

September 23, 2011

Friday - 10 pm

I need to tell you my story before I die. What I am about to tell you, is nothing new. You have heard it all before from so many other voices. Still there is this great need in me to tell you my side of the story: to have your undivided attention as I divulge my deepest, darkest secrets to you.

To be honest, truthful in spite of the consequences, often times it is the hardest thing to do. In fact to be completely honest with oneself and the world takes great strength and bareness that I am not sure I possess. Yet here I am, in front of the computer desk writing to you. As I sit here in my bedroom, writing this epistle, I am flooded with thoughts as to whether this is the right thing to do.

Will it change anything – telling you the truth? Will you believe me or be able to handle what I am about to say to you? After all, I have tried to tell you my story before in so many ways, through so many voices. Will you listen now?



The sudden whooshing sound of the wind made her put down the pen and glanced around askance.

He is on his way here! the female voice behind her said excitedly.

She frowned, went to unlock the front door, reheated the meal that was on the stove then returned to the computer desk. In an instant, angry, hated heat surrounded her as the whooshing sound of the wind became louder in her ear. She immediately gripped the seat of the chair and began to count to ten as sweat poured down her face. The angry heat increased followed by a faint wave of sadness. *He was at the door!* Fear filled her mind with doubt and pain.

She wanted to run.

There was nowhere to run.

She gripped her chest as dark invisible arrows of hate hit her repeatedly.

A feeling of dizziness washed over her.

Why is he here?

She wondered but didn't ask those that knew the answer. She heard the knob of the front door turned, felt the gush of fresh air flow through her, felt the cool breeze fanned all around her, watched as the hair stood upright on her arm and shivered.

When she sensed it standing at her right hand, she sighed in relief.

For now, it was over.

She waited until she heard his fork scraping the plate then she picked up the pen and continued writing.

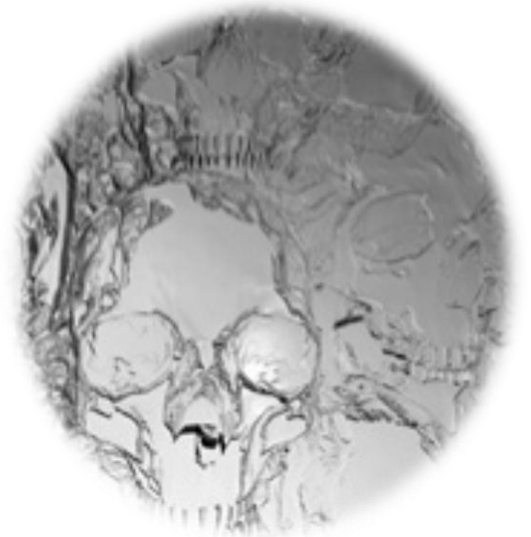
For so many years, I have remained silent, kept these secrets buried deep within, under the misguided belief that this is how I protect those that I love.

Now, I realize, that remaining silent, burying the evidence, hiding the carcass from plain view has only open the door for more evil to occur and has caused great damage to the very ones I was trying to protect.

I now know that these secrets must not stay hidden they should be revealed.

I hope that in telling you the truth, I will lay to rest these bodies I have tried to bury. These bodies that refuse to stay dead and buried but is continually being dug up and resurrected.

Here I am, forced to exhume and examine the skeletons once again, but this time I hope that by taking this journey with you, I will not only examine but will put these bones into deeper grounds and finally lay them to rest. In the process I hope to also understand - why?



“Night” He called out from her bedroom.

“Night” She answered from her little hiding place at the computer desk in her brother’s room.

“Should I go?” He asked.

The bed gave its usual squeak as he sat down and waited for her answer.

“No, you can stay.” She replied, afraid to say anything more than those few words.

“Ok.” He said and began to get ready for bed.

Where do I begin, how do I say this and what should I tell you? I was told that the best way to tell a story is to write from the heart – do not worry about what is said but just let the words flow – the story will tell itself. But since of late, words aren't coming easy to me.

In speech, I fumble for the right words to bring my message across and often times it is the wrong thing that is said and you know once something is already said it is hard to erase what has been already said. So I hope that by writing this, I will be able to tell you what I feel and at any time, if it does not come out right, I can erase and rewrite again until what I need to say gets said.

While, for the moment, I am willing, able, determined and unafraid to tell you the truth; I find that I am a bit reluctant to tell you their story. I do not want to hurt anyone in this process of confessions, revelations and purification. It is for this very reason why I remained silent for so long. But, as you know, I do not exist in this world alone, although I am a single, independent entity, my life is entwined with yours and theirs

because as you know, we share the same space and oftentimes interact with each other, so it cannot be helped, for me to tell you my story – I must tell you part of theirs. The parts that relate to me of course.

I should tell you this story from the beginning, but I am not sure exactly where the beginning begins and I am not at the end as yet. So instead, I will start in the middle where I first saw you.

It was summer 1992, the last day of school to be exact. I was standing at the bus stop waiting for a bus to take me home. You were leaning nonchalantly against the wall out at Gracey's supermarket in Falmouth, across the road directly in front of my view, a lone figure standing out and away from the crowd. You wore a black baseball cap, white T-shirt, stone wash jeans and white sneakers. The cap hid most of your face and the beard that you sported covered the rest. Someone beside me asked me for a pen and when I looked up, you were walking towards me. I looked at you, expecting you to know me as I knew you. Besides, I was sure that you had been checking me out from across the road. I waited, you looked straight at me and through me as though I wasn't there. My sixteen-year-old heart fell. Your stare had been so cold and aloof. Immediately, I felt as though I had bumped into a brick wall. The pen that was being handed back to me fell

to the ground; I quickly stoop to retrieve it and hid my face in shame. The blaring honk of the bus horn brought me to my feet. I was carried along with the crowd rushing to the bus doors before they were even opened. And before I knew it, I was inside the bus, seated, staring out the window, looking at the back of this man that didn't seem to notice that I existed.



“Where is your computer?”

Tristan looked over at Alex seated at her computer desk, about to write. He frowned as she quickly closed the notepad and looked up at him, surprised.

“What?” Alexandria pulled out the desk drawer and threw the notepad in.

“Where is the computer?” Tristan repeated.

What is she hiding now? He wondered.

“They came in di house again.”

“You didn’t lock up,” Tristan stated firmly.

“You should report it to the police.” He added.

Alexandria didn’t see the reason to. So far, whenever she had called the police for help, they had never shown up.

“Alex report it.” Tristan spoke sternly.

The look on her face told him that she wouldn’t. Tristan didn’t want an argument so in a conciliatory tone he said,

“I’m sorry that they took the computer.”

She nodded and came to sit beside him.

He pulled her closer as he slumped down unto the bed and sighed.

It felt good having her in his arms.

“Dave, I didn’t know the door wasn’t locked.” She explained.

“*Dave,*” - a shortened version of his last name Davis. It was her pet name for him. *Why did it feel so good to hear her call him that?* He could always tell when and how mad she was at him in which name she chose to use.

Right now, she wasn’t mad.

She was explaining how the thief got in – that they or he must have come in from the door leading to her brother’s room.

His phone rang.

Tristan stiffened and prayed it was not her.

Alex slipped out of his embrace and stopped talking.

He ignored the call and inquired instead,

“What else did they take?”

“Who is dat?” She asked.

He got up, went for the phone in his pants pocket and looked at the missed call as she watched him suspiciously. He made sure to look her straight in the eye so she would believe him and said,

“It is my friend Clay.” he lied easily.

Her heart sank as she watched him - felt him.

He was lying!

She wondered if he knew that at that very moment; her mind was linked with his.

Right at that moment, she was hearing his thoughts clearly, feeling his emotions, reading his actions, and even knowing the mind of the caller. That woman who just called. And so many other things that she could not even begin to explain.

Suddenly they weren’t alone anymore.

There were other presence in the room.

Flighty, ferocious, angry, fearful, fretful, sneaky fluttering about.

She was being attacked!

Alexandria felt as though she was under attack!

Bombarded with negative energy and heat.

How could she explain that to him she wondered, there were no physical evidence to support her claim, just her senses working overtime.

She stretched out her hand for the phone as she said,

“Let me see.”

“No!” He said angrily, grabbed his pants and began to get dressed.

It wasn't difficult for Triston Davis to get angry.

The anger came over him in an instant.

Tristan embraced it and felt safe within its clutches.

He wore it like an old familiar cloak and shield.

Feeling empowered and justified, he attacked,

“Fuck, I shouldn't have cum!” he shouted angrily.

Alexandria winced, holding her chest as though he had hit her there.

“Why ask me a question if you nawe guh believe me? FUCK!” he pulled on his shirt.

“It's obvious you lying, if you weren't you would've given me the phone long time.” *or if you had deleted the stuff on your phone*

you would have given it to me, Alexandria thought, you have done that to me before.

Hell, maybe he's telling the truth.

She had deleted Mark's messages, and she wasn't really doing anything wrong with Mark.

Besides, all the stuff that happened to her when the phone just rang, well those things can't be trusted and probably just a figment of her imagination, Alexandria reminded herself as she tried to convince herself that she was wrong in her thinking.

But his next words and actions made Alexandria changed her mind.

“Alex! I'm not giving you my phone mek you search it up like you do all di time!”

His voice was loud enough to tear off the roof.

“Mi tell yuh why mi did search di phone the one time and its...”

Her voice was just as loud.

“Fuck every time me come here yuh ah” Triston continued.

“...because of what was happening to me! Why I...” Alexandria bellowed.

Neither was waiting for the other to finish their speech.

“Yuh a go on and on about what happen to yuh like ah my fault,”

Tristan had immediately interrupted, seeming agitated and uncomfortable as though he couldn't stand another minute of hearing her speak.

“Figet the past!” He shouted.

But she couldn't.

It wasn't the past for her it was her present.

“Why I looked in d...” Alexandria tried to finish her statement.

“Fuck! Mi tired a dis!” Tristan interrupted.

“Yuh always mek mi feel like shit!”

“When you when a have yuh man dem a call yuh, yuh nevah care how me feel.” He finished buckling his belt, angrily jabbed his foot into his shoe as he continued his accusations.

“Yuh have dem a flaunt in a mi face.”

“They weren't my man!” Alexandria yelled in frustration. *Why couldn't she keep her cool with this man?*

She did it so well with others, Alexandria wondered.

How many times did she have to tell him the truth.

There had been only one man and... there is something wrong with me!

As though on cue Tristan said,

“You nuh see you a go crazy, mi nawe go crazy wid you!”

“TRISTAN!” Alexandria shouted.

She was in his face pointing.

What was she doing pointing her finger in his face?

She was a girl, shorter than he was, weaker than he.

He could easily take her.

What the hell is she doing?

Suddenly, the rage began to take over.

He became afraid that any moment he would hurt her.

He wanted to.

Tristan was out the door, slamming it shut, locking her in.

He began walking towards the road, tried to calm himself but the anger held its grip, it would not subside.

When had he become such an asshole? He wondered.

I am an asshole.

With those words screaming loudly in his head, he brushed the tears from his eyes and walked furiously to the bus stop.

Men do not cry, he asserted as he waited for the bus.

Alexandria did not bother wiping the tears from her eyes.

She let them run down her face.
She hadn't gotten control of this thing yet.
It was still taking hold of her.
And it was bent on getting her killed.
She gulped for air then buried her head in the pillow, curled up in a ball and began to cry hysterically. Now, she could not stop the tears even if she wanted to. They oozed out of her like a forceful, uncontrollable flood rushing through a small village washing away everything in sight.
She felt so tired, so drained, so exhausted.

Tristan was slowly convincing her.

When had she gotten so susceptible to other people's opinions – to their feelings - Tristan and Dre's opinions that is? And when had she begun to care what other people think of her?

Oh, but she wanted him to believe her.

Why? She was not sure.

It was getting harder to remember all the stuff that had happened over the past five or six years.

The memories were fading.

Maybe it was all in her head...she has oftentimes felt as though she must be going crazy, that these things are just not real.

How does one convince someone else that “these things” are real and are happening to them when they themselves aren't even

convinced that “these things” are really happening? She asked herself.

I am going crazy!

Dear God, I do act crazy so many times since of late or maybe all of my life, Alex conceded.

“Why di RARSECLATH uno nuh listen to me!”

“Me seh ah nuh dat mi when say” Rosalind Thompson enunciated loudly.

“Monica! Mi a big rarse wooman,”

The profanity came out again.

Rarse she was trying hard not to curse and she was doing so well with her promise not to use those words until now.

But who could keep calm with these people?

Dem nuh listen!

“Monica, mi a big woman, fifty years ole why mi need fi lie bout dat.”

Rosalind Thompson threw off her work shoes, transferred the phone to her neck and began to peel a ripe banana. She listened and sometimes nodded to Monica as Monica explained. The phone beeped. Rosalind checked who was calling and heaved a sigh of relief. It was her daughter.

“Monica me have anadah call me wee call yuh back.”

“Hello”

“Mom, you busy...can we talk?”

Rosalind knew immediately that the “talk” she and her child was about to have would most definitely be about Tristan.

“Alex, a yuh an Tristan ah argue again?” Rosalind asked gently.

“He’s becoming more and more like Dre` Mom” Alexandria complained.

Rosalind wished her daughter would revert to the woman she once was. The Alex, Rosalind use to know and be proud of, the daughter who would not be calling her to complain about a man!

“Yuh know uno nuh act like seh uno nuh deh”

“Dat need to change!”

“Or uno gone back together again?”

Rosalind Thompson was trying hard to be gentle with her eldest daughter.

While she expected and was used to this kind of behavior from the others, Rosalind had still not gotten use to her daughter behaving insecure, fretful and suspicious and the many other weird behaviors she was now exhibiting.

She was not used to her daughter acting this way over a man, over anything for that matter.

It broke her heart every time she heard the sadness, uncertainty and pain in her child’s voice.

Where was the confident, self-assured child she had brought up that faced any and everything in her life with courage, boldness, fierceness and a determination that sometimes bordered on stubbornness?

This isn’t Alex, something is wrong.

The two of them use to be so good together, but then that was years ago.

Tristan was not the same anymore neither was Alex.

“Mom, you believe me when I tell you that something weird has been happening to me for these past years, right?” Alexandria asked meekly.

Rosalind nodded her head.

Although Rosalind Thompson was not the type of woman who readily gave hugs. At that moment, she wished she was at her daughter's side, holding her.

“How much time, me a go tell yuh me believe you?” She chided.

“Alex, a me you a try convince or yuh self?”

Rosalind pulled the apron over her head and began peeling the potatoes for dinner as she continued talking.

“Why you don't just look at it as a gift, weddah it is a blessing or a curse.”

After a whole week of packing peppers at the pepper factory in Hague and dealing with Enid, Rosalind was looking forward to a weekend of rest and solitude.

Solitude she would not be getting.

A couple of her family members from town had given her a surprise visit last night and was staying for the weekend. So, she was now having a few guests for the weekend. But she hoped she would still get some rest.

All Rosalind Thompson wanted to do was to sit and rest her feet. But she was hungry and her family needed to eat.

It was Saturday, she was not going to work tomorrow she will rest on Sunday.

She threw the potato peels in the bag for her compost heap. Turned the stove on and put the potatoes to boil.

“Why yuh don't just accept it?” Rosalind asked.

“Maybe then you wee can manage it.”

Alexandria didn't know how to explain that she was trying to manage it!

“You know, sorry I called... I'll talk to you laytah.”

Rosalind did not want her daughter to hang up. She immediately felt frustrated, angry and concern. She could hear the sadness in her daughter's voice.

Alex was always sad nowadays.

It was as though a constant darkness surrounded her child. That too was not the way she was before. Before, Alex was always positive and filled with light.

I want my daughter back! Rosalind silently screamed in frustration.

“Oh, they came in the house again.” Alexandria said.

Rosalind immediately dragged the kitchen stool to her and sat down.

“What!” She was now holding the phone to her ear with both hands.

“ah last night it happen?” she asked.

“No. Last week.” Alex responded.

“den something like that Alex you should ah tell me from long time.” Rosalind reprimanded.

When the robbery had taken place. Alexandria hadn't seen any reason to let her mother know, what purpose did it served, except to make her mother worry about her more, it wasn't like her mother could catch the culprit or bring back the stolen computer could she? Alexandria was telling Rosalind now because she knew Rosalind would want to know.

“Wha dem tek this time?” Rosalind asked angrily.

Andre Adam Prescott a.k.a. Dre a.k.a. Steven Adams a.k.a. Alec Thompson sauntered into the pub and ordered a drink.

Andre Prescott, no Steven Adams; for that was the name he was going by for the moment, checked his watch and decided that he had time. He could deliver the stuff and be back at his house in no time.

Couple g's made easily.

Carlissa was on the graveyard shift.

She would be home by six am, seven the latest.
She wouldn't even know he had left the house.
He was careful when he was leaving out.
He was sure no one had seen him leave.
He nodded in the direction of the man coming through the crowd
towards him, took a sip of his drink and waited.

“The truck is out back,” the man said.

“Here are the keys”

Andre pocketed the keys.

“Call me when it's done.”

With that said, the man walked back into the crowd.

Steven Adams finished his drink and went out back to the truck.

September 25, 2011

Sunday - 11 am

Where am I in this account of my past that I am trying to re-count to you? Yes, I was at the part where I saw you for the first time. After that first encounter, I didn't see you again until I was twenty-one.

I remember that night so clearly. It was a week before the general election, December 1997. That day everyone seemed to be having a good time – carefree, having fun. That December, the energy and vibe in Falmouth was so high. Then, it had seemed as though most of them – the Falmouthians were happy and doing well, enjoying their lives. Of course, I am talking about those

people I was around or let's say exposed to, I don't know how the others feared.

You remember? that was the year that the reggae boyz qualified for the world cup football – France 98. Jamaica – well Jamaicans everywhere on a whole was in high spirits because of that win. The “Reggae Boyz” – Jamaica! was the first English speaking Caribbean nation to qualify for the World Cup soccer finals. And you already know that as a result, the boyz gained worldwide fame and millions of fans and was voted one of the most “colorful” football teams of the tournament which wasn't a surprise to us Jamaicans for we are use to our Jamaican people flaring on the international scene. Remember, Walter Boyd and the other “boyz” was always wearing red or yellow boots and creating antics on and off the field. I remember the excitement and patriotism then just like how we are with Usain Bolt and the rest of the track team now. Ok let me see, Portia Simpson (that was her name at the time – she wasn't married yet) was the sports minister then, the Brazilian Rene Simoes was the coach that had brought the “boyz” to the world cup. Theodore “Tapper” Whitmore wasn't the football coach yet, but he was one of the boyz. So they qualified for the world cup in November and P.J. Patterson the then “first real black man Jamaican Prime

minister” for that’s how he was dubbed, had declared a holiday in November for pure celebration. Think that was on November 17. Well, P.J. called election right after the boyz “win” to capitalize on our celebrating mood. There was no way P.J. wouldn’t win the election that year. So Election Day was December 18 and the Christmas celebration had just kept on after P.J. – PNP (People’s National Party) won the election of course.

Let me see, on the other side (the opposition), Bruce Golding had an argument with Seaga about leading the JLP (Jamaica Labour Party) which lead to Bruce and five others moving over to a relatively newly formed unknown political party of their own called the National Democratic Movement (NDM). Think Bruce wanted Seaga to step down, while Edward Seaga thought he was still “young” enough and “strong” enough to stay as leader. Basically it was a power struggle between the two, Bruce thought that Seaga should step down because “him ole now” and give him Bruce a chance. Seaga didn’t give in, so Bruce walked away from the party and joined that party who was willing to make him President. They ran that year, but you know Jamaican politics has always been between the two major parties, red (PNP) and green (JLP). Blue (NDM) had no chance of winning, though they were the first/third choice if the other two didn’t

show up/exist. You also know that eventually Bruce and Seaga “made up” and Bruce and most of his five merged once again with the JLP, deserting the NDM and eventually Bruce finally got his chance at running the country.

Well, while everyone else seemed to be having a good year that year mine wasn't all that great. Come to think of it I have had many bad years. Anyway, two weeks before that day, I had packed up all my belongings and returned to my hometown, Falmouth. I wasn't happy living in Kingston. With the exception of my cousin to keep me company, I had no one to turn to when things started going wrong. And things were going wrong. So I made the decision to return home to my family, with the hope that my life would work out better than it was doing thus far.



Alexandria Prescott stopped writing, leaned her head more to the right listened, frowned, glanced at the television on her left and then unconsciously nodded her head.

She searched for the remote control and flicked the t.v. on. T.V.J.'s Michael Sharpe came on the screen.

Alexandria listened in surprise, hesitated, then grabbed her phone and dialled her mother's number.

“Mom, you hear the news yet?” she asked.

“What news?” Rosalind shouted over the other loud noises in the background.

“The Prime Minister resign”

Rosalind laughed as she said,

“Bruce always ah resign, Alex yuh soon hear seh dem beg him fi stay an him change him mind and nuh resign.”

“Oh, this isn't the first time?” Alex asked a little bit surprised.

“Mi wee call you back, the bar a get busy.”

Alexandria stared at the television and wondered why it was important for her to see that news flash. She no longer had the energy needed to get up out of bed. She pulled the sheets over her head and went to sleep.

Tristan Davis heard the news in the cafeteria at lunch.

He was seated in the middle, between Monica and Pauline.

They were discussing the news over his head as he munched on the KFC chicken leg while scrolling through his messages in his phone.

He was not really paying attention to their chatter until Monica asked him if he had heard the news that the Prime Minister had resigned then he started really listening.

His first thought was to text Alex but decided that was unwise.

She often texted him.

Sometimes in one of her crazy stints, she would text him even more than ten times within the hour.

So, he would just wait for her to call or text.

He waited.

She did not call or text.

So, he texted this message as he walked out the gate of his workplace that night.

“You Prime Minister resign.”

“Yes mi see.” Alexandria texted back.

“I am passing by your house, should I stop”

“Yes”

Alexandria was surprised at how quickly he knocked at her door, *was she losing time again?* She wondered.

He stood outside in front of the door.

She peered at him from inside.

Tonight, he was happy, feeling in control not stressed or angry at all, she sensed.

He walked in, pulled her in his arms and said,

“I miss you, no arguments tonight ok”.

“Ok.” She agreed.

“Mama Rosa!” Rosalind handed the red stripe beer to the man standing before her, glanced over at the man who had shouted out her name and answered,

“Yes Bola, wha yuh ah call out mi name fah?”

“Turn up the t.v. mek mi hear di news deh.”

The bar was getting busy. Rosalind reached for the remote, turned up the t.v. and got busy serving the usual drinks to her well-known patrons.

“Wha dem a seh about mi Prime Minister now?” Mikey pulled a chair closer to the t.v and sat, his eyes glued to the tube.

“Him should a whey resign long time.” Mama Rosa couldn’t help but saying, which resulted in loud raucous laughter from her patrons.

Mickey nudged Bola and said to Mama Rosa,

“Wha yuh a seh true he give up Dudus?”

“Mi nuh bizness wid Dudus but him nay hav fi kill off the 70 an add people fi get to Dudus, him no betta dan Seaga”

“The whole a dem in a them garrison politics even your gyal Portia” Mickey declared adamantly.

“Mi nah get in a dis wid you tonight, the place ah get busy.” Rosalind grabbed the dish cloth and briskly walked towards the recently emptied table.

“Shorty, di usual fi you right?” Rosalind asked the man walking towards her as she wiped up the spilled drink off the table.

She was being carried to that cold dark place. That place that always fill her with fear. That place where invisible ugly dead looking people lived whom always seem to be silently watching her from the darkness. She could feel his strong arms carrying her there to that place where she dreaded. As he walked to that place, she watched the scenery pass her by. It was the middle of the night. The fear increased. She wrapped her legs around his hips, holding on tightly to

him afraid that she would fall into the darkness and they would catch her. Then, she felt the pain and began to cry.

Her eyes open wide; she sat up in bed and wrapped her arms around her.

This isn't a dream, she thought, *it is a memory.*

Her phone rang.

She glanced at the name of the caller and sighed.

It was him.

She ignored the call.

It wasn't wise to answer; they would only end up in an argument, she thought.

Besides, she knew that she hadn't gone back to him even though she had slept with him the night before.

The sadness crept upon her as she sat there trying to get a grip of her mind and trembling body.

Some years ago, it was as though her mind had open to a whole new level, a level where she couldn't comprehend. Her brain felt like it was short circuiting all the time. Aside from all the other weird things she was feeling and seeing, her thoughts seemed to be going too fast for her to even think straight and she was remembering things in detail that she didn't even know she could remember. Not to mention

how her body had started to function. This had been occurring for years now, these dreams, nightmares, “knowings” and visions which even occur when she was awake. It only got worse when she spent time with him. Things only got worse when she spent time with him. She knew deep down in her heart; it wasn’t wise allowing him to visit, seeing that they were not together anymore but she kept on hoping that this time it would be different. It hadn’t been different. She slipped out of the bed and began to clean the house.

Tristan ended the call and resisted the urge to throw the phone at the wall. He had been calling the whole god-damn day. *She was not answering!* He knew what that meant. *Why the hell do I keep on doing this to myself,* he asked himself. He should leave her alone. She keeps on leaving him anyway. It is clear what she wants is to be left alone. He glanced over at the guys waiting on him in the car and made a decision.

September 27, 2011

Tuesday - 7 pm

So as I was saying, the second time I saw you was a week before election day in December 1997.

It was a festive night that night; everybody was dressed in their colours and out to hear the politicians speak at the PNP rally. Then, Falmouth was considered a PNP stronghold and so it wasn't a surprise to see almost everyone I know clad in red and at the campaign venue. So I was on Queens street, you know where the PNP office used to be before they move it to where it is now, I was there among the many followers joining in the clamour shouting and clapping to the speech of jobs for the youths and better roads for the community etc etc. I wasn't really interested in the speech much but just there with Sammy and Clara and their friends revelling in the excitement of politics. Though I wasn't a "staunch" PNP advocate mom and auntie Bobbette was and that night they had dragged us along to hear and see the politicians that were running for the seats, it was just expected that we would vote for PNP, it really didn't matter who was running for the seat. Then it was okay to shout to the labourites (JLP) that they should put the x at the head instead of the bell and only "power" will reign we don't need no "shower" in the place – not sure if you can say that now – now everything is a bit more serious as you already know.

So, in all the excitement I turned around and saw you standing a little distance from me with your friends, my heart

skipped a beat as I covertly watched you watching the show being displayed, it became erratic when one of your friends called to Sammy and all of you walked over to where we were and joined our group of friends.



September 28, 2011

Wednesday – 7:15 am

Although I saw you that night during the election campaign, I really spoke to you on Christmas Eve at a Christmas Eve party that's really when yours and my life became entwined. Let me try to tell you this detail by detail.

It was in the afternoon, Christmas Eve day 1997; I was out at Auntie Bobbette's gate waiting anxiously to see the bicycle man riding towards me with the food we had ordered from Burger Castle. Although the name suggests burgers, that wasn't what we had ordered. We had ordered rice and peas and curry mutton which I had not eaten in a long while. Added to that, I was extremely hungry, so I was waiting impatiently for the delivery guy to show up. I was outside there at the gate when Johnny

drove by, (you know him well he's one of the guys in your group of friends that you use to hang out with then) Johnny had honked his horn and shouted for Sammy. She didn't hear him. He saw me and handed the two invitations to me instead. "Tell her to come" he begged, and I immediately asked if I could come too. He hesitated then shook his head, "sure, you can come" he said.

Justin and Ryan had called several hours before, to tell us that they were on their way from Kingston. Justin had invited me to go with them (he and Ryan) to the grand market kept in Brownstown, St. Ann every year. Well that was before they moved it to Falmouth square some years ago, back then the grand market was always kept in Brownstown. I have never been to the grand market but had always wanted to go. However that year, I thought it wise to go to the party instead of going out with Ryan and Justin.

You know, I need to tell you a thing or two about Justin and me. Give you a rough history of our relationship. Well, bring you up to speed as to why I thought it wise to go to a party instead of going with Justin and his friend to the grand market, an event that I had always wanted to experience. Hell, I will talk to you about Justin a little bit later when I feel strong and brave enough to talk about him and when it doesn't hurt so much to

talk about him. For now suffice it to say, I thought it was wiser to go to the party than go with Justin and Ryan. In retrospect, maybe I should have gone with Ryan. For sure, my life would have taken a different turn; I would have chosen a different path. Well that is, if there is no preordained destiny for each one of us, right.



Her phone alarm went off, and she pushed the notepad away.

This will have to wait.

I must get out of the house today!

Today I must go to Falmouth, she reprimanded herself.

She hadn't ventured out of the house for days.

The sinking feeling of trepidation gripped her.

What would she face once she stepped out of her house today? She wondered.

What would she come home to find? She asked herself.

She would come out of the house.

She should not allow the same thing to happen again, Alex reminded herself.

Alexandria Prescott mentally shook off the feelings of fear and foreboding and went to get ready.



It was Wednesday. The busiest day of the week in Falmouth. Added to the usual ‘bend down day’ event that happens every Wednesday, where people from as far as Kingston and as near as Martha Brae came to buy and sell their wares, there was now two cruise ships docked at the Falmouth Pier and tourists were being ferried up and down the streets.

A taxi swerved around the corner and Alexandria jumped out of its way. She slammed the taxi door shut and quickly apologized to the driver who had started to cuss. She had slammed the door too hard, he complained. Alexandria sighed, *yes, my day has begun*. She gave a grateful smile, and mouthed a thank you, at the male driver who had slowed down for her to cross and rushed across the main road. Upon crossing, through the corner of her eyes, she noticed the antique looking sign at the front of Martha’s supermarket and quickly glanced

around her looking at all the shop signs. She frowned. They were all done in the same black and white Georgian style frames and looked ancient. *Falmouth has changed since the last time I came here, only three weeks ago*, she thought. Actually, the big changes were made to the town of Falmouth several months ago in March when the Falmouth Pier was officially declared open. However, little things were still changing in Falmouth daily. Alexandria was just noticing some of those changes.



She walked around to the Falmouth square. It took her breath away. The old water fountain was spraying water and no longer looked old! There were now beautifully decorated signs posted at the water fountain and at the Albert George Market. Flowers were strategically planted at different locations giving the square a garden look and the square now had old brick tiled floor and even chairs for people to sit on. Alexandria was impressed. It was a great improvement from the

last time she had seen it; old, dirty and trodden down, the new look made even the business place located in the square looked well, particularly the furniture store Courts, painted in yellow and blue and the National Commercial Bank, NCB also painted in yellow and blue. *What a pity it was only fixed up because tourist would be coming here, she thought.*



Alexandria walked around the square reading the signs.

The signs planted at the fountain informed her that Falmouth was the first parish to receive piped water even before New York. It also stated that the Falmouth water square was the original Sunday marketplace where the enslaved slaves and later peasants sold their provisions giving the location its second name which was Market Square. It mentioned that “the market remains a major shopping event particularly the Wednesday bend-down market”. Alexandria sighed and wondered why they didn’t state that bend-down was given its

name because at the time of its inception, all items were normally located on the ground and people had to “bend down” to pick them up to look at or buy. *That would be interesting information for the tourist*, she thought. The next sign planted at the Albert George Market informed Alexandria that the Albert George Market was more than a hundred years old and was once the largest market in the country. The market was named after the grandsons of Queen Vitoria. *Another thing we got from Britain*, Alexandria thought as she walked away from the sign.

Market Street was busy, crowded with tourist from the cruise ship and with the locals who were busy going about their daily life. The street was filled with colours, white, black and brown people dressed in assorted styles, colours and fashions. Alexandria was standing out at the Falmouth post office. She looked around her wearily and joined the throng of locals who were on their way to work. She stared at the many buses parked on the street side, lining one side of the road from one intersection to the next, listened and watched as the men shouted at their prospective passengers trying to coerce them into choosing their bus to take them to their destination and felt confused and unsure of where she was going. She saw one of the guys they often referred to as the back-up boys for the buses and went over to him.

“Prescott!” he cried out,

“Yuh goin to Mobay?” Alex shook her head in reply and asked,

“Where is the Hague taxis?”

“Ovah deh soh” He pointed to the gas station.

“Thanks!” Alexandria didn’t know his name.

“Prescott, you know you still look good!” He said in parting as he smiled at her. Alexandria smiled as the words “still look good”

echoed in her head and darted across the road to where the Hague taxis were parked.



In the early 70's to late 80's, Hague district was considered the place to live by those of the poorer Falmouth residents' second generation educated children. At that time, Hague was considered a suburban community who prided themselves in being middle class, educated professionals who were constantly striving to be in a better financial and social position than their forefathers. By the late 90's when the then P.J. Patterson led government with the aid of the Chinese contractors started their project to build the highway 2000 road that ran pass Hague district the community had increased in numbers but not of the correct kind of community members, in the older resident's opinion. At the time of the inception of the building of the Highway 2000 road, the government was faced with the problem of relocating many of the squatters from the surrounding area where the road was going to be located. Though the government had the right to throw the squatters off government owned land, the squatters had nowhere to live. After many quarrels and demonstrations by the squatters and the public at large, the government finally made provisions for the

squatters by relocating them to government land that was in Hague. Hague like Falmouth was now going through some major social changes. Nevertheless, it remains a relatively small community that keeps on growing which houses the only pepper factory in the community and its environs as well as several dilapidated garment factories ran by couple overseas companies, heavily backed by government funds.

Alexandria Prescott gave the taxi driver a five-hundred-dollar bill and slipped out of the front seat of the car. The taxi driver handed her the change and asked,

“Do you know what a man needs?” Alexandria laughed and replied.

“No, I definitely don’t know what a man needs, Simon.”

“Alright, I will tell you the next time mi see yuh.” Simon said as he slammed the car door shut. Alexandria sighed and slowly walked into her mother’s restaurant. *No, she definitely didn’t know what a man needs.*

Rosalind Thompson was having a lousy day. Her only employee had called in sick, which meant that she had to call in sick at her job again for there was no one else to operate the little restaurant & bar establishment that she had running. Alexandria wasn’t dependable but Rosalind had called her on the off chance that she could come help her out. Alex walked into the restaurant and Rosalind smiled; *Alex was glowing today.* She looked radiant as though a light was surrounding her and emanating from deep within. It wasn’t often anymore that she saw her child glow like this. Love and pride rushed through her. She resisted the urge to rush to her child and cuddle her,

protecting her from the world and everything in it so that she could keep on glowing like that and said instead,

“Alex, mi glad yuh cum!” Alex threw her bag in the chair and looked around.

She didn’t want to be here; she was already feeling it, those awful feelings that always swamped her the moment she stepped into her mother’s restaurant.

“Yuh alright?” Rosalind watched the light emanating from Alex dissipated and began to worry.

“Just the thing that always happen when I am here, I will be alright” She assured her mother.

“So, what’s wrong with Enid?”

“The same ting whey always wrong with Enid me need somebody else fi run di restaurant.”

“Mama Rosa yuh deh yah?” Alex frowned, shook her head as her mother motioned to her to go serve the customer and silently begged her mother to go instead.

“Please just give me five minutes and I will be ready to help.” She whispered.

“Mi caan believe it seh di prime minister resign man, a him mi when vote fah.” The young man stopped talking, laughed, shook his head, took the joint from behind his ear, pulled the lighter from his pocket and lit the joint.

“You know seh a di first time me a vote!”

After taking two puffs he handed it to Tristan. Tristan passed it on to Tommy who was leaning against the car.

“You vote fi him cause yuh a idiot, mi maddah seh a only two kinda people vote fi JLP di very rich and di idiot dem.” Tommy took a draw.

“you nuh rich so you a one a di idiot dem.” Tommy deduced as he took another draw from the joint.

“Mi when vote fi PNP, me when vex when dem nay win.” A young man in the group said laughing hysterically as he puffed heavily on the spliff. A heated argument about politics ensued between the two men until Tommy cut them off by saying,

“Wha yuh a seh you can’t believe, him an Shaw get enough money out ah poor people, him can afford to resign, mi wish me when have sum a dat deh MILLIONS dem get from IMF, you know wha me would ah do wid dat deh money deh bwoy.”

Tommy grinned and looked up in the sky, as the others laughed and agreed that they could use couple millions, even couple hundred thousand would do.

Bradley felt the need to state the obvious.

“But ah Shaw dem ah seh ah go run di country next.” He took the joint and took a long draw passing it back to the young man standing beside Tristan.

“So him must see noh get enough money yet!” another crackle of laughter from the group.

“Or Holness, mi nevah see him as a man fi run di country, him caant even run di education system well and dat a fi him ministry.”

Another marijuana joint was lit and started making the rounds as the conversation continued.

“Fuck!”

“Mi when know seh Golding would ah in a shit from him give up Dudus, Golding own ah people dem a ton pan him an him know seh Christopher dudus a go give di Americans dem all di information about him, soh it wise fi him fi resign before dat happen.”

Tristan inhaled the scent of the marijuana.

He liked the scent of it even though he did not smoke.

Someone handed him a beer; he took a sip and nodded in agreement with the group of young men who surrounded him.

“From him go in ah power him bruck all him promises to di poor people and di youths dem.” The young man said as he blew out smoke creating circles in the air.

“Whey di free education deh?”

“It noh free at all and whey di new jobs dem deh?”

“Whey dem deh!”

“Lawd deh gyal yah deh come up di road look good!” Tommy slapped Bradley on the back jumping up and down excitedly and shouted,

“Gyal yuh a say one, yuh look good eehh”

“I would take you home to meet my mother.” Bradley added and the other men began to whistle, laugh and jeer.

“Hi Mr. Davis” The girl called out, smiling sweetly as she passed the men.

“Soh ah so you a do it, you ah go dis me soh,” Tommy gave his bad man stance,

“a only Davis you see out yah?”

He held out his hands for a touch from the girl and screwed up his face to show his disapproval when she only laughed and passed him by.

Tristan’s phone started ringing he glanced down at the number and automatically felt guilty. He walked away from the crowd and answered the phone.

Tristan walked over to the old bus stop which was in front of the Courts building and looked around for Alex.

She was not there.

He was about to call her when he saw her across the road, chatting to two men.

He walked over to her and picked up one of the heavy bags at her feet.

Greeted the men and asked Alex if she was ready.

“Thanks for coming Tristan,”

Kurt, one of the men she was talking to, took up the other bag as Brian said goodbye.

Tristan started walking towards where the buses were.

“I didn’t have anyone else to call.” she explained apologetically.

As they walked over to where the buses were. A barrage of backup boys surrounded them. One tried to take Alex’s bag intent on placing her in the bus he was loading.

Alexandria began to act weird, seemed confused and unsure as to which bus to take.

Ignoring the guys’ comments and calls to come into whichever bus they were packing, Tristan led the way.

He was getting angry, upset even.

Alexandria was acting weird again.

He hated taking the bus, hated when the backup boys acted that way and by now, he should own a car, picking her up and driving her home not taking public transportation.

Alexandria was never alert, he fumed, she took any bus and that could get her in trouble.

And he was tired of her acting weird, of her trying to control his very existence, of her taking things for granted, of her never listening to him, of her being stubborn and, and, and...there were so many things wrong with her!

Alex slipped out of the vehicle and took the bag that the conductor handed her. She slowly walked behind Tristan and watched him walk ahead of her. The dog ran out to meet him, jumped on him excitedly. Tristan barked a command to the dog which went unheeded.

“Alex hurry and open di door noh!” Tristan commanded.

Alex tried to get the dog to move instead.

Tristan got even more upset.

“Just open the damn door!” he shouted.

Alex gave him a look, slowly found the key, and open the door.

“Look at that you always have to do your own thing.” He dumped the bag on the floor and glared at her.

“I was just trying to help.” Alexandria explained.

“How yuh a go help?” he asked,

“All you needed to do is open the door so I could get in the house and away from the dog.”

Alexandria sighed she knew it made no sense explaining to Tristan what she could have done. He would not believe her and there was no proof.

“I could have helped.” Alexandria said firmly and began to unpack the goods from out of the bags.

“The dog would have listened to me if you”

“You have done the worst thing possible” Tristan declared.

He stared at her with hatred.

“How you think that mek me feel?”

Alexandria was beginning to think that Tristan was on something. Sometimes he seemed to get into such rage for the slightest thing she said or do, things that she just could not understand why they got him so mad.

“You slept with Justin, you fucking whore!” His voice was loud enough for the neighbours to hear.

“Alex yuh play me, you fucking bitch!” Alex instantly felt embarrassed and ashamed.

“And wha you doh?” Alex shouted.

“Nutton as bad as you, yuh in love wid him, fuck!”

“And yuh just call me when yuh need me like me noh have feelings, me tired ah you a use me.”

Tristan slammed the door shut.

Alex stood in stunned silence and disappointment.

She was hoping that Tristan would stay. She wanted to spend some time with him.

She resisted the urge to run after him and slumped down unto the floor.

Tristan hates me, she acknowledged.

I will not call him again, she promised herself.

With that resolve, she pulled herself up from off the floor and began to unpack the grocery bags.

But Alex had never been good at keeping that promise.

September 28, 2011

Wednesday – 8:30 pm

As I have said before, I really don't know how to tell you my life's story. It's hard to tell you my story in a long straight line saying

this happen, then this happen and then this happen which is how it should be right? Usually, in life one thing happens which leads to another thing which leads to another thing and so on but my life hasn't seemed like that to me and my memories aren't coming out like that. My life has felt more like a circle with many circles within overlapping simultaneously sometimes. Well, let me just say it's a cycle. When I think of my life – how I have been living, a washing machine comes to mind with its water whirling the clothes around the spinner thingy inside going round and round and round. So I've decided to just put my life's experiences that I've had so far into little headings so you can follow the jumbled sometimes chaotic process of my thoughts, my actions – my mind flow.



She screamed, jumped up out of the bed, grabbed the phone with the intention to call him and instantly remembered that she had promised herself not to, so she rushed to the bedroom light switch instead, then laughed because it didn't matter if the light was on. *But it helped!* She decided and went around the house turning on all the lights. I can manage this, she told herself, after all it is not as bad as it used to be. He and I are no longer involved. She reminded herself. What he is doing is not my concern.

“This is just a dream.” She told herself firmly.

“They are all just dreams.” She kept on saying until she felt calm and sane enough to go back to sleep.

September 29, 2011

Thursday – 1pm

JUSTIN

As I sit here writing this letter to you, I get a little scared. I am no longer certain if I can hand these pieces of paper to you once I am finished writing what I need to tell you. My courage is failing me. Now, I find myself thinking that maybe this was not such a good idea after all. While it is a noble idea to want to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth – tell you the truth, have you get to know the real me, I find myself reluctant to speak this particular truth.

As I’ve said before, telling the truth is hard. Accepting the horrible, negative truth about oneself is even more difficult. For some people that I know, facing the truth about themselves, the reasons why they do things, accepting all that they have done in their life’s span is difficult and remains elusive. They never seem to reach the point of realization that although all of those experiences – good & bad – have helped in making them who they

are at this moment, their past deeds, experiences, mistakes, bad choices does not have to keep them in an eternal prison. At any point, one can make a different choice. Change the flow of things. Change the cycle – the rhythm that your life flows in.

So here I am, trying to change my rhythm – my life's flow and in doing so hopefully get out of my 'eternal invisible prison'. Now, how do I be bare, naked before you? How do I get over this fear that's gripping me, this fear of being embarrassed, ridiculed and look down on by you – my judge and executor? You will see me differently after this, maybe even more so than you already do.



The sound of her phone alarm brought her out of her reverie. It is News Time, the reminder said. She was trying so hard to keep abreast of the events of the day but was failing miserably. She decided not to watch the news and instead got up and got ready for bed. Once in bed, she scrolled through the phone that showed several missed text messages from Tristan. She was about to read the first one when she heard a knock at the door.

“You are not answering your phone.” He reprimanded.
Alexandria moved out of the way so he could come in.

“Are you hungry?”

“Yes.” She answered.

He handed her the KFC bag and walked in.

September 30, 2011

Friday – 5am

You know, I know not everyone can handle the truth that we are all only human beings who are flawed, who will make mistakes but hopefully grow from them. And yet so many of us, me included, uses this very excuse – that we are only human - imperfect beings, flawed individuals to excuse our evil deeds. Yet I have come to see that we can be so much better than we are, I won't use that excuse anymore. “Being only human” doesn't excuse the wrong that I have done or caused. Enough of my musings, this is the part that most don't like about me anyway, here goes, I am just going to go ahead and tell you what I did.



Andre Prescott looked around him and sighed heavily. He told Jermaine never to do this, never to bring the green stuff to his house. Nonetheless here

he was in his living room surrounded by stacks of it packaged and ready for shipment piled high in every available space. Luckily Jennifer, his woman for the moment and the official owner of the house - unofficially it was his house, he was the one who had paid for it, knew all about his profession. Still, it wasn't wise keeping the stuff around. The police could stop by at any time. Going to jail was not part of his plan. He carefully, very slightly pulled the curtains aside and peeked out the front window of his house. He scouted the area. Still no cops in sight. The stuff will be safe here till morning, he decided.

Andre slowly, very carefully let go of the curtains and lit a joint. It relaxed him enough that he no longer worried about the cops. Instead, his mind wandered to his family. Those he had left behind when he walked on the plane at Sangster's International Airport, Montego Bay that Monday night. No one had known that he was leaving. There was no fanfare, no goodbye hugs and kisses. He planned it that way. His passport said Alec Thompson. He had calmly walked through customs and out the door unto US soil. Jennifer picked him up and they had driven straight to the house in Miami. He spent two days in bed with her and then got right down to business. That was several months ago. He hadn't spoken to his family since then. But on occasions like these he remembered them, wondered about them and worried about them. Andre's mind rested on Alexandria.

"Alex" It was just a soft gentle wisp of a whisper, not loud or as though he was shouting or even screaming out her name. That meant that he wasn't in any danger. Although sometimes there were many different voices shouting in her head, some she wasn't sure she knew, Alexandria recognized his voice immediately. She sighed with relief. She hadn't heard his voice in such a long time; she had started to

believe that she could not hear him any longer. Alexandria didn't know how to turn this thing on or off so she wasn't sure how it worked but Alex knew for certain she could recognize her brother's voice. He was calling her – thinking of her tonight. The images of where he was flashed through her mind. She looked around the living room through his eyes, saw the marijuana and sat up straight in bed shook her head vigorously as though trying to get the images out of her sight and thought...*Dre!*

September 30, 2011

Friday – 9am

I met Justin when I was six years old. He was eleven. Samantha and I were playing in the front yard. Sammy saw him first and thought he was cute. I looked up and over at the boy to see if my cousin was right, so far, the boys she thought were cute I did not. At that age, I didn't see boys as cute. He had very cool dark, black skin and beautiful white white teeth. He was smaller, shorter than the chocolate brown girl standing beside him. He seemed sad and alone, I thought. He stared at me as though he had heard my thoughts and was agreeing with what I just thought. It was as though we connected across the distance of the yard. I felt a jolt of energy, physical attraction rushed through my body and for the first time, I liked really liked a boy.

They introduced him to me as my half-brother. His full name was Justin Thomas Saunders. Justin and Juleen were my Dad's kids. They explained to me why Justin and Juleen's last name didn't match ours. The story goes like this.

Dad met Justin's mom, Jacqueline Saunders in Kingston when he was in his last year of college. I think it was a one-night stand or something because the day they brought them to our house in Falmouth was the first time Dad laid eyes on them. By the time Jackie found out that she was pregnant, my Dad had already finished college and moved back to Falmouth. At their birth, Jackie hadn't bothered to put the name of their father on their birth certificate, for she wasn't quite sure that they were really Dad's. She gave them her last name instead so that it would match with the other two kids last names that she already had. Justin and Juleen were her third and fourth kids respectively. I don't think Jackie had intended to let Dad know that she had his kids but she couldn't take care of them, and she left them with her mother, when her mother died those that were taking care of them who knew she had been with Dad brought them to Dad.

September 30, 2011

Friday - 10pm

I was six; they were five years older than me and fraternal twins as Andre and I are. Dad was often applauded for his prowess as a man. He had "hit" it twice having twins two times. Must be something in his juice, his male friends would laugh and say. Like me, Justin was the first born. Though Juleen always acted as though she was the older one and Justin often times allow it, unless it got out of hand. He came out ten minutes before Juleen while I came out eighteen hours before Dre. I was born at 9pm on March 22, while Dre was born at 3pm on March 23. So now, I was no longer the older child in the house, I now had a bigger half-brother and sister. I was elated.

From the onset, Juleen and I never got along. And even as a child, I understood why. You know that story; it's no different from so many others.

So the dynamics of our family changed after Justin and Juleen came to live with us. Dre and I easily adapted to our new extended family. It wasn't any big deal to us to have two more persons living at our house. Dad bought another bed and placed it in our room. Juleen and I slept on one bed while the boys slept on the other.

From the start, Juleen and Andre got along immediately. Justin and I warmed up to each other eventually. In the first few months that Juleen and Justin started living with us, Justin and I really didn't talk much. He had his own problems and I had mine.

When we were growing up, Justin always looked younger than his age. He was smaller than the other boys, enjoyed reading instead of playing football and was the darkest one in our family. A point that Auntie Bobbette often liked to point out, so you know, he had his share of taunts and jeers and for a time, as he grew older those taunts and jeers got worst.

We became friends one weekend down Granny V's house. He found me crying out at the old broken down board house at the back of the yard. It was the kitchen but got burnt out and so Granny V no longer used it. However, it was still intact enough for someone to go inside and close the door. I was leaning against the banana tree glaring at that old burnt-out kitchen and crying my eyes out. He tried to comfort me. I remember that he brushed my tears away with his small dirty hands. Justin had been playing marbles in the street with the new friend he had made and had come around the back of the yard to wash his hands. As he brushed away my tears, I held on to his hands and begged him

not to tell. I knew, he knew. He had seen where I was coming from and with whom. He hugged me tightly and promised not to tell. He told me everything would be alright. We both knew it wouldn't. Juleen came around back looked suspiciously at me and Justin hugging, holding on to each other tightly and informed Justin that Granny V wanted him to go to the shop. When Justin left, Juleen grabbed me, shook me hard and told me I was a whore. That she knew and she would be telling. But she never did tell my parents, though she told others. Instead, Juleen used her knowledge of all the accumulated "bad things" I did in those early years as a leverage. For many years, Juleen would get me to do whatever she wanted by just threatening to tell. Well, after that day Justin and I got close. He taught me to do all the guy stuff that I wanted to learn like playing marbles and such a like. And through the years that followed, we would only get closer. Justin was gentle, attentive, listened to and understood me when I talked. Something no one else seemed to do. Then, it seemed as though, he talked to me about everything and anything. And too, there was that unmentionable secret that we kept between us.



Revelations

**Don't forget the Journey.
How you get to where you are
at presently. Is important!**

As we grew, he became my best friend then lover.

The cock-a-doodle-doo sound of the rooster and the bright sunlight through the windows which indicated that she didn't need the electric light to write, told her that she had stayed up all night writing. She closed the notepad, curled up on the bed and fell instantly asleep.

October 1, 2011

Saturday – 11:10am

The first time it happened, it happened in Kingston at Cousin Greta's house. We were staying there for the summer. Justin had just turned thirteen and I was eight.

One night, when all the adults were out of the house partying or doing some other stuff and the other kids had sneaked out of the house to go on the main road to watch and count the cars passing by – a game we played most nights, Justin and I decided to stay in and watch the horror movie that was showing on the t.v. Those times there were only one local station and its name was JBC not TVJ as it is called today. When the movie ended and I went to bed, I became afraid to sleep alone in the room I shared with Juleen and Cousin Greta's daughters

Brenda and Cynthia so I crawled into the bed that Justin shared with Dre and Carl - Cousin Greta's son.

He didn't ask what I was doing in his room. Instead, he pulled me close and when his hands began to touch, feel, explore, roam I didn't stop him. I lay still and let him touch me. Then, I showed him what I knew, had been taught and had learned.

The feelings were intense, sexual, sensual, loving, gratifying. I climaxed without the feeling of shame, guilt or fear surrounding me. He was the first person that I willingly, openly gave my body to. And Justin would thereafter hold a special, confusing place in my heart.

The next morning I woke up in my own bed with my night gown soiled and dirty. Later that day Justin told me what I had done. That after he and I had had sex and I fell asleep I scared him by getting up, unlocking the front door and began walking out to the street as though I was headed home. I even crossed the busy road. It took him a while to realize that I was sleep-walking. He had observed me for a while, walking behind me then caught up to me and had lead me back to the room I shared with the girls and had kept watch until the other kids came back into the house then went back to the room he shared with the boys.

After Justin told me what I had done, I remembered what had really happened. That night, after our love making and Justin and I fell asleep I began to dream. Remember, I had been watching horror movies earlier in the night so at the time I thought I was having a nightmare.

I became aware that the room Justin and I were in was filled with darkness. And that Justin and I weren't alone in the room. There were many people in the room with us and they were watching us. Someone came to me and took my hand. It was a woman dressed in pale white. I didn't see her face. I just had an impression that it was a young woman. I felt her determination to take me somewhere far away from where I was and she began to lead me there.

I remember hearing the car horns, walking on the road, watching myself being led by her, hearing Justin shouting my name and finally feeling his hands grabbing my shoulders.

I didn't tell Justin that I had remembered. For some reason I was afraid, scared to speak about the things that I had felt, seen and experienced that night.

The next year, our family unit changed again. Juleen, now fourteen years old was according to Mom, "acting like a big woman" and there would be only one big woman in the house. As

you may have guessed, Mom and Juleen had many fights, one in which Juleen declared that she wasn't staying and Mom declared that Juleen didn't have to stay. So Juleen and Justin were sent back to their Mom's relatives in Kingston.

For the first year Justin came to visit every holiday and sometimes even on weekends. I knew he was coming mostly to see me. Well, that was what my little nine year old heart thought at the time. As I am not really sure why Justin came each holiday or why he stopped coming after that first year or why we never saw him again until three years later. There are many things about our past that Justin and I just don't discuss. Memories that I would like to fully understand – clarify. Things that I find I need to know, when I had asked him about them some years ago, his reply had been – no regrets Alex, leave the past in the past, live in the now. Good advice I know but one which I find I don't know how to follow and there are times when I am not even allowed to try to follow this advice.

My past keeps on creeping back into my present and seems as though it will be staying as an unwelcomed guest to greet me in my future.



She got up from the computer desk, went to get some coffee, stood staring out the window at her neighbors backyard for several minutes and watched for hours as two birds made their nest in the tree near her window. The hours went by without her noticing and suddenly it was nightfall. When night fell. She went back to the computer desk and continued writing.

October 1, 2011

Saturday - 7:47 pm

As I sit here writing, I look at the fact that everyone always have regrets, some more than others, it is a part of living and the past never stays there - dead and buried. Your past experiences have a hand in creating your present and helps to mold your future. It is the building block from which your house - your home is built upon. That house that you have to reside in for the rest of your life.

What you learn as a child is what you build upon as an adult and continues to live out through your entire life time.

The house - your home that your mind resides in can only change depending on the knowledge of the one building it - you the builder. Which blocks does the builder keep to make the foundation strong? Which ones does he reject? How will the builder use the raw materials given to him to build the house so that it will

withstand the test of time? That is the question for me today. I cannot change my past; I can't even change what happen yesterday, I don't know how to, but I want to change my future.

I want to use these present materials I have, to build a stronger, sturdier foundation – to build a better, more peaceful, beautiful home to live in. My mind is the greatest asset I have, if it's not functioning right, then my house that I'm building will be filled with cracks hence it will easily crumble and fall.

Well, I have been rambling once again, let me get back to the story I am trying to tell. What I remember is that Justin was the reason why I finally stood up to him.



Alexandria pushed the papers away from her. *I can't write this*, she thought. She went to turn the tv on and spent several hours in front of the tube surfing the cable channels for shows that would make her laugh. She didn't find any.

She turned the key in the lock and pushed the door open. The house was in darkness. She bumped into a pot on the floor, sighed and spoke out loud in frustration,

“I need to clean dis place!”

Kicking the pot out of her way, she dumped the two heavy bags at her feet and pulled her handbag open.

It took several minutes for her to find the phone. Using its flashlight to guide her way, she walked to the light switch and flicked it on. Alexandria wasn't surprised when the light didn't come on.

The kitchen light is out again. She thought.

Maneuvering her way through the pots, pans and other knick knacks on the floor, she made her way to the nearest light switch and flicked that light on.

She surveyed the messy kitchen, took in the unwashed dishes in the sink, the empty open dusty cupboards, the pots and pans that she had placed on the dirty floor earlier that day in order to spray the cupboards and the dead cockroaches scattered on the floor, and decided to rest a bit before unpacking the goods she had bought at the supermarket.

Alexandria mentally listed all the things she should do before going to bed as she headed to the bedroom. Clean her bedroom for a start! *Hmmpff*...I'll just lie down for ten minutes or maybe fifteen then unpack these things, she thought.

She noticed the suitcase first.

It wasn't in the place where she had left it.

It was on her bed, open.

She noticed the drawers next.

They were all slightly pulled out.

Someone had gone through each one looking for something.

One of her handbags was on the floor, its contents emptied.

Alexandria picked up the purse and looked through it, as expected, the two one hundred U.S. dollar bills that she was keeping for her mother was not there. The thief must not have seen the five two U.S. dollar bills that her Dad had given her for safekeeping because they were

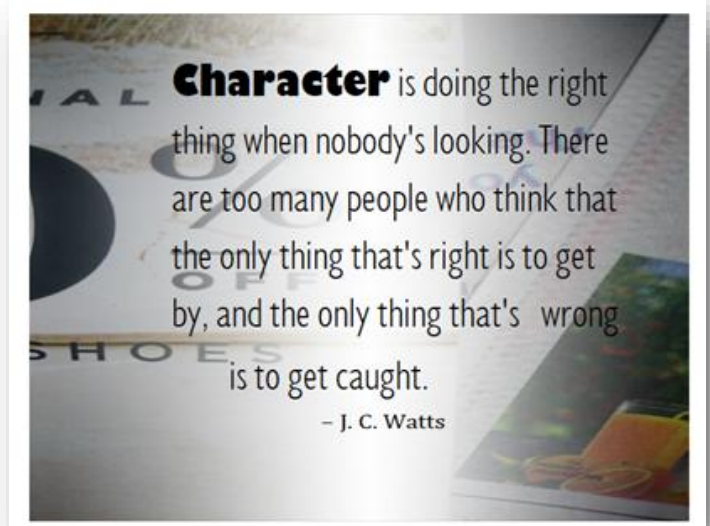
still there. How could she have forgotten to take the money with her when she was leaving, she berated herself.

She stared at the piece of newspaper clipping that several days before she had taped in the inside of her purse as a reminder and read the quotation, “Character is doing the right thing when nobody’s looking. There are too many people who think that the only thing that’s right is to get by, and the only thing that’s wrong is to get caught.”

– J.C. Watts. Alexandria laughed, gently lay the purse on the bed and slowly walked into her brother’s room; with a sinking heart she walked around the room looking at the mess the thief had left.

They came into the house again. The doors are still locked, how had they...he gotten in this time, she wondered. Alexandria Prescott walked over to the door facing her, the door leading to the unfinished house her parents were still building and turned the knob. The door wasn’t locked, just closed. She must have forgotten to lock it last Sunday when she opened it to let some fresh air in while her cousin Tanya and her kids were visiting. She thought that they would have liked some cool breeze and so she opened the door. *The thief must have come in through here and closed the door on his way out,* she supposed. Since the last time they had broken in, she had become even more careful when locking up. Alexandria let out a big heavy sigh. *I guess I wasn’t careful enough.*

Ting-a-ling...Ting-a-ling...the sound of her phone alarm went off, pronouncing that it was seven o’clock. NEWS TIME the phone



reminder prompted. Alexandria searched for the remote, clicked the tv on to the local station. The Prime Minister came on; she didn't hear what he was saying, the tv signal went down. She zipped up the suitcase, placed it back in its place, then brushed aside the clothes that needed to be ironed and slumped onto the bed.

“Where is God?” The old woman cried.

Alexandria was just about to turn the tv off, the image of an old woman looking distraught filled the screen,

“Where is God’s angels to protect us?” The reporter took the mike from the old woman and explained the circumstances for her outcry. Gunmen had gruesomely killed an old couple that was well known and loved by those of the neighborhood. The old woman was a friend of the couple, and she didn't see any reason for anyone to want to kill such good people.

Alexandria turned the tv off.

With the old woman’s cry echoing in her head, she slowly walked to the bathroom.

Why wasn't there any good news? She asked.

Because good news don't sell. She answered herself.

Where is God indeed...is there a God? Alexandria mused.

“Oh, No, No, No!” Alexandria stamped her feet down sturdily on the ground, glared at the toilet water, willing it not to flood over unto the bathroom floor.

Dear God, what more can go wrong? She silently asked.

Standing in the foul filthy toilet water now flooding the bathroom, Alexandria began to cry noiselessly.

The tears rushed down her cheeks as she dragged her tired body to where she kept the old newspapers stocked in the corner of the kitchen near the rubbish bin and began to lay the newspapers out on the floor, a newspaper heading caught her eye, “Healing Words” the caption said, “York woman uses words to heal wounds”. Alexandria

noted the date of the gleaner, Sunday January 30, 2011 and began to read its contents. It said,

YORK, S.C. (AP):

The composition books she writes in are the same ones elementary school kids use – the black and white bound ones with the white ruled pages and wide lines. She has so many note-books filled with words, and she fills more each day. As Christmas approached, the day that celebrates the birth of her Lord, this woman named Ida Neal Lord used the word “love” at least four times in her latest notebook, which is all about overcoming what happens when there is no love.

“Love conquers all,” Lord said at the York Adult Day Care Center, the place she spends her weekdays every day of her life where she is the one and only author-in-waiting. Where this 45 -year-old woman lights up the place with her face – a face that once lay on a cold floor, covered with blood.

If you get shot in the head by a maniac on Valentine’s Day 2008, and then have to re-learn how to eat and walk and read and write – there is plenty to write down.

Alexandria paused, looked up in the ceiling and wondered what she was doing on Valentine’s Day ‘08. She went to the notebooks she recently packed up into a small cardboard box and rummaged through the books, when she found the book dated January – April 2008 she ruffled through the pages and read the page dated February 14, 2008. *Yes, that was what I was doing, the same thing that I did the year before and maybe the year before as well.* She continued reading.

Ida Neal Lord will not be denied. She writes it all down.

The story she writes is about a mother of three and a nursing aide for hospice patients who goes to a check-cashing business to get money to wire to a brother in prison.

There, somebody who has shot three people before - and robbed even more at gunpoint – shoots her in the head for no reason.

For good measure, he shoots her in the back as she lays on the ground.

The woman somehow survives surgeries and a coma and re-learns how to do everything. But only to a certain point.

Some wounds to her head and body cannot heal. Bullets tore away too much of that head and spine that tell the body what to do and how to do it.

NOT A NOVEL

That is not a novel. That is what happened to Ida Neal Lord on Valentine's Day 2008, and what she has lived with every day since.

And somehow, at that adult day care, Ida Neal Lord walks in, with a metal brace like a cane with four feet, and smiles.

And each day Lord, a mother of three boys and a grandmother of eight, takes out her composition books and writes it all down.

"Ida has such a determination, a spirit, a joy for living, that none of us can figure out where it comes from because she always has it," said Dee Curran, director of the adult day care in York.

"She never gives up."

Nursing assistant Regena Hawes calls Lord, "Our author. Our greatest treasure. Our celebrity."

A woman who gained celebrity because she was shot. A woman who limps through the grocery store or Walmart, and people clap. They just stop and applaud when they recognise the cane, and the smile, wrought from the barrel of a gun held by the worst serial shooter in York County, ever.

She writes it all down, how people are nice to her and help her continue.

"I love them all," Lord said.

HELP

With help from one of her grown sons, Lord has found a self-publishing house that will publish that book for about US\$1,700. Women who have been shot and have had to re-learn every part of life, do not have US\$1700.

Lord has social-work help, an apartment in public housing after a life of living from the sweat of her labour, and little left over. She has asked Santa Claus, in her Christmas list written in one of those

composition books, for a CD player for Christmas because hers just broke.

That is what Philip Watts, serving eight life sentences and deserving every one of them for crimes so brutal and cold, has given Ida Neal Lord every day of her life.

Yet Lord forgave Watts long ago.

“I pray for him every night, when I read my bible,” said Lord.

Then, after prayers for the man who shot her, Lord somehow lays her head down to sleep.

She wakes early and faces another day of trying to eat and walk and using her right hand to write.

Her left hand is clasped shut forever - a reminder of violence unleashed on her for no reason at all other than meanness.

She plans on calling the book *Anu Beginning*. A play on words, instead of ‘A New Beginning’.

“That spelling might be catchy,” Lord said. “I know the right spelling. But I want it to find people.”

“I just hope to get this published, so somebody might be inspired not to give up, like I don’t give up.”

On Ida Neal Lord’s Christmas list is only that CD player. The other thing she wrote cannot be purchased. It can only be earned, then given.

“I want better people, who love each other more,” Lord said.

“That is all I really want.”

“A better world for people, with more love in it.”

The other heading read, “Food For The Poor donates computers”. The advertisement below that stated, “ONE conversation can change so much SWITCH to First Caribbean and gain real benefits!”

Why does everything seem to have spiritual meaning to me nowadays? She asked herself as she took note of the words “*one conversation can change so much...*”

Alexandria flipped the newspaper over. Digicel’s logo declared its slogan – Jamaica’s Bigger Better Network. The full-page ad said,

“Good Luck to our Ambassadors in the youth view awards 2011 - Young, Hot & hype.” Alexandria sighed. This isn’t for me, she thought.

At thirty-five years old, Alexandria Prescott no longer considered herself to be - Young, Hot & Hype. The ad featured pictures of six popular, well-known Jamaicans, age ranging from 21-30. Deejay and dancer Ding Dong, singer/dancehall artist Tiffa, reggae artist I-Octane who had a song with the lyrics “noh bwoy khan play in a mi dread”. Though Alexandria wasn’t sure if I-Octane had accepted the Rastafarian religion or was just sporting the dreads as a hair style, as some of the Jamaican artists were apt to do. T.V. and radio personality Ms. Kitty (who helped to make the word “fluffy” promoting “Big/fat-PHAT” women popular), Yendi Phillips – the previous host of *Digicel rising stars*, holder of several beauty titles including Miss Jamaica World 2007, Miss Jamaica Universe 2010, first runner up to the now reigning Miss Universe 2011 and current girlfriend of Jamaican sprinter Asafa Powell. Disc Jockey Bambino – one of the three judges of *Digicel rising stars* 2011 completed the six. Alexandria glanced at the pictures once more, nodded and affirmed, “Yes, this isn’t for me.”

She placed the newspaper on the floor, brushed the tears from her eyes and chuckled. *Love conquers all*, hadn’t she proven those words to be false, weren’t those words her motto for many years until recently.

She wasn’t sure God was in control.

Or if there was a God.

What if there wasn’t a God?

And if there is a God, God and his angels seem to be standing aside, just watching, allowing the evil to take over. Anger and