**DYING TO BE LOVED**

*“There’s a voice that cries out in the silence, searching for a heart that will love him…” -Forever Jones*

**Prologue**

“Lord, I come to you today in hope of receiving a listening ear. I want to thank you for your mercy, your grace, your favor and loving kindness. I want to say thank you for keeping me under your wings and showering me with all the blessings that you have seen fit for my life and circumstances. I promise to continue to be thankful, loyal and faithful to you Lord. I will continue to listen to your voice as you guide me daily. Lord please continue to guide me, as I know that my journey is not over but just beginning. Lord, as you may already know, I am not here to ask you for material possessions, as such things come and go. Today, I’m asking for your help in making my foundation stronger. I’ve surpassed so many hurdles, and I’ve accomplished goals that I couldn’t have imagined I would.

However today, I feel that my foundation is weak and I’m looking forward to making it a solid one with your help, Lord. At this point, I don’t know what I’m doing wrong because I work hard daily. Every day, I try to work on myself in areas of parenting, career, goal setting, finances and forgiveness, and even love. I know that you are thinking, *Love?* But yes, love. I’m willing to try this again because I’m ready. Yes Lord, maybe that’s it—love. I’m going to try it again…. Amen.”

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“Hey man, I mean God. Or Heavenly father whatever they call you. As you know, I don’t do this often. I’m here today because my mother won her bet for me to come to church with her. I said that I would come on Tuesday, not thinking that there was actually going to be a prayer service on a Tuesday. Go figure! Well, she got me and she’s kneeling right here next to me, watching me pray. I know this may be funny, right, because I’m supposed to be praying, but I don’t even know where to start. There’s a lot going on in my life right now and I just wanna ask you—why me? I did everything right. I graduated from high school and college and I even got a good job right afterwards. So, why me? Why did everything have to come crashing down for no reason. First, I lost my job and then my house and I have five kids to take care of. I’ve never admitted this to anyone, but I’m struggling. Struggling to make it, struggling to provide, and struggling to hold on to all the things that make me a man.

My mom keeps saying that things will get better and that I just need to pray about it. I have kids to take care of and this isn’t helping. Man you know what, I’m just ready to give up. But I can’t! So lord if you can hear me please help me. Yeah, that’s right please help me.”

*“Father can you hear me, we need your love today.*

*I know that you are listening, you hear me everyday*

*Father please hear us……..and we will be okay”*

*Father we need you to heal families today”*

**Kyndal**

“Honey, I’m dying and I only have five months to live,” were the words Michael chose to tell me that he was dying.

The memories of that night still give me nightmares. I find myself waking up in cold sweats, reaching for him, only to find no one there. My friends say that I just need to get over it. But how do you get over the love of your life? He was everything I ever wanted in a husband—rich, successful, well groomed, smart and connected. Not to mention the fact that he absolutely adored me.

When I first met Michael, I was immediately attracted to his charm and his affluent lifestyle. He was a successful doctor who appeared much younger than his 44 years. Aside from the huge age gap, my family and friends loved him. Still, 18 years had never stood in my way before. At the age of 26, I knew what I wanted and I wanted to live the good life. I was always told that the more aged the wine the finer it was. That is exactly what Michael was, my fine wine.

On our first date, Michael told me that he was going to finally start living his dreams. He said that I was his dream girl and that he wanted to make sure that I always had whatever I wanted, no matter the cost. We experienced many “first times” together. We travelled the world within the first six months of us dating. Six months later, we were engaged to be married. We were in love.

I just knew that, in Michael, God had finally answered my prayers for a dream husband. However, six weeks before the wedding, he dropped a huge bomb on me.

There I was, standing in front of the mirror with my beautiful wedding dress that we’d spent over $10,000 on. It had just arrived from Paris and I wanted to see myself in it one last time before the wedding. My mother said that she was on her way over to help me with it.

I wasn’t expecting Michael to come home from his appointments until later that evening. So when he walked into our bedroom I was totally surprised.

“Michael, what are you doing here?” I questioned, frantically trying to stuff the dress in the closet so that he would not see it and ruin my surprise on the big day.

He glanced at the dress still in my hands, noting how beautiful it was. Then, with a serious expression on his face, he announced that he had something to tell me.

 That was when he told me that he was dying of cancer and was in his last stages. At first, I was in complete shock and denial. I never saw the signs. How could he be dying? He looked fine. He was on a few meds, but I didn’t think it was anything major. We had been having so much fun in the past months, mostly travelling, so he couldn’t have been seeing a doctor regularly.

For the last two months of his life, I didn’t want to do anything with him because I couldn’t fathom the thought of me losing everything that we shared.

“How could he do this to me?” I would ask myself repeatedly, even after he passed away.

I couldn’t stop thinking about him and all the memorable moments we shared. I would never stop thinking about him.

“Kyndal, Kyndal!” my mom yelled as she pushed my bedroom door open.

“I’ve been calling your name for the last ten minutes. What are you doing in here?”

Before I could respond, she looked down at the photo of Michael and me in Paris that I was holding.

She shook her head and I slid the picture into the last bag I was carrying to the car.

“Mom, can you give me a few more minutes?”

“Baby, the longer you hold on, the harder it will be to let go,” she said, as she turned to leave. “We’ll be waiting for you in the truck. Everything is packed and ready to go, Kyndal. We’re just waiting on you.”

“Okay mom, I’ll be right down,” I said.

It was hard to believe that I was losing everything I had come to love during the last two years so quickly.

Our mansion was repossessed by the bank, as Michael had taken out a reverse mortgage and I could not afford to pay the outstanding $200,000 in order to keep it. Now I was being forced to move on with my life with almost nothing.

I took one last look at the huge empty bedroom that contained so many good memories before closing the door.

I walked as slowly as I could down the spiral staircase leading to the front door, trying to savor the good memories our home held—all the wonderful parties, dinners, love making and pure fun. When I finally reached the bottom, I didn’t want to look back, so instead, I looked up and said “Michael please walk with me. I really need you.”

**Kent**

These last five months have been pure hell. First, I lost my job and then I find out that I have two babies on the way. What the hell could I have done to someone to deserve this? I know that I haven’t always lived a good life, but how was I to know that being young and having fun would catch up with me like this?

Fuck’n women! They’ve always been my biggest addiction. They come so easily, I just can’t seem to resist them. My Pops tried to warn me, but that obviously didn’t do me any good. Hell, he was the reason I loved women so much.

When I was younger, he would bring pretty women around all the time. My Pops is what many may call a player. He has always been smooth with the ladies. There was never a time that I can remember that he had only one woman. He said that he had what he liked to call a ‘90 day love contract’, which stipulated that, after 90 days of fun and unrestricted sex, he could either take it to the next level with the woman in question or leave her. During my childhood, he mostly chose to leave them. I vowed that I would never be like him, but over the last two years, I’ve noticed that his ways are slowly becoming mine.

I’ve always tried hard to please the woman I was with, but after being with so many that were either confused or just plain dumb, I realized that all they really wanted was somebody to come and lay down next to them at night, and I was happy to be that man.

I’ve been told on many occasions that I am extremely handsome. But I don’t let that get to me. I really don’t have to do much to capture their attention. I’m not much of a talker or charmer. I just say ‘hello’ and smile, and they’re hooked. This damn smile has gotten me into beds of many single and married women, which inevitably lead to too much trouble—including the loss of my job.

I’d been at my job for two years without sleeping with any of my female colleagues because I vowed not to mix business with pleasure. Still, she got to me. After two months of constantly trying to ignore my supervisor’s flirting and sexual advances, I finally gave in. Stacey was the aggressive type. She knew what she wanted and did whatever was necessary to make it happen. At least, that was how she was with me. And I always loved women that knew how to take control. Her being my boss didn’t really bother me, as I felt that it was a win-win situation. In my view, she would get all the sex she wanted from me and I would eventually be promoted to a higher position.

Everything was going fine for the three months I’d been sexing her after work. She was happy with the ‘no strings attached’ theory. I never called her to have casual conversation nor stayed over at her place after our sex-capades. She was just a fuck! Who knew that she was telling other female employees about our sex life? I just figured that the other ladies were just as attracted to me as she had been. So about two weeks ago, I started sleeping with Krystal. Krystal was more of my type anyway. From the first time we went out, I knew that she wanted me in her bed, and I obliged, of course. It wasn’t until I saw her laughing with another co-worker and Stacey that I sensed that something was up.

See that’s the problem with women. They need to learn to keep they damn mouth shut! Always gotta brag to their girlfriends about what they got or what they’re getting. Then their friends want exactly the same thing she’s getting. And I do mean exactly.

Apparently, Krystal told another employee that I was amazing in bed and Stacey walked in on the tail end of the conversation. Krystal told Stacey that we went to dinner and afterwards I stayed the night at her place. Stacey was pissed and later confronted me about it. She didn’t seem to be upset that I had slept with Krystal; she was more upset that I had taken her to dinner and stayed the night with her.

I used the little charm I had to win her over and agreed to spend the upcoming weekend with her. However, something came up and I couldn’t make good on my promise. She got really upset and started demanding that I commit to her or else. Of course, I ignored her threats, and now I’m pissed off. She got so mad that I didn’t want to take our relationship to the next level and got me fired.

Now, here I am, 30 years old with three kids and two on the way, with four different women and no job. Where do I go from here?

**Kyndal**

When we first pulled up to my new condo, I almost wanted to cry. There was nothing luxurious about this place. No gates, guards or gardens. Instead, there was a chain grocery store across the street and cement yards, and it appeared that the neighbors parked their vehicles in front of their homes instead of using the one-car attached garage.

I couldn’t believe this is what they called a brownstone. This place looked nothing like the pictures I’d seen in the brochure that my sister had given me. She advised me that it was a “nice and cozy neighborhood”, but this was a mess. I really felt that I was taking two steps back instead of moving forward.

“Walk with me Michael,” I screamed before opening the door. “This is all your fault.”

My mom must have felt my pain because she immediately walked up behind me and patted my back to soothe me. “I’m here for you, baby. Just relax.”

As I walked around the 1200 square foot townhome, I realized that it wasn’t so bad. The painters had actually done an excellent job with the color scheme. I loved my natural brown and red tints that covered the living and dining room walls. The kitchen had been completely remodeled with nice laminate countertops, because I couldn’t afford granite. The master bedroom was small compared to at the one I had at the mansion, but I liked the sky blue paint color and the crown molding.

My mom could tell that I was a little happier, so she signaled for my brothers to start unloading the truck. I decided that I wouldn’t fight it because I had nowhere else to go. I’d purchased this place with the very last of my savings without even looking at it.

My sister was a real estate agent so she told me it was a good deal since these townhomes were less than 10 years old and selling for $15,000 cash. I trusted my sister to handle it because I just didn’t want to deal with anything after Michael’s death. My family had since been taking care of all my responsibilities including my son, Noah.

“Noah?” I yelled. “Mom where’s Noah?”

“Honey, you know that Noah left yesterday to stay with his grandmother for a few weeks. Please, don’t tell me that you don’t remember that conversation about him going to be with her while you spent some time getting used to your new place.”

“Mom, I don’t remember that conversation. I wouldn’t have let Noah go, knowing that I would have to be in this new place all alone,” I responded sadly.

“Kyndal, please don’t start with the crying again. You really need to get your emotions in check, stop daydreaming and come back to reality. I’m going to be staying here with you for a few days, but you need to get used to the fact that you’re going to be alone for a while.”

I just stood there, looking at my mom. Had she lost her mind? She had some nerve talking to me like this. I was the one who just lost her fiancé. I was the one who was broke and had to revert to living in common places again. I was the one who had all my dreams stolen away from me nine months ago. Still angry, I decided it was best that I just walk away from her while I had the chance.

“Kyndal you know that I love you, but you have got to get a hold of yourself. It’s been nine months. You’ve lost a lot, but you’re going to lose your job and your son if you don’t pull it together. Here’s the number to a doctor friend of mine that will help you through these hard times. I told her you would give her a call on Monday at noon. Please use it,” she said as she walked out of the bedroom.

Yes, she has really lost it. I can’t believe that she thinks I need to speak with a therapist. There is nothing wrong with me. I’m just a little down in spirit, which is to be expected after you lose someone you love. Well I don’t care what people think of me, I know that I don’t need to speak to a therapist about anything.

I walked over to the master bath, which I found was quite small. I was even more disappointed to see that it had a shower instead of a nice Jacuzzi tub. Now, that was all the therapy I needed—a glass of wine and bubble bath. But, I guess, I would just have to deal with it for now. I grabbed a piece of toilet paper to wrap the card in and threw it in the trash.

“I’m not calling anyone,” I said to myself as I closed the bathroom door. “She’s the one that’s losing it.”

For the remainder of the evening, I decided that it was best that I stayed as a far away from my mom as possible, to avoid any arguments so I stayed in my room.

Ring. Ring. Ring. I looked down at my phone and didn’t know if I should answer or let it ring. It was my best friend Gabrielle. She had been calling me for days, but I just didn’t feel like talking to anyone.

“Hello,” I finally made up my mind and answered.

“Hey girl! What’s been going on with you? I’ve been calling you like crazy,” she asked.

“I know, I’ve just been busy,” I replied.

“Busy my ass,” she replied. “You haven’t been to work in six months. Hell you haven’t even been out of the house in six months.”

“I know, I just—”

“You’ve just lost your damn mind,” she interrupted. “Girl, I’m on my way to come get you and take you out for lunch,”

“Umm I can’t go to lunch,” I replied.

“Well you are going today. I want to see your new place anyway,” she demanded.

“It’s not quite ready for visitors yet. That’s why I can’t go to lunch with you today. I have to get the house ready.”

“Whatever, I already called mama and she told me that she has been unpacking all your things and doing everything else for you so you can save all the bull, Kyndal. I’m on my way, so you’d better be ready when I get there,” she said before hanging up without waiting for my response.

Damn! I didn’t feel like going anywhere, but I knew that Gabrielle wasn’t going to let me stay in the house any longer once she got here.

Gabrielle was the kind of friend that didn’t take no for an answer. She wouldn’t allow you to “rot” by yourself, as she liked to call it. She was always there to listen to anyone’s problems, even if it meant that your problem would be the highlight of her gossip session with her friends later that day. I knew that she was a trip, but I loved her like a sister anyway. She had been a part of my family for over 10 years and I really couldn’t imagine my life without her. However, these last few months had been rough and I didn’t want to talk to anyone, including her.

When Gabrielle arrived, I think my mom was happier to see her than I was. My mom loved Gabrielle.

“Kyndal,” my mom called upstairs, “Gabby’s here.”

Before I could respond, I could hear her coming upstairs.

“Ooh girl, I love this place!” she exclaimed excitedly before giving me a hug. “I’ve missed you.”

“I’ve missed you too,” I responded while hugging her back.

“Well you look good, Ms. Beautiful,” she said while flipping through my hair.

“Well you know that I have to keep myself beautiful on the outside, honey,” I said as we laughed.

It felt good to laugh. It was at that moment that I was genuinely happy to see my friend.

We finally left the house and headed to J. Alexander’s for lunch. This was our favorite spot, even though it was located outside the city. During lunch, we caught up on the events that had taken place in each of our lives over the past few months. Gabrielle told me a little of everyone’s gossip, including her own.

She had been seeing this guy named Benjamin for about two years now. She felt that they needed to take their relationship to the next level; however, it appeared that he was not ready to commit to her so soon.
As I listened to her, I found it very strange that, although they have been dating for two years now, I had yet to meet him. I also didn’t like the fact that she sounded more sad than happy when she talked about her new love. Still, I loved her dearly, and as long as she said that she was happy, I was happy for her.

Once we finished lunch, we decided to do a little shopping. Now I always loved to shop, but since my funds were now restricted, I no longer enjoyed going into the stores as much as I had before. However, Gabrielle was on a spending spree. She grabbed a pair of BCBG pumps and a bag to match at Macy’s. She also bought a gorgeous pair of gray Nine West pumps at Neiman’s, which she gave to me.

“Girl, I wish I could spend money like this again,” I said upon leaving the store.

“Oh you will have it all back in no time,” she responded. “You just have to get back out there and do it like you did before Michael. Girl, you know that you’re easy on the eyes,” she concluded and we both laughed while getting into her car.

I loved Gabby and I just hoped that she was right about me getting my life back sooner than later.

Later that evening, when I returned home, I decided that it was time to talk to my mom about why she felt that I needed to speak with a therapist. Although I was still a little annoyed that she even brought this whole therapist thing up, I knew that she had to have a reason for feeling this way.

“Hey Ma,” I said as I slid next to her.

“Hey baby,” she replied as she covered my legs with her blanket.

“Why did you give me that card to call your ‘doctor friend’ yesterday?” I asked.

“Well Kyndal, you should know that I love you and I want nothing but the best for you. However, lately, I’ve been worried about the way you’ve been dealing with Michael’s death. It’s as if, when he died, he took a part of you with him. I’m scared that you are really losing yourself. My dear, you may not know it but, you are depressed.”

“I’m not depressed mom. I’m just sad,” I responded with tears in my eyes.

“Baby I’m your mother. You can trust and believe that I know what you are. I know the beautiful, loving, kind and smart child that I birthed and this ain’t like her. You are depressed. And I’m scared that you may be on the verge of a mental breakdown if you don’t speak with someone soon.”

“Now mom, how can you say that?” I asked before getting up from the couch.

“I’m not saying this to hurt you. I am only trying to make you realize that you really do need help, Kyndal.”

“I don’t need help mom. And I think you’re the one that’s going crazy,” I replied. “I’m done talking to you,” I shouted as I ran upstairs to my room.

A few minutes later I heard my mom knock on my door. I didn’t open it.

“Kyndal, I love you and I know what’s best for you. Your mind is really fragile right now and I don’t want to lose you to this thing you’re going through right now. Don’t you remember the vibrant person you were before Michael? Don’t you remember the girl that was “about her money and business”? Don’t you remember the kind of mother you used to be to your son? Don’t you remember the friend you were to all your friends? It’s as if you’re losing everything because of this man’s death. That’s just not right and I won’t let it happen to you. So, dammit, you need to wake the hell up because you ain’t lost nothing that you didn’t already have. If God felt that you two were meant to be then it would be done. But it’s not, so you need to move on. So if you don’t call Dr. Anderson tomorrow, I will have her come over here to see you personally. I love you Kyndal. Good night.”

I almost couldn’t believe that my mother felt that way. What hurt me the most was the realization that there was a little truth behind what she had said. I had been neglecting family, friends and work, but most importantly, my son.

I remained in bed for the rest of the night, crying and thinking about what my mom had said to me. I figured that even if I wasn’t depressed, maybe it would be good for me to speak with Dr. Anderson. She could help me see how to get past the hurt of not moving forward with the life that I had planned with Michael.

**Gabrielle**

I really enjoyed myself with Kyndal yesterday. I’ve missed my friend over the last few months since she’d been going through the whole losing Michael ordeal. Still, I personally think she just needs to get over it and move on. I love Kyndal, but that girl has got some real issues when it comes to men. She can get whomever she wants, which she always does. Yet, once she gets them, she just either leaves them or chases them away. She’s what I like to call a “confused li’l skinny bitch”. You know the kind of girl that has everything but doesn’t know what to do with it once she gets it.

If only my love life could be so easy or, better yet, as interesting as hers is, I would be fine. But no one has written a book that allows “Got it altogether thick chicks” to live happily ever after with Mr. Prince Charming. So that’s why I have to deal with all the bull that I’m dealing with Mr. Benjamin.

Benjamin and I have been seriously dating for a little over two years now, and I often feel as if we are still at the first base. When I first met Benjamin, I didn’t know what to think of him. He seemed to be a pretty nice guy, but the thing that I liked most about him was that he was white. Yes white. Kyndal always thought that I was crazy because I’ve always told her that I was going to marry and have kids with a white man. I don’t know when this thought entered my head, but I just had a feeling that a white man would be a better fit for me.

I mean, as an engineer, I do work in corporate America with a plethora of white men. My chances of being with a black man that is on my level are slim to none. Not to mention the fact that I’m smart and probably more advanced than most black men would prefer. But that’s just how I see it.

Now, back to Benjamin. Benjamin is not exactly the type of white guy that I would have preferred, but he likes me, and for right now, that’s all that matters. I’m willing to deal with the fact that he has a minimum wage job and has to take care of eight kids with six baby mamas.
His past has nothing to do with me because I’m gonna get exactly what I want from him, a ring and a baby, whether he knows it or not.

But, for right now, I have to convince him to spend more time with me instead of his boys, doing what they call “hanging on the block.” I really love him and I know that he can be the man I want him to be, if he just lets go of his childish ways. He’s 33 living the life of a 21-year-old. But I can convert him. I know I can.