

INEVITABLE

Chapter 1

REFLECTIONS

Giselle Mosely reclined on her grey, leather chaise as she reveled in the magnificent views of downtown Atlanta. The focal point of her living room was a floor-to-ceiling panoramic window that eventually sold her on the \$870,000 investment. She felt on top of the world whenever she looked out upon the bustling city of zealous professionals ranging from actors to musicians to politicians. Here is where childhood dreams could become reality – only if you possessed the irrefutable grit to outperform your competition. She sniffed her glass of Egon Muller Riesling and breathed deeply. After rolling the wine around her palette, she swallowed slowly. The \$2,000 libation was her favorite and she didn't plan on sharing for the occasion. The weather was seemingly not going to cooperate with the day that lie ahead as scattered showers were in the forecast. She tossed a throw over her swollen, aching feet and massaged her right ankle as she closed her eyes. It was hard to believe that 18 years ago she was stuck in her small hometown going nowhere fast. She smiled a confident smile as she glanced around the two-level penthouse. She remembered her realtor having to convince her that she not only could afford the hefty mortgage payment, but would also be able to completely decorate the 3,200-square-foot space to her liking. Giselle was so used to saving money that she'd forgotten how to spend it. But as she looked around, in awe of her second biggest accomplishment, a sense of pride arose within her. Basquiat's "Horn Players" gave her living room immense flavor. It was her beloved oil stick canvas that spanned the entire wall adjacent to her kitchen. Its colors spoke volumes while telling a quiet story of triumph and progression. She loved jazz and this particular piece paid tribute to those who Giselle deemed as the greats – Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. While she didn't have much growing up, she could vividly remember her mother playing old jazz records to cheer her up whenever she had experienced a rough day at school.

Giselle would constantly be teased for her second-hand clothing and worn shoes that she seemed to outgrow every three months. Because her mother and father had both dropped out of high school, they struggled more often than not. Despite the hardships, they managed to stay together. When her mother, Grace, found out that their family of two would soon become four, she threw herself into work, securing odd jobs here and there throughout the city. But with only one post office and two grocery stores within a twenty-mile radius, she couldn't find much. She volunteered at the local church and accepted offerings when the pastor felt like giving. She was also a local seamstress, altering clothes for neighbors and church members. Her father, Gerald, worked on and off at the Black Diamond coal mine and supported his family the best way he could. The nearest school was ten miles away. Giselle would walk nearly half a mile every morning just to catch the bus. She hated it but pressed forward as she knew that her parents didn't want her to experience life the way they had. "*Learn the value of hard work by working hard*", her mother would often say.

To escape her dismal life, Giselle visited her aunt in Atlanta during the summers. And while she wasn't rich, Aunt Gigi lived a much better life than her sister Grace. She was successful, intelligent, and everything that Giselle aspired to be. Except in the "men" department.

Giselle picked up a picture of the last memory of her and Aunt Gigi. Her health had noticeably started to deteriorate when Giselle began the juris doctorate program at Emory University. She rubbed the outline of the silver frame and wiped her tears as they began to fall. She died in February - three months before her graduation. Giselle wished she had been able to let her know how much she was appreciated. Her aunt had inspired her to become a lawyer. Gigi used to joke that she would one day need Giselle to rescue her from her crazy boyfriends. One late summer day, when she was about 11 years old, Giselle remembered returning to find her aunt's then boyfriend, William, hovering over her with a hammer. Even though she was young, Gigi's frightened eyes somehow warned Giselle of the untold truths that could change a person's life forever.

Giselle continued to fumble around the pictures on her leaning bookcase. She smirked as she picked up the picture of her two best friends, Elicia and Marley. Even then, the three of them looked like they were ready to run the world in their sexy bikinis and lean beach bodies. She'd met them during Black Beach Weekend seven years ago. She hadn't planned to go but was persuaded by a few of her co-workers who hadn't missed a year since they were in college. Once she arrived, her associates ditched her for some guys they'd met in the hotel elevator and she found herself sitting at a bar on the beach alone. Elicia came and sat next to her. She cackled at the thought of how pitiful she must have looked.

"I'm Giselle," she said as she extended her hand.

"What a pretty name. I'm Elicia and this is my girl, Marley. We came down from Atlanta for the weekend."

"To have some fun!" said Marley "And of course, to meet my future husband." Elicia smirked as she pulled out a blunt.

"You two smoke regularly?" she inquired as Marley handed her the lighter. "I don't smoke at all," said Elicia. "But this weekend we've decided to channel our inner "bad girl Ri-Ri" and make a few exceptions to the rules. After all, you only live once, right?!"

After partaking in marijuana use for the first time, Giselle felt carefree and blissful. She explained the mess she was in and was invited to stay with Elicia and Marley for the remainder of the trip. From that day on, the three were inseparable. Needless to say, there was never a dull moment. Over the years they were able to master some of life's greatest challenges while building an impeccable bond. It was only fitting that they were there to celebrate tomorrow's most momentous occasion.

Giselle stopped reminiscing long enough to check her phone. She had six text messages from Elicia. She quickly dialed her.

"Girrrrrrrllllllllll, what are you doing? Why are you not answering the phone and you know people are coming through in less than twenty-four hours? Wassup with that?"

"I apologize. I've been having those random headaches and exhaustion again."

"That's because you're overworking yourself. You need to slow down."

"Well, obviously, all this work is working for me, isn't it?"

Elicia sighed. "Yes, but you really do need to relax more...this is coming from your friend. I'm serious."

Giselle was quiet.

"Anyways, you didn't send me a list of the things you need me to pick up for tomorrow. And, when are you going to go to the doctor?"

"You know my memory is shot. I'll send the list once we hang up. And you also know that I don't do doctors."

"Well, please expedite the list. I still gotta pull my 'fit together."

Giselle sucked her teeth. "Why do you always do this, Elicia? Why would you wait until the last minute to find something to wear?"

"I didn't intentionally wait until the last minute. I just haven't been able to find anything that's purple *and* sexy. And plus, I'm trying to snag Mr. Right so you know ah gotta be da baddest ting in da building," she sang in a very convincing Jamaican accent.

"Well, you better get it together because that is the color scheme!"

"Why must everything be purple with you, Giselle, why!?" Elicia said with an exaggerated tone.

"For two reasons. Number 1, Prince is my man and we will all pay homage to him and Number 2, because we represent royalty over here, boo. You already know this."

"The royalty concept I get, but I think you need to go see a professional about your obsession with Prince." huffed Elicia. "Send me the list, please. I'm heading out in twenty."

"Yes, ma'am. Don't forget to bring samples of your makeup." Giselle heard her other line beep.

"That's tacky, G. It's your day."

"Elicia, you've been working on this makeup line for months. This would be the perfect crowd to test it on."

Elicia sighed. "I suppose you're right. *FaceIt* is ready for the world to see!"

Giselle ended the call and clicked over to answer her brother.

"Sis!" he yelled playfully.

"Did you get the drink list?"

"Well, hello to you, too. Yep, I got the list. Purple-Rita, Pomegranate Martini, Purple Haze, and Z Violet. I told you I got this."

"Remember that you will be here to bartend. Not flirt with my friends and guests."

"Whatever, G. I have my queen already."

"Yea, whatever. Just don't be late, Gerrod. You damn near missed my graduation, remember?"

"I won't, sis, and Eva is not going to allow it. A'ight?! I'll holla at you at 7:00."

“Gerrod!”

“Just kidding, see you at 6:00. And I just want you to know that you are being disrespectful by asking me to wear all purple.”

“It’s just for one night.”

“I’ll try, but don’t be surprised if I show up in Big Bird yellow.” He hung up.

Giselle smirked and made her way back to the leaning book shelf. She picked up a picture of Gerrod when he was younger. They were very close siblings – growing up he was practically her shadow. Now he was a Morehouse graduate working in real estate. Giselle cracked up at his missing teeth. She was proud of him.

A hint of sadness came over her as she was reminded that she didn’t have that special someone to share this moment with. She had been praying to God to send her a man who would be her everything. While her patience was getting the best of her, she knew that the next guy to come into her life would be worth the wait. He would have to be “the one”.

She walked onto the rooftop terrace and began tidying up. The cool autumn breeze made her shiver a little. After moving around furniture and plants, Giselle swept the wooden floor and made sure the glass firepit was stocked. She polished her metallic leather sectional and arranged the solar light planters to her liking. Stepping back, she admired her Property Brothers-inspired layout and grinned from ear to ear.

After following up with her makeup artist, Djane, and photographer, Giselle opted for a short nap before doing anything more. As she dozed in and out of sleep, a special kind of excitement came over her. She was elated about sharing this moment with her loved ones.

Not every day does an African-American woman from Adger, Alabama make partner.

end of first chapter

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