
Chapter 1

Remisha Hughes sipped her drink quietly, watching her best friend and sister from another mister, Letecia read her latest work.

“You sure about this? I mean this is a big can of worms to open, Remy. You publish this story and he will come climbing out of the woodwork, he’s going to think you’re talking about him even if you’re not,” Letecia warned with a sigh, pushing Remisha’s laptop back across the table to her.

“That’s just it, Lettie. It’s not about him. Everything I just described is everything I wanted and nothing he was, so there is no way he should think it’s him,” Remisha reasoned. “I need to do this, the magazine wanted a happy ending from me for once and I was actually able to write one. I honestly believe this story is me closing that chapter in my life,” Remisha explained, picking up a chowder fry from the plate the waiter just set down in the center of their table.

Remisha and Letecia had been best friends since middle school. They were so inseparable they both left Alabama and went to college together at Xavier University in Louisiana and both relocated to Los Angeles after graduation.

Remisha graduated with a degree in creative writing and moved quickly up the ladder at the small publishing company she worked for and enjoyed her career as an editor. She also worked freelance as a writer.

Letecia moved to San Diego six years ago to further pursue her love of teaching and was currently the principal at a high school that was once known to have the lowest test scores and rating in the district. Since she'd taken over as principal the school's test scores were now in the top five and she was proud that all of the graduating class was accepted to either trade schools or colleges all around the world.

She was okay with the move because she was proud and happy for her best friend and, at the time, she had Clinton. They had been seeing each other for over a year and things were going well. Little did Remisha know her perfect relationship was about to implode and she would spend the next five and a half years being strung along by the biggest, selfish, douchebag God ever blew breath into.

Since the friends were so far apart now, they had a standing dinner date with each other two Fridays a month. They alternated who did the driving to the other, it was Letecia's turn to drive up and she begged to go to Cajun Cavern so here they were sitting out on the patio sipping amaretto sours and catching up on the last two weeks.

"I get it but I still think it's like poking a hornet's nest. Clinton Maxwell and his BS almost cost you everything the last time you dealt with him. You know the boy ain't wrapped too tight and he's gonna think it's him, are you sure you want to publish this story?" Letecia asked again, taking a fry of her own.

Remisha sighed and signaled their server for another drink for both of them. "Honestly, Lettie I'm tired of spinning in the mud I should have let dry years ago. I'm ready to let all that shit go once and for all, its time."

Clinton sipped his coffee and scrolled through the Essence website looking for Remisha's latest article/short story.

Of all his former loves, she was the only one he kept tabs on, because she was the one who got away. He still loved her as much as he always did and knew deep down inside she still loved him, too.

He always knew what she was up to because of her blogs and social media. After all he put her through he was surprised she never blocked him, but he also took it as a sign that there was hope for them.

Her social media was trending like crazy, her name and #Chocolate was popping up everywhere and had women from all over the world talking about needing some chocolate in their lives. When he heard the assistants talking about craving chocolate at lunch, followed by female laughter he knew he needed to see what the hype was all about.

His heart rate sped up when her picture came into view as he scrolled, she had changed her promo picture and her hair, he liked them both. The new picture looked like it was taken in a city park, blurred buildings were in the background, trees and grass in the forefront.

Her smile lit up her beautiful face, her hazelnut hued skin shined in the sun, her high cheekbones shimmered, he knew it was some sort of makeup but couldn't remember what it was called. Remisha didn't wear makeup when they were together so he wondered when she started wearing it and why, in his opinion she didn't need it; maybe he would mention that to her.

Her brown eyes were alight with laughter and bright, her naturally long eyelashes, he once accused her of being fake, framed them, her dark brown hair tumbled over her shoulders in curls. Her hair, like her lashes, was all hers and she alternated

between curls like the ones in the picture or rocking her natural curls.

For once she decided to use a $\frac{3}{4}$ body picture so he was treated to a glimpse of her curves. Damn he missed her. Now that he thought about it, he didn't know how he felt about that though, he liked to think those were his curves and if he was checking them out so was every other man who had clicked on her article.

He had always thought she was one of the sexiest women he ever met and it looked like she was finally realizing it, too. She was a big, beautiful woman with a sexy ass body and in this picture she was showing it off and he didn't like it one bit!

Her beige slacks and peach, silk, button-down looked phenomenal on her and had him remembering how good she looked outside of her clothes too; that and the faint scent of peaches and mangos that followed her wherever she went.

He shook his head clear and scrolled past her picture and began to read her short story.

Immediately he knew exactly what she was talking about and soon a slow, cocky smile spread across his face, his baby had forgiven him! Yep it was past time for him to head out to Cali and check up on his number one girl.

“Girl, I can't believe how much attention that short story is getting, it's just a few paragraphs and now everyone keeps asking when the book is coming out, I'm like how about never people? I don't write books, I don't want to write books. Short stories are so much easier, in, out and done. Kind of like a one-night stand,” Remisha told Letecia over the phone as she strolled through the mall after work.

She had a craving for an Auntie Anne's pretzel with spicy

cheese dip and stopped to grab one. After she had her 'dinner' she decided to stroll through the mall and burn off some calories.

For a very long time Remisha hated everything about her body, she hated that while Letecia and the other girls in school could wear spandex and miniskirts she really couldn't without looking trashy. Things that rode their gentle hips and asses just right, clung to her like a second skin.

For years she starved herself on fad diets, tried everything from Weight Watchers to Paleo, worked out daily, sometimes twice a day trying to reach a magic number on the scale and when she got there she still hated how she looked and knew it was something bigger than her size.

Now, here she was five years later and she loved herself and every dimple and curve on her body and carried herself like a boss!

"Pshh, like you would know a damn thing about a one-night stand," Letecia scoffed in her ear. "And I hear you about not wanting to write a book, Remy, but you might want to reconsider, girl. You gave every woman in the world a sweet tooth, specifically for chocolate," Letecia said. Remisha could tell she was in her car by the echo on her end of the connection.

"Nah, I wrote the short, it's over and time to move on to the next one. Anyway, when I drive up next weekend, can we do a girls' night in? I'm talking movies, jammies and junk food. I need a wind down for real," Remisha suggested, stepping into an African gifts and crafts store, it was a great place to kill time and she wasn't ready to go home yet. She sighed contentedly as the scents of Nag Champa incense and scented oils surrounded her.

"Saturday we can, but we are meeting at that new Brazilian steakhouse on Friday, remember? Brent is coming too, he said he misses his sister-in-law and you keep sneaking in and out of town when he ain't here."

Remisha shook her head, smiling at the thought of Letecia's

husband. If there was any man on this earth who was perfect for Letecia it was Brent. From day one she could see the chemistry between the two of them and was so happy for them both from the start.

“Tell my favorite pilot and brother-in-law it is not my fault he decided to start rubbing elbows with the big dogs and flying for Emirates Airlines and fine, Saturday for the night in, I’ll need it after the steak house if it’s anything like the one here,” Remisha said reaching for a mini dress with embroidery that would match the new sandals she bought the other day, perfectly.

She walked over to the trifold of mirrors and held it up to herself, before turning around to go find a salesperson and bumped right into a tall frame with a wall of muscles so hard she stumbled back, landed on her butt and her air pod popped out.

“Damn, I’m so sorry. Are you all right?” a deep and sexy voice asked.

Remisha snatched her air pod off the floor and looked up with a glare, right before her heart jumped in her throat as Letecia continued to scream her name in her ear.

The equally tall and solid man looking down at her was fine as hell! He was at least 6’2” tall, his hair was cut into a bald fade, his deep, dark brown skin glowed in the store’s artificial light.

His face was baby smooth except for a mustache. His eyes were piercing and dark, his lips were full and framed the most perfect set of teeth she had ever seen on a man in her life, and he was like a wall of a man! Barrel chest, muscular thighs and calves but not in a gym rat, bodybuilder way, he was just cut and massive in size.

He reached down to help her back to her feet.

“Lettie, let me call you right back. I just made a fool of myself and bumped into someone,” Remisha said, before quickly hanging up the phone, as she took his hand and he helped her to her feet.

"You never answered, are you okay?" he asked, smiling down at her watching her readjust her pencil skirt.

Remisha still felt her face burning from blushing, she looked up at him nodding. "Yeah I'm good, sorry I ran into you, I was busy running my mouth to my best friend, something I do often, especially when I'm out and about killing time," she over explained nervously, shaking the wrinkles out of the mini dress she wanted to try on, this man was the very definition of eye candy.

"I see," the stranger said, his gaze swept over her entire body before resting on the dress she was nervously swinging in her hand. "Are you going to try that on?" he asked her leaning against the wall next to the mirrors.

Remisha lightly touched the dress looking at him curiously. "That was the plan, do you work here or something?" she asked with a small smile.

He took the dress from her hands and turned to walk away, assuming she would follow him. "No, I own the place actually, just happened to be passing through after a meeting nearby and wanted to see how things were going," he explained, still walking away from her clutching the mini dress. He came up short when he realized she was still planted in front of the mirrors looking at him with a frown.

"Something wrong, Miss? Ah, forgive me, I never introduced myself." He came back over to her extending his hand. "Nieko. Nieko King and you are?" he asked, shaking her hand when he was stepping back in front of her, his friendly, sexy smile had her mouthwatering.

Remisha reached out taking his hand, surprised at his firm but gentle grip. "Remisha Hughes, nice to meet you. Now, please excuse me if this seems rude, but how can I be sure what you're telling me is the truth? This could be just a clever pick-up line," she answered, eyeing him skeptically but still digging his vibe.

Nieko continued to smile, his eyes taking another leisurely stroll up and down her curves. “If that were the case, Miss Hughes, I would have waited until you tried the dress on to make my move, because if you look even half as good in it, as I imagine you will, I have every plan of asking you out for dinner tonight,” he quipped catching his bottom lip in between his teeth. His eyes on the move again.

“Remisha, and oh, really? So what if I look like a hot mess in the dress, Mr. King? What happens then?” she asked, folding her arms and trying not to squirm under his sexy ass gaze.

He rubbed his chin, the playful expression on his face turned to one of deep thought. “You can call me Nieko and if that were the case, which I highly doubt, we will comb this store together until you find something you like. But, in my opinion, there is nothing in this store that measures up with how beautiful and sexy you are, Remisha,” Nieko informed her, turning again but waiting until she fell in step behind him this time to lead the way to the dressing rooms.

“Wow, thank you. Straight, no chaser, huh, Nieko?” Remisha blushed and followed him to the dressing room enjoying the view of his muscular back and ass. She was so distracted she failed to notice when he stopped walking and she over corrected at the last second, tripping over her feet.

Nieko turned around and made sure she was okay before handing her the dress. “I’m not one to beat around the bush or mince words, you know you’re an attractive woman and I wanted you to know I noticed it too. There is nothing sexier in this world to me than a woman who loves herself, it just shines through and the light that you shine Remisha is breathtaking,” Nieko told her, making her blush even more.

“You do realize you have only been talking to me for about ten minutes, right? You have given me enough ego stroking to last me a lifetime and you don’t even know me. As much as I am

enjoying it, don't you have work to do?" she asked, slipping into the dressing room.

"I am working, I'm helping you," Nieko answered through the closed door before wandering to a rack close to the dressing rooms and organizing the mask display on top of it.

"Yeah, I appreciate that but aren't we done now? I needed to find the dressing rooms, you brought me to them, so now you can continue 'checking on things' as you put it a few minutes ago, I'd hate to hold you up any longer," Remisha stated quickly shedding her clothes and trying on the dress, she loved how she looked in it and how it hugged her curves.

For a brief moment she actually debated on opening the door and letting him see her in it and getting his opinion, then she quickly changed her mind and started to get back into her clothes. She liked how she looked in it and it was her opinion that mattered most.

"No, we're not done, Remisha. I'm actually enjoying your company and would like to continue our conversation over dinner, get to know each other better?" Nieko asked moving to the next rack and display while he waited for her.

Remisha stepped out of the dressing room and wandered over to him smiling.

"Maybe one day, but tonight, I think I'll just take the dress. Nice to meet you, Nieko." She winked before walking over to the nearest attended cash register and made her purchase. She could feel his heated gaze still on her as she thanked the cashier and put her card back in her wallet and was not surprised when he stepped up to her as she walked to exit the store.

"Have a good evening, Remisha. It was a pleasure meeting you," he said, his sexy smile still in place as he handed her his business card. "Let me know when you can take me up on my dinner invitation." Nieko reached out to shake her hand again.

"You as well, Nieko. I will let you know. Goodnight," Remisha answered leaving the store and then the mall. Climbing

into her car she looked down at his business card and dropped it in her middle console without much thought.

Nieko King was just her type but she had no desire in pursuing anything with him or anyone else, at the moment. No matter how much he looked like all of her fantasies of dark chocolate come to life.