

## FORGIVENESS

By Kimini Randall

*KIMANI:* I wondered as a child and most of my adult years: Did my mother really love me? This feeling of uncertainty originated from the first time that I felt as if my mother betrayed me. Because in spite of a lack of food, shelter, and affection I didn't receive much of prior to this moment that I felt as if my mother betrayed me, it was nothing that she could have done to me, or not given me as a child that would have made me look at her any differently than being the twinkles in my eye, due to the fact that a young boy's love for his mother is so strong, and unconditional, that she could do no wrong in his eyes.

However, needless to say, the year was 1988. I was exactly 10 years old at the time... BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM – when the L.A.P.D. banged on my mother's boyfriend apartment door and arrested me for assault and robbery on another young boy. After receiving answers from the police to the usual questions that any mother would ask the authorities, which consist of, What did he do, where is y'all taking him, and what's going to happen to him, I was then handcuffed, placed in back of a squad car--

*YOUNG KIMANI:* Momma please don't let 'em take me away!

*MOTHER:* You be strong for momma, ok? You be strong Kimani.

*YOUNG KIMANI:* Help me momma, please, help me momma!

*MOTHER:* I can't Kimani, I can't!

*YOUNG KIMANI:* I'll be good momma!

*MOTHER:* I know baby, I know!

*YOUNG KIMANI:* Help me momma, help me, please!

*KIMANI:* And afterwards driven to the police station, where I was then finger printed, ordered to take a mug shot, and several hours later put back into handcuffs, along with ankle shackles this time then, ZOOOOM transported to Central Juvenile Hall in East Los Angeles. After arriving at the juvenile hall and being processed through, I inquired to an elder man, who was a staff there, the following:

*YOUNG KIMANI:* Excuse me sir, sir 'scuse me, when I'm going home to my mommy?

*KIMANI:* He said within three days I was going to be released to my mother. But three days turned into six days, still no mother came. Yet I remained optimistic as any other young boy would who loves his mother unconditionally and believes in her.

It wasn't until fourteen days later after appearing in front of a judge (while still in juvenile hall) that I finally had a chance to see my mother. She sat to the left of my public defender and I sat to his right. Not knowing the significance of this hearing or being aware that my life was about to change forever, I paid the sadness that lingered in the air conjunction to this moment no attention, while constantly leaning forward, past my public defender (hoping to get my mother's attention) while smiling to let her know that I was being strong and that I was happy to see her.

Yet she stared straight forward at the judge while not even glancing my way. I could not understand what was going on at the time between this man who wore a black robe and this other man with this suit and tie that prevented my mother from hugging and kissing me by sitting in between us. It wasn't until the public defender whispered in my ear, "Mr. Randall, please sit back," to when I actually started to pay attention to what the judge was saying to my mother. I vividly recall the judge saying to my mother, "Mrs. Sims, I am placing your son on six months of probation in your care, and if Mr. Randall violates any terms of his probation, his next vacation is going to be in a juvenile camp for the next six months." He then continued in his dialogue by asking my mother was she aware that she could've picked me up within three days? After I was brought to Juvenile Hall? I remembered my mother clearly replying:

*MOTHER:* Yes, judge I was aware of that, but I don't want Kimani no more. That's my son, but Kimani do not listen to me, or to his stepfather. He do what he want to do. So you take him wherever, I cannot help him. It is hard on me!

*KIMANI:* After hearing my mother, my hero, say she didn't want me anymore, I felt so betrayed, and my heart broke that day just as Hamlet's heart broke when he felt betrayed by his mother, and I too, such as Hamlet, was imprisoned by the thought of betrayal, that anger once controlled my actions, to the point where it drove me mad, and landed me in prison as a teenager until this age of thirty-four that I am today.

However, unlike Hamlet, no precious lives had to be taken to seize the anger that imprisoned my mind with the thought of being betrayed. Instead I sought forgiveness through prayer, and received it through God's grace for all of humanity; then afterwards freed from my mind from the insidious thoughts of being betrayed by forgiving my mother, which in returned help me to heal my once broken heart. Because through forgiving I was blessed to become aware of my mother's circumstances during my childhood, and realized, by taking into consideration, her own destroyed childhood, her substance abuse, and being a victim of domestic violence, that the day she told the judge that it was hard on her, and she could not help me, was her way of soliciting help from the judge to place me within the system in hope to give me a better life than what her heart told her she could have gave me as a child. Therefore, for my mother being willing to subject herself to the tears that a mother sheds from the pain that a broken heart brings in regards to giving away a child to give that child a better life, proves to me that my mother has always loved me, unconditionally, just as the queen loved her son Hamlet in spite of her choice to

marry King Claudius.

In closing, all praises goes to God, God bless you all, and thank you.