

Prologue

“YEAH MAN, I’M ABOUT TO DROP HER OFF RIGHT NOW. I’LL HIT YOU BACK in a few.”

Mark made the turn into my apartment complex. Two right turns and a left around the circle. He pulled up and parked in front of building 2510.

“Girl, you pissy drunk! Can you make it up the steps?”

“I’m aight! I been way-mo drunk than this!”

I wasn’t lying. I had gotten fucked-up way worse than this before. I was still coherent enough to push Mark’s hand off of my thigh as it crept up my leg.

“Oh, so it’s like that, Lil’ Mama?”

“Hell, yeah! I’m out.” Truth was I could have used a little help getting out of the car. As the cool evening air hit me, I felt a second wind. Hopefully it would be enough to get to me to my apartment.

I stumbled out of the car. Mark laughed.

“F - Fuck you Mark!” I stuttered, as I slammed the passenger door to his black on black Benz CLK 500.

“Whatever. Later Mia,” he said as he drove off.

As I walked to the door, I remember thinking that it was awfully quiet out for an early Saturday morning. The people in the building next door were usually outside drinking beers and playing music to usher in the weekend.

I tripped again and decided that the high heels had to come off. Fumbling through my purse, I pulled out my keys. I reached my front door, high heels in hand, and never was I so happy that I lived on the bottom floor. It took me a second to get the key in the

keyhole. My vision was a bit doubled and I made a mental note to lay off the Long Island iced tea the next time I went out.

The lock clicked and I was home sweet home. Breathing a sigh of relief, all I could think of was getting in the bed and sleeping off the intoxication.

I didn't even bother to turn on any lights. I couldn't take anything that would make my head pound any worse.

I thought for a second where my girl Carmen could be at this time of night. Then I remembered that she told me that she would be staying the night over at her boyfriend Manny's house.

Great. I couldn't take another night of her and Manny's sexcapades. There was only so much, "Aye Papi" that a girl could take.

As I entered my bedroom, I let the heels and purse land where they may. The street lamp from outside cast an eerie shadow in the room.

The next thing I remember was an arm coming from behind, grabbing me around my throat. The arm squeezed relentlessly as I clawed, trying to be released. I was picked up off of my feet and thrown to the bed. *What the fuck was happening?*

"What the hell do you want?" I screamed.

The answer was a back handed slap to my left cheek. I rolled off the bed and scrambled across the room, searching for my heels. At least then I could clock this mutherfucka in the eye or something.

He pounced on me as I hit the floor. He was dressed in all black: black gloves, black mask, black hoodie, black sweat pants, black tennis shoes.

We struggled on the floor for what seemed like hours. He was obviously stronger than me, but I wasn't about to lie down and die. Not tonight.

It surprised me that I gave up such a fight considering how drunk I was. I guess my adrenaline was pumping something fierce. He finally punched me hard enough that it stunned me for a sec. As I lay there, I felt cloth inserted into my mouth and knew that he was gagging me. *Shit!* Had I even screamed for help this whole time? Did my neighbor next door, Ms. Lee, hear the commotion?

He grabbed me again, this time throwing me on the bed. He tied my hands and legs to the bedposts. He then straddled me and all I could do at that point was say a silent prayer. That was the only way that I would make it out of this alive.

I saw him pull something out of his pocket. He unwrapped a condom, slid it on. A sharp pain consumed my body as he rammed himself into me. Again and again, he roughly plunged in and out of me. A small cry escaped my lips. I knew that no one heard. He just kept going, as I lay there unable to defend myself. I could not figure out why this was happening. The only thing that I could do as the pain from my vagina burned was transport myself to some far off place. The places that I watched on the Travel Channel flashed through my mind. White sand beaches; azure, blue waters.

Just as I was on the beach, eating a vanilla ice cream cone, he stopped. I lay and waited for what he would do next. He laughed and smacked me again. My body ached all over and my womanly area throbbed from the beating I took. All I could think of was would I ever be able to have children. I was too young for my life to end like this. I tried not to show any fear. Something I learned on the streets. People like him fed off your fear. All I wanted was for this to be over and for me to be alive at the end. I prayed that someone would come to my rescue.

Then he pulled up his pants and got off the bed. He got close to me, up in my face and I could smell his sweat mixed with my scent on him. I prayed that he would leave.

“Bitch, you lucky I don’t kill you! I came to bring you a message. Big Deuce say he ain’t finished wit you yet! Believe that, ‘ho!’”

Shit! I thought all of that was over. And to be honest, I wasn’t sure how Big Deuce had become my problem.

Next thing I knew, I passed out after his black, gloved fist connected with my face.