

TC Sample

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Bitch You're Dirty



DAMIEN

“Sign in here.”

The reception room is basic. It's the same for a men's facility. Cream and beige walls and counter. A small waiting area with lockers across from the chairs. The water machine wedged in a corner. A stand of magazines and literature packets between the door and the lockers.

It's busy. I'm directed to take a number and have a seat. A number was called, and I watched as three people get up and go to the front desk.

My dreams have led me here. I suppose you can also call them memories. As much as I'm learning about Lucy, I'm also learning about myself and the life I lived before my accident. I spent the first year after my accident with my father's family in Barbados.

In college, Lucy found him and encouraged me to meet him. I wouldn't do it. It felt like a betrayal to my mother. When I woke up from a coma, a year had passed, and my father was there.

In the year I spent with my father's family, I learned more about emotional intelligence and boundaries than in my 24 years with my mother's family.

I've been in contact with Amalah for three months now. Writing to her since memories of her resurfaced. I visited her once at my request, and I needed to make amends in the worst way. This would be my second time. I head to the locker assign to me to put my phone away. Fifteen minutes later, my number was called, and they took me to the security screening area. It was like airport security, except for the drug search and eye scan.

I was expecting to be admitted straight back. The first visit led to a strip search. Of course, it would have been prevented if I had called the prison ahead of time and found out what I could and couldn't bring. This time I followed instructions exactly, and they admitted me to the visitation area.

I saw her.

We don't hug. It's not the nature of our relationship. We weren't friends, lovers. By her description, it wasn't her choice. She won't divulge who made her feel like she had to do what she did. Or why she was with me.

"Damien."

"Thank you for seeing me. It was brought to my attention that you didn't want to see me again. I need answers, Amalah, and you're the only one who has been forthcoming."

“That’s a bit of an exaggeration.”

“Do you want something from the vending machine? Maybe a soda?”

I’d heard many prisoners only have square meals and no money on the books. It can be uncomfortable without the right connections. I spent a year in a county jail when I was 18. Illegal gun possession.

“I’m well looked after.”

“By your sponsor?” It has to be that the girl I knew would never do this for a regular joe. She didn’t so much as flinch at my words.

“I told you; I didn’t do what I’ve been accused of.”

“Why would anyone set you up? And why Lucy? What could you possibly have in common? She barely knew of your existence.”

“Oh, so little do you perceive about your baby mama.” That grated on my nerves. “She is my stepsister. Her father married my mother when I was five, weeks after he left Kada and Lucy.”

The shock registered on my face. I couldn’t hide it.

“Oh yeah. We had words, and I struck out at her. The blow didn’t land, but—whoever did this knows about it.”

She’s hiding something important.

“How close were you? To Lucy? Do you know about her whereabouts? Keturah?”

I got ahead of myself, and the excitement bubbled up. She can tell.

“We weren’t close, Damien. She viewed me as a nemesis. A word of advice for you: don’t go poking in corners if you’re not willing to look at all your pasts.”

“What the fuck does that mean?”

“When we were together, you were under suspicion.”

“I’m aware. The authorities have cleared me.”

“Bitch, come on. You’re dirty. Of that I am certain.”

I look around, and two guards are staring right at us.

Amalah laughs bitterly, “Relax, you’re protected—always have been. No matter how much you screwed up, someone was there to take your consequences. Don’t think for a minute what happened to those girls will stay buried.”

Leaving that compound, my heart was heavy. I could not stop thinking about one girl in particular.

“Damien, don’t be stupid!” Mama slapped me upside the head and said, “Where is your sense? How the fuck do you think turning yourself in is going to help? They did not prove that you knew anything about their abductions. Do you even remember what was happening?”

“Yes! I am guilty, Ma, despite being cleared. I may not have done it personally, but I made them a target... I tried to.”

“Yes. You were too aggressive. It was what put you under suspicion.”

Jane’s the only one who didn’t speak. She held her silence until we’re alone.

“Leave it alone; no good will come from this, Damien. You won’t get two years in the county. You’re going to the pen this time.”

Mackenzie’s right, of course. I’ll never meet my daughter, and it serves no purpose. I don’t have inside information on their loca-

tion. Even if I could expose the traffickers, it would be traced back to me.

Still, it doesn't sit well with the man I'm trying to be.



"Yo, where you think you going?" I grabbed her arm, and she jerked away from me. That pissed me off, but not as much as her next words.

"I'm not doing this with you. I can't stand this anymore, and I'm done with you."

I trailed behind her as we moved from the patio to the house.

We stopped at the kitchen counter.

"What the hell, Damien? I thought because you bought this house, you were different. You're still the fuck boy you were in—"

Her words break off into a scream when I grab her hair and slap her face on the counter. Her body falls to the floor, and I let go of her hair. She's disoriented.

"A fuck boy, huh? You're disrespectful in my house? You think you can leave because you're unhappy? Nah bitch." I dragged her into the living room. She was screaming and fighting.

I dogged her and walked her to the couch.

"Bitch, you gon learn your place tonight." I punched her in the face the second time she stopped fighting. Her screams turn into hard sobs. I choked her while diving into her.

I liked the fear on her face. I like how her pussy squeezed my dick as she's cumming because all girls want to feel pain. They want to be abused. It turns them on.

As my seeds fill her, I held her chin.

"What I have with Lucy outweighs what we have. When I'm ready for you, be available. You're my bitch. Do you understand Hanna?"

Her sobs were quiet.

"Yes, Daddy."

"Good girl. Clean yourself up."

I woke up feeling sticky from my semen. I experienced nocturnal emissions. I'm messed up. Confused. My mission was to uncover the identity of Lucy. Instead, I'm learning more about myself. I took Amalah's challenge, and I'm finding that I had way more secrets than Lucy had. In the past, I was truly awful. I can't even be sure if this Lucy person isn't hiding from me. I waste an hour trying to make sense of my dreams.

Time passed, and the dreams continued. I reached out to my father. My sisters and my mother would have me stay and ignore the things I've done. Not because it implements them. No. I did these things, and if I go down, I'll do it alone. They don't want me to go to prison. These dreams haunt me. Something is crawling up from the depths of my mind. It makes me believe I've done something heinous. I put the call off because, quite honestly, I'm afraid of the truth. Until I have a dream, I can't ignore it.



I watched her from my car. She'd cut her hair. She dined with a man of pedigree. Polished motherfucka. Well. In the last hour she's laughed, danced, and drank with the man. He's a gentleman. He didn't try anything with her. I can't say the same for my bitch, though.

I followed her home. I waited for her company to leave before I broke in through the back door. She'd relocated and sold her home. She thought leaving Cincinnati and starting over would discourage me.

I waited for her to come out of the shower.

She screamed the moment she saw me. Clenching her towel, she backed into the wall, crying.

"Get out. Go away, Damien!"

"She's out of my life—"

"Your lying," she said as tears fell from her cheeks. "Why are you here when you have her? Why bother with me?"

"Because I still want you."

She shakes her head in denial, and that pisses me off.

"Don't tell me how I feel!"

"Okay. I won't. I'll tell you how I feel. I don't want you. I want nothing to do with you or your family. I want my life, Damien."

"You're serious?"

“Yes.”

She’s bold, that’s why I was drawn to her. The others tried to leave in secret without embarrassing me. Not Hanna.

“There isn’t a life without me—do you remember telling me that? That you couldn’t live without me.”

Before I knew what she was about, she hit me with a stainless steel vase and ran. She damn nearly made it to the front door. Shorter hair meant I needed something else to grab on to something else. She falls back into me, and as we staggered under her weight, we knocked into an end table, turning it over. The towel fell from her body. I was ready for the momentum shift. What I wasn’t ready for was the revelation of her body. I hadn’t noticed.

She’s pregnant. My arm tightens around her. She tenses with apprehension. Despite what she says she was going to have this baby. My child. She still wants me. My lips brushed her earlobe.

“Hanna, do us both a favor and submit. I don’t want to hurt the child growing inside of you.”

She was scared. She knew she wasn’t going to make it.

“What do you want?” she asked, resigned. She asked, but she knew what I came for. And now that I knew I was going to be a father, she understood I wasn’t leaving.



“This girl you’re dreaming about isn’t Lucy?”

I shake my head.

“Son?”

“Oh, sorry, Pops, no, she’s not Lucy. I think we were seeing each other before I met Lucy. We were definitely rocking while I was seeing Lucy.” I didn’t completely lose all my memories.

“I did that. I had several on the sidelines.”

“I see... and where are these other girls?”

Now here comes the hard part.

“I get it. It looks bad, Pops.”

“Damien, I don’t see what anything looks like because you aren’t being honest with me.”

“Quite a few of my exes went missing within a week of breaking up with me. It’s just what happened. They cleared me of wrongdoing, but I still feel guilty.”

“Why?”

“I could have helped them, and I didn’t. Especially Yelena. She ran from me into moving traffic.”

“Jesus Damien.”

“I know! Pops and now Hanna. I need to know what happened to her. Pops... I think I have another kid.”

“You need more than that, Damien. You need to face your part in all this, and if that means doing time, do it and move on.”

Mom’s opinion was very different. Victor’s as well. My family built their wealth around criminal activity. As much as I wanted to believe I was growing, I’m not. I want to know what happened. No, I need to know what happened. If that means doing time. Well. I know a talented lawyer. Three months before my daughter’s

second birthday, I had my first appointment with Dr. Eubanks. A therapist specializing in memory loss.

An hour later, I turned myself in—to Grisham Grant’s astonishment. The man had been building a case against me for six years.

“I didn’t see this coming. What do you know?”

Second Chance



DAMIEN

It's taken me six years to make amends and to redeem myself. They convicted me of aiding in the act of human trafficking. They didn't overlook my role in aiding in the act of human trafficking and the things I had done to the women taken, even though it was indirect. It played a part in my 15 year prison sentence.

"Mr. Coleman, your name and the history of your case have stayed with me. I've seen your growth—I do not condone your actions that led you here, but I see you've done what you can to make amends. The court approves your request for early release."

My sisters, Jane and Sarah, are the loudest of everyone. It was a long shot. We all knew that coming into this. Tears drop from my

cheek. My hands cuffed in front of me, I use my shoulder to wipe at the moisture on my face. I beat at my chest as I'm led out by the bailiff. No chance to speak to my family beyond the "I love you" exchange when I entered the courtroom.

My lawyer, Brian Bates, visits me three hours after my court appearance.

"It's going to be 21 days before it's all processed. You know, by now, nothing is ever quick in the penal system. They will evaluate your residence. You'll have three years of probation if you make it. The rest of your suspended sentence will go away."

"I'll make it. I can't thank you enough."

He nods stiffly.

"I'll be present on release day. It's best that I escort you to your residence. The official date will depend on your home plan. Right now, an investigation is under way. It looks like your sister; Jane and her husband are volunteering their home. Is there any reason your father should be concerned about that arrangement?"

"Jane and Kevin are squares. By that, I mean they stay away from the dealings of my parents. Far away from it. I don't expect issues with the home plan."

My sister is stone cold hard for God. She and Sarah are the safest. I know Sarah loves her space and peace. If it falls through, she'll be next in line.

"It's all good, man. Be patient." I tap my fingers on the table. "I'll be out in the world in a few weeks."

Hours later, I wake, startled out of my sleep. It's not because of the guards walking outside of my cell door. It's the loudness of

silence. Have you ever been in a room with no background noise? You can hear everything going on outside of yourself.

What I'm about to say may be hard to take. It's in the first moments of consciousness that my dream is still with me, like it's just a vivid memory. I sat in a room similar to this one. The desk and chair bolted into the wall and floor. A tinted yellow paper laid on the desk.

A letter from a lover. The penman doesn't mention a name. They used term of endearments like sugar and honey. The writer claims to be pregnant and misses me "something terrible."

The letter continues, and the writer begs me not to get into trouble again. My family needs me out and alive.

It's just one dream I've had in this place. It felt and still feels real. I know it can't be because this is the first, I've done hard time. It's as if it's something that has already taken place.

My cell was nearly identical to theirs, but it lacked a window. In the dream, the walls were teal and white instead of crisp white. The furnishing bolted into walls and floor.

I'll tell you the truth. I don't know what to make of it and until I do, I'll keep it to myself. The words stay with me until I write them down.

A fever comes over me, I can't stop writing. Pouring my thoughts and feelings on the page. I'm not even aware of time until a shadow cast over me. I look up in shock. A woman with auburn curls peeking out of a black top hat. She wore a dark greatcoat with double breast and a shoulder cape attached.

Her golden eyes look directly at me, not through me. As if she's here for me.

"Oh, how I love you with every fiber of my being." Her voice was low. Tears gather in her eyes, "even though you throw it away."

I look behind me. No one.

She chuckles.

"We have a bit of time. Dominic—no. Damien. You are the same and not." I turn back to her in shock. I'm rooted to the spot.

"I miss that look of awe in you. My love, this is the last time. We will not have another if you do not fix what you've broken."

"You're not Lucy."

"No. Not in the way you mean. It's up to you to find me this time. I will not help you. If it's met to be, you will fight for us."

I move towards her with little thought. She's standing in front of the door.

A door made of metal with a narrow window used for meal, mail and medical swaps. She shouldn't be here.

"You read my letter."

"What is this? Who are you?"

"All wonderful questions in which you have the answers inside of you. You have everything you need."

"I have everything I need," I repeat, "and I still want more."

It came out in a soft tone. I have an impression that I hurt her and still she's here.

"I'm sorry."

I don't know what else I can do.

"Don't apologize, fix it. Fix us. I want everything owned to me."

Okay. The only thing to do is to go on instinct. She's not Lucy.
"I'll fix us. Lola."

At the sound of her name, her eyes light up, chasing the shadows of sadness away. And then she's gone. All except her memory.



I was 23 when I got locked up. The world has changed little in the 6 years I've been in and yet it feels like I'm so far behind. My ride from the prison came at 5 a.m. It feels surreal to be in normal clothes. Even more unreal to receive what I came in with. Outwear garments, wallet and cellphone. Man! My phone is ancient when compared to Brian's Nokia Lumia. My Sony Ericsson looks like an oversized mp3 player. Hell. Are those outdated too?

Well, damn.

I had an unrealistic expectation that fell short. The morning after, I'm feeling a little more centered when a knock interrupts my peace.

"Uncle Damien."

My nephew. Julian. The boy was a baby when I went in. His father wouldn't allow him to visit and so it's a little awkward for Julian and me. He's now almost six years old.

"Come in. Buddy."

He stands just outside the door.

I have to put a stop to this or else it's going to get weird.

“So, I know it’s strange to have a stranger in your house.”

He doesn’t respond.

“Man, I get it. I feel just as unsettled. I don’t know what I should and shouldn’t do. Jane tells me you’re a model student. Maybe you can help me out when you have time. School’s starting up soon. I imagine you’ll have your hands full then.”

“I don’t like school. Leila’s a better student than I am. I just follow the rules and everything else falls into place.”

He makes it sound simple when it’s a hard thing to do.

“You must have a method. I’ve never been able to do the right thing because it’s the right thing to do.”

He moves into the room. The pensive expression replaced with curiosity.

“It depends on the *context* of the situation. If it’s a choice, I have to make I do the most boring of my choices.”

“Hmm...”

“On the school bus, the monitor always says sit down and be quiet. The other kids sit down and talk. I’m the only one who doesn’t talk until my friend Adrian gets on the bus. And then we both don’t talk. It’s very boring, and it gets us good citizen points—”

“Julian—”

“Oh! I was supposed to tell you breakfast is ready.”

I like the reaction that he has when Jane calls him. Not scared and not dismissive. He immediately goes to his mother, explaining what distracted him even though she can see for herself. Jane’s not at all put off.

“Thank you, baby. Damien, don’t forget about your appointment with your probation officer. Shelby’s a stickler for timeliness.”

After breakfast, Jane drops me off at my P. O office, telling me to call her when I’m ready. I’m not prepared for the visit. I’m definitely not prepared to have a sexy brown woman as my parole officer. Damn, I’m fucked up. I’m clean for sure and yet I don’t feel like the man with a prestigious background that I am. My family is wealthy. I had advances while I was in the pen. Money on my books, care packages every month. Now that I’m out, everything I need is waiting for me.

Physically, I look the part, but inside my mind is a mess.

The wait to see Shelby Dawson is 15 minutes and when I’m in, she’s blunt and speaks fast, giving me a list of dos and don’ts. Honestly, I’m overwhelmed when she’s done. No alcohol. No drugs of any kind. Not even a beer.

I went over my court order and still it’s a lot. And then came the question I was prepared for, but not for her. I expected they would assign a man, given the circumstances of my case.

I told her. And found out how incredible it is that I got an early release. She’s professional and listens without giving her thoughts away. She went over my rap sheet and I thank god that it’s only five items long.

I don’t know why I want to leave her a lasting good impression. It feels like an interview; I need to nail this one.

“You’ll need to either find a job or have documented proof you are actively looking for work.”

“That’s no problem. It’s already taken care of. I’m starting at West Key Investment Group as a bank analyst.”

She took a moment to look over my documents before making copies. When she’s done, she requests a drug test via a urine sample.

The appointment took an hour. I’m relieved when it’s over. I have to use the customary phone to call my sister. She rolls up with take out.

“Where to now?”

“My house. I know Jane. I need a few things.”

It’s frustrating. I have this house I can’t live in for another month. Grisham bosses want another month to scour the property. They’ve had six years to do this. It feels like a setup and I wouldn’t put it past Grisham.

I part ways with Jane, promising I would stay out of trouble and call if I need anything.

It’s exactly how I left it. My office is located around the corner from the kitchen. I found what I need, the title to the car and an envelope of cash from the safe. I’m about to leave when I notice paper poking out of a drawer.

As requested, I’ve located Hana. Lucy remains unfound. However, I have found evidence she is a woman from the streets. If you’re going to find her, you need someone who knows the streets. I suggest you connect with Jerry Mason. 319-208-5806.

No name. Then again, I don’t need a name. There’s only one person I can trust with this information. A name and address. Hana’s is five hours away. I could hop on a plane and be there in

two if I wasn't on probation. My terms include staying away from Hana.

Later, I bent Jesse's ear. Sarah's husband.

"Damien, be cool. Establish yourself first. Quiet as it's kept after everything you've put this woman through... maybe the kindest thing you can do is help her from afar."

There's wisdom in his advice. Hana Perez was the one I kept going back to. I was drawn to her for her beauty and her body. Before Lucy, I was going to make her my wife. I met Lucy and nothing's made sense since her.