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WOODARD

Don't Call Me Crazy!
I'm Just in Love

Swiyyah Woodard



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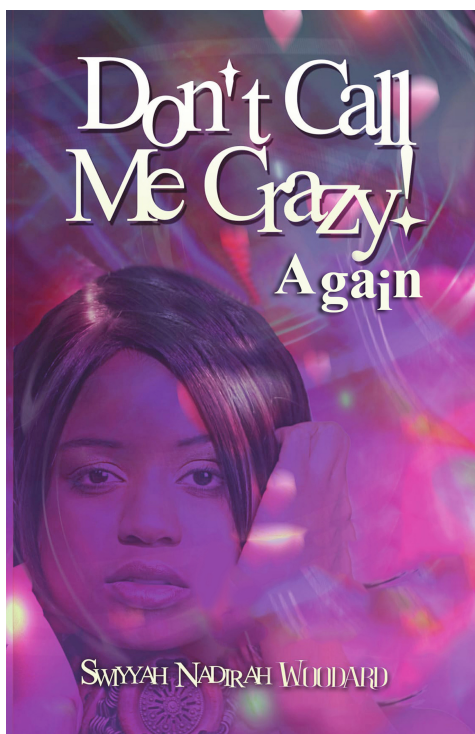
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To God be the glory.



Anika loves Mosi. Mosi is in love with Anika.
Anika lust for David. One will propose? Who will
Anika choose? Read today!

This book is dedicated in loving memory of my brother, Jameel Muhammad, who committed suicide.

Special thanks to my mom, Halimah Kencler, who has believed in my dreams and encouraged me to never give up; to my loving husband, Dederick Woodard, who loves me like no man has ever loved me and helps me to sustain my business. Thank you to my wonderful business consultant, Yolanda Cowart, who is one of the people responsible for the success of my business. Thanks to Emad, Maurice, Monique, Alim Muhammad, Faheemah Muhammad, Yakyah Muhammad, Lateefah Haugabrook, Ibn Abdullah, Steve Manning of SMS Excellence, Tia Grant, Wayne Brass Usf, Rashida Strober of play "A Dark Skinned Woman's Revenge," Jerry Coleman, Feven Hunde, James Evans, Candy Lowe of Candy Lowe Tea Time Tampa, FL, my loving family and friends and my editors at Palmeri Photography & Freelance Media Services

CHAPTER 1

Boredom

Anika begins to lose her mind. The towering moon disappears before her eyes. The sky lightens a rosy violet, pastel color. Streaks of what appear to her as purple lighting, pelts against the sky. Moonstone towers in Greco-Roman style appear in front of her car. She places the back of her left hand across her eyes, fearing she will collide. Apprehension rushes from her throat. She removes the back of her hand and sees a six-foot dragon fluttering belligerently toward her. His claws grip her windshield wipers. As she looked away he disappeared from her sight.

Anika takes a look at her past to see how in the world she got to this point in her life.

The beating sounds of her alarm chimes clangorously. The time is 3:00 a.m. and Anika dreams of black pearl surroundings, a flash of white light, the sun, moon, and planets charging towards her. Is this a dream; a nightmare? She

quivers with icy cold fear and takes three elongated, profound breaths while apprehensively awakening out of her deep slumber. She looks at her clock, turns on her light and succinctly glances at her watch and says with a tone of distress, "Damn!"

She springs up like a chicken with its head cut off and grabs a few articles of clothing. Dressing quickly, she leaves, slamming the door behind her. She steps into her 1985 lackluster blue-black Ford to embark on a long journey to see Mosi, the love of her life, the man who she one day hopes to marry. An eternity can pass and she will still be waiting, ring finger pointed, for his hand in marriage. Performing her daily ritual, Anika buckles her seat belt, starts her engine, and puts in her music, the music that makes her feel at home, the music that makes her feel love for herself and others. The joy of music is what holds her together, it's what gives her the stamina to struggle through life's trials and tribulations.

She can now drive, for she has found that right song for that right moment. Amidst nightfall throttled by chalked fog, she observes American flags swaying from pole to pole, grounded outside of each store front, lining the streets. Her eyes step past bravery crimson and glance at the purity of a royal sky filled with opal stars; which to her, represents peace and tranquility, freedom, choice, love, honor, and the hope of fulfilling the American dream. She envisions buildings of grandeur; corporations. She feels she can have anything she desires; anything she lays her eyes upon... anything. She is

aware of how corporate America chooses to advertise; the colors they use, the words used, the symbols they use. Anika is ultra-aware of her desire to have what it takes to succeed in life and makes it a priority to make a mental note of each detail so that she can incorporate these things in her own plan to be successful. The creativity and material possessions are what she seeks; not to mention the cute outfits and jewelry clad upon the wives of these business owners. She will figure it out and she will live a parallel life.

She remains content as she listens to her music. She knows there are strategic steps to take to acquire the material possessions that are wanted. She exhales, inhales, and then exhales once more. She's so confident. She can stare at anything she chooses and still drive, without losing focus. Through her car mirrors she sees everything. No need to worry. She fast-forwards her CD to one of her favorite songs. She begins to sing "You're my everything," and repeats it over and over, again. Before she knows it, she has made it to her anticipated destination. Excitedly, Anika leaps out of her car, runs up to his door, and knocks. After the third knock, here he bolts up to the door like he's spider man. Mosi's bare, chestnut-brown, muscular chest and massive broad shoulders greet her with a hug only to be compared to one usually found within a steamy novel. She can't help but stare as his athletic shoulders squeeze through his white tee. He is a towering, slender, well-built man. He would make any woman melt down to her knees. He's rough though; rough around the edges. He is her opposite, but it was when he first spoke to her that she was all too aware, that he was the one for her. He was so

down-to-earth; an honest, faithful, and loyal man who would never leave her side. She was sure of it.

Anika met Mosi while she was a student in one of her business courses. He had his eye on her during the entire semester, but never said a word. He was swept away by her beauty. If it were any other time, and with any other woman, he would have approached her as if he were a jungle predator, but around Anika he remained without words. Anika had to be the one to initiate conversation. She, too, had her eyes on him until the semester's end. In the last month of classes she realized she would have to make the first move.

It was on a Friday, she remembers, right after Christmas. She arrived ten minutes early to class, for she knew he would be the only one waiting for class to start. And she would have her opportunity to speak to him with no interference from other classmates. She gathered her uneasy nerves and spoke.

"Did you get anything good for Christmas?" she asked. He was startled by her voice. So much time had passed and she had never spoken a word to him before this. He swallowed and fought to utter just one word. His first words stumbled off his tongue.

"I, I had a good Christmas. I got a lot of gifts. How about you?" Mosi asked. Anika was then struck with words of a player. "I wish I would have had you for Christmas," Anika said. The ice was then broken and they began to chuckle.

Before meeting Anika, Mosi was a player. He didn't believe in being faithful to one woman. He thought monogamy was a belief held only by the insane. Handsome man that he is, women catered to him. He didn't have to lift a finger. He had one woman who would clean for him, one who would run his errands, and one who was available for sex, any time, day or night.

Anika, to Mosi, is a wonder woman. She is a beautiful young Capricorn born in January and unknowingly surrounded in purple rain, which is the natural color of her aura. She has a petite seducing figure; curvy like an hour-glass. Her long jet-black hair shines as it flows down her slender back and her flawless coffee skin is as beautiful and smooth as silk and satin. She is kind to a fault and is forever reaching out to those in need, which sometimes can pull her into what some people may see as, 'drama.' She portrays herself as an extremely approachable woman from the wild color selection of her clothes to the type of jewelry she wears. She's what some people may call eccentric; although people know she can be trusted and will undoubtedly solve all things through love.

Mosi smiles, his bleached snow-white teeth are lined in a row of perfection. The warmth of his smile takes her breath away, every time. *Inhale, pause, exhale, pause, inhale, pause, exhale, pause.* His jaw thrust forward and he kisses her softly curled plum lips. The corners of her mouth then turns upwards, as she returns his kiss.

"So how was the long drive?" Mosi asks as his aroused pupils welcome her into his lavish home. His home looks as though it was decorated by a professional interior designer. A late renaissance canvas covers his beige walls. His ivory ceiling

appears to rise with no end in sight, and his eggshell carpet feels of rabbit's fur.

"Fine, I love to drive," Anika replies.

He fixes her a late-night snack. They both sit on his leather chaise and enjoy watching television on his 65-inch. Anika's eyes begin to look peaked; as she dozes off. Mosi awakens her with his sexy voice.

"You're not falling asleep already, are you?" he asks as his u-shaped grin presses up against his dimples. She does not reply, but attempts to awaken as she staggers towards the bedroom. She knows what it is he wants without nary a word spoken. Her eyes fall, pressing weight on her curled lashes.

Four hours later she awakens again, only to bathe, say her good-byes, and rush off to work. Nine to five, eight hours a day, forty hours a week and on call; year after year. Working for others bothers her. She wants her own corporation. She wants to be the one of power who takes charge, who gives orders, who is in control. This is what she desires. Anika day dreams as she sits on her hard computer chair, with virtually no leg room and enters nothing but numbers all day. *How exciting*, Anika thinks. She begins to mumble, "I can't wait until thirty years from now when I can retire and this company will finally take care of me." *Yeah right. That's unrealistic*, Anika thinks. *Most employees probably won't even last five years and definitely not ten.*

She remembers a former coworker who was in her tenth year of employment and quit right before she was due to retire. This employee, without warning, was given additional job responsibilities; much more than she could handle. The subordinate did not know it then, but Anika knew that since she was earning so much from the company she worked for, after raises for ten years, the owner could no longer afford to pay her the same salary. So instead of firing her, a sneakier plan was chosen; one that was decided by the surreptitious management team to force her into quitting.

Pretty smart, Anika thinks. The time has passed today within a blink of an eye and she realizes that it's nearing 5:30 p.m. and she needs to rush off to class. Just as Anika's feet press the floor, here comes Mr. Boss Man.

His red neck reaches her sight before his face does. He's from Deep South, Mississippi; brags of being country and dresses the part to a T. Day after day he dresses in loosely worn blue-jean jumpsuits that have enough pockets to hold the contents of a wallet in each one. His feet are in his heavy onyx stone shoes, teeth are tarnished straw colored, from excessive use of tobacco and home-brewed whisky. His eyes bloodshot russet, skin rugged from hard work, and his hair is reminiscent of hay. He's proud of the awards his pig receives for racing each year. Anika's anxious eyes kept a sturdy stare as he strides towards her, erect and confident. Anika's right eye peeks up at him with a look of timid surrender.

“What did I do wrong?” she whispers as sweat dribbles from her restless fingertips and lands on her quivering legs.

Mr. Boss Man’s eyes pause and his forehead droops in inquisition causing his eyes to squint. “Nothing, why is it that every time I come to your desk you think you have done something wrong? I need to give you a quick evaluation. For the past two weeks you have been tardy for four days; one more day late and you could be terminated. Is there a reason for your tardiness?” Mr. Boss Man said with an aggressive look in his stern sky-blue eyes.

“Lately I haven’t been able to sleep much. When I finally do go to sleep I only have a few hours to rest and my alarm clock is not doing much good in waking me up,” Anika rambles while biting down on her manicured burgundy fingernails.

“What do you think can be done to improve your attendance?” Mr. Boss Man asks as he stares into her eyes. Anika cannot look into his eyes for she is afraid he might read her mind and know that she feels guilty for her tardiness. Anika lifts her head.

“Maybe I should buy another alarm clock, one that’s much louder,” Anika said.

“That sounds like a good idea; just make sure you follow through,” Mr. Boss Man said. “Also I have noticed your keying errors have doubled within the last two weeks; please let’s make sure you are double-checking your data entry before you turn it in. Other than that, you are doing great. I know you’re anxious to leave, so you have a nice day,” Mr. Boss Man says.

Anika then releases the breath that her diaphragm was holding, grabs her book bag, and surges off to her economics class. She is taking classes in business administration and psychology at the top business university in the nation, the University of South Florida. Several of her professors work for the President of the United States; because of this, she feels privileged to be a student. Even though she fails some of her difficult tests, she remains proud. Through going to college part-time throughout the years, Anika has learned a great deal about marketing, economics, management, accounting, finance, and just about anything anyone would need to know about psychology.

Her most challenging class is “Womanist Vision in Religion.” This class is not challenging because of the subject itself. It is only challenging because she has to squeeze in time out of her day to write papers. She’s required to write papers on topics ranging from racism to religion; the sort of topics you dare only to discuss with a select few. She has a voluminous amount of knowledge on a variety of subjects coupled with the ability to effectively communicate with others.

She is a natural tutor and teacher. She wants to teach those who have an open mind and are ready to learn. Sometimes she feels as if her mind will explode sending pieces of knowledge to those of want and need. She has learned from her mother to always have an open mind and always be ready to shut up and listen because as her mother says, *‘You just might learn something.’* She’s always so busy thinking she sometimes has an arduous time focusing in her classes.

Her economics teacher startles her when he speaks louder to get the attention of those who loaf in his class. This professor misses nothing; his eyes are perfectly glued to the back of his head. He has been in the teaching profession for ten years, is brilliant and quite wealthy. His tailor-made, midnight black suits possess an air of intimidation and creates an illusion of height. A day doesn't pass where he forgets to mention that which is valuable to him, namely his shiny, black, voice activated and responsive Lexus, while adorning his uneven toupee.

"Ms. Muhammad, are we daydreaming again?" Professor Sharks says as the lines across his forehead squeeze tight and his eyebrows droop into a downward slope.

"No, sir. I am definitely paying attention, sir; you were speaking about poverty and how only one percent of America's households makes one hundred grand or more," Anika says as her eyes remain shut.

"That's correct. Please try to focus more in class please," Professor Sharks says. Before she knows it, her economics class is over and she hurries off to her next class, Womanist Vision in Religion.

How boring it is to listen to this instructor, Anika thinks. But she does because her gut tells her that this teacher has something important to teach.

A six-foot tall omnipotent African-American woman stands in front of the chalkboard. Her braided black hair is covered in a dark sateen wrap; African print covers her elongated dress.

“Does anyone here agree with many theologians who feel that they have been oppressed by a patriarchal society?” Mrs. Kadeem asks, standing erect.

Anika slowly raises her hand. “Yes, I agree. I think some people interpret and use religion as a means to control others,” Anika answers in stuttered speech.

“May I ask what religion you choose to study?” Mrs. Kadeem asks, lifting her chin upward.

“I am not a part of any religious organization,” Anika replies.

“Well, class I’m having you write these essays because they are making you think; these essays will develop you spiritually. And you will learn how many theologians view religion. After viewing this film that I am about to show, your assignment will be to write an essay describing how Mahalia Jackson contributed to Christianity.”

Anika has completed the essay required of the class and she briefly reads over her work before turning it in.

And it reads:

Womanist Vision in Religion 3030

“Mahalia Jackson”

Mahalia Jackson, born in 1911, was a very powerful inspirational gospel singer who taught religion through her music. She, unlike many, followed her heart and found a profession that suited her best. She had the ability to reach many others, giving them the wisdom and knowledge that was needed in order to better oneself. Those few who become legends like Mahalia Jackson, have found their calling. Everyone has the ability to reach self-actualization and pursue careers that would make him stand out as supreme. It is up to each of us to seek out what it is we were meant to do. Most people get caught up in just surviving from day to day and lose track of what their heart tells them to do. I am on a journey to find my calling; to find what I love and what I do best.

One day, I want to be known worldwide in my chosen field and make a difference in the livelihood of others. At Mahalia’s funeral in 1972, hundreds of people came out to grieve. Many loved her and she loved many. This was the first time that I had the opportunity to view one of her sermons. I was really amazed, for I have never witnessed a singer who possessed such a powerful voice. Her voice was so powerful that one had no choice but to remain in her presence and listen and learn from her gospels. Her singing gave me goose bumps. She put her heart and soul in every song she sang.

After turning in her essay, Anika skips out to her car and heads home.

Chapter 2

Depression

One of Anika's best friends, Mary, gives her a call while she is driving home. Mary is first in line for the drama queen award. If there is not drama in her life, she will make it her responsibility to create it. If drama moves out of her life, she will surely follow, as well as supplying it to those who are in and around her circle of friends.

Mary has been Anika's best friend for six years. She is what most would call a hootie. She wears large earrings that stretch her earlobes, her four-inch long rainbow-bright nails angle into sharp edged shapes that she paints to match her toes. The dirt on her three inch heels outline the pattern of her feet and her legs have never been shaved. Somehow, Mary thinks this will attract men. Not only that, but her hair is braided thickly with 100% horse hair and reaches past her waist. She wears skintight clothing to attract men, yet goes through more men in one month than most do in a lifetime. Mary think she's an expert in relationships.

Anika's phone rings and she sees that it's her friend Mary on the line. Mary voice is shaking as she begs Anika to take her over to HH Kencler.

Mary is waiting outside Bethel Heights with a few male friends when Anika drives up. Music from several apartments is blasting loudly. There's a smell of marijuana in the air. Children are playing tag through the brown grass and several young men rest across their neighbor's cars talking about how much money they plan to make.

"Hey, what's up, girl? I'm glad you got here so soon. I can always depend on you," Mary says beaming.

"So how's everything going? How are you and your lover man? Are y'all doing all right?" Mary asks.

"We're doing OK. We have our ups and downs but we're OK," Anika says.

"So you and him working things out again, huh? I can't believe you still with him after all that. I would have been left him. First he cheats on you, then he leaves you for another woman, then he kicks you out of his apartment.

What's next? How long have y'all have been going together, anyway?"

"Eight years," Anika says.

Mary and her male friends burst out in uncontrollable cackling causing Anika to feel self-conscious. They all screeched out, "Eight years!"

"You for real? I would have left him. You should leave him. He ain't nothing! He should have never done those things to you," Mary says with a look of repulsion across her face.

"After one year you should know whether or not a man's good enough to marry. Eight years? He's just using you for sex," Brian says as he pulls up his sagging pants and passes the rolled up marijuana joint.

"Somebody that looks as good as you, I would have been married. It don't take no eight years to know if you the right one," Reggie says.

"Yeah, you're right. But I'm not going to leave him," Anika says as she folds her arms in a poised manor. Mary sees the grief on her face.

"You know I'm only trying to help you right?" Mary says.

Anika replies, "Yeah I know."

"See, it's like this. When a man ain't doing what he's supposed to be doing, you got to put him in his place. You want to get married, right?" Mary asks.

"Yeah," Anika replies.

"Well," Mary says, "you're not getting any younger; you got to put your foot down and tell him he better marry you because you have been with him for eight years; eight long years and you're tired of this mess. If you're thinking of staying with him, y'all might as well get married. You can have anybody you want and you know that. You are young, attractive, and smart. Forget him. All he's going to do is cheat on you again. Once a cheat, always a cheat," Mary says while slapping her outer thighs.

"He may not cheat again. And I never actually caught him cheating; I just suspected that he was a cheater," Anika says.

"You got that right; he may not cheat again, but chances are that he will, and you are worth more than that. You got to

find your worth. You don't have any confidence in yourself; that's the problem. You got to start standing up for yourself more. You got to get some male balls," Mary says.

"Some what?" Anika says.

"Some balls?" Mary says.

"All right, I think I get the point!" Anika says as the palm of her right hand pushes the air.

"It sounds like you're contradicting yourself. First you say I need to leave him then you say I need to marry him. What are you trying to say?" Anika asks.

"I'm not offending you, am I? I'm sorry if I am; I was just speaking the truth. You crazy if you stay with him," Mary says as her eyes roll in a disrespectful manner.

"I am not crazy; I love that man. I don't care what any of you say I want to marry him and he will marry me one day," Anika says.

"Sure he will," Brian and Reggie say while laughing and hitting their hands together. Anika and Mary step into the Ford. They both remain quiet as they pull up to the store. They're quiet the entire time while shopping. After Mary is done shopping, Anika drops her off and they say their good-byes.

Anika's now on her way to her mother's house. She is feeling down as a result of the conversation with Mary and her friends. She searches different radio stations for that right song that will calm her shaken nerves. Her fingers halt at 95.7, the beat with Steve Harvey. She arrives at her mother's house and

immediately begins telling her mother how upset she is and fills her in on the details of what just happened.

Her mother wears a beautiful lilac scarf covering her natural ebony hair. Her dress flows down touching her ankles. The ankle bracelet and toe ring is the only means in which to show off her sexuality. Ms. Muhammad has gone through more tragedy in life than most. Her first husband was abusive; Anika's father. He always accused her of infidelity. When she would arrive home from work, he would check her underwear for signs of cheating. Besides going to work, she could not leave his side. He would verbally abuse and demean her. "You got to be smarter than a paper bag," he would say.

The first day that he struck her was when she was returning from her sister's birthday party. It was past two and he accused her of spending the night with another man. She raised her voice for the first time, to defend her honor and prove her innocence, but before she could utter another sound, the back of his right hand flew through the air and landed across her cheek.

From that point on, she made plans to live a life on her own. She opened a separate bank account without his knowledge. The funds were automatically drafted from her pay every two weeks. Once she had enough money for her own apartment, she planned to flee. She underestimated her husband's inquisitive nature and on the day of escape, he shot her seven times. Thank God she survived.

She had had other misfortunes throughout her life. She's lost three jobs, two homes, two cars, four husbands, and was involved in two fatal car accidents. Life has been challenging for Ms. Muhammad, but she never gives up. She has an A and C personality. She's high-strung, yet will attempt to please others to the point of self-sacrifice.

"Mom, I'm so upset and embarrassed. Mary made me look like a fool in front of her friends, telling them how I've been with Mosi for eight years and telling me that I should dump him. I'm not going to listen to her advice, I love that man," Anika says.

Her mother sits up straight in her seat.

"You must know who you are and your purpose in life so you will not be so affected by what others say. You must learn how to solve your own problems. One of the reasons I don't give advice is because it might come back to bite you if it's not what they want to hear. Besides, most people want you to just listen to them when they have a problem instead of telling them what to do. And, I try to stay away from drama at all cost."

"What do you mean, drama?" Anika questions with a perplexed look on her face trying to fit the puzzle pieces of Ms. Muhammad's teaching.

"Drama," the mother explains, "is characterized by a lot of things. Number one, just as in your situation, when everything is going well, a person enjoys digging up past pains and traumas in order to have for themselves a dramatic excitable conversation. The friend may feel as if they are helping you

come to the right decision, even though only you are the only one who can make the right decisions for you. Number two, pay attention to who your friends are and which family members you get along with best. Nine times out of ten, we choose to surround ourselves around people that compliment us. If we want drama, we hang around negative individuals; if we want happiness and success, we hang around positive people. Think about it. Number three, sometimes when we have a fear of making our own decisions we push others into making decisions for us. An example being, if a person asks how you are doing, say, 'I am doing just fine.' If they ask how you are doing and your reply is to tell them every last bad thing that has happen to you within the last week, that gives the drama-stricken people the opportunity to engage in negativity. You want to stay away from negativity at all cost. I don't even watch dramatic programs on television; shoot, I don't even watch the depressing daily news. Negativity and the inability to solve your own problems as an adult, sometimes bring about depression. We all experience depression at one time or another, but some people experience it all the time and if that's the case, they must ask themselves why it occurs."

"Well, I'm always depressed and I need to know why," Anika says.