



Cutthroat

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Category: Suspense Thriller

Description: Eden Shelton was once told that you can't spell embarrassment without MEN. She never believed it because according to her there was nothing better than being a wife to a loving and appreciative man.

Marrying her college sweetheart seemed to make everything in her life better. But, when her rose colored glasses are removed, Eden discovers that the man she planned to walk through life forever with has secrets.

Secrets that will change who she is forever.

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Well, hello stranger. What brings you here? Wait, let me guess. The reason you're here is because you're curious about the things that are being discussed in the news.

Am I right?

You don't have to answer that. I already know I'm right. Anytime something devastating happens to a family, and it's reported on the news, everyone's morbid curiosity takes over. Typing the victim's name into a search engine or social media just to see what you can find. Then clicking on every family member with an open profile and messaging them questions as if they're obligated to answer. I'm willing to bet that's what you did too.

Ever since that article was released about me, my social media notifications have been going crazy. Strangers are so curious about matters that do not concern them. Correction, not curious, just fucking nosy. You being here proves that I'm right. Since everything came out, I gained 23.5K social media followers.

Now I'll admit, I am a bad bitch. But I'm no model or celebrity. So, I can't believe 23,500 new people have started following me. Originally, I only had 900 followers, this increase has to be a world record for a person that's not a celebrity, influencer, or Only Fans Content Creator.

No, I'm a woman of substance. I'm an Investment Banker. My career in investment banking focuses on international banking and working with multinational clients. I bet you weren't expecting to hear that, but it's true. It's crazy, I'm telling you my business, and I have yet to properly introduce myself.

My name is Eden Marie Shelton. But everyone calls me “Edy.” As I said, I’m the US Investment Banker for Rashid Zayed International Banque founded in Saudi Arabia, and, you know what, none of that is important. I’m sure you guys don’t want to hear about my career, how well traveled I am, or my hefty salary.

No, you all found me because you’re interested in the Shelton drama. So here goes. All the speculations about me in the news are correct. Yeah, I did all that shit, and I don’t feel bad about it. I have no shame in what I did. See, I was once a damn good woman. I didn’t allow my accomplishments, my degrees, or my money to turn me into a modern woman.

There were times that I worked up to eighty hours a week and I still found time to cook my man dinner, wash his clothes, and make sure he was well satisfied in the bedroom. On nights where I was too tired to open my legs, I stayed on my knees. I apologize if that was TMI, but I wanted to prove the point that there was nothing that I wouldn’t do for my man. His needs always came first.

I gave that man 100% of me even when I wasn’t operating to my full capacity. And how did he repay me; he played me, and I couldn’t have that. Most people would say, “just move on,” but where’s the fun in that?

That man looked me in my eyes in front of God and said that he would love honor and obey me, and that was a lie. He humiliated and embarrassed me. The only thing that would make us even was some good Old Testament retribution. My ex needed to feel my pain, and I made sure he did.

You may ask if taking revenge made me feel better. The answer is no because I wasn’t seeking revenge. Revenge is an act of passion; vengeance is an act of justice. I was seeking vengeance and that damn sure made me feel great. The Bible says, vengeance is mine, and it was.

Since you're here, get comfortable. Let's take a look back over my life and I'm going to tell you exactly why I turned into a cutthroat bitch.

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A bright smile spread across Eden's face when "The Husband" flashed on her phone's screen. She saw her husband every day, slept with him every night, yet butterflies still filled her stomach as if she had just met him. Drying her hands, she tapped the green icon and answered the call.

"Hey Babe. How's your day?" Eden asked as she mixed the ingredients for a vegetarian lasagna.

She refused to give up meat, but her husband refused to eat it. He hadn't eaten any form of flesh since the age of twelve. After working more than twelve-hour days, it drained her to come home and cook two different meals, but she did what she had to because her man deserved whatever he wanted.

"My day has gotten better now that I'm talking to you," Jermaine admitted.

Eden's smile resembled the Cheshire Cat's. All her pearly whites and the empty spaces where her wisdom teeth once resided were on full display. After five years of marriage, Jermaine still made her feel like a kid at Christmas .

"Jermaine, stop making me smile," she blushed as she stirred the egg and ricotta cheese mixture.

"It's my job to keep that smile on your pretty face. Making sure my wife is happy is how I keep the other men away,"

"Well, you don't have to worry about that. Happy wife. Happy life. And I am very happy," Eden admitted.

Jermaine couldn't see it, but he knew she was smiling. A slight pain poked at his heart. He knew he had a good woman, but the world was filled with so many other women. Who was he to deny the other women the opportunity to experience a ride on the Jermaine Express.

"I love you, Eden," Jermaine blurted truthfully.

Eden froze at the sound of her name coming from her husband's mouth. He hadn't called her by her birth name in so long that she didn't think he remembered it. Truthfully, she didn't even use her government name when conducting business. She knew now that something was wrong.

"Ok Jermaine, what's wrong? You never call me Eden. It doesn't even sound right coming out of your mouth. Whose ass do I have to beat for messing with my man?" Eden asked jokily, but seriously .

Jermaine laughed.

"Calm down killer. Nothing is wrong. Nothing that I can't handle," Jermaine joked. "I hear a lot of moving around in the background. What are you doing?" Jermaine asked as he read the incoming text messages on his iPhone.

"You know I'd never let the head of the household come home to an empty plate. I'm making you a vegetarian lasagna and a rainbow salad. By the time you get here, dinner will be ready," Eden said as she removed the phone from her ear and put it on speaker, because for the life of her, she could never keep up with her AirPods.

"Awww Babe. You know your lasagna is my favorite, but it's Thursday. I'll be here at the office late as usual. I thought bringing Malcolm on as a Partner would lighten my workload, but it's making shit worse," Jermaine said while responding quickly to the second incoming text.

“Now I see why you called me Eden,” Eden sighed as she shook her head. “You know I love Malcolm, but he doesn’t know what being a partner means. He wants to be in control. He wants your spot. Sometimes friends and family simply can’t work together. It’s a sad fact,” Eden shrugged .

“You’re right. What are you doing now, I still hear a lot of movement?”

“I’m packing all this shit up. You know how much prep work goes into your specialty lasagna. This will be dinner for Tuesday,” Eden admitted.

As much as she loved her man. She would’ve never gone through the trouble of making a lasagna if she had remembered what the day was. Work had driven her so crazy that she had to dip into her ‘on the clock liquor stash’ more than once to calm her nerves.

“I’m sorry babe. Look, do me a favor,”

“What?”

“Go get a glass of wine and unwind. When I get home, I’ll eat the stress out of you,”

Jermaine’s third leg turned to stone at the thought of burying his face in between his wife’s legs. It amazed him how satisfying her sent him over the edge.

Eden’s clit pulsed. Jermaine made it his business to devour her to the point of unconsciousness and she loved him for that. She was more than ready for the Earth-shattering orgasm she’d receive.

“Don’t make me come to your office and spread eagle on your desk Mr. Shelton. I’m overdue for some office sex,” Eden said as she slid her fingers inside her leggings.

Jermaine's erection instantly died. The moment he started mixing business with pleasure, he knew the days of having his wife coming to his office were over.

"Those office romp days are over. Your screaming ass almost got me fired. You refuse to be quiet," He laughed as he thought back to a simpler time in their marriage.

"Stop blowing my back out so well and I'll stop screaming," Eden joked. "But seriously Babe, is the Malcom situation the only thing bothering you?" Eden asked, she knew his joking right before a meeting meant something else was going on.

Jermaine inhaled.

He had approached this topic in the past, but every time he did, Eden shot the idea down. He was hoping that this time would be different. Exhaling, he got ready to shoot his shot.

"Yeah, there is something else on my mind. I was calling to gage your temperature,"

"Gage my temperature? Why?"

"Edy, I think, know I know that we're ready. We've been married for a while; our lives are stable, and I think it's time we started our own family. Add some little Shelton's to this large nest. I want my own legacy. Watching you take birth control pills makes me feel like you don't want kids with me. I'm your husband, not some dude you just met," Jermaine said truthfully.

In the beginning of their relationship, they were both enthralled with finishing their degrees and landing careers within their field. He understood that Eden didn't want children before she was married. But they had been married for five years now. Though he had a lot of maturing to do as a man, he was positive that the only woman he wanted to bare his children was Eden Marie Merci Shelton.

Eden sighed.

She had shot this conversation down so many times. But now, she was ready.

“You’re right,” She admitted.

His eyes nearly popped out of his head. Jermaine was stunned. This was the response that he wanted, but he honestly wasn’t expecting it. For years she had shot the kid talk down, but now she was all for it. He didn’t know what to say. Instead of saying anything he sat speechless.

Eden laughed. She knew her response had caught him off guard .

“Your silence says a lot. Look, you’re right. I apologize for making you feel like a boyfriend. In all actuality, I’ve always wanted children. I’m just afraid,” Eden said honestly.

“Afraid of what?”

“I’m afraid of not doing a good job. My parents raised us girls to focus on our brains and disregard our beauty. That’s why when someone compliments my looks instead of accomplishments, it angers me because I’m so much more than a pretty face.

Eve and I are extremely hardworking and giving, but Envy acts like the spawn of Satan. That bothers me. I never understood what happened to make her act the way she does. I don’t want my kid to turn out like her,” Eden admitted.

Jermaine nodded even though Eden couldn’t see him. He now understood her hesitation. Her sister, Envy, was bat shit crazy. She was only concerned with herself. She stole her parents’ identity, Eden’s debit card, and stole Eve’s car and wrecked it.

“Edy, our children will be perfect because we will raise them in a healthy household, filled with love. Throw those pills away. I got something big for you when I get home,”

Eden giggled .

“I’ll throw them in the trash. I’m about to call Eve over here to drink with me. You know how we get. So, if I’m passed out drunk when you get here; Fuck me anyway.”

Jermaine laughed.

“I love you,”

“I love you,”

She wasn’t an ‘I love you, too’ kind of woman. She loved her husband genuinely. Even if he hadn’t said it, she would have.

As soon as she dialed Eve’s number, the phone was instantly answered.

“Well, well, well. Look what the cat dragged in. Hey stranger,” Eve mocked. It had been over a week since she last spoke with Eden. They normally spoke every day.

“Damn, did the phone even ring? I missed you, Eve Marie!” Eden sang jovially. Eve and Eden were two years apart, but they acted as if they shared the womb together.

“I can’t tell that you missed me. It’s been nine days since our last text. Anyway, I’m hungry what did you cook?” Eve asked .

“I didn’t cook anything. I was making Jermaine a vegetarian lasagna, but he’s working late. So, I was going to eat leftovers and invite you over to get drunk with

me,”

“Vegetarian lasagna? I definitely wouldn’t eat no shit like that, and I don’t want any leftovers. I want some freshly prepared food before I have my drinks,” Eve said as she pulled on a pair of ripped skinny jeans and Baby Tee.

Eden sucked her teeth.

“I should’ve known a shake down was coming with your bougee ass. Let’s go to Ribeye’s,”

“Ribeye’s! Now you’re talking my bougee ass language. I’m already dressed. Come pick me up!”

“I’m on the way,” Eden said before ending the call.

The drive to Eve’s house was done in complete silence. Though she agreed to throw her birth control away, truthfully, she was apprehensive for more than one reason. Her job was her life. She worked hard to land the position that she had, and she was filled with pride to be one of a few black women to work for such a prestigious bank.

Questions ran through Eden’s head quickly. How would her life change after becoming a mom? Would she have to stop traveling internationally? Could she travel with a newborn?

“I’m not giving up my job?” Eden said though no one was around to hear her.

She recalled her mother saying that quitting her job was the worst thing she’d ever done. By giving her husband complete control of her livelihood, she lost pieces of herself. Her father was old fashioned and didn’t want nannies or maids tending to his children. Yes, Jermaine was a great provider, but she didn’t want to lose her identity

to motherhood.

By the time she pulled into Eve's driveway she was mentally exhausted. The thoughts running through her head had her reeling. She was so deep in thought that she didn't hear when Eve opened the car door.

"Girl, I'm starving," Eve said as she slid in the passenger seat and closed the door.

Out of nowhere, Eden burst into tears.

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Eve jumped at the sound of her sister's primal war cry. They had been joking and laughing roughly twenty minutes ago, now Eden was wailing like a banshee. Confused was an understatement as to how she now felt.

“What the hell? What's going on?”

Eden continued to sob. She wanted to speak, but she was filled with so many emotions that tears were all she had to offer.

“Edy-”

“I'm fine Eve. I just...it's just a lot going on in my head and I'm just trying to make sense of it all. Believe it or not, these are tears of joy,” Eden admitted.

Somehow, she felt that telling her sister the truth would make her appear like a bad wife. She felt horrible for wanting to prioritize her career over motherhood.

“Tears of joy has you crying those ugly ass tears. What is going on Edy?” Eve asked. She wasn't buying the tears of joy speech.

“I'm serious. Everything is all good, ”

Eve looked skeptical but she wasn't going to pry. Eden would share what was on her mind when she was ready.

“Come get in the passenger seat. Emotional driving is a recipe for disaster. I'll drive but you're still paying,” Eve joked, she knew it would make her sister laugh.

Eden did as she expected. Laughter instantly replaced her tears.

“You’re so crazy with your cheap ass,” Eden laughed while wiping the wetness from her face.

“You were just all smiles twenty minutes ago. Now you’re crying. But I’m crazy. Yeah right,”

“These are tears of joy,” Eden lied. “Jermaine wants me to throw away my birth control. I want that too, at least I thought I wanted that. I’m unsure of what I want. Will I have to give up my job? I would die if I had to leave such a prestigious bank just to be a mom,” Eden cried.

She knew her words sounded selfish, but Rashid Zayed International Banque was not a bank that a person could simply apply to. The company didn’t even post open positions. It was invitation only. When a position needed to be filled, the bank’s internal recruiters would reach out to potential applicants by viewing their employment qualifications via their LinkedIn. Giving up employment with such a prestigious bank seemed like a death sentence.

“Eden,”

“I love what I do. I love having to take a flight to meet some of my clients. I don’t want to change my life or lifestyle. I know that sounds selfish but-”

“But nothing. You are not mommy. The days of being a stay-at-home mom are over. I’m a flight attendant with two kids. My life hasn’t changed. You’re terrified about being a parent and there’s nothing wrong with that. It’s a new experience and it’s ok if you’re scared.

Between me, Mommy, and my kids, your baby will be well taken care of when you

have to work. Calm down everything will be ok,”

Eden wanted to cry all over again. She knew that she would've been able to trust Eve with her feelings without judgement. The fact that she doubted their bond made her feel horrible.

“You're right. I just, I'm just-”

More tears erupted.

“Girl, why are you crying now? You know what, we might need to skip Ribeye's and go to Walgreen's to get you a pregnancy test. This new emotional you has me thinking that you're already knocked up,” Eve said as she patted Eden's flat stomach.

Eden shook her head. She knew she wasn't pregnant. She had just thrown her pack of pills away.

“You always know how to make me feel better. I love your-”

Eden's sentence stopped and her eyes squinted as she tried to process what her eyes were seeing.

“I love your big head too,” Eve said sweetly, but Eden ignored the sentiments. She was too focused on what was in front of her. It wasn't every day that a Bentley was parked in front of a family friendly steakhouse.

“That's Jermaine's car. Why would Jermaine be parked at Longhorns?” Eden asked herself unaware that she had asked the question aloud.

Eve looked to the left at the Franchise steakhouse, saw the black Flying Spur, but thought nothing of it.

“He’s probably having a meeting. You said he has meetings every Thursday,” Eve shrugged.

Eden tuned Eve completely out. The only thing she could focus on were the drums now pounding in her head .

“Turn in,” Eden said dryly.

“Why?” Eve asked while scrunching her face.

“Turn into Longhorn’s right fucking now,” Eden said slowly, making sure to announce the syllables of each word.

The hair on the back of Eve’s neck stood on end. She had never seen her sister like this. The joy that always brightened her face had been replaced with something dark and malevolent.

“Eden I’m sure there’s a reasonably good explanation for why he’s there. You know he’s not on a date, because his bougee ass doesn’t eat meat. I’m sure it’s only a dinner meeting with colleagues,” Eve added.

Eden looked at Eve as if she had lost her mind.

“Do I look stupid to you? I may be a good woman, but I ain’t never been a dumb bitch. If this was a dinner meeting with colleagues or clients, the parking lot would be filled with luxury cars, not Honda’s, Ford’s and Hyundai’s. It seems like you have a problem with turning into the restaurant. You must know something that I don’t know,” Eden said through clinched teeth .

Eve gasped. Never in their entire life had Eden accused her of something so disrespectful. It was now her turn to cry.

“Edy, are you serious? You know I-”

“This is what I know. My husband said he’d be at the office late. But with my own 20/20 vision I can see that that’s clearly a lie. I don’t see any other luxury cars in this cheap ass parking lot to suggest that any of Le Bleu’s stakeholders or shareholders are here.

We practically lived off Longhorn’s and Apple Bee’s when we were in college, so even if he doesn’t eat meat, Longhorn’s sells some good ass soup and salad. Now I’m going to ask you again, do you know something I don’t know? Because you’re doing a whole lot of stalling when all you need to do is park the car,” Eden stated.

A chill ran down Eve’s spine. She had been alive long enough to know that all people possessed a level of darkness, however she had never encountered this version of her sister. Eve knew better than to argue. Instead of saying a word, she pulled the big body car into the parking lot.

Eden was out of the car before Eve put the car in park. She opened her car door with so much force that it dented Jermaine’s driver’s door.

“Edy!” Eve shouted in disbelief .

The dark force that seemed to be driving her sister couldn’t hear anything. Eve noticed, she had to literally grab Eden’s shoulder to halt her steps.

“Eden wait. Look, for your peace of mind let’s just go in here and see what’s going on. When you see that it’s nothing, I want the 24-karat gold dessert after you buy my steak,”

The joke was lost on Eden, and Eve knew it. Eden was too filled with anger to process anything other than what was already on her mind. Instead of responding, she

opened the door to the family friendly restaurant.

Neither of them had been inside the restaurant since their college days. But they maneuvered through the maze of hungry patrons with ease.

“If he’s in here he’ll be in the-”

Eve gasped and her heart stopped when she saw Jermaine behind the closed glass dining room doors. Disbelief made her stumble backwards. This wasn’t even her marriage and her heart was breaking.

Hearing Eve’s audible sound of disbelief made Eden turn to see what had startled her sister. The sight in front of her nearly made her collapse. Tears flooded her eyes as she watched Jermaine eating a steak, off the fork of the beautiful woman that sat beside him .

“En...Envy?”

The image seemed so foreign to Eden that she had a hard time making sense of it. She was convinced that she had lost her mind. For years, Jermaine had her making vegetarian meals because he said he couldn’t stomach the scent or taste of meat.

Seeing her husband, eating steak-medium at that, while kissing her younger sister felt like a bad dream. Her heart cracked at the realization that Jermaine had played her. She was so hurt that she couldn’t even hear the sounds of the restaurant around her. The sounds of forks scraping plates, babies crying, and friendly banter had all disappeared. The only thing she heard was the knife piercing her heart.

The dial in Eden’s brain began to shift from good to bad. Her hands trembled as she fought to regain the control she was losing.

“Oh, hell no,” Eve said as she watched her brother-in-law and whore of a little sister damn near maul each other in a public setting. The comfortability that she was witnessing let her know that this was not their first time together.

From the time they were kids Envy had been a thorn in everyone’s side. But this time she had gone too far. Eve pulled her hair up into a high ponytail and prepared to run into the dining room, but she stopped when she felt Eden’s hand around her wrist.

“Let’s go Eve,” Eden said as she stared at the man she vowed to love for the rest of her life betraying her in the worst way. There was no coming back from this.

“Let’s go? What do you mean? You were ready to run in here and catch him. We see him being foul and you want to leave. Nah, we need to go in there in show out,” Eve said angrily.

“Nah, I’ll handle this,” Eden said calmly as she grabbed the keys from her sister’s hand.

For the second time in mere minutes, a chill ran down Eve’s spine. This side of Eden was completely unlike her. This calm was too calm to be normal. Eve followed her sister to the car unsure of what would happen next.

“Eden, I’m so sorry. I know men can do some scandalous shit, but I never thought Jermaine would ever stoop this low,” Eve said as she grabbed her sister’s hand. She was so upset that her intense hunger had disappeared.

The pain inside of Eden’s chest and the hollowness in her stomach made it impossible for her to respond. She had been nothing short of a perfect wife. Knowing that her husband could look her in the face every night and lie after spending the night or nights with her very own sister unleashed a level of devastation that she didn’t know how to cope with.

Her thoughts would not stop. He said that he planned to do things to her after he got home. So was he planning to make love to her after fucking her sister. The thought made hot vomit spew from her mouth.

“Oh my God!” Eve screamed as she watched her sister bend at the waist and give up everything she had eaten.

“Edy, let’s just go to my house.”

Eden shook her head no. Instead, she wiped her mouth and reached for her phone, dialing her husband’s number. As she listened to the ringing, she couldn’t wait to hear what lie he’d come up with.

“Hey Beautiful, I’m almost done here. I should be home in a few hours,” Jermaine said. His tone was as cool as a cucumber. Had he looked up, he would’ve seen his wife and other sister-in-law watching him kiss their sister as he spoke on the phone.

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As Eden watched him, she couldn't speak. Too many thoughts raced through her head. Is she who he's with every Thursday? How long has this been going on?

Jermaine noticed the silence and with obvious concern asked, "Babe is everything ok?"

The tone in which he spoke made another surge of sickness race up Eden's throat. It truly sounded like he cared about her wellbeing. That thought was funny. Eden swallowed the sickness and tried to bring some normalcy to her voice.

"Yeah, I'm good. I just wanted to see how the meeting was going. Eve and I are on the way to Ribeye's. I wanted to know if you wanted me to pick something up for you," She lied. She shocked herself by the calm way that she spoke.

"Everything is good. You don't have to get me anything. My secretary got my specialty order, so I don't need anything," Jermaine lied unaware that he had been caught.

Eden shook her head. She smirked as she watched him hold the phone to his ear while he walked out of the restaurant hand in hand with her sister. He was so caught up in his lie that he didn't even notice that she was parked directly beside him. Nor did he realize the large dent in his driver's side door.

"Well babe, I don't want to intrude. Try to make the best of your night and I'll see you when you get home. Bye."

"Bye?!" Jermaine repeated. The simple word with lack of emotion stunned him.

They never ended a call or conversation without expressing their sentiments. They both knew it.

“What happened to I love you?” Jermaine asked as if he was offended.

Eden ended the call and scoffed. She wasn’t surprised to see The Husband flashing on the screen. Unlike the times in the past, seeing his moniker filled her with hate.

“He has a lot of fucking nerves?” Eve said as she tapped the red button on Eden’s phone.

“What could I have done to make my husband fuck my sister? Most men have affairs with random women. A bitch from Facebook, a gas station, shit a coworker. What did I do for him to have an affair with my sister?” Eden asked as she slapped at the tears that rolled down her face .

The last thing she wanted to do was cry over someone that could betray her like this. The rage outweighed the pain. She couldn’t stop the tears even if she wanted to.

“You are not about to blame yourself for the actions of a whore and an undisciplined man. Men that have no boundaries are not men, they’re little boys dressed up in a man suit. Envy has always been a bad apple. She goes out of her way to make everyone’s life miserable. So, to answer your question, you didn’t do shit.” Eve said as she watched Jermaine exit his Bentley and walk into the Red Roof Inn.

Eden threw her head back and laughed.

“Longhorns and the Red Roof Inn. Envy probably thinks she hit the jackpot tonight. She’s always been low budget. It’s been a long time since I had to turn on my knuck if you buck. Let’s go.” Eve said as she watched her little sister traipsing into the \$50 a night hotel like the queen of the universe. The sight in front of her made her sick to

her stomach.

“Give me five minutes,” Eden said as she watched her husband comfortably scroll into the budget hotel.

Of all the things she expected to see today, seeing the man that begged her to start a family less than an hour ago, walking into a cheap motel with her flesh and blood was not it. If someone told her that she’d discover her husband having an affair, she would’ve called them a liar.

“Five minutes?!” Eve shouted in disbelief, “Edy you had laser surgery, so I know you’re seeing what I’m seeing. What are you waiting for?” Eve was appalled.

At the first sight of Envy and Jermaine together, she wanted to shake shit up. She couldn’t understand what Eden was waiting for. She couldn’t understand that Eden’s internal dial was moving slowly but steadily to the bad side.

Her actions were calculated and deliberate. She knew what she needed to see and why. This was her marriage. Her methods weren’t meant for Eve to understand. This was her situation, and she’d move in five minutes when she was ready.

When she was ready, she grabbed her purse and exited her car. The sliding glass door chimed alerting the clerk on duty that another guest had entered the establishment.

“Why are so many people coming here tonight?” The front desk attendant thought.

She had taken the job at the hotel because the foot traffic was so light that she could study in peace and still collect a check. But tonight, she had to earn her check because more than twenty people had already checked in during her 3-11pm shift.

She was irritated, but instead of showing her frustration, she stood, closed her

Accounting Systems textbook, and smiled. Her smile didn't waiver even though she could see that the woman that stood before her was not in a pleasant mood.

"Hello Ma'am. Welcome to the--"

"I'm going to make this easy for you Richelle," Eden interrupted as she read the clerk's name tag. "Jermaine Shelton and Envy Merci. What room did they check into?"

Richelle was caught off guard by the woman's straightforwardness. She could tell that she wasn't one to ask the same question twice, but she didn't want to get fired for giving out private information. She needed this job.

"Ma'am, I'm sorry. I can't give out customer information. It's against our policy." Richelle said as she backed away from the desk.

Eden glanced down and saw the textbook. She smiled a little because it wasn't too long ago that she was behind a hotel desk, studying from the same book. She decided to take a different approach and take some of the hostility out of her voice because Richelle wasn't the person that had done her wrong .

"Richelle, let me apologize for my demeanor. You didn't do anything to deserve that. That's a gorgeous pendant of you and your sister," Eden complimented.

"My daughter," Richelle said as she absent-mindedly grabbed the custom-made pendant that cost her two paychecks.

Eden smirked inwardly because she knew the girl had know idea that she gave her the information that she needed.

"Richelle, my name is Eden Shelton. I'm the Investment Banker for Rashid Zayed

International Banque,” Eden said as she handed the young attendant her onyx business card.

Richelle was stunned.

“Mrs. Shelton, I’m-”

Eden interrupted because she wasn’t interested in what she had to say.

“Richelle, when I was around your age, I sat behind a hotel desk reading that same book. Studying for the same test that you’re probably about to take. Back then I brought home \$328 biweekly. That’s \$164 a week. Not even \$700 a month, not even enough to be considered pocket change.” Eden stated .

Richelle looked away because she was only making \$100 more biweekly.

“By the way you diverted your eyes, I can tell that you aren’t making much more than I was nearly eighteen years ago,” Eden said factually.

“I’m not trying to get in your business, but when I was sitting behind a desk, studying for classes I prayed for a financial blessing every day. Maybe I can be that blessing to you. Jermaine Shelton and Envy Merci. What room are they in?” Eden asked as she opened her Chloe Bag and slid ten brand-new hundred-dollar bills over to the desk clerk.

Richelle’s eyes bulged. She had never seen \$1,000 at once. She could smell the newness of the bills, and it was the most intoxicating thing that she had ever smelled.

“Mrs. Shelton. I’m sorry. But I can’t. Even though this job only pays me pocket change as you call it. I have my own responsibilities. I need my job,”

Eden pulled out another stack.

“Mrs. Shelton, I-”

“Richelle, I’m a mom. I know how beneficial two thousand tax free dollars can be. We can do this the easy way or the hard way. You can take the money and give us the room key. Or my sister can put the money back in her purse and I’ll knock you out and look the registry up myself. How would you like to handle this matter?” Eve asked as she slid the new bills in Richelle’s direction.

Based on the names alone, Richelle was able to put two and two together and understand exactly what was going on. It wasn’t her place to get involved in familial disputes. She didn’t get paid enough for that. Nodding her head she said,

“Envy Merci. Room 305. It’s across from the elevator,” Richelle said as she slid the room key to Eden as she pulled the money backwards.

“Thank you,”

Eden’s hands shook and her eyes twitched when she pushed the number three button to go to the third floor. The feelings that were taking over her body were new.

“You already know that what you’re about to see is fucked up. There’s no coming back from watching your husband having sex with someone else. Our sister, our enemy. Do you think you can handle seeing that?” Eve asked as the elevator chimed and stopped on the third floor.

“No, I won’t be able to handle it. But I need to see it anyway. It’ll justify everything that’s going to come,” Eden said as she stepped off the elevator and stepped directly in front of room 305.

Loud theatrical screaming and pounding could be heard as soon as the elevator door opened.

“It’s go-time lil’ sis,” Eve said as her nostrils flared.

Eden’s hand shook as she placed the plastic card in the door and watched the light turn green. She pushed the door with so much force that the cheap chain lock at the top of the door flew across the room.

“What the fu-”

Jermaine’s sentence was cut short when Eve and Eden burst into the room. His dark skin turned white as a ghost as he stared into his wife’s face.

Regret aged his face by ten years. His vocal cords seized as he fought for words.

Eve wasted no time. She wanted no parts of a stare off, she attacked Envy with the ferocity of a lion on a gazelle.

Envy screamed. The attack was so vicious that strangers would’ve never guessed that the two women were blood sisters. Envy tried to escape, but the sheets that she used to cover her nudity were wrapped around her legs .

Eden couldn’t even focus on the attack. She was too busy assessing her husband. The sight of Jermaine’s sweat covered chocolate body and the bible hiding his condom-less manhood. There was no putting Eden’s heart together. She had officially seen everything she needed to see.

“Eden, I’m sorry. This... This didn’t mean anything,” Jermaine stuttered as he looked down to the floor. He couldn’t even look at her.

There was no need to throw out the phrase, 'It's not what it looks like' because it was very much exactly what it appeared to be. He had been caught with the very person that Eden feared their children would become. There was no greater betrayal, and he knew it.

“So, is this what a late night at the office looks like. After you fucked my sister, you planned to come home and do the same thing to me, right? Every Thursday night, you come home, you don't even take a shower. You climb your foul ass in the bed and in between my legs. I'ma ask you again. Is my sister who you're with every Thursday night?”

Jermaine trembled. There was no way he would answer that question. She had already seen the worst thing she could see, there was no need to admit anything else .

Eden shook her head and let out a dry mirthless laugh.

Jermaine stepped backwards. He had never heard such a sound coming from her. After seeing something so devastating, he expected Eden to spit on him, attack him, or stab him. The fact that she spoke calmly without attack, terrified him.

“Edy. Eden, Baby I-”

“Let's go Eve. We're done here,” Eden said as she turned to walk out of the hotel room. She ignored Jermaine's stunned look.

“We're done here?” Envy mocked. “Oh my God, you're so lame. No wonder all of your exes practically lived between my legs. You have no backbone,” Envy laughed.

Envy didn't care anything about the ass whooping she just endured by her older sister. Breaking Eden down was the highlight of her life.

“Y’all need to leave and close the door behind you. Jermaine normally busts two times. He only bust once so far. See,” Envy laughed as she reached between her cum drenched legs and wiped Jermaine’s seminal fluid on Eden’s face .

Eden lost it. The last thing she remembered before being placed in handcuffs was stabbing Envy with the hotel’s personalized pen.

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Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 9:50 am

“Hello?”

Eve answered her call with an attitude from hell. For the past two weeks, she received multiple calls from the last person she wanted to hear from. The fact that he thought he could talk himself out of the hole he dug for himself made Eve’s blood boil. She and Eden were thick as thieves, and by no means would she entertain the fake sincerity of a bullshitter.

Jermaine let out a sigh of relief when he heard his sister-in-law’s voice. For two weeks Eve had declined all his calls. He knew that no one in the Merci Family wanted to speak to him, except Envy, but he refused to give up.

He continued to call hoping that his aggressive approach would weigh her down, and low and behold, it worked.

“Eve, I know I’m the last person you want to speak too, but-”

“Yet you keep calling. Why is that?”

Jermaine sighed .

He wanted to tell her to get rid of the attitude, but he knew he wasn’t in a position to make any demands. Instead, he pushed forward because he knew that Eve was the only person that could make his wife speak to him.

“Eve, I know the family hates me. I just want a chance to fix things. Can you please tell me where Eden is? Please Eve. I just want to talk to her.” Jermaine begged.

He was a mess. Now that his dirty deeds were exposed, he realized how foolish his actions had been.

“Stop fucking calling me. If Eden wanted to speak to you, she’d answer her phone when you called. No real man would ever do the type of shit that you did. Because of you, she now has a criminal record. Leave her alone,” Eve spat.

“Eve. I just want to talk to her and explain my side. I just need ten minutes to talk to her,”

“Nigga, stop calling me!” Eve shouted coldly before ending the call.

There was nothing for Jermaine to explain. He had done the unthinkable, and there was no forgiveness in her heart for that type of fuckery. Instead of focusing on an apology that made no sense, she focused on her sister .

“How are you feeling Little Sis?” Eve asked as she rubbed Eden’s shoulder.

Eden’s thoughts were so convoluted that she didn’t hear the question that Eve asked. Nor did she hear her one-sided conversation with her husband.

Eden sat in the bland sterile room covering her legs and thighs with a thin paper sheet. She wanted to cry but disbelief had frozen her tears. She wanted to speak, but the doctor’s words had paralyzed her tongue. Eden could feel her body trembling, and it wasn’t because of the cold doctor’s office. She trembled because she couldn’t believe the news.

“How did this happen?”

Her heart raced so quickly that she began to hyperventilate.

“Eden, I know this is shocking. But I want you to think positively and stay calm. Any anxiety will upset the baby,” Dr. Brenda, Eden’s Ob/Gyn and friend, stated as she reentered the examination room.

“Upset the baby. Upset the baby.”

The words replayed in her head like a broken record. Eden cringed in disgust. She couldn’t understand how this happened. She took her birth control religiously and hadn’t discarded her pack of pills until last week. She couldn’t understand how she was pregnant.

Twelve weeks pregnant to be exact. After knowing what she now knew, the thought of growing Jermaine’s seed made her sick.

“What did I do to deserve this?” Eden asked as tears fell from her eyes.

Her tears were so heavy that they dropped straight to her lap and tore a hole in the paper sheet. It was hard to believe that the man she once loved was someone she didn’t know.

Brenda was stunned by Eden’s outburst. She had known Eden and Jermaine since college. The two of them were inseparable. She needed answers. Brenda tucked her professionalism and got into friend mode.

“Spill the beans Edy. I thought you would’ve been happy about this. The last time we spoke you said-”

“I know what I said the last time we spoke Brenda. Damn,” Eden snapped.

She didn’t mean to be so abrasive, but she couldn’t control her anger. Jermaine had asked her to have his child right before having unprotected sex with her sister. He had

played her, and she never saw it coming .

Eve knew that at this moment Eden's pot was boiling over. The last thing she wanted her to do was snap at their friend.

"Edy, calm down. Brenda didn't make Jermaine do what he did. Don't take it out on her," Eve said soothingly as she ran her hands over her sister's goose bump covered arm.

Eden sobbed. She knew she was wrong for her snappy response, but she couldn't help it.

Brenda was accustomed to patients snapping, but when it came to people she knew personally, she snapped back.

"I'm waiting on my apology," Brenda said as she rolled her neck like a common guttersnipe, instead of the educated doctor that she was.

Eden chuckled.

Anytime her friend transformed from professional physician back to "Beat a bitch Brenda" it was comical to her. She was thankful for the slight distraction because it was the first time she had laughed in weeks.

"I'm sorry Brenda. I didn't mean to turn on you like you were the enemy. It's not your fault,"

When Eve suggested she take a pregnancy test, she had no idea that the test results would be positive. Even though giving Jermaine a family was once her heart's desire, now it was a nightmare. She hated the baby growing in her womb just as much as she hated the man that placed it there. This baby was a trap, a tether to keep her to the

man that she no longer desired.

“Apology accepted. But seriously, I want you to stay calm. Babies are a bless-”

“Abort the baby,” Eden said angrily. She cut Brenda’s ‘Babies are a blessing speech’ off so quickly that Brenda’s mouth hung open.

Eve gasped.

Her head snapped up and jaw dropped at the three words that rushed from Eden’s mouth. Neither of them had ever expected to hear her say something so cruel.

Eden could see the disbelief on both of their faces, their shock meant nothing to her. She refused to carry the child of the man that she no longer loved. A man that apparently never loved her.

“What?” Eve and Brenda asked in unison.

Eden kept her mouth shut. There was no need to repeat herself because she knew both women heard exactly what she said.

“Edy. Don’t- ”

“My mind is made up. I don’t want this baby any more than I want the man that put it inside of me. From the first time I met Jermaine, I made him the center of my universe. Cooking vegetarian meals, praying over him every night, I never missed an opportunity to show him how much I loved him. He repays me by stabbing me in the back. Get this baby out of me,” Eden shouted. She was so livid that her entire body shook.

Eden was beside herself with grief. All she felt now was bitterness, hatred, and an

intense need for payback. Jermaine's betrayal had stripped her of everything that made her a good human.

"Eden, I know Jermaine fucked up, but this baby is completely innocent. He or she doesn't deserve your wrath. Jason did the same thing, but I never thought of aborting our kids. Jason -"

"Jason wasn't fucking our sister Eve!" Eden shouted.

Brenda clutched her invisible pearls as her jaw hit the floor. Of all the things she thought she would hear, hearing that Jermaine had been having an affair with Envy was not it. Brenda cringed.

She thought back to the multiple abortions that she had personally performed on Envy and wondered if any of the children belonged to Jermaine. She had also treated Envy for several STD's. Envy had always been a horrible person, but Brenda never thought that she'd have sex with her sister's husband.

"Edy, you're right. Jason didn't do what Jermaine did, but the fact still remains that your child is completely innocent. Don't make a permanent decision based on a temporary emotion. You'll regret it," Eve said sincerely with tears filling her eyes.

"I love you, Eve. But this is not about you. I didn't judge you, so don't you judge me,"

Eve burst into tears. She never told Eden about the child that she secretly got rid of. It was her biggest regret. At the time she thought she would be hurting Jason, but she was the only one hurting because no one else knew, or so she thought.

"Dr. Young, I am of sound mind and body. I'm not under pressure. Can you please perform the abortion? I won't ask twice. I'll use a coat hanger and scrape his ass out

before I beg you to do your job,” Eden said coldly as she stared directly into Brenda’s eyes. She refused to call her by her name, because she wanted Brenda to know that she meant business.

A tear fell from Eve’s eye. She had seen this type of pain several times in her life. Good wholesome women loving a man with every iota of their being. A woman giving a man their all and loving him so genuinely that she reserved nothing for herself. Eden had loved Jermaine that way and now she was conflicted. His selfish ways had unleashed the bad side of a good woman. Eve wept silently because she knew Eden would never be the same kindhearted woman ever again.

“Ok Eden,” Dr. Young responded solemnly.

She could tell by the way that Eden was speaking that she had already begun to change. The professional side of her told her that Eden would never mentally recover from this. She also knew that Jermaine would pay dearly for his mistake. Even though he didn’t know it, he already was.

“Since you’ve never done this before, I’ll explain it to you. Since you’re twelve weeks, I’m going to perform a D&E. Dilation and Evacuation. It is the most safe and common practice for pregnancy between twelve to sixteen weeks. I’ll inject your cervix with numbing solution, before opening it and emptying the contents with the suctioning vacuum,” Brenda sighed.

She had given this speech several times in the past. But somehow this time, it felt wrong. This was a procedure that she never imagined doing to Eden Merci Shelton. Jermaine had done something so cruel that Eden despised the child growing in her womb .

Hearing Brenda refer to her child as ‘contents’ was confirmation that the baby needed to be removed. Or at least that’s what she told herself.

“Let’s do it,” Eden said as constant tears rolled down her face.

“Eden, please don’t do this,” Eve begged as she stood in front of her younger sister. “Jason and I will raise the baby like he’s ours. Sis, please, please don’t do this. You’re only doing this because you’re angry. Please don’t do this.”

Eden ignored her. She knew adoption could have been an option, but she didn’t want Jermaine’s child to ever see the light of day. He didn’t deserve a lineage as far as she was concerned.

“Where will the procedure be performed? What do I need to do?” Eden asked as she diverted her eyes.

She looked at her bare hands. The large platinum 5-carat wedding ring that she once drooled over was long gone. After being released from jail, Eden had taken the ring back to the hotel and given it to Richelle to pawn. She knew the girl wouldn’t receive the full twenty thousand dollars, but whatever the Pawn shop chose to give her, would be more than she currently had .

“It will be performed upstairs. I’m going to need you to sign a few consent forms once we get you up there and before we get you prepped. When you’re done, the nurse will help get you changed into a gown, then start your I.V. The whole process of getting you prepared, and the evacuation will take about thirty minutes.

You’ll be rolled into the recovery room for an hour after the procedure. After that, you’ll be able to leave. You may experience bleeding and cramping for seven to fourteen days after the procedure. Do you have any questions?” Dr. Young asked.

Eden couldn’t speak. She was ragged with emotion. Instead of speaking, she shook her head left to right slowly, letting Dr. Young know that she had no questions.

She tried to hide the tears forming in her eyes, but the tears fell before she had the chance to wipe them away

“Ok Eden. I’m going to step out while you get dressed. I’ll be back in a couple minutes, then we’ll go upstairs.” Dr. Young said somberly as she stepped out of the examination room.

Brenda said a silent prayer for her friend. She prayed that this chapter of Eden’s life wouldn’t leave her mentally broken .

“I wish you’d reconsider, but I know you won’t.” Eve sighed.

“It’s for the best. I can’t miss a man that was never mine and I can’t miss a baby that I don’t want.” She lied.

Her voice cracked as she spoke. She turned away from Eve, because she knew her sister would be able to tell that she didn’t mean what she was saying.

Eden’s heart ached. In the past she believed that when she became pregnant, she and Jermaine would be in the doctor’s office listening to the heartbeat of their baby together. But he had altered those plans.

“We’re ready Eden.” Brenda said as she cracked the door open and poked her head inside.

Eden cried silently. She was walking into the operating room with two heartbeats and walking out with one. Envy and Jermaine would pay dearly for that.

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“An abortion,” Eden thought to herself as she lay in the middle of her childhood bed.

She was in so much pain that she couldn't think straight. The cramps that ripped through her body were unlike anything she ever experienced. In addition to the cramps, resentment now resided within her.

Never in her wildest dreams did she think she'd have her first child vacuumed from her womb. But she had. She was a married woman. In normal circumstances, the thought of a wife aborting her husband's child didn't seem right, but this situation wasn't normal, and she didn't think that she had done anything wrong.

“I thought you were asleep. How are you feeling?” Eve asked when she felt the wetness from Eden's eyes on her thigh.

Eden opened her mouth to tell Eve that she felt like shit, but before she could her mother's thick Louisianian accent floated in from the doorway.

“I never get tired of watching you girls love each other.” Marie said proudly as she admired her daughters .

Though she hated the circumstances that brought her children home, she was glad to have her girls staying under her roof again.

“Ma, I swear you're like a cat skulking around. You move around without making a sound like you're trying to catch someone off guard. How long have you been standing there eavesdropping?” Eve joked.

“I don’t skulk or eavesdrop in my home. I just walk up and listen,” Marie joked.

She was hoping the quick and witty response would bring some sort of smile to Eden’s face. But the grim look that covered her daughter’s normally angelic face let her know that she didn’t have the energy to laugh.

Marie sighed.

“How are you feeling Edy? Not just physically, but mentally and emotionally?” Marie asked as she crossed the threshold of the room that her daughters shared as children.

The question made more tears fall from Eden’s eyes. On the day she witnessed her husband deep fucking her sister, she hadn’t shed a single tear. Now she couldn’t keep the tears in her eyes to save her life. Jermaine had cut her too deeply for her to even pretend that she was ok. She couldn’t cry in front of him, but in front of her sister and mother, she didn’t have to pretend.

She could never use the “I’m fine” lie with her mother. Marie had always been able to read her daughter’s true emotions like a bestselling book. Marie was born to be a mother. And a lie, no matter how small, would be easily detected.

“Ma, I’m devastated. No scratch that. Devastation isn’t strong enough to describe how destroyed I am. Of all the females in the world, he had an affair with my sister. Envy has always gone out of her way to make our lives hell. I know she busted it wide open for a few of my exes, but somehow, I never thought she’d have sex with my husband,”

Eden was in mental hell. Feeling the thick maternity pad between her legs tormented her psyche in a way she didn’t think was possible.

“I swear Envy is adopted. No one else in this family acts the way she does. Envy can’t be a real Merci,” Eve said as she sucked her teeth.

Marie diverted her eyes. Her fair light skin turning lobster red.

Both Eden and Eve noticed. They stared inquisitively. The look on Marie’s face was a dead giveaway to a secret. Whatever the look on Marie’s face was, it had the girl’s attention. They couldn’t understand what they said to make her react that way because they’d called Envy worse names than adopted in the past.

“What’s wrong?” The sisters asked in unison.

Marie could feel her daughters’ inquisitive stares without looking at them. Blowing out a breath, she began to unburden the secret she had held for years.

“I never thought I’d be telling you all this. As much as it hurt me, I vowed to take this to my grave. But giving the circumstances, I think it’s about time I shared the Merci family secret.”

“Merci family secret?” They asked confused. As far as they knew, there were no secrets between the three of them.

“Yes, all families have secrets. Ours is no different. I was stern with you two because I never wanted you girls to make dumb mistakes that could haunt you throughout your life. I gave you both unconditional love and attention because you are my babies. I couldn’t do that with Envy because she’s not my daughter,”

“WHAT?!” Eden and Eve screamed out in shock. They had never truly suspected that Envy was adopted. It was just a joke that they shared since Envy had always been the black sheep of the family. This revelation stunned them.

“Wait a minute. Are you saying that Envy isn’t our sister? She’s really adopted?” Eve asked. The surprise on her face would have been comical if the situation wasn’t so serious.

“I didn’t say that. I said she’s not MY daughter,” Marie said with emphasis on the word my. “Envy is your sister. She’s Everett’s love child,”

Revealing the truth, even though it was over thirty years later, made her heart ache. The pain that shot through her body was just as sharp as it was the day she found out her husband had gotten another woman pregnant.

“Envy is Daddy’s daughter? How is that possible?” Eden asked in disbelief.

Her stomach sank to the floor because her mother’s words confirmed that she was a bad judge of character. Her father was the first man that she had ever placed on the “can do no wrong” pedestal . Jermaine was the second.

The fact that her judgement led her to be wrong twice had her second guessing everything she believed was right. Eden wanted to speak but she couldn’t say a word .

“Daddy had an affair and had a child? Envy is the product of Daddy’s affair. Ma that can’t be right. Daddy preached the importance of family, togetherness, and finding a perfect mate. He wouldn’t disrespect you or us like that. Would he?” Eve asked nearly on the verge of tears.

She was so caught off guard by her mother’s admission that she couldn’t make sense of the words. She didn’t want to believe it. She didn’t want to believe that her loving father could disrespect their family by bringing an outside child into their home.

Marie could see the genuine hurt on her daughter’s face. Her daughter’s, but

especially Eve, had always been daddy's girls. They doted on him as if he were a king. The knowledge that Everett Merci was nothing more than a flawed mortal was hard for them to accept.

"Yes, to all of the above Sweetheart. Yes, he had an affair and had a child. Yes, he would disrespect us. Men lie. I taught you girls that a long time ago," Marie answered.

She refused to sugarcoat anything. The truth was the truth and what was done was done.

"Did you girls ever wonder why you weren't allowed in our bedroom?" Marie asked .

"I assumed you didn't want us in your marital space. My girls aren't allowed in my room. They have their own bedrooms, a game room, and a lounge. My bedroom is Jason and I's personal space. My room, my rules." Eve said repeating the line that her mother repeated to her and Eden when they were children.

Marie chuckled dryly because she knew that's what her children believed.

"I did tell you girls that didn't I? That was a lie. The truth is after Everett brought his illegitimate bitch of a daughter here, I had the king-sized bed replaced with two full sized beds. I never wanted you girls to see that we slept separately because at the time I didn't know how to answer the questions I knew two little girls would ask," Marie said truthfully.

"I can't believe that Daddy would bring his side baby home for his wife to raise. Who did he think he was Denzel in Fences?" Eden asked.

Marie chuckled. Though the 2016 movie had won several awards, because of that very scene, she could not bring herself to complete the movie.

“Ma, if you don’t mind me asking, how did Envy even end up here?” Eve asked.

Marie wasn’t flustered or caught off guard by her daughter’s questions. She was expecting them after telling the truth .

“Honey you are old enough to know that a man will do whatever he thinks he can get away with. Like Edy said, Everett brought that baby to me like he was Troy Maxson.

Envy’s birth mother died from a drug overdose when she was six months old. Because Envy was clearly biracial, her white mother’s family didn’t want anything to do with her. Her grandmother literally put Envy in her car seat and placed her on the curb with the trash.

After the sheriff arrested Envy’s grandmother for child endangerment, he called Everett to pick his daughter up from the Sherriff’s Department. Everett brought Envy here and had the audacity to say,

“This is my daughter Envy. Take care of her as if she’s one of yours and I don’t want to hear anything about it. If you try to get uppity and think you’re going to leave, just remember that you don’t work. How are you going to take care of yourself and the girls without me?”

Eve and Eden gasped for the second time. They were learning things about their father that they couldn’t believe. The man they knew would have never spoken to their mother as if she were just a common tramp. In public, he spoke to her with the utmost respect. Hearing the things he said in private made them sick .

“That was the day I lost it. The calm demure Marie Antoinette Merci had left the building. I endured so much in my marriage. The lies, affairs, physical abuse, spousal rape when he was drinking, were some of the things I dealt with. Him bringing a child that he made in the streets into my home was the straw that broke the camel’s

back. That was a level of disrespect that I refused to accept.

Without realizing it, I slapped Everett so hard that my Lee Press-On nails popped off and flew across the room. He was stunned and so was I, but I was too hurt and upset to care. I said,

“ When I divorce your no-good ass, it’s still going to be you that takes care of me and my girls. Here’s how adultery and divorce work.

Since I’m a wife with small children, no job because you forced me to quit, and since I have proof of your affair, half of everything you own belongs to me. This house is mine because, like you said, I have small children. No judge is going to put a wife and mother on the streets.

I’m going to take every dime you make because I have kids to feed. By the time I’m done with you, you and your bastard will be on the corner begging for loose change to get a cup of soup. Whatever bitch you had this child with, can keep your trifling ass. All I want are my girls and your money. ”

That was the first time I ever disrespected my husband. The look on your father’s face was priceless. That was the first time that Everett genuinely apologized. But his betrayal was too massive for me to forgive. It was God’s job to forgive him, not mine.

Even though Envy’s mother died when she was a baby, she acts exactly like that tramp. Hateful, manipulative, and spiteful. She’s nothing like us, because she’s not one of us. She was conceived in lust and sin, and she carries on that tainted legacy,” Marie said truthfully.

Eve and Eden were lost for words. They never expected to hear that Envy was only their half-sister.

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“I genuinely don’t know what to say. I held Daddy in such high regards. I remember watching him holding your tissue while you blew your nose. I watched him polish your toenails and brush your hair before you went to bed. I would’ve never known-”

“You would’ve never known that he was just like any other man. It wasn’t your place to know that Sweetheart. Everett was the leader of the pack of fucked up men if you ask me,” Marie admitted as she interrupted her oldest daughter. Thinking back to all she had endured was making her angry.

“I guess you really can’t judge a book by its cover. I never thought that daddy was that type of man. Ma, you’ve always looked so happy. No red eyes from crying, not a strand of hair out of place, and a smile was always on your face. You and daddy were relationship goals. I always said I wanted a man just like my dad,” Eden said as she sat in the middle of the bed.

The knowledge that her father had been so heartless to a woman with the heart of gold genuinely hurt .

Marie replayed her daughter’s words in her head and without warning, she threw her head back and laughed.

“Relationship goals? I never understood why women say they want a man just like their dad. When they don’t know what they’re asking for. You knew Everett as a father, not as a man. We have two very different views of one person. Do you understand?” Marie asked.

Eve nodded her head in understanding. Eden didn’t respond and Marie knew that she

wouldn't. Eden was just now realizing that she had gotten exactly what she asked for.

“Eden let me be clear, you should never look at any couple as relationship goals just because you see a smile. If you watched me hard enough, you would've seen the Visine I dropped in my eyes to hide the redness. Smiling faces sometimes hide the most pain. Do you understand that?” Marie asked as she looked into her daughter's bloodshot eyes.

Eden was too emotional to speak. She only had enough strength to nod. But Eve had questions. There was something that she just couldn't understand.

“Ma why did you even accept responsibility for Envy's demonic ass? She has always made our lives Hell, but what she did to Eden definitely takes the cake. All the drama involving her could have been avoided if y'all just let her grandmother throw her out with the fucking trash. Why did she have to come here?” Eve asked angrily.

She was furious. Envy had always been a backstabbing bitch, but this new betrayal was a new low even for her. Marie could see the fire in her daughter's eyes and knew it was time she gave her girls the whole truth, because from where she sat it was obvious to her that neither of her children understood her actions.

“I'm not surprised that you two haven't caught on yet. I raised you girls to be good upstanding women. I raised you girls to have manners and told you to treat people the way that you'd like to be treated. So let me fill in the blanks.

Even though I believe all children need a strong motherly figure in their life, being Envy's mother was the furthest thing from my mind. I wasn't interested in raising another woman's child. I was interested in revenge,” Marie said nonchalantly.

Eve and Eden sat with their jaw on the floor as they stared at their mother in disbelief.

“Revenge?!” They asked as they looked at Marie as if she had lost her mind. The word sounded foreign to them coming from their mother’s mouth .

“That’s right. Good old fashion RE-fucking-VENGE! I was a good woman to Everett’s dog ass, and he took advantage of me. I stuck by that man through a lot, but there is but so much a woman can take before she’s had enough. There was no way I could honor a man that brought an outside child into my home.

So, like any fed-up woman, I met someone else. When your father found out he lost it. When he asked me , “Why would you do this?’ I’d point at Envy’s little ass and smile. I brought Envy here to remind Everett that he was the reason things were the way they were. There are consequences to disobedience,” Marie laughed.

Since she was talking to her and Everett’s daughters, she left out the devious parts of the past. There was no need to tell them how she set it up for their father to walk in on his business partner performing oral sex on her, walking in on his best friend signing his name on her cervix, or her having unprotected sex with his rival.

She had transformed Everett from a suave businessman to a disgraced alcoholic. Revenge was a dish best served cold, and Marie Francois Merci was a cold-blooded bitch. She also made sure to leave out the part about the hit and run that left their father dead. Paying someone to make her a widow was \$3,000 well spent. No, there was no need to tell her children those minor details.

Eve was shocked by her mother’s admission. But Eden had an epiphany. It was as if a light bulb switched on above her head as she listened to her mother speak. A physical attack against Jermaine would be pointless. He was a mammoth of a man compared to her. Punches from her dainty hands wouldn’t hurt him in the least. It also wouldn’t give her the satisfaction she desired.

Eden bolted upright. She now understood what she had to do to her cheating husband.

She had to hit him where it hurt. Attack the core parts of him and break him down as a man. A physical attack was an emotional response to betrayal. No, she needed something permanent. Something that would torment him forever. She smiled; a psychological attack was the key to a successful decimation. She knew this type of damage took time and patience; she was ready.

“Let the games begin,” Eden thought as her idea began to form into a plan.

The thought of what she planned to do to her husband had her giddy with delight. Her cheeks felt inflamed from smiling, she didn't mind because it was the first genuine smile she had in weeks .

“Ummm, are you ok? I've never seen you look like that.”

“Yeah, you look a little psychotic Edy. What are you planning?” Marie asked as she stared at the maniacal look on her daughter's face.

Eve cringed. This new version of her sister terrified her. She didn't know what Eden had in mind, but she knew it'd be out of character.

As Eden stared at the curious looks on both her mother and sister's face, she couldn't keep them in suspense any longer.

“Ma, thank you for sharing the past with us. I hate that you had to reopen old wounds because of me. Being loyal to a man that has given you their ass to kiss is stupidity. I think you handled daddy the right way.

I plan to take a page from your Book of Revenge. To answer your question Eve, I'm going back to my husband. Hand me your phone, I need to give him a call and let him know that I'm coming home,” Eden said deviously.

Eve could practically see the devil horns growing from her sister's head. Eden was proof that Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. Eve looked worried, but Marie smiled. She knew her baby girl had the skills to turn a man's world into rubble .

As Marie listened to Eden's plan, she knew that Jermaine would buy into the veil of deception. He'd never recover from what Eden had in store for him, and it was no one's fault but his.

"Bring him into the Garden of Eden, baby girl," Marie said proudly as she bit into her apple.

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Source Creation Date: July 21, 2025, 9:50 am

The sound of the phone ringing under the empty beer cans threatened to make Jermaine's head explode. The vibration of the phone against the cans seemed to make the entire house shake.

Any sound other than silence was just too much for his spinning head. The hangover he was nursing was not a fan of loud noises. He prayed that when his phone rang it'd be his wife, but he knew her, so he knew better.

"God, if you bring Eden back, I'll never drink or cheat again," Jermaine said as he felt around the cluttered table to find the ringing phone.

He tried to locate the phone by feeling around on the coffee table. Getting up, even opening his eyes, seemed impossible. Bright lights were as much his enemy as sound. For the past two weeks, drinking had been his only companion.

Trying to drink his depression away had taken a toll on him. While in college he could drink all day and night and be up for his 8am class with no problem. He was a kid then, now he was a mess of a man, and he knew it .

Jermaine hoped his companionship with Heineken, Hennessy, and Casamigos would help him forget his stupidity; it hadn't. His choice of friends only highlighted why he was alone.

"Why did I fuck my life up like this?" Jermaine thought as he ignored his ringing phone and scratched the side of his face.

The sound and feel of coarse hair under his fingertips didn't surprise him. Personal

grooming had taken a backseat to his misery. His normally well-groomed face was covered with dry patchy facial hair. So many nights he prayed for a do-over or a lie he could use to save himself.

“When you tell one lie, you have to tell several others to keep up with the first lie. It’s best to just tell the truth,” His mother’s wise words rang in his ear.

He missed her, and addition to that, the excessive lying and manipulating reminded him of the one person he hated: his father Jerry Shelton. In his opinion, Jerry had been the worst type of man. As a child, Jermaine made a promise to himself to treat women, especially the woman he made his wife, with the utmost respect. The hell he was in was proof that he hadn’t lived up to the rules he set for himself.

“This was the worst thing I could’ve done.” Jermaine said to himself .

He frowned in disgust when the foul scent of unbrushed teeth, alcohol and regret slapped him in the face.

“Goddamn, is that my breath?” Jermaine asked as he cupped his hand over his mouth and blew into it. He gagged.

“I’m falling apart without you. This wasn’t supposed to happen to us,” Jermaine said as he stared at his and Eden’s wedding photo. With a heavy heart, Jermaine smiled as he thought back to his and Eden’s first encounter.

“Eve, I need your notes for the-”

Jermaine’s mouth dropped to the floor at the sight of the woman talking to his friend. The sight of her, light brown eyes, afro puff ponytail, and wide hips made him stumble. As cliché as it sounded, Jermaine couldn’t remember ever seeing a woman more attractive than the woman standing with Eve.

“Close your mouth. You act like you ain’t never seen a bad bitch before,” Eve joked.

“My mouth wasn’t open,” Jermaine lied.

“You know we can see you, right?” The woman joked making Eve burst into laughter. Jermaine joined in with the laughter because he knew the lie was pointless .

“Edy, this is Jermaine Shelton. He’s in my Hospitality and Tourism Management Class. Jermaine, this is my sister Eden, but we call her Edy,”

Jermaine shook his head. That simple conversation and interaction had brought the most amazing woman into his life. But his selfish ways now had him in shambles. He had messed up in more ways than one. He and Eve were genuine friends before he even met his wife, now their friendship was on the rocks because of this Envy situation.

“I should’ve known better than to fuck a bitch named Envy. Who would name their child Envy anyway. I messed my marriage up for some loose pus...What the fuck?!” Jermaine exclaimed when he caught a glimpse of his face in the mirrored picture frame. His appearance nearly sent him into cardiac arrest.

He knew that he hadn’t been tending to himself. He could feel the unusual roughness on his face, but seeing it was an entirely different story. He didn’t recognize this version of himself. Jermaine silently screamed as he stared at what he had become.

He couldn’t believe what he was seeing. Raising his hand slowly, he touched his face. He didn’t want to believe that the face in the mirror was his, but he couldn’t deny that it was him, when he watched the man mimicking his every move .

His reflection horrified him. The face with droopy bloodshot eyes, heavy bags, and a struggle beard was a far contrast from the smooth-shaven polished man in the

wedding photo. It had only been two weeks since Eden left and from the looks of things, he had fallen apart without her.

“I gotta get my wife back. When I tell Eden how things happened, she’ll understand that I never meant to hurt her. We can recover from this,” he said as he reached for the phone to plead his case.

He knew Eden didn’t have any words for him, but he had them for her. Jermaine planned to fight tooth and nail to get his marriage back to where it once was.

“I gotta show my wife that our marriage is worth saving. I’m human, I made a simple mistake. I love her too much to lose her for good.”

RING!

The sound of the ringing phone made him jump. He ran to the phone hoping it was Eden, but when he looked at the unsaved number, he knew it wasn’t his wife. The number hadn’t been a saved contact, but he had sent enough illicit text messages and photos to the number to recognize who was calling.

Jermaine sighed .

He didn’t want to speak, but he knew that if he didn’t answer she’d keep calling just to be annoying.

“What do you want?” He asked dryly.

“I miss you so much,” Envy said animatedly.

From the simple four words that fell from Jermaine’s mouth she knew he didn’t want to speak. The irritation in his voice was evident. She wanted to laugh at his lovesick

ass. His misery was brightening her day.

“Envy, stop playing with me. I told you I was done with this shit. I should’ve never started dealing with you. Now because of you, my life has gone to Hell. Stop calling and texting me. You’re loose and all over the place. I don’t want you and you never wanted me,” Jermaine yelled.

He was so angry that his hands began to shake. He couldn’t say that he was mad at Envy, she was who she was. He was mad at himself for taking the bait. Envy was a mistake that spiraled out of control.

“I find it so funny how men will rearrange their entire schedule and even their life, become an entire trick, pay bills, eat ass, and the moment their ol’ lady finds out about their dick slinging, the pus is now loose. You are such a clown,” Envy laughed .

Marriage, family, and loyalty were a joke to her. She knew firsthand that the people that were closest to a person were normally their betrayers. She proved that when Jermaine made excuses not to go home so he could put his penis in every hole of her body.

Her words butchered him because it was the truth. Before Eden discovered his infidelity, he had been doing a lot for Envy. It was wrong, but sadly, the thrill and good sex, kept him on the hook.

“Look, we crossed a line that we should’ve never even gotten close too. From the time we met, I’ve never lost contact with Eden. These past two weeks without her have been torture. I’m fucked up. I need my wife back. You and I both knew it was a fling. It was sex and lies, nothing more, nothing less,” He admitted.

Envy rolled her eyes.

“I don’t know why you’re so broken up over Eden’s ass. I’d think you’d be glad to get rid of her. I mean you said she was boring and-”

“I never said she was boring.” Jermaine interjected.

A heatwave of embarrassment hit him. He had said she was boring, but his words had been taken out of context. He spoke with no malice, but he should’ve known that saying anything that could be perceived as negative to Envy was a horrible idea. Jermaine shook his head as he thought back to the day, he and Envy crossed the line.

“I’ve walked around this big ass house five times. Where is Eden? I need to borrow some money,” Envy said when she walked into Jermaine’s office unannounced.

The sound of Envy’s voice made him jump. He knew that Eden had left for her weekly spa visit, and he had no idea that anyone, especially the sister that Eden wasn’t fond of, had entered their home.

“Envy? How the hell did you get in here and what are you doing here?” Jermaine asked as he stared at his sister-in-law.

“Did you not hear me? I said I need to borrow some money. Where is Eden?” She ignored the “How’d you get in here” question because there was no need to tell him that she made a copy of Eden’s key.

“Eden is out doing whatever boring task makes her happy. She could be at the library reading a book, at the community garden planting roses, or teaching a course at the community college. It’s the weekend, she could be anywhere. She should be back in a few hours. I’ll tell her to call you.” Jermaine said. He hoped that she’d get the hint and leave .

“Well, I still need to borrow some money. Call her and tell her to wire me \$3,200 and hurry up, I need to catch a flight to Vegas,”

Jermaine’s jaw tensed. He wasn’t used to the mouthy way that Envy spoke. His mother had never spoken so brazenly, and Eden would never disrespect him by speaking to him as if he weren’t a man.

“Envy, watch your mouth when you’re talking to me. Borrowing money means you intend on paying it back. We both know you don’t plan to do that. Eden and I aren’t your personal ATM. Your Vegas trip won’t be sponsored by us.”

Envy picked up on the flash of anger that flashed in Jermaine’s eyes. The sight of his jaw flexing as he tried to remain calm instantly made her wet.

“Time to kill two birds with one stone,” She thought as she watched her brother-in-law’s shoulders stiffen in anger.

“Watch how I talk to you? You ain’t my daddy, so I’ll talk to you however I want to. Now, call Eden so I can get some money. I don’t want to call her because I don’t want her to have my new number. That’s why I came by instead. And like I said hurry up. I’m behind on time.”

Jermaine’s penis stiffened .

“What the fuck?” He thought as he stared down at his third leg standing at full attention.

Envy was gorgeous, but he had never been physically or sexually attracted to her. He despised her. So, he couldn’t understand why his penis was as hard as a cinder block. The sight of his pulsating hardness distracted him so much that he hadn’t noticed Envy sizing him up like prey.

As she approached him, she licked her lips seductively. She could taste the betrayal they were about to indulge in. Her excitement dripped down her thighs.

“You must be happy to see me,” Envy purred as she lightly squeezed the hardness between Jermaine’s legs.

Jermaine jumped as if he were just awakened from a trance. He blinked rapidly to clear the haze from his mind. His heart seized when he realized that Envy’s hand was caressing him. He wanted to push her away, scream for her to get out, do anything that would signify that he didn’t appreciate what she was doing. But he hadn’t. He couldn’t. He was genuinely paralyzed as he stared down at the red polish of Envy’s long stiletto nails as it gripped his hardness .

“Get her out of here.” Jermaine thought as he watched his dick throb so violently that it appeared to be shaking Envy’s hand.

“I always knew you had a big dick. Eden’s not handling you the right way. She’s too submissive to break you in properly. I’m a fuck the common sense out of you,” Envy said before dropping to her knees and pulling down his gray sweatpants. His dick popped out as if it were spring loaded and Envy swallowed the entire length. There was no sensuality, no caressing, no love. It was the XXX porn quality that Jermaine longed for.

He cried out in ecstasy. The sound that escaped his lips was foreign to his ears as his wife’s nemesis ate his entire erection.

Envy held Jermaine’s gaze as his thick eight inches disappeared down her throat. She wanted him to know that she was well aware of what she was doing. She also wanted him to know that she knew that he was enjoying it; and he was.

He wanted her to stop but he couldn’t bring himself to tell her to do so. Her skills

were too impeccable. Jermaine leaned against his desk and enjoyed the sight and feel of his sister-in-law slobbering over his entire shaft. Envy gave messy head, and he loved it. The spit that coated her face and mouth excited him so much that he started spilling truths.

“My dick ain’t never been sucked like this before. Eden ain’t never sucked my dick like this. Don’t stop Envy, goddamn, please don’t stop.” Jermaine groaned as he fisted Envy’s thick hair and pummeled her mouth.

Envy moaned. She was so wet that her juices dripped to the floor and pooled at her feet. Aggressive head turned her on, but what really had her as wet as a pool was the fact that she was on her knees in front of her sister’s husband.

“Time to get paid,” Envy thought as she stopped sucking and stood up.

“What? Why’d you-” Jermaine swallowed his words when Envy stuck her tongue in his mouth to shut him up.

“You said we got a few hours before she gets back. That means you got a couple of hours to make me cum. Look at how wet you got me. Fuck me Jermaine,” Envy said as she sat atop his desk and spread her legs in the perfect V.

The sight of how wet she was made Jermaine truly lose his common sense. As if he were in a trance, Jermaine guided his condomless shaft into Envy’s slit without a second thought of his wife.

*** *

“Do you hear me talking to you?”

Envy’s loud shrill voice snapped him back to the present. Jermaine shuttered as he

recalled the first time he and Envy had sex. The memory was so vivid that he could feel his stiffness turning his basketball shorts into a tent. Jermaine laid pipe that night like a man fresh out of prison.

The sex was so good that he had given her the \$3,200. Hush money he claimed. He didn't want to admit that the sex was so good that he paid for it. Jermaine squeezed his hardness in anger. He had been a fool for Envy, now he was fucked up because of her. Her feisty attitude and their arguments turned him on, so he knew the best way to handle this conversation was to remain calm to get her off his line.

“What did you say? And wrap this up. I got things to do,” Jermaine sighed.

“I said you might as well get over my sister's self-centered ass and acknowledge that I saved you from a life of mediocracy. You should repay me for a job well done. You should come over here and award my hard work,” Envy said seductively as she sat in front of her bedroom mirror completely nude.

She couldn't lie, she wanted it badly. The downfall of her sister's marriage, Eden losing her baby, and Jermaine tussling with the bottle excited her. Envy moaned at the thought of Jermaine, but he hadn't heard anything she said after 'self-centered.'

He was just hard as a brick. Now he was as limp as a noodle. It was the simple lie that made him feel worse than he already had. Eden was not self-centered. She was the most selfless person that he had ever met, and he had fucked it up.

“Fuck you Envy.” He said quickly before ending the call. He knew he needed to speak to his wife. A sense of urgency gripped him as he dialed Eden's number.

“The number you have dialed has been changed, disconnected, or no longer in service.”

“Fuck!!” Jermaine screamed when the automated out of service message began to play.

“Eden, I’m sorry Baby. I don’t know what I was thinking. I just need another chance to-”

The monologue Jermaine was on the verge of beginning stopped when he saw Eve’s number. His heart stalled. Eve had made it clear that she didn’t want anything to do with him, and she had always been a woman of her word. He knew that if she was calling that something had to be wrong with Eden .

“Eve, what’s wrong? Is Edy ok?” The concern and panic in his voice was apparent.

“It’s me. Can we talk?”

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“It’s me. Can we talk?”

The tearfully laced words that came through the phone sobered Jermaine instantly. The pain that dwelled within her because of his betrayal was evident. In all the years that he knew Eden, she had never sounded this broken. It made his heart sink knowing that he was the cause of her pain.

“Eden, yeah. I mean yes, we can talk. I’m glad you called. I’ve been trying to call you, you changed your number. I’ve been beating myself up for real Edy. Baby, I messed up. I’m sorry. How are you? Are you ok?” Jermaine asked quickly.

The words flew out of his mouth like they were running a race. The only time he ever sped through a speech quickly is if he were lying or nervous.

Eden could sense his nervousness and laughed flatly.

The sound of her dry humorless laugh made his skin crawl. The situation they were in was by no means funny. In fact, he had been in tears nearly every night behind his actions. So, hearing Eden laugh didn’t sit well with him. If he didn’t want to speak to her so badly, he would’ve ended the call.

“Is that a real question? What do you mean how have I been?” Eden asked though she really didn’t want an answer.

Jermaine recoiled. He could practically hear the fury seeping through his wife’s teeth. Explaining himself was the only thing he could think of doing.

“I was just-”

“Let’s dissect that question,” Eden interrupted. “I caught the man I’ve dated since college having sex with my sister. A person that has done everything to ruin my family. A person that he knew firsthand was more of my enemy. But whether she was an enemy or not, she is still my sister. But you couldn’t care less.

On top of that, the heartbreak and stress caused me to miscarry a baby I didn’t even know I was carrying. After that, how do you think I’ve been? If you caught me having sex with someone in your family, would you be ok?” Eden asked.

Jermaine remained silent. He knew there was nothing he could say to justify his actions. No matter how much Envy had come on to him, he knew he should’ve never crossed the line. He knew that Eden’s question was hypothetical, but he thought it best to answer her anyway .

“Edy, I was wrong. I can’t even come up with a lie to make sense to justify why I did what I did. You have been a perfect wife. You’re the type of woman that my mother prayed her sons would find. She would’ve loved you so much Edy. She would say, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord, ” Jermaine admitted.

Tears filled his eyes as his mother’s favorite scripture came to mind. It had been years since he even thought of Proverbs 18:22. It was painful, but now as he spoke to the woman he gave his last name, it was as if his mother were speaking for him.

Eden’s face twisted in disgust. She could hear what may have been true emotion. At one point in time, she would have believed that the sound of pity coming from his mouth was genuine, but now she just didn’t know. But even if he was genuine, some people should be off limits, but Jermaine had obviously not received that memo.

So, even if he was truly upset by his behavior, she didn't care. He had crossed the line. His feelings meant nothing to her. But she had a game to play, and play she would. If she had to fake an interest to make her role believable, she would.

"Instead of coming up with a lie to justify as your actions, just tell me the truth?" Eden said .

"The truth?" Jermaine repeated the two words as if it were a foreign language.

Hearing Eden ask for the truth seemed so simple. The truth was something he never planned to give. Though now hearing her ask for it, it seemed like the best thing to do. If he had just told the truth from the beginning, he wouldn't be living in hell now.

"Yes, Jermaine the fucking truth! After all these years, is that really something that needs to be explained? I thought our love was pure and we could talk about anything. But I was wrong. Calling you was a mistake, because what the fuck do we need to talk about. I know the truth. You fucked my sister and that's all I need to know. I gotta-"

"Ok Edy. Ok. Just give me a second," Jermaine interrupted.

He knew that if Eden ended the call that she would not call back. Instead, the next person he'd hear from would be her divorce attorney.

"I know this is going to sound cliché, but I love you and made a simple mistake. The situation with Envy was just a thing that happened. That's it and that's all."

Eden lost it. His response to having an affair with her younger sister nearly made her blow a gasket .

"Are you fucking insane Jermaine? A woman's menstrual cycle is just a thing that

happens. Unexpected rain on a sunny day is just a thing that happens. You fucking my sister was not just a thing that happened. An opportunity was presented, and you made a choice, that's what happened. Did you think that bullshit line would work?" Eden asked.

"Edy, I-"

"No, Jermaine. I was a damn good woman. And of all the women you could have slept with you chose to go flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood. You know what's funny? You are not the first of my exes to fuck my little sister. I guess Envy is just a better woman than me," Eden cried.

Jermaine's stomach lurched. Hearing Eden mentioning her exes did something to his psyche. He knew it shouldn't, but he couldn't help the way it made him feel. It was as if she was saying that if Envy hadn't slept with her exes, she would've been with someone else. At least that's how he interpreted it.

"Focus on her feelings and not yours," he told himself.

The fact that he was thinking about his own insecurities, and not hers, made him feel low. These were Envy's scandalous traits rubbing off on him. As he listened to the nonsense that fell from Eden's mouth, he couldn't believe that his actions had reduced her to this level of insecurity. What was more troubling was the fact that she believed what she was saying.

"Edy, baby stop. Please stop," Jermaine begged as he dragged his hand over his stubbly beard covered face.

He couldn't listen to her tearing herself down with false truths anymore. The fact that he made his wife feel as though she was worthless made him feel less of a man. She was never supposed to feel that way. He knew now that it was time to tell her the

truth that he tried so hard to keep buried.

“Edy, the day I met you, I knew I didn’t deserve you. You were perfect, and I had too many unresolved issues. There were things about my past that I didn’t know how to share with you,”

“You didn’t know how to share them with me, but you knew how to share them with Envy?” Eden scoffed.

The explanation made no sense. In fact, it sounded as if he was making the story up as he spoke. Because after all, that’s what liars did.

“It wasn’t like that,” Jermaine insisted.

His agitation was through the roof. He was frustrated. Being interrupted when he was speaking didn’t sit well with him. This loudmouth behavior was out of Eden’s character. He wanted to scream at her, but he couldn’t. Because the non-understanding, impatient and argumentative woman that was now his wife was all his fault.

“Then you have to explain what it’s like Jermaine. I don’t understand. I mean, I tried to be a great wife. I tried to be everything you wanted me to be. I-”

“And that was the problem! You don’t know how to stand up for yourself!” Jermaine snapped and immediately regretted it.

Eden gasped a real gasp. His outburst had caught her off guard.

“I didn’t mean that, Edy. I’m sorry. I’m making you the problem when the problem is me,” Jermaine admitted hoping that if he continued to talk fast that it would soften the blow of what he said. To avoid Eden getting a word in, he continued to speak.

“The truth is you remind me so much of my mother. Growing up she was my everything, and then she was gone. I held onto so much anger towards her that I eventually unleashed it on the wrong person,” Jermaine admitted.

He tried to swallow his emotion before Eden could hear it. The thought of being vulnerable in front of the woman he vowed to be strong for terrified him. She was never supposed to see him with a chink in his armor.

However, even in anger, Eden’s ears worked well. She could hear a mouse piss on cotton just as loud as she could hear a drunk man stifling a sob. Her eyebrows furrowed as she listened to him trying to hide the breakdown he was experiencing.

She was still very much stunned by his attack on her character, but she knew she couldn’t dwell on it. In the grand scheme of things, his outburst was a small fish in a big pond. But no matter how small, it eventually would be addressed.

“Get out of your feelings. He said what he said. Add that slick comment to the list of shit you’re about to make him regret. Let him clear his so-called conscience. His somber ass is about to give you some news you can use.” Eden thought.

“Jermaine what you’re saying doesn’t make any sense. How can you be mad at your mom? I know you were just a boy when it happened, but baby, it’s not like she left you for another man. She died. We can’t control the day we leave this Earth,” Eden said soothingly.

She spoke with the tenderness of a mother telling her young child the bandage would fix their boo-boo before placing the call on mute and biting into her cheesy Gordita crunch. She was starving. Pretending to be a concerned wife and acting as if she gave a fuck about his feelings or his dead mother, had her as hungry as a 1000-lb Sister. Making a mental note, Eden jotted stress eating and weight gain on the list of things she planned to hold Jermaine responsible for when the time was right.

The act of revenge was so sweet she could taste it. The punishment for his betrayal would not be swift. No, Eden planned to drag it out and prolong his suffering for as long as humanly possible. His pain was pleasing to her. She relished the moment when she could stop with the games and break her foot off in his backstabbing ass.

Jermaine chuckled, a dry humorless chuckle. “That’s just it Edy. My mom could’ve controlled her death by watching the company that she kept. She didn’t die. She was murdered. Murdered by my father.”

An unchewed piece of the crunchy taco slid down Eden’s throat making her choke. She coughed excessively trying to get the piece of chip dislodged from the wall of her esophagus. Eden knew that if she didn’t clear her air passages, she’d be joining Jermaine’s mother.

His admission had stunned her so severely that she couldn’t remember if she needed to chew her food or just swallow it. Of all the things Jermaine could have said, she hadn’t expected him to say that. Discussions about his mother, Andrea Shelton, had always been a sore spot. When Jermaine did speak of her, he’d use soft phrases like “passed away”, “died suddenly”, or “went home to Heaven” to describe her death.

Because of his choice of words, she assumed Andrea died from either Cancer or natural causes. Worst case scenario, a car accident. Murder by the hands of her husband, his father, never once crossed her mind, especially since Jermaine claimed he never knew who his father was.

“Are you okay? Go get some water.” Jermaine suggested. The violent coughing coming from his wife had him concerned.

Clearing her throat and wiping the tears from her eyes, Eden began her follow-up questioning.

“I’m sorry, what you said caught me off guard. What do you mean your mom was murdered by your father? I thought you said you didn’t know your father. I’m your wife Jermaine. Why would you keep that part of your life from me?”

Jermaine sighed.

He knew he’d have to explain his family dynamics one day. He just wished he had made better choices and wasn’t sharing the most painful moment of his life as a way to save his marriage.

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“Edy, I love you. But love was not enough for me to share the worst part of my life. That tragedy happened twenty-two years ago; I still wasn’t ready to talk about it. I’m not ready to talk about it now, but you deserve the truth,” Jermaine admitted.

“I’m not trying to make you relive any childhood trauma. But as your wife, I’d like to help you heal from some of the hurt, or at least help you find the resources, if I can,” Eden said sounding as sincere as a nun feeding the less fortunate.

Jermaine could feel his eyes water. For years he had kept the horrors of his childhood locked away in hopes of forgetting the worst day of his life. But he knew, even though he had done her wrong, Eden would do her part in helping him heal. Swallowing his emotion, Jermaine cleared his throat and began to speak.

“I know that I told you I never knew my father. That was a lie. Lying about not knowing him was the only way I could erase his trifling ass from my life. It was the only way that he’d never be brought up in conversation. My father, Jerry Shelton, was an evil son of a bitch. But he wasn’t always that way. He used to be a great hands-on father. Then he changed. After my brother was born, he was in a car accident, and when he came back, he was different.

He would physically and verbally abuse my mom, pick fights with me and my brother, or he’d literally steal the rent money and go on drug and alcohol fueled binges. I looked forward to the days he got drunk, that way I knew he wouldn’t come home, and we’d have some peace. Then one day, he came home drunk and nearly beat the skin off my mother’s face. I was eleven at the time and my brother was seven. I was helpless and powerless.

He was the only man that I ever feared. I knew there was nothing I could do, so I called the police to save my mom. He was so out of it, that after he had beaten my mother into unconsciousness, his unstable ass went in the bed in bloody clothes and fell asleep.

When the police came, he acted as if he didn't know or understand why he was going to jail. For three weeks my Uncle Jackson stayed with us until my mom was released from the hospital. When she got out, she was unrecognizable. My mother had a fair complexion, like Marie's, and Jerry had broken so many blood vessels in her face that it couldn't be repaired. Her face was a purplish-hue when she returned home.

When I looked at her, I noticed that she wouldn't look me in the face. She was embarrassed. It was my first time ever seeing that look. She always made excuses for Jerry's actions. But he had gone too far that time and she knew it. My Uncle Jackson told us that Jerry was diagnosed with Bipolar Personality Disorder, Intermittent Explosive Disorder, and severe depression. But my mother didn't care. She had had enough. She finally realized that her Christian values were bullshit.

My mother never cursed, but that day she said, "Jermaine, Josiah, I'm sorry that I kept that sorry motherfucker around. I should've been stronger, but I was scared. This was my eye opener. Everyone gets tired of dealing with other people's bullshit. I'll never let that piece of shit hurt this family again,"

I had never heard her speak that way before and I believed her. The house was his, so she packed all of our things: clothes, shoes, and all documentation needed to start a new life and we drove to Georgia.

I wish she was a woman of her word because had she been, she'd still be alive. For thirteen months, we lived a blissful life without him. While Josiah and I were living in peace, my mother was living in agony. She didn't know how to live without her tormentor. My Uncle Jackson said my mother suffered from battered woman

syndrome. And she'd sneak off and call him, not caring that she was putting us in danger. She didn't realize that until it was too late," Jermaine admitted .

Eden listened intently. She was so engrossed that she didn't realize that her mouth was wide open.

"This is better than a damn movie." Eden thought as she hung on to every word for dear life.

My mother was the only woman I knew that loved to grill. She'd cook on the grill 5-6 times a week. The day she was murdered; she had just taken our steaks, potatoes, and corn off the grill.

"Josiah, turn that Gameboy off and Jermaine go wash your hands. The food is ready."

"Ok Ma," I said before going down the hall to the guest bathroom. I wasn't in the bathroom for thirty seconds before I heard,

CRASH!

"You thought you was gonna leave me bitch!"

"Jerry! No!!"

BOOM!

Eden nearly jumped out of her skin at the sound of Jermaine's loud outburst.

"Jerry had tracked us down,"

He had never spoken about the things he witnessed and now that he was, he couldn't

stop. He needed to purge himself .

“At the sound of the first shot, I ran down the hall. He shot Josiah in the chest. My mother was wailing, cradling my brothers’ dead body. There was so much blood that it looked black.

I watched her try to scoop blood and bone fragments back in his tiny chest and breathe in his mouth. She rocked him back-and-forth, calling his name, trying to get him to wake up, but Josiah was gone. I was frozen. Paralyzed from shock and fear.

While my mom was cradling their dead son, my father was grinning like it was the funniest thing in the world.

He said, “If I hurt, you hurt too!”

I never knew what that meant because my mom had never done anything to hurt him or anyone else. Jerry looked so demonic. Eyes bloodshot, pupils as large as the irises, nose running. But I could tell my mom didn’t hear him. She was too busy apologizing to Josiah and me. Screaming “I’m sorry,”

But Jerry kept laughing. He turned around, sniffed the air, and grabbed one of the steaks and ears of corn that we were supposed to have for dinner. He said, “This is a damn good dinner Andy,” He sat there eating dinner while my mother cried over their child. He just didn’t seem to care. It’s like Josiah always rubbed him the wrong way .

After he killed my brother, ate our food, he raised his shotgun and shot my mother in the face. Then he pulled her pants down, inserted the barrel and pulled the trigger again. I literally watched him insert the barrel of a shotgun in between her legs and blow the top half of her body across the room. There was nothing left of her. You’ll never understand how much I hate my father.

That's the story of my childhood. I know you're probably wondering what that has to do with anything. In my mind, anytime something good comes into my life, I find a way to sabotage it because I'm damaged. I can admit that. I should've admitted that a long time ago and given you a choice.

I love you, Eden. Besides my mother and Josiah, I never loved anyone. That's why this situation really did destroy me. I know I don't deserve another chance because I was wrong. But if you give me a chance to get into therapy and fix us, I promise, I'll never let you down again," Jermaine said truthfully and sincerely.

He now knew what it was like to be without his wife. He wanted no parts of the single life.

"I didn't know you experienced something so tragic. I can understand why you kept this from me. I can't lie and say this won't be hard Jermaine, but I don't want to give up on my marriage. I think with counseling, you'll be able to cope with your childhood trauma, and eventually we'll be able to put this behind us. Look, I need to process this. I'll call you in a couple days so you can pick me up and bring me home," Eden said before ending the call.

"And scene," Eden said as if she were ending a stage play.

"Bitch you're stupid!" Eve laughed. Seeing how her sister switched roles was comical and quite scary. It almost reminded her of Envy.

"A man's pride will always be his downfall. Only a prideful man would believe a woman would take him back with no consequences after sleeping with her sister. He truly believes that all he had to do is tell you how his mother died and there will be no ramifications for his actions," Marie laughed.

"Sucks to be him. Forgiveness is not on the menu," Eden smirked.

THREE MONTHS LATER

Jermaine stood at the entryway of his kitchen watching Eden in awe. Butterflies flapped in his stomach as if he had just seen her for the first time. He had seen this sight, her moving around the kitchen like a Top Chef, several times over the years. But now he watched her with a new appreciation. Since starting counseling, he now felt whole and unburdened.

He hadn't realized how his behavior, views on women, and actions stemmed from childhood trauma. His therapist explained to him that vices such as womanizing, being hypersexual, and addiction were ways of self-gratification to fill the void from his childhood.

He had never thought about that before, mainly because he never thought about it. But after listening to what his therapist had to say, he had to agree that the words she spoke made sense.

There had been many times after a rendezvous where he felt empty and alone. However, he never felt that emptiness with Eden. Though he felt like he had the whole package with her, the nagging voice in his head constantly told him that she wasn't enough. Since seeing a therapist, that voice had silenced. He felt less burdened and now he could genuinely appreciate the woman that he married. Creeping behind her, Jermaine wrapped his muscular arms around Eden's waist.

Eden screamed.

“Oh my God! What are you doing here?”

She asked as she gripped her chest.

“I’ve been standing here for ten minutes just admiring you. You got in here smelling good. What are you cooking?” Jermaine asked as he bit her ear.

Eden sent up a quick prayer, “God thank you for talking me out of putting this Thallium in this food. I was so determined to do his ass in that I didn’t even know he was home. I would’ve been caught. Thank you, God!” She thought as she patted the vile in her left pocket.

“I’m doing pot roast and roasted vegetables. Do you want a plate?” Eden asked as she tasted the well-seasoned gravy.

After all these years, it was still an adjustment eating meat in front of her after having her believe that he didn’t consume it. Though he had practiced a vegetarian lifestyle while in college, it had nothing to do with the last supper he shared with his mother.

It was simply a personal preference and the fact that he had the ability to make his wife do something that she didn’t need to do. His therapist pointed out that he was manipulative, because he was intentionally taking advantage of a person that was willing to give freely of themselves. Eden had been the best type of woman, and his selfishness nearly made him lose her.

“I want something to eat, but what I want isn’t in that Crock Pot,” Jermaine moaned seductively as he pulled Eden’s legging’s down in one swift motion.

In the few months that they’d been back together, sex had become a rare act between them. They went from having sex daily to hardly ever. Jermaine could understand why, but he had to admit that he wanted his wife now more than ever. There was something about this domestic side of her that always brought out the savage in him.

The sound of his ringing phone halted the feast before he could even get started.

“What are you doing?” Eden asked as she stood with her leggings bunched at her ankles.

“Give me five minutes babe. I’m sorry. I’m waiting on a call from Harold Jayroe.”

“Oh my God, really? The new Public Relations Officer?”

“Yeah, that’s why I got home early. He’s flying in and I’m picking him up from the airport and taking him to the hotel’s private housing. It’ll give us a chance to talk about what we expect from him,” Jermaine said proudly.

Eden understood perfectly. Work always comes first.

“Answer that, I’m going to the bathroom,” she said as she pulled up the leggings and sprinted off.

Jermaine admired the thickness of Eden’s backside as she sprinted down the hall to the bathroom. He hadn’t missed how her hips had begun to spread just a little.

Grabbing his ringing phone, his heart nearly seized in his chest.

“What the fuck?” He screamed inwardly as he watched the white numbers display on the screen. It had been months since this number dialed his phone, but he knew exactly who the unsaved number belonged too. He red buttoned the call and saw that there were nine missed calls from the same number in the past thirty minutes .

As a show of disrespect and mockery, the phone rang while in his hand. He hesitated on answering, but he knew he had to. This was the tenth call.

“Eden and I are back together. Don’t call-,”

“I know all about y’all being back together. I just don’t care,” Envy said truthfully.

“Look, I got some things to do on y’all’s side of town today. I need to see you before I handle those things,” Envy crooned seductively.

“What happened between us was a mistake. It’s over. I got my wife back.”

Envy laughed.

Jermaine was really a joke to her.

“Just be honest Jermaine, you miss fucking me. Edy already knows about us, so it’s not like I had any leverage to use against you. I doubt that you have my number saved, yet you answered the phone while your dumb ass wife is home. You want to fuck me like we used to do and that’s why you answered the phone. You could’ve just blocked my number if you didn’t want to hear from me. Come get this pussy. I’m dropping my location,” Envy said before ending the call .

Jermaine’s third leg was hard as Chinese arithmetic. He knew everything she said was correct. For three months, he had not cheated on Eden, nor did he think of Envy, but now that she was back, he knew that he had to have her. He hated to admit it, but it seems that she was worth losing it all.

Absentmindedly, Jermaine walked to the bathroom, twisted the knob and frowned. Eden never locked the bathroom door.

Eden jumped and quickly closed Facetime.

“Eden, are you ok?”

“Yeah, babe, I’m good,”

“That was Harold. He’ll be landing in fifteen minutes. Do you mind if I drive the Wagoneer? I know he’ll probably have a lot of luggage,” The lie rolled off his tongue effortlessly.

“Sure, go ahead!”

“Why is the door locked?” Jermaine asked as he twisted the knob yet again.

After a few seconds he heard the toilet flush and faucet run before Eden unlocked the door.

“I didn’t realize I locked the door when I came in here. But I’m glad I did lock it because you almost caught me in the middle of my favorite guilty pleasure, ”

“Oh yeah, what’s that?” Jermaine asked as he licked his lips seductively.

“Online shopping with your credit card,” Eden laughed as she held up her phone screen showing the Louis Vuitton website. “I spoke with Eve while you were talking to Harold. She wanted me to come over, but I told her, I’d have to do a rain check. I’m not feeling the best,” Eden said as she pulled on a T-shirt and climbed on the couch.

“What’s wrong?”

“I’m just tired. With all the flights I’ve had to take for work for the International Offices, I’m just drained. Go get Harold. I’ll be here when you get back,” Eden said as she grabbed the remote.

“Call me if you need anything,” Jermaine shouted over his shoulder as he quickly

walked out the door.

“ What the fuck are you doing? You just got your wife back about ninety days ago. Think with your big head, ” His brain said as he got behind the wheel of his wife’s second car.

He wanted to listen, but try as he might, he couldn’t. He couldn’t go back in the house to the woman he chose to love, honor, and obey and he couldn’t turn Envy down either .

“Stupid! Stupid!” He said as he slapped the steering wheel. Thoughts of the conversation he and Eden had before she came back home played in his head.

“Do I have to worry about you and Envy again? I-”

“No Eden. I put that on mama. That was a mistake, and it’ll never happen again,”

Three months ago, when he said those words, he meant them with every fiber of his being. But today, as he read Envy’s location, he knew his words were a blatant lie. As grim as it sounded, he was glad that his brother was dead, so Eden couldn’t seek revenge.

Envy spotted Jermaine behind the wheel of Eden’s Grand Wagoneer and wanted to burst into laughter. She sprayed a healthy amount of perfume on just to make sure the scent lingered in the car.

“You should really win husband of the year. Why are you driving her Jeep, instead of yours?” Envy asked quizzically.

The question made him nauseous. Trifling dudes did shit like this. He was wrong and he knew it. But sadly, he didn’t care enough to leave.

“Because I knew she wouldn’t think I was doing anything suspicious with her car,” Jermaine said and instantly felt like shit .

Envy threw her head back and laughed. “That’s how I know I’m worth the risk. You took your wife’s car, so she wouldn’t be suspicious, of you having sex with her sister,”

Jermaine dropped his head in shame. Envy was right. That is exactly what he did. So many different emotions swirled through him. But lust was still the strongest. As he looked down at Envy’s Lime Green Toenail Polish, blood drained from his head and shot to his dick.

“Since you’re on a curfew, let’s get to it. I didn’t come for the small talk. I came for the orgasm,” Envy said as she climbed to the third-row seat and spread her legs. Jermaine was right behind her.

He didn’t say a word as he dived headfirst in between her legs. In all the time they had been sneaking around he had never performed oral sex on her, but now, seeing how wet she was, how good she smelled and the bright green polish on her toes, he was turned on some much that he couldn’t contain himself.

“I didn’t come here for your tongue. Save the foreplay for your wife,” Envy said as she mashed Jermaine’s head disrespectfully.

Ironically, the disrespect turned him on even more. Sliding his condomless dick into Envy’s semi-tight hole. Jermaine closed his eyes and hissed .

“Damn, I missed this!” Jermaine growled as he drilled into Envy as if she were paying him. He was so caught up that he sucked her toes like she was his wife.

CHECK ADDITIONAL WEIGHT IN REAR SEAT

“Why would he put the suitcases on my back seat? Use the trunk,” Eden said when the rear seat notification came to her phone from the Wagoneer app.

Jermaine rarely drove this vehicle, so he had no way of knowing that the rear seats were weight activated. He also had no way of knowing that in the rearview mirror was also an interior camera that could be viewed via the Wagoneer App. Logging into the app, Eden’s jaw tightened when she saw the additional weight in her rear seat was not his coworkers luggage, but her husband going to pound town on her sister.

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“As soon as I cum, I come to my senses,” Jermaine recited Lil’ Wayne’s ad lib as he stood in the restroom of the Hess gas station. Post nut clarity instantly made him regret his choices. All he could do was look down and shake his head. He didn’t even want to look in the mirror. Looking at himself in the face was too hard at the moment.

This was a new low for him. Mainly because it was unnecessary. Eden had already caught him, Envy had no more leverage. Yet when she called, he went running. Jermaine knew the act of betrayal that he committed was wrong, but if he ever doubted it, what he was doing right now confirmed it.

He stood in the public restroom washing his stomach and groin with Safeguard Antibacterial soap and hard brown paper towel like a whore. He was a man; he had never taken a hoe bath before. But there was a first time for everything, and this time was necessary. There was no way he could go home to his wife smelling like another woman.

As he lathered the harsh soap on the paper towel and washed his private parts, he wanted to forget about the wild sex, choking, and spit swapping that he and his sister-in-law exchanged. But the erection he was sporting let him know that forgetting the moment would not be easy.

“I don’t even want her. Why am I so hard?” Jermaine asked himself. “How could I be dumb enough to fuck Envy in Eden’s car. I lied to my wife so I could use her car to have sex with her sister. What the fuck was I thinking?” Jermaine chastised himself.

He didn’t want to think about Envy, but he couldn’t help it. Envy had hopped on his dick and owned it. With every thrust he made; she made sure to meet his strokes like

a professional. Allowing his tip to pulverize her G spot. Sending shockwaves through his body that he never knew were possible.

Jermaine closed his eyes as he remembered how Envy shook and expelled her love juice all over his clothes and Eden's back seat. While Envy was on his dick, he was in Heaven. He hated to admit it, but Envy knew how to please him.

"You can go back to your wife now," Envy smirked as she climbed off Jermaine's ejaculating dick. She didn't bother pulling her dress down nor did she assist in cleaning the evidence of their betrayal. It wasn't her car or her husband to be concerned with.

"Evil bitch," Jermaine said to himself as he replayed Envy's cruel act. By the time he had gathered himself, Envy was gone. Her car was nowhere to be seen.

"This is some bullshit," He mumbled.

He didn't understand Envy. She skated through life intentionally hurting people that had never done anything to hurt her. It was as if she got a sick thrill from causing her loved one's pain.

"But aren't you doing the same thing?"

As soon as the thought entered his head, Jermaine knew he couldn't point any fingers at Envy. Eden had not deserved this type of betrayal, he knew it. Yet he had done it and enjoyed it. The thought of being like Envy made him sick to his already weak stomach. Now that the act was over, thinking of what he and Envy just did made Jermaine physically sick. It didn't matter that his dick was hard, he felt queasy.

"Shake it off. This was the last time. You blocked that bitch's number, shampooed the carpets in the car and wiped off the backseat. Thank God the Jeep has leather

seats. I'm done with this foul shit before Eden finds out," Jermaine told himself.

He was confident in what he was saying because he had no idea that Eden had seen every sexual act shared between him and her sister in real time. Touching his sweatpants, Jermaine confirmed that the hand dryer had dried the excretions. Exiting the restroom, Jermaine made peace with his actions. He was on the verge of making things right.

The scent of wild sex and cum could not be detected when Jermaine climbed into Eden's Jeep. He silently thanked God that there was no telltale sign that just an hour ago, the Wagoneer had been a sex dungeon. Jermaine turned the volume of the radio down so he could work through the thoughts in his head.

"Ma, I wish you were here. I really wish I could talk to you. I've needed your advice so badly in the past twenty-three years. I'm married now. My wife's name is Eden, you would've really liked her. I have a real good woman, but for some reason, I keep fucking my marriage up.

We split up a few months ago and I was going insane without her. After a few months, we got back together. I thought that time apart scared me straight, but it didn't. Like a fool, I did the same shit again. I don't even know why," Jermaine sighed.

As a child, after he sighed, he knew this would be the moment where his mother would say, "God never puts more on us than we can handle," Foolishly he waited to hear those words, but sadly it never came. The absence of her voice made the pain in his chest feel as brutal as the day he watched her being murdered .

"Damn Ma, you're really gone. I just wish you could give me some sort of sign to let me know you're ok and guide me in the right direction. I don't know what to do next,"

“Nothing says, I love you, like a bouquet of freshly picked cut roses. Show the lady in your life how much you love her with a personalized Bouquet of Love,”

The ad on the radio nearly made Jermaine jump through the windshield. Fear made him jerk the wheel so hard that he nearly hit the car in the opposite lane. He laughed nervously as he gained control of his senses.

“If Eden hadn’t already put her Wagoneer in the shop twice due to the radio’s volume increasing by itself, I’d think you were trying to tell me something Ma. I mean I did ask for a sign,” Jermaine laughed as he tried to calm his nerves.

The radio had successfully scared the shit out of him. Whether a simple technological malfunction or a sign from the other side, Jermaine couldn’t deny that good advice was good advice.

The floral shop was less than a mile away on the next exit. Using the Bluetooth connection, Jermaine called out for Siri to call, The Wife.

“Bonjour, you’ve reached Eden Merci Shelton. I’m unavailable. ”

“Why is the call going to voicemail?” Jermaine thought. He knew she hadn’t left home because his ADT app didn’t show any movement. At the sound of the beep, Jermaine left a message.

“Hey Edy, why is your phone going to voicemail? I’m on the way home. Do you want me to grab something to eat since you aren’t feeling well? I’ll be home in fifteen minutes. I’ll see you in a little bit,” Jermaine said as he pulled in front of the flower shop.

Jermaine exited the Wagoneer, entered the flower shop and instantly wanted to leave. The sweet scent of roses, petunias, and other floral scents that Jermaine couldn’t

identify attacked his sinuses, making his eyes water, nose itch, and a flurry of sneezes began.

“Bless you. First time in a flower shop, Huh?” The older woman, whose name tag read, Madge, asked as she handed Jermaine a box of Kleenex.

“Thank you and yes, it is. I’m assuming the chronic sneezing gave that fact away,” Jermaine joked as he accepted the soft tissue.

“The sneeze chorus gives it away every time. What can I put together for you?” Madge asked.

“Well, I don’t know. Like you said, this is my first time needing an actual bouquet. I normally buy flowers from Publix or Edible Arrangements. But it’s my anniversary. I wanted to do something special,” Jermaine lied.

There was no need to tell a stranger the truth. She did not need to know that he felt guilty for having sex with his sister-in-law. Though something told him that Madge had heard every sob story and raunchy tale known to man. If he were the type to wager a bet, he would’ve won, because Madge was a little crestfallen that he didn’t have a salacious tale to tell her. Heartbreak and dumb decisions are what kept her business afloat for thirty years.

“An anniversary arrangement. I can do that. So, you just want something bright and pretty. Something that says, I’ll love you from now until the end of time. And you don’t have a preference on the type of flowers, correct?” Madge asked for certainty.

“Correct,”

“Well, you are in luck. I made this arrangement two hours ago. As you can see it has yellow and orange lilies, sunflowers, snowball mums, and pink roses. I can add more

to it if it's not big enough for you," Madge said cheerfully.

Though he wasn't a flower guy, Jermaine knew what looked good and he had to admit the floral arrangement was beautiful. The different types of flowers blended perfectly together .

"This is gorgeous. I'll take it. I saw something in a magazine called Venus et fleur. Do you carry that?"

"Yes, I do," Madge said eagerly.

"I'll take an order of that as well."

"Coming right up,"

Madge said as she scurried to the back to get the designer flowers. Jermaine nearly called Madge an old Bitch when she said the total of his purchase would be \$573. Publix flowers were \$25.00 at most. But if anyone deserved that price tag, he knew his wife did.

"For almost \$600, I hope you were right Ma!" Jermaine chuckled as he thought back to the radio ad that had gotten him to the flower shop.

He had grossly misinterpreted what he assumed was a sign from his mother. Andrea Shelton despised flowers. She once said flowers were a sign of trouble because men only gave them to their partners when they did something they shouldn't have or if there was a death.

When he was growing up, she refused to have them in her home. Andrea had been gone so long that Jermaine had forgotten about her disdain for flowers. Had he remembered, he would've known that what he thought was a good sign was indeed a

premonition. But because he wasn't aware he drove home without giving his mother's theory on flowers a second thought. His only goal was to see a smile on his wife's face.

Eden frowned in disgust when she saw her Jeep Wagoneer pull into the driveway of her home via the ADT App.

"Guess whose lame ass just pulled up," Eden asked jokily.

"I wish I could be a fly on the wall when he walks in,"

"Even if you were a fly, you wouldn't see or hear anything. I don't plan to mention what I saw tonight. Nah, I'm not going to say anything. I have other plans for his dog ass," Eden smirked.

Though she wore a grin, she was indeed angry.

"Oh, so you're being mysterious and keeping secrets. I gotta watch your pretty ass Eden," He laughed.

Eden chuckled right along.

"Look Babe, I gotta go. ADT tells me when there's movement. It looks like he's walking up to the house,"

"I didn't say you could go yet. Go get that dildo that you have and suck on it. I need to see how much you miss me," He ordered .

"Ok Baby," Eden agreed.

Between her legs felt like an ocean. She loved it when he spoke disrespectfully to her.

She was so turned on that she couldn't keep her fingers from between her legs.

She felt no shame or guilt. There were nights when Jermaine was asleep, and she was riding this man in the next room.

Propping her phone on the sink, Eden quickly pulled her faux phallus from under the bathroom sink. It was still in the same place she threw it when Jermaine knocked on the bathroom door. Placing the suction base on the mirror, Eden wasted no time deep throating it like a porn star.

“Thats it. Just like that!” He urged breathlessly as he felt his nut rushing to his tip.

Eden could hear keys being placed in the door and the sound of the alarm being deactivated. The thought of getting caught by Jermaine, while another man watched her masturbate, made her explode.

The eruption was so electrifying that she could barely breathe. Her circuits had literally overloaded. She struggled to gain control of her senses so she could stand. But her legs simply wouldn't cooperate .

“Damm Babe! All of this should've been inside of you,” He panted as he held up his cum covered left hand. His release was so thick that it looked like Elmer's glue. Eden's mouth watered at the sight of it. She hadn't always been a cum guzzler, but for him, she'd drink every living sperm from his balls like a cocktail.

“Don't waste my kids. Clean them off,” It was now Eden's turn to make demands.

Without any form of hesitation, he did as he was told. Sucking each cum covered finger as if it were a delicatessen.

“I need your legs wrapped around my waist in the morning,” He panted.

“I’ll be there,” Eden winked before ending the call.

She was drained and exhausted. But it was worth it.

“Edy!”

Eden rolled her eyes. The after sex feeling that she wanted to bask in, quickly dwindled when she heard Jermaine screaming her name from downstairs.

“Edy, I’m home!” He shouted, clearly out of breath .

Jermaine struggled to carry the two floral arrangements. Though they were beautiful, they were large and heavy. At this very moment, he thanked God for Eden’s strategically placed Dmitry Samal Human Tables.

They had had these tables for years and he still hated them. He couldn’t understand how someone believed that four faux male legs supporting a tabletop was considered high end home decor. But Eden wanted them, so in his home they resided. Because of their placement, he was able to get the large bouquets out of his hands.

“I got a surprise for-”

The sound of hard vomiting silenced Jermaine’s speech. He had never heard anything so violent. Running up the stairs to the bathroom, Jermaine flung the door open.

“Oh, shit! What’s wrong?” Jermaine asked when he saw his wife hugging the toilet bowl.

Jermaine stepped into husband of the year mode. Wetting a washcloth, he gently cleaned Eden’s face and placed another wet cloth on her neck to cool her down.

“Babe, I know you said you didn’t feel well. But I didn’t know you were throwing up. What’s wrong?” Jermaine asked tenderly as he sat on the floor beside her.

“I’m pregnant.”

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From: Eden's dumbass husband - Eden and I are having a baby. When the baby arrives, I'm done with this. Edy flew out yesterday to meet a client.

To: Eden's dumbass husband – I hate kids that's why I aborted ours. Are you expecting me to say congratulations?

From: Eden's dumbass husband – I'm expecting you to say you're coming over.

To: Eden's dumbass husband - Put the camera in Privacy Mode.

From: Eden's dumbass husband : Done. You know the routine when you get here.

Envy looked at the message and laughed. To her, Eden and Jermaine were two of the densest people on the planet. A woman so desperate to keep a man and a man so unfulfilled, he'd willingly keep it in the family. The whole situation was pathetic and hilarious to Envy.

“If she only knew how many babies her husband had planted in me, in their home, she wouldn't have taken him back,” Envy laughed .

She felt no remorse. Why would she?

“The power of the P,” Envy laughed as she patted her shaved and freshly glazed vagina.

“You need to come back to bed. You're on my time,” Malcolm said as he stroked himself.

He had heard a lot about Envy and her qualities. But in his opinion, nothing was more telling than a man willing to lose his wife for her sister. It was the ultimate cosign that he needed to sample her. He didn't care about her whorish tendencies, he only cared that it was his turn to sample the goods.

“Get out of my bed and get dressed. You need to go home to your pregnant wife. I'm sure she could use your company since she's on bed rest with a high-risk pregnancy,” Envy said as she wiped Malcolm's secretions from her stomach with his black shirt. She threw it on the floor as if it were trash.

Malcolm bristled at the mention of his wife. Envy saw the flash of anger, but she didn't care. In fact, she smirked.

“No need to look so angry. I'm sure your wife knows that you've been giving that dick away since she can't fulfill her wifely duties. I'm sure she won't bat an eye at all that cum on your shirt. She'll be too busy rubbing on that lopsided belly to even notice you. But that's between you and her, get dressed and leave,” Envy mocked.

Her words did exactly what they were supposed to do. She had homed in on Malcolm's heart, placed a bullseye on it, and launched her attack. Her aim was spot on, each deadly word landed like a missile disintegrating its target.

“You can be a real bitch you know that.”

“Yes, I do know that. Yet you're still in my bed,” Envy shot back.

Situations like this is why she was normally against men coming to her place. They acted as if they didn't understand what leave meant.

Malcolm flung the covers from his legs. His once hard erection now deflated. Grabbing his cum covered shirt, he turned it inside out to hide the proof of his

indiscretion.

“How am I supposed to explain not coming home last night?”

“I don’t try to figure out other people’s problems. Lock my door when you leave. I’m going to Jermaine’s before Eden gets home. See you later,” Envy said nonchalantly, leaving her unwanted guest where he stood .

Though nothing surprised him, Malcolm couldn’t deny that her words stunned him. Jermaine made it seem like he was done with her, blocking her number and moving on with his life, but Malcolm knew that unblocking a number took no effort at all. Pulling out his phone, Malcolm sent Jermaine a text.

To: Jermaine – I thought you were done with the in-law. I didn’t mean to step on your toes. But you know how it is.

Jermaine’s eyebrow dipped in confusion as he read the message from Malcom. He ignored the message because the call he was on had his undivided attention.

“Cassidy, tell me you’re joking right fucking now?” Jermaine said quietly as he pinched the bridge of his nose.

His calmness made Cassidy shutter. She had worked with him long enough to know that his calmness highlighted the true fury brewing within him.

“Sir, I wish I was, but I’m not. Federal Agents came in earlier and said they were given a tip that you were purchasing kiddie vids on the company computer-”

“What the fuck are kiddie vids? Cartoons? Why would the FBI be in my office about some damn cartoons?” Jermaine asked genuinely confused .

Cassidy dropped her head and sighed. If she knew nothing at all, she knew that Jermaine Shelton had no interest in the footage found on his computer. No, he was too much of a ladies' man for that. She didn't want to be the person to deliver the bad news to him. Since she was unable to reach Malcolm, it looked like she would be delivering the devastating blow.

"No, Sir. Kiddie vids are not cartoons. It's child p-,"

Cassidy hadn't even said the entire word before Jermaine leaped from his seat. He knew his assistant hadn't implied that anything of that nature would be found on his work computer or any electronic device.

"Cassidy, say psych right now. This is a joke, right? You're playing on my fucking phone, right?" Jermaine screamed so loud that Cassidy dropped her phone.

Rage, unlike anything he ever experienced, made him sweat and tremble.

"Sir, I might tell a joke, but I won't tell a lie. The computer analyst says he's recovered over four hundred images of minors on your system. They've confiscated all our work cell phones and they're boxing up your computer as we speak. I had to sneak to the parking garage to call you from my cheating phone," Cassidy admitted .

If the situation wasn't so dire, Jermaine would've laughed because he knew she was telling the God's honest truth. The prepaid Tracfone that she purchased from Family Dollar, was kept in her center console and only used to call men that weren't her husband.

"Sir, you gave me this job straight out of high school. Not many people were willing to give a single mother a chance, but you did. I'm always going to look out for you and Mrs. Eden. I know you didn't do what they're accusing you of, but they're still accusing you. I'm just giving you a heads up," Cassidy said somberly before ending

the call.

“What the Fuck!” Jermaine screamed as he threw his office phone against the wall.

He trembled uncontrollably as he fought to make sense of what his assistant had just shared with him. His uncontrollable anger made him throw anything within range. Grabbing and smashing everything in sight.

Eden stood in the hallway as Jermaine yelled obscenities. The entire ordeal was comical to her.

“Jermaine what is going on?” Eden shouted as she rushed into the office as if she weren’t just standing down the hall laughing like a lunatic. She paused when she stepped into the office. It was completely trashed .

“Oh my God! This is not The Rage Room! What’s going on?”

The look of sheer terror on Eden’s face made Jermaine soften.

“Edy, something happened, and I have to go to the office...”

“Go to the office? It’s Sunday,” Eden said as though she didn’t believe him.

Jermaine was General Counsel for Le Bleu Luxury Hotels. Though he was always on call, having to go into the office on a Sunday was something he never had to do.

“Jermaine-”

“I have to go to the office because somehow my VPN was corrupted, and my system was compromised. I gotta go sort some things out,” Jermaine said as he grabbed his keys and ran out the door.

The terror on Jermaine's face filled Eden with pride. She felt like a proud psycho after unleashing chaos and destruction onto the world.

“Wait until the local news spreads this story and your face is all over the city,” Eden smirked as she watched Jermaine back out the driveway and drive like a bat out of hell .

The hate that radiated through her body felt like a toxin. She had worshipped the ground this man walked on, now the very sight of him made her want to slit his throat. But she couldn't do that to him. Death would be too easy. She needed him to feel every bit of psychological anguish that she had in store for him.

Envy pulled up behind Eden's SUV without a care in the world. She had done this routine so often that it was normal for her. As much money as Eden made from traveling, she was too cheap to pay for long term parking at the airport. Instead, she preferred to call a ride share service and leave her car parked at home for free.

“I should key this piece of shit,” Envy thought as she stared at the shiny black SUV.

It didn't matter to her that she drove a BMW, what mattered was the fact that Eden also drove a BMW and had enough money to purchase a \$80,000 SUV just to run errands. Envy walked past the Wagoneer; she nicked the paint as she walked to the front door. She opened the door as if she were the queen of the castle.

“Honey, I'm home-”

“So am I,” Eden said as she raised the baseball bat and knocked Envy out cold .

Eden looked down at her younger sister and felt absolutely nothing. No pang of guilt, no indecisiveness, no emotion. She was no more than an intruder.

“You had the audacity to walk into my house and take your dress off and announce your presence. I don’t feel bad for anything I’m going to do to you tonight. You deserve everything. You backstabbing ass bitch,” Eden seethed as she looked down at her unconscious sister.

Grabbing her by the legs, Eden pulled Envy to the basement door and kicked her body down the seventeen stairs. She watched as she tumbled, rolled, and bumped her head on each non carpeted stair. Envy grunted, but she didn’t move. Taking the steps one at a time, Eden walked slowly toward her younger sister. She wanted to savor every moment of what she had planned.

“Wake your dick hopping ass up!” Eden yelled as she doused Envy with water.

Envy screamed.

The water was so cold that it burned. She tried to free herself. It felt as though shards of icicles were burrowing into her skin. She tried to get up and run but found that she was strapped to a chair. The sound of crunching and rustling under her feet made her stop moving.

“Wha..what’s going on?” Envy panicked.

She couldn’t remember where she was. The bat to the head, the kick down the flight of stairs, and the excruciating burning of her flesh made it hard for her to focus. Yes, she had done a lot of people wrong. But to her recollection, nothing she had done was bad enough to have her tied up in a room lined with plastic.

“Oh my God! Help! Help! Ple-”

“You might as well shut the fuck up! Because no one is coming to save you,”

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The voice from behind Envy's back made her spine stiffen. She didn't recognize it. The flatness of the voice was cold and unfamiliar.

Her eyes nearly bulged when she saw her sister. Text messages between her and Jermaine played in her head. The last thing she remembered was walking into her sister's home to sleep with her husband. Somehow, she believed that sharing this knowledge would keep her safe.

"You might want to let me go before Jermaine gets back. I mean he did invite me here," Envy smirked. Even tied up she was still a bitch.

"Jermaine invited you here. Are you sure? Oh, you mean those text messages that I sent from his number?" Eden asked as she pulled out her phone to show Envy the messages on the text changer app.

Envy's stomach roiled. She had never seen this version of her sister. She was terrified but she refused to give in to this fearful tactic.

"Yeah, I called you here. He doesn't know if you're in Hell or Haiti's at the moment. But don't you worry, Jermaine is also getting a dose of my medicine as we speak," Eden laughed as she turned on the small basement television to the local news.

"Pornographic material containing underage individuals has been discovered on the computer of Jermaine Shelton. Shelton is the General Counsel, meaning he is the attorney for Le Bleu-"

Eden muted the broadcast.

“As you can see, he’s a little tied up at the moment with his own issues. So, coming home to save a person he didn’t know is here, will probably not happen,”

For the first time ever in her life, true fear began to creep into Envy. Eden had never been a person that she took seriously, but now she could see that she either underestimated her or pushed her too far.

“Edy. Eden. I...I-”

“Why are you stuttering? Scared, huh?”

“Scared of you? No,” Envy lied.

“Yeah, you’re scared. You couldn’t hide your fear any more than an alcoholic could hide their addiction through denial,” Eden said coolly. She tried to remain calm, but she was seething. Envy had done everything to ruin her life .

“So, what did you think would happen bringing me here? Did you think tying me up would be the only way we could have a sister to sister, heart to heart conversation? News flash Eden Marie Shelton. I don’t like you! How many of your dudes I gotta take down for you to comprehend that?” Envy shot back venomously.

Eden had already made peace with this revelation. Her sister’s actions had proved this many times over. Her saying it aloud did not ruffle her feathers at all.

“There are tons of sisters that don’t get along. It’s unfortunate, but it’s true. The smart ones just stay out of each other’s way. But not you. Not Envious Lilith Merci. You made it your mission to destroy mine and Eve’s lives. Why is that?”

Truthfully, Envy couldn’t answer that question. She never understood why her family made her so angry. Though she had the best of everything, she never seemed to fit in

with the Shelton's. When she was eleven years old, she noticed a difference in the way her parents looked at her. Eve and Eden received looks of adoration, but she received looks of aggravation and resentment. She couldn't understand why.

She was polite, received good grades, and was just as pretty as her sisters but that look had done something to her. She had seen it too many times. When she asked about it, she was brushed off or ignored. But her sisters were never dismissed. Her father had taken any answers to the grave and her mother completely disregarded her after his death. Because Eve and Eden seemed to be highly favored, she made it her duty to ruin her sister's lives.

"Y'all deserved it. Especially you."

Eden's eyes widened in surprise.

"That's right. Mommy and Daddy treated you and Eve like you were better than me. Treating me like I did something wrong or like I didn't belong--"

"Bitch because you didn't belong!" Eden blurted. "You're not like us! You're not like us! You're not like us!" She repeated.

Envy looked shocked. She blinked rapidly as if doing so would help her understand what was said.

"Wha...what?"

Eden could feel pressure building in her pelvis. She was so excited. She relished the look of hurt and confusion on Envy's face.

"Before, I get into that, I need to handle this. Being pregnant is hard on a bladder. I literally have to pee all the time. Hold on," Eden said as she pulled down her leggings

and began to urinate in what appeared to be a glass water pitcher.

The hard way in which the urine fell into the pitcher sounded as if bacon were being fried in hot grease.

Envy frowned. This crass behavior was unlike Eden. The foul ammonia scent and the darkness of color seemed as though Eden hadn't drunk water in weeks. As degrading as this behavior was, the only thing that she could truly focus on was the, "you didn't belong" statement.

"Sorry about that. I felt like I was going to burst at the seams. But as I was saying, you're not like us. You are the product of daddy's affair with some trashy bitch. My mom just took you in because your real family didn't want you," Eden said cruelly as she held up a copy of Envy's real birth certificate.

Envy's heart cracked.

Never in her life did she ever expect to hear something so cruel. Sadly, this was the first time she had ever seen her Birth Certificate. She only needed it to get her Driver's License and the woman she thought was her mother provided it and took it back. She had no idea who the woman listed on the document was. The emotions running through Envy felt foreign to her. Without warning she burst into tears .

Eden was not moved by her sisters' heaving shoulders or body racking sobs. It filled her with elation knowing how devastated she truly was.

"Sucks to be you, h'uh. Your mother didn't want you; daddy didn't want you; my mother couldn't stand you and you did me and Eden wrong even though we did nothing to you. On top of that, I found out about you slipping Jason a GHB. You a real sheisty bitch. But guess what, you ain't the only one." Eden laughed as she threw the pitcher of urine into her sister's tear-streaked face.

Envy screamed in disgust as the hot foul-smelling urine saturated her face and entered her mouth. Vomit galloped up her throat and raced to the nearest exit.

“I know you didn’t think you was going to get away with wiping cum on my face. That little ass whooping I gave you, was nothing compared to what I have lined up for your trifling ass,” Eden said menacingly. This was only a small sample of the degradation that she wanted her sister to experience before the real fun began.

6 months later...

“Take it out! Take it out! Take it out!” Eden screamed as pain radiated from every orifice of her body. She knew childbirth would not be easy, but the contractions she was experiencing felt as though she was being ripped in half.

Never in her life had she experienced this type of pain. She had no idea that this level of pain existed. The contractions were so intense that she was on the verge of passing out, but she fought hard to remain conscious. The pain was overbearing, but she knew that bringing this baby into the world would be worth it.

“Get this fucking baby out of me!” Eden screamed as boulder size sweat beads ran down her forehead. She knew.

“I don’t know why you wanted a natural birth. You saw how hard that shit was on me,” Eve laughed as she held a cool cloth against Eden’s sweat drenched forehead.

Jermaine didn’t care about the profane language spewing from Eden’s mouth. The only thing he cared about was finally having a family of his own. He had lost his entire family when he was twelve years old. Now he was bringing new life to the Shelton name.

“You’re doing good baby,” Jermaine said proudly as he allowed Eden to squeeze his

hand. He was so excited; but more importantly he was proud. He thanked God for restoring the love and trust in his marriage. Envy tried to destroy his life, but it hadn't worked. Just the thought of her had darkened his mood.

Jermaine gritted his teeth. He didn't want to think of her, but at this very moment Envy was on his mind heavily. As he stood in the delivery room, he thought back to the day he knew Envy had to go.

“What is going on here?” Jermaine screamed as he stormed into his office.

The sight of so many unfamiliar people rummaging through his office let him know that everything Cassidy said was accurate. He had participated in some unsavory acts in his office, but those acts were with consenting adults. Nothing he had ever done had ever been with someone that couldn't vouch for themselves. This sight made him sick to his stomach

“Jermaine what-”

“Cut the shit Harold. Someone called you here, but I guess it was too much for you to call me and inform me of this bullshit. I had to learn about this from the fucking news,” Jermaine screamed angrily.

A vein throbbed in the middle of his forehead. Harold knew by the way it pulsed that Jermaine was either on the verge of blacking out or having an aneurysm. Harold knew that he could have called but why would he? He and Jermaine were not friends. They were colleagues and that was it.

“How was I supposed to call when they confiscated our phones until the investigation was over. All phones had to be secured,”

“If you wanted to, you would have, since you keep a second phone secured under your chair,”

Harold smirked.

“I have to look out for the best interest of the company. We cannot have an attorney that’s frolicking with minors,”

“Pertaining to the matter at hand, Mr. Shelton has not done any frolicking of the sort,” said a voice that neither Jermaine nor Harold were familiar with.

“I beg your pardon?” Harold asked, caught off guard by the third voice.

“I didn’t mean to intrude. But I’m Agent Blankenship. I’m the information and security technology analyst. Sadly, it appears that Mr. Shelton is the latest victim of AI Fakery .

With different applications such as Midjourney, DaVinci or Dall-E3, a person can generate an image that looks exactly like another person. But it won’t be the actual person. Think of it as a virtual body double.

Though the images appeared to be 100% authentic, there are inconsistencies that prove that the image is not authentic. Prime example, if you look at the image here, you can see that the hands appear to be fused together.

The image here shows a mouth with four rows of teeth, and to simply prove that this was a fake, I used an application called AI Background Removal and the image was dissolved.

Mr. Shelton, your system was compromised and that’s how someone was able to plant these falsified pictures,” Agent Blankenship advised.

“Are you serious?” Harold asked.

From the high-pitched sound in his voice, Jermaine knew that Harold asked more out of irritation than actual concern. Jermaine heard what was said, but he didn’t speak. He was too angry to say anything.

“Mr. Shelton, I do apologize that this has happened to you. Unfortunately, even though we’ve proven that the images are fake, this matter is not over. Someone did take the time to create and plant Pornographic images of you in a compromising position.

We now have to investigate why that is. Was Deep Fake created as a personal attack or professional one? Either way, we have an investigation to conduct. Also, a scan of your emails did show that some nonwork related engagements were discussed. You will have to speak with HR about those findings,” Agent Blankenship informed.

Jermaine heard none of the conversation after the words Deep Fake. Fury overtook him when he realized who was behind this. The two words jarred a memory that instantly made him shake. He thought back to the text where he first heard the words.

Text from unsaved number: I got two words for you: Deep Fake. Come over here now or I’ll have Eden thinking that you were here

“That dirty bitch,”

“OUUUCCHH!!” Eden screamed as she snatched her hand away from Jermaine’s tight grip .

“I’m sorry baby! I’m just excited!” The lie was believable. The memories of what

Envy had done to him had him so angry that he had forgotten where he was.

“The head is out,” The doctor interrupted. “One more hard push and-”

Before the doctor finished her sentence the sound of cries from a brand-new set of lungs filled the room. Eden fell back exhausted.

“It’s a boy! Congratulations Mom and Dad,”

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The maternity room was filled with the type of love and energy that only a newborn can bring. The doctor quickly swaddled the bundle of joy, and attempted to place him back in Eden's arms, but Jermaine intercepted.

Jermaine cried as loud as his son. This was the moment he'd been waiting for his entire life. For years, he tried to fill the emptiness that he felt with different women. Every self-gratifying moment, no matter how temporary, was done to fill a void. For the first time ever, as he looked at his son, he felt complete.

"Thank you, God for blessing me with a second chance. Eden, thank you. Thank you for making me a father," Jermaine cried as he kissed Eden's forehead.

His elation filled Eden with pride.

"You did it Sis. Jermaine, he looks just like you," Eve said as she stared at her nephew. She smiled warmly. She wanted to give Jason a son, but due to the botched abortion, having another child was not something she'd ever be able to do .

"Yeah, he looks just like you. But he's not yours,"

Eve gasped.

Jermaine's spine stiffened. He knew that he hadn't heard what he thought he had.

"Very funny Eden. He looks exactly like me. That pain has you delirious," Jermaine chuckled as he continued to rock his son.

“Picture it, Kenmore Correctional System, 2025,” Eden began, sounding like the character Sophia Petrillo from *The Golden Girls*.

“I told you I had a business trip, but I actually just rented a car and took the three-hour drive to meet Inmate #307625 Jerry Shelton. His mugshot did him no justice. That man is fine. I told him that I was an attorney that wanted to revisit his case, but he’s smart, and he knew I was lying.

So, I got straight to the point and told him I was married to you and that I was specifically there to fuck him. Did you know some prison systems allow conjugal visits even if you’re not married?

Well, they do. Jerry didn’t care that I was his daughter-in-law. I can honestly say, I understand why his wife put up with so much. That man’s dick was magnificent.

Did you know that if you identify as an attorney, that some prison’s won’t search your briefcase? Kenmore Correctional System sure didn’t. Did you know the website Adam and Eve sells a penis molding kit? You can make an exact replica of any man’s anatomy.

That dildo you’ve been sliding in and out of me, it’s Big Jerry’s replica. So, to make a long story short, Little JJ here belongs to your daddy. That’s why you all look alike. You missed your brother, so I replaced the one that you lost. I’m your mama now, nigga,” Eden said proudly.

Eve couldn’t speak. She looked at Jermaine and saw that he too looked horrified. In her wildest dreams she would’ve never thought that this is what Eden had up her sleeve.

“What are you saying, Edy? What?”

“You heard me,”

“Are you telling me that you had this child for the man that killed my mother? ”

“Yep!” Eden said jovially. The look of abject horror on Jermaine’s face made this pregnancy worth it.

Jermaine was frantic.

“You don’t mean that? Why would you say that?”

“I said it because it’s true. It’s men like you that I can’t stand. You unhealed, broken, bitter, daddy issue having ass niggas. You walk around like you got your shit together the whole time you’re damaged and destroyed. Its men like you that latch on to good women and destroy everything good about her. You didn’t appreciate what you had, so meet the bad side of a good woman,” Eden smiled.

Jermaine could feel his world crashing. After losing his job, the only bright spot in his life was Eden’s pregnancy. The knowledge that she had carried a child for his father, the man that murdered his mother, the man that ruined his life, made him see red.

“You rotten bitch!” Jermaine screamed as he tossed the swaddled newborn like a football towards Eden’s head .

Screams erupted in the small delivery room as Eve and the doctor scrambled to catch the airborne child.

“You son of a dead bitch!” Eden screamed as she tried to get up to catch her child.

It was at this moment that she realized what her mother said was true. To protect your

child, you would do anything. The fact that she had just pushed him out and was somewhat weak didn't register to her when she thought she had to save his life.

“Call Security! Get the police in here now!” The doctor screamed as she cradled the newborn as if he were her son.

Pure pandemonium broke out as Jermaine tried to kick Eden out of the bed. Raising his foot for the second time, Jermaine dropped to the ground when the prongs from the officer's taser dug into his back.

“You're being charged with child abuse, harm to a minor under the age of 12 years old, child neglect etc,” Jermaine was in a catatonic state. He didn't hear what the officer stated.

It had been two days since his arrest, and he still couldn't believe this was his life. Yes, he had made a few mistakes within his marriage, but he never thought Eden was capable of this level of brutality.

Jermaine sat in his cell in disbelief. The drab gray walls matched his mood perfectly. In his life, he had never once seen the inside of a jail cell. In addition to calling the police when his mom was murdered, his only other interaction with the police was a speeding ticket he received while in college. He was not his father. He never thought he'd be in jail for assaulting his wife and child.

“Not my child. My brother,”

The word brother played in Jermaine's head on a loop.

Brother, brother, brother, brother.

Without warning, vomit erupted from Jermaine's mouth like hot lava. Never had a

simple noun made him so sick. For years, he craved the companionship of a sibling. He longed for the day that he could say, "I am my brother's keeper." But he never expected to receive a brother like this.

The faux images of his wife on her hands and knees, on her side, on her back, bent over a prison table with his father, the man that murdered his entire family in front of him, made him sick .

The thought of Jerry Shelton releasing his murderous seeds into Eden's ovulating womb made another round of sickness rush from his mouth. It came so quickly that he had no time to make it to the stainless-steel bowl. He hadn't eaten in days, yet chunks of the remnants of his days old, digested food coated the front of his stained shirt.

"What is that smell? Let's go, Shelton. Someone saw fit to post bail for your baby launching ass," The officer chuckled as if Jermaine's heartache, embarrassment and family dynamic was the funniest thing in the world. It was as though he was desensitized to human suffering.

"Who posted my bail?"

"It sure wasn't your wife or little brother," The Officer advised. That line was so funny to him that he slapped his knee.

"I see I'm the butt of the department's jokes,"

"Aye man, I'm just yanking your chain. You're an attorney so you know how we cops get. We joke about everything because nine times out of ten, we've experienced whatever it is that you're going through. The rumor mill says you started this whole family swap. I guess it's true what they say,"

“Oh yeah. What’s that?”

“It ain’t no fun when the rabbits’ got the gun,”

Jermaine didn’t respond. Instead, he gritted his teeth.

“The young fella wearing the Florida Gators shirt posted your bail,” The officer added. “Be safe out there Mr. Shelton, it’s obvious that you’re not built for this side of the law.”

Jermaine knew he was right. It had only been two days in the county lock up. It felt like he had done a ten-year bid.

Malcolm’s jaw hit the floor when Jermaine rounded the corner. He had spent a few weekends in jail and never had he come out looking or smelling the way Jermaine did.

Malcolm gagged.

“I’ll sit in the backseat, roll down the windows, and take me home,”

“You don’t have to tell me twice. How are you feeling man?”

Jermaine stared out the window. There was no need to answer that question.

Malcolm was glad that he didn’t. He wasn’t accustomed to asking other men how they were feeling. He also didn’t know what to say if he responded. This situation was truly taboo. Anything he said would be cliché.

Jermaine didn’t respond.

“Man, I know this may sound crazy. But do you think you could forgive Eden?”

Jermaine’s bloodshot eyes shot daggers at Malcolm.

“Forgive her? Hell no I can’t forgive that cutthroat bitch. I told her what Jerry did and she went looking for his ass. I didn’t even tell her where he was locked up. She purposely looked my father up to fuck him! I can’t forgive no shit like that,”

“Ok, you did the same thing. You started the cutthroat shit. Let’s not act like you hadn’t gotten Envy pregnant a few times. We’ve all heard the saying hell hath no fury like a woman scorned. We’ve known Eden since college, she didn’t have a ruthless bone in her body. The difference between you and Eden is you paid to get rid of your indiscretions, and she had hers to throw in your face. She matched your energy, and you can’t handle it,”

Pain ripped through Jermaine’s core. He knew his friend was right. If he hadn’t had the funds to correct his mistakes, he and Envy would have at least three children.

Instead of telling Malcolm the true thoughts in his head, he switched the topic. He’d discuss his actual plans with his wife.

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Jermaine stared out the window trying to get his thoughts together. So much was on his mind that he couldn't make sense of it all.

“Have you seen Envy? I've been calling and texting and it's going to her voicemail,”

“Honestly man, it just dawned on me that I haven't seen her. I don't keep tabs on women that's not mine. I had that little situation with her six months ago and never saw her again,” Malcolm said honestly. He wanted to add that he was too busy bonding with his daughter to think about Envy, but he knew Jermaine would never recover from that.

“She went off the grid the day I lost my job. I remember Eden saying she'd do shit like that all the time when they were growing up. After she'd fuck them over, she'd be gone for about two years then pop up like she was never gone. I texted her that she was dead when I saw her again. That bitch ruined my fucking life. I lost my wife and my career behind some pussy that wasn't even mine. How much worse can my life get?” Jermaine asked as he stared ahead at his home .

“Man, I don't think you have to worry about it getting any worse than this. That's impossible. Call me if you need me,” Malcolm added before driving away. He had no way of knowing that things for his friend would indeed be getting worse.

Jermaine stood outside of his home, the place that once brought him so much peace and dreaded going inside. For the past six years he walked in and out of the front door of this home. As he stared at the home, he noticed so many things that he had forgotten, not forgotten, but ignored.

This home was once perfect. Three levels of custom-built beauty, his first major purchase, and a wedding gift to his new bride. But just like his bride, he started to neglect it, now cracks had begun to surface.

Tears filled his eyes as he thought back to the good times that he and Eden shared, the date nights ended with them falling asleep on the couch and the arguments that led to hours of makeup sex. This was supposed to be their forever home, but he knew that that had changed.

“I really spent a weekend in jail,” Jermaine thought as he reflected on how his overall actions had led him to the place he was now .

The officer and Malcolm were correct. He had started the cutthroat antics. Of all the people in the world. He knew that Envy should’ve never been someone that he entertained. Her only purpose for wanting him was to hurt her sister and he had willingly participated. Now he was dealing with the fallout by himself.

He had never known this level of anger, but he would use it to fuel the ass whooping he had for Envy. Pulling his phone out, he opened his text app to send Envy a quick text. There was no need to call, because he knew she wouldn’t answer. His hands shook as he typed the short message.

Text to unsaved number: Bitch, when I see you, you’re dead

There was no need to mince words. Exiting the app, he dialed his wife. He knew that she probably wouldn’t answer, but he still needed to hear her voice, even if it was from her voicemail.

“Why the fuck are you calling me?”

Eden’s high-pitched voice caught Jermaine off guard. He hoped she would, but he

wasn't expecting her to answer the call. In all actuality, he planned to take a scalding hot shower to wash the scent and feel of jail off of him then drive over to Marie's to speak to his wife.

"Edy look, I messed up. I know that. This is a lot for me to process. But I'm willing to work through this. I'm willing to go to counseling. We can speak with an adoption agency-"

"Adoption agency? Jermaine, are you an idiot? The moment I drove three hours to hop on your daddy's dick, I was 100% done with you. Did you really think that we could or that I would be interested in working anything out with you? I'm not. You started this shit, and I ended-"

"Ended what? Bitch, you ended what? Did you think I'd let you get away from me? You're not going nowhere until I'm ready to free your stupid ass."

"Isn't that what Jerry said to your dead mama?"

Jermaine's heart stopped. He never expected Eden to say something so venomous and cold.

"Eden, I-"

"You are always a victim Jermaine. I hope you get exactly what you deserve. A cop is escorting me and Eve over there to get my things. I'll see you in divorce court," Eden said before ending the call .

For the first time since his mother and brother were murdered, Jermaine felt completely alone. Eden had been the one person that he knew would always be in his corner, and now she was gone. The sinking feeling threatened to consume him whole. Yes, he still had a phone filled with beautiful women to keep him company, but they

were just that, company. Something to do to pass the time.

“I need to figure out a way to get this baby out of the picture and get my wife back,” Jermaine said as he put his key in the lock of his front door.

As soon as he stepped into his home, he wanted to run back outside. The smell of putrefied meat was so rancid that his eyes watered and he gagged.

“What the fuck is-” he couldn’t even finish the question as vomit forced its way up his esophagus and expelled from his mouth and nose. He welcomed the violent expulsion because it replaced the scent of whatever was rotting in his home.

“What the fuck is that smell?”

The scent was so overpowering that tears leaked from his eyes. The only time he could remember smelling something so vile was when a raccoon was stuck in the attic. The dead rodent smell was abhorrent, what he was smelling now was ten times worse. Stumbling inside he tripped and fell. He now understood the phrase; the scent was blinding.

“Goddamn what-”

The profane blasphemous swear died in his mouth when Jermaine looked at Eden’s Dzmitry Samal human end table. Yes, he saw the horrid table with its four human-like legs every day, that isn’t what bothered him. It was the two oozing grayish-black legs with lime green polish on the nails that made a blood curdling scream burst from Jermaine’s lips.

“ENVY!!”

“Ma’am stay here!”

The officer escorting Eden, pushed her, Eve, and the stroller behind him when screams erupted from the home.

“What’s going on?” Eden asked as if she weren’t the orchestrator of the events that were unfolding.

“Oh my God!” Eve screamed as she watched a frantic Jermaine running out of his home gripping the hair of Envy’s decapitated head .

Breaking News

Former Le Bleu Luxury Hotel General Counsel Jermaine Shelton has been arrested for the murder and dismemberment of his former mistress and sister-in-law, Envious Lilith Merci.

Though the body was found in Shelton’s home, he claims that he was possibly set up by his wife, even though there are several text messages between Shelton and the deceased that shows that the two had a volatile affair filled with threats of bodily harm and death.

Shelton is currently being held at the John E. Goode Detention Center. No bond has been set .

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I could've ended it there, but I'm sure you all still have a few questions. I'm sure you're wondering if I killed my sister in the basement of my home. The short answer would be, no. Am I the reason that she's dead? Of course.

Envy should've been dead a long time ago. She was a miserable person, so I put her out of her misery. Her death was orgasmic. Here's what happened. Jerry Shelton was sentenced to life with the possibility of parole after twenty years. With my contacts willing to speak on his behalf, he was eligible to be released on work release. He had to stay away from guns, drugs, and avoid leaving the state of Georgia so that he wouldn't violate the conditions of his probation and parole. You know, the usual just freed jailbird shit.

Jerry was deemed to be not a threat, because the murder of Andrea and Josiah was considered a crime of passion. It turns out that Jerry's brother Jackson was Josiah's actual father. When he discovered that Andrea had been cheating on him with his brother, he lost his mind and turned to drugs and alcohol to cope with the hurt and betrayal. Jermaine's mother was a whore, so the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

When I told Jerry about his son and my sister, he agreed to take Envy out. He said anyone that hurt me deserved to suffer, and Envy did just that. I watched Jerry chop my sister up like a Christmas ham. Hearing her scream and pleading for help as Jerry hacked off her hands, arms, and her leg at the knee was genuinely music to my ears. He wanted to kill her first before the dismembering, but I wouldn't allow it. I wanted her to feel every ounce of pain. She deserved it.

With Envy dead and Jermaine in jail, I no longer had a need for that baby or Jerry. I don't know why, but Jerry somehow thought that he and I would be together. This

man killed two women, his stepson, and he thought I'd be his next wife. Be for fucking real.

I sent in an anonymous video of Jerry entering my Florida home, which violated his parole, and he was sent back to prison. I did not want a person with that type of negative energy around me. I signed over my parental rights to Baby JJ and he was sent to an orphanage. I had no need for any Shelton's in my life.

After receiving my mother and Eve's blessings, I had my job relocate me to the Saudi Arabian branch. There was no need for me to stick around to see how things would unfold. There you have it fellas. I want to end my story by saying this:

If you have a good woman, then be a good man

If you're unfaithful, you need to quit.

You'll lose everything once she finds out

And she gets on her cutthroat shit.