

A Taste of Fate:

**ULTIMUS
PRIMED**



a novel, by
WILLIAM ASHANTI HOBBS

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Excerpt – *A dollop of crème*

It was the way she bit into her strawberry Napoleon that sunny Thursday afternoon, catching a dollop of crème off of her pinky with her tongue. As if leaving a trace was an insult to her womanhood. That's what did it. Tiramisu brown was she, re-crossing her well-toned legs just as he stopped and faked like he was receiving a call under one of the green and white Vie de France awnings. West Indian, he figured from the grade of her low-cut hair. She noticed him as she massaged a calf muscle. The way she made him forget he was walking around the corner to Shula's for a tight-mouthed lunch with the partners... It only seemed fair that she would have to pay for everything that was happening to him. At least for a few hours.

He politely interrupted her chat with some insignificant female sitting next to her with a latte. He watched her mouth as he spoke with a level of intent usually following a coke and bourbon, no ice. He told her his real name, that he was going to close a business deal over lunch with some associates in Shula's and then he would be sharing one of those Napoleans with her afterwards. Even asked for her number before he asked for her name. She shot a look to her friend: Is he serious? He licked his lips and stood his ground.

And so he thought of this Ana Joseph, from Antigua, with her 268 area code and sky blue sundress, while the partners started in on him over Butler's courtroom meltdown. He bit into his club sandwich - yes, a departure from his standard 12 oz.

New York Strip. Damn ordering what the partners ordered. Steak and potatoes would make him too bloated and sluggish for the work he had in mind. They threatened his stock options, brought up time shares that would have to be taken off the table if the pro bonos with undesirables persisted. He nodded grimly. Sort of. Without Richard Hunter there, he found it difficult to take a reprimand to heart. Perhaps his mild stiffy played a part as well. In the middle of some story about a former associate of the firm who could not cut the mustard, Darius closed his eyes as if he was concentrating on the story. He nodded thoughtfully to mask his replaying of Ana under the patio umbrella.

The sundress. Classic. Comfortable. Easy access. He couldn't make out the circumference of her hips, but they had to be ample the way they fanned out along the contour of her seat. Tight calves. Shaved legs. Diamond earrings. Not much makeup. Early-thirties. Effortless.

Ana made him put in effort to get her into one of the hotel's beds. She ignored his first call, then returned the next to say she was busy. He said that was unfortunate, that he was up for a stroll along the beach and a light dinner. Nothing intense. He invited her along if she wanted to come, but that if she was, she had better be where he met her in thirty minutes. He was quick to get off the phone to keep the mystery factor piping hot. He got into his Lexus, parked across the street, twenty-three minutes in. Ana, already staying at the Shula (as he had assumed), unknowingly walked right passed his Lexus. She was seated in front of Vie de France at 28 minutes and tried to play off not looking around for him. He pulled up at 30 minutes flat to, matter-of-factly of course, catch her seated and waiting. He checked his watch. "Oh, so you're game. Ok. I was just about to

get going.” Message: I am not desperate. Get that ass in check and on board.