

TROPICAL ESCAPES

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A Novel

Anita Davis-DeFoe, PhD

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AFIA PRESS BOOKS
SUNRISE, FLORIDA

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Afia Press Books may be ordered through booksellers or by contacting:

Afia Press Books
Post Office Box Post Office Box 451644
Sunrise, Florida 33345-1644
www.theafiadevelopmentcorporation.com

ISBN: 978-0-9817191-0-8

Set in Georgia Ref
Interior Design by Daniel Middleton
www.scribefreelance.com

Printed in the United States of America

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TO THE CARIBBEAN DIASPORA and all her people, thanks for being my source of inspiration, and a wellspring of fond memories.

Special thanks for the love and support showered on me by my Virgin Islands family Carlton and Vernell Stevens, Vincent Herbert, and Dr. Ramona Moss. To my Barbadian brother Aubry Padmore and sister Yvette Maynard, I appreciate you both more than you know. Words can not express how grateful I am to Yvette, an editor extraordinaire. Dr. Antonia Martinez, thanks for all of your assistance and sisterly support.

To my best friend Valerie, her husband Greg and son Sky, thanks for always being there for me.

To my sister Teresa, and Aunt Dot I wish you blessings and appreciate your love and concern for me.

To my soulmate Donald, love you maxx and more.

Much joy and happy travels to everyone who relishes tropical getways.

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CHAPTER TWO

I Got To Get Away...Get Away

You can run but you cannot hide, but sometimes you simply have to step back and get away so that you can figure out what you are running away from and how to deal with what is challenging you. There is a purpose in the problem, problems offer opportunities and nurture inner strength...But most times the problem is simply how we see the problem. You can run but you cannot hide, strive to look within, the answer is always inside.

“IF I MISS THIS FLIGHT, I will totally freak,” Zetta barked to herself as the telephone’s busy signal throbbled in her ear.

The airport limousine was late and Zetta was furious. To combat her anxiety, Zetta paced from room to room, peeping out the door every two seconds like a five-year-old waiting for the Mr. Frostee ice cream truck to pull up into the neighborhood. Things somehow always go wrong when you have no time to waste, and Zetta hated rushing, especially when trying to get to the airport. Being up all night was not helping Zetta’s state of mind either; anxiety dominated her spirit.

Zetta was flustered and agitated. The lack of sleep was making her more frantic than usual and this nervous energy caused Zetta to pace back and forth, gazing intently out the front door, much like a caged animal contemplating escape.

Clad in a black leather pantsuit with a matching floor length coat, Zetta looked spiffy even though emotionally she was a wreck.

Yesterday's thirty-inch snowfall had been pushed neatly aside by city snowplows, and only a few snow flurries were falling under the watchful eye of a still hidden sun.

Chunky snowmen graced the yards of homes up and down the block; while children played in the snow, dragging all sorts of new and homemade sleds as they enjoyed thrilling roller coaster rides thanks to the rambling hills of Reservoir Park. Friendly snow fights were plentiful as the neighborhood kids gleefully frolicked in the winter wonderland.

Being a southern girl, it still amazed Zetta how northern cities continued business as usual even during a blizzard; while in the south, southern cities shut down at the drop of a few flakes. The thirty-inch snowfall covering the ground would have shut down many a North Carolina city for quite a few days, but not up north.

Where in the world was the airport limousine and why was their number still ringing busy?

Zetta picked up the telephone and dialed the limousine service for what seemed like the hundredth time. Still no luck. It was almost eleven and Zetta's flight was scheduled to leave at noon.

In anticipation of the limousine's arrival, Zetta dragged her luggage closer to the front door. This was cutting it entirely too close, and the thought of missing her flight was simply tormenting.

Practically flinging herself into a nearby chair, Zetta appraised the situation; 11:00, no airport limousine, her car still buried deep in the snow, flight leaving in an hour. The situation did not look good.

Feeling dejected, Zetta did not want to accept the fact that she might miss the flight.

Forlornly, Zetta dialed the limousine service one more time. To her surprise, someone picked up after the first ring.

"Good morning, Speedy Airport Limousine Service, may I help you?"

"My name is Zetta O'Neal, and I have been waiting for the limousine service to pick me up since 9:30. I am scheduled for a noon flight today."

"I am so sorry, but because of the weather we have experienced some delays, your limousine should be...."

Before the woman could finish her sentence, Zetta heard a horn tooting outside.

Finally, her tardy chariot had arrived. “It’s here, thanks.” Zetta hung up the telephone so quickly, the woman did not have a chance to reply or finish her flimsy explanation. The limousine service definitely was not speedy this day.

After loading Zetta’s luggage, the driver apologized for being so late and assured Zetta that she would make her flight. Ten minutes into the trip, Zetta was not so sure.

Once on the expressway, the airport limousine stalled. The driver had to get out of the car and fiddle with something under the hood before the sluggish vehicle came back to life. Zetta was not certain what he had to adjust, but whatever the problem; it had taken nine precious minutes to fix.

Feeling like she still had a chance to make the flight, a ten-car pile-up on the Pennsylvania turnpike doused any glimmer of hope that Zetta had been clinging to earlier. The horrific accident backed-up traffic for miles and now the airport limousine was creeping along like a snail on a laid-back sightseeing tour across wet sand.

In an attempt to maintain her composure, Zetta rested her head on the plush black leather seat and tried to remain calm. Unable to contain her emotions any longer, teardrops of despair began to glide down her cheeks.

Seeing how upset his customer was, the driver attempted to comfort Zetta. “I am so sorry miss, it has been like this all morning, one delay after another, and the roads are still very, very slippery. There have been countless delays from the time I started this morning.”

Zetta was too upset to reply, and the driver’s well-intended explanation offered no consolation.

By the time Zetta arrived at the airport, it was noon.

Zetta checked her bags curbside, even though the baggage handler assured her that the bags would not make it on the flight. Zetta did not have time to worry about her luggage because it was not even certain that she was going to make it on board.

Refusing to give up just yet, after making her way through the airport’s security maze, Zetta scampered all the way to her gate.

Out of breath by the time she reached the ticket counter, a discourteous ticket agent, obviously not in a good mood, greeted Zetta with a torrid tongue-lashing.

“Ms. O’Neal, you are terribly late, we have already completed the