

As an adult looking back on my childhood from my memory bank I wanted to convey the most vivid, the most outrageous and the most unapologetic events that stood out to me as a child while enforcing my self-knowledge. There were many questions that needed answers. It was executing truth versus lies that were told to others by my family members as I listened. My family and I were a few steps behind with society but we eventually caught up with the world ending with some of us making hurtful decisions and choosing sides to be on. I learned the value about trust and betrayal within love which exhibits various attributed about feelings.

However, in life we make choices and say words that sometimes can't be taken back. It's always wise to be respectful in how you approach a person because you would want to be treated with respect yourself. So in saying that, I say this that every culture exemplifies difference in lifestyles which can sometimes become alarming. I saw a lot as a child which helped me mature at a young age. What I witnessed within a three week span in New York most would have had taken years to manifest in the country of Oklahoma. My lifestyle immortalizes hidden truths that were covered up by the least possible person within the family. I latched on to my favorite Auntie who was nearly a shadow of protection and knowledge to me but deep down she was battling insecurities. She took the time to explain her many encounters of doubts of self-assurance on a daily bases while trying to fight for respect. She blamed her insecurities on some of her siblings who made it known they disapproved in how she was built making her feel like a failure. This girl was self-absorbed until she discovered the difference between a man and a woman and because of this comparison I watched our family fall apart.

CHAPTER 1

Adventurous as my childhood was living in the South, I can truly say, that I enjoyed being raised in an undissipated lifestyle given to me by my parents J. W. and Geraldine White. Over the years during the early sixty's I indeed, witnessed first-hand an array of personal life style changes linked to experiences resulting in; dramas; love, secret sex scandals, betrayal of the heart, and witch craft. I matured quickly in those

days at a young age. The atmosphere on our farmland was fast pace, unpredictable, unsettling and mind boggling.

As a result, I will take you on a ride into many life's changes of events that left an everlasting dent or while some would say a scar in my life and. Here's my story.

CHAPTER 2

I was thankful school was over for the day. I couldn't wait to be dropped off at my Auntie Eisha's classroom. My teacher, Mrs. Waller often walked me to meet my Auntie in her last period class after school. Upon reaching my favorite Auntie I immediately noticed something different about her. I couldn't pinpoint it right away but, from her appearance something about her demeanor was out of bound. The sadness upon her face was noticeable; almost, as though she had been crying in school all day. I stood there next to my teacher not wanting to let her hand go; because I knew personally when Auntie Eisha's mood shifts all hell breaks loose. She had a tendency in taking her anger out on any one that was near her. I knew what to expect from her from previous circumstances and I really did not want to be her punching bag all the way home. She had a quick temper that was sometimes obnoxious with a bit of sarcastic in it. I use to think maybe she acted this way because she was the baby among her siblings. She regularly had tantrums which pretty much got her, everything she wanted; her way. Undoubtedly, when Auntie held her hand out to retrieve me from my teacher's hand, she said 'come on So-soo' and snatched me away from my teacher's hand. My head jerked I looked back at Mrs. Waller who saw that, and should have said something to Auntie Eisha, but she chose to ignore us by looking at the floor making me secretly yelled underneath my breath 'bitch call my Momma'!

In addition, our daily routine Monday's through Thursday's consisted of my teacher Mrs. Waller who walked me to meet Auntie Eisha in her last period class. She was schooled in the next building over where both the middle and intermediate students went to up till the eighth grade. On this day my Auntie's demeanor after school that day made me watch her every move. She gathered her books; I mean she was slinging those books on top of one another, than she tried to yank her raggedy Ann purse only to

realize that the belt strap was wrapped around the chair. This mild set-back infuriated her even more, nevertheless, causing her to make a huffing sound, and at the same time wouldn't you know once she unwrapped her purse this brod snatched me once again by the arm! Do you know once we got outside to walk our two mile stretch home this heifer nearly dragged me about a quarter of a mile! When I screamed her name to stop pulling me she then stopped, looked down at me and said 'So-soo I did not realized I was pulling you'. Her mind was set on something heavy. Hell bout time we made it home from school my Mother saw us walking abruptly. She ran off the porch to meet us then grab me by my upper shoulders and said 'Sofay what happened to you, were you in a fight'? I said 'Huh Momma'? Before I knew it I just busted into tears. Momma said 'look at you Soo' I did not know that my ribbons on my hair were untied and hanging loosely on my pony tails, my hair looked as though someone ran a rake through it, my culottes' skirt was lopsided, I had one shoe on because Eisha would not slow down for me to go back to retrieve my other shoe that slide off my foot. Momma said 'now Sofay tell me exactly what happened'. After, I told her how Eisha was looking in school and acting funny again Momma did not let me finish. She grabbed my hand as we walked passed the men on the front porch saying to me 'Momma's gone take care of this causz ain't no bitch gone be yanking my baby all the way home in this hot ass heat'. Granddaddy looked up from playing cards with his longtime friend gossiping Mr. Johnson and yelled out 'what in the God's name is going on now'? Momma yelled back 'your baby girl is at it again being grown and out of control'! Momma did not have much tolerance to evil when it came to the family especially me and Daddy. She walked right up to Auntie Eisha's face and said 'now looka here little girl this is your last damn time that you will scare my baby by pulling her hair and thangs'. Eisha looked at both of us with a dumb look on her face. Oh how I desperately wanted to say to Eisha no I did not say that! Well we all knew how my sweet Momma always had a vivid imagination which automatically triggered her to add on unnecessary, but additional untrue drama to make the story juicier. I knew very well not to interfere with Momma's conversations. I learned early on to stay in a child's place. Momma did not play with me she would pop me in the

mouth within a heartbeat if I attempted to interfere in any of her conversations without being spoken to. Momma always said 'you speak when spoken to'.

Consequently, I always stayed quiet when I really wanted to voice my opinion. My opinions usually did not matter because my Mother did all the talking for me even though that did not stop me from talking underneath my breath.

CHAPTER 3

However, Auntie Nitta the second oldest was walking pass us. She stopped and asked what was going on? Momma said 'your baby sister tripped my baby making her fall out her shoe!' I was humiliated! I wanted to roll myself to the shed and just stay there for the night. Auntie Nitta looked at Eisha than took her by the hand and they walked on the farmland looking for my Grandmother – Gramz's who was near by picking blueberry for that night's dessert. Before, reaching Gramz, Nitta whispered to Eisha to open up and tell us what was bothering her. Gramz's turned around to see; me, Momma, Eisha and Nitta standing around her. She then said 'what yall cherrins up too?' Nitta said 'Momma I do not know why this child of yours got all these different attitudes and taking it out on us this needs to stop'. Eisha stood there like a zombie and did not bulge when asked questions regarding what was wrong with her, instead, she started crying; sliding down onto the ground. This drama occurs whenever she thinks everyone is ganging up on her. Momma shouted to Eisha 'girl if you gone fall down don't hold the tail of your skirt to cover your butt on the ground, just fall your ass down like a normal person would'. Daddy walked over just in time to hear Momma's outburst and nudged her in the armpit with his elbow meaning to be quiet. Auntie Eisha paused from crying for a moment. Somewhere in the back of her mind that humiliating joke Momma just said did not sit well with her. This forced her to say 'shut up Geraldine and take care of your own busy husband'. I thought Huh? I was clueless in hearing that statement somehow or another the siblings knew what that statement meant including Momma who grasped for some air then she shut the hell up. She looked at daddy who stood there looking up into the sky weary with his eyes bulging out the sockets. Next thing I knew Momma stormed off. Truthfully speaking, it was no secret that my Daddy with several of his brothers hell

maybe even Granddaddy had philandering ways with many women in town. I once asked daddy what hoe meant? He said 'Soo-so stay in your place'. He was never able to answer any of my sexual questions it may him uncomfortable. He would stare at me, clear his throat, and act like he was choking on something before saying go sit down somewhere. When he turned his back that's when Eisha and Nitta (if she was not painting her eyes black) would explain to me the meaning behind those unfamiliar adult words.

Meanwhile, Gramz's had just about enough of both of the exchanges and bickering of words so she shut them all down by screaming at the top of her lungs saying 'everybody shut the fuck up' throwing a balled up fist into the air. Like in a cartoon animation all of them dropped their heads like soldiers shutting up one by one.

Anyway, before I knew it, the area where we all were standing seemed to have drawn attention from the visitors and the remaining siblings. Who by then, made their way to where we were standing and immediately started asking 'who did what-what happen-what's wrong?'

Ironically, this was certainly not out of the ordinary to have a large amount of people standing around because we kept visitors throughout the day at the farmland. I just don't recall the visitors being so concern nor involved with our family drama or maybe I never paid attention until now. The visitors were friends of my Dad along with his siblings. We had Granddaddy's longtime friend's ole gossiping Mr. Johnson, sickening Mr. Brown and old man Martin who visited daily if not every other day. Their wives were Gramz's friends. Mr. Johnson who had no glue to what was going on jokingly said 'alright suggar nobody messes with my baby cause I'll shot that sucker down' Laughter exploded, ironically, any other time, Gramz would have replied back by saying 'ol go sat your gossiping ass down some where Johnson' but this time she did not respond back. Even my Dad J. W. took notice to say 'Momma you okay you didn't say nothing to Mr. Johnson' it was like she was hypnotized staring blinkingly into Eisha's eyes. Gramz's was thinking back to when Eisha started this tantrum shit. She was used to Eisha normal tantrums of; whining, pouting and loud outbursts but none of us was

prepared for this new fond of tantrums that consisted of; pushing and shoving, rolling her eyes, storming off during conversations it was too much. Hell, I was the baby and I knew better to not act like that! To make matters worse many who were standing there clueless began laughing silently just concurring up shit without a clue. I'm not sure if their laughter was geared towards Eisha or geared towards Momma for storming off or maybe the laughs were geared for both of them. I could not tell yah which one but it was starting to become irritating. Eisha begin looking at everyone standing there laughing and became so frustrated that she blurred out 'all yall miserable asses can go to hell' I didn't know what she expected behind that statement because all she got were more laughs.

Truthfully speaking, she was right misery does Loves Company. By this time, Gramz's was boiling over with anger she could not take any more shenanigans from Eisha who still would not say what was bothering her. Gramz's decided she would beat it out of her but as soon as she tried to reach for her neck Granddaddy walked in between them. He blocked Gramz's stretched out hands and said to his wife 'Olivia leave her be'. Eisha get up off the ground and gone on up to the house I will be up there later. Whew Eisha dodged that beaten! It is a good thing Granddaddy came between them because Eisha would have been swollen for days from being whipped and nearly strangled by her Mother.

Likewise, my heart fell looking down at my sweet Auntie with her legs crossed on top of one another on the ground. As she got up off the ground she gained her composure but looked bewildered mostly from crying. She looked angrily at those that were laughing then turned up her top lip and gave them the middle finger causing some to bend over with laughter. I did not understand why she would do such a thing she was already the center of attention. I guess it was the brat in her that was being unleashed. I silently laughed and thought Eisha always gives a show when she's put on the spot. I looked over at Gramz who by this time stood there shaking her head left to right. I then looked back to Auntie Eisha relieved to see she started getting her dignity intact by; straightening out her skirt, and fixing her hair. She began to walk I immediately grabbed her hand and we walked back uppa yonder to the house. She looked down at me and I

tried to encourage her by saying 'Auntie you are my favorite! Eisha took a deep breath paused then said 'So-soo I love you sooooo much! That was my way of apologizing for telling Momma she dragged me home from school earlier in the day. I thought to myself if only Eisha had not dragged me home none of this would exist.

It just so happened, on our way to the house Granddaddy was standing directly in front of the house making those that were still laughing at Eisha to stop. He said 'that's his child and enough is enough'.

Apparently, Momma, with both Auntie Nitta and Camille apparently didn't get Granddaddy's memo to leave Eisha alone because they were still giggling having a good ole conversation. They eyed us as she and I walked passed them. Eisha tried to ignore them but somehow she just couldn't. She screamed out saying 'what cha looking at? I wanted to scream out those same exact words, but looking at momma I didn't want her to give me that ass whipping look, so I looked at the ground as we passed by them. But you better believe I cuss all of them out underneath my mouth.

CHAPTER 4

Then there was Mr. gossiping Johnson sitting on the porch with everyone else looking peculiar and unsettled. Auntie Eisha and I looked straight at the front door ignoring those on the porch. Luckily for us Uncle A.J. was standing directly in front of the door as if he was waiting for us to go inside. He opened the door and said 'yall gone on inside and freshen up'. He slammed the door behind us and we heard him going in hard on his friends. Eisha was relieved knowing the family had her back she had a slight smile which made me smile.

Finally, we made it to the bedroom sweaty we both were. Eisha fell on top of her bed relieved to breathe under the homemade fan. I laid next to her rubbing my foot while humming a song into the fan. My one foot was still hurting from being dragged in the dirt and stepping on rocks I asked Eisha when would the foot pain go away? She did not know but rose up from underneath the fan to massage my foot. We were both still hot and sweaty so Auntie Eisha decided that we should go ranch ourselves off with cool

water. She went to the window and called James Junior to bring several buckets of water from the well so she and I could take a bath. He obliged and had Uncle Floyd to help him bring in the water.

Meanwhile, she and I waited patiently for them two to fill up our home made tub which was adjacent to the back bedroom that my parents and I shared. Funny though, if you looked at our house from the top of the windmill; it looked like a Crayola box of colors. There were so many adjacent rooms added onto the house that from the outside it resembled a colorful maze.

In contrast, Granddaddy and the boys continued throughout the years building rooms and making everyone comfortable. Another room! Baebae shouted out. Uncle Marshal said 'yes Bae we need to be inside bathing so Dadday and I decided to build a tub with another toilet'. They used all sorts of; lumber, cast iron, pile wood, cement , boards, pipes and everything else that was needed. It took them days if not months to complete this project. I was more eager than anyone else because I was tired of the barrows we used to bath in and besides I enjoyed telling my friends that we had an indoor tub.

Moreover, the tub was in a room of its own. Gramz's had decorated it so pretty she was determined to make this room her sanctuary for peace and quiet. She was so excited that she implemented a plan to decorate the tub room. She purchased multiply pieces of linen fabrics and used her sewing machine to make these beautiful long types of curtains that hung from the top of the tub rails and hung low on the floor like a wedding dress train. There were new wood chairs which were built by the hands of Uncle Floyd. He placed one chair near the tub while the other chair was in front of the window for Gramz's; for when she would sit, look outside, and hum songs while picking vegetables but drinking a cup of moonshine. Uh huh I saw her trying to be slick by using a coffee cup instead of the drinking glass for the moonshine. Gramz's believed in improvising and wasn't quick to throw anything away. There was extra material of linen left over so instead of trashing that material she made matching linen chair covers. I

have to say; once everything was in place the tub room could have been put in a magazine.

Finally, my goodness both Uncle James Junior and Floyd were finished filling the tub with water. Once we left from underneath the fan it seemed like the sweat was fiercely running down our backs. I could not wait for that cool water to hit my body. Auntie Eisha said 'come on So-soo take your clothes off,' nothing was out of the ordinary with her saying that. She took off her blouse but left her shorts on. Again, this was not out of the ordinary. I climbed into the tub like an old lady relieved to remove the sweat off my body and to remove the remaining residue of rocks that were hidden underneath the skin of my toes. We both were silent for several minutes then Eisha did the unthinkable. She got the wash rag and roughly started bathing me with the soap bar splashing water everywhere. I thought 'uh-oh here she go again acting crazy!' She pulled my leg into the air to wash it completely ignoring my other leg. Before, I could respond she pulled me up from the water by my arm to say stand up. By this time, my heart was beating a mile a minute. My body trembled uncontrollable and honestly, this was the longest bath of my life. I told her Auntie it's okay I know how to bath myself. Truthfully speaking, I didn't know what had gotten into her but I didn't want to stick around to find out what was next up her sleeves. One minute she's sweet as pie but within seconds she turns into an uncontrolled maniac like she's rushing to complete a race. I was so confused. I did not comprehend those mood swings which were scary at times and this was one of those times I was scared.

Finally, this devil left me alone so I could bath myself. It was so hard to explain how she flips personalities like she did. She sat there on the edge of the tub constipating like she was studying something silently making me wonder was she cracking up. I could tell she wanted to say something but she didn't know how to explain it. All I know is I didn't take my eyes off of her as I continued bathing myself. Moments later she said 'get out the tub Red' I nervously climbed out the tub looking at Eisha hold the towel to dry me off. She dried me off and then said the unthinkable. Auntie said 'Sofay I got something to tell you and only you'. I asked what is it then she paused once again.

In the meantime, I became delirious thinking to myself of all the times nobody is in the house. Where is everybody? Any other time somebody would have walked through the house by now.

Nevertheless, Eisha took a deep breath and shared with me that our good family friend Mr. gossiping Johnson had been messing with her. My stomach fell even further away from my intestines I had simultaneously forgotten how she tried to bath me just that quickly! I said 'Eishaaaa what!'

As a result, I did not understand why she did not share this hidden secret with Gramz when asked moments earlier. I didn't know what to say so I kissed my Auntie on the cheek very thankful that she did not do anything else to my precious body. She went on to explain with clear but precise details about her encounter with Mr. Johnson. This little secret thing started two months ago with him being playful with her. Clearly, no one and I mean not one of my fifteen Aunties or Uncles ever saw him being playful with her. She cohesively struggled but giggled trying to re-iterate her sexual experience. She and Mr. Johnson would meet behind the shed at night when everyone was sleep. I said 'the stinky shed'? Remember we were in the country without street lights. He wanted to use the shed as a hide away. The shed was approximately ten or more yards away from the house way towards the fields. The shed was a cooler storage for the meat that was hunted. No one would have expected nor been able to smell any scent of sex floating in the air. I mean what was smelled was the blood from the animals that were; hunted, killed, cleaned and skinned for food.

Contrarily, we as a family were not lacking in the food department. We rarely went to the grocery store for food because my Grandparents had everything both inside and outside the farm. We had fruit trees, cows including goats for milk, chickens for eggs, pigs, hogs and other animals for meat. We had a rooster along with several horses. Also there were different acres of vegetable which was how Granddaddy made his financial living for the family. He was a farmer. He grew the crops then separated them into piles dividing one for the household, and the other piles were sold for profits. This was a three to four day weekly process with help; from all eight boys,

Granddaddy's two brothers and various friends. There were a lot of pipes directly on the side of the shed with a homemade sign that said 'watch the pipes'. I had a tendency of running around and through the shed area causing Granddaddy to have a nervous attack. He was afraid my foot would get caught in between the pipes and maybe get cut off. That was his way of scaring me into playing elsewhere on the farmland.

Anyway, I was stuned to learn that Mr. Johnson was bold enough to have had touched my Auntie on our property. She said 'when they would meet he would already be charged up'. She would be dressed in her pajamas eagerly awaiting his arrival. Those two had secret codes they used whenever Johnson would want to see her at night. I on the other hand, was stuned to hear that Eisha would even go this far let alone with him of all the people in the world.

Likewise, I did not see a good outcome with this situation because all of my family members had some what of split personalities with doing the unthinkable. Eisha went on to describe explicit details into what took place between them two. I sat there frowned up trying to absorb what she was saying to me because she was teaching me something here. At first, she didn't let me get a word in because I could not get pass certain words. I said 'umm' stopping her midway. Auntie Eisha said 'So-soo let me finish telling you wanna know the meaning of these words...right!' Then she went into a descriptive dialog of the meaning speaking in a way that I would comprehend. Eisha continued on by saying once she experienced woman hood he never gave her enough time to catch her breath before continuing on. From all of that she was in heavenly bliss flying into Orbitz. I had to stop her again, I said 'Eisha you lost me with that. I said it's ok because I don't know how to follow along with what you are describing to me. Auntie Eisha was red in the face from laughing at me. She said 'Red when you get older you will appreciate a man loving you then she broke out smiling. I was beyond stuned I did not want to hear any more of this crap it was too explicit for my ears. Now remind you dammit that she was just five years older than me making her fourteen. I was mortified because I did not know I had female parts that move. I was not familiar with sex at all then again maybe I was. My parents and I shared a bed. Whenever there were two pillows placed between us I pretty much knew what was about to take place. Hours prior

to bed I would sometimes hear Daddy tell Momma Geraldine get ready for Jimmy tonight causz we gonna wear you out! Momma always whispered to daddy saying J.W. be quiet before Sofay hears you. Funny though, the next morning some would have thought that I was the one having sex from my looks because of; my baggy sleepy eyes, wild hair and excessive yawning. Gramz's took one look at me and knew instantly her child and daughter in law were at it again. She often said to my father 'J.W. why don't yall make So-soo a palette on the floor she's getting to big to sleep with you two'. Dad would just shrug his shoulders. I personally, thought it should be a permanent palette from the way these two who fucked like rabbits.

Besides; I learned from using my imagination, hearing, and not seeing my parents having sex. I heard sounds smelled odors and heard Momma silence screams of oh it is so good bababee. So in hearing Auntie Eisha's sex rundavoo with Mr. gossiping Johnson it really was nothing new to me but quite alarming knowing she was acting grown with a grown married man, who had a family living four miles away from us.

Realistically, I thought only Momma and Daddy did the who'd-chee-coo at night. I didn't know other people did that type of activity and I certainly did not expect Eisha to have such an experience at such a young age. From the look on my Auntie's face, it was priceless I did not know whether to scratch her eyes out or open up the window to scream for help. Ooowee I was beyond perturbed with both Eisha and Mr. Johnson. How could a friend of the family stoop so low in being nasty with a child?

CHAPTER 5

Henceforth, I was seeing fire being put on Mr. Johnson's juicy lips, thin neck and pop belly. Strangely enough, Eisha also revealed that she blamed Mr. Johnson for her sudden change in personality. He wanted to end their affair because he didn't want her to fall in love with him. Whereas, Eisha didn't want to end the affair she wasn't ready to let him go.

In fact, she couldn't concentrate during the day because of her wild imagination. Mr. Johnson told her all this jive she didn't want to hear before ending this secret affair. For instance, he said she was too good for him. Firstly, he was the one who initiated this ordeal and secondly, truth was I think he grew tired of her and had already moved on to the next young thing. Oh how I wanted to kick this man! I didn't realize that seconds if not minutes had went by because I was hearing the crickets outside. I heard Gramz making her way into the kitchen to start cleaning the food she was about to prepare for dinner. She had the girls Auntie Gwen, Baebae, and Monee to help her. I peeked outside through the window to see it was getting dark but not pitch black. People were still outside, however; I was relieved that Eisha was in the house away from Mr. Johnson. As I got up off the floor to put my clothes on Eisha slowly took off her shorts and underwear like she was in a daze and got into my bath water. When I glanced at her it looked as though she was about to cry. She had one arm over the tub with one leg out the tub just ah twirling staring into space smiling. When I saw that smile I hurried even faster putting my clean clothes on to run outta there quick, fast, and in a hurry! Thank goodness I made it out of that room safely leaving Eisha in her own world. I was so caught up in a whirlwind of thoughts that I didn't know if I was coming or going. Within those last few minutes I re-hashed what Auntie Eisha had said to me and I was spelled bind. Man what was a child my age to think? I was to think enough to go tell on both Eisha and Mr. Johnson nasty asses. I made up my mind while walking through the kitchen that it will only be right to tell an adult. I was so mind-boggled that I didn't hear Auntie Gwen said to me 'hey baby girl supper will be ready shortly'. I heard her but then again I did not hear her. Gwen stopped looked at Gramz who said to me 'So-soo go out there and tell Earl to come in here to light this here stove up so I can start cooking'. I kept walking without saying anything. She turned around putting her hands on her hips to say Sofay White did you hear me gal? I said 'huh' Gramz sarcastically repeated back what I said; she said 'huhhh', huh what? I said 'mamm' she said 'mamm what' then I said 'yes mamm'. Gramz then said 'girl get your red narrow tail outta here and go do what I say'. So I went out the door to search for Uncle Earl to relay the message. Once I got outside on the porch I thought I was seeing things. It's was him that bastard Mr.

gossiping Johnson who should have been hiding miles away from us but instead, he was sitting there in the flash gossiping about some lady's coochie. I wanted to scream out as loud as I could I hope you not talking bout my Auntie Eisha's coochie but you know I couldn't say that so the only other option to get back at him at least I thought was to spit on him. My goodness, what was I thinking! Because that's what I did spitted at Mr. Johnson and ran off the porch. I did not look back but heard Granddaddy say what the hell! I ran straight to the shed covering my nose because of the blood smell. I wanted

to see any type of signs of sex I didn't know what to look for but somehow or another; I needed to investigate where Eisha and Mr. Johnson had been having oral sex. I did not see any signs of a blanket or any forms of body prints carved into the dirt so I sat there at the locked door weary and out of breath. Suddenly I saw images of a tongue and I couldn't make out the face of the person hell I didn't know if it was me or Eisha so I hurried and tried to delete that from my imagination and began rehearsing what I was going to convey. I wanted to be cohesively clear on what was told to me by Auntie Eisha. The last thing that could happened from my story was to be compared as an emanate person like my Momma.

In addition, I was indecisive in whom I would tell first. I went down the line of sisters:

Camille: -uh-uh- She would stab him on the spot

Faye – hum mm- She would reason with him before sic'ing the hounds on him

Antoinette - uh uh- She would try to wrap him around a tree

Gwen - uh-uh- She wouldn't be able to see him from the tears streaming down her cheeks in trying to read various scriptures from the Bible

Monee – naw- She would not be able to see straight from the moonshine

Nitta maybe- Nittaataa she would sum it up with a blink of her painted black eyes and all

Bae bae naw- Just plain ole crazy

Nonetheless, I named my Uncles excluding my dad:

R. L. - nope- He will yank his front teeth out with his bare fingers

James Jr. – nope- He would pull him down the road with the horse whip

Earl –nope- He would hang him on the wind mill

Floyd ?? po Floyd??

Marshal- nope- He would drown him in the well

Chester –he'll follow him home and that would be the last of him

A.J. – maybe- AJ heyyyy he IS a chain saw freak who loves experimenting

Goodness gracious this was more complicated than I expected. I went over the list once again. To make certain the right Auntie or Uncle will make Mr. Johnson put those lips away for good. Miraculously, I just realized Eisha did not say it's our secret don't say nothing to nobody or did she? Either way I'm saying something I want to make certain he never use Eisha again....oops he didn't use her, geez! I'm acting like Momma. He bruised her pudgy-pie, no he didn't...uh-rah-uh he raped her darn-it he didn't do that either oh I don't know what to say because she *liked it*. I got to think...think Sofay think I can't think from suddenly becoming overwhelmed. I knew there will be consequences and repercussion. A friendship of over forty years ruined because of lusting a youngin. Goodness gracious, the battle between the White's and the Johnson family has just begun. It was getting darker and I heard someone calling me. Lord and behold it was Auntie Nitta oh no! well hear I go my voice started stuttering and all. Auntie Nitta come quick! She ran to me quickly without hesitation saying oh Lawd what's wrong with my baby! When she reached me I started crying. She said 'now wait a minute baby girl firstly, whatcha crying for and secondly, why you spitting on Mr. Johnson like that'? I said 'Auntie I'm so fairous I don't want to get into trouble but it is about Eisha'. Nitta said 'Eisha! Baby girl the word is furious'. She said 'So-soo take your time think about it first then tell Auntie what it is'. I took a deep breath and before I knew it the words just

floated out of my mouth I told her everything except for Auntie Eisha experimenting on me. I told her how; Mr. Johnson ended their affair and where the affair took place. Nitta stepped back three steps looked down on the ground and said 'Red are you sure they did it right here on this spot...right here'? Her mouth dropped with shock; she grabbed the hem of her skirt to wipe away the dark make-up from around her eyes, then she wiped the sweat from her forehead, and then she covered her nose. I have to say she looked human without all that black makeup running from under her eyes. She said 'my God that explains why he looks so suspicious whenever Eisha is around'. His whole persona changes drastically. She said 'one day while applying her make-up she thought she saw Mr. Johnson blow a kiss to Eisha but he did it so fast that she thought she was seeing things'. From that point on Nitta said 'she started paying close attention and even told A.J. to start paying attention as well'. I said to myself I chose the right two people to handle this situation hooray! Nitta said 'Soo you did nothing wrong by telling me' and hugged me. She lifted my chin up wiped my eyes and said 'Auntie gone take good care of this don't you worry'. Do NOT say nothing to nobody you hear me Sofay you hear me? I said 'yes mamm'. She said 'my po baby sister what was she thinking'? Come on let's go inside the mosquitos are hungry tonight so, she grabbed my hand and we went through the tub room door into their room.

CHAPTER 6

To top things off, Auntie Nitta, Eisha, Faye and Gwen shared a bedroom together with two twin beds and one full size bed. It just happened to be that Eisha was lying on her bed alone. Nitta scanned the room and the boy's room which was across from them to make sure the coast was clear to talk. She ran back into their room looked and said to Eisha with a three step dance 'well little Miss Missy we no longer a virgin huh'? Eisha instantly stopped twirling her one foot in the air then rose up from her bed and said 'I'm still a virgin'. Auntie Nitta said 'Eisha I heard all about it from my baby Sofay and you lucky she did not get ahold of Momma Nor Dadday or else you would be skinned alive'. Eisha did not say anything just starred at Nitta. Moments later, Nitta surprisingly ran and jumped onto Eisha's bed wrapped her arm around her shoulders and said 'tell me all about it baby sis and don't leave nair detail out!' I on the other hand, was afraid to move

from my spot. I knew in my heart Eisha was angry with me for telling Nitta but fortunately for me she was not. She held her hand out for me to grab; I grabbed it. Before I knew it, she pulled me towards her then placed me on top of her lap. She held me tight as Nitta conveyed to her everything that was said from me.

Likewise, I wondered after that, had I told Nitta her sister used me as a Ginny-pig in the bath tub earlier that day, I wondered the outcome.

Nevertheless, the two sisters continued to converse together answering each other's questions and even prayed by asking for forgiveness from our Lord and Savior. Eisha cried not because of the ordeal but because Mr. Johnson was finished with her according to Auntie Nitta. From prior experiences with several men in her life, Nitta knew right away that Eisha and Johnson runavoo was more pleasure for him. He took full advantage of her innocents and vulnerabilities as a youngster. She couldn't blame it all on Johnson because Eisha was a willing participant only out of curiosity. Nitta's observation was Eisha was curious but innocent in wanting to feel a man. She learned sex education hands-on instead of learning the bases from family or school. Regardless Eisha was still a child of God's. Nitta was furious but she decided that she would not hurt nor discourage her baby sister any longer about Johnson's male ego.

Instead, she focused on helping her sister move forward and to be prepared but receptive to criticisms once this news linked out. Eisha said 'from hearing about oral sex from other girls in school she wanted to see what it felt like.' But after looking at his thang she said 'I couldn't gather my nerves to let him inside of me'. Actually, I couldn't let him near me it looked so nasty and I...I... I just couldn't let that stuff touch me. He was angry and started huffing and puffing. I just couldn't go along with him and his request. Nitta replied 'thank you sweet Jesus you did not go all the way with him because he has done enough damage to you as it is. Eishhhh I hate to say but umm I think because you were not willing to do what he asked of you that might have been the reason he lost interest in you. I'm just saying maybe that's his reason.

CHAPTER 7

Subsequently, everyone started making their way into the house to wash up for supper. The usual loud talking began to overshadow both of my Aunties conversation. Granddaddy made his way to the girl's room searching for me. Upon seeing me sitting on Eisha's lap, with my head on her shoulders he just stood there looking and said 'now I see my grandbaby I was about to whip your ass for spitting on Mr. Johnson'. Nitta jumped in to intervene and said 'oh no Dadday, Red was getting sick so she spit the vomit taste out her mouth and it so happened to land on Mr. Johnson'. Sofay meant no harm you know she got manners. Granddaddy said 'yell you show right Nitta'. He walked up to me and lifted my head to look closer into my eyes. I quickly began rubbing my eyes fiercely so they could turn red. Granddaddy did not go for that con he said 'look up baby' and I did. He said 'you know Nitta saved your ass causz ain't a damn thang wrong with cha'. Do it again and I'll have Olivia beat your ass you hear now'? I jumped and said 'yes Sir'. I could never fool Granddaddy but honestly he's never whipped me he always threatened me or threatened to get my Dad or Gramz to do the whipping. Being the first and only grandchild I basically had my Granddaddy wrapped around my fingers. Before he left the room Gramz made her way into the room saying So-soo what did I tell you to do earlier before I could respond; Granddaddy said 'Oliver this baby suddenly got sick and she said 'oh Lawd child my baby done got sick'? Granddaddy put his arms around Gramz's shoulders and maneuvered her to walk with him. He looked back at us; me, Nitta and Eisha and winked his eye with a smile.

In contrast, I said 'damnnn' Nitta looked at me with a smirk and said 'what Sofay'? I said I won't be eating dinner tonight let alone that good smelling blueberry pie because Gramz is about to whip up her healing potions for sickness. That meant soup and several types of homemade remedies. Both Aunties laughed I did not because I smelled those good ole collar greens with turnips, chicken and dumpling, bar-b-que chicken, fried chicken, potato salad and really all of my favorite foods. Momma came to the door of the room to say 'Sofay yall come on and eat' Nitta said 'ok thanks sister n law we will be right there'. I looked at Nitta's face and she looked like she got ran over by a bull just from talking with Eisha for those minutes. She said 'one more thing I got to say is Eisha you are never to; I mean never ever deal with a married man or a man

living with his woman. It will leave you heart broken or maybe even create a disastrous situation with that woman.

As a matter of fact, now that I'm thinking about it that night several weeks ago did Mr. Johnson blow you a kiss? Eisha said 'yes he did'. Auntie Nitta said 'girllll you don't know Eisha but I was up all that night pondering if I was gonna wake you up or not to ask that question'. When you thought I wasn't looking I was. I've been watching you heavenly ever since that night. But what's blowing my mind is how you got pass me at night to go meet this man? Eisha responded by putting pillows in her bed when she left, she puffed them up like a body some kind of way making it seem that she was still in bed when she wasn't. Auntie Nitta said 'I wished I was a man to beat him down to his socks'. But I will maintain my composure and so will you. This is our secret for now, us three; me, you, and Sofay. Eisha swallowed long and hard knowing Nitta is really a no-nonsense evil type of woman who believes in revenge! The two ladies with me dragging behind them joined in with the family to eat supper. I could not get into the kitchen fast enough before Gramz's walked up to me to feel my fore head then my throat. She said 'you don't feel hot you feel normal'. We not gone chance it So-soo come on over to the stove I made you some soup with bread and brewed up some cod liver oil. I also got mental soaking on this here towel so you can sweat out what's in yah. I said 'yes mamm' and told her awh Gramzzzzzz I hate that hot cod liver oil I can barely swallow it down. Do I have to drank that? She said 'girl don't sass off get over here now'! When I looked at Gwen she made a sad face but slightly smiled. I didn't think anything under my breath about her because she meant well. I was instructed by Momma to go and lay down in our bed after sipping my soup. Nitta stepped in suggested to Momma to let her watch me for the night. Momma looked at daddy, he said 'sure'. Normally when I'm sick I take full advantage of the catering services that all of them give me. I lay in bed all day and everybody take turns bringing me food, liquids, homemade cakes and that's when Gramz's is a little leany because she don't force me to sip on that cod liver oil. I usually lay there watching TV while Eisha raddle off the latest gossip within town. My father is quite worrisome during my sick times because he can't stop kissing my cheeks nor checking up on me. It's Momma who make him stop and tell him to go back to work.

In the meantime, I went back into the girl's room to climb into Nitta's bed I was exhausted it was a long hot day and truthfully speaking I was starving. After supper, the girls cleaned the kitchen then everybody slowly left the kitchen for their beds. The boys gathered the trash and used a bucket with a lid to store the trash for the morning. We all were settling down to rest. I went to my Grandparents room to say good night. Gramz wanted me to sleep with her but Nitta insisted she would be responsible for me so everyone could rest peacefully. Once I climbed into bed Gwen rose up from her bed smiling she said 'Sofay come here, come over here for a second' when I went to her bed she moved the covers and there was that night's dinner including a slice of blueberry pie. You don't know how delighted I was to eat that food. As I was eating Auntie Eisha came into the room smiling and eating another slice of pie saying 'Sofay I prepared your food for you and don't be alarmed because Nitta told Gwen everything. I rose up saying 'huh' because Nitta specifically said tell no one. Nitta came into the room observing us all and said 'So-soo it's okay let me explain Gwen knows because I couldn't keep this to from her. When you get older in life you will know who you can trust to not tell your business. Gwen is not a gossip and can truly keep a secret. Auntie Gwen said 'So-soo you are too young to be this involved with grown people businesses'. We are not trying to confuse you but we want you to be aware that there are vicious people in the world. That's one reason why we keep you near one of us at all times just like Granddaddy kept all sixteen of us near him especially us girls. We are a huggy- kissy kind of family. We got each other's back daily and that's why we teach you to stand up for yourself. I'm so very proud of you Red for stepping up for Eisha. Had you not Mr. Johnson would still be taking advantage of her. Listen, Red we don't want to go to jail for murdering someone who is taunting or harassing any of us and that's why we teach you right from wrong and sometimes revenge. We want you to be cautious outside of your surroundings. I can stand strong in saying the WHITE'S are a loving connected family with back bone.

In addition, So-soo, look at the Johnson's. His kids bicker and physically fight each other all the time in public. Look at Mrs. Johnson who boldly rips her middle daughter down with insane lies secretly whispering to others in saying that Tisha is

molesting her younger daughter. I guess she figured if she speaks people would automatically believe her since people are under the impression that family don't lie on one another. The devil is a lie I've seen and heard Mrs. Johnson speak these lies saying Tisha is a man. She is ever so wrong Tisha may have broad shoulders but she's one hundred percent a full fledged woman with a beautiful golden smile. She is truly attracted to men I know that for a fact! Shit I've seen her twice coming out the witch doctor's house and I know she's there for one reason and that's to kill her unborn child. Like I said 'I know for a fact she ain't no fucking man'.

Coincidentally, we don't know what goes on behind closed doors but from what I gathered Mrs. Johnson has an evil jealous spirit hovering against her flesh and blood Tisha. I was never aware of a Mother who bridge gaps and keep her children divided among each other. Gramz's said 'she was floored when she went over to visit Mrs. Johnson one day and she watched her literally tell each child what the other child had said about them causing; all kinds of hate, sibling rivalry and division among her kids'. Your Grandmother-Gramz's said 'Mrs. Johnson is full of wickedness'. Her house is a true theory of a house divided won't stand because of the hatred she has for her younger daughter. Maybe that's why Mr. Johnson is here daily if not every other day avoiding the atmosphere he helped build, a house of darkness. Georgeis Johnson is just as involved with the bickering between his kids because instead of disciplining them he chooses to turn a left eye meaning he ignore their fights and don't step in to teach them respect nor how to love one another.

In fact, have you've ever noticed Sofay that Mrs. Johnson has limited her visits with Momma? I said 'yes'. That's because Momma don't relate to her nor is a guppy to help in sabotaging that girl's credibility...it's sad...poor Tisha. As for us, Church and Momma's prayers are what keeps us humble with encouragement Sofay. We don't tear each other down because Gramz won't allow it; instead we turn our burdens over to the Lord'. I once read from Power of positivity where it suggests *"the bad people give you experience, the worst people give you a lesson and the best people give you memory."* I said 'ok Auntie' trying to keep from falling asleep. Truthfully speaking, I actually had one

eye opened and one eye closed saying to myself dog-gone-it are you finished yet! shit as sleepy as I was! I managed to look over at my Auntie Eisha who was looking more relaxed and relieved. Her skin tone changed it had lightened for some reason. I hope she's preparing herself for the next chapter in life.

CHAPTER 8

Likewise, out of all my Aunties again, Eisha was my top favorite with Antoinette following behind her.

In fact, when I observe physical bodies I have noticed that all the White girls were either stocky or shapely with either thick hair or a combination of naps blended in with thin curls. To me Eisha's body was the shaped of an adult woman who works out doing exercises. She always demanded attention by sashaying around the house wearing her older sister's jewelry, clothes and high heels. She loved entertaining everyone with her many accolades from sewing rags into an outfit to cooking in the kitchen with Gramzs, or drawing unique artwork. She was definitely multi-talented. Eisha was like a second mother to me not because we were five years apart in age but because she always took her duties as my Auntie as a badge of honor.

And truthfully speaking, at one point I think she started believing that she gave birth to me. She treated me like I was a Barbie doll by always matching my clothes before school completely disregarding the clothes that my Momma had already laid out for me to wear. She would carry me throughout the house on her hip until my Grandma would shout out put that lanky red headed gal down. Then Eisha would laugh, put me down only to grab my hand as we both walked throughout our farmland.

In fact, it was Gramz who nicknamed me both So-soo and Red. She chose Red because of the color of my shoulder length hair which none of them could part straight for ponytails except for both my Momma and her Momma Grammy. All my Aunties tried to comb my hair but somehow they had the hardest time parting my scalp for pony tails. Whenever, I looked at Nitta, Camille, Monee and Baebae's hair I always thought they all had curly hair.

It just so happened, my Aunties would pour water on top of their hair before leaving the house in order to stay cool. Once the watered dried and they perspired from the heat, honey, and those curls would ball up into scattered knots that looked curly but in actuality they were naps. Auntie Camille always said 'a perm won't do for her because she sweats too badly'. The sound of the comb going through their hair was like popcorn popping or grass being raked. I really tried not to laugh because I did not want to hurt their feelings. From Momma's reaction she could have cared less about their feelings.

Subsequently, I developed my second nick name So-soo also from my Grandmother – Gramz's. She said I was always hard-headed making her repeat herself twice if not three times when she told me to do a chore. She said 'I worked her nerves when I didn't listen', ha-ha, hey, what can I say. Gramz's would say this girl child just don't listen worth a damn, I bet if I get that switch on her high yellow tail she'll listen to me then. Boy I tell yah, it was something about even hearing the word switch it made my skin crawl. My Gramz's was a no nonsense type of lady who could care less what anyone else was doing or saying, when she told any of us to do something she wanted it done instantly. That basically meant to drop whatever it is you were currently doing and do what she says.

I on the other hand, could have care less what was being told for me to do because I was too busy trying to keep up with my Aunties who were either entertaining their guests, or courting boys. Whenever those little timid boys entered the farm for one of my Aunties; you could have heard thunder roaring with Granddaddy and his boys who raved angrily with resentment against them without even knowing many of their names. It was hard for Granddaddy to accept the fact that his girls were turning into both young ladies and women. Those boys didn't have a chance with any of my Aunties' which was hilarious. Once, visiting the farm Simon a nervous but well-mannered boy who lived four miles from us had just started courting Camille. He was nervously there to take Auntie Camille out on a date. Camille is the oldest daughter who had much attitude. We found out later, Simon was cautious with the men of the family because of their reputation. My Uncles were known for beating the shit out of people that crossed

them. He wanted to stay on good terms with the family and didn't want any little obscurity to interfere with dating Camille. I remember seeing Simon standing there clueless on the road. He was pacing two steps forward then he would turn around to head back then stopped just to turn back around towards the house to stand still in that same spot on the road. I instantly busted up laughing knowing this boy was petrified. I would count to myself- one, two, three and off I ran out of breath towards the shed to tell Granddaddy a nappy headed boy was there for Camille. Granddad often had hearing problems but I guaranteed you in that moment that built up wax in his ears opened wide when he heard the words boy and Simon because he marched out that shed with a machete in his hands from skinning a hog. There would be blood on his trousers; his shirt would be hanging off flying in the air as he walked in a fast pace, and he would be cussing up a storm with some of his sons touting behind him. They all would rehearse what they were going to say upon reaching Simon. Simon looked up from staring at the ground and saw Granddaddy with the boys approaching him. He began sweating bullets and his belly apparently began to make sounds. Granddad and the boys were standing on the road with Simon. They slowly started circling him, finally after what may have seemed like forever for him, Granddaddy said 'son what parts of this here county you from'? Simon stuttering couldn't find words; furthermore he was hypnotized with that machete that was glistening from the beam of the sun. As he tried to talk there was a strange sound coming from either his throat or his stomach. Within seconds, Granddaddy realized what that sound was. Within a blink of an eye, Granddad and my Uncles were bended over with laughter realizing that was not a sweat aroma flooding in the air but more of a shit aroma. Yes, Simon did number two on himself. My dad had a soft heart and tried to make them leave him alone. He walked him into the house to wash up and change into clean clothes.

However, Auntie Camille was heated up with anger when she found out Simon's mishap and called her self-snapping on everyone that made fun of him doing number two on himself. She couldn't get pass the fact that he could not hold his bowels and furthermore, she didn't want to pursue the date any longer with him. To make matters worse, Auntie Camille had not a clue that my dad with three of his brothers were going

to chaperone her on that date. Upon hearing this news Auntie Camille was outraged she was orange in the face. She was angrier hearing her nosey brothers would tag along on her date than anything else. It wasn't funny, but then again it was when Simon came out the house with Chester's clothes on Camille looked at him and shouted uhhh I'm disgusted! she kept repeating out loud what grown ass man shits on his self? Suddenly my eyes widen I remembered something and I whispered to Gramz's. Gramz looked at me then smirked she said 'that's not nice Red' she covered my mouth with her hands before I blurted out Auntie Camille who are you to talk? I see your panties when doing the laundry with Gramz's. Truthfully speaking, out of the entire girl's dirty underwear's Gramz had to scrub her panties twice. Gramz often said 'to Camille girl your thang down there is like knives, I can't seem to get the soul of your underwear clean'. Camille always smiled and said 'Momma'!

Ironically, when Camille would get up from a chair I never sat behind her cuz I didn't want to catch whatever it was that stained her underwear's to attach and stain my underwear's. I guess that's why she always kept her legs cocked wide open fanning herself down there.

CHAPTER 9

Moreover, it was always some type of amusement or drama flowing around the farm. There were talks between some of my Aunts who have nothing better to do and occasionally they're conversations pertained to Auntie Eisha's shape or appearance. Like I said earlier Eisha was a pretty girl who was shy and always smiling. They poked fun at her shape as she walked. Her walk was something she was working on to control. Her walk drew added attention that she didn't like. Her sisters made it no better with the stupid riddles they would sing once she entered the room. It was nerve racking to see and hear them act silly towards her. At one point Eisha would raddled back putting her sisters in their places but lately she just stands there saying nothing. So I call myself defending her in saying Nitta I know you ain't talking looking like a witch on a broom with all that black make up under your eyes. She would reply back saying maybe I'll whip up a spell and put it on you then your walk can resemble your Auntie's. My father

would walk in every time and catch her talking smack to me causing him to say Nitta I wish you would. Keep talking to Sofay like that and see what I'll do to you. Thank goodness, my Daddy had my back. He would then tell Nitta to go find something constructive to do instead of picking on me. What she didn't want was for me to tell my Momma who had a short fuse for ignorance. Momma would have definitely checked Nitta, Baebae and Antoinette for wasting time when the baskets of apples needed to be; washed, peeled, sliced and cooked for the pies.

Nevertheless, my father was under pressure in being the oldest son. He had a heavy responsibility in being; a son, a father, a brother, a nephew and a husband. He was grown with a family and still at home with his parents. My father was so ready to move out into our own place but my grandmother had a whole on him. I could never understand how he cussed out his siblings and anyone else but was never able to stand up to Gramz's his mother it didn't make any sense to me.

CHAPTER 10

Moreover, my Gramz's was definitely the lady of the farmland. She was sassy with a genuine heart. She was God fearing and often quoted scriptures or verses from the Bible. I remember her always correcting her depict of me when I was hard headed. Instead of saying 'you nappy headed heifer' like she often said to her daughters when they misbehaved; she would call me by my full name 'Sofay Camille Antoinette Gwen Faye Monee White' when I heard thttttt! Babaeeee I took off running because I knew I had done something awful that I was not supposed to do. Gramz's would say let me at her! You ole red headed yellow heifer' and sure enough Eisha would be right there sniggering and running with me to help find a hiding place. During those moments I would try my hardest to say out loud a verse from the Bible "Mo peal pons is against me" Auntie Eisha would say no So-soo that's not appropriate right now just run. After what seemed like hours from hiding in our hiding place from Gramz, Eisha would say gasping for air then say now So-so you only say that verse when someone is trying to bring harm to you. Momma is not bringing harm to you, she's just gone whip your red ass for pouring that moonshine in the chicken's food-look how they acting going berserk

with feathers and busted eggs everywhere. You know better girl! Eisha went on to say from what I remember, the verse says *No weapons formed against me shall prosper* though I don't remember the name and verse in the Bible I'll have to ask Momma later on. Eisha said 'you only use that verse So-soo when you are in trouble or in harm's way'. I told her hell Eisha this is harm's way Gramz gone whip my ass and leave; all those damn red whelps on my legs, back and butte girl those burn like hot pins. Auntie Eisha said with a smirk 'you shouldn't have done it girl'.

Anyway, I didn't feel like hearing anymore of her logics so I said okay.

Eventually, the atmosphere calmed down. Auntie Eisha and I tip toe back into the house, my routine was to find Gramz's and give her the biggest hug and kisses to make her forget why she wanted to whip me in the first place. My hugs sometimes worked with both her and my Granddad. Granddaddy always said 'Red you gonna learn right from wrong but somehow he always, always and I mean always practically melt in my arms when I hugged him to say I'm sorry.

On the other hand, Gramz's would give me a hard time. Eisha would say Momma she was trying to say the weapon verse and couldn't get it right. What Eisha was doing was trying to soften her up as a way to distract her from whipping me. Then I would reach up to kiss her on the cheek and say Gramz's I can't remember the verse please help me batting my eyelids. She would smile saying oh really now! Come on over herr Red and sit on my lap let me see that particular verse is in Isaiah 54:17 where it says: *No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper: and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgement thou shalt condemn.* As Gramz's recited that verse Ms. Missy was lighting my butte up using her hand to whack me. I mean she was hitting me hard making me shout out ouch. I have to say, I liked those whacks better than those switches whenever she did get a whole of me. Funny though, when she was adamant about whipping my butte, do you know, she made me go to the bushes to pick my own branch so she could whip me. (Can you believe that?) I remember the smallest branches being the most painful ones. Eisha would say don't get the skinny ones they hurt the most So-soo (my nickname). She said 'get the medium size one or the biggest

switch cause they break quicker and Momma would get to frustrated to continue on whipping you'. I paid very close attention.

Meanwhile, my Uncles and my Daddy weren't so receptive to my con of hugs and kisses because they had to clean up the mess in the chicken coop and what a mess it was. I felt it wasn't my fault that I couldn't tell the difference between moonshine and water. I always wondered why water tasted that way; furthermore, I always wondered why Granddad along with his sons Marshal and James Jr. would walk lopsided at times with orange eyes after drinking what I thought was water. The three of them along with our neighbor Mr. gossiping Johnson and sometimes old man Martin would make that moonshine in the wee hours at night. I couldn't tell you how they made it; my Aunties and I were not allowed near the men when they were making the liquor. I do remember them using corn from the field, molasses and what I thought was a bar of soap which later on I was told was yeast.

In time, I would notice the more the men drank that moonshine the louder their speech became. Their conversations would at times become a stampede match where they were all standing in a circle pointing at one another shouting who was right or wrong. I couldn't make out what was being said because of the distance but I bet cha it involved a whole lot of cussing. From their looks I could tell they were all intoxicated from the way they were staggering and wobbling just trying to stand up. The men started shoving one another I guess they were ending the party but decided to return back to their original spots and continue on with their argument. It was funny to watch them from a far in my bedroom window. When Gramz would notice the time how late it was and the how the dogs were barking she would go and awake my Dad and Uncle R. L. to go out there and shut that drinking down. Once the boys went out there they would practically get cussed out for breaking up their good time. My Dad literally would have to run behind and drag Mr. Johnson home by his belt on his pants because he never wanted to leave. Dad said 'Johnson would be slopping from his mouth as he tried to speak I don't wanna go home! Dad would ignore him and pick up the pace faster to get him home quick.

Meanwhile, Uncle R. L. would be left alone to handle his drunken brothers and Father. R. L. would demand his brothers to straighten up and walk to their beds but Granddaddy on the other hand, gave him a hard time. Granddaddy would threaten R. L. if he didn't take his hands off of him he would skin him alive just before tripping on his own feet. I tell yah, when potent moonshine was on the surface those observing the drinkers were in for a good time. The morning after, is another round of laughs. I would laugh so hard. Momma said 'Sofay never laugh at people when they at their lowest it's not Godly'. I couldn't stop my laughter especially after seeing all those mosquitos' bites on Granddaddy's face, neck, and arms. He would be in the kitchen just; scratching, fussing, and cussing because he couldn't control the itching. Ha-ha, family!

In contrast, when I think about it, my Gramz's was more than a trip. She often needed some me time for her self-meaning everybody including Granddaddy needed to give her space and quiet time to be alone. She would sit in the tub room with the doors closed; humming songs, knitting blankets, drinking her cup of moonshine, or she would just sit there in peace observing nature through the open windows. I really didn't like it when Gramz's spent time to herself away from everybody in the tub room. She was definitely missed during those moments and truly needed. I only realized what her time alone meant as I grew older. She was always being called by one of her children throughout the day which at times got on her nerves. But, being; a wife, a Mother, a mother in law, and the best Grandmother in the world we appreciated her for being who she was and what she meant to all of us. Baebae decided that we all should give Gramz's one day off a week for being everything to us. We certainly didn't know how detailed Gramz's ran the household until we all pitched in to take over her daily routines. The older siblings chose Saturdays as a day off for Gramz. I didn't mind but everything was so particular with precise details from getting up at 5:00am to start chores and pick but clean food for three meals. It was tiresome! Somehow or another Gramz's didn't sit in the tub room all day she couldn't be still she was so used; to moving around, delegating duties, and being the woman of the nest. So I see exactly why she needed a little boost in energy from drinking moonshine after handling an entire farm with kids, a

husband and grandchild anybody is liable to drank. She always said 'yall gone drive me to drank!

Even though, I have to say that my Grandmother wasn't always a saint and neither were many of my Aunties. For some reason, they kept the moonshine near the water. There were many separate cups of that moonshine sitting throughout the kitchen. I always seem to get a whole of Gramz's cup, hell; she was the one that told me it was water! When I first drank that liquor; I nearly choked, it was hot going down, I regurgitated, the taste was like rubbing alcohol or something dead. From that taste, I figured it was some type of liquid for the chickens to grow, so I feed it to them. Not knowing they would act up in that way with all; the chaotic fighting, plucking of flying feathers, laying eggs, and I mean it was a sight to see! My mother would be angry at the family for leaving the moonshine laying around the kitchen meanwhile, my Dad would be angry with me for picking up food or drinks lying in the open without being covered up. All I can say is that they confused me a lot while growing up.

CHAPTER 11

Miraculously, I had enjoyed watching Auntie Eisha change and transform her ritual routine of fantasizing to be with Mr. Johnson to being a kid once more. She started sewing again making all these neat clothes from skirts to pants. She made matching outfits for; me, her and Gramz. She and I dressed alike going to school, Church, and even just hanging around the farm. She had Uncle Marshal to reset and bring out her drawing materials and easel to start back painting again. Eisha's healing was great at least I thought! Out of nowhere she joined the Usher board in Church Gramz's was so happy to see that but in reality she was still secretly healing from her rundavoo with Mr. Johnson. The lust she once had suddenly resurfaced in her memory causing a hostile rage.

I mean, after all, Mr. Johnson continued on visiting Granddaddy like nothing was wrong. In fact, even Auntie Gwen's rage slightly intensified as she saw him but she tried to keep her rage in clock nit toe.

On the other hand, I can't say the same for Nitta who did not want to hear any sorts of reasoning or forgiveness in the matter of Mr. Georgeis Johnson. All she saw was anguish with revenge. She was persistence in ending it all, her way. Exhausting as this was my Grandparents were still clueless to what was going on behind closed doors. The more I looked at Mr. Johnson my heart felt for him I would see him either walking down the road or sitting on our front porch mingling with the fellows. I know Granddaddy noticed the change in atmosphere whenever, he was around.

Consequently, Nitta's rage had grown tremendously over these past two months causing her to say unhuman acts of violence.

In addition, from those acts Nitta started expressing when and where her first beat down for Mr. Johnson would take place which not only frightened Auntie Gwen but forced her to involve the reminder sibling's. Gwen felt her sibling's needed to know this secret from the past several months. This pressure took a toll on Gwen which, reflected in her to instantly cry at the drop of a hat for everything. Auntie Gwen was indecisive in which sibling to start with so she started with Uncle A.J. She tried to tell him the ordeal between Eisha and Mr. Johnson and how it has now affected her and Nitta. It took a lot to keep him from getting his chain-saw. Poor Auntie Gwen wasn't masculine enough to hold A. J. down she had no choice but to call out to Uncle R.L. to help her.

In fact, A. J. was so out of hand with sharpening his chain-saw blades that he and R. L. literally began to wrestle. Nitta made it no better upon reaching them both she influenced A. J. to run up on the porch to beat Mr. Johnson's ass. Why did Nitta say that because all hell broke loose! Uncle R. L. ended up screaming for James Jr., Chester and Earl making them change their route from going out into the field to work but instead, they went running towards R. L.'s direction. From his voice they knew it was something wrong. Chester asked what the commotion is about. A. J. shouted what Gwen revealed to him about Eisha's rundavoo and instead, of the four of them staying calm they all went berserk over this news and each one was trying to run towards the front porch one by one. Uncle Floyd saw his brothers and immediately ran over and demanded to know what was going on. I didn't know what to do in between crying my

damn self and wishing I had never said anything to anybody about Auntie Eisha's and Mr. Johnson's rundavoo. R. L. said 'hey, hey, what the fuck mane! Ah we got to quiet down and start moving in that direction. I don't want Momma and Dadday to hear us. I looked into the corn field and luckily I saw both Daddy and uncle Marshal walking out the field getting ready to separate the corn into piles. Daddy came out the field to re-call his brothers he thought maybe they didn't hear him so he came out to look for them. As Daddy was walking towards his brothers I ran towards him. When he saw his brothers shoving one another he thought they were fighting and called back for Marshal to come quickly. They both started running in A. J.'s direction. I have to say it was so much land that it seemed like it took nearly an hour just to reach my Father. I literally had to stop running just to catch my breath then I continue back running towards my Daddy. The closer I had gotten the more I feared for Mr. Johnson after all, he was still there on the porch visiting Granddaddy.

Finally, I got within close proximity to my father and Marshal. My Daddy was too consumed with looking at his brothers from a far he might not have noticed me bend over gasping for air but luckily he did notice me. He stopped running; looked at me and said 'Sofay what you doing running towards me like that'? Out of breath I said 'wait Daddy...Uncle Marshal' my goodness Marshal was like wait...wait for what? At first it looked like he was gonna ignore me but thank goodness he re-thought about it and walked back towards me and my Dad. I said 'yall Mr. Johnson was freaking Eisha behind the shed and I told Auntie Nitta'. Both brothers mouth dropped! Uncle Marshal said 'you've got to be kidding me'. He said 'J mane I told you something was going on with Eisha's ass'. Daddy said 'Sofay who told you this shit'? I said 'Auntie Eisha' both brothers' looked at one another knowing that I was telling the truth. Daddy said 'got damn mane, got damn; he picked me up as I wrapped my legs around his neck then he and Marshal continued on running towards their sibling's direction. Again, thank goodness the fields were so far and beyond apart that my Grandparents hadn't heard the cussing and all the rages that were floating into the air or else they would have been right in the mix.

However, upon reaching the sibling's Daddy went straight for A. J. to pin him down with Earl and R.L.'s help. A. J. was definitely some kind of crazy he never learned or at least he tried not to learn how to let stuff go he took everything personally and offensively. Neither Gramz's prayers nor Granddaddy's threats triggered his mind set into accepting Faith by not bringing harm to people. He was truly a hard head bull. I couldn't tell you how long it took but things semi started calming down until Auntie Eisha came out the house. She came out to pick peaches that Gramz's told her to pick. She saw her siblings standing there yards away from her. It seemed like they all suddenly stopped what they were doing to look directly in her direction. Eisha thought that was strange so she headed in that direction miraculously no one bulged from their spot nor said anything. When she got closer to them her instincts moved in quickly and she knew they all knew about her ordeal with Mr. Johnson. My heart pounded a mile a minute. Uncle R. L. said 'so what up sis'? Nitta said 'Eisha don't start that crying and carrying on I want you to know that we all know except for Momma and Dadday'. And we gonna keep it that way A. J. said. Eisha's eyes were so watered she looked like a faucet I started walking toward her only to be stopped by Uncle Chester who told me not to move. Gwen's started tearing up saying Eisha you have a purpose to go on and do well in life. Daddy said 'Gwen be quiet!' He said 'Eisha we all want to hear from you; when, where, why, and how this all started'. Eisha slid down to the ground looking dumb found. I thought thank goodness Momma wasn't standing there to see Eisha sliding down to the ground ain't no telling what she would have said to her this time. Poor Auntie she was silence for several minutes. She looked up at everybody standing there and began to speak. It all started in the tub room. I was bathing got out the tub and walked onto the added space outside (which now days is called a patio). She said 'she decided she wanted to air dry instead of using a towel to dry off'. She had no idea Mr. gossiping Johnson was back there. She sat there on top of the rail to dry off. A. J. screamed out that bastard! Eisha paused. She continued on saying 'he made a noise

which caught her attention causing her to stand straight up and reach for the towel to cover up her boobs and pudgy-pie. She asked who's there because she knew it wasn't any of her brothers. She knew none of them would have never hid they would have demanded that she go put some clothes on. Earl said 'since when anybody goes back there as much company as we all have here'. He knew she was back there I just feels it, mane he knew she was taking a bath! Chester said 'hold on mane let her finish'. By this time the tears were rolling down Eisha's cheeks and she continued on in saying he came out from his shadow behind the tree because at first I couldn't make out who that was he said 'hey sugga it's me Mr. Johnson'. Eisha said 'she was shocked and got off the rail looking for her towel'. Mr. Johnson grinning said 'wait don't! No need to cover up you is a beautiful caramel stallion of a woman'. He said 'good Lord Eisha you are more beautiful clothes less than with clothes on'. Girl looking at you, you got my heart skipping a beat. He then started wiping off sweat from his forehead and neck with his handkerchief. Uncle Chester said 'that mother fucker he went in on you making his way inside of you'. Daddy said with the most evil look I've ever seen on his face' let her finish'. Hell I was becoming more afraid than ever for this man.