

Chapter 1

Fuzzy

Monotony again infiltrates Omar's life, stealing another ten hours of heartbeats. Although he and his crew members are paid well, the majority of the day is spent standing around waiting for directions from the unorganized higher ups. They are tasked with pulling electrical wire of various sizes from numerous point A's to a multitude of point B's. He is scheduled to work ten hours today, five tens and one eight on Saturday, to be exact, but it's a mundane Monday so he decides to work eight n' skate. He plugs in his red one-man aerial lift, signs out and heads for the gate to badge his way to temporary freedom. He swipes his badge and after hearing the click, pushes through the turn style to walk the dusty path leading to his vehicle. When he arrives, he opens his lift gate and sheds himself of his hard hat, safety vest, glasses, boots and then slips into his brown Karl Kani slides and hops into his black '92 Tahoe. Typically, he would drive home to feast on the meal he prepared the night before, but his refrigerator is on E and his cabinets are bare. Sundays are designated grocery days but yesterday Omar was captivated by large Styrofoam plates of BBQ and endless bowls of chili at his IBEW local's yearly picnic. The protein overdose left him lethargic and laggard. Grocery shopping was not an option. He feels that he is playing himself, leaving work two hours early to spend time bagging groceries instead of steeping a bag of African Rooibos tea unwinding to the soothing sounds of Freddie Hubbard. A rough draft of the shopping list is written, and Jewels Grocery is the destination. After a series of red, green and yellow traffic lights the SUV's pioneer stereo CD player is spinning with Miles Davis playing through the speakers, Blue Green: a classic. The melody in this moment rekindles a recurring daydream for Omar. He is center stage, big crowd, fingers flipping and the notes are flowing. He makes love to the scales hitting the notes just right. Or sometimes he is in a park surrounded by green grass, trees, the occasional bystander in his periphery and a cloudless blue sky outlining the bell of his trumpet as he makes it sing to the heavens. Green Light. He mashes the gas.

If only I could spend more time developing my craft.

Several months have passed since the last time he kissed Juliet his trumpet and he misses the peace she brings. Right Signal. Click Clock...Click Clock...

"How about you pick a lane, idiot." He sneers.

Everyone is driving around in Lala land, oblivious to the people around them.

The streets were a bit busier today, which meant for him more idiots were in motion behind steering wheels increasing the potential for bumper bangs and cracked grills.

Bustas. Left Signal. . Click Clock...Click Clock...

The twinkling of the jazz piano calms Omar and reduces his road rage. Then all of a sudden. BLACKA! ..POP! He feels the burn of a bullet graze his temple that entered the rear window. His immediate reaction was a sharp right turn, avoiding the rear bumper of a blue Beamer, which sent him smashing into the traffic light on the corner of Maple and 33rd. A woman screams, the bag does not inflate, and he hears his forehead crack. Now serenaded to sleep by the hissing of a punctured radiator and the blare of a continuous horn, but it was not from the great Miles. There is silence and then darkness.

Beep...Beep...Beep....Beep. Omar slowly awakens to the sound of what he assumes is a heart monitor. With his eyes still closed, blurry images of a bumper and a street light pole fade across his eyelids. Beep ...Beep.... Beep. The blip of the heart machine seems strange to him. It does not resemble the tone from the normal telemetry monitoring system. It almost sounds... human. The crust breaks along the rims of his eyes as they gingerly open trying to focus on an image propped up at the edge of the bed. The fuzzy figure stands frozen, or is it sitting? An immediate distinction is difficult for him. The shine of the sun entering the room is heavy on his eyelids. Beep... Beep... Beep...that is no heart monitor, he determines. The beeping sound is coming from the stiff blurry figure Beep...Beep. It's getting louder and somehow sounding more sarcastic. BEEEEEEEEPPPP!!!! Sharp fingernails pinch his pinky toe startling him to instantly sit up in the bed grasping for his foot. He is surprised by a woman in blue scrubs grimacing at him.

"Are you ok sir," she asks, still grimacing.

Omar's vision is now clear and vivid. The pink paisley wallpaper is popping. So is the lip gloss. Her lips glisten in the sunlight beaming through the opening in the white curtains as she twists her soft brown round face at him. She has her hair pressed, black and cut neat just above the shoulders. Her twisted face and lips did not match her perfectly developed body. She was bad, he thought. Confused he watches the nurse glide to the obviously misplaced mustard yellow recliner located at the foot of his bed.

"I forgot my notepad." She says looking around the room. "Oh, there it is." She picks it up and winks at him.

"Is everything ok with you?" she asks as he marvels at the silver sparkles in her eyes.

Wait, why is one iris purple and the other light blue?

She looks at him with honest curiosity.

“Why look so surprised, and how long has it been now?”

Omar didn't know how to answer. Dropping the note pad she eases in closer. As she reaches out her hand and gently places it on his forearm, he notices her fingernails were perfectly manicured with sky blue polish that seemed to match her right iris. Her hand felt familiar and soft on his skin. Positioning herself on the side of his hospital bed he could feel the heat from her body. The nurse's skin is smooth, and she smells like baby powder and raspberry flavored cotton candy. Omar feels deeply relaxed by her aura. She rubs his arm; her lips are full, perky and even wetter up close. He gazes into her bright rainbow eyes. He licks his lips, her mouth parts. That's when he feels the sting of her spike like fingernail gouging him in the gut.

With shock he opens his eyes and tries to sit up. The pain attacks every muscle in his body all at once. His head is throbbing and the constant beeping he hears feels like someone jabbing each vessel in his temple with a sewing needle. A nurse bursts through the door and puts her hand on his shoulder while she places the heart monitor back onto his finger. The beeping moderates, his eyes become heavy, and his body is sore. He lies with one eye barely open. “What the hell?”