

CHAPTER ONE

Sweets to the Sweet

Zander, wake up!” Mom’s voice drifting through the fog. “You’ve got a visitor!”

“Tell Kambui to come back later!” I said, my head still under the covers.

“It’s LaShonda,” Mom said. “She’s really excited.”

“About what?”

“About everything!” LaShonda’s voice.

I peeked out from under the blanket and saw LaShonda Powell in the doorway. Her eyes were wide and her hair was standing in about four different directions. Before I could say anything she was sitting on my bed.

“Is this going to be okay?” Mom asked. “I don’t need to chain anybody down, do I?”

“I just have to go over some things with Zander,”

LaShonda said. She had her knuckles rubbing the back of my head.

“I’ll make breakfast for the two of you,” Mom said cautiously. “You will be out to the kitchen soon, won’t you?”

“Yes, ma’am,” LaShonda answered.

Mom started out the door as I was trying to remember if I was wearing underwear. LaShonda had one arm around my shoulders and had her head close enough to kiss me if she wanted to. I was hoping she didn’t want to.

“What’s up?” I asked.

“I got a scholarship!” she squealed in my ear.

“Hey, that’s mad good!” I said. “But you’re in the eighth grade, what kind of scholarship are you getting?”

“Listen to this!” LaShonda cleared her throat and rattled the paper she held about three inches from my nose. “‘Dear LaShonda Powell, We are pleased to offer you a full scholarship to the Virginia Woolf Society Program for Young Ladies based on your amazing designs for the play put on by the Cruisers last Wednesday. Completion of this program will qualify you for further scholarship aid to either Amherst, Spellman, or the Fashion Institute of Technology.’ Zander, I’m going to college!”

“Right away?”