8|EIGHT

Imani pressed the skin of her cheek against the cool of the door in front of her, her heart pounded so loud she was sure the brute behind her could hear it. She felt weak, vulnerable but safe, it was the strangest of feelings. "Stop, Richard." The command came strong and she was surprised he listened. His fingers stopped working her core and she was grateful for the relief as her legs wouldn't have been able to hold her up much longer.

He slowly removed his hand from hers above her head and dropped his forehead to her neck. "You make me insane, Imani." He grunted, before taking in her scent and pushing back from her completely.

She didn't wait around for a round two, her feet worked quicker than her mind and she found herself pushing through his door and running down the hallway. It wasn't until she was downstairs and in the kitchen with her hands braced against the sink that she finally allowed herself a breath.

He was complete and utter danger, the kind that set her soul on fire. She played with the faucet and splashed her face with water, her whole body was burning up.

"Imani, you're home," the older woman watched as her daughter jumped almost a foot in the air. "Oh no!" Leela gushed as water splashed onto the floor.

But Imani did not care for the water or the almost cardiac arrest she'd just endured, she was pleased to see her mother. Before her mother could put down the table cloths she had in her hands, Imani was on her. "I missed you," she mumbled.

Leela's stance softened, she wrapped her arms around her daughter and pulled her close, "I missed you too, sweetheart. It's been so quiet here without you." She felt Imani's arms tighten further, almost bruising against her rib cage. She finally felt warm again, her daughter was back. "Okay, Imani, go shower and I'll finish off dinner."

Imani shook her head, "let me help," she hadn't realised how empty she felt without her mother until this moment. But her mother wasn't one to argue with and she knew she'd not win this battle as she felt Leela nudge her through the back doors towards the guest house. She laughed but finally gave in after throwing a look over her shoulder.

She made her way across the lawn, the sky had darkened completely by now.

It had been so long since she'd been home, but it felt the same, her mother had not moved a single thing. She lit up the hallway and made her way to the linen cupboard, she grabbed a towel and decided she'd borrow some of her mother's clothes until she gained the courage to challenge Richard for her suitcases.

Entering the bathroom she turned the shower on and waited until it began steaming. Removing her clothing she stepped under the spray. Her mind ran a mile a minute, she always knew during her time away that she'd have to either fight her illicit desires towards Richard or give into the brute and risk the chance of being hurt. There was no doubt in her mind, Richard would be her undoing, it would be toxic and pleasurable but ultimately painful.

The worst part was she felt guilty, not one moment during Richards exhilarating torment, did Imani think of Ben. She felt sick, deep down she knew she had to tell Ben, she could no longer lie to herself, it was selfish.

Wrapping a towel around her body, Imani made her way into the hall where she paused, her bags stood silently by her old bedroom door. She caught his scent as a shiver passed down her spine and the junction between her thighs warmed, she was in trouble, big fucking trouble. Moving on autopilot, she dragged her bags into her room. The light from a parting in the curtains illuminated part of the room, just enough for her vision to keep her from falling.

She opened one of the bags that carried her undergarments and slipped her panties on under her towel, the cold chill in the air had her moving through her smaller suitcase quicker, as she laid it down on the ground after unzipping it. Locating her warm cotton pyjamas she stood up and dropped her towel, she slipped the long sleeved top over her body, and then she heard it. It came from behind her, a small release of air. She knew it was him, knew he was there.

She kept her back to him.

Richard gazed at Imani as she dropped to her knees and filtered through the clothes. He knew he was beyond redemption, he was violating her and he damn well knew it, despite this he could not bring himself to announce his presence. He had no understanding of his own feelings, all he knew was, he owned the small woman in front of him and it would take more than a gold band around her finger to stop him from claiming her.

He knew it would almost kill him, but he would be patient, she was after all finally home. He'd wait for her to come to him, to need him, he felt somewhat pleased knowing she was under his roof.

He watched her silently as she slipped into a small piece of flimsy material. When she stood back up and dropped her towel, he could no longer hold onto his control, without realising it he released a deep breath as the fraction of light soaking the room cast a erotic shadow over her body, crafting against her curvaceous silhouette. Fuck, she was beautiful

He saw her tremble slightly, she knew it was him, he didn't move. "You shouldn't be here," her voice was soft, fragile and yet he could hear the husk in it, he knew if he stood up and moved within her perimeter, he'd smell her arousal. Irregardless of his needs and wants, Richard knew she felt something for him, he felt her body give into him and that wasn't something he'd crafted in that dark mind of his.

"Dinner is ready, Imani. Get dressed and come join us," Richard stood to his full height. He knew he had to be patient with her. Sure, it would be easy to grab the nape of her neck and push her down, fuck it'd be so easy to slip her panties to the side and tease her into giving into him, so easy, but he wanted more. He wanted her to ask for him, to need him, there was something more enticing about hearing her want him. That was the only thing that kept him at bay.

He stepped up behind her and placed his hands on her hips, slowly rubbing his thumbs along her waistline, he pressed a soft gentle kiss on her exposed neck.

Imani was unable to speak, she felt his breath touch the sweet spot of her neck, before she could give into him, he was gone. She felt cold. He brushed past her and left her to her own thoughts, she numbly pulled on her pants and followed behind him.

Richard wasn't one to enter the guest house let alone inform her of dinner being ready. In all the years she'd lived on the brutes premises, not once did they share a meal together. She felt on edge. As she entered the dining room she found Richard sitting at the head of the six seater-table, he seemed to be completely focused on his phone, it gave her time to absorb his form.

He was just as handsome and masculine as she remembered. She trailed her eyes over his broad shoulders, dark hair and those damn brooding irises that hid beneath long lashes. She couldn't help but look at the way his jaw clenched, he was stressed, this time at something other than herself. "Sit down," his deep voice snapped her out of her daze.

She finally noticed the two plates placed on opposite ends of the dining table. Imani obeyed the command.

Leela walked in with the last tray of roasted veggies and sat down. This was just as unfamiliar to her as it was to her daughter.

"Thank you," Richard's expression softened as he spoke to Imani's mother, she was good to him, she was the closest thing he'd known to a mother. "It looks wonderful."

Imani watched her mother eye the man, she knew her mother was just as confused, "is everything okay, Mr. Bassette?" She questioned.

Richard paused, his fork slightly lifted off the plate. "Everything is good. A position has opened up at my office, I think Imani would be fit to apply for it." He spoke in a neutral tone. As if he was talking about the weather.

Imani had no time to refuse, her mother seemed all too pleased with the idea, "I think that would be a great opportunity! Don't you agree, Imani?" She questioned.

No, fuck no. The young woman did not think it would be that great at all. Sure she knew he'd give her a good, well paying job, but the whole purpose of her leaving was to be free of his claim. Despite this she knew she couldn't be ungrateful. Hundreds of applicants applied for him on a monthly basis, he was a very well known man. Imani also could not help but take note of how happy her mother seemed by the idea. "I'll think about it," she mumbled.

The night continued with small bits of chatter here and there, it was clear Richard's intentions were to have her work for him. They finished dinner and Imani helped her mother clear the table and clean the kitchen, Richard disappeared as usual.

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Imani woke to the sound of her phone buzzing next to her, she had promised her mother to head into the city and hand in her application at Richard's company.

It wasn't long before the woman was dressed and walking out the door towards her mother's car, she made a mental note to go car hunting at earliest convenience. She placed the folder with her resume on the seat beside her and started up the car. She followed the GPS's instructions as they led her to the man that had plagued her dreams in an all too consuming manner.

As she parked along the street, she realised just how out of depth she was, the building stood tall against the neighbouring glass towers. Her legs carried her across the road and through large sliding glass doors. Imani was unsure of what she was to do exactly, she decided her first means of action was to find out where Richard's office was located. Stepping up to the long reception desk, she did just that.

They sent her to the top floor, where a much smaller desk stood. She repeated her previous actions.

"I'm sorry, do you have an appointment ?" The man behind the desk questioned, flicking his eyes from the computer screen in front of him to her.

Imani shook her head, "no, but if you could please just try and get hold of him, he is expecting me," she spoke in a rush. The man gave her an apologetic look, so she saved him the trouble, "in that case, please just pass this over to him." She placed the black plastic folder on the desk and turned on her heels.

This was a mistake, an awkward, unplanned or thought out mistake. She needed to get out of there immediately. Pressing the down arrow on the elevator she waited impatiently, watching her heeled foot tapping hastily against the carpeted flooring and regretting all her recent actions.

The doors opened and she finally looked up, her breath caught.

His dark eyes caught hers, "Imani..."

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This has been long over due, I aim to get more chapters up within the next few weeks, ending with about 20-25 chapters. Enjoy x

p.s. I do plan on eventually leaving Wattpad, you can find me on Instagram under the name [**officialjaysarmy**] where I'll continue to update you all on where you can find my stories in the future and on any new endeavours I branch out on. Thank you for all your support. Xx.

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