

# **Zaid: An Urban Tale**

Danielle Yvette

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## Zaid: An Urban Tale

He watched her from his car window as she stood on the porch. Pink sweat suit and baby blue bubble coat. Her hair, in brown micro braids, fell into her face as she bent down. Below her thighs stood a baby girl. Two years old, almost three. Covered in a baby pink eskimo suit. Her little brown face framed by her bubble hood.

Zaid gripped the steering wheel. She had his mother's face.

The baby laughed as her mother fixed her baby pink mittens on her tiny hands.

Zaid stepped out and stood in front of his car. His hands buried deep in his coat pockets. His breath was cloudy as he exhaled.

The woman looked up and saw him standing below her. Their eyes met, locked. Zaid had forgotten what this felt like.

The woman's widened eyes narrowed. The skin of her forehead wrinkled, each layer a year he was not there. She looked away.

Zaid crossed the narrow street. The woman picked up the child and descended the stairs with fury. She was met at the bottom step by him. She tried to push him out of her way but he gripped her forearms with his hands.

"Amiah," Zaid said. His tone low and quiet.

She stared at the ground. He stared at her face. Her jaw locked. Her large brown eyes were smaller than he remembered. Her cheeks slightly sunken, her complexion grayer.

"Hi," the baby said. Her large brown eyes stared at him curiously. Zaid did not know what to say. His skin flushed with embarrassment. He looked towards Amiah for help. Two wet streaks fell from her eyes to her chin.

"Just go!" She pushed past him and marched away from her home. Zaid grabbed her arm and jerked her back. She fell to the ground, baby in hand. The baby, on top of her, cried.

"Aw, Honey. Don't cry." Amiah placed her hand on the baby's face.

Zaid put his hands under Amiah's arms and attempted to pull her up.

"Get the hell off me!" Amiah hissed. She shook his hands away. Ashamed, Zaid stood back.

"Come on, baby. Mommy's gonna take you to school. It will be okay." Amiah said to her daughter.

"Miah. Please. Talk to me."

Amiah snapped her head back towards him. "What the hell we got to talk about!" Her face filled with anger Zaid had never seen in it before. Amiah picked herself up and brushed the dirt off her daughter.