

## Casey's Story

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Casey had already left me twice before. The first time he left 'cause, he said, I was always takin' him for granted. I was always wanting him to do shit. He was my "f...ing man; what the hell was I suppose to want him to do that he shouldn't do?! He went out and laid up with somebody, then came back two days later and said he was ready to come home. I let him in.

The second time he left me he said he was stressed out 'cause we had too many problems goin' on. So he left and, I don't know, I guess in his mind the problems disappeared or maybe he felt he'd just leave the problems with me- whatever; he left and came back two weeks later 'cause, he said, he was ready to work things out. So I let him back in.

He left a third time. This time, I didn't really get a reason; he just said he was going out and would be back and I didn't see him for almost a month. He came back one hot summer night with a bag of groceries. He had this big smile on his face and said to me, "Baby, I'm home." I told him, "This is not your home. Go back where you came from." He said, "I am where I came from. I came from here. I love you. You know I don't ever go away and stay away."

I said, "Well, this time you might as well as stay away 'cause I'm not takin' you back." He said, "Oh, baby, don't be like that. Let me in." I said, "I leave for different reasons but you know I love you. Don't I always come back?" I looked at him real man like because I could see he was trying to make a fool out of me and real bold-like, too. He even still had that smile on his face like he was sure he was gonna be getting back in.

I said to him, "Oh, I'm stupid now, huh. I'm supposed to let you back in because you say you love me. That's all you think you have to do is come back and say you love me and I let you back in. That's all you have to do, right?" He said, "Why you wanna dramatize shit? Why don't you just let me in and..." I cut his ass off real fast.

"Three strikes you're out, Casey! Three strikes! You left me three times. Three!!! If I let you back in then you'll have a chance to leave me again and that would be four strikes. Whoever heard of four strikes!?" He said, "Those weren't strikes; they were foul balls, you know? Fouls!!"

Ooooh, I got so mad at him. I was furious beyond furious. I gave him a look that I knew even his mama felt. I cut my eyes at him and I was burning with thoughts of hurting him right there at the front door, but jail is not a place for me. I said, "Oh, do now I'm just real stupid, huh." He said, "No baby, you're not stupid. Let me in."

And I did.