

## "Counterfeit Dreams" - Chapter 1

Reagan and Styles sat on the sofa watching the basketball highlights on ESPN from his game the night before. He watched himself float down the court and mesmerize his many adoring fans. Styles was very animated, so every time he played, he put on a show. The fifty-two inch flat screen sat on the wall with the sound on mute. Reagan sat on the opposite end of their ebony leather couch wearing one of Styles' old t-shirts, and her hair wrapped in a scarf. Styles pulled her out of bed to watch the game with him, but he spent the entire time on the phone.

"I know, nigga, the shit was crazy. I was doing my thang though. A nigga is really tryna show out cause I gotta renegotiate my contract in a couple months."

Styles got up and continued his conversation in the kitchen. Reagan sat with her arms folded across her chest. She was beyond irritated. Styles had been in town for only a few days, and this was the first night she had seen him. His team had a home game in Oakland, but he refused to let Reagan go. He always told her she was a distraction.

"Cameron, are you serious, babe?" Reagan whined.

"Let me call you back, nigga," Styles said putting his phone down on the grey granite countertop, "My bad, Rea, I'm just excited. This is my best season ever. People are really starting to pay attention to a nigga. Do you know what that could mean for me?"

Reagan got up and walked toward their bedroom. "Well, I'll leave you to yourself, Cameron."

"Damn, Rea, okay. Let me change my clothes, and then we can watch those 'Bad Girl' bitches or something," Styles said grabbing Reagan and setting her down back on the couch, "I'll be right back. Then it's just me and you. Promise."

Reagan loved Styles. They had been together for seven years, and he was all she knew. She was there before all of the money and the fame, but ever since Styles got drafted into the NBA by the Golden State Warriors, two and a half years ago, their relationship changed. He provided greatly for her, but soon he replaced his time, love and affection with jewelry, clothes, and money. That wasn't enough for Reagan, but she decided to let her frustrations go for the moment and enjoy the night.

Reagan heard the shower turn on in the bedroom. She walked into the kitchen and opened the stainless-steel, double-door refrigerator and grabbed a bottle of water. Styles' phone started ringing on the counter. Reagan didn't recognize the number. She and Styles got into it so many times about her going through his phone. He paid the bill, so he felt whatever was in it was his business. Reagan tried to restrain herself, but the voicemail icon taunted her.

Fuck that, she thought, if it's nothing then it's nothing. Styles changed his password more than he changed his clothes it seemed, but somehow Reagan always figured it out.

"0-4-1-6," Reagan said out loud.

"You have entered an incorrect password. Please, try again," said the automated voice.

Reagan laughed. Every time Styles had to change his password, he would set it back to the default password until he thought of a new one.

"9-9-9-9. Stupid ass," Reagan whispered to herself.

She immediately heard a female's voice. "Hey, baby, I had fun last night. I hate that you left this morning. I miss you already. Call me, k?"

Reagan was heated. She ran into the bedroom and threw the phone at Styles who was sitting on the bed putting on his clothes. The phone barely missed his head.

“What bitch were you with last night?” Reagan asked with tears lining her cheeks. These arguments were so typical. Reagan expected groupies to be a part of Styles’ new life, but she didn’t think he would ever go for them. But to him, this was the life of a nigga in the league.

“Get outta here with that shit, Rea.” Styles grabbed his phone and saw he had a missed call from Lanae. He met her while he was in town a couple of months ago, and he saw her from time to time when he came home.

“Now you can’t answer? Nigga, fuck you. I keep going through all this bullshit for what, Cam? So you can leave me at home by myself while you go out and fuck the world? I’m cool.” Reagan grabbed her Louis Vuitton luggage set down from the closet and snatched random clothes and stuffed them inside the bags. She didn’t know what she was bringing or where she was going, but she had to go. Styles got up and took the bags out of her hands.

“You’re doing hella extra ass shit.”

“Fuck you,” Reagan spat, “These hoes are steadily popping up, but I’m not supposed to say shit. Fuck that! All the money in the world ain’t worth this shit. You’re not worth this shit.” She grabbed her duffle bag from Styles. He allowed her to pack up her side of the closet. She was struggled to fit everything in her five-piece set.

“So, where are you going, Rea?” Styles laughed. Reagan’s episodes were funny to him. He knew she had nowhere to go. He was all she had.

“To my nigga’s house,” Reagan said wiping the remaining tears from her face. Styles’ shot into the closet and grabbed Reagan by her throat. She clawed at his arms trying to release his grip.

“Bitch, where?” Styles looked at her like he expected her to answer. Reagan knew he would kill her if she ever cheated on him. The thought alone sent him over the edge. “You won’t ever leave me. Know that, okay?” Styles kissed Reagan on her lips and let her body drop to floor. She gasped for air coughing until she caught her breath. Reagan sat on the closet floor massaging her neck as Styles grabbed his phone from the bed and disappeared back into the living room.

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The next day, Reagan woke up sore. She had blue and purplish bruises covering her neck. She stared in the mirror and tried to adjust her sweater to cover up the reminders of the night before. After being with the Warriors for a year and a half, Styles decided to move from a townhouse in the Oakland Hills to a condo in San Francisco with Reagan by his side. The change wasn’t big, but she still hated it. She became adjusted to living in Oakland after moving from Sacramento, and she didn’t want to have to start over again. The short trip across the Bay Bridge gave Reagan anxiety. She was trapped in Styles’ dreams and ambitions. Each of them required her to just look the part of a NBA player’s wife, so Reagan had to surround herself with less and less people who didn’t help her fit that image. Her family was from Sacramento, but many of them moved to Atlanta a few years back. The only person Reagan could turn to was Styles’ sister Robyn. Reagan and Robyn became close over the years, but anytime she did anything, Robyn ran back and told her brother.

Reagan was reluctant to call Robyn. She felt like a broken record always calling her after she and Styles fought, but she had to get out of the house.

“Hello?” Robyn answered the phone with sleep still in her voice.

“Hey, girl.”

“Do you know what today is? It’s your anniversary!” Robyn sang, in her best Tony Toni Tone voice, “Where’s Styles? I tried to call him earlier, but he didn’t pick up.”

“Bitch, where you think?”

“What happened now?” Robyn asked without even thinking.

“Same shit. But fuck that. What’s Sac looking like? I need to get out of this house. I’m bout to be on my way out there,” Reagan said grabbing her cheetah print Betsey Johnson purse off the couch.

“You really gon drive out here? I’m pretty sure you should be spending your anniversary with your nigga, Reagan.”

“You would think that, but he’s not here, and I don’t have shit else to do.”

“Okay, see you when you get here, Rea.”

As Reagan was walking out of the door, she noticed a bunch of flowers sitting on the dining room table. She walked back into the house and saw fifty pink orchids sitting in a Swarovski crystal vase with a white card laid next to it.

*Happy anniversary, Reagan. You mean the world to me even though I’m not good at showing it...*

Reagan balled up the card and threw it on the floor. She was not at all impressed with the gesture, so she left out of the door without looking back. She couldn’t get five minutes away from the house before Styles called.

“Hey, babe. You get your gift?”

“Yeah, Cameron. The flowers are really nice. Thanks.”

“Thanks?” Styles asked with confusion dripping from his voice.

“What else do you expect me to say? I’m pretty sure that it’s our fucking anniversary, and I’m by myself. Again. While you’re probably with those groupie-ass bitches. Must be nice.”

“Rea, you know I have a game tomorrow. The coach doesn’t allow bitches before a game,” Styles laughed.

“Yeah whatever, Cameron. I’m busy, so I’ll talk to you later. Good luck on your game, though.”

“Rea, I love you.”

“Right...”

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Two hours later, Reagan pulled into Robyn’s driveway. The entire drive was filled with thoughts of Styles. His infidelity was a constant occurrence in their relationship. As much as it happened, Reagan thought she would become numb enough to overlook it, but each time hurt like the first. She didn’t understand why she allowed Styles to use and walk all over her, but despite everything he did, she loved him.

Ten minutes later, her small Lexus coupe felt like an inferno. Not able to bear the Sacramento heat any longer, Reagan got out of the car and walked up Robyn’s driveway. When she got to the door, it was unlocked as usual, so she let herself in. Reagan heard Robyn running around upstairs.

“Rea?” Robyn yelled.

“Yeah, bitch, you ready?”

“Damn near. You got out here fast,” Robyn said putting on the finishing touches to her make-up, “Come upstairs. I’m almost done.”

Reagan walked up two flights of stairs to get to Robyn's third level. The whole area was used as her dressing room. Every time Reagan came over, she felt like she was at the mall. The furniture was always covered with unopened shopping bags from Christian Dior, Gucci, Prada, and Jean Paul Gaultier. Robyn stood in front of her full-length mirror admiring her body. She wore a size ten, but there wasn't an ounce of fat on her. She was built like a goddess. Reagan sat and watched as Robyn tried on her clothes.

"Robyn, why do you buy all this stuff knowing you not gon wear it?"

"Cause a bitch needs options," Robyn laughed, "And why you all up in my mine? But here's a better question, why do you have that black ass sweater on, and it's 100 degrees outside? You are not in the City anymore."

Reagan pulled down her sweater and showed Robyn the bruises that covered her neck. This was not the first time Robyn had seen marks on Reagan's body, but it shocked her every time. She didn't want to believe that her brother was capable of doing something like that to any woman. Robyn knew that Styles and Reagan's relationship had been rough lately, but she didn't know it was that bad.

"Okay, you didn't drive out here for nothing, Rea. Let's go," Robyn said trying to ignore her friend's situation.

"Bitch, you know I can't go anywhere. Look at my neck. I just wanted to get out of the house. We can chill here."

"Let me take care of it." Robyn grabbed her make-up case, and they were out the door.