

My Final Approval



James Mehling/DN

Note: This is part three of a four-part fiction story.

I sat endlessly looking for answers to her questions. But I couldn't find any. I really didn't know how Anthony was going to take the whole ordeal. Hell, I was still trying to deal with it myself.

"Well, first of all, he is not my boyfriend, he is only an acquaintance," I said. "And I really don't know how he is going to take it. He has one child already and I don't know if he wants another." I could feel my eyes start to gather with tears.

The woman told me to go see my physician to verify what she had just told me — about testing positive. Then she told me I had plenty of time to make a final decision, and I should talk things over with Anthony and someone I could trust, preferably my mother.

I concluded that this nice old woman often bonded with her patients, because before I left she made herself available to me and told me to come back to see her and let her know how I was doing.

"Shanequa, Shanequa, didn't you hear what I just said?"

My mother was asking me questions as I came out of the trance that I'd slipped into. Hell, I was almost there — I was almost at the place of my final call.

I looked over at my mother and answered her question. The look on her face put me back at her house when I had first told her of my ordeal.

When I had first pulled up in front of our house, I noticed my mother wasn't at home. I went to go into the house, but I was unable to get in because I didn't have a key to the screen door.

My neighbor came out and told me my mother had gone to the store. He then asked me if I could take him to the store. I told him yes. I figured by the time I got back home, my mother should be back. But I was wrong.

I went to my sister's house to

get her spare key. I walked into her house with an empty look on my face.

"Shanequa, what are you doing home in the middle of the day, something must be wrong," my sister said. I didn't say a word, and then she looked at me with a studying eye and asked, "You're not pregnant, are you?"

I gradually looked up with confused tears in my eyes and told her I possibly could be. I could hear the excitement in her voice.

"I thought you were, because of the way you were looking when you walked in here," she said. My sister sat back in her chair.

"So what have you come to talk to mama about — I know not about having an abortion," she said.

I looked up in a startled way. "No. But I want her to know my circumstances," I said.

But really, I thought to myself, I was going to my mother for answers, because I didn't have any.

I wanted so much to blame someone — I wanted to blame Anthony. I wanted to blame my doctor for allowing me to get off the pill. I just needed to blame someone, but the only one I could blame was me.

My sister finally gave me the key, and I told her I had to leave and would talk to her later.

When I got home, my mother was waiting for me. Our neighbor had informed her that I was looking for her. I walked into the house with a solemn look on my face and sat down at our living-room table. She was in a somewhat cheery mood.

"So what's wrong with you, your brother causing you problems again?" she asked as she continued to unpack her groceries and store them in their respective places.

I said nothing. I didn't quite know how to find the words to tell her about my unwanted pregnancy. I shook my head to let her know that was not the case.

Once again I lowered my head as she walked toward the refrigerator.

"Now, what's wrong? You didn't come home for nothing — what, you pregnant or something?"

My mother looked up with a smirk on her face, as if she knew it couldn't be that extreme. But she didn't take the conversation any further, and she stopped for a minute with one of her grocery items floating in mid-air, waiting for my response.

Nothing would come out of my mouth, but my head nodded up and down answering yes as my mouth said nothing. Then quickly without much effort, I was speaking again.

"But I don't want it!" Those were the words that ran out of my mouth as soon as my bottom lip dropped open.

"Well, Shanequa," my mother said, "it is up to you — you do what you want to do. I am not going to be in your decision process, because you are not going to say that I made you have an abortion or keep a child that you didn't want. I will not have that on my conscious, so you decide what you want to do, and I'll support you."

And in one endless motion she went back to finishing unpacking the groceries. The relief of telling her and having someone I love know of my ordeal made it easier. But it also put the reality of my situation back into perspective, and the water that had started to well up in my eyes at the pregnancy clinic was now streaming down my face.

At the clinic I had realized for the first time that I was with child and had to make an important decision, one that would be final.

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