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[ chapter ]

# 1

Kiki sat in Mr. Crandall's office. "Miss Shemeka Butler. Will you please look up and pay attention? I'm attempting to educate you."

Kiki sighed and moved her braids out of her face. Mr. Crandall was the worst. He was always telling students what to do.

"It's Kiki, Mr. Crandall," she whispered. Not like Mr. Crandall was listening. Not a lot of people did when Kiki talked.

"Miss Butler, do you know why you're here?"

"Cause you got nothing better to do?" she muttered.

Kiki covered her mouth. Did she just say that? It sounded like something her twin sister, Sherise, would say! Sherise was always talking back to teachers. Kiki was the good student. The quiet one. Usually, anyway.

Mr. Crandall's blue eyes glared at her over his glasses. "No, Miss Butler. You're a very intelligent girl. You should be able to understand I'm trying to help you."

Kiki frowned. That's exactly what he said when he forced her to join an after-school club. It was lucky that she really liked yearbook club.

"You need to attend class, Miss Butler. It is no excuse that you are doing well. Truancy is not tolerated at this school."

Kiki exclaimed, "I only missed a few days, Mr. Crandall! I was sick. I've already made up the homework."

Mr. Crandall rolled his eyes. Kiki could practically see his hair getting whiter.

Kiki couldn't believe it. Even when she told the truth Mr. Crandall didn't believe her. He never believed any of the kids.

"Then can you explain to me why you let Jackson Beauford copy your work again? Last time you got a warning. I told you if you were caught a second time there would be consequences."

Kiki sighed. It wasn't her fault Jackson sat behind her in study hall. Jackson was nice to her. He noticed her. Sort of.

There was only one other guy who'd ever smiled at Kiki like that, and she'd only seen him a couple of times on the basketball court.

It wasn't like she had a lot of options. Was it the worst thing in the world that Jackson looked over her shoulder sometimes?

"This just isn't the behavior I'm used to from a girl like you, Miss Butler. Until two months ago you were an exemplary

student. Then you let that boy copy your homework. Now you're skipping class. What's next?"

Kiki looked at her shoes. What was she supposed to say? That she got so sad sometimes she felt sick? That she really wanted a boyfriend, but didn't know how to get guys to like her?

"Letting boys copy your school work only leads to trouble, Miss Butler. You will not make friends that way. You may think he's cute now, but he'll leave you in the dirt once he gets what he wants."

Kiki couldn't believe it. Yeah, she thought Jackson was cute. Yeah, she wanted him to ask her out, but it wasn't like Kiki really wanted Jackson. She just wanted a guy to pay attention to her. Like every guy in the room paid attention to her sister whenever she showed up. Mr. Crandall had no clue what he was talking about.