

In this spirited three-part story, Olive Charleston and Edwina Tyler are best friends during the Harlem Renaissance era. As both women struggle over personal relationships, they discover their unique inner strengths.

Doing The Dream Box Sweat

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## **Doing The Dream Box Sweat**

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# **Doing The Dream Box Sweat**

**Donna Monday**

# STORY ONE

## CHAPTER 1

Charleston residence, 1923

**I**t's a hot summer day in upstate New York, and at a modest Victorian country frame house, a humid haze hangs in the air that threatens to stifle the energy out of anyone who dares venture out into it.

Olive Charleston, a thirty year old, unmarried black woman, dressed in a long black cotton skirt, starched white blouse, and black high button shoes, will not let the heat keep her from the one thing that she looked forward to everyday.

Olive paces impatiently back and forth on her front porch while fanning herself with an old magazine in a futile attempt to cool off. Her clothes have become even more restrictive and uncomfortable due to the oppressive heat.

A young postman, about twenty-four years old with wavy black hair and smiling eyes, appears on foot to deliver the mail.

"Good afternoon, Miss Charleston."

"Afternoon, I was waiting for you. Is there anything for me? I mean, personally addressed to me?"

The postman takes some mail out of his almost empty leather bag. "I'm sorry, but I didn't really check. I hope there is, though. I'd sure like to bring a smile to your face."

The postman winks at Olive as he hands her the mail. He secretly has a crush on her, and longs to tell her so, but keeps it to himself out of his fear of appearing

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improper. Olive ignores the flirtatious gesture and quickly leafs through the stack of envelopes.

“Bill, bill, business . . . Oh good! This one’s mine.”

The postman wipes his sweaty brow, desiring to keep their conversation going a little bit longer.

“Oooweee! I tell ya, Miss Charleston. This has gotta be the hottest day on record. Seems like it’s taken me twice as long to make my rounds than usual.”

Olive is still staring at her envelope. The postman has become a minor distraction.

“Yeah. It is hot, isn’t it?”

“I tell ya. If this keeps up, I’m gonna havta carry around a block of ice with me and rub it all over to keep cool.”

The postman gives a good-natured laugh. Olive wishes the postman would leave so she can go inside and open her letter. He always wanted to stop and talk to her for some reason. She indulged him politely, only because she didn’t want to be rude.

“Um hmm. That’s a nice idea. It’s almost unbearable today. As a matter of fact, I’m going inside right now to pull all the drapes around the house. Mama needs to keep cool.”

Olive fans herself with the mail in her hands. She really wants to go back inside. “Thank you for the mail, Eddie. I hope you don’t get too uncomfortable before you finish your rounds.”

Olive turns to go inside the house. When she looks back, the postman is still standing there staring at her.

“Good day.”

“Yeah well, you’re my last stop anyways. Always a pleasure ma’am.”

Eddie, the postman, tips his cap and walks down the street.

Olive hurries inside the house. She rushes up the stairs to her room on the second floor and closes her bedroom

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door, except for a crack, so she can hear if anyone needs her.

Olive tosses the other mail aside so she can better concentrate on the big brown envelope, with the fancy stamps, that had her name on it. She's so excited she can barely stand it. Olive rips the envelope open and takes out a handwritten letter. Several professionally done black and white photos of a very pretty black woman, around her own age, spill out onto the bed.

Olive looks through the photos with obvious pleasure and curiosity. This was a surprise she hadn't expected. Suddenly, a high-pitched voice pierces the air, interrupting her enjoyment. It was her invalid mother, Lunetta Charleston, calling out to Olive from her downstairs bedroom.

"Olive! Where are you girl? Olive!!

Olive quickly puts down the photos and hurries out the door and down the stairs. Olive enters Mama Charleston's bedroom with a mixture of annoyance and trepidation. She never knew what mood her mother was going to be in until she was forced to face the older woman. Knowing her mama like she did, she figured she was going to hear a complaint about something. The woman never seemed to like anything Olive did.

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Lunetta Charleston, who was wearing a long white cotton nightgown, sat up in bed giving her oldest daughter a disapproving look.

"What'cho been doing, girl? I've been sitting in here roasting for a good hour, with no relief. Kept calling you. No answer."

"I've been out waiting for the mail, mama. Sorry, I didn't hear you calling."

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“What’s so damn important about the mail? I’m in here roasting my brains out and you’re talking about waiting for some mail. Is the mail more important to you than your poor, laid up mama? Lying here helplessly. Can’t even get up and get a glass of water for myself.”

Mama was milking her misery again, Olive thought.

“No ma’am. Mama I left you a glass of cool water right there on your nightstand.”

Lunetta glances over at the half-full glass and scrunches up her nose. “The ice melted in it a long time ago. It’s too warm to drink.”

Lunetta Charleston narrows her eyes.

“I know you were waiting for something from that Edwina friend of yours again. Weren’t you?”

Olive becomes defiant. Her mother had turned against her best friend, Edwina, simply because she had moved to the big city. She wrongly assumed that everyone who lived in a big city was inherently sinful. Olive thought this kind of thinking was silly.

“So what if I was. It’s not a crime is it?”

“Don’t sass me, girl. That girl is no good. Moving to New York City, that den of iniquity. She’s a bad influence, and if I could get around like I used to, I’d burn everything she sent you. You wouldn’t see any of it. Trying to corrupt one of my daughters.”

Olive calmly goes about her business—she’s used to her mother’s preachy opinions.

“She’s a nice girl, mama, and my best friend. She’s not corrupting me at all.”

Olive removes the bedpan, yellow urine sloshing around inside, from underneath the covers and fluffs her mother’s down filled pillows.

Not willing to let well enough alone, Lunetta Charleston examines every inch of Olive’s appearance. “Oh yeah? Why are you looking so messy then? You



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know I like neatness. Your hair's flying all over. And why is the top buttons open on your blouse? You trying to give someone a peek?"

Olive touches the tight bun on the top of her head. It was still holding up nicely in spite of a few flyaway hairs. Her mother insisted that she always wear her hair up, and that her body be properly covered at all times. Even in heat like this, she was expected to keep her modesty in tact.

Olive wearily glances at herself in the mirror. She notices the perspiration stains under her armpits.

"It's hot, mama."

Olive leaves the room. Lunetta Charleston continues her nagging.

"That's no excuse! Messiness is the bane of a decent woman! I raised you better than that. If you give a man a reason to look, he's gonna take all he can get from you. I've told you time and time again, Olive. Keeping a proper appearance is the mark of a virtuous woman!"

Olive shouts back from the kitchen.

"It's too hot, mama!"

When Olive comes back into the bedroom, she's carrying a fresh glass of ice water. She gingerly hands it to her mother. "Here. Drink this, mama. It should keep you cool while I fix lunch."

Olive leaves the room again.

"You button up your blouse before you come back in here, you hear? And bring me the drumstick off that cold chicken!"

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Olive brings lunch in to her sister, Precious (Prissy) Charleston, twenty-seven years old with the face of an angel, and unfortunately, confined to spending her life in

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a wheelchair. Prissy is lying in bed reading a book. Her face lights up when she sees her sister.

“Lunchtime, Prissy wissy. Heads up!”

Prissy lays her book down and puts on a fake British accent for show. “Oh, hello sister dear. Won’t you come into my abode?”

“Have you been reading that novel again? The one with all those earls and duchess people?”

Prissy laughs. “You caught me again, sis.”

Olive sets the bed tray on Prissy’s lap.

“Oooo. What’d you bring me?”

“My famous chicken corn chowder, which I know you love, and some buttermilk biscuits.”

“Oh, Olive. You spoil me so much. It’s so hot out, though. I’m not sure I feel like eating.”

Olive takes on a motherly tone. “You have to eat to keep up your strength, no matter what the weather’s like. You’re not gonna make me spoon feed you now, are you?”

“Nope. I don’t need any help eating your chowder.”

“Good, because I have some fresh berry pie waiting for you if you clean that up.”

Prissy gives Olive a teasing look. “Yes, mommy.”

Olive sets the day’s mail on Prissy’s tray. Prissy enjoyed reading the mail while she ate lunch.

“Here’s the mail. There’s a couple of things with daddy’s name on them,” Olive said.

Prissy puts her glasses on, tears open the envelopes, and takes out the contents of each one. She glances over the invoices studiously.

“Damn! They overcharged us again for the canned goods. Can’t those people get their billing right?”

“Who?”

“McBride’s. Never mind. I’ll take care of it.”

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"I'm glad you understand all that business stuff. If it were left up to me, we'd be closed up in about two months."

It was true. Olive never did have any inkling about the day-to-day operations of the family business.

"I can help acquaint you with some of it, Olive. It's not that hard, really."

"You know I don't have a head for all that business talk. You might as well be talking Greek. I used to try to listen in when you and daddy discussed eatery business, but I never could develop an interest in it."

This reminded Prissy of their late father's wishes for their future.

"Daddy wanted both of us to learn about it in general. So we'd know what to tell our husbands—when we got some."

Olive shakes her head at the memory.

"Poor daddy. No sons to pass on his prize obsession to."

Prissy takes a red pencil and carefully circles the mistakes on McBride's invoice. The truth of Olive's words hang heavy in her heart.

"Daddy knew I had no hope of ever being married. I think he wanted me to pass on my knowledge to you and your man if he wasn't around."

Prissy was right. Their father had looked upon her as a hopeless case. Destined to be taken care of by the charitable graces of her family for the rest of her life. Although she was beautiful, with big almond shaped eyes, long wavy hair, and perfect chestnut brown skin, she was unfortunate to be born with withered leg syndrome. When she was a toddler, their doctor had said Prissy would never be able to walk because of the weakness of her leg muscles, and so, she's been in a wheelchair ever since.

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"Forget it," Olive said. "I don't have any plans to get married any time soon, either. I'm already considered a spinster at thirty, and could you imagine how mama would react? She doesn't want to lose her little servant."

Prissy wrinkles her brow and stubbornly crosses her arms. "I'm angry about it, Olive. With my knowledge, I should be running the business. The rest of the family doesn't have daddy's business instinct, which I've seemed to have inherited."

Prissy was smart and resented being talked down to in any way, shape, or fashion.

"Uncle Burt treats me like a bookkeeper, and he acts like he's doing *me* a favor by letting me do that."

Prissy mocks her uncle's tone of voice.

"Isn't that sweet. My little crippled niece wants to help make business decisions. Here honey, you can help us keep the inventory. You think you can do that, sweetheart? Condescending bastard."

Olive tries to hide how sorry she feels for her sister and for herself too. "Eat your soup before it gets cold."

Olive walks over to the window and looks out at the beautiful green yard with its sturdy chestnut trees.

Prissy continues her indignant rant against their uncle.

"Do you know that I was the one that suggested adding another eating room to prevent overcrowding? Good ole uncle took credit for it. And what about serving a free slice of pie for buying a two-course meal? That was my idea too!"

Prissy felt that if she and Olive stuck together, they could make some real changes in the way things were done around there. Times were changing, and she felt the family should be more open to new ideas. Like the idea of a crippled woman running a popular family eatery.

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"I swear, Olive, we should band together and demand to have a more visible role, don't you think?"

Olive is momentarily distracted from her thoughts—but not for long. "Um hmm. It's such a beautiful day out. Wouldn't it be nice to have a picnic?"

Olive dreamily imagines her ideal scenario for such a warm, picture-perfect day.

"You and me and two handsome, extremely charming men."

Prissy finally realizes that her sister's head is in a completely different place than her own.

"What?"

Olive gazes at two squirrels playfully chasing each other around the yard.

"The four of us would be down by the lake and we'd have a nice spread of cold chicken, cornbread, French pastries, and bottles of wine. You and I would pretend not to notice how intensely attracted to us they are."

Olive imagines herself in the middle of this scene. She can see her and Prissy's sharp white sailor dresses with their attached blue ribbons floating in the wind. She can taste the sweet-tangy red wine. She can feel the eyes of their adoring men enveloping them with love.

"We'd bat our eyes and giggle shyly at their jokes, and, maybe just show them a little peek at our delicate shoulders. They'd fall for us so hard that they'd swoop down and sweep us off our feet. Wouldn't it be wonderful?"

Olive twirls around in front of the window several times with her eyes closed. In her mind, she has temporarily escaped into another world.

"We'd lock arms and twirl round and round until we all get dizzy and fall down to the ground . . . laughing so hard that our sides hurt. Can't you just see their beautiful smiles, Prissy? Can you imagine the warm

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breeze blowing in our faces as they bend over to kiss us?”

Prissy is dismissive of her sister’s silliness. “You’re having one of your fancy daydreams again, sis.”

“But, can’t you imagine how romantic it would be?”

Olive desperately wants Prissy to share the fantasy with her. Even if it was a long shot that it would ever happen to either one of them.

Prissy’s expression is solemn as she answers.

“No, I can’t imagine it, because I’ve never been with a man.”

Olive turns to face Prissy. She gives her sister a sad look. “Neither have I.”

After a brief pause, Olive steps away from the window and faces the harsh glare of reality again.

“I’ll go and get your pie.”

Olive walks out of the room feeling slightly depressed as Prissy silently watches her leave.

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## STORY TWO

### Chapter One

Harlem, New York, 1925

**E**dwina Tyler, a thirty-two year old classic brown beauty, stands in front of an easel, working on a painting depicting life in a typical Harlem neighborhood. The small room's furniture is draped over with white sheets to protect them from being splattered with paint.

Several of Edwina's original oil paintings, some finished, some not, are scattered about the room.

Edwina's husband, Darryl, tall, dark, and dashing handsome, enters the room with his usual good humor.

"Hello, Dwee! How's my pretty miss artist doing today?"

Darryl kisses Edwina on the cheek.

"Hi honey. I'm just putting the finishing touches on my latest creation. Do you like it?"

Darryl examines the painting with a critical eye.

"Um hmm. Are you gonna hang this one in the living room, or is it gonna sit here on the floor like the others?"

Edwina squints when she looks over her painting with her inner critic.

"Well, Darryl, I just don't think it's quite good enough to be seen by other people. I'm still experimenting."

Darryl thought Edwina was being overly picky, but who was he to argue? He was happy that his wife at least had a hobby that she enjoyed.

"It looks okay to me, but it's your decision."

Darryl rubs his stomach to indicate it was empty.

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"I'm hungry. We got any more of those cold biscuits left?"

Edwina sees her chance to plant an idea into her busy husband's head.

"Yeah, but you don't need to eat those. I thought we could eat something together today. I planned a nice brunch, with your favorite—crab cakes and eggs."

Darryl picks up on the fact that Edwina is trying to bribe him with food, but he can't let his business slide just to please the wife. Edwina will just have to understand that his photography customers were his priority. After all, those very same customers were responsible for keeping a roof over their heads.

"I can't, hon. I'm just too busy today. That photo session with Mrs. Waters and her dog lasted longer than I thought. Took me the whole morning to get that damn dog posed right. Now, I've got the clients for my next photo session waiting in the studio."

Darryl pulls a gold watch out of his pocket and checks the time.

"I only have time for a few bites."

Edwina's face reflects her extreme disappointment.

"Oh, Darryl. I was looking forward to enjoying a romantic Sunday afternoon. Just you and me, like we used to do. Can't you cancel them for today? For me?"

Darryl gently grabs his wife by the arms and looks directly into her big brown eyes, with their naturally curled long lashes. Boy, his sweet, little wife was such a beauty, it sure was tempting to take her up on her offer, but then his mind wanders over to the image of his clients sitting in his studio waiting for him. Nope. He wasn't about to cancel this appointment.

"I'm sorry, Dwee, I just can't do that. I made a commitment. You understand, right?"

"I guess. Who're these clients?"



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Darryl slips his hands in his pockets and avoids looking Edwina straight in the eyes.

“Just a couple of ladies. You don’t know them.”

Edwina grows suspicious.

“Ladies, huh? Are they paying ladies?”

Darryl had hoped this conversation wouldn’t come up.

“Well uh, actually they’re uh . . . models.”

Edwina sets her paintbrush down and puts her hands on her hips.

“Damnit, Darryl. You can’t have brunch with your wife, but you *can* take nude pictures of a couple of floosies! How insensitive can you be?”

Darryl knows he better smooth things over, quick.

“They’re not floosies, Edwina, they’re models, okay?”

And, I don’t take naked pictures, but my artistic interpretation of the female form.”

Edwina can’t believe he’s using this excuse.

“Artistic? Ha! Since when is it artistic to take nude photos?”

“You’ve painted nude figures before.”

“From a book!”

Darryl is determined to get out of his wife’s line of fire as soon as possible.

“You didn’t have a problem with it when I took nudes of you.”

“That’s different. We were engaged.”

Darryl hated when Edwina acted like a prude. Maybe she was just a tiny bit jealous of his buxom lady friends.

“Edwina, you’re being hypocritical. I have as much right to practice my art as you do. Besides, I make money from selling some of the nude photos to various interested parties.”

Edwina scoffs at this.

“Art connoisseurs like yourself, no doubt.”

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“Fellow appreciators of the human body. Look, I’ve gotta get going, Dwee. I’ll see you later.”

Darryl takes a few steps towards the door, then whirls around to make one last point.

“Relax, babe. It’s really not a big deal. These are modern times, you know.”

Darryl saunters out of the room.

Edwina experiences the mild hurt from her husband ignoring her feelings.

“I know.”

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Edwina sits alone at the dining room table eating the special brunch she prepared. An empty place setting, where Darryl should be sitting, happily eating and talking with her, silently mocks her with its flowered china patterned plate, perfectly folded white napkin, and polished silver place setting. Edwina stares emptily at the rose centerpiece.

“Hello there rose. I guess it’s just you and me today. Can the honeymoon be over already? What happened to our romance?”

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Inside the Tyler Picture Studio, which was located in another section of the house, Darryl prepares to take pictures of two, pretty black models. The models sit on top of tall stools that are positioned in front of a countertop prop.

Both women wear long, flowing black wigs, feather boas, and panties. One of the models, whose name is Pearl, holds a large fan decorated with Asian characters

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and pastel flowers. Agnes, the younger model, holds a plume of ostrich feathers.

Darryl stands in the middle of the studio floor giving directions to get them into the perfect pose.

“Now, Pearl, I want you to sit like this with your feet crossed, holding the fan in front of your chest.”

Pearl follows Darryl’s instructions.

“Like this?”

Darryl nods his approval.

“Yeah, that’s good. Now lean back on your other arm. Good.”

Darryl directs his attention to Agnes.

“Agnes, I want you to sit facing Pearl with your left leg dangling and your right one drawn up.”

Agnes poses as Darryl tells her.

“Yes, that’s it. Keep the feather between your legs and look at me. Smile for daddy.”

The two models display their gleaming white teeth. However, Darryl thinks they look a bit too innocent. He knew exactly what his male clients wanted in their nudie photos.

“Not too much. Look a little naughty for daddy. Alright, that’s it. Perfect! Don’t move.”

Darryl hurries over to his professional Kodak camera, which sits on a sturdy wooden tripod. He looks through the lens and adjusts the focus.

“Okay now, I’m gonna take it on the count of three. Ready? One, two, three.”

Darryl snaps the picture. Afterwards, Pearl and Agnes relax. Agnes, who had never posed before, is excited to be a part of a professional photo shoot.

“How was that, Darrylsie? Did we look okay?”

“You look really great ladies. You two are the best looking models I’ve had yet.”

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"Don't listen to him, Agnes. He says that to all the girls once their clothes are off."

Pearl should know. She's been in his studio numerous times.

Agnes looks flirtatiously at the handsome Darryl Tyler.

"Is that true, Darrylsie? Do you take our beautiful bodies for granted?"

"All the time. Pearl's got my number, if you know what I mean? I'm an alley cat with a lustful eye. I yowl at the sight of hot, young flesh."

Darryl yowls like a wolf for effect. His antics make the two women laugh.

"In that case, maybe I should spread my legs and let you yowl up a little bit closer," Pearl teased.

Darryl smiles sheepishly at Pearl.

"I ah, would take you up on that, Pearl, but my wife, who's in the other room, might object."

Agnes finds it hard to believe that an obviously hot guy like Darryl would get himself tied down to a wife. If he were her man, she'd have him busy doing other things with his time, like pleasing her in bed.

"I wouldn't blame her," Agnes said. "I'd find it hard to be married to a guy who likes to take photos of young, hot-blooded girls like us. Doesn't your wife mind you doing this?"

Darryl puts his hands in his pockets and idles over to the women.

"It's not a question of whether *she* minds or not. It's a matter of what I want. You see, in all seriousness ladies, you're not just models to me, but creatures of beauty."

Darryl plays with the feathers on Agnes' boa. She bats her eyes flirtatiously at him.

"I enjoy using my skills and imagination to bring your unique inner essence into photographic form, one that

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will be admired by others. The sweet purity of your images will last for years to come.”

Darryl winks at the models slyly.

“Besides, you’re more interesting to photograph than her.”

Agnes and Pearl giggle at this admission.

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Edwina entertains her good friend, Antonio Rodriguez, a sophisticated gentleman of African American and Puerto Rican heritage. Edwina normally enjoyed his visits, and today was no exception. Besides, it gave her a reason to pull out the pretty tea set she got as a wedding gift. They both loved tea and good conversation. They especially liked talking about the emerging world of black culture. Antonio, himself an emerging playwright, is standing in the Tyler’s backyard examining Edwina’s latest oil painting.

“Well, say something. What do think of it?”

“It’s very good, Edwina. You’re getting better and better. You know, you really should have a showing of your work. I could arrange it for you.”

Edwina lets out an embarrassed laugh.

“Don’t be silly, Antonio. You can’t possibly think that my little paintings are good enough to be seen by the New York art crowd.”

“Yeah, I do.”

Antonio sits down, across from Edwina, at the quaint white garden table. He really liked her sense of taste. In fact, he liked everything about her.

“Oh, you’re just being polite. Darryl is the only real artist in this family. I’m just a dabbler.”

The mention of Darryl’s name makes Antonio wince inside, he ignores it.

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"I have a friend who's an art dealer. He's always looking for new talent. I could take your painting and show it to him. Maybe he'd put you in one of his art exhibits."

Edwina thinks Antonio is taking his kindness a bit too far. She really didn't believe her paintings were good enough to be displayed anywhere, let alone, some art exhibit. Antonio was a good friend, but a lousy judge of art.

"No thanks, Antonio, I'm content with the way things are. My painting is just a hobby. Really."

Antonio rubs his hand across his naturally wavy hair. Slender built with a light tan complexion, he is handsome, in a slightly exotic way.

"Oh, Edwina. My dear, sweet Edwina. If you could only see what I see in you. Your beauty is like a soft breeze that warms the soul. Your eyes are like bright, shining diamonds, they pierce me with their brilliance."

Antonio can see that his flowery words are having a positive effect on Edwina. Maybe he wasn't as charismatic as Darryl, but he made up for it with his natural flare for the dramatic. Words flow out of him the way a stream of pure water bubbles out of the ground. He could make them dance, come alive, and touch people, like the lovely woman sitting across from him.

"Your skin, soft as silk to the touch. Your talent is creating beautiful works of art, which brings a smile to the face . . . a jolt to the heart. As I stare at it and contemplate, it makes me never ever want to depart."

Antonio softly kisses Edwina's hand, which makes her blush. She laughs to hide her embarrassment at such adulation.

"Stop, Antonio. What a dear. You'd exaggerate just to make me feel special."

"No, I'm serious, Edwina. I meant every word I said."

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Antonio takes a sip of tea, while giving Edwina a piercing stare. He wished he could let her know how he really feels about her, but holds his tongue out of respect for her married status. Still, he felt he was a better match for her than Darryl could ever be. If only she knew the truth.

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That night, Edwina lay asleep in bed. The only light in the room is from a bedside lamp that was left on when she dozed off.

Darryl quietly tip toes into the room and starts taking off his clothes. Careful not to disturb his sleeping wife, he slips into bed next to her. However, when he reaches over her to turn off the lamp, Edwina stirs and wakes up.

“Darryl, is that you?”

“Yeah, it’s me honey. Go on back to sleep.”

Instead of taking his suggestion, Edwina sits up and looks at the clock on her nightstand.

“It’s three o’clock in the morning. Where’ve you been? I tried to wait up for you, but I guess I fell asleep sometime after twelve.”

Darryl turns over on his side and faces his wife.

“I was playing poker with the guys. I had a really good hand going and the game lasted late. You know I hate to leave when I’ve got a good hand.”

Edwina knew this was true, but she was still concerned because they hadn’t made love for over a week.

“I was worried about you. Darryl, I don’t like what’s happening. You’ve been staying out late way too many nights. When I close my eyes at night, I like to feel my husband cozy up next to me.”

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“I know, Dwee, but I have to socialize to keep my business going. You want me to be successful, don’t you?”

“Yeah, of course. But, I just think we should socialize more together, you know, as a couple, instead of you going out by yourself and me stuck here alone.”

Darryl was sleepy and he didn’t feel like discussing it right now.

“I’m really tired. Let’s just get some sleep, okay?”

Darryl turns out the light and Edwina lies back down, but she doesn’t close her eyes, instead, she stares at the ceiling thinking about her relationship with the man softly snoring next to her. She was no fool. Darryl was losing interest in their marriage, but why?

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In this spirited three-part story, Olive Charleston and Edwina Tyler are best friends during the Harlem Renaissance era. As both women struggle over personal relationships, they discover their unique inner strengths.

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