

## Mr. Fix It

*He came to fix my lock then broke my heart*

His name is Demetrius but I call him Deme for short. I invited him to my home to prepare a resume for him and recommend him for a position within our complex for a maintenance position. To show his gratification, he volunteered to fix the lock on my door.

Deme is an all right looking fellow. He's nothing you'd write home to mamma about. His complexion is a bright, almond colored and his eyes are light brown, amber. His goatee is a sexy little trickle around his mouth. However, he never have to touch it up since it just happens to grow that way. His frame is small and the only thing he has going for him is the fact that he works out occasionally to keep his muscles toned that gives his body a strong appearance. He takes pride in his muscles as well because he always want someone to have a feel of them. His dressing is a bit off beat and I for one can't appreciate it and personality wise, he likes to clown around all the time. There isn't too much that he takes seriously. Deme is the kind of guy you could tell him that your mother just died and he will turn it into a joke.

The day after I prepared his resume, he called me at work to ask me if I wanted him to come by and take a look at my lock. I told him that that would be fine. So I told him that I got off work at 5:00 and he could meet me at my station around 6:00 so we could walk to my house together.

"What's up gorgeous?", he called to me as I ascended the stairs of the subway. I looked at my watch to see what time it was. I realized that I was early and so was he. I like a man that realizes the importance of being on time. There's nothing I hate more than waiting for someone. "Hello Deme, you're early." I responded. He took the envelopes from my hand which was becoming cumbersome and heavy. I had been carrying my manuscript for the past four weeks and sending out copies of it to editors and agents for viewing. While walking we talked about my day at work and I told him that I was pretty tired. "Listen, if today isn't a good day, I can always come tomorrow or when ever it's convenient!", he offered.

"No Deme, tonight is fine. I just want to get something to drink and sit down to relax for a while."

"I hear you. Everyone needs a little rest at times." We walked silently for a moment then the jokes started.

I unlocked my door and let him in. He helped me remove my coat then I hung it up in the closet then took his. While he talked to me and examined my lock, I went into the kitchen and prepared dinner. He stood in the doorway of my kitchen and continued to talk.

"So gorgeous, what kind of work do you do?"

"I do administrative work for a financial consultant?"

"What kind of financial consultation does he give?"

"Well he specializes in investments, life and health insurance, disability income, employee/employer benefit packages i.e. pension plans, IRA's, etc."

"How long have you worked with the company?"

"Seven years."

"You like it?"

"Yeah, in fact, my boss sent me to school and I am now licensed to do the same kind of work. Unfortunately, I haven't been licensed in variable products yet. I have to take the required courses and State test for my series 7 license."

"So why not do it?"

"Because for the moment my focus is on writing. I have completed my first novel and I am currently working on two. I am at this moment one-third into each."

"You're very ambitious. I admire that. You always were that way. I used to watch you in school when we were younger. If no one else listened to the teacher, you were. Do you remember when I used to cheat off your tests?" He didn't give me time to respond..."You always did help me. Until one day you got tired of me riding your back and told me to do it on my own. I'll never forget it, it was the first test I failed in that class. You know that wasn't right don't you?" He gave me a serious look then started laughing..."I'm just kidding. I appreciate everything you've done for me. I always considered you to be my best friend Chantel. Of course at the time, I didn't respect you for that but now when I look back to that time, I realized that you denied me to make me learn to help myself. Anyone else would have used that against me to chide me or put me down. You genuinely wanted me to succeed." Things got a little silent after that while we both waited to let that memory pass by.

I prepared both our plates which consisted of a baked potato garnished with scallions, red and green peppers, dried onions and butter. On the side was a grilled steak with gravy and an oriental blend of vegetables. That was set on my best set of China along with fine crystal flutes.

He looked down at the plate and I could tell that he was pleased. "You have certainly out done yourself this time."

"So have I redeemed myself from the last time."

"Yeah, this is certainly better than those microwave burgers you made the first time I came here."

"Hey, hey, hey, that wasn't my fault, you saw I had a phone call. The burger was for you, you should have taken it out instead of allowing it to burn, you knew it was done, I don't know why you would have allowed it to stay so long?"

"This isn't my house, I have no right to open your microwave and take anything out."

"Well, if you feel that way, then don't complain. I did the best I could under the circumstances." He looked at me for a moment then decided that he had better not challenge it any further. He put his first fork full of food in his mouth, starting with the potato which look so tasty..."Girl, you put your ass in this food." His curtness caught me by surprise. "I presume that's a compliment!", I said with a little apprehension. "Of course. This food is delicious. Girl if someone were to put their hand in my plate right now, I'd probably eat their hand. I was trying to eat those pretty little flowers in the design of the plate." We started laughing.

After dinner, we sat and watched a movie. I have a large collection of some of the best action/mystery movies that came out. Not to mention horror and comedy, of course on a lower scale than the others. I'm a action buff and the more I watched him, I realized that so was he. He took to excitement the same way I do, not to mention, good special effects. We were silent while the good parts were showing and discussed with enthusiasm right after. When the movie ended we reiterated the highlights of the movie and compared it to other movies we've seen in the past.

Finally, I looked at the clock and told him that it was getting late and I have to get to bed so that I could get up for work tomorrow. Not realizing the time, he expressed embarrassment and said good night. "Listen, I will come tomorrow to take you to get a lock and install it for you."

After he left, I cleared the dishes and straightened up the livingroom before taking my shower and getting to bed. When I lied down, I thought about the fun we had together. The best thing about it was that he was the same person that I remember from elementary and junior high school. He had not changed a bit. Well, maybe just a little. He was much older and just a bit, not a lot, but a bit matured.

With the parents I had, hanging around with the locals wasn't permitted so we only ran into each other in school or outside in the projects when I was allowed outside after my homework was done. Never-the-less, the little time spent with each other was enough to make us have a respectable friendship. I never had an argument with him or fight. He defended me when the other kids wanted to "rank me out". I wasn't good at that. He always had a good "dis". No one

liked him because they couldn't say anything about him that was as funny as what he would say about them. Before I knew it, my adversaries were no longer tormenting me but shying away from his repeated insults. The only problem with that was when he got started, he had trouble stopping. He didn't know when to let the joking end so the end result was a fight. The good thing about it was he was the one fighting and not me. Things are back to the way they were. I closed my eyes and felt good that I had the opportunity to spend time with an old friend of mine.

The next day while at work, I received a call from my good friend again. I hadn't expected to hear from him so soon. I figured he would call me closer to the afternoon to confirm our meeting time but it was only 10:00 in the morning. "What's up gorgeous," was his greeting. The same one he used the first time he called me. "I was thinking about you so I decided to give you a call. His response took me by surprise and I didn't know in what way I should take it. Was he serious or was this just another of his usual joking lines I've heard him use on women in the past. One thing about Deme, he loved the women and loved flirting with them. In most cases, he didn't mean anything by it, he liked to see their response or just to make them laugh.

"I'm fine Deme, how are you?"

"Chillin'", he'd say. "Listen I just wanted to hear your voice, I'm gone." Then he'd hang up as though what he just said would have no impact. I thought about what he said all day. It had been a long time since someone acted like that toward me. Of course, I knew that he had some sort of feelings for me since our childhood, however, neither of us pursued it or even attempted to reveal it. I realized that I was staring in space, girl get a grip on yourself and stop dwelling on nonsense.

Later that day, I met him at the station by my home again just as before and we walked to my house. The only difference was he brought his cousin with him this time. He introduced us and told her about our growing up together and how I used to look out for him in school. She seemed to appreciate that and liked my company. That was an unusual thing because I tended to be really quiet with people I didn't know until I warmed up to them. However, I was always courteous and my hospitality was second to none.

I went into the kitchen and began my dinner while Deme played on my computer and read parts of my completed novel. I watched over his shoulder while he read. I didn't know anything about him intimately so seeing his response to the steamy love scenes in my novel was definitely of interest to me. While reading, I saw him glancing at me as though to wonder whether or not I had actually written it. "You didn't write this," he stated. "Yes, I did."

"Not you, innocent Chantel. You couldn't be sexy as this." I watched him make such a big deal over the writing while licking his lips. I presumed from his response that it was pleasing to his mind. After he finished reading, he handed me the manuscript and I handed him some of my masterpiece letters that I write for people on occasion. I told him that I wanted to submit them to

Play Boy for publishing in their magazine. I wanted to have a running story line. He seemed pretty impressed.

"This is some really hot stuff you've got here. Are you as hot as what I read?"

"That's yet to be seen," I retorted and left no opening for any other response. Just then, I could smell the barbecue sauce sounding off in the kitchen. "Dinner is done," I called out while going into the kitchen. I prepared a plate for the both of them and I had never seen anyone clean a plate like that before. I must admit, the meat was very tender. In fact, it was falling off the bones. The macaroni and cheese was superb. Three different cheeses bristling between each and every noodle and the corn on the cob was buttered to perfection.

After dinner, I watched Deme work on my lock. He explained what he was doing and why every step of the way. Finally, when he had finished, I looked at the job. He had put the lock on just as good as a licensed locksmith. From that moment on, I had nothing less than total respect for him. I must admit that I didn't expect that kind of workmanship from him since he had always been a clown. However seeing his work in person, I realized that this clown hadn't wasted every ounce of his life being a project comedian.

The funniest thing happened while watching him work, there was something about the way he handled his tools was turning me on. I watched him put just enough pressure on the bit to get it inside marking the center point. Then gently working the circular saw around that point until he made a perfect hole for the lock. Then I watched his tentacles at work removing the insulation from the door to put the lock on. He worked so smooth, so easy, so gentle that it was turning me on. I tried to shake that thought from my head and think of something else. This was my friend I was thinking about here. There was nothing attractive about him. Besides, what could I possibly gain from him. He wasn't working. He had a girlfriend - which he lived with. What could I want with him? I asked myself.

Meanwhile, he continued to admire his work not even noticing that I had taken notice of him in another way. He cleaned up his mess and washed his hands and cooled himself down with a nice drink of cold water. He checked the dead bolt on the lock and was satisfied with its reliability. Indeed the work was superb, I couldn't ask for better.

Finally, he bided me good night and asked me if he could leave his tools at the house and pick them up at a later time. I told him that, that would be fine. He placed it in the closet where I hang coats and said he would pick it up soon. I told him that it was no rush. He left that night and I for one don't know what was happening, but I realized for the first time that my friend Deme was a man and not that little boy that I had known so well growing up.

None the less, he was not my type so I would never allow myself to get involved with him. My men were always sophisticated and were money makers. Accountants, attorneys, high paid

construction workers, preferably owning their own businesses or that sort were my style. He had nothing to offer but a joke or two. What in the world would I want with him?

Deme was calling me on a daily basis. In fact, on the average, I could safely say that I received at least three to four calls per day from him “just wanting to hear my voice.” You would think that one would get tired of just hearing someone’s voice. I must admit, I did like the attention although I still didn’t have any strong interest in him.

Then the day came when things changed pace. We were sitting in my apartment watching a movie and I was talking about having to wash my hair and he volunteered to do it for me. Of course, that sounded preposterous to me so I didn’t take him seriously. “Deme, what do you know about washing someone’s hair?”

“Hey, I grew up with nothing but sisters and I have five of them. Certainly I know how to wash hair, grease scalp too.” I thought about it for a moment and decided “what the hell!” there wasn’t much damage he could do in washing my hair. So, I pulled out my regimen and outlined which shampoo I used first and for what, then I explained the conditioning, timing and other steps to follow. “Yeah, yeah, I know what I’m doing. You just give me the stuff and leave it to me.” I must admit, he did a damn good job in washing my hair. The massage he applied to my scalp was out of this world. I felt like I was in heaven. He took his time and made certain that my hair was clean. Meanwhile, something strange was happening, I could feel his body pressing against mine while he worked on my scalp. As he passed from one side to the other, I felt as though he was sending subliminal messages to my central nervous system, which in turn down loaded that information to my sensual organs.

“Get a grip chick, you can’t follow your hearts desires now. Your aggressiveness might just get you into trouble. You know he is currently involved in a relationship. Moreover, you know that he lives with that woman. Don’t get yourself involved with something that may become dangerous.” I continued to chastise myself until finally, I made it through the head washing. He towel dried my hair and wanted to blow it dry for me. I told him that my dryer was extremely hot and I felt more comfortable doing it for myself because I had no doubt that he would burn me. After little protest, he gave in and allowed me to dry my own hair. He stood behind me watching what I was doing. I could tell that he was fond of me and somewhere in the back of his mind, he did indeed have an interest in me outside of our friendship.

As soon as my hair was dry, I handed him my hair dress so that he could condition my scalp to keep it moist and to replenish it for the damage that “blow drying” is said to do. This guy was amazing. Not only could he install locks, he was able to wash hair better than any woman beautician I’ve ever been to and now she knows how to part hair and apply grease. I wondered what else did he know how to do.

We started talking about some kinky things that we saw on the television and I told him that I had handcuffs. He tried to convince me that he was able to get himself out of them without using a key.

“Good, then prove it!”, I said hoping that this would be my opportunity to get close to him. I led him into my room and he laid down on my bed. I pulled out the handcuffs that I kept on my night stand. Now straddling over him, I placed his hands over his head and with his palms pointed upwards, I cuffed him to the frame of my brass headboard. I could see that the act disconcerted him a little bit but he didn't physically express it. His body writhed from one side to the other while he attempted to free himself. I lingered over his waist watching his hands fight to release the safety lever on the cuffs. After a while, I told him that I would place the keys on his forehead, if he could get them, he would be able to release himself.

“How about you remove my sneakers and I'll be able to get that key?”

“All right.” I pulled off his sneakers and placed them on the floor and waited at his side to see how he was going to get the key that was sitting on his forehead. He jolted his head forward just enough to make the key land near his torso then using his toes, he grabbed the key from the bed and placed the key in his hand. With great struggle, he attempted to position his hands to unlock the cuffs. In trying so hard, he dropped the key to the floor. He looked at me and smiled. “I dropped it.”

“What do you want me to do about that?”

“Could you hand it to me again?”

“No, that wasn't part of the agreement, I told you that I would put the key in a reachable place so that you could get it and now you want me to make it easier for you.” I could tell that he was becoming frustrated so I found the key on the floor and released his hands.

He sat up on the bed and began to explain why he could get out of the handcuffs. I told him that it was all right. Maybe the next time. After that, we started talking about other things. Then the urge hit me to kiss him. I moved my face closer to his and like magic, our lips touched for the first time. After two pecks, we indulged in oral inquisition. I have never seen this thing coming but since the urge was so strong, I allowed my physical wants to take place and not my mental reasoning. In the back of my mind, I knew that this should not be happening but with my feeling at present, I allowed it to continue.

Our fervent desires were extinguished by hot, out of control passion. If we were made out of gasoline, we would have been on fire. Afterwards, our concupiscence subsided into soft conversation and memories. We laughed to think that after all these years of just being friends, we could find ourselves physically attracted to each other. For a while we continue to lay there holding each other. He massaged my back and talked about his life after junior high school. He

was so gentle and sweet that I wanted him. Wanted him around forever, even if it meant taking him from someone else.

That night, I fell asleep in the comfort of his arms while he continued to caress me. When I woke up the next morning, he was still there at my side. I felt a warmth that I hadn't felt in a long time. I was comfortable with his presence and the situation just seemed right. I continued to enjoy his presence a little while longer and then got up and took my shower to get ready for work.

He joined me in the shower and washed me up. His amber eyes were so kind and sensitive. How could I ever let him go, when I enjoyed his company so much. After the shower, I got dressed and he walked me to the train station. He waited downstairs in the station for my train to come as he was not going in the same direction as I was. He was just merely being a gentleman by waiting to see me off safely.

All day at work, I thought about him wondering if he was thinking about me. Every time the phone rang, I picked it up with enthusiasm expecting it to be him and the funny thing was I really didn't expect him to call but it was him, just like clock work. He had not changed his persona. The same friend he was before we made love was the same friend he remained afterwards.

He repeatedly remarked about how he never anticipated us sleeping together. In fact, he would never have conceived himself ever stepping foot into my house. One might say "what a difference a day makes."

That day, I did a great deal of thinking and there was so much I wanted to do for this guy. I wanted to turn his life around and help him make something of himself. To be able to show the world which had so coldly turned on him that he was somebody and was capable of making a strong man of himself. His endeavors would be accomplished without struggle because the faith that had been so long ago lost, he will have found it. I wanted him to find it, to embrace it.

All the songs of my past that reminded me of perfection in a relationship is what I heard in my head when I thought of him. I knew that I would search in my collection for those songs and tape it for him. It would be a constant reminder to him of how I felt about our relationship. I guess needless to say, I was falling head over hills for this guy.

I arranged a date where he could meet my landlord and I knew that with his talents and adeptness with his tools that he would be more than qualified for the maintenance position that was currently available within our complex. When I spoke to the landlord, he said he would be more than happy to meet with him. When the day of the meeting finally came, I was more than anxious to hear what happened. The day seemed longer than any before. They say "anticipation of death is worst than death itself." I can certainly see what they meant by that. Waiting for something to happen is definitely a killer.

Finally, the call I had so desperately awaited had come through. “Hello Gorgeous, I met with the building’s director and landlord.”

“Don’t hold out on me, tell me what happened!” The excitement in my voice was apparent. I think I was more excited than he was. “They didn’t seem too impressed by what I presented them with so I don’t think I will be getting the job.”

“What do you mean they weren’t impressed with you, what did they say?”

“They told me that I needed to get some more paper work for them and provide them with my reference letters from each job.”

“That’s a good sign. No employer wants to be bothered with references if he/she isn’t interested! Listen, I will call the landlord tomorrow and see what he says.”  
We got off that subject and started talking about something else. As soon as I hung up the phone with him, I called the landlord. I couldn’t wait another minute. “Hello Pelham, this is Chantel.”

“Oh, Chantel, I saw Demetrius today.”

“How did you like him?”

“I think he’s great, in fact, the director liked him as well. I think the job is guaranteed to him.”

“I’m happy to hear that. When will he be able to start?”

“I told him that he needed to get some more paper work for me and I will be getting back to him with the starting date and salary requirements.” I was so ecstatic to hear that response that I forgot about all the other questions I wanted to ask him. Wait until I tell Deme what he said to me.

I continued seeing Deme for the following weeks and weeks turned into months. Everything seemed so perfect. We were better friend than ever before until the day came when we realized that we had fallen in love with each other. This is when the changes came about.

"What's up gorgeous." his usual greeting when he came by. "Deme, there is something that I have to tell you." I paused for a moment and I could tell that he became disconcerted by it. "I'm listening, what is it? You know that you can talk to me about anything no matter what the subject!" He searched my eyes for understanding. "Deme, I think that I am falling in love with you." Hearing the words in your heart was certainly different from listening to if escaping your mouth. The sounds of the words seemed to reverberate back and forth several times before it subsided. It was like an echo that would not end. His eyes focused purposefully on mine. I couldn't quite tell what they were saying, but the look was definitely intense.

I tried to turn my head, wishing that I could retract what I had just said but like the saying goes, "can't pick up spilled milk." When my voice finally returned to my lips, I started to take back that last statement and I guess that he knew that so he caught my chin and kissed me..."I feel the same way." Our arms found its way around each other and I could feel a closeness that had never been encountered between us develop. Still clinging to him, I thought to myself..."I'm in love with a clown!"

From this moment on, things could only get better. I thought there was nothing in the world that could go wrong. Of course, I have realized a long time ago that anything can go wrong! First of all, my family already knew of our friendship and that we were old classmates. They also enjoyed his company and jokes so there was no doubt in my mind that when I told them of my interest in him, they would respond the way they did.

"Chantel, Deme is a nice young fellow but he is definitely not your type. Don't waste your time." My mother was adamant about that. Of course, I tried to debate with her and ask her what was my type and she just continued to reiterate her point. "Chantel, I know that he makes you laugh and he probably makes you feel special but I don't hear good things about him and I don't want you to get hurt. Besides, he already have a girlfriend who lived directly downstairs from us. You don't need that kind of complication in your life. It's okay to try and help him find work, it's fine to even keep your friendship with him. We all enjoy him when he comes around but as a mature relationship, he is definitely not for you. You are too sophisticated for that and I expect much better from you. Besides, why would you lower your standards anyway?"

"Ma, I'm not lowering my standards, I'm merely trying to build him up to where he should be. He is a very smart fellow and needs someone to believe in him."

"I'm not questioning whether or not you should try and build him up, I'm just telling you that you should build him as a friend, not a lover. He is not compatible to you and you and I both know that he loves women. He flirts with every woman he sees."

"Not when he's around me!" I weakly said, knowing damn well that one of the things I was looking to change about him was his flirtatiousness. "Chantel, you know that I would never steer you wrong, please leave that man alone. He's not for you and mamma knows best." With that statement, she had nothing else to say. In fact, she called my other two sisters into her room and asked them if they thought Demetrius was compatible for me. "No, why would she want someone like that? He would only embarrass her. She like a well dressed, clean man. Chantel is a profiler and anything that makes her look bad, she don't have around." Then the other sister added her response...By the sound of things, I could hear my brothers coming into the room and adding their response. Basically on speculation assuming that from the conversation at hand that they were implying that I was interested in Deme..."He sleeps with anyone who will give it to him!"

The whole conversation made me feel sick. It was like someone has placed a heavy metal plate on my chest and it was bearing me down. I had never looked at him in that light. He was always a respectable person as far as I knew, how could my friend be so dirty. I told my mother that I had to go now so I hung up the phone. That sick feeling had the best of me and I felt that I couldn't go through the madness that I was about to put myself through. When I heard from Deme, I would just call things off although there was no real reason to call anything off since we really didn't have anything. Never-the-less, whatever it was, I was going to let it go and just remain as his friend.

When he had finally called with his usual cheery voice, he immediately detected the weight in my voice. "Baby what's wrong?"

"Deme, there is so much on my mind and I don't quite know how to handle it!"

"Lay it on me!" When he heard my pause, he told me that he didn't want to impose so he would give me space to handle whatever was on my mind and that I knew where to reach him if I wanted to. "Deme, my family have told me some disturbing things about you and they feel that I should not set myself up for a fall." The words was like a double edged sword. He never expected to hear what I had to say. I repeated the conversation I had with the family including the details that my brother had contributed. He couldn't believe his ears. "Chantel, what would your brothers know about me? They never hang out with me. Besides, anything that I have done on an intimate level has remained private, I don't exploit women and I definitely don't kiss and tell, so what ever your brothers feel they have on me is totally fabricated and preposterous. I can only imagine what must be going on in your mind right now and for that I am sorry. I really hate for you to have to go through this." He paused for another moment and listened to see if I would respond any further. When he didn't hear a response, he told me that there was nothing he could say that would relieve me other than that they would not have said such a thing if he were there to defend himself. "Chantel, anyone can defame a person when he or she isn't there to defend themselves. That's why they were able to tell you all that stuff. Listen, if I didn't want my sister talking to someone, I would probably do the same thing. Its up to you. If you don't want to see me anymore, just say the words and I will be gone from your life. I don't want to make you unhappy."

The words he spake made me feel like a Judas. I had betrayed him instead of defending him. How could I, being an independent woman allow my brothers who were no better than what they described him to be discourage me from making a decision on my own. I decided at that instant that I would give him a chance and hope that none of that which they told me was true. Moreover, what if it was? How could I judge him based upon his past. What he was to someone else should not be important to me. Its how he treats me that I should focus on.

That metal plate that I felt on my chest had been lifted and once again, I rekindled those feelings that I had developed for this guy. I had over come the shame of his so called past and allowed the brightness to surface again. We talked for a while longer until I had realized that the sun had

come up. Deme, listen, its 7:00 in the morning an we have been talking since 10:00 last night. I'm going to get some sleep now and I'll talk to you later. He seemed relieved himself and we gave each other a kiss and hung up the phone.

In my dreams, all I could think about was him and how I had almost allowed my brothers to come between us. In fact, I had almost allowed the entire family to come between us. The only person missing from the bunch was my father and I don't think he would get involved anyway.

As weeks went on, I continued to enjoy his presence, conversation and love making. He had become the epitome of my happiness. My home had the feeling of completeness that had never befall me since my separation. My son adored him and I think even in his silence his son liked me, but certainly, the boys enjoyed one another and could learn a great deal from each other. Their personalities clashed at times especially when it came to the computer. My son is a show off and always has been. I think he takes after me when it comes to aggressiveness and helping people. The short fall in that is when you take it too far and don't allow the person to learn - you begin to be teaching yourself rather than the other person. But of course being four years old, what do they know about listening. On the other hand, Deme's son is feisty, he knows all and wants to do everything himself which clashes with what my son is trying to do so needless to say, argument erupts and the computer becomes off limits until a later time when all is forgotten. I tend to let the kids handle their problems on their own because they usually settle things pretty well on their own. When parents get involved, we make a mountain out of a mole hill!

Time went on and the feelings I had for this man developed to new heights. I wanted so much to change him into the man that I could appreciate. He had the personality, romance and skill to become a complete gentlemen but he had become so infested with street trash and bad experiences that they controlled his better judgement. Sometimes I would just watch him and I could see that he was trying to determine which lifestyle he wanted to lead. Looking at the entire situation, I can't understand where the confusion lies. He partially lives with a woman (and I must say partially because he's like a rolling stone "where ever he lays his hat is his home", he's barely there yet he drops in just enough to secure his shelter. Now what would you call a person like that? A user? or wise? I guess the reason I allowed this charade to continue is because I wanted to believe that he was just buying his time to get on his feet. I mean, what if we were to get together and things didn't work out - where would he go? Where would he live? At least by keeping her around, he would be securing a place to stay if all else failed. In that respect, I would have no choice but to call it a "coward's wisdom," because he was looking out for tomorrow but was too afraid to take a chance. My theory is that you can't gamble and keep your money. A gambler either comes out a winner or a loser but never leaves the same way he went in.

How could I compete with a four year relationship? This woman has allowed him, with all his bullshit, come into her home and live in her quarters amongst her children for four years. Sleep in her bed and eat her food (occasionally) I presume. She contributes nothing to his future and offers no moral support. What could he ever benefit from this? She verbally abuses him and

even though she tells him to find work, probably the case is that she doesn't want him to work because that would mean the minute control she has over him will be gone and he would be able to fully take care of himself. I, on the other hand has offered him true love, peace of mind and the encouragement needed to strive to do more. He has the skills to be successful, all he needs is a push and someone to believe in him. The worst part about it is he knows this and yet, still chooses to remain with a low life. My mother always told me to "let sleeping dogs lie," and to her, he is that sleeping dog! But I saw something else in him that no one else seemed to notice - he had a dying ambition that needed to be resuscitated and I wanted to be the one to breathe the breath of life back into his dreams and help him to make it live. I guess, that's what love does to a person. It makes you act stupid when you can see failure right before your eyes. It causes you to fantasize about what something could be if only you..."nothing" because the truth of the matter is when something is dead, you can't give it life. It has to have a little life of its own already! But anyway, I loved him and I believed that he would change.

One day I got up the nerve to offer him something that in my right state of mind, I would never have given..."Deme, I want you to come and stay with me. Leave your past behind and lets start this thing new." No response came only a blank look which seemed to have no meaning. I didn't know whether he was happy or sad about it. "Chantel this is too soon. Although we have known each other of over 17 years, never in this fashion. There are a lot of things about me that you don't know and maybe you won't like them or can deal with them. As much as I love you, they may be important facets of my life that keeps me going and I may not be able to give them up so easily or change as quickly as possible. I would love to be here with you and I appreciate the offer, but I think that in the long run, this will ruin things."

"I know that you have bad habits Deme and I know that it will take time for you to change those bad ways you have, however, if you want to make me happy and want to be happy yourself, I think that you should give yourself a chance. You can't straighten out your life if your still involved with what's causing it to be crooked!"

"I know, it's just that there are some things that I need to take care of myself before I come to be with you. Can you give me some time?"

"Yes, I can give you some time. Not a great deal of time but as long as I can put up with the present situation, I will continue to be patient. However, you know that eventually you will be forced to make a decision and I don't know when that will be but it will come like a thief in the night and without warning so be expecting it."

"I know that you will get tired of it, I'm just hoping that it will be enough time for me to straighten out matters of my own." He cupped my hands in his and bowed his head in my lap. In my heart I wanted to believe that he would never intentionally do anything to hurt me. Then he sat up..."I want to ask you something...If I were to move in with you and things didn't go right between us, would we be able to continue being friends? Because your friendship is more

important to me than anything else and I don't want to lose that no matter what. You are my best friend and the only real friend that I have so can you promise me that?"

"Deme, you will always be my friend, however I can't promise you that things will be the same. If you get evicted from a home that you've lived in, when you pass it will it look like any other house on that block or will you think "I used to live in that house?" The wheels of thought was turning and I could see that he understood my point. "Every time you look at that house, you will either feel resentment or remember the good times you had while you were there. I don't know which of those feeling I will have toward you if and when you leave, but no matter what, deep inside, even if I don't speak to you, you will always be a friend to me and I will always hold those feelings with thoughts of respect. That's the most that I can promise you. Maybe seeing you after breaking up may be like salt in a wound, I don't know. I don't want to continue hurting every time I see you."

"I understand." With that, he had nothing else to say about it and the conversation was closed. That night we at around the glittering fires of candle light dinner. I had prepared something special for him and wanted him to see how much I loved and appreciated him. That night after dinner, he prepared my bath and like a child he washed me up. The bathroom was lit by the same candles which lit the table at dinner. The soft glow of the fire shone brilliantly off his amber eyes. I asked him to join me but he said it was for me and I deserved to be pampered, so just enjoy it.

I relaxed in the tub filled with lavender bubbles. The heated bath water steamed away my cares and fears. He sat at the edge of the tub and lowered his lips to mine and we began to kiss. It was so tender and barely touching, as though if too much pressure was applied, my lips might burst. Our tongues met in the hall of our mouth and passionately danced to a romantic song that we created with our moans of pleasure. His hands fumbled for the lofa sponge and he gently lathered my neck and back, then my breast and stomach.

He raised one leg out of the water and lathered my foot and leg then with the same care and concern, he did the other. He even took time to pay attention the my toes and made little snowmen on my toes out of the bubbles then blew it off. I stood up so that he could finish the job and turned on the shower head and rinsed away the lather. We continued to kiss as he towel dried my body and carried me into the bedroom where he lotioned me down with Victoria's Secrete pear body lotion. The room filled with the sweet smell of freshly cleansed body with the perfect body lotion. His skinny little finger kneaded into my muscles while he massaged me.

I longed for him to enter me but he continued his pampering with no sexual innuendos. As many times as we had made love, none was ever the same as the other and was always a pleasure. He knew exactly what to do, when to do it and how long to do it. I admired the way he adeptly handled my body not to mention, I am not a small girl. As tiny as his body was, I was like a baby in his arms and was nothing for him to handle. He had enough energy in his body to fill a high potency multi-vitamin. It was indeed something that could be shared.

He allowed his mouth to trail down my chin, onto my neck, through the strait of my breast and into the open sea of my belly. He continued down that path until he found my tunnel of love. I was moved by ardor and yearned for more. When finally a sweet release escaped me, he returned to the bathroom and took a shower leaving me to float on the clouds of rapture until his return.

After his shower we tried every position possible and with great skill he expressed nothing less than sheer respect for me and what we were doing. When it was over, we sat on the edge of the bed and watched the moon light up the sky. Nothing else mattered at that moment except how we felt for each other.

The following morning I demanded an answer from him and told him that we can't go on the way we have been for the past three months. He told me that he had already made up his mind and that he was going to move his things out of his girlfriend's apartment and come and stay with me. I was about the happiest chick on earth right about now since the words I had awaited so long finally came to fruition. "You really mean that?"

"Yes. I want you to be happy and I think that you will make me happy as well so after weighing the situation, I realized that you were more important to me and the most valuable in my life." I left for work and was relieved to know that the man I have grown to care for would finally be at my side and I would no longer have to share him with anyone else.

I had a set of keys made up for him and was going to surprise him with them when I had gotten home. I found a nice jewelry box and put them into it. From now on, he would be able to freely come and go and feel at home.

That afternoon, just before I got off from work, he called me. "Chantel, I want to ask you a question before I move in with you."

"Are you changing your mind Deme?"

"No, its just that our friendship is so important to me I want you to promise me something."

"What is it?"

"I want you to promise that no matter what happens, we will always be the best of friends."

"You have changed you mind haven't you?"

"No, I just need to know that. If you can not promise me that then nothing else matters."

"Deme, I'm going to be very honest with you. There are two reasons that I will give up our friendship if we were to break up. One - you cheat on me. You must be willing to give me your whole being. That means you mind, body and heart. Two - you must never do anything to humiliate or defame me. In other words never hit me or call me outside of my name."

"I would never hit you. I don't want to hurt you Chantel, but sometimes I do crazy things but I would never intentionally hurt you. Now as far as cheating, that I can't promise you. That was always my problem. I love women and I don't know what would happen if I'm put into a bad predicament. Maybe I gave you a premature answer. I think I need to give this thing a little more thought but right now, I'm not ready."

"So what you're telling me is that you want us to remain as friends?"

"Yes. I'd rather lose the relationship and keep you as my best friend than to forfeit it all."

"You didn't really love me, you used me. I don't believe you would give up the relationship without even trying. You're like a prize fighter who steps in the ring with someone that has never been defeated and his stamina appears to be invincible and you just put your gloves down and accept defeat without throwing a punch. You'll never know if his punch was worse than his looks." I couldn't stand to hear any more so I hung up the phone and the day just seemed to drag on and on without purpose. I had wasted so much time with him. My wanting to help him so much caused me to not see the inevitable.

A pain which I had never felt before shot through my chest like pangs of distress. I thought that my life was slipping away right before my eyes. I went to the restroom and looked at myself in the mirror and realized that I wasn't dying, my heart was just broken. I had allowed my best friend to break my heart.

That evening I went straight home from work. I had already told myself that I would not answer any of his calls but somehow I knew that if I knew it was him I would pick up the phone. Just as I had expected, he called and I wouldn't speak to him. He tried to explain what happened and why he came up with the decision he did but I didn't want to hear it. I again hung up the phone and it wasn't long before there was a knock at my door...."Chantel, I didn't want to lose our friendship. You're going back on your word."

"No Deme, I'm not going back on my word, you just broke my heart and I'm trying the best way I know how to deal with it. If you would just leave me alone for a while, I'm sure that I will be back to my old self again. I have never been dumped before."

"I didn't dump you, I dumped myself. You're worth more than 100 times the value I hold on myself. I'm sorry I did this to you but I was afraid of losing everything."

"You should have tried."

"And lose all? I guess it didn't matter anyway, because I'm still losing everything even after denying myself to preserve your feelings in the end. I guess the case is that I'm just not ready for a woman like you."

"Goodby my love." I held the door open and waited for him to walk out the door. When he was in the hallway, he turned and looked back at me..."I don't want it to end this way."

"I know, but for my own sake, I must end it here. My sanity is at stake and I can't risk that for anybody. I have a son which I have to be happy for and with you lingering around being a "friend" will not be good for me. No matter how you feel, I will never be able to see you as just a friend again. I shared my most intimate self with you and you threw it away as though it was nothing. What does this woman have over you that you can't see a good decision when it's right in front of your face?" He did not answer. He just walked away. When he looked back one last time, I told him that he came to fix my lock and broke my heart!