

You are My Angel

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Hope gave the ability of a generation of a dance team before their time. The yawning of the music and the aura from the crowd made the dance team visible. The pitiful short yellow and black shorts and yellow half t-shirts created a dance signature that was favorable to the audience. The dance team's moves common to the 70's and 80's were unique as they danced to the rhythm of Madonna and Prince. The black dance group was favorable to the black community because they introduced dance body movements, hand movements and feet movements never in the dance formation or combination in Vegas. Before the 70's whites would dance using fancy hand movements, while blacks were known for seductive body movements and Hispanics and Asians used fancy foot work. To belong to the street dancers dance team meant you had to be good. Most dancers' stereotypy was that they had big thighs, big but, light skin, long hair, big breast and you just about had to have juice to get on the dance team. Tryouts consisted of doing turns, pirouettes, and jazz and ballet movements. The team was a group of street dancers. The team had to know the latest street dances, rebuttal cheers and be able to dance to the instruction of the dance instructor without getting tapped out. If a dancer after routine after routine were tapped out, they would not be on the team. The dancers had to pass a live audition and then come before a panel to discuss what being on the team meant to them. The team captain would give a big speech and then tell us to take our hand and pat our backs to have accomplished this. I made the team. There were three mottoes the team had: better respect, better represent and you better recognize. Everyone knew this.

The team would gather every morning at 6 AM for practice. The dance team captain expected the team leader to have music handy as well as new dance moves every time the group met. Once the captain saw this she would combine the dance moves to the beat of the music to create the team dance routine before game, parade or competition. One and two and one and two, three four, three four... the team was prepared. Kudos to the team. It was the first time that the street dancers performed in the battle of the bands. There was always someone in the audience who questioned the ability of the team by asking them to leave. In order to be captain of the team, you had to have the team confidence and support to make the team work. The team was prepared and well organized. Our team was competitive. We were disqualified from performing in this competition because our team captain was guilty of stealing our dance routine from another group. This was a disappointment, when some of our group would give our routine to other groups to break us up. Their penalty would to drop them from our team. Everyone wanted to be team captain and so at times their was dishonesty. It got so that the captain would get a routine together before the competition. The team knew the routine, the captain leads and the team follows. The day of the national competition, I was not allowed to perform because of my race. We won this competition. The next year, our team entered the competition; our team was discriminated against because we were a rookie team. I paid money for the team to perform. This time I was allowed in the competition. Our rivals from the battle of the bands were tied for first. Their team cheated in the first round of competition. They copied our routine. We were so upset we were ready to fight. The team leader taught us to fight with our dance routine and not our fist. We knew the routine. The team captain leads and we follow. We won the prize because we were a good team.

1. SUMMER MEMORIES

It was a hazy day. It was no ordinary day. A fog overcast down on a small town in Mississippi. It was predicted the uncertainty of a storm to come. Sheri was in no mistaken mood of discovery. She was hot. She was together and had it made. Her hair was always right. Her dress was well cultured. Her attitude was preppie. Sheri was no ordinary girl. She indeed was special. Today

would make a difference in her life. It had been mid-noon and a heavy overcast of dark sky set the mood. Sheri greeted her friends to coffee with a bagel at Starbucks. Diane presently pretended to be Sheri's friend. She was on a mission. They had the kind of friendship driven by competition of who could out speak who, only Sheri could bark the loudest and Diane could had small talk with a little bite. Each of Sheri's friends had much play. They had many boyfriends and believed in playing the field. Sheri never believed in playing games. Sheri had the same boyfriend since college. "What's up, chicks?" exclaimed Sheri. They all replied, "Me!" and they laughed. Kim kept quiet. Sheri wondered, "What is wrong with you, girl? Why so quiet?" Kim proclaimed with a long face that she lost her best friend. Sheri knew she acted differently lately and had to go deeper to find out what was going on. Doris padded Kim's back, "It'll be all right girl. Just wait." As if she knew something. Late that evening, rainfall trickled from the sky. Doris found something in Kim's journal giving secret information about a bad relationship with Kim's XO. Doris found she wrote letters in her journal as if she was talking to (him)? The journal talked about how Diane crept with Sheri man of 5 years and how she hoped it would work out and that she did not want to hurt Sheri. She took the pregnancy stick and was pregnant. Doris called up one of her friends dreaming up a scheme to set the record straight of events to happen. Her best friend David was gay and acted as if he knew had to dream of vengeful devious schemes. Everyone knew this about him.

Thunder escaped passes a dust of wind as if rain met its mate. Doris and David planned to reveal the secret to Sheri that her best friends, Chris, went on the down low with Kim and were expecting a child. They planned for confessions to be made at the house party on Sheri anniversary. Dian felt if she had to find out the juice had to explode at the right time. They planned to show diary and all that happened that led up to breaking them up hoping she would leave this cheater and ending her friendship.

Sheri was so in love she said she had planned to marry Chris. Kim was always jealous of Sheri. Sheri had everything she wanted including a good man. Kim would embellish attitude at times. Sheri would give Kim the clothes off her back to help her cousin out. Kim knew this. Kim always felt pretentious. She wanted more. She wanted what Sheri had and so she stole her man with a baby. How naïve a scam to get ahead.

Sheri's friends planned the works, as usual, for Sheri anniversary party. Everyone would be her guest. It had been cold and snow fell from the heavens above. It was winter and the day planed had as much doubt and confusion. Champaign was poured by the host to give a toast to the glorious occasion. To their surprise; Chris got on one knee when Doris came up with the diary questions to propose the toast. David exploded with the truth before any more details were let out. Doris got her face slapped by Kim as she ran outside. Sheri started to cry and told everyone to leave. "It is not the time for this," thought Doris. "Well, well," thought Sheri. "How could you, of all people do this to me?" Sheri asked Chris, "When I expected more out of you. I thought you were special?" "And now leave me destitute with mixed blood by your cousin?" By the look of Chris stoic face expression, it looked like he had some explaining to do. Doris and David scheme was a cold game to play on family. They knew this now. It was not the right time; but something had to be said. A cry of silence dispersed energy of the moment to gesture innocence had broken ties to bitterness. Sheri just did not get it. She knew how much she loved Chris and had to let him make a decision or the right choice and until he had made a decision she must wait.

Chris told Sheri that he was sorry. While Sheri was keeping busy, she lacked keeping company in her man. Chris needed someone there for him and only Kim could keep him company as a close friend.

Amber planned a baby shower for Kim. Sheri picked up pink and blue clothes she thought would look right on her great grandniece or nephew. The dark past of deception left the aria with hope and faith. It was important that joy would overcome hate in spite what happened. Chris and Kim were making the relationship work due to the baby.

Many tearful years had passed since Sheri could be herself again. She kept a keen eye on her friends for now on. She had to watch her back from devious friends. It became hard to trust. Sheri knew she was different and because of that she made enemies fast. It was this that Sherifound

why her friends played the field. They were waiting to choose from the first real thing to come and then they would have found true happiness.

2. COMPANIONS

It was imaginable. It was that thing. The notion of remarkable imagery. It was a mark like no other mark that has an imprint on my mind. It is a mark that has traveled throughout history. A mark of burdens. It represents character. It describes a movement. It was no ordinary mark. No. It was a mark that was passed down from generation to generation. It was a mark of indignation. It was a ridicule of hatred. People have been spit on, cursed at and beaten and that mark represented a movement. It was a mark of persecution. Where witches have gone on trial for neglecting social standards. The mark stood obsolete from the pen marks. A spider's web draped from the wall. A cob web dangled from the wall unnoticed. But this mark; represented all the pain my ancestors faced throughout history to be recognized through this mark. The mark was someone disturbing because I could not figure it out. It was different. A wall did not deserve to be so distinguished. It was different than anything I had ever come across. It bothered me to discover something that represented a rite of passage. It was a journey in time. It described the evolution of man slowly making its mark in history. How a mark could elude me so much pleasure. I was pleased to see something different that reminded me of my past that I could not quite understand the truth behind it. The imagery eluded my imagination. I stared at the mark on the wall and it had moved me. It made me feel welcome. No other wall in the house had been so privileged to having this mark. The mark had a favorable impression to me. I saw my personality and years of undulation that made me cry, made me angry which resulted in laughter. The mark on the wall represented the conflict between race and gender. I know it represented indignation and denial to conformity. To get excited; it represented the right to protest because it granted me the right to do so. The mark actually made me fearful. I was scared to reveal this mark to the world. It would have to be kept a secret. If anyone knew this secret, man would destroy the purpose behind it. I decided to cover the mark with year of frustration. I would imagine it never existed. The more and more I wanted to hide it, the power behind the mark was noticeable. I could not hide it. No. It was too relevant to hide. Other people have seen the mark. It was prevalent it existed. No one figured it out like I did. It is amazing how so many people passed this wall and never noticed how beautiful a mark in history had changed man. No one could relate to it. It never crossed their minds that such a mark reflected their fate. The mark on the wall will leave its mark in history and historians will make gestures without psychiatrist really studying the beauty of it.

3. THE ABUSE

I can recall endless nights, lying on the floor of my bed room, crying in love with the wrong man.

Tupac asked, "Why do we hurt our women, why do we beat our women, why do we abuse our women?"

I walk passed the store everyday hoping he will notice me. I actually dress up for the occasion of being noticed by him.

The last time I saw him he was married. With my luck he has a family with small children. For the least, I can manage not breaking up a happy home.

He wore those same khaki pants. His shirts were various colors that complemented his skin tone. He wore army cut shoes. His head was shaven in a Marcus Garvey cut and he wore a go-tee mustache and beard. I admit he was dedicated to his wife.

He always wore a wedding band. He had a harru chest and arms. If only I could hold my composure. When he is around, I get nervous trying to contain my sanity as I watched his muscular physique. He had broad shoulders and a really tight but, just like a model out of a magazine. Whenever I saw him my heart could skip a beat, while I remained unnoticed.

Gary and I had not spoken much. He was too busy with other things. I remained unnoticed. I often wondered why he paid much attention to caressing me with his hands. I did not understand. It had been the first time I was noticed by a man. He would verbally abuse me from time to time. I ignored this and followed my heart. I thought this is the right man for me. If only I could forgive an excuse to have a burning desire for something that was too true to be.

The last I saw him, he was pleading me to come work with him.

“Angela,” he says, “You are one of my best cashiers.”

I could not accommodate working for him. Never mix business with pleasure and besides with all the drama going on in the store, I dare not go back. I did not want to get my feelings hurt.

He headed off to work.

I spent most of my days alone trying to get his attention blinded left unnoticed. I was not good enough and it hurt. I could not understand I was being played. He was after one thing and that was sex. He acted this with all women.

“Come on Angela, we miss having you.” Gary said.

“You do not understand.” I replied.

“You’re the best.” Gary said.

“It’s better this way.” I thought to myself. “I would only cause more problems for me.” “He cannot see how other girls hang all over him. And he is married and carries on. I was only a statistic.”

“Hi, Kris.” Kris is his wife. “I do not want her to think I am after her husband.”

When Kris was around bitterness imitated some bitter confusion as if I betrayed my feelings for ignorance. My hands began to trimmer and I also felt empowered with jealousy for being lonely and not having a man.

My brother said, “Look sis, you need to take care of yourself. You need to lose weight, get your nails and hair done and smell nice. You will never find a man looking like you are.”

My aunt said, “Niece, there is nothing you can do with a married man.

“How they pitied me about my appearance.” I thought.

“You need to be more focused on reality. Yea. Take a reality check and someone will come that is right for you.” Mom said.

For the first time in my life, I had a mission to find happiness. I was doing this for me. I needed this because I knew if I took care of myself, others would like me more. It would be the new me. I started clearing my wardrobe. I began to change eating right and dieting. I feel men started to notice me. It was this time that Gary was off my want list.

I felt less vulnerable. Before when Gary asked me to do things, I would do it just so he would like me. All the time Gary made remarks about my weight and appearance, I felt ashamed that I was not as attractive as his wife. I let Gary use my mind, only to humiliate and embarrass me.

The delusions began to fade.

Gary always told me that I was not about nothing? How does this feel? Insecure? I belittled myself for someone who never cared about who I really am.

All I could do is cry until this moment. I was at church and the preacher touched my heart with his sermon. Let that be a symbol to everyone. “There is much more to it in life” The preacher said.

“Mind if I take you to dinner?” A voice approached me from the congregation. “I wanted to tell you that I admire your demeanor. You are special.” When I looked up, there was this man. He appeared humble and kind. It was someone I could trust.

I looked into his glaring eyes and said, “The time has come.” I was asked out on my first date. It was the first time in life I realized, taking care of myself made a difference.

“We have a lot in common.” Tony said as we began to get along.

I could not contain myself. It was the reward God had promised me.

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Tony was someone warm that I could accept that he liked me for being a kind person who cares for others. Some men look at women who would look good on his arm. I felt now that I was one of them.

Tupac said, "Hold your head up. You are appreciated."

To think of how many women allow a man to use them for sex. Too many women let men get away with being a player that they fail to recognize the pain that lies within their hearts.

We women accept every violence we could to the body, except to walk away and be true to ourselves.

Tony and I are close friends now and sometimes all you need is a true friend who listens.

And the Lord answered my call.

4. TOGETHER WE WILL BE ONE

I thought I had you in the palm of my hand, when I made you buy nice things for me. I thought I had you tied around my little pinky, when you bent over backwards to please me.

We are all she has and does not realize it. I call her Misty. I have known her for some time. She has a heart of gems and does not know how loved by many she is.

Do you know who I am? I took advantage of you. For years, I controlled you and you obeyed me to have me.

Misty can make a blind man idolize her great personality. She is sweet and easy going. We all enjoy having her around. It is her man that needs replacing. He buys her nice things. We wish she was more independent. Michael is only using her. One day it will cost her life.

Our relationship was unbinding. The burdens I held for you were reassuring.

It has been months and it appears she is getting weaker. The bruises he gives her, she covers it up with Maybelline. It is only a mask for what she is covering up. The real mask is having an abusive relationship.

I was confident you were happy being used. You are so insecure that you needed me to remind you that pleasure are what determined who you were.

How long can she do the unexpected? Stacy is defying God by so much greed. She fails to understand that everything happens for a reason. If she stays to long with Michael, she will have to pay for it.

You meant nothing in my life. I only wanted a new pair of shoes or a new purse. Everything I own, you bought for me.

It is God's calling the eagerness to feel less alone. She must welcome her conscience to understand it is wrong to use her body. God gave a girl a body that is her temple. Even the misguided understands.

I represented your identity. You were merely proud to have me in your possession.

I made you glow. I wore your bling, bling. I made you the man you are. Other men envied you because of me.

The irony between what we had was nothing but a dark humid hole.

You beat me and verbally abused me for the moment. I could not absorb your manly pride. Every time you beat me you stole a piece of me.

It was then I wondered if my life was worth the fortune. I wondered at what price I would take to lose my life over glory.

Moments like this had its reservations. She felt guilty for God could not bear a jealous man. I close my eyes to find joy in bitter insanity. The price I had to pay to live. Her conscience began to talk to her. She began to turn away and ask for God's guidance.

5. THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU

Vegas, sin city, an antidote to drugs. Young Stevie, age 8, was the running boy for the gang. He would look out as a scout for the police. Whenever someone was arrested the whole neighborhood knew about it and the church was there to bail them out.

Early by day, John would blow his horn at Alex window, to wake him so the boys could all hang out.

The boys walked pass a house that was well built, more so than the other houses on the block and at the house was a lexus that the boys admired. The neighbors knew the drug houses in the neighborhood and were told of the danger there.

Just the other day, someone stole a car and no one snitched for fear of reveries would kill them.

Simon was lurking out on the corner holding a small bag crumpled in his hand. Alex approached Simon.

“What up, homey?” said Simon as they exchanged drugs for money while they did a quick hand shake. They would pat each other on the back to recognize they were friends.

In the heart of the city, Alex must reinvent what it means to survive. A suggestion; he must lay low for a while. The police were out.

Later on Alex planned to meet up with Simon to meet the girls. At the block party, there was loud music and wet t-shirt contest. Alex could always find his choice of women. Sheila promised to meet at Simon house later on. Alex knew the girls who were the young virgins and the freaks wanting to use him.

Alex was in the mix of things. The beginning of the day he found himself caught in a struggle, wrestling with the neighbors about something small. The struggle was over how his friends planned to take his money to buy a few eight balls so they can chill at the corner liquor store while smoking weed laced with cocaine.

Alex knew the drill. He must be efficient. He must carry the weight and give in to them. He opted out of being involved; but he had to. He had no one else. This was his family.

Tina, Alex mom, had high expectations for her son. He made good grades and was fairly attractive. It was his senior year of high school and she depended on him to take care of the family.

When Alex mom stepped in the room, the boys snatch the money from Alex pocket and all of the boys ran out the house laughing. His mom suspected nothing.

Alex stumbled across Simon in the street. “It’s on.” Exclaimed Simon. Alex went to the kitchen where did cocaine together, sniffing it all inside of them. They were high.

Simon took Alex to the back where a girl was loaded on drugs. She did not know how she got there she was so high. The girls had to submit to men for drugs because they could not pay and now it was Alex turn to do her. She must have performed on three men all in one day. The boys played sports and it was the groupie’s way to fame.

Alex would not know that night might cost him his life.

Sam recruited the girls through their college dating business. They were bound getting caught. Young girls would pose nude for them to date an athlete star. Doing drugs was a part of their drug business.

At the park Alex ran into trouble. The black bandits were trying to take over his turf and he could not allow that to happen. When the black bandits saw the bandanas colors exposed, it was time for them to leave.

It was common of a gang initiation for gangs to crawl one after another on top of a girl to make her a part of their family. The others girls in the house knew the procedure.

It was common city life to convince others this is how it is.

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The black bandits were a new gang from California. They brought their group to take over other groups in Vegas. Whenever someone new came along it was standard that they join a present gang instead of launching on their own. It would cause too much confusion; but they left a message when they shot up Simon's house and killed a few members. Just by doing so, they declared war.

Silence is a lesson of death defying consequence with circumstance that radiate hate. Alex had the opportunity to be someone great. Alex used his mind on technicality that may cost him his life.

There is a saying; it takes a village to raise a child. Do not take my niceness for stupidity. There is another saying for young hopeful minds to use their intelligence in school, be productive and come back to the community to teach others to being successful with their God given talent. Do not blow your life with things that can be harmful.