

**Eye of the Panther**

**A Novel**

**CETARRACCA “Cicely Rue” ROCKWELL**

**EYE OF THE PANTHER**

*Book One*

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Thanks to you, the readers, for giving my first book, *The Eye of the Panther*, a chance. I hope you enjoy it.

P.S: To Destiny and Desiree, when I think of the future I promise I think of yours the most. Love you to death minions.

## **DEDICATION**

*The Eye of the Panther* is dedicated to all the fallen activists who sacrificed their all for our quest for freedom I hope it serves as a source of inspiration and a rally cry to the people who are no longer willing to survive under the dictatorship of respectability politics and white supremacy.



*“Nobody can give you freedom. Nobody can give you equality or justice. If you're a man, you take it.”*

—MALCOLM X

"Joey!" Officer Marco sees his partner stumble into the precinct. "Where've you been?" He rushes over to him weaving between desks and other officers.

Officer Smith had been missing for the last two weeks. No one has heard from him, not even his family. He was treated as a missing person and his picture ran countless times on major news outlets, but they didn't even get an anonymous tip.

Joey's lips don't move as he vigorously shakes his head. He tries to open his mouth but can't. Officer Marco sees that Joey's mouth is stitched shut when he reaches him. "Don't do that, I'll call an ambulance!" He tries to stay calm, but the sight freaks him out. There is so much commotion going on at the precinct that only Marco noticed Joey wander in. People are everywhere. Desks are cluttered with paperwork. Suspects are waiting to be processed and officers are coming and going. Everyone is doing his or her own thing.

"Help!" Officer Marco calls out as he leads Joey to his desk. "We have an injured officer!" He helps Joey to his seat. The chatter stops and several officers rush over; talking at once and asking questions. Marco pushes them away and silences them; he then makes room for Joey to sit down. Officer Greer picks up the phone and calls for an ambulance. "Who did this to you man?" Officer Marco asks Joey.

Officer Smith shrugs his shoulders and frantically searches for a pencil and paper. He scribbles, "I'm sorry and you should be sorry too." His head hangs low.



"We'll find who did this to you." Marco reaches for his hand, but Joey shakes his head. Officers Marco and Smith have been partners for six years. In that time, they developed a strong bond.

Joey's desk phone rings. This is the first time it has rung in weeks. Marco answers it. "This is Officer Marco speaking."

A deep electronically altered voice responds. "Did you get the package I sent you?" Officer Marco sees Joey turn to his computer, open his email, and type a message.

"Who is this?" Marco signals the officers around him to quiet down.

"I'm the voice for many, but right now you can call me Kendra Nelson."

Marco pauses. "Is this some type of sick joke or phone prank? This is a police station." Marco says as he watches his partner type an email.

The voice chuckles. "Look down at her killer. Now you tell me is this some type of sick joke." Marco glances at Joey. He's not paying attention to the commotion around him. He just keeps typing his message. "Yeah, thought so, you should put me on speaker."

"Who are you?"

"Just do what you're told or you won't get an explanation for my next action." The person on the phone demands.

Officer Marco puts the phone on speaker and quiets everyone around him.

"Hello, you are speaking with a representative from The Eye of the Panther. Recently your comrade, Officer Smith murdered Kendra Nelson. He was not punished. Justice was not served, however I'm sure within the last week he partially paid his debt."

"What did you do to my partner?" Marco asks as Joey sends the email then rocks back and forth in the chair.

"Let's just say he knows Kendra Nelson really well now. He also realizes he was wrong to take an innocent woman's life. I want to congratulate all of you for the perfect cover-up. I specifically love how you positioned the body just right Marco." Marco looks at Joey in shock.

"Yes, he told us everything. Your little bond is no more. Now everyone must be punished for the part they played."

Marco becomes evasive. "I have no idea what you're talking about." He says through clenched teeth. He laughs. "How do you expect to punish us?"

"Well, with your partner, of course! It's only fitting that he personally delivers your punishment, which is death. You're all going to die." The person on the phone says with a crazed laugh.

Marco looks around. "What are you talking about...?"

"Say bye-bye officers..." The person on the phone starts to count down. "10... 9..." Marco and the other officers look around the police station. Officer Smith stands up and rips open his bulletproof vest. There is a bomb attached to his chest. He murmurs a prayer.

"8... 7...6... 5..."

"He's got a bomb. We gotta go!" Officer Greer yells.

They all run for the door, except for Officer Marco, who clasps his hands together and prays with his partner.

"4... 3..."

Everyone runs to the door, but there are too many people crowding the exit to get out.

"2... 1..." The voice on the phones laughs as the police station explodes.

Sireen removes her wig only to replace it with another one. Her heavy makeup almost hides her facial features. She looks around the garage before stepping on the gas pedal. At twenty-four, this is the first time she's owned her own car. She usually borrows a boyfriend's or a current fling's, but two weeks ago she was able to walk into a car dealership and finance a car.

She pushes the talk button on the leather steering wheel. More than she loves the ivory white exterior, she loves the beige leather seats. It goes well with her cocoa skin, plus it's classy. She slides her hands gently across the dashboard.

“Hello,” she says when the dial tone stops.

“Hey Sireen!” Amare sounds relieved to hear her voice. “Are you on your way back?”

She hears him pacing. “You can stop walking a hole in the floor. I’m about to pull out of the airport parking garage. I should be home in an hour or so.” She makes a left onto the street.

“How did it go? Are you safe?” He whispers into the phone. Amare was pretty nervous about sending Sireen on this mission. Prior to meeting him escorting was her lifestyle, but now so much depends on her success.

“Everything is fine. I’m safe. I secured what we needed with a little extra. It all went smooth and there weren’t any problems.” Sireen wonders if he is more concerned with her safety or how she obtained the money and the information. When he first told her about the mission to meet with the senator, he stressed she didn’t have to sleep with him. She explained she would try to avoid it at all costs. Since joining The Eye of the Panther Sireen no longer has to use her body to get what she wants.

"Is there anything you want to talk about aside from your mission?" His voice lingers.

"What else is there to talk about?" Sireen doesn't understand what he means.

"Nothing!" He answers quickly. “I’ll see you when you get here. Be safe.” He says, then hangs up.

“Be safe.” Sireen mimics him. Amare Kent is sixteen years her elder and acts like her father. Although she’s grateful for his guidance, it’s the last role she wants him to play. She shakes her head trying to stop herself from thinking about him that way, but it’s hard. She cranks up the radio and checks her makeup in the mirror. One year ago, Mr. Kent hired her as an accountant for his business. Since then she hasn’t been in any trouble. The song on the radio is abruptly cut short by an emergency broadcast.

“Today at 12:01 p.m., the Low Plains Grove Police Department was attacked by a group called The Eye of the Panther. They are a racially motivated terrorist organization, more than likely led by a hostile group of African Americans. Although we have little information on them, they left an important message...”

Sireen turns off the radio. This was definitely not the welcome message she expected to receive. She slams her fist against the steering wheel. Amare promised he would discuss Operation Genesis prior to its execution. She didn't feel comfortable killing innocent people.

Although she doesn't want to, she turns the radio back on.

“Twenty-seven people were killed, twenty-five were police officers. Thirty-three people were injured and right now there are twelve criminals unaccounted for. Currently, the true motives of this domestic terrorist group remains unknown.”

She turns it off again. She wants to call Amare back to find out why he'd lied to her. When he sent her on her first mission he told her it was because she was ready. Obviously, that was not the case. He needed her out of the way because he knew she didn't agree with Nadia's plan. Sireen rolls her eyes thinking about Nadia. This attack has her name written all over it.

To Sireen, blowing up a police station is way over the top. The officers needed a hard lesson, but she doesn't believe they should be killed. How can we expect the world to take us seriously if we kill innocent people? She doesn't believe violence is always the answer. She wished Nadia and Amare could see this too.

Sireen sighs and tries to calm down. She's pissed, but she doesn't want to throw a temper tantrum when she sees Amare. Although she hates their methods, she appreciates that they get results. She also never imagined her life would have a purpose. Before she met Amare, she didn't have anything. She lived day to day. The most important things to her at that time were her smooth lip liner and even smoother edges.

Now she has a cause and she plans to see it through to the very end.

Within an hour, Sireen pulls up to Amare's home, or castle as she likes to call it. It has six bedrooms, three bathrooms, two half baths, a study, a gym, and a media room. When you first walk in there is a huge chandelier with a sweeping staircase underneath it. In the large dining room are two long tables that easily seats fourteen each. Above each dining table is a huge crystal chandelier.

Throughout the house are portraits of prominent African Americans like Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton, and W.E.B. Dubois. The media room is modeled after a real theater with ample

seating for twenty-four. On the walls are pictures of famous actors from the greatest African American movies. The two guest rooms each have a theme, one is Egyptian and the other is dedicated to the Harlem Renaissance. In the backyard, there is a beautiful pool with a Jacuzzi surrounded by lush landscaping. The pathways are bordered by abundant flowers. In the middle of the courtyard is a huge fountain. To the left of the fountain is a white pavilion with a small table and four benches. You could get lost in the beautiful nature. Sireen loves it. An hour before everyone wakes up she sneaks in a swim. She remembers her mother doing this when she was a child.

Before she unlocks the door, she hears Nadia and Amare talking. She already knows she is the center of the discussion. She slowly opens the door and slips in.

“She’s weak. She doesn’t have a purpose of her own. How can you expect her to fight for ours!” Nadia yells. Sireen sees the shadow of her arms dance wildly against the walls. Sireen disliked Nadia from the first day she met her. She can tell that the feeling is mutual.

“Nadia, calm down please.” Amare says coolly. “Sireen has a purpose. It just hasn’t been revealed to her yet. She’s only twenty-four. She’s still young.

Sireen tiptoes over to the living room and sees Amare walk over to Nadia and he put his hand on her shoulder. She tenses at their closeness. They are so comfortable with each other.

“At twenty-four I had substance. There was more to me than relaxed hair, fake eyelashes, and a face full of makeup. What can a whore do for us? She’ll be our downfall!” Nadia’s voice is shrill. Nadia takes pride in her roots. She is fair skinned, but what she lacks in melanin, she makes up with her long dreadlocks, natural looks, and black advocacy.

“She’s playing her part. What else do you want her to do, Nadia? She went through physical training. She accepted the program and adopted our views. She’s no longer acting like the whore you claim she is. At the end of the day, she’s a child! She’s learning.” Amare is fed up with Nadia complaining about Sireen. He doesn't feel it's justified.

Sireen cringes when she hears Amare refer to her as a child. She'd rather him see her as a whore than a child. She’s a grown woman. This grown woman just secured \$25,000 for their cause!

“Amare, I don’t understand why you side with her. She does all those things for *you*; not for the cause. She can barely control herself around you. She's infatuated with you, always smiling and looking at you as like you're God. It's not hard to tell she has a school girl crush on you. We're trying to save our people; we don't have time to babysit.” She caresses his cheek. Since Amare first brought Sireen home he's babied her. Nadia is sick of it.

Amare groans as he steps away from Nadia. “She's thankful for me. I helped her out of a tough situation. I saved her life, but that's beside the point. How are we babying her?”

Nadia ignores his question. “Do you really think she deserves to be a part of the Founding Order?”

“I do with all my heart.” He answers without hesitation.

“Well you and your heart are fools.”

Since all the years they've worked together, this is the first time Nadia has questioned Amare's decisions. She's always been loyal, rarely challenging him. Then Sireen comes along and she starts to question everything. Where is the damn respect? Amare wonders.

Sireen has had it with Nadia. Ever since she was personally recruited by Amare, Nadia has made her time with the group a living hell. She understands she's not like the Afro Queen Nadia. Sireen's hair is relaxed. Nadia's hair is natural, but her natural hair isn't kinky or dry like Sireen's. Sireen wears makeup all the time. Nadia doesn't, but Sireen doubts she thinks about their skin difference. Nadia's skin is a pretty mild vanilla while Sireen thinks her skin as too dark. She knows Nadia will never understand because she doesn't need to enhance her beauty. How can you enhance perfection?

“Her name says it all. She's a siren, a destroyer.” Nadia says. “Her mother knew it when she named her.” Nadia knows that before Sireen started working at Kent Enterprises, she was a self-employed call girl for rich men. She doesn't see how that is beneficial to the cause. She can't wait to see how it all plays out.

When Sireen steps into the room Nadia and Amare turn in surprise and abruptly stop speaking. Sireen's eyes meet Nadia's. Today is the day. She never allows anyone to disrespect her mother.

“Don’t ever and I do mean *ever* refer to my mother.” Her voice cracks and tears form in her eyes. She refuses to give Nadia the satisfaction of seeing them fall. She’s going to stand her ground. Nadia doesn’t scare her. She’s dealt with worse. She’s put up with her disrespect because she hates confrontation.

“Excuse me?” Nadia is taken back by Sireen’s words

“I said don’t mention my mother, ever. I’m sorry if I don’t look like you, act like you, dress like you, or if my standards are different from yours but I don’t give a damn.” Sireen tosses the envelope filled with \$25,000 on the table. Some of the money slips out. "I'm putting in work just like you are, except my work doesn't entail innocent people getting killed."

Nadia is surprised by the thick wad of cash on the table and by Sireen's bold words.

Nadia tries to speak, but Sireen ignores her. “Mr. Kent, I need to speak to you.” Sireen says walking out of the room.

Nadia tries to object, but Amare holds up a finger silencing her. "Nadia, go do a press check and bring me a summary from every major news station." He says, and then leaves the room.

When he enters the office behind Sireen and closes the door, she turns to face him. “So, it’s starting already? Is that why you sent me away this weekend?” Sireen searches for the truth in his eyes, even though she knows she won’t find it. He’s secretive, cryptic, even mystical in a way. She's thought that since the first moment he saved her.

“Don’t look at me like that. You know we have to hit now. Emotions are high. The other side is vulnerable. People are angry and they want to do something about it.” Sireen usually hangs on to his every word, losing herself in the passion in his voice; but not today.

Racial tensions have escalated in the last few years. The police killings of unarmed African Americans are at an all-time high since the Civil Rights Movement. The tension and protesting increased when Kendra Nelson, a young African American woman was shot by a police officer. People are angry. The media and police department couldn't use their regular excuses and rationalizations. Kendra didn't have a criminal record. They couldn't find any incriminating photos on her social networks. She was in college, heavily involved with social

and educational organizations, and she was even crowned Miss Black at her university. She had a promising future. Their halfhearted apology wasn't enough. First riots broke out across college campuses, then they rippled throughout the country. In many areas, the National Guard had to be deployed.

"I... I... understand that, but I thought we would send the message first. Let them see what we're about. They'll never negotiate now..."

Amare interrupts her. "The Eye of the Panther was not created to negotiate with anyone. This is the perfect way to introduce ourselves. Everyone is wondering who we are and what we stand for, and what we'll do next. The goal is to make a splash and then formally introduce ourselves." He looks at his watch, "That introduction takes place in an hour actually. Just remember Sireen, we'll never negotiate for what we are entitled to. The only thing a man can give up for his freedom, equality and justice is his right."

Sireen hangs her head in shame, because like always, Amare is right. "I just don't want anyone else to get hurt."

He lifts her head, then takes her hand and walks her to the chair in front of the desk and motions for her to sit. She obliges. "If we can do this without bloodshed then that's ideal." He takes a few steps away from her with his hands behind his back.

"But there isn't an ideal situation when it comes to a revolution," he says.

Sireen's face drops. He goes on, "But your sensitivity is part of the reason why you're here."

"It is?" She slips a lock of hair behind her ear. "I thought it was the reason I should be asked to leave." Sireen knows that Amare and Nadia are ready for anything, regardless of the consequences and damage. On the other hand, she is weary of some of their tactics and it's the only time she speaks up about them. It makes it seem like she is more against them than with them.

"No your opinion is important, Nadia's as well, that's why I put up with your bickering."

"My views are nothing like Nadia's."



Amare chuckles and playfully swipes at Sireen's nose. "Exactly!"

Sireen considers his methods. Amare is telling the truth. Nadia and Sireen are night and day. It creates an interesting dynamic. She can see why her compassion and Nadia's ruthlessness could be beneficial to the cause. She just isn't sure if compassion would ever be the final choice. She shrugs, "Okay... I'll let it go for now."

"Good!" Amare stops in front of Sireen and puts his hand on her shoulder. "Sireen, just know I choose you and I feel good about that choice. Nothing Nadia says is going to change that." He smiles then leaves the room.

Sireen, sighs. If only he meant it the way she took it. She knows she can make him feel good in many ways. She licks her lips thinking about his baldhead settling between her thighs. She tries to convince herself to stop thinking about Amare that way He's much older than she is. She's also pretty sure that he and Nadia have had a relationship and may even still be messing around. Yet every fantasy of them together grows more vivid every time she closes her eyes and hears his voice.

She finds it funny she is able to so easily seduce other men, but she can't manage to get Amare to see her as anything other than a child. She goes to her room to take a quick nap. In her dreams she imagines being with Amare and experiencing sexual bliss with him. Her dreams are interrupted by the sound of footsteps and dogs barking.

The house clock loudly dings signaling that it's 9:00 p.m. Sireen doesn't think she'll ever get used to the jarring sound, especially since it often interrupts her naughty fantasies about Amare. She gets up to get ready for their live broadcast.

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"Are you guys ready to record?" Amare asks as he positions the camera.

Nadia and Sireen put their masks on. Ready," They answer in unison. They line up, with Amare in the middle, and look in the camera. Nadia speaks.

"This is The Eye of the Panther speaking to the citizens of the United States of America. In the past years, we, as individuals and as an organization have witnessed the growing racial issues in the so-called land of the free. As black people, we have experienced these issues since

your boats docked the shores of Africa. During those centuries, you formed our consciousness to appease the entitled white master, a trick used even to this day. We tried your ways, to fit in, but that attempt quickly transferred to obedience, which became tortured decades of enslavement. During those years, we worked or ran away until we were granted freedom. Years followed and we were still treated as second-class citizens until we marched, pleaded, and peacefully boycotted. Even then you attacked, lynched, raped, beat, and humiliated us.

Today, your methods may have changed, but the message is still clear. To be black in America means to be second to white America. In subtle but clear ways you show us this through tactics we will reveal and destroy. We are here to inform you that we will do this in ways you have never witnessed. We will no longer assimilate ourselves in such a way that we shame ourselves and become distanced from the little culture we have left. Respectability politics is a thing of the past. We will not march for hours or sit or stand and hold signs that didn't change things sixty-seven years ago. We will take what is considered to be our innate rights: freedom, equality, justice, and the pursuit of happiness or we will bring America to its knees to show her the error of its ways. Expect another bombing at a police station unless you right your wrongs. And like you, we won't be so nice about it."

Thank you reading Chapter 1 of The Eye of  
the Panther!