



# The Cure for the Healer

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**Category:** Fantasy

**Description:** Trust is a fragile thing, especially in a world fueled by division. Liam and Nicole come from different worlds and seem to have nothing in common, yet both are hunted by a merciless regime. When fate draws their lives together, an unexpected bond begins to form—one that will test the limits of loyalty, courage, and love. Amid the rugged peaks and the chaos of a society on the brink of collapse, Liam and Nicole discover that they not only hold the keys to each other's survival but also to their hearts. What starts as an alliance in the fight for freedom transforms into a love powerful enough to defy the hatred that surrounds them.

In a time where cruelty reigns and hope is fleeting, can their forbidden love endure? Will Nicole's gifts and Liam's strength be enough to heal their broken world—or will their love be swallowed by the chaos that threatens to consume everything?

The Cure for the Healer is the first installment in The Healer's Cure series, an epic love story that unfolds during a time of racial conflict and biological warfare.

**Total Pages (Source):** 8

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:00 am*

(Liam)

I always knew this day would come. In so many ways, today is a day that I planned for, anticipated, but most of all, dreaded. Burying my mother today was the hardest thing I've ever had to do. My mom was a beauty, inside and out. She had long, beautiful, red hair and blue eyes. Liam, my father, had dark brown hair, brown eyes and easily cleared six feet. I inherited his name, size, and hair, but my eyes and my smile were all from my mom. She was everything to me.

My earliest memory of my mother was of her on her hands and knees, crying and screaming at my father to stay home with us. It was the first time I remember seeing him hit my mother. She threatened to leave him. He just smirked and continued getting ready for his date. She told him she would take me with her. That's when he turned and rushed to grab her by the throat. He lifted her and slammed her into the floor-length mirror, breaking the glass in their walk-in closet. "Bitch, I will hunt you down and kill you if you so much as think about taking my fucking son anywhere."

Then, he calmly dropped her on the floor and stepped over her. He chose one of his many women over his family that night and would continue to choose them over me for my entire childhood. My mother, on the other hand, chose herself. One might assume that the choice caused a rift between my mother and me, but it didn't. It was my first lesson in strength and self-preservation. I was five.

The next thirteen years of my life, my father hired nannies to care for me while he continued to do whatever it was that he did. They were all women of color. He treated them horribly, but paid them well. Liam verbally abused them and would go out of his way to let them know he thought they were beneath him. He mocked their

cultures and encouraged me to do the same, but even as a young child, it felt wrong. One of the first things my mother taught me was to be respectful and show kindness. “An ounce of kindness goes a long way, Lee,”

she would always say. When I refused to belittle my nannies, he called me weak, stupid, and any other name he could think of. I think my nannies took pity on me and stayed longer than they should have.

There was Delilah. She was Jamaican, kind, and smart. Delilah would take me to the park and pretend that she didn’t see my mother when my mom would sneak to spend time with me. She would sing to me to calm me when we had to leave my mom; she had the voice of an angel. Delilah left me after she finished her degree in child psychology. Then, there was Anna. She was Mexican and fun to be around, but she was afraid of my father. The first time she spotted my mother in the park, she threatened to tell my father. Liam had told Anna he would have his friends come and take her sick abuela back to Mexico. But my mom knew my father well, so she would give Anna extra money and help her get medical care for her grandmother. Anna left me not long after her abuela passed away; I was ten. Then, there was Ms. Cassie, the second most important woman in my life.

Ms. Cassie was, for all practical purposes, my grandmother. My mother’s mother disowned her when she married Liam because my paternal grandfather had financially ruined my maternal grandfather. Liam’s mother disappeared when he was a teenager, so I never met my biological grandmothers. Ms. Cassie was a Black woman, older than my other nannies. She was born and raised in Mississippi but moved to California with her husband to raise their children in a more liberal environment. I guess Liam’s attitude towards Black people was a bitter taste of home for her. Ms. Cassie was different from the others. She didn’t respond the same way to my father’s threats and demeaning attitude. I once asked her how she could stand the names he called her. She said, “Chile, I’ve been called everything by white folks but a child of God. I stay because when I look in your eyes, I see your heart. If I can help

keep your heart kind, then tolerating Mr. Sinclair's nonsense is worth it."

That's when I asked her to walk with me to the park.

At eleven, I was more than capable of walking to the park on my own in our affluent, coastal neighborhood of Palos Verdes Estates in southern California. Ms. Cassie asked me, "Why do you always go to the park? You have this huge mansion with sprawling lawns, a pool, a tennis court, and a basketball court. Your father even let you put in that ridiculous half pipe ramp thing for you to ride your skateboard. What does that park have that you don't have here?"

My answer was simple, "Come with me and find out."

That was the day Ms. Cassie met my mother. Unlike my nannies before her, she fully embraced my mother and wanted to get to know her. She affectionally called my mom Jessie, short for Jessica. It was the start of a beautiful relationship. Ms. Cassie didn't just look after me, she also became a stand-in mother for my mother. My mother cried just as much as Ms. Cassie's own children at her funeral. We buried her twenty years ago right after I turned twenty-one. Ms. Cassie died from flu complications. Something that could have been prevented, but no one listened to her. I was studying abroad at Oxford that semester. I would have fought harder for her if I had been there. It was my mother who encouraged me to turn my frustrations into action by studying infectious diseases. Now, they are both gone. Hopefully, this journey home will help clear my head. My trek back from civilization will take about three days if I don't run into any trouble. Wow, I really am a coward. All that talk about social justice, but all I've done is hide out on my mountain for the past three years.

After I finished my B.S. in business, I worked part-time at my family's finance company. Liam was upset I chose not to pursue my MBA. Instead, I earned an MS in molecular pharmacology and toxicology from the University of Southern California. I

stayed local so I could check in on the firm. Then I earned a PhD in biological sciences in public health from Harvard. After graduation, I was already published and had several job offers, but I did something no one really expected, least of all Liam. I went to work full-time at the firm. What people didn't understand was that I knew what was coming. I could see the trends in the medical field and the shift in power in the social constructs of our country. And so, the first pandemic wave and the uprising against white power were not surprising to me.

Ms. Cassie would say, "Don't fear your dreams. It is the universe's way of preparing you for what's coming."

I started having dreams about the shift in power eight years before it happened. Once Liam passed away of a heart attack, I became owner and CFO of the company. Not only did I branch out and start diversifying, I began investing in my friends' businesses. I also made a few medical breakthroughs and sold the patents. Money was more abundant than ever before. That's when I started anonymously hiring contractors to build small parts of my large compound in the mountains. I figured the area I selected was remote enough that no one would ever come looking. Shit really got real when I went to pitch the cure that I found for a blood disorder that disproportionately affects Black children. Not even two hours after that pitch meeting, they tried to have me executed. I took two bullets to the chest.

I called Christopher Ito, one of my best friends, really a brother, from undergrad. He joined the military and eventually became a SEAL. When he was discharged, he opened a security company. Chris provided me with a security detail, but more importantly, he trained me in weaponry and hand-to-hand combat.

I've done a lot of construction and hunting over the last five years, so I realize how threatening I must look at 6'2"

and 225 pounds of pure muscle. I guess I'm not the nerdy weakling my father always

told me I was. Well, I'll always be a nerd. Okay, okay, I need to get my head ready. I'm about a mile outside of the last checkpoint before I'm able to head into the forest and up the mountain.

The checkpoint is just outside of the small port town of Port Jaron, right on the border of California and Oregon. It's used as a trading post and a port where they separate people of color from whites, but this time it's the whites getting the short end of the stick. People of color board buses and boats to take them somewhere nice while whites are shipped off to some shitty destination if they don't have a trade that is useful around the port. I guess some people become the same monsters they hate when they get tired of having a boot on their necks, literally and figuratively. At least we finally have people from all walks of life in D.C. working together to make America truly a place where all are accepted. Hopefully, their efforts will reach everywhere soon, and these pockets of guerrilla warfare will end.

I purchased a huge piece of land here that leads into the forest. Some of my favorite memories are of the annual camping trips I would take up here with my environmental studies club in high school. It always meant peace, and time away from Liam. I built a luxury resort on the land. When the tables turned, I signed the land and the resort over to one of my other closest friends, Thaddeus Masters. Thaddeus is Black and shorter than me, 5'10", average build with just a little extra around the middle these days. His dark skin and perfect teeth always kept the ladies around. It also helped that he is super cool with a relaxed vibe. Thaddeus is versatile and can blend in with royalty or hang with the fellas on the Shaw. He once took me to meet his family in Windsor Hills and then to hang out on Crenshaw. I stuck out like a sore thumb, but once people got to know me, they saw I was cool. Thad has always had my back. Let's hope my drop-in doesn't cause any problems for either of us.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:00 am*

### A Mother's Love

(Liam)

Okay, here we go. Ducking into an abandoned burnt building, I get to the second floor quickly for a better vantage point. I pull out my binoculars and take out my high-tech breathing gear that I personally designed. Assholes got bold after the first wave of the first pandemic. That may have been an accident, but some of this other shit they've released into the air is not. Whites say it's the Blacks trying to wipe us out, but in my heart, I know it's the whites retaliating.

The resort is visible from here. I can also see the port and most of the hotspot trading stations. Zooming in on the docks with my binoculars, there appears to be a situation brewing. There is a group of Black people, about five to seven people, surrounded by Black guards. They all bear a resemblance; they must be a family. "I don't get it. What's the issue there?"

That's when I see her. There's a woman arguing with a guard. Why is she crying? Did he just snatch her mask off her face? My concern and fear for them spill out audibly. "Oh, no, she hit him! Please don't hurt her! Shit, I don't want to see him kill her."

Her family members are surrounding her and holding their hands up in surrender. Now she's hugging them. It looks like she's saying goodbye. I'm so confused. The circle disperses and I finally see what the commotion was about. She has a son, looks like he's mixed-race. They're both crying and hugging. "Okay, where's her husband? He must be hiding somewhere. Coward. How could you let them face that alone?" I

watch for a few more minutes, but no one shows. I grab my backpack and drape my rifle over my body with it pointing down and head out of the structure.

“Hey Clorox, where are you going?”

I turn and see a guard preparing to approach me. That’s when I reach into my pocket and pull out a pre-wadded roll of ten hundred-dollar bills.

“Hey man, I’m not looking for any trouble. I’m simply passing through.”

“Yeah well, I don’t know when the fuck in time you think you are, but whitey ain’t allowed to stroll through this town bearing arms.”

“Yeah, I get that, and I mean no disrespect. I’m just looking for safe passage from here to the other side of the port. Can I offer you a grand to just look the other way?”

Snatching the wadded money from my hand, he says, “Whatever, Clorox. Take yo’ ass on. I hope you have something for the next guard.”

I continue and can see the front of the resort. There’s a long line of diverse people hoping to find somewhere to lay their heads for the night. One of my requests to Thaddeus before signing over the property was that everyone would be welcome here.

As I approach the entrance to the resort, I see a man standing in the line in front of the mother and her son. “Hey bitch, you think you and your little pale bastard are going to get shelter here? If they have any sense at all, they’ll throw you out on the street where you belong.”

He’s too close to them.



I walk up right behind the woman and her son and calmly, but sternly, say, “They’re with me.”

He looks up, preparing to challenge me, but I have about six inches on him and outweigh him by at least forty pounds. Then, he notices my rifle. His eyes double in size and I ask, “Are we cool here?”

He turns back around.

Now that I’m standing inches away from her, I see that she’s a short, little woman. I’m at least a full foot taller than her. When she turns to look up at me, our eyes meet over our masks, and I swear she looks straight into my soul. Her eyes are filled with fear and anguish, but not defeat. Hmm, she’s a fighter. I like that. She grabs her son even tighter and holds him close. I reach for her arm to guide her to the front counter. Probably afraid that my white skin will bring her extra unwanted attention, she jerks away. I look deep into her eyes. “Please, let me help you. I promise you I can help.”

She gives me a wary look, but nods. I continue to push my way through the crowd.

“Hey Casper, it’s a new day. Did you miss the memo? You’re not running shit around here anymore,”

someone shouts. Many hurl other obscenities my way, but I keep us moving. We pass other white people who stand in line sheepishly with their heads down. I nod in acknowledgement, but they all quickly turn away.

Finally, we reach the front desk. “Excuse me, ma’am. Would you be so kind as to ask Mr. Thaddeus Masters if he would come to the front desk?”

Rolling her eyes, she looks in my direction, but appears to be looking through me. “As the gentleman you pushed by told you, you are not running anything. You need

to wait in line like everyone else.”

“Actually, this one we’ll make an exception for.”

The voice of another woman sounds behind her. A beautiful Black woman appears wearing an expensive designer, coral colored dress, and heels. She has dark, flawless skin and shoulder length natural hair. I recognize her as Thaddeus’ wife. “Well, look what the cat dragged in. I was beginning to think you were dead. It’s been what, like three years?”

I nod. “Yes, sorry about that. How are you, Alicia? Thad around?”

“Yeah, he’s around, somewhere. How about I get you settled into your room?”

She grabs the sister key to mine for the dual lock system on my room. One of my conditions for giving Thad the resort was that I get to keep a room that no one else enters without me, but of course I kept a copy of their sister key. She begins to lead the way and then notices that I have guests. “So, I see you have company.”

Holding out her hand, she says, “Hi, I’m Alicia.” My guest shakes Alicia’s hand but says nothing.

“I’m sorry. Please forgive her. She’s had a rough day,”

I respond.

“No worries. We all have those. Here we are. You ready? On three. One, two…”

We turn our keys simultaneously. “So, how long are you planning to be with us?”

“Not long. Thanks for everything, Alicia. Will you please ask Thad to call me before

he stops by the room?”

Whispering, “She’s skittish, I get it. Yeah, sure thing.”

She walks away.

The room I kept for myself was once the presidential suite, so there’s plenty of room for three people to spread out. There are two bedrooms, but I had to turn one into a makeshift infirmary, lab, and armory in case I ever run into trouble while passing through. I remove my mask and turn to my guests. I hold out my hand, but don’t advance toward them. “You’re safe now. Hi, I’m Liam, Liam Sinclair.”

They remove their masks and I try not to react. I know it’s been a long time since I’ve been in the company of a woman, but goddamn she’s beautiful. Caramel skin, big brown, doe eyes, high cheekbones, her hair is pulled back in a ponytail, but it’s clear that once released, it flows down her back. I can’t see her body yet because she’s layered her clothes like many do to lighten the load they carry. Even though it’s early-spring, it’s cool out. Shit, they’re both wearing sneakers. That’s not going to cut it on our trek up the mountain.

She slowly reaches for my hand and shakes it. “Hi, I’m Nicole Simmons and this is my son, Zion. I apologize for being so skeptical, but they tried to take my son from me.”

She breaks out into tears and pulls her son close to her side. “I’ll be damned if anyone is going to take my son away from me! I carried him, birthed him, nursed him, and...”

“Shhh. It’s ok now.”

I tell her, but I dare not touch her. Zion is just as traumatized; I can see it all over his

little face. I can feel their pain and, without thinking, I blurt out, “No one is going to take your son! I promise.”

Her eyes dart up to me as she regains her composure. “Thank you, Mr. Sinclair, but I don’t think you’re in a position to make that call. I appreciate you helping us out, but I can’t pay you anything. And why are you helping us anyway?”

I’m not really a fan of how she called me Mr. Sinclair. “Please call me Liam, or Lee. I saw what happened with your family on the dock. It was bullshit, and I didn’t like it. So, let’s just say that I have a soft spot for mothers and their sons.”

“You didn’t exactly answer my question, Mist... Liam. Why help? You don’t know us, and I can’t pay you back right now.”

“I don’t want anything from you. I’m helping you because I can. My mother taught me that if you can help, you should help. Why don’t the two of you get comfortable, maybe take a bath. In this day and age, you never know the next time you may have access to hot water. Come on, let me show you around the suite. That is, if I have answered your question to your satisfaction.”

I take off my jacket and throw it on the sofa.

They follow and take off their jackets. Underneath, she’s wearing a hoodie and jeans. She removes her hoodie to reveal a fitted, v-neck, long sleeve t-shirt. Damn! Her ass and hips are pure perfection. Her waist curves in, creating that classic hourglass silhouette. It accentuates her round ass. Those hips are baby-making hips. Thad taught me that one. She has lots of curves. I’ve always liked a voluptuous woman. She turns around after hanging their jackets on the back of the chair on the other side of the room. Well, damn! Those must be double Ds. Hmm, I bet they would bounce wildly while I bounce her up and down on my cock. Shit, her expression just changed. She must have noticed me looking at her breasts. Damn, man, pull yourself

together! Her voice pulls me out of my head.

Turning Zion away from me, she says, “So, should we take the tour on our own?”

I blink and wipe the stupid smirk off my face. “No, right this way,”

I say to Nicole, gesturing with my hand. Walking next to Zion I tell him, “What a handsome young man you are.”

Zion has pale skin, maybe just a shade darker than mine, a head full of dark brown loose curls, and freckles. He has his mother’s eyes.

With a healthy sense of stranger danger, he shyly says, “Thank you.”

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:00 am*

### We'll Get Out of Your Hair

(Nicole)

A deep, stern voice sounded behind me. I turn around to see... Oh sweet Jesus! Who is this crazy ass white man? He's either going to get us killed or kill us. He grabs my arm and pulls me out of line, and I think to myself, I know the fuck he did not just grab my arm! He's a big guy, but I'm not going out without a fight. It is my God-given right to protect my child and I will, by any means necessary.

Then, he whispers that he can help me as he leads me past the other people waiting, straight to the front desk. All the while, I'm thinking he must be on drugs. He thinks he can help me? God, please don't let us die today. This lady is looking at him like the nutcase he is. Seriously, look lady, I really don't know him. Please don't call the guards over here. I can't take another run in with them today.

Just then, a well-dressed, beautiful Black woman appears who looks like she knows him. Oh, thank you, Lord! I can't believe we made it past the mob and the front desk. Who is this white man? He finally takes off his mask and introduces himself.

I burst out in tears at the thought of how close I came to losing my child earlier. This day just keeps getting better and better. There was a time in my life I would have never let anyone see me cry. I lost it twice today in front of complete strangers. Then, he promises me that no one will take Zion away from me. Now might be a good time to tell him I won't be staying with him long enough for him to fulfill his promise. After taking off our jackets, I turn back to face him.

Well, hello, Mr. Liam Sinclair! God forgive me, I know this isn't the right time, but you know I've always had a thing for light-bright Black boys and white boys. And this white boy is very easy on the eyes! I can't remember the last time I saw a white man this clean. Oh, hold up, did he just check me out?

"Right this way," he says.

"Lead the way."

"This is one of the bedrooms. I had to fix it up a bit, make it more practical. I'll use this bathroom and sleep out front on the sofa. That way, I can guard the door. This is the kitchen area, but we won't be here long enough to use it."

We walk across the dining room and through the large living room and enter the master bedroom where he says Zion and I will stay tonight. "Please, make yourselves at home. I'm going to go look for my buddy and I'll have dinner brought up."

"Ok, thank you again, Liam. I promise we won't be any trouble and we'll be out of your hair in the morning."

"Out of my hair? What exactly is that supposed to mean?"

"Uh, it's a fairly known expression,"

I say sarcastically. Zion tugs my arm for me to follow him into the room.

"I know what the expression means. What I'm confused about is where exactly do you think you're going? How far do you think the two of you are going to get?"

Pulling Zion farther behind me and slightly closing the bedroom door between Liam and me, I respond with, "Just because you're helping us get out of the cold for

tonight, doesn't mean I'm following you anywhere."

His gaze intensifies, not with anger, but with concern. He lowers his voice, seemingly being sensitive about Zion overhearing his words. "Look, I know we don't know each other, and I have to earn your trust, but you need to believe me when I tell you that I will never touch you or your son in a manner that is not respectful. I have witnessed women being raped in these streets and I wouldn't be able to live with myself, not knowing if the two of you are safe or not, dead or alive. I have somewhere safe where you both can relax and not look over your shoulders."

"I'm sorry, Liam. I know you mean well, but you expect what from me? I just lost my family today, and I have every intention of finding them as soon as I can."

His expression turns very dark, sad really. What's that look? I wonder if I'm being too aggressive in my protest, so I ask him, "Liam, are you ok?"

"Yeah, I'm sorry. Look, I know you want to find your family, but I can help you do that in a safe way. Just think about it. I'm going out. Don't open the door for anyone."

I close and lock the bedroom door and hear the suite door close. I turn to Zion, looking at him. I scoop him up and toss him on to the king-sized bed. He giggles uncontrollably. Yes, I want to hug him and be serious, but I haven't seen my seven-year-old smile in days. This is hard on me, and I'm an adult. After several minutes of joking, jumping on the bed, and giggling, I grab him into the tightest embrace he's ever had. My voice breaks a little as I try to speak. "Zion, you know I love you, right?"

"Yes, Mommy. And Mommy, you know you're still my favorite person, right?"

"Yes, baby, I know, and you're mine. Listen, I know things are really scary right



now, but I want you to know that you're not scared by yourself; I'm scared too. The thing that scares me the most is losing you. I know it hurt today when we lost Tee-tee and your cousins. Auntie Renee's not just my sister, she's my best friend, after you. I miss all of them so much."

"I know Mommy."

He pauses and then continues, "Mommy, who is the man that's helping us? Can he really help us find Tee-tee? He's white like me. I like him."

"His name is Mr. Sinclair. I don't know if he can help us find Tee-tee. And for the millionth time, you're not white!"

I tickle him and we giggle. "Why do you like him?"

"He doesn't let people push him around. And Mom, if I'm not white, they would have let us go with Tee-tee."

Wow, this kid always knows how to shut me up. "First of all, you know I hate it when you call me mom, makes me feel like my baby is growing up too fast. Come on, I think it's time for a bath and maybe when Mr. Sinclair comes back, we can ask him if we can have ice cream for dessert. What do you think about that?"

He squeals, "YES!"

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:00 am*

Team Liam

(Liam)

It only takes me a few minutes to find Thaddeus. He greets me with a hug. “Hey Lee, buddy! Sorry to hear about your mom, man.”

Contrary to popular belief, Thad and I keep in touch. There’s a whole underground communications system that most people don’t know about. That’s because I invented it with my friends during our undergraduate years when I created special projects for my friends and their rich daddies. You know, the kind of projects that always skimmed off a couple of hundred grand for me and my buddies. None of our fathers needed any more money.

“Thanks, man. Listen, I sort of met someone today. She’s upstairs in my suite.”

“There you go, man! Leave it to your white ass to be able to still pull pussy even with a target on your back.”

We both laugh.

“Look, it’s not even like that. I mean, don’t get me wrong, she is beautiful, but right now I just want her to trust me enough to let me help her and her son.”

“Oh, shit! She has a kid?”

“Yeah. The guards separated them from their family because he’s biracial.”

“Wait, I heard about that. How did you get involved?”

“I saw the whole thing from the burnt out building up the street. When I got here, she was waiting downstairs trying to get in.”

“Look Lee, no offense, man, but ain’t no Black woman getting ready to follow you into the forest. She’s probably thinking you’re going to kill her.”

“I know, but what other choice does she have? She can’t protect herself and her kid out there.”

The thought of her being violated angers me to my core. “Thad, if she refuses to go with me, can you give her a job?”

“You know I’d do anything to help you out. You’re my brother and I wouldn’t have this amazing spot without you.”

I cut him off, “But?”

“But I can’t take the heat the kid would bring. Your best bet is to turn up the charm tonight and convince her to go with you. Hey... it’s the mother-son connection, huh?”

I look away and nod in acknowledgment. “Yeah, it is. Listen, I’m going to need food for three for the next three days, four if you can spare it.”

“Spare it? Man, I got you! Plus, you’re talking to the owner of the best joint in the land! And you know this!”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah. Will you please send up dinner for us? I need to get back up there before she starts freaking out.”

Thad grabs me around the shoulders and smiles ever so cool. “I got you.”

I leave Thad and head back to the room. When I enter, I hear them talking. I shouldn’t listen in on their private conversation, but I need to know where her head is at.

“Mommy, who is the man that’s helping us? Can he really help us find Tee-tee? He’s white like me. I like him.”

“His name is Mr. Sinclair. I don’t know if he can help find Tee-tee. And for the millionth time, you’re not white!”

I hear laughter. “Why do you like him?”

“He doesn’t let people push him around. And Mom, if I wasn’t white, they would have let us go with Tee-tee.”

His struggle with his identity breaks my heart a little. He’s a little kid. He shouldn’t need to worry about these things.

“First of all, you know I hate it when you call me mom, makes me feel like my baby is growing up too fast. Come on, I think it’s time for a bath and maybe when Mr. Sinclair comes back, we can ask him if we can have ice cream for dessert. What do you think about that?”

I pull out my phone and text Thaddeus.

Me: Will you please send up ice cream for dessert?

Thad: Sure, what flavor?

Me: Don't know and I can't ask. I was eavesdropping. Vanilla? Strawberry? Chocolate? Cookies and Cream?

Thad: I'll mix it up. You need all the help you can get!

The food arrives just before they come out of the bedroom. She almost looks startled to see me back. Zion stays behind his mother. Knowing that he's Team Liam, I decide to take a chance. "Hey buddy. I'm Liam."

He peeks around Nicole. "My mom says I have to call you Mr. Sinclair."

"Well, I'm okay with you calling me Lee; it's what my friends call me. That is, if it's okay with your mom."

She looks at me, then at him, and nods. Score one for Liam! "Let's see what's for dinner. I have it on good authority that we're having ice cream for dessert."

He smiles big and heads over to the table.

Thad, my man! He sent up steak for me, jambalaya for her, and pizza for Zion. Though steak is my favorite, I look at Nicole and apologize. "I'm sorry. I just asked him to send up food. I didn't ask you about allergies or preferences. Which plate do you prefer?"

"I love jambalaya! It's one of my favorite meals."

And for the first time, she smiles. That smile sucked all the air out of my lungs, and I swear she glowed. Then again, it was probably just the lack of oxygen to my brain.

We sit down to eat at the long table. I sit at the head and she and Zion each skip a seat away from me to sit across from each other. Time to see what I can find out about

her. “So, Nicole, tell me about yourself.”

“Why?”

She snaps at me without looking up from her plate.

“Just trying to get to know you.”

“Why?”

This time she looks up at me with one raised eyebrow.

This woman is going to be tough to crack. “Because that’s how you start a friendship.”

“I want to be your friend.”

Zion chimes in. “Can I ask you a question?”

“Zi,”

Nicole says firmly as if reminding him of his manners.

He looks at her and says, “May.”

Then he turns back to me. “May I ask you a question?”

I smile, “Absolutely buddy, ask me anything.”

Nicole chuckles and says, “Good luck with that.”

Zion continues, “Where did you live before you came here?”

“Rancho Palos Verdes near Los Angeles.”

I smile, remembering the good times and the parties I threw when my father went out of town.

“We’re from Los Angeles too!”

He beams, acknowledging that we have something in common.

“How old are you, Zion?”

“Seven. How old are you?”

“Forty-one.”

“You’re older than Mommy. She’s thirty-eight.”

“ZION!”

Her tone scolds him for the over-share.

“Sorry Mommy.”

Laughing hysterically, I smile at her and say to Zion, “That can’t be true. Your mom doesn’t look a day over twenty-five.”

Blushing, she says, “Well, you know, Black don’t crack, but thanks.”

“So, Zion, what else can you tell me about your mom?”

“I can tell you a lot about my mom, but if I do, I’ll probably get in trouble.”

He curiously looks over at his mother. “Hey Mommy, what are you going to take away now if I get in trouble? I don’t have any of my games or devices.”

“You like video games?”

I ask. “What’s your favorite thing to play?”

“Roblox, Minecraft, Fortnite. I love gaming.”

“Sweet! Maybe we can play for a little while after dinner, but we should all go to bed early since we need to leave early in the morning.”

I look over at Nicole and see the disagreement in her face. I’m sorry, Ms. Nicole Simmons, you’re coming with me whether you like it or not.

“Where are we going? Is it far? How are we getting there? And can you really help us find my Tee-tee?”

“And there it is. Zion, looks like your pizza is finished. Are you ready for dessert? Let’s see what kind of ice cream we have.”

His mother tries to redirect the conversation.

I jump up to grab the ice cream out of the freezer before she can stand. “I’m told there’s cookies and cream, vanilla, and chocolate. Who wants what?”

Zion screeches, “Cookies and cream is my favorite.”

Nicole follows with, “I love my vanilla!”



I audibly grunt, “And chocolate has always been my favorite.”

My eyes lock with Nicole’s and we both laugh at our flavor selections, not missing the innuendo. “It’s been a while since I’ve had ice cream. It was always my favorite treat growing up. My mother took me out for ice cream when I lost my first tooth.”

Sadness fills my chest. I can’t let her see my pain, not yet.

We finish up the ice cream and I invite Zion into the living room to check out Roblox. Nicole follows closely behind us. With the flip of a switch the massive screen descends from the ceiling. Zion squeals with excitement.

“Impressive,”

Nicole says from behind me.

With Zion already comfortably on the sofa and Nicole lounging in the comfy chair several feet behind him, I circle around the sofa instead of cutting across. I slow down just enough to whisper to Nicole, “We need to talk.”

I don’t stop long enough to give her a chance to respond. Zion and I both sign-in to our accounts on the split screen and play for barely an hour before I notice his avatar stop moving on the screen.

“He’s out,”

I say softly over my shoulder to Nicole. She stands and wipes her face. She’s been crying. My eyes well up with tears at the memory of my own mother silently crying in the corner while I played without a care in the world. She walks over to pick up her son. “No, Nicole, let me.”

I pick him up and we both walk him to the bedroom and I place him on the bed. Walking back toward the bedroom door, I stop in front of her where she's leaning up against the wall with her arms crossed. "Do you want to talk now, or do you need a few minutes?"

"Do you mind if I take a shower first?"

"Not at all. I'll go take a shower too and we'll meet in the living room afterwards. Okay?"

"Yes. And Liam, thank you."

I nod and leave the room. She closes and locks the door behind me. Hopefully, I can earn her trust, make her feel safe. I walk across the huge suite to the bedroom on the other side. It's been a long day even though it's barely 7 p.m. I take off my clothes and step into the shower where for the first time, I allow myself to feel the weight of the day. The warm water falls all over my whole body from the rain showerhead and tears fall down my face. Even though the funeral had been closed casket, her husband allowed me a few minutes with my mom where I was allowed to see her. She lay there in a navy-blue dress with the sapphire earrings I gave her on her sixtieth birthday. She told me then that she hoped I never wanted them back because she was taking them to the grave with her. With all my knowledge of the human body and pharmaceuticals, there still wasn't anything I could do to prevent her death. My mother was a great mother. She loved and cared for me even when her own life was threatened. I think that's the kind of mother Nicole is.

My thoughts shift to Nicole. Nicole, she's so beautiful. Just the thought of her makes my cock stiffen a little. I've grown use to ignoring myself, so I didn't give the urge to stroke my myself a second thought. Besides, it would be disrespectful, and I need to go talk to her. The last thing I need, she needs, is for me to have a flashback of me fucking her in my mind just moments before.

I never gave my mother a grandchild or a daughter-in-law. Yeah, I had my share of women, but I never took the time to get to know any of them. I was always too busy trying to overthrow my father. I came close once when I was twenty-eight, but after six months, she decided I was too wrapped up in trying to save the world. After my father died, I was obsessed with stockpiling money to synthesize drugs for the pandemics that I knew were coming. Until that point, I would still have an occasional lady in my bed, but once I had the dream about the change in society, I just didn't have time for sex. I mean, don't it get wrong, I still have stroke sessions with myself, but over the last three years, it's been less often. Shit, I've become a weird, loner, mountain dweller.

I need to get out of this shower. Nicole is probably waiting for me.

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:00 am*

### A Decent Man

(Nicole)

I close and lock the door behind Liam and head to the bathroom. Great, there's a rainfall shower. I've always wanted to try one, but never have. It's too hard to keep my flat-ironed hair straight. Well, I guess I'm taking a bath. I turn on the water and take off my clothes. Looking in the mirror I sigh, "Crap, I look like someone beat me with a roll of quarters. I've cried too much today."

I've lost a lot too, my support, my dignity, my faith in my people. My mother and father made sure we grew up to be proud of our Blackness, but here I am, ashamed of how my people constantly reject my child. He's a part of me, and that should be enough.

I know what Liam wants to talk about. He wants me to follow him off somewhere. My head is telling me to run away from him. My heart is telling me he's a decent man. My gut? Well, my gut is telling me that he's my best option for keeping my son safe. I turn off the water and step into the tub.

Liam is tall and built like a god—dark brown hair, deep blue eyes. He's gorgeous, more than gorgeous. He's strong, prepared, and calculating. Yet, it's clear that he's kind and gentle. Five years ago, I would have met him, fallen in love with him, and followed him anywhere. Things are different now. It hurts my heart that my people haven't found a better way. The oppressed oppressing the oppressor, never works. I learned that from one of my favorite philosophers. It's too dangerous to be with Liam. "Oh, Renee. I wish you were here to tell me what to do."

I really need my big sister.

I spend a few more minutes in the bath before drying off and heading into the bedroom to throw on some pajamas. Unfortunately, I only had room for something small, so I packed a set with shorts and a cami. I cannot go in there wearing this. Please let there be a robe in this closet. I walk over to the closet and open it. “Yes!”

Okay, time to face the music.

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:00 am*

All Roads Lead to You

(Liam)

I enter the living room before her, wearing only my boxer briefs because I forgot my robe is in the other bedroom. My other options were the wet, freshly washed clothes I just took off, or my suit I wore to the funeral. I hope she isn't offended. As soon as she comes out, I'll run in and grab my robe. That's when I hear the door open. I look up and there she is standing in my robe. This is bad. I grab the closest decorative pillow on the sofa and place it in my lap to hide my growing erection. There is nothing sexier than a woman, naked, under her man's clothes.

Nervously, I quickly apologize for my nakedness. "Hey, sorry Nicole. I forgot my robe was in your room."

"Oh, I'm sorry, Liam. Here..."

She opens the robe to take it off and I see all her bare skin in those skimpy shorts and clingy tank top.

"No, please, you keep it. Just please forgive my bare chest."

Though it sounded gentlemanly when I said it, it was really to hide just how un-gentlemanly I was being.

She is just as eager as I am to change the subject. "May I ask you something?"

I look at her with sincerity, “Absolutely.”

“How did you come to have a suite in this amazing resort?”

“Can you keep a secret?”

She nods. “Well, I used to own this resort. When the racial clash went downhill for people who look like me, I signed it over to my best friend and asked if I could keep this room.”

“Wow. May I ask you another question?”

I nod. “Not that I’m staring, but what happened to your chest?”

“I was shot.”

Changing the subject quickly, I ask, “What size shoes do you and Zion wear?”

She takes a deep breath, and I brace myself for the fight that doesn’t come. “Seven for me and kids size two for Zion.”

I guess she notices shock covering my face because she asks, “What?”

Smiling and shaking my head with my hands up, “Nothing.”

“You’re surprised I’m not fighting you?”

“Well, yes. Give me just a second.”

I send Thad a text asking him if he can find boots for both of them. Then, I continue, “What made you change your mind?”

“Water helps me think; it always has. While I was in the bath, I tried to come up with a feasible plan to find my family while keeping Zion safe.”

I already know the answer but need to hear her say it. “And?”

She sighs, “And all roads lead to you. Please tell me you’re not one of those men who likes to gloat.”

I smile, “Absolutely not. I just want you both to be safe.”

“I’m almost afraid to ask, but where are you taking us?”

“I have a home in the mountains. It’s a three-day hike. Before I came back to civilization yesterday, I was up there for three years without seeing another person.”

“Okay, the mother in me is officially freaked out. You want me to take my seven-year-old child on a three-day hike to a remote location where there are no doctors?”

“Is Zion sick?”

“No, but...”

“Are you sick?”

“Well, no, but...”

“Then what’s the problem? Didn’t you see that room in there? There are a lot of medical procedures I can perform.”

“Are you a doctor?”



I stare at her hoping this conversation won't lead her to changing her mind. "No, I'm not an MD, but I have a PhD in biological sciences in public health."

"Stop talking!"

I look at her as if she slapped me in the face. "I'm sorry, but you're giving me an anxiety attack. I only recently started getting them."

As I spring up, the pillow falls out of my lap. Thank goodness my erection went away. Gently, I take her hand and help her sit on the sofa. I sit down in front of her on the coffee table. "I'm guessing you probably aren't taking any medication for these attacks, so just sit here, close your eyes, and take a few, deep cleansing breaths."

She does and I watch her breasts rise and fall with each breath. One day, I'm going to hold her in my arms and feel them against me. After a few deep breaths, she slowly opens her eyes. "Better?"

"Yes. Sorry about that. This is hard for me, I used to be so strong and self-assured."

"You still are! What you did today for Zion was one of the bravest things I have ever seen. You, are very strong."

I look down and realize I'm still holding her hand. She hadn't noticed either. She begins to pull away, so I gently let go. "We should get some sleep. It's best if we leave under the cover of night. I'm thinking 4 a.m. which means we need to be up by 3:30."

"You sure you don't need to ask me more questions before you take me off into the woods?"

She gives me a little smile.

“If I ask you everything I want to know about you now, what will we talk about during our hike for the next three days?”

I smirk and stand. She stands too, and I walk her to her room. “Good night, Nicole. It has been my absolute pleasure meeting you today.”

I turn and go back to the sofa where I’ll be sleeping tonight.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:00 am*

### The Real Adventure

(Nicole)

The night must have flown by because I'm awakened by a soft knock at the door, and then I hear Liam's soothing voice, "Nicole? Nicole, time to wake up."

I don't respond right away because I think I'm still dreaming. Then, I hear, "Zion, buddy, are you awake? Wake your mom up please."

I call out to let him know I heard him, "Okay, I'm up."

"Zion, time to wake up, kiddo. We have to go."

"I don't want to leave this bed, Mommy, please. Please, can we stay here?"

"I wish, baby. Do you remember when I told you that the next few weeks were going to be full of exciting adventures?"

"Yes, but I don't like this adventure. It isn't any fun. It's too sad and scary."

My heart breaks to hear him say those words. "Yes, it has been, but now the real adventure begins. We're going with Liam, but we must leave before the sun comes up so no one will see him or you."

Zion sits straight up, "We're going with Liam?"

“Yes, we are, but we need to hurry up and get out of here.”

We both get out of bed and are ready in fifteen minutes. We head into the living room to find Liam at the dining room table having breakfast.

“Either of you hungry? Thad sent up some eggs, bacon, potatoes, toast, and juice if you’re hungry. But you only have a few minutes to eat. And guys, you can’t wear those sneakers. The boots over there are for you.”

“Okay, you heard him Zion. Put some food in your stomach.”

“Nicole, you too. I’m finished. Let me repack for you. I have a backpack for you; that suitcase won’t cut it either.”

I pout a little because that’s my favorite piece of luggage. It’s a hard-shell Tinker Bell suitcase. I remember when I got it, but I won’t complain. I simply say, “Ok, thank you, Liam.”

I sit down with Zion to eat.

Liam finishes packing my backpack and calls me over. “I need to ask you something.”

“Yes?”

“I saw your tampons. Are you bleeding right now? I ask because there’s a certain way you’ll need to dispose of them on our hike.”

“Oh, no. Not yet, I just always have to be prepared. Crap, Liam, will I be able to get supplies?”

“Don’t worry, I got you covered. I’m sure I won’t have everything you need or are accustomed to, but we’ll figure it all out. I promise. Once we cross into what I call the safe zone, I don’t want you to worry anymore.”

“When do you think we’ll get to that point?”

“This afternoon.”

“Hey guys, are we leaving or not?”

Zion has put on his boots and jacket and made it to the door.

Liam gives a chuckle and says, “Yes, sir! Let’s do this.”

He walks over to Zion. “How do your boots feel? Comfortable?”

Zion smiles and nods. “Nicole, what about you? Are your feet good?”

I stand up after putting them on. “Yeah, they feel good.”

I turn to Zion, “Zi, don’t forget your mask. It’s over...”

Liam cuts me off.

“About the masks, those are a no go. Those don’t provide enough protection.”

He hands us two masks that he grabbed from the lab. They match his. “These protect against most airborne agents. They also have a red-light indicator that will flash when anything bad is detected. I designed them myself.”

Handing them to us, he says, “Okay, now we’re ready.”

Taking a last look at the beautiful suite and my favorite piece of luggage, I wonder what this next chapter of my life will look like. Will I find my family? Will this new place be a place where Zion can thrive and be accepted? Will he be happy? Is Liam who he says he is? Will he make a good role model for Zion? I sigh and turn to Zion and Liam. "I'm ready."

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 8:00 am*

### I Will Drop You

(Liam)

After grabbing the boots Thad left outside the suite door, I shot him a quick thank you text to let him know we would be leaving soon. Once we all had breakfast and got dressed, it was time to go. As soon as I open the door to head out, I spot Thad leaning on the wall directly in front of the door.

“Wow, okay, I see how it is. You stroll in here off the street, eat my food, use my connections and what, slither out in the middle of the night without saying goodbye? Not cool man.”

I pause, not sure if he’s actually upset. “I’m sorry, Thad. I just know that it’s a crazy hour and you’re a married man now, with a kid. I just didn’t want to disturb you.”

“I’m not mad. I’m hurt. And you are never a disturbance to me. I never sleep when you’re here. I know you’ve gotten used to being alone out there in the wilderness, but I worry about you.”

Changing the subject quickly, “You must be Nicole.”

He reaches out and shakes her hand. “Nice to meet you.” She nods. “Listen, I know you’re probably wondering if you can trust this guy. Let me tell you, you can. We’ve been friends since grade school, best friends. He’s more like the brother I never had.” Turning his attention back to me, “I’m sorry again, man, about your mom. Wish I could have been there.”

I interrupt him because I don't need Nicole worrying about me or feeling sorry for me. "No, it's all good. I know you would have been there if you could. I love you, brother, but we really need to get going. Since you're here, help me lock up?"

We lock up and head out of the building.

As we walk, Thad continues questioning me, "You have everything?"

"Yes, Thad."

"Water?"

"Check."

"The food I packed up?"

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Please continue following [lokepub](#); the other chapters will be updated soon.