

Three's A Charm

By

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Chapter 1

This was day twenty of year nineteen in their marital prison. A day as cold and relentless as the frigid winter mornings in the city of the famous “Green Monstah”. Waking up to the screeching sound of a blaring fire truck siren racing down the vacant side streets of Boston was just as effective as any screaming alarm clock, waking everyone up for yet another busy day in the “rat race”. The loud screeching siren from the fire truck woke Monica instantly. Her heart was pounding and she had a look of shock and then exasperation. She looked at the handsome male figure that laid quietly next to her sound asleep as if nothing had happened. He turned over looked at her, and she touched his face, smiled and got up from the bed.

They lived in a bustling part of the city. In the early morning darkness, the lights of the city illuminating sky, you could see the Charles River, as the back of their brownstone faced Storrow Drive. From their roof deck they had an incredible view of the Boston Skyline that included the iconic Citgo sign. The sun was beginning to rise, so, Monica headed to the bathroom to prepare herself for the day. She walked in and closed the door, turned the light on and looked herself in the mirror.

“Hey, baby, I’ll be home from work late again this evening”. The voice of her husband peirced through the bathroom door a few moments later.

“Okay”, she responded. Monica felt a sense of sorrow. This had become a common occurance of having to get used to being without her husband. The kids were older now. It’s become increasingly more obvious that their Dad wasn’t home as much lately. *How did I allow myself to get to this point in my life?* She didn’t like whom she’d become. She pulled herself together and showered, dressed, and called for the twins to come down for breakfast. Today was a different day, a special day because, today was Martin Luther King’s Birthday. The family had plans to attend a special brunch in his honor at their church. Today, Monica also promised

herself that she would not feel sorry for herself, today she was not going to think about where their relationship was going.

The family was having breakfast when Adam walked in texting on his phone. Monica was standing at the kitchen island drinking a glass of orange juice looking at the television, as it was playing in the next room. The local news station WBZ was running a report on a new candidate that had joined the senate race. They were at a MLK Day breakfast celebration in the city. It caused Monica to take notice when she heard the voice. It was a very familiar voice.

“So, everyone meet Derrick Longwood. He is no stranger to Boston. He was born and raised right here in Boston. Get used to him! He’s going to running in the state primaries this coming June”, said the news reporter.

“Thank you. That’s right, I was raised in Roxbury. I love Boston! I attended Howard University and Harvard Law School”, said Derrick.

“So Derrick, tell our viewers why this MLK Event is important to you”, asked the news reporter.

“Thank you, Jess. This event is important to our community and that’s why I’m here. We need to have a dialogue that addresses the needs of the African-American community, and I’m here for that conversation and to be a voice for the people”, said Derrick.

“Will this be the only event that you will doing today”, asked Jess.

“No. I’ll be at Jubilee Baptist Church later this morning”, he answered.

“Well there you have it folks. If you want to get to know Derrick Longwood, head over to his campaign website or catch him this morning at the Jubilee Baptist Church”, stated Jess as she threw it back to the studio. Derrick was sharp as a tack mentally and physically, and ended the interview by flashing that killer, million-dollar smile.

He's still as handsome as I remembered. I can't believe he's going to be at Jubilee today. How ironic? Monica couldn't stop thinking about her former college boyfriend. *Ah, he still gives me butterflies.* She snapped out of her thoughts immediately when her daughter Kailyn, "Kai", began calling her name.

"Mom! Oh Mom! Mom!", nearly screaming at the top of her lungs, Kai was eager to get her mother's attention.

"Yes, Kai! Geez! Why are you yelling?" Monica answered a bit exasperated.

"Are you okay", asked Kai.

"I'm totally fine. I was just in my thoughts for a moment", Monica answered. "What is it? What were you calling me for?"

"We have to get going, Mom. We're going to be late for the breakfast at the church", said Kai.

"Where's your sister?"

"Right here, Mom", answered Alex as she walked into the kitchen eating a banana.

"I'll meet you guys there babe. I have to leave early. I have surgery a six hour surgery that begins at 1 PM", said Adam.

"Okay", said Monica.

The family poured out of the house heading to the MLK Day Brunch at their church. Of course, in the African-American community this is a day of reflection and reenergizing the purpose for moving forward into the future. The brunch service was inspiring and uplifting. There were phenomenal motivational speakers and praise dancers and lots of gospel singing. It was something that Monica needed today. It was therapeutic to her soul and spirit. She felt a sense of overwhelming joy throughout the entire service. The family was having brunch with

other guests of the event when Adam's phone began to vibrate on the table. It was around eleven thirty am.

"Baby, I have to go", Adam said to Monica as he stood and gathered his coat.

Monica nodded. Adam said his goodbyes to everyone politely as he left, and stopped and greeted the Pastor on his way out of the door.

Ugh, he's so predictable. Monica was so disgusted by her husband's fake demeanor. She couldn't help but to roll her eyes.

"Monica Harrison! Is that you?", a familiar male voice came from behind her. Monica turned around. It was Derrick Longwood.

"It's Monica Storrow now", she answered.

"Wow! Aren't you a sight for sore eyes? How are you? How's your practice", he asked.

"I'm well! I can't complain. I saw you on the news this morning. How's the campaign efforts going", asked Monica.

"It's going great! Listen, I'm glad that you mentioned the campaign. I'd love it if you'd join our team! I need all of the help and support that I can get", Derrick threw in that killer smile.

"Sure. Whatever you need. What's the point of being friends if you can't call on one when you need them?", said Monica.

"Exactly! Great! Here's my card. Do you have a card?", he asked.

Monica smiled and handed him her business card.

"Listen, I'm going to give you a call soon. Let's do lunch! I want to run some ideas by you", Derrick said as he was being pulled in another direction to meet potential supporters.

"Sure! Nice seeing you Derrick. Take care", said Monica.

After the MLK Day brunch activities Monica came back home, after dropping Kai and Alex off at the mall with friends. Monica threw on her favorite sweats, fixed herself a cup of English

Breakfast tea, lit a lavender candle and sat down at her desk in her office to look over some files. She spent quite a bit of the afternoon reading and studying. Each sip of the tea comforted her like a mother's arms. She thought of Adam and how nonchalant he always acted about his infidelities. A year ago Monica had threatened to leave and take the kids when she found the photos of him with another woman in his phone, and he promised again that it wouldn't happen again. *What a jerk! I know that you're cheating again, you asshole!* Monica's thoughts were getting the best of her. She was looking online at their phone records. It was obvious. *He doesn't even have the decency to cover it up anymore!*

Just then the front door opened. "Hey Ma!", it was a deep voice and then the same from two younger voices. It was Roman, Kai, and Alex.

"Ma, what are you doing?", as the beautiful head hair and handsome manly face of Monica's oldest child, Roman, peaked into the office. Monica looked startled for a moment.

"Hey son! I'm so happy to see you. Come give your Momma a hug. I thought that you weren't coming in until tomorrow", says Monica with open arms as she stood up from sitting in her plush leather executive office chair.

"I know, but I was able to catch an earlier flight. I caught up with the twins at South Station", said Roman.

Roman had arrived in town for National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) conference.

"Hey! Where's Dad? I thought that he and I could go hang out", Roman looked bewildered as his mother looked at him equally perplexed.

"Your father will be home later this evening", she said with slight hint of an attitude and left the response as vacant as her heart was becoming for this man she called her husband.

"Ma, is everything alright between you and Dad", asked Roman.

“Don’t you worry about your father and I. We’re fine. “Come let me fix you kids something to eat”.

Monica cooked, ate, and laughed with her kids. It was a good time. They always had good times together as a family, and that included Adam. Until recently, the kids had no exposure to his infidelity, it was seamless. If it weren’t for Monica’s women’s intuition, and investigative skills, she’d probably be oblivious to it too.

Monica’s cell phone began to vibrate. It was an unusual text coming from her friend and accountant, Isaac St. James.

His text read as follows: “Hi Monica! Sorry to bother you, would you have time to meet for a coffee or tea tomorrow? I have something that I would like to run by you”.

Hmm, I wonder what he wants? It is not tax season, technically, yet, she thought as she chuckled under her breath.

She responded: Sure thing! <Smiling emoji>

The front door opened. It was Adam. He came in looking like “new money”. He was fresh and clean. Lately, he did his best to never come home smelling of another woman, but his over zealous attitude always gave him away. “Dad!”, the kids gleefully yelled as he walked in the door.

Monica began clearing the dishes and getting the kitchen back in order as Adam and the kids headed down to the family room in the basement. *Ugh, I can’t stand it! He drives me insane!* Monica thought as she put the food and dishes away.

Monica headed upstairs to her bedroom, showered and got dressed for bed. As she climbed into her bed and began to relax into the coolness of her thousand count linens, her phone vibrated again. It was Isaac. He’d sent another text.

His text read as follows: "I'm looking forward to seeing you tomorrow. It's been a minute. I hope things are well with you. Do you remember that time we did the Boston Runners Club Scavenger Hunt back in college? I just thought about how hot it was that day and how much fun we'd had. It's a far cry from today considering how cold it is outside. Anyway, I'll see you tomorrow".

Wow, I wonder what's gotten into Isaac. I know that he recently got divorced. Okay, it's been about two years but still. Monica smiled at the kind gesture and at the text. This time she didn't respond.

"What are you smiling about", says the jerk standing about 6'7" in the doorway staring at Monica.

"Adam, what the hell are you talking about?", she responded.

"Who are you talking to", says Adam.

"Why do you care? You don't want me any way. You would rather continue to be the cheating jerk that you are", Monica says sternly as she sits up in the bed.

"Here we go again! Are you serious? I told you that I'm not fooling around anymore. Are you that damn insecure? Do you have to assume that every time that don't come home early that I'm cheating on you? Hell, I was working! I was in a six-hour surgery! At this point, the two were shouting at one another. It was quickly becoming a toxic relationship.

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I do. You've given me every reason to question your behavior. You've hurt me too many times", she yelled.

"Okay! You win! Stop it! Please, Missy, please!", he promised as he moved closer and sat down on the bed next to Monica. He touched Monica's hand resting on her legs. Adam always called Monica "Missy" when he wanted something, and at one time she loved that name.

Monica began to cry uncontrollably. “Why are you still here Adam? Why don’t you just leave?”, she asked.

Adam began to cry too. He never wanted to hurt his wife. He truly does love her. He went to hold Monica and she pushed and hit him, but then gave in, and kissed him. It had been months since they’d been intimate. He’d tried many times and Monica had shot him down.

“I can’t leave you Missy. You’re the only woman that I’ve ever loved. You’re the woman that I love. You’re the mother of our beautiful children”, the most beautiful words lingered on lips as his huge beautiful well-manicured hands grasped her chin and lifted her lips to his. He kissed her again.

He grabbed her, took her silk night gown off of her, slipped off her panties, picked her up and laid her down and began to kiss her from head to toe. He licked and sucked in places that would make any woman stay. No one ever said that this man didn’t know how to make love. The problem is that he’d been sharing this “gift” with everyone else. In the moment, Monica was swept up by his “abilities”, and she began to let herself enjoy what was happening to her body. It had been so long since she’d felt his touch. She’d almost missed it. As she slipped into instant bliss, and a sense of euphoria, it quickly came to a screeching halt as the last woman that he cheated with entered her mind. She thought of the photos that she saw of them together in his phone, and instantly she felt tense and disgusted with every single touch.

In her mind she thought, *No, I can’t do this. I’m not ready.*

“Adam stop! I can’t do this”, Monica yelled and began to cry as she pushed him away.

“What is it now? What did I do wrong? I can’t take this shit! This is ridiculous Monica! I told you that I was sorry. You’re my wife! You’re supposed to make love to me.”, Adam got up from the bed naked and upset and went into the bathroom.

Monica laid in bed curled up in a fetal position crying. She didn't care that Adam was upset with her. She wasn't going to be intimate with him until she felt like it, and right now that doesn't look like it will happen anytime soon. She picked up her cell phone and looked at the text message from Isaac. She began to find a sense of comfort in his words. Although, innocent, his words were genuine. She wasn't sure how genuine Adam was anymore. She didn't feel like she could trust that he was not seeing anyone else. She'd become so disgusted by Adam that she couldn't stomach the thought of being with him intimately anymore. They'd just gone through an episode of him being unfaithful not long ago.

Adam's cell phone was on the side table and it began to vibrate. Monica turned over to look and the name that came across the screen was, "Terri L.". Adam emerged from the bathroom showered and fully dressed. He took a look at his cell phone. He began to act weird, and said that he needed to get out of the house. He claimed that he was going to the gym to burn off the extra energy and that he'd be back later. Monica nodded and went to the bathroom showered, dressed and returned to bed.

Monica picked up her cell phone and texted Isaac back.

She responded: "I can't wait to see you tomorrow too".

She placed her phone back down and turned over. With the television playing a marathon of "The Golden Girls" in the background, Monica thought about seeing Isaac the next day as she slowly drifted off to sleep.