



# Resisting Your Love

**Author:** *Rayvin Skye*

**Category:** Romance

**Description:** Young and talented, Levi Smith's life is about to take a turn for the worse, or so he thinks. With his lifestyle, he lives it on the edge by being wild and reckless. When his parents step in to take control of the problems Levi faces, how will he handle the situation that was thrown at his feet?

Amryn Fox has everything she wants and goes after what she needs. No matter the problems she faces, she keeps a smile on her face. When a family crisis hits, it puts her in a situation she didn't ask to be in.

Amryn and Levi are placed in a situation neither of them want to be in, but somehow they make it work. Passion is created around them from their first encounter. As they continue to get to know each other, feelings develop. Someone from their past tries to come between the two. Will they stay together and fight, or will miscommunication break them apart?

**Total Pages (Source):** 24

## Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

Wiping his sweaty hands down his slacks, Owen Fox didn't know what he was doing there, but he knew that if he didn't show up, things wouldn't end well.

Sweat glistened on his temples as he shook uncontrollably.

It was just like him to get into some trouble and not know how to pull himself out of it.

Oh, how he wished his wife were still alive.

Maybe then he would have made good decisions.

Since she died, he felt like his life had turned upside down.

His wife had always been the one to keep him in line.

Without her, Owen felt like a failure. He even failed his only child, his daughter.

What was he going to do? What if he lost his life?

"I need a drink," Owen mumbled to himself, blowing air out of his mouth.

He ran a hand down his face, trying to get rid of some of the sweat that kept coming.

He took a moment to observe his surroundings.

A polished wooden desk with an office chair sat in the middle of the floor.

Large painted pictures hung on white walls.

The brown leather chair he sat on probably cost a fortune.

There were potted plants that sat in the corner of each wall.

Hell, he sat on a couch that probably cost a fortune. That was expected with the Smiths.

He wished they'd hurry. He had to get back to his poker lounge. The one that had him in this situation right now. He refused to give it up or let it go under. He'd do whatever it took to make sure he didn't lose it.

He closed his eyes as he thought about the fact that he was behind on his payments. "Damn it. That's why I'm here."

The door to the office opened, and two well-built men in business suits stepped out. They wore scowls on their faces as they glared at him.

He stood up and gulped as he greeted the men.

"Gentlemen." He acknowledged with a nod that they didn't return.

"We don't have time for the chitchat. We are here for one reason only. Do you have our money?" Travis Smith asked Owen.

Owen's hands clammed up as his eyes bounced between each man.

If either of them made a sudden movement, he was sure he'd shit himself.

The Smith brothers, Travis and Theodore, built their empire from the ground up,

making them one of the wealthiest families in Skyeville.

They owned most of the neighborhoods around the city.

Many people called them The Real Estate Moguls.

Owen, Travis, and Theodore had been close in college, with each man making something of themselves.

Along the way, Owen secured several bad deals that landed him in debt.

There were times he could pull himself out, but this time around, things were going from bad to worse.

Owen shoved his hands in his pockets, knowing he had no choice but to tell them the truth.

"My lounge hasn't been doing too great lately. I don't have any of the money. I just need another mon?—"

"Another month?" Travis bellowed. "We haven't heard from you since we gave you the money, which was almost two years ago."

Owen dropped his head. "I know. I know. My lounge is failing and has been since my wife died."

"Sorry to that woman, but what does that have to do with you not paying the money you owe us?" Theo cocked his head to the side. If he had his way, he would have hired some goons to take Owen out a long time ago. Travis always had a soft spot, which was something Theo hated.

Owen glared at Theo. "You wouldn't be where you are today if it weren't for me. I gave you the money to start your business, making you who you are today. Just cut me some slack. We all make mis?—"

"Don't you dare say what you do are mistakes! You are a grown ass man and know what the hell you are doing!" Theo yelled. It took everything in him not to bash Owen's head in.

Travis had to get control of the situation. If he didn't, his brother would snap.

"Let's work out a deal," Travis interjected. Two sets of eyes met his. One glowered while the other pleaded. "We can work something out," he reiterated, eyes on his brother. "We're going to need something from you in return until you give us the money. Let's say we give you three more years."

Owen's eyebrow lifted. "Like an arrangement?"

Travis smiled, snapping his fingers. "Yes, it'll be something like that."

Owen sighed in relief. "Okay. I can work with that. What do you need?"

Travis smiled brightly, knowing things were finally about to go his way.

He had a son that was wild and out of control.

As much as he and his wife tried to get him counseling, it didn't work for Levi.

His son was a party animal and was reckless.

He cared nothing about the consequences of his actions.

Travis could admit it was his and his wife Deborah's fault.

They spoiled their son rotten and always had all his life.

Now, it was time for them to try a different approach. Something had to calm him down.

Now that he had Owen's attention, Travis pushed further. "Your daughter? Is she seeing anyone?"

Theo and Owen gave him a funny look, both probably wondering why he'd ask something like that.

"Yes, she is."

Travis shook his head. "Nah, not for long. I want her in return.."

"What?" Theo and Owen shouted at the same time.

"For my son," Travis finished.

Owen's eyes nearly popped out of his head as his mouth fell open. "Excuse you?"

Travis nodded, having it all figured out. "My son needs a wife, someone to slow him down. I also need my money from you. In return, you're going to give your daughter to my son for three years."

Owen didn't know what to do or say, so he laughed. This had to be some kind of joke. There was no way this man was for real.

Travis clenched his jaw muscles together and narrowed his eyes at Owen. He felt fury

making its way through his body. He didn't like the fact that this man laughed in his face. Did Owen take what he said as a joke? One thing about Travis was that he didn't joke around.

"Did I say something funny?" he asked in a hard tone. "If that's the case, you can pay us our money now.."

That wiped the smile right off of Owen's face. "How will this even work? Neither of them would go for this."

Travis shrugged. "I don't give a damn. They'll get used to it. Those are my terms. The first payment will be the day we sit them both down and tell them of the plans. Oh, and there will be a contract and prenup. Your daughter won't get a dime of my son's money when this is all said and done."

Owen had to bite down on his tongue to keep from lashing out. "When do you want to do this?"

Theo finally stepped in. "Are you sure you want to do this?" He knew how his nephew was and knew he would never go for what was about to happen.

Travis looked at his brother and nodded. "It is the way to go. Levi won't like it, but it has to be this way." He shifted his attention back to Owen. "We can do this a month from now. I'll call you and set up the dinner."

Owen gave a stiff nod, knowing he didn't agree with any of this, but it had to be done. He wasn't the best father to his child, but he felt like what he was doing was wrong. This might not end well for his daughter, but he had to hope for the best.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

One Month Later

I removed a bottle of wine from the refrigerator, getting ready to pour myself another glass.

"He has never been this distant before. I don't know how to feel," I stressed to my best friend Mianna, but she liked to be called Mimi for short.

She came over to my house to keep me company before she headed home for the night.

"Girl, I think you overthink too much. What makes you think Joel is being distant?" She held out her wineglass.

I scoffed, pouring the wine into her glass. "I can give you a whole list of things, but you won't believe it."

She rolled her eyes. "That's not true. I just can't see Joel being distant toward you. That man loves you, plus I hooked y'all up. Y'all are too cute together for any of you to be feeling some kind of way."

"You always throw that up in my face. Just because you go with his cousin, you think we're all supposed to be happy and in love like you are. Sometimes it doesn't work like that." I hated I was taking my frustrations out on her, but I was irritated with Joel.

Mimi threw her hands up. "Well, maybe you need to talk to him and figure out what it is that's going on. It could be nothing."



"Or something, but I won't keep going back and forth with you about it. It won't solve anything, anyway. Not until we talk to each other. Whenever that will be," I mumbled.

I went to take a seat at the kitchen table with her and put my elbow on it. I rested my chin in my hand as I tapped my cheek with my fingertips. "Maybe I should drive to his house to see what's going on."

Mimi shook her head, taking a sip of the wine. "He had to work today."

If Joel were talking to me, I would have known that. I hated that he was cutting me out of his life for no apparent reason. If anything, he needed to be honest with me. How come my best friend knew he had to work and not me?

I threw my head back and groaned. "Now I have to wait until he gets off."

"Best time to do so. Other than having Joel problems. How are you, girl? We don't talk how we used to since you started working at your father's poker lounge."

I cringed, not even wanting to think about that place. "Why did you even have to bring that place up? You know how much I hate it."

"Yes, I know, but you have to get from up under your father. The only way to do that is to work. It's a good thing you don't see him all the time." She chuckled.

I glared. "That doesn't even matter. I still feel like I'm being watched."

I started working at my father's lounge two weeks ago and was ready to quit it already.

The work wasn't hard, but the workers looked down their noses at me.

They acted like I was getting paid more money than them.

One thing about me is that I was unable to hold a job for long.

Since my father was a very wealthy man, I didn't want to work.

Why should I when he would get me anything I wanted or needed?

Plus, I had a black card. Joel felt some type of way about that, too.

He hated that I depended on my father for everything and never came to him.

We had only been dating for a year, so I felt like I shouldn't have to.

Plus, he wasn't even my husband. At twenty-eight, I didn't have marriage on my mind.

"Well, all you have to do is watch them back. They can feel any way they want to. If they have a problem with it, they can take it up with your dad. Ohh, that's what you should tell them." She picked up her wine glasses and took another sip.

Mimi matched me in every way. She was my best friend and the closest thing to me since my mother died in a car crash.

I wouldn't know where I'd be without her.

She pulled me out of the dark place I was in after losing my mother.

My father wasn't there since he was going through his own grief.

Truthfully, since the passing of my mother, my father had barely been around.

It made me feel down, but I tried not to let it get to me. People dealt with grief differently.

"I'm not worried about them people. They're not putting money in my pocket or signing my checks."

She snapped her fingers. "There you go, girlfriend. Sometimes, you have to think that way. If you don't, you'll let others run all over you. That's something that's not about to happen."

Mimi was right. Since I was quiet and was known to keep to myself, people tried me on a daily.

I had to let them know plenty of times to tread lightly.

When I was up, it was hard for me to calm down.

Since the loss of my mother, I didn't too much care about anything anymore.

She was my lifeline. To lose that, I was in deep mourning.

The good Lord knew how much I missed my mother.

Mimi's cell phone commenced to ring. The smile that spread on her face told me it was her man calling. I knew she was about to head home since that always happened when he called.

"Okay, girl. I'm going to head out. My man just got off work. He wants me home and naked by the time he gets there."

I grimaced as she danced in her seat. At least one of us was getting some. It had been

a couple of weeks since Joel touched me. I wish I knew what the hell his problem was.

I stood up from the table right along with her. "Make sure you call me when you get home."

Mimi gave me a slight nod. "And you know I will. Make sure you talk to Joel. I really want you guys to work."

I scoffed, walking her to the door. "The other person has to be willing to make the relationship work as well."

"So true, but we will talk later."

When Mimi walked out of the door, I closed it and leaned against it. I closed my eyes, fighting off the eerie feeling that sank into my soul. What the hell was about to happen?

I had to see Joel and find out what was going on.

That was the only way I'd feel better. I had this nagging feeling that wouldn't leave me alone.

Plus, he hadn't reached out to me all day.

I had to be the one to call him, but he didn't answer any of my calls.

When I pulled into the apartment complex, my stomach dropped as I passed by Joel's car.

It was parked in front of his apartment building.

I needed him to be upfront with me. That was the least he could do.

I exited my car and made my way to his apartment door with my heart throbbing in my chest. Once I reached it, I rang the doorbell. I gnawed my bottom lip, waiting impatiently for him to let me in.

I heard his footsteps coming to the door. When he opened it, his eyes widened as if he'd seen a ghost. My heart ached a bit from the gesture. Was he not happy to see me?

"Amryn? What are you doing here?" he questioned. His dreads were falling all in his face as he screwed up his oval-shaped face.

I arched a brow, placing my hands on my hips. "Am I not allowed to come see my boyfriend?"

He looked dumbfounded at me. "Of course you can. I wasn't expecting you to drop by without calling."

I gawked at him. Was he for real? "I've been calling you all day. And are you going to let me in? I refuse to have this conversation outside in the cold."

It was the middle of September and was getting colder by the day. He looked hesitant like he didn't want me to come inside his home.

"Do you have someone in there? Is that why you don't want me to come inside?" My blood boiled at the thought of him having someone in his apartment.

He scoffed and moved aside to let me in. "Man, you are being ridiculous right now. Bring your ass on inside."

When I entered his apartment, I peered around, expecting to find someone else there.

I was starting to think he was cheating on me, and that was something I didn't want to feel.

My heart would be crushed if that happened.

Although I wasn't in love with him as of yet, I was growing to love him.

I swirled around to see him watching me, leaning against the door.

I nibbled on my bottom lip as uncertainty flowed through me.

With a look of annoyance on his face, Joel pushed off the door and made his way to the couch to take a seat.

I followed behind him to take a seat next to him.

He sat on one cushion, and I sat on the other.

I wasn't trying to get too close to him, fearing he would move away from me.

I folded my hands in my lap, not knowing how to approach this conversation.

Would he turn me away? Would he be reasonable? How would it end?

I inhaled and let out a shaky breath. "What is going on, Joel? You've become distant, and I would like for you to tell me what's going on."

He tilted his head to the side and studied me. I tried not to squirm from the look he gave me. "You're being extra for no reason. Think what you want."

I frowned, knowing I wasn't being extra. The only thing I wanted to know was the reason behind him being distant toward me. "Okay, Joel. If I'm extra, so be it."

My shoulders sagged at the possibility of Joel giving up on our relationship. We had been together for a year now, but it felt like our relationship wasn't going anywhere.

It was true Mimi hooked us up, but we decided to build on our own.

But sometimes we could go days without talking to each other.

I had never stayed the night with him either.

We'd have sex during the time I was with him, and I'd leave to go back home to my own bed.

Could he be tired of that? Did he want me to move in with him? If that were the case, I wouldn't.

"What's the reason for the visit? Is it to argue with me?"

I shook my head. "No, of course not. I'm just here trying to get answers." My hands grew sweaty as my heart pounded in my chest.

"There is none to get, Amryn, but with you still at home with your father, you'll think just about anything."

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

My mouth dropped as my eyes widened. "Hmm." I pressed my lips together as it dawned on me what his problem was. "You'll never be okay with me living with my father, huh?"

He grunted. "Never. You're a grown ass woman. It's time you live for you."

I shot him a venomous look as my teeth ground together. My blood boiled with fury, and as much as I tried to tap down on it, it was hard to do. I stood up, unable to stand, with my hands balled up to my side. With the way I was feeling, I was likely to punch him in the face.

"How dare you?" I growled.

He stood up as well, holding his hands out in front of him. "We're not getting anywhere with this. You can see yourself out." He walked away from me, leaving me to stare after him as if I had done something wrong.

I scoffed as tears began to form in my eyes.

This man didn't deserve my tears. Why is my staying with my father an issue for him?

However, it all came back to me. The many times we met up, it was at his place or someplace else.

He had never come to my house before. It was a good thing we had gotten to the root of our problem.



That still didn't give him a reason to ghost me the way that he was.

I didn't like or appreciate that. He could have kept it real with me.

I was lying on my bed at home, watching TikTok videos, when a knock came at my bedroom door. I sat up with a huff, not in the mood to talk to this man.

"It's open," I called out.

My father — my twin — stuck his head in the door with a slight smile on his face. "Hey, Am. Do you mind if I come in?"

I shook my head. "You might as well since you came this far."

He chuckled, came in, and closed the door behind him. He sat on the edge of my bed next to me, rubbing his hands up and down his pants legs. That was a nervous gesture he used plenty of times.

"Dad, what's wrong?" I asked him.

He dropped his head to his chest. "This is not an easy thing to do or tell you, but it must be done."

I arched an eyebrow, wondering what it could be. "What is it? Just spit it out," I snapped, not wanting to, but it just came out that way.

He jerked his neck in my direction, and that was when I knew I messed up. I was never the one to disrespect my parents. Today had been a hard day for me, but I shouldn't have taken it out on my father.

He started talking, letting me know what was going on. As he detailed his situation,

my eyes widened in surprise.

"But now you have to get married to the man's son for three years."

I jumped up, ready to hit my father in his throat. He had to be playing some kind of game with me. "Excuse me? Are you out of your mind? No way you are serious."

He nodded. "I am, very much. I wouldn't play with anything like this."

I folded my arms across my chest and shot daggers at him. "And if I refuse?"

"That won't happen. You will do this," he stated matter-of-factly.

"Dad, please don't do this. I am in a relationship. There is no way I am about to leave my boyfriend."

I wouldn't mention how my boyfriend and I were on the verge of being broken up.

That was none of his business. He had to be out of his mind to think that I was about to enter into an arranged marriage with a man I had never met a day in my life.

That was just wrong. That was foul play. I refused to do something like that.

Since my mother passed away, my father changed into a man that I sometimes didn't recognize. He was never home how he used to be. We didn't talk like that either. It felt like my father lost a part of himself without my mother.

Growing up, I was the happiest person having both parents in my life.

My parents were happy too. There wasn't anything they wouldn't do for each other.

I could remember my mother being a housewife, not having a job.

My father took good care of her. I loved that for her and knew I wanted a man to provide for me the way my father did for my mother.

That was why I wasn't so eager to move out.

I didn't have to worry about paying for anything.

My father took care of everything. I didn't have to depend on a man for anything.

Now that it was just my father and me, he made sure I needed for nothing. Although we didn't talk like that, I knew if I needed him, he'd be there for me.

"You will have to break up with him. It's the only way this would work. This is for a good reason. I don't want anything to happen to my poker lounge. Am's Poker and Lounge is my life, just like you are. My two babies. And I named her after you. Don't let me down. It's not even for a long time."

I gawked at him. "Not a long time! Dad, that's three years of my life with a man I don't know!" I screeched.

He grimaced, gazing at me with pleading eyes. That wasn't going to work, not with me. "I never said it was up for debate. It is something you are going to do, as I stated before. I never asked you to do anything for me?—"

"No, you haven't, but this is huge, Dad! I can't."

"I don't care what you say. It will happen. We will be having dinner with them on Saturday at eight. When I find out more details, I'll let you know. I love you. Goodnight." Without saying anything else to me, he quietly walked out.

What was I going to tell Joel? With the way things were going with us, I doubted we would even make it as a couple. But that was beside the point. My father must've bumped his head really hard to think I would do something like this. There had to be another way — it just had to be.

I plopped back down on my bed and ran a hand down my face. "I can't believe this," I whispered to myself.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

"Damn it," I groaned, trying to turn over on my stomach, but that was hard to do.

My head was pounding from the alcohol I drank the night before.

That party I attended was wild as hell. There were bitches everywhere, too.

Man, I should have taken at least two home with me.

The only thing I was concerned with was having a good time, and that I did.

It had been a while since I let loose like that.

I was trying to slow down since my parents had been on my back about being reckless.

Why should I stop what the hell I was doing because they said so?

I was grown and living on my own. I should say damn them and what they were talking about.

Lately, I saw that they were right. It was starting to catch up with me.

I lifted my head from the pillow again, trying to sit up, but it was no use.

My stomach rumbled as nausea gripped me tightly.

My mouth watered as if I was going to throw up.

This feeling wasn't anything to play with.

It was best I tried to go back to sleep in hopes of waking up feeling much better than I did at that moment.

I shut my eyes, hoping for sleep to reclaim me.

My eyes snapped open as I heard pounding on my door as well as someone ringing my doorbell like they had no sense. I groaned and punched my bed, trying my hardest not to spazz out. Someone had lost their damn mind. I got out of bed and instantly grabbed my head. It was still pounding.

"Shit," I grumbled and made my way out of my bedroom and down the stairs. "I'm coming! Hold on!" I yelled. I couldn't wait to cuss whoever was at my door out.

When I snatched it open, my words died in my mouth after seeing my parents' faces. It had been a while since both of them showed up at the same time. I didn't do anything, so why were they here?

"Whatever you here for, I didn't do it."

They exchanged looks before they turned their attention back to me.

"That remains to be seen. May we come in?" my father asked.

I stepped aside to let them in. "Why didn't you call first? Y'all always call before you drop by. What if I had someone over?"

"They would have to leave," my mother bluntly responded.

We made our way into the living room and took a seat. I observed them and knew

that something was up from the way they kept looking at each other. It had me anxious to know what the hell was going on.

"Are y'all going to tell me what's going on or just sit there looking at each other?" Truthfully, I wanted them out of my house so I could go back to sleep. This headache wasn't trying to go away.

"Yeah, we're about to tell you. We just want you to keep an open mind about what we are about to say to you," my father started.

I lifted an eyebrow and leaned up on the couch. He now had my attention. One thing about my parents was they didn't half-step regarding anything they did.

"I'm listening," I stated. Whatever it was, I was indeed going to try to keep an open mind about it.

My father commenced talking, and my mother was shaking her head.

My eyes ballooned before they narrowed. "Hell no.

" I didn't let him finish saying what he had to say.

"What makes you think I'd do something like that?

If I did want to get married, it would be when I'm ready.

Not when y'all want to hook me up with someone. Nah.."

"It wasn't up for debate. It's what you're going to do," my father countered in a hard tone.

I shook my head with a chuckle. "Yeah, y'all got me messed up. I'm not about to marry some woman I don't even know. Plus, that's not my style."

"You are reckless, Levi," my mother pointed out.

"And?" I hunched my shoulders. "I'm trying to change my ways."

My mother burst out laughing, and I glowered at her. It was like them not to believe me. When I said it, I wanted to laugh too. However, it was true. I had to get my life together. I was twenty-nine years old, and it was time I grew the hell up.

"Yeah, it's a little too late for that. We heard about the party you went to last night. The cops were called, and you tried to fight them."

My eyes widened. "Nah, I don't remember it happening that way."

Truthfully, I remembered nothing that had happened last night. After my fourth shot, I couldn't tell you what I was doing.

My parents gave me the best life while growing up.

They spoiled me, and I used that to my advantage.

Anything I wanted, I got. If they didn't give it to me, I threw a fit.

It worked out for me, too. Whenever I got in trouble at school, they tried teaching me a lesson, but it went in one ear and out the other.

My parents came from money, so they made sure I dated women with money, too.

They hadn't approved of any of the women I brought home, so I stopped.



The only thing I did as of late was date around. That seemed like the best thing to do.

My parents were one of the wealthiest families in Skyeville. Many people respected them for who they were. When you heard the last name, Smith just knew they were loaded with money.

My father stood up, as well as my mother. "The dinner will be on Saturday at eight. You better not be late. If you do, there will be consequences."

I shook my head in disbelief. "Y'all can't be for real."

"But we are," my mother affirmed.

I clenched my jaw muscles together, still not wanting to believe what they were saying was true.

Why in the hell were they putting me through this?

I didn't need to get married to slow down.

That woman wouldn't be my real wife. Therefore, I was going to continue doing what I was doing. Who the hell would stop me?

I didn't walk them to the door either. Fuck them.

My best friend River stared at me with his mouth dropped.

He was in disbelief right along with me.

I still couldn't believe the people I called my parents were playing in my face.

How in the hell could they do this to me?

After my parents left, I called him and told him I needed to tell him something.

We met at his job. Since he was in the office, I went there.

It made no sense for someone to party all night and go to work the next day like they weren't affected by the liquor they consumed.

River was that person. He could drink liquor all he wanted, but when it was time for him to work, he was going to show up.

"Man, are you for real? You about to be married to a stranger?" River asked, knowing full well I just told him that.

I glared at him. "Man, is that not what I just said? Why the hell do you want me to repeat it?"

He chuckled. "My bad, bro. I guess congratulations are in order?"

I wanted to murder him for saying something like that to me. "Don't say that shit again."

He burst out laughing. "Man, you already know it's true. You are an engaged man now. How does it feel?"

"Like I'm about to drop kick your ass in the throat. Stop playing with me."

He only laughed harder. River was a jokester and kept the jokes coming for days if you let him. He was my partner in crime, though.

We went back to elementary school days. We were some little badass boys that stayed getting in trouble. Like me, River came from a wealthy family as well. His parents and mine partied a lot back in the day and sometimes still did.

He was single and wasn't looking to settle down anytime soon.

My cousin Zyanna wanted to be with him, but she knew that would be a disaster.

River told her that out of his own mouth.

That caused her to back up off of him, but they became the best of friends.

Now, we all chilled together at times if Zy wasn't hanging out with her best friends.

"Are you really going to go through with it?" River questioned.

I hunched my shoulders. "There is no telling what my parents are going to do if I don't go along with it. Do you know how long three years is, man? That's a thousand and ninety-five days I have to be with this woman. How the hell am I supposed to fuck on something?"

River pressed his lips together, giving me an amused look. I didn't understand why he wanted to laugh at my pain.

"Do you hear yourself? That's about to be your wife. You can fuck on her."

If looks could kill, he'd be dead right now. "Man, gon' 'head with that."

He shrugged. "It'll work out. You never know. This might be something that changes your life."

I grunted. "Or ruin it."

He nodded slightly. "Or that."

Later that evening, I had a tattoo appointment on the calendar.

I almost forgot about it. After the whole arranged marriage situation on my mind, I was in a funk.

I had to call my parents to make sure today wasn't April Fool's Day because this felt like a joke.

Of all the people to betray me, my parents were the ones who did it.

Did they not care how I felt about this?

Then, to think that a girl I didn't even know was being shoved into this as well.

How did she feel about it? One thing I could say was her father needed his ass beat.

He should have never let his business fail.

Why did I have to suffer for his fuckups?

That made no sense to me. I needed to get my mind off of the situation since I couldn't change it.

My mind was back on the tattoo I was going to be doing.

It was something about doing tattoos I loved.

Every tattoo that covered my body, I created it myself.

I had to draw the picture out to get the visual I needed to perform.

Even if someone showed me a tattoo they wanted done, I had to first draw it myself.

If I couldn't get it, I'd put my own twist on it.

Some wanted it done that way, while others didn't. It didn't matter to me one bit.

I had clients that came and went, but I was going to make my money either way.

I had been doing tattoos since I was twenty-two years old.

I got my tattoo shop at the age of twenty-five.

It kept growing, and I kept expanding it.

LES Designs was my baby. I did all that I could to keep my business afloat and was going to continue to do so.

My parents wanted to help me get my business off the ground, but I told them nah. I had it, and I did.

Four years later, my shop was one of the best around. I had two other workers in the shop with me. They had their own clients, too. I only charged them a booth fee.

I was now sketching out a design I wanted to try on someone. It always gave me a good feeling knowing I was someone people wanted to do their tattoos. I made a living out of it. It was my livelihood. With the money I was making, I was able to get anything and everything I wanted.

The door opened, and my client walked in.

Damn, she looked good as hell. I tried not to stare, but I couldn't help myself.

The girl looked too damn good. I didn't know if it was her chestnut brown eyes or that pout that was on her full lips.

She was a looker with honey-brown, flawless skin, either way.

"You called for the appointment, right?"

She shook her head sadly. "No, I didn't, but if you can squeeze me in, I'd love that."

I chuckled. "Hmm. I only do appointments, but for you, I might be able to make an exception."

Our eyes met and held, causing a vaguely sensuous light to pass between us. A smile spread across her lips. "Thank you. I surely appreciate that."

"I need your name and the design that you want."

"My name is Amryn. The design I want is of the saying 'new beginnings'."

I gave her a slight nod. "Anything else?"

"A heart coming back after being shattered."

"Oh damn."

"Ah yeah. My life is.. a mess."

I grunted. "Yours is not the only one," I mumbled. "Well, let's start the tattoo. Have you ever had one before?"

She shook her head. "Nah, but I love pain, so this would do me some good."

A woman after my own heart, but I wouldn't go there.

I had too much on my plate now. And to get involved with someone I knew I couldn't have would be a big problem.

But damn, she was a fine ass woman. What man wouldn't want to get to know her in a desirable way?

She was the whole package, too. I wanted to roam my eyes down her body but knew that wasn't the right thing to do.

I had to calm my thoughts that were coming forth.

"Word. Let's get this going."

While I did her small tattoo, we talked and laughed a bit. Damn, it had been a while since I kicked it with a woman without the thought of sex on my mind. Amryn was a vibe I didn't know I needed to take my mind off the problems I was facing.

"All done," I announced forty-five minutes later.

"Wow, that seemed fast." She chuckled.

I gave her the mirror to look at the tattoo that was on her arm.

She nodded with approval. Our eyes met and held, causing my heart to beat rapidly in

my chest. She had me wanting to reach out and soothe the pain I saw in her eyes.

It was time she got out of my shop. I was feeling something for this stranger.

A stranger I could easily get to know if this damn arranged marriage wasn't being shoved down my throat.

"Thank you. How much?"

I told her the price. She paid and left, leaving me to my own thoughts once again.

By the time I got out of there, it was well past midnight. I was tired and hungry as hell. I would have to hit up the all-night diner close to my house. After I cleaned up my workstation, I headed out of the shop.

I wished my parents had given me more information on the arranged marriage, but I knew I'd be finding things out on Saturday. I planned to be an asshole to that woman, so she better watch out.



## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I sat at the dining table with a scowl on my face and my arms folded. The man I was supposed to be marrying was late. Hopefully, he didn't show up. I fought back tears at the possibility of meeting this man.

As my eyes bounced around the room, the man's parents looked familiar to me. Although I heard of their last name, I had never laid eyes on them.

"Sorry for my son's tardiness. He always marches to his own beat," Travis stated with a chuckle.

I scoffed. "If he knew what we had planned, he should have been here on time," I retorted.

It was wrong of me to take out my frustrations on these people, but I had to.

I was in a terrible mood. I hadn't talked to Joel since the argument at his apartment.

What made it so bad, he wasn't trying to reach back out to me.

I didn't know what to do about that. As much as I should have left well enough alone, I didn't want to.

I felt like we could make this work. However, after today, I'd be an engaged woman, so what was the point of trying?

I sighed deeply, shaking my head.

The door opened and closed. "Sorry, I'm late," the voice called out, and everything in me tensed up.

It sounded like the man from the tattoo shop.

I could remember his voice since it was embedded in my head.

Then it was so deep and sexy. No way he was about to be my husband.

It had to be someone that sounded like him.

I could hear his footsteps coming into the dining area.

When he stepped inside, my breathing caught in my throat. It was him from the tattoo shop.

When he saw me, his eyes widened. I averted my eyes from him.

"Oh, hell no. It's you from my shop!" he yelled out. "Did you know who I was from the beginning?"

I jumped up out of my seat, ready to fly off. "What exactly are you trying to accuse me of? Hell no, I didn't know you'd be the man I was supposed to marry."

He scoffed, waving me off. "I don't believe that."

I hunched my shoulders. "I don't care what you believe or don't believe. It makes me no never mind." With a huff, I sat back down in my seat.

While he claimed his seat, I glared at him with burning, reproachful eyes.

How could he accuse me of something like that without even knowing me?

As much as I wanted to lash out again, I knew it was best I didn't. I wasn't about to let him think he mattered to me when he didn't. He differed totally from the man I met at the tattoo shop.

My father cleared his throat, gaining our attention. He went through everything again.

"I don't want to be married to him," I blurted, cutting my father off.

"I don't want to be married to your little peanut head ass either," the man retorted.

My eyes ballooned as I stared at him. "See, no. Hell no. I'll end up killing him?—"

His laughter stopped me from finishing what I was going to say. "Yeah, baby. Talk dirty to me. That's the type of talk that turns me on."

My cheeks burned at his words. Our eyes met and held, causing me to roll mine at him. There were no words to describe this man in front of me. Not only was he an asshole, but he had a comeback for everything I said.

I sighed, turning to my father. "Dad, I don't like this. Can something else happen? I can't be married to him. Plus, I am in a relationship. What am I supposed to tell my boyfriend?"

"You might as well dead that shit right now.

I'll be damned if I'm sharing you. I don't give a damn if I'm not touching you.

If you are married to me and wearing my ring and my name, you're going to act like you're taken.

Fuck with it if you want to. I'll be a widower before the ink dries on the contract. "

The only thing I could do was gawk at this man.

I was flabbergasted by his words. Who the hell did my father have me marrying?

I didn't care if he was fine as hell — too damn fine if I was being honest. He was light-skinned with a square- shaped face.

I could see that he kept his hair cut short and his goatee trimmed.

I couldn't forget about the tattoos he had. They seemed to be everywhere on him.

"Levi!" His mother snapped.

He turned his narrowing honey-brown deep-set eyes on her. "What? I'm just being honest. Can we get this over with? I have things to do today."

He wasn't the only one who had things to do. My father glanced over at Levi's father.

He gave a slight nod. "Sure, we can." He went into his suit pocket and pulled out a ring box.

Levi's eyes widened. "I know damn well you're not giving her grandma's ring. Man, hell no. Y'all doing too much now." He had a deep scowl on his face as he shot daggers at his father. I didn't blame him for his anger.

"Here. You will be the one to put the ring on her finger," his father professed.

"What?" Levi and I said in unison.

I refused to allow this man to come near me, let alone put a ring on my finger. That made it too real, and we were nowhere near real. If anything, we were the fakest thing ever.

Levi was shaking his head. "Nah, I refuse."

I nodded. "That's something both of us can agree on."

"It's not up for debate," all the parents declared at the same time.

Levi threw his hands up, and I exhaled deeply. I was ready to get this over with. I just wanted to go home and lay across my bed and cry. My life had turned upside down.

"Man, give me the ring. Don't expect me to make this shit romantic, either. Damn that."

Levi took the box out of his father's hand and walked over to me. I gulped as he stood in front of me with glowering eyes.

"Give me your hand," he snapped.

I knew he wasn't directing his anger at me, but I didn't like his tone. Truth be told, I didn't feel like arguing with anyone else. I just gave him my hand so he could slip the ring on my finger.

"Once the ring is on your finger, you can't take it off for any reason at all, especially when you are in public. If you do, the contract will be void, and Owen knows the rest," Levi's father stated.

I didn't even look at my father. "Whatever."

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

"Cousin, you about to be married, ain't it?" Zyanna nudged me. I wanted to push her out of my face.

"Man, don't say that shit to me. You, as well as I, know that shit's not real."

She shrugged with a laugh along with River. They had stopped by my house to check up on me. I didn't want to see them if I had to be honest. I wanted to be alone in my thoughts. The thought of becoming a married man in two weeks made my stomach hurt.

"Have you met your fiancée yet? How does she look?" River asked.

I glared at him. "Why does it matter to you?"

He shrugged. "I just want to know if she's ugly or not."

He and Zyanna shared a laugh. I was ready to kick their asses out of my house. They were playing around a little too much for my liking.

"I don't know what the hell to do." I ran a hand down my face.

"That doesn't answer my question."

I sighed deeply, reaching for the water bottle that sat on the coffee table. "No, she's not ugly at all. Truthfully, she's fine as hell. I did her tattoo before I knew she was going to be my wife."

"Aww, look at the way he just said wife," Zyanna teased.

"Shut the hell up. You know what I meant," I snapped.

Zyanna picked up the chips that were on the table. "And didn't. You never know, cousin. This might work out. You do have three years with her. Plus, you said that she's fine. You never know."

"I don't want to know," I muttered.

They shared another laugh.

"Have y'all decided where she'll be living?" River asked.

I dropped my head to my chest. "She'll be living with me. Something I'm not looking forward to. I've never had someone in my space before. I've been getting one of the rooms ready for her arrival."

"Damn, Auntie and Uncle Travis weren't playing any games," Zyanna voiced.

And they weren't. I hadn't talked to them since this happened and wasn't planning on it either.

My mother had been calling me, but I ignored her.

I knew sooner or later, they'd be paying me a house visit.

I wasn't looking forward to it. They had put me in an awkward situation like that was okay.

They hadn't thought about the effect this would have on my life or how this situation

would make me feel.

They only thought of themselves. Not once have they asked me how I felt about the situation.

"Aye, we need to throw you a bachelor party. It can be the last night you fuck on something. What do you say?"

Zyanna and I cut our eyes at River. What he was saying wasn't a bad idea, but I didn't want to do that. I mean, it would be good to fuck something for the last time until I was free again to do so.

"A bachelor party does sound nice, but I don't want to fuck on anything. What would be the point?" I asked, folding my arms.

"To know that you won't be fucking on anything in the next three years."

I pointed my finger at him. "You got a point."

Zyanna scoffed. "Y'all are disgusting."

"Aye, let's set that shit up," I told him.

He nodded. "Word, let's do it."

We got to planning, leaving Zyanna to shake her head at us.



## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I was weeping, but it wasn't with joy. I didn't like this one bit.

Although I was nervous, I was also scared.

I was about to be someone's wife for three years.

That was so crazy to me. For the past two weeks, we were getting ready for the fake wedding.

One I had been dreading since I found out about it.

This wasn't a joyous moment or day for me.

I was happy that it was going to be a small wedding.

That was probably the good thing about it.

I had only my father and best friend by my side, the only two people who mattered to me in this world.

If only my mother was alive to see this, but if she were alive, it probably wouldn't be happening.

She didn't let my father do whatever he wanted.

She always stepped in and told him how to do certain things, which was why I knew in my heart she wouldn't let this happen.

"Oh, Mommy, what the hell am I going to do?" I sobbed, trying to get ahold of my emotions, but it was difficult to do. I felt so out of sorts right now.

The door of the guest room opened, and Mianna stepped in. The wedding was at Levi's parents' mansion. I was not comfortable here and was ready for this to be over. When Mimi saw me, a look of concern spread across her face.

"Amryn, what is wrong? I was only gone for a few minutes." She rushed to pull me into her arms.

I cried on her shoulder. "I don't want to do this. Everything about this seems wrong." I sobbed, pulling away from her to hold my face in my hands. I was a wreck on my wedding day and didn't know how to get it together.

"Everything will work out as it should. You can't let this get you down. If you do, you won't go through with it. Remember, this is for your father," she affirmed.

With a scoff, I rolled my eyes. "I'm in this situation because of my father. Don't even bring him up. What kind of father is he to marry his only daughter off to a complete stranger?"

The door opened, and my father stepped in. His face held regret on it, but it was a little too late for that. It meant nothing to me.

"Mimi, may you give Am and me a moment alone, please?"

"Yes, sir," she stated and left the guest bedroom.

I wanted to tell him there wasn't anything to talk about, but I was sure he had heard what I said to Mimi before he opened the door. He stood by the door with his hands shoved into his pants pockets.

"It was never my intention to hurt you the way that I did," he started.

I waved him off. "At this point, I don't want to hear it. You did what you set out to do to save yourself. You intended to hurt me, so don't use that line on me. Then I had to break up with my boyfriend."

I turned away from him and gazed into the mirror.

I grimaced when I saw my face. My eyes were puffy and swollen from crying so much.

It was a good thing the makeup was waterproof.

If it weren't, I'd be in big trouble. I sighed as I thought about Joel.

We started talking again after the argument.

It had hurt me to break up with him, but the words he said hurt me the most. He had laughed in my face and told me I did him a favor.

Just thinking about that day, I wanted to bawl my eyes out as I did that day when I got back in my car.

After not hearing from Joel since our argument, I decided to pay him another visit.

This time, it was to let him know I couldn't be with him anymore.

I wouldn't tell him the reason as to why, but the less he knew, the better.

Joel probably wouldn't care, anyway. It had my heart breaking in two.

A year down the drain — more like a year of my life wasted.

I knocked on his door, drawing a shaky breath, not knowing what was about to greet me. I heard his footsteps coming toward the door, and I braced myself for what was to come. The door opened, and Joel stood in front of me with a scowl on his face.

I forced a smile on my face, knowing I didn't feel like it. Every time I was to come to this man's house unannounced, he had an annoying look on his face.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, moving aside to let me in.

At least he was letting me inside with no problems. I'd usually have to ask him to let me in. "I think we should talk."

"Oh, hell. Here we go again," he mumbled, sucking his teeth.

I decided it was best to ignore him and get to the point of why I was there. I turned to face him, seeing that he had one of his eyebrows lifted.

"Wassup? What's the reason you are here now?"

I gazed at him, seeing that he was unbothered by why I was there.

He didn't even greet me with a kiss or even a hug.

That was something that was lacking in the relationship, too.

There was no affection of any kind. This should have been easy for me to do, but it felt so hard.

I was about to break up with my boyfriend.

With a deep sigh, I told him the reason I was here.

"I'm here to let you know that this relationship isn't getting anywhere.

I think it is best we break up." My shoulders sagged as if a weight had been lifted off of it.

Could this be a good thing or a bad thing?

From the way that it felt like a load had been lifted off of it, I didn't know what to think of it.

Joel looked me straight in my eyes and barked out a fit of laughter. My eyes widened as I stared at him, laughing at me. Was he taking me as a joke? That was what it seemed like he was doing.

I folded my arms across my chest and gazed at him, spitting fire. "I'm serious, Joel. I'm breaking up with you." I clenched my jaw muscles together as I narrowed my eyes at him. If looks could kill, I wanted him to be six feet under.

He stopped laughing long enough to wipe the moisture from his eyes. "Yeah, okay. It's all good, shawty. You just did me a favor."

I gasped and got the hell out of there. There was no way he could be serious saying that to me.

Sadly, Joel was serious since I hadn't heard from him since I told him that.

I was holding on to something that was pretty much over before it actually began.

It was safe to say no man would take me seriously because I still lived at home with

my father.

It didn't even matter anymore since I was about to be a married woman.

No matter if it was a loveless marriage.

As I stared at myself in the mirror, I couldn't help but admit I was a pretty bride. The color of my dress was nude pink. It wasn't as long as I'd like it to be, but I refused to go all out on a wedding that wasn't real.

"I know there aren't any words I can say to make this better?—"

"You're right, it's not," I interrupted him. "I need to finish getting ready before it's time for me to walk out." I dismissed him.

There was nothing my father could say to me to fix what he had caused. I didn't know when I'd be able to forgive him.

Mimi came back in and gave me a sympathetic smile. It was one I didn't need. After I finished getting ready, it was time to marry me off.

"You may kiss your bride."

My eyes widened before they settled on Levi's face. His eyes were too wide. Someone cleared their throat, but we were staring at each other, not knowing what the hell to do. I didn't want to kiss this man's lips, not knowing where they were.

"Levi," someone whispered.

I felt Mimi clearing her throat behind me, too. Yeah, this was a disaster, but I knew we had to kiss each other to make this final. What I wanted to do was run the hell

away from the whole thing. I stayed put, though.

Levi stepped forward, and I did as well.

He leaned forward, and I did, too. Our lips touched, and we pulled away too quickly.

Everyone started clapping their hands while Levi and I awkwardly stood there.

From the outside looking in, the people that were here probably sensed something was wrong.

Hell, they'd be right, too. Something was very wrong.

"Girl, y'all have to join hands and walk back down the aisle," Mimi whispered.

I gulped and held out my hand for him to take. Levi eyed it like it was a piece of trash but eventually took my hand. We walked down the aisle, holding hands, and they threw rice at us.

"They need to cut that shit out," he grumbled.

I didn't say anything, but that was something both of us could agree on. We made it back inside of the house. I thought we were going our separate ways, but we were stopped by many people saying, "Surprise!" I nearly jumped out of my skin.

"What the hell?" he mumbled.

I was fighting hard not to pass the hell out. This wasn't supposed to be happening. It was supposed to be small. Where did all these people come from?

"I'm going to kill my mother," he growled.

I could feel a headache forming and didn't know how to stop it from coming on. Many people came up to congratulate us. I had to smile at people I didn't even know and played nice.

"I need a drink.." I mumbled.

Levi hummed next to me, causing me to look over at him. He had me wondering if he agreed with me or not.

When I finally got a chance, I went to get a drink. The punch was good — too good. I had two cups back-to-back.

I became dizzy and nearly collided with someone. "Careful," the person said, holding onto my waist.

I turned and saw that it was my new husband. He, too, was in the kitchen. For some reason, the space now seemed small. He quickly let go of me, and I smoothed down my hair. It probably wasn't out of place, but I needed to do something with myself.

"Once everyone is gone, we're meeting my parents in their office," he stated.

I leaned against the counter and arched an eyebrow. "Uhh, why?"

He filled his cup with the juice. "For you to sign the contract and prenup."

I nodded. "Okay, cool." I was ready to get that over with.

"Damn, this is good as hell," he complimented the drink.

I smiled. "Yeah, it is. I had two cups already and nearly fell on my ass."



He chuckled. "Not a real drinker, huh?"

I shook my head. "No. I never had a reason to drink. What about you?"

"Man, I can get down when it comes to some liquor. I have it bad. It's one of the reasons my parents wanted this marriage.. to slow me down."

I lifted a brow. "How the hell is that gonna happen? I'm not gonna stop you from doing what you want to do."

He scoffed. "You couldn't if you wanted to."

I rolled my eyes. "Are you sure about that? I love a challenge."

He smirked. "And so do I."

I went to pour myself another cup of the punch. "You don't want to go there with me, but why should it matter? This isn't real."

He nodded. "It's not, so it doesn't matter."

I sipped my drink in silence. "How's this gonna work?"

Before Levi could answer, his mother came into the kitchen. She eyed us and the drinks. A smile spread on her lips. I didn't need or want her to get the wrong idea, but from the look on her face, she had formed it.

"We are ready to meet with the both of you in the office. The party will still be going on, but the lawyers are here."

Levi and I exchanged looks before he nodded. With his cup in his hand, he walked

out of the kitchen. I followed behind him.

In the office, the lawyers were getting snappy with me for no reason. I didn't like it since I hadn't said anything to them but a greeting. They went over things I already knew from the start.

"I don't want any of his money. I have my own," I snapped back. They were getting on my last nerves, saying the same thing over and over. "Plus, I have a job."

They exchanged looks, but it didn't matter to me, not one bit. They were rubbing me the wrong way.

"If I'm just here to sign papers, let me sign them so I can go on about my business."

I was in need of another drink. The lawyers he had were pissing me off. Never had I ever been disrespected the way they were disrespecting me. I didn't ask for this to begin with. They better leave me alone before I air all of this out.

I stood in the corner with my arms folded without the help of anyone.

Every time I thought about what my father got me into, rage simmered through my body, putting me in a chokehold.

I hated the lawyers were treating me like some kind of groupie when this wasn't even my fault.

As much as I wanted to cry, I didn't. It wouldn't help my situation.

I glanced down at the ring on my finger and smiled. It was a nice-looking ring, too. Whoever his grandma was, she was a lucky woman to have gotten this ring.

I sighed, running a hand across my face. Thinking about everything was giving me a headache.

"We are ready for you to sign," one of the lawyers announced.

I did what was needed of me to do, and then I walked out with my head held high.

If only my father could have been here with me.

If there was a way for me to rewind time, I would.

I didn't want to be married to Levi. He seemed to be immature.

I didn't need something like that in my life.

From what I learned about men so far, they were chumps.

Joel taught me that. Knowing that Levi was a reckless man, he probably was no better.

Levi was a party animal and did reckless things.

What the hell could he offer a woman like me?

I knew I didn't have much, but I wanted genuine love.

There was no telling how long it'd take to get that.

"Come on, three years."

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

A week had passed since the wedding, and Amryn had moved into my house.

This was an experience I didn't like. I never had anyone in my space before the way that she was.

We didn't talk much either. She stayed in the guest bedroom, only coming out to get the takeouts she would order.

That was cool with me. For a minute, I thought we'd be cool since we were talking at the wedding a bit, but when the lawyers got snappy with her, I could see the moment she retreated into her shell.

This was a weird situation we were in. I couldn't blame her for what was happening to us.

It was our parents who did this. If only I could talk to her and tell her that.

Whenever I tried talking to her, she shut me out.

There had to be a way for us to be at least friends.

She just had to be open to it. I wouldn't kiss her ass either for her to talk to me.

I ran a hand down my face as I thought of the small kiss we shared.

It wasn't big at all or anything to talk about.

It was the small spark I felt when our lips touched.

It was one I had never felt before while kissing.

It had thrown me off, and it still had me feeling funny.

I didn't know why it did. One thing I didn't do was relationships.

If I did do them, it would be when I was much older.

I was too young to settle down right now.

I stood at my kitchen window, looking at my backyard. Nothing stared back but grass. I kept saying I was going to put a pool in the back, but I hadn't done that yet. I needed something to do. There were no tattoo appointments booked for today, so there was no need for me to go to the shop.

Maybe the wife — nah, I wasn't going to go there. She wasn't going to bite my head off if I tried talking to her.

When I heard footsteps coming toward the kitchen, I turned and saw Amryn making her way inside with a worried look on her face. It had me wondering what the problem could be.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

She gnawed her bottom lip, causing me to observe her.

As much as I didn't want to, I was. Amryn was tiny with small curves and was short as hell.

The red sweater she had on clung to her figure, as well as the black tights.

She made the outfit look good. Her hair was pulled into a ponytail out of her face.

Even with her honey-brown face clear of makeup, she still looked breathtaking to me.

One thing I could say was that she wasn't an ugly girl.

"Levi?" she called my name, gaining my attention once again.

Damn, I got caught staring at her. "Yeah? You never told me what was wrong." Even if she did, I wouldn't have known. I was too busy staring at her as if I had that right. Although we were married, that didn't give me that right since it was a loveless marriage.

She crossed her legs and uncrossed them. "I need to go back to my father's house. I left something very important there and am going to need your help to carry it out of the house."

I gawked at Amryn, not at all expecting her to need my help with anything. And the fact that she came to me to tell me that surprised the hell out of me.

"When are you trying to go?" I asked.

"We can go whenever you are ready," she stated, licking her lips.

My eyes had a mind of their own, gazing at those sexy, full lips of hers. "We can go now. I don't have anything to do."

She gave a slight nod. "Okay, cool. Let me grab my shoes then."

After we got the chest box from Amryn's father's house, we headed back to the house. Since we were already out, I thought it would be best to get something to eat, but only if she were up for it. I turned the radio down and tapped her arm. She glanced over at me.

"Before we go back to the house, do you want to go get something to eat?" I asked her.

She arched an eyebrow. "From where?"

I shrugged. "Whatever you are up for. I noticed you were ordering from Dunk's Wings a lot."

She smirked. "Yeah, I love their wings. We can go there."

"Word. Are you always this quiet?" I asked her, trying to make conversation.

She chuckled. "No, not really. I'm known to be quiet because I'm always to myself."

That was something I could understand. "We have three years together. I know both of us not trying to stay in the house for three years muted."

She laughed out loud. "Yeah, I guess not, but what is there to talk about?"

I shrugged. "It's a lot to talk about. We know nothing about each other. We don't have to be mad at one another or want to bite each other's head off. Yes, all of this has blindsided both of us, but we could be friends if that's what you want."

"I guess you do have a point. It just feels so wrong, you know."

I nodded. "I do, but it's nothing we can change about it. Not yet, anyway."

Amryn sighed. "Was it true what your mother said?" she teasingly asked.

I lifted an eyebrow and looked quickly at her. "What did my mother say?"

"That you would come to their house drunk and get in their pool to skinny dip?"

I groaned, not at all liking the fact that she remembered what my mother told her three days ago. I didn't even know she was paying attention since she was muted.

"Uhhh, yeah. I was wild as hell. I'm trying to slow down, though."

She giggled. "That's a crazy thing to do while your parents are at home."

I chuckled. "I didn't care about anything back in the day. My parents spoiled me, so I decided to take advantage of it. When I say I got into a lot of shit, I did."

The only thing Amryn could do was shake her head at me.

The corners of my mouth curled upward into a grin. "What about you? Was you a bad kid?"

"No, I don't think that I was. I can remember getting in trouble for cutting the maid's hair in her sleep."

I burst out laughing. "No, you didn't."

She covered her face with her hands. "I did. For some reason, I didn't like her, and she always told on me. After I cut her hair, she quit. My father was furious with me for that."

I shook my head as I turned into the parking lot of the restaurant. "I didn't do anything like that before."



"No, you were too busy wanting to run around naked and jump in swimming pools."

We shared a laugh while I turned off the car.

Amryn was an alright person. Even if we didn't build anything, that would be fine.

As long as we could talk to each other, that was good enough.

I could see us vibing with one another every now and then.

It was a good thing she wasn't stuck up.

If there was something I hated, it was a stuck-up woman.

While we ate, we continued to get to know each other. Amryn told me about her job at her father's poker lounge, but she hadn't been back since her father dropped the bomb on her about the arranged marriage.

"Are you not scared you're going to get fired?"

She shrugged. "I wouldn't care if I did, but I'm going to start going back. I need that money to start saving."

I nodded, putting my fries in the ketchup. "That'll be a good thing."

"Do you like doing tattoos?"

I grinned with a nod. "Hell yeah. It's something I've wanted to do since I was a youngin'. It's one of the best things I've ever done." I glanced over at the tattoo on her arm. It looked good as hell on her. "When you got your tattoo, you looked down. Why was that?"

She gnawed her bottom lips before she started talking. "I knew about the arrangement when I came there that night. I just didn't know about you. It was about to be a fresh start with me, so I decided why not."

That made sense. "What about the boyfriend?"

I didn't know why I wanted to know about him. Did she break up with him like she knew she was supposed to? I was dead ass when I told her while she was wearing my ring, she was going to break up with him.

She scoffed with a roll of her eyes. "I broke up with him. It's one of the best decisions I made in my life." She didn't go into details, and I didn't pressure her to. "I'm done with relationships."

"I know what you mean. I've said many times that I wouldn't get into one until I was much older."

Amryn picked up a barbecue-flavored wing and bit into it, licking the sauce off her lips.

Damn, she made that look sexy as hell. I exhaled deeply, knowing I shouldn't be going there with her.

She had my head all messed up just by talking to her.

It was probably that damn kiss, too. Nope, I wasn't going there either. It was best to leave all of it alone.

"That's understandable. I know after this arranged marriage is over with, I'll try again."

I scoffed. "That's not something that needs to be on your mind right now. We still have three long years together."

She rolled her eyes. "You know what I meant."

I chortled. "Yeah, I did."

Man, I could vibe with Amryn any time of day and felt like it was only mere minutes we spent talking.

Something I never felt before pierced my heart as I stared at her eating her food.

It was something I didn't understand. It was a warm feeling that stirred deep within me.

Who knew what it meant, but I knew I wanted to continue getting to know her.

## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I stared at myself in the mirror, loving the way this dress hugged my figure.

It had been a while since I dressed up and had fun doing it.

The wedding didn't count because I didn't like or enjoy that.

For the past month, Levi and I were getting to know each other.

I could admit that he wasn't as bad as I thought he would be.

He was actually a good person. Sometimes, it felt weird living with him since I was used to staying with my father.

He made me feel like I belonged there. We'd stay up late, eating snacks or just talking.

One night, we ended up falling asleep on the couch while watching a movie together.

A smile touched my lips as I thought about that night.

Sometimes, we'd go out during the day if he didn't have to work. Since I only worked at night, we had time to hang out during the day.

One night, when I got off work, Levi had cooked for me.

I was so surprised by that, and I didn't know what to say.

Then he stayed up to wait for me. It was thoughtful of him to do.

I didn't know what this all meant, but I liked it a lot.

He was a good friend to me. That was all we could be, and both of us knew that.

We didn't want a relationship, but we were stuck together whether we liked it or not.

Tonight, we had an event to attend as a married couple. Levi's parents would be in attendance, too. My father had been blowing me up also, but I refused to answer the calls. To me, we have nothing to discuss.

I was nervous about going downstairs to face Levi.

How would he think I looked to him dressed this way?

I'd be lying if I said I didn't care if he liked the way I dressed or not.

I did want his approval since I'd be on his arm as his wife — and his friend.

Hopefully, he thought I looked okay. I was stressing way too hard about this.

"Okay, girl. You can do this." I gave myself a pep talk.

I picked my clutch up from the bed and exited the bedroom.

With my heart pounding, I made my way down the stairs.

Levi stood with his back to me and his hands shoved in his pockets.

I hoped I hadn't kept him waiting too long.

He must have heard my heels because he turned around.

I saw the way his eyes traveled down my body, causing my breathing to get stuck in my throat.

I didn't know what to make of the look he gave me.

It was unexpected, but it warmed me as if it were a blanket caressing my skin. I shivered at the thought.

Levi stepped closer to me. "Wow, you look good as hell," he complimented.

I blushed, dropping my head before I lifted it back up. "Thank you. You don't look half bad yourself."

The man looked good as hell in a pair of black slacks and a white button-down shirt.

Levi had shades on his face, covering his eyes.

He had recently gotten a haircut and trimmed his goatee.

He told me he was going to grow his beard out to see how he'd look.

I told him not to because he looked good with his goatee.

His light-skinned face was shining from the lotion he had on it.

He brushed off imaginary lint before he popped his collar. "I know this."

I rolled my eyes. "So conceited."

We shared a laugh.

"Are you ready to go?"

I nodded. "Yes. Let's go face the music."

He grunted, and I followed him out of the house.

The party was in full swing when we showed up.

Once we stepped in, all eyes seemed to be on us.

I suddenly grew nervous all over again, not liking the fact that so many people had their eyes on me.

It felt like I was the center of attention.

I was about to run out of there, but Levi tightened his hand around mine.

It was nothing to jerk away from him, but I wouldn't.

I gazed at him with troubled eyes. His eyes held a look that said I could trust him, so that was what I was going to do.

His parents came toward us, as well as a dark-skinned girl with a smile on her face.

It made me wonder who she was to Levi. Just then, a man came walking toward us as well.

Both of them looked so familiar to me. Then it hit me. I saw them at the wedding.

Levi introduced us, and I found out the girl was his cousin, and the man was his best friend. Once everyone got acquainted, Levi and I mingled with everyone else. He was introducing me as his wife.

I sighed in relief when we were able to finally take our seats. Levi glanced over at me and chuckled.

"It is always like that. It takes a while until you can finally sit down and relax. Since these people don't know you, they wanted an introduction," he explained.

I nodded, understanding. "It's all good. I'm just happy to get off my feet."

He glanced down at the heels I had on. "Nobody told you to wear those high heels that high. That's your fault."

I rolled my eyes. "I know whose fault it is. When are they serving dinner? I'm hungry."

He grunted, shaking his head. "That's nothing new."

I playfully glared at him. "Whatever."

Over the past month, Levi had been saying a lot that I ate too much, which I did. Since I could remember, I always had something to eat in my mouth. My mother always called me Little Worm since I was a tiny child. It made me wonder what Levi thought of me.

I shook my head at that thought. I needed to stop trying to see what this man thought of me. We were only friends.

Later that night, it was time for the dance. I gulped, wondering if Levi and I were



going to dance together.

"Do you want to dance?" he asked.

I met his stare and shrugged. "Do you normally dance with someone when you are here?"

"Whenever I show up, yes, I do."

I gnawed my bottom lip. "Okay, we can dance."

A sly smirk spread on his lips. It had me wondering what he was up to.

The couples on the dance floor were dancing too close.

Would he expect us to dance that close as well?

He got up from his chair and held out his hand for me to take.

Once I did, he pulled me out of my chair, and we made our way to the dance floor.

Many people moved out of our way as we made our way through the crowd.

My heart was thumping loud as hell, too.

Gosh, why did he want to get out on the dance floor and embarrass me like this?

I knew how to dance, but I didn't know how to slow dance.

In the middle of the dance floor, Levi pulled me into his arms. I gulped as my breathing grew shaky.

Up and close, touching him had my body going rigid.

"Relax," he whispered in my ear. "You got this, and I'm the one holding you. Wrap your arms around my neck."

I did as Levi instructed me to do. He told me to relax as if I could do that in his arms. This man had my whole body pressed against his.

Truthfully, it felt amazing, too. I couldn't understand the feelings I felt at this moment.

It had me wondering if he felt something, too. Was he as affected as I was?

"You are not relaxing. Have you ever danced with a man before?"

I was embarrassed to say I had never done so. Maybe it was best I kept that information to myself. I was already feeling some type of way about it.

"Well, for it to be your first time, you're doing a good job of it. Your body feels.." He didn't finish what he was going to say. "Damn, my bad."

"It's okay," I whispered.

Levi licked his lips, and my eyes followed the movement.

Air seemed to be closing in on us as he watched me watch him.

What the hell was happening with us right now?

We said we were going to be friends. We shouldn't be anything else to each other, but his lips looked so damn tempting.

Maybe one kiss wouldn't hurt us. Just one.

I couldn't help but lick my lips.

"You shouldn't have done that," he groaned.

I arched an eyebrow. "Why is that?"

He grinned. "Because now I want to kiss you."

Truthfully, I wanted him to kiss me, too. What if I liked it a little too much? Oh gosh, I shouldn't even be thinking about it too much. I should just go ahead and let him kiss me. It was what I wanted — to feel his lips against mine. It might feel so good, and his lips might be so soft.

"Amryn?" Levi called my name in that sexy voice of his.

"Yes?" I whispered in a daze. Yeah, I needed this man to kiss me right now. "You can kiss me." I had to go ahead and get that off my chest. It felt like I would suffocate if I didn't.

"Are you sure?"

I gave a slight nod. I didn't know how much closer I could get against his hard rock body, but he pulled me into him.

He lowered his head to mine, and I lifted my head and closed my eyes.

Our lips touched, causing me to gasp in his mouth.

Levi's lips were soft as cotton. I moaned when he pecked my lips again.

I started to lift my head, but he held the back of it.

"Nah, I'm not done yet."

He damned sure wasn't as he devoured my lips.

His tongue moved against mine. I couldn't help but to suck on his bottom lip.

I felt the center of my body throbbing, and that wasn't good.

It had been too damn long since I had sex, but I wouldn't have it with this man.

No way. It couldn't happen. He groaned and pulled away from me. I felt his erection and gulped.

"Damn, I got too carried away." Levi licked his lips and pressed his forehead against mine. "How do you feel?"

"Like I just got kissed." It was one of the best ones I had ever had, too.

He burst out laughing. "Well, you did."

We shared a smile that had us leaning in to give each other another kiss. Where did we go from here?

Later that night, I heard Levi's footsteps before I saw him enter the kitchen. He saw me with the bag of chips and shook his head. I dropped my head, trying to hide a smile. It wasn't like I was sneaking to eat them. I just knew he was going to say something.

"Of all places I found you, here you are stuffing your face."

I snickered. "You should have seen that coming."

He opened the refrigerator door and pulled out a bottle of water. "Do you want one too?"

"Yeah, you can bring me one, please."

I never thought we'd be here with each other. It all started over a basket of wings and fries we shared. Levi wasn't a bad person. I could talk to him about anything, it seemed like. One thing I noticed about him was that he listened to what I had to say, too. I loved that so much.

He set the bottled water in front of me and joined me at the table.

"Why are you up so late? I hadn't expected to see you down here."

"I couldn't sleep," I admitted. There was no way I was about to tell him the real reason I couldn't sleep.

We had been home for over two hours now. As soon as we entered the house, we went our separate ways. That kiss we shared had me feeling things. It was almost like it was meant to happen in that exact moment. Every time I thought of it, my heart skipped a beat.

"I haven't been to sleep yet. I was up doing a little bit of drawing,"

I shoved a chip into my mouth and chewed slowly. "What did you draw tonight?"

I found out that Levi had a love for drawing. He did a good job of it, too, but he still wouldn't let me look at his drawings. I was salty about that.

"A lion in his cage in the forest. I just have to color it now."

"Ohhh! Let me color it. It'll be my own personal coloring book."

He eyed me funny. "Nah, man. That's like you looking at my work."

I rolled my eyes skyward. "Your drawings must be ugly then."

He burst out laughing. "Never that. I never had anyone look at my drawings before other than my parents, best friend, and cousin."

I nodded, understanding. "Ahh, I get it."

Levi might as well have said I was an outsider. I wasn't going to let that get to me, but it did. Maybe he didn't want to share that part of his life with me since I wasn't anything to him. Only a friend — a person he was getting to know.

With a sigh, he got up from the kitchen table, leaving me alone. Maybe that was for the best since the conversation did bring down the mood. It wasn't going to stop me from eating, though. I knew I needed to stop and go to bed.

I was wrapping the chip bag up when he came back into the kitchen with a sketchpad in his hands. That caught me completely off guard because I hadn't expected him to come back at all.

"These are my babies. If you talk shit about them, I'm going to get offended."

I scoffed with a roll of my eyes. "Why would I talk shit about them? You are a tattoo artist, so you must be able to draw really well."

He shrugged, giving me the sketchpad. I scooted my chair up and looked through it.

Some of them were colored in, while others weren't. Each drawing seemed to tell a story, capturing me.

"They're really good. I love them."

"Thanks. They all are a part of me. Drawing keeps me at peace," he admitted.

I lifted my eyes to look at him. "Watching the Discovery Channel does that for me," I confessed.

He burst out laughing. "Man, what?"

I joined him in his laughter, but I was serious.

I loved animals and was always learning about them.

"Yes, it's true. I love animals. Every time I go to the zoo, I stop and look at the signs for each animal.

It's been a while since I've gone to the zoo, though.

I got to find some time to go one day. Since it's not too hot or cold, I might need to start planning now. "

"Wow, I have never heard anyone say that before."

"It's a first time for everything," I stated.

"Yeah, you're right," he mumbled.

No matter what, Levi and I never ran out of things to talk about. That was something

I loved most about hanging out with him. Plus, he kept a smile on my face. I loved that, too.



## Page 10

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

"I still can't believe I am at the zoo. Thank you so much!" Amryn exclaimed, jumping up and down.

The only thing I could do was smile at her.

Since she told me about her love for animals and how she hadn't been to the zoo in a while, I surprised her with a trip this weekend.

I'd do it all over again just to see the look on her face.

Every waking moment I spent with her had me on a high I could barely explain.

She was getting under my skin, and that was something I wasn't expecting.

Not her. Not right now. We were just now getting to know each other.

I didn't know if it was a good or bad thing.

Since we shared that kiss the night of the event, we were kissing a lot more.

I didn't know when we got on the level that we were on, but I liked it.

Maybe a little too much. I didn't know if that was best or not, but I was willing to explore it if she was down to do so.

However, we were tied down by this arrangement, so I didn't know how we'd be able to overlook that.

That seemed to be hanging over our heads. It was hard not to think about.

I shook her thank you off. "Nah, you don't need to thank me. You mentioned you hadn't been to the zoo in a while. I figured why not, especially when we didn't have anything to do."

She shrugged, gnawing her bottom lip. There was something about her actions that excited me.

"Hmm, I guess you have a point. I don't know what I want to see first. The monkeys and gorillas are my favorite.

Plus, the aquarium." She turned to me. "What do you think?

" From the expression on her face, I couldn't help but lean down and kiss her lips.

If she wasn't rolling her eyes, she was gnawing that bottom lip of hers. I saw that she did both of them a lot. I asked her why she did it. She only shrugged and told me it was a habit.

"We can go to the aquarium first. That's what I want to see," I stated, grabbing her hand in mine.

The weather was cool today — not as cold as it had been for the past two days. For once, the sun was shining, but I could still feel the coolness. Amryn and I made sure we were bundled up in layers of clothes, too.

It was packed as hell out here at the zoo, but I wasn't going to let that bother me. As long as nobody got out of pocket, we'd be good. We walked around, laughing and joking together. It had been a while since I enjoyed myself like this. With Amryn, it came easily.

"I can't believe your family called you wild and reckless. You hadn't done any of that since we've been fake married," Amryn said out of the blue.

I chuckled. "Man, stuff like that gets tiring after a while. Before my parents did this, I was ready to slow my ass down. I got into a lot of shit while growing up. I even went to jail before."

She gasped. "No way!"

I nodded, dropping my head in shame. Jail was a place I didn't like. I never wanted to go back there again in life. "I stayed in there for a week. My parents thought it would teach me a lesson."

"Did it?" she asked.

I scoffed. "Man, hell no. I got out and did the same shit. It was worse, too."

We laughed.

She shook her head. "That's just terrible."

"Tell me about it, but I made sure I didn't end up back in jail though. Hell nah, I wasn't about to go back."

We laughed again. We randomly started sharing things about ourselves with each other.

No matter what we were doing, we always ended up talking about our past. It was something I looked forward to.

I had never met someone who was down to earth the way she was.

When Amryn got in her moods, I knew it meant to leave her alone, but I wanted to comfort her, too.

She told me it meant she was missing her mother when she was down like that.

Some days, I had the urge to take her in my arms and let her know it was going to be all right, but I knew I didn't have that right.

It was the things I thought about when she was around me that had me bewildered by it all.

Never would I have let my thoughts go places like that with anyone else.

What made her so different? I was someone who wasn't looking for a relationship, not now anyway, but with her, my thoughts got the best of me. It wasn't a safe place to be.

For dinner, we ended up stopping by The Subs' Inn. It had been a while since either of us ate there, and I thought it was best we stopped by.

"Do you cook?" I asked her.

She screwed up her face, causing me to laugh. "Oh, no, sir. I never learned or thought to learn since my father had a chef. Whatever I wanted to eat, all I had to do was call on him."

I nodded, understanding. "Even when I was living at home, I tried to cook for myself. I knew I wanted to leave the nest one day. And it came easy."

Amryn picked up her sub and bit into it. Even she made that look sexy. Everything she did was a turn-on. Maybe I was horny, but whatever the case might have been, I

always found what she did sexy.

"What?" she asked when she caught me staring at her. "Do I have something on my face?" She reached for a napkin to wipe the corners of her mouth.

The only thing I could do was stare. I needed to snap out of it and get a damn grip. I had to shake my head to clear all thoughts of her.

"My bad. I zoned out."

"Uhm, I can see that." She took another bite out of the sub, wiping her mouth immediately.

"Why are we beating around the obvious?" I blurted.

She lifted her eyes to meet mine and chewed slowly. "Uhhh... I don't know how to answer that."

I chuckled. "Just answer it. What the hell is going on with us? Why can't I stop thinking about you?"

Her eyes widened. "What?"

I nodded, exhaling. "I'm confused as hell. It's not supposed to be this way."

Amryn nodded slowly. "You're right. It's not supposed to be. I don't know what it is. We are getting to know each other. Maybe that's it, and we don't hate each other either."

"Yeah, I don't hate you. You're not the reason this is going on, but I can admit that at first, I was prepared to hate your ass."

She laughed. "Hey, same here."

We chuckled. I hated beating around the bush with things.

I had to get that off my chest. We were growing closer, and the feelings I developed for Amryn seemed surreal.

I hadn't expected it to be this way, but here we were, laughing, joking, and touching one another.

The kisses we shared were heating up as well.

For us, we wanted to be just friends, but the kissing and touching put us on another level.

"Man, let's not talk about it. We're going to see how it plays out." I had to wave it off. Who knew how all of this would end? "Let's just continue to vibe how we're doing."

She nodded, picking up her sub. I glanced down at my roast beef sub and realized I didn't take a single bite out of it. I picked it up and began eating as well. We ate in silence for a while.

Our eyes bounced around the sub place but not at each other. I felt tension coming from her but didn't want to call her out on it. It was one I had never felt before. I had a feeling we were in trouble.

Later that night, after we took our showers, we were back downstairs in the living room, getting ready to watch a movie. Amryn looked worn out, as if the shower didn't help her at all.

I sat down next to her and smiled. "Why do you look worn out?"

She looked over at me and exhaled deeply. "My legs are sore from all that walking I did." She rubbed her legs, causing me to caress them with my eyes. I wanted my hands to be the ones to rub on her.

"Let me massage them? It might make them feel better," I offered.

She gnawed that bottom lip of hers, causing me to lean over and kiss her lips. Whenever she did that, I felt the need to kiss her. It had become a habit. One I didn't quite understand, but I didn't need to.

"Okay. I'll go get the lotion." She got up from the couch and headed out of the living room.

While Amryn was gone, I rubbed a hand down my face, trying to get myself together. To want to put my hands on her in that way, I didn't know what was going to come of it. I looked forward to it, though. I wanted to touch her — all over her body.

"Okay, I'm back. Those stairs just about took me out."

I cackled. "Man, I can't with you. It's only seven stairs."

Amryn scoffed. "Seven is too many."

I shook my head. "Man, you're too much."

She smiled and handed me the lotion, which was the kind she always used to. It smelled good as hell on her. This was about to be torture. I got up from the couch and peered down at her. She had the most innocent face I had ever seen, but I knew there was nothing innocent about her.

"Lay on your stomach," I instructed her.

Amryn did what I told her to do. Once I put some of the cream in my hand, I got down on my knees and tried not to stare at her ass, but that was hard to do. It was right there, and I had no choice. My mouth watered as my dick grew hard.

"Yeah, we're about to be in trouble," I mumbled.

"Hmm? What did you say?" she asked.

"Nothing." I began rubbing her foot first. One thing I could say about her was she was going to keep her feet and nails done. I loved that a lot.

A gasp slipped out of Amryn's mouth, and then a moan.

She was going to have to stop that, or we won't be finishing the massage.

I tried not to let her moans get to me, but my dick was painfully hard.

When I got to her thigh, I was on the verge of letting loose in my basketball shorts, so I had to stop.

"I can't continue. You keep moaning and shit," I growled, standing up from the floor.

Amryn sat up on the couch with her eyes bulging out of her head when she saw my erection. It was standing at attention, putting a tent in my shorts. There was no hiding it if I wanted to, and I didn't want to hide it at that point. I wanted her to touch it, stroke it, lick it, and fuck it.



## Page 11

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

"Fuck!" I growled. "Look, I don't know how to say this, but I'm going to say it, anyway."

She stood up and walked closer to me. "You don't have to say anything. I get it."

"Good. At least one of us does because I don't, nor do I understand the way I'm feeling about you."

Amryn placed her finger against my mouth, hushing me up. As much as I wanted to put that finger of hers in my mouth, I didn't. There was no telling where this was about to lead, but I was hoping with me in her guts. That thought made my dick even harder.

"I don't understand what I'm feeling for you, either. It came out of nowhere, scaring the hell out of me."

I smiled, knowing what she was talking about.

I couldn't help it. I wanted to feel her body close to mine.

Without thinking of my actions, I wrapped my arms around her waist. She leaned in closer to me.

I groaned, knowing I needed my dick to go down, but I didn't have the slightest idea of what the hell to do.

That was until she moved her body against me. I clenched my jaw muscles, knowing

what was about to take place.

"Amryn, I haven't fucked in a while. If you keep that up, all that will change. Real fast, too. Do you want to do that?"

That caused her to move against me more as she stared me in my eyes. "Fuck me, please."

That was all she had to say before I lowered my head and kissed her lips hard.

She moaned in my mouth and took the kiss to another level.

It was one that had us reaching to take each other's clothes off.

It would be my first time seeing her naked, and I was ready for it.

I needed her to know that I was eager to get inside of her walls.

"Damn, I want you bad as hell," I whispered against her lips. I pulled away from her to run kisses down her neck and kissed her shoulder.

Amryn moaned and threw her head back. I put light kisses around her neck, wanting to brand her as mine. That would be taking it too far, but at this point, damn it all. I wanted this woman — so damn much.

"Fuck. I got to have you now."

"Yes. Please!" she begged.

I picked her up, heading up the stairs to my bedroom. It would be the first time she'd been in there. Once inside, I went to the bed and dropped her down on top of it. She

had a smile on her face as she eyed me, along with a look that said come and get me, so that's what I did.

I got on the bed with her and cupped her face in my hand.

Her skin was soft and flawless. I could run my hands up and down her body each and every day, given the chance.

I leaned over and kissed her lips. She sighed deeply and eagerly kissed me back.

Her lips parted to let my tongue in. She moaned and sucked on it, causing my dick to twitch. Just by kissing, I got more turned on.

My hands traveled up her body and palmed her breasts. She hissed, squirming against me, and pulled her lips from mine. Did I hurt her? Her eyes held uncertainty in them, and now wasn't the time for that. Not when I was ready to go all the way with her.

"What's wrong?" I questioned.

She gnawed at that bottom lip. I lowered my head and kissed her lips once again. Her doing that was a turn-on by itself. It was a desire I didn't know I had until she consistently did it.

"My breasts are sensitive. When they are touched, it sets me off," she disclosed.

I smirked, knowing I was about to do everything in my power to make her cum every chance I got. "Prepare to cum each and every time, then. I'm a breast man, and I'm ready to feed from you." With that, I leaned down and took her nipple in my mouth.

Amryn cried out and bucked against me.

I groaned just from the taste of her. It was juicy as hell, too. With my other hand, I played with her other nipple. She squirmed beneath me, but I wouldn't stop.

"Nah, you might as well chill that out and take it."

"Ahhh. You are torturing me. I can't take it," she panted.

"Well, you better try," I demanded.

I refused to let up on what I was doing to her.

I wanted her to come apart in my arms and beg me to fuck her nice and slow, then hard and fast. Whatever preference she liked, I was down to do whatever.

I let go of her nipple and, roamed my hand down her body and cupped her sex.

Damn, she was soaking wet. It was easy access inside of her tunnel.

She was tight as hell, too. I wondered how long it had been since she fucked on something.

I moved two of my fingers in and out of her.

Amryn's soft moans egged me on as I continued to torture her with my hand and mouth.

I removed my mouth from her nipple and placed a trail of kisses from her chest to her stomach and to her navel.

She made a sizzling sound as if I burned her with my mouth.

I was for sure feeling the heat that flooded between us.

Once my mouth made it to her pussy, I inhaled her scent, causing my mouth to water. Her smell was everything. I hiked her legs over my shoulders and dived into the meal I craved the most. I was famished for a taste of her goodness.

"Levi! Ahhh! I can't take it!" she screamed.

I continued to eat at her as if I were possessed. Her taste was too good to stop eating her pussy. Her moans and cries had me wanting to explode, but I had to hold myself back. As much as I didn't want to nut, I knew her moans would cause me to do so prematurely.

I kissed back up her body until I got to her lips and gave her a tongue kiss, letting her taste herself.

She wrapped her arms around my neck, pulling me closer.

I hiked her legs around my waist and nudged my dick at the opening of her pussy.

She squirmed, trying to get closer to me.

I let her, ready to be buried deep in her guts.

I pushed more of myself inside of her, and she moaned. I tensed, hoping I wasn't hurting her.

I lifted my head. "Are you good?"

Amryn gnawed her bottom lip and nodded. That was all I needed to know before I kissed her lips again and proceeded to push my inches deeper.

I whispered how good she felt wrapped around my dick.

The more I moved in and out of her, the quicker I felt my nut approaching.

Her fingertips caressed my back, forming goosebumps all over my body.

"Ahhh! Levi! Baby, I'm cumming!" Her nails clawed at my back.

"Cum for me, baby," I whispered harshly, leaning down to take one of her nipples in my mouth again. I knew doing so would cause her to explode. I couldn't get enough of the gumdrops. I was ready to feel her juices covering my dick.

Her cries of release triggered mine. I groaned loudly as I emptied myself inside of her.

I let go of her nipple after sucking it raw and then buried my face in the crook of her neck.

She hugged me even closer to her. "I can go to sleep just like this."

As much as I'd like to stay like that, it wouldn't have been comfortable for me. We switched positions, and she buried her face in the crook of my neck. "Go ahead and take a nap. I am nowhere near done with you."

She moaned. "Good, because I need some more of you, too."

I dropped a kiss against her cheek the best I could and joined her in sleep. She wore me out, but that was something I would never complain about. I was fighting hard not to get back inside of her so soon.

## Page 12

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I never thought I'd be enjoying Levi the way I was.

I thought we would only have bad experiences with each other.

The arranged marriage was turning out for the best. Things were different, but he still liked for things to go his way at times.

I guessed that came from being an only child.

Well, both of us were like that. November had come and gone, and now we were in December, and I didn't know how we were going to do Christmas.

For Thanksgiving, we spent it with his family, and they saw a change in us.

We saw it, too, but didn't comment on what it was.

It was best not to give what we were a title.

Not yet, but I could say that we were behaving like a married couple.

Levi showed up at my job one night with flowers and food. Something he had never done before. Then, another time, he gave me a gift card with a sizeable amount to keep my nails and feet done. The man was full of surprises, which was something I didn't see coming but welcomed.

Since I knew he liked to draw, I got him a new sketch pad. Levi didn't want to accept it, but I put it in his bedroom anyway. It was the small things I enjoyed doing

with him.

This man had me outside with him, helping him put up Christmas lights, something I never thought he'd be interested in doing. He wanted to get it done early since he knew it was calling for snow later this month.

"It's cold out here." I pouted.

He laughed. "Don't pull that with me. We're almost done. Do you want to go out and get the Christmas tree today, too? We don't have anything else to do."

I scoffed. "How do you know if I don't already have plans?"

Levi shrugged one of his shoulders. "I never thought to ask. Well, do you?"

"No." I snapped because that wasn't the point.

He sent me a wink. "I'll warm you up when we get in the house."

I blushed, knowing his way of warming me up would be with him between my legs. That was something I had no problem with.

An hour later, we were done and back inside. He made us some hot chocolate, and we sat at the kitchen table, drinking it slowly.

"After we get the Christmas tree, do you want to go see a drive-in movie?"

I smiled. "Yes, I'd like to do that. Do you know what they are playing today?"

Levi shook his head. "I think today is a throwback movie. I just don't know what all is playing. I can look it up and see," he suggested.



I shook my head. "No, we can just go and see what's playing."

"Word. Are we still going to that event next week?"

I arched a brow, wondering what the hell he was talking about. "Huh? Do we have another event coming up? Your mother hasn't mentioned anything."

Just because Levi's family was invited to all these parties and dinners, they wanted to include us, too. I didn't like that too much. I knew I married into his family, but why the hell did I have to show up for everything? I didn't like it since she never ran it by me.

"She told me to tell you."

I scoffed, rolling my eyes. "Well, of course, she did."

"Are we going?"

That was Levi's way of not trying to argue with me about it, but I wasn't done fussing and wanted to get my point across, which was something he didn't like. He wanted to always be in control, but I had a say in the matter, too.

"I'll have to think about it," I said with a pout.

He chuckled. "Well, while you think of it, decide what colors we are wearing as well."

"What?" I bellowed, but he was already out of his seat. "Levi!"

He kept walking out of the kitchen, completely ignoring me. Gosh, I hated this so much.

We sat in the car, sharing a box of popcorn and staring at the big screen in front of us.

We went to see Love & Basketball since it was playing.

I wanted to see Next Friday , but Levi wasn't feeling that.

Of all things playing, he wanted to watch this movie.

That caught me off guard. We weren't even watching it.

We were just talking to each other, which was good enough for me.

He shook his head. "Man, I swear he did ol' girl wrong."

"He did. That's why I don't want to watch this movie. I've seen it a thousand times and hate his character more every time I watch it."

He chuckled. "Only you, for real."

I shrugged. "I feel like he played in her face plenty of times. Even when she kept going to him, he still gave her his ass to kiss. Ugh! I hate this movie."

Levi burst out laughing. "I can feel the hate rolling off you. I get it, I guess. Have you ever been hurt like that in any of your past relationships?"

I thought of Joel and got sad. I tried to make the relationship work with him, but he kept giving me his ass to kiss as well.

"In a way, you can say that I have, but I'm over it now. I broke up with him and moved on."

I hated thinking about Joel since I wanted to forget about him.

Truthfully, I hadn't thought of him since Levi and I started getting close to each other.

Whenever I talked to Mimi, she'd bring up Joel, letting me know he said he made a mistake.

That was something I couldn't care less about.

That man meant me no good, and I was happy to be out of his life.

He wanted me out of it so badly before, but now I was happy and content where I was at.

"I've never been in that type of situation before. Yeah, I had girlfriends in the past, but I never let it get to the point where I'd let them hurt me. Nah, that's something I couldn't see myself doing."

That was understandable, coming from a man like Levi. "You seem like the type to leave a girl alone as soon as things get too serious."

He laughed. "Yeah, that's what I'd do. It was too many women wanting me, and I wanted to explore them all as much as I could."

I cringed, thinking about the number of women he'd been with. "I hope it wasn't too many."

He gave me an amusing look. "Nah. Nah." He licked his sexy, full lips.

I waved my hand, not at all believing him. "So you say."

Levi's head rested on the headrest as he smiled.

He had a nice smile, too. I could sit and stare into his light, bright, boyish face all day.

When he was sleeping, I'd do just that. That seemed creepy, but he was a sight for sore eyes.

Since we started making love, we had been in each other's beds.

I hadn't moved into his bedroom yet and didn't know if I wanted to.

I loved having my space, and when I needed a break, I could easily go back to my bedroom, but since being with him, I hadn't needed a break at all. I wanted to be near him all the time.

Levi tapped my thigh, gaining my attention again. "Hmm?"

"Did you zone out on me?" He had one of his eyebrows lifted. "Are you bored with the movie?"

I didn't know if I should be honest with him or not. "Umm, the movie is okay, but I am enjoying your company more and the conversations we are having."

He grinned and then swiped his tongue across his bottom lip. "Oh yeah?"

I nodded. "Yeah. I'm not enjoying the movie at all."

He laughed. "I figured as much. I was trying not to go to sleep."

"Do you want to head back home? We do have ice cream and hot chocolate waiting

for us."

"You already know that I am."

He smirked and sat up straight in the seat. He started the car and drove out of the drive-in movie theater's parking lot.

Later that night, we stood in the bathroom, undressing each other.

Today had been an adventurous day. We were finally taking our nightly shower.

Sometimes we'd shower together, other times we didn't, but I liked it when we did it together.

It felt so intimate and stroked the sexual desire in me.

The way he'd reach for me and bathe me, it felt so tender. I enjoyed every minute of it.

I sighed as I stepped inside the shower. "Please tell me that we can have a day at home without going anywhere tomorrow."

The water felt so good against my skin. His water pressure was everything.

Levi smiled. "We can do that. There is nothing on the schedule for tomorrow except church."

I nodded. "Okay, cool. Now, that's something I can do. However, after church, we're coming straight home. We can order takeout."

"Is there anything you want to eat for tomorrow?" he inquired.

I shook my head. "We can have whatever. What if you grill some food?"

"Nah, that's a negative. Like you, I want to relax too, so takeout it is."

I rolled my eyes at him, causing him to laugh. "I hope this feeling never goes away. I love taking a shower or bath with you. It's comforting when you wash me up. Gosh, I love it," I babbled.

Levi's eyes widened as he stared at me. "Oh yeah, for real?"

I smiled, happy to have gotten that off of my chest. "Yes, it's enjoyable."

He nodded slightly. "I love it too. What else I love most about it is that I get to pin you up against the wall and fuck you real good until you scream out my name."

I blushed, cheesing hella hard. "Oh yeah, I most definitely love that. Are you going to do it tonight?"

He chuckled. "Baby girl, I'm going to do that, plus more." He pulled me in his arms and proceeded to do exactly what he said.

## Page 13

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I felt like I was on top of the moon from the way I was feeling.

My relationship with Amryn took another turn for the better, and I couldn't have been happier.

We decided to make this marriage work. She meant a lot to me, which was something I never saw coming.

We hadn't let anyone know yet of our plans or what we were going to do.

For now, we were keeping it to ourselves.

We thought of telling our friends about it, but nah, we didn't.

To celebrate us making the marriage work, we went out to eat a fancy dinner. Then, we went to my tattoo shop and got matching tattoos on our ring fingers.

Now we were at the event together, looking like a damn bumble bee with all this yellow on.

We all were dressed in yellow, except for the wait staff, who wore black and white.

They strolled around with trays of drinks in their hands.

I was going to tell my mother to never allow Amryn to pick the theme color again.

I turned to scowl at Amryn only to see a bright smile on her face. It was cool that she

was happy about this. River and Zyanna made their way over to us. Like me, River had a glare on his face. Zyanna cheesed hella hard. She and Amryn could go straight to hell.

"Man, who told your wife to pick yellow of all colors?" River asked, glaring at Amryn. "I can't believe you approve of this."

I threw my hands up in front of me. "I didn't know about it until moms called and told me. She snuck this one in. Trust me, if I had known, we wouldn't be dressed like a bunch of suns."

She and Zyanna laughed hysterically. I was going to get her back for this.

"Why y'all acting like y'all don't look dashing in your yellow?" Zyanna asked with a chuckle.

She was trying to be funny, but I wasn't laughing.

River fussed. "Next time, you need to ask her first to see what she says. I'm not feeling this yellow at all."

"Hell, neither am I," I chimed in.

Amryn waved us off and turned her attention to Zyanna. "You look amazing in your yellow."

Zyanna beamed. "Thank you! So do you. Let's go get us some wine and let the fellas stay mad." She looped her arm around Amryn's and pulled her away from me.

River turned his glare to me. The only thing I could do was laugh since the situation was over now.



"Man, you hell on wheels," I told him.

I followed Zyanna and Amryn with my eyes.

It was a good thing it wasn't as packed tonight.

It would be an early turnout, and I was happy for it.

My mother was on the planning committee for all the events we had.

She'd plan it sometimes, or other people of the society she and my father were a part of.

I hated it, but I had to attend since I was their son.

It would look bad on their part if I didn't show up.

When I was younger, I used to cause them so much hell about it, but now I was over it.

I saw a man approach Zyanna and Amryn, and she tensed up.

An angry expression crossed her face, and that was when I made my way over to her to see what the problem was.

I wrapped my arm around her waist and stared at the man in front of her.

He looked down at the hand on her waist and lifted an eyebrow.

"Who the hell are you?" he asked in a hard tone.

I didn't like his hostility when he didn't know me. I hated it when someone did that.

"Who I am is none of your business. I see you over here bothering my wife, and to me, that's a problem."

The man's mouth dropped, and his eyes widened before he burst out laughing. He laughed loud as hell, causing everyone to look over at us. He gave clown behavior.

He looked between us and narrowed his eyes. "Your wife?"

"That's what I said. I'm not repeating myself. If you know what I know, you'll find yourself something safe to do and stay the hell away from her," I nonchalantly stated, although I was ready to knock him on his ass.

Anger simmered through me tenfold, and as much as I didn't want to cause any problems at this event, I wouldn't let this man think it was okay to bother my wife the way he was.

Amryn belonged to me, and I'd be damned if anyone thought they were going to talk or look at her like they were crazy. I'd beat their asses first.

He stepped closer to us, and I pulled Amryn behind me. It had been a while since I had to put someone in their place. This man was baiting me and was about to see how I acted up. I tried to spare him, but he kept trying me.

"The best thing to do is walk away, man," I warned him. That was as far as I'd go before I showed my ass.

He smirked, his eyes bouncing around. I didn't know what the hell this man was on, but he chose the wrong day to be on it. "Nah, I think I'll stay right here. I'm trying to have a conversation with Amryn. I'm not leaving until I talk to her," he retorted.

I stepped closer to him only to be pulled back by Amryn. She wasn't doing a good job of holding me back, but I'd take it. I needed to calm down and was happy she was there. It was hard for me to remain calm, but this man was trying me.

"Let's just go, Levi. He's trying to make you mad," Amryn urged.

"Hell, he succeeded because I'm already there." I snarled. I wasn't trying to take my anger out on her, but when I was mad, I targeted anyone.

"He shouldn't even be here. He's not dressed properly," Zyanna butted in.

She had a point with that. He wasn't wearing the color yellow but had on all black. Who in the hell let him in? They needed to escort him back out.

His eyes knitted together as he turned his attention to Zyanna. "Who the fuck?— "

I didn't give him time to say anything else. I popped him in the mouth.

It was that quick and simple for me. He baited me to the point I couldn't stand it any longer. When I was up, it was hard for me to calm down. My body was locked with rage to the point where I thought I was about to explode.

River rushed over and pulled me out of the area.

"Man, what the hell?" he bellowed.

I felt ashamed of myself, but it had to be done. "That man tried me, bruh. On everything, he was trying to get a rise out of me. I have a feeling that's Amryn's ex-boyfriend. He don't know who the hell he's fucking with, for real."

Amryn and Zyanna came running out of the ballroom. She came straight to me and

held my face in her hands. She had a look of concern on her face, and that was something I never wanted her to feel.

"Are you okay?" she whispered.

I nodded. "I'm straight. I'm sure he's not."

She gnawed her bottom lip, causing my dick to twitch in my slacks. I had it bad — real bad. I leaned over and kissed her lips.

"We're not going to worry about him. My only concern is you. I'm sorry that happened. I don't even know how he showed up."

We took a seat out in the lobby. I ran my hand down my face, trying to get my temper under control. River and Zyanna left us alone, and that was a good thing. I needed some privacy with my wife.

I sighed deeply. "Damn, it's been a minute since I've gotten this heated."

"I'm sorry," she softly apologized.

I frowned, tilting my head to look at her. "What do you have to be sorry about? You didn't do anything."

"Yeah, I know, but he is my ex-boyfriend. I hope this didn't ruin your mother's event."

I shook my head, not wanting her to feel like this was her fault when she did nothing wrong. "If it's anyone's fault, it's mine since I hit him, but he deserved it plus more. If we were out at a club or something, man, I would have really rocked his jaw."

We shared a laugh.

"I can believe that. He would have deserved it, too. Do you want to go back in there, or do you want to head home?"

I smirked. "Home. I need to relieve some of this stress."

She giggled. "I got you."

Before we got up, we shared a kiss. I didn't know how much I needed this until Amryn's lips were against mine. It was sweet as hell, too, just like she was.

## Page 14

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I couldn't help the smile on my face as I stepped inside Dunk's Wings.

Their wings were everything, and I couldn't get enough of them.

Every chance I got, I was dining in or ordering takeout.

Levi said that I was addicted, and that was something both of us could agree on because I was.

Since Levi worked today, I thought it would be best if I stopped by and brought him lunch.

It would be the first time I had done that, and plus, he didn't know I was coming.

I didn't know how or when it happened, but he was starting to mean a lot to me.

I enjoyed the relationship we had. Levi made me feel special, something I hadn't felt in my previous relationship.

I didn't want to get my hopes up with this relationship.

Although we said that we were going to give it a shot, I hope nothing ruined it.

After I got my and Levi's food, I was heading to my car. It was cold outside today and very gloomy. I was hoping it didn't rain. It wasn't needed since we were already having cold weather.

"Well, look who it is," I heard a voice behind me and grimaced.

I threw my head back and groaned. It was someone I'd rather not deal with. I didn't want to see him ever again. Joel was showing a side of him I had never seen before, and it was frightening. To make matters worse, I was alone without Levi, so there was no telling what he'd do or say.

"What do you want, Joel?" I asked with a glare.

He walked toward me with a smirk on his face. I didn't know what was amusing.

"You got me fucked up, shawty. How do you break up with me, and then months later you're married? It is almost laughable."

I shrugged. "Why does it matter to you? You didn't want me, right?"

Every time I thought about how Joel did me, it made me sad. I didn't do anything but try to make our relationship work, but he was hung up on the fact that I lived with my father.

"It didn't take you long to move on from me. We hadn't been broken up that long, and now you have a husband. What sense does that make?"

I shrugged again. "Okay, and? It doesn't have to. As long as it makes sense to me and the man I married. That is what matters most."

He chuckled. "That man is going to end up cheating on you when he sees how worthless you are."

Ouch, that had hurt, but I knew that wasn't going to happen.

"Yeah, you can say what you want. Now that we aren't together, do you think you can talk to me any kind of way? Think again. Now excuse me." I tried pushing him out of my way, but he stayed put.

"Yeah, you can go ahead and run on. Let's see how long your marriage lasts. You're a dull woman with nothing going for yourself always depending on your father to give you money," he taunted.

"Aha!" I yelled as Joel shoulder-checked me as he walked away.

My lips quivered as I clenched my jaw muscles together.

I refused to feed into what this man said.

He was jealous that I moved on from him.

He must've thought I would be down and depressed.

Nah, I was the one that broke up with him, and I found better.

Still, in the back of my mind, I wondered if what he said was true.

I shook my head, refusing to let this man get to me.

Joel had never been there when we were together, so I'd be damned if I allowed his negative words to get me down.

With a deep sigh, I pressed forward to my car, trying to get Joel and his words out of my head.

When I got in my car, I tried calling Mimi, but she hadn't answered the phone.



It had been like that for the past two days, which had me wondering what the hell was up with her.

A huge smile lit up Levi's light-skinned face when he saw me walk through the door of the tattoo shop.

With that smile on his face, I pushed forward and smiled back.

I greeted the people who were in the shop and walked over to my man.

He stood up from the chair he sat in and embraced me tightly before he lowered his lips to mine and kissed me.

"I wasn't expecting you today," Levi stated when he pulled away from me.

I shrugged and lifted the bag and the bag with the drinks in it. "I figured you hadn't eaten, so I brought you something from Dunk's Wings."

He licked his lips. "Damn, that got my mouth watering. Let's go to my office. I have two hours to spare."

Without saying anything to the workers, we made our way to Levi's office, which was in the back of the shop.

When I stepped in, he shut the door behind me.

I took the chair that was in front of his desk while he took the one behind it.

I set the bag of food on top of the desk and sat back in the chair.

His eyes were on me, with a smile spread on his lips.

I lifted an eyebrow. "What?"

"Nothing. I'm just surprised to see you. I wasn't expecting to see you until I got home tonight."

"Well, now you see me. I've had this planned all day, and I'm happy it worked out the way I wanted it to."

It was the look on Levi's handsome face that made me feel like I accomplished something big.

As much as I tried not to let what Joel said get to me, it was hard to let go.

I knew I was worthy, though. I didn't know if I should bring it up to Levi or not.

Since he punched Joel in the face, I doubted if that was best. Levi was hotheaded and didn't care about getting into trouble.

If I told him what Joel did and said, he'd be ready to go looking for him.

That was something I didn't want or need to happen.

I could fight my own battles when it came to Joel.

He was a nobody to me since I dropped him.

Levi took the food out of the bag and placed it on the desk, along with the two bottles of sodas. "What did you do all day?" he asked.

I told him what I did, leaving out me running into Joel. I felt guilty for doing so, but it needed to be done. For right now, it would be for the best.

He opened his food and got a fry. "Do you have to work tonight?"

I shook my head, happy that I didn't have to work.

"How about we watch a movie later?"

I beamed happily. "I would love that. Do you have anything in mind?"

"Nah, but we can look up something together on Netflix."

"Gotcha."

We ate in silence for a while. I loved that we spent a lot of time together. Even if we weren't talking, it was silent, but it was comfortable. I never thought I'd have something like this. It differed from what I was used to, especially with Joel.

"Damn, that was good." Levi got up to throw his empty carryout tray in the trash. I already knew I was going to take this food home. I couldn't eat a lot at one time.

I closed my container and used the napkin to wipe my hands. "I'll be taking the rest home to eat later."

He chuckled. "You mean for me to eat later? You know you don't bother with eating your leftovers until I'm about to eat them. This time, I'm not going to let you know anything."

I rolled my eyes at Levi. He didn't have to call me out like that. "Whatever."

He smirked. "Come here and sit on my lap." His voice grew low and husky.

I already knew what time he was on. I checked to make sure the door was locked. It

wasn't, so I went to lock it. As soon as I sat down on his lap, I felt his erection and wasn't surprised at all by it.

"How long have you had that?"

Levi laughed. "Since you walked in."

He grabbed me by the neck and pulled me down to kiss his lips.

I nibbled on his bottom lip, causing him to groan.

Our tongues tangled together, causing the kiss to get wilder.

I moaned in his mouth and leaned more into him.

His hand traveled to my breast, and he grasped it in his hand.

I purred in his mouth. He knew that was going to make me cum too quickly.

We hastily removed each other's clothes, and I wasted no time sliding down his thickness. I threw my head back as I took him deep inside of me until he was fully embedded. Gripping his shoulders in my hands, I slowly rode him up and down. He held on to my butt as we moved in sync.

I shuddered against him as the pressure built between us.

The feeling felt too good. We felt like the perfect fit — almost too good to be true.

As Levi plunged deeper inside of me, I was seeing stars.

It was an excitement that I didn't know I needed until it was right here.

This man was the perfect lover — the best one I ever had.

I leaned my forehead against his, breathing in the air that he breathed. I pecked and licked his lips, and a groan slipped out of his mouth. He tightened the hold he had on my butt, moving me more snugly against him. I took it all in, not wanting to ever let him go.

"Damn, you're soaking wet. I can't get enough of you. Do you feel me in your gut?" he groaned.

I moaned, unable to say anything.

"How do I feel, baby?" He circled his hips and pushed upward inside of me.

"Ohhh, Levi!" I cried.

"That's right, just like that. Say your husband's name again. Let the whole world know who fuck you real good," he whispered.

I bit down on my bottom lip to keep from crying out the way he wanted me to. If I were to scream how I wanted, the entire neighborhood would hear me.

He slapped my butt hard, and I did scream out then. I had a feeling he did that on purpose.

"When I tell you to scream, that's what I want you to do," he growled.

Levi picked me up and laid me down on the desk. He roamed his hands over my body and grasped my breasts in his large hands then squeezed them. He thrust deeply in and out of me. I was about to cum, knowing I couldn't hold it any longer.

I gasped. "I can't take no more."

He chuckled. "Yeah, I know. Go ahead and let go," he instructed as he continued to stroke in and out of me, setting my soul on fire.

"Ahhh, Levi!" I screamed out as if there was no tomorrow. I didn't give a damn anymore. He did what he set out to do.

I felt his nut pushing its way through my body.

The feeling overwhelmed me, and tears welled in my eyes.

Feelings that were unknown bubbled inside of me, gripping me tightly.

My heart opened to accept any love he had for me.

Even if it were just a little, I would accept anything at this point because I was falling in love with my husband.

He leaned down and sweetly kissed my lips.

"Damn, I needed that. Thanks for showing up."

I smiled. "Anytime."

## Page 15

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

Amryn and I were sitting in our kitchen, eating the breakfast I prepared for us. She tried helping me with cooking, but it was a big mess. She was down about it, so I knew I needed to take time out to teach her. It was the least I could do.

She looked so distraught, and I didn't like it. I hated that she was beating herself up about it.

"Are you good?" I asked her.

She only stared down at her food and shrugged. It bothered me that she wasn't looking at me.

"Look at me," I demanded, needing to see her eyes.

She turned her attention to me. The deep sorrow I saw on her face had me feeling some type of way.

"What's wrong with your face? I know you're not upset about the breakfast."

She didn't say anything, which wasn't about to fly with me. She wasn't about to sit here mad about shit she could fix. There was no need for her to get down on herself about it. I didn't even know what to say to her to fix the situation. Those were her own feelings to have.

I continued to eat my food, hoping she'd open up and tell me what was running through that thick ass skull of hers.

"I want to be able to cook a meal for you," she softly stated.

I stopped cutting into my pancake to give her my attention. "What makes you think you can't?"

"I can't even make a simple pancake."

"That's why you practice it. Don't be down about it. Make a difference."

She lifted her eyes to mine, and I wanted to kiss the uncertainty off her face. "I really want to learn. My mother was a good cook, but my father didn't like for her to be in a kitchen since we had a chef to cook for us, but sometimes, she'd give the chef a break and cook."

"We can spend the day doing just that. I don't want you to ever think you can't do something. That is something I'm not about to let you be down about. Do you understand me?"

Amryn averted her eyes from mine and nodded. What the hell had gotten into her?

"Do you have anything you'd like to learn how to cook?" I inquired, picking up my glass of orange juice to take a sip of it.

A smile crept on her face. "Yes. I would like to learn how to cook stewed chicken."

I lifted an eyebrow. "Any reason why?"

The smile slowly died from her lips, which had me thinking I had said something wrong.

"That was my mother's favorite meal to cook. I haven't had it since she died. Nobody



could cook it like she did, so now, I want to learn how to make it on my own. I want to show that I am capable of doing anything I put my mind to."

I nodded, not knowing where that came from. "Yeah, you can. Let's finish eating, and then we can go to the grocery store and get everything you need. Cool?"

She gave me a small smile. "Cool."

When we returned home from the grocery store, Amryn seemed to be in a better mood.

As much as I wanted to know where some of the things she said came from, I decided not to ask.

I hoped she'd come to me and talk to me about it.

It was the far-off look on her face that had me wanting to know what was going on in her head, but I was happy she was in a better mood than she had been before. That was all I cared about.

"I think we got too much food," Amryn declared with a chuckle, eyeing the many bags on the counter.

While she eyed the bags, I observed her beauty. She had a baseball cap on her head with her hair pulled into a ponytail at the nape of her neck. Her flawless, honey-colored complexion was a little red due to the cold. She looked over at me and knew she caught me staring at her.

"What? Do I have something on my face?" Amryn swiped at her face, and I laughed.

"Nah, I'm just admiring your beauty."

She blushed, dropping her head. "You're too much. Come on. We have to unload these groceries and start cooking soon."

Not only did she get chicken to cook, but she also added lima beans to the yellow rice, and she wanted to bake a cornbread. I was going to let her do all the work but instruct her on what to do.

Thirty minutes after we unloaded the groceries, we went upstairs to get into something comfortable. Now we were back in the kitchen, prepping for her meal.

She placed her hands on her cheeks and had a look of disbelief on her face. I frowned, wondering why she had that look on her face.

"What's wrong?"

"I am really about to cook."

I smirked. "Oh yeah, you are. I'll be your backup if you need me, but you will be doing everything on your own."

She nodded. "I can get down with that. Let me get the TikTok video up so I can follow along."

I took a bottle of wine out of the refrigerator and retrieved two wine glasses out of the cabinets.

I poured her a glass and then myself. Our fingers touched when I handed her the glass.

She gazed at me with longing in her eyes.

If she didn't quit, I'd say damn the food and have her for my dinner.

No matter the time of day, Amryn had me wanting her at any time.

I couldn't resist leaning over to kiss her lips, though.

When we pulled apart, she smiled at me. I'd never get tired of seeing the smile that brightened her complexion.

"Okay, I need to get started," she huffed.

I smiled and moved back toward the counter to lean against it.

I set the wine glass down and watched her.

Every so often, my eyes would drop to stare at the sway of her hips as she walked from one end of the kitchen to the other.

Once she propped her phone on the island, she didn't need my help.

To me, she was in her element. If only she knew she was made to be in the kitchen.

She moved graciously as if she knew what she was doing.

All she needed was a little confidence, and she'd have it.

Although she moved slowly, she was getting it.

"Damn, baby. Are you going to ask for help or not?" I teased with a smile.

She glanced back at me, gnawing that bottom lip of hers. "Am I doing it right?"

I chuckled. "Yeah, you're doing everything just right. You got it."

She beamed happily. All I wanted to see was that smile on her face. I couldn't stand the down look she was sporting.

Amryn gave a quick nod before picking up her wine glass to take a sip of it. "Do you have a favorite dish you like to cook, or did your parents make you everything when you were a kid?"

I thought about it. "It's a lot of things my parents used to cook.

Even though, like you, we had a chef, that didn't matter to my mother and father.

They'd get up early sometimes on a Sunday to cook Sunday dinner before church.

My mother used to always make the best shrimp scampi.

I loved it, and to this day, if I ever want it, she'll make it for me.

When I got older, I cooked for myself, and my favorite thing to cook is steak and chicken tacos. "

She gasped as her mouth opened wide. "Oh my! I haven't had either in a long time. You have to cook that for me one day."

"Just let me know when you want them, and I got you."

"Tomorrow," she blurted.

I laughed, causing her to join me.

"I'll see what I can do. It all depends on whether we have leftovers or not."

Amryn playfully rolled her eyes and turned away from me.

While she continued to cook, we talked a bit.

And by the time all the food was in the oven and on the stove, she looked like she was ready to pass out.

While she cooked, she wanted me to be the taste tester, and everything was good as hell. Even for her first try, she did well.

"Are you tired, baby?" I asked, biting back a smile.

She wiped at her forehead exaggeratedly. "Very, but I think I did a good job. What do you think?"

I smiled proudly. "Baby, you did amazing. I'm proud of you. You didn't need my help at all. You set your mind out to do something and did it."

I wrapped my arms around her waist and kissed her lips. I urged her lips apart with my tongue, shifting the kiss from persuasive to demanding and thrusting my tongue deeper into her mouth. I couldn't seem to help myself. Kissing Amryn was like a drug, and I stayed high, too.

She moaned and wrapped her arms around my neck, stepping even closer to me. I leaned her against the counter, still kissing her, getting higher. I slowly pulled my lips from hers before we took things to another level.

I gripped my hand in hers, needing to continue touching her. "Come on. Let's go watch a movie while we wait for the food to get done."

Amryn giggled, trying to get away from me, but I held her ankle.

We were in the bedroom for the night after eating and watching two movies.

The food was bust down good, so I had to go back for seconds.

The look on her face as I showed my admiration for her meal was breathtaking.

If she could cook that meal, she could cook anything else.

She had no more excuses either. That would give me a chance to stay out of the kitchen and let her take over.

"Stop!" she screeched. "Nooo! You will not mess up my toes trying to polish them."

I pulled her to me, not letting her go. "You never know. I might do a good job."

Amryn scrunched her face up. "I doubt it, but since you want to help me. Sure."

My mouth watered as I eyed her pretty toes.

Amryn was perfect in my eyes. As I continued to get to know her, I felt myself falling deeper in love.

Love? Something I hadn't expected to feel.

Now that I did, I had to find the perfect moment to tell her.

She deserved for it to be told to her in a special way.

With Christmas right around the corner, I had to present it like a present.

I chuckled at the way my thoughts were leading me. She eyed me strangely but didn't say anything.

"Are you ready to polish my toes? What color should I do?" She got the polish bottles from off of her pillow, holding up yellow and white.

"Damn sure, not yellow. I'm sick of that damn color."

Amryn threw her head back and giggled. "Please don't hate on my favorite color. I should make you polish it yellow just because you're hating."

I scoffed. "Bullshit."

She handed me the white nail polish. "I've never done this before, so if I mess you up, don't hold it against me."

"Oh my goshhh! Why would you volunteer to do something if you're already trying to second guess yourself?"

I paid her no mind and grasped her foot in my lap. With concentration, I painted her toes. She egged me on. Once I was done, she carefully got out of bed and started moving around the bedroom, doing little dances.

I frowned. "What the hell are you doing?"

Amryn doubled over and started laughing. "I am drying my toes by dancing around."

I shook my head. "I can't with you."

She started moving her booty and then shaking it, which gave me an erection. If she knew what I did, she had better chill the hell out.

"Oh yeah, you are looking to get fucked to sleep."

Amryn ignored me and continued dancing. I felt like she was baiting me, and I was about to get hooked. While she danced around without a care in the world, I got undressed until I was naked. I got off the bed and made my way over to her with my dick leading me. Yeah, even he knew what he wanted.

"Come dance on top of me," I demanded.

Amryn twirled around and gasped when she saw me.

With a wicked grin on her face, she glided toward me and sank to her knees.

I gulped as I averted my eyes as she gripped my dick in her hand and stroked it.

She lifted her eyes to gaze at me before she leaned forward and took me inside of her mouth.

I groaned loudly, not at all expecting our night to end like this but damn it, I welcomed it.

Her mouth felt good as hell, wrapped around my pipe.

"Yeah, baby, just like that," I coached.

By the time she was done with me, my face was soaked with my sweat. She took me through something I hadn't expected her to do. We were in for a long night, and I couldn't help but look forward to it.



## Page 16

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I smiled as I moved around Levi's kitchen, preparing dinner for him while he was upstairs taking a nap.

I hadn't seen myself as a stay-at-home wife, but that was what I did with my time.

I had quit my job at my father's poker lounge.

Levi said it was okay, and I jumped at the chance to do so.

I now helped Levi's mother with the planning of some of the events. I was officially on the committee.

My cell phone rang on the counter, and I ambled toward it to see that it was Mimi.

That was a shocker since it seemed like she had been avoiding me.

I didn't know how to feel about her calling me out of the blue like this.

We hadn't talked in a while, and every time I'd try to hit her up, she didn't reply or answer the phone, so after a while, I stopped trying with her.

"Hello?" I answered, putting the phone on speaker.

"Well, it's about time you realize you have real friends," she voiced.

I frowned, wondering where that came from. "Huh? What do you mean by that? Whenever I call you, you don't answer the phone, so I stopped calling you."

If Mimi thought I was going to run behind her, that was a lie she told herself. I would never let someone make me out to be the bad person when I did nothing wrong to them. I hated that.

"I can remember calling you plenty of times, and you didn't answer the phone. Do you think you are better than me or something?" she angrily questioned.

I was in disbelief at what I was hearing right now from my best friend. No way had those words left her mouth. "Mimi, how could you say something like that to me? I've never switched up on you. What the hell is going on? Why are you acting this way toward me?"

Silence came on the other end of the phone. Was I about to lose my best friend for something I didn't do?

"I'm sorry, girl. Joel's got my head all messed up. He's been talking about you badly."

I scoffed, wondering why she hadn't told me before now.

I didn't like the secrecy she had shown.

"And from the way you were just talking to me, I guess you were too," I bluntly stated.

It was best to get that off of my chest since I was feeling that way.

From the time I answered the phone to now, Mimi had been saying things that I questioned if she was being a genuine friend to me.

"What?" she screeched. "No, I wasn't, but let's face it. Things haven't been the same since you got married to that man."

Now I was getting pissed off. "For one, his name is Levi. For two, you need to stop listening to Joel. Joel didn't want me, and now that I am happy with someone else, he's bothered. His words can no longer hurt me."

"Who words can no longer hurt you?" Levi interjected.

I jerked my neck toward his voice, and the color drained from my face when I saw him leaning against the entry of the kitchen. The look on his face was unreadable, but he was staring a hole in me. I didn't know what to do or say as I stood there frozen.

Mimi continued talking. "Yeah, Joel told me he saw you at Dunk's Wings, and y'all exchanged words. I wouldn't say he is bitter. He just wants his girl back. And let's face it, you not really married for real."

I hung up the phone. I'd heard enough of Mimi showing her true colors. I refused to listen to anything else she had to say.

I had to face Levi now. I could feel the rage rolling off of him. This wasn't about to be good for me. In my defense, I didn't do anything, so I hope he wasn't going to take his anger out on me.

"You talked to your ex-boyfriend and didn't tell me about it," he accused.

I gulped, not knowing how to answer that. "It wasn't anything to tell you. I was able to handle Joel on my own. It was the day I brought you lunch." I decided to be honest with him.

Levi pushed off the wall and strolled toward me. He looked dangerously delicious, with his tattoos covering his light brown body. "Hmm, you had all the time in the world to tell me, though. What did he say to you?"

I shook my head, not wanting to repeat any of the awful things Joel had said about me. "I'd rather not."

"Nah, go ahead and tell me. It had to be something good since you felt the need not to tell me. Wassup with it?"

I had a feeling he wasn't going to let it go, so I needed to be honest once again. Sighing deeply, I told Levi everything Joel said about me.

"He said that you were going to cheat on me when you found out how worthless I was. Then he said that I was dull, and I had nothing going for myself."

I cringed, just even repeating what Joel said to me.

It made me feel like he was right since I didn't have anything going for myself.

The way I was brought up, I didn't feel the need to do anything other than collect money from my parents.

I was spoiled rotten and was treated like royalty.

Look at me now, married into wealth, although it was an arranged marriage.

Levi's face turned a shade darker, and I didn't know how to react to it.

"You kept something like that from me when I could be kicking down his door and giving him a knockout he deserves for talking to you like that," he growled.

"I didn't want to tell you. It meant nothing to me," I lied.

"Bullshit!" Levi bellowed. "Is that why you were walking around here like you lost

your puppy? You were saying slick shit about yourself, too. Is he the reason for it?"

I dropped my head and nodded.

"Un-fucking-believe-able. All this time, you could have told me what was said, but you didn't. You kept it from me."

I shook my head wildly, tears filling my eyes. "No. No. I wasn't trying to keep it from you. I hated repeating it like you made me do just now. It hurts too badly."

I didn't want Levi to ever think I was keeping anything from him. Just talking about Joel and what he thought of me hurt.

"Why the hell do you care how another man feels about you? I'm the only man who should matter to you. Or so I thought, yet you're still worrying about that damn ex of yours."

No matter what I said, I had a feeling it wouldn't even matter to Levi. Not now, anyway. Maybe I'd try again when he was in a better mood. I also didn't like how he was cussing at me.

"Okay, you are not about to continue to cuss at me. You are doing too much, and I don't have the time for it. When you are ready to talk to me normally, we can talk. Until then, I'm going to walk away." And with that, I left the kitchen and headed to my bedroom with tears streaming down my face.

It was a good thing I hadn't started cooking yet. If Levi was still in the kitchen, I didn't want to be anywhere around him. If he thought I was going to sleep with him tonight, that was something he didn't have to worry about. Today started off good yet ended bad as hell. I hated that for me.

## Page 17

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I tossed and turned a lot last night, and I guessed it was because I didn't have Amryn sleeping beside me.

She slept in her bedroom last night. It took everything not to drag her out of that bed.

I guessed she needed some space from me since our argument.

I still felt down about it. She kept the fact that she saw her ex from me, which made me feel some kind of way. What else was she keeping from me?

When I got up this morning, Amryn wasn't home.

As much as I wanted to reach out to her to see where she was, I didn't. If she wanted me to know, she would have told me.

We had our first fight, and I had no way of making it up to her.

Hell, I didn't know how to. Thoughts pondered my mind, leaving me disoriented.

I had two clients today and was ready to get it over with.

As the day went by, I picked up the phone so many times to call Amryn, but I didn't go through with it. It was bad enough that she hadn't tried reaching out to me either. What did she do today? Was she thinking of me as I was her? Questions I didn't know wouldn't leave me alone.

"Damn it," I muttered, cleaning my workstation. I was missing the hell out of my girl.

The door of the shop opened, and River breezed in. It had been a minute since he stopped by here. I wondered why the hell he stopped by today.

"What the hell are you doing here? This is a surprise."

He came toward me, we dapped up, and then bro hugged.

He took a seat in one of the chairs. "I just left from having dinner with your aggravating ass cousin. We saw your girl, and she didn't look too happy. We tried talking to her, but she said not now. What the hell did you do to her?" He scowled at me.

I threw my hands up, not knowing what to say. It was the fact that he blamed me for her being sad. I gave him a rundown of what had occurred the night before.

"Damn. I can see why both of you feel some type of way. I'm not getting in that. Are you going to make up with her?"

I scratched the back of my head. "I don't know how to," I muttered, looking down at the floor.

That was embarrassing as hell to say, but how would I look trying to make something up to someone and don't know what the hell I was doing?

He laughed loudly. "Man, ain't no way you're telling the truth. Are you for real?"

"I'm dead ass serious right now. I never had to make up with anybody besides my mother. This is different to do." That was the truth, too.

"Even I know how to make up to a woman I hurt. Go buy her something. Hell, when your cousin and I get into it all the time, I buy her something. It's a win-win." He

shrugged as if that was no big deal.

I frowned. "You and my cousins are only friends to each other that get on each other's nerves. This is different."

"Well, figure it out on your own. I was trying to help you out, but I only buy her stuff. The other women that piss me off.. damn them."

I merely laughed. "Man, you are no help. I'll figure something out."

He nodded and stood up. "That's all you can do. I hope it works out for you."

We dapped up again, and he left out of the shop. I stayed behind to make sure I locked up the place. I also was going to take his advice and talk to Amryn. I missed the hell out of my wife, and this distance was killing me.

When I pulled into the driveway, all the lights were off in the front.

Amryn's car was parked in its usual spot, so that was a good thing.

She hadn't left me after all. That gave me a sense of peace.

I got out of the car, grabbing the items I got for her as well.

Once I locked my car door, I headed toward the house.

After I entered the house, I went straight upstairs and to the bedroom she was sleeping in. That light was on, causing me to knock softly on the door. I wondered if she was going to let me in. How did I let myself get into this situation?

"Come in," her soft voice called out.



I wasted no time opening the door. There Amryn was, sitting on the bed, doing her nails. I smiled, loving that one of my gifts was going to make her smile, or so I hoped. She had her bedroom set up as if she were at a nail salon. The aroma in the room was strong as hell, too.

She turned her head and glowered at me. "What do you want?"

I held up the bags in my hand. "I got you a little something for my behavior last night."

She snorted and went back to doing her nails. "Nothing can fix what you did, Levi. You were cussing at me so badly."

I couldn't say anything because I was doing that. I was just that mad, and when I was like that, I didn't give a damn how I came off. Maybe I shouldn't have come off that harsh to her, but at the same time, there was no stopping me. The only thing I could do was make up for my actions.

I sat the things on the bed, not going to go into another argument with her. If she wanted to accept the gift, she could. If she didn't, I was fine with that, too. Who was I kidding? I wouldn't be fine with it since I was being thoughtful.

I turned and headed out of the bedroom, but before I left out of the room, I heard her digging through the bags. She gasped when she pulled something out.

"You got me a nail kit with fingernail polish?"

I glanced over at her and smiled. "I did. The people in the store were eyeing me funny." That had rubbed me the wrong way and had me wanting to ask them what the hell they were looking at, but I refrained from doing so.

She chuckled, causing another smile to break on my face.

"Can I join you?" I asked, not knowing if I was forgiven or not.

Amryn glanced at me and gave a short nod.

Without wasting any time, I went toward the bed again and got in with her.

I leaned forward and kissed her cheek. Damn, I missed her ass like crazy, but I was happy we were able to make up.

I was going to try my hardest not to let anything like that happen again.

While she did her nails and toes, we chilled and talked the night away.

Moments like this I cherished. Amryn was the only woman I ever had the pleasure of doing this with.

I wanted her to be the only one I ever did things with.

She was my everything, and I couldn't wait to shout it first to her and then to the world.

## Page 18

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

A dreamy smile covered my lips as Levi and I strolled through the mall.

It was packed today. I guessed everyone was trying to get in on last-minute Christmas shopping, like Levi and me.

Even the stores were packed. Some were so crowded that the lines led out of the store.

It was crazy in the mall around this time of year.

Christmas was eight days away, and we were out shopping in this madness.

I had nobody to get anything for, but I was going to buy something for Levi's mother and father.

My father and I hadn't made up yet. Mimi and I weren't talking either.

Since what occurred between us on the phone, I decided to let our friendship cool off.

She was sticking up for Joel when he was in the wrong.

Speaking of Joel, he had been blowing up my phone.

Even when I blocked his old number and told him to stop calling me, he found more ways to contact me.

I hadn't mentioned it to Levi yet, especially with the way things went down the last

time.

I hated that it felt like I was keeping things from him, but I didn't know what else to do.

We were happy, and I didn't want to ruin that.

"Aye." Levi nudged me, gaining my attention. "I said, did you want to eat while we are out or wait until later?"

I shrugged slightly. "I'm not hungry right now, so later. I'm still full from breakfast."

This morning, we cooked breakfast together. While I cooked the bacon and sausages, Levi managed to make the waffles and sliced fruits to go along with the meal. It was so good, and I was happy to be walking it off.

"Okay, cool. I'll order out later, then. I don't feel like cooking anything, and I am sure you don't either?"

"It doesn't matter. Since I am learning how to cook, I like it more now. So, if you want me to cook, I can."

He chuckled. "That was all you had to say. Do you have any idea what you want to cook? Since you love that damn TikTok so much, has it given you any ideas?"

I blushed, knowing I had saved a lot of recipes. "Yes, I want to try to make a baked spaghetti."

Levi nodded his approval. "Oh, hell yeah. Add some garlic bread and corn on the cob, too. That will be our meal for the night."

"You have yourself a deal."

I beamed, ready to go home to cook for my man. There was no telling how long we would be out today, but I didn't care. Whenever I was with Levi, I felt protected and safe.

Later that night, I was in the kitchen cooking when my phone rang.

I paused in cutting the bell peppers and went to the sink to wash my hands.

Once I dried them, I went to the phone to see who it was.

It was a number I didn't recognize, so I sent it to voicemail.

As I continued to cook, the same number kept repeatedly calling.

I grew uneasy, feeling I knew who it was. I wish he'd leave me the hell alone.

Just as I was about to turn the phone all the way off, Levi stepped foot into the kitchen. Damn, this wasn't good at all. There was no way I could turn back the hands of time and tell him about Joel calling me from the start.

"Someone is blowing you up, I see," he voiced.

My heart hammered as I stared at the expression on Levi's face. His eyes were cold and hard as veins popped out of his neck. I wanted to go to him and grasp his face in my hand and kiss the look away.

I laughed shakily. "It's no one important. Trust me."

He folded his arms across his chest and leaned against the kitchen wall.

"You want me to trust you..." He dropped his arms at his side and lifted an eyebrow.

"...When you can't tell me who it is that's calling you.

" He scoffed and commenced pacing. He was like a lion, pacing from one end of the kitchen to the other.

"Start fucking talking, man. The longer you keep your mouth shut, the more pissed I get. "

I jumped from the thundering tone he spat at me. My heart was breaking in two at the thought of what was about to take place. "It was Joel," I rushed to say. "I don't know why he's still calling me."

Levi stopped his pacing long enough to shoot me a furious look. His nose flared as he balled his fists at his side. I took a step back, and my heart was beating so hard. It felt like it was going to come out of my chest.

He dropped his head and bitterly chuckled. "Of course, it's him, and you're not answering."

I could feel the fury rolling off of him and wanted to run for cover, but I stayed put. I had to get through to him.

I gulped, trying to swallow the lump that was clogging my throat. "I have no reason to answer Joel's calls. He's dead to me." With my shoulder slouched, I bowed my head to my chest. Why won't he believe me?

"If he was dead to you, you would've answered the phone and let him know that."

I bit down on my bottom lip, not knowing how to answer that. I felt him recoiling

himself from me and didn't like it. Tears brimmed my eyes as my nose burned. My face grew heated as my lips trembled. This was crushing my soul.

"Man, this isn't getting anywhere." I heard the sadness in Levi's voice mixed with the anger that was still consuming him.

My eyes bucked out of my head as my mouth moved, but no words came out of it.

"Wh-what do you mean?" I stammered over my words.

"What about the contract?" I wanted to add, what about me?

I couldn't care less about the contract or even the arrangement.

Levi couldn't walk away from me like this when I didn't do anything.

He laughed humorlessly, turning his cold eyes on me. From the look alone, I took a step back as if he struck me. "Damn, the arrangement, and damn you, too. The only thing that's between us is the contract." With that, he turned and walked out of the kitchen.

I stood there stunned again as a sob slipped from my mouth.

I buried my face in my hands and gave in to the tears that wrecked my body.

What the hell was I going to do now? Levi wasn't trying to hear anything I had to say.

I was being truthful with him, and he still didn't care.

Did he really just break up with me? Tear after tear escaped my eyes one by one.

I tried to muffle my crying, but it was hard.

My heart had shattered into a million pieces.

The man I loved had walked out on me and our relationship.



## Page 19

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

It wasn't my intention to get drunk, but the way I felt was an excuse to do so.

It had been a minute since I actually consumed as much liquor as I had so fast. With a grimace, I downed yet another shot of tequila.

I was feeling that one tenfold, but I had to shake it off and keep going.

I knew I needed to stop, but I didn't want to.

I wanted to be numb to the agony that throbbed through my broken heart.

My heart felt like it had repeatedly broken into a million pieces.

For the first time, I thought I had something real, but it should've stayed how it was, which was by contract.

I shouldn't have given Amryn a part of me. I screwed up when I did that.

I never thought Amryn would have hurt me the way that she did.

It was the fact that she was keeping things from me that hurt the most. I hadn't laid eyes on her in two days, and that felt like a lifetime to me.

I knew where she was staying due to me having her location.

If she hadn't left, there was no telling how we'd behave around each other.

Not even being at the club made me feel any better when it was my idea to come out.

It was an escape I needed from being in the house without Amryn there.

I picked up another shot of tequila and down that, nearly bringing that one back up.

I felt River and Zyanna's eyes on me, but I paid them no mind.

Until I was ready to talk, they'd have to sit and watch me down these shots.

We had our own section at the club. A bottle sat on ice with shot glasses around the table.

I was the only one drinking, but I didn't give a damn.

The club was a vibe for real, but I wasn't in a partying mood.

I merely came to drink and drown in my sorrow. I was glad to have them there with me.

"Man, damn. How many shots were you planning to down in a matter of minutes? We just got here, and you downing these shots like water," River pointed out.

He didn't know what the hell I was going through. Therefore, he shouldn't speak on anything right now.

"Hush, River. You don't know what's going on with Levi," Zyanna stated.

"Well, if he stopped taking shots, maybe we can ask him," he countered.

Zyanna sighed deeply. "Obviously, it has something to do with Amryn. Why else

would he be drinking like this? It's stressing me out."

They were talking about me as if I weren't here with them, and it pissed me off. I should've stayed home, but I knew I needed to talk to them.

"Levi, what happened between Amryn and you?" Zyanna asked.

"She's still stuck on her ex," I replied.

"What?" Zyanna's eyes widened. "No way. I don't believe that."

I shrugged. "You don't have to believe me. It's true."

I gave them a rundown of what had happened yet again. As I restated what happened between us, I gritted my teeth together. It angered me that the woman I love was still hung up on her ex. That was wrong as hell.

"That doesn't mean Amryn's stuck on him.

Did you ever think to tell her to change her number?

She said she blocked his main number. What else do you want her to do?

You broke up with her for no reason and then had the nerve to say what between y'all is only the contract.

If I were her, I would have beaten your ass. "

I covered my eyes with my hands and ran them down my face.

Truth be told, downing those shots had me tired as hell.

"Man, listen, this is the second time this has happened.

Instead of telling me what the hell was going on from the beginning, she kept it from me.

Damn, Amryn, and damn this fake ass marriage. "

Zyanna placed her hands on her hips and glared at me. "Boy, if I was her, I wouldn't have told you, either. You've punched ol' boy in the face one time. What more do you want to happen? If she had to tell you, what would you have done?"

"Go find him and beat his ass," I truthfully answered.

River burst out laughing while Zyanna threw her hands in the air.

"It's a good thing she didn't tell you then. You would go looking for trouble," Zyanna stated.

"It's all good. I don't need her, anyway. We should have kept our relationship by the contract."

As much junk as I talked, I couldn't say I didn't miss the hell out of Amryn. She had a presence that was known whenever she walked into a room. Now that I didn't have that, I felt the loneliness.

"What y'all going to do? Will she move out?" River asked, picking up a shot and downing it. At least someone joined the party with me.

"I haven't thought about it yet, but I'll think of something.

One thing I do know for sure is I know I can't be with someone who is keeping

something from me.

I don't care how little or small it is. If her ex was calling her, she should have told me and not kept it to herself.

That's something I can't get over," I uttered.

"Maybe it was for your own good," Zyanna countered. "You are ready to throw away something that made you happy. What sense does that make?"

I clenched my jaw muscles together, not wanting to go off on my cousin, but she was pushing me. "Listen, Zy, I know you mean well, but right now, none of what you are saying matters to me."

She smacked her lips and got up hastily from her seat. "Fine! I'm done trying to help you see you are making the biggest mistake of your life. Asshole!" She walked away from our section, fuming.

River only stared at me. "You know she's right, but I'm going to let you figure that out on your own." He got up, leaving me alone. He was probably going to find Zyanna.

I did owe her an apology, but right now, she could forget about it.

Since River wanted to take her side and walked off with her, it was to hell with both of them.

I knew I was doing the right thing, no matter how it made me feel.

Since I was the one who broke things off with Amryn, I shouldn't be affected, but I was.

When I thought about our fight, anger resurfaced, but I also hated the way she cried.

As much as I wanted to go to her and pull her in my arms, I didn't. Then she left the house without saying anything to me.

That was an agony I hadn't expected to feel.

She was the first woman I ever opened up to, and things weren't good between us.

This is our second time getting mad at each other.

This time, things ended between us. Would we ever be able to work things out?

I'd have to trust Amryn. I knew if I couldn't, I doubted I'd be able to let this go.

At home, I was alone, and guilt cut me deeply.

I stared around at the house and clenched my teeth together.

The decorations that were up, Amryn and I did together for Christmas.

Then we had a picture of us hanging on the wall that we took at a charity event.

Damn, this was hitting me hard as hell now.

I already knew that if Amryn were here, we would be doing something right now.

I could remember a time when I drew a tattoo design, and she colored it in.

We ate buffalo chicken dip with buffalo wings that night, too.

Then, we ended the night with a candlelight bath that led to us tearing up the sheets.

Damn, I missed the hell out of her. I was having too many mixed emotions swirling around in my chest. This cut me deeply.

## Page 20

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I was depressed and had nobody to blame but myself.

How did I lose my man and my best friend right before Christmas?

I didn't care too much about losing Mimi since she flipped the script and turned her back on me.

Since she got with Joel's cousin, she'd changed big time.

When I needed her the most, she sided with Joel with her boyfriend.

That was something I never saw coming. She was at my wedding as my maid of honor.

Now, who else did I have? Nobody — I was all alone.

I was held up in a hotel, not wanting to go back to my father's house. He'd probably ask a million questions about what was going on. Those were questions I didn't have the answer to or wanted to answer.

My cell phone rang as I relaxed across the bed, flipping through channels, trying to find something to watch. Nothing held my attention. The only thing on was Christmas movies, and I wasn't in the Christmas spirit anymore.

I reached for the phone that was on the pillow and checked to see who was calling me.



Surprise hit me when I saw my caller was Zyanna.

She'd sometimes call about an event, but I knew we didn't have anything until next year.

With it being Christmas time, I thought we'd have something, but I was happy we got to rest a bit.

I knew as a community they had festivals in Skyeville.

I wouldn't be attending either of them. Without anyone to go with me, what would be the point?

"Hello?" I answered.

"Hey, girl. I'm calling to check on you. Levi told me what happened."

I had a feeling he'd confide in the two people he was the closest to — River and Zyanna. They probably had a lot to say about me.

"Yeah, we stopped talking to each other." I didn't have to beat around the bush, especially when it came to someone calling to let me know I was wrong.

"Yes, he told me, and I wanted to let you know I don't agree with the way he's handling things. Levi doesn't think when he does things. Once he flips out, that's it."

Zyanna wasn't telling me anything I didn't know already about her cousin. Levi was ridiculous when he was mad.

I sat up and yawned, covering my mouth out of habit.

"Yeah, well, it is what it is. I am hurt by it, but I'll find a way to get over it.

" I got out of bed and went to the refrigerator to see what I had in there to eat.

Hopefully, I had something in there. If not, I'd have to go out even when I didn't want to.

"It's not, though. Y'all going to be miserable in a house and not talking. If word gets out that you are in a hotel, hell is going to break loose."

Zyanna had a point. "I won't go anywhere that I'm not welcome," I insisted, closing the refrigerator back. There wasn't anything to eat in there. "If your cousin wants me back, he has my number. I am pretty sure he knows where I am right now since he has my location."

She mumbled something about two stubborn people, causing me to smile.

"Look, I can't make you go back, but can you at least try?"

I shook my head as if she could see me and took a seat on the couch. "No, I won't. I can't say I don't miss him because I do. If we are able to make things work, I'll be happy. If we can't, then I don't know. I want to reach out to him but don't know how he will react."

"You won't know until you try."

I gnawed my bottom lip and sighed deeply. "That's true, but I don't know."

I hated talking about Levi or even thinking about him when we weren't on good terms.

"I wish it was something I could do," she sadly stated.

I smiled. "You can't, but it's fine. Thanks for calling."

When I hung up the phone with her, I had to fight back tears. I wished my mother were alive. She would have known what to do in this situation. Right now, I was lost and needed her more than anything.

My cell phone rang, causing me to jump. I eyed the number, seeing that it was unknown.

I answered. "Hello?"

"Well, it's about damn time you answered my calls," the voice said on the other end of the phone.

I growled. "Joel, I want you to listen to me and listen to me good.

You didn't want me, so why the hell are you calling me now?

Don't even answer that. I want you to leave me the hell alone.

I've moved on from you, and I suggest you do the same.

It's over and done with and has been for a long ass time. "

I didn't give him time to say anything else before I hung up the phone. If I didn't get my phone number changed as soon as possible, I'd lose my mind. Joel was doing too much.

## Page 21

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I hoped like hell it wasn't too late for Amryn and me.

I wanted her back in my life and was feeling depressed as hell without her.

It had been too long since I laid eyes on her.

Christmas was two days away, and we hadn't made up yet.

I didn't want to be mad at her any longer.

Truthfully, I wasn't even mad anymore. I just wanted her back at home where she belonged.

I called Zyanna and told her I needed her to stop by, explaining my plans to get my girl back. She came in a hurry, too.

"It's about time you came to your senses," she stated as soon as I invited her inside my home.

I scowled at her. "Man, I'm not trying to hear that. I already know I need to make things right with Amryn."

She dropped her bag on the floor and eyed my living room. "What do you want done?"

I detailed to her what I wanted done, and she had to call up her girls since they loved working together. They would be bringing the stuff with them. Since I didn't know

what the hell to do, Zyanna handled it all. While she did that, I ordered the food and had to go pick it up.

On the drive to pick up the food, I had time to reflect on everything.

I concluded that I needed to work on certain aspects, such as managing my anger and approaching different situations more effectively.

That was one of my biggest issues. It had always been like that with me.

Amryn and I needed to talk things through.

I also needed to find out why she was quick to keep things from me.

She had to let me know everything despite how she believed I might feel about it.

There were times when I would spazz the hell out, but that was something I needed to work on.

I stopped by to see my parents while I was out, and they asked about Amryn. I didn't know what to tell them, so I told them she was good. Usually, when I went to my parents' house, I had Amryn with me. I wondered if they saw that as odd. If they did, they hadn't said anything to me.

While I was out, I got a text from Zyanna, letting me know everything was good.

That was fast as hell. I didn't understand why she wouldn't go into business doing what she loved.

I rushed home to see the finished product.

When I stepped foot inside my house, I was amazed at what I saw.

Zyanna and her friends did a dope ass job of transforming my living room.

They pulled the couches back and moved my coffee table.

A banner was hanging from the ceiling that read: I'm Sorry .

White and red roses were all over the floor.

My kitchen table was situated in the middle of my living room, covered with a white tablecloth.

Now, the only thing I needed to do was call Amryn up and tell her to come home.

First, I needed to put the food on the table. Tonight, we were having Italian dishes — well, hopefully, we would. It all depended on Amryn.

After I took a shower and got dressed, I sat on the edge of my bed and dialed Amryn's number. She answered on the first ring. Her voice did something to my insides. It was like a breath of fresh air washed over me. Damn, I missed the sound of her voice.

"Wassup with you?" I ran a hand down my face, trying to pull myself together. It wasn't like me to get nervous, but here I was, nervous as hell.

"I'm okay. I just finished doing my nails," she softly answered.

I had a feeling Amryn wouldn't make this easy for me. I wasn't about to go back and forth with her making small talk.

"It's time for you to come home," I stated.

She scoffed. "I don't have a home to come back to."

My heart broke all over again at her words, but it wouldn't be the final words she said to me. If she thought so, she told a lie.

"We can do this the easy way or the hard way. Either way, it goes, you coming home," I demanded. This wasn't a damn game.

"What do you want, Levi?" she snapped.

"What I want is for you to bring your ass home. You know what? You don't have to move. Stay your ass right there. I'll come get you." I jumped up from my bed. Amryn was stubborn as hell, but I knew it was my fault she acted this way.

She hung up the phone in my face. My mouth dropped as I eyed the phone. Nah, she had to be bullshitting.

I used the keycard that was given to me to enter the hotel room.

There was no telling what was about to greet me, but I was prepared for it.

I wasn't leaving unless Amryn was leaving with me, even if I had to throw her over my shoulder, kicking and screaming.

I heard the TV on in the bedroom and went toward it.

Amryn was lying across the bed, not paying the TV any attention, but was on her phone.

I went to take a seat on the edge of the bed. She didn't even acknowledge me.

"So, this is what we're doing?" I asked her. I semi-turned to look at her to see what she would do or say.

She kept looking straight ahead, ignoring me. "We aren't doing anything. I don't know what you want me to do or say. You can't demand me to come back to a place where I'm not welcome."

I pressed my lips together to keep from lashing out.

"Man, I called you up and told you to come home.

Don't try to act like you're hard or some shit.

Then you had me drive across town to get to your ass.

Don't do that, man. What the hell do you want me to do or say?

We both need to work on some things. I'm not saying I'm not wrong for the way I handled things, but don't you think you are wrong too? "

Amryn finally looked at me with a scowl on her face. "What am I wrong about?" She sat up on the bed.

My eyes widened. "Are you serious right now? You kept your ex calling you to yourself and didn't let me know. Don't you think I have that right?"

Amryn averted her eyes from me. "Yes, you do have that right, but if I told you, you'd probably go off on him. You had already hit him."

I dropped my head. "And what's your point? You are my wife, and nobody needs to be calling you but me. He's your ex and needs to know his place. When he first



started to call you, you should have let me know, not tried to hide it."

"I wasn't trying to hide it," she retorted. "If you don't believe me, I don't know what to say to you."

I swiped my tongue across my lips, not at all liking the way the conversation was going. I scooted closer to Amryn and grabbed her hands in mine, needing to touch her. She looked over at me with tears in her eyes, and my heart shattered. I didn't want her to cry again. I couldn't take her tears.

"Levi, I don't want you to ever think I would keep something from you to deceive you in any way. That was never my intention when Joel was calling me. I thought he would eventually stop, but he didn't. Even when I told him to, he was still calling me."

I clenched my jaw muscles as my nose flared. "I see he won't stop until I beat his ass. When I see him, all bets are off. That's the type of man that won't leave a woman alone until he gets put in his place, which is something I'll have to do."

She sighed deeply. "See what I mean. Joel's not even worth you going to jail over for fighting him."

I stared her in the eyes and responded, "But you are worth me going to jail over.

That man knows what the hell he's doing.

He should have appreciated you when he had you.

Now that he sees that you've moved on from him, he wants to come back.

Nah, he had his turn and fucked up. Damn him. You are mine. I'll kill him," I huffed.

"No," she snapped. "It won't come to that. I'm just going to change my number. It's time for me to do so anyway."

I nodded, liking that idea. "Yeah, you need to go ahead and do that, but on the real, I apologize for the way I handled things."

I want us to start over and, this time, get it right.

I was wrong for saying the only thing between us was the contract.

I mean, it is, but this between us that we're building is much deeper than that.

You matter a whole lot to me. Hell, even more than that. I love you, Amryn."

She squeezed my hand in hers as tears clouded her eyes yet again. "I love you too, Levi. I want us to get this right as well. You cut me deeply when you brought up the contract. Just when I thought that was behind us, it was like a reminder of it when you said that."

"If I could, I would beat my own ass for saying that to you. Something like that will never ever leave my mouth ever again. If it does, I give you permission to slap the hell out of me."

"Deal." She was quick to say, and I laughed.

"Yeah, you would like to do that, huh?"

She only chuckled with a nod.

"Will you come back home with me? The house and I miss you a lot. It's time for you to sleep back in my arms." I unwrapped my hands from hers and pulled her onto my

lap. I began getting an erection the minute her ass made contact with my dick. "Yeah, he missed you, too."

Amryn dropped her head, trying to hide a blush.

"Trust and believe I missed all of you, too."

I stared deeply into Amryn's eyes as I covered her body with mine.

She gnawed that bottom lip of hers and had me lowering my head to her lips to peck them with mine.

Damn, I missed her being beneath me. I was eager to please her.

My dick was twitching, ready to be buried deep inside of her.

I didn't know why I was prolonging it. She lifted her bottom half, and her flesh touched mine, causing me to hiss.

"Please, Levi. Why does it feel like you are torturing me?" she whined, causing me to smile.

"I'm not, baby. I'm just loving the feeling of your body against mine. Your softness against my hardness. You were made for me. Damn, I'm happy to have you back with me." That was the honest truth. Since we made up, I planned to do everything in my power to make sure we stayed that way.

When we made it back to the house, Amryn gasped when she saw the living room had been transformed, and she loved it.

We shared a meal and laughed about different things about our childhood.

It was a good night. Now, I was going to end it with her screaming my name.

It was long overdue. I figured she had enough of my torture for one night.

It was time I stopped and gave her what she wanted.

I reached between us to take hold of my dick and placed it at her opening.

With her eagerness, he slid right on home where he belonged.

Amryn moaned as I groaned loudly. Damn, she felt good as hell.

This was a feeling I was used to, but every time I got a taste of it, it felt like something new.

I moved slowly in and out of her, trying to savor the feeling of her wrapped around me.

It was almost like she was suffocating me, but damn, I'd die happy as hell.

I spread her legs wider, getting more comfortable in her heat, and sank myself deeper and deeper inside of her body.

She purred loudly, wrapping her legs around my waist. I buried my face in the crook of her neck and gave her long strokes, loving the way she whimpered in my ear.

"Levi, please."

I didn't know what she was begging for, so I picked up my pace. She moaned loudly and moved with me. She knew what I liked. As we moved together, the pressure built. Sweat glistened our bodies as our skin smacked together. Our sounds of

pleasure filled the room, causing my dick to swell even more.

"Damn," I groaned. I wasn't going to last in this position.

I flipped us. She panted and grabbed my chest as soon as she landed fully on top of me. With a wicked smile on her face, she gnawed at that bottom lip of hers, sitting on top of me, looking like a honeycomb goddess. I wanted to eat her alive with her sexy ass.

"You know you look good as hell, right?" I swiped my tongue across my bottom lip.

She beamed. "Thank you. You know I always aim to please you." With that, she circled her hips and moved up and down on me.

I gritted my teeth together as I narrowed my eyes. "Stop playing with me."

Amryn giggled. "Hmm. I don't think so. Remember when you were torturing me? Well, now it's my turn."

And torture me, she did. By the time she was done with me, I was ready to bust. Nah, it couldn't end like this, but I had nothing left to give. Amryn continued to move on top of me, crying out my name.

"Fuck!" I growled as I spilled my seed deep inside of her. She groaned deeply, wiggling her hips, still moving up and down on me before she threw her head back and shouted my name. Her head dropped against my shoulder as she breathed heavily.

"I love you so much." I kissed her forehead and rubbed her sweaty hair.

She panted in my ear and snuggled deeper as if she was trying to get in my skin.

"I love you too," she mumbled sleepily.

I didn't know which one of us was going to get up and hit the lights, but as of now, I was content with where I was. That was with my dick locked deep inside of her as we snuggled together. I got my girl back, and I was happy as hell. Life was good as hell.

## Page 22

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

"Man, I'm so happy to see y'all back together. Levi be doing too damn much for real," River commented.

I glanced over at Levi and pressed my lips together to keep from laughing.

Levi glowered at River while Zyanna shook her head.

We were at All Nite Seafood Palace. It had been a while since I last visited.

Since Zyanna wanted to catch up with Levi and me, we all came here to eat and drink.

The vibe of the place was top-notch. If you wanted a good drink with good seafood, All Nite was the place to be.

It was crowded, just as it always was on a Saturday night.

It was two days after Christmas. I enjoyed my first Christmas with Levi and looked forward to many more holidays with him.

My father stopped by, and we talked things out, and I told him thanks for being a messed-up person.

Without him, I wouldn't have met Levi, the love of my life. That day brought a smile to my face.

Levi and I were in the living room with a platter of cheese, crackers, and deli meat.

We also had a bottle of wine in a bucket, chilling on ice.

We were about to have one of our nights where he would draw out his tattoo designs, and I would color them.

He had the remote in his hand, getting ready to turn on some slow jams while I was setting up my coloring pencils.

A knock came at the door. He glanced back at me, and I stared at him.

"You get it," we spoke simultaneously before laughing loudly.

"We play too much. Go get it while I set up the music," he stated.

I huffed, getting up from the couch. Who in the world could it be messing up our time together? When I peered through the peephole, I gasped as I stared at the person, wondering why he was here.

I unlocked the door and opened it, revealing my father. "Dad?"

He tried smiling, but his lips trembled as he eyed me. The moisture I saw in his eyes broke my heart. "May I come in?" he asked hesitantly.

I moved aside to let him in.

"Baby, who is it?" Levi called out.

"It's my father. I'm going to talk to him in the kitchen," I responded, leading my father through the foyer, and taking a right to enter the kitchen.

He took a seat at the kitchen table while I leaned against the counter, staring at him.



He rubbed his hands together with his head lowered, staring at the kitchen table. He looked as if the world was on his shoulders.

Levi came to greet my father before he came and wrapped his arm around my waist. He kissed my cheek and whispered in my ear, "You got this," before leaving out, causing me to stare after him. How did I get so lucky to have a man like him in my life?

I turned my attention back to my father, nibbling on my bottom lip. "Why are you here, Dad?" I asked since he hadn't yet said why he dropped by.

He lifted his head, and his eyes met mine. The movement of his hands stopped, and he folded them on the table. "I realized how wrong I was for putting you in this situation — "

I shook my head and waved one of my hands to stop him from talking. "No. No. There is no need for any of that. I am happy and in love with Levi, so I should be thanking you for being a messed-up person. Without you, I wouldn't have found the love of my life."

My father opened his mouth and closed it before his shoulders shook, and laughter spilled from his mouth.

"I love you, Amryn. Never forget that."

I smiled brightly, my heart feeling as though it was about to burst with happiness. "I love you too, Daddy."

He got up from the chair, and I met him halfway.

He enveloped me in his arms, and I could admit that I missed the hugs from my

father.

I buried my face deep in his chest, knowing that we were going to be alright.

Joy spread through me and almost had me breaking out into a dance, but I contained myself.

For Christmas, I bought Levi a cologne set, a watch, and new equipment for his tattoo shop.

He bought me too much stuff. I was in awe of the many things he got me, but my favorite was the perfume.

We spent Christmas at home, cooking and watching Christmas movies together.

His parents showed up, and they brought over dessert. It was a great day.

"You always running your damn mouth. Shut up sometimes." Levi snapped at River.

Zyanna laughed. "The truth always hurts, Levi, but we love you anyway." She picked up her drink and took a sip. I wasn't getting into that. I stared around the place, smiling, feeling very happy where I was with my life.

"Don't start with me, Zyanna. You're always jumping to his defense," Levi countered.

Well, he wasn't lying about that. You'd think Zyanna and River had something going on, but let them tell it, they didn't. I didn't even follow them up anymore.

"Well, he is my best friend too, so I think I have that right. Right?" She looked over at River, who nodded.

"Right," he agreed.

I burst out laughing, unable to hold it in any longer.

All eyes seemed to be on me, but I didn't pay them any attention.

What I did was excuse myself and go to the bathroom.

After I finished doing my business, I stepped out and came face to face with Mimi.

She was someone I never thought I'd run into and so soon at that. Her eyes ballooned when she saw me.

"Wow, well, look who it is." She chuckled.

It was best I ignored her, so I did. I wasn't the one to cause confusion unless it was brought to me, so if she thought she was poking for something, she'd better think again.

"Oh, please don't think you are all that," she sneered.

I frowned and turned to her after I finished washing my hands. "What are you even talking about right now, Mimi? What is your problem with me? I have done nothing to you, and you threw our friendship away for what?"

A look of sadness came across her face before her eyes turned cold again. "No, you turned your back on me when I wanted to do things with you. You always had something to do, so I stopped trying."

My mouth dropped before I started laughing. "Okay, Mimi. You can say what you want, but we both know the truth. I have to go."

Before I could walk out, her words stopped me. "Joel is here too. I will make sure I tell him I saw you."

The door pushed open, and Levi stepped into the woman's bathroom, sending Mimi a murderous look. "And when you tell him you saw her, make sure you tell him Levi is looking for him. The fuck wrong with you?"

I stepped in front of him and had to pull him out of the bathroom. We needed to hurry and leave before things turned ugly. I wasn't running, but I knew how Levi was, and I didn't want him to go to jail. That would make me feel like it was my fault, and that was something I didn't want to feel.

"We need to leave," I announced to River and Zyanna when we made it back to the table. "I just saw Mimi in the bathroom, and she said that she was going to let Joel know she saw me. They are here now."

Zyanna and River stood up and peered around. "Where at?"

I slapped my forehead. This wasn't about to end well.

"We need to get Levi out of here," I stated to them.

"Nah. That girl thought she was doing something by saying that. I don't know who the fuck she thinks she is, but she chose the wrong day to want to get riled up," Levi snarled. He peered around, too, when all I wanted to do was keep the peace.

"That's why we need to get you out of here. Now isn't the time or place," I pleaded, but it seemed like it fell on deaf ears.

It was crazy as hell that they were standing around looking for them. Then, what made it worse was that the customers were looking at us. I already knew when Levi

laid eyes on Joel he was going to hit him. That was something he had been talking about for a while now.

"Levi, please. Joel is not worth it." I tried again, hoping that would work.

He stared down at me with his eyes narrowed. "Didn't I tell you before, you were worth it? I don't want to hear anything else about it. It's over and done with. I've made up my mind on what the hell I'm going to do. Nothing will stop me."

I gnawed my bottom lip, hoping like hell Mimi wouldn't be a grimy-ass bitch and tell Joel she saw me.

What the hell had happened to her? She changed from the girl I called my best friend to now an enemy.

That hurt me the most since I hadn't seen that coming.

I thought she would've always had my back, but she was showing her true colors.

I saw Mimi leading the pack as her boyfriend and Joel came strolling toward us. My heart thumped in my chest. We all were about to get sent to jail. All of this could have been avoided if Levi had listened to me. He was too damn hot-headed for his own good.

Levi didn't let them get to the table before he walked up to them.

River and Zyanna followed quickly behind him.

I had to snap out of it and follow behind Levi, River, and Zyanna.

When Levi reached Joel, he didn't say anything to him.

He just drew his fist back and punched Joel with so much force that he knocked him out.

Joel's limped body sank to the floor. I gasped, covering my mouth with my eyes widened.

Zyanna and River's hands went to their mouth as well.

Joel's cousin stepped in front of Levi's face with his eyes wide and lips snarling. His fists were balled at his side.

"You got me fucked up if you think I'm going to let you put your hands on my cousin," he spat.

Before Levi could have said anything, Mimi jumped forward and got in my face. She gave me a murderous look with her nose flaring. Her chest heaved up and down as she pointed her finger at me. I quickly got into a fighting stance just in case she wanted to take it there.

"Look what the hell you are married to! A damn thug?—"

I stepped in her face, not about to let her call my husband out of his name. I had put up with so much of Mimi's shit for the past few months and was sick and tired of it.

"Let's get one thing straight, Mimi. When you are addressing my husband, you better say his name or keep your mouth shut," I hissed.

"Quite frankly, none of this has anything to do with you.

What you need to do is run back and sit in the corner, letting your boyfriend continue telling you what he wants you to do.

Don't you ever in your life try to come at me like that again.

I'll make you regret it without even putting my hands on you," I growled, spitting fire with my eyes narrowed into slits as I glared at her.

She had me so hot that my blood was boiling to the point where I wanted to hit her — I wanted to hit her twice as hard as Levi punched Joel.

With tears in her eyes and her lips trembling, Mimi swirled around and marched away from me.

Her boyfriend turned to me, but before he could open his mouth, Levi drew his fist back and punched him to the ground, too.

River had to push Levi out of the door. If he hadn't, Levi was about to stomp Joel's cousin. With a shake of my head, I rushed out of the restaurant. I hoped like hell we wouldn't get banned from all the drama that had taken place.

I ran us a bath, not saying a damn thing to Levi. I was still pissed the hell off about what had taken place, but Levi wasn't fazed, and neither was Zyanna nor River. Of course, they weren't, but I was. I wasn't the type of person who dealt well with confrontation, and they were ready.

I heard Levi moving around in the bedroom, but I didn't acknowledge him. I was just ready to take a bath and get into bed for the night. Then I heard music playing loudly, causing me to shake my head. This man was on ten tonight, and I was ready to burst his bubble.

I got up from the edge of the tub and went to turn down the music that was playing but paused.

Levi was getting undressed, looking sexy as hell.

His golden-brown skin was covered in tattoos.

I loved his ink so much. He turned to look at me with a wicked smile on his face.

He gestured for me to come to him. I wasted no time going to the love of my life.

When I stepped into his arms, he lowered his lips to mine and kissed me.

"Don't ever think I won't do anything for you.

I'm always going to do what I say I'm going to do.

That ex of yours got what he deserved. You should have hit that girl, but the words you said to her did the job.

You match me so well because you are the calm and peace to my raging storm. I love the hell out of you."

That brought tears to my eyes, but I pushed them away. "I love you too, Levi. I felt like tonight could have gone way better than it did, but I know you had my back like I had yours. I'm just happy we didn't go to jail."

He chuckled. "Nah, nothing serious happened."

I pulled back so I could stare him in the face. "Nothing serious happened? Levi, you punched Joel so hard that you knocked him out."

He threw his head back and laughed. "And, what's your point? That's nothing serious in my eyes."



I shook my head. "You are impossible."

He smirked. "Nah, I'm just a man who is overly protective of his wife. I'll be damned if anyone tries to come after you for any reason. I'd put them in their place. You are mine to love, cherish, and protect. Believe me when I say that girl ain't seen nothing yet."

I groaned. "No, Levi. Leave it alone."

He narrowed his eyes but sighed deeply. "Fine, but only for you."

It was now my turn to sigh just as hard. Levi was a mess, but I loved him beyond words.

"Now, let's go take a bath so I can dig in your guts for a few hours." He dropped a kiss on my lips.

I beamed. "I'll love that very much."

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

I smiled as I gazed at my baby. It was unknown to Amryn that I was looking at her, but it was something I could do without getting tired.

She was mine to look at, and I was going to get my fill.

We had somewhere to be, and I needed her to get dressed.

I was already dressed, and I knew it was going to take her a little minute to get ready.

I cleared my throat, gaining her attention from the coloring book she was coloring in. Her face lit up when she saw me. She closed the book and got up from the bed to greet me.

"Where are you going looking good?" She lifted her chin to receive my lips.

"The same place you are going. You need to get dressed."

She arched an eyebrow. "Huh? Do we have an event to attend?"

I only smiled. "You can say that. I just need you to hurry your ass up. You know it takes you forever to get ready."

Amryn rolled her eyes and scoffed. "I hate when we have to go somewhere so last minute. They should have let us know ahead of time."

I almost laughed out loud, but I didn't. "The more you stand there and talk, the longer it's going to take you to get ready. Stop playing and go."

She glowered at me before she turned away.

Thirty minutes later, Amryn came downstairs, and I was blown away by her glowing presence.

Oh damn, what a damn goddess I was married to.

She was stunning to look at. My mouth watered as I eyed her from her head to her feet.

If she wanted me to say fuck this and go back to bed, that was all she had to say.

Amryn wore a vibrant yellow off-the-shoulder dress that stopped just above her knee with tall high heels on her feet.

She wore her hair in a bun with a bang. Two small strings of her hair were falling on each side of her face.

"How do I look?" she asked, swirling around, giving me the perfect view of her ass.

"I have no words to describe the way you look," I expressed. "Got damn, baby. I don't want to take you out of the house."

Amryn squinted her eyes. "Oh, you are taking me out of this house tonight. Oh, and thank you." She walked away from me, heading to the door.

The only thing I could do was laugh loudly. I didn't know what I was going to do with her. I had no choice but to love her, and I planned to do that for the rest of my life.

When we showed up at my parents' house, everyone was there. We were the ones

who were late.

"Wait, what? I thought you said we were going to an event." Amryn was confused as hell, but in a minute, everything would start making sense to her. I wouldn't give anything away.

"We are. Now come on, we're late." I got out of the car and went around to help her out.

I couldn't help but lower my head and kiss her lips. "Damn, you just... damn."

She cackled. "Please, stop. You are boosting my head up."

"As I should, baby."

We walked in silence toward the house. Before we could ring the doorbell, the door was opened for us. My father greeted us with a smile. Once inside, we spoke to everyone and sat down at the dining table.

Amryn leaned over and whispered, "What is going on?"

I kissed her lips. "You'll know in a minute. Calm down."

Amryn could be impatient as hell if I let her be, but right now wasn't the time for that.

I was glad to have Zyanna and River by my side.

Hell, I wouldn't be able to go through with what I wanted to without them.

Amryn's father was also there, but what he, my father, and my uncle had going on had nothing to do with us anymore.

I wasn't about to let what they had going on come between Amryn and me.

Dinner was being served when the doorbell rang. My father went to answer it and came back. While we ate, conversations flowed around the table. Hell, I was a little too nervous about what was about to take place.

After dinner, the lawyers were brought in. Amryn jumped up with a scowl on her face. "What the hell is this?" she asked.

I grabbed her wrist and sat her back down. "Man, just chill."

She shook her head. "No, I won't chill until you tell me what the hell is going on."

I felt the rage that was flowing through her body and had to get control of this before Amryn started thinking the worst.

The lawyers came and set the contract in front of us. Amryn's eyes ballooned, but she remained quiet. That was a good thing. I didn't need her jumping to conclusions until I said what needed to be said.

I picked up the contract that was on the table and ripped it in two.

Amryn gasped. "Levi!"

I continued tearing it until it was in pieces, covering the table and me, connecting her hands with mine.

"That contract has been voided, baby. As you can see, no contract exists between us anymore.

" I eyed the ring on her finger and lifted her hand for me to kiss it.

"I want to marry you, for real, this time with no strings between us, only my love and your love flowing between us.

I had never been a romantic man until you stepped foot in my life — when you brought your ass into my tattoo shop, looking for a new beginning.

Well, baby, you got that and more. You tattooed your name on my heart without trying.

I love you more than words can express." I rose from the chair and got down on one knee. "Will you marry me, baby?"

Tears ran down her face. "Yes, Levi! I'll marry you!"

Our family cheered us on as I stood up and pulled her into my arms. We kissed — passionately. It was too passionate because many of the people around us cleared their throats.

When we pulled apart, the only thing we could do was laugh and hug each other tightly. I didn't want to ever let Amryn go. She was mine forever.

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 6:37 am*

"The last time I did this, I had Mimi by my side.

" I stared at myself in the mirror, loving the way the dress felt against my flesh.

I was in the same room where I had been for the first wedding.

I made sure I prayed through this room over the past month.

I didn't want any negative energy lingering. It was all brand new.

"Well, you don't have to ever worry about her again. You got me," Zyanna reassured me with a beam. She adjusted my dress in the back, ensuring it was straight.

The dress I wore was longer and fuller than the first one. The color of my dress was champagne gold with small sparkles all over it. I wanted to feel like a princess, and my husband made sure I did. I felt beautiful.

Zyanna and I became close during the months Levi and I were together. I loved the friendship that had blossomed between us. She had introduced me to her friends, and I could see us all getting along well. The minute I felt a bad vibe, I would distance myself. Everything was good as of now.

I still couldn't believe Levi had proposed to me a month ago. Since then, we've been planning for the wedding. He wanted to be involved, too, so I made sure he was.

"Thank you for being a friend."

We shared a hug. "Always. Now let's go get you married to my cousin."

My father was giving me away again, but this time, I was happy to be on his arm. With a smile on my face and tears shining in my eyes, I made my way to Levi. He had a smile on his face as well, and I saw the tears that shone in his eyes.

The ceremony began, and I was in a blissful mood. Levi and I stared into each other's eyes and burst out laughing. We took nothing seriously, which was why we were a match made in heaven.

"You may kiss your bride."

Levi wasted no time, pulling me into his arms and kissing my lips with so much passion that I was ready to make love to him right here, right now.

Several people cleared their throats while Zyanna and River cheered us on.

When we finally pulled away from each other, it was only to catch our breaths.

My arms were wrapped around Levi's neck as we moved against each other on the dance floor, sharing our first real dance. A smile covered his face as he peered at me.

"What?" I innocently asked.

He shook his head. "Nothing. I just can't wait to start our honeymoon. Where do you want to go again?"

I twisted my lips, trying to think of any place in the world I wanted to go. "Hmm, I don't want to go anywhere far. Remember, I have two events coming up."

He scoffed. "Fuck them. We are taking two weeks off. Since you haven't said where you want to go, I'll just take you somewhere."



"Well, do you then, sir."

Levi lowered his head and kissed me. "We did it."

I agreed. "Yes, we did. Even when I was trying to resist your love, it happened anyway."

He chuckled. "Aye, the feeling is mutual, but I'm glad we finally saw what was in front of us, and that was our love for each other."

"Right. Now we have the rest of our lives to do whatever, but while I'm with you, I don't care what we do as long as we're doing it together."

"I hear that, baby. I love you."

"I love you more."

We locked lips again, holding onto each other, not wanting to let go. As our guest cheered us on, we kept kissing, not wanting to be away from each other. This was love. This was my life. I was Amryn Smith.

The End