

The Williams Sisters Book 1

Hello: Keyshia Williams



Marie Rochelle

Red Rose™ Publishing

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The Williams' Sisters

Book One

By

Marie Rochelle

Dedication:

To Frank:

Thanks for the memories.



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Hello Keyshia Williams

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Chapter One

Standing in the nursery's doorway, Keyshia William's mother stared at her oldest daughter while holding a crying and squirming baby on her left hip.

"Keyshia, please come in here. I need some help with your little sister. I need you to change Allura's diaper and then place her back in the crib. I have to finish giving Fawn her bath."

"Mama, I don't want to help you anymore today. I just changed Sasha's diaper a few minutes ago," Keyshia whined. "I want to finish watching cartoons. Scooby Doo is coming on."

"Girl, don't you argue with me," her mama scolded. "Since you're the oldest you have to watch over your baby sisters. They are always going to depend on you because they love you. You're the one that will have to protect them from the dangers of the world. Remember you were the one who wanted a baby sister."

"When I asked for a baby sister I didn't know you and Daddy were going to bring three babies home at once. That is a lot of babies," Keyshia whined.

Now she wished she was still the only child. She liked her life so much better when she was the center of her parent's attention. She didn't want to miss watching her cartoons to change another dirty diaper. It wasn't fair!

“Sweetheart, Mommy and Daddy weren’t expecting so many babies at once until the doctor told us.” Her mama came out of the nursery and stood next to the television looking down at her. “We all have to pitch in now and work together as a family. I know that we can do it, don’t you?”

“Remember tomorrow is our day to spend together while your daddy stays at home with your sisters. We can go to the park and you can get on the tornado slide. I know how much you love that. I’ll even push you on the swings. After we are done with that then the two of us can go out for pizza and ice cream, so can you please come and help mommy?”

“I don’t know,” Keyshia pouted. She had forgotten that tomorrow was her day to spend with her mommy. She always *loved* going out for pizza.

“Keyshia, I really need you to do this for me. You aren’t old enough to give Fawn a bath yet or I would have you do that instead. Your daddy will be so proud of you when he comes home and finds out how you were such a good little helper today.”

“Okay, mommy,” Keyshia sighed getting up off the floor. “I’ll help you. I can watch the Care Bears later instead of Scooby Doo.”



Keyshia Williams shook her head at the fond memory, as she glanced out the window of her business *Family Affair*. “I guess mama was right,” she said to

herself. “I started looking out for Sasha, Allura and Fawn when I was seven years old. I’m still doing it now and they are twenty-eight years old.” She couldn’t believe how fast time had flown by since her triplet sisters were born.

Moving away from the window, Keyshia strolled around the room as a sense of overwhelming pride swelled within her chest. This is where she had always known she wanted to be for as long as she could remember. She wanted to be the owner of her own establishment and now she was.

However, she was still hurt by the fact that her beloved Uncle Raymond had to die for her dream to finally fall into place. After his burial, the family discovered that her uncle left an insurance policy for a substantial amount that was to be divided equally between her and her younger sisters.

She knew instantly that her portion of the money was going to be used to support her dream of opening and running a charming and intimate hotel with an upscale feel. God, her uncle’s sudden death from a massive heart attack had taken the entire family by complete surprise. She had loved him dearly and had very fond recollections of him from her childhood. He always had a joke to tell or magic tricks to show her.

Despite the fact that by the time she had turned ten years old, she had easily figured out all of his tricks. She never let him know because he loved doing them

so much, and it would have ruined the magic for her younger sisters who still got a kick out of watching him perform for them.

It would be an understatement to say that her parents had been shocked as hell when Sasha, Fawn, Allura and herself had been listed as the sole beneficiaries on his life insurance policy. He constantly told them that he had something special planned for them, but they never had a clue it would be something like a five hundred thousand dollars.

It had taken close to two months for her to finally get over her grief before she got everything set in motion for *Family Affair*. For years she had rolled the idea of having a high-end hotel/spa kind of venture for people to stay in for a week, month or longer if they wanted.

Family Affair wasn't like a bed and breakfast in her opinion because it offered more amenities. It had internet access for the guests. A small maid service came through and cleaned the rooms while the guests were out and after check-out. A small gym was located at the back of the building.

The gym wasn't huge, but just big enough for people to use. After her establishment gained some extra capital, she was thinking about adding a larger Jacuzzi or a Steam Room, but she had to run the idea past her opinionated younger sisters first.

Keyshia had really thought about opening a Bed and Breakfast at first, but in the end she had axed the idea. B and B's were more for couples looking for a romantic place to stay and relax. However, *Family Affair* catered to a larger clientele because families or individuals could book a room here. Mostly, individuals had been booking rooms so far and she was okay with that. After word of mouth got out about how good everything was, more people would be coming in to see what the 'buzz' was about.

She wasn't positive about what her sisters' planned on doing with their share of the money back then. For some reason, they had stopped discussing their money issues with her a long time ago. So, it had completely blown her mind when Sasha, Fawn and Allura all decided to invest their share of the life insurance money into her dream making them equal partners.

Honestly, it wasn't like her siblings were thinking about their futures or even had a five year plan written down anywhere. Her baby sisters' usually lived for the same things the majority of women did at their age: Going to parties, shopping, dating and having fun with friends.

She knew that Fawn, Allura and Sasha might talk about finding a good job and keeping it for a long period of time; however, her sisters never seemed to stick with any job for more than six months.

That is why it was so hard for her to believe them when they told her about wanting to be a part of *Family Affair*. Maybe she was just being too hard on her siblings and not giving them enough credit. They could be maturing more than she thought they were. Honestly, it was about time they started thinking about their futures.

Keyshia recalled how Sasha had informed her that she, Allura and Fawn really wanted to have a stake in *Family Affair* just in case none of their dream jobs came true. Out of the three triplets, Sasha was the more level-headed and dependable one. She would always think first before she acted on her emotions. It was the one quality that she loved the most about her sister, and could probably be attributed to the fact she was born first and suffered from the *oldest child syndrome*. Sasha was a horrible perfectionist, very detail-oriented and responsible. Sasha did worry more than she should, but that was just how she was.

Shaking her head, Keyshia thought about how her two other sisters Allura and Fawn were forever up to something. It was like night and day when it came to her siblings. Sasha was constantly being pegged as being a high-achiever.

Allura, without a doubt was the toughest. She was constantly trying to outdo all of them when it came to anything. It didn't matter what it was as long as she felt she had done her. But, Allura also has a rebellious streak. She likes to see

how far she can push someone's buttons without getting into trouble. But if any of them needed help, she was the first one there to tackle the problem.

Fawn, however, was her biggest worry out of all of her sisters because she was the baby and felt she could do nothing wrong. She loved getting attention from people. Yes, her sister had a good sense of humor which made her a pleasure to be around. But Fawn needed to find a way to stop trying to continuously sway her sister's opinions. She had the ability to work a situation until Allura and Sasha gave into her demands and it wasn't acceptable in her opinion.

Her siblings had these constantly changing big ideas and plans on how to make their marks in the world. Yet, it seemed like no matter how hard they tried staying at a particular job it never worked for them. It seemed like within a week's time, they would be on to the next big adventure and telling her not to worry about it everything would be okay.

Lord, she remembered being twenty-eight and already having her ten year plan typed out and ready to go. She was *nothing* like the triplets, but she loved them dearly and would do anything to help them with their hopes and dreams.



Walking around, Keyshia took in the elegant atmosphere of the place and silently gave herself a pat on the back. Towards the side of the room instead of using the expected round entrance table like her sisters wanted and begged her to

get so many times that she lost count after a while, she had decided to go with a striking open-fretwork table, perfectly arranged seats and end-tables.

In addition, she was lucky enough to find a chandelier that added an extra pop to the space. The décor of *Family Affair* was so beautiful that Martha Stewart would have been jealous of it.

The dining room was to her left and she had specifically spent a lot of time working on that one area because she wanted a soothing ambiance for the guests to unwind and enjoy their meals. A series of tables were placed throughout the room. The linens were white with a deep red strip going down the middle for a dash of color. The decision was made to use four chairs made of teak to create inviting seating but in an eye-catching décor around the tables. Crystal glasses enhanced the place settings and a single red rose in a vase was placed in the center of each table.

The forty-two bedrooms upstairs fell into the same white and red patterns as the linen on the tables downstairs. A white comforter was on all of the beds with a red throw blanket going across the foot of the bed and matching red and white pillows were at the head to tie everything in together. She thought the white and red color combination worked perfectly for the chic appearance she was looking for.

Most people who have stayed at here gave her endless praise about the unique name, “*Family Affair*,” and the sophisticated interior. She informed them that the name had come from one of her mother’s favorite childhood television shows. At first, she didn’t think it would work, but now Keyshia had to admit that the name fit perfectly.

“Since nothing is going on right now I’m going to fix myself something to drink and rest my feet. I have been on them all day and they are killing me,” Keyshia said out loud as she made a beeline over to the bar. Nothing really exciting ever happened on the weekends, especially at night, so that was the main reason she traded shifts with Sasha.

Chapter Two

Spelling, Virginia

Turning his head to the right, Steven Weber watched as all of the buildings weren't more than a flash here and there as the Greyhound bus sped past them. At the very last minute he had decided to take the bus instead of his car. Because he had to get away from his job and he wasn't in the right mind set to be driving anyway.

He was finally ready to admit that the fast pace of his job was getting to him now. He had to find a place to unwind for a while as he contemplated his future and what it was going to entail. When he first started working as a tabloid journalist he couldn't get enough of it. For the first three years, it had been the greatest job in the world to him. He totally loved getting up each and every day.

What person wouldn't love writing about the dirty little secrets all the stars wanted to keep secret?

He possessed the capability to dig into privileged people's lives and get paid hefty sums of money for all the scandalous information he could find on them. The

dirtier the information or scandal, the bigger the check he deposited into his bank account.

Now, the thrill of the job was starting to lose its shine. His bosses didn't want the same stuff that they used too: Like which celebrities were cheating on their spouses or what teen queen got so smashed that she had to be carried out of the club by her newest bodyguard.

Sure, some of those things still sold quite well; however, not as much as a picture of a celebrity being carried out of their apartment in a body bag after an apparent suicide or worse a drug overdose. He wasn't so money hungry that he had to cause the families more pain by seeing their loved one plastered across the front of a tabloid. He wasn't interested in making anyone's anguish any harder than it already was.

That's why he had told several of his informants to lose his number for a while. He wasn't interested in making a fast buck off anything like that. It just didn't sit well with him. Maybe he was getting softer in his old age and he was just beginning to realize making money at any price wasn't worth it. No matter what, this time away will give him a new outlook on what he might want to do with the rest of his life.

It wasn't like he had a girlfriend or wife waiting for him back home. He couldn't remember the last time he had been in a relationship, because most of his

days and nights were filled with working on his next story. Hell, one thing was for sure. There was no way it could get any worse in his opinion.

Closing his eyes, Steven decided to take a quick nap before the bus got to his stop. He was always so busy chasing after celebrities that he had not realized how tired he truly was until now. He hated that the bus ride was taking way longer than he had originally anticipated.

But he could deal with it, because he didn't want anyone looking for his car or him. He wanted to lay low until he worked out a few things in his head and an unexpected visitor wasn't going to help with his decision. Shaking that final thought from his head, Steven finally drifted off to sleep.

Steven didn't know how long he had been asleep before he felt someone shaking his shoulder. Opening his eyes, he frowned at the young blond man sitting next to him. Where in the hell had he come from? Because when he decided to take a quick catnap the seat had been empty and he wasn't seated anywhere else on the bus either.

"Sir, the bus driver has been yelling at you. He told me to wake you up because this is your stop," the guy informed him, pointing towards the front of the bus.

Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, Steven snatched his jacket off the back of the seat in front of him, grabbed his bag from underneath the seat and then got up

from his seat sliding past the guy next to him. “Thanks for letting me know. I wasn’t expecting to be asleep for so long.”

“Hey, no problem,” the young man grinned. “I always try to be helpful whenever I can.”

Steven made his way towards the front and stopped by the bus driver. Frowning, he looked out of the windshield, but he didn’t see a hotel sign in sight. What in the hell was the bus driver trying to pull dropping him off here? He had explicitly asked to be let off at the closest spot to a decent hotel or at least in walking distance of one. This spot was out in the middle of nowhere and it was almost ten o’clock at night. A person would have to be out of their mind to get out on the highway during the middle of the night.

“Sir, I don’t see any signs of a hotel around here,” Steven complained. “Are you sure this is the correct stop for me? I don’t want to get off and be stranded out here.”

“Mister, the hotel is right in front of you. Don’t you see the red *Family Affair* sign in the distance?” The bus driver asked pointing through his window. “I heard it’s one hell of a place to stay from other passengers I have had on here in the past.”

“Right here is as far as I can go to your stop because I have to turn left at this corner. So, you have to get off and walk the rest of the way. I’m sorry about this, but it shouldn’t take you that long to get there.”

Steven kept staring until he finally made out the red and black sign in the distance. He sure in the hell didn't feel like walking there, but if that was his only option then he would have to do it. At least, there was enough light outside from other signs to lead his way, and so that the steady flow of traffic would be able to see him clearly and not turn him into road kill.

His mouth thinned with displeasure at the thought of how long it was going to take him to get there, but he kept his complaints to himself. "Okay, thanks for taking me this far," Steven retorted. "I guess I can make it the rest of the way. You can go ahead and let me out here." He waited while the bus driver opened the door and let him out.

"Sir, you have a nice night," the driver told him once he was off the bus and standing to the side.

"You too," he answered and then watched as the door closed and the bus turned the corner leaving him alone.

Steven couldn't believe how his day had gone so far. So many different situations had popped up since he left home early this morning. He wasn't sure what was going to happen next, but he would try to go with the flow no matter what came up. Honestly, the adventurous side of him couldn't wait to see what else might happen before the night was over.

“Well, I can’t stand here all night. I need to start walking.” He adjusted the strap of his carry-on on his shoulder and headed in the direction of the *Family Affair* sign. He hoped this place wasn’t a dump. He hated staying in those when he was on the road and tried to avoid them at all costs.

It seemed like Steven had been walking close to an hour before he finally walked through the doors of the hotel. He was so jubilant to finally be there he didn’t care if *Family Affair* was a five-star hotel or the next Bates Motel. All he wanted to do was take a hot shower, get something in his stomach and curl up in a nice soft bed. Truthfully, all of his wants or needs didn’t necessarily have to fall in that order either. All he cared about was that all of them got fulfilled in the quickest amount of time as possible.

Stopping dead in his tracks, Steven paused inside the entry way. He couldn’t believe how incredible the inside of *Family Affair* looked. He would have never imagined a place like this would be on the outskirts of small town. He wondered how many people drove past this and never knew what a treasure they were missing out on.

The first thing that caught his eye was the two tan couches that were facing each other with red, white and ecru throw pillows across the back of them. In the middle of the floor was a long black table between the two couches. It went

perfectly with the russet and off green rug underneath it that blended in flawlessly with the color pattern of the couches.

As he continued to check out the place, he noticed that two lamps were placed on each side of the sofas adding more light to the room while giving it a hint of sophistication and charm. Huge green potted plants off to the side gave the area some life and a hint of a homely feel. The lobby was topped off with a chandelier hanging down from the center of the ceiling with recessed lighting along the side walls, and to his left was a red accent wall with a variety of pictures hanging inside black picture frames.

Steven didn't see anyone around, so he headed in the direction of the empty front desk directly in front of him. He hoped that the reservations person was nearby because he was beyond tired and ready to hit the sheets. He knew as soon as his head touched the pillow he was going to be out like a light for the rest of the night.

Pausing at the desk, Steven tapped the bell once with the palm of his hand and waited for about five minutes for someone to show up. However, when no one came he decided to call out and prayed that someone would come sooner instead of later. He was usually a very patient man, but after the long-drawn-out bus ride and even longer walk here his patience was running thin.

"Hello. Is there anyone here?" he called out. "I need some help."

“Hello, sir. Can I help you?” a soft feminine asked behind him a minute or two later.

Looking over his shoulder, Steven did a double take as his eyes landed on the most beautiful and breathtaking black woman he had ever seen relaxing at a table watching him from beneath her long, thick lashes. Her skin was a smooth mocha complexion; it made him want to touch her to see if she felt as smooth and creamy as she looked. He had been so busy trying to the check-in that he had not noticed her and she wasn’t even twenty-five feet from him.

He continued to let his eyes slowly travel over the rest of her body. She had her legs crossed displaying shapely limbs. He had always been a leg man and this mystery woman owned a great pair. He couldn’t wait until she stood up so he could get a better look at them. Steven even liked how she had her hair styled without a strand of it out of place.

For some odd reason that made him want to find a way to mess it up, so he could see how she would look a little less perfect. Steven wanted to say something to her, but he couldn’t get his tongue to form any words. He couldn’t remember the last time a woman had made him this tongue-tied. All he could do was just stand there and look at her like a young boy with his first crush instead of acting like the mature man he prided himself in being.

“Sir, can I help you?” she asked him again placing her drink down on the table. “Are you looking for directions?”

“No, I’m not looking for directions,” Steven replied when he finally regained his voice. “I want to check into a room. I hope that you have one empty.”

“You’re in luck. We do have a couple of empty rooms.” The mystery woman replied as she stood up and came towards him.

Steven couldn’t help but notice how amazing her legs looked in those four inch heels. They were better than he could have ever imagined. He usually wasn’t this instantly attracted to any woman, so he knew the woman in front of him had something special about her to peak his curiosity like this.

“Are you here for business or personal reasons?” she asked drawing his attention away from her captivating legs and back to her stunning face. “Do you have any family in the area?”

Steven watched as she walked around him and went behind the desk. *Did she work here?* He wanted to know more about her. Hell, he didn’t even know her name and all he could think about was asking her out on a date. As much as he was dying to learn more about this beauty talking to him, he had to get a room first and then he would find out more about her-like was she married, single or dating someone.

The family comment made a lot of stuff rush into Steven's mind. At first, he was going to accept his brother's offer to stay with him, but he didn't want to get a lecture from his younger sibling about how he needed a career change when he wasn't living the best life either.

In addition, he was fed up with his brother's current girlfriend cornering him in every room asking him if he had any juicy new gossip on the celebrities that she was obsessed with. He had told her countless times that he couldn't talk about anything he was working on, but she just couldn't seem to get it through her thick skull.

"Excuse me, sir. Do you still want to rent a room?"

Steven brought his attention back to the woman and noticed she was holding a green and gray sign-in book against her chest. He was tired of wondering who she was. He was just going to come out and ask her.

Chapter Three

“Miss, who are you? Do you work here?” Steven inquired. He was dying to know who she was. Hopefully, she would be up to having drinks with him after he had checked into his room.

She grinned at him revealing a beautiful smile. “I apologize. I should have introduced myself sooner. My name is Keyshia Williams. I’m the owner of *Family Affair*. I bet you were wondering why a strange woman was asking if your visit here was business or personal.”

“Yes, I was wondering about that,” Steven admitted. “That is why I finally asked who you were.”

“I wanted to know the information so I could give you the rates for the rooms. We keep the business clients on a separate floor from the regular clients. It works better that way for everyone.”

Keyshia...was her name? Steven thought. It suited her perfectly. He loved how it sounded coming from her full lips. He was dying to test it out and see how it felt coming off his tongue. With a name that beautiful there wasn’t a doubt in his mind that it would feel good.

“Keyshia, I’m not here on business. So, I think a personal room would work better for me,” Steven answered. Yeah, he loved how her name just seemed to roll off his tongue. He would make sure to say it every chance he got while he was on vacation.

“Wonderful,” Keyshia exclaimed, giving him another charming smile. “Let me go over the prices and then you can tell me which package interests you the most.”

“Sounds good to me,” Steven replied moving closer to the desk. He wanted to get as close to Keyshia as he could, but he didn’t want to make her nervous.

“A regular room runs between seventy-five dollars a night or five hundred twenty-five dollars for one week. Suite rates are one hundred fifty dollars per night or one thousand fifty dollars a week and then the Deluxe is three hundred dollars per night or two thousand one hundred dollars for a week.”

“The prices include 24-hour room service, sauna and fitness center, indoor swimming pool, laundry and dry cleaning service. You’d be able to visit the lobby area for a drink and listen to the nightly singer from 6 to 8 o’clock. We offer a variety of food here that ranges from Italian and American to Thai. You can have a full course meal or a light snack. It’s left up to you.”

“What comes with the regular room?”

“Just the twenty-four hour room service,” Keyshia answered. “I only have a few customers that want the regular package, but we still offer it. With the way the economy is at the moment, I want everyone to still feel welcome at *Family Affair*. It’s the right thing to do. ”

“I don’t think you mentioned the times I’ll be able to get my meals around here,” Steven said. Sometimes he enjoyed eating earlier and other days he liked having a late dinner; it all depended on how his day had gone and the mood he was in.

“Sorry, I always forget to mention that,” Keyshia apologized. “Usually I send out brochures and everything is included in those. We usually don’t get that many walk-in customers. I think you are only the third one, so let me go over them with you.”

“Breakfast starts at five in the morning and ends at eleven. Lunch begins at one in the afternoon, and ends at three. Dinner is served at five, and concludes at nine. Sometimes we run a little later with dinner if the place is full because we know some people might be running late.”

“So, have I sold you on a room...? Would you like a room at *Family Affair* for the night or longer?” Keyshia asked him. “Sir...”

“Sorry,” Steven apologized. He hadn’t realized that he had forgotten to tell Keyshia his name. He had gotten so caught up in looking at her that it completely

slipped his mind and that wasn't like him at all. In his job, he was used to dealing with stunning females yet there was something about the uniqueness of Keyshia that genuinely captivated him.

"My name is Steven Weber and yes I believe I do want to get a room here. Do you have any rooms left for the deluxe package?"

Keyshia gave him a small nod. "Yes, Mr. Weber we do have one room left. Usually we have more but two conventions are coming to town next week and the rooms went fast, so you got pretty lucky getting this one."

"Steven," he corrected. He didn't want Keyshia calling him Mr. Weber. It sounded too cold and impersonal. He wasn't interested in a detached or distant relationship with the striking woman in front of him.

Steven knew it was crazy on his part, but he was already thinking about what their first date would be like. All of his life, he had been a take charge kind of guy and he wasn't going to stop now. He wasn't about let moss grow under his feet when it came to Keyshia. He just hoped she wasn't married, engaged or had a boyfriend. He prayed that she might be as attracted to him as he was to her.

"Okay, Steven," Keyshia said placing the sign-in book down on the desk in front of her. She flipped it open, grabbed a pen off the desk and pointed to an empty line in the book. "Why don't you sign right here while I get everything taken care of." She held out the pen to him and waited for him to take it.

Steven grabbed the pen and felt a slight electrical jolt when his fingers brushed Keyshia. He saw the surprised look that passed over Keyshia's face and he knew she had experienced the same sensation as him.

*Wonderful...*the pull he was feeling wasn't as one-sided as he might have first believed.

"Thank you," he said as he took the pen and quickly signed his name before handing it back to Keyshia.

"You're welcome." Keyshia took the ink pen and placed it back in the spine of the book. "How would you like to pay? We take credit cards, debit cards or cash. We don't take checks. I also need some form of identification to verify your name if it's going to be cash."

"We," Steven frowned. He hadn't seen anyone else here but him and Keyshia, so why was she saying we all of the sudden. "What do you mean by 'we'? I thought you mentioned earlier that you were the owner?"

"Sorry, I didn't mean to confuse you. I own this place with my sisters. We all take turns working here. Tonight was my night to work."

"I understand." Steven reached into his pocket to grab his wallet, but it wasn't there. "What in the hell?" he mumbled underneath his breath. He was positive he had placed it in there right before he got on the bus; however, he could have been mistaken and it was inside his back pocket instead.

Reaching around, Steven patted his back pocket a couple of times and found it empty also. "I can't believe this," he mumbled to himself, totally unaware of the worried look Keyshia was giving him. He quickly searched through his jacket and it wasn't there either. He couldn't believe it his wallet and all of his money was gone.

What in the hell was he going to do now? If he didn't have any money to pay for his room, where in the hell was he going to spend the night?

Chapter Four

Keyshia tried not to stare at the man in front of her, but it was almost impossible not to keep looking at him. He was a very good-looking man. Sure, a variety of men passed through here all the time, but there was something about Steven Weber that seemed to draw her interest more. She admired the way his wide shoulders filled out his shirt. She loved tall men and he looked to be around six feet four inches with a body that would make any woman stop and take notice.

Absolutely the perfect height for a man to be in her opinion, it meant that her head would almost come directly under his chin. There was nothing sexier than when a woman could rest her cheek against a man's hard chest while they were slow dancing.

In addition, she liked how the lights shined off his wavy dark brown hair giving him a more intriguing look. A lock had fallen across his forehead and she was tempted to brush it back, but she suppressed the urge.

Stop it!

I know nothing about this guy at all. I need to get my runaway hormones under control or I'm going to embarrass both of us, Keyshia reminded herself; however, that passing thought didn't last once she noticed his clothing.

The gray slacks Steven was wearing seemed like they were tailored to fit his athletic body perfectly. They were molded to his thighs showing everything he had to offer, and she was very impressed. If he was this stirring with only the two of them in the room, she could only fathom how compelling his presence would be in a crowd of people. Without a doubt, all eyes would be on him and his every word. He commanded that kind of attention and wouldn't stop until he got it from everyone that knew him.

"I can't believe this," Steven mumbled in front of her as he kept searching through his pockets.

"Is there a problem?" Keyshia asked, shaking off her fantasy. She could return to it later when she was alone.

"You won't believe this, but I can't find my wallet. I think I might have lost it," Steven confessed as he continued to hunt for it.

Keyshia didn't like the turn this conversation was taking. She thought Steven looked like an upstanding guy who would have a good job and without a doubt be able to afford the prices to stay in a room here. But was he really a con artist trying to pull one over on her? Lord, if her sisters Sasha, Allura and Fawn were here they would be throwing a fit and telling him to get his no good ass out of their place of business.

“You’re kidding, aren’t you?” she asked with a scowl on her face. How could he not know that he didn’t have his wallet with him until now? It just didn’t make any sense to her. “How did you get here without any money? Didn’t you need to fill up your car with gas or buy something to eat on your drive here?” Everything she asked was very logical questions and she expected an answer to them and she would get them.

“I didn’t drive here,” Steven answered.

“How did you get here then?”

“I took the Greyhound bus. I wanted to get away from my work problems and thought a bus ride would clear my head. I wasn’t focused enough to deal with driving for several hours. I know when I got on the bus I had the wallet in my pocket. I never got off the bus until the driver let me off and gave me directions to get here.”

“Are you telling me the truth?” Keyshia questioned. Something just wasn’t adding up with his story. “How do I know you aren’t trying to pull something over on me?”

“I’m not trying to run a game on you,” Steven swore. “I’m quite well-known back in my hometown. I have money, but without any forms of ID or credit cards I’m broke. I can’t believe this happened to me.”

Stepping back from the desk, Keyshia glanced down at the phone underneath it and wondered if she should call the police. Steven Weber might not even be the guy's real name for all she knew. He could be running from the police and thought this would be a good place to lay low for a while. It was out of the ordinary that someone would just waltz in here off the street without any kind of money or form of ID on him at all.

"Mr. Weber, maybe you should leave. I don't think I'll be able to help you." Keyshia took another quick glance at the phone again and prayed that she wouldn't have to use it.

"Keyshia, you don't have to be afraid of me. I'm not going to hurt you. I swear to you that I'm harmless. Honestly, I just need a place to stay for tonight and I promise I can clear this entire situation up in the morning with a single phone call."

No matter how attracted she was to Steven there was no way she could give in on this. "I'm sorry I can't let you stay here. I don't know you. I can't be sure if you're telling me the truth. You need to leave, sir."

"My name is Steven Weber and I work in New York as a journalist. Honestly, if you let me stay the night I can prove who I am to you tomorrow." he pleaded. "My editor will be back at home tomorrow and he'll be able to back me up. My brother is also out of town and won't be back until late tomorrow

afternoon. He can also verify who I am too. Can't I please stay here for the night? I have no other place to go."

Shaking her head, Keyshia folded her arms beneath her breasts. "I'm sorry Mr. Weber. My sisters and I are trying to start a business here. We can't afford to let anyone have a free ride not even for one night. You have to leave now. I hope you will be able to catch the same bus that brought you here because I can't help you."

Steven stared at her with such a devastated look on his handsome face-he didn't know what to say. Keyshia didn't want to feel guilty for tossing Steven out on the streets, but she couldn't let him stay. Her sisters would have a fit if she gave Steven such a huge pass like that.

"I understand," Steven replied as he picked up his bag. "It was very nice to meet you. I wish you all of the best with your business. It looks like a wonderful place I'm sure you'll have much success here with it." He spun around and headed in the direction of the exit looking alone and defeated.

As Keyshia watched Steven walk away she started to feel a little bit guilty. He did look like a trustworthy guy and she would bet that someone on the bus stole his wallet without him even knowing it.

What would it hurt if she allowed Steven to stay until morning? Her Uncle Raymond always told them to give a helping hand to someone who needed it.

Right at the moment, Steven Weber looked like a man who needed someone to step up for him. Besides, Sasha, Allura or Fawn would never know that he hadn't paid for his first night here unless she told them and she wasn't about to do that. Anyway, she was positive her sisters had stuff going on that she was clueless about. Steven was halfway to the door before Keyshia decided to go against her better judgment.

“Steven, wait! I think I might be able to help you,” Keyshia shouted, hoping that she wasn't making a terrible mistake.

Chapter Five

Who was going to give him a room this late with no money? Where in the world was he going to go after he walked out of the door?

Steven was so worried about the next place he was going to stay that he almost missed Keyshia calling his name. The sound of her sweet voice was almost too good to be true. Was she going to let him stay after all? He didn't want to get too excited just in case he was wrong and she wanted something else from him.

Spinning around, Steven looked back at Keyshia not realizing that he had such a hopeful look in his eyes. "Yes," he called back to her.

"Can you come back here for a second, please?" she inquired.

Steven made record time getting back to the front desk and Keyshia. He secretly hoped that she would find a soft spot in her heart and let him stay until tomorrow morning. Once morning came he could have his agent or brother Western Union him some money. "Did I forget something?"

Please let me stay. Please let me stay.

"No," she said. "I have decided to let you stay for the night. It would be wrong of me to send you back out there late as it is. I know that you would have a hard time finding any place that will let you stay without any form of

identification. Are you sure that you will be able to pay the money first thing tomorrow?”

“I swear that you’ll have your money tomorrow. I’ll be able to get it to you.” Steven had never been more grateful for a person’s kindness than he was right at this moment. Keyshia wasn’t only drop dead gorgeous, but she was a sympathetic person too. He couldn’t think of one place in California that would let him stay the night without money or any form of identification with him.

Every once in a while he would take a freelance job and write a heartfelt story about how a Good Samaritan would appear out of nowhere and help the less fortunate. He had never really believed the stories until now. There were still some really first-rate people in the world, and Keyshia Williams was one of them. He would have to find a way to make this up to her and soon.

“I didn’t have a clue where I was going to end up tonight. I’m not familiar with anything or anyone in this town. The only reason I stopped in Spelling, Virginia was because I wanted a place to get away from it all.”

“I can look in your eyes and see the sincerity there. I know I made the right decision by helping you out. You’re just having a string of bad luck tonight and hopefully things will go better for you after a good night’s sleep,” Keyshia told him.

“Thank you so much for doing this for me. Seriously, I will give you the money I owe you. I was worried about going back out there tonight,” Steven confessed.

“You’re welcome. Let me grab your room key and then you can head on up. After you have gotten your stuff put away, come back down here and we can find something in the kitchen for you to eat. I’m pretty sure that the cook had some leftover food. He always makes enough to feed a small army of people.”

Spinning around, Keyshia grabbed an electronic room key and was about to hand it over to Steven when she noticed the number on it. After the night he had been having she wasn’t sure if he would want to spend a night in this room.

“Is room number thirteen all right with you?” She held the card out waiting for him to take it.

“Despite the night that I have been having I don’t believe in bad luck,” Steven laughed taking the keycard from her. “I believe a person makes their own luck and that’s it. Room thirteen will be fine with me. All I want to do is take a shower, get something warm in my stomach and then hit the bed.”

“Wonderful, that’s good to hear because that is the only deluxe room that we have empty. Like I told you earlier there is a convention coming in next week and most of the rooms are already pre-booked, so you really lucked out walking in when you did.”

The ringing of the telephone next to Keyshia's arm stopped her from saying anything else. She didn't have to guess who it was because she already knew. Her sisters called her at the same time every time she was scheduled to work alone at the hotel.

She swore the three of them acted like they were the oldest instead of her. They worried about her as much as she worried about them. She guessed it just came from them being very close as children.

"Let me get this and I'll be right with you," Keyshia said to Steven as her hand reached for the phone.

"Not a problem. Take your time," Steven retorted and then moved away to give Keyshia some privacy.



Before answering the phone, Keyshia glanced at Steven admiring how the fabric of his slacks hugged his toned ass. She couldn't believe she was drooling over a man who didn't have any money to pay for his room. Had it really been that long since she had been with a hot guy? Hell, she needed to get her act together fast and her mind off the hunk that might not be who he says he is.

"Hello?" Keyshia said finally answering the phone on the third ring.

"Hey, big sis, how are you doing?" Sasha asked her. "We thought maybe you were into something since it was taking you so long to answer the phone."

“Do you have me on the line with Allura and Fawn too?” She hated when Sasha did that because her sisters all started talking at once and it was hard to keep up with them.

“Girlfriend, you know that we do it all the time,” Fawn butted in. “Why do you constantly ask that? We aren’t ever going to change how we are because we know that you love us just the way we are, so don’t you start complaining now.”

“I know the three of you aren’t,” Keyshia sighed, “but I thought I would ask anyway.”

“Stop talking to Fawn,” Allura said, “So I can ask you something. “I’m always the last one who gets to talk and I hate it.”

“If you weren’t so slow maybe I wouldn’t get to talk first,” Fawn snapped back.

“Shut up! I don’t want to hear you,” Allura screamed back. “I’m mad at you anyway for what you did yesterday when we went shopping. You knew that I wanted that black skirt and you snatched it off the rack a second before I could grab it. Sometimes I hate that you’re my sister.”

“Ladies, calm down. Fawn, let Allura ask me her question,” Keyshia said trying as usual to be peacemaker between her always bickering little sisters.

“I want to know if you’re watching television.” Allura asked. “We didn’t buy that flat screen for you just to use as decoration in the lobby. You need to turn it

on every once in a while so you'll know what is going on in the world. You know that you can use it without anyone being there, don't you?"

"No, I have been busy and haven't had time to look at it. What is going on?" Keyshia inquired. She hoped it was something more important than the last time they told her to turn on the television. Yeah, she thought Tyson Beckford was cute too, but she didn't need to see him every time he was being interviewed.

"There's a fugitive on the loose and we are very concerned about you being out there all by yourself," Sasha informed her. "Is there anyone there with you? I know that a couple of people were supposed to check in early tonight. Have any of them shown up yet? If not, I can leave my job early and come on out there to be with you."

"It's the weekend and you shouldn't be alone. I'm worried about you. Did the electrician ever get the lights fixed? I called him last week about them. They kept going off and on most of the day when I was there last Friday; in addition to fact that the phone started acting up on me too."

Keyshia tried not to laugh at how Sasha was trying to be her protector. Sasha was so funny about things. Her sister needed to understand that she was a grown woman and more than capable of taking care of herself. She was pretty sure that an escaped inmate wasn't going to come and hide out at *Family Affair*.

“Keyshia, are you there?” All three of her sisters screamed at the same time almost breaking her eardrum. “Answer us.”

“Ladies, be quiet,” Keyshia shouted. “It’s hard for me to answer any of you above all of the screaming coming from the three of you. First, let me say hello to all of you, because none of you gave me the chance to do that earlier.”

“Now, let me move on to your questions. No, I don’t have the television on. You know that I stay too busy here to be watching television. Yes, the repair man came and fixed the light problem early this morning and everything is working fine now.”

“Furthermore, I didn’t have a clue that there was an inmate on the loose. However, I’m pretty sure that he isn’t going to be paying me a visit. *Family Affair* isn’t the kind of place that a convict will come to.”

“Are you sure about that?” Sasha questioned. “You don’t know how a person’s mind thinks nowadays. I’m coming there to be with you. I know you are probably out there all alone and too stubborn to ask for any help.”

“Don’t come way out here. I know you just finished working your shift on your other job. Stay at home and relax; besides, I’m not here by myself. I have someone here with me. He just signed in and I was about to show him to his room when the three of you called.”

“You have a man there with you.” Fawn asked. “Is he cute?”

Keyshia couldn't believe this. Not a second ago her sister was worried about an escaped convict coming here to murder her and now she wanted to know if Steven was cute or not. Lord, what was she going to do with Fawn?

Hell, she wasn't about to let any of her sister's know how handsome Steven was. She took a peek at him from the corner of her eye and found him watching her. She gave him a quick smile and focused her attention back on her nosy sisters.

"Fawn, I don't care if he's cute," Allura snapped. "I want to know who else is there with Keyshia. Surely, one of the other guests has arrived by now. Someone always get there a day early."

"No, it's just the two of us. I'm sure Steven is very harmless."

"When do we start calling the guests by their first names?" Sasha questioned. "Is there something going on there we should know about?"

Keyshia cursed her slip of tongue. Of course, Sasha would be the one who picked up on it. Lord, she needed to have a talk with all of them when they finally got a chance to be in the same place at the same time. She was the oldest, and it was about time her baby sisters understood that she could take care of herself without any help from either of them. They treated her about as bad as their parents did. She knew how to think for herself, but if anyone talked to the rest of her family no one would believe she did.

“Hey, there is nothing wrong with her calling him by his first name,” Fawn interjected. “I call the male guests by their first names all the time when I’m working at the hotel especially if they are cute.”

Great...she didn’t know that Fawn was flirting with the male guests. She wondered why so many of them told her to tell Fawn good-bye when they left. Now, she knew the reason. Lord, her sister needed to find a way to burn off the flirty gene that she had or she was going to end up in a whole lot of trouble.

“Fawn, stop flirting with the male guests who stay here,” Keyshia scolded. “I don’t want them to get the wrong idea about our establishment. When you are here at *Family Affair* it’s for work and nothing else.”

“You tell her Keyshia,” Sasha laughed. “See, Fawn, I told you that Keyshia would be mad. You should have listened to me.”

“Shut up, Sasha. I don’t need to hear your opinion. I can do what I want to. There is nothing wrong with some harmless flirting. Maybe if you did it more you would have a man in your life instead of goldfish.”

“Sasha and Fawn, stop fighting,” Keyshia cut in. “I have heard enough from the both of you. The two of you are too old to be acting like this.”

“Sorry,” Sasha and Fawn apologized at the same time.

“See Keyshia, you are always getting on me and look who is fighting now,” Allura complained. “I haven’t said a word about you flirting with a strange man.”

“Allura, why don’t you keep it that away?” Keyshia suggested. “I want us to move on to a different topic of conversation.”

“Fine, what does your guest look like?” Fawn questioned bringing the subject back to Steven. “Is he a hottie? Do you even know what a hottie is?”

Keyshia gave Steven another once over and without a doubt he definitely fit into the category of being a hottie. She wasn’t too old to know what that word meant. Hell, sometimes her sisters acted like she had one foot in the grave.

“We are done discussing that too. It’s off limits. I don’t see him like that.” She was going to keep some stuff to herself and there wasn’t anything wrong with that at all. “Sasha, how was work tonight? I know you needed that extra money for your mortgage payment. That’s why I worked for you tonight.”

“It was all right, I guess. Nothing exciting ever happens there. You know half the time I’m bored out of my mind. I hate it there, but my boss pays me well so I stay. I’m really hoping to be able to leave before the end of the year. I’m getting burnt out.”

“Are you planning to be here tomorrow night? Since I worked for you tonight, you have to work tomorrow.”

“I know,” Sasha sighed. “I haven’t forgotten that I have to work this weekend. You aren’t going to let me forget it either. I don’t need to get bossed around about working. I’ll do my share, as I always do.”

“Yes, you do,” Keyshia agreed. “I shouldn’t have thought you wouldn’t be here. You’re a very responsible young woman.”

God, this phone call was taking longer than she thought it would. She needed to get off and escort Steven to his room. She glanced over at Steven and noticed him coming back over to her. Great, he was probably tired of waiting for her and was about to give her a piece of his mind. This wasn’t any way for her to run her business. She had to get off the phone and finish helping him.

“Keyshia, are you listening to me?” Allura chimed in. “I’m talking to you.”

“Wait a minute. I need to take care of our guest. Let me see about this and I’ll be right back with you.”

She covered the phone up with her hand and spoke to Steven. “I’m sorry this phone call is taking longer with my sisters than I thought it would. It’s hard having a conversation with triplets especially when they all want to talk to me at once. I should have shown you to your room by now.”

“Can you just tell me?” Steven asked, staring at her. “I’m sure I can find it on my own. I don’t want you to stop talking to your family. How can I complain when you were nice enough to let me stay here for the night without paying you?”

Keyshia tried not to get lost in how amazing Steven’s gray eyes were as she answered his question, but it was very difficult since he was looking directly at her. “Go up the stairs and turn to your left. It’s the very last door at the end of the

hallway. You have a wonderful view there. Please let me know if you need anything after you are settled in.”

“I’ll let you know,” Steven said and then picked up his bag off the floor.

Keyshia watched as Steven headed in the direction that she told him to go admiring how powerful his body looked as he moved away from her. She couldn’t stop staring at him until he disappeared from sight. *Damn!* He was one nice-looking man and she wondered if he was single or not.

Usually she was against dating the guests, but she might have to make an exception for Steven. She sensed the attraction between them and wondered if he was willingly to get to know her any better.

She couldn’t think of the last time the thought of going out on a date ranked higher than her taking care of her business and making sure that it was running as well as it could. Her sisters were always trying to set her up on dates with guys that she had no interest in, but this time she might have found one that she is fascinated about getting to know a little better.

“Keyshia, are you still there?” Allura asked her. “I’m tired of waiting for you to answer me.”

Looking away from the empty hallway, Steven just walked down Keyshia returned her attention to her bossy sister. She could think about Steven later when she was alone and her sisters weren’t trying to talk her ear off.

“I’m listening to you, Allura,” she sighed into the phone. “How are things going with you? Did you get that raise you wanted from your boss?”

“No, I haven’t had a chance to ask him. He has been avoiding me. I know he has been hiding from me. I’m good at my job and I deserve a raise. He isn’t going to keep jerking my chain.”

“I think there’s another reason Allura’s boss is hiding from her,” Fawn butted in like she usually did.

“We don’t want to hear anymore of your crazy stories,” Sasha complained causing Keyshia to hold back her laughter. She loved how Sasha always made the smallest things seem so huge. Sasha never knew how to just laugh at the antics of her younger siblings.

“It’s not crazy,” Fawn said defending herself. “I think Allura’s boss is attracted to her and doesn’t want to admit it. I have seen him. I would want him interested in me. He’s fine as hell.”

At the mention of a man being fine as hell, Keyshia let her mind wander back to her guest upstairs in room number thirteen. She wondered what Steven was doing right now. Honestly, she would rather be upstairs finding out more about him instead of listening to her sisters squabbling back and forth with each other. She loved them dearly, but sometimes all of their fighting did get old.

Chapter Six

Resting his shoulder against the wall, Steven stared out the window into the darkness. He wondered where he would be right now if Keyshia hadn't let him stay here for the night. Most people wouldn't have been so kind hearted and would have tossed him out on his ass without giving it a second thought.

He was so grateful that she changed her mind. He wasn't used to people acting like that in his line of work. Everyone was always out to make an easy buck here and there. His co-workers never stopped and thought about what their actions were doing to the people they were sent to do stories on.

Shit, how could he condemn them when he was guilty of doing it himself? That is one of the main reasons he had to get away like this. He was really thinking about whether he wanted to be a part of the rat race anymore.

He wasn't going to lie the pay he got was exceptional; however, with every check he got from his boss it felt like he was losing a part of himself each time he wrote one of those tell all stories about a celebrity. He was beginning to feel like he was losing the love he had for the written word and that isn't what he wanted at all.

Steven wondered what someone like Keyshia would think about his job. Would she be offended by what he did and try to find different ways to avoid being around him? Just the thought of that created a dull ache in the middle of his chest, because he liked the way her dark eyes shined when she looked at him. It was a rarity for him to find a person who smiled at him and it actually reached their eyes. He liked the openness Keyshia had around him. It brought a kind of lightness to his heart which had started to get harder and harder over the years.

Moving away from the window, Steven strolled around the beautifully furnished room wondering if Keyshia was still on the phone with her sisters. From the way they were talking to each other it seemed like all of them had a very close relationship. He was close to his brother, but he wished that they were closer. Maybe he would work on that aspect of his life more while he was on vacation. However, tonight his main focus was getting to know Keyshia better.

“Well, I guess I need to go and see if she’s still on the phone,” Steven said as he moved toward the bedroom door. “If Keyshia isn’t off the phone, perhaps she can at least point me in the direction of the kitchen. I’m starving. With any luck, there may be a possibility that I can talk someone in there into fixing me a quick snack. Hell, I’ll make it myself if I have to.”

Going out the door, Steven was on his way back down to the lobby when he noticed the lights were starting to flicker. “What in the world is going on?”

It didn't look like rain or a storm coming up when he was staring out the window, so why would the lights start acting crazy all of a sudden. It just didn't make any sense to him. "I swear I'm beginning to think I have some kind of curse on me."

"Keyshia, did you see that?" Steven yelled as he continued to make his way down the staircase. The lights flickered again and then went completely out when he got close to the last three steps. Luckily, he made it the rest of the way without falling.

"Damn, I thought that shitty ass electrician had fixed those lights," Keyshia screamed from somewhere in front of him.

"Keyshia, do you need some help?" Steven moved in the direction he thought he heard her voice coming from and then cursed when his knee hit a hard object in front of him.

"Steven, don't move," Keyshia hollered at him. "I'm grabbing a flash light from under the front desk. "Just stay where you are and let me come to you."

"Are you sure?" He hated to think that Keyshia had to rescue him twice in one night. He wasn't doing the best job impressing her with his skills. "I can try to find you instead."

"Steven now isn't the time for you to worry about your ego. Let me find you," She sighed with exasperation.

Steven's deep laughter filled the air around them. Damn! Keyshia was outspoken. He had to admit that normally outspoken women turned him off, but coming from Keyshia he found it to be hot and very sexy. It was hard for him not to want to be her protector and he didn't even know her all that well, but if he had anything to say about it things would change.

"Sorry, it's a bad habit I have," he apologized. "I'll stay here and let you find me. I'm near the bottom of the stairs." Steven tried not to get too alarmed when it felt like it was taking Keyshia forever to show up.

Suddenly, he heard noises and then a bright light was shined in his face. He held up his hand to deflect some of the glare. "I see that you found me." "Are you sure that you can handle being rescued by a woman twice in one night?" Keyshia teased as she moved the flashlight out of his face. "I don't want to give you a complex. I know how sensitive a male ego can be."

"I would be an idiot to turn down help from a beautiful woman. Now, do you think you're up to finding us something to eat? I'm famished. I haven't eaten since this morning and that bowl of *Wheaties* is long gone now."

"I think the pantry is filled with different kind of snacks. We won't be able to use the stove because of the lights," Keyshia said. "Why don't you follow me and we'll see what we can find to eat?"

“I’m right behind you. I’m not about to turn down a woman who is going to feed me,” Steven joked, while following behind Keyshia as she went in the direction of the kitchen.

“Steven, I’m beginning to like you more and more,” Keyshia flirted back as she walked inside the kitchen with the flashlight helping light their way in the dark. “Why don’t you tell me more about yourself? Didn’t you tell me earlier that you were a journalist? What kind are you?”

Steven hated talking about his profession because it usually got two reactions. Either people were fascinated by what he did or disgusted he made his living writing reprehensible stories about other people’s lives. He was worried that Keyshia would do the latter instead of the former.

“My job isn’t that interesting,” he hedged. “How about you tell me more about you and your sisters?” Steven was trying to deflect the conversation off him and back on Keyshia he hoped that she didn’t notice and call him on it.

Steven blinked as Keyshia spun back around and shined the light into his eyes. “Nope, I want to hear more about you. Don’t try to get out of it. That is the least you can do since I’m letting you stay here without paying me.”

“Fine, I’ll tell you,” he sighed as he moved the flashlight away from his face.

“Good,” Keyshia mumbled as she turned away from him and focused her attention back on finding food for the two of them.

Steven could only hope that Keyshia would still be fascinated by him after he told her more about his job. He took pleasure in how she looked at him with such enthusiasm in her gorgeous eyes. All of that may vanish after he told her all of his dirty little job details, he would just have to cross his fingers that his worse fear wouldn't come true.

"Where do you want to start?" Keyshia asked.

"How about we grab our snacks first and then I'll tell you more about myself?" Steven was trying to put off telling her about his career as long as possible. This could be a sign that he truly did need to find a better way to earn a living when it came to his writing abilities.

"Sounds good to me," Keyshia said shining her flashlight into the dark pantry. "Would you like to fix some S'mores? We can roast the marshmallows in front of the fireplace. I love S'mores. I used to fix them all the time with my sisters when we were younger and went camping."

Steven eyed the sophisticated woman in front of him with the perfect outfit and hair, and he couldn't image Keyshia camping in the woods getting all dirty and sweaty with her younger sisters. "I can't believe you went camping as a kid. Did you sleep in a cabin or in a sleeping bag?" Of course, she was going to tell him inside of a cabin. He didn't even know why he asked her that in the first place.

“Here hold this and keep the light on the second shelf,” Keyshia instructed as she handed him the flashlight.

Steven took the light and shined it in the direction that Keyshia told him. “Are you going to answer my question?” he asked, watching as Keyshia grabbed a box of Graham Crackers, a bag of large marshmallows, two long bamboo sticks and two milk chocolate bars off the shelf.

“I’ll have you know that I won several fishing contests when I was a teenager. I loved when my family went camping. I wish I still had the time to do it, but I don’t. I’ll also have you know that I slept in a sleeping bag on the ground. I feel insulted that you thought I would sleep in a cabin. I’m an experienced camper. I know how to rough it with the best of them.”

Well, he guessed the old saying was true. He should never judge a book by its cover.

“I’m very impressed. I never had a girlfriend who wanted to go camping with me,” he confessed. Maybe it could be one of the things he might be able to talk Keyshia into doing with him if something deeper happened between them after tonight. If...Why was he thinking so negatively? Something more was going to happen between them because Keyshia was just the type of woman he needed in his life. He just hadn’t been aware of it until now.

“I guess you were dating the wrong women,” Keyshia remarked, looking back over her shoulder at him. “How about we get out of here and get started on this food? We can grab some bottled waters from the refrigerator on our way out.”

“That’s fine with me.” Steven said. “How about handing me the food and you can take the flashlight back?”

“Okay.” Keyshia gave him the food and he passed the flashlight back to her.

“How long do you think the lights will be out?” he asked.

“I was hoping that the backup lights would have been kicked in by now, but I see they haven’t.” Keyshia complained as she brushed past him. “I guess after we eat I can go and check the breaker. It’s down in the basement.”

“First thing in the morning, I’m going to make sure that I call that damn electrician. He got paid for a job that he didn’t do and I’m not going to let that stand. I don’t have money to waste on his lazy ass. I would be in a lot more trouble if there were more people here than just the two of us.”

Keyshia was crazy if she thought he was going to let her go down in a dark basement alone, Steven thought. “No, let me take care of it. My lights in my apartment would do this to me at least four times a month. I know how to fix it pretty quickly; however, I do agree we should eat first. I always perform better when I don’t have any distractions in my way.”

Spinning around, Keyshia looked at him as she caught the double meaning of his words. A cute little smile turned up the corner of her mouth making an even cuter dimple pop out. “Well, we can’t let you stay hungry now, can we?”

“Let’s get comfortable in the dining room by the fireplace and then we can get the S’mores started. I love making these things. They are so good.” Turning away from him, Keyshia strolled toward the refrigerator only stopping long enough for him to grab two bottled waters.

After they left the kitchen neither one of them said much as Keyshia used the flashlight to guide their way until they were seated in front of the hypnotic fire and all of their supplies were laid out next to them.

“How many times have you made S’mores like this?” Steven asked as he opened the bag of marshmallows and then popped a couple into his mouth.

“Only one other time when I was in college,” she confessed. “I made them with a guy I was dating at his house.” Keyshia just realized that she hadn’t thought about Todd in years. The last time she heard about him he was living in Vermont and was married with four kids.

“I bet you were as gorgeous in college as you are now. I’m sure you had a lot of guys dying to be your boyfriend,” Steven said, shocking the hell out of her.

“I really didn’t date that much in college. I was too busy working to keep my grades up. I wasn’t there on a scholarship, so I had to work harder than the

other students there. I think most of the kids there thought I was a loner or a snob. I'm not quite sure which one it was, but then I really didn't care what they thought of me."

Picking up a marshmallow, Keyshia slid it on the large bamboo stick and held it towards the fire. "Grab a marshmallow and get busy toasting. I can't let my favorite guest stay hungry, can I?"

"I'm your only guest," Steven corrected as he grabbed a marshmallow, placing it on the stick and then held it in the roaring, cozy fire. "So, tell me more about yourself. You're the oldest in the family. How was it growing up and having three little sisters that were triplets? It seems like it could have been a lot of fun."



Keyshia turned her marshmallow so it would get a nice coating on it. She wondered how much she should tell Steven about her life. It wasn't like he had been so forthright about himself. And what was up with him not wanting to talk about his job with her? What was he trying to hide? She shoved the wayward thought to the back of her mind. Steven could just be the kind of person who didn't like talking about himself.

She didn't know that much about him, but she still thought he was one of the sexiest men she had ever laid eyes on. How could he make roasting a marshmallow in front of a fireplace without any lights on seem so damn appealing?

Before they got started Steven had rolled up his sleeves and the light from the fire was showcasing the light dusting of hairs on his forearms. Even the musky scent of his cologne was turning her on.

Steven was asking her about her sisters and all she could think about was kissing the hell out of him. Maybe she had been without a boyfriend way *too* long and was ready to jump on the first attractive man with a pulse.

No, that couldn't be it. She had been around other handsome men in the past couple of months and none of them did anything for her. It was something about Steven that made her want to strip him naked and make love in front of the fireplace.

"At first, I was dying to have a brother or sister because I hated being an only child," Keyshia said finally answering Steven's question. "However, when my mother and father brought home three babies I didn't think it was so cool anymore to be the oldest."

"My little sisters needed a lot of attention and help from my parents and me, so I was mad at my parents for awhile. I was no longer the center of their universe and to be honest that didn't sit well with me for the longest time," she confessed removing her marshmallow from the fire. "You might want to remove your marshmallow too. You don't want a burnt marshmallow on your S'more."

“Okay, now what do you want me to do?” Steven asked after he had removed his marshmallow from the fire.

“Hold my marshmallow.” Keyshia handed Steven her stick and then opened the box of crackers along with the bar of chocolate. “Watch how I do this and then you can do yours the same way. I swear this will be the best thing you have ever tasted.”

Breaking the chocolate apart, she added it to the graham crackers and then took back her marshmallow. After everything was together, she gave it a good hard press before taking a huge bite.

“God, this tastes so unbelievable. I don’t know why I don’t fix them more often,” she moaned.

“Well, I can’t give my opinion since I haven’t eaten one yet,” Steven grinned staring at her.

“Oh, I’m sorry. Go ahead and fix yours. I should have waited for you. My mother would get on me for having such bad manners.”

“Not a problem. I always enjoy watching a beautiful woman when she’s happy.” Steven winked at her and then proceeded to put his S’more together then took a huge bite. “Damn, you’re right this is good.”

“You have something on your face,” Keyshia laughed pointing to a smudge of chocolate at the corner of Steven’s mouth.

“Where is it?” Steven’s pink tongue darted out and licked the side of his mouth, but he missed it.

“Right here.” Leaning closer, Keyshia wiped the spot of chocolate off Steven’s face with the pad of her thumb at the same time his tongue came back out. The feel of his moist rough tongue against the tip of her finger sent a pool of moisture into her panties.

“I have to change my earlier comment,” Steven said as he dropped his S’more onto the floor next to his leg. “I was wrong.”

“Wrong about what?” she asked gazing into Steven’s gorgeous eyes. She couldn’t look away if she wanted to. He was drawing her to him like she never imaged a man could do.

Keyshia felt her pulse speed up as Steven’s large hand slid behind her neck and pulled her closer to his hard chest. “You taste twenty times better than any S’mores,” he growled before he captured her mouth in a deep wet kiss.

She had been kissed before. What woman hadn’t by the time they had reached her age? However, she had never and she meant *never* been kissed as thoroughly as Steven as was doing at the moment. He was devouring her mouth like it was the meal he had been searching for all night long.

He licked at her tongue like he was trying to take the taste of her S'mores from her mouth and bring it into his. It had to be the hottest thing that had happened to her in years.

Damn his kisses were addictive, but more on the criminal side. Without a doubt, Steven should be slapped with a pair of handcuffs for the way he was making her cream her panties. It wasn't right at all!

God, what if he made love as well as he was kissing her. Keyshia knew it wasn't possible, but she was sure that she heard her sex-deprived Kitty Kat *purr* at the thought of Steven being buried deep inside of her body.

No! She couldn't let that happen. She had to keep her wits about her. She needed to stop Steven before this went any further and he had her begging him to strip her naked right here in front of the fire.

Keyshia tore her mouth away from Steven and instantly regretted the closeness that was missing. "We need to stop," she panted and then moaned as his sharp teeth nipped at her sensitive neck.

"Why?" he growled by her ear as his fingers stroked her back through her shirt. "Don't you want this as much as I do? You don't have to worry I have protection in my bag upstairs."

"Please let me make love to you. I have been thinking about it since my eyes connected with yours earlier tonight. You're the kind of woman that makes a man

want to make love to her for hours. I can't determine which thing I find sexier your name or your body."

God, she wanted to do this so badly and from the raging hard-on poking at her Steven wasn't lying about his feelings either. He did want her as much as she desired him, yet she couldn't do it.

Chapter Seven

Placing her palms flat against Steven's hard chest, Keyshia gave him a determined shove, and scooted across the carpet until she was positive that she was a safe distance away from Steven. She hated always being the perfect and logical one in the family. Maybe it came from her being the first born and all of that, but that was the way it was. She loved being in control and with only one hot ass kiss, Steven almost took that power away from her.

She had to keep him at arm's length or he was going to mess with her well-organized life and that just wouldn't do at all. "We really can't do that again," Keyshia whispered, placing her fingertips against her swollen lips.

"Why not?" Steven asked looking into her eyes, searchingly.

"I'm not the spontaneous type at all. I have everything planned out and I don't like getting off track, but more than anything I hate surprises."

"Are you saying that I surprised you by how well I kissed? I can promise you, if you come back over here I can surprise that sexy body of yours even more and in so many different ways."

Keyshia was dying to crawl back across the carpet and let Steven do everything to her that he was promising, but she couldn't do it. How could he take

her seriously after he got what he wanted from her? She was sure that he had women coming on to him all of the time; however, she wasn't going to allow herself to fall into that same trap.

Ever since she was a little girl, everyone around her had taken her very seriously and she had known that they did. It was one of the reasons she decided to open up her own hotel.

It gave her an extremely immense sense of accomplishment, for her parents to be proud of what their first born daughter had done. The whole experience had enhanced her tolerance and patience when it came to other people. If she went with her heart now instead of her head, then everything she had worked so hard for would have been for nothing. She had never acted on her feelings in the past and Steven Weber wasn't about to seduce her into doing it now.

"No, I'm sorry, I can't do it," she apologized, getting up off the floor. "I should go and check that breaker. I need to see if I can get the lights to come back on tonight."

Steven quickly got off the floor and stood in front of her shaking his head. "I told you earlier that I was going to do it and I haven't changed my mind. I need to put some space between us anyway or I'm going to find a way to kiss you again. So, where is the breaker box?"

Keyshia tried not to focus on how good Steven looked standing in front of her, but it was hard not to. She was dying to feel his warm, hard lips pressed against hers again.

“Go to the end of the hallway and make a left. It’s the very last door on your right. You have to go down some stairs and it’s on the wall as soon as you step off the last step. You won’t miss it,” she informed Steven. “Are you sure that you don’t need me to come with you?”

“No... I think I can handle this all by myself. Just hand me the flashlight and I’ll be on my way.”

Bending down, Keyshia picked up the flashlight and then stood back up. “Here you go.”

“Oh, I did forget something,” Steven said as he took the flashlight from her.

“What?”

“A kiss for good luck.” He grabbed her by the waist and tugged her back against his body before she could stop him. The kiss was quick, but it was still as hot as the first kiss they had shared.

“Thanks,” Steven winked at her and then went in the direction she told him. She watched his wide back until he disappeared around the corner out of sight.

Sitting back down in front of the fire, Keyshia stared into it wondering what in the hell she was going to do about Steven. He was so good-looking and made

her body crave so many wonderful things. God, she needed to talk to someone about this and she knew the one person who would give her an honest answer.

She loved all three of her sisters, but she was closest to Sasha. Maybe it came from them having so many of the same personality traits. She was the oldest out of all of the siblings and Sasha was the oldest of the triplets. They could talk about anything and right at this moment in time she needed some advice about the very distracting Steven Weber.

Keyshia quickly dug her phone out of her skirt pocket and hit the speed dial number for Sasha's phone. While she waited for her sister to answer, she thought about the kiss Steven had planted on her before he left to fix the breaker.

Steven had feasted on her mouth like he had been offered an all you can eat buffet and wasn't about to stop until he had a full sampling of everything it had to offer and then some.

Chapter Eight

Twirling around in front of the floor length mirror in her bedroom, Sasha Williams checked out the new maid's outfit that her new boss, Sterling Norris, wanted her to wear for the current promotion they were having at the bedding store. To earn extra money to make her mortgage payments, she had taken this part-time job to help supplement what she made working at the hotel with her very opinionated and vocal sisters.

She wasn't fond of the dressing up part at all, but it had brought in new customers. Well...most of the new clientele were men who loved staring at her in this get up, but she got commissions on everything she sold. So, she guessed it worked out for her in the end.

God, she didn't know how she was going to tell Keyshia about this. Her sister already had this perfectionist attitude about her as it was and this new part of her job was bound to set her off. Yet, she had to do it before someone they both knew saw her inside the store and ran to flap their gums to Keyshia.

Their hometown was so meddlesome that you couldn't sneeze without it getting around the neighborhood and retold twenty different ways. No, it would be better if the news came from her and not someone on the street.

Now, Allura was the most loyal out of all of her sisters, so she would stick by her no matter what she did. She was always the family cheerleader and constantly tried to avoid conflict with the rest of them. However, Fawn was going to be extremely jealous that she wasn't the one wearing the outfit just to push Keyshia's buttons. She didn't know what the deal between Keyshia and Fawn was but they were always arguing about something.

Sasha had to be honest and admit that Fawn did love to manipulate any situation she could for attention. She was very quick to place the blame on someone else in the family instead of admitting when she was wrong. Yet, in her baby sister's defense, Fawn was the most engaging person she knew. She could draw you in with any of her many adventures. Sasha didn't know why their parents hadn't pulled their hair out over the years when it came to the youngest Williams daughter.

"Okay, I have to get out of this outfit before Sterling comes over to discuss the new design for the store," Sasha said, talking to herself. She was about to get undressed when the phone ringing stopped her.

Walking over to her bed, she sat down and answered the phone on the second ring. "Hello, this is Sasha."

"How many times do I have to tell you not to answer the phone like that?" Keyshia questioned. "You never know who could be on the other end."

Rolling her eyes, Sasha shook her head at her sister. Keyshia never failed to remain in the protective older sister mode. She would love for Keyshia to break out of her shell one day and do something wild and extremely crazy.

“Hey Keyshia, how are things going at the hotel? Is there something wrong at work? I know you wouldn’t be calling me for any other reason.” Is there a problem and that’s why you are calling me? Do you need me to come over there? I can do it after Sterling leaves.”

“No, there isn’t anything wrong except the lights are acting up again. I think I’m going to hire a new electrician because Hudson isn’t getting the job done anymore. I don’t want to hear anymore of his excuses.”

“Are you there in the dark? I really can come over and help you with the breaker. I know how much you hate going down in the basement.”

“No, you stay at home and wait for Sterling. Steven is down there now working on getting the lights back on for us,” Keyshia replied.

“Steven, is that the man who’s staying there with you?” Sasha asked. “How are things going with him? Is he okay? He hasn’t tried anything funny has he?”

“That’s why I called you. It’s about Steven,” her sister whispered into the phone like she had a naughty secret to share.

“What about him!” Sasha yelled. Forget about her boss coming over tonight, she was going to grab her siblings and they were going to *Family Affair*. This guy

wasn't about to try anything with Keyshia. They would kick his ass out of there so fast that his head would spin and still be spinning a week later.

"Calm down," Keyshia hushed. "Don't get all protective on me. Remember I'm the oldest not you."

"Fine," Sasha mumbled. "If Steven isn't trying to make the moves on you then why are you calling me?"

"I didn't say Steven isn't trying to come on to me. That isn't the problem. The problem is that he already has and I loved it. I want him to do it again and again."

"What!" Sasha gasped, stunned. "Keyshia, you aren't a one night stand kind of girl. As far as I know, you have never done anything that wasn't planned out in your entire life. What is it about this guy that makes you want to jump onto Fawn's rebel train? You know that this is the kind of crazy shit that she would do just to piss the rest of us off."

"Don't you think that I know that, but there is just something about him," Keyshia sighed. "You know how mama always told us when we met the perfect man we would know it?"

Sasha nodded her head and then realized that Keyshia couldn't see her. "Yes, I know what you're talking about, but you don't know anything about this guy. Are you sure that he could be the one? Maybe you're just horny and want him to

scratch your itch. I know it has been a while since you've been in a serious relationship because of *Family Affair*. I would hate for you to jump into something too fast and get hurt."

"I'm not attracted to Steven just for him to scratch an itch. I feel a real connection with him. That's why I called you," Keyshia said. "I wanted some advice from you. Do I take it to the next level...like I really want to or not? The kiss we shared was hotter than a steaming cup of Dunkin' Donuts coffee and I want it to happen again."

"Okay, how about you just flirt a little more with him and share a couple of more kisses. I don't know how mama would feel about you dropping your panties for one of our guests at the hotel. She might give you a lecture about controlling those urges."

"Come on, Sasha," Keyshia laughed. "You remember the story about how mama got daddy to fall in love with her."

"Are you talking about how she invited him to dinner for a home cooked meal, and then at the end, when he was throwing the trash away he found several restaurant containers in the trash?"

"You got it. I don't think mama was taking it slow back then. I'm tired of being so by the book. I want to break free of that persona."

“Keyshia...” Sasha stopped talking at the sound of the doorbell. Damn it, she wasn’t able to change clothes before Sterling showed up. She didn’t want him to see her in this stupid outfit, but she didn’t have time to change now. “I have to go. Sterling is at the door. All I have to say is don’t get too crazy. I understand about you wanting to break free of that reliable personality of yours; however, don’t do too much at once.”

“Okay, thanks for your advice. I’ll take it into consideration.”

“Why don’t I believe you?” Sasha asked as her doorbell rang again. “God, I have to go Sterling is at the door and he isn’t about to leave.”

“How are things going between the two of you? Has he figured out yet that you’re in love with him?” Keyshia inquired.

“First, I’m not in love with Sterling. We just work together and nothing more. Now, let me go and I’ll call you back later. Bye.”

“Bye,” Keyshia said and then hung up.

Sasha got up off the bed and rushed to answer the door before Sterling pushed the doorbell again. She wasn’t in the mood to deal with any of his lectures tonight. It didn’t matter how fine she thought he was. She needed to get this meeting over as fast as possible, so she could call Allura and Fawn about Keyshia. They weren’t going to believe that their straight laced big sister was thinking about having a booty call at work.

Chapter Nine

Snapping her phone closed, Keyshia tossed it down on the floor next to her. What in the hell was she going to do about Steven? She had known him less than twenty-four hours and she wanted to get naked with him. She wasn't that kind of girl. She had never been the kind of girl that did stuff on the spur of the moment. She meticulously planned things out to make sure everything went smoothly.

Keyshia knew that her strictly business personality caused people to interact with her on a rather impersonal level, but she wanted them to begin to see her in a different light. She had been trying to change that part of her some, but it just wasn't working on her end. Steven, however, made her want to loosen up about the way she thought about certain things. He came off so carefree without a care in the world and she loved that. Maybe he could teach her how to let go more in her personal life.

While she was growing up, she thought her sisters had it easier because they were younger and could get away with anything they wanted. She always had to remain the good daughter and do everything that her parents told her.

It wasn't until she went off to college that she felt like she was her own person. She finally felt that she might be able to live her own life, without being Keyshia Williams, the girl, who had the adorable three little sisters.

Now, she didn't want anyone to think that she didn't love her sisters dearly because she did. Yet, she hated being the one who constantly had to watch over them. Or play with them, when she had wanted to be out with her own friends having fun and doing cool stuff. Before she left for college she'd had to resort to finding creative ways to ditch her younger sisters, because they followed her everywhere she went and it got old after a while.

"I can't keep living in the past. I'm an adult now and I can do anything I want with my life. I know that Sasha meant well, but I'm going to take my own advice and flirt with Steven. A little harmless flirting never hurt anyone." Just as Keyshia made up her mind to give Steven a chance and not chase him away by over thinking what was happening between them the lights came back on.

"YES!" Keyshia screamed. She was thrilled that Steven was able to fix that stupid breaker. "I'll make sure to give him a proper thank you when he gets back up here. I wasn't up to dealing with those hellish lights anymore."

Leaning back on her hands, she relaxed and waited for Steven to get back upstairs. She was privately hoping that they could finish what they had started

before she got scared and pushed him away. It was way past time for her to start living for herself instead of everyone else.

“Hey gorgeous! I fixed the lights,” Steven called out to her as he strolled back towards her with the flashlight in his hand. “I guess I’m good for something,” he joked falling down next to her on the floor.

Keyshia liked how good it felt to have Steven sitting next to her. She truly could get lost in this man if she allowed it to happen. She was really surprised at how she was so drawn to a man that she barely knew.

“I want to thank you again for going downstairs and doing that for me. You really didn’t have to do it. We could have waited until tomorrow morning and I could have called someone about it.”

“No, I liked doing that for you. I have a fondness for beautiful women and I wasn’t about to miss out on the chance to impress you,” Steven said, running his finger down her bare arm.

“Well, I think I should thank you for your kindness,” Keyshia whispered as she leaned closer to Steven. Her heart rate started to increase as the scent of his expensive cologne filled her senses.

“What do you have in mind?” Steven cupped her face in his hand and moved the last few inches separating their mouths. As he was about to kiss her, Keyshia closed her eyes so she could get lost in the moment. However, just as Steven’s hard

talented mouth touched hers her cell phone rang breaking them apart before she could get lost in the kiss.

“I’m sorry,” Keyshia whispered against Steven’s mouth before moving back. She snatched the phone off the carpet, “I never get this many phone calls while I’m at work. Who is calling me now?” Keyshia looked at the caller id and cursed under her breath. She was going to kill her sisters and her parents would just have to deal with it. “I’m sorry I have to take this.”

“Don’t worry about it. I can clean up the stuff from the S’mores and maybe later we can continue that second kiss,” Steven replied as he got up from the floor and started clearing up all of their snack items; a few seconds later he was headed towards the kitchen.

The phone went off again in her hand and Keyshia flipped it open. “Do you want to tell me why you’re calling me? I thought you were supposed to be at work. You can’t be doing your job if you’re on the phone with me.”

“I’m not at work. I’m on my way there to see you. I got a crazy phone call from Sasha talking about how you’re thinking about getting freaky with that male customer that checked in tonight. I need to talk some sense into your crazy ass and I can’t do that from work, so I left early. I should be there in thirty minutes.”

What in the hell!! Why would Sasha send Allura to her? She didn’t need any help. Keyshia couldn’t believe that Allura was coming to give her a lecture about

having sex. She wasn't about to have that talk with her little sister. She knew what she was doing.

"Allura, you turn that car back around and go back to work. Sasha doesn't know what she's talking about. She called you for nothing. I'm just having a good time with Steven and nothing else. I can promise you that I don't need your help with anything."

"I was just testing out new recipes with one of the chefs. I told him I was having a family emergency and he let me leave. Anyway Brody was out on a date with one of his new girlfriends. He wouldn't care if I stayed two hours or two minutes."

"He has more important things on his mind and I'm not it. If we didn't work together he wouldn't even know that I was alive and we both know it. So, instead of being at work having a pity party I thought I would come and help you."

"Listen, I honestly don't need you to come here and watch over me. Steven and I are the only two people here. We were just making some S'mores in front of the fireplace. I was planning to have a quick drink and then going to crash in bed."

"See, that is what Sasha and I are worried about; you jumping into bed with this Steven guy. How do you know he isn't hiding something? I want to meet him and see what his deal is for my own peace of mind. You know that I have that right

as your sister. So, stop trying to talk me out of it. I'll be there soon. Love you."

Allura ended the phone call to her with a click of her cell phone.

"I can't believe I'm being treated like this," Keyshia complained as she got up from the floor. I'm going to make sure that Allura doesn't stay too long. She isn't going to act as a babysitter for me."

"Sweetheart, what's wrong?" Steven asked behind her.

Twirling around, she closed the short distance between Steven's body and hers. "Nothing that can't be fixed," Keyshia answered. "Now how about we finish what we have been trying to start for half of the night?"

"I don't need a second invitation." Wrapping his arms around her, Steven pulled her against him a second before his mouth covered hers hungrily.

All the doubts she had earlier were shattered with the ravishment of his kisses. Steven's hands slowly slipped down her waist until they were cupping her ass and lifting her up until she could wrap her legs around his lean hips.

Keyshia moaned against Steven's hard lips as she felt his rock hard cock between her thighs. She was dying to get Steven into the nearest bed. The prolonged anticipation was almost unbearable. She was beyond eager to feel his bare skin against hers.

Chapter Ten

Keyshia was so caught up in the kiss that Steven was giving her that she almost didn't feel the couch touching her back, but reality started to sink in as Allura's conversation slowly reentered her mind.

"No...we have to stop," she moaned twisting her head to the side breaking the kiss as she shoved at Steven's chest.

"What...why?" Steven asked, nibbling at the side of her neck. "We both want the same thing. You know that we have been dancing around it all night. Something intense flared between us the second I turned around and I saw you sitting there with your long, sexy legs crossed. It was a hot sight."

"I'm not stopping because I want to, but we are about to have an unwanted guest in about five minutes maybe a little less," Keyshia said, as Steven leaned over her body.

"Who's coming? I thought all of the guests were coming in a couple of days. I was enjoying this time that we were having together."

"I was too," Keyshia admitted, as she ran her fingertips over Steven's full bottom lip. "However, my sister Allura was worried about me being alone here

with you, so she is on her way. I don't want her to find us on the couch making out."

"I guess that wouldn't be the best way for me to meet your sister." Steven planted a kiss on her finger and then got up off the couch. "I think I better go upstairs and cool off before she gets here. I don't think I should meet her in this condition."

Glancing to the side, Keyshia noticed that Steven was still hard and ready to go. It brought a smile to her lips. She liked that she could get him aroused so easily. "I'm sorry about this. Maybe later you can come to my room for a little slumber party."

"Are you sure? I like what is happening between us and if we don't make love I'm fine with your decision. I know that we haven't known each other that long. This isn't a rush decision that you need to make because your sister is coming tonight."

Her feelings for Steven were intensifying as her heart pounded beneath her breast. She drank in the comfort of his nearness for a few more seconds before she pushed her body off the couch and stood in front of him.

"Thank you for telling me that," she whispered and then smiled at him.

“You’re welcome, beautiful. I better go. I’ll be back down stairs in a little while.” Stephen winked at her before moving away and going back upstairs to his room.



Keyshia only had a few minutes to herself before the front door to *Family Affair* was opened and Allura strolled in looking ready to fight whatever may jump in her way. “All right, where is this guy that you seem so crazy about all of the sudden? I want to meet him and I mean now!”

“Before you decide to take Steven’s head off with your bare hands, can I at least get a hug from my baby sister? I haven’t laid eyes on you in almost a week.” Keyshia walked over to her sister and gave her a tight hug. “I left several messages on your phone, but you never called me back,” she complained stepping back.

“That piece of junk is driving me up the wall. I’m going to buy a new one this weekend. I have no clue what the problem is with it, but it will be out of my house soon. So, if you’re done trying to avoid the topic. Tell me where this guy is? Did you warn him that I was coming over here and now he’s hiding from me?” Allura demanded going around her.

Keyshia wasn’t about to tell Allura the real reason that Steven went upstairs, so she lied instead. “Steven was downstairs fixing that worthless breaker

and got dirty. He's taking a shower and will be down when he's finished. So, he's not hiding from you, little sister."

"Fine, I'm not leaving until I'm positive you aren't trying to share a bed with a nut job. Shit, you shouldn't even be thinking about sharing a coke with him, because you barely know this guy. Where in the hell is your mind?"

"You really need to stop listening to everything that comes out of Sasha's mouth. She doesn't have a clue about what is going on with me. She called you in a panic for nothing. I think she needs to focus more on finding a way to get Sterling's attention instead of meddling in my life."

Allura didn't say a word to her as she went behind the front desk and checked the sign in book under the counter. "Steven Weber," she said, pointing to the middle of the book. "What else do you know about this guy besides his weatherman sounding name?"

"How about we talk about what's going on with you? Have you found a way to get Peter to notice you? The last time we spoke he was working side by side with you and he still hadn't asked you out on a date."

"Truthfully, I'm beginning to think that I should just move on and forget about ever thinking I could have something with Peter. He hasn't given me a second glance. I'm beginning to think Sasha will do a better job of getting married

before I do and she has been in love with her man a shorter period of time,” Allura sighed.

“Don’t give up I know that you will get Peter’s attention. All you have to do is make him think you aren’t interested anymore and he’ll be all over you.”

“That idea will be hard for me to do since we practically spend every waking moment together thinking of new recipes and working on them in the test kitchen. Besides, you aren’t going to sidetrack me with my bad love life. I came here to see about yours. How much longer is this Steven going to be upstairs? What else is he doing besides taking a really long shower anyway?”

Keyshia shrugged her shoulder. “I usually don’t time the guests when it comes to how long it takes them to shower and get dressed. How about I fix us a drink and that will make the time go by faster?”

“I like the sound of that. I need something after the day I had a work.”

Keyshia prayed that Steven was relaxed and ready to handle Allura because she wasn’t sure what her sister was going to say. She just wanted the two of them to get along with each other, because she was going to find a place for Steven in her life.

Chapter Eleven

Brushing his hair back off his forehead, Steven checked his reflection in the bathroom mirror as he prepared himself to meet Keyshia's sister. He didn't know what he was walking into, but he was going to be prepared to handle anything she might toss at him.

Because of his job he was used to dealing with difficult situations and people. No matter what happened when he went downstairs it wasn't going to stop him from pursuing a relationship with Keyshia.

"Okay, I've wasted enough time in my room. I need to go downstairs and find out what is waiting for me." Steven walked out of the bathroom and then left his room.

When he was halfway down the stairs, he could hear Keyshia talking to her sister about him and it made him smile. He was touched that she wasn't allowing her sister to make her change her mind about him. He was going to stand his ground and prove to her family how much he was growing to care about Keyshia. Steven noticed how neither woman sensed his presence as he got closer to them. They were too busy with their little disagreement about him.

“I still think you need to find out more about this guy,” Keyshia’s sister complained. “You know nothing about him, yet you’re all into him. What is wrong with you? Have you been hitting the bottle too much tonight? I can’t smell any liquor on your breath, but that doesn’t mean a thing.”

“Allura, I’m trying to get to know Steven better, but you and Sasha won’t let me. I swear the two of you act like I don’t have the sense God gave me. I know what I’m doing can you just let me live my life.”

“Keyshia, I’m just looking out for your best interest. You know that you would do the same thing for me. We are sisters and we’re supposed to take care of each other,” Allura exclaimed.

Steven could see the conversation was going to get more heated, so he decided he better make his presence known. “Keyshia, is this one of your sisters that you have been telling me about?”

Looking over her shoulder, Keyshia grinned at him before getting up from her seat and meeting him half way. “Steven, I’m glad that you were finally able to join us. I was getting worried about you. I thought you might have fallen asleep up there.”

He gave Keyshia a kiss on her cheek and then wrapped his arm around her waist. “No, I just took a long shower to get some of the dirt off me after being down in your basement.”

“You have excellent timing because now you can meet my sister. She has been asking me twenty questions about you and our blossoming relationship.” Grabbing him by the hand, Keyshia escorted him over to her sister.

“Steven Weber, this is my sister Allura, she’s the middle triplet,” Keyshia said making the introductions. “Allura, meet Steven Weber, the man you have been asking me about most of the night.”

“Nice to meet you,” Steven said, extending his hand for Allura to shake, but she just looked at it, so he dropped it back down by his side. Well, this first meeting was already getting off to a bad start.

“Don’t try to charm me. Why are you so hot for my sister? You barely know her. What kind of game are you playing? I’m not going to let you hurt her. She barely knows anything about you.” Allura fired off the questions at him. He didn’t have to guess where she stood when it came to her sister.

“What man wouldn’t be attracted to Keyshia? She’s a very good-looking woman. I was drawn to her from the moment she introduced herself to me. I’m not playing any kind of game with her. I’m hoping that we can get to know each other better and see what can grow from that.”

“I understand your concern because it seems like we are moving fast, but when I see something I want I go for it with both hands. Keyshia is someone I

want in my life and I don't mind jumping through hoop after hoop to be in her life."

"Steven, you didn't have to go through all of that with Allura. I know how to take care of myself," Keyshia retorted, looking up at him.

"No, I want Allura to see that I'm honestly interested in you. I wouldn't be down here talking to her if I wasn't."

Steven waited while Allura studied him from the chair she was seated in. He couldn't tell which direction this line of questioning was going in, but he was ready for anything. If Allura was giving him the third degree like this, he could only imagine how Sasha and Fawn were going to act toward him.

While he was waiting for Allura to say something he noticed the similarities and differences between the two sisters. Keyshia was a little taller and slimmer than Allura. Keyshia's eyes were a sexy dark brown, but Allura's had more of a light brown look to them; however, anyone would be able to tell they were sisters.

"You said all of the right things, but how do I know I can go and tell my sisters that you're good enough for Keyshia. She has been there so much for us and we will hurt anyone who breaks her heart. Are you going to break her heart or hurt her?"

Steven planted a kiss on Keyshia's cheek making her smile at him. "No, I'm not going to hurt your sister. I only want to be given the chance to be in her life. I

know that you and your sisters love her, but I want to see what it is like to love her too. Just give the two of us a chance. That is all I'm asking."

Getting up from the chair, Allura walked up to him until she was directly in front of him. "I'm going to give you a chance because I don't want to come across like a psycho or anything, but if you hurt my sister, you will have three very pissed females to deal with," Allura warned him. "Are you hearing what I'm telling you?"

Steven tried not to laugh at the spunky young woman standing in front of him. Her head came just below his chin but she acted like she was the same height as him. He felt a warm spot in his heart for Allura because of the way she was protecting Keyshia. He would do the same thing for his brother. He found Allura's actions to be quite admirable, and he was going to keep his word.

"Yes, I hear what you're saying," he responded, wondering what was going to happen next.

"You better," Allura said, glaring at him before focusing her attention on her sister. "Are you really going to be okay here with him for the rest of the night? I really do need to get back to work, but I will stay here if you want me too."

"No, you should go back to work. I'm going to be just fine here with Steven. I'll call you in the morning and please tell Sasha not to worry about me. I'm an adult and I know what I'm doing."

“I’ll tell her,” Allura laughed, but you know how Sasha is. She won’t be satisfied until she sees him for herself. We both know that no one can tell her anything.”

“I know, but try,” Keyshia said.

“I’ll do my best.”

Steven stood to the side while Allura hugged Keyshia. He could see the closeness that the two sisters shared and he thought it was wonderful. He was very close to his brother and when they were kids they did everything together.

Over the years they hadn’t been able to spend a lot of time with each other, but that was going to change. He was going to spend more time with his brother because he wanted to introduce his family to Keyshia. They were going to be so surprised that he was finally interested in having a long-term relationship.

“Remember, what I told you,” Allura warned giving him one last pointed look before she turned away and made her way towards the front door.

“You don’t have to worry I will,” Steven yelled after her, just before she walked out the door. He had dealt with one of Keyshia’s sisters now he only had two more to go.

“Thanks so much for being so nice to Allura. I know she can be a pain sometimes,” Keyshia said, wrapping her arms around his neck. “I’ll talk to her later about her behavior.”

“Don’t, I think it’s wonderful how concerned she is about you. It shows how much she cares.” Steven ran his hands down Keyshia’s back cupping her ass and giving it a light squeeze. “Now, I believe we were supposed to finish what we were doing after your sister left. Are you still ready for that?”

“You better believe it, handsome. Just let me close up and we can pick up right where we ended our hot little kiss.”

“I love the sound of that.” Steven gave her a lip-locking kiss before moving back. “Do what you need to do and then meet me upstairs in my room. If you aren’t there in twenty minutes. I’ll be back down here to get you.”

“Is that a promise?”

“You can bet your sexy ass it is.” Steven didn’t waste any time leaving her alone, and giving her enough time to lock up everything downstairs so they could have their night together.

Chapter Twelve

Standing outside Steven's bedroom door, Keyshia ran her hands over her black skirt thinking about what was waiting for her on the other side of the door. Steven had come into her life tonight like a whirlwind and stirred up emotions inside of her that she had never felt for any other man.

Most of the time she was too busy taking care of her business and worrying about her sisters to even think about having a love life, but all of that changed when a tall and handsome stranger walked through the doors of *Family Affair*. He had caught her attention the moment she saw him standing at the check-in counter waiting for some service.

It had taken everything in her power not to come on to him right then and there. She tried to act cool and collected; like he was just another customer, instead of a man who was making her pulse race a hundred miles a minute. Usually she was big on doing stuff for other people and making sure their lives were okay, but tonight she wasn't going to think about anyone else but herself.

"It's now or never," Keyshia whispered to herself right before knocking on the door.

A second later the door opened and Steven was standing there looking very mouth-watering with his shirt out of his slacks, the sleeves rolled up and then pushed up passed his elbows.

“I was beginning to get worried about you. I thought you might have changed your mind,” Steven said as he grabbed her hand and pulled her into his bedroom closing the door behind them. “I hope you like what I have done with the place.”

Her eyes widened in shock as Keyshia looked around the room in awe. How in the world had Steven done all of this while she was downstairs? White candles were placed on the on the window ledge and on the desk across the room in the corner.

The whole atmosphere gave the bedroom a dreamy quality and he had even found some soft music to play in the background. The setting was truly exquisite and more romantic than she ever thought it could be.

“Where did you get all of this stuff?” she asked spinning around to look up at Steven who was smiling at her. “I love it.”

“You would be surprised at what I found hiding in some of those drawers and in the back of the closet. I’m just thrilled you like it so much. I wanted to make this night special for us.”

Placing his hands on her waist, Steven eased her closer to him until not even an inch separated their bodies. His clear gray eyes caught and held hers for a whole two minutes before he spoke to her.

“I want you to know that if you want to stop at anytime during this that you can and I won’t get upset with you. Despite the fact, that I find you totally irresistible and can’t wait to make love to you. I don’t want to force you into anything you aren’t ready for.”

“I’m more than ready for this,” Keyshia swore. She proved her point by unbuttoning Steven’s shirt and running her hands over his well-defined chest.

“Do you know that you’re playing with fire?” Steven placed his large hand over her smaller ones stopping their movements.

“Tonight, I’m going to live dangerously, so I’m ready to play with you anyway I can,” she whispered.

For a moment, he studied her intently like he was trying to make sure that she knew what she was telling him, and then slowly his eyes smoldered into a darker shade of gray and she was enthralled by what she saw.

“Baby, I’ll let you play with me as much as you want to,” Steven promised right before he kissed her.

Chapter Thirteen

Keyshia's body was shattered by the hunger of Steven's kisses and she gave herself freely to the passion of them. Standing on tiptoes, she wrapped her arms around Steven's neck and slowly opened her mouth to allow his tongue entrance. She had never been so captivated by a single kiss in her entire life.

"You taste so unbelievable," Steven moaned as his lips brushed against hers.

"Thank you. I like the way you taste too," she whispered running her fingers through Steven's thick hair.

His lips left hers to nibble at her earlobe while rubbing his hands over her back slowly tugging her shirt out of her skirt. Easing his hands under her skirt, Steven cupped her ass and tugged her firmly against his body.

The feel of his erection against her stomach made the blood pound in her head, her heart kicked up another notch and all of that made her knees tremble with the need to be with the man touching her body.

"I need to get you out of these clothes, so I can see the beautiful body that they are covering up." Moving back, Steven quickly removed the white shirt she was wearing tossing it behind him on the floor.

“I have never seen a more perfect sight.” Cupping her breasts in the palm of his hands, he ran his thumbs over her already hard nipples making them even harder.

The bra she was wearing wasn't doing anything to hide how much she wanted Steven's mouth on her breasts. She had been fantasizing about this half the evening and now it was about to happen. A rush of moisture soaked her already moist panties as Steven dropped his head and ran his tongue over her left nipple before drawing it entirely into his waiting mouth.

His hands explored the hollows of her back as his teeth bit at the hard peak of her nipples before sucking away the stinging pain. The sensation of being in Steven's arms was better than anything her mind could have dreamed up. His breath was warm and moist against her skin making her clench her thighs so her juices wouldn't run down her legs.

Keyshia couldn't move as Steven's hands grabbed the hem of her skirt and shoved it up as far as it would go. Long fingers massaged her ass before moving to the edge of her panties, easing underneath the lace and then inside of her. Her body quickly sucked at Steven's warm finger drawing it deeper inside her wetness.

The light stroking of his caress against her body was making her skin tingle, and showing her how long it has been since she had been with a man. She had no desire to back out of his embrace. Hell, she wanted it to go on forever and if she

had any say, it would. Steven was making her wild and he wasn't even naked yet. She could only imagine what was going to happen once they got in the bed.

Running her fingers through his thick hair, Keyshia held Steven's head closer to her breast as she worked her hips to keep up the tempo his fingers had going on inside of her body. She was going insane and it was his fault. She needed...something so bad and he was toying with her like a cat would do with a ball of string.

"Please," she whimpered, not caring how desperate she sounded to her own ears.

Steven let go of her breast with a loud pop before he gave the other one a couple of good licks making her even crazier for him. "What do you want, sweetheart?" he whispered, slowing the pace of his fingers that were still fitting snugly inside of her.

"I need..." Hell, she didn't want to say it. He should know what she wanted without the words being said out loud.

"Do you want me to love you like I have been thinking about doing all night? Do you want me to strip you naked and thrust deep inside of you until both of us forget our names?"

"YES!" she screamed.

“Your wish is my command.” Taking his talented fingers out of her wetness, Steven quickly stripped her out the rest of her clothes until she was standing naked before him only wearing her black high heels.

The gleam of excitement in Steven’s gray eyes excited her more than any well-spoken words ever could. It should be her that he was totally into and nothing else today. It almost made her standing naked in front of him not so bad, but she didn’t know how much longer she could do it.

She was dying to feel Steven’s warm naked body on top of her as they did the time old dance of two people completely into each other. Just the way he was standing in front of her clothed, his stance emphasizing the force of his long powerful thighs, and the slimness of his hips. She wouldn’t describe Steven as having a swimmer’s body because he had too much muscle for that, but she thought of it as a body she wanted to get to know very well before the night was over.

“How about I help you get out of these clothes?” Closing the small distance between them, Keyshia pushed Steven’s shirt off his shoulders. After the fabric was lying on the floor behind them, she eased her hands down his chest until her fingers were resting at the top of his belt. “Are you sure you know what you’re doing?” he asked, looking down at her with his gorgeous eyes.

“You better believe that I do.” She started to unzip his pants until Steven placed his hand on top of hers.

“I better do this, because if you touch me, I promise you that tonight will be over a lot faster than either one of us would want it to be.” Stepping back from her, Steven stripped out the remainder of his clothes until he was standing in all his naked glory before her.

Chapter Fourteen

Keyshia could only stare at the hunk positioned not ten inches from her body. She wasn't a virgin. So, she had seen a naked man before; however, Steven was in a totally different league than any of them. His body looked like a picture of perfection that any artist would be dying to capture on a canvas for other people to pay to see in a museum.

He stood there looking devilishly handsome with his broad shoulders, a well-defined chest that was covered with dark brown hair. Not enough to turn her off, but just the right amount to make him ultra sexy in a semi-rugged sort of way. Even his thick arms with their silky hairs were turning her on. As her eyes traveled down, she couldn't drag her gaze away from his erection.

Double Damn!!!

She knew that it had been a while since she had been with a man...but Steven's cock was just plain beautiful.

It was long, thick, curved against the muscles of his stomach and was the same tanned color as the rest of his breathtaking body. She was having a hard time believing that this tall, handsome man with his beautifully proportioned body was all hers for the rest of the night. She wasn't going to let tomorrow and what may

come up even enter her mind. All she could think about now was getting that amazing cock deep inside of her.

“Should I be pleased or nervous that you can’t seem to tear your eyes away from me?” Steven asked, drawing her attention back up to his face.

“You have nothing to be nervous about I’m very impressed.”

“Good, I’m glad you are. Now let me impress you with something else.”

Keyshia didn’t have time for a comeback before Steven picked her up in his arms and carried her over to the bed. Placing her in the middle, he gently pulled at her hips until they were close to the edge of the bed. He dropped to his knees in the front of her and gently opened her legs as wide as they would go.

“You smell so good,” he whispered as his finger brushed at her wet curls. “I can’t wait to taste you.” Leaning into her, Steven ran his tongue along the inside of her right thigh several times before he made his way to her wetness. He slowly moved his tongue around until he found her most sensitive spot.

“Ooh, that feels so...” Keyshia purred as she fell back against the mattress as wonderful sensations started taking over her body. Steven was making her wild and she was *loving* every minute of it.



Steven couldn’t get enough of how amazing Keyshia tasted. She was richer and sweeter than any candy that had ever been in his mouth. He loved how she

was running her fingers through his hair as his tongue hit all of her sweet spots. He liked how she wasn't trying to brush his hands away as he held her down so he could get better access to her delicious cream.

He had never craved bringing a woman to the peak of pleasure as he did Keyshia at this moment. Taking the tip of his tongue, he gently glided back and forth over her and listened as the moaning sounds got quicker and louder as his tongue went deeper inside of her.

Speeding up his movements he made them a little firmer and quicker as he felt her legs tighten behind his hands. He knew her orgasm was fast approaching, but he wanted his cock buried deep inside of Keyshia when she came, not his tongue.

Steven eased his tongue out of Keyshia's body despite the sounds of protest coming from her sweet, full lips. "It's okay baby. I'm still going to make you feel so good." Sitting down on the bed, he reached for the condom on the night stand, tearing the foil wrapper open he quickly sheathed himself before lifting Keyshia above his aching cock and taking her in one powerful thrust.

Bending his legs a little more, he planted his feet firmly on the floor so Keyshia could benefit the most from the deep penetration of his cock. Her eyes locked with his as all of his nine inches went completely inside of her welcoming

heat. Steven slid his fingers through her hair and brought her head down for a long, slow kiss while he started to pump into her as his free hand held onto her hips.

Keyshia tore her mouth away from his and her hands grabbed his shoulders as her hips moved up and down to meet every one of his thrusts. “God...it has never...felt so good,” she panted, as she bounced on his cock.

“I know. I agree, baby,” Steven growled then sucked one of her pebble hard nipples into his mouth.

God, he wasn't going to be able to last much longer. Thinking about being like this with Keyshia all night had already had him at the point of coming inside of his pants. Now that the reality of it was happening, it was too much for his body to handle.

“Baby, we need to slow down or I'm not going to last.” Steven tried to control the movement of Keyshia's hips, but she pushed at his shoulders making him fall back on the bed.

“No, I need this...I want this...it has been so long,” she groaned, harshly right before she threw her head back screaming as her orgasm raked through her body.

The beautiful sight of Keyshia achieving her release because of him made Steven grip her waist even tighter and thrust into her one...two...three...more times until his orgasm took him over the edge and his guttural scream echoed in the room seconds after hers.

Steven came back to reality little by little and he held Keyshia to his chest as his heart rate slowly returned to normal. He had never been with a woman that made him feel like this. He just had the best sex of his adult life and he wasn't about to give Keyshia up for anything in the world now, but he was worried about how she felt.

Did she think this was just a hot one-night stand between strangers or could she possibly see having something deeper and more meaningful with him?

Chapter Fifteen

Stretching in the bed, Keyshia relished the soreness in her body that she hadn't felt in over two years. Steven had really worked her body out last night and she had loved...LOVED every single minute of it. Lord, he must be a magician or something because he worked some powerful magic on her entire body, mind and soul.

She knew without opening her eyes that Steven wasn't in the bed with her because his warm presence wasn't there keeping her relaxed and calm. When Steven was around it was like she didn't have a care in the world and she really liked that about him. He had a very calming affect about him.

Keyshia could see Steven being a big part of her life if she allowed him to, but she had so much going on right now with making *Family Affair* a success that she didn't know if she had the extra time to give a relationship that needed time to grow. Just from the short amount of time she had spent around Steven, she could tell that he was a good man. She thought he could be the kind of man her mother told her about and eventually dreamed about becoming her husband.

Lord, her mama would give her a lecture from here to next Sunday about having sex with a man she had known for less than twenty-four hours, but that

discussion wasn't going to happen because she wasn't about to breathe a word about this to her mama. She didn't even want to think about how upset her father would be. He would demand that Steven marry her on the spot and make an honest woman out of her.

Laughing, Keyshia shook her head and snuggled deeper underneath the covers. She loved how old school her parents were when it came to sex and marriage, but she adored both of them dearly, despite the fact, they still treated her like she was twelve years old instead of a grown woman with a career. She was thinking about going back to sleep for another hour when the sound of the bedroom door opening drew her attention.

"Good morning, sleepyhead," Steven grinned as he came through the door fully dressed carrying a breakfast tray filled with delicious smelling food.

"What are you doing?" Keyshia asked grinning at Steven wearing the 'Kiss the Cook' apron. She loved how adorable he looked in the apron. It was a sight she could get used to for a very long time. She wanted to stay snuggled up with the covers and relive the magic of last night, but she didn't.

Instead, she sat up in the bed and fixed the covers across her hips as she eyed the moth-watering try in Steven's hand. Despite the repeated requests from Steven last night that she stay naked, she decided to put her shirt back on. This man was just full of surprises. God, she was so surprised last night when he

invited her to stay in his room when she suggested that she should go back to her own.

She wasn't trying to read any more into what happened between the two of them, so she wouldn't be setting herself up for disappointment. However, it seemed like Steven had other plans in mind and she wasn't about to ruin them by opening her big mouth again. She was just going to go with the flow and enjoy this as long as she could.

"I want to treat the most beautiful woman in the world to breakfast in bed," he said sitting the tray over her hips. "I hope you don't mind."

Keyshia knew she should have thought what Steven was saying was corny as hell, but she sort of liked it. It had been so long since a man had made her feel special like this. She was usually the one showering all of the attention on the guys and that's why she decided to stop dating for a while. She wasn't supposed to do romantic things like this with her past boyfriends. The guys in her past never acted like they were in a committed relationship with her.

Steven hadn't been in her life for long, but he already topped the last three guys she had dated. Three guys that her sisters told her on a daily basis they hated and wondered why she would be giving them the time of day since she was so gorgeous and could get any man she wanted.

“Do you like everything that I fixed? I wasn’t sure what your favorites were, so I cooked a little bit of everything.” Steven said waving his hand toward the mound of food that was overflowing her plate.

Keyshia’s mouth watered at the sight of French toast, scrambled eggs, and sausage. She didn’t know where to dig in first. She even noticed that Steven brought her some orange juice and a cup of coffee.

Whoa! Wait a minute!

Now, there were only a few people in the world who knew how she liked her coffee to taste, so that was going to be the first thing she was going to sample. She had to make sure that Steven knew how to fix a perfect cup of coffee.

“I should warn you that I’m very picky when it comes to my coffee. I just don’t drink it any kind of way. It has to have the right amount of cream and sugar in it to make it wonderful.” She blew on it a couple of times wanting to cool it down before she took a sip.

“I think my cup will be a winner when it comes to your coffee, Ms. Williams,” Steven bragged and then gave her a quick kiss on the mouth.

Keyshia raised one perfectly arched eyebrow before she took a sip and then looked at Steven with shocked eyes. It tasted *perfect*! How in the world did he know that she like a dash of cream and two sugars in her coffee? Usually most people fixed it too strong for her, but this was delicious.

“It’s just the way I like it,” she replied still surprised by the fact as she placed the cup back on the tray.

“I told you not to be surprised,” Steven grinned at her. “I know what my woman likes. Now dig in to your food because I don’t want it to get cold.”

Grabbing her fork, Keyshia got a forkful of eggs shoving them into her mouth. She moaned at the hint of garlic that she tasted on them. Garlic was one of her favorite spices to use, but she had never used it with eggs before. Next, she cut through a slice of French toast and about died when it practically melted on her tongue. Lord, if Steven kept cooking for her like this she was going to be in a whole lot of trouble. This guy really knew his way around a well-stocked kitchen.

“Where did you learn how to cook like this?” she asked, before eating another bite of French toast. She couldn’t get enough of it.

“My mother taught me and my brother at a young age how to cook. She was training to be a personal chef when she got pregnant with me and had to leave school. She was planning to go back after I got older, but she had my brother and got married, so it never happened.”

“So, she took all of her training and passed it on to us. Which is a good thing because the way my brother has a new girlfriend every week. He needs to know his way around a kitchen to impress them.”

“I like hearing about your brother, but why don’t you tell me more about yourself.” Keyshia grabbed her coffee and took another sip.

“What do you want to know?” Steven asked, brushing a piece of hair off her forehead. “There isn’t much to tell about me. I’m a pretty simple guy with an okay life nothing to really brag about to be honest with you.”

Keyshia wasn’t about to believe what Steven was telling her for a minute. His life wasn’t as dull as he was pretending it was and she was going to find out more about him. She had opened up to him way more than he had let her know about him.

“Didn’t you tell me you were a reporter? What made you decided to do that? It sounds like a very interesting job to me. Have you interviewed any famous people?”

Steven knew this was going to happen sooner or later. Whenever anyone found out about this job they always asked these questions, and he found them hard to answer because he had lost the true meaning of his chosen career over the years.

The articles that he had been doing lately weren’t anything he was proud of or cared for anyone to know about; especially, someone as open and giving as Keyshia. She might not like how he was earning his paycheck now. He would hate to look bad in her eyes when he was trying so hard to build something with her.

“Come on. I told you about my crazy sisters. God, you even got to meet one of them yesterday. I know you can give me a little bit of information about you. I like you and want to know about you. I wasn’t that open with my ex-boyfriends in the past because I didn’t feel a connection to them like I do you. Don’t make me regret my decision by not answering a couple of questions I asked you.”

Steven didn’t want to lose Keyshia, so he knew that he had to tell her more about himself and his job. “I really just fell into it by accident in college,” he said, removing the breakfast tray off of Keyshia’s lap and sitting it on the floor by his bed.

“A friend of mine at college got attacked and hurt badly after an incident. He had said something that a lot of other guys didn’t like, so about twelve guys waited for him after class and beat him up. The college did a little bit about it, but most of the guys got off because their parents had money invested in certain programs at the college.”

“Several students there, including myself, hated the way the situation turned out, so we took a stand and I wrote a long story about it in the college newspaper. I got a lot of positive comments from that article and a couple of the guys even transferred to another school because of it. I realized then that I had a talent for the pen and paper which convinced me to change my major from law to journalism.”

“I loved that story. Why would you be ashamed to tell me about you? You have a gift and you get to use it each and every day. What is so wrong about that?” Keyshia asked confused.

Steven sat next to Keyshia on the bed in half anticipation and half in dread at what Keyshia’s reaction was going to be when he told her the rest of his story. The longer he took to answer her made the lengthening silence between them more uncomfortable. This was the main reason he decided to take this vacation and sort things out. He was becoming ashamed of his job the more he thought about it.

He wasn’t proud to tell people anymore that he had taken all his years of journalism training to become a tabloid reporter. His skills had gotten so good over the years that he had gotten offers from *TMZ* and *Star* magazine. He didn’t want to work for either of them because he wasn’t fond of certain things they liked to talk about or make fun of.

“Steven, what’s up with you? You have gotten so quiet all of a sudden was it something that I said?”

“No, it’s me. I’m just not the guy you think I am,” Steven admitted.

Little tension lines appeared on Keyshia’s usually smooth forehead as she stared at him with confusion in her dark eyes. “I’m not following you. What kind of guy are you?”

“You think that I’m this good reporter/journalist who writes all of these heartfelt stories about the public, but you’re wrong. I’m not like that at all.”

“Okay, tell me how you are then,” she said as the lines on her forehead got even deeper.

The unwelcome tension stretched even tighter between them as Steven tried to get his words together. “I’m the kind of journalist that all of the stars hate. I find all of the best gossip on them and then report it to be public for a nice fat paycheck. The juicier the dirt I can dig up the more my boss pays me for it.”

“Are you saying that you write for those trashy rags that are usually in the checkout lanes at the grocery store? The ones that have those altered photos of the stars saying that they are on death’s door or that they had gained eighty pounds in less than six weeks?”

Steven didn’t want to admit to the truth. Just hearing the words come out of Keyshia’s mouth made him feel even worse than he already did. He knew what he had been doing for the past couple of years was wrong, but it helped pay all of his bills, plus it left him with a huge bank account after all was said and done. Back then he loved getting those checks and nothing else had mattered, but he was older and wiser now. He knew that there were more important things in the world than money now.

“Yes, I’m one of those people, but I have changed. I’m not planning on writing anymore sensationalized articles. I want to change my life and I know that I can become a better man with you if you give me that chance.” Steven secretly prayed that Keyshia wouldn’t toss him out of her life when they were just getting to know each other.

“I don’t know how I feel about you getting rich off of someone’s misfortune. It doesn’t seem right. I have never been that kind of person. I don’t know if I could be with someone who made themselves rich off of another person’s agony.”

A cold knot formed in Steven’s stomach as he got off the bed. He wasn’t going to give up on Keyshia. She was the type of woman that he had been searching for half his life: caring, understanding, selfless and gorgeous as hell. He would go downstairs and give her a little time to herself to think, but he wasn’t about to give up on her-not when he just found her.

“I’m going to go downstairs and make some phone calls. I want us to talk more about this after you have gotten dressed.” Picking up the tray off the floor, Steven went toward the door, but paused before going out. He glanced back over his shoulder and found Keyshia watching him.

“Please don’t judge me by my job too quickly. Get to know the real me and you’ll see that I’m still the nice guy you thought I was.” After he said those words, he continued out the door silently praying that Keyshia had listened to him.

Chapter Sixteen

“I think we need to check on Keyshia. I still think something is wrong with her. She isn’t the type to do the nasty with some guy that she barely knows. God, if it was one of us that had spent the night with a stranger, she would tell mom and dad on us without a second thought, but that would be after she read us the riot act first,” Sasha complained taking a sip of her coffee.

“Why don’t you just mind your own business and worry about your own love life?” Fawn asked. “All of us know that you’re already half in love with Sterling. I’ll never see how you could have any feelings for him with the way he walks around like he’s so much better than everyone who works with him.”

“We aren’t talking about me,” Sasha tossed back. “Besides, I’m not in love with Sterling Norris. He is just my boss and nothing else. When are you going to get that through your thick skull?”

“Will the two of you stop fighting? We decided to have an early breakfast before we went to *Family Affair*, so we can discuss Keyshia not jump down each other throats,” Allura complained.

“I think we should just leave Keyshia alone and let her live her life. She is an adult and doesn’t need us telling her what to do. I met Steven last night and he seemed like a nice guy. I didn’t get any creepy vibes from him at all.”

“You can’t tell us anything because you’re going to be right behind Keyshia in the jump into the bed with a man you barley know department,” Fawn laughed.

“What are you talking about?” Allura frowned, glaring at her sister. “I’m not about to have sex with a man I don’t know.”

“Are you really trying to lie and tell us if Peter asked you to spend the night being his love slave that you wouldn’t do it? I think you bring him up in every other sentence. Today might be the first day that you haven’t done it.”

“Sasha, how about you stay out of my business and I’ll stay out of yours when it comes to Sterling?”

“Don’t get all upset with me because I’m speaking the truth,” Sasha tossed back.

“Stop fighting you two,” Fawn jumped in. “We aren’t here to do that. Now, let’s get back on topic. Should we confront Keyshia about this Steven Weber or should we let her live her own life? She has a good head on her shoulders. Do you think she will just have this little affair and move on?”

“From the way she was acting last night, I think Keyshia really likes this guy. The two of you weren’t there. I saw how they were looking at each other. I

think it could grow into something pretty good. So, I vote to stay out of Keyshia's business," Allura said, hoping this conversation was about to be over.

"I think you're wrong, but I'll go ahead and leave it alone too," Sasha replied, still a little worried about her big sister and this new guy in her life.

"Great. Now since that is all settled how about we order some food, I'm starving." Fawn picked up her menu and looked over the breakfast section hoping they had blueberry pancakes as an option.

Chapter Seventeen

Walking around *Family Affair*, Keyshia made sure that everything was in order before her sisters showed up to take over for the day. She had been working for three days straight and it was time for her to have a day off, but as much as she tried she couldn't get her mind off what Steven had confessed to her.

How could she think about being in a relationship with him when he did everything that she was against? She hated when someone used another person for their own personal gain. She was always on her little sisters about dating a good, respectable guy and here she was having feelings for Steven.

He wasn't the man that she thought he was at all. He made his living off being mean and probably sometimes a liar to just make a fat paycheck. How did she know that he wouldn't use her to better his career? No, she couldn't let things go any further between the two of them. Last night will make a wonderful memory for her, but she had to stick to her beliefs and not allow Steven to become important to her. He would only be a guest for the remainder of his stay here.

"Have you had a chance to think about what we were talking about this morning?"

Keyshia peeked over her shoulder and found Steven standing directly behind her. The look on his face looked so hopeful that she hated to tell him what her discussion was. For a spilt-second, she thought that she might be making the wrong decision but then quickly shook the thought from her mind. No, she couldn't be with a man who spread lies on purpose just to make a nice paycheck.

"Yes, I have given thought to what you told me upstairs and I have something to tell you."

"God, I can tell from the way you're looking at me that I'm not going to like what you're about to tell me," Steven sighed shoving his hands into pockets. "You don't want to have a relationship with me, do you?"

"I..." The sound of the bell ringing above the front door made Keyshia stop talking to see who had walked through the door. She was taken aback when a police officer walked in with a plastic bag in his hand. She prayed that there wasn't anything wrong with her sisters.

"Can I help you, Officer?" Keyshia asked going up to the man.

"Yes, I'm looking for a Steven Weber," he answered.

Keyshia's gaze swung over to Steven and then back to the cop. What in the world did the police want with Steven? Was he in some kind of trouble? What else wasn't he telling her? Who in the hell had she spent the night making love with?

“I’m Steven Weber,” Steven said, coming to stand next to her. “How can I help you?”

“Last night at the bus station, we caught a guy stealing people’s wallets and after we got to the station we found your wallet in a bag with several others,” the officer said giving the bag to Steven. “It took a couple of hours before he finally told us where to find you.”

“I don’t think he had a chance to use any of your credit cards or spend any money, Mr. Weber. If you do find something is missing, let us know and we will add it to the charges the station already has against him.”

Steven opened the bag and checked through everything, but he didn’t see anything missing. “Everything is here. Thank you so much for bringing this to me. I was totally out of money. I was planning to call my brother to let me borrow some from him until I called my bank.”

“Not a problem. I’m glad to be of service.” The officer told Steven before giving Keyshia a quick smile and then leaving them alone.

“I’m so thrilled you got your wallet back,” Keyshia told Steven. “I remember how upset you were to find it was missing.”

“I’m glad that I’ll be able to pay you for my room now.” Opening up his wallet, Steven pulled out a platinum card and handed it to her. “Charge me the full amount. I don’t want you to give me a discount or anything.”

Keyshia glanced at the credit card for a few minutes. As she reached for it, her fingers brushed against Steven's giving her a slight shock. She pretended not to notice as she moved around him and headed for the front desk. She wasn't going to let her attraction to him cloud her mind.

"How can you act like we didn't spend an amazing night together?" Steven asked, as he followed closely behind her. "I know you just felt the same thing I did. God, Keyshia; give me a chance. You thought I was someone you could see yourself dating until I told you about my job. Would you really not date me because of it? I told you that I was thinking about giving it up. Can you at least give me a second chance?"

Keyshia didn't answer Steven while she ran his credit card for the room. All she wanted to do was have some more time to herself to think about things. Everything had moved so quickly between the two of them and she was still a little taken aback that she fell for someone like that. She needed time to sort through some things.

"Here you go." She gave Steven his credit card back along with the receipt to sign.

"Baby, please talk to me. I know you feel something for me. I can see it in your eyes when you look at me. I get that you're scared everything happened between us so fast, but it did. Hell, I love that I walked through those door and

saw a woman I was dying to be with. Can't you see that this was meant to be between the two of us?" He signed the receipt and gave it back to her.

"Steven, can you understand that I have a lot going on in my head right now. Last night blew my mind because it was so good and then this morning I learned so much more about you. I'm only asking for some space," Keyshia answered. "I have been working non-stop so long here that getting into a relationship is something new for me."

"I understand about you being a workaholic. I used to be the same way, but you need more in your life than these four walls. They aren't going to keep you warm at night. Now, I'm going upstairs for a little while, but I will be back down and when I come back we are going to get everything out in the open." Steven turned on his heel and strode from the room back up the stairs to his bedroom leaving Keyshia to wonder if she was making a rash decision when it came to him.

Chapter Eighteen

After Steven left her alone like she requested, several thoughts raced through Keyshia's mind. Did she really not want to be with Steven because of his job? Was it that important to her? He did tell her that he was going to stop being a tabloid reporter and try to get back to his old ways. Writing articles that helped people instead of cutting them down all the time, but she didn't have any proof he was telling her the truth.

Moving from behind the check-in desk, Keyshia made her way over to the dining room and took a seat at one of the tables. She leaned back in the chair and thought about everything that has occurred in her life in the last twenty-four hours. So much had happened that it was hard to believe it was her life and not someone else's.

Was it really possible for him to give up all of that money? She was positive he made huge amounts from his publishers. Would he truly be content writing about something different and mostly positive things about people? She was torn between going with her heart and listening to her head like she has done so many times over the years.

Why did this have to be so difficult for her? Shit! She wished now that he had never walked through the doors of her hotel. Her life was going good without having this drama in it. She constantly got on her sisters for doing stuff without thinking about it first and now she was just like them.

“If I could just get a sign to show me what to do,” Keyshia mumbled. “It would make my decision so much easier.”

“How about this as a sign?” Steven asked as he slid a piece of paper in front of her and took a seat at the table with her.

“What is this?” she asked, glancing down at the paper.

“I could tell after our talk that you didn’t believe what I was telling you about wanting to change the way I write. So, while I was upstairs I called and gave my boss my resignation. I told him that I could no longer do those kinds of articles for him anymore. I’m going back to being a freelance writer.”

“I know the pay is going to be a lot different, but I won’t miss it. So, why don’t you check out my first article? I have already emailed it to a couple of the old newspapers I used to work for. I hoping one of them will run it.”

Picking up the sheet of paper, Keyshia glanced at Steven before she started to read what he had written.

Family Affair is Simply Amazing!

By

Steven Weber

This was my first trip to *Family Affair* in Spelling, Virginia, and my stay was better than words can describe. My favorite breakfast could be eaten in the dining room or brought to my door each morning at the time of my choosing. The food is extremely good. The breakfast plates are brimming with delicious, fresh foods (fruit, yogurt, muffins, bagels, tea/coffee, juice and lastly an entrée). You can have everything I just listed or only the things that you want.

Breakfast is so fulfilling that you don't have to eat lunch if you don't want to. However, if you do, the lunch/dinner menu is even better than the breakfast. You won't leave the table feeling unsatisfied at all. This hotel/spa is conveniently located right outside of town, yet you feel like you're right in the heart of the city.

I had the great pleasure of staying at *Family Affair* while I was on vacation, and I was amazed at the beauty and attention to detail that this small, yet beautifully decorated hotel offers to its guests. The rooms are cozy and comfortable. Keyshia Williams, the owner couldn't do enough to make sure that I had everything that I needed while I was there.

This is a 5 star hotel with rates comparable to any of the major hotel chains. If you ever get a chance to stay in Spelling, Virginia, you should definitely check out *Family Affair*. It will be the one place you will hate to leave once your vacation is over.

Blinking back tears, Keyshia reread the review that Steven had written about her place of business. She couldn't believe that she ever doubted the sincerity of his words. Instead of getting upset when she told him that she needed some space to think about things, Steven had taken that time away from her and wrote this outstanding article.

"Why did you do this for me?" she asked, placing the paper back down on the table.

"Don't you know?"

"I think I might, but I would like for you to tell me," she replied, softly.

"Keyshia, this is going to sound strange and I hope it doesn't scare you away but I have fallen hard for you. When I walked through the doors of Family Affair I felt a connection to the place before I even saw you. After I got the pleasure to meet you I knew this is where I belonged for the rest of my life. I know I'm falling in love with you."

"Steven, I..."

"No, please let me finish," Steven insisted, cutting her off. "I can wait for however long you want me too, but understand that I want to be with you. I want to be around to see you make a success of your business. That is why I wrote the review for you. I know people listen to what I have to say about anything and

everything. Why shouldn't I brag about the woman I care about? It seemed only right to do that for you since you did let me stay here for free."

"You're falling in love with me? Are you sure?" Keyshia was so used to living by the book that she didn't think she could be spontaneous and tell Steven how she really felt about him. It was just too much too soon for her.

"Honey, I have never been more sure of anything in my life, but like I said earlier you don't have to tell me you feel the same way yet. All I want to hear from you is that you could start to feel something for me despite the job I used to have. Do you think you could do that?"

Keyshia's grin was so big that it covered most of her face. She didn't need any more time to make her decision. She had it made a second after she read the article Steven had written. She cared about him just as much as he cared about her. Her family might think it was strange, but she would get into it later with them. Right at this moment, she was going to live her own life and not think about her family's opinions of her.

"Steven, I care about you too. I don't know how it happened, but it did. I want us to be together. We can start slow and learn more about each other. I truly would love to give us a chance."

"Oh, baby. You don't know how good that makes me feel." Steven got up out of his chair and came over to her. Picking her up, he sat down in her chair and

placed her on his lap. “How do you think we should celebrate our first day as a couple?”

“Maybe we should seal it with a kiss?” Keyshia suggested.

“No, I don’t want to do that.”

“Alright, do you want to go back upstairs and have a repeat of last night?”

She didn’t have a problem with that at all. Her sisters would be here in half an hour and she would have to rest of the day to learn Steven’s hot body. She could take him back to her house for some privacy.

“Sweetheart, you really know how to hit a man where it hurts, but my answer will still have to be no.”

“Steven, you have turned down a kiss from me along with spending the day making love. I’m beginning to think your words of love aren’t true because I can’t think of anything else that you would want to do with me.”

Steven cupped her face in his hands and then planted a soft kiss by the corner of her mouth. “Baby, I want to do the thing that made me realize I was falling in love with you.”

“What was that?” Keyshia asked caught up in the web Steven had weaved around them.

“I want to make S’mores in front of the fireplace. You looked so beautiful doing that and I knew at that moment I had to make you a part of my life.”

“Keep talking like that and you might get something extra to go with those S’mores,” she promised in a low voice leaning closer to Steven.

“Can I have a hint of what the something extra might be?”

Climbing off of Steven’s lap, Keyshia grabbed his hand and pulled him toward the kitchen. “Come with me and I’ll show you the extras I’m talking about.”

“Will it be something good?” Steven asked as he followed behind her a huge grin on his face.

“You better believe it will be because it’s warm, sticky and twenty times better than any S’mores. I promise that after you have tasted it. You will be begging me for more and more of it.”

The End

www.freewebs.com/irwriter/

Author Bio:

The Queen of Tease: If you want to read interracial romance stories that leaves you panting for more and turning the pages faster than you can read them. Marie is for you.

After reading her first “dirty” book as a teenager, Marie knew she had to become a writer. She started writing a few years ago because she wanted to reach for her dream. She writes her characters so her fans will believe in the Happily Ever After. She loves collecting bear figurines and reading a HOT book when she gets the chance.

You can find out more information about her and her work at the following places:

- Official Site: <http://www.freewebs.com/irwriter/>
- Official Blog: <http://shopdiva28.blogspot.com/>
- Official Yahoo Loop: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/marie_rochelle/
- Official Yahoo Discussion Loop:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MarieRochelle2/>

Awards

- Best Selling Author
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Marie Rochelle is a bestselling author and award winning author of interracial romances featuring black women and white men. Marie first started writing IR books about three years ago and it has been nonstop for her ever since. Her first best selling IR romance was entitled **Taken by Storm**. This bestseller

will be released by Phaze later on in the year. Her hero in the book Storm Hyde won the 2006 Choice hero from REC.

In addition Ms. Rochelle has several bestselling books published through Red Rose Publishing that include: With All my Heart, Dangerous Bet; Troy's Revenge, Cover Model and Pamper Me.

Marie loves hearing from her fans. Please drop her an email at marierochelle2@yahoo.com or visit her website @ www.freewebs.com/irwriter/. She also has a discussion group fans can join and talk about her current releases. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MarieRochelle2/>. Or you can visit her website and join her regular yahoo group.

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Accept My Love: Sasha: The Williams Sister Series-Book 2-coming soon