

## CH.15 *YOU ARE THE ONE FOR ME*

Tuning in to a piano jazz station on his satellite radio, Tunde settles into the driver's seat in his car and heads home to Shakespeare Parkway in Glenville. Ellis Marsalis' haunting piece, Orchid Blue, comes out of the speakers filling the atmosphere with a swinging groove that makes Tunde reflect with pleasure on his date with Oni.

He spent a few moments soaking up the positive energy that Oni' sweet presence left inside his car. A smile covered his face as he glided east along St. Clair Avenue feeling very light of spirit. As Oscar Peterson's piano swung into I Thought About You, Tunde realizes he is not yet ready to seek his bed.

"No matter what, I'll always come back to you," Tunde sings out loud, making up his own version of the song's lyrics. On impulse, Tunde swings a left when he reaches East 9th Street and drives north to the lakeshore near Voinovich Park.

When he reaches the pier, he notices a few other late night souls milling about the area. Observing the aimless wandering of those gathered in the cool air, he realizes that many of these late night visitors to this part of the pier are in truth the homeless who have few places to lay their heads on this cold November night.

Pulling alongside a concrete pylon, Tunde lowers the car's window allowing the crisp late autumn air to fill the auto's interior. Continuing to hum to himself, he cut the engine and listened to the mournful cry of sea gulls gliding about Lake Erie's choppy waters looking for an early morning breakfast morsel.

Tunde inhales the familiar green algae scent that always emanates from the lake's waters before they began to freeze over for the winter. It's not a good or bad smell," he reflects, "it's just Cleveland."

"No matter where I roam," he thinks, "Cleveland will always be my home." In all their many travels, this was he and his friend Taj's favorite refrain. Another buddy of theirs, Malachi, would tell them how crazy they were.

"See that's what's wrong with you cats," he'd say, "most people are trying to get the hell outta this bitch and here you motherfuckas are trying to stay." "What's up with that?" He questioned, shaking his head.

Tunde would just look at Malachi sagely and repeat, "no matter where I roam my brother..." "You know that's some corny shit Tunde," said Malachi on many occasions, the friends laughing good naturedly.

Tunde thinks fondly of his three Aces, as he had named his childhood friends. Beside, his father, Sharif, his brother, Sekou and Lulu; Taj, Malachi, and Que were closer to him than anyone else on Earth.

They were truly a family who supported each other through thick and thin over the course of their

years from childhood to young men growing up in Glenville.

Tunde couldn't imagine his life without their presence. When he reflects on the blessings in his life, he never fails to place his Aces at the center of his peace of mind and good fortune.

Tunde loves basking in the tranquility and quiet of the nighttime atmosphere as it eases into early morning. He uses this time to be still and reflect.

Exiting the car, he stands leaning against its hood with feet crossed and elbows braced on the auto's hood. Lake Erie's waves came crashing against the shoreline sending droplets of foamy spray onto the landing where he'd parked.

The lights of the city reflected off the back of his broad shoulders, while the dark mystery of the lake, with its twinkling stars shown on the dark contenance of his strong features. Tunde's state of consciousness evolved into a light weight daydream as he began fingering the marks that ran across his left jawline.

He had much to ponder over the day's events. He'd discovered that Oni was indeed familiar with Clock of Destiny symbolism and the Moorish birthright of the scattered peoples of Africa.

Earlier, following their final glass of wine, Tunde realized Oni was still smarting over his refusal to explain more about the Circle Seven Law they'd discussed as they were arriving at her condominium. "I'm going to ask you to tell me something that has important meaning in my life Tunde," she said. Noting the serious tone in her voice, he replied, "anything for you sweetness." "But first you have to tell me something that may have great importance in my life."

"No fair Tunde," she complained. "I asked you first." Then looking at Tunde out of the side of her eye, she said, "o.k. mister." "I'll answer your question." "But you'll have to answer two of mine." "Deal," said Tunde.

Taking Oni's left hand in his, he turned her hand over unclasping her watch. Oni was getting a little nervous wondering what he wanted to know.

"Tell me Miss Derricotte," he said pausing dramatically over her watch, "What does the R in your middle name stand for?" he questioned reading the back of her watch.

Oni exhaled and hit Tunde lightly on his arm. "Is that all?" "It's Rose," she said. "I'm named for my Nana, Ivy Rose Baptiste," she said proudly. "And yes Tunde," I do know the meaning of my first name," she said before he could try to show her up with his superior knowledge.

"It's Yoruba and it means born in a sacred place. "My father gave me that name;" "and your mother named you Rose in honor of her mother," he finished for her. "Yes she did," said Oni, returning to a more serious tone of voice.

"Your turn Tunde," said Oni;" "and you best believe, I'm not letting you off the hook about anything," she said. "Tell daddy what you wanna know baby," Tunde said in a mischievous tone of voice, leaning over to her cheek to steal a kiss.

After he explained to her a little history of Moorish Science and its esoteric Clock of Destiny component, Oni realized she was indeed slightly familiar with some of its doctrines.

“I believe my parents were once members of an organization such as this,” she recalled. “But Drake and I were too young to understand very much about it.”

Thinking back on that moment, Tunde peers upward into the first bloom of the Cleveland dawn as it broke over the eastern horizon of the lake.

In that split second, Tunde commiserated with the spirit of Anna. “Is Oni the woman for me?” he questioned the heavens. “Please give me some kind of sign mother of mine,” Tunde said watching a singular star twinkle and wink at him over the darkness of the lake.

