

## Chapter One

It's was hotter than fish grease outside in the ghetto's of Atlanta. Even though my grandmother lived outside the projects. Her house was still located in the hood. Everybody and they mom's had a fan in the window and freeze pops close by to cool off. My thighs stuck together like two Jimmy Dean sausages. I swore I took like three showers through out the day just to cool off. My grandma would bitch and moan a few times. But after I promised her I'd do her hair and buy her a pack of cigs she'd quiet down.

I'd been stuck in the house all day watching Martin reruns and braiding my grandma Nattie Mae hair when my homegirl Rae called me. Rae was cool as shit and she always looked out for me in school and in the neighborhood.

"Bitch, what you doing tonight?" Rae squealed.

"I don't know. Probably finish reading The Coldest Winter Ever. Why...what's up?"

"Girl, you know Rashawn and his boys throwing together a lil kick back. So, you know it's gone be lit than a motherfucker!"

"I don't know Rae....my hair ain't done, my period bout to come on and..."

"Girl, cut that noise! You coming with me and that's word. We ain't been out together in a minute." Rae whined.

"Let me think about it and hit you back."

Rae sucked her teeth and paused. I could hear her heavy breathing through the telephone. I could hear Juvenile booming through her stereo system. If I knew my girl Rae she was probably laying across her bed in boy shorts and

a tee shirt eating flamin hot Cheetos scouting niggas in the neighborhood to fuck later tonight. Nasty ass.

“You know your boy gone be there.”

“My boy...?”

“Oh so now you got some amnesia and shit. Oh ok Shante I see how you like to kick it.”

“Whatever. That ain’t my boy. I just said the nigga was cute in his midnight blue chevy.”

Rae popped her tongue and replied, “ Well, he been asking about you.”

“Shut up...what he say Rae? Bitch, tell me everything and don’t leave nothing out.”

Rae began to laugh. “ I ain’t telling you shit unless you coming to this spot with me tonight.”

“You sure Tony going to be there?”

“Yep, he gone roll through.”

“Alright. Cool, I’ll show up.

A few hours later after I finish putting my grandma Nattie curls in place. I made sure it was cool with her that I leave the house for a few hours to get some fresh air. She pulled her cigarette two times and rested her back against the plastic on the couch. She cut me with her eyes as she looked at me standing in the doorway. She nodded her head and turned back towards the television. I knew my grandma Nattie pretty well. She raised me since my mom walked out of my life when I was three years old. We’d had enough talk about the birds and the bees or as she called it good penis and bad penis. She knew talking could only do so much. She knew every woman know matter the age had to get some bad penis to appreciate the good. I walked out the front door with my grandma Nattie’s life lessons rolling in the back of my head.

I pulled my halter top up around my breast and pulled my denim white shorts from in between my thick thighs. I swooped my hair into a cute bun, through some cute lip gloss and perfume and walked out the door. I was dressed to snag a few digits and a whole man. I walked down the block a few houses to get to Rae mom's house. A few of the neighborhood dope boys gave me a few slick glances but I brushed it off. Been there and done that. I banged on Rae's mom door three times before she answered and greeted me with a mean mug.

"The hell you beating on my door like that...that's how black folks get shot!" Rae's mom yelled.

I took a few steps back and quickly apologized. "Sorry, Ms. Deion, is Rae home?"

Ms. Deion scratched her left boob through her spaghetti stained tee shirt and rolled her eyes at me. She opened the screen door widely and screamed at top of her lungs.

"Raelina! Your lil fast tale friend is here!!"

Ms. Deion walked away from the door without so much as a thank you. I shook my head and walked inside. Less than five minutes inside the house and my nose was hit with the smell of burnt chicken grease and collard greens. My stomach began to turn. Ms. Deion used to be the neighborhood candy lady until one day one of the neighborhood kids found a sack of crack inside his sack of candy. The police ran sacked Ms. Deion house for everything. Turns out Ms. Deion boyfriend Tyrone was the culprit trying to recruit neighborhood kids on the low. Ms. Deion ended up kicking him to the curb and shut down the store.

I walked up the stairs and into Rae's bedroom. I politely held my breath until I got to the top of the stairs.

I walked inside Rae's room and found her rolling up weed inside her boy shorts and tee shirt. I knew this heifer just wanted to get me out of the house.

“Really?”

Rae shrugged her shoulder and licked the tree inside her multi colored fingernails. Her bedroom was a hot mess. Jordan’s size 5, jeans, make up, and purses everywhere but in the closet. I copped a spot on the edge of her bed. Rae lit her tree and puffed one in the air.

“What up hoe?” She mumbled.

“Rae, I thought you said you were getting ready.” I stated annoyingly.

“I am. I just have to figure out which pair of J’s I’m wearing with my outfit.”

“Man, I’m about to take my black behind home.”

Rae jumped up off the bed and placed her tree onto the dresser. “Alright. Chill.” She emphasized with her hands.

Rae jumped into a pair of light denim jeans, a printed tee black shirt, and a pair of Jordan’s. She looked cute for a tom boy. Rae liked men and women. Depending on the day of the week she could be found with either in her bed and sneaking out her window. I didn’t judge. That’s my girl. Besides her skeletons are none of my business.

Within twenty minutes Rae and I were beginning to walk out the door. That is until, she asked me to hold Baby Blue. I didn’t want to.

“Yo, don’t trip. You know how these dudes get down. We got to be packing when some shit go down.”

I stared at Baby Blue with tears in my eyes. I was nervous as hell to touch a gun. Ever since I saw my Uncle J.D. get shot in Grandma Nattie’s yard I never wanted to see a gun again.

“Is it loaded?”

“Nope. I got the bullets right here.” Rae stated as she held three bullets in the palm of her hand.

“I don’t know.”

“Look, just keep it in your purse. I’ll get it from you at the end of the night. It’s not loaded so you ain’t got nothing to worry about. Cool?”

I nodded my head hesitantly. Rae and I walked out of the house and headed to the party. I had a funny feeling inside my heart the moment Rae gave me Baby Blue. I felt like something bad was about to happen and there was nothing I could do about it. Something told me to take my black ass home and just chill. But I wanted to fuck before the night was over and hang with my girl. I just hoped my choices wouldn’t cost me my life.