“Well Rubie isn’t here at the moment. However, she should be back in about half an hour.”

“Aight. I’ll wait in the car.” I pointed over my shoulder.

“Nah, I wanna talk to you for a little bit, so you can wait inside.” He pushed the door out some to allow me space to come in.

Fuck.

“Aight.” I kept calm.

Ronald locked the door and then waved for me to follow him. We ended up in his den area.

“Would you like something to drink?” he offered, pouring himself a glass of what appeared to be scotch.

“What you got looks cool.”

He nodded and rinsed another glass before pouring me some of the same alcohol. Keeping strong eye contact, he made his way over, handing the glass to me before taking a seat.

“Rubie told me what happened, and I can’t say that I’m surprised, given your profession, Eitan.” He sipped his drink, and I did the same.

“It had nothing to do with my profession. I’ve been a rapper since Rubie met me, and I haven’t cheated on her once, until now.”

“I see. So what was different about the relationship that made you step out on my daughter?”

“I’m embarrassed to say it was, because we weren’t exactly being as intimate as I liked. So when I was propositioned, I fell for it, partially.”

“Partially?”

“It didn’t go all the way. She gave me something, and that was the end of it, if you know what I mean.”

Ronald nodded, placing his glass on the coffee table as he sat up a bit.

“Rubie is my daughter, my baby, so when I found this out, it made me very upset, Eitan. I only have one child, and she’s my prized possession. The kind of man I want her with is not someone who can easily be led astray, just because they’ve gone without sex for a little bit.

I was married for fifteen years before my wife died, and trust me when I say there were times when we didn’t get along, and when you’re not getting along, you’re most likely not getting sex.”

“Yeah.”

“And I was successful, young, and around a lot of different people, including women who threw themselves at me. However, I didn’t fall for it, because I loved my wife. And I knew no matter how much I would’ve enjoyed that pleasure, it would’ve been short lived and not worth all that I would have lost.”

Where was his ass when Frida was unbuckling my jeans?

“I know, I know.” I shook my head at myself.

“Sometimes us men have to think like women. We tend to act first and think later, which is why we regret so much and get into so much damn trouble. But a woman, she plans, thinks, asks hypothetical questions, etcetera, before she does anything.”

“I’ve learned that, and I know you don’t want me with your daughter, but I do love her, and I can put it on my children that this will never happen again.”

“I hate what you’ve done to my daughter, but I can see you love her. Now it’s your job to make her understand everything you just told me. Most importantly, don’t make excuses for the shit; be apologetic, don’t be argumentative, and let her call you every horrible name in the book if that’s

going to make her feel better. You need to mature and tighten up if you gon' be a husband and father."

This was embarrassing as hell.

"Thank you. I appreciate that." I smiled but Ronald didn't.

Getting up, he said, "You can wait here until she returns." Touching my shoulder as he walked by me, he added, "I want you to know that if it does happen again, Rubie will be a widow." He patted me then left, slurping on his drink.

I chuckled at his comment before leaning back to chill and wait for Rubie. I wasn't worried about his ass as far as him hurting me, but I didn't want to have beef with Rubie's father. She loved him a lot, and I wanted to be close with anybody in her life that she felt was important.

After a cool minute of me being on my phone, I heard the front door open and the sound of Rubie's voice cooing at our son. I sat up, dusted myself off, and waited. Suddenly, she appeared at the entrance of the den area, holding the baby carrier, and when she laid eyes on me, she rolled them shirts.

"Hey, baby, how are you?" I stood up, taking the baby carrier from her hand as she walked by. She had a crocodile leather Birkin on that I knew I didn't buy, but I was afraid if I asked about it, she'd blow up.

"My father called me and said you had something to say, so what is it?" She sat down, so I did too, after checking on my son.

"Yeah, I did. Umm, where were you though?" That pricey ass bag on her arm had me wondering.

"Why do you ask? I have a whole job, or did you forget?"

"My bad. So you was at work?"

"No, I was out apartment shopping. I found something very nice, but expensive. I will give you the address once I get settled in there so you can visit Elijah."

"Rubie," I scooted closer to her, "you know I love you and didn't mean to fuck up. I'm not excusing my behavior at all. I had no business even being around Frida's ass and alone, but that shit meant nothing. And my reasoning behind what I did was foolish and childish as fuck... I know that. I think you know that too, so why can't we figure out a way to work through this instead of getting divorced and shit?"

"So if I let my ex-boyfriend eat me out, you'd forgive me?"

"Uh—"

“Exactly, you would not. You would call me all types of hoes and be telling the world how you couldn’t believe you fell for a slut. Kind of like after you saw me out with Armonn and assumed I was messing with him, so you dropped a diss track.

“However, since you’re a man, I’m just supposed to say okay, and charge it to the game. I swear, men want to be treated like men one day, but as soon as they fuck up, they want to be coddled and forgiven because they don’t know any better, like a child.”

I hated that she was right. I couldn’t say for sure, but if she got head from her ex, especially at this stage in our relationship where it was solidified, I’d be hot and would look her at ass differently.

“You’re right.” I nodded, and her frown softened a tiny bit. I could tell she was surprised that I agreed with her.

“Well... yeah, of course I am. And Frida? Really? You’re such a stupid idiot. Do you know how many men would rather have me over her, and yet that’s who you decided to cheat on me with. What a complete loser you are.”

I had to admit, her anger was cute.

“I agree.” I chuckled. “Other than the fact that I’m in love with you, that’s why I’m trying so hard to fix this shit.” I got even closer, taking her hands in mine.

“It can’t be fixed.” She looked away.

“Even though I love you and you love me?”

“You don’t love me, because if you did, you wouldn’t have done anything with Frida.” She snatched her hands and got up. “You can go home now. I have a date to get ready for.” She reached for my son’s carrier and started off.

Grabbing her wrist, I asked, “Date? How the fuck you have a date when we married, Rubie?”

“Same way you got head when we were together, Eitan.” She yanked from me and left out of the den with my son in tow.

I ended up waiting around to see, and sure enough, an hour later, she was dressed up and left the house.

Rubie and I were supposed to be on a honeymoon or something so soon after getting married, not dealing with this bullshit. I wasn’t prepared to let up though.



A FEW DAYS LATER...

“Aight, baby girl, I guess we gon’ have to go to your mommy.” I kissed my daughter Haleigh as I buckled her into her carseat.

Holli was supposed to be here to pick her up three hours ago, but like always, she was late. Usually, she did this shit to Rubie, but now that Rubie and I were on a break, per se, I was on the receiving end of her bull.

Once my daughter was safely buckled in, I got in my whip and pulled off, headed to Holli’s house. She lived only fifteen minutes away, which made the fact that she was always late even worse.

It was true when they said to be careful with who you have kids with, because Holli was the fucking worst baby mama you could ask for. Shit, if it wasn’t for her mama, Haleigh would be in bad fucking shape when she went over there.

Last time Holli kept Haleigh on her own, she gave her back to Rubie and I with dirty clothes, food crusted on her face, and her hair was a damn mess. You would think her mama was this broke ass bitch from the hood, not a rapper with plenty of money to spend in an upscale area.

I grabbed my daughter from the back seat once I got to Holli’s, chuckling a little bit at Haleigh’s ponytail, because I was forced to do it. Rubie usually did her hair.

“Ring the doorbell.” I leaned Haleigh forward, and she pressed it with excitement. It was crazy how small shit would make a baby’s day.

“Oh shit!” Holli opened the door in a big t-shirt and panties. It was obvious she’d just woken up, even though it was 4 p.m.

“Stop talking like that in front of her, Holli.” I stepped in. “You been sleep this whole time?”

“Yeah. I had a long night.”

“In the club, I know. I saw the pictures on social media.” I shook my head.

“Relax! I swear, ever since you became a dad, you’re always preaching.” She waved me off as I followed her to the kitchen. “Boring ass.”

“You ain’t gon’ speak to your daughter?”

“Hi, baby. You look so pretty!” Holli finally smiled, making Haleigh giggle.

“Hey, baby.” Holli’s mother entered the kitchen, reaching for my daughter, so I let her have her. “Say bye to your daddy.”

“Bye, Daddy!” Haleigh cheesed at me, so I kissed her face.

When Haleigh and her grandma left, I said, “Aye, I need you to stay in tonight, Holli, and spend time with her.”

“Why? She’s small, she won’t remember.”

“She’s growing up, so yes she will. She ain’t a newborn no more. She can talk a little bit and everything. You want her calling Rubie mama?”

“Maybe that wouldn’t be so bad.” She put some raw bacon into the microwave.

“What?”

She pressed a button on the elevated microwave to start it, then turned to face me.

“I’m just thinking, it wouldn’t be so bad if I gave up my parental rights; let you and Rubie have her.”

“So you for real telling me you don’t want her?”

“I mean, I do, but I have more important things going on, Eitan. How am I supposed to have a career with a baby?”

“Same way I do the shit.”

“Yeah, but you have Rubie to help.”

“I have Rubie, yes, but we also have our own baby on top of that shit, who lives with us full time. Not to mention, Rubie has a more than full-time job of her own. Secondly, you have your mama who keeps Haleigh ninety-nine percent of the time she’s over here. Yo’ damn career shouldn’t be more important than yo’ fucking kid, Holli.”

“Well, right now, it is. I didn’t plan on having a baby this soon. Being pregnant ruined everything for me. We started at the same time, basically, and look at you versus me, Eitan. You’re this big ass superstar, yet I’m half as successful, and a lot of that success is only due to me being your baby mama.”

“Don’t blame yo’ lack of work ethic on Haleigh. Yeah, you couldn’t do what was needed because you were pregnant, but that girl was born a long ass time ago, Holli. You’ve had ample amount of time to get shit back on track, but you stay slacking. How many times have you brought a new track to Tony or Rahim to get recorded? Not once lately, I bet. You more worried

about the club, blowing what little money yo' ass is making by performing an old ass collaboration with me.

"So nah, none of this shit is because of Haleigh, it's because of you. Now I'm gon' let you think on this shit for a little longer, allow you to get your head together, because I'm pretty sure it's the liquor from last night talking. I will be back in a few days to get Haleigh, and she better be in perfect condition." Without another word, I left the house and went out to my car.

I was in the mood for a donut, so I drove to this shop I liked. After parking, I hit the locks on my key fob, and as I was about to enter, I saw someone coming, so I held the door. When Frida and I locked eyes, I spoke, but she kept walking, causing me to catch up with her.

"What?" She looked up at me, obviously annoyed as hell.

"I wanted to apologize for what I said to you at the studio that day. I was just pissed that you'd thrown that hot ass food on me."

"Okay. Anything else?"

"And I also apologize for doing anything sexual with you, knowing you had feelings for me. I low-key took advantage of it, and that wasn't my intention. To add to that, I want you to understand that I love Rubie, and that's who I want to be with. It has nothing to do with you as a woman and how good of a person you are, because you're dope as fuck. Rubie is just mine; that's me."

Frida nodded, glanced down at her feet for a second, and responded. "I'm sorry too, because I took advantage of the fact that I knew you were still attracted to me. I was also still seething from you cheating on me with her, and wanted revenge. It's pretty obvious you love Rubie, so I shouldn't have been angry with you for proposing to her after our tryst. But thank you for letting me know it wasn't something wrong with me that made you go back to her. I'm kind of happy that you cheated on me with a woman you loved and not some random hoe."

I snickered, and she followed suit.

"I guess that's an upside to it. So we cool?"

"Yes."

"I don't have to worry about any hot grits coming next, right?"

"No." She laughed before we embraced lightly.

We said 'bye', and then I went into the donut shop to order a box and wait.

To pass time, I took my phone out and saw I had a bunch of Instagram notifications. When I tapped one and it went to one of them gossip blogs, my heart dropped. Of course, some nosy asshole snapped a photo of Frida and I just now then sent it in.

Rubie was never gon' fuck with me again.

JILLY

THAT SAME DAY...

I sat in my car, staring at the deposit I'd gotten for styling Ahmad all this time. Seeing my current balance as eighty-five thousand dollars was crazy to me. I remembered hoping to get a check for one thousand five hundred dollars after working my ass off doing overtime at the department store.

Still, I wasn't rich, but I was in a very good place, and my man was in an even better one. I really didn't want to say goodbye to all this great money I was making, by declining to help Ahmad in concealing his sexuality, but I couldn't do Nehemiah like that. I loved him too much, and it just wasn't worth it. I mean... it was worth it, but then it wasn't.

I got out of my car and rang Ahmad's doorbell. His house manager let me in, offered me something to drink, which I took, and then I went to Ahmad's dressing room that we always worked in. While I waited for him, the house manager brought me some juice, and I went over what I was going to say to Ahmad in my head.

"Hey, my favorite girl!" Ahmad walked in to come hug me.

How didn't I know that he was gay? He had so many gay tendencies, but then again, he wasn't completely flamboyant. In fact, Ahmad was quite masculine, and you'd really have to pay attention, like I was now, to see any cracks in the mold. I guess that explained my blindness.

"Hey!"

Pulling back from the hug, he asked, “Where are the clothes for me to try on?”

“Ahmad, can you sit down for a second so we can talk?” I patted the couch cushion next to me.

“Sure. Are you okay?”

“Yes, I’m fine, but there are some things I have to say. First of all, I want you to know that I really love working with you. You’re one of my favorite clients, even over some of the ones signed to my brother. When I see you on my schedule, I literally look forward to it.” That was another sign I guess I missed. I’d never felt this close to a straight man, outside of Vernon, once upon a time, and Nehemiah. But Ahmad, for real, brightened my workdays.

“But...?”

“But I can’t pretend to date you. It would humiliate my fiancé, and it would make a mockery of our relationship. Our relationship, Nehemiah’s and mine, is very important to me. Then to add to it, I’m pregnant, so that wouldn’t really go well with the media, seeing me knocked up by Nehemiah whilst being your girlfriend. So I understand if you no longer want to work with me because of this.”

“Wow, you’re pregnant? Congratulations, Jilly.”

“Thank you.”

“However, I am going to have to let you go. I need somebody that can do whatever I tell them to and when I tell them to do it.”

“Right, okay.” I got ready to stand up, but he stopped me.

“I’m fucking with you, Jilly. I only asked you because I felt like you’re the only woman in my life, other than my sister, who wouldn’t want to make me kill myself while playing my beard. But if you can’t do it, that’s fine; I’m not going to fire you. You’re reasoning is very understandable, especially the pregnant part. It’d be hard to spin that narrative without making you look bad, and I wouldn’t want your reputation ruined just to hide my sexuality.”

“So I’m still your stylist?”

“Yeah, of course. But you didn’t bring any clothes.”

“I did, but I left them in the car because I didn’t know if you’d want to still work with me.”

“Well I do, so go get them. I have some things to do later.”

“Okay, sure thing!” I hopped up happily and went out to my car to get the clothes.

Just like all Ahmad’s other fittings, it went nicely, and time flew by because we always had good conversation. It seemed like my sessions with him were only ten minutes instead of two hours, and then my sessions with others seemed to feel like ten hours instead of two.

It was noon by the time I left Ahmad’s, and I was in a way better mood than before. I was feeling so good that I decided I was going to make fried pork chops tonight, which Nehemiah and Timothy loved. He said he’d be home from his video shoot around 9 p.m., and I was supposed to pick up Timothy at two thirty, so I had just enough time to grocery shop before I got the baby.

I mapped the closest store to our house, checking to see which one would have the majority of what I needed, and I decided on Gelson’s.

By the time I was done shopping, I had thirty minutes to get to Timothy, who was with Star. I didn’t want to go get him, but Nehemiah assured me that Star and Dre were no longer in a relationship, so I was cool. Star was all bark and no bite, so I didn’t mind her ass too much, especially after I fucked her up sometime ago.

I put all my groceries into the trunk of my Range, and as I rounded the car, I noticed my rear left tire was somewhat flat. Getting into the truck, I started it, trying to drive like I’d done in the past when the air got low, but the loud sound of my tire tearing jolted me.

“What the hell!” I shouted when I got out, seeing it was completely flat now, and messed up to where adding air to it definitely wouldn’t be enough. “Damnit.”

I quickly dialed up AAA to get someone to come out, and they let me know it’d be about half an hour before someone got there. I didn’t have that kind of time, because I needed to pick Timothy up.

While I waited, I called Nehemiah countless times, but he didn’t answer, which wasn’t a surprise to me. He was always hard to reach when shooting because he kept his phone on silent so that it wouldn’t ring or vibrate during a scene. I bit the bullet and dialed Star to let her know I’d probably be late, but I realized I was blocked when it rang once and went to voicemail.

“Hey, you called AAA, right?” The tow truck finally arrived at 2:25 p.m.

“Yes, and can you please hurry? I have to be somewhere in five minutes.”

“You can’t even drive this, so you’re not going to make it. I can tow it to a tire shop, and you can call a ride service to get where you need to go.”

“Fuck, you’re right.”

I looked up the shop that Nehemiah always used, which was close by our condo, and then showed the truck driver. Once he confirmed the shop was AAA approved, he had me sign some papers, get my stuff from the trunk, and then he hooked my baby up to his truck.

I ordered an Uber, and by the time it got to me, it was 3 p.m. En route to Star’s, I saw Nehemiah calling me, so I answered.

“Baby, where are you? You were supposed to get Timothy half an hour ago, and now Star is tripping.”

Crying for some reason that I wasn’t aware of, I replied, “I know. My tire ripped, and I had to call for help. That took some time, and now I’m in an Uber to her house to get him. I tried calling Star, but she has me blocked, with her immature ass.”

“Damn, okay. But baby, she’s probably not gon’ let me have him. You know how she acts when I’m late getting him. You can just turn around.” He sounded defeated.

“No, I’m going to get Timothy,” I assured him. This bitch wasn’t about to keep his son.

We exchanged I love yous then hung up.

When the Uber driver got to Star’s place, I asked if he could wait since I had all my damn groceries in his car, and he nicely agreed.

Rushing up the hill of her driveway, I rang the doorbell repeatedly until the bitch came.

“Oh, you finally remembered to get my baby? I hope you don’t think I’m letting you take him.” Her brow went up.

“Star, it is literally only three twenty p.m, and even if it was later than that, why are you keeping that boy from his father over such a small reason? Nehemiah is a great dad, and during this whole co-parenting thing, he’s been late like three damn times. Stop acting like he’s purposely putting these pick-ups on the back burner.”

When I was done, Star gave me a slow clap, being the bitch that she was.

“Yeah, Nehemiah means no harm, but you, I don’t trust you. You were probably out with your boo Ahmad and lost track of time.”

“Ahmad is not my boo. And I know you were the one who snitched on me to Nehemiah.”

“I told you I was going to snitch unless you broke up with him or got an abortion.”

“Okay, well your tattle telling didn’t work, bitch. Now give me Timothy before I take him.” If I had to knock this whore out, I would, but my man was getting his son.

“Bitch? Who the fuck are you calling a bitch!” She came fully from behind her door.

“Who the fuck am I looking at? You’re nothing but a jealous ass, hating ass, built like a bulldog ass bitch!” I took the last line from Tony, who always called her a pitbull in a skirt because of her muscular body.

“I’m glad I slit your fucking tire, you skank, because now you’re going to be the reason Nehemiah doesn’t get his son.” She sneered.

WHAM!

I wasn’t sure what came over me, but knowing she herself sabotaged this pickup, caused my fist to have a mind of its own. Maybe it was genetics, because Tony swore that his reflexes caused him to slap the shit out of people; it was in his blood.

Star stumbled back, cupping her nose and hitting her head on the other side of her door, which made her trip and stumble down her three porch steps. While she was incapacitated, I rushed into the house and found Timothy in the kitchen, eating a jell-o cup.

“Hey, baby. Come on.” I picked him up and started running out of the house. He was so heavy, but that didn’t stop me.

“Come back with my baby, you bitch!” Star tried getting up from the ground, nose busted beyond belief.

“Get in!” I told Timothy since I had to put him down to open the Uber car’s door.

Laughing, since he thought this was fun, he hopped into the car, and I did right after him, yelling for the Uber driver to take off. I was so happy that he did, and I would be sure to tip him nicely for waiting for me and being a great getaway driver.

I directed him to my condo, and by the time I got there, Nehemiah was calling me. I didn’t answer right away because I wanted to get Timothy and

the groceries inside of the house. He blew me up the entire time, so once Timothy, the food, and I were safely inside, I answered.

“Hello?”

“Hey, what the fuck happened?” I could hear wind in the background, so I knew he was driving.

“Star told me I couldn’t take Timothy, and she also admitted to slicing my tire so I’d be late picking him up. When she said that, I don’t know what happened, baby. I blacked out,” I lied, whining for extra sympathy. “I’m pregnant. I cannot take all this stress,” I added.

“I know. I know. Shit. But I’m glad you got him. Thank you.”

“Welcome. Are you on your way home?”

“I was, but I need to meet up with someone real quick. I will be there earlier than expected though.”

“Okay, see you soon.”

“Aight. I love you.”

I wondered where he had to be, but I decided I would ask once he got here.

“Ready to help make pork chops, T?”

“Yes!” Timothy threw his tiny arms in the air, making me kiss his cheek.

“Okay, let’s wash our hands.”

I didn’t know how the three of us—Star, Nehemiah, and I—would move on from where we’d plunged, but I knew our current situation was just not working. And when I had this baby, it would only be worse.



TODAY, Nehemiah and I were going to court with Star. After her latest stint, Nehemiah was fed up and went straight to his lawyer’s office.

I was so proud of him for always doing what he needed to do for his son. When he took her to court the first time, knowing he would have to pay plenty of money to her for child support, I commended him for that. It showed me how good of a father he was and how he would do anything to make sure he saw and spent time with his son, even if it caused for him to have to pay Star thousands of dollars she didn’t need.

This time was much different though, because Nehemiah and his lawyer were filing to have a professional mediator exchange Timothy. That way Star wouldn't be able to get away with her little games, not unless she wanted to be penalized by the courts. Most importantly, having that mediator there for the exchange would ensure that Nehemiah got his time with his baby.

I was seated with Timothy, behind Nehemiah and his lawyer, watching everything go down, including the way Star's lawyer tried to paint him as a bad father and me as some psycho girlfriend. Thankfully though, he and I kept all evidence, showing the mess that Star had made. We even went so far as to source the camera footage from Gelson's on the day she slashed my tire. When Nehemiah's lawyer played that, it was pretty much the nail in the coffin.

"I've seen enough today, and I first want to say that, Miss Chasen, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. I expect way more from a woman of your caliber who clearly has a lot going for herself. This man does not owe you a relationship simply because it's what you expected. And him moving on does not give you the right to act foolishly. If he does not want to be with you, you pick yourself up and go on about your business so you can meet someone who *does* feel like you're worthy of a relationship." The judge read Star's ugly ass.

"Yes, Your Honor," she replied sheepishly.

"As for you, Mr. Van Buren, when it comes to your son, I'm going to need you to make moves a little bit quicker than you have. From the evidence you've shown me, Miss Chasen has been harassing your significant other and playing around with your visitation for over six months. Your loyalty needs to lie with your son and that woman you chose to have a life with, not with your past." She turned to Nehemiah to let him have it too.

"Yes, I understand and agree with you, Your Honor." Nehemiah nodded studiously.

"Good. I hereby make judgement in favor of the plaintiff. A mediator will be assigned to monitor the exchange of Timothy Van Buren until further notice. I will also be granting the restraining order against Miss Chasen, so she is not allowed to contact nor be within one hundred yards of the plaintiff or his significant other, Miss Jilly Terranova, for a minimum of seven years, or she will be arrested. This restraining order is effective

immediately. If the defendant needs to contact the plaintiff regarding the child, Timothy Van Buren, she can inform the assigned mediator who will then deliver the information to the plaintiff.

As for the damages the defendant is suing for, I am denying that. Miss Chasen, you provoked the plaintiff's significant other, and therefore suffered the consequences. Have a good day." The judge banged her gavel, and I couldn't help but to jump in excitement.

Star snatched her shit up and hurried toward the exit of the courtroom, I guess embarrassed.

But before she left, she yelled, "I hate you!" at Nehemiah, like a dummy, and was immediately apprehended.

I was so happy we had a restraining order against that bitch. I smiled, thinking about it, as I exited the courtroom with Timothy to wait for my man.

"Damn. I feel like I'm about to start a whole new life." Nehemiah smiled at Timothy and I as he met us outside the courtroom.

"That's because you are. Me, you, Timothy, and this new one."

"Sounds perfect." He kissed my lips a couple times, just as the security guard walked Star by us in handcuffs. It was perfect timing. Timothy didn't seem to be fazed by seeing his mother in distress either.

I finally felt like I could breathe, because now that bitch was out of our fucking lives and way before my baby got here.

Life was good.

TONY WACKO

ONE WEEK LATER...

It was a little after 4 p.m., and since a nigga ain't have shit to do today, I decided I was gon' roll through to see my wife and Baby Cuz at her spa. I'd been there a few times, but the shit was girly as fuck and had me feeling some type of way just chilling in that muthafucka. Plus, if I stayed around too long, Camarih's ass would be trying to give me a muthafuckin facial, and I wasn't with that shit in public.

I allowed her to do that shit occasionally in the privacy of our home, but I made her turn her fucking phone off beforehand so she couldn't take any damn photos of the shit. And you muthafuckas reading this shit bet not relay this top-secret information to any fucking body. No one would believe Tony Wacko sat up and got no damn facial anyway.

I had to admit my girl was good at that shit, because my muthafuckin ass almost fell asleep, and that wasn't even the type of nigga I was. I stayed alert, even at the crib, so the fact that she had me dozing off like a bitch just proved how amazing her beautiful ass was. Couldn't say I was surprised though. I would always support my girl, even if it involved some bullshit like that.

Parking my whip outside of her spa, I pulled my phone out to call her ass up. I needed some information before I came in.

"Hi, baby," she answered excitedly, stroking a nigga's ego and shit. I smirked, knowing she was grinning hard, showing off that one dimple she

had. Camarih could get my dick hard, even over the fucking phone.

“Aye, who inside yo’ shit?”

“Why?”

“Because, Camarih, just tell me.” I kept my eyes on the people walking up and down the sidewalks and driving by.

West Hollywood had some weird muthafuckas, but it was upscale as shit over here and where all the rich folk hung out, which was why I bought her the shop in this location.

“It’s me, Dana, and my intern, Kai. Of course Avery is here, but I let him go on break until my next client.”

“Aight, and don’t be giving that nigga no fucking breaks. I pay his big ass a lot of money to watch yo’ shit.”

Giggling, she replied, “I know, but he just looked so tired.”

How I ended up with such a nice ass compassionate wife, I would never know. She was the complete fucking opposite of a nigga, but in the same breath, perfect for me. I always thought if I lost my damn mind and decided to be monogamous, it would be with some hood bitch that was just as mean as my ass.

I guess God knew I needed something better, and that was Buttascotch; nice as hell but would knock a hoe out if needed. Shit was crazy to me how just seeing her face or smelling her scent would have me relaxed as fuck, no matter how bad my damn day was. Once she came around, I would legit forget why I was so pissed and have to remind myself of it.

I reached into my back seat to grab the rose I’d gotten from this florist nigga I always hit up, to get some arrangements for Camarih, and the small Cartier bag. Stepping onto the sidewalk, I canvassed the outside of her shop again, just to be sure I didn’t see any funny shit, then walked up to the door. I made sure you had to be buzzed in, in order to get into her spa, because muthafuckas were crazy. And even though Camarih was adamant that she was a regular ass person, the truth was that she wasn’t.

“Hey, who is it?” A girl that looked familiar came to the glass door, frowning.

“Open the fucking door, Oscar Proud.” I frowned back at her busted skinny ass.

“Oh, Tony, my bad!” She laughed, hitting the button to allow me in.

I yanked on the door and slipped inside to see her weird ass still standing there with a gleam in her fucking eyes.

“Where have I seen you?” I quizzed as Camarih walked up into the lobby-like area.

“Oh, I tried to work at The Pink Cherry, but you wouldn’t hire me because—”

“You look like Oscar Proud. Yeah, I remember.”

“Houston! Do not say that, that’s mean.” Camarih came closer to hug my torso.

“It’s not mean. I ain’t say that hoe was ugly, but they look alike. Same body and same lava lamp head.”

Camarih bucked her eyes at me, jaw clenched, which was what she always did when she wanted me to stop talking, but like usual, I never listened.

“He’s so funny.” Oscar laughed.

“Do not encourage his rude behavior, Kai. Just for that, you can have an extra twenty minutes on your lunch.” Camarih half smiled at her then took my hand to lead me toward the back where her office was. That hoe Dana at the front desk spoke to me, so I nodded to say ‘what’s up’.

“This is for you.” I gave Camarih the rose and bag, pressing my lips to hers.

“Aww, thank you, baby. This is why you asked who was here. You didn’t want my clients knowing you’re a softy for me.” She hugged me from behind as I talked to my son in his fly ass stroller.

“I got a reputation to uphold.” I turned to face her for another kiss, holding the front of her neck so I could get my tongue in her mouth. She reciprocated for a little bit, but when she felt cuz down below perking up, she nudged me off.

“I have an appointment coming up, so no. If I wasn’t pregnant, then yes, but you’ll have me out of breath on top of having gummy worm legs.”

Shaking my head, I scooped my son out of his stroller and sat down to peep her office as if I hadn’t seen it before. Even this shit was girly, with light blue walls that had glitter and shit in it, plus all this other frilly gay ass furniture she added. If I was a bitch, I’d fuck with it for sure though.

“I don’t like that bitch Oscar.”

“Houston, her name is Kai, and why not? She’s sweet.”

“Something in her fucking eyes. She sneaky as fuck. You run a background check on that hoe?”

“Of course I did, and everything came back fine. All that she told me was true and right there on her background report.” Camarih sat down next to me on the loveseat in her office.

“Aye, cuz,” I stood my son up in my lap, “what I tell you about getting yo’ shoes so dirty?”

“Tell Daddy how I let you walk, and you ran right into some mud on purpose.” Camarih rubbed his back as she leaned on me. When he laughed, we started chuckling too.

“Oh, so you doing shit purposely to fuck with me, huh?” I frowned at him playfully, which only made him laugh harder before running his mouth in baby talk. “This little nigga be talking shit to me. Listen to all that fucking bass in his voice while he looking at my ass.”

“No he does not!” Camarih giggled.

“You the only muthafucka I let talk out the side of his neck at me.” I kissed his face.

“No curse words, Houston. I told you he can talk.”

As I was about to respond, I got a text message from Abel. Handing my son over to his mama, I watched as she got up to put him in the play area she had for him in here, then focused back on my iPhone.

Abel: *Dirko at the waffle house causing problems. Fake banging and shit.*

Me: *Aight.*

Standing, I pocketed my phone as Camarih made her way back over to me, looking sexy per usual.

“What do you want to eat tonight?” She hugged my body, looking up at me.

“Same shit I had last night.” I grabbed her ass roughly, nasty shit running through my mind as I crashed my lips onto her neck.

“Houston, for real.” She snickered.

“Anything you make is fine. That reminds me, stop showing what you be cooking on yo’ fucking story. I don’t like that shit.”

“Why?”

“Because you already fine as shit, niggas know you got good ass pussy ’cause I married you, and I don’t need them seeing you can throw down too.”

“Oh my gosh. Are you serious?” I just gave her ass a stare, and she added, “You are. Okay, I won’t post the food I cook, only the food I eat

out.”

“Aight.” I pecked her and pulled out of the embrace she had me in.

“Where are you going?”

“I got some shit to handle, then I’ll be home to you. Plus, I don’t want you trying to do some shit to my face.”

“Okay, byyyyye.” She wouldn’t let my hand go, so I yanked her over to me to give her bratty ass another kiss before she let me go.

By now, it was around 6 p.m., so I knew Dirko was up at the waffle portion of The Pink Cherry acting up, because he was waiting for the strip club area to open. I swear to God this nigga was pissing me off, and it was hard as fuck for me not to just straight murk his ass or let some niggas do it.

I got to the waffle house in about fifteen minutes and parked right outside of the shit since it was mine. I saw Dirko right there in front, in the parking lot, with a few hoes surrounding him. He was arguing with another nigga that I knew from the hood, so he must’ve had an issue with Dirko’s ass pretending to be down.

Walking up, I said, “Move,” to the bitches in my way so I could get up to Dirko. “Fuck is wrong with you, bruh?” I shoved him hard as fuck, making him stagger and almost fall, but he caught his balance.

“Yeah, check that nigga, Tony, before I do the shit.”

“Aye, nigga, either you gon’ eat here, or you gon’ get the fuck on somewhere. Y’all not doing this ghetto hanging shit in front my business,” I let cuz know who was ready to light Dirko up.

Old boy nodded and waved for his homies to follow him into the waffle house to eat, just as Dirko yelled from behind me, “Yeah, cuz, get yo’ ass in the—”

Out of nowhere, the back of my hand went across his fucking face, making him hit his head on the window of the waffle house. Blood splattered from his nose, as everyone currently outside clamored in response.

“What the fuck I tell yo’ ass about pretending you gangsta, nigga?” I yoked him up by his collar. “You a muthafuckin millionaire out here looking dumb as fuck trying to be down. Niggas bang because that was all they fucking had. This shit ain’t no muthafuckin fad or trend, you hoe ass nigga. You disrespecting me and my fucking city by playing with this shit like it’s a muthafuckin game.”

WHAM!

I went across his face again, and when he dropped to the floor, I proceeded to beat his ass right here in front of everybody. It was what the fuck he needed. Dirko wasn't tough, and he wasn't even from here. Niggas like him were annoying as fuck, thinking just 'cause they had money they could fake some shit and get away with it. So since he wanted to be a banger, I was gon' treat his ass like he was one.

I punched on his ass until blood from his face basically drenched my hands, and I felt my heart beating out of my damn chest. Rising up, I delivered a kick to his stomach then back that made him groan in pain.

"Oh my gosh!" A girl screeched, chuckling with her phone out.

"Bitch, get yo' cocker spaniel looking ass out my view 'fore I bust yo' shit," I hissed, and she put that fucking phone away with the quickness, running off. Looking down at Dirko, I asked, "How the fuck you gon' be a hood nigga when you can't even pass getting put on, cuz?"

"Shit, Wacko," he mumbled, sitting up and looking like a crack hoe.

"Take yo' ass home."

"I can't walk."

"Get one of these hoes to do it then, but when I call up here in the next ten minutes, you bet not be outside of my shit." I walked off just as his ass passed out, and I sure and the fuck wasn't about to call the police.

"Aye, Wacko." One of the dudes who were outside caught up to me. "I just wanna say I respect you for putting cuz in his place." I nodded and tried to keep walking, but he cut off my path, irritating me. "I was wondering if you'd sign my shirt and—"

"Word of advice, cuz: Worry less about dick riding other niggas and more about getting that rhinoceros skin off that chapped ass bottom lip. You a grown ass man, out here ashy and crusty like you in fucking middle school."

His homies clowned his ass as I continued on to my whip, shaking my head at some of these niggas' actions.

You'd never catch me out here looking crunchy as fuck and trying to ride another muthafucka's coattail. Soon as I signed that damn dingy ass white tee, cuz was gon' ask me to listen to his funky ass mixtape. I already knew.

I went by the studio to check on Holli's session, because it'd been a long time since her ass had been in the studio. To my surprise, she was

doing pretty cool, so I took my ass home before Nala got word I was there and showed up.

When I got home, it was perfect timing, because Camarih had just finished making a big ass lasagna and apple pie. I'd never had apple pie as good as my bitch's, and last time she made that shit, I ate the whole thing with the exception of her one slice. This time she made two, one for me, and one for herself and other people to have, if they came through.

"Shit, that food was good as fuck." I kissed her shoulder as we chilled on the couch in the den. Baby Cuz was knocked on the shorter couch due to a food coma.

"Thank you. That lasagna called for so many different kinds of cheese, so I hope you're full."

"Off food, yeah. Cuz over there is slumped, so come on."

"No. I told you I found a new movie for us to watch, so we're gonna check it out first." She squinted her eyes as I exhaled heavily. "How well do you know Klaude?"

"I know Ced better, since I usually see his ass coming before her."

"Houston." She hit me, laughing. "Seriously."

"I don't know that bitch like that. I don't know any of them hoes like that. All I do is make sure their asses are fuckable before I hire 'em. Klaude kind of ugly, but her body got her through. Why?"

"I was told she's the one supposedly pregnant by you." Camarih looked at me before we both guffawed. "I mean, I didn't believe it before, but when I found out she was supposedly the one, it confirmed it for me."

Somebody obviously planted that fucking rumor in the club to tear Camarih and me apart. Whomever did the shit though was clearly a muthafuckin idiot to think some dumb shit like that would break us up. Camarih would never believe no shit like that, and even if she did, she'd have to kill me to get away from a nigga.

Even though the plan failed, I was still gon' find out who the fuck the culprit was.



THE NEXT EVENING...

I wanna go shopping... New Gucci is dropping, I wanna go cop it... Heard the purses is poppin'... And bae, get the blicky, 'cause niggas be plottin'...

IT WAS a little after 11 p.m., so The Pink Cherry strip club and the waffle house were packed. Since there were two stages on each side of this big ass club with two poles on each, there were currently four hoes up there shaking ass to “She Like I’m Like” by Young MA. Both stages were covered in cash, and it was because four of the best hoes were up there currently. I did that shit on purpose 'cause I knew that would be the outcome.

As nice as the sight of them bitches showing pussy was, that wasn't what a nigga was here for. I wanted to get to root of that bullshit ass rumor.

Initially, I didn't give a fuck and brushed it off, but now that names and shit were popping up, I had a muthafuckin issue.

I watched as Klaude delivered drinks to the section she was working since she was scheduled in the club tonight and not the restaurant. As she made her way down the stairs, through the club of people, and toward the back for her break, I trailed her ass.

“Ah!” She screeched when I whipped her ass around and hemmed her up against the wall in the hallway by her neck. I squeezed hard as fuck on that shit, digging my teeth into my bottom lip as I did.

“Tell me why muthafuckas is saying I nuttied in you? You know damn fucking well I'd never stick my dick in that porta potty pussy.” I was gritting my teeth, wanting badly to choke this bitch until she blacked the fuck out.

“I don't know!” She cried when I loosened my grip on her neck so she could speak. I could see the terror in her ugly ass eyes.

“I'm gon' ask yo' ass again, bitch, and if you come at me with that ‘I don't know’ bullshit, I'm slapping the dog shit out yo' ass. Now I don't know if you need to consult that nigga Ced in yo' funky ass mouth or what, but you better have a muthafuckin answer.” Gripping tightly again, I spoke through clenched teeth. “Why the fuck people got me and you in the same sentence on that fuck shit? Why the fuck my wife even know about some bullshit like this?”

“Okay. It was this girl named Angel!” Klaude screeched. “She-she convinced me to get a job here and told me to get close enough to you to fuck you. Meanwhile, she and some friends would periodically come to the

club and make sure they were heard talking about us and a baby. She even paid some of the dancers to be overheard talking about it. Please, I swear I'm sorry! I needed the money and—”

WHAP!

I couldn't help it. Knowing she did some stupid shit like that, that could've cost me my fucking family, had me heated, so I popped her in her shit.

Holding her mouth with tears in her eyes, she kept apologizing.

“How the fuck you know Angel?” I ignored her apologies.

That apology wouldn't have done shit for me if Camarih bounced. Thankfully I married a woman that would always ride for me.

When I asked that, she hesitated for a second, but when I got ready to slap her the fuck up again, she yelled, “Okay! Okay! She met me through Joy!”

I chuckled angrily for a second. I couldn't believe it. I thought that hoe Joy moved the fuck on with my cousin for good. Then again, I was just now noticing he hadn't mentioned the bitch at all in a minute. He usually couldn't keep her name out his mouth when I saw him.

“Wow.”

“Don't be mad. Joy just loves you! I spent time with her in the facility, and she told me a lot. I know—”

“Bitch, shut yo' unfortunate looking ass up and get back to work, 'cause in a minute, I'm gon' haul off and knock the shit out you again.”

Before I even finished my sentence, Klaude rushed off, slipping into the bathroom to hopefully clean that blood off Ced and the rest of them teeth.

Both Joy and Angel's asses had the game fucked up.

I left the club and went straight home so I could handle some shit in my office. When I got there, I heard voices in the den, so I knew Camarih had her chicken-head ass friends over, clucking. Shaking my head, I kept it pushing but saw Camarih coming down the stairs with Baby Cuz.

“Hi, baby.” She paused so I could get a kiss.

“'Sup.” I grabbed her ass roughly after tickling my son's belly.

“Come say hi to everybody before you go do your thing.” She switched off while I watched, following behind her.

“I don't wanna speak to them hoers.”

“Houston!” She looked back over her shoulder just before entering the den.

“’Sup.” I peeked in with a fake smile. I only then realized my sister was here.

“Hey... Hi, Tony... ’Sup, bro.” Rubie, Shanece, then Jilly’s ghetto ass spoke.

“Say hi, cutie!” Camarih kissed my son’s cheek. “Say hi to Mommy’s friends.”

“Hi, bitches!” Baby Cuz cooed.

The room fell silent until I burst into laughter because I couldn’t hold the shit. When I laughed, Baby Cuz did too, but I stopped when I saw Camarih’s eyes shooting daggers through me.

“Don’t be fucking looking at me. I don’t know where he got that shit. Probably from them bitches you be around,” I fussed, defending my damn self and lying my ass off.

“Don’t say that, baby, okay?” Camarih rubbed his head full of hair.

“Oh my gosh. He’s turning into his dad already.” Shanece finally chuckled before everybody else did.

“Can you say hoes, cuz?” I asked him just to fuck with Camarih.

“Stop, Houston!” She tried to control her chuckle.

“I’ll teach him that later. Y’all bitches be easy.” I joked, leaving the den and ignoring Camarih going off on me.

I was proud of my boy.

RUBIE WRIGHT

As the black truck I was riding in pulled up to its destination, I finished the FaceTime call I was on with my baby and father. I hated having to leave him for work, but it was a must to keep that nice luxury apartment roof over our heads, especially since me and his father were no longer together, meaning I didn't have his money either.

I hated Eitan for what he did to us, but I admit the fact that he hadn't sent me a gift or contacted me about anything other than seeing Elijah, had me feeling some type of way. Did my fake date really piss him off? Was he already over me? If so, then I guess it was a good thing that I chose to break things off with him.

I hadn't filed for divorce yet because I didn't know what to do. My head was telling me to get the shit done so I could be single and move on, but my heart was saying otherwise.

Eitan cheating on me was still such a hard pill to swallow because, in all the time that we'd been together, he'd never done it. Or maybe he had and was just so good at it that I had no clue. See, something deep down wouldn't even allow me to believe that about him. Eitan wasn't even clever enough to pull that off. Being conflicted only made me hate him even more.

"Wow, this shit is nice." Big Dane got into the back seat of the truck after the driver opened it for him.

"It is, huh?" I laughed. "Champagne?"

"Yeah, absolutely. Is this how Make A Killing treats all their potential artists?" Big Dane rubbed his hands together just as the truck pulled off, headed to the Make A Killing headquarters.

“Potential?” I raised a brow as I handed him the flute filled with this expensive ass champagne.

“Now you know I’m gonna sign.” Big Dane smirked before gulping down the liquor. Damn.

“Okay, great. You’re going to love being signed under Tony. He’s very smart, but he doesn’t take any shit, so no slacking off.”

He better had been willing to sign after all I’d been through. Having to duck and dodge Mark Vegas was enough in itself, but I did a lot of side work for free in order to boost his persona in the media, to convince him to come over to Tony’s label. Today was finally the day he was going to sign on the dotted line. I felt proud of myself, finally.

“You know slacking ain’t my style. I’ve *been* ready to work. I didn’t mention this shit to Mark, so he may have an issue with it.”

“Well we won’t worry about him. If he tries to cause any issues, we will handle him for you,” I assured Dane as I refilled his glass. I felt cool, like I worked for the mob.

“I appreciate everything, Rubie. You solid as fuck.” He took a sip. “You don’t find too many women that look like you with that type of head on their shoulders.”

I wished Eitan knew that. Thinking of him made me check my phone, but of course, there were no messages or missed calls from him. My dad hadn’t mentioned any new gifts in the mail either.

“Thank you. I really appreciate that. I’ve been wanting to get into PR for years, and it seemed like I could never catch a break, especially while I was working for Mark. However, Tony gave me a chance, and it’s been great ever since.”

“That’s inspiring. Mark is cool, but he just moves too damn slow for me. It’s like homie got the connections, but he don’t use them; he’s more worried about other shit.”

“Yes! So true, and that other shit is female artists or any woman in general that he thinks he can sleep with.”

It was all facts. Mark had the potential to be a great music manager if he could control his damn dick. He was too focused on finding new female singers or rappers that he could manipulate into fucking him, than actually curating a big star. The only reason Big Dane had gotten as far as he had was because of himself and all the work he’d put in before even signing to Mark’s management company. But unfortunately for Big Dane, because he

didn't have a vagina, being under Mark was holding him back. I was sure had I slept with Mark, he would have given me more opportunities, but I wasn't built like that.

"You got any managers you recommend?" Big Dane quizzed.

"Tony's assistant, Alejandra, doubles as the music manager, and she's really great." I hated to compliment that whore, but she was good at her job, hence why she was still working for Tony after whatever incident some time ago. "She stays on top of things. We all work well together." I nodded.

"So, Rubie, tell me you not still with Eitan."

"Um... why?"

"The photo of him and that ex stripper chick he used to date been floating around the internet for a while. You deserve better."

I did see the picture, and because I was so stupidly in love with Eitan still, the photo appeared to be innocent to me. He and Frida's body language didn't come off flirty at all, but I'd trusted Eitan in the past, and it came back to bite me, so what did I know? Maybe that was why he'd left me alone. It was possible he realized he didn't love me at all, and Frida was the one for him.

"Yeah, umm, I'm sure it was nothing."

"Well if you find out that it *is* something, don't hesitate to hit me up. I don't want any beef with bro, especially now that we're about to be label mates, but I can't pass up a good woman when I see her."

I swallowed the lump in my throat, feeling funny being flirted with. It only showed me that I wasn't ready to get back out into the dating world. I felt uncomfortable. As bad as it sounded, I wanted to be married to Eitan, the man I loved and the father of my child. I couldn't believe what I was currently thinking. I always swore I would never be one of those women who stuck around after a man cheated.

"I will be sure to call you if it pans out negatively." I laughed it off.

Finally, the truck arrived at the Make A Killing building, so I thanked the company driver, Bob, as he held the back door open for us.

Big Dane and I entered the building, and I prepped him a little bit on how to converse with Tony, mainly letting him know not to fangirl out, not to try to act hard, and don't smile too much because, for some reason, Tony was leery of smiley people.

"Ready?" Big Dane smirked.

"I am." I stepped off the elevator.

Please don't let Tony embarrass me by calling me DSL.



I DROVE HOME, feeling good that I'd gotten Big Dane for Tony. For a minute, I was afraid it wouldn't happen and also afraid I would run into Mark who would try to fight me or something. I had to remember though, that Mark was a little bitch, and he wouldn't try anything if it would make Tony Wacko upset.

I actually really liked having Tony as a bodyguard somewhat, and was surprised Camarih didn't take more advantage of having a crazy nigga. I now understood why Jilly always used him to get what she wanted; it made you feel powerful as hell. I low key wanted Mark to try something just so I could feel like a boss and have Tony knock his ass out. I laughed at my thoughts.

I stopped at the store to get some non-alcoholic wine so I could celebrate at home, then picked up my son from my father before heading to my apartment. I felt good as far as my work life went, and seeing Tony be proud of me made it all the better. I was starting to think he liked me as a person now.

"Yes, Mommy got a big artist for the label and a bonus check for it." I cooed to my son as I entered my place.

I didn't expect the bonus, but Tony handed me the check for forty thousand dollars when I was leaving out today. I tried to give it back, but that only pissed him off, so I kept it. Shit, I wanted it anyway.

"Congratulations, beautiful." Eitan got up from my couch, scaring the shit out of me.

"How did you get in here?" I frowned as he went to get my son from his carrier that I'd placed on the bar counter.

"Your dad let me make a copy of his key that you gave him." He held our baby in his arms while looking down at me.

"Oh. Well I still don't appreciate you coming into my apartment without me knowing." I went to put my jacket in the coat closet.

"You hungry?" he asked, and just then, my eyes landed on two bags from Ruth's Chris. I was starving and knew something great was in there.

"I could eat." I started washing my hands.

We both went to sit down on the couch after he put our son back in his carrier, bringing him over with us. After praying, we dug into the steaks and all the glorious sides he'd ordered. I felt like a damn hippo.

"Tony told me about Big Dane, and I'm proud of you."

"I figured you knew when you told me congratulations," I replied in a snappy manner. "So I guess you've gotten back close with Frida, huh?"

"What? No. I knew you saw that picture, and I meant to hit you up about it, but I figured you wouldn't believe shit I had to say."

"Why, because you're such a stupid, ugly liar?"

He laughed.

"I wouldn't say I'm a liar, but I have lied in the past, which I'm sorry for. It's just scary thinking one sentence could ruin our relationship, Rubie."

"Well if you didn't cheat on me, that wouldn't be the case. And if you're not with Frida, then why haven't I heard from you? I mean, not that I want to. It's just weird for you to be hounding me one moment and ghost the next."

He nodded to agree while chewing his food.

"First of all, the photo of Frida and I was innocent. I ran into her at the donut shop and felt the need to apologize to her."

"Apologize to *her*? What the fuck?"

"Not for that, but because some shit happened at the studio, and I said some things I wasn't proud of. Being me, anything I do, people feel the need to document, so that's why the picture ended up everywhere."

"But I haven't contacted you because I needed to take sometime to think about what I did and why the shit hurt you so badly. I realized that sending you gifts and flowers wasn't gon' work because that should be sent to you when we're on good terms, not because I fucked up. Also, you ain't the type of woman that can be pacified by gifts, I've learned."

"Nope," I stated proudly.

"That's something I like about you, and I like the females you surround yourself with because they're quality like you." Taking my fork from me, he placed it down so I could pay attention to him. I was not happy about that. "Rubie, I'm sorry for messing around, for doing it with Frida of all people, and while you were healing from giving birth. It's probably one of the biggest mistakes in my life, other than getting Tony shot. I couldn't imagine you cheating on me with an ex of yours and while I was incapacitated. I honestly don't even know what I was thinking. Not to make

excuses, but the shit happened so fast. It was like one minute she was talking to me and the next she was on her knees. ”

“Spare me the details, please.” I put my hand up, and he nodded.

“I’m honestly ashamed. I feel like dumb ass Rahim. Anyway, I learned during the time I left you alone that what you wanted from me was to understand what I did. I was so focused on making sure you didn’t leave me that I overlooked that.”

Who the fuck was this? And where was my Eitan that was kind of slow?

“I just... I can’t forgive you right now.” I looked down at my food. “It’s too soon, and I’m still angry.”

“I get it, and that’s fine. All I want is for us to stay married and be a family. If you need six months or even a year before you’re nice to me again or will sleep with my ass, I’m cool with that. I just want you.”

“Have you ever cheated before this? And don’t lie.”

“Before what?”

Okay, there the old Eitan was.

“Before this time with Frida, Eitan, what else!”

“Oh shit. Nah, never, I swear. It’s the last time too, and it was only head, nothing more.”

“Stop saying *only* head, because it’s still a form of sex. You had your dick in her nasty mouth.”

“You right. My bad.” He snickered. “I don’t expect you to forgive me right away or ever. I just want you to know I love you, and I will do whatever it takes, even if it doesn’t benefit me, to fix this.”

I looked off for a second, thinking about what I wanted to do.

“Okay. Elijah and I will come home, but you will sleep in the guestroom. Our bedroom has my walk-in closet and make up station, so it makes more sense for you to leave.”

“Umm, aight.”

“Also, you and Frida can no longer be friends.”

“No problem. What else?” He nodded.

“We will go from there, but I can’t promise that it will work or last. It depends on how you make me feel.”

“What about the wedding? Can we still have it?”

“You *want* a wedding?”

“Yes. I thought we both wanted the shit.”

“Again, it depends on how you make me feel. If I don’t like how you act, then I will seek a divorce and so on.” I stuck my nose in the air.

“Cool.” He kissed my cheek. “After we eat, you want a bubble bath?”

“I guess.” I pretended that didn’t sound nice.

“Can I spend the night?”

“No—”

“I can help you put the baby to sleep, give you a foot rub, and we can watch some TV.”

“Okay, fine. But hurry up and finish your food so you can get started on my bath.”

“Aight, fasho,” he replied excitedly before restarting on his food.

I watched him for a second, simpering since he wasn’t looking, and then I got back to my plate as well.

Eitan realizing what he did actually made me feel a little better, surprisingly. I still wanted to strangle and bludgeon his ass to death, but not as much. And the fact that my father, the toughest critic when it came to the men I dated, gave Eitan a copy of the key, baffled me. I knew he didn’t too much care for Eitan, but he himself must’ve felt Eitan loved me and was genuine if he would assist him in getting me back on multiple occasions. Armonn would have never been able to get a copy of my damn key. Hell, my dad wouldn’t even let his ass come to his house.

Hopefully Eitan and I could get back to how we were, but only time would tell. One thing I knew for sure was that I loved him, and even though his actions lately proved otherwise, I knew he loved me.

CAMARIIH

I'd gotten an offer on my mom's house, and it was a pretty great one. The buyers wanted to pay over the asking price, which I was surprised by due to its location. I guess Tony was right when he said if we fixed the place up and made it look like something, it'd sell. I was hesitant about doing that because I didn't want to throw money into something for no reason, but I was happy I had.

Before I agreed on the offer, Tony wanted to go over there and look at the house. He needed to be sure the buyers didn't see something we didn't, which would explain their reasoning for over offering.

He parked his Bentley truck in the driveway, and then we made our way inside so he could look at the house with a damn magnifying glass. I was helping him at first, but then I lost my zeal due to being tired, so I sat my ass down to relax.

"Aight, shit looks the same. I don't see no damn gold mines or nothing." He checked the cabinet in the hallway. "You talk to yo' mama?"

"Nope. Not since she told me she didn't want me selling it."

"Well her ass is in jail, and she ain't got no fucking choice," he replied, saying exactly what I was thinking. "Come on." He helped me from the couch and then hugged me, sliding his hands down to my ass. "This shit is fat."

"Houston, not here." I laughed.

"Back of the Bentley?"

I pondered on it for a second and then said, "Okay. You're lucky Jilly has the baby."

“Yeah, we gotta hurry up then so he don’t pull all my sister hair out and shit.” We laughed at his comment as we walked from the house hand in hand, even though what he said was facts.

As we came down the steps, I felt a lump form in my throat upon seeing Marcel again, Driz’s friend. He had to have moved over here now, because every time I stopped by my mom’s house, he wanted to pop up. Granted it was only twice as of late, but what are the odds that he’d run into me each time? Stalker much?

“Aye, Camarih, let me—”

“Hold the fuck up, cuz. Don’t address my girl when you see me standing right here.” Tony cut him off as we neared each other.

“I was—”

“Who the fuck is you?” Tony interjected again.

“I’m Marcel, nigga, who is you?”

Oh Lord. And Marcel knew exactly who Tony was.

“I’m gon’ be the nigga that puts yo’ ass to sleep for good if you don’t learn some respect, little nigga.”

“Man—” Marcel focused his attention on me.

“Like I said, don’t address my girl. You ain’t got shit to say to her. I don’t give a fuck who you are, cuz. Don’t no other nigga speak to my woman while I’m right here.” Tony blocked Marcel’s view of me, and I hid right behind my man.

“Damn, why it have to be all like that. She yo’ property or something?”

“Don’t worry about what the fuck she is. Take yo’ bitch ass back to where the fuck you came from ’fore I pump that pigeon chest with some heat.” Tony pulled his gun from his waist.

I wanted to step in and tell him not to do anything, but one, this wasn’t the time, because he felt disrespected, and it would only piss him off if I tried to stop him. Secondly, my nigga was crazy, and I wasn’t a big enough idiot to upset him when he was like this. I had to accept the fact that, when it came to his son and me, he didn’t take any prisoners.

“Nigga, fuck you and yo’ bitch—”

POP! POP! POP! POP!

“Ahhhh!” I screamed at the top of my lungs out of fear and shock, seeing Tony light Marcel up, and his body drop, covering itself in blood already.

“Get in the car.” Tony rushed me, pulling some weird phone out and typing. “Camarih, go get in the fucking car.”

I had still been standing there, petrified, but finally, I rushed to the car and got in on the passenger side. I watched Tony talk on the phone for a little bit, then he came to get in with me and drove off like nothing happened.

“Is-is he dead?” I stammered.

“Most definitely. Who was that?” he asked while keeping his eyes on the road, so calmly too. He always told me, where he was from, catching bodies was normal.

“He was Driz’s friend. I didn’t really know him like that.” My voice was shaking.

After a while, Tony pulled the car over, throwing it in park. He took my seat belt off, moved his seat back some, and then brought me over into his lap. Wrapping his strong arms around my body, he held me tightly, so I reciprocated, hugging his neck and inhaling his cologne.

“I’m sorry,” he said lowly.

“It’s okay. He wasn’t my friend or anything,” I spoke softly.

“Nah, fuck cuz. I’m sorry for shooting his ass in front of you like that. I just snapped when he called you out ya fucking name.”

We were still holding one another tightly, with him rubbing my back. I pulled back some so that I could look down into his eyes.

“I know.”

“You afraid of me?”

“No, I love you. I’m not scared of you. I just know you can take care of me and protect me, if that makes sense. Having you keeps me unafraid.” I caressed the side of his face before kissing him. “I just don’t want you to get into trouble, especially over me.”

We just looked into another’s eyes for a couple moments.

“I feel you. I love yo’ ass too, and I wanna be able to have you and fuck you forever.” He kissed all over my face.

“Okay. So let’s go get our son then go home and do that.”

His bright smile appeared, making me cup his face to press my lips to his a couple times, before I got into the passenger seat.

I loved him.



TODAY, Tony and I were going to find out what the baby was. We'd decided to make a bet on the gender, so I was praying I won. Of course, if it was a boy, he'd win, and the reward was something very sexual. If I won, he had to spend the whole day at my spa as my assistant. It was the only thing I could think of that he didn't want to do and would bother him. If I chose something involving sex, he'd be happy, and if I chose something like a foot rub or anything doting, it was stuff he already did.

"Okay, there is the baby." My doctor pointed. I smiled, looking at the screen. "The baby is very healthy and growing perfectly. Let's try to get a look." She squinted her eyes, moving the device around on my belly.

"Cuz throwing up Crip right there with his hand. It's a boy," Tony pointed out.

I tried to ignore him, but when my doctor laughed, I did too. He was so damn stupid.

"He's right, it's a boy." The doctor grinned, surprising me. "Looks like you'll have two boys. I'm sure the next one will be a girl."

"Fuck I tell you, Buttascotch." Tony kissed me, way too excited. "Knew I heard cuz crippling in the womb."

I didn't truly care what I had, as long as they were healthy, but I feared another boy would be bad just like my current little boy.

I giggled, and so did my doctor at Tony's reaction, while she cleaned my stomach off. I fixed my clothing, we finished the appointment, and then we were free to go.

I had a few facials to do, so after promising Tony I would come right home to give him his prize, I went to my spa. Jilly was kind enough to watch our baby, so Tony was going to pick him up.

Even though the facials were an hour apiece, they seemed to fly by. I had all of my usual clients today, so I guess that was why. Whenever I had someone new, it always took a little minute because they had questions, and I had to explain the process plus take note of anything they were allergic to.

Anyway, by the time I felt tired, it was the end of the day and time to close up.

"Hey, boss. Do you think you could give me a ride home?" Kai inquired.

"Oh yeah, sure."

I said 'bye' to Dana and Avery as they walked out of the shop, then locked up. I hit the button on my key fob to allow Kai to get in on the

passenger side while I loaded some things into my trunk. Making my way around, I hopped in and pulled off.

“Oh no, the freeway right here is where you have to go.” She pointed.

“I thought you lived—”

“I do, but I’m spending the night with my boyfriend. I’m sorry, I should’ve said something. I hope it’s okay.”

“Yeah... yeah, it’s cool,” I said, even though I was annoyed. I wanted to get home, eat some food, spend time with my baby, and then fuck Tony. This bitch was interfering with my plans.

I let Kai direct me until we ended up at a small home in the hood. I slowed down to a stop when Kai pointed out the house, and then waited as she put on her jacket since it was cold out.

“Get out the fucking car, bitch!” A big dude came to my side, pressing a gun to the window.

“Oh my gosh, what the fuck?” I screeched. “Okay, okay, I will.” As I panicked, I noticed Kai wasn’t, so I glanced her way briefly to see she was chilling. “Kai, we need to...” Suddenly, it hit me that she knew whomever this was. And when I looked back at him, I recognized the man to be Theo, her boyfriend. “Really, Kai?”

“Bitch, get out the car!” Theo roared.

“My name isn’t Kai, by the way. Kai is my college roommate whose social I stole to fool you. I’m Valencia.”

“Okay, and what the fuck was the point of all that? To rob me?” I started to cry, feeling like I was going to die.

“No, bitch, because your nigga killed my fucking brother over that hoe of a little sister, Jilly.”

“Your brother?”

“Vernon.” She raised her brow. “And *Theo* is my other brother, Vance. He escaped from prison, so you’d better do what the fuck he says.”

Vance was the other guy who’d assisted Vernon in murdering Driz. Was this shit really happening to me?

And Tony killed Vernon because of that, not over Jilly; however, this wasn’t the time to be harping on specific details. I couldn’t believe this shit, and no wonder Kai tried to work at *The Pink Cherry* with her Oscar Proud looking ass.

“Hurry up, hoe!” Valencia yelled, shoving me lightly.

“Who the fuck are you calling a hoe?” I barked. If I was gonna die, I was gonna go out beating this bitch’s ass.

Before she could answer, I started raining blows on that hoe’s face. She tried to get ahold of me, but couldn’t, and I hit her ass as hard as I could, feeling bones crack under the pressure. Blood splattered on me a tiny bit too, but that didn’t stop me from hammering that bitch’s face in. I wanted it to be concave when I got done with her. She was about to kick me, but her foot got stuck, putting her at a further disadvantage as I pounded her.

Kai, Oscar, Valencia, or whatever the fuck her name was, let out blood curdling screams, and the only reason I stopped was because her brother yanked me from the car.

“Chill out!” he hollered as Valencia cried.

When I slipped from his grasp, her punk ass bolted from the car and ran across the tiny street, almost getting hit by a lone vehicle speeding by. Vance grabbed me again before I could get to her.

“Let me go! If you hurt me, my nigga is gonna kill both of you dirty, crusty, broke ass bitches!” I growled.

As I went crazy in Vance’s hold, Valencia watched from across the quiet street, face covered in a mix of blood and tears. I felt my teeth grinding together as I stared at her like she was a piece of raw meat and I was a lion. I wanted to beat on that bitch some more, and the fear in her eyes only made me salivate.

“Kill her crazy ass!” Valencia shouted, scary hoe. I could tell if I broke loose, she would piss her cheap ass tight.

“Let me go, you pot belly muthafucka!” I hollered to Vance. “If you shoot me, I better die, nigga! Wait until I get loose! I’m fucking you up next!” I cursed Vance.

PHEW!

A silent bullet came out of nowhere, splattering Valencia’s brains and causing both Vance and I to freeze.

“Put her down, cuz.” Tony appeared, checking for cars as he crossed the inactive street like it was nothing.

“I ain’t putting shit down. If you shoot me, I’m shooting her a—”

PHEW! PHEW!

Vance’s grip loosened immediately as Tony put two shots in his head. I promptly rushed into Tony, hugging him so closely that I could feel his abs.

“Damn, baby. That bitch is unrecognizable.” Tony lifted my head to look down into my face, referring to how battered Valencia’s face was.

“She shouldn’t have called me a hoe.” I whimpered as he tittered, wiping my tears.

“I peeped you acting a fucking fool before I shot that hoe. You definitely my bitch, crazy just like yo’ nigga.”

“I don’t know what came over me.” I smirked.

“Shit was sexy how you was talking that shit to a nigga with a gun.” He licked his sexy lips at me. “But aye, don’t do that shit no more. ’Cause if you get hurt, you know a nigga gon’ lose his mind.”

“And vice versa.”

“I was crazier first, so I got dibs on that shit. You gotta chill out, plus you pregnant.” He laughed and so did I as he led me to the passenger side of my car.

“How did you find me?” I asked once we were both in my Rolls truck.

“Had some extra time, so I looked into that hoe, especially when Avery told me about ‘Theo’ and how he was a known criminal. I then got some people I know to collect her fingerprints and found out her real name and address.

“This they mama’s house, but she moved in with some new nigga she met and left it to the Valencia bitch who was supposed to be overseas studying still, but her ass came home on some fuck shit,” he explained as he drove. “As I’m sure yo’ ass knows, I got a tracker on yo’ shit, so when I saw you headed to this crib, I knew it was about to be some bullshit. I had the homie drop me off a block away so I could sneak up.”

“You have a tracker on my car!”

“That’s all you heard out of everything I just fucking said? I just saved yo’ muthafuckin life. You should be sucking my dick right now.”

Without another word, I bent over to the side to take his dick out. It took no time for him to get hard as I started sucking. I made sure to do it sloppily, allowing my saliva to coat his thick and lengthy dick as I bobbed on it.

“Mmm,” I moaned on it, letting the head gently tap the back of my throat.

When I let it sit there for a little bit, Tony moaned lowly, making me wet at the sound. He loved that. When I felt his hand start to massage my

scalp, I knew he was gonna pull my hair, so I started sucking faster and harder, making him groan a little louder than usual.

“Camarih, fuck, you gon’ make me crash.” The car swerved some, but I didn’t let up.

Playing with his balls, I kept up my pace, making it so sloppy my chin was drenched. I wanted to laugh when he hit the brakes so hard the car screeched, but I didn’t. I just kept slurping the life out of him. He was frozen, straight up paralyzed as I sucked, massaged, and twirled my tongue around the head of his dick when I could. Soon enough, he was cumming hard, with cars behind him honking because he was stationed at a green light.

I took it right down and then sat up to get a napkin from the glove compartment to wipe my mouth. Reaching into the back seat for my purse, I dug for a wipe and then cleaned his dick before putting it back up as he drove. I used some hand sanitizer for my hands until we got home. The whole time I was freshening up, I felt Tony staring at me, but I pretended not to see while wearing a half smile.

“What?” I finally asked when he came to another red light.

“You gon’ marry me?”

“What? Houston, we’re already married.”

“Shit I’m just making sure, ’cause if not, the way you sucking a nigga up, I was ’bout to wife yo’ ass.”

Laughing, I said, “I love you, crazy,” while rubbing the back of his head as he drove. His side profile was so sexy.

“I love yo’ ass too, with that crazy ass head game. Got damn.” He shook his head like he was in disbelief as he checked his mirror to switch lanes.

I just giggled, liking how satisfied he was with my work.

JUST A FEW DAYS LATER...

About an hour ago, I told Tony that I was going grocery shopping. Instead, I waited until he got in the shower then stole Nala and Joy’s phone numbers from his phone. Leaving the house, I drove straight to the studio, let myself in, and called them both, hanging up as soon as they sang hello.

I knew I didn’t need to say a word, because they were so damn thirsty that a simple call from Tony’s studio would have them running to see what it was about. I laughed as I sat in my car, testing the intensity of my taser,

before sliding out and putting it into my back pocket. Locking my truck, I made a left to go back into the studio to wait.

Around five minutes later, I heard a car, so I peeked out discreetly to see that G-Wagon Nala drove, and a smirk spread across my face. Hiding again, I waited until I heard it shut off and her heels clicking onto the sidewalk before I made myself known.

“Good afternoon, Nala.” I grinned as she froze, looking at me as if I were a serial murderer.

“Hey... Camarih. Is umm, everything okay? Tony called me.”

“Did he, Nala?” As I moved closer to her, she backed up. “Did he call you, or are you assuming he did because of the phone number that popped up?”

“Well I—”

“I know you wish he’d called you, don’t you? You see, when I beat you up that day, I assumed we had an understanding.”

“We do, Camarih. I don’t even try with him. It’s not even—”

“So did you not have an abortion because it wasn’t his? That seems a bit much for a man you know is off limits.” Again, I made steps toward her, and like clockwork, she backed away. Every direction I went, she moved. From afar, it probably looked like we were doing the waltz.

“My words were taken out of context. I meant the baby wasn’t by a man I loved. But I swear to you, Camarih, I have not tried anything.”

“Well, Nala, you’re a liar. It seems I didn’t hit you hard enough the first time. You still go out of your way to be alone with him, hence walking to get tacos and stuff. You also press him about his personal life, and you know I don’t like that too much.” I kept my tone soft and sweet. “So I think we need to fight.”

“No! No, Camarih, we don’t. I wasn’t quite sure of what needed to be stopped, but now I know no alone time and—”

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!

I was tired of hearing that bitch’s voice, so I just started wailing on her. She did try to swing back, eventually, but landed not a one punch. I tagged her face about four more times before she tried to run, so I retrieved my taser and stuck it right into her side, laughing as her body gyrated then dropped.

Putting my taser back into my rear pocket, I dragged her paralyzed body into the studio then used this cord I had to tie her hands behind her back.

“Do not say a word, bitch,” I let her know as I got back in place to wait for the next hoe.

It wasn't long before my main course, Joy, showed up. Knowing she planted that rumor had me heated. Tony said he was going to take care of her, but no, I wanted to. She did this to fuck with me, not him; at least that's the way I saw it.

I smirked when I looked down at Nala, who was worried as hell, and then I slid out to stop Joy from coming inside.

“Camarih?” She took a few steps back, clearly shocked. This bitch had fixed herself up for Tony; it was obvious by the freshness of her perfume.

“Yep, that's me. The one who you tried to fuck with by planting little baby rumors around.” I cheesed nicely.

“Wow, so I guess you're the one who called.”

“I did. At least I know you're smarter than this bitch.” I pointed down to Nala who was inside the studio hallway, tied up.

Joy peered inside and then regained eye contact with me, looking afraid.

“I did not plant any rumor. I am happily in a relationship with Tony's cousin.”

“No. Carter let us know he ended things with you months ago. Now, I am just about tired of you. I used to feel bad because you were stupid enough to abort babies for him, but now I just see you're a pathetic, loser bitch who is jealous. Tony never cared about you, and it seems that's hard for you to realize. So it's my job to embed it into your head.

“My God, woman, I have never met someone as sad as you. How are you this hung up on a man that gives you nothing in return? You are a sad sack of shit.”

“Fuck you, bitch! And watch him—”

WHAP!

I slapped her across the face, and when she was about to hit me, I started pounding on her. I admit Joy wasn't as easy as punk ass Nala, but my ass was up for the challenge, pregnant and all. In no time, I had the upper hand, knocking Joy's head around like an intense game of ping-pong. Like Nala, when she tried to break away and run from having enough, I stuck that taser right into her abdomen and dragged that hoe into the studio to tie up.

“Camarih, I am sorry.” Nala whimpered as I came in and stepped over them so I could see their faces as they laid on their stomachs.

“Whew! Beating you hoes up is a workout, especially being pregnant and all.” I left them to get some water from the room Tony didn’t use, then came back out.

“Camarih, please, I promise I will never bother you again.” Joy talked weirdly, drooling some because of being tased.

I laughed then laughed harder and louder because they were looking at me with such terrified expressions.

Setting my water down, I said, “Now, we all have an agreement, right, ladies?” I moved closer to them. Getting down onto my knees since squatting was hard with a small belly, I added, “Houston Terranova is off limits. I really hate that I had to do this, because, honestly, I’m a very sweet person. I want everyone to be happy and free of violence, yada yada ya, but it became apparent to me that the two of you hoes are visual learners, so words aren’t enough.

“Now, Nala and Joy,” I petted their heads like little doggies, “this is ass whooping number two, so if I have to see the two of you parched hoes again, I can’t promise it won’t be fatal. Does everyone understand and agree?” I rose back up, waiting.

“Yes,” Nala said, sounding defeated.

“Oh, and don’t try to sign to another label because I’ll kill you.” I winked at Nala then turned to Joy.

“Yes, yes.” Still, her speech was slurred.

Chuckling, I said, “You both look so ugly and dumb. But okay, I guess I can let you—”

“Camarih!” Houston appeared in the doorway, making me jump. “What the fuck?”

“I’m sorry. I had to!” I whined, wanting some sympathy.

“Baby...” He looked down at them then entered the studio, kicking Joy a little bit for space. He was frowning hard, so I knew I was in trouble. Finally, he started chortling heavily, so I joined him and noticed Nala and Joy watching us, clearly horrified. “Untie these hoes.” His laughter started to cease a little bit.

He helped me untie them, and both darted out, but not before Nala promised to be at the studio next week like a good bitch.

“I’m sorry,” I lied to Tony.

“No you not.” He touched my small belly. “Chill out though, crazy ass. Doing all this shit while pregnant with Crip.”

“No! That is not gonna be his nickname.”

Chuckling, Tony just hugged my body while kissing me. I knew that shit meant my protest went in one ear and out of the other.

RAHIM

THE NEXT MORNING... AROUND 11:30 A.M....

“**H**ow is it coming along?” Amara walked into her backyard with two glasses, full of what appeared to be lemonade. I truly didn’t care what it was; I just needed something to drink.

It was hot as fuck, and my daughter wanted her playhouse built today so that she could play in it. I tried to tell her I’d do it tomorrow, but it was hard for me to say no to my baby girl.

“It’s coming. I just wish this shit didn’t have so many parts. I’ve had to unscrew and redo so much shit.” I shook my head as Amara cackled, handing me the glass.

She descended into the chair that went to the table I was by. Sitting down next to my project, I took a little break to drink down what I confirmed to be lemonade, homemade at that.

“I’m very impressed with you, Rahim.” Amara leaned on the table, smiling down at me.

She looked beautiful, per usual. Her hair was hanging down, and she had on one of them long dresses with a split; the whole thing was covered in flowers. Her light skin was so supple, not a spot of ash in sight.

“I like impressing you.” I smirked.

Amara and I had been out on a few dates alone and then a few with Ahmira. I had yet to get a kiss on the lips, let alone any kind of bedroom

action from her, but I honestly didn't mind. I was more focused on her willingness to take me back.

I made a point to visit Amara and Ahmira whenever I had time off from the studio, and I occasionally spent the night in the guestroom when I knew I didn't have an early day in the morning. It was nice, and I think I was enjoying that so much that I didn't really mind not getting any action.

Don't get me wrong, I definitely thought about it, because Amara was fine as hell. She didn't look any different from the day I met her in college. She was only much more mature and even more attractive because of all she'd done with her life, all the while supporting my dream and having a child. It amazed me sometimes when I thought about it, and I couldn't even fathom the fact that I fucked my shit up for women who didn't even measure up, excluding Shanece.

"I'm starting to see the Rahim I fell in love with, but also a more mature version of it. You weren't ready for me to take you back before, when it all first happened."

"I always loved you, Amara, but I guess all this taught me how horrible life is without you and that I need to be okay with being alone."

Other than the fact that I was a man and around other single niggas who had hoes, my issue back then was my inability to be by myself. Ever since I could date and have sex, I'd always had a girlfriend. And if we broke up, I had a new one within weeks.

I'd always been a serial monogamist, and that shit had me hella dependent on relationships. Having my wife in another state was a recipe for disaster for a nigga like me at that time, someone who needed physical and mental affection 24/7. From Phoebe, I got that physical shit, and then Shanece stimulated my mental.

It was hard as hell for me to break up with Dallas, knowing full well I had no back-up woman, which was a first for me, and that it was more likely than not Amara *wouldn't* take me back.

But during this period, it helped me be able to stand on my own, because even though I was dating Amara, I couldn't have her all of the time. It wasn't the same as being in a relationship with her, especially when some nights she went out with that nigga Donnie and I had to babysit my daughter like a punk while she did it.

However, after all the shit I did to Amara, it wasn't my place to have any issue with her dating around. The ball was in her court, and that's how I

preferred it; she deserved for it to be that way. Her giving me the opportunity to take her out when I could was just that, an opportunity, so I had no right to try to call shots or intervene.

I chuckled to myself, thinking about the shocking expression on Tony's face when I told him Amara went on a date and I stayed at her crib with Ahmira. Nigga asked so many questions because he just couldn't believe I sat there and allowed it. He called me a couple hoe niggas too. And truthfully, from the outside looking in, I would've called myself that shit too.

"Yeah, it's good that you've learned to be alone, Rahim. Because no matter who you're with, sometimes you guys can't be together as much as you want. And if I'm married, I want to know my husband can stand on his own and not need to be tended to constantly."

"You wouldn't have to worry about that... I mean, if you married me." I shrugged, and she laughed.

Getting up from the seat, she lowered down, her alluring perfume wafting over me as she did it. She leaned in to press her lips to mine, and my dick immediately pitched a tent, even to my surprise. She looked into my eyes afterward and then gave me a few more deep pecks.

"I'm not quite ready to get married again, but I am willing to be monogamous."

"With me?" I pointed to myself. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Shit, there were times I wanted to die because I knew I would never hear this shit from Amara.

"Yes, with you, who else?"

"I had to ask. But that sounds like a great deal for me."

"Okay." She kissed me once more, but when she tried to stand, I brought her into my lap, making her giggle. "We're still going to live separately though, like normal boyfriend and girlfriend."

"I got it. I'm thinking of a Christmas wedding."

"Rahim."

"That gives me about six months to convince you to marry me and propose." I pecked her as she smiled. "I love you."

"I know." She hugged my neck just as we started to tongue one another down.

Other than when my daughter was born, today was one of the best damn days of my life. Would've been better if I got some, but kissing was farther

than I'd gotten with Amara in ages, so I was gon' take it.

We were getting married by December, I was making sure of it, and the only way this shit would end is if one of us died.

TONY WACKO

I was in the studio by myself, just listening to a bunch of newly recorded tracks from the past few weeks. I'd been too held up handling other shit to hear them as soon as they were recorded like usual, so I had to cram it all into one listening session.

I decided to take a break just so my ears could be fresher when I turned on the next track. Standing up, I left the studio room to head outside to smoke and get fresh air, but I noticed a white envelope had been slid under the door. Picking it up, I read my name on the front, so I stepped outside to see if anybody was still around. It was nothing but a couple random crack heads across the street, so whoever left this shit was long gone.

Going back inside, I shut the door and opened the letter to see it was from Brielle's ass.

Dear Brother, I won't speak your name just in case this letter finds itself in the wrong hands. To keep things short and to the point, the way you like it, I am keeping the promise I made to God and turning myself in. I tried, I really did to move on with my life, but the weight of what I have done is really much too heavy for me to bear. I thank you for helping me the way that you did when it went down, and I will not mention your name when I confess. No one knows you assisted me but you and I, not even my husband, and I'd like to keep things that way.

Although in a perfect world, you and I would be together, I've realized a while ago that would never happen. I've loved you...

I stopped reading because I didn't care about all that bullshit she was about to say. That bitch was off her fucking rocker to ever think we'd become more than fuck buddies, whether our parents got married or not.

I wanted to be pissed that her stupid ass went down there to confess, but a part of me believed she wouldn't throw my name in that shit. And even if she did, there was no body and no evidence, so she'd have a hard time proving not only that I was involved, but even her damn self.

Muthafuckas thought they could just confess to shit and go to jail, but it didn't work like that. You could confess until the fucking sun came up, but if there was no evidence, yo' ass would be free.

So whatever the fuck she needed to do to leave me the fuck alone and be able to sleep at night, I was all for the shit.

Taking the letter, I shredded that muthafucka then went on about my muthafuckin business.

I was more than happy to be ridding my damn life of these hoes.



NEW YORK CITY... AROUND 2:30 P.M....

Brooklen and Eitan had just done a show yesterday, since Brooklen was Eitan's opening act on his tour. She did a good ass job, and I knew now that if she'd dropkicked her bitch ass dude, she would only get better. Niggas like him couldn't handle having a bitch that was successful and didn't need their asses to survive. I on the other hand didn't want no hoe who couldn't get the shit on her own.

That's why I loved Camarih. She was a hustler and didn't want to be handed any damn thing. But in the same token, she wasn't overly independent to where she wouldn't let her nigga take care of her.

She was perfect, and every night I prayed, I thanked God that He gave me a woman like that to not only call my own but to be the mother of my kids. She loved hard too, unconditionally, because even the times when I wasn't the best nigga, she was still there. She understood that I was different. I wasn't some fairytale ass nigga that was gon' magically become Prince Charming just because she came into my life. I was a hood nigga through and through.

But I got that shit together; real recognized real, and it was only right for me to respect Camarih. I loved her, and I knew if I wanted her to feel

that shit, it would have to start with respect. And everything I lacked, my girl had, making us some perfect ass fucking puzzle pieces.

Anyway, I was chilling in my hotel room, currently on FaceTime with Camarih, trying to get her to show me something, but she refused since my son was in the room.

“Take cuz in his fucking room, come back, and then get to the shit, Buttascotch.”

“No, Houston. Just wait. When you get home in a few days, I promise it will be worth it.”

“Baby... look.” I flipped the camera to show how my dick was standing in my sweats. “I’m dying out here.”

“Well keep dying, and you better not fuck any bitches or jack off.”

“I won’t jack off. I promise.”

“Houston, you—”

“I gotta go.” I hung up, laughing, especially when she started blowing me up, calling.

Just as Camarih’s calls ceased, I got a text from the homie out here letting me know Angel was eating at this deli nearby. I’d been on the hunt for that hoe ever since Klaude let me know she was behind that stupid ass rumor. Camarih took care of Joy for me, which I didn’t ask her ass to do, but that was what happened when yo’ bitch started turning into you.

I slipped my feet into my Nikes, pulled on my black hoodie, which matched my sweats, shoved my keycard into my pocket, and then dipped out. I booked it straight to that deli from the hotel, on foot, because I didn’t want any type of tracking on me. When I got to the beat down ass deli, I spotted that bitch finishing up her food to throw it out. She was switching hard as hell, as if she wasn’t shaped like a damn toothbrush.

I dipped around the side of the brick wall, which was a small alley, and waited. Moments later, I quickly peeped to see her coming out, so I slipped back into hiding.

“Ahh!” She screeched when I grabbed her by her skinny ass neck. “Oh —”

WHAP!

She barely got her sentence out before I slapped the shit out of her, making her collide with the big ass dumpster. She actually tried to run up and hit me, but I coolly smacked the shit out of her again, causing her to become dizzy as hell.

“You thought that rumor shit was funny, huh?” I walked toward her as she backed away like it wasn’t a dead end.

“No, I’m sorry, I swear I—”

WHAP!

I delivered one more to her ass, after making sure no one was watching still, and that time, she fell to the ground, hands up in mock surrender, face bleeding, and pleading with me to stop.

“What type of nigga you think I am, Angel? Next time you wanna scheme and play these muthafuckin games with somebody’s family, you better do it to one of these bitch ass niggas that play tough on ya TV screens, hoe. I’ll knock the shit out you in real life. Let me find out you doing shit that involves me, my girl, or anything I got my hands on, and I’m splittin’ yo’ ass like pea soup.” Lowering my voice some, I whispered, “And even if you *dream* about doing some shit, I’ll know, so when you wake up, I’ll be there to break my foot off in yo’ flat ass. I pulled the pre-rolled blunt from my pocket and lit it. “We cool?”

“Ye-yes.”

“Aight. Get the fuck up off the ground. That ass is flat enough. Sitting down only gon’ make the shit worse, dummy.” I shook my head, checked my surroundings again, and walked off.

I got back to my hotel around 3 p.m., and all I could think about was fucking. I left four days ago, and that was the longest I’d gone without pussy, excluding when Camarih had just given birth and couldn’t bust it open for a nigga. But shit, even then I was getting some head and able to eat pussy after a couple weeks.

There was no way I could sleep tonight without something. And I felt like jacking off was some gay shit, because regardless of whether it was yo’ hand or not, it was a nigga’s hand stroking yo’ dick. Shit, if you’d stroke yo’ dick and you a nigga, whose to say you won’t let the next nigga do it? So nah, I wasn’t with that gay shit.

Damn...

HOURS LATER... ALMOST MIDNIGHT...

Taking off my jacket and shoes in the dark room, I laid them both on the chaise then removed the rest of my clothes. Making my way over to the bed, I peeled the covers back and got in, hovering over Camarih who was

sleep on her back, wearing a tiny, silky type bra and the matching shorts. I knew when I saw them shorts she didn't have any fucking panties on.

I planted kisses on her belly as I removed the shorts, making her move about before her eyes fluttered open.

"Houston?"

"Who else?" I held her thighs, kissing the inner area as I made my way closer to her exposed pussy. It was perfect, like always.

"When did you get here?" She whispered softly as I sucked her thigh area right next to her pussy.

"Like ten minutes ago. I told you I was horny as fuck for you."

"You flew back just for this?" she quizzed, and I nodded just before I started to eat her shit up. "Mmm," she whimpered, spreading her legs wider.

She was soaking wet in no fucking time, so I dipped my tongue into her opening before bringing it back up to put pressure on her clit. Her moans got louder as she ran her small fingers through my hair and released. Keeping her legs apart with my hands, I lapped her juices up, fucking her with my tongue for a little bit, then went back to teasing her bud before sucking it. I kept switching back and forth between those two, french kissing the pussy as she creamed two more times. My dick was rock hard from hearing her moans and tasting her shit.

I sped up my motions, causing her body to become paralyzed as she whimpered and sniveled my name. I couldn't help but to groan myself at the taste of my bitch, as she came again, hard as hell. Gently, I licked her clean, then made my way up her body, using my mouth, as I removed her silk top.

"Didn't I say if I was away from you, I would fly out to fuck you before I cheated on yo' ass?"

Out of breath, Camarih smiled and nodded before I slipped my tongue in her mouth. My dick was swollen beyond belief, so I plunged right inside of her tight walls, which almost made a nigga nut. She moaned into my mouth from the pressure, as I slowly glided in and out of her dripping wet pussy.

"Houston!" She cried my name the way I liked as I started to beat it up.

And every time I went in deep, I felt her nectar coat my shaft. I loved listening to how wet she was, and for a moment, I stopped kissing her slowly and nastily so I could look down at my work. Biting down on my

lip, I slowed up my strokes to be able see just how pretty her shit looked when I was pounding it.

Picking my head up, I got back to tonguing her down while beating it up with force. I was hitting it hard, so hard Camarih couldn't moan; she could only hold her lips apart as I sucked and nibbled on the bottom one, while holding the front of her neck with one hand and using the other to hold her left leg outward to be sure I could hit it deep.

"Damn, baby," I groaned lowly, feeling how good this pussy was all throughout my body. "Told you yo' nigga will catch private flights for this shit."

Camarih's pussy was nice and grippy but so wet that I could feel her drenching the sheets. Holding the front of her neck a bit tighter, I bit down on her bottom lip and beat her shit out the frame, to where she couldn't help but to cry out, making the sexiest faces I'd ever seen.

Soon enough, I was shooting her shit up. We kissed for a while, trying to catch our damn breath.

"You booked a private jet just to come fuck me. And I know you have to go back out in the morning... I just love you." Camarih panted, looking up at me sensually as her teeth held her lip captive.

"I love yo' ass too."

That's it, cuz... We lived happily ever after and all that bullshit. Happy birthday. Merry Cripmas... and shit, whatever other fucking holiday y'all muthafuckas is into.

You don't need to get no muthafuckin epilo—

CAMARIH TERRANOVA

MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA... THREE YEARS LATER...

“That was fun.” I smiled as Tony helped me from the shower. We’d just had sex in it, but it wasn’t your normal shower, which made it quite interesting.

The house we were staying in, while on vacation, was so damn beautiful, equipped with a private beach, pool area, jacuzzi, and butler service. My friends and I had been cooking breakfast, but we let the chef handle lunch, dinner, and dessert. I would be so sad when we left next week.

“Of course that shit was fun.” He kissed my collarbone.

“Houston, give me my towel.” I giggled, watching him smile deviously before handing it over.

“You look better naked. I ever tell you that shit? With clothes, I be like, she a cool seven, but when yo’ pussy out—”

“Shut up!” I hit him before he pecked me.

We needed to hurry up and get dressed before the babies woke up.

Speaking of babies, now that my oldest son Houston was four years old, he was a terror but the sweetest little boy in the world to his mama. It was so hard disciplining him because I knew he meant well, just like his daddy.

Once Tony and I were all fixed up and dressed, he went to wake them both up while I prepared breakfast.

“Good morning, cutie.” I cooed at Houston when he walked in next to his father. Tony had gotten them cleaned and dressed while I cooked.

“’Sup.” Houston Jr. nodded his little head up.

“Don’t speak to ya mama like that. I told you that’s only for them hoes—I mean other people.” Tony corrected himself when I shot him a glare.

“Sorry, Mommy.” Houston smiled cutely as Tony put him in the chair at the table. “I meant to say, good morning, beautiful.” His one dimple that matched mine showed as he cheesed his little ass off. He was going to be a heartbreaker for sure.

Tony and I shared a laugh as he placed our other son Camden in the seat next to his brother. I guess God knew it would be wrong to bless me with two little tyrants, because Camden was not as bad as Houston. However, he was extremely sneaky, and you had to keep an eye on him at all times. They both looked exactly like Tony, however.

“Hoes eat breakfast, Daddy?” Camden asked his father. He was two going on twenty-five.

Tony had nicknamed him Crip Cam and still referred to Houston as Baby Cuz. My little boy had issues with being called a ‘baby’ still, but somehow, Tony convinced him that it was cool, so he wore it with pride now.

“No, they eat roaches!” Houston Jr. frowned, correcting his brother as he ate some of the snack his father had given to tide them over.

“Houston, do not let him talk like that!” I stared at Tony, who was trying not to laugh.

I didn’t know why I didn’t think the way he talked would eventually spill over to them. They were around him a lot, and he placed no filter on his language.

“These little niggas got minds of their own.” Tony shrugged as he came over to me. Rubbing my small bulge, he said, “Now when she get here, whatever she do is gon’ be on yo’ ass.” He was referring to our daughter still growing in my stomach, and I prayed he was right. That meant she’d be sweet like me.

“Houston, Camden, do not say the word hoe. You talk like me, Mommy, not Daddy, okay?”

“You said Nala was a hoe, Mommy.” Houston stared at me, eating a snack and awaiting my reply. Tony burst into laughter, making Camden do the same, even though I doubted he understood.

I’d had no more issues out of Nala or any of Tony’s little ex hoes for a while now. And even new women he signed were already well aware of how I was, so they didn’t even try the shit.

His other hoe from way back, Brielle, had gotten locked up for her mom's murder, but since there was no evidence, they had to let her go. She moved to the Midwest with her husband as soon as their cuffs were off. It amazed me how she went from wanting a life with Tony, to marrying a square. But I guess because my nigga put her through the ringer, she went for the complete opposite of him.

Joy had disappeared into the wind now that Carter wasn't fucking with her and had a new girlfriend that actually liked him back.

"Cause she is a hoe." Jilly walked into the kitchen, holding her daughter, Jillian's, hand, talking about Nala.

Jillian was adorable, looking like the perfect mixture of Jilly and Nehemiah. I wished my sons looked like me, but they only inherited this one weak ass dimple.

"Jilly, please." I chuckled.

"See, Camarih, you and I have the same problem. I tell her not to talk like that around Timothy or Jillian, but her ass don't listen." Nehemiah shook his head, taking a seat at the table.

Timothy wasn't here on this trip, because it fell on Star's time with him, and she wasn't about to budge, of course.

Jilly and Nehemiah had been doing great, both in their careers and with that personal life drama they'd once endured. That restraining order was like the magic key, because they never had to deal with Star anymore. It was unfortunate that Timothy had to have two separate birthday parties and stuff, but Jilly said he liked it.

It was funny how Star tried to pretend on social media that everything was still good with her baby daddy, but the difference was so obvious. She did have a little boo now though, so hopefully, that was helping her continue to get over the fact that she'd lost Nehemiah. We weren't exactly cool anymore, which was bound to happen, so I didn't quite know the details of her personal life.

Tony whispered something to Jilly, making her laugh, before going to sit down on the couch and starting up his video game.

"Shit, I'm just in time." Eitan walked in, and his son Elijah was running right with him as if he was gonna get a chance to play the game too.

"It's like I have two Eitans." Rubie rolled her eyes. "But at least I have you." She kissed Haleigh's forehead.

“I know. They’re annoying,” Haleigh agreed. She was only four but acted grown as hell; however, not in the bad way.

For the last few years, Haleigh had been living with Eitan and Rubie full-time. Holli was adamant about signing over her parental rights to become a star, so finally Eitan gave in. However, although she was no longer responsible for Haleigh, her career was at a standstill because she didn’t change her behavior. All she did was party, shop, and do a few performances to keep that cycle going.

Rubie had recently officially adopted Haleigh now that she and Eitan were married, which I thought was sweet of her. I swear you’d never know Haleigh wasn’t her real daughter unless someone mentioned it.

“Good morning, ladies,” Wade walked in, holding he and Shanece’s daughter, Sadè, and greeted us all. He then kissed his wife, who was right behind him, looking refreshed, so I already knew what they just came from doing.

Sadè was the cutest, and Shanece just loved her so much. Even though Shanece had accomplished a lot, including finally becoming CEO of *Scene Magazine*, I knew Sadè was her greatest feat.

“What?” Shanece inquired after Wade went to sit on the huge sectional couch with Tony and Eitan.

“Nothing. We just know you’ve been fucking.” Jilly raised her brow.

“Jilly!” Nehemiah barked at his wife, and when they made eye contact, he gave a face to say ‘what the fuck?’. “Come on, baby.” He waved for Jillian to sit at the table with the rest of the kids who were embroiled in conversation with one another.

“Elijah! Come here, cuz!” my son Houston shouted, making everybody in the kitchen and open floor living room area laugh. Elijah rushed over to see what he was trying to show him on the kiddie iPad.

I guess they thought it was funny, but it was normal for him to talk that way, and I hated it.

“Houston, do not call him cuz.” I let my son know, who nodded, giving me a wink with his bad ass.

“Good morning, everyone. Did you need some help?” Amara entered the kitchen, taking a banana to eat. Ahmira, who was almost eight years old now, was right by her. Amara was about seven months pregnant, and she carried the belly well.

“Umm, could you set the plates out?” I smiled at her after locating them.

I admit I was surprised that Amara remarried Rahim. If homeboy would’ve asked me what I thought years ago, I would’ve said to let it go. I didn’t know Amara like that at the time, but as I got to know her, I realized I liked her more than I thought.

From afar, I thought she was some holier than thou chick, but as we became somewhat friends, I admired her strength and how she whipped Rahim’s ass into tip top shape. She and Rubie had that in common, because after Eitan’s slip up with Frida, it took him a nice while to get back in good with Rubie.

Even she and Shanece were cool, which I admit was quite weird, but Shanece was so not interested in Rahim that I guess it was okay. Rubie and I liked to mess with her sometimes and remind her that she slept with him, just because her disgusted reaction was hilarious. She didn’t hate him; she just wasn’t into him and didn’t see how she ever was.

“Don’t be working my wife too much,” Rahim let us know, hugging Amara from behind and kissing her cheek.

“Nigga, please... if you don’t go somewhere...” All of us ladies ran off different comments in response to his ignorant one.

“Baby, please go before they jump you, because I will not help.” Amara nudged him, laughing at how we ripped him up a tiny bit.

“Woowoow.” Rahim took a seat at the table.

“Okay, everybody, come sit down. We have to eat and then go have some fun!” Jilly called out, so everybody moved about to come sit at the large dining table, where the ladies and I had set the food out.

Once situated, Rubie prayed over the food, and then we dug in, having minimal conversation since everybody was starved.

“So how do you like preschool, Houston?” Rubie just had to ask.

“I don’t,” he replied shortly, sounding just like his damn father.

“He got in trouble the last time he was there before break, for being bad.” I looked at my son as I chewed some of the waffles. I had Camden in my lap, who always had to share a plate with me.

“That bitch framed me!” he shouted, making me pop his little hand while everyone roared with laughter, pissing me off. “Sorry, Mommy.” He looked so sad, making me feel bad, so I kissed his cheek.

“Sorry, Mommy.” Camden mocked him like he always did.

“Shut up bitc—“ Houston Jr. caught himself when I cut my eyes at him.

“Don’t mock your brother, or I’m gonna let him pinch you,” I whispered to Camden before pecking his plump cheek. He just looked at his father for help.

“Can’t help you, Crip. Aye, but she did try to frame cuz,” Tony had the nerve to say, referring to our son’s original comment.

Everyone continued chuckling and clamoring, as I looked at my husband to shake my head.

“This is your son. I’m disowning him,” I told Tony who smirked.

“Same way I’m never letting yo’ ass go, he not gon’ let you go. You know Baby Cuz love his mama.” He crashed his lips to mine, making me smile because it was true. “I love his mama too.” He pecked me again as everyone had their own conversations, including the kids, making a lot of noise.

“I love you more—ah!” I jumped, laughing, because Tony had reached under the table to squeeze my inner thigh.

“Don’t pinch Mommy, or, or I get real, real, real mad,” Camden let his father know, while shoving a piece of turkey bacon into his little mouth and causing everyone to light up with laughter.

“Wait ’til you grow out of being all cute and shit. I’m boxing yo’ fucking head,” Tony replied to him, making our son giggle cutely.

“Tony, they are both you.” Shanece spoke facts, while everyone commented to agree.

If all of this was what you got from loving and giving your all to the hood’s finest, I would do it all over again.

****FIN* ...for real***