

Angie Situation
(INNOCENCE)

by
Angela Sherice

KARMAIC PUBLISHING

All Rights Reserved. Copyright ©2011 Angela Sherice and Karmaic
Publishing

Library of Congress Pre Assigned Control Number
LCCN 2010925624

p. cm.
by Angela Sherice.
Sherice.

Angie Situation (INNOCENCE)

The paperback's ISBN: 978-09709806-6-3 (KARMAPUB) Angela Sherice

KARMAIC PUBLISHING
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Cover art and design by Angela Sherice

Author photo by Angela Sherice

Written and edited by Angela Sherice

Printed in the U.S.A

DISCLAIMER

This book is a work of fiction.

Any names, characters, places and incidents are products of the author's imagination and are used fictitiously.

Any resemblance to actual events localities or persons alive or deceased is purely coincidental.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or by any information storage or retrieval system without written permission from the publisher except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review to be printed in a newspaper, magazine or website.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement goes out to everyone who inspires me, encourages me, ennobles me and truly wish me well, because that would mean at some point; I either, have or I continuously do the same for you. That is how kinetic energy and kindred spirits work.

It is only by way of my Creator, and you, that the pulse of my beating and bleeding heart makes it way to my pen.

You keep me supplied with inspiration, love, light, the reason, and something to write about.

With love and because of yours,

Angela Sherice.

I graciously thank you all.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	5
<i>1.</i> The Roots of Picked Fruit	17
<i>2.</i> The Precocious Ripening	33
<i>3.</i> Ripe & Ready. Gangs, Bangs & Pangs	39
<i>4.</i> The Queen Bee in Me	63
<i>5.</i> Another Level. Blossoming. Beautiful.	80
<i>6.</i> TGGF, Male Model & Me	101
<i>7.</i> TGGF & Me	112
<i>8.</i> Divorcing Dad	124
<i>9.</i> You Know Who	130
<i>10.</i> First Flings First	139
<i>11.</i> In the Lion's Den	170
<i>12.</i> Cold Shoulders and Frozen Dancing Feet	195
<i>13.</i> Pills & Frills	204
<i>14.</i> You Know What: I Told You So	209
<i>15.</i> Dichotomies & Dazes	228
<i>16.</i> Situations, Decisions & Transitions	241
<i>17.</i> Up, Out & Away	244
MEET the AUTHOR Q & A	254
READING GROUP GUIDE	257
SNEAK PEEK into book2	
(“Angie Situation NAIVETE”)’s CHAPTER ONE	260
OTHER BOOKS BY ANGELA SHERICE	269
ABOUT the AUTHOR	270

decided that I am nothing but a burden, and burdens only make people miserable.

You know. I am really hurting. I just could not live with knowing that unhappiness is what I'm putting you through. Yes! We've had good times. It makes me cry knowing that we could come to this after all the "I love yous" and smiles and the feelings we've shared in bed where our true feelings just overflowed. I can't live knowing that the lady that I love does not trust me.

You say you do to convince yourself, but you really don't. I'm hurting. But you're tired of that line so I'll keep it to myself.

And I mean, I just don't have the heart to say to someone that I don't like you. I mean they have feelings too. But it no longer matters because I love you and I'll tell her flat out.

And if I never get to have wife and kids and necessities and luxuries in life, at least I know I had the chance with a very special and most attractive young lady. I'm not giving up, don't get me wrong and I don't want to die, I have so much to live for. You, our family, our kids, and our family life but I don't

want to ruin or mess you up! I love you, please believe me.

I won't say I'm sorry again (although I am) because that's something else you don't want to hear. And don't say that killing myself shows how much I don't love you 'cause you are wrong.

I love you and I love you so dam much (I'm crying) but I'm making you unhappy and I can't live with that.

Love, Santana

PS- baby I need you right now!"

DICHOTOMIES & DAZES

We made it through his senior year and all the plans, and excitement that came with it. I didn't want to be a Debbie Downer at a time in his life that he would never be able to repeat, but would certainly be able to hold onto the memories of-even if we ended up being a memory to each other.

I continued to be the doting girlfriend; wearing his class ring around my neck while being in receipt of anything else he would give and do to solidify our relationship and rebuild our "love bubble." Santana was trying hard to prove to me that what we had was built to last. It was working for the most part. He was my man and I was his girl-"Angie and Santana" were household names in both of our households and throughout our extended families by this time. It just was what it was.

If I had any plans on leaving him, they were halted shortly after prom. All that sex we were having and my-on again-off-again relationship with the pill: straddled between gaining one pound and panicking or getting sick from taking them every morning, was proving to be a bit much for me. Over time, Santana and I would see-saw between either using condoms or resorting to the old-fashioned rhythm method until our beat went off the track. In between time, we would just take the plunge and cross our fingers since it had worked for so long.

Well after prom, when I didn't get my period-we already knew. Ooh if Ms. You Know Who could be a fly on the wall of my life right now.

Part me was disappointed in myself because my life was headed in one direction but then Santana and all things that came with it-in the name of "love," took me in another direction and my heart followed it.

I knew what I should have been doing and should not have been doing, but we were so tight and no matter what, I knew he would have my back. He loved me crazily, and he also fulfilled for me, that fairytale girl-meets-boy fantasy that every girl dreams about. Now, we were on to real-life and needing to make real-life decisions.

After he graduated, that summer, my mom found out that we had officially made feet for those socks that she would talk about. The decision had to be made as to whether or not I would abort, put it up for adoption or have it.

Our Madonna classic love song “Crazy for You,” eventually turned Madonna-tragic, singing: “Papa Don’t Preach.” Down to the very last lyric, it was as if that woman’s songs brooded over our relationship and every aspect of it from love and now life: the feet that were being made for socks. As irony would have it, Madonna rode with us from conception of our relationship and the theme song for it, all the way through to what was a kind of immaculate conception growing inside of me: the product of two virgins who made love and a baby from love-regardless our interruption and situations. I could not hear “Papa Don’t Preach” without crying uncontrollably and clutching my stomach. Everything about it resonated with what I was feeling about, Santana, our relationship and me being estranged from my dad-who, if he found out I was pregnant; no question about it, would have forced me to stop the music for all dancing feet involved-immediately. Thanks to me being estranged from him, along with Madonna singing all up in my relationship, with abortion omitted from the list of options; the fact still remained that my belly was going to grow bigger. Her goal was to deal with first things first: pull me out of that school. The dream was officially over, as far as she was concerned.

As far as the school itself, the dream had been over long before I even *met* Santana, little did she *or* my dad know. That was a big secret I kept

from him over the years of my even attending the artsy-school. Because he had a different perception of my inclusion at that school than what actually was. Although I didn't abort, I still had a second chance at life and a career going forward-hence why I chose adoption as an option. My father however, though estranged and out of the know of it all; the dream would never be over in his eyes-oh hell no-over his dead body. He was far too obsessively ambitious and loved playing fantasies in his head; his idea of success in the making (being cultivated vicariously through me).

Reminiscing on the time from back in third grade when his insatiably ambitious self interrupted me from my language arts classroom with a bunch of papers in his hand. He had the kind of excitement on his face as if he had hit the lottery. I was his lottery ticket: his golden-child.

He grabbed me by my tiny hands and dragged ninety-five pounds of skin and bones down that hallway so fast that dust probably followed us. He sat me in that empty lunchroom with the packet of papers telling me about this new school that was exclusive to kids with talent of a wide variety.

All my dad knew was that I could sing, I could dance, I could act, I could spell, I'd won spelling bees, I was articulate, I was theatrical, I had a lot of personality, good penmanship, nice handwriting, I was loved by my teachers (parent-teacher open houses were big to-do's and major strokes to his paternal ego)-my hood loved me. So in my dad's eyes, that was all the ingredients it took to make "Star Pie." So he signed me on for the school, when little did he know, my: acting, the written test, my dancing, my creative writing, my music and my drama portion of the audition that opened the doors for me to step right in to the world of non-mediocrity (from the outside looking in) wasn't what it took to actually make it in that "exclusive" school that he felt was built just for me.

All of that was merely behind (the entry) to door number one. That

door merely squealed open to let you in the school-to separate you from the “mediocrity” of the traditional neighborhood high-school.

Door number two slammed behind you: hard. It consisted of politics of the economic, political and social kind:

The: **“Nobody’s”**: usually quiet, exceptionally multitalented, kept to themselves. Fashion was *definitely* not a priority or forte[?]. Most of them wore tattered and recycled clothes. Some were groomed acceptably rather than exceptionally well, other’s-not. For many of them, their circumstance was visible and on their sleeve. They were friendly, stayed out of the way, probably had one hell of an opinion about the remaining cliques:

The: **“Why-The-Hell-Are-They-Here-Don’t-They- Belong-In-Some-Neighborhood-School-Rather-Than-This-Exclusive-Schooler(s)”**: This was Santana’s group. Hardly anyone in the school knew what their special talents were. Amongst one another they knew (I think). But to all other groups, you kind of just wondered why in the hell were they even in school but more importantly: *our* school. This group consisted of those who were most probably poor to middle class but wore the latest fashions that seemed to camouflage what, if any, talent they really had. It was *such* a mystery. They were the typical/local/neighborhood high-school type of group that seemed like they floated into the artsy-school on some island and got stranded there. Some of them laughed at the “Nobodys” and other cliques for not having the latest clothes like them and thought people outside of their cliques were lames or just flat out weirdos. They speed dated amongst each other and would rather be caught dead than to date anyone in the “Nobodys,” but would occasionally date or speed date some in this next group:

The: **“Artsy- Talented- Popular-Attractive-Part/Nerd-Part/Hood-Part/Normal’s”**: This was my group. We cared nothing about the latest

fashions, but rather, expressed our fashion sense through what we could do with our clothes to create our own style. Some of our friends were in the “Nobodys,” outside of that, we were friends amongst each other-that was of the utmost importance to us. Our group dated amongst each other, some would date within the “Nobodys” and the “Why the Hell’s” if they summoned (and only if *they* summoned).

The: “**Wanna-Be’s**”: Sigh. Rhetorically, I would have to ask: where do I start...

For starters, if this group of people’s fashion choice consisted of white top shirts, white bottoms, white tennis shoes and (whether guy and girl), if they wore pink sweaters tied across their shoulders and they walked around with tennis rackets; it wouldn’t be too far off from all their personas in school.

This was a pretty cool group (a very small part of them). The large part of this group would literally sicken you to your stomach if you let them (or hadn’t eaten yet). They weren’t trouble makers by any stretch of the imagination, but the large part of them would rather fight Goliath or ban together to hold open the mouth of a whale and fight tooth and nail than to digress to the clique in which *many* of them *really* belonged: “Nobody’s,” “Why the Hell’s” or the “Artsy’s.”

It was funny because in truth, this large part really *did* consist of a mixture of “Nobodys,” “Artsy” and “Why the Hell’s” but you better not tell nobody God, because if you brought that truth out, you probably would have been in for a knock-down, drag out whatever-you-wanna-do-about-it-off.

The “Wanna-Be’s” had one goal and one goal only: to be friends with, known by, connected to or connected with and/or besties with the “Be’s.” They *lived* for that. The “Wanna-Be’s” dated amongst each other-period. The black guys (and black girls) in this group would rather be caught dead than to be caught dating a “Nobody,” but would [in secret and *only* in secret] let it be rumored that he or she dated or kissed a black girl, or black

boy, or an “Artsy”-and only *if* that “Artsy” was an “Artsy” that wanted to be a “Wanna-Be” or a wanted to *be* a “Be.”

Eventually, most “Wanna-Be’s” would get their chance in being a “Be,” but the *actual* “Be’s” were set in stone. “Be’s” had the social power to make a “Wanna-Be” feel like a “Be” and especially depending on that “Be’s” popularity at the time.

The bottom line was-since the “Wanna-Be” wasn’t a set in stone “Be”-they would still have to take their place back in their “Wanna-Be” spot and remain happy that they were friends with, known by, connected to, connected with and/or besties with the “Be’s.” And in order to maintain their “Wanna-Be” slash want to be a “Be” image; it was best that they: deny that a “Nobody” existed, ignore the “Why the Hells” and act like they didn’t know any “Artsy’s” unless it was one of the “Artsy-10.”

The **“Artsy-10:”** They were like: “reverse-moles.” Moles of about ten guys and girls in our “Artsy” clique who if given the chance, would do anything to be a “Wanna-Be,” and would *kill* to be a part of the “Be’s.” You could always tell when one of the “Artsy-10” got a chance to step out and hang out with the “Wanna-Be’s” or “Be’s.” Because (for a short while) they would talk different, walk different and carry on a whole persona befitting of a “Wanna-Be” or “Be.” They would feel *so* accepted and grateful that they stood a chance (even if it was a mere conversation with a “Wanna-Be” or “Be”). That would be enough to send them on these highs that (like clockwork because it was all a matter of time) the “Wanna-Be” and/or “Be” would send them *right* back into the clique to which they belonged: “Artsy- Talented- Popular-Attractive-Part/Nerd-Part/Hood-Part/Normal.” Their little fantasies and hopes of actually being a “Wanna-Be” or “Be” (for good) never-*ever* came to fruition and they would steadily try: year after year. It was crazy to observe. Aya and my other friend Carren were two-tenths of one such type. It would be a mixture of pathetic and painful to watch their ups and downs as a result of it all.

The “Be’s”: They were a mixture of *three types of people* and it was just this simple:

1-Either their parent or relative worked at the school (and/or had some control over the school program or any particular performance art or academic).

2-They were the kids whose parents were on a committee of givers who donated significant monies to the school (on a continuous basis).

3-They were close friends/besties of both. I repeat: close friends/besties of both. Not: known by, connected to or connected with. Their real friends and besties *only*.

“Be’s” had their way with about 65% of the teaching staff. The teaching staff was kind of like a teaching staff at a college. In college, you have some professors who may have athletes as students, who pretty much have a “pass” in their class no matter what. Athletes’ schedules are methodically chosen by their coaches and the athletic staff on a “preferred professor” basis: the professors who would always cut the athlete some slack because they are in cahoots with the sports program (secretly).

It was like that here, at our artsy school.

Probably about 65% of the staff was in cahoots with parents or relatives who worked at the school and/or had some control over the school program or any particular performance art or academic and as well, parents who donated money to the school.

So having to take a class with a “Be” could be quite the experience. Not as a result of the “Be’s” behavior or presumptuousness (because they indeed were). The “experience” would come from the “Be’s” real friends and besties or the “Wanna-Be’s” behavior-that was the irony of it all.

The “Be’s” besties, real friends and “Wanna-Be’s” *loved* for it to be known that they too, were exceptions to most rules. Most all “Be’s” were very assuming and presumptuous (subtly so). But they weren’t pathetic or painful to observe. The “Wanna Be’s” and the “Be’s” real friends and besties were-at all times. “Be’s” never had to do anything but just: be. They knew their place and knew it was solidified, and knew they had the most

social power in the *entire* school-effortlessly.

All of that was what my dad did *not* know about this artsy school that he was so eager for me to get in. The doors had shut behind me, and the politics of the economic, political and social kind was a well-known secret that none of us ever talked about (in *either* group). It just was what it was. I'm just breaking it down (to *how* it "was"). I never explained it or broke it down to my dad because he would have taken my inclusion into that school to a whole new level, and I wasn't interested in that kind of fighting to get in and fighting to stay in kind of illusion that I was watching. It was really a circus act that neither one of them even understood.

When my dad had come to grab me out of my third grade class to do that school's paperwork, got me auditioned and in; he thought he knew-but he had no idea...

He merely expected that because I was multi-talented, I would get early training at a school that would hone in on that in a big way and from there-the world would be my oyster.

Well, unbeknownst to him, getting trained for the world to be my oyster-did not happen outside of evening recitals from well-rehearsed dance performances, drama recitals or art-exhibits for required classes. I tricked him into thinking that these performances, demonstrations and exhibits were major.

The bigger training and experience took place on the stage. That gave you the feel for what it would be like gigging in New York. The closest I got to that experience and on that stage (outside of my evening dance recitals) was auditioning for the major/school box office plays.

A callback list would go up. It had gotten to the point where I never had to check the first or second callback list-I made all of them. But when that final list would be posted, it was always 77% populated with the: "Be's" and "Wanna Be's." 10% Artsy's, 10% Nobody's and 3% "Why the Hell's".

Unbeknownst to my dad, by eighth grade (many years before Santana was ever a twinkle in my eye and had even started the school), when I started to take notice of the social politics and began to pay attention to the list of student's parents who donated big monies to the school-I totally quit auditioning. I would be obsessed with strolling that first floor area near the administrative offices watching rich parents with full-length mink coats stroll in and out of the principal and artistic director's office; either cutting checks or finding out why their child was the understudy rather than the actual lead in a major. I would run to the front of the building just to take a peek at their big expensive Jaguars, Mercedes and BMW's parked sideways-presumptuously knowing that the meeting they came for wouldn't last-because they knew all too well how their money talked and bullshit runs the marathon.

By eighth grade, I refused to be the bullshit running the marathon through callback list number two and higher. I started turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to it all. If you understood the social, economic and political dynamics (that at the age, I didn't have name for); you would have understood-like I did-how that social politic game went. I had zero interest in being a "Wanna-Be." I found too much comedy watching, listening to and hearing about the pressure and rollercoaster ride that some of them would go through to be where they were socially. It was so pathetic to me.

In hindsight it was *all* so pitiful; watching the five cliques outside of the "Be's (including me). The pathetic way that those who were in control of the performance art program, would come to classrooms and stand there like big suits-folding their arms and looking down from their eye-glasses and placing their hands on their chins, looking around at everyone and squinting their eyes like they were about to pick their next superstar. We would sit up with our backs arched straight and one-hundred watt smiles (looking all stupid and shit) from being told in advance that they would be coming through scouting for local commercials. No words were ever spoken, it was a classic case of the psychological Pavlov Dog Experiment.

By eighth grade, I quit barking and jumping. It never phased me anymore. I started turning my head to the direction of the window when the suits would show up. To myself, I would crack up laughing when they would leave-from how stupid some people looked-having no idea how that social politic game went. It was sad-watching my peers do just what I would do my first five years there for those suits (that were merely looking for the kid whose parents just strolled through with the mink coat-double-checking to see if the kid had the look for the next commercial they had just promised rich mom, rich dad).

It was hard not to, but I never told my dad about the politics that existed there because secretly, he too, was classist, elitist and insatiably ambitious and so was I, to an extent. Though I hated that school because of it-I understood what was going on. He (secretly) never forgave himself for having kids by a less than ambitious mother, so he was going to make at least one of us pay for it. Between Twin and me and my other brothers; I was the best fit. So he executed his plan, set me on the mark, put me in position and threw me into doors-that once closed behind me-he knew nothing about. He just knew I belonged and would have paid top dollar to put me where he wanted to see me: on a main stage even if it was up on a harness flying across that auditorium with a diaper on and sprinkling glitter throughout-that would suit him just fine. My dad played the game-always had. He had a formula for success and life: no sleep. To be the boss, you have to pay the cost-and usually, by any and all means necessary...

The only thing that made me happy there, were my friends-I loved my friends and two other teachers [outside of Ms. You Know Who, who respected me, knew my worth and talents]. I had nothing to prove to her outside of following her rules.

When I got home to the where I lived, my experience was altogether different.

If I say to someone (who is not from my hood: “my hood held me down,”) that person would probably think I meant that my hood stifled me. But no, that school stifled me, but my hood “held me down” (up-in the highest esteem). I was fortunate because of that. And I always knew and was grateful for that.

Without my hood, I would have had no self-esteem or confidence, because that school would have broken me. When I left that school at 3:40p (many years before meeting Santana) my show began there-that was my main stage and bright lights with people cheering me on and appreciating being entertained by me at whim and request. My hood was my main stage, but while in school from 8a-3:40p; I was amongst a game of social politics that I refused to be the butt and bullshit of. That balance kept me grounded. Everything I learned and any skill I honed was the result of the ones who truly loved me, respected me and knew me-not the school I attended. My hood was merely disillusioned, bedazzled, and dazed by it all, because I was the only one from it-able to make it through those doors, that they (like my dad) knew nothing about-once they closed behind me.

In secret, I continued to let my dad (and even the people from my neighborhood) think that it was the school that was grooming me to blossom. Even Ms. You Know Who (who taught there) thought the same thing. I was learning, dreaming and inspired by way of her and my hood-not the school.

I wasn't learning shit at the school. I wasn't inspired there. I didn't dream there. That school wasn't preparing me for a life of what she and my dad thought I was attending there for. The school only taught me one thing and one thing only: the game of social politics, where by age thirteen, I was a pro at it and recognizing it. I *knew* my worth to people, my talents and what I was capable of. I didn't need that school to validate that for me-all for a financial, social and emotional large fee.

As far as I was concerned with my [dead dad], my faith and disinterest

in the school plus my estrangement from him all worked out. I was no longer under his pressure in more ways than he knew (and little did he ever know)...

As far as I was concerned [with my mom on pulling me out of the school], it was a favor to me. Because little did she know, after about my eighth-grade year there, it only became important for me to attend because of the school's reputation and big name-in the eyes of other people. The school was something I could most certainly live without.

But now, I was faced with a decision to make and to decide if I could live with or without: this growing child inside of me. My mother merely felt that it would be distasteful for me to be in that type of school with a growing belly. She not only did what was best (and a favor to me), she also did what was natural for her and what she did best whenever she was faced with an important issue: run away from it, or ignore it away or send it away. So plans were made for me to be sent away to a home for pregnant girls that had a school campus but to me-was more like a pregnant jail filled with other pregnant and mean big-nosed bitches who like me, had a decision to make as to whether or not we were coming home with our brat, or give them to some happy couple waiting in the wings (which is what most did-as was my prospective decision) because I still had plans for a real life, with or without "real" love.

Couldn't necessarily say that Santana had any serious and major plans for his life after he graduated, because although I personally knew his creative and artistic talents; they were about as obscure to other people as about as obscure as what he was going to do in life *with* his talents.

Although I played a part in creating the feet for socks, mending socks were not in my plans. All I could see was a hard life, and a hard-working man; working hard for a minimum-wage job, coming home stressed, over

worked and pissed at and resenting me.

No thank you (to that “life”)...

SITUATIONS. TRANSITIONS & DECISIONS.

In the meantime during preparation for my transition and decision making process; my mother was up to her same ole “let me fuck with Santana” Jedi Mind Tricks. He was hard-working his ass off-continuously trying to be for me: a good man and a good dad. He took a job in the vicinity where my mom and I had moved to-which was in a whole other community a ways away from all of my school friends, umbrella friends and my TGGF.

Santana had come over to my house one day while I was gone to the mall with one of my big brother’s girlfriends. By the time I made it home, Santana looked like he had been held hostage. The look on his face when I walked into the door was the type of sigh of relief that you can imagine from being rescued after being tortured. I found out that my mom and her friend Ms. Andrea-Dana’s mom-had told Santana that I was gone out on a date-trying to explore my options, since it wasn’t set in stone that I was going to keep the baby.

He had no reason not to believe her, because my stomach wasn’t showing at all. Immediately, he had flashbacks on his cheating on me, so, he didn’t know what to think. When I walked in on it and found out about what they had done to him, I screamed at my mother and her friend. I then walked back to tend to Santana and his hurt feelings, and there he was: standing there in his funny-looking work uniform, with the funny-looking polyester pants and the funny-looking pancake cap; looking like he was about to have a not-so-funny looking panic attack. Since the beginning of my pregnancy, he was about as pregnant and emotional as I was-we were both pregnant. I felt so bad for Santana-he could hardly breathe, he was so

hurt. He just looked up at the ceiling at the light and held his head back; trying his hardest to hold his tears back. I reached out to hold him and he broke down and cried in my arms. I cried so hard with him. It was a sad day for the both of us. We had already had a lot to think about and were going through so much already, and my mother couldn't have picked a worse time to fuck with his head like that.

~~~~~

Twin had still been on his send-off and vacay spot for rambunctious boys that my mom sent him to, and once he returned home, plans were still set in stone for him to go live with my [dead] dad. Mom was still on my don't ask, don't tell policy that I had asked her to adhere to-and especially at this time. It had been a couple years that I had been knee-deep in with this boyfriend of mine and now pregnant since last my dad saw me, so now was just a good a time as any for my mom to keep her mouth shut. She knew that by the time I would be showing, I would be good and gone off to the pregnant jail anyways.

My send-off would be coming around the time the new school-year was beginning.

The pregnant jail was a campus located about a half-hour drive away, where on the weekends, Santana and his mom (or sometimes Santana alone) would come get me. I would sometimes go home to my mom's house, and other times I would stay over in Santana's private cul de sac, neglecting to talk about what I was deciding to do with this "thing" growing inside of me. My way of not attaching myself to it-was to refer to it as an "It" or a "thing" versus referring to it as a baby or a child, as yet. I replaced getting attached to "It" by keeping in mind, my plans for a life that had no room for new feet. Because the first order of business was to complete my senior year of high school. I was insistent on graduating on time and the same year-as if my life hadn't been put on pause with this

thing growing inside of me. With all the schooling I had missed (because of my mom wasting no time pulling me out before my belly even got a chance to get a bump), I had a lot of work to do.

Although through the pregnant jail, I could earn school credits, but the credits would not be enough to graduate on time-night school was my only option in addition to day school (full-time) plus summer school. I had already been looking at colleges I wanted to attend out of state and a couple nearby and in-state just in case this trial time away in the pregnant jail became too much to bear for Santana and me. That would let me know if I could handle being without him, although I knew in my mind-chances were-that Santana and I would not be together. For me, for a while, though I loved him; I was getting to the point where I was just going with the motions and being lead by my heart. I knew these mixed emotions weren't because of my pregnancy, because I never felt that way until he cheated on me. The newness, specialness and sacredness wasn't there for me like before. And even through the day before I found out that he cheated, I used to see forever with him.

## *UP, OUT & AWAY*

The campus was so private, dim, and quiet that you could hear a pin drop.

I was so lonely that pregnant jail-one of the loneliest times that I could never imagine-it was claustrophobically unbearable and depressing. It really *felt* like “jail.”

I spent a lot of time crying and sitting in my room alone: just-thinking...

After some time, I dried my tears and tried to toughed it out.

Though phones were free, and the comfortable little phone area was always available, I never used it anymore, after the one day and one day only-I placed a phone call home; crying to my mother about how lonely I was. She spit new idioms that she had thought of since last I saw her-all of them created to remind me that my being in the predicament I was in was a consequence of mine and Santana’s actions.

No results or comfort with my mom, so I called my friend Dana whose voice had an all-too familiar sound, sort of like mine once did: as if the sun was calling her name and together: she, the sun, life and our friends, were playing a game of tag and running with the wind blowing through her free fingers. I did not want to interrupt her joy by dampening her sunshine with my tears that were falling like rain. I still managed to get through the conversation with a smile in my voice, but the truth was-I was now in a different element and my mind was echoing my mother’s reminder that I was in the middle of a consequence of mine and Santana’s irresponsibility. Dana had nothing to do with that, so I let her go as if nothing was wrong with me on the other end of that phone, but the truth was; everything was wrong-everything.

In search of comfort rather than conversation-just someone to listen to me while I sat there shaking and crying uncontrollably from feeling like I was about to have a nervous breakdown, who better to call than my accomplice and partner in my crime: Santana. He wasn't home. He too, was out with the wind blowing through his free fingers-most probably feeling the newness of being unattached at the hip that we stayed at conjoined at for many years. He probably didn't know what to do with himself, with me gone and put away for five point five of his seven days of the week.

I had to tough it out. I never liked feeling sorry for myself. So, after that day, I vowed never to pick up that phone again. I never even looked at it anymore. I decided it would be best to deal with the predicament I was in as best as I could and on my own. I was beginning to feel far too emotional for still having not made my final decision about whether or not I would be giving this thing up for adoption. I didn't want my emotional state to force me to give it away any more than I wanted my emotional state force me to get attached to it and keep it; merely out of being temporarily emotional.

I tried mingling with the other girls. I made friendly with three of the girls. Nobody really wanted to be friends with anybody. The way the pregnant jail was structured-we all had the option of having so much privacy that you really did not have to make friends. Most everyone took the privacy option, and so did I after a while. There were two other girls in particular that refused to be nice to me. I think they knew each other outside of the pregnant jail. They were unbelievably rude and mean on purpose. I think it was because they got jealous when they'd see Santana come get me every Friday, and kiss me guiltily as he'd leave on Sunday afternoon's after dropping me off. It was obvious that we were in love, at least once upon a time. Those two mean bitches never got visitors. One of the girl's fathers would pick them both up for some weekends home, but



they'd remain on campus on the weekends, most of the time-snapping at one another.

Every girl was so full-bellied, pregnant, tired and mad. I was still able to make my way around just fine because I was barely showing-you could only tell that I was pregnant if I undressed, and then you could see a tiny little circular protrusion in front of me-from side view, only.

It seemed like overnight however, that thing sprouted inside of my belly like the sun hitting a flower that blossomed in a day. It made its presence known one morning after I woke up and masturbated. I lay there on my back while my stomach began to flutter rumble. It turned around and poked its butt in the air-sort of like how babies do when they are taking a nap. I felt so embarrassed. I was wondering if it knew what I had just done. The moment was cute, a little bit scary and a little bit creepy at the same time because I was at my bottom and it was in my belly-resting...in a child's place.

Considering the way I had been feeling, I needed that little bit of attention that thing inside of me gave me for that moment. I hadn't smiled and laughed like that in a while.

I proceeded to bathe and get ready for my day, and it did not move about anymore throughout that day. I guess it decided to rest...and stay in a child's place.

When morning came, I wanted to see if it would show its butt again. So I did it again.

I then lay there and waited to see what would happen.

It began to rumble just like the day before.

All of a sudden, it turned around and poked its butt in the air again. I sat up some so that I could see it better. It had poked its butt out so far that

I could see where its little butt cheeks separated. I covered my mouth and giggled-not wanting it to hear my voice and laughter. I felt so happy that I had some company-*finally*.

It hid throughout the morning and then all of a sudden, while I was in history class, at exactly 11:10am; it began to move about as if it was waking up. It ran to the left side of my stomach and kicked its foot.

That startled me. It then ran to the right side and kicked its foot. I tried to grab it. It ran back over to the left: kick! To the right: kick! It was so funny. I covered my mouth and laughed over and over again.

Day 3 and 4: It slept. After I did it-it woke up with its butt in the air. I smiled and lightly spanked its little booty and then rubbed it. It could feel me nurture it through my skin as it lay there and it went back to sleep while I bathed and prepared for my day.

11:10am into the morning. History class. It began to move about-waking up. "Time to play!" this rambunctious little must've thing said. It ran to the left side of my stomach and kicked its foot again. I was a little startled, but somewhat expecting it. It felt so funny-this life inside of my belly-this "real" life and living thing growing and moving about inside of me.

It then ran to the right side and kicked its foot-I tried to grab it. It ran back over to the left: kick! To the right: kick! Still, I covered my mouth and laughed-again.

Day 5 and 6: It slept. After I did it-it poked its butt in the air and I rubbed it gently. It was like I calmed it down because it went right back to sleep. I bathed and prepared for my day.

11:10am. History class. It began to wake up and start moving about-again. It ran to the left side of my stomach and kicked its foot, then ran to the right side and kicked its foot. I never could catch it, but it was fun trying though.

Throughout these days and moments, my mind started to play out scenes in my head of holding this thing in my belly from behind my belly and into my arms. I started feeling emotional about all inside of me that was literally protecting it and giving it life, while knowing that soon after being born into this world and right after taking its first breath of life; it would be handed over to be held not by me-but to the arms of someone else who is somewhere in this world having no idea about these special morning moments that I was sharing with this child, and wouldn't bit more understand the experience if I explained it to them.

I was feeling myself getting attached to "it"...my baby...

But into the lonely night by day 6, my mind began to play out the realities according to how things were looking in my life at that *very* moment; my mother's voice ringing in my head-continuously referring to my predicament as a "consequence" as if it were a punishment rather than a human life. I couldn't *imagine* what life would be like-bringing a baby into that house with her-that was punishment enough. I could see so clearly-her trying and make me feel punished for it every single day. From behind a door, if she couldn't handle my asking her if I could to go steady, then telling her I needed to get on the pill; there was no way in heaven she could handle a real-live crying baby from behind another closed door.

There I was, sitting up in that pregnant jail while life was still going on at home. My friends were living life and enjoying theirs, just like Santana was living his. If ever I needed time and attention-this was that time and the cure for feeling claustrophobic and lonely was merely a half-hour away. I wasn't that far away in distance that Santana couldn't make it during the week (in the evenings) for a visit or two. But he never took the initiative to do that. He was out in the wind enjoying his five-day a week, born-again freedom. Although it hadn't been decided as to whether or not I would be keeping the child, he never put up a fight or stood his ground about me

giving the baby up for adoption. Yet he stood on many-a-floors of my mom's apartments crying *ugly* cries; holding on to me like nothing but death could keep him from me. I had seen him fight before. I knew how he could do when he fought for love and something that he really wanted. He didn't fight for this baby at all-not like he fought for me. He wasn't fighting the wind to get up here and see me with this child in my belly-not like the way he would fight to see me when I wasn't with-child. He was nothing like he would write to me in many-a-letters-talking about how he would fight for our (future) kids. That future was growing right now-inside of me without a fight being had for this kid, me, and from what I could see: our future, either.

I began to think about love and the reality of it and how it is never "forever."

I reminisced about how when we first lost our virginity, his light-bulb head use to be sitting in that chair in my bedroom beaming just like one. I couldn't peel that fool off of me. We spent so much time honeymooning, letter-writing and all things unimaginable in our fairytale; yet he found it easy to lift a six-foot tall bitch off her feet and carry her upstairs as if she were a bride simply because she told him she was a virgin (too). So he stuck his dick in her-in the midst of us still honeymooning and me having lost my virginity with him (too), as if it didn't matter anymore and he was on to something new. My lonely lil' vacay at the pregnant jail plus what I learned from his cheating episode was slowing teaching me that whether it be love or sex; it's all good and right as long as it is in front of you-in the moment. Love seems to be only as good and true as it is in your face. Because the moment that the moment is over-it roams free. The biggest reward you get out of love is if somebody loved you back. But in the bigger scheme of things, you didn't do anything but teach them how to love and make love to another person. Virginity and the newness of things are physical trial basis' with expiration dates of the heart. People are here to learn love-lessons from each other until they end up with the one person

[later on who at that time] will be in receipt of that person having finally gotten right: all that *you* taught *them* about love and making love. Santana and were merely were one another's first stop. I began to understand that no matter your age, "love" must really be this way.

I wanted and searched for a bright-side in this. But outside of a pretty baby in my arms-conceived by two people who once upon a time in this fairytale-loved one another, and were inseparable; I saw none. Except for the fact that the baby got a chance at *life*, so here we are, as we lay:

I'm back on "it," again...my tears and feeling sorry for myself is over. "It" lived, and I have to make it and take it from here...

Day 7: It slept through the morning because I didn't do it. I didn't do it because I did not want it to wake.

I did not want to see its butt. I did not want to smile. I did not want to touch or nurture it. I did not want it to expect me to nurture and touch it going forward. As if we had already bonded; it still raised while I lay there-as if my masturbating had nothing to do with waking it up anyways. This time, it raised as if it could read my mind and feel my resistance. This child insisted on waking with its butt in the air-regardless. I sat my head up some to look at it but I still refused to touch it. Instead, I gripped the sheets with my fingers and just stared at it like I was peeking; wanting it to put its butt back down. But this time, that baby wiggled its butt slowly and stretched it out farther than I had ever seen it do as if it wanted me to touch and smack its tiny little cute booty. I still refused to.

It lay there in its place...and went back to sleep. And I did the same.

Still, at 11:10am like literal clockwork, and while in my room watching television; it began to wake up and start moving about: "Time to play!" the rambunctious little thing must've said. It ran to the left side of my stomach and kicked its foot-ready to play.

I was stiff and stoic.

I didn't expect that...

My laugh from the 11:10am days previous turned into a frown.

It ran to the right side and kicked its foot.

I didn't reach for it.

It ran back over to the left: kick!

To the right: kick!

I still frowned and remained stiff.

This time, I tightened my mouth with resistance rather than covering it with my hand (with surprise, joy and laughter).

While I resisted, it insisted. Like never before, it was kicking and playing games in my belly as if was kicking conversation to my mind:

“You mean to tell me that you don't want me?” (kick!)

“I won't be a problem-I promise I won't get in your way!” (kick!)

“These pretty eyes-these little fat thighs?” (kick!)

“You mean to tell me you don't want me?” (kick!)

“Look ma! No hands!” (kick!)

“How come you don't want me?” (kick!)

“Wait'll you see these chubby cheeks!” (kick!)

“My skin is as smooth as my butt!” (kick!)

“When I'm out of your belly and you hold me underneath my arms, you can look me in my face while I yawn and stick my butt out in person!” (kick!)

I remained stiff.

This time, it tried something different. Instead of it lying on its stomach and sticking its butt out the front of my belly; it turned sideways and stuck its butt out on the side of my belly-as if was showing off for me.

Still, I did not reach to rub it or spank its little booty, although I thought about it.

But then, I gathered my thoughts, emotions and attachments to it-and in my mind, I said (back) to it:

“Nah, I've got living to do. After I hand you over, I get a second

chance to do it right this time. Can't mess it up. I love you and I gave you a life to live."

"Look ma! No hands!" (kick!)

I kept my hands in my lap...

"Look ma! No hands!" (kick!)

I continued to keep my hands in my lap-balling my fists tightly.

"Look ma!"

I kept my fists balled up-no hands.

It rested in its place...

Day 8: Morning came.

It slept.

I did not do it, even though I knew It did not need me to-to remind me that it was there.

I did not want it to wake.

I did not want to see its butt.

I did not want to smile.

I did not want to touch or nurture it.

I simply did not want it to expect this of me going forward.

Unlike yesterday and previous mornings when I'd wake and lay there, shortly thereafter-it would wake and raise. But this time-it did not.

I got scared.

I gave in, and did it-just to see if it would wake and raise.

It still did not wake or raise.

I sat my head up some to see if it would, but it did not.

I lay there and went back to sleep, right along with it.

11:10am.

It's history...

Into the morning it did not move about or begin to kick and play-at all.

I lay there waiting to see if it would, but it still did not move.  
“Ma...no hands?” (no kick...)

I lay back down with my fists balled up. Tears rolled down my face but I held on to the sheets between each finger tightly...tight like the rest of my life depended on it...”



## ~READING GROUP GUIDE~

**1)** Although it happened some 20+ years prior, during a conversation with her mother, Angie revealed some of what had gone on in her life (with regard to her being molested) whereby, she (herself) was taken aback by her mother's "fresh like it had just happened yesterday" kind of response. In the book, Angie stated that because she was participating, enjoying [and in one particular case]: even "seducing" one of her offenders; she never regarded her being violated as "molestation," and always had a hard time seeing herself as a victim (although she was a child).

a. How did that reach you, or make you feel?

b. What or how did that make you think about cases like that?

c. Have you ever heard of such a reaction or misunderstanding/misinterpretation coming from a victim of molestation?

d. Angie also stated that because she didn't go on to having deviate fetishes and thoughts and desires surrounding pedophilia, porn addiction, drugs, prostitution, bed-wetting, acting out, other behavioral problems etc; she just didn't think her being molested affected her in any way. In having read [book1/Innocence] of the trilogy; do you think that what happened to her manifested in any way and perhaps showed up in other ways? (Do not interject any thoughts or opinions about other excerpts or sneak peeks that you may have read off her website from book2/Naivete').

**2)** Do you think that Angie and her TGGF ever grow out of that situation they had going on?

a. Do you think it was a "phase" or something that will probably continue or re-surface in book2/Naivete' or book3/Sophistication?

b. Do you think the TGGF will end up being a mere BFF as Angie gets older in book2/Naivete' or book3/Sophistication?

**3)** How do you feel about “Ms. You Know Who?” Do you think that she dropped the ball too soon or do you think that (as woman herself-who too I am more than sure, experienced that teenage love and rebellion phase); felt that it was too much to contend with?

a. Do you think she could have handled it any more differently than she did? How would you have handled such a situation? (If you were “Ms. You Know Who”).

b. Thus far, in having only read (and sticking strictly to this book1/Innocence), how would you guess that Angie’s life would have turned out had she followed through with Ms. You Know Who’ “life plan” that she had mapped out for her-under her mentorship. (Think about and consider all situations that happened through to the end of this book1/Innocence).

**4)** How and what do you feel about Angie’s *mother*? (Everything: what type of person she was, what she did, what she didn’t do, what she should have done, what she could have done differently) etc.

**5)** How and what do you feel about Angie’s *father*? (Everything: what type of person he was, what he did, what he didn’t do, what he should have done, what he could have done differently) etc.

**6)** What do you feel about life in general, as compared to what Angie’s situation and feelings were (with regard to the artsy-school she attended)?

**7)** What do you feel about Santana? Do you think they will break up and get back together and end up together throughout the 3-books/trilogy and live that “happily ever after” in spite of all that had gone on thus far? (Do not interject any thoughts or opinions about other excerpts or sneak peeks that you may have read off her website from book2/Naivete’).  
What do you think will become of them (together)?

**8)** What is your interpretation of what was going on at the very end of the book-at “Day 7” through “Day 8” (the last 4 pages of the story)?

**\*BONUS QUESTION\*** So, she (Angie) mentioned that thanks to Madonna's song "Papa Don't Preach" ringing in her head and playing on her heart; she could not term the pregnancy. Although we do not know what is going to become of that child throughout the trilogy, hypothetically speaking, if so-with Madonna having adopted all these kids, she's got another one out here she doesn't even know about huh?

\*In order to understand the joke, you would have to know that Madonna's adopted a few kids. :)

## ~MEET the AUTHOR Q & A~

### 1) How did you come up with the idea for this book?

The original 'idea' (which began in 1997) was this same story and pretty much the same concept. However, as a novice-then; my writing style was indicative of what was "popular" at that time: the self-help/spiritual guru craze. And even though my story *was* what it *is* (then and now), I had the book broken down as such that I was kind of "evaluating" each chapter and speaking to my readers as if I was identifying a problem & providing a lesson by finding a solution for it.

There were three big chapters: "Innocence," "Naivete," and "Sophistication." But the "lessons" were listed in categories of how we evolve. First by: learning ourselves, then earning ourselves (having being done by way of surrendering things that stunted our growth and involvement-be it by way of people, certain situations, circumstances etc.)

I completed the manuscript (which ended up being 600 pages).

When I took a step back from it and evaluated it after some time, I started *hating* it-badly. I got discouraged. So I sat the manuscript down-for years. In 2000, I picked it back up and started to "fine-tune" it. And that's when my feelings of *being* discouraged turn into courage. Because I began to re-write it honestly and from *my* voice-instead of trying to interject what the "new what's-happening" was (that self-help/spiritual market).

I'm already a spiritual person just-by nature. So I had a long talk with myself. I told myself to stop trying to write to please a whole world of people-so as to not offend, appall or isolate anyone. In short: BE YOURSELF ANGELA. The only way I could "be myself" was to write: introspectively, reflectively, and efficaciously. I had to tell myself to let the motivational/inspirational/self-help gurus (who define themselves as that) do their thing, and me-do mine. And in order for me to be myself and do my own thing; I had to come to realization that I was *indeed* going to offend, appall and isolate some people (in the world). I struggled with that. But I dealt with it.

I had to condition myself, to believe in myself by saying: "*so what, there is an audience out there that will appreciate you simply being yourself. And*

*since you are naturally spiritual and a good storyteller; narrate your story as such that if there is any self-help, motivation and inspiration to be found within it; allow the reader to find it for themselves within the message in the story. Narrating and storytelling is your strength, so stick to that-even if you only have ten readers who love you. Do not try to please everybody. People who like you-will find their way to you and stick to you.”* That is the talk I **had** to have with myself. And after conditioning myself to write honestly and from the heart (introspectively, reflectively, and efficaciously); that 600-page manuscript looked a complete mess to me-how stupid and fake I sounded trying to be a little bit of myself plus tell a story, but at the same time, trying to be something that I wasn't-simply because sententious was popular.

So in order to do it *my way*, I put out of my mind; having an audience of ten, one-hundred, one-thousand, ten-thousand or one-hundred thousand. I allowed myself to be my own audience. I then taped to the wall, these words when I began the re-write:

- Introspective
- Reflective
- Self-Efficacious

Although the concept and story was still in the crux of the manuscript; it required a complete literary overhaul. Page for page, and paragraph by paragraph; I was reading from the manuscript's (fakeness) and had to turn to the computer and say: *“Okay, now write it how you really wanted to write it. Say it how you really wanted to say it-and without fear of being judged and feeling the pressure to be apart of the guru market-share. Just do you-Boo.”*

It was one of the most liberating but expensive, emotionally and creatively taxing experiences I had never gone through. Because the re-write had taken me more time to do, than it actually took for me to write the book itself. That experience (though it took years to discover) taught me a *big* lesson in being comfortable in my own writing skin: that even if my style or “way” wasn't the “new what's happening-” as long as I remained true to myself from start to finish; the task will be smooth and nothing but a total labor of love that will surely birth nothing but pretty little unique babies with their own look.

The lesson: be your own guru-your own way. Even if in the end, they have to create a genre around you...

## **2) Why the title? And how did it come about?**

The original title was called: "Keeping Secrets." I gave it that title because (as you know from reading the story) "Angie" (the main character) talks about many things that were kept secret, and how she had grown so accustomed to the "covert;" that almost by second nature, she was "pro-vert," (with all that was secret and covert). But then in the middle of my re-write, I discovered there were so many *situations* within the story surrounding and within the main character: "Angie," that I felt compelled to change the title to: "Angie Situation."

**3) Speaking of "*so many situations within the story, surrounding, and within the main character: 'Angie.'*" All that is packed in to her journey, life and experiences within this book; the reader learns a whole lot about: bullying, peer-pressure, molestation, sexuality, tween growing pangs, the mentor-mentee relationship, sexuality, sexual identity, bi-sexuality, teenage love and rebellion, teenage angst, the parent-child relationship (father-daughter/mother-daughter), elitism, classicism and teenage-pregnancy. Did you have to do a lot of research in order to bring so many important, taboo, and heavy issues into the story?**

Scientific research-no. I went with and wrote on life as I know it, experienced it, heard tale of, supposed, witnessed and observed-period.

**4) It is interesting to read this story from the voice of "Angie" (the story's main character) and her thoughts behind the goings on. Yet, we can clearly see all the other characters involved in the story as well. We know their personalities without you going in heavily on physically "describing" them and making your readers paint-by-number/page for page; trying to bring those characters to life through extensive physical description and excessive dialogue. It's like, you go right in to narrating your characters, and as we read on, we already know what they look like, what type of person they are, and how and why they do what they do within their role/character without a lot of description**

**and dialogue about them, in order to bring them to life. How did you manage to do that and why?**

When I write, I like to write how I like to read. And when I read, I want to read as though I am reading someone's diary. I want to read as though someone is telling me a story: uninterrupted-uninterrupted by my asking questions and uninterrupted by excessive quotations and dialogue.

To me-a book is just like a diary. When we kept a diary, we didn't write a lot of dialogue and quotations in order to describe a conversation, secret, desire or happening. And when we talked about a *person* in our diary, we didn't go heavy in on describing them. We described them within the context of talking *about* them.

Don't "remind" me that I am reading a book. Make me *feel* like I am reading a diary (or watching a movie).

The "rule" in (fiction) writing is dialogue.

The "rule" of Angela Sherice fiction is "narration" and some dialogue (when absolutely necessary).

Because when you think about it, when a person buys a book and goes to tuck themselves away in the corner of a couch or an area to read it, they almost do it like it's a secret. (Take a look around at people at the bookstore-next time you go in). And when they go off to read a book, they tuck themselves away like they are hiding a secret. They want to be left alone to read [it]. When you catch someone staring at the book in your hand at the library or bookstore, what do you do? You draw back and frown, just like you would with a letter in your hand. Words are emotionally powerful (and personal).

How often is it that two people get together and cuddle up in the corner of a couch and read out of the same book together? That visual is odd isn't it? That (to me), is because the reader wants to be a voyeur. And for me (in my opinion), I think it (subconsciously) forces the reader to *think* while reading (when there is too much quotation dialogue and description).

I feel that as a writer, if you are thorough enough in your storytelling; you can build the character's personality, their description and the scene right in your readers head through good narration and storytelling versus too much quotation-conversation (dialogue) and list-like description.

The five senses are *magical*. I'm an extreme "sensualist." And to me-reading is as personal as it is sensual, especially novel/fiction. Your words,

your writing, and your storytelling can send your voice narrating to a reader's head like a movie in front of their eyes, and theme music in their ears.

Too much dialogue (quotation-conversation) and description in order to build a scene makes a reader think and ascertain rather than see and voyeur. Readers tuck themselves away because they want to be a voyeur. I insist on allowing them to voyeur when they open up my book. I did all the thinking when I wrote it. None of the five senses require "thought." I just want the reader to voyeur and enjoy.

As a writer, I do not treat a book or novel any less different than a diary or a handwritten letter.

**5) Speaking of characters. Some of your characters, you do give actual names to, while others-you give names like: "Ms. You Know Who," "Ms. Beautiful," "Painful Pam," "TGGF," "Basketball Lena," etc. That is very interesting, but why do you do that?**

I do that almost for the same reason I elaborated on in the previous question.

As a writer, I have the responsibility to take full control of how I deliver my story. And as I stated in the (previous) response, narrating the story works best for me so that I can allow my readers to sit back and watch a movie in their head by the words that their eyes are seeing-line for line. In doing so (using names like: "Ms. You Know Who," "Ms. Beautiful," "Painful Pam," "TGGF," "Basketball Lena," etc.), challenges me to make sure I have done a thorough enough job in narrating my character's personalities, and what significance they play in a scene. And in having delivered that, what they *do* should be more memorable than what their name is.

It's just like watching a movie or television show. When we are telling someone about something that we watched once or for the first time, we may be talking about ten different people within that movie or television show. We may be able to recall two or three of ten of their names (definitely not all ten). But one thing we *will* remember about *all* ten of them is: what they did, what they wore and what their role was in the movie or television show. In recalling or re-enacting the movie to someone,



when we don't recall the name-we will snap our fingers and say: "the one with the light-blue suit on-who showed up late to the meeting!" ... (and recall the name after that-if at all).

Well, for me [if the moment hits me while writing, I feel that because of the role he may have played in my book] that my reader may not recall his name; but the fact that I know I was thorough enough in narrating the scene and the character, I leave myself with the *option* to call him: "Michael," or call him: "The Late Man in the Light Blue Suit"

As I stated before-two things: As a writer, I respect my reader enough to allow them to relax and voyeur. I don't want them to have to snap their fingers and "think" when trying to recall a character from any of my books. I've already done the thinking for them (in that regard). I just want them to "feel." It's no different than they saying: "people will not remember exactly what you said to them, but rather, how you made them feel."

That's what I mean when I say that I am an "extreme sensualist." An extreme sensualist doesn't just use their own eyes; they try to use someone else's eyes to see what they see, touch what they touch, smell what they smell, taste what they taste and hear what they hear, as well.

An "extreme sensualist" will go the extra mile to *see* (and intermix): smell, taste, touch and sound, the same way a blind man has to go that extra mile to *hear* (and intermix): sight, touch and smell.

It may sound excessive and confusing to you, but I am the mother of a blind child, so for years, my senses are like that of a blind person. I've had to see, smell, touch, taste and hear for two people practically all my life, so for me-sensuality/the senses is second nature.

That being said, as a writer-I oversee my reader's senses like I've had to learn to oversee my child's senses-with him.

So in that regard, that's how the naming method fell into place for me. And in overseeing while writing, the task of remembering character's names takes me away from delivering a good story that my reader can experience.

And as I said before, from a creative standpoint, I let go of trying keep up with the “new what’s happening’s.” When I let go of trying to be that genre that hindered me from delivering good storytelling, I also stuck with all things (creatively) that worked for me-for my reader-as well.

So by my book “Michael” (the man in the light blue suit who showed up late for the meeting) might be: “The Late Man in the Light Blue Suit,” so that my reader can move on. I’m not going to tie their brains up with trying to remember “Michael” by name when there may be nine other characters within the story with names as well. They’re not necessarily going to remember all ten characters’ names, but they will remember what all ten characters did, (and how those characters made them feel).

#### **6) How has writing “Angie Situation” changed you, if at all, in any way?**

It humbled the hell out of me! Because (just like all novice writers feel) once that first manuscript is “completed,” I thought I was ready for the literary world. In addition to that, you couldn’t convince me that my manuscript wasn’t blessed after the fact that in October ’97, I had even gotten it to sit across of the desk at Oprah Winfrey’s. And the fact that it was 600 pages of blood, sweat and tears, had me feeling like the rest of my literary career and process would be easy as pie. I felt like I had almost arrived after hearing all those voices in my head of the ghosts of millions of people chanting: “I always wanted to write a book.” Well, I had done it. And to add homage to honor (after countless query letter mailings) a major New York publisher-Kensington Books did the proverbial rarity: wrote back and told me they were interested in reviewing some sample chapters of my manuscript after my writing and mailing to them-that winning query letter that piqued their interest. “So step aside world-here I come!”

All up to that point was the high, stimulated by ups and downs at the fact that Kensington began asking for a few different sections of the manuscript versus simply asking for the entire manuscript. It annoyed me, and I couldn’t understand why, until some time had passed and eating that humble pie: when I got the letter that they were going to pass on it. The only crumb I had left was the fact that I “almost” got picked up (maybe)-

which still meant nothing, since “almost” never counted for anything. That shook my faith in the book, so I closed it for three years and went on to write and complete three other manuscripts (to feed my “I can write a whole book” ego). One book in which a smaller publisher was interested in publishing (my astrology book): “in about two years” from date. I was serious about writing, and two years was a lot of time to just hang around-happy, when I knew I still had the book (“Keeping Secrets”/“Angie Situation”) lingering in my head.

By this time, it had become a handy-dandy footstool for all those years. I picked the book back up after three years, and dusted it off. As I began to look at it all over again, I could see it with a different set of eyes. I had done a lot of living, loving, thriving and growing (as a writer) and could now (finally) see what I suspect Kensington saw: The book’s story was the “diamond,” but the rest of it was fluff in the rough. The fluff was in the way-a distraction-and better suited for a whole other book (all the rhetoric and “lessons” of learning, earning, and surrendering-as mentioned in question number one). So I began to re-write it by being myself and writing in my own voice, versus trying to write so “safe” so as to not offend or appall any particular reader. In addition to that-I could clearly see what parts needed to be cut out, but it was interwoven so well with the storytelling that it was *very* hard to do-very hard to get to that diamond (buried) within the book. I suspected that editor knew if she asked for that entire manuscript-she would have turned me down immediately. Because after growing as a writer, I (myself) could tell that regardless what parts of a manuscript an editor asks for, the story should still flow and be able to be followed-regardless the break or interruption. Those certain sections, regardless which ones were asked to be sent via query, could tell a lot about the amount of editing that would have to be done to it in order to make it a marketable book that would resonate with readers and sell. I had to do some creative and personal soul-searching and reminiscing. Over those few years, I would allow some of my close work-friends, associates, and friends read the manuscripts and I would end up having conversations (and even handwritten letters) from them revealing to me-many things within the story they could relate to and had experienced.

That's when I realized that the diamond was in the story and the storytelling, not the fluff (surrounding it).

I could clearly see it-but not until after all those years.

The diamond was interrupted with too much "teaching." The attractiveness and thick of the book was in the story. Inter-mixing both (the storytelling and the teaching) made the book run all over the place.

I could finally see that Kensington sure as hell did not want to deal with all of that. It was a full-on, knock-down drag-out editing overhaul that even I (myself-the writer) did not want to tackle. So if I didn't want to do it, how could I expect them to?

My eyes and novice didn't know that, then. I was too busy being "impressed." I had to get rough and real with myself. First, by dropping and letting go of all that I had been "impressed" with:

- the fact that the manuscript lay across Oprah's desk once upon a time
- the fact that it got a second glance by a major New York publisher
- the fact that the manuscript was "600 pages" of a story
- the fact that I proved to my ego that I could write an entire book quicker than a person could write a love-letter

I had to slow down and get real with myself.

In getting real with myself, I had to have the same conversation with myself, **and** give myself the same advice that I would give to someone else who would ask me if they were in my shoes: *"you can remain impressed with those "impressionables" that really mean nothing anymore, other than the fact that you have a manuscript of "600 pages" that too, mean nothing. Because until those 600 pages are re-written right, you just have 600 pages of words on paper. Get over yourself and get over being impressed about something that amounted to and produced-nothing (for you or anyone else). Get to work on those 600 pages. Get to the crux and diamond that people are responding to and resonating with first: the story. Save the guru-ism and teaching for another book. Until then, those 600 pages will sit there and always serve no-body and no-thing until you do it right-by serving it like you (really) mean it. After that-then be 'impressed' ...with yourself. Because one thing is for sure: a good story-teller can still always 'teach' if he told a good story-the way it's supposed to be told. Whereas a good teacher can just- 'teach.'"*

**7) “Angie Situation” was at one time, a stand-alone novel. Now it is a trilogy. How’d that happen?**

I study the business and the market as a publisher, an editor and a writer. It became a trilogy rather than a stand alone novel because in studying the market, you will eat even *more* humble pie and be forced to put your preconceived notations about how things are done-down. And in getting myself unimpressed with the fact that I had completed a “600 page manuscript, I had to remind myself that people aren’t anymore impressed with a 600 paged book any more than they are with a novice bragging about having written any *number* of books. ONE good 100 paged book can vibrate, sell and resonate for twenty years. Times are getting tough, people are busy and attention spans are getting shorter. No one wants to read a 600 page book. However, a 200 paged book was more reasonable. Therefore, what was once 600 pages was eventually divided by 2 and made into a trilogy-broken down by its three main chapter titles: “Innocence,” “Naivete,” and “Sophistication.” It made no sense to try and stuff an entire story that [in “Innocence”-alone] has a storyline built around issues dealing with: bullying, peer-pressure, molestation, sexuality, tween growing pangs, the mentor-mentee relationship, sexuality, sexual identity, bi-sexuality, teenage love and rebellion, teenage angst, the parent-child relationship (father-daughter/mother-daughter), elitism, classicism and teenage-pregnancy. So imagine what “Naivete,” and “Sophistication’s” storylines around *it* are going to contain? That’s all too much for one book. Therefore, I made it a trilogy.

**8) What (if anything) has surprised you the most about “Angie Situation” or since writing it?**

That so many people identified with some and most all parts of the main character and the storylines. And as a result, brought up a lot of old wounds and fond memories-alike, and as well; they still got those “lessons” that I wasted so much time trying to inter-weave into the story-anyway! Because the story provoked a lot of thought, consideration and proposed questions for many answers they thought they already had, while providing a resolve where there were once questions. I was surprised, humbled and inspired by that. That is what kept telling me that regardless how bad I ignored the

book, there are people out in the world that needed it more than I ignored and suppressed it because my bruised ego wanted to battle it. I had to earn the right to write the book and eventually surrender to doing so, as well. To do anything else or start another book without finishing what I started was less than acceptable to my spirit-both creatively and personally. The book came back to bite at me one-too many times. Now, I know and have surrendered to the reasons-humbly so.

Find out what happens in Angie's life, next-in the sequel: "Angie Situation (NAIVETE)":

## *Chapter One*

We had the time set-down to the literal minute that we would all need to finally spend time together.

Shana's mom would be leaving out for her club meeting at about 6:30p, but would be walking back into the building at exactly 9:25p. If all goes well, we all should be good and out by then.

We made plans to get together over at Shana's house on that cold November 4<sup>th</sup> day, where Shana would be cuddled up in her bedroom with his friend Wes. And he and I would be snuggled up on the comfy living room sofa by the door- you know: talking.

Shana and Wes tucked themselves back into her cozy bedroom-door closed, while he and I had the luxury of looking at the front door while we talked. My heart was beating fast. I was shaking like the last leaf on a tree.

"Come here and stand up, stand right here-right here in front of me," he said to me with a deep frown in his brow, strategically positioning me in front of him like a chess piece.

"Why?" I asked repeatedly all the while, allowing him to position me.

"I just want to look at you," he responded.

He began to run his hands down my arms, waist, hips and thighs without saying a word. It was weird to me: his touch, his way, the scene-everything. I couldn't tell if I was turned on, scared or both. I think it was both but I was so afraid to allow myself to be aroused enough to respond, so I stood there.

He then lifted my shirt up, grabbed me by the waist, and then turned me around so that he could now look at me from the back. I cooperated by still allowing him to turn me in circles like he was admiring something that he was about to buy, take home, and eat. When I made my way back around to standing in front of him, he moved closer to the edge of the couch while looking up at my face as if he was asking for permission, yet, nothing came out of his mouth. He placed his hands around my ass and something finally came out: "Why do you always wear things to cover your butt? You can still see it," he said-bluntly.

That caught me off guard and made the moment even more awkward for me. I reached to pull my shirt back down while quickly removing his hands from around me as if to convey the message: "*You blew it!*" to him.



He ignored the gesture. He then stood up to turn the kitchenette light on then turned off the living room light in the room where we were.

He sat back down and proceeded with more instructions: "Stand back right here," he asserted.

He was so awkward and technical. I was so nervous and nervous. When he reached underneath my shirt again, I jumped back a little bit-not wanting him to touch my stomach. He was going straight for my breasts anyway; grabbing them while letting out an awkwardly aroused sigh that sent chills through my body as he began to caress my breasts fervently.

Before I knew it, my pants had hit the floor along with my shirt and all the rest of my clothes. He scooted back on the couch for me to get on top of him. I grabbed his dick and thought hard about mounting him, and just going for it-only because I could tell that was what he was expecting and positioned himself for me to do. I wasn't quite ready to do it though. He had positioned himself about as blunt, awkward and assertive as he was in conversation that whole evening already. I was powerless the whole night: from the conversation, his touch and this very moment. I needed some time to think, even though my clothes were off of my body. Although I knew he was laying there waiting for me to mount him, I could not do it. I froze. My mouth froze as well. I wanted to tell him that I needed him to enter me first-before I could mount him. At the point of intercourse and entry, I had a thing about being laid on my back, missionary or any way submissive and "in receipt-of," first-before the party could begin. It always seemed like that was they way it was supposed to go. It turned me on. I gestured to let him know how I wanted it without dripping a word from my frozen mouth. He cooperated. He laid me on the couch, folded my legs toward my chest and gently slid himself into to me. At that very moment, there were fireworks woven in between his moans, grunts and breathlessness. I had no idea this was going to be like this. I felt like a fucking virgin. It felt so good that I began to cry. I didn't know what was happening to me at this moment. I just couldn't process it at all. His shaking and deep breathing lead the whole moment as I followed his lead by slowly meeting his manly thrusts deep into me. We were fucking as if each long stroke was something that we both wanted to last forever. We must have sound like two cats in heat.

He jumped, yelled out and pulled out of me as if he was trying to stop himself from cumming so soon: “Angie, please-please get on top of me, I want to talk to you,” he pleaded. I could do it this time. By now, if he asked me to stand on my head I probably would have.

He lay on his back.

I got on top and mounted him. My legs were shaking nervously like a doe struggling for strength. I was afraid to grab him and put him inside of me, but rather-hoping he would take the lead again.

He did.

With his right hand, he grabbed his dick while holding my ass with his left hand and slid himself back into me, biting his bottom lip as if he was singing his favorite song; thrusting into me as if he was making moves to the beat of that very same song. It was awesome. All I could do was throw my head back and bite my own bottom lip.

He went from biting his bottom lip to puckering them and frowning with a kind of pleasure like he was in full concentration of the circumference of my warm vagina that gripped him so tightly. He nodded his head back and forth in total disbelief yelling “ah shit,” repeatedly-as if after this night, it was going to be some trouble...

It was explosive.

It was weird because initially, I wasn't in the mood to fuck him and he hardly gave me the foreplay that I was so used to and I certainly didn't give him the foreplay that I loved to give. I wondered if my pussy would even get wet enough for him. But from the moment he lay me down and entered me-I exploded and it was on and popping from there.

His awkward lovemaking was slowly turning me on. I felt like I could get used to his way. His touch-every sound, every facial expression he made, turned me on. Every step of the way, he surpassed my arousal times ten. So much so that I could barely fuck him back. I remained frozen stiff throughout the entire fuck. I could hardly move-consistently. He dominated everything all the way down to the way he fucked and thrust me. It was as if he just wanted to take and scrape it all. I eventually allowed him to use me every which way he wanted to. I had no other choice.

This second, time felt like what my first time was supposed to be like. I didn't know the how-many-eth time it was for him and I didn't care. I just

knew that from the moment I was with him this night, I felt like a virgin-all over again.

He more than busted my cherry (so it seemed), he also busted my fucking tear ducts because I cried silently while biting my own bottom lip as well, from the very moment he entered me throughout the entire fuck-the whole night. It felt unbelievable. I was a combination of: embarrassed, horny, virginal, sad, happy, worried, uptight and aroused. He didn't know what to think. All he could do was let all that he had inside of him-out, while he looked up at me wiping my tears:

“I wanted this so bad. I wanted you so bad. I thought about you for so long. You don't know how bad I wanted this moment. I'm so happy right now-girl, I'm so happy right now,” he confessed.

I still could not say anything back-I was still frozen. He was still doing all the fucking and grinding deep up into me while my eyes continued to roll in my head and my tears rolled down my face. I believed what he said. He had been fucking me that night like he had been alone with me inside his mind and in his dreams he kissed my lips a thousand times, and sometimes saw me walk outside his door.

Hello...

I was stunned. I placed my hands on top of one another, covering my lower stomach with my fingers and kneading my pussy-in an effort to keep his focus on and into my pussy only.

“Angie-you got some good pussy. This pus' is gooo-ed,” he pronounced and grunted, with his lips puckered again-looking like he was some thug, yet he was far from one. He seemed to pucker his lips when it would get good to him. I liked that. It was especially exciting because I always had a thing for opening my legs for my lover. So the thought of mounting him with my legs spread apart while he looked right down into my world as he slurped through his lips, was exciting to me. He would grunt, pucker and stare at my crouch-while enjoying the rhythm he had going; thrusting himself upward and deep into me with that concentrating look on his face-listening to the sound of himself going in and out of me but puckering his lips and looking into my world as if he could see the circumference of it all in x-ray vision.

It was a mess between us. He was digging from inside of me-a wet rush down onto him that was making all kinds of sounds that he was enjoying

like good music. Each thrust into me seemed to pop sparks inside of me, yet I still couldn't respond. He had a firm grip onto me and fucking me as if the top of me was not even there. He kept grunting and stroking up and into me harder as if he was going to fuck a verbal response out of me. He grabbed me by my waist and held me stiff, then began to grind up into me like he was punishing me for not fucking him back or telling him how much I loved it. I refused to say a word and do anything more than bite down on my jowls and gasp and moan-out for mercy. He was working hard and enjoying it so much. It was almost like had I told him I loved it-the fuck wouldn't have been as good. I couldn't talk if I wanted to, I could only gasp and squeal into the air. I was too stunned and speechless.

The more I gasped and squealed with my head falling back, the harder, deeper and slower he grinded up into me. I dug my nails into his arms, biting down on my teeth until my jaws and ears wanted to pop out the sides of my head.

I couldn't take it anymore.

I fell into his chest and bawled myself up like a snail while he lifted his legs up-nearly folding me; thrusting even deeper, and harder up into me. In an instant, he grabbed my shoulders to look me in the face: "Angie-Angie! Say you'll have my lil' girl, say you'll have my baby. Say it-say you'll have my baby."

Little did he know, those were the magic words that snapped me out of the daze I was in: immediately. I wanted him out of me, and I wanted me having this lil' girl from out of his mind: immediately.

"No, no!" I finally spoke.

"Please!" he kept asking-desperately. "Please have my lil' girl."

I could hear him near gargling-so I quickly lifted off of him but held my face into his chest while holding his dick with my both my hands; covering it completely as if I did not want any air to get in and spoil his moment or change what it was his dick was feeling while being inside of me.

I was insulating.

He was ejaculating.

I was jerking him.

I made sure every ounce rested in my hands-not inside me.

I wanted off of him-but he kept holding me like he didn't want to let me go.

As we got dressed and after, I never responded to anything he said to me for the duration of his stay-at all. I just wouldn't talk to him. I froze up-all over again.

It was time for Shana to make he and Wes leave so that we could straighten up the house before her mom came back home.

I walked towards the kitchen away from him and he came following me, backing me into the wall. He kneeled and dropped down to his knees to look up at me almost apologetically and like he had a 70's Billy-Dee Williams moment. It was so manly and romantic-his way. The way he frowned his brows and puckered his lips as if to say "ooh" when he would talk to me. It was a combination of lust and adoration; almost like my pussy was written all over his face. That's what turned me on more than anything about him. He looked at me the same way he did after we fucked, the way he did before we fucked. The same way he looked at me standing outside talking to me, in Wes' car and everywhere else. That look was there before and after.

He was so awkward, but sexy.

I was feeling just as awkward as I did before we fucked-standing there feeling just as awkward after. No less awkward while standing outside talking to him, in Wes' car and everywhere else.

I held my head downward but turned to the right some-not wanting him to look at me in the face. His placed his thick fingers to the sides of my face-trying to secure and center my face in his hands to look at him:

"Please talk to me. Tell me if I made you do something you didn't want to do?" he kept saying, over and over.

"No, I wanted it. I just have something on my mind, that's all," I responded.

To him, that must have sounded like this was goodbye forever:

"Angie, tell me. Is this the last time I'm going to see you again? Tell me," he demanded to know.

"No, no it's not." I responded.

"I'm going call you later tonight. Is that okay?" he asked.

He did.

We talked on the phone for a long time about the night we had and the days before it. All of a sudden, my other line rang. The male party asked: “Angie, what are you doing?”

I was confused because it didn’t sound like Santana, but I knew that the only other guy who had my telephone number was Pucker (on the other line).

The male party opposite Pucker started laughing in my ear. I was really confused then. It was Pucker using his parent’s line trying to confuse me. When we got back to our line he said to me: “Angie, I notice that you were nervous-real nervous, why? Why were you so nervous?”

I didn’t have a clear answer for him, but I did not tell him that I thought he was Santana either. We talked for a while longer, and then got off the phone.

We ended up cozying up on the phone pretty much the same time everyday-routinely- until my schedule changed because I had gotten a job at the hamburger joint that I had applied for work at, the same night I *officially* met him.

You see, we had originally first saw one another once while shopping for sneakers for Santana one Saturday afternoon-back when I was pregnant and home on one of my weekends from the pregnant jail.

He and Wes were in the sneaker store following Santana and me around every section that we turned to walk through. Pucker would make his way across from me-forcing me into eye contact. I managed to ignore him for a long time, but it was obvious that he was not going to leave the store until I acknowledged his presence at some point. I decided to look back at him, and he looked at me like a baby deer caught in headlights. I kept Santana preoccupied with conversation representative of my being his personal shopper, slash fashion critic, slash buyer; so as to distract him away from this guy and his buddy who totally invaded my space.

I didn’t think much of him at the time because he looked like an older guy. And by this time (and years into a relationship of normalcy with Santana); it was like my crushes on older guys and my flings with girls, was [what I thought it was]: a phase that would soon pass. So in that sneaker store, Pucker (in my eyes) was merely another cute older guy trying to get my attention. And I did not want to give Pucker the same

opportunity that I gave the last older guy that sequestered me the last time I was in a store with Santana. It was a nightmare for me.

It happened quite some time before I was to report off to the pregnant jail. I was no where near showing-in the face or stomach.

Santana and I had walked around to the store to buy all the things to calm and satisfy my cravings I was having: vinegar, pickles, peppermints and plain potato chips. Out of nowhere appeared this older man (who invaded both of our spaces as well). He looked at Santana with his arm around me then looked at me as if he had a flashback and remembered his own daughter was once in love the way were. He had a few choice words for me:

“Don’t let this young man ruin your life! Don’t let him mess your life up before you get to live it! You bea-u-ti-ful girl you! Don’t let him get you pregnant and make your life go down the drain! Don’t do it!” yelled this stranger- sounding like the ghost of my estranged dad who would rather burn in hell than to know that I was in the condition that I was in.

It caught both Santana and me by surprise and ruined my day. I was already waning in and out and back and forth about what I was going to do about the pregnancy. This all was too much for me. I looked around for my dad in that store. Santana and I hurriedly walked out having bought nothing. My taste buds were even affected: my cravings were no longer. I just wanted to go home and finish off the cry that had begun the moment I turned away from that strange man and burst through the doors of that store to head home. Santana was so hurt. That scene both haunted and traumatized the both of us. Neither one of us said a word to each other about it-ever again. He just held me while I cried myself to sleep.

So when Santana and I were sequestered in that sneaker store as Pucker followed us around; I would be damned if this was going to be a repeat of what had happened just a short time right before. Uh uh-no how! No way! I insisted. So I broke Puckers forceful eye-contact then coached Santana into picking out the nearest sneaker, and we hauled ass out of that store.

But Pucker seemed to reappear what seemed like every other time Santana and me would go for a walk around the block and down to the (haunted) corner store.

From the moment we would make it to the left side of the street to begin our walk down on the long main street, like clockwork-this blue

vehicle would be out in the distance blasting this classic jam by a group called "Cameo." As lyrics would play: "*Back-back-and-Fourth-and-Fourth. Our loves goes: Back-back-and-Fourth-Fourth. As we go...Back-back-and-Fourth-Fourth...*" I could tell when it would be moving closer to us, because they would sound clearer-back by a lot of base from his speakers. After about the third time this had happened, when I would hear it-my heart would begin to beat faster. Because just as disregarding to Santana's presence he was in the sneaker store-he was that same way when he would see us walking. It's just that when we were in the sneaker store, I had no idea that he was that *same* guy-all that time.

But this day in particular that he had come down the street blasting his music, it all came together-it was him, yet again. Each time we would see him, I would just lower my head and hold Santana's hand tightly, and he would grab mine even tighter. Even though Pucker was evasive, Santana knew I didn't know him-so we both just ignored him.

Pucker refused to be ignored though. His face was becoming more common to me; popping up in strange places all over the city. This next time, from behind the kitchen of a chicken joint he was working at. He was peeking out at me looking like Tyrin Turner peeking from behind the fence in awe of Janet and her crew in that Rhythm Nation video. It was strange-he was strange.

This time however, I was not with Santana. I was with my oldest brother's girlfriend-out shopping. It was the same day that my mom and Dana's mom's had Santana sequestered in the house, torturing him by breaking the fake news to him that I was gone out on a date to explore my options. Ironically, I *was* out without Santana, but rather, *being* explored:

"Hi, how are you doing?" he asked, feeling like it was his lucky day.

"I've seen you before! I've seen you before! Can I talk to you for a second?" he said, excitedly and as if his double-confirming that he had seen me before was enough to have earned him the right to have my hand in conversation.

I didn't respond to him, but rather, acted as if I didn't hear him; fidgeting through my purse as if I was preoccupied and digging for something-do or die.

"Can I be your friend?" he asked-urgently. It was so awkward.



I thought he was weird-because he was so eager and excited. But he was simply trying to get in on this first open opportunity he had seen me without Santana-which was a rarity for anybody to see.

I looked up at him and snapped at him: "I have the same boyfriend!"

He kept on insisting:

"I can be your friend. Can I be your friend? I can be your friend," he kept insisting-impatiently and awkwardly as if he was bargaining at his last chance at life.

I scolded him with my eyes and gave him the look of death. Because although it wasn't visible to him, little did he know, I had a possibility growing inside of me and it felt gross to me-having him in my face way.

We made it out of the chicken joint without my being plucked.

Pucker refused to be ignored however.

He appeared again-the day Shana and me were up at the mall shopping and picking up job applications. We ended up, last, in Walgreens. At the end of the store aisle I saw a man staring down the aisle as if he knew either Shana or me. I couldn't make out that I knew him and I was sure he didn't know me, so I moved out of his view and stood closer to Shana and whispered to her: "Girl, you didn't take nothing did you? 'Cause it's a man in here way down at the end of the aisle-following us from aisle to aisle!"

I had to double-check on that with Shana because she was cunning as they come. She was a very sweet girl with a soft-spoken and delicate way about her, but you had to watch her. She could steal the clothes off your ass and have you walking around not knowing you were naked.

Once, she borrowed a pair of my sneakers and I called her up to get them back from her. She did me one better-she brought them to me. She allowed me (and went out of her way) to make me see that she was returning them by sliding them right back under my bed. But sometime during her visit, she stole them right back from me. She was sneaky like that-so, you had to watch Shana.

"Girl I didn't take anything! I swear-she insisted.

I responded: "Girl, he keeps looking down this aisle at us like he knows one of us-or something."

She squinted and looked down the aisle but he had walked away.

Coast clear.

Another guy walked down the aisle, and up on Shana:

“Hi Wes!” yelled Shana into the guys face, they hugged.

She introduced us.

“I’m in here with my dude-you guys hanging out longer? How are you getting home?” asked Wes.

From the other end of the isle, that *same* man walked towards us slowly.

He nodded and spoke to Shana as if he knew her. She spoke back to him. Wes was whispering in her ear.

Low and behold, it was that *same* guy who drives up and down my street, who works at the chicken joint and disregards my boyfriend.

This time, I was outnumbered-everyone knew each other except me. Confidently, patiently and like a gentleman, he gave me his hand, and introduced himself to me by name.

I replied:

“Hi,” I said quickly, throwing my hand up then down: quickly.

“Angie is it okay if Wes takes us home?” asked Shana-in front of everybody.

I pulled her to the end of the isle:

“That tall man always tries to talk to me girl! No! Not if he’s with him!”

I laughed and gasped-thinking of how he seemed to show up everywhere I seemed to be.

In her high pitched voice, Shana replied:

“Girl that aint no man! That’s Wes’ and n’em’s boy. They all grew up together. They’re all around the same age. He’s only about a year or two older than you and me! He just looks older than us. He is **so** fine! All the girls chase him. He is fine! I don’t know what you’re talking about! You’d better get on with that one if he’s chasing you like that!”

I laughed and said:

“He’s so hairy and tall. Look at all that shadow hair on his face. He’s got hair all on his arms and shit girl. What sixteen to eighteen year-old boy looks like that!” I cringed.

Shana thought that was the funniest things she had heard all day.

We walked out and over to Wes’ car. Hairy got happy-thinking he was going to be able to sit next to me in that back seat that he stuffed himself

into with space left for me. Before seating could take its course, I told Shana to switch places with me so that I could sit in the front with her friend Wes-who was driving. And she could sit stuffed in the back with happy Hairy. She agreed. We got situated and starting heading home.

From the back seat, Hairy's long arm kept reaching for my arm.

He kept begging for conversation in that same bargaining and impatient way he did at the chicken joint that day. I would short answer his constant questions with my head turned downward and to the left, then I'd turn quickly back to the right to look out of the window.

We pulled up to Shana's house and I hurriedly opened that car door to get away from that man.

"Could I PLEASE talk to you for a second, one second-PLEASE," he pleaded as if he could not take the chase anymore. I looked at him and squinted my eyes as if I was seeing if I could trust him:

"Yeah..." I replied.

He looked surprised, and looked me in the eyes as if he trying to trust that I would not yell: "Psyche!"

I didn't.

We stood outside the apartment talking small talk.

"May I switch phone numbers with you?" he asked.

"I keep telling you that I have a boyfriend. I can't call you. And you can't call me!" I said-firmly, desperately hoping that it was enough to make him go away and I would never see him again.

"Please, let me call you. Call me then-please, I just want to talk you soooo bad," he pleaded.

I paused. I was trying to think of a question to ask him that would be a perfect exit and way out for me. We went at it-and fast-like a game of talking tennis:

*"Do you have a girlfriend?"*

"No."

*"Why?"*

"We just broke up."

*"What was her name?"*

"Yolanda."

*"Why did y'all break up?"*

"It just wasn't working out."

He was ready. He *refused* to lose-knowing that he would never get another chance at me like this again. I paused for a second then mechanically gave him my phone number while still squinting my eyes, and looking him in his.

He called me that night and the next few nights.

I decided that I liked him after all. He was good-looking and it was something awkwardly sexy about him that I could not resist. And the way he would talk to me would be like he was pulling my arm-afraid that if he let go, he would never talk to me again. I could tell that he liked me a lot. During one of our conversations, it turned out that he lived in the next community over from me. We joked about him stalking me and clocking me down to the usual time of day I would be walking to the corner store-which typically would be the time Santana made it up to the house after work, and we would go on our daily walk and talk.

I would laugh-listening to his awkward methodology and things he was telling me he was doing trying to get to me and how he had narrowed down the proximity of where I lived. Little did he know, at that time, all those times that he would stalk me and Santana walking down to the corner store, I was craving something vinegary, salty, pepperminty and pickled in taste. My possibility would be sending me to the store almost the same time everyday with that craving (unbeknownst to him) but I did not tell him that part...

Day by day, however, I warmed up to him-letting him in on everything but that. We talked about everything and enjoying getting to know one another.

Although I enjoyed our talks and thoroughly enjoyed our first night over at Shana's house and every other time we would get together, all bets were off when it came down to actually discussing Santana and me.

Pucker had no idea that all those months he was stalking me; I was with-child. He had no idea about all the transitions, transformations and changes I had gone through in my life during all those *very* same times he was pursuing me. And as far as I was concerned, none of it was his business or a topic in our many lengthy conversations in getting to know one another. The fact still remained (and as he had already known) I still had that same boyfriend. And he had no idea that by the time we first got together over Shana's mom's house that day, I was no longer with-child.

But he had a secret too. All that time I was keeping a secret from him-he was keeping a secret from me too: a girl at the hamburger joint I had applied to and was working at. My new friend who too, worked there with me...

**~ABOUT the AUTHOR~**

Angela Sherice is a writer and expressionist of:  
Erotic, Self-Efficacious, Introspective, Reflective and Metaphysical  
Literature.

**INGEST. FEEL EMPOWERED. BE ENLIGHTENED. GET INSPIRED.**

Get acquainted with her by visiting: <http://www.angelasherice.com>

