

# Behind the Broken Cross

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# Behind the Broken Cross

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**This book contains sexually explicit material.**

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All biblical scriptures are from the Holy Bible, King James Version.

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# CHAPTER 1

Friday, March 17, 2006

**T**HE ACTIVITY ON THE ICU floor of the University of Chicago Hospital was busier than usual for a Friday evening. Nurses and doctors hurried in and out of patients' rooms as the sounds of medical equipment beeped in a cadence that was reminiscent of the rhythm and beat of the once popular, heavily-synthesized songs that played on the radio. All of the sounds and movements went unnoticed by a conservatively dressed gentleman, whose only focus was on the Bible he was reading.

Just as the gentleman turned a page in his Bible, he took in the intoxicating scent of a woman's perfume. He glanced up to see who was wearing the fragrance, but was only able to see the young woman from behind. Her hair fell past her shoulders to the middle of her back and she wore a pair of skin-tight Apple Bottom jeans that were low enough on her hips to show the top of her thong and the tattoo right above it that read, *Platinum*. As she continued up the hall, with a full-length, black diamond mink coat draped over her right arm, each step she took in her 4-inch designer stilettos caused her hips to sway seductively from side to side drawing the attention of everyone she passed. The gentleman said a silent prayer and went back to reading his Bible.

The young woman quietly entered room 1123. She walked to the bed and looked down at the terminally ill woman who slept peacefully. She gently grasped the woman's hand and rubbed it as she spoke.

"I'm here, Mama. How are you doing, my sweet angel?"

The woman opened her eyes. She looked up at the young woman, not with love, but with disappointment. Her daughter wore so much makeup that she barely recognized her as her own child. Tears began to form in the woman's eyes as she looked at the tight vest her daughter was wearing, exposing the voluptuous cleavage of her breasts.

"How is my daughter, Platinum, doing?" the woman asked.

"Mama, my name is Faith Michelle Raines. Please don't refer to me by my stage name."

"That's what those whoremongers and adulterers at that sin den call you. Why can't I call you that? Girl, you are such a disappointment to your father and me, rest his tired soul. We raised you in a loving and God-fearing, Christian home and we gave you everything in the world. And what do you do to show your appreciation?"

She waited for her daughter's answer, but none came forth. "You show your appreciation by dancing naked at a place of sin. I'm embarrassed to attend church because the entire congregation knows how you're living, and they talk about me behind my back. Your own brothers and sisters are even embarrassed by your behavior. God didn't bless you with a beautiful body to show to every man who throws money on a stage while you perform like a trained animal. He meant for your body to be a blessing for the man of God who loves and respects you enough to make you his wife."

The tears in Faith's eyes began to slowly down her face.

"Mama, I didn't come here to listen to you criticize me about what I do with my body. This is my body, and I can do with it as I please. If I choose to make money with my beauty, that's my prerogative."

She paused to regain her composure and continued.

"I didn't come here to argue with you about my lifestyle. I came here to see my Mama, the lady who raised me to be strong and independent and always be the best at whatever I chose to be. This is what I am, Mama. I am the best dancer in Chicago. I have a beautiful home in Hyde Park. I paid cash for a 2006 BMW 735i. I wear the finest designer clothes and jewelry. My daughter Destiny, your granddaughter, attends the best private girl's school in Chicago. So how can you lie there and criticize me as if I'm not handling my business?"

"Faith, like the good book says, 'what good is it to gain the world, but

lose your soul?' All those material possessions mean nothing if your soul goes to hell."

"Mama, I didn't come here to hear you preach."

"Did the doctors tell you they don't expect me to live until Easter? Because of the fervent prayers of church members, God answered and allowed me to continue to live this long. My time is almost over. I have lived a blessed and fulfilled life. My greatest misery and disappointment is you, Faith. I will go to my grave with a broken heart because of you."

She stopped talking and waited for Faith to wipe the tears that were flowing freely from her eyes. "Are you going to give table dances on top of my casket at my funeral?"

Faith couldn't take any more of her mother's criticism. She ran out of the room and past the gentleman who was still standing in the hallway.

"Faith! Faith! Come back here! I'm sorry, baby! I'm sorry, baby!" her mother shouted through tears, but her words only echoed in her room.

The gentleman continued reading, ignoring the sounds and movements around him. He grumbled when the sweet smelling breeze from Faith running down the hall caused a page to float to the floor from his worn out Bible that was held together with tape. He slowly bent down to pick it up and silently read the verse on the page from Job, Chapter 2, Verse 3:

*And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause."*

As he straightened up, still reading to himself, he heard the snap, crackle and pop from his back and knees. Looking up from the page, he saw a lady with smooth, vanilla-colored skin, a shade darker than white, with long silver hair, smiling at him. Although she was 81 years old, it was hard to tell her age because she had a youthful spirit about her. The man smiled back and hugged her. The right side of her face pressed gently against the middle button of his suit vest. She pulled away and looked up. Her 4'10" petite frame resembled that of a delicate China doll.

"I heard those bones crack. You're too young for your body to start making those old man sounds," she said still smiling.

The man put his finger up to his lips to quiet her. "Don't tell anyone, Mama. I don't want anyone to know I sound like the tin man."

"Your secret is safe with me, Son."

"How's Reverend Hayes?" the man asked.

The lady placed one hand on her chest, and with the other dabbed her eyes with a lace handkerchief. She removed her hand from her chest and grabbed the man's hand. His enormous hand engulfed hers as she led him into Rev. Hayes' room.

Tears welled up in the man's eyes as he looked at all of the medical equipment that was used to keep Rev. Hayes on this side of life. He also noticed the morphine drip that neutralized the pain caused by the cancer that had consumed the reverend's body. Rev. Hayes smelled the scent of his wife's perfume and opened his eyes.

"Greg!" he yelled with all the wind that was available in his cancerous lungs. The excitement in his eyes made it apparent that he yelled, but Greg's name came out only a little louder than the beeping of the machines. Then a coughing attack caused Rev. Hayes' body to convulse. Sister Viola Hayes hurried over and rubbed his back to soothe him. Greg handed him a cup of water and watched as Rev. Hayes struggled to swallow. He slowly handed the cup back to Greg, as he turned to look at his wife. "Mama, Greg and I have to have a talk. Can you please excuse us?"

"Yes, Papa," she said in a soft southern accent. "Don't get too excited talking about the Lord. You remember the last time you got excited you got an erection."

Greg covered his mouth trying to contain his laughter.

"Mama, I told you that wasn't an erection."

"Okay, Papa. I thought God had answered my prayer. I asked God to let me make love to you one more time before He took you home."

"Mama, gone nah," he said reaching to pat her on the backside.

*Lord, I pray that Amber and I are like that when we get this old,* Greg thought to himself and then he prayed again. *Lord, please let Amber see another year.*

Sister Hayes finally left the room. Greg was sitting in the chair to the right of Rev. Hayes' bed. Rev. Hayes had adjusted his bed and was sitting straight up looking at him. Greg already knew he was about to hear a sermon so he had his small spiral notebook and pen ready.

"I can remember when I dedicated you back to the Lord, 51 years ago."

"Rev. Hayes, I'm only 43 years old," Greg said not really wanting to correct him. He was aware that Alzheimer's was slowly taking control of the reverend's mind.

"I know it was you, so stop back-talking your elder."

"Yes sir," Greg answered meekly knowing he was referring to his son, Cleophus, who was 51 years old.

“Ever since the day that your parents gave you to the Lord, you have followed Him, not swaying to the left or the right, but keeping the straight path.” Rev. Hayes paused to clear his throat. Greg handed him the cup of water. “Just as I placed you into the pool to be baptized, I felt the Holy Spirit jump into you and you started talking in tongues.”

“Really?” Greg asked. He attempted to sound surprised, although he had heard Rev. Hayes tell that story a thousand times.

Rev. Hayes began to cry. He used the bed sheet to wipe his tears.

“That didn’t really happen, Son. That was a lie, just like countless other lies I’ve told in the pulpit on Sunday, during Sunday school classes, and during my counseling meetings over the past 60 years. I strayed away from the true doctrine of God and started teaching and preaching false doctrine. I let man’s tradition supersede God’s word.”

“Rev. Hayes, why did you let that happen?”

“It’s hard breaking a family tradition, Son. The men in our family have been preaching since the 1800s. I am the fourth generation of preachers. Preaching is in my blood. While other slaves on the plantation were taught a trade that could be passed down, the ‘House Negroes’ were taught to preach.”

Greg sat and listened while Rev. Hayes gave him the history of his preaching family. He was shocked and, at times, horrified by what he heard. The more he heard, the more he despised the men he’d encountered throughout his life who supposedly preached in the name of the Lord. After listening for a while, Greg could no longer contain his anger.

“Why, in the name of Jesus, did you continue to move away from God? Why? Please tell me why,” Greg asked clearly upset. He got up and paced back and forth.

“Son, listen to me. For thousands of ministers, religion is a business. After awhile, it isn’t about the souls we save, but about the money we collect every Sunday. It’s all about business. The money, Son!” he said in a strained, high pitched voice.

“Rev. Hayes, please don’t call me Son anymore. You have lied to me for years, and I believed them like they were the gospel. Now you tell me I was living and teaching a lie, causing those who heard and applied my words to live a lie as well.”

“You knew good and damn well what I was saying was a lie, Son. If there was anyone who searched the scriptures, it was you. Because of you, many people left my church to find the true doctrine. Other elders and deacons wanted you to be removed from your position, but I prevented it. You didn’t

believe anything I said unless you found it in scripture and investigated it further. You're probably just as guilty for not chastising me, and allowing me to preach false doctrine and man's tradition because of your respect for me. But you haven't led any souls to hell. The church we attend on Sundays is my church, and I alone will reap what I have sown."

Both men remained quiet staring at one another until Greg opened his Bible.

"Son, please forgive me. I knew that what I was doing was wrong, but the fame and fortune caused me to forsake God's true word and seek my own understanding. One day, God will bless you with your own flock, and it is my prayer that you don't allow the things of this world to draw you away from the truth like they have done to me."

"Where am I going to find this truth? With all of these 'name it and claim it' preachers with these mega-churches, what man, of the thousands of men who claim to have been called by God to preach, still preach the truth?"

"His name is Brother Powell. Find him, and he'll teach you."

"Where can I find Brother Powell?" Greg asked.

"He..." Rev. Hayes began wheezing uncontrollably as the monitors sounded. Nurses rushed into the room. Sister Hayes followed behind them and hurried to Greg.

"Is he going to be all right, Mama?" Greg asked sincerely concerned.

"All we can do is pray, Son. The Lord is about to call him home any day. It has been by the grace of God that he has lasted this long. We have to leave while they stabilize him."

"Mama, when was the last time Bobby and Cleophus visited?" Greg asked, as they walked out of the room. She didn't answer. "Mama, who is this Brother Powell that Papa was talking about, and where can I find him?"

A smile appeared on her face. *Thank you, Lord, for allowing Papa to finally accept the fact that what he has been doing all these years was not glorifying you,* she thought to herself.



## CHAPTER 2

Saturday, April 15, 2006

**T**HE FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS of Sister Margaret Raines were leaving the dining hall at Rev. Hayes's church after having eaten the meal that was catered by Le Monica's Restaurant. Greg was walking to his office when a young woman approached.

"Minister Hill, that was a beautiful eulogy you gave for my Mama," Faith said as she tried to contain her sorrow. "If a person can be eulogized to heaven, Mama will certainly be there because of the things that you said about her."

"Thank you for the compliment," Greg said unlocking the door to his office. He looked back over his shoulder and saw that the woman stood in the same spot as if she wasn't sure what to say or do next.

"Come in, Faith, and have a seat," he said walking around and sitting at his desk. She entered the office and sat in one of the guest chairs in the opposite side of the desk.

"Minister Hill, I'm sure you already know that I'm a dancer at the Heaven Can Wait Gentlemen's Club downtown."

"Yes, I'm aware of that, Faith."

“Minister Hill, as my mother was dying, I promised her that I would stop dancing and give my life back to the Lord. I want to get baptized again and start my life over. I want to repent and be forgiven for all my sins and, from this day forth, live for the Lord. I want to be a role model for my daughter and other women. I want to show them how a virtuous woman of God should live.”

“Do you know the sacrifices you’ll have to make, the things of the world that you will have to give up for the Lord?” Greg asked.

“I know I have to stop associating with ‘worldly’ people, and stop satisfying the desires of my flesh by indulging in fornication and drugs. I know that my body is a temple, and the spirit of the Lord dwells in me. Minister Hill, I’ve been a Christian all my life, and I admit that I backslid. I know what it takes to be an obedient servant of the Lord. In order to be with my mother again one day, I’m willing to do whatever it takes. I’m ready to be baptized again and rededicate myself to the Lord. That’s the least I can do for my mother.”

“We can baptize you tomorrow morning after service, Faith.”

“No! I have to be baptized now. Tomorrow is not promised, and I have to do it now, not just for me, but for my mother, my daughter and the Lord! There are some chapters in my life I have to close tonight, and I’ll feel better doing it as a born-again Christian.”



NELLY’S SONG, “IT’S HOT IN Herre,” was blasting throughout the club as women dressed only in G-strings danced provocatively on the stage to the shouts of both male and female customers. One dancer encased in a clear glass box, performed while water from a showerhead brought her to climax. Another dancer was sliding up and down a pole while men threw money on the stage at her. Waitresses, also dressed only in G-strings, waited on the customers while other dancers gave lap dances to both male and female patrons.

Inside a sound-proofed VIP room, another dancer entertained two men to the tune of Luke Campbell’s song, “Pop That Cootchie.”

“How do you want it, Bobby?” the dancer asked over the cheers of both of her male customers.

“You know how I like it. Come over here and back that thang up!” Bobby said, unbuttoning his tailor-made silk suit pants, and allowing them to drop to his ankles.

She walked over and stood with her back to Bobby. He pushed her forward to bend at the waist, and penetrated her from behind.

“What about me?” the other man asked, as he looked on with obvious lust and excitement.

“Davonte, you know it’s not a party unless my boy can get his freak on, too,” Bobby said motioning with his head for his boy to move around in front of the dancer.

Davonte walked over and stood in front of the woman. In one quick motion, she unzipped his pants, removed his erect penis and began to pleasure him with her mouth. Bobby and Davonte looked at each other, smiled and slapped each other’s hands over the woman’s body.



“WHAT THE FUCK YOU MEAN you resignin’?” Bear, the owner of the Heaven Can Wait Gentlemen’s Club, asked with anger in his voice.

“What don’t you understand, Bear?” Faith asked. “I quit! I’m out! I no longer have the desire to dance in your club or any other club. I have given my life back to the Lord. I was baptized today after my mother’s funeral. I promised her before she died that I would live my life for the Lord.”

“Girl, you know you my number one stunner! It’s because of you that we’re on the map with Magic City in Hotlanta. When pro athletes come to Chi-town, they all ask for you. Last year, we pulled in over a million dollars, and you made over 200 grand your damn self. How the hell you gonna give up all of that?”

“Easy. I’m exercising my freedom of choice and choosing to live as a virtuous Christian woman. I’m not selling my body for money anymore.”

“What does being a Christian have to do with you working here? Hell, Bobby, the assistant minister at the church you attend, is in one of the VIP rooms, probably getting his knob polished as we speak. If you a Christian like Bobby and Davonte, you can still be a Christian and work here,” Bear reasoned.

“Bear, it’s Christians like them that give all Christians a bad name. I’m determined to be the best example I can be of what a virtuous Christian woman should be.”

“Platinum, I’m gonna hate to see you go, but hoes are a dime a dozen, and I got a whole lot of dimes. A new crop of young girls come into the game every day, so there will be another Platinum. And you played out anyway. It ain’t like you some super porn star who can really do the damn thang. But if you ever wanna come back, I’ll always have a pole and a tabletop for you.”

"You don't have to save nothin' for me, Bear. I'll never be back," Faith said as she left the office and closed the door behind her. As she walked through the bar and the customers recognized her, they began shouting her name.

"Platinum! Platinum! Platinum! Platinum! Platinum!"

She waved to all of them and continued walking toward the exit without looking back. When the bouncer opened the door to let Faith out, another woman rushed in.

"What's up, Faith?" the lady asked.

"I just hung up my G-string, girlfriend. I'm back with the Lord where my mother always told me I should be."

"Minister Hill told me you got baptized today. Girl, that's one of the best decisions you could've ever made. Will I see you at church tomorrow?"

"If it's God's will, I'll definitely be there," Faith said while reaching to hug her. "What are you doing here?"

"Looking for my sister. She left her young daughters at home by themselves. When I find her, it's gonna take the grace of God to keep me from going to jail tonight!"

"I hear you. Your sister is in VIP room #3. I saw her go in just as I was leaving Bear's office."

"Thanks, Faith. Hurry up and get out of here. Some things might go down that I don't want you to witness."

Monica walked into the main area of the club and sighed when she glanced at the stage and saw the dancers performing. When some of the men saw her and recognized who she was, they immediately lowered their heads and hoped that she hadn't seen them. She disregarded them and continued toward the VIP section. When the bouncer saw her coming, he blocked the doorway. Monica quickly reached into her purse and pulled out her Beretta.

"I'm not in the mood Charles, so step off," she said as she pointed her gun at the center of his broad chest.

"You know you're not allowed back here," Charles said as he folded his massive arms.

"I came to get my sister Cheryl, and that's it. I don't want any trouble from you or Bear. If I have to leave without my sister, I'm coming back with Scotty Johnson and five of the deadliest members of ICC that Chi-town has ever seen. So, bypass sticking your head up Bear's ass to get an answer, and make an executive decision. Now!"

Charles made his decision and moved out of the way. Monica continued down the corridor and banged on the door of VIP room #3.

"Who the hell is that?" a man asked never taking his eyes off Cheryl who was performing completely naked on the small stage in the room.

"I don't know. But if we ignore them, they might go away," she answered.

The knocking continued nonstop. Dancers from other rooms opened their doors to look out. When they saw who it was, they quickly closed and locked their doors. Finally, Cheryl put on her silk robe and opened the door. When she opened the door, a hand reached in and grabbed her throat.

"You're coming with me, heifer. Why did you leave my nieces home by themselves?"

"Monica, you can't come up in my place of business and treat me like I'm your child. You ain't my Mama," Cheryl screamed. The man who had been watching her perform squeezed by them in the doorway with his hands up.

"Heifer, I know I'm not your mother. I love you and I love my nieces even more. And this shit about this being your place of business is ridiculous! As of this moment, you no longer work here. If Bear has something to say about it, this will be his last damn night, too," Monica said walking down the corridor with her hand still around Cheryl's throat.

"She put it down didn't she, Bobby?" Davonte asked as he and Bobby prepared to leave the room.

Bobby froze as if silence and lack of movement would keep Monica from recognizing him.

"Well, Assistant Minister Bobby Hayes, how is your pregnant wife, Tasha, doing? Does she know you're still up to your whorish ways?" Monica asked.

"She's doing just fine, Sister Monica. I'll tell her I saw you." He hesitated then continued. "But there's no need for you to tell her where you saw me. Wouldn't want to upset her, considering her delicate condition?" Bobby asked trying to sound confident.

"How you get down ain't none of my business. Just remember Minister Hayes, everything that's done in the dark eventually comes to light. Tasha probably already knows how you get down, but she's probably just too scared to do anything about it. I just pray that your father doesn't pull a dopefiend move and make you the head minister before he passes away. If he does, I'll have to find another church home."

"Sister Monica, nobody's perfect. Not your husband or that wannabe saint, Greg Hill," Bobby said in a weak attempt to defend his infidelity.

"Bobby, what your punk ass does is between you, your wife and God," Monica said as she turned and knocked on Bear's door. Behind the office door, Bear checked his closed-circuit television, saw who it was, and buzzed them in.

"Bear, my sister no longer works for you. Do you have a problem with that?" Monica asked with her gun by her side

"She wasn't no real money maker for me no way. She was only turning tricks. I'm glad you came and got the hoe. I'm runnin' a classy establishment. I don't need another sack-chasin' coke head. Both of y'all be ghost," Bear answered nonchalantly dismissing them.

Monica thought about shooting him for making derogatory remarks about her sister, but she knew he was telling the truth.

"Thanks, Bear. I'm glad your lowdown ass didn't make me shoot you. But if I see or hear that my sister is in here again, expect this place to be shut down. Believe that!"

Monica released the grip she had on Cheryl's neck and put her gun back in her purse. To avoid humiliating Cheryl further, Monica told her to go to the dressing room to get her belongings before she left the club and walked to the car. Minutes later, Cheryl was walking out the door of the club for the last time. She held her breath and said a silent prayer before she opened the door of Monica's Escalade SUV.

"This is going to be a short conversation, Cheryl. Let this be the last time that my nieces call me crying that you left them at home by themselves with no food, while you run the streets being a crack hoe. If it happens again and I find out about it, I'll get permanent custody of your girls. I've already talked to my husband, and he said he would be more than happy to help me raise them. You can try me if you want to. You are, without a doubt, Mama's daughter. Get your ass together and stop trying your best to ruin the reputation that I have tried to make for our family."

"I'm sorry, Monica. You know I've tried over and over to kick my cocaine habit, but it keeps callin' me," Cheryl responded as she lowered her head in shame

"Girl, you've got four daughters to raise. When that monkey calls, you better stop answering, damn it!" Monica said biting her lip to stop herself from crying.

"Monica, I didn't plan to become an addict, or start selling my body for ..." Cheryl tried to explain her situation to Monica for what seemed to be the thousandth time.

Monica dismissed her with a wave of her hand and pressed the selection button on her CD player. The sound of Mary J. Blige's song, "Can't Keep A Good Woman Down," filled the vehicle, as Cheryl continued to talk. Monica tuned her sister out and let the lyrics of Mary J's song soothe her soul.