

## Taylor

I'm tired. I'm tired. I'm so tired is all I can think. This man has had me going through circles for the past ten years. Ten years and no kids, and we are still living a life full of drama. But I guess it's my own damn fault, I have been taking everything he has to dish out for all this time. *What else did I expect to happen?* My mother always told me "a man will only do what I allow him to do." I just don't understand why I allowed Michael to do so much to me. I mean it's not as if he has been there for me in any magical way or anything. We stay in the same house and everything but I do every damn thing. I pay most of the bills, the condo is in my name, and I handle all of the cooking and cleaning. He is just good for the sex when I need it, to be perfectly honest.

This last incident was a bit over the top though. He has done many messed up things over the years but this last episode was the final straw for me. It was the one thing that I had told him I would not tolerate under any circumstances...cheating.

We've had many conversations on the subject and I've let it be known that if he cheats once, it had better be because he wants our relationship to be over - forever. I can handle a lot of things but cheating isn't one of them.

Today I came home to not only find him cheating, but in my bed with one of my best friends. I was livid! I only wondered exactly how long all of this had been going on behind my back.

All night long, I played the incident in my head. I saw it over and over again. I actually came home from work early and caught him in the bed, in my bed - with her. Yes, my bed, the one I paid for considering the fact that he only brought home a measly thousand dollars a month. Not to mention, that this wasn't just a regular day, this was also our anniversary. Ten years to date.

I left the office early because I wanted to prepare a special dinner for us to celebrate. I had also bought him the Sony Playstation 3 that he has been dying to get his hands on. When I unlocked the door and walked into my house, I could smell the sex in the air, and I was all the way downstairs. I knew that something was going on. I shut the door as quietly as possible, laid the game system on the couch, and began to creep silently up the stairs. The closer I got to the top of the stairs the louder the noises became. I could hear the headboard banging against the wall.

I heard Michael asking, "Whose is it?"

Then the reply, "It's yours, baby."

That's when I decided that rather than going into the bedroom and acting a fool, I would get even and hurt him even worse. Even though I wasn't going to ruin their party, the nosey person in me still needed to know who this woman was. I peeked into my bedroom and discovered that the woman that my man of ten years was sleeping with was one of my friends, Michelle.

One of my best friends, we had known each other since we were toddlers. Our mothers were very good friends, too. My legs buckled as soon as I saw her face and at that moment, the whole idea of getting revenge later went completely out the window. I went back downstairs and grabbed my pistol. I made sure I had the silencer in one hand, and ran back up the stairs. I busted the door open and fired a shot into the ceiling.

Michelle paused for a minute and then started screaming so loud it damn near cracked the walls. She tried to run out the door but I yanked her back by her way too-long weave. When I let go of her hair part of it was still in my hand.

I cocked the gun against her head and loudly asked, "Why are you in my house sleeping with my man?"

She gave me a weird gaze before she started crying hysterically and stuttering but for some reason no words were coming out.

I screamed, "I'm going to ask you one more time, Michelle, why are you in my house sleeping with my man?"

She finally managed to say, "Taylor, I'm so sorry!" in between loud sobs.

Angrily I said, "I didn't ask you if you were sorry, I asked you why, Michelle, and you better answer me before I shoot you."

I attached the silencer to the gun to show them both that I was not playing around. The poor girl looked like she didn't know what was happening. All she knew was that she had better say something because as of right now her life might really depend on it.

Finally, she mumbled, "Taylor he came on to me first."

Damn, she was a stupid! I knew then that I wasn't really going to kill her but if I were, she would be dead as a doorknob with that dumb ass answer.

"Move next to your man!" I yelled.

I was still pointing the gun at her. I made her move over by Michael so I could hear his lies, too. He had been sitting there as quiet as a church mouse watching the entire thing in horror. I was surprised that he wasn't trying to protect her. I knew that he was going to try to "man up" when I pointed the pistol at him so I was going to have to do a little more to make him scared. Without any warning at all, I fired a shot that went right through the headboard and about two inches away from his head. He had no clue that I had been taking marksmanship classes for the past five years. Idiot! When he saw how close the shot came to his head, he became noticeably scared.

He tried to talk me into putting the gun down, "Baby, please put the gun down, we're sorry. We made a mistake, it only happened once."

His voice was so whiny that I wanted to shoot him for real. As soon as he said, we only did it once, I got angrier.

I cocked the gun against his head and started screaming, "Michael, cut the bull! I'm looking at the ring on this heifer's finger! It looks to me like you two are engaged and this is definitely not the only time!"

He was as nervous as a hooker in church, and he should have been. He had never seen me this mad before.

"Tell me why are you doing the one thing I asked you not to do? Or better yet, tell me why you are doing it with one of my best friends? Are you two supposed to be in love?" I really wanted to know.

There was still no answer so I forced Michael to open his mouth by hitting him in the stomach with the butt of the pistol. I put the gun inside his mouth. Michelle was still crying and still very loud. I told her to shut up before I killed him.

"So you are planning to marry the man that I have loved for the past ten years? Is that right?" I questioned.

I took the gun out of his mouth and pointed it back at Michelle. She wouldn't say a word. She was trying to make eye contact with Michael, but I positioned myself between them so that they couldn't give each other any looks without me noticing them.

I didn't know if it was because she was scared or what, but Michelle kept glaring at me, especially when I wasn't talking to her. She didn't think I noticed but I did. All I knew was if she felt like leaping then she could. She would regret it. That was a promise.

I turned my focus back to Michael.

"So is this what you do to the woman that has taken care of you for the past ten years? When you didn't have a pot to piss in or a window to throw it out of I took care of you Michael, no one else!" I screamed.

I kept glancing at Michelle out of the corner of my eye. She didn't know what I was thinking. I kept looking at her ring, and the more I looked at it the more agitated I got. All I could think about was the ring I had I bought for myself. Michael was supposed to pay me back, but of course, he never did.

All of a sudden, I jumped on top of him. I forced his mouth open and stuck the gun in again, and this time he peed on himself.

At that point, I was satisfied that I had scared the life out of both of them, so I decided to put them out of my house butt-naked. I made them get out of the bed while I followed behind them with the gun. When they finally got outside, on the sidewalk, I came back inside and locked the door. Considering that it was only thirty degrees outside, I don't think they really appreciated it much but it sure did make me feel much better.

I sat down on the couch and started to think about what I was going to do to them next. This was definitely not over.

My thoughts were interrupted by a loud knock at the door and a command.

"Police open up!"

I hopped up and opened the door.

"Officer how can I assist you?" I asked him pretending I didn't know what was going on.

"Ma'am there was a report of loud screaming coming from this house. Is everything okay?" he asked.

"Yes sir, everything is fine."

He paused and gave me a slight smile. Then he looked back and, Michael and Michelle came from around the corner. They were trying to hide their private parts. I wanted to laugh out loud.

Right on cue, the officer said, "And these people are standing here naked. They've stated that you have stolen their clothes."

I calmly explained to the officer that I had their clothes because they were on my property without my permission.

He turned towards Michael and Michelle and explained to them that he could not take me to jail because this was my property, and I told him that

they were trespassing. Unless they could prove otherwise, he had to take my side. However, he felt sorry for them and insisted I go get their clothes.

I did and they got dressed on the sidewalk because they were not allowed back on my property. The officer could clearly see what was going on, and I think he got himself a good laugh. Before he left, he told me to be careful and not to do anything too foolish.

When the cop left, I went back inside the house to continue thinking about my next move. I knew that Michael couldn't survive more than seventy-two hours without me so I knew he would be in my face or on my phone soon. I was going to have to do something drastic to show him that it really was over this time. I saw them pull away right behind the officer in Michelle's car. I was sure that she was going to take Michael to one of his friend's apartments or maybe they would shack up at her house. I was so furious that I could care less what they did.

By the next day, my other three best friends had heard what happened and were already calling. I had about seven new voice messages and they were all from the same three people: Remi, Nicole, and Kayla. Michelle must have told them. I'm sure she wanted everyone to take pity on her because I pulled a gun on her. But the way I see it, that trick knew I was crazy anyhow. I mean after all she *was* one of my best friends. *What did she really expect me to do?* Hug her and say I know she didn't mean it? Maybe that kind of crazy stuff happened in her world, but not in the land of Taylor Devereaux.

I pressed play to listen to the messages. The first one was from Kayla. We considered her the nice one in the clique. She was beautiful like all of us. She was a mocha complexion, and had the prettiest bob haircut that I had ever seen. She stood about five feet ten inches. Men were always attracted to her. Kayla was a real woman and carried herself like a lady at all times. Kayla always did the right thing. She went to church every Sunday, work and school during the week. We were all so proud of her and usually listened when she spoke. Today though was an exception, it would take a while before I listened when it came to this. I loved her, and I really would probably end up listening sooner or later, but just not today. I was still on fire about the whole situation. I already knew that Kayla was going to tell me to pray about it and to try to give Michelle another chance and in due time our relationship would heal...blah, blah, blah.

As soon as I heard her soft voice trying to sympathize, I immediately hung up the phone. I was in no mood to listen to anybody trying to console me when they had no idea how deep this betrayal had cut me.

I sat on the couch with a big bag of potato chips. I started crunching away and then decided that I was not about to ruin my perfect figure over

this whole mess. I put the chips on the coffee table and just sat back and started flipping through the channels on television.

Now I had to figure out how I was going to go about making sure that Michael was out of my life forever. That's when I remembered that it was almost time for my lease agreement to be over. I hadn't re-signed yet, out of pure laziness, but at this point, I decided that it was a good thing that I hadn't. It was at that very moment that I decided I was just going to move. I wasn't going to tell Michael anything. I wasn't going to tell anyone for a while. Although he did know where my mom lived, she would never tell him, especially if I asked her not to.

He was such a bum. He didn't have a car so he couldn't follow me. I made the decision that I was going to move this weekend. By the time Michael got the nerve to call me or come by and try to make up with me I would be long gone.

I picked up my laptop and immediately looked up the beautiful town homes close to my job that I had been interested in for the past year. They were called the Colonnade at Hickory Park Townhomes. I had already walked through them once before and they were beautiful.

I called and asked to speak to the manager of the community. I needed a new place now and I was certain that only the apartment manager would be able to help me.

"Hello, this is Maggie. How can I help you?"

I heard a very happy voice sing.

"Hi Maggie; my name is Taylor Devereaux. I am wondering if you have a vacant two-bedroom town home available for move-in this weekend, I can come by right now and fill out the application and give the security deposit along with the first six months of rent if you can make this happen for me."

Maggie responded, "Well, Ms. Devereaux let me place you on hold and see exactly what I can do for you."

Maggie placed me on hold for about forty-five seconds, then came back, and said that I was in luck. They had a town home available for me. She told me to come over in about an hour with my money order or cashier's check for seven thousand dollars and they would have the paperwork and the unit all ready for me.

I thanked Maggie and told her I would see her soon.

Now, it was time for me to get some clothes on. I hadn't left the house since the whole ordeal yesterday. I walked past the full length mirror and did a double take. I looked a hot mess today. I was usually always ready to go,

but given the circumstances, I excused myself this time. I ran up stairs and took a quick shower. Since it was cool outside, I put on my black and white Adidas jogging suit with my black and white Nikes. I loved this jogging suit because it showed all of my curves but it also showed my long, slender figure. I took the scarf off my head and let my hair fall down. I didn't have to worry about my hair because I wore a long wrap and it always fell right into place. While I finished getting dressed, I couldn't help but think about all of the things that Michael and I had been through over the years. This was without a doubt the straw that had broke the camel's back. As my mind wondered I thought about how Michael was a lazy, selfish, and childish man.

Michelle wasn't that much better. She lived in an income-based apartment complex and received government help because she refused to get a job. She always treated people like they owed her something. I can't front on her though; she had so much potential. She wasn't dumb by a long shot. Too bad she was a waste of skin, I thought to myself.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized they really did deserve each other. I felt like this whole bad experience would be a blessing in disguise. I needed to know that Michael was trifling so that I could stop wasting my time.

Ten years of my life had been spent on trying to make it work with him. It was about time I took my life in another direction and started doing what was good for Taylor.

All of a sudden I got so excited because I was about to start a new chapter in my life and it all was going to begin with the move I was making this weekend. This was going to be the beginning of many great things for me and I couldn't be more excited.

