



KIMBERLY BROWN

B. LOVE
PRESENTS

It's Gotta
BE YOU

IT'S GOTTA BE YOU



KIMBERLY BROWN

B. Love Publications

OceanofPDF.com

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CONTENTS

[Preface](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Afterword](#)

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PREFACE

Author's Note

This work of fiction discusses the topic of being overweight. The main character does struggle with insecurities surrounding this. Profanity and lewd sex scenes are also a part of this story.

If this serves as a trigger, please do not continue.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We have made it to book twelve! To my readers, thank you all for taking a chance on a newbie! You guys have made my journey absolutely amazing, and I appreciate you.

Now, to a few of my ladies:

Quandra M, Lizzy C., and Jennifer C: I appreciate you all so much! Whether it is the reviews, hyping me up, inboxes, or words of encouragement, I am so grateful for you being with me since my very first release!

To B and my BLP sisters: Words can't express the appreciation I have for you ladies! You are all so amazingly talented and it's an honor to be a part of this family!

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Zenni

I should have stayed my ass at home.

This was the fourth date with this man, and I was really beginning to get pissed off with the fact that he'd been trying to get in my pants since the second one. I wanted to give him the benefit of the doubt. Maybe he wasn't such a bad guy. But the more time I spent with him, the more I began to realize that this shit was for the fucking birds. Sure, he had a little money, but shit, I made money too. Sure he was fine, but beyond the surface, there was nothing else that I liked about him. He was obnoxious and entitled. I could tell he wasn't used to hearing no or being turned away.

I got the feeling that he was one of these niggas that had a big bitch fetish too. Those were the ones that loved to fuck us in private but ducked us in public. Every place he took me was dark, and we always seemed to sit far away from other patrons. He claimed he just wanted to have some privacy, but something in my gut told me he was intentionally not trying to be seen with me. Tonight we were having dinner at this nice restaurant downtown, and the entire time, he was making sexual innuendos.

I wasn't a virgin or some shit like that, but I would be lying if I said that I wasn't uncomfortable. He put my hand on his thigh on more than one occasion this evening, and I was

tempted to twist his dick off if my hand even grazed it. It'd been a minute since I had some dick, but I'd be damn if the first taste I got was from his ass. I was glad that I decided to drive my damn self. I was over this date and over him.

"Listen, Everett..." I said, wiping my mouth. "I enjoyed the food, and the time we spent together over the last couple of weeks has been decent, but I don't think that this is going to work out.

"Well, that's fine," he said. "I'm not looking for a relationship, more of a physical thing."

At least he finally admitted that shit.

"I'm not looking for that, so I think it's best if we call it quits."

"Excuse me?" He looked as though I offended him.

"I think we should—"

"I heard what you said." He frowned. "I know you fucking with me right now."

"No, I'm very serious." I pulled out my wallet and tossed enough money on the table to cover my portion of dinner, then stood. "Have a nice night."

"Wait a minute, bitch." He grabbed my arm. "You don't get to just walk away from me."

I looked at him like he was crazy. "Watch me, *bitch*."

Snatching away from him, I stormed out the restaurant and to my car. I'd just opened the door when it was forcefully slammed shut, and I was pushed up against it.

"So you are one of those bitches, huh?" he said. "What? You think you too good for me? You should be lucky a man like me even gave your fat ass the time of day."

"I was fat when you met me, yet the moment I won't give you some pussy, you want to insult me? Some man. Now get the fuck away from my car."

I tried to push him off, but the grip he had on my arm was growing firmer.

“You ain’t going nowhere,” he declared snatching me into his space.

We struggled for a minute before he was met with a fist to the right side of his face, sending him to the ground. I looked up to see my brother Zalen and his wife.

“Nigga, you got the wrong one!” he yelled, putting his size thirteen boot into Everett’s neck.

“Zay, I’m okay,” I said as my sister-in-law rushed over to me.

Zay picked Everett up from the ground. “If you value your fucking life, you better stay away from my sister,” he warned him.

My brother gave him a hard shove. Everett stumbled away, glaring at me as he did.

“Let me take you home, Zenni,” Zay said, grabbing my hand.

“I’m okay. I promise.”

“Nah, I don’t trust that nigga. We will follow you home to make sure you’re safe.”

“Zay—”

“Just get in the car.” He turned to his wife. “Baby, I’m gonna ride with Zenni. Just follow behind us in my car.”

My sister-in-law nodded. Zalen reached for my keys, and I reluctantly released them. Pouting, I stomped around to the passenger side and got in. Sitting back and locking myself in, I crossed my arms and waited for the speech I knew I was about to get. The entire drive back to my house, I had to listen to him lecture me about my taste in men as though I was a serial dater. I had gone out with maybe a total of four men in the last six years, and only one of them could say he was successful at getting into my pants.

I was a loner by nature but mostly my choice. Growing up, I didn’t have many friends, and the older I got, the less my tolerance for fake ass, messy ass females became, largely in part to my mother. But that was another story for another day.

The only person that I trusted wholeheartedly in this world was my sister Zaria. She was my best friend, my human diary, and my biggest supporter. If it wasn't for her keeping me sane, I would have lost my shit a long time ago.

“Are you listening to me, Zenni?” he asked as we pulled into my driveway.

“Yes, Zalen,” I said, rolling my eyes. “Thank you for driving me home. Can I have my keys so you can get back to your wife and out of my business?”

“You are so damn stubborn,” he mumbled, opening the driver's side door. I grabbed my purse and got out, meeting him at the front of the car.

“My keys?” I held out my hand.

“I'm gonna walk you inside.”

“Zay, come on!” I whined, stomping my feet. “I just want to get out of these clothes, curl up in my bed, and watch reruns of *Sanford and Son*.”

“I just wanna make sure you're safe.”

“Zalen, that man has never been to my house. I'm not stupid. I'm going inside, and you are going back to your date with Penny.” I gave him a quick hug and snatched my keys. As I was walking away, he grabbed my arm.

“Zenni, wait,” he said, pulling me back. “I just want you to be careful out here, okay. It's a lot of people that mean you no good. You don't have to settle for any of these niggas, baby.”

I was offended that he thought I would settle for anybody.

“Goodnight, Zalen,” I said, removing his hand from my arm.

Without another word, I marched up the front steps of my home, unlocked the door, and went inside. Ensuring that everything was locked up, I headed into my bedroom to disrobe and shower. After pinning my waist length locs atop my head, I stepped into the hot shower, allowing steam to engulf me. I was honestly tired of this whole idea of dating. I mean, men were overrated anyway. The most they proved to

be useful for was dick, and not many of them excelled at that. Throw in being a plus-sized woman dating, and here you have me.

Don't get me wrong. I was mostly comfortable in my skin these days. Then again, I didn't really go anywhere or do much that required excess peopling. I hated drama, and I didn't do confrontation. If I kept to myself, there was less of a chance that I would get involved in some shit. The few times I tried that in the last couple of years resulted in now four men who were the furthest thing from what I needed.

There was Reese, the habitual liar and professional bum-friend. This nigga thought he was just going to finesse me. He looked at me as his meal ticket. I wasn't one of those. A man couldn't feed me good dick and compliments and in turn I open my wallet at his whim. He was on my ass for a few weeks, laying shit on thick as hell. I was tired of him because he was doing too much. When he stopped by job one day and asked me if he could hold my car and some money, I cut that shit loose, happy as hell that I hadn't caught a body behind that one.

There was Brent, the man that made me hate his kind of men the most. For three months, I dated this man. I didn't think much of it at first. I was busy with work, and I knew he worked too, so we normally spent time at my place. He loved on me in private, but in public, he looked at me with disgust. The first couple of weeks, we mostly spent time together at my house. Weeks went by, and I was tired of the same old routine.

I told him I wanted to go out, so he took me to a movie. We sat in the darkest spot of the movie theater, and as soon as it was over, he rushed me out. It didn't take me long to figure out he didn't want to be seen with me, especially when I came across him with a group of friends. I simply walked over to speak to him when he flipped out and started calling me every derogatory name for a fat bitch he could think of.

I was more shocked. Before I could get pissed, I had to walk away and collect myself. This nigga had the audacity to show up at my house later that night. We got into an intense argument, and he finally confessed that he didn't want to be

seen with me. He liked fucking me in private and proposed that we continue to do so on a low-key level. After I cursed him from here to hell, I put him out of my house and blocked him.

There was Elijah, a thirty-year-old speech pathologist. We actually dated for about four months. On the outside, he seemed perfectly normal. Inside he was a total freak. At first things were cool. I was feeling him, and he was feeling me. Things were great... until they weren't. This man had a fetish for plus-sized women. I'm talking borderline kinky. He loved my body a little too much. It eventually to the point where I felt more like an object versus his woman. There were times where we would get into a groove, and it would all go to shit. There I was, thinking that I was going to get some bomb ass dick, and he was so engrossed with touching and squeezing certain parts of my body that he'd nut before the dick was mine. I'm talking a nut so massive his ass fell asleep when he was done.

When he wasn't doing shit like that, he asked me to do shit like wear the same underwear for days at a time. I didn't know what kind of bitches he was used to in the past, but I was very serious about my hygiene. No one could ever say I smelled or that I was sloppy. That was just the beginning of the things he wanted me to do. Finally, I got tired of the antics. I blocked him and got a restraining order.

And finally, this monstrosity from tonight.

I was done with men, at least for now.

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Idris

I was tired as a muthafucka after working eighteen hours straight. Yet, here I was, driving to my parents' house for this meeting my father had called with my siblings and me. The shit had me paranoid to be honest. Anything that called for the whole family to get together was serious. I just hoped that they weren't about to tell us somebody had died. As I pulled up in the driveway, I took a long pull from my vape pen before I got out. I might as well get this over with.

When I walked into the house, I could smell my mama's signature pot of neckbones and hear the chattering in the kitchen. I took slow strides until I was standing there face to face with my parents and siblings.

"Look who finally decided to join us." My mother smirked, as she mixed together a bowl of cornbread.

"I had to work today, and I wasn't coming over here smelling like ten cans of bounce that ass," I said, walking over to kiss her cheek. I made my rounds speaking to the family before settling at the table. "So what's going on?" I asked

"It's your grandmother," my father said, looking at all of us. I felt my heart pause, waiting for the next words to leave his mouth. My spirit was in a panic. I loved my grandmother. She and my grandfather were my favorite people growing up. We lost my grandfather a few years ago. If they were about to

tell me we lost my grandmother too, I didn't know if I could take it.

"You all know your grandmother had a bad fall and broke her hip a few years ago," my father continued.

I heaved a sigh of relief. "Yeah," I answered. "She's okay still, right?"

"She's great according to her, but I've spoken with her doctor. She's in pain. She can't walk for an extended period of time without feeling it. You know your grandmother is a proud woman. She will never ask for help, even when she needs it."

"So are you putting her in a home or something?" asked my brother Jael.

"No, we aren't putting her in a home," my mother answered. "We were hoping that one of you would be willing to go stay with her for a while."

"Ma, Grandma isn't going to accept our help," my sister Shari said, crossing her arms. "And I for one am not up for being cursed out every day."

"I know right," my other sister Jada agreed. "Saved, sanctified, and filled with hell. No, thank you. Why can't we just get her a nurse?"

"Grandma is gonna scare them off," Jael said.

"You're right about that," my mother mumbled. She sighed. "Well, if they don't go and the nurse is out of the question, I guess it's gonna be up to us."

"I'll go," I said.

All eyes fell on me.

"Come again?" Shari sounded appalled. "You're volunteering?"

"Yeah. I mean, y'all know Grandma is my dawg. She won't do me like she'd do the rest of you heathens." I laughed.

"You always were her favorite." Shari rolled her eyes.

"I was not her favorite."

“Please!” Jada scoffed. “You got away with bloody murder. You’re the apple of her eye.”

My grandmother and I have a special bond. As an awkward kid, she just understood me. She gave me confidence and helped me build on it. I wouldn’t be the type of nigga that I was without her. I honestly didn’t have anything tying me here. I was single, no kids, and no current prospects. A change of scenery wouldn’t be the worst thing.

“Anyway,” I said, ignoring my siblings’ obvious disdain. “Just give me time to secure a job, and I’m there.”

“Well, I guess it’s settled,” my mother said. “I’m sure your siblings won’t object to coming down to relieve you for a few days every now and then.”

They all looked at her then at me and mumbled sure. I wasn’t counting on that. As the oldest of the four of us, I remembered summers with my grandparents vividly. Back then, it was always the highlight of my year. As a military family, we moved around a lot, but that was the one thing that remained constant. I could always count on a great summer with my grandparents. Though I hadn’t seen her in a while, I called her three times a week to check in. I even paid to have her groceries delivered to her so she wouldn’t have to be out often. Moving in with her wouldn’t be a horrible thing.

After eating and talking with my family for a while, I headed home to my apartment to shower and chill out. Once I finished with my shower, I climbed in bed, allowing the softness of my mattress to engulf me. I swear this was the best money I ever spent. I was happy to be off tomorrow because I was laying in this bitch all day. Scrolling through my Instagram, I came across the page I had low key been stalking for a minute now. Not on some creep shit, more of checking up on her. It propelled me to call her brother, my homeboy.

“What’s good, my nigga?” Zalen answered.

“What’s good, Zay?”

“Ain’t shit, man. Trying to keep these kids of mine in line. Junior getcho ass down from there before you break your

neck!” I heard him tell his son. “What’s going on with you?”

“I’m actually moving to town for a bit.”

“Word?”

“Yeah, my grandmother isn’t doing well. You know she broke her hip a few years back.”

“Yeah, we pitch in to help her out from time to time. Mostly Zenni.”

“I appreciate that, man.” I was quiet for a minute.

“Go on and ask, man.” He chuckled, knowing my next question.

“How is she?”

“You stalk her Instagram. You tell me.”

“That’s how you do me?”

“I’m just fucking with you. Zenni is Zenni. You know you can always reach out to her yourself if you wanted to talk to her.”

“I don’t wanna interrupt her peace.”

“Trust me, you’d be a welcome distraction, a change from these niggas around here. I had to go upside this nigga’s head a couple of weeks ago for grabbing her, man.”

“You serious?” I frowned.

“Dead ass. Apparently, she was on a date and it went south, so she was trying to leave.”

“Niggas these days,” I said, shaking my head. “She good?”

“She’s fine. Just being her stubborn ass and brushing it off. I keep telling her she’s a beautiful woman and she doesn’t have to deal with the shit she encounters. There’s a man out there for her that would treat her like a queen.”

“She deserves that much.”

There was silence between us for a moment.

“Well I just wanted to touch bases with you,” I said. “I’m about to lay it down for the night.”

“A’ight. Hit me up when you touch down.”

“I will.”

“And Idris?”

“What?”

“If you wanna shoot your shot with my sister, I’m cool with that. I know your ass is still sweet on her after all these years.” He chuckled.

“We’ll see how that goes. Zenni probably ain’t checking for me, man.”

“Well, the ball is in your court. I’ll holla at you later.”

“Bet.”

I hung up, and images of Zenni instantly came to mind as they did often. She was the one thing I was never able to let go of. I haven’t seen her in the flesh since she was fifteen. That was the summer before we moved to Germany. I had, however, kept up with her over the years through Zalen. He knew how I felt about her even as kids. I wanted her something serious, but being who I was back then versus the man I am now, I was afraid.

Not to mention I only saw her during the summer. Circumstances never really permitted me to pursue anything serious with her. But shit we were good and grown now. If the ball was in my court, maybe the odds would find me favor. I’d give myself time to settle in at my grandmother’s. But Zenni Calloway was going to see me.

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Zenni

It was Sunday.

That meant that I was about to sit through church service and Sunday dinner with my family once again. Don't get me wrong; I love my family, and I am eternally grateful for them. But my mother wasn't exactly my favorite person at times. Tracy Calloway liked to believe that she was absolutely fucking perfect, and we needed to reflect said perfection. She was always giving unsolicited advice about things she thought would improve our lives. I was her favorite topic no matter where we were or what company we were keeping.

I felt like a fake ass bitch around her sometimes, and that shit really fucked with me. I had to sit and listen to her complain about the way that I looked or smile and nod as she pointed out how much weight I've gained even though I have been the same size for the last eight years. My mother was five feet nine, slim with nice curves. She was built like a model, and ironically, she did model for a few years before she met my father.

As healthy and as fit as she was, I knew she was embarrassed to have a fat daughter. I was five feet eight, two hundred fifty pounds. I carried my weight mostly in my hips and ass, not to mention I had a little stomach. I was a big girl,

but I was proportionate. To let my mother tell it, I was sloppy. She would always give me a backhanded compliment like,

“You’d be so pretty if you lost a little weight.”

“You look good, but you’d look great if you shed a few pounds.”

“I wish I had the confidence to wear that at your size.”

She’d been doing this shit since I was a kid. My father used to get on her ass when she said it in front of him. After a while she would only say that shit behind his back. But now that I was an adult, she had absolutely no couth about the situation. She could be downright disrespectful. In her mind, as an adult, they were just words to me, something I could brush off and keep it pushing. But when you’ve been hearing that shit since you were a child, you didn’t just brush it off. Yes, you were accustomed to it, but it didn’t hurt any less.

I took a deep breath and got out of my car. I could see my brother, Zalen, and my sister, Zaria, standing in between their cars talking with their families. As if it wasn’t bad enough that I was the fat child, I was also the unmarried, childless one as well. My mother thought that shit was a sin. The audacity of me to be twenty-eight years old with no man and no children. I rolled my eyes at the thought. I made my way over to my family with as much of a smile as I could muster on my face.

“Happy Sunday.” I greeted them.

“Hey Zen!” Zaria beamed, embracing me. “You are working that outfit, sis.”

I was dressed in a pair of cream-colored, high waist pants that concealed my stomach, a white camisole, and a floral blazer. My locs were neatly pinned in a bun atop my head and a pair of nude pumps adorned my feet. I thought I looked cute. Of course I always thought I looked cute when my mother wasn’t around.

“Thank you, Z,” I said, hugging her back.

“You look good, sis.” Zalen kissed my cheek.

“Thanks, Zay.”

I greeted their spouses along with my nieces and nephew before I felt her presence behind me.

“Good morning, everyone!” my mother said cheerfully, as she did every Sunday morning.

I turned around to see her standing there with a fake ass smile in her Sunday best. Of course, she looked beautiful. She was dressed in a burgundy wrap top with a pair of burgundy and navy-blue striped palazzo pants and black heels. Her salt and pepper tresses were perfectly curled and styled into place. Her diamond jewelry glistened under the morning sun. At fifty-seven, she could easily pass for our older sister rather than our mother, a fact that she loved to hear.

Everyone spoke to her and my father as her eyes trained on me.

“You look nice today, Zenni,” she said, kissing my cheek. “Did you lose weight?”

This was the shit I hated. She was already starting with me.

“No, Mother,” I said. “These pants just fit different.”

“Oh... well, it’s certainly flattering. I hope you have more than one pair.”

She flicked my nose and brushed past me. I closed my eyes, counted to ten, and prayed to Father God that I didn’t curse her ass out on holy ground today. Heaving a heavy sigh, I made my way into the church. As I was walking through the doors, I was stopped by Mother Bailey, a woman who had been the church grandma for as long as I could remember.

She was the sweetest little old lady. She was getting older and needed help getting around now that she was in a wheelchair. Everyone knew that Mother Bailey wasn’t going to let being wheelchair bound stop her from her church duties, so the congregation generously pitched in to buy her an electric one. She was zipping and sliding all over the church now tending to her business.

“Zenni!” she exclaimed, reaching for my hands.

“Good morning, Mother Bailey.” I smiled, leaning down to hug her small frame.

“You look beautiful, baby,” she said, kissing my cheek.

“Thank you. You look quite dapper yourself. Is that a new hat?”

“It sure is. I caught a good sale in the mall. You know how I love my hats.”

“Oh, I know.” I giggled.

“Grandma, I told you I was coming,” came a deep voice from behind us. “Do you always have to be so hard-headed?”

He walked up beside her, and my eyes met the finest, milk chocolate muthafucka I had ever seen. I had to look up at his roughly six-foot frame. He was dressed in a pair of navy-blue slacks and a white button up with the top two buttons undone, giving a glimpse of his tatted chest. His hair was cut into this short fade.

A diamond stud glistened in his ear as a frown adorned his handsome face. A slight gust of wind blew and his scent infiltrated my nostrils. I had to stifle a moan from how delectable he smelled. I inadvertently bit my lip looking at this fine muthafucka. If the Lord decided to strike me down for the impure and sinful thoughts running through my head about this damn man, I would just have to be okay with that.

“Boy, the last time I checked I was *your* grandmother,” Mother Bailey fussed. “And for your information, I get around just fine in this wheelchair.”

“What if you roll over and fall out? Then I have to listen to you fuss about me not being around to catch you.”

Mother Bailey rolled her eyes. “You see what I have to deal with, baby? You get in a wheelchair, and they think you’re handicapped.”

“Grandma...”

“Where are your manners? Zenni, do you remember my grandson Idris? He used to come down for the summers when you were kids.”

Her eyes landed on me, and a smile crept across his face.

“This is Idris?” I asked, not believing my eyes. The Idris I remembered was a scrawny kid with a big ass head and thick ass glasses. I haven’t seen him since I was at least fifteen years old. His parents were in the military, and the last time I saw him they were leaving to go to Germany.

“That’s him.” She smiled. “He grew into his head.”

I couldn’t stifle my laugh quick enough. He looked at me, shaking his head.

“Go on and laugh at my expense.” He chuckled.

“I’m going inside. You two can catch up,” Mother Bailey said. Without another word, she rolled on about her business, leaving Idris and I alone. Our eyes connected, and he licked his lips.

“Zenni Calloway,” he said, looking me up and down as he circled me. “Time has been good to you.”

“Is that right?” I asked, cocking my head to the side.

“Damn right,” he said, shoving his hands in his pocket. “I was hoping I would see you when I came back to town.”

“Came back?”

“I moved back about three weeks ago to take care of that stubborn old woman.”

“Mother Bailey is not that bad.”

“You know her as Mother Bailey... I know her as Grandma. Trust me, she’s that bad and then some.”

He smiled, and I instantly fell in love with his dimples. I couldn’t stop staring at him.

“Do I have something on my face?” he asked.

“No... You just, you look like a whole new person.”

“I guess I got tired of walking around looking like a lollipop.” He grinned, showcasing his deep dimples.

“Well whatever you did it worked for you.”

“I see you filled out in all the right places, Zenni.” He took a step back and looking me over. I felt like he was undressing me with his eyes, and it was a sin and a shame how turned on I found myself under his gaze on this sacred ground.

“You look beautiful,” he said, licking those luscious lips.

“Thank you.”

I couldn't tear my eyes away from his mouth, imagining just what that shit could do. If I was being honest with myself, I might have had a little crush on him growing up, but he was mostly my brother's friend. He was a little awkward back then, but he was always super nice to me, and I never forgot that.

“I better get inside,” I said, clearing my throat.

“Okay. Well I'll holla at you later.”

I nodded and walked the rest of the way inside the church. I could feel his eyes burning a hole in my ass. When I turned back slightly, I found him watching me. He winked at me and made his way on in the church. I took a seat beside Zaria.

“Who was that you were talking to?” her nosy ass immediately asked.

“Mother Bailey's grandson, Idris.”

“Idris? Big head Idris with the pencil frame and the coke bottle glasses?”

“That's him.”

“Oh my... he isn't awkward anymore,” she said, eyeing him. “Let me look away before Ralph catches me. He has his eyes on you, girl.”

“What would a man that fine want with me, Z?”

“The same thing you would want with a man that fine.” She frowned at me. “Don't you let Mama into your head again, Zenni. You are gorgeous. Period. Any man would be lucky to have you, including ol' big head Idris Bailey.” She squeezed my hand reassuringly.

That was my little sister... always my biggest supporter. I looked back over at Idris who was chopping it up with my brother. Zalen dapped him and then came to sit behind us with his wife and kids.

“You looked pretty chummy with my boy.” He grinned, leaning forward.

“You look like you are in my business,” I responded. “And what do you mean your boy?”

“We kept in touch over the years. Idris has always been cool people.”

“Hmm.” That was all I offered.

“I see you checking for him, sis.” He grinned.

“Whatever, Zay,” I said, rolling my eyes. I wasn’t checking for that man like I was sure he wasn’t checking for me.



I WASN’T FOCUSED ON CHURCH IN THE LEAST BIT TODAY. MY mind kept floating back to Idris. It should be a rule about being that damn fine and knowing that shit. He grew into his looks alright. This muthafucka was a full, grown ass man. I was glad he sat on the opposite side of the church because if he sat anywhere near me, I was going to have to excuse myself to throw my panties away.

I clearly wasn’t the only one infatuated with this familiar stranger. Women all over the sanctuary couldn’t keep their eyes off him. As we were heading out of the church, I saw several of them slip him their number. Everybody wanted a piece of fresh dick.

I made my way down the front steps and across the parking lot.

“Zenni!” I heard behind me. I turned to see Idris walking toward me.

“What’s up?” I asked.

“Grandma said we are supposed to come to y’all’s house for dinner.”

“Oh. I wasn’t aware of that. It’ll be nice to have you... I mean the two of you. It’ll be nice to have the two of you.” I was fumbling over what I wanted to say like an idiot.

He chuckled, and those dimples appeared again.

“What did your mom make to eat?” He inquired.

Me, I thought. I was slowly sending myself to hell on this church ground. I was going to need a word of prayer before this day was over with.

“I’m not sure what she cooked, but you know everything she produces tastes good.”

“I bet it does,” he said, licking his lips as he slowly looked me over.

I knew my skin had to be red. I was really out here feeling like a harlot thinking of all the ways I wanted this man to touch me. I had to take a step back from him, and the moment I did, I stumbled. I just knew I was about to bust my ass in front of all these people, but then I felt his strong arms come around me, lifting me to my feet. My body literally quivered under his touch.

“You good, baby?” he asked, tightening his grip on me.

“I’m f-fine,” I stuttered. A group of uppity bitches that I never fucked with walked by and turned up their noses. I stood to my full height and gently pushed away from him. “Thanks for not letting me bust my ass.”

“That’s not the position that I want to see you in.”

My eyes widened. Maybe I was tripping. Maybe it was the lack of sex. Or maybe it was because this nigga had my pussy in a frenzy, but I may have interpreted that in a completely different way than it was intended.

“I need to stay away from you,” I said, shaking my finger at him and opening my car door

“Why would you want to do that?”

“Because you can get me into a lot of places.”

“Like where?” He chuckled

“At this very moment, *Hell*.”

I climbed into my car as he walked off shaking his head and laughing.

I made it to my parents’ house after a long fifteen-minute drive scolding my overactive hormones for how they had me acting right now. I don’t know why I was so affected by him. Sure I had a crush on him as a kid, but we weren’t kids anymore. We were grown and yet he had me feeling like a schoolgirl, quivering in his presence. I couldn’t be acting like this in front of everybody, especially my mother.

I pulled into the yard and grabbed my duffle bag to change once I got inside. There was no way I was sitting through this dinner being anything less than comfortable. Inside, Zalen, my father, and my brother-in-law, Ralph, all sat in the living room watching football. My mother, Zaria, and my sister-in-law, Penny, were in the kitchen starting dinner.

I headed up to my old room to change clothes. Even at twenty-eight years old, I was still cautious about what I wore around my mother. She had this nasty habit of picking apart my outfits and making me feel disgusting in them. No matter how good I felt I looked before I saw her, she always managed to make me want to go change.

Sighing, I slipped into my sandals, tank top, and wide legged shorts, which fit kind of snug being that I had thick thighs. I freshened my deodorant and my perfume then headed downstairs. The moment I walked into the kitchen, Zaria’s eyes went to my titties.

“You got the girls sitting up there.” She giggled.

“Z, I found this heavy-duty pasty bra. Works like a charm.”

In true Zaria fashion, she came right over to me and lifted my tank top to see for herself.

“Oh my. I need these!” She giggled.

“What are y’all doing!” our mother hissed, coming into the kitchen from outside. “Why aren’t you wearing a bra?”

“I don’t need one with this,” I said, pulling my shirt back down.

“Zenni, nobody wants to see those big titties of yours swinging everywhere. We are having guests.”

“First of all, my titties don’t swing. They sit up just fine. The pasties are a courtesy.”

She rolled her eyes. “That’s trashy, Zenni.”

“To you.”

“Can you two not start today?” Zaria whined. “I just want to get through one dinner without you two going back and forth.”

“Tell that to your mother,” I said, taking a seat on the stool.

“What are you wearing, Zenni?”

“Clothes.” Sarcasm filled my voice.

“Those shorts aren’t very flattering or appropriate for company.”

“Company should be more concerned with what’s on their plate than what is on my ass, Mother. They are comfortable and very appropriate.”

“Well if you want comfort...” she started but I immediately cut her off.

“Don’t you dare start with me, Tracy,” I said, calling her by her government name. “There is nothing wrong with what I’m wearing.”

“Your ass is going to show if you bend over.”

“Think of it this way. At least you won’t be the only one showing your ass today.”

“Excuse me?” She looked appalled.

“You are just waiting on this Sunday’s moment to embarrass me. And now that you will have new audience members, I can only imagine what you are going to say.”

“You know what? I’m not doing this with you.” She frowned as she moved around the kitchen to grab plates to set the table. “If you aren’t going to help cook, just sit there, and don’t say anything, especially to me.”

“That’s absolutely not a problem.”

Dinner preparation was practically silent until Mother Bailey came into the kitchen on her walker with Idris on her heels. He had changed into a pair of joggers, a baseball tee, and a clean ass pair of Vans. My eyes were actively searching for a dick print.

“Grandma, slow down.” He sighed. “Nobody is going anywhere.”

“You are going to be going somewhere if you don’t leave me alone, Idris,” she threatened him, as she eased into the kitchen chair. “Go find you something to do. You like football. Go watch the game with the men.” She waved him off.

“Did you just dismiss me?”

“I sure as hell did.”

Everybody giggled. Idris rolled his eyes.

“How are y’all?” he asked the room, but his eyes were on me. There was that feeling of him undressing me with his eyes again.

“Good,” everyone responded.

“It’s good to see you, Idris,” my mother said. “We got used to seeing your face during the summers.”

“I know. Zay and I used to run up and down these streets.”

“You did. I wasn’t surprised when he told me you two kept in touch all these years. Time has certainly been good to you.”

“Yeah, you grew into the big ol’ head.” Zaria laughed.

“You are still a jokester, I see.” He grinned, showcasing those dimples once again.

“But for real though,” Zaria said. “You look good. The women around here are gonna be on you like white on rice.”

“Oh, he’s gotten plenty of attention.” I smirked. “They were practically lining up after church.”

“Don’t you be in my church being no thot, Idris,” Mother Bailey said. Zaria, Penny, and I were killing ourselves laughing.

“How do you even know what a thot is, Grandma?” Idris asked, crossing his arms.

“The young people keep me up to date. That’s beside the point. Don’t be sticking that thing in any and every woman up in there. If you are going to church to find a woman, make sure that woman is your wife.”

“Alright, Grandma.” He sighed. “I’m gonna excuse myself.” He looked at me. “I got you, Zen.” He chuckled as he left the room. I could feel Zaria’s eyes on me. When I looked at her, she rolled them with a smirk on her face.

“Mmm hmm,” she said.

I held my head down, keeping the smile on my lips at bay.

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Idris

The last thirteen years had been good to Zenni. Truth be told, I had the biggest crush on her during the summers I visited. I was an awkward, scrawny kid with thick ass glasses. Girls weren't checking for me back then. But it was cool, 'cause Zenni was the only one I wanted anyway. I tried my best to get close to her or make her feel special.

Whether it was inviting her to hang out with her brother and I, bringing her flowers or her favorite candy, or simply taking advantage of moments alone with her. Those were the moments she and I used to sit and talk about the first things that popped in our minds. I always cherished those moments. Seeing her today after thirteen years, further confirmed that I still wanted her fine ass. Time and maturity held it down for me this entire time.

It was chill at Zenni's parents' house. Zalen and I caught up on so much shit. I couldn't believe my boy was a whole husband and father out here. Seeing pictures of his family was one thing but seeing him in action was a different story. I wanted to get married and have a family myself one day.

That was if I found the right woman. To be honest, when I was a kid, I thought Zenni was going to be my wife. Zay used to tease me about my slight obsession with his sister when we

hit teenaged years and I was still pining over her. She was a chubby girl back then, and she was teased a lot. Her size never bothered me. Hell, I liked my girls BBW. And the way that she had filled out over the years... her body was looking right. I couldn't keep my eyes off her.

"Are you finally gonna make your move?" Zalen asked as we were watching the game.

"Whatchu mean, man?" I grinned.

"Nigga, don't act like I haven't seen you watching my sister," he said, elbowing me.

"Is it that obvious?"

"A blind man could see that shit. I told you she's single."

"I remember that."

"Thirteen years later, and you still have this crush on her." He chuckled as he took a sip of his beer.

"Thirteen years later, I look like this, and she looks like that. I might actually have a chance this time."

"You might have had a chance back then if you said something, nigga."

"Man, there wasn't shit I could have done to get her attention back then."

"You were always nice to her. She noticed that."

"Well, I want her to get to know Idris the grown ass man and not see me as that big headed lil' boy that use to bring her flowers from my grandmother's garden."

"She used to keep those things until they died."

"Really?"

"Dead ass. You made her smile with that."

I looked over at Zenni laughing and talking in the kitchen with her mom, sisters, and my grandmother. I always loved her smile. She was so fucking beautiful. Those thick ass thighs in those shorts were calling me. I just wanted them wrapped

around my face or my waist. I wasn't picky. She looked over at me and smiled softly as I returned the gesture.

"I see your wheels turning," Zalen said, breaking my stare. "Go for it. Just remember, that's still my little sister."

"I got you, big dawg." I grinned.

Dinner ended up going pretty well. The Calloway women could cook; that was for damn sure. Everybody was laughing and talking as we enjoyed our meal. I did, however, notice Mrs. Calloway giving Zenni dirty looks all throughout dinner. It was like every time she took a bite of food, her mother frowned.

I wondered if anybody else saw that shit or if they were just used to it. I kept my mouth closed unless I was spoken to directly. Right now the conversation had switched to Zenni's business. She owned this dope ass plus size clothing boutique. I had kept a tab on her over the years, and I was very proud of the moves she was making. I would think that everyone would support her entrepreneurship, but I guess I was wrong.

"You really shouldn't condone an unhealthy lifestyle," Mrs. Calloway said. I looked down at my plate of food, food that she cooked, puzzled by how she could say that.

"What unhealthy lifestyle, Ma?" Zenni asked. "They are clothes. Big girls like to dress too, and we don't want to wear that trash that's put out in the department stores."

"I know that's right," my grandmother said. "Some of those things look like my couch patterns."

"All I'm saying is she's making it easy to be complacent at an unhealthy weight."

"You do realize that some big women aren't unhealthy, right?" Zenni asked. "There are several medical reasons as to why people gain weight. You always have to do this, Ma."

"What am I doing? I mean, is it wrong for me to encourage you to want to live a long, happy life?"

"So you know when I'm going to die? And who said I'm not happy?"

“Let’s just drop the conversation. It’s going nowhere as usual.”

“Fine.”

It was awkwardly quiet for a minute. Then Mrs. Calloway spoke again.

“I just think you’d live a longer more fulfilling life if you lost a few pounds.”

Zenni dropped her fork and rubbed her temples.

“I’m not trying to make you feel bad, baby,” her mother said. “But let’s be real. It’s probably the reason you are still single.”

“So I can’t be single by choice? It has to be because men find me repulsive.”

“I never said you were repulsive, sweetheart.” She shook her head. “Idris, you know what I mean, right? You’re a man.”

“Actually, I think Zenni is beautiful the way that she is. I like my women with meat on their bones.” I looked directly at Zenni. “I’m a big man. I need something to hold on to.”

Zaria and her sister-in-law smirked.

“Oh,” Mrs. Calloway said, turning a slight shade of red. “Well, excuse me.”

For the rest of dinner, she was quiet. I was happy about that. I didn’t like that gaslighting shit she was doing. After we finished eating, my grandmother wanted to stay for a while and chit chat. I was cool with that. I sat outside with the guys, watching the kids run off the meal they just ate and shooting the shits. Zalen and I made plans to kick it this week. We were all just chillin’ when Zenni came outside.

“I’m about to go, Daddy,” she said.

“What’s wrong, baby?” he asked.

“Nothing. I’m just tired, and honestly, your wife has worked my nerve enough for the day. I need to desensitize from her before I forget she is my mother.”

“I’m sorry, baby girl. I’ll talk to her.”

“It’s going in one ear and out the other. It would be nice to come over here and for once not be subjected to that. You used to say something; now you just kind of let it go. But it’s whatever. Don’t waste your breath. I love you, Daddy. I’ll call you this week.”

She hugged and kissed her father, Zalen, and Ralph.

“It was nice seeing you, Idris.” She smiled at me.

“Can I walk you out?” I asked.

“Um... sure.”

I excused myself and walked her back through the house and out the front door. She tossed her duffle bag in the back seat and turned to face me.

“What can I do for you?” she asked.

“How honestly do you want me to answer that?”

“Don’t start with me. We have had enough of this at church today. You were about to send my soul to hell.”

“How is that my fault?” I asked, stepping closer to her until we were chest to chest. I rested my hands on either side of her and leaned into her. “You smell good, Zen...” I said, looking down at her.

“Th-thank you,” she stuttered.

“Can I see you this week?”

“Why?”

“Do I need a specific reason to want to see your beautiful ass?”

“Idris...”

“You want me to beg?” I asked, squatting in front of her and looking up at her. That shit only gave me a glimpse of what it would be like to have her ass naked in this position. I cupped the back of her thighs and licked my lips.

“Can I see you, Zenni?” I asked again, kissing the butterfly tattoo on the front of her thigh.

She looked at me like she wasn't even breathing. A small whimper escaped her throat. She swallowed hard and then seemingly shook herself out of her thoughts.

"Get your ass up," she said, pulling at my arms. "Are you always like this?"

"Not all the time. I can be quite pleasant."

"If I agreed to see you, you have to behave yourself."

"Do you really want that though?"

"Yes," she lied.

I chuckled. "Okay, Zenni. "I'll let you have that... for now. Just know when you are ready, all you have to do is say it." I stood to my full height of five feet eleven. "Give me some love."

She hesitated for a moment and then slid her arms around my waist, resting her head on my chest. When I enclosed her in my arms, that shit felt more than right. It felt like she was home. I gently rubbed her back and kissed her forehead before pulling away.

"Let me get your number," I said, holding the door open for her to climb into the car. She settled in and handed me her phone while I handed her mine. I saved my number and handed it back to her.

"You plan on actually using my number?" she asked.

"You damn right I am. Maybe not tonight because I have to go to work, but I'll be calling you, baby."

"Don't do that."

"Do what?"

"Call me baby."

"You wanna play these games with me, Zen." I chuckled, leaning into the open door. "I got something for you though."

She sat back and looked me up and down.

"Goodnight, Idris." She smirked.

"Goodnight, Zenni," I said, closing the door.

I watched her back out of the driveway and head down the road before I made my way back inside. The shy, chubby girl who had stolen my heart all those summers ago was now a full-grown, fine ass woman. She didn't know it yet, but she was going to be mine and that's on God.



“I SEE YOU EYEING MY ZENNI,” MY GRANDMOTHER SAID AS I drove her back to her house, where I was sure her night nurse was waiting.

“Oh, you do?” I laughed.

“Don't you be trying to hump on my girl, Idris. Zenni is a good woman. She has her head on straight, and she's doing something with her life.”

“I know, Grandma. I've been keeping up with her over the years. Zay kept me well informed.”

“Mmm hmm, I bet he did. I can't believe you are still crushing on her.”

“I'm a grown man. I don't crush.”

“Whatever you want to call it, Idris. You have eyes for her.”

“That I do.”

“You treat her right.”

“I hear you, woman,” I said, rolling my eyes. “Is her mama always like that?”

“For as long as I can remember. I'm sure she thinks she means well, but she comes off as a bitch about the whole thing.”

“Did Agatha Bailey just call someone out of their name?”

“I was making a comparison.” She giggled. “I feel bad for Zenni when she starts that shit. It's sad when a mother doesn't think her child is pretty. My girl is beautiful, regardless of her size. She's beautiful inside and out. Tracy better wake up

before she loses her.” She shook her head. “Life and death lives in the mouth of a parent, baby. You can either tear your child down or build them up. I build that girl up every chance I get because she needs to hear it from someone.”

“You know how I feel about her. And you know the kind of man I am.”

“I know.” She grabbed my hand and kissed it, and I kissed hers in return.

I loved my grandmother. She was hell at times, but she was the most humble, sweet old lady you would ever meet. I hated that she was down and couldn't take care of herself like she was used to. When my father told me she needed a caregiver, I didn't hesitate to pack up and move here to fulfill the job. I could do my job as an electrical engineer from anywhere, so I secured a position the week before I moved. On the days that I worked, I had hired a nurse to come sit with her. Since I was going in tonight, her nurse Kendra would be waiting at the house to get her settled in.

After Kendra and I got her situated, I headed to my room to take a shower and lay down for a few hours before I went in. Sleep was the last thing on my mind though. All thoughts led back to the object of my affection, Ms. Zenni Calloway. I hoped she wasn't going to be on no bullshit about me wanting to see her. I'd pull up at her shop if I had to. She just didn't know how bad I wanted her ass. I didn't just wanna fuck on her. Granted, I would beat the frame out that pussy. But honestly, I wanted her to be my woman. We weren't kids anymore. I was pushing thirty-one years old. It was high time that I staked my claim on her.

We were grown.

There was no more running. No more hiding. No more stifling my obvious attraction to her. I wanted her. And I wasn't letting up on that shit.

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ZENNI

I knew that I was playing with fire the moment that I gave Idris' ass my number. For the last week or so, we had been talking and texting on a regular basis. I was fine with that. He couldn't see my facial expression through the phone. He didn't get to witness me zoning out thinking about all the ways I wanted his big, fine ass to touch me. The more I talked to him, the more I looked forward to talking to him. We had been catching up on life and the shit we both had going on over the last decade or so. He told me all about life in Germany and all the places he had visited while his parents were actively deployed.

I always dreamed of traveling out of the country and witnessing the beauty the world had to offer. But I wasn't getting my ass on a plane. I was afraid of heights, and there was no way I would survive extended time in the air. I saw *Final Destination*, and I was likely to freak out just like that. The safest place for me was right here on solid ground. A girl could dream though.

While I thought that I was buying time without actually seeing Idris in person just yet, this man had other plans. Thursday evening rolled around, and I got an invite to dinner with him and Mother Bailey. It was her birthday, and he decided to spoil her for the day since he didn't have to work.

All day long, he had been sending me pictures of the two of them. He took her to brunch, shopping, and to get her hair and nails done. She looked so happy in every picture, and it warmed my heart. I loved the way that he took care of her. He was still as sweet as he had always been. I was trying to get out of going to dinner because I didn't want to intrude, and honestly, I was nervous about seeing him. Imagine my surprise when he called me and put Mother Bailey on the phone.

"Don't you try to back out of dinner, Zenni Calloway," she said. "I done got fine for tonight, and I want to show off a little bit. It would be an honor to have you join us."

"Well, since you went and got fine, how can I say no to that?" I giggled.

"You can't." She laughed. "Now you be at my house at seven."

"Yes ma'am," I agreed, rolling my eyes and shaking my head. She gave Idris back the phone. "You told your grandma on me?"

"I sure did." He chuckled. "I want to see you and you are playing."

"I'm not playing... I just didn't want to intrude on your time together."

"We live in the same house, Zen. Ain't no intrusion."

"I guess. What should I wear?"

"Something sexy." His voice deepened, and I felt a chill run down my spine.

"Am I dressing for dinner or for you?"

He did this sexy ass chuckle that caused me to clench my thighs together. If this man knew the kind of reactions my body had to him, he'd know just how much of an advantage he already had with me. I just knew I was going to be sitting at this dinner table wanting him to spread my ass out and eat me before the night was through.

"Dress for dinner," he answered. "I don't mind using my imagination."

“I don’t even want to know what you are imagining.”

“You don’t?” I could hear the smile in his voice.

“No, I don’t.”

“Why is that?”

“Because I know it’s nasty as fuck.”

“Damn right. I’m gonna let you get back to work. I can’t wait to see you.”

“I bet. Bye, Idris.”

“Bye, baby.”

I hung up the phone, grinning to myself. I decided to look around my shop for something to wear. There was this new shipment of dresses that we had just put out that I had been eyeing since I ordered them. Flipping through to find my size, I picked out this bomb ass red number. It was definitely classy, but sexy at the same time. I found myself thinking about the look on Idris’ face when he saw me in this shit. The man had made it clear that he liked the plush pals, yet as horny as he made me, he made me just as nervous. Almost to the point where I put the dress back.

“If you don’t get that, I damn sure will,” a customer said to me.

I smiled at her and looked the dress over once more. “You think I could pull this off?” I asked.

“Honey, yes!” she said. “You are doing a huge service to us big girls with this shop. Rock your own shit, mama. You will turn heads in that.”

I guess it was decided. While it would take some pep talking with myself, I decided to buy the dress. I even bought a pair of heels and a few accessories to go along with it. By the time I left the shop for the evening, I was more than a little excited to put everything together.



I ARRIVED AT MOTHER BAILEY'S HOUSE AROUND SIX FORTY-five. Zaria had come over to help me get ready, and of course, her extra ass had to hype me up. I loved my sister. If nobody else appreciated the skin that I was in, she did. She had given me this whole speech about giving Idris a chance and going after what she knew I wanted. I never told her I wanted that man, but she could read that shit as clear as day. So here I was, sitting in my car, double checking myself before I went inside. After about five minutes of sitting there, my phone rang. It was Idris.

"Hello?" I answered.

"Are you gonna sit in the car, or are you gonna come inside?" he asked.

"I was coming, thank you very much," I said, pulling the key out of the ignition and opening the door. I grabbed my wristlet and got out of the car.

"Well bring your ass on, woman."

"Get off my phone, Idris." I giggled.

"Nah. I'm gonna watch you walk your fine ass up this driveway."

"Stalker much?"

"Just enjoying the view."

He hung up. The front door opened, and he stood there looking sexy as hell in a black fitted T-shirt, black jeans, and a pair of brown boots. On his waist was a brown belt with a gold buckle. On his neck hung a gold Cuban link chain and a gold watch adorned his wrist. I couldn't help but bite my lip as I slowly made my way up the driveway. Lord this man was fine. As I approached him, he stepped on the porch and closed the door.

"Zenni, Zenni, Zenni..." he said, looking me up and down. "Damn, you are beautiful."

"Thank you." I blushed.

"The pleasure is all mine."

He reached for my hand and spun me around before pulling me into his broad chest, his hand resting on the small of my back. The way he peered down at me, seemingly devouring me with his eyes, caused my breath to hitch in my throat. He smiled at me, lifting my chin with his finger. For a moment, I thought, this was it. He was going to kiss me. He did kiss me. However, it was on the cheek, and I felt slightly disappointed.

“I might have to put my grandma to bed as soon as we get back,” he said.

“Why is that?”

“Because I can’t look at you the way that I want to in front of her.” He let me go and took a step back. “Red is your color, baby.”

“You are laying it on thick.” I giggled.

“As thick as you look in this damn dress. You got the thighs out, showing off this sexy ass tattoo.”

I felt a little self-conscious, and it resonated in my face. I could tell he noticed.

“What’s that look?” he asked.

“I just... I felt a little exposed.”

“Give it time and I’m gonna expose all of you. I want you, Zenni. In every way, in every capacity, baby.”

I knew my face was red. Thank God Mother Bailey called his name. Otherwise, I would have melted with the way he was looking at me. My body had never heated up under a man’s stare so much. Idris oozed big dick energy and the longer he looked at me, the more I wanted to find out if he was packing that shit. He opened the door and allowed me to walk in front of him. Mother Bailey was sitting in her walker in the living room. When she saw me, her face lit up.

“That’s what I’m talking about!” She grinned as I walked over to hug her. She embraced me and kissed my cheek. “You look beautiful, baby,” she said, cupping my face.

“Thank you, Mother Bailey. You look quite ravishing yourself. Idris really treated you today, huh?”

“He did me right.” She smiled.

She really did look good. Her nails were painted a ruby red. Her salt and pepper tresses were curled and feathered to perfection. She was dressed in this beautiful white wrap dress that hugged her in all the right places. I wouldn't have known she was as shapely as she was outside of her church clothes.

“Let me get a picture of you two,” Idris said, whipping out his phone.

I helped Mother Bailey to stand and held her up to pose for the picture. Idris quickly snapped it, and I lowered her back into the walker's seat.

“You two take one,” she said, nudging me forward and reaching for Idris's phone. He handed it over and grabbed my hand, pulling me into his side, where the scent of his Versace Eros cologne engulfed me. I fought the urge to sniff him. His hand migrated to the small of my back, and I shuttered just a bit, producing a chuckle from him.

“Smile!” Mother Bailey said, grinning herself.

I put on my best smile, feeling like I was posing for the prom pictures I never took because I refused to go.

“You two make a beautiful couple. I can see some beautiful great grandbabies in my future.”

“Alright, Grandma,” Idris said, rolling his eyes. “You are gonna scare the woman off before I do.”

Just then, there was a knock on the front door. I opened in to find Deacon Jones standing there with a bouquet of red roses in his hand and a smile on his face, dressed in his Sunday best suit.

“Deacon Jones,” I said, shaking his hand. “It's nice to see you.”

“What are you doing here?” Idris asked.

“He's my date,” Mother Bailey said proudly.

Idris' head snapped in her direction. "Date!" he exclaimed.

"Nice to see you, Ms. Calloway. Mr. Bailey." Deacon Jones smiled as he stepped inside. He made his way over to Mother Bailey, presenting the flowers. "Happy birthday, my love." When he stooped to kiss her lips, Idris' mouth dropped. I had to stifle a laugh. It was clear that he didn't know his grandmother had a boyfriend.

"Grandma... I know you ain't out here being fast."

"Oh, hush up," she said, waving him off.

"How long has this been going on?" he questioned, arms folded.

"A while."

"How long is a while?"

"Two years, Idris."

"Two years!"

I covered my mouth to hold in the laughter. The only thing that popped in my head was that Souljah Boy meme.

"Grandma."

"Idris! Pick your mouth up off the floor and let's get going. Grab my walker."

Deacon Jones happily assisted her with standing, and they made their way out of the house, leaving Idris and I behind. I looked at him with the deep frown adorning his beautiful face.

"Ain't that a bitch?" he mumbled, shaking his head. "I'm not paying for his dinner."

"I'm sure Deacon Jones is more than happy to cover the bill for his boo." I laughed.

"Oh you got jokes, Zenni?"

"I'm just saying. Everybody needs somebody. They look happy."

"That doesn't mean I have to like it."

I rolled my eyes and grabbed his hand. “Come on, big baby,” I said.

“You call me baby again, I’m gonna have something for your ass.”

He slapped my ass, and it took everything in me not to moan. As we made our way down the front steps, I noticed that Mother Bailey was happily perched in the front seat of Deacon Jones’ car.

“You two ride together,” she said, putting down the window. “I’m sure you don’t want to be cooped up with a couple of old folks all night. Willie will bring me home.”

Idris opened his mouth to protest, but I quickly shut him up by pulling him toward his car. I stood at the passenger side, waiting for him to open my door.

“Something wrong with your hands?” he joked, as he reached for the handle.

“Seeing how this has just become a double date, you are inclined to treat me like a lady, sir.” *And fuck me like a slut,* the voice in the back of my head said.

He grinned at me as he went to close the door.

“I got you, baby,” he said. As he shut the door, I pulled on my seatbelt and nervously sunk into the passenger seat. I was trying to hide my nerves with jokes, and I prayed that that shit worked. I hadn’t been with a man in months, and now I felt like I was being set up. Granted, I loved Mother Bailey. I was sure she thought she was giving Idris and I a little push at pursuing something, but the way my nerves were set up, I felt like I was going to have an anxiety attack if I didn’t get that shit under control.

“*Get out of your head,*” I scolded myself. “*He’s just a man.*”

A fine ass, sexy ass fucking man, but still a man.

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IDRIS

I was convinced that the Lord put this woman in my life to tempt me with a good time. The way that Zenni was looking in this sexy red dress was killing my ass. I couldn't keep my eyes off her. The moment she rounded her car and I laid eyes on her, my dick wanted to make himself at home.

I've said it before and I'll say it until the day I die, there was nothing I loved more than a fine ass BBW. Zenni was fine as a muthafucka. I knew everyone had their preferences, but damn that. If a nigga couldn't appreciate all this body sitting in my passenger seat, fuck him, disrespectfully.

I looked over at her as we drove in comfortable silence. Her dress had slightly inched up her thigh when she sat down, exposing them even more. I wanted them wrapped around me so damn bad that I couldn't help but lick my lips as I watched her.

"You better keep your eyes on this road, sir." She giggled, looking over at me.

"How do you expect me to focus on anything but you when you are out here looking like this?"

"Well, I would like to live to make it to dinner."

“I promise, you are always safe with me, baby,” I said cupping her chin.

“You are gonna have to stop calling me that.”

“Why?”

“Because... it makes me feel... certain things.” She nervously rubbed her hands together.

“Like?”

“Just things.” She twirled one of her locs around her fingers, avoiding my eyes.

“Well, I’m at your disposal whenever you want to indulge me in just what those things are,” I said, taking her hand in mine.

I pulled it to my lips and kissed it as she stared at me. The rest of our drive to the restaurant was spent in silence. Every so often I looked over to see her quietly texting on her phone, figuring she was talking to Zaria. Even though she was the little sister, I always admired the way that Zaria cared for Zenni. She was her not only her hype-woman, but she was her best friend. It was good to see that their relationship hadn’t faltered over the years.

We pulled up at the restaurant around seven-twenty, Zenni’s hand was resting comfortably in mine. After valeting the cars, we made our way inside and I gave the hostess my name. She let us know that our table was ready. We followed behind her to our designated section. Deacon Jones was really swooning over my grandma, and I didn’t like that shit. He pulled out her chair, and the entire time we sat waiting on our food and drinks, the two of them acted like Zenni and I weren’t even there. I sat there with a slight frown.

“You looking like a hater right now.” Zenni giggled, elbowing me.

“I ain’t no hater. I just wanna know how this happened.”

“I’m sure Deacon Jones had game. I mean, look at the way they are sitting up under each other.”

I saw that shit. There was no way I could miss pimp daddy over here putting the moves on my grandmother. I felt like they were trying to get rid of us tonight so they could be nasty, and I wanted to cock block like a muthafucka.

“You are supposed to be my date for the night, sir,” she said, reaching up and gently grabbing my chin, turning my head ever so slightly toward her.

“If you want my attention, all you have to do is say it,” I said, licking my lips.

“I want your attention. Now are you going to stop mean mugging these lovebirds and give it to me?”

I couldn't help but smile. “Alright, mama. I'm all yours.”

She gave me a satisfied smile, and for the rest of dinner, I did my absolute best to fight my urge to snatch the man of God from up under my damn grandmother.



AFTER DINNER AND GOING BACK TO PICK UP HER CAR, ZENNI and I parted ways with my grandma and old ass Deacon Jones. I low key wanted to pull up on them and see what they were doing, but Zenni inviting me back to her house for dessert and a movie took precedence over it. Since I always kept a change of clothes in my car, I had grabbed my duffle bag when we pulled up at her place. Zenni lived in a nice ass house in a very nice neighborhood. If there was ever evidence of her shop doing well, this was it. I walked up the pathway to the front steps of her one-story brick home just as she was unlocking the door.

When I stepped inside, I was met with nothing less than her style all over the place. Her living room housed this huge sectional that looked like it could double as a full-size bed if you took the cushions off. The shit looked soft as hell with those furry ass pillows. The plush rug under the glass coffee and end tables looked just as soft. It was tastefully decorated, and there was no sign of a nigga living here at all.

“I’m gonna go slip into something comfortable,” she said. “The guest bathroom is the second door on your left. Towels and washcloths are in the cabinets. Feel free to make yourself a drink or something. I’ll be back shortly.”

“Aight,” I said, watching her walk down the hallway toward her bedroom.

I could have sworn she was switching that ass just for me. After she closed her door, I headed into the bathroom and stripped out of my clothes, changing into a pair of basketball shorts and a tank top, leaving on my church socks. I grabbed a rag and washed my face and then brushed my teeth and tongue free of tonight’s dinner. Once I was done with that, I took my bag back out to the car. After grabbing my charger, I headed back inside to find Zenni in the kitchen.

She was dressed in a tank top and these pajama shorts and the way her ass was jiggling as she moved about making us drinks, I knew she didn’t have a lick of underwear on. When she turned around and my eyes landed on her hard ass nipples, I knew she wasn’t wearing a bra either.

“Down, boy,” I mumbled to my dick because this nigga was excited like he just knew he was about to get some pussy. I made my way over to the couch and sat down, seemingly sinking into the cushions. Zenni brought over whatever she had concocted us to drink in the kitchen along with bottles of water.

“Alright now, don’t you get me drunk and take advantage of me,” I joked.

“Oh, please!” She giggled. “I have a feeling you would let me do whatever I want to you.”

“I’m not saying you’d have free range... but within reason.”

She rolled her eyes and went back into the kitchen, returning with a pan of sweet potato pie and forks. She took a seat on the opposite end of the couch.

“Why are you all the way over there?” I asked.

She shrugged.

“I’m not gonna bite you,” I said. “Bring your ass closer to me.”

She inched over but still wasn’t close enough for me. So I took it upon myself to slide my ass right up next to her, pulling her legs across my lap.

“That’s better,” I said, gently rubbing on her thighs. “How about a foot rub?”

“That would be nice,” she said, barely above a whisper.

I pulled off her socks, and the beauty of her perfectly pedicured white toes greeted me. Her feet were soft and supple. For a woman who seemed extremely comfortable in heels all the time, I expected nothing less than that.

“You have some pretty ass feet, Zen,” I said, lifting her feet to kiss her toes. A soft whimper escaped her throat as she stared at me, seemingly not breathing at all. After a few minutes of me massaging and kissing her feet, she abruptly pulled them away and placed them on the floor.

“Okay, that’s all I can take of that.” She grabbed her bottle of water. I noticed how bad her hands were shaking as she twisted off the top and raised the bottle to her lips. Her hands were shaking to the point where she had water dripping down her chin to her neck.

“Shit,” she mumbled.

Without missing a beat, I leaned over and pulled her neck to my mouth, licking and sucking away every drop of water she had spilled. Her skin was so damn soft, and her scent made my mouth water. I loved the feel of my lips against her flesh. Hell, I would love the feeling of my lips all over her. Another whimper escaped her throat, and she gripped the open bottle so hard that water gushed everywhere. I looked at her with a chuckle.

“That’s exactly how I’m gonna have you the moment you let me grace you with this dick,” I whispered.

Her eyes widened, and her mouth parted slightly. I pecked her lips and sat back on the couch with her staring at me. She looked as though she was ready to pounce on me but lil’ baby

wasn't ready for that yet. I wanted to build her anticipation, make her sweat a little, because when she finally gave me the green light to indulge in what I knew was some of that "*Oh shit!*", I needed her to be fully ready to receive the soul snatching that would be unleashed upon her. I wasn't trying to fuck her tonight, but I definitely wanted her to know what type of shit I could be on when she was ready. Right now, I just wanted to enjoy her company and maybe rub up on her for a little bit.

"So," I said, picking up the remote. "What are we watching?"

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Zenni

Idris fucking Bailey.

That man was going to be the death of me. Since his grandmother's birthday a week ago, the night we shared at my house had been on replay in my mind. While I didn't have sex with him, I knew I must have nudded at least twice from his touch alone. The way his hands roamed my legs and thighs aimlessly as we watched a movie I couldn't begin to tell you about, I felt like I was about to combust. When he had laid down to get comfortable and beckoned me into his arms, I just knew he was going to pull my shorts to the side and slide his dick in between my folds.

What a dick it was too. With him laying behind me, all I could feel was it poking me. Every time he moved, it would graze my ass, and I fought the urge to grind up on him. As horny as I was, as much as I wanted him, I was intimidated by him and it. He was likely to drop dick in me so good that I would be actively stalking his ass. I'm talking standing outside of his window with him asking me why I'm being weird.

Nigga, why are you being weird to me?

To avoid all that, I had been actively avoiding seeing him in person again, although we were still talking and texting almost every day. I kept our little encounter to myself, but I was dying to tell Zaria. Knowing my sister, she was going to

tell me I should have whipped his dick out and sat on it since he wanted to tease me. That's why her ass had two babies under the age of two.

After a long ass day at work, all I wanted to do was relax. However, my sister had other plans. Zaria had practically begged me to go out with her and her friends tonight. She had left the kids with her husband for a mommy break. It was Wednesday, the middle of the damn week, and I was getting ready to hit up a bar like I didn't have to open up my shop in the morning. I never went out. Aside from the girls that worked in my boutique, I didn't have very many people I called a friend. I kept to myself like I always had. Zaria was my best friend in addition to being my sister. Her friends had always been nice to me as well, but I wouldn't go out with them without my sister being present.

"I have something sexy for you to wear, Zen." Zaria beamed, thrusting my own boutique bag in my face.

"When did you come to my store?"

"While you were at lunch. I picked you an outfit and didn't need you telling me you weren't going to wear this shit."

"If I sell it, nine times out of ten I will wear it."

"Remember that when you open this bag. Your assistant said this hadn't even been put on the racks yet. She dug it out the back just for me, so you better appreciate my effort."

I rolled my eyes and looked at the bag.

"Take the bag, Zenni," she said firmly.

I sighed and took the bag while she went into my closet. My eyes widened as I pulled out the contents. Zaria had absolutely lost her muthafucking mind.

"Where the fuck am I gonna put this? No, better yet, where am I going to wear this?" I turned around to see her holding up a pair of my studded black heels with a smile on her face.

"These will go perfect with your outfit."

"Zaria!"

“Zenni!”

“I’m not wearing that.”

“Yes the fuck you are.”

“This is lingerie, and it’s see through. My titties will be out for the world to see.”

“And those babies are gonna get us some free drinks.” She laughed. “Don’t worry. I got you some pasties too.”

“Z, I’m serious.”

She sighed. “Zenni, you are beautiful. You can wear whatever the fuck you want.” She turned me around in the mirror and pulled the sash on my robe then pulled it from my shoulders. I had no shame in front of her, and that was something we established when I was a teenager. Whenever I felt insecure about my body, she made me stand in the mirror fully undressed and spoke to me about loving myself as I was.

“Look at you,” she said. “You are perfect in every single way. There is nothing you need to change about yourself to fit into other people’s standards of beauty. I want you to have fun tonight, and I want you to feel sexy while doing it. Put on the outfit and you will see that you look like the bad bitch you are.”

She thrust the shoes into my arms.

“I’m going to get dressed in your guest room. You have twenty minutes.” She kissed my cheek and then grabbed her bag, leaving me be. I sighed heavily, looking at the outfit she picked out. Finally giving in, I started putting it on. The black lace body suit, slimming latex pants, and heels were a bad ass combo.

I decided to pull my locs up into a bun. For jewelry, I chose a simple pair of diamond studs, a diamond “Z” necklace that Zalen had gifted me last Christmas, and a diamond tennis bracelet. The outfit itself was enough so the jewelry needed to be simple. Looking myself over in the mirror, I had to admit, I felt like a bad bitch. My titties were sitting up, and the high waist of the pants concealed most of my stomach.

I actually felt good in this shit. So good that I snapped a few pictures and posted them to my Instagram account. Normally I posted pictures to my boutique's page, but this time I chose to post it to my personal account. Within seconds, my notifications were buzzing. After a few minutes, my phone chimed, alerting me that I had a message from Idris.

Idris: Zenni, Zenni, Zenni... make me come find your fine ass tonight.

Me: Are you stalking me Idris?

Idris: I'm keeping an eye on my woman.

Me: Who said I was your woman?

Idris: I did. Where are you going looking like a full course meal and a nigga is over here starving.

I couldn't help but blush as I read that. This man was so damn silly, but I loved it. I was just about to respond when my door opened, and Zaria walked in. The smile on her face made me blush even harder.

"Bitch!" she screamed. "That's my muthafucking sister! Bitch, you look so good! Did I do good or what?"

"You did great." I smiled. "I feel like a bad bitch."

"Cause you are a bad bitch. I hope you are ready to drink because the niggas are gonna be in full effect tonight! We outside!"

"Z, you are married. Ralph will fuck you and them niggas up."

"Allow me to live vicariously through you before I have to go home and pop my titties into somebody's mouth."

"The kids or Ralph?"

"Both."

We shared a laugh before snapping a few pictures and then heading out. The bar we ended up at gave me more of a club vibe, but it was pretty chill. Zaria knew this damn outfit would get me attention and that it did. As we headed to an empty table after grabbing drinks, I felt so many hands on me. Niggas

thought they were slick at touching your hips to try to get past you. A couple of them even rubbed up against my ass. If I felt one more hand on me, somebody was getting cursed the fuck out.

“The niggas are on you tonight, Zenni!” said Liza, Zaria’s best friend. “You look amazing, girl.”

“Thank you. I don’t think my titties have ever sat up this high.”

“They are definitely up there, girl,” said their other friend, Tesha. She cupped her breasts. “You are putting my lil’ biddies to shame.”

We had been chilling for a good hour just vibing to the music and drinking amongst friendly conversation. Several drinks had been sent over to our table, and we greedily indulged in them all. I was feeling the fuck out of mine. We were all laughing and talking when the three of them all looked up at the same time. Liza and Tesha’s mouths were open, and Zaria held a smirk.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Your man came to claim you.” Zaria motioned behind me.

I looked back to see Idris strolling his big fine ass over to us. He was dressed in his signature black. He was wearing a pair of fitted black jeans that hugged his thighs and a black muscle shirt that spread across his shoulders much like I wanted him to spread me across one of these tables. This man was so muthafucking sexy. The fact that so many women were vying for his attention and his sole focus was on me, made my nipples hard. He licked his lips as he approached the table.

“Good evening, ladies,” came his smooth, deep voice.

“Heeey,” they sang

He turned to me. “How you doing, baby?”

“You are something else, you know that?” I crossed my arms.

“Well you never texted me back when I told you I was starving, so I had to come feast my eyes on you in person.”

“Damn,” Tesha and Liza said.

My face flushed. Zaria was eating this shit up.

“Who is your friend, Zenni?” Tesha asked.

“This is Idris. Mother Bailey is his grandmother.”

“*That* is Idris that used to run around with Zalen?” Liza asked in disbelief.

“That would be me.” Idris chuckled.

“You definitely grew up,” Tesha said. “I ain’t mad at you, Zenni. Milk did that body good.”

Idris blushed, and his dimples made an appearance.

“How are you ladies doing tonight? You all look beautiful, by the way.”

“Oh, he’s fine and charming.” Liza giggled. “I think we have a winner.”

“Alright now, don’t give him a big head,” I said.

“Yeah, he just grew into this one.” Zaria laughed.

“You always gotta play me, Z?” Idris laughed. “Your dome ain’t that small, sis.”

“My man appreciates this head, pun intended.”

“Zaria!” I exclaimed.

“I’mma let you have that one,” Idris said. His eyes focused on me again. “Come dance with me.”

“Oh, I don’t dance...” I protested.

“Zenni, come on.” The authority in his voice had me getting my ass up out of the chair and following him out onto the dance floor. As nervous as I was, the Lord had a sense of humor. The DJ started playing Dru Hill’s “Never Make a Promise”, and Idris immediately pulled me into his chest and held me tightly as he buried his nose in my neck. My fucking eyes fluttered as his woodsy scent filled my airway. That

mixed with the amount of alcohol I had consumed, had me drunk with lust. Without my permission, a moan escaped my throat. To my surprise, he chuckled.

“My sentiments exactly,” he said, looking at me. “You look gorgeous tonight, baby.”

“Thank you.” I blushed. “Where is Mother Bailey?”

“My sister came to visit for a few days, so she’s watching her tonight.”

“How did you find me?”

“Z may have left her location on her IG posts.”

“So you *were* stalking me?” I giggled.

“I told you I was keeping an eye on my woman. I had to see you looking this damn fine in person. I’m not staying long.”

“You got all dressed up to come see me?”

“I couldn’t step to you in here looking like anything but your man.”

“I’m still trying to figure out who told you that you were my man.”

“You are going to be mine, Zenni Calloway. That’s on period, pooh.”

“Oh my God! Don’t ever say that shit again.” I laughed.

“What! That’s what y’all women love to say, right? ‘That’s on period, pooh!’” he mocked. “I’m so tired of that shit.”

“Nah, you perfected that too well to not be using that yourself.”

“See, now you are trying to play me.”

We shared a laugh. I must have danced with him to at least four more songs. I was feeling those drinks and having Idris in my space was calming. I felt like I could be free with him. Z and her friends weren’t even tripping that I had basically ditched them for him. Hell, they were all married or committed and going to their husbands or boyfriends.

I was going home alone... maybe. Idris had my ass so turned on that I had to excuse myself to the bathroom while he said he would grab us all a round of drinks. As I sat on the toilet relieving myself, I heard a group of women come in talking and laughing all loud.

“It’s too many fine niggas out there tonight.”

“It damn sure is. Did you see the one dancing with that big bitch?”

“Who didn’t see that shit? She’s damn near popping out of that cheap ass bodysuit.”

“I swear. She’s already fat. Why would she want to draw more attention to herself by wearing something that revealing?”

“You know them big bitches love attention too. Baby didn’t have a friend or a mirror.”

I must have sat there listening to them talk shit about me for three minutes, fighting back tears. When the bathroom finally cleared out, I cleaned myself up and hurried to wash my hands. I quickly made my way back to our table to grab my things.

“Zenni, what’s wrong?” Zaria asked, immediately noticing the look on my face.

“I need to go home. This was a mistake.”

“Zen...”

“Can you please take me home?” I asked Idris.

“Baby, what—”

“Please take me home,” I said again, avoiding his eyes.

“Okay.”

“Thank you for trying to make sure I had fun, Z. I love you.”

Without waiting for her to try and convince me to stay, I grabbed Idris’ hand and led him out of the bar. He helped me into his Jeep and then got in himself. He looked at me, and I

frantically took off all my jewelry and lashes and put them in my wristlet. To my surprise, he didn't say anything at first, just cranked up and pulled out of the parking lot. We must have driven in silence for five minutes before he reached over and took my hand in his, kissing the back of it.

“Are you calm?” he asked.

I nodded.

“What happened back there?”

“What happened was I made a fool of myself coming out of the house looking like this.”

“Who said that shit?”

“People talk. You'd be surprised the things you hear in a bathroom.” I wiped my eyes and rested my head against the window.

“Somebody said something to you?”

“Not to me, but about me. I mean, look at me. I don't dress like this. This isn't me.”

I told him about the girls in the bathroom, and a deep frown appeared on his face. He pulled over into the median and turned the car off.

“Look at me, Zenni,” he commanded. Again the authority in his voice had me doing exactly as he asked. He reached for my hands, and I slid them into his. “You are by far the most beautiful woman I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. I know it's been a long time since we've seen each other, but I have faith that the sweet, loving and caring fifteen-year-old girl I left here thirteen years ago blossomed into the sweet, loving, caring, fine ass woman across from me today. You aren't just beautiful outside. You are beautiful inside and *that* is unmatched. I feel sorry for anybody who chooses not to embrace the dope ass boss that you are. But that is their loss. You are a queen. Never let a fucking peasant tilt your crown, baby.”

I couldn't help but hug him after that. He was still the same Idris Bailey who used to go out of his way to make me

smile anytime he saw me. His heart was so kind, and I saw that hadn't changed over the years. Certain things you never forgot about people, no matter the time or distance between you.

“Can I take you somewhere?” he asked, cupping my chin.
“Unless you really want to go home.”

“No. I'm not ready to leave you yet.”

He smiled and cranked up the car. “I'm glad to hear that.”

He turned up the music, grabbed my hand, and we sped off down the road.

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IDRIS

I took a forty-five-minute drive to take Zenni to the lake my grandparents used to take us to as kids. It used to be one of my favorite places to come. It was so peaceful out here, and at night, you had the most breathtaking view of the night sky reflecting off the water. We parked and kicked off our shoes to walk down. I led Zenni to the huge rock I used to love to sit on and take in the beauty of nature around me. Growing up as a military brat, I had lived in a lot of different places. I got used to a lot of different sounds so to come back here and hear nothing but peace was exhilarating.

I helped Zenni onto the rock and took a seat behind her so that she sat between my legs. I wrapped my arms around her waist and held her close to me. For the longest time, we sat in silence. She felt so fucking right in my arms.

“Idris?” She called my name.

“Yes.”

“Why are you single?”

I wasn’t expecting that. I thought about it for a moment.

“I guess... I believe in love... real, raw unconditional, and passionate love. Something like my parents have and my grandparents had. I haven’t found that yet, and I don’t want to keep going through the motions of investing in a dead-end

relationship. I want my next partner to be my last. I fully believe that when my heart has found her, she will feel that shit too.”

“How do you know when you’ve found that though?”

“My grandfather said that the moment he felt my grandmother’s presence in the room, he knew she was the one.”

“Just her presence? No conversation or eye contact?”

“Just her presence.”

“That’s some powerful shit.”

“That is some shit that was ordained by the big man Himself. I never felt anything that powerful... though I’ve had a few moments recently.”

“Oh?” she looked up at me.

“Yeah, this bad lil’ baby I’ve been knowing since I was a young boy. She stole my heart years ago and never gave that shit back. It’s cool though. I’m just hoping I can earn hers in return.

She smiled and settled against me. “You know, my mother thinks it’s a sin that I don’t have a man. She always brags about how Z and Zalen are happily married and how they made her a grandmother. Then there is Zenni the Spinster. No husband, no kids, just married to my career and having an affair with my lonely sheets.”

She giggled, but I knew she found nothing funny. Her words slurred a bit, and I knew she was still feeling the impact of those drinks she had consumed. She needed to get this off her chest and I would allow her to do that, but what she wouldn’t do is wallow in it.

“You would think that she would be proud of me for being a successful businesswoman.”

“I’m sure she is proud of you, Zen.”

“She never says it. She barely comes to my shop. You heard her at dinner. She thinks I’m promoting an unhealthy

lifestyle. I make women feel beautiful in their natural skin. Something she never makes me feel.”

“I know it hurts, but everybody won’t be a part of your vision, baby. You just keep doing what brings *you* happiness. Everybody else is irrelevant. You make differences in people’s lives that you don’t even know about.”

“Are you always this affirming,” she asked, turning into me slightly.

“I’m expressive with people I care about.”

“So you care about me?”

“Of course I do. I brought you to my spot, didn’t I?”

She smiled. “You did. It’s beautiful out here. So quiet and peaceful.” She looked up at the stars and rested her head against my shoulder. “You brought any other women out here?” she asked.

“Just you.”

“Hmmm... those hoes from church would have been dying to fuck you under the stars.” She looked up at me and traced my bottom lip with her thumb. “I can’t say I blame them.”

The moment the words left her mouth her eyes widened in embarrassment.

“I’m sorry; that was the liquor talking,” she confessed. “That was a thought that was never meant to be heard out loud.”

She scrambled to her feet and took a few steps back. I climbed to my feet and approached her. The closer I got to her, the more steps she took back. I reached out and gently wrapped my fingers around her neck.

“Bring your ass here.”

Her feet followed the pull of my arm. My lips crashed into hers, and my arms came around her waist. I kissed her with passion... with want and desire. I wanted her to know what I was on. Hell, if she wanted me to fuck her under the stars, I would send that pussy into orbit. My dick was already hard as

a damn rock. All she had to do was say the word, and I would give her exactly what I knew she craved too.

“Idris,” she moaned as I gripped all that ass. “Take me home.”

I nodded and led her back to the car. The entire ride, she kept her hands on me. Playing in my hair. Flicking my ears. Kissing on my neck. When we got to her house, she beckoned me inside. The moment we were, her lips were on mine again. She backed me all the way into her room and pulled me down on the bed on top of her. I kissed all over her lips and neck and the tops of those soft ass titties.

“Wait!” she said. “Do you have a condom?”

That’s when it dawned on me that I had one in the car.

“Give me a second,” I said, climbing off her.

I went out to my car to retrieve that pack I kept in my glove compartment. By the time I got back to the room, this woman was knocked the fuck out, snoring slightly. I had to chuckle to myself. Zenni looked like the type of woman could drink a whole bottle of wine and be okay. Yet, a few cups of real liquor, and she turned into somebody else. I was this close to meeting her tonight.

It was cool though. She needed to sleep it off, and I was never in the business of taking advantage of a woman, especially one that couldn’t give consent. I didn’t bother undressing her because I didn’t feel comfortable doing so with her still being asleep. I got her settled into bed and covered her up. After kissing her forehead, I told her that I was going to go.

“No,” she mumbled. “Stay with me.”

“Zen...”

“I feel safe with you.” She pouted. “Please stay.”

I hesitated for a moment before closing her bedroom door and kicking off my shoes. Unbuckling my pants, I slipped out of them and folded them up neatly. I pulled back the covers and climbed in bed behind her. She cuddled up next to me, and

the next thing I heard was her snoring lightly. I chuckled to myself and closed my eyes. Before long, sleep found me too.



WHEN I WOKE UP THE NEXT MORNING, ZENNI WAS STILL knocked the fuck out. It was almost eight o'clock. I gently slid from under her and climbed out of bed to drain the main vein. While I was handling my business, I could hear her alarm go off and her stirring around in bed before it stopped. After washing my hands, I turned the shower on to heat up then went back into the bedroom. Her eyes widened at the sight of me standing there in boxers and church socks.

“Good morning,” I spoke.

She looked at me and then peaked under the cover, heaving a sigh of relief.

“There was no sex involved last night,” I reassured her.

“Oh, thank God. I’m sorry if I was being weird last night. I was drunk and emotional and not thinking clearly.”

“Oh, you were clear. But I’ll let you live this time.”

I walked over to the edge of the bed and leaned down to her.

“I have morning breath,” she said.

“Woman, if you don’t kiss me.”

She giggled and offered me her lips. I placed the sweetest kiss on them as I caressed her body through the covers. She moaned softly. I loved the way she always responded when I touched her because the connection with her skin sent something through me that I knew was nothing but passion.

“I turned the shower on for you.”

“Thank you.”

“Are you hungry?”

“I’m starving.”

“You get ready for work, and I’ll cook you something.”

“Okay.”

I pecked her lips and then left her to her business to find the kitchen. While she showered and got ready for work, I cooked us a helping of bacon, eggs, and grits with a side of toast. When she walked into the kitchen, I swear all I could do was stare at her beautiful ass. Dressed in a pair of dark, high-waisted, skinny jeans, a white camisole, and a pink blazer with pink heels, she looked fucking delectable. Her long, thick locs hung freely down her back. I might have drooled a little.

“It smells good in here,” she said, sitting at the kitchen island.

“I hope you enjoy it.”

“The fact that you cooked for me says enough. I’d hope you wouldn’t offer if your skills weren’t up to par.”

“I wouldn’t do you like that.” I chuckled, placing a plate in front of her before making mine and sitting beside her. I grabbed her hand and said a quick prayer over the food before we dug in. We made light conversation as we ate. Before long, she had to leave for work, and I was set to head back to my grandmother’s. After locking up the house, I walked her to her car. She put her things inside and turned to me.

“Thank you for last night,” she said. “I really needed you, and you came through for me.”

“I’ll always come through for you, Zen,” I said, pulling her into my arms. “You have a good day, baby.”

“Thank you.”

I pecked her lips a few times before releasing her and letting her get in the car. Once she was all settled in, I said goodbye and got into my own car to head home.

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Zenni

When I arrived at my shop this morning, the very first person to greet me was Zaria. She was on her way to work, but I expected nothing less than her popping up to check on me after last night. My assistant had already gotten there and was taking care of the morning duties, so I had Z follow me into my office.

“Are you okay, Zenni?” she asked, immediately coming to hug me.

“I’m fine, Z.”

“What happened last night?”

I gave her the spill about the conversation I overheard in the bathroom, and like I expected, she was livid. That was why I didn’t tell her last night. She would have made it her business to find out just who those women were and curse them the fuck out.

“I promise, I’m fine, Z,” I reassured her. “I had all the comfort I needed.”

Her eyes widened, and a smirk appeared on her face. “Well, I hope he comforted you well into the wee hours of the morning.”

“We didn’t have sex... though it wasn’t for lack of trying on my part.”

“What!” she screamed. “*You* initiated it?”

“He took me to this spot out by a lake his grandparents used to take them to. We were talking, and Z, the way he just kept affirming me, I got so turned on. I told that man I couldn’t blame the bitches from church for wanting to fuck him.”

“No you didn’t.”

“I did. I put my damn foot in my mouth. Girl, when I tried to get away from him, he gently grabbed my throat and told me to get my ass over to him. Z, if I could have bust a nut from him kissing me, I would have.”

“Yaaaass!” she squealed, clapping her hands. “It’s the energy for me! What happened next?”

“I asked him to take me home. The whole ride, I couldn’t keep my hands off him. When we got back to my house, I took him into my bedroom, and shit got pretty hot and heavy for a second. Bitch, he went to grab condoms from his Jeep, and my drunk ass fell asleep.”

Zaria was laughing so hard that she started wheezing and sounding like one of those fucking spray bottles.

“You are supposed to let the dick put you to sleep, Zenni,” she said when she finally caught her breath.

“I know, I know,” I said, palming my forehead. “He stayed over last night. I just wanted him to hold me.”

“Aww, baby!” she cooed with her hand over her heart. “You like him, don’t you?”

“Zaria... no man has ever made me feel the things he makes me feel. It’s crazy. I’ve known him since we were kids, but I feel like I’m seeing him for the first time.”

Idris had me feeling all kinds of shit I hadn’t felt in years. I had been single for a long time. Then men I encountered made me feel like I should be honored that they even talked to me. Like they were doing me a fucking favor by showing me interest. Idris was the opposite.

“That’s that grown man energy, girl. He pulled up on you and almost brought the freak out.”

I couldn’t help but laugh at her extra ass.

“That man has claimed you. You better let him love you, Zen.”

“I don’t know about love... but I might see where it goes.”

“You should bring him to Sunday dinner.”

“You just want me to rub that shit in your mama’s face.”

“Just a little. Maybe she’ll stop talking shit. My sissy has a man! And a fine muthafucka too.” She stood to leave. “I’m get me some dick in your honor tonight. Poor Ralph won’t know what hit him.”

“Goodbye, Zaria!” I laughed.

“Bye, girl. I love you.”

“I love you too.”



MY DAY HAD BEEN GOING EXCELLENT. MY SHOP WAS BUSY. I had already sold out of the shipment I got from this new designer I was working with. Every time that register dinged, I got excited. This was the shit I wished my mother could see— all these beautiful plus-sized women, embracing their bodies, buying what made them feel good, and not being worried about what the next person thought about the way they looked in it. So many of my fellow BBW sisters thanked me every time they came into my shop. From my vast selection of clothes down to my own attire. It put a smile on my face because I had a helping hand in making another woman feel beautiful. That’s the shit my mother didn’t understand.

“Ms. Calloway, you have a visitor,” said my assistant, Mya, from my office door.

“Who is it?”

“A *very* attractive gentleman.” She smiled. “He said to let you know he is taking you to lunch, and he doesn’t want to hear any lip about it.”

I rolled my eyes. “Thank you, Mya. I’ll be out shortly.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

She closed my door, and I sat back in my chair, shaking my head.

“Dammit, Idris,” I mumbled.

Even though we had been speaking damn near every day for the last two weeks and spent time together often, I was still a ball of nerves when he came around. The man made all five senses tingle with excitement. We spent our time getting to know each other again and talking about life. While the conversations were serious, my mind couldn’t help but wander whenever I smelled him or his hand brushed up against me. And when he kissed me... somebody opened the fucking flood gates. There was no telling how long I was going to deny my flesh of him.

Shaking the thoughts from my head, I stood and headed into the small bathroom in my office to check myself over. Today I was dressed in a black and white polka dot button up that I had tucked into my red wide legged pants and a black pair of heels. My locs were hanging freely down my back.

After checking to make sure I looked presentable, I grabbed my phone and my wristlet and made my way out front. Idris was sitting in one of my chairs, playing on his phone and looking fine as ever. He was dressed in a black pair of black jeans, a blue paisley colored shirt, and a pair of blue canvas shoes.

When I stepped in front of him, he slowly looked up at me.

“So you’re taking me to lunch?” I asked.

“I am.” He stood and wrapped his arms around me tightly, allowing his lips to brush against my neck when he pulled away. “You look beautiful, Zen.”

“Thank you.”

“This is a dope ass place you have here.”

“Thank you. I try.”

“Well, you are definitely doing the damn thing.” He smiled brightly, and I couldn’t help but blush.

“Where are you taking me for this impromptu lunch date, sir?” I asked him.

“Glazed Trail Bistro.”

“Alright, big money grip,” I said. “You must want to spoil me, Idris.”

“In more ways than one, baby.”

He grabbed my hand and led me out of the store to where his blacked-out Jeep Wrangler was waiting. After opening my door and ensuring that I was locked in, he came around to the driver’s side and got in.

“I hope you drive with sense in this traffic,” I said, looking over at him.

“I promise you are safe with me.” He grinned as he pulled onto the highway.

“How are your parents?” I asked.

“Living their best life. They retired from the military and have been traveling ever since. They were going to take some time off to come take care of my grandmother, but I stepped in. They have worked their whole lives. They deserved a break. Besides, I hadn’t spent any quality time with my girl in a while. I was happy to come take care of her.”

“That’s so sweet. I love Mother Bailey like she was my own grandmother.”

“Trust me, she loves you too. She’s threatened *me* about you.”

“Why?”

“She just wants to make sure I have good intentions for you.”

“You have intentions for me?” I looked at him curiously.

“You know I like you, Zenni. Since we were kids.”

“I didn’t know that back then.”

“I wasn’t risking getting my ass beat to bring you those flowers for nothing.”

“You did give me flowers,” I realized, smiling at the memory. “You were so sweet to me.”

“Cause a nigga was sweet on you.”

“Why didn’t you say anything?”

“Be honest. Would I have had a chance back then?”

“I don’t think anybody had a chance. I was so shy and reserved.”

“Exactly.” He looked over at me as we pulled into the restaurant parking lot. “But you are a full-grown woman now, Zenni... confident, beautiful, sexy as a muthafucka.”

His hand squeezed my thigh.

“What do you want with me, Idris? Are you just trying to fuck me?”

“While there are a number of things I would like to do to you, that’s not my focus. I want that right there.” He pointed at my heart. “Tell me I have a chance, Zenni.”

I looked at him, not knowing what to say. At first glance, any woman would jump at the chance to have him tell her that he wanted her. I needed action behind words.

“Let’s just take this slow...” I said nervously. “You have a lot to learn about me before you can say you want me, Idris. Maybe it’s the feeling of seeing me again that has you thinking you want that... Maybe you don’t really want me at all.”

He frowned at me. “That’s your mother in your head talking. I haven’t been spending all this time with you for no reason. Let me tell you something, baby. I am a very secure man. I’m secure in myself, my wants, my needs, and I am secure in *you*. We can do this your way and take it slow. But just know that I have every intention of making you mine. And just in case you think I’m playing with you...”

The next thing I felt was his fingers around my neck and his lips on mine. He kissed me with passion and desire so intense that I started moaning against his mouth.

“Idris...” I moaned.

When his tongue slipped into my mouth, I just let him have me at that point. His lips and hands felt so good against me, and I didn't want him to stop. It had been months since I had gotten laid. I was hormonal, I was stimulated, and if he even breathed on my pussy, I was liable to bust a damn nut. I knew the seat of my panties were soaked. When he pulled away, he looked at me and wiped the corners of my mouth.

“You let me know when you are ready to sample everything I have to offer you, Zenni,” he said, reaching for the door handle.

He got out of the Jeep. As he rounded my side, I tried to get myself together. He opened my door and reached for my hand to help me out. Once I was on my feet, he laced his fingers through mine and led me into the restaurant. This was a pretty upscale place. Most people were dressed to the nines, and even though I was dressy casual, I felt out of place. I saw the looks and stares we got as we followed the waitress to our sitting area.

It wouldn't have been so bad if we weren't seated directly in front of those bitches from church. Sylvia Tanner, Alecia Jones, and Kacey Brabham had been making my life miserable since elementary school. I didn't know what it was about me that set them off, but it couldn't just be that I was fat.

Those bitches had some deep-rooted issues because even after Zaria had whopped all three of their asses, they still found time to be petty. They looked over at Idris and I with scowls on their faces. Alecia was one of the bitches that gave Idris her number after church that Sunday we reconnected. I'm sure him walking in here holding hands with me didn't sit well with her.

“What's wrong?” Idris asked, noticing the obvious annoyance in my face.

“Nothing.”

“Don’t lie to me, Zen.”

“Those bitches are gonna try to start some shit,” I said. “They are already looking like they want to come over here.”

“For what?”

“Because you’re here with me. In case you forgot, the middle one gave you her number.”

“Those numbers went from my pocket to the damn trash.”

“Can we move to another table?” I asked our server.

“No,” Idris said firmly. “Don’t you ever let another female feel like she has power over you, Zenni. Besides, you are with me, and I’m not about to let anybody talk to you reckless. Disrespectfully, fuck these people. We aren’t going anywhere. Give us a few minutes to look over the menu,” he told our waitress.

“Of course.” She offered me a warm smile before walking off.

I tried to focus on the menu, but I could hear them whispering and shit from across the room. I was never a person who liked confrontation. Zalen and Zaria were the fighters. I was the mild-mannered, laid-back Calloway. I didn’t like drama. I didn’t like feeling like my back was against the wall. I kept quiet to keep the peace more often than not, and that shit ate me alive. When our waitress came back, I still didn’t know what I wanted. To be honest, I had pretty much lost my appetite, and all I ordered was a salad.

“Zenni, you can order whatever you want,” Idris said.

“I don’t have much of an appetite.”

“Let me get a to-go order of my dish for her,” he told the waitress. When she was gone, he stood and came around to my side of the table to sit next to me. “What’s the story with them?” he asked.

“Idris, please.”

“Either you tell me or I’m going to their table, and they are going to tell me. I would much rather hear your side of the story.”

I sighed. “You know I’ve been heavy set basically all my life. They used to tease me as a kid, and it carried on over into adult years. What started as them picking on me about my weight, turned into them spreading rumors about me paying men to sleep with me.”

“What kind of petty shit is that?”

“Apparently this guy Alecia had a thing for, had a thing for me. She convinced her two flunkies that I managed to steal him from her by offering to pay him to be my man. I guess her ego wouldn’t allow her to think that he could possibly be interested in me over her. When Zaria heard about it, she beat all three of their asses. They don’t do much past whisper when I’m around these days.”

“So you think that they are going to concoct a story about us being together?”

“I wouldn’t put it past them. Alecia wants you...”

“I don’t give a fuck what she wants. The only woman I’m interested in is you, Zenni.” He stood so that they could see him, because of course they were watching, and leaned over me. “Give me a kiss.”

“Right now?”

“Am I not asking for one now?”

“In front of all these people?”

“It’s just you and I, baby.” He cupped my chin. “And I won’t ask again.”

I hesitated before closing my eyes and pulling his face to mine in a deep, soothing, earth-shattering kiss.

“Don’t ever think I’d be ashamed to claim you in front of anybody, Zenni” he said when our lips parted. “Do you understand me?”

“Yes,” I whispered.

It was crazy how I was willing to submit to him. He commanded my body's attention, and she gave in as though he owned that shit. Whether it was the way he looked at me, the things he said or when he touched me, my body responded with lust for him. The waitress brought our food just as Alecia and her friends were getting up to leave. She glared at me as she walked past. I rolled my eyes, and that bitch decided to turn around.

"It's nice to see you eating healthy, Zenni." She smirked, cocking her head to the side. "You finally took your mother's advice about losing weight?"

Idris dropped his fork and knife and looked at her.

"Excuse you?" he said.

"I see why you haven't called me. I didn't peg you for a chubby chaser. What a waste of a fine ass nigga. You passed up all of this for all of nothing." She looked me up and down, shaking her head.

Idris chuckled. "You are one disrespectful ass bitch." The smirk dropped from her face and was replaced by a frown.

"Nigga, fuck you."

"That's what you wanted, right? The fact that you were willing to pop your pussy on my dick when you didn't know the first thing about me speaks volumes. Let me tell you something about men... real men. We don't equate pussy with desire. That shit is easy to get, and women like you make it a conquest. Now, if I were a dog ass nigga, I would have fucked you and never looked in your direction again. Remember two things. One, you will never get bragging rights to any of this dick. And two, don't ever disrespect this woman in my presence or otherwise. Ain't shit about you or your lil' friends that could ever touch Zenni. I didn't choose her over you because you were never a fucking option. Now, do yourself a favor and get the fuck away from this table so we can enjoy our lunch."

Alecia looked at him with fury in her pretty brown eyes. Without another word, she stormed off with her flunkies in

tow. I looked at Idris and had to clinch my damn thighs together. The way he defended me made my pussy throb. My clit was literally pulsating right now. I wanted nothing more than to throw his big, fine ass in this table and fuck the shit out of him right then.

“Thank you,” I whispered, running my sweaty palms down my thighs.

“I don’t play that disrespectful shit. Now I would never talk to you like that or call you out if your name, Zenni. But nobody is gonna tear you down in front of me. That bully shit is for kids. We are grown. She better learn to take her L’s like the rest of us.”

I simply nodded and started poking at my salad. I really didn’t want this shit. The steak he was eating looked good as fuck. He saw me looking and a smirk crossed his beautiful lips.

“You want to share my food?” he asked, sliding his plate forward.

“No...”

He cut a piece of his steak and held it to my lips. “Don’t fuck around and starve trying to eat cute.”

I hesitated for a moment before wrapping my lips around his fork and taking the steak. It was so juicy and tender and practically melted in my mouth.

“Oh my God, that’s good,” I moaned slightly, closing my eyes.

“Alright now, you can’t be doing all that.” He laughed. “Come on and eat this food, woman.”

I couldn’t help but smile as I picked up my silverware. This man was nothing like the kid I knew thirteen years ago. He was strong, confident and the way he handled me was sexy as hell. He might just become my own undoing.

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IDRIS

Zenni had reluctantly been allowing me to spend time with her over the last month. I could honestly say that it had been fun getting to know her all over again. The more time I spent with her, the more I wanted to be with her. She was opening up to me and becoming more comfortable with me showing her affection, in public or otherwise. I couldn't keep my hands off her. It wasn't that I was being clingy. I just craved her in every way possible.

She divulged to me her past relationships with men and why she had been single. I learned about the number of men who had pursued her based off of Alecia and her friends' lies about her paying for sex. She also told me how many men wanted to fuck her but keep that shit on the down low. See, there are too many niggas out here that want to experience a big girl in private but never wanted to claim her in public.

I ain't that nigga. I caress stomachs, rolls, and ass no matter where I am. I'm not ashamed of shit.

"Idris, wait..." She moaned as my hands moved to unbutton her shirt.

I had offered Kendra extra money to watch my grandmother tonight so that I could spend some quality time with Zenni. We had just finished eating dinner and were laid out on her couch watching a movie. Actually the movie was

watching us because from the moment it came on, we were caught in an intense lip lock.

“What’s wrong?” I asked, hovering my body over hers.

“I don’t know if I’m subconsciously ready to take it there yet...” she said, looking away from me.

“That’s okay,” I said. “It won’t make me want you any less if I have to wait.”

“I do want you. God, do I want you. I just...” she covered her face with her hands. “I don’t know if I’m comfortable with you seeing all of me just yet. I don’t want to find myself feeling like an object instead of a woman.”

“Zen...”

“It’s not you. I promise. I just need to mentally prepare to give myself to you. I haven’t had sex in over eight months. When I give myself to you, I want you to see me. All of me. The rolls, the stretch marks, all of it. And I want to see you.” She ran her hands up my chest and cupped my face. “I want to see all of you, Idris...” she breathed. “I want to feel all of you so fucking bad.”

I dipped my head and kissed her passionately. Reaching over her head, I turned off her lamp. The only light in the room was the glow from the television. My lips moved from hers to her neck.

“Can I at least give you a sample?” I asked, fumbling with the buttons on her shirt as I nibbled on her neck.

She nodded slowly.

When I got her shirt undone, my eyes marveled at her titties in this sexy ass black lace bra. I unhooked the front closure and set them free. Her nipples were taunting me. My mouth watered as I pushed her breasts together and took them into my mouth one by one. She moaned softly as her body trembled beneath me. My hand found its way up under her skirt and between her thighs.

I could feel the heat radiating from her pussy before I even touched her. She draped her leg across the back of the couch to

allow me access to her sweetness. I gripped the elastic band of her panties and in one swift movement ripped that shit right off of her. I ran my finger through her wetness, and she gasped.

“You are so wet, Zenni.” I moaned, sucking her essence from my finger. “And you taste good...”

“Idris...” She moaned as I took her nipple back into my mouth. I took my time sucking on them as my fingers slowly dipped in and out of her. Her muscles contracted around them, and she arched her back off the couch.

“Oh... my God!” She gasped, gripping the back of my shirt.

Her pussy was juicing up so damn bad I knew she was going to have a wet spot on her couch when I was done with her. That muthafucka was spitting at me, and I wanted nothing more than it to be my dick she was coating. I located her G-spot and attacked it with sweet torture.

“You know you done fucked up, right?” I smirked as I continued to finger her to oblivion. Ecstasy was written all over her face. “I can be patient, Zenni. Just know that you’ve only amplified my craving for you. I know what your sweet ass tastes like now, and when you finally let me have you...” One final stroke of my fingers sent her over the edge. “... I’m going to fucking devour you.”

She trembled beneath me. I pulled my hand away and sucked my fingers free of her juices. She pulled my head to hers and kissed me hungrily, moaning as she tasted herself on my lips.

“Can you stay with me tonight?” she asked.

“I’ll have to call Kendra to see if she’s cool with staying over...”

“Shit, I’m sorry. I forgot.”

“Why don’t you come back to the house with me?”

“I’m sure Mother Bailey would frown upon that.”

“She knows we are seeing each other.”

“I know, but it would be weird staying over. Even if we aren’t having sex, I would still feel awkward with her waking up to me being there when I wasn’t there when she went to bed.”

I sighed and pulled out my phone to call her on speaker. My grandmother was a night owl. She was probably awake reading or watching reruns of her shows like she often did with Kendra.

“Hello?” she answered.

“Hey, Grandma.”

“Hey, baby.”

“I know Kendra has to leave in a little while, and I’m not quite ready to let go of Zenni. You cool with her spending the night?”

“Am I gonna hear y’all bumping uglies during the night?”

“No, Grandma,” I said, rolling my eyes. “We aren’t having sex. We just want to be close to each other right now.”

“Well, I guess I’m fine with that. Are you treating my baby right, Idris? Are you making her happy?”

“I’d like to think that I am,” I answered, looking over at Zenni who was blushing.

“He’s making me very happy, Mother Bailey,” she said, cupping my face.

“Zenni! Hey, my beautiful girl. You just bring your pretty self right on over here. The two of you can watch my shows with me until I fall asleep.”

“I would love that.” Zenni smiled. “We’ll see you in a little bit.”

“Okay, baby.”

We disconnected the call, and I looked at Zenni. “I told you that woman loves you.”

“I love her too. She’s always been so good to me. She’s given me confidence over the years, and I appreciate that.”

She cupped my chin and pecked my lips. “You really do make me happy, Idris. Everything I love about her, I see in you.”

“You’ve always been my baby, Zenni.”

She smiled. “Let me go wash my ass so we can go.”

“You need some help with that?” I grinned, moving so that she could get up.

“No I don’t, sir.” She giggled.

“I’m just saying... that’s a lot of ass back there, baby. I can handle all of that for you.”

“I’m sure you can. Make sure you brush your teeth before you kiss your grandmother. She doesn’t need to know what my pussy smells or taste like.”

She went to walk off and I slapped her ass, watching it jiggle under her skirt. Yeah, when she was ready, I was tearing that shit the fuck up.



WE GOT TO MY GRANDMOTHER’S HOUSE AROUND NINE, AND she was wide awake waiting for us. I excused myself to take a shower while Zenni climbed her ass in that king-size bed to get comfortable. When I came back, she was lying with her head in my grandmother’s lap while she stroked her hair. Both of them were so engrossed in the television that they didn’t even see me standing in the doorway.

For the longest time, I stood there watching them with a smile on my face. The woman who meant the most to me loved the woman I wanted most. It did my heart good knowing that she cared for her. The shit had me thinking that it was fate that I came back here after all this time.

The summers that I spent here were filled with so much love. Back when my grandfather was alive, I lived for summer vacation. We would come down the week after school let out and stayed until the week before it started back up. My

grandparents were fun. They would be right out there running around in the yard with my siblings and me.

Every weekend they planned something special to do with us. To say we were spoiled was to say the least. I guess you could say spoiled but disciplined. We had good sense and knew not to play with them.

After my grandfather passed away from a heart attack, my parents didn't want to push the burden of caring for four kids off on her by herself. So instead of us coming here, they flew her out to spend the summers with us. My grandmother was still youthful. But when she fell and broke her hip a few years ago, it just never healed correctly.

Over time, it got worse, and now she couldn't walk for too long without being in pain. I knew she was a strong, proud woman and would never ask for help. So when my father said she needed it, I jumped at the chance to take care of her. Who knew that moving here would bring Zenni back into my life in this capacity?

"Y'all got room for me?" I asked, finally making my presence known. They looked at me with smiles as my grandma patted the space beside her. I climbed into bed, and she rested her head on my shoulder.

"My babies..." she said, patting my thigh and Zenni's arm. "I'm so happy to see you two together. I always knew you would find your way to each other."

"Oh, really?" I chuckled.

"Grandma knows everything, baby. I've seen it."

"You helped raise quite a man, Mother Bailey," Zenni said, reaching for my hand. I gladly took hers and kissed it.

"I guess he's alright." Grandma chuckled. "You let me know if he steps out of line so I can put foot to his big ass."

"Grandma, really?" I laughed, looking down at her.

"Really." She said that like she meant it.

"I told you she threatens me over you, Zen."

She giggled. “Well, I know who to call when you start acting up.”

We must have sat with my grandmother for two or three hours before she started nodding off. Zenni had already fallen asleep in her lap. I got her up and into my bed then went back to get my grandma settled.

“You need anything?” I asked as I pulled the covers up over her.

“No, baby.”

I bent down to hug her and kissed her forehead.

“I love you, Idris.”

“I love you too, Grandma. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight.”

I turned off the lamp and headed to my room. The moment I climbed in bed with Zenni, she found her way into my arms and snuggled up next to me. I pulled her leg around me and rubbed on her ass as she drifted off to sleep.

“I’m grateful for you, Idris,” she mumbled lightly.

“I’m grateful for you too, Zenni,” I said, kissing her temple.

I *was* grateful for her. I’d wanted this woman for so long, and she was finally letting me give her the parts of me I had longed for. By the looks of it, you wouldn’t think that I was a passionate man. It seemed the women I was used to dealing with were used to ain’t shit niggas. Like I said, I loved plus size women. It was sad to say that most of the ones I dealt with did too much to try to keep me. It was almost like they were trying to prove their worthiness. I didn’t like or need that shit.

I appreciated a strong woman.

My mother was a strong woman.

My grandmother was a strong woman. Zenni was a strong woman. Even though she had some issues with her self-confidence in private, you would never know it by her outer presentation. She dressed with the confidence of ten women.

She carried herself with grace and humility, and that shit was sexy as fuck. Now if I could just get the voice of her mother and bitches like Alecia out of her head, she would be the complete package. She didn't know it, but I was going to break down every single barrier she had by continuing to build her where she was. When I was done with her, the world would know who the fuck Zenni Calloway was.

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ZENNI

It was Sunday again, which meant I was in for another episode of my mother and her mouth. Arriving at church this morning, I didn't even bother sticking around for her or my father after I spoke to my siblings. Instead, I went in search of Idris. I spotted his Jeep pulling into the parking lot, making its way to the handicap space up front. As I waited for him and Mother Bailey to get out, Alecia and her flunkies strolled past me, with her giving me the evil eye. She had avoided me since Idris dragged her ass during our lunch date, but make no mistake, she was always watching us when we were together. What a miserable bitch.

Idris loaded Mother Bailey into her electric wheelchair, and as usual, she was gone before he could close the passenger door completely. I laughed as he called her name, but she just kept rolling toward the inclined ramp. As she made her way to the front doors of the church, she stopped to greet me with a hug and a kiss.

“Good morning, baby,” she said.

“Good morning, Speed Racer.” I giggled. “I see you left Idris.”

“I sure did. He was talking that noise, and I didn't want to hear it.”

“What are we going to do with you?”

“Not a thing.” She laughed. “You look beautiful as always. I see my grandson keeps you with a smile on your face these days.”

“He does.” I blushed. “He makes me very happy.”

“Well I’m glad to hear that. You deserve all your heart desires.”

“Thank you, Mother Bailey,” I said, swallowing hard. I spotted Idris coming up the front steps.

“Let me go before he starts his mess,” Mother Bailey said, turning in her chair. “See you later, baby.”

“See you!” I called after her.

“You can’t run from me. I live with you!” Idris said, as he approached me. He shook his head. “Remind me why I agreed to move here.”

“Because you love her.” I giggled, wiping the sweat from his brow.

“That has to be it,” he said, rolling his eyes. He looked down at me and smiled. “Good morning, baby,” he said, lightly pecking my lips, before pulling me into a hug.

“Good morning, Idris.”

I could feel eyes on us as we shared an embrace. When he pulled away, he laced his fingers through mine.

“I missed you,” he said.

“I missed you too.”

I really had missed him. Over time, I had gotten accustomed to seeing him so much. The last week, however, he had been working a lot of nights, and being that I worked during the day, our schedules didn’t sync up until today.

“I want to spend some time with you later,” he said.

“That can be arranged.”

“Good. Deacon Jones is taking her out for dinner with his kids and grandkids after church. He invited me along, but I really am not trying to play meet the family.”

“When are you going to get over the fact that she has a boyfriend, Idris?”

“It’s not just the fact that she has a boyfriend.” He sighed. “I’m just used to seeing her with my grandfather, you know. It’s weird.”

“I know, but Deacon Jones is a good man. He’s sweet, caring, and he really loves her. His wife passed away about a year after your grandfather. They found each other through the grief ministry here at church. Heartbreak brought them together and allowed them to find happiness again. That’s a blessing at their age, Idris. He won’t ever replace your grandfather, but I promise you, he’s a genuine man.”

He looked at me with a slight frown, then his face began to soften. He sighed heavily and pulled me into his arms.

“You know, I hate when you are the voice of reason with these two.” He chuckled.

“Somebody has to keep you in line,” I said, cupping his chin. He kissed me softly. The sound of someone clearing their throat reminded me that we were on holy ground. I looked up to see my mother standing in front of us.

“Good morning, Mrs. Calloway,” Idris said, his arm still wrapped around my waist.

“Idris,” she spoke with a light smile. “Zenni, let’s not forget ourselves.”

“Good morning to you too, Mother,” I said. “I’m doing well. Thanks for asking.”

She sighed. “Good morning, Zenni,” she said through gritted teeth.

“That’s an improvement,” I said. “We will see you inside.”

I started to walk off with Idris, but she grabbed my hand. “Let me speak with you for a moment,” she said.

Offering Idris an apologetic smile, I sent him on inside. Turning back to my mother, I crossed my arms. “Yes?”

“What are you doing?” she questioned. “You think so little of yourself that you would tongue down the elder mother’s grandson right on the church steps?”

“How is me kissing Idris me thinking little of myself? It wasn’t even a full kiss; it was a peck on the lips.”

“You like embarrassing yourself, Zenni. I heard about your PDA fest in a restaurant a few weeks ago.”

“And just who would have told you that?” I asked, placing my hands on my hips.

“It doesn’t matter who told me. The fact is I know.”

“Ma, you do realize that I am vastly approaching thirty, right? I’m not afraid of you finding out that I kissed a man.” I scoffed. “Idris and I like each other. I’m sure you will hear a million things about he and I before it is all said and done.”

“You can’t be out here acting like one of those loose women, Zenni. It’s not a good additional look for you.”

“What do you mean additional look?”

“God, not this again.” She groaned.

“You brought it up. Let’s talk about it, Mother.”

“I’m not doing this with you here. I’ll talk to you at the house.”

“Just so you know, he’s coming with me. You know, just in case you want to act like a mother today.”

She tossed a glare over her shoulder. I waited for her comeback, but she never said anything. I followed behind her into the church and took a seat next to Idris who was ironically seated next to my father. When my mother finished making her rounds and finally came to sit down, she looked at me. Then she looked at Idris, who wasn’t paying any attention to her ass, with his hand rested comfortably on my thigh.

She took a seat next to my father and leaned in to whisper to him. I guessed that it was about me because I could see him look over at me in my peripheral. They heatedly whispered back and forth for a moment before I saw my father make a

motion for my mother to cut her shit out. She crossed her arms and legs and sat there pouting like a child. I smirked and giggled to myself.

“What’s funny?” Idris asked, looking over at me.

“Just thinking,” I said. “You know what would be fun?”

“What?”

“If you came over to Sunday dinner at my parents’ house.”

“You trying to get me killed?” He chuckled. “I feel the heat from that glare on the end.”

“You let me worry about that,” I said, resting my hand in the same position as his was on my thigh on his own.

My mother cleared her throat. Reaching into my purse, I handed her a bottle of water.

“That might help,” I said.

She glared at me and snatched the bottle from my hand, forcing herself to look ahead. Zaria sat behind, stifling her laughter. I reached behind me and pinched her, causing her to yelp slightly. This time both our father and mother looked over at us.

“Need I remind you we are in the house of the Lord?” my mother asked. “Keep your hands at bay and stop drawing attention to yourselves.”

While she was speaking to both of us, I knew that it was directed at me. Rolling my eyes, I removed my hand from Idris’ thigh and laced my fingers through his. Bringing my hand to his lips, he kissed the back of it and smiled at me as the praise team took center stage.

Throughout the service, I kept an eye on Idris. It wasn’t hard to miss the lustful eyes and looks of disdain from women in the congregation who previously plotted on this man when he knew that none of them existed. Idris had told me repeatedly that he had tunnel vision when it came to me. He never fell victim to the watchful eyes of the masses when we were together.

No matter where we were or who was around, when I gave him my attention, that was it.

After service, we went to bid Mother Bailey goodbye until later, and Idris followed behind me to my parents' house. Once inside, we headed up the stairs to my old bedroom to change into comfortable clothes. Zaria stopped me at the top step. I pointed out which room to go to and sent Idris ahead.

"I see you brought your man candy for dinner." She smirked. "I hope *you* are going to be dessert."

"You know, Z, not everybody is thinking about fucking," I said.

"Bullshit. You better hop on that dick, Zenni. That man is waiting to ravish you, girl."

She growled at me then giggled as she headed downstairs. I shook my head and continued to my old bedroom. When I opened the door, Idris was standing in his boxers and a tank top. For a moment, all I could do was stand there, nibbling my bottom lip. Then I remembered that I had the door wide open. I stepped inside, closing it behind me. Idris beckoned me over to him, and my feet glided in his direction. He turned me so that my back was to him, and pulled the zipper down on my dress, dropping kisses along my collarbone as he did.

He peeled the fabric away from my skin and allowed it to pool at my feet. As I stood before him in nothing but my bra and panties, my breath hitched in my throat. His arms came around me, and his hands cupped my titties through the lacy fabric of my bra. I shuddered as his thumbs grazed my nipples.

"Idris." I moaned softly.

He came to stand in front of me, dick planted against his inner thigh. He gripped my ass and gave it a hard smack, causing me to hiss in both pain and pleasure.

"You know temptation is a muthafucka, Zenni," he said, tracing my bottom lip with thumb. "Like right now, seeing you in next to nothing, I'm tempted to let your people know what a nasty nigga I can be." he lightly gripped my throat and pressed his body against mine.

“I’m patient, Zenni,” he whispered against my lips. “But I want you so muthafucking bad I can already feel you.”

He dropped his lips on mine, and I swear I came right there. As bad as I was aching to feel him inside of me, I once again denied my flesh, still not sure if I was able to handle all of him. Idris was a lot of man, and I wasn’t referring to the size of his clothes or the size of his dick. I meant just what I said; he was a lot of man...the passion, the confidence that could be mistaken for arrogance if one didn’t know him, the sexual prowess the seeped from his pores and engulfed me like hot lava any time he was near me.

I knew once I allowed him to have me, that was one soul tie I didn’t want to be broken, a soul tie that I didn’t want shared with anybody else after me or experienced by anyone but me. Idris Bailey awakened something within the depths of my soul, and if there was ever a time where I got to claim him as mine, experience him as mine, I needed to know that I could handle everything he was bringing to the table.

“Soon...” I managed to whisper between his kisses.

Even as I said the words, I wasn’t sure of them. I couldn’t hold out on him for much longer. Every touch of his hands, every feel of his lips on me left my body reeling. I wasn’t above my family finding out how much of a nasty bitch I could be too.

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IDRIS

Zenni and I ended up fooling around a little in her childhood bedroom. She had yet to allow me to grace her walls, but I had finally gotten to taste her beyond the remnants on my fingers. Keeping her quiet proved to be a challenge yet oh so rewarding. Her essence coating my tongue instantly created an insatiable appetite for her. The taste and feel of her on my pallet was something I could never get enough of. I ate her pussy until her voice gave out from muffled screams and tears were streaming down her face. When we finally emerged from her room, we were in a good ass mood.

“Nice of you two to finally join us,” her mother said as we walked into the kitchen. “What took you so long?”

“We took a nap,” I answered.

“You look mighty refreshed,” Zaria said with a smirk on her face. She looked at Zenni who was sporting an almost euphoric smile. “And extremely happy.”

“Extremely satisfied,” Zenni mumbled, winking at her as we fixed our plates.

“Mmm hmmm,” her mother said. “The entire congregation saw how satisfied you were trying to get earlier.”

“Tracy, don’t start,” Mr. Calloway said.

“Start what? I’m just stating that my daughter was trying to fornicate on holy ground.”

I scoffed. “Because Idris had his hand on my thigh and mine on his, we were trying to fornicate?”

“The hand on the thigh, being all hugged up and kissing on the front steps... all of it was just shameful. I’m beginning to think you like negative attention.” She took a sip of her wine.

The look that Zenni gave her mother was one so lethal that it could have struck her dead. Ralph and Penny stood and gathered the kids from the table, retreating outside.

“Negative attention?” Zenni said, sliding her chair back. “Allowing myself to finally be freely affectionate with a man who shows genuine interest in me is me seeking negative attention? Idris is the only man that has always gone out of his way to make me smile, and that’s dating back to when we were kids. The attention that I get from him is long overdue and a welcomed relief from the attention that I get from you.”

“What do you want, Zenni?” Mrs. Calloway said, throwing up her hands. She sat back in her chair and crossed her legs. “Every turn I make at having a conversation with you turns into this.”

“It turns into this because you don’t give a fuck what you say to me!” Zenni yelled, shooting up from her seat, causing her mother and Zaria to stand as well.

“Who the fuck are you talking to?” her mother yelled back. Her prim and proper demeanor disappeared right before our eyes. “I don’t give a damn how grown you think you are. Don’t you ever call yourself disrespecting me! I am *your* mother, and this is *my* house. You will show some damn respect.”

“Respect? Disrespect and you go hand in hand! You’ve disrespected me my entire life!”

“When have I disrespected you!”

“Are you serious?” Were the first words out of my mouth. Maybe it wasn’t my place to say anything, but this woman had

to know that she was foul as fuck. “Everybody at this table can attest to that.”

Mrs. Calloway looked at me with a disdain I had never seen before.

“You should have dismissed yourself along with Penny and Ralph,” she said, leaning forward.

“Mrs. Calloway... let’s be honest,” I said, grabbing Zenni’s hand. “You pick this woman apart every chance you get. Since I’ve been back around you, I’ve heard you say some pretty disrespectful things to her regarding her weight and her appearance. It never stops.”

“If educating my child on her unhealthy lifestyle is being disrespectful—”

“What about me is unhealthy, Mother?” Zenni asked. “I have no health problems. I don’t have shortness of breath. Fat doesn’t mean unhealthy. It doesn’t mean I’m desperate. It doesn’t mean that I’m gonna settle for less than I deserve. And it damn sure doesn’t mean I’m ugly. It means just what it says, *fat*. Just admit that you are embarrassed that I look like this while you look like that. I am so sick and tired of you belittling and diminishing me as a person, as a woman, and as your child. You are toxic, and I refuse to allow you drag me down to your level again. Until you can love me and accept me just as I am, I have nothing else to say to you.”

Without another word, she stormed out of the kitchen and headed upstairs.

Mrs. Calloway sat there with a frown on her face. She grabbed her wine glass and downed the remaining contents before pouring another glass.

“So I guess the consensus is I’m just a horrible mother,” she mumbled.

“Nobody said that,” I said. “But the way you treat Zenni is no way for a mother to treat her child. She may be grown, but at the end of the day, she is still the little girl that just wants to be loved by the woman that birthed her.”

“I do love her...” she cried.

“Zenni doesn’t feel that way. She cries a lot about the way that you see her. It’s enough that she struggles with the way the world views her. She doesn’t need that from you too. She’s doing an amazing job with her boutique, building the confidence of woman who also struggle with their self-image because of society and people who rip them apart just for being built different. Maybe you should visit. Take a look at the difference she makes in other people’s lives, and think about how your words make a difference in hers.”

I heard her come downstairs. A few seconds later, the front door slammed. “Thank y’all for dinner.”

I excused myself from the kitchen and went to grab my shit from upstairs. When I came back down, I could hear Zaria going off. I grabbed my keys and headed out the front door. Zenni was sitting in her car crying. After putting my bags in my Jeep, I went over and opened her front door.

“Come here, baby,” I said, pulling her out of the car and into my arms. She fell against my chest, holding on to me as if her life depended on it.

“I’ve got you, Zenni,” I said, kissing the top of her head.

“Why does she hate me so much, Idris?” she cried. “I’ve never been good enough for her. All she will ever see me as is her fat ass daughter.”

“We aren’t going to do that,” I said, cupping her face and forcing her eyes to meet mine. “Your mother has some deep-rooted issues, and she’s projecting that on you. That is not on you to fix, and you damn sure do not have to accept it, blood or not. Protect your peace. You are a beautiful woman, Zenni, all of you. When I look at you, do you know what I see? I see a strong, independent, fierce black queen. I see your beautiful heart. I see love and light inside of you. I see *you*, baby.”

I kissed her lips and wiped her tears away.

“Thank you, Idris,” she whispered.

“You don’t have to thank me, Zenni.”

“Yes, I do,” she said, taking a deep breath. “You always make me feel like a woman. Not because of my size, just a

woman.”

“You’re a hell of a woman, baby.” I kissed her once more. “How about we head back to your house. I’ll order us some food and run you a nice bath, give you a massage, and we can cuddle for a bit.”

“I could really use that.”

“Let daddy take care of you,” I joked.

“Okay, daddy.” She giggled.

“There’s that smile I love,” I said, caressing her cheek. “Never allow another person to tilt your crown or steal that smile. You are worth more than diamonds, baby.”

She smiled softly. “You trying to finesse me out of some pussy?” she joked.

“I’m being sentimental, and you think I want some pussy?” I laughed. “Oh how little faith do you have in me. Get your ass in this car, woman.”

She giggled as she kissed me once more before climbing in the car. “I’ll see you at the house,” she said.

“Bet.”

We left in our respective vehicles and headed to Zenni’s house which was only about six minutes away. On the way, I ordered us some food that should arrive by the time we would be ready to eat. Once we got to her home, I ran Zenni a hot bath, just as promised. As she settled into the tub, I lit a few candles, turned on some music for her and brought her a glass of wine. It was a small gesture, but I just wanted to create a calm ambiance for her to relax in. While she soaked, I cleaned up a bit, tossing her dirty clothes in the laundry and straightening up her living room. The food arrived just as she was getting out of the tub.

Since she wasn’t hungry right away, I took that opportunity to give her a massage. Migrating the candles and music from the bathroom to her bedroom, I continued the ambiance from earlier. She laid face down on her towel and allowed me to pour the heating massage oil onto her back. I took special care

in massaging her body, ensuring to work out the tension and stress, leaving behind tender kisses in every spot. The moans falling from her lips were doing their job of making my dick hard.

By the time I was done with her, my shit was painfully erect. I hopped in the shower to calm my nerves down. It was getting harder and harder to touch this woman and not slide up in her, especially in the position I had her in. I could see the wetness coating her thighs as I lifted her leg to massage it. I was tempted to bury my face between them, but this moment wasn't about me and my pleasure. I just wanted to make sure my baby was okay. When I came out of the shower, she had warmed up our food and was waiting on the couch for me with a movie ready to play.

“Thank you for cleaning,” she said, handing me my food.

“It was nothing.” I shrugged.

“Why do you do that?” she asked.

“Do what?”

“Brush off what you do for people. The way you take care of your grandmother, the way you are with me... you're a good man, Idris. I'm glad I get to spend time with you. I don't want you to think that I take that for granted. You are very special to me.”

“Thank you, baby,” I said with a light smile.

I didn't do the shit I did for thrills or recognition. My intentions with Zenni were noble. I wanted the chance I was too afraid to ask for all those years ago, a chance to grow what we already shared into something beautiful. I wanted to love her past her fears, past her hurt and insecurities. I wanted her to experience the love of a good man because she deserved that times ten. Maybe things weren't official just yet. But I had faith that Zenni Calloway would be my wife.

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ZENNI

Outside of Zalen and Zaria, I hadn't spoken to my parents. I was over my mother, and my father was on my shit list for allowing this bullshit to carry on for as long as it did. He had heard the shit my mother said to me over the years. The fact that he chose to remain silent instead of defending me like he used to, made me feel like he agreed with the shit she said.

Both of them had blown up my phone for a week after the whole fiasco. I finally had to tell Zaria to tell them to give me space. If they couldn't give me respect, they could give me that. I wasn't ready to have yet another dead-end, pointless conversation for shit to stay the same. I meant exactly what I said. Until my mother could love and accept me just as I was, I was done with her. She was my mother, and I loved her for giving me life, but what I didn't need was her bullshit.

Idris had been great with helping me cope with things. Even with work and taking care of his grandmother, he still found time for me and my shit. The man made a way to date me, not an excuse as to why he couldn't. It was weird calling what we were doing dating. I mean, we spent our free time together.

We went out and enjoyed each other's company. The way his mouth had been on me, I definitely couldn't call him my

friend. We hadn't put a title on what we had, so I couldn't really call him my man either. Whatever this entanglement was, I was enjoying the thrill of him and I together. I could feel myself falling for him increasingly as time passed between us. He was so much more than I could have asked for.

Today was Monday, and it was dragging by super slow. The boutique had a steady flow of customers, but it wasn't enough to make the time go by fast enough. By the time lunch was approaching, I had completed inventory and placed orders for new shipments. The only other thing I could do besides helping customers was fold and refold clothes.

"Why don't you take an early lunch?" my assistant Mya said. "It's tiring watching you find something to keep yourself busy."

"I'm not. I just—"

"You don't know how to sit still, Ms. Zenni. Go take a break. The store looks great, and if anybody needs assistance, you know I've got you, girl."

"Idris is picking me up for lunch in a few. I guess I can chill in my office until he gets here."

I went to shut out my register. As I was almost done, I heard the bell chime on the door.

"Welcome to *Beautifully Zen!*" I said, not looking up from my register.

"Do you have a moment?"

I was more than a little surprised to look up and see my mother. It was very rare that she actually came in here, so for her to show up today put me on edge. I was having a decent day, and the last thing that I needed was her to come in here and put a damper on that.

"Hey, baby," she said as I rounded the counter to greet her.

She looked beautiful as usual, dressed in a pair of white skinny jeans and orange tank top with a leopard print blazer and orange pumps. Her salt and pepper tresses were styled into

a sleek bun and silver jewels adorned her ears, neck, wrist, and fingers.

“Mother.”

She pulled me in for a hug and kissed my cheek. That surprised me because she was never very affectionate with me.

“What are you doing here?” I asked, leading her over to the sitting area.

“I can’t come see my baby girl?”

“I thought we were giving me space.”

“Well, I was in the city and wanted to see you. You’ve refused to come to dinner for the last couple of weeks... I missed your face.”

She touched my face and smiled. I had been spending the last couple of Sundays with Idris and Mother Bailey after church, and it was a refreshing change. To hear her say she missed me caused me to look at her skeptically.

“Don’t look at me like that, Zenni.” She tucked an invisible piece of hair behind her ear.

“I’m sorry. I’m just a little taken back.”

“I know we don’t have the perfect mother-daughter relationship...”

“That’s largely in part to the things you say to me, Ma. You really have to chill with the insults. I’m twenty-eight years old. There is only so much I’m gonna take from you before I clap back, mother or not.”

“I know. I’m sorry, Zen. You know that I love you, baby —”

“Do I know that?”

She took a deep breath. “I do love you, Zenni. I just want you to be happy...”

“What makes you think that I’m unhappy? Because I’ve been single for a few years? Is it because I don’t have any children? Because I don’t have a plethora of men falling at my

feet or fawning all over me? What is it? What about me makes you think that I'm unhappy with the life I live?"

She was quiet for a moment. "You don't really live, Zenni. You just kind of exist in the world sometimes. Baby, you've always been my quiet, reserved child. You acted like you were afraid of people, and I always felt like it was due to how the other kids treated you because of your size."

"So your solution was to make me feel exactly like they did? You bullied me, Ma. You *still* bully me about being overweight. That hurts me more than what anyone else had to say about me because you are my mother. It was your job to love me."

"I do love you..." Tears were building in her voice.

"You say that, but we both know that you love the parts of me you find acceptable." I stood as tears pooled in my eyes. "You made me almost hate myself," I said, my lips trembling. "Do you know what it feels like to have your mother tell you that you would look better if you lost weight? You pick apart my clothes. You don't support my vision in this boutique. You are the reason I never want another fat girl to feel like she can't be beautiful just as she is... that she has to conform to society's standards of beauty. Look at me... all of me. This is who I am. I'm never going to be a size two. I'm never going to look the way that you want me to look. This is the Zenni you will always get. And if you can't accept that, then maybe I should continue to distance myself from you."

She looked hurt when I said that, but the truth of the matter was I had been hurting long before that. I couldn't remember a time when she complimented me without insulting me at the same time. I couldn't remember her telling me that I looked pretty or beautiful and it be left at just that. Fuck the rest of the world. She had been the most damaging to my self-esteem.

"I think you should leave," I said, wiping my face.

"Zenni, please."

"Ma, just go."

She looked at me and slowly stood with tears in her eyes. She stepped close to me and cupped my face. I refused to look at her.

“I love you, Zenni...” she whispered.

She kissed my cheek and then walked away from me. I finally looked up as she was walking out the door, and Idris was walking in. They spoke briefly before he made his way over to me. We were supposed to go to lunch, but right now I didn't have an appetite. I made my way back around the counter and busied myself with my head down.

“Your mom came to see you, huh?” he said.

“She did.” I sniffed.

“What's wrong?”

“Nothing.” I was fighting back tears at this point, and I didn't want to break down in front of customers. I excused myself to my office, and he followed me.

“Talk to me, Zenni.” He closed my door and wrapped his arms around my waist from behind. I shook my head no. “Did she say something to you?”

Again, I shook my head no. I could feel my shoulders begin to heave. Tears were streaming down my face. I couldn't hold it in any longer. I allowed him to be my strength as I crumbled in his arms. He didn't ask any questions. He just lifted me into his strong arms and held me as my tears wet the front of his shirt. I didn't even think about the fact that he had just dead lifted me like I weighed nothing. I just let him comfort me because I needed it the most right now.



SINCE MY MOTHER'S VISIT, I'D BEEN FEELING SUPER emotional. I just wanted to be alone. I went to work and came home. I didn't even talk to Idris or Zaria as much as I normally did. They had given me space but still checked up on me, but it was going on two weeks now. Patience had worn thin, and I

knew it when they both showed up to my house at the same damn time. I had taken the day off work to clear my mind.

All I wanted to do was relax a little but that was cut short by a knock on my door. I tried to ignore it, but after a few minutes of knocking, I heard the locks turning. Zaria had a key to my house, but she never just barged in. I guess that ended today. They found me in my living room curled up under a blanket watching reruns of *Maury*. She walked in, grabbed the remote, and turned it off.

“Z, not today,” I whined, covering my head with the blanket.

I heard her footsteps, and the next thing I knew, she snatched the cover off me. I was glad I decided to put on clothes today.

“Enough of you moping around, Zenni.” She frowned.

“I’m not moping.”

“What the hell do you call it!” She raised her voice at me, something she never did, and it caused tears to pool in my eyes. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have yelled at you. I’m just worried about you, sissy. We both are.”

“I’m fine. I just needed to clear my head.”

“You and Mommy need to have a conversation. Not what you had in your shop, a real conversation. This has been going on long enough, Zenni. I’m calling her and Daddy over here right now.”

“Zaria.”

“What did I say?”

I just let her do what she wanted because that’s what was going to happen anyway. I sighed heavily and rested my head on the back of the couch. I could feel Idris’ eyes on me. When I looked at him, he came and sat beside me, pulling me into his lap. For the longest time, I couldn’t look at him. I missed him, and I was embarrassed that I shielded myself from him for this long.

“Look at me, Zenni,” he gently commanded. My eyes slowly met his. “Don’t pull away from me like that again, do you understand?”

I nodded.

“I need to hear you say it.”

“I understand. I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry. Just let me be here for you when you need me, baby. I know you have your reservations, but I’m right here, Zenni. I’m trying to be everything you need and then some.”

“You are more than enough, Idris.” I pulled his head to mine and kissed him sweetly. “I missed you,” I said, resting my forehead against his.

“I missed you too, mama. I brought a bag. I’m staying with you tonight.”

“What about Mother Bailey?”

“She’s fine. Deacon Jones is with her, so she’s well cared for.”

I smiled a bit. “You have nothing to say about that?”

“You know I do. But ol’ boy seems like a good man. Besides, you need me.”

Things seemed to always work out with him when I needed him the most. For that I was grateful. He spent a great deal of time taking care of his grandmother. Between work, being a caregiver and spending time with me, he hardly ever had time for himself. But he never complained. That just made me love his heart even more.

“They are on their way,” Zaria said, walking back into my living room. She smiled softly at Idris and me. “And you say this ain’t your man.” She scoffed, shaking her head.

It wasn’t long before my parents were ringing the doorbell. I was still sitting comfortably in Idris’ lap when they walked in. He spoke to them and then tapped my thigh so that he could stand.

“I’ll leave you to your business,” he said, squeezing my hand. “I’m just gonna step outside.”

He kissed my forehead and excused himself. My mother and father sat in the love seat across from the couch and Zaria took a seat beside me. My mother looked like she had been crying and had a lot on her mind. I hadn’t spoken to her since I told her to leave my shop two weeks ago. She had called me several times, but I just didn’t have the energy to talk to her. She sat rubbing her hands together nervously. My father gently covered them with his.

“I’m just gonna jump right into what I have to say,” Zaria said. “Mommy, you owe Zenni an apology. For as long as I can remember, you have said some pretty hurtful, underhanded things to my sister about her weight. You know Zenni doesn’t like confrontation. You know she will never just openly disrespect you no matter how many times you disrespect her unless you force her to it. That is no reason to blatantly be mean to her.”

“I wasn’t mean to her,” my mother protested.

“Yes, you were,” Zaria said. “Maybe that wasn’t your intent, but you were. And Daddy, I’m really upset that you allowed it to continue for this long. You used to say something. Now you are just as quiet as a church mouse about it.”

My father looked at me. “I’m sorry, Zenni,” he said. “I was just trying to let you two work out your issues.”

“No, Daddy,” Zaria said. “You couldn’t tell your wife that she was wrong and had been wrong for a long time. Zenni had to suffer because of that.”

My mother dropped her head in her hands and sighed.

“I love Zenni,” she said quietly. “She’s my baby girl. Of course I love her.” She got up and came to sit on the coffee table directly in front of me. She cupped my face and looked at me with tears in her eyes.

“You know that I love you, don’t you, Zenni?” she asked.

“Sometimes I just feel like you don’t like me very much.”

“Of course I like you!”

“You just don’t like the way I look.”

She dropped her hands and took mine into them. “I’ve been afraid for you, Zenni.”

“Why?”

“Because you are my most fragile child. I see a lot of me in you.” She took a deep breath. “I wasn’t always this size. Growing up, I was overweight, and I was teased horribly for it. I saw how you handled being bullied about your weight. I’ve always been terrified that one day it would become too much, and you would do something to hurt yourself. The two weeks that you haven’t spoken to me, I did some soul searching. I realized that that fear manifested in the worst way. Instead of comforting you, I became the one person you shouldn’t have ever heard all those negative things from. I thought that if you lost the weight, the bullying would stop, and you would be happier. I’ve said some things to you that no mother should ever say to their daughter. I should have told you how beautiful I think you are. How wonderful you are. How proud I am of you for everything that you have accomplished...”

She got on her knees in front of me. “I love you, Zenni. I love you with everything in me. You are absolutely beautiful. Your heart and your spirit are beautiful. I am super proud of the beautiful job you are doing in your shop. Your clothes are beautiful. The joy you are bringing to these women is beautiful. I’m sorry it took me so long to see that. Please forgive me, baby. I can’t take you hating me.”

“I don’t hate you, Ma,” I said. “I accept your apology, but I meant what I said. Until you can learn to respect me, I’m keeping my distance.”

“Baby—” she started.

“No. You have to be held accountable. Saying sorry doesn’t fix it. Just like band aids don’t fix bullet holes, sorry won’t fix years of self-hatred I felt because of you. If you want a relationship with me from here on out, you have to work for it. That goes for both of you,” I said, looking at my father. “I

love you, but it's time that I put myself first for once. My feelings are valid and they matter."

"That's my sister," Zaria said, snapping her fingers.

"Thank you for always having my back, Z. You're the best sister anyone could ask for."

"Don't make me cry now." She sniffed.

My mother stood and motioned for my father to follow suit.

"I'm really sorry about all of this, Zenni," she whispered. "I hope we can get past it."

"If you are serious about changing how you treat me, we can."

She nodded. "Can I at least have a hug?" she asked.

I reluctantly stood and hugged both her and my father before they made their way to the door.

"Zenni?" she said, turning back. "I'm glad you have Idris. I can see that he really cares for you, and you deserve that."

Offering a faint smile, she and my father departed my house.

"You can give your man proper thanks when I leave," Zaria said, resting her head on my shoulder.

"I don't know who wants me to get some dick more, you or me."

"Oh, it's me. I need to be able to gossip with you about this shit, sis."

"Z, I don't wanna hear about Ralph's penis."

"With a name like Ralph, he has to make up for it with good dick, Zenni."

"And I bet he has you screaming 'Ralph' to the high heavens."

"You muthafucking right!" She sat up and twerked a little. "I'm gonna get going, give you and Mr. Bailey some privacy. I

love him for you, Zenni. He's everything you deserve and more."

"Yeah, if my shit doesn't run him off first."

"That man ain't going anywhere," Zaria said. "I see it in his eyes. He didn't just come back for Mother Bailey. He came for you too. Maybe not at first, but he's been putting in work to make you his woman, Zenni. You just have to allow yourself to fall for him. He'll catch you."

I plucked at the imaginary dirt under my fingernails. She was right. Idris has been amazing. He deserved every part of me because he had been giving me all of him. I had to stop running from him. Lord knows I wanted that man. I wanted every single thing about him. And I knew he wanted me too. I just had to suck it the fuck up and give it to him.



AFTER ZARIA AND OUR PARENTS LEFT, IDRIS AND I CUDDLED up on the couch to catch up. He ordered us food, and we must have talked for hours before we fell asleep. It was around nine when I woke up to take a shower. He was about to go into my guest bathroom when I stopped him.

"Idris?" I said.

"Yeah, baby?"

I looked at him. I had been building up my courage all day long for this very moment.

"There's no reason why you have to shower in there... mine is plenty big enough."

His eyes widened. "Are you sure about that?" he asked. "I know you aren't ready."

"No, I am. I'm ready."

"Okay then."

"You go ahead. I'll meet you in there."

He nodded and headed into the bathroom. I took a deep breath and began undressing myself. It took me a good ten minutes to gather myself. The whole time I was giving myself a pep talk. Idris had been patient with me. I don't know any man that could have shown as much restraint as he had shown me.

There were times when we got hot and heavy, and he literally had to force himself away from me. He never got upset. He never gave me an ultimatum. He simply respected my wishes. Tonight was going to be the night I finally allowed him to indulge in me as much as I wanted to indulge in him.

Fully undressed, I headed into the bathroom. He already had it hot and steamy. I watched his silhouette as he lathered his body. I just knew he was beautiful all over. Pulling open the shower door, I stepped inside as he was rinsing off. When he was done, he turned and looked at me. The way his eyes slowly trailed over every inch of my body turned me on in a manner that I had never experienced. It was like he was making love to me in his mind. He bit his lip and beckoned me to him.

"You are fucking perfect..." he said, enclosing me in his strong arms. His hands gently caressed my skin. His very touch sent the most pleasurable sensations coursing through me. Those same hands came around my neck as he dropped the nastiest kiss on my lips. I could feel his dick against my stomach, and I desperately wanted him inside of me.

"I'm gonna take real good care of you tonight, Zen," he moaned against my lips.

Grabbing my bodywash and my loofah, he lathered it up and cleansed my entire body in a slow sensual manner. Every spot he touched, he left a kiss behind. By the time he was done, my pussy was throbbing, and I could feel the slickness between my thighs. I wanted this man in the worst way. He dried our bodies off and then lifted me into his arms as though I was as light as air and carried me into my bedroom. He placed me in the middle of the bed and kissed me until I was about ready to explode from desire.

“Idris,” I moaned.

“Tell me what you want, baby.”

“I want... I want to feel you.”

“How bad?”

“I need it... I need to feel you inside of me.”

He pulled away and stood in front of me, dick all in my damn face. My mouth watered looking at that muthafucka. It was long and thick, and I knew right then, he was gonna fuck the shit out of my no dick having for over eight months ass.

“Get on your knees,” he commanded.

My heart began to racing as I moved into position.

“Go on and arch all that ass for me, baby,” he said, slapping my ass so hard that I hissed. I arched my back, and I heard him moan.

“Damn, Zenni,” he said, massaging my ass. “Mmm, mmm, mmm... all this shit is gonna be mine. Do you hear me? You are gonna be my woman. All of you. And this pretty shit here ...” He ran his finger through my freshly waxed pussy, and I damn near came. “I’m about to brand my name all over this muthafucka. Any time you even think about me, she’s gonna act the fuck up until you let me satisfy her craving for this dick. And when that happens, you better call me. You understand me?”

“Yes.”

“I mean it, Zenni. You better not touch one of those dildos either. Nothing is gonna satisfy this pussy better than me. You got that, mama?”

The aggressive nature of his tone turned me on even more. This man had claimed ownership of my pussy, and he hadn’t even graced my walls yet.

“I got it,” I moaned.

“Relax,” he said, dropping to his knees. “Daddy is gonna take real good care of your beautiful ass.”

The first swipe of his tongue almost took me out. Before Idris, I hadn't had my pussy eaten in so damn long I almost forgot what it felt like. But with him, it felt like my skin was burning from the inside out. He lit tiny fires every time his lips were on me.

Idris moved in a slow, sensual fashion that threatened to push me to the brink. He swirled his skilled tongue around my clit as his fingers plunged in and out of me.

"Shit," I moaned, dropping my arch lower.

"You trying to give me all this good pussy, Zenni?" he asked, pulling his mouth away.

"Yes, it's yours."

"You damn right this shit is mine. Give me your hands."

Here is where I fucked up. I reached behind me and offered him my hands. He grabbed my wrists and locked in his grip as he shoved his face in my pussy. I couldn't move. All I would do was lay there screaming to the fucking heavens as he ate my pussy for all it was worth. He went from slow sensual strokes of his tongue to damn near fucking me with that shit.

"Oh my God, Idris!" I cried in pleasure. "Don't stop! Fuck! Don't stop that shit!"

As if he would have. He used his mouth to fuck me into submission. I was cumming and creaming all over his face. When he finally let up on me, all I could do was lay there panting, face down, ass up.

"You been eating fruit, baby? 'Cause that pussy is sweet as hell."

I couldn't answer him. I was too focused on trying not to black the fuck out. I rolled over onto my back as he slipped a condom on. I felt the bed dip as he climbed in and positioned himself between my thighs.

"Open your eyes, Zenni," he said, lowering his perfectly sculpted body on top of me. "I want you to look at me while I snatch your soul."

If words alone could have made me nut, I would have bust one right then. I slowly opened my eyes and looked into his. He really wanted me, every single pound. Memories flooded my mind of all the men who had fetishized me over the years, the men who made me feel like I was too much for anything other than private pleasures, the ones who only looked at me with lust. They wanted me for their secret indulgence and then it was to hell with me. But not Idris. He looked at me with so much passion and desire that it made me self-conscious. I looked away.

“Wipe that look right off of your beautiful face, baby girl,” Idris said, turning me to face him once more. “Get it out of your head that you are too much to handle. You will never be too much for a real man, and you damn sure ain’t too much for me, you understand me, baby?”

“Yes...” I said, a tear trickling down my face.

He lowered his lips to mine and gave me the most arousing kiss as he filled my pussy with all nine inches of his beautiful dick. I gasped for air as our kiss broke. I expected him to fuck the shit out of me. But he was slow and intentional. His hands caressed my body as his eyes commanded my attention. He stared at me, and it was the kind of moment that made you want to fall in love with a nigga. I couldn’t speak. I couldn’t force my eyes to look away from him. All I could do was lay there, just as he said, and watch him snatch my soul. When he fully lowered his body onto mine, I clung to him as he buried his face in my neck, stroking my pussy like he wanted to touch my very core.

“You are so fucking beautiful, Zenni.” He moaned in my ear. His eyes found mine once again. “I need you to give yourself to me, baby. Let me replace all the pain and hurt in your heart. You are worth more than gold. Ain’t a muthafucka on the earth that can fuck with you when you are mine, Zen. No bitch or nigga for that matter will ever have the opportunity to disrespect you about your size again. I want all this shit, Zenni. I’m going to devour every fucking drop of you. Everything that you are, belongs to me. You never have to worry about your heart being broken again, because I hold

your heart right next to mine. You are a part of me and to take care of you is to take care of myself. Stop fighting me and let me love you, Zenni.”

I didn't know if I wanted to cum, cry, or do both. His dick was touching my stomach, and his words were touching my heart. I couldn't muster the right words to respond so all I could do was nod my head yes. He kissed me once again, and my body erupted as I clung to him as though my life depended on it.

“Idris!” I screamed as my body quaked beneath him. He stroked me through two more full blown orgasms before he climbed off me and flipped me onto my stomach. I gathered myself and moved into position for him to enter me from behind. He rubbed his dick against my clit and slid it through my wetness.

“Mmm, you juiced up just right, baby.” He moaned, teasing my entrance. I felt him slide into me once more and we both moaned in satisfaction. “Throw that ass back,” he said.

I did just as he asked and threw all this ass at him. My pussy engulfed his entire length. I could hear her singing his praises every time I slid up and down his shaft.

“Just like that, baby.” He moaned, slapping my ass. “Take that dick.”

“You feel so good, Idris.” I moaned, picking up my pace. “Shit!”

“This pussy is mine.”

“All yours, daddy...” I surprised my damn self with that one.

“Daddy, huh?” He chuckled. “You better say that shit, Zenni.”

He gripped my hips and started hitting me with deep, powerful strokes. His fingers wrapped around my locs as he filled me completely. He pulled me upright with one hand wrapped around my neck and the other cupping my breasts. I felt his lips on my neck as his strokes deepened. He was whispering all kinds of nasty shit in my ear, turning me on

even more. I was at the brink of my orgasm when he started talking shit.

“You are gonna think about this dick every time you think of me after tonight,” he whispered, licking my neck. “Whenever I need this shit, you better give it to me, you hear me?”

“Yes.”

“You ready to cum for me, Zenni?”

“God, yes!”

“Wet this dick up.”

As if on command, my pussy erupted like a fucking waterfall. It was like all she needed was his permission to show the fuck out. He released me and pounded my shit until his own nut took over.

“Fuck!” he growled.

I collapsed on the bed, panting, both my legs and my pussy trembling. I could still feel him inside of me even though he had pulled out. The sensation alone caused me to cum for the fifth and final time. A bitch was literally seeing stars at this moment. I just needed to close my eyes for a second. I could hear Idris’ footsteps on my hardwood floors as he approached the side of the bed. I looked up at him handing me a bottle of water with a smirk. I couldn’t believe his dick was still hard.

“Drink up,” he said. “I’m nowhere near through with you.”

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IDRIS

Pussy is a powerful thing, especially when it comes from the right woman. If I wasn't in love with Zenni before, I definitely was after finally tasting the gold mind between her legs. Since that night, I had been in the best fucking mood, and everybody around me could see that shit. We had finally made things official. Just as I had told her she would be months ago, Zenni Calloway was my woman. There was no feeling that could top this shit unless she told me she loved me too. I had yet to voice my feelings to her, however. I was waiting on the right moment. I had almost slipped up and said that shit the other day.

I was watching her get ready for work, admiring the care she took in presenting herself. She was in the bathroom putting on make-up while I was putting on my work clothes to head in myself. Our eyes connected through the mirror, and she smiled at me. Once I finished lacing up my shoes, I made my way into the bathroom, wrapping my arms around her waist and kissing her neck.

"Is it bad that I want to call out and lay up under you today?" I asked.

"No." She giggled. "But we've been up under each other for days now."

“Up under... on top of... inside of.” I cupped her breasts, and her nipples instantly began to bud. “All that good shit.”

“You are so nasty.”

“But you like it.”

“That I do,” she said, turning around in my arms. She wrapped her arms around my neck and kissed me softly. “Have I told you lately that I am thankful to you for all you’ve been to me, Idris?”

“You don’t have to thank me, baby. I fuck with you, Zenni. I’m always gonna make sure that you are straight.”

I wanted to tell her I loved her right then, but I held back. It didn’t seem like the right moment. When it was time to reveal my love for her, I would know. There would be no hesitation, not a second thought. It would just happen. Until then, I would continue to be the man that I had been since we reconnected. The very man that she needed.



ZENNI TOLD ME THAT SHE HAD A SURPRISE FOR ME AND ASKED me to take off from work this Friday. Now I wasn’t sure what she had up her sleeve, but I couldn’t lie and say that I wasn’t excited. She had sent me a text early this morning telling me to pack a bag with enough clothes for a couple of days. I obliged her, thinking that she wanted me to stay with her for the weekend. Deacon Jones had been spending more and more time with my grandma and was supposed to be staying over this weekend anyway.

I packed my bag with an assortment of clothes, not knowing exactly what we were doing. Once the deacon arrived, I bid goodbye to my grandmother and headed to Zenni’s house. When I got there, imagine my surprise to find her rolling a suitcase into the living room dressed in this crop top and high waisted shorts that showed off her thighs.

Since the conversation with her mother a few weeks ago, she had become more comfortable in her skin. And when I say

that, I mean she was showing more of it. Her confidence level had soared. She was speaking up for herself more, and I was loving that shit.

“What’s this, baby?” I asked as she made her way over to me. Wrapping her arms around my waist and pulling me into her, she stood on her toes and kissed me sweetly.

“We are going away for the weekend.”

“Say what now?”

“We are going out of town.” She giggled. “I already booked our flight and hotel.”

“You? You booked a flight? The woman who is afraid of heights?” I grinned at the thought. Zenni had told me on numerous occasions that she was never getting her ass on a plane.

“Yes, I did,” she said, playfully slapping my chest. “You’ll be there with me, and I know I’m safe with you.”

“I don’t know how much help I’ll be if that plane goes down.”

“Idris!” She shoved me off her and rested her hands on her hips.

“I’m playing, baby,” I said, pulling her back. “Everything will be fine. I can’t believe you did this.”

“Well, you’ve been working hard and taking care of your grandmother. And you deal with me, so I wanted to treat you.”

“I appreciate that, baby,” I said cupping her face. “You know you aren’t touching your wallet once we get down there though, right? You paid for the flight and the hotel, but I got everything else.”

“I wanted to treat you.”

“You can treat me in other ways,” I said, wrapping my arms around her and gripping her ass. I pressed my forehead against hers. “You got something sexy in that suitcase?”

“I might just have this sexy pink lingerie set that just came in at my shop,” she said, running her thumb across my bottom

lip.”

“Oooo, is it lace?”

“Of course it is.”

Something about lace against her skin just sent me over the edge every time I saw her in it. I owed her at least ten pairs of panties from the last couple of weeks because I’d been ripping those muthafuckas off with a vengeance.

“We have to get going,” she said pulling away from me. “Our flight leaves in an hour.”

“That’s enough time.”

“Enough time for—”

Before she could get the question out, I had hoisted her in the air and was headed toward her bedroom.

“Idris!” she squealed, holding on tight to me. “Don’t you drop me!”

“The only thing I’m dropping is this dick in your guts,” I said, slapping her ass. “Get your ass in here.”



FUCKING AROUND WITH ZENNI, WE DAMN NEAR MISSED OUR flight. We got to our gate with minutes to spare. Once we got our shit loaded and settled into our seats, I think panic started to settle in. She was gripping my hand so damn tight, and the plane hadn’t even taken off yet. She sat there with her eyes closed tightly, deep breathing.

I couldn’t help but chuckle to myself. She was going to have to work through this because the way my passport was screaming for a trip out of the country. I needed her to get it together. I hadn’t really traveled much in the last couple of years. Once I settled into my career, I threw myself into work to make my way up the ladder.

Before moving here, I lived an extremely comfortable lifestyle. I mean, I still lived that now. My company paid me

handsomely for my skills, something I negotiated before I even took the job. My grandfather always told me to know my worth and make them pay me for it. That was something I took to heart all my life.

“You okay, baby?” I asked.

“I’m fine.” She breathed heavily. “You assure me the plane isn’t going to go down?”

“You are gonna be fine, Zenni.” I chuckled. “I’m right here with you, baby.”

Just then the captain came over the loudspeaker and alerted us that we were preparing for takeoff. Zenni must have checked to make sure she was secure in her seat at least ten times. As the plane slowly began moving, she firmly planted her feet to the floor, closed her eyes again, and grabbed my hand. When we lifted from the ground, she let out a small whimper.

“The worst part is almost over, baby,” I said, gently caressing her hand with the pad of my thumb. Once we were high in the sky, I was able to coax her into opening her eyes. She slowly looked around and peaked out of the window.

“I need a drink,” she mumbled.

Shaking my head with a chuckle, I motioned for the flight attendant and ordered us two beers. When she returned with them a few minutes later, Zenni practically inhaled hers and then drank half of mine. After a good twenty minutes or so, she had to pee and was terrified of getting up and walking around.

I ended up escorting her to the bathroom. In fact, she had to pee at least five times and made me go with her every single time. I was sure somebody thought we were trying to fuck. Although I wouldn’t be opposed to inducting her into the mile high club, with the way her nerves were set up right now, she would fuck around and have a panic attack and force the plane to land. I was lowkey relieved when she fell asleep.

We made it to Miami around four that afternoon. To my surprise, there was a driver waiting to pick us up. Zenni

informed me that he would be with us for the duration of the trip. He loaded our bags into the blacked-out Escalade as I helped Zenni inside. As many places as I had been out of the country, I had never been to Miami, and it was right here in the states. The area we were staying in was beautiful. I couldn't wait to get my ass to this beach. After stopping to grab swimwear for myself, we headed to check in at our hotel.

Zenni had booked us the Four Seasons which was right on the beach. When we walked into the lobby, the shit looked like something right out of a magazine. I knew it had to be expensive. She was definitely getting some good dick tonight for making this happen. We headed up to our room, which had this gorgeous ocean view. I dropped our suitcases as Zenni headed out onto the balcony. After kicking off my shoes, I joined her, wrapping my arms around her waist.

"I could live like this every single day," she said, resting her head against my chest as she stared out at the ocean.

"This is definitely dope," I said, kissing her temple. "Thank you for this trip, baby. We are gonna get into some trouble while we are here."

"I can think of some big trouble I want to get into right now," she uttered, pressing her ass against my crotch. She slid my hands up to her titties, forcing me to cup them as a light moan escaped her throat.

"You must be trying to get fucked for everybody to see on this balcony," I whispered, nibbling on her earlobe.

"I'm trying to get fucked period," she responded, turning around in my arms. Her hand slipped inside of my joggers and beyond the elastic band of my boxers where she grabbed my dick. "Oooo, I see he's ready for me." She smirked, biting her bottom lip.

"Go on and bring him out then," I said.

She pushed me down onto the lounge chair and wasted no time pulling my mans out. He was already standing at attention waiting to see just what she would do. When she dropped to her knees in front of me, my eyes widened. Now, I

had been eating the hell out of her pussy and fucking her senseless for weeks. I never worried about getting head in return because honestly, pleasing her was more than enough for me and that was a first. But if she wanted to suck on this muthafucka, who was I to stop her?

I watched as a thick layer of spit trickled from her mouth and onto the head of my dick. Using her tongue she swirled it from the head all the way to the base and back up before her wet ass mouth engulfed me. She sucked me slow, gently massaging my balls and jacking my shit as she did.

“Damn, baby...” I moaned, gripping a handful of her locs as I thrust my hips into her mouth. “You just gon’ take me away and suck my dick like that?”

She started humming and the vibrations that moved through me almost made my toes curl. Her pretty brown eyes locked on mine as she watched me watching her. Eye contact always did something to me. I loved watching Zenni’s facial expression change. I knew when shit was getting good to her. I knew when she was about to bust a nut. I knew when she felt some unexpected shit that threatened to push her over the edge all by the look on her face. She couldn’t fake an orgasm with me even if she wanted to. Like everything else, her face told it all.

“Fuck, Zenni!”

She was sucking me faster and adding more suction. For a moment, she paused to suck my balls, all the while stroking me with her skilled fingers. She then ran her tongue up the length of my shaft, slapping it against it, before swallowing me again. Before long, my nut was rising. I tapped the side of her head, thinking she would move but to my surprise she stayed in place. She gripped my thighs and dropped her mouth down on me until I could feel the head of my dick touching her uvula.

The next thing either of us knew, I was shooting off down her throat. Once she swallowed every single drop, she pulled my dick out of her mouth with a loud smacking sound and a

smile on her face. Without a word, she stood and headed into our suite, shedding her clothes along the way.

By the time I was able to gather myself and follow her, she was fully naked and waiting for me in the middle of this king size bed. I stripped down to nothing as I approached her. She licked her lips as my naked body took form. I loved the way that this woman looked at me. It was like she held this twinkle in her eyes anytime they landed on mine. She beckoned me to her and motioned for me to lay down.

“That’s what we are on this trip?” I asked, grinning as I climbed into bed beside her.

“I can show you better than I can tell you,” she answered.

She straddled my thighs, and I could feel the heat radiating from her pussy. She was already wet and leaking on my shit. Leaning forward she kissed my lips and fed me her tongue as she slowly grinded on my dick. I gripped her ass and eased inside of her where we both moaned in satisfaction. She was so damn wet that it was sounding off in the room. You couldn’t tell me that somebody wasn’t stirring a bowl of macaroni in a corner somewhere.

“Damn, baby.” I moaned as she rode me at a slow, even pace. Her titties bounced in my face, her nipples taunting me until I latched on to them. I was feeling letting her have control and it seemed like she was a whole new woman. The way she was bouncing on my dick and displaying a slightly aggressive nature was a huge turn on. At this very moment, she had one hand rested on my stomach and the other gently wrapped around my neck fucking the hell out of me.

“Oooo, shit!” She moaned, tossing her head back. “Fuck! This shit is all mine.”

“Damn right it’s yours, baby,” I said, slapping her ass.

“You feel so fucking good, Idris. I need every drop of you, daddy.”

She knew I loved that shit and what it did to me when she called me that. It was like awakening a dormant beast. I rolled

her over onto her back, hooking my arms in the bends of her knees and hit her with those deep, death-defying strokes.

“You sure you want every drop, baby?” I asked.

“Yes... fuck yes.” She moaned, cupping her breast. “Give me all of that shit.”

I pounded her pussy to the point where she was screaming and squirting all over my stomach. If somebody came knocking on our door, it wouldn't surprise me in the least.

“Idris!” She cried, blissful pleasure written all over her face.

“You ready for me, Zenni?” I asked, feeling my nut about to surface.

“Yes!”

I hit her with about five more strokes before erupting deep inside of her. If we came back from this trip pregnant, oh fucking well. That would serve as even more of a confirmation that this woman was mine, was always supposed to be mine, and always would be mine. I looked down at her, panting and trembling as her orgasm began to subside.

She was breathtakingly beautiful, and her spirit had always captivated me. Since we were kids, Zenni was always been my soft spot. She was shy and timid then, but we always seemed to just click. Being with her now, being able to claim her as my woman was a feeling like no other. By the end of this trip, she was going to know the true extent of my feelings for her.

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ZENNI

Idris had fucked my ass right to sleep.

A few hours later, he woke me up with the best mind-blowing head. After a mini session in the shower, we finally got dressed and headed out to see what the streets of Miami had to offer us that night. True to his word, he made me leave everything but my phone and ID in the hotel, ensuring that I didn't pay for anything else on this trip. I simply rolled my eyes with a smirk on my face. I didn't mind paying for the trip. It was my idea to come, and I wanted to show him my appreciation for the addition that he had been in my life the last couple of months.

We were seated at this rooftop bar called *No. 3 Social*. The space was beautiful and gave the vibe that you were sitting on your own patio at home. We ordered food and drinks and just sat enjoying each other's company and conversation. Idris had been staring at me for a minute and I was wondering if I had something on my face.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" I asked with a grin as I sipped my martini.

"You just look so damn sexy tonight, baby," he said, licking his lips.

I was dressed in a simple but cute outfit of a white tank top that I had tucked into a pair of high waisted skinny jeans. The

jeans themselves were ripped in the back all the way up to the pockets and were held together by these colorful bandage strings. I paired the outfit with a cute pair of nude block heels. My locs hung freely, and I wasn't wearing any makeup, as he loved my bare face look.

“Thank you,” I said with a smile.

“I really appreciate you doing this for me, Zen.”

“It's no problem, baby. You deserve it.”

He leaned across the table and kissed me sweetly. “You are a blessing, you know that?”

“Don't make me blush.”

“I'm serious. You've always captured my attention, Zenni. And now you've allowed me to capture your heart. You make a nigga happy as hell.”

“Are you trying to make me cry?” I sniffed, feeling tears pooling into my eyes.

“I'm just being honest. I see my future when I look at you, woman. There is no part of life that I don't want to experience with you from here on out.” He looked at me with hesitation for a moment, and I could tell his brain was ticking. He slid his chair next to me, took my hand, and looked deep into my eyes. “I need you to know that I don't just love you. I'm in love with you.”

My hand flew to my chest. He loved me? I knew he cared for me immensely. I knew he cared about my well-being and my mental health. But he loved me? I thought about all the time we had been spending together getting to know each other.

Our dates, the intimate conversations...we spent time learning each other again. I hadn't seen this man since I was fifteen, yet when I was with him, it was like no time had passed. We easily fell into a routine that I not only looked forward to but that I cherished above all else. Idris was everything that a man should be. He was patient, kind, and affirming. He was a protector and a provider. He had honestly

become my best friend. I couldn't see life without him anymore.

"I'm in love with you too, Idris," I whispered.

I couldn't stop the tears from falling down my cheeks as he kissed me. If you had told me a few months ago that I would be sitting here professing my love for any man, let alone this man, I would have laughed in your face. He came back into my life and completely swept me off my feet. If I spent the rest of my life being as happy as he made me, I would never complain about another thing.



OUR TIME IN MIAMI WAS SPLIT BETWEEN TRYING NEW PLACES to eat, shopping, the beach, and getting drunk as hell and fucking all night. I needed this vacation, and I was thoroughly enjoying my time with my man. It felt weird calling Idris my man, but that's exactly what he was. I felt shit with him that I never felt with anybody else.

He was mine, and I was free to show him off to the world. Our Instagram accounts were flooded with the hundreds of pictures we took this weekend. My favorite was one he had me pose for in my bikini, with the caption "Mine". He managed to catch me at the very moment that the sun was setting behind me on the balcony of our suite. The picture was beautiful.

As our time here came to a close, we decided to go out with a bang. We ended up on the strip near the beach. After hours of dancing, bar hopping, and getting high out of our minds, we ended the night back in our hotel. Idris and I showered, and I sent him to get ice while I quickly switched into the pink lingerie set that I brought with me.

I wanted to treat him to a little show before we went to bed. I had been planning this trip for about two weeks, and with the help of Zaria, I had worked out a little striptease just for him. I was so fucking nervous because I had no clue how this was going to go. I wasn't a dancer, but with all this liquor

in my system, a bitch was feeling very Sasha Fierce-ish. I surprised myself by how quickly I got dressed.

When he returned to the room, I was sitting in a chair in the middle of the floor. I offered him my best seductive pose—stilettoes on, thigh out, legs crossed with a pair of handcuffs swinging around my finger. The playlist I had compiled was playing softly in the background. As he walked in, a smile crept across his face. He sat the bucket of ice down on the counter in the kitchen area and made his way to me.

“Zenni, Zenni, Zenni,” he said, circling me.

I loved when he said my name like that. It was always the calm right before he took me to euphoria. Once he was in front of me, he hovered over me, running his hand up my thigh.

I have about ten things I want to do to your fine ass right off the bat,” he said, blessing my lips with a nasty kiss.

“I have something for you,” I whispered, sucking on his bottom lip.

“Does it end with this coming off?” he asked, trailing his fingers along the fabric of the lingerie.

“Absolutely,” I said, standing.

Pushing him down in the chair, I handcuffed his arms behind him. I changed the song to Jhene Aiko and Mila J’s “On the Way” and started my little dance. He watched attentively as my hips dipped and swayed to the music. The look that appeared on his face when I threw my leg over his shoulder and brought him face to face with my pussy let me know that he was going to fuck me up once he was free.

“... *I touch myself just thinking about you and... what that mouth do and...when it comes down oooo, lick it up, suck it up, vacuum...*” I sang along, touching myself in the process.

Dropping my leg, I straddled him and planted my ass in his lap, grinding on him slowly. I could feel his dick fighting to be free of his pajama bottoms. It was obvious that he wasn’t wearing boxers beneath them. The more I grinded on him, the harder he became. I thought I was tripping when I heard the *plink plink* sound of metal hitting the ground until I felt his

hands gripping my hips. This strong ass muthafucka had broken free of my cheap little handcuffs.

“You just had to take the fun out of this.” I giggled.

“Ain’t no fun if I can’t touch you,” he said, gently grabbing my neck and kissing my lips. “You were trying to torture me, Zenni.”

His free hand pulled my bottoms aside and his fingers dipped into my honey pot.

“I love the dance, but I need you to come put this wet muthafucka on my face.”

The next thing I knew, he had stood, dead lifting me into his arms and carried me over to the bed. He placed me on my feet and went to work, taking the lingerie off. When he was done, he laid in the middle of the bed and beckoned me to him.

“Come ride this tongue, Zenni,” he said.

My eyes widened. I was not a stranger to riding dick, but riding his face? That was a new one. I nervously looked around the room.

“What’s the matter?” he asked.

“I’ve never... I’ve never done that. I don’t wanna hurt you.”

“Stop that,” he said sitting up. “I told you, I can handle you in every capacity, baby. Including this one. Now get your sexy ass over here and feed me. And leave the heels on.”

I swallowed hard as I climbed on the bed and stood over him.

He grinned. “Drop it.”

Taking a deep breath, I lowered my pussy onto his mouth where he was waiting with anticipation. The moment his thick tongue made contact with my sweetness, I gasped for air. His hands gripped my thighs as he ate my pussy like it was the life that sustained him.

“Shit, Idris!” I cried, gripping the headboard.

He tortured me, ravishing my honey pot to the point where I wanted to explode and then pulled his mouth away. I had felt myself at the brink at least four times already, and I feared I wouldn't make it to a fifth.

“Please, baby,” I begged.

“Please what?” He smirked.

“I can't take it. I need to cum. Make me—”

The rest of the words didn't make it past my lips before my orgasm threatened to take me under.

“Shit! Fuck!” I screamed, bucking against his mouth.

As I came down from my high, rolled off his face and onto my back. Starting up at the ceiling and panting, I looked over at his heaving chest.

“Are you okay?” I asked.

“I'm good, baby.” He grinned, wiping his mouth. “You have to do that more often.”

“Idris! I thought I hurt you.”

“Girl, please. Your man is all man, okay. There is nothing you do to me sexually that can really hurt me. I'm built for this shit.”

He got out of bed and headed into the bathroom. I heard the water running, and a minute or two later, he came out, brushing his teeth with a wet rag in his hand to clean me up. Of course, Idris being Idris, he couldn't do that without being nasty.

“Alright now,” I said. “You are gonna fuck around and have to brush your teeth again.”

He grinned at me as he pulled his fingers away. After discarding the rag and rinsing his mouth out he joined me in bed, cuddling up next to me.

“I really enjoyed this time with you, Idris,” I said.

“Me too, baby. I haven't been on vacation in a minute, and this was well worth it.” He looked down at me, lightly tracing

my jaw with his finger. “I love you, Zenni.”

“I love you too. I mean that from the bottom of my heart.”

Seven months ago, I was ready to give up on men all together, and then here comes my most unlikely partner. If someone had told me I would have fallen in love with this skinny, big-headed boy that brought me flowers as a kid, I would have thought they were crazy. But lying next to me was that same boy that grew into this sweet, loving, wonderful man that loved me beyond me being able to love myself. He cared for me, supported me, and made me feel like a woman in more ways that I could count.

With Idris, I felt free.

I could be myself with no judgment.

He made me embrace the beauty within myself. And while I didn't need him to feel it, he completed me in a way that complemented me in every way. Where I was weak, he was strong. He poured love and light into me, and in return, I was free to love him all the ways that he deserved. As I looked into his eyes, laying in this bed, I thought to myself, “*This was the best thing I never knew I needed.*”

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EPILOGUE

One Year Later

Zenni

“**Z**aria, I’m so nervous!” I said, pacing back and forth.

“Girl, you are working yourself up for nothing!” she said, waving me off and snapping a picture of herself.

“Bitch, can you put the damn camera down! I’m falling apart here!”

She looked at me and sighed, putting her phone down. Walking over to me, she grabbed my hand and pulled me in front of the full-length mirror in the corner of the room. She wrapped her arms around me and looked at me with a smile.

“What are you so nervous about?” she asked.

“I’m about to be somebody’s wife, Z.”

“Marriage is a beautiful union, Zenni

“I know. I’m just... I’m scared. What if I’m not a good wife? Idris is really my first successful relationship. We haven’t really been together that long. What if I’m not everything he dreamed I would be?”

“Zenni Calloway,” she said. “Idris loves you. That man worships the rain that waters the ground you walk on. In his eyes, you are perfect in every single way. Yes, you will have problems. If you don’t, that isn’t a real marriage. You will have to compromise and sacrifice. Some days you won’t know how you are going to get through it. But it’s on those days you need to love each other the most. I see you with him, baby. You are happy. You’re healthy and you are glowing. You’ve always been deserving of that, Zenni. This is your wedding day, a day you have dreamed up for the last six months. You look like a bad bitch in this dress you designed. Your hair is slayed. The face is beat. You are glistening all up in this muthafucka with this ring. In less than thirty minutes you are gonna walk down that aisle to your husband, and you are going to slay this wife shit bitch.”

Leave it to my sister to be sentimental and extra at the same damn time.

Idris had proposed a few months after we got back from Miami. It was a private moment just between the two of us.

He had tossed and turned half of night, and I barely gotten any sleep because of it. When he finally got up and left the bed, he kissed my forehead before leaving the room. I settled into a peaceful slumber, and I woke up that morning to find him sitting on the side of the bed watching me.

“What’s wrong?” I asked, sitting up.

“Nothing is wrong.” He smiled and leaned over to kiss me. “Good morning, baby.”

“Good morning, my love.”

“How did you sleep?”

“Like a rock after you left.”

“Damn, you just gon’ do me like that?” He chuckled.

“You know I love sleeping next to you.” I giggled, cupping his chin. “But you kept me up half the night, baby. Why couldn’t you sleep?”

“I had something on my mind. Something very important that I wanted to ask you.”

He reached into his pajama pockets and produced a small black box.

“Idris,” I whispered.

“Just hear me out,” he said, holding up a finger. “I love you, Zenni. I’ve loved you since before I fully understood what love really was. My heart has always been with you. Even with all the time that passed between us, the love I carried for you never diminished. You are the most beautiful, amazing woman in my eyes. You carry yourself with grace and humility, and the confidence you’ve gained is the sexiest thing about you. When I moved back here, I knew I wanted you to be a part of my life. And as time went by, I realized that I didn’t just want that for a moment in time.”

Dropping to one knee, he opened the box. Inside lay the most beautiful pear-shaped diamond ring.

“I want you forever, Zenni. Will you do me the honor of becoming my wife?”

For a moment, I was stunned. I couldn’t do shit other than look between him and the ring. This was really happening. He had really asked me to marry him.

“Baby?” he said, waiting for an answer.

“Yes...” I whispered.

“Yes?”

“Yes! Yes, I’ll marry you!”

He slipped the ring on my finger and found his way into my arms with his lips on mine. We made love for the rest of that morning.

“You’re right,” I said, sniffing.

“I know I am,” she said, turning me to face her. She kissed my cheek and hugged me tightly. “I can’t believe my little baby is getting married!” Sometimes I forgot she was the little sister with the way she looked out for me.

“Well, that’s not the only thing we’ll be celebrating,” I said, pulling away.

“Oh, really?” She looked at me skeptically.

Walking over my purse, I reached inside and pulled out a slim box, handing it to her.

“What’s this?”

“Open it.”

She pulled the top off the box and immediately started screaming.

“Oh my God!” she cried, getting teary eyed. “You’re pregnant?”

“Six weeks.”

“Oh, Zenni, I’m so happy for you, sissy!”

She embraced me once more. Rapid knocking at the door broke our hug as she went to answer it. It was our mother and Mother Bailey. She had gotten a hip replacement, and you couldn’t tell her she wasn’t a brand-new woman. She was getting around better than ever these days.

“What’s all the screaming about?” my mother asked, running in.

My relationship with my parents had improved tremendously, especially with my mom. She apologized to me several times over the months following the sit down at my house. Since then, we had been spending quality time together. Since she didn’t work, she’d been coming to my shop to help out. It was actually fun working with her. She was fashion forward and was really good with my customers. For the first time, I could say she was actively trying to see my vision for the shop. So much so that when I told her I wanted to design my wedding dress, she put me in contact with a designer friend of hers from her modeling days to bring my vision to life.

From there birthed a new vision. *Beautifully Zen* was set to carry a line of plus size clothes designed by me in the fall. It

was a small step, but I had faith that within a few years, my little shop would gain worldwide exposure.

“Just overly excited for our girl!” Zaria said, not disclosing my news just yet. She discreetly closed the box and put it back in my purse.

“You look beautiful, baby!” my mother said with her hand over her heart.

“Thank you, Mommy.”

“I told you I saw this,” Mother Bailey said, taking my hands. “You and Idris were destined for each other.”

“You really brought us back together Mother Bailey,” I said, kissing her cheek.

“Who would have thought a busted hip would conspire a great love story?”

“Well you are working that new hip,” Zaria said, snapping her fingers. “I know Deacon Jones is enjoying it too.”

“Zaria!” I said, slapping her arm.

“What!” she asked, frowning. “Mother Bailey already knows my mouth. She ain’t new to this.”

“I surely am not.” Mother Bailey giggled. “And yes, he is enjoying this hip.”

“That’s what I’m talking about!” Zaria said, giving her a high five. “Don’t hurt him!”

“What am I going to do with you?” my mother said, palming her face.

We sat around laughing and talking until it was time for everyone to take their places. With everyone gone, I waited at my door, saying a silent prayer. I prayed for the blessing of this union. The strength and courage to fight for this marriage, even when it felt as though the odds were against us. I prayed for the prospering of our now growing family. I prayed for Idris.

The sound of a soft knock on the door forced my eyes open.

“It’s me, baby,” my father said from the other side.

“Come in.”

He opened the door, and tears instantly grew in his eyes when he looked at me.

“My baby girl,” he said, fist to his mouth. “You look so beautiful, baby.”

“Thank you, Daddy.”

“Idris is a lucky man.”

“I’m the lucky one, Daddy. He’s everything I could have dreamed up in my head and then some.”

“And you deserve that.” He offered me his arm. “It’s time, sweetheart.”

Slipping my arm through his, we left the suite and headed to the front door of the venue. The last of my bridesmaids were just walking through. Taking a deep breath, my father and I got into position. When the DJ started playing, “You for Me,” by Johnny Gill, I knew this was the moment. The doors of the venue opened, and I was greeted by a crowd of people, but my eyes only focused on the man who would soon be my husband.

My father and I started down the aisle. The closer that I got to Idris, the more I could see him losing it. His brother handed him a tissue to wipe his eyes. Women all over the congregation sent up a resounding “*Aww!*”. I had jokes with him that if he didn’t cry, I was going to turn around and we were going to try it again. He delivered real, genuine, heartfelt tears. As I stood face to face with him, smiling brightly, I wiped the tears from his eyes and pulled his head to my lips to kiss the top of it as a sign of great honor and respect.

“I love you, King,” I whispered to him.

“I love you too, Queen. Let’s get married.”

I smiled and took his hands as we turned to the minister and entered the first chapter of our new lives.

The End

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AFTERWORD

Thank you for reading *It's Gotta Be You*. I hope that you enjoyed Zenni and Idris' story as much as I enjoyed writing it! Feel free to connect with me on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram! Don't forget to sign up for my mailing list for sneak peeks, giveaways, and more!

Much love,

Kimberly Brown

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