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Jackie Donkin

MY INHERIT

I INHERITED MANY physical attributes from my deceased mother: her smile, her cheekbones, her size 9 ½ feet, her hands, and most noticeably, her hips. People often told her that her hips were great for child-bearing. That proved true after four boys and four girls. I am the only girl fortunate enough to have inherited the childbearing hips. Though I have borne no children in my twenty-seven years, my hips have served a purpose.

I

I come with my own theme music. Take your pick. “When I hear this song, I think of you.” I have heard this said several times lately in reference to the recently released single by Will.i.am in which he asks the ladies, “Baby, where’d you get

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your body from?” To which they each respond, “I got it from my mama,” (this line also being the song’s title). This and “Shake Your Money-Maker,” or “Miss New Booty,” or even “Baby Got Back” often inspire thoughts of my hips.

My younger brother, Jimmy, finds himself very amusing. Since his discovering the song “Honky Tonk Badonkadonk,” whenever we are walking together he will stop behind me and sing his favorite line in his best Trace Adkins impression, “I hate to see her go, but love to watch her leave!” Very funny, Jimmy.

II

I volunteered to deliver two plates of leftovers to the night guards at the front gate. It was

warm and sticky out, as most of the nights were in Mozambique. I approached the gate with my two plates. “Oi guardas!” I shouted. Dinis came out of the dark, took the plates, but did not turn to go back to the gate. Instead, he took a long ogle from my toes slowly up to my eyes with a look that suggested he had something to say, and so I waited—I shouldn’t have. The thick atmosphere may or may not have influenced Dinis to say what he did. The basics of the one-sided conversation were that he’d never been attracted to a white girl before he saw me, and regardless of whether or not I had a boyfriend, he wanted to know if I had ever considered having an “intimate” Mozambican friend. My response was a nervous giggle, and his closing remark was, “Tens tudo que eu preciso utilizar numa mulher,” with a penetrating look at my hips. Loosely translated, I have everything he needs to *utilize* in a woman! I never delivered leftovers again.

III

I asked my grandma if she remembered any hip-related incidents from my mother’s childhood. She quickly responded, “Well, she was swinging ‘em before she was two.” Apparently my mother had been given a doll and buggy to play with. She loved to push the buggy up and

down the driveway, all the while swinging her hips back and forth. Grandma said, "If music played, Lynne's hips were a-swingin' in perfect rhythm." Grandma used to tease her that the reason her hips were so large was because she had been exercising them for so long.

IV

My hip was hit by a car once. The sidewalks are abnormally small in Portugal and, thanks to the local cuisine, my hips were wider than they ought to have been. I was on an eastward hip-swing toward the street just as a BMW passed. The left-side-view mirror hit my right hip so hard that I had a bruise for three weeks. My sisters love that story. Margie said, "Only you, Jackie! That could only happen to you!"

V

I was at a mall in Nashville, Tennessee, with my friend Shara. We were walking aimlessly around the place when we passed a group of gangstas complete with oversized gold chains, pointlessly large t-shirts, and pants down to their knees. At my approach they stopped and stared. I was a little uncomfortable and I glanced back

over my shoulder to see if they were still staring as I walked away. They certainly were. The entire group did a full one-eighty to watch my retreat. One of them yelled, “Shake it! Shake it! Shake it!” Oh, dear.

VI

There was a permanent path in the grass around my grandparent’s yard from my mother’s jogging. At sixteen she had hoped to trim down her hips and lose some weight. Her star quarterback teenage brother volunteered to be her trainer and decided to use some of the same techniques he used: several shoulder-weighted knee-bends and hours of jogging a day. My uncle, Doug, recalled, “After all was said and done, she had these huge, masculine muscles and she was so toned in her legs.” She was less than pleased with the outcome, her new muscle weighing more than fat and her muscular, toned legs actually looking larger than when she began. Doug never let her live it down.

VII

My family and I were seated in one of the long pews of the chapel. (There are now twelve of us, adding my stepmother and two more boys.) I

was at one end of the bench and my twelve-year-old sister, Jeralyn, was at the other. I looked over toward my family members and I noticed that they were passing a piece of paper down the row. One by one they would get the paper, look it over, fruitlessly attempt to control their outbursts of laughter, and then pass it on. It finally reached me and I discovered that Jeralyn had drawn a picture of me and shared it. My sister is a talented artist, and in the drawing I had a small head, small shoulders, a small waist and small feet. My hips, on the other hand, spanned the entire eleven inches of the page. On top of my hips was laid out a luxurious feast complete with ornate goblets, champagne flutes, a turkey with stuffing, and several flavors of pudding.

VIII

I went to a night club in Machava with some of the locals. I hadn't been there long when a Mozambican soap star singled me out. He danced five straight dances with me and then asked to speak to me outside. I was polite and accepted the invitation to go talk. He then delivered a drawn out and dramatic monologue about how it was love at first sight, how his mother and grandmother would never approve of his "being in love

with” a white girl and there was even a lengthy section about race relations in Mozambique. All the while people were passing us on their way to the dance floor and telling him how much they enjoy his work on *Almas de Paixão* (*Souls of Passion*). Suddenly he placed his hands on both of my hip bones, uncomfortably low, pretty much grabbing my butt as well, and said, “We African men like our women just like this,” pulling me toward him. He went in for a kiss but I escaped and joined my friends back on the dance floor. He continued his advances throughout the evening and wanted to take me back outside to continue our love scene, but I didn’t fall for that again.

IX

My mother was performing in Kimberly, South Africa with BYU’s *Sounds of Freedom*, now known as the *Young Ambassadors*. For the first number the girls wore slacks. The second number meant running offstage for a quick change into a knee-length skirt and back on again. Mom wore a body-shaper from high waist to mid-calf while in her slacks to trim down her hips. When she ran off stage to change into her skirt, she forgot to remove the body-shaper when she removed her slacks. She ran back on stage and someone snapped a picture

of her looking out of place, being the only one wearing bright white, silky bloomers. When she realized her mistake, she danced her way backstage, ripped them off, and danced back on without missing a beat. It was her most embarrassing moment and the photographer had it made into an eight-by-ten. She hated that picture. I feel your pain, Mom.

X

I was crossing Yamhill Street, just in front of the Pioneer Courthouse Square mall in downtown Portland. A man dressed in head-to-toe Trailblazer paraphernalia looked me up and down, held up an open palm and said, "All right! High five for big hips. Nice and full." I paused for a split second and thought, "I got it from my mama." I gave him the high five.