

## TWO

**It was a rough landing at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport.** Demarcus and Porsha felt a bit queasy and were relieved when the plane finally landed.

Walking out of the restroom inside the airport dressed in tightly fitted pink shorts that rested at the top of her thighs, white tank top with pink and white sandals on, Porsha turned the heads of men and women, some of whom openly admired her stunning figure, while others turned their noses up in disgust.

Porsha's cell phone vibrated in her purse. Startled, she quickly dug through her purse and answered, "Hello."

"Girl, what's up? You back yet?" Nicki asked.

"Hey! Yes, we just landed about to leave the airport."

"So how was the trip?"

"Girl, guess what? Demarcus proposed to me!"

"Whaaat! Oh my God! My girl is engaged now?"

"Yes, I am," Porsha said with a grin.

"So how did he do it? Give me play by play. I want all the details. Come on!"

"Nicki," Porsha said, and took a deep breath. "My kitty climaxes every time I think about it."

"Whaaat?" Nicki said with a frown.

“We are going to have to put this one on hold. I’m about to go out to his house, get my car and head home. I’ll call you then.”

“Well, let’s just go out tonight, celebrate, and you can tell me all about it then.”

“Okay. Well, I’ll probably take a nap then give you a call.”

“I’ll just holler at you later.”

“Alright Nik.”

“Bye”

“Later.”

They headed out to the parking lot and Demarcus loaded the luggage in his late model navy blue Tahoe LS.

Driving from the airport, Demarcus merged onto 275. Lakeside’s song “Fantastic Voyage” played low through his sub woofers and tweeters. Porsha was taking forty winks when Demarcus glimpsed over at her and said, “Precious.”

“Yes baby,” she replied with her eyes closed.

“You enjoy yourself?”

She slowly cast her eyes over at him and said, “Baby, why you ask me that? You know I had the time of my life.”

He smiled.

She said, “I didn’t want it to ever end.”

“I know,” he said, thinking about the trip.

Alerted by the vibration of his cell phone, Demarcus looked down at his armrest. He removed it from the cup holder noticing immediately he had 80 missed calls, most of which were from Arthur. He dialed Arthur’s number.

Arthur was in his living room sitting back on his French cream color leather sofa, receiving a back arching, toe curling, blow job from his favorite boss freak, Angela.

Shawty Lo’s hip-hop ring tone “Done, done it all” chanted loud from Arthur’s cell phone. Knowing it was Demarcus calling, Arthur reluctantly answered, “About time you called me!”

“What’s up? You been blowing me up?”

“I need to holler at you. . . .” A light moan escaped from Arthur’s mouth.

Silence.

Demarcus switched lanes as he glimpsed his rear view. “Man, what are you doing? Did I catch you at a bad time?”

“N-n-n-naw man, I-I-I . . .” Arthur couldn’t gather his words.

Excited, Angela blurted out, “You like the way my tongue peddled your ass while I shifted your stick?”

Frowning his face up, Demarcus asked, “Man, what did she just say? Lick your ass? Where they do that at?”

Arthur quickly covered her mouth and sat up. “Nothing . . . man nothing. Had some problems while you were gone. You need to come holler at me when you get free.”

“Naw, you need to holler at me when you get free.”

“All right, give me a minute and I will call you—100.”

“200,” Demarcus said, and hung up the phone.

Demarcus got off the Forest Park exit and headed south down Winton Road. He turned right on Kemper and as soon as he passed Kroger’s grocery store at the stop light, he made a left and then a right onto his street. Halfway down the cul-de-sac, he pulled smoothly into his driveway.

**Later after his nap, he headed to Arthur’s crib anxious to catch up on the latest details of their business.**

Arthur was his longtime friend since elementary. They both graduated from high school at Woodward with big dreams to live luxuriously. They had plans to make it happen through their business ventures, but were diverted from their plan by fast money. They thought they could quickly fulfill their dreams by hustling in the streets. Hustling on Burnet Avenue and

Rockdale, led them to be confined at Hamilton County Justice Center, facing long term prison sentences. Fortunately, after seven months they were acquitted and released. From then on, they reconstructed their lives and stuck to their plans. They built a foundation on investing their money wisely and helping the community. Now, they racked up money through promoting concerts. Demarcus' absence at the last concert had him thinking of what went on at the concert.

Making his way to Mt. Auburn cruising down Reading Road through Avondale, Demarcus approached a stop light. He glanced down Blair Avenue and saw that it was full of unmarked cars and police cars. The police in swat gear had a group of young black males lying flat on their stomachs with their hands zip tied behind their backs. The police always harassed the blacks over frivolous things. Back in 2001, the city rioted because of police killing black men randomly and deliberately. Demarcus shook his head at the sight of the young men on the pavement, thinking bitterly to himself that some things will never change.

Demarcus pulled in Arthur's driveway with his music shaking the house like an earthquake. The song "Go Hard or Go Home" by Cincinnati's rap artist Showtime blared out his tweets.

Arthur opened the front door as Demarcus strolled up eyeing Arthur's black Dodge Charger with its smashed front end. Demarcus pointed at the car and asked, "What's up with that?"

Arthur with a disgusted expression just shook his head back and forth.

"Freaky ass dude. Mr. She put an ex-pill in my booty and now I'm salacious!" Demarcus teased.

"Man, fuck you! What's up?"

"What's up?"

They gripped hands and bumped chests. Both headed in the house and walked to the kitchen. Demarcus grabbed a seat on a comfortable stool at the counter while Arthur opened the microwave removing a slice of two day old LaRosa's Pizza. He took a bite as he opened the refrigerator and removed a beer for himself, and then pitched Demarcus a bottle water. Effortlessly catching the bottle with one hand, Demarcus said, "You need to clean up."

"I'm going to get to it."

"I done, done-done-done it all! One of your bitches should of done cleaned up!" Demarcus chuckled. "Just tell me she didn't have you in the huckle buck?"

Arthur turned to face his friend. He placed his hands flat on the counter, leaned forward and locked eyes with Demarcus.

"Man, little Andy got shot," Arthur said solemnly.

"Whaaat. You talking about your little brother Andy?"

"Yeah," Arthur said nodding his head.

"He all right?"

"He's on crutches for now."

"What happen?"

"I had him handling the currency at the concert, because you was gone. He had some chick he just met all under him. He was stunting with the money, trying to impress that bitch. I know she had to peep game, because at the end of the night, I had him take some of the profit made with him. He took the girl to Bond Hill, supposedly her friend's house. As they got out the car walking to the front door, three guys came from around the house and up the pistol on Andy. He took off running. One guy fired and a bullet hit him in his shoulder. He spent around and fell. He jumped back up running again. They fired several shots and a bullet caught him in the leg before he could go anywhere."

"Damn!" Demarcus exclaimed.

Silence.

“Laying there bleeding, unable to move, he gave up everything. That’s when they took off with my Charger. The police recovered it in Walnut Hills. I just got it back.”

“So that’s why the Charger looks like that?”

“Yeah.”

“You talking about the concert during Jazz Festival weekend?”

“Yep.”

“You know who did it?”

“Naw, not yet. I got some people on it. Can’t nobody find that bitch he was with? I suspect she had him set up.”

“Yeah, that’s what it looks like.”

“The Police done forensics and took fingerprints during their investigation. I want to get these guys before the police do. I’m going to handle it.”

“Man, you just fuck me up with this one.”

“Yeah, I’ve been losing it and mom’s been worried about me thinking I’m going to go off the edge.”

“Because she knows how we used to get down. We had to put that away when we became businessmen, but you already know it’s still in us.”

“We are going to have to count that money from the concert, because I haven’t bothered to get to it. You see how I’m living.”

“That’s why I’m not doing anything else, unless it’s through Ticketmaster, because of situation like this. I’m talking Cincinnati Gardens, US Bank Arena.”

“They’re going to have Friday Night Fights at the Gardens this month.”

“See, we could have thrown that. We got the connections.”

“Yeah, you right.”

“I proposed to Porsha,” Demarcus said and smiled.

“That’s cool. You said she was the one.”

“What you doing tonight?”

“Nothing.”

“I’m stepping out to the club to meet Porsha and her friend.”

“I’ll roll.”

As they walked out of the kitchen, Demarcus said, “Get what you going to wear, you can change at my house.”

“All right,” Arthur said, and galloped up the stairs.

Arthur gathered his gear and they departed in Demarcus’ Tahoe. While driving, Demarcus was feeling vengeful, thinking it would never have happened if he were there. They made a few stops to see if anybody heard any information on the situation before arriving at Demarcus’ house.

### **Meanwhile, Porsha picked up Nicki and headed to the club.**

Animated in the passenger seat wearing a black skin tight dress, black heels, hair, nails done, pretty brown skin with a mole on the left side of her chin, and gorgeous, Nicki demanded, “Now tell me what happen on your exotic vacation.”

Glancing back and forth while she drove, Porsha said, “Girl, I didn’t want to come back.”

“You were gone for two weeks. What happen?”

“Girl, he took me to the South Pacific. When we landed in a seaplane, I was carried to shore in a chair by Fijian men through the water. Every day we did something from scuba diving, horseback riding along the ocean, body painting; now that was fun. We made each other out to be Bengal Tigers, and went to the dirty dancing party like that.” Porsha giggled.

“Girl, y’all was butt-naked dirty dancing at a party?” Nicki asked, and snickered.

They both laughed out loud.

“Yeah,” Porsha said chuckling.

“Y’all was clowning!”

“It was fun! We had picnics on the beach all the time. The Bure Mama helped us plan out our days.”

“Bure Mama? Who is that?”

“Everyone who comes to the island receives a Bure Mama, who tends to every need, like a butler with extra duties.”

“Okay,” Nicki said, nodding her head.

“I was lounging back, being lazy and letting Demarcus pamper me loving it!”

Porsha pulled up in the club’s parking lot searching for a parking space and circled until she found one. As soon as she put the car in park, both of them pulled down the sun-visor to check for flaws and freshen up—as if they really needed to. Stepping out of the car, Porsha sported an eye catching, white short sleeve cat suit, like LisaRaye wore when she hosted the Source Awards, with five and a half inch glass heels, and a white purse. Walking to the club door, guys yelled out, “Day-um! Hey, you two!” But they kept on walking.

Both paying ten dollars to get in the club, they made their way to the bar, ordered some drinks and copped a seat at a table. They examined the packed club. DJ Slick’s song “Ice Cream” featuring Moe Tre and Erica P boomed out the concert speakers. Nicki leaned toward Porsha’s right ear and said loudly, “So tell me how Mr. Demarcus proposed to you!”

Porsha took a glimpse at Nicki and positioned herself to explain. “Well, he took me to a secluded Island, where we spent time talking about life as we strolled through the sand letting the water hit our feet at times. It was a beautiful sun setting and he sat me down in a comfortable blue lounge chair, got down on one knee holding my hands, expressed his feelings and I start

crying. He sung to me, and then pronounced the magic words, and I said yes.”

“Damn. Then what happen?”

“It started raining and we began to kiss. He picked me up and carried me to the boat. He got us back to our island and then chase me all the way to the hut. I was screaming all the way there,” Porsha said, and chuckled. Nicki joined her. “When we got inside our hut, I gave him a striptease and then we got into the spa tub. From there, he made powerful love to me. He took me outer-space. I mean, his lips, tongue, and dick, touch every part of me. I never came so many times in my life.”

“Wow! He put it down on you,” Nicki said, staring at Porsha amazingly.

“Yes, he did.”

“That’s what we all need.”

“It was the best time I had in my life. I’m so happy I have Demarcus in my life. I feel peace, joy, and security. He’s good-for-everything.”

“I’m happy to see you finally happy,” Nicki said, and gave Porsha a hug.

“You remember the shit I used to go through with Jamie?”

“Yeah, I used to tell you, you just had to leave.”

“He used to I used to tell control the shit out of me, smother me, hit me, had me all twisted.”

“When he blacked your eye that was enough. I wanted to kill that motherfucker. Now all that shit is over with.”

“I know. I came a long way.”

“Let’s not trip on the past, ‘cause that shit is over with. You got a king now. Besides, we’re here to have a good time and celebrate your happiness. Let’s have a toast to the good life!” They raised their glasses and made them touch. “Here’s to the good life,” Nicki said, and they took a sip.

Beyonce's song "Single Ladies" came on. Nicki shouted, "Let's hit the dance floor!" They grooved their way to the dance floor and danced with each other.

Porsha sang, "If you like what you see put a ring on it," as she waved her hand to show off her diamond ring.

On the other side of the club was Porsha's scumbag ex-boyfriend, Jamie. Jamie was taking shot after shot of liquor acting hard with his boys.

**Meanwhile, Demarcus and Arthur pulled up to the club, finishing off conversations over their cell phones as they sat in the truck.**

Jamie stepped through the crowd like he was the toughest man alive. He appeared as if he was just looking for trouble.

After dancing a couple of songs, Porsha and Nicki sat back at their table. Porsha glanced over towards the pool tables and did a double take. It was Jamie right before her eyes. Panicking, her heart beat briskly. She said, "Nicki, we got to go."

"Why? What's up?"

"Speak of the devil. Out of all the clubs in the city, Jamie is here."

"Where?"

"Right there by the pool table with his boys," Porsha said as she pointed.

"Girl, don't be scared. Don't pay him no attention. Isn't Demarcus coming?"

"He told me he might come, I'm not for sure. Let me text him." Porsha went in her purse, got out her cell phone, and texted Demarcus.

Nicki stared over at Jamie to watch his every move.

Porsha murmured, "I don't feel good. I feel like throwing up."

“He just grabbed that girl’s booty.”

“I’m not feeling this shit Nik. I can’t stand the sight of him, after the way he treated me. Plus, I wouldn’t feel comfortable with Demarcus and an ex in the same building.”

“Girl, shit like that happens. You just can’t run from it every time. You got to be strong. We came here to have a good time. Fuck him. As long as he don’t *mess* with you.”

Jamie started wandering towards Porsha and Nicki’s table.

**Demarcus and Arthur finally got out of the truck and strolled to the front door of the club.**

Jamie’s eyes searched the club and Porsha’s image peered through the crowd. He staggered to Porsha’s table to see if it was true.

Porsha and Nicki pretended not to see him staring at them. “What’s up?” Jamie asked.

Porsha and Nicki with a disgusted expression turned their heads and looked at Jamie. Porsha frowned upwards, pushed her chin back, perked her lips, and rolled her head towards Nicki.

“What’s up?” Jamie asked again.

“What do you want?” Porsha asked heartlessly, and rolled her eyes.

“I just came over to holler at you, maybe buy you a drink.”

“I don’t have anything to say to you.”

Putting the palm of her hand up, Nicki yelled, “Yeah! She don’t have anything to say to you.”

“Ain’t nobody talkin’ to you,” Jamie said savagely, as he mean mugged Nicki.

Demarcus and Arthur entered the club with Porsha and Nicki’s attention distracted by Jamie; they weren’t aware of Demarcus entering the building.

Demarcus and Arthur were stopped by a guy they knew by Toot. Shaking hands, Toot said, “The last time we saw each other was at the Black Expo in Indianapolis.” Arthur and Toot continued to talk while Demarcus’ eyes x-rayed the club looking for Porsha.

“I know we can get back together Porsha,” Jamie said, stepping closer to Porsha.

“I don’t *think* so. You see this!” Porsha retorted, holding up her left hand showing the ring on her finger.

“What that mean?” Jamie asked, feeling the liquor.

“You more nuttier than squirrel shit! Boy, bye!” Porsha said brusquely, and rolled her eyes.

Finally, Demarcus spotted Porsha with Jamie in her face. He smacked Arthur on the chest and proceeded over to Porsha.

Jamie grabbed Porsha’s arm and said, “You don’t have to act like that. I need you back.”

Porsha snatched her arm back and snapped, “Don’t touch me!”

Nicki stepped towards Jamie and screamed, “Don’t be putting your hands on my girl!”

Demarcus rolled up. Porsha and Nicki were relieved. “Put your hands on me now!” Porsha said hostilely sticking her chest out.

“What’s the problem here?” Demarcus said, walking in the middle of the situation.

“Who the fuck are you?” Jamie asked menacingly. Before Demarcus could get out a word, Jamie snapped, “I’m trying to holler at my ex-bitch! Move on.”

Demarcus never met Jamie, but heard about his cruelty, and had already wanted to knock him out. He instantly assumed it was Jamie.

With no hesitation, Demarcus slugged Jamie in his chin. The blow sent Jamie flying to the floor. His head bounced off the floor like a basketball. He was knocked out cold with his arms locked stiff in the air as his body twitched.

Porsha and Nicki both said, “Damn!”

While Demarcus stood over Jamie glaring down at him, the security ran over. Jamie’s boys ran over talking loud trying to get past the bouncers. One of them threw a bottle and hit Demarcus in the shoulder. Arthur swung around one of the bouncers and connected to one of Jamie’s boys’ jaw and wobbled him.

Porsha spit on Jamie and shouted, “Bitch!” Demarcus gave Jamie a monstrous kick to the face and blood went flying out his mouth and nose. The bouncers grabbed Demarcus, rushed him to the door and pushed him out. Arthur came out right behind him.

As Porsha and Nicki were making their way to the exit door, Porsha twisted her ankle and fell. She quickly took off her heels and Nicki helped her back up.

Demarcus was about to go back in to get Porsha, but they came stumbling out.

Demarcus helped a limping Porsha to her car, while Arthur went to get the truck. After the girls were safely in their vehicle, Demarcus hopped in the truck with Arthur. Porsha called Demarcus and put him on speaker phone.

“Yeah!” Demarcus said.

“Baby, you okay?”

Nicki in the background yelled, “What do you mean are you okay? He knocked Jamie the fuck out!”

“Yeah, baby I’m cool.”

“I’m sorry that happen.”

“Who in the hell was that?”

“That was Jamie, my ex, I told you about.”

“Oh, that was him?”

“Yes, I was about to leave out of there right before you showed up.”

“He got what he been asking for.”

Nicki and Porsha both laughed.

“Every night I have to fight to prove my love,” Demarcus shouted out. Porsha, Nicki, and Arthur busted out laughing.

“Baby you crazy,” Porsha said.

“What you two about to do?”

“I got to work in the morning. So I’m going to take Nicki home and head in.”

“Okay. Well, I will be up there after I drop Arthur off.”

“Okay, love you.”

“Love you too.”

“Later.”

“Bye.”

The ambulance pulled up to the club, still knocked out, medics placed Jamie on a stretcher and took him to University Hospital.

## THREE

**“Get your hands off of me! Get your fucking hands off me!”** Keisha Johnson screamed in an angry voice as she tussled with Wayne Collins.

Wayne was a six foot three, two hundred and sixty pound giant, compared to Keisha’s thick one hundred and sixty pound, five foot six inch frame.

Wayne huffed and puffed wildly like a mad bull getting his NUTS pulled. “Get back in there!” Wayne demanded, referring to their bedroom.

“Let me go so I can leave!”

“No! You’re not going anywhere! You’re going to talk to me!” Wayne yelled, pinning Keisha against the wall in the hallway, knocking their portrait off the wall.

In one last desperate attempt to break free, Keisha unleashed a flurry of wild blows to his face and chest. Rolling and blocking her punches, Wayne was unfazed. Furious at her defiance, Wayne grabbed a handful of her long silky black hair and slapped her to the floor . . . then slapped her again. He stared down at her feeling deranged and murderous, but resisted the urge to stomp her to death. “I should kill your crazy ass,” Wayne spat, standing over her.

Dazed and frightened, Keisha slumped against the wall, covered her face, and prayed he would just leave.

Wayne hulked and spit on Keisha. “Tramp, you just don’t listen,” he uttered as he kicked her legs aside and trudged down the hallway.

Keisha heard the front door slam and instantly tears began to flow freely. She pounded her hand against the floor several times as she wailed.

Struggling to her feet, she massaged the left side of her sore puffy face while using the wall for support and stumbled down to the bathroom. Once inside, she flipped on the light switch, pulled down a towel and a wash cloth, stood at the sink gasping for breath, and tried to stop crying as black mascara tears glided down her face.

She wiped her face and studied her features in the mirror. She frowned when she saw the puffiness and discoloration under her left eye. She turned the cold water on and used the dampened wash cloth to soothe her aching face. She stared back at her reflection in disgust. Dropping her head, she leaned forward and cursed her life.

She called herself stupid for loving him. A dumb bitch. She hated herself. She didn’t understand why she kept taking Wayne’s brutality. She couldn’t believe he kept putting his hands on her. This wasn’t love. She didn’t feel loved. She was heavily beat down with mental anguish and fed up. She was ready to take Wayne on again as she moved around with her fist balled. “I don’t deserve this. You don’t love me. I hate you . . . I fucking hate you . . . I’m going to get you back . . . you want to kill me? Come on motherfucker! Kill me then!” Keisha screamed, throwing her body around angrily and bent over sobbing with no tears.

The vibrations of her body movement caused a glass candle holder to slide off the shelf and smack the floor behind her. She nearly jumped through the roof, thinking Wayne had returned.

She spun and eyed the doorway, listening closely, and then glanced back at the candle holder on the floor. Breathing shakily she said, "I've got to get out of here."

She bolted down the hallway into the bedroom and ran straight for the window. She pushed the curtains to the side, peered out, and was relieved to see Wayne's car gone. She dashed to the hallway closet, pulled out two suitcases, carried them to the bedroom, and filled them haphazardly with clothes and other important things she would need. Keisha dumped out a laundry basket of dirty clothes and filled it with all her shoes, then darted to the window again and peered out; still no sign of Wayne.

She dragged the two suitcases to the head of the stairs and flung them down, then jetted back to the room to grab her basket of shoes.

She struggled down the stairs with the basket, dropped it to the floor, then raced to the kitchen and grabbed her keys from the drawer.

Once at the front door, Keisha eased it open and scanned the immediate area of their North Chicago residence. With no signs of Wayne, Keisha grabbed the two suitcases and raced to her car. She loaded the suitcases in the back seat and darted back to the house and grabbed her basket of shoes.

Seated behind the wheel, she spotted a cop car coming down the street in the opposite direction. The sun's rays beamed off the windows of the police car, causing a blinding glare that made it impossible to see inside the vehicle as it cruised by.

She mashed the gas and sped off eying her rear view mirror. To her horror, the police car's lights popped on and the cruiser made a U-turn.

Praying to God, Keisha sped south down Brown Avenue and made a right on Dodge. She glimpsed her rear view and nearly

panicked at the sight of the police car in pursuit of her. “Shit!” Keisha exclaimed, and pounded on the wheel.

The cop had switched the lights off, but was still in pursuit of her. Keisha slowed and made a right on Lyons Street, and a Sunday driver blocked her path, causing her to slow almost to a crawl. She pounded on her horn repeatedly, but it only seemed to make the old couple drive even slower.

She glanced in her rear view and cringed at the sight of the cop car speeding towards her. “Fuck this shit,” Keisha spat under her breath, and swerved recklessly around the slow *ass* car in front of her, but quickly swerved back over as a car was speeding towards her from the opposite direction.

Panicking now, Keisha recklessly turned left on to Sherman Avenue and floored it, but the cop car was still in close pursuit. Her body heat began to seethe, breathing became short, and she consciously heard her heart beat as she glanced back and forth from the road to the mirror, searching frantically for a way to shake him off her tail.

She sped over a little bridge with a creek under it. Coming to an intersection, she tried to make a right on Lincoln Street, but careened out of control and crashed into a pole right in front of Evanston Water Filtration Center.

The airbag exploded in her face and slammed her backwards as one of her suitcases burst through the passenger side back window. Keisha was knocked out cold, slumped over in the passenger seat with the car smoking. The police car cruised by as if the accident didn’t exist.

People rushed out of their vehicles to assist the lovely young woman whom they prayed to God wasn’t seriously injured.