

A KEYWALT CROSSOVER
WITH DIVINE LOVE

all I need
is you

MONICA WALTERS & T. KEY

All I Need Is You

By

Monica Walters & T. Key

All I Need Is You

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Graphics and Book Cover by T. Key

#teamkeywalt

COLLAB effort number 6! Our writing chemistry continues to grow, and it definitely shows in these latest crossover books, *All I Need Is You* and *Divine Love*. Solomon and Divine's characters are EVERYTHING! T and I both enjoy writing from the male point of view, so that's why we always switch up for every collab, unless there ends up being a spin-off. Have you read any of our previous collabs? Let me list them for you!

The Book of Noah and The Flow of Jah's Heart

The Revelations of Ryan, Jr. and All That Jazz

Savage Heart and Shawty You for Me

I'm In Love with a Savage and Trade It All

Deep As It Goes and Perfect Timing

We didn't come to play. We came to give you our unique crossover stories that you all could rock with as readers. And we truly hope y'all rocking with us because we aren't slowing down no time soon!

Thanks, T for the friendship we've developed over the past three years! God has taken us to some great places thus far, and I know the sky is the limit to where we will go from here. Love you, girl!

Hello, Readers!

Thank you for purchasing and/or downloading this book. This book is told from ONE POINT OF VIEW. To get the female character's POV, you will need to read T. Key's book, Divine Love.

This work of art contains EXPLICIT LANGUAGE, quite a few LEWD SEX SCENES, SOME VIOLENCE, and MOMENTS OF DEPRESSION. This is also an INSTA-LOVE type novel. If any of the previously mentioned offend you or serve as triggers for unpleasant times, please do not read.

Also, please remember that your reality isn't everyone's reality. What may seem unrealistic to you could be very real for someone else. But also keep in mind that despite the previously mentioned, this is a fictional story.

If you are okay with the previously mentioned warnings, I hope that you enjoy the story of Solomon and Divine, told from Solomon's POV.

Monica

Chapter 1

“IF I NEEDED A MUTHAFUCKA TO TELL ME HOW TO THINK, I wouldn’t be in this business. All of you are a bunch of greedy, corrupt, selfish sharks. Weak-minded individuals have no business in the entertainment industry.” Rubbing my temples, trying to woosah myself to a state of calmness, I continued, “I don’t care how much money the role is offering. I refuse to play a weak man that lets a white man walk all over him. That’s not gon’ happen. Ever. Find somebody else.”

I ended the call as I got in the car waiting for me. This bullshit had already popped off this morning from a producer I knew and had put me in a fucked-up mood. I had a new assistant starting today and I wasn’t ready to deal with that shit either. I’d just gotten back from a magazine shoot. The session had gone well yesterday, and the interview was even better. Telling the world about my love for portraying strong, meaningful characters on the big screen was fulfilling. My pride and excitement tended to beam through me whenever I spoke about my passion in life.

I’d been an A-list actor for a while now and I’d hustled my ass off in the beginning. I took roles that I wasn’t all that comfortable with just to get my name out there. But now... I could be selective and because of that, people thought I was a jackass. If I voiced my opinion and people still continued to try to persuade me to go another way, it irritated the fuck out of me. The ruder I got with them, the more respect I obtained. Even if that respect was out of fear, I took it. I knew my worth and my place in this business. No one, and I meant no fucking one, was going to be able to say they convinced me of any damn thing that I didn’t already believe in.

I came from the slums in South Central LA, more specifically, Inglewood. Ain't nobody knew what was best for me but me. I was more than determined to make it out of there and I refused to ever go back. Both my parents were deceased, but I had a brother out there living the fucking thug life. I hadn't talked to him since the last time he called to ask for money about six months ago. I refused to let too many people get close enough to me to feel like they could come at me like that. I had a couple of friends that were in my inner circle, but David was the only one alive that would come at me like that. But after this last time, I doubted he ever would again.

When the car pulled up to my Bellaire mansion, Celeste, my agent, was standing at the door. That was what I expected of an assistant. Be waiting for my arrival. I shouldn't have to find out where she was when I got there. My old assistant was a fucking dunce. This new chick had better learn and learn quickly. After the driver sat my bag at my backdoor, he opened the car door. When I exited the car, Celeste opened the door for me. "Good morning, Solomon. Welcome back. How was the shoot?"

"Good morning, Celeste. It was great. I actually had a good time, so it was amazing. Were there any issues while I was gone?"

"No, sir. Everything was perfect, besides the fact that you weren't here. Are you ready to meet your new assistant?"

I gave her a one-sided smile. Flattery could get you a long way in this business and Celeste had the shit down to a tee. She'd been my agent for a long-ass time and while I wouldn't say that we were close like friends, she knew me really well. That was why she was so great at her job. That was also why I was okay with her calling me Solomon. "I suppose so."

I followed her further inside to the kitchen to see this beautiful young woman. That shit caught me off-guard. I expected her to be a little older and was hoping she was unattractive like Celeste. Her smooth, light brown complexion and thick, natural coils caught me by surprise. Her eyes were

bright and hopeful, but I couldn't let her see my surprise. So, I only stared at her as Celeste said, "And here she is. Solomon, this is your new personal assistant, Divine. Divine, meet Solomon."

She immediately showed me she was on her job, but if she called me Solomon it was gonna be a problem. "So nice to meet you, Mr. Frank. Or would you prefer I call you Solomon?"

She extended her hand, but I just continued to stare at her. I didn't hide the fact that I was taking her in, but she didn't know I was secretly admiring everything about her. A strand of her soft looking curls fell to her face and she swiped it away as she cleared her throat and pushed her hand in her pocket. She nervously continued, "Um... I have your tea. And I called your chef... he's on his way in case you're hungry. I also sat your cigar by your favorite chair. I know you like to have Hennessy with your cigars, but I didn't think you would want any... so early in the morning."

Those long curls were calling me to them. I could imagine approaching her from behind, grabbing a handful of them... "I would prefer you call me, Mr. Frank. I don't know you and you don't know me, no matter how much you probably researched. I don't smoke without my drink, so put that shit up until I'm ready for it. Do you have my number? I should have received a text this morning, asking if I wanted breakfast or anything else to eat. My chef should have already been here, preparing my meal. My schedule is incredibly detailed, and it's already planned down to the minute. I suggest you get with Celeste on exactly what it is I expect. I do want brunch, since it's almost ten. He knows what I like. Where's the tea, Divine?"

She slid her hand through all that hair, and I wanted to do the same. She looked bi-racial, but I couldn't quite make out what the other race was. She was obviously Black, though. "My apologies, Mr. Frank. You're right. Next time, I'll text and move according to the way you would prefer. I'll get your

tea and let the chef know when he gets here that you want brunch. Is there anything else you need?"

I stared at her for a moment, memorizing all her features so I could still see her once I walked away, then said, "Not at the moment."

I left her presence and grabbed my luggage, sitting it at the bottom of the stairs for my staff to handle. After I sat in my chair, I noticed my cigar was still sitting there. She had ten minutes to come get this shit. I put my feet up on the ottoman in front of me as I looked over my schedule on my phone. I would be in town all week, so I'd be home every night. That was rare. It caused me to smile slightly because I couldn't think of anything more relaxing than sleeping in my bed every night this week.

As I sat, gazing out at the water, and thinking about the role I would be depicting starting next week, I heard her approaching. I eyed her once again, looking at her beautiful legs, imagining them wrapped around me while I tore that kitty to pieces. She held a tray in her hands, then placed it on the table beside me. I hoped it was the type of tea I wanted. There was honey and lemons on the tray, just how I liked it. She picked up the cigar and said, "I'll make sure to get the cigar right next time."

She seemed to be trying to hurry out of my presence, so I asked, "Is this Chai or chamomile?"

She was so fucking flustered, and I couldn't help but to continue fucking with her. She'd better get used to this shit, because I wouldn't make shit easy for her. "Um... chamomile. That is your tea of choice in the mornings, right?"

"Either is, but I put more honey in one versus the other. So, I needed to know what I was drinking."

She nodded and before she could open her mouth to respond, I said, "I'll take the cigar and a drink after dinner."

"Yes, Mr. Frank."

My phone vibrated on the table as she asked, “Was there anything else you needed?”

You... riding all this dick. “No. You’re dismissed,” I said absentmindedly as I poured honey in my tea.

After squeezing lemon in it, I stirred it as my mind went through my schedule. Would I need Divine to accompany me to these upcoming events? Of course, I would. She was my personal assistant. She should be with me wherever I went. Picking up my phone, I saw the text message that she’d sent, that read, *This is your personal assistant.* Hmm. I was gonna have that woman running ragged. I just needed to see her without her knowing why. Seeing her flustered only turned me on more. I sent her a text just to get a rise out of her. *Has the chef finished? I’m famished. When I’m hungry, I’m really grouchy.*

She answered immediately. *I’ll check right now.*

I chuckled to myself. They were so afraid to upset me. I could imagine her scurrying to the chef, trying to rush him to finish. Within a few short moments she appeared next to me, giving me the perfect view of her beauty. The way the sun shone through the glass, made her skin look like it was glowing. She said, “Brunch will be ready in ten. Would you prefer the dining room or the patio?”

Allowing my eyes to slide up to hers, I said, “The patio is fine. I suggest you come to the table with me and I will run down tomorrow’s activities. No room for error. And no time to correct errors. I’m sure you’re aware that you’re on call this weekend. But I already know I’ll need you, so don’t make plans that you’ll have to break.”

She looked slightly bothered. “Uh... yeah. Sure. Will I be busy the entire day, Saturday? I did have a prior engagement that’s really important to me.”

“More important than your job? If so, you can leave now so you’ll be good and prepared for the weekend.”

I knew I was being a real jackass, but oh well. She was gonna be wherever I needed her to be. Staring at her, awaiting her answer, I noticed her facial expression that she quickly checked. Her eyes were saying, *fuck you and this job*. However, I waited to see how she would respond as I took a sip of my tea. As I looked up at her, her eyes were closed, and she tucked her hair behind her ear. “No, this job is very important to me. I want to be here. I’ll grab my iPad and tell the chef you’d prefer to eat out on the patio.”

“Are you sure? Personal assistants come a dime a dozen. I could get someone else.”

I didn’t want to push her away, but I didn’t like how I couldn’t seem to keep my eyes off her. Whenever I had time to talk to Celeste, I was gonna cuss her ass out. “You could and that would be your right, but I’m good at what I do. With all due respect... Mr. Frank, I’m here to work for you and I’m hoping that you will come to know that one day. If there’s nothing else, I’ll grab what I need and meet you on the patio.”

She had a slight attitude and that shit pissed me off and made me hard all at the same fucking time. I stood from my seat and stared at her. “Whether you’re good or not has yet to be seen. So, the attitude is unwarranted. You haven’t been here long enough to prove a damn thing to me. But since you’re so good, I’ll let you figure this shit out on your own. I was trying to make this a little easier for you by going over my schedule. But fuck it. Celeste has all the information. Let’s see how that shit works out for you.”

I walked away from her to head to the patio. Hopefully, Celeste didn’t forget to tell her anything or she would be unemployed tomorrow. When I got to the patio, I flopped down in the chair as my phone rang. It was one of my friends, Watson, who we’d nick-named Watt. “What’s up?” I answered.

“You still coming to the gym?”

“Yeah. My chef is just finishing my brunch.”

“Aww shit. Who head on the chopping block?”

“I have a new assistant. She got a couple of days to get shit right.”

“She, huh? How old is she?”

“I don’t know. She looks to be in her mid-twenties.”

“Nigga, you almost forty-one. You don’t think that’s a big jump?”

“A big jump for what?”

“You don’t wanna be with her?”

“Naw. I mean, I’d fuck, but that’s it. Listen, I gotta go. My food is finally ready. I’ll hit you up when I’m on my way.”

Chef Riley sat my fried crab cakes in front of me with scrambled eggs and shrimp. I nodded my head at him, then dug right in. And it was so good. As I ate, I noticed Divine walking toward the patio. I pretended not to see her. The shit I dished out was nothing compared to the bullshit I endured trying to break into this business. I literally slept outside sometimes, not knowing where my next meal would come from. I was determined to make it. If she couldn’t take my attitude and personality, then she wasn’t meant for this shit. When she got to me, she stood there for a second as if she were waiting for me to acknowledge her. Wasn’t gon’ happen. She began, “Mr. Frank, clearly we got off on the wrong foot. I apologize for my attitude. It wasn’t professional and that’s not me. I would like for this... boss-employee relationship to be easy for the both of us, because that is why I’m here. To make things easier for you. Again, I apologize.”

I finally looked up at her as I chewed my food. “Just make sure I don’t regret not firing you.”

I continued with my food, refusing to give her any more of my attention while I was eating. In my peripheral I could see her tuck her hair behind her ear again. “Yes, sir, Mr. Frank. Thank you.”

She walked away, not realizing I could see her reflection in the glass when she rolled her eyes. Instead of calling her out on it, I let her make it. I knew that apology was bullshit. She wanted this job to make a name for herself and I was here to make sure she earned that shit.

Chapter 2

YESTERDAY EVENING WAS UNEVENTFUL. AFTER I ATE BRUNCH, I'D gone to the gym with Watt and our other friend, Bryce and stayed there for hours. I had to work off the sexual energy I was feeling. It had been a minute since I'd indulged in what all a woman had to offer. By the time I left, I was tired of being made fun of about my attraction to my assistant and went home to shower, eat dinner, smoke my cigar, and go to bed.

This morning I had to attend a script reading. A movie director I'd worked with before wanted me to read a script for a movie he was pitching. He said he centered the main character around my strengths as an actor, so I should like it. But I didn't trust that. I needed to read the shit for myself. I hopped in the shower and washed up, hoping that breakfast and my tea was being prepared and my clothing selections were ready for me when I got out the shower. That was part of the things Divine needed to make sure were done.

Once I washed myself, I wrapped the towel around my waist and headed to the closet with all my fits to find Divine in there, laying my clothes on the ottoman in the center of the room. When she saw me, her face turned red as hell. She hurriedly whipped around to keep from ogling all this chocolate, I was sure. "Sorry. I was trying to be done before you got out of the shower. I laid out three choices for you to choose an outfit from. I'm gonna go make sure breakfast is almost done and get your tea. Chai or chamomile today?"

It was like she said all that in one breath. She was nervous as hell. Thankfully, she'd turned around because I couldn't hide how hard my dick had gotten in her presence. I didn't expect her to still be in here, either. She'd tucked her hair behind her ears. That was obviously something she did when

she was nervous. I walked closer to her to grab the fit closest to her, just to make her sweat. I was so close to her; I could see that she was slightly trembling. “Either one is fine, Divine.”

I saw her muscles flinch slightly. “Okay, Mr. Frank,” she whispered, then cleared her throat.

I chuckled inside knowing that I had her rattled. If she only knew how turned on she had me, she’d be ready to hop my bones right now, and I’d let her. “I’ll get right on that,” she said louder than before, then her breathing hitched.

Oh, she was rattled for real. I bet her face was as red as a damn fire engine. She *could* get right on this. I’d cancel my whole day for a sample. “I mean... I’ll get the tea kettle going.”

She bolted from the closet like someone had put a taser to her ass. I wanted to grab her and kiss her pretty lips, but that wasn’t what she was here for. She was here to do a job. Once I chose what fit I would wear, I brought it to my bedroom and got dressed. After grooming my beard and applying my moisturizers, I went to the dining area for breakfast. I had to say, I looked fly in my black slacks and long sleeved, flower-patterned shirt. I looked good in whatever I wore, but this was fresh. When I walked in, I was expecting to see Divine, but she wasn’t in the room yet.

I sat at the table and patiently waited for breakfast. My mood was lovely thanks to our contact earlier in the closet. For some reason, teasing her and watching her get flustered had given me joy. Divine walked in with a tray like yesterday and sat it next to me as I stared at her. She refused to look at me. “Your tea. The chef will be bringing your breakfast in a sec. I have a car arriving in an hour to pick you up. Is there anything else you need from me?”

She was so damn nervous. “Yeah. The car is picking *us* up. Not just me. Which tea did you choose?”

“Uh okay, Mr. Frank. And I chose chamomile. I thought you might like to be relaxed when you went in for your

reading today.”

Now that was the shit I wanted from her as a personal assistant. That was thoughtful and I appreciated that more than she knew. As I stared at her, I knew she’d seen something in my eyes that startled her. Maybe it was my admiration of her, but whatever it was, I chose to go back to my tea. “Thank you. Will you be joining me for breakfast?”

As I stirred my tea, I waited for her answer. Because of what she saw in my eyes, I knew she would probably say no. Besides, I didn’t know anything about her personally. She could have a boyfriend or some shit like that. Her plans for the weekend probably included a man. I shook my head slowly, trying to rid my thoughts of sitting her on this table in front of me. “You’re welcome. And no thank you. Since I’m supposed to be going with you, I need to get my shoes, finish my hair and grab my things. If you have everything you need, can I be excused?”

I turned to look at her. She was still nervous and that almost produced a smile out of me. I knew what I was about to say was gonna piss her off and make her even more nervous. I bit my bottom lip for a second as I looked her up and down, checking out the pencil skirt she wore. It didn’t hide the slightest curve. “For the record, whenever I move, you move. You’re my *personal* assistant, so you travel with me. With my upcoming schedule, I’m going to need you a lot more and I’m willing to increase the pay. I would hire somebody else, but I hate getting used to people. I’m still trying to get used to you. There’s no way I could handle trying to get used to two people at once. So, it looks like we gon’ be glued at the hip around here. You’re excused.”

“Understood,” she replied quietly.

She left the room and I could see that her demeanor had turned into sadness and my joy had somehow left with her. *What in the fuck was going on with me today?* The chef sat my breakfast in front of me and I did my best to shake the visions of her shoulders somewhat slumping when she left. I often

watched people when they didn't know it. They thought I was ignoring them, but I saw a lot. Maybe I should back off and be the same asshole I always was. I couldn't allow myself to get soft with her, although I really wanted to. As I sat there finishing off my eggs, I thought about canceling what I'd said. I really didn't need her to come with me everywhere. Then I thought more about it. Why did I care how she felt?

As my mind tried to analyze this situation, she walked into the room. "I'll take this for you." She grabbed my now empty plate and my teacup. "The car should be here soon. Would you like a bottle of water for the road?"

"Yeah."

I stood from my chair and was face to face with her. Well, not exactly face to face. I was much taller than her, but our eyes met for a moment. She did that nervous thing she does with her hair but had forgotten she'd pulled her hair up into a bun, giving me the perfect view of her neck. I wanted to kiss it, sink my teeth into it... *shit*. I frowned as she cleared her throat and quickly walked away. She was feeling me, but she didn't want to be. She definitely had a pathetic excuse for a man. With as rude as I was at times, she was still admiring me. There was nothing I'd be able to do to keep her attention if he was everything she needed. She was obviously lacking something with him.

I walked to the door as my phone chimed. Pulling it from my pocket, I saw a text from David, my brother, whom I haven't talked to in months. *What's up, Solo? Just wanted to see what you were up to.*

Not many people called me Solo. Only people that were extremely close to me. I rolled my eyes, then responded, *What's up, David? I'm heading to a meeting.* Before he could respond, Divine was heading in my direction with a bottle of water and a bagel hanging from her mouth. *Oh, the things I could put between those lips.* The smile was trying to break out on my face, but I couldn't allow that. What was she doing to me? I won the battle, suppressing the smile that tried to

emerge. I knew she saw it, though. She held out the bottle of water and I took it from her. “So, you *are* capable of a genuine smile,” she said after removing the bagel from her mouth. “Car’s here, Mr. Frank. Shall we go?”

I nodded as my phone chimed again. It was David. I already knew that. When we got to the car, the driver got out and opened the door. I stood to the side as I waited for Divine to get in, then I followed suit, while taking my phone from my pocket. *Your birthday is coming up. You have any plans? I wanted us to kick it if possible. I miss you, bruh.*

I rolled my eyes again and exhaled, then responded. *I’m gonna be working. But maybe I can spare a little time. I’ll let you know.*

He knew I never celebrated my birthday. It was in two weeks and I hadn’t even thought about the shit. I frowned just thinking about trying to turn up with David. He called himself the King of Inglewood. He was king of a shithole. He stayed in our parents’ old house and hadn’t done shit to keep it looking nice. At the age of thirty-five, he should be tired of having nothing. Glancing over at Divine as she took a swig of her water, I got the urge to kiss her lips. Just looking at the drop of water that fell from her bottom lip, had my pants slightly uncomfortable. Putting my head back in my phone, I slid my Air Pods in my ears and started some music. It wasn’t loud, so I was sure to hear what I needed to hear.

The ride was quiet for a while until I looked over at Divine and asked, “Is this the job you really want?”

Why in the fuck was I trying to engage in conversation? I lowered my head and sank my gaze into my phone screen again. I could see her turn my direction from my peripheral. “Actually, yes... for now. I like to be close to the action because I love the business. In a year... maybe two, I’d like to be an agent like Celeste.”

I nodded, then continued to play on my phone as my brother texted again. *Aight, bruh. Talk to you soon.* I exhaled again. David was always trouble. If we hung out, he would

definitely have to come to my environment. As we reached our destination and the car had come to a stop, the driver exited and came around to my side to open the door. Once I was out, I held my hand out to help Divine from the car. She hesitantly slid her hand in mine, and I could feel the heat and tremble of it. I licked my lips slowly, but my eyes didn't leave hers. Whatever was going on between us, I was gon' have to put that shit to a stop.

When she stood, I let her hand go and swallowed hard, then turned to walk to the entrance of the building. I could hear her shuffling somewhat behind me, trying to keep up. I purposely walked faster, because I knew she would have a hard time keeping up in that pencil skirt. When I got to the door, I opened it, then turned to wait for her to enter. When she did, I headed to the elevator. I turned to her and asked, "Are you familiar with my work? I mean..." I looked up to the sky for a second. "Are you familiar with the type of roles I depict? I need an outside eye to not be a yes man, but to honestly tell me if the role fits me."

I didn't need her to tell me shit. But I wanted to see how her eye was and if she was really meant for this industry... if she had the level of talent being an agent required. Whenever I did a reading, I was slightly nervous, but I knew what type of role fit me. When we got on the elevator and I'd pressed the button to bring us to the thirtieth floor, she turned to me and answered my question. "I'm familiar with your work. You only play strong impactful roles. You don't let the industry corny you up or turn you into something you're not."

She lowered her head as she blushed. "I may regret saying this, but your roles are kinda a reflection of your personality. A part of that is your... sex appeal."

My eyebrows went up slightly. I didn't expect her to go there, but since she did, I would walk right through the wide-open door. She kept her head lowered and continued, "There are roles that accommodate both. You have plenty of female fans. It would be great to give them a little more... sometimes."

I couldn't stop the smirk that appeared on my face. Stepping close to her, I lifted her chin. "A little more like you got this morning?" My voice lowered as I asked, "You a fan, Divine?"

She seemed to be getting more nervous by the moment. Lowering my head to her ear as I stepped even closer to her, I asked, "You think I'm sexy?"

I could hear her nervousness through her breathing patterns. But when she put her hands to my chest, I couldn't help but imagine she was riding me and pressing her hands into me as women often did to keep their balance. She gently nudged me back. I'd better heed that warning before she slapped my ass with a sexual harassment lawsuit. Although I could tell she wanted me, I couldn't take that risk. She was my employee. I needed to welcome the asshole back to the equation, but his ass was only lingering for moments at a time. "I'm not blind, Mr. Frank."

Shit, at this point she could call me Solomon. "And yes... I am a fan by the way... of your work."

I looked away from her for a moment, then my eyes were back on her. She was a fan of more than that shit. At the rate we were going, if I didn't back off, she'd be calling me Solo. The elevator dinged, alerting us that we'd made our arrival to our floor. She licked her lips and focused her attention on the door. I turned as well and took a deep breath, getting mentally ready for the reading. I didn't bother responding to Divine. As soon as the doors opened, I quickly headed to the suite.

I didn't walk as quickly as I did outside, allowing her to keep up with me. I opened the door to the suite and allowed Divine to walk in first. When I followed her, Charles, was just walking through the office. "Solomon! Come on back, buddy. We're glad to have you here. I'm so hoping you'll like the script."

I nodded, but I hated for people to call me buddy. I glanced back at Divine to see her following and keeping up. I wasn't being rude by not introducing her. Charles didn't deserve the

pleasure. Now, the other director, Miles, was cool with me. When we walked in, he stood from his seat and shook my hand. I then spoke up. “Hello, Miles. This is my personal assistant, Divine.”

She smiled and shook his hand. “Nice to meet you.”

“Likewise, ma’am.”

Before I could walk away, Divine grabbed my arm. “In bocca al lupo,” she said quietly with a smile. “It means break a leg in Italian.”

I wanted to smile, but I couldn’t lose focus. Just her touching me had my mind in other places. She let me go and I turned back towards Miles. We sat and immediately got started. As I stood and read the script, I wasn’t expecting a romance. I thought it would be action or drama. I’d have to portray an executive who falls for his assistant. If that shit wasn’t coincidental. I could see Divine kind of look flustered all over again as I read. Stopping to bite my bottom lip or lick my lips when needed between lines, only heightened the sexuality of it. As I continued to read, it felt like I was making love in the form of words, begging my assistant to let me in and let me take her places she’d never been. My body temperature had heated beyond belief.

Before I read the next passage, I unbuttoned my shirt to the middle of my chest and rolled up my sleeves with a frown on my face as Miles sat with a smug grin on his face. I picked it up again and began reading. “Fuck that fool. You know he doesn’t measure up to me. All the things I do to this body without even touching it is why you’re still here. I turn you on, and you can’t figure out why or how because you supposedly love someone else. But I’m the real deal. If I do all of this to you with minimal contact, imagine how I’ll make that body feel when I’m sliding on top of it, connecting it to mine.”

I took a deep breath and sat the script down. Rubbing my hand over my beard, I wrestled with whether I wanted to play a romantic role. “I thought you said this role was me?” I asked Miles.

“I believe it is. It’s strong, passionate, and somewhat controlling.”

I rolled my eyes, getting a slight glimpse of Divine’s slightly parted lips. The entire time I was reading, I was imagining it was her and me. “I don’t know, man.”

“Did you hear yourself while you were reading? It’s gonna give people a part of you that they aren’t used to.” He took a deep breath and clasped his hands in front of his face. Redirecting his focus to Divine, he asked, “Ms. Divine, will you tell Solomon that this role is meant for him?”

I turned to her and stared in her eyes, thinking about what she said earlier in the elevator. *It would be great to give them a little more... sometimes.* She ran a hand up the back of her head, then cleared her throat and shifted her gaze back to Miles. “I agree with you. The role is perfect for him. It’s power, seduction, and still falls within the parameters of what people would love and expect of him if he did romance.”

She slid her eyes back to mine and I knew that this movie would be a blockbuster hit, because the acting would be raw. Tearing my gaze from hers, I took a deep breath. “A’ight.”

I snatched the script from the table and walked out. Miles knew how to get ahold of me. I needed to walk and really think about this. Letting people see this side of me was scary as hell. While it was only acting, I was too connected to the storyline, so it would be real for me. As I stood waiting for the elevator, Divine caught up with me. “Mr. Frank, you know we’re right about this,” she said quietly.

I didn’t acknowledge her until the elevator doors opened. I allowed her to step on first and when the doors closed, I stepped closer to her as she stepped backwards, pinning her against the wall of the elevator. “You feel that? You want that on the big screen?”

I slid my finger down her cheek, waiting for her to push me away as I stared into her eyes. My dick was making his presence known and at that point, I didn’t care whether she felt

it or not. When she leaned into my touch, I knew we would definitely be crossing the line at some point. As if I hadn't already crossed the line with her already. We continued staring at one another, I believe mainly because neither of us wanted to look away. "If you love your craft, you'll do this. There was so much passion in it. The world deserves to see you take your game up a notch. I felt it. So will they."

I slowly stepped away from her as the elevator doors opened. My mind was racing, and I was tired. I knew this movie would be great, but the emotions I was feeling were overwhelming as hell. I walked off the elevator and went out the entrance, knowing I needed to get home and have a drink. Staying as far away from Divine as possible was the plan. That probably wouldn't work, but I would try hard as hell. As we rode in the car, I could see her glances, but I refused to acknowledge them until we were driving in the driveway. "Could you fix me a drink? I need something a lil stronger than that cigar, so I'm going to my room for a minute."

"Yes. Anything else? Food?"

"Naw."

"Okay, Mr. Frank."

When we got inside the house, we went our separate ways. I hadn't said another word to her. I'd already shown her too much. That shit was bothering me. It was like the moment I knew she was feeling me, my mind wouldn't let me be as rude and condescending towards her. My body wanted to do everything I'd read in that script. I went to my bedroom and rolled a fat one. I needed to get high, especially to deal with Watt and Bryce's asses. They were supposed to be coming by this evening. So, Divine would be happy to know that she could be excused... for the rest of the day actually.

As I walked to my chair, Bryce texted and asked, *Are we still on for this evening? Watt might have to renege. His wife tripping.*

We're still on. And Watt... what else is new? She's always tripping.

As I sat, I noticed the glass of Hennessy sitting there. I had to admit, Divine was on her shit today. I would only be admitting that to myself, though. Passing out compliments didn't happen a lot. It took a lot to impress me, and she'd only been here a day. As I lit up, my phone vibrated once again. It was Bryce. *Aight. I should be there by six.*

I didn't bother responding, because I needed to get right. After my first pull, I could feel my insides going numb. *Just the place I liked to be.* I didn't smoke weed often, but when I needed that shit, I indulged, for real. I was gon' be high as shit in a lil bit. I had another one in my pocket. Sipping my drink, I thought about David for a minute. I often felt guilty for not spending more time with him, but we had gone in opposite directions. On my mama's dying bed, she'd said, *"Look out for your brother. Keep him out of trouble."*

When she said it, I knew it was a wish I wouldn't be able to honor. David was hardheaded and stubborn. In other words, he inherited the Frank trait, that started with my dad Jesse. We all had biblical names, who were father, son, and grandson in the Bible. My mama thought it would be cool to have us named David and Solomon, since our dad's name was Jesse. I sat there smoking and sipping, thinking about my mama. Cancer had wreaked havoc on her body before she died, and I wished I didn't have to see her that way. I was only seventeen when she died.

Our dad had died when I was thirty. He was the one that told and taught me how to be a man. A hard man. One that didn't show his emotions. That shit was practically second nature to me now. He taught me life lessons about being strong, determined, and having a good work ethic. He also said to mean what you say and say what you mean. My old man didn't play. Some of his lessons were a lot harder than others. After I'd sparked up my second blunt, I sent a message to David. *We can hang out on my birthday. Whatever I got going can wait.*

That's what's up, bruh! I can't wait!

David didn't really apply our father's advice to his life. He was spoiled and was used to getting whatever he wanted until he couldn't anymore. He couldn't keep a job to save his life. After finishing off the second blunt, my eyes were low as hell. As I took another sip of my drink, I saw her reflection in the glass. "Celeste will be here at noon tomorrow to talk about some deals and the black-tie event you're supposed to be attending. The stylist is coming at two tomorrow."

I sat there quietly, waiting to see if she had anything else to say. I secretly watched her reflection as she stared at me. "It's a little after one. Don't you think you should have lunch?"

"I'm not hungry. Actually, you can chill out. I'm done for the day. One of my friends will be over later, so I think..." I gulped the rest of my drink and stood to face her. "... I'm gonna take a nap."

I put the empty glass in Divine's hand as she watched me. Surely, she could tell I was high, but oh well. Even the best of us had issues we needed to get away from sometimes. "Okay. Well, if you need me, just text or call."

She left the room and I was right behind her. I was so damn high, when she bit her bottom lip, I wanted to snatch her up and fuck the shit out of her. And for some reason, I didn't think she would object.

Chapter 3

“MAN, YOU HIGH OR SOME SHIT?”

“Shut the fuck up, Bryce.” I let him in, then closed the door and said, “Hell yeah. I’m high as giraffe pussy.”

We both cracked up. That nap was lovely. I’d slept for three hours, and my high was still intact. I was racking my brain trying to remember who I’d gotten that ganja from. That shit was amazing. As we sat on the couch, he said, “You know Watt talking ‘bout coming anyway. Him and Renee been arguing all day about him not spending time with her.”

I slowly shook my head and felt the dizziness. While we sat silently for a moment, Divine walked in and I couldn’t help but to stare at her. Her legs were fully exposed in the short, floral-print skirt she wore, and the shirt she had on had her cleavage on full-blast. It dipped dangerously low in the front. Her hair was loose, and I just wanted to grab a handful of it while fucking her from the back. Bryce followed my gaze to her, and a smirk appeared on his face. She noticed my stare and I was sure she noticed that I was doing more than staring. “I’m gonna step out for a couple of hours for happy hour with my cousins. If you need me, text or call. I’ll come right back.”

If she knew how close I was to putting Bryce out and having my way with her, she would run out of here. I nodded, but I couldn’t say the things I wanted to say in front of Bryce. Slowly licking my lips as I stared at her, I said, “Have a good time.”

And come back drunk enough to lose those inhibitions. I was gonna make sure I was good and awake when she got back. As soon as she rushed out, Bryce said, “You muthafucka! She fine as hell!”

“I know.”

“What’chu mean you know?”

“Just what I said. I know she fine as hell, but she’s my assistant. I done already crossed the line.”

“Well, you all nonchalant about the shit. How you crossed the line?”

“Nigga, I’m high, not nonchalant. I pinned her against the wall of the elevator.”

“Oh shit. I can tell by her face and how fast she got out of here that she’s feeling you, too.”

“Uh huh.”

“So why are you getting high?”

“I accepted a role in a romantic film.”

“What the fuck?”

“Right. And it pretty much seems like they looked into my situation with my assistant and wrote a movie about the shit.”

“Well ain’t that some shit. You finally got some drama. Usually it’s me or Watt... especially Watt.”

We laughed loudly about all the shit he’d been going through with Renee. The shit was hilarious to us. She was driving him crazy with her bipolar ass tendencies. I was just glad to get off my situation. I hated talking about my issues. We talked and had a good time, catching up on his drama with the three women he was fucking with. I only shook my head. We were too old for some of the shit he was doing. Bryce and I had known each other since sixth grade, though, and he’d always been my boy and had my back.

Once he left, I went to my room and smoked another blunt. My high was wearing off, but I wanted to keep it intact for when Divine came back. By the time I finished and took a shower, I heard her come in quietly until her phone rang. I wondered how her night had gone. I just needed to get a glimpse of her. Who was I fooling? I could stare at her all day.

She was that beautiful to me. But I had to be careful. She was my assistant. Putting on my basketball shorts, I headed to the kitchen, but before I got there, I noticed she was out by the pool.

Heading to the glass, I watched her. There was a bottle of wine next to her and her shoulders were slumped. She seemed like she was in deep thought. Her feet were in the pool and she was slowly swinging them back and forth. Everything in me wanted to go out to her, but she'd seen enough of my sensitive side. I felt like she needed it, though. As I stood there, I thought about my plans to try to have her and felt guilty. She was obviously going through something that had her as deep in her feelings as she seemed to be.

Just as I was about to walk away, she turned her head and looked at me. Our eyes met... as low as mine were, I was surprised I could see anything. I was having a hard time looking away, so I didn't. It seemed she was having trouble as well. But the moment she looked like she wanted to make a move, I was able to snap out of it and walk away. Going to the kitchen, I got a bottle of water, although I had a fridge in my room. I had to make it look like that was my main reason for coming to this side of the house. I was honestly getting on my own nerves about this situation.

Things never seemed to be clear cut for me. There was always some type of hindrance when it came to me falling for a woman. The last woman I'd gotten close to, I later found out she was married. Talk about a hindrance for yo' ass. Divine found me in the kitchen, and I knew my dick had to be leaking. Being high did that to me already but being around her was only heightening what I felt. She sat her bottle and glass on the countertop and walked past me. Her scent was so fucking intoxicating. I wanted to grab her and make love to her in this kitchen. As if hearing my thoughts, she turned around and came back to me.

My insides heated up drastically and the heat traveled south. She stared in my eyes for the longest, then lifted her hand to my face. I flinched slightly because it felt like a bolt of

energy shot through me. Her touch was magnetic, and I didn't want her to pull away. I wanted to hold her in my arms. *Why couldn't I just give in?* She quickly pulled away and left me standing there in my fucking feelings. I stood there for a few minutes longer, trying to restrain myself, then said aloud, "Fuck it."

I quickly made my way to her room and knocked on the door, waiting to see if she would answer. My heart began pounding and my nerves were getting the best of me. Just as I turned to walk away, she opened the door. "Yes, Mr. Frank?"

I nearly froze at the sound of her soft voice. Turning back to her, I tucked my bottom lip in my mouth and let my eyes slide over her body. I rested my hands against the doorframe, staring into her eyes. Being only inches from her lips, I closed my eyes for a moment, then opened them. I brought my hand to her waist and pulled her to me and laid my lips on hers. She tensed up for a moment but quickly relaxed into how amazing the kiss felt as she looped an arm around my neck. I pulled her even closer with my other hand and slid them both to the small of her back as she slid hers around my waist, wanting me even closer than I already was. Her hardened nipples were against my bare chest and I wanted to free them and caress them with my tongue.

The heat between us was overwhelming. Then thoughts of my career being over because I somehow took advantage of her flashed through my mind. Slowly pulling away from her lips, I took a deep breath, and said, "I apologize."

My spirit felt calm, though, despite my thoughts. Why was a woman almost fifteen years younger than me affecting me this way? Her staying here wasn't a good idea. How was I supposed to avoid temptation when it was staring me the face? She squeezed her eyes closed, then said quietly, "Don't. There's nothing to apologize for."

She dropped her head as mine fell to the side, then tucked her hair behind her ear. When she looked back up at me, she said, "Goodnight, Mr. Frank."

Her eyes went to my lips, then back up at me. Our desires were off the charts, but this was a delicate situation. I nodded, then left her standing there, going to my bedroom to suffer alone.

When I woke up the next morning, I had a headache from hell. My mood was fucked, and it felt like I had blue balls. Throwing the covers off me, I knew I was gon' have to fuck somebody soon or I was gon' really be hell on wheels. After handling my hygiene, I checked my phone for any messages. I didn't feel like meeting with Celeste today, but I needed to tear her a new asshole for hiring Divine. I was awake before my alarm and that alone made me cranky.

As I headed downstairs, I saw Divine in the kitchen making my tea. When I did, I realized that I hadn't got dressed. I was still in my boxer briefs. Where in the fuck was my head? I grabbed my hard dick and groaned slightly, then turned to go back to my room. Divine had my head fucked up and I needed to get her out of my system. I just didn't know how I would go about doing that. She'd only been here three days, and I couldn't go a fucking minute without thinking about her... her smell... her touch... her kiss.

This shit was insane. I slipped on a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, then walked out to the patio, glancing at Divine on my way out. She'd noticed me, so at least she would know where to bring my tea. She looked beautiful with her hair up, showing off that beautiful neck again. I exhaled loudly as I flopped in the chair with that fucking script. I wanted to read over the entire thing today, but I didn't know if I would make it through. It reminded me too much of Divine and the things I wanted to say and do to her.

As I started reading, she appeared next to me with my tea. *Quit being soft like a bitch and man up, son.* My dad's words

to me rang loud and clear... in every situation... with this script and with Divine. *Suck that shit up. You stronger than that because you a young king. Why you think yo' name is Solomon? And the last name Frank surely didn't breed no punks.* Breaking me away from my thoughts, Divine sat the tray on the table. "I made chai, today. Should I tell the chef you will be eating out here this morning?"

"It's where I'm sitting, isn't it?" I responded without looking at her.

I immediately cringed inside. This was the same woman whose lips I tasted last night... who I'd dreamed of making love to all night. But I couldn't continue giving her sensitivity. Not if I wanted to steer clear of her. The wall had to be rebuilt. "Yes, sir... Mr. Frank. Anything else you need?"

You. But what I needed was off limits... what I wasn't supposed to have. I didn't understand why I wanted her so badly. I didn't even know her. I knew her name was Divine and that she eventually wanted to be an agent. *I knew how her lips tasted... how her body felt against mine... how her tender touch felt against my cheek. Fuck!* This shit had to stop. "No. Today will be a light day and so will tomorrow. You're welcome to come and go as you please after breakfast until dinner. But Sunday, I start filming for a new movie. That's when things will get fun, and I'll find out what you're really made of."

I still hadn't looked at her. After getting my tea to be the perfect blend of honey and lemon, I began sipping. I knew she was wondering how I could flip the script so fast, but it should have never gotten to where it had gone in the first place. "Understood. I'll let you know when Celeste arrives, Mr. Frank."

I could hear the sadness in her voice, and it felt like it was destroying me with every word she spoke. Once she walked away, my phone rang. I frowned at the unfamiliar number and debated whether I would answer or not. The last time I answered one, it had been someone with the wrong number,

but somehow, they recognized my voice and kept calling. I had to eventually block them. I answered cautiously, “Hello?”

“Well, hello handsome. How are you?”

“Nadia?”

“The one and only.”

“Where the hell you been?”

“Just traveling the world. Getting away from the stress of Hollywood.”

“That right?”

“Yep. What about you?”

“Same ol’, same ol’. I start filming a new project on Sunday.”

Nadia was a woman I used to mess around with. She was an actress that allowed the stress of the business to weigh her down. She’d disappeared about six months ago and her number had changed, hence the foreign number on my caller ID. She was the only woman I’d slept with for the past two years, but I was on a six-month-long drought. That was probably why I was so drawn to Divine. She was beautiful, young, and vibrant, even younger than Nadia. Nadia was thirty-three, but she’d been in the business for almost twenty-two years. Just as long as I had. “Well, if I’m remembering correctly, your schedule should be light today and tomorrow.”

“It is.”

“Would you like to join me at Bottega Louie for dinner tonight or tomorrow night?”

“Sounds like fun. You know that’s one of my favorite spots and that I wouldn’t say no because of their coconut Italian soda. Their pomodoro isn’t bad either.”

“So, is that a yes? And which night?”

“That’s a yes. Let’s go tonight. I ain’t got shit else to do after my meeting with Celeste and a stylist.”

“Okay. Let me call in for reservations. Seven?”

“Yeah, that’s cool.”

“I can’t wait to see you. I’ve missed you, Solomon.”

“Shit, I can’t tell. But I’ll see you then.”

I ended the call and was thankful for the distraction. Noticing I’d finished half my cup of tea, I went ahead and gulped the rest. I was somewhat excited about meeting up with Nadia tonight. Before we crossed into uncharted territory, we were friends, trying to navigate our way through the business. Neither of us were at the very beginning of our careers, but she was just trying to find her way as an adult in the business and we’d ended up co-starring in a movie together. My mind briefly went back to Divine as I waited on my breakfast. I was sure she probably had someone tucked away. *Her lips and her body didn’t say that, though.*

Chef Riley brought my breakfast to the patio and I continued to read over the script as I ate. Tomorrow and Saturday, I planned to run some lines with Divine for the movie I’d start filming on Sunday, since I was gonna give her the rest of the day off. As I finished my breakfast, I received a text from Divine. *Celeste is here. Where would you like her to meet you?*

She can come to the patio. Slight change of plans. Once Celeste leaves, I’ll fill you in. Don’t make plans for tomorrow.

I exhaled as I thought about how I was trying to push her away. Why couldn’t I just let whatever was gonna happen, happen? *Because she’s your fucking employee, Solo. And you don’t know her.*

Her response came through as I mentally mulled over the predicament I was in with her. *Okay, Mr. Frank.*

I rubbed my hand down my face. Her calling me Mr. Frank didn’t even sit right with me anymore. Not after the passionate kiss we shared last night... the moment in the elevator... in my closet. *Shit!* I couldn’t stop thinking about her. Even after talking to Nadia, my mind had gone back to her. This shit was

insane, and it was bothering the fuck outta me. The more I read the script, the more I thought about her and I knew I wouldn't be able to separate the two. So, it was either turn down the role or give in to what I was feeling for her. I was no longer nervous about the world seeing this side of my acting skills. She'd convinced me that they needed to see me level up. So, how could I not do it? That only left the latter.

As I sat there reading the script and fighting my thoughts, Celeste walked out on the patio. "Hey, Solomon. How's it going?"

"It's going."

"Mmm hmm. So, how's Divine working out? She must be doing great since you haven't fired her yet."

I narrowed my eyes at her while she cleared her throat and directed her attention elsewhere. "Naw, look at me Celeste. You tryna set me up?"

"What?" she asked, feigning innocence. "What do you mean set you up?"

"You know exactly what I'm talking about, Celeste. I've never had an assistant like her."

She giggled quietly, then asked, "What do you mean like her?"

"You know what? I'm not about to do this with you. Let's get on with this, so you can get the hell on with your day."

She sat next to me and said, "Whatever floats your boat. So, there are two offers on the table. You can only choose one, though. Sprint has a deal they want to offer you, as well as Apple."

"Apple. More money and it's more popular. People pay more attention to Apple versus Sprint."

"Well... just listen. Apple *is* offering more money, but it's for one commercial. Sprint is offering less money, but for three commercials. Sprint wants to build a relationship with you. The commercials will even run longer."

“Sprint wants to use me for a long-term sales boost. But I get where you’re going. It could benefit me, too.”

I rubbed my chin as I thought about it. Did I want to commit to such a deal? Did I have time? I shrugged my shoulders. “Let’s do it. I’ll take the Sprint deal.”

She clasped her hands together excitedly and said, “Perfect. You wanna know something else?”

“What?”

“I was gonna pitch the Apple commercial. It was Divine who said to pitch the Sprint option because you valued relationships and pretty much that you weren’t superficial to just choose the money over that.”

My eyebrows had risen slightly. Didn’t much surprise me, but I was genuinely impressed. She knew me a lot better than she let on. Actually, that touched me and made me feel so fucking guilty about the way I’d been treating her. Just that act had me wanting to cancel dinner with Nadia. “Okay. That’s cool. I’m impressed.”

Celeste gave me a one-cheeked smile, then we talked about the schedule for filming and the black-tie event I would be attending in support of cancer research. I attended every year and donated generously. We also briefly talked about the script I’d accepted. It was at that moment that I decided I would accept the role and put my whole heart into the shit and after tonight, I would stop fucking around with Divine and just go with it. But I had to dip into Nadia to get this nut off. That way I could take things slow with Divine. *Or as slow as she wanted to take them.*

Something told me that she was ready to get into some sticky situations already. I wouldn’t turn her down. I’d give it to her however she wanted it. *From the back, bent over the couch... missionary with one leg on my shoulder... her on top, watching her handle all...* “Solomon!”

“What?”

“I was talking about the stylist coming and you checked out on me. She was originally supposed to come at two but asked if she could come earlier due to scheduling conflicts. She’s here.”

I stood from my seat and went inside so she could show me the tuxedos she’d picked and the accessories. As she and her assistant brought everything in, I stared in the direction of the space I knew Divine was occupying. *Damn*. Either she was great at the job she wanted, or she really cared and wanted to see me succeed. Maybe it was both. But I knew I wanted to explore everything about her. I wanted to get to know her in every way possible.

Once I picked out what I would be wearing to the event, I tried it on, and the stylist took some measurements. Minor alterations were needed, but it was practically a perfect fit. When they were all gone, I sent Divine a text. *Would you please meet me at the couch by the fireplace?*

I sat there waiting for her to join me and my heart felt like mush. No one besides my boys and Celeste had ever had my back like that or ever tried to make decisions based on what I believed in, regardless of the money on the table. Even Celeste didn’t do that all the time. The more money the deal offered, the more she got paid. My phone chimed her response. *Okay*.

She was in her feelings, just like I was. I slid my hands down my legs to try to settle my nerves as she made her way to me. She sat nervously on the other end of the couch. I swallowed hard and said, “After this meeting, you can have the rest of the day off. I’m going out tonight. However, tomorrow, I’ll need you longer than I intended. I need to run some lines with you. Although this is my typical role, I wanna be sure that I’m convincing due to the subject matter.”

I took a deep breath as she sat there watching me. “Okay,” she said quietly.

“Should I lay out your outfit choices before I leave?”

“That’s not necessary. Unless you just wanna make sure I’m looking my best.” I said with a slight smile. I continued before she could respond to that, because I could see that she probably had a comeback for me. “I also wanted to thank you for looking out for me with the Sprint deal.” I scooted closer to her. “I know I haven’t been the easiest person to get along with and I apologize. I just don’t know...” Taking a deep breath, I grabbed her hand. “I didn’t know how to proceed after last night. I think I do, now.”

Holding her hand in mine, I could feel the tremble in it. She glanced down at them, then looked back up at me. “You’re welcome. It... it seemed like the better deal for you. And... how do we... proceed?”

“Naturally, Divine. Just let it flow and quit trying to analyze it. I’ve been trying to look at this professionally and it has me all over the place, trying to stop something that’s strong because of what people might think or how I thought it might look.”

I scooted even closer to her, to the point I could smell her scent from her body wash. Her breathing pattern changed as my hand slid around her waist. “Can we proceed that way, Divine? You cool with that?” I asked near her ear, watching the goosebumps that appeared on her skin.

She turned her body to me and brought her hands to my face. Her touch excited me, especially when she slid her finger across my bottom lip. She leaned in and laid her lips on mine, causing my natural, aggressive instincts to take over. I pulled her body to mine until she was in my lap. *Damn! Slow down, Solo. Remember?* I slid my tongue in her mouth, then pulled at her hair, her neat bun coming loose. My fingers threaded through her curls as I grabbed them, pulling her head back and showing attention to her neck. When my teeth nipped at her, she moaned. *Fuck!*

Feeling her hands at the back of my head, signaled that she wanted everything that I was doing to her and didn’t want me to stop. But I had to stop before this went too far. Going back

to her lips, I kissed her again. “That was a natural reaction to what I said, baby girl?”

She bit her bottom lip as she stared at me and my eyes went right to those soft lips. “My way of saying I’m cool with that.”

I chuckled, giving her a smile that was on full blast. Not many people knew what that looked like. Just the fact that I felt comfortable enough in her presence to do that spoke volumes. “Hai un bel sorriso,” she said softly.

I wasn’t sure what she said. I believed she was talking more to herself than me, since she said it so softly. I still wanted to know, though. “What does that mean?”

“It means you have a beautiful smile.”

Man, she had a nigga feeling all sensitive and shit. I could feel my face heating up. She was still seated on my lap, so I held her close and said, “Thank you. I really don’t wanna go out now, but I’m sure you have plans.”

I kissed her shoulder, then her neck again. This felt more natural than I thought it would. Nadia could kiss my ass if Divine wanted to kick it. “Actually, I don’t,” she said as she slid her hand over my waves.

“Mmm. Does that mean you cool with chillin’ with me like this all day?”

“If that’s what you want. I wouldn’t mind at all.”

“I don’t know much about you, but I wanna change that. I need to know more about the woman I’m feeling. Let me make a phone call right quick.”

“Okay,” she said as she stood from my lap.

“Don’t go anywhere. This won’t take but a moment,” I said with a smirk on my lips.

I felt excited and the happiest I’d been in a long time... probably since I’d won an Academy award five years ago. I

walked away to get my phone from the patio table and called Nadia. “Hey, darling! Are you canceling on me?”

“Actually, yeah. My girl had made plans for us and I didn’t know,” I said, slightly lying.

I had to let her know that there was a woman in my life, though. “Oh. I didn’t know you had someone in your life.”

“I mean... you were gone for six months.”

“I guess you’re right. Well, good luck and I’ll talk to you soon.”

“A’ight.”

I slid my phone in my pocket and made my way back to Divine. She smiled as I sat, then slid to her and pulled her back in my lap. “So, I don’t even know your last name.”

Her smile was big, and it was beautiful. Knowing that I put a smile that big on her face made me feel good. “My name is Divine Love Stewart.”

“Beautiful, just like you,” I said as I tucked her hair behind her ear, something she usually did. “How old are you? I know you’re much younger than me. I’m surprised you’re even feeling someone my age.”

“Thank you. I’m twenty-seven. Twenty-eight in three weeks.” She lowered her gaze to her lap, then looked back up at me. “And feeling you wasn’t the plan when I came here. Especially since I was in a relationship. But it just happened... no matter what I did or told myself. Or maybe it’s genetic.” She chuckled a little, then continued. “My father is eleven years older than my mother. But most people know that already.”

I frowned slightly. How would most people know that already? “Well, my birthday is in two weeks. I’ll be forty-one. Who are your parents?”

“Desmond and Juliana Stewart. And I kinda figured that was your age. Wikipedia doesn’t always get it wrong.”

Well, ain't that some shit. Her dad was a well-respected director and her mom was a screenwriter. No wonder she knew as much as she did. “You gotta be fucking kidding me. I love their work, as does everybody. Shit. So, you’re Italian and Black. Your dad directed the first movie I was in. I didn’t have a big role, but still. I admire that man so much.”

“Well, I’ll make sure to tell them you said so.”

“And you looking me up, huh?” I laughed at her facial expression. “I’m just joking. I know you did that for the job.”

She gave me a one-sided smile, then said, “Didn’t even know you knew how to do that.”

I was about to tickle her for that lil comment, but she straddled me. That shit caught me so off-guard. My dick woke all the way up like, *whoa and we got action.* I hoped she didn’t mind what came with this. She wasn’t finna be putting all that heat on my dick and not expect me to go further than we had. “What about you? I mean, your parents.”

I broke our gaze as I slid my hands up her thighs, then around to her ass. I’d lost all concentration when I felt how soft it was. Pulling her on my erection, I said in a low voice, “What about them? They’re both deceased.”

I slid my hands up her back, then back down to her ass... slow as hell. Changing the subject from my parents, I asked, “You know, you were bold for getting on me like this. That tells me you’re okay with whatever I do to you, right?”

She leaned into me and slid her hands up my face, then to the back of my head. “Why wouldn’t I be?”

She kissed me hungrily as I slid my hands in her pants, grabbing her bare ass. She flinched but didn’t take her lips from mine. I allowed my finger to slide between her lips, from her clit to her opening, then pulled my hand from her pants and separated our kiss and tasted her. Closing my eyes to let her taste settle on my tongue, her words hit me like a ton of bricks. She was in a relationship when she got here. I was willing to bet they’d broken up yesterday. That was why she

was at the pool drinking a bottle of wine last night. “Divine, we have to slow down. I don’t wanna be a rebound nigga. It just hit me that you just got out of a relationship since you’ve been here working for me. You’ve only been here three days. I’m not looking for a new sex partner. I want something more.”

She slid her hands up my chest and my hips lifted a bit. She was taking me there and I wasn’t gon’ be able to come back. “You’re right. I did just get out of a relationship. But you’re not a rebound. This is about more than sex to me, Solomon. Questo e molto piu che fisico. Way more than physical.”

She was staring into my eyes, letting me see her sincerity. I’d always been a good judge of character. She dropped her forehead to mine, and I wrapped my arms around her waist, not wanting to let her go. She whispered, “Please... don’t stop this, because neither of us want to.”

I slid my hands back inside her pants and said, “Fuck. Bring this pussy to my face then.”

She slid her hand up the back of my head, kissing me again. “Undress me then,” she said against my lips while she grinded into me.

I licked my lips, then toyed with the hem of her shirt, teasing her and myself. That light brown skin underneath was turning red with passion, waiting to feel my touch. Slowly lifting it over her head, getting my first glimpse of her titties proved to be worth every second. Sliding my hand behind her to unsnap her bra, I literally held my breath, waiting to see her nipples. Her titties weren’t big, but they weren’t small either. They were perfect. Those chocolate nipples that looked like small chocolate kisses, called out to me. I slowly teased one with my tongue, circling it, enjoying her moans.

My hands slid to her ass and I pushed her waist band down as far as it would go with her sitting on me. As she tried to get up, I pulled her back down. I wasn’t ready for her to get up yet. “You’re so beautiful, Divine. Simply divine.”

“Thank you,” she barely muttered as she slid her hands beneath my shirt, caressing my abs.

She bit her bottom lip again as she rolled her hips. My dick was throbbing, and I couldn't wait to be buried inside of her, but at the same time, I wanted to take my time. I pulled my shirt off, then gently laid her on the sofa to get her pants off. When I pulled them down along with her lace looking panties, I was in awe. Her hairless pussy was calling my name. I scooped her up and brought her to my bedroom. I needed to be able to get at her right. Divine's nibbles and licks on my neck were threatening to bring out a whole different nigga. Being gentle with her was my intent, but as long as she kept showing me the sexual side of her, I wasn't going to be able to restrain myself.

I laid her on my bed and just admired her beauty as she arched her back. She sat up slightly as I undid my pants and pulled them off. My eyes never left hers as I freed my dick, then joined her in the bed. When my body touched hers, I wanted to immediately slide inside of her. Her skin was red in spots and she'd immediately tried to mount me. She was hot as hell and needed me to douse that fire as quickly as possible. “I'm running this shit, Divine.”

She laid back on the bed, allowing me to remain in charge. I ran my hand from her thigh, up her stomach, breasts, and neck, to her face. Her breathing was shallow, but I wanted to completely take her breath away. Lowering my mouth to her nipples, I commenced to teasing them, one at a time as she squirmed. She brought her hands to my head as I sucked her nipple. “Solomon...” she moaned.

After kissing her lips, I rolled to my back. “Can you bring that pussy to my lips now, baby girl?”

She got up on her knees and straddled my face. After that sample taste I had a few minutes ago, I knew I'd never get enough of it. She pushed the hair from her face and stared down at me. She was so fucking sexy. Sliding my hands up her legs slowly to her ass, I pulled her pussy to my lips. Her body

trembled as I sucked her shit, then swirled my tongue around her clit. Fuck! That Italian soul food was soothing my palate. “Ohhh merda,” she moaned, trying to circle her hips.

I held her ass to me, not wanting her to move as I began sucking her clit, making love to that shit, with all the slurping noises. I could feel her juices leaking to my beard and I was beyond ready for that shit to be leaking on my dick.

I could feel her body trembling as I moaned against her shit, feeling her trigger stiffen even more. “Sto per venire,” she whined.

She was still grinding on my face, riding my shit like she was at Disney Land having the time of her life. I didn’t know what the fuck she was saying, but with the way she was moaning, that shit sounded sexy as hell. “Ahh, Solomon, shiit!”

Her body trembled and jerked as she came on my lips, giving me life. That shit was so good. I couldn’t believe we’d made it here so quickly. I was willing to go slow, earning the shit that she freely gave me just now. I continued sucking and teasing her until I was sure I’d gotten it all. But then I decided to keep going. I slid my hands up her body and toyed with her nipples, making sure she knew the type of shit I was on. Wanting to please her completely was my mission and I aimed to please with every stroke and suck of her clit.

Now that I wasn’t holding her hips anymore, she had free reign to do whatever she wanted. I wasn’t gonna stop her. Seeing how she would handle all this man I had to offer her had me anticipating the pleasure. She began circling her hips spreading that alfredo sauce all over my lips. I continued enjoying her taste, but she shocked my senses when she grabbed my dick, stroking the fuck out of it. I almost lost all concentration. That shit felt good as hell. She lifted herself from my face and turned around, straddling me once again, tooting that ass up right in my face.

She kissed my abs and made her way down to the ultimate prize. She kissed my dick, then teased the head with her

tongue. When she began sucking my shit, a deep groan left my lips. It had been even longer since my dick had been sucked and baby girl had skills. As she took more into her mouth while still stroking me with her hand, I popped her ass, then inserted two fingers in her pussy. She moaned on my dick, causing me to close my eyes. Feeling that warmth on my fingers made me wanna say fuck all this shit and dive into her. I matched her fervor as I stroked that kitty, being sure to apply pressure to that g-spot with every stroke.

My dick was throbbing, ready to pump that liquid coating down her throat. I began lifting my hips, stroking her mouth as I continued to fingerfuck her. I popped her ass with my other hand and said, "Fuck that shit up, baby."

That seemed to motivate her to put in her best work and she was fucking a nigga up for real. Her tongue was performing tricks on my dick and I was about to bust. Not knowing how she felt about that, I said, "Baby, a nigga 'bout to bust. Cum with me."

She began bucking on my fingers as she sucked the fucking skin off my dick. Since she was putting in that extra work, that let me know that she was okay with digesting my beautiful babies. Listening to and feeling her moans vibrate through my dick had me there and ready to coat her esophagus. But when her body seized, I knew her orgasm had made its arrival. I let go and shot off down her throat as she did some coating of her own. My fingers were drenched with her goodness. Pulling my fingers from her, I brought them to my mouth and sucked them clean, savoring her taste.

When she released my dick, I let out a deep groan. He'd found a new home and its address was 69 Divine Love Stewart Lane. Now it was time to see what the garage felt like. I gently pushed her off me and laid next to her, slowly rubbing my fingertips down her back. "Divine, you know I'm gon' need this shit all the time, right? I haven't slid my dick in that box yet, but I already know that shit gon' be my kryptonite."

She grinned, sliding her arm underneath mine, then slid her hand to my shoulder. After kissing my skin near where her hand rested, she said, “Such a dirty mouth, Solomon. But I have to agree with becoming insatiable.” Lifting her head, she looked in my eyes. “But are you sure you’re not just head high?” she said, then smirked, holding my gaze.

I gave her a one-cheeked smile. “Only one way to find out.”

I went to the nightstand and grabbed a condom. Tearing the packet open, I quickly strapped up and made my way back to her. “I hope you ready, Divine, ‘cause this ain’t about to be sweet and tender. I’m ‘bout to wreck some shit.”

I slid on top of her and kissed her lips, giving her my tongue and allowing my dick to sniff shit out. I didn’t want to immediately dive in, I wanted her to beg me for it. She wrapped her arms around my neck as she spread her legs wider, lifting her hips into me. “What are you waiting for?” she whispered between kisses.

She ran her nose against my neck, causing me to shiver slightly. “I’m waiting for the moment that we’re both fiending for the shit. Until we can no longer contain ourselves, on the verge of tearing one another to shreds like wild animals.”

I grabbed her neck and brought my thumb and pointer finger to her jaw lines, staring into her lust-filled eyes, then kissed her lips softly, pulling her bottom lip into my mouth. I was damn near there already as my dick twitched. She whined, “Solomon...”

She wiggled beneath me, trying to arrange herself to where my dick would just slide inside. “Per favore.”

I knew that shit meant, *please*. She was begging me for it and that shit turned me on immensely. When she drug her nails down my back, I had to breathe deeply so the savage inside of me wouldn’t be too rough for her cultured ass. Baby girl was licking and sucking my bottom lip, grasping for whatever

piece of me she could get. “If I wanted you any more than I do right now, I’d fucking go up in flames.”

“Good. My hose will be here to put you out of your misery when that happens.”

I slid down her body slightly, so she couldn’t slide that pussy on me anyway and rested my weight on her, holding her arms to the bed by her wrists. Her skin was turning redder as I tortured her senses, teasing her nipples with my tongue. As I pulled one in my mouth, I sucked it until she released a soft cry from her lips. I moved to the other one and did the exact same, then made my way back to her neck, nibbling and sucking it, letting her scent intoxicate me as it assaulted my senses, similar to the way I was doing hers. “Fuck me now. Pleeeeeease,” she moaned.

I knew I’d leaked pre-cum in the condom that seemed to be stretched beyond capacity. That shit felt tighter than normal. Maybe Divine had turned me on beyond belief... more than any woman had ever turned me on. I bit her earlobe, ready to fuck her senseless and asked, “What’d you say, Divine?”

Hearing her beg me for the dick was driving me crazy and I couldn’t hold out after that. She panted as she squirmed. “I said... fuck...”

Before she could get the words out, I thrust into her shit rough as hell. The way her pussy gripped me and the heat that came from it, I had to pause. I shivered as I tried to get acclimated to how tight and hot she was. *Fuck!* I could feel her wetness leaking to my sack and just as I’d said, I knew I would need this shit often. Divine grabbed the back of my head, pulling my face to hers. We kissed one another hungrily. Not wanting to separate my lips from hers, I struggled when she pulled away. Slowly wrapping her legs around my waist, she pressed her lips to my ear as I licked and sucked her neck. Moaning softly, she said, “Mmm, I need you to move, baby.”

She began winding her hips, but I firmly stilled her movements by grabbing her leg. “You feel so fucking good,

Divine, I had to let my dick marinate in this shit for a minute.”

Slowly sliding out of her completely, I shivered, immediately missing her warmth. Plunging back into her forcefully, I gave her at least five quick cervix checks as she held onto me, sinking her nails in my back. Slowing my pace, I asked, “How’s that, baby? How you want me to fuck you?”

“Ohhh babyyy,” she moaned. “You feel so perfect,” she whispered as she slid her hands down my back to my ass.

Feeling her hips roll beneath me only fueled my hunger for her. My strokes went deeper as she pulled me into her. “You’re perfect, too, Divine, but I’m ‘bout to fuck perfection up.”

I rammed into her repeatedly as I felt her legs tremble. Reaching down, I pulled her leg up and over my shoulder, filling her pussy with all of me. I hadn’t been able to get all my dick in a woman in a while, but Divine took every bit of it. Her fuck faces alone had me about to bust. “Divine, fuck!” I growled as I continued to slam into her.

“Solomon, I’m cum...” she screamed, not being able to fully get her words out before that shit took her down.

The way her pussy squeezed me; I knew I’d want to be buried in this shit every day. Grabbing both her ankles, I lifted her legs in the air as I went to my knees. Watching my dick kill that pussy was almost too much for me. Couple that along with Divine’s screams and it was even harder to maintain concentration. I wanted to stay in that pussy as long as possible. Pulling out of her, I flipped her over, roughly pulling her ass to me and pushing her head to the bed. I entered her again, on a mission to make her cum again. Seeing her body surrender to the power I was pumping into her was a high I didn’t want to let go of.

I popped her ass as I slowed my pace, watching the redness that appeared after. Leaning into her caused her to lay flat. I straddled her legs and pushed deeply inside of her causing her to scream and cum on my dick. “Divine, damn. This shit... fuck!”

I couldn't even get out a whole sentence. Grabbing a handful of her hair, I laid the pipe expertly, giving her my best with every thrust. "I'm about to bust... shit!"

She tried tooting it up for me as much as possible with me lying on top of her, then turned her head and said, "Cum for me, baby."

I immediately covered her lips with mine and her tongue invaded my mouth like it was in search of a culprit. I gave it back to her until I had to vocalize my release. I pulled away, and said, "Shit!"

I couldn't wait to see what she felt like without this latex. It was still unreal that we'd fucked already. I didn't expect her to move this quickly, but I couldn't say I was angry about the shit. Rolling off her, I shivered a little as my dick slid out of her. Taking the condom off, I sat it on the sheets. I knew at that moment, that she would be my last, if I had the final say so. Divine scooted closer to me and dropped her head against mine. "That was amazing," she whispered as she slid her fingers on my chest and abs.

Pulling her on top of me, I said, "It was. And I can't wait to have even more amazing moments with you."

I kissed her lips as my shit began rising again. Feeling her skin against mine... her titties against my chest... her ass in my hands... damn. It was what I'd been missing. She'd come in here and changed my whole fucking attitude in a matter of three days. It took everything in me not to just push inside of her raw. "I love this," she said as she pulled my lower lip down to stare at my grill.

"I've never seen one up close. I was homeschooled and dragged all over the world my whole life. So, a lot of things I'm still finding new at twenty-seven."

I chuckled. "Well, it's a snatch out. If I get a permanent one, it's gon' be platinum. I have one for the top, too, but I rarely wear it."

She slid her fingers across my bottom, then top lip. “How fascinating. I do hope you will get that permanent one. This fits you.”

Divine kissed me again, then said, “So, I’m starving. You hungry?”

“Uh huh.” I rolled her over and spread her legs. “I’m starving, too.”

She was definitely gonna be mine and I couldn’t wait to teach her everything I knew.

Chapter 4

“HELLO, MR. FRANK. THEY WILL BE SERVING BREAKFAST IN YOUR trailer and your wardrobe is in there for your sets and makeup will be in an hour.”

That damn assistant was nervous as hell. I glanced over at Divine before nodding at the lady. I definitely had a reputation around these parts, but oh well. At least they knew not to fuck with me. We followed her to my trailer as she talked more, but I wasn't paying attention to a word she was saying. I could only concentrate on the beauty walking next to me.

Divine and I had been going over lines, in between fucking. For the past two days I hadn't been able to get enough of her. It was like, damn, where had she been all my life? I wanted to grab her hand walking through here, but we were being professional. I didn't wanna blur the lines betwixt the two. The lines were already sort of fuzzy already since we'd been sleeping together. When we got to the trailer, Divine's phone alerted her of a text message. I'd been around her enough to know what that particular alert sounded like.

Once she read it, she cleared her throat and said, “Celeste just texted me. Miles wants to have a reading with you to pick the leading lady. They have two in mind. Melinda Reese and Nadia Benjamin. Your first free day from filming is when it's scheduled for.”

Well ain't that some shit. Looking into Divine's eyes, I could see that she was somewhat bothered. There were rumors flying around that me and Nadia were a couple. We did see one another, but it was never anything serious. I couldn't address her insecurities or the fact that she was uncomfortable with that on set. So, I simply said, “Okay. Be sure to put it on my schedule.”

I was wondering if she expected more of a response out of me. Hopefully, she didn't. Not at this moment anyway. Nadia was a sweet woman, but I never thought I could have more with her than what we had. If Melinda Reese was any good, I'd choose her just to make Divine comfortable. However, this was a dog eat dog world. I wouldn't knock Nadia out of a job if Melinda was trash or if we had zero chemistry. "Okay. Is there anything you need me to do before makeup gets here?"

I wanted her to sit on my face, but I didn't think that would be professional. Her taste had me hooked. "Yeah. Sit down and eat breakfast. It's gonna be a long day."

She was sitting down as I said it. I chuckled inwardly. I'd gotten to know so much about her in the last couple of days, so I knew she had a big appetite... sexually as well. "I know, but I'm used to long days on sets. How are you feeling? You ready?"

"Yeah, I'm good. Now, when we get to the other movie, you can ask me that question again."

Kissing and pretending to make love on screen was gonna be hard for me. If Nadia got the part, it was gonna be even harder because of the familiarity of it. How was I gonna keep myself from getting turned on? I did my best not to think about that, though. I couldn't stress about something I had no control over. There was a movie that we were about to start shooting in the next couple of hours. That was what was important right now. She smiled slightly, then said, "Don't worry. You'll be fine then, too." Her smile broadened, then she said, "I'll be happy to help you run lines for that one, too."

I chuckled. "I bet. Well, you will be helping me run plenty lines for that one."

That was another problem. If I imagined Nadia was Divine, that shit would get me in a world of trouble with her. This was just bad all the way around. I almost wanted to pull out of the damn role. *Yeah. It wasn't too late.* Nadia could do it with somebody else. "I'm still not one-hundred percent sold on the role. I keep going back and forth about it in my head."

Divine stood from her seat as I watched her. “Permission to be... unprofessional for a minute?”

I brought a forkful of eggs to my mouth, then nodded. She walked over to me and straddled me, resting her arms on my shoulders and clasping her fingers behind my neck. *Shit*. I had no idea this was what she would do. I slumped in my seat as she spoke. “When you said you keep going back and forth in your head, it reminded me of something my dad used to tell actors. He used to say, it’s the roles that give you the most pause that you should take. Especially if it’s pushing you out of your comfort zone. Is that still the reason for your hesitation?”

I brought my hands to her ass as I stared at her. “I’m not just thinking about me. Can we talk about this later?”

I slid my hands up her back, then back to her ass. This woman was gonna be the death of me. I didn’t know how she thought I would be able to think about anything else with her straddled across my lap. But I didn’t wanna get into this conversation before putting in this work, either. “Yeah, of course. That’s probably not the headspace you need to be in at the moment. I’m sorry.”

“Don’t worry about it. Just kiss me.”

She immediately brought her lips to mine, her hands making their way to the back of my head as she sucked my bottom lip. My dick was hard as hell, so I pat her legs. She pulled away from me and stood, then went back to her chair. By the time I finished my breakfast, there was a knock at the door. Had to be wardrobe and the makeup artist. It was time to get this show on the road and transform into a strong man that took the law into his own hands.

I was tired as hell when I got home. Divine had gone to her corner of the house and I went to mine. After I smoked a cigar

and secretly watched her in the backyard doing her yoga shit, I took a shower. We'd eaten at the set before we left, and I was somewhat nervous about talking to her about this shit between me and Nadia. Although no one knew Divine and I were seeing each other and wouldn't think anything about it, I didn't want things to be awkward between the two of us. I cared for her a great deal already and regardless of what the movie paid, I'd be fine financially with or without it. As I sipped on my Hennessy, my phone rang. *Nadia fucking Benjamin*. "Hello?"

"Hi, Solomon. Sorry for calling so late, but I knew you'd been filming today. Are you aware that they want me to try out for the role opposite you for this romantic drama?"

"Yeah."

"First of all, I'm shocked that you're doing a movie like that, but I think it's a good look for you. I just wanted you to know I would be trying out for the part at the end of next week so you wouldn't be surprised to see me."

"Okay. Talk to you then."

"Oh... I'm sorry. I didn't even ask if you were busy."

"I'm not, but I'm tired and don't really feel like holding conversation with anybody."

"Okay. Talk to you soon."

I ended the call, seriously contemplating what I would do. While I was shooting, I could rid the thoughts, but as soon as the director would yell cut, the thoughts flooded my mind. Hopefully, Divine couldn't tell that I was bothered, and I surely hoped it wasn't noticeable in my acting. I sipped my Hennessy and as badly as I wanted another round, I couldn't. I had to be on my A-game tomorrow and every day of filming. As soon as I could again, I'd get fucked up and have my way with Divine.

While I loved spending time with her and sexing her, I wasn't ready for the world to know about us yet. We were thirteen years apart and I didn't need to be crucified because of

that. However, I really didn't think the age would be a big deal. People were a little more accepting these days. Just the fact that I'd pursued my assistant would probably get a little backlash. As I stared out at the water, I heard, "Seems like I'm doing quite a bit of apologizing today. I didn't get your drink and cigar when we got here. I'm sorry about that."

When I looked at her, her head was leaned against the doorframe. If I wasn't mistaken, she looked high. "Come here, Divine."

I was getting too soft with her. She was slacking on her job, but it had been a long day. She made her way to me as I watched her. She was definitely high. I knew the look anywhere. She stood in front of me as my dick hardened. That muthafucka had no self-control when it came to her. "I can forgive you for that, tonight. We had a long day."

"Thank you. It won't happen again."

The sexual tension was thick as hell. "Come closer to me."

She lowered herself in front of me, between my legs on her knees. *Shit*. I immediately slumped even more so in my chair as she licked her lips. "We need to talk."

"Okay," she said as she eyed my erection.

I liked this game of power. It seemed like I was her master in this moment and I planned to play my role exceptionally well. "I'm sure you know of my connection to Nadia Benjamin. Tell me how you feel about her doing this movie."

I slid my hand to my erection and grabbed it through my shorts. She wore an oversized t-shirt which made for easy access. But no access would be granted right now. Pulling her lip between her teeth and tucking her hair behind her ear, I could tell she was ready to hop on this dick. She was just as ready as I was. "I don't like it," she said after a moment. "But if you two together is what it takes to pull off the movie, I know enough about this business to know that you go with the magic. I would never stand in the way of you becoming

greater. And I didn't know for sure about you and her. Only that there was speculation of... something."

I swallowed hard as she spread her knees apart. Staring into my eyes, she asked, "How do you feel about it?"

"Before you, I would have been okay with it. Nadia and I were... I guess you could say friends with benefits. We never had a relationship or connection. Out of respect for you, I won't do the movie. I'm sure there will be other opportunities."

I looked around for my phone and realized I'd set it on the table. I grabbed it and began looking for Miles's phone number. This game of sexual power would have to be placed on pause. This was a decision that I'd made my mind up about. I didn't want Divine's to feel like I'd stepped on or disregarded her feelings. If I were to do the movie, I wouldn't be comfortable knowing how she felt about it. She covered my hand, stopping me from making the call. "Solomon Frank, I can't let you do that. It wouldn't sit right with me if you did that. The other day, when you left the script out, I peeked at it. It's fucking great, Solomon. And the way you read it... I felt every word. Only great actors can make you feel something. This role seems tailored for you, Tesoro."

There she goes, speaking a language I can't understand. I frowned at her, causing her to smile. "It means sweetheart."

She pulled her shirt over her head as she stood to her feet, showing me that glorious body that I couldn't get enough of. "Please do this movie. Just think about me when you do. Unless there's another reason you want to turn it down."

I pulled my hard dick from my shorts and my shirt over my head, then I began stroking my shit while staring at her. "If I think about you while I'm acting, this is what will happen. I'm gonna be hard as a rock, giving someone what I've only given to you. My sensitive side. That's what you want? Let me back out now while I can. If I don't, I feel like I'm gon' lose you. I care too much to miss out on what we could possibly

have. You willing to risk that? This career won't control me. I still have to live my life."

She could barely keep her eyes off my dick while I talked but somehow, she managed to comprehend everything I said. She walked closer to my chair as she said, "No... I'm not willing to risk that, especially when you have the ability to move me in ways I don't understand through your words alone."

She'd dropped to her knees and replaced my hand with hers and began stroking me. "Just promise me one thing. Promise me you won't back out until you at least see who got the part."

I knew that wouldn't work. I didn't want this to seem personal. Although it was, it didn't have to look that way. Then again, Nadia already knew I had the part, so either way it went, it would be personal. She kissed the head of my dick, then continued, "If she does, I won't fight you on backing out."

She took my dick in her mouth, but I grabbed her by her hair and pulled her off it. Staring into her eyes, I said, "You might as well let me back out now. Nadia doesn't lose roles. She will get the part."

Leaning over, I kissed her lips as I tucked my dick back in my pants. She looked disappointed, like she thought I wasn't gon' feed her all this dick. I stood from the chair and grabbed her hand, helping her to her feet. I didn't have any condoms where I was. Had I let her go too far, I would have gone deep sea diving without a wetsuit. "Okay. It's your call and I respect your decision," she said before kissing my chest.

Grabbing her hand, I led her to the kitchen so I could get a bottle of water. Before we could leave, though, I couldn't help but sit her on the island and lay her back. I spread her legs and had a midnight snack... shit, a midnight meal. Eating her out was one of my favorite past times. As I sucked on her clit, I slid two fingers inside of her and massaged her g-spot. Thankfully, it was late, and no one would pop up to visit,

because they would get an eyeful with all these floor-length windows. “Oooh shiiit,” she moaned as she lifted her hips and grabbed the sides of my head.

I kissed her pussy, then whispered against it, “I love this shit.”

After kissing it a couple more times, I went back to her clit and sucked the fuck out of it. Feeling her legs tremble gave me satisfaction and she never disappointed. That pussy rained on me for what seemed like minutes as Divine screamed out her sentiments of pleasure. As she came all over my lips, I slurped every bit of it up, then pulled her up from the countertop and into my arms. I cradled her to the bedroom, ready to give her everything she craved. I was almost sure that Celeste would be here within ten minutes after I called Miles and declined the role. I was also sure that I would get a call from Nadia. This was personal, but ready or not, the world was about to know about me and Divine.

“Solomon! It’s not like you to be so indecisive. They based who they wanted to audition for the female lead based on you.”

I didn’t respond to her, because I was in too great of a mood. Divine and I had made love and fucked all night. I’d just gotten home from a long day of filming and all had gone well. The filming was progressing quicker than scheduled because a brother was on his shit. Divine had already gone to take a shower when Celeste drove up. I was still on the patio smoking. She was fuming, but she would get over it as always.

I watched her pace back and forth, then slide her hand down her face. “Do you wanna develop a bad reputation? People aren’t going to want to hire you if you back out at the last minute!”

As she ranted, I saw Divine walking towards us through the glass. She had to have heard Celeste talking... more like yelling. Celeste had better be glad I was calm today or I would have yelled right back and reminded her that she was working for me and I had a right to change my mind about what I did or didn't want to do. "I... I can't handle this right now, Solomon."

"Then don't. Do what I hired you for and find me something else. If there is nothing out there right now, I'm cool with that, too. I have millions in the bank and my house and cars are paid for. I'm not hurting. I'm living my life. If you don't like that, you can always drop me from your roster. Last I checked, you were still getting paid."

She didn't respond. Instead, she walked inside the house after getting a glimpse of Divine. I didn't know what they were talking about and I didn't really care. I didn't want the role in the first place, and I let them talk me into taking it... I let Divine talk me into it. But everything changed when Nadia was brought in the picture. I refused to cause her to lose a job. If I did a role like that in the future, I would have to have a say so on who they picked to audition. Nadia and I could not co-star in a movie that was as romantically charged as this one was. There were a couple of lovemaking scenes that would have nudity and lots of kissing and touching.

There was no way in hell I could do that and remain confident about my relationship with Divine. Today, I would let her know of my position about us and she meant a lot to me. For me to turn down a role I'd already accepted should let her know just how much she meant to me. If that meant it was the end of my career, then so be it. She meant more to me than that. *But how, Sway? As I sat there watching them talk, I got a text from my brother. Hey, Solo! We still on for next weekend for your birthday?*

Yeah, bruh. Honestly, I can't wait to kick it wit'chu.

I knew that would catch him off-guard. Being with Divine had mellowed me out something fierce. This was crazy. She

hadn't even been around me for a week yet. It would be a week tomorrow that I first laid eyes on her beauty and felt her aura... that I'd tried so hard to dismiss. David texted back. *Word? We can always hook up before then if you have time.*

Unfortunately, I won't have free time until then. I'm shooting a movie and we won't have a real break until next Thursday.

I turned to look back in the house as Celeste frantically tried to explain to Divine what was going on as if she didn't know. It didn't matter. I was going to tell Celeste soon about us. She was the one that hired Divine, knowing that I went for older, unattractive women as my assistants. She must have wanted this to happen. When she finally left, I saw Divine head to the kitchen. She probably needed a drink, but I was sure she needed something a little stronger. I planned to give her something a little stronger. She had me on a high that I couldn't seem to come down from.

Walking inside to the kitchen, I walked up behind her and kissed her neck. "Don't stress. Celeste ain't running shit. I am. Don't let her intimidate you. I'm going to make her aware of our situation once she calms down, and I'm almost sure Nadia will be calling me, too. Nadia already knows I'm involved with someone. She just doesn't know who. So, I hope you're ready for the spotlight."

My hands wrapped around her, gently teasing her nipples as I resumed kissing her neck and earlobe. She dropped her head to the side as she pushed her breasts in my hands. A soft moan left my lips as she turned around in my arms. She tiptoed, pulling my face to hers to kiss my lips, teasing each one separately. "Your birthday's next week. Are you celebrating?"

She was deflecting. That let me know she was shying away from my observation. I'd let her make it for now, though. "My brother wants to kick it with me. I haven't seen him in over six months. Those plans were made before my expressed interest in you. That's only that Friday night, though. Other than that, I

don't have any plans. What about you? Your birthday is coming up, too."

She grinned, then said, "Well, according to my cousin, I needed to ask Mr. Sexy Frank if I could have a night to celebrate. I don't really have anything planned aside from dinner with my parents and whatever my cousin has planned. If... that's okay with you, Mr. Frank."

She wrapped her arms around my waist. "You know you started calling me Solomon without my permission, now that I think about it, but I love the way it rolls off your lips. Your plans are cool with me, especially since I'm Mr. Sexy Frank." I moved closer to her lips and mumbled against them, "Just save some time for me. I wanna claim you as mine, Divine. Are you ready for that or should I wait?"

I needed to bring the conversation back to what it was originally. If she wasn't ready, I would hold off. I was used to the spotlight. What people thought about me was insignificant. I did whatever I felt like doing. Fuck them. But everyone wasn't built to handle that shit like me. Plus, I'd been dealing with the paparazzi for years. They were the reasons people left me the hell alone, because of how rude I could be. I kissed Divine's lips before she could answer and allowed my hands to slide inside of her shorts, gripping her ass.

She separated her lips from mine and stared up at me. I was almost sure she felt the same way I did or even stronger perhaps, but I needed to hear her say it. "For two years, I was with someone who never made me feel an ounce of what I feel just being around you. Right from the start actually. I am yours... and so is my time whenever you wanna spend it with me."

Divine smiled as she ran her finger across my bottom lip. Sticking my tongue out, I licked her finger, then pulled it into my mouth, sucking it slowly as she pulled it from my mouth. "I haven't had a relationship in years. Been too busy chasing a career that could fuck me over at any given moment. Being with you made me realize what's important. Divine, you are

important to me. You pranced your ass in here and stole my attention, causing me to place you at the top of my list of priorities. Even though I tried hard to fight it, I had to give in to it, because it was so strong. It nearly paralyzed me.”

I pulled her close to me and rested my cheek atop her head and said in low voice, “You consumed me and nothing else is important when it comes to you. You got the number one spot. If that means I don’t act in another major film, I’ll gladly accept that as long as I have you.”

I knew my dad was probably turning in his grave, but Jesse didn’t control my work ethic anymore. It was like when Divine came along, all that shit dissipated. So, in a way, I guess she freed me. Divine looked up at me, then rested her hand on my cheek. I could see the tears that were accumulating in her eyes. “Wow,” she said as her voice cracked. “That’s the most beautiful thing that’s ever been said to me. I don’t know how you’re able to touch such deep parts of me with words, but I’m glad God wired you that way. I wish I could make you see how it feels when you’re vulnerable with me.”

I lifted my hand and swiped away the tears that fell from her eyes. My dad had always called me soft. He said that I seemed to have more of my mama in me than him and that wasn’t right for a little boy. If I ever cried about anything, he would beat the shit out of me. So, I learned to hide it. Before long, it seemed to have disappeared. My sensitive side was on an indefinite hiatus until Divine came along. “I know how it affects you. I can see the goosebumps on your skin. When you’re vulnerable with me, it affects me the same way. I’ve just learned to hide it.”

After wiping her tears away, I left her to her business, because I hadn’t taken a shower yet. The call I’d been anticipating came through before I could get in, though. “Hello?”

“So, you pulled out of the movie because I could possibly be in it?”

“Come on, Nadia. My lady knows about us. Shit, the world practically knows about us. While it’s acting, I don’t want her to feel a way about the kissing and those sex scenes. I don’t want to feel uncomfortable about it either. My best work wouldn’t shine through because I’d be too tense.”

“You feel that strongly about her, huh? Strong enough to go against what you stand for? You gave Miles your word that you would do this film and now you’re backing out? That’s not the Solomon I know. So, if she can make you do that, then she might be the devil.”

“Get the fuck off my line, Nadia.”

I ended the call and I could feel the anger threatening to consume me. *Why is everyone so concerned with what I do in my life?* I dropped the phone down on the countertop so hard until I think I broke it. My nerves were totally on edge now, and I hoped I didn’t have to talk to anyone else in the business, tonight. They’d get the Solomon Frank they were used to dealing with, no question.

Chapter 5

TONIGHT, I WAS GOING OUT WITH MY BROTHER, AND I WAS KIND of excited about it. I'd been relaxing all day, preparing for tonight's festivities. I hated that I was actually gonna have to be away from my Vine, but I couldn't revolve my life around her. The vine provided all the nutrients to a plant and that was what she was to me, my Vine. She walked outside as I sat there smoking and having a drink. "I'm leaving now, baby," she said as she sat on my lap. "I'm gonna go home, get some laundry done and grab more clothes."

"Okay, baby. Enjoy your peace away from the boss."

The past week had been busy, but it had been productive. Divine deserved the break. Celeste had been quiet, though. Too quiet. She was up to something. I just didn't know what. I'd wait for her to reveal it and hopefully I didn't have to shut her ass down. I allowed my hands to travel to Divine's ass, then I kissed her neck. When I lifted my head, she kissed my lips, then pulled my bottom lip down with her finger. She was so fascinated with my grill. It made me chuckle at times. "I'll do my best. Assicurati di ubriacarti piccolo."

She kissed me again and got up as I frowned. I didn't know why she insisted on speaking to me in a language I didn't understand. Without turning around, she said, "It means make sure you get drunk, baby."

She continued to the door as I watched her ass, wishing I would have dug into that once more before she left. She finally turned back to look at me, showing me her desire through her eyes. *Yeah, I should've hit that.* "I'll be here when you get back."

"Damn. I hope so."

She smiled, then walked her sexy ass off to her car. After I finished my drink, I made my way inside to get dressed. He'd reserved a spot at Apt 503 Lounge and assured me that they would have extra security since I was coming through. I didn't trust that, so I called for my own security. Despite that, I was still ready to turn up. After showering and brushing my teeth, I put my grill in and smiled at myself in the mirror. It had been a while since I'd worn the top. I took a picture and sent it to Divine as I chuckled to myself. I was gonna do a platinum one next time I made a trip to Houston. Paul Wall had made a name for himself customizing grills... aside from rapping anyway.

After moisturizing and conditioning my beard, I went to my closet to see Divine had laid out a fit for me. Nothing fancy, just some jeans and a tee. That was perfect for where I was going. Apt 503 Lounge was a hip-hop driven club and that would probably be the dominant attire, for the male attendees anyway. I got dressed and slid on my white forces, then put on my jewelry. My phone chimed with a message from Divine. *What I wouldn't give to be that towel...*

I chuckled as I read it. She ended her message with heart emojis. I responded, *Don't tempt me with a good time, baby.*

I checked my reflection in the mirror and a nigga looked fly as always. After brushing my waves once more, I slid my wallet in my front pocket and my keys in the other pocket. When I picked up my phone, I saw another message from Divine. *Lol fine... I won't tempt you. But I WILL promise you a GREAT time when you get back to me.*

I sent her heart emojis back as my dick hardened just at the thought of all the things she would do to me. When I made my way up front, I noticed the car was here and my brother hopped out of it. "Solo!" he yelled when he saw me through the glass.

I smiled big and went to my brother. We slapped hands and immediately hugged one another. No matter how our last

interaction went, he was my brother and I'd missed him.
"Nigga you look good!"

I laughed and said, "You don't look bad yourself, David."

Right after, another car turned in the driveway. It was the guys I contacted for security. "You invited other people?"

"Naw. Extra security. Can't ever be too careful."

"True. My guys are gonna meet us there. They say parking is great, so we shouldn't have a problem."

"A'ight, bruh."

With that, I followed him to the car. The three guards I'd hired approached me and shook my hand. They were reputable. I'd seen them around at events and heard about their professionalism. Once I got in the car, David smiled at me, so I asked, "What'chu been up to?"

"Same shit, different day. Although, I *have* looked into going to school for carpentry."

"'Bout time. You the shit with a saw. If you decide to go, send me the bill and I got'chu."

The car ride to the club was filled with talk about what I was up to and shit going on in the hood that I could give a good got damn about. But instead of voicing that, I decided to be easy tonight, let that shit ride and just enjoy time with my brother. When we got to the club, I wasn't worried about his guys being there, since I had my own, but he called them anyway to inform them of our arrival. Once the car was surrounded by security, we got out and they led us to the entrance. The bouncer looked at me and his eyes widened. He pulled back the rope and let us through as people gawked and females screamed.

I was used to this shit because I got it everywhere I went. Kevin Gates was blasting through the speakers and women were grinding and twerking on niggas all over the place. The club manager immediately approached us. "We're so happy to

have you in our establishment tonight, Mr. Frank. Follow me. We have your area already prepared.”

I nodded at him and we followed him to the area of VIP they’d setup for us. “Jam” was coming to an end and “The Box” by Roddy Ricch set the club off. As we sat, David ordered a bottle, then invited a couple of women to our area. I wasn’t really feeling that, but again, I remained silent and tried to stay loose. As soon as the bottle made its way to us, I scooped that shit up and took the first swig, then passed it to David. One of the women started dancing in front of me and I thought of Divine. She wouldn’t be too happy with this setup.

I started playing on my phone and David jerked it out of my hand. “Naw, nigga. No business tonight. Straight turnup. It’s your birthday weekend.”

I chuckled, then ordered a bottle of Hennessy and commenced to getting fucked up. Pulling the blunt from my pocket, I lit up and let loose. Before I knew it, there were at least ten women in our space and one was dancing so hard on David, it looked like they were fucking. My vision was getting a little fuzzy, but I felt good as shit. There was a chick sitting next to me... close. I looked over at her and she slid her hand down to my dick. Staring at her hand for a minute, my shit was bricking up. I moved her hand and she stood to start dancing in front of me.

Her ass was bouncing as she twerked that shit, throwing it in a circle. I took the rest of my Henny to the head and lit up once more. I almost lost my high, though, when I saw David sniff some white shit. “Yo. That ain’t cool, bruh. You know how I feel about that shit.”

“A’ight, a’ight.”

I looked around for our guards and mine were still cool, but his were tripping. Them niggas were drinking as much as we were. How in the fuck were they gonna protect me and watch my back if they were just as fucked up as I was? I was ready to go home and dig up in Divine anyway. We’d been here for almost three hours and I realized there was nothing in

there I wanted. I had everything I needed at home. I just wanted to spend time with David, but he was on his bullshit as usual.

As the night went on, I'd seen him take a couple more sniffs. That nigga was so high, he'd literally pulled his dick out and some nasty hoe was bobbing on the shit. I'd had enough. My image was important, and I didn't need negativity like this in my life. When I stood, I stumbled. Divine had her wish because I was fucked up. "David, you ready? I need to go fall up in something."

He laughed. "It's plenty pussy in here to fall up in. Ready and willing pussy," he said as he moved the chick's boy shorts to the side and slid his fingers in it.

That nigga was wilding. I was fucked up, but not that fucked up. These managers were letting all kinds of shit go on over here. I knew they saw that shit. That nigga pulled out his dick and that hoe sat on it. They were straight up fucking in this bitch. Those pitiful ass guards he hired, were surrounding them. I was starting to believe that they weren't guards at all. Before I could move, this female was on her knees in front of me. Her face was right at my shit. "Yo, move out the way. I don't go for that shit."

She stood and went to David. "I'm out, bruh. This shit is too much for me."

"Man, always been a stick in the mud. I'll holla at'chu," he said as he focused on the chick on his dick.

I slowly shook my head and my guards led me outta that bitch. I rode in the car with them and let David keep the car he'd gotten. Sparking up for my final smoke of the night, I needed to maintain my high for Divine. Watching all that shit had me horny as fuck. I couldn't wait to dive in her gushy shit.

After getting to my house, I stumbled out of the car, and walked toward the patio to finish smoking. When I got there, though, Divine was laid out in a lounge chair, wearing a blue silk robe, looking sexy as shit. I noticed the music playing as I

took a long pull from my blunt. When she turned to me, it was like she was in a trance. I walked closer to her, slowly, because I was so fucked up, I would have fallen over. I flopped down in the chair next to her and handed her my blunt, then pulled the belt loose that was holding her robe closed.

Divine stood from her seat and stood in front of me, sliding her hand from my cheek to the back of my head, then kissed the top of it. “Happy birthday, baby,” she whispered as her hand slid down my back.

I was already on one. Her touch was gon’ make me bust right in my pants. “Show me how happy that shit gon’ be, Vine.”

She took a long pull from the blunt as I laid my head back. For some reason watching her take a pull off that shit had me leaking. That shit was so sexy... watching her get high. It could have been that I was feeling that way because I was high as fuck. She lowered her head and kissed me, sliding her tongue across my bottom lip. When I parted my lips, she released that smoke right to me through her erotic kisses, giving me a charge like no other. She pulled away and passed the blunt back to me. I took a pull while I watched her let the robe slide from her shoulders to the ground.

All that ass was eating that fucking thong, and I was ready to eat, too. She was so fucking sexy. I slumped even more in my seat and unzipped my pants, pulling my dick out. That shit was hard, and it needed to be free. “Where would you like for me to demonstrate my appreciation for your birth, Mr. Frank?” she asked softly, then pulled her hair to one side and looked back at me.

I laid my head back, my eyes only narrow slits, and said, “All over this dick, baby. But I want that reverse shit. I need to see that ass working on my shit. And leave that thong on, Vine. Come appreciate yo’ man.”

She came to me as I stroked myself and dropped to her knees. I moved my hand and gave her access to please me like only she could. My senses were heightened and the minute her

tongue touched the head of my dick it felt like she'd licked my fucking heart. She teased the head like she normally did, lubing me up, but a nigga was feeling aggressive as hell. When she slid her warm mouth down my shit, I grabbed her by her hair and slowly pumped my shit to the back of her throat. Feeling her gag was doing me in, though.

She released me from her mouth, not giving me the satisfaction of nutting that way tonight, and turned around, pulling her thong to the side. I stretched my legs open a little wider as she grabbed my dick, putting him in position to receive all the creamy goodness, then slid down my pole. *Dear Lord... father of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

Baby girl was so fucking sexy and watching that ass twerk as "Say So" by PJ Morton and JoJo played in the background, I was feeling things prematurely it seemed. I was so open to her in a short amount of time. She needed to say that she loved me, because that was what this shit felt like. I wanted to ask her to move in permanently and fuck my world up every day. Grabbing her hips, I slammed her down on all my erection, trying to take her fucking breath away. I watched her ass jiggle as I filled her to capacity with every stroke, then let her go to continue handling me however she wanted to.

When she began circling her hips as she grinded on me, that shit took me to another place. She pulled my hands to her breasts and I teased her nipples with my fingertips. "Fuck, girl! I love this pussy. Tell me how you feel about this dick, baby. Talk to me, Vine."

My extremities were tingling, and I knew her heat was about to take me down... fast. I had no control as high as I was. Felt like I was sitting on top of the damn clouds, blowing rings of smoke into the atmosphere, making the whole world as high as me. If that wasn't high ass thinking, I didn't know what it was. And where she was taking me, I felt like I was finna impregnate mother earth... shit! I was raw in all this good-ass pussy. "Like it was made for me," she moaned.

Oh shit. Those words did some shit to me I didn't expect. It hit me right in the chest and penetrated my heart. As I felt her legs trembling, she continued, "Like I never been touched or loved until now. I adore this dick, baby," she cried out as she came all over my dick, her head falling back against mine.

I was doing my best to hold my orgasm back, so I didn't have to interrupt her orgasm, but shit, I couldn't. Instead, I wrapped my arms tightly around her waist and did something I was gon' probably regret when I was sober. I bust all in her depths, planting my seeds in her womb, hoping they weren't landing on fertile ground. "Fuuuuck!" I roared.

My voice was filled with pleasure and regret all at the same time. Resting my forehead against her back, I whispered, "That shit felt like love, Vine. I ain't ever felt nothing even close to that magnitude."

She twisted her body somewhat to look at me, my dick still resting inside of her. She kissed my lips, then said, "You ain't alone in that feeling. How is it possible to feel you so damn deep so fast?" she asked before kissing me again.

I slid my tongue past her lips as I felt my dick hardening again inside of her. When my lips left hers, I leaned back and spun her around on my dick. It never left her wetness. I sat up more and kissed her nipples, sliding my hand to her ass. I looked up at her and her gaze had me in a trance. She was so beautiful, and her aura had me at hello. "I opened up to you in ways I've never opened up to anybody, and I swallowed you whole. You're a part of me now, baby. My Vine. I can't help but flourish from the nutrients you give me. It's not surprising that this shit is so deep to me, because of that."

Lifting her hips, I began thrusting into her once again. Pulling her with me as I laid back in the chair, I held her against me tightly as I began to slowly stroke her pussy, feeling her juices cover my balls. She was better than the strongest drugs and I was addicted. I hoped she never left me because I wouldn't be the same. She rolled her hips into me and whispered in my ear, "That sounds like love to me."

Her words produced goosebumps on my flesh, causing me to stroke her deeper and with even more passion. I closed my eyes, feeling every twitch her pussy made and enjoying every roll her hips took. “It does sound like it. It definitely feels like it.”

With my dick repeatedly kissing her cervix, I slid my hands up and down her back, digging my fingertips into her flesh as I latched on to her nipple once again. She was perfection personified and I was grateful to be able to add to her aura. *How do you make perfection better?* I couldn’t make her better, but she was definitely doing that for me... teaching me how to let go of my emotions with her. With what she was putting on me, I didn’t have a choice. It felt like the power I once held was being stripped from me with every thrust inside of her and for once, I didn’t mind being stripped bare.

Divine moaned and bucked against me, then grabbed my face, causing me to release her nipple. “Then take me inside and make love to me.”

“That’s what you want? You about to be confessing shit you don’t wanna confess.”

I knew that shit could be true for me, but I had no intentions of letting those confessions leave my lips... just my eyes and my dick.

I felt her hand in my beard and the kisses to my face, but I didn’t want to get up. Then I smelled food. I was starving. “Hey. It’s time for breakfast birthday boy,” Divine whispered.

I slowly opened my eyes and stared into hers. The time we had last night... more like this morning was still on my mind. The way I gave her all of me last night was hard to believe. I was so gentle but thorough with her, showering her body with the affection and attention it deserved... and love. She owned

every bit of me, and I couldn't allow her to ever think otherwise. "Hey. Thank you," I said huskily.

Neither of us had confessed what we were both feeling, but it was definitely evident in her eyes. *She loved me.* She moved away from me so I could go handle my hygiene. As I stood in the bathroom, looking in the mirror, I checked out myself. Like really stared in the mirror, trying to see my soul. It felt so much lighter and I knew that was because of Divine. When I was done, I headed back to the room to find her sitting in the bed with a tray of breakfast. "Did the chef come? Where's your breakfast?"

"Umm... both the pieces of frittata and all that fruit is not just for you, Mr. Frank," she said as I picked with the food to get a taste. "And no, the chef didn't come. I made this."

I looked up at her. "You know I worked up an appetite. But if you can cook, you gon' really spoil a nigga. You know that, right?" I asked as I sat in the bed and pulled her to my lap.

"Well, consider yourself spoiled."

Before I could get comfortable with her on my lap, she clapped her hands together and yelled, "Oh! Speaking of spoiled, I got presents."

She hopped off my lap and ran out of the room. That was sweet of her, but she didn't have to buy me gifts. I hadn't had a gift bought for me for my birthday in a long-ass time. I'd gotten used to not getting anything. I continued picking with the food on the tray because the frittata was getting cold. When she came back to the room, she held out a gift and said, "Gag gift first. That's what popped into my head when I realized something was going on between us."

I frowned slightly. I didn't joke around often, so I didn't quite know how to take this gift. When I opened it, it was the DVD of *Beauty and the Beast*. I frowned even harder, trying to figure out what was so funny about it. Then realization hit me. I was the beast. I looked at her from the corners of my eyes and said, "Ha, ha, ha."

She laughed as she rolled her eyes, then sat her other gifts for me on my lap. “You really have to loosen up. Birthdays are a big deal. And the best time to let your hair down.”

“Well, birthdays have never really been a big deal for me. So, change isn’t gonna happen overnight.”

I hadn’t had a party since I was eight. After my mama died, we stopped celebrating birthdays altogether, especially since she died a couple of days after my seventeenth birthday. So, I hadn’t really celebrated since I was sixteen. “I get it, baby. Good thing you got me now,” she said, then winked at me.

She began eating while I opened the other gifts. The cigar sampler was nice. I’d be trying out one of those cigars later today and the custom lighter that came with it was everything. The other gift was a weed grinder in black and gold. Another genuinely nice gift. I looked up at her and said, “Thank you so much, baby. These are really nice gifts. Now let me get my strength up, so I can really show my appreciation.”

She smiled. “Please do. And you’re very welcome. I was thinking, maybe you can come to my birthday dinner with my parents with me. If you want.”

My eyebrows lifted. She wanted me to meet her parents. I didn’t have a problem meeting them, because I admired the hell out of them, but it would be totally different meeting them as the man that stole their daughter’s heart. Although she hadn’t said so, I knew that I owned every part of her. Her body and the way she looked at me told me that whatever I wanted from her was mine. I had stuffed my mouth with the frittata. After chewing and swallowing, I asked, “You ready to tell them we’re a couple? Or have you already told them?”

“My mother may have a clue. I talked to her about her and my dad. I’m sure she’s put two and two together by now. But I am ready. Are you?”

I pulled her close to me and fed her some of the frittata, then kissed her forehead. “I been ready. I’m ready for the

world to know about us whenever you are. I wanna take you out and be free to go wherever I wanna take you. I know you not feeling the paparazzi, but I can help you through that, baby. Although you think I'm the beast, it comes in handy when dealing with those vultures. So, you ready to ride with me, baby?"

She placed her hand on my cheek, then kissed my lips.
"Let's do it, baby."

Chapter 6

AFTER FILMING ALL DAY, I JUST WANTED TO RELAX WITH MY BABY. Having her around meant the world to me. I was stingy as hell when it came to her. When she would go home to wash or whatever, I just wanted to pack up and go with her. The weekend was amazing, though. I couldn't wait until her birthday to reveal to the world that she was my woman. I planned to take her out to see a Broadway musical and to an upscale restaurant. And the most public event of them all would be the gala that was coming up. As I got a bottle of water from the fridge, Divine and Celeste had walked in. "Go ahead and handle your business with Solomon, we can talk afterwards," Divine said.

"Okay," Celeste responded as she sat on the stool.

Before Divine could walk away, I called out, "Divine. Come here, please."

When she made her way to me, I bit my bottom lip as Celeste looked on, eyes wide. "Yes, Mr. Frank?"

I grabbed her hand and pulled her closer, then kissed her pretty lips. Might as well let my agent know before she heard about it or saw us together on TV. When I pulled away from Divine, she smiled, and I slapped her ass as she turned to leave. She seemed to move a little faster after that. When she was completely gone, Celeste looked back at me and said, "You have got to be kidding me! That's why you turned down that role with Ms. Benjamin!"

"You and I both know that Nadia is gonna get that role. Divine is everything I've ever wanted. I feel like you hired her for that reason."

“Nooo, I didn’t. I figured she would mellow you out, but umm... it’s only been like a little over two weeks at best, right?”

“It’s been three. But why does time matter?”

“I suppose it doesn’t. Are you sure about this? Is it real, Solomon?”

“Celeste, you know me. I don’t fake shit. And as much as I distance myself personally from people, it has to be real. Now what is it that you came to talk to me about?”

“Oh... umm... you have offers on the table from Tom Ford and Gucci. There’s also a couple of other offers. One is for a stage play...”

“Naw. Movies only. You know that.”

She exhaled louder than what I was comfortable with, so I asked, “You have something you need to talk to Divine about? Our meeting is over.”

I walked out the kitchen without giving her a goodbye. She was acting brand new suddenly like she didn’t know what I went for. I guess I *have* been changing it up some, though, especially with taking that romantic role in the first place. That didn’t give her a right to get impatient or irritated or whatever that loud-ass exhale meant. When I passed by Divine, I said, “She’s still in the kitchen.”

I tucked off to my room. I was tired as fuck anyway and my patience was thin. There were still a few days of filming left before my next break and I was already over it. As I stripped down to my drawers, my phone rang. “Hello?”

“You have a collect call from... David-come-bail-me-out-at-county.”

I ended the call. He’d said all that shit like a continuous statement, so I didn’t have to pay for the call. His ass was gon’ be shocked when I didn’t show up. As I sat on side of the bed, Divine walked in. “Celeste is gone,” she said, waiting for a response.

When I didn't give her one, she asked, "Something wrong?"

"I'm just tired, baby. When I'm tired, I'm extremely irritable. She tried to offer me a role for a stage play. Celeste knows damn well I wouldn't do a stage play. But what really irritated me was her heavy sigh, like I was being unreasonable."

I purposely left out David's predicament. I didn't want her to try to talk me into going get him. All I wanted to do now was go to sleep. I had a long day of filming tomorrow and I didn't feel like talking about David. That shit would have me up all night. Unbelievably, I didn't even feel like having sex. She climbed in bed behind me and wrapped her arms around my shoulders, then kissed my cheek. "Mi sto innamorando di te," she whispered in my ear.

While it sounded sexy, it was only irritating me more, because I didn't know what she was saying. Before I could say so, she asked, "What do you need me to do to rid you of this irritation?"

"I don't know, Vine. I'm not really feeling like doing anything but sleeping, right now."

That was putting it nicely. My mind was working overtime, wondering what she and Celeste had talked about, but at the same time, I didn't want to know. David was on my mind and wondering what the hell he'd gotten himself into this time. I didn't have time to be fooling around with him. I needed rest to be able to put in quality work tomorrow. Celeste questioning my decision on being with Divine was kind of irritating me as well. I was a forty-one-year-old man. I knew she cared, but I already wasn't in the greatest mood.

She kissed my cheek again. "Understandable. But before you do, there's something I need you to know," she said as she rested her forehead against the side of my head. "It means I'm falling in love with you."

I slowly turned my head to her, staring into her eyes in disbelief. I wasn't in disbelief that she was falling in love with me, but that she actually said it. I pulled her in front of me, causing her to straddle my lap. "Is it that you're falling? Or do you love me, Vine?" I asked in a low voice.

Here I was irritable as fuck a minute ago, but her words calmed me, making me want to bury myself inside of her. My hands slid to her ass and squeezed it as I softly kissed her neck. She moaned softly, then she brought her hands to my face, staring me in the eyes. "I'm in love with you, Solomon Frank."

My dick was hard as a rock. I wish she would have had on next to nothing like me. I was only sitting here in my boxers. I slid my hands in her pants and squeezed her ass. Taking my eyes off hers for a moment, I said, "The only people that have said those words to me are my mother and my brother when he was a kid. I know my dad loved me, but he refused to say it, fearing that it would make him sound too soft. He raised me to be the same way. So, for me to say this is hard as hell, but I refuse to leave you hanging. You're everything my heart wants and my soul craves. I love you, too, Divine Stewart."

I lifted her rose colored blouse over her head, then kissed her lips, sliding my tongue inside. Everything I thought I wanted to do was out the window and I just wanted to feel her love wrapped all around me in a tight embrace.

As I got dressed, I stared at myself in the mirror and smiled. I couldn't believe I was a man in love. I'd never told anyone I had been with that I was in love with them. It felt good, though. I was pretty upbeat, although, I was working on a limited amount of sleep. After the outpouring of our emotions, there was no way I could go to sleep without making love to Divine. Today and tomorrow would be a full

day of filming and Thursday would be a half day. We would have a break Friday and Saturday again. I planned to ask Divine to move in with me full-time. She was here most of the time anyway.

After glancing in the mirror at my navy slacks and white button down, I made my way to my chair to drink my tea before leaving. Breakfast would be served on the set. I could see Divine in the kitchen, so I went there. When I entered, she was on the phone, but her eyes met mine and she handed me my tea. She ended her phone call and kissed my lips, then said, “The car will be here in thirty.”

“Okay. Everything cool?” I asked, then took a sip of my tea.

“Everything is great, baby, but there’s something I wanna run by you.”

I sat my tea down on the countertop and folded my arms across my chest. Something told me that phone conversation she was having was about me. “What’s up?”

She tucked her hair behind her ear... that nervous thing. *What did she have to say?* “There’s a movie on the table. Same genre as before, but even more perfect for you. I’ve read the script, and Celeste read the script. And if you take this role, you’ll have influence on who plays lead, opposite you. You interested in hearing about it?”

I frowned slightly. Celeste was gonna fuck her way out of a job. I didn’t give a fuck about a contract. If Divine was doing all the work, what the hell did I need her for? “I’m actually interested in knowing why you’re finding movie’s and making pitches instead of Celeste. That’s what I pay her for.”

“I got this job because Celeste knows my dad. He just retired and when he did, I was out of a job, because I was his PA. I needed a job and Celeste told my father she’d help with that and preparing me to be an agent as a favor to him. She let me take a couple of test runs on some things to give me some experience. Are you mad at her about it?”

She seemed nervous about my response. I guess because my frown had deepened as she explained. “I don’t like to be left in the dark. She knows that. But she also knows that I wouldn’t have hired you as a personal assistant if you were going to be her assistant as well. So, while I’m irritated at just finding this out, I understand why she didn’t tell me. Put the script by my chair and I’ll start reading through it when we get back.”

I picked up my cup and took a sip of my tea before it started getting cold. It wasn’t that I didn’t trust Divine, but I didn’t know about this. We were already involved personally. I didn’t know if I wanted her involved in every aspect of my business. Maybe it was just my insecurities. I wouldn’t be able to keep switching hats with her. I would never be as professional as I needed to be. I felt like Celeste was using her because of that.

She stepped closer to me and wrapped an arm around my neck and kissed my cheek. I sat my tea down and grabbed her ass but still adorning the frown on my face. “You know, you’re very sexy, even when you’re irritated. Deep frowns on your face and tightened lips and all.”

“A’ight, stop, before I take my irritation out on that pussy. Then I’m gon’ be late for filming.”

I pat her ass, then gave it a squeeze. Diving in her shit was all I could think about now. She was forcing me to abandon some of my old habits when it came to business and it was driving me insane... but in a good way. “Sorry, Mr. Frank. Couldn’t help myself. I’ll get my things and meet you in the foyer.”

She was so damn horny, and she was making me that way, too. As she tried to walk away, I pulled her back to me and kissed her deeply. She made me wanna say fuck everything else and just spend my days laying up with her, catering to her. I had a whole day of pampering planned for her on Saturday, then we would go to the Broadway show I’d bought tickets for and dinner. I just hoped she enjoyed that. When I released her

mouth from my hostage, I slid my thumb over her bottom lip. “I could get so lost in you, Divine.”

She softly kissed me again. “I love you, too.”

“I don’t think you understand. I more than love you. How that’s possible? I don’t have a clue, but when I say I can get lost in you... I mean fuck everything else. Just attach myself to you and only you. You’re changing me and I like it.”

I threaded my hands through her hair, holding her close to me. Mumbling against her lips, I said, “Fuck breakfast. I have breakfast here.”

Quickly sliding my hand in her clothes between her legs, I took a sample of her wetness and brought it to my lips to taste. “I can’t let this go to waste, Divine.”

“We don’t have much time, baby. The car...”

I kissed her to hush up all that talking she was trying to do. She slid her tongue in my mouth and wrapped her arms around my neck. I didn’t need much time for what I wanted... needed. Damn, I needed her... all of her. My dick was threatening to break my zipper if he got any harder. She pulled her lips away from mine as I slid my hands in her pants, wanting to pull them down her legs. “We can get lost in each other later. Other people need you today... aside from me.”

“But I can’t fuck them. Divine, you telling me no? It’s here or in the trailer. I need you, baby. Tell my dick you don’t want him. We ain’t gotta get lost. Just enough to satisfy my thirst for now. You making me resort to begging, baby.”

My fingers slid into her wetness again and I stroked her slowly as she moaned. “Give me my shit, Divine. We wasting time right now,” I said in a low voice against her ear.

She slid her arms from around me and down to my belt. Once she undid it and my pants, she pulled my shit down, freeing my dick. I quickly shoved her pants and underwear down over her hips and to her knees, then spun her around to where she was leaning against the island. I couldn’t suppress the animalistic growl that escaped me as I stroked my shit,

then shoved it inside of her. Feeling my body shiver in response let me know just how much I was fiending for her. “Fuck! Divine... I can’t believe you were trying to keep my pussy from me. Ahh Shit!”

“Take it, baby,” she moaned as she threw it back at me.

I stroked her hard and deep, trying to quench my undeniable thirst for her. But I realized I needed a taste before I could continue. Pulling out and going to my knees, I stiffened my tongue to suck her pussy from the back. I swear she had driven me crazy with the way she tasted. I couldn’t fuck her without having her on my tongue. Hearing her screams and pants of pleasure only excited me. I stood back to my feet as my dick leaked on the floor and pushed back inside of her goodness. Pulling her back by her hair, I turned her face to mine to give her a quick taste of what I couldn’t get enough of.

The way she licked and sucked at my tongue and lips made me think that she loved her taste as much as I did. That shit was so damn sexy, and it felt like my dick expanded because of it. Her legs began trembling and I knew she was about to have a mind-blowing climax. I was close as well. She held my face to hers and bit my bottom lip and whimpered as she released that premium shit all over my dick. That made me hungrier and the desire to fill her with my seed even greater. Grabbing her hips, I slammed into her repeatedly until I growled out my release. Thoughts of wearing a condom were long gone after I experienced her raw. I’d never go back.

As I caught my breath and slid out of her, I pulled up my pants without washing her essence off of me as she watched. “I want to smell you on me all day. And who says we didn’t have time?”

“You were right... and I’m thankful for it.”

I smirked as her phone chimed. “The car’s here.”

Looked like I’d be getting breakfast after all. I needed it since I’d definitely worked up an appetite.

It seemed like filming had lasted all day and I had only been there for three hours. I'd done a lot of my own stunts, so that made me exhausted. That was pretty much what we did for the entire time... stunts. I was worn out, but tonight was a big night for my baby. It was her birthday weekend and I would also meet her parents tonight. They'd both been popular in the industry, her dad even more so as a director. I was somewhat nervous about it, but I would make it through.

When I left the set and had gone to pick up her birthday gifts, I came straight home. My barber was meeting me to touch up my fade and trim my beard. Today, I'd picked out my own fit: a gray Gucci suit with a black shirt and a black tie. Divine had been out and about all day. Of course, I'd given her the day off for her birthday. Although the lines between our personal and professional relationship were somewhat blurred, it was working. I puffed on a cigar while my barber got me right, then went to take a shower. Making sure I smelled good and was moisturized was easy. I always took my grooming seriously, even to sit around the house. So, to make a good impression wasn't hard as far as the looks went.

Checking the time, I saw I had a little over an hour to be ready, so I went ahead and got dressed, put on my diamond studs and watch and added some glasses to the ensemble to complete it. The fit was nice if I had to say so myself. I made my way to my chair with a glass of Henny to ease my nerves. About ten minutes later, I heard Divine enter the house. I could see her reflection in the glass, just staring at me in her beautiful red dress. It was speaking to me, telling me to cum get it, and Lord, did I want to. As she stood there in a trance, ogling all this masculinity, I stood from my chair and turned to her.

Her hair was straight and nearly hung to her waist and her dress clung to her curves perfectly. The makeup she wore was

natural and light and her red heels were begging me to put them in the air. I walked over to her with my drink in my hand and pulled her to me by her waist. “Happy birthday, baby. You look gorgeous,” I said low in her ear.

My phone was vibrating in my pocket, but I refused to entertain whoever was calling, because tonight was about my baby.

MY WOMAN.

MY LIFE-CHANGER.

MY FOREVER LOVE.

“Thank you. You look amazing,” she said as I continued to hold her close.

“Thank you. So, I have a gift for you tonight, since it *is* your actual birthday. I believe it will go amazingly well with the dress you’re wearing.”

I left her to go back to my chair to get the jewelry box. I’d purchased her a diamond necklace and drop earrings set. I was nervous about giving it to her, because she didn’t wear jewelry often, but I thought it would look gorgeous on her. When I came back with the box, her eyes widened slightly. My nerves were a little heightened, waiting to see if she would like it. I handed it over to her and said, “Here’s one of your gifts.”

When she opened the box, she said, “Oh, baby. Wow... this is about the most beautiful gift I’ve ever gotten.”

I smiled slightly, but I was searching her eyes to see if she really liked it. She cupped my cheek and kissed my lips. “Thank you. I absolutely loooooove. Would you?” she asked as she took the necklace from the box and handed it to me.

As she held up her hair, I clasped it around her neck. She put on the earrings, then stepped away from me, flipping her hair over her shoulder. “So, love, how do I look?”

“Just as I imagined when I saw it. Beautiful as always.”

She wrapped her arms around my neck and kissed my lips once again. I did believe that she liked it. Trying to relax a little, I took a deep breath as she said, “Thank you again, love. You ready to go, baby? The car will be here any minute.”

“Yep,” I said, then downed the rest of my Henny.

When we got to the house, my nerves kicked up quite a bit. I was assuming the dinner would be at a restaurant, where I would have to pay attention to other people somewhat and not have to hold as much conversation. This place was massive. They could hide from each other for days in a house this huge. Divine let us in, and we were immediately greeted by someone I took to be the housekeeper. “Divine! How are you, beautiful? Happy birthday!”

They embraced as Divine said, “Thanks, Gloria. I’m great.”

She turned to me and I tried to offer a smile. It probably looked awkward. “This is my boyfriend, Solomon.”

Gloria’s eyes widened and I was waiting for her to scream or be weird, but she didn’t. She just stood there gawking, which caused me to chuckle. I grabbed her hand and said, “Nice to meet you, Gloria.”

“Same here,” she said with a smile. Turning back to Divine, she added, “Your parents are in the entertaining room.”

“Thanks, Gloria.”

Divine led me through the house which I had to marvel at. Her upbringing was way different than mine. I grew up in a three-bedroom house that could fit in their foyer. As we walked, she turned to me and asked, “You okay, baby? You seem a little nervous.”

I stopped walking and pulled her to me. “I’m meeting the most important people in your life. Of course, I’m a little nervous. I don’t make great first impressions. I’m sure you remember. It was a struggle to smile with Gloria.”

Wrapping my arms around her waist, I continued, “But you can calm the beast in me.”

Releasing my embrace, I grabbed her hands and I laid them on my chest as I closed my eyes. After taking a deep breath and exhaling with a slight moan, I opened them and stared at her. Divine leaned into me and kissed my lips. “I love you. That is all that will matter to my parents. Just relax and let yourself... live. Besides, my parents are a riot after a few drinks.”

I gave her a soft smile, then said, “I love you, too, Vine.”

She grabbed my hand and gave it a squeeze, then continued to lead the way to her parents. Knowing how much I admired her dad... Desmond Stewart... whew. The man was a genius... a master mind when it came to directing quality films. So, my nerves weren't just because I was Divine's boyfriend, but I respected him so much in the industry. I guess I was happy to be meeting the man I'd looked up to my entire career. That same man could be my father-in-law one day. *Whoa. Slow down, Solomon.*

When we got to the room they were in, music was playing, and Mr. Stewart was dancing a little. The moment they noticed us, they made their way to us. Mr. Stewart greeted Divine and Mrs. Stewart quickly made her way to me. “Solomon Frank, so nice to meet you. I'm Juliana, Divine's mother.”

She extended her hand and I gave her a genuine smile. “Nice to meet you also, Mrs. Stewart.”

I couldn't call her Juliana. I wouldn't dare. My mama would have risen from the dead and slapped me in my mouth. She smiled politely and we kind of stood there awkwardly. I didn't know what else to say to her. So, she went to Divine and greeted her as I looked on. Mr. Stewart held out his hand to me and said, “It's good to see you again, Solomon. It's been a while.”

I nodded. “Yes, sir, it has. It's good to see you again as well,” I said as I shook his hand.

While we were familiar, I didn't really know him. I knew him professionally but that was it. Personal interaction could be a totally different thing. Divine moved closer to me and wrapped her arm around mine. I couldn't really hear anything else when she did that. All I could focus on was her. When I heard her mother asking to be excused, I nodded my head with a slight smile. More words were being exchanged and since dinner was being catered, we would have time to chat. *Shit.* Divine turned to me and wrapped her arms around my neck. "Dance with me my love. This is one of my favorite songs, and it *is* my birthday."

She smiled and kissed my lips. I was doing my best to maintain a soft expression on my face instead of the normal frown I adorned. That shit was hard as hell. Since I was an actor, one would think that shit would be easy. Not so much. "I think you did good with that first impression. You should give yourself a pat on the back."

I swayed to the music while holding Divine at her hips, being careful not to slide them to her ass. It sounded like Frank Sinatra, but I wasn't familiar with that type of music. Most people didn't know how "hood" I was. I was just a great actor that kept his mouth shut and his actions somewhat refined. "I think you're somewhat partial, since you love me."

She squinted then nodded once. "You could be right, but it was a helluva lot better than the one I got," she said, then giggled.

I couldn't help but smile as I thought about how rough I was with her at first. Leaning down, I kissed her lips. "You're right about that. I was a bit rough," I said when I pulled away.

Holding her this way felt like I was embracing an angel. I wasn't much of a dancer but being here in this moment with her was everything to me. I knew that she didn't believe me when I said I could get totally lost in her. Shunning the outside world just to have her all to myself would be easy for me. Divine frowned at me then burst into laughter. "A bit? Baby,

you wouldn't even shake my hand. But it's cool, though, because now you can't keep your hands off me. And I love it."

I smiled at her and pulled her in my embrace. "That was mild. I could have been worse. You don't ever wanna see worse."

Right after, I heard a voice speaking Italian as Divine often did. I already knew that they would be talking about me in Italian if I ever pissed them off. What had I gotten myself into? Divine's mom and dad had come back with two glasses of wine. "They really do," Divine's dad said.

I could feel the frown brewing and about to surface on my face. Divine tip toed to my ear and whispered, "She basically said we look good together."

I gave her a head nod as Mr. Stewart approached us, handing us our glasses of wine. "Let's have a seat."

We followed them to the black sofas, where they sat on one and Divine and I sat on the other. As soon as we sat, Mr. Stewart said, "So, Solomon, how's the business treating you? You've developed into one helluva an actor."

"Thank you, sir. The business is great. There's more work on the table than I'm sure I want."

I grabbed Divine's hand, holding it in mine as I took a sip of my wine. "You talking retirement?" he asked as his eyes widened.

"No, sir. I'm just not accepting as many jobs. There's someone in my life that deserves my time as well."

"I get it. Baby girl wants to be an agent. How do you feel about that? She's already been with somebody that didn't value her dreams as much as his own. That doesn't need to be a concern here, right?"

Before I could respond, Divine had slid the back of her fingers down my cheek, distracting me totally. I grabbed her hand and kissed it, then said, "This woman means everything to me already. Whatever she wants to do, she has my support."

You don't have that to worry about, Mr. Stewart. Your daughter is in safe hands with me. And she knows whatever she needs from me, she has it. No question."

I kissed her hand again, although I wanted to lay her back on that sofa and tongue her down. To try to calm my desires, I took another sip of wine. "Oh my gosh, Des."

I looked up to see her drop her head to his shoulder. She continued, "They look like us back then... when we were young."

They kissed each other on the lips, and I knew that could be me and my Vine years from now. They were the reason why she was so passionate. "You'll forever be young to me, baby," Mr. Stewart said.

Divine had told me that there was a significant age gap between her parents, like ten years or so. I continued to hold Divine's hand, itching to show her some of the passion the two of them were sharing. Her mom told him thank you and kissed him again. When he turned his attention back to us, he said, "Well, Solomon, all I can say is I like you and that's my only baby sitting next to you. I'm trusting you with her. Please don't let me down."

I nodded my head, hoping that I could forever honor his words. "I don't intend to, sir."

I glanced at Divine, then gulped the rest of that wine. I was tired of playing with it and sipping like I was supposed to. I wasn't much of a wine drinker anyway. I usually went for the hard stuff. The hard stuff was easier to sip, cause I had to give my throat time to recover from what I'd swallowed. "Okay then. Welcome to the family," Mr. Stewart said and chuckled.

I was slightly embarrassed after that. *What was I thinking?* The chef walked into the room informing them that dinner was ready, so Mr. Stewart asked, "Shall we eat?"

I nodded, then stood from the sofa, and helped Divine up to follow them to the dining area. Pulling Divine close, I

asked, “Did I answer his questions okay? I tried to be as honest as possible.”

This moment, meeting her parents had me feeling so insecure and unsure of myself. Divine brought her hands to my face. “You did great, baby. Relax my love. We’re good. Everything is... perfect. Okay?”

That was easy for her to say. I felt like I was auditioning for my first movie. “Do me a favor and help me relax, baby.”

She slid her hands to the back of my head, pulling me to her, kissing me softly on the lips. When she pulled away, I bit my bottom lip. That shit was so sweet, I was gon’ definitely need another one. She slid one of her hands to my chest and asked, “What do you need me to do?”

The way she stared in my eyes made me wanna duck off into one of these rooms. “Give me some more of those sweet lips. You knew that soft peck was only going to fuel my fire.”

She tipped her head back, giving me access to all I wanted. And the moment I laid my lips on hers, I felt my spirit calm. Sliding my hands through her hair, I moaned into her mouth, suddenly wishing we were at home. Pulling away from her, I leaned my forehead against hers and mumbled, “Shit. I can’t wait until we get home.”

“Me either, baby.”

“Baby wake up. You ain’t gon’ believe this shit, but I cooked breakfast for you. It ain’t that fancy shit you made, but it’s some bacon, scrambled eggs, and Pillsbury biscuits.”

She stirred in her sleep, but I knew she heard me. I’d made love to her all night. After leaving her parents’ house slightly drunk, I was ready to give her a workout. Plus, all the sensuous touching she was doing under the table had me hard as hell. But today was the day I was catering to her. I’d

brought the tray in the room. Along with her breakfast, I'd made her a mimosa, and laid a single rose on the tray. I only fixed breakfast for her. While she was at the spa, I was gonna have plenty of time to eat.

They would be giving her a two-hour massage, doing her nails, toenails, her hair if she wanted them to, and a facial, along with her makeup for this evening. I was taking her to a Broadway special of Raisin in the Sun. There was only one performance and not many people knew about it. Thankfully, I was able to cop two tickets. On the tray also sat a gift-wrapped box with the key to my house on a monogrammed keychain inside of it. I was gonna ask her to move in with me. "Viiine, come on, baby, so you won't be late."

She stirred and moaned, making me wanna say to hell with everything. Finally, she pulled the covers from her head and squinted as she looked at the tray. She smiled, then asked, "You really made this?"

I watched her stretch, her nipples begging to greet my lips. Biting my bottom lip to restrain myself, I said, "Hell yeah. And burned myself, too... all for you. I ain't cooked in years. Hadn't had to."

She grabbed my hand and kissed it. "Thank you, baby. Can I pee and brush my teeth first so I can kiss you?"

I shook my head as a smile played on my lips. "As if you had to ask. Come on, girl."

I sat the tray on the nightstand, then sat on the bed and kissed her head. Shortly after, she hopped out of it to go handle her hygiene. As I sat there, I wondered how she would answer the question of her moving in with me. Was she traditional and wanted something more concrete between us, like an engagement, before she fully submerged herself in us? I didn't know what her response would be, but all she could do was say yes or no. All I knew was that I loved feeling her next to me at night. When she reentered the room, she wore my wife beater. As if that was enough to cover those hard ass nipples.

She made her way to me, then stood between my legs, palming my face. Man, those nipples were right in my face and as badly as I wanted to nibble on them, I again restrained myself. Divine kissed my lips a few times, then said, “Thank you so much for this, love.”

“You’re welcome,” I said as I pulled her to my lap.

Grabbing a strip of bacon, I fed it to her, then gently grabbed her nipple through the shirt with my lips. I couldn’t help it. Ignoring my actions, she chewed the bacon and nodded her head. “Pretty good for a rusty cook,” she joked, then kissed my lips.

She had to ignore me, or we were gonna end up engaging in activities we didn’t have time for. She tipped her head in the direction of the tray and asked, “So, what’s in the box, baby?”

I gently pat her legs so she would get up, then got the tray from the nightstand and sat it on the bed. She pinched off a piece of the biscuit as I said, “Open it and find out.”

She glanced at me, then tore into the box. She stared at the keychain for a moment, fingering her name that was engraved in it, then slid it on her finger, letting the key dangle. The way she was staring at it, let me know that her mind was working overtime, trying to figure out why I was giving her a key. She tucked her hair behind her ear, then asked, “Something you wanna ask me, love?”

I went to my knees in front of her and held her hands in mine. “Divine, I know we haven’t known one another long, but sleeping next to you and just always being around you makes my soul happy, baby. I’m giving you this key, because I would like for you to move in with me. Live here all the time. There’s no pressure, though. If that’s something you aren’t comfortable with yet, I understand. I just... I love you and I want you close to me all the time, even when I’m sleeping.”

She released my hands and swiped at the tear that fell from her eyes, then whispered, “Kiss me.”

I did what she asked, not sure of what she would say when the kiss was over. If I had to persuade her to say yes with the kiss, I was giving her my best. She grabbed my face, pulling me into her, so I obliged and stood to my feet, following her as she leaned back on the bed until I was on top of her. Divine gently swept her hand over my cheek as I stared into her eyes, still waiting to hear what her decision would be. “I love you, too. There’s nothing I would love more than to wake up to this face, this body and all the love you’re always showing me. So, I guess I’m saying yes, my love.”

I didn’t respond verbally, just pushed her legs open with my knee and pulled my dick out of my sweatpants and guided him inside of her. “Damn, baby. I love you so much.”

I knew we were pressed for time and her breakfast was getting cold, but I couldn’t resist the urge to make love to her. Moving the beater to the side, I sucked her nipple as I plunged deeply inside of her. After a few moments, her legs wrapped around my waist and my pace increased. I hated that I had to hurry it along, but she needed to eat, shower, and get going. As I felt her legs trembling, my nut was rising to the surface as well. She gripped my shoulders as her orgasm freed itself. “Shit, Vine. Shit!” I said as I released inside of her.

She kissed my neck, cheek, then lips. “I didn’t know I could love somebody this much,” she whispered as she ran her finger across my bottom lip.

“Me either,” I whispered back as allowed myself to slide out of her. “Fuck! My shit sensitive as hell right now. I been using him too much.”

I smirked as I lifted myself from the bed, then pulled her up. She smirked as well. As she grabbed my dick, she said, “Well, I say you and him get used to it, since I live here now.”

“Mmm. You better get your hands off him before you miss your spa day. That’s all I’m saying.”

She giggled as she let me go, then pecked me on the lips. “As hard as I work for my boss, no way in hell I’m missing

this spa day,” she joked. “I’m gonna go shower.”

I slapped her ass and said, “A’ight, baby. Your car will be here in about an hour.”

She nodded, then stretched up to kiss my lips again. I would say she liked kissing me. It seemed we couldn’t be in one another’s presence for more than a minute without her doing so. “Thank you again, love.”

“Anything for you. You’ll learn that shit eventually.”

She smiled, then headed to the shower as I headed to the kitchen. Something in me wanted a bowl of cereal, so that was what I had for breakfast. I was surprised I even had cereal that wasn’t stale. Divine must have bought it. While eating, my phone rang. I knew the unknown number was David, especially since I hadn’t gone to bail him out. “Hello?”

The operator did its spiel, but he didn’t try to leave a message in the section of the recording for his name this time. “Yes,” I said after it asked if I would accept the charges.

When we were connected, he immediately went in. “I guess the time we spent together for your birthday was a joke. I figured that meant we were cool again and that you had my back.”

“David, I still have a career. I need details before I go bailing yo’ ass out. Why you locked up?”

“Possession. What else?”

“You sure that’s it? You know I’m gon’ find out once I get there. If it’s more than possession I’m gon’ be so pissed, you gon’ wanna stay there.”

He huffed loudly. “You act like yo’ ass so fucking perfect. I guess you forgot about the time you got arrested.”

“First of all, somebody that wants help, shouldn’t piss off the person they want help from. Secondly, I got arrested for you and yo’ bullshit and once they figured that shit out, I was released. Thirdly, you still didn’t answer the question. You running out of time.”

“Possession, resisting arrest, and assault.”

“Assault on who?”

“An undercover officer.”

“Hell naw. Get real acquainted with how shit go down in there, because I ain’t touching that shit with a ten-foot pole.”

“Oh, that’s how we get down now, bruh?”

“That’s how we’ve always got down, since you wanted to be a fucking thug. Learn how to function like a civilized human being and maybe we would have more to talk about. I’m sick of this fuck shit. Every time you get in trouble, you decide you wanna insult me. That shit have to be because you jealous of the shit I’ve accomplished. Well, get the fuck over it.”

I ended the call and immediately went to my room. As soon as Divine left I was going fire up something serious and smoke my anger away. I couldn’t be feeling like this later when it was time to take her out... our first public outing that she was probably already stressing about. As soon as I got high enough, I was taking a fucking nap.

Chapter 7

WHEN WE GOT TO AHMANSON THEATRE, I WAS CALM AS SHIT. While Divine was at the spa, I'd gotten fucked up. I set my alarm and took a much-needed nap to get David off my mind. And not just David... but my mother's words on her dying bed. *Lookout for your brother*. It was the anniversary of her death. Some time while I was getting dressed, Divine had returned and the moment I saw her, my dick had hardened. I was already high as fuck. Adding being horny to it probably wasn't a great idea. I should've just smoked one blunt to take the edge off. I smoked three of those muthafuckas.

I could still function, but if someone got close enough to look into my eyes, they'd know I was fucked up. That wasn't a good thing, because Divine was gonna eventually ask what was up. When she'd come to the foyer and I'd seen her in that nude, floor-length, beaded gown, I wanted to stay home and just take that shit off of her. When she came closer to me and I noticed that split, I really wanted to fuck. Her legs were one of my favorite things about her. Her hair was full of bouncy curls, a lot different than her natural coils.

Conversation about her time at the spa had kept the ride from being awkwardly quiet, but I knew she could tell something was wrong. The most interaction she got from me was responses to her inquiries and statements unless I was sliding my hand around her thigh through that split in her gown. Before we got out of the car, I slid my shades on, then opened the door. I wasn't expecting there to be a red carpet, but I guess so, since only celebrities and people of importance in the industry even knew about the showing.

I helped Divine from the car as cameras flashed. The paparazzi was thick, and I could feel the nervousness in

Divine's touch. Pulling her close to me, I could see the worry in her eyes, so I assured her that I was good. "Don't worry, Divine. Everything will be fine."

I kissed her cheek, then led her to the carpet. She didn't have a response for me, so I assumed it was her nerves. Cameras were flashing in every direction we looked, and it seemed the closer we got to the carpet, the more they gravitated toward us. I rarely brought a date to anything. The only woman I'd been seen with was Nadia. I pulled Divine close as I felt my high dwindling and the moment we were on the carpet, I stopped and posed for the cameras. Holding her around her waist, I dipped to her ear. "You okay?"

She turned to me and cupped my cheek. With a smile, she said, "I'm okay, love."

I could feel the flashes from cameras, vultures trying to catch any moments they could between us. Since they wanted something to talk about, I gave it to them. I leaned in and tenderly kissed her lips, then led her to the theatre. I could hear some of them yelling, trying to ask questions, but I didn't stop to answer any. I was almost sure we would be in the headlines tomorrow... maybe tonight.

Once we were inside, I released my grasp around her waist and lowered my hand to hers as a lot of people spoke to us. I only nodded and kept moving until we reached our seats. I wasn't trying to talk to anyone while we were there. That was why I kept friends who weren't in the business. They knew my schedule and routine as well as I did. Since I was filming, they hadn't reached out, but I was sure they would after tonight. After I sat next to her, I turned to face her. "I love you, Divine and I hope you enjoy the production. I never asked if you enjoyed the theater. That was selfish of me. It's okay to tell me if you don't."

I was glad we were here actually. I could use the quiet time. Although I wanted Divine around me at all times, this situation gave me the best of both worlds. Divine was close to me and we couldn't really talk a lot. Maybe when we got

home, I would talk to her about what was up with me. The only thing I'd told her about my family was that my parents were deceased. That was it. She needed to get to know me as well as I knew her. While expressing my feelings for her had come easier than I thought it would, I knew revealing my past with my family would be everything but.

Divine leaned in close to me, laying her hand on my chest. "I love you, too, baby. And I do love the theatre. My dad got me into it. So, I'm excited about tonight. Thank you, again."

She laid her lips on mine, giving me a kiss in public that we'd only engaged in in private. I almost forgot where I was as I slid my hand up her thigh and my tongue in her mouth. When she released me, she said, "Nobody's ever taken me, except my dad."

"Well, I guess I'm gon' really get thanked tonight then, huh?" I said in a low voice close to her ear.

When I pulled my head away from her ear, I stared into her eyes, seeing the desire in them. She ran her finger across my bottom lip as she often did, just to see if I was wearing my grill. It made me smile at just how sheltered she was. "Like you wouldn't believe, love."

I swiftly pulled her finger in my mouth, teasing the tip of it with my tongue, then pulled her hand in mine as the lights flickered, letting us know the show was about to start. There were some A-list celebrities amongst us tonight, as well as in the production, so this should be good. "Until later. Enjoy the show, baby."

She smiled at me and leaned her head against my shoulder. As the lights dimmed, I felt my phone vibrating in my pocket. *Who in the hell was calling me?* After it stopped, within a couple of minutes it started again. Then it dawned on me. Our pictures had reached the airwaves already. Divine seemed oblivious to any of that as she stared wide-eyed at the production unfolding before our eyes. I was glad she was enjoying it because after the production, I felt the moment we stepped outside, there would be a whirlwind of gossip

columnist and reporters, wanting to dig into our personal lives like sharks that got a whiff of blood.

“Mr. Frank! Mr. Frank!”

Just as I figured, the vultures were showing their claws the second we stepped out of the theater. I protectively wrapped my arm around Divine, trying to high-tail it to our car. This had gone beyond what I was expecting. They were almost too much for the security to handle. *“What does Mr. Stewart think of you dating his daughter?”*

“Aren’t you much older than Divine Stewart?”

“Are the two of you really dating or is this a publicity stunt?”

The questions were being hurled at us like fiery darts and I was only praying that I could keep my cool before we got to the car. “Ignore them baby,” I said to Divine as she trembled in my arms. “I got’chu.”

When I’d gotten her inside the car, I took a deep breath, hoping that dinner wouldn’t be the same way, but I had a feeling it would be and that would be too much for her. Joining her inside, she threw her arms around me and I felt her racing heart. I gently caressed her, rubbing my hand up and down her back as they threatened to surround the car. “I’m so sorry, baby. I had no idea it would be this bad. I ruined your birthday outing. You wanna go home and have dinner delivered?”

I felt like this was a disaster. Instead of it being a mild distraction from our night, it had become the focal point. Putting her hands to my face, I slid off my shades, so she could see my eyes. “You didn’t ruin anything. We couldn’t have known it would be this bad, love. And I had an amazing time. But yes... I wanna just go home. I don’t think I can take much more of this tonight.”

I felt my heart sink, hating that my plans for her had been derailed due to no fault of our own. Wanting to show her a good time turned into me stressing her out. I wasn't cool with that. She slid her finger across my lip. "Thank you for trying this... for me," she said softly, then kissed my lips.

When the kiss separated, I nodded my head. Truthfully, I was somewhat pissed. I'd never be able to take her out and that made me feel like a prisoner. Feeling caged in gave me horrible feelings of what David had brought up earlier. Scooting away from her some, I pulled my phone out of my pocket to call and cancel the reservations I had at Maude. I knew I would still have to pay something, but at this point, I was paying for peace of mind. Divine was watching me, but I didn't want to acknowledge her gaze at the moment. I felt bad about what she'd been through tonight. "I need to cancel a reservation."

"Okay, sir. When is it for?"

"Tonight, in the next hour for Solomon Frank."

"Oh, I'm so sorry you won't be able to dine with us, sir. There is a cancellation fee of three hundred fifty dollars since it's so short notice."

"I understand. Charge my card on file. But I would like the food delivered to my home."

I proceeded to give them our order and paid an additional hundred dollars for delivery. They waved the cancellation fee, since I still ordered dinner. Before I could put my phone in my pocket, I saw I had a missed call from Bryce and one from Watt, my two best friends. I'd fill them in later. Pushing my phone back inside my pocket, I pulled Divine close once again and kissed her lips, then she laid her head against me. However, her kiss didn't do much to soothe the misery that was creeping in. Staying home wasn't hard for me, but it had to be my choice. I didn't like anyone dictating my comings and goings. The somewhat hostile paparazzi was doing just that. "How can I make this up to you, baby?" I whispered into her hair.

She lifted her head, staring into my eyes for a moment. Man, the love I had for this woman already was unbelievable. It was so overwhelming to my senses, that I just felt the need to express it all the time, which was so new for me. Divine lifted her hand to my mouth, pulling down my lip. “Well, for starters, when we get home, you can put that grill in, both actually. Then you can feed me, get me a little liquored up and high.”

Before I could smirk, she licked my bottom lip, then kissed it. “Then you can possess this body like only you can. Think you can handle that?”

I slid my hands to her ass through the split in her gown. “So, you telling me you want Solomon from Inglewood, tonight? Not bougie-ass Solomon? Be careful what you wish for, baby,” I said against her neck.

That wouldn’t be hard to accomplish. I was already in that frame of mind anyway. “Definitely Inglewood Solomon,” she moaned.

“Mmm. I can’t wait to give him to you, then,” I whispered in her ear, then bit her lobe.

I could see the driver glance at us in his rearview mirror, but I didn’t care. Lifting her ass a bit, I slid a finger inside of her, checking the climate. It was hot and the humidity was high, just like I liked it. Sliding my finger from her, I sat back, then slowly brought it to my lips. The taste was amazing as always. I closed my eyes and savored it until we could get home. “You gon’ get fucked up tonight, Divine. I really hope you can handle me. I’d hate to hurt you, but I promise you it’s gon’ hurt so good, you won’t have a choice but to stay in tomorrow.”

She crashed her lips into mine, and I already knew we were gon’ be on some rough, don’t give a fuck type of shit as soon as we got to the house. But I was gon’ slow it down to give her what she wanted. I was gon’ roll the fattest shit and give her charges all fucking night. When she pulled away, I

just knew my dick had escaped my pants. “Do I look like I give a damn about being hurt right now, love?”

“Hell naw. And I love that shit. I just may give you the chance to fuck me back,” I said as I pressed my hand against my crotch.

Sliding my fingers over her slight cleavage, I wanted to tear all that shit off her. Savage mode was sprinting through me like Michael Johnson and it was taking the sheer power of God to hold all that shit back. We still had another ten minutes before we got home. *Lord, please hold my desire to a minimum.* I closed my eyes tightly and bit my bottom lip, because this driver was about to get a show. Divine leaned into me and slid her nose underneath my jawline. “I do hope so,” she whispered as I dropped my head back against the seat.

I could feel the precum leaking from my dick and it felt like I was on the verge of doing some gangsta shit in this car. Thankfully, the vehicle came to a stop at my gate. I didn’t even realize we’d gotten here. I could see the headlines now. *Solomon Frank and daughter of mogul, Desmond Stewart, charged with indecent exposure.* I looked over at her and said, “You just don’t know that you dodged a bullet by the skin of that beautiful pussy.”

She licked her lips and mumbled, “Sucks for me.”

“Don’t worry, I have plenty to put between those pretty lips for you to suck. Come on.”

I helped her out of the car, and nearly stumbled. I was already intoxicated by desire and I didn’t know how I was gonna make it through eating dinner, getting drunk, *and* getting high. It wasn’t no way in hell. I led her inside and went straight to the kitchen. We were both moving in silence, damn near suffocating from the shit we needed to get out. I grabbed the bottle of Henny and asked, “How lit you wanna get, baby?”

I poured her a glass, then took a swig from the bottle. “As lit as you were on your birthday.”

“Oh. You really tryna get fucked up then, huh?” I gave her a smirk, then took another swig. “Let’s get comfortable before dinner gets here.”

Looking at my watch, we had about twenty minutes before their promised delivery time. Grabbing the bottle, I brought it to our room as she followed me, gently tugging at my tuxedo jacket. That shit was stoking the flames. Once inside, I sat the bottle on the dresser and came out of my jacket. I couldn’t stop to even acknowledge Divine right now or the delivery guy was gon’ get an eyeful. I’d be fucking her all over this damn house. Going to my drawer, I pulled out my shit to make a blunt. “Pick yo’ poison. Joint or blunt?”

“Definitely blunt,” she said after stepping out of her shoes.

A woman after my fucking heart. After gutting three cigars, I rolled the fattest blunts I’d ever seen in my life. But if she thought she could hang with me, we would see. I glanced up at her, then took off my clothes as she slid her gown off her shoulders. I wanted to dig her out so bad, it was unreal. My dick was sticking out like a gun ready to be fired and just as I was about to approach her, the bell rang. I smirked at her and slid on my basketball shorts. When I got to the door, the woman stared at me for a moment, then let her eyes slide to my tatted chest. “Umm... hello, Mr. Frank. I have your order from Maude.”

“Thank you. It’s much appreciated.”

I handed her a twenty-dollar tip and took the food from her. She looked like she wanted to say something more, but I closed the door on her as my baby walked into the room wearing one of my t-shirts. She looked so sexy in them. Sitting the bag of food on the countertop, I immediately began to unpack it. My stomach was growling, so sex was on the back burner for now. Divine came to the island and sat. “So, what’s on the menu, Mr. Frank?”

“Well, first let me explain to you how *on* your man is. They were serving their Australian cuisine, but they allowed me to order whatever I wanted. I wasn’t up for trying anything

new on what was supposed to be such a special occasion. So... we have steak seared to perfection, asparagus, garlic mashed potatoes, and side salads made of spinach, roasted almonds, carrots, tomatoes, and real bacon. You cool with that, baby?"

And there was my desire... coming back with a vengeance as I stared at her in my shirt. Licking my lips, I made my way closer to her, sliding my fingers down the side of her face. I could feel a nice lil buzz from the Henny I'd consumed, and I knew it was only gonna get worse after we ate. "That sounds perfect, love," Divine said as she opened her legs and pulled me closer by my waist.

"I know some other shit that sounds perfect, too, Vine, but I'll show you later so our food won't get cold."

I kissed her neck softly, then slid my tongue to her earlobe. *Fuck!* I picked her up from her stool and sat her on the island countertop, then proceeded to open the containers of food. "I'd love to hear about this other perfect shit," she said, giving me chills.

Grabbing the fork from the bag, I dipped it in the mash potatoes and fed her the first forkful. The way she pulled it off the fork had my dick screaming. I leaned in close to her and said close to her ear, "For starters, my lips gracing every inch of your body, including that precious jewel between your legs. Then wrapping my lips around that clit and sucking it until you cum on my face. How does the appetizer sound?"

"Sounds delicious," she whispered.

Her legs had spread further apart, and I knew she was ripe and ready for whatever plans I had for that kitty. I grabbed some asparagus to feed her and continued, "Then, I'd like to put this thick, long licorice between your lips and tickle your tonsils with it until it's sensitive and excreting its cream satisfaction down your throat."

She pulled me even closer with the heels of her feet and licked her lips. "It just keeps getting better." She kissed my lips and everything in me wanted to just dive in that gushy shit

and say fuck dinner. After sucking my bottom lip, she asked, “Is there more?”

“Mmm. Yeah, baby. I wanna slide this dick inside of you, massaging all your fears away, putting a satisfied smile on your face. Giving you an exhilarating ride that makes your heart pound in your chest, then soothe you all over again by taking you to ecstasy. I want you to reach that peak several times tonight as we grace every room of the house and explore every feasible Kamasutra position. So, in layman’s terms, I wanna fuck you and make love to you at the same time, all... fucking... night.”

“That does sound like perfect shit, baby. I hope we can make it through dinner, because all I can think about now is you inside of me.”

She ran her fingertip along the waistband of my shorts, and it took a lot for me to move her hand. Sitting in front of her between her legs, I said, “I promised you dinner and to get you as lit as I was for my birthday. All that gotta come before I pipe you down. Although, I wouldn’t mind laying you on this island and starting the appetizer.”

Lifting her shirt, I placed soft kisses on her stomach as she put her hands at the back of my head. Her pussy was calling me, damn near screaming at me. Looking down at her underwear, I gently slid my finger up the middle of the crotch of her panties, then slid them to the side and eased two of my fingers inside, watching her juices coat them. Standing to my feet, I grabbed her hair, pulling her head back and nibbled on her neck while I stroked her. Pulling my fingers out of her, I sucked them slowly, then left her to get two plates from the cupboard. Hearing her pants was only fueling my desire, but in time, I’d put that pussy to sleep. “You can’t be serious,” she mumbled to herself. “Solomon Frank, are you showing signs of being a tease?”

I only smirked, not bothering to answer her question. Her frustration was clear in her tone of voice. After making our plates, I slid one to her where she’d sat, then went to pour our

tea. I licked my lips as I tasted her on my tongue. When I sat next to her, it was like I could feel the heat emanating from her. She was somewhat sulking, but she wouldn't be later. Cutting into my steak, I turned my body to hers and asked, "Baby girl, why you pouting? You know you gon' get the dick. Now let me handle shit. Didn't you say you wanted Inglewood Solomon? His ass is on his way in just a lil bit."

"Because you got me all hot and bothered now, love. And you know that, too."

I smirked at her. "And what this hard dick mean? I'm hot and bothered, too. But I wanna take my time, baby. Tease you and appreciate you at the same time. I love you. Now eat up, 'cause you gon' need yo' strength. You begging for it now, but you gon' be begging for a break once I get in yo' shit."

She was bringing the hood right out of me and when I beat her pussy to death tonight, she was gon' see. "Fine. And I love you, too."

We sat there eating quietly as I planned out my attack. She wasn't gonna know what hit her. After finishing our food, I threw the containers in the trash, then went to the room where I'd left my Hennessey and blunts and also put in my snatch-out grill. Divine had also left her glass there. When I came back to the kitchen, she was sitting in the same spot. "Come on, baby. Let's go outside."

She followed me like a sad puppy, fiending for the dick, and I couldn't help but chuckle. After sitting everything on the table beside my lounge, Divine flopped in the one next to me. Sliding in mine, I grabbed a blunt and sparked that shit up. After taking the first pull from it and exhaling, I said, "Vine, get yo' ass over here."

She stood from the chair and walked over to me. As she stood over me, I said, "Take that shit off."

Slowly lifting the shirt, I watched her pull it over her head. Licking my lips, I hit the blunt again. I motioned for her to come to me with my head and she climbed on the chair. I

roughly pulled her to me, straddling my lap and gave her a charge as I laid my lips on hers. When I pulled away from her, I went to her nipple and teased it with my tongue as she moaned, holding my head against her and grinding on me. I handed her the blunt and said, “Get fucked up, baby.”

Pulling away from her, I lit the second one, then took a swig of my drink from the bottle. I decided to smile and show her I’d put my grill in. She smiled and her fingers went right to my bottom lip. I blew a little smoke in her face, then pulled her back to me as she blew smoke right back at me. We were gonna be wrapped up in a cloud before long. Grabbing my phone, I put on some music, letting Kendrick Lamar take us higher. The way her hips were moving against me, had my dick been out, we would have been fucking by now.

I wanted to be good and lit and I wanted her to be even further gone than me. “Turn around and lay back, baby.”

She did as I asked and laid her back on my chest. I fully expected her to slide to the side of me, but she didn’t. She kept her comfortable seat in my lap, blowing smoke in the air. After taking the last pull from my blunt, I sat it on the table and gently ran my hands over Divine’s hard nipples. She sat her blunt on the table next to mine and as she looked back at me, I could see her eyes were getting low. Leaning back against me, she arched her back as I grabbed her inner thighs, then slid my hands up her body.

This woman was the epitome of sexy and I couldn’t wait to dive in her shit. “Divine, how you feeling, baby?”

“Like I’m on a cloud. Like this is probably *the* best birthday. I could go on and on, love.”

“You about to soar above the clouds, though,” I said as I lit up the last blunt. I handed it to her and said, “Get at it.”

Grabbing my bottle, I took a huge swig and it felt like my head was spinning. Once I sat it back down on the table, I saw Divine taking a long ass pull from the blunt. She was gon’ be fucked up in just a minute. I had something she could suck on

like that, and I couldn't wait to give it to her. Sliding my hands around her hips, I lowered them to rest on her mound, then slid one hand between her legs. Again, moving her panties to the side, I slid my fingers inside of her as she smoked. She damn near choked as she gasped. "You ready to be fucked?" I asked, then rubbed my other hand over her hard nipple.

She was more than ready. I believed she was so fucked up, she was gonna wake up tomorrow wondering what the hell happened. Without even waiting for her response, I pulled my fingers out of her and said, "Vine, come slide that pussy down my shit."

She sat up as she lazily took another pull from the blunt. Grabbing it from her, I took another pull myself as she stood to her feet. Taking a swig from my Hennessey bottle, she stumbled as she sat the bottle down, then giggled. I stroked my dick while I sat the blunt on the end table. Her eyes were low as hell and I was almost sure mine were the same. My dick looked big as fuck and I was ready to tear her to shreds.

When she straddled me and slid that hot shit on me, it was like we were both put out of the misery I'd induced. But just her straddling it and rolling on it wasn't enough. I wrapped my arms around her waist, pulling her to me. Kissing her lips took on new meaning, because it felt like she was trying to suck my lips off. The kissing was sloppy as hell, but it turned me on beyond belief. Grabbing her ass, I pumped her with dick for days, in search of the liquid gold her pussy would excrete. "Ahh, fuck!" I yelled as she screamed my name.

"Solomon! Shit!"

"Naw, baby girl. Solomon ain't here. You wanted that Inglewood, so you got Solo."

Slamming her down my dick was offering me the relief I desperately needed. My inebriated state only made my cravings more intense. That shit between her legs was my drug and I was fiending for everything it could give me. Her body began bucking against me, alerting me of her orgasm. That shit was intense as hell, because I felt her spray my abdomen

with that good shit. Only one other woman I'd fucked had done that, and that was years ago, when I was still living in Inglewood.

That shit only propelled me forward. I yanked her off me and sprayed her titties with my nut. My dick was still hard as hell, though. I stood from the chair and pulled her up with me, lifting her from her feet. She wrapped her legs around my waist, and I lowered her back on my dick, bringing her to the glass that was behind us. I brought her knees to her shoulders and looked down at her beautiful pussy as it left a glorious trail of her excellence all over my dick.

She started to bounce on my dick as I rested my hands on the glass. I could only take so much, though. I dropped her lower on all my dick as her mouth formed an O. "I hope you ready, Vine, because I'm finna fuck the breath right out'chu."

Chapter 8

“SO, WHAT WAS BOTHERING YOU YESTERDAY?”

Divine was sitting next to me, eating her grilled salmon. I was somewhat hungover and tired as hell. We didn't wake up until almost noon. She'd called the chef to prepare us some lunch, because neither of us were in the mood to cook shit. I'd fucked her all over the place. We'd even gotten in the pool... fucked on the kitchen island... in front of the fireplace... every fucking where. And even now, my dick had the nerve to be hard. Finally acknowledging her question, I said, “I got into it with my brother and as usual he tried to slam me because I refused to bail his stupid ass out of jail.”

After answering her question, my phone vibrated. That shit had so many missed calls and text messages, I didn't have the energy to deal with it right now. My head was pounding as I thought about David's trifling ass. “Oh,” she said quietly. “So, I take it y'all aren't close?”

As kids, David and I were inseparable. He was my lil brother and there was nothing I wouldn't do to protect him, until I realized I was sacrificing my life for his when he didn't give a damn about either of our lives. That was when I took a step back and focused on what I was trying to do with my life. Mama was gone and Dad wasn't really the understanding type, so I left. “Not really. My parents never really held him accountable for all the bullshit he got involved in. I was just expected to look out for him.”

“Who was looking out for you?” she asked as she reached for my hand.

“Me.”

I didn't wanna talk about this anymore. While I knew I would have to discuss it with her eventually, today wasn't the

day. I just wanted to rest so I could get the last week of filming done. Shoving salmon in my mouth, I was hoping she caught the hint. It was bad enough that I would possibly have to deal with David whenever he got out. So, addressing the issue now would make me have to address it twice. I'd be sure to hide my frustrations better when I was with her, which was all the damn time. She seemed to catch the hint because she changed the subject. "My cousins are taking me for drinks this evening to celebrate my birthday. Should be gone maybe two hours. You think you gonna be okay without me for two hours?"

She smirked as I glanced over at her. "I should be able to manage, but check on me just in case," I said as I smirked as well. "I would hate to slip into a depression without you."

I chuckled for a moment, then pulled her close to me and kissed her head. She brought her hand to my cheek and said, "Oh, baby. You have no idea how mutual that feeling is."

Standing from her seat, she made her way to my lap. "Thank you for last night. I'll never be able to get it out of my mind, love. Sei stato fantastico," she said against my neck, then kissed it. "It means you were amazing," she whispered in my ear.

"You actually remember it?" I chuckled as she rolled her eyes. "What was so amazing about it, baby?" I asked as my hands slid to her ass.

Looping her arms around my neck, she said, "First of all, every time I got a glimpse of that grill, I was ready to explode. But the way you fucked me in a way that made it feel like we were still making love. You own my body and heart and you know it. I love the way you use that knowledge to your advantage."

I couldn't help but smile. Putting my hands to her face, I pulled it to mine and kissed her deeply. She loved me and she barely knew who she was in love with. When I pulled away from her, I asked, "So, what time are you leaving me all alone in this big ass, empty house?"

“Around six, baby. How ‘bout while I’m gone, you check out that script. And then...” she paused to kiss my ear, then continued, “You can tell me what you think about it while I scream your name.”

“Mmm. That sounds good. Or you can start screaming my name now. I’m conceited in a way and I love hearing my name fall from your pretty lips.”

Gripping her ass once again, I wanted to slide my fingers inside of her, but I decided to wait to hear what her response would be. I doubt I would be reading a script while she was gone. Taking a nap was more like it. “Well, Solo...” *She definitely remembered last night.* I suppose she was tryna summon his ass back here. “...Lucky for you, you have become a growing addiction of mine.”

She slid her hand up the back of my head and the other down my back, then began rocking against my dick. “Your name was meant to roll off my tongue, baby,” she whispered in my ear.

I swiftly lifted her, pulled my dick out of my shorts, and lowered her right on him. “Let that shit roll off your tongue right now, then.”

I loved that she didn’t wear underwear to bed. That made for easy access for me. “Ohhh shiiit, Solomon fucking Frank,” she moaned while winding her hips on my shit.

Just as we were getting carried away, I saw a car drive up the driveway. *Fuck!* It was my boys, Bryce, and Watt. *Great.* I guess since I didn’t answer their calls or text messages, they decided to show up. Slowly lifting Divine from my dick, I angrily stuffed him back in my shorts. Divine turned around to see what I was looking at, then stood from my lap. *Fuck!* I should’ve brought her to my bedroom and refused to open the door. The only person I needed had just stood from my lap. She kissed my lips. “I’m going soak, love.”

I didn’t respond, just watched the two bozos approach the door. Standing from my seat, Divine’s scent overwhelming my

senses, I walked to the door and stared at the two of them. My back door was made mostly of glass. The only people that came through that door besides me and Divine was Celeste and my boys. Before they could ring the bell, I opened the door in my basketball shorts. They both turned their lips up as they looked at me. “What the fuck y’all want?”

“Muthafucka, don’t act like you ain’t trending across this bitch,” Bryce said holding up his phone.

“I feel so outta the damn loop. One of my best friends finally got a woman and I had to find out about the shit on the internet. Who car outside?”

Before I could answer Watt’s question, Bryce filled him in. “Oh, that’s his personal assistant turned girlfriend’s car.”

“You dating yo’ personal assistant? Oh, that shit messy as hell. What made you cross the professional line?” Watt asked.

“Shit, you saw her. You tell me.”

They both laughed, then slapped my hand one behind the other. I couldn’t help but to think how that same hand had been gripping Divine’s ass a lil while ago. “Well, whatever. I’m happy for you, bruh. For real,” Bryce said. “I ain’t seen you with a girlfriend since what’s her name.” He frowned for a second. “What the fuck was her name?”

“Shelly.”

“Yeah, that’s right.”

I didn’t know why he had to bring up her cheating, conniving ass. She was only with me for who she thought I was going to become. In the meantime, she was fucking everything with a dick and burnt my ass. Had I not been getting blood work done, I would’ve never known that she gave my ass chlamydia. “But she ain’t got shit on Divine. Man, I told her to call me Solo last night.”

“Oh, fuck! You must love her ass then,” Bryce joked and laughed loud as hell until he realized I wasn’t laughing.

“Nigga! You done fell already? It’s only been... what? A month?”

I exhaled. “Something like that,” I said under my breath.

“Well, at least you know she ain’t after your money. She come from money... mo’ money than yo’ ass. Wait. Hol’ up. You ain’t tryna get in good with Desmond Stewart, huh?” Watt asked.

“Naw, man. I was feeling her before I knew she was their daughter. What we got ain’t got shit to do with that. She just... touch me like I ain’t ever been touched.”

Bryce turned his lip up. “Nigga, you sound feminine as hell. She done came in here and took yo’ balls and put ‘em in her purse.”

“Shut the fuck up,” I told him as my face heated.

They laughed at my expense, but once they calmed down, Watt got serious. “On another note, David called me.”

I rolled my eyes. “Why he calling you?”

“Tryna get bailed out. He said you forgot where you came from, but I had to put that nigga in his place. Just ‘cause you ain’t finna let him pull you to the gutter don’t mean you forgot shit. I appreciate you, Solo. Real shit. Had it not been for your help, I don’t know where me and Renee would be right now.”

“Y’all asses would be in a matchbox fighting, just like y’all in that four-bedroom fighting,” Bryce said, causing all of us to laugh.

I was grateful that he diverted the conversation from David’s ass, though. Bryce gave me a head nod, while Watt continued to laugh.

I'd taken an hour nap after eating out Divine's treasure box. She was my daily obsession. Life wasn't shit without her. After my nap, I took a shower and felt refreshed. Maybe I'd have some energy for filming tomorrow and we could get this shit done early. Looking at my watch, it was a little after nine and I couldn't wait for my baby to get here. Since I didn't have shit else to do, I decided to pick up the script she'd suggested I look at. I poured myself a glass of Henny and got to it. As I scanned it, it seemed like a true romance with tasteful scenes that wouldn't get me caught up.

I needed to see how my body would handle those type of situations before diving into a more explicit movie. That other role had me playing with and sucking on nipples and shit. I wasn't really trying to go that far right out the gate. As I scanned through it, I saw headlights in the driveway. Frowning slightly, I looked at the time. That couldn't be Divine. I stayed where I was, waiting to see who would approach the door.

She didn't come to the back door, though. She came through the front. No one else had a key to that door, so I knew it was Divine. As I made my way that direction, her back was turned to me and she was heading towards the bedroom. Before I could say a word, she knew I was there. Without facing me, she said, "I'm gonna shower real quick, love."

She didn't sound like herself and that bothered me. "Divine," I said before she could walk away.

Had something happened? She always greeted me with a kiss when we'd been apart. Was she angry at something I may have done? I was racking my brain that quickly, trying to remember details of anything I might have done in my past that she could have gotten wind of. Maybe the paparazzi had gotten to her. "Yes, love?" she barely got out.

She didn't turn to face me, so I walked closer to her and wrapped my arms around her waist. "Did you have a good time, baby? I missed you," I said softly in her ear, then kissed her neck softly.

She whipped around in my arms and fell against my chest, sobbing. That shit caught me off-guard and my heart fell to my feet. Pulling away a bit, I needed to look into her eyes. Lifting her head by her chin, my eyes fell to her cheek. My grip on her chin tightened. “Divine, what the fuck happened to your face?”

There was a bruise on her cheek, like somebody slapped the piss out of her. My head was pounding, and I could feel my anger go from zero to one hundred in seconds. “It was Kadeem.”

Her fucking ex? She dropped her head, but I was still gripping her chin. She continued, “He showed up at Perch. He said he wanted to apologize, but then... flipped, because I wouldn’t acknowledge his apology and plea to get back together.”

“Stay right here. I mean it. I’ll be right back.”

I went to the room and threw on some black sweats and a black t-shirt, then met her back up front. This nigga was about to get fucked up. My anger was overwhelming as hell and it had consumed me. Just ‘cause I was in Hollywood didn’t mean he was gon’ get away with that shit. I’d throw this whole fucking career away for Divine. “Let’s go.”

When I was about to grab her hand, I noticed the bruise on her arm. “He did this shit, too?”

She lowered her head and that gave me all the answers I needed. I was gon’ kill that muthafucka. When she looked back up at me, she said, “Solomon, you cannot do anything crazy. Please.”

I couldn’t respond to her. I felt like a raging bull and I was ready to charge his ass. She grabbed my face, but her touch did nothing to calm me down. “I can’t let you do whatever you have in your mind to do, baby. I can feel that it ain’t good.”

I pulled her hands from my face and held them tightly in mine. “And it was good what he did to you? This shit ain’t up for discussion. You just better pray that muthafucka ain’t there

when we get there. And believe me, you won't have a choice but let me, because you can't stop me. Now let's go."

When we got to the rooftop bar, I looked over at Divine and she was literally shaking. The ride over had been quiet as hell. I guess she was praying. Getting out of the car, I went to her side and opened the door. I knew I was underdressed, but I didn't give a shit. If he was here, they were gonna have to call the police. Grabbing her hand, I led her to the building without saying a word.

Once we'd gotten inside, I looked around and said, "Tell me where he is if you see him."

We continued to the bar and I ordered a Hennessy and immediately gulped it down while Divine scanned the crowd. As I downed the drink, I saw her freeze up. She'd spotted him. When she turned to me, I sat the glass on the bar and left a twenty to pay for it. I didn't understand how he got away with hitting her in the first place. Somebody had to see that shit. But no one did a thing about it. They were about to come running in just a minute. "Where is he?"

"In the back corner," she said while fixing her hair to make sure it was still covering her cheek.

She was nervous as hell. There wasn't a nervous bone in my body, though. All I felt was anger. There was no way I would ever let anyone get away with harming her. Ever. "Lead the way."

I followed behind her until we reached the pathetic looking fool, drunk off his ass. While I wanted to just fuck him up, I tapped his shoulder instead. I wanted him to see it coming. When he turned around, I asked immediately, "You know this woman?"

There would be no question as to why I fucked him up. I probably should have her file assault charges on his ass, and maybe she should still do that, but he was gon' still get fucked up regardless. That bastard had the nerve to chuckle. At that point, I knew I would only have to hit him once. "Damn Di,

you went and got your man on me? I tried to apologize. Look man, I shouldn't have put my hands on her."

There were a couple of people in the vicinity that I knew were hearing everything that went on. Hopefully, they would be witnesses. "You damn right," I replied, then brought my fist all the way back and landed it across his jaw.

I felt that shit crack on impact. He was out, just like I thought he would be. I sat at the table near him and waited for the police to get there while people scrambled all over the place. Divine had brought her hands to her face. I didn't know whether she was crying or just embarrassed. I was calm now. Everything that was swirling inside of me had been unleashed on his ass in that one punch. The manager came running over and saw that I was involved. He stood quietly for a moment, I guess shocked that I wasn't trying to hurry and leave. "Pull your hair back, Divine."

I wanted him to see why I did what I did. "You see her face? He did that shit right here in your establishment. I came to make it right. Nobody gon' get away with putting their hands on my woman. So, if you're calling the police or ambulance, go ahead and call them. And bring me a Hennessy on the rocks."

He nodded quickly and walked away. I supposed he realized I wasn't going anywhere. The pictures that were being taken was getting on my fucking nerves, though. Divine walked over to me and put her trembling hand to my face. Looking down, I noticed my hand was starting to swell. I hadn't had to fuck nobody up in a long ass time. "Call Celeste and get my attorney's information from her. Then call him and tell him where we are and what happened."

"Okay, I will. But look at me."

I lifted my head and stared into her eyes, waiting for her to tell me how embarrassed she was and how my behavior was unacceptable in her eyes. "Why would you risk everything you built?"

My heart was beating out of my chest. “Because you’re worth far more.”

That decision was easy to make. She was everything to me. However, while I was protecting her honor, it seemed at this moment, she was my personal assistant. I knew she was reeling from tonight’s events, but I needed her to put on her business hat for a moment and suck up her emotions. If I went home tonight, I’d be sure to give her the love and affection she needed to comfort her broken spirit if she allowed me to. Thinking about what he did to her made me wanna get up and stomp the shit out of him. The manager came back with my Hennessy and said, “Mr. Frank, would you follow me to a more secure area of the club?”

I stood from my seat and grabbed Divine’s hand, pulling her with me. That bitch ass nigga was still on the floor. Nobody had even bothered to pick him up. I could hear the sirens in the distance, and I was ready to be cuffed and led out of here. Wouldn’t be the first time and I was sure that shit was gonna come up now, even though I ain’t had shit to do with why I was arrested the first time. Once we were in the private area, Divine started making her phone calls. Just like last night, my phone was blowing up in my pocket. We’d gone viral once again.

I threw my Hennessy back and hoped this process would move along quickly. Once Divine was done making phone calls, she sat next to me. I remained quiet because I was just ready to find out what would happen. Two police officers soon joined us, and we ran down the details of what had happened. After hearing everything, one of them asked, “Ms. Stewart, are you going to file charges against Mr. Kadeem Jenkins?”

“Yes,” she said.

He nodded, then turned his attention to me. I was glad she chose to press charges. “In the meantime, we are going to have to take you into custody, Mr. Frank. Mr. Jenkins is filing charges against you. I nodded, then handed my keys to Divine.

I could see she was upset, so I said, “Everything’s gonna be fine, baby. Okay?”

She nodded, then pulled my face to hers and kissed my lips. “I’m coming to the precinct. I’ll call your lawyer back and update him.”

“Baby, you don’t need to come to the precinct. It’s late and I probably won’t leave until morning. Actual filming doesn’t start until ten, so hopefully I’ll be out of there before then. If not, my lawyer will let you know what’s going on and if you don’t know who to call, Celeste does.”

I gave her my cell phone and my wallet but took my driver’s license from it. “I don’t wanna go home without you.”

I pulled her to me. “Go to your parents’ house. I’m sure everyone knows about this by now. They’re probably worried. Your phone is probably going as crazy as mine is. You can power it off if you want to. I love you, Divine. I’d do it all over again to protect you.”

“I love you, too. I’ll go to my parents’ house for the night.”

I hugged her tightly. We were behaving like I would be gone for years. I’d only be gone one night. That only showed how attached we’d grown to one another. “We have to go, Mr. Frank.”

I nodded at the cop, then kissed her again and stepped away from her. “Could you please not cuff him? He was cooperative. Please don’t walk him outta here in handcuffs since he’s willing to go with you.”

“I didn’t intend to, ma’am. Given the situation, I can’t say that I would have been as mild as he was. I would have been worse. Plus, I’m a fan.”

The officer smiled at Divine, then led me out of the room.

Chapter 9

MY LAWYER HAD GOTTEN ME OUT AND HAD ALSO CALLED DIVINE to let her know I was on my way home. I ended up staying locked up until morning. So, I had to get home and shower, then go to south central to film. There wasn't much time to doddle. It was already eight-thirty. I'd given my keys to Divine, so hopefully she would be at the house when we got there. I had to get this stench off me as soon as possible.

When we got there, I saw my car parked in the driveway. "Mr. Frank, I'll keep in touch to inform you of your trial date."

I nodded, then got out of the car. When I got to the back door, Divine was standing there waiting for me. She threw her arms around my neck and I wrapped my arms around her waist. I never wanted to spend another night away from her. "I missed you, baby. How did you sleep?"

"I missed you, too. And I hardly slept at all." She pulled back to stare up at me. "What about you?"

I shook my head. "Barely slept at all either. You were all I could think about."

She smiled slightly, then said, "Well, you're back with me now, and as much as I would love to take advantage of that right now, we both have jobs to do. Your outfit options are already laid out. By the time you're done getting ready, the car will be here. So, I'll put your tea in a to-go cup."

"Thank you, baby. But I have a few minutes."

I pulled her closer to me and kissed her lips, feeding my addiction a snack. "I always have time for you," I said, letting my hands slide down to her ass. "After I get this jailhouse scent off me, meet me in the closet. Call the set and tell them

I'm going to be ten minutes late. I'm sure they're already aware of the events from last night. I need to feed my addiction."

She slid her hands down my chest, then kissed me sweetly, allowing it to linger. When she pulled away, she said, "Well, from one addict to another, I'll get right on that, love."

I couldn't help but smile. After swatting her ass, I made my way to the shower. Before going in, I looked in the closet to see my options and my phone and wallet laying there also. I never would have thought a woman would have me putting my career on the back burner. That shit was what kept me going, gave me purpose, and convinced me that despite my past and where I was from, I had made it. While I wasn't poor or anything, I wasn't exactly on the trek to become a Hollywood A-list celebrity either. I'd always expressed an interest in drama, but that wasn't a manly job. I should've been working on cars or other machinery, driving a truck, or welding something, according to my dad.

I shook my head, then made my way to the shower. While I washed, I was grateful that I was out of that hell hole, but my attorney had said to be prepared to have to pay that nigga. I didn't even wanna think about that shit. Because of him, Divine wouldn't be going out without me or a fucking bodyguard. It just puzzled me how no one tried to attack that nigga when he hit her. The place was packed. Maybe it wasn't packed at the time or he'd brought her to an isolated section, wanting to talk. And Divine probably fell for the act, thinking he was being sincere and shit.

All I knew was that I had to prepare myself for the backlash. There was no way there wouldn't be any. Somebody would jump out there with half a story and it would spread like wildfire. While my image had been squeaky clean, people would still jump to conclusions and believe anything they saw on the internet. I needed to holla at my boys and let them know what happened. They deserved the real story.

After getting out of the shower, I dried off in the bathroom, then walked out of the bathroom to see Divine's clothes on the floor, leading to the closet. *Hell yeah*. Nothing would be able to calm me like her hidden treasure. Looking at the time on the clock on my nightstand, I knew we had about ten minutes tops. Well, at least we wouldn't have to wrestle with clothes. When I walked in the closet, she was seated on the ottoman in her bra, panties, and heels, with her legs spread open. There was no time to waste.

I quickly made my way to her, snatched her ass up, ripped her underwear, and dropped her on all these inches. My soul shivered as my addiction was finally being fed that good shit.

It was the weekend, but there was no rest for the weary. The movie was done, and I couldn't be more grateful. But tonight was the gala for cancer research. If I could get away with it, I'd stay home. Divine had gone to get her hair and nails done. Although she'd insisted she didn't need a bodyguard, I sent one anyway. I really didn't feel like sitting in a salon. Tonight, would be my first public appearance since the shenanigans. I wasn't looking forward to it at all. So, I just wanted to chill out before it was time to go.

As I sat outside smoking a cigar, Celeste drove in the driveway. I hadn't seen her since all this bullshit, and I knew it was because of Divine. She didn't want to fuss about what I did in front of her. When she got out of the car, she had a slight frown on her face. I rolled my eyes and took another pull from my cigar. When she got closer, she said, "Hello, Solomon. Are you ready for tonight?"

"Hello, Celeste. I am."

"I don't have great news. Umm, Sprint has backed out of the deal. They are going to go with another celebrity. All the

offers that were on the table from Tom Ford and others were pulled as well.”

I expected that kind of backlash. I wasn't tripping. While I loved what I did, financially I would be fine for the rest of my life. It wasn't like they were movie deals. Nodding at her, I took a sip of my water. “You're not upset about it?”

“Nope.”

“Solomon, I'm not understanding what happened to your passion for your craft. It's like nothing matters to you anymore.”

“What am I trying to prove at this point? I haven't lost my passion, so don't make it seem like I'm putting out junk work.”

“I'm sorry. That's not what I meant. It just seems ever since you and Divine have been dating, you've pushed your career aside.”

“I know what my priorities are. I love her, Celeste, and she loves me. Nothing is going to come before her or there would be no point in trying to establish a relationship with her. My career is amazing, but it doesn't compare to what I feel just in Divine's presence.”

“You have it bad, huh? I understand.”

I glanced at her, then took a pull from my cigar. She sat next to me and said, “So, the story I heard was that the guy at the bar insulted Divine and you lost your cool and knocked him out.”

“Nope. Divine had gone out with her cousins for her birthday. He approached her to talk. She obliged him, but while they talked, he smacked her. When she got home, I saw the bruise in her face.”

Celeste's eyes had widened. “Solomon, wow! I don't think any man would blame you for that. You wanna make a statement, clearing the record?”

“Nope.”

“What about Sprint? Do you want me to relay that to them?”

“Nope. I don’t need to set any records straight. I just wanna move past it. I go to court in two weeks, but I refuse to pay that muthafucka. So, if that means I have to plead guilty, then so be it. He isn’t getting a dime of what’s mine. I assaulted him, there’s no denying it.”

“Okay. Well, do you need me to do anything? Oh! What did you think about the role for the movie Divine found?”

“I think it’s cool. I’ll take the role if they want me to have it.”

“Okay. I don’t think anyone in Hollywood would consider you a risk. Your past is squeaky clean. You cooperated with the police and accepted responsibility for your actions. Divine is lucky to have you. She brought out such amazing qualities in you that I wouldn’t have guessed you even possessed.”

I smirked at her, then drank the rest of my water. “Well, I’m gonna go. I’ll be in touch to let you know what the director says about your interest in the movie. He may want you to come read for him, since you’ve never done a romantic drama.”

“Yeah. This script is gonna pull things out of me no one has ever seen.”

“Well, I’ll be sure to relay that. Talk to you soon.”

I nodded, then stood as she walked to her car. That script had hit me right in the heart. The woman I would be pursuing would experience the death of her mother and her father was emotionally and verbally abusive. She would meet me at a point in her life when she was broken, insecure, and had thrown herself into her work to hide just how broken she really was. When I’d read that about her, I realized, she was me. I knew at that point I had to do this movie and rescue myself from my past at the same time.

After finishing my cigar and drinking a glass of Henny, I went inside to take a shower. Divine should be arriving at any

time now. I rubbed my waves as I looked in the mirror, admiring myself. My barber had come early this morning and gave me a fresh cut and trimmed my beard. My boys had joined me this morning to check on me. I talked to them over the phone earlier in the week, letting them know that I was cool, but they insisted on seeing for themselves. So, I invited them out to get fresh cuts on my dime.

When I stepped in the shower, I exhaled, trying to calm myself for tonight's event. My nerves were on edge about the public appearance, but they were also on edge because Nadia would be there. I haven't seen her in months and because Divine knew about our past, it had me nervous. I should have smoked a blunt instead of a cigar, but a couple of drinks should keep me cool. Once I emerged from the shower and had dried off, I walked into the room to see the most beautiful woman I'd ever laid eyes on. "Damn, Vine. You look gorgeous, baby."

"Thanks, love," she said as she pulled her straightened hair to one side. "Could you zip me up, please?"

I walked over to her slowly as she turned around. When I got to her, I inhaled her scent and closed my eyes. Resting my cheek against the side of her head, I asked, "You sure you trust me to only zip your dress? I have zero restraint when I'm this close to you. Damn."

I could see the goosebumps appear on her skin as I spoke in a low voice close to her ear. The strapless white dress had me imagining her walking down a damn aisle. That high split and the gold mesh at the top of it had my mind on the honeymoon. Divine could wear sweats and a t-shirt, and I still wouldn't be able to keep my thoughts off entering her sanctuary. "I trust that you know how important this gala is. And that... when it's over, you have the pleasure of unzipping it," she said seductively as she ran her hand up my arm.

"It's a very important gala, but I needed you to know how much I want you right now... how much I always want you."

As I zipped her dress, I softly kissed her neck. When I backed away, I stroked my dick a little. He was ready for action and I couldn't seem to calm him down. That shit was throbbing, and I could see the veins popping out on it. I didn't know how I would be able to focus with her sitting next to me at the gala. I briefly closed my eyes as Divine said, "The feeling is very mut..."

She stopped mid-sentence which prompted me to open my eyes, only to find Divine staring at me, my dick still in my hand. "Shit," I said, then went to get dressed.

I had to get away from Divine or we were going to be late. I wanted her so bad, but with as hungry for her as I was, I would never get enough. After moisturizing my beard, I slid on my black tuxedo, along with a white shirt and black bow tie. Looking at myself in the floor length mirror, I gave myself a once over, from my diamond studs down to my black Dior shoes. My waves in my hair were screaming for attention and my beard was glistening as it hung low almost to my shirt. Looking at the time on my iced out Audemars, I noticed that we only had a few minutes to leave and be there on time.

Stepping out of the closet, I noticed Divine looking in the mirror. However, when she noticed me, she spun around slowly, her eyes taking all of me in. I bit my bottom lip, then smiled at her. "I can't wait for this gala to be over."

I chuckled, then said, "Well, let's get this shit over with."

Holding out my arm to escort her out of the house, she smiled and joined me. I was almost sure the car was here waiting for us. Grabbing my phone from my pocket, I couldn't help but take a selfie of us before the madness. Just us in our element, the comfort of our home without the distractions of the media and fans. Divine smiled brightly, then I took another, capturing our lustful desires. Before I could get lost in her eyes, I hurriedly looked away and headed to the car that was in the driveway waiting for us.

When we arrived at the gala, I looked over at Divine before getting out of the car. "You know I got'chu, right? No

matter what. I love you.”

“I know, baby. I love you, too.”

After kissing her lips, we stepped out of the car amidst the chaos of reporters and their camera crews. When we made it to the carpet, we took pictures as Divine trembled in nervousness. The questions were being hurled at us like fiery darts once again. To soothe her nerves, I kissed her cheek and rested my head against hers.

“Solomon! Are you going to have to do time for the assault last week?”

“Are y’all a real couple?”

“Everyone wants to know what the two of you are embarking upon!”

I never had the desire to answer any of the questions about me and my personal life, but I had a real urge to say something. That was so unlike me. As we walked, I stopped, causing Divine to stop as well. I wrapped my arm around her waist and turned to the crowd of reporters. “This is Divine Stewart, daughter of moguls Desmond and Juliana Stewart. To answer some of your questions, we are indeed a couple. This is very real. Please allow us our privacy as we work through some issues. Things aren’t always what they seem. But what we have is strong and we have the stamp of approval from her parents. So, thank you for your support and at some point, I’ll be able to speak freely about your inquiries of recent issues.”

I kissed Divine’s stunned face and we walked away, heading inside. The moment we stepped inside, she said, “I need the bathroom, love. Like right now.”

She looked like she was about to throw up. “It’s down this hallway. Come on.”

I quickly led her to the hallway, and she let my hand go and practically ran to the bathroom. I didn’t know what was going on. Maybe her nerves had gotten the best of her. I waited for about five minutes before she emerged. She’d

reapplied lipstick but she looked flushed. I grabbed her hand, holding it between mine and asked, “Baby, you okay?”

She smiled and nodded, then stepped closer to me, draping an arm over my shoulder, allowing her hand to slide down the back of my head. After kissing my lips a couple of times, I was ready to hem her up in the bathroom. I didn’t know why she was playing with me. “You were pretty awesome back there, Solomon Frank. Didn’t expect you to give the vultures anything.”

I wrapped my arms around her waist and said, “Well, maybe they’ll back off a little bit. I surprised my damned self.”

She giggled. “Well, they ate it up, love. Good job.”

“Shit, they were probably in shock.” I chuckled, then kissed her forehead. “But you sure you okay, Vine?”

“I’m fine, baby. Nerves just upset my stomach,” she said as she straightened my bowtie.

“Alright, if you say so, I have to believe it. Let’s get to our table before the festivities start.”

I positioned my arm where she could grab it and led the way to find out where we would be seated. Surprisingly, I hadn’t seen Nadia and I was praying she didn’t show up just so there wouldn’t be a moment of awkwardness between us. When we approached the entrance, the man standing there led us to our table where our names were. There was only one problem. Nadia was seated right next to me. *Good looking out, Lord.* She turned toward us, and she smiled big. “Solomon! Hey!”

She stood to her feet and hugged me, then looked over at Divine. “Hello! I’m Nadia Benjamin.”

She stuck out her hand to shake Divine’s hand. I could feel Divine’s grip on my arm tighten as she obliged her with a handshake. “Divine Stewart. Nice to meet you.”

“Likewise.”

I didn't know why I was nervous, but I was. As I pulled out Divine's seat, Nadia sat back in her seat, eying us not so secretly. I could tell she wanted to ask questions because I knew her. She was a naturally inquisitive person, but sometimes she didn't know when to mind her business. After pushing in Divine's chair, I sat in my seat. "So, how have things been, Solomon?"

"They've been good."

I wasn't trying to hold a conversation with her. Turning my attention to Divine, I leaned in closer to her. "You okay?"

She placed her palm on my cheek. "I'm good, baby. Are *you* okay?"

"I'm trying to be, baby."

I kissed her lips, then turned forward in my chair to see Nadia watching us. "Y'all look really good together and you look happy."

"Thank you. I'm extremely happy."

"Hmm," she said under her breath.

I wanted to say something, but I bit my tongue and held Divine's hand. "So, Divine, are you in the business also? Following your parents' footsteps?"

"Actually, I *am* in the business... just not following my parents' footsteps. I'm going the agent route. What about you? Read any interesting scripts lately?"

Whoa! This shit didn't take a good turn. I didn't understand what just happened to make Divine show her claws. I was lost as hell as Divine smiled big, resting her chin in her palm. Before I could intervene, Nadia had a nasty scowl on her face. "Actually, I picked up an amazing role for a movie I'll be starring in with Vivian Michaels. He's a great actor and will match my talent. However, I have way more chemistry with Solomon. But since his lil girlfriend was so insecure, he backed out of the movie, knowing that I still turn

him on,” she said, then ran her fingers down the back of my head.

Shit! I snatched her hand from my head. I knew Nadia could be blunt and nasty, but I didn’t expect it to be like this. “That’s enough,” I said roughly.

Divine continued like I wasn’t sitting there, and I was getting more pissed by the second. This cat fight was irritating me more than the damn paparazzi. “First of all, Nadia Benjamin, it wasn’t because of my insecurity that made him turn down the role. It was his love for me, sweetheart. I urged him to take the role, by the way. So, there you have it. Don’t come for me without the facts. K? Now, please sit there and respect the cause we’re here for or I could request to have you removed from our presence. ‘Cause, you know, those parents of mine you spoke of, they have plenty of pull. Pick your poison.”

I was fuming. Tonight couldn’t be over quick enough. Nadia leaned over the table, looking around me, directly at Divine. “I know Solomon well. The only way he would turn down that role was if you felt a way about it. He is respectful in that way. Secondly, you don’t have to “remove” me from a table. I’m on a much higher level than a little girl that has to call her parents to fight her battles for her.” She sat back in her chair and mumbled, “Bitch.”

“You know what? I said that was enough! The two of you are calling attention to us. Just add this shit to the other drama I’m already dealing with. Since the two of you can’t do as I asked, I’ll remove my damn self from the table.”

I stood from the table and walked away amidst the murmurs from people close enough to hear what was going on. When I got to the back, I called one of the helpers I’d grown familiar with over the past few years from going to this event. “I have to leave. Do me a favor and make sure the organization gets this cashier’s check. I was supposed to present it tonight.”

“I sure will, Mr. Frank.”

When I turned around, I saw Divine looking for me. I was too angry right now to talk to her. I turned and walked out the side exit. That bullshit was uncalled for and I didn't even know how it got to that point. When Nadia asked her if she was following in her parents' footsteps, that seemed to set Divine off and for the life of me, I didn't know why. Nadia just asked a question, that Divine somehow took the wrong way. I could see the shock on Nadia's face with Divine's response. Not only that, but this was how I honored my mother's memory, coming to and supporting this cancer research gala every year. Knowing that they disrupted that, only angered me more.

As I stood there waiting for the car to come around, I called my boy, Bryce. He actually lived pretty close by.
"Hello?"

"You at home?"

"Yeah. Why?"

"Can you come pick me up at the Los Angeles Convention Center?"

"Shit. Yeah. I'll be there in ten minutes."

I ended the call and when the car pulled around, the driver exited. "Divine Stewart will need a ride home. So, wait for her. A friend is coming to pick me up."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Frank."

After waiting for almost ten minutes exactly, Bryce pulled up and I got in. "Why you way on this side of the building?"

"Avoiding the press. I left Divine here. Between her and Nadia, I felt like I was about to blow a gasket. Nadia asked her if she was following in her parents' footsteps and she went off. I still don't know why. I demanded they stop, because they were drawing attention to us, but neither of them noticed that shit because they were too busy taking shots at each other."

"Damn. You ain't never been in drama between two females. Must be that Hollywood."

“Shut up, Bryce. Nadia and I were never together.”

“I didn’t take her for the petty type when I met her.”

“That’s ‘cause she isn’t. That’s why I’m lost on why all this shit went crazy. I’m so pissed, I’m going smoke. Maybe when Divine gets home, I’ll be calm enough to talk.”

“No, you won’t. Sleep on that shit. I can see the damn vein bulging in your neck.”

I didn’t respond to him. As I looked out the window, my cell phone started ringing. “Hello?”

“Mr. Frank, this is Huey Langston, the driver for tonight. Ms. Stewart obtained her own ride. She left a couple of minutes ago.”

“Okay. Thank you.”

I hit the dashboard of Bryce’s Tahoe, then slid my phone in my pocket. I was sure she wasn’t coming home. That’s what I got for falling in love with a younger woman. She couldn’t see how her behavior was unacceptable in the environment we were in. I was almost sure someone would have footage of that shit, too. “What happened?”

“She’s being childish. So, because I’m pissed at something *she* did, she got her own ride and probably isn’t coming home. I waited all this time for love for this? I get angry and she throws a silent fit and not wanna come home? I can see if I was the one that messed up.”

“Well, you did leave her there.”

“I left but I didn’t leave her stranded. I cared enough to see that she got home. I couldn’t stay there and listen to her and Nadia go back and forth. The best thing for me to do was to remove myself from the situation.”

I sent her a text. *Since you declined the ride I left for you, just tell me you’re safe.*

The rest of the ride was quiet, and I was so over the shit. Thankfully, I didn’t have shit coming up no time soon. So, I

could stay home and not be bothered with the press.

When we got there, Bryce offered to chill out with me for a while, but I declined and thanked him for bringing me home. Divine hadn't responded and at this point, I figured she wasn't going to. I was trying to figure out what she was angry about. In my eyes, I hadn't done a thing wrong. But whatever. I walked inside, taking my clothes off on my way to the room, leaving the shit where it fell. I pulled out my stash and rolled up, then went out on the balcony of my bedroom and smoked that shit fast as hell, taking long deep pulls off it, then laid in the bed and let the THC takeover.

Chapter 10

I TOSSED AND TURNED ALL FUCKING NIGHT, WONDERING IF DIVINE was safe, but at the same time, I was still angry. My mind was at war with my heart. I guess had I known she was okay, maybe I could have rested better. *Who was I kidding?* That wasn't a possibility either. I'd gotten used to holding her at night and I felt like a stranger in my own damn home without her being here. But still... I was angry.

I was getting the best sleep of my life, finally, when my phone alerted me that someone had entered the house. It was Divine. I'd set the alarm and allowed notifications. I got up and went brushed my teeth. After starting the shower, I went back to the bedroom to find her standing there in the same thing she had on last night. I stood there, staring at her, not knowing what to say.

She lowered her head and tucked her hair behind her ear, avoiding my gaze. "I'm sorry," she whispered. "It wasn't my intention to stir drama."

She stood there fidgeting until her body took over her and forced her to run to the bathroom. Peeking inside, I could see her on the floor in front of the toilet, throwing up. I had a feeling in the pit of my stomach that it wasn't her nerves, but I brushed it off. Going to the bathroom, I got her a towel. I still didn't really have words right now. I didn't know what to say to her, other than to treat her like my employee who was sick.

I leaned against the vanity until she finished, then handed her the mouthwash and a cold, wet towel. Leaving the bathroom, I went to her old room, since my bed was a mess and pulled the covers back. When I went back, she was done. I grabbed her hand and led her to the guestroom, so she could lie down. Grabbing my phone, I called the chef so he could

come and make a chicken noodle soup. She stared in my eyes, trying to feel me out, but I only said, “Get some rest. The cleaning crew will be here in a lil while and my room is in desperate need.”

I walked out of the room and went to take my shower before the cleaning crew got here. Resting my palms against the wall, I lowered my head, trying to rid myself of the anger, but I didn’t know how to get it off of me right now. While I was trying to show her some affection by grabbing her hand and showing sympathy for the fact that she wasn’t feeling well, it was like the events of last night played through my mind. *But she apologized.* If her intent wasn’t to stir drama, then what exactly was her intent when she went back and forth with Nadia at a formal event?

As the hot water sprayed over my head and cascaded over my body, I exhaled loudly, then began washing myself. I was gonna have to talk to her soon. I just didn’t know what to say. *Maybe I should just accept her apology and be done with the whole thing.* We could move on from here like nothing happened, although I knew that wasn’t healthy. It seemed when it came to being angry or hurt, I reverted to the old Solomon. When I finished my shower, I was refreshed and my heart kept telling me to go to her room and at least say that I forgave her, but the doorbell rang. I hurriedly slid on my t-shirt and basketball shorts and went to answer it.

When I got the door, I saw it was the cleaning crew. “Everything except the guestroom. The door is closed on it. Thank you.”

It was still morning, but I wanted a drink bad as hell. I opened the door for the chef, then went upstairs. I entered the room without knocking to find her lying in the bed. Going around to her side, I got on my knees in front of her. “I accept your apology, Divine,” I said in a low voice, then kissed her forehead.

She didn’t respond, only closed her eyes tightly, so I stood and left the room. Taking a deep breath, I made my way to the

kitchen and poured me a drink. I went outside and put my feet up on my lounge and pulled up the internet to find out I was trending. Of course, the first picture I saw was one a gossip columnist posted from last night's event. In the picture I was sitting between Nadia and Divine and they both had frowns on their faces. That was the shit I was trying to avoid. My phone started to ring as I was scrolling. It was Celeste. Rolling my eyes to the sky, I answered, "Hello?"

"Hey, Solomon. The director said no. Because of the recent events, he doesn't know if he will be able to depend on you to be there, since you still have a case pending."

"Seriously?"

"Yeah. I'm sorry. I believe this role would have been great for you."

"A'ight."

I ended the call and threw the drink back. My career was on hiatus. I wanted to retire on my own, not have Hollywood turn its back on me. That call left a bad taste in my mouth and suddenly, I didn't feel like being bothered with anybody. I wanted to leave, but I knew I couldn't right now. Somehow, I managed to get comfortable although I felt sick inside. Who knew that falling in love with Divine would bring all this bullshit in a short amount of time? It made me wish we would have just stayed in our bubble.

After sitting outside for an hour, the cleaning crew came out to get me to do a walk-through of the house. They'd done well, so I dismissed them. When I went to the kitchen, the chef was done with the soup, but he was still cooking. "You didn't ask for breakfast, but you look weary. So, I prepared something for you... more of a brunch, since it's almost lunchtime."

"Thank you. Will you be able to cook dinner? I know it's short notice, but I'll be needing you every day for a while. Except for breakfast. I think I can handle that."

With the way Divine was feeling, I didn't think she would feel like cooking, especially if she didn't get better soon. She was probably coming down with a stomach bug and just needed a day or two of complete rest to get it out of her system. "Sure thing, boss. I appreciate the work, actually. Things have been kind of slow. So, I don't mind cooking breakfast. No extra charge."

"Thanks."

I walked away to go back to check on Divine and I could hear the shower running, so I went back to the kitchen to wait for brunch. It was a beautiful day outside, so I'd sit on the patio. Although it was beautiful outside, it felt like thunderstorms were blowing through my insides. As I waited for brunch, Divine walked into the kitchen with her purse and phone. I supposed she was leaving. She and the chef traded pleasantries as I stood watching her. I could tell she didn't feel good. She looked like she was on the verge of throwing up. Her skin was pale, and her eyes were weary. The chef told her that her soup was ready, and she thanked him then turned to me. Doing that nervous thing she does, tucking her hair behind her ear, she asked, "Can we talk for a minute?"

Taking a deep breath, I nodded, then led her to the outside patio, where I planned to eat anyway. I didn't know what there was to talk about. Talking about last night's events was only gonna piss me off all over again. I'd just let the shit go this morning. Waiting for her to sit first, I sat across from her, staring at her, waiting for what she had to say. She squeezed her eyes shut, then said, "Solomon, I'm late."

I frowned slightly because I didn't have a clue what she was talking about. "Late for what?"

"My period... it was supposed to come two weeks ago."

My heart swelled slightly. Divine was pregnant? I didn't know what to say. I was gonna be a dad? My heart took off running without me. I didn't want to get excited, because I didn't know what all that would mean for her. But we definitely needed to know for sure. My mouth wouldn't form

words. I stood from my seat and her head dropped. I guess she thought I was upset, but that wasn't it at all. Grabbing her hand, I pulled her from her seat and pulled her in my arms, letting my arms hang loosely around her waist.

Grabbing her hand, I led her inside and asked the chef to fix her a bowl of soup. Going to the refrigerator, I brought her back a Sprite. "I'll be right back, Vine."

I kissed her head. The store not far from my house sold pregnancy tests. When I walked outside, I felt like I was running to my car. I couldn't stop the smile that spread across my face. After last night, this type of news had elevated me. When I looked at her, all I saw was love... nothing else. I made it to the store in record time and thankfully there weren't many people inside. I signed an autograph, then as the old people would say, I made a beeline back to my house.

When I walked back inside, Vine was eating her soup. I'd only been gone maybe a total of fifteen minutes. I sat next to her and the chef sat my brunch in front of me, with a mimosa. I stared at the sunny-side-up eggs, pork meat, and vegetables for a second, then looked over at Divine. I tucked her hair behind her ear, then handed her the bag. After looking at it, she leaned into me and kissed my cheek, then stood and went to the bathroom.

I was so damn nervous. Diving into my food, I tried to focus on that. I was hungry as hell and I'd be damned if I was gon' eat soup. I'd eat it with Vine, but that couldn't be my main meal. Focusing on my food didn't work. I wanted to go stand outside the door. Anxiety was coursing through me. I'd always said that if I ever became a father, I would be a better father than my dad was to me... no question about it.

By the time she came back, I was halfway done with my food. After wiping my mouth, I stared at her, waiting for her to put me out of my misery. She hugged my head and kissed the top of it, then put the test in my hand. I'd never had to read one of those things, but after reading what the two lines meant, Divine was indeed pregnant. Looking up at her, I stood to my

feet. “I know it doesn’t seem like it, but I’m excited as hell. I’m just not one to jump up and down or run with excitement. I can’t wait to be a father. I love you, Vine.”

I pulled her to me and held her tightly as I kissed her head repeatedly. The tears were building, but there was no way I could let Divine see that. I hadn’t cried in a long time, probably since my mama died. But here I was, about to let tears fall from my eyes. I took a deep breath as I hugged her, trying to suck it up, then let her go. “I really need to make love to you,” I whispered in her ear.

She pulled away from me slightly, staring up at me, she said, “Please do, love.”

I gently rubbed her cheek, then picked her up, cradling her in my arms. Heading to our bedroom, I gently kissed her cheek. Knowing that she was having my baby was overwhelming and had me sensitive as hell. When I laid her in the bed, I stared at her as I pulled my shirt over my head. Sitting my phone on the dresser, I started a playlist that happened to start with “Forever My Lady” by Jodeci. That was the perfect song for the moment.

After sliding off my shorts and underwear, I made my way to her. Hovering over her, I kissed her lips tenderly, probably more tender than I ever had. Feeling her body beneath mine was a feeling that would always fill my heart with love. When I pulled away from her, I went to my knees and began disrobing her, taking my time to caress her skin and kiss every inch of her. When I pulled off her leggings and underwear, I indulged in her fruit.

Per usual, it was ripe and ready for me and I loved the vitamins her shit offered. Her taste was my favorite flavor and if I could put that shit in a drink, I’d sip on it all day. As I pleased her, I hummed in satisfaction right on her clit, causing her to coat me with her goodness. Pulling away from her, I wiped my hand down my beard and hovered over her, slowly pushing inside the warmth her body offered me. Before I could stop it, a tear left my eyes, so I buried my face in the pillow as

I stroked her. I couldn't believe that happened and I was embarrassed and felt soft as hell. But Divine being pregnant, unleashed all my damn emotions. "Baby. Look at me," she said as her fingers dug into the flesh of my back.

Trying to calm my emotions some and discreetly wiping the tear on my cheek on the pillow, I lifted my head, staring into her eyes as I continued to dig deeper into her love. "Shit," I groaned.

Staring into her eyes while making love to her was some powerful shit and knowing that she was gonna make me somebody's daddy was causing the tears to form once again. I was holding on to that shit like it was a lifeline. I closed them briefly to gather my composure, then stared at her once again. She grabbed my beard and pulled me to her, pressing her lips to mine as her hips began to roll. Her sucking my bottom lip produced a moan from me and when she began licking at it, I kissed her again, trying to make her feel just how much I loved her.

Regardless of what had happened, she was my Bonnie and I was her Clyde. I wouldn't allow anything to separate us. Feeling her legs wrapped around my waist was doing me in, though. Those thick thighs against me, rubbing each side of me was another turn on of mine. Lowering my head to her breast, I sucked her nipples, then suddenly got a vision of her breastfeeding our baby. The emotions were back, but I decided to fuck right through them.

Going to my knees, I spread her legs apart, running my fingers down the backs of them, then pushed them to her head. Seeing that pussy bust wide open for me, made me go harder but I still tried to remain gentle. Divine was gonna be the mother of my child. The tears dropped once again as we fell into ecstasy at the same damn time. "Shit! I love you, Vine."

"Ti amo anch'io amore."

I had enough sense to know that meant some variation of I love you. Now, where we would go from here wouldn't change. We were very much so on this path. I couldn't even

remember when I stopped using a condom with her, but I wasn't a dummy. However, I did think that she was on birth control since she seemed to be okay with it. "Divine, I'm not saying I don't want this baby, because I do. So, don't take what I'm about to say that way. I thought you were on birth control."

"I never said I was, love. I actually don't believe in that."

"Well, I guess I assumed it, since you were okay with me going in raw. You were okay with getting pregnant, even then?"

"I wouldn't say I was okay with it, but I knew it could happen if we weren't using condoms. Which is something I've never done by the way." *Shit, me neither.* "It was you... so, I was with it. I knew I wouldn't be upset if it did happen."

After running my fingers over her cheek, I finally rolled off her. "I know what you mean. You're the first woman I've ever entered raw. Real shit. There's been no one else that I desired to do that with."

Grabbing her hand, I kissed it, then pulled her close to me, letting my mind float off into la-la land, thinking about us as a family. "So, you were cool with me getting pregnant?" she asked, then kissed my chest and laid her head against it.

"Honestly, Vine... I thought that just in case I fucked us up, if you had my baby, we would always be connected. I know that's selfish, but my biggest fear is hurting you and making you leave."

I couldn't believe I admitted that to her, but it was the truth. I'd never been a relationship that progressed this quickly, and I'd been an asshole for so long, I didn't think I would be able to make her happy. But some of the things I was doing and saying to her was surprising even me. "So, we have a baby and you get to keep me close."

Divine lifted her head and stared into my eyes, then ran her finger over my bottom lip. "That's pretty deep, love. To want me close even if we weren't together."

“Tell me about it. You bring all kind of shit out of me that I barely remembered was there.”

I thought reflectively about my dad and how he sometimes beat the damn sensitivity out of me. Ain't nothing about me was supposed to be sensitive. *You a man or a pussy?* I cleared my throat, trying to rid myself of the sensitivity I was feeling. The tears falling from my eyes earlier plagued the fuck out of me. Taking a deep breath, I knew I had to push that out of my mind. I was doing what was right. I was showing the woman I loved my soft side. She deserved to see it. “Well, I don't think you'll fuck us up, baby. And I don't think I could leave you if I wanted to. That's how much you mean to me.”

I was glad one of us had faith in me. I turned on my back for a moment, preparing to get up to get us cleaned up, but Divine continued. “But... on another note, why do you call me Vine? Most people go with Di or call me Di. What made you call me that? Which I love by the way.”

I turned back to her and stared into her eyes, something I loved for us to do. Gently swiping her hair from her face, I said, “For a plant, the vine is the most important part. It provides all its nutrients. Without the vine, the flower or fruit can't live. I feel the same way about you. You're my Vine. You provide me with so much love, devotion, passion, affection... I can go on, but you get my point. I'd be a withered soul without you.”

I kissed her lips softly and rested my forehead against hers. She put her hands to my face as I noticed the tear that slid down her cheek, and said, “I love you... so much, Solomon Frank. You have no idea.”

If she could only understand how deep my love went for her, it would frighten her. I would give up everything for her and the feeling of that was overwhelming. I gently wiped her cheek with my thumb and closed my eyes for a moment, warring with myself on what I was about to say to her. “My mom died when I was seventeen. I was a junior in high school. She was the last woman before you that I could say meant

everything to me. After that, my dad was in full control and I didn't have anyone to level out his teaching and rules."

Opening my eyes, I continued, "He was the one that taught me to be closed off, because as a man, you just didn't express your feelings like that, especially with a woman. She would think you were weak. Well, with anyone. If you did, people would take advantage of you. So, when I was getting my career off the ground, I realized that I would have to be a mean cuss just to get respect from people. And it worked. But in the meantime, I was missing the one thing that my mother gave so freely. Love. When you came along, I had no idea we would be where we are today."

"Me either," she whispered.

She was probably in disbelief that I was sharing that with her. She continued, "One of the things I love about my dad is the way he loves my mom and doesn't shy away from showing her... telling her. I wanted that. I don't think it makes a man weak at all. I think it means he's confident enough in who he is, that being vulnerable with his woman doesn't make him uncomfortable. I love the way you show your love to me. You've opened up so much to me."

I pulled her closer and kissed her forehead. "Can we leave town for a bit to celebrate? It's not like I have anything going on right now. If you don't have anything going on, I really wanna take you somewhere secluded and exotic. I wanna get used to knowing that I'm going to be someone's father in a few months. Can we do that, Vine? I wanna show the mother of my child even more love than I already have."

I kissed her forehead again, resting my hand at the nape of her neck, cherishing everything about her. "I'd love to... after we go tell my parents. They're gonna be thrilled."

"Of course, baby. St. Lucia good for you?"

"Wherever you are is good for me."

And that was why I loved her above everything else. She gave herself to me unselfishly all the time and no matter what

went on last night or at the bar that night, nothing would ever change that.

Chapter 11

“HOW YOU FEELING, BABY?” DIVINE ASKED AS SHE SQUEEZED MY hand.

We were standing at the door of her parents’ house, waiting for the housekeeper to open the door. I was nervous as hell. I didn’t know if they would be disappointed, thinking we were moving too fast or if they just wouldn’t approve because of all the drama. We’d laid in one another’s arms the whole day yesterday, just loving on one another. We were both excited that our love would represent itself in human form. I couldn’t wait until we left for St. Lucia. We were going to have to wait longer than I planned, because I completely forgot about my court date coming up. I couldn’t leave the country until after. So, we were grounded for another week or so. “I’m a little nervous, baby. Just hoping we get their blessings.”

She kissed my cheek, then said, “It’ll be fine, love. I promise.”

I wanted to believe that she was right, but I knew how I would feel if my daughter rolled through my house talking ‘bout she was pregnant for a man she hadn’t been with for three months yet. Before I could respond, the housekeeper opened the door. “Divine! Hey! Mr. Frank,” she said all in one breath.

“Hey, Gloria,” Divine said.

“Hello, Ms. Gloria. Nice to see you again,” I responded.

She blushed as she let us inside and told us that Divine’s parents were in the dining room about to have lunch. We headed to meet them, and my nerves were getting the best of me. My stomach was in knots and I didn’t know what to do to

untie that shit. When we walked in, Mrs. Juliana stood from her seat and squealed in excitement to see her only child. Her dad, Mr. Stewart made his way to me, shaking my hand with a smile on his face that I gladly returned. “Thank you for handling that situation, Solomon. It was exactly how I would’ve handled it. And don’t you worry about David Meechum. He owes me, so that role is yours if you still want it.”

As if I wasn’t emotional enough. This man barely knew me, but he was welcoming me to the family practically. He was offering me something you only did for family and that touched my heart. I had never had anybody looking out for me. I was always on my own, almost my entire life. Even when my mama was alive, she could only do so much with my dad around. I couldn’t answer him right away, because I had a huge lump in my fucking throat. After swallowing hard and feeling my face heat up, I said, “Thank you. That means a lot coming from you. I’m gonna pass on the role, though. I don’t wanna be *that* guy. I hope you understand what I mean. Something else will come around. But to know you would put yourself out there for me is somewhat overwhelming. I appreciate that.”

Mr. Stewart patted me on the shoulder and said, “Of course, I would. You’re family now. And if you change your mind, let me know. Now come on, let’s eat. I’m starving.”

Family. At forty-one years old, I shouldn’t be feeling like a kid at Christmas. My emotions were at an all-time high and it felt like I was fighting Goliath without the help of God, trying to control them. He was giving me what I didn’t get from my own father.

ACCEPTANCE OF WHO I WAS.

He wasn’t trying to change me to make me fit in with them. He simply welcomed me with open arms because his daughter loved me. That feeling was foreign to me and it gave me a joy I’d never felt before. When we got to the table, Mr.

Stewart blessed the food and we all dug in. As we ate, Mrs. Stewart asked, “So, what’s this surprise you have for us, Di?”

Divine grabbed my hand as she glanced at me. My nerves were long gone, thanks to Mr. Stewart and I knew they would be accepting of the grandchild we would be gifting their lives with. “Well, you know how I feel about Solomon. And I’m sure y’all can sense how he feels about me. That love... it’s created an addition to our family.”

For a few seconds or so, the table was quiet as if they were making sure they understood what Divine had said. They looked at one another, then back at us as smiles spread across their faces. Mrs. Stewart said something in Italian, causing Vine to blush. “Yes, Mommy. I’m pregnant.”

“Oh my gosh!” she squealed in excitement as she clapped her hands together.

They both stood and walked over to us, embracing us in their arms. It caught me by surprise when Mr. Stewart hugged me as well. “I’m gonna be a grandpa?” he asked.

“You are,” Divine replied as we both smiled at the excitement on their faces.

“Wow. I’ve been waiting for this day. When did you find out?”

“Yesterday,” Divine answered.

“This is... so perfect,” he said with a grin on his face, then turned to me. “I trust you. You’ve given me every reason to. You light up my baby girl’s eyes and gave me a grandchild. You’re definitely family now, son.”

This man had me all in my fucking feelings. I hated that but I loved it at the same time. I was doing my best to not let them show on the outside. He again walked closer to us and hugged Divine tightly. I smiled at their love. However, he did the same to me. My dad had never shown me affection of any kind. The only touching we did was when we shook hands or when he was beating my ass. “I can tell you’re a good man, Solomon. My bullshit meter has never steered me wrong.”

I took a deep breath, reeling my emotions back in. “Thank you, Mr. Stewart... Mrs. Stewart, for accepting me into your family. This means more to me than you’ll ever know. You guys barely know me, but I can feel the love whenever I walk through the doors. I know you are probably wondering about my future with Vine, but I promise you that I plan to make her happy forever.”

I couldn’t help but notice the smile on Divine’s beautiful face. She already had that pregnancy glow and I loved it. Mr. Stewart patted my shoulder. “I believe that. Just let me know when to get my tux.”

He winked and my face heated up once again. To hear him approve without me even asking for Divine’s hand in marriage was heartwarming. This Stewart family had plans to do me in today... had to. “Des, stop,” Mrs. Stewart said while giggling. “We want him to stay. Don’t put the pressure of rushing them down the aisle on him.”

“I’m just saying, baby love. If he needs my blessing, he has it.”

Divine’s face was a blush pink as she tucked her hair behind her ear. I looked at her mother and said, “No pressure at all. It’s something that’s going to happen eventually...” Turning my attention to Divine, I continued, “Sooner than later.” Bringing my focus back to Mr. Stewart, I shook his hand, and said, “Thank you for your blessing. When I feel the moment has come, you’ll be the first person I call.”

“See, I know what a man deeply in love looks like, beautiful,” Mr. Stewart said to his wife, then kissed her cheek as she blushed. “I know the look all too well.” Looking back at me, he said, “I look forward to the day.”

I nodded as Vine leaned over and kissed my cheek. She whispered in my ear, “So do I.”

I turned to her and kissed her lips, gently sucking her bottom one. My heart was full, and I knew no other way to express that. As I kissed her, I rested my hand on her stomach.

Slowly pulling away, I said, “You’ve made me so happy. I know you’re the one because that wasn’t an easy thing to accomplish.”

“You are right about that, love. But... it was worth it.”

One day, this woman was going to be my wife and once all this legal stuff was over, I would take the first steps to making that happen.

When we got home from the amazing lunch we had with Divine’s parents, I could have literally regurgitated every bite I’d eaten. David was standing outside at my back door, banging on it. After parking, I closed my eyes briefly, rubbing my temples. Divine looked concerned, so I told her, “That’s my brother, Vine. Go in the house. If this gets ugly, call the police. I don’t have a good feeling about this.”

She wrapped her arms around my neck and pressed her face against mine. “Try not to blow up, baby. Please, because I don’t wanna *have* to call the police.”

I didn’t respond to her verbally. She didn’t know David. He liked pushing me to my limits. After helping her out of the car, David turned to us with a cynical smile on his face. I knew that face anywhere. This was about to be dramatic and the shit was about to hit the fan. As we approached, he said, “Hello, Divine Stewart. I’m David Frank. So nice to meet the woman that has my brother doing shit that he’d never do for me. She must be pretty special to sacrifice your career for, since only a few weeks ago, you refused to do that shit for your flesh and blood.”

“Go inside, Divine.”

The minute she walked inside, I looked over at him feeling deadlier than I ever had. “You know I could fuck you up and get away with it. You on my property.”

“Man, fuck that. You couldn’t risk yo’ good image for me, but you can catch a case for her half-white ass?”

I wanted to knock his ass out. Instead, I pushed him out of my face, causing him to stumble and fall to the ground. “As long as I live, you gon’ show her some respect. If you remember, I got arrested for yo’ ass. Sat in jail for four days for some shit I had nothing to do with. After that, I was done with trying to protect you. Who was there for me? No fucking body. You didn’t wanna do right, so you were on your own after that. That woman in there is the woman I love. My career don’t mean shit compared to her.”

He was sitting on the ground, looking stunned, then suddenly he charged me. We went to the ground and began tussling. As I landed a fist to his jaw to get him off me, I couldn’t help but remember a time when we were teenagers, fighting just like we were now. Our fights were always because of something I wouldn’t do for him. He was selfish and was raised to be that way. I was always the one that had to look after him while he got away with murder.

As we continued fighting for control, he kneed me in my shit, causing me to double over. He dove on top of me, but I quickly recovered and flipped him over, landing blows to his body until I heard sirens. I fell off him, then saw Divine running to us. The cop car was at the end of the driveway. Divine yelled, “Oh my God! What the hell?”

She dropped her face in her hands as I sat on my ass, watching David spit blood out of his mouth. He yelled, “You ain’t my fucking brother. Fuck you, Solo! Fuck you! I bet Mama spinning in her grave right now to see how you’ve treated me.”

“Naw, fuck *you*! I’ve done nothing but support you and I’m tired! I’m tired of always bailing you out and being your safety net. At some point, you need to take responsibility for your own actions. So, if that means you ain’t my brother no more, then so be it.”

Two officers walked up the driveway, weapons drawn.
“Hands up!”

The three of us lifted our hands. I hated that Divine was even out here. It seemed like the floodgates had opened and I couldn't swim above water. When they got closer, one of them asked, “Whose residence?”

I answered, “Mine. I'm Solomon Frank and she's my girlfriend, Divine Stewart.”

The cop with his gun on me lowered it and told me to stand. I did as I was told as best I could. My leg felt like it was fucked up. My clothes were torn and there was blood on me. I wasn't sure if it was mine or David's. “He's David Frank and we had a domestic dispute.”

“Let's have a seat, Mr. Frank.”

I glanced over at David as the cop had him lay on his stomach so he could cuff him. Once I ran everything down, letting him know that David attacked me, I could see Divine's facial expressions. She looked sad and I knew it had everything to do with what David said. That muthafucka was the last person she needed to let get to her. I grabbed her hand as the officer filled out his report. “I'm sorry, Vine. Please try to relax.”

She closed her eyes and I could see she was having a hard time doing as I asked. Pulling her close to me, I rested my forehead on hers. “Think about our baby and all the love we made creating him or her. Forget about all the bullshit and just think about the love, baby. I love you so much, Vine.”

“I love you, too, baby.”

Bringing my hands to her face, I kissed her lips, then she laid her head against me. When I looked up, David was looking right at me with a scowl on his face. “I guess because he's the famous Solomon Frank is why he isn't in cuffs.”

“I'm not in cuffs because this is my house, dumb ass. Now shut up and thank God that I'm not gonna press charges.”

Looking back at Divine, she smiled weakly at me. “If you’re okay, I’m gonna go take a hot bath. I’m so anxious right now, love.”

“I know, baby. It’s okay. Go relax. I’m fine,” I said, glancing down at my swollen knee.

I kissed her forehead and watched her go inside. The police had already taken her statement. When she got outside, we were already on the ground fighting. So, there wasn’t much she could say about it. He looked up at me and asked, “Are you sure you don’t wanna press charges?”

“Yes, sir. But I don’t want him on my property or near me again.”

“Officer, did he tell you he’s been arrested before? Don’t think he’s so innocent just because he has money and speaks correct English. I came here to check on him because of all his latest legal troubles. He was fighting at a bar, too. Maybe he’s the violent one.”

“Shut up. This situation... because it happened on his property, is why you’re the one in cuffs. You will be arrested if you keep talking.” Turning back to me, the officer asked, “Do you have security footage to corroborate your story?”

“I didn’t even think about that. I do. I’ll be right back.”

When I walked in the house, I could hear the soft music coming from the bedroom. I just wanted to lay in the house and just be. My knee was fucked up, though. I had a nice lil limp. Hopefully, it was just swollen from bruising. It didn’t feel like it was anything more. Once I’d gotten the footage where it should be, I called the officer inside. When he watched, he slowly shook his head when David charged me. Although I’d pushed him out of my face, it wasn’t nearly as violent as what he’d done. His fall to the ground was because he’d tripped over his own feet. “Can you email this to me?”

“Yes, sir.”

After sending the footage to him, I followed him outside. The other officer was walking David to the car when he

suddenly fell to the ground. I rolled my eyes until I saw his body jerking. He'd always had problems with seizures. Doing my best, I ran to him. Despite the jackass he was, I didn't want him to die. "Turn him on his side! He's having a seizure!"

The officer did as I asked, but the seizure was lasting too long... way too long. "Call for an ambulance! He should have come out of this by now! David, come on, man."

After a few seconds, his body went limp. "David!" I shook him, but he didn't respond. "Take these cuffs off!"

The officer did as I asked, and I rolled David to his back. He wasn't breathing. The cop that I had been talking to me the whole time was at the street, waiting for the ambulance as I watched the life slip out of my brother. I tried performing CPR, but those compressions soon turned into me pounding on him, begging him to fight. "David! Come on, man, shit! Fuck!"

The tears found their way down my cheeks as I realized there was no hope. The fight had probably caused the seizure. My last words to my brother were filled with hate and now I sat here wishing I could take it all back.

When the ambulance arrived, David was long gone and there was nothing anyone could do to bring him back. Once the coroner came to bring him to the morgue for the time being, I walked in the house and sat in the kitchen for a moment to search for a funeral home to get his body. It was my fault that my brother was dead, so I couldn't let the city bury him. Once I called and they informed me that they would go and get his body, I headed to the bedroom, hoping that Divine was asleep, so she wouldn't have to see me this way. I wasn't so lucky. Almost as soon as I walked in, she sat straight up in the bed. After looking me over for a second, she asked, "What happened? Everything okay?"

I only shook my head, then limped to the bathroom to run some water to soak in. *I killed my brother.* I pulled my shirt off and let it fall to the floor, then closed my eyes as I stood there. *What could I have done differently?* As I stood there,

drowning in my own thoughts and sorrow, Divine's arms slid around me, and her hands rested on my chest. "Talk to me, please," she said softly, then kissed my back.

I took a deep breath and felt my body tremble. I was stuck with not being able to make it right with my brother. The last words we said to one another played through my mind on repeat. Dropping my head, I said in a low voice, "I killed him. He had a seizure and didn't come out of it. I killed my brother."

She moved around me until she was in front of me. I immediately noticed the tears on her cheeks. "I'm so sorry, baby," she whispered as she wrapped her arms around me.

I couldn't even bare to lift my arms to hug her back. My soul was crushed, and it was affecting me physically. "You need me to do anything, love?"

I shook my head, then left her embrace to pour Epson salt in the water. My entire body was gonna be aching tomorrow if I didn't. Divine continued to stand there as I sat the carton on the floor, then turned the water off. Unfastening my pants, I allowed them to drop to the floor, then gently pulled off my briefs. Once I'd gotten them off, I got in the tub and slowly eased my body down in the hot water. I laid my head back, then brought my hands to my face and slid them down it. My brows furrowed as I tried to hold my cries in, but I couldn't. My head felt like it was about to explode. My bottom lip quivered, then the floodgates opened. My shoulders quaked as I brought my hands to my face. The audible cries that came from me only made me feel worse.

Sliding my hands down my face, wiping away my tears, I allowed my hands to go into the water. That was when I realized Divine was on her knees next to the tub, tears streaming down her face as well. She grabbed my hand from the water and held it between hers for a moment, then brought it to her cheek. She turned her head and kissed it, then said, "I am here for you, love."

I slid my hand away from hers and said, "I'm cool, Divine. I'll be out in a minute."

I was embarrassed as hell for breaking down like that in front of her. *Only pussies cry like a little ass girl. Wipe that shit off your face.* After taking a deep breath and gathering my composure, I relaxed and tried to let the hot water heal me. My legs were burning from the scrapes on them from the cement. Before closing my eyes, I looked over at Divine. She was staring at me with a look of sympathy. "I'm a'ight, baby."

I couldn't be all fragile right now. She needed me and needed me to be strong. I couldn't have her stressed, especially not while she was carrying my baby. "Okay."

She stood and left the room as I exhaled. I wasn't cool. I wasn't okay, but I needed to be... for her. Shortly after she left, she reentered with a glass of Hennessy and sat it on the tub beside me, then walked out once again. My head was pounding, and I just wanted to try to sleep, but the images of my brother on the ground seizing kept coming to my mind. I couldn't stop them. Why did he have to push me? Holding my hands to my head, trying to wish them away wasn't helping. I grabbed the glass of Hennessy and threw it at the wall, glass shattering and alcohol painting the marble. Glass had fallen in the tub with me, so I let the water out and just sat there as it drained out.

When I finally got out of the tub, I dried off and walked into the room naked. Divine was at the foot of the bed and she looked to be asleep. I slid on some drawers, then slid in bed, lying on my back. As tears left my eyes, I whispered, "God, I'm sorry."

Shortly after I said that, I heard, "I wanna lay with you. Is that okay?"

I thought she was asleep. Taking a steady, deep breath and exhaling slowly, I said, "Yes."

She made her way to me and my heart softened some. I could feel myself getting angry about what happened. David

and I had been like Jacob and Esau almost our entire lives, but it was never this bad. It just so happened to be its worst right before he died. I'd matured and he hadn't... found my way in life and he was still lost... gotten smarter and wiser while he'd remained stagnant. We were different like night and day, but it wasn't always that way. As kids, we were close, but as I grew, we grew apart. He would always say we weren't close anymore because I had changed. I had and shame on him for not changing, too.

Divine laid her head and hand on my chest and kissed it. "I love you."

Turning to my side, I pulled her to me so I could spoon her. Placing my hand on her stomach, I said, "I love you, too."

Chapter 12

“WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?”

“Nothing.”

“Do you need anything, Solo?”

“Man, I need y’all to just leave. I said I’m cool.”

Watt and Bryce were on my last nerve. When I woke up this morning, I’d left Divine in bed and took a shower so I could ice my knee. That shit was hurting so bad, I could barely walk. I’d taken my shower down the hall so I wouldn’t wake her up, then went downstairs. The chef would be here in a minute. Bryce and Watt showed up here early as hell. I was assuming it was on the news because I hadn’t called either one of them. “How the fuck did y’all even know what happened?”

They looked at each other, then back at me. I knew it was about to be some bullshit. “I got him out of jail, Solo. Once he’d taken a shower, he asked me to drop him off at your place. I burned off because I had to get back to my job for a previously scheduled meeting. He said he’d just hang out with you and get you to bring him back to Inglewood or get a ride from someone else. When David never called to let me know how things went, I started calling. Neither of you were answering your phones, so I knew some shit had happened. Then I saw it on the news this morning,” Watt said.

My anger was threatening to spew like lava from an erupting volcano. “Man, get the fuck away from me. You should have left his ass where he fucking was! Now I gotta bury my brother when he should have had his unstable ass in jail! Leave!”

Bryce raised his hands in surrender and said, “Bruh, we still here if you need us.”

I didn’t respond to him. I was so angry. When they left, the chef arrived and offered his condolences as he went inside. I didn’t respond to him. Closing my eyes, I tried to focus on the baby that Divine was bringing in this world. That didn’t last long, though, as I heard another car coming up the driveway. When Celeste walked around the corner, I rolled my eyes. “Solomon, I’m so sorry for your loss. Is there anything you need me to do?”

“No.”

“Is Divine awake?”

“No.” Right after I said that, I saw her standing near the glass, watching us. “Well, I guess she is.”

Celeste walked away, going inside to talk to Divine while I stayed outside, in my lounge chair, waiting to hear from the funeral home. This would be simple. No funeral. Just us and a preacher. I couldn’t bear to be around anybody right now. Then again, I guess it wasn’t about me. His people would want to show up for his service. Before I could fully commit to one or the other, Celeste walked out the house and said, “I’ll see you later, Solomon.”

I didn’t respond to her. Shortly after, Divine walked outside and hugged me, then kissed my head. “How are you feeling, baby?” I asked her in a low voice.

I was almost sure she’d thrown up this morning. Turning to look at her, I could see she looked nervous. *Did something happen?* Maybe I was making her nervous. “I’m okay. More concerned about you.”

“Come here, Divine.”

She walked closer to me and I pulled her down in my lap, then ran my hand across her stomach. “As long as I have you and my baby, I’m gon’ be fine. Don’t worry. I’m just trying to process my feelings, baby. But I’ll be fine.”

I leaned over and kissed her stomach, then pulled her face to mine and kissed her lips. When I laid back in the lounge, I pulled her back with me. She was going to be the one to help me through this if I allowed her to. And with all the feelings running through me, I needed her now more than ever. Fuck her seeing my emotions through my tears. I'd be a pussy all day if that made me one. She placed her hand to my cheek and said, "You'll always have me. Whatever you need, love, tell me. I wanna be here for you however you need me to be."

"All I need is you. Everything you're doing for me right now is all I need you to do. Now please climb on top of me and give me those lips."

I needed to feel her taking charge for the moment. Ruling me, commanding my body to do as she pleased. That was new for me, because I was always in charge, but in this moment, I needed her to be gentle with me, showing me her undying love for me, because right now, I felt unlovable. She slid her body on top of mine, straddling me, and put her hands to my cheeks. When she covered my mouth with hers, I felt healing virtue leave her and pour into me. As she sucked my bottom lip, my hands traveled to her ass and I squeezed, pulling her close to me. "Mmm," I moaned. Pulling away from her kiss, I said, "I need you, Vine, in every way, but right now, I'm in desperate need of those nutrients you supply me with. Can I have them?"

With the chef being in the kitchen, I knew we would have to go to the bedroom. "I'm yours, love. Whatever you need from me is yours."

That being said, I rubbed her against my hardness and watched her eyes close. "We have to go to the room, baby."

She stood from my lap and I struggled getting up a little. My knee was huge. If the swelling didn't go down within the next couple of days, I'd have to get it checked out. Grabbing her hand, I led her in the house and the chef said, "Breakfast will be ready in about thirty minutes, Mr. Frank."

I nodded and continued to the bedroom. The moment we got inside, and I closed the door, I pulled my clothes off, then

slowly took off hers. She glanced down at my erection and licked her lips. In my mind, I wanted to tear her to shreds, but my heart was weak, along with my knee. Once her clothes were off, I slid in the bed, lying on my back and stroked my dick, waiting for her to join me. Hopefully, she didn't trip on how big my knee had gotten. That shit was the least of my worries. She slid in the bed with me and replaced my hand with hers and teased the head of my dick with her tongue.

My eyes rolled to the back of my head as she pleased me. When she hummed on it, it felt like the head swelled with confidence because she enjoyed it so much. As her hand stroked me and her tongue teased me, I grabbed a handful of her hair as I looked down at her. The pleasure was so intense, it felt like I wanted to fire off already. When her warm mouth descended on my shaft, I let out a groan that I was sure the chef heard. Releasing her hair, I laid back and enjoyed the head and how supreme her skills seemed to get every time she pleased me. Each time was better than the last.

As she continued her rhythm, still gripping the base with her hand, I said, "Vine, shit! I'm about to bust, baby."

She released the killer suction he had on my shit, then straddled me and slid that hot pussy down on my dick. I didn't move a muscle, because I needed to marinate in her shit for a minute. "Fuck!"

Resting her hands on my chest, she began working that shit on me so good, I couldn't contain myself. Sliding my hands up her legs, I allowed them to travel to her titties. I pinched her nipples and she hissed. Releasing them, I watched them bounce as she sat up on my erection and began bouncing on my shit. Her legs were wide opened, and her feet were flat on the bed as her body shuddered from the orgasm that was threatening to tear through her. Sitting up slightly, I could see all the action as she came, and it only got me closer to firing off in her depths. Seeing the trail of lubricant that her pussy was leaving all over me was the final determinant. Grabbing her hips, I thrust into her and released my seed with a grunt. "Fuck!"

She laid flat on my chest as I kissed her head and whispered, “Shit. Thank you.”

That had to be some good shit for me to be thanking her for putting me out of my misery. All I wanted to do now was sleep, since I didn’t get much last night. Divine lifted her head, kissed my lips, then laid back down cuddling up to me. I wrapped my arms around her and realized that I’d lost myself in her. It was the best feeling in the world.

I’d made the decision to have a small gathering at the funeral home for David, but as the car pulled up, I was starting to regret that decision. Thankfully, I’d hired a couple of guards for Divine and me. There were guys standing outside, looking like hoodlums, probably some of the guys he hung around. Taking a deep breath, I grabbed Divine’s hand. I could tell she was a little nervous about them. I was just ready to get all this shit over with. After today, I had court Monday. I wanted to be done with everything so Divine and I could live in peace while waiting on our baby to make his or her arrival.

I gently slid my hand across Divine’s stomach and gave her a slight smile. “You okay, Vine?”

She slid her hand across mine and said, “I’m fine, love. Are you good?”

I took a deep breath and said, “As good as to be expected.”

The casket wouldn’t be open, because I felt that would just be too hard for me. So, I opted to display a picture of him. The guard opened the door and I got out, then held my hand out for Divine as the hoodlums looked on. When she got out, she said, “My parents are here.”

She nodded in the direction behind me. I smiled softly at her, then turned to greet them. I held my hand out for her dad

and he shook it, then pulled me to him. “We’re here for you, son.”

I closed my eyes and hugged him back. I never realized until now how much I needed them, too. When he let me go, Mrs. Stewart hugged me as well. She kissed my cheek and expressed her sympathy. It felt like I had parents again and I loved that feeling. Having their support meant a lot to me. Looking to the door, I saw Watt and Bryce standing there, waiting for us. Grabbing Divine’s hand, I smiled softly at her and led her to the door.

Even Celeste showed up and while she hadn’t been on my best side, I was glad to see her as well. When we got to the door, I shook my boys’ hands, then they opened the door for us to enter. There were a few people inside, talking quietly. When I walked in with guards, all eyes were on us. I couldn’t take any chances, knowing what kind of bullshit David was into. I wouldn’t be unapproachable, but I would be selective of who I allowed to approach me.

Once we sat, I put my arm around Divine’s shoulders and the preacher walked to the podium as everyone that was outside joined us on the inside as well. I didn’t know the preacher personally, but he was Bryce’s pastor. Bryce had asked him to speak and give encouragement to us and he accepted and said he would be honored. As everyone was seated, he began singing and it happened to be my mama’s favorite song, “Even Me.” Before I could stop it, the tears fell from my eyes as my mama’s face appeared in my mind and her last words to me echoed through my heart. *Look out for your brother.* Bringing my arms in front of me, I leaned forward, enduring the pain the song brought to my heart.

Wiping my face, I put my shades on and was extremely relieved when he stopped singing. Divine had been gently rubbing my back the entire time. I grabbed her hand as we listened to his uplifting sermon and had it not been for the casket, I would’ve forgotten we were at a funeral. The preacher had made it seem like a church service. Rubbing my thumb across Divine’s hand, she turned to me and I gave her a

slight smile. In my heart I was thankful that this was just about over because I didn't know how much longer I could sit here.

The funeral home had asked if I wanted to open the floor up for others to speak about David, but I'd quickly shot that down. That alone could have taken so much time. Because we didn't do that, the funeral was over in less than an hour.

When we got to the house, Chef Riley was arriving to cook for us, Divine's parents, Bryce, and Watt. I needed to speak to my boys about my outburst the other day. As Divine and I went upstairs to change clothes, I couldn't help but thank God for the support he gave me. When we got upstairs and were about to get changed, Divine wrapped her arms around my waist and laid against my shoulder. "You are so strong. I don't know how you do it."

I put my arms around her. "I've had to be strong my entire life, baby. Thankfully, my knee is getting better. That was rougher than everything else," I said, then chuckled.

Divine smiled. "Oh, yeah. Definitely need that knee to get better, love." After giggling, she continued, "Monday, I'm making a doctor's appointment. We need to see how the munchkin's doing."

"Yeah. I can't wait to find out how far along you are. Do you want a girl or a boy?"

"I don't have a preference. I want a healthy baby. What do you want, love?"

Pulling away from her, I sat on the bed to give it some serious thought. "Honestly, I would be cool with either, as well. Although, if it's a boy, I can teach him everything I didn't learn growing up. Teach him about all the things he can do and to not worry about the misconceptions... what someone else is telling him he shouldn't do, especially if they aren't doing a damn thing themselves. But if it's a little princess, she's gonna teach me, just like you have, that it's okay to be soft at times... show my sensitivity. I was so hard,

and I still am in a way, but the first time I was gentle with you, it shocked the hell out of me.”

Divine walked over and sat next to me, putting her hands to my face. She loved holding my face in her hands and I loved it, too. I loved her touch... period. “Now you got me changing my mind. I want a girl if it’s gonna give you all the feels. I love every piece of you, but the softer side of you is my favorite.”

I gave her a smirk, then said, “You sure? Because when I’m digging deep in that pussy, you don’t be thinking about my softer side. You want a fucking thug up in there.”

She laughed loudly. She knew that shit was true. I chuckled with her as I pulled her closer. “Notice, I said *every* part of you. Solo’s right up there, too. Second favorite part, hands down, love.”

I nuzzled my face where her neck and shoulder met, taking in her scent, then pulled her on top of me. “Mmm. Solo don’t like being second best. He need to be in that number one spot.”

I gripped her ass tightly as my fingers grazed her heat, then kissed her shoulder, then her neck. “What he gotta do to be number one in your life, baby? ‘Cause he willing to go as far as putting you outta commission for a day or two.”

Her eyes were closed, and a soft moan had left her lips. I supposed she was imagining the things she felt when I was deep in her shit. My fucked-up knee had kept me from getting at her like I normally did for the past few days. So, I was beyond ready to tear some shit up. While it wasn’t one hundred percent, it was a lot better than it had been. “He gon’ have to remind me how he fucks shit up. He need to take his spot, baby.”

Oh, she was baiting a nigga. I quickly pulled my dick from my briefs and slid her thong to the side, then lowered her on my shit. The heat I always felt upon entry always gave me pause. She threw her head back as she moaned. That shit was

sexy as hell. Sliding my hand down her neck, then around to her back, I unfastened her bra, letting it fall to the floor. I gripped her ass and began lifting her slowly and lowering her again. “You okay with your parents hearing your dirty-ass mouth? ‘Cause I’m finna fuck the shit out of you.”

Looking at the way she was coating me with her juices already was like a K-9 catching a whiff of cocaine. I only had one agenda and that was fucking up the way she walked. She gripped my shoulders, rolling her hips, giving my dick the action he needed as she moaned. “I don’t care about shit right now except you taking me to Inglewood.”

Word? The dog had found that good shit... a stash of that uncut shit. I stood up with her in my arms and quickly brought her to the nearest wall. She hit it with a thud as I power drove into her. She screamed out in passion and I knew we would get some looks when we made it back to the front. Her skin was red as I fucked her world up, causing her to speak in unknown tongues straight to God’s ears. The grunts leaving me were uncontrollable. I was hitting her with so much pressure, the wind was leaving me with each thrust. Her legs began trembling in the crooks of my arms, so I slowed my pace to watch her cream all over my dick.

And what a sight that shit was. Swinging her body around and going to the bed, I let her slide to her feet and spun her around. “Touch your toes, Vine.”

When she did as I asked, I went to my knees and sucked that pussy from the back, getting all the nutrients my taste buds craved. “Baby, shiiit!” she whined.

I slapped her ass as I moaned in satisfaction, and she came again, giving me a bonus orgasm. After slurping all that shit up, I stood and re-entered her with a force that could only be classified as Inglewood. I had so much thug in her, she was gon’ start quoting 2Pac in a minute. The frown on my face was giving me a fucking headache and the way my other head was punching the fuck outta her cervix was gon’ give him a fucking headache, too, if he didn’t nut soon.

Leaning over her, I pulled her up by her hair, then walked closer to the bed, so she could rest her head on it. I had her close her legs, then rested one foot on the mattress and dug that shit out. She eventually ended up flat on the mattress, so I straddled her and gave that pussy everything she wanted as she yelled, “Solo! Fuck!”

That shit did it. I came so fucking hard, I felt that shit go up my spine and through my extremities. I grunted out my satisfaction as I panted. Standing to my feet, I said, “Fuck! That shit was so good.”

When she stood, it looked like her knees buckled. After wrapping her arms around my neck, she kissed me repeatedly until I parted my lips, welcoming her tongue to mine. Once our lips separated, she smirked, then said, “You owned that number one spot, baby.”

I swat her ass, then said, “You ain’t slick. That was your way of getting that out of me. I don’t mind, though. I’ll get at that pussy whenever you want me to. You wanna hop in the shower now or wash up and wait until tonight?”

“I strongly suggest we just wash up.”

She pulled her bottom lip between her teeth as I stared at her. This dick had only increased her desire for me. She wanted more. I wanted more, too. “Maybe I can coax Solo to make an appearance when we shower later.”

“Oh, I can assure you that no coaxing will be needed. Let’s get cleaned up, before your parents think you’re dead. All that screaming that happened a minute ago... now it’s quiet as hell? They may have called the police.”

I chuckled as she narrowed her eyes at me playfully. “I may not be dead, but you damn sure killed the kitty. Good thing she has nine lives. Now come on. I’m starving.”

I laughed as her words swelled my head, both of them. I wondered what would happen after I killed that kitty nine times. Once we cleaned up, we joined the peeps for our

makeshift repast. And just like that, my mind was back on how I killed my brother.

“Thank y’all for coming. I know the last time y’all were here wasn’t all that pleasant.”

“Nigga, we been dealing wit’ yo’ funky-ass attitude for years. We used to yo’ bullshit,” Bryce said, then laughed.

“Had I known he was on some bullshit, there was no way I would have left him here, Solo. I’m sorry man. I really am. As your friend, I can tell that the guilt of what happened is eating you alive. This isn’t your fault. It’s his. You were only reacting to his actions. He knew his epileptic condition was severe. So, for him to start shit with you was on him,” Watt said.

He and David had been close growing up. But as we grew into adulthood, they kind of went their separate ways. David was always into bullshit. It was like some *Boyz n the Hood* type of shit. He was Doughboy and I was Ricky. The only difference was that I was the older sibling and I didn’t get killed because of his foolishness. Although, I’d come close to dying because of some shit he’d done. We looked a lot alike and some niggas almost shot my ass, thinking I was him. Looking over at Watt, I said, “All I keep hearing is my mother’s voice, telling me to look out for my brother.”

Bryce stood from his seat on the patio and said, “Naw, fuck that. You looked out for him, but it’s hard to look out for a muthafucka that don’t want the protection. It was like he was doing shit on purpose just to see how far you would go to protect him. That wasn’t fair to you, man. Hold your fucking head up high. You were the best brother he could’ve ever had, and he didn’t appreciate that shit. I hate that he went down that way and I could only imagine the last words y’all said to one another, but all that shit was said out of anger. David knew you loved him. So, don’t beat yo’self up, bruh.”

I took a deep breath. They were making me feel better about what happened. In my heart, I knew I had done all I could to help David, but it seemed he didn't want to be helped. I could have gotten him in the industry easily after my foot was in the door, but he wouldn't hear of it. Smiling slightly, I said, "Thanks, y'all."

I sent a text to Divine, because I wanted to tell them the good news with her beside me. I'd introduced them earlier while we were eating. They were the only family I had left. While we weren't blood, they were still my brothers. No one had my back like them, and it was why I never turned against them. Fuck all the fame and money. I didn't need new friends when I had friends like them. *Baby, can you join me outside on the patio?*

She answered immediately. *Yeah. Coming now.*

I smiled, then looked over at the two of my friends. Finally, Bryce said, "I can't believe yo' punk-ass was up there fucking, though. Her parents looked all kinds of embarrassed. In my mind, I was like, this nigga here. Thankfully, we walked in on the end of it. No telling how much of it they heard."

Watt laughed as I said, "Shut up, Bryce."

Before either of them could say anything else, Divine walked out, joining us at the patio. I pulled her down to my lap as Bryce rolled his eyes. After kissing her lips, I said, "I wanted Divine out here, because I have some news to tell y'all."

"When and where we need to get fitted?" Watt asked.

Bryce grabbed Divine's hand, but when he didn't see a ring, he pushed Watt. "They not engaged, fool."

Divine giggled slightly as I chuckled. They got on my nerves. "I wanted to tell y'all that Divine is pregnant. She's gonna have my baby."

"Aww shit. Hopefully, it's a girl. We don't need another Solo running around here," Watt said.

“Congratulations, Ms. Divine,” Bryce said as he chuckled. “I guess you really do love his ass.”

She shrugged, then winked at me. “I guess he grew on me a little.”

“A little, huh?” I asked as I began tickling her.

Hearing her laughter, caused me to laugh. I didn’t tickle her too long, because I didn’t want her to get the urge to throw up. “I’ve never seen Solo like this with a woman, so he definitely loves you, too. Thanks for making our brother happy,” Watt said.

She stroked my cheek, staring into my eyes and said, “The pleasure is all mine.”

Chapter 13

WHEN I WOKE UP, DIVINE WAS SNUGGLED UP TO ME, LIGHTLY snoring. Solo had worn her ass out for the past couple of days. I chuckled silently at the thought of how she practically passed out last night. It was time to get up, though, so I could get ready for court. I was facing disorderly conduct and assault and battery charges. The disorderly conduct would be a slap on the wrist, maybe a five hundred dollar fine, but the assault and battery, I wasn't sure about. I didn't think I would have to do any time, but I didn't want to be placed on probation either. That would mean that I wouldn't be able to take Divine out of the country. As I slid out of the bed, letting her head shift to the pillow, her eyes fluttered open. "Good morning, beautiful."

"Good morning, baby," she replied groggily. She closed her eyes as a smile graced her gorgeous face. "I just need like... ten more minutes. I'm worn out... in the best way possible."

I chuckled, then said, "I got'chu, Vine. I'll wake you up after my shower."

"You are absolutely the best."

I leaned over and kissed her forehead, and my dick woke up to kiss her, too, but I scolded his greedy ass and headed to the bathroom to handle my hygiene. As I did, my mind drifted back to what I was facing. My attorney had all his ducks in a row, though. I didn't want to lie about the issue. I went back to that bar with the intent to do bodily harm to that jackass for what he did to my lifeline. He tried to sway me in another direction, but I told him that I was gonna say the truth even if he didn't. I was guilty, without question. But I felt like the judge would be more lenient knowing that I was telling the

truth and not trying to sucker my way out of it. Lies always came back to bite you in the ass, one way or another.

Washing myself so I could get out the shower, I pushed those thoughts to the back of my mind and focused on Divine and our unborn child. Those thoughts had given me peace for the past couple of days and I knew they always would. I couldn't wait until the doctor's appointment, so we would know the due date. After getting out and drying off, moisturizing my body and beard, I put on my boxer briefs, then woke Divine up. Not lingering around to make sure she got up, I went to my closet. Had I lingered, there was no telling what would have happened.

I pulled out a navy-blue suit, crisp white shirt, and brown shoes. The chef was cooking breakfast and the smell was about to make me take a bite out of my own arm. I was so damn hungry. After laying out my tie, I put on some shorts and a t-shirt and made my way down to the kitchen. "Good morning, Mr. Frank," the chef greeted me as soon as I was in his line of vision.

"Good morning, Riley. What'chu got for us this morning?"

"Well, I decided since you didn't know how long you would be gone today, I would do eggs benedict, waffles, ham, and grits. Something that will stick to your ribs a little longer."

I smiled as my stomach growled. "Perfect."

Just as he sat my plate in front of me, Divine joined us. "Doctor's appointment is next Monday, love."

I smiled as she sat next to me. But I thought her court date was next Monday as well. "Okay. When is your court date, again?"

"It's Monday, too," she said, her eyes glued to her plate. "We'll have to leave straight from there 'cause it'll be pushing it close. But my doctor is a friend of my mom's. It won't be that big of a deal if I'm a few minutes late. That just happened to be the soonest I could get in."

“What if court is delayed or something, though? You could miss the appointment altogether.”

I stuffed my mouth with eggs, then grits, waiting for her response. You never knew with court proceedings. Dealing with David, I had been to a few. The ones we thought should only last an hour or two held us all damn day with unnecessary recesses and delays. If she wanted to shoot for that day, though, I was cool with it. I was just hoping we didn't miss the appointment. “Then, she'll just squeeze me in where she can. It'll be fine. I don't wanna wait any longer than I have to. Do you?”

I glanced at her as I chewed my food. “No,” I said after swallowing. “You know I'm just a little more anal about schedules and timing. That's all. I like to be on time. Unless it's unavoidable or... you know. That can be unavoidable, too.”

She smiled after swallowing her food and asked, “Would it make you feel more comfortable if I called back and scheduled it the Wednesday she offered me instead?”

“As in two days later or the next Wednesday?”

I could wait two more days. There was no sense in running ourselves ragged and me being stressed about being on time for a two-day difference. Now if it was over a week later, then we would just get there whenever we could. I couldn't wait that long. “Two more days.”

My eyebrows went up and I chuckled. “Really, woman? You causing all this disarray over two days? How you gon' make it waiting until the due date? Reschedule the appointment, Divine.”

I shook my head slowly with a smile on my face as I stuffed my mouth with waffles. “Fine,” she whined. “And I will make it until the due date, because the father of my child will keep me very distracted. Yes?”

I pulled her close to me and let my nose glide up the side of her neck. “Mmm. Distracted indeed, baby.”

I felt her tremble in my embrace and she said with a slight moan, “The perfect man for the job.”

I knew I could only go so far with her right now. We didn’t have time. I could hear and feel that kitty purring for me. Slowly backing away from her, I went back to my food. Had this been anything else, this would have been an unavoidable situation, but I needed that judge to see that I was taking these charges seriously as well. My dick kept nagging me to get at her, though. I mumbled loud enough for her to hear, “Nigga, if you don’t calm yo’ ass down, that judge might throw you in jail. Ain’t no pussy there.”

That shit deflated quick as hell and I had to laugh at my damn self. Divine leaned in close and said, “But there’ll be plenty for him when we get back.”

“Mmm hmm. I can’t wait.”

I finished my food, then went upstairs to get dressed. We had a little less than an hour to spare. I wanted to arrive at the courtroom at least fifteen minutes early. Divine wasn’t far behind me. After getting dressed, I checked myself in the mirror, then sat on the ottoman I’d bent Divine over a few times and put on my shoes. I couldn’t wait to get this shit over with.

As we left the courthouse, I was pleased with what the judge decided. I was charged with disorderly conduct which held a five hundred dollar fine. After viewing the footage from the bar’s camera, he chose to fine me again and give me ten hours of community service for the battery charge. No probation. I was beyond happy about that. I had an entire month to get the community service done and it had to be at the Boys and Girls Club in Inglewood. I haven’t stepped foot in Inglewood since my dad died, but that was okay. I was

grateful that was all I got. Divine was grateful, too, because she'd been smiling since we left.

The proceedings only lasted for a couple of hours and we were back home. Of course, the media was there, trying to get a statement, but I ignored them for now. I didn't want to address them until after Divine's day in court next week. Just dealing with them was tiring in itself and I needed a nap. Surprisingly, Celeste was there, I supposed to see how things went for me. She seemed to be satisfied with the verdict as well. Even Mr. and Mrs. Stewart were there. Since I was defending the honor of their one and only, I suppose they felt obligated to be there.

When the car pulled in the driveway, I turned to Divine and said, "After I take another life from that pussy, I'm gonna sleep until lunchtime."

"She will gladly give that life up to you, baby."

"I hope instead of nine lives, she has infinite, because I plan to go through the eight you have left within the next week. After your appointment, we getting the hell out of here for a minute."

"Something tells me you have the power to give her life even when you take it," she said as she leaned in closer, the tip of her nose grazing my neck.

"Keep that shit up and I'ma take all eight at once and give you a slight heart attack. Damn, you got me on some severe Inglewood shit with the way you talking, Vine. Let's get the fuck outta this car so I can get at'chu, baby."

She moaned softly as she anticipated the things I was going to do to her body, only causing my dick to secrete pre-cum. Before we could make it inside, though, my phone started to ring. *Shit!* I only had one thing on my mind at the moment, and that was performing a God-like miracle by killing Divine's pussy, then raising that shit from the dead. After walking in, I pulled it from my jacket pocket to see

Celeste's phone number. Rolling my eyes, I answered, "Hello?"

"Hello, Solomon. I have some business I need to discuss with you. Is it okay if I come by this evening before dinner?"

"Yes. That's fine."

"Okay. I'll see you around four."

"Okay."

I ended the call, then slid my phone back in my pocket and pulled Divine to me. Lowering my lips to hers, I devoured her sweetly, gently pulling her apart one layer at a time with my tongue. My hands slid to her ass and squeezed as I sucked her bottom lip, then softly tugged at it with my teeth, and her hands slid up the back of my head. As I began walking her backwards toward the room, my fucking phone rang again. "Shit!" I yelled after pulling my mouth away from hers.

As I reached for my phone, Divine pulled my tie loose and began unbuttoning my shirt. When I saw it was Watt, I started to ignore the shit, but something told me I'd better answer it. "Hello?"

"Hey, man. How'd court go today?"

"It went well. Fines and a little community service. No probation."

"Good. I umm... I need you to come by my job, or I can come by there on my lunch break. There's something you need to see."

I looked at Divine, who'd began taking my jacket and shirt off my shoulders, ready for what I needed to give her. "Now?"

"It doesn't have to be this minute, but I think the sooner, the better."

"What is it?"

"It's a letter one of David's friends dropped off to me. David was staying at his place before he got locked up, because of something going on in your parents' house, that

you may need to check out by the way, and he found it in the room he was staying in.”

“Fuck. Okay. Come by on your lunch break. The chef will be here to cook in a little bit, so you can eat here. What could David have said in that letter? Is it addressed to me?”

“Yeah. The outside of the envelope has your name on it.”

I took a deep breath, looking into Divine’s concerned but disappointed eyes. “Okay. See you when you get here.”

I ended the call and walked away from her to the bar. Grabbing the Hennessy bottle, I took a healthy swig, then went in the drawer for a cigar. Looking back at her, I said, “Solo left the building, baby, but Solomon can use that slow grind you give me to make my toes curl.”

She grabbed two of my fingers as I held on to my cigar, leading me to my chair while I watched her ass sway in the black pants she wore. Once I sat, putting my bottle and cigar on the table next to me, Divine stood in front of me, causing me to lean forward. She placed her hands on my face, allowing her fingers to gently glide through my beard, then leaned over and kissed the top of my head. “Take my clothes off, Solomon,” she whispered as she unfastened my pants.

Sliding my hands up her legs, I undid her pants as well, then slid them down to the floor. I was doing my best to keep my mind off David and what he could have written to me, but my mind wouldn’t turn the thoughts loose just yet. Grabbing ahold of Divine’s panties, I pulled her closer and gently kissed her mound through them. I began unbuttoning her shirt, but quickly lost patience trying to get the buttons through the small holes. I ripped that fucking shirt open, then stood and pushed it and the black jacket she wore off her shoulders. Fiending for her soothing touch, I needed to feel her walls wrapped around me as soon as possible or at least fill my mouth with her secretions.

She yanked the t-shirt over my head, then pushed my pants down that were hanging about my hips along with my briefs.

Looking past her to the pool outside, I tried my best to concentrate on the task at hand. Gently nibbling the flesh on her shoulder and neck, I whispered, “I love you, Vine.”

“I love you, too, baby.”

After unfastening her bra, I sat down in the chair, pulling her underwear down with me. Once she stepped out of her pants and panties, I gripped her ass, pulling her to me. “Come give me my nutrients ‘cause I’m feeling depleted.”

She straddled my lap, then grabbed my erection to guide that shit right where it needed to be, like an air traffic controller. Her lips fell to mine and she kissed me as she slowly slid down my erection, squeezing him in her embrace. When she temporarily ended our kiss, her forehead resting against mine, she moaned, “Ahh...”

“Mmm,” I moaned, feeling whole again and full of life.

My Vine had brought the water and vitamins to replenish me and that letter was long gone from my mind’s confines.

I sat quietly at the bar, somewhat picking over my chicken parmesan, waiting on Watt to arrive. Divine and I had taken a nap after our love making. It was so off the charts, we practically fell asleep in the chair, my dick still inside of her. We’d made love again in the bedroom, then napped for about thirty minutes. The chef had arrived during our second session and he’d entered using the key code I’d given him. Once he entered, my phone alerted me that someone had entered the house.

Divine had been just as quiet, probably trying to figure out what was on my mind, but she didn’t ask. I was sure she knew that she was about to find out soon enough. After taking another bite, forcing myself to eat something, there was a knock at the door. I knew it was Watt, holding the answer to

all my questions, but possibly something that could temporarily break me in ways I had nightmares about. I scooted away from the bar and went to the door, letting him inside. “What’s up, bruh?” he asked as he shook my hand and embraced me.

“I’m okay. How’s work?”

Watt was a sport’s agent and he had gotten to the point where he was starting to hate his job. Dealing with athlete’s attitudes and cockiness, stating what they deserved and didn’t, irritated the hell out of him. But it was paying the bills until he found something else to do. “Work is work. You know the drill.”

Yep,” I said, glancing down at the envelope in his hand.

I led him to the bar area where Chef Riley had plated him some food and sat it in front of a place sitting. “Hey, Ms. Divine. How you feeling?” he asked, then gave her a side hug.

“I’m great. Thank you.” She glanced between Watt and me, then asked, “Do y’all need some privacy?”

“Naw, baby. Enjoy your lunch.”

Watt smiled at her, then sat. Once he’d blessed his food, he handed me the envelope. “I didn’t open it. But I hope whatever is inside heals you in a way you never thought you’d be healed. I feel like since he had no problem spewing venom, this has to be the total opposite.”

I nodded my head, then looked down at the envelope, walking over to my chair. As I sat, nerves about what I would read kicked in. Tearing the edge of the envelope as my hand trembled, I pulled out the slip of paper. Glancing back at Divine as I noticed her staring at me, I opened the letter.

King Solomon,

It ain’t necessarily a good thang if you reading this. If you are, that means I’m dead. Because I was too coward to admit this to you while I was alive, I decided to write this down to give you some peace of mind. No matter what I’ve said over

the years, I love you with everything in me. I love how you went after your dreams and didn't let nobody stop you, not even Dad. You made it out the hood, regardless of the lack of support you had. Instead of me to be happy for you, I was jealous. Even when you tried to put me on, I decided to be a fool, clinging to the streets that meant me no good.

The tears were free-falling down my cheeks. Instead of this making me feel better, I felt worse about how he left this life. Quickly swiping them away, I continued reading.

You were a great example of how to pull yourself up by the fucking bootstraps and do what you felt you were called to do. Every movie you were in, I watched it. Even though I told you on a few occasions that I didn't wanna see that shit. You were the best big brother I could have ever asked for and I was too stupid to see it. Bailing me out of trouble, risking your career for me was foolish. I just didn't want to do right. You should have left my pitiful ass alone a long time ago. Regardless of how you respond to my antics, I know you love me, or you wouldn't have entertained my foolishness. I love you, Solo. I wish you all the success and love you can stand, and I hope that pretty lil tenderoni you got, make shit move in your world like never before. You deserve all the love that you didn't receive from the niggas that mattered the most to you. I'm proud of you and Dad was, too, although he wouldn't have ever said so. Mama would definitely be proud.

Love you forever,

King David

What I thought would depress me further, had lifted me. When I read the part that said my responses to his antics didn't change the fact that I loved him, it freed something inside of me. I wiped my face and a slight smile formed on my lips as I whispered, "I love you, too, King David."

After gathering my composure, I made my way back to the two of them. Shaking Watt's hand, I said, "You were right. I

needed that so much. Thanks, bruh.”

“Of course. You my bruh.”

I eased up behind Divine and wrapped my arms around her waist as she sat on the stool, I assumed entertaining Watt while I read, and kissed her cheek. She turned her body and palmed my cheeks. “You good, love?”

“Yeah, baby. It was a letter from my brother, expressing how much he loved me,” I said, then nodded repeatedly in acceptance, recalling the words that would be forever etched in my heart.

Knowing that even my dad was proud of me healed what I thought was beyond repair. I just hated that I didn’t know the truth until they were all gone. That was the only sad part about it. I wish I would have known that they loved me while they were still here. Mama expressed it all the time, but Dad and David never said, *I love you*. I rarely said it either after Mama had died, and now, it was like I couldn’t say it enough. “That’s amazing. I’m happy about that, baby,” she said as her phone rang. She grabbed it and said, “I’m gonna take this. I need to tell my cousin, Sheena about the baby before she finds out from my parents and kills me.”

I kissed her lips and she took off. After sitting where she once was, I stared at Watt. Something was off about him. “You a’ight, man?”

He looked over at me and said, “I filed for divorce. I can’t take her shit no more.”

“You’re leaving Renee?”

“I already moved out. I didn’t wanna say shit until we’d both signed the papers. This ain’t the first time I moved out. But it got real ugly this time. She called me a hood nigga several times, saying I didn’t appreciate the finer things in life... finer things like her. I don’t know how I put up with that bitch for the past five years. I’m just grateful we didn’t have any kids.”

“How long ago you moved out?”

“Only about two weeks ago, but we signed the papers a week ago. She can have all that shit. All I wanted was my car and my personal shit. That bitch nearly broke me, though. She was never satisfied, saying I needed to get with you about getting a high paying industry job. That bougie bitch was on my last damn nerve.”

“Honestly, I’m glad you came to your senses. I never really liked her, but I tolerated her because that was your wife. At least y’all ain’t got kids together.”

“Who you telling? She already broke my ass on her own. You know I loved her if I stayed this long. I was trying to make my marriage work. I saw the parts of her that y’all didn’t.”

“You know I got’chu for whatever you need. You straight on money?”

“For now, I think I’m good. Thanks, bruh. I’m just happy that you finally found love, wit’cho hateful ass.”

“Thanks, Watt.”

He was good at deflecting, just like I was. He was tired of talking about his situation. I just hoped this didn’t turn him into someone he wasn’t. We only needed one playa out of the three of us and that was Bryce. Nigga was always tryna dig up in something. After he finished his lunch, he thanked me and headed back to work, promising to hit me up later. I pulled out my phone and booked our plane tickets to go to St. Lucia Thursday morning.

Chapter 14

WE'D LEFT THE COURTHOUSE AND WAS HEADED HOME. IT HAD been a week and during that time, Divine and I had relaxed around the house, enjoying one another the best way we knew how. I'd also put in eight hours at the Boys and Girls Club, two hours a day for the remaining four days of the week. I'd put in the final two tomorrow. Celeste had come to talk to me about where I wanted to go in my career and asking if anything had changed with roles I wanted to do. We'd had an easy meeting and we'd even joked around a bit like we used to do. Other than that, there were no items of business on the table for me. My schedule was clear for the first time in years, but as long as I had Divine, I didn't care.

The judge had sentenced her lil ex to a year. He obviously had a record. I'd seen people get a slap on the wrist for assault and battery... like me. I knew it also probably had a lot to do with who Divine was and just the fact that she was a woman probably weighed heavily on the judge's decision. Her family was so well-known and had such a positive image, it would be impossible to win against them, though. Despite being happy with the judgement, Divine wasn't feeling well. The baby was giving her a hard time.

Once we got home, Divine went to the room to get comfortable. The day had been longer than we anticipated, so I was glad her appointment wasn't today. She looked drained. I called the chef to be sure that he would be here to cook dinner and he assured me of that fact. Afterwards, I went to the bedroom to find a naked Divine in the bathroom, running bath water. I eased up behind her, sliding my arms around her while softly kissing her shoulder. "What you need me to do, Vine?"

"What you're doing now is perfect."

“Mmm,” I moaned, then kissed her neck. “It feels good to have all the drama over, so we can enjoy our lives and concentrate on the little Frank growing inside of you. You get to be a vine to our baby, too... literally. Then, we leave for St. Lucia Thursday morning.”

She smiled as she closed her eyes. “I cannot wait. Being the vine for Baby Frank has got me in desperate need of some sun and relaxation. Maybe a good massage or two,” she said as she spun around in my arms, wrapping her arms around my neck. “Thank you for taking care of me the way you do.”

“You don’t have to thank me for something that’s my obligation. Not only that, but it brings me joy to see that beautiful smile on your face. And I promise, you’ll get as many massages as you want. We’ll be at the Sandals Grande St. Lucian, so not only will I be waiting on you hand and foot, but we’ll have a butler as well.”

“Be careful now. I could get used to being spoiled.”

“Well, that’s a good thing. I suggest you go on ‘head and get used to that shit because it ain’t gon’ stop. I love you, Vine.”

Before she could respond, I laid my lips on hers, letting our tongues mate for a moment. She slid her hands up the back of my head and that shit always had me ready to dive in her sweetness. Her touch did all kinds of shit to me and I loved it. Once we’d ended our kiss, she said, “I love you, too, baby. You are my world.”

Thinking about how I’d lost my family one by one, I knew without a shadow of a doubt that she was my everything. “That’s a good thing, too, because you’re my universe.”

Sliding my hands down her body, I squeezed her ass. “Well, get in the tub and relax, baby. I’ll be waiting on the bed to put you to sleep for a lil while.”

I kissed her forehead as I began to pull away. “I know I won’t be in here long now,” she said as she walked to the tub.

I chuckled, then bit my bottom lip as I watched her. She was so damn fine. My dick could live inside that comfy dwelling forever.

When we'd gotten to the doctor's appointment, I could tell that the nerves were crawling all over Divine. But we were both excited as well. Today we would find out how far along she was. The appointment I couldn't wait for was the one where we would find out the sex. But I couldn't concentrate on that or I would make myself insane. Once they'd called her to the back and gotten everything they needed from her, she'd gotten undressed and situated in her gown. "I think I'm getting more nervous and antsy by the minute," she said as she studied the posters on the walls.

I stood from my seat and walked over to her, grabbing her hands in mine. "We've waited all this time, a few more minutes won't hurt. If it makes you feel better, I'm a little anxious, too."

After kissing her hand, I hugged her, trying to settle her nerves. Not a second later there was a knock on the door and the doctor walked in. "We wait no longer," Divine said as the doctor approached her.

"Hey, Divine. How are we doing?"

"Hey, Dr. Foster. I'm doing okay, today. Just a little anxious. This is Solomon."

She smiled as she looked up at me, then shook my hand. "Nice to meet you. Big fan by the way."

I returned her smile and said, "Nice to meet you, also and thank you."

She turned back to Divine and said, "Well, everything looks good, so far. We'll let you know when the labs come back, probably via phone call. According to your last cycle,

you look to be about six weeks, so we're looking at a November baby... maybe October. Now if you'll lay back, we can hear the heartbeat and get a look at your baby."

Divine was all smiles as she nodded, then glanced at me while squeezing my hand. I was just as excited as she was, and I found myself grinning more than I ever had in front of a complete stranger. The doctor gave Divine instructions as she got ready to do the ultrasound, while I felt like I'd zoned out, staring at the blank screen. I was getting more anxious to see our baby as the seconds ticked by. I was brought back to what was going on in the room when the doctor asked, "What about you? I know Divine's excited... she's so impatient."

I smiled because that was indeed true when it came to making the appointment. "I'm excited as well, but I know what you mean about Divine. I told her to call back and make the appointment for today instead of Monday."

Divine pouted playfully as I continued to hold her hand and the doctor chuckled. As I stared at the screen, the doctor said, "Alright, you two. Here we go."

Looked like a bunch of static to me. I frowned slightly as I tried to make sense of what I was looking at. "Okay, if you look here," she said while pointing at the monitor. "There's your little sweet pea."

It felt like my heart swelled immediately as Divine shed tears of joy as if she was doubting the reality of it. "It seems we were right about the due date. Now let's hear the heartbeat."

Divine began crying again as our baby's heartbeat filled the quiet room. I gently swiped her tears with my thumb. "Good, strong heartbeat," the doctor said with a smile.

I leaned over and kissed her forehead. "Divine, I'm gonna remind you of this moment whenever I catch you doing something you aren't supposed to. I'm gonna be reading all those pamphlets."

She giggled as she stared up at me. "I love you so much."

“I’m gonna remind you of that, too. And I love you more.”

“Everything looks great. Congratulations, you two. I’ll see you in a month,” Dr. Foster said. She passed the ultrasound printouts to us and continued, “Stop at the front for your appointment date and prescription for your vitamins.”

“Thank you, Dr. Foster,” Divine responded.

“Of course. See you guys soon.”

I nodded at her with a smile. The minute she walked out, Divine pulled me to her like she wanted to do something right here in this room. I would happily lock the door and oblige her. “Seeing your baby growing inside me gave me a new appreciation for you, love.”

“The feeling is mutual, Vine.” I kissed her lips, letting it linger. “You better get dressed before we end up turning this room out, showing our appreciation.”

She laughed and said, “We gon’ give St. Lucia all that energy, baby.”

“You damn right.”

If she only knew the things St. Lucia held in store for her. I couldn’t wait to see her smile. She grinned. “We’re about to be parents, baby. You’re literally stuck with me for life.”

“There’s no other predicament I’d rather be in,” I said and chuckled. “I just hope you ready to be stuck with me, too. ‘Cause I don’t give my heart to just anybody.”

“Good thing you gave it the woman that will hold it forever.”

She tilted her head back and I slid my hand up her cheek and through her hair, then kissed those pouty lips. When I pulled away from her, my eyes remained closed as I felt my mini-me rising. “Mmm, Vine, we better get out of here, before we don’t.”

“Okay, baby,” she somewhat panted. “Let’s go home and celebrate... loudly.”

“Let’s.”

When we got to the Sandals Grande St. Lucian Resort, I was ready to just get inside and give Divine what I couldn’t give her for the eight-hour flight. Although, the island was simply gorgeous. The way the sun was shining on Divine’s already glowing skin as the sun set, was creating an atmosphere for romantic lovemaking. However, when I heard Divine’s stomach rumble, I knew that was gonna be on hold. “I take it that you and Baby Frank are hungry.”

Divine turned red as she giggled. “I’m starving, baby. But you planned this, so we’re gonna do this your way.”

I hadn’t planned anything for the day since we would be tired from the flight, but tomorrow I planned to take her on a chartered boat ride. But that would be in the evening. Earlier in the day we would tour the island and see what else we could get into. The resort was all inclusive, so we really didn’t have to venture far if we didn’t want to. There were plenty of activities to get into. Grinning at her, I said, “I’m no fool, Divine. I will not stand between you and food right now. I don’t have plans for us today. Now the question is if you want to eat here or venture out to one of the twelve fine-dining restaurants in our package.”

“Mmm... I just wanna order something and climb in bed with you. That flight was a lot, baby.”

“Okay, baby. Even if I have plans, nothing is more important than you. It’s not a big deal if we have to alter them.”

When we finally arrived at our residence and had walked in, the butler greeted us. “Hello, Mr. Frank and Ms. Stewart. I’m Jean-Louis and I am here to serve you for the extent of your stay,” he said in a French-creole accent.

“Thank you, Jean-Louis. Although we’ve just gotten here, Ms. Stewart is extremely famished. Could you get dinner ready for us?”

“No problem, Monsieur.”

After the bellhop brought our luggage in, we retreated to the bedroom suite as Divine took everything in. We had an amazing view of the beach and a huge window to make sure we saw it. Divine wrapped her arms around my neck. I noticed she’d pulled her hair up and I couldn’t keep my lips off her neck. Before I could fully explore, she said, “I’m gonna shower, love. Care to join me?”

“Mmm. You ready to get started already, huh? You know I can never just take a shower with you without gutting out those insides.”

She kissed my neck, bringing my temperature up slightly. “Isn’t that the point of us getting away? We get to enjoy each other endlessly without distraction.”

“It sure is, baby. But I thought you might wanna get your strength up first. You know once I start, I have a hard time stopping until we pass out. You can’t have Baby Frank mad at me for your decisions.”

She kissed my neck again and it was like she’d kissed the head of my dick. I was so damn turned on; I already knew it would be one of those nights. “I’ll take the blame, love. Once I start feeling a way... I can’t really stop it.” She grabbed my hand and slid it under her wrap dress, pressing it against her hot pussy. “You know that.”

There was no turning back now. I could give a fuck about a shower now. I pulled her dress loose and went to my knees and rubbed my nose against what I was itching for. I gently bit that fat mound and slid my hands around to her ass, pulling her underwear down. Standing up, I unhooked her bra, then picked her up, bringing her to the bathroom. After sitting her on the vanity, I started the shower. When I went back to her, I gently

pulled her head backwards by the ball of hair on top of her head and devoured those lips.

I moved to her ear and down her neck, then leaned her back, so I could get a taste test. When I lifted her legs, her flower bloomed, giving me the perfect view of its beautiful insides. I immediately tongue kissed it, taking my time to slowly caress it. We had all the time in the world, and I planned to use every minute of it, showing her how great my need for her was. Creating a rhythm as I sucked her trigger, proved to be her undoing. I could feel the tremble in her legs, and I decided to take her over the edge by inserting two fingers inside of her, going straight to her g-spot.

She grabbed my head on both sides and screamed out her satisfaction. When I digested what she offered me, I released my hold on her and whispered to her pussy, “Fuck, I love you.”

Her juices were in my beard and I swore sometimes I didn't wanna wash the shit out. Her smell and taste were just that good to me. Standing up straight, I helped her from the vanity, then grabbed our shower gels from the bag and escorted her inside the shower, so I could gut her out as promised. The moment I closed the door, I gently pushed her against the wall. There was no point in playing around with what we wanted. We could save the rest of the foreplay for another session. I already knew her pussy was ready for me. I kissed her lips, then lifted her and dropped her on my stiffness.

The gasp that escaped her produced a groan out of me. Pulling my lips away from hers, I went to her neck and kissed and sucked while I delivered blow after blow. Raising my head to look in her eyes, I asked, “Is this what you wanted, Vine?”

Before her answer could come, I thrust deep and forcefully into her pussy, feeling the liquid offering it gave me with every stroke. “Oh, God,” she cried out as her head fell back against the wall. “Mmm... this is what I needed, baby. So damn bad,” she moaned as she rolled her hips against me.

“Fuck. This shit feels new every time, baby.”

The goosebumps that appeared on her skin only mirrored mine, letting me know that she was getting the best of me, just like I was getting the best of her. There would be no holding out this time. Whenever she fell, I was gonna fall with her. I never had to chase that shit with her, but this time, it felt like it was trying to tackle me like I was running a football. “Vine, shit!” I yelled as I did my best to wait for her to get hers.

Her nails dug into my shoulders and I could feel the tremble in her legs. “Ahh,” she screamed as her orgasm rained on me.

It seemed I became a possessed animal after that, trying to ruin her as she wrapped her arms around my neck and laid her lips on mine. I had to pull away or the savage beast in me was gonna bite her damn lips off. My fingertips dug into her hips as I fed my intense desires. Her nails dug into me once again as I pinned her against the shower wall. As that shit was about to fire off in her depths, I sank my teeth into shoulder, trying not to sound like a bitch, but nothing I did, would muffle my orgasmic relief. “Ahh, shit!” I yelled as I continued to dig into her depths.

Seeing the redness of her skin where I bit her, I kissed it, panting uncontrollably as I rested my forehead against her shoulder, still holding her against the wall. “Fuck!”

Divine placed her hands to the sides of my face and kissed my head. “I love you, baby.”

Allowing her to slide from my grasp, I stared in her eyes and said, “I love you more.”

I was quite sure our butler had gotten an earful. After we finished washing up, I knew Divine was at the point of starvation, but I wasn't gon' deny her what she needed from me. We got dressed and went back up front to find our butler in the kitchen plating our meal. Whatever it was, it smelled almost as delicious as Divine. My mind briefly went to the beautiful, yellow sapphire and diamond ring that was in a hidden compartment in my suitcase, and I decided that I would

present her with it on the chartered boat ride tomorrow. As sensitive as I was feeling, I wanted to give it to her now.

When I'd called Mr. Stewart and told him of my plans, he was overjoyed. I asked him not to tell a soul, not even Mrs. Stewart. I didn't want the word getting back to Divine before I had a chance to ask her. I didn't tell him what day I would propose, because I wasn't sure until now. Glancing over at her, I said, "Now you can feed my baby."

She blushed as she laid her head against my arm and wrapped her hand around it. Leaning over I kissed her head and pulled out her chair, so she could sit. This was the woman for me, no doubt in my mind. I wasn't the least bit nervous about what I had planned, because I knew she would say yes. Leaning in closely, I kissed her again and leaned my head against hers, smelling the scent of her body wash. I was gonna make this woman my wife and tomorrow couldn't get here fast enough.

It had been a wonderful day. We'd ventured out on the island, socializing with the natives and had visited a few shops and an authentic restaurant for lunch. I didn't want to do fine dining for the whole trip. Only a few people recognized us, which was nice. Being surrounded by security all the time just made me want to stay home and not travel. When we got back to our suite, we changed into our evening attire for the boat ride. The nerves I didn't have yesterday had somewhat embodied me and I had no idea why.

While Divine did her makeup, I slid the ring in my jacket pocket, then sat in the front room waiting for her to emerge. Rubbing my hands down my black slacks, I took a deep breath and whispered to myself, "Chill out. This is the moment you've been living for with the woman you've waited for all this time for."

When Divine walked out, I was mesmerized. She was gorgeous as always, but her skin was glowing, like she knew tonight would be a monumental moment in our lives. “Damn, baby.”

She made my all black getup look mediocre. From her tight, black leather-looking pants to the black and white snakeskin looking shirt, she had me just where I liked to be... in awe of her. But when she spun around slowly for me, I realized that her entire back was out. I licked my lips, then bit the bottom one. I wanted to tangle my hands in her natural curls while I stroked her, but that would come later, after she had that huge yellow rock on her finger.

She made her way to me as she said, “I’ll take that as a compliment.” Scanning my body, she said, “All black is definitely your thing, baby.”

I pulled her close to me by her hips and softly kissed her cheek, not wanting to mess up her lipstick. Not yet anyway. “Well, let’s go before I engage in my favorite past time.”

Her smile was so damn bright, I literally almost did just that. “Let’s, because if we don’t, you may have to restrain me, love. I’m excited, too. Let’s hope Baby Frank doesn’t make me seasick, being on the water for an extended amount of time. I’ve never gotten seasick before, so hopefully, that’s still the case.”

“Damn, Vine. I didn’t even think about that before scheduling. We can cancel, baby. I would hate for you to get sick. I just wanted to do something romantic that we’ve never done before. I wish I would have thought about that before I scheduled it.”

She wrapped her arms around my waist and tilted her head back to look in my eyes. “It’s fine, baby. It’s sweet that you wanted to venture out of our box. So, let’s go give this thing a shot and enjoy ourselves. And thank you for this getaway. I’m having the time of my life.”

I kissed her forehead, then smiled at her. “You’re so damn perfect.”

I grabbed her hand and led her out, trying to think of when the perfect moment would be to pop the question. It would have to be during dinner or right after. After getting to our car, I realized I hadn’t said a word. I was in my head so much, I forgot to talk. Once inside, I said, “I will have you know that I catered the meal around foods that I thought would be safe for the baby. So, no shellfish or seafood, really. I think you’ll be happy with what I chose.”

She grinned, then ran her finger across my bottom lip. “You really took full advantage of that pamphlet, huh baby?” she asked jokingly, then giggled. “Whatever you got planned, I’m sure it’ll be amazing.”

“I sure did take advantage. I gotta make sure you and Baby Frank safe.”

I smiled big at her, so she could see that my platinum grill finally came in from Houston. Instead of getting a permanent one, I decided to make it a snatch out as well. I couldn’t limit myself that way in this business. I’d been fighting the urge to show her for the past few days. Then I figured tonight would be the perfect time to wear it. Her eyes widened as I chuckled. She leaned over a bit and pulled my bottom lip down further. “You absolutely know how much I love this.”

She licked her lips and pulled my lip down even more. I couldn’t help but chuckle. She was like that damned mermaid that was mesmerized by all the human shit that fell in the water. “Well, you’ll be happy to know I got the top, too.”

Her smile got even brighter and the damn song went through my mind. *Look at this stuff, isn’t it neat?* She removed her fingers from my lip and replaced them with hers, kissing me softly. “Look at Solo... coming through for his favorite girl.”

“Uh huh. Anything for you, Vine.”

When the car stopped, I realized we were at the dock. I suddenly got hot and needed some damn air. Not waiting for the driver, I opened the door, got out, then helped Divine out as well. The gentle breeze blew through her hair as we walked to the boat. When we were getting on, I said, “Be careful, baby. Watch your step.”

“Hello, Monsieur Frank... Mademoiselle Stewart. Welcome to the St. Lucian Accra. We hope you enjoy your ride.”

I nodded. Resting my hand at the small of her back, we walked over to the far side of the boat and looked out at the water. It was so peaceful, and the sunset was amazing, just like it was yesterday evening when we arrived. Once the crew had gotten everything together, we began moving. I stood behind her and wrapped my arms around her waist as we drifted off. “How are you feeling so far, baby?”

“I’m good, love. More than good actually,” she said as she took in the beauty of our surroundings.

St. Lucia was definitely a beautiful place. Resting my hands on her stomach, I stared out at the water and mountains for a moment, taking in slow, deep breaths. I didn’t know why I was tripping. I already had the approval of her parents and Divine had already told me that she was ready whenever I was. *Solo, man, get yo’ shit together.* I hadn’t even told my boys that I was going to ask Divine to be my wife. While I was sure that they knew it would be coming, they were going to be pissed that I didn’t tell them beforehand. Divine turned her head slightly, peering up at me. “Everything okay, baby?”

“Everything is perfect, Vine.”

As we stood there, in awe of the landscape, I nuzzled my face to her neck and kissed it softly as the cook joined us on the deck. “Monsieur Frank, dinner awaits you and your lovely lady.”

Turning toward him, I nodded in approval. “Very well. Thank you.”

I grabbed Divine's hand and led her to the lower living quarters of the deck near the stern. When she saw the dining table in the middle with a bouquet of roses and sparkling cider, her eyes widened. She probably thought it was wine. I'd heard that pregnant women could have a glass of wine occasionally, but I wasn't taking any chances. Continuing to lead her to the table, I could feel the tremble in my hand. *Shit*. "This is so sweet and so amazing, love," Divine said with a smile, breaking me away from my thoughts.

"I'm glad you like it."

"I love it."

I led her to her chair and pulled it out for her to be seated, then walked over to my seat as the chef brought out our salads and baked plantains. He then popped open the bottle of cider and poured us each a glass. Walking to the back, he came back with a pitcher of water and filled our other glass on the table. "Enjoy. I'll be back with your Bouyon momentarily."

"Thank you," I said with a nod.

Giving Divine my full attention, I asked, "Have you ever had plantains?"

"I have not. So, looks like you're introducing me to something new."

I smiled at her, giving her a glimpse of the grill she loved, then continued eating my salad and plantains. My mind was running a fucking marathon and I just wanted it to stop. Grabbing my phone, I turned on some soft jazz music as we ate to try to calm it. I was praying like crazy that Divine didn't notice my nervousness, but with the way she was glancing at me, I knew she did. By the time I was done with my salad, the chef was coming with our Bouyon. I was ready. It wasn't the Lambi I'd wanted to try, but it would be just as amazing. The Lambi had shellfish in it. So, if Divine couldn't have it, I wouldn't either. He sat the hot sauce on the side as I requested, then said, "Enjoy."

I nodded as I salivated over the chunks of ham hocks and yams in the stew. It was a staple here in St. Lucia and after my first sample, I could see why. “Mmm... now that is good,” Divine said, getting my attention.

“Extremely. This is my first time having it, and I’m a little upset that I haven’t tried it before now. I hope Baby Frank likes spice and it doesn’t give you indigestion.”

“I hope so, too. But it almost seems like it would be worth it,” she said, then giggled as she brought another spoon to her mouth.

I chuckled. “Spoken like someone who’s probably never had a bad case of indigestion.”

I continued eating mine and moaned slightly like she had. It was really good. Trying to pretend I didn’t see Divine trying to analyze me, a smirk graced my lips. She leaned forward, resting her elbow on the table. She rested her cheek on her knuckles. “Baby, what is up with you? For real. This isn’t our first date, you know. So, I can’t possibly make you that nervous.”

I looked up at her with a smirk on my lips. She was trying to force my hand. “I just want everything to be perfect. Solo is trying to make me jump the gun. I want us to enjoy our dinner without having sex.”

I was starting to sweat. While that was true, it definitely wasn’t the reason for my nervousness. I pushed more food in my mouth as the chef came out with breadfruit balls. “Is there anything more you require, Monsieur?”

He refilled our waters and cider as I said, “No sir. Thank you.”

He nodded and said, “Enjoy the rest of your evening.”

Once he left, Divine turned her attention to me. “Everything is perfect, because you’re here, love. So relax.”

I smiled at her, then stood and leaned over the table to kiss her lips. She puckered up for me and after tasting my deepest

desire, I sat back in my seat and finished off my Bouyon so I could get to the breadfruit with the spicy dipping sauce. When I sat back down, I felt the ring move in my pocket and thought, what the hell. Why was I trying to stick to a schedule? I needed to put my Vine out of her misery before she started worrying. Swallowing the chunks of breadfruit, I said, “Vine...”

When she looked up at me, I continued, “You know you’re my everything, right?”

“That’s what you keep telling me,” she joked, then winked at me. “I’m playing, baby. I do know. The same way you know you’re my world, right?”

I nodded as I desperately tried to remember what all I wanted to say. Sliding my palms down my pants leg, I decided to just go from the heart. I looked up at her and began, “When we met, I was only a shell of a man. I found my real purpose in you. I love you so much that I feel like the Lord put me here just to take care of you... your body, spirit, and heart. I knew that you would be the one to change me forever when I first laid eyes on you, even though I tried to resist for a lil bit. You are my heartbeat, Divine Love Stewart.”

I stood to my feet and walked to her side of the table. When I fell to my knee and reached in my pocket, I could see her excitement and how overwhelmed she already was. “I just wanna make everything I feel for you official. I know you feel the same for me. Please say you’ll do me the honor of being Mrs. Frank.”

I opened the box, revealing that huge yellow sapphire surrounded by small white diamonds. It set me back thousands, but she was worth the world. I stared back up at her as my heart turned to pure mush. She placed her palm to my cheek, and said, “Love of my life, father of my child... there is nothing I want more than to spend the rest of my life as Mrs. Frank.”

A tear slid down her cheek and I could feel my own eyes getting a little misty, but I reeled that shit back in. She

continued, “I’ve never been happier than I am now.”

I smiled at her, then took the ring from the box. She eagerly held her hand out and I slid it on her finger. Immediately, I stood to my feet, pulling her with me and pulled her close. My lips couldn’t resist those beautiful lips of hers. Giving her my St. Lucian flavored tongue, my hands slid to her ass before I slowly pulled away. “Damn. I love you so much. Let’s finish our meal, before the ride is over. I didn’t want to do this until we were done with our food, but you were pressuring me,” I said, then chuckled.

“I love you, too. And you *were* acting weird, baby.” She kissed me again. “Sorry not sorry?”

She was beaming and I loved every minute of it. Kissing my lips once again, she took her seat and I went to mine. As I finished my food, I watched Divine take pictures of her ring as she smiled at her phone. “I love that smile on your face, baby.”

She smiled bigger and blushed, causing me to smile. I felt like a kid in a candy store. “Well, I love the man that put it there... madly.”

I stood from my seat and pulled her from hers to take a couple of selfies and a picture of her ring to post to my social media pages. I rarely got on. Celeste normally posted on there for me. Then I led her to the deck. The boat was about to dock in a few minutes, and I wanted to spend time with her looking out at the water while holding her in my arms. As we did, I enjoyed the quietness with her, knowing that sooner than later, she would be Mrs. Frank.

Chapter 15

“BABY.”

It was a soft whisper, that sounded like Divine, but all I could get out was a groan. I put in some fucking work last night when we got back to the suite and all I wanted to do was sleep. It seemed like it had only been a couple of hours. “My love.”

Wake up, fool. “You okay, Vine?”

“I’m good. We were just on TV, baby. The world knows we’re engaged now. And your fiancée and baby are hungry. Are you gonna get up with me?”

I slowly tried to sit up but felt her laying on top of me. Allowing my eyes to open and adjust, I said, “Good morning, baby.”

Although I really wanted to sleep, I couldn’t tell my baby no. Divine knew that whatever she wanted from me, she would get. And at the mention of Baby Frank, I would rearrange the planets if I could. “Good morning. How’d you sleep?” she asked as she pushed the hair from her face.

“I slept well, knowing that I was now your fiancé. What about you, baby?” I asked as I wrapped my arms around her waist.

My heart was still overwhelmed from last night and I knew I probably had a ton of notifications on my phone, especially since I actually posted on my social media accounts. “I love the way that sounds,” she said with a grin as she rubbed her finger over my bottom lip.

I was convinced that she was obsessed with my mouth. A smile spread across my face as she continued. “And I slept

pretty good, baby. Woke up for a bit in the middle of the night, though. Watched TV and stared at this ring until I finally drifted back off. Still seems so surreal to me.”

She lifted her hand and wiggled her fingers while staring at her ring. “I’m just happy you liked the ring. I’m also happy you didn’t get seasick. Why were you up? That indigestion didn’t hit you, did it?” I asked with a smirk.

She chuckled. “Nooo, it did not. And I don’t know why I was up. Maybe a bout of insomnia. But enough about that. What are we doing today?” she asked excitedly.

“Umm... not enough about that. If you haven’t gotten enough sleep, after breakfast, we will be taking a nap. How often do you have insomnia, Vine?”

She was gonna hate me by the end of her pregnancy. But she’d get over it. It was my job to make sure she was doing what she was supposed to and choosing healthy options as often as possible. Placing her hand on my chest, she stared into my eyes. She knew that shit made me soft. I was gonna have to man up. “Solomon, I’m fine. I was only up maybe thirty minutes... an hour. And I hardly ever have insomnia. Maybe it was the excitement of you asking me to marry you. I don’t know, but I promise you, it is nothing to worry about.”

I slid my fingers down her cheek. “Okay. This time I’ll take your word. Next time, it will warrant a trip to the doctor. So... I wanted to scuba dive, but it’s not safe for you and the baby. So, besides making love to this beautiful body, I don’t have plans. Whatever you wanna do is fine with me, baby, even if it’s just laying out on the beach. Tomorrow is spa day for us. I’ve already booked that.”

“Well, after breakfast, how ‘bout you make love to this beautiful body, as you said? Then, maybe we can lay out for a while, then do some shopping.”

My lil nympho. “Mmm, sounds good. I’m not in the least bit complaining, but that pussy oughta be sore after last night. I’m just saying. Solo put shit down.”

She giggled. “Yes... he did indeed. But the kitty wants what the kitty wants, love.”

I shook my head slowly. “If you say so. Well, let’s get cleaned up, I wouldn’t want to keep that kitty waiting.”

Before Divine and I could get inside, Watt and Bryce were driving in the driveway. Just as I figured it would, the news about our engagement was damn near global. People were weird in that way to me. Why should anyone be concerned with my engagement? That had nothing to do with acting or the business. If we could have stayed in St. Lucia forever, I didn’t think Divine would have had a problem doing so. We were supposed to get home yesterday, but we couldn’t seem to part with the beautiful island and ended up staying another day. “Let the bullshit begin,” I said, then chuckled as I opened the door.

Watt and Bryce weren’t far behind us and I knew Divine was worn out. We’d flown overnight this time, but it was hard to rest about four hours into the flight due to turbulence. I hated that shit. It was like I saw my life flash before my eyes every time the plane jerked. “Go get some rest, baby, while I entertain these fools.”

Pulling her to me, I kissed her lips, then each of her tired eyes. We planned to go to her parents’ house later once we were rested. “Well, if it ain’t the two love birds tryna sneak back in undetected,” Bryce said.

“So much for our over thirty-year friendship. You could have told me you bought a ring,” Watt added.

They both had smiles on their faces as they walked over to kiss Divine and shake my hand. She smiled back at them and said, “Hey guys.” Turning back to me, she kissed my cheek, then said, “I’m gonna shower and lie down, love.”

“Okay, baby. I’ll be joining you soon.”

I said the last part loudly, so Bryce and Watt could hear. They chuckled as Divine walked away. “If you would have communicated with us, you would already be rested, fool. You told us you would be back yesterday.”

“Yeah, yeah, whatever,” I said, then sat in my chair.

“So, what made you do it so soon? I mean, I already knew it would happen, I just wasn’t expecting it now. Man, you had to have spent at least thirty grand on that damn ring,” Watt said.

“Well, I have no plans of being with anyone else and neither does she. So, why not now? I went got the ring and had it sized a couple of weeks before we left. And it was forty grand.”

“Daaaaamn!” Bryce said. “All I wanna know is if Divine got any fine ass friends. Me and Watt starving out here, man. Plus, I think I might be ready to settle down.”

“It’s about damn time. You done screwed all of L.A. and got two kids to prove you ain’t been no saint. I’ve never met any of her friends. So, that’s something you gon’ have to ask her yourself.”

“I’m not ready to be in a relationship again. I just got rid of Renee’s ass. Thankfully, I haven’t heard from her. The papers are all signed, and the divorce was finalized. If anything, I need to go out and celebrate that shit. I’m no longer in bondage.”

I shook my head. “Well, I’m glad you got away from her controlling ass. But again, you already know how I felt about her.”

“But anyway. Back on yo’ sensitive ass,” Bryce said. “How was St. Lucia? Y’all *did* try to see the island, right?”

“Quit hatin’ so damn much. Just ‘cause you ain’t got in-house pussy ain’t a reason to be tripping on me. And yes, we

enjoyed the island. We enjoyed the shit so much, we wanted to stay.”

“Fine, nigga. We’ll leave yo’ grouchy ass alone. Just make sure you don’t let Divine have us looking all sensitive for the wedding. ‘Cause I know we in that thang. Let her know I don’t do yellow, ‘cause it washes me out,” Bryce said.

“Man, get the fuck outta here. I’ll holla at y’all niggas one day during the week. I’m tired as hell.”

“Congratulations, Solo. I’m happy for you, man,” Watt added.

He was always the one with some sense. Bryce’s ass was always a fool. I shook both their hands as I said, “Thank y’all.”

Once they left, I made a beeline to my Vine. I could hear the shower still running, so I took that moment to cling to our last bit of peace for the day. I was almost sure we would be at her parents’ house for a while. I wasn’t upset with that, because I looked forward to telling Mr. Stewart that I would start calling him Pop, soon. After stripping down, I went to the bathroom and got in the shower with my baby. Standing behind her, it was like I could breathe again. I’d been connected back to the source. She spun around in my arms and wrapped her arms around me. “My parents invited my family over... surprise engagement party.”

I frowned slightly. “How’s it a surprise if you know about it?”

“My cousin, Sheena, called to warn us,” she said, then chuckled. “She can hardly hold water when it comes to me. Hey. You should invite your friends. Gonna be one big happy family soon anyway. That’s if you want. My parents won’t mind.”

I shook my head and chuckled inwardly. That would be right up Bryce’s alley. He’d love to see who he could see. “Uhh, maybe next time. It would be obvious that we knew about it beforehand if I had time to invite somebody, right?”

“Trust me. My parents know that Sheena has told me about every surprise party she’s known about. I haven’t been surprised since I was a kid. I don’t even know why they still call the parties surprises anymore.”

I chuckled at her words. Her family was everything I’d longed for my entire life, but I would be extremely nervous meeting *all* of her family. She continued, “But if you wanna wait ‘til another time to invite them, that’s fine, love. Just thought you might like to have them there.”

I thought about it for a moment. “Well, since you think it’ll be okay, I’ll call and invite them when I get out the shower. I could use some back up around all those people. I can look somewhat unapproachable around people I don’t know. You know how I can be.”

She grinned. “Nooo, not you. Unapproachable? No way,” she joked.

“Ha, ha, ha. You obviously didn’t have a problem approaching me, telling me you were damn good at your job and hadn’t been on the job for ten minutes. So, your family may be okay with my look now that I think about it.”

She laughed, causing me to laugh as well. “I see you got jokes, too, Mr. Frank. Touché, baby. Touché.”

I smiled at her, then proceeded to wash myself so I could get at her and take a much-needed nap. “What time are we to be expected at your parents’ house?”

“They said to be there by six. That gives us plenty of time to relax and take a nap.”

“Okay, baby. Bryce gon’ be excited as hell when I call him. He was already asking to be hooked up with one of your friends.” I shook my head slowly. “But anyway, what are we doing first? Relaxing or napping?”

She yawned, then giggled. “He sounds like he’s right up my cousin, Sheena’s alley. And we are definitely napping first.”

I chuckled, then said, “Napping it is, baby.”

“Congratulations!” everyone yelled as Gloria opened the door for me and Divine.

After walking in, I noticed there were a lot of people there, at least thirty. Divine laughed as she glanced back at me, I supposed checking to see if I was cool. My boys were with me, so I would be fine. Bryce and Watt had met us at my house so they could follow us to their house. They were standing behind us quietly, looking around, taking everything in. Divine said, “Thanks everybody. Uh... family, this is Solomon.” Turning to me, she continued, “These are my people. You’ll learn names later.”

“Since you weren’t too surprised, I take it Sheena ran her mouth,” Mr. Stewart said as he and Mrs. Stewart approached us.

Mrs. Stewart hugged me as Mr. Stewart went to Divine. They then switched and Mr. Stewart came to me as he and the woman named Sheena joked back and forth. When he hugged me, he said, “I knew it wouldn’t be long when you called, son.”

“I knew that you knew before I mentioned it, Pop.”

He smiled at me as I smiled back. “I like that. Pop it is.”

Divine reintroduced Watt and Bryce to her parents and they all shook hands acknowledging their remembrances from the funeral and repast. Then Pop said, “Well, come on. Party’s out back. We got food, music, and as much champagne... and sparkling water as you can drink.”

I wrapped my arm around Divine’s waist as I glanced at my boys, seeing that Bryce already had his eyes on Sheena. I rolled my eyes slightly and we followed Pop and the rest of the family out to their backyard. The moment we stepped foot

out there, Pop pulled me and the fellas away to mingle with other gentlemen. Handing us all cigars, we lit up. That was right up my alley. I hadn't had a smoke in a few days, so I was ready. "Man, that Sheena chick is bad. She know I'm watching her ass, too. I'm cool with that, though. She want me to watch her."

"You ain't been here five minutes and you already pushing up on somebody. Chill out," I said to him as Watt chuckled.

"You already got yo' woman. So, you chill out and let me find mine."

"Solomon, would you like a drink, maybe a little stronger than the champagne?" one of Divine's uncles asked.

"What'chu got?"

When he held up that bottle of Hennessy, I was in Heaven. "Hook me up, boss," I said as he laughed.

As I waited for my glass, I caught Divine's gaze and winked at her. That woman had changed me for the better, teaching me how to love her without saying a word. As I stared at her, I got the feeling someone was staring at me. When I broke my gaze and turned around, all the men were looking at me. My face got hot as hell as they all laughed. Pop approached me and said, "And that is why I don't have an issue with you being with my daughter. Just from the way you look at her, I can tell how much you adore her. I believe you are the answer to my prayers that God would send her a man that will honor, love, respect, protect, and cherish her. She was already a beautiful flower, but since you've been in her life, she's blossomed. Having her in your life has had some amazing effects on you as well."

"Thanks, and that it has. She's my first love and I plan to do all those things you mentioned for the rest of our lives."

He patted my back and walked away. Divine's uncle gave me my glass and I immediately took a sip. That shit went down smoothly as Watt came and sat next to me. "The lady

with Divine keeps watching me. I'm trying to stay to myself, but she's beautiful."

I frowned slightly as I glanced at Bryce to make sure he didn't hear Watt. He was too busy staring at Sheena and looking like he wanted to walk over there to talk to her. "Not the one he's looking at. The other one. Do you know her?"

"Naw. I don't know either of them."

"Well, I'm gonna see if Unc will hook me up wit' a drank. I could use one."

I chuckled as Watt stood and walked away, then brought my attention back to Divine. We didn't engage in any extra-curricular activities before we left home. Sleep held us hostage for at least three or four hours. My gaze went from her head to her feet, then back up to see that she was staring at me again, too. Standing from the chair, I sat my cup on the table, but before I could sit, I saw my beautiful bride-to-be walking toward me. When she got to me, she wrapped her arms around my waist, staring up at me as I stared down at her. I gently pushed her hair behind her ear as she said, "Let's get married as soon as possible."

My eyes widened slightly as she continued. "Just you and me, love. We can have a separate ceremony for everyone else, but I wanna marry you like yesterday."

Glancing around, my eyes landed back on hers as I asked, "You serious? What would your family think of that?"

She wrapped her arms around my neck and kissed my lips. "You love me?"

"Of course. Without question. You know that."

"And I love you... more than you can imagine. I just... I'm just ready to be your wife, love. I would've married you in St. Lucia if I thought you would go for it. I'm ready, baby. If you are, too, then we should do it. I'm ready to be connected to you in every way."

I swallowed hard as I slid my hands to her face. Tilting my head slightly, I said, “Are you sure, there’s no other reason? I mean, what’s the hurry? You know you can talk to me about everything, Vine. Are you overwhelmed with the media? What is it, baby? I’m not saying no. I just want to understand.”

She grabbed my hand from her face and led me to the jacuzzi. “My mother told me why she named me Divine Love and... it speaks such volumes to my life. The exact way that I feel about you is how she feels about my dad. She felt it so deep, that when she had me, her miracle baby, she decided to name me the very thing she felt and wanted me to have.”

She draped her arm over my shoulder, and I could see the tears threatening to fall from her eyes. “I have that with you. I just wanna solidify this piece of heaven as mine. Nothing’s wrong, love. I’m just... ready.”

I pulled her face to mine and kissed her gently, closing my eyes. It didn’t matter when we got married, just so long as we did. We could have the ceremony and family environment that I longed for as well. When I pulled away from her, I said, “Let’s do it. We’ll go to the courthouse and get the marriage license Monday.”

I would give Divine the world and she knew that. I felt like I was gaining the world by having her in my life. Nothing was more important than her and my unborn child. I knew she was probably feeling extra sensitive, but whatever my queen wanted, she got. “For real, baby?” she squealed as she wrapped her arms around my neck.

Just as quickly, she pulled away and stared up at me. “Do you really want to? ‘Cause if you don’t we can wait.” Her eyes dropped from mine. “You don’t have to do what I want if you don’t feel it.” Before I could respond, she dropped her head and continued, “The same way you’ll give me the world, I’d do the same for you. Do you really wanna do this?”

I honestly wasn’t sure that I wanted to, but what did it hurt? I lifted her head by her chin with my fingers, staring into her beautiful eyes. “Vine, I’m gonna marry you. Whether

that's next week or next year, nothing will change that. As long as you promise to have a ceremony for your people, we can do this as soon as possible. I love you, and whatever you want is fine with me."

"I promise that after the baby, we can have a real wedding. I think it would be nice with Baby Frank being there." She kissed my lips, then said, "I love you... so much."

"I love you more, baby. So, where you wanna do this at?"

"I hadn't thought that far yet. I honestly didn't think you would go for it. You know with you and your organization and scheduling and timing obsession. I'll get it figured out, though, love."

She had a satisfied smirk on her lips. "It's not an obsession. It's a way of life. So, you should know, I'm gonna be on your ass about the particulars. I don't like not knowing the whole plan. Come on, personal assistant. I need you on the job," I said as I discreetly slid my hands to her ass. "You been getting lax since you been fucking the boss," I said in a low voice near her ear.

"But the boss hasn't been complaining... I clearly gotta be doing something right... since I haven't been fired."

She quickly pulled away from me and stared at me with narrowed eyes. I did my best to hold in my smile, because I knew she'd thought the same thing that was on my mind. "And don't you fire me to prove a point, either."

She burst into laughter and so did I because that was exactly what I was thinking. I pulled her back to me and said, "Don't worry, as long as you keep the boss satisfied, your job is intact. But I'm gon' have to fuck some professionalism back into you tonight. All Solomon. Solo has the night off. If you don't know what that means, that's good. I can't wait to remind you of how Solomon works."

"You mean, Mr. Frank? And by the way, I, in no way, protest having Solomon fuck *anything* into me. Also, in the spirit of professionalism... Mimosa Moments wants you to fly

to New York and be on their show. Whenever you're ready. I told Celeste I would ask you... when the time was right. When the opportunity arose, it wasn't a good time. So... think about it and let me know... Mr. Frank."

I smirked at her calling me Mr. Frank. "First off, Mr. Frank ain't fucking shit into you. Mr. Frank was who you met day one of your job. You don't want him nowhere in the picture. I can guarantee that," I said as I laughed.

I also knew what she meant when she said it wasn't a good time. It was probably around the time David died. I've been trying not to think about it too much. But I also had an amazing idea to get pictures painted of him, Mama and Dad to hang in the house. They weren't perfect, but they were my family. Dad raised us the best way he knew how. He had to overcompensate for how soft my mama would have made us. I finally learned to accept that. "Next, Mimosa Moments... they just wanna interview me? Will I get the questions beforehand to approve them?"

"Yes to your first question. They're kinda like The Breakfast Club. As far as your second question, I'm not sure, but I'll get with Celeste and find out Monday. Now, can me and my fiancé get back to this party?"

"Well, you came over here to me. I can't help that I get lost in you. Nothing else matters when you're in my space."

I slid my fingers down her cheek, then kissed her lips. Before I could release her, I heard, "You know there are at least thirty other people around that would like to socialize with the two of you."

I didn't have to turn my back to know that it was Bryce. Chuckling, I let Divine go and said, "I'm gon' kill him."

Divine laughed and grabbed my hand as the music came down a notch. Mr. Stewart grabbed the mic and Divine said, "Oh Lord. My dad is drunk. If you ever see him with a mic in his hand at a party... he's lit and is about to be entertaining as hell."

I chuckled as she laughed. “Take it easy on Pop. I got his back... for now. If he gets too outrageous, he might be on his own.”

“Pop... I like that. I’m sure he loved it.”

Before I could respond, Pop had started talking. “I’m sure I speak for every man out here with a daughter when I say my daughter is forever my little girl.”

I smiled slightly as everyone aww’d. He continued, “I never liked anybody she dated. Ever. But just like most daughters, they tend to date rebelliously sometimes. And she did. A few knuckleheads that I would have loved to go a few rounds with in a ring.”

I could feel him on that. If any of them were like the dude I laid out, then baby girl hit the jackpot here. That wasn’t even me being braggadocios. He was a real piece of shit to put his hands on her and they weren’t even a couple anymore. “Papa,” Divine said loudly, in a somewhat warning tone.

I chuckled silently as Pop continued. “Alright, alright. I said that to say, I’ve never felt secure or... good about trusting her with anyone for the rest of her life. I prayed she found someone that her mother and I could trust to give her exactly what she deserved. What she’s named after.”

I could feel the lump forming in my throat, but ain’t no way I was about to get all sensitive in front of all these people. “I felt that with Solomon the first night he came to our home. And if you need proof... I still haven’t shown him all my guns.”

Everyone laughed loudly. I supposed that was something he did to her past boyfriends. “Let me hurry this along because my wife told me not to get long-winded up here. Baby girl, we love you, and we are so happy you found someone to love you. Solomon, I’m proud to be your Pop. Never had a son, but I feel like I do now.” *Lord. I never really felt the sense of a father until I met him.* “So family, join me in raising our

glasses to my kids and my grandchild that I can't wait to meet. May God bless y'all beyond your wildest dreams."

Divine pulled me with her to where her dad was standing, and they hugged one another tightly. When they released one another, I hugged him, too. "Thanks, Pop."

"Always, son."

Chapter 16

WHEN WE WALKED IN THE DOOR, DIVINE IMMEDIATELY CAME OUT of her shoes. Everything was amazing at the party. The food, music, drinks, and just the atmosphere in itself. Divine's family was crazy but fun to be around. I spent a lot of time laughing at her uncles and Pop and picking with Bryce about his silent flirting with Vine's cousin, Sheena. They'd eye-fucked practically the entire time we were there. The shit was funny as hell to watch. Bryce enjoyed that more than I thought he would. He was usually a get to the point kind of guy, but that slow simmer had him excited as hell.

When we left, everyone was feeling good, me being one of them. That Henny never ran out, and my throat never got tired of swallowing it. "So now that you met my crazy family, you sure you still wanna be a part of it? Sheena will be your cousin now," Divine said, then laughed. "You know she's texted me six times about Bryce since we left. I don't even wanna think about the trouble we could be in if they start talking."

I chuckled. "Well, I love your family, even Sheena's crazy ass. I'm already seeing a side of Bryce I've never seen. He's moving slow. Normally, if he was feeling somebody, he would've approached her, laid it out on the table what he wanted, and been done. To watch him flirt without saying hardly anything to her was amusing as hell. Did you tell her he has two kids?"

"I did and her exact words were, *As long as his baby mama ain't with the shits, Bryce could get it.* Her words, not mine... after a few shots and a couple glasses of wine," Divine answered, then laughed.

"Aww shit. Well, I never hear him complaining about *them*. He has two baby mamas."

“Oh,” she said with a shrug. “Well, as long as they ain’t with the shits, she’s down.”

Divine walked over to where I was and wrapped her arms around my waist. “It was very dope to watch you with everybody today. I don’t really get to see you interact comfortably with people. Watching you laugh and talk to people with ease... it was nice to see.”

“Well, it felt good to be able to do that. Most people I’m around, I tend to be on guard because I don’t know what their angle is. Unfortunately, you’ll see that Solomon again when it’s time to do this interview. But your family made it easy to be myself. And I’m honored to be able to call them my family, too.”

“I can tell they love you already. It’s not unbelievable. You’re pretty loveable... once you get past the beastly shell. But right now, I’m more interested in the Solomon that was supposed to be helping me with my professionalism.”

“I bet you are,” I said as I gripped her ass. “But you are on his time now. So, however he chooses to move, you gon’ have to be cool with that.”

I kissed her lips, allowing it to linger a bit. Solomon was all about taking things slowly. By the time she got the dick, she was gonna be begging for the shit, salivating at the mouth. “I expected nothing less, baby.”

“Good. Let’s take a shower, Vine,” I said, then nibbled her ear.

Going slowly with her was gonna be torture for me, too. I’d gotten so used to just taking it however I wanted it and she seemed to enjoy that as well. She liked me to handle her roughly and fuck her senseless. I had no complaints. I pulled away from her, then pulled off my shirt and left it there on the floor, then began peeling her clothes off her... slowly. Starting with her belt, I pulled her close to me and unfastened it, letting it fall to the floor, then undid the few buttons at the top of her dress. I slowly slid it off her shoulders as I stared at her body.

Unbuckling my belt, I let my pants fall to the floor, then stepped out of them as Divine watched me. When I focused my attention back on her, I unfastened her bra, then slowly slid her panties to the floor, taking a moment to rub my nose across her mound. Staring at her beautiful body once more, I began lowering my boxer briefs, unleashing my hardening weapon of mass destruction. He was ready to sniff it out, so I had to talk to him mentally about the game we were playing.

I gently scooped Vine up and walked to the bathroom as I placed soft kisses on her shoulder. Once we were there and I'd put her down, I started the shower, allowing the water to heat up, then got towels. Going back to Vine, I gently kissed her neck, then grabbed her ass, feeling the heat hit my fingers. She wasn't saying anything, just emitting soft moans to let me know she was enjoying my touch. After a few moments, I grabbed her hand and led her to the shower, where I gently washed her body, taking my time to caress every inch of her skin and to tease parts of her that craved more.

After rinsing her off, I took her nipple into my mouth, sucking it gently, enjoying the hardness of it as I began flicking my tongue across it. Lifting my head, I turned her around, her back to me and pressed against her. My dick was hard as a rock and pissed that I was denying him right now. There wasn't a moment that we didn't get it on in the shower, but now was that moment. I knew she was expecting or hoping that I'd pick her up and lower her on this hardness, but not tonight. Backing away, I began washing myself. She turned around and took the towel from me and began washing my body as I'd done hers.

I closed my eyes and hummed in satisfaction as she'd been doing. Once I rinsed off, she slid her hands over my back and up my shoulders while placing soft kisses in various places. When she nipped my shoulder, that shit caused my dick to jump in excitement. I grabbed her hand that she'd slid up to the back of my head and kissed it, then led her out of the shower. I was almost sure that she was expecting something more to go down in there, but not so. Once I dried her body

and mine, we went back to the room. Laying her in the bed, I moisturized her skin with her body butter, gently kneading her in places I felt she needed it.

I laid next to her and gently slid my fingers up the side of her body, admiring every curve as she trembled in anticipation. I knew this pace was torturing her, but the moment I entered her would be like walking into paradise. Placing kisses on her neck, I gently rolled her to her back, and made my way down to her love. I needed to taste her, and I did, slowly tongue kissing it. "I love you," I whispered before I pulled her clit between my lips.

As I sucked it slowly, Divine's trembling became more intense, so I stopped. The look on her face looked as if it would produce tears. Bringing my mouth to hers, I gave her my tongue so she could delight herself in her own flavors, then moved to her nipples. She kept raising her hips, trying to get a slip up to occur, but I wouldn't allow it. "Solomon," she whined.

I hummed on her nipple, as I toyed with the other between my fingertips. Coming up for air, I stared into her eyes, seeing that she was on the verge of begging. Remaining silent, I went to her neck and kissed it gently as a smirk formed on my lips. "I can't take this anymore, Solomon. Please," she whispered.

When I lifted my head to look at her, I noticed a tear had trickled down her cheek. Even in this moment, it weakened me. Wiping her cheek with my thumb, I positioned myself to enter her wetness, but not too close or she would have taken charge. "Why are you crying, baby?"

"I need you," she replied as she pulled my face to hers and kissed my lips. "Now." She kissed me again, gently pulling my bottom lip with her teeth. "So bad."

I brought my lips back to hers and continued to kiss her as my hand traveled to the place she needed me most. I could feel the heat before I slipped them inside. Her love clinched my fingers tightly as it desperately needed satisfaction to drain through its tunnel. After rubbing circles on her G-spot a couple

of times, I brought my fingers to her lips. She pulled them into her mouth and swirled her tongue around them. That was my undoing. I could no longer deprive her of what she needed... what I needed. Slowly, I pushed inside of her, immediately taking her to ecstasy and reminding her of what professionalism was.

I hadn't been to Miami in a couple of years. Divine had decided to get married there at the Provident Resort. Thankfully, her parents and peeps were cool with what we were doing. I didn't like unnecessary confrontation, so I was more at ease about everything. We'd stopped to do paperwork for our marriage license, then headed to the resort. When we'd gotten to our suite, we looked around to see how we liked it and ended our tour outside on the garden terrace. Divine wrapped her arms around me and asked, "What do you think, love?"

"It's nice, baby. But we could be in a dumpster and I'd be fine as long as you were there," I said, then chuckled.

She tilted her head back for a kiss and I gladly gave in to her. Her upper lips were as much of a weakness as her lower ones. After I released my hold on her, she said, "So, I was thinking, after we shower, we can change into our swimwear, order some food, and eat out here. Take a nap and then maybe go for a walk on the beach, then have dinner at the beachfront restaurant tonight," she rattled off.

"I see you got it all planned out, baby. Sounds good. I'm rolling with whatever you wanna do."

"Sounds like the makings of a great husband," she said with a smile.

I smirked at her and said seriously, "I can't believe you about to officially be mine. I plan to be the best man I can be for you, baby. If at any time I fail at that, call me out on my

shit, no matter how angry you think I might get. I love you, and my plan is for you to be the envy of every woman we come in contact with. I want my love for you to be seen whether we are somewhere together or alone. In your every action, I want people to see how happy you are. Let the media report on how perfect we are for each other.”

She circled her arms around my neck, and I circled mine around her waist, lifting her from her feet. Her lips met mine and we engaged in a lingering kiss. “I love you, too. I can’t wait to marry you and spend forever being whatever you need from me,” she said as she rested her forehead against mine. “Making sure you remain confident in the fact that you are my world.”

“We’re perfect for each other and I’m glad God decided to bless me with your perfection. You know after this baby, I’m gon’ put another one in you as soon as possible.”

She giggled. “I’ll have as many babies as you want, love. How many babies *do* you want?”

“As many as your body can take, baby. I’ve always wanted a big family. I guess if I had to put a number on it... that you might be comfortable with... maybe four or five. But if you wanna give me more, I’ll take all of them.”

“Yeeeeeah... let’s stick with four or five. I think I could handle that.”

I laughed, then kissed her lips and lowered her to her feet. “Well, hopefully multiples don’t run in your family. I don’t have a clue what runs in mine.”

“We’re gonna find out together, I guess. Ready to shower? I’m so hungry, baby.”

“Yep. That’s nothing new. You’re always hungry, Vine,” I said, then chuckled.

She glared at me playfully. “Whatever.”

Today was the day. We'd done everything Divine had wanted to do yesterday and today was the day we gave our lives to one another. She was on the phone with the planner, talking excitedly about our beach wedding and where we needed to be at what times. As I ate my eggs and waffles, Divine ended her call and stared at me with excitement in her eyes. "We're hours away from becoming Mr. and Mrs. Frank, baby. Excited? Nervous?"

"I'm rather calm, baby. I'm excited, but I feel a sense of peace. This is the life I've always wanted and it's surreal that it's about to happen in a few hours. What about you?"

"I feel the same way. I just wanna make you happy forever, love."

I smiled at her, then rubbed her cheek. "There's no doubt in my mind. So, should I wear my grill or not?"

I already knew what her answer would be, but I just wanted to see her facial expression. I knew she at least wanted the bottom ones in. Not knowing about how she felt about me wearing the top part, made the question worth asking. But just as I originally thought she would, she frowned, producing a nice chuckle out of me. "You're joking, right? I need the top and bottom, baby."

My chuckle became a laugh as she maintained her frown. "Okay, okay. You can chill with that frown, baby mama. I got'chu."

She chuckled, then leaned closer to me and said, "Just kiss me."

"Gladly."

I pulled her face to mine and gave her what she wanted. While I wanted more, I knew I would get all that I was hoping for after she became my wife.

The rest of the day was filled with preparation for our pending nuptials. I'd gotten a barber that came highly

recommended to edge me up and trim my beard to make sure I looked my freshest for my beautiful bride. I'd even gotten a manicure, because I was almost sure the photographer would want to take pictures of our hands. If she thought her engagement ring was the shit, she was gon' flip the fuck out when she saw the piece I was adding to it. There were yellow diamonds all over the band and her engagement ring would fit inside of it.

I knew she didn't really do flashy, but if she wore anything that was flashy, it was gon' be that shit. Nobody would ever be able to say they didn't see it. In a way, I was marking my territory. Divine was all mine, and while I trusted her with everything in me, I didn't trust everyone else. Seeing someone disrespect our union would awaken a side of me that I hadn't seen in a long ass time. What her ex got at that bar was nothing in comparison to how I could be.

As I walked to the beach in my champagne-colored, three-piece suit and white shirt, I knew this was one of the moments that my life had been craving. Adjusting my brown flower-patterned handkerchief, I continued to the location on the beach to wait for my bride. Fingering the band in my pocket, I could feel the nerves starting to settle a little bit. I wasn't nervous about marrying her, but suddenly I was nervous about if I could keep her happy for the rest of her life.

When I saw my beautiful bride approaching me in her white, floral patterned gown, the nerves dissipated. She was my peace in ways I'd never imagined. She had a huge smile on her face and that only made me feel even more sensitive. Knowing that I was the one that had put that smile on her face, puffed my damn chest up with pride. The music was cued up and the song, "Frank" by Alina Baraz began playing. I was familiar with the song and how the album was titled *It Was Divine*. That was either coincidental or a sign from God that she would have a song titled "Frank" on an album called *It Was Divine*. I knew that would be our song forever. When she got to me, she said, "You look so handsome, baby."

I slid my fingers down her cheek. “And you look like an angel here on earth. All you need are wings, baby. So beautiful.”

“Thank you, baby.”

We turned our attention to the officiant, and he said a prayer and we recited some vows after him. He’d asked if we had any words that we’d prepared for one another. I knew I hadn’t. But Divine... my beautiful almost wife said, “I didn’t prepare anything, but I would like to speak from my heart, if that’s okay.”

She glanced from the officiant to me and I knew my emotions would probably get the best of me. She was already so beautiful, and this moment was so sacred, any words of love she spoke to me, would probably make the tears fall. When the officiant nodded, giving her the okay to speak, she started, “I think I knew from the first day I met you... you would be an intricate piece of my life. There was always this unshakeable feeling of... like there was something that I needed that only you possessed.”

I gave away a one-cheeked smile, thinking about how she mesmerized me when I first saw her. “I fell fast and hard for you effortlessly and I wholeheartedly believe that it was because I had finally found my one. My love. My world. I could never see waking up a day from now until forever without you. I love you more than anything, Solomon Frank. For the rest of my life, you will be my world.”

The tear fell down my cheek before I could stop it and I swallowed the lump in my throat. This woman had me deep in my emotions. I went to my knees and pulled her closer to me by grabbing her legs. “Divine Love is just what you are and it’s what you’ve shown me. That night when I saw you sitting by the pool was the moment that I knew you were much more than an assistant. Then after you were looking out for me for the business opportunity, I couldn’t help but succumb to how I was feeling. Despite how we started, the journey to this moment, no matter how short, was a sweet one. And I plan to

make it an even sweeter journey for you from this moment on.”

I pressed my face to her stomach. “You and this little one mean everything to me. I just pray that I can continue to be everything you deserve. That I can always show you the love I’d never been capable of showing to anyone. You complete me, so without you, I wouldn’t be whole. I love you, my Vine. And I’m so happy that you found me worthy of your love.”

I stood to my feet and I was ready to take her at that very moment. Seeing her trying to compose herself only caused more tears to fall from my eyes. After dabbing her eyes, she stared up at me. Her gaze pierced my heart and I couldn’t look away if I tried. “That was beautiful,” the officiant said.

“Now can we have the rings please?”

Once we’d gotten the rings in hand, he continued, “Solomon place the ring on her finger and repeat after me.”

Divine held her hand out and I slid the band that fit perfectly around her ring on her finger, holding it halfway. The officiant then said, “With this ring, I marry you and bind my life to yours.”

I repeated his words to Divine, my gaze never leaving hers. The officiant continued, “It is a symbol of my eternal love, my everlasting friendship, and the promise of all my tomorrows.”

I repeated his words, then pushed the ring completely on her finger. He then turned his attention to Divine and my eyes widened slightly when she slid a matching ring on my finger. I was ready for this to be over and done with. I needed to make love to my wife. “You have formalized the existence of the bond between you with words spoken and the giving and receiving of rings. Therefore, it is my pleasure to now pronounce you husband and wife. You may now kiss your bride!”

“Hell yeah,” I mumbled, then placed my hands along her jawlines and pulled her face to mine.

I gave her all the love I felt inside, doing my best to drown her in it. When I pulled away, I'd damn near sucked all her lipstick from her lips. *Damn!* These pants were getting tight as hell. She leaned in and pecked my lips again as the officiant said, "Congratulations Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Frank."

I smiled at the sound of that and so did Divine. "I love how that sounds. Mrs. Solomon Frank sounds pretty sexy."

"Mmm hmm. Sexy as hell."

After practically a month of isolation with my beautiful wife, it was time to get back to work. I had so much shit coming up. Promo would be starting soon for the movie I'd filmed when Divine had first started working for me. At least it would give the media time to calm down. Our marriage seemed to be headlines for every media outlet I could think of. *Solomon Frank Marries Pregnant Girlfriend in Private Ceremony*. Why was that news to anyone other than us? Although Divine tried to hide it, I could tell that it bothered her.

We were in New York for my interview with Mimosa Moments, and I was taking promo pictures with the hosts of the show. Even though I should have been focused on the camera lens, Divine was a line-drive behind it. I couldn't keep my eyes off of her. Visions of our lovemaking the night of our wedding and every night after were still on my mind. While our lovemaking was always passionate, since that night, it was on a totally different level. I was making love to my wife.

When we were done, I made my way to her. Once I got close, she said, "Celeste has two scripts for you to read. She said she'll drop them in the mailbox. May wanna have Bryce or Watt go by and put them in the house before the mail comes tomorrow."

I nodded and pulled out my phone and texted Watt. He responded immediately, saying he would go by there after he got off work. Shortly after, it was time for the interview. I was a little jittery because I hadn't done an interview like this in a long time. Hopefully, they would stay in the pocket and not try to get too personal, since I didn't get the questions beforehand. I would hate to shut them down. After we filed into the studio and took our places, the show started.

"Yo, yo, yo! It's ya girl Lola Lee!"

"Ya boy, Charlie!"

"And ya girl, DJ Ivy. Thank you for tuning in to Mimosa Moments. Today... today y'all... we got a G.O.A.T. in the building. Mr. Solomon Frank, y'all!"

I chuckled as Lola teased DJ Ivy, by saying, *"Call him what you really call him."*

"I ain't ashamed. We got the next damn Denzel Washington in the building!" DJ Ivy said.

I chuckled again and said, ***"I appreciate that. I'm glad to be here."***

That was the truth. They made me feel comfortable and that was a must if they wanted Solomon Frank to play nice. And gassing me up was always a good move. *"You are more than welcome. We gon' get right into it because we've all been fans long enough to know not to waste Mr. Solomon Frank's time,"* Ivy said, then giggled.

"First of all, can we say congrats on the marriage and baby. We know you are a very private person, but we've all been watching the pieces of the beautiful love you and your wife share and it's so inspiring. How does it feel now to be a married man?" Lola asked.

A smile graced my face. Simply thinking about what Divine meant to me produced that whether I wanted to or not. ***"It's an amazing feeling to know that the woman that makes me a better man is committed to me for life. It makes me feel***

loved more than I ever had, because she had a choice and she chose me.”

As I glanced at her, I caught her wink and gave her a small smile. *“That is so beautiful. We wish you both the best. On top of being busy in your personal life, a few months ago, you wrapped your latest movie. If you can tell us anything about it, what can we expect from that project?”* Lola asked.

“You can definitely expect plenty of action. Of course, I’m the hero, saving a few people from a shady individual. Lots of violence. There’s also a minor romance subplot. Nothing over the top, though. You’ll be extremely entertained, especially by the back story of the hero.”

“That sounds dope. What made you even wanna act in the first place?” Charlie asked.

I took a few seconds to myself and decided that I should just say it how it came out. I’d never even told Divine why I wanted to act. Lifting my head, I said, ***“It gave me an outlet. I grew up in Inglewood... not the best neighborhood. There was lots of negative activity right past our doorstep. But my father ruled me with an iron fist... literally. Acting took my mind off my problems at home. Pretending to be someone else who mostly always had it together, kept me going. It was why I never played negative roles. I had enough negativity in my personal life, and I needed an escape. Acting gave me that. I chased it with everything in me, even when I had to suffer to do so. It was my passion. It still is, but it’s not my top priority anymore.”***

I glanced over at Divine and I could tell her face was slightly red. Sharing with the world that I grew up in an abusive home was freeing. Now that they were all gone, I could live in my truth and not fear any backlash from them. Suddenly, being private concerning that wasn’t important to me. Maybe what I had to say could help someone that might have been going through similar issues. *“That is a true testimony. I’m sure somewhere out there is a young man or woman who are in that situation that was inspired by your*

words. And... I'm pretty sure that beautiful lady over there has claimed the top priority spot," Charlie said, causing everyone to chuckle. "Is there a favorite role you've ever played? If so, what was it?"

"I used to think it was my role as Hunter in Low Intentions. I loved the suspense of it and that Hunter was an everyday good guy that stepped up to the plate to protect his family. Now, I would have to say my favorite role is my real-life role as a husband. I'm sure that role will have a fierce competitor in a few months. But being a husband is a role that's rewarding and fulfilling."

"Aww," DJ Ivy and Lola said in unison, then looked over at Divine. "Divine, you must be a gem," Lola said as Divine shrugged her shoulders with a smile on her face. "Do you mind if we ask how far along you are?"

"I just hit the three-month mark," she answered.

"I'm so happy for y'all. Congrats again," Lola said.

"Thank you," Divine beamed.

"A'ight, so what's next for Solomon Frank?" Charlie asked.

"I'm looking into different roles, aside from my usual. My wife seems to think I would be amazing in a romantic movie. She says women would appreciate that." I chuckled and allowed time for everyone else to do so as well, as DJ Ivy fanned herself with her hand. ***"Other than that, I just wanna enjoy life with my family. I have a baby on the way, so I definitely have to make time to spoil Baby Frank."***

"Ivy over here about to pass out," Charlie joked as she rolled her eyes at him. "So, I think your wife is on to something with that. Any plans on stepping out the game anytime soon? Maybe directing or producing?"

"That question used to garner a swift hell no. I didn't want the headache of it, but the older I get, the more I think about it. Now that I'm in a family of great directors,

producers, and writers, I'm quite sure I'll have the perfect mentor if I decide to do so."

"That's what's up. It's really been great sitting down with you today, man," Charlie said.

"It really has," Lola agreed. *"Thank you for coming."*

"Thank you for having me. I enjoyed sitting down with you all as well."

Once we wrapped up, Divine and I walked hand in hand to the car that was waiting. "That was a really good interview, love. I think you gon' have scripts rolling in after that. You were very personable."

I stopped her from walking by putting my arms around her, resting my hands on her little pooch that had formed, then kissed her neck. "Thank you, baby. You're the reason for that. Being with you makes me extremely happy. I can't help but beam with excitement whenever your name comes up. I love you. And as long as those offers fit me, I'll be game. I'll be needing my personal assistant more often than not. You think you can handle that?"

She turned around in my arms and looped her arms around my neck and kissed my lips. After pulling away, she said, "I got'chu, baby."

Chapter 17

I'D JUST FINISHED WORKING OUT AND I WAS TIRED AS HELL. BEING wrapped up in Divine had its advantages and disadvantages. The main disadvantage was that I had gained five pounds. I thought I was good since I'd been working out on that body daily. That obviously wasn't enough. I'd put in an hour this morning and I had every intention to take a shower and go back to bed. Today was the gender reveal and I knew it would be a long day. When my eyes popped open at four, I decided to get up. Before Divine came along, I either worked out with my boys in the evening or I got up early.

I'd read the scripts that Celeste had left for me a couple of months ago when I was in New York for the interview with Mimosa Moments and I'd accepted both. One of them was a movie titled *Something*, but the one coming up first was called *The One That Got Away*. I was sure the title would get changed, but the script was amazing. It followed the life of a doctor who'd moved away from home and left love behind when he went off to college. He met someone in college, they got married, but it didn't work out. So, he chose to throw himself into work, but deep down he wanted love. A few years after, when his mom fell ill, it forced him to move back home and he ran into the woman he left behind. Where it went from there was obvious. I was excited about it and couldn't wait to start filming.

Before I could head to the shower, my phone rang, causing me to immediately frown up. Who in the hell would be calling me at five in the morning? I didn't recognize the number, but I answered anyway. "Hello?"

"Good morning, Solomon."

“Good morning, Nadia. Is there a reason you’re calling me and so early in the morning?”

I recognized her voice right away. I didn’t talk to many people on the phone, at least not for entertainment purposes. But because of our schedules, we used to talk on the phone quite often. I haven’t heard from her since the horrible black-tie event where she and Divine nearly came to blows. “I knew you would possibly be awake, working out. I saw the news about your marriage and your baby on the way. I wanted to congratulate you and wish you well. I also wanted to apologize for my behavior. That’s not my style and I’m sorry.”

I was quiet for a moment, surprised that she’d apologized. “I accept your apology. And thank you for the well-wishes.”

“Happiness looks good on you. I’m truly happy for you. I feel like you’ve been wanting this for a long time, because you looked so relaxed in the pictures. She brings out the best in you.”

“I have been wanting it for a while, so I’m definitely relaxed in our love.”

“Well, that was all I wanted.”

“Okay. I wish you well in the business and in life as well.”

“Thank you, Solomon. That means a lot coming from you. See you around.”

“Okay. See you.”

When I ended the call, I smiled at the phone. That was the last person I expected to be calling me. I was just glad I was actually awake, or she would have gotten a much different Solomon. Once I took my shower and had dried off, I slid in the bed next to my wife and gently kissed her neck and shoulder. Seeing her naked body had me ready to go all over again. We’d gone to bed early because she was tired. She was five months pregnant now and it was pretty obvious to anyone who saw her, that she was expecting.

She moaned softly in her sleep and that only propelled me forward. Hopefully, she didn't wake up and shut me down. I slid my hands around her and gently palmed her breast as I kissed her shoulder. My dick felt like it could bust concrete. He craved the feeling of being within her walls relentlessly. When she rolled over to her back, I was excited. That meant she was going to let me have my way. Her eyes fluttered open, but she remained silent. As I prepared to hover over her, she spread her legs for me. I could tell she was still half asleep, but this dick was gon' wake her up.

After kissing her lips, I pushed inside of her. I could tell she was still tired, so I opted to make it quick. Stroking her deeply, I groaned in satisfaction. Her pussy was always wet, no matter how prepared she was. The myth was true. Pregnant pussy was the best. I could no longer be ignorant about the fact as I plunged into her. Hearing her moans helped to get me there quicker, and I couldn't deny that she had me sprung. Within her walls was the best place on earth and there was nothing I would allow to jeopardize me making a daily appearance.

When her legs started to tremble, I knew her orgasm was about to flood me, so I stroked a little faster, lifting her leg over my shoulder. "Oh, Solomon! Shit!"

The words that fell from her lips, managed to push me even closer to the edge, but when her pussy gripped me and pulled me further inside, my dick relinquished the goods. I could no longer hold on to it. "Fuck! Damn, baby. Thank you."

Divine released a soft chuckle as she panted. After kissing her forehead, I went to the bathroom to clean up, then came back to clean her up. She'd already fallen back to sleep. I smiled at her beautiful face as I cleaned her priceless treasure, then threw the towel on the floor and joined her in bed.

After I got dressed in my baby blue linen suit, I could hear Divine fussing about colors. She'd been on one all day, even though her mother and cousins were here to do all of that for her. Leaving the room, I headed to the front where they were. I could hear her mom say, "Divine, nobody will notice that."

"But I do," Divine whined.

As I approached, Mrs. Stewart glanced at me, causing Divine to turn around as well. "Please, get your wife," Mrs. Stewart said. Focusing her attention back on Divine, she said, "Go get dressed, daughter. This party is starting in about an hour."

I grabbed her hand from her belly and said, "Come on, baby. Everything will be fine. Let's go dress this beautiful body."

Hesitantly, she allowed me to lead her to our bedroom. When we got inside, she said, "I'm being dramatic, I know. If I could help it, that would be great." She glanced over at me, her eyes sweeping over my fit. "You look and smell amazing by the way."

She made her way to me and pulled my lower lip down with her fingers to look at my grill. I chuckled every time she did that. Gently wrapping my lips around her finger, I sucked it into my mouth while staring in her eyes. "You know where shit like that always leads to, baby," she said as she wrapped her arm around my waist and slid her finger from my mouth.

"I'll take all this shit off. I don't mind following where that road leads."

"You are so nasty... all the time now," she said, then giggled. "Later, love."

I pulled her close to me by her hips and kissed her lips. Lowering my head to her ear, I said, "Well, if that pussy wasn't always calling my name, I could relax. Seeing you carry my baby is the ultimate turn on."

Leaning back, she took my face in her hands and laughed as she shook her head. "Uh uh, you can't be all in my ear. You

know what that does. I'm gonna get dressed before there's another chance my parents can hear me in here getting my back blown out."

I tucked my bottom lip into my mouth as I watched her stepped away. Damn, I was horny. I wanted to get at her so bad. Adjusting my dick as she watched, I gave her my puppy dog eyes. "Later, baby. I swear you'll survive until then. How about you go keep your Pop company. And I'm sure your friends will be here soon."

"Are you trying to say that they are as interesting as you? 'Cause I'm not hearing what your bargaining chip is."

She laughed. "No... I'm not. I'm saying go distract yourself, baby daddy."

"I guess. Just hurry up fo' I get withdrawals. I think I'm suffering from pregnancy cravings and shit. Like I just wanna be attached to you all the damn time. I'm leaving now that I done dropped all my manhood in here."

I walked out as Divine laughed and said, "Okay, baby, I'll hurry. I love you."

"I love you, too," I yelled back outside the door.

I was serious as hell, though. It was like since she'd been pregnant, I just wanted to be next to her all the damn time. When I walked out to the front, Watt and Bryce were seated on the couch and Pop was in the kitchen area with Mrs. Stewart and Divine's cousins, Sheena, and Gia. I walked in the kitchen and said, "How you doing, Pop?"

I shook his hand and he gave me a partial hug. "I'm great! I see we're both in blue. That means we're hoping for a boy."

"Yes sir," I said as I noticed the frown on Mrs. Stewart's face.

"Juliana, why are you frowning?" Pop asked.

"I'm trying to figure out how you got a term of endearment and I'm still Mrs. Stewart. I think I'm a little jealous."

I smiled softly at her. I'd been trying to come up with something, because I didn't know how comfortable I would be with calling her Mom. My mama had meant a lot to me and I didn't wanna call anyone else Mom but her. "How would you like it if I called you, Mama?"

Her eyes welled up and she hugged me tightly. "I would love that."

Surprisingly, it didn't feel uncomfortable like I thought it would. I hugged her back, then went to shake hands with my boys. "What's up fellas? I see you wanted to be a sellout, Bryce, and wear pink."

"Well, I think it's a girl, so wasn't that what I was supposed to wear?"

I rolled my eyes and said, "Whatever."

"I ain't got time for y'all. I gotta put the moves on Sheena. We been talking for a while and I need us to move to the next level. I ain't talked to nobody since I been fucking with her. Can you believe that shit?"

"Hell naw."

"Well, it's the truth. While I'm making moves, Watt need to be making moves himself. Gia been showing him that she's interested, but dude been leaving her on stare. She's obviously feeling him, and I know he feeling her, but he being all sensitive and shit about Renee."

"I don't wanna bring my baggage from Renee into another relationship. That wouldn't be fair to the next woman. Let me chill out and heal from that shit first."

"I agree, Watt. Don't listen to that nigga."

As we clowned around and talked, Divine made her grand entrance. She was beautiful in her pink dress and sandals. Her hair was up, showing off that beautiful neck that I enjoyed nibbling on. When Mama noticed Divine, she asked, "Is everybody ready to eat?"

“I am,” Divine answered quickly, before anyone else could say a word.

I made my way to her as she scanned the various dishes Chef Riley had prepared. Sliding my arms around her waist, I said, “You look amazing, baby.”

I softly kissed her neck. “Thanks, love,” she said as Sheena and Gia approached us with plates in hand.

“Plates for the parents,” Sheena said with a smile as Gia handed plates to us.

“Thanks, boo,” Divine said. “Although, I thought Bryce would have gotten his plate before me.”

We all laughed at Divine’s remark. Clearly, Sheena was feeling Bryce more than he thought. “Oh, I got him next, baby girl,” she replied, then laughed louder. “Gotta take care of the baby’s mama and daddy first.”

When they walked away, I led Divine to our designated seats, then said, “Bryce is really feeling her. He said he’s gon’ apply some pressure today. He wants to be in a committed relationship with her, not just kicking it.”

“Really? I can’t wait to see what comes of that. She seems to really like him.”

Divine stuffed her mouth afterwards as I said, “Yep. I’ve never seen him so into a woman, not even his baby mama’s. The first one, the whole pregnancy was a trap that didn’t keep him anyway. The second one, I don’t know what happened with that one. He never would say. But Sheena done hit something with that nigga. Look at them.”

Bryce was holding her hand and had pulled her next to him and fed her some food. That shit was so unusual, I couldn’t stop watching them. “Well now... that’s cute,” Divine said, then giggled. After a brief pause, she continued, “My poor Gia. What is taking Watt so long to put them both out of their misery?”

“That nigga scared, honestly. He just divorced his ex-wife and he not all the way right yet. He don’t wanna hurt her because he’s still hurt from the way Renee played him. Hopefully, he gets it together soon, ‘cause he’s into her for sure. They do that damn eye-dance whenever they’re around each other.”

“That’s understandable. Their chemistry and connection is so deep, though. I can feel it from here. I know how overwhelming it can be to feel that,” she said as she turned to me with a smirk on her face.

Pulling her to me, I kissed her lips, then said in a low voice, “Tell me about it.”

We continued enjoying our food and one another’s company, but it was time to do what we were all here for. I was anxious to know what we were having. I couldn’t wait to see one of the guest rooms turned into a beautiful nursery, filled with pinks or blues. It didn’t matter which one. I was simply happy to be able to become someone’s dad.

As we walked outside to the backyard, excitement was coursing through the both of us. There was a huge box out there on the patio, filled with either pink or blue balloons, to reveal the gender of our baby. The scissors sat next to it for someone to cut the ribbon off it. As I stared at it, the excitement evident in my smile, Divine said, “I think you should do it, baby.”

She nudged me toward the box, but this moment was special to the both of us, so I pulled her with me. “We should do this together, baby.”

She smiled and nodded in agreement. As we stood in front of the box, I grabbed the scissors, and placed it in position to cut the ribbon as Divine laid her hand atop mine. When I cut the ribbon, the flaps of the box opened, and pink balloons filled the air. I was gonna have a daughter... another little woman to spoil. Divine jumped up and down as she squealed, then wrapped her arms around my neck while everyone clapped and cheered.

I kissed her lips and said, “Another beautiful woman to spoil.”

I touched Divine’s stomach and lowered my face to it and said, “Well, hello my beautiful princess. Daddy can’t wait to meet you.”

When I stood to my feet, Divine stared up at me and smiled. “If you think you’re showing your sensitivity now, baby...” she said, allowing me to finish the sentence.

This little princess would have me sensitive as hell... wrapped around her pinky finger. “I know, I know. But guess what? People think I’m a mean ass now, too. It’s only gonna get worse when it concerns my baby.”

Divine wrapped her arms around my waist as people congratulated us. Once they were going back inside, she looked up at me and said, “Oh, trust me... I know it. But I was playing around with names and now that we know we’re having a girl, you wanna hear what I came up with? If you don’t like it, we can change it, love, but I think you might.”

“I’m listening, Vine.”

“Well, if it was a boy... I wanted to name him after you... make him a junior. Maybe we can hold onto that idea for the future. But... since it’s a girl... I was thinking about the name Solé. I didn’t come up with a middle name, but maybe you can.”

“Solé Divine Frank.”

“Real... I... that’s beautiful, baby,” she stuttered.

I was sure that caught her by surprise, but it didn’t take any thought for me. Everything about her was divine and the same would be so for our daughter. “Thank you... for all this love you gave me,” she said as she rested one hand on my chest and the other on her belly. “I love you so much.”

“I love you more.” Putting my hand to her stomach, I said. “I love you, too, munchkin.”

Epilogue

FOUR MONTHS LATER...

“BABY... I NEED YOU TO GET UP.”

I thought I was dreaming. Divine’s voice was so sweet and soft. As I shifted in my sleep, I heard her say, “Solomon, my water just broke.”

My eyes popped open, and I sat up. “It’s time?” I asked to make sure I heard her right.

“Yeah, baby, it’s time. I’m gonna get dressed and call my parents.”

She was so calm. I didn’t feel panicked because of that. “Okay. I’m gonna get dressed and get your bag out of the closet.”

She’d been packed for a week, waiting for this day. I’d been anxious, waiting for it to happen, not knowing when it would. I was grateful that we were at home when it happened. Sliding on my black sweatpants and a t-shirt, I grabbed her bag as she talked to her parents. I was about to head downstairs to get the car started and bring it closer to the door when I heard Divine yell. I ran to where she was and asked, “Baby, you okay?”

She put on her shirt, then panted, “Baby, I love you, but no, I’m not okay. I’m in labor and just had a contraction. So, let’s not ask that question again, please.”

I didn’t take offense to her nice, nasty attitude. I knew she had to be in a lot of pain for her angel wings to disappear. I knew that they would soon be replaced with a pitchfork. After she got her shirt straight, she gripped the door jam and

squeezed her eyes shut. She cried, “Oh, God. This is too hard already.”

The tears were in her eyes and I wished I could help. “Baby... remember to breathe deeply through them. I’m here for you... to help in any way I can. Let me carry you, baby. Maybe you can get drugs when we get to the hospital.”

“That... would be great, love, because I don’t think I’m gonna make it if I have to walk on my own. I’m sorry for snapping. It just hurts so bad,” she said, still struggling to catch her breath.

“No apology needed, baby,” I said as I scooped her up in my arms.

Moving as quickly as possible, I headed to the car. I knew from watching the pregnancy shows with her, that the quicker we got to the hospital, the better the chances were that she could get something for pain. Once I got her in the car, I ran to my side and got in the driver seat, cranking up and driving out immediately. As I sped down the highway, trying my best to get there in as least time as possible, Vine gripped the shit out of my shoulder as she said, “Ooooh.”

“You’re doing good, baby. Come on, breathe with me.”

I began taking deep breaths, hoping she didn’t slap the piss out of me for telling her what to do. When she began trying to breathe, following my instruction, I thanked God for small favors. By the time we got to Cedars-Sinai Hospital, my baby looked worn out. Quickly getting out, I ran through the entrance doors to get a wheelchair and a nurse came out with me. When I opened the door, she was in the middle of another contraction. Scooping her from the seat, I sat her in the wheelchair, debating if I wanted to go park the car or leave it there.

I chose the latter, grabbed her bag, and hauled ass behind the nurse. She was brought directly to a room and I knew that was most likely privilege that afforded us to not have to sit in a room in the ER. As she got undressed to put her gown on,

another contraction hit her. It seemed they were coming quickly. She draped her arms over my shoulders and rocked side to side. “You’re doing so good, baby,” I said, then kissed her head.

She was bent over, trying to get through the contraction. Once it passed, I helped her in the bed. “I love you, Vine. Our princess is almost here.”

She grabbed my hand, then rubbed her cheek with it. “I love you, too. I can’t wait to meet the little person that’s been kicking my butt from the inside out.”

I smiled at her, then backed away as the nurses came in to get her situated. They’d done her IV and hooked her to a monitor. Hearing my daughter’s heartbeat was the best sound in the world. Moments later, they checked her to see she’d dilated to five centimeters. The nurse said, “Dr. Foster is on her way and we can get you an epidural if you would like something for pain.”

“Oh, dear God, yes. Thank you.”

I chuckled silently at Divine’s response. It was like the word epidural was music to her ears. The nurse smiled and nodded. “Great. We’ll get the anesthesiologist up here as soon as possible,” she said.

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome, Mrs. Frank. Hit the button if you need us.”

Divine nodded in response, then they left the room. I stood from my seat and went back to her side, grabbing her hand and holding it in mine. Softly kissing it, I said, “If you choose not to have anymore, I definitely understand.”

She had another contraction before she could respond, and I wished I could bear the pain for her. When the pain had subsided, she said, “This... is hard, for sure. But I will gladly give you the babies I promised you as long as I get to feel that joy from you. See that smile light your face up when you think

of our family and how it could be. This pain... this pain is so worth it, baby.”

I kissed her hand as someone knocked on the door and came in. It was the anesthesiologist along with Pop and Mama. I stepped away from the bed to allow them to greet her, then we all moved out of the way so she could get the drugs she needed. Watching him tap into her spine sent a chill down mine. That looked like it was more painful than the contractions. Once he was done, Divine looked so relaxed. I chuckled softly and said, “Finally, some relief, huh babe? Get some rest like he said, until it’s time.”

“You have no idea, love,” she said as she immediately drifted off.

I sat on the little couch, anxious to meet my princess. For a moment, I’d planned to get some sleep as well, but I was too excited. So, I opted to play on my phone while I waited. It was extremely early in the morning, but I texted Watt and Bryce to let them know that Divine was in labor and where we were at the hospital in case they wanted to come later.

After dozing off and on for an hour or so, the doctor came in to check Divine. Before she could speak, Divine woke up. Dr. Foster smiled and asked, “How are we feeling, Divine?”

“I’m feeling okay right now.”

“Good. We’re gonna check you and see where you are.”

As the doctor examined her, I looked on in excitement, hoping it was time. From all the shows I watched, I knew they could give her a Pitocin drip to make her dilate faster. But that wasn’t necessary as the doctor smiled and said, “Looks like we’re getting ready to have us a baby girl.”

“It’s time?” Divine asked as I helped her sit up.

“It’s time. Let me get everybody ready and we’re gonna start pushing. You’re at a nine. By the time we prepare, it’ll be time to start pushing.”

“Okay. Is it okay if my mom stays in the room, too?”

“That’s totally fine,” the doctor responded.

Before another word could be spoken, Pop interjected and said, “I love you, baby girl. I won’t be far.” He kissed her head and continued, “You got this. I can’t wait to meet my granddaughter. I’ll be in the waiting room.”

When he walked out, Dr. Foster and a couple of nurses were coming back in. As they prepared to get ready, I held Divine’s hand, glad that this moment would be easier for her, since she’d had the epidural. After getting setup, they got Vine’s feet in the stirrups, then checked her again. “Alright, we’re ready. When I say push, give me a big one.”

I leaned over and kissed her head as we waited for the green light. Divine looked up at me and said, “Almost time to meet your daughter.”

I smiled back and before I could respond, Dr. Foster gave her the countdown to push. “Okay, Divine. One, two, three push!”

Baby girl squeezed my hand and pushed with all her might. Watching this moment was gonna be embedded in my brain forever. Once she stopped pushing and the doctor told her to relax for a moment, she took deep breaths. I did, too, because I was doing my best to keep my emotions in check. Within a minute it seemed she was pushing again. This time the baby’s head came out. A tear fell from my eye and I quickly wiped it. “The baby’s head is out. Lots of hair,” Dr. Foster said.

I squeezed Divine’s hand. “I love you, baby. She’s beautiful.”

Divine glanced over at her mom and she said, “She really is.”

The tears were threatening to fall from Mama’s eyes along with mine. “Okay, Divine. I’m gonna need a really good push on this next contraction. If we can get the shoulders out with this one, you’ll be holding your baby girl before you know it.”

Divine nodded and seemed to gather energy from I don't know where to give it her all with hopefully, this last push. She had a new determination on her face that I admired as I held her hand and stared between her legs at my baby making her entrance into the world. When the doctor counted down again, Divine pushed as hard as she could, the blood rushing to her face. Shortly after, it was like my little princess just popped out of there, screaming. Divine fell back as she panted, and I kissed her head.

"Mr. and Mrs. Frank, meet your baby girl," the doctor said as she placed our princess on Divine's chest.

She fell apart and so did I. "Hi, baby. My pretty girl."

I wiped the tears from my eyes, but they kept coming. I couldn't contain the overwhelming sense of joy that I felt. "Daddy, you wanna cut the cord?" Dr. Foster asked.

I nodded as I let the tears fall. It was no use in trying to wipe them away. She handed me the scissors as she pushed more nutrients to the baby from the cord. I was in awe, staring at my beautiful princess. Finally getting myself together, I cut the cord, then handed the scissors back to the doctor. I walked back to the head of the bed where our baby laid on her mother's chest. As I gently ran my finger down her back, Mama said, "I'm gonna go tell your Dad she's here."

"Okay, Mommy," Divine said as she left the room. Once she did, Divine looked up at me. "She's everything, isn't she?"

"Even more than that. There aren't words to describe how I feel about her right now. The two of you definitely hold my heart in your hands."

The nurse came and took Solé from Divine's chest to get her cleaned up. My eyes followed them until Divine grabbed my hand. When I turned back to my beautiful wife, she was staring up at me. "I love you, Solomon Frank. And thank you... for the best gift you could have ever given me. Little Miss Solé Divine Frank. I couldn't be happier right now."

I smiled back at her, but before I could say anything, they brought our bundled-up baby back to us and put her in my arms. As if I hadn't shed enough of my manhood, the tears fell even more as I stared into her beautiful face. She had a headful of hair like Divine but had my nose and lips. "Hey, princess. It's Daddy. You're so beautiful."

I looked at Divine to see the smile on her face. "Thank *you* for blessing me with this beautiful baby." Looking back at Solé, I said, "You are so gorgeous."

"You should see her dad," Divine said as someone knocked on the door.

Mama peeked in and asked, "Can we see her now?"

"Yeah, come on in. Proud Papa's got her," Divine said as they walked in.

They both had wide smiles on their faces as Pop walked over to me. He patted my shoulder and said, "I know the feeling. It feels good, doesn't it?"

"The most amazing feeling in the world, Pop. Amazing."

Pop slid his finger over Solé's beautiful curls and said, "And you're gonna be great. You have everything it takes to be a great father, and I don't doubt you will." Turning his attention to Divine, he said, "Motherhood suites you, daughter. Y'all are gonna be great parents."

He went took a seat as I glanced down at my princess. When I looked back up, he was holding his arms out. "Now I know the proud papa is wanting all the time he can get with his baby girl, but can an ol' man spend a little time with his granddaughter?"

I chuckled, then brought her to him and made my way back to Divine's bedside. "What's my little sweetheart's name?" he asked.

Divine and I had decided not to tell anyone her name until she was born, so we both knew that Pop would be the first to inquire. "Solé Divine Frank," Divine answered.

He smiled and said, “That’s a beautiful name.”

“Perfect for her,” Mama added.

I grabbed Divine’s hand in mine and kissed it, admiring her even more so... loving her more in this moment. If I never worked another day, knowing that I had her and my little princess, I had everything I needed.

The End

From the Author

And another one! This is our sixth collaborative effort! Every collaboration gets easier and easier... more seamless. We vibe so well together, T. Kay and I have even started to think alike. LOL I really hope you enjoyed Solomon's mean ass and his beautiful story. Love can remove a multitude of sin. It can change even the hardest of hearts. Solomon and Divine became a beautiful couple that just vibed so well together, although the beginning was rough as hell. LOL

There's also an amazing playlist on iTunes for this book under the same title that includes some great R&B and rap tracks to tickle your fancy. Please keep up with me on Facebook (@authormonicawalters), Instagram (@authormonicawalters) and Twitter (@monlwalters). You can also visit my Amazon author page at www.amazon.com/author/monica.walters to view my releases. Also, subscribe to my webpage for updates! <https://authormonicawalters.com>.

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