



Touch of Base

Part 5

All Ready Home

By Inakat

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Dedication: *50th Milestone Celebration Edition*

On this day April 29, 2019 I dedicate this book to my brother Charles, also known as, the Mixologist DJ Base. Often siblings say that the best words that they can hear from one another is "I love you". Without a doubt that is true, so consider this a little reminder. However, the greatest thing that you have said to me is "Baby girl, you can do anything that you set your mind to!" You are steadily supportive of me (and countless others), and for that, I thank you. Your altruistic resolve to use always your gifts to educate, heal, uplift, and inspire with music is invaluable, and for that, I admire you. You encourage me to never lose confidence in the power of my own gifts. even when I felt like giving up, and for that, I appreciate you.

"Go DJ, "Cause that's my DJ!"

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Chapter 1

While the warm water rolled down her skin, “This one here might be a keeper. My knees weak.” Misty thought. Kaiden had gone to work from her place that morning, again. The moment that he had left, Misty nearly crawled to the shower. She wore nothing but a satisfied smile. Her clothes were a crumpled pile underneath the kitchen table because Kaiden had decided to have Misty for breakfast.

From the moment that he had arrived at her door, days before, the chemistry between them had been pure magic. She was divorced, and he been lonely. Misty had given little thought to where their connection might end. When their eyes first locked, Kaiden had pulled her into a kind of sexy mental place that even in her wildest thoughts, Misty had ever imagined going before him.

Kaiden’s muscular body, silky chocolate skin, and velvety voice were things that Misty had not noticed, at first. Instead, she was immediately drawn to his eyes. When Misty stared at him, she felt as though her mortal soul had slid into a pool of unrepented lust. Usually shy, it was only for a brief moment that Misty allowed herself to investigate his eyes. Even then it was a short look that sent a quiver up her spine, and she broke her gaze from him quickly. Still, it was enough for her to recognize the energy that sparked a sensuous glow inside of Misty. It reminded her of something that she had forgotten for many years, the power of attraction. First Misty tilted her head, smile coyly, and then finally managed to catch herself right before she was engulfed in his magnetic gaze.

Later that night, Misty argued with herself but quickly found herself unwilling to deny her lure to him. Kaiden had seduced her, while she was barely clothed and at first glance. That was nearly a week ago. Since then, every other thought in her head had been of his caresses. Although Misty wondered how he felt about her, she had not asked. Misty had decided to merely enjoy the relentless passion between them, for now.

She leaned her long, dark hair into the spray of the shower before she pushed the head away. The heat from between her thighs had been cooled, for the moment. Misty gently ruffled her hair and began to finish her shower. Fifteen minutes later she reached to turn off the water. Then Misty opened the frosted shower door and reached for a rich burgundy towel to wrap around her.

Misty took a deep breath. Sweet-Scented steam hung thick in the air. She listened intently. The house was quiet, except for the gurgle of water sucked down the drain.

She wrapped the thick towel around her and stepped out onto the bath mat. A chill ran through her body that caused her to shiver a bit. Misty gripped the dry cloth tighter and hurriedly darted through the open bathroom door into her bedroom. She flung herself on top of the unfinished covers and sighed.

Exhausted and relaxed, Misty fleetingly doubted that she would have the energy should Kaiden return that night. Her eyes slowly closed with that question in mind. There she could see him. Kaiden's eyes looking up into hers, strong arms supported her soft brown thighs, and his face buried in her juicy fruit treasures. Misty shuddered so hard that her eyes flew open. She sat up and pulled her hands to her chest.

"Damn! I like it like that." Misty chuckled aloud.

The morning was nearly gone. Kaiden and Misty had spent most of the time having each other for "breakfast". Misty scolded herself gently, before she dropped her towel, stood up and walked over to her closet. Misty reached in and grabbed a thin black sundress and shimmied into it. She glanced over to the wall where her full-length mirror hung. Her hair still had beads of water that dripped from the ends. The dress held her curves in all the right spots. Delicately cupped at under her plump ass but loose enough to sway when she stepped. The low-cut top portion of the dress showed just the rise of her breasts. It was enough to make someone want to see a little more. She was pleased with what she saw. It was not often that she felt comfortable and natural, at the same time.

"Don't get caught up miss thing!" Misty warned herself. "Remember the first time that you thought it might be something. You went through hell trying to find yourself again. You promised yourself, from now on, it's all or nothing at all. Enjoy the moment but don't get lost in it."

Deep inside, Misty worried about the challenges of a personal connection with someone. She had already guessed long ago that love might not have been her most substantial area. The problems that sometimes came with emotions like jealousy, insecurity, and hurt had confused Misty. She had abandoned the idea of love.

Misty made a habit of running every time love got too close to her also. Now, she wondered if that would be an issue between her and Kaiden. Misty had only contemplated a forever type of love once before. That time, it had been with her ex-husband, Scott.

Misty's marriage to Scott was doomed from the start. He had told her what kind of person he was. A good deal of his conversations focused on topics such as female place and responsibilities. At that time, Misty was more concerned with his pretty boy status, than anything he had ever said to her. She soon regretted that she had.

She was less than a month from her 18th birthday when they met. Misty had disregarded the thinly veiled criticisms of women from him, at first. She overlooked the signs of the subtle hints that he did not care for equality or self-identity in women. Self-identity was a human right, as far as Misty was concerned.

Slowly, the confidence that Misty had always held tightly begin to feel strained around him. They had started to argue almost daily, over things that seemed trivial to her. He complained that her clothes revealed too much; that makeup was obscene and for whores. Scott scoffed at the notion to pamper oneself with manicures and pedicures as selfish and vain. Education was another point that they fiercely debated. He argued that women did not need school because it brought no value to the world. In other words, it was a waste of time because it was not training to please men. It did not take long before it seemed that everything about her, he despised or disapproved.

Misty's natural temper spurred her to fight back; after all, she had indulged those things before she had met him. She was on her way to get her nails done the day that they met. Misty had decided that she would break it off a few months into their tryst.

She was set to graduate high school and had been awarded a full two-year scholarship to Tennessee State University. Misty was excited and proud. It was then that a missed period alerted Misty that she was about to become a mother. She quickly decided to keep her pregnancy and leave for school in the fall, as planned.

When she informed Scott that she was with child, he quickly asserted the right to be a part of his child's life. Which meant he was not going to allow her to move state, especially not for education. Misty pleaded with him to understand that while she was happy about baby, a college education meant the world to her. Scott refused to reconsider. What she wanted or

desired was not of concern to him. He refused to support the child immediately and vowed that he would make her life a living hell if she left with his child.

Scott's campaign of terror began the same day. Misty's greatest fear was how to tell her parents about the pregnancy. After she mentioned her fear of their reaction, Scott not only rushed to say to them himself but also asked her father for her hand in marriage. Misty had no clue that he wanted a weddin. He had never asked her. Scott and her parents agreed. Misty was informed later.

Misty was furious. She was not in love with Scott. Misty had just begun to date, and Scott happened to be a guy that Misty fancied. At first, she at least found him attractive.

When Misty went to her mother, who had married her father at the tender age of 16, she received little support. Her father was no ally either. As far as her father was concerned, it was Scott's duty to create a legitimate family unit rather than expect his daughter to raise a bastard child. The concepts of love, respect, or happiness were never mentioned. The unintended pregnancy had somehow turned into a world of duty, social honor, and a marriage requirement for her.

Scott was rapidly able to gain support for his cause. It was the first of many times to come that Scott would coerce, manipulate, and attempt to regulate power over Misty. Instead of the planned break-up, she relented and married him. Her parents had withdrawn their support for her desire to be an educated woman in place of being a married family woman in front of Scott. Her mother kept repeating to Misty in private talks about her education, "Well Misty, wherever there is a will there is a way." Misty wrinkled her brow in confusion at the phrase.

Misty did try to adapt to her "new" life. She promptly found herself working two part-time jobs to support the three of them. She had given birth to a robust boy who had become the center of her world. Misty decided to try to get a degree, just the same. She hoped that at some point she would no longer have to work hard at low paid jobs. The moment that her former husband discovered that she had enrolled herself in classes against his wishes, the terror became a nightmare.

Although Misty was intelligent enough to get into college, her husband often did things to make her appear ignorant. She enrolled at a local college without the benefit of her earned scholarships. Scott was livid and continuously questioned her about her choice. Six months into the union, her first name was officially changed from Misty to "Bitch" by Scott. It was such a

regular occurrence, that the moment her son could talk, he too called her that name. In between a child, a job, a miserable home life, and school Misty struggled to keep her balance in life.

Scott had kept his promise to punish her for her defiance. When it was time for class, Misty would find that papers that she had worked on for long hours had vanished. Once Misty found ways to get around that issue, her school books would disappear. Other times, she would find her clothes shredded, soiled, or discarded. Misty's makeup and perfumes would turn up destroyed too despite the items being kept in her purse. Finally, her birth control pills began to vanish mysteriously as well. Fed up, Misty, at last, summoned the courage to confront Scott about his abusive behavior.

"Why Scott? Why would you be the one holding me back? Why is control over me so important to you? Do you think that I want to be with a passive-aggressive asshole for the rest of my life? If you had a job and were a responsible person, then you would know better. You have time for this shit, but you can't afford pampers for your child? Boy die!" Misty screamed at him one night.

"Because stupid bitch! You are my wife. You belong to me. Your job is to cook, clean, and fuck when I say so. Those are your wifely duties. Now, if you think that I am about to let you disrespect me by doing anything other than, then what I do is all your fault. I do not want other men looking at you. You are too damn pretty, as it is. Who are you trying to attract? My dad told me to get an ugly girl, but I didn't listen. She would love to me death and do what I ask. Better yet a fat one and ugly one. You don't need the education to cook, clean, or suck my dick now, do you? You have wifely duties, now get the fuck out of my face and find a book that teaches you that! Better yet, get the Bible and learn your place!" Scott yelled.

"Scott, I know that you did not just lie on Jesus like that. First, the Bible says that it is you not me, that is supposed to be the provider. You don't have a problem with me working for the money; you want to control every dime. There is not a bill in this place including the rent that you pay. Second, the Bible says to train your child in the way that it should go and to honor your parents. You think it is right to teach our son to call me bitches and whores. Then it says that if a man does not work, then he should not eat. Again, you have no problem sending me to the welfare for benefits for you to eat with. Finally, you might want to read Ephesians 5:25," For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave his life for her (KJV)." The last I checked, what you are doing would not be considered love in any fashion. So,

don't you dare come at me with that Jesus told you to do it nonsense? You refuse to let me even go to church because you did not want your son raised in hypocrisy, remember? God is a man card to play. Don't get me started on what is wrong with calling any woman ugly or fat either. Women are attractive to you, or they are not, she is either thick or not. I have yet to meet an ugly or fat woman. Trust me, plenty of people have said that you are a waste of height and light-skin. Your mind is ugly, and your daddy is ashamed that you're a selfish bum. You are much more bitch than I am. So. you can cook, and clean, and go fuck yourself when you are done." Misty replied.

When Misty came to, after confronting Scott, she lay on the hardwood of the dining area floor. Her clothes soaked with pine scented fluid that stung her nostrils. Misty forced herself to sit upright through blurred vision. She cringed when Misty heard the angry squeal of car tires howl from outside. She hid her face when she felt a chubby little hand rub her arm.

"You got an ouchie mama, get up. Get up bitch; you got blood." Her toddler son said.

In the middle of the night, Scott returned to the house. Misty sat up surprised by the bright bedroom light and a hulking figure that towered at the edge of the bed. Her heart raced when Scott flung himself, fully clothed on the space in bed beside her. At once, she rolled her back to him and curled up.

The two loud thumps on the floor caused her to glance towards the sound. Misty saw Scott's dirty shoe hand landed near her red travel bag. She had packed earlier when she saw the bruises left from the bucket of unclean mop water that Scott had used to slug her. Misty frowned.

She swallowed hard after Misty heard a sharp zipped noise. A solid odor of car oil and funky sweat brought a swig of vomit to the back of her throat. She listened hard in the dark because Scott was unusually quiet until he firmly grasped the edge of Misty's short nightgown. Misty felt the tears roll sideways across her cheeks and sealed lips when Scott yanked her bed clothes up to her waist.

A tempting urge to turn around and punch him gripped her. Before Misty could think the thought through, searing pain ripped through her private part. Like a rabid, untrained dog, Scott had penetrated her and humped forcefully from the side. Although Misty could not see his face, she imagined a threatening sneer on his face, while he took what he wanted from her.

After what seemed like an eternity to Misty, Scott whimpered and dumped a load of semen inside of her. It was the first bit of moisture that she had felt throughout her ordeal. The

salty fluid stung her dry and torn walls. Once Scott shriveled up and withdrew, he sighed loudly and then rolled away from her. Finally, he reached out and switched off the lamp. The comfort of total blackness hid the shame and disgust on her face.

“Maybe I should bring home a prostitute to show you how to react when you with a man. You pretty, young, and dumb. Next time don’t lay there like a sack of garbage that I’m sticking my dick in”. Scott complained.

Misty felt her spirit withdraw. A deep depressing fog swirled about her daily for a year. Misery reminded her constant fate. Soon she found herself pregnant again. The first child was in pull-ups still. The moment that Scott learned that the child would be a girl, he began to beam with pride. Misty, however, sank into more profound despair.

While she was ecstatic about the birth of her baby girl to come, she quickly realized that Scott had already damaged their son. He treated the child as if he was a bag to punch. People were the same as shoes to him, they had a function or purpose, but that was it. There was never a genuine interest in a family, on Scott’s part, that Misty could see. Her precious baby was about to be born into a house of oppression, abuse, fear, and hate for anything female.

In a scant few months after they had met, Scott had managed to criticize and offend every friend that she had. Even his mother had been openly critical of Misty. She had made it plain that had Scott married a “Godly” woman then he would have been happier. Scott’s mother appeared to have a penchant for protection of her son, regardless of the issue. By then, Misty was too ashamed to tell her parents about the abuse. She reasoned that they might feel guilty that they had insisted that she marry him. Misty felt isolated and alone.

It was two children, eight mistresses, and a couple of random baby mama’s that she never knew existed before she snapped. Misty packed her bags and left with her children in the middle of the night. She left everything except the clothes on their backs, a paycheck, and important papers like identification, shot records, birth certificates, and social security cards for them. The children were so young that Misty had secretly hoped that they would one day forget all of it.

Misty went to her parents’ house and asked her mother to stay for just a few days, and she agreed. She called the one girlfriend that had always appeared to be unbothered and even defensive at times of Scott’s attitude. The woman encouraged her to keep her man. Misty did not want her friend to worry for her and the kids. She pleaded with her friend to keep quiet about

her whereabouts, should Scott reach out to her and ask. A week later, Scott contacted Misty's associate and then showed up at her parents' home.

Misty had just moved into a new place the night before. Again, she called her associate to let her know that she and the kids were fine. A few weeks later, Misty had furnished the place. Misty called that same friend to invite her to a house warming party and given her the address.

A few days later, while reconnecting with old high-school friends at their home, Misty thought she saw a picture of her and her two youngest children flash across their television. Immediately, she called her mother. Misty burst into tears when his mother reported that the police and fire department were looking for her. Scott had mystically found out about her new address, gone to it, and burned her house down to the ground. Misty left her old friends' home in shock.

Scott was arrested with gasoline on his clothing, at the scene. Misty went to a Domestic Violence Shelter. Despite her refusal to talk to Scott, he continued to manage to glean information about her location and life. Scott continually damaged her property, cars, and caused her to lose employment. The harassment continued, even after their divorce. He married his ninth mistress which he had gotten pregnant, while still married to Misty. That couple was on kid number two.

The divorce had been messy, and Scott had done his best to drag Misty through the mud. At every turn, he invented some new and incredible accusation. Meanwhile, he wanted no contact with his children, unless it involved a chance for Misty to be present too. In the process of finally taking a stand against Scott, Misty confronted him.

"You did all that, and I still don't want your ass. Now what?" Misty asked.

"Honestly Misty, I love you so much that I been fucking that ugly ass so-called friend of yours. She is so desperate for a man that she still hasn't figured it out. I only go over there to find out about you." Scott said.

Misty felt her chest deflate in devastation. She had suspected that it was someone close but to her, but that it was one of her best friends was too much. Scott's affair with Misty's "friend" and even though he had remarried, showed that he still desperately wanted Misty. In Misty's mind, the news finally confirmed a real image of the kind of person that Scott was inside.

For her children's sake, Misty had tried to think of her and Scott as two people who valued different things after she had left him. He seemed to want a tightly control homelife with an utterly subservient and brainless mate. She wanted education, culture, romance, flair, style, and freedom. Misty craved the kind of energy drew soulmates together effortlessly. At last, after hearing him brag about bedding her former friend she saw him as something far worse than before. Misty settled on the idea that Scott was a broken man and a heartless fool. It was then that she had learned a valuable life lesson: "Broken people tend to break other people."

In a moment of temporary insanity, Misty picked up a pole that had lain nearby. She bashed Scott across the head. Misty pounded the metal stick on the floor near where he lay in a fetal position as he howled.

"If you ever come near me again, I will kill you. One day someone will love me for me. I will not give up who I am, for the enslaved garbage you want me to become. Now try me, and I will do you in broad daylight while holding a neon green banner saying that I did it. My definition of a man is everything you are not. Maybe I should have brought home a real nigga to show you how to fuck." Misty said calmly.

Instantly, Kaiden exploded into the front of her thoughts. The hell that she had experienced with Scott turns into a tiny file thrust far back in time immediately, inside Misty's mind. His sweet and tender kiss and warm smile were like sunshine to her. Kaiden was her peaceful moment after years wandering through a terrible storm.

"Kaiden, my sexy, dark brown, muscle-bound, soft-tongued, certified magical beast, how did you get here? I love what we do, but I can feel my heart beat again because of you," Misty moaned.

Her right hand moved up to her chest. Misty could physically feel the thump of her heart under her skin and below her breast. The warmth that spread through her body at the thought of Kaiden was intoxicating. She stood quietly and allowed the pleasant energy to flow through her.

Suddenly, her mind began to race, and the images of each moment that they had shared started to flow faster. The memory of the fire in Kaidens' eyes when he stared into hers. The feel of their tangled flesh melded into one fluid entity. The sound of his raspy voice as he whispered her name along with the high-pitched whimper of hers when she cried out his name in pleasure.

The memory of Kaiden by the feel of his broad back beneath her clawing fingertips caused her hands to tremble. His sweet and spicy scents of cologne and their sweat stuck inside her nostrils. The decadent taste of his skin lingered near the back of Misty's throat. Misty could no longer deny the pleasure of that his touch brought. Misty shoulders dropped slightly. Her breaths grew quick as fear settled inside her. Without any doubt, they were twin flames.

"Damn, I'm supposed to go home. Kaiden. I do not want to be the source of your pain, but I gave my word." Misty wailed.

Slowly, her breaths returned to an average pace, and her chest rose and fell slower. Misty's hand roamed up past her neck, past her ears, and finally up to her forehead. She gently massaged her temples to ease a headache that had begun to form. A bit later, Misty, at last, heaved a sigh.

"I made a promise to go home, but that was before I met you. Now, how I am supposed to walk away from the first person who moved my emotions into forever?" Misty mumbled.

Chapter 2

"Mr. Base! Excuse me, sir, Mr. Base!" Mr. Kirk yelled.

Thomas walked across the school lot towards the metal detectors. He groaned when he heard his name but smiled. Thomas turned his head in the direction that an unknown voice had come. An older man with a greyed afro limped to him on a cane.

The man's skin looked weathered, deeply creased lines covered his forehead. The scowl on his face made him appear to be in pain. He shuffled to Thomas as quickly as he could. Once he had made his way to Thomas, he let out a long breath.

"Yes sir, how can I help you?" Thomas asked.

“You left a message ‘bout my one of my youngins’ showed up to school drunk. I’m B.D Kirk. I’m not her daddy, but I mess with her mama sometimes. I told her that you called me, but she had to go to work.

I sat the girl down yesterday evening because she comes home crying. I was finna ask her what the problem was, but she was sniffing too hard. I just went on and laid down. When I got up this morning, she was gone. I ma try to help see to it that she where she supposed to be. I’m crazy ‘bout her mama and the kids. Now, what’s going on?” Mr. Kirk gushed angrily.

“I don’t know. Look, sir, I am a teacher. I have no idea what is wrong with these kids! The school does not allow me to check them outright. I am tired of meeting parent like this for the first time. What’s wrong is we teachers need support. We need parents to show up. I appreciated those that do. Those kids do better because they know someone cares.

We need for them to help us, help their kids, and our future. I rise up to you coming out on her behalf, but the child has a drinking problem. I’m not saying you did nothing wrong; I’m just saying that we can’t keep losing these babies to bullshit.” Thomas stated.

“I hear you. Back in my day, somebody would have whipped her little ass, sent her home to her mama. Then she would have got another whipping for getting the first one. It wasn’t anybody taking no mouth and attitude off these kids. Now, they got cell phones, laptops, and all this here new stuff and no damn direction, respect, or common sense!” Mr. Kirk said.

Thomas listened while the man went on about everything from slavery to chain gangs. He squared his shoulders, closed his eyes, and took a deep breath rather than interrupt the man. Still, Thomas needed a moment to keep his peace. When he opened his eyes, he saw a young girl that looked a lot like the student they discussed. He blinked several times and leaned to the side.

“There she goes right there,” Thomas said.

Mr. Kirk eyes followed in the direction that Thomas’s head had nodded. He clutched his cane tighter and squinted. The girl walked, with a quick pace across the field, and then darted into the school doors. The men turned and looked at each for a moment. Abruptly, Mr. Kirk nodded at Thomas, threw his hands up, and limped away.

“Where are you going?” Thomas asked.

“You a busy man and I’m retired. ‘Spect you got a class of children waiting. Thank you for your time, my brother. We much appreciate what you do. Let me get out your way: got to see a man about a mule.” Mr. Kirk mumbled.

Thomas rolled his eyes and shrugged his shoulders. He looked around the area that surrounded the school, once more. The city had come through and boarded up most of the vacant homes, and others marked for demolition. Houses that were sellable, now easily identified and awaited families. The usually unattended fields were cut and cleaned. The rebirth of Detroit was well on its way.

The liquor bottles and trash that used to flow freely in the wind no longer littered his every step. For Thomas, in that fleeting second, an idea that had seemed so far away had seemed closer to reality. The combined efforts to have a positive impact on the city showed. Thomas sighed and then grinned.

"Won't he do it!" Thomas exclaimed.

Thomas said a few words to anyone while he made his way down the long corridors to the band room. He had expected to see the students just strolling in class, on their phones and texting up a storm. When he opened the door, the majority of his first-hour course were huddled up by his desk. They watched one single phone, together. He could not make out their conversations.

"Good morning, class," Thomas said.

"What up doe, my nig...umm, Mr. Base" Blink said.

Thomas cut his eyes across the room. He shook his head back and forth. Finally, he let go of that breath with a giant whoosh. Thomas waved for the students to sit down in the respective chairs.

"I can't short the ones who showed up! Let's GO!" Thomas said.

He watched patiently while the students adjusted their seats, sheet music, and instruments. They had been working on a new song for two months. The Battle of the High School Bands approached quickly. A good performance might mean scholarship dollars, for some of them. Thomas had already decided, that ready they would be.

Thomas felt his cell phone signal a message in his pocket. He pulled it out and touched the screen. It showed a text from his sister Misty.

It read: Made it back safely, Love you.

Thomas replied: Thanks, I love you too.

"Okay people, being the best takes practice. Put your digital devices away, grab your instruments, and move out the parking lot. Leave your sheet music on the stands. I want shirts

tucked in and belts on your waistline. I refuse to look at anyone's drawers today." Thomas bellowed.

He stood back and quietly watched his charges carry out his requests. Once the students made their way to the heavy metal blue doors that led to the practice field, Thomas followed closely behind them. Even though the sun shined brightly, an early morning chill still hung in the air. Thomas cupped his hand over his brow to shield his eyes and smiled at the children as they neatly lined up.

Chapter 3

Kaiden pulled into a parking space in the lot at work and then put his car in park. His smile was as broad as the rays of the sun. Kaiden leaned his head back against the rest and closed his eyes. He could still taste the delicious pineapple-like flavor of Misty on his lips. Just then, his thoughts were interrupted by a knock on his car window.

Kaiden jumped and scowled. His nosy co-worker had his hands cupped against the glass pane. He put his finger on the power button and rolled down the window.

"What's up, man?" Kaiden asked.

"Oh wee boy, I saw that little chocolate hottie you been all goofy about, damn dawg. She got them pretty ass lips. I know you are banging the brakes off that bruh! I watched her walk when she came to the airport parking lot the other day. Man, I'm telling you she walks like she's making a baby in them damn heels. I bet she could suck the chrome off a Chevy too." The man jested.

Kaiden frowned. He had just left Misty. She had said nothing about an airport. Furthermore, he did not like this guy. Kaiden knew his co-worker was a secret hater.

"First of all, bruh, that is some disrespectful shit right there. You married so why are you even looking? Let alone worried about what she might be like in bed? Approach me like that again and catch a pimp slapped brand-new flavor in your mouth. I'm grown. Stay out my business and hers. We ain't that kind of friends." Kaiden said.

"Man, you tripping about some ass that you just met? On me? Have we been up in here forever? What you sprung? Oh, you in love now, over a little bit of wet-wet on your dick? Calm down player; I was kidding. I was just saying; she is hot."

“If you would like to be still able to talk, you won’t say shit else disrespectful about my woman. I can get another job easily, but it’s going to take a whole lot of surgery to fix your mouth. You got a mama, wife, and two daughters. You should know better than to talk about any woman that way. Grow the hell up and get your ass off my door. That clock isn’t gone be the only thing that gets punched the fuck out. Say something else.”

Kaiden’s co-worker raised his hands and stepped back from the car. He watched Kaiden get out and slam the vehicle door. A scowl tightened Kaiden’s face. His jaw muscles twitched visibly, and his co-workers dropped his head. Kaiden said nothing as he glared at the man’s back when he trotted away. The noon sun beamed down on his brow and beads of sweat formed around his nose. Kaiden was furious. He straightened his jacket and brushed off his khaki pants.

“Damn, she got secrets and shit already? Catching a plane isn’t something you forget to mention now. I can’t get played again; my heart can’t take this shit. Maybe it’s a good reason she didn’t tell me? Maybe he saw somebody else? If I ask her, she might think I’m prying into her business. She could still have a woman low-key. Maybe even another guy. I came to work happy, and this fool almost ruined it just that quick.” Kaiden pondered aloud.

Kaiden managed to punch in, get his truck, and hit the road. The hours flew past. He had just pulled up to a rest area when he heard his cell phone ring. Hastily, Kaiden snatched it from the dashboard and saw Misty’s number. Despite himself, he smiled before he answered.

“Hello beautiful, how is your day going?” Kaiden said.

“Hey love, it’s going well and yours?” Misty asked.

“Better now, but listen, someone that I work with saw you at the airport. Are you planning on taking a trip without me?”

Misty held the phone, and her eyes become wide as mason jar tops. A million thoughts raced through her mind. She opened her mouth, but nothing came out. Misty gulped hard and stammered.

“What? Misty asked.

Kaiden grimaced. He was sure that she had heard him. Kaiden’s gut clenched at her visible stall for time to think. He cleared his throat.

“Maybe he was mistaken. Anyway, I wanted to know if you felt like maybe coming over to my place later. I would love for you to see where I live. Maybe we could have dinner, talk, whatever you want to do? Are you game?” Kaiden asked.

“Ummm, yeah dinner sounds great. Text me the address and time, and I’ll be there. Should I bring anything?” Misty inquired.

“No, just yourself.”

“Ok, text me the info. I just called to say “hi”. I have something that I need to do. I’ll call you when I’m on the way. Talk you to soon!”

Misty abruptly pushed the end button on her phone. She slid down her living room door where she had stood when she called him, straight to the floor. Misty’s temples began to throb immediately. Her heart banged against her chest.

“Fuuucckkk” she whispered slowly.

Someone had seen her when she returned from Detroit and squealed. She was horrified. Misty had not thought that she might have to explain her brief absence. Misty had no idea how to tell him anything about the real her. Notably, the parts that she preferred to keep confidential.

“Oh my goodness, I don’t want to start with secrets, but I am not ready to share everything thing about me with this guy. This isn’t his business. We aren’t married, it’s just supposed to be fun. Damn.” Misty wailed.

Just that quickly, a random busy body had changed her mood. Now, instead of her bathed in the glow of all the extra naughty things that Kaiden and Misty had shared, she was worried. The date for that night was set, and she had already decided to show up. Her body craved him, even amidst her hesitation.

After a while, Misty pulled herself from the ground. Her legs were unsteady. Slowly, Misty took a deep breath, blew it out, and smirked. She had made no plans to explain herself to him. Misty quickly realized that she did not have to.

“Kaiden is your first piece in a long while, don’t panic silly girl. You got his ass felling some type of way too; that’s all.” Misty giggled.

The rest of the day went by quickly after she dressed and left for errands. Misty had been on the road back to her place before she realized that the sun was about to go down. She pulled into her driveway, shut the car off, and turned her head slightly to the east. Misty gazed into one of the most beautiful sights that she could recall, in a long while. The soft orange glow of the sun surrounded by shades of light blue, teal, yellow, and rose hues behind puffs of white and grey clouds floated past slowly. Daylight had packed up to go shine elsewhere for a bit and cleared the stage for the enchantment of the night.

Misty grabbed her purse from the seat, gathered her wits, and opened the car door. A subtle and warm wind swirled gently around her face and neck. Misty paused for a few seconds to appreciate how normal it felt to her. Almost immediately afterward, Kaiden entered her thoughts once again.

Misty stepped out of the vehicle and closed her door. Kaiden expected to see her in a few hours. She still had not decided how she would handle his inquiries if more came. Misty did not want to lead him on with fabrications and stories of ninja monkeys. She rolled her eyes to herself and went inside her house to prepare for her date.

Ten minutes later, she heard her cell phone. Misty was in the middle of pulling her hair into a tight bun, in the bathroom mirror. In her haste to answer, she knocked down a container of hairpins. They scattered across the tiled floor, and Misty grimaced. She raced to the couch where she had last laid her phone.

“Hello” Misty gasped on the fourth ring.

“Hey, did you get my text? Are you still going to come? How was your day?” Kaiden gushed at once.

“Wow, let’s see. Yes, of course, and much better now.”

“My bag, I did throw a lot of questions out there huh? I think that I am excited about the night with you?”

“Why? It’s just me coming through for a quick bite to eat.”

Misty heard a swift gasp. She pulled the phone down and looked at the screen. Misty smiled. Quickly, she put the phone back to her ear.

“Kaiden, is everything alright?” Misty asked.

“Huh? Oh yeah, sure. I mean dinner and some conversation, exactly what I had in mind. I won’t hold up your evening, in case you have other things to do, people to see, places to go...” Kaiden trailed off.

Misty held the phone quietly. The long awkward hesitation seemed to go on until it became uncomfortable. Misty put her index finger over her lips, which was a habit when she was in deep thought. Finally, Misty said something.

“Are you sure that I don’t need to bring anything,” Misty asked.

“At the moment, I can’t think of anything. You are more than enough.” Kaiden responded.

“Awww, that is the sweetest thing to say. I will see you in a while then.”

“I look forward to it.”

“My pleasure, gotta run. Bye for now.”

Misty ended her call and tossed her phone back on the couch. She decided to leave her hair and make-up for last. Instead, Misty walked to her closet and pulled out a rolling overnight bag that was empty. She unzipped the main compartment and sat it on the bed.

“Now, I need my hottest lingerie set, some lace thigh-hi’s, a pair of stilettos, a robe, silk scarf for my hair, that new perfume from the mall, and toiletry bag. While I am it, I best grab those thigh restraints, baby oil gel, a bag of hard fruit candy, and a mix-tape. Probably should pack a skirt set for tomorrow too. Oh yeah, I can’t forget that one green and gold Mu-mu dress to cover up with, that is a must-have.” Misty said aloud.

Half an hour later, Misty was packed. Her previous giddiness to spend time with Kaiden had returned with a passion. Mistys' thoughts were focused entirely on the adventure that laid ahead with her admirer. Inside, she felt as if she was higher than a cloud and sizzled inside at merely the thought of another lovely evening with him.

Chapter 4

Thomas had just finished up with his class. He was ready to dismiss them and send them off to learn other subjects. Thomas blew the whistle and the students scattered from the lot and headed in the school. He took a moment to try to make sense of his morning, so far.

Not only had the young lady who had been torn-down drunk the day before in class shown up clean and participated, but the child had also made no rude remarks, which was highly unusual for her. Additionally, some of the boys that had bounced class frequently had shown up too. Thomas scratched his head.

“No accounting for what works with these kids, I’ll tell you that. When think this might not be worth the effort...boom, they come through and try to do right. I’ll take it though.”

Thomas mumbled.

As usual, Thomas heard someone yelling for him before he could step foot inside the building. Thomas looked over his shoulder and saw a stylishly dressed man walk towards him.

The pace of the man's steps indicated that his business with Thomas was important. He squared his giant shoulders, and the corners of his smile evened out.

"Excuse, Mr. Base. My name is Jeff Whitley, and I have heard some amazing things about you. I understand that you have taught music for more than 25 years. It was made plain to me that you love what you do. I won't take up much of your time, but I would like to offer you a position as the principle of the Soul Joy School of Performing Arts. Do you have any interest?" Mr. Whitley asked.

Thomas' eyelids fluttered hastily, and he shook his head in skepticism. Beads of dampness had begun to show on his brow. He took his handkerchief from his suit pocket and then wiped his face and hands. Once Thomas realized that he had gripped the cloth so tightly that vapors could not escape his fingers, he shoved the material back into his pocket.

"What is that and who does it help exactly.?" Thomas asked.

Mr. Whitley took a deep breath before he spoke. The man understood that Thomas would be the best choice but that he had often shown a vested interest in the lives of his students. He had less than a minute to pitch his elevator speech to Thomas. Mr. Whitley could not afford to waste any time.

"Well sir, I can walk and talk with you to tell you more. It is a music school for Urban Children that is currently under construction. The building will be brand new, but the concept is not. Fine arts have been proven to enhance lives worldwide in many ways. Detroit once had a school for it, and now we don't. Some donors and grantees got together to put one back in place. Our problem is that before the doors open, we need a solid leader in the Principal's chair. We would like for that person to be you. The funds are from private sponsors, grants, and donations but admission to the school will be open to the public. Now, I am sure we can come up with a very comfortable salary if you accept." Mr. Whitley beamed.

The man reached into his breast pocket and pulled out a sealed envelope. Mr. Whitley passed the packet to Thomas. Thomas looked at the covering and saw that it had been pre-addressed to him. Mr. Whitey held his breath when he saw Thomas tear it open.

Thomas unfolded a typed offer of employment. His eyes scanned down to the page and stopped. He wiped his forehead with the back of his hand and cleared his throat simultaneously. The salary offered amounted yearly was the same as what it usually took him five years to earn.

"Sir, if you need more time to think about it?" Mr. Whitley said.

“Yes,” Thomas said.

“Well, I can leave my card and come back in a few days. Is that enough time?”

“I said, yes I will take the position...on one condition.”

“What is that, sir?”

“That we are going to make every effort to have a positive impact on these kids. I grew up here, and the last thing these kids need is to be used or let down. I get how the world works. I am grateful for the opportunity. I need for you, and whoever is backing this project to understand upfront, these kids are not data, statistics, or figures for your charts and graphs. They are people. I will not stand in the way of figuring out how to best help them, but I won't stand for or help with nobody playing them to the left either. They are going to need support in ways that corporate America might not understand from just charts and records. We are going to need all of that. Now the question is do you still want to do this, or do you need time to think it over?”

“No sir, I completely get it. Look, all bullshit aside I'm tired of watching new jails go up, and schools get closed too. I have friends over in the York Woods area and the Matrix Hub that wants to repurpose abandoned properties for the youth. I assured the supporters that their funds would go to enhance an underserved area. There is a movement to restore access to both Fine and Perfuming Arts to Detroit. It is too much talent here to ignore. My personal goal is to see that every structure that can be used to better this city is used to do just that. I heard that you were the man to help accomplish that goal when it came to youth. It appears that you have made quite an impression on talent scouts for colleges. In fact, that is how your name came up. So, I accept your request, both personally and professionally.”

Thomas grinned faintly when the man extended his side to shake. He paused and then wrapped his massive fingers around the almost feminine hand extended to him. Thomas guessed that the guy had never done anything more push a pencil and had never known hard labor. Still, he was hopeful to see the pencil pushing in a direction that might further protect the city's youth and cultivate their dreams.

“Thank you, Whitley,” Thomas said.

Mr. Whitley suppressed a scream when Thomas engulfed his hand. Thomas had a sturdy grip. He was anxious to leave since he had done what he had come to do. Mr. Whitley nodded to assure Thomas that he would be in touch before briskly walking toward the rows of parked

vehicles. Thomas looked on to ensure Mr. Whitley's safety until he crossed the lot and out of his sight. The corner of the letter clutched tight in his fingers.

"Won't he do it?" Thomas exclaimed.

Chapter 5

After Misty dressed, she took one more look at her overall appearance. She had finally managed to pull her thick hair up into a messy bun with a few wispy curls that hung on either side of her face. Misty had chosen a sleek black catsuit. It had a discreet open lace crotch. It could not be seen unless she wanted it that way. She decided to drape a calf-length, wheat colored wrap around her delicate shoulders. The cover matched Misty's open-toed pumps. She decided on a multi-colored natural stone necklace set and a Louis V satchel for her accessories.

Misty walked away from the mirror and into the hall where she picked up her overnight bag. She heaved a long sigh. Misty had several emotions that seem to swirl and mix inside of her. Excitement hung in the air around her entire body like a cape. Misty locked up the house and strolled out to her car. She opened the door swung her bag into the driver's side and shimmed into her seat. At last, Misty had buckled in, started the ignition, put her vehicle in drive and backed out of the driveway. Her car radio kept her company like a much-needed calming device until she arrived.

It had not taken long to find Kaiden's house. She double-checked the address that he had sent to her cell phone. Once Misty was sure that she was where she wanted to be, she parked. The lawn was neat, which is the first thing that Misty noticed.

She pulled down her visor and gave herself a glance in the mirror, once more. Misty loved when her lips were kissable soft and shiny. She opened the car door and grabbed her bag. Misty smoothed out her wrap, as she exited the car and headed to the door.

Misty sashayed from his driveway up to Kaiden's front door. The doorbell glowed, and she trembled inside when she reached to push it. The musical notes had barely reached her ears before the door swung open. Misty smiled when Kaiden looked in her eyes and turned his arm to usher her inside.

When Misty stepped in, she was surprised to find the place was tidy and impeccably furnished. A large leather sofa covered with enhancing pillows rested a few feet from the front

door. Enormous, polished, mahogany colored oak tables accented the couch. Her heels sank into the plush Berber carpet.

“Glad you made it, please make yourself comfortable and welcome to my home,” Kaiden said.

“Thank you for inviting me,” Misty replied.

A piquant aroma wafted from the through the house. Misty suddenly remembered that she had skipped lunch to run errands. Misty tummy rumbled gently. The smell made her mouth water. Just as Misty parted her lips to share her thoughts with Kaiden, he leaned in and sensually brushed his lips against hers.

Misty let go of her baggage and wound both her hands around Kaiden’s waist. Time stood still while they nurtured and tasted each other’s lips. Misty was the first to break away. She rested her plump cheek on his chest and sighed. She felt as though her insides turned into the fluid fire under his skillful caress, every time.

“Kaiden, that was quite a hello. I think we best save some of this energy for dinner. Something smells incredible. Do you need any help in the kitchen?” Misty asked.

“That was quite a response. What I need is for you to have a seat, put your feet up, relax and let me get you a drink. I need to check on a few things in the kitchen.” Kaiden said.

Misty nodded agreement while she reluctantly unwound her arms. She waited and watched Kaiden walk away. His broad shoulder muscles rippled with unlimited power just beneath his pressed button-up shirt. Kaiden’s slacks were creased and fit well enough to see the bulge of his thighs when he moved. Misty clutched her necklace and held in a naughty groan.

Misty snatched her bag up from the floor and walked over to the couch. She slid her things aside the sofa, took off her wrap and folded it and then laid her shawl on the armrest. Misty checked her clothes before finally sitting and crossing her legs. She had begun to wring her hands nervously, while she waited.

Finally, Misty had begun to look around. Pictures of Kaiden and what she assumed to be his family hung on the closest wall. A collage of important African-American men and women graced the adjoining wall. The spacious home had a large open doorway that led to a formal dining room. It was tastefully decorated, as well. Misty saw that the table was set correctly, which included a fresh bouquet of ivory and peach blossom flowers and votive candles on each end.

“He has good taste, tastes good, and has amazing tasting skills, not bad Misty, not bad,” Misty told herself.

“Everything good out there?” Kaiden asked.

Chapter 6

Thomas had gone from a job to another before he realized that he had a moment alone. The day had gone well. Thomas was grateful about the sudden uptick in attendance and willingness to learn from his students. Although he did not know exactly why things had changed, he could not help but think it was nothing short of the work of God.

“If those kids keep this up, there will be more opportunities for them in the future, A good deal of these babies are college material. They deserve a chance. Lord knows they need as many positive advantages that they can get.” Thomas sighed.

He had not been home long enough to cook dinner. However, his house was in pristine condition, as usual. Thomas disliked clutter and confusion. To some, it was a flaw, to others a model to follow. Either way, Thomas had a personal distaste for messiness. He laid back on his comfy chair in the front room and peacefully took a short nap. He had less than three hours before he was scheduled at the club that night.

Thomas taught his love of music to the audience that he cared about the most, urban youth. He was always a bit irritated when people referred to his students as lazy, petty, or treated them as if they had no potential from birth. Much to his dismay, he had heard most of the negativity comment that might be made about the kids and learned to shrug it off, after a while. His appreciation for naysayers was zero. Especially, if their only reasons were skin color or to flaunt stolen wealth from the sweat of other races.

He had grown up with two little sisters. Misty had mostly been fierce, methodically, intelligent, and a tad bit mentally twisted. Their baby sister was crafty, resourceful, helpful at times, and learning to cope with life without as much guidance as Thomas thought she could have benefitted. They had lost their mother years before. Thomas had tried his best to be an excellent example of a man, whenever he could. Still, his sisters had turned into sturdy young women with some sense of their mother’s values too.

He too had faced many challenges in life. It had not been the easiest of roads or loads to carry for Thomas. His had cued in at a very early age on a universal coping skill, which was a desire to make others happy through music. He loved to see faces that smiled, people that danced, clapped and snapped their fingers. Whatever the worry was, in their personal lives, for a moment at least, melody and harmony had the power to bring some peace.

Lately, the industry had changed. There had been a time when music held a much deeper meaning. A disturbing trend where women were treated as objects, men were viewed as targets to be shot at, and babies were burdens or collateral damage had begun to flow freely. Thomas could never hate music, but like many others, he questioned what the purpose of some of the negative messages. On the other hand, Thomas recognized that creativity came in many forms. More importantly, he understood that was the reality for many of the artists.

Thomas woke up just in time to get his shower, change, and head out to the Base Unit Lab. Despite a longer than usual winter for Detroit, the club was packed almost every night of the week. Through trial and error, a chosen few had managed to create an atmosphere where music could be heard and enjoyed on any occasion. Thomas looked forward to the evening with a smile.

Nearly every time he stepped into his position in the booth, something close to enchantment happened. His gift of music seemed amplified with an encouraging vibration that captivated crowds. Music was in many ways therapies for the soul, he thought. It had the power to make one cry, sing, dance, bring back memories, and create new ones. Thomas loved his craft.

Thomas pulled up early and immediately entered the building. It took him a short while to set up. After many years of being a disc jockey, he had created a specific routine that was scientific and reliable, in almost every situation. Thomas had worked hard towards the dream he had. Now, he got to witness one of his favorite dreams replay with different crowds regularly.

Thomas stepped down from the DJ stand and headed to the bar. He had given up alcohol for the most part in place of healthier choices. Especially, when he worked. A female bartender approached him quickly.

“What will you have?” she asked.

“Do you have any Red Bull, if not I will have ice water please,” Thomas replied.

“Sure thing, one Red Bull is coming up.”

Thomas reached in his pocket to pay for his drink. The bartender came back and sat a glass aside from the can of his beverage. She waved Thomas off and refused to take his money. Thomas smirked and said, “Thank You”, before he walked away towards the booth.

Thomas had just warmed up when he looked. Across the dance floor, under the strobe lights, he noticed a familiar face emerge. Thomas felt the air thicken as he tried to breathe in. Classy had come. After he had left her bed the night before, Thomas had wondered if she had a genuine interest in him as a man, or just as beastly love-machine for a moment.

Either way, he was glad to see her. Thomas had not ever been close enough to notice the sparkle in her eyes and the beautiful tune of her sultry laugh. She had been by his side when he received the offer for a position that he had earned for a long career. Thomas recalled that she had seemed truly happy for him. It had been a long time since he been in the company of such a beautiful woman. Thomas felt a chill run down his spine.

Thomas saw her waved discreetly and then walk over to a bar stool and seated herself.

He nodded to her to let her know that he had seen her. Thomas patted his foot and slipped his headphones over his ears. For Thomas, all was well, the moment he took control of the wheels of steel for a while. He grabbed the microphone.

“Hey party people, this is your man, The Mixologist Dee Jay Base! We about to celebrate life while we get our function on! I want to take a moment to welcome all the grown and sexy people that love a good party. Alright now, let’s get it!” Thomas said.

Within moments, the dance floor had several people in lines on the dance floor. Thomas rocked the bass speakers with his special mix of hustle music. The hustle was like an urban exercise group dance. It was fun, and people who had not done any of the variations before hung in the back and learned the steps. It amazed some patrons to see such a large crowd of different people get together and perform the same steps, together. That was just one of the many good things about music.

Chapter 7

Misty heard the metal clink and then a gentle hum of a machine. She stiffened and leaned forward. Misty was curious about what Kaiden had done in the kitchen. She slipped her feet from her heels, stood up, and crept in the direction that his voice had come. After she passed through the vast formal dining area, she rounded a corner and saw him.

Much like most of his home, the kitchen was tidy save for the items that he seemed to need right then. Misty leaned against the doorway, while Kaiden dropped ice into a blender and then turn to measure Tequila in a cup. Fresh limes lay sliced in a bowl nearby. Misty wondered what drink he had decided to make.

She eased closer, just as Kaiden poured the green and yellow concoction from the pitcher into a glass with rimmed with white granules. She licked her lips absently, in anticipation. Misty moved closer, Kaiden swung around and extended a lead crystal glass. Misty gasped and then giggled.

“I’m not used to other people being in my home, but you can’t creep up on me either. Your perfume floats through the air, and you give off an energy that I cannot ignore, even when you sleep. Taste this. I want to get this just right.” Kaiden said.

Misty pulled the goblet to her mouth and dabbed the edge of the glass with her tongue sensually. Afterward, she sipped the pineapple and lime fluid. The sweet sugar crystals melted in the flow of the strong liquor. She smirked and nodded.

“You like that?” Kaiden asked.

“It’s awesome, thank you. Where is your drink.” Misty asked.

“Well, I figured a woman like you would like something fruity but strong. However, I am going to enjoy a couple of shots of Hennessy and twist up.”

“Oh”

“Is that a problem.”

“Well no, I’m at your house. Do you.”

“I like that.”

“What’s for dinner?”

“See now you are worrying, I made plans, relax and let me do this. Please, just let me surprise you.”

“Okay, but I don’t know how to sit around and do nothing. Especially, when it comes to cooking.”

“You might have to learn to share some things. I’m not your average guy.”

“I see. It’s almost scary. Like you just walked out of a fairy-tale I made up and became real.”

“So, I am just your little dream huh? I don’t know if that’s good or bad?”

Misty moved closer and kissed Kaiden’s soft, plump lips passionately. When she broke away, Misty could see that Kaiden was turned on. The muscles under his shirt rippled as he heaved breathlessly. She placed a hand on his heart and looked him in the eyes. The scent of his cologne invaded her senses. Misty found herself unable to form a complete thought, at first. She inhaled deeply while she fought the urge to tear his shirt away from his skin and kiss a trail to parts below his waist. Instead, she patiently released the air in her lungs slowly.

“If that’s what that you think then do us both a favor tonight. If we are dreaming let’s stay sleep, don’t wake up until this dream is complete.”

“A sexy little poet too? You trying to make me fall in love with you?”

Misty smiled at Kaiden but did not answer the question that he had asked. She turned to head away and swallowed hard. Misty was unsure of how to answer the question. She had not planned anything.

She reached out and stroked his arm. Misty softly gripped his bulging bicep and then turned and walked through the house back into the living room. She heard Kaiden’s steady footsteps not far behind her. Her heart bumped in her chest as if she had jogged a great distance.

Misty quickly took a huge gulp from the glass in her hand. She had come to a stop between his sofa and the coffee table. Misty’s fingers shook when she extended a hand to sit her drink on the table. She closed her eyes and hoped that Kaiden had not noticed. Suddenly, she felt his steady hand touch her shoulder.

Misty tried not to shudder. Her eyes flew open. A warmth spread through her stomach and spread out to the tips of her fingers and toes. Misty struggled not to turn around and embrace him.

“Did I say something wrong? I was only kidding.” Kaiden asked.

“No Kaiden, I’m fine,” Misty answered.

“Something just changed in the kitchen. I don’t want you to be uneasy around me.”

Misty felt the smile that had begun to form. She turned around to face Kaiden. The large room suddenly seemed much smaller to her. Misty felt so delicate and little at that moment. Once again, the anxiousness to run away gripped her.

“What is it about this man that makes me want to run to him and away from him at the same time?” Misty wondered.

Before Misty could come up with an answer, Kaiden leaned down and kissed her roughly. She was surprised at first. Quickly, Misty realized they had sunk to the fluffy carpet on the floor. She could not recall how she came to straddle across him; once Misty realized that she was.

“Misty, I hate to break this up, but I should probably go check on dinner. If I can walk, that is.” Kaiden joked.

Misty rocked forward and ran her tongue over an exposed portion of his neck. Kaiden groaned aloud while he ran his fingertips over the cloth that covered her plump thighs. Misty felt her delicate treasure box swell. Her plump pearl had puffed up past her clean-shaven lips. Misty silenced a whimper as her body strained against the fabric of her black catsuit seams.

Kaiden could not hide his arousal without difficulty. A massive lump pushed firmly against his zipper. His pants that seemed comfortably fitted earlier now fought to contain his manhood. Kaiden gently slid from underneath Misty and swiftly flipped over on his stomach.

Misty placed both of her knees on the floor for balance and tried hard not to laugh. When Kaiden heard her snicker, he turned towards her. He grinned, got up, and walked towards the kitchen without a word. Finally, Misty could no longer hold in her giggles.

“I can hear you Misty,” Kaiden shouted.

Misty shrugged her shoulders and picked up her drink. She looked down into the delightful potion and hesitated. The taste of Kaiden was still on her lips. She flicked her tongue out and ran it across them briefly. At last, satisfied that she had left no taste of his warm mouth on hers, Misty suckled the drink in her hand.

“Dinner is almost ready. Would you like to eat now?” Kaiden yelled out.

“Let’s have a few drinks and unwind first if it’s all the same to you,” Misty yelled back.

She grasped the edge of the table, sat her drink down, and then pushed off the floor. Her messy bun fell loose as she remained folded in half, head to the floor. Just then she noticed a shadow fall between her legs. Kaiden had come back. Misty was secretly grateful that she had chosen to wear the tan wrap. Otherwise Kaiden would have seen everything from that position.

Kaiden was quiet as he walked past Misty with a triple shot of cognac in a glass. He had gone to a farther wall and pushed a switch. Misty scrambled to stand up and hastily plopped on the black leather cushion. The light in the room gently faded to a soft glow, before he came and sat next to her on the couch. When Kaiden picked up a stuffed Back Wood from underneath the table and lit it, Misty cocked her head to the side. She stared at him when he picked up the remote and turned on the radio, then leaned back and closed her eyes.

A sweet and funky scent drifted past Misty's face. Kaiden puffed a couple of times before he took a big swig of his liquor. Misty opened her eyes when Kaiden swallowed and coughed. He turned to Misty and seductively chewed the bottom right-side of his lip. He offered the hand-rolled cigarette to Misty.

"Thanks love but I can't," Misty said.

"No pressure, just sharing, but why can't you?" Kaiden asked.

"I mean I can, I have not for the past three years. I don't want to get out of myself or lose control of my senses. I'm already sipping."

"Lose control?"

"I have another side to me just like anyone else, and you haven't met her. That right there makes me something extra in the bedroom."

"What?"

Misty became very quiet. Her thoughts wandered. Misty turned her attention to the radio.

"Is that Fire and Desire on the radio right now," she wondered. Her thoughts jumbled into a prolonged mix of phrases that did not quite make sense to even her. Kaiden question kept returning to her mind.

"Why not?" He had asked.

Kaiden leaned back on the sofa. He closed his eyes and inhaled deeply. A moment later, he lurched forward suddenly. Kaiden exhaled a large hazy cloud of smoke. Misty giggled and waved the smoke from her space, as it crept towards her.

"Why are you so quiet Misty?" Kaiden asked.

"Just enjoying the moment," Misty replied.

"Did you say that the trees make you lose control? What does that mean?"

"It means that it kicks my kinky into second gear, I think?"

Kaiden's mouth fell open when Misty turned her head towards him. She watched him slowly pull his free hand up to his mouth. Misty's eyebrow rose while his lips morph the roundness of surprise to a mannish smirk. She laughed aloud.

"So, you have levels of kinky? What does it take for me to get on that elevator!" Kaiden tittered.

"Don't ask, Kaiden, do not go there." Misty chuckled.

He quickly pulled his hand-rolled cigar to his lips. Kaiden puffed hard for some moments. Without warning, he softly grabbed chin, floated smoke in her face, and then placed his lips on her. He gasped when he felt Misty soft tongue slip into his mouth. Greedily, Kaiden sucked her into him. Almost instantly, Kaiden's manhood had begun to throb against his thigh.

Misty let out a sensual sigh. Her entire body felt as if her blood was slowly being replaced with liquid warmth. Misty pulled away reluctantly, finally. Her breaths had become sharp gasps. Misty placed a hand on each thigh and took a few deep breaths to calm her senses.

"What's wrong Misty?" Kaiden asked.

"Nothing," Misty answered.

"I hope that I didn't offend you."

"No, Kaiden. I'm fine. Just tell me why you did that?"

Kaiden dropped his head. His member throbbed violently against his slacks. The urge to grab Misty and kiss her overwhelmed him. Kaiden wanted her. He had thought to apologize and then he decided against it quickly before he smiled and looked at her again.

"Because you said that you have been holding out on me. I want all of you." Kaiden said.

Misty fought hard to hold her words. She waited instead. Misty wanted to hear what he had to share. She leaned closer towards him.

"What about you Misty, what do you want from me?" He continued.

Misty quickly picked up her drink from the table. She took several swigs before she sat it back down. Afterward, Misty looked at Kaiden's face. His eyes seem to search her face and body for clues of her thoughts, while he slowly looked her over. She shivered.

"I enjoy being your companion Kaiden," Misty replied.

"What kind of answer is that? That doesn't tell me anything. Do you mean to tell me that you have not thought about me past a friend? At all? That you have given zero thought to where this could go between us, Misty? Seriously, you hit me with the friend zone?" Kaiden groaned.

Misty could feel the smooth shift in her soul as intoxication set in. She was tipsy, and a touch buzzed from the haze. She could sense a change in the energy between them. Kaiden's emotions had found her heartstrings and pulled them.

"That is not what I said," Misty replied.

Kaiden squared his shoulders and sat up straight. He took his cognac glass from the table and finished its contents. An instant later, Kaiden sat his glass back down on the table. He turned and looked at Misty for a second. She watched as his gaze slowly shifted to the floor.

Misty reached her hand out to him. She placed one delicate hand on his chest and pushed him back on the couch. That hand roamed down his strong stomach timidly, until she reached his zipper. Misty traced her fingers down the length of his swollen dick through his pants.

Kaiden swallowed hard when Misty's fingers reversed their way back up and grasped his zipper tab. A sharp whoosh filled broke the sound of his ragged breaths. His chest heaved faster once his pants unzipped. Kaiden closed his eyes when her fingers slid inside of his boxer shorts and tenderly wrapped around him. He took a deep breath and smelled her perfume floated up to his nostrils.

The cool air on the tip of his warm meat had caused him to squirm, for a second. His thighs stiffened when he suddenly felt the soft and warm vacuum of her lips slide over his shaft. Kaiden balled his fist up, shoved it in his mouth, and bit down hard on the side of his hand. His face tightened in a tortured squeeze. Kaiden groaned loudly when Misty's soft, dewy lips reached the base of him.

Quickly, his full sac tightened. Kaiden loins had begun to pulse faster and faster with each skilled stroked from Misty. He grabbed her shoulders and pulled her away after a few minutes.

"Please, wait Misty. I can't take this," Kaiden muttered.

Misty leaned up and looked in his eyes. She firmly grasped his hard spit-soaked fellow while she moved her hand back and forth. Misty placed her thumb under the uppermost part of his thick, meaty tube. She grinned and continued to massage him. His chest rose and fell swiftly, as the desire for sweet release overcame his control. Finally, Kaiden moaned when his juices escaped and dripped down over her delicate fist.

"What the fuck are you doing to me Misty? I'm sorry. I will help you get cleaned up." Kaiden wailed.

Misty smiled and sat upright while she held her messy hand in the air. She stood up and walked across from the room and into the bathroom. Kaiden tried hard to compose himself enough to tuck in and zip his trousers. The struggle became real when he realized that although he had busted his dick was still hard.

“See, this shit right here. No woman should be able to make you bust that tough and still be stiff. I don’t know what she thought, but I will not be staying in the friend zone baby girl. I am getting out this shit tonight!” Kaiden whispered to himself.

Kaiden waited patiently until Misty returned from the bath and then excused himself to that same place. A short while later, Kaiden returned to the living room as well. He scowled when he noticed that Misty seemed entirely composed and carelessly relaxed against the cushions. Kaiden’s grimace changed into a sly grin while he walked over the table. He stooped over and took both glasses before he made his way to the kitchen with them for top-ups.

Kaiden was alone with his thoughts in the kitchen. He began to attempt to make sense of what had just occurred. It had taken less than five minutes in total. His brain wanted to play out every second in slow motion. He had just finished with his refill of their drinks, when a thought formed that was so profound, it left his lips aloud.

“Did she just boss up and take the dick?” Kaiden asked.

He tried hard to recall exactly. Kaiden eyes darted back and forth fast while his mind raced. The buzz from the drinks and puff slowed down had slowed down his usual thinking speed. Finally, he shrugged his shoulders and picked up the glasses. With a sure pace, Kaiden swaggered back towards the front room. He chuckled when he saw that she had stretched out across the farthest end of the couch.

Kaiden placed the drinks on the table before he sat very close to Misty. He felt her shift to make room, Kaiden jerked his face towards her when he heard a soft click. It was then that he noticed the glow of the flame lighting the burnt end of his hand-rolled cigar. It was lodged firmly between Misty’s finger and thumb, while she sucked some of the acrid fog.

“Oh damn, this is not a drill. She about to make me fall in love with her. I am not going by myself though. Let her pull one more freaky ass trick up out that bag. She is going to need some bridesmaids and a color scheme. We are about to move into the I am your man zone.” Kaiden thought to himself.

“Hey, Kaiden its puff, puff, pass right? It has been so long that I think I hit like five times Sorry I took your cigar. I hope you don’t mind.” Misty said at last.

“I got plenty. Does this mean I am out the friend zone?” Kaiden inquired.

Misty had decided many years before to focus on her words whenever she was intoxicated. The funny thing about being under the influence for her was that it weakened her ability to put a careful spin on her true feelings. Sometimes, these were truths that her sober version did not yet recognize. Right then, sober Misty had left the area entirely. All that remained was her need for more pleasure with him.

Kaiden took the cigar from her outstretched hand and hit it firmly. He coughed a little and then reached for the glass. Misty pulled her feet underneath her and rose up before she picked up her drink for the table too. Her plump breasts brushed past Kaiden’s cheek when she did. She ran her tongue around the edge of the glass seductively before she sipped down a third of the sticky mixture. The liquor sent an icy chill down to her navel.

Kaiden placed his cigar in the ashtray. Afterward, Misty sat her drink back in place and stood up. She shimmied her way past his closest leg and stopped. Kaiden looked up at her when he felt her hands touch his muscular arms with pressure. Again, she urged him to lie back against the sofa.

Misty reached down and pulled his trouser button undone, for a second time. Her lowered eyelids hid the fire that raged in her spirit. She had moved past the desire to taste him. The idea to go slowly had become a long-forgotten memory. Kaiden leaned back, and Misty could quickly free him. He had not noticed that her black catsuit was crotchless yet, in the dimly light space.

Once he was free, Misty straddled lap. Kaiden smiled at her playful gesture with half-closed eyes. In turn, she reached out and pulled her covered breasts and exposed them. When Misty leaned into him, he sucked a stiff nipple into his mouth gently. He listened intently, focused solely on her reactions.

Misty had held onto him for a brief second while his tongue flipped her hard bud around in circles. Her full lips glistened in the dim light with much-needed oils for the size of him. She lowered herself until the tip of him was pressed hard against her wet entrance. She gasped when Kaiden stiffened suddenly and bit down on her nipple.

Kaiden was surprised to be engulfed by her heated wetness. A shock of pleasurable pain coursed through her sensitive blood engorged breast still trapped between his teeth. Her thigh

muscles tensed. Misty deeply inhaled the mixed scents of cognac, perfume, haze, cologne, and arousal. Kaiden had awakened every nerve in her body.

Tediously, she eased further down on him. Half-way along, Misty pulled up a little. Swiftly, Kaiden let go of her breast and clutched her bouncy ass with both hands. She trembled when he pulled her even further down into his lap until she was impaled on him. Kaiden dug his fingertips deep into her thick hips. Her breasts bounced freely as they developed a smooth fluid pace of rhythmic motions.

A few moments later, Misty wrapped her arms around his shoulders and buried her face in the cleft of his neck. A sheen of sweat covered their skin. Kaiden had been still for the most part until then. Misty dragged her long, sharp manicured nails across his back. Kaiden flinched and responded with hard, confident thrusts deep inside of her womb.

Kaiden moaned when Misty's body tensed around him, and she began to shudder in his grip. He felt an intense desire to flip her over on her back, but instead, he held onto her tightly. Abruptly, Misty stiffened all over. A powerful force coursed strongly through her.

Misty reluctantly surrendered when a shriek tore itself from her throat. She gritted her teeth until she began to sob softly in Kaiden's ear. Her moans of pleasure excited him, and Kaiden whispered inspiration to Misty.

"Damn little mama, take the dick then. Don't stop." Kaiden whispered.

His words set a spark of new pleasures in her soul. She felt the tears as they began to form in her eyes and she shut them tightly. Kaiden had accomplished in two sentences what no one had ever done with her before. He had inspired her feminine willfulness to him while freely he surrendered himself to her.

Without warning, Kaiden threw his head back and let out a primitive, guttural growl. Gracefully, he plunged and plowed through her tremors. With each stroke came a new level of delight for Misty until Kaiden burst deep inside her violently quivering walls. His teeth clenched made his jawline appear angry as he exploded.

"Fuck Misty, what are you doing to me?" Kaiden groaned.

His hips thrust out each word. She bit down on his shoulder and clawed at the cushions. Screams of satisfaction wedged inside of her throat and kept Misty from responding to him. Misty rocked with Kaiden until their last waves together had subsided. Then she rested her cheek on his shoulder close to his ear.

Chapter 8

Base Unit Lab had begun to fill with patrons. Within the first hour, there were barely any available seats left. Thomas smirked while he stood back for a moment. His watchful eyes scanned the crowd. It had not taken long before Thomas's attention was distinctly drawn to where Classy had taken a seat at the bar.

His smirked turned into a wide grin when he saw Classy's attention seemed to be on him. She looked up towards the booth and smiled shyly. Thomas took a step forward and stopped. He had begun to go over to her when he realized that he was about to walk off and leave the booth unattended. Reluctantly, Thomas put it off.

About an hour later, he felt something barely touch his arm. Thomas had concentrated on the spirit of the music and was engrossed in the energy of a crowd on one accord. He swiveled his neck quickly around with a jerk. Instantly, he smiled when he saw Classy. She extended a new cool can of a beverage to him.

Thomas reached out and accepted the drink with a nod. Classy moved closer to Thomas. His eyebrow rose in surprise when he felt a fresh towel dab at his forehead. Thomas stood still, while Classy wiped away the light sheen of labor from his face. Before he could say anything, Classy reached out with her free hand and clutched the first empty container.

Classy turned to walk away. Thomas reached out and gently put his heavy hand on her shoulder. When she turned to face him, her head lowered. Thomas grasped her chin delicately and lifted her head, and she snickered. Unexpectedly, he leaned over and kissed her on the cheek.

Classy was taken back to the night before. It was first that time that Thomas had given her an indication that he was genuinely interested in her. For a long while, Classy had faithfully hung around as the supportive but platonic friend. She had thought him handsome, responsible, dedicated, and in love with music. Classy had wondered a million times if he had any interest in her at all past friendship. The things that attracted her to him the most were his jovial laugh and his adamant position of being a God-fearing man. He was just her type.

Thomas had thought she was gorgeous. He had just assumed that she was someone who had a common interest in the students and so they had generally talked briefly about that subject. Thomas was shocked when she invited him over to her place. However, he quickly accepted.

Words raced through his thoughts, but he had not expressed them to Classy. He had planned to soon. He wanted to tell her that he believed her name fit her perfectly. She had a fantastic way about her, he had seen her handle frustration with dignity, and she seemed to like things neat and tidy. With a mannish chuckle, he remembered the night before. She had hidden jewels that he would never discuss with others.

Thomas had never been the one to kiss and tell. He was indeed quite a smart man. Furthermore, he knew early on that if you were lucky enough to find a diamond mine, you better claim it quickly. It was just a bad idea to run around to tell others before you were sure that had secured her for yourself.

Thomas watched as Classy sauntered away to her seat after he kissed her. His chest steeled with pride. Thomas had already decided to court her fully. His soul yelled that she was the one for him. Thomas ran his hand down his side. Perhaps it was his imagination, but he felt a new strength near his ribs. As if, something that had been missing in his life had come.

Thomas grabbed the microphone and put his headphones back into position. He cued some slower songs. Thomas licked his lips and looked at Classy from behind again. He twisted his lips and smiled a little before he spoke.

“You got your men, Dee Jay Base on the wills tonight y’all, We about to slow it down and get that hustle groove on party people, Make your way to the bar and check out tonight’s drink specials. We got vendors in the back with that product so stop by and check them out, show some love and support Independent Owned Black Business. That’s Black Excellence right there baby! Fellows, when you stop at the bar to get a drink, that Classy drink belongs to me! Get your damn cup but don’t be breathing all over mine! Hurry up and let’s get this Grown and Sexy Function back to rocking!” Thomas said.

Thomas put the microphone back in its stand, placed his headphones neatly on his booth’s edge and jogged over to Classy. She had heard what Thomas said aloud and nearly turned her chair over when she jerked around. By that time, Thomas headed her way. He towered over for a moment before he leaned in and hugged her.

“Listen, thank you. I appreciated the drink and concern for me up in that booth. Can I get you anything?” Thomas asked.

“Thank you, for thinking of me as well Thomas, but I’m fine. I think that I just got what I wanted.” Classy said.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes Thomas, I’m sure. I just wanted to spend some time with you.”

Hours later a smile still warmed Thomas’s face. After the last customer had left, Classy waited by the door for her new beau to close up the Lab for the night. He had insisted that she allowed him to see her safely to her car. Classy wrung her hands nervously. She thought she had picked up on a bit of a severe tone of his words earlier.

Chapter 9

Misty tried not to hum as she stepped from Kaiden’s shower. The last evidence of their hot love had washed away. She stood naked on a padded bath mat for a moment. In her haste to clean up, she had left her bag tucked neatly behind the sofa. At the moment, she had nothing suitable to put on. She grabbed a fresh towel from Kaiden’s rack and wrapped it around her body.

Saturated steam from the shower coated the mirror. Fortunately for her, Misty had remembered to bring her purse. She rummaged through it quickly and found baby oil gel that she liked to moisturize her skin. Misty had also managed a few wisps of her favorite perfume from her bag.

When Misty was satisfied that she was clean and smelled sweet enough, she opened the door to the bathroom. She had intended to run and get her things and slip on something a little sexy. A cold burst of air whooshed across her skin. Misty trembled after she opened the door. The odor of succulent spices drifted up to her nose.

She had arrived hours ago, but they still had not managed to have dinner. Misty was drunk, hungry, and naked. On her way from the bath, she noticed that Kaiden stood a few feet away near a door that was not open when she arrived. The house was dark save from the glow of light that flickered around him.

“Hey Misty, I brought your things to my bedroom. I thought you might like a little privacy to get dressed. It is late. I thought you might want to stretch out in bed. I’m going to grab a quick shower and bring some food in there. Can I get you anything before I do?” Kaiden asked.

Misty cocked her head to the side and sashayed over to the door by Kaiden. She had to lean her head up a little to look up into his eyes. Misty held onto the towel with one hand and wound the other around his waist. She pulled him close and embraced him.

“Thank you; I think I can manage from here,” Misty replied.

Kaiden wrapped his arms around Misty’s body. She was thick but appeared small next to him. His hands made a sensuous trail down to her butt. Misty lifted her head, broke away, giggled, and darted in his bedroom. She peeked back out from behind his door and laughed harder.

“You do know you just ran into my bedroom right?” Kaiden teased.

Misty stuck her tongue out playfully, put a draped hand up, and waved him away. Kaiden leaned back and smiled, for a minute. Misty started to close the door. Kaiden shrugged and had turned to the bathroom when he heard the door snap shut.

Misty looked around his room and noticed her bad next to a large bureau. She opened it and grabbed a fresh thong and her green and gold sheer overlay. The colors brought out the tone of her brown skin nicely. The candles that lit the room gave it a sexy atmosphere. Much like the rest of his home, Kaiden’s place was neat and tastefully decorated in hues of mahogany, almond, and bronze.

Misty swiftly took care of her appearance but left her hair down. She pulled back the dense comforter on his over-sized bed. Quickly, Misty shimmied in between his sheets and tucked herself inside. Misty laid back on the pile of luxurious pillows and closed her eyes for just a second.

She sat up startled when she felt the weight come down on the bed next to her. Misty clutched her the cover to her chest and heard Kaiden snicker. It occurred to her that more than a few seconds had passed and that she must have fallen asleep. Misty rolled her eyes and giggled.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you. I guess you were tired huh? You were asleep so pretty and peaceful. I was going to hold you for a while and watch this movie.” Kaiden said.

“That is so sweet. Thanks. I think I was visualizing the couch and dozed off.” Misty said.

“Because I was in the shower daydreaming about the table.”

Misty eyebrows knitted together in confusion. After she had sat her drink on the table. Misty was unsure what he had meant. She looked on while Kaiden stood and walked around to

the other side of where she lay. Even in the dim light, she could see the outline in his satin boxers tented with his excitement.

Without warning, Kaiden plopped down near the foot of the bed, reached out, grasped the covers, and pulled them back from her legs. Misty eyes widened at his boldness. Just as abruptly, Kaiden leaned down, gripped her thighs and snatched her effortlessly to the edge of the bed. Misty gasped when Kaiden buried his face between her legs.

Kaiden nipped at the edge of her thong, and she flinched instinctively. His strong hands pushed her legs open when her reflexes meant to close them. He licked a wet path up the center of Misty's treasures over her thong. Misty squirmed when his hot tongue slipped past the little string that barely covered her clit and stroked the inside of her lips.

Misty struggled to catch her breath. Kaiden sucked her into his mouth. His lips anxiously demanded her dampness flow. Seconds later, Misty's sweet liquor had begun to drip across his lips. Misty remained still against the urge to grind into him. Kaiden fierce grasp on each thigh partially restrained her. Pleasure had taken over her every sense and did the rest of the job for him.

Kaiden loosened his hands and slipped them down to her calves. Misty relaxed and laid back. Tenderly, Kaiden brushed his fingers over her soft skin down to her toes. Finally, Kaiden cupped her bared heels in his hands.

He rose up to his feet slowly. Kaiden hands guided her legs in the air with him. Misty glanced down between the open space between her thighs at him. Even in the candlelit room, she could see all of him.

Kaiden pulled her right ankle onto his chest. He slurped and nibbled on her painted toes. Misty watched while still flat on her back. Kaiden paused for a long minute and then pressed his way into her wetness with one significant surge.

Chapter 10

Thomas locked up the Lab, slipped the keys in his pocket, and waved his arm for Classy to lead the way to her car. He glanced over his shoulder and checked his surroundings before he

looked back toward Classy. Thomas' eyes stopped at Classy's wide hips, and he smiled. Just then Classy began to snicker again.

“What is so funny Classy?” Thomas asked.

“Nothing but I can feel you trying to sneak a peek at my booty Thomas.” Classy tittered.

“I was not peeking. I am a grown ass man. I was looking with both eyes. I didn't even blink yet.”

When they reached her car, Thomas opened her door. He gulped when she slid her long legs into the driver's seat. Her jeans shifted a slight bit, and he could see the cleft of her bottom. Thomas raised his eyebrows and briefly wondered if Classy had done so intentionally. By the time she sat and buckled her seatbelt, Thomas had managed his usual straight and severe face.

Classy looked up at him as he leaned poised to close her door. In the glow of the streetlight, Thomas appeared larger than life itself. The sight made Classy feel safe and secure, and she smiled. Nervously, Classy looked away and began to fiddle with her keys.

“Goodnight Classy. I'm glad you came out to tonight. Call me when you make it home.” Thomas said.

“Oh, well okay then Thomas. Thank you.” Classy replied.

“Is everything okay?”

“Thomas, I had hoped that you would follow me home tonight...again.”

“Oh, you mean like the last time I was over at your house?”

Classy nodded very slowly. Afraid of what she might hear, Classy kept her head down. She trembled when she Thomas put his hand on her chin and turn her head towards him. Classy gasped when Thomas kneeled aside her car to look in her face.

“I was a little nervous that maybe you were having second thoughts or regrets. If you want me to come over, I would love to spend some time with you. I did not get a chance today to talk to you. I wondered how your day went. I have some electrifying news to share with you if you feel like listening. Just pull out, and I will follow you.” Thomas answered.

Thomas did not wait for Classy to respond. He closed her door securely and strolled off towards his big black truck. Thomas was almost to his vehicle when he realized that his feet did not seem to be landing on the asphalt of the lot. It seemed as if his steps had become lighter.

He grinned so widely that little lines creased his eyes. Bright headlights swung his way, and he threw a hand up to shield the glare. After his eyes adjusted, he saw that it was Classy who had pulled her car back to light the dark door panel. Thomas burst out in laughter.

Thomas hit the key fob and unlocked his door before he touched another button that started his truck. Almost silently, his vehicle came to life with a quiet hum. Thomas opened the door and hoisted himself into the driver's seat. He chuckled out loud when Classy sped past him to pull up in front of him. Thomas laid on the horn twice rapidly, and then Classy drove off.

Twenty minutes later, both cars arrived at Classy's home. Thomas parked on the street before he shut his car off and opened his door. Classy was already on the porch to open her door for him. Thomas walked up on the porch in deep thought. He looked around for a quick safety check before he followed Classy inside and closed the door.

Classy swung her arm toward her sofa for Thomas to relax. She offered to call for pizza, but Thomas declined. Classy excused herself to the kitchen and quickly returned with a fruit and cheese platter and a bottle of wine. Thomas nodded while she set the items down on the coffee table.

Thomas reached for an oversized strawberry and nibbled the edge of it. It tasted sweet and juicy to him. Thomas smirked and leaned over and placed the berry to Classy's lips just as she sat near him. His slight grin became a soft laugh when Classy bit down quickly on the rich fruit from his hand.

Classy reached over them to the platter and settled on a batch of deep purple grapes. Thomas's eyebrow rose in curiosity. Classy carefully examined the bunch until she found the biggest one to pluck. She clenched her teeth on the closest end of the fruit and leaned over to Thomas with the refreshing treat protruding from her lips.

After Thomas accepted the sexy morsel that caused their lips to touch, he leaned back. Classy looked away and stifled another giggle. Thomas licked his lips, and then wiped his mouth with his large hand. His eyes darted back and forth.

"I don't think I have ever tasted anything that sweet before," Thomas whispered.

"Oh yeah, the grapes are awesome," Classy replied.

"Well, they were pretty good too."

Classy slid closer to Thomas until she felt his arm touch hers. Thomas yawned and stretched his arms before he draped one around her shoulder. Classy wiggled a bit and at last,

laid her head on his chest. They cuddled quietly for a long while and fell fast asleep around three in the morning.

Three and a half hours later, they awakened to the loud alarm on Thomas's cell phone. He bolted up before he realized that he yet to make it home. Classy had nearly rolled on the floor once dislodged from his arm, Thomas caught her and apologized.

"Look, I'm sorry about falling asleep, but I have long days and short nights. I have got to go home, shower and change, then head over to work. I'll make it up to you. You think that you might be free for lunch or dinner?" Thomas gushed.

"I am so sleepy. Thomas, you just moved the best place in the world to sleep. Lunch or dinner sounds fine." Classy said.

She stretched out across the couch. Thomas had barely blinked when he noticed that Classy had fallen fast asleep again. Thomas bent down and kissed her cheek. Quietly, he made his way to the door and let himself out.

By the time Thomas arrived at the school, his morning class members had begun to stream into the band room slowly. He was dressed sharply in pressed dark blue slacks paired with a white shirt and Burberry Blue tie. He peered over the crowd that gathered in the hall near his door. A smile lit up his face when he saw the student that had been drinking and missed class often come strolling up the hallway toward him.

Thomas looked at the young lady that he had secretly nicknamed "Trouble." Today, she appeared clean, bright-eyed, and ready to practice. For a second, he wondered what Misty had said to Trouble. He had spoken with Misty about her conversation with her but Thomas knew his sister. She denied bullying the girl, but his sister was known for being brutally blunt. Whatever Misty had said had some impact because for the second day in a row the girl was in class and did not reek of liquor.

"Trouble might not be as bougie as Misty was at that age, but that attitude reminds me so much of my sister when that fire kicked off. There's nothing more on point than a black woman tired of the bullshit and know that she can do better." Thomas thought.

Chapter 11

Kaiden used his freed hand to pull the satiny material of his boxer shorts down. They hit the floor in a pile around his feet. He quickly stepped from them and kicked them away. Then, he turned his focus back to Misty. Kaiden grabbed her ankle tightly and rapidly pushed her leg back.

He slid down on top of her while he had maneuvered her into a pinned situation. Kaiden's free hand roamed down her opposite thigh and burrowed into her flesh. He looked deep into her eyes. This time, Misty did not turn away.

Misty's leg trembled from the tightly stretched position. She could smell the freshness of his skin. Misty could feel his hand on her thigh inch upward with each open and close. Closer he moved his hand to the soaked center of her love until his thumb vanished under the thin thread of her panty.

Misty groaned, as soon as his thumb rolled her panties aside from her plump labia. She exhaled and closed her eyes. Kaiden moved his hand away. Abruptly, she inhaled sharply and bit down on the inside of her lip. Her eyes opened wide at first, but then quickly lowered to see in the hazy light.

Kaiden had violently stuffed more than half of his reliable staff inside of her small walls. Misty let out a shriek. Without reluctance, he pulled back a bit and then paused. Through lowered eyelids, Kaiden could see Misty's mouth had formed a circle of surprise. She stared up at him.

Finally, Misty closed her lips licked and them. Her throat slightly parched from her earlier outcry. Misty's heartbeat had become a hard-paced, rapid thump, an instant later. She swallowed hard. Misty felt the steady mattress give faintly under their combined weight.

With no more to warn her than a quick murmur, Kaiden aggressively shoved his way further into the depths of Misty. A single tear formed in the corner of one of her eyes. Her warm oils gushed when her taunt thighs jerked and trembled. Kaiden slowly pulled himself back from her and gazed on at Misty. His seemed eyes ablaze with a mysterious energy that danced like light to her. Mischievously, Misty flexed her tight walls around him.

"Please don't do that too." Kaiden panted.

Misty tore herself away from his gaze. Slowly, her pink tongue slivered from between her lips. Kaiden gulped when Misty sensuously ran her tongue across her bottom lip and then bit down. At last, gravity pulled the single tear down the side of her face. Misty closed her eyes and began to rhythmically massage Kaiden in a wet, vise-like grip.

Kaiden's nostrils flared while he visibly strained to keep his control. His bicep glistened with sweat, and the veins stood out like confused tracks that all led to his heart. His chest rose and fell sharply with each short breath. Kaiden held still.

When Misty's hands roamed from him down to her breast and cupped them, Kaiden watched and groaned. Misty had begun to whirl her hips in a small circle while her body sucked at him greedily. Faster and faster, she flexed her well-trained muscles around his member. Tiny, uncontrolled of pure pleasure shock rippled through her, as she did. Each one was harder than the last. Misty pulled her other leg up higher to brace herself for the sweet release that felt coming on.

As soon as she did, Kaiden grasped the back of that thigh and pushed it, until her knee touched the mattress. He plunged into her until his sac was wedged firmly against her ass. Kaiden pulled back until only his thick head remained inside. He jabbed deep into her womb with long strokes again and again.

Her firm breast bounces with each dive. Misty whimpered as if wounded, at first. Her moans seemed to excite Kaiden as he slammed into her harder and faster, after each sound. Misty opened her mouth to yell but immediately felt Kaiden's wet, hot tongue slip deep in her mouth. She returned his search for more of her passions when she sucked hungrily on his probing tongue. Fierce hotness spread throughout her body. Misty heated skin moist with dew seemed as if she was on fire to her. Finally, her walls drew tightly around Kaiden seconds before her slick juices exploded.

"Kaiden" Misty whined.

"That Misty, I' ma need all that." Kaiden grunted.

Kaiden buried himself as far as he could within Misty's vibrating body and waited for a moment while she came. Finally, he slowly began to stroke at a pace that mirrored her shivers for a while before Kaiden proceeded to hammer into Misty. Sweat had started to roll from his face and drip down between her fingers and onto Misty's breasts.

She opened her hands when her bouncy melons swung free. Afterward, Misty wiped the sweat from her hands on the crisp sheets around her before she wiped Kaden's face. Then she reached for his broad back, and Misty's sharp nails raked his silky skin. She continued to claw at his shoulders blades and thrust her hips to meet him until her tremors came so fast that she gasped for air to speak.

"Repeat it, baby, say that one more time!" Kaiden whispered.

"Kaiden... Kaiden." Misty whimpered.

He opened his eyes and stared down at Misty's face. Kaiden saw a burst of yellow, red, and green sparks dance around pupils of her eyes. An oily sheen covered her skin while dark and damp curls framed her face. His jawline and neck protruded from his tightly clenched teeth. The seductive rasp of her voice when she cried out his name echoed in his head.

At last, Kaiden broke his gaze from her and bellowed. He hid deeply inside Misty's womb just as the first thick stream of cream erupted. Kaiden groaned loudly as each burst that followed the first intensified until he collapsed on top of Misty. His heartbeat swiftly pounded against his ribcage.

They laid in that position until the last flex of Misty's orgasm passed. She gently pushed at Kaiden's arm and he rolled aside of her. Both of them stared at the ceiling quietly for a long while. Kaiden smiled when he heard a delicate breath turn into a light snore.

"I can never tell this woman that I was about two seconds from saying some shit that I don't even know that I mean yet when we were making love. She knows exactly what to do to mess up some guy's whole train of thought. I'll probably be pulling up in the driveway exactly 12 minutes after I get off work every day, paying all her bills, and cleaning gutters by this time next year. No worries though, I got the dough and some gloves. Wait, what if she doesn't want that though? What if sex is all she wants? I wonder if she wants to discuss a future with me. I think it would be hard to put this feeling on a shelf and walk away one day." Kaiden thought.

Kaiden jumped when he woke. Misty had softly shaken his arm. The morning sun cast a radiant sparkle across her face. Misty placed a steamy cup of brown liquid on his nightstand with a clink. Kaiden sat up and yawned while he looked closely at Misty. He noticed that she had showered and dressed and came to realize that he must have fallen asleep.

“Good morning Kaiden, I made some coffee. I apologize for the noise in the kitchen. I am a complete mess in the morning without my coffee, and these walls are much closer than they appear with a little youch of hangover.” Misty said.

Kaiden waved his hand and swiftly picked up the cup. He sipped the hot brew before he replaced the mug on his nightstand. Kaiden scrunched over to make room and then patted the open space beside him. When Misty did not move, he reached out and grasped one of her hands.

“Good morning Misty, thanks for the joe. Can we talk?” Kaiden asked.

Misty frowned. She remained standing for a few seconds before she finally turned and sat on the edge of the mattress near him. Misty’s mind raced with thoughts about what he might say. She stayed quiet and waited for him to speak his mind.

Kaiden took a deep breath. Inside his head, a million questions popped up but he did not blurt them out. He kept silent until he formed the question that he thought made the most sense. Kaiden wanted to get a sense of what she felt about him. He exhaled before he spoke.

“Misty, I have been with a lot of women. There’s a part of me that enjoyed the player life, I won’t lie. These last few days have been incredible, but I would like to know where you want to go with this.” Kaiden asked.

“Do you mean if I want a relationship with you, Kaiden?” Misty responded.

“Do you? Or is this just sex. I need to know because last night was something different for me.”

Chapter 12

For Thomas the day went by quickly. He had barely had the time to sit and reflect on the proposal brought to him the day before until late in the evening. A part of his thoughts was on the tasks as they came for the day. Another part of his mind was anticipating another visit with Classy.

Around six thirty, Thomas found himself relaxed for a moment while he sat in his truck. He prepared to leave the school lot but decided to take a moment to gather his mind. It was then that the possibilities of his new position had begun to flood his mind. Thomas balled up his fist and bit down while he examined some options.

A new school dedicated to the Fine Art of Music could mean that talent scouts would be able to come to one place to recruit youngsters. It could also mean more scholarship dollars for college to talented students that wanted to go further. College meant a better opportunity for good-paying jobs and benefits. That was a huge long-term advantage to his students that Thomas deeply appreciated.

Another point to consider was that he could have more input in establishing the programs and education. After many years in the education system, he had a good idea of some of the policies that worked and what did not. Those experiences would be valuable to set an even more positive tone. Thomas found himself pleased that the future had shown a new path for him.

He had just let go of his hand to place his key in the ignition when his cell phone rang. Thomas pulled his phone out and saw Classy's mobile number on the screen. Anxious to speak with her, Thomas answered on the second ring. He pushed to accept button and then started his vehicle.

After some greetings and banter, Thomas and Classy planned to meet at a local restaurant for dinner at eight. Thomas realized that left him just enough time to go home, shower, and change again before he headed out to meet her. He hung up and pulled out of the lot with a grin plastered on his face.

When Thomas arrived home, he began to make himself ready to hang-out with Classy methodically. He had noticed that her place was immaculate. Thomas thought back to when he awoke that morning on the sofa with her. The fruit and cheese platter along with the bottle of wine had vanished from the coffee table.

"She likes things neatly in order." Thomas thought.

Thomas arrived at the restaurant a few moments before Classy did. He had waited patiently in the lot for her to come. When Thomas saw her parked, he got out of his truck and walked over to her car. Thomas opened the door and extended his hand.

Classy shut off her car and smiled. She was not surprised by his actions as much as pleased. From a distance, Classy had noticed things about him as a person over the years. She had seen him be frustrated too. Each time he seemed to handle events with charm and style.

She had never heard him be disrespectful to anyone. He did not always agree with other people, but he did respectfully disagree. Classy admired his calm demeanor.

Still, even at that moment, she wondered why such an attractive and employed man was single. The first answer that came to mind was his busy life. Thomas always seemed to be at work, on his way to work, or just leaving a job to go to more work. She guessed that he had been so busy that it had taken what seemed like forever for Thomas to notice her.

Classy was naturally shy and reserved. She loved to dance but would never have the courage to go up to someone and ask them to dance. Classy was much more comfortable with the idea to wait to be asked. It gave her a sense of sureness.

After Classy got out of her car, she was surprised when Thomas held her hand on the way to the diner door. She blushed when he opened the door and bowed slightly. She shook her head back and forth and stared at Thomas for a second. Finally, Thomas laughed aloud.

“Are you being silly right now Mr. Base?” Classy asked.

“Girl get your beautiful self in this door; Of course, I have a fun side. Relax, we are about to have a ball. I have been looking forward to this all day.” Thomas jested.

“Me too.”

Once inside they looked at each and grinned at the odor of steak and spices that hung thick in the air. A burly waitress rushed by them with a plate of warm biscuits and butter and headed for a corner table. A lady with greyed temples, an apron, and starch white blouse approached them and offered to seat them. Thomas nodded and then followed Classy and their hostess to a candlelit booth.

A few moments later, after they were seated with menus, the waitress with the biscuits from earlier came over to take their order. Almost immediately, the pair were left alone to talk while they waited for their food. Thomas sat in silence for a long awkward moment. He looked up to see Classy with her hand under chin staring intently at him. Thomas’s eyes darted around the room before he cleared his throat.

“So, how was your day Classy?” Thomas asked.

He watched as Classy’s chest fell and rose in a deep sigh. She winked at him. Thomas placed a hand over his mouth and stifled a yawn. Finally, Classy spoke.

“It was long and restless. I can’t believe that I invited you to my place and fell asleep on your chest. I’m sure that wasn’t what you expected. I was too tired. I was even more embarrassed that you felt like you needed to apologize to me when I invited you over. The least I could have

done is made sure that you made to a comfortable place to lay your head. I'm sorry Thomas, it won't happen again." She said.

Thomas raised his brow. He looked around the room again. His brow wrinkled, and he twisted his lips. At last, Thomas opened his mouth but quickly closed it again before a word escaped. Her apology had left him speechless because it was the first time he had ever heard Classy say more than a few words.

"Um, we were both tired. I was happy to chill with you for a while and cuddle. I didn't come expecting anything Classy." Thomas said.

"Really?"

"Really, now that is settled. Tell me about your day. What do like best about working with kids?"

Classy picked up the water glass and took a sip. She slipped her hands under the table and wrung them nervously. Classy glanced over and saw a slight grin on Thomas's face and then giggled again. She turned her head towards the aisle to avoid his stare.

Thomas clasped his hands together and rested them on the edge of the dining table. Slowly, he moved his head to try to see her face better. When she glanced over at him again, Thomas winked at her. They burst out laughing.

"A penny for your thoughts Classy," Thomas said.

Classy shook her head back and forth. Thomas's smile began to fade and his brow line creased. Classy blushed and pulled her well-wrung hands from under the table. She reached across to him.

"I had a great day. I'm a little tired. I am shy. It's much easier for me to join a conversation than start one, Thomas." Classy said.

"Nah, you have a lot to say. You just scared that I'm about to judge you. So, put it out here so I can get my judge on! You blow bubbles in chocolate milk when nobody is looking don't you?" Thomas snickered.

Classy laughed so hard that tears welled up in her eyes. Thomas smiled and shook his head back and forth at her. A full minute had passed before Classy's laughter turned to sniggles. Mostly because every time that she looked up at Thomas, he invented a severe face.

Mercifully, their food arrived. Thomas reached across the table and clutched both her hands. He bowed his head and led them in praise and grace over their food. When he finished, he

glanced over at Classy. She wiped a tear from the corner of her eye. Thomas did not know if it was left over from the laughter or because of a different emotion. He decided not to ask but dug into his plate of food instead.

After another long awkward silence, Thomas began to talk about his new adventure. Classy listened and even interjected between a bite of her meal with questions. The more that he spoke to her, the more comfortable she seemed to be conversating with him. Soon, she had warmed up and began to talk about her life. Thomas was pleased and began to laugh and smile.

They finished their food. Thomas excused himself briefly and took care of the check. When he returned, Classy had refreshed her lipstick and was in the process of sliding a compact mirror into her shoulder bag. The table had been neatly arranged for pick-up, Thomas noticed.

He swept his arm out for Classy to grab ahold to before he escorted her back to her car. Classy placed a hand on his bicep and strolled beside him. The sun had begun to set with different shades of blue, orange and yellow that combined. It created a great scene in the sky. It was a beautiful view of ending a good time together.

Chapter 13

“I don’t know. Kaiden, I have to go back to Detroit. The only reason that I am still here is this affair with you. The plan before we met was to go home. I have children and family there. Other than you, this part of the country has no meaning to me other than a place to refresh my mind, which I needed badly. I didn’t expect to meet anyone. I certainly didn’t intend to fall in love. I am not even sure if that’s what I am feeling. I know that this is not the same as anything that I have ever felt or wanted to feel over and over again so much before.”

‘You feel something for me?’

“Well, yeah.”

“I won’t make you choose in between this or that. I want you to have whatever makes you happy. I want you to feel respected, secure, and complete with me. I think that if you feel as strongly about me as I do you, then we will eventually become a couple. If not then maybe as good as this feels right now, it is not meant to be.”

“Kaiden, I am going home. I have been gone longer than I should have been. I thought that maybe you were some sign that I should stay here. You don’t know me well enough to know that as sweet as I appear, I am a fighter at heart.”

“What are going to do when you get there, join a gang?”

Misty’s eyes darted back and forth. She swiveled her head to the side. Misty put a finger to her lips and giggled. She cleared her throat and threw her head back.

“It’s time to turn the worst away from my best life. The Base family legacy of turning nothing into something special is long. I have to contribute something positive. I don’t want other young women to waste twenty years of life because they got caught up with some immature knucklehead. I will never get those years back, but if I can help someone avoid an expensive lifelong lesson, then I want to try.”

“Damn, he messed your head up that badly.”

“No, but it triggered a deep resentment so much that I did forget that love was even possible. I felt as if love equaled slavery and mistreatment. Can you imagine being so hurt inside that you can’t tell love from hate anymore? Even worse, you quit caring?”

“Are you willing to let me love you, Misty? Somehow our bodies know what to do to, but my thoughts and my heart might not know exactly what you need to be happy.”

“Kaiden, I have to go home. I have stayed single for a reason.”

“Just come out and tell me that you don’t want me then. I would not ask of you what you don’t want to give freely. You can’t seriously believe that every guy will be like he was. Being in a grownup body doesn’t mean your mind grew with it right? He fucked up, that is his problem. I have your attention now, so do you want to try to love again Misty with me, do you?”

“Is this that or is it just we are incredible in bed together? I know that I needed you, but I’m unsure why. I would never go out of my way to hurt you.”

“Damn baby, did you say needed as if you have already made up your mind to end this? I want a chance. I’ll come wherever you are. I want to support your dreams, be a part of your joy, if you allow me. You don’t have to decide right now. I was asking if we can talk openly to each other about feelings. I want to be the one that makes you forget the past, Misty.”

Misty inhaled quickly and held her breath for a moment. A single tear gathered in the corner of her right eye. Misty let her breath go with a soft huff. She looked up into Kaiden's eyes briefly before she tore her gaze away.

Misty turned away because in the depths of his eyes she saw confusion and desire. Kaiden's eyes scanned her face. Misty could feel the intensity of his look slide over her face like gentle fingers. Even though his words had been direct, timid lines around his mouth and across his brow suggested that he too felt something about them that was extraordinary. Misty struggled hard not to let another tear fall down her face.

When her calves and toes tightened suddenly, Misty groaned. The air in the room became dense to her. It had become hard to breathe normally. The impulse to run overwhelmed Misty. She bit her lip instead and remained in place. At last, Misty found the courage to speak.

"Even though I am not perfect and you are not sure what is to come, you want to try, huh?" Misty asked.

"Yeah Misty, I do," Kaiden whispered.

"Your coffee is getting cold Kaiden, would like some breakfast before you head out?"

"Are you on the menu again?"

Misty wiped wetness away from the corner of her eye with her thumb and giggled. She glanced over at Kaiden and saw him smirk. Misty shook her delicate curls back and forth. She shrugged her shoulders before she slowly began to strip down to her panties.

She shivered when her bra fell to the floor. The cold air had caused Misty's nipples to harden, right away. She stepped from the pile of clothes around her ankles. Now, Misty only wore red lace panties and black pumps.

Her breasts and thighs jiggled when Misty took another step toward the bed where Kaiden lay. Misty could already feel the moisture in between her lips in anticipation of his touch. She wrapped her arms tightly around herself and walked over to his bed.

Misty flung her hair back and plopped on the edge of the mattress. She reached down and slid her feet from her heels. Misty gasped aloud when she felt Kaiden caressed the small of her back. A warm rush flashed over her entire body.

Slowly, Kaiden caresses moved around her side and up to one of her breasts. He rested his forefinger and thumb around her nipple. Misty sighed when she felt Kaiden's warm kisses

touch her skin. With painstaking care, he kissed a trail across her back up to the base on her neck.

Her cheeks blushed when Kaiden began to glide his tongue along Misty's neck and while he massaged her breast. Instinctively, she leaned back into him. The center of Misty's panties darkened from her wetness. She trembled when she felt his hand release her breast and traveled down to the fat mound between her thighs.

With adept skill, Kaiden stroked her clit through the flimsy material. Misty tensed and clamped her thighs tightly around his hand. Her breasts bounced harder as her breaths quickened with each rub. Kaiden pulled her arm with his free hand until he had coaxed her to lay down.

Misty laid back. Her hips gyrated in tight circles as Kaiden straddled her. Gently, he rolled Misty's wet panties down her legs and over her feet. Kaiden flung the panties to the far side of his bedroom.

Through half-closed eyes, Misty could see Kaiden's nakedness. Specifically, the thickness of his firm manhood. Misty flared her nostrils. She saw that was he aroused just from touching her. The weight of shaft had caused him to hang half-way of his thigh. The large mushroomed tip glistened in the morning sun.

Misty swallowed hard at the sight of him. She remembered the taste of his sweet cream as it flowed from her lips the night before. Misty had been amazed that shortly afterward, Kaiden was harder than ever before. He fucked her through too many orgasms to count.

She smiled coyly when Kaiden slid his hands under her bottom. Misty had slept well, showered, and had coffee. Although she had yet to adjust to the size of him, she wanted to feel him deep inside of her again. Her cheeks quivered in the palm of his hands while he pulled her close.

Misty reached between them and grasped him firmly with both her hands. Kaiden groaned when she softly began to massage his shaft up and down. A spasm gripped the depth of Misty's belly. She had unintentionally brushed the head of him across her juicy labia, just once.

On the next stroke of her hands, Misty intentionally guided Kaiden to the narrow entrance of her womb. He leaned down and kissed her while he shoved his way inside. Misty cried out and quickly thrust her hips up to meet him. He dug his fingers into the folds of her ass and paused.

"Misty, I wanted to please you first." Kaiden gasped throatily.

Misty let go of his hardness. She wound her arms and legs around him. Misty clutched the muscular chocolate skin on his broad shoulders and pulled him closer. Passionately, Misty began to suck and nibble at the tender exposed flesh near Kaiden's ear. She flexed her vaginal walls and sucked him in a little farther, ignoring his protest.

"It's fait accompli", Kaiden." She whined.

"What does that mean?" Kaiden asked.

Misty could feel Kaiden strain for control. His arms were tight. The veins in his neck and biceps throbbed wildly against Misty's skin. She wrapped her legs tighter around him and nipped at his earlobe.

"It is already decided," Misty whispered.

She clawed at Kaiden's back. The width of him stretched her walls. Misty felt her legs quake when Kaiden pushed even more in-depth. He had barely managed to fit half of his length inside of Misty before she felt him withdraw.

Misty kissed a path from his broad shoulders to his lips. Tenderly, her lips pressed into Kaiden's. Suddenly, Misty stifled a scream and sucked frantically at his lower lip. At last, she cried out when Kaiden smashed his stiffness into the pit of her belly.

Gradually, Kaiden pulled back. Her pleasure-filled moans floated through the air. Kaiden grimaced when Misty raked her lacquered nails sharply over his shoulder blades. A welt rose on his skin. Kaiden's eyes widened, and he stared into Misty's lowered eyelids. He saw that she had bitten down on the side of her lip before he slipped balls deep into her slick cavern again.

Deliberately, Kaiden caressed her thighs and hips each time that he glided inside of Misty. Small ripples of pleasure raced through her every time that he did until she cried out loudly. Soon he pace had quickened to a furiously unrelenting pace. An hour later, Misty's cries had become soft and raspy sobs.

She had barely felt Kaiden kiss her lips when he left for work. Before Kaiden quietly departed from the house, he had stood in the bedroom doorway and watched Misty sleep in his bed. The covers tangled around her waist. He inhaled the mix of smoke and her exotic perfume and grinned widely.

Chapter 14

Thomas saw Classy home. It was well past midnight when he made back to his house. Thomas had parked, gone inside, and plopped down on the sofa. He let out a long sigh of relief.

As usual, Thomas reflected on his day. It had gone well. Particularly, the cozy dinner with Classy. For Thomas, it had seemed that although it had taken such time to warm up to him, Classy had made him feel as though she was attentive to Thomas's wants.

She listened to him talk about the new school and his love of the band and did not seem bored. That was a massive win for Thomas. He had many interests, but the music was at the top of the list. Thomas grinned widely as he recalled how she nodded in agreement about the idea of him at the head of the newly designed school.

Thomas smirked to himself and then stood up to head for the shower. As much as he loved the time that he had spent with the students and Classy, the day had caught up with him. Thomas decided to shower and rest. He bent over to unlace his shoes and began to hum.

He was in his bathroom before he realized that he had been humming. The sound magnified as a happy echo that bounced off the shower walls. Abruptly, he stopped when the noise grew too loud to ignore. It was then that Thomas realized it was him.

"Wow," Thomas said.

Nearly an hour later, Thomas was tucked in bed and fast asleep. The thoughts of his day held at bay while he slumbered. A soft breeze from an open bedroom window woke him. Thomas shivered, wiped his face with his hand and sat up.

The morning sun had risen and beamed through the sheer curtains. Thomas stretched and yawned. His alarm had not gone off yet. Thomas threw the covers back and leaped from the bed.

Because Thomas was highly organized and neat by nature, he was spotlessly dressed and out the door in less than an hour. He stepped outside, locked up, and headed for his truck with glee. As soon as Thomas started his vehicle, music blared from his speakers. The all-encompassing energy made him smile as he slid in the driver's seat.

He flipped down his sun visor to mask the bright light that gleamed through the windshield. Slowly, Thomas pulled from his parking spot and flowed into traffic. In short order, he found himself at the school's parking lot. A flood of anxious student's crowded around the steel blue doors.

Thomas could hear some shouts over the music in his car. He opened his car door to see from where did the ruckus come. Thomas rolled his eyes and sighed. When he looked back to where the crowd of kids had been his eyes widened. They ran straight towards him. Quickly, Thomas shut his truck off and stepped out.

“Whoa! Where are you all going? What’s going on?” Thomas yelled over the excited chatter.

For a few minutes longer, the noise continued. Finally, Thomas threw his hand up. The pride of teenagers began to gasp and settle down. Thomas looked over the group. He realized that the majority of the students were his current and former band members. He rubbed his chin and furrowed his brow.

Trouble stepped up and put her hand on her hip. Thomas looked down at the tiny menace and twisted his lips. He tried not to laugh as she stared hard at him. Mockingly, Thomas placed his large hand on his suit coat and leaned his head aside.

“You think you about to leave us huh? Just gone go to your fancy new school and leave us down here without nothing. I only came to tell you I don’t give a damn. Leave then. Now I got NO reason to show up to this hellhole.” Trouble yelled.

Thomas clutched his chest. He opened his mouth to give Trouble a piece of his mind in exchange for her disrespect. Then Thomas saw the tears flow down the girl's face and she turned her back to him. He placed a hand on her shoulder and looked around at the sea of faces awaiting his answer.

“First of all Good morning. Second, curse at me again, and I am going to suspend your little butt. Third, I am not leaving anybody behind. I don’t know where you all got this information, but we talk to each other not nut up and scream. I’m sorry that something upset you guys, but you have to tell me what’s up not accuse me.” Thomas said.

“It’s all over Facebook, sorry Mr. Base.” Trouble whined.

“We are a family. We have always been a family. We will always be a family. This family talks to each other with respect. Facebook does not run this family; am I clear?”

Thomas’s face was stern. He looked over the group and slowly began to see nods of agreement. A few people shrugged their shoulders. Trouble folded her arms defiantly while her tears subsided.

“Now, I have something to tell you. Please meet me in the band room in fifteen minutes. Cellphones are to be off.” Thomas said.

The crowd chatter began to rise and the students dispersed. They walked towards the doors of the building. Everyone except for Trouble because Thomas still had his hand gently on her shoulder. Softly, he urged her to turn around and look at him.

Thomas watched her wipe her little face. He squatted down so that he could see her eyes. Thomas placed a finger under her chin and lifted her pouted face. He smiled at her.

“Look here you are a bright young lady. Anywhere you go I expect you to do well. I know that it does not seem like it sometimes, but a lot of people care about you, including me. You have every reason to show up and do your best, regardless of who is here or not! Reason number one is the mirror, and that young lady deserves every chance to have a good life. Reason number two, this place or somewhere like has a diploma that they are waiting to put your name on, but you have to be here to earn it. Reason number three, you owe me, and all I want is to be there to clap as hard as I can when they call your name, and you walk across that stage, you hear me? I would not miss it for anything! After that, you are going to go to college and show them why you are one of Detroit’s most talented. When you walk across that stage, I’m going to be front row screaming like a maniac. Why? Because you can do this. Don’t you ever let me hear you talk like a person or a challenge can stop you again? I am going to speak to your mom, even if I have to drive to one of her two jobs to do it. I want you at the new school too, if you want to go.” Thomas said.

Trouble’s face lit up. Her frown faded into a bright smile. Trouble sniffled and regained her composure. Suddenly, she hugged Thomas tightly around the neck.

“I thought you didn’t want us no more. I’m so sorry Mr. Base. We just figured that you would get all new kids from upscale hoods and stuff. You know, ones that don’t show up drunk or got smart mouths.” Trouble giggled.

“What, kids like you are the reason I do this. A lame life of quiet, well-mannered students showing up on time and ready to learn? Nah, all kids need help, you are just as good and special to me as any kid on the planet. Don’t ever doubt it. Some kids have better advantages than others, but it doesn’t make you less of anything. Seeing you do well is the highlight of my life; besides anything that gets you here is a win, hellhole or not.” Thomas snickered.

“I didn’t mean that. I was mad though.”

“Get to class.”

Thomas stood up after Trouble reluctantly let him go. He scratched his head and shook it back and forth. He squared his shoulders and stuck out his chest and then strolled across the lot to the school. Many times, Thomas had secretly wondered if his efforts were in vain. He was a little disturbed that his kids were upset. Still, he beamed with pride as he realized something important. Thomas’s presence as a leader did indeed seem to matter.

He had barely walked inside when Classy flooded his thoughts. Thomas had a nice evening with her. It had been a long time since he has enjoyed the company of a woman that he had found it easy to be around. Thomas smirked to himself and then walked down the hall through the bustling crowd.

Chapter 15

It was early afternoon when Misty was awakened by Kaiden gently rubbing her shoulder. Misty sleepily sat up, rubbed her eyes and yawned. The smell of grilled beef woke her fully. She watched curiously while Kaiden set up two television trays aside the bed. In short in order, Kaiden had set a late lunch in front of her.

“Hey love, what’s all this?” Misty asked.

Misty nearly fell off the bed as she peeked to see where Kaiden had gone. She was shocked when he returned in satin printed boxers with real cutlery, napkins, and a bottle of wine. Misty swung her legs to the floor and scooched up her meal.

Kaiden popped the cork on a bottle of Cabernet and filled their glasses mid-way.

“I ordered our lunch from the Black Rock Grill. It’s bacon-wrapped filets, Sole’ with Crab and Scallops, Roasted Sweet potatoes, Cranberry and Broccoli Slaw, and a creamy French Onion Bouillon. You did get breakfast, and it was the least that I could do.” Kaiden replied.

“This is so very thoughtful Kaiden. Thank you. I intended to be home by now. Why didn’t you wake me?” Misty said.

Kaiden bristled and shrugged. Misty looked on when he quickly put a bite of slaw in his mouth and chewed slowly. Nervously, Kaiden scratched the side of his chin. He seemed to stall on an answer.

“When I realized that you were asleep in my bed, I was happy. I loved seeing you there. I saw your panties and heels were all over my carpet, from last night. My whole room smells like your perfume. Your face was so peaceful this morning that I couldn’t wake you. You were exactly where I had hoped that you wanted to be.” Kaiden said.

“Oh” Misty replied.

Misty picked up her fork and slowly began to eat. Occasionally, she would peek over at Kaiden. She felt a pang of envy at the fork, as Misty imagined that he touched it longer than needed with his soft tongue. She took a deep breath and continued to eat.

Half an hour later, they had finished. Misty cleaned up and put their trays away. She freshened up and returned to his room. Kaiden had gotten in bed. Misty slipped under his covers with him.

“Are you okay Kaiden?” Misty whispered.

Sensually, she rubbed the shaved nape of Kaiden’s neck. He threw his leg across her and then laid in his head on her shoulder. His quick, warm breaths whispered into her ear. Kaiden heartbeat pounded against the plane between Misty’s breasts. She reached under the sheets and playfully squeezed his manhood.

“I’m okay, don’t do that again baby, please. I can take a couple of shots and be ready again to put you back to sleep again.” Kaiden teased.

“You do know I’m from Detroit, right?” Misty asked.

Kaiden raised his head from the crook of Misty’s neck. He abruptly propped up on one elbow. Deeply, Kaiden stared into Misty’s eyes. He raised his right eyebrow and his face contorted with confusion.

“Is that supposed to mean something to me? Kaiden asked.

Misty gently pushed at Kaiden’s chest. He rolled away from on top of her and onto the rumpled bed sheets. Once free, Misty sat up and softly swung her quivering feet into the plush carpet beside Kaiden’s bed. She stood up quietly while a slick drop of wetness rolled down one of her Misty’s thighs. Misty had found that every time he had touched her, she became aroused.

The heat of Kaiden's gaze at her naturally tanned nakedness in the dimly lit space excited her. She was conscious of what he might see and confident which made her quiver within. Misty wiped loose, unruly curls from her brow before she swung her head to glance at him. Afterward, she turned and walked around the bed and went out the bedroom door.

Misty sashayed into Kaiden's kitchen. She quickly grabbed two glasses, rinsed them, and filled them with ice. Misty added water to one drink and took them both to the counter. She added liquor to the other glass and then took them back to the bedroom with her.

Misty smiled as she deliberately approached Kaiden with the glasses extended. The moment he reached out to grasp them, Misty turned and walked away. She stopped in the well-lit doorway, and her body became a curvy silhouette in a frame in his view.

Misty flinched to suppress the giggle when she dipped into the bathroom. Kaiden huffed loudly at the sound of the glasses clinking on the marble counter. Misty had sat down the drinks, to set a warm shower. A shadow emerged across the bath doorway and made her heart start to pitter-patter.

She peeked and saw Kaiden saunter inside, look at both glasses and pick up the ice water. He sipped the water and stared over the glass at Misty's bottom in the air. Kaiden gulped loudly when his eyes rested on the puffy, bald lips that peeked from between her thick thighs. Although they had just made love that morning, Kaiden became rock hard.

Misty stood up and then turned towards him. She stepped over to where Kaiden was. He cocked his head to the side when she lifted the liquor and took a long sip. The warmth of spicy liquid flowed down her throat. Suddenly, a strong-willed thought popped in her mind. Misty lowered her eyelids seductively, licked her plump lips and smirked.

Kaiden shrugged when Misty put the glass to his lips. Gradually, he took the robust liquid flow into his mouth. When Kaiden wrapped his free hand over her glass-filled hand, Misty sighed. Gently, she moved the glass and their hands down from his face.

Misty propped up on the tips of her toes and breezily brushed her lips across his. A cold drop of water dripped down the side of her hand from the glass. Misty half expected to see a puff of steam to rise from the water drop because of the heat she could feel inside of her. She sucked a wet trail of liquor from Kaiden's mouth before she pulled away.

Kaiden guffawed when Misty took both glasses from his hands. He leaned his head aside when she set them back on the counter. Embolden by the taste of his lips, Misty quickly grabbed Kaiden's hands and pulled him to the shower.

He followed Misty but stood back at the shower door and swung his arm out. She graciously threw a bared leg into the tub and nodded at him. Misty scurried under the spray through the steamy shower rain and waited for him to come inside. Once she heard the latch of the closed shower door, she turned towards him. Misty felt Kaiden's arms circle her waist protectively.

"You are something different. You know that little lady." Kaiden quipped.

Misty smiled then reached for the shower gel and body scrubber. Kaiden reached up and pointed the shower head to their thighs to see the warm rain massage the curves of her. Misty uncapped the top on the soap and filled the cleaner with sudsy foam. Methodically, she began to wash his neck, then muscular chest, abdomen, and finally down to his swiftly thickening erection.

She adoringly enfolded her soapy hands around his swollen pole. Misty watched Kaiden's eyes roll back, and his lids flutter for a moment. When Misty was done, she refreshed the puff and began to wash away their sweat from her shoulders. With her head down, Misty noticed Kaiden's hardness visibly throbbed. Finally, Misty had pitched one leg high against the shower wall and looked up at his face. She saw him bit down hard on his lips, while a full path of frothy bubbles flowed down from between her thighs to Misty's toes.

Kaiden took a deep breath. He covered himself with one hand and shook his head back and forth. Misty rinsed the foam away and turned her back to him. When she started to wash again, her cheeks glistening in his view and he exhaled loudly. Kaiden heard Misty snicker.

"Why are you playing me like this? That was premeditated." Kaiden said.

Misty finished her and stepped around Kaiden and traded places. She deliberately wedged herself between Kaiden's erection and the frosted glass door, before she opened it. A cloud of steamed vapor curled upward from the hot stall when Misty stepped out. She grabbed the fluffy towel from the hook behind the bath door.

Misty wrapped the towel around her breasts, picked up the glass of liquor from the counter, and walked out. A few moments later, Kaiden followed to find Misty in his already in

his bedroom. She had stopped in the living room, retrieved the drinks and ashtray before she had begun to tidy the bed sheets.

Kaiden walked to the side of the bed in a towel that swaddled around his waist. Misty felt his presence and turned toward him. She returned her attention to the task of bed-making. Shortly, she heard a click, and soon afterward a colossal cloud of pungent dank submerged her nostrils while he puffed. Misty placed a knee on the bed. Her towel snagged and slid off, just as she began to crawl across his bed.

“So, are you just gone keep playing peek a boo with that huh?” Kaiden jested.

Misty scampered to the far side of the bed and giggled. She patted the empty spot next to herself on the mattress. Misty waited with bated breath while Kaiden sat down next to her. She softly blew a huff of air, leaped up, and then slid over onto his lap, Misty straddled him and looked into his glazed eyes.

Kaiden leaned over and sat his drink down on the stand. He held the hefty rolled leaf between his fingers to her lips. Misty inhaled. Later, Kaiden placed the cigar between his lips and took a robust drag. Misty shifted when Kaiden lazily leaned back over to lay the smoke in the tray carefully.

Misty chuckled because the firm length of him pushed had pushed through the opening of the towel when he reached. His stiffness had touched her bared, moist lips. Misty sucked in a huge gulp of air. Next, she felt Kaiden’s hands dig into the pliant meat of her full cheeks. Her melons jiggled against his chest when she began to shake from holding onto her surprised laughter.

Kaiden let the smoke waft from his nostrils. Misty placed her lips over his and gently blew smoke into his mouth. When Kaiden felt her soft tongue touch his again, he pulled her closer. His chest heaved while Misty reach down between them and gripped him. Kaiden nipped at her lips, while Misty massaged him against her wetness.

Misty gasped when Kaiden broke his kiss and nibbled his way down to her hard nipple. Her breasts were extra sensitive from her excitement. The hard had tightened buds jutted out. Once Kaiden sucked her into his mouth, she felt her juices immediately increase. The mixture of heat and determined suction from his lips had hit a nerve of pleasure for her.

Kaiden sucked hard at first and then softer and softer until she grabbed his head. Her breasts thumped for more attention. Misty placed a hand on his chest and pushed him onto his

back. He reluctantly pulled away from her altogether and laid back. Usually overly concerned about her appearance, Misty knew that her hair was a tousled mess and figured her eyes were glassy from the extreme high she had. She locked her stare into Kaiden's bloodshot eyes.

Misty did not blink while she positioned herself over the head of Kaiden. She painstakingly forced her tight wetness over him. Her clit came to rest on his pelvis. Misty gradually flexed her legs apart until at last, she was in a split position. Misty licked her lips, put both hands on Kaiden's chest, and started to twerk a sexy rhythm on his dick.

"For real Misty?" Kaiden whispered.

Misty leaned forward a bit and closed her eyes. Rebelliously, she bounded up and down slowly. Without warning, a spasm ripped through Misty. Sweet oil flowed down the sides of his shaft from her. Less than five minutes later, Misty felt the return of another powerful spasm wrench through her body. Her muscles sucked at him, and she bounced faster.

"Damn Misty, I'm about to bust," Kaiden whined.

Misty slowed down her motions, pulled in her legs, and slid down. She cradled his sac in both her hands and nearly swallowed Kaiden. Misty determinedly teased the entire length of Kaiden with taunt lips. Slowly, she slithered her wet tongue around him with each downward spiral.

Kaiden stiffened and groaned. Misty rolled his testicles gently in her fingers. By the fifth stroke, she could hear him claw at the sheets. A stream of hot, watery cream exploded from Kaiden and he screamed out Misty's name.

"What the fuck, my soul" Kaiden gasped.

Although Kaiden had yelled, Misty did not stop. Misty laid her head on his thigh and unhurriedly drained him. His body went suddenly went from tense to limp. Finally, she was sure that he had taken the last drop of his juices from him.

Misty smiled to herself when she crawled back up his body. She nestled her plump face against one of Kaiden's muscular arms. Misty watched for his chest heave for a moment, before she closed her eyes. Abruptly, Kaiden wrapped his arms around her and pulled her tightly to him. Misty snuggled herself in his comfortable embrace quietly, for a long while.

"Misty, damn, what have you done to me?" Kaiden asked softly.

'Huh?' Misty responded.

“This is why he is still so upset. You can’t do this and think a man can watch you walk away? Even if you not in love with me you, make me feel like it’s all mine.”

“Love, Kaiden what are you talking about?”

“I’m in love with you Misty. I am going to take the best care of you. I want you, not just some of you; all of you.”

“Take care of me?”

“What, are you an echo now?”

Misty lazily lifted her head and looked up at Kaiden. She saw his brow was furrowed with concern. Kaiden’s jawline was taunt which gave him the appearance of anxiousness to Misty. She sighed and swallowed harder than ever before.

“Kaiden, I don’t know about that. We are great in bed together, no doubt it, but I don’t think that this is enough to be talking about forever.” Misty said.

Kaiden gently rolled Misty on her back. She laid her head into the massive pillow and stared up at him. Kaiden leaned closer to her face. He delicately cupped her chin.

“Look me in the eyes and tell me we are just fucking then Misty. Better yet, tell me that you would be like this anyone. Say it how you playing it baby, is this just a fling? Then look at me and tell me I mean nothing to you.” Kaiden said.

Misty purse her lips and flared her nostrils. Slowly, she turned her head towards the door of his bedroom. Misty could feel the blood rush through her veins as her heart began to race. Her cheeks flushed when Kaiden softly pulled her face back to his.

“What do you feel right now? Say it Misty, tell me the truth.” Kaiden pleaded.

“This is conversation is insane because you opened a room in my heart that I didn’t even know was there. I feel like you are a part of the sultry colors in my soul. Like I just don’t want to kiss you, but that I need to. I feel like I have never been more free or natural with anyone. You make me feel confident, sexy, beautiful, and special.” Misty admitted nervously.

“Tell me the truth Misty, all of it! Please just answer the question once and for all. Am I only a fuck?”

“Kaiden, where is all of this coming from baby? We had a great time, so far. Do we need to complicate this?”

Misty pulled away and sat up. She spotted her towel on the floor and quickly darted towards the cloth. Hastily, Misty covered herself. She bolted from the room with the towel wrapped tightly around her.

Without hesitation, Kaiden leaped from the bed. Just as Misty leaned against a wall in the hallway, the first tear ran down her cheek. Kaiden walked over to her and firmly placed both hands on either side of the wall near her face. When he saw the water roll down from Misty's eyes, his demeanor softened. With the softest touch, he wiped her face and gazed into her clouded irises.

"I'm sorry baby, please don't cry. I didn't mean to yell." Kaiden groaned.

When Kaiden reached down and grasped her hands, she sobbed. Misty struggled against the tension in her thighs that urged her to run. Kaiden lifted their hands together over her head. He pinned her against the wall when he stepped forward. She looked up into his face when his body pressed on hers.

"What Misty?" Kaiden asked.

Misty could feel the defiant confidence in his hands. His gaze burned through her like rare energy that could see inside her thoughts. Misty shivered when she felt Kaiden thrust his groin against her through the fabric between them. Her lips began to move, but the words would not come out.

"Forget it Misty, since you expect me to believe that I am just a fuck to you then, Even though that is not what your body says," Kaiden whispered.

Kaiden let go of Misty hands and watched them slide down to her sides. Cautiously, he took one finger and pulled her wrap open. Misty trembled when the towel fluttered to the floor. She sighed when Kaiden dropped down to where the sheet lay, anticipating that he would retrieve the item.

Instead, Kaiden planted a wet French kiss across her clit. Misty clutched her breasts and moaned, although her face was still wet with tears. She offered no resistance when Kaiden lifted her leg and draped her thigh over his shoulder. He slithered his tongue along the length of her exposed treasures repeatedly. With her back pushed against the cold wall, Misty whimpered while Kaiden licked her into an unadulterated frenzy. Her womb muscles froze as she climbed towards her the highest peak of a liquefied release all over his lips.

Delicate babble slowly began to escape through her lips as she teetered on the cusp of yet another orgasm. Eyes closed, Misty could feel herself a few scant seconds away from physical bliss. Unexpectedly, Kaiden stood up and shoved his renewed hardness into her. He still had her thigh cupped in his hand. Surrounded between the solid plaster behind her and the solidness of Kaiden in front of her, Misty grimaced when he pushed far up inside her clenched walls.

Uncontrolled vibrations pulsed through her, which made her grip Kaiden's manhood as tightly as a wrench. He was near wholly hidden inside of her. Misty's mouth open and closed several times in a row. She desperately wanted to release the overwhelming reality that lodged itself in the depth of her unspoken words earlier. With no going back, the sparks of color had begun to coil from her soul and waft through her lips in a throaty whisper.

"Kaiden, please baby, you already know." Misty panted.

Kaiden's fingertips curled into Misty's skin. She winced and opened her eyes. Shocked, Misty saw a range of emotions flash through Kaiden's eyes. Once again, with her soul ablaze, she convulsed violently while impaled on him. His teeth clenched and passion-filled veins curled along his biceps.

"Yes, I know Misty, but say it," Kaiden grunted.

Misty gasped. She blinked away the tears that had started to form. Their bodies had become magnetically entwined spirits that no longer relied on simple words to explain anything. Still, he deserved the truth.

"I want you Kaiden" Misty sighed.

Kaiden thrust into her and calmly withdrew. Misty quivered in his hand. Her clit thrashed and thumped against the slow drag of his long stroke. Misty threw her hands against the wall.

"I know" Kaiden huffed.

Sharply, began to Kaiden drive into her wet slipperiness. Misty knees shook, although the bulk of her weight was on Kaiden. Her breaths turned into short bursts of air. Water from her eyes glistened in her long lashes, while she studied his eyes intently.

"I'm yours," Misty said.

Kaiden lifted her the air. Misty clutched her arms around him to prevent a fall. Swiftly, she found herself on the carpeted floor with her legs far behind her head. Misty whined, opened her arms, and then placed her hands on Kaiden's chest.

Drenched in sweat and juice, Kaiden spread Misty's thighs wide apart. He positioned himself just at the edges of her engorged labia. Unrestrained shudders jolted through her when Kaiden senses locked onto Misty's pretty dark eyes. A tiny stripe of sugary nectar rolled down between her the bared halves of her bottom.

"I know," Kaiden said.

Without a noise, Kaiden started to plunge his inflexible spear inside of her over and over. His sac spanked the crease of Misty's ass, and she writhed. Kaiden pulled one of her ankles down to his face. Sensually, he kissed her the back of her calves without a missed stroke.

Purposely, Kaiden developed a controlled pace. Misty flinched when the next enormous wave of passion came over her, and she grabbed ahold of him. Her lacquered nails carved trails into his bare chest and shoulders, as she fought to maintain some sense of control. Misty shimmied, quivered, and gasped. Her eyes glazed over when an Earth-sized orgasm jerked the words from her lungs.

"Damn, Yes I love you..." Misty sobbed.

He stopped mid-stroked. Kaiden's head moved from side to side searching Misty's face. He gulped hard. Suddenly, Kaiden closed his eyes.

He rose up while Misty trembled on the floor. Kaiden jumped up hurriedly and scooped Misty from the carpet. He then carried her across the threshold of his bedroom doorway effortlessly. With great care, Kaiden laid Misty in the center of his bed. Still wracked with subtle convulsions, Misty turned her head when he climbed on top of her again. She lightly rubbed his back, while her lover entered her again until he finally rested his lips next to her ear.

"I know from the way you touch me. You are going to be my wife soon. The truth is that I have the means to you spoil you rotten. I fell in love you with the first time that I looked in your eyes. Whatever you want from me. I'll be that."

Misty smiled and sniffled. His voice quivered when he poured his heart out to her. Misty could hear, see, taste, and feel the sentiments from Kaiden. Misty ran one hand up to the nape of his neck and kissed Kaiden with the whole of the fire that had been smoldering in her depths.

"Stay mine, Kaiden forever." Misty murmured between kisses.

Chapter 16

Thomas rolled his eyes and looked at his watch. It was nearly time to hit the field with his students. The word had spread like wildfire about his upcoming adventure at the new school. Thomas was excited. Still, he had been a little tired of the questions he had to answer all that day.

Finally, Thomas found himself with a quiet moment. The students had gone inside to suit up. He waited in the cold shadow of the brown brick building. Thomas looked up at the sun as it began to lower itself beyond the horizon.

Thomas took a deep breath and then slowly blew the air out through his lips. He had enjoyed his time with Classy. Briefly, Thomas wondered what she was up to at the moment and smiled. He found that he thought about her often since they had spent the night together.

A few minutes later, Thomas heard the sound of rigid bottom shoes patter against the polished concrete floors of the school hallway. The chatter of teenagers grew louder, and Thomas stood up straight when they burst out the door. Quickly, the young adults galloped toward the open grass covered area with their instruments.

The sun had set to dusk. A large panel of solar lights slowly blinked into a softly lit glow. A warm, gentle breeze swept across their faces, and everyone talked and hustled into position. Thomas began to walk to the first line of the formation. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a whistle.

Without warning, a sharp shrill blast rang out. A few seconds later, the only noise was the whoosh of cars that sped down the main street nearby. The kids stood straight, eyes on Thomas, and clutched their instruments. He swiveled his eyes back and forth across the rows.

Satisfied, Thomas raised his hand and blew sharp tones on the whistle. On cue, a measured drumroll banged out in the evening air. Thomas patted his foot rhythmically and snickered while he shook his head from side to side. He threw his hand up and briefly interrupted the percussion. Thomas walked over to the drum section and folded his arms.

“When I said to study the Pledge of Allegiance first, did you hear me?” Thomas asked.

Thomas’s eyes scanned over the crowd. He saw many heads nod up and down and noticed a few confused faces twisted. Thomas grabbed his chin and rubbed. He sighed and slid a hand in his pocket. Thomas nodded and slowly brought the whistle back out and blew.

Again, the drum line began to bang out the same tune. Thomas stared at them for a moment. Suddenly, the horns started to blow. Thomas closed his eyes and listened keenly. At last, he reached up and wiped his face with his free hand and blew the whistle. The music dropped.

Thomas cleared his throat while he looked on to gauge their focus. When he was comfortable that he had their attention, Thomas took in a deep breath and licked his lips. He opened his mouth.

“Wow,” Thomas yelled.

“Is that good or bad?” Trouble asked loudly.

Thomas scowled and sauntered over to her. He looked at the pint-sized reform and shook his head negatively. Thomas huffed and stopped next to her. He rolled his eyes at the child and smiled.

“Look, I have been in the music scene longer than most of you have been on the planet. I know T. I and Rick Ross’s Pledge of Allegiance, when I hear it.” Thomas said.

“Yeah, that what you said to play the Pledge of Allegiance first.” Trouble yawned.

Thomas bent down and stared at Trouble. She pursed her lips and began to cock her head to the side. Thomas felt the laughter that brewed in his chest. He stood up and walked backed to the front of the line.

“Boy I tell you, these kids these days are something special. God knows we gave them instructions and the internet. There was no telling what was going to happen. They are learning though.” Thomas grumbled.

Thomas noticed Trouble make her way towards him through the lines. He braced himself for the smart-mouthed little girl and her antics. Most of the time, he had to bend down to hear. Thomas glanced down at her and folded his arms when she reached him.

“Mr. Base, did you mean those other people’s version?” Trouble asked.

Thomas lowered his gaze towards the child. His nostrils flared as he counted back from five in his head. A wave of calm washed over him, but his squared shoulders remained staunch as always. Visibly, nothing about him had changed.

“What do you mean by those other people?” Thomas asked.

“The white people version. The one that references people of color being slaves, as if that is something to be proud. I can’t play that. I have personal objections.”

“What! Who raised you? Last week I couldn’t get your little behind in a chair to learn nothing, now you got a Civic class lesson and personal objections? You are doing the most right now.”

“You told me to go class, and I did. “

“Girl, if you don’t get your little Disturbing the Peace Black Power Strong-self, back in line where you belong.”

“Mr. Base for real though, we got our own thing. We don’t want to play that one. We want this one.”

“Really, why?”

“We just do.”

Thomas sighed and looked up. He swung his arm out in the direction that the child should have been. Thomas lowered his chin and watched as Trouble peacefully marched back into the line. Then he reached for his whistle again. A loud blast pierced the evening lull. Quickly, a cadence started from the snare drums.

Thomas listened patiently until the end. He scanned his eyes over the gathered formation. The horn section appeared winded as they struggled to catch their next breaths. A few of the dancers sprawled out on the grass from faked exhaustion. While others looked anxiously toward him, slowly, Thomas put his hands together and clapped.

“Well, you did play it very well, and I’m so proud of you. Good job, we will address learning the other version at another time. Class dismissed.” Thomas said.

Thomas stood back and guarded his post. The children began to break from their lines and rush towards the school. Thomas smiled. He walked towards the building behind the last kid.

As usual, Thomas times the students. He opened the door and yelled for them to hurry after five minutes. As he expected, Trouble and a few others were the last to leave out the large doors. He rolled his eyes and feigned annoyance when she ran up and hugged him.

“Thank you, Mr. Base. We rocked that.” Trouble said.

“What you know about racism? I supposed I didn’t think that would be something that you would latch on to, but I assume that you made it to History class at least.” Thomas said.

“I know that when I grow up what I’m gonna be riding in.”

“What?”

“I’ ma be riding in my ’64 with all the homies screaming swing by sweet chariot stop and let me ride! Well after I graduate, I want to study law.”

"Let me guess, Civil Rights huh?"

Thomas looked down at the young woman. Her face looked round and hopeful to him. Thomas noticed that she had pressed clothes an that she smelled like flowers. He was proud that she had changed so quickly. He giggled and thought of his sister, Misty.

Thomas watched Trouble bounce off and head toward the bus stop. He began to walk to his vehicle. On a whim, Thomas pulled his cell phone out and dialed his sister. He reached his truck and hit the fob. The lights came on, and the engine purred while the phone rang through.

“Hey bruh, what’s good with you?” Misty whispered.

“What you doing? I just called to tell you that one little lady that you came to see did a 180 turn.” Thomas laughed.

“Oh, that’s what’s up. Glad I could be of service.” Misty sighed dreamily.

“Did I catch you at a bad time? When are you coming home? I heard you got a project on the flow.”

“Nah, it’s not a bad time. I was thinking about getting to the apartment to pack. I am coming home next Friday though. I’m going to drive up and to see a place this weekend.”

“Did you tell Dad yet?”

“Nope”

“Hmmm, what about your friend there or are coming home alone?”

“Are you trying to figure out if I am coming? Yes, I am coming home to get this popped off from my end. I think this relationship will be fine, no matter where I am.”

“Let me know if there is anything that I can do my baby, okay?”

“Hey, what happened with that lady you went out with?”

“It’s all good. I’m going to see Classy tonight. Now, what about you?”

“Good. Oh me, I think that Scott better figure out something that makes sense before I get back. Kaiden has been a game-changer.”

“Alright, you know what works for you Misty. Be happy.”

“Love you.”

“Love you more Shuga.”

Thomas had barely hung up when the phone rang in his hand. He looked down as saw Classy' s number flash across his screen. Thomas smiled and cleared his throat. He answered and listened while Classy invited him over. Thomas agreed, hung up, and pulled out.

Chapter 17

Kaiden laid back on the pillow and watched Misty slide her cell phone back into her purse. She flopped back on the pillow and snuggled next to him. Kaiden stared up at the ceiling and watched the fan blades swirl slowly.

“The way we have been making love, makes me keep forgetting that you are leaving me,” Kaiden said.

Misty scowled and propped up on her arm. She leaned over Kaiden to look in his eyes. Kaiden closed his eyelids. Misty sighed and placed her other hand on his bared chest. She felt Kaiden shiver.

“Don't do that. Don't shut me out.” Misty whispered.

“I couldn't even if I wanted to. I'm in love you and your ex wants you back. Now you are going back to where he is. You are so passionate Misty; do you not realize that if I were him, I would do everything that I could to get back with you? I'm no fool baby but what's going to happen when you are in this mood, and he comes to call?” Kaiden asked.

“The same that happens when your ex comes calling I guess.”

“That's not fair Misty.”

“Neither, is your question. You have to trust what you feel about me like I trust what I feel about you.”

“You said what you said in the heat of the moment. I think that in that split second you meant that, but over time and distance, I'm not so sure.”

Misty face snarled into tight twisted lines. She sat up and turned away from Kaiden. Her heart began to race. Misty dropped her head into her hands and shrugged.

“Perhaps, I should be headed back to my place. I've overstayed if I make you worry like this.” Misty said.

“Fuck Misty, I apologize. I can’t stand the thought of any other man with you that is not family. I’m not even sure from where that came. Look, let me grab a shower and get we can sit and talk, please. Just don’t leave yet, okay?” Kaiden groaned.

“I’m going to go get some ice and freshen our drinks.”

Misty pushed off from the bed on sore legs. She winced. Misty saw Kaiden’s button up shirt that hung on the rack. She grabbed it and slipped inside. The long arms dangled over her fingertips. Once Misty rolled the back a few turns, she sashayed her way into the kitchen.

Misty had managed a fresh bucket of ice. She was headed back to Kaiden’s bed when his doorbell rang. Misty went into his room and quietly sat down the ice. She heard the steady pelt of water from Kaiden in the shower.

Shortly, Misty heard a soft frantic knock at the door. She paused. Suddenly, the shrill ring of his phone chirped. Misty looked over at his phone and walked to his front door. She saw a woman with a phone to her face, and hand raised to tap on his door again. Misty opened the door.

“Hello, can I help you?” Misty asked.

“Who are you and where is Kaiden?” the woman snorted.

Misty looked the woman up and down. A breeze flowed through the door between her thighs and the edge of his shirt lifted. Tightly, Misty clutched the fabric around her and smiled at the woman. She threw back her head in the direction of the bathroom.

“He is in the shower right now; would you like to leave him a message?” Misty asked.

“Yeah, tell him his woman out here.” The woman replied.

“I think you mean his ex-girlfriend. I am sure that you meant his ex.”

“Oh, you must be a call girl huh? So, this payback for me cheating. Okay, tell my man I still love him, and I will see him later.”

Misty cocked her side to the side. She raised her free hand to her chin and parted her feet firmly on the floor. Slowly, Misty balled her fist tight. She sized the woman up and took a step forward menacingly. Misty watched the female shrink backward.

“I’m sorry, did you just ask me to tell him that the mudhole in the driveway is what I left of your disrespectful ass?” Misty asked.

“Oh wow, that is immature.”

“That’s your opinion, but you need to decide, right now. I take exception to be referred to as a call girl. I am a grown ass woman. Especially, by some broad, that does not have the self-pride just to let it go. In case you are blind, I am nearly naked. I’m not here to have tea and crumpets boo-boo.”

“So, he slept with you. We were working on our problems; it’s a mistake.”

“You put him on a bookshelf like a toy and walked away.”

“Look, you know don’t him or me like that so where did you even come from, like seriously?”

Misty’s face had become a tightly scrunched ball of fury. In her head, she focused hard on the distance between her fist and the other woman’s eye. Kaiden had opened the bath door and peeked out, just as Misty took another calculated step forward.

Misty did not hear anything, except the blood rush past her eardrums.

“First of all, Kaiden is not your man. He is mine. Second, I’m not a call girl, but I am the grown ass woman that he calls...repeatedly. Finally, I came from a place with a fist in front of the doors of the City Building. My state is affectionally referred to as the Murda Mitten. Now, I can show you why that is, or I can get back in his bed quietly. The finder is the keeper. So, what is it going to be?” Misty asked.

“I ain’t about to fight over no man.” The woman replied.

“Fight implies that you are going to walk away after.”

” You want to beef over a dick, wow.”

“Girl, preserve your life and get back in the car, before I get my purse and part that funky rat weave right for you, in broad daylight.”

Misty smiled and squared her shoulders. Misty watched the woman’s eyes dart toward the sidewalk quickly and then back to her. Misty shook her head and then balled up her other fist. She paused when Misty heard the sound of water that dripped on the wooden porch. She looked down and saw a puddle start to form around the woman’s left shoe.

Misty burst into giggles and slammed the door. She took a deep breath and began to walk back to Kaiden’s bedroom.

By the time she reached the door, Misty had noticed that Kaiden sat on the side of his bed. His fingers pressed against his lips. Kaiden looked straight ahead while Misty hesitantly

sauntered up to him. Misty stopped and stood in front of him quietly. The noise of tires that squealed suddenly and then quickly faded had caught her attention. Misty suppressed another giggle.

Misty squatted down and looked up at Kaiden. She reached up and touched his cheek gently. Misty gasped softly when the warmth of his hand slid up to cover hers. She licked her lips.

“Baby, I apologize. I answered your door. I didn’t like what old girl said, and my Detroit temper sparked a little bit, but she is still alive. Yay for growth!” Misty said.

“I heard but am I really your man Misty? Did you say it because we were sexing or what? I can’t help but feel some type of way right now. I mean you said that like you honestly meant that. I know what you said, but I did wonder if that was all just in the heat of the moment. Damn, I don’t even remember me thinking this much about what a woman thought or felt before. Just forget that I asked.” Kaiden sighed.

“I meant what I said.”

“Look, you don’t ever have to fight over me. I’m right where I want to be. But you got a little a savage side huh? Did you say a mudhole, Misty?”

Misty huffed and turned her head. She looked to the floor and fought the urge to respond because the thought of him with another woman had made Misty furious. The veins in her delicate hands were plump from the adrenaline rush. Misty bit down on her bottom lip. Kaiden fingers gently stroked her cheek and Misty began to calm down.

Kaiden smiled when Misty stood up. He leaned back on the bed. Kaiden smile turned into a wide beam when Misty straddled his lap and sat down on him. He threw one arm behind his head.

Misty draped herself across his chest before she rested her cheek on his shoulder. Her soft bald wetness flanked both sides of his pole. Misty gasped when Kaiden moved to adjust himself. She caught a chill when he rubbed against her clit in the shuffle.

After a few minutes, Kaiden wrapped his both arms securely around Misty’s waist. With her ear close to his chest, she could hear the change in his heartbeat quicken. She swallowed hard when she felt the thickness return below his waist. Kaiden began to move his thumb in small circles on Misty’s soft skin.

“Smart, independent, and feisty. I like a little hellcat in a woman too though.” Kaiden giggled.

Misty soon found herself snickering as well. She has not expected the other woman to be such a sore loser should they ever meet. Indeed, she was offended by the woman’s rude remarks. However, Misty did not feel guilty over how she had responded either.

“I mean I did not imagine that you, of all people, would react that way. You seem like an innocent, sweet person.” Kaiden said.

“If it makes any difference in the future, I could offer her my right Hand of Fellowship Detroit Style?” Misty whispered.

“What is that?”

“Pretty much the same thing, these hands.”

Kaiden laughed hard. He shook his head back and forth. Kaiden’s abs tensed and flexed. He took a hand and covered his eyes.

“I would much rather make love to you than watch you fight, I think,” Kaiden said.

They had made love often over the past few days. Misty had become extremely sensitive to his touch. Her constricted and engorged walls were on the edge of tenderness. Misty’s nipples had become vulnerable from the stimulation. The slightest bit across her breasts for her seemed to tingle down her spine. Her love button pushed from between her lips because she was aroused from her naked skin on Kaiden’s.

Misty rolled off Kaiden. She laid aside of him and closed her eyes. Misty felt the mattress shift before a warm breath breezed across the cleft of her breasts. She squeezed her eyes tightly and shuddered. Misty felt Kaiden began to suck her nipple gently.

“Kaiden please.” Misty moaned.

He shifted his weight onto his knees and slid down her body to the floor. Misty’s gasped. Kaiden moved her legs until the back of her knees were draped over his shoulders. Suddenly, Mist felt his tongue poke through her swelling labia. Kaiden heard a faint whine from Misty when his tongue slowly glided up the center of her.

Misty threw her arms out and clutched Kaiden’s bed sheets in her hands. Soon, Misty found herself gyrating her hips in response to his movements. Each lick over her swollen clit

caused her to inhale quickly. The air had become cumbersome and hard to breathe as she came closer to the brink of another orgasm.

Without warning her stomach muscles tightened. Misty breaths were so quick and short that her breasts wobbled. Clear sweet juices rolled down her open cleft and pooled in the crack of her plump ass. Misty open her hands and clawed at the sheets even tighter and before she finally looked down at him.

She was surprised to see that his eyes fixed on her face. Kaiden's lips glistened and glowed from Misty's wetness. She bit her lip and flung her hair back. Misty began to stare at him while she ground herself even further onto his tongue. A tremor of pleasure bolted through her legs, and she closed her eyes again.

Suddenly, Misty felt the pressure that pinned her knees back on both sides of her. Her massive bottom jiggled when the bed moved from underneath her. Her eyes flew open. Misty saw Kaiden's lips moist lips close to hers a second before she felt the warmth of his passionate kiss.

Just as quickly, Kaiden's rigid tool pressed hard against Misty's well-oiled slit. Roughly, he plowed into the narrow and moist path to her womb. Misty's first scream was barely audible because his tongue and lips had covered hers completely. Kaiden grunted and pushed her legs back even farther.

Misty broke away from the kiss to catch her breath. She huffed swiftly and wrestled to get her hands between them. Kaiden had lodged himself so far inside of her that Misty hoped that he would not merely split her into halves. Her tiny little hands were useless when she pushed against his massive well-toned chest.

He laid his head aside hers. Kaiden's weight had anchored Misty into position. She turned toward him and sucked his lip into her mouth. Kaiden slowly withdrew only once, before he began to hammer mercilessly inside of her.

"Kaiden, please baby." Misty cried.

Despite the thick carpet, the rapid bumps of the bedposts against the floor floated through the air to her ears. Less than a minute before, Misty had been on the verge to release a flood of cum meant for his face. Now, her muscles fiercely gripped his pulsating dick. Misty lay trapped in a mixture of slight pain and great pleasure.

Misty wiggled around in an attempt to control his access. Kaiden swiftly let go of her thighs and gripped her fleshy mounds in his strong hands when he hoisted her butt into the air with his palms forcefully. The tips of his pressed until Kaiden snatched her close and her love button smashed against his pelvis.

Kaiden glared boldly into Misty's eyes. The flames that he saw there taunted his soul. Misty smirked and squeezed him playfully. Kaiden rose up and then grimaced before he plunged into Misty again.

A wide prism of colored lights warmed her body. Misty grabbed onto Kaiden and began to rock her hips to meet his thrusts. Steadily, a strong storm of pure desire began to build into a rage in between them. Misty started to sob.

Kaiden huffed and pounded while sweat dripped from his brow. A light steady stream of drops from his face rained between her breasts and rolled across the space of her heart. A violent tremor gripped his entire body and his muscles rippled underneath his dark skin. Kaiden clenched his teeth and struggled to suppress a bellow. Instead, a guttural animal-like growl escaped his lips.

"Please Kaiden." Misty whimpered breathlessly.

"I don't want to, Misty," Kaiden grunted.

Misty was the first to cave into the frenzy of contractions that wrenched the pit of her belly. Her thighs spasmed as the natural energy ripped through her like bolts of lightning. Kaiden's last shred of control shattered. His frame tensed, and a burst of cream erupted inside of Misty's softness from him.

"Fuck, I'm cumming," Kaiden groaned.

Chapter 18

The next few days seemed to go by quicker than usual for Thomas. His hectic pace of life brought Friday evening to his calendar before he had time to reflect. Thomas sat on his couch alone. He stared the shot glass filled with Hennessy in hand when his cell phone rang from the table. Thomas sighed and leaned over to pick up and accept the call.

"Hey, Thomas. How are you? Where are you spinning tonight?" Misty asked.

"You here? Aww, snap." Thomas chuckled.

“Yeah, I’m at a hotel for the weekend. I’ve got an appointment with a realtor in the morning, for a final walk through. Three bedroom and two baths, so I think I’m going to take it.”

“That is a lot of space for just you.”

“I know, but since my friend hooked this up and most of this situation will be taken care of, I’m good. Maybe we can get together for brunch tomorrow, afterward?”

“That’s a hell of a gift to a woman. What about your program? How do you feel? I know you hate public speaking, sis.”

“I hope that the more I do it, the better I’ll feel about speaking. Our little ladies are growing up not realizing that we are not just descendant of slaves. I see what Mama meant now, about if you knew better you would do better. No brown child should ever have to grow up believing that it is the offspring of a monkey that benevolent white folks saw fit to make servants. Every scientific fact points to humankind origins as coming from a black woman. You have always been so smooth and polite in the face of this, which is great. I applaud your dignity and tact, but my view is different. At the end of the day, I think there is a benefit to aim for a better world through the pursuit of truthful knowledge. We are more than the Talented Tenth, period. IF we are not, then we damn sure better get on the ball and get those numbers up. I don’t give a damn what W.E.B Dubois said. He is a bald-faced lie. I refuse to accept that one out of every ten kids are good to go but the other nine are doomed. Let alone the utter stupidity to assume that skin color has anything to do with learning ability without any evidence that it is true? If I am wrong to say that racism is sibling rivalry gone to the extreme, then so be it. We all have the same mother. Humanity started with one woman and she was African according to common sense backed with scientific data.”

“Oh, my goodness, Misty. You are relentless. It never occurred to you to follow the system and work through the kinks to promote things as fairer for people of color, did it? Don’t answer that. Look, I’ll be at the Lab in a few hours, see you there my baby.”

“Look, I never got to say this but thanks for being such an amazing Brother,”

“Is there another kind to be? I’m Base, Thomas Base.”

Misty burst out laughing and hung up. Her brother’s confidence had always been such. Some people believed him to be conceited, but Misty knew better from growing up with him. Their mother did not tolerate arrogance but endowed her babies with a sense of confidence about their unlimited potential.

“You can be whatever you want to be, dream it, plan it, do it.” Mama reminded them.

Thomas sipped the amber colored liquid and chuckled. He smiled after he learned that his sister was home. Thomas had begun to worry, that Misty might be happier away from home than she had been in Detroit. He placed his drink on the table, stood up, and walked into his kitchen.

Thomas looked in the refrigerator and groaned. He would have to cook and had been too busy to remember to thaw something, lately. Both of Thomas’s eyebrows went high up on his forehead when his disappointed expression changed. He walked back to his cell phone, picked it up, and scrolled through his call log. Misty answered on the first ring.

“Hey sis, let’s go grab something to eat before we head to the club.” Thomas gushed.

“I’m game. Is it okay if I bring someone? My friend said that was something important that I needed to know. You guys could meet anyway. I would love to meet the lady who has my brother smiling too if she can come.” Misty said.

“For sure, let’s do that.”

Thomas hung up and then quickly dialed Classy to invite her, as well. He beamed, while he walked quickly to his shower first and changed for dinner because Classy had agreed to join them for dinner. An hour later, Thomas walked out of his front door into the cooling evening air.

He had already pulled away from the curb when he checked the clock on his dashboard. Thomas sighed when he realized that he still had almost an hour before meeting his sister and her guest at the local diner. He drove Woodward Ave. through Mid-town Detroit until Kaiden had passed Wayne State University’s campus. A feeling of nostalgia ran through Thomas while he passed familiar streets from his childhood.

Thomas turned onto Warren, and his eyes widened. He slowed down his vehicle and stared out the windshield attentively. Thomas immediately expected to smell fried chicken and beef floating in the breeze through his window from the Food and Munch. The restaurant had been located directly across the street from the Murray- Wright school where he and Misty had attended. Thomas inhaled fresh air instead though.

As he neared the upcoming intersection, Thomas stopped at the traffic light close to the school. A resigned grimace slowly appeared on his face. The hang-out that had been started by his friend and fellow Murray -Wright alumni, Big Bill, was gone. Thomas saw a neatly cut field in its place.

The light turned green, and unhurriedly Thomas pulled off. Without serious thought, he crossed the intersection and pulled into a spot in the Student Parking area of his old school. Thomas flipped his visor down over to shield his vision from the pointed glow of the sunlight. After his sight adjusted, he leaned his head to the side while a smile spread across Thomas's lips.

It had been rare that Thomas found time just to relax and reflect. He was glad for the chance but smiled at what he saw. Even though the landscape had changed so drastically, Thomas was excited. The most noticeable changes were ones he believed were most needed.

It had been nothing short of a miracle, to Thomas that anyone could make it through the purposely designed system of oppression that was the ghetto. Suddenly, he shook his head back and forth. He vividly remembered the crumbling buildings, people that walked fast back and forth with a glassy stare into the eyes of a drug-addicted death, young people with real potential caught in the crosshairs of the war on blackness. In the middle of his formative years, Thomas had hung to the hope that one day it would not be as bad. In the quiet evening of the nearly desolate area of maintained fields around the school, Thomas saw the dawn of better days.

The area was cleared of blight, the schools declared a drug-free zones, and the small businesses relocated to bigger and better things. For blocks except for old families that owned generational real estate and refused to leave, there was land to rebuild. The sky seemed to be the limit of potential for the longstanding neighborhood, and so Thomas grinned.

Fifteen minutes later, Thomas started his truck and pulled out. When he arrived at the next light, only a single car pulled up in traffic beside him. Thomas looked over casually before he reached to turn up his radio. A loud car horn blared quickly, and his head popped up to check the rearview mirror. No one was behind him, and Thomas then looked over at the vehicle beside him.

“What’s up Base. Long time no see, Big Homie!” The driver yelled.

Thomas stared at the driver for a second and then nodded curtly. Although the face looked imprecisely familiar to Thomas, he could not readily name the person. Thomas pulled off yet again. At the next light, the same car pulled next to Thomas again and blew the horn. Thomas reached and lowered the volume on his music for a second.

“What’s up, man?” Thomas yelled.

“Nothing bruh, I thought that was you, and I was like dang, I can’t believe it. I haven’t seen you since before I did them 25 years upstate. My mama sent out invitations to my

homecoming, but I guess you didn't get one. It was off the chain, but that was three years ago though." Mark said.

"Homecoming party for spending 25 years in prison, yeah I guess it was off the chain. What you are doing now?"

"Nothing, you know my criminal record and no diploma been a weight on my shoulders. I'm still trying to get on my feet. I see the game done changed so much out here man that I can't flip a couple of eight balls or get me a couple of young hoes to get that paper like I used to. How is Misty and what you doing now?"

Thomas sealed his mouth, bristled and then stared hard at the guy. He could not remember his name no matter how hard he tried. Thomas did not much care for what the man said either. He quickly decided he was not about to tell him anything about his sister. Instead, Thomas scowled and put his hand on his waist.

"What did you say your name was again?" Thomas asked.

"Aww my brother come on, it's me, Mark," Mark replied.

Thomas' eyes began to dart back and forth. Out of nowhere, a memory of a younger and much slimmer version of Mark holding his mouth while blood poured between his fingers appeared in Thomas's mind. Instantly, he made the connection to Misty. Thomas chuckled.

"Oh, my bad man. She is fine and we out here still changing the game. I'll tell her that you said hello." Thomas replied.

Before Mark could say anything, Thomas hit the power button on his window and pulled away. The moment that he had a car length ahead, Thomas guffawed. He had recalled that in high school Mark had apparently thought he was smooth. Mark had tried hard to be friends with Thomas and some of their group, but they wanted no part of him. For the simple set of teenagers, it an easy guess that Mark would in up in jail or hell.

The latter almost had come first. The short story went that Mark was afraid of Thomas and decided to cozy up to Misty first for cool points with the clique'. However, it did not go as Mark planned when he let a jealous hearted comment about her brother slip out of his mouth. In their younger years, Misty solved problems with violence. She swiftly round-house kicked the boy in the mouth. Thomas's only memory of the man was the laughing stock of the Murray Wright Pilots, as the guy who got beat up by a tiny little girl.

Chapter 19

Misty looked at the Jacuzzi longingly. She had time for a quick shower and to change before she and Kaiden had quite a drive to make it across 8 Mile and into Detroit. Misty turned and saw Kaiden asleep peacefully across the hotel bed. She leaned her head against the door's frame and sighed. She wondered how many times he would drive back to Detroit before it became too much for him. It was his first road trip of a nearly five-hour drive from Illinois. There would be time for them to relax in the private hot tub later before the trip back.

Misty ran a hand through her curly hair before she walked into the bathroom to get ready. She set the water, stripped from her clothes and stepped inside the frothy warm spray. Misty closed her eyes and let the heated rain flow down her face and naked body for a long minute. She suddenly tensed and began to wipe her eyes clear since she felt strong hands grab her bouncy wet breasts.

She spun around into Kaiden's arms and then kissed his bared chest. Misty whined a little when Kaiden's fingers traced the curve of her spine. Since they had met the smallest touch between them sparked an inferno that raged quickly for her. Misty struggled against the want to wrap her legs around his waist.

"Hey, I thought you were sleeping. Can we please save all this until we come back from dinner and drinks with my brother and his girlfriend?" Misty said.

"Well, that's a nice surprise. I'm meeting your brother tonight, hmm," Kaiden reacted.

"Uh yes and I'm going to roll through his Lab tonight for a while if that's okay. I've never met his new girlfriend either so that it won't be too awkward, at least I hope not anyways."

"Actually, I have a surprise, as well, but it can wait until later."

Kaiden pulled Misty tighter to him. She had assumed that he would be too exhausted for intimacy, after the long drive up to Michigan. However, his manhood that thumped firmly against her thigh suggested that she was mistaken. Kaiden started to rub circles in the small of her back before he let go. Twenty minutes later, they both bolted from the steam-filled bath, clean and

wrapped in white towels. Misty grabbed her unpacked suitcase and flopped on the bed. Forty minutes after the shower, they had managed to get dressed and leave the hotel. Misty rode quietly after she had set the address to the Blue Fin Restaurant into the screen of the mapping system for driving directions. The heat of arousal from his caresses in the shower still weighed heavily on her mind, while she slid on her seatbelt.

The soft hum of the engine startled Misty back to reality when Kaiden started the car. She casually looked out of the window and had begun to watch the sky speed past a window-sized view. Misty saw the soft glow of the sun start to dip below the skyline; she settled in her seat and relaxed for the ride.

“Why are you so quiet love? Is everything alright?” Kaiden asked.

“I’m fine. I’m looking forward to seeing my brother,” Misty answered.

“I’m a little nervous about meeting him, but I kind of hoped that I might one day. I’m glad just to get it done tonight.”

The remainder of the trip to dinner, Kaiden, and Misty remained quiet. At last, the feminine on-screen voice proclaimed that they had arrived at their destination. Kaiden pulled up into the valet lane, put the car in park, and got out. The valet person quickly opened Misty’s door and helped her out of the vehicle. Misty smiled faintly when Kaiden walked over and reached for her hand.

Kaiden reached for the entrance door, opened it, and stood back. Misty walked inside and over to the host stand quietly. Kaiden walked up beside her and gently placed his hand in the small of her back while he requested a table. The host nodded agreement and then beckoned for them to follow him to a table. When they arrived at the table an unknown hand reached for the chair that she had aimed to sit.

“Well, well, well, the Queen of Icy Hearts in the flesh. Fancy seeing you here looking like a delicious snack,” Scott purred.

Misty’s head followed the voice over and saw her ex-husband. Her face immediately contorted in displeasure for a second but then relaxed in a smile. Misty looked Scott over and

shrugged. The fear that she had of him before now replaced with a calm braveness. Kaiden clutched her hand and pulled her closer when Misty opened her mouth to reply to Scott.

“It is going to be very hard for you to swallow with hands wrapped around your girlish windpipe,” Thomas said.

Misty looked past Scott and saw her brother’s immense border cast an uncomfortable shadow over the father of her children. She smiled after Scott bucked his eyes, swallowed hard, and then nervously started to rub his tie. When Scott swiveled around to face the implied threat from Thomas, Misty giggled. She moved toward her brother.

“Even harder without any teeth to chew delicious snacks. Especially, since Misty is my soul food, I don’t tolerate little boys playing around plates that are made for a grown man,” Kaiden growled.

Misty leaned over and hugged his brother. Partly from excitement at seeing him and somewhat to delay him strangling Scott. Quickly, Misty reached back for Kaiden and attempted to direct him past Scott and introduce him to Thomas. Her plan failed miserably because Kaiden did not move an inch. Misty looked back at Kaiden and saw him nod at her brother instead.

Scott stepped back and turned his head back and forth between Thomas and Kaiden. He inhaled deeply and then shoved his hands in his trouser pockets. Suddenly, the bravado from a moment before was gone his shoulders slumped. Scott took another step away, but Thomas and Kaiden moved closer to him. Finally, Scott turned and walked around the table and straight out the eatery’s front door.

“Hello, I’m Kaiden Jedrek, it a pleasure to meet you, Thomas,” Kaiden said.

Kaiden unclenched his fist and extended his hand to Thomas. Misty’s brother reached out and firmly grasped the offered hand and nodded. Thomas looked at his sister’s face and saw her smile which warmed his heart almost immediately. Kaiden let go of the handshake and looked sternly toward the front door.

“Dawg, did you say knock the calcium chips out of his mouth?” Thomas jested.

“Seriously, but breathing is on the hierarchy of needs O. G,” Kaiden snickered.

Misty glanced back and forth from her brother's and Kaiden's faces. She pulled a delicate hand over her lips and shook her head back and forth. Still tittering while Kaiden offered her a seat first, Misty then looked on as both men sat. A waiter appeared beside her unexpectedly and placed menus near her table settings. Misty listened attentively, while the men talked until the host ushered Classy to their table.

Chapter 20

Thomas got up and placed his hand on the back of the chair that had been offered to Classy by the host. Kaiden stood up politely until Classy was seated before he and Thomas sat down again. Thomas looked on as Misty reached out and clasped both her hands over Classy's while she introduced herself.

Kaiden informed the host that the table needed drinks and the host took their order and relayed them to the bar. Within minutes, everyone engaged in cheerful small talk. The evening flew by quickly after they placed orders for food. Almost two hours later, the waiter returned with the tab sat it in the middle of the table.

"After we settle up, you guys are coming to the Lab right?" Thomas inquired.

"Sure thing," Misty answered.

"Misty, I had something to talk to you about first," Kaiden whispered.

Thomas and Classy had overheard Kaiden and looked at each other. Misty eyes began to dart from side to side, and she raised a brow while she gauged their reaction against her own. Thomas leaned back in his chair while Classy leaned closer to the table anxiously. Kaiden cleared his throat.

"Well, don't let us stop you from talking Kaiden," Thomas teased.

"Yeah, Misty and I are practically family Kaiden, please speak your mind," Classy jested as well.

Kaiden shot a look of feigned annoyance at the nosiness of the couple and smiled. Without delay, he turned his chair to face Misty directly. Kaiden unhurriedly straightened his

jacket before he reached out and clutched one of Misty hands tightly. He visibly tremored bit, reached in his suit and pulled out an envelope. Kaiden cleared his throat again while he laid the document on her lap.

“Look Misty, I know that you are coming back here to stay, and I can see why. Your family loves you, and I love what makes you happy. I finally got to see that little something amiss in your soul is filled since we arrived. Meeting you was a curveball as it were, but I caught that, and I’m not trying to lose you either. The house that we are going to see in the morning is just the start. I already made an investment that I hope will make you very happy. It is a lucrative franchised delivery route here in Detroit. There are just two problems though. The first one is that you will need an experienced manager who can drive those trucks to make this plan work. It just so happens, that I can personally vouch for this one guy that is eager to relocate next week and take care of that for you if that is what you want.” Kaiden said.

Thomas leaned up to the table and smiled when Misty’s mouth fell open. Heat flushed Misty’s face while she digested the intent of Kaiden’s words while Thomas and Classy stared at her. She squirmed in her seat and looked up at him, then Classy, and finally over to Thomas. Her brother coughed behind a balled fist, which Misty did not find helpful at all. Finally, after a long silence at the table, Thomas crossed his arms.

Misty closed and opened her mouth several times, but nothing came out. She felt Kaiden move, and her hand vibrated anxiously against his palm. Misty closed her mouth and inhaled deep. Her chest puffed with fresh air as her heart raced wildly. Slowly, she exhaled.

“What’s the other problem?” Misty asked.

Kaiden smiled at the soft, curious tone of her voice. He leaned his head to one side and sheepishly dug his free hand into his pants pocket. Still firmly clutching her hand, Kaiden gracefully slid from the chair onto the floor on one knee. He steadied Misty’s quivering fingers and slipped a brilliant round diamond ring on her third finger.

“The other issue is that I did not realize until we met just how incomplete I felt. I need us to grow into everything good that we are meant to be, so Ms. Misty Base will you do me the honor of marrying me?” Kaiden asked.

“Yes,” Misty answered.

Kaiden’s mouth fell open. He pivoted his head around the room quickly. Kaiden stood up abruptly and pulled Misty with him. He held her protectively in his arms before she kissed him.

Thomas and Classy started to clap. Soon several other patrons joined the unscripted celebration. Kaiden relaxed when Misty grabbed his waist tightly. Thomas stood and walked over and welcomed Kaiden into his family with a pat on the back. Classy, the neat Diva, whipped out a tissue, rushed around the table, and then dabbed at the tears that threatened to ruin Misty’s make-up.

Misty was pulled away by Thomas, and he hugged her. She laughed and wrapped her arms tightly around her brother’s neck. A peaceful wave of calm flowed over Misty. The love that had unexpectedly found her was real enough to follow her and added to love that she already had in her family.

“Don’t ever go to sleep mad with him Misty. Whatever it is, talk it out and then work it out. Congratulations,” Thomas said.

Thomas checked his watch and grimaced. He let go of Misty. Thomas took Classy by the hand before he announced that they had to get the Lab. He would not be late.

Misty and Classy started to stroll towards the valet bench just outside the front door of the restaurant. They giggled and gushed over Misty’s engagement ring along the way. Thomas and Kaiden stayed behind and spoke in low tones while they settled the tab. In a short while, the men had come out, retrieved their cars, and pulled out with their respective dates seated for the ride on the way to Base Unit Laboratory.

Chapter

Thomas blew his car horn to greet his old friend Kent in the parking lot of the club, as soon as they pulled in. Cars lined the busy street on Larkins Avenue, but it seemed quiet oddly quiet in the area to Thomas. He parked, got out and opened Classy’s door, and then he began to identify the door key while he walked toward the side entrance. Thomas reached the large opening, unlocked the door and swiftly swung it wide before he stepped inside the spacious hall.

The aroma of freshly fried chicken overwhelmed Thomas. He paused in the darkness near the light switch. Thomas cocked his head to the side and listened. When he reached out to power up the lighting, he thought that he had heard giggling come from inside the building.

Misty and Classy stood to the side while Kaiden pulled the door open for them. As soon as they entered, Thomas flipped on the lights. His face wrinkled with confusion because loud music had begun to play. Thomas glanced behind him, and the trio saw the concerned scowl on his face. Misty looked over at Classy who shrugged as if clueless too. Thomas walked up to the hall and then bent the corner that led into the main ballroom. A rush of people that chanted suddenly appeared.

“Go, DJ! ‘Cause that’s my Dj! Now go, DJ!”

Thomas stopped and clutched his chest. He looked up in time to see a flood of balloons and colorful confetti rain down from the ceiling on his head. Thomas’s eyes were able to focus on the banner that hung across the wall that read” Congrats to the Base Administration!” Slowly, he turned and grinned sheepishly at Classy. He had quickly guessed from the sign that she had planned this event because she was the only person that Thomas had told that he would be picking his staff for the new school.

Thomas stepped over to Classy and grabbed her around the waist. He lifted her high off the floor and twirled her around in a tight embrace. Finally, he placed her gently on the floor, grabbed her hands and lifted them to his lips and kissed them. Thomas glowed with gratitude for Classy’s efforts.

“I know that you did this and thank you so much,” Thomas blushed.

“Yes, I did Thomas, but it is to thank you. In the coming months, there will be challenges that cause you to question why you were chosen for this position but first hear my viewpoint. You are an incredible leader, and more importantly a man of integrity and honor. I have not met enough men that are so heavily invested in their community in such a personal way. You were blessed with a gift that you use tirelessly for the benefit of others. I admire and respect that.

You make sense in a world where too many brothers chose other routes that end in prison, rehab, or dead. It is a tragedy to see any black person locked in a cage, strung out, or cold

in the morgue from bad choices of theirs or by design. There are whole systems that used to destroy our women and children by taking men of potential and creating convicts, junkies, and corpses. Without bold people of vision like you, that are willing to risk everything to find a better way, to protect our future then we would have already been defeated.

That doesn't just deserve respect, it commands it, so thank you for everything that you mean to all of us. You are appreciated, Thomas," Classy replied.

"Aww Classy, but I had good mentors in my family, and then teachers like Mr. Love and Mr. Ellison. Hell, even ordinary people that just worked every day to be the best people that they could be. It was right in front of me. I didn't make me anything special. I just tried to figure out how to walk in those big shoes. I never marched for Civil Rights or nothing. I am the best version of Thomas Base that I can be at this moment while planning how to be better tomorrow, baby."

"I disagree Thomas. When someone selects not to tear down their community, chooses to walk past the trap, chooses not to spend his time on earth in a cell, chooses to skillfully protect and defend the future, and chooses to recognize and honor the sacrifices made for him or her to do so by repeating it, then he or she is marching for Civil Rights. He or she has taken up the bloodstained banner to carry it forward. He or she becomes the heartbeat of our culture, one that beats with love. Thomas, I love you because you are a symbol of love in all that you do. The greatest alchemists' patiently craft our future moves with wisdom. Tonight, we chose to gather and celebrate that."

Misty walked up to her brother and placed a supportive hand on his shoulder. She high-fived Classy with the other hand. Misty leaned on her tip-toes and kissed his cheek. She headed back to Kaiden's side before Thomas and Classy walked into the crowd that waited.

"Amun-Ra," Misty shouted.

Kaiden leaned back and looked Misty up and down. An aware spark of fire responsively flashed in his eyes. Kaiden licked his lips, rushed forward, and then swept Misty up into his arms. Passionately, he kissed her, until she finally pulled away to catch a breath.

“Esoteric knowledge, Misty? In front of other people at that. I am tempted to take back to the room right now and polish your tight walls with my lips before I slip you an obelisk that now feels as if it is carved from stone. Girl, you know what you are doing to me,” Kaiden rasped.

Misty giggled seductively in his ear. She ran her hands up his broad chest and swayed her body against his. Misty felt Kaiden pepper a trail of soft kisses along her neck. She closed her eyes and sighed.

“In about an hour we can leave, go back to the hotel, and slide into the Jacuzzi. I can’t wait to share with you some of the most fundamental knowledge of an enigmatic, soul snatching, medical anomaly. It was probably discovered before the days of Imhotep,’ Misty purred.

“What might that be?” Kaiden asked.

“No gag reflexes.”

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