

I'll Never Tell

(excerpted from the young adult novel *K My Name Is Kendra*)
by Kamichi Jackson

So I decided not to tell anyone about the last time I saw Uncle C.J. Especially the part about him popping into my room a few moments after I had left him sitting downstairs on the couch. He had claimed that he'd come up to see what was taking my father so long, and that he'd made a wrong turn at the top of the stairs. But the way he looked me up and down as I stood in the middle of my room in my bra and panties told me he was no different than the boys Mama was trying to keep from coming around me. Then he had called me babygirl and asked me if I wanted to hang out with him some time. Stupid me said okay, because I just wanted him to leave. He had stepped into the room instead, though, closing the door behind him softly as he mumbled something about giving me a hug, since it would probably be a while before we would actually see each other again. I remember trembling as he held me because it just didn't feel right. He didn't do any of the nasty things I'd heard boys at my school whisper about. But he did hold me too close for too long, and his hands moved over my bare skin in too many different directions for an uncle hugging his not-even-sixteen-year-old niece, especially when she's not dressed in anything more than a bra and panties. We both heard the shower in Daddy's bathroom shut off down the hall, and that's when Uncle C.J. pulled away. He gave me a soft kiss on the cheek, put his finger to his lips as if to tell me we had some secret to keep, and then he was gone. I cried for half an hour behind that.

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