

LEXIE

What's the freakiest thing you've ever done? Almost a month ago, that was the ultimate question that was posed to me by one of my best friends, Meshell. The Crew, which consisted of Meshell, Tonya, Tracee and myself, were all comfortably sprawled out on the polished hardwood floor and soft leather sofas in my midtown Atlanta loft apartment. After a night of partying, we were in the process of finishing off very expensive bottles of wine, that my other friend, Tonya, was so gracious to provide.

Tonya is a head buyer for one of the largest wine distributors in the United States and Europe. Girlfriend always hooks us up with the good stuff, which by our definition means expensive. By the way, I'm Alexis. Lexie to my friends.

What's the freakiest thing you've ever done? That question took me completely, totally off guard. It was a Saturday night, the second Saturday of the month to be exact, and we were

participating in our monthly ritual. . . *Ladies Night Out*. Our adventures were synonymous with getting buzzed (not drunk mind you), being a little loose (not to the point of being a slut), having a wonderful time (limited drama and no work discussed), talking about men (or lack of), and keeping it real (we could say anything to each other and usually did).

Years earlier, Meshell, Tonya, Tracee and myself had met at a historically black college in Atlanta and became instant friends when we pledged the same sorority. Being line sisters can create an everlasting bond that we have yet to break. Now, years later, we're all pushing thirty with exciting and demanding careers and various commitments without husbands or children in our lives. Once a month, the second Saturday, come rain or shine, we stop everything, put everything on hold, to rebond, regroup, hang out and have a good time in between our weekly phone conversations with one another. We look forward to this monthly ritual.

As I said before, after a night out of dancing, drinking, and flirting with attractive men at one of the popular Atlanta nightspots, the Crew was now crashing at my loft apartment, which if I must say has an amazing view of the city. Just like old times, we were still hyped up after an evening out on the town. We were not quite ready to call it quits; the night was still young. In college, we'd hang out in one of our dorm rooms, change into our PJs, drink and talk into the wee hours of the morning about our dreams, ambitions, families, and of course men. This early morning was no different. Even through our alcohol

haze, those four topics were still important to us and heavy on our minds.

After we left the club and grabbed something to eat at the International House of Pancakes down the street, we headed back to my place for our traditional sleepover. Before we could even make it into the living room, expensive shoes were tossed off at the front door as we chatted amicably about who the possible down low (DL) brothers were in the club. Nowadays, you just didn't know.

Tracee, the true drinker of the group, made herself at home as she stumbled into my compact kitchen and retrieved four cute wine glasses that I'd purchased for a great price at a IKEA's One Day Sale. In a swift, skilled motion, Tonya opened one of the bottles of wine that she'd brought over and joined us in the living room. We were full of chatter and laughter.

After everyone's wine glass was filled almost to the brim, Tonya captured our attention by lightly tapping her glass three times with her long, acrylic nails.

"Ladies. Ladies, please join me in a toast," she exclaimed, with a slight slur to her sultry voice.

As we looked from one to the other with big, genuine smiles, everybody raised their glasses high in unison.

"To my best friends. The smartest, sexiest and most divine women I know. I love you divas!"

"We love you too girlfriend," we shouted in unison, gently clicking glasses amongst ourselves and sipping. The wine was excellent.

Tonya continued, "I mean it. I love you divas so much, and I thank God every day for placing you in my life."

Meshell spoke up first. "Okay. Don't go getting all mushy on us. We know you love us, ditto, but this wine is making you say it just a bit too much. We heard you the first time."

We all laughed. I glanced around at my girlfriends from my spot on the floor, below my tan leather loveseat. With my feet curled underneath me, I had made myself comfortable. We are all so different, yet so good for one another. The Crew definitely complements each other in ways that only the rich spirit of sisterhood can.

I am the levelheaded, rational one of the group. I keep everyone balanced and centered and point out the pros and cons of every situation before they jump head first into them. My girlfriends call me for advice and an ear to bend when problems arise in their lives or they just need to vent or chitchat. Back in college, they jokingly nicknamed me "Miss Goody Two Shoes" and they still call me that from time to time.

It was unbelievable to them that I was a virgin until I was twenty. They respectively claimed I was the group's conscience; always trying to do the right thing. I admit, sometimes it's hard for me to cut off my counseling skills and techniques once I

walked through my front door. By profession, I'm a psychologist working for a small practice in Midtown.

Of all the ladies, I am the closest to Meshell. She is a straight trip. What words can describe Meshell? She is loud, articulate, outspoken, and very confident. She doesn't hold back, anything. Most people either like her or hate her. Typically, there isn't an in between. Meshell and I divulged some personal truths back in the day that weren't shared with the rest of our crew, and to this day she has not betrayed my trust. Meshell's personality is the perfect blend for her role as an assistant district attorney.

Tonya is most definitely the group member who has the most expensive and elegant taste for the finer things in life. She is a true diva in every sense of the word. Hell, we all are, but Tonya takes it to a whole other level. She is always dressed to the nine's from head to toe in designer wear. Her weave is always fabulous and flowing down her back, and I don't think I've ever seen her without makeup since we pledged. I think she sleeps in full makeup just in case she has to wake up suddenly and dash out. Tonya is fierce and aggressive, but I guess she has to be as head wine buyer for a major distributor.

Last, but certainly not least, is Tracee. Tracee is outgoing, always has a smile on her pretty face, and is into karma, energies, spirit guides and the entire metaphysical dimension. Her one vice is drinking. That girl can drink any man under the table in a matter of minutes. We joke that she is a closet

alcoholic, but Tracee just shakes her head of long dreads, quotes some line from a famous poem, and declares she is a social drinker. Tracee is an Associate Professor of English Literature at one of the colleges on the Atlanta University Center campus.

That's my crew. I love them with all my heart and soul. I'd trust them with my life. Oh, did I mention we are all gorgeous women? I'm not boasting, just keeping it real and breaking it down for you to give a clear, precise picture. We are a combination of the friends on *Sex and the City* and the popular sitcom, *Girlfriends*. True divas. When we go out, heads turn from both men and women. I'll never forget the time this big boned, Amazon-looking lesbian tried to pick up Meshell in the bathroom of a local club. Meshell calmly finished washing and drying her hands, freshened her lipstick, and told her off in no uncertain terms. I can't begin to mention the words that came out of Meshell's mouth. I almost felt sorry for the lesbian. Almost, not quite.

For as much as we have it going on, we are all turning or had turned the big 3-0 this year and none of us are married, have any strong prospects for marriage, have any children, or even a man at this particular point. I know for me, my work is my life, and I am very good at what I do. However, I want it all! The husband, the career, and the family. Is that too much to ask for?

"Miss Goody Two Shoes, where is your mind tonight?" Tracee asked, filling her glass up to the brim, yet again.

"Uh, what did you say?" I asked, looking around in confusion. For a minute I was so lost in thought that I didn't realize Tracee had asked me a question and put on some soft, baby-making music as we called it. By now, we were all in a mellow mood.

"Earth to Lexie. Can you hear us? Come in," Tonya chimed in, lighting multiple candles of all shapes, sizes, and colors that were a permanent fixture on my marble coffee table. Candles soothed me, so I always had them lit and placed throughout my apartment in every nook and cranny imaginable.

"Tonya, you know Lexie is always thinking about or analyzing something or somebody. Y'all leave Lexie alone. She'll come back to us sooner or later," Meshell said, jumping to my defense. She was sitting, half reclining next to Tracee. I threw a small pillow at her. She didn't even try to fend it off. We all laughed a hearty chuckle through our alcohol-induced buzzes.

"This wine is excellent," I said, lifting the half empty bottle from the table to check out the label for future reference. I knew the price was probably too steep for my pocketbook. I didn't know that much about wines, but Tonya had dragged me to a couple of wine tasting events so I knew a little something something.

"Of course. Only the best for my divas. I don't do substandard nor do I do cheap. First class all the way," Tonya exclaimed with a toss of her wavy hair.

"Yeah, and it'd be even better if I had a man standing in front of me instead of you witches in my face," Meshell said from her

spot on the sofa, with her eyes slightly closed, swaying to the soulful music. Some old D'Angelo song was playing.

"Meshell, I can't even disagree because I haven't had a date in two months. Two months y'all," I said, stretching and changing my position on the floor.

The Crew nodded their heads in agreement.

"At this rate, we'll be fabulously single at forty," Tracee cited. "Where are all the good men? Quit feeling intimidated by successful women. We don't bite, that is unless you want us to."

Again, there were more nods of agreement and amens in between sips of wine and personal reflections.

"Diva, you know we're already married. Married to our damn jobs," Tonya said. "But I shouldn't complain because my j-o-b is providing for the lifestyle that I so enjoy."

"That's all true and good, but the last time I checked, my j-o-b couldn't make me have an orgasm," Tracee added. "There is nothing like the feel of a man deep inside you. I don't know how these lesbians do it. I wouldn't give up dick for all the tea in China."

"It's been so long since I've been with a man that if one even touched me on the shoulder, I'll start quivering. The other day, I promise you, I almost had an orgasm at the water cooler when this new associate, fine as all get out, twenty-something, walked up behind me and accidentally brushed against me. He was smelling all good and looking like he stepped off the pages of

the current issue of GQ magazine," Meshell sighed with a big smile on her face as she relived the moment.

"Meshell, you are so crazy," I said.

"I'm serious. If I hadn't been at work and baby boy and I didn't have to see each other every day on a professional level, I would have been on that. Believe me. Like jelly on peanut butter."

"Yeah, I believe it. You would have done some freaky shit like that," Tracee shared, pulling back her dreads.

"Damn right! I work hard all day. Every day. I work hard for the money. Hell, I need to get my freak on every now and then. I would have been working that dick in slow motion and showed baby boy some new tricks."

"I hear ya," I said, seriously feeling the wine. It was going straight to my head. I was definitely not a drinker.

"In fact ladies, lets get real and live! What is the freakiest thing you've ever done?" Meshell asked, looking from one to the other. "If we can't get the real thing tonight, at least we can reminiscence on when we did."

For a few brief moments, we were deep in thought as we tried to remember the freakiest shit we had participated in.