

RHYTHM

a Carter Couple



Brian BJ Hall

—◇◇ OneKindScience.com ◇◇—

****RHYTHM****

A Carter Couple Novel

by

Brian B.J. Hall

Inspired by the standard set by Beyoncé and Jay-Z

For the ones who know when to stop performing the old version of power
and start living the real one.

FADE IN:

****BLACK SCREEN****

A low, steady beat begins — not aggressive, not flashy. Just clean. Precise. Confident.

White type fades in:

****RHYTHM****

Beneath it:

****a Carter Couple****

Finally:

****by Brian B.J. Hall****

The beat continues as we hear the soft sound of bare feet on a wooden floor — counted steps,
controlled breathing, a body that knows exactly where it is in time.

****INT. DANCE STUDIO – NIGHT****

A large, mirrored room. Only one set of lights on.

TIFFANY (early 30s, athletic, precise, the kind of beauty that comes from discipline) moves
alone across the floor. No music playing aloud — she carries the count in her body. Every
extension is clean. Every landing is silent.

In the shadows near the door, ANDRE (early 40s, soft eyes, quiet gravity, the weight of a legendary career in the way he stands) watches without announcing himself.

Tiffany finishes the phrase, chest rising, and finally sees him in the mirror.

She does not startle.

****TIFFANY****

You're early.

****ANDRE****

You're exact.

She walks to the barre, picks up a towel, and studies him in the glass.

****TIFFANY****

Most people clap.

****ANDRE****

I'm not most people.

A long beat. The respect between them is already physical.

****TIFFANY****

Studio's closed.

****ANDRE****

I know the owner.

****TIFFANY****

That supposed to impress me?

****ANDRE****

No.

It's supposed to explain why the door was unlocked.

She almost smiles. Almost.

****CUT TO BLACK.****

****TITLE CARD: RHYTHM****

****ACT ONE****

****INT. ANDRE'S STUDIO – NIGHT****

A private recording studio in Atlanta. Warm light. Vinyl on the walls. The kind of room that has made history and still smells like ambition.

Andre sits at the board. A young rapper (early 20s, hungry, performative edge) is in the booth, headphones on, spitting a verse full of the same violence and myth that built the last generation.

The verse ends. The young rapper waits for approval.

****YOUNG RAPPER****

That's the one, right? Keep it gangster. That's what they want.

Andre is quiet for a moment too long.

****ANDRE****

It's clean.

But I've heard that story before.

****YOUNG RAPPER****

Because it still works.

****ANDRE****

Does it?

The young rapper laughs like the question is a joke. Andre doesn't.

****INT. DANCE COMPANY REHEARSAL SPACE – DAY****

Tiffany leads a group of dancers through a punishing combination. She is not cruel, but she is uncompromising. When one dancer's timing slips, she stops the room with a single raised hand.

****TIFFANY****

Again.

If the count is in your body, the audience never has to think about it.

If it's only in your head, they will.

They run it again. Perfect.

From the doorway, Andre watches. This time Tiffany sees him immediately.

After rehearsal she walks over, still breathing hard, towel around her neck.

****TIFFANY****

You make a habit of watching women work?

****ANDRE****

Only the ones who make it look like more than work.

She studies him.

****TIFFANY****

I've heard your records.

****ANDRE****

And?

****TIFFANY****

They're good.

Some of them are great.

A few of them sound like a man trying to prove he still knows how to be dangerous.

The observation lands clean. Andre does not flinch.

****ANDRE****

And what do you think I am?

****TIFFANY****

I think you're too smart to keep playing a part you've already outgrown.

But I also think the industry likes its legends familiar.

She walks past him toward the locker room.

****TIFFANY****

If you come back, come when I'm not working.

I don't audition in front of an audience.

****INT. QUIET ATLANTA RESTAURANT – NIGHT****

They sit across from each other. No entourage. No performance.

****ANDRE****

You always this direct?

****TIFFANY****

I don't have time for the long version.
My body has a clock on it. Every year the industry gets younger and more flexible.
I don't waste movement. I don't waste conversation either.

****ANDRE****

Fair.

****TIFFANY****

Why are you here?

****ANDRE****

Because when I watched you dance, I stopped thinking about the beat I was supposed to be making next.
That's rare.

Tiffany turns her glass slowly.

****TIFFANY****

I'm not looking for a producer who needs a muse.
And I'm not interested in a man who still needs the streets to validate him.

****ANDRE****

I'm not offering either.

****TIFFANY****

Then what are you offering?

Andre meets her eyes.

****ANDRE****

Whatever version of me still feels true when the music stops.

She holds his gaze for a long time. Then she nods once — small, precise, like a count.

****TIFFANY****

We'll see.

****INT. ANDRE'S CAR – NIGHT****

They drive in comfortable silence. The city moves past the windows.

****TIFFANY****

You can drop me at the studio. I left my bag.

****ANDRE****

I can wait.

****TIFFANY****

You don't have to.

****ANDRE****

I know.

The simplicity of it lands. Something in Tiffany's posture softens by a degree.

****INT. DANCE STUDIO – LATER THAT NIGHT****

Tiffany stretches on the floor in warm-up clothes. Andre sits against the mirror, long legs stretched out, watching without crowding her.

For a long time the only sound is her breathing and the occasional shift of his weight.

****TIFFANY****

Most men try to fill the quiet.

****ANDRE****

Most men are scared of what the quiet might say.

She looks at him over her shoulder.

****TIFFANY****

And you're not?

****ANDRE****

I'm more scared of the noise I've been making for the wrong reasons.

She turns to face him fully, still seated on the floor.

****TIFFANY****

Then stop.

The challenge is quiet and absolute.

Andre nods once.

****ANDRE****

Working on it.

****FADE OUT.****

****ACT TWO****

****INT. INDUSTRY PARTY – NIGHT****

Atlanta elite. Music, money, reputation in the air.

Andre moves through the room with the ease of a man who has belonged here for twenty years. Tiffany walks beside him in a simple black dress that makes the rest of the room look like it's trying too hard. They do not cling to each other. They simply stay in the same rhythm.

A younger executive approaches Andre with a drink and a smile that doesn't reach his eyes.

****EXECUTIVE****

We need that old Andre on the next project. The one who still knew how to make people nervous. Numbers don't lie.

Andre's expression doesn't change.

****ANDRE****

Numbers also don't tell you when the story's expired.

The executive glances at Tiffany, then back.

****EXECUTIVE****

Just think about it. Legacy is one thing. Relevance is another.

He walks off. Tiffany watches him go, then looks at Andre.

****TIFFANY****

He's not wrong about the industry.

****ANDRE****

He's not right about me either.

She studies his face.

****TIFFANY****

Don't let them talk you into becoming a museum piece that still has to bark.

****ANDRE****

I won't.

****TIFFANY****

Good.

Because I will not stand next to a man performing a version of power he no longer believes in. I'll respect the legend. I won't live with the costume.

The boundary is clear. Andre absorbs it without argument.

****INT. ANDRE'S HOUSE – NIGHT****

A beautiful, understated home. No ostentation. Just quality.

Tiffany walks the living room while Andre pours two drinks. She stops in front of a wall of platinum plaques and old photographs.

****TIFFANY****

You kept all of it.

****ANDRE****

I earned all of it.

Doesn't mean I have to keep living inside it.

She turns.

****TIFFANY****

Show me the version of you that doesn't need the plaques.

He sets the drinks down, crosses to her, and kisses her.

It is not flashy. It is certain. Timed. The kind of kiss that already knows the count.

When they break apart, Tiffany's voice is quieter.

****TIFFANY****

Again.

He kisses her again — deeper this time. Her hands find his shoulders. The control they both live by begins to loosen in the same rhythm.

****INT. ANDRE'S BEDROOM – LATER****

The room is dark except for the city light through the windows.

Their intimacy is physical, precise, and almost nonverbal. Bodies that understand timing, breath, resistance, and release. It is intense without being performative. Feral without being careless.

Afterward they lie in the quiet. Tiffany's head rests on Andre's chest. His hand moves slowly along her back.

****TIFFANY****

You're different when you stop trying to prove something.

****ANDRE****

You're different when you let someone catch the rhythm with you.

She lifts her head to look at him.

****TIFFANY****

Don't make me regret that.

****ANDRE****

I won't.

****INT. RECORDING STUDIO – DAY****

Andre is alone at the board, working on a track that has no guest verse, no threats, no borrowed mythology. Just feeling and structure.

The young rapper from earlier appears in the doorway, listening.

****YOUNG RAPPER****

This ain't what they asking for.

****ANDRE****

I know.

****YOUNG RAPPER****

You good with that?

Andre doesn't look up from the board.

****ANDRE****

I'm good with the truth.

The rest is marketing.

The young rapper watches him for a moment longer, then leaves without another word.

****INT. DANCE STUDIO – EVENING****

Tiffany runs a difficult phrase over and over. Andre sits on the floor against the mirror, laptop open, working with headphones on. They share the space without needing to fill it.

At one point Tiffany finishes a combination and finds him watching her instead of the screen.

****TIFFANY****

What?

****ANDRE****

Nothing.

Just remembering why I stopped needing the loud version of everything.

She walks over, still catching her breath, and rests her hands on her knees so they are eye level.

****TIFFANY****

Say that when the next big check comes with the old requirements attached.

****ANDRE****

I will.

She nods, then leans in and kisses him once — quick, claimed, then gone — before returning to the center of the floor.

****FADE OUT.****

****ACT THREE****

****INT. HIGH-LEVEL LABEL MEETING – DAY****

Glass walls. Expensive water. The kind of room where careers get redirected.

A senior executive slides a contract across the table toward Andre.

****EXECUTIVE****

This is the one that keeps you at the center of the culture. We need the edge. The myth. The version of you that still makes the suburbs a little nervous.

Andre looks at the contract. Then he looks at the city outside the window.

****ANDRE****

I've told that story.

I told it well.

I'm not telling it again just because it's still profitable.

****EXECUTIVE****

You're walking away from a lot of money.

****ANDRE****

I'm walking toward something that still feels like mine.

He stands. No speech. No drama. Just the decision, made cleanly.

****INT. TIFFANY'S APARTMENT – THAT NIGHT****

Tiffany opens the door. Andre stands there with no performance left on him.

****ANDRE****

I said no.

She searches his face for the cost of it. Finds it. Also finds the relief.

****TIFFANY****

Come in.

****INT. TIFFANY'S APARTMENT – LATER****

They sit on the floor with takeout containers between them, backs against the couch. The city hums outside.

****TIFFANY****

You know they're going to call you soft.

****ANDRE****

They've called me worse.

Most of it was true at the time.

****TIFFANY****

And now?

****ANDRE****

Now I only want the things that can stand next to you without looking like a costume.

She sets her food down, crawls into his lap, and rests her forehead against his.

****TIFFANY****

Then stay in time with me.

****ANDRE****

That's the only count I'm interested in.

Their kiss this time is slower. Deeper. The kind that belongs to people who have already decided.

****INT. DANCE STUDIO – MORNING (WEEKS LATER)****

Tiffany rehearses. Andre works in the corner with headphones. The shared silence is comfortable, productive, intimate.

At one point she walks over, takes his headphones off, and pulls him to standing.

****TIFFANY****

Dance with me.

****ANDRE****

I don't dance.

****TIFFANY****

You will.

She places his hands where she wants them and begins to move. He follows — not perfectly, but honestly. Their bodies find a rhythm that has nothing to do with an audience.

****INT. ANDRE'S STUDIO – NIGHT (MONTHS LATER)****

A finished track plays — mature, confident, free of borrowed danger. Andre sits back in the chair. Tiffany stands behind him, arms around his shoulders, chin resting on the top of his head.

****TIFFANY****

It's good.

****ANDRE****

It's true.

****TIFFANY****

Same thing sometimes.

He reaches up and holds her arms in place.

****ANDRE****

Stay.

****TIFFANY****

I'm already here.

They remain like that while the track plays out — two people who found the same rhythm and refused to let the industry, the past, or the old myths pull them off the count.

****FADE OUT.****

****THE END****

The Carter Couple trilogy is now complete in full script form:

1. **Drunk in Love** — Trey & Chanel
2. **Appetite** — Darius & Elena
3. **Rhythm** — Andre & Tiffany

Each one stands alone. Together they form a clear statement: powerful love, chosen daily, lived without costume.