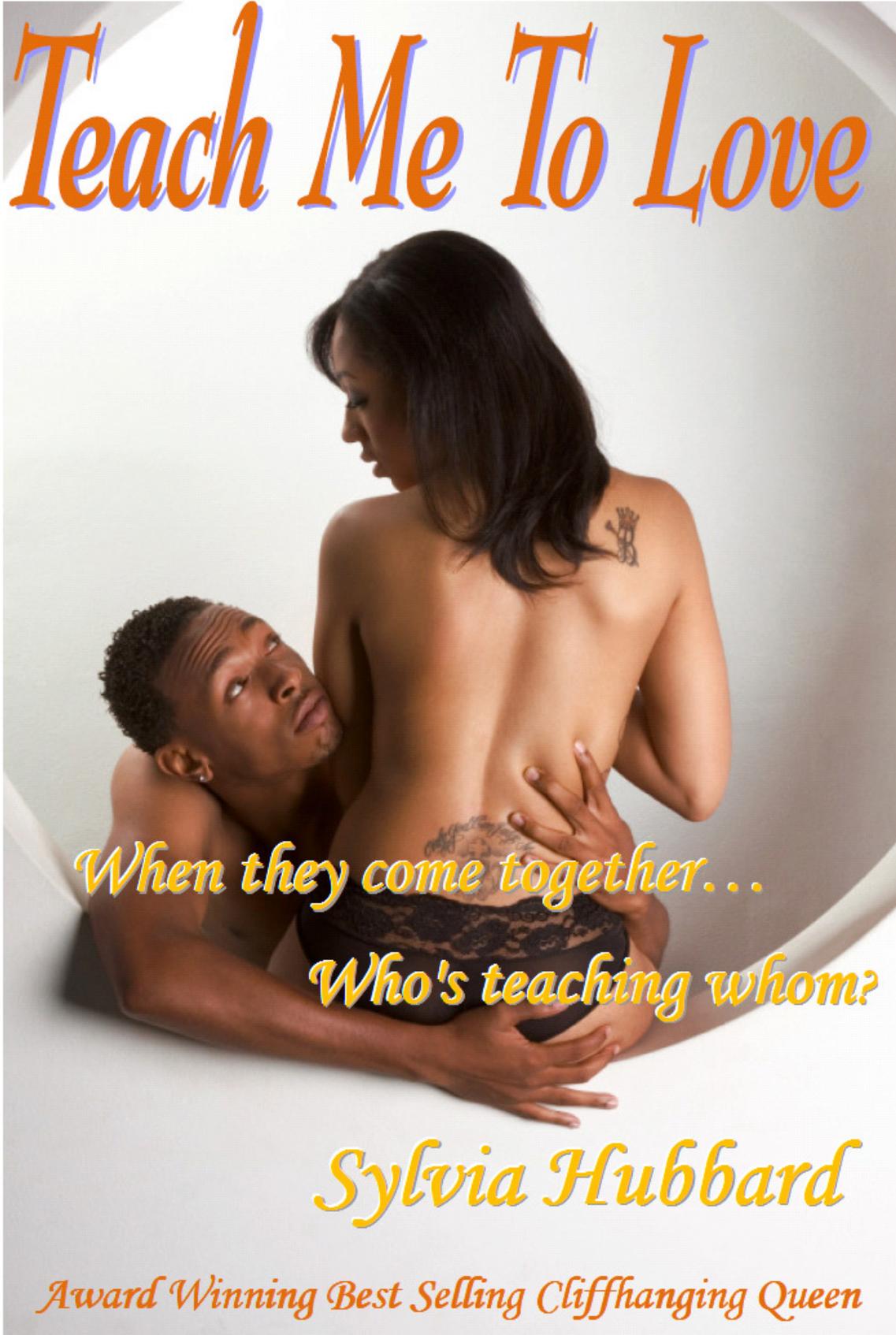


# *Teach Me To Love*



*When they come together...*

*Who's teaching whom?*

*Sylvia Hubbard*

*Award Winning Best Selling Cliffhanging Queen*

# Teach Me To Love

**Sylvia Hubbard**

<http://SylviaHubbard.com>

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual person, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales, is entirely coincidental.

Teach Me To Love © Jan 2006 Sylvia M. Hubbard  
Word Count: 91,739

Book Title Winner: Sharon Powers

Cover design by Sylvia Hubbard  
All rights reserved.

This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without permission.

For information address:

<http://HubBooks.biz>

Sylvia Hubbard  
PO Box 43439, Detroit, MI 48243

Visit her website at:

<http://SylviaHubbard.com>

**Author's Note:**

*This is an unedited book, which is why it is only exclusive to the website & a bargain for the price downloaded.*

## Chapter 1

Setting her bags by the door as she entered their two-bedroom apartment, Rachel sighed hoping she could make it through the night without passing out.

In the back of her mind, she could hear the doctor's words, "*I don't think it's a good idea to go back to work so soon, Rachel. You've just had twins. You need more rest.*"

"That was all fine and good if she was a doctor's wife, but she wasn't. She was Robert Herlong's wife. A man who started out with so much potential, but now merely a father who couldn't pay the light bill much less the rent, if his wife decided to take any more time off.

A knock on the door told Rachel that even though she had just spent eight hours at school teaching second grade, she would now have to deal with her own children.

"It's open," she called out to Mrs. White on the other side of the door, who lived across the hall. Rachel could hear Justin before he even came through the door. Mrs. White was an elderly woman who loved children – with none of her own - and was honored that Rachel had chosen her to take care of the twins.

When Justin saw his mother, he wailed even louder and almost fell out of Mrs. White's arms trying to reach for Rachel.

"How was your first day back?" Mrs. White inquired, putting Jessica in the front room crib after Rachel took the rambunctious three-month-old Justin.

Rachel quieted her son down before answering. "Just like old times, but being a sub is very different from having my own class. I might accept that high school opening."

Mrs. White tsked her tongue disapprovingly. "Back in my days, a woman could take off for as long as she wanted to or needed to."

Rachel sighed, sitting Justin in the crib next to Rachel. "Yes, but times have changed, Mrs. White." She took that tone of voice that clearly told the older woman that this was a sore subject.

"Same time tomorrow?" Mrs. White asked.

Rachel nodded. "Lock the door on your way," she reminded her gently and looked down at Justin, who murmured a protest because he wanted to be back in her arms. After getting their bottles, Rachel cleaned up the kitchen. By seven, she had finished dinner, made the twins bottles for tomorrow and had her clothes ready for work. She gave the twins a bath and put them to bed shortly after.

Checking her watch, she reminded herself that even though it was after nine; her husband should be home soon so she wasn't going to worry. Gathering her grade book and lesson plans, she settled in bed trying to catch up on all the paperwork.

At ten, she heard the front door open and Robert came in with some very noisy friends. She didn't bother to go down there and confront him. She knew that in the morning, despite her cleaning, the place would be a mess and it would be up to her to clean up again before going out to work. If she had decided not to clean up, he'd rag on her about being lazy or make her feel bad she didn't want her husband to come home to a clean house.

Putting away the schoolwork, she went to the bathroom to wash her face before going to bed. Staring in dull lifeless brown eyes, with long dark lashes to grace then and a thick nose on warm flawless nutmeg skin. At a size fourteen, she was healthy despite the fact she had just had babies, yet for some reason her husband treated her as if she had the plague. She faked a smile in the mirror. Although, her smile was her best asset, to her, she felt stress had aged her significantly.

Deciding not to worry about her face anymore, she went to her bed and she laid down closing her eyes, wondering what would have happened if she had decided to remain a single parent and not marry Robert? Would her life have been different? Could she have met someone who would have loved her as unconditionally as she could have loved them? Would she really be as miserable as she was now?

Tomorrow, she would request the transfer to the high school. Maybe older students wouldn't tire her as much, plus she would make enough to at least pay the bills through the Christmas holiday, since Robert wouldn't get a decent job.

When she had met Robert early in college, he was an honor student majoring in Chemical Engineering. She had loved his zest for life, and although he had a gambling problem, she overlooked that because he had so much "potential."

Everything between them was perfect. He was a great guy, lover, and friend. The perfect relationship didn't last forever. Once she let him know that she was pregnant, all of his drive to finish his degree just disappeared, yet he demanded that they get married.

"*I'm not going to have no baby momma drama in my life!*" he yelled.

Between the both of them as college students, they were dirt poor. She was on a scholarship and his parents didn't approve of the marriage, refusing to give them a dime.

After the wedding, she was already working at the school as a teacher's assistant and she also started substituting in the public schools in Davenport, Ohio to get extra money throughout her pregnancy, while still trying to earn her degree and keep her scholarship.

On top of this, during her pregnancy she discovered that Robert was smoking pot, by staying home one day sick from her condition and hearing him brag on the phone about how much he was using to his friend as if this was something to be proud of. He used to do it in college, but now that he had dropped out his drug use not only returned but also accelerated.

Maybe things wouldn't be so bad if Robert showed he cared for her. True, she was carrying an extra thirty pounds from her pregnancy and she couldn't fit into a size twelve to save her life, but that still didn't give him a reason to stop touching her. He hadn't made love to her since their wedding night almost a year ago.

Rachel tried to convince herself that as long as she had the twins that she would be happy. They would love her and she could deal with a husband who didn't care for her anymore. Lots of women stayed in a marriage because of the children and they outlived their husband.

Things would probably be different if Rachel had family of her own, but she had been raised in foster homes all her life and the idea of having a family of her own was more important to her than anything.

Self-respect didn't keep you warm at night even if it was just every blue moon and losing dignity was much better than being alone. Wasn't it?

\* \* \*

The officers removed the handcuffs and stepped away from Derrick James quickly. His parole officer, Michael Montgomery – who was a Bill Duke look alike- warily stared at the young man at the age of sixteen, who was already six feet tall. Derrick was use to people distrusting him because of his size. Most of the boys in the juvenile home assumed that he had done something felonious to earn him a long-term sentence. When they found out that Derrick had only been sent in for narcotic possession they still believed that he had done something terrible, but just hadn't gotten caught yet.

Michael looked over Derrick's file and shook his head. "In my opinion, they should have kept your ass until you reached eighteen."

Derrick did his best not to comment on the wise cracking parole officer. He promised himself he would do his best to keep his opinions to himself, but – as he cracked his knuckles and rubbed his wrist he was thinking, *'this mo'fo was asking for it.'*

"You don't plan to hook up with that step brother again do you, Mr. James?" Michael questioned suspiciously, squinting his beady dark eyes at Derrick distrustfully.

"No, sir," Derrick said coolly, looking at the sweat that appeared above the parole officer's lips. It was October and the hallway they stood in was quite cool.

The chains were taken off of Derrick's ankles and the bag of clothing that Derrick's mother had sent up yesterday was shoved at him. They wanted to be near him as little as possible.

"Go on and change," Michael ordered, pointing to the bathroom.

Derrick took the clothes and went into the bathroom. A plaid dress shirt, a white t-shirt, some jeans and a pair of socks were in the bag. Nothing fancy and they were a size too small. His dark brown skin hadn't seen sun in so long, he was anxious to feel the air of freedom. He wasn't the skinny kid anymore from when he first entered the juvenile facility, but had grown into a strapping teenager with thick black hair, cinnamon eyes and even peach fuzz over his lips.

He couldn't button up the plaid shirt because of his broad chest and the pants outlined his thick thighs. Derrick had always been thick and at sixteen standing six feet and weighing over two hundred pounds, he didn't find anything about his size that would be offensive, but everyone else he had ever met had thought differently.

Derrick came out of the bathroom and handed the prison uniform to the guard. He listened with little interest as Michael spit Derrick's plans.

"Your mother has enrolled you in Davenport High School. You'll start in eleventh grade and you're expected to keep a three point or better at all times with close to perfect attendance. If I find out that you've missed more than three days of school, consider yourself back in the Sawyer County Detention Center until you're eighteen, mister, and that shit won't come off your record."

Derrick gave him a grunt to show he was listening still thinking that this bitch was full of shit. And Michael's empty threats didn't mean anything to Derrick cause he had more power in his pinkie that Michael had working for the state for thirteen years.

"You'll report to me twice a month with a progress report from your teachers, which I will provide for you to give to them. No excuses in not turning them in, Mr. James."

Derrick nodded half-heartedly wondering if he would have to listen to Michael give him that don't fuck up speech again.

"And you can let everyone know, I don't give a damn who your old man knows, if you think you can get away with some shit and I won't find out about it, then you're as stupid as you were in the beginning for getting in this mess. I'll be watching your ass, Mr. James. I'll make sure you don't go anywhere for the rest of your life."

That's what Derrick was waiting for. Michael Montgomery had been upset over the fact that Derrick's father had spoken with the Prosecuting Attorney of the County, David Richards, for Davenport and gotten his son out on good behavior.

"What grade?" Derrick mumbled.

“Eleventh,” Michael said.

“But I’m studying at college level,” he disputed.

“But you’re only sixteen. You should have taken your GED earlier.”

Derrick wasn’t going to comment about how they conveniently lost his files and he had taken the GED and passed with a higher score than any of the other sorry asses up in that bitch he just wasted four year of his life in.

Why’d he go and make that promise to his father? He remembered when his dad had come there. Derrick had been surprise to see the formidable Jerald James because he thought nothing could tear his father away from Canada and his business.

Knowing Rita, Derrick’s mother, she must have prolonged Jerald from knowing about the truth until later. Probably about the third Christmas was about the time Jerald must have picked up something was wrong and Rita wasn’t just trying to keep him from talking to his son. By that time, Derrick had surmised that he wasn’t going to get out, but Jerald knew the Mayor of Davenport, Ramsey McPherson from college and pulled some major strings. Derrick’s exemplary juvenile record helped out a lot on Jerald’s behalf with the parole board, but it didn’t help Derrick against his father’s temper. Jerald warned Derrick he would beat him within an inch of his life if he ever had to leave the territory of Canada ever again on some stupid shit like this.

Jerald also made Derrick promise on everything that was holy not to fuck up again.

Without hesitation Derrick did because his father was no joke. There was this certain fear of Jerald James even though Derrick only saw his father about once a year since he had turned nine. They were the same build now, with Derrick clearly destined to surpass his father in height, but Jerald had this certain strength that was more than physical. The man was highly intelligent and even if Derrick could kick the shit out of him, Jerald would have no problem coming back and doing even worse damage to Derrick.

Jerald may have been a powerful businessman, but his roots were from the streets of Detroit and he could fight dirty like the worst of them.

Derrick still remembered the threat Jerald made to him when he was just five years old and Derrick had raised his hand to hit his father. *“Boy, when you strike me you better strike to kill because if I get back up, consider your ass grass. And even if you killed me, I’ll come back as a ghost and whoop your ass.”*

Until Rita married Tucker Smith five years ago, all she had to do was call Jerald if Derrick got too out of hand.

One thing Derrick didn’t like was to be reprimanded by his father. Jerald had this power to pull something out of a person and leave them emotionally drained.

Right now though, Derrick barely listened to Michael’s tirade about what to do once he got out and what not to do. Once that was over, he was escorted to a bus that had DAVENPORT on the front. The ticket his mother sent was passed to the bus driver before Derrick even touched the receipt.

He hated not being trusted.

The drive to Davenport was only two hours from the state’s juvenile facility and he went over in his mind his plans. He would find some way to get out of the eleventh grade and into twelfth grade. Of course, he would heed his father’s advice (or more like warning) and stay out of his step brother’s bad track – at least until he graduated – and he would join the football team. He had a letter of recommendation from the warden that told of Derrick’s great football skills at the detention center.

Davenport would be his home until he became eighteen in two years. All he had to do was stay out of trouble.

## Chapter 2

Justin's cry awoke Rachel. They were still at the table and she had been trying to spoon feed the difficult boy for the past half hour. Yawning, she looked over at the lesson plan in front of her and moaned to herself. Three more months and she would complete her advance teaching certificate.

She would also receive her bachelors in Education with honors.

Right now, her mind wanted to go back to dreamland again. Justin cried awaking her Mommy senses and immediately she felt renewed. Grabbing his bottle, she decided to forgo his bath and wipe him down with a baby wipe before putting him to bed.

She wanted to get to bed as early as possible. Not only did she have her school finals, but also she would be entering her first day at her new high school. Coming in a month into the beginning of the school's year was really good especially for high school students. She had been warned that this was going to be a difficult class. The students were the smart type, but not well behaved enough for honors and often were disruptive.

Rachel was confident she could handle them, she put the alarm on and snuggled into bed. She would wake up early, get the kids over to Mrs. White's house and get to school bright and early.

\* \* \*

Pulling up in the parking lot, Rachel huffed to herself. Nothing was going right today. She had set the alarm, but late in the night Robert decided to unplug the alarm to put up a stolen VCR he had bought for twenty bucks from a crack head and watch television very loud all night long. So when she had awakened to see that she was over an hour late, she had almost screamed in frustration especially when Justin refused to stay still while she changed his diaper.

On top of that, somehow cookie crumbs were all throughout her hair, which she suspected Robert must have been eating in the bed right over her head. She even found a chocolate chip melting on her forehead and hair line. She nearly pulled out her kinky black hair that had a mind of its own and refuse any perm she tried to put in. With no time to press her hair out, she was forced to cake her head with super hold gel, twist the shoulder length into a ponytail and put a fake bun on top to the nappy ball to cover her shame. Black hair was no joke and Rachel had the coarsest version of all.

Robert had stayed asleep through her entire morning frantic episode to get out the house, not bothering to get out of bed until she was on her way out the door and then demanded to be taken to the unemployment office. On top of that, he took his time getting dressed and getting out to the car. She wasn't going to argue with him about the fact that he was the reason she was running late once he finally did get in the car.

Finding a parking spot way in the back, Rachel grabbed her bags from the trunk and rushed inside. The office secretary, Laura Preston, gave her a disapproving look. Another teacher had told Rachel that Laura was a substitute here and had applied for the position that Rachel had gotten thinking she could easily get it because she had been at the school, but instead they offered her the office head secretary job, which she took and also part time substituted whenever they were real short on teachers.

"Mr. Davish is watching your students instead of being on hall duty, Mrs. Herlong," Laura Preston said with an air of condemnation.

Rachel grabbed her mail and rushed up the three flights of stairs to her class.

The third floor was under construction and the school was trying to move all the classes to the second floor, but ran out of room. Her class was the only one left behind on the third floor, but she didn't mind the seclusion it offered her.

Dr. Dwayne Davish, the English Department Head gave her a disapproving look as he quieted down the class. There were some derogatory remarks made Rachel could hear some of the students commenting on how young she looked, but she ignored them all and proceeded over to Mr. Davish setting her items down on her desk.

"I'm really sorry, Mr. Davish," she said apologetically, keeping her voice low for just his ears only. "It won't happen again."

"We'll talk about it on your break, Mrs. Herlong. Right now you need to get your class under control and get the days lesson started," he snipped and left the room.

Pushing all the mornings' negativity out her mind, she took a deep breath and faced her eighteen students with her most brilliant smile. The students were certainly curious to know what she had to smile about and became suddenly quiet. When she knew she had almost everyone's attention, she began to recite "Phenomenal Women," by Maya Angelou off the top of her head, coming out from behind the desk and walking around the room. By the middle of the poem the students were certainly intrigued with her performance and by the end some were even smiling with her.

When she was done, she announced, "My name's Rachel Herlong. I'll be your teacher for the rest of this year for English and Homeroom. Let's open up our books to page three hundred and four. We're going to learn about hyperboles." She said it as if this was going to be the greatest experience of their life.

Books began to open - Some energetically, others reluctantly, but the fact that they opened was exciting enough for Rachel.

By the time the bell rung, she had figured out the trouble section of the class. There were five boys and one girl in the far corner of the room. Two of them couldn't read well, and two others were just clowning around all the time. She had

to separate them, but even when it was time for the class to work on their own they still managed to disrupt the class. The largest one in the group, Derrick James, managed to escape her notice until the end when she asked the disruptive group if they had done their work. Of course the four said no, but Derrick said he had been done.

Trying to hide her disbelief, she came over to his desk leaning over his shoulder and looked at the well-written paper. He had followed instructions to the letter and had even done the bonus assignment in the book.

Promptly collecting his paper, she gave him an extra assignment to keep him busy thinking that should stop the disruptive group for a while, but even at the end, she was surprised as everyone filed out of classroom, he had stopped at her desk and placed the finished extra assignment on her desk and had the nerve to give her a triumphant wink.

Checking the assignment, she saw it was correct and she would need to look up his file to see what was the kid's story.

At her break hour, she went to the counselor's office before going to see Mr. Davish and asked to pull Derrick James folder.

The counselor looked a little nervous. "Has he done something wrong?"

Rachel shook her head. "No, I just wanted to know why he's able to complete my work so fast."

The counselor handed her a file that was already sitting on his desk. She noticed the Sawyer County Records immediately and felt a little intimidated. "Four years? He was just a baby?" she asked the counselor hoping there were answers. "Why was the sentence so hard on a twelve year old? Usually they are just given a slap on the wrist and let go."

Mr. Davish came in the room on her last sentence and remarked shrewdly. "He didn't look like a baby, especially when the cops caught him and he was able to physically bring down three of them at the age of twelve years old. On top of that, there was an unbelievable high number of witnesses that said he was really the master mind behind the drug traffic coming in and out of Canada."

"But he was twelve," she said incredulously.

"A genius at planning according to the prosecutor, but nothing really couldn't be proved about the trafficking. The judge didn't look too favorable on him and made an example of him."

"Did you look at his test scores?" she asked her department head. "He shouldn't even be in my class."

"But he's going to stay in your class. Just because you're scared of him, Mrs. Herlong, his intelligence is not an excuse to get him out of your class."

Snorting insulted, Rachel said, "I'm not scared of him. Why would I be?"

The counselor spoke up stuttering, "B-Because everyone else is."

"He's not properly challenged and I don't think eleventh grade English is a place for him. I want to request he be moved to honors."

"NO!" Mr. Davish said flatly. "You'll do well to get your butt in on time on a daily basis, Mrs. Herlong, and not use your students as an excuse to get out of teaching. Derrick James is sixteen years of age and he'll stay in eleventh grade English as part of his curriculum to get a degree from this school."

Mr. Davish stormed out the room and she was left very speechless about Derrick James

"He's scared of him too," the counselor whispered as if the walls had ears and Mr. Davish could hear them.

"Can I keep this file?" she asked, holding the file close to her.

"I need it by the end of the day."

She promised to return it by that time. That was more than enough time to get to the copier and make her a copy.

Leaving out of the office, she returned to her own room. Underneath her door, she found the poem "Ego-Trippin" by Nikki Giovanni and at the bottom someone had written, "*This would have been a better example of a hyperbole.*"

Looking down the hall to see if there was anyone standing around, she had to wonder who had left the paper under her door, but obviously the messenger was not going to reveal themselves.

Sitting in her classroom alone, she looked over Derrick James' file in depth and made notes. If they wouldn't put him where he belonged, then she would see about getting a recommendation for him.

## Chapter 3

Arwin shook his head in disbelief. "You're going to get into a lot of trouble, Derrick," he warned.

Derrick shrugged, tossing the orange in the air despite the warning that the lunch aide had given him just a few minutes ago. "About what? I did the assignment to the letter, it's not my fault that she can't put in the instructions what she really wanted us to do." He enjoyed fucking with these smarty-pants teachers. If he couldn't get them to notice his intelligence then he decided he'd drive their ass crazy.

"I don't even understand what you've written," Arwin said.

Tonya, the only girl that hung out in their group, grabbed the assignment out of Arwin's hand and looked it over. "You so stupid, Derrick. Even the teacher won't be able to figure out that equation."

"Good, maybe then he'll leave me the hell alone," Derrick sneered.

Arwin nudged Derrick just as they were getting in the lunch line. Derrick followed his best friend's eyes to a couple of people ahead of them. Arwin was almost six feet, skinny as a beanstalk and could easily see over everyone's head easily just like Derrick.

The shoulder length dark head of hair was easily discernable even though she was only five feet five, plus the rounded derriere peeked out from the line. Oh yes, Mrs. Herlong was getting her lunch. He was glad she didn't have that ugly ball of hair in her head like she had done the first day.

Derrick couldn't help the confusing stirrings rushing through him at just the sight of her. Skipping past the students trying to get food, Derrick and Arwin made it through the line until they were standing beside her. She was paying attention to the lunchroom attendant, who was picking out a bowl of fruit and vegetable for her.

Arwin cleared his throat loudly to draw her attention to them and she cast them that brilliant white smile that she had bestowed upon the class the first day.

Derrick wondered when she was looking at her husband did he get a special smile? There was just something about her that drew his interest and he couldn't figure it out. Did she have an even more beautiful smile for people she loved? Were those her natural teeth? Couth teeth really grow that perfect? Why couldn't he see any flaws in her face? Were her lips as soft and juicy as they looked? Why couldn't he stop thinking about her all the time?

"Hello Arwin," she said in a melodious voice and looked past Arwin at Derrick. "Hello Derrick."

"Hi Mrs. Herlong," Tonya said, pushing through the crowd and coming up beside Derrick.

"Hey Mrs. Herlong, are you happily married?" Arwin asked bluntly.

Derrick wanted to hit his friend in his mouth for his rudeness.

This didn't make her uncomfortable. "That's none of your business, Arwin." She paid for her food and walked away.

Derrick picked up a milk and slapped fifty cents on the counter before getting out of line with Arwin behind him and Tonya bringing up the rear.

"Why'd you go and ask her some shit like that?" Tonya snapped at Arwin.

Derrick knew why Arwin did, but he just wished Arwin didn't have to be so immature about the whole matter. Rachel Herlong wasn't someone who wanted to be with a child. She needed a man. Derrick felt he could be that man for her. Not some guy who made her stare longingly into nothingness when she thought she was alone in her classroom, or the guy who made her look so stressed out some mornings.

"Why don't you shut up and mind your business?" Arwin snapped at Tonya.

They began a round of cursing back and forth at each other as Derrick pondered about Rachel Herlong.

"Excuse me," Rachel said at the end of the table near Arwin with her lunch tray still in hand.

None of them had even noticed that she had not left and they all hoped she had not heard what they were arguing about.

Derrick's eyes met her light nutmeg brown eyes. She was looking directly at him - A very rare occurrence indeed. Usually in class she avoided giving him direct eye contact. It wasn't that he felt she was scared of him like other administrators in this stupid school, but it was as if she knew something about himself that he didn't know and if she stared long enough, Derrick would be able to read her mind.

"Yes, Mrs. Herlong?" Arwin asked.

Derrick didn't mind his best friend speaking for him, because his reputation around the school was that he was a student who spoke very little and if he had to open his mouth he was like fucking E.F. Hutton.

"Derrick, I need to speak with you." She handed him a pass. "If you could come to my class once you get done with your lunch, I would appreciate that." Rachel looked at the carton of milk in front of him and smirked. "I take it, you won't be long?" She didn't wait for him to answer before walking away.

He watched her intently leaving the lunchroom, most likely heading to her room to eat her meal. Derrick was usually on the third floor skipping lunch and watching her eat. Why had she decided to come to him, he didn't know, but he would certainly find out.

"Why do y'all be watching her all the damn time?" Tonya asked suspiciously, munching on a bag of chips as if her ass needed more cholesterol. Like most of the teenage females his age, they were getting on the new Depro Vera that was out and it was making their ass fat as hell.

True, Derrick loved a little junk in the trunk, but some of these girls were just way to plump for his taste. Now, Mrs. Herlong had nice junk in her trunk and despite the baby pouch in front, she was just right to him.

“You both got the hots for Mrs. Herlong?” Tonya asked with a mouth full of chips, looking at Arwin and Derrick.

Before he could answer, Tonya said, “It ain’t nothing to be ashamed of. So do all the other little boys in this school.”

“Unlike them,” Arwin said proudly. “Derrick’s gonna get in her pants.”

“You a nasty motherfucker, Arwin,” Tonya cackled with food coming out her mouth.

They started cursing back and forth again at each other. Derrick got up and went over to the door of the lunchroom. He was aware of all the eyes on him. Even the senior girls watched him like a hawk, but he wasn’t interested in any of those girls. He wasn’t interested in anyone, except Mrs. Rachel Herlong.

“Hey Derrick!” Arwin yelled from the doorway of the cafeteria. The lunch attendant was holding Arwin inside.

Derrick lied, “Yeah, she wanted to see him too.”

The lunch attendant believed Derrick and allowed Arwin to come with him. Just as they were rounding the corner, they heard Tonya screaming for them to come back and get her out. They didn’t stop to go back though.

“It’s enough you got me out of there, she aint nothing but a nosey bitch,” Arwin grumbled as they took the flight of steps two at a time. “What do you think Mrs. Herlong wants?”

“Same old shit, just a different teacher,” Derrick mumbled, knowing this probably had something to do with his paper he turned in this morning. He knew having Arwin there with him was only to be a witness in case Mrs. Herlong decided to lie on him about some things like some other administrators had tried to do.

Arwin stopped at the second landing and grabbed Derrick to stop him too. “What’s that supposed to mean, man?”

“It means I probably got the hots for the lady who’s going to be my demise, Arwin.” He was frustrated over his feelings and the fact that Arwin couldn’t understand what the hell demise meant. Derrick knew his higher vocabulary was hard for Arwin to understand sometimes, which is why he always chose not to speak a lot, but he couldn’t help showing his intelligence and he wasn’t going to dumb down just to fit in. “She’s probably on the side of all the other adults and wants me out of here.”

“I think you’re just paranoid, Derrick,” Arwin said.

“Why shouldn’t I be?” Derrick asked. “When everything I do is scrutinized or frowned upon by that jackass Davish and my parole officer? They’re just sitting around waiting for me to fuck up. She could be on their side.”

“Look, maybe you better not go see her, man. Your temper ain’t on your side today.”

Derrick calmed himself. This could be one of those chances that he had to get to her; To get her to think about maybe there could be a possibility for them. He took the flight of stairs almost three at a time to get up to the third floor with Arwin struggling to catch up.

Her door was opened and when he walked in, she was chewing on a piece of carrot. A little Ranch dressing had gotten on her upper lip. He stopped in the doorway to look at her. She had opened up her blouse a little, which she usually kept buttoned up to the neck and she wasn’t wearing her jacket.

Derrick figured Rachel Herlong wore those corny clothes because they made her look a little mature, but in truth he could see past all that. Still this opportunity to see just a little skin exposed that seemed so taboo was exciting to him that he completely forgot to be defensive when he walked in.

“I didn’t expect you so early,” she said a bit flustered quickly, closing the file she had been reading and sticking it in her desk.

Coming to the desk, he reached over and touched her face. She didn’t move away like most people did from his closeness. “You got dressing on your lip,” he said, relishing in the chance to touch her cheek and liking that her skin was as soft as it looked.

She took a napkin to wipe her cheek and lips then handed him one for his hand. “I was just a little bit too hungry, I guess. Trying to eat and study is never good.” She tossed the rest of the food in the garbage.

“That’s all you’re going to eat?” Derrick asked, seeing the full bowl of fruit and just a few raw vegetables in the bowl. She hadn’t eaten much at all.

“If you must know,” she said defensively. “I’m trying to lose weight.”

Arwin chose that time to come into the room from catching his breath in the hallway. “Lose weight, Mrs. Herlong? You look damn good!”

Rachel flushed. “Thank you, Arwin, but I don’t recall writing your name on the pass.” She looked passed Arwin to see if anyone else was going to join them.

Derrick took this opportunity to look behind her desk. He noticed she didn’t close the drawer all the way and he evasively peeked over her desk to look at the folder. His name was on the top and he wondered why she would be reading up on him?

Becoming defensive again, Derrick asked in a very harsh voice, “What did you want to speak with me about, Mrs. Herlong?”

She reached into a pile of papers and pulled out his research paper he had done on Nikki Giovanni. He thought for sure she was going to ask him about the note that he had written to her.

Derrick prepared himself to admit he had done the deed.

“I wanted to speak with you about your research paper you did on Nikki Giovanni.” Rachel said going behind the desk and sitting. “Your resources are incorrect and you plagiarized words.”

Defensively, Derrick refuted immediately, “I’m never incorrect and I don’t steal.”

“Really?” She snatched the paper out his hands and flipped to the last page of the research paper and read off the last sentence.

He found no errors in what she read and immediately became upset because he felt she was just like all the others trying to get him kicked out. “If you want me out your class, Mrs. Herlong, all you had to do was ask.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” she asked confused. “I’m merely pointing out-“

Derrick cut her off abruptly. “You’re just like all the others. You can’t wait to see me at some dirty nasty detention home again.” He leaned over the desk with his formidable height, glaring hard at her in disgust. “That’s alright, it ain’t worth shit to fight whatever you’re going to lie to them about.”

“I’m not lying,” she protested, standing up to make her point as if she were ten feet tall. “If you would just look, you’ll see that you quoted Ebony magazine incorrectly and you didn’t write quotations on your paper. Any other teacher would have immediately taken this to Davish and let him see what you’ve done to take it out of context, but I was willing to give you an extra day on your assignment before turning your work into him. He sent me a note earlier this week that from now on all your work is to be sent to his office even before it’s proofread or graded. I was trying to save you face before I turned your research paper in.”

If Derrick’s foot could get any deeper down his throat, he would probably shit soles for a week. He looked over at Arwin who mouthed the words, *‘Apologize.’*

Derrick had never apologized for anything before in his life. He was motherfucking Derrick James, Dammit!

Yet, he wanted to make amend to his rudeness. “So I have one day to complete it?” he asked to be sure.

Sitting behind her desk again, she nodded. “Of course,” she said simply and then added. “In turn, you’ll owe me.”

He should have known there was a catch. Forcing his eyes to stay on her face and not the partial opening her shirt made when she leaned forward, Derrick tried hard to concentrate on what she was about to say. “What would that be, Mrs. Herlong?”

“You know the Black History class contest coming up for the English Department? I want you to help me win,” she announced excitedly.

“You want me to get up in front of the whole school and recite some stupid shit?” he asked. Before she could answer him, he said adamantly, “Hell no!”

“Give me a chance to-“

Again he cut her off. “No fucking way are you going to blackmail me into getting on stage to read no stupid ass essay like this was third fucking grade, lady. Bull shit!”

She shot out her chair and raised her voice slightly. “Would you let me speak, Mr. James?!”

Rachel had never raised her voice at a student before. Even Arwin looked a bit worried about her upset.

“The contest consist of writing about prolific African-Americans and presenting them in a creative way. Most times it has been an essay, but I was thinking of something different our class could do this year from other classes. Davenport High doesn’t have a drama program and I think if we come up with the script, we could perform a fifteen minute sketch that would certainly win the contest.”

Warily, he asked in a more calmed voice, “And I don’t have to act in it? I just have to help you write it?”

She nodded. “I need the whole class participation and if they see that you’re involved they would certainly get involved because a lot of them look up to you. I know you can also find the information that I need in record time. I have approval by the principal to do this and he’s given me three days of paid overtime to stay after school to work on the script with a student.”

“And why’d you chose me?” he questioned suspiciously.

“I can only use a student in my homeroom class. You’re the best writer in my homeroom. You’re smart, you think you know everything, and you are a natural leader, which would make my job a lot easy.”

Arrogantly, he said, “I do I know everything.”

“And you are certainly not modest,” she clipped amused.

“What if I don’t do it?”

“Then I’ll be forced to assign you a make up thesis of the life and times of Shakespeare with a minimum of fifty pages due before the Christmas Holiday, with footnotes, index and pictures included,” she said, using her teacher’s voice that should have brook no contest.

Derrick knew most of Shakespeare by heart, but he wasn’t going to tell her that and could probably write the paper overnight. Yet, this was a chance to be alone with her - To talk with her. Hell yeah, he would do it, but he didn’t want to give in so easily. “What if I can write Shakespeare in my sleep?” he challenged.

Coming around the desk to face him, she said, “I’ll be forced to let Mr. Davish see this paper as is. This isn’t my only copy.”

He couldn’t believe how deep down devious she could be all wrapped up in the sweetest package of a woman imaginable. “You’re almost a bitch, Mrs. Herlong.”

Surprisingly, she didn't take the least bit of offense at almost being called out her name. "I can be when I want to in some cases," she said with wickedness flashing in her eyes and placed her hand gently on his arm.

Derrick was very evident of the soft palm from the innocent touch even though he wore a long sleeve shirt and he could feel the heat emanating from her hand.

Leaning to him, she whispered, "This would mean a lot to me, Derrick. As a new full time teacher, you cannot begin to understand the stress I have to go through with other teachers and administrators."

Did she know he would move mountains if she asked? Did she know how much her touch affected his whole body, despite how innocent it was? Did she know when he looked deeply enough in her eyes, he could lose himself? Damn, somehow he would have to get her out his system. He knew if it wasn't soon he would find himself consumed with her. This was really all new to him to be attracted to a female like this and he was very perplexed by his reaction to her. He was very aware of her being older and even more aware that she was a teacher. Even before he went to prison he had never had a crush on a teacher or any other female like he had on Rachel Herlong.

"Fine," he said doing his best grumble filled with reluctance.

The bell rung and he took the paper off her desk and headed for the door. Arwin left out to get to his next class, which was different from Derrick's this hour.

"Derrick," she called him.

He turned only slightly to see what she wanted.

Walking up to him, she handed him a slip. "Tomorrow after practice and have your parents sign this to let me know its okay with them."

Derrick only nodded and watched as she walked back to her desk to get a good glance at her apple bottom. "Mrs. Herlong," he called as she was sitting at her desk.

"Yes, Derrick?"

"Arwin was right. You really don't need to lose any weight."

She rolled her eyes heavenwards and ignored him to return to her lesson plans.

Derrick caught up with Arwin in the halls and Derrick pondered to himself what could possibly happen meeting Rachel after football practice.

"Are you really going to do it?" Arwin asked as they maneuvered themselves through the crowd to their next hour.

"Yeah," Derrick shrugged. "I'll help her out and you pass around the word that everybody better go along with it or they'll have to deal with me."

Arwin chuckled. "I'll be over tonight, so make sure the windows unlocked."

"Don't your old man ever wonder where you are?" Derrick asked.

"Nope and I wouldn't care if he did, man. See you tonight." Arwin ducked in his classroom.

## Chapter 4

Rachel looked at the clock to see that it was nearing the time when he was supposed to be there. She prepared all the work he would need and crossed her fingers that he would like the idea she had come up with. He had turned his assignment and parental signed permission form back in to her during homeroom, slipping it on her desk as he came in the room without drawing too much attention to anyone.

When Derrick entered with a list of names of present prolific African-Americans, she smiled her wonderful brilliant smile just for him.

"I thought I would do some research early to get a lot of the work out the way," he said bashfully, yet his voice was tight.

She immediately noticed he was still a bit damp from the quick shower he took after practice. "You didn't go outside with your hair like that?" she asked seeing the damp hair that naturally curled and she wondered was it as silky as it looked.

"No, Mrs. Herlong," he said as if he didn't need another mother in his life. "I came through the school. The locker room has a back staircase that leads straight over pass the auditorium and up here to the third floor. They said this place used to be an old warehouse during prohibition and the football team knows all the secret entrances where they used to store the stuff."

This was news to her and she felt silly acting like his mother and all. This was almost a grown man. "And you know them?"

"The guys like to skip a lot and even though I can't go with them, I know where they are," he admitted as if everyone knew this information, then bit his tongue cursing the fact that he shouldn't have admitted that to her. *Dammit, Derrick keep focus! This is a damn teacher!* "But of course you'll never tell," he added wickedly.

Rachel sat on the desk near him, "I probably won't until of course I have to blackmail you for something else." She winked at him teasingly.

Instead of sitting at her desk, she suggested they work at her desk because she had her laptop plugged over there and they could type up the work as they went. He didn't mind even though Rachel thought he would and she couldn't believe how comfortable he went out of his way to make her feel. Was he really as dangerous and bad as all the other teachers said?

Fifteen minutes into their researching, he actually began to talk with her. Asking her questions about how he met Robert. What she had studied in college?

Somehow they had even gotten on the subject of her growing up. This was the most she had heard him speak the entire time she had known him and even though she wasn't in the business of discussing her private life with a student, she found herself to be easily able to talk with Derrick. His smooth deep voice seem to push past the barrier she usually kept up while she was at school and with him hardly talking, she found herself that she wanted to hear his voice more and more.

Unlike most men, maybe because of his age, he actually listened to when she spoke and responded to what she said. It was a very mentally stimulating conversation that she had not had with a decent man in a very long time despite the fact she was very aware that this was just her student. Still she took enjoyment speaking with him freely about her past.

"I've never had a mother and father," she confessed. "I grew up in a lot of foster homes around Sawyer County, since I didn't know my mother or father. Once someone mentioned my parents had been teenagers, who had singed their rights over to the state."

"Did you ever think to look for them?"

She shook her head with hesitating. "No, because I thought it was best that I don't. I've never really wondered all these years. I just made due for myself. Took responsibility for myself," she said proudly, hoping her lessons in life could help him a little.

"Do you work all the time?" he questioned.

"No, I do actually go home sometimes," she teased and then reminded him, "I am a wife and mother."

His tinted dark goldenrod eyes flashed with slight amusement to his always-serious glare. "You know what meant."

"Like I said, I'm a new mother. When I'm not taking care of them or being a wife, I work all the time. I will admit the twins were not planned, but I take my job of mothering seriously because I love them," she admitted honestly.

After about an hour and a half of working, he suggested they take a break because he wanted to go down to the vending machine and get something to drink.

"I have a Gatorade if you want it?" she said going over to her closet. Inside was a small lunch bag still full and untouched near where the drinks were.

"You should eat more than you drink," he said with concern, taking one of the Gatorades, which were cool.

She shrugged a shoulder nonchalantly. "I should, but you're too young to know about baby weight, Derrick."

"And you are? How old are you?" he asked, taking a long swig of the drink with his usual serious look.

"Twenty-two in three days," she said proudly.

Curiously, he asked, "And what does this birthday girl plan on doing?"

Her shoulders slumped in disappointment. "Come to work, go home, nothing special."

“That’s a bummed out birthday, Mrs. Herlong. Why is it adults don’t seem to celebrate birthdays anymore?” he inquired.

Rachel moved away from the closet and back to the side of the desk to give them a little distance. Being so close to him, she didn’t like how she always became aware of her femaleness. She didn’t think about being a teacher to him. Yet, she was so aware that her chest seemed to swell and her insides felt warm.

Crooking her head to the side, she answered, “Maybe the fact that we’re celebrating getting old depresses us.”

“And Mr. Herlong doesn’t have anything planned?”

She turned her back to him and pretended to straighten up paper to busy herself. “Robert doesn’t really celebrate birthdays and holidays.”

“So when does he make you feel special?” Derrick had walked up behind her.

For some reason, without turning to face him, she could feel his eyes on the back of her neck and moving down her spine and then... Rachel faced him feeling all of a sudden, uncomfortable. “We’re very busy people, Derrick. Like I said adults don’t take the holidays or birthdays very seriously. They’re mostly for kids.”

“You’re avoiding my question,” he said.

“Then I’ll be honest and say that I don’t wish to answer your questions, because it’s none of your business.”

He changed the subject in a very thoughtful and natural manner. “That’s another thing, Mrs. Herlong. Is six weeks really enough time to take off from having twins? I think you would need more than that?”

“Bills don’t understand that,” she said evasively.

“What about your husband? Couldn’t he hold the fort until you got some rest?”

“Derrick, that’s none of your business.” To give them more distance, she went behind her desk trying to not look as if she really wanted to get away from him.

He looked as if he was going to drop the subject – for now, but she had a feeling he was dying to ask her some more questions. They worked some more until there was a knock on the door.

Both of their attentions were drawn to Laura who Rachel felt was Mr. Davish’s sidekick. It seemed that they both had something of a vendetta against Derrick.

Even though Laura was just as old as Rachel, they were two very different women. Laura couldn’t be more than a size eight, skinny with the body that reminded Rachel of a skeleton. Her hair made her head even bigger because it came down to her shoulders and was colored a very light brown. Rachel had never changed the color of her dull black hair, but she could say that due to her pregnancy her hair had grown past her shoulders and the natural oils in her hair made the strands look strong and healthy.

“Mr. Davish sent me to collect that file for *that* student,” Laura said evasively.

Rachel opened up a drawer near Derrick and pulled out a folder. Rachel noticed how Laura didn’t take her eyes off Derrick for one moment even as Rachel handed Laura the file.

“You are aware of school policy about keeping students late, aren’t you, Mrs. Herlong?” Laura asked finally looking at Rachel with an immense amount of jealousy in her eyes.

“What policy?”

“Teachers or administrators aren’t allowed to provide transportation. It’s a school safety issue.”

Rachel looked back at Derrick with concern. “I’m sorry. I did forget to ask about that. You do have a ride home?”

He crossed his arms over his chest as if he hadn’t plan on answering, but then muttered, “Yeah.”

Laura smiled knowingly and walked out the room.

Derrick’s mood was rather dampened when they were alone again. He gathered his items and mumbled something about getting out of there as early as possible.

“Derrick, what’s wrong?” she asked.

“Everything,” he said and left out the room mumbling, “See you in two days.”

Rachel was deeply confused about his sudden change as she gathered her own items, including her coat, locked up her room and decided to make sure Laura did get that folder to Mr. Davish before leaving for the day. His office was located on the same floor as her classroom, but on the other side of the building.

His door was cracked and she hoped he was in there. Yet, before she even got a chance to look inside she heard the moaning coming from the office.

“Yes! Oh yes, Laura,” Dwayne Davish was panting.

Being quiet as a mouse, Rachel cracked the door open a little bit more and peaked inside to see Laura stretched across the desk naked from the waist down and her legs were wide open. Dwayne Davis was lying between her legs with his pants and underwear down by his ankles.

Laura madly scratched at his back in reckless passion as he drove repeatedly deep inside of her. He rocked her thighs so hard the desk they were using inched back by each hard thrust Dwayne executed.

Covering her mouth, Rachel gasped her disgusted horror knowing Dwayne Davish was a married man of six years who had the wife that always became overly drunk at all Christmas parties, according to the gossipers in the main office – Laura was included in this club. Rachel would bet her bottom dollar the gossipers didn’t know what their ring leader was doing at this very moment. Quietly, yet with hurried paces, she rushed down the three flights of stairs and out of the

school. Her heartbeat accelerated as she prayed she had not been caught peeping, but on top of that just the very idea of what she had seen had...

Excited her? No...well, yes. Sex had been down to nothing between her husband and Rachel. Sometimes in the middle of the night, Robert would forget in his sleep and roll over and cradle her, but once he awoke he was quick to move away. So seeing what she had just seen, had aroused her senses and made her remember how it felt to be a woman and feel like a woman.

The teacher's parking lot was near the front of the school and she had parked in the very back in her old Honda that miraculously continued to run every day.

It was dark because of the approaching wintertime even though it was just a little after five in the afternoon. Dusk was settling in the clear sky and her vapid breath could be seen coming from her lips.

"You shouldn't walk out here by yourself, Mrs. Herlong," a deep voice said startling her from behind.

Turning around, her abrupt stop almost made Derrick bump into her.

"What are you still doing here, Derrick James?" Rachel demanded.

"Waiting for my ride," he answered coolly.

Calming her racing heart, she apologized for her huffiness. "This day has been rather trying, Derrick. Would you like me to wait with you?" she asked.

"If you want," he said nonchalantly.

She looked back in the parking lot to see Laura's and Mr. Danish's car there. Were they waiting for her to leave or spying on her as she had spied on them?

"I can see my ride from where your car is parked, Mrs. Herlong. So you don't have to go far when I get picked up," Derrick said, taking her heavy bag from her and walking with her to her car.

For some reason, she had a feeling he knew her vehicle already and had been waiting for her to come out. Did Derrick have a crush on her?

"Mrs. Herlong," he said quietly, helping her put her bags in the back of the car next to the double car seats. She noticed he took little notice of this as if it didn't bother him. "If you could ask for anything you wanted for your birthday, what would it be?"

"Anything?" she asked amused.

"Yes, anything." There was that serious glare in his eyes again.

Rachel decided to take his question seriously, but it was hard to think of just anything when no one had ever asked her this question in a long time. Robert certainly didn't care what she wanted and with no other friends and family around she hadn't felt considered as a person in a while. "I have to be honest with you Derrick and say--"

He cut her off. "It's none of my business again?"

Chuckling, she said, "No, I wasn't going to say that. I was going to say, I wouldn't know what I want. I could shout my needs in a heartbeat, but my wants have always been...insignificant."

"So even if a Genie swept down to grant you a wish, you couldn't find anything to ask for? Even if you were young again?"

The conversation was rather pubescent and she almost felt young again. "You mean like a teenager?"

He gave her other suggestions. "What about your parents? Would you want to know about your parents?"

She shook her head. "I don't think about them, and since I've grown up in foster homes, birthdays and receiving gifts for holidays were never something of a big thing with me. I stopped wanting things a long time ago because I felt I would never get what I wanted." Thoughtfully she pause and finally said, "There was one Christmas though when I was fifteen and the foster lady I stayed with gave us personal Christmas gifts. I was living there with twin sisters who were fostered as well. She gave me a charm bracelet, which I still wear to this day." She wiggled the bracelet on her right arm with only three charms on it. "I buy a charm for special occasions."

He took her arm and took a close look at the charm. So close she could feel his warm breath on her wrist. "There haven't been many special occasions in your life, Mrs. Herlong," he observed.

Rachel pulled her arm away and continued her story. "The foster mother gave the twins two beautiful pendants with their picture inside." She touched the front of her collarbone as if an invisible pendant was there. "I always wished for a pendant of my own, but I never said anything at the time, because I didn't want to be ungrateful for the bracelet." Looking up at Derrick, she smiled longingly with a deep breath. "I just never got around to buying me something like that."

"Why?" he inquired.

"Diapers are more important?" she sarcastically figured. "Plus, a gift like that wouldn't be special if I bought it for myself."

A horn honked loudly and rudely in front of the school. Derrick looked very reluctant to leave and hesitated for a moment as if he wanted to say something very important. The horn honked again, this time longer and very drawn out.

"Goodnight, Derrick. See you tomorrow," she said as if giving permission for the young man to leave.

He only nodded before turning away and running into the darkness toward the car. She heard a car door slam and a muffler in a very much need for repair as the car drove away.

Getting in her car, she drove home for the night. Mrs. White brought the twins home as was their ritual and Rachel finished her nightly routine as early as possible so she could work on the play for her students.

Lying in bed alone, she looked at her hand where the cheap gold band of her wedding ring was on. She remembered how Robert had reluctantly paid for it. Why had he married her? She knew the pregnancy was a major factor and she knew that deep down in his heart he had some very deep love for her, but there was so much going on in Robert's mind, she didn't know if she should be apart of his life anymore.

The twins meant a lot of him and to take them away could take away his current ambition to make something of himself – what little that was. What would become of Robert if she took the kids away?

Should she really care? He never cared about her? Or at least it seemed.

Trying to go to sleep, she wondered if she were sixteen again would Derrick actually find a girl like her attractive? Would those deep goldenrod eyes of his glitter and dance for her? Would love change a man like Derrick like it had changed Robert?

She didn't want Derrick to change, not into a person like Robert. Despite what others thought of him, Derrick was a fascinating young man who was meant to be something really great. Even if it would be immoral and adulterous to be with him, she was scared a woman like her in his life would limit his potential just like it had done Robert. She never wanted to mess up a man's life again.

Just as sleep had started to set in, Justin's screams awakened her. She checked his temperature and knew it had to be one thing - An ear infection. It would be a long night and sleep would not be coming to her. Packing the kids up to go to Children's Hospital in Downtown Detroit, she knew a dream like having Derrick James was only going to be a fantasy that would never come true.

## Chapter 5

When Rachel entered the office that morning, Laura was there looking cheerful and refreshed.

“Good morning,” she said with a bright smile to Rachel.

Rachel said something, but she wasn't sure what came out of her lips. She had been in Children's Hospital with the twins up until six that morning before she could take them home and get ready for work. Robert was up when she walked in the door and looked pissed.

“Why the fuck didn't you leave a note telling me where the hell you were?!” he yelled as soon as she walked in the door with the sleepy twins still in her arms. He made no effort to assist her in getting them over to the crib.

Keeping her calm, Rachel said, “He had a high fever and I didn't have time to leave a note, Robert.”

He snatched the keys out her hands and started for the door to leave.

“I've got to go to work!” she exclaimed in frustration.

Robert turned to her and took out two dollars. “Catch the bus. I got business.”

She had felt like breaking down and crying, but she didn't. When Mrs. White came for the children, Rachel had a cab waiting for her and used a secret stash of saved up money to get to work on time.

Trudging to her classroom, she hoped the day would go by quickly. Keeping a cheerful manner would be very difficult today, but she would do her best.

Derrick was the same as always with his friends and acting like a teenager. It was as if he was a different person around them and not the same mature young man she met last night.

She didn't let this bother her and she didn't address it at all. Rachel was his teacher and the thoughts she had last night about Derrick James she would keep to herself. Her ethics and morals would never get in the way. She would maintain the strict code of conduct of a teacher because she loved her job so much.

On her last hour, Dwayne Davish entered her room just as all the children were filing out. He was carrying the folder for Derrick James and he placed it on her desk. She already had a copy of the past events in Derrick's life, but Mr. Davish's folder looked a little thicker with most likely all updates to Derrick's current grades and behavior reports.

“I've already graded the paper and I expect you to mark his grade in your books,” he said.

She opened the folder to see that most of the grades given on the assignments were C's or D's. Frowning, looking up at him, she said obviously, “But those grades are not worthy of those assignments, Mr. Davish.”

“Are you saying I don't know how to do my job, Mrs. Herlong?” he challenged.

“I'm saying that I'm his teacher and given the assignments and my grading, those grades are wrong. The student's know I don't grade on a curve. All my assignments are based on percentages. Percentages that clearly go by what is on the syllabus and any student following the syllabus correctly will receive the grade befitting the assignment.” She took out the research paper. “Mr. James followed the directions and included all the requirements into his page. He went above and beyond the page count and he even exasperated with interest about his subject's work. I was entertained and informed. That grade of C does not even come close to what he should get.”

“But that's the grade he will receive, Mrs. Herlong.” He narrowed his eyes. “Or did you forget the March teacher evaluations coming up? You are still on probation.”

Flinching in disgust at his deceit, she put the research paper neatly back in the folder and placed the folder in her drawer. “I didn't forget, Mr. Davish.”

“Good, I'll be checking your books before you submit them for report cards. You won't disappointment me will you, Mrs. Herlong?”

She didn't answer, but he took her quietness as her acquiesce. Mr. Davish walked to the door triumphant. “Dwayne, how's that wife of yours doing?” she asked casually.

Looking over his shoulder at her this time it was his turn to flinch. “I wouldn't know, Mrs. Herlong. Maybe she's out with your husband who never comes home,” he responded coldly.

That was a low blow and she didn't get into a verbal tear down match with him.

Mr. Davish walked out and she was glad when he was gone. Putting the file for Derrick James in her drawer, Rachel pondered what to do in order to prevent his grades from dropping. The contact at the school board was expected to receive the grades for Derrick soon and if they were what she had touted them to be, Derrick wouldn't get the opportunity to get to take the GED like she had planned to arrange for him.

\*\*\*

Derrick moved away from the doorway and looked down at the corridor in the direction of Davish's office pissed as hell. Tightening up his fist, he bit his lip trying to control what little restraint he had. Taking the steps two at a time, he made it around the large school to the photography lab where Arwin was at.

Tonya was with him working on a project and she followed them into the dark room.

“What's it going to take to get something on Davish?” Derrick asked.

“What do you mean?” Arwin asked confused.

“I mean something incriminating that could get rid of his ass,” Derrick said barely containing his anger.

“How good would it have to be?”

“Good enough to have him gone by the end of the school year.”

Tonya said, “I think we can get something for you, Derrick.”

“Like what?”

She smiled wickedly and looked at Arwin who still looked confused. “Trust me, Arwin and I can have something really good.” Deceit and deception were Tonya's forte. She loved causing mayhem and since she considered herself Derrick's really good friend, loving all the hating females that casts envious looks at her, Derrick knew she'd find him something that would tear Davish's ass a new one.

\* \* \*

On Derrick's way up to Rachel's classroom after practice the next day, Laura who was blocking his path suddenly stopped him.

“Hello Derrick,” Laura said pressing her body close to his.

He moved away in disgust. “Doesn't your day end at three-fifteen?” he asked.

“Yes, but sometimes Dwayne has me to stay to help him out. I don't mind. It's all a learning experience.” She moved in close to him again. “You thought about my offer, Derrick?”

“No. There's nothing to think about,” he said. “I don't want you like that Laura.” Although he was no stranger to women throwing themselves at him since he was ten years old, he didn't want to get involved with Laura, but this bitch had been dogging him since he had stepped foot in the main office the first day.

His refusal didn't phase her one bit. “But it doesn't matter what you want.” Lustfully, she grabbed his crotch and her eyes twinkled in delight at what she felt. “You're a big boy, Derrick. You can see life has dealt you a fucked up hand. Let me make it all better for you. Let me take away the monkey on your back.”

Derrick forced her hand away. “And you can do that?”

“Yes!” Laura relished greedily. “By helping you get that GED early? By making sure the right things get down to the board that will approve you instead of what Davish wants to be sent. You know he's out to make sure you get back in the juvie home as quick as possible?”

He roughly grabbed the back of her head. “And you'll help me out if I fuck you?”

She gasped, but she was clearly aroused at the forcible treatment and the wild angry look in his eyes. Gritting her teeth in carnal passion and licking her lips, she whispered desperately, “Yes! Yes!” Laura's manicured nails clawed at his shirt as she desperately gyrated her hips against his groin.

Teasing her, Derrick allowed himself to be affected by her wantonness. He leaned his face close to hers, seeing her lips pout filling with arousal, wanting to mesh with his. No matter how he tried to imagine, he couldn't get Rachel out of his thoughts.

Releasing Laura abruptly in disappointment, Derrick stepped away. There were footsteps coming down the steps from the third floor.

Gathering himself, so his emotions wouldn't show, he said, “I'll think about it, Laura.”

She was still breathless from the turmoil of arousal he had brought her to with just, “Don't take to long, Derrick,” she said before walking away.

Continuing on to Rachel's room, he paused before entering. She looked deeply stressed about something and he saw she was looking down at his file again. Should he help her with her stress? Or should he allow Davish to send him back where Montgomery wanted him?

Coming into the room, she was so deep into the file, she didn't hear him enter. He was able to make it to the desk and look over her shoulder at what she was exactly so involved into looking at. He noticed there were two different files on her desk and it looked as if she were doing a comparison of them.

Finally hearing him, she jumped a little. “I-I didn't know you'd come,” Rachel said, flustered trying to close the folders.

“If you wanted to know about me, why didn't you just ask?” he questioned.

Rachel was honest in her words to him. “I didn't think you would tell me the truth.”

“Why do you want to know about me and what I did in the juvenile center?”

“Because I want to know why is everyone so scared of you? I want to know why on paper you're a different boy than what I have in my class everyday, but when you're not around your peers you're a different person?”

“That last one should be easy to answer, Mrs. Herlong. I have an image to keep up.”

“You want people to believe you should be feared?”

Putting his bag on the desk and sitting next to her, he said, “It keeps the wrong people away and it gives me some peace from the people I don't want to be bothered with. What am I going to say to them? The truth? That I'm some guy that wants to get back the attention his father isn't giving him so I offered to take a large shipment somewhere? I didn't do it for the money. And I sure as hell didn't do it because I was pressured. I did it for the attention, but I didn't think the judge would give me so much time. Bottom line, Mrs. Herlong, I know I didn't think.”

“What about the allegations of coming up with the shipping routes to bring drugs in?”

No one had blatantly asked him that, yet Derrick felt comfortable answering her questions. "I was twelve years old and true I knew drugs were wrong, but I knew a better way to get them in since I'd cross the border millions of times before I was even ten years old. When I saw the police were tagging the routes, I suggested alternatives. Mules you could say. My suggestions were taken to heart."

"So you know it was all wrong to do what you did, but you did it anyways without any regards of what it might do to your relationship with your father."

"There was no relationship with him until I did this, Mrs. Herlong."

She got his point and then asked, "So what happened in the center? Why were you in the infirmary for three months? Why are the records missing?"

He stiffened. The incident hadn't been thought of in so long. Derrick had told himself to never think about it. He had convinced himself that it really hadn't happened. Not to him. He was supposed to be a healthy young boy. No one had picked up on the fact that the records were missing for the three months of his life at the infirmary – not even the judge or the probation board. No one except her!

Had he wanted her to know? Derrick felt compelled to tell her, but he knew he couldn't. Not when it had been so much work to make sure no one knew the truth.

"They must have gotten lost," he said unyielding. "I wouldn't know. I've never seen my own records and I certainly couldn't have gotten to them in the center."

She must have realized this flaw in her accusations and apologized. "I didn't mean to imply--"

Derrick cut her off because he wanted to stand firm for her not to treat him like a child. "I was struck on the back of the head. It was a revenge thing with some Arian punk and I wasn't having that. I tried to break off the motherfucker's dick when he tried to make me his bitch. They jumped me in the shower and tried to shank me in the groin. I went down with a fight taking five of them with me to the infirmary, but I needed a lot of medical attention. I almost bled to death."

"That must have been hard at thirteen," she surmised with pity. "It must have been painful."

He wanted to really drop the whole subject. Speaking about his experience in prison brought a lot of cold feelings over him. "Let's get to work, Mrs. Herlong." Derrick opened her laptop and turned it on.

"You are presumptuous, Derrick." She typed in her password and he secretly watched her long fingers wondering about the feel of them against his bare skin.

"I just want to finish and hurry this up," he lied.

They proceeded to get to work and he found her creativeness honorable. She had done her homework and could match wits with him toe for toe. He was surprised because an adult had not impressed him in a long time.

When she was able to print out their completed project and he read it over one more time, she sipped on a juice while he waited. Derrick really wasn't reading it. This just gave him a change to study her out of his peripheral vision.

She happened to catch him staring and just assumed he was finished. "How is it?" she asked. "Do you think they'll like it?"

"The students or the school?" he questioned.

"Both."

"Yes," he assured her, handing the pages back to her. Their hour was almost up, but Derrick didn't want their time to be up.

Rachel checked her watch. "We finished thirty minutes and two days earlier than I thought, Derrick."

"Can I ask a favor, Mrs. Herlong?" he said going over to the window to check the teacher's parking lot. Only Rachel's car was left in there along with the maintenance staff.

"It depends, Derrick. I'm not changing my mind about that A minus I gave you on the test today."

Derrick looked back at her and smiled remembering their earlier debate over something he had just barely paid scant attention to – yet it was just another opportunity to engage in conversation with her. His thoughts had been elsewhere while he took the test and as he usually did, he didn't go back and check his work. "No, it's not that. It's about your birthday. Could you come with me?" Holding out his hand, his heart raced to hear her acquiesce.

Warily, she came to him. "What do you have in mind, Derrick?"

"Trust me?"

Without hesitation, Rachel took his hand and allowed him to lead her out the classroom down the hall to a double door. There was a chain on it, but the lock wasn't closed. Every moral fiber screamed for her to not go with him, but curiosity was killing her. His hand felt so strong and powerful and she could almost see the electrical currents as their palms rubbed together.

"Where are you taking me?" she asked suspiciously.

He only grasped her hand a little tighter as he opened the door and led her through a darkened passage way.

She stayed close to him, but not because being this close made her feel safe – and she hadn't felt safe in a very long time with someone – but because she really could hardly see where they were going.

Derrick knew his way through passage way with his eyes closed and he took her into a dimly lit corner where candles lighted the area. There was a blanket laid out in the middle of the floor and on the blanket two crates had items on it. One was a large piece of watermelon designed to look like a square shaped cake with pieces of grapes and strawberries to

decorate. The top of the cake read, HAPPY BIRTHDAY RACHEL in a fruity thick cream with one candle in the middle that hadn't been lit.

On the other crate was a smaller box. He knelt behind the crates and looked up to see the shock on her face.

"W-Who did this?" she asked becoming very emotional.

"I did. I know your birthday isn't until tomorrow. I thought I would plan a day in advance. Arwin's goes to that cooking tech school and did the cake for me and I knew exactly by yesterday what to give you as a gift."

Rachel turned away suddenly holding her hands over her eyes.

Worried that he had done something wrong, Derrick went in front of her and placed his hands on her shoulders. "What is it?" he asked.

Shaking her head, Rachel said, "It's nothing... I don't think I should have come here with you."

"Yes, you should have," he refuted. "You of all people deserve something special, Rachel."

Looking up at him, she scolded, "Don't call me that, Derrick. It's not your duty to do special things like this for me. A card would have sufficed. I will always be your teacher. Nothing can change that."

"What if I'm no longer your student?" he asked.

She stepped away from him to give them some distance and so she could actually think straight. "Like I said, I shouldn't have come. Take me back to my room," she ordered.

"Aren't you even going to see what I've given you?" he asked.

Rachel gave him a very stern look as if angry at him for going through the trouble, but after a moment, she stepped forward and knelt down at the crates. He moved on the other side to watch her delicate fingers unwrap the box.

Gasping, as her eyes beheld what was inside, she took the chain out with the pendant at the end. "H-How did you get this, Derrick?"

"My father keeps a credit card for me handy to use when I chose to. I choose to use the card for this occasion."

"This must have cost you a fortune."

He took the necklace from her and moved around behind her. She stayed still as he put the necklace around her and clasped it firmly. Turning around to look at him, she smiled that brilliant smile again.

"You shouldn't have," she said, standing up and feeling guilty, but happy at the same time. Rachel heart sung as she felt the metal rest against her collarbone. This was the most magnificent token anyone had ever given her. Despite the fact that this was her student, Rachel was enthralled that he had bestowed something wonderful to her.

"I did," he said proudly moving closer to her until he could feel her breath touching his lips. Derrick wanted more than that to touch his lips and from the look in her eyes, she was wondering what he would taste like.

He leaned in just a little closer and tilted his head to the side to give her what she desired, but her hand to his chest stopped him coming any closer.

"I should be getting home, Derrick," Rachel said.

As much as he wanted it, he didn't press the subject. There would be another time another place. "I'll wrap your cake up," he said.

When he moved away, she took a deep breath of relief as if she had passed some great test. He watched her gather herself and fondly touched the pendant, smiling to herself. When he was done putting the cake back into the box it had come in, he blew out all the candles and took her hand again. She held it tightly and stayed close to him as he led her through the darkened passageway. He went slower to feel her touch and proximity a bit longer.

"Are we lost?" she asked, nothing their slowed pace.

He shook her head and continued on until they were back in the hallway again. She took charge of the pace and quickly walked to her room. They quietly gathered their items and left. He carried her bag and her box down to her car with her.

They didn't say anything to each other, but there was this silent truce as if to speak would mean they would admit something they weren't suppose to.

To break the growing tension, she asked, "Will your ride come for you soon or do you want me to wait with you?"

He nodded assuredly and repeated her words back to her. "You should be getting home."

Before driving off, she looked up at him. "Thank you, Derrick. Thank you for... everything."

Derrick watched her drive away and pondered just how much he had wanted things to end differently than what they had. Getting Mrs. Rachel to pay attention to him was going to take more than just subtle hints. She needed a wake up call and he fully intended to seduce his teacher.

*Thank you for reading a sample chapter. Please return to place of purchase to get your copy now!*

**Author's Note:** Onyx Heart can be found in various books as well and her book is due to come out only after her brother's book. You can also download a compilation of [The Heart of Detroit Series](#) exclusively on the author's website. [Details Here.](#)

## About Author

# **AUTHOR, BLOGGER, MOTHER, SPEAKER, JOURNALIST, RADIO HOST, EMPOWERMENT COACH, CONSULTANT & MORE!**



Sylvia Hubbard knew she wanted to be a writer of romance long before she knew there were African-American writers in the world. Weaving stories magically as a summer past time to writing stories to get through the humdrum of school, she was able to create something from nothing.

Today, she has independently published over 28 books, is the founder of Motown Writers Network and The AA Electronic Literary Network, CEO of HubBooks Literary Services, runs over five blogs on a variety of subjects, host The Michigan Literary Network Radio Show and is a happily divorced mother of three children in Detroit, Michigan.

“I’m no superwoman,” she states with a smile that seems infinite on her lips. “I’m just being an asset in the world instead of a liability.”

Considered an addicted blogger by HoneyTechblog.com, nominated and recognized for her literary work in the Metro Detroit area, referred to as “A Literary Diva” by Detroit City Council and donned “Cliffhanger Queen” by her readers, she finds solace in speaking and educating on a variety of topics.

Her subjects range from Social Media, Internet Marketing, Creative Intimacy, Single Parenting, Blogging, E-Books, Publishing (all aspects i.e.: writing, publishing, marketing & promoting online & offline), and personal triumphs with inspiration mixed in.

Never a disappointment, Sylvia Hubbard, has spoken in front of thousands all over the United States and Canada.

[www.SylviaHubbard.com](http://www.SylviaHubbard.com)

More of this author’s works can be purchased on her website at:  
<http://sylviahubbard.com/fictionbooks>

### **BOOK LIST (Alphabetical Listing - - STBP = soon to be released)**

BabyDoll: Heart of Detroit Series	Red Heart: Heart of Detroit Series
Cabin Fever: Heart of Detroit Series	Road To Freedom
Diary of A...	Sex Weed (STBP)
Deceptive Nights	Secrets, Lies & Family Ties
Diamond In The Rough: Heart of Detroit Series	Silent Lynx
Drawing The Line (STBP)	Sin's Iniquity
Dreams of Reality	stealing innocence
Eve's Deception (STBP)	stealing innocence II: The Ravishment
Emperor's Addiction (STBP)	Stone's Revenge
His Substitute Wife... My Sister (STBP)	Sweet Justice
A Little Bit Of Sin (STBP)	Tanner's Devil (STBP)
Love 101	Teach Me To Love (STBP)
Love Like This	
Mistaken Identity	
The Mysterious Mr. Black (STBP)	

## Video & Book Trailers for Sylvia Hubbard

- [Sin's Iniquity Book Trailer](#)
- [stealing innocence Book Trailer](#)
- [Tanner's Devil Book Trailer](#)
- [Sylvia Hubbard's personal Book Line](#)
- [Sylvia Hubbard speaking on Blogging & Author promotion](#)

## Where Books Can Be Purchased At

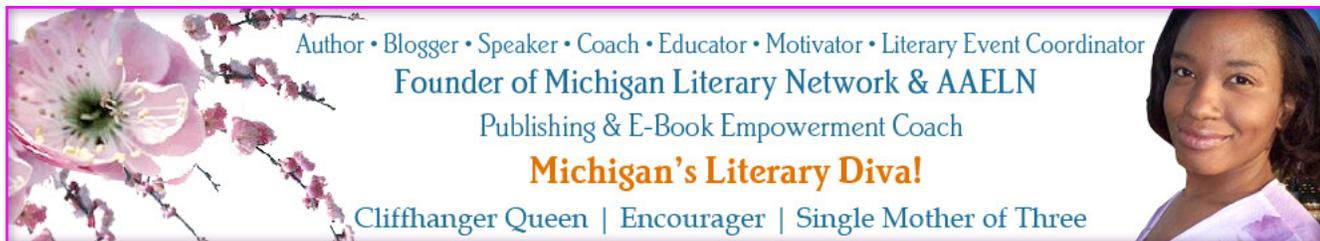
-  [Amazon Store \(Paperback & Ebook\)](#)
-  [Barnes and Nobles \(Paperback & Ebook\)](#)
-  [KoboBooks \(Ebook Only\)](#)
-  [Other Ebook Formats](#)

**Online Listing of All Current Books** *(includes links to excerpts, video and detail descriptions)*  
<http://sylviahubbard.com/fictionbooks>

## Author Pictures to Download

[Author w/City in Background](#) jpg 223px × 315px  
[Author w/PlainGreenBackground](#) jpg 542px × 799px

**Author Current Events** - <http://sylviahubbard.com/events>



## Related Websites:

[www.SylviaHubbard.com](http://www.SylviaHubbard.com)  
[www.MotownWriters.com](http://www.MotownWriters.com)  
[www.MichiganLiteraryNetwork.com](http://www.MichiganLiteraryNetwork.com)  
[www.DetroitLiteraryNetwork.com](http://www.DetroitLiteraryNetwork.com)  
[www.EssenceofMotownLitConference.com](http://www.EssenceofMotownLitConference.com)  
[www.MotownBookClub.com](http://www.MotownBookClub.com)  
[www.AAELN.com](http://www.AAELN.com)  
[www.LoveABlackWoman.com](http://www.LoveABlackWoman.com)  
[www.MichiganMurderandMayhem.com](http://www.MichiganMurderandMayhem.com)

**Don't forget to leave a message or review on the author's website | [Click Here](#)**

Thank you in advance for your support.

Connect Online to Sylvia Hubbard:

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/michigansliteraryworld>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/SylviaHubbard1>

Website: <http://SylviaHubbard.com>

My blog: <http://SylviaHubbard.com/blogs>

Or subscribe to her newsletter at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SylviaHubbard>

Want another book to read now?

<http://sylviahubbard.com/fictionbooks>

*Happy Reading*