

FROM BLACK GYRL

TO MATRIARCH:

THE SACRED

BIRTH

OF MY

SOUL

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In the sun-drenched “wonder years” of my youth, life was a rhythm of hopscotch, tetherball, and the carefree spin of the monkey bars. I was a Black gyrl with a heart full of puppy love and a mind swirling with the beautiful, brutal transition into my teens. I spent those days gazing at the boy on the basketball court, dreaming of a future where I would finally “arrive” and show the world who I was meant to be.

But the universe had a more divine, powerful arrival in mind. Eight months after high school graduation, the tide of “being grown” rushed in like a tsunami, sweeping away my childhood innocence and replacing it with the weight and wonder of life. My journey into womanhood didn’t begin with a degree or a career path—it began in Oceanside, California, through the fire of a twenty-seven-hour labor that tested the very fabric of my spirit.

The transformation was not a soft whisper; it was a roar. I remember the unbearable counting of contractions in the mall parking lot, the desperate prayers whispered through tears, and the terrifying stillness of a body numbed by anesthesia. When they told me my daughter was finally here—a 7lb 13oz miracle—I expected to hold her instantly. Instead, I was met with the excruciating trial of separation.

For two agonizing weeks, an infection kept my arms empty. I watched from a distance as the nurses who had named her “Bright Eyes” held her in the doorway. They told me she was beautiful and healthy, and in my pain, I could only reply: “When can I hold her?” But in that darkness, a new strength was being forged. The fever didn’t just burn through my body; it burned away the “gyrl” I used to be.

The moment the numbness finally broke, and they placed that indescribable joy into my arms—my true first love, with her gorgeous crown of black hair and those alert, searching eyes—I was no longer just LaTanya.

On January 13th, 1979, as I looked into the face of Da’Vanessa Monique Graves, I didn’t just become a mother.

I rose from those troubled waters as a Strong Black Woman.

I realized that my power didn’t come from a carefree life, but from the ability to survive the storm, hold the line for my lineage, and love with a depth that only a queen can carry.

The world knew I had arrived. Not because of a career, but because of the soul-deep transformation that only sacrifice, survival, and a mother’s love can bring.

I am LaTanya Graves. TS#7 of 52 of The Soutown Magazine. I want to thank you all for having SOUL! 🌟



TS#7

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