

Color Me Jazzmyne

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Color Me Jazzmyne

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First Edition

To:

My husband

My mother

My mother-in-law

My friends & family

My spoiled but playful Dog

Thank you for your love & support!

Acknowledgments

I would also like to thank the editor who looked into the pages and saw something more than a story. I can't give thanks to anyone, however, without mentioning my interior book designer, who showed me that commitment to a project is still alive and well even in the world we live in today. Thank you very much!

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The Encounter

My name is Naya Moná. Some say, that I live what they would call a “once upon a time” dream. How I wish that were true. You see, every turn I made and every moment that flew by in my life, created a new color in my box, my crayon box that is. I made the choice to keep that box closed, until now.

There are moments in our lives when we are forced to open our boxes and expose our colors. For me, that moment had arrived. I woke up one morning with the sun, glaring into the corners of my eyes, and the light from it, burning a sense of reality into my head. It was at this precise moment, that I realized, it was time to open my

box, pick up the phone, and make a call to a son whom I hadn't seen, since birth. I knew it would be difficult, hard, and very emotional. For the both of us. And yet, this was a moment that neither could run from. It was a moment that we both would have to face. That was the beauty of reality, the nature of a moment.

Soon, he would ring my doorbell, enter into my home, and pull back the cover of my box— exposing my colors. He would force me to answer the question...What color is Jazzmyne?

Hear my story, listen to my voice, feel my emotions, follow my journey. Come into my box of colors, to discover the woman I've become. Listen, as I explain the moments that colored me Jazzmyne.

PART ONE





Chapter 1

“My past however, is something quite different. It still haunts me, slaps me in the face and dares me to face the reality of today. Every day, it seems, I am forced to remember what color is Jazzmyne.”



What Color is Jazzmyne

Just the other day, I saw a little girl who reminded me of what peace looks like. Even now as I sit in this room waiting for him, I can still see a picture of her. It's so clear that I find myself reaching out to touch an image inside my head. She stood, just on the bank of the ocean, as if she were holding only the tip of her bare toes in the coolness of the water. She had her eyes closed, allowing the crisp waves of the water to sink, deep into her veins, and run up to the pit of her stomach. This seemed to make her laugh, because a small smile slid across her face and her head tilted softly into a relaxed position. She looked so peaceful and sure of herself as she stood just

watching her reflection dance upon the water, playing off the sunlight and smiling at the clouds.

Life was once like that for me—peaceful and serene, with not a care to steal the sunshine away. That is how it should be for a child.

My past however, is something quite different. It still haunts me, slaps me in the face and dares me to face the reality of today. Every day, it seems, I am forced to remember what color is Jazzmyne. Once upon a time the color of snow ran through me. It ran so deep that it blended with my insides, messed with my emotions and played with the deepest corners of my heart.

How can life do that to a woman? As I look into the mirror, I can quickly see the colors that answer that question.

Upon the walls of my office are newspapers encased in gold frames. I glance at the writings, the ink still trying to hold on to the paper. So many years have passed. They all told a story. Each one represented a version of some reporter's dream. Some wrote that I became everything from simply nothing. Others wrote that my voice awakens them, and breathes life into the deepest corner of their being. I

wish it did the same for me. I could use an awakening. I stop and pause in front of my window. How I can still see that little girl, the picture of course is not as faded as it ought to be, the light has left, the clouds have come raging in, and the sun, well, it appeared to have left some time ago.

I was still gazing out the window, struggling to get that picture out my head when I heard the knock upon my door. I could feel my nerves as they came crashing upon me. My story, my life, is about to unfold.

Once again, I will become a color in a crayon box. I will tell him, how the colors began to mix in my life.

He stands before me as I sit upon a soft white leather chair. I can see him taking it all in. I say nothing. I try to imagine his expression as he pulled up to my home, I could see his eyes gazing over the acres of lush landscaping, settling for a moment, on one of the gardens that surround the property, admiring the beauty of the waterfall within it.

Maybe that doesn't do it for him. Maybe, just maybe, it's the way the driveway seems to never end, or perhaps it's the way the house sits up on the mountain, commanding the attention of the flowers below. I've heard it said that one can smell the richness of this house a mile away.

Now here he is, standing in my office, soaking it all up, trying to imagine how it would have been to grow up in the midst of all of this. I knew that as he walked in, he'd seen the first-edition prints on the walls and felt his feet sink into the smoothness of the plush carpet. I knew that he had stood at the bottom of the stairs, just before placing a foot on the first step and glanced around at the other staircases that seemingly flowed from each corner of the house. I imagined his mind wondering what my life was all about.

In a moment, I'm about to break the silence that still exist between us. I'm about to take the mystery out of his thinking, correct his wild and highly mistaken conclusions. I'm going to tell him just what color is Jazzmyne. After all, he feels he has a right to know.

Time seems to stand between us, moving at a turtle's pace. I glance upon him and I see his eyes twitch upward. I listen, and I swear I can hear my heart begin to thump right through the silk threads of my blouse. I feel the movement of my mouth and then the words "my son" drapes off my lips.

I catch him staring at me, wondering if it could really be so, if I could really be his mother. There is no hello, no hug and of course, no small talk. We both are sitting now, ready to put it all on the table, saying to ourselves that we won't hold anything back. It sounds good only inside our minds. I find myself lost in the shadows of the past as I watch him. I glance into his light blue eyes and immediately I find myself being taken back in time, back to the years of tears. However, I know that it's not time to go back there yet so I still say nothing.

He's right next to me now, gazing into my twilight hazel-brown eyes. I watch his hand reach out and touch the creamy complexion of the skin on my left arm. I felt the tremble in his touch. There was something about the strength in his hands that told me so much and then left me knowing nothing at all, except here stood a man.

He is tall. Taller than I expected. His shoulders are broad and his brown hair so curly that I can tell he hates it. He reaches up and without realizing it runs his fingers through it, almost in disgust. How I remembered looking at him when they put him in my arms, he was so small and

swaddled. I was thinking that he was just as white as white could be. Nothing it seemed had changed about that fact.

Actually, as I sat there taking him all in, I saw there wasn't a trace of me in him from his hands to his feet. It's ironic how the color of snow appears to have seeped deeply into the veins of my son.

Yet, as I close my eyes even for a brief moment, ignoring his impatience with this—I can still remember holding his tiny little hand in mine and wondering what his life would become. I had been a quarters throw from thirteen then.

I let out a long sigh as I open my eyes. He's so close to me that I can smell his anger. I can feel his suspicion and his haunting thoughts that he was not wanted or that I just didn't care. How I want to tell him that it wasn't like that. In fact, I want to scream it from the top of my lungs and allow it to flow out from the tips of my toes.

I admit that I long to hear him call me Mother, Mama or anything that would lift my spirits and remove emotions that are present inside me. But I know it's too soon for such a request.

I need courage, strength, to tell him, to have my life unfold right in front of him. Someone once told me that

strength comes from within, so I dig deep. I feel like I'm looking into a bottomless well that has long dried up— not a drop of strength in sight.

I knew he was waiting. He can't even say my name and yet he's still here, still waiting and watching. Shall I begin with a "*once upon a time*" type of story, or would he see through that fairytale? I sigh again. I know that this upsets him because I can see him trying to hold back the fact that he wants to hit me on the back and make the words flow off my tongue that he has come to hear. Patience is a virtue, of course, who knew it would be put to the test between a once-upon-a-time mother and a once-upon-a-time son.

Finally, I open my mouth but then I catch him staring at something. His eyes are focused upon my dresser.

He's looking at a small picture that sits just on the corner of my fireplace mantle. He's staring at a picture of me holding him. I try to hold back my emotions but my mind quickly begins to drift off to the day when I held him so tight before I had to say good night.

That was the day that I planted my first mother's kiss upon his baby smooth cheek and told him to never forget

me, to think about me in his sweet little dreams. Foolishness now, it seems. I had even whispered into his right ear as if he could actually understand me then, “Mommy loves you little one.”

How quickly I am snapped back into reality, as the tears begin to flow to the tip of my cheeks and then linger there, just on the end, hovering on the brink of my words.

I see him look at me as they began to run furiously from the corners of my eyes, hitting the top of my shirt, as if a faucet had been turned on. I know that he’s looking at me and thinking that it’s all a performance, something to feign a sign of emotion.

He gets up ready to head toward the door, I reach for him. The tips of my fingers glaze upon his skin and I thought I saw a flicker of hope, a spot of love, a speck of forgiveness. It was just a thought.

He’s almost at the door now, but something inside him tells him to stop. He turns quickly back toward me while shooting me a look that sends me into a fancy. The faucet is still turned on and the tears are gushing out, darn near slobbering all over myself. I watch as he walks back over

and you can see the tiny wrinkles in his face just around his eyes. He sits, but I can smell the anger that's in the air.

He's so determined to hear this. After all, this is why he's here. I muster up some courage from a well near mine and wipe away the tears. I take one deep breath and then another one; this is not going to be easy, as life never is.

I can feel my mouth opening and the words slowly finding their way to my lips. *Okay*, I say to myself. I try to picture myself on stage for the very first time. *I got through that*—I can get through this, is all I can mutter inside my head. He still hasn't said a word, but I know his heart is listening.

