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### Chapter One

*You're going to die in fifteen days. Repent and change your abominable ways or you'll meet God's judgment. You are an abomination before Him. Either stop or you'll die.*

~Abomination Abolishers

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Her eyes bulged from her head as she read the words of the letter again. Stacey stuffed the stupid paper into the envelope as she entered the front door to Beyond My Status. The importance of the work she helped Rosalyn and Daniel do on behalf of the HIV positive community resonated deep within her. Some nights she dreamt about ways to help lobby to change the laws around HIV treatment for the Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) underprivileged.

“Stacey!” Rosalyn ran toward her. She took some of the things Stacey carried from her hands. She knew her protests against help fell on deaf ears with Daniel and Rosalyn, so she shrugged. Together, they walked toward the small conference room.

“Thanks. How is my baby girl?” Stacey smiled. “Been way too long since I came over to the house. You guys are sweet to change the meetings so I won’t have to drive so far.”

“Um as much as you could charge for your services, we should be coming to your house and doing laundry.” Rosalyn said. “You know our little princess has been talking since she arrived. Now we’re able to understand all of the words.”

Daniel peeked his head Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) into the room. “Ladies, I’m running to grab lunch. Subway or Chinese?”

“Chinese.” Stacey and Rosalyn said.

Daniel nodded. “I’ll get the usuals. Be back in about fifteen.”

Rosalyn winked at her husband. “I miss you already.”

“You guys give me hope for love. Black love.” Stacey sighed.

Rosalyn watched until her husband’s back disappeared. She whipped her head around. “You met someone?”

Stacey waved her hands and shook her head several times.

“Tell me about her.” Rosalyn clasped her hands together. “Does she know about your status? That you’re a minister?”

“No, Rosalyn. I’m single as the dollar bill. You guys just give me hope for love in general is all I’m saying.” Stacey said. She laughed. “Don’t start matchmaking. Again.”

Rosalyn shrugged. “You want some water while we wait for my boo thang to return?”

Stacey shook her head. “Let’s watch videos of the baby, before intelligible words.”

Daniel strolled Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) in to find Rosalyn and Stacey Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) huddled over Rosalyn’s tablet. Gurgles and laughs from

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the small speakers on the side of the tablet filled the room. Fragrance of fried rice, oranges and shrimp mingled in Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) the air. "One of my favorite sounds in the world."

"Me too." Stacey said. The slight orange flavor tickled her palette. After she ripped open the container Daniel placed in front of her.

Daniel placed dishes from a paper bag on the table in front of the ladies, and placed a third empty chair next to Rosalyn. He handed a torn envelope and half crumpled paper to Stacey. "Found this in the hallway. Think it fell out when Rosy took your load off."

"Load off? You so corny, Sweets." Rosalyn shook her head.

Stacey rolled her eyes. "You could have thrown that in the garbage. Some cuckoos saw the panel video about me being homosexual and a licensed minister. I still receive stuff every so often. Most people aren't as judgemental as I worried, but every religion has a few nut jobs."

Daniel grabbed the paper back. His eyes scanned the page. A vein throbbed in his forehead. "You need to take this to the police."

"Legally, I have nothing to report. They aren't going to do anything to whoever sent it because it is too vague and has no recognized sender. Waste of time and money all around." Stacey shrugged. "Nothing ever comes from those silly things. Some zealous nut who's forgotten they used to sin."

Rosalyn chewed and nodded.

"I'd be more comfortable if you told someone. What about that nice detective who helped you with the corporate espionage case last year?" Daniel pointed toward Stacey with his fork.

"Rosalyn, get your husband. Please."

Rosalyn shrugged. "I'm more concerned about the letter. How many?"

"Right. Let's focus." Daniel's eyes strayed to the letter. "We need to report this, Stacey. You could be in danger."

Stacey cleared her throat. "Not my type, but a nice guy. You and your wife are incorrigible."

"Equally yoked baby!" Rosalyn said. She gulped down a swig of water. "He and I just want you to be happy."

Sadness covered Stacey's Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) face for a moment. Slid down her spine and settled in Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) her lower back. "Yeah, me too."

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Daniel made eye contact with Rosalyn.

“Your concern is endearing, but until God and I are ready, I’m good on my own.” Stacey said.

Rosalyn patted Daniel’s hand. “Leave it alone, Sweets. Stacey is capable of deciding what she needs to do about her love life. Last thing she needs is pressure. Not after those bullies left her a mean letter.”

Stacey grabbed the envelope. “Why do you say they left it?”

“No address. Just your name.” Rosalyn flipped it over. She tapped the address space with the tip of her pinky. “Might not worry you, but it’d prompt a visit to the gun range from me. You and God are real tight.”

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Sweat poured down his wife’s brow for hours.

“Breathe, Phoebe, squeeze my hand. Yell. Just don’t stop pushing.” Solomon rubbed her back with one hand. He squeezed her hand in his other hand.

Phoebe’s skin looked clammy with each second, her pupils dilated and tears sprang to her eyes. She whimpered.

“I know it’s hard just don’t give up. She needs one more push.” Solomon rubbed the small of her back.

The doctor looked at the monitor. He nodded at Solomon.

“Ok. One last time.” Solomon braced himself for her to apply a vice like grip to fingers he believed to be misshapen forever from the first contraction. “I’m right here with you.”

“Arrrgggggghhhh.” Phoebe almost stood in the stirrups as the baby ripped through her legs.

The doctor scrambled to catch her. He looked at Phoebe for a moment as she collapsed onto the bed.

Her eyes zoned in on their daughter. A faint smile crossed her lips before her face distorted to a grimace.

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A nurse gathered the baby from the doctor after he cut the umbilical cord.

“She needs to deliver the placenta.” The doctor repositioned himself below the sheet covering Phoebe’s legs limp with fatigue.

Solomon placed a tender hand on his wife’s shoulder. He gave her a gentle shake. “Pheeb, she is beautiful we need another push Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) before you can hold her and breast feed.”

Phoebe didn’t move. The clammy look to Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) her skin deteriorated to an ashen gray. Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9)

“Phoebe.” The gentle shake became a fervent shake. Solomon’s voice grew louder. He jerked her shoulder harder. “Phoebe... Phoebe!”

A nurse followed the instruction of the doctor and pulled Solomon away from the love of his life. Mother of his child. Her fingers flew to Phoebe’s neck for a pulse.

Solomon watched the room transition from a delivery room to an emergency room. Taste of bile covered his tongue. The baby placed in the small cart and rolled over next to him in the corner. Small twitches and peaceful breaths. Her almost colored cheeks puffy and inviting Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) like her mother.

A defibrillator materialized and pads were attached to his wife’s body. Oxygen mask placed over her face forced her lungs up and down. The nurse checked for a pulse again. She shook her head. Blood gushed from her vagina like a waterfall.

“No!” Solomon stepped away from the sleeping blankets in the corner. “Fix it. Help her. Do something to resuscitate her. This is America. Women don’t die in childbirth!”

A nurse restrained Solomon from lunging toward the doctor. “Your wife is gone, sir. Nothing we can do. I’m so sorry!”

Solomon fell on his wife’s lifeless body. The shell of his soulmate. Scent of her sweat overpowered by the stench of despair. He envisioned old age and grandchildren to spoil with the wonderful creature lying motionless on a bed created to deliver life. “No. Phoebe, please. I need you. No. Phoebe, please.”

Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) The doctor reached for him.

The Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) nurse stopped the doctor from pulling Solomon away from his wife’s body.

“Why?” A low Open My Heart (Wholeness Series Book 9) long groan pushed from Solomon and traveled through the soul of every person in the room. A droll longing seeped into every fiber of his being. The sadness in his toes spread to the ends Open My Heart (Wholeness

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Series Book 9) of the hair on his head.

“Solomon.” Rosalyn rushed into the room.

Daniel stood behind Rosalyn next to the small bassinet holding the baby.

Solomon clung to his wife’s midsection still large from housing the only child they would create together instead of the first of the many children they planned to parent. His tears soaked through the gown and streams of tears ran down her thighs. Puddles began to form on the floor beneath her.

“Let him be, Rosy.” Daniel placed his hands on Rosalyn’s shoulders.

Rosalyn’s shoulders trembled as she watched her best friend’s husband try to pull her lifeless body into his arms.

Daniel turned his wife around and pulled her face into his chest. “Let it out. He and the baby are going to need us.”

Rosalyn’s shoulders shook for several minutes as memories of her time with Phoebe ran through her mind as quick as the tears fell from her eyes.

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