

THE LAST CHANCE

Written by

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INT. MAIN SUITE BEDROOM - DAY

A very messy bedroom. There are empty hard liquor bottles, and clothes are scattered all over the floor. The king-sized bed looks like it hasn't been made up in days.

JESSICA (late 30s) is dressed in all black from head to toe, as if she's ready to go to war. Packs a large suitcase with various women's underwear and clothing.

She argues with an open bathroom door.

JESSICA

Girl, I'm sick of this mess. Every three months, he is either drunk and violet, cheating on you, or talking down to you and making you feel like shit.

NIKKI (O.S.)

Well, he is going through a lot of stress with his new business, and I need to be more understand--

JESSICA

--UNDERSTANDING Nikki? Do you hear yourself?

NIKKI (O.S.)

You never liked him, Jess, so you wouldn't understand. However, once you get to know him, he's sweet.

JESSICA

Was he sweet three months ago when you caught him cheating on you with his so-called "female friend," Or how about a few months before that, when he was so drunk that he began to belittle you to the point where you drunk a whole bottle of hundred proof so you won't have to feel anything anymore?

NIKKI (O.S.)

You don't like me with him.

(CONT'D)

JESSICA

-I don't care what you think. I'm telling you straight up: I don't like him. You are getting out of this house today come hell or high water, and to be clear, I am hell and high water.

INT. MASTER SUITE BATHROOM - DAY

A bright, airy, sun-filled bathroom with large windows, a glass-walled shower, and a waterfall vanity makes this room seem like it isn't attached to the messy bedroom.

NIKKI (early 30s) pretty, tired, and despondent in a simple cotton tube-top maxi dress. Lays inside the bathtub, which sits in the corner on a platform.

Her eyes are puffy and bloodshot red from crying. She has a shiner forming on her right eye, and in the corner of her mouth, small drops of blood slowly slide down her chin onto her dress while tightly embracing a fifth of Hennessy.

NIKKI

I'm tired. I can't fight the both of you anymore. You want me to leave, and he wants me to stay.

JESSICA (O.S.)

You should want to leave! You are steadily holding on to someone who doesn't want to be held.

NIKKI

I invested too much time and money into this man. I helped him finish business school and put the seed money up for his real estate property management company--

JESSICA (O.S.)

(Mumbles loudly)

--You sound just like her.

NIKKI

(Inebriated)

What did you say? I mean, if you are going to say sumthin' say it loud.

INT. MASTER SUITE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nikki's words stop Jessica from zipping up the packed suitcase. She turns, squints her eyes tight, and viciously glares at Nikki's voice.

Hastily, Jessica stands in front of a tipsy, pitiful Nikki, arms folded in her chest, with an offensive look on her face.

JESSICA

I said--you are acting just like mom. She took all that crap from Daddy; the verbal, mental, physical, and emotional abuse, and what does she have to show for it, huh?

Nikki scrambles to stand in the tub while holding onto the half-empty liquor bottle.

NIKKI

First off, I don't remember any of the crap you are talking about that Mommy supposedly went through with Daddy. I remember growing up in a loving environment with two wonderful parents who loved me and each other very much.

(takes a big swig of the liquor)

Jessica, frustrated and at her wits' end, paces back and forth across the floor.

JESSICA

Honey, let me tell you the truth. You were too young to know what was happening, but Daddy wasn't always this stand-up, righteous, God-fearing man that he is today, baby, ok? I remember Mommy getting cheated on, taking mental abuse, catching Daddy at another woman's house, and turning around and forgiving him. Mommy was getting drugged through the god-damn dirt like she was nothing.

(tears forming in eyes)

I remember sitting outside their bedroom one day, and Mommy felt so low. She looked in the mirror and had the audacity to ask God what was so wrong with her.

(MORE)

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Why can't Daddy love her the way she needed to be loved? To this day, those words still haunt me and bring tears to my eyes.

Nikki is in awe and disbelief at Jessica's words, and tears fall out of her eyes as she sits on the half-empty Hennessy bottle on the bathroom sink.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Seeing Mommy ask God that question broke me. Mommy was questioning her worth for a man; she broke herself down for a man. For weeks, Mommy couldn't eat or sleep, didn't want to be around us, and didn't want to go to work. I learned that if a man can't love you at your worst, he doesn't need you at your best. If you have to beg a man to be with you, he doesn't deserve you. You never have to force anything that is already yours. You don't have to beg anybody for anything when you know what you bring.

Jessica pulls Nikki out of the tub and stands her in front of "her" vanity and large oval mirror. Forcing Nikki to look at herself all weepy-eyed, drunk, bloody, and bruised.

NIKKI

(exhausted)

I am so broken. I built up this house and our relationship. When nobody believed in him, I was there for him. I still love the people who hurt me. I try to understand where everybody is coming from, and that is the problem that I have. All I ask him is for him to give me honor and respect. Please don't hurt me, and you're hurt, too. Why cheat and beat on me when all I have been to you is backbone?

Looking at Nikki in the mirror, Jessica rubs her shoulders in agreement.

JESSICA

Baby girl, let that other woman have him and his problems, his cheating, and his lies. Let her have him. Stop thinking of yourself less than who you are.

NIKKI

I feel like if I walked away, then
she won what I've invested in.

JESSICA

Won what? What did she win? Other
than the sleepless nights you went
through – the lies, the
embarrassment, the betrayal, the
unfaithfulness – what is she
winning? Let her have him and all
his drama. You can do bad all by
yourself. I would rather lay in a
bed by myself before I lay in a bed
with a man who claims to love me
and still feel alone and unsafe.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE MASTER SUITE BEDROOM - HALLWAY - DAY

Natural light illuminates the stunning hallway with large
archways and bronze pendant lights.

BRANDON (early 40s), handsome, lean, and tall in ripped
jeans, basketball shoes, and a cotton T-shirt, drunkenly
bangs on the locked bedroom door. Turning the doorknob,
trying to force his way into the room.

BRANDON

Nikki. Nik'. Nikki baby. C'mon and
open the door.

(softens his knock)

C'mon, please. I'm sorry, baby.
First thing in the morning, I am
going to find a therapist and start
going to therapy until I'm fixed. I
swear.

Brandon deflects what he has done to her. He stops knocking
and puts his ear up to the door.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

If you hadn't gone through my phone
and started asking me questions
again and again about the ol' girl
I told you was just a friend, I
wouldn't have lost my temper.

Brandon again knocks on the door, then twists the knob to see
if it's open.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

I'm so, so sorry. I know you don't
believe me. I know.

(MORE)

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Nikki baby, I love you. You're my soul, my heartbeat. I can't live without you in my life.

INT. MASTER SUITE BATHROOM - DAY

Nikki takes a deep breath out. Wipes the tears from her face and blood from the corner of her mouth, then looks back at Jessica in the mirror.

JESSICA

Now, I said what I needed to say. Initially, I came over here, and I was going to drag you out of her kicking and screaming if need be. Nikki, you are grown. You have to grow up and, for once, choose you and not a man. I can't make that choice for you.

(points to Nikki's black eye)

You need to know that love doesn't look like that. If it does, then it isn't real.

Jessica turns Nikki around to face one another and hugs her tightly.

JESSICA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I love you, baby sis

NIKKI

I love you, too.

JESSICA

I called the boys, and they're on the way to ensure you walk out in one piece if you leave with me. You already know they called the police.

NIKKI

I-I choose me today.

Jessica grabs Nikki's hand and leads her into the bedroom.

INT. MASTER SUITE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nikki steps into some sandals on the side of the bed, zips them up, and drags the large suitcase behind her.

Jessica throws her oversized designer bag, which is sitting on the floor, over her shoulder. She stops, opens the bag, and pulls out a black stun gun. She turns it on to see the electric current voltage light up.

JESSICA
(Winks at Nikki)
Just in case, I gotta stun his ass
so we can get out of the house.

Jessica opens the bedroom to see a tipsy Brandon leaning against the door.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Jessica and Brandon lock eyes and stare each other down. Brandon towers over Jessica by a few inches, but this doesn't sway Jessica.

Jessica stands in front of Nikki, who guards her from him.

BRANDON
Nikki, Nik', Nikki, baby, give me
another chance. I can change. I
know I can change...so long as you
help me. I can't do it by myself.

Jessica smacks her lips and rolls her eyes at Brandon.

JESSICA
You're pathetic.
(Tries to move past him)

Brandon pushes his body aggressively against Jessica to get at Nikki. Jessica reveals the stun gun and presses the side buttons, which release the electrical current voltage.

Seeing the electrical currents, Brandon steps back in fear and disbelief.

BRANDON
Nikki, are you going to stand there
and let your sister electrocute me?

Still holding on to Nikki's hand, Jessica moves towards the curved staircase.

Nikki pulls away from Jessica and faces Brandon, who also towers over her height.

NIKKI
Wait. Stop! I can't leave like
this.

Jessica, in disbelief, stops and looks at Nikki with astonishment.

JESSICA

--NICOLE AMANDA WRIGHT! What--

BRANDON

Baby, I love you; I will never cheat on you or raise my hand in anger at you again. Just give me another--

NIKKI

--Brandon, I'm tired. How many times are you going to say you're sorry for cheating or hitting on me, huh? How many times do I have to be the strong one in this messed up relationship? I AM TIRED of you not showing up for me, not having my back, supporting me. As a black man, I know you go through a lot. I understand, and we, as black women, have to support that. That is a lot on us as women. Then on top of what you go through as a black man on an everyday basis, you come home and download that shit on me. So now I gotta deal with domestic violence, carrying your baby, having a miscarriage, and you showed no sympathy for me at all. Then my body gotta bounce back, or you will spaz out. I gotta deal with your insecurities; I gotta go fifty-fifty on the bills, cook and clean. I gotta be able to put it down in the bedroom, be a trophy piece on your arm, turn around, and motivate myself to keep my own business afloat. The question is, What are you doing? You are not building me up. I'm depleted. I'M TIRED!

Brandon stands there staring at her with dead eyes. Jessica's eyes closed tightly as tears fell down her face, nodding in agreement with Nikki's words.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

I'm tired of holding you down, holding your secrets. Then Brandon, what do you do to me? You treat me like I'm trash.

(MORE)

NIKKI (CONT'D)

You keep saying you are going to change, but you never do. You hit me because you can; you cheat on me with the same got-damn woman over and over again because you want to. You declare war on me; you shame me in front of your friends, family, and the women you sleep with. You make me beg for scraps when all I do is fight for you. The least you can do is be my friend, have my back, show up for me. You have never loved me, so for the first time in six years of this one-sided relationship, I will choose me.

Nikki steps away from Brandon, grabs her suitcase, and goes down the large curved staircase with Jessica following close behind.

Brandon begs and pleads for her to stay as he chases the girls down the stairs to the foyer.

Jessica opens the front door to see a red and blue police flashing light blasting her in the face. Standing in the doorway are the girls' two very large older brothers, ERIC (mid-40s) and MICAH (late 40s), dressed in army fatigue attire, ready for battle.

ERIC

Yo, you girls good?

NIKKI

(exhales)

Yes. I am leaving.

Brandon, making one last attempt at stopping Nikki, reaches for her arm.

BRANDON

NIKKI, Don't leave me. I'm sorry.

The two brothers step in front of him and block his grasp.

MICAH

No. B step back before this doesn't end well for you.

Jessica and Nikki enter the door together, and the police greet them to take Nikki's statement.

END