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Disclaimer: While this excerpt does not spoil Volumes V-VII, it does contain spoilers for the first IV Volumes of the ThugHarmony Series.

Overview: During Calvin's restless Christmas night in 2012, he analyzes his behaviors while cycling through pivotal moments in some of his former relationships. In "The Promise," one of the tamer erotic passages from ThugHolidays, Calvin reviews the events that took place on Christmas 2008, months before Volume I: ThugHarmony.com begins.

From IV: The Promise

2008. One year later, ThugHarmony was growing strong. We had about 4,000 members all over the world. ThugHarmony was getting love from users in the UK, South Africa, Ecuador, and The Virgin Islands. I was proud of my site's little bit of growth. Users posted regularly, and it was far too easy to get lost for an afternoon in the porn, music, literature, or entertainment sections, along with the many social groups. That wasn't the only thing in my life booming at the time either. I had been working at the bank for a little over a year. Bank management had just given me a \$1.25 hourly raise and a Christmas bonus. I had taken a year off from school to master some of my debts and devote more time to the growing site, which was making some of its own revenue from advertisers. It was only a fraction of a penny per click, but those pennies added up when you had 4,000 members and an average of 700 clicks an hour.

Though the economy was in collapse, I wasn't feeling much of that. 2008 was closing out well for me. We had just elected a black president, I had money in my account, and I had somehow managed to sweep a thug off his feet and turn him into my boyfriend. Marcus and I started talking earlier in the year and started sleeping together shortly after that. We'd journeyed through a rocky start but considered ourselves officially together. We were dating, although we didn't do much outside my apartment. I wasn't even sure where he lived, only knowing that it was apparently on one of the bad sides of town, where the gangs roamed.

This Christmas Eve, I was expecting him to spend it with me. We had specifically planned this day months in advance. See, Marcus was the first person I opened up to in a way comparable to how much I opened up to Sharif. I didn't reveal everything about my former relationships, but he knew I was haunted. I didn't reveal details about my family, but he knew we were estranged. I shared my hopes, fears, stresses, and aches with him.

This time of year always saddened me; they call it seasonal depression. But with me, it seemed so much worse. While kids generally loved Christmas, I'd grown up loathing it. I liked the gifts, but I didn't exactly spend Christmas with a loving family. So while some people shared the holidays with their loved ones, I grew up seeing this as the one time of year when all of my biggest tormentors would be in my personal space, wearing their fake smiles and all.

The only Christmases I could remember immensely enjoying were those I spent with Sharif. It was just us, but that was all we needed. We cuddled all day, living in our own little gay, Hallmark-movie fantasy. But, of course, that got ripped away. Last year's holiday was spent with TJ and Devin, but it was easily one of my worst Christmases. They were good company, but as I mentioned already, I was still wrapped up in Sharif. And I hadn't made a whole lot of progress the past year. ThugHarmony was online now; building it no longer gave me the escape I was

chasing. Marcus did a good job of quelling those intrusive thoughts when he was around. *But where was he?*

He promised this day to me, but now that the day was here, he'd gone ghost. He didn't call, text, or send an email. He hadn't logged on to ThugHarmony since 9pm on the 23rd, which was right before he came to my place. The last time I saw him was at 2 am early this morning. Where was he? I'd put aside my tradition of hanging out with TJ and Devin on Christmas for him, and he was nowhere to be found. I called and called, and it went straight to voicemail. He would stress how he knew me so well. He should've known I was growing more livid by the second. He needed to be here; he needed to keep *this* promise.

I ranted to myself, pacing around the apartment, knowing that he would probably pop up at 10 or 11, expect to fuck, and then leave again. The routine was getting a little old, and that was not the deal we made. While I had enormous amounts of self-doubt (scars left by Sharif), I knew for a fact that there were niggas on ThugHarmony that wanted me and would constantly tell me how they would cherish me. And I rationed in my head that if Marcus didn't get his shit together, I might let them.

I logged into my Yahoo Instant Messenger, thinking I may be able to reach him there. Instead, a minute after the app showed I was online, I received a message from his best friend.

Now, I want to clarify that at the time WhiteBengal and BlunThug hit me earlier in the year, I had no idea they were best friends. I had no clue that I was the trophy in their pissing contest. Neither of them had pictures online then, but as soon as Marcus started posting pictures of his chest on ThugHarmony, Jerome started posting pictures of his. And their ThugHarmony pics had nothing on what they flooded in my DMs: face, dick, chest, arms, and abs. They would post their body pics on ThugHarm, and the guys on the site would go wild for them. That is until Jerome got exposed by another member who leaked his face pictures.

Initially, I was feeling Marcus' personality more. He was more vibrant, and he was sexy. Jerome was so damn fine, but he always came across as a little too reserved. He led with deep conversations that always drew me in, but they made me feel like he wasn't real. They call it catfishing now, and I thought he was doing that. He was always too good to be true. I had a hard time putting his face and his personality together. For the longest, I thought his pictures were fake. And when I realized that they weren't, I knew it had to be his personality that was the fake aspect. No one in the world was that perfect, and if someone was, what did they want from me?

When Jerome got into the infamous flame war with Kboogie, it confirmed many of my suspicions. While Jerome had every right to talk with whoever he wanted, it made him look like the playboy that he was telling me that he wasn't. With Jerome etched into my mind as someone who was out of my league and clearly planting seeds across the site, it gave way for Marcus to shine brighter and boldly take me.

Unlike Jerome, Marcus' online persona matched his physical appearance. He was sexy with a personality that was rough around the edges. But more than anything, he came off as more authentic. He wasn't promising me fairy tales and illusions of deep connections only to be outed by another member of ThugHarmony, to whom he was selling the same dreams. No, Marcus was blunt. He wanted to devour me sexually, and I wanted him to do it.

So, those were my perceptions of each man when I first met them. And by Christmas 2008, I'd already learned about Jerome and Marcus being best friends. The three of us played X-box more than a few times.

"Wassup Cal?" the YIM message from Jerome Minnicelli read.

Me: Nun have u talked 2 Marcus?

Jerome: Not today

Jerome: U need him?

Me: Yeah. Can you call him and see if he answers you?

Jerome: Y'all break up?

Me: No. He just sposed 2 cum over

Jerome: He not answering

Ok, I was a bit relieved now since his boy couldn't get ahold of him either. He wasn't ditching me, or at least, I didn't have proof of it. Maybe he is on his way over, and he forgot his phone or something. I relaxed and decided to wait. After two more hours had passed, there was still no sign of him. I'd been chatting it up on ThugHarmony so much that I didn't realize how much time had gone by. Jerome kept checking in on me, seeing if I'd made contact yet, and offered his services to come by with a new X-box game until he showed up. When I read his suggestion, my heart kind of pounded.

I knew that Jerome found me attractive; I remembered all those messages he sent me on ThugHarmony when the site first went up. I remembered many of his compliments on my photos and my webcam shows in the moderator's chatroom. And while the three of us would be playing Xbox together, it was clear that Jerome still had that attraction for me. He was never overt, but it was still obvious in his stolen glances and flirty winks. I found him to be something quite aesthetically amazing too.

The thought of inviting him over lingered in my mind. If he came over, this would be the first time he and I were alone in a room without Marcus. I trusted Jerome because he was tame and always so nonchalant. The person I didn't trust was myself. I was lonely. I craved human contact so much that in Marcus' place, any guy would do.

I bit my fingernails before I replied. Weakening under pressure, I quickly typed the words down on the computer. "Bring it, and let's play."

Within twenty minutes, Jerome was knocking at my front door, waiting for me to let him in. We began playing this new game that wasn't my cup of tea, so I watched him face off against the computer while he taught me some of the basic controls. I scooted closer to him to see the buttons he was pressing, but the whole time he talked, I was taking in his intoxicating aroma. His cologne was fresh, with a hint of cannabis and mint on his breath. His hair was buzzed really low with a cleaned-up face and a couple of razor bumps on his neck. I didn't trust myself this close to him, but I also didn't want to pull back.

"-You're not feeling this game, are you?" he asked.

"Is it that obvious?"

"Your eyes are kind of glazed over. You weren't listening to anything I said."

"No, I wasn't," I smiled. "I'm sorry."

"It's ok," he set the controller down. "What were you thinking about?"

You... You... You... I wanted to say 'you' so bad. I wanted to kiss him, wrap my legs around his body and let him wrap his arms around mine. And then, if or when Marcus came by, I'd let him take over me too. I'd let both friends pound me until my legs shuddered, my back cracked, and my teeth chattered.

"Uh, I guess I'm still just thinking about Marcus, you know?" I said.

He slumped over, leaning back on the sofa. "I'm sure he's ok."

"I hope so."

“You know, we don’t really get the chance to hang out much.”

“You and Marcus?” I asked.

“No,” he replied. “Me and you. I consider you a friend too.”

“We are friends, aren’t we?”

“Yeah, we gettin’ there.”

“Maybe we should get to know each other a little more,” I said. “You know, on a friend level.”

“I’d like that. So how do you normally spend Christmas? And why aren’t you doing that this year?”

“Uhh, growing up, I always spent it with my family, but I haven’t talked to them since I left home. So, for the last few years, I’ve spent it with my adopted family, some friends I’ve had for a while.”

“I see. So, what’s going on with the bio-fam?”

“They just don’t understand me, never really have, and never cared to. And there’s a lot of hurt behind that,” I shrugged it off, eager to change the subject. “What about you? Why aren’t you with your family right now?”

“Uh... I guess some of the same stuff you’re dealing with.”

“You came out to your family?” I asked, a little too inquisitive.

“No,” he smirked. “I guess maybe not the exact same stuff. But, I- I just can’t go home yet. Not when they’d see me like this.”

I looked him up and down. *What in the world was he talking about?*

“See you like this?” I questioned. “You look good to me.”

He smiled at me, making me think over what I said. *I probably needed to take that back, I thought.*

“I mean, you look fine. You look fine to me,” I corrected.

“Thank you. I guess, I mean, some things are chasing me while I’m out on the streets, and if I run home, they’d only follow me there,” he said, speaking metaphorically, I assumed.

“I understand.”

“But I used to love Christmas. I have a lot of family, and it’d be a time when I got to see all of them. So I miss it, honestly.”

“I don’t know your story,” I started. “But you sound like you want to be with them. You have a loving relationship with your family. So whenever you’re ready to come back, I’m sure they want to have you. Listen, so many of us would kill for a family to embrace us.”

“You’re right,” he nodded. The look on his face showed that he had something on his mind, and I didn’t want to pry. Things had already gotten much deeper than I’d anticipated. It was time to lighten the mood.

“So, when did you first realize that you were into guys? Any embarrassing stories that I could hold over your head?” I requested.

“I don’t know. I guess I’ve always known but never really acted on it,” he answered. “I grew up where, you know, being gay was something you could tell by looking at people. I didn’t look like those dudes, you know. You’d only just see the real *drag-queen-faced* dudes, and you would know that they were gay. That’s the cool thing about ThugHarm. There’s a lot of dudes on there that I would have never guessed if I saw them in real life.”

“Yeah, I wouldn’t have thought you and Marcus were either. I’d probably still try to get at you because that’s who I am. I tend to chase the straight guys,” I laughed. “But I wouldn’t have thought that you would swing both ways.”

“Mmmm...” he hummed, scoping me over. “I think I may have figured out that you were gay if I just saw you on the street. I’d have some idea.”

“Ouch- You’re saying I have a ‘drag queen’ face?”

“That didn’t come out right. What I meant was-”

“Yeah, go ahead and try to clean it up,” I teased.

“No, listen. If I’m honest, what I mean is that you look good.”

“Uh huh?” I nudged him.

“I probably would’ve followed you around until I found a definitive sign.”

“Stalkerish, I like that.”

He laughed.

“So...”

“Sooo...” he returned.

“You think I look good?”

“You said you thought I looked good first.”

“I did,” I nodded.

“So then?”

“So then...”

My heart was pounding again. I was about to do it. I was about to cheat on Marcus with his best friend. I could see movement in his pants, a gentle squirm of a bulge by his thigh. He had a nervous tick because blood was flowing to his phallus, just as my blood was flowing to mine. I made the first move by placing my hand on his chest. I could feel his pulse racing too. He looked at me, and I looked at him. He was paralyzed, frightened. He wanted this to happen, I could see the proof, but he just wouldn’t come to me. He didn’t lean in. I couldn’t have made it clearer. I wanted him to take me right then and there, but he wasn’t doing it. He made no proactive movements toward me.

This was a huge mistake. I thought that maybe I was reading the signs wrong. We were just flirting back and forth, weren’t we? Luckily, before I faced further rejection, my phone rang. I slowly backed away from him.

I looked at the phone, and it was Marcus. Standing up and turning away from Jerome, I answered the call.

“Hello. Marcus?”

“Hey,” Marcus greeted. “Yo, I’m on my way over right now.”

“I’ve been calling you all day.”

“Yeah, I saw. I was out handling some shit. I was getting your Christmas present ready,” he said.

“Christmas present?”

“Yeah. I’ll be there in 15.”

“Ok. I’ll see you in 15.”

Marcus hung up, and I did too. The minute I hung up the phone, I turned around, and Jerome stood right behind me. He pulled me into his arms and kissed me. It felt... *I felt...* But there’s no way this was the same guy from a minute ago. A flame lit inside of him. But the problem was now that I’d heard from Marcus, that same passionate flame had just died in me. I pushed him away.

“I’m sorry, Jerome. Thi-this- that was a mistake,” I said. “Marcus is on his way over now.”

“But-”

“It was wrong. What I did to you was wrong.”

“But just a minute ago-”

“Right! A minute ago, you looked at me like I was crazy for feeling something, so I know you know it’s wrong too.”

He sucked his lips. “Yeah.” Once again, Jerome’s patience forced him to lose out to his bestie. And something was sitting on the tip of his lips. I could see it boiling in him. There was a bulging vein right in the middle of his forehead. I’d never seen it before that day, but its presence was known, the vein inflamed like it could erupt at any second.

“Did he tell you why he was unreachable all day?” Jerome asked with a fit of anger to his tone. This was the first time I had ever seen this side of him.

“He said he was getting me a present.”

“All day? You don’t believe that; you’re too smart to believe that.”

I didn’t know whether I should take his comment with a grain of salt or not. Was this a sudden quip out of jealousy, or was he aware of something that I wasn’t?

“Well, you sound so sure,” I started. “You must know what he was doing then.”

Jerome got silent and looked away.

“You do,” I came to the realization. There was a secret, probably more than one. Marcus was away all day, and Jerome had some kind of idea of what he was up to.

“It’s not for me to say. But don’t believe everything he tells you.”

“I thought you were his friend,” I said.

“I’m yours too. And- Calvin, I don’t want to see you get hurt. And I already know this ends with him hurting you.”

Jerome began his walk to the front door of my apartment. He was about to go, and here was my way out. If pain was in my future with Marcus, Jerome could stop that. I wanted him to.

“Jerome,” I called out, and he turned around. “Please just tell me. Whatever it is, he won’t know it came from you, but just tell me.”

Jerome looked conflicted, torn between his best friend and the secret he was helping to conceal from me. He parted his lips. “You need to hear it from him, Calvin. Make him tell you. It’s his secret.”

Jerome took a few steps back toward me and put his hand on my chin, tilting my face upward. “And if whatever comes out means that the two of you are over, make sure you let me know.” Then, he planted a sensual kiss on my lips, a kiss that made me want to throw caution to the wind and devour his tongue. Our second kiss, the first being a mere minute earlier. The sparks were electrifying. That is until he pulled himself away. He left me wanting more from him and very anxious about Marcus. When he walked out the door, my heart was racing again. I had to catch my breath and cool myself down. Jerome’s tender kiss and fervent desire for me left me dripping. My glands were working in overdrive, and I was wet in places that normally took a lot longer for me to dampen in.

“Whewww...”

I waited the twenty minutes it took for Marcus to get to my place and open the door. He had his own key, which I had given him a couple of weeks before. He let himself in as I was watching TV.

“Hey,” he said, his face lighting up as he came in.

“Hey.”

“How yo day go?”

“I didn’t do anything. I just waited on you. Where were you?” I asked.

“I told you already.”

“All day, Marcus?”

“Yeah. I had some business to take care of, and then I had to pick up your present,” he clarified.

“Where’s the present?” I didn’t see any bag; I didn’t see a box.

“Let me get it ready,” he said. Marcus took off his jacket and shirt and came to the sofa I was sitting on. He leaned down and got in between my legs. Then, he unbuttoned his jeans and pulled his pants and boxers down just below his groin.

When I saw it, I laughed so hard that I snorted.

“Marcus, what is this?”

He had a Christmas ribbon tied around his dick and balls, and he’d obviously done this before he came over because the creases in the ribbon were deep, so this wasn’t a new tie.

“Untie it,” he told me.

“You are going to fuck around and cut off your circulation doing shit like this,” I said, untying the ribbon and pulling it off him.

“Merry Christmas, baby. I missed you all day,” he said.

“Mmhmm,” I played hard to get.

“You don’t believe me? Nigga, can’t you see I brought you dick for Christmas? I plan on giving you dick for Kwanzaa, dick for New Year’s-”

I laughed at him.

“-Some King Day dick, dick for Valentine’s, dick for my birthday, and a res-erection for Easter-”

“Stop, stop, stop,” I couldn’t take it anymore. I looked up at him, a light smile sweeping across my face. “I just want dick, now.”

“I got that for you.”

I picked up the ribbon I’d just pulled off his junk. Sexily, I ran it between my lips.

He winked at me. “Taste good, don’t it?”

“No, it’s terrible. I actually wish I hadn’t done that,” I joked as I put the ribbon to the side.

“Oh, you wanna be a funny nigga,” he leaned down into me, nibbling on my neck. “You know you missed me. Tell me you missed me.”

“I missed you so much, Marcus. You don’t even know.”

“But you can show me.”

“Ok,” I agreed.

Marcus backed off me and stood at his feet. His “gift” pointed straight in my direction, teasing. Standing firm and placing his hands on his hips, Marcus waited for me to make my move. I opened my mouth and encircled his dick, letting it go as far down my throat as possible. I’d practiced many times, and Marcus trained me to suck his dick how he liked it. By this time, I’d mastered it. I pleased him the way he liked and teased him the way I liked.

I sucked, taking my mouth down to his pubes, his man-bush tickling the hairs inside my nostrils; all the while, his manhood was lodged in my throat. I had to fight the urge to sneeze and the feeling of choking. I slowly backed away from his 9 inches, working my tongue on the underside of it. Slightly snaking my head, I shifted it from left to right to add another stroke sensation as I came off. When I got to his mushroomed tip, I noticed how much wetter and saltier the tip was, his precum droplets dawdling on my tongue. I pulled all the way off and parted my lips to show him,

He smiled at the sight. "You are so fuckin' nasty, and I love it."

I blushed.

Marcus got back down on his knees before me, getting in between my legs. He placed his hands firmly on my neck, clasping at it and lifting my face to meet his. Then we kissed, him tasting his pre-ejaculate in my mouth. It was a ferociously messy kiss, with him achingly lapping at my lips and leaving me thirstily devouring his.

"Cal, you make a nigga so happy," he said, looking into my eyes. His own were seemingly made of stone. Yet, he didn't break from contact.

I'm aware that Marcus gets the bad edit when it comes to my memory. Yeah, our relationship was wildly unstable. And yeah, the blood turned really bad much later; that much is reflected whenever I think about it. I focus so much more on his cheating, lies, temper, and violence. But when we were good, things were so good. And that made it easy for me to look past certain things when they didn't add up. Marcus conquered the act of telling me what I wanted to hear. I always doubted the validity of his words, but I loved hearing him say them, especially when we were engaged in our nightly acts. I can admit that I was complicit in his lies. I allowed myself to live in the illusion of our faux relationship. *It just felt so damn good...*

"You ready for your real present?" he asked.

"I'm ready for anything."

He pulled back from me, taking off my pants. I raised my hips to make it easier for him to pull them off, my dick thumping out of encasement. When he got them all the way off, he lifted my legs, pushing my knees to my shoulders. I closed my eyes, anticipating him covering his dick with that condom and pushing it into me. I craved for it to nestle inside my colon as it normally did. As I waited, I felt his weight turn. I exhaled, ready for his next move.

Whirrrp, I heard. For only a fraction of a second, I wondered what the hell the sound was and why it was paired with the almost airy feeling on my ass. Then, his face lowered, and he began to consume. I opened my eyes and looked down at him going to town, eating my ass with that same serious look in his eyes that he always had. This wasn't the first time he'd ever done it, but it was typically reserved for special occurrences. This was an act for holidays, weekends, or after huge fights when he wanted to return to my good graces. But this whipped cream on my ass thing was new. I didn't hate it.

"Oooh," I cooed.

"You like that, Cal?"

"Yeah, Don't stop."

He forced his tongue into me, puckering his lips at my outlet. Then, he slithered right in, his tongue still wet from the personal lube mixture from our saliva and his own dick juice.

"Awh, Fuck," I groaned.

As if it were a stamp of consent, he went even harder. He placed my thighs on his shoulder and wrapped his arms around my waist to keep me in place. Then, he rose to his feet, picking me up with him. The scene must've looked like a wrestling match, me in a limp position, hanging upside down with his head lodged between my legs.

Marcus pulled my balls out of the way using his long fingers, roughly fondling them and unintentionally pushing at my prostate. All the while, he kept right on lapping at my opening. I yelped at the sensation. He'd taken that as another stamp of consent and turned up the heat even more, withdrawing his lips and rearing his teeth to make as much space for his tongue to sink. I could hear him panting and grunting from above while the blood began to rush to my head.

"You taste good as shit," he said, slightly suctioning my ass. "You like that?"

It was euphoric. The combo between licking my ass and ruggedly rubbing over my prostate reduced my vocabulary to moans and grunts. I could no longer communicate effectively in the English language.

“Mm... ass so fat... hole so tight...”

“Ahhh,” I moaned.

Marcus penetrated me orally, especially loving the added milkshake taste of the whipped cream. My hole was just the cherry on top that he needed. His tongue thrashed and rolled viciously as he repeatedly forced it into me.

“Fuck, you taste so fucking good!”

He braced himself, shifting my weight onto just one of his arms. Then, he reached down to grab the canned whipped cream. He looked at my asshole, almost admiringly.

“Tight fuckin’ hole... Phat fuckin’ ass... Calvin, this shit don’t make no damn sense,” he muttered.

Whirrrrrrrrrp! He sprayed right over the crack of my ass and went back to working over it with his mouth. He didn’t go with the same tactic of tonguing my hole. Instead, he used his thick tongue to rub back and forth along the rim this time.

“Dude, what are you doin’ to me?” I asked.

He was so much more hype than he normally was. We’d started becoming a bit played out in the bedroom, but this was next-level shit for him. He tongued me deeper and deeper, salivary cream dripping from the crack of my ass and down my spine. My hole was drenched in a syrup made from Marcus’ spittle and whipped topping.

After a minute or so, my weight got to be a little stressing for him. He slowly let me down to the couch, never letting up from cradling my asshole in his oral cavity. Once I was down, his hands were free to roam around other places. He put his hands on my joystick, both hands. He jacked it up and down; these hard, rough, thuggish fists pounding against my pelvis.

“Shit, Marcus- Ohh,” I sounded.

“Yeah, you like that nigga?”

Before I could confirm it, his face was back in my ass. As he lapped and spat, he used one of those hands that were viciously jacking me to pull my cheeks apart. He took a moment to admire the view, my freshly moistened and pert asshole exposed with that syrupy white residue all around it. Then, he dived for my ass again, sucking, tonguing, and chewing once more. I was so damn close; my dick throbbed in a way it hadn’t done since some of our early days of fucking. I was worked all the way up, so worked up that I would’ve given him anything he wanted in the moment. But, *God, I hoped he wouldn’t make a request...*

“Come on,” he said, in between licks. “Bust your nutt, nigga.”

“Oggghhhh...”

“Come on, I wanna see that shit up close.”

“Mar-kiss,” my pitch shifted up in the middle of pronouncing his name.

“Yeah, that’s my name, nigga. Marcus up in this ass, bust that shit.”

I reached down between my legs and held his head in place. He took the hint, not coming up from my ass anymore. Instead, he grunted and slurped beneath me, looking like a rabid Pitbull tearing a hole into my ass.

“Ahhhhhhhh,” my body tensed, my eyes rolled back into the socket, and Marcus continued to beat my dick mercilessly as my brain went through numerous explosions of pleasure. I fired off. Cum sprouted up into the air. All the muscles inside of me convulsed at once and in such a powerful way. Not to mention, Marcus was still beating at my pelvis as he

stroked me. He soon relieved himself of that task, removing his hands from my still sputtering and spewing shaft to put his lips in place. His mouth latched on, catching the last little bit that sprouted. He made long drags of my dick, slurping me all the way and hoovering every drop dispensed.

“Marcuzzz...” I moaned, out of breath, looking down and seeing him milk me.

I threw my head all the way back and stretched over the couch, Marcus still going at it with my dick. THIS WAS A FUCKING RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE. What-the-fuck?

Marcus kept going a good 20 seconds after he'd drained me completely dry. He then worked on the droplets of cum that I had on my abdomen and chest. As he came up, he placed his hands sensually on my chest, and his kisses kept going further north as well. Finally, he wound up at my face and began kissing me deeply, his growls audible and vibrating in my mouth. I was in a compromising position: his tongue was deep in my mouth, his chest hovered right above mine, and his dick was grazing my well-lubricated ass.

Like Sharif, Marcus, too, had a complicated relationship with condoms. He didn't like them. And many nights, particularly in the early days of our relationship, he'd try to sneak me. And with how he'd just revved me up and spit-shined my entire lower region, he'd probably try again. Luckily, he broke his kiss and collapsed on the side of me.

“Fuck, you was wilin’,” he chuckled.

I looked over at him. “What in the world got into you?”

He chuckled again. “I knew I had to make this count.”

“Oh, you did that.”

“Fuck...” he said, putting his hand between my legs and finding my asshole again. He strummed it, rubbing it back and forth. “That hole was good as fuck when I was eating it.”

I was too dazed to even accept the compliment. That was fucking amazing.

“Like...seriously, what happened?” I asked again.

“Nothin’ happened, Cal,” he smirked. “I just knew you was waiting on me all day. I knew I had to come correct and do you right.”

I smiled.

“I know I promised you that I was gonna be here for you today. I almost didn't make it cuz I was busy.”

“Doing what?” I asked.

“It don't even matter,” he returned. “I just had this feeling that if I didn't keep my promise and show up tonight, you were never going to forgive me. And um... after what happened... I knew that if I didn't show up tonight, you were never gonna take me back.”

I rolled that comment around in my head. I didn't say anything.

“Tell me, if I didn't show up, you would've been done with me, huh?”

“Ummm... maybe,” I agreed.

“See,” he smiled, flashing his teeth my way. Meanwhile, he grabbed my leg and placed it on top of his, just so his fingers could get a better feel at my ass. His middle fingertip inserted and flicked, tugging gently. “I just- I ain't want to lose you anytime soon. I'm gonna try to make good on all my promises, but I knew I had to on this one.”

As I said, Marcus was great at puffing and telling me everything I wanted to hear. But this felt genuine. And to this day, I still think it was. Marcus needed a place where he could be as loud, as free, and as gay- all the things he had to hide from the outside world but were eating him up inside. He had that in my old apartment with me.

A few weeks later, about halfway into January, Jerome and Marcus came over to play the game. Jerome wouldn't even look at me. At the time, I thought maybe he had some guilt. Now, I know better. After that, he avoided coming back over. He avoided talking to me on YIM, ThugHarm, and all forms of contact. In fact, the next time I saw him was the day I tried to set him up with TJ. At that time, I felt a lot of guilt as well. If Marcus hadn't called at just the right moment, he might've lost me that night. That would've been a shame because he showed me how much he was trying. Hell, we had quite a few months of good times left in us.

In the present day, I still feel guilty over this incident, although not for the same reasons. Now, it's heavily weighted for Jerome. This moment comes up far too often with him: it's one of the reasons that I constantly have to remind him how much I love him. For me, Christmas 2008 was all about my insecurity. My loneliness almost led me to be so reckless that I almost cheated on Marcus with Jerome. And now, Jerome has internalized this scene to make it all about his insecurities. I had a loyalty to Marcus that didn't completely waver when Jerome wanted it to. This was Jerome's second time missing out on opportunities because he opted to be complacent. And here Marcus was, sweeping in and taking it from him.

Have they worked all of their issues out? I hope so....

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