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## A Callaloo Affair

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All week they had been digging a ditch on her street, sending dust swirling. Despite the heat, she was forced to close all the windows. Saturday morning when she picked the callaloo from her garden, they were covered in dirt and she had to wash and soak them three times.

She turned off the stove, and was about to sit to breakfast when she heard the thwack of the stone on her gate, and a bass voice call out, “Howdy in the house. Can I trouble you for a glass of water?” She cracked open and peered through the window.

The man’s face was polished mahogany, and he stood erect, about 5’10”. Doreen did not recognize him as someone from the village, but just looking at him caused her blouse to cling to her skin. She walked to the thresh-hold of the kitchen door and called “Step through the gate.”

He didn’t hesitate to enter, stepping confidently. Out the periphery of his eyes, he scanned and noted the lush garden that circled the entire house, wrapping it in beauty. He already liked the occupant, although he was not able to see her because of the sun’s glare in his eyes.

The aroma of salt-fish and callaloo permeated the small kitchen in which he squeezed, finding himself trapped between the door and the refrigerator. “I’m Linden, the supervisor for the men digging the ditch. Thank you for the water,” he said taking the glass from her hand, and seeing her clearly.

Her serene beauty surprised him as it seemed larger than the small kitchen, the entire village in fact. He glanced quickly, then smiled at her empty ring finger. Trying to think of an appropriate opening, he drank slowly, but her shiny black eyes penetrated to his depth, pulling his heart.

“Looks like I interrupted your breakfast; it smells delicious,” he said looking at the table set for one.

“You should join me,” she said immediately moving to the cupboard and reaching for another plate. “I don’t want to eat alone this morning.” They sat and smiled shyly at each other.

Four hours later they got up from the table, and they both knew they would be together, forever. He told her she must have put some of Mada–Make–It–Happen potion in the callaloo and salt-fish she served him with the soft bananas and sweet potatoes. She never denied it.

He bought her a jersey, callaloo-green dress that hugged her body like a snake’s skin. When she arrived at the party there was a hush as she sauntered into the hall. Meredith, her best friend, declared from where she stood, “Lawd Doreen! You look damn good like food, but wicked too.”

At their wedding, pepper-pot soup and callaloo patties were the appetizers. Even before they told the story of their meeting all the guests remarked that they were obviously made for each other. But as people were leaving, and presented with black-rum-cake and cards advertising Mada-Make-It-Happen, they wondered: love or potion.