



## Nervous

By Zane

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### Nervous By Zane

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#### [WARNING: EXPLICIT CONTENT]

Zane's legion of fans can't get enough of her way of telling a juicy, sexy story. In *Nervous*, the *New York Times* bestselling queen of erotica brings us a tale of a woman with a split personality.

Jonquinette has always been nervous around men, but on the weekends her alter ego, Jude, goes on intense sexual escapades. When Jonquinette seeks the help of Dr. Marcella Spencer, the psychiatrist Zane originated in her bestselling novel *Addicted*, Jude's response is to go on a sexual rampage. Meanwhile, Jonquinette becomes interested in her new neighbor, Mason, but Jude has no intention of letting Jonquinette fall in love--not when Jude's having so much fun. Based on a short story of the same title from her bestselling collection *The Sex Chronicles*, *Nervous* is classic Zane with an edge. So relax, sit back. You're in for a nerve-tingling read.

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### Editorial Review

Review

#### Praise for Zane's works:

"Arguably not since the emergence of Nancy Friday has American letters produced a purveyor of erotica with such mass-market appeal." --*New York Times*

"Will keep you engrossed from start to finish." --*Vibe*

"Seductive." --*Essence*

"Erotica at its absolute best." --*Urban Spectrum*

#### About the Author

ZANE is the *New York Times* bestselling author of, among others, *Afterburn*, *The Heat Seekers*, the Flava series, and *Dear G-Spot*. Her television series, *Zane's Sex Chronicles*, is featured on Cinemax, and her bestselling novel, *Addicted*, has been adapted for a major motion picture. She is the publisher of Strebor Books, an imprint of Atria Books / Simon & Schuster, and lives in the Washington, DC, area with her family.

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### Chapter One

#### jonquiette

I entered my third floor apartment fighting back tears. It was hot. Extremely hot. I'd forgotten to turn on the air before I'd left that morning.

I tossed my keys onto the coffee table and kicked off my low-heel black pumps. "You knew they were calling for a heat wave today," I said aloud, recalling the morning weather report that I'd neglected. "Why didn't you turn on some air?"

The sole of one of my stockings snagged on a nail in the parquet flooring as I stumbled into my hallway. I adjusted the thermostat to seventy and sighed, praying it wouldn't take long to drop down from the current temperature of eighty-six degrees.

I continued down the hall into my bedroom and collapsed on my king-sized bed. I'd purchased it despite the fact that one person didn't need such a monstrosity to sleep alone. And sleep alone I did. Always.

The red light on my answering machine was blinking. Who could possibly have called? On a Saturday, no less. Normally it would be Momma, but she was out of the country for two weeks. She'd whisked off to Paris to fulfill a lifelong dream. More like fantasy. Momma had a way of fantasizing like no other. One day I hoped she would find whatever it was she was truly searching for. I doubted she would've called more than once at those rates and she'd called three days earlier to inform me that she and her latest romantic conquest had arrived safely.

I rewound the tape and hit play.

"Jon, what's up girl? It's me!" a bubbly, female voice squealed out at me to the point where I felt compelled to adjust the volume.

Me who? I wondered.

"In case you don't know who this is, it's me, Darnetta."

I sat up on the bed. I should've known it was Darnetta. I heard that overanxious voice daily at work. Why was Darnetta calling me at home on a Saturday? We were coworkers but rarely spoke more than two words to each other.

"Jon, I was wondering if you want to hang out tonight. I know we don't usually flow like that, but I have two tickets to this live concert at Club Snatch and everyone else I know has plans already." There was a slight pause. "That's not to say that you're my last choice. I was going to ask you about going out sometime soon anyway and I saw this as the perfect opportunity. You always seem so shy at work. Anyway, give me a call if you can make it. My number is -- "

I didn't even bother to listen to the phone number and hit the erase button. Me in a club? No way. That meant a lot of people. That meant a lot of men. No way!

I baked some chicken breasts that I had marinated in Hawaiian flavoring all day. I cut up a few russet potatoes and boiled them along with a pouch of broccoli. While I was waiting for my meal to get done, I pulled some paperwork out of my briefcase and looked over the weekly shipping records for the office supply warehouse where I was head accountant.

The numbers didn't make sense. They were way under target for the week, something that normally only happened around holidays. After all, who orders office supplies for Christmas presents? Most people take vacation the week between Christmas and New Year's anyway. But we were in the middle of August, when there were no holidays.

I'd broken out my calculator and was crunching numbers when my phone rang. I debated about answering for the first three rings. What if Momma was calling back? Maybe something had gone wrong in Paris. I picked it up on the fifth ring, one ring before my answering machine normally kicked in.

"Hello."

"Jon, is that you?"

I didn't utter a word.

"Jon, you there?"

"Yes, I'm here," I replied hesitantly.

"It's me, Darnetta!"

"I kind of figured that."

"I left you a message earlier. Did you get it?"

"Uh...yes, I did. Sorry I didn't call you back but I couldn't quite make out the number."

"Cool. It's no problem. Sometimes I talk too loud. I'm working on all that though. So, what's up? You trying to hang out tonight or what? Lil' Z is performing. The show is going to be all that and them some. You feel me?"

"Lil' Z?"

"Yeah, Lil' Z, the rapper. You've never heard of him?"

"Of course I have." I lied again. "He's one of my favorites."

I hoped Darnetta wouldn't ask me to name any of his songs because I'd never heard of the man. Thankfully, she didn't go there.

"So how about it, girl?"

After accidentally knocking over my tea onto some paperwork, I involuntarily blurted out, "Shit!"

"Ooh, Jon, I've never heard you curse before," Darnetta chided. "What else do you do that I don't know about?"

I didn't like her implications. "Huh? What do you mean?"

I felt bad about cursing. I wasn't raised that way but, from time to time, a four-letter word forced its way out before I could push it back down my throat.

"Never mind," Darnetta said. "What about tonight? I really need someone to go with me and I don't want to waste the ticket. They were so hard to come by."

"What about your boyfriend, Darnetta?"

Even though we rarely held conversations at work, everybody knew about her boyfriend Logan. He was all she ever talked about -- rather, bragged about -- in the break room.

"Logan's out of town for the weekend. He went to Durham. Asshole! I'm so pissed at him. I told him about this concert weeks ago but he made plans to go hang out with some of his immature friends anyway."

"I see." I rolled my eyes up to the ceiling. Surely there had to be one other person in the entire city of Atlanta Darnetta could get to go with her. "Darnetta, I'm exhausted. I had a lot of errands to run today. Maybe we can go out some other time."

"Aw, Jon, please don't do this to me," Darnetta whined into the phone. "I realize this is short notice, girl, but I guarantee you'll have a good time. Funky music. Free buffet. Fine-ass men."

I couldn't help but laugh. Now I definitely wasn't going.

"Jon, I'm telling you to take a chance and do the damn town with me. What's the problem? Do I stink or something?"

We both giggled.

"Darnetta, it's not you. Really, it isn't. I just don't like going out. Especially to clubs. I don't even recall the last time I've been in one."

"Well, things need to change then. How old are you?"

"Twenty-four. Why?"

"I've never heard of a single, twenty-four-year-old woman that doesn't enjoy going out. You have a man, right?"

Now why did she have to go there? I could never tell her the truth. She could never identify with the fact that I'd never really had a boyfriend. No one would.

"No, no man. I'm kind of between men at present. You know how it is."

"I'm feeling you. That's why this is a great opportunity to meet someone new. There will be a ton of bachelors there tonight, just waiting on a sexy sister like you to grace their presence."

Me, sexy? Who was she trying to fool?

"Darnetta, I appreciate the offer. I can't believe you thought of me, but I really just can't make it. Sorry."

Darnetta sighed into the phone. I could tell she was disgusted. "Fine, Jon. I'm going to let you off the hook this time, but there's one condition."

"A condition?" I asked, still trying to reorganize my papers and dry the damp ones off.

"Yeah, the next time I ask you to hang out with me, no matter where it is or when, you have to agree right this second that you'll go."

"Um, I can't really say if -- "

"Jon, I mean it. Agree to go with me next time or I'm going to be highly offended and get an emotional complex thinking I really do stink or something."

I didn't want to hurt her feelings so I agreed. "Okay."

"Okay what?"

"I'll hang out with you the next time you ask."

Darnetta giggled. "All right. Now we're getting somewhere. Well, I better run and get ready for the evening. Even though I've got a man, I'm still trying to be fly as hell when I step up in that bitch. I still have to wash my hair so I'm going to get started."

"Have a good time, Darnetta."

"Oh, I will. You can believe that."

We discussed work for another few minutes before hanging up. Darnetta said that if I changed my mind, I could call back within a couple hours. But that would never happen. There was no way I was going to a club with a bunch of strange men around. They made me nervous.

I ate my dinner and watched some cable. I was completely drained by ten. I took a hot shower, threw on some pajamas, and climbed into my bed with the latest D. V. Bernard novel, *The Last Dream Before Dawn*. The brother is a powerful writer but I didn't make it through ten pages before I passed out.

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### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Lynnette Cash:**

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#### **Ella Woods:**

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