

Tekila

Nika

The Forbidden Bronx Video
Diary Tales

BABE
CHARISSE
WORTHINGTON

A Disilgold Urban Joint!
www.DisilgoldBooks.com
Disilgold.com
Bronx, New York

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Disilgold
P.O. BOX 652
Baychester Station
Bronx, NY 10469

For interviews and media: Email Heather Covington Publicity:
Disilgold@aol.com
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CRITICAL PRAISE FOR *TEKILA NIKA*

“Nothing is most important in making a mistake than learning from it!”

-Katrina Bills, Renown YGA Award Winning
Erotica Poetry Writer

“Heather Covington is a writer who speaks for and taps into the struggles and hopes and aspirations of a people striving for their piece of the American pie. Through her words via an ‘urban vernacular’ she has made a crochet of what it is to be human.”

-Bruce George, Co-Founder of Def Poetry Jam
www.BruceGeorgeMedia.com

“Heather Covington is more than a writer, but a visionary whose writing style hits the hotspot. A hot urban writer is born.”

-Harold Overton, President of Long Walk Entertainment

“The novel, Tekila Nika, reminds us that lasting friendships and unity for a worthy cause are the real benefits of joining a book club. The women of the “Bronx Divas are Readers” Book Club are sassy, alluring, witty and masterful. If I were Tekila Nika Jones, Jr., I’d stay off the streets, because these book club members are on an inimical mission. Tekila Nika is a reader’s gem from DisilgoldSoul!”

-Author Kevin M. Weeks, The Street Life Series
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“I love it! The book is real, with real people, right out of your and everyone's life. You are a great writer. World class.”

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“A lethal stroke of rare genius with sensuous and breathtaking writing appeal that makes your heart stop!”

-Paul Stevenson
Bronx Computer Technician

“A Disilgold Urban Joint with high-chic rolling energy, daunting murd-erotic humor and thriller suspense that will hauntingly glue your eyes to every page and make you lose your breath. Get the movie in a book you've been craving. Heather Covington's bringing the Literary HEAT!”

-A New York Fan Since Day 1

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work of fiction to all of the writers and dreamers in search of a better life. May your story bring you the wealth and success you deserve. And—special thanks to my Disilgold Soul Magazine YOUNity Reviewers Guild of America family and all past, present and future supporters who believed in my eternal quest to become, “The Writer!”

Babe Charisse Worthington
aka Heather “The Literary Heat” Covington
www.Heather-Covington.com

Author of National Bestseller “Literary Divas: The Top 100+ Most Admired African American Women in Literature,” A NAACP IMAGE AWARD NOMINEE & THE 2007 AFRICAN AMERICAN PAVILION @ BOOK EXPO TONI TRENT PARKER AUTHOR OF THE YEAR!

ABOUT BABE CHARISSE WORTHINGTON

Babe was born in the poorest and most rundown ghettos of the Bronx. At age 3, her father and mother separated, leaving her in the hands of a single and unemployed mother who was too proud to acquire welfare, but found a way to support herself through school and soon became a NAACP TEACHER OF THE YEAR. Her history dates back to the Dr. Martin Luther King "Sit in" Demonstrations and boycotts.

Their apartment was extremely cold in the winter and air conditioners were not allowed in the summertime. Her brother caught pneumonia 4 times and suffered with a heart murmur, but went on to become a child prodigy and miraculously conditioned his body with weight lifting later on.

Neighbors often had quarrels. Prostitutes and homeless people roamed the staircases. Police cars and fire sirens could be heard on a daily basis. The elevators were always broken and filled with stench from raw-urine and animal feces. Unpainted walls pealed with lead paint, and bathing water was always tepid and never hot. Only hard cheese and stale bread was issued to residents. Gangsters lined the projects from corner-to-corner and equipped with knives, guns and weapons. Graffiti defaced the landscaping and buildings.

Babe Charisse Worthington, a poet, had to fight for her life everyday. She learned to stay out of trouble by reading poetry and scholarly books while indoors. She said no to peer pressure, drugs, guns, violence and gang-life and vowed one day, she would move her family out of the ghetto, but would never sell her soul like many of her childhood friends, now dead and gone. She decided she would support herself through school and become a teacher, too. Today, she is a self-made journalist, educator, media mogul, member of the Tau Omega ladies of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. and promoter who places herself in the fictitious stories she creates. No one really knows why, not even Babe Charisse Worthington.

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I thank God for your guidance, perseverance and the strength you have given me to endure all of life's obstacles and prevail with respect, dignity, integrity, determination and a profound love for mankind. You want me to write stories with hidden messages and warnings about real life and so, I shall follow your direction and guide people to your greatness because all I have is myself, YOU and those I love!

I thank the students I have been blessed to teach. You are my soul inspiration. Your dreams remind me of my dreams as a youth. They will become a reality one day! Keep the faith. You found me as an adult. Great! Pass on my legacy and become a legacy. I was born to shine and so were you!

I thank the authors, publishers, writers, literary professionals I have been blessed to meet and poets who have motivated my soul and journey from writer to novelist. Visit Disilgold.com for my ongoing listing of acknowledgements. My writing heart beats for YOU! Wishing you literary success!

I thank my sisters of Tau Omega, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. for your continuous support since day one and my extended literary family on all online forums. Keep the faith.

I thank those people growing up who cared enough to support my family and I, and never expected anything in return. My gift is my writing. It's all I have to bring. Enjoy.

COURAGE
is the ability
of a Queen to stand alone
until her greatness is matched
with a King who respects her reign
and accepts the fact,
that behind every
great man on
earth is a
WOMAN!

PROLOGUE

An amateur video reveals a reporter on New Year's Day, 2008 at the most notorious crime scene in Bronx history.

REPORTER:

“Tekila Nika Jones Jr. is found dead in the Tekila Men's Nightclub on Boston Road at 4 a.m. this morning. Reportedly, several women may have mutilated his body last night which was found stuffed in a very large ice box along with broken Chardonnay and Beringer wine bottles. Almost every limb of the victim's body was severed with lacerations applied by what authorities believe to be a meat cleaver, razors, utility butcher knives and industrial-like saws. Resources say the victim's fully detached genitals were left on the ground premises of the popular Bronx local nightclub. It is unclear why a bloody coded trail mixed with ketchup and gasoline was left by these female man killers. Additionally, the mysterious letters F. F. F. & L.T. were written on several napkins strewn about with traces of Tequila. It hasn't been released yet on just how many women participated in the most brutal and bizarre murder in Bronx history, but 12 different lipstick colors possibly owned by Tekila's murderers were found smeared all over the smoked glass mirrors in his nightclub which may point to revenge. As you can see, Nika Jones, Sr., the father of the murdered victim is now being arrested outside of his own nightclub across the street from the Tekila Men's Nightclub and apparently taken into custody. Reports have it, the father and son had been feuding over women, money disagreements and ownership of the renown Tekila Men's Nightclub, and rumors are

circulating from bystanders here that he could have been responsible for this heinous and ruthless hit on his own son survived by his mother, Teakil “Tea” Rose, which may allege a staged murder. Other local residents say this is a clear example of revenge by possibly 12 scorned and male-hating women being dubbed by local residents as Santa’s Elves on a mission this holiday to kill, and who may have had relations with Tekila Nika Jones, Jr. If indeed, there are 12 women involved, none have been found. Tekila Nika Jones Jr., dead at 38. Again, the most brutal murder ever reported in the history of the Bronx. This is Bill Preston E. Washington of Bronx Limited Press News!”

A beautiful and voluptuous woman wearing a long Christian Dior gown glides across her living room floor and turns off the DVD video footage on her monitor. Her arms are glazed with an obvious bronze hue from a sugar scrub treatment. Her face shines with a honey brown iridescence and that just washed look. Her thickened hair locks gently cascade down the mid-drift of her perfectly sculpted back.

She then switches her monitor to camera mode. Her full frontal body appears on the screen as she slowly steps away before sitting atop her white leather sectional sofa. She gazes into the camera lens with a nasty and contemptuous look on her face that might be mistaken for a ghetto girl attitude instead of a woman owning complete confidence in herself from head-to-toe.

She has soft luscious lips masked in cherry red gloss and darkly-lined eyelids subdued by glossy-tinted and darkened opal-colored eyes. Her soul looks wretched and hungry, yet calm and reserved. Her apartment is trimmed with remnant traces of Christmas decor and a string of reddish blinking lights against a smoked wintry window covered with hints of steam condensation. Water droplets trickle down the window thanks to the toasty heat from her radiator topped with a wooden counter top decorated with festive red-velvet cloth. An old-fashioned radio sits atop it and softly plays a Christmas medley of hits like Stevie Wonder’s version of Ave Maria and Nat King Cole’s version of “The Christmas Song.”

The lady finally pounces onto her couch and looks dead into the lens of her camera. Her bold eyes are riveting and exude pulsating glances filled with natural sensuality. Her name is Babe Charisse Worthington.

She casually reaches for her laptop and clicks it on. Then she types in her password. All along, she's gazing at her camera. A soft jazz melodic tune can now be heard over the Christmas music.

Dear Video Diary,

Right now I am listening to the late Nina Simone's new remix album on my MYSPACE page, and thinking about the millions I am walking away with because I, Babe Charisse Worthington, am THE WRITER and worth it!

Good riddance to the man in my life I just kicked to the curb yesterday. He thought a sister was going to work 5 jobs while he watched cartoons and dreamed his fucking life away. I don't think so! Then he's got the nerve to always put a woman down for trying to work and look good!

My hair has grown down my back. My nails are healthy and long. My body is in the best shape it has ever been, and my bi-annual physicals got me pegged as the healthiest BABE in town. My mammography, HIV and HPV tests are negative, and I don't have diabetes or high cholesterol. I am feeling *so* good! I love my temple and am going to keep myself up this time.

And—for all of those cheap magazines who wouldn't pay a sister for her freelance work unless she stripped down naked like a video vixen, and while I struggled to enrich the world with my intellectual creativity, I'm richer baby! Fuck you! You'll be out of business in a minute.

Even five dollars would have helped as a token of appreciation. Babe almost starved to death, had the lights turned off and missed bill payments because folks just didn't care about a black woman's well being. Those folks gonna' fall hard when they get to the top. "I'm not sayin' nothing" like Kanye West. God don't like the greedy and he curses those who take from the poor.

Only 11 days left and I'll be coasting along the isles of Caymen Island's Seven Mile Beach with its casuarina trees and waterfront

condominiums. Um, I can just taste its shallow sandbars. Just imagine me swimming in ultra clear waters with coolness against my cocoa brown skin and the new man of my life I am going to meet when I get there, but I need to get focused here.

I only have a few days left to find out who these women were that killed Tekila–Nika–Jones,–Jr. on New Year’s Eve, 2008. There’s this fast growing publication called Jamer-On American Magazine who prides itself on publishing groundbreaking news. They want to pay me handsomely for this story.

No doubt, Tekila was the finest man who ever walked the face of the earth, but now he’s dead by the hands of 12 scorned women who left their lipstick marks on the mirrors of his Tekila Men’s Nightclub. I, Babe Charisse Worthington, am going to find out who these women were since the case has been shut down here in New York. I guess Tekila had the police in gridlock and afraid to move.

No one cares about a drug-toting gangster criminal in New York City unless he’s giving away cash anyway. All I know is that I gotta’ get out of New York and fast. There’s nothing for me here. Seen everything and been everywhere. Don’t like the clubs. Don’t like those celebrity parties with fake folks profiling. Don’t like the fast life. Don’t like a damn thing.

Folks are getting hostile and rude. Money, power, drugs and crime rule the day. I can’t even walk outside anymore without watching my back and carrying my piece. Been robbed three times like the streets are a fucking video game. Well, game over buddy. The next time I get robbed, I am taking the criminals down because they are shooting pretty ass women like me in broad daylight. Can you believe this shit? These men don’t care if you’re a dime in New York.

Kids need to know what’s up in the streets from day one because that’s who’s getting mixed up in these gang wars. The kids are all I care about. They call me Ms. Worthington. But–what does today’s man call a black woman in New York? Shawty? Humph, that’s just another secret word for bitch.

Besides, I need a mansion so I can spread out and concentrate on the novels I’ve been dying to complete before my obsession

kills me. New York ain't for everyone. People are confused and identifying with their cultures and status more than human beings living next door to them who could very well save their lives in a crisis.

I have to admit, when I heard some robbers in the apartment next door to me before that family moved out, I didn't bother to call the police. Those folks never spoke to me anyways. So on that note, I am going to have to come back-and-forth to share my thoughts because like I said, I don't have much time. Time is money in New York City! And—it's time for Babe to shine and get mine! For those who don't want me to shine, you can suck on these baby! They're as real as the 1 million dollars I'm about to make!

Mwah,
Babe Charisse Worthington
Bronx Photojournalist and Resident

Babe walks up to her camcorder and smacks it with a wet luscious kiss leaving lipstick traces. Her ample breasts slip out of her gown exposing two full boobs which she sensually catches before tucking away and flipping her long black hair to the side and shutting it down. She's one of those sexy by accident broads with real hair, real tits, and real nails!

PART 1

VALENTINE'S DAY
2007

SCENE 1

THE BRONX DIVAS ARE READERS BOOK CLUB MEETING

February 14, 2007

“Well ladies, welcome to our first Bronx Divas are Readers Book Club meeting of the year in the illustrious Panera Bakery-Ca-féeeeeeeeeee!”

India ranted with pride as she flung her well-toned arms full span in the air after beating on her lap with a long drawn out drum roll. She gazed into a video camera handheld by Devia, the newest book club member of 2007.

She definitely sounded like an Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority girl with that sick girlie girl shrill to her voice. Her gold bangles jingled as she twirled her fingers in a circular genie fashion to expose her French manicured nail tips precisely done by Joaqui Nail Salon, a Bronx Dominican Queen of style.

Her elite book club members cheered louder and louder. India believed in perfection, so she wore the best designer clothes and not cheap frills or bargain clothes from Target. Her trick was raiding Bloomingdales P.O.S. markdown racks from last season. It was like she had a spell over her book club members when she spoke in a fake French accent with a ghetto twang. India's dark mocha complexion mesmerized people because her skin was flawless and noticeably soft unless she self-treated herself with facials which agitated her skin, but only temporarily. She looked like a cross between rapper Foxy Brown and singer Angie Stone

after working out on the Celebrity Fit Club on VH1 with advice from Dr. Ian Smith, author of *The Smash Fat Diet*. That man would make any woman want to work out. The book club was determined to participate in his national 50 Million Pound Challenge and drop all of that unsightly fat.

The book club members flooded the email box of Beverly Black Johnson, editor-in-chief of *Heavy Divas by Design* with requests to feature India, but the editor had just completed compiling the book, *Gumbo for the Soul* that received endorsement from the one and only tv personality, Tavis Smiley, so the ample India had missed her calling.

Those late-nights spent curling 10 pound dumbbells and working out to Tae Bo video workouts while sitting at her computer reading Advanced Review Copies of soon to be best selling books had paid off, but she complained about her booty spreading. She had an obsession with losing weight all of the time even though she was a bonafide fox in most straight men's eyes.

She knew she looked curvaceously pleasing by the stares of men standing outside the bakery after she worked out at Bailey's Fitness gym, but if she sat down the wrong way, she would notice mounds of fleshy cellulite that would force her to point her toes on the ground as she sat to elevate her thighs off of a chair and make that rippled look disappear. India knew all the tricks of the trade as a former plus sized model for Sears Department Store Catalog.

Regardless, she was a certified diva who loved imitating Oprah's intros on her talk show when fab celebrities would come out, and could do radio talk show host Wendy Williams's Drama Queen impersonation to perfection as she twitched her nose in the air as if to say, "I'm the *IT* lady and you better work it girls."

Most around the way girls couldn't hang with India or her book club's high maintenance routines. They were the kind of women who would shout out tacky celebrities who took photos with chipped nail polish in tabloids. They frequented events just to get mug shots and post them on their MYSPACE page to embarrass celebs who thought they were too cute to holler at the Bronx Divas are Readers Book Club members. These ladies had it going on.

There was no time to feel sorry for oneself over the haves and have nots or physical imperfections in India's life. India got this advice from listening in to Shirley's Strawberry Letter on The Steve Harvey Morning Show. She didn't care if MediaTakeOut.com fans were shouting out celebs physical features who had more in the back trunk. Dark-skinned and curvaceous, India fancied her book club meetings after her favorite talk shows for the sheer excitement of it all, and wore her hair to match Tyra Banks whenever this former Super Model and talk show host changed her style.

Tyra's show was soon coming to New York, *the Big Apple*, so India couldn't wait to be on the show with her idol. A magazine fanatic, she got her outfit ideas from In Style, Ebony, O!, Sister2Sister, Vogue, Elle, Essence, Jewel, Sophisticated Black Hair, Black Hairstyle Magazine, Today's Black Woman, Center Stage Magazine, SwingUptown, Vibe Vixen magazines and Disilgold SOUL Magazine Online Fashion Review, and not those cheesy magazines with those stinky vixens looking desperate for fame or unoriginal stock photos of has been celebs in the industry who had been around the block and back. Of course, Vivica Fox, Halle Berry and Janet Jackson were an exception to the rule.

India may not have been perfect, but she had great style, and was always bright and fresh looking. She smelled good, too. Her favorite fragrance was Beautiful by Estee' Lauder, and a few new fragrances from celebrities that made the cut. A diva attitude was a necessity to run a book club as popular as the Bronx Divas are Readers Book Club. Their goal was to get recognized by Hollywood and earn a reality Tv show based on the life and times of their book club members.

These sexy, high-heeled wearing and book loving fashion crazed women had taken over the Bronx and internet as the most hated critics on the planet for their outlandish and personal reviews. You either had a 5 star book or would receive a trashy review.

You couldn't call them an ordinary book club. These ladies had reached over 700,000 visitors online that frequented the new

state-of-the-art Bronx Library within months of grand opening day thanks to an outdoor membership campaign and a free T-shirt give-away contest. Fordham prep was right next door so they had the world at their long manicured fingertips.

They all could have appeared on Donald Trump's Apprentice Show like Stacie J., but rather enjoyed impressing one another. What else was there to do? They even booked 107.5 FM, HOT 97, V103FM and 105.1 FM vans to their events to attract attention to themselves.

Distributing tens of thousands of brochures within a month that were designed from their laptops, and linking folks to their private online website for booklovers was a regular routine. They depended on India who was not so shy about networking in Manolo Blahnik pumps and Apple Bottom Jeans with her online literary video diary e-grams.

She lured tens of thousands of male authors to join her online book club forum with ease, but never let the frisky ones step one foot near her. A few tried to pull publicity stunts to gain attention for their books and good reviews, but India always remained professional and sent horrible books back to the sender with her honest reviews even if they got mad and threatened to write about her in their next book. India was a true businesswoman and shrewd! Many resented her for this reason, but she held her ground as one of the best Bronxite reviewers in town. Sometimes her reviews were off and books turned out to be hits, but she never apologized for her reviews. India had pride and loved some rap music thanks to daily doses of her hottest rappers on Angie Martinez, Funk Master Flex, Jazzy Joyce, Coco Chanel, Miss Jones and Ed Lover's Shows. That's how she acquired her attitude!

The book club members stood up and cheered some more when the hot Caramel Lattes, Cappuccinos and Espressos arrived. Then they held their mugs in their hands with fingernails all topped with black and burgundy shades, the new in-season colors that were truly ugly as hell on most women with unkept and ashy looking hands.

India cut the book club's anniversary Kente-cloth ribbon

celebrating 3 years of service to the African-American literary community and toasted new member, Devia with head nods for volunteering to film the meeting. There were tons of books all over the place from Zane, Venesha, Miasha, Omar Tyree, Relentless Aaron, Carl Weber, Vickie Stringer, Karrine Steffans, Eric Jerome Dickey, Michael Baisden and Black Expression Book Club recommends.

Devia was the only member who was recruited into the club as a reviewer in 2007, and thanks to her own retro style. As a result, she was unanimously voted in by some of the most wicked book critics on the planet. Devia epitomized the meaning of what it meant to be a strong black woman, and was already feeling at home.

What her book club members liked was her confidence, boldness in experimenting with different looks, and insistence on getting her clothes tailored to fit. She could wear a sweater 4 ways and rock peep-toe shoes, slides, and sling backs in the dead of winter with a faux fur coat. It was all about representing the image of the book club. They even dressed up to shop at Huelman's Bookstore in Harlem and literary events like the Literary Awards Show, Sister Girl Bookclub Holiday Dinner and the Harlem Book Fair in New York.

As soon as this meeting was adjourned, they would hang out for a movie marathon night which consisted of pre-bought tickets online for Dream Girls starring Beyonce', Eddie Murphy, Jamie Fox and Jennifer Hudson; The Pursuit of Happyness starring Will Smith and other movies like Stomp the Yard, Smokin' Aces, Freedom Writers, and Constellation.

People who saw them coming into the theater would trade in their tickets to see another movie because they criticized everything on the big screen way too loudly and giggled like hyenas when people walked by with tons of popcorn and super-sized sodas.

This was the norm for the women who were all manless and grieving, but used clothes as a cover up of their pain, misery and loneliness. Tension was already about to erupt since they had discussed their favorite authors on the Disilgold.com Chatroom

when no one was looking late nights. No login code was required and anyone could see folks communicating online.

This month, they were intrigued by Oprah's Book Club Pick, *The Measure of a Man* by Sidney Poitier. The ladies of the Bronx Divas are Readers Book Club decided to discuss the book in great depth on this 14th day of February 2007. The topic requested was, "What have you overcome in your life that you attribute to Sidney?" along with a chance to win dinner with Oprah and the legendary, Sidney Poitier.

Deadlines were fast approaching, and India wanted her book club members to shine like the stars they were, so she tried not to hog the spotlight, but it was kind of hard for her since she had such a wide posterior when she stood up. India was stacked like a brick house. She was the woman the late Rick Ambrose Johnson, Jr. aka Rick James was singing about in his song, *Super Freak* and somehow wrote a memoir before he died on August 6, 2004 and called, "The Confessions of Rick James."

SCENE 2

THE HOTSPOT

“So how do you like our new hotspot ladies? Is this the place or what?” India lauded which created more fond toasts and cheers among the ladies. India knew how to make every meeting as equally exciting or better than the prior meetings.

Janet, Kim, Veronica, Billy, Sugar, Lena, Dina, Leslie, Debbie, Monica, Tina and newcomer Devia chimed in with pseudo-sophisticated gestures like they were all God’s gift to man, and they had the right to be.

Women today just didn’t take the time to pay attention to details as these women who pampered themselves at the spa, gym, manicurist and hair salon with weekly high maintenance routines and rituals that would make the average girl puke with envy, but of course, would keep any Bronx man happy!

They were all pretty in their own way, but suffered complexes about minute physical traits they believed were flaws because of the former men in their lives who lead them to think they had major imperfections. It didn’t help that nearly all of the ladies had not written a book yet as planned. They were way too distracted to focus on their writing skills. India was ready to begin her book club’s scheduled activities.

“Did you all bring the first chapter of your soon-to-be bestsellers to read today?” India asked with certainty.

The ladies reached inside their Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Fendi, Coach and Prada bags. One-by-one, manuscripts flopped onto the table and even Mac lipsticks in shades ranging from wine, plum,

peach and red to cinnamon, mocha, and soft pastel colors.

They decided to be reviewers and write books because they were hot like that and vibed well unlike some stuck-up women in other posh book clubs from Upper Manhattan. They would be there to support one another to the top and knew exactly what they wanted.

Their booth spaces for the African American Pavilion @ Book Expo, Circle of Sisters Expo, Harlem Book Fair, and Frankfurt Book fair were already booked. These were some of the hottest events to make literary connections.

Book club dues came in handy and defied the notion that, "Black people cannot get along, work together or even read their own books," as said in a vicious e-mail circulated around the net called, "Black People Don't Read!"

"Okay ladies, we're going to do a roll call. Devia, will you take minutes today? India requested.

Devia put her video camera down on a mini-tripod that enabled her to continue recording the meeting, and without contest she whipped out a gold-plated monogrammed pen just like a show-off. She then flashed her supposed diamond marquise 56 facet ring from an ex-hubby whom she claimed got it from Jacob the Jeweler. Of course, it had to be stolen from the streets or bought from a pawn shop.

"How do you like this bling ladies?" Devia asked, and who got plenty of "OOHS" from her book club peers followed with endless prattle. Everyone was impressed. All of the ladies knew fake fashions from the real thing, faux dog fur from real fur, vinyl from real leather, cubic zirconia from diamonds, synthetic hair from real hair, fake nail tips from real nails, eau de- toilette from real perfume, and generic name brands from real designer brands, but seemed to have trouble deciphering players from real men.

The ladies would get a chance to show-off their bling and femme' fatale' ways that impressed one another like Bronx fashion divas do. This was more than a book club meeting, but a rights of passage into the literary diva hood. Either you were well-dressed to impress or you wouldn't receive an invite for the next book club's hot spot which rotated frequently among 5 star Zagat rated

restaurants.

India was a take-charge-no-nonsense president and socialite who ran her book club like the United States government and very well respected. She got folks excited about books and boosted sales beyond bestseller status, but NAACP Award winning status and international acclaim among other confraternities.

SCENE 3

DEJECTION ON VALENTINE'S DAY

At that moment, some very attractive and well dressed men entered the eatery and starred bizarrely at the overdressed ladies of the Bronx Divas are Readers Book Club.

One resembled LL Cool J, and another looked like a spitting image of that best selling author everyone was crazy about, Eric Jerome Dickey. Their glance over stares were intense and kind of rude. After the guys sized up the ladies from head-to-toe they virtually turned their heads away with hostile abruptness, upturned noses and went about having their lunches.

The ladies who were so confident on this day of their conclave, seemed dismayed that none of them got any likeable stares from the men who were obviously turned off by their overwhelming blinged out attire.

The highly energized morale of the meeting was shot down to the floor and India had to think of something quickly to boost up her insecure book club members. Valentine's Day was not supposed to be this depressing!

The literary warm up exercise...

“I want to warm up things right about now ladies because I know it is freezing outside, so let's all re-introduce ourselves. As an icebreaker, I want you all to admit one thing about yourselves that a man made you feel very secure about in the beginning of your relationship, but lied. And please, be honest. Let it all out

even if you have to cry. Forget that everyone is here. Please, please, please say whatever the hell is on your mind. Alrighty?”

India's book club members were surprised because they never heard India beg for their participation. The ladies hesitantly took turns introducing themselves and revealing their biggest insecurity. India started things off.

“This guy told me that he liked my dark complexion and size of my posterior. What was I thinking? My ass is way too damn big for the average man to handle. Just look at it,” India turned around and revealing one of the biggest rumps that ever sat in the eatery's chairs.

A few forks could be heard dropping onto plates from other dining guests along with severe choking spells and sudden gasps for air from men trying to keep their composure. India was built like a brick house. She had incidentally placed her hand on top of a book by Rita Ewing called, *Brickhouse!*”

“And—many still have fetishes for light-skinned women nowadays, and no offense to our fair sistahs here, but this complexion nonsense is tired. Black don't crack and men should like that,” insisted India.

“Well, this guy told me he liked my little tits, and I believed him. I mean look at me, I'm an A cup. No, I take that back, an A minus,” Janet trashed herself as she held her little breasts, making the women heckle with belly holding laughter that caused tears to pop out of their eyes drenched with heavy eyeliner like the singer, Amy Winehouse.

“Who the hell wants an Itty Bitty Titty Committee graduate? I remember the days I stuffed my bra. He didn't even say a darn thing about the zits all over my face. No man digs a woman with acne. The guy even said he liked the way I giggled and from all the women he met, I was the most down-to-earth. Down-to-earth? Oh, please child! He put me down to the dirt and played me worse than the tabloids say that rapper did to that 40 year old pretty actress, Vivica,” shouted Janet.

The cacophony of the women made someone from across the restaurant whisper, “SHHHH!” These women were tacky, loud and ruthless.

“Hold up, that’s nothing. That lady did it to herself messing with a young rap superstar and trying to be a classy lady around the brother. I’m glad she’s doing big things now! F-fiddy! Men only want freaks in bed. Look at me! Sister girl here is 4’11. My guy pretended he dug short women. He was a no-good-lying bastard, and you should have seen how he tossed me around like a plaything. Short girls get no respect unless we’re wearing big hoop earrings or provocative clothes to get attention,” Kim interrupted.

“Wait a minute lady, don’t ever be rich and overweight like Star Jones before she slimmed down. You’ll never know if the men want you for your money or for what you’re packing. I bet she had a gastric bypass surgery because no woman slims down that fast and looks that damn good. My guy told me he liked everything about me from head-to-toe and you won’t believe how he handled a healthy sister, but that was all an act. He didn’t even care about my money. He just wanted to get in the panties,” grunted Veronica who knew she had passed a little gas, and wasfunking up the place so she took out a perfume bottle and sprayed herself like it wasn’t her. The ladies austerey looked at each other with disgrace and pretended they didn’t smell anything.

“Girl, you are too much. I am one of the best singers out there. I can out sing Erykah Badu and Jill Scott with one vocal chord honey child. Don’t put me on Apollo Amateur Night in Harlem,” Billy said while sucking her teeth and rolling her eyes to the back of her head.

“But-some of these men think that they can abuse and misuse a woman when she’s a singer because they know they are desperate to make it and fighting time. Look how Ike did Tina. I don’t blame her for leaving him and marrying a white man. That’s one bad bitch. They’ll let them make millions with one single and then sabotage their careers so they can’t fulfill their contracts and make any royalties. Look at what happened to Janet’s sales when she turned the big 4-0. It’s a good thing she’s marrying a classy guy to protect her from the grime of the music industry. I bet Mya, Olivia, Ashanti and Amerie won’t be getting new contracts unless they give up some. That lady is way too talented for that

nasty music industry. Men start trying to beat their women too if they can't pimp them, but this ain't the movie Sparkle. Anyway, my guy told me he was going to marry me because I had a precious voice, but dumped me just like all of those other singers who get kicked to the curb when they get a little older," Billy chimed in without taking a breather so she began to choke. She looked pathetic and drenched in unnaturally heavy make-up that aged her.

"You alright sis?" India asked while patting her back. Billy suffered with a pathetic choking spell for a few minutes. Everyone in the restaurant just stared and did nothing to help Billy.

"Hey, can we get some water?" shouted Sugar to a waiter.

Billy cleared her throat after gulping down water.

"I'm okay. Thanks y'all."

Lena, Dina, Leslie, Debbie, Monica and Tina shared their stories of being dumped by their men who claimed they were perfect and didn't have any problems with their imperfections which were really all in their minds. These ladies were truly gorgeous and the envy of most Bronx girls, but insecure.

India stood up to ask, "We need to get these suckers back once and for all! Right ladies?"

The Bronx Divas are Readers Book Club members gazed at each other with contemptuous thoughts about their ex-men and within seconds, all vibed together like a secret cult of deranged woman as they boldly replied, "That's right!" and cursed under their breaths with plenty of eyeball rolling, but all except Devia, the minute taker and videographer who was very quiet and austere looking.

It was obvious that she lifted weights. It appeared like she had an Adam's apple protruding from her neck, but the other ladies never noticed this. Devia's fine apparel detracted from this obvious physical trait.

"We're going to make it on all the bookstore bestseller lists! Right ladies?" Confidently boasted India.

"Fuck yeah," the ladies chimed together.

"We're going to make it on the New York Times Bestseller list and get the hell out of the ghetto! Right ladies?"