

DESTINY'S DIVAS

TOYOTA ARENA

April 1, 2011

The Toyota Arena rocked with thunderous applause as Destiny's Divas, swathed in purple, sauntered onto the stage. They paused, held hands, raised their arms into the air, then strolled away from one another, each to her own mark. Liza, with the elegance of royalty moved stage left; Raine's sisterlocks, wrapped high upon her head, bounced as she edged toward stage right. And, the young one, the beautiful one, as Sierra was so often called, held court on center stage.

As the deafening ovation continued, the three singing evangelists peered into the darkened arena, seeing no one. But of course, they were there - twenty-thousand Texans had come to worship, praise, and celebrate with Destiny's Divas.

With a concerted, majestic raise of their hands, the Divas quieted the capacity crowd and the air thickened with anticipation.

Three cords on the keyboard, and then the first three notes of their signature song....

"Love the Lord...."

That was all their fans needed. The men and the women who'd paid fifty, one hundred, up to two hundred dollars for a ticket, rose to their feet and roared their approval. The audience sang and swayed with the melody of the song that had stayed at the top of the gospel and R&B charts for five weeks.

After the first stanza, Raine and Liza pivoted and with their sequined gowns flowing behind them, they sashayed to the center, joining Sierra.

The people stayed with them, all those thousands of back-up singers, worshipping and praising on one accord. At the end of the song, the lights on the stage slowly dimmed and the three posed, creating a Charlie's Angels-esque silhouette as they held that last note for seconds that nearly turned into a minute.

The thunderous cheering returned, vibrating the walls. They clapped, they stomped, they cheered. As the lights came up once again, Sierra, Raine, and Liza bowed to the ovation, soaking in the adoration that came from this: their first night, in their first city of their first tour. For minutes, they let the crowd adore them, then, Raine and Liza eased back and rested on the high stools behind them on the stage.

"All right, Houston," Sierra said. "How's everyone tonight?" Her tenor tone reverberated through the arena.

"Great," "Wonderful," "Terrific," blended together and floated back to the stage sounding like a new song.

"It is so good to be here, deep in the heart of Texas!" Sierra shouted, as she sashayed to the left.

More applause.

"So, y'all ready for some real talk?" she asked, this time swinging to her right.

Laughter mixed with their applause - the crowd loved to hear the Divas sing, but they'd come to hear their motivating testimonies. This was the first time they were speaking in person and this crowd couldn't wait.

Sierra strolled past the stool that had been placed in the center of the stage for her, but she never planned to sit. She would strut through her ten-minute testimony, hoping that would make her a little less nervous.

"Let's get down to it, right now," Sierra said. She paused, and even though just about everyone in arena knew what she was going to say, they leaned forward with expectancy. "I'm saved...I'm single...and I'm celibate!"

"And you're fine," a guy yelled out from one of the front rows.

Laughter rose from those who were close enough to hear.

Sierra laughed too; she was used to the compliments. "Thank you," she said. "But, I'm not here to talk about how I look on the outside; I'm here to talk about who's living with me on the inside. And inside of me, right here," she pressed her index finger on her chest, then raised her hand in the air, "is Jesus!"

The audience was on their feet once again, and behind Sierra, the other two in the trio applauded as well. As the crowd quieted, Raine reached for Liza's hand. This was the beginning of their twenty-city tour, and they were all fueled by the adrenaline that came with success. Two number one singles, their first CD that had just dropped today, and now this. Did it get any better?

"Let me tell you how Jesus saved me," Sierra began her story as Raine and Liza settled back, both waiting for their turn to share.

And they would share, but not one of them would have any clue that their testimonies would end tonight. No one in the arena would have been able to predict that this would be the first and final show. Because in just hours, every lie they'd ever

spoken would be revealed, every secret they ever held would be exposed, and every one of their lives would be changed.

After all, that's what happens with murder - it changes everything.

