

Kiss and Tell

“**W**hat you doin’ in that bathroom, Essence? Spendin’ the rest of your life in there. Come on so we can go to Tiaja’s party.”

It was Saturday evening. Had the house all to myself. I was in front of my bathroom mirror putting on my chocolate lipstick when my road dog Sean was hollering from my living room.

“I’m coming, dag! Whatever happened to being patient?”

“Whatever happened to Tweet? Come on, so we can bounce on outta here.”

I groaned under my breath and tossed my lip liner into my purse. See, that’s why I hated depending on people because I like to take my time when getting ready. But it’s either get a ride to Tiaja’s house or catch the bus. So off in Sean’s Corolla I will ride in. Peeping into the mirror to make sure my honey blonde microbraids were in place and that my makeup was flawless, I straightened my black, crocheted top decked with stones and catwalked into the living room where Sean was sitting on my cream sofa.

Girl Talk

Looking up from his watch, Sean checked me out from my top to my black, hip hugging leather pants. “Damn!”

“What’s that damn for? Is it Damn, you look good!, Damn, you look tight! or Damn, you look fine! Which one is it?”

“All of that! You look like you got crazy loot!” At five foot nine, Sean had almond-colored skin as smooth as a baby’s butt and a ripped body that came from working out at the gym. Sean and I attend East Falls University where both of us are Broadcast Journalism majors. Sean wants to be like Sway on MTV whereas I wanted to be an entertainment reporter on Entertainment Tonight or Access Hollywood. . We’ve been partners in crime since the first grade at Mount Carmel Christian Academy.

“What you tryin’ to say? That I look like chopped liver most of the time.”

“See, I don’t even mean it like that. It’s just that you rockin’ this millionaire outfit on. Now we can find you someone at the party so you can be like Stella and get your groove back.”

“Oh no, not you too,” I rolled my eyes skyward. “It’s bad enough your girls Tiaja and Zana try to hook me with every guy and his best friend, but here you go jumping on the matchmaking bandwagon.” Like Sean, Tiaja, Zana and I also go way to elementary school. Actually Tiaja, Zana and I weren’t friends until the fifth

grade. Although we go way back like crayon boxes and crayola markers, they can be a pain in the ovaries with their matchmaking. If Tiaja wasn't trying to hook me up with one of her neighbors, Zana was trying to match me up with one of her buddies from church. If Zana wasn't trying to play Cupid between me and this guy she met downtown, Tiaja was trying to play Love Connection

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with me and one of her co-workers. It was getting on my last nerves.

Sean asked. "Why won't you let them hook you up? If you're not feelin' them you can drop them like a bad habit."

"Yeah, but having folks constantly hooking you up with this guy and that guy is like saying you can't find anyone on your own." I slipped my arms into my black, leather jacket.

"But you can't find anyone on your own."

"Excuse me, Sean. But let me let you know I don't have a problem finding anyone. Besides, I don't go finding men anyway. They better find me."

"Yeah, but that guy who finds you has to be fine, intelligent, enunciates all his syllables and come with a debit and credit card."

"He doesn't have to come with a debit and credit card. But he does have to be fine, intelligent, cute, funny and articulate. And he has to be thoughtful, a good dresser and have goals. And he has to take me to shopping sprees at Neiman Marcus. And trips to Tahiti and Egypt. And he has to rub my feet and paint my toenails."

"Take you to shopping sprees at Neiman Marcus? Paint

Girl Talk

your toenails. You want a rich, whipped, white man then.”

“Rich, white, whipped man, rich, whipped, black man, rich, whipped, Hispanic man. I’ll take him just as long as he spoils me. But look, I just don’t want folks hooking me up.”

“Well, you don’t have to put on a wedding dress and marry the dudes. Although it has been a minute since I danced at a wedding.”

“I still don’t want any hookups. Besides, I had a bad experience with someone hooking me up. You remember, Dawn, right? She was a year ahead of us at Mount Carmel. She was light-skinned with like light eyes.”

“Yeah, I remember, Dawn. That girl had a big butt. You could sit a tray of drinks on that jawn.”

“Anyway,” I rolled my eyes at his comment. “I’ll never forget when she hooked me up with her cousin Paycheck. His mama should’ve named him Onion because he was hell on the eyes. That guy was soooooo ugly, Sean, he made Lil Wayne look like Boris Kudjoe.” To say I was disappointed when I saw him waiting to meet me in the school’s parking lot afterschool in the eleventh grade is an understatement. As sexy as his voice was over the telephone, I imagined him to be tall with sparkling white

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teeth, skin the color of a Twix bar and a body for days. Well, Paycheck was the opposite of that. He looked like someone beat him with the ugly stick, ran him over with the ugly truck and then dropped an ugly bomb on him. He was short and super skinny with beady eyes and had more gold in his mouth than at a jewelry counter at Zales'. So he broke number two and three in my book. Never date an ugly guy. And never date a guy with mouth full of gold, platinum or diamond teeth. I told everyone to call me Samantha that day and jumped on the first charter bus home. "See you gon miss out on having a good man being superficial like that. It shouldn't be how the person looks on the outside. It should be about how they treat you." Sean said, sounding full of the brown. And I don't mean chocolate.

"Oh give me a freakin' break."

"For real. Sometimes you have to sacrifice the face for the personality. Like he can be ugly as hell just as long as he treats you right."

"So you mean to tell me if you met a girl who was feelin' you, and she had a nice personality, but looked like the Crypt Keeper, right? You would give her the time of day." I faced him after pressing the code into the burglar alarm system.

Girl Talk

“Oh, never that, never that.” Sean headed out the door to his car. “The only thing an ugly girl can do for me is introduce me to her cute friend.”

Twenty minutes later we arrived at Tiaja’s house. And when I say her house was packed with folks, it was packed. I never seen so many people inside a house in my life. Not even after a funeral, or on the night of a prom. People were everywhere profiling, running their mouths off, laughing, drinking, eating and getting their dance on to some Ludacris song. Of course, you had a lot of folks booty humpin’ and crotch grindin’ all over the place. For a minute there, I thought I was in the middle of some porn except people were sexing each other with clothes on. Most of the brothas wore shirts and baggy jeans. Some of the girls were dressed in tight-fitting jeans and fancy blouses. Others wore skirts and high heels. Of course you had those skankified chicks who looked like bootleg versions of Lil Kim. As Sean was headed in his boy Isaac’s direction, this skinny girl whose sand-washed denim skirt and baby blue belly shirt had about as much material as my wash rang and her ghetto-looking friend with the swap meet weave switched over to him and was all in his face.

I shook my head and watched Sean exchange flirty smiles

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with his tacky admirers. I swear some chicks really think they're the shit when they look a hot ass mess. Zig-zagging through the party goers, I scanned the crowded, living room for Zana and Tiaja and found them in Tiaja's kitchen talking and drinking by the sink. As I eased over to them, I ignored these quintet of roughlooking, need-a-comb-a-brush-some soap-chlorine-and-bleach brothas who assumed my name was shorty. Why is it always the dirty-looking, ghetto brothers who are the main ones trying to get at somebody?

"Hey y'all!" I greeted my girls when I bounded towards them.

"Oh yeah, Essence! Oh yeah! Your outfit is sick!" Zana exclaimed.

Tiaja agreed. "Ain't it though! I love those leather pants!

They are sharp! What size are those?"

"A size six."

"A SIZE SIX!" Tiaja was sizing me up and down. "You gonna stop playin' with me! The only time my big butt can get into some size six leather pants is unless I dream about it. Shiiiiiiiiit, I can't even get my damn foot in no size six."

Zana and I laughed at Tiaja's delivery. Tiaja was what the

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majority would call thick, meaty or big-boned. She had wide hips, big legs and huge, Queen Latifah boobs that made my 34Cs' look like two raisinets. When I first met her, I thought she was mixed because of her yellowish-tan complexion and long, silky hair, but both of her parents were undoubtedly black. Zana, on the other hand, was three inches shorter than me at five-four with dark brown skin, dark, deep-set eyes and a smile that can light up an entire room. Her hair was styled in a short, layered crop like Regina from The Steve Harvey Show except Zana had plum-colored highlights in her hair.

My eyes roamed around the house and watched everyone enjoying themselves. "I'm telling you, Tee, this party is off the hook!"

"Speaking of off the hook, there this guy I want you to meet. You see that guy right there," She pointed to this lightskinned guy standing by the living room steps talking and laughing with some short, stocky guy sporting a pair of black, baggy, Sean John jeans and a matching jacket. "Well his name is Chris. Isn't he fine?"

I scrunched my face like I smelled someone bust their buns. I haven't been at this party for a good ten minutes and already

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they're starting with this Let's Make A Match shit. Do they really think I can't find somebody on my own? Don't get me wrong. The guy wasn't butt ugly. As a matter of fact, he was nice-looking. The guy had soft, curly hair with long eyelashes. In my opinion, he was too nice looking and that was rule number four in my book. Never date pretty boys. Why? Because they fall in one of two categories. They either think they the new shit of the night because they're so use to girls throwing themselves at them, or they were the biggest playas on earth. Now that I think about it most pretty boys fall under both categories. Plus why should I have to fight with a guy over the bathroom mirror?

Zana said enthusiastically. "And check this out? He's an entertainment law major at Temple University so you know when he graduates he's going to be making money. Plus he models on the side too."

"And girrrrrrrl he drives this gold Lexus his parents gave him for his high school graduation that's bad as shit!" added Tiaja. He drives a gold Lexus. And he's a model too. Oh hell no! Now you can't tell me that dude didn't think he was the greatest thing since the microwave. "I hate to break this to y'all, but I don't date no pretty boys."

Girl Talk

Tiaja rolled her eyes. “You don’t date period. The boy drives a Lexus. Hello, need I say more?”

“And hello, need I say again I don’t do the pretty boys. I’m sorry, but I don’t like dating a guy whose skin and hair is softer than mine. And I bet you his girly face, modeling ass spends more time in the mirror than I do.”

“You can tell you’re a Virgo cause you’re so picky,” scowled Tiaja. “I mean, who will you date? You don’t date guys shorter than you. You don’t date guys a lot taller than you. You don’t date guys who are too skinny or too big. You don’t date gruff-looking guys. You don’t date ugly guys. Now you’re saying you don’t date pretty boys.”

I corrected her. “No, no, no. I said I don’t date roughlooking guys.”

“Rough, gruff, tough. They mean the same thing.” Tiaja sighed and threw her hands into the air in exasperation. “That’s like saying I didn’t say he was ugly, I said he was unattractive.” She mocked in a voice full of attitude which is probably how my voice sounded. “Look, I suggest you stop being so stuck-up and get with Ritchie Rich over there. That way when you hook up with Chris you can get him to give me a ride home sometimes.”

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“Look, Essence,” Zana put her hand on my shoulder and stared at me. “If you think you’re gonna find the perfect guy, it ain’t gonna happen. You gotta take what you can get nowadays, or else you gon end up being by yourself.”

“And y’all gon end by y’all selves because y’all getting on my nerves. If I get with somebody it’s because I want to and not because y’all need me to.” I hated to sound like a bitch, but oh well. I just don’t understand how the sky is the limit for guys as to who they want to date, but for girls the limit is the sky. Think about it. If a guy said he didn’t want to date a girl who was too pretty, or he wanted a girl with long, wavy hair like Ananda Lewis, a small waist and an ass the size of Busch Gardens, it would be a closed case. But when a girl like me has her set of standards, I’m too picky. A double standard, I tell you. I left Match.com in the kitchen and headed to the dining room where everyone and their neighbors were now dancing to Ciara’s Get Up. Snaking through the crowd, I spotted Sean sitting on the couch talking and laughing with his boy and Zana’s boyfriend, Isaac and Tiaja’s new boyfriend, friend or whoever he is to her named Raphael.

“Excuse me, my brothas, but I need to talk to my boy for about a minute.” I grabbed Sean’s arm and dragged him away

Girl Talk

“What’s wrong with you?” He stared at me like I grew a second head when we were out of earshot.

“Your girls Zana and Tiaja playing Get-The-Hookup again,” I whispered hotly. “I love them like play cousins, but they’re annoying as pop up ads.”

“And you pulled me away to tell me that? Just tell them you don’t want no hook ups. Now, if you excuse me, it’s time for me to get my flirt on in this place.” He was about to stroll off, but I pulled the sleeve of his light blue and brown striped shirt.

“Come on, boy. Why you being like this? Besides I did that already, but they’re not trying to hear that.”

Sean shrugged his shoulders. “So lie. Tell them you already got a man.”

“Now we both know that’s not gonna work.” I said, then I ticked off each possible fact on my fingers. “Cause they’re gonna wanna see pictures of this imaginary man, talk on the phone with this man and eventually wanna meet this man.” Suddenly a 100 watt light bulb flashed into my head. Click! Click! Click! Why didn’t I think of this sooner? God, I’m good!

Cutting my eyes toward Sean, a naughty grin flashed across my face. “Unless I tell them I’ve been seeing somebody on

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the DL.”

Sean must’ve read into my mischievous look because he shook his head emphatically while taking a sip of his Incredible Hunk. “Oh hell no, Essence! Unt-unh, I’m not pretending to be your man.”

“Why?”

“Because that’ll never work.”

“Why you say that? Look, all we have to do is explain that we’ve been going together for a couple of months, but we’ve been keeping it on the hush-hush so we wouldn’t jinx things. We can just pretend to be a couple when Zana and Tiaja are around and then we break up once those tricks get off my bra strap.”

“Nope, nada, try again.”

“Okay, Sean. But remember you said no when you ask to copy my Biology homework.”

“All right, all right. If I do this,” Sean folded his arms across his chest and looked me dead in the eye. “What do I get out of it?”

“What you will get out of it is seeing your friend happy.”

“No, that’s what you’re getting out of it. I want to know what I’m getting out of it. I mean, do I get the benefits of being your man? Like you inviting me over your crib and cooking me

Girl Talk

dinner, giving me long, back rubs, writing my term papers for me when I'm too tired and letting me hit that on the kitchen sink afterwards."

"Boy, you done lost your head."

Nudging me in the elbows, Sean winked, took a sip of his drink and placed it down on the coffee table. "I'm just messin' wit you. But since you cool and all, I'll do it, but just this one time."

I pulled him in a tight hug and planted a kiss on the side of his face. "Thank you, thank you, thank you. See I knew you would see things my way. Now it's time to put on some bomb acting skills."

I searched the living and dining room for Zana and Tiaja. And sure enough I noticed Zana dancing with Isaac while Tiaja and Raphael was in an embrace as Raphael was whispering something in her ear. I didn't want to be all out in the open like on the dance floor for what I was going to do, but at the same time I wanted to be open enough where my road dogs would see me. Sean and I dodged a few people sitting, standing and talking on the steps as we bounded to the front of the bathroom door.

"Now I want you to kiss me with a little bit of tongue." I wrapped my arms around his neck and pressed my lips against his.

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I have to give Sean credit. He was a good kisser. Soft and passionate. Definitely not rushed or sloppy. And his lips were pillow-soft. I know we had to be fooling folks left and right.

“OH! OH! OHHHHHH!” Tiaja’s loud voice made me jump out of my skin. We broke apart and found Tiaja, Zana and Isaac staring at us with wide eyes and mouths. And they weren’t the only ones who saw Sean and I making out because out the corner of my eye, I noticed a circle of girls gathered by the fireplace murmuring among each other and shooting me stares hard enough to freeze a jug of water.

Zana’s body froze like a homeless Eskimo. “I know I’m not seeing what I’m seeing! That you two aren’t slobbering each other down in here!”

“You saw it all right!” grinned Isaac. “They were definitely slobbering each other down.”

“I thought you all was busy dancing.” I wiped some of Sean’s liquid of affection off my upper lip with the back of my hand.

“Damn that!” Tiaja answered, waving my comment off. “What the hell is going on between y’all two? I know y’all not messing wit each other.”

Girl Talk

Sean slung his arm around my shoulder. "Well, we wouldn't be kissing each other if we weren't seeing each other, now would we?"

"Since when?" Isaac's eyebrow wrinkled in suspicion.

"Hold up, hold up, hold up!" Zana demanded, closing her eyes like she was trying hard to digest what she just heard. "Stop, rewind and play this back! Did you just say y'all are seeing each other?"

I nodded my head, but had to pray silently over and over again for my face not to break into a grin. "Yeah, me and my boo are together. We would've told y'all, but we had to keep it on the DL so we wouldn't jinx things."

"How long have y'all been going together?" asked Tiaja.

"Two months." I quickly answered.

"Two weeks." Sean answered simultaneously.

"Well, we've been dating for two months. It's just that, uh, it seems like we've been dating uh two weeks because it's still so uh new to us." I explained when everyone shot me and Sean a strange look.

"Y'all been dating for two months!" Tiaja's eyes bugged out her head when I breathed a sigh of relief inside. Whew that was close! "See you wrong, Essence. Straight up wrong. Didn't

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even tell your homegirls. Your friends til the end of time. Your girls through thick and bone thin about this.”

“Because it was for me to know and y’all to find out. And guess what? Y’all just did.” Suddenly one of me and Sean’s favorite song Tell Me by P. Diddy with Christina Aguilera.

Sean grabbed my hand and a homecoming king like smile appeared on his face. “Oh this is my song! Yo I would love to stay and talk with y’all, but I have to dance with my girl on this one. Yo Isaac, man, I’ll holla at you in a little bit.”

“Mmm, go ahead and get y’all jam on, but we gonna talk later, Essence,” Tiaja said after we weaved through the crowd.

Zana chimed in. “Yeah, cause I’m feeling some type of way about this.”

“Did you see the looks on their faces?” I giggled into Sean’s ear when we were getting our dance on. “I’m telling you, their mouths were so wide a swarm of flies could flew right in.” Sean shook his finger at me in a condescending fashion. “I know. But you not right got me lying to your girls and my boy Isaac.”

“But I’m not wrong either. Look I had to do something to get them off my back.”

Girl Talk

“I gotta give it to you, SexxyWitSense,” He called me by my AOL screen name. “You’re a good kisser. You think you wanna go in one of the bedrooms?”

“Shut up, boy.” I grinned and playfully slapped him on his right arm.

Sneaking a glance over his shoulder, I tried my hardest not to bust out laughing when I caught Isaac, Zana and Tiaja huddled by the stairs staring at us with an ain’t-this-some-shit look on their faces. Little did they know it was all a plan to put a stop to their matchmaking and it was working like a charm.