

The background of the book cover is black, featuring a network of glowing red lines that curve and swirl across the page. Two bright red starburst light effects are positioned horizontally, one on the left and one on the right, adding a sense of dynamic energy to the design.

Dangerous DEALINGS

AMARIS RICCI

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Amaris Ricci

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Chapter ONE

Amari Camden is an accomplished Barbadian doctor. He grew up not entirely poor but his mother often struggled to make ends meet. She got so frustrated at one point she would bring men home when she thought Amari was asleep and they would pay her to have sex. The bills were always paid now and food was always in the house and he got extra allowance.

Amari got up one night to go to the bathroom and the noises he heard coming from his mother's bedroom excited him. A budding teenager with a new found activity, he was destined for trouble. When Amari's mother wasn't at home, he would drill a small hole into the wooden wall of her bedroom from his. He made sure he collected all the dust and washed it down the sink. His mother's bed was on the far side of her bedroom away from the wall so no matter where he put the hole he would have a great view of what was going on. Sure enough, late at night he would turn the light off in his room and he would hear voices bypassing his bedroom. Minutes later he would move the picture and take a look. What Amari saw the first night more than excited him. He got so aroused he felt like crying because he didn't know how to make his erection go down.

Every night for the next four years it would be the same thing. Late at night his mother would bring home the men. Amari never had to go anywhere to learn about what to do in bed, he learned it right at home.

One day his mother was rearranging her room and she found the hole. She went into Amari's room and tried to figure out where it would be. She moved every photo and when she saw it, her heart broke. She always thought she was careful but only now she knew the ramifications of her actions. Amari was now 17 and he wanted to be a doctor and she would let nothing stop him from achieving this. When he got home from school that day, his mother sat him down.

"What's up mom?"

"How long have you been watching me Amari?"

Amari could not find a crater anywhere to fall into.

"I never wanted you to see me like that. It's not how things are supposed to be and I don't want you to treat women that way either. Be the best at everything you do but treat women with respect do you hear me?"

"Yes mum." Amari held onto his mother for what seemed like an hour. He didn't even realise she had stopped breathing because he had fallen asleep.

"Mom? MOM?"

He ran to the neighbour's house and soon everyone was frantic, the police came, the ambulance and the coroner. Amari stayed in his bedroom. What would he do now? How was he going to stay in school? He knew of no family he could stay with.

One of his neighbours knocked on the bedroom door.

"Amari, have you eaten since you came home?"

"No sir."

"Come, my wife cooked, let's get you fed and we can talk about your next steps.

Amari got up, took the keys from the wall and locked the door behind him.

He was sitting at the table eating and a young girl he had been sweet on came into the room.

"Hi Amari, sorry to hear about your mother, she was so nice to me."

"Thank you."

She sat down next to him and took his hand.

"It will be okay Dad will find out what you are going to do and the rest of us will pitch in where we can."

"Okay thank you." He continued eating trying to ignore the annoyance between his legs. He scooted further under the chair to avoid being seen.

Over the next few days, everyone helped Amari out. They brought him food and helped out with the bills. He got a job working so he could help himself as well.

The girl next door would sneak into his room and they would spend the time they had kissing and fondling each other. They were both too scared to go any further and as time went by they were content to play with each other's bodies.

One day he had just come home and a man was sitting on the front porch.

"Can I help you sir?"

"I'm here representing your mother as her attorney. Can we go inside this is a private matter."

"Sure."

Amari took his keys out, opened the door and let the man in.

"Have a seat would you like something to drink?"

"Something with bubbles would be nice."

Amari took a Sprite from the refrigerator and took it to the gentleman. He opened it took a sip and closed his eyes.

"That was what I needed, thank you. Now down to business. My name is FredriqueBynoe and I am here to deliver letters from your mother's estate. These are yours for starters and you can sign here that you have received them sealed and intact." He handed Amari four envelopes and a form to sign.

"Now, I have bank account information and college documents as well, you need to sign for those as well." He handed him an envelope from a bank and one from the college his mother had picked out for him. He signed and handed back that form.

"Now the good part. Your mother told me what she had been doing for the last 5 years or so. I know you may think badly of her but she was a good woman and she did everything she had to because she wanted you to succeed in life. She asked me to make some investments for her and they paid off, I just wish she were here to see it. These my son are yours."

Mr. Bynoe handed Amari four documents. There were statements from 4 companies he had invested money for his mother. Over \$350,000 in all. The statement from the bank said \$8000 and the Credit union also had about \$8000, which one was for savings only.

"How did my mother do all of this?"

"I can only tell you that she never intended to do this for the rest of her life, she was saving enough money to send you to college and then you would do the rest. She decided she would not cheapen herself further and only chose successful business men, at least that way she knew she could get proper cash. Son, you don't need the details, she did the best she could. Now your college fees are paid in full. The mortgage on the house is paid in full as well and it's in your name. Sign here and here."

Mr. Bynoe marked the areas with his pen.

Amari was stunned, all the time he was watching his mother degrade herself, she was making a way for him.

The papers stated he was to start school in a few months and it wasn't too far. He could ride his bike there and back.

"Now last but not least. Everything your mother left is yours, some of it you will get now and the rest you can only access when you finish your studies. The bank account is yours to use as you see fit, like a bonus. Your credit union account is to be used for deposits only. Your mother suggested that you use it for emergencies only. The dividends from the investments will accumulate and when you get your title they become yours. I won't invest anymore unless you say so and no I don't have any actual access to the money, so no fear of it disappearing. Do you understand everything so far?"

"Yes sir. I'm still in shock. I will do my mother proud."

"I'm sure you will son. Now this is my card, if you need any help call me day or night. I have to go now, my office is about 15 minutes from here so you can pop in and let me know how you are doing."

"Thank you sir bye now."

Amari, sat down and cried his eyes out.

Chapter TWO

Three months later, he began studying to be a doctor. He was careful with his money. He didn't go out drinking or partying, he was always in his books. The memories of his mother's escapades at night gradually dimmed in his mind and he remembered only the good and positive things about her.

Amari spent the next 10 years meeting every criteria, he passed every exam with almost perfect scores. He couldn't make up his mind if he wanted to open a clinic or work in a hospital. He chose both. He took half the money from his investment account and bought a building in Belleville. Where most of the doctors in Barbados circulate. He got all his licenses and documents prepared and in about 6 months he was ready. He was now a qualified Orthopedic Surgeon.

Amari was now 30 years of age and other than losing his virginity at 21, he had not been interested in a girlfriend or even sex until he saw a woman sitting on a step in tears. He stopped his car and got out.

"Miss can I help? Are you sick?"

"No, I'm about to be evicted from my home." She handed him the notice and she had about 3 weeks.

"Do you have a job?"

"No the company close down that's why I haven't been able to pay my rent."

"I have an opening as a cleaner, you can have it if you want."

"I would rather die than be a maid. I have something else in mind. You look like a single man, how about I give you all the sex you need, and you pay my rent every month for the time we are together."

Amaris stepped back. He thought he was helping a damsel in distress but she turned out to be a whore in disguise.

"No thanks, good luck with your rent."

"What you think you are too good for me is that it? I will have you know I have a degree in Business Management, I've never done drugs and I've had this apartment for 6 years. Two months' rent and they are throwing me out. I'm not interested in a boyfriend right now and my offer would suit us both. You won't need to worry about me sleeping with other men 'cause I don't sleep around. Look forget it. Have a good evening."

"Why would you propose such a thing, I am a stranger to you."

"You stopped to see if you could help, do you have any idea what that says about you?"

"I see. Tell you what. Have dinner with me and will find a way to solve your problem without you selling yourself to me for rent money."

"Okay let me go change. Come on in."

Amaris remotely locked his car and followed the girl inside. The apartment was nicely furnished and tidy. She disappeared into a room and when she came back she looked completely different.

"Wow, you look wonderful. What is your name?"

"Alayna Jones, yours?"

"Amari Camden."

"Nice to meet you, shall we?"

Amari showed Alayna to his car, she didn't fuss over the fact that he drove the 2014 Acura MDX. He could see she liked it and wondered why she didn't comment. He was glad at first because if she did he would assume she was going out with him for his money. That didn't last long.

"Nice car, how much did you pay for it?"

"Why does that matter?"

"A car tells everything about its owner."

"The car not the price. Doctors have to work for a living, I worked for this car, think nothing of it."

"Oh, sorry."

They talked about little things, likes, dislikes, what they wanted from a relationship. Amari was beginning to see the kind of person Alayna really was and he was not liking it at all. She seemed obsessed with money and when he pulled up to the restaurant, he could see the stars in her eyes. To him it was just another expensive place to eat.

Alayna ordered, the most expensive things on the menu and she didn't even eat all. Amari had had enough of her and he wanted the night to be over. When he drove up to her building, he got out, opened her door and helped her out.

"Come on up Amari, you know you want to." She walked away, unlocked the door and left it open.

Amari hesitated at first but what did he have to lose? A night of fun and he may never see her again. When he got to her bedroom door, Alayna was already naked and sprawled across her bed. Amari stripped, put on a condom and went over to her.

Amari was not an accomplished lover, he barely knew what to do and Alayna seemed as if she knew everything so he just let her have her fun.

When they were finished Amari got up and began to get dressed.

"So, are you gonna help me with the rent?"

"How much is it?"

"\$800 for the two months."

"I don't have that on me, come by the clinic tomorrow and collect it."

"Okay. See you tomorrow then. It was nice."

"Yes it was."

Amari finished dressing and left in a bit of a hurry. He actually felt as if he wanted to throw up.

The next day he was sitting in his office preparing for the next patient and his Secretary buzzed and say a Miss Alayna Jones was here to see him and he said to send her in.

"Morning Amari."

"Morning Alayna." He handed her an envelope with the money.

"Thanks, will I see you again tonight?"

"Why to extract another \$800 from me for an hour of sex? I don't think so. If this is the life you want to live, go do it with someone else. Have a good day."

Alayna looked shocked, she actually thought she would be living high on the hog off the doctor, boy was she wrong.

"You just used to me to get sex, the least you could do was give me a little bit more money."

"I gave you enough to pay your rent for 3 months and buy some food, now kindly leave my office and do not come back."

Alayna's face registered even more shock.

"Amari, I'm sorry I....."

"Don't. Just leave." He went back to his paper work and ignored her completely. Alayna hung her head and left the clinic.

Amari felt bad but he didn't want that kind of life.

As the months passed he worked hard at the clinic, he wanted to take a vacation so he hired another doctor to work for the time he was away.

He had been looking into another business and it was time he made his move. He didn't expect the next few months in his life to play out as they did but things happen and we just have to roll with the punches or get caught up in the melee.

Amari wanted to get into real estate, he had seen a few town house on Maxwell Main road and he figure he could buy them and rent them out to tourists with families, it would be a lot cheaper than a hotel room. He also saw a few old houses he wanted to buy and fix up and either sell them or rent them out as well. He looked through the newspapers and he saw quite a few for sale. He called the numbers one by one and by the end of the week he would be purchasing 10 properties cash. When he spoke to the owners, they were currently evicting a few families and Amari didn't like that one bit. He kept going back to his mother and all she had to do for them to survive. He said he would visit the families and try to figure out how he could help them get back on their feet.

The first house he went to visit was a man with a wife and two children. Henry a construction worker and Juane was a stay at home mom. The children were both under ten years old. Amari had all respect for the husband but as soon as the wife

saw his car pull up, she did everything she could to seduce him. Amari could not believe the risk this woman was taking to keep her household together. She offered him something cold to drink when he first arrived and she hinted she was so hot that she needed something to cool her down. When asked where her husband was she told him he was at work but he could tell her anything he wanted to. She went into the kitchen and got him a drink and when she came back her blouse was undone and her cleavage was showing.

"If you want me just say it, I would do anything to keep a roof over my family's head. I promise I won't go blabbing to my friends, that won't do for either of us, just don't tell my husband I did this."

Amari looked at this nice looking woman who was willing to sleep with a rich man rather than end up on the streets and it was as if a light in him went off.

"Two things and neither of them are up for debate. You will not be sleeping with anyone else besides me or your husband, we will not do this indefinitely, I will speak to your husband and we will work out a plan to get your rent paid. You will get up off your lazy ass and find a job. I determine when I see you and if I ever hear about this from anyone you will be sorry. Are we clear?"

All of a sudden Juane became fearful of the man standing before her. She couldn't even speak, she just nodded her head.

"This is my address, come tomorrow afternoon around lunch time." Amari turned and left the house. His heart was thumping in his chest. He knew what he was doing was wrong but he was beginning to realise the power he had over women and he would use it to get what he wanted, whenever he wanted.

Chapter THREE

He had ten houses to go to and 2 more of them had wives who were willing to sleep with him to save their homes. He decided to leave the others for another time

as he was supposed to be on vacation and sex with three different women was enough for now. This went on for about 3 months. The doctor he hired at the clinic decided it was a better environment for him and he decided to stay on if Amari agreed. They worked out payment and it was going smoothly. Amari had time to try other projects in his spare time.

With seven more houses to go to, he started again to see what goodies he could find. After the ninth house and no luck he was ready to give up. He checked the address of the last house and it was in a cul-de-sac and the closet house was over 300ft away. The property was run down and he could only think of knocking it down and building a new one. He walked up to the porch and knocked on the door. He was unprepared for the beauty that came to the door. She was wearing a soft button down, yellow jersey dress that molded to her figure. Her natural braids were piled on top her head but he could see they were at least shoulder length. Her eyes were the loveliest shade of brown he had ever seen, her dark skin glowed as if she had been in the sun for hours.

"Good afternoon, my name is Dr. Camden and I....." He saw the woman step back and tears formed in her eyes.

"We have to leave now?"

"Leave now? Wait, no, I'm sorry let me explain myself, can I come in and sit down for a minute?"

"Um, it's not the best but it's all we have, if you can find a good chair, sit at your own risk."

Amari found a bar stool and sat on it.

"I have, Kool-Aid, lemonade and mauby."

"Mauby."

She dropped a few ice cubes in a tall glass and poured the drink into it.

Amari took it and said thank you. When he took the first sip, he closed his eyes and moaned.

"Sorry, it's not from the bottle, I make it from scratch with the bark."

"Oh this is wonderful, I haven't had old fashioned mauby in years."

"You are most welcome. The previous landlord told about you buying the property. Now if you aren't here to evict us, why are you here?"

"This is the last one on my list and I'm not here to evict you. What I would really like to do is fix the place up and work with you to find a way to purchase it for yourselves. How many of you live here?"

"Four, two children, my husband and myself. The children are at school and my husband is out in the back taking care of the vegetables."

"Can you ask him to come in please, he needs to hear this as well."

"Sure, give me a minute." She went out to the kitchen and Amari heard her call for someone. About five minutes later she came back in with an unkempt and dirty man in tow.

"What do you want?" Immediately Amari disliked the man and wondered how he ended up with such a lovely wife.

"I'm here to work out an agreement for the house. I plan to fix it up and arrange a rent to own."

"Is that right? I don't see how that's possible when we barely got enough now, how the hell do you expect me to buy a new house?"

Amari was taken aback. How could this lovely beauty possibly be married to this oaf? He decided to take a chance.

"You could give me your wife in exchange for the new house."

The woman looked up at Amari as if he had gone mad.

"I'm not for sale."

"How much we talking?"

"This house is worth nothing, the new one will be worth at least \$350,000."

"Can we get the money instead of the house?"

"Sure but you would have to find some place to live, since the property is still mine and I would be losing twice on the deal."

"She is a fine piece of ass, you can have her. The kids stay with me."

"Done. You can pack your bags and be ready in an hour."

"I am NOT for sale and I am NOT leaving the children. This is illegal, you can't do this to me. It's 2014 for crying out loud."

"I bet he lives in some fancy house and just look at the car he has too. Even his shoes are worth more than this house. Think of the things we can buy the children finally. We don't need you here right now anyway. I will help you pack."

"I am not going anywhere."

"Yes you are, you can come see the children anytime you wish. Do this for them, you know it's the right thing to do."

"I can't believe this. After all I've done for you this is how you treat me? Fine!! Dr. Camden I will be ready when you get back. She turned and left the two men."

"What a bitch."

"If I ever hear you refer to her in any derogatory names again you won't get another cent from me. I will be back in an hour with your cheque. What name shall I put it in?"

"Justin Forde."

"Fine. See you then."

Chapter FOUR

Amari drove away with a warm feeling in his stomach. He could see the hurt in the woman's eyes but he could also see a measure of relief. He wanted her to bring the children but he needed some time with her first. She wasn't like the other wives he has been seeing. She was a fighter and even though she had given in to her husband's bullying, he knew she would not give in to him so easily. He would have to pull out every stop in convincing her that her life would be better off with him and then he would bring the children as well.

An hour later Amari show up at the Forde house with a cheque for \$350 thousand dollars. Caitlin is sitting on the front porch with two suitcases and a hand bag in her lap. She looks as if someone knock the wind out of her and there was a mark on her cheek.

"Did he hurt you Mrs. Forde?"

She looked up at Amari and the tears fell. Amari very nicely pushed the front door and went inside and before Justin could react Amari punched him in the face and knocked him back about four feet. He flung the cheque at him and left. Caitlin was already sitting in his car when he came out.

He got in and drove away.

"What's your name?"

"Caitlin."

"I have a proposal for you Caitlin."

"What's that? You're gonna pay Justin another 350 to sleep with me?"

"No, I would like permission to take you on a date." Amaris spoke softly.

"A date?" Caitlin's shock registered in her voice.

"Yes a date. When was the last time you went out and had some clean fun?"

"Never! I married Justin when I was 20, then the children showed up."

"Say yes and I will take you out, no strings."

"Are you serious?" Caitlin's eyes lit up.

"Very."

"I....." She was about to say she didn't have anything to wear.

"I would also like to take you shopping."

"Can we get some stuff for the children?"

"I just paid your husband, he can get things for the children."

"They won't see a cent of that money Dr. Camden. I'm the one who takes care of them 24 hours a day. Since Justin brought them home he has never paid any attention to them, they are going to be so sad when they get home. Can they come over for visits?"

"Anything to please you."

"Why me? You could have any woman you want."

"You turned me down. I've visited ten houses and you are the only wife who has turned me down."

"Are you still seeing them?" She asked before she could stop herself.

"After today not a chance. Wait what do you mean brought them home? The children aren't yours?"

"No, my husband cheated on me with two separate women on the night of our wedding 6 years ago, both children are five years of age. I don't have any for Justin, nor do I wish to."

"I see. I'm sorry you had to go through that. Where would like to go shopping?"

"You are asking me? I have never shopped for clothes in my life, all the clothes I brought with me from home I still have. We never had any money for nice things and whatever we make from the garden I make sure the children get to school and have something to eat. You made a poor choice Dr. Camden."

"I beg to differ, sometimes we make choices but we don't see our efforts for a long while. I can have someone come to the house and you can pick out what you like first, then as time passes you will have your own money and you can shop on your own, fair enough?"

"How long do you plan to keep me?"

"Honestly you aren't a prisoner, if you decided you wanted to go back home, I would take you and find a way for you to get the house legally."

"Okay, will you.....?"

"No Caitlin, I don't expect you to have sex with me, although that was my original intention. You are a very beautiful woman."

Caitlin bowed her head.

When they pulled up to Amari's house Caitlin, blinked for a few seconds, she expected something different. Sure the house was huge but it looked like someone actually lived there and it wasn't just for show. There were fruit trees in the garden, a nice manicured lawn, a small fountain and there were flowers all over the place, there was a love swing under a mango tree and what looked to her like a fish pond. Amari got out and opened her door. When he held out his hand, she hesitated. Then she took it and stepped out.

They walked up to the house and Amari unlocked the door and stepped in.

"Welcome to my home."

"Oh Dr. Camden this is lovely, you live here alone?"

"Well now that you are here no and my name is Amari. Would you like something to drink?"

"Yes please."

"The kitchen is that way, help yourself, this is your home now as well."

Amari went back to the car and took her suitcases out. He contemplated giving her her own room but he wanted to feel her body next to him at night, even if they didn't make love. Caitlin was special and he would do everything he could to make her feel comfortable.

When he came back from the bedroom, Caitlin was cooking.

"Caitlin?"

"Sorry, I didn't know if you had eaten and I thought I would prepare something for you. Today has been an unexpected one and I am not sure what you want of me."

"What I want is for you to feel at home, you are not my maid or slave, you are free to come and go as you please. Let me warn you though. I will give it my best shot at trying to make you leave your husband. I will never force you to do anything you don't want to, understand me?"

"Yes Amari. We don't have a telephone at home, can you take me back to see the children, I need to tell them I won't be there for them for a while, at least until I get settled here."

"You love them that much?"

"Oh I had no choice, they are the best thing to happen to me, and they give me so much joy. I knew nothing about raising children, I was an only child and....."

"Go on." He said softly.

"My father was poor and he made my mother prostitute herself to feed the family, when Justin came along he was rich just like you and they gave me to him. I thought I would have had a better life, but he was really a drunk and a gambler and within a year whatever money he had accumulated, was gone. We got this house rent free for a year because it was old. I started the garden and I give the former owner some of what I grew and that's what has been keeping us afloat. Justin brought home Catherine first, she was just a few weeks old, quiet little thing. He bought home Joshua a year later it was then I realised when they would have been conceived. He blatantly confessed everything. Fortunately he was too drunk to consummate our marriage and I never let him touch me. I raised those children as my own and if anything happened to them because of me, I would die."

"Tell you what, they can come for visits on weekends but you can go see them whenever you want though."

"Thank you, they would like it here especially the pool, I would have to get them some floatation devices though, they can't swim yet."

"Not a problem, I can teach them, give me a minute will you?"

"Sure." Caitlin continued cooking.

She heard Amari talking on his cell phone. When he was finished he came back into the kitchen.

"The personal shopper will be here later this evening. I have a question for you."

"Would you like to have children of your own?"

"I'm not sure if I can, I've never been to see a doctor before."

"You need to get a full checkup honey. Tell you what, go to my clinic and have everything done, I will cover the charges."

"You own a clinic?"

"Yes I do."

"Oh."

"That smells nice."

"Thank you, it will be finished soon."

She turned back to the stove and she could feel Amari staring at her.

"Caitlin?" She turned to face him again.

"I'm not sure what I am doing here, I have made many mistakes with women in the last few months and I need to tell you something."

"Are you going to hurt me?"

"No. I would never do that."

"Are you a murderer?"

"No."

"Are you a rapist?"

"Not in that sense of the word no. Let me finish."

"My mother sold herself to men to keep us fed. When she died, all the money she made sent me to college, paid for our house and a whole set of other things. I loved and hated her for a long while. I bought some properties and when I first started going to the families to talk to them, I ended up bargaining with the wives

for sex. It went on for about 3 months or so. When I saw you I had the same deal in mind but when you said no, it did something to me. The three wives had no remorse whatsoever in sleeping with me. You on the other hand told me flat out no, even though you and Justin have the world of problems and I have the utmost respect for you. Honestly since meeting you, several things have happened. I decided to disengage myself from the women, I would love to create a loving home for you so you won't want to leave. I would like to meet the children soon and see how I can help them as well and last but not least. I have never met a woman who I thought I could be married to until today. I know this is a lot to take in and like I said you aren't a prisoner but I would like you to try a relationship with me and see how it goes."

Caitlin turned off the stove and turned to face Amari. She walked over to him and stood close.

"Kiss me Amari."

Amari didn't falter, he took her face in his hands and when his lips touched hers, a planet somewhere exploded. Her lips were soft and warm and she smelt like golden apples. Caitlin moaned and opened up for Amari. He deepened the kiss and his hands left her face and moved to her waist. He knew she was getting aroused, her body language was giving off all the signs. She put her arms around his neck and leaned into him.

"Caitlin....." He pulled back and looked at her. He breasts were rising and falling, her skin glowed even more now and her eyes were closed. Just then a tear trickled down her cheek.

"What's wrong honey, am I moving too fast?"

"Justin never kissed me like that. No one has ever kissed me like that."

"It's okay, we will stop now or I may not be able to leave you alone."

"Am I turning you off?"

"Open your eyes honey."

Caitlin opened her eyes and when she saw Amari's own, she could see the desire staring back at her.

"I'm taking a chance here. Don't be afraid." He pulled her close again and this time he let her feel his erection against her hip.

"I don't understand Amari."

"Have you never been held close like this before?"

"No, man has ever touched me, not even Justin."

Amari was blown away. He knew she was special but this was more than he ever imagined.

"Honey, I promise you this, if you decide to stay with me I will hold you like this every day as long as you let me. Now, I need to let you go because after that confession I would love to take you to bed and make love to you all day."

"I want you to Amari."

"Not yet honey, we have lots of time. We will get to know each other and when it happens, we won't have any doubts or regrets, understood?"

"Yes."

"Now how old are you?"

"26. You?"

"37."

"Come on let's eat. What time will the children be home?"

"The bus will drop them off around 3:15."

"Okay we will get there before then."

They sat at the breakfast table and ate and talked. Caitlin was a highly intelligent girl but she never got the chance to go to college. Amari decided if she wanted to go he would pay her fees. It was about 1 in the afternoon and Amari was a bit tired.

"I need a bit of sleep honey, feel free to roam the property. If you need me you can wake me up."

"Can I lay down with you?"

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Well come on then."

He took her hand and led her to their bedroom.

"I'm sleeping in here with you?" She saw her suitcases.

"That's what I had in mind but there are three other bedrooms you can choose from and don't worry about being alone in the house with me, I can restrain myself."

Amari had let his hair and beard grow and he looked kind of old but when he took off his shirt Caitlin almost ran through the door. Amari was perfectly toned, his abs looked like they were carved from rock. His arms were defined so much so Caitlin wanted them around her all the time.

"Keep looking at me like that and I will torture that body of yours. Come, lay with me."

She moved from the wall with great difficulty. She lay down on the bed and Amari lay next to her. He pulled her close and spooned her and within minutes he was snoring lightly. Caitlin on the other hand was hot. Amari had turned the a/c on but she was finding it difficult to relax. Amari's body was hard and warm and she felt safe. She wanted another kiss. She slowly turned in his arms and when she was face to face with him, she stared at the man she had just met.

She wondered what he looked like without the beard and hair, she would mention it to him when the time was right. She leaned forward and kissed him softly.

When he stirred she stopped. She waited until he was calm again and she kissed him. Caitlin found herself laying on her back with Amari firmly seated between her thighs.

"Hi."

"Hello."

"You were asleep."

"Yet you decided to tease me, do you know what that means?"

"That you will torture me?"

"You learn fast."

Amari lowered his head and kissed her. The fires ignited in his belly. He could feel himself harden and he growled softly.

"Make love to me Amari please."

"No honey, not yet. Be patient."

Amari ran his hands all over her body and she could not contain herself. She was writhing under him and he was getting harder. He needed to put both their fires out and he knew how. He slowly caressed Caitlin's leg and he maneuvered her dress up until he felt her panties. He continued to kiss her and she was in total oblivion.

"Make it stop Amari."

"I will honey, I will." He eased her panties down her legs, pulled them off and threw them somewhere. He got up and pulled her with him, he stood her up and unbuttoned her dress. Her breasts were heavy and her nipples perked when the coolness of the room hit her. He bent his head to take one into his mouth. Caitlin grabbed his head and pulled him into her chest. Amari could smell her scent, he knew she was ready but today was not a day for that.

Her dress hit the floor and he lay her back on the bed. He kissed her breasts again and made his way down to her stomach. Caitlin was trembling so bad, Amari couldn't help but notice. He spread her legs gently and when he licked her, she almost screamed his name. He continued slowly and there was no pretense, no lies, no cheating, she was just enjoying all that he had to give her.

Amari hooked his arms under her knees to give himself better access and he placed his hands on her tummy. She quivered uncontrollably as he carried out his promised torture.

"Let it go honey."

Caitlin was bursting, she knew she wanted something but no words would come out, Amari was making her feel as if she would disintegrate into the bed. Just when she thought she couldn't feel any more pleasure, something wonderful happened. Her body flushed from her core and spread throughout. As her orgasm took her to a place she had never even dreamed of, the tears came. Amari massaged her tummy, her hands, her legs and when she finally calmed down, the tears were still flowing.

"Shhh honey it's alright. I'm here." He lay down next to her and pulled her into him and let her cry but she wouldn't stop. He knew something else was wrong.

"Honey talk to me, did I hurt you in some way?"

"You don't want me."

"What are you talking about?"

"I thought you were going to go all the way but you did... that instead."

"Honey, if you only knew how much I wanted to take you but you are still married and until that is no longer an issue, I won't make you mine. I'm sorry if I made you think I didn't want you."

"I feel so foolish."

"Honey, we just met and already I know what you taste like. I've never done that with any woman before but for some reason I trust you and I need you to trust me as well. I started off on the wrong foot with you and I intend to make it right somehow. We would need to discuss a few things but first, it's almost three and I want you to be there when the children get home."

"Amari!"

"Yes hon."

"Thank you for rescuing me."

"Ah my love I believe it was you who rescued me. Come let's get dressed and go meet the children."

They got dressed and went out to the car. A van was pulling up when Amari opened Caitlin's door. He recognised the emblem on the side.

"Crap I forgot about her."

"I can take a taxi back if you need me to go."

"Well I won't look good wearing any of the clothes because the personal shopper is here for you. She can leave the items we will see them when we get back."

"Okay."

Amari spoke to the nice lady and he went back to the house and let her up to put the clothes inside. When they came back out Caitlin had closed her car door and was sitting quietly inside.

"She is beautiful Doc, are ya keeping this one?"

"If she will have me, she is nothing like the rest."

"Oh I can see that, she looks like an innocent lamb. Treat her well Doc. Catch you later, I will send you my bill."

"Bye Pen."

Amari got in and started the car. Caitlin looked uncomfortable.

"She's just a good friend honey, no one can compare to you."

"I didn't say anything."

"You didn't have to, it's written all over your face."

"I'm sorry, I saw her and I thought, well I got jealous because I don't have anything to offer you."

"Is that what you think? Or do you think all you have to offer me is sex?"

"Yes." Caitlin bowed her head.

"Honey, the best conversation I have had since I was a teenager was today with you. You listen, you disagree when the need be, you are open with your feelings if coaxed and so far, I don't think you have lied to me. Trust me when I say, you have a lot more to offer than sex."

"Thank you, I needed to hear that."

"Okay here we are, do you want to go inside or stay out here with me?"

"I want to stay here with you, after being with you today so intimately, I can't bare for him to be near me."

"Oh I know the feeling."

Chapter FIVE

The school bus pulled up and Caitlin got out of the car to greet the children. They screamed for her and rushed over for hugs and kisses.

"Oh I missed you so much today. Come sit with me I need to talk to you."

"Is something wrong mummy?"

"Yes and no. I have to go away for a while and until I get myself settled, you can come stay with me on weekends, I will be here every evening when you get off the bus but I won't be with you here at night."

The both started to wail at the same time as if they were a twin. Caitlin's heart was shredded. She wanted to take them with her but she didn't think Amari was ready for that responsibility as yet and she would never be able to win custody of two children that were not hers by blood.

She looked up and saw Amari staring at them, she could see his heart was breaking as well. She heard a sound behind her and Justin was coming through the door.

"Will you two cut the caterwauling and get your butts inside."

"I told you not to speak to them that way, they are just hurting."

"Ain't my fault you chose to leave them, what kind of mother are you?"

"How dare you speak to me that way? Children, I love you both never forget that, now go inside and do your homework and I will get dinner for you."

"No you won't, you don't live here anymore and you have no rights to MY children."

The children cried even harder and clung to Caitlin's legs.

"Momma don't leave us please!"

"I have to hunnie bunnies but I will see you tomorrow when you get home okay, I promise."

They shook their heads and went into the house sniffing.

"You are a bastard Justin you always have been."

She turned to walk away and he grabbed her arm. Now that was a mistake. Caitlin didn't have time to tell him to let her go before Amari punched him in the face for the second time.

"I warned you already, do not put your hands on her or any woman for that matter. As a matter of fact, I'm taking the children. Honey go pack their things this minute."

"Are you serious?" Caitlin's eyes lit up the whole porch.

"Yes I am, now go, I will have a conversation with your husband."

Caitlin rushed into the children's bedrooms and started flinging things into bags and boxes. The children helped too. When they went back, Justin was sitting in a chair smiling and Amari was standing by the door waiting.

The children rushed out of the house and stood next to the car without even saying good bye to their father. Caitlin just shook her head at him and walked past. Amari took some of the things from her and took them out to the car. He opened the trunk and put the things in. The children were smiling at him. He smiled back.

"Are you going to be our new daddy?"

"Would you like that?"

The both shook their heads. Amari laughed and took the rest of the things from Caitlin.

They all got into the car and drove away.

"How much?"

"Half of the original."

"I'm sorry Amari, I seem to come with not only baggage but a huge price tag." She whispered.

"I didn't pay for you, I paid for his ignorance and they are not baggage, just innocent bystanders. We will have to change around a few things at home."

"I didn't think of that. Are you really sure you want to do this?"

"In all my years the only thing I was ever sure of was that I wanted to be a doctor and now I can safely say yes I am sure about this. Are you?"

"No. I think you have taken on a lot. How do we move forward when Justin has the upper hand?"

"I have a great attorney and Justin has a great need for money."

"Are you leaving papa?"

"Yes I am honey, do you want to go back?" Caitlin mentally crossed her fingers.

"NO MAMA! Don't make us!"

"Shhhh it's okay, I won't make you. We are almost home, now be on your best behaviour."

"Yes mama."

"Last chance to back out Amari, you will have a ready-made family on your hands as of now."

"Never, I know what I am getting into. Here we are."

"Is this our home now mama?"

"If Amari will have us yes."

"Okay."

Amari got out and opened the door for Caitlin, then she opened the door for the children who were already starry eyed at the big house.

Amari opened the door for them and they slowly crept in.

"I will go get their stuff, be right back." He kisses her on her forehead and goes back to the car. When he comes back in the children and Caitlin are waiting for him.

"I'm gonna need a new vehicle for you and the children."

"I can't drive."

"That's why they have driving schools honey." Amari smiled and Caitlin smiled back.

"Amari dropped down on one knee in front of the children.

"Would you like to pick the room you will be sleeping in?"

"Yes please." Two five year old voices chimed in.

He held out both hands and each child took one. He winked at Caitlin and left with the children. Five minutes later she could hear screaming and laughter. She ran upstairs to find the children beating Amari with pillows.

"Oh my goodness."

"Oh hi, we were just" A pillow to the head. He pretended to fall over.

"Children!"

"Yes mama!"

"Time to clean up for dinner. Tell Dr. Camden thank you for the room."

"Thank you for the room Dr. Camden."

"Most welcome, I will see you in a bit. Do you think you can take your things out and pack them into the drawers on your own?"

"YES SIR!" Two happy voices yelled.

"Well okay then, I will come get you for dinner."

He and Caitlin left the two children and stood outside the bedroom door and listened. The children were talking.

"I like him, don't you?"

"Yes, and he smiles at mama a lot."

"She smiles at him too, I never saw her smile at papa and I bet Dr. Camden will never hit mama or us."

With that statement Caitlin, fled from next to Amari. He found her in the kitchen hunched over the counter. He walked up to her, pulled her up and put his arms around her.

"I am so sorry honey, I promise I would never hurt you or the children ever."

"I took it for them, he hates them Amari, how could you hate your own flesh and blood. He would come home drunk and go into their rooms and try to beat them and I would always get in the way. I couldn't let him touch them so I took it."

"Jesus, if he comes near them again I swear I will kill him. Neither of you are to go back to that house without me, understand?"

She nodded through her tears. Just then they heard the children coming.

Catherine and Joshua took one look at their mother and flew into a panic.

"Mama, whats wrong?"

"Oh you guys, I'm just so happy I have you with me that's all. Did you put away all your things?"

"Yes mama but we need a toy box big enough for all our toys and a book shelf for our books."

"That's a job for this weekend, we can go shopping if you like and you can pick out what you need."

"We can? We have never been shopping before."

"Well that settles that. Now what would you like for dinner."

"Pasketti and meat balls please."

"Coming right up." Caitlin looked at Amari and mouthed 'thank you'.

Chapter SIX

Caitlin started dinner and the children helped while Amari watched in awe. He never thought he would find this kind of happiness and three times over too. The children were well behaved and their grammar was impeccable.

Catherine laid the table and Joshua was attempting to pour the drinks when he spilt some on the table cloth.

"Uh oh, I'm sorry mama, I didn't mean to." Joshua put down the jug and ran away crying. Amari got up and ran after him while Caitlin and Catherine cleaned up and finish serving.

"Joshua?"

"Yes Dr. Camden." He sniffed out from the opposite side of his bed.

"What's wrong?"

"I spilt drink, papa hit me the last time I spilt drink."

"Joshua?"

"Yes Dr. Camden."

"Do I sound upset to you?"

"No Dr. Camden."

"Did you spill the drink on purpose?"

"No! I was trying to be helpful like mama taught us, I didn't mean to." He started crying again.

"Well then it's quite okay. I spill drink sometimes too."

"You do?" He peeked out from behind the bed.

"Yes and I had to spill lots of drink before I got it right."

"So you aren't mad at me?"

"Not at all. So, come let's go get dinner, the girls must be waiting for us."

Joshua stuck his head right out, wiped his face with the back of his hand and came out. He went through the bedroom door and Amari followed with a smile on his face. When they got to the kitchen Caitlin was just putting extra ice on the table. Catherine set down the spaghetti and meatballs. Everyone sat down at the breakfast table since it seated four.

"Can we say grace mama?"

"Sure pumpkin."

"Dear God, thank you for sending us Dr..... Dr....."

"Camden". Joshua whispered.

"Dr. Camden, I think he is a nice man to let all three of us into his home. Thank you for making mama smile again and even though she isn't our bio... bio...."

"Biological."

"Biological mother, she is the best. Thank you for the food and the hands that prepared it especially ours. Amen."

Amari's heart was bursting with love but when he looked at Caitlin she was staring at the children.

"Catherine?"

"Yes mama?"

"Who told you that I wasn't your mother?"

"Papa did. You were outside in the garden and we were playing and he was drunk again. He looked out and said you weren't our real mother and that our real mothers didn't want us and that you would aba.....aba....."

"Abandon." Joshua whispered.

"Abandon us too. Will you mama?"

"Never, Cat. As long as I have breath in my body I will never leave you okay."

"Yes mama."

"Come now the food is getting cold and I'm sure Dr. Camden doesn't want to hear any more of our sob stories. She looked at Amari apologetically. He smiled and picked up the bowl of pasta.

Everyone ate and talked and laughed and then it was time for the children to get to bed. With everything that happened that day, it didn't turn out too badly. They had a new home, a new father figure and hopefully they would adjust well to Amari."

"Papa can you read to us?" Joshua asked Amari.

"Is that okay?" He asked Caitlin.

"Go right ahead, I will go wash up."

Amari sat in the middle of the bed with Joshua on one side and Catherin on the other. They snuggled up to him as he read them their favourite book. Zana and The Amoeba by Aisha King

Before Amari reached the second page they were both out cold. He eased downward and slid off the bed, then put pillows at the ends and covered them up. He put on a night light and closed the door.

When he got to the kitchen Caitlin was just putting the last of the dishes away and the kitchen was spotless and the leftovers were already in the refrigerator.

"I could get used to this Caitlin."

"What?"

"Coming home to a wife and two loving children. I never thought I would get so much joy out of reading a children's book and when I kissed them goodnight, Joshua whispered goodnight papa."

"Welcome to my world. It feels great when you have impacted a child's life so much that they see only the good in you. Pity Justin never figured that out."

"Come here." He sat down held out his hand. Caitlin took it and sat on his lap.

"Tomorrow, I want you to file for divorce. I also want us to get married in 6 months and legally adopt the children but only if that's what you want as well."

"Three months, I'm not taking the chance you change your mind. I need to talk to the children, whatever we do affects them."

"Agreed. I need you to understand something though. I have to call the other women I had been involved with and tell them I am finished. I am not sure how they will take it and what they will try to do. I don't care about my reputation but now that I have the three of you, I need to protect you from anything else."

"Do you think you could ever love me Amari?"

"Haven't you noticed? I already do. My mother taught me that loving someone is the most natural thing that can happen to two people and there is absolutely no time limit on love. I want so much to give you everything you need in life and with the children I can see I will be a happy man and if more come then so be it. I may want to go back to clinical work but for now I just want to buy more properties and secure my family."

"I love the way you think, and I love that you include me in your decisions as well, please don't ever change the way you are."

"If I do I have you to bring me back in line. For tonight I think you should sleep in the other bedroom, children are impressionable and they may not understand."

"Okay." Caitlin sounded disappointed.

"In time my love in time." Amari read her like a book. Always in tune to what she was feeling or thinking.

They closed up the house left on a small light and went to their separate rooms. Around 3 in the morning Caitlin was awoken by a child screaming. She flung off the covers and ran straight to the children's room. Catherine was thrashing about the bed and Joshua was on the floor as if he had fallen off.

Caitlin ran to Catherine and picked her up. Amari came in as she sat down on the bed.

"Shhhhhhhhhh mama's here baby, don't be afraid, I'm here shhhhhhhhh."

"Josh are you okay?" Amari spoke softly.

"I'm okay papa, Cat was having a bad dream and she knocked me off the bed."

Amari walked over and picked him up and sat next to Caitlin. He put his arm around her.

"Is she okay?"

"I'm fine now papa, it was a dream that's all."

"Wanna tell me about it?" Caitlin whispered.

"We were playing outside and Justin came and took us away." Amari marveled at their adjustment of calling him papa and their real father by his name.

"He isn't going to harm you sweetie."

"I know but it was so real."

"I understand. Would you like to come sleep with us for now?"

"Okay can Josh come too? Sorry I knocked you off the bed Josh." Josh nodded his acceptance of her apology.

"Sure sweetie." He looked at Caitlin and she was smiling broadly.

They all went to the master bedroom and lay down on the bed, children in the middle and adults at the ends. When the children were settled Josh spoke.

"Mama?"

"Yes sweet pea."

"Did you and papa have an argument?"

"No Josh why would you ask that?"

"When I passed the other bedroom, it wasn't made up and there's no one else in the house, so you had to be sleeping in there."

"Oh my!"

"Did we cause a problem by being here?" Catherine asked.

"Oh my goodness, the two of you are something else. Papa and I are still getting to know each other and I am still married to Justin. Until we get married we won't be sleeping in the same bed okay?"

"Well get married tomorrow then." Josh yawned and fell fast asleep.

"Yes mama, get married tomorrow then." Catherine followed suit.

Amari tried to stifle his laughter so much his eyes were watering. Caitlin gave him a look what you did face.

She reached out her hand and he took it, they rested them on the children and fell asleep. Amari woke up to the aroma of porridge, scrambled eggs and toast. He got up, brushed his teeth and went down to the kitchen.

"Morning Amari."

"Morning Papa."

"Morning you three, wow this looks yummi."

"I did the toast." Josh piped in.

"I laid the table. Mama did everything else we aren't allowed to use the stove yet." Catherine offered.

Amari sat down and waited for Caitlin to sit as well.

"Oh gosh I forgot the bus. I have to call the service and tell them the children won't be there anymore for pick up."

"I can take them."

"Yai, we get to ride in a car to school mama."

"Yes you do, now eat up and go clean up and get dressed, you don't want to be late."

Everyone got ready and Caitlin went to the spare room to pick out something from the items the personal shopper brought. She chose a pastel green halter top and a short white pants. She didn't even realise Amari has asked for shoes, bags and other accessories as well but she didn't want to overdo it so she picked out a pair of wedge sandals and bag to match. She always wore the locket her mother gave her and that was it.

"Mama you look sweet." Josh said.

"Yes you do Caitlin. Didn't you find any jewelry you liked?"

"I didn't want to overdo it Amari, I'm not accustomed to this."

"It's okay I understand, come guys let's get you off to school, your mother and I have some things to take care of today."

They all piled into the car and before the pulled off Amari plugged his cell into the car. When the screen came up he swung the engine. While driving down the road, Amari touched a speed dial number and the phone was on loud speaker.

"Nassco Limited can I help?"

"Hi Jenna Dr. Camden here, I'd like a family car, what do you suggest?"

"How many Dr. Camden?"

"For now there are four of us, 2 adults and two children but it will be for a female and two children most of the time."

"I recommend the Fortuner Sir. Would you like to come in and see one today?"

"We will be there in half an hour."

"I will be here sir."

"Thank you."

He ended the call and touched another number.

"Hey Cam, what's up?"

"We are coming to see you in an hour David."

"Walk right in buddy."

Amari ended the call.

He touched another number.

"Camden Clinic, Sonia speaking."

"Hey Sonia, Dr Camden here, do you have any appointment slots open today?"

"Yes Doc we have one at 12 and another one at 1."

"We will take the 1. See you then."

Amari disconnected and asked Caitlin to dial the number for the bus service.

"Barbados Transport Board School Bus Service can I help?"

"Good morning this is Dr. Camden, just informing you that the Forde children won't need the bus anymore."

"I'm sorry sir but Mrs. Forde is the only family member cleared to make that decision, I will have to contact her."

"It's okay Shanice, they are with me."

"Oh sorry Mrs. Forde."

"That's okay. Have a good day."

"You as well."

Amari ended the call.

"Okay guys, I will be taking you to school from now on and picking you up as well, is that okay?"

"Yes papa."

Chapter SEVEN

Amari pulled up outside the school and they all got out. People stared at the car and the people who got out of it. Those who knew the Forde's, knew who Caitlin was and the fact that she got out of an expensive car with a man who was not her husband, started tongues wagging, especially one particular woman who knew what the good doctor looked like naked.

"So that's why he broke it off. For a young bitch, well we will see how she likes it when I tell her what the doctor has been up to."

Amari kissed the children goodbye while holding Caitlin's hand. When they were safely inside they went back to the car, got in and drove off. He didn't even pay any attention to the people staring at them, he was happy and nothing else mattered.

"Caitlin, we have to go pick out a vehicle, then to the lawyer's office, to the clinic and whatever you want to do after that we can."

"I'm too excited to think, I've never seen the children so happy and it's because of you. Oh why couldn't I have met you years ago?"

"The children needed you and years ago I would not been ready for you and we may not have worked out but we are here now and we will make our best efforts."

"Agreed."

"I want you to go back to school. You can study in the day time and be home for the children."

"What about you?"

"Me? I don't understand."

"Everything has been all about me and the children so far since we met. What do you want from us Amari?"

"Love, trust, friendship, attention, care, foot rubs, back rubs, vacations on the East Coast. I want everything you want and I want what the children want. That's family for me, people sacrificing for each other."

"I think we can handle that."

"Okay here we are, now let's go pick out a vehicle."

Amari let Caitlin pick what colour she wanted since the vehicle would be hers when she got her license. The vehicle would be delivered later that evening. He would sell his and use the new one.

They arrived at the attorney's office about 15 minutes later.

"Good morning David, this is Caitlin Forde."

"Well hello Caitlin, now it makes sense."

"What makes sense?"

"Amari does all his business with me over the telephone, this must really be important for him to show up and with a beautiful woman in hand."

"I am sure Amari has his reasons, I have come to realise he is very adept in his decisions."

"Wow, a woman with a perceptive brain. So, tell me, what services can I provide for you two today?"

"Caitlin and I met yesterday when I went to speak to her and her husband about rebuilding their house which I just bought and going from rent to own. I admit when I saw her I changed my motive for being there and her husband seemed to sense what I had in mind. I paid him \$350,000 for her to leave with me. They have two small children who are not Caitlin's biologically and even after 6 years they have not consummated their marriage. The children are now living with me. I know this is sudden but we are sure this is a good thing no matter how it came to be. Caitlin wants a divorce, we plan to get married and legally adopt the children."

"Wow."

"Yeah, we know." Amari reached out and took Caitlin's hand and winked at her. She blushed.

"Okay, since there was no consummation, this should be a piece of cake divorce wise. If he took the money for her to leave I am positive he will want more. The issue of the children will be a great undertaking. He will want money for them as well. Whatever you do, do not keep them away from him, even if you take them to the house and sit and watch him."

"He is an abusive man, he has been beating Caitlin for years, he comes home drunk and when he tries to take it out on the children she steps in. They didn't even say goodbye to him when we were leaving. I can't allow them to go back there."

"Sorry buddy, they are more his children than hers. Let's start the divorce proceedings and then we will tackle the adoption. When do you plan to get married?"

"The children said today but I was thinking more like six months, which will give us some time to get to know each other better and allow the children to adjust."

"Okay, Caitlin, you have been very quiet."

"Sir, I've come to trust Amari, and although I agree I that his first decision was a bad one, I have been a millions times happier in the last 24 hours than my entire life. He can't want me for my money since I don't have any and"

"Ah okay I understand, if I know the good doctor here, he wants to wait until you are divorced."

"Yes."

"Okay let me get some information from you and I will have the papers to sign within the week. I suggest you not tell the children you plan to adopt them legally. Try not to swing them against their father."

"Sir, my children are very intelligent for their age and they have decided that after a few minutes of meeting him, they want Amari as their father. I had no influence over that and if we have to go to court they will tell the judge what they want without any of us interfering."

"I see. Okay. I will see what I can find out about your husband and decide where we go from here."

She squeezed Amari's hand and smiled.

An hour later, they left David's office and went to the clinic.

Caitlin was examined by Dr. Joseph and the good thing about Camden clinic is that every piece of equipment known to the medical industry could be found there. She got a full checkup. She was sitting in the consult room when Amari came in and sat down.

"I can go back out if you want to talk to Ryan alone."

"No I don't mind." She smiled at him. Just then Dr. Joseph came in.

"Caitin, I need to run some other tests on you, I found a growth on one of your ovaries."

She squeezed Amari's hand.

"Will I be able to have children?"

"You will need to try first sweetie, I know you are still a virgin."

"Sir, Amari and I just met and already he has taken on my entire family. The children are both 5 years old, I can't just decide to try for a baby. I need to discuss this with him first. Is there anything else wrong with me?"

"No all your organs are healthy, the results from the blood tests will be back in a few days. In the meantime, I need you to take a regimen of vitamins and eat healthy, the tumor may go away on its own without me having to operate." He handed her some information.

"Anything else Ryan?"

"No boss, I will let you know when the test results come back."

"Thanks. Come on honey, let's go." He stood up and waited for her to get up.

They left the clinic and Caitlin was noticeably silent.

"It will be okay honey, try not to worry. What would you like to do next, before we go get the children from school?"

"Make love to me Amari."

"Honey, I know you are scared but let's not rush this, we have so much stacked against us and I need to be focused and this might sound strange but the fact that you are still a virgin works in our favour in two ways. Justin cannot say he consummated the marriage and he can't say you were unfaithful to your marriage."

"I don't care Amari, do you have any idea what it feels like not to be touched? To lay in bed and ache for someone to show you their love?"

"Yes honey I do know but if we are to be together and have the children with us, we need to do this right, you said you trusted me, don't give up on me yet."

"It's hard."

"So am I."

"Amari!"

"Sorry you walked into that one."

"Gosh."

"We can have fun without going all the way, until then just be patient and we will get through this."

"Okay, can we go get some ice-cream? Wait no I can't do that without the children. I need to get some clothes for them, they are growing fast."

"Not a problem, I will have to set up an account for you so you have money without asking me."

"What I really need is a job Amari, you may be rich but I need my freedom, I don't mind you taking care of us, but I need to be able to go into a store and buy a gift for you or the children or even myself with my own money."

"I can respect that. Tell you what. I will turn one of the properties over to you to run, actually no. I have an empty building, I want you to take a look at it and tell me what you would do with it and I will get it done and turn it over to you, it will be your responsibility after that. I am here if you need guidance but the final say will be yours. That way you don't have to go through applying to anyone and you can still be free to go to school and take of your family."

"Oh thank you this means so much to me I won't let you down I promise."

"Great, we can go see the building now."

Chapter EIGHT

They pull up to a lovely building and immediately, Caitlin can see what she wants to do.

"A mall would be perfect, I saw only one shop on the way here. There is enough space for offices as well and even a cinema. What do you think?"

Amari stared at Caitlin.

"I'm sorry you don't like the idea?"

"Hold on a moment." Amari let her hand go and went to the car, when he returned he had floor plans in his hand.

"Oh my. You already knew what you wanted to do?"

"Yes but now I don't have to worry about changing a thing. I will get David to turn the property over to you."

"Wait not yet, after we are married."

"Why wait?"

"I don't want people to think I'm in this for the money. Yes I would like to be treated well and be able to afford nice things but I you hardly know me and you keep blowing my world away with your generosity."

"This is why I want you in my life honey, you are so selfless and giving. Even if we don't end up together, I want this for you so you don't end up in the same situation as with Justin that you can't get out of and you would be able to provide for the children on your own."

"Thank you Amari. How soon can we start?"

"If you can come up with a marketing plan in a few days, we can start advertising next week. The building is complete just waiting to be rented. Retain the cinema and rent everything else.

I will give you a cell phone and I will set up an office for you at home. The leases are already prepared."

"I'm so excited, wait until the children hear about this. Can I name the Mall after them?"

"It will be yours to do whatever you wish. What will you name it?"

Caitlin thought for a minute.

"Ceejays."

"Great, I will get the specs for the cinema and we can start retro fitting within a month."

Amari looked up, clouds were looming.

"Come on home before we get wet."

"I already am."

"Caitlin....."

"I'm sorry, I've never said anything like that before." She felt ashamed.

"Honey, that simple statement has me so hard right now I could take you in the car."

"Oh."

"Yeah oh. Let's go get the children."

When they got to the school, they saw every other child but Justin and Catherine. They asked a few people but no one saw the children.

They went into the school to the staff room.

"Mrs. Forde how are you?" One of the children's teachers asked.

"Well not too good at the moment, we haven't seen the children come out."

"Your '*husband*' came to get them just after lunch, he said they had a doctor's appointment and you must have forgotten about it."

Amari could hear the venom in the teacher's voice and he was about to give her a piece of his mind when Caitlin fainted.

"Caitlin honey, wake up for me." He rubbed her hands, massaged her back and even kissed her. She stirred a bit and then she opened her eyes.

"Oh God, Justin has the children." She tried to get up quickly and almost fainted again. Amari held onto her and made her sit down.

"I've already called the police but they can't do anything since he is their biological father. Come, let's go back to the house and see if he has them there."

"Maybe if she hadn't left them, her *'husband'* would have needed to take them."

"Maybe if you didn't sleep with strangers for money, you would know that Caitlin is an exceptional woman and mother, I can't say the same for you Sophia. Have a good day."

Amari lifted Caitlin and walked quickly to the car. He opened her door and helped her in. He got in and sat down.

"I'm sorry Caitlin."

"For what Amari? For blurting out that one of the children's teachers is a fling of yours? It's not an issue."

"It is for me and now that you know I'm wondering if you don't want to be with me anymore and if that's the case I understand."

"You were honest from the beginning Amari but she just verbally attacked me not because she had proof that we are together but because she realised why you left her. Is this what I will have to go through when people start realising, I live in your house?"

"I'm really not sure honey but like I said you aren't a prisoner but I won't allow you to go back to Justin."

Amari started the engine and drove in the direction of the Forde house.

When they got there Caitlin knew it was a waste of time. If the children were there, they would be out of the house screaming for her.

"Stay here."

The house looked deserted. Amari got out and walked to the front door and without much effort, he kicked the door in. He realised Justin took whatever he could and left with the children. He went back to the car and got in. He pulled up the yellow pages and searched for the radio station.

"Starcom Network can I help you?"

"My two children have been taken from school. I am putting out a \$500,000 reward for anyone who provides information that leads to them being found. Their names are Catherine and Joshua Forde."

"I'm, sorry sir, I will have send the information to my supervisor and I'm sure he will air it as soon as we can. Do you have a number where I can contact you?"

Amari rattled off his cell phone number and his name, said thanks and hung up.

Five minutes his cell phone rang.

"Amari?"

"Hey Andrew."

"You don't have any children, what's going on?"

Amari gave him the short version of the last few days.

"Jesus, I will do what I can and I hope we can bring them home safely. I will call if we hear anything.

"Thanks." Amari hung up.

"Exactly how much money do you have Amari?"

For the first time since they found out about the children, Amari laughed.

"Well according to my banker, I have about \$18 million in cash, stocks, bonds and other investments. My properties are currently valued at about \$3 million excluding our house. The clinic is worth about \$3.5 in annual revenue, the equipment and the property."

"Wow."

"It hasn't all been roses for me honey, my mother gave me a good start from her life and I vowed never to end up in that position and now that I have you, if I still have you, I intend to make sure you don't either."

Just then his cell phone rang.

"Hello."

"Papa?"

"Catherine? I'm putting you on speaker phone, mama is here with me."

"Where are you Catherine?"

"At the Coco.....coco....."

"Coconut." Josh whispered.

"Coconut Court Hotel. Room 28. Can you come get us please?"

"We will be there in five minutes."

"Okay papa."

Chapter NINE

Amari hung up and turned the car around and stepped on the gas.

They pulled up to the hotel, parked and ran inside. When they got to reception, they asked the clerk to call the police, two children were being held against their will in room 28.

"Those two brats? They were screaming down the whole place their father had to spank one of them."

Caitlin was furious.

"If you ever call my children brats again I will punch you in the face, now call the police and give me the damned room key."

The clerk was taken aback at Caitlin's anger. She handed her the key and dialed the number of the police station.

Amari was ahead of her and when they got to the room, he unlocked it and went inside.

"Josh, Catherine!"

"Mama, Papa." They came running from the bedroom.

"We have to go now, papa says he will be back, he has to call you for ran... ran..."

"Ransom." Josh whispered.

"Ransom."

"Okay let's go, the police are on their way."

Caitlin picked up Catherine and Amari picked up Josh and rushed out of the room.

They got as far as the reception desk, when Justin came walking into the foyer door.

Amari put Josh down and pushed them behind the counter.

"Stay there."

"Well well, if it isn't the good doctor, his slut and their bastards."

"What do you want Justin, haven't you caused enough trouble? The cops are on their way."

Justin pulled out a gun and pointed it at Amari.

People started screaming and running. Amari stood there unflinching.

"Take your pick, either I take the children or my wife."

"Not happening. You sold them remember!"

"That money is already gone. Make them worth my while."

"Not another cent, Caitlin is divorcing you and the children will be adopted legally by us."

"Oh no, I am not signing anything, you will support me as long as they are alive."

"Are you entirely crazy?"

"Oh I am as sane as the next guy. I did some digging on you Doctor Camden and you haven't been as upstanding as you would have Caitlin believe. Do you want me to tell her you have been sleeping with other men's wives and that your mother was a prostitute for five years?"

"I already know all of that Justin, Amari is not like you and you are not getting any more of his money. Just go into a corner and die."

"Well somebody's coming with me today so take your pick."

"I'll go, you stay with the children."

"No Caitlin, he will kill you if you go."

"It's okay, I'm so glad you came into my life Dr. Camden. I love you." She whispered into his ear.

"Mama, don't leave us, you promised." They screamed from behind the counter.

"I'm not leaving you, I'm just going with papa to talk okay! Amari will stay with you until I get back."

The children began to cry very loudly. Caitlin's heart broke. She knew the moment Justin was able to, he would kill her but if he took the children she would never forgive herself. She walked over to Justin, who grabbed her and put the gun to her head.

Just then the police showed up and aimed the weapons at Justin.

"If you come any closer, I will kill her. Now let me pass."

They backed away and allowed him to pass. He made his way with Caitlin and shoved her into the car and drove away.

The cops followed close behind and it turned into a high speed chase.

Amari wanted to leave the children and go after Caitlin but they wouldn't let him go.

"He's gonna kill her Papa, he said he knew she would go with him to save us. Don't go he will kill you too!"

"Oh God!" The clerk exclaimed.

"Okay, I will stay with you are you hungry?"

"Yes papa."

He turned to the clerk who was now in tears at the whole scene.

"Can you give them what they want and charge it to my card please?"

"I will pay for whatever they want Dr. Camden, it's the least I could do for calling them brats."

"Thank you."

"Come on children let's go find you some food."

"Are you coming Papa?"

"Of course, let's go."

They went to the restaurant and sat down, the children ordered burgers and fries and a juice. They also ordered cheesecake for when their mother got back and a Caesar chicken salad for Amari.

"How do you know what to order from a menu?" The clerk asked.

"Some of these things mama makes at home if she gets extra money from the garden sales. Hers tastes better."

The clerk laughed.

"I'm sure it does, now eat up, when your mother gets back you will need your strength to give her hugs and kisses."

"Thank you and we are sorry we made so much noise when we came in."

"That is quite okay sweetie and I'm sorry I didn't believe you." She ruffled Joshua's hair and left.

They waited and waited and waited without a word. They left the restaurant and went to the reception lounge and sat down. The children had fallen asleep on Amari's lap.

Amari kept his eye on the door way.

When he saw her he woke the children.

"Look whose here."

"MAMA!" They screamed and ran over to her.

"Oh my babies, I'm here. See I told you I would come back. Have you been behaving?"

"Yes mama, the clerk apo... apo...."

"Apologised." Joshua whispered.

"Apologised and gave us food and we ordered cheesecake for you, you can pick it up before we leave."

"Oh you are so thoughtful. Are you okay? Did Justin hurt you?"

"No mama, he hit Joshua on his arms but we are fine. I think papa needs a hug and a kiss so we won't hog all your time." They let her go and went back to sit down."

"Hi."

"Caitlin...."

"Yes."

"You said you loved me."

"I do."

"I love you too. I don't mean to rush you and you can tell me what happened on the way home but I need to get us out of here. Children go get your mama's cheesecake."

Just then the clerk came up.

"I wanted to apologise for my comment earlier, I shouldn't have judged the children without knowing what was happening."

"Understood, thank you and thanks for taking care of my family."

The children came back and they all left to go home. They were so tired they didn't eat any dinner, Amari took Josh and Caitlin took Catherine for their baths. In no time they were out cold.

"Talk to me honey, I know you didn't want to say anything with the children here."

"I need a shower, come with me."

They went into the bedroom and headed for the shower. They stripped and stepped in.

It wasn't a romantic shower, just something to take the edge off. They finished and came out. Amari dried Caitlin's skin and she dried his. He put on a pair of boxers and she put on a night shirt.

"When Justin drove away all I could think about was you and the children and that I may never see you again. I couldn't handle that. Justin is not a very good driver and he couldn't control the car at the speed he was going at. Ya' know when you see things in movies you always want to try them? I realised his seat belt wasn't on and the car he rented had dual air bags. I waited for the right time and I grabbed the wheel and pushed it to his side and pulled the handbrake. The car slid and crashed head on into a pole. My bag came out, his didn't and he went through the windscreen and broke his neck. The police were right behind us so they cut my bag and let me out. I didn't want to wait, so I asked one of the officer to bring me back here and they could talk to me tomorrow. I just needed to see my babies and hold you in my arms again."

"It's over now honey, we can start our lives without a fuss. I love you so Caitlin."

"I love you too Amari. We still have a problem to sort out though."

"What's that?"

"The children's mothers are still alive, they will be contacted when the adoption application is made."

"I am sure they won't show up and if they do, the children will want to stay with us but I will let David know."

"Thank you."

"Amari?"

"Yes honey."

"Please."

"Caitlin....."

"We almost lost each other today, I need to feel you. Please."

Amari, heard the need in her voice and decided wedding be damned. He crawled over her and kissed her deeply. She moaned softly. Amari made love to her for hours and when they finally were satiated, they cuddled up and fell asleep in each other's arms.

Chapter TEN

The next morning was no school and Amari had promised the children he would take them shopping for clothes, book shelves and a toy box. So around 7 when he and Caitlin were still wrapped up, the children came bouncing into the room.

"Mama, papa wake up it's Saturday." Josh shouted.

"Can you hear voices Caitlin?"

"I can hear yours."

"Go back to sleep then, I must be hearing things."

"Nooooooo, you gotta wake up, we have to get breakfast and go shopping."

"Caitlin I keep hearing voices, are you sure you didn't hear anything?"

"Mmmmm"

Amari pretended to look all around the room and just when the children were about to get worried, Amari threw a pillow. They screamed with delight and jumped up into the bed.

"Good morning you two."

"Morning papa. Wake up mama!"

"I'm up with all the racket you three are keeping. What would you like for breakfast?"

"Can we eat out today, it's so pretty outside." Catherine said.

"If it's okay with papa, it's not a problem."

"Of course it's not. Come on Josh let me give you a bath."

"Come Cat, I will give you yours."

They got the children ready and then they took their shower together."

The Fortuner had arrived the previous evening but no one was in any mood to even look at it. But this morning they all fussed over it. They all got in and made their way over to Sheraton Mall. Amari could see the excitement and awe in the children's eyes.

"Please don't go overboard with them."

"Aw come on, I've never done this before and neither have they, let's have some fun please." Amari gave Caitlin the most convincing puppy dog eyes she had ever seen. She laughed

"Okay but just this once."

"Yai, come on guys, let get breakfast first then we shop."

They spent the entire day buying new clothes, toys and books for the children, there was no way they could put the things in the SUV so Amari paid delivery fees to take the things back to the house. They put the children to bed and went down to the living room.

"Oh you are spoiling them."

"I know but after everything they have been through they needed it and so did you. I have something for you Caitlin."

"I don't need anything else, you have given me so much already."

"Oh this you definitely need."

He got down on one knee and produced an emerald engagement ring.

"Oh Amari."

"Marry me Caitlin."

"Say yes mama." The children whispered from the door way

"I thought you were sleeping."

"We pretended so papa could ask you."

"Sneaks."

"Yes Dr. Amari Camden I will marry you."

Four years later

"Amari honey, are you taking the children this morning?"

"Yes I am, are you going to work this morning?"

"Yes only for a few hours, your child seems to have a fondness for sleeping in the corner of my belly."

"Oh now he's my child."

"Yep you said it." Amari walked over and put his hands on his wife's 6 month belly.

"Don't mind your mother, she's just mean, now since you are dad's child, make mummy comfortable for me." He continued to rub and the baby seemed to respond because he or she moved again."

"I do not believe that just happened."

"I have skills oh wife of mine."

"Yeah I think that's how I got pregnant to begin with."

"I can show you some of them now if you like."

"I am sure you can Dr. Camden but we are opening in a few weeks and you will not stop progress." She tiptoed and kissed him on his cheek.

Amari had wanted to make a change in his life, so when the day of their wedding came he got a shave and a haircut. Caitlin had never complained about his looks but he wanted her to be proud of him. When Caitlin stepped into the church and Amari turned around, she paused at the door. It was only when he smiled she realised what he had done. He face beamed with happiness.

They launched Ceejays mall 6 months later and the children cut the ribbon. Since then Caitlin had finished her degree in Business Management. The children were doing great in school and with a new baby on the way, everyone was happy. The children's mother came to see them when the adoption papers were filed and when they told the story of how Justin threatened them so they let the children go with him. Caitlin totally blew everyone away.

"If you allow us to adopt the children you can see them whenever you want, if that's what they want. I have rules. You may have given birth to them but for all their lives I was there and that means something to them and me. You do not make

decisions for them unless you ask us first. You do not just show up and take them, let us know first."

The two women agreed and since then there were no problems.

Joshua and Catherine grew up to be doctors under the guidance of Amari. He turned the clinic over in their names when they turned 25. Caitlin built her businesses up with Amari's help and in the 20 years they were married, they now owned 15 malls 25, properties and she ran a children's home. They had one more child and life was great.

The End.

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