## **Dark Child**

I love latkes and brie. Beef bourguignon and Irish breakfast tea.

They call be *bougie* and of my lifestyle make jokes. They say I'm *uppity* and my *black card* needs to be revoked.

They—whose black history education is isolated to calendar dates. They—who don't know the names of the many who are so worthy of praise. They—who let pop culture constrict who they are meant to be. They—who know nothing of the core of my identity.

I am a daughter from a long line of single mothers who could write anthologies on how to sacrifice. Educate you on where you came from and give you the tools you need to make it in life. I am the descendant of women who didn't know how to quit. Who bore half a dozen children and more and still took strangers in.

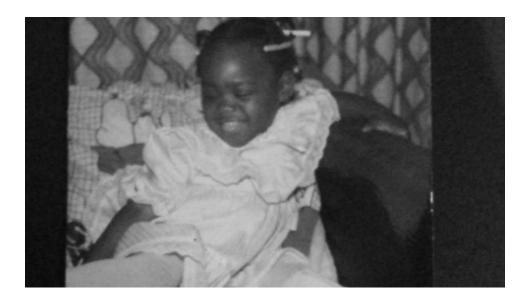
Women who smiled through their struggles and taught me how to grind. Who were proud of the lives they led but for me—they wanted more for mine. These women who taught me about the Mohegan in me. The Italian— The American— As well as my slave ancestry.

I grew up in a home founded on hard work and integrity. Where we listened to Sam Cooke and Elvis Pressley. Where we ate collard greens and black eye peas. Baked Challah bread and Italian ziti. Where you went to school or you got a job. Where you might not have had much but you always had love.

I like imported vodka and single malt scotch. Crazy Horse, Old E *AND* Sauvignon Blanc. I like grits and cheese and grease biscuits. Beef Wellington and mid rare steak... bone in.

This is not a fucking tan This is who I am. Daughter of Phillis, granddaughter of Charlotte and all the *Phenomenal* women before them.

They gave me confidence and taught me self-worth. They taught me humility and the value of hard work. They taught me tolerance and to appreciate creativity. They educated me in acceptance and the art of civility. Their hands—the color of chestnut, olives, peach, sandalwood and mahogany. Their hearts—enormous, giving and unconditionally forgiving. Their backs—strong, dependable, sturdy and how I made it this far in life. How dare *you* try and shame *me* when it's you who has no pride.



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