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The White Witch

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The White Witch

Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"'Jared, wait,' Shante whimpered. 'Someone could walk in any moment.' 'I thought you liked that sort of thing,' he teased as he suckled her neck and shoulders. 'Jared! I only did that once,' Shante whined. 'Well, they say two's a charm,' he whispered pressing her toned body against the conference room wall. 'No, they don't,' she moaned, sliding her leg up over his bulky frame onto his waist. She grabbed a fistful of his auburn hair, yanking his head backwards. He yelped. 'Don't make me get physical, white boy,' Shante warned seductively. 'You know I'd hurt you.' "

Cover Page Footnote

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“Jared, wait,” Shante whimpered. “Someone could walk in any moment.”
“I thought you liked that sort of thing,” he teased as he suckled her neck and shoulders.
“Jared! I only did that once,” Shante whined.
“Well, they say two’s a charm,” he whispered pressing her toned body against the conference room wall.
“No, they don’t,” she moaned, sliding her leg up over his bulky frame and onto his waist. She grabbed a fistful of his auburn hair, yanking his head backwards. He yelped.
“Don’t make me get physical, white boy,” Shante warned seductively. “You know I’d hurt you.”
Jared smirked. He liked it when the street in her came out to play—it made her black eyes glisten. She definitely had an edge—a seducing iciness—that terrorized and enticed all the same. He called it her vixen trademark, and rightfully so. In the boardroom Shante was vicious: cold-hearted, unflinching and cutthroat. She wasn’t dubbed the White Witch for no reason. Everyone feared her and those that didn’t hated her. But everyone knew better than to ignore any warning she threw your way. Jared didn’t care. From the first day they met, six years ago at Princeton, until the day she stole the two billion dollar account that cost him the Senior Partnership—Jared wanted her. He couldn’t keep his hands off her. She couldn’t keep her hands off his accounts. But the way he figured it, it’d only be a matter of time before she’d acquiesce—he’d make sure of it.
“Shante,” Jared breathed, yanking her leg up over his shoulder. “I don’t respond well to threats.”
Shante had to smile at her wannabe lover and colleague Jared Clanikousophonos. He tried so much to be hard but it never worked—at least not with Shante. Truth be told, she abhorred men like Jared—always thinking they could get what they want just by flexing a little muscle or by donning the latest rap CD or spouting off the latest ghetto slang. Just like everyone else from the burbs, Jared liked to play Harlem—Shante didn’t have to. The people, the fla, the very life-force of Harlem coursed through her veins; and when she breathed its gritty injustices exhaled with her—scourged her—binding her like a master does a slave. She hated Harlem but she needed it just like feet need shoes. Sure, you could walk barefoot in the city, but why would you?
Harlem was feisty, angry and definitely no place for a half-breed like Shante. On record, she was Asfricano-American—half Asian, half African—but in the hood she was the white girl with black girl hair and chinkly black eyes. The chicks on the block called her out every day—Blanca, Chingy, and Negrito—everything save the name she was born with. Harlem hated her—they all hated her—but just like a fine vinaigrette, you can’t really enjoy the taste unless the flavors collide.
She yanked his head back harder. His eyes were twinkling. She kissed him deeply, roughly. She bit him— hard. He smiled, broadly.
“You’ve got work to do,” she whispered, freeing her leg from Jared’s firm grasp. “As do I; call me.”
“You always say that,” Jared huffed, “but then you disappear and nobody knows where you are. You gotta secret life or something?”
Shante chuckled to herself. She had to give her boy some credit. Jared wasn’t as stupid as he acted.
“Why Jared,” said Shante in her rendition of a Southern belle accent, “are you jealous of little ‘ole me? How sweet.”

“Shut up, Shante,” Jared growled.

“Aww, don’t be like that Jared,” Shante cooed. “I’m a loner, you know that. Don’t make it such a big deal.”

“Fine,” Jared retorted. “Now, get the hell out!”

Shante smirked. Ordinarily, she’d eat the heart of anyone who spoke to her like that, colleague or not; but she was feeling good, generous even. She couldn’t afford to lose her cool, not tonight – not with so much at stake.

“Be careful, Jared,” Shante said smilingly. “Your emotions are showing and we both know that didn’t work out so well for you on your last account. We wouldn’t want a repeat performance, would we?”

Jared glared at Shante. That skank! He wanted to choke the life out of her.

“Fine, I’ll go,” Jared retorted. “But you should get some sleep. It’s a busy time of year for women in your profession what with all the crack downs on brothels and such.”

“Ouch,” laughed Shante. “Don’t be a hater,” she yelled down the hall just as Jared stepped onto the elevator. She’d pissed him off, again. But he’d get over it. She always did. Funny, how karma works, Shante thought to herself. Jared used to laud his father’s ambassador status over everyone at Princeton, using it to get whatever and whomever he wanted. Now in a place where merit and performance ruled, he could barely keep up. He thought everyone’d be afraid to challenge him and most were – idiots. They all cowered in his shadow; but not Shante. She feared no man – ever – and Jared was hardly an exception.

* * *

Ordinarily, Shante’d change in the backroom of The Choke at six o’clock but her tryst with Jared took a little more time than she planned. She chuckled. She liked toying with Jared; the danger in it roused her. Still, she thought to herself, I should just cut him loose. She chuckled again. But why bother when I can have his cake and his job too? Friends close; enemies closer – it was Shante’s anthem.

To make it to The Choke on time, Shante had to break protocol – she changed at work. For most, getting dressed at work is hardly worth mentioning. But for Shante, discovery could mean the loss of everything – her job, career, everything. Still she took the risk. Not because she had anything to prove, but because she understood that some things – no matter how hard you try, how polished you look, or how high up the ladder you climb – can never be purged from the heart.

The great Shante Dawson: most sought after Corporate Attorney in the city, looking like she had stepped off the cover of a raunchy magazine. Tousled, black, bushy hair; 3-inch diamond studded hoops; shredded Versace jeans; black, rhinestone-encrusted Armani halter; 4 inch stilettos from Gucci; and pink, green and yellow body paint applied to her eyes, midriff and arms. Here she was — the White Witch—in regal attire. She smiled.

“Michelangelo ain’t got nutin’ on me,” she smirked as she donned a pair of large black sunglasses, a black wide-brimmed hat and a weathered London Fog trench coat. She was fearless. She spoke to everyone as she left the building. The new guy in cubicle 3, security, even the receptionist—no one had a clue. She smiled—broadly—stepped onto the street and into a cab.

“Take me to The Choke.”

* * *

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“I see you made it in – on time,” Shante said, smirking Jared. Odd. Jared never came to work smirking. “Have a good night, did you?”

“You could say it was electric. I almost choked with glee. How was your evening?” Jared was smirking at her – again. Something was wrong – she could feel it. Still, she returned his smirk with one of her own. Whatever he was up too, she wouldn’t give him the satisfaction.

“Oh, you know the same: busy, busy, busy.”

“Really?” he asked with feigned interest, “I would’ve pegged you for more a home girl type. You know, the type to drop it like it’s hot?”

He shot her another smirk and slithered closer to her.

“Jared, dear, do stay away from the BET channel. It’s been known to corrupt even the most educated. And, by the way, no one says drop it like it’s hot anymore.”

“How about choke it like it’s hot?”

Shante glared at Jared. Her ears and neck burned red.

“Aww, did I upset her majesty,” Jared asked as he brushed his fingers against her face and hair.

“Tsk, tsk, tsk,” he mocked, “your emotions are showing, Shante, you might want to fix that.” He leaned into Shante, his breath charring her cheeks. “You know, it’s been said that people will do anything – give anything – to keep a secret. Do you agree?”

Shante smiled – widely. Touché, Jared, she thought to herself, it took you long enough to figure it out, you sneaky little prick. She inhaled deeply as Jared’s hand slid under her blouse. He did have splendid hands. He kissed her – hungrily – and pushed her atop her desk, yanking wildly at her pants. Shante had to smile at her wannabe lover and colleague – he thought he was in control.

She returned his kiss with an erotic one of her own. He moaned lightly and shivered. He wanted her – like always. She pulled him on top of her. His tie brushed against her lips. She licked his neck and then his chest. His skin flushed red.

“You know, tomorrow is as good a day as any for you to announce your resignation. I mean why prolong the inevitable, right? I want a copy, too – to hang in my new office. I’d be happy to proof it for you when it’s done. It is the least I can do.”

Shante had to smile at Jared. He was in his element; on top and in control. Sneaky little prick, she thought to herself, I should’ve cut you loose. But why do that when there’s still cake to be had?

It was quick, painless, and he didn’t feel a thing, at first. He merely swatted when he felt the pinch at the base of his skull. He didn’t have a clue. He kept yanking way at her belt buckle trying to get it open – to get inside. He was smiling, laughing, and taunting her as he slithered back and forth on top of her. She smiled. You’d think he’d know her better than that.

Six years, seven months and two days – Jared’s moment had arrived. He had triumphed; the White Witch was dethroned. The great Shante Dawson: most sought after attorney in the city was his. The skank who denied him at Princeton – defied him in the boardroom – was cowering in his midst. The white girl with the black girl hair who stole his two billion dollar account and his chance at Senior Partner was now his foot stool. For once, he’d get the cake and eat it too. This was his moment. Too bad he wouldn’t get the chance to enjoy it.

* * *
Friends close; enemies closer; it’s the Shante Dawson way—Harlem’s way—and there are no exceptions to the rule. Really, blackmail? How naïve, Shante thought to herself. Jared should’ve known better than that.

It was pouring outside. Juicy rain pellets beat against her windshield. Tippity, tip, tip, they sang as Shante sat solemnly in the dilapidated car idling in the junkyard. Midnight rains were her favorite.

“Friends close,” she hummed to herself as the scents of the junk yard rubble slapped her nose. Smirking, she exhales. Her chilled, mocha hands grip the steering wheel. Resolvedly, she smiles—widely.

“Enemies closer,” she whispers aloud. She steps into the rain and swiftly walks to the trunk of the car. She opens it. She tosses a letter onto the decomposing corpse that lay rigid atop the car’s spare tire.

You really should’ve known better than that, Jared. Really.

OOPS

KARA DREBITKO