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#### A Total-E-Bound Publication

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A Marriage of Convenience
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Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

#### A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

Aliyah Burke

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#### **Dedication**

To Angie who is watching from Heaven.

Thanks for the wings.

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#### **Prologue**

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Ayanna Barker moved in time with the fairground's loud music as she stood in line at the beer tent. For a brief moment, the skies were silent as the air show regrouped for the final demonstration which would be followed by a huge fireworks display. So for the time being, it was solely the music that pulsed through her.

Taking a step forward as the line progressed, Ayanna shivered at a light touch on her back. Looking over her shoulder, she met the deep chocolate eyes of the tall, handsome man behind her, and her mouth grew dry.

He towered over her, yet she didn't feel threatened, at least not in a physical way. Sexual ... it was way off the charts, he oozed sexual prowess and it was a bit intimidating. A dark grey shirt wrapped his muscled torso and his lower body had been poured into a pair of light blue jeans that had a hole above one knee. As her gaze travelled down, she noticed the grey hiking boots on his feet. Not an inch of him was ignored by her stare; he was just too damn fine.

Moving her eyes back to his, Ayanna was blown away by the primal lust blazing in his gaze. Shoving back a similar reaction, she turned and focused her attention back on the line before her. That would be a great man to have a fling with. God, my pussy is dripping just from that slight touch. I can't imagine what a night with him would be like.

Michael Taylor had been talking on his cell phone when he'd stepped into the busy beer tent line. A jostle from behind had almost shoved him into the woman in front of him. His hand had swiped across the bottom of her back and in that second, everything else had faded away. Electrical currents had showered him. The second her soulful brown eyes had landed on his, it was as if he'd just hit mach one in his jet.

He'd stood still as her eyes had travelled hungrily over him. Part of him had wanted to preen while more of him had wanted to lift her up, carry her away from everyone and kiss her senseless. And keep going from there.

What the hell am I thinking? I don't know this woman, but damn if I don't want to.

She wore a purple open-backed shirt that perfectly offset the nutmeg hue of her skin and a pair of hip hugging black jeans. He saw sandals on her feet and if he moved his head just so, he could see the dark purple on her toenails.

While their physical connection was over almost immediately, the ardent impression still lingered between them. He wasn't blind to the desire swirling in her eyes no matter how she tried to pretend indifference.

Paying for her beer along with his, it seemed only natural to settle his large palm against the smooth, dark skin of her back as they left the overcrowded beer tent.

He had no problem following her. The gentle scent on her skin reached out and wound around him, making him yearn for more of her. He craved to find out if her perfume was just around her neck or if the tempting smell went all the way to her feet.

When she stopped to allow a group of people to pass, he leaned forward and murmured, "Michael," into her ear.

Her head turned, positioning her full tempting lips a hairsbreadth from his, and she whispered, "Ayanna."

He kissed her. He had no choice. Her mouth had teased him as it formed her name and challenged him to sample her lips. She tasted divine.

The innocent kiss quickly evolved into something more. Michael hungered for all that this woman offered. He dominated the kiss, using his tongue to sweep throughout the recesses of her mouth.

His cock swelled and dug into her side as Michael plundered her mouth. He groaned his pleasure as the kiss lengthened.

The roar of jets in the sky rumbled around them and put a miniscule distance between their bodies as he struggled for restraint.

Ayanna's lips were swollen from the force of their kiss.

"I want you," he stated bluntly as he watched the rapid rise and fall of her chest. She ran her tongue over her lips.

"Yes," she breathed huskily.

"After the show." Taking her hand, he led her to a vacant spot on the ground. They watched the show like any other couple, holding hands, exchanging kisses, and occasionally staring into each other's eyes. As the park had begun to empty after the show, Michael kept one muscled arm around her, anchoring them together. They'd stopped at the entrance. Pressing her against the cool wall of a ticket booth, Michael ran his hands through her short hair. Strong legs

settled on either side of her thin body, eliminating any means of escape.

Courtesy of the night sky his eyes appeared black as obsidian but as gentle as Egyptian cotton.

Ayanna had no intention of going anywhere. This was her night to give in and have a fling. And the man whose breath still held the faint smell of beer was the one her body craved.

"Do you need to tell anyone goodbye?" His voice pulled like crushed velvet over her skin.

"No, my friend saw me with you." Ayanna looked up. "Unless you're leaving alone."

A pleased, yet arrogant grin crossed his face. "Let's go."

The door closed with a click, but the couple embracing barely noticed. Michael and Ayanna's mouths had rarely left one another during the walk from the parking lot to the hotel. Inside the elevator, he'd begun kissing her again, not caring they were in public, being stared at. He had what he desired in his arms.

In the hall, it had taken a passer-by clearing his throat for Michael to remember he hadn't yet reached Ayanna's room. But, he'd hardly slowed in his quest to dominate his lover's mouth. He'd moved his powerful body slightly and effortlessly lifted the woman into his arms, opting to carry her the rest of the way.

Now, as the door to her room shut behind them, Michael reluctantly let the captivating woman in his arms stand on her feet. Both of his hands cupped her face as he lingered at her luscious mouth before slowly drawing away from the nectar he classified as his own ambrosia.

"Do you want a drink?" he asked.

Ayanna stepped closer, eliminating the distance he'd put between them. "No."

"Tell me one thing, Ayanna," Michael ordered as he watched her fingers trail up his arm.

"What?" She never spoke above a whisper.

"Where do you live?"

Ayanna hadn't expected that question. She didn't want to tell him. There was something else she wished from this man, and talk wasn't necessarily high on the list. She wanted one hell of an explosive night of sex with him.

"Around," she hedged as her hands moved from his arms to the hem of his taut shirt. Slowly, she pulled it up, baring the golden-tan planes of his hard chest.

Her body was jerked against his as his mouth covered hers with a ferocity that stunned them both. He was claiming her, branding her, marking her for the rest of their lives.

She shivered as his masculine taste filled each of her senses. Her knees were shaky and her heart beat erratically. At the same time, she felt perfectly safe. This large, powerful man who could snap her in half with his strength made her feel safer than she'd been in her entire life. No other man had ever evoked such powerful and intense reactions in her body, physical or emotional. She shivered as his touch electrified her. Until she had been exposed to *his* intoxicating touch, the idea of actually going through with a one-night stand hadn't been feasible. As Ayanna stared at this walking sex ad, she realised that was *all* she was thinking about.

Wetness pooled between her thighs as she moaned into his mouth. Her teeth grazed the top of the tongue thrusting inside her. Her skin felt like it was being eaten alive with flames. She wanted more. She wanted the hard ridge digging into her belly to slide deep inside her.

Her body bent backwards as Michael continued to plunder her mouth. Each stroke of his tongue brought more wetness to her cleft and she craved more. As he braced her with one arm, his other hand palmed her stomach and inched its way under her ribbed shirt.

His callused hand on her sensitive belly was enough for her internal muscles to clench with longing. She whimpered into his mouth as her grip tightened on his collar.

Thanks to his touch, exhaustion from her emotions plagued her body and there was so much more to come for them in this night.

"Ayanna," Michael crooned into her mouth as his hand moved further up her torso.

He kept his touch light as his fingers danced along her ribs until they met with the cool satin covering the underside of her firm breasts. He skimmed along the tempting globes and her body tensed. Each time she shivered, he felt his cock twitch in response. Slowly bringing her back to a full-standing position, Michael ran his gaze over the enchantress before him. Silken skin the colour of rich nutmeg, brown eyes smoky with passion, full lips, parted and swollen and begging for him to sample again. He couldn't resist her.

He dragged his hands down her sides then back up, bringing along the bottom hem of her shirt. His fingers

caressed the skin of her arms as he pulled her top off and dropped it to the floor.

"Jesus," he bit out. His mouth grew dry. She wore a pale lavender sateen bra and the way it complimented her body's natural rich colour made him almost erupt in his jeans. Dropping to his knees before her, Michael pressed featherlight kisses to her bared belly. His hands settled on her hips as his tongue dipped into the depression of her navel.

Her whimper was like a scream of ecstasy to his ears. Every breath he took brought the spicy scent of her arousal to his nose. Michael tightened his fingers on the waistband of her jeans as he fought for control.

He looked at her belly and noticed five freckles forming a circle. He traced them with his tongue as he unbuttoned her pants. Pulling them down her hips and legs, Michael groaned as her matching coloured boy panties were exposed. Tossing her pants to the side, he unfastened the delicate straps of her sandals.

When all she wore was her panty set, Michael stood and looked his fill. Incredible. Stunning. Gorgeous. Sexy as all hell.

The tightness in his pants snapped him from his thoughts.

Ayanna's body prickled with anticipation. Every hair stood on end and each synapse was alive with one identical reaction to the man before her. Wanton desire. Her panties were soaked, and he still wore jeans and hiking boots.

She eagerly explored his lightly haired chest. Her fingers memorised each dip and swell carved into his rock-solid torso.

As her nails scraped over his tight nipples and he groaned, a siren's smile crossed her face.

One hand travelled over the large bulge in his pants. Her fingers squeezed lightly as it twitched beneath her touch, and she licked her lips instinctively.

"Keep that up, and we won't be going slow." His deep voice slid over her and sent her to a higher state of arousal.

"You're the one still in boots, handsome." Ayanna dropped her hand to rest on his muscled butt cheek.

He gathered her close and kissed her furiously until her entire body went limp. "Ten secs and they'll be gone."

Eyes still heavy, Ayanna remained immovable as he made short work of his boots, stood and pulled her back into his embrace. Mouths reunited with enough heat to melt the arctic as they stumbled through the dim room to fall on the bed.

Ayanna couldn't remember removing her bra, but the way his mouth suckled upon her breasts made it irrelevant. He nipped, laved and made love to each breast until she thought she'd died. Her body shook from orgasms. She didn't know when one ended and the next began.

His devilish mouth moved between her breasts before trailing down her flat belly. His hands were gentle as they removed her panties. She had no warning as Michael's mouth covered her bald pussy, ran his tongue up the slit and began to feast.

"Ah!" she screamed to the room, her back arching as his tongue flicked mercilessly against her already swollen clit. When she moved he readjusted his body and continued his

endless assault. This man is going to kill me and he's still dressed.

Heaven. Michael lost his control as her glistening crux was exposed. Her pussy was completely shaved allowing her pleasure to be seen. This whole woman was magnificent. The heady scent that had tantalised him since they'd gotten into the car earlier filled him even more now. He held her wet panties in his hand and before him was a pussy whose swollen clit peeked through the hairless lips. He leaned forward to touch his tongue to her shiny nub then he slid his tongue into her wet heat.

"Oh my God!" Her cry wrapped around him.

His eyes fluttered as her essence filled his mouth. She tasted like spicy candy and he craved it. His cock throbbed painfully as he enjoyed her. He lapped at her thick cream.

Each swipe of his tongue, every suckle of his mouth, pulled a deep throaty cry from the exquisite beauty. He slid his arms under her smooth derriere and held her still so she couldn't writhe away from his touch.

The way her lithe body thrashed, how her cries filled the room, how her hands pressed against the back of his head keeping him where she wanted him ... It all made Michael want to dominate, claim, and possess Ayanna until she knew she belonged to him.

"Please Michael," she begged in a faint voice.

He shucked his jeans and boxers. Moving back up her body, he saw the longing in her eyes matched what he felt deep in his soul, a gut-wrenching need to be joined totally with her. Mixed in with the physical desire was something

else, something more, an emotion he hadn't experienced with another woman ever.

He picked up the condom packet, opened it and rolled it on his engorged shaft. He counted to gain control when her gaze landed on him and her pink tongue swiped over her lips.

Positioning his body between her spread legs, Michael almost lost his hard-won control when her hand touched his cock and guided it into her wet warmth. As her pussy welcomed him, Michael encountered euphoria and his body thrummed with electricity. Her muscled walls gripped him tightly as he slid fully into her body. The heat almost seared him. Images grew blurry as he sank until he could go no further.

"Fuck me!" he uttered on a harsh breath. The pleasure was almost too much.

"Oh, God!" Ayanna moaned and shuddered as another orgasm took her.

The rippling sensation snapped the tenuous hold Michael had on his control. He began to pump. Back and forth. Her body clutched at him as he withdrew, trying desperately to prevent his leaving, and conformed perfectly to his erection as he moved back inside.

Her panting grew louder as her hips gyrated and move up to meet his thrusts. Michael kissed her as his hips moved faster. Deeper. Harder. Her short nails dug into his back as he continued to pound into her.

"You feel so good, Ayanna," he muttered into her ear as he slid his hands under her shoulders and gripped the back of her head.

"Michael," she mewled.

"Tell me, baby." Sweat covered his body as he tried not to come before she reached her orgasm. Her body tightened around him. I want to partake of you without a condom on, Ayanna. I want to spill myself deep inside you.

"I'm ... I ... I'm..." Her words were garbled. Her actions weren't. Ayanna tightened her legs as her back arched in time with her climax. The waves of pleasure sailing through her propelled Michael over the edge of the cliff he'd been teetering upon. He came with a gravelled shout, his eruption longer than it had ever been before.

Collapsing beside her, he kissed her then disposed of the condom before gathering her back into his arms. They both lay in silence as their hearts slowed and their breathing returned to normal.

He knew they had the night and he wanted to enjoy her luscious body as much as he could. He also realised something else.

Something more meaningful than just sex had happened between them. More powerful than the flames that erupted where they'd touched, the intense experience between them had an undercurrent of destiny. It was almost as if the fates had tipped their hand and brought them together.

Ayanna was boneless and limp. And unsure. This was supposed to just be a good session of sex—which it had been—but her invading emotions threw her. The only thing she was sure of was that she wanted more. More of the pleasure Michael brought her.

His penis hardened against her as his lips moved over her ear. "Take a shower with me."

"Okay," she agreed. I can't get enough of his touch.

They walked to the bathroom, heedless of the clothes scattered on the floor of her hotel room. The heat lamp was switched on along with the fan before Michael turned on the water.

When he faced her, her breathing hitched. Goosebumps popped up along her body. His eyes watched her and they looked sleepy, but she knew ... she knew they were anything but. Her own gaze moved up and down his hard, naked body. His mouth-wateringly handsome body.

Unbidden, she reached for his fully erect cock and wrapped her fingers around it. His hiss of pleasure reached her, but she ignored it. She focused on what she held.

She swiped her thumb over the tip of the swollen head and it jumped in her palm. In her peripheral vision, Michael's hand clenched. She moved her other hand along the shaft, slipping down to the nest of dark hair at the base and up until it met the one that teased the head of his cock.

Drops of pre-cum were smeared with each pass of her thumb over his hard rod. It was like touching steel covered by warm silk. Ayanna dropped to her knees on the plush bathroom rug and replaced her thumb with her mouth. Her hands shifted down, one on his thick shaft and the other caressing his balls.

"Ayanna!" Michael's voice was hoarse. His rigid posture exposed the tendons of his neck.

Running her tongue under the bulbous head of his cock, Ayanna hummed against him vibrating the tip. But instead of waiting for a reply she moved down the shaft, taking more and more of him into her mouth. She continued to tease his scrotum as her mouth alternated its pressure.

He pumped his hips, driving himself into her while she kept her eyes on his face. His shout announced his release as he came deep in her throat. Before the sound faded, he had pulled her from the floor, kissed her, took her in the shower and proceeded to fuck her like there was no tomorrow.

The water cascading around them only added to the pleasure. The steam made it more exotic. Michael gripped her hips, as she faced him, her back against the wall.

He pulled out of her seconds before he came and spilled his seed onto the dark skin of her belly, only to have it washed away seconds later by the shower. Afterward, she let him carry her back to bed where he loved her all over again.

Every muscle ached, but this man was like a drug. She craved more. It was going to be hard to walk away in the morning.

As she rode him at her own pace, she looked at him again. His eyes spoke of more than just a one-night stand. Neither of them seemed to remember he wasn't wearing a condom. Neither of them seemed to care.

In the morning, however, when Ayanna woke, sore but content, she was alone. There was no sign of Michael Taylor anywhere. Staring at her reflection in the mirror she smiled sadly.

"That's what happens when you agree to a one-night stand."

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#### **Chapter One**

Michael opened the purse he'd found and searched for some identification so he could have the owner paged. As his tanned fingers slipped through the interior they passed a book of American poets—Edgar Allen Poe, Langston Hughes, Robert Frost, Walt Whitman, and more. He found a container of orange breath mints. A playbill for one of his favourite shows, *The Phantom of the Opera*, was crumpled up on the bottom and under that, he finally found an identification card. He immediately recognised the woman pictured on the Exchange employee card. She worked in the flower shop, but he'd seen her in the bookstore, as well.

Standing, he curled one hand over the muted purple purse and headed for the door. Not even the loud roar of the F-18s and other aircraft flying overhead distracted him from his 'mission'. As a pilot stationed here at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, the sounds were all common place to him.

Crossing the parking lot of NAS Oceana's main Navy Exchange, Michael fought the grin which almost crossed his suntanned face as he watched a few children walk past him in their 'I (heart) Jet Noise' tees. He knew he was receiving strange looks from people as he walked in the Exchange, carrying a purse, with no woman beside him, and for some reason it didn't bother him. Today was a good day.

It was summer in Virginia. Everything was hot, so it was nice to enter the air-conditioned building. He breathed a bit

easier without all the humidity in the air. Moving past the beauty salon, barbershop, GNC, and the bookstore, he headed directly to the floral department where he saw the woman he searched for.

"Can I help you?" she asked, coming towards him.

"I believe you dropped this outside, Ma'am."

"Oh, my goodness. I couldn't find it. It must have fallen out of my bag. I've been looking everywhere for my card to swipe, and I didn't..." she trailed off, apparently realising she was rambling. Clearing her throat, she muttered, "Thank you so much...?"

He smiled at her. "Taylor. Lieutenant Michael Taylor."

\* \* \* \*

In the bookstore, Ayanna smiled at the customers she was helping and handed them their purchases. "Have a great day," she said as they walked away.

Her gaze moved back across the corridor to the flower shop where a handsome man talked to Lauren. His faded jeans seemed to mould themselves to his lower half. A beige shirt hugged his torso and defined his upper arms as it conformed to them. A whisper of familiarity skated across her skin, but she shook it off.

"Figures," she muttered to herself. "She's either getting a dinner date or he's buying flowers for his wife." Allowing herself one lingering look at the dark-haired man, she walked over to a box of new inventory waiting for her attention and got back to work.

As she finished putting the last book on the stand specifically for military reading, Lauren entering the bookstore with a silly grin on her face as she walked.

"Hey, Ayanna," she said in her typical, upbeat manner.

"Lauren," Ayanna responded with a grin. "I saw that handsome man hanging over your counter."

A blush moved up her friend's face. "Oh, that ... that was Lieutenant Taylor."

"Ooohhhh," Ayanna teased. "And what are you doing with him later? Or should I say *to* him."

I knew a Taylor once, but that was a different lifetime ago.

"Shut up, you. He was returning my purse, well your purse. He was very impressed with its contents. The playbill, the poetry book..."

"Why would he be impressed with that?"

"I guess he doesn't meet many people who read American poets anymore."

Ayanna rolled her eyes. "And I suppose you told him the lead in *Phantom* was just *so* dreamy." The deepening flush on Lauren's face gave her the answer. Ayanna shook her head. She'd let Lauren borrow the purse for a date and was still waiting on the return of her items. Things she'd forgotten were in the purse at the time. "Shame on you for trying to pass off those things as yours."

"Well, I was just trying to make an impression."

Ayanna burst out laughing. She couldn't help it. "Can you even tell me one of the poets in that book?"

Collagen-injected lips pursed as Lauren thought.

With a friendly yet knowing smirk, Ayanna patted Lauren's arm as she moved to the counter and the customer who waited there.

Fifteen minutes later, Ayanna sat down outside the Exchange at the small table and took out her lunch. A few moments later, Lauren joined her and they chatted easily while they ate.

"Is Erma dropping off Devon today?" Ayanna smiled. "Yes. Yes, she is."

Devon Lamar Barker was her three-year-old son. Back when all she'd cared about were parties, she'd had gone to a Thunderbirds air show demonstration with a friend in Albuquerque while on a break from undergraduate school.

And had gotten pregnant.

There'd been a huge party. Lots to see. Lots to do. Well, only one for Ayanna. She'd met him at the beer tent. His name was Michael Kelly Taylor.

He was a handsome man. A few inches over six feet. Golden tan skin, all over. His hair was mocha brown and soft to touch. His dark, sensual, chocolaty gaze had felt like satin when it had touched her. He was beautifully constructed—a body that belonged in a sculptor's studio, chiselled from granite or marble. Yet, his touch had been warm and tender.

He'd told her he was staying in Albuquerque at Kirkland Air Force Base. She hadn't known what that meant exactly, but she'd gathered he was military. And assumed Air Force.

Honestly, she didn't care. It was a combination of things. The evening air, the buzz from alcohol, the fact she was wild and impulsive. All combined, it had left her with no desire to

leave his presence. Topping it all had been how the mere touch of his callused fingers sent tremors through her body.

Michael had kept her cradled against his chest during the firework display that had rounded out the night's festivities, his body keeping the cool desert air at bay. The memory of that night was imprinted on her soul.

"Ayanna, are you listening to me?"

Blinking rapidly, Ayanna shook her head, dragged back to the moment. "Sorry Lauren, I got lost there for a sec."

"From the dreamy expression on your face, I'd bet it was a guy."

Ayanna blushed. "Yeah, it was."

"Who?" Lauren asked, more than ready to dish some dirt with her friend.

"Devon's father."

A blonde eyebrow rose. "You haven't ever talked much about him. I guess I always assumed your relationship had ended badly."

A short bark of laughter slipped out. "Relationship? Let's just say I was being 'liberated' and such. Went to the Thunderbirds air show and the fireworks afterward. The rest was history."

Lauren opened and shut her mouth. "Is Devon's father military?" Her head cocked to the side in question.

Ayanna shrugged. "He said he was staying at Kirkland. To be honest ... I didn't care. I was at lot younger then, still trying to figure out what I wanted to do."

Lauren smirked. "Since I've met Devon, I'd say you *did* do something you wanted to."

Running a hand down her face, Ayanna narrowed her eyes. Leaning forward, she whispered in a conspiratorial tone, "I did and it was *wonderful*. I have never, and I mean never, felt like that."

"What happened between you two?" Lauren asked.

"What do you mean? We had a wonderful night and then ... parted ways."

"I mean, why didn't you tell him about Devon?"

"I didn't know until I was two months pregnant." Ayanna smoothed out her sandwich bag and put it back into her lunch container. "I had to settle down and get my life in order—and fast—so that's what I did."

"Were you scared he wouldn't-"

"No," Ayanna interrupted. "I didn't even think about him at all. The second I got the news I was pregnant, my whole world shifted. It was all about the precious life I carried. And has been ever since. Having Devon is the greatest thing that could have happened to me. Sure, I wish circumstances had been different. Like marriage beforehand, but it didn't happen that way."

She placed her empty water bottle inside the container as well. "I wasn't anywhere near New Mexico and didn't have extra money to attempt to find him. Okay, perhaps I was scared of rejection." Ayanna fiddled with her lunch box. "Perhaps I was scared to hear anything negative out of his mouth. I wanted to remember him as he was when we spent the night together. Passionate. Sexual. Erotic. Not angry and accusing. I had enough on my plate to deal with."

Lauren smiled softly and reached her hand across the round wire table. "I'm glad we became friends. And I am going to stop questioning you about this, because—" She pointed to the left.

Ayanna followed her friend's finger with her gaze and smiled. Erma, her babysitter who was really more like a grandmother, and her son were heading towards them. Devon churned his little legs as fast as he could, a silly grin on his face.

Standing, she started to walk to him.

"Ayanna? Ayanna, is that you?"

Looking behind her, she met the gaze of the person who called out to her and froze. Staring back at her was the most sensual pair of dark chocolate eyes she'd seen in her life.

Michael Kelly Taylor.

Dear sweet Jesus. Am I imagining him? How come he still looks so damn good?

She allowed her gaze to roam over his body. Everything around her faded as his stare touched her like the lover he'd been to her that one wonderful night. Her lower body reacted much the same way it had the night they had met. Suddenly, she grew damp. Her hand touched the base of her throat. *All it takes is a look and I am ready. Ready for him to ...*Mentally shaking the direction of those thoughts away, Ayanna fought to moisturise her dry throat. *How is it when my mouth goes dry my pussy is drenched?* 

"Michael?" she murmured.

The afternoon sun glinted off his dark hair. Those muscles covering his body were more defined than they had been

before. His body rippled with power and the promise of safety.

In slow motion, she took in his jeans and the shirt and realised he was the same man who'd returned her purse to Lauren. The same man who'd given her more pleasure than anyone had a right to experience.

He stepped closer. "Ayanna?"

Michael couldn't believe it. The last time he'd seen Ayanna, she'd been sound asleep in the king-sized bed of her room at the Marriott. Her naked body had contrasted beautifully with the light sheets that had covered her.

He'd sat beside her and stroked her hair. She'd murmured incoherently and snuggled further into the feather duvet, never waking. Trailing a finger along her jaw line, he'd whispered, "Goodbye, Ayanna," and left. Like any man would after a one-night stand.

He hadn't wanted to leave her but his leave was up and he'd needed to get back to work. Before they'd ended up in the bed, he'd asked her where she was from. She'd hedged with her answer.

That hadn't mattered. The second his hand had brushed the small of her back in the beer tent line, he'd been lost. The nutmeg tone of her skin had seemed to surround the lighter tan of his and cradle it. The jolt that rocketed through his body at that simple touch had amazed him.

He'd made love to her, and for the moment she had soothed the restlessness inside him. And now, she was before him in a different state and looking better than ever. *I haven't* 

experienced anything remotely close since the night in her arms. I want that back.

She'd changed her hair. Now springy curls moved with each motion she made. She wore dark blue jeans and a floral top that only fastened on one dark, creamy shoulder, leaving the other one bare. She was curvier than he remembered, and he longed to explore her new body. Wanted to bury his face in the side of her neck and relearn her scent all over again.

"Ayanna?" he asked again, noticing how her eyes kept flickering to the side. Following her line of sight, he spied an older woman walking with one of the cutest little boys he had ever seen.

The child wore a tank top with a picture of a basketball on it. The shorts he wore matched the colours of the top. His head was shaved almost bald, but there were telltale signs of growth. However, it was the sparkle in his dark eyes and a smile that stood out against his brown skin that brought a grin to Michael's face.

The fierce concentration on the young man's face was apparent, but so was the joy he had as he walked in the afternoon sun towards his goal. One small hand reached out and his fingers wiggled with anticipation. From his lips poured the word "Mama" over and over again.

Michael experienced a serious pang of envy when Ayanna turned and opened her arms to the overjoyed child. Of course, such an adorable child would have a stunning mother. She went down on one knee and embraced the little boy. As her arms wrapped around his body, she stood back up. She

glanced at Michael over her shoulder before returning her complete attention to the woman who'd walked with the child.

Glancing down at the table where Ayanna had been sitting, he noticed the clerk from the floral shop. He moved towards her and stood near the chair Ayanna had left. Lauren's eyes focused on him.

"Do you know her well?" Michael asked without looking at her, opting instead to watch Ayanna.

"Yes, Lieutenant, I do." Lauren stood, as well, and watched him as if she'd just figured out a huge secret.

"Is she married? Is that her child?" The questions rattled from him as quickly as if fired from a semi-automatic gun. Logically, he knew it was her child, but part of him refused to accept it.

He didn't wait for an answer. Three long strides placed him beside Ayanna.

It was sweltering out and yet this woman smelled fresh. He recognised the smell of her soap. It was light and gentle, soothing like baby powder.

She stiffened and he knew she'd sensed him. His eyes moved to the hand splayed on the boy's back. No wedding ring.

She's not wearing a ring, his mind crowed.

This woman was his destiny.

"Hello, Ayanna."

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#### **Chapter Two**

Ayanna didn't know what to do. When her eyes settled on the man who'd fathered her child, she froze. How did one go from saying "Hello" to "Oh by the way I want you to meet *our* son?"

Her fingers instinctively tightened on Devon's jersey. Michael's light woodsy scent flooded her senses. If she hadn't been holding her child ... their child ... her legs might have given out.

Devon struggled to be set down, so while she assisted him in that, she answered, "Hello again, Michael." *Please go away before I lose control of my emotions.* 

He didn't grant her wish. Instead, he knelt beside her and smiled at the child who was thrilled to be on the ground. "And who is this handsome little man?"

"Hi," the child chortled. Then as his brown eyed gaze landed on Lauren, he let out a squeal of "Lr'en" and ran to her, demanding she pick him up.

Ayanna began to stand as she felt his hand on hers. Glancing over at him, she asked the first thing that popped into her mind, "What are you doing here?"

Michael's eyes sparkled. "I'm stationed here. What about you?"

"I'm ... I ... I'm ... I ... work here and now, I've got to get my son home." She pulled her hand from his intoxicating touch and stood. Stepping away, she moved to Erma who still

stood silently and kissed her goodbye. "Thanks, Erma. We'll see you tomorrow."

The old lady nodded and walked off after kissing Devon goodbye.

"Ayanna?" Michael asked as she sent him another nervous look.

"It was good to see you," she managed to stutter. "Goodbye, Michael."

"Da-da!" Devon's voice rang loud and clear like the bells of Notre Dame. Both Ayanna and Michael looked at him. He was pointing in Michael's direction.

A blush burned up her cheeks. Beside her, Michael laughed, allowing her to relax. "Introduce me to your son, Ayanna." His command was soft, but she heard him easily.

Together, they walked to where Lauren still stood with Devon. He reached out his arms the second they got within range, but when Ayanna reached out for him, he stuck out his bottom lip and reached towards Michael instead.

Michael's mouth quirked and Ayanna knew full well it was because of the exasperated expression on her face. Taking Devon, she said, "We'll see you later, Lauren."

Lauren smiled and kissed Devon who still happily repeated "Da-da" and grabbed in Michael's direction. "Bye," she said, then went back inside to return to work.

"Down, Mama. Down!" Devon demanded.

Ayanna complied. Once he was down, Devon spread his arms wide and began imitating the jets that roared above them. She glanced at Michael as he stared at her son.

"His name is Devon," she said.

Michael's sensuous gaze met hers. Ayanna knew that look, the sleepy look that belied the sharpness of his observation skills. It was a look she'd received, right before he'd proved he'd been watching each of her reactions to his touch.

This time, his eyes turned shrewd.

"How old is he?" Michael asked as one strong arm shot out and kept the tottering child from falling over his feet. He smiled as Devon's hands closed over his forearm. "He looks about..." Michael trailed off and looked back up.

Ayanna shivered as comprehension dawned in his eyes. Squaring her shoulders, she met his gaze directly. "I have to get going. This is our afternoon to go to the park." She shouldered her son's bag. "Devon, let's go."

"Wait a minute," Michael said as her hand closed around her son's smaller one. He stood in a smooth motion. "Is this ... is he ... am I...?"

Tightening her hold on Devon's soft hand, she swallowed. *I* had no idea it would be this hard to admit *I* kept his child from him. Granted he had been the one to leave first, but by the same token she hadn't wanted to share information with him. Why? Because it was a one-night stand. This just happened to be one with consequences.

"Ayanna?" Michael placed a hand around her wrist.

"Lieutenant Taylor, how wonderful to see you," a thin brunette woman interrupted. She smiled as she stopped beside them. Her green eyes moved to where he held onto Ayanna then back up to his face. "Bridget was saying how excited she is that you're stopping by for dinner."

Michael surprised Ayanna by not releasing her hand. Instead, he intertwined their fingers. "I'm sorry, Ma'am, but I told her I couldn't make dinner this week."

The woman's eyes narrowed and she looked back at Ayanna before nodding. "Well, I guess my husband will be disappointed as well, then."

Michael sent her a tight-lipped smile. "He's already been made well aware of the change in plans, Ma'am."

"Well, apparently Bridget hasn't. But since she's coming right now, you can explain it all to her."

Ayanna swallowed back her hurt. Why should I expect him to be single? Gently, she unhooked their hands and smiled at him. "I've got to get my son to the park. Um..." She dug around in her pocket and pulled out a piece of paper, writing on it. "...here."

Michael took it and looked at the address before putting it into his front pocket. "I'll talk to you later then, Ayanna. It was wonderful to see you again."

"Yes it was, Michael." She picked up her child, needing his closeness. Her eyes landed on the pretty woman approaching them. Stepping away from the man who had the ability to make her forget everything, she looked back at him, her eyes solemn.

He met her eyes and cocked his head.

"He is," she murmured so only the two of them could hear. Then she walked off, not wanting to witness another woman taking his attentions.

Michael's gaze followed her as she carried Devon through the parking lot. His eyes stayed on her retreating form until she disappeared from view.

I have a child? I have a child! Michael couldn't let Ayanna leave like this. He took two steps then froze as Bridget placed a hand on his arm. As the commander's daughter began chatting, Michael knew he'd lost Ayanna for the moment.

He wanted to get this straightened out and then he wanted to make love to her. Over and over again.

Michael made his excuses as soon as he could and drove to the address on the paper she'd given him. It wasn't much to look at; the whole building needed work. He went home and waited until six when he hoped she'd be home from the park.

Ayanna? His mind repeated her name over and over as he got out of his car and headed up the dark stairs to the number she'd written on the paper. He knocked on the waterstained door.

"Who is it?" Ayanna's voice reached him.

"Michael."

He heard locks disengage before the door swung open. The light from behind her highlighted the dark auburn tint to her hair. Beautiful.

"You came."

"You honestly didn't think I wouldn't come, did you? You have my son." There was no menace in his voice, just fact. He looked over her head and smiled as he saw Devon playing with blocks on the living room floor.

"Come on in," she said. He walked past her and straight to where Devon was and knelt beside him. Michael heard the locks engaged but didn't turn around. The big brown eyes that looked up at him struck him speechless.

Devon showed him a block and smiled. "Hi," he said before turning his attention back to his toys.

"Hello, Devon." Michael reached for a block and turned it over in his lean fingers.

"Peez."

Michael looked away from the block and saw Devon holding out his hand for it.

"Peez."

"Oh, sorry." He handed it back with a smile. The child babbled a toddler's version of thank you while Michael looked over to the kitchen table with one chair and a highchair at it and saw Ayanna watching their private interaction with a nervous expression on her beautiful face.

Pushing up from the floor, he walked over to her. "I think we should talk." His gaze took in the books on the shaky table—all of them about Pharmacology.

"You're right."

\* \* \* \*

"No. I don't think that would be a good idea." Ayanna shook her head. Michael's suggestion didn't feel right to her.

He blew out an exasperated breath. They'd been going over this for the past two hours. A while ago, Devon had been put to bed then they'd continued arguing over the same thing. He didn't like her and his son living here.

"What isn't a good idea? You need to get out of this place. I have room at my apartment. I can watch him when you're in school or need to study. Let me help you."

"I just..." She let the words hang in the air.

He shifted his weight on the couch and watched her, she'd opted to reclaim her seat at the kitchen table. "Look, I have a three bedroom townhouse. Devon can have his own room." He licked his lips. "And so can you. Please, Ayanna. Let me help with *our* son."

"Why aren't you more upset that I didn't tell you?" she questioned, truly baffled. She didn't understand why he wasn't yelling at her.

"Would that make you feel better? Do you want me to yell at you? I am furious that you didn't tell me, but what good will yelling do for either of us? I want to be a part of my son's life and not just by giving you money."

Ayanna ran her hands over her face. "I ... I just don't want you to be—"

His jaw clenched. "Don't you *dare* say inconvenienced. I could never be inconvenienced by my own son."

His son. Not her. Her heart sank before she could stop it. "Okay, we'll give it a trial run. But I'm putting my stuff in storage in case it doesn't work out."

Michael grinned. Standing, he moved to her side and tipped her head up. "We'll get you moved in tomorrow. I'll be here around seven. Does that work for you?"

Ayanna couldn't answer him. All it took was his touch and she was a bumbling mess of nerves. When a knowing grin touched the corners of his mouth, she found her words.

"Okay, we'll be ready. I just hope you know what you're getting into."

One hand caressed her cheek. "I know exactly what I'm doing. Now, I should get going and clean up my office so it's is ready for Devon." His head lowered so their lips were scant millimetres apart. "Goodnight, Ayanna." He settled his lips along hers and gave her one of the most tender kisses of her life.

Her body shivered with longing. And she didn't quite catch the whimper that escaped as he backed away. The flare in his eyes told her that he heard it. Jesus, I would walk through the fires of hell to experience this man's touch again.

Michael traced her lower lip with his thumb before kissing her again. Then he grabbed his keys and walked to the door, saying over his shoulder. "Tomorrow, Ayanna. Lock this behind me."

She stayed motionless in her chair as he walked out the door and disappeared from view. After it closed, she got up to lock it again. She looked around her tiny place.

"This is a good move. More space for Devon. His father in his life." Trying to assure herself and keep the doubt at bay, she began to pack her few belongings in boxes and suitcases. She took only the bare necessities for herself, making sure that Devon came first. All his toys and clothes were most important. She also called Erma and filled her in on the change in plans so the woman didn't show up the next day.

It was after midnight before Ayanna climbed into bed, her meagre items packed and ready. She'd clean tomorrow after the place was empty. The lingering taste of Michael's kiss still

on her lips, she murmured his name as she lay on her twin size bed and pulled the sheets over her.

\* \* \* \*

Michael was at her door a few moments before seven. He knocked and couldn't explain his relief when she opened the door, a shy smile on her face.

Today she wore a pair of dark green warm-up pants and a grey T-shirt. Her hair called out for him to touch it, to sink his fingers into the curls and kiss her until neither of them knew their own names.

His gaze dropped to her lips, which were free of gloss and he groaned as the memory of her taste floated to the surface of his mind. "Morning, Ayanna," he whispered.

"Come on in," she said. "We're ready. I just have to clean after its empty."

He picked up on the nervousness in her tone. "This will work out, Ayanna. Trust me." His hand travelled over the small of her back as he moved to where Devon ran in circles with his toy plane. The engine noises he made were in sync with his "flight path."

"Good morning, Devon," Michael said as he crouched down beside the pattern the child was wearing into the alreadyworn rug.

Those big brown eyes, darker than his mother's looked right back at him. In fact, they looked like the dark chocolate colour of his own eyes. "Hi," Devon spoke. One hand shoved the grey plane at Michael. "P'ane," he announced proudly.

A knock on the door, interrupted before Michael said anything. He moved to stand behind Ayanna as she opened it and admitted a group of his friends who said hello to Michael.

"Okay, Ayanna," he said as he lifted Devon into his arms, "tell them what you want put in storage and what you want to keep with you."

Obviously unnerved at the looks the men were sending her and Michael, Ayanna cleared her throat first. Then she began pointing to items that were going. The men left and with Devon playing with a toy, Ayanna and Michael made short work out of the cleaning.

\* \* \* \*

Ayanna followed Michael in her vehicle, Devon secure in his car seat in the back. Unbidden her mind drifted to the man she was moving in with. Michael's powerfully fit body appeared in her head. Lowering over her, his hard cock slipping between the lips of her wet pussy. The way his sensual eyes grew lustful as he drove into her. Over and over again.

Ayanna shifted on her vinyl seat as her belly clenched with longing. Squirming helplessly, she swallowed and thought a bit more. How was she going to be able to control her rampaging lust when it came to this man?

Memories swarmed her. The water droplets cascading down his naked physique in the shower. The dimple in his right butt cheek. The feel of his cock in her hands, mouth, and how he tasted as his cum shot down her throat.

She whimpered as her body reacted to the images as if they were happening.

"Get a grip, Barker," she admonished herself and did her best to focus on something other than the tall, muscular, smouldering-eyed Michael Taylor.

It didn't work.

As Michael pulled into an apartment complex, she followed and parked beside him. Her gaze took in the nice two-story buildings. It looked nothing like where she'd lived previously.

The lawns were well manicured. The buildings were not in need of painting. In fact, all of it was amazing. The kind of place she wanted to be—a place where she'd be safe going out at night, a place where she'd be okay letting Devon play in the front yard.

"Mama!" Devon yelled from the backseat as he began kicking his legs.

"I'm coming." She unbuckled her belt and found Michael had opened her door. His hand lingered longer than necessary against her skin as he helped her out.

"I'll get him." Michael moved back to the door. With ease he lifted the three and a half year old from his seat. "Let's go, little man."

After he shut the door he glanced again at Ayanna and said, "We'll get you two inside and then I will come back for the rest of your things. The truck is here and your stuff is being put in your new rooms. My townhouse is the one at the end."

Grabbing two bags for Devon from the trunk, Ayanna followed Michael. She felt as if every eye in the development

was on her. Watching her, judging her. Considering it was early morning on Sunday, however, there weren't people outside, so she knew it was her imagination.

Her stomach knotted up as Michael unlocked the door to his townhouse. She followed him across the tiled foyer and into the open and airy downstairs. The carpeted parts were done in a slate grey and all the furniture was beige leather. She didn't see any personal touches around the place. It was much larger than hers—and this was just the downstairs.

Walking behind him to the stairs, she automatically identified things that needed to be done to child-proof his place. She bit back a worried snort as she saw his large television.

When they got to the top of the stairs, Michael pointed to the left. "That's my room. Devon's is in the middle and your room is down there. I gave Devon the smallest room and yours is in the back so you can have some privacy." The men who'd moved the items smiled at her as they passed them. They nodded at Michael.

"Sounds great. But we really need to go over rent and stuff like..." She stopped as his eyes speared her. "What?"

Michael opened the door to Devon's room and set the child down on the floor among the toys that were there. His furniture was already set up. Everything was more than she could have hoped for.

She blinked as Michael's attention turned from Devon to her. He stalked her until her back was against the corner of the doorjamb. Her eyes widened as inch by inch her personal space was eviscerated.

"I am not charging you rent. You're the mother of my child. First thing tomorrow, we're going to get both of you on my medical plan and get you a dependant's card."

A dependant's card? "I'm not marrying you."

"Yes, you are. I won't force my attentions on you, but you will marry me and you will take the health insurance I can offer. It will help you with the cost of your schooling, too."

She shook her head furiously until one of his hands gripped her chin and held it immobile. His mouth covered hers and his tongue swept inside.

Ayanna clasped his sleeves as their bodies pressed closer. Just as it had been the first night they'd touched, each response was explosive and set her body on fire. Her craving for him flared almost out of control. She wanted to crawl all over his body and let his touch carry her away to the stars.

"We *are* getting married," he promised her as his mouth left hers.

"I agreed to move in—not marry you." Ayanna tried to step back but his hand swept behind her and kept her body pressed to his. His erection pressed into her.

"Ayanna," he said with increasing exasperation. "I'm willing to overlook the fact you kept my son from me. But this is the only way I know to give you protection and you will take it."

"What about your social life?" She couldn't bring herself to let go of his arms.

He smiled with more tenderness than anything else. "It doesn't matter. You and Devon matter." His lips brushed against hers again before he stepped away. "You stay here.

I'll get the rest of your things and say goodbye to the guys." His callused hand caressed the side of her face one more time before he moved past her to go back downstairs.

\* \* \* \*

Michael knew he was moving fast, but for the life of him, he didn't care. Part of him had fallen in love with Ayanna that night in New Mexico, and he'd hoped she'd come looking for him. He'd been disappointed when she hadn't.

Ayanna Genat Barker had sent him into a tailspin he didn't think he'd ever want to escape. His body come alive again as if shooting through the sky in his F/A-18 or doing a series of night traps out on a carrier. That same rush he got from his job, he got from seeing a smile on Ayanna's face.

He smiled as he walked back to his house carrying Ayanna's bags. A family would make this place a home. The thought of making love to Ayanna in every room, on every piece of leather furniture, turned his gentle smile to a predatory one. The vision of her dark skinned body draped across his lighter furniture made his cock leap to attention. He adjusted his pants and continued towards his house.

Pushing open the front door, he momentarily froze at the familiar sight of his bland decorating scheme. As the musical strands of childish laughter floated down the stairs, he relaxed and shut the door with his foot then headed up to the second floor.

He stopped in the doorway of his old office, now Devon's room and watched Ayanna reading to his son. She sat on the floor, her voice full of expression as she told the story, but

the words were meaningless to Michael. All his focus was on her mouth. He couldn't move past the way her lips pursed to form the words. So plump, so luscious, so damn tempting.

In a flash, he saw her sucking his cock, her gorgeous mouth wrapped around him. Her tongue would run around the head, pulling him further into her web of passion.

He bit back a groan as his penis jerked adamantly. Squeezing his eyes shut, he shook as more pictures exploded before his mind's eye. Ayanna sprawled across his bed, wet and waiting for him. Her firm body as she rode him, cradling him with her heat. Her full breasts swaying before him, luring him to taste and suckle them.

Forcing down the unrelenting yearning to possess this woman, he cleared his throat.

She smiled warily when she looked up.

"I have to go out and pick up some things," she said, setting aside the book and standing. "But we'll be back later."

His gut clenched. The idea of losing her again raced through him. Fear slithered through him. What if she disappeared with Devon? What if he lost her before he'd really even had her? What if?

"What do you need?" he asked, his voice sharp with suspicion.

"I have to childproof your house or Devon will be into everything."

Child-proofing. I didn't even think of that. "Okay, let's go." His fear vanished, replaced by shame. I should have trusted her.

"I can do this without you."

"Ayanna," Michael growled. "Don't make this a battle. We need to get another car seat anyway, for my vehicle, so we may as well take it and that way we will have more room with whatever you need to get. Besides ... if you keep insisting on arguing with me, I'm gonna insist on making up." His body tensed even if his voice didn't reflect it. Ayanna understood.

"Fine," she agreed immediately. "Let's get going."
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#### **Chapter Three**

Michael opened the door and entered his home. His dark brown eyes took in the scattered toys around the living room, the gate at the bottom of the stairs, the child's beanbag chair and a blow up chair beside a Big Wheel. It had been a month since he'd moved in Ayanna and Devon. His place was totally different, and he loved it. He had a family, even if she didn't want to tell anyone about the marriage and insisted on sleeping in a separate room.

That was his next hurdle.

His nose was filled by the smell of food cooking even as he caught sight of Ayanna cleaning up the living room. She wore a purple shirt and a floral skirt, which was knotted up midthigh, allowing him to see her beautiful legs as she moved.

He knew she thought she was fat but he loved her curves. She was a gorgeous woman. Having his child had only enhanced her beauty. He grinned as she muttered to herself while she cleaned.

"Hey, Ayanna." A groan slipped from deep in his throat as she turned towards him and she licked those full, tempting, succulent lips of hers.

"How was work?" she asked as she closed the lid of Devon's toy chest.

"Wonderful. There isn't much that compares to being a pilot." His eyes moved with definite purpose over her body. "There are some things though."

"Right," she snorted. "Dinner should be ready in a bit."

He dropped his bag by the door and walked further into the room. "Where's Devon?"

"Still napping. We went swimming today, and he's really exhausted. I'm letting him sleep until food's ready."

"Be right back," Michael said. He took the stairs two at a time and headed to his room to change.

Ayanna sank onto the couch as he went. It was getting more and more difficult to ignore the attraction between them. Especially when Michael looked so damn good walking through the door in his flight suit. Damn, it made him look good. Everything he wore made him look good, but that suit ... just ... aroused her. She sighed. Not even in the same room with him for three minutes and she had wet panties. *I should give up wearing them, yeesh.* 

Standing, she went into the kitchen and checked on dinner—spaghetti and meatballs.

"Damn you, Michael," she cursed as she ran a hand over her skirt before dipping a spoon into the sauce for a taste. "Why do you make me want you?"

"Is wanting me really all that horrible?" a deep voice asked from behind her.

She screamed and jumped, dropping the spoon. The hot sauce splashed onto her hand. *Of course he would hear that.* 

"Damn, I'm sorry. I didn't want to scare you. Give me your hand," he ordered, even as he took it himself and put it under cold water. "I'm sorry, baby. Does that feel better?"

Feel better? Sweet Jesus, I am about to jump you right here and now if you don't let go. Pulling her hand away, she shook off the water. "Fine, it's fine."

Michael reached around her and turned off the faucet. Grabbing her hand, he pressed his lips to the red mark on her smooth skin. "I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to startle you."

You have got to stop touching me, man. "I'm fine. Thanks." She pulled her hand back.

"Ayanna," he murmured as his fingers delved into the curls on her head.

Give me the strength to keep him away.

Her palms rose between them. His smouldering eyes tugged at every fibre of her being, crying for her to give in.

Instead of backing off, he stepped closer so her hands rested against the hard planes of his chest. He caressed her skull as the distance between them was diminished.

"We can't..." she forced out even as she traced the contours of his chiselled torso.

"We can," he whispered back. "Ayanna, we can." One leg pushed between hers, pressing his full-fledged erection into her belly.

"No. We shouldn't." Her senses were swimming.

He lowered his head so their mouths almost touched.

"Ayanna," he groaned. His tongue traced her lower lip before he sucked it into his mouth.

Her body clenched with need. She arched her back and moved her hands up his chest to lace them behind his neck.

"Yes," she mumbled back as his kiss dominated her very being.

He put both of his hands on her face as he made love to her mouth. His body pressed hers to the sink as the intensity

of the kiss increased one hundred fold. Their hips instinctively mimed the action they craved to share.

His hands moved down her shoulders and along the contours of her body. When he touched the bare skin of her waist she whimpered into his mouth. Her eyes flew open then closed as waves of pleasure erupted in her.

"Ayanna. You fit so perfectly in my arms."

"Michael." She pulled him closer so they seemed to meld together. He lifted her to sit on the edge of the sink and she wrapped her legs around his lean waist. His mouth nibbled down her neck, following the V in her shirt. His rough tongue swept over the exposed tops of her breasts. She dropped her head back to allow him easier access. One hand rested on the cool countertop while her other remained pressed against the back of his head. Her body shivered with her desire to have his length burrowed deep inside her again. Unconsciously, her legs tightened around him.

Michael inched up her shirt even as his tongue continued to relearn the subtle taste of her skin. Her breasts were sensitive and she wanted him to suckle on them.

"Please," she moaned.

"Look at your breasts. They're fuller than before. Damn, you're beautiful." Michael sucked one breast in his mouth, shirt and all, while his hands covered her belly. He took one hand and teased the soft skin of her inner thigh. She trembled as his touch inflamed her. Working feverishly to get some moisture back in her mouth, she mewled with pleasure.

"Ayanna," he mumbled, releasing her breast with a pop. His free hand shoved up her top and seconds later his mouth latched onto her other breast. Bra and all.

He slid one thick finger under the edge of her underwear and ran it up between her pussy lips. Her juices dripped out of her. She pressed his head tighter against her. His finger circled her swollen clit before thrusting inside her.

"Oh yeah!" she hissed as her hips gyrated down on his digit. He added another. And another. "Oh shit!" she rasped.

Her body burned and she writhed shamelessly, coming hard on his plunging fingers. Her screams grew louder and louder as the palm of his hand ground against her overly sensitive clit.

His mouth left her breast and he nibbled her neck near her ear. "I want my cock buried balls deep in your hot pussy."

His blatant admission combined with the exquisite torture he delivered sent another orgasm crashing through her. Her body contracted around his fingers as her hips rose off the countertop, the evidence of her pleasure running down his hand.

"Michael!" Her scream couldn't be contained.

"Right here." He kissed her. He kept his fingers moving as she gradually came back down from the rapture his touch had elevated her to. Still his touch placed her back on the edge within moments.

He rotated his thumb over her swollen nub as his fingers continued to plunge deep inside her, her thick cream covering them. Her body shuddered as his expert caress sent her over the edge again.

"Michael," she moaned as she bit her lower lip. She was drained, her throat dry and scratchy from her response to him. I have no idea how many times this man just made me orgasm, I can't think straight.

"This is what it should be like, Ayanna. Why do you continue to deny us pleasure?"

Reality washed over her, and she shoved him away.

She jumped from the counter and headed for the door, only to be jerked back against Michael's chest.

"You can't keep running." He pressed her hand over his swollen erection. "This ... this is what being around you does to me. I can smell your arousal. We belong together." He put his coated fingers in his mouth and licked them clean. "You still taste like heaven." He groaned even as he released her. "Soon, Ayanna. Very soon."

She bolted from the kitchen, her heart pounding like she'd just completed a marathon. *I can't believe I let that happen.* Her body still felt electrified from the encounter as she ran upstairs. *I was like a goddamn pole dancer and used his hand as the pole.* 

In her room, she slumped against the cool wall and tried to sort out her feelings. How long could she truly fight her desire for this man? Sure, she was married to him, but he'd only done it for his son. "What am I doing? I can't get involved with him. *Can I?*" She shook her head violently. "No. No. No! I can't."

Why not, her mind taunted.

"This is just a business arrangement." The throbbing between her legs told her she was wrong. Then he wouldn't

have insisted on getting married. He could have just put Devon on his health plan.

"Fucking conscience," she swore. "I don't want to be involved with him. It's better to protect myself now before he finds the woman he really wants to be with. It won't hurt as much that way."

What was the interaction in the kitchen if he didn't want you?

"I better figure it out." The wet panties she wore had her adding, "And fast." As she changed, she began a mantra of 'business relationship.'

She was no fool. She'd sensed him watching her at night, while she put Devon down for bed. His eyes would grow all soft and tender until he met her gaze, then his killer eyes would turn possessive and damn near primal. Flames would lick her skin where his eyes touched her.

Everyday he'd found more and more reasons to linger with each caress he gave her, be it when he took Devon from her, offered to help her clean, or just walked past her. He seemed to be shirtless a lot more, as well. And as soon as Devon went down for the night, Michael would invariably show up at her door to say goodnight.

Every night, his wishes for a wonderful night's sleep were echoed by contact. A touch which grew longer, more personal, and more heated every time it occurred. It had started as a stroke on the back of her hand, now he ran his fingers down the side of her face and along the back of her neck, before leaning in close and whispering in her ear. "Have a wonderful night, my wife. My beautiful Ayanna."

If she was awake when he left for work, he'd make sure to say something similar and leave her longing for more. For the life of her, she wanted to give in and see what it would be like to have a true relationship with him.

Pasting a smile on her face, a calmer Ayanna opened her door and headed downstairs to finish their meal. Five minutes later, Michael strolled in with Devon who'd just woken. This time her smile was unforced.

"Mama!" Devon said as he stomped across the floor and latched onto her leg.

"Hey, baby." One hand tenderly brushed the top of his head before she returned her attention to putting the final few items on the table. Even so, her eyes kept drifting back to Michael. His eyes were on her and they still blazed with unquenched thirst and a promise. A promise to finish what they'd started.

Michael watched as she moved. Instinctively she seemed to know where Devon was and always managed to step around him. As they sat down for dinner, Devon played with his spaghetti, eating it one piece at a time.

"Are you still free this afternoon or did you need to get more studying done?" Michael asked. His voice showed none of the ardour he felt for her. He realised he had to be careful on how he proceeded from here.

Taking a drink of water, she answered. "I can handle watching him if you have plans. Don't worry about it. I've studied with him around before."

"No, that's not it at all." He grabbed Devon's cup before it toppled. "I wanted to take both of you to the base and show him the planes."

"P'ane, p'ane, p'ane!" Devon chortled.

"Eat first, sport," Michael said, keeping his gaze on Ayanna. "What do you think?"

She smiled and it warmed him to the core. "Sure. I'm game."

She got up to take care of the dishes.

Michael frowned. "Just put them in the dishwasher and we can go." Although just watching you walk around is tempting.

"I am so used to doing them by hand."

He walked to her and kissed the back of her neck as Devon ran to the living room. "I know. But you don't need to do them that way anymore." Spinning her in his arms, he continued to kiss her.

Ayanna struggled against him for about two seconds before she sighed into his mouth and gave over to the power of his kiss.

He tucked her in closer to his chest. "Let's go."

"I'll be changed in a flash." She pulled back.

Michael followed, eliminating the distance again. "Need some help?" he purred. He watched her eyes flutter.

"N ... n ... no."

"Are you sure?" He slid on hand up her skirt at the knot high on her thigh. Her eyes glossed over with passion.

"I'm sure," she panted as his finger slid closer to the juncture of her thighs.

He looked over her shoulder before glancing back at her. His hand moved over the front of her panties. "You're wet for me." His cock pressed insistently against his jeans.

"I should get changed." Her words were barely audible.

"I want to taste you, Ayanna." He leaned in close to her ear. "Tell me I can." Light, feathery strokes moved across the increasingly damp underwear. Her mouth moved and he only just heard her faint 'yes.'

Michael groaned as he delved his index finger inside her. His hard erection throbbed as he withdrew his finger and sucked it clean.

"I need you," he said. His timbre was lower than usual as he let her out of his arms. He watched her leave and swore under his breath as he attempted to find a more comfortable position for his engorged cock.

\* \* \* \*

The guard at the gate snapped out a salute as they passed and entered the base. Turning into the parking lot, Michael found a spot and parked the SUV. Quickly, he got out. Ayanna was slower to follow.

"Coming, sweetheart?" he asked from the back door where he was pulling out Devon.

Smiling at him, she nodded and climbed out. Immediately, she felt nervous. She was swamped with that belief that everyone was watching her and judging her. It was her own personal demon, the belief that everyone wanted to pass judgment on her. Maybe it would be different with Michael

beside her. She looked for him. He waited on the other side of his vehicle.

"Let's go," she said with more bravado than she felt.

Devon between them, they walked towards the jets lining the main road into Naval Air Station Oceana. Michael glanced at her. "Everything okay?"

"Yes, I just haven't been here aside from..." She trailed off.

"When we got married?" he asked.

"Yes," she muttered.

Michael shook his head. Ayanna was so strong and passionate about some things, but when it came to their relationship, she was still unsure. It was all crystal clear to him. They were a family. He'd happily stay with her for the rest of their lives. He wanted to have another child and be there for the birth. He wanted to see their children grow, get married, and have children of their own.

He'd recognised it the second he had seen her again. That restlessness inside him had vanished like it had the first time they met. Two halves of the same whole.

You are my life, Ayanna.

By now Devon had seen the jets and tried to hurry along the adults. Michael laughed and swung him up on his shoulders and hurried towards the object of his son's affection.

Ayanna followed at a slower pace and allowed her eyes to roam over the way Michael's jeans fit him and how his blue shirt pulled taut across his shoulders. Her mouth watered at the way his rippling muscles easily flexed to support Devon

and keep him safe from any harm. Jesus, this man has me acting like a damn sex addict. I am in a constant state of arousal around him. She swallowed the groan that threatened to slip out as her mind stripped away his clothes.

A few other people milled around the planes, talking and pointing at them while they read the information beside each one. She moved up beside a grey jet in time to overhear Michael say to Devon, "This is almost like what Daddy flies."

Patiently, he pointed out things to their son, his tone gentle. His eyes met hers and his nose crinkled as he grinned. Her physical response had her forcing down another shudder.

As she walked up to them, Michael leaned over and kissed her cheek, apparently not concerned with keeping their relationship a secret.

"You fly this?" Ayanna asked.

"Well, no. I fly the F/A-18E Super Hornet." Michael caressed the side of the grey plane, his passion for flying lighting his eyes.

"Boo," Devon announced as he pointed at the Blue Angel jet.

"That's right, it is blue," Michael said as he walked his son to the blue and yellow jet. "This is an F/A-18 Hornet."

"This isn't what they were flying in New Mexico, was it? For the Thunderbirds?" Ayanna asked as she hesitatingly touched the jet. Her body flushed as she remembered what had happened after the show.

"No," Michael answered. "The Air Force flies F-16's for the Thunderbirds." The gleam in his eyes told her he was remembering, as well.

"And what, if any, are they also called?" Ayanna wanted to keep that glow about him as he talked about planes. *He looks* so hot with that fire in his eyes. Her mind painted another erotic picture for her. She moaned softly.

"Fighting Falcon," he replied, smiling.

"Oh, I see." Ayanna pulled back her hand and wiped it on her thigh. She swallowed a few times, trying to find a way to understand the emotions moving through her. It scared her to know that he was up in the sky, flying one of these aircraft.

It was dangerous flying.

Okay, time for you to face it. You have feelings for him, and they're more than just sexual ones, her brain announced. Ayanna realised it was true, all of it. No matter how hard she tried to ignore it, there was a true connection between her and Michael. She could imagine them together when they were both old and grey. And it scared the hell out of her.

Before actually hearing him say he flew a fighter plane, it had been easy, to an extent, to ignore the flight suit and pretend his job was safe. The possibility of losing him to a woman was a way to keep him at arm's length. The thought that he might go to work and never come home ... scared her shitless.

Her heart rate tripled when he sent her a private smile. The kind that made her believe he viewed her as the most beautiful woman in the world. There goes my idea of maintaining a business-like relationship. He licked his lips as his eyes roved over her. It's like he reads my mind.

Michael winked.

Ayanna trembled.

"Michael!"

She looked in the direction of the voice. A man on the other side of the street waved at Michael. Slanting a look at her husband, she saw him smile and wave back.

A few moments later, the blond-haired man reached them. He was a bit shorter than Michael but in the same excellent shape. "What's up, Taz?" he said. "Didn't think you would be here on your day off."

"What's up, Racer?" Michael shook the blond's hand.

"Just coming to see if I can get—" Racer snapped his mouth shut, suddenly noticing the child in Michael's arms. "Who's this cute little man?"

Michael slid an arm around Ayanna. "I want you to meet my wife, Ayanna, and our son, Devon. We're spending the afternoon looking at the planes."

Devon grinned and pointed at the Blue Angel replica aircraft. "P'ane," he proudly said.

If Racer was shocked, he didn't let it show. A wide grin appeared as he reached for Ayanna's hand. "Wow, what's a beauty like you doing with this one?" He bowed over the back of her hand. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Ayanna. I'm Lieutenant Pete Kysenzki, better known as Racer."

She smiled shyly. "Thank you. It's wonderful to meet you, as well."

Michael frowned at his friend. "Let go of my wife's hand, Racer."

Racer winked at her, then he looked at Devon. "Good thing he takes after his mom, instead of you, Taz."

"I know," Michael agreed. "He's a great looking child."

The blond man smiled. "I have to go. I have a date. I'll see you later on, and Mrs. Taylor, it was lovely to finally meet you." He waved one more time and took off in the direction from which he had arrived.

Ayanna looked at her husband who was watching her instead of his friend. "What did he mean by that Michael?"

"Just that he's been waiting to meet you. That's my RIO. My closest friend here. Of course, he knows I'm married." He kissed her again then walked to an older version of a Navy plane showing it to Devon.

"Your RIO? What the heck is a RIO?" Ayanna was totally lost.

"Radio Intercept Officer. He and I fly in the same plane."

Ayanna closed her mouth. She had plenty of questions but she had other things to mull over. Like how matter-of-factly he'd said that of course he'd told Pete he was married.

Another point in your favour Michael Taylor.

If she was honest, she'd been concerned people wouldn't like her because she was black. She'd already been a stereotype, the single black woman who had a kid. What if being with me hurts his career? She swallowed. Michael doesn't seem to care or he wouldn't have introduced you or married you. Running a hand over her face, Ayanna walked closer and watched her family. Eventually, Michael's deep voice soothed her frayed nerves. His actions with Devon were another huge point in his favour.

\* \* \* \*

On the way home from the base, Michael had picked up kerbside service from a local restaurant. At the moment, he was alone in the kitchen. As he finished wiping down the counters, he grinned as he recalled his earlier encounter on them with his wife.

He growled low in his throat at the recollection of how her tight, wet channel gripped his fingers. And how she tasted ... Oh God. Even now, the memory of the look of her flushed skin as she cried her pleasure to the room made his body prickle as if he'd been filled with electricity.

"Fuck this!" He slapped the towel down on the counter and left the kitchen. Quickly he locked up the house and shut off the lights before heading upstairs.

Tonight, Ayanna. No more running away. No more excuses.

Walking slowly to his son's room, he heard Ayanna's low alto voice as she sang to Devon. "I'll love you forever. I'll like you for always. As long as I'm living. My baby you'll be." A smile appeared on his face as he looked in the bedroom. Ayanna was in the rocking chair near the crib. Devon was basically sound asleep in her arms as she sang.

Back and forth they moved, a faint light shone down and reflected off the book she had long since put down. She'd memorised that story, and he'd often heard her singing the chorus to Devon when he went down for his nap.

As he watched her fingers gently caress Devon's face he stepped in the room. "Hey," he whispered. "Is he out?" "Yes." she replied softly.

Michael took him and lay him down in the crib. Then he took a hold of Ayanna and led her out of the room. His strong hand cupped her face.

"Stay with me tonight."

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#### **Chapter Four**

Ayanna looked into his eyes as his words registered, part command and part question. His gaze was direct and unwavering as he watched her. She looked at his nose and lips before returning to his eyes. Instead of verbally giving him an answer, she turned her head until her lips were against the palm of his hand. Lightly, she kissed it as her own hand rested behind his.

His eyes closed before he reached for her and lifted her off her feet. Backing her into the wall, he kissed her. She shivered at the barely restrained passion coiled within his powerful body. *I won't back out this time.* 

"Michael," she moaned into his mouth. Her body tensed with hungry anticipation.

"Ayanna," he said on a purr of pleasure as her tongue danced with his. His strong fingers dug into her ass as her legs locked around his waist.

She slid her fingers through his short hair, trying to get as close as possible. Her back pressed against the wall as Michael's wicked mouth teased the satin smooth skin of her neck. A whimper escaped her as his teeth grazed top of her bra before he licked the cleft between her overly sensitive breasts.

Suddenly he stopped. "Not against the wall," he muttered. His voice deeper and more gravelly than normal. "I want you in bed. Not just any bed. *My* bed.

"Yes. Your bed." She pulled his earlobe into her mouth and grazed it with her teeth. He shivered with pleasure. Michael stepped away from the wall and headed to his room.

Ayanna threaded her fingers through his soft hair. Her mouth nipped then licked away the sting along his jaw line. Breathing grew harsher the closer he got to his room. Each step ground her pelvis against him. Their lips met as the remaining distance was covered quickly.

As soon as her feet touched the floor, Michael pulled up her shirt and tossed it to the floor.

"Yours, too," she murmured. Her plea turned into a groan of longing the second his shirt joined hers on the carpet. Moisture pooled between her legs. She could look at him forever and never get bored.

His well-defined chest was rock solid. A light dusting of dark hair scattered over his broad torso. Each cut of muscle on him was a work of art. He didn't have an ounce of extra fat on him.

Sucking her lower lip into her mouth, she closed the miniscule distance between them and ran her fingers over the rippling planes of his upper body. Closing her eyes, she was taken back in time to that night in New Mexico when she had first learned his body. In the years that had passed, her mind hadn't forgotten. His eyes were molten as they opened to stare into hers as her fingers followed the hair that disappeared below the waist of his jeans.

Not moving her gaze from his, she unbuttoned his jeans and lowered the zipper. "Michael," she mouthed as his pants

fell around his lean hips. He just watched her, letting her touch him.

Michael's whole body was on fire as her gaze zeroed in on the bulge in his boxers. He wanted to strip her of all her clothes and reclaim her body. When she sucked his lip into her mouth, his cock twitched so painfully in his pants, he thought he might lose control. Somehow, he managed to let her continue her quest.

His pants fell to the floor and he stepped from them, leaving him in his boxers and nothing else. His whole body tensed with the need for the woman before him. His wife. The mother of his child. His Ayanna. His.

That did it. His control snapped faster than a jet catapulted off the deck of an aircraft carrier. He growled low in his throat as he swept her back into his arms.

He placed her gently on the bed and rose up over her. "I've waited a long time for this." He reached out, undid and pulled her shorts down her silken legs. *My God, she's stunning.* He stared at Ayanna. She lay on his bed in bra and panties. He used one hand and opened the front clasp of her white bra and let her breasts fall free. "So beautiful," he mumbled.

His hands lingered along the top of her panties. For all his desperation to be inside her, he wanted to savour this moment.

"Michael." Her eyes held his. "Please."

He pulled her panties down, his fingertips teasing her skin. Michael tossed her underwear to the side. This was how he wanted her. Naked.

His erection swelled even more as he looked at her body. Stop looking and start acting. She was the epitome of perfection in his eyes. Faint stretch marks streaked her belly. Her belly was no longer perfectly flat but he didn't care. Her breasts were fuller. "So beautiful," he whispered before he leaned over and kissed her belly.

Ayanna shivered beneath his lips. Michael retraced the small pattern surrounding her belly button and dipped his tongue into it. She whimpered and tossed on the bed.

Michael trailed his lips over her exposed skin. Up one side and down the other of her body. He refused to let her pull him where she wanted him and he avoided the damp lips at the junction of her thighs. He took his time in his homage to her body.

Her cries grew louder. Her hands reached blindly for him as she squirmed on the bedspread.

After blowing gently on her pussy, he licked it. Once. Twice. Three times. Running his thick tongue up between the bald lips. Michael sucked her clit into his mouth and hummed. Lick. Suck. Lick. Suck. He never gave up.

Her body arched off the bed as her hoarse cry filled the room. "Oh shit, Michael!" The hand that landed on the back of his head pressed his face closer to her throbbing entrance. "Don't stop. Please. Please, Michael!" Her fingers dug into the back of his skull as her hips ground her dripping pussy on his lapping tongue. As he ate all she offered him, her grip on him changed and he felt her trying to pull him up her body.

"Tell me, Ayanna. Tell me." Michael rose over her and settled between her spread legs. The head of his erection poised to slide into her wet depth.

"Michael. Please." Her hips arched, trying to force the contact between them.

"Tell me," he insisted.

"Make love to me."

As his hips moved him deep into her velvet heat, a fleeting thought of protection crossed his mind. It vanished as her body moulded itself around him like a long lost lover. "Yes," he hissed as he kissed her, sharing everything he couldn't find the words to say at that moment.

Two halves of the same whole had been brought together again. He could never find another woman who'd made him feel like this again. Each touch from Ayanna's hands, each look from her stunning eyes made him swear he was invincible. She was his soul mate, and while he may have ignored that the first time, he wasn't about to this time.

They moved in perfect harmony, each of them giving and receiving equal pleasure. That pleasure was heightened by the fact they were in each other's arms again.

The room was filled with the sounds of lovers who had been reunited. Moans, groans, mewling, and grunts. Like it had been that night in the hotel their passion for one another flew off the charts. As they expressed their love for one another everything else faded away into nothing. There was no tomorrow, no future, only the current pleasures they shared with each other.

He tucked his beautiful wife closer to his body and kissed the top of her head. "I'm not letting you go this time. I was stupid to allow it the first time. We're a family. You, me and Devon." His arms tightened around her as he thought about her leaving him. "You are my family. Mine."

Ayanna mumbled something unintelligible against his chest, but when her arms tightened around him, he smiled. Not exactly a declaration of love from her, but it wasn't a negative response.

Outside the bedroom window, a star shot across the sky. Let her love me like I love her, he wished. "I love you, Ayanna." His eyes shut and he let sleep win the battle.

\* \* \* \*

He woke alone. For a brief moment, he thought it may have all been a dream. "No, that wasn't a dream, was it?" he murmured, sitting up in bed. He couldn't see any signs that she'd been there. Flopping back, he groaned. If it was just a dream, he was screwed. He laid there for a moment, then got up, slipped on some pants and headed downstairs.

A sigh of relief left him as he saw Devon on his threewheeler going as fast as he could and squealing with joy as he headed into the living room. On his heels was ... Racer.

As Devon headed around the couch and back into the kitchen, Michael met his friend's gaze.

"Morning, Taz," Racer said with a smirk as he took in the shirtless man on the steps.

"What are you doing here?" Michael asked

"We have a long-standing golf game. What? Forget about it?" Racer winked. "Well, I would too, if I got to share my nights with Ayanna."

"Watch it, Kysenzki," Michael warned.

"Da-da!" Devon squealed as he came rolling back into the room.

Michael bent down to pick up Devon and kissed his cheek. Then he set him back upon the seat of his toy. "Morning, sport."

The two men went into the kitchen and Michael's breath caught in his throat. Ayanna had that effect on him. She was talking to her friend Lauren as they made breakfast.

Slowly, he took in the black and white crossover contrast pants she wore for working out. One half of his mouth turned up in a smirk as he noticed she wore one of his shirts. His eyes lingered on her butt as it swayed to the music that played in the kitchen.

"Damn," he muttered before striding across the kitchen and sweeping her into his arms to kiss her.

Ayanna smiled as he kissed her. Placing her arms around his neck, she returned the passionate embrace. "Morning," she said as she wriggled out of his arms and turned her attention back to preparing food.

"Morning," he responded in a husky voice. "Lauren. Good to see you."

"And you, Michael. Oh, I like this song" She grinned as she looked back at Ayanna and turned up the music. She wore similar clothing to Ayanna. Michael looked over his shoulder

at Racer and stepped back, watching the two women in the kitchen dance to the music.

Ayanna set down her knife and picked up Devon, dancing with him and singing. Spinning him around until he laughed uncontrollably.

Family. My family. Michael smiled.

Racer stepped up next to him and said, "You got it made, man. Don't fuck this up. That is one special woman you have there."

"I'm beginning to realise just how special," Michael agreed in a low tone as the women continued to have a wonderful time.

\* \* \* \*

Ayanna couldn't dwell on Michael. She had to study for her finals. Her husband and Racer were off playing golf. Lauren was downstairs playing with Devon. Ayanna couldn't waste time.

Despite how wonderful it had been to be back in Michael's arms, she was determined not to succumb to her desire again. She had to focus on her schooling and her son *not* how good being with Michael was. With him gone with his friend, her body had a momentary reprieve from the temptation wrapped in the sinful package called Lieutenant Michael Kelly Taylor. That arrogant pilot, amazing father, husband, and wonderful lover had the power to distract her from her goals and she couldn't let that happen.

She opened her books. Last night with Michael had been amazing, but now her studies had first priority. Immersing

herself, it hardly registered when Lauren came to tell her Michael was back and she was leaving. A few hours later, Ayanna closed the book and groaned. Rolling her shoulders, she rubbed her eyes. She pushed away from the desk and went to check on Devon who was napping.

She froze when she heard voices coming from downstairs.

She recognised Michael's voice and the other sounded familiar. Feminine and high pitched. Ayanna wrapped her arms around her middle as it clicked. This was the woman who'd waylaid Michael on base the day he'd landed back into her life. Bridget or something like that.

Ayanna knew better than to eavesdrop, but she couldn't bring herself to give them privacy. Deep fear settled in her gut. Close on its heels was jealousy.

"I know Papa will be so happy that we're a couple," Bridget's voice carried to Ayanna's ears.

"We aren't a couple, Bridget. I told you that a long time ago. I'm sorry you and your mother believe we should be. I'm not available," Michael said.

Ayanna began to walk down the stairs. A calculating gleam appeared in Bridget's eyes as she saw her.

"But, Michael, I'm pregnant. About seven weeks ... and ... oh, I didn't know you had a guest." Bridget covered her mouth and tried to look embarrassed.

Michael turned around and met Ayanna's gaze.

She forced herself to maintain a bland expression. "Don't mind me," she said softly. "I'm just going to the kitchen.

He followed her. "Ayanna, wait," he insisted.

"No, Michael. I'd say you have something important to discuss with that woman." She waved him off and walked to the fridge to grab a bottled water before heading back upstairs.

I knew this was too good to be true.

Minutes later, she heard the door slam and feet pounding up the stairs. Taking a drink of her water, she gathered her inner strength and waited for her door to open.

She didn't have long to wait. Michael swung it open without even knocking. "Let me explain."

"I don't think I need an explanation. I'm fully aware of how that works. I was there. Although I found out at eight weeks, but still." She shrugged, determined not to show how hurt she was.

"She's lying. Well, perhaps not about being pregnant, but if she is, it isn't mine." Michael shut the door behind him and walked over to stand in front of her.

Ayanna kept her eyes on water bottle in her hand.
"Whatever. As long as you don't try and gyp Devon of anything, what you do is your business." She understood that the part of her prone to ruining good things was rearing its ugly head.

"What are you saying?" he demanded as the bottle was removed from her hand and he forced an eye connection.

"We both know the only reason you married me was for convenience. And I appreciate what you've done for me and Devon. But—"

His eyes grew hard as ice and colder than that. "Shut up, Ayanna. Don't even go down that fucking road. This marriage

is a marriage not a goddamn convenience." He clenched his jaw. "Maybe at first, in the beginning." He relaxed and a brief grin flashed across his face. "No, not even then. I've always known I wanted something more from you."

"No, it's wrong." Her heart swelled at what she heard. Could he be for real?

"What's wrong about it, Ayanna?" Exasperation slammed full force back into his voice. "I'll give you this, it started off in a unique way, but," he took her hands, "it's real now. This. You. Me. Devon. This is real. *We* are a family."

"And Bridget?" Ayanna recognised the desperation in her voice. But, she had to know.

"That was just Bridget being Bridget. I have never even screwed her."

Her eyes searched his. *He seems so certain about what he says. Why can't I believe him?* "I just don't know," she protested.

"What? What are you doubting? And why? The fact I was stupid to leave you that first night? And that you think I'm doing this because I feel guilty about you having to struggle with Devon for a few years? You're right, I do feel guilty. I should have been there. I should have married you that night. Part of me wanted to." She swallowed as he took her hands. "Marrying you has never been a regret. Ever. I love Devon." He made sure she couldn't pull away. "And I love you."

Her belly filled with butterflies. *He loves me.* She drew her bottom lip into her mouth. *I can't say it yet. I ... I ... I just can't.* 

She pulled a hand free from his hold and trailed it down the side of his face before gathering his shirt below his Adam's apple. "Good," she ground out. "The next hussy who comes to the door and claims that, is gonna get her ass beat. Clear?"

Michael smiled as he kissed her. "Yes, my wife.
Understood." Standing, he pulled her against his broad chest.
He glanced at the book of American poets, he had seen in that purple purse the day his life had changed for the better.
"Now, do you have time ... for your husband or do you have more studying to do?"

Time for my husband? So much for no repeats of sleeping with him. She tilted her head. Was that why he said he loved me?

Her pussy clenched. *Oh, to hell with it. I want him.* "Well," she purred as her hands slid around his waist. "I could study you, you know, perhaps do a little art appreciation." She licked her lips and demurely lowered her lashes.

"Little? A *little* art appreciation?" he growled as he bent her backwards and nibbled on her jaw line.

"I believe that was the word I used. But ... care to prove me wrong?" Her fingers dug into his corded forearms as he bent her further.

"Oh, hell yeah. We'll see how little you think he is."

"Such talk." Lifting her head, Ayanna met his gaze. "Just take me to bed, Michael."

"Yes, my beautiful wife. I think I should take you to bed. Then you can apologise to him for calling him little."

Ayanna held his gaze as her hands untied the drawstring on his shorts and pushed them down. "You're right," she cooed. "I should apologise."

Michael muttered incoherently.

Her hands held his erection. "You know, you were right about something else." She dropped to her knees. "He's not little at all." Fingers stroked along the length. "It's like velvet over iron."

"Ayanna."

"Hush. I'm apologising." She kissed the head of his dick, smiling as it leapt in response. "I'm sorry." Her mouth engulfed it, tongue swiping across the top, cleaning away the pre-cum.

Settling more comfortably on her knees, she began to slide him in and out of her mouth. "Ah hell, Ayanna," he groaned from above her.

One hand rested upon a corded thigh while the other reached between his legs to tease his balls. Her wet mouth slipped up and down. She removed her mouth and wrapped her hands back around him, cradling him between her soft palms. Stroking him up and down, moving easy with her saliva that was there.

"Fuck. I want to come." His voice grated.

"Shhh. I'm not done with my apology." One hand fisted around him and moved faster while her gaze remained focused on the cock before her. *Everything on him is beautiful.* 

He moaned, fists clenching, hips beginning to thrust. "I'm about to come."

Licking her lips, she put the head of his dick back in her mouth, her tongue ran along the edge. She tightened the circle her hand made near the base and began milking him.

A deep growl erupted as thick, salty ejaculate filled her mouth. Michael pumped his hips as he came furiously in her mouth.

When there was no more to swallow, she sat back and grinned at him. "I hope he accepts my apology."

Michael stared at her. He couldn't do anything else. Ayanna licked her lips as if she'd just finished the most scrumptious sundae. She looked up at him with those sexy brown eyes, that saucy grin and a look of such satisfaction on her face.

His cock twitched as his eyes moved over her still-moist lips. The tops of her breasts tempted him. Even her ears tempted him. *I am the luckiest man in the world.* 

He assisted her up off the floor and kissed her. His tongue swept like a river through her mouth. Stepping out of his shorts, he lifted her, placing her legs around his waist. He walked to the door and shut it before returning to Ayanna's bed.

He dropped her on the bed. Her eyes widened as she bounced. He groaned as her breasts jiggled inside her shirt. He jerked his shirt off, tossing it to the side. "Get your sexy body on your hands and knees."

"What?" Her question floated through the air.

"You heard me. Hands and knees and stay by the end of the mattress. I wanna see that ass in the air." His order was

sharp. He noticed an immediate flush to her skin. Her plump lips parted with excitement.

Ayanna did as he ordered. Stroking one hand along his hard-on, he lifted her skirt and groaned. She wore no panties. "You are such a naughty wench. No panties. Jesus, Ayanna," he mumbled, "your pussy is so wet."

He rested her skirt on the small of her back, exposing her totally to him. One finger teased her cleft as he continued to move closer to his own piece of heaven. As his finger moved, she looked at him over her shoulder and blinked once. A slow blink before facing forward.

Michael ran the head of his cock between her lips, drenching it with her juices. He thrust once and sheathed himself totally within her.

"Oh my God!" she wailed as her head dropped towards the mattress.

"Come on my cock, baby," he ordered. He drilled into her faster and faster. He shut his eyes on the sight of her ass shaking in front of him as his balls tightened. He pounded harder. The walls of her tight pussy clenched around him as she climaxed.

A roar erupted from him as he exploded inside her. Sweat ran from his body to hers as his limbs shook. He collapsed on her, pressing her body into the mattress while they fought to regain their breath. Then he pulled out and moved them up further on the bed to spoon them together.

Fifteen minutes later, Michael stood under the spray of the shower head. Fabulous memories of making love to her filled his mind as he turned off the water. He had to get her into his bedroom. He wanted it all with Ayanna. Not just snatches of her love. As he dried off, he ran through how to tell her. Pulling on a pair of clean khakis, he looked in the mirror. I know she responds to me, but how does she truly feel about me? How can I be so sure about my feelings and yet she seems so hesitant?

He ran the towel over his short hair then reached for a black shirt and tugged it over his head. Hanging up his towel then leaving the bathroom, he went downstairs still trying to figure out what he was going to do about his wife.

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#### **Chapter Five**

Michael smiled with the rush he felt as his F/A-18 Super Hornet took to the sky. He loved it up here. Was it possible for life to get any better? Being a pilot was ... indescribable.

"You okay up there, Taz?" Racer asked from behind.
"You're awfully quiet."

"Just enjoying the view, Racer. Just enjoying the view."

"Sure you are. You're probably trying to come up with some way to get that wife of yours up here and inducted into the mile-high club."

Male laughter reached his ears and Michael knew the rest of the squadron was listening in. They'd all surprised him and Ayanna last week when they'd stopped by his home to meet his wife and son. They'd come with their significant others and families, bringing food and a cake. Michael had been very pleased at how welcoming they'd been to Ayanna and Devon.

Now that it was just the guys, it was time for the ribbing to begin anew. They'd already been merciless to him when they'd found out he'd kept Ayanna a secret from them.

"Well, if I thought there was a way to accomplish that in this cockpit, I'd sure do it," Michael retorted. An image of Ayanna naked in his plane impaled on his cock was a helluva erotic image to him. Her juices coating his erection as he took them to new planes of pleasure was something even his jet couldn't deliver. Michael shifted as his penis swelled.

"Sure she wouldn't prefer the stick your hands are on?" Racer teased. "Or rather, the one it should be on."

"Watch it, Racer. He's liable to get so excited thinking about her, y'all will crash," another voice broke in.

"Don't be jealous that you still have to pay for women, Coyote," Michael retorted. Racer snorted behind him.

Their conversation halted as they received their orders and began their flight op. The second they'd succeeded and were heading back to base, the ribbing began again. Michael took it all with good cheer—until a voice broke in.

It wiped all the cheer from their faces. They had a mission and were needed out at sea. As one, the small squadron of three planes headed out over the Atlantic Ocean to the aircraft carrier where they'd refuel and receive their new orders.

As the F/A-18's shot across the blue sky and headed from home, Michael wondered how Ayanna would take this new development.

The men chatted amongst themselves. Michael looked on either side of him and nodded at the men there. He had the best men with him. There were no others he'd rather have at his side. Their tactical precision was unmatched by anyone which was precisely the reason they'd been sent on this mission.

It was dark when they landed on the flight deck of the carrier. After checking in with the ship's Commanding Officer, the men got briefed on their mission. They'd leave in a few hours but first they needed to get some food and sleep.

Michael nodded to his men as they went to their temporary quarters or the mess. Personally, he had a call to make. He

wanted to explain things to Ayanna. He also craved the soothing sound of her voice.

Michael stood by a ship to shore phone and stared. "Would you like some privacy, Lieutenant?" the CO asked as he stopped beside him. "Rumour has it you're recently married. Congratulations."

"Thank you, sir. And yes, if you don't mind, I would love some privacy."

"Very good, stop by my stateroom, and I'll let you use my phone." The CO patted him on the back and walked off.

Michael followed him immediately, wanting desperately to hear Ayanna's voice. Soon he was looking at the white receiver of the MRSAT in the CO's stateroom. He picked it up then set it back down again. He was scared. He had heard horror stories from other sailors about what had happened between them and their spouses when deployed. Infidelity. Spitefulness.

He shook his head. Ayanna isn't like that.

Finally he just dialled his home number and held his breath as the phone began to ring.

"Lieutenant Taylor's residence," Ayanna answered in her smooth alto tone. Just her voice managed to soothe his nerves.

"Hey, Ayanna," Michael said over the static-filled line.

"Michael? Where are you? You sound scratchy."

"I'm not coming home for a while," he told her. The static grew then faded. "Okay? I'm on a mission."

He waited for a response and got nothing.

"Ayanna? Honey, are you there?"

Nothing.

The call had been lost.

Michael dropped the phone back on its cradle and swore as he stood up. When he opened the door, the CO was waiting. "Everything okay at home, Lieutenant?"

"We got disconnected, but thank you, Sir, for letting me use your phone." Michael sent him a tense smile and walked off.

I am so totally fucked. I don't even know how much she heard.

\* \* \* \*

Ayanna hung up the phone, oblivious to the tears streaming down her face. *Not coming home for a while.* Well, that explained why he still wasn't home at eleven o'clock at night.

He doesn't want to be with you anymore, her mind taunted. She swallowed, no, that couldn't be right. Why not? You gave him what he wanted, sex. That's all men ever want.

Refusing to let her mind continue down that destructive road, she tried to turn her attention back to the task at hand. Studying.

It wasn't easy. The words from her notes and books seemed to mock her very being. She saw Michael's face in them. "Damn it!" Her hand smacked the desk as she struggled to get her work done. "I don't have time for this. I have to study. That hands-on practical is just around the corner."

It was near two when she finally gave in and crawled into bed, wearing one of Michael's shirts. He'd left it in her room one night when he'd had come to her—something that had irked him. He wanted her to share his room, but she still refused. It looked like he was tired of walking down the hall.

"Get a grip, Ayanna," she admonished herself as she rolled over and punched her pillow. "Don't assume anything."

Still, sleep eluded her until she allowed her fingers to drift between her thighs, along with an image of the man who'd defined passion for her.

\* \* \* \*

Her state of mind didn't improve. Life without Michael was hard. Very hard. Each passing day sent her mind down roads she knew in her heart were best left untravelled, but unfortunately they were frequented on an hourly basis.

She received calls from the significant others of the men who flew with Michael. They left messages which said to call if she needed anything, *anything* at all. Ayanna was grateful for the kindness but she didn't call. Between working, school, and Devon she stayed almost busy enough to keep his image at bay.

Almost.

Still she hurried to the phone each time it rang only to be disappointed when it wasn't him.

Lauren did her best to explain how things worked in the military. She rationalised he'd most likely been disconnected and Ayanna hadn't heard all he'd wanted to say. Ayanna didn't know what to think. She wanted desperately to believe

Lauren, but her mind kept coming up with vicious reasons for his absence.

Matters weren't helped by Devon constantly running around crying "Da-da". He didn't understand why Michael wasn't there and began to act out.

One night, two weeks after Michael had gone, the phone finally rang. Exhausted from working extra hours and from her studies, Ayanna wanted nothing but her bed. Sinking into the leather chair beside the phone, she answered wearily, "Lieutenant Taylor's residence."

"Ayanna? Baby is that you? Can you hear me?" Michael's rich voice reached across the line and threaded itself deep in her system—a system that still desperately craved him.

"Hello, Michael," she said softly as tears filled her eyes.

"I can't talk long but I wanted to see how you and Devon are doing. Is everything okay?"

"We're both fine. Thanks for asking." The traitorous tears leaked down her face. His comforting voice broke through the shell she'd erected to keep her sanity.

"Ayanna?" he asked. "What's wrong?"

She fought down a sniff as another rush of unexpected emotions swarmed her. *I have to keep strong. I can't be weak.* "I'm fine. Devon's doing well. How are you?" She heard the impersonal edge to her tone. Part of her longed to give in and cry but her pride demanded she stay and act strong.

"I'm okay. I miss you," he paused. "Are you sure everything is fine at home?"

"Yes, I'm sure. Thanks for calling and letting me know how you were doing. Stay safe. Goodbye, Michael." She replaced the cordless phone on the base and headed for bed.

\* \* \* \*

Michael looked at the phone like a foreign object. The droning of the dial tone reached him. She'd hung up. Just like that. Just a short goodbye and then ... nothing. Her tone ... so distant.

He replaced the receiver and wiped a hand down his face. He felt devastated. They really hadn't ever talked about what being a Navy wife was going to be like. Every time he tried to bring up his job, she'd found a way to change the subject. She still kept a barrier between them. Sure, at night it was different, but she refused to share his room like a true married couple.

"Ayanna," he mumbled as he left to go back to his quarters. Racer was in there when he walked in.

"You alright there, Taz?"

"Pete, man, I don't know what to do. I'm torn." Michael sat down heavily on his bunk.

"Wow, it must be serious. Look man, we're supposed to be going home tomorrow. You'll go home, take her in your arms and kiss the hell out of her. Sometime later, after you're done loving her, you'll explain how things are as a pilot's wife." Racer sent him an encouraging smile. "It'll work out. Where's your faith?"

Lying on his back, Michael looked at the ceiling. "I don't know. She sounded so distant, dispassionate even." Closing

his eyes, he thought over his mission. They had flown over parts of South America to 'tactically erase' some terrorists that had gathered there, and they'd managed to do so without any other civilian causalities. But his mind still wandered back to Ayanna.

He needed to know that Ayanna understood his job and what it meant. Michael needed to know that she didn't think he was out sleeping with anyone else. "I need her to know I love her and Devon."

Laughter reached him and he opened his eyes and saw Racer standing over him. "Tell her man. Just tell her."

"You're right." Michael sat up and saw his two wingmen and their RIO's looking at him as well. "Get outta here guys. Grab some sleep, we're haulin' ass home tomorrow."

The remaining crew waved and went to their own bunks. Michael went to sleep dreaming about Ayanna and Devon. The next afternoon when they launched from the flight deck a familiar rush went to his bones. At the same time, an extra one that told him he was soon going to be with his wife.

\* \* \* \*

The next day, work dragged on and on. Ayanna was exhausted from her restless night.

Her dreams had been haunted. She and Michael were kept separate by a chasm, a chasm that only grew each time she reached for him. By the time she'd woken, covered in sweat, the distance between them had grown from the size of a crack in the pavement to larger than the Grand Canyon, or so it seemed to her heavy heart.

Additionally, she was tense about hearing back on the practical exams that she'd taken, and all she wanted was get home to her son. It was a relief to finally walk through the door with Devon. At home, there was no need to pretend everything was alright. She let Devon play while she decided what to do about dinner. A picnic would be fun, but it would have to be inside since a late afternoon storm had rolled into the area.

She spread out a vinyl tablecloth on the floor and she sat on it with Devon to enjoy a fun dinner of finger foods. She watched her son build something out of cheese slices and grapes.

"Well, Devon. I'm done. Mama is almost a pharmacist. What do you think about that?" Ayanna asked as she dunked a carrot stick in some dip and ate it.

Big soulful eyes looked up at her and he grinned. Wrinkling his nose, he placed one finger across his lips, his sign for 'quiet.' Seconds after that, cheese squished between his fingers as he blew kisses to the room, his new, favourite thing to do.

Just as she grinned at his antics, he exclaimed, "Da-da." Dropping her head, she muttered, "Figures. That would be your answer. No love for mama."

"Da-da!" he said again as he pushed from his seat on the floor.

"I don't think he wants that piece of cheese. Eat your food." She directed a wayward piece of cheese back to Devon's mouth. "Not to mention your Da-da isn't here right now."

A deep masculine voice filled the kitchen. "Actually he is. And for the record, I would love a piece of cheese and am very proud that you're almost a pharmacist."

Devon giggled as Ayanna jumped. The happy child ran to the gate she'd had put to keep him and the food in the kitchen. She turned in time to see Michael pick him up.

He was home!

Michael kissed Devon and stepped over the baby gate. "Hello, Ayanna."

It was almost surreal. Her gaze travelled over him as he stood there in his flight suit. She noticed a slight hesitation or even fear in his eyes as his dark brown gaze stared back at her. Almost as if he was unsure of her reaction.

I love him.

Ayanna smiled as the realisation hit her. She loved him. And he loved her.

True, there were many things they had to discuss, things she couldn't continue to run away from. The life of a military wife, more specifically a pilot's wife. *Because, that's what I am. A US Navy pilot's wife.* 

Finally getting up off the floor, she walked towards him as he held their child and looked so devastatingly handsome. He took her breath away.

"Hi," she managed to mumble.

One strong arm reached out and pulled her to his body. Their lips met and even Devon's rambles faded into the background.

\* \* \* \*

Upon arrival at NAS Oceana the foul weather had delayed landing a tiny bit. Michael had sent his wingmen in first, making sure they'd gotten down safely before he'd taken himself out of the sky.

Farewells had been brief as he'd had the craving to get home and see his family. Rushing home, he'd parked his vehicle and run to the house, where he'd let himself in. He'd dropped his bag in the entryway and he listened for Devon and Ayanna.

He'd easily pinpointed their location in the kitchen and hurried to join them. Standing behind the baby gate, he'd taken in the scene. The table was off to the side, and Ayanna had placed a tablecloth down on the floor.

Her back had been to him, so his eyes had travelled over her, soaking up the vision she offered in a pale green tank top and dark grey pants.

His son had seen him and immediately Michael had put his finger across his lips. An action that Devon had mimicked before blowing kisses and chortling, "Da-da." Michael had blinked back tears at the love in Devon's eyes.

The moment he'd spoken and Ayanna had turned to look at him, Michael had known he'd come home for good. This was what life was all about.

As he kissed his wife, he thanked God she was still here. "We have to talk." *I love her so much!* 

"I know." She snuggled closer to him, her arms slipping around his waist.

Michael kissed the top of her head and then bounced Devon in his arm. "And how was he while I was gone?"

"Difficult," she answered. "Have you eaten?"

"No. We landed and I came home as soon as I could." He ran his hand up her exposed arm. "I'm starving though," he said, his deep tone full of another meaning. He knew she could feel his swollen cock pressing into her side.

Her body shuddered with arousal.

"Let me go change and I'll be right back," he said.

He took Devon with him upstairs, chatting about he expected him to behave better the next time da-da was gone.

He changed into grey Navy sweats and a blue shirt while Devon laughed and talked up a storm. In no time, he was on his way back downstairs.

The gentle strands of IL DIVO played through the room. Ayanna sang along to the song, *Amour Venme A Buscar*.

As they sat back down on the floor to eat, he reached across the space separating them and took her hand. When her lighter eyes met his, he swallowed. "I love you, Ayanna."

Her eyes grew big. "What?"

Michael manoeuvred to kneel before her. He cupped her face in his large hands. "I love you. I. Love. You."

"I love you, too, Michael. I love you, too."

A growl of satisfaction erupted from his throat as he lifted her to straddle his lap. "Do you know how much I've longed to hear those words from your mouth?"

"I love you," she said over and over as their mouths met with a blinding passion. Her stomach grumbled. Loudly. She pulled back from him and tucked her head into his neck.

"Hungry, dear?" he asked with a chuckle. As much as I want to make love to her, just being with her is more than perfect.

"Starved."

"Guess that means I should set you down, so we can get to the meal."

"I suppose," She replied, disappointment heavy in her tone.

Reluctantly he set her beside him and they began to eat. After a few moments, he spoke. "You do know we aren't having separate rooms anymore, don't you?"

She laughed. "I hope not. I've missed you."

"When is Devon's bedtime again?" Michael asked.

"Not for a while," she responded as she trailed one finger along his jaw.

He shivered at her simple touch. "Keep that up, and he'll be going to bed much earlier than normal."

"Impatient?"

"You have no idea," he said.

"Good. Now, eat up."

"I plan on it." Picking up a carrot stick, he offered it to her. "You're gonna need your energy."

"Really? So pilots can go for a long time?" Her thick lashes fluttered.

"This one can," he growled. "And I've never failed to deliver."

Laughing, they both ate and enjoyed just being together until they could reunite in the way their bodies craved. Later,

as Michael watched his wife put their son down for the night, everything about her called to him.

His gaze lingered over the way her full hips moved when she walked. How her breasts seemed to almost spill out of her shirt, but manage to look classy at the same time. Ayanna Genat Taylor was all he could ever want and more. If he had thought doing 7Gs in his jet sent him spinning, then from now on, it wouldn't affect him. The woman in his arms affected him much more than that.

As she shut Devon's door behind her, he pulled her close. Trailing his lips along the skin of her neck, he grew hard as the taste of her skin filled his mouth. "I want to love you."

He lifted her and carried her easily down the darkened hall to his bedroom.

Ayanna shivered.

The pleasure which erupted within her simply by being held close to his chest was mind-blowing. The deeply sexual tone he spoke in warmed her to the point of being single-handedly capable of melting a polar ice cap.

"Yes," she murmured. "Love me, Michael."

A slow seductive smile crossed his face as he closed the door behind them, creating the private sanctuary she longed for.

"All night long, baby," he promised. He set her down, searing her with the explosive heat in his gaze. "First things first. Let's get rid of these clothes."

Ayanna missed his touch the second he set her down. She whimpered softly and was blessed by another wicked grin from the tall man before her.

His callused hands skated up her bare arms to her collarbone. She trembled as her sensitive nipples tightened with anticipation. He unbuttoned her sleeveless blouse, slipping it off her shoulders. Without a word, one strong hand reached around her ribcage and expertly undid her bra.

As her breasts tumbled free of their confinement, she muttered, "Well now, that seemed mightily practiced."

She loved the blush that graced his face at her comment.

Her belly quivered as he knelt before her, his warm breath dancing along her exposed skin. His long fingers examined her stomach. Ayanna tipped her head and watched the myriad emotions on his face as he touched her. Pleasured her.

His hair shone in the room's soft light, the summer sun having given his normally dark hair lighter streaks. She watched the way his straight white teeth sank into his bottom lip, how his head cocked to the side as his eyes followed the path his fingers travelled.

She swallowed hard as he moved down over the swell of her hips to the button that rested on her right hip. Every action was smooth, seemingly effortless—even the way he lowered the zipper of her pants and drew them off her legs.

Ayanna knew he could smell her arousal, hell she could. She didn't care, she wanted him to touch her. "Michael," she stuttered as his index finger ran along the edge of her satin thong.

"Damn it, Ayanna. I wanted to go slow, make love to you as you deserve, but," his hands gripped her hips and pulled her close so her dripping pussy was right before his mouth,

"sitting here, smelling your scent. I want to rip this fucking purple thong off and screw you until neither of us can think."

Dropping one hand to rest on the back of his head, Ayanna urged him closer. "Don't hear me complaining, do you?"

Her other hand manoeuvred between her crotch and his face, she slid her fingers under the wet material, allowing them to sink into her. Moving them up and down until they were wet with her juices, Ayanna removed them from her pussy and put them to his lips.

Michael's mouth sucked on her fingers until there was no more taste for him to get from them. He nudged her thong out of the way and began feasting on her.

Her moans quickly turned to loud mews of pleasure. Somehow, her thong was removed and he kept his mouth pressed hard to her. His thick tongue fucked her until she came.

"Michael!" she cried as her body shook.

He stayed on his knees until he was sure he had gotten it all. When he rose before her, her body pulsed with eagerness at the raw, primal craving she saw. Her eyes drifted down to the obvious ridge in his sweatpants. She licked her lips. *I* want to suck on that cock.

Michael lowered his pants and whipped off his shirt. She shifted as she tried to keep her moisture inside her body as opposed to leaking down her leg. His naked body made her lust uncontrollably. All of him was magnificent, but she focused on the thick cock that jutted out from the nest of dark hair.

Again, she wet her lips and reached for him. She groaned in tandem with him as her fingers closed about him. Her pussy pumped and sent another orgasm through her. She loved the feel of him in her hand.

Leaning forward, she took him in her mouth. His moan made her smile. He gripped her hair and gently tugged her away from him. Confused, Ayanna looked up at him. What does he want? The answer was on his face. He needed her.

"I need to be inside you, Ayanna. I need to feel your pussy around my cock." His words were husky with strain.

She nodded. She stood and walked to the bed, sitting down on it and holding out her hand towards the handsome lieutenant who happened to be her husband. Hers.

Michael followed her. He settled between her legs. She helped guide him inside her and they both caught their breath at the sensation of being joined in such a way.

Eyes on each other, he began to slowly move inside her. The rhythm quickly gave way to a faster, deeper, harder thrusting of hips. Ayanna screamed herself hoarse as her hips rose to meet each powerful stroke.

Throughout the night, they made love. They explored each other's bodies. Ayanna sat up and looked at her husband in the gentle light of morning. Thick lashes rested on his cheeks as he slumbered. He lay on his back, the sage-coloured sheet resting just below his navel. Her eyes travelled over his bared chest, admiring the masculine form.

"My husband," she mumbled.

Tugging down the sheet, she exposed his cock to her gaze. She licked her lips. Reaching out, she touched it gently,

slowly running her fingers up the shaft. She never stopped watching as it grew harder and stiffer in her grasp.

Low grunts and groans came from Michael as he continued to sleep. His hips shifted a bit and Ayanna rose up on the bed. Carefully, she straddled him and sank down his aroused shaft. Her body trembled as he filled her. She closed her eyes, tipped back her head and began to move upon him.

"Now, this is a wonderful way to wake up," his sleep-laden voice said.

Ayanna didn't stop riding him but she did look down at him. "I couldn't agree more." She smiled as his hands landed on her hips and he began to move opposite her, so when she came down, he went up, allowing much deeper penetration.

Her nails scored over his naked chest as she neared her release. His rumbles offset her mewls. Up and down she moved, rotating her hips, angling them so he hit different spots inside her.

"Oh God," she moaned as her entire body began to tingle. Michael took her hands in his and laced their fingers together. She came in a rush and collapsed on top of him, panting hard.

Michael rolled her so he was on top, their joined hands above her head. His hips continued to pump into her. "You were made for me, baby. I fit so perfectly inside you. I love you."

She could see the sweat on his skin, feel the pounding of his heart. "I love you, too," she said on a low purr of satisfaction.

Hooking her ankles so her feet rested on his back, Ayanna closed her eyes again and gave herself over to the pleasure this man brought her.

This was where she belonged.

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#### **About the Author**

Aliyah Burke loves to read and write. She is married to a career military man, they have a German Shepherd, Borzoi, and a DSH cat. Her days are spent sharing her time between work, writing, and dog training.

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