

Already Lived

Bre Jour

The bathroom was engulfed in yellow tile that lined the walls from the floor to the ceiling. You could stand in the middle and touch both sides of the room with outstretched hands. It gave a pleasantly eerie glow in the early morning light, casting shadows of white daisies from the shower curtain on the toilet and sink. Dasia squatted over the toilet, balancing on the tip of her toes. Trying to aim the flow of urine exactly on the tiny applicator. "Okay, Lets see how good my aim is." She adjusted her weight to one side as she felt the warm fluid run down her leg.

"Damn it," she cursed, dropping the pink and white plastic stick into the toilet bowl. "Great, just what I need right now." She reached down for the pregnancy test, now completely drenched in a mixture of urine and water. Holding the test in one hand, she reached for the towel bar, jerking the rag off the handle, the entire thing came crashing down. "Ah fuck me! I should've gotten the one with a cup." Thinking back to late last nights, she remembered why she hadn't. She was going for the higher quality brand, but found that she only had twenty dollars in her pocket. So, pharmacy brand it was.

Dasia sank to the floor, not bothering to clean up the mess she just made. She let the water from her eyes wash her face. "What am I going to do? Lord! Why is this happening, now of all times?" Pulling herself up, she began to clean the bathroom. She took a shower and got dressed in blue jeans, sneakers, and a white polo shirt. She did her hair in a puffy ponytail, and went downstairs for some breakfast.

The kitchen smelled of pine sol and bleach. The only window's shade was pulled down, preventing any natural light from entering the room. A bouquet of old lilies sulked over the brim of their vase, sat on the sill. Rita was sitting at the table, reading the back of the cereal box and munching on Cocoa Krispies. Her hair hung loosely, barely reaching her shoulders. "Next time you want to have a party in the bathroom, let me know so I can leave. All that damn noise early in the morning is *not* called for. Shit, it's freaking 7 o'clock. You've been in there for two damn hours. What the hell are you going through?" Rita tugged at her oversized t-shirt, and bounced her leg up and down over the seat as she ranted. The ears on the fuzzy bunny slippers she wore on her feet flopped from side to side.

Dasia ignored her mother's complaints as she made her way to the kitchen cabinets to grab a bowl. It was always something every morning. "*You're too loud,*" or "*You can't speak, you think you better than me.*" The cabinets used to be all white, now they appeared soft beige from years of neglect. Even the glass centers lost their shine, aging the old china kept on the shelves even more.

"Morning Mama," Dasia sighed.

"So, you not gon' answer me when I'm talking to you?"

"Yes, mama, and no, nothing is wrong, I'm just a little tired."

"Tired? Shit, from what you don't do nothing. Witcha lazy ass. Don't worry, you gon' end up just like me. Pregnant at 17, for some no-good loser, and ain't gon' have shit. Least now I gotta man taken care of me. You better do something witcho'self. Shit, I ain't responsible for your ass after next year." Dasia wanted to respond, *I go to school all day, what's your excuse*, but she didn't. she held her tongue, again, and fixed herself a bowl of cereal. The bus would be coming in about fifteen minutes. She ate, standing up, the table was cluttered with old magazines, TV guides, and mail. Her mother's boyfriend, Greg came into the kitchen. He walked right pass her and sat down on her mother's lap. She pretended like she couldn't hear them whispering and giggling in the background.

“Later mama,” Dasia called as she grabbed her bag to go.

“What, you can’t speak to Greg?” Her mother shouted. “Bye,” Dasia mumbled as she rushed out of the house.

On the bus, Dasia’s mind was racing. She only had enough money for lunch. How was she going to get another pregnancy test without anyone finding out? And how would she tell James that she might be pregnant? She contemplated going to the free clinic. Yes, that’s what she would do. But when? She would have to skip 6th and 7th period, again. Skipping. That’s how she got into this mess now. She thought about what her mother would say. *‘Fast! I knew it. I could tell you gave your stuff up. With your nasty self. Keep on though, I don’t care. Got one more year to deal with your ass.’* It was funny how she could predict every word her mother would say. Ok. The clinic. She would take bus 32 to get there before they closed. First things first, she would get to the clinic to confirm what she felt was true. That she was in fact pregnant. She would have to have proof first before she could tell James. The bus ride was short and she got to class as soon as the bell rang.

The day sped by and soon it was two o’clock. Dasia signed herself out and ran down the street to catch the bus. The ride felt unusually long. A light drizzle came down outside. She rested her head against the window and tried to push down the negative thoughts about her mother and James’ reactions. Her mother made it painstakingly clear that she would be on this ride alone. So, it was time to start thinking about her options.

The waiting room was stark and white. The walls were plastered with posters with prevention messages of abstinence and safe sex measures. Some even showed the effects of contracting an STD. There was a jar on the counter with condoms a rainbow of colors and sizes. Dasia sat on one of the hard metal chairs, waiting for her name to be called. She rapped her fingers on the arm of the chair for five minutes. There was no one else waiting. She started to get nervous, but couldn’t tell if it was butterflies or nausea that caused her stomach to turn.

“Dasia-Blue Jones,” a short stocky woman came from behind the receptionist desk and called. She wore pink scrubs that highlighted the undertones of her pale skin. She was close to five feet tall, not quite there. Dasia could see over the top of her head. Her hair was light brown and looked like a pixie cut that was growing out.

“Yes, that’s me”

“Right this way sweetheart, the doctor will be in shortly.” Dasia was expecting a full work-up, height, weigh-in, and the other additional screenings a clinic would normally take, but none of that happened. Except for a brief questionnaire when she arrived, no one else interacted with her. And it didn’t look like no one else was in the office besides the woman who brought her to the small consultation room. The nurse, at least that’s what Dasia assumed her to be was right. It didn’t take long for the doctor to walk in.

When she walked in, the doctor was almost a foot taller than Dasia. Her hair was long and dark, resting right below her shoulders. She wore black framed glasses, slightly oversized for her narrow face. And her white coat was a pleasant contrast against her olive skin. When she spoke, her Caribbean accent was not what Dasia expected to hear.

"Hello, I am Dr. Reynolds. How can we help you today?" Dasia sighed and rolled her eyes. Why was she asking if the questionnaire was in her hands, and she could clearly see the *reason for today's visit* listed. Her thick block handwriting couldn't have been that hard to read.

"I think I'm pregnant," she replied, staleness in her voice. Dasia looked up at the doctor again. She was wearing all black with large red earrings. They danced as she scribbled the response on her pad. She bobbed one crossed leg over the other, the red patent leather catching the light with each bounce.

"Two things, when was your last menstrual cycle and when was the last time you had sexual intercourse?" Dr. Reynold's tone didn't change. It remained steady and even.

"About two months ago, for both." Dasia thought back to that day. She skipped her last two classes to meet James at his house. He told her he had something special planned and wanted to surprise her. Feeling excited, and not wanting to let him down, she obliged.

"Was that your first time?"

"Yes."

"Was it consensual?"

"Wait, what!? You mean was I raped? No!" Dasia exhaled. The room was spinning. *'What did I get myself into?'*, she thought *'This was a big mistake.'*

"I'm sorry, but we have to ask. Ok, what makes you think you are pregnant?" Dr. Reynolds adjusted her frames, and leaned in closer to Dasia. She was very still as she waited for Dasia to explain.

"I started feeling sick and throwing up every morning for the past two weeks."

"I see. So, what is your relationship to the person--"

Cutting her off, Dasia began to grab her bags, "Look ma'am, you asking a lot of personal questions. And I just came here to get the test so I can figure out my life. This is taking way longer than I expected it to already. I need to get home soon."

"Okay, okay, just a moment. I need to ask these questions because you're still 17. And while this clinic is confidential, we still need to take precautions for your own safety. This is what we're going to do for you. We are going to give you the pregnancy test, but also examine you and swab for any STDs including HIV. Is that alright?"

"What!? Oh no, HIV? I don't have no HIV! What is this place? What are ya'll trying to prove?"

"Dasia, I'm not saying that you do, but it's best to rule out everything so that you know where you stand. You won't believe how many people come in and are diagnosed who believed they didn't have it. When you take the risk of having unprotected sex, you owe it to yourself to get tested."

"Ugh! Fine, fine, let's just get it over with." Dasia sulked back into her seat.

"You'll get the results in about twenty minutes for the pregnancy and HIV tests. The other STD results will be ready in about two weeks. We can go over different support options if any of your tests come back positive." Dr. Reynold's stood as she spoke making her way out the door. "

“Yea, I know my options. Thanks.” Dasia avoided making any more eye contact with Dr. Reynolds. She was feeling everything at once. Confused, shameful, angry. She buried her face in her arms, and breathed deeply.

“Alright then, get undressed. The gowns are here, I’ll be right back.”

Dasia slipped out of her clothes and put the thin fabric on. She hopped up onto to the medical bed and leaned back. She closed her eyes and began to pray.