

NOT DADDY'S GIRL

by Brenda A. White

MADISON

Color me dazed and confused because two women approached me at Frenchy's Chicken and said I was their niece.

I was suddenly not hungry, so I closed my box, wrapped my lemon cake and rushed toward my car. My hands trembled so badly I dropped my phone. I fished it out from underneath the seat, and scrolled to my favorites to call my sister, Shay. The phone rang four times and went to voice mail. I slapped the steering wheel. "Shay, call me back, please. I have something to ask you."

I wanted to call my dad since I had just finished talking to him about moving my stuff back home after graduation. I pulled the hoodie over my head and rested against the headrest to calm my nerves. My chest moved up and down.

I had watched my family for years, wondering why I didn't look like any of them. I had always felt different, too. Though it had been awhile, I even questioned my parents on a number of occasions.

"Oh, girl, stop it, you do look like us then continued with what I know now as a bunch of lies. I remember Troy always appeared sad when she responded, but I thought it was because he missed his dad.

I often wondered if I was adopted, but when I discussed it with Shay, she'd remember my mother's pregnancy. She showed me pictures. My dark skin, high cheek bones, thick silky eyebrows, and full lips were totally opposite of her and the rest of the family.

Tears started to glide along my eyelids and my cheeks flushed a wave of heat. I wanted to believe, but I thought *were those ladies telling the truth.*

My phone vibrated.

"Shay!"

"Hey girl. Why are you yelling?"

“You will not believe what just happened to me.” I turned the radio off.

“Yes, I will. What?” Her tone excited. I loved her; she always showed interest in whatever was going on with me.

“I was sitting at Frenchy’s eating by myself and these two ladies came up to me.” I paused and looked around at the cars lining up in the drive thru. “They came up to me and said that I was their niece.”

“Girl, stop it. They are lying to you. How is that?”

“The younger lady was doing all the talking and the other one was just sitting there nodding. She said Momma messed around with her married brother and had me, while she was married to Daddy and that’s why they divorced.”

“Madison, how is that possible? Momma and Daddy divorced when you were almost eighteen.” She paused. “Who would wait eighteen years after an affair to get a divorce?”

She didn’t know it, but she was destroying my theory and desire of finally belonging.

She continued, “If Daddy was mad at Momma about you, Aiden wouldn’t be here, either.”

“What if Aiden is not Daddy’s either?” I twirled my finger around my hair.

“Madison, cut it out. Aiden looks just like Daddy,” her voice elevated.

“I don’t think so. He looks like mom to me. So, we really don’t know who his dad is either.” I mumbled and rested my elbow on the steering wheel.

“Madison! You are out of line?”

“What? No, I’m not! What if Momma is a ho?”

She sighed, “I can’t with you today.”

Our conversation had gone differently than I had planned. I expected support.

“Okay, hear me out. Do you remember when they used to argue all the time? They argued for almost five years about an affair before they finally divorced. I thought it was Daddy’s, because Momma did all the yelling. They argued all the time and it had to be about me, they’ve been telling lies all these years.”

“Madison, that is not true,” she yelled.

“You don’t know, you were gone when daddy found out I wasn’t his daughter. I didn’t understand then, but it’s all clear to me now. Everybody treated me differently. I was only twelve.” I wiped away a tear with the back of my hand.

“That is complete nonsense.” Her voice filled with frustration.

“No, it’s not,” my voice trembled. She didn’t respond, so I continued, “And Shay, I look just like the lady. So identical, I could be her daughter.” I waited, still no response. “She gave me her number.”

“Goodbye, Madison.”

My jaw clinched and I took one long sniff as a sign to suck it up, because that was the last time, I would cry about how my family treated me. Shay knew I was telling the truth. She had never hung up on me because she knew that pissed me off and everybody in the family knew what I did when I got pissed off.