

Blurb

When Tamika Jones arrives at the apartment on Hargrove Street, she expects to find her boyfriend, the money he stole, and the woman he cheated on her with. Instead, she finds Anton Bevins, a young attorney, who's good-looking, bewildered by her appearance, and also a victim.

Anton doesn't know what to think of the sexy, baseball-bat-wielding firebrand who disturbed his weekend rest. But somehow he gets sucked into her charms, and after one night together, he can't get her off his mind.

The two end up in a sexy, fun-loving relationship that takes them both by surprise, but is it really love? Or are they just two lonely people on the rebound, seeking comfort in each other's arms?

Night and Day by Delaney Diamond

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Chapter 1

Bang. Bang. Bang.

Rubbing sleep from his eyes, Anton rolled onto his back and squinted against the sunlight coming in through the curtains.

Bang. Bang. Bang.

The noise was coming from the front door. Someone was knocking. *Loud.*

Rolling onto his side with a groan, he checked the clock beside the bed. Seven-thirty on a Saturday morning. *What the hell?* Who would—

Bang. Bang. Bang.

Irritated, he tossed off the sheets and marched to the door with angry strides. The person on the other side better be dying, or they'd be getting their ass kicked.

Though pissed, he took the precaution of peering out the peephole to see who was attacking his door and was taken aback when he saw the petite woman out front. Wearing a baseball cap low on her head, he could tell she was attractive even through the distorted lens and the angry pucker of her lips.

“Open the door, Calvin!” she screamed. “I know you’re in there, and I’m not going anywhere, so you might as well come out.” She started banging with her fist again.

How could someone so small make that much noise?

Anton swung open the door and her hand remained suspended in the air, mid-bang. Her eyebrows winged together in a startled expression, and then her gaze traveled from his bare chest, down his pajama pants, to his bare feet. His skin tingled everywhere she looked, as surely as if she'd dragged her palms down his chest.

“Who the hell are you?” she demanded.

“I should be asking you that question. I live here, not this Calvin person you’re looking for. You have the wrong address.”

She smirked. “Nice try. I know he doesn’t live here, but I know he’s here with that bitch.” She then lifted a baseball bat he hadn’t seen through the peephole, over her right shoulder, as if she were standing at the plate ready to swing.

Anton’s hands lifted in defense. “Whoa, hold on. There’s no Calvin here, and I don’t know who the bitch—I mean, woman—is that you’re looking for.”

One sculpted brow lifted above her skeptical dark eyes. Despite the volatile situation, he couldn't help appraising her features. When was the last time he'd seen anyone quite so... stunning? With a round face, high cheekbones, and catlike eyes that glared at him but managed to look sensuous at the same time. Her nose tilted slightly upward at the tip, and her full, thick lips could be too much on the wrong face, but settled on hers in a way that drew the eye and made him temporarily forget the damage she could do with that bat nestled on her shoulder.

She wore a red top that, well... it was rather revealing, exposing her midriff and showing off the dark walnut of her flat stomach and the white-gold belly ring nested in her navel. And she obviously wasn't wearing a bra, her large breasts sitting freely on her chest, nipples evident against the soft cotton. He had to force himself to look at her face and keep his gaze there, which wasn't an easy task.

Anton swallowed hard to beat back the lust that reared its horny head as he admired nature's handiwork.

"Sure you don't know them. Unless you want some of this"—she waved the bat—"I suggest you get out of my way and let me handle my business."

"This is *my* apartment," Anton insisted.

These gated communities weren't worth the money. Why pay extra when it was so easy for crazy people to slip in behind someone else, like this psycho obviously had?

"Calvin!" the stranger screamed. When she tried to shove past him, Anton slammed his hand on the doorframe.

"Listen," he said, lowering his voice to a lethal level, "I don't need you waking up my neighbors and causing me problems, all right? This is my apartment. I'm not telling you again. There is no Calvin here. This is 2516 Hargrove Street Apt C. *You have the wrong address.*"

Bad enough she'd woken him up out of bed after a long week, but now she was getting on his nerves with her insistence of trying to get past him to find this Calvin dude.

"No, I do not have the wrong address. Tell me this, do you know who Melissa is?"

Shock jolted Anton's back ramrod straight. "Melissa?"

The stranger smirked knowingly. "You *do* know her. Where is she? Tell her I want to talk." She tapped the bat in her left palm, looking like anything but someone who only wanted to talk.

"Melissa's on a business trip," Anton said, his interest piqued. She'd left for California the day before.

"Is that what she told you?"

He didn't like the direction this conversation was taking. "Who are you and why do you need to speak to my girlfriend?"

Her mouth fell open, and she slowly lowered the bat. "Melissa is your girlfriend?"

"Yes."

"Calvin is my boyfriend. We definitely need to talk."

She stepped forward, trying to gain entrance to the apartment again, but Anton shifted his body and blocked her. They bumped chests, and the stranger bounced back, but not before he experienced the fullness of her soft breasts and caught the scent she wore. Something floral and sweet that made his nostrils flare.

"Excuse me," he muttered, his voice coming out oddly hoarse.

She appeared startled and took an extra step back from him.

An awkward silence descended between them, his arms and neck prickling, as if the hairs there were standing on edge.

Anton barred the door with his arm again. "I'm not letting you into my apartment until you tell me who you are and what the heck your boyfriend has to do with my girlfriend."

"Do I have to explain outside?"

He eyed her with suspicion, still unsure she could be trusted. Unless she knew some kind of martial arts, he was pretty sure he could take her. At the very least, she needed to give up the bat.

"Leave that out here," he said, pointing.

She hesitated, eyeing him with distrust.

"You're the one who showed up at my house talking crazy, and now you want to come inside. If you do, you need to leave the weapon behind. I don't want you tearing me or my shit up."

"I wouldn't do that. I only want a piece of Calvin."

"And Melissa, apparently."

"Maybe. I haven't decided yet." She shrugged, as if threatening assault was no big deal, and set the bat outside the door. Resting her hands on her hips, she said, "There. Satisfied?"

He didn't answer but let her into the apartment and took the liberty of checking her out from behind. The tight-fitting jeans fit low on her hips and snug on her thighs, and her backside looked nice and plump. Meanwhile, the cotton top looked like it had been seared into her skin, it was so tight. If he wasn't already taken, and she wasn't crazy, he might be tempted...

The stranger swung around to face him. "Nice place. Where do you want me?"

What a loaded question.

“Right there.” Anton pointed to the sofa. “Have a seat. I’ll change real quick. Don’t move.”

“Don’t worry. You’re gonna want to hear this.” She sat down and crossed her legs.

He didn’t like the sound of that and had his suspicions about where the conversation was going, but held his tongue. “What’s your name, by the way?”

She angled her head to look up at him. “Tamika. Tamika Jones.”

“All right, Tamika. I’m Anton Bevins. I’ll be right back.”

He exited the room and changed into navy blue sweat pants and a washed-out, red T-shirt from a team-building exercise with the name of the law firm where he worked—Abraham, MacKenzie & Wong—printed on the front.

He returned to the living room, and Tamika was on her feet looking at the collage of photos on the wall above the sofa. Most were family pictures, but there were also some with friends.

“You have a twin brother,” she remarked, staring at a photo of him and his brother, arms around each other, grinning hard as they ate popsicles outside the house they grew up in, in Wisconsin.

He remembered that day like it was yesterday. One of the best days of his life. The sun was shining and life was good. At the time, he’d believed with the naïveté of a typical nine-year-old that nothing would change, and he’d always have his brother.

Pain arched into his throat. “Had a twin brother,” he corrected huskily.

Tamika swung to face him, and Anton cleared his throat. She opened her mouth to speak, but he cut off whatever question she was about to ask.

“What do you have to tell me about Melissa and your boyfriend?”

Planting her hands on her hips, she replied, “You’re not going to like this, but I think your girlfriend and my boyfriend ran off together.”

Anton crossed his arms. “I told you, Melissa’s on a business trip.”

She shook her head vehemently. “She lied. Calvin’s gone, and now you’re telling me she’s gone, too, and I know for a fact they’ve been seeing each other.”

“What proof do you have?” Calvin asked.

“Text messages, plus one day I followed him and saw them holding hands at a restaurant, but I only saw the back of her head.”

Stunned, Anton didn’t speak for a moment. Maybe he hadn’t heard her right. “Holding hands?”

Tamika nodded. “That’s right. Your girl might be on a trip, but it’s not business related.

Calvin told me he was leaving on a weeklong guys' trip, but he took way too many clothes for seven days. And he emptied my bank account."

"Hold up, he stole from you?" This story was getting wilder by the second.

"Yes. He took everything—almost ten thousand dollars. Thanks to him and your girlfriend, I don't have any money. I-I'm broke!" Her voice cracked.

Then, as if the gravity of the situation hit her all at once, tears filled Tamika's eyes and her face crumpled. She dropped to the sofa, burying her head in her hands as she sobbed out loud.