

{ DELPHINE PUBLICATIONS PRESENTS }

*Supposedly*  
**Broken**

**TANYA HARRIS**

## Supposedly Broken

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## MARCUS

I hate waiting. Courtney asked me to meet her at six and she's late. I hate that! She thinks she's all that, but apparently she can't tell time. Bougie motherf . . . Even her choice of restaurant is bougie. She thinks she's so much better than everybody else. She is a part of the same sorry family that I am. My poor excuse for a father is her father's brother, and family traits are hereditary. There's no way around it and she'll never be better than a Happy Meal because of it. *You don't know my dad. He's a good man.* She's always telling me that nonsense. Whatever! I don't have to know her dad. I know mine, and he's a no-good, low-down, heartless son of a . . . When I was about nine, I saw him beating the crap out of my mom and I begged him to stop. He wouldn't! So I ran over and somehow grabbed his arm. Without a thought, he pushed me to the floor with enough force to make me slide out of his bedroom and into the hall. It knocked the wind right out of me. *Stop being a punk! It takes a real man to keep his woman in check!* That's what he told me. My family is so messed up. I would rather not deal with them at all. It's five after six. I'm leaving. I'm a grown man with better things to do.

## MARISA

Good, I made it. It's just five after. I thought I was going to be really late. Kyle . . . delayed my departure a little. He's been traveling a lot with his company lately and came home today unexpectedly. And, well . . . Let's just say we had to catch up. We may have to "catch up" a little more after this meeting. Courtney is really excited about discussing this year's family reunion. It's been awhile since the last one. She says everyone is excited about seeing one another. She even told me that she talked to Marcus. I haven't talked to Marcus since when, undergrad? And he's my TWIN brother. Twins are supposed to have an unbreakable bond. Yeah, right. Marcus has issues with our family. Since I'm a part of the family, he has issues with me. He would much rather cut me off completely than deal with them. He's always getting caught up in his problems. Deal with it so you can move on is what I say, but let me try to tell him that. He'd give me a quick dial tone and wouldn't try to answer the phone the next time I called. Do you know that he changed his number twice on me, and this last time got an unlisted number? I had to call our *mother* to get his new number. I'm sure he told her not to give it to me, but because she's so weak, she gave it to me as soon as I asked for it. She is sooo weak. Just thinking about her makes me mad. When we were younger, my dad treated her like garbage, and she never said or did anything to stop him. She just let him treat her that way. She never dealt with the problem, which taught Marcus not to deal with his. She should have just left. Marcus wouldn't be the way he is if she had.

## KENNY

I hope this meeting isn't long. I have jury selection in the morning . . . I have to finish drafting my motion and brief then get them to my paralegal to be typed, proofread, and filed before five tomorrow . . . I also have that appointment with a new client tomorrow . . . I think we're meeting at two. I really don't have time for this, but Courtney assured me that this wouldn't take longer than an hour and a half, so I promised to come. I'm sure this is about another big family event. She loves family stuff. To be honest, so do I. I can't wait to start a family of my own. I tried to marry my last girlfriend, but she couldn't see herself marrying a man she hadn't slept with. How did she put it? I need to know if you can handle me before I get tied to you! Oh well, not going to do it. I'm not trying to risk getting somebody pregnant and letting another man raise my children. I don't know what it is with stepfathers, but everybody I know who grew up with one had bad childhood memories, myself included. My stepdad had a *good* relationship with my mom. He did whatever he wanted, to whomever he wanted, and she believed everything he said. She was SO in love and we "needed a daddy," let her tell it. I can remember a time when he locked himself in my sister's bedroom and she was screaming for my mom to help her. My mom was downstairs watching TV. What did she do? She turned the TV up louder. I ran to her to tell her what was going on, and she turned the TV up even more. It wasn't until Z ended up pregnant that my mom said anything, and even then, all she told him was to leave

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Zakia alone until the baby was born. It was then that I realized that I had to protect my sister.

I graduated from high school at fifteen, undergrad at eighteen, and law school at twenty-one. I knew that I had to hurry up and get out of school so I could help get her out of that house and away from my mom. She put us through all of that for a man that never even loved her.

## ZAKIA

This better be good, short, and sweet. I'm supposed to meet up with Dexter . . . Darryl . . . Dexter . . . one of them tonight. Let's just say I have a date to have my toes curled. Derek, my son, is at home with Terry, his stepdad. Since I had to come out anyway, I thought, why not work a quickie in. Terry got my mom to let us borrow her car while ours is in the shop. That's the least that heifer could do after what went on in that house. Things were bad around there, and when Kenny left, they got worse. Kenny told me to move too, but at the time, I was nineteen with a baby and no job. What choice did I have? I thought maybe since I had Derek, that my mom would protect me. She didn't and nothing changed. So I decided to take matters into my own hands. I took a handful of sleeping pills, followed by a four pack of strawberry wine coolers. I crushed a few for Derek and put them in his cereal bottle. I thought that I had killed us both. I don't know how we survived, but after that, I was hospitalized for a short while then ordered by the judge presiding over my case to either see a psychiatrist every week for six months or go to jail for child endangerment. I got lucky. After that, Kenny hooked me up with income-based housing and helped me get a job so that I wouldn't have to go back there. He says he wants me to go to school so I can get a better job and possibly a career. School ain't for everybody. I'm not the brain type. High school was too hard for me. I'm the type that gets a job and gets married. So that's what I did. Kenny's going to be disappointed that I didn't bring Derek with me. I didn't bring him because I needed a break. We had been hanging out all day and he's starting to look too much

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like . . . his dad. Sometimes, I can't stand to look at him. The psychiatrist told me that when the day comes where he starts to look or act like his dad, I should start my sessions again . . . but I'm fine. I don't need to go, I'm fine. DEXTER is who I'm meeting tonight. Good. I'm in the mood for chocolate.

## COURTNEY

This reunion is going to be the best. I have so much planned. Family picnics, summer jazz festivals, kids' night, adults' night—I'm so excited! I haven't been this excited since I found out that we were pregnant. I'm at the "any day now" point and I can't wait! My husband, Daniel, can't wait either. He wants to be a daddy so bad. He reminds me a lot of my dad. Strong, dedicated and in love with his wife. My dad really loved my mom. I don't remember their love, but you could hear it in his voice whenever he talked about her. My mom was killed when I was about two. I was told we were on our way home from a movie when my dad stopped at a convenience store to pick up some cigarettes. Dad went in, leaving me and my mom in the car. After a short while, my mom grabbed me and went in the store looking for him. Turns out two guys decided to rob the store right after my dad went in. When my mom called my dad's name, she surprised them, and they shot her. One shot in the chest, straight through the heart. She was dead before she hit the ground. My dad quit smoking right there at the store and hasn't smoked since. For a long time, he felt that if we hadn't stopped, she would still be here. When I was younger, I felt the same way, then I realized that there was no way that my dad could have known that those guys would rob that store, no way my mom could have known to stay in the car, and no way that she could have died if God wasn't ready to take her home. I don't have my own memories of my mom, but my dad has always told me who she was and gave me pictures of her to learn what she looked like. I look just like her, except I have light hazel eyes like my dad. I love my dad for that. He provided me with a stable

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environment. He didn't introduce me to a million "Aunties" who I wasn't related to. He never talked down to me or made me feel like his life would have been easier without me. He was always there for me, and I will always be there for him, no matter what. That's why I get into planning these reunions. Because it's something I can do for my dad. He loves his family, and I do too, especially my cousins. It's ten after six. I can't wait to see them.

## RANDI

How long have I been sitting here? What time is it? Five after six? That can't be right. "Bartender, what time is it?"

"6:07." Okay, this shot is going to be the last one. "When did I get here?"

"About five thirty."

"How much do I owe you?"

"At four dollars a shot . . . forty dollars. This last one is on the house."

Okay, THIS one is the last one.

"Thank you kindly." This feels like a fifty. "I have to meet my cousins for a meeting." That was funny. I almost fell.

"Are you okay to drive?"

"Don't worry. We're meeting here, but in the restaurant. If I know my cousins, by the time we finish, I'll . . . be sober." That was funny too. I'm on a roll tonight.

"You started early tonight, didn't you cousin?"

"See Bartender, you can relax. This is my cousin Risa. Risa, this is . . . Tony the bartender. So Tony, you don't have to worry about my drinking too much."

"Okay. Then I'll worry. You're drinking too much cousin."

"I'm grown, Risa. I can roll out of bed and into a drink if I want to." Three for three. "Don't worry about me. Worry about . . . What's his name? Don't tell me."

"Kyle."

"I told you not to tell me."

"Kyle is fine. He wants to get married."

"Married! We need to celebrate!" She is not excited. Maybe I jumped the gun. "He wants to marry you, right?"

"Of course!"

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Who is she snapping on? She's the one that doesn't look happy. What am I supposed to think? She needs to loosen up.

"Let me buy you a drink."

"I don't drink."

"Then let me buy me a drink." Whoa! Lost my balance for a minute. "I'm cool. I'm cool."

"Still don't think you had enough?"

She is so sarcastic. That is not attractive.

"I just need to get rid of a little bit of what I already had."

Is the room spinning a little? "I'm going to the ladies' room."

"Let me help you."

"I told you I got this Risa. These sandals cost two hundred dollars. That should be all the help I need."

"I'm sure."

Why is she still touching me?

"Excuse me Ma'am."

Another one of Judge Cartwright's fans, no doubt. Make this quick. I really have to go.

"Aren't you Randi Cartwright? Judge Cartwright's daughter?"

I can see them coming a mile away.

"Yeah, I am."

"Wow. I watch his show Family Court all the time! 'I help the family when the family can't help themselves.'"

She is not quoting that lame commercial.

"I'm prelaw at Emory."

"Great."

Did she just block me from leaving? Little girl . . .

"Are you a lawyer?"

"No. I'm just the family embarrassment."

"Randi."

Risa sounds like my dad. SKELETONS ARE MEANT TO STAY IN THE CLOSET. Forget that. It's the truth. I

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embarrass both the Honorable Judge Randy Cartwright and his wife Toni. They have always seen me as a failure. I made valedictorian of our senior class but because I only beat the salutatorian by half of a point, that embarrassed them. I didn't go to a university that their *friends* approved of, and that embarrassed them. Never mind that I got a full scholarship and my bachelor's degree from an HBCU. I slipped up and got pregnant while I was in high school. Talk about embarrassed! They wouldn't even let me tell the father or his parents. They said they would cut me off financially if I told anybody, so I didn't. They sent me to a clinic in Florida to have an abortion and set me up for the summer in their beach house. That way, if anybody asked, I was at the beach house "with friends." The only friend I saw was the nurse that they paid to take care of me . . . a male nurse. We got together a few times after I recouped and needless to say, when I returned home, I was pregnant again. That was the ULTIMATE embarrassment. They didn't trust me to go back to Florida, so they had the procedure done here in Georgia by a private doctor that they bribed to tie my tubes at seventeen because they couldn't stand to be embarrassed like that again. Can you believe that? The doctor screwed up and somehow removed my left ovary and severed my right one, messing up any chance of me having kids . . . They were both more excited than I was when I turned nineteen. I got my million-dollar trust fund, got out of their house, and got out of their lives. They even bought me a house to make sure I had no reason to stay with them.

"Well, you look just like him."

"Don't tell him that. He may hold you in contempt."  
Good, she's laughing. Maybe now I can go.

## THE MEETING

“It’s great to see you guys.” Everybody’s here except Marcus. What else is new? “Risa, I see you all the time. You don’t get a hug. Just kidding.” Nobody’s drinking but Randi. What else is new?

“Courtney girl, you’re crazy. Here’s your drink.”

Mmmm. Sweet tea. I’ve been craving this ALLL day.

“Thanks, Risa.” This tea is good. “I don’t guess you heard from Marcus.”

“I think I saw him leaving when I pulled up.”

“Why was he leaving?”

“Girl please, this is Marcus. He probably saw me pull in and decided not to stick around.”

She really wanted to see her brother. That’s why I asked him to come. I even offered to buy him dinner . . . Marcus!

“So what’s up Courtney?” Kenny is already looking at his watch. “Why the big meeting?” He told me he had work to do, so I’m not mad at him. I just wish we all could get together and have a good time without time constraints, but since we can’t . . .

“Well, it’s reunion time again, and I just wanted to run a few ideas past you all. We normally have our reunions in the South, but this year I was thinking we should go somewhere more exotic . . . like the Caymans. Daniel and I stayed at an all-inclusive resort for our honeymoon and we thought that you guys would enjoy it as well. What do you think?”

“That should be fun.” Risa’s on board. “We can get pampered and hang out like we used to before everybody got so busy.”

“Sounds good to me.” Randi’s on board too.

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“Am I going to be the only guy? I don’t want to get caught up in the middle of an exhale.”

“Whatever, Kenny. Daniel will be there.”

“And Kyle.”

“And Eric.”

Who? I thought Randi was dating somebody named Taylor or Tyler or something starting with a T.

“Eric?” Apparently Kenny and Risa don’t know him either.

“Flavor of the month.”

“Slut.”

I’m pretty sure Zakia meant to say that under her breath, but Randi heard her. And if I know Randi, she is NOT about to let it slide.

“So, Z,” Kenny heard it too. He’s running interference to try to keep the peace, as always. “You think Terry will come?”

“Yeah, Z, Is your HUSBAND going to be there?”

I knew Randi wasn’t going to let it slide.

“Why, Slut?”

“Oh, I got your slut!”

“I know you do.”

“Hey hey hey! Can we get back to my meeting?”

“Do whatever, Courtney. I’m going to the ladies’ room.”

I don’t know why Z let’s Randi get under her skin like that. She always makes her mad enough to leave the room.

“You need to quit.”

“Quit what, Risa? I just asked the girl a question. Kenny did too. It’s not our fault that she’s cheating on her husband.”

Randi’s right. Zakia has been cheating on Terry for years. For the life of me, I don’t know why she won’t just leave the man.

“Hello, my name is Tina and I’ll be your server for the evening.”

Is she talking to anybody other than Kenny?

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“Can I get you . . . anything?”

She is shamelessly flirting with him.

“I’m undecided. I don’t know if I want to play it safe with a salad or if I want something a little spicier.”

“Spicy is always better. Why don’t you call me when you’re ready to heat it up?”

She all but gave Kenny a lap dance trying to give him her business card before leaving.

“Did she take anybody’s order?”

“I think she put in an order of her own instead, huh, Kenny?” Randi and Risa get a kick out of teasing Kenny because he gets so serious about EVERY girl he meets . . . and because they know he’s going to blush . . . He did.

“Hi, I’m Noah. I’m your server for the evening.”

“What happened to Tina?”

Listen to him.

“Tina’s not working tonight?”

“She was just here.”

“Oh, you must be the guy she was talking about.”

“What did she say?”

“Dude, I don’t know.”

Obviously irritated with Kenny, Noah took our orders and left.

“So what resort in the Cayman’s are we talking about?”

Randi is so drunk. She looks like she’s going to pass out at any moment . . . It bothers me when she drinks like this.

“The one you guys go to every year.”

“That’s where your auntie and uncle go every year, not me.”

“Randi.”

“I’m fine. Excuse me, please.”

She nearly knocked the hostess and another party down when she left the table. She really needs to stop drinking and deal

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with whatever she's trying to drown. I tried to get her to open up once, but she's so protective of her feelings. I could just see the emotional walls going up every time I tried to get her to talk about a personal area of her life. How do you help somebody like that?

"Courtney you think we should go after her?"

I guess you keep trying.

"Just give her a minute, Risa. If she's gone longer than five, I'll go."

"So can I bring a guest?"

"Who, Kenny?"

Listen to all of that big sister in Zakia's voice. She came back just in time to comment.

"Not that little girl in the kitchen asking about you. What's her name? Tina?"

"What's wrong with Tina?"

And Kenny, he hadn't even called this girl and is already including her in the head count for family functions.

"You just met the girl! Do you really want her meeting your WHOLE family this soon?"

"That is my future family. I think she's the one."

"Here we go."

"Not the speech, Kenny."

Risa and Zakia know where he's going too.

"You know how it is when you meet somebody and you just—"

"CLICK!"

Everybody at the table knows it by heart because we've heard it so many times.

"Where have I heard that before? . . . Oh yeah, when we met your last girlfriend."

Tell him, Z.

"And the one before that."

Risa knows too.

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“And the one before that.”

We all do.

“And the one before that.”

Did Randi stop by the bar on her way back from the bathroom? She’s holding an empty martini glass in her hand. Did she even go to the bathroom?

“Randi, are you driving?” She’s had two apple martinis since I got here and had obviously had several drinks prior to that. If she gets behind the wheel, somebody is going to die tonight.

“Are you worried, cousin?”

“YES!”

Risa and Kenny obviously feel the same.

“Well, if I don’t drive, how am I going to get home?”

“I’ll take you, if you’re ready now.”

“Wait a minute, Z. Am I supposed to believe that you want to see me home safely? Are you serious?”

I don’t blame Randi for being surprised . . . but why does she have to have so much attitude?

“I just think you will be better off at home where you can sleep this stuff off.”

That’s not going to be good enough for Randi.

“So you’re concerned for your cousin?”

I told you.

“Do you want me to take you or not?”

There’s that famous Turner temper flaring up. We all have it, and when it turns on it’s almost impossible to turn off.

“I’m just curious to know why, cousin. We all know I’m not your favorite.”

“You know what? Forget I asked.”

“You can’t give me an answer?”

“I’m trying to do something nice for you, but you can’t see that because that’s not allowed in your world.”

“In my world?”

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“That’s right! In your little rich girl world where you can’t appreciate what’s given to you because you never had to work for anything! You’re always throwing money around, always bragging on two hundred dollar this and two hundred dollar that without thinking about how bad that might make somebody else feel. Your parents gave you EVERYTHING, but you don’t even talk to them.”

Z is MAD. She’s almost crying.

“Instead, you just keep embarrassing them the same way you’re embarrassing us right now!”

Wrong thing to say. You do not come at Randi like that.

“You know what, Z? I can’t help that I was born ‘well off,’ and I’m not about to apologize for it. I’m glad I never had to work, and according to my investment banker, I’ll never have to, and if you can’t handle that, then you can leave.”

“I can leave? Let me tell you what you can do.”

“Ladies, ladies. Let’s not make a scene. You guys sound like you’re about to go a couple rounds right now.”

Kenny is the peacekeeper of the family, but even his patience runs thin when it comes to these two.

“Anytime . . . any place.”

And Zakia continues to provoke Randi.

“Bring it!”

And Randi never backs down.

“Can we please skip the drama for just one night?”

“I’m fine, Kenny.”

Randi’s talking to Kenny, but still looking at Zakia.

“But you need to check your girl. She owes me an apology.”

“Apology? Girl, please! Don’t nobody owe you no apology! Somebody needed to read your ungrateful behind. Everybody else may bow down to you, but I don’t.”

Zakia signaled for the waiter to come over.

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“I’ll leave first.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Can I get this to go?”

“Sure.”

“Come on, Z.”

As always Kenny took on that parental role he assumed a long time ago. He’s always trying to make everybody see everybody’s side and forcing us to make up. I swear he acts older than all of us. He’s the youngest of the group, but he’s definitely the most mature. . . I’m second.

“Nobody has to leave. Let’s just apologize and get past this.”

“Apologize? Ain’t nobody apologizing to her! And you the last person to be taking her side. I’m your sister, remember? Don’t tell me she got you on her payroll too. Apologize? . . . Negro, *please*.”

“Z, why are you tripping?”

“Why am *I* tripping? I don’t believe you, Ken! What about her? She’s been loud, drunk, and obnoxious all night, and you guys just laughed like it was nothing, but I speak *my* mind and you think I did something wrong! Whatever.”

“Z, come on. You don’t have to leave . . . Z . . . Excuse me, ladies.”

We could see Kenny catch up to Zakia in the parking lot, but couldn’t hear what they were saying.

“So how am I getting home now?”

“Hey, Z, wait up.” She is really mad. I haven’t seen her upset with me like this since I moved out of our mom’s house. “Wait up . . . Z!”

“She doesn’t know what ‘hard’ is, Ken. She’s always talking about how her parents don’t want her. She was the drunk at twenty-four, sleeping around at seventeen . . . and she gets the

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brand-new Mercedes, she gets the huge trust account, and she doesn't appreciate any of it!"

Now she's crying. She always gets this mad after talking to Randi.

"All they wanted was a normal child to give a normal life to, Kenny, and she couldn't be that! She's had it hard? She brought it on herself! I have NO sympathy for that spoiled heifer, and I'm not about to apologize for that."

"Randi, why do you do that?"

Zakia looks like she is going off on Kenny. He hasn't gotten the chance to say anything.

"Do what, Risa?"

I hate when Randi gets this 'I don't give a . . .' attitude.

"Provoke her like that. You know she has issues."

"Everybody has issues."

"But, Randi—"

"But nothing, Risa. Am I supposed to hide what I have because she doesn't have? Is it insensitive of me to have nice things because she can't afford them?"

Great. Now she's mad.

"She's always trying to make it seem like I'm forcing my money on her! She makes it seem like I think I'm better than her, but I never said that, Risa! She hates me for whatever made-up reason, and no matter what I do, she will always hate me, and I . . . could care . . . less."

"That's your cousin, Randi."

"Well, why don't you try telling her that?" She signaled for Noah who just happened to be lurking nearby.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Can I please have a carry-out?"

She is furious! Randi's butterscotch skin tone has turned maroon.

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“Randi, come on.”

“Come on nothing, cousin! I’m always expected to be the bigger person! I’m always expected to put my feelings aside because she’s had it so freaking hard! Forget that!”

Noah returned with the carryout.

“Y’all can have this.” She jumped up to leave and almost passed out.

“Randi, you can’t drive home like this.”

She’s swaying back and forth by just standing there.

“I already told you, Risa, I’m grown. I can drive home naked if I want to.”

She is not getting behind anybody’s wheel like this.

“Randi, give me your keys.”

Is she staring me down and giving me the silent treatment? Hilarious. “I’m not moving until you give up your keys.” Still nothing. “I guess you don’t want to leave.” I can be just as stubborn as she is. I’ll just have to finish eating standing up. She’s really burning now. I think she would shoot fire out of her eyes, if she could.

“Why are you two standing?”

“Fine. Kenny, can you take me home?”

“What? I just sat down.”

“Then stand back up.”

He did not like that attitude, but if I know Kenny, he’s going to take her anyway.

“It would be nice to eat.”

“Take it with you. Here.” Randi gave her carryout to him. “Take mine.”

“What if I don’t want your food?”

“You know what? Why don’t you just stay here and I’ll drive myself?”

Kenny really looked at Randi like he was trying to determine if she could drive. I don’t know why because she can

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barely stand still. Her eyes are red and half closed. She tried to reach into her purse and get her keys three times, not realizing that the zipper was closed.

“Give me your keys.” Kenny put his steaming hot meal in the same carryout as Randi’s.

Is he really going to eat all of that? Disgusting.

“Can one of you or both of you pick me up later?”

“No problem.”

“Yeah, we got you.”

“Thanks and before I forget . . .” Kenny gave Courtney two hundred dollars. “Dinner’s on me.”

“Get dessert while you’re at it,”

Did Randi just throw her money at me?

“Excuse me.”

She is maaad and so wasted. I’m surprised she can roll her eyes like that without passing out.

“I still love you, cousin.”

“Whatever Risa. Kenny, I’m at the car.”

“I’m right behind you. Ladies, I’ll see you in a minute.”

“Bye . . . I guess it’s just you and me a-gain, cuz.”

“Dang, Courtney! Try not to sound so disappointed.”

I’m kidding.

“I just wish we could get through one of these get-togethers without the drama.”

She’s serious.

“Good luck with that.” Now I’m serious. “With Randi and Zakia in the same room, drama will follow.”

“I just wish we could end one evening on a good note.”

Okay . . . Let’s try this.

“Well, Kyle asked me to marry him.”

Look at her face light up. She’s excited.

“Oh my God, Risa! That’s great news . . . right? . . . What did you say? You said yes, right? Please tell me that you said yes!”

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“I told him . . . that I would think about it.” Maybe if I look down at my plate I can avoid her what-the-heck-is-wrong-with-you look . . . It’s not working. “Come on, Courtney. You know how I feel about marriage. I don’t trust it.”

“Do you love him?”

“Yes.”

“Can you imagine your life without him?”

“No.”

“Then what’s the problem?”

“It’s not that easy, Courtney.”

“What’s not that easy?”

“It’s not as easy as falling in love, getting married, and living happily ever after. There are other things to consider.”

“What other things?”

“Felice loved my dad and married him and look what happened to them.”

“Marisa, please. Kyle is not your dad and you are not your mom. This will work out.”

“What makes you so sure?” She didn’t see what Felice let happen to her . . . the way she let my dad dominate her. She never stood up to him, and as Marcus always says, ‘Family traits are inherited,’ and I can’t go out like that.

“Look at me and Daniel. We’re happy, and we’ve been married for years.”

“Three years.”

“That’s still more than one.”

“Yeah, two more.”

“Which still makes it yearsss. Just talk to Kyle. Let him know why you’re stalling . . . then say yes.”

“I don’t know.”

“What don’t you know?”

“I just don’t know!”

“Then leave him!”

## Tanya Harris

What?

“Exactly. So straighten up your little scared face, go to that man, and tell him yes.”

This is why Courtney and I are so close. Whether I need an ear from a sister, scolding wisdom from a mother, or that silliness of a best friend, she’s always there for me.

“Can I get you ladies anything?”

Right on cue.

“We’re fine.”

“Yeah, Ma.”

Ma??

“I can see that. I’ll just leave this here.”

“No need to leave it here.” Courtney gave him enough to cover the check, and he was gone again. “Our waiter has a crush on you.”

“Whatever, Courtney.”

“Yeah, Ma.”

She is so crazy.

Noah came back with a receipt and two more carryout trays.

“Is there anything else I can do for you? Get you some dessert, a drink, my cell number?”

Whispering is not sexy.

“You should have used that one on my cousin Randi.”

“Nah, that’s all right. I’m trying to get wit’ chu.”

He did NOT just lick his lips. He is trying so hard to be sexy, and it is NOT working.

“And I ain’t afraid of an older woman, either.”

Did he just grab the crotch of his sagging pants and call me an OLDER WOMAN?

“I can handle you.”

“Not even if you had the manual, sweetie.” THAT made him mad. He used several descriptive words that I can’t repeat

## *Supposedly* **Broken**

before leaving. “Wrong. Just wrong . . . Before I forget . . . we’re celebrating your engagement tomorrow, on Randi.”

Yeah, right. As soon as Courtney sees Randi, she’s going to give that money back to her.

“Are you riding to Randi’s?”

“Yeah, I guess I could ride with you. I wouldn’t want you to be by yourself and go into labor or something.”

“Please don’t let Daniel hear you say that. I have enough restrictions as it is.”

“Is one of them driving?”

“Girl, get in the car and let’s go.”

“. . . Hey, Courtney . . . Do you still have Marcus’s number?” I know I make Courtney uncomfortable when I ask her about Marcus. She feels like she should help me improve our relationship because I’m her cousin, and that’s what I want. At the same time, she wants to help him keep his distance because he’s her cousin, and that’s what he wants. She’s so caught in the middle.

“Yeah, but are you sure you want it . . . It’s no secret that he’s trying to stay distant.”

“Not too distant . . . You have it.”

“Yeah, but I got it from his girl—”

Yeah, I caught that. Don’t look over here, just start explaining.

“I . . . we . . . Daniel and I bumped into them . . . at the mall.”

That sounds like a lie. She’s trying to hide something. Look how nervous she is.

“And how long ago was this?”

“I’m not exactly sure.”

Another lie. I know she’s lying because when she tells the truth, she is much more definitive.

“How long have they been dating?”

Tanya Harris

“No clue.”

Finally, the truth.

Do they live together?”

“I think so.”

That’s definitely a lie.

“So what did you think . . . of his girl?”

“She’s really nice . . . or at least it seemed that way . . .  
from the short time that we were together . . .”

“At the mall?”

“Yeah.”

Uh-huh.

“What else?”

“She actually reminds me of you.”

Whatever.

“She’s tall and athletic. She’s very career-oriented, silly,  
sarcastic, stubborn—”

“Stubborn? Who are you calling stubborn?”

“You! You know you don’t give on ANYTHING.”

“Whatever.”

“The two of you act so much alike you could be sisters.”

Interesting.

“So does he love her?”

There’s that nervous look again.

“It seemed that way.”

“What made it seem that way?”

“Umm, they’re . . . engaged.”

Engaged? My brother is engaged, and I have NEVER met  
the girl he plans on marrying. “Wow.” Does she even know about  
me? I’ve never met her, never heard about her, never saw pictures  
of her . . . I’m going to cry.

“Ri-sa . . .”

## *Supposedly* **Broken**

And I'm not mad at Courtney for not telling me . . . I know she's in his ear about making things right between us. She's trying; he's just not listening . . . wow.

"Do you still want to go inside or do you want to wait in the car while I see if Kenny's ready?"

Are we at Randi's already?

"Yeah. I'm fine. . . Hey, Courtney . . ."

"Yeah?"

"You learned all that at the mall?" She's not drinking or eating anything. Why is she choking?

"Can you guys give me fifteen minutes?"

Kenny must be working in the study and watching the feed from the security camera at the front gate to know that we're here and to get to the door so quickly. "I'm working on my brief and I don't want to stop until I'm finished."

"That's good, Kenny. We'll wait."

Uh-huh. I never saw a pregnant woman move so fast. She's practically inside and I'm just getting out of the car. I'll let her slide for now. We'll talk later.

"Look what the cat drug in." I love Randi's place. She has the highest ceilings and I just love her hardwood floors. Did I mention that her place is tri-level? She has a home theater downstairs that puts *The Regal* to shame. It's beautiful.

"Does Kenny know you're here?"

Kenny had gone back into the study before Randi came downstairs.

"He let us in, but he asked that we wait while he finishes his brief."

Randi was no longer dressed in her designer evening wear . . . She's now dressed in her designer lounging wear . . . right down to the slippers. I'm not mad at her at all. My question is . . . Why is she still drinking? Randi raised her glass to take a sip, and Courtney took the glass right out of her hand. Randi gave

## Tanya Harris

Courtney the evil eye for a minute then, just let it drop. Interesting.

“I thought Eric let you in.”

“Eric?”

“Flavor of the month.”

“Did somebody call me?”

I don't know where Randi finds them but goodNESS, she finds some FINE brothers. He's not solid muscle, but you can tell he spends time in the gym . . . in-deed.

“Yeah, I did.”

I have to admit . . . Courtney and I are watching this dude way too closely. Neither one of us is single annd he's Randi's man . . . but he is FOINE and tall! She's standing on the second step from the foyer, he's standing on the foyer floor, and he is barely lifting his head to kiss her.

“What do you need?”

Randi whispered something that caused him to look at her like she was standing on the wrong side of a breakfast menu.

“Have you met my cousins Marisa and Courtney? Ladies, this is Eric.”

He has nice eyes too.

“Nice to meet you.”

And a deep voice. He gave Randi the biscuit-and-syrup look again before going upstairs.

“Girl, where did you find him?” Daniel and Kyle would kill us if they knew we were watching another man leave the room.

“And how serious are you?”

Randi doesn't talk about her personal life with ANYONE. She will avoid it at ALL costs. You can see her searching for something to say to turn the spotlight away from her.

“Oh, Courtney, did Risa tell you she's getting married?”