

HE MADE ME DO IT

K.F. Johnson

Copyright © 2022 by K.F. Johnson

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, organizations, places, events and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

For information contact :

One Ironwoman Publishing
Grayson, GA 30017

Cover Art: North Shore Publishing House Inc.

ISBN : 978-1-954469-11-2

Foreword

TRIGGER WARNING: The content of this book includes scenes of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Prologue

NOVEMBER 2019. The moment Jason regained consciousness, the same toxic venom that landed him where he was, came spewing from his hateful lips again. I watched in silence before the butt of the .38 caliber gun in my hand crashed down on his ever-blabbering mouth.

“It ain’t no fun when the rabbit’s got the gun. Huh?” I quipped.

The crack of his jaw and perfectly straightened teeth crumbling under the blow of my handgun, brought a smile to my glossy lips. He groaned in agony but didn’t scream out as I had expected. Not that it would have mattered. No one else would have heard him anyway.

He spat blood and chipped remnants of his veneers on the floor, and silently turned his glare on me.

“Did you have anything else you wanted to say?” I tittered, cocking my head mockingly. “Or do we have an understanding, yet?”

“You’re crazy.”

“Am I? If I’m not mistaken, *I’m* the one with a restraining order against *you*. Do you think any of this would be happening to you right now, if you would have abided by it? If you would have simply stopped. Stopped stalking me. Stopped calling me. Stopped terrorizing me. All *you* had to do, was *stop*.”

“You weak, mealy mouthed, freak-eyed, slut. You don’t scare

me, and you don't tell me what to do."

"Oh, but I *do*."

He snickered." And what do you think is going to happen when I get out of here? Huh? Do you really think I'm going to let you get away with this? Let you keep me away from my child?"

"When you get out of here?" I smirked.

His expression remained unchanged, but his eyes betrayed a flash of fear as he struggled to break the restraints binding him to the chair.

"Do you remember that time..." I rested the gun atop a box and picked up the thick encyclopedia beside it. "You hit me so hard... I fell over that glass coffee table and broke it?"

"You know what I remember? I remember that I never did anything to you that you didn't ask for, or deserve."

Without warning, I spun around with the heavy book in hand and slammed it against his face with all my might.

THWACK!

Blood shot from his nose and his head jolted painfully to the side. I grinned with pleasure and swung the book once more against his pompous, thick skull. I was disappointed to see him out cold. I wanted him fully awake for the suffrage I had in store.

I leaned down close enough for him to smell the strawberry bubble gum on my breath, had he been conscious. I studied the face of the man I once loved and now hated beyond repair.

"Oh Jason, Sweetheart." I brushed my knuckles gently across his cheek and whispered, "I won't do anything to you that you didn't ask for or deserve."

Chapter 1

"Sometimes I feel like a motherless child..." ~ Unknown

BEFORE

Contrary to how my mother treated me, I never asked to be born. My father missed my birth and everything afterwards, but I respected him more for leaving, than I did her, for sticking around just to torture me. Thank God for my maternal grandmother, Lola, or "Momma" to me. Because despite the murderer I later became, everything decent about me, was instilled because of her.

I was born, Crayola Diane Webber, June 12th, 1983, in Queens, New York. It's a stupid name. I know. But Momma chose it because I was mixed with so many ethnicities, and she thought it encompassed my rainbow heritage. My nineteen-year-old mother didn't care about me or my name.

Sinkoya "Sin" Webber, had big hazel eyes with heart shaped lips and bouncy dark coils that hovered just above the shoulders of her hourglass figure. I never wanted to *be* like her, but I liked it when people said how much we resembled. My freckled face, multicolored eyes and Brillo pad hair texture, didn't exactly scream beautiful, to most people.

Heterochromia, having two different colored eyes, happens

in less than 1% of the population and is more common in animals than people. It's even less common in a mutt like myself who's a smorgasbord of racial DNA. One grayish-blue eye, and the other hazel, just added to the many reasons I was sometimes publicly called, a freak.

Me, Sin, Momma and Uncle Peewee, lived in a three-bedroom, row house just a few blocks walk from the elementary school Momma taught at for more than twenty years. I learned at an early age to keep my distance from Sin, and to be on alert when she was uncharacteristically kind. She typically liked to use me as a punching bag, and insult receptacle, whenever Momma wasn't there to stop her.

The last time I trusted her, I was four years old. She lured me into her spider's web with a cooing tone and a baggie full of chocolates. Momma rarely let me have sweets, so I was an easy target for my twenty-three-year-old egg donor. When she slipped them to me with an index finger pressed to her lips, I happily agreed to stay quiet, and scarfed all but one of those chocolates down in a single sitting.

Uncle Peewee was supposed to be looking after me while Momma was out shopping, but he and his other sixteen-year-old friends were on the stoop shooting the shit instead. The words "Ex-lax" written on the little chocolate morsels didn't mean anything to me. Both because I didn't know what they meant, and because I couldn't read.

Within a half hour, I was vomiting, cramping and crapping until I cried out in agony for Momma from the toilet. When Uncle Peewee finally heard me, he went into a total panic and got a

friend to take us to the hospital. Expectedly, Sin was not one of the “us” that went.

My greediness was rewarded with a stomach pump, an overnight hospital stay, and questions from Momma, doctors, and CPS on where I got the Ex-Lax. I wish I could blame it on the alcohol or drugs it was sometimes rumored Sin took, but I can't. The things she did to me weren't the chemically induced or judgmentally impaired behaviors of someone under the influence. She was just evil.

I don't know where Sin lived after that, but Momma put her out after we were subjected to regular CPS visits for three months while they investigated. Sin started coming back around a couple of months after those visits ended. Momma wasn't coldhearted enough to turn her away when she came to see Uncle Peewee or even to have dinner. Whether by choice, mandate from the courts, or Momma, her interactions with me were minimal from that point on.

With Sin's room vacant, Momma's room downstairs, and Uncle Peewee's in the basement, I basically had the upstairs to myself. I regularly sat atop the stairs with headphones on, listening to music or pretending to while eaves dropping on adult conversations in the living room as I drew. Obscured from view by the wall blocking the top landing, adults usually spoke freely without a clue that I was there.

It was from that spot that I heard Momma and my uncle discussing my mother's recent nuptials, and my new stepdad, who I'd never met. From their conversation, I gleaned that the marriage was as much of a surprise to them, as it was to me, and

Momma and Uncle Peewee disliked her new husband. A lot.

“One of my boys told me they saw her last week at the bodega wit’ a *fat* diamond on her ring finger. I thought it was probably fake, and she was just stuntin’. I paged her, but she never hit me back. At the most, I thought she might be engaged, but I ain’t wanna come tellin’ you no rumors without talkin’ to her first. I swear, I never heard nothin’ about her bein’ married already.”

Momma groaned. “Boy, you know I hate when you talk to me using all that hip hop slang.”

“C’mon, Ma,” he laughed. “You understood what I said didn’t you?”

“That’s not the point. Crayola is learning by your and my example. Lord knows Sinkoya has been a bad enough influence on her as is. I want as little of that street mess tainting my grandbaby, like it did her mother, as possible. When Sinkoya called yesterday and told me she was bringing that hoodlum husband with her, I called Keith.

“Keith says Bamboo’s real name is Clarence Davis, and he did two years upstate for attempted murder. The man’s not only a drug dealer, but he’s got a rap sheet as long as the Brooklyn Bridge. Bamboo,” she huffed. “Multiple drug related arrests including assault and battery on a woman. Apparently, he’s also a suspect in a current case involving some drug related murder of some young boy up in Lefrak. And this... this is the type of man Sinkoya chose to marry.”

Keith was Momma’s police officer *friend*. He was a tall, burly man, who Momma giggled and sat close to in the living room

while I was awake, and made mewling cat noises with in her bedroom when I was supposed to be asleep. He seemed nice enough to me, but in two years, I rarely saw him for more than a few hours at a time, and he was always in uniform. She referred to him as her "friend", but even at twelve years old, I knew he was more than that.

"Murder? I mean, I heard he was some kinda' big time drug dealer in Brooklyn, but..." he didn't finish his sentence.

Momma sighed loudly. "I'll tell you what; If there's a bad penny in the vicinity, you can bet your last, Sinkoya is going to pick it up. That girl is always looking for love in all the wrong places. No matter what I tell her, or what they do to her, she keeps falling in love with these derelicts. Men who poison the community and make it unsafe for the rest of us to live comfortably in this world."

"Ma, you know how Sin is—"

"Sinkoya." Momma corrected sanctimoniously. She hated when anybody used the shortened version of Sinkoya's name. Something about the power of words and her nickname effecting how she behaved. As far as I was concerned, the name Sin fit that heifer's character perfectly, but I never called her that in front of Momma. It wasn't worth the lecture.

"Aiiight, Ma. Anyway, you know all she cares about is how she looks and what people can do for her. Long as they keep her laced in Fendi, and Gucci, and truck jewelry, she don't care how they get it. Just as long as they spendin' it on her. She don't listen to you. She don't listen to me. She don't listen to nobody. So, I don't even try to tell her no more. She gon' live how she wanna.

“Now, I don’t know for sure, but they also sayin’ she might be pregnant.”

“Pregnant!” Momma blew a gasket.

“Maybe that’s what the shotgun wedding’s about.”

The pause afterwards was as pregnant as Sin probably was before Momma spoke again. I scoot down a step and craned my neck to peek past the wall. Momma’s cheeks and forehead were growing rosy and her teeth were clinched in anger.

“God forbid. That must be why she was so adamant about bringing that man to my house to talk to me today. Pregnant. Lord knows she doesn’t need to bring another child into this world to abandon.”

“Yeah. She ain’t ready for no kids. Man, I heard he already got three or four out here,” Uncle Peewee tattled more.

“You sure hear a lot for somebody who wasn’t saying anything to me when you heard it,” Momma’s head cocked with aggravation. “Have you heard anything *else* that she might be coming over here to share?”

“No,” he mumbled. “I ain’t want to be spreadin’ rumors I didn’t know for a fact were true. How was I supposed to know that of all the drug dealers Sinkoya’s ran through, that she was gonna turn round and marry *this nigga*?”

Momma’s frown deepened and Uncle Peewee realized his error.

“My bad Ma. Sorry. Sorry,” he apologized for his grammar and stepped back a pace. Momma sucked her teeth and crossed her arms. “I don’t know if any of it is true. I’m just telling you what *could be* true. I hope she’s not.” He cleaned up his syntax a

little. "Are they supposed to be on their way?"

"Supposedly. I'm not holding my breath that she'll be here on time. Are you going to stick around for the freak show?"

Unexpectedly, Momma glanced in my direction, and I almost got whiplash trying to jerk back, out of sight. If she saw me, I feared I was going to feel more on me than Momma's eyes. She warned me against eavesdropping countless times before, and here I was doing it again.

I released the breath I was holding when my uncle began talking, and to my relief, Momma's frustrated face did not appear at the bottom of the stairs. I heard my uncle jingling keys in his pocket, as he often did out of nervousness.

"I sorta' already have plans to see somebody and some business to handle. I don't know if me being here is a good idea anyway. Me and dude get along."

"Business to handle?" she asked sarcastically. "What business are you handling on a Saturday?"

"My, business," he laughed.

"You just make sure that you wrap it up while you're handling *your* business. None of my kids are ready to be a parent yet. And I doubt that any of these hoochies you keep spending your time with are worthy of being my daughter in-law."

My uncle was a lady's man and a chronic gambler, but he was a city bus driver and kept his nose out of trouble, other than hanging with his corner-boy friends. Momma would've put him out faster than the week's trash if she found out differently.

"Aiiight Momma," he said, quickly showing up at the bottom of the stairs as he headed to the door. Glancing up, he spotted

me jerking away from the wall, bug-eyed and busted. The front door was wide open, but the screen door was shut.

He mouthed, "Nosey," and then said aloud, "I'll be back Pipsqueak. Momma, hit me on my pager if you need me."

Momma appeared looking up at me as Uncle Peewee let the screen door close behind him.

"What are you doing?"

"Drawing," I answered timidly.

She stared at me for a beat longer than necessary, before heading down the hall towards her bedroom. I exhaled and swallowed the lump in my throat in relief. Glad she didn't question me further. With nothing better to do, I actually did sketch a picture of a little girl I imagined, on the swings at the park.

By the time Sin and her hubby arrived, Momma was in the kitchen cooking and I was in the recliner watching "That's So Raven" on the television. Momma told me not to move, and went to the door herself. She offered them a cool welcome, and Sin paid that energy forward to me.

"Crayola," she sneered.

"Hi," I answered dryly, not taking my eyes off the show.

"This is Bamboo. He's my new husband." She flashed her ring, which I saw, but did not acknowledge. "Did you hear me?"

"Yes."

"I'm cooking," Momma said moving past them toward the kitchen.

"Baby, have a seat. I'm gonna go help Momma."

She departed on Momma's heels with my eyes rolling at her

back. From what I knew, Sin couldn't cook to save her life and Momma required her sous chef assistance when she was around. The massive tall and wide man with a bottom row of gold teeth made me extremely uncomfortable. Bamboo leaned back in the adjacent loveseat and twirled a toothpick at the corner of his mouth, leering at me while massaging his full beard.

"So, Crayola. Your momma said you like to draw. With a name like that, you must like to color too, eh?" he amused himself." She said your birthday's next week. How old you turnin'?"

"Thirteen," I answered in a monotone, resenting his referencing my egg donor as my momma.

"Thirteen? Hmph. With a body like that? You must have all the little boys sniffin' 'round behind you. Your momma taught you how to turn them big titties on a small frame into a profit yet?"

Cringing, I conspicuously folded my arms across my burgeoning breasts. He was looking at me the way nasty boys on the block who tried to cop feels on me, did. Puberty sprung on me at ten, and my womanly curves were coming in at hyper speed. I hated it. I liked being a kid and was in no rush to grow up.

"*Ohhh*. You still innocent huh?" he nodded, licking his lips like he was confirming something to himself. "I like that. Good girls deserve good things. Earrings, bracelets, necklaces, money. You see all those jewels your momma got on? I bought those for her, and I could buy those for you too. You like jewelry?"

“I guess.”

“You guess? What you like? Toys? Like, Nintendos and dolls and shit? I could get those for you too. Would you like that?” his snakelike tongue licked his bottom lip as his eyes gradually drank me in. “We livin’ real good in Brooklyn. You should come live with us. Would you like that?”

My eyes darted towards the kitchen where Momma blasted Al Green too loud to hear us. I could see Sin verbally begging for something as Momma’s head shook sideways while chopping an onion. They’d left me alone with a predator.

“Hey! You hear me talking to you?”

Startled, the beads on the ends of my cornrowed braids clacked as I pressed deeper into the cushions of the armchair. Still, I wasn’t about to pretend like I wanted to live with them.

“No. I don’t want to live with you and Sinkoya. I want to live with my momma.”

“Your momma? Ain’t Sin your momma?”

“My grandma is my momma,” I replied defiantly.

“Oh yeah? Well, *I’m* your daddy, now.”

I swallowed the lump in my throat and shifted uncomfortably as he stared at me, staring back at him.

“Come on, Baby. Let’s go. She ain’t gonna do it,” Sin stormed in with Momma in tow.

“You do that. If you want to run around here with this drug dealer, you keep your ass on the outside of my house and let *him* support you.”

“It’s my money, Momma! And you don’t know my husband to talk about him like that. I don’t know what Peewee told you,

but he works in construction,” she swiveled her neck, facing Momma.

“Construction my ass. That man ain’t working no damn construction.” *Ooooh* I knew Momma was mad when she started using slang. As a schoolteacher, she hated when we didn’t use proper English and Sin was famous for it. When Momma was mad though, her hood grammar catalogue opened right on up. “Shut the hell up, lying to my face Sinkoya. No matter what you say, I saved that money for you to go to college. *You* chose not to go. It was never your money, because I never gave it to you.”

“But you saved it for me. I’m still your daughter. I’m your only daughter. You so worried about Cray all the time,” she pointed at me. “You forgot I existed? That’s *my* daughter anyway.”

“You have never acted like it Sinkoya. I’m raising her for a reason. If you weren’t so selfish, you would appreciate that. And stop calling that child Cray! You know she hates it.”

“Why is everything I do always wrong Momma? You care so much about her, but what about me? I made one mistake and you never let me forget it. You ain’t even congratulate me on my marriage.”

Momma placed one hand on her hip and gave Bamboo a once over before looking back to Sin.

“Congratulations,” she uttered dryly.

“Let’s go Sin. Don’t never let nobody make you beg. Not even your momma,” he twirled the toothpick in his mouth disdainfully.

“Take your husband and go then.”

“That’s how you feel?” Sin actually looked hurt.

Momma pursed her lips and through the dishrag in her hands over her shoulder.

“Don’t worry, Baby. She’ll be sorry,” Bamboo snarled shoving the coffee table and standing up.

Momma’s eyes bucked, but she didn’t reply. Sin wiped her eyes and looked at me, then back to Momma.

“You know what Momma? Now that I’m married, you don’t need to keep Cray for me. Me and my *husband* can take care of *my* daughter. We got enough room for her to come live with us. Don’t we Baby?”

“Hell yeah.”

“Over my dead body,” Momma balked. “You and this negro don’t know anything about raising a child.”

“Well, whose fault is that? You made me have her, when I didn’t want to, and then took over as soon as she was born. So, what did you expect?”

“If you were grown enough to make a baby, you should have been grown enough to mother one. But I knew my child, and you weren’t fit to raise a sunflower from a seed, let alone a child. So, I did what any mother, and grandmother, should do. I took over.

“Now I hear you’re pregnant with another one and that your husband has a herd of babies in Brooklyn he’s not taking care of already. I hope y’all are planning to do better by this one”

“Yoooo! Sin, get your mom before I make this bitch eat her words, talkin’ ‘bout my kids.”

Sin stopped his momentum towards Momma and stood

between them. Momma stood stoically. Unintimidated. I, however, was about to cry. That big ass gorilla might not have scared her, but he scared me.

“You and Bimbo can go now.”

“Bimbo,” Bamboo laughed satirically. “*You* know that’s not my name, Old Woman. Your mom got jokes, Sin. She better hope, I keep laughin’, before I make *her*, start cryin’.”

“Can you not disrespect my husband, Momma?”

“I don’t think you can afford any more legal trouble Clarence.”

He raised a confused brow.

“Keith says you have quite an extensive rap sheet.”

“Who the fuck is Keith?” he frowned at Sin.

“Nobody. My mother’s boyfriend.”

“Fiancé. My police officer, fiancé,” Momma corrected.

Sin grabbed Bamboo’s hand and led him to the front door. It was already open, but the screen was closed. He went reluctantly. His glare fixated on Momma’s face. He mouthed something to her, but I couldn’t read his lips. Momma exhaled a breath and faced me.

“What did he say?”

“Nothing for you to worry about.”

“I don’t like him.”

“Me neither Baby. Not one bit,” she agreed.” Go ahead outside and play. Dinner should be ready in about thirty minutes.”

I hated to leave the airconditioned comforts of my home, on one of the hottest days of the summer, but when Momma said to

go outside, that's what she meant for me to do. She went back in the kitchen, cranking the music louder, and I went upstairs to get my sketch pad.

Pencil and pad in hand, I sat on the stoop and looked both ways up the block for inspiration. My best friend Ananda was at a play with her parents, which is why I wasn't hanging with her in the first place. The door to Ms. Pearl's house across the street opened, and out walked Java, my boyfriend in my head. I say that because one, he never asked me. And two, I wasn't allowed to have a boyfriend, even if he had.

He was unlike any other fifteen-year-old boy I knew. He read books instead of dribbling a ball or riding bikes like the others. He was an artist like me. Except he played the drums instead of drawing. We bonded over our unique names and the butterflies that fluttered in my stomach whenever he was around.

Java moved with his grandma three months earlier after his mother died and his dad was deployed. We kissed once. Me and my boyfriend in my head. But that was a week ago, out of sight of prying eyes during our annual block party. We hadn't spoken since, and now that he was walking over, I felt awkward.

"Hey, Ola" he trotted through the gate with a smile.

I pretended to be too engulfed in the picture I just started drawing to acknowledge him. What else was I supposed to do? Ananda said I should never be too easy for boys, and this one had iggered me for a week.

"What you drawing?" he asked sitting beside me.

"Like you care."

He rubbed a hand through his curly hair and placed it on mine to stop my pencil from moving. I shot him a scathing look and he removed his hand.

“I’m sorry. Okay? I was going through something an—”

“Yooo young boy. You sittin’ mighty close to my niece,” Uncle Peewee warned playfully as he entered the yard.

A spliff dangling from his lips, his hooded eyes bouncing between Java and I. He leaned nonchalantly on the railing and let us marinate in the uncomfortable silence.

“What’s up Peewee?”

“What’s up? You tell me what’s up. You’re what... fifteen? You know my niece is only twelve, right?”

“I’m about to be thirteen next week, Uncle Peewee,” I whined, embarrassed.

Uncle Peewee, whose birth name was Pete, was easy-going and usually smiling, but he was very protective of me. Whenever he wasn’t hanging with his boys, flanking a pretty female or on the corner gambling, he was spending time with me. He was my first friend and only person who told me he loved me every day.

“Y’all ain’t having sex are you?”

“Ewww!” I could’ve died.” Uncle Peewee! *Stooooop!*”

Java was fidgety, but otherwise calm. Not that he struck me as a punk or anything, but he wasn’t a tough guy either.

“Nah, it’s not like that. I’m... I’mma head back across the street,” Java pointed a thumb as he rose.

“Yeah. You do that,” my uncle inhaled the smoke, then blew out in the air.

“I’ll see you later,” Java told me, moseying back across the

street with the teenage swagger I liked about him.

“You really like that guy huh?”

“*Yees*,” I continued grousing. “Why are you trying to embarrass me?”

He chuckled. “I’m not making it easy for any of these little niggas to get with my niece. I don’t care if you like them or not.”

I rolled my eyes.

“So, how you like your new stepdaddy?”

I pursed my lips, knowing he was trying to be funny.

“That much huh?” he laughed, and sat beside me, nudging me until I joined in.

“He asked me if I wanted to come live with them.”

“What? Momma doesn’t even like you alone with Sin. She must be selling him lies about the kind of relationship y’all have.”

“I don’t know, but I don’t like him. He’s mean and creepy. He was saying stuff that he shouldn’t be saying to a little girl,” I shivered at the thought.

“Stuff like what?”

“Just... that he knows the boys are probably sniffing around me,” I said, too mortified to say more.

He took a drag and blew out a circle of smoke. Then looked at me concernedly.

“Stay away from his ass then. Always trust your intuition. God gave women that shit for a reason. As long as I’m alive, I’m always going to protect you, but if you *feel* danger... listen to it. You understand me Pip Squeak?” he leaned in, placing his forehead to mine. “I got your back.”

I smiled and he pulled away, ruffling my already messy hair. His pager buzzed in his pocket and a devious grin covered his face when he saw the number. I knew it was a girl.

“How much longer till dinner’s ready?”

I shrugged.

“What’s she making?”

“Curry chicken, I think.”

“Oh, hell yeah,” he rubbed his belly through the long green T-shirt that hung down to his knees as he stood and took another puff. Momma would skin him alive if she saw him smoking weed in front of me.” Aaight Pip Squeak. I’m gonna go handle some grown folk’s business with Jamila. Tell Momma I’ll be back for dinner in a little while.”

Jamila was his latest conquest. I hadn’t met her, but he talked about her a lot. She lived somewhere in the neighborhood, but not on our block.

He flicked my beads and chuckled as I swat at his hand.

“Quit it!”

He playfully mushed the side of my head and jogged down the walk before I could hit him again.

“Big baby!” he quipped.

“Your momma,” I stuck my tongue out.

“I’mma tell her you said that too,” he laughed walking backwards towards the park a few paces before turning around.

Refocusing on my sketchpad, I looked at the meaningless squiggles I drew to avoid eye contact with Java and flipped the page. Since he was on my mind, I decided to draw him. As I was developing the outline of his handsome face when the familiar

clap of gunshots rang out.

I sprang up, ready to dash in the house, but the glimpse of a man staggering into the street in my peripheral caught my attention. Squinting in that direction, my heart dropped the moment I realized who it was.

“Momma! Uncle Peewee’s hurt!” I hollered, dropping everything, leaping off the stoop and sprinting towards him.

The block became an instant ghost town as his lone figure lumbered down the pavement with a bloodied hand clutching his chest. I shook my head in disbelief as I reached him, not wanting to believe my own eyes.

“Uncle Peewee,” I squeaked. Afraid to touch him.

Snot and tears combined, I looked back towards the house, hoping to see Momma bursting from the door and racing to save the day. His grip on my shoulder startled my attention back to his quickly blanching face. A loud wheezing sound struggled from his throat. A single tear falling from the corner of his eye.

“I...” he gasped. “I think they... I think they killed me.”

And with those last words, his body dropped beside me like a sack of potatoes.

The sound of his head cracking on impact with the pavement was equally as jarring as the sight of it. The back of his green shirt, soaked in dark crimson seeping from two separate wounds, now clearly visible to me.

Hands cowering against my temples in disbelief, I fixated on his contorted face melding now with the ground. A chipped piece of tooth lay like a grain of snow in the pooling blood around him. This couldn’t be real. This couldn’t be happening. I

squeezed my eyes shut and vigorously shook my head, denying this twisted reality while muttering lowly, "No. No. No. No. No."

My young soul had never seen anything so horrific before.

Unfortunately, there would be more to come.

Enjoyed This Subscriber Special?

**Tell a friend & pick up one of these other releases
by K.F. Johnson**

[BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: LOVE HURTS](#)

[LIAR'S BALL: BEHIND CLOSED DOORS 2](#)

[WHEN I'M BAD I'M BETTER](#)

[WHEN I'M BAD I'M BETTER 2](#)

[WHAT I'D DO FOR LOVE](#)

[WHAT I'D DO FOR LOVE 2](#)

[STABBED THIS CHRISTMAS: A NOVELLA](#)

[LOVE HURTS: BEHIND CLOSED DOORS SERIES COMPILATION](#)

[WHEN I'M BAD I'M BETTER FOREVER: SERIES COMPILATION](#)

**Subscribe to become a part of the EMPRESS'S EMPIRE mailing
list for exclusive access to new content!**

<https://www.kfjohnsonbooks.com>

Networks:

www.twitter.com/KFJohnsonbooks

www.instagram.com/authorkfjohnson

www.facebook.com/KFJohnsonAuthor

About the Author

“The Empress of romantic, murder, suspense”, K.F. Johnson is a Queens, New York native residing in Atlanta, Georgia. As a child, habitually failing to make curfew before the streetlights lit, earned her numerous occasions on restriction where reading & writing became her main form of escape. Later, K.F continued to develop her talent while obtaining a B.A. in Psychology at Spelman College & acquiring an MBA. In 2012, she published her 1st book for her social media friends & family to see. To her delight, it went viral, repeatedly reaching #1 on Amazon's top 100 for its genre. Since then, K.F. has published multiple books, started One Ironwoman Publishing, been featured in magazines & nominated for numerous awards, both for her books & as an author. With her fan base cheering for more, this mother & wife has blossomed into a witty & cunning author, penning spicy, realistic & deadly tales of African American life to remember.