

Chapter 1

“Evelyn, I’m going over to Neely’s to fix something at her place.”

“This late? Why can’t you do it tomorrow?”

“She called me yesterday and I just didn’t make it over there. It sounded important.”

“All right then. Get on back as soon as possible.”

Walking to his wife and giving her a peck on the lips, he responded, “I’ll be right back.”

Leaving their half of the duplex, Julius stopped, remembering something else he needed to address with Evelyn. “I might as well pay the rent while I’m there. Do you have it?”

Evelyn slowly pushed herself out of her chair. She went to their bedroom to get her purse and retrieve the money for the rent.

Why her parents left this duplex to her sister, Neely, she didn’t understand. For some reason, they thought Neely was a better choice to care for the family’s home when they passed away. When Evelyn questioned their wishes, her mother told her it was her father’s decision, while her father claimed it was her mother’s choice.

Evelyn’s feelings were hurt when she found out Neely would take over the family home where they all grew up. It didn’t matter now whose decision it was, Evelyn and her family needed a place to live and this was it. At least Neely allowed them to move in after their eviction from their previous rented home.

However, Neely could be so unreasonable about their rent being on time and the exact amount. If they were a penny short or a day late, she would lose her head and threaten to put her, Julius, and her children out on the street. Whether Neely would really follow through with her threat Evelyn wasn’t sure, but she was certainly convincing if she was bluffing. With her husband barely working and her disability check being so small, she had to cut corners where necessary to make ends meet while satisfying Neely’s demands.

Like tonight, Neely always had a chore or something for Julius to do. If it wasn’t Julius, it was their son Demetri. Evelyn often wondered why Neely didn’t get one of her many boyfriends to make repairs for her. Certainly, one of them was handy. Evelyn concluded Neely just liked having her brother-in-law and nephew jump whenever she called.

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Evelyn suspected her sister was jealous of the fact that she was married and Neely had never been. Being the older sister and the more outgoing of the two, most would have thought Neely would be married first. However, Neely never had the privilege of experiencing even one proposal though she dated half the male population in their small town.

Evelyn hobbled back to the living room and gave the money to Julius so he could take it to Neely. She hoped he remembered to get a receipt so they would have proof of the cash payment. Evelyn never knew when Neely was going to try to get one over on them. A person couldn't put very much past Neely.

With Julius gone, Evelyn went in search of her nine-year-old son, Demetri. Vanessa, Demetri's thirteen-year-old sister, had long outgrown the bedtime ritual Evelyn was seeking her son for. She walked into her daughter's room thinking she might find him there, but Vanessa was its only inhabitant. She walked past the bathroom thinking she might find him in her bedroom. Suddenly, she heard his voice in the bathroom, stopping her in her tracks. She wondered to whom he was talking. Placing her ear close to the door, she realized he was talking to God. Feeling as though she shouldn't infringe on his privacy, she started to walk away. However, when she heard him crying, she returned to knock on the door.

"Demetri, are you in there?"

Demetri sniffled and responded, "Yes." It was obvious he tried to remove the tears from his voice, but his mother wasn't fooled. She'd already heard him crying.

"When you're done, come out to the living room. I have a special story for you tonight."

"I'll be there in a few minutes, Momma."

Evelyn had noticed her son's sadness on several occasions before now. She'd asked him if everything was okay and he'd assured her everything was fine. She didn't believe him because she knew him better than he knew himself. But with no input from him, it was difficult to help if she didn't know what the problem was. She'd been praying about this particular situation from the moment she first noticed the change in his demeanor.

Evelyn felt led to talk to her son even more about God's love in situations that may not be the best. She was going to talk to him about Joseph tonight because that was what she believed

God was directing her to do. She didn't understand it all, but she knew well enough to be obedient to what she believed was God's direction regardless.

Eventually Demetri showed up for their nightly ritual, reading bible stories, praying, or whatever the two decided to do during "their time." His eyes were a bit puffy still and his nose a little red, but he did his best to hide his feelings. He crawled up next to his mother and snuggled up. She hugged him back and the two sat in silence for a brief period. There was silent communication between them. His mother confirmed her love for him and he let her know he believed her.

"Demetri, is there anything special you want to talk about tonight?"

Demetri looked as though he thought about saying something but quickly changed his mind and shook his head. Evelyn was disappointed because she knew something was going on and wanted desperately to help her son with whatever it was. She did take comfort in knowing he went to God with his concerns. Ultimately, it would take God to fix it regardless of who knew anyway, but it was natural for a mother to want to get involved as well.

"Do you remember when we talked about Joseph before?"

"Did he have that coat with all those colors?"

"That's him. God had a very special assignment for him. He spoke to Joseph through dreams."

"His dreams got him into trouble, didn't they?"

"Well, his brothers were angry because of a dream he had."

"Then they made him a slave."

"Yes, they did. He had many bad things happen to him after that. But, God still spoke to him through his dreams and visions. In the end, Joseph ended up right where God wanted him to be. You have a special assignment from God, too. We don't know exactly what it is yet, but I know it's there. Do you know what that assignment is called?"

"It's my calling."

"Yes, baby, it's your calling. I see you have been paying attention to me, haven't you?"

"Yes, Momma, I always listen to you. I'm not like Vanessa."

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“I know, Demetri. I want you to remember that when things get hard and you go through difficult situations, it’s part of the preparation for your calling. Don’t be afraid. God is always with you. Momma and Daddy may not be there, but He will be. In the end, no matter what you go through, you’ll get to the place where God wants you.”

“What kind of difficult situations?”

“I don’t know, but I think you’re going through one now.”

Demetri looked away from his mother once again at the mention of his problem. Again, he looked as though he debated telling his mother the nature of the issue.

“I am, Momma. But you taught me to talk to God about it and that’s what I’ve been doing. Now I understand it might be because of my calling.”

“That’s right, baby. It’s because of your calling.”