A TWIN BLISS
RESORT NOVEL





Paradise

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Content Warning

It’s nice to know you chose to read this book, however, before you go any further, here are some content you would find inside this book:

Sex/Nudity: several explicit sex scenes

Foul language: mild and infrequent

Other: infidelity

Heat level: 5/5

Dedication

To all the kings and queens who are working hard to make their homes paradise on earth.

Paradise by Rosemary Okafor

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Prologue

Bodo Town, Gobota Island

THE WOMAN CLIMBED OUT OF the boat and waited for the girl to follow suit.

Bouts of coughing tore through the girl's throat, hitching her breath as she inhaled the choking stench that was corroding her lungs.

"I am scared, Mama," the girl croaked. Stumbling on what must be a rock, her water flask slipped out of her hand.

The woman paid her no heed. "Come, it's time."

"But the flask contains fresh water to quench our thirst!"

"Can you hear her? The mother of Hades, she beckons louder." The woman had her eyes fixed on the forest, her lips held a sinister smile. She looked like one in a trance. "Come child, where we are going, we will not need earthly water."

The woman strode into the forest with ease. The dark forest released a plethora of sounds as the two navigated the paths, not by sight, but by the woman's sixth sense.

"Hurry!"

Though thirty, fear buckled the girl's feet and made her tremble like a child. The more she tried to pick up her pace, the more the distance between her and the woman widened.

"Mama!" The girl's voice echoed in the forest like a mocking cry. Abruptly, a chill grazed through her spine, making her shiver. Something was following her.

Whipping her head back, sounds of hushed whispering erupted around her. The trees moved and gradually took on human form. Mismatched eyes pushed out from the trunks. Wide, horrifying, staring at her blankly. She sucked her breath and stumbled backward, jamming her heels on the root of a tree.

Without warning, the root detached itself from the ground, curling around the

girl’s legs.

“Mama!” The girl cried, yanking and thrashing to no use. The forest was feeding on her strength.

“Mama… Please.” She cried, her bottom lip trembling, eyes squeezed shut in fear. She cringed when something firm gripped her arm, pulling her to her feet.

The girl slowly opened her eyes to find the woman standing before her, face stern.

“Don’t look at the trees. You will never get out of here if you do.” The woman turned her back to her and continued walking. “Hurry, we are almost there.”

The path led into an even thicker forest with no sign of it ever being walked on, the girl kept up this time, hunching to avert her face from branches that scratched and tore her flesh.

“Hurry!”

She could hear the excitement in the woman’s voice and the sound of a rushing river as they walked deeper. A chorus of chants tore through the night as they arrived at the coven.

Her excitement rose too. Finally, she would get back what was taken from her. Mama said the dark power of the ancient ones had the answer she sought.

“Daughter of Ekwensu, the black cat that feeds on the fears of mortals. You suck the light from the Ancient Marula tree and turn it to darkness…”

The girl gave out an exasperated sigh. It was time to pay back the wrong done to her with the same tree the villagers adored.

PART ONE

One

Lekki, Lagos

Muyiwa

WHAT DO YOU BRING TO the table?

Oh honey, you got it all wrong. I expect the table to be full by the time I arrive.

Nonsense. You expected me to have a coy answer when luxury is something I've craved all my life. Waking up in a king-size bed, pressing a button to open the electronically controlled window drapes, being served exotic meals daily, and having employees kneel while addressing me, knowing I have the power to lay them off when I get tired of seeing their faces, now that's a life worth living.

I used to be embarrassed when people called me a materialistic lazy money-grubber, not anymore. Not anymore durling. I am unapologetically materialistic, and I don't fancy the idea of working my ass off just to live the life I so desire. I prayed for this money and the luxury that came with it.

Rubbing my eyes, I made to get up from the bed but fell back, closing my eyes in pain. It's as though someone hit my head with a baton. Muttering curses, I massaged my temples. *I should consider quitting partying,* I hissed, gingerly turning my head to the side.

What is that?! Or who?! I furrowed my brows, confronted by the sight of a shirtless young man clad in dirty jeans, pissing a perfect arc into my mosaic-tiled swimming pool.

Scampering to my feet, headache or no headache; I had to know who let a mad man into my compound and why! I grabbed the cordless telephone off the table, hitting the speed dial.

"Get in here now!" Chekwa, my middle-aged housekeeper, better have a suitable explanation for this thing my eyes just saw. What! Only an imbecile pees in a swimming pool. Yes. An imbecile!

Being the wife of an iconic movie star did place me on a pedestal and there are things I do not tolerate. I'm a living enigma, waiting for a documentary to be done based on my marriage and my interpersonal skills.

Most Nollywood wives predicted my marriage would be over in just a year - *'Lucas Opeyemi doesn't stick to a woman for more than two years'*, which was the longest his marriages had ever lasted. But when we made it to the third anniversary - a record, which some ladies felt I deserved an award for - they suggested there was something special about me.

From the stories that hovered around Lekki ladies' gossip centers, his ex-wives had objected to his skirt-chasing and with the objection came banishment.

Of course, I had something special alright. Patience. And a knack for pretending not to know when my celebrity, iconic husband made pussy appointments with the wives of big movie directors and actresses alike. I was smart, smarter than all of them. It's Nollywood after all, someone was always shagging someone else's husband or wife. The key to maintaining sanity was to pretend you aren't aware of shit.

With my eyes still on the imbecile who had completed his pee-task and was now luxuriating on my favorite sun lounger - as if he owned it - I forced my arms through my maroon, marabou silk robe, then slipped my feet into my furry slippers.

Chekwa appeared by my door, calm, indifferent, oblivious of my plight. Chekwa was the only member of my household staff who didn't scamper like a rabbit when I barked or threatened.

"Who is that man by the pool?" I pointed. "Who let that crazy stranger into my compound?"

Undisturbed, Chekwa followed my finger to the figure outside the window, murmured something under her breath, then moved into the room and began collecting clutter.

What was wrong with this nincompoop? "Call the guards or something!" I clapped." Get that man out of my house!"

"You employed him yesterday and asked him to start working today. He is your new employee."

I blinked. "I did?"

I sounded moronic to my own ears; she rolled her eyes and ignored me, continuing with her task.

How could I forget such vital information? I looked at the pool again, trying to put two and two together, then shook my head when it wasn't clicking. “Well, he won’t last a day in this job. Look at him sprawled like an overfed cat on my chair.”

She shrugged. “Not my business.”

Chekwa didn’t like me. I noticed this the first day Lucas brought me to this mansion. The saggy-faced woman had looked me over and mumbled an insulting “Okay,” when I was introduced to her.

“Tell that Orangutan I want him out of my compound, and he shouldn’t come back!”

Balancing lumpy arms on her large hips she stared at me for the first time that morning. “You are sacking him?”

I arched my brows, folding my arms. “Do you have any problem with that?” She knew better! I was the boss. The wife!

“You can’t do that, not today!”

Tsk. Tsk. I scrunched up my nose. This woman and her heavy Igbo accent.

“And why is that?”

“You dismissed the cook just two days ago.” She began, counting her fingers. “The cleaner has not returned since she went on leave two Saturdays ago, and your driver called this morning, he said his wife has a running stomach!”

“What of the gardener?”

“You sacked him yesterday.” My eyes widened in surprise at her blatant lie. “Before you left the house.”

“Oh.” That’s true. I did that.

Pacing from one end of the room to the other, I mumbled to myself, “Why is it so difficult to get loyal and sensible workers in Lagos? Employ them today, they go mad the next day.” I reached the faux marble fireplace opposite the bed then turned to stalk the other direction. “Look at that one out there, peeing inside my pool on his first day of work. My pool!”

I caught my reflection in the mirror as I walked back and gasped in horror. Oh no! Who was that stranger? A cat had eaten my hair, puked it, and let it dry in the sun. That’s what I saw staring back at me. *Mogbe.*

Yesterday’s expensive coiffured wavy pixie cut was ruined.

“You came in late last night looking like that,” Chekwa snickered.

I gave her a stink eye and turned back to the tawny skin-toned, crazy woman staring at me from the mirror. Oh, God!

My expensive hair...my beautiful expensive hair. Peering closely into the mirror to inspect the damage done to my hair, I remembered the event that had me looking like Ursula from the animated movie, *'The Little Mermaid.'*

What started as a celebrity ladies' night out ended in a royal cat-fight rumble, with the crystal face of my diamond wristwatch shattering on the party floor and my hair…oh, my precious hair was pulled on by that two-face bitch - Montana.

I groaned, patting what I could of it down, then marched towards the bed and plopped down on the bedroom bench instead.

That girl, Montana, that cheap ingrate! What had I done to deserve a friend like that? All I did was bring her into the inner circle, and connected her to that sorry actor husband of hers, and boom, she turned around to disrespect me? To bite me where it hurts the most! Not just by shagging my Lucas - that I can swallow - but to rub it on my face!

Like I said, the key to remaining married and sane, especially to my kind of husband, was to pretend and do nothing. The sanity part gets tested when some ugly cock sucker mocks you because she had a taste of the royal dick. And that's who Montana is - an ugly, horrible, backstabbing cock sucker with no iota of respect instilled in her.

Memories from the previous night flashed in my head. I had stormed in, ready for a fight. He took one look at me and laughed, that was the moment I knew the story of my cat fight with Montana had reached him.

"What were you thinking? Montana is a kid. You let a child disrespect you like that," he'd said, shaking with laughter.

"A kid?!" I bared my teeth, perspiration threatening to form sweat beads on my forehead. "You call her kid, yet your dick found her slutty, dirty pussy!" I eyed his irritating laughing frame.

I had no regrets saying what I said the night before, in the presence of our household staff. If Lucas could stick his rod inside Montana's hole, he should deal with the shame.

My fists clenched at the memory of the lowlife who had prattled on about the size of Lucas's dick throughout the party. I hadn't come up with the best way to deal with her, yet.

"Where is my husband?"

Chekwa folded those lumpy arms over her chest.

“He didn’t sleep in this house last night, did he?”

She clicked a fingernail repeatedly on the edge of a table, then glanced at me with her chin jutting out. “No.”

Why he did this every time, I‘ll never understand. My shoulders drooped. I got up and sat on the bed’s edge, hands dangling between my legs. As much as I pretended that his actions didn't affect me, I still wanted him by my side. Maybe I should have done more to keep him tamed at the beginning of our marriage.

“So…” Chekwa asked impatiently.

I looked up, my poker face in place. “Call him and let me know where he is.”

“That is not my job.” She pursed her lips.

True. That job was exclusively reserved for me. Only that I didn’t want to talk to him, yet.

“Run me a warm bath and make me breakfast after that.”

“That is not my job either.”

“Then what is your job?!” I glared at her.

She tossed a hand in the air. “Overseeing other domestic staff and making sure they do *their* jobs.” The wrinkles at the corners of her eyes deepened when she emphasized the word *‘their.’*

“There’s no other member of staff in the house, according to you.”

“There is one by the poolside.” She tossed a glance towards the pool.

I stretched my neck, following her direction, true to her words, the imbecile was still there, staring into the pool as though someone was buried in it.

“And you have to employ three more,” Chekwa added, her lips pursed in a stubborn line.

“Why I still have you working here beats me,” I murmured, groping under the pillow for my phone.

“I am the only one who can tolerate you.”

“Ignore, Muyiwa ignore,” I muttered under my breath as I searched for Lucas’s number.

Chekwa reminded me of the grumpy old landlady in the Chinese movie ‘Kung Fu Hustle,’ always cackling with aggression like a hen whose eggs were being taken away, splurging tantrums for no reason.

I gave up trying Lucas's number after being greeted with the annoying *number is busy* automated crap the third time and dialed his manager who picked immediately.

"Yes?" he barked.

"Sunny, is my husband with you? I have been trying to reach him all morning."

"Muyiwa," he exhaled. "Yes, he is. But I can't give him the phone right now. We are busy…"

"I know. I just want to know where he is."

"Uh… I will get him to call you back, I have to run now-"

"Please wait. Location… where are you guys?"

He hesitated. "We are currently at Ziroc Residence, Lekki. How long we will be here depends on your husband's effort in getting this thing done." There was an edge to his voice.

"Thank you, Sunny. Let him know I called when you get the chance."

"I will. Happy anniversary by the way."

Chai, my hand flew to my chest. Holy crap! How could I ever forget something as special as my wedding anniversary? What was wrong with me?

"Chekwa!" I yelled immediately the line went dead.

"I am still here, madam." She hissed from the corner, then stepped into my view.

"Today is our wedding anniversary, you know that?"

She looked everywhere but at me. "I know." The tapping of her foot on my polished granite floor irritated my teeth.

"Well, why the hell didn't you remind me before?"

"It's not like the two of you are still in love. All you ever do is yell at each other."

Chekwa was right. I couldn't remember the last time we had a conversation like normal couples. Yelling at each other for hours seemed to be more satisfactory than lovemaking. Just last Sunday, we'd spent our morning screaming our lungs out - insults, recriminations, and accusations.

The harmony of our first two years together had vanished, now replaced with antagonism and ill-will.

“You are an idiot.” I hurled at Chekwa, as I walked into the bathroom, slamming the door so hard, a framed print sprang off the wall, crashing onto the floor. The shattering glass was jarring to my ears. “Get yourself down to the market and buy everything you need to make something special for my husband. Then drag that stray cat by the pool and put him to use,” I shouted from the bathroom.

I rubbed my chin as I stared at the bird nest on my head. We were a feted and adored celebrity couple celebrating their wedding anniversary, we had to give our social media fans something to drool and aspire to. There’ll be other days to brood over the failure of my marriage or the disgrace of the night before.

By the time I stepped out of the shower, I had a whole new plan worthy enough to be the debut for a Nollywood acting career.

Two

Lucas

HITCHED RIDE. SCENE 3, TAKE 11.

Take 11. Take fucking 11 and I still couldn’t get it done.

I am Lucas Opeyemi. I don’t do a scene more than twice. Heaven forbid three times. When that happens, it's someone else’s fault - the directors, the gaffers, whatever. It’s the reason I am one of the most sought-after actors in the industry.

Eleven.

Had I grown old and clumsy that I couldn’t even remember my lines?

I wiped my forehead with the back of my hand and swore silently as I cast my eyes on Ana who was laughing at my expense. She was supposed to be my lover in this movie, but the chemistry between us was non-existent. Or let’s just say… she wasn’t playing my game.

Acting with a young heroine has never been a problem. In fact, the younger the better. But Ana had turned down the invitation to dine in my suite and savor the combusting tools required for igniting the chemistry sorely needed to move the shooting forward.

Ana’s shrill laughter wafted to my ears, forcing me to turn to where she was - surrounded by both the director and crew members. She was good. So good. No one gave a damn about me on this set.

I rubbed my nose as my gaze lingered on her. She reminded me of Julia Okoye when she made her debut in the industry - heartbreakingly pretty, self-assured, snobbish Julia. It took me time, but I eventually humbled her in all ways possible.

My dick stirred, and I licked my lips, recalling those scenes rather than the ones on this frustrating movie set.

“We are back on set in twenty minutes,” the director yelled, to my relief.

I stood up, snatched a face towel from the shoulder of the prop guy, wiped my sweaty palms, and threw it back to him.

“Don’t be hard on yourself, man. You are still the star of the movie.” The director placed a condescending hand on my shoulder. “It happens. You just need to calm down.”

He was gone before I could mutter ‘*Fuck off.’* Aside from gulping down cans of energy drinks and screaming orders, what did he know about working one's ass off to get a script acted out perfectly?

Walking off the set, I ran through a mental check of all the possible places I could spend my free time. Twenty minutes wasn’t a long time but I needed solace, from the annoying cast and crew members. Anywhere as far away as possible would be welcome at the moment.

They could wait till eternity. In fact, it would be my pleasure to have them wait.

It was time they realized their sweetheart, Ana, would not fetch them as much money as I would. Casting Lucas Opeyemi meant having the highest-grossing films in cinemas and major streaming platforms outbidding each other for the rights. Who would queue up at the cinema to view Ana Nwachukwu? Big breasted, pale skinned Ana that would turn into another attention seeking Nollywood starlet after one big break. Even if she crawled into my hotel room and begged for it, I wouldn’t fuck her... Mmm, maybe if she begged, I might reconsider.

I was the hottest male in the industry, forty, a little over six feet, with a bald head women loved to run their hands over. My sex appeal got me money, fame, and a certain kind of power, that made my peers green with envy. For the past six years and running, lifestyle bloggers declared me the sexiest thing Nollywood had after Richard Mofe Damijo retired from playing Nollywood’s bad boy. His other contender - Ramsey Nouah had dropped the title six years ago.

Yes. They had to wait for me, or they could go fuck themselves.

Forty-five minutes later, I was back on set, turning deaf ears to the grumbling of the crew members. I laughed out as I glanced towards the frigging director, his pale freckled face had already turned red.

“Ready to go on this last take?” Sunny questioned. I liked it when he used *‘last take.’* It certainly would be the last.

“Make-up!”

The girl hurried to my side fast and flashed me a shy smile. I hadn’t seen her before, but she sure knew how to give a star the right treatment - I gazed at her cleavage, as she dabbed off sweat, applied powder on my face, combed my brows and added a little touch of gloss on my lips.

My lips were still pouted as I brushed my fingers over her breast and gave her perky nipple a cursory pinch. Giggling she looked around furtively, before drawing closer, thrusting her bosom into my face.

“Sweet girl,” I crooned, “come over to the hotel later today and show me how you would like to treat Lucas.”

Nodding with enthusiasm she hurried off.

“Rolling the camera in five minutes!”

“Are you ready, Lucas?” The director asked, his lips curled.

Asshole.

Three

Muyiwa.

RICHE'S PARLOR WAS THE PERFECT place to kick start the gossip on my big anniversary plans, so I'd stayed a little longer than I'd intended. As I pulled my car out of the salon lot, I wondered if I had said enough to get tongues wagging, and haters pulling their hair out in jealousy.

I brought down the visor mirror as I drove out of Eko Atlantic to Lekki Phase 1, turned my head from side to side admiring my new look. Richie had done his usual magic; his salon was the place one entered as a winter sheep and left a shorn lamb. The beauty that stared back at me was worth it. More so, since Lucas paid for it - looking the part of the star's wife didn't come cheap.

Everything seemed to be going on as planned, so far. I looked divine, in my Tiffany Amber maroon high slit gown, its strapless neckline managed to cover half of my voluptuous breasts. The two melons looked like they would jump out of the discomforting cage if I coughed, but that was the celebrity fashion *Genevieve Magazine* wanted to feature on their front page.

I ran my free hand on my stomach, where a latex corset was squeezing my gut. My fingers trailed up to my luscious boobs and I smiled with satisfaction as I remembered the time I was ashamed of them, until I realized they were essential for my identity, especially amongst men.

Back then in Ogbomosho, men would embarrass me with their leers and sick comments, girls saw me as a cheap whore whose breasts became so big as a result of constant fondling. When I moved to Lagos, I realized with awe what I had was an asset. Small chested women would glance at me with envy. Some would boldly squeeze on my mounds, asking if they were made of saline or silicone.

Soon enough, I was swimming in the ocean filled with boob-loving, wealthy and influential men. My twin towers landed me on the laps of the right men, all I needed were a few lessons on gold-digging and Lagos was mine for the taking.

No. I didn’t prostitute, that would be so degrading. I simply repackaged, bared more skin, and boom…dinner was served for the men who could afford it.

That is the same thing as prostitution.

Nope, it’s gold-digging. In Lagos, with proper packaging and the right kind of friends, a girl can live the best life without lifting a finger to work.

I took a turn from the Lekki-Epe Express to Freedom Way. Knowing Lucas, I knew he would jet out of the location once they were done for the day, but I’d plead with Sunny to keep him occupied till I got there.

Lucas...

The first time we met was at the *Bay Lounge*. I was twenty-nine, with some friends having a good time, when he sauntered in, dripping with sensuality and class. His skin, an umber hue. His head, bald, with an aligned stubble beard that gave him that *Morris Chestnut look*, he flashed the sexiest smile at his friend - a smile capable of dropping panties. I didn’t know who he was at the time.

By the time he bared his teeth, I knew I wanted his damn cock inside my pool of moisture.

As if he knew I was gazing, he looked in my direction - his eyes lustfully traveling from my face to my breasts. As those dark orbs lingered on my melons, a slow knowing smile worked its way across his face. My excitement had increased on seeing his hunger.

I watched him beckon a waiter, eyes pinned on my face. His deliberate flirting left my panties soaked. If ‘hotness’ had a face, it was Lucas’ - the movie star, the ladies’ man.

My feet moved before the waiter got to our table.

I remembered the first word he said to me and felt a tingle in my core.

“Take me away with you; lay my head between these mounds. Make me your slave, suffocate me, mama,” he had said.

A few hours later and we were eating each other out in a hotel room he’d quickly arranged. I’d wanted to please as well as have every part of him - his black, thick, long, dick. His perky nipples, the lines of his abs, and he sure knew how to make a woman scream in pleasure.

Whoever said all cats are the same in the dark must have been deaf, dumb, and blind. Lucas made me realize I had been fucking crabs all along. Everything about sex with Lucas was different. The heat. The chemistry. His expensively perfumed flesh. He had me moaning a litany of husky requests and had

responded to my every need.

Patting my flushed cheek mildly, I willed myself to contain the burgeoning desire in my stomach.

It was useless thinking about the past. Lucas had forgotten I existed; I could count myself lucky if I got to have his dick six times in a whole year now. If not for my vibrators, I would have climbed walls. The last three years have been a sham - we had degenerated to a celebrity couple putting on shows for the public.

Did I still love him?

I loved the fame, the attention he brought to me and wouldn't want to lose that, ever.

And I did not miss the sex anymore. It was incredibly raunchy and hot when we started, but after two years - which it took me to realize that I had become a bore to Lucas, the desire for him went into hibernation.

Carefully, I made a left and nosed up to Rivoc Residence's entrance gate which opened on its own and made a right to the large parking lot.

One call to *Liadi* to confirm if his cameramen had arrived, and I was ready for the show. I stepped out of my Jupiter red Mercedes Benz, my latest toy, then handed over a well-packaged hamper to my PA who came to meet me. Smoothening my dress, I prepped my breasts to have the desired effect.

Four

Lucas

“OH YEAH, THAT’S IT…DON’T stop…don’t ever stop. Yeah babe...yeah...yeah. Keep going…almost there…”

Ah… this is life, I thought as I sat at the edge of the bed, stripped of every piece of clothing, my legs wide apart. Bisola, a faded actress who had chosen cock sucking as her new career, was on her knees, the whole length of my cock buried inside her mouth, spittle drooling from the corners of her mouth to her bare breasts as she sucked on me like a pulsating vacuum cleaner.

The dangling king between my legs needed the purge after the make-up girl left me more miserable than a soggy slice of burnt toast. The girl had worked to impress me with her act which by the way needed improvement. I had to dismiss her as both of us were getting exhausted and my once erect cock was fast withering in her mouth.

“Don’t come in my mouth, tiger,” Bisola purred. She removed my cock from her mouth, then stood to her feet. I shifted to the center of the bed, falling back flat. On all fours, Bisola crawled up to me like a cat, a condom trapped between her teeth, and knelt astride me.

“You came prepared huh?” I grabbed her round butt and squeezed.

“Don’t know the many oceans your dick has swam, this old lady has to protect herself.”

“You know I always use protection.” My hand left Busola’s butt and grasped her titties.

For a lady in her late forties, Bisola had the tight body of a teenager, taut breasts - unlike Muyiwa’s flabby pair that I needed to go down in search of the nipples - firm thighs, and a tummy that was nothing like Muyiwa’s fupa.

She rolled the rubber down the length of my hard cock, pushed her ass up a little, and guided my erection inside her slimy muff.

‘Oh…this is life…” I groaned.

“When are you going to divorce that pregnant cow you are married to?” She asked as she started moving her waist slowly.

“What…who?” I blinked. Oh...she meant Muyiwa...

“This one has lasted longer than the other two,” she added, lowering a hard nipple into my mouth, while still riding slowly. “She must have something special. Oh, I forgot. She makes a fool of herself all over social media and television shows to your advantage.”

I sucked on her nipple obligingly while wondering why we should be discussing Muyiwa now.

“I am already tired of having her around.” I lied as I felt my ultimate trip beginning. Grabbing her waist, I began pounding her from underneath, meeting her thrust with mine. “Argh…fuck...grind it…. Want it faster? Hmmm...Hmmm?”

“Yes, tiger, slam your rod deep in my fucking hole,” she whimpered.

I climaxed with a jolt that made my body spasm. She held me tight until my muscles relaxed.

“That is how to make a man like you feel alive.” She grinned in a manner that’d suggest that she too was satisfied. “You know....” She rolled off me to lay on her back. “We are good together. I understand your lust and I don’t fucking care who you are screwing, as long as you will return to me.”

So does Muyiwa.

I rolled to my side, trapping Bisola’s slender legs with mine, then kissed her neck. “Muyiwa will be gone very soon. I am making plans already.” Another kiss. “But you know you are a free spirit; marriage doesn’t suit you.”

“So are you. Everyone knows you can’t stay married for a long time. What did she do to you? Has the almighty Lucas been hypnotized?” She bit on my lips.

“That will never happen,” I spoke into her mouth. “You know Muyiwa is a sweet girl, I have to find a very good reason to discard her.”

Discard Muyiwa, I will, but not for Bisola.

“I will not continue to service you in hotels. Get that woman out and we will have the freedom to do this thing anywhere. I am not asking for too much.”

I know what you are asking for. “I will do just that. Once I am done with this

shoot, I will contact my lawyer."

"Five years is too long for Lucas Opeyemi to remain married." Bisola rolled away, walking unabashedly naked to the bathroom.

Chuckling, I relaxed on the bed, my hand padding the back of my head.

Ah…Women…the story of my life. Who would have thought in secondary school that shy, studious Lucas Opeyemi would develop into one of the greatest lovers of the century? I couldn't help the effect I have on women now; one penetrating glance and they come running. None of my colleagues have such a track record.

Not that I went chasing. It has never been necessary. Once I felt the freedom of college, I decided to change my major from Electronic Engineering to Theater Arts. The women had fallen across my path with monotonous regularity when I started investing in my body and confidence. Since then, I have indulged shamelessly. Ten, twenty, fifty. Who counted?

A quasi marriage I had with a young, Gobota girl, which didn't last up to two years had slowed me down, then I got tired of it and let myself go. To say the truth, she packed her things and disappeared one day. Thank God we didn't have a court or church wedding, only her parents' blessings. I was twenty-eight when she left, had a lot of hotties to fill the vacuum so I didn't miss her much, a little pretty thing that couldn't cope with my burgeoning fame. Then there was Ivy who got fed up six months after our wedding.

And Barbara, my Barbie. Somebody else's wife when I met her - I railroaded her into ditching her husband, so she could live with me. We made the relationship legal a few months after her divorce. Barbie was already exhausted two years in, around the same time I announced my own exhaustion. However, she wouldn't leave without a public fight. She finally accepted my parting package and left with our son. Last I heard, she was screwing Arthur Wale, the upcoming music producer.

Now Muyiwa. Five years with her and I was as choked as a man with a noose around his neck.

"What are you doing later today?" Bisola called out from the bathroom.

"Not sure," I stroked my balls. "I will stay here for a while then drive home?"

"Avoiding your wife huh?"

"Let's just say I want to squeeze every juice out of you, old hen. Come here!" I demanded.

“You are becoming insatiable, Lucas.” I could hear the smile in her voice. “Come get me.”

I kicked off the bed and ran after her.

Five

Muyiwa

HE ALLOWED HER TO CALL me a pregnant cow?

I have done everything to make us work, to make us the ideal celebrity couple- at least, in the eyes of his fans. And what did he do? Allow his fuck bitch to disrespect me. *E mi Muyiwa*! Haaa!!! I will show her in this town, it's like Bisola wants to be unfortunate this year.

Standing by the slightly opened door, I suppressed the burning urge to storm the room and smash the bitch's head to the wall. Punch her botoxed lips until they bled. Then I would turn to Lucas, shove my long nails inside his shocked eyes and gouge them out viciously.

Bastard! How could he discuss me like this with that…that…tattered bird? Now I understood why Montana could insult me without fear, this bastard gave them the key. Once they got hold of his dick he began to sing.

So much for a surprise visit, I thought, fumbling the spare smart door card that was handed to me at reception.

Muyiwa you are a fool.

I wanted drama, now I had one. I shouldn't have come here without first calling, that would have saved me from seeing this. Sunny had wanted to ring his room but I insisted it *would spoil the fun.*

The receptionists had bought into my plan and were eager to hand the spare card to me. I was Mrs. Lucas Opeyemi, the movie star's wife, after all, and had tipped them so well that they were ready to lick my ass crack.

Did they know and yet allowed me to walk into him? They wanted publicity from the drama or what?

A shuffling behind made me turn.

"Everything is set for the photoshoot. Lots of paparazzi down there to cover the event, did you call them?" Sunny asked.

“Did you know about this?” I shot him an accusing stare.

“What? Ehm…I don’t…”

“Go in there and tell him to dress up.”

I walked away feeling stupid. I have never caught Lucas pants down, only second-hand testimonies from his fuck bitches who would make jokes of their rendezvous with him. Discussing the length of my husband’s dick had become a favorite topic whenever the ladies gathered, but I have kept my head high, until today.

Getting to the foyer, I managed a frosty smile as cameras came alive. Inside of me, I was outraged, furious and incensed.

“Where is Lucas, the star?” I heard someone shout.

He was the important one, not me. The reason they’d agree to come around. The reason I had their audience and would always have.

Lucas, the man everyone would love to kiss.

Lucas, the man full of shit but still loved by all.

Lucas, the bastard who knew I would hang on to him no matter how many women he screwed.

“He will join us in a moment please.” I dug out my sexiest voice, twirling and turning for the camera, smiling like a bride. *Fools.*

Where the heck is he? Fifteen minutes should be enough for him to clean up his dirty ass and get down here.

Euphoric gasps, followed by cheers and claps.

Cameras panned towards the stairs.

The movie star made his entrance, dressed in a black embroidered white Agbada, the one I’d brought with me and had handed to Sunny, a cap to match. Smiling like an angel.

Swallowing the anger spree that was about to choke me to death, I touched my golden curly wig, fluffed it out a little. If I was going to be caught on camera with this sexy as sin, cheating bastard, I should have my social mask in place and look my best. It wouldn’t do to be captured looking like a sulking Melania Trump.

So, I smiled, turning and twirling. Positioning for the perfect couple’s romantic pose as the cameramen leaped into action.

Six

Lucas

CHEKWA SPREAD AVOCADO OVER THE bread, carefully placing two slices of tomatoes on top, then covered the decoration with another slice of bread, and placed it on top of the other two on a plate before me.

“Thank you, Chekwa.”

I dropped my tablet on the dining table and took a generous bite of the sandwich, while savoring the news I’d just read on Bella Naija.

The online celebrity magazine captured a perfect picture of me during the little anniversary show we put up yesterday. And the lady who wrote the article must be a huge fan; *‘Our hero, and his lady,’* she captioned it. A perfect caption that clothed the real shitty marriage I and Muyiwa were in.

The sandwich had already gone down halfway before I picked the cup of tea and sipped it. *Hmm…nice…* everything seemed perfect, including the call that woke me up this morning.

We finally got the deal. The McKay role is yours. Shooting starts in two months. The script will be sent to you anytime today,” Sunny had sung.

That role was written with me in mind, I smiled. Raymond Alabi would not want just any actor to play the male lead in his movie, it had to be Lucas Opeyemi or the movie would be a disaster.

Draining the cup, my joy was exhilarated at the thought of the new movie. I couldn’t wait to get *‘Hitched Ride’* done and over with. The thing was not becoming shitty, just the female lead was being a bore. Were it not that abandoning the project wasn’t good for this business, I would have done that.

“Another bunch of flowers for you and madam,” Chekwa said with curled lips, as she dropped an offensive jar of glorified grass before me. I plucked out the note, it read,

To the best couple in Nollywood, happy anniversary.

from the House of Colors.

“They are goodwill flowers, Chekwa.”

“Am I supposed to make petal soup with them or feed them to those tiny fishes inside that aquarium over there?” She snapped. “I swear I am going to move out of this place finally if these flowers keep coming.”

“I shall relieve you of your job if you keep complaining like a pregnant woman.”

“You know you cannot do that, I am the only person who can work with your wives.”

True. I can’t remember how many times Muyiwa had fired Chekwa, but the old lady had refused to go. She’d return to work the next morning as if nothing happened. I like her though, having lived with her for more than ten years, her foul moods were not new to me.

“Where is my wife?” I pushed the remaining of the sandwich inside my mouth, wiping my lips with a napkin. I didn’t see Muyiwa in bed when I woke up, I had thought she was out for her morning jog but I’d seen her phones on the side table. Muyiwa never left the house without her phones.

Chekwa shrugged. “How would I know? Checking on your wife is not part of the job you are paying me for.” She picked the tray, a dark cloud descended on her face as she saw an untouched sandwich.

“Two is enough for me, Chekwa. You know I have to watch my weight.”

“I shouldn’t have made it at all. Why hasn't madam employed a cook? I told her to do so immediately, now I have to do everything…everything with no appreciation. Who will eat this leftover now? The dog?” She grumbled.

“Leave it there Chekwa, I will have it.”

I regarded Muyiwa as she entered the breakfast room and took a seat. She looked calm in a simple Ankara short-sleeved dress.

“Morning,” I said.

She nodded, clicked on her phone, gazed at the screen for a while, then pushed it towards me - *Bella Naija*. I relaxed my back, padding the back of my head with my palm, a smile graced my lips.

“It's amazing stuff, I read it this morning…good…very good,” I acknowledged.

I must give it to her though when it came to social media image-making,

Muyiwa was a goddess, she knew when to hit the space with sensational pictures and stories about us.

“Are you okay?” I asked, desperately wanting to start a conversation. I don’t know why, but somehow, I missed those moments we would sit here, chatting and laughing at insider jokes. Now, interactions between us were far from jovial. We were hardly even intimate.

“I am fine,” she replied, eyes downcast, dragging her phone back to herself.

I wanted to apologize for yesterday. Not for fucking Bisola. Lucas Opeyemi would not apologize for catching fun with another daughter of Eve. I have already told Muyiwa that this cock was too big for her alone and she seemed to be okay with that. I wanted to apologize for being so careless and making her see it. Sunny told me she’d caught me in the act.

Chekwa waddled in with a tray balanced on her palm, the strong aroma of goat meat pepper soup wafted to my nostrils even before the dish touched the table.

“Eating heavy this morning?”

“I always eat what I want at any time of the day,” her tone stilted.

She scooped the soup, placed it in her mouth, then ‘o-ed’ it, blowing off the heat. I watched the sauce stain a corner of Muyiwa’s lips. A sudden strange desire to lick the excess off her pink, round lips settled inside my stomach. It dawned on me that I had not ventured near Muyiwa in months. Our fans would find this shockingly unbelievable. But sex between us was becoming less and less frequent and when it happened, it always left me feeling unfulfilled.

When did I become bored with this woman? When did Muyiwa’s thick, curvaceous body stop freaking me? Her eyes were naturally clothed with naked lust, like one who was always horny, and they used to get me shoving her into the corner for a quickie. Hers is the only skin I had ever licked, and by skin, I mean her succulent pussy too. She wasn’t dead meat in bed, and her cunt was a work of art - fleshy, swollen, always begging to be sucked. She had everything in excess.

My cock stirred at the thought of the moments I’d settle between her legs and sup. My hand grazed over my groin. It’s been how many months? Two? No three. I doubted if she would want to be fucked now. Better not remind her of yesterday. I would rather buzz the nymph, Bisola, later today.

“So... what will you be doing with yourself today?” I asked, but she stuffed a piece of sandwich between those lips of hers. One of my phones chose that

moment to ring.

I picked the call from my air pod, cleared my throat, and gave out a burst of loud laughter at the joke that greeted me from the other end.

“The money bag himself,” I hailed, glancing at Muyiwa who was nibbling on a piece of meat held firmly by her fork while browsing through her phone. “You should know I am not glued to my phone, I hardly even check my mails.”

Man would not change, five solid years of going incommunicado and Onahi was starting our first conversation with a lecture on how important it was to check my emails regularly. “Man, you are not the boss of me…remind me who the celebrity is again?” I picked out a tomato seed from my shirt, cleaned my fingers on top of the table.

“Hm..hu…is this a peace offering? Are you trying to make me forgive you for not keeping in touch?” I swiped my phone from the table, pushed the chair with my legs, and made it towards the staircase. “An anniversary gift? Oh, this is amazing! A holiday in a good resort, away from this busy place is what I need right now...you owe me that.”

Another bout of laughter.

Pushing the door open, I grabbed my laptop and went straight to my mailbox as I sat on the bed. “Gobota? Why the fucking hell would you establish a resort there? What happened to Nigeria or Ghana?” I clicked on the latest message. “Twin Bliss Resort…yes, definitely…Thanks, man.”

The line went dead, and my eyes returned to the message. It’s addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Lucas Opeyemi. Did Onahi know about Muyiwa or was he referring to Barbara, ex-wife number two.

I read the invite again, clicked on the link attached, browsed through the pictures; a satisfying smile crossed my face. This was one place I would not miss going for any reason in the world.

Twin Bliss Resort, aye! I growled with ecstasy; one whole week alone would do me a lot of good.

Alone, why not? I wasn’t going on this trip with Muyiwa, she would become a pest and a restriction. I planned to have fun, a lot of it and I wouldn’t need a wife who would slow me down.

I sprang to my feet, jumped into the bathroom to have a quick shower.

The movie shoot for the next two weeks must be put on hold until I get back. Mr. Director should go eat his shit and Ana Nwachukwu…hmm… wouldn’t it be

nice to see the little miss queen of the screen get frustrated?

Seven

Muyiwa.

I COULDN'T STOP GAZING AT the exotic pictures that graced my sight as I clicked Lucas's laptop. *Where is this place?* I sighed in awe and pulled the gadget closer as the tropical resort seduced me.

The more I browsed through, the more I got enchanted. The place reeked of money and class, and the fact that it was situated outside Nigeria made it the kind of place I would want to lose myself completely, get pampered and frolic for the first time without giving a shit.

Click, click, click, and I was back to the invite.

Oh…wow…Whoever this Onahi guy was, God bless his generous heart.

Why hadn't he sent it earlier? Maybe like yesterday? I would have lauded it at Richie's salon and watch that doll-faced Montana shrink with envy. We would have even chirped it in during the anniversary interview.

But for reasons best known to him, Lucas hid it from me. The narcissistic bastard couldn't even mention it this morning either. He knew this was one news that would have zapped me out of my foul mood and made me grab my phone doing what I know how to do best, peppering my haters and making fans go "aww…" on my social media pages, yet he kept it to himself. He'd preferred featuring on Bella's Blog for *just* anniversary pictures. Nothing more. No *pepper dem* news, then greedily grinning with satisfaction as if he did the work. Without a, *thank you my love.*

Nonsense.

The king of the big screen would rather jump over the third mainland bridge than appreciate anyone other than himself.

He also didn't return home with me after the little impromptu anniversary party.

"Sorry hun, I still have something to clear out with the producer," he said,

sending me off with a passionate kiss both of us knew was for the cameras.

No appreciation.

No apology.

He was the fucking movie star and that fact that he showed up should be enough for me.

“So… what will you be doing with yourself today?” he had asked.

Cleaning up your ass, I had wanted to reply. But it would have made no difference. The prick was feeling damn good this morning as always, nothing seemed to bother him except roles, scripts, and probably how to make this trip without me.

My hand flew to my mouth as realization dawned on me. That’s it! That’s it! Lucas didn’t tell me about this trip because he didn’t want me to go with him. I smiled, then bit on my bottom lip and shook my head.

Ode leleyi sha.

But wait. Who was he planning to go with? The bastard probably had girls he had promised the trip to. Like that botoxed-lipped-Bisola. Well…he was in for a surprise - we would be going there together, and I would enjoy every day of the vacation at his expense.

I read the message again. How many people did this Onahi guy invite? Who were they? Of course, a guy who has the money to invite us would be inviting other wealthy celebrities, billionaires, and oil magnets.

Maybe I should call the number on their website to enquire who the other guests were. No... that wouldn’t be necessary. I’ll just ensure I have more than enough clothing and knowledge to show them who’s the boss. That would work. Oh yes!

My phone began to ring the same time I closed the laptop. Peering on my phone screen I smiled - exactly the man I wanted to speak to, Lucas’ PA.

“I can’t get Lucas on the phone, I need to get some details right so I can book his flight.”

Oh no, Lucas. I will not watch you disappear to Mystery Island with another woman while I stay here like an unwanted housekeeper.

“It’s okay, I will take it up from here.” Trust me on that. “Don’t worry, Lucas will be fine.”

My husband seriously wanted to get away from me. Not that I was surprised,

nothing Lucas ever did surprised me anymore. But something in me snapped when I witnessed his disgraceful act with that washed-out whore. This is me fighting back. Taking what I wanted. I didn't care about him and I knew he didn't want to be around me anymore, which was fine by me, I would not force him to.

When it was time for me to leave him, I would be so dramatic about it. He wouldn't see it coming. Twin Bliss Resort was my chance to rebuild myself, find me a new man while he fucked around. We'll see who will be laughing soon.

One more call to make. Madrid, Lucas' son from his second ex, Barbara, was due to come spend the weekend with us. That had to be postponed.

Barbie wasn't picking up so I sent her a text message. She would call back to make a fuss, probably remind me she already fixed a date and wouldn't want to cancel. But who cares? She had better sit her flat ass down and take care of her son.

Done with Barbie, I tapped my long, almond manicured nail on my teeth repeatedly, doing a mental check of my activities for the day.

Exercise class with the girls, a visit to the *Skin Parlor,* and Bola's Beauty House to wax my legs and give my pussy some good yoni tightening treatment, then back home.

The exercise class and Bola's place had to be cancelled and replaced with shopping. A day spent shopping at Belle *L'Afrique* with Chacha would have their sales soaring. Then when I post pictures online, referencing the store, fans would storm them trying to recreate the look.

The thought of this trip had me humming a soft tune, as I strode down the stairs to grab my car key. Oh no! No. No. No! I screamed mentally at my garden's reflection on the window.

"Chekwa!" I yelled, rushing to the entrance for closer inspection. I didn't wait for Chekwa to catch her breath before I began lamenting. "Who cut down my trees? My beautiful pine trees!"

"I thought you had fallen inside the pool ma'am," she hissed.

"For Christ's sake, I can get myself out of the pool if that was the case," I spat. "Who did this to my trees?" I shook my head.

The imbecile from yesterday chose that moment to stroll by.

"Him." Chekwa pointed.

The imbecile had the nerve to throw a careless greeting at me, pulling on his

loose workman jeans with one hand while whirling the garden shears around his finger.

“Hey, you imbecile! Get out of my house before you ruin what is remaining of my garden!”

“Ma?”

“Don’t ‘ma’ me.” I faced Chekwa. “I can no longer have this thing here, throw him out or I will let the dogs loose on him.” I pointed a stiffened finger at the confused guy. “I do not want to see him here again, you understand me Chekwa? Get him out!”

The guy cast a pleading stare at Chekwa who puckered her lips and heaved a dramatic sigh. “But there is nobody to help me out with work; you have refused to employ any other staff.”

“Staff or no staff, I don’t want to see this… this Agama lizard ever again.”

My phone buzzed, a reminder that Chacha was waiting for me so we could go on a spending spree.

Eight

Lucas

PICKING UP RAYMOND ALABI'S SCRIPT from Sunny, I made some follow-up calls and went online to buy some stuff in readiness for my trip.

I had a major decision to make on which of the ladies I would take with me. I needed one who would be mature and appreciative enough to keep it out of the media, away from Muyiwa's hearing.

Getting entangled with Muyiwa was a mistake. Who would blame me? What did anyone expect of a man going through a messy divorce, a blood-draining movie shoot, and two whole months of unplanned celibacy?

Seeing her seated at that lounge, breasts the size of watermelons, brazenly and bodaciously exposed, jiggling at her every little movement. My brain had shut down to every other meaningful thing I came there to do, fluid rushed into my mouth, so much that I had to swallow severally to prevent from drooling.

I had taken a little fancy to big women all my life, that day was different. I could swear I saw glitter all over her like those little stars that surround brand new trophies, add the heavenly orchestra humming the harmonious tune in my head and you got the scene perfectly.

Before I could restrain myself, old Lucas was already organizing a private engagement party for a woman I met barely a month ago. Three months later, we marched down the aisle.

How long did it take me to get over the euphoria? Two years. The longest I have remained committed to one woman. I did have some fun though, a couple of production assistants, some enthusiastic actresses, and a handful of models - all one-night stands. I made those affairs discreet - the first time I was doing that for any woman. As far as I was concerned, I have been scrupulously faithful which wasn't good for my cock or publicity.

Slowing my car, I veered towards the estate that led to my mansion, cast an appraising glance at a very impressive rear-end of my neighbor's wife clad in a

tight black jumpsuit, moving a box. I licked my bottom lip and smiled to myself. I could recognize Montana's ass anywhere. Sweet Montana, one of my one-night stands.

Before Muyiwa, I had always spoken about my many conquests, with names and details, but with a woman like Muyiwa who had made our union headlines, I had to be careful.

Carefulness, that was what I didn't like - I have lived for the moment, not giving two fucks about the media.

I pulled the car into my compound, entered inside, and climbed the stairs two at a time with a solid decision in my heart.

I would make the trip with Ana, the new female Nollywood sensation. Since she wanted us to start all over again with the right foot for the sake of the ongoing movie shoot, she said so herself. I knew she wouldn't turn down the offer of going on a weeklong trip with me.

What a conquest that would be.

Damn! My balls were aching for her already, I couldn't wait to be in her and know what she tastes like. Maybe I could even get the chance to jam it in her on the flight.

Deciding on taking Ana Nwachukwu to Twin Bliss was pure lunacy as the media was everywhere. I knew the media space would blow hot on it; maybe that was the storm I needed to send Muyiwa off. I allowed myself the pleasure of a laugh while thinking about the risk of being found out, the whole scenario giving me an erection.

When I returned, I would gently cut Muyiwa loose. Lucas Opeyemi would be back again, single and ready for adventure, without feeling guilty.

Juggling my car keys, the thoughts still playing in my head, I pushed the room door open.

"What the fuck!" Uhn "What's going on here? Are you moving out?" I tripped over an opened box, landing on a heap of clothes. Ouch! My butt! What the fuck? I dipped my hands inside the heap and came out with a scary heeled sandal, spun and flung it out from the door.

Muyiwa's laughter came out like the sound of an old truck with a bad engine. By the time I pulled myself off the littered floor, I was fuming.

"Baby please, don't be mad." Muyiwa approached me, chuckling. "You are hardly home this early…" Her palms stroked my cheeks.

Shrugging her off, I sank my butt on the edge of the bed, bringing out my phone.

“Chekwa, gather those clothes and push the suitcases aside.”

“Are you finally leaving?”

Maybe she’d decided it was time to leave me the fuck alone, I thought. Bracing myself for a positive reply, I held my breath.

God, please let her say it. I’ll pretend to plead with her for two seconds, then that’s it.

Please God…

“Me? Leaving? Oh, babe…” She stroked my face and I pulled away from her touch. “When were you going to hit me with the surprise trip?” *Wait. What?* “What trip…what are you talking about?” Knowing she had my full attention she smiled.

“Baby boo…” she cooed. Her fingers pressed the sides of my cheek, gathering my lips in a forceful pout. “I know you wanted it to be a surprise but that’s okay. I saw it this morning on your laptop…”

The laptop! Shit. “I am so excited,” she shimmied, her breast jiggling along. “Thank you so much for this special treat.”

I kept nodding like a bubblehead; my eyes followed her breasts as she spoke in her usual, high-pitched, excited tone.

Shaking my head, I looked her in the face. “You found an invitation to an unknown resort, and you want to go?”

“Yes.”

“But I thought you had an interview with this-”

“Cancelled.”

“Is it not your turn to host the Lekki women’s night out?”

“Actually, I declined. After the last time, I don’t want to have anything to do with those idle bitches.”

As if you are the General manager of the Central bank, girl…you are the mother of all idle and lazy women.

“What about Madrid? He is coming over to -”

“Not anymore, I called Barbara.” Hands on her hips, she smirked. “You weren’t planning to jet off without me, were you?”

Chekwa placed a hand to her lips, stifling her laughter.

“Of course not.” I shot Chekwa a warning glare.

This is trouble, this is horror. Muyiwa is horror.

“I called your PA to cancel your current arrangements and flight bookings.”

“Why would you do that?”

“We are celebrities, durling, not some commoners.” She went to her lingerie drawer and emptied its contents on the floor. “You don’t expect me to share the flight with second-class citizens. I can’t even stand the poverty that oozes from them.”

“But I fly first class?”

“Who is talking about first class?” She turned to face me, her lips pouted. “It’s going to be a chartered private jet or nothing.”

Private what? I wasn’t even taking you in the first place.

“Come on durling. I am looking out for you, for us…you wouldn’t want fans to rip you apart. And landing on a private jet speaks class.”

“For fuck’s sake Muyiwa.” Arghh... “Who gives a shit if one arrives with a jet or an air balloon?”

“I do…” she rushed towards me, “ Lucas I do.” Then folded her arms, causing those huge watermelons to be more pronounced, her stubborn chin jutting out. “And social media does.”

“Christ!”

This trip is about to be the worst trip of my life.

PART TWO

Nine

Twin Bliss Resort

Muyiwa

“FINALLY,” I MURMURED, PLACING MY butterfly-shaped sunshades over my eyes. A smiling gentleman walked towards us holding our names on a placard, while I took in the view of the jetty-filled dock.

The ride from the airport to the jetty was irritating as the driver had the manners of one who should suffer a stroke and die a painful death. He was unrepentantly rude - the disdainful man had ignored all my warnings and had purposely allowed one of my designer suitcases fall off his trolley while loading them in his trunk.

Why don’t second-class citizens treat celebrities with the utmost respect? Always trying to do too much or too little, when dealing with us.

When the gentleman reached us, he bowed respectfully, putting out his hands to help me out of the rude driver’s car. Now, that was how to treat a woman of class like me.

Marching regally by his side, my arm tucked in his, I ignored three gawking female tourists who must have recognized Lucas behind me. They can have Lucas, while I enjoy this gentleman’s attention - Operation Leave Lucas has started.

“Have you been to Gobota before ma’am?” The gentleman who had introduced himself as Bawa, a Twin Bliss concierge, and a Bodo local, asked. I wouldn’t describe him as a stunner, but he was quite attractive, and I could try my wiles on him.

“Oh, no…” I smiled. “Never knew a place like this existed.”

Bawa gave a brief nod. “Then you are in for a sweet, unforgettable experience. We are glad you are here and will do everything to make your stay memorable.”

“That’s so sweet.” I flirted, placing a hand on his.

Bawa pointed to a new-looking speed boat. “There, perfect for you and your husband.”

Husband, I snared inwardly. I’d forgotten about Lucas immediately after I left the car; he could fly back to Nigeria for all I care. This trip was for me. On second thoughts, I needed someone to vent my frustration on. It was time to go all witchery on Lucas, he would hate me so much at the end of this vacation, he would be begging for a divorce.

I turned to find two porters hauling my luggage onto a cart in another direction. Oh no! Returning worried eyes to Bawa, he assuaged my fears.

“Don’t bother about your luggage, ma’am. We will deliver it at the resort on another boat.” He smiled.

“Are you sure? They are designer bags, and everything in there…you know.”

“All of us are not thieves, ma’am.” His smile now forced as he let go of my arm.

How was I to know? The only reason I had followed him was because he had our name on a placard and wore a suit with the Twin Bliss logo.

****

Throughout our journey, the Helmsman ensured we had a thrilling ride, racing one moment, then lazing on top of the water to allow us to catch our breaths, laugh at our fears and scoop the warm water. He knew when we had to pose with our cameras and click as many shots as the unstableness could allow us, then he would pick up again, sending our heads tilting backward and our voices rising in joyful squirms while holding firm to the bars and rails. I guess he wanted us to take in every moment, feel the gust of the wind with every tempo.

“Excuse me,” a random biracial man shouted over the noisy propelling engine. “I think I have seen you before.”

“Me?”

He nodded, smiling.

“Really? Where?”

“From social media, I have seen you on Twitter and Instagram. I must confess…” He looked back, maybe to know if Lucas was within earshot. “You

are more beautiful in real life than in pictures."

A flirting guest, this one. Trying his luck. My beauty has still not faded. Hot girl summer!

I flicked a glance towards my husband who was drawn to whatever another male passenger was showing him on his phone. One of the three gawking female tourists on one side. How easy it was for him to ignore me whenever his ego was being bathed with praises and admiration.

"I wish this journey will not end, it really is an honor to be on the same boat with you ma,"

"Oh...thank you."

Turning my gaze away from the grinning man, I busied myself with sending pictures to my assistant for editing and uploading. I later returned my attention to him, and we spoke of fashion and what was in vogue in the industry. Apparently, he owns a fashion apparel line he wants me to model for.

"I would have to think that through first."

"I'm in no hurry. But it would be an honor having you walk down the runway in my arms, wearing my design."

I gushed at the design he showed me on his iPad, laughing a little louder than necessary to capture Lucas' attention, but the idiot didn't know I existed. When the boat docked, I looked around for him to help me off the boat.

The biracial man stretched his hand towards me. "It would be my utmost pleasure to help you out of the boat. Please don't deny me this." I smiled, accepting his offer, my roving eyes still in search of Lucas.

Where the hell was he? He was supposed to be the one helping me out of the boat, not a random man from God knows where! What if someone wanted to take a picture of us?

Oh, there he was, grinning at the doll-faced lady that sat by him during the boat ride. I'd suspect she would come hard on him, seeing the way her and her friends kept gawking before we boarded the boat.

'I know you from the big screen…I am a huge fan, I've watched all your movies," she chirped like a dehydrated bird as I drew close to them. I would enjoy watching her bite and swallow her tongue when asked to mention at least ten of Lucas' movies in that irritating voice of hers.

Why did I sit by the helm of the boat? I should have been by his side. Just one glare from me would have had her running the other way. But Lucas was in one

of those moods, he needed some time to digest the fact that I had lavished his money.

With my eyes still on Lucas and his new acquaintance, I saw him write on the girl's arm. What would be next? Selfie, of course! And Lucas would pose for that too, while it would take dragging him like a horse to the river for me to get him to pose with me, except it was for the media.

"Ma'am…ma'am?"

A soft tap on my arm and I realized a resort hand had been speaking to me all the while. I blinked and rushed an apology, "What were you saying?"

"Here is your ride to the resort." My eyes followed his finger to a short man wearing a red robe standing beside a white shuttle. "He will take you and your partner straight to your suite."

The small man adjusted his bucket hat, and shuffled towards me with glee, speaking words so fast I couldn't catch up. My brain needed to switch to decoding mode for me to understand the small man. Was he speaking English? Oh God. Do they speak English here?

"Don't worry ma'am, I will take care of you." I finally heard him say.

My gaze darted from the man to the thing behind him that looked like an expanded children's toy car with only two seats facing backward and the one the driver would seat on, then back to the resort hand.

"Is-is-is that the thing we are riding in?" It can't be. They must be joking.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Oh no, it's not. What happened to cars? I can pay for Uber or something… not this!" I blinked, then shook my head. Why didn't they ask us to arrange our ride ourselves?

"It's not a thing ma'am," the short man's smile slid off his face, "it's a shuttle."

"Of course, I know that. I am not dumb. It's just...just…. You won't understand." Hot tears of frustration threatened to spill from my eyes. Why don't they understand? Whether it was a shuttle or a cart wasn't my concern. The damn thing wasn't classy! It wasn't befitting for a woman of my status and size! It was insulting. Were they expecting me to squeeze in with Lucas behind that...?

"Get me a car please," I pleaded with the short man, "I would pay you double. Please..." I pleaded, casting a furtive glance behind me. Who knows who could be listening? I can imagine them splashing it all over the media and blogs.

Lucas Opeyemi & Wife squeeze into the Twin Bliss Resort or Muyiwa Opeyemi begging for a ride. Then Lucas would be denied acting roles and banned from important circles.

“But ma’am…”

“Please!” Just do it!

Lucas chose that time to join us, I could smell that birdy girl’s cheap perfume all over him. “What’s the matter?”

“We are to ride a freaking shuttle!”

“Come on Muyiwa, this is just a short ride to the resort, not a luxury cruise. Besides, that’s what everyone is using.”

“Everyone, not us! Lucas, this thing is not befitting!” I panted, folding my arms. “This is a joke!”

He grabbed me by the arm and pulled me to himself, “Quit whining like a baby, Muyiwa. You mustn’t make a scene everywhere, climb on top of this thing and let us go. Ehn.”

Embarrassed, I cleared my throat to remind the resort hand and the short man they were staring like morons. Brushing against Lucas, I moved, plopping my buttocks on the shuttle seat. “So much for a luxury vacation,” I muttered, dusting imaginary lint off my dress.

“Isn’t this place lovely?” Lucas asked as we rode at snail’s speed.

I gave him a side glance, then hissed.

“Urm... Driver,” I leaned forward, tapping the small man on the shoulder, “Can you please move this thing faster, for God’s sake. You drive as if you are about to pass out.”

“I am being careful ma’am.” Because I am big?

“Give the poor guy a break, Muyiwa. Stop bitching,” Lucas spat, touching my back. His touch sent shivers down my core. I mentally shook it off, focusing on the issues at hand.

Dude…you ain’t seen nothing yet.

“So, when are you going to fuck this one?”

“Which one?” Lucas looked perplexed. His gaze ran to the driver then back to me. “What are you talking about?”

I titled my head to the side. “The bitch that was all over you earlier.”

Letting out a deep breath I didn’t notice he was holding, he pulled out his phone. “Don’t be ridiculous, woman.”

Shameless goat. I am so dumping your celebrity ass. Just wait for me to settle down. I’m hopping on the next available dick.

****

My reflection waved back at me from the mirror. Perfect, I smiled as I wound down the lipstick and placed it on the dressing table, smacked my blood-red lips, and pouted.

I leaned closer to look at the art I’ve made, carefully wiped excess liner from the corner of my eye, drew back, twirled, and admired my hips in the suffocating black pencil mini dress. My transformation amazed me, even my skinny legs were beginning to have some attractive curves.

The marula.

Powdered, it has little effect on the skin. Ointment, mixed with my body cream and my once rusty brown color had turned sleek, shiny, and appealing. Steaming and inhaling the magic root mixed with the blood of the mother cat had left my eyes bright and sparkling.

Smoothening my neatly packed hair, I sighed with satisfaction.

So much has changed these past years. From the day I packed my bags and left Lagos, shame-faced, heartbroken, and beaten down, I’d vowed to let go of the shy, naïve girl I was.

My then ambitious husband had toured producer’s offices looking for roles, ‘even if it is a commercial,’ he would plead.

None came.

It was exhausting to watch him go through the same circle over and over again. Leaving in the morning with hopes of finding an agent or a producer that would want to invest in his talent. Returns with ‘we will get back to you’ promises. Waits with anticipation and then…nothing.

For every failed effort, I bore the brunt. He blamed me for their rejections.

Then, he got his big break barely one year later. He came alive again and I tasted relief, after a long while.

My relief didn’t last as my husband became obsessed. The desire for more

turned him into a stranger, his thirst for fame insatiable.

The industry possessed and consumed him. The click-click of the camera, his face on the billboard, were his obsession. He became a whore to the public who couldn't get enough of him.

I was lost and he didn't notice. I became a total wreck without his attention, maybe because my entire life has been lonely before I met him. Yet I feared he would think me insensitive if I'd cry out - after all, he was working hard to make it in an industry he knew no one.

When he managed to come home, he'd looked me over like one would do a rotten mango.

"No one knows I am in a relationship yet - let's keep it that way until I am ready to make us public," he'd say. "It's for your own good. You can't deal with the publicity right now."

It was for his career, his face, his fans. I wasn't good enough to be seen by his side. He wanted those kinds of women that graced the cover of magazines and billboards clad with clothes that left nothing to the imagination. The kind that spoke through their noses and laughed like hyenas on television shows, crossing and uncrossing their legs.

He became more demanding, rough, and nasty when he sexed me, wanting me to do some dirty things. Forbidden acts only whores do.

I met him for the first time when he came to my mother's little Restaurant, with some group of stage drama performers, to eat. He was 26, loud, boastful, quite a charmer. What made him different from the boys in the village wasn't just his foreign accent and his vigor, but the way he cared - really cared.

At 19, I didn't know what a crush was, but I was sure I would want to have him do with me what father does with mother at night in our one-room apartment. I got my chance the day we were alone together in my mother's backyard, he had always come around to help clean up after the day's business. He'd reach out and cupped my face in his hands, gave me my very first kiss, long, hard. The feel of his tongue exploring my mouth created a vacuum of excitement that I never knew before.

"I will get a role in the movie industry, make a lot of money and come and marry you."

He had said that to me before, but that day, those words finally sank into my head. I had allowed him to undo my buttons, fondled my breasts, all the while whispering endearments.

His words, his voice, the way he looked at me. I believed him so much that I wanted to be his wife immediately. When he bent his head to capture my nipple, I thrust my chest forward, his lips on my young breast thrilled me.

He slid his hand inside my skirt, shifted my pants, and slid his finger. “How many boys had done this to you before?” He’d ask, his finger thrusting in and out of me.

My vagina had received more than a finger before - I didn’t like the act and the boy that did it to me, but this one was different. It was as if he knew the right button to press to keep me melting at his touch.

I’d thought of Mama walking in on us. She would slap me like she did when she caught me with Fraya and then she would call me a prostitute who would end up like her, a mother without a husband. However, I couldn’t have moved even if I wanted to, I was at the brink of a fantastic discovery.

The sight of a rat scurrying from under the bed to the hole at the edge of the bathroom door shook me back to reality. I pulled my eyes away from the mirror, fixed it rather on my blood-red polished fingernails.

Those were many years ago, my past, though I have to admit that remembering those years made me uneasy.

I was a woman now and had experimented with men who meant little or nothing to me, learned how to enjoy those whorelike acts I had cringed on. I wonder how it would be with him. Would he accept this new me?

I gave off soft laughter, pulled out my black pumps from under the bed, and slid my feet in them. Stood up to give myself one last check. I wish I could remove the gold scarf around my neck; it ruined the whole effect of the tight dress on my round boobs.

You know the rules, the uniform must be modest.

As long as I agree to work at the resort, I must stick to the dress code, the scarf stays. But it wouldn’t be long; I smiled as I smoothened my dress.

When I would finally have him again, it would be bye-bye to this suffocating job.

“Thank you, mama...” Adjusting the scarf, picking my phone from the dressing table, then slipping it into my bag, I made my way out of the room. I had just fifteen minutes to get to the resort before our guests would start arriving.

My husband would be among them, and I would welcome him properly.

Ten

Lucas

I DON’T DO FANS.

Okay…did that twice , in my early years in the industry. I learned my lessons after the second one almost ruined me. Sleeping with a fan who had nothing to lose but a lot of bucks to gain was a bad idea.

Now I had my standards, no screwing around with female fans no matter how beautiful they were. Talking about beauty, I combed the place with my eyes, lingered on Muyiwa who kept screaming orders at two confused-looking stewards.

Mehn, am I so happy not to be by her side right at the moment.

I caught sight of the lady from the boat ride. She had small titties, but I forgive that fault immediately my eyes settled on her pretty, long legs. She turned and met my stare, flashed a winning smile, and waved.

Waving back, I once again espied her crooked yellow, big teeth which made her mouth region larger than the rest of her face, that seemed to be the first thing one would notice about her - her teeth.

I gave her an acknowledging nod and looked away.

She was flirting. And I was too tired to give her a second thought.

A guy whose bulk was screaming to be freed from his tight-fitted uniform approached me. “I am Dombra, the butler, specially assigned to you.” The big guy thrust his chest out in pride. “It’s my pleasure to welcome you to Twin Bliss.”

“It’s my pleasure to be welcomed.” I didn’t need to look around to know that I had phone cameras directed towards me.

“Tiwa Savage was here two months ago, Evan Farmer left the resort last Saturday, and now you...”

“Then, this place must be as amazing as I heard it is, Dom.” The guy who

looked more like a rugby player, than a butler was pleased.

“It is, it is.” He smiled.

“I am Muyiwa.”

I turned around and saw Muyiwa striding to my side, with a mischievous grin on her face.

“Welcome, Ma’am. I follow your Instagram page and I must say, you are a sensation.” The big guy glanced at me and then quickly added, “I hope Mr. Lucas doesn’t mind me using that word.”

A guy who spends time on social media ogling other people's wife. Impressive. “Feel free.”

“Come, your suite is ready, I will escort you in.” He reached for Muyiwa’s handbag, “Allow me to help you with that, ma’am.”

“Certainly,” Muyiwa said so sultrily, I wondered if she was considering…no. Not Muyiwa. She could attempt anything but casual sex with a stranger.

“Mr. Onahi also wanted me to tell you he is delighted to have both of you here,” he smiled.

I ran a hand over my face in exhaustion. I could feel sleep’s warm embrace by just imagining the luxurious bed waiting for me, but I needed to see my old friend. Just to say thank you.

Talk of the devil.

Onahi sauntered into the reception like one without a care in the world. He had on dark sunglasses that completed the hue of his skin. Skin that looked as though he bathed in goat milk regularly, his hair trimmed short. Marching up to him, I grasped his hands, pulling him into a bear hug.

“My Manchi! It’s good to see you, man.” We slapped each other’s backs. Every memory of us, the good times, the bad, the naughty, flowed through the hug.

“How long has it been, twenty years? You disappeared without a trace fam,” he grinned as we shook hands.

“Me? Disappeared? I'm on your screen man. Everywhere." I laughed, pumping his hands in mine. "Just accept you're a pro at shutting friends out. You enjoy working like a jackal.”

“Says the movie star that hardly stays out of the screen. I tried following up on your progress, my guy, I lost count.”

“Or you got carried away with business deals.”

Another bout of laughter. Our voices boomed all over the reception that had beautiful artwork gracing its walls. I felt Muyiwa’s arm slip through my curved elbow and her head rested on my shoulder.

“Oh, uhm…” I didn’t want to do this introduction here, but Muyiwa had a way of making a loud statement at unsuitable moments. “This is my wife, Muyiwa.” I placed my other hand over hers.

Onahi narrowed his eyes on me.

Oh boy...

As if he read my mind, his demeanor softened and he fixed a charming gaze at Muyiwa, picked her hand, and planted a kiss on the back of her hand.

“You're a true beauty; I'm so glad to have you here.”

I could feel the thrill that wrapped Muyiwa from the sole of her feet to her short gold-tinted hair. Even the warmth from her cheeks heated my neck.

“And I appreciate your kindness. Coming here… It means so much to me…to us.” Excitement made her speech process break in transmission.

“The pleasure is mine, ma’am.”

“Sweetheart, sweetheart…I think you should go with this gentleman that has been waiting for us while I catch up with my good friend here.” I stepped in before she could make a blunder. Muyiwa could be irrational when she got excited.

Pinning me with a glare that would have killed weak men, she strode off.

“Okay, spill.” I broke the silence between us.

He shook his head, pinning me with an apologetic look, but it's lost on me. “Let’s join one of my guys by the beach.” Onahi strode ahead while I followed. “His name is Femi. A nice guy. I am sure you've not met, and you would be most interested in meeting him.”

I didn’t want to meet any guy; I just wanted to have this ‘son-of-a-bitch’ start his morality sermon and get it over with. The sooner he did that the better.

“He is a world-class movie producer.”

Now that was some news that elevated my interest.

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“What are you looking at?”

Dom’s voice made me jerk my head away from the slightly opened door where I had been ogling at the man. Dom walked toward the door and peeped, “You're not his type. I'm sure he goes for high maintenance girls..” He shut the door and leaned on it.

Avoiding his stare, I busied myself with the sheets I was supposed to deliver to the laundry room.

“He has a wife, and she doesn’t look like she would want to share,” Dom continued.

That fat woman wasn’t my problem or any woman at all. The mothers of the night promised me no one would stand in my way.

“I don’t know what you are talking about,” I said.

“Sure, you don’t. Just know that lusting after a celebrity is a waste of time.” He grabbed me by the waist. “We are good together, you know that. If what I am working out goes very well, I will make you my woman permanently.” He gave me a peck and walked out.

Dropping the sheets as if they were burning my fingers, I puffed a breath and hurried back to the door. The man was gone.

My husband was gone!

“By the mothers, I will find him.”

Eleven

Muyiwa

SETTLING FOR A POLKA DOT bikini and skimpy cover-up, I left the room before Lucas woke up, making my way to the closest restaurant.

“Breakfast, ma’am?” A beautiful dark-skinned attendant approached me at the poolside.

“Isn’t it too early for breakfast?”

“Not here ma’am, breakfast can be eaten any time in the morning.”

“Well, I don’t think I want to stuff myself with food this early, but…” I finished typing a reply to my PA’s message and placed the phone back into my bag “Thank you.”

“I believe you are satisfied with our services so f…” She looked at me and gasped.

I immediately knew what would follow.

“You are the wife of Lucas the movie star; you are Muneewa! his wife!”

Oh no! Did she just murder my name? My goodness... “It is Muyiwa- M-U-Y-I-W-A. Young gurl…it’s important that you get my name right.” I smiled tightly.

“Yes ma’am,” she squealed.

“And I think I can do with some cookies and water to go with it, thank you.”

“Yes, ma’am, I will get them for you, ma’am.” The girl paused. “Ma’am I am one of your husband’s big fans.”

“That’s nice.” Another Lucas’ fan. How popular is my husband? I thought he was just a Nollywood sensation. Most people we've met on the island knew him.

“Ale, stop bothering our guests.” I turned to find the butler, Dom, who settled us into our suite the previous day. “Come on now, go back to your work,” he said, his tone light.

“Don't forget to get my order, please.” I said to the girl, then turned to the man. “Thank you so much, Dom. It’s nice to see you again.”

“Mrs. Opeyemi, I hope you had a wonderful night’s rest, and are enjoying your stay.?”

Aside from having your staff interrupting my relaxation just to recite her ‘Lucas *fanship* pledge’, “Everything is perfect.”

When told to select services during our registration, I had chosen a male butler just to spite Lucas and booooyy did they send the right guy for the job.

The attendant returned with my order, but Dom took it from her "If you don't mind, I would like to be of help. All you had to do was request my presence at your Villa through the app."

"It's alright, I wanted my morning to myself," I replied as we walked towards the pool.

“This is the Lagoon pool.” Dom set down the tray with my cookies and water on a miniature stool beside a sun lounger.

“Perfect. It is perfect.”

“And you can always grab a meal or two from the Sweet Morning Restaurant over there.”

He pointed towards an exquisitely designed restaurant behind us. Apart from two women engrossed in a discussion while sipping…What? Tea? And a lone man browsing through his phone, the place was empty.

“Cookies too. You can get more of them from there.”

“Thank you, Dom. I am okay with just this, for now.”

"Okay ma'am. Need me? I'm at your fingertips." He grinned.

Settling on the lounger as the big guy walked away, I picked a cookie, took a bite. “This is good,” I took another bite. “I love this…hmmm…so good.”

Throwing the remaining piece into my mouth, I dusted off crumbs from my breasts, peeled up my bra to allow those stuck between my two towers to fall off.

Hmm… this is life. I relaxed back on the lounger.

“Ma’am, I...uh...You need anything else?”

Oh, it’s the attendant from the Restaurant.

Her eyes darted around, then she brought out a photograph. “Ma’am...I...I want your autograph ma.”

Really? Mine or Lucas'? I leaned forward, took the photograph. "Hmm, that's a picture of my husband and I."

"Yes ma'am, I bought it...uh…" She scratched her nape. "On my way to work today."

"Someone is selling our pictures here?"

"Not only yours, ma'am. There are pictures of popular Nigerian actors and singers here." This town Seemed obsessed with Nigerian celebrities, it explained their craze over Lucas.

"Ma'am."

"I don't have a pen with me…"

"I came with one."

"Oh." Now this is an ardent fan, Lucas' fan- unfortunately. "Here," I handed the picture back to her. "I guess you would want my husband's too?"

She nodded.

"Good luck finding him." This one wasn't beautiful and curvy enough to attract Lucas, so I wasn't going to fret.

I watched the girl dance off and smiled. "Fans." I loved to see them go wild with excitement on meeting us physically, but I swear I would drop dead if one more Lucas' fan pesters me.

The larger-than-life dickhead had strolled off to God-knows-where yesterday, leaving me to see to our settling in. He couldn't even pick my call! Didn't even care if I was dying and needed his help. What did I ever do to deserve him treating me without regard?

All I ever did was to stand by him. He wouldn't admit it, but I was instrumental to his success! Yes, he wasn't doing badly when I met him but… he had remained one of the most celebrated actors because I wouldn't have him become less. I knew what it meant to be a nobody and wouldn't want to go back into being irrelevant, unnoticed.

My father died when I was barely sixteen. Five years later, my mother left one fateful morning and never returned. I was left with two young siblings to fend for. I took up helping neighbors clean their homes and sometimes, teach their children after school. Life was hard and unfair. No amount I made from the domestic services I offered was ever enough.

I learnt the correlation between wealth and respect when my mates who left

the village to the city started returning every Christmas season. They had everything I wished for, the basic things. While I, I became the gurl with no name, no identity, forced into parenthood, working my ass off during the day and going to bed with an empty stomach.

One Easter season, my friend, Gabriella - that’s not even her real name - who is late now, God bless her soul, told me to follow her to Lagos - it was an invitation to live the live I’d always wanted - but I was scared of the unknown. It took a lot of convincing for me to leave Ogbomosho as I couldn't bear leaving my siblings behind. But it was worth it.

After experiencing the rush of being a Lagos big girl and even an Ogbomosho bigger babe, I didn't want to go back to not having more than enough. Meeting Lucas was the answer to the prayers I’d made with an empty stomach. When he popped the question, there was no ‘No’ in my head. When he popped the question, I was thinking of how to help him remain relevant, so we would never lack. So my younger self would be compensated for those days of lack. The reason why I’d stuck to Lucas this long was because he kind of understood that hunger in me then and was appreciative of my efforts to help him remain relevant.

At some point, I had thought of becoming an actress or even having my own show. My media aide said I would do pretty well on the big screen. I didn't doubt her, but what would happen to Lucas? One slip while I wasn't watching, and he would hit the bottom.

Now he no longer gave a fuck about me.

“I’ve gotten used to it anyway.” Have I really?

“Morning.”

Another fan? I can't deal. My goodness! Who is this lord of sexiness? My eyes roamed all over the man’s body. I must have licked my lips as the man chuckled, jostling me back.

All my married life, I had never been infected with the ‘smitten by a strange man’ syndrome, the more reason I have never considered adultery. No man had come close to Lucas in sensuality. No man, but this one.

“What is a lovely lady like you doing here, alone?” Mr. Gorgeous said.

You are dead sexy in an edgy way.

“You don't have to answer that, I understand perfectly.”

Hot. Delicious.

“Hope it won’t be much of a disturbance for me to sit with you.”

Damn! Where have you been, motherfucker?

My eyes mirrored every movement of his body as he settled on the lounger beside mine. Striped board shorts concealing a multitude of goodies. A sleeveless tee. glistening black skin, he was a yummy sight.

“Impressed?”

“Wait, w...what?” How dare he proposition me?

He gesticulated. “The resort. You must have been to other amazing places…I hope this place meets your standard?"

Thank goodness. Phew! I had thought he was talking about his sexy body. “Yes. It’s beautiful. I am loving it.”

“As you should.” He shifted his bulk to face me. The light scent of his cologne filled the air. Sexy...this is the man, good Lord…I’d finally found him.

Common Muyiwa, you're married. You have an image to protect.

And Lucas? Who said I can’t get my essence tended by another sexy dude? After all, my husband had been having fun with other women since the big screen was invented.

That would mean before he was born.

Whatever.

“So, handsome." I fluttered my lashes, “What do you say we go somewhere to test this out?” I had to know if he was worthy of washing Lucas off my system.

“What?” He arched one of his brows. Was I forward or was he slow?

“You, me… getting to know each other…and more?” Christ. How could a cute guy like this not know when a lady is flirting with him?

“Oh…that.” He chuckled, “You are not one to take things easy, are you?”

You have no idea.

It wasn’t just fucking this guy that was getting me all sweaty and eager. It was the fact that Lucas would die twice when he sees the man I have gotten myself involved with.

The depth of his pockets and his societal status were things I would get to later. For now, I had to make sure he’s endowed down there.

“I just want to make sure you are capable of handling a woman like me.”

Throaty laughter rolled out of his mouth, and I loved the sound of it. It’s the kind of sound that could make even a daughter of Zion pull off her panties.

“There is a man seated over there,” he pointed towards the Sweet Morning Restaurant, “who keeps looking at us. Know him?”

I turned slightly and my sight caught him. “Tall, chocolate skinned, bald guy?”

“Yup.”

Lucas. Haha. Just what I wanted. Let him choke with jealousy.

“That’s a Jealous Ex. Don’t let that worry you though.” If only this guy knew how desperate I wanted to kiss him hard on the lips so Lucas would have a heart attack.

“But… I don’t…”

“I am done with him.”

Lucas would burn if he knew I'd refer to him as an Ex. “It’s been three months now, but the guy keeps stalking me. I am surprised that he followed me down here.”

The dude said nothing for a while, then he shook his head. “Pity.”

“What?”

“He must still have feelings for you, for him to be following you around. ”

“He was careless with our relationship.”

“Then he is stupid.” The dude tugged on his shorts, drawing my attention back to his toned thighs. “I would have done anything to make a woman like you stay with me forever.”

Then do something, Tarzan. Start from taking my lips in yours, then we would talk about you having me forever.

“Women like you are some men’s fantasy, and this one couldn't keep you? He is an idiot.”

“What do you mean?”

He licked his thick lips, flashed a glance in Lucas’ direction, then turned back to me. “Some of us love our women thick. The fleshier the better.”

Was that a subtle insult? His face said otherwise, so... “That makes me feel better, thank you.”

“You are a very beautiful woman. And I am glad you are no longer with that

guy, he doesn’t deserve you. So tell me, are you with someone?”

“No, I want to give myself a break.” Not totally a lie.

The dude eased himself off the lounger, wiping his palm on his shorts. “I would like to see you again. Maybe we could get the chance to test this out? You know…to see if I am capable of handling a woman like you,” he chuckled.

“I will like that,” I said and stood up, feeling elated. “I will like that so much.”

“My name is Asim by the way.” I allowed him to take my hand. “So, what do you say we meet later today- in the evening, at the gym? I hope your ex will not trail you.”

“My name is Muyiwa and I told you, I’m done with that guy.”

“The way he is looking at us, I doubt if he believes that it’s over between you two.”

I turned and my eyes locked with Lucas’. His face could bring down lighting and thunder. “I am joining the tour later today. Want to tag along?”

“It’s going to be difficult for me to leave the gym, but… I can do it for you." He smiled. "If it will make you happy.”

“It will make me happy.”

“It’s a date then?”

It’s more than a date, handsome. It's a mission, part of Operation Leave Lucas. I couldn't wait to see the look on Lucas’ face when he would hear I agreed to go on a date with this man. From what I’ve seen since we arrived, the community dick was about to live up to his name, starting with the Bonga fish that was all over him during the boat ride. We would see who plays the game better.

Talk of the devil.

The Bonga fish walked to the poolside, then chose to sit on the sun lounger next to mine.

My first fiery instinct was to dash forward, snatch the terrible, feathery brim hat off her head, along with a handful of hair! But I knew that causing a scene here would avail me nothing as I wouldn’t have a perfect explanation as to why I charged at her. So, I ignored her, turning my gaze to Asim. She wasn't deserving of my attention.

“You are that woman from yesterday’s boat trip?” The lady asked after taking

off her sunglasses and began unscrewing her bottle of water.

“Lucas’s wife.” This lady needed to be reminded. “Lucas the movie star.”

“Wife?” the guy, Asim said in awe. “You’re married?”

Oh Muyiwa, you just blew it! Why wasn't I so good at keeping up with lies? “Yes.” I hope you’d still want to go out with me.

“I knew I had seen you somewhere…” The lady looked me over.

Lies or no lies. I had to put this bitch in her place. “You sure have, durling. Except if you don’t own a TV and don’t do more than take numbers and make calls with those big phones of yours.” It was meant to be a subtle insult and I knew she got it.

“I don’t have time to watch celebrity women who are desperate to outdo each other, spread lies about themselves and their marriages that we all know are nothing but painted sepulchers,” she shot back.

Clenching my teeth, I suppressed the urge to push the B-I-T-C-H inside the pool, holding her head down till she drowns.

“Well, at least, there are families and husbands to talk about, some girls are too disoriented to even land themselves a man, not to talk of building a family.”

She stared at me with the bottle on her lips. Oh, how I wished she would choke on the water. Okay, that was cruel. But she started it!

“Hi.” She turned to Asim who was doing his best to be polite, offering her hand. “I am Rethabile, call me Retha, and I will consider being your friend." Sizing me up in a way that made me want to go through with pushing her into the pool, she added, “Make it Reth, and I will offer you something much more intimate.” *Fucking slut.*

The dude who seemed amused by the whole drama took her hand, planting a gentle kiss on it, “South African, I guess?”

“How did you know?” She grinned, her ugly teeth making a show as she moved her hand up his arm.

“I lived in South Africa for six years and Rethabile is a popular name.”

She gasped, placing a hand on her chest, her hat bobbing maniacally, she would never make it as an actress.

“I am Asim, the gym instructor here…”

“Oh, I see.” her eyes roamed all over Asim. “Well, I am the regional manager of Swizz bank, Zwelitsha city.” She paused to make sure we digested the

information. “Tell me Mr. gym instructor, do you offer private lessons?”

“Trust me, gurl, you don’t want to think of the gym,” Gosh! I couldn’t stand this lady any longer. One weight lift and her thin-like body would shatter like my long-forgotten diamond wristwatch.

She shot me a glare. “So, what are you doing out here, with our movie star’s *wife*?” Nice try. Reth or whatever your name is.

“I am here to make my acquaintance and we were talking about the tour around the village before you joined.” This guy is a dummy! All muscles and no sense. Didn't he notice the battle going on?

“Oh.”

Yes. Oh.

“Ladies, I have to go. It’s almost getting late for breakfast and I want to put something in my stomach.” He looked at me. “Are you coming?”

With Lucas still in there? I would pass.

“I will see you later today then.” He said to me.

“Are we still...?”

“If you want me.”

Dude. I just don’t want to go with you, I need you.

“Actually, I am headed to the restaurant. We can go together,” Reth said.

Nice. Just nice.

Twelve

Lucas

“WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?”

The question screeched out of my mouth the moment I caught up with Muyiwa.

She shot me a glance and continued walking, we were almost at our villa. The mushroom of anger inside me grew into a tree.

Fuck! I swore loudly as she hurried down the path. “Don’t ignore me!” Grabbing her by the shoulder, I spun her to face me. “Muyiwa, I asked you a question.”

“Get your hands off me.” She slapped my hand off, adjusted her bikini strap and almost bumped into a Caucasian old woman pushing her walker. “Sorry, I am so sorry ma.”

The old woman turned, and her eyes landed on me. Muyiwa was still checking if she had done her any harm, but the old woman paid her no mind.

A new light burned in her eyes as I drew closer, she took Muyiwa by the hand, pulling her protectively to her side.

“Back off young man!” She wielded withering fingers at me.

Didn't see that coming.

Shuffling some steps backward, I noticed the myriad of reactions on Muyiwa's face - shock, surprise, then wonder.

The last thing I needed was a time-chiseled mama, who didn’t know what was going on, thwacking my head with her handbag or umbrella.

“Is he bothering you?” She asked Muyiwa in a firm but quivering voice.

“He is my…uhm…husband. I can handle him. Thank you, Ma.”

She pouted her lips, observing me. “This one is no husband material. I know them by their actions.” Her eyes narrowed, “Dump his stupid ass, child.”

Yeah, right. I had an old woman tagging me a no-husband material because of what? I was demanding to know why my wife would decide to flirt with a random guy. Why would she even flirt at all?

“Thank you, ma,” Muyiwa muttered her gratitude. The old woman asked a couple of questions and I heard Muyiwa say, "That's our villa."

“Perfect. I'll see that you get there safely." She looked at me, forcing what she thought was a mean stare and I tried to keep from laughing out.

The old woman grabbed and tucked Muyiwa’s hand under her armpit, while pushing her walker with the other hand. “Hope you'll be alright, child?” The woman shot me a disdaining glance as I walked behind them.

If the word ‘Alright’ had a face, it would be Muyiwa. I was the one who should have people around me asking if I would be okay.

“Trust me, mama, I can handle him.”

“Ya sho' will, child. Punch him on the face if he ever raises a finger at ya… that’s what I did to my Jack. He is now a quiet lamb.”

Muyiwa turned her head to give me a thoughtful stare. “I might do just that, mama.”

Goodness Lord!

What did I even do to deserve two bitter women plotting my death in my presence, in front of my villa!

“Thanks a lot, Mama. It's so sad to see you go."

“Oh, but…we are neighbors! I will be checking on ya.”

Muyiwa nodded, she swiped her card on the sensor, and as the door hissed open, she stepped in.

I bid Mama goodbye as she passed by me, but a firm hand grabbed my arm, pulling me back.

Granny craned her face towards mine. “Shame on ya, young man. Shame on ya!” Her antibiotic reeking breath slapped my nostrils.

I didn’t know how long I stood there wondering what just happened.

Muyiwa was helping herself to a glass of water when I stepped in.

“So do you mind explaining what that was all about?” I asked.

“By ‘that’ you mean the old woman?” She swirled the water in the glass and downed everything.

“You know what I am talking about.” I braced my palms on an antique table at the center of the suite. Every fiber of my being cried out for me to snatch the ceramic vase on top of the table and smash it to bits. Maybe then the heated vexation in my blood would ebb. “Who was that man?” I turned to face her.

“Oh, Asim?” She turned, her eyes clouded with excitement.

She likes him.

She likes him

She fucking likes him!

“You were staring at the dude as if you would jump on him the next minute and suck the hell out of his miserable mouth. While the idiot was shamelessly showing off bulges that were no match to mine.”

“Jealous, are we now?” she raised her brows, her lips stretched in a wry smile.

“As a sane husband should be, if he catches his wife selling herself like a whore, to a man who is lower than him on all sides!”

She cocked her head to the side, narrowing her gaze at me. “What exactly is your problem Lucas? That I was with a man or that the man is lower than you?” She arched her brow, “Would you have looked away if the man was…let’s say… someone way better than you on all sides?”

“Cut the crap and tell me what I want to hear.”

“What do you want to hear, Lucas?”

“You were supposed to end whatever discussion with that man and hurry to my side. But you ignored me. Showed no sign of recognition, no remorse whatsoever.”

I knew she did it purposely. It was an ‘I don’t care’ gesture, as if to say, ‘I am fucking around with another sonofabitch, you can go hang yourself, Lucas.’

“He asked me out for a date -”

“And you said no.”

Her face whipped up to meet mine again, her hands on her hips, lips curled in a way that showed that she knew what I was fighting within and was enjoying it.

“Actually, I said yes." She smiled sweetly. "We will be touring the town together this afternoon. I don't need you anymore.”

I felt like someone had delivered a blow to my stomach. *Pow*. Right in the

solar plexus, *take that you horseshit*.

“For Christ’s sake Muyiwa,” I growled. Pounding my fist on the table. “Why?” I couldn’t help my voice from scaling up.

“Why not? You didn't want to go in the first place, so...” She shrugged, "I had to find a replacement. A thank you would suffice."

“We are here as a couple and should be seen together. Not you flirting with another man by the poolside!”

“And I have seen how much you have kept me company since we arrived here. You would rather sign your autograph on that skinny bitch’s butt than to be seen together with me.”

The lady from yesterday’s boat ride? Or the one at the res... I shook my head. "Don’t be ridiculous, they're not my type.”

“Of, course.” The mockery in her voice was palpable. I could almost taste it. “Big screen sluts that are more than happy to get your cock pushed down their miserable throats while you promise them a place by your side, those are your kind. Unfortunately, my durling husband, none of them could follow you down here so you have to make do with that skinny bitch. Don't worry, I give you permission even though you've never asked it." What the fuck? "Oh, and she is so eager to have her toes pointed to the sky while you show her what your big dick can do.”

Words and saliva dried from my mouth as I stood there, my hands firmly tucked in my pockets while she brushed past me to the bar, scanned through the many flavored teas stacked there, settled for one, picked a cup, and walked towards the electric kettle.

Feeling my jaw tightened even as I tried to remain calm, I unbuttoned my shirt as I walked through the room, flopped myself on the king-size bed, and shut my eyes.

This resort has unscrewed a part of Muyiwa’s brain. She was on the verge of going wild and I wouldn’t allow that. Muyiwa was still useful to me until I decided it was time to show her the door.

Thirteen

Muyiwa

THE SNATCHES OF SUGGESTIVE WORDS and feminine laughter that kept flying into my ears from every corner was enough to conclude that it was a lovers' getaway instead of a tour. Almost every lady either had a strong arm curled around her waist or a peer of soft eyes gazing down at her.

Why didn't I agree to meet Asim at his gym center so both of us could come together, holding hands? No, that would be going overboard. I shouldn't give people the impression that I am a loose woman.

But Lucas never cared and he's living the life! Why should I?

Anyway, where is my new man?

I scanned the area, my eyes lingering on toned male bodies. I could make another pick if Asim wasn't showing up. I was about to take my search to another area when my eyes caught the dreamy wanna-be entrepreneur, who'd bored me last night with lectures on skin cleansing, exfoliation blah blah. What was her name again? Destiny yes. She was here for a school reunion.

She had no man groping and whispering sweet nonsense into her ears and that was a relief. I shouldn't be the only one without a man, yet.

She saw me and waved.

I waved back.

Oh, dear. a guy blocked and hooked his hand around her elbow, both of them strolled off, smiling at each other's face.

Phew. And I was back to being the only female without a tour partner

"Hey!" A voice said behind me and I turned to see a petite, light-skinned flat-nosed lady whose lips reminded me of Kerry Washington.

"Hi."

Not another Lucas's fan…please Lord…not another one.

“I have seen you somewhere…I remember…you are Lucas' wife, Muyiwa Opeyemi!” Her accent sounded similar to Bawa, the gentleman by the dock.

I am going to die!!!

“I have loved you from the first day I waltzed into your IG page. I was hooked on your flawless skin. Then I followed you on Twitter, on TikTok…” she gesticulated with her fingers, her face oozed out excitement. “…you slay me! I couldn’t get enough of your videos. Girl…I love you!”

Oh…well. Gurl, you have my attention now. Talk on babe…pour the praises on me. give me the orgasm…I like it…

“I am Camilla Grey by the way.”

"Camilla…” I pulled out my dramatic British accent. “…such flattery.” I chuckled, fanning my face with my hand.

“Come on girl, everything I just said is true. You are original.” She leaned closer to my face, “And thick. Every man’s kinda woman.”

Every man but Lucas.

“I don’t know what to say…thank you.”

She dismissed my gratitude with the wave of a hand. “I am here with my man, Duncan Dugo. You know Duncan?”

“Am I supposed to know him?” Gurlll...I'm not from Bodo. And neither do I have superpowers to know who is who.

“Oh. He’s quite popular like Dangote.” She looked proud of her accomplishment.

Okay. Dangote would be a great catch. "Really?”

“I thought you've heard about him?”

“Maybe I have.” I haven't but I'm proud of you! You are my kind!

Grabbing her hand, I stopped her from hurrying off as I suspected she wanted to do. “We should meet again,” I beamed at her. “In fact. We have to meet.”

She stared at me with subtle suspicion. Bitch, I ain’t going to snatch your filthily rich man. I just want to be friends.

“Okay," she shrugged. We were kin, no need feeling threatened. We exchanged numbers and I watched her catwalk off. Wiping the social grin off my face, I resumed the search for my sexy knight in glossy brown armor. My eyes scanned the many humans waiting to board the shuttles to the jetty.

Then I saw him.

The man I am definitely going to cheat on Lucas with…

I donned off my shirt, neatly folded and hung it across my curved arm. With my free hand, I pulled the waistband of my jeans up, pushed the neck of my camisole a little lower, then started walking towards Asim.

He had not seen me yet, but I was sure he would want to drag me to that palm grove at the other side of the entrance and do something naughty with me. One look at my voluptuous, supple breasts and he would want to be buried between the twin towers all day.

“Hell...no.” What the actual heck? Didn't Camilla Grey just talk about her billionaire boyfriend waiting for her somewhere? What was she doing stopping Asim mid stride to plant a kiss on his face?

That kiss wasn't a platonic one. Uh...uh, I knew a friendly kiss and the one I just saw now had the word ‘intimate’ written on it.

“Two-faced bee-yatch.”

The ladies on this resort are bitches. Pretentious, annoying bitches. Except the lovely model I met yesterday.

“I’m Lola,” she said, smiling, so young and innocent, “I’ve not seen your husband’s movies, but now that I’ve met you. I’ll get around to doing it.”

And oh…I fell in love with her immediately. She didn’t spill much about herself but was sincere and direct during our short meeting.

Okay, back to my date.

Asim glimpsed me, those alluring eyes widened in surprise and a smile touched his lips.

Camilla seemed to be saying something to him but his eyes were on me. He muttered a few words to Camilla who nodded and walked away.

In your face Camilla, ha ha.

His smile spread slowly as he made towards me. With my hands folded across my midriff, and not knowing how to react without looking too desperate, I focused my gaze on the South African Bonga fish that walked past with Lucas.

“Low budget Naomi Campbell,” I hissed.

“Hi, you look amazing, Muyiwa.” Asim set his bulk in front of me, making it difficult for me to keep tabs on my husband and his new lover.

“I can say the same about you too.”

“I thought you’d change your mind… you know.”

“I am an adult.”

“I know, for now we have to tread carefully, since your husband is a popular man- I heard.” He planted a soft kiss at the back of my hand. “Are you ready?”

Ready to fuck you? Dude, I was ready the first day I met you.

“Is something wrong?” He asked. Staring at me with concern.

Yes! Dude I am worried about your pace. We should be heading to your house so we can explore the chemistry between us. “I am fine, why did you ask?”

“You seem a little distant.”

“I am perfectly fine. Maybe... a little excited.”

“Excitement is good. Come, the shuttles are ready.”

And my pussy is ready for you.

My eyes caught Lucas and his fan turned lover in the midst of other tourists. She was holding his hand, baring her ugly teeth in his face. So much for ‘She is not my type,’ I hissed.

“You are not with me.” Asim had stopped walking and was staring at me. “You are reconsidering?”

“Of course not. I am here as your date.”

His face beamed. “Then, let’s go and have some fun. “

Fun? That I intend to have to the fullest.

Fourteen

Lucas

SHE ALLOWED HIM TO HOLD her hand! That...that...he was no match for me, yet she had looked at him as if he was the movie star and I, the lowlife. I dropped the South African lady's hand as if it was smeared with dirt.

"What?"

"Run along now,"

"But I want to be with you?" I would rather dive into the ocean. "I thought you would want to know me better."

"No need." I never planned to be part of this excitement. Wandering off to a village I know nothing about wasn't my kind of fun. But Muyiwa had accepted to be chaperoned by that guy!

So here I am. In pursuit of my wayward wife.

Muyiwa should know better not to be swayed by that guy's sweet words. She wasn't teenager but a fucking grown woman. A married woman. I was supposed to be the one with prying eyes, the philanderer, not her.

I caught a glimpse of Muyiwa and that guy entering a shuttle meant for four passengers, watched their shuttle thin out. Something told me that Muyiwa saw me approaching and had instructed their rider to zoom off.

Cursing under my breath, I took a seat inside an idle ride, unbuttoned my shirt as the ride geared into motion.

My phone vibrated and I check; A message from Sunny, an email from Raymond Alabi and a missed call from Femi.

"Lucas Opeyemi!"

God! Not now please.

"Sir, you are my mentor." Yeah, right. The whole recognition thing was beginning to wear me out. I turned to the couple that just joined the ride. I've

met the guy before...yes. At the restaurant. He was with this same lady who looked like she would melt into a puddle and slip away any minute.

“I am not sure what I feel right now.” He looked from me to his lady, then back at me.

“Breathe, young man.” I chuckled.

“You don’t understand, sir. I have been wanting to see you all my life! I am a scriptwriter…” He scrambled inside his hang bag and came out with papers, some of them slipping out of his hands. The lady gathered and handed them to him.

“Thank you, love,” he said to her, edged towards me, and handed the now arranged papers to me. “I have wanted to act like you.”

“You are a scriptwriter…” My eyes scanned through the first page.

“Yes, I can act too. I have been doing local jobs with this organization here in Bodo, but I want to land big roles in Nollywood.”

I saw that coming. Every successful actor is seen as a ladder for up-and-comings to climb. Actors, scriptwriters, everyone wants to shove gigs and scripts to your face.

“Please, sir. You can be his big break,” his lady added.

Oh, she could talk! “Who is she?”

“My girl Martha, my name is Marcus. We’re here on a getaway.”

“You’re from here?”

“Yes.”

The lady reminded me of the naive girl that once lived with me. My secret, unofficial wife who had insisted on going to see Emem Isong with me so she could beg Emem to give me a role. *“Let him look me in the face and deny you the opportunity to come for the audition.”*

Emem turned out to be a woman and had given me my first Romance movie role.

“I will go through your script.”

Their joyful shrill could have woken a hibernating bear.

“I am not giving you a role in Nollywood.” Didn’t want to make promises. “But if this script is good, I will hand it over to a producer who will take it up from there.”

The young man’s brows furrowed. I knew how uneasy he must be t rusting a total stranger with your work could either land you a contract that would change your life, or the work could get rejected and you would still see a movie with the same storyline as yours, premiering after.

The latter happens more often, unfortunately.

“I don't know how you are going to trust me but, you have to trust someone if you want to make it in the industry. I’m not promising you that I'll do much…”

“I trust you sir.” Trust me not to take advantage of him or to get him to Nollywood?

“Meet me tomorrow morning at the Tennis court so we can agree on how to get this to the right people.”

“Okay sir, thank you sir.”

Muyiwa would have captured this moment with her phone for her social media followers. What would she caption it?

“You are going to love the story.”

“I hope so.” *And I hope Muyiwa realizes what she is doing to us, to herself.* We were a team, I fed her material lust while she kept me on top of the trend. Without me there would be no her.

And without her, there would be nothing interesting about you.

No, I was already made before she waltz into my life…

Were you?

“We are here.” the shuttle rider announced.

I sighted Muyiwa and her lover waiting for a taxi. Her laughter floated into my ears and my heart clenched. It’d been a long time since I heard her abandon herself to real laughter, the kind that makes her stomach and her breasts wobble. Muyiwa had a maniacal guffaw that caused people to always turn and stare.

The guy must have hated the sound of it.

Or not... he was nodding and smiling like the deluded person he was.

My God! I hated it that she was happy with him, nobody had the right to make her this excited except me.

****

Stroking the bottle that held the hate vial with my fingers, I stared at the key card in my other hand. “Thank you, mother of Hades.” Everything was falling in place for me as it was prophesied.

“The vial of hate would make him loathe every other woman in his life.”

Balancing my weight on the store table, I tapped the card repeatedly on my teeth and juggled all the possible chances of me sneaking into his suite without being seen. Getting the key was tough work. Now I had to figure out how to slip the vial into his drink.

I looked at the bottle again. Four of them were given to me. I have used the vial of rejuvenation which would keep me fresh and beautiful for him. Now I had to give him this.

The mother of Hades said three drops would do the work, but I think giving him the whole of it would get the job done faster. Then he would be all mine…

“What is responsible for that big grin on your face?”

Dom. The sound of his voice made me want to yell.

“What are those things you are holding?”

“What? Nothing?” I gave him a warning stare, pushing both hands behind my back.

“Let me see those.” Grabbing my dress, he pulled me to his body and wrestled both the card and the vial out of my hand.

“Give them to me!”

“Whose key card is this?”

“I am a cleaner. Am I not supposed to have access to the villas?”

He shoved me aside, his eyes still on the card. “The Lagos Luxury Villa.” He turned sharply, “You are not assigned to clean Luxury Villas this week, how did you get this?”

“It’s none of your business!”

“You want him, you want to sleep with him.”

“And so, what?”

“He has a woman!”

“Don’t tell me that.”

“And you are going to do something to his woman?” He shook the bottle to my face, “Or to him, with this?”

“Give it back.”

“Not until I know what you want to do with it.”

Staring at him with all the hatred in me was all I could do as I couldn’t wrestle the bottle out of his hands.

“You want him that bad? I thought I was enough for you?” I saw his face darkened. What would he do? Smack me? Dom had never raised his hands on me. "Answer me!”

I could snatch the vial off his hand now before he knew it... But my fingers barely touched his when he smashed the bottle on the floor.

“No!” I howled as he smashed the bottle on the floor. “See what you have done! You have destroyed everything!”

The man who stood with brilliant fury in his eyes.

Fifteen

Lucas

THE TOWN WAS A MARRIAGE of sounds, from bicycle wheels, the throaty growl of motorcycles, the exhaust notes of taxis, to chatter that floated and dispersed in the air. What made it more perfect was the friendliness that oozed from the faces of its people.

The smell of food on the streets also made the town a home in a way that bound my soul. I couldn't resist that, so I located a local vendor and settled for a plate of a recognized delicacy.

"Hmm…" With eyes closed, I savored the taste of the roasted plantain dipped in a peppered sauce.

"*How you see am?*" The vendor asked.

"Nice, I like it." I adjusted my butt on the bench and continued eating. "So nice. Like they make it in Nigeria."

"I been stay for Rivers State, Nigeria for 17 years. Na there I learn am."

"You learnt well. This is amazing." Eating on the street was one of the things you would never catch Lucas Opeyemi doing. But mehn... if I was going to add 'have eaten 'Gobota made' Bole and Fish' to my résumé, I had to eat like the locals.

"This is really good." I threw a piece of fish in my mouth, licked my oil-smeared fingers, and brought my head up to see the chatty Rotimi Daramola, one of Nigeria's finest RnB singers walking towards me. The last time I heard of him, he was on a musical tour in the US. What brought him to Gobota?

"Never knew Celebrities do eat local," he said.

"Says the kid who is about to order a plate for himself." Rotimi amazed me, he amazed all of us in the entertainment industry. The kid was ready for the world and like me, he had grabbed opportunities with both hands and had shot himself to the top. I was so happy for him. "This tastes like home, trust me."

“Really!” Rotimi took a seat beside me, signaling the vendor. “I don’t believe I am doing this with you.” He edged towards me.

“I don’t believe myself too, kid.” I pushed the last piece of fish into my mouth and sighed with satisfaction. Wouldn't it be nice to abandon this quest and go get a long, satisfying sleep at the resort?

Why should I care if Muyiwa gets banged by all the men in this town?

“That’s your woman over there.” Rotimi nudged my shoulder.

Looking was a bad idea. Now I couldn't take my eyes off the couple walking down the road holding hands.

“Like she didn’t see us,” Rotimi said with a mouth full.

“Trust me, kid, if she did, she would be sitting on my lap right now.” She’d see us and was trying very hard to make my blood bobble out of jealousy and it’s working. Damn! “Who’s the guy with Muyiwa?”

Rotimi glanced over. “That’s Asim Morrison, the resort’s exercise instructor.”

Really. Gym instructor? A man who does nothing but huffs and puffs to lure fool-headed women? “He works in the resort, uh?” He's about to kiss his work goodbye then. We would see how he would be able to look another man’s wife in the face when he’s thrown out of the resort. Onahi would do that for me.

“Must be handling your woman real good.” Rotimi must have seen the dark cloud on my face. “I didn’t mean it that way.”

“Don’t push it, Kiddo.”

“I am sorry, Man.”

My heart lurched out of my body as I looked across the road and... and that idiot had his hands on my Muyiwa’s waist. His face was close to hers, awfully and uncomfortably close. Was it my eyes playing a trick on me or was he nibbling on her ear?

Muyiwa wouldn’t dare screw around for real.

Or would she?

Standing up, I grabbed a bottle of water and gulped down. “See you when I see you, kiddo.” Ego bruised, extremely hurting, I ambled down the road.

Muyiwa could be anything; chaotic, crazy, but she’d never openly hit on a guy and rub it on my face. What then came over her?

Sixteen

Muyiwa.

THE TOWN SEEMED LIKE SOMETHING that was conjured from a fairytale. The market? A gorgeous mixture of smiles and friendliness.

“It will look nice on you.” The beads seller surprised me with her perfect English.

“It looks out of fashion to me.”

“Nothing is ever out of fashion to a lady with confidence.” She bared her stained teeth in a Cheshire smile.

Confidence, that, I have. The last time I wore bathroom slippers to a function, it trended as the latest fashion the next day.

“You will find it.”

“What?”

“What you lost.” The woman placed a feeble but eager hand over mine. “You will find it.”

“I am not searching for anything.” Except Asim, who left to get us something to eat from an eatery and had not returned.

“You are. My eyes may be weak, but they still see the soul.”

Biting on my bottom lips to curb the sudden fear that made my heart race. I looked around for anyone I could call on if anything bad happened.

The woman’s smile broadened “Quite an experience you will have here. A very frightening one, but out of it a new beginning will be born.” She picked the beads. “Have it for half the price.” She opened my palm and placed the item on it.

I laughed. “Thank you. Though I would have loved to pay the original price. I don’t want to make you lose money.”

“I didn’t buy it, I made it myself.”

“But you bought the materials used in making it. I should at least pay you for that and your time too.”

“It isn't worth so much.” Before I could object further, the woman picked a bottle from the many that was neatly displayed at the other end of her table. “You must have a taste of this too.”

“What is that?”

“A drink brewed by me.”

“No, I can’t take that, I don’t know what it is.”

Ignoring me completely, the woman unscrewed the bottle, poured a little of the content in a shot glass and offered me the green-yellowish liquid.

“No, please.” I gently pushed the cup away, not before the fruity fragrant whiffed into my nostrils.

“But you have to.”

“Not when I don’t even know what it’s made of.”

“Trust me, child. I am not trying to kill you. I just want someone to taste this new brew and tell me how good it is.” And you chose me among all the customers that have come to your shop today. Was there something about me that reminded this woman of a lab rat?

“Don't deny an old woman this favor.”

“This is ridiculous.”

The woman placed the cup on my lips and nudged, staring hard into my eyes. “Please.”

It’s just a drink. What’s the worst that could happen? “Okay.” I took a sip and pulled away, wiping my mouth with the back of my hands.

“So?”

“I don’t know what to say, I guess… a thank you is in order then.” The bitter-sweet taste of the drink gave me a shudder and a feeling of calmness at the same time.

“Like it, yes?”

“Hmm.” I nodded while placing the waist beads inside my bag, rubbed my hand on my belly as a light gush of air, heavy with the irresistible scent of roasted meat, invaded my sense of smell, reminding me that Asim hadn’t returned with the food he was supposed to buy. I would have gotten myself

something to eat here, but that would be too degrading. Buying food from street vendors was one of the things I would never do.

How long was Asim gone for? I checked the time on my phone and frowned. I should be heading back to the resort, with or without food. And Asim could choke with the one he went to buy. Something told me he had met another lady and had forgotten I was waiting for him.

Not that I still desire to fuck him anyways, that longing flew away the moment I sighted Lucas at that food spot.

“Thank you once again, ma.”

“Nice to know you are having a good time, my dear wife.”

Lucas’s strong cologne announced him before his arms grabbed my waist. I felt myself melting at the spot as his anger sipped from his fingers to my body, arousing...

Goodness! Why was it difficult to act indifferent with him by my side?

“You should be more conscious of what people will say about you flirting with a random guy while you abandon the side of your husband.” He pressed me against his body and a moan escaped my throat.

“If you are going to cheat on your husband, do it discreetly.” He accused me of cheating? The anger that seemed to be subdued by his overpowering scent rushed back and I pushed away from him.

“How dare you?” Who did he think he was to preach morality to? Me?

And for Pete’s sake! Why did I allow my eyes to linger on him long enough to notice the stubble on his chin? His nipples begging to be pinched from the light fabric that covered them. The ripped denim shorts that enabled him to flaunt his legs. And the bastard stood staring back as if it was the first time he was meeting me.

My boobs ache like they’ve not done for a long while. A sudden desire flooded the floor of my stomach like artificial smoke on a performing stage. I swallowed a whimper as a rocket of lust shot into my head, making my core gush out wetness. I have not felt so sexually pulled to Lucas for quite some time. When we’d engage in the boring, comfortable sex, it was just to remind ourselves that we were still married.

But now this. This was strong, and I hated it so much that my body had chosen to react to his sexiness.

Many questions rushed to the fore of my consciousness as I looked from him

to the bead seller who was now attending to another customer.

Did the drink have anything to do with this sudden feeling?

“Hey, darling…” I heard Asim called from behind. Words got stuck in his throat as Lucas and I turned to face him.

“Darling?” Lucas looked at me, “What is going on, Muyiwa?”

“You don’t want to do that here, Lucas.”

“Sure, I do!” He faced Asim. “You, who are you?”

“Asim is my name, a gym instr-”

“I know your name. Why you are calling my wife ‘darling’ is what I want to know.”

Mogbe. This shouldn't be happening. Lucas wouldn't dare disgrace us in this town where practically everyone knows him. And the latter looked like a drowned puppy even with all his muscles.

“The lady has no problem with me calling her darling.”

“Sure, she doesn’t.” Lucas flashed me a cold glance, “In fact, I can see how much she loves it, do you mind asking her to go to bed with you too? I guess she would love that very much.” The sarcasm in his tone was as sharp as a blade.

“What? Lucas. How dare you?” Lucas had no right to point fingers and use those words on me.

“No, you tell me, dear wife. How dare you? What are you doing with this punk?”

“Now, that’s enough, man. You don’t go around calling people names. Who do you think you are?”

Standing beside Lucas, I could feel his growing ire, it seeped out from his flared nose, his tightened face, the intensity in his tone.

“I am the husband of the woman you are itching to fuck. The one guy you don’t want to mess with!”

In my very own eyes, the confrontation grew from the striking of a match into a raging fire. If Lucas was light skinned, he would have turned hot red at the moment. And why was nobody trying to save these kids in adult bodies from disgracing themselves?

I was still looking around for someone, anyone, even the strange woman that gave me the drink had her palms supporting her jaw watching the men, when I

heard a bone-cracking sound that was accompanied by cheers from onlookers.

“Get him, Movie star!” Someone shouted from the little crowd that had gathered.

“Is this a reality show?” a young lady who I didn’t know when she crept beside me, asked.

It was obvious I had to find my way out of there before things got out of hand. Shaking my head, I hung my bag and began to walk.

Those two could kill themselves for all I care.

Seventeen

Muyiwa

STRIPPING MY BODY OF EVERY item of clothing, I stepped into the bathroom. There, I inspected my face, still red with embarrassment, closely in the mirror. I couldn't believe I allowed myself to gush over the mere sight of Lucas.

Saying that I allowed it would place me in control of what happened back there. I was enchanted! The concoction that woman forced on me left me drooling like a sex-starved bitch in heat at the sight of the one man I never wanted to desire, it was like the craving that'd gone vacation came roaring back. The whole of my body was on fire for him!

Talking of craving, I could still feel wetness at the junction of my thighs. My hand left my face to stroke my throbbing clit, I slipped a finger inside.

Goodness! It's a pool down there. How could it...what did he do to me?

Tearing a piece of tissue paper, I wiped my fingers, opened the toilet lead and plop myself on the seat.

Done with that business, I leaned forward, my hard nipples rubbed on my thighs, reminding me of their disloyalty. These voluptuous bad girls had wantonly ached for Lucas's touch.

Lucas must have seen my little hard dagger points pushing through the fabric of my clothes. I could swear I saw his eyes widened for a brief moment, then he had clouded them with fury.

A thousand, tiny sharp needles walked up my feet as I tried to get up. I sat back down and allowed some time to pass before I slowly stood up. I squeezed my titties and stepped beneath the icy pinches of a cold shower.

Exactly what I needed to send the tickling sensation to rest.

Still not ready to run the soap through my skin, I relaxed my head on the rim of the tub, shut my eyes, and inhaled deeply.

There would be another party at the resort tonight, one of the girls who just arrived today had invited everyone to her engagement party. Though she didn't invite me herself, only sent Dom up here with the card, but I would forgive her for that mistake.

In Lekki, no girl sends an invite through a third party to me, not without calling to apologize first. Only then would I consider gracing the occasion with my beautiful, vibrant self.

Well, Twin Bliss wasn't Lekki where I am queen.

Carefully, I ticked off the details of the party in my head. Just like the tour, horny couples would glue to one another drinking, kissing, and smooching. Some would end up humping like mad dogs in dark enclaves, while some would be decent enough to make it to their suites.

The thought of it sent warmth to my skin, the initial throbbing of my pussy resumed. I sucked in air through my clenched teeth, grabbed the soap, and gave my titillated body a punishing scrub.

People would expect me to walk in with Lucas.

Was I up to it?

This sudden burning desire for him was what I wasn't sure how to handle. If my pussy continues betraying me like this, standing side by side with Lucas would be high risk.

Toweling myself dry and applying moisturizer on my face and body, I contemplated giving in to the lechery and ask Lucas to shag me, just for tonight. *We are married after all.*

But I fear 'tonight' wouldn't be enough. I would want a lot more.

Lucas was going to divorce me in the next five days or so, allowing myself to be *dickmatized* would leave me hurting. I'd gone down that lane before and wouldn't want to do that again.

My breath left me immediately as I stepped out of the bathroom. Standing opposite me was the object of my recent confusion, my husband, who would cease from being my husband soon, depending on how long the process of the divorce would take.

He arched a brow, his lips crooked in a lopsided smile. Then he bent down to untie the lace of his sneakers. Done, he sat at the edge of the bed. His gaze descended on me again, this time it roamed, slowly, leisurely, eating me up.

I desperately wanted to blame the shivering of my body on the raging cold

emanating from the air conditioner. But I knew that having him peruse me as if I was a meal to be consumed was responsible for my fluttering.

My hand jerked to cover my chest, but I held back. “Bastard,” I hissed. With my head held high, I moved to the other end of the bed and sat, aware that my rebellious butt cheeks had waddled as I walked, and he’d stared at them.

What should I care if he decides to spend the rest of his miserable time staring at my butt? After all, we would be walking out of this sham soon.

Wouldn’t we?

Eighteen

Lucas

IN HER BIRTHDAY SUIT, SHE was startling pretty. really pretty.

It shocked me that I took notice of the little details of her body after all these years- her lumps, lines, flabby stomach. More shocked to realize that I'd sucked them all in ravenously.

Fuck it, Lucas you're staring like a fool! Muyiwa didn't acquire a brand-new ass. It's the same old rump and shouldn't stir me like this. I scratched my head and turned to where she hunched over her box, frantically throwing clothes into several places. My eyes moved to her arched ass, and I didn't try to pull away this time. What would it cost me to have her sit on my face again? And that strand of bead around her waist, when did she get it? Muyiwa had never worn waist beads. However, this one sat well on her waist, accentuating her figure. I loved it.

Swallowing my ache, I turned my face away. I should be angry at her for her waywardness, but my cock had decided to turn me dumb.

Gosh! I gotta feed the damn thing with the juice from a woman's pussy, not just any woman, Muyiwa's.

I glance at her again. Now in her bra and panties, she stood hands akimbo grumbling under her breath.

What would she do if I marched up to her, lifted her off the floor, leaned her back against the wall and plunged into her? After all, she was still my wife and I needed to quench this hunger.

My wife, ha. Muyiwa stopped being that since the first day we arrived here. She wouldn't hesitate to spit on my face if I ever suggest sex to her now.

For fuck's sake, getting my royal cock attended to wouldn't have been a big deal in Lagos. I only had to make a pick from my many lays, and I would be moaning in the next few minutes. Here, every lady seemed to be hooked with someone, every one of them except the South African ugly who'd decided to

stalk me.

Creep.

It was all nice and good until she started haunting me like a ghost.

“God! I don’t even know what to wear to this bloody party,” Muyiwa let out.

“Wear everything.” I had to clear my head of the image of her naked thickness and taunting her might do the job. “Or wear nothing,” I added with a rude chuckle. “You’ll look like a right sexy old bird in nothing.”

“Dickhead,” she shot back.

“At least, that would give your new fuck boy easy access to your fat cunt.”

Muyiwa faced me. “You know what? I would offer this fat cunt a thousand times to that fuck boy than allow your unlatched dick in it.” She grabbed a cloth and started stuffing herself in it. “Stray dog.”

Anger rumbled inside me as realization kicked on my ribs. One, she didn’t deny that there was something strong going on between her and the guy, and two, she threatened me with infidelity!

Muyiwa dare not open that pussy for another man, not while I remained her husband.

“Wife of a stray dog.”

“Not for long.”

“What does that mean?” Was she planning to run off with that man? What the f... “What did you just say, Muyiwa?” I marched up to her, my head clotted with anger and an overloaded cock. “Listen to me, you are my wife. I married you and will not have you threaten me because of some idiot you just met!” I wasn't going to watch a common gym instructor take my wife.

“Quit the acting, Lucas. you are not on stage. You had this separation thing planned out already, you wanted it more than you wanted air.”

“I don’t know what you are blabbing about, but you are not going to make a mockery of us here. Nobody knows how shitty this marriage is and we must keep it that way. And for fuck’s sake, stop making your sexual desperation too obvious!”

Her chest rose and fell, I expected her to punch me while hurling curses.

“Get out of my face, Lucas Opeyemi.” She nudged me with her shoulder and walked to the dressing mirror, clad in an animal print jump-suit that hugged her body, outlining her crotch. Muyiwa wanted to give the world a free view of my

pussy.

Good gracious! What was Muyiwa on today? She looked like an unapologetic hooker, out to get laid by multiple men.

“You can’t go to that party dressed like that.”

“Really?” She fastened her earrings.

“People will be staring.”

“That is the idea.”

“You look cheap like a prostitute.” My voice started raising again, how I wish she would snap out of this new attitude; it was beginning to piss me off. And when did she buy this thing she had on by the way?

It made her look delightfully whorish.

It made her look like a cheap slut!

“And who wants to look like a virgin?” she asked.

“Come on. Stop being difficult Muyiwa, you are my wife, act like it!”

She was my wife. *My wife!*

Dressed, ready to go screw another man.

“For a man who spent the best of his time screwing every woman in Nollywood, you are doing well as a devoted husband.” She glared at me. “We have a party to attend, I will be waiting for you at the venue, at least to keep a front.”

****

All eyes on me, yeah...that’s the reaction that gives me joy. I stroked my chin for effect as I walked through the lobby of the Eclipse bar.

I may not be a money bag like the oil magnet, Mathias Cookey, whom I had caught leering at Muyiwa on two occasions. But, I have enough to buy me my own kind of comfort, I have charisma, fame, and sex appeal. Add that I am one of the most famous actors in Nollywood.

Soon, Hollywood would beckon, and I would answer. It was time to roll with the likes of Chiwetel Ejiofor.

I smoothened my tux.

“Hello, Lucas,” cooed a woman sprayed into a halter top and a mini skirt.

I gave her my killer smile and looked over her appreciatively. “How are you?”

She would have been happy to tell me, only that I didn’t stop my stride.

Pity. I wouldn’t have minded sparing her some time, she could be willing to help me relieve the loads in my groin, but I had to keep my eyes on Muyiwa who seemed to be on a quest for a free dick.

The image of her, down on both knees, sucking and gagging on the length of another man’s dick gave me a shudder.

You see, Muyiwa was the best when it comes to giving head. I’d tease her about going to a special school of cock sucking, she knew a lot of tricks other women didn’t.

Thinking about it now, I wondered why I had to sample other ladies when I had her. Habit. Dicking multiple women had become part of me.

Several more people greeted me along the way. Two young boys stopped to stare, and a very thin girl in a black, leather, bodycon dress waved.

I didn’t stop until I entered the venue for the party, the Eclipse bar that also served as a casino and nightclub. The vibe here flowed like a virus, a good one, there was excitement in the air, laughter rolled like waves.

Making it to the bar wasn't easy as I had to push through dancing bodies. I took a seat close to a slightly manic-looking man in a peach-colored t-shirt underneath a royal blue blazer.

In the Casinos ambient lights, I couldn’t tell whether his jeans were blue or black.

“Hiya,” I said and beckoned on the bartender.

“Hiya,” The man threw back at me without enthusiasm. There was something about the motion of his features that gave him a crazy look, his periodic chugging after a gulp from his beer, crossing his eyes, sucking in his cheeks. In repose, he was quite nice looking, the face of a veteran lost in war.

“Nice night, uh?”

“Yeah.”

“You look...are you okay, man?”

He flashed me a frustrating glance, turned his head scanning the floor as if in search of someone, then he returned his eyes to his drink, back hunched in

defeat.

I got the message, the guy was comfortable in an enclosed world and didn't want me to intrude.

"Straight whiskey, beer, or a cocktail, sir?"

"Margarita and three Tequila shots," *Not the marula concoction, please.* Until someone tells me that the so-called marula wasn't a witches brew meant to hypnotize unsuspected strangers - I wasn't going to touch anything made of it.

Onahi and his team seemed to have incorporated the mystery fruit into the resort's cuisine. There is marula bread, marula cake, cream liquor, and locally brewed beer.

"Here sir." The bartender handed the cocktail to me.

I took a sip. "Perfect," I murmured and gave him an appreciating nod. I took another sip and set the tumbler down on the slab, ran my hand over my head, and allowed my eyes to roam.

Searching for Muyiwa, my eyes caught Duncan instead, sauntering in with his lady Camilla. Both of them looked so picture-perfect as I and Muyiwa should have been.

For Fuck's sake, where was she? I searched the crowd again.

"The sexiest man alive!" Duncan grabbed my arms in a firm handshake.

His woman looked at me over. "The Nollywood man, himself."

"Ma'am." I planted a kiss on the back of her hand. "I hope this man is doing you well. You should show him the door if he is not living up to expectations."

She shrugged. "He is coming around."

My gaze went back to the silver fox. I'd finally met him in person just last night. He was interested in investing in the Nigerian movie industry so, it wasn't difficult to hit it off with the jolly, old but good-looking money bag. He'd also introduced his lady to me, with a hint of his interest in catching fun rather than settling down.

I watched them fuse lips in a long sensual kiss. She whispered something into his ear and turned to leave, Duncan slapped her little round butt, earning himself a glance from her.

"Nasty man," I muttered over the tumbler that was on my lips.

"With a sweet lady like Cam, I can be nasty all day."

“Good for you.” I gulped down the rest of the drink and beckoned to the bartender for a refill while Duncan ordered straight vodka.

“You will get drunk before the celebrants arrive,” I put in, noticing that the strange man that sat beside me earlier was gone.

“As if I give a fuck.” Duncan took the empty seat. “Why have they not started already?”

“Don’t know. One of them could have developed cold feet.” I checked out a sleek, blond girl walking past with a much older man.

“You think?” Duncan asked, swiveling to take in the girl’s ass.

Our drinks arrived and we sipped in silence for a while. Idly, I watched a dark-haired girl in black leggings and a red shirt stride by. She cut through the crowd as if she owned the place. I liked her style, not to mention her body. Though it would be a bird bone in bed, compared to Muyiwa’s.

Christ! Every time I saw an attractive woman at this party, I couldn’t help but weigh her up with my wife. I was losing my sanity. There was no way to explain the sudden craze for Muyiwa’s body.

Twirling the drink in the glass, I bit my bottom lip. I've seen Muyiwa naked several times. My wife could walk buck-naked around the whole house when the servants had all retired. Maybe, that was what turned off my lust towards her. Nakedness could be ugly, especially a flabby one.

Today was different though. When Muyiwa walked straight out of the bathroom in the buff, I saw curves where I used to see something else, and those breasts- oh, those divine pairs, they had me drooling. And the beads too! I found myself itching to grip her waist…

“Hey, you’ve heard the rumor making rounds at the resort?” Duncan swiveled his chair to face me.

Muyiwa and her lover. What else could stir a rumor in a place like this, If not a wife of a popular Nigerian celebrity frolicking with another man? “I don't listen to rumors.”

“Trust me, you would want to hear this one.”

“I said I don't care about it.”

“This one is huge and interesting.”

I gave Duncan a quizzical stare. “I didn’t know men gossip.”

“This is no gossip, everybody is talking about it.”

“Sad. I haven’t heard.”

Slipping my hand into my tux pocket, I brought out a pack of dental bubble gum, popped two into my mouth, and offered it to Duncan. He took one. “So, tell me. What is this rumor?” Not that I was interested.

“Ah-ha! You finally want to know.”

“Come out with it or don’t bother me.”

“Okay, okay. Ahmed Gusau. Your country’s senatorial aspirant.”

Relief flowed into my stomach as the story had nothing to do with Muyiwa and me. “Ahmed...Nigerian Ahmed Gusau?

“One and only. Heard his fiancé is here, on the resort, and you will be shocked who the lady is.”

“Who?”

“One quiet lady that some Tyrell guy has been following around.” *Why should I care?* “Heard that this Tyrell and the senator’s babe have been an item since their arrival, dude may have eaten the forbidden cookie already.”

“My goodness! I fucking don’t care.” Two adults on a vacation chose to have casual sex. Big deal!

“But the story is just beginning.” Duncan said. *Can this old man just stop?* “Heard the Tyrell guy posted pictures of him and the babe on the internet, tagging the senator.”

“Holy fuck!” Whoever this Tyrell guy was, he had guts. Shagging another man’s babe and going public with it. He’s my kind of guy… “Dude is playing a game.”

“Yeah.” Duncan snatched the pack of bubble gum I had out on the table and popped one more into his mouth. “One which he will come out injured or totally crushed.”

My gaze returned to my phone, and I began browsing social media pages. Women are all the same, give them your blood and they will still betray you. Muyiwa was no different. I provided her with everything, yet she went ahead to shamelessly wrap herself around another man.

“Phew…phew… ooh la laaaa,” Duncan dropped his bottle, leaned forward, and bobbed his head towards the dance floor. “She is gorgeously thick!”

I followed his stare to where Muyiwa was dancing with some guy. The throbbing beat of Wizkid’s ‘Ginger’ caressing them. A sudden flare of jealousy

overwhelmed me as I watched her dance partner grinding against her body with vigor.

“Damn that Mamacita is a handful. Just look at that ass!.”

“You are an unrepentant cunt.” I downed the last of my shots and regretted not ordering something stronger. Duncan let out a guffaw and slapped my shoulder.

“Come on man, I know she is your wife, but a beauty like this is not meant for your eyes alone. Look at her. Most men could kill to get their hands on her ass, mehn.”

The thought of snatching the empty beer bottle in this man’s grip and smashing it on his head poked my chest.

“I thought you have something going with Camilla, old man?”

“The reason why I wouldn’t hit on this thick body gracing my sight.”

Every male in this resort now found Muyiwa attractive? What did she rub on her skin to make them lust after her like this? “You are crazy.”

“You are no better, sexy pants.” He grabbed his drink and gulped. “You are lucky I have someone I am not planning to leave soon. I bet your curvy wife would be touring the whole world with me, in my jet by tomorrow.”

Unbelievable. This one too? I looked at Duncan, wishing I could punch his face and break that million Naira nose of his. “I need some air.” I rose to leave.

“You can’t handle the fact that another man is rocking on your wife like that?”

“I am not an insecure man.” *Bullshit.* “I just want to breathe.”

“But there is enough air to go round here.”

“I am bored to death here and it seems like the celebrants have changed their minds.”

“We can gamble while waiting.”

“I don’t gamble.”

Duncan gave me a dazed stare... “Why?”

“Nowhere is the predatory competitive society of social Darwinism more obvious than the gambling table.” I shoved my hands inside my pockets and gazed around, a little worried that the loud music had ebbed, most people had gone back to their seats and were now chatting and drinking. But Muyiwa and

her dance partner were nowhere in sight.

“Some fancy jargon you just spoke now.” Duncan heaved off his seat as well. “However, gambling has given some people hope more than the governments.”

“You and I know the truth in it , addicts on the floor, addicts who run the place, one group losing daily, while the other keeps cashing out big time.”

“Everyone is addicted to something. Some money, like me, while some, musky scented holes, like you.”

“Add your name to the list of those addicted to musky scented holes too. I wonder why Camilla still sticks with you.” I checked my phone for new messages.

“Same reason your wife is still with you.”

The laughter that erupted from his throat drew attention. I gave him a stern glance and started making my way out.

“Say hi to your wife for me,” he called back.

Fuck you.

“She is a well-made dish.” His thick voice, coated with laughter floated into my ears.

Sick man.

I walked into a heated commotion at the lobby.

Nineteen

Muyiwa

“SO, HOW DO I LOOK?”

“Amazing, simply gorgeous.”

I walked into the conversation like I have been walking into weird things since I stepped out of the villa this evening. The best of them all was catching the doll-faced Beatrice Murray making out with a guy, in the bar’s toilet.

The bitch was screaming like a stoned-out cow, voice too loud that you would wonder if it was coming out of her tiny body.

The worst part? The lady whose engagement party brought us all to the bar was said to be pregnant for another dude and the engagement had been canceled.

“Phew, it's getting crazily hot.” I didn’t mean the bar, I left there after the wild booty and boobs shake on the dance floor with this random cute guy. I was rather referring to everything that was happening between the ladies and their men this single night. It had been a potpourri of drama.

The two ladies that were discussing earlier turned their eyes towards me.

Oh, wow! If it wasn’t Lucas’ new attraction, the girl from the boat who has been trailing him like a wench with no life. Madam Swiss Bank Branch Manager.

“Fat girls sweat a lot,” she was deliberately loud.

I would ignore that. God! I would ignore that.

“Seriously, girl. You look beautiful.” Her friend went back to their early conversation.

“I don’t think so, I look like a little fish in a whale suit.”

“That’s because the outfit is on you, durling. Give it to your girlfriend and she would have a million-dollar runway model look.” I would have loved to capture the embarrassment written on her face on camera.

Madam branch manager glared at her friend who was trying to suppress a laughter. With a hand up her face and the other on her stomach, her friend apologized. I wondered why she would be sorry for laughing at the obvious. I mean, the Jovani short fringe dress would fit perfectly on any lady with a larger hip and bigger boobs, Madam branch manager looked like a scarecrow in it.

“You are a bitter, fat, ugly, smelly woman. You know that?” I could see beads of sweat on her cheeks.

“Bitter? I don’t think so. Fat? Obviously, but I would have loved you to use *curvy* and *thick* instead. Ugly? Me? Have you looked at your face in the mirror lately, dear? As for me being smelly…” I sniffed my armpits and shook my head. “I only perceive my Christian Dior Balade Sauvage perfume. And even without wearing it, durling, I smell better than you.”

“Deranged wife of a celebrity husband. No wonder he finds solace with other women while you hop from one television station to the other, defending the obvious.”

“Oh, stop bitching. You are lusting after a piece of the famous Lucas Opeyemi’s dick. News flash durling, you aren’t getting the pie, not when I have my eyes on him.”

Our escalating squabble had attracted people who would laugh at every banter.

Madam manager, feeling defeated, pulled my wig off my head. laughter rolled out from the little crowd that was eager for the unpaid entertainment to heat up.

“Oh, no you don't. Not my ‘Forever Young Remy weave.’ You mad woman.”

I jumped on her before she could save herself. Punching, scratching, tearing on her clothes. Balancing my butt on top of her, my fingers scrunched her cheeks forcing her lips to a duck-like pout. “In your miserable life, do not take off a lady’s wig, ever in your life!”

Strong arms grabbed me by the waist and pulled me up.

“What are you doing?” Lucas’ voice grated into my ears. “Come on, you are embarrassing yourself.”

Oh, I have done nothing. By the time I would be done with this dry wood, Lucas would know the meaning of embarrassment. Like his other women, this one thought she could call me names.

“Come on now, Muyiwa. Let us go!” Lucas dragged me out of the building,

muttering under his breath.

“Get your hands off me.”

“You should be grateful I came when I did to save your shameless ass.” He waved down a shuttle.

“I don’t need you to save me!” Annoyance knotted the pit of my stomach. “I am not Cinderella or Snow white that needs Prince Charming to come to her rescue. Muyiwa needed no rescuer. I was doing just fine, giving that fish bait the beating of her life.” Christ! It has always been difficult defeating Lucas in a struggle. I thought of biting his hand so he could loosen his grip on my wrist but gave up the idea, and respectively entered the shuttle. “Where are we going?”

“Back to our villa. And thanks to you, I wouldn’t be coming back for the engagement party as everybody would be talking about your disgraceful act today,” he shifted his bulk to face me. “God, Muyiwa. What were you thinking? How could you forget that this is not some hidden island? Bloggers would feed on your carelessness!”

“As if I care.” I turned my face to the other side.

Brushing away tears. I thought of the two bloggers on the resort who would be punching their tabs right now, adding spice to the story to make it catchier. What picture of me would they use?

If this had happened in Lagos, my media manager would be working her ass off to counter what bloggers would put out there.

“They can all fucking write whatsoever they wish.” Sooner or later this union would be history. Bloggers would dig up our shits and the world would know the rot we’ve been hiding all these years.

Sniffling, I peeled off the net that hid my unkempt hair while flashed back to the bitter scuffle scene. Kai! I should have beaten that lady until her face became a potpourri of blood, bones, and pieces of meat.

“That couple would always remember this day as the day Lucas and his wife ruined their engagement,” Lucas murmured.

“There isn’t going to be any engagement.”

“What do you mean there isn’t going to be an engagement?”

“The man broke the damn thing off. His bitch is carrying a baby for one crazy-looking dude who showed up today at the resort.”

“Oh.” That was all he said as we made the remaining journey in silence.

As soon as we stepped inside the villa, he let his anger loose. “What has come into you?”

You.

“Answer me! Why are you doing this?”

Does he really want to hear what I have to say?

I peeled off my shoes, kicked them aside, and went ahead to remove my earrings.

“Everyone here knows you have been frolicking about unabashedly. You have decided to trade your shame for what?”

He got me confused there…what exactly was he angry about?

The fight?

The dance?

The frolicking with the other men? Or all of them?

I dropped the earrings on the table and went for the front zipper of my jumpsuit. With my back on him, I started taking off my clothes from the shoulders.

“Look at me, damn it. Muyiwa, look at me when I am talking to you.”

And I did. With my jumpsuit down to my waist, my breasts freed from the bra that previously caged them, I turned to face him - ready to give him a piece of my mind.

It was a mistake.

A terrible, sweet one.

“Goddamn it.” He drew me to himself, crushing his mouth to mine in a kiss that tasted of alcohol and bitter frustration.

He pulled away as if my lips were searing hot, his hand still holding me firmly, “How can you be so damn annoying and desirable at the same time?” Then, without waiting for me to catch my breath, he took possession of my lips again. Invading every corner of my mouth until I wondered if that was the part of my body that offended him.

“For Christ’s sake, I want to fuck you so hard, and still feel like throwing you over the terrace right now,” he groaned.

And you think I don’t feel the same way? You horse shit.

Turning my eyes away from his face, I pushed on his chest, but he wouldn’t

budge. “I am tired,” I hated the shaking of my voice. “I’m humiliated, disgraced. Just leave me alone, Lucas.”

“I’d want nothing better than to leave you alone,” His fingers pressed hard on my cheeks, turning my face so I could look at him. “Do you think I need the turmoil and complication you have brought into my life since we arrived? That I wouldn’t want to pretend that you have not eaten up my brain so much in these few days than you did in the past five years?” his hands traveled down from my face to my arms.

“What I do with my life here shouldn’t be your concern at all…we,” I swallowed the heat that was suffusing my entire body, “We are already wrecked.”

He stared hard at me. What I saw in those eyes, a mixture of annoyance and arousal, sent a tremendous flash of desire through my body and my limbs went weak as I became aware of every part of him. Hands. Breath. Aroused member. I heard his body speak to mine.

“You are doing this on purpose, aren’t you?” His question came out in a gruff tone, “To punish me, to torment me…”

My pulse rate doubled, I was sure he saw how vulnerable I was, standing this close to him, with his breath stroking my face and his erection brushing against my pelvis. He was right, I’d want to punish him for what he did to me, but now he seemed to be the one punishing me, making me crave to have him throw me roughly on the bed and do with me whatever that pleases him.

“Am I tormenting you, my dear husband? Oh…I should get a medal for this,” I slapped his hands off and made to walk away, desperately wanting to disperse the strong sexual tension that had thickened the air in the room.

He wouldn’t have that. Twirling me around, he pulled me to his chest. “Such sarcasm and bitchery spewed out from the mouth I suddenly want to suck on again and again.”

Trapped in his hold, my cheeks burn and the sole of my feet tingle from sustained arousal. Goodness! I was at my melting point. “Let go of me… Lucas…let me go right now!” I said between clenched teeth.

“You know, I think you’re doing this to make me go crazy with jealousy… it's actually working…”

“Go to hell, Lucas. Go to hell and stay there.” I breathed. Aware of his hardness, his gnawing, raw need, and his desire to punish me for making him feel this way.

His lips curved in quick humor, “If hell is you, I will gladly be there.” Without warning, his lips imprisoned mine again. Our bodies still fused, he swiveled and moved us with such urgency that sent objects crashing to the floor and my inside exploding like a smoke grenade.

My back crashed against the wall.

Every thought of resisting him melted as I welcomed his probing tongue. The intensity of the heat that saturated every pore on my body as he made love to my mouth made me whimper my total submission.

Blocking out all thoughts about what further mess I might be creating for myself by allowing him to ravish me like this, I gave myself to him. Kissing him back with the same urgency that he attacked me with.

I almost cried when he pulled his lips away from mine. But when his mouth traced its way down to feast upon the rings of my neck…oh God, it was like tiny fireworks were going off inside me, bits of me I’d thought dead reignited a life.

Moving me slightly away from the wall, Lucas tugged on the barrier on my body, “How do I get this thing off you?” He groaned. Abandoning the suit down my calves, he bent me slightly backward, his hand propped up my breast, his mouth found its nipple and he sucked, kneading and squeezing the whole. Painful, sweet sensations shook my core.

He was doing everything at the same time, yet he felt he wasn’t doing enough.

Guiding me so that my back leaned on the wall, Lucas propped one of my legs up to his hip. His fingers traveled down my crotch, roughly moved my panties to the side, and slid a finger inside my dripping pussy.

“Muyi,” he grunted. His weight pressed me against the wall while his finger worked in and out my pussy. The more he finger-fucked me, the more I wanted to melt into him- moaning his name. I would simply die if Lucas changed his mind at this point.

“The musical sound coming from your cunt as my finger fuck it, is making me go crazy,” he said against my neck. “I want to turn you around and push my cock inside your cunt, yet I want to drop on my knees and lick your dripping cunt. Muyi, what are you doing to me?”

Yes, Lucas. Hunger for me. For just this night, desire me.

“I’ve missed your fat cunt so much.” He had two fingers inside now- fucking furiously, his lips pressed against my ear- torturing me with words.

“Lucas…”

“You want me,” he whispered in my ear; his voice so sexy.

“Fuck you, Lucas,” I whimpered, surrendering to the lust that was drowning my body. I dug my teeth into my bottom lips as need sparked inside me- the need to…

“Suck me, Lucas…I need your tongue down there, please. It’s been too long.”

“Gosh! I don’t know if my cock would be able to hold on. I want to be inside you now,” he grunted.

Whatever you want, wolf. Just fuck me real good.

Hurling me off the wall and dumping me on the bed, Lucas ripped my suit off my body. He threw my legs apart and crouched over my throbbing pussy.

There was no preamble, no stroking, his fingers spread me wide, his hungry mouth covered my extra- ordinary-sized bud- I have an unusually long clitoris, something I used to be ashamed of.

I let out a loud moan and held his head while he drank from my fountain. Slipping two fingers, he worked on the walls of my pussy. My eyes rolled into my head as he overloaded my body with sweet, tingling sensations.

“Lucas…my husband…”

“That I am,” he said as he came up for air. “Always remember that.”

My heart pounded and my blood swam. Over and over, he filled me with clashing sensations. The wave of heat, the chill of anticipation, a shiver of greed, the warmth of being desired.

“Lucas,” I groaned, digging my nails in his shoulders. Hey God! The strength of what was building down there was staggering, mind-blowing. My body was going to be blown to dust when it hit.

“Yes, darling…”

“Oh, God…Lucas please.” I was almost there…almost there! I’d cry, cry and beg if he’d stop now. It’s been so long I felt like this under him and I would even kill to have this precious moment.

Then it happened. Every one of my muscles grew taut. I could almost swear I had left this earth and was soaring in the cloud with him.

“Ahhhhh fuuuuck…yes…yes!” I clutched his shoulders for strength as I shuddered to the waves of spasms that overtook the whole of me and I exploded with a scream.

He didn’t stop. His thumb rubbed around my sore clit. I flinched each time his finger brushed the tip- yet I wanted him to continue.

“Please…” I moaned

“Please what?” He ran his tongue down my slit. “I want you sore,” he murmured, continuing his sweet leisure torment, “I want to remind you who owns this cunt.”

“Then own it properly. Fill me with your dick”

For today- just for today, Lucas. Do with me whatever you so desire.

“Yes ma’am.” He stood up. “Shit, shit, shit. Hold on for me, babe.” His hands trembled as he battled with the buttons of his shirt. “Touch that fat pussy for me, you know how you used to do it.”

I ran my hand up and down my little penis- that’s what he called it- moaning softly and watching him loosened his belt and pulled his trousers off.

“Good girl,” he muttered as he spread my legs wider and knelt between them.

“I don’t know what is happening to us this night, but I want to fucking bury myself deep inside you and never come out.” He took my hand off my pussy, sucked on my wet fingers before discarding them.

“Oh, my…” I moaned as he propped his dick up with his hands ready to invade and stretch my pussy. A smile played on his lips, and I knew he must have read my thoughts. I wanted that munificent dick inside my mouth.

The last time I sucked Luca’s dick was…when? I’d never wanted to suck a dick this bad in my life.

“Next time, darling. I want to bury it in your sweet cunt so bad…”

“Then take it, fuck me so hard…I deserve it, Lucas.”

“You deserve even more.”

He plunged in and I trembled to a gasp at that bright instant of joining. I arched my back, savoring, tormenting myself with the power, groaning at the texture of his hands that had slicked up to torture my aching breast.

Then he began to move, slowly at first, then faster, wilder, dirty names poured out of his mouth- names I loved him calling me when he does this thing to me.

I matched him , thrust for thrust, stroke for stroke, the room became a mixture of heat and our scents.

I wanted to feed myself to satisfaction because I didn’t know how long it

would take to get him fuck me like this again. He increased his rhythm, driving me with him.

“You are mine,” he said, pumping into me. The length and level of his arousal were brutal, “Mine, whether you want it or not,” he swore as he sharply pulled out. Nudging me to turn over. One hand hard on my arched back while he plunged back. “I want to use you hard, so hard that you will not forget this night in a hurry.”

I sucked in my breath with a faint ‘ah’ as he plundered my pussy. My breasts bounced up and down as he thrust hard and rough into me. His grunts and periodic whimpers swarmed into my blood until I exploded again beneath him.

“Yes girl, gush for me, give it to me.”

He didn’t stop. His thrust became harder- banging me wild- the way I liked it. Then with a long, deep thrust, he shuddered and poured himself inside me.

“Muyi…My girl…” he growled, kissing my neck, down to my shoulder before he slid to the side.

I didn’t know what came over us either.

He was drunk, I guess.

And I was still suffering the effect of the drink that woman gave me.

That was the only explanation that came to my head as I stroked my hand up and down the length of his back.

Twenty

Muyiwa

“STR…EEE…TCH. STR…EEE…TCH. COME ON LADIES, you want to tone that body so you can rock your bikinis without being self-conscious.”

I felt attacked by Asim’s comment. Who said a thick body like mine can’t wear a bikini? Who cares what anybody thinks about body type anyways?

You are fat. Go ahead and enjoy it. Who gives a fuck?

But you are here, wobbling like a jellybean, trying to reach your toes with your hand over your head.

That was because I had woken up hornier than I was last night. The raunchy hot sex with Lucas ended up confirming my fear. I wanted more of him.

So I’d decide to snuff out the shameless, insatiable need this way.

“Put something into it, ladies. One more time, come on…. St…reeeee….tt…ch...”

I felt my backbone shift. I must have done myself permanent damage.

Hei.…God! Did Asim, on seeing me, decide to change the routine just to make me suffer for what Lucas did to him the other day?

I slumped face-flat on the workout floor. Spread like a starfish. There was no way I was moving my limbs again, I was done.

The enthusiastic grunt of other ladies in the room wary me greatly. Why were they not protesting for a break yet? Oh, and most of them were in impeccable shape, why were they stressing their pretty butts?

In Lekki, working out wasn’t this hard. We celebrity ladies would gather at the gym to dance for some comfortable minutes, then gossip would take the remaining time. Here, it felt like we were being prepared for the Olympics.

My eyes caught the sight of a perfect booty, covered in black, short, latex sports pants, bouncing up and down a stationary bike with the movement of her

toned legs. Bare midriff and arm breamed with sweat.

The owner paused, took out a pristine hand towel that was hung around her neck, and wiped her face, tilting a little towards me so I could see.

Recognizing her as the lady that'd rather take a chopper back to her father's castle, rather than become friends with me, I hissed, "Show off."

An over pampered brat that thought she was better than all of us. I remembered the look on her face when I introduced myself to her, thinking it would be nice to be friends with the daughter of a billionaire. After all, I was the wife of Nollywood's best and sexiest actor.

"Is that all?" She'd ask degradingly. "Such a disappointment, I thought there was something more to you than your husband's name hanging around your neck like a noose," she had added.

"Okay girls. Let's take a break now. Let it go. Take this time and do some muscle-relieving movements."

"Finally," I breathed out. Turning my face away from the brat to look at Asim. If not that every muscle in my body was on Air Force One alert, I would have smiled up at him so we could pick up from yesterday.

He looked nice this morning. Dressed in a gray and white striped leotard and white leg warmers. His crotched bulged disconcertingly.

"Is he single?" someone asked.

"I don't expect so," another answered. "All the handsome ones are taken."

"I think I know you." I turned my head to the lady that asked the question. "You are Beatrice Murray. The bitch that was having it hard and wild inside the bar's toilet last night. I saw you…"

Forehead creased, Beatrice threw glances around. Then rested her harrowed eyes on me. I got that; she wouldn't want me shouting but I could whisper.

"He must have been stroking every side of your walls to make you moan like that," I mellowed my voice and winked at her.

"Okay," Asim shouted. "Enough with the chit-chat, let's do something more exciting, the swim movement."

"What's the swim movement?" I asked.

"I don't know. We only have to watch and learn."

The music came in full blare.

“Follow me, ladies.”

All the ladies lay on their bellies after Asim, writhing and wriggling like worms. I joined in but couldn’t move as fast as most of them. Crap! I was damn tired and my muscles were beginning to protest.

“I think I am going to have an orgasm if I keep doing this,” Beatrice muttered.

Tell me about it. This snaking on the floor was also intensifying my horniness. It brought back the glorious sight that greeted me this morning. Lucas sprawled unclothed beside me, his dick- hard, curved, deliciously beckoning on me to slide down and taste him.

I resisted the temptation.

Now I wished I hadn’t as all I could think of was pumping up and down Lucas’ dick.

“I can’t get this guy’s bulging crotch off my mind,” Beatrice said in a hushed tone.

“Who? Oh.” *What is wrong with this woman?* “Get yourself another man, this one seemed to be taken.” *By me.*

One night of mind-blowing sex with Lucas didn’t mean he wasn’t going to divorce me. I still needed to have some fun with Asim, probably keep him, if he was good enough and his pocket wasn’t hopeless.

“Oh, God!” Beatrice exclaimed.

“What.”

“Nothing.” She giggled, sat down, and folded her legs.

“Why do I feel you just cum in your panties?” I sat with her.

“Oh, I did.” She admitted dreamily. “And it feels so good.” Another giggle. “I shouldn’t be sweating over toned male torsos and thick dicks at my age.”

“Hmm, you sure shouldn’t.”

“Sadly, I can’t think of anything other than sex.”

“You had one last night.”

“And I want another this morning.”

So do I, girl. So, do I.

“Do you think it has something to do with this place?”

“Huh?”

“Me turning into a nympho all of a sudden, you think it has something to do with the island?”

I almost asked her if a strange old woman gave her something to drink.

“Okay, ladies. That’s it for today. I hope you enjoyed it?” Asim asked.

Are you kidding? Who enjoys such a gladiator kinda workout? I caught Asim staring hard at my ass, licking his lips. He still wants a piece of it and that should make me happy.

“I want to go shower, are you ladies coming?” Beatrice rose. At the same time the spoiled, bitchy brat sashayed past us, honoring us with a deflecting glance.

“Izonbou,” Beatrice whispered, referring to the brat. “Izzy for short.”

“That's her name?”

“Yap. I think I like her.”

“I don’t, she makes me sick.”

“Why, what did she do to you?”

“That brat insulted me! She called me a lap dog that would jump over a moving train at Lucas’s sneeze.”

Beatrice stifled a laugh. “Okay, let’s forget that. So, are you coming to shower?”

“I think I will go to the spa instead; I need that steam to get some things off my chest.”

And my crotch.

Twenty-One

Lucas

“COME ON, LUCAS! PASS THE ball!”

I balanced my feet on the ground, twirled the racquet with my left hand, and juggled the ball with my right.

“Serve. Damn it!” Asher, one of the guys I met at last night’s party, hollered.

When it comes to sports, men could be brutal. It was common to call each other names and swear loudly like uncultured humans.

“Okay. Okay…”

Taking a stance, I positioned a foot to point towards the right net post while the other stood parallel to the baseline. Then, I tossed the ball in the air, bent my knees slightly, and pushed off upward, hitting the ball flat, but not hard enough to get it across the net.

“What is wrong with you, man? You have been making us lose since the game started.” Femi slammed his racquet to the ground, scrubbed his head with his hands. “And guys, please keep it down with your victory laugh,” he shot at our opponents, Asher and Onahi.

The other guys simultaneously balled out thunderous laughter, grabbing each other’s shoulders for support.

And that was when Muyiwa, the source of my lack of concentration, chose to walk past with two ladies. Her voice ringing like a boarding school bell floated towards me. I found her loudness attractive. *Weirdly attractive.*

“Fuck it.” Dropping my racquet, I walked to the bench behind the baseline where I left my kit.

Muyiwa’s sudden appearance brought back the memory of her soft body in my arms. Holy shit! I felt my cock responding to the mere thought of her.

Stylishly chucking my stiffened cock between thighs, I glanced around to know if any of the guys noticed my bulge. Getting a hard-on publicly, in a tennis

court filled with crazy dudes would earn me jabs and dirty jokes.

I threw a glance at the group of chatty women as they passed by. My eyes settled on Muyiwa. And for an instant, all I could do was gape. She looked so spectacular in chocolate-brown biker shorts and a tank top that left the upper part of her breasts bare.

Feeling an unsettling shiver through my body and my heart thudding at a perilous rate, I scanned her face for a sign that she was as confused and lost at what happened between us last night as I was. Our eyes locked for a split second but nothing in her expression betrayed even a little of effect.

An inexplicable wave of disappointment washed over me as I saw the blank mask on her face. When she turned away, I felt my nerves strung to a snapping point and anger strummed my vein, which was insane.

I should be ecstatic at her aloofness as it was the best for both of us. At least, she wouldn't break down when I finally decided to let her go.

Letting her go. Why did that make me want to punch myself in the face? It no longer sounded fun and manly. The Lucas kind of freedom seemed not to appeal to me all of a sudden.

God. Why was last night different? It was just sex with Muyiwa! It was supposed to be a boring marriage routine that should have left my head immediately after I opened my eyes to a new day. Rather, I'd woken with the hardest stiff I've ever experienced and had gone mad when I couldn't find Muyiwa in bed. I had hoped she would bless me with her mouth job which I wasn't patient enough to get last night, after which I would ram my rod inside her sweet cunt again.

She'd left me cold and furious, battling a persisting hard-on.

Which woman sneaks out of bed after a night of passion?

Muyiwa.

My groan must have slipped out louder this time because the guys started walking towards me giving me that 'We got you bruv' kind of look.

"Okay, Dude. You have been acting up lately. What is going on?" Femi stood in front of me, hands akimbo.

"I think I miss Nigeria, the cameras, locations, and…"

"Sleek feminine bodies," Duncan added with a burst of sputtery laughter.

"Maybe not," Onahi added. Cropped one foot on top of the bench and

balanced his arms on top his raised knee. “You are deeply in love with your wife.”

“What shit are you talking about? She is my wife, why would I be in love with her…” The guys gave each other knowing glances. “Okay, that came out wrong. But for goodness’ sake, I shouldn’t be feeling like a piece of shit because of my wife.”

“That’s the point, Lucas. You have never loved any woman; it has been a rush thing for you. Wam-bam! And you are done. Off you go on another adventure,” Onahi continued.

“Jesus!” Not now, Onahi. The last thing I needed at the moment was a sermon from Mr. ‘I’ve got everything in control.’ Pulling my bag to my lap, I groped for a bottle of water. “I have been married twice and have treated those women with respect.”

“Have you? Really?” Duncan said smugly.

“Shut up, old man.”

“Think about it, my friend. This could be your chance to actually build something beautiful. All it takes is your commitment to this one woman,” Onahi said.

What I need is Muyiwa’s pussy squeezing my cock.

“I saw you were staring at her earlier. Guy, you were drooling.”

“Shit." This dude was watching me. I searched the other guys' faces, praying that none of them also noticed me ogling at Muyiwa.

“Forget it, bro,” Onahi dismissed as if he read my distress.

“What happened? What do you both know that I don't?” Duncan slipped his phone inside his pocket and drew closer, his curious gaze pinned to Onahi’s face.

“I've met you and Barbie before and you never looked at her that way, even on your wedding day.” Onahi went on, ignoring Duncan. “You look at Muyiwa differently. Like...you want her by your side, never out of sight. Even though you do the darndest to make it look like you’re irritated.”

“She is my wife, dude. I should know her whereabouts. That's what husbands do.” Who made Onahi my moral instructor? The dude also has some shit in his pants, why was he acting so pious with me now?

“You never cared the first day both of you arrived, you didn’t even want to pick her calls,” Femi added.

“For a woman you are planning to ditch, you are showing a lot of concern,” Onahi said.

“And why shouldn’t I? I brought her to this resort; I am responsible for her until…you know.”

“Is he going to wave this one farewell too?” The one called Asher strolled to join us, with a white towel over his neck and a Dodgers baseball cap.

“He insinuated such over some bottles of beer the day they arrived,” Onahi confirmed. “But I guess our man is having second thoughts.”

“Stop spitting shit, Onahi. You have no moral right to preach to me. All of you. You guys don’t even have your shit together!”

“Calm down, Lucas. It’s not that serious, I’m just trying to help.”

“Sort out your own feelings first before preaching to me. you all should face your messy lives and leave me the fuck alone.”

I didn't even know why I sat there and allowed them to lecture me as if I was a kid. Hanging my bag over my shoulder, I walked out on them. I was about to pass through the exit when I saw a figure running towards me screaming my name. I waited for the person to approach.

“It’s me, Marcus,” he panted.

“It’s you.” *This is not good.* I forced a smile while figuring out the lies to tell him. *Why hadn't I touched his script at all?* Again, Muyiwa was to be blamed.

“Did you read it?”

“Uhm…”

“Yes?”

“Yes.”

The guy made a fist bump with a grin on his face. Then with both hands clasped together, fingers weaved in between another he asked me the dreaded question.

“Do you like it?”

Oh, goodness. Lying has always been as easy for me as acting, but looking at the young face beaming with hope, I couldn’t dig up that part of me that would want to formulate appealing stories to get away from life bugging situations.

“Do you? Please tell me…”

“Yes, it was amazing.” There...easy...but didn't feel right.

“Oh, my God! I knew it.”

“See kid, don’t get too excited yet. I will have to find a way to send it to a producer who will decide whether it is worth it or not.”

“Okay…I will wait. Oh, God. I am freaking out.”

“You have a soft copy?”

“Yes, in my flash drive.” He unstrapped his backpack and scrambled inside it. “Sorry, I left it with my girlfriend.” His eyes lightened. “But I can get it immediately if you wait for ten minutes.

Ten minutes? I looked over my shoulder, the guys were still where I left them at the court, agreeing to wait would mean going back to them and a resumption of marriage and relationships discussion.

“Meet me with it at the Lagos Luxury Villa on lane eight.”

****

From the store window, away from sight, I watched him with delight as he took a stance on the tennis court and danced around while chasing the ball. I could hear nothing but the palpitation of my heart each time he swings his hand right, left, up, down. It was the same each time I watched him from afar.

My heart had always throbbed for him since the first day we met. And had never stopped even when I wanted to hate him so badly and wanted to punish him for what he did to me.

He had such power over me.

My super star.

I no longer want to hurt him, not if he agrees to love me again.

Of course, he would. I would help him find the feelings he’d forgotten. The fire we once shared. With the love vial, he would be attracted to me to the point that he would want to drink from my well of womanhood again.

“Only when he swims in it, he will be trapped forever. Nothing would save him from your hands after that,” The Mother of mothers had assured me.

But he had to drink of the vial first, then have sex with me.

Seriously, I was beginning to feel that getting him would be easier than I thought. Last night I saw him fighting off a woman at the casino. He was angry

with her. He has started hating them all.

Thanks to the mothers. Things were already working in my favor, even without the help of vials and potions.

If I show my face to him and flaunt my new look, would he follow me of his own free will? Would he even recognize me when we finally meet? Or had the faces of those women wiped mine off his head?

No. he would remember me. The heart knows where it belongs. He belonged to me. I was the woman who would make his life complete, who would make him stop hopping from one woman to another.

My eyes traced a course around his biceps, his taut muscles flexed when he lifted his arms to hit the flying ball.

I knew nothing about tennis, but from the way he shook his head, baring his teeth, I knew he was losing.

“With me, you will not lose, my king.”

The buzzing of my phone snapped me out of my fantasy.

“Where are you?”

“At the Mall store.”

“Get yourself down to the Aqueduct immediately, there is work to be done over there and there are not enough hands.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

Ma’am. *Ptua!* I spat on the floor, looked around to ensure no one saw me do that, grabbed a mop to clean the spittle.

Soon, I said to myself, soon all these would be over. We would even visit the resort, me and Lucas when we would finally be together.

I imagined the look on my madam’s face when she would see me with Lucas, and Dom, he would be the one to welcome us.

With that hope, I left the store.

Twenty-Two

Muyiwa

THE ROOM WAS FULL OF heat and musky scents. Some ladies had it rough last night and had come this morning to cook naughtiness out of their skin.

Don’t ask me how I got to know. I had a profound sense of smell and discernment. I could look a woman in the face and tell that she got her pussy rammed a few minutes ago. These ladies here? They weren’t innocent.

They couldn’t bath out the smell of sexual pleasure from their bodies like I couldn’t get Lucas’s scent off me.

The two ladies that arrived with me from the gym immediately located unoccupied spots. I had to find a place where I could settle my fat ass and get all steamed up without being bothered.

I didn’t want to hear any love and relationship litany today. Every woman to her own, I had the piercing stare I got from Lucas as I was coming here, to worry about.

Oh God! that stare got my insides so jittery that my steps nearly faltered. My heart had pounded as if someone was using it as a drum. I had to prevent myself from giving him another glance.

However, I wouldn’t allow a single night of recklessness to make me go soft on the path I have already chosen. Sex or no sex, my marriage was a wreck. Lucas was tired of it, so was I.

Spotting a nice space on a bench that was directly facing the door, I walked towards it, peering at faces.

“Move.” I didn’t need to say that twice, my hip did the talking as I nudged Madam Swiss Bank manager seated on the bench and plopped down on the much larger comfortable space.

“Hei! Watch it.”

“You say?” I pushed my head to her face.

She ducked. Hissed and left the bench.

Nice. I filled my lungs with the mixed scented air. Exhaled. Shut my eyes and started gesticulating.

“Humm… let this mist get these wacky feelings out of me…humm…I don’t love you no more…humm…you dickhead who is planning to leave me I’m gonna leave you first…humm…” I chanted the mantra of cleansing, formulated by me. “Get your damn scent off me…humm…and you damn pussy, stop throbbing like an uncontrolled bitch…humm…”

“Muyiwa, Muyiwa,” A soft voice whispered close to my ear.

Not now. I am trying to concentrate.

“Muyiwa.”

“What!”

“Are you okay?”

“Yes! Yes, can you leave me alone now?”

“Well, you should try keeping your voice down, it’s an open space and we can hear you.”

Oh, oh. I swallowed the lumps of embarrassment that clogged my throat. Opened an eye. Two ladies had their widened eyes fixed on me, add the lady that called my attention, and that would make them three.

“Sorry.”

“That’s okay girl.” The lady giggled. “We all have those moments when we enjoy a good dick but want to toss the man out of the window.”

I leaned closer to see the face clearly. “Camilla, right? Good to see you again, Cam.” Smiling, I shifted my butt on the bench.

A murmur beside Cam made me stretch my gaze over her shoulder and my eyes fell upon the acrylic tongued brat, Izzy. Hissing loudly, I decided that ignoring her call for a quarrel was the best thing to do.

I closed my eyes, then heard shuffling. We have guests. I open one eye to see a familiar lady settling for a spot to sit.

“Hey, I know you.” Noticing her properly, I sat up. “You are Janelle, Senator Ahmed’s fiancé, right?”

She nodded.

“Gurl, you don’t look like a million-dollar bride to be. You should be glowing

with happiness."

"I am just tired," she replied, her voice barely a whisper.

"Hmmm." A lady that had two grown-ass men on each other's throats because of her shouldn't be tired at all. Her blood should be bubbling with excitement. "Anyway, it's nice to meet you. I am Muyiwa Opeyemi, you know my husband." My lips stretched in a smile.

I hate being seen through my husband's success lens, but here, with the girls, I felt it wouldn't hurt to plaster his personality on my forehead.

"I do?" she frowned, "is he a friend of Ahmed's?"

Oh, God! she didn't. She actually didn't know who my husband was! The frown on her face when she asked if my husband was Ahmed's friend, said it all.

"Duh! He is Lucas Opeyemi, Nollywood's biggest star." I was itching to discuss the whole hullabaloo making rounds around the resort since yesterday.

"Oh, yeah!" she said. "I know him."

You better. Because gurl, if you don't know my husband then you are from the 1930s.

"Wow, gurl! You must be a star to have two men about to rip themselves apart because of you. Your *puna* must be a thing." The words danced out of my mouth before I could stop myself.

Okay, I didn't want to stop myself. By God! I love this kind of story! It is the kind one hears in Lekki - amongst Lagos' big babes..

"Muyiwa!" The Izzy lady nudged me to zip it. "Can you not be uncouth for a few minutes? And please, we're trying to connect with our spirits. Some peace will go a long way."

What? I shut her an *'I have had enough of you'* glance. "What kind of *yeye* spirit is that?" I hissed. "But what did I say that was such a bad thing? Our gurl got herself a dick and became comfortable with it, now another dick has come to claim ownership. The question is, who owns the Puna in the first place?"

"It amazes me how you can simply reduce people to mere sex organs- a woman becomes her vagina and a man penis. Muyiwa, that's not nice," another lady seated directly opposite me remarked. She doesn't look like the type of ladies I'm used to, at all. Looking so reserved and collected, but they do the worst.

Ignoring the lady's comment, I stretched my hand to Janelle. "It's so good to

meet you. Which of the villas is yours? I bet it's one of the Luxury Villas? Lucas and I are at the Lagos Luxury Villa. You should visit us sometime, bring the senator with you, sha."

She nodded and I continued, "And Janelle," I winked like a schoolgirl about to do something nasty, "welcome to the prestigious and steamy ladies association that I lead."

"The unsolicited chatterbox, you mean," a lady seated directly opposite me said. I don't think I've met her before, but I heard Cam refer to her as 'Doctor Melody.'

We soon slid into a boisterous conversation like young girls planning a prom night. Relationship and marriage talks filled the sauna.

I love this place, I swear. The ladies could be bitches- crazy, sassy. But not as pretentious as I once thought. They are the kind of bitches I would like to get drunk with.

While chatting with the other ladies, I was picking tiny details from Lola's conversation. She was asking questions about pregnancy and how soon it would take for one to know if she has gotten the bug.

Had she? Oh, my goodness! "You had it last night, didn't you?" I put it to Lola.

"What? Oh, no…I was only asking for a friend," she defended.

Asking for a friend my fat ass. Lola had finally had her pussy taught some good lesson and I could swear with the hair on my armpits that she loved it. I squinted at her, and she bit her lips, avoiding my gaze.

There…there! all the confirmations I needed.

I see through people, I know women and their body languages, this one had swum in sexual ecstasy last night.

"He gave it to you real hard, gurl. Could smell it all over you." I leaned forward, not caring that the towel around my chest had loosened and my titties were out for all to see. "Aww…you are blushing…you see…you like him," I chuckled, happy that I could equally make her smile. "If you don't make up your damn mind to grab this man, then you need redemption."

I know I told you I didn't want any love and relationship litany. However, when a gurl is in love but confused, it is my duty to make her see the light.

"You are amazing, Muyiwa," Lola chuckled.

“I know, right? Everybody says that about me.”

Covering my titties and checking the towel wrapped around my head, I leaned back so my back touched the warm wooden wall. Shutting my eyes again, my arms spread wide, with the tip of my thumbs pressed against the tip of my middle fingers, I willed my body to relax.

Back to my soul-cleansing meditation.

Breathe….

I could feel all my tensions drained by the heat in the sauna.

“Okay, this is way better than sex. Who needs a man’s problem when I can orgasm in this paradise?”

Some ladies busted out laughing.

But truly, this was the first time I found my body relaxing since yesterday. Finally, whatever that woman gave me was losing its grip on me.

Score 1 for me, 0 Lucas. I giggled.

“What?” Camilla asked.

“Nothing.”

“God! Can you chill already?” The brat Izzy snapped. Grating on my nerves.

“Excuse you?” God! I was this close…this close to slapping her face. What was wrong with her? Why was she on me as if I was responsible for her lonely, miserable life?

“We would like some peace and quiet, please,” Lady bitter ass added.

“Eat your flesh and drink your blood.”

You know how some people who are lonely and sad want everybody around them to be lonely and sad? Yes. This Izzy girl is one of those miserable humans. I wouldn’t honor her with any more responses.

A fleeting smile crossed my lips as the ladies loosen up and secrets began to flow out freely. Even the bratty Izzy lady seemed to abandon all sassiness and had joined in the convo.

“Men are nothing to write home about. They just walk around with that thing between their legs…” I started.

Since the conversation had tilted towards the stupidity of the male folks and everyone was tearing her man and fuck buddy apart, I didn’t mind bringing Lucas to the butcher’s table, after all, the legendary stories of his untamed cock

could make a full-length novel.

“You can say that again,” Camilla hyped me, with the ‘Go girl!’ vibe.

When I had the stage, everyone listened, cos gurl… I knew how to keep my ladies howling and squalling with my nasty truths. So, I preached on. “I wish there was a way one can just wrap these men around one’s finger and not go to hellfire.”

“But there is,” a lady cut in with a sing-song voice. “Marula. You haven’t heard of it?”

And…someone finally brought it up. I knew there was something not right about that thing. Was that what that woman gave me?

Did Lucas plan it with that woman? Was that why he showed up there to pay her the agreed fee for getting the job done? Last night, we had sex. It was hot, nasty, fast, the kind we’ve not had in a long time. He started it, seducing me with his eyes.

Did he accept the drink from the woman too? “This thing must be a jazz like *Kanyamata* total package. Nobody would tell me otherwise,” I cut in.

“Have you used it before? Tell us please.” Camilla adjusted her buttocks on the bench, fixing her eyes on me.

I could feel the thumping of her excited heart. She wanted this badly and just needed someone to validate it. *gurl, you would end up an extremely horny mess.*

We were so engrossed in the discussion that we barely responded when the lady called Sapphira excused herself to leave.

Sapphira. Who answers that name nowadays, knowing the Ananias and Sapphira bible story? I was still haggling that thought when I heard a thud and somebody screamed.

I sprang to my feet, abandoned my loosened head towel on the floor, and ran towards the commotion.

“Someone, please help me get her outside!”

“Muyiwa, please help me carry her!”

“Muyiwa, Fan her!”

Which of the orders was I supposed to carry out first? The towel around my chest was already falling off.

Twenty-Three

Lucas

BACK TO THE QUIETNESS OF my villa, I settled on the bed with a script.

A peaceful afternoon suited me just fine as it wasn’t often that I had the luxury of spending time by myself. My life here consisted of meeting and talking movies with Femi and Duncan, playing tennis, spending the evenings in the bar and every other place the guys drag me to.

I wasn’t complaining. However, I needed a full afternoon like this one, where I wouldn't have to stomach jealous stares from some dudes or play Lucas Opeyemi, the charming, sexy movie star to the ladies.

Adding that the resort was no longer fun. Everything about it seemed to set me at the edge the guys making my marriage their personal business, the ladies staring at me and talking to themselves, my brain not able to comprehend one word from the scripts I was supposed to go through in preparation for the movie shoot I agreed to complete once I get back to Lagos.

The script… Yeah.

Leafing through it without grasping a single word, I felt so beaten up, so empty and stupid. I didn’t want to admit it, but I missed Muyiwa, my wife!

My wife would do anything to make me successful including reading my scripts loud while I listen. As funny as it was, it had always worked. It may no longer be all romance for us, but we were partners.

I shook my head, fixed back my eyes on the script. Mastering my lines had never been this difficult.

God! I couldn’t even remember the last time I struggled over a script.

Muyiwa, you caused this! She had succeeded in occupying my mind so that I couldn’t concentrate on anything else.

A sigh shook my body as I pushed the script away and lay flat on my back, thinking of what to do to yank Muyiwa off my mind.

The more I tried, the more the sound of her laughter invaded my mind. The more the image of the guys adoring her as if she was their queen, sashayed into my head.

Duncan and the gang, I hissed. Remembering how their eyes softened around my wife. I noticed and have been, well, if not jealous…at least, aware.

Another hiss left my mouth as I jerked up from the bed and made my way to the table where I grabbed another script. The script I lied about while I didn't even go past the first page. Returning to the bed, I took my phones and strode to the terrace. walking around the pool, I stopped by the terrace rail and looked down.

I could see a man in a white silk tuxedo and multiple gold bracelets, posing for a photoshoot under a palm tree.

"Mr. Brittle," A lanky Spanish dude that seized every opportunity to tell me, each time our paths crossed, that he was a famous recording star- who drove women crazy. I couldn't agree less, his accent was enough to drive anyone crazy.

The man looked up, a plastic smile crossed his face as he waved.

"Silly punk," I muttered and looked away. He too had eyes on Muyiwa. "She 'ave a wondeefool *badii…actractiva…deliciosa...."* The man had commented lustfully from the table beside mine at the Sweet Morning Restaurant, the same day the gym instructor was hitting on Muyiwa at the lagoon pool.

I strode back to the pool, relaxed on the sun lounger, and started reading. Three pages and my mind strayed off to my wife again.

Last night. Her delicious scent of sweat mixed with feminine perfume. Her gasping into my ears while I fucked her. Her threat and plea for me not to stop, "*Don't you dare stop now…please, Lucas, fuck me hard."*

Jesus H Christ! I felt my core stir with a dangerous desire to have her again and adjusted myself on the lounger in a bid to curb my discomfort.

What would Muyiwa be doing at the moment? Who would she be with? I would strangle her if she's with that man, or any man at all. Only I should have access to her voluptuous body.

My hand skimmed from my stomach down to my groin, and I felt my cock throbbing together with the jealousy that hammered in my chest. Goddamn it.

Muyiwa is mine. I wouldn't bear to see her with another man.

Not yet.

Not ever.

Really? How the hell did that even happen in just four days? How did my feelings for Muyiwa go from level one to level hundred? Lucas Opeyemi wasn't a 'forever after' kind of guy.

The doorbell chimed, snapping me back from my mind wandering.

Muyiwa, I thought.

Yeah. My cock exclaimed, sabotaging my efforts to stay calm.

The little man was eager to dive into the well of pleasure, the sweet walls that held him tight as he whacked and smacked in and out last night.

Shameless pecker, I snorted, squeezing my bulge.

The doorbell chimed again. I heaved off the lounge, tucked my stiffness between my laps, and walked to the door.

Without peering through the door hole, I opened it and sighed with disappointment when I saw a maid instead. A tray was balanced on the flatness of her palm, a charming smile on her face.

"Your order, sir."

I couldn't remember making any order.

"Watermelon smoothie. Someone called and asked us to send it to your villa."

Must be Muyiwa. "Could be my wife, not me." I let the maid in. Muyiwa wouldn't mind me having a little of this, so I decided to help myself.

"Let me serve you, sir."

If it would make the 'ready to please girl happy, why not. "Go ahead." I watched her lift the mug lid, pour it into a hurricane glass, garnish with a cucumber wheel, and slipped a straw.

"Thank you, miss…"

"*Mene*, sir. And I know who you are."

Oh, Christ.

"The popular Nigerian actor...Lucas," The girl mentioned my name as if she wasn't worthy of saying it.

"You look more handsome than you are in films."

I felt like I was drowning in a sea of flattery. It was easy to handle when I walked down the road or with the guys. But here, alone in this suite, I didn't

know what to do with the maid.

“Did you really punch Jim Iyke on the face in that movie?”

“That place you died in the movie, ‘Making money’, I felt it so much that I cried.”

“Please, tell me. What is Patience Ozokwor like in real life? Is she as wicked as she is in the movies?”

The questions came at me all at once. And the lady? Got bolder. I could sense her come-ons from the way she thrust her tiny boobs to my face while talking.

“Hey, would you mind doing something for me?” I cut in.

“Yes, sir.”

“I would like a sandwich to go with this. I suddenly realized I am hungry.”

“Sure, right away, sir.”

Then she bent towards me, her lips would have brushed against mine had I not tilted my head backward. “I give good heads too. I can suck your dick without you paying for it,” she whispered.

My goodness! “Just the sandwich, please.”

She smiled sadly, was about to pull herself erect when she knocked off the glass of juice and spilled all its content.

“I am so sorry sir, I didn’t mean that to happen, I swear I didn’t…I will get you another one…it’s on me sir.”

“It’s okay, please get the cleaner up here. And don’t bother about the sandwich either.”

I watched her ass as she left. Behind the black midi, bodycon dress lay great promises. She reminded me of the little make-up artist in the last movie shoot. Portable round ass that I’d pinched and scrunched once in a while on locations.

As the lady closed the door behind her, I realized I haven’t had the strong desire to frolic around here. Once I set my eyes on a promising lady, I thought of Muyiwa. Wasn’t I losing my manliness?

The cleaner arrived shortly, a study man with a nose so big that one would think he could suck in all the oxygen in the room in one breath.

Changing into a pair of shorts, a plain tee, and loafers, I left the villa.

Twenty-Four

Muyiwa.

THE MEMORIES OF HOW HE made me cling to him like I would die had he decided to pull away came rushing with the chilly air that greeted me as I opened the door. My embarrassment was immense as my eyes settled on the neatly made bed and I knew a cleaner must have been here.

I thought of the cleaner catching the scent of our cum and wondered if it was her that picked our clothes where we discarded them or Lucas.

“Lucas,” I muttered as I stepped deeper into the room, peeled off my clothes, tossed them aside, and dumped myself on the bed.

Last night I felt Lucas like I have not done in years.

I had called him ‘my husband’ and meant it.

When he whispered, ‘*Muyi*, his special name for me, into my ear as he plundered my pool of moisture. I had wanted to believe that it was from the deepest part of him where everything true and pure resided. I had desired so much that he’d mean it when he groaned how much he missed me.

Those endearments, possessive words, promises. I wished he meant them all. But Lucas was not one to love deeply and faithfully, he made it clear to his women, both in words and actions.

I hissed and rolled over facing up. Spread my legs wide to allow the cold breeze to massage my tingling folds.

“If only this breeze would dry up this persisting need to have him plow my wetness,” I murmured. My pussy clenched in response to an intense sensation that coursed through my body. “Oh God,” I moaned. Clamped my mound with my hand and squeezed it.

Lucas. What have you done to me?

I hope he won't see me like this. The douchebag would laugh so hard if he realized I was becoming this needy after just one hot night of correct sexing.

Realizing that he could walk in at any moment, I abandoned the bed, went to the bathroom for a quick bath. hurriedly picked out a plain t-shirt and blue jeans. Spritz a generous amount of wet gel on my tapered natural hair and headed to the beach.

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Bikinied bodies, oiled and gleaming, lay in various stages of undress beside the beach. I sauntered aimlessly among them, passed an ebony slender beauty with cheekbones that could cut butter. She threw me a long slow look as she suggestively rubbed oil on her thighs.

Pity. I love dicks too much to consider going for pussies.

My eyes roamed the beach, caught madam branch manager dusting sand off her cloth mat. From where I stood, she looked more like a cockroach without wings in that brown bikini that barely covered her bony ass.

Why is she everywhere? Each time I turned up in a place- boom! She would show up as if she was a demon sent to continually gnaw on my nerves.

She stood up and the cloth rose with her, gliding in the air like a paper kite. I couldn't help the laughter that busted out of my mouth as she ran after the weightless flat jet.

"Hi!" Someone shouted from afar, pushing my attention away from the hilarious scene. Beatrice. She was waving.

Still wondering when I became friends with her, I waved back and walked towards her. What would a girl do? All the ladies were busy today with their men as I should be with Lucas. But my husband and I were too pigheaded to even fake a happy together union just for a day. So, I'd rather get stuck with a loser like Beatrice. Maybe we would form an association and would call it *'Association of Dumped and about to be dumped bitches.'*

"Hi." I sat beside her.

"Are you going somewhere?" She thrust a can of malt into my hand and stretched out on her mat.

"No, why?"

"You are dressed like someone going for a church service."

"Well, there is no sign that reads 'no Tees and jeans allowed.'" I popped the

can open, taking a satisfying sip. “Thank you for the drink.”

“Hm.” She searched her bag and came out with a lipstick, ran it through her already glossy lips, and threw it back.

“Charlotte Tilbury?” I asked.

“Uh-huh,” She agreed, “How did you know?”

“Gurl, I have been using that makeup brand for years now, I could tell from the unique scent.”

“Oh.”

“And your lips looked like a full cup of melted chocolate was emptied on them.” I’ve never seen a dark brown lipstick look so ugly on the lips but now.

“It’s too much, I guess.”

“Gurl, I can paint a hundred lips from the one on your lips.”

I grabbed her bag, tore a ply of wipe from the pack I found inside, held her chin, and cleaned off the mess she made earlier. Got what was remaining of the lipstick out, ran a reasonable amount on her lips, capturing her cupid and corners. “Smack,” I ordered, and she did.

“Perfect. Run a gloss on it, and any man would desire to have your lips for the rest of his life.”

“Thank you.”

“So, what’s up with the guy from yesterday?”

“What? Who?”

I gave her a hard stare. “The guy you were shamelessly shagging in the toilet lounge by the corner?”

“How?” She shook her head in amazement, her eyes twinkling with the excitement of being caught.

“Gurl…I know everything.” I slapped her shoulder, “Back to my question, I saw the way you look at him when he walked by the gym earlier today.”

Her lips curled up in a smile and her lashes fluttered. *Oh, gurl, I know that look.* “You like him!”

“Do I look like a fool to you? I am a woman with needs, and he is a horse. The kind I would love to have in handy.”

Our girlish giggling rose with the mild breeze that caressed our skin. When she turned to face me, her eyes glimmered as if someone poured stardust inside

them.

“You are a bad girl; I swear no man is safe around you.” I let out another round of laughter.

“I am in for the fun babe. What would a lonely widow do?”

“Go be a nun!”

“My coochie wouldn’t allow that to happen.” Her grin grew slowly into a broad smile. “Enough of me. Muyiwa, how long have you and Lucas been together?”

“A little over five,” I balanced my weight on my hands that were planted on the ground behind my back.

“Hmm…and what did you do to keep him this long? Heard his rendezvous with ladies is legendary.”

Wasn’t this a somewhat personal question coming from someone I barely knew? But I’ve done nothing but intrude in other ladies’ affairs since I came here, so why complain when someone wants to reciprocate?

I gave her a side glance. What does she want to hear? Hadn’t she been reading Nigerian entertainment and gossip stories? It was a well-documented fact that Lucas Opeyemi had a phobia for a forever kind of marriage and had never hidden the fact that he was a free spirit.

“I think I would rather take a walk for a while.” I pushed myself off the ground, then brushed off sand from my butt.

“I am joining you.” She grabbed my arm to help herself up, then I waited for her to pack her things.

We walked in silence, breathing deeply the cleansing ocean air, listening to the steady roll of the waves. My eyes moved from sand to stone, from stone to rock, rocks that served as wind breakers.

“When are you two giving us a baby?” Beatrice asked in her usual high-pitched voice that reminded me of a tea kettle.

“Really, when has that become a societal issue?” Lucas and I had not considered this as something to bother our heads with.

“Come on, that’s what celebrities do. Pop out kids, give them weird names and plaster their pictures all over the internet.”

I drift into another silence, chewing the question like tough meat. It wasn’t surprising to hear her ask me why I have no kid of my own- it was a question

most fans and enemies asked. *Why was he still with her when she has no child?*

The first time the reality of being childless punched me in the face, Barbara had decided to grant an interview to an entertainment news agency. The interview had glided into her life with Lucas and what she thought of me. The imbecile had called me a barren desert land that would end up ruining Lucas.

Trust bloggers and their use of bogus headlines. Stories cropped up. My history was exhumed- the many men I fucked to secure my place as a Lekki big girl and how I must have possibly destroyed my womb in the process.

Lucas had taken them all in and had handled the situation like a pro. While he had refused to say anything to the media, he had made sure we were spotted together more often- vacations, functions, launchings, name it.

The thought of his amazing support sent a soft flutter to my stomach and a smile to my lips.

“You haven’t answered my question? When are you two surprising us with the big announcement?” Beatrice nudged me.

“We are not ready yet.”

Which was partially true. Though I have never been lucky enough to get pregnant and wouldn’t mind my womb to house a new life, Lucas has not been eager for a baby. *“I have a son already and that is enough. There are more things to do with one’s life than making babies,”* he’d always say.

“Strange, both of you. Well, I wouldn’t also want to share him with some rug rats this early in my marriage if I were you.”

I could swear I heard a chord of jealousy in Beatrice’s voice.

“You plan on remarrying anytime soon?” I asked.

“Me? No. After my last experience, I don’t think I would want to do anything serious with anyone again.”

“Oh, sorry. I didn’t mean to remind you.”

“Come on girl, do I look like one who would spend time brooding over some dude who chose another girl over me? It was fun while it lasted. Now I have moved on.”

How nice it would be to rid myself of this resurging feeling for Lucas, the way this woman rid herself of her ex. One-night mind-blowing sex shouldn’t turn me into mushy peas.

“I wish you luck. And I hope love finds you,” I said.

“Until I find someone who would be jealous over me the way Lucas is over you.”

I let out thunderous laughter to the amazement of the woman that now stood looking at me.

“Why is that funny?”

Lucas is jealous alright. I laughed some more. If only she knew how many years I have wanted Lucas to be jealous over me because he really loves me, to look at me the way a man in love looks at his woman. We did lots of posing for the cameras. Showed open affections we didn’t mean. But we knew there was nothing left to feel- no love, no spark, no lust, just acting and what's left of our partnership. My marriage turned into a big acting stage two years after we exchanged vows. With the media becoming the producers, Lucas and I the actors.

“You don’t know the half of it,” I said, choking on my laughter.

“What do you mean I don’t know? I may not be an expert when it comes to love but I know when a man is on fire for a woman, and I saw that look on your husband’s eyes yesterday - at the party when you were dancing.”

He was only concerned about the damage I was doing to his ego.

“And you? You reeked of passionate sex when you walked into the gym today. I knew Lucas must have appended his signature on you.”

He must have had the image of one of the hot bodies he’d banged in his head while he was appending his signature on me.

Yet it was the best sex I have had in years.

I dragged in a deep breath, trying to tamp down the bubbling sensation rising like molten lava in the pit of my stomach. Lucas knew what he was doing - had wanted me to have a taste of what he’d denied me all these years.

What was it for him? Punishment?

A thousand thoughts went through my head in a split second, one of them being that he thought it was a good way to make me pay for frolicking with different men, bringing shame to him and his celebrity image.

If that was the case, then he was a dyke. A selfish, egocentric idiot who couldn’t stand seeing me with other men while he sampled different pussies.

God! It was so reckless of me to allow him turn my switch on like he did last night. A recklessness that all the Yoga mantras in the world couldn’t amend and

steaming myself inside that hot sauna didn’t erase either.

I want to hate him.

I think I am crushing on him anew.

I felt a rumble in my stomach- a rumble that later came out from my mouth as a roar of laughter.

“What’s funny?” The other woman asked.

I slipped my feet off my *nurse bucket* flat shoes and picked them up. “I am crushing on my husband- Lucas,” I muttered casually, turning to face the waves.

“Is that supposed to be a bad thing?”

Not bad, miserable. I am miserable. I should be pitied for what awaits me once we return to Lagos.

“You should be happy, girl, or you don’t want to crush on him?”

“I don’t know.” I blinked, watching the waves, the bubbly feeling, all gone, in its place the need to curl up and cry.

“Well, you are confusing me right now…” Beatrice’s phone chimed, she fished it out, glanced at the screen. “Girl, I have to go now.”

I nodded.

“It’s an appointment I don’t want to miss.” She was already moving, “I will tell you about it when next I see you.”

I barely heard her last words, for my ears listened to the crazy thoughts that were forming inside my head and my lips quivered. I won't cry here. No one would ever see me weak.

****

I wore a new undergarment, the type he used to admire on those magazine women, a slide of a dress, and a heeled sandal I bought with the fat tip given to me by that senator that came in yesterday.

On the way up to his villa, I smoothed down the bottom half of my dress. The material felt sensuous and rich against my skin- it gave me confidence. I shouldn’t have any fear about this mission as the groundwork has been done. I had paid so much for this day, both in the coven and at the resort.

And now, the road has been cleared, my husband would be waiting for me.

All I had to do was to make sure no one sees me going in.

My pulse rate was jumping with trepidation and anticipation. I sighted the building and walked with haste.

Having done my research properly, I already knew that most of the guests were either at the beach or somewhere else far away from the villa so nobody would be visiting him anytime soon. His woman had been sighted somewhere at the beach- a long way back to the suite- enough time to make him mine again.

I wasn't bothered about her though.

My phone rang and I reached for it. Dom's unexpected voice caused a wave of fierce anger to rise within me.

"What?" I gritted.

"I thought we agreed you will wait till I close for the day then we will go home together?"

"Dom, I don't have time for this now, I am…"

"Where are you? There is something very important I want to talk to you about tonight."

"I don't want to hear anything from you," I murmured directly then ended the call.

Dom should know when he was dumped! Was it so difficult to realize when a lady no longer wanted you? He was good when I had no one, now I have found my husband. The mothers had delivered him to my laps, Dom wouldn't spoil this chance for me.

Ignoring the continuous chiming phone, I approached the door- the partition that held me from uniting with my husband.

Twenty-Five

Muyiwa

IF THERE WAS ONE THING I know about Lucas, it was his love for bread. It had baffled me how one could eat so much bread and still be in shape. I often told him how easy it was for him to be poisoned through bread as he would not resist the aroma of a freshly baked loaf or toast.

So, after weighing some options at the beach, I had decided to do one of the craziest things I have ever done to win a man- feed Lucas with some marula bread and get him to love me enough to lose the desire for other women pussies.

Yeah. If I were you, I'd be disappointed and ashamed of myself too. No proud daughter of Eve should vacuously lose her body and soul to some lecherous, wanton fool like Lucas's.

But I love him. It took me this long and this island to realize that I was in love with my husband.

It wasn't just his name and the fame that pulled me to his side. Maybe it was before. I realize now that I haven't gotten over Lucas' charm. The sweet, sweet charm I haven't seen in other men. His laughter - low, and suggestively dirty. The way he made love- tearing through the body to reach the soul, touching the untouchable with his unspoken claims.

Yesterday had exhumed memories. For the first time in years- he did things to me that made me want to look back on my decision.

Perhaps, fate brought me here to reclaim love. Didn't that woman at the market say that I would find love most dramatically? This could be it… or not.

Crap. Muyiwa what has happened to you? I looked down at my fingers. Maybe I should go in search of Asim instead. We hadn't tested the water like we'd agreed we should, Dude has been avoiding me like a plague since the day Lucas shifted his jaw.

"Hi, beauty." I turned to see a man with a neck as thick as that of a seal, struggling to sit up from a single cushion at the corner of the pastry store.

Matthias Cookey. A silver fox who felt he deserved my pussy because he controls *oil money*. Apart from his stomach which seemed to be heavily laden, age has by no means dulled his good looks.

I threw a rushed ‘Hi’ at him and returned my face to the pastries sampled in the show-glass.

“My Diana,” Mr. Cookey cooed.

“I will really appreciate it if you stop pestering me here or I will not hesitate to sue you for harassment.”

“Come on, Princess. Everybody knows your Nollywood husband is a dickhead, he doesn’t deserve you. Try having a little fun with daddy.”

Such guts! Such insolence. Throwing suggestive words at me as if I was a whore his money could buy. Without shame.

I glare at him. If eyes were fire lasers, Mr. Cookey would have turned into barbecued meat. He got the message. Silently, he walked back and planted his backside on the chair he once vacated.

“This one,” I said to the attendant, pointing at a bloomer-shaped bread that had *‘Mine alone’* writing on its sticker.

“Are you eating it yourself, ma’am?” The attendant, a young man with a dusty yellow skin, raised an eyebrow.

“You think I should share with you?” I clapped back, subduing him with my stare.

“Sorry ma'am,” he murmured, handing the bread to me. “I hope you enjoy it.”

By God! The aroma alone. Lucas won't be able to resist this one.

Perspiration broke out on my armpit and my forehead as I left the store. God! How do all these Lekki big girls survive tying men down with voodoo? I could already see myself screaming and gnashing my teeth in hellfire just for buying this harmless marula bread. All the talk from the sauna about magical powers was getting to me.

Calm down gurl, I said to myself as I waited for the shuttle I booked to come in sight so I could get back to the villa before Lucas' return. Getting him to eat the bread wouldn’t be a problem, I just had to place it where his eye would see it and he would stuff his mouth with some pieces before asking where it came from.

Lucas.

As I thought about him my body responded with a strong sexual longing, a feeling so powerful, the same burning that'd envelop me the day we met at that woman's shop...

Maybe, that woman was right. I and Lucas... we could still have a chance to save what we have left.

****

Not a flicker of recognition crossed his handsome face as we both stood gazing at each other. There was no reason he'd remember me after all these years. He had become a big movie star whose days must be filled with meeting different women and getting intimate with them. Why would he still remember a scrawny naïve daughter of a food seller whom he met perchance?

"What do you want?" He snapped, startling me with the hostility in his voice.

His sudden bark threw me off balance, every rehearsed word I'd planned to say to him evaporated like a cloud of smoke into thin air.

Didn't the girl deliver the juice to him? She assured me she did. Didn't it work like the mother of mothers promised?

"Who are you?" He asked impatiently.

He was ravishing. Even better than watching him from afar.

I didn't know if the vial was working on him or not, I only knew that the sensuality exuding from his body was killing me with desire. The fear of what I was about to do, mixed with the excitement of standing a few breaths away from him was heightening my need and I swung into action.

I stepped into the room and kicked the door with my foot. Grabbed his face and crushed my lips on his.

He didn't even allow me a moment of pleasure; I couldn't get a proper taste of his lips when he pushed me like a rabid dog, and I fell with a thud on the floor.

"What is this? Who the fuck are you?"

It took me some time to get my embarrassment tucked in, so I could try again. Springing to my feet, I held him from behind as he had turned, his phone plastered to his ear.

Was he about to call the security?

I wrung my hands, blurting out, “It’s me, Awate, your wife.”

I watched him stiffen.

“They told me you would return. I have been waiting.”

He dislodged my hand from his midriff and turned to face me. His face was drained of color. His stare, hard, searching.

“Look at me, remember me, Lucas. I am your wife.” My name should ring a bell, so should my face. We were together for two years.

Tilting his head backward, he leveled his eyes on my face as if I was a blur vision- an apparition.

“This is strange,” he muttered.

“Strange? This is not strange, my love. It is what is meant to be. They brought you here for us to reunite. Can’t you see?” I held his face, looking into his eyes.

Removing my hands, he took two steps back, his eyes widened, his jaw sagged. “Fuck! I can’t believe this. Awate, is this you?”

I don’t blame him for not recognizing me at one glance. It was the Marula that had transformed me- that and the bodywork I was able to get done in Eritrea. I paid in installments, money and woman bits.

“Yes. And I have come to make you mine.”

He pulled me into a body-crushing hug. Amidst sobs and laughter, I felt at home in his amazing, much powerful arms. His scent was different from the cheap collagen mixed with sweat I used to know him with. Ah… it’s been such a long wait and it was worth it, now I had to take this reunion to another level.

Gradually pulling away, his eyes ran through my body in awe, then pulled himself together almost immediately. “What did you do to yourself? You used to be… you know…”

I should be proud of my transformation. But the way he looked at me with no iota of admiration or interest- just surprise and…and… amusement! I wasn’t sure…

He was supposed to be on his knees begging me to forgive him and take him back. He should be telling me how much he missed me and had been miserable all the years we were apart.

Had the vial worked at all? Did he even drink it?

“It’s for you Lucas. For you. I saw the way you looked at those women, and I thought…”

His laughter came like a howl, it circled the room and left me confused. I stepped away from him. My eyes pinned on his unempathetic, unappreciative face. Everything I'd believe before today crumbled, every hope, dream, every conviction.

"They told me you will love me. That you would desire to be with me without me begging."

"What- who? What are you talking about?"

Aside from his body, nothing has changed about this man. Lucas was still the same unrepentant, selfish boy I met fourteen years ago. I stifled the sob that wanted to disgrace me. "You are supposed to love me! I did everything for you- to get you back. The mothers- they said once you taste the vial of love, you will realize I am the woman for you- why are you not loving me?"

Lucas coughed out a chuckle. "Wait. You are not making any sense right now. Can you take it slowly?" He strode to a couch and sat down, gesturing that I do so but I remained standing. "Okay, start from the point where you said, 'the mother' which mother and what vial are you talking about?"

It wasn't working. The daughters of Hades had deceived me, the mother of the black cat had made me a mockery before the man my heart so desired.

Or maybe he didn't drink it.

"The juice that was brought to you…"

"What about the juice?" he shifted his bulk uncomfortably on the couch. "It got thrown over and… wait a minute." He stood again, "You don't... You didn't," realization crossed his face. "You drugged my drink? Awate! How did you even find me? Who let you in here?"

"I work here."

"What?"

"Because of you. The mother predicted that you would be coming to this place, and I have been waiting. I saw when you arrived with that woman- the fat one."

"Jesus! This looks like something out of a movie." He scratched his head and matched up to me, stood a few inches away, "Let me understand this, lady. You trailed me to this place and slipped a substance into my drink, for what!"

"It was the only way to get you back. I am your wife…"

"You are not my wife! Have never been my wife in the actual sense!"

His words sliced my heart into two, tearing a sob from deep in my lungs. “You promised me. You made me leave my home, I followed you around like a vagabond, all over the country, in search of your big break. You made promises to me!”

“I have promised a lot of balderdash to a lot of people. Besides, I didn’t leave you, you left on your own.

“Because it wasn’t time yet! I had to wait for you to discard the other women- they made me wait.” My explanation came out like a strangled cry as I looked at the man whom I’ve followed blindly. The man who’d promise everything and had delivered nothing.

Twenty-Six

Lucas

I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING eerily familiar about that vixen, scandalous stranger the moment I opened that door. I couldn’t place it at first, ’was too mentally drained to even try. The sudden recognition left me feeling like an unprecedented thunderstorm was visiting me.

What fuckery of a day was this? How come everything was happening all at once? When I thought I’d seen it all, Awate decided to show up after many years, for what? And what was this talk about mothers and vials…

I stared at her in disbelief, wondering what land of the dead she arose from with her eyes now a shocking hazel instead of the smokey black I remembered them with. Charcoal-black, false, over-mascaraed eyelashes shrouded her eyes while buckets of foundation and bold makeup masked her usually demure face.

With her cheeks sunken, her bone protruded at both sides, giving her an animated vampire-like look, a ruby red lipstick coated her botoxed lip, the doctor that did that job on her deserved a seat in hell.

My eyes trailed down the silver mini-dress that clung to her now curvy body- I would agree that the doctor that did the bodywork tried, though I did have to look beyond the dress to be a better judge.

Her transformation was mind-boggling. When I was still with Awate, she wasn’t this bold and daring. Everything about the woman standing in my room right now was loud, demanding.

“Because it wasn’t time yet! I had to wait for you to discard the other women… they made me wait.”.

I parted my lips to ask why she hadn’t moved on like her mother said she had but as she stood there, eyes brimming with tears, I couldn't.

“You still love me, right? The fat one- she has to go.”

How could she be this certain? What we had died a long time ago and there

was no way I was resurrecting it.

“The fat one, as you said, is my wife.”

“And she is going.” Her voice was louder, assertive.

“Awate. you must sit down, let's talk. I don’t know what this is or why you decided to show up now with all these freaky made-up stories-”

“They are not made-up freaky stories, they are true. It was prophesied to me that you would come to me on your own accord, the vial was only to make your realization faster.” She took a few steps closer.

“Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and the wee donkey,” I muttered. “Can we cut this superstitious, voodoo bullshit and reason like two adults!” My frustration soared. “Seat down please, let’s talk.”

She kicked her shoes off, reducing herself to a comfortable height but didn’t move from where she stood.

“You didn’t tell her about me,” she said.

Unable to look into her eyes, I turned my attention to the clock that chimed 5 pm. Muyiwa would likely be on her way back. And I wouldn't want her to meet me with this person.

“Listen to me, dear,” I tried to cajole “You must understand…”

“I listened to all your lies and excuses when we were in Lagos. Tell me, Lucas, does she know about me? Do any of them know?”

“No,” I answered

“The one after me, and this one, none of them knows that you have a wife?”

This was getting fucking creepy. Jeez! How could Onahi's resort employ my Nemesis and still invite me to come to spend my vacation here? Or did he put her to this? He was one of the very few that knew about her. We all met on the island years ago. He was here for vacation while I came in search of opportunities.

My former roommate Festus, a rascal, had come home with a flier for one open stage, happening in a remote East African country, Gobota. He’d suggest we take the leap.

I was twenty-six then, out of work, had about three hundred thousand Naira I managed to save from gigs and nothing to do with my time. So, I had jumped on the idea.

A few days later, with an extra two hundred thousand I swindled out of my

mother, we found ourselves in a bus going to Chad, stopped over to change money, then hitched our way to Asmara, Eritrea where we hung out sleeping rough, scrounging food, booze, and women. It had taken us another two days to finally get to Bodo town, Gobota, where I met Onahi.

I was fascinated by him, we became friends as we bonded over our Nigerian origins and Awate was a local I was crazy over.

“Awate, what we had was brief. We were young and naughty, we didn’t even have a proper wedding- no certificate.”

“You met my people, promise to return with the full bride price when you make it in Nigeria.” Awate interrupted. “You swore to me that you would never forget what I did for you, my patience and love.”

“I know the shit I said, alright? But I was stupid that time. You didn’t even stay for me to make it big.”

“You lied to me. They lied to me, everyone…And when you got your first break, which I helped engineer. Lucas. I believed in you. You got that and you were hardly ever home."

"I was working!"

"So you claimed! I saw the women. They were different from me. I heard people say it was normal. You lied and lied, and I had to leave. I had to leave so you...so you...so you could come get me when you cleared your head.”

Tears began to course down her cheeks in uncontrollable torrents. I frowned at the sight of her vulnerability. There was nothing more weakening than a crying woman. I didn’t know what to do with this one.

“You all played on my naïve mind. You, them, the black cat, the marula. Giving me hope. That you would return...my love... I never stopped loving you.”

Either she was having a mental breakdown or something else possessed her. Awate wasn’t coherent, her words made no sense at all. The black cat, what black cat?

“Please, Awate.”

“Do not say that to me, Lucas.”

“I don’t know what else to do. I made a mistake by asking you to follow me, how do I amend it?”

“Tell her I am your true woman. Send her away.”

Her request hung between us like a dark curtain. If only she was in the right

frame of mind, it would have been easier for me. Possibly, I could offer her something, a settlement of sorts.

“I can’t send Muyiwa away. She is my wife.”

“I am your wife. Your first!”

“That was a long time ago, I was stupid and unreasonable. Please understand me.” I reached out to touch her shoulder, but she shrugged my hand off.

“Lies. All lies. Everything, fables, fairy tales,” She muttered repeatedly.

“Awate. What do you want? How do I make this up to you?”

“Marry me,” she demanded defiantly, “Or I would go to the press with my story, I will make sure the story is empathetic enough to ruin you and your fat woman. You have hidden me away from your life for a long time.”

“But I can’t. Please understand me. I am married- really married.”

How did I get myself into this shit? How on earth did I even find her attractive? Looking at her now, I knew I wouldn’t even give her a second thought if she was the only woman in the world.

“I don’t care, Lucas. It’s either that or I would destroy you, and her. She would come to terrible harm, and you’d be sorry. Trust me, Lucas, you don’t know what I am capable of.”

She was mad, unhinged. I could see it in her eyes, her uneven breath.

Where is Muyiwa for Christ’s sake? I turned on my heels, reaching for my phone laying on the bed. Before I could straighten up, a weight hit my back. Awate's legs curled around my hips, her hands tightened around my neck.

“Let’s do it again Lucas.” Her minty breath wafted into my nose as she spoke close to my ears. “Here and now, sex me... I can give it to you better now…I have learned…” She cried desperately as I tried shaking her off, my phone now out of my reach.

“Get off me, you demented woman.” I gave her an elbow and she slipped off, landing with her back on the bed. Her dress rose to expose a red thong.

Awate never wore thongs! I used to beg her to wear them, she practically hated that piece.

Who was the woman in my room?

Twenty-Seven

Muyiwa

A GIRL WAS CRAWLING ON Lucas' back like an energetic spider monkey - all long gangly arms and legs, scratching and grabbing.

Muyiwa, turn, run and never return, a voice whispered into my ears as my eyes stayed on the disgust on top of the bed, a bed that held a heart-tickling memory of what Lucas did to me last night.

Choking back the anger that was stirring inside of me, I snatched my eyes away from the scene. Stepped back from the door.

I should leave. Run without looking back like I've always done. Like I did the day of our Anniversary when I saw Lucas with that sorry of an actress.

Walk away Muyiwa. get somewhere to stay till morning, then you could find your way back to Lagos.

I peered into the suite again. The girl was on her back, legs spread and my husband, my Lucas, was bent over her, saying something- another promise? Another vow? Was he telling her how fat I was and how he wouldn't wait to throw me out of his life?

Clutching my chest, I croaked out a sob as I withdrew my head. I leaned against the wall, placed my hand over my mouth and gave off a stifled scream. Tears came down my face as if my pains had at last condensed into a deluge of rain. All my strength left, replaced with helplessness and daggering pains.

My body slid down the wall. My ass flumped on the floor. The bread I bought earlier fell off my hand and I let myself loose to silent crying.

Somehow, I was grateful I didn't have to do this in the open, where all eyes would be on me, and cameras would capture my ugly crying face as I wasn't blessed like Serena Gomez who looked like a barbie doll when she cries.

Why did I fall in love with a dickhead?

Why did I have to lose my head after a night of drunken passion? How could

I ever believe that he would turn into a perfect man overnight?

I wanted to scratch my face till I bled. I deserved it.

Tired of sobbing, I staggered to my feet and picked my tote bag to leave. A wave of disorientation hit me, and I toppled forward. Grasping for anything to support myself, my hands pushed the door ajar, and I landed in a heap - half of my body inside the room.

“Muyiwa!”

His voice pinned me flat on the floor. His backstabbing, betraying, cheating voice.

Why did he sound too surprised? Or was that guilt I heard in his voice? Lucas Opeyemi, Nollywood Super Star, wouldn’t feel guilty even if he was caught with his tongue inside a woman’s pussy.

“Muyiwa, are you alright?” He was beside me immediately, playing the concerned husband’s role. His hands were on my arms, trying to lift me to my feet.

“Get your hands off me. you… you…Bastard,” I spat out, somehow managing to pull myself from the ground.

This shouldn’t be a big deal, right? It wasn’t like I was a new bride who’d married a pious man. I knew what I was signing up for when I agreed to pick up Lucas’ name as mine, his lasciviousness wasn’t new to me.

I’d developed a tough skin when it comes to Lucas and his insatiable taste for women, or so I thought. However, standing in this adultery oozing suite, with Lucas playing innocent while the evidence of how busy he has been, was on the bed, tore me in bits and pieces.

“I- I thought we could have…something tonight,” I muttered, hating that my bottom lip quivered with my voice. Even more annoying was the tremor in my heart as I spoke those words. Clearing my throat, I lifted trembling hands to brush off tears I didn’t want to shed.

“I am so sorry, Muyiwa…”

I cut him off with a wave of the hand. “I was foolish to desire more than last night. Thinking that with a little help- you could- we could- it doesn’t matter right now, you are Lucas Opeyemi, and nothing can change that.”

“Tell her, my husband. Let her know now,” the girl on the bed pushed with excitement glittering in her eyes.

“Shut your mouth!” Lucas barked back at her.

What was he trying to hide? Something different from what he had told the other women? “Tell me what? Lucas, what are you supposed to tell me?”

“Forget her, let's talk about us, babe.” He tried coming close, but I gave him a withering glare

“Hell no! We have not talked about us for years, Lucas. All of a sudden, you want to discuss us in front of another woman who just called you her husband?”

“Tell her or I will!” The girl crawled out of the bed, then stood close to Lucas, her petite frame complimenting his tall one, her hands in akimbo. “Tell her now!”

“I said shut the fuck up!” Lucas shouted then looked at me, his eyes saying a lot of things I've never heard his lips say. If only I can give him a chance, but how many chances does one get?

The tension between us lingered in our brief silence. My heart threatened to implode and turn to dust.

Not perturbed, the girl broke the silence with a malicious smile on her face.

“I think I have to make the announcement myself then.” She drew closer, “Lucas is my husband. We met and got married…”

Fumbling with the hem of my shirt, I tried to make sense of what the girl was blabbing about. What sort of delusional talk was this?

“Awate, please don’t do this,” Lucas said, glancing agitatedly at me.

Two things baffled me in the whole situation; who was this woman and what noose did she have around Lucas’ neck? Also, why had Lucas suddenly become concerned with how I would react to his bullshit? He never cared.

“Why not?” The girl said with glee, “Everyone would know soon enough-”

“No, they won’t,” Lucas countered.

“Yes, they will.”

“And how is that?”

“We are going to tell them. You and I, we will tell the world.”

He caught hold of her arm in a vice-like grip, “There is no we, and there isn’t going to be any announcement because I have a wife!”

“What? This one, a wife?” the girl cackled, her eyes sizing me up. “She is not worthy of you.”

Something snapped inside of me immediately those disdaining words left her lips. I flung my hand and it landed on her cheek with a force that sent her staggering with her hand on her cheek.

“Muyiwa…please…stop.” Lucas held me by the waist as I wanted to descend on the tramp.

My emotions turned jagged, my inside tightened. Twirling to face him, I jabbed my finger in his ribs. “Is she pregnant for you? Is this what all this is about?”

“No!”

“Then why?” I asked. punching his chest. “Why is she here? Why did you have to invite her over? Why did you have to fuck her on the same bed you made me open up for you like I never did in years? When I thought you could- no that’s not right, I thought we discovered something beautiful.”

My words were greeted with hysterical laughter from the girl and an uncomfortable stare from Lucas whose gaped mouth seemed to be dried of saliva and words.

I glanced at the girl, her smeared face gave her a local clown look with its garish makeup, and headed towards the door after picking up my bag.

Lucas caught me by the arm. I waited, heart in my mouth, hoping for magic that would make everything I just witnessed disappear, leaving only the two of us. Then he would pull me to his chest, guide my head to his heart where I would hear the sound of love that's gone out for years rushing back. The melody of his pure desire for me- just me alone. Then he would speak to me, assuring me that it was safe to fall in love with him again, that he was done with philandering, his heart now yearns for me alone.

“Don’t walk away, please,” he pleaded.

I wished he meant it.

“Please.”

Like always, he was pleading for me to go through this with him, find a solution, and something to tell if the girl would be stubborn enough to go to the press. But I was tired of cleaning up the same mess every time.

“Watch me.” I snatched my hand away from his grip and walked out of the suite.

He followed. Pleading and promising some mumbo-jumbo. My gait changed into a run. I wasn’t going to listen to him…not today, not ever.

“Where are you going?” He shouted.

“To suck the life out of a willing dick and fuck it later.”

Twenty-Eight

Lucas

“SHAME ON YA, SENSELESS MAN.”

The quivering but audible voice snapped me back from my state of daze. One last glance down the empty path where I’d watched my Muyiwa disappear, I turned to meet the scrunchy-faced old woman. This time she had a puppy in her arms.

“You are a baaaad man…baaad I say…" she wagged her finger at me. “Heartbreaker!”

Jesus! Not now, please.

Avoiding the woman’s piercing stare, I hurried to my villa and shut the door.

You deserve it, Lucas.

You’re a selfish cad.

Awate was seated unperturbed on a cushion chair. I ignored her as I walked over to the paneled wall and stared out the windows in search of Muyiwa. Where would she spend the rest of the evening as dusk was fast approaching?

“To suck the life out of a willing cock and fuck it later.”

Did she mean it?

Images of her shuddering with ecstasy while bouncing on top of another man’s cock played inside my head, sending bolts of anger into my very soul. I had to puff out a short breath to control the emotions that were warring within me.

There were a thousand and one men who would lay down their cocks for Muyiwa to straddle on. I had to get out of the suite, find and stop her before she would make the offer.

“What now?” Awate ventured. She must have thought my attitude would soften towards her after what happened. “She knows about us now and by

morning, others would know too."

I turned to look at her. "Is that what you think?"

"Yes, Lucas. You have to accept me now or I will make you miserable." She sashayed towards me, looking like a Chinese masquerade. "I mean it, Lucas. If I don't have you, you are ruined," she said bravely, placing her hands on my shoulders, and skimming them down my chest.

I stared long into her eyes, wondering how I managed to find her attractive enough to ask her to come to stay with me? How could I have been so stupid and…and…careless? What was I thinking?

Gathering her hands, I gently pushed her away. And reached for the phone.

"You shouldn't have come up here." My fingers circled the receiver.

"There was no way to reach you." She sounded relaxed.

"I agree I made a mistake. I am willing to make amends," I added, staring at her intently. "But it would not happen immediately."

"I know and I will wait until you are ready to go back to Lagos. We will go together, I promise to be by your side, like old times, while you break the news to the press."

The madness ravaging her was becoming obvious. She was suffering from delusion.

"There is a lot to consider…"

"We will find the way together." She was on her knees, her hands wrapped around my legs. "It will all work out and we will have each other again."

I shot her a pitying look. Punched a number.

"Who are you calling?"

"Dom, come to my suite right now," I spoke into the receiver, ignoring Awate's protesting squirm.

PART THREE

Twenty-Nine

Muyiwa

I WASN'T ONE TO CRY because of Lucas' untamed penis. But tonight, tears were closer to me than an unseen foe acting as friend, accompanied by shame.

What did he have with that girl that he'd hidden perfectly from me? From everyone? What hold did the girl have on him that turned him into a meowing cat?

The fear I saw in his eyes when the lady called him her husband. The desperation to shut her up yet the parrot had sung irrespective of his plea…

I didn't know which hurt more; that he took me for a fool, hid such a secret from me all these while only to let it blow on my face unannounced. Or that he snuck her into the resort and had fucked her on the same bed he had me last night.

Oh God. The look on his face when I foolishly told him how I'd want us to have something special. He must have thought me stupid for allowing my emotions to run like a damaged water pipe when I should have gotten used to who he was- the man with the generous dick.

Filled with a sudden rush of despair, I waved down an empty shuttle.

"Where do you want to go?" The driver asked.

"The gym."

As the shuttle took off, I closed my eyes and gave my face to the rushing wind. *Slap away my folly,* I willed it. *Return my heart to its former state of aloofness*, I pleaded with nature.

Surely, there was no need to try to ignite damp wood. No matter how many marula products I ingested, I could only get my pussy squirming and craving for sex, but Lucas would never be committed to me as a husband should.

My despair settled deeply into my stomach, pulling down every resemblance of love that I thought I felt for Lucas this shortest period and locking it behind

the growing wall of resentment. I felt a nudging hunger for vengeance.

There was no way I wasn't going to tear the flimsy linen that still covered our cracked union. He thought he was the only one good enough to swim in and out of open legs, that I had no guts to match up to a man and bang him recklessly?

You actually don't.

Well, the first- and last-time I mustered courage and went in search of a dick, I'd lost the will when I set my eyes on the chosen dude's nakedness.

It was the day Lucas told me how childish I was to allow my feelings to flare out of proportion. He had told me that he wasn't a man of total commitment to one woman and that I should get used to it or get out. He had dared me that night and I had wanted to prove to him that I could fuck a man all night, record it and bring it home for his eyes to see.

So, I'd carefully picked my target. He was a hunk with no touch of handsomeness. His nose, as crooked as a child's doodle. The guy was a lazy son of a bitch who spent his days prowling high-end clubs, entertaining Lekki cougars and sometimes men who could afford him.

The plan did start well until it was time to do *the do*. What I saw left me speechless. Under the rippling muscles was a small, angry uncircumcised penis pointed in my direction.

I still wondered how he was able to ram the pussies and butt holes of Lekki's big men and women.

But tonight would be different. I would take Asim's dick in my mouth and suck with every vigor in me even if the thing was pea sized. Then I would allow him to take me on top of his gym mat. My pussy would be offered as a sacrifice for his pleasure. We would do it all night until he collapsed on me or I on him.

"We are here, ma'am."

"Thank you," I hurried towards the house behind the gym, Asim's house. Then I remembered that I should have dialed his number first. Crap! What if he wouldn't want to see me?

One glance at the glass window and a little hope surged within me. The interior was brightened by the electric bulbs and as I approached the door, I could hear Blues music emanating from inside.

I punched the doorbell and waited. Who said committing adultery was as easy? Well, for bastards like Lucas, it was as easy as eating a slice of bread. As for me, I was sure that if I deep my hand inside my mouth, I would come out

with my heart.

Not that I haven't had my share of bed-hopping, but that was when I wasn't married, a girl got to survive in a hostile city like Lagos. However, the shackles of marriage made it impossible for me to look another way, though I'd admit to having accepted a kiss or two and a boob squeeze from random good-looking guys.

I punched the doorbell again. No voice response and no approaching footsteps. To be double sure, I grabbed the door handle, gave a gentle push. The door gave and I walked in.

Where is he? And why will he leave his door unlocked? Is he expecting someone and feels the person should just walk in straight? Well surprise, surprise Asim...get ready to fornicate with me.

I glanced around the moderately furnished sitting-room, at the space that was supposed to serve as the dinning stood an exercise bike, a stand of dumbbells, and some other muscle stretching machines. There was no human presence.

Or there was…

Laughter floated to my ears- the voice of a woman- more like a drunken hooker. Then a baritone moan came as a rejoinder. Faint but loud enough for my ears to pick.

Curiosity moved my legs towards the sounds, and by the time I got to a door that was slightly ajar, I knew what was going on.

He was there. Asim, the man I had planned to fuck until I felt even with Lucas had found himself, someone. Someone to keep busy with. A pussy that won't give him hassle.

I stood still, absorbing the horny laughter and throaty moans. Then I decided it wouldn't hurt to know which of the ladies that was getting her garden of pleasure tended to while I wallowed in despair and self-pity.

Leaning closer, I peered through the slight opening and gasped.

Holy crap!

Madam South African bank manager had her oil-sheened body spread on Asim's bed. Her boobs aggressively pointed to heaven while Asim's head was bobbing between her legs that hung up his firm shoulders.

Her *oohs* and *aahs* and *go big boy* got louder and louder with Asim's head bob. The more noise she made, the faster Asim's tongue worked up and down.

Tears of anger and shame burned my eyes as I hid beside the door peeping on two adults making out. That should be me on that mat, with my toes pointed to the ceiling, while Asim sucked like his life depended on it.

Fuck Lucas. Fuck Asim. Fuck the attendant who sold bread to me and fuck all the men in the world.

You too, a little voice mocked.

Yes, me too. Stupid, senseless Muyiwa. Fuck you too. I quietly took a step back from the door, my heart sinking, wretched. I dragged one heavy foot over the other, towards the exit.

What was it with me that made men unserious around me? Why was it that the men I was most into seemed to reject me?

There was Jackson. I met him the same year I came to Lagos, fell in love with him the same day we were introduced, and he treated me like a kid. With Lucas , it was lust at first sight. Got married to him and he has been treating me like an annoying lapdog ever since.

Now Asim. When I was about to figure out if we would work, he already had his head trapped in that South African walking leaf's slit.

As I walk down the road, wallowing in misery, oblivion of the shuttle that was gradually throttling beside me. I decided that there was no need to stay one more day at the resort. It was time to leave, get back to Lagos and start preparing myself for media fallout.

"Hey, lady, where are you headed to?" Someone shouted, startling me out of my deep thought.

I stood gazing at him. He was the same driver that dropped me off some minutes ago.

"Get in, let me take you to the villa."

"Take me to the club," I demanded instead.

"What?"

"I want to get drunk," *And get laid.*

Eclipse club was bubbling when I made my entrance. My eyes scaled above swaying heads and hands in the air to an empty stool at the bar. Inhaling deeply, I made the 'not-so-easy' walk up and took the seat.

"Something strong," I ordered. My eyes roamed around the crowded hall. Most of the ladies I knew weren't anywhere in sight. *Probably groaning to the*

intense penising by their men and fuck boys.

After three shots of the drink, I became restless, annoyed that I'd given Lucas the power to mess up my mind like that of a teenage girl whose first-ever boyfriend just ditched. If only I could get someone, a man who I will give myself to. A guy who would be capable of banishing Lucas from my memory.

Lucas was bad news, I had ignored this for a long while, but not anymore.

I scanned the club.

My eyes descended on a table where a lady was giving a lanky man who looked like he would pass out in a second, a lap dance. Pulling my eyes away from the laughable scene, I settled them on another table where a waitress was zeroing in on a fair-skinned bearded dude who was throwing off that bad boy vibe women found irresistible.

My eyes lingered on the guy, sizing him up and wondering what his pack would look like. It shouldn't matter though, what I needed was just to get laid.

I wished the guy would look in my direction so we could establish a chemistry. I gave up when the guy didn't lift his head to meet my gaze.

His loss not mine.

Now...where else could one find a single, nice-looking son of a bitch? I swiveled my head back to the bar.

A short white man with a rodent-eaten beard the color of mud, eyes the size of headlamps, walked up the top, beckoned on the bartender, and leered at me.

"You are too beautiful to be alone. So, what is it going to cost me to keep you company? A drink? What about dollars?"

My goodness! If I was going to bang a man to spite Lucas, at least heaven should send me a sweet-looking one. Wouldn't it be embarrassing to be captured in a compromising position with a frog?

"I have a lot of money I just won from the casino tables," he winked, "I can give you a generous share if you come with me to my villa." He grinned.

"Back off schmuck," I hissed. "Try the honey over there wiggling for attention, I am sure she would appreciate your offer."

With his ego bruised, his leer turned to a glare. "Fat wench," he muttered, grabbed his beer, and strode off.

I was on my fifth shot, feeling a little hotter inside, more restless. I shifted myself on the stool so my eyes could travel towards the other side where men

were wagering away their earnings. Again, every good-looking man there had a woman beside him.

I must get laid, I groaned. Where have the single, gorgeous guys gone to?

A man was playing alone on a snooker table. Bald, dark, looking moody. I slid off the stool and started walking towards him. Then he turned and observed me with surprise and interest. His mouth stretched in a grin and his teeth became visible. He possessed Lucas' kind of smile, and structure.

Shame and vexation washed through me as I turned away abruptly. *Lucas is haunting me*. He was making sure that when I set my eyes on any man, what I saw was his face.

I was heading back to the bar when a hand grabbed my shoulder. "Are you here alone too? Want to join me on the dance floor?"

I turned, and my gaze landed on a hot dark male. His abs, visible underneath his lightweight t-shirt, made my dull senses scream in glee. He's perfect!

I have a thing for abs, just like men have a thing for boobs. It's something Lucas, Asim and this guy have in common. And his voice, that voice. I have heard it in the throes of passion before. "Is that all you want from me, sugar?" I purred, trying my best to sound sexy even though I feel a little disorientated. He looked familiar. I had seen him before.

He smiled, a knowing gleam in his eyes. "Who knows where the night can lead us?" He smirked, then leaned closer. "Your eyes, I can't save myself from the charm that exudes from them."

I giggled like a schoolgirl, the drinks kicking in no doubt because what he said wasn't funny. I moved closer as well, almost wiping out the civil space that should be left between us. Then it clicked. "Ah…I know you. Beatrice's plaything"

"Ouch!" He clutched his chest and feigned pains. "That hurts. You made it sound like I'm a used rag."

"Funny. You don't look like a rag to me, and you don't look hurt either."

"I'm Richard, and I love all God's creation." He gave me a once over, licking his lips.

"Hmmm." He must like what he's seeing. A dance, eh? And who knows where the night might lead. There's no mistaking what we would be doing in the next twenty minutes.

"You are supposed to tell me who you are."

It’s been a long time since I played this whole dating thing. “Muyiwa.” No need to share my last name because I’ll be ditching it soon.

“Can I have this dance?” Rihanna’s *Work Work Work* began playing from the speakers.

My answer was to turn on my back and begin grinding on him. I pulled his arms and placed them on my breasts. It felt odd, strange, different. But if I wanted to get Lucas and thoughts of him off my head and move on, I needed to jump all these bridges. Richard didn’t delay, he got the memo and began thrusting his hardening penis on my ass. Okay...Who knows where this night might lead. I smiled, grinding feverishly against him.

Thirty

Lucas

“GET YOUR HANDS OFF MY wife!”

I grabbed the arm that was around Muyiwa’s waist and flung it aside. The owner whipped his head back, his face contoured in a scowl.

“What da…”

The words got stuck in his throat as realization paralyzed him for a moment.

Jamming my finger on his chest, I allowed my anger to run free. “You don’t lay your hands on my woman; do you hear me? You don’t come close!”

He stared from me to Muyiwa, then back to me. “This is uncalled for! She came onto me!”

Feet had paused on the dance floor, dice rolled at a slow pace, elated voices gone down. Eyes were on us, but I was too annoyed to care.

For fuck’s sake! I had wanted to make amends, to tell Muyiwa the truth and ask for forgiveness. I was going to crumble at her feet, weep if I must until she agrees to listen to my confession.

So, I’d quickly gotten Dom to yank the protesting Awate out of my suite. Then I’d rush after my wife, but I was late. Friends I’d called swore they didn’t see her. Thanks to the shuttle driver who agreed to have given her a ride to the club.

My nostrils flared. “You touch her again and I will break your neck”

“I wasn’t going to rape her, you hear? She was the one who approached me!”

Blowing hot with anger, I hooked the lapel of his shirt. Pulled him closer so that my hot breath made him shudder. “One more word. One more, and your head will roll on that snooker table.”

“Leave him alone!” Muyiwa yelled, hitting her fist on my arms, “Let him go, you idiot!” She was reeking of alcohol. God. How many shots has she had?

I loosened my grip and pushed the guy away. Turned to Muyiwa and said, “We are getting out of here now.”

“The only place I am going from here is to have myself fucked by a man much more worthy than you, you deceitful, lying, cheating bastard!” She hit me hard on the chest, eyes darkened with determination.

“You heard the lady,” The man sniggered.

“Shut your big mouth up!” I glared at him.

Snatches of words floated from the gathered onlookers into my ears. I needed no one to tell me that someone- if not everyone in here had their phones on camera.

“Muyiwa, we need to talk, please,” I pressed on, reaching out to her.

She recoiled; a line drawn between her forehead. “Don’t touch me,” she snapped. “I will never go anywhere with you, Lucas Opeyemi. And you are wasting your time if you think I am reconsidering this night. Richard is going to fuck me and he will do it real good.”

Richard? Who the fuck is Richard? This guy? She had to be crazy to want to do this. Christ! What was wrong with her?

“You can’t do this.”

“And you can?” She shot back, staggering a bit, before getting herself. She was tipsy. “Oh, I forgot. Lucas! The sexiest man in Nollywood. The man with the golden celebrity dick that women are toppling over. The best thing that has happened to women after Adam. You have the right to fuck every pussy you so desire, but I don’t?”

Pain seeped in the laughter that followed her stabbing words and it hurt. God! I felt it tearing my skin to reach my heart.

“Please!” I grabbed her arm and pulled her to me, “Come with me.”

She struggled until Richard forcefully dislodged her from my grip, “Leave her the fuck alone man. She doesn’t want to go with you.”

“And you have suddenly become a hero because you are eager to commit adultery with her?”

“I can’t deny that I would have enjoyed making love to her if you hadn't arrived when you did. But I don’t think I want to do that now. Not in this situation.”

“Good. Now bounce!”

“For Christ’s sake. Let this woman be. If she said she doesn’t want to follow you, then leave her.”

“She is my wife! “The veins on my neck threatened to pop. I found it hard to swallow.

“I am not your wife!” Muyiwa screamed. Then laughed bitterly, “You already got a replacement. You... You… Married another woman while being married to me? Or did you marry her a long time ago and had her hidden somewhere all along?”

Jesus. This was getting out of hand. *Where the hell is Onahi when I need him?* He would be able to calm this situation, “Muyiwa, you are creating a scene.” My gaze darted around, “For our good, please stop this.”

“You think this is a scene? Oh, I will give you an internet-breaking scene.” She pushed past me. “Hey, everyone,” waving to gather an audience even with the loud music. “My husband is an irresponsible idiot. Who goes about sleeping with every woman that catches his fancy...”

What’s all this? How did we come to this? I watched as she went on, powerless to do anything without seeming abusive. In all my life as a man, as an actor, except the one time in my university days when a man let his two dogs loose on me because he caught me shagging his horny wife, I have never been shamed like this.

As tempting as it was to rush towards her, cover her mouth with my palm and drag her along with me, I wouldn’t dare do it, not even with the angry storm rumbling in my stomach.

“These past years, I have pretended that he was the nicest husband any woman could ever ask for.” She preached on. “I have cleaned his shit up, turned my face, and shut my ears to his dalliances...”

There was something in those words, a pain behind it. I watched. Then she turned to me, and I saw it - something that has always been there but I was too busy tasting pussies to notice. Her eyes moved around the little audience she had gathered but never settled on me.

“You know what Lucas? I would have still stomached it had she been another whore you were shagging. I would have forgiven you but you went too far this time. How long, Lucas? How long have you been hiding her? Was that before Ivy your first official wife? Or when our marriage started going sour? Does this one have a child for you?”

“Muyiwa, stop it.” A lady pushed her way through the small audience and

circled her arms around Muyiwa's shoulders. I have seen her with Duncan's girl on one or two occasions. "Come on Muyiwa, quit making a fool of yourself! People are recording, you will not like it when this story hits the media."

Muyiwa shook free, "Don't give me that shit. This Nollywood free dick planned to dump me even before we arrived here, why should I care what the media do with him?"

"Not like you didn't know this day would come. But you're doing it the wrong way. Come on girl, you are doing your image more damage," the lady added.

"Does it look like I care?" Muyiwa cried.

She turned and closed the gap between us, her anger fanning my face, "I was going to make you love me, Lucas." She laughed bitterly. "I was going to make you eat the marula bread so both of us would be charmed into falling in love again." Every word from her lips slapped my chest. My heartbeat.

Her voice trembled, then she broke with a sob. Makeup ran in colorful rivers down her face.

God! I have been an asshole. A selfish, uncaring asshole. Onahi was right, I couldn't love anyone but myself.

"Somebody should stop these two from airing their shit in public!" Someone said from the crowd.

"Leave them alone, I lost a lot of money tonight, this is my compensation!" Another shouted back.

"Muyiwa," I breathed, searching her tear-stained face, contemplating if I should hold her, or fall on her feet. "Muyiwa, please."

Why was it difficult for me to turn my back and walk away? Take the next plane back to Lagos tomorrow morning and announce our divorce. After all, this show of shame would work to my advantage if my media assistant did a good job. The publicity would give me a perfect justification.

"You aren't worth it, Lucas. And you are right, I have overstayed my welcome in your life."

"No." I reached for her, but she shrugged my hands off. "We can sort this thing out."

Why it took a vacation to this remote place and one fucking magical lovemaking to realize that Muyiwa was my life, I couldn't explain. I couldn't remember the last time I wanted a woman like I wanted Muyiwa now. The

sudden awareness of the emptiness that would consume me if I let her go sunk my heart.

I have been stupidly blind and selfish. “I want to make things right.”

She coughed out a bitter chuckle, slowly backed away from me. “I know what you want to do, Lucas.” She shook her head. “My world-class actor. Do you think this is a movie? Me and you, playing out a script where you, a stray husband, returns and begs for forgiveness, and I run into your arms?”

For the first time after a long while, I found myself searching for words to say to Muyiwa, my wife with whom I have fallen in love over again.

“It’s about your image, right?” She asked.

“No, Muyiwa. I can change things…”

“Can you create a new world in my mind? One where you are loyal and don't treat women like shit, where my trust is complete?”

She waited for me to say something. To agree to a commitment I knew would come crashing like a sandcastle in less than no time.

This is the part you would want to know about my history. What happened in my life that turned me into an insensitive dickhead?

Nothing happened.

My father wasn’t the devil with a long pitchfork that went about tormenting his kids and his wife, but a clergyman who did try so much to instill fear and discipline in his only son and three daughters. And my mother wasn’t Lady Tremaine, Cinderella’s wicked stepmother, but a kind schoolteacher who did love me to a fault.

I just happened to turn out this way. I guess I woke up one morning, in my first year at the university, and decided that a guy needed to catch up with all the years he’d stay away from sleek female bodies and cute lips. Seventeen years old. Sly as a fox and determined to have all the fun the university environment could avail me, I made some crazy friends, big screen dreamers like me.

We had little to do with our time except for touring cities in search of stage opportunities, burning off the little money we made on strip clubs, girls with big titties and cheap pussies, and drugs whenever we could afford it.

Those were my early realization days, freedom did come with a sweet offer and I didn’t hesitate to go into sex in a big way. Since I was one of the most talented among my peers, there was no lack of partners among the girls.

My first score was an older girl, about seven years older than me, the daughter of the stage director who housed us at Enugu, during one of our tours. A mousy girl that one would wave off as a novice in the things of the flesh. She had crept into the room where we lay waiting for the next day when we would perform, squeezed herself by my side, slipped her hand inside my shorts, and started working up and down my virgin length. I became greedily responsive instantly.

By the time she parted her wrapper, adjusted her hips, and guided my cock into her warmth, I was almost exploding. I ejaculated a few seconds after she guided my penis in, maybe three thrusts of her hips and that was it, she rose and snuck out quietly as she came in.

My friends, four of them, made jokes about that night. Maybe they arranged it, maybe not, but it became obvious in the morning that they were aware of what went down that night.

I never saw that girl again, didn't even know her name.

"Answer me!" Muyiwa screamed. Bringing me back to the presence. "Can you do that? Lucas, can you make me forget?"

I stared at her moronically.

"There's no other way to make amends unless the slate is wiped clean, memories are erased, my broken heart is sewn back. And that is impossible for you, Lucas."

"But something can still be done…"

"This is it, Lucas. Your freedom. You can go marry the girl waiting for you in the suite. Oh, wait. What will you do with the one you promised to marry before we came here? The stale actress who couldn't even give you good head?" She snared, leaning closer to my face.

I wanted to call out for her but she started walking out with the lady that intervened. I wanted to ask where she would be staying for the moment, knowing Muyiwa, she would give me the middle finger and ask me to go to hell.

Wasn't I in hell already?

****

"Why wouldn't he love me, Mama?"

I stood by the abandoned well, eyes fixed on the pitch-black unending hole, a spiral of thoughts swirled in my head. Dark, wicked, vengeful thoughts.

Dom had left. He had the mind to report me to HR who were aghast at my treatment of a guest. And said the usual, we don't tolerate that here and are sorry to let you go. Dom made sure I got into a taxi with my things, out of a job, Lucas out of my reach.

"Sit your backside down in your mama's house and think about what you did tonight."

He was so glad to get me away from Lucas. Dom never liked Lucas, never liked that I was getting so close to making Lucas mine.

My eyes brimmed with tears, and I quickly wiped them off. Unleashing the scarf around my neck, I allowed it float into the darkness of the well. A little pang of envy enveloped me. If only I could become a 'thing,' with no life, no thoughts, no memories like this scarf, just floating in an unending spiral.

"Maybe, it wasn't yet time," my mama replied.

I suddenly wished she hadn't opened her mouth to spew those words. What time was she talking about? The daughters of Hades promised me, the mother of mothers said it was time, my mama was there, she heard it.

"I did everything that was asked of me, including sleeping in that spooky wood where demons and beasts come to hunt."

"My daughter…"

"I did everything I was asked to do. The brew, I gave it to him, yet he didn't grow soft for me."

Burgeoning bitterness sprouted from my belly, I could feel its claws walking up to my throat. My fingers sought for my dress, and I held it tight, a means of curbing the urge to get hold of my mother's neck and squeeze.

"That other woman," I said, "She has something on him, something stronger than what you and the witches gave me."

"Don't call us witches."

Wasn't that what they were? A group of women that moved with the night owl into the dark woods, dressed in white, making enchantments and dancing like people under influence.

"The woman," my mama continued, "Did she do anything to you?"

"I saw the way he looked at her." I ignored her question. "He would have

jumped the walls had she asked him to."

"But you told me that you saw them fighting the other night."

I pulled my gaze away from the well and turned to face my mama. "All you promised me were lies. You and them, liars!" My voice raised "You did this to me! you made me wait this long. I should have gone back with him when he came for me."

"He only came to make sure you were alive and safe."

"How would you know that? You didn't even allow me to see him."

"He was up to no good then."

"But he came looking for me."

"I wanted him to mature and be sure of what he wanted."

And what had he become? A big star without me by his side. I should have been his woman, me!

"He would have been so satisfied with me that he would not think of another woman."

"He abandoned you for movie roles, he felt you weren't up to the standard. He couldn't even declare you as his wife publicly. What makes you think he has changed?"

"You don't know him like I do, mama."

"You came back to me because you could no longer tolerate him."

"And you promised me he would come back!"

"He did."

"He belongs to another! All my sacrifices and gifts to the coven couldn't change his mind. Your mixture of marula bark and the burnt whiskers from the black cat with only three white spots couldn't help me get him."

Silence descended on us like a burden, like a bale of mourning clothes. It sunk me deeper into anguish. Crushing my bones and hopes. Turning my face away from my mother's intense stare, I looked around the sorry state of the place I called home. Thanks to the apartment given to me by the resort management, I would have gone mad staying here. God! I hated the whole place, it reeked of wretchedness.

I should sneak to my apartment. But then I thought of the stern warning against setting my feet anywhere close to the resort and abandoned that decision.

Now I had to remain here, bound to it like a sinner bound to hell.

“We will go to the coven tonight,” mama broke the silence.

“No. Not anymore. I will handle things my way.”

Mama clenched and unclenched her fist. “What are you going to do?”

“It’s that woman. She has something on him.”

I didn’t need to tell her all the dark plans forming inside my head. She would want to talk me out of them. I knew my mama, she could play around with miniature charms and potions, but she had the heart of a chicken.

“She is not the one to be punished, the mother forbids you to punish the innocent for the sins of another.”

“The mother is stupid and senseless. What does she know about the matters of the heart?”

“It’s the oath we took. To wrong those who have wronged us…the marula wouldn’t sanction anything contrary…the black cat would come for you.”

I leveled a stare on her frail face. Something about my eyes made her shiver, I could taste her fear and somehow, I loved it. How I wished others would fear me too, Lucas…his woman…Dom…they wouldn’t treat me like I was a statue to be ignored.

“Is that why you have refused to deal with the woman who took my father away from you? Coward! You chose to remain in penury than destroy the woman and take what belongs to you!”

“The coven forbade me to touch her. Your father was the one who wronged me, and judgment has been meted upon him.”

“Death,” I sneered, “That is the punishment you chose? For a man who willed everything he had to a strange woman, you chose death for him?”

“That was enough for me.”

“You see why I am better? I want my Lucas alive, in all his glory, with all the riches attached to his name. And you and the coven promised to give me that.”

“We tried to help you, maybe the universe doesn’t want it. Let us go to the coven tonight my child. The mother will explain to us the reason why everything failed.

I grabbed her by the throat, her whimper came out like the anguished cry of a cat. “I will not set my foot there again, not to listen to the foul words coming out of you people’s mouth.” I released her with a push, and she staggered backward.

Rubbing on her neck, she looked at me with skittish eyes. “What has happened to you, my child? Your heart is dark.”

“You know this already mama, the first day you took me to the coven, you knew this day would come.”

“You have taken too much of the substance and it has darkened your heart. You must stop!”

“Too late, mama.”

I looked away from her, my gaze went into the starless sky, pierced through. My plans became bare like an apparition.

“In the ancient dark forest of the mothers…in the gathering of the unseen worshipers of the night, I will take back what has been stolen.”

It was time to take my destiny into my own hands, and Dom was going to help me. I knew plenty about his privy, dirty acts. Secrets that would get him sacked if I let them out.

Thirty-One

Muyiwa

“WHY ARE YOU BEING NICE to me?”

Izonbou Diete-Spiff. Bossy, Bitchy, *‘I am better than you all’* daughter of the renowned oil magnet Chief Dexter Diete Spiff. she’d arrive at the resort a day after, with a chopper! Who did she think she was? Making such an entrance and reducing all of us to average class ladies.

“I know you don’t like me. you made that obvious the day you arrived. Trust me, the feeling is mutual.”

Ignoring me, she sat on the couch, bent to unzip her knee-high leather boots, peeled them off, and walked to the wardrobe. I don’t know how comfortable she was wearing leather boots in this tropical place.

“Okay,” I sighed. She wanted to make me feel like a fool, eh? Slapping me with silence, as if I wasn’t standing at the center of her suite, reeking of alcohol and sweat, my bra cups shifted up to my chest. I definitely looked more like a rain beaten ‘Madea,’ I have better curves than Madea though.

“You’re not going to say something?”

“What do you want me to say?” She lets out a sigh of frustration.

“Why are you being nice?”

“You don’t want me to be nice?” She asked. All the while going through the clothes in her wardrobe.

“You’re not supposed to be nice!”

She gave me a sardonic gaze, then flung a dress at me. “That is the only thing I have that’s your size, go clean yourself up in the bathroom. And I’ll make tea.”

“W-What… Are you trying to pity me now? I don’t need it. Not one help from you, you hear? I can take care of myself!”

“Then help yourself out of my room. Go, crawl back to him. I think he would

be on top of the other woman by now, you could join the party and make it threesome sex.”

I’ll throw this dress back at your face! You snobby bitch. Happy to see me low. Do you want me to beg? Choosing calmness against fight, I’ve had enough for the night, I dragged myself to her bathroom.

By the time I came out, she was seated at the mini dining by the corner of the room, sipping what must be tea, her legs crossed. She shifted another steaming cup towards me as I took the seat opposite hers.

I hesitated, then looked from the cup to the enemy turned friend…. No. She wasn’t a friend yet.

“What? You think I would poison you?”

“How would I know? You don’t like me. I don’t like you. It's natural I wear my caution cap around you.”

“Suit yourself.”

I didn’t know how much I needed the drink until the rich scent wafted into my nose. Lifting the cup, I sipped. “Wasn’t expecting it to taste this good,” I said, bringing the cup down to the table, and leaned back.

“So... how are you feeling now?” She asked.

“Fine. I have never been better.” On the contrary, I feel used. Abused. Deceived. Furious.

“Look at what he turned you into.” She tsked, shaking her head.

“I told you, I. Am. Fine!” I said through gritted teeth.

She raised a perfectly arched brow. No doubt done by the best esthetician. “And you are about to explode before me.”

“I am not exploding!” My nose flared, my fist clenched and unclenched. I need to calm down, but it’s not that simple. Argh! Curse you, Lucas!

She stared me hard in the face, then shook her head. “I wonder why you kept up with him this long. Why any woman would stick to a man that does nothing but give her headaches and restlessness.”

“I don’t want to talk about it.” Tilting my head to the side, I rubbed on my neck.

“I know why you couldn’t ditch his sorry ass before now, you have no life without him.”

“And why would I have no life without him? I told you I don’t want to talk about this.” I stood, looking down at miss know-it-at, my tea forgotten.

“Why don’t you want to talk about it? What are you avoiding? The truth?”

“You are one, annoying little bitch.” I spat, folding my arms.

“You have called me that before,” she said, standing up, picking our cups. “Gullible bunch, all of you,” she muttered. “I can never understand why you ladies chose to put up with shit from men. They are bastards. All they do is eat, fart, sleep and snore.”

“They give us orgasms. That is something.” I kicked my chair back and strode to the couch.

“Any woman who depends on a man to give her orgasm is either a fool or in love,” she responded. “Let me assure you, my vibrator gives me better sex than most men I have met.”

Obviously, you have never met a man like Lucas in bed. Not Lucas of two years after marriage, but the Lucas that got me squirting the first year we met and the Lucas that turned my brain to pudding two nights ago.

“You prefer the company of another woman then.” Wait, what? I blinked, then smiled. “If that is the reason you brought me here, girl you just got yourself a bad market. Pussies don't excite me, except my own.”

She stared at me with disgust, then shook her head with her lips downturned, “You are just impossible.”

“And you are what?” Okay, I have had enough. “I am getting out of here.”

Ignoring me, she disappeared into the kitchenette and reappeared later, picked her towel, and entered the bathroom.

“You are already trending on social media,” she scoffed when she reappeared minutes later, ruffling her rich, dark natural hair while holding her phone to her face.

She had the ‘I don’t give a fuck about anything that doesn’t add money to my pocket’ look, with a snooty attitude.

“Your community prick of a husband will be wishing he didn’t bring you along on this vacation.” She laughed.

Lucas could wish whatever he wants, I don’t give two fucks. My concern rather was me. By tomorrow, Lekki women would visit the usual gossip centers and I would be the topic of discussion.

I could imagine Montana narrating the whole scene as if she was here when it happened. I thought of her laughter, more like snorting, and the way she would be spitting out globs of saliva as she prattles.

“I will never be able to show my face in public again. My fans, my followers, they would know that everything I said to them about the unending love between us was all lies, tales made up to keep appearances,” I muttered more to myself.

And why hadn’t I gotten a call from my PA? None from my media assistant either. They should be bugging me with calls right now, presenting me with come-back plans to counter what the media must have put out there.

Chewing on my bottom lips, I decided that the first thing I would do when I get back to Lagos would be to sack both of them.

With the towel wrapped tightly around her chest, Izzy proceeded to the dressing table. “Stop being a cry baby and see this as an opportunity to grow your traffic. Then come up with a powerful media content that would push you up.”

“You don’t know what you are talking about.” I watched her from the mirror as she picked out a ball of cotton wool from a pack, to wipe her already gleaming face with a toner.

“Trust me, I do. You are the one that’s just too dumb to see what you can do with this chance.”

Done, she walked to the bed and lay down. “You can come to bed or sit there brooding over a man who doesn't care about you.”

Nursing a pounding head, I dragged my feet and flopped down on the other side of the massive bed. For a lady with her size, I wondered why she chose a room like this, massive space, massive wardrobe, massive bed.

Turning to my side, I slipped my phone under the pillow and closed my eyes. My fingers itched to check the internet, I needed to know exactly what was written and how it was said. The pictures, did they choose nice ones or the ones that I was looking like an angry Rhino?

“You know, girl… I have always admired you from afar,” Izzy said lazily.

Whipping my head back, I stared hard at her face, wondering if she was the one talking, or someone was speaking through her.

“Don’t be shocked, you are an interesting piece.”

Piece? I didn’t know if I should take that as a compliment, but… Okay…

“You have a vibe that makes people like you a lot, that is a great strength. And your social media skills are top-notch. I have watched some of your videos, you have a way with words.”

“Well… should I be glad that you have finally given me an appraisal?”

“You shouldn’t.”

“Oh.”

“I am not generous with compliments; I don’t know why I am giving you one.”

“Because you want to make up for being mean to me earlier?”

She gave me a sidelong glance. “You are a chipmunk.”

“I am not small and I don’t sound like a fast-forwarded audio recording.”

A fleeting smile crossed her face before she turned to her side, her back on me. “Good night Muyiwa. Should I still add Opeyemi to your name?”

“I don’t know…”

“You have always been proud to wear that name as a badge,” she said, yawning.

True. I have paraded that name like an achievement that deserved an Oscar, now I wasn’t sure if I still want it.

Thirty-Two

Lucas

I COULDN'T SUPPRESS THE LAUGHTER rolling out my mouth when I opened the door to find Muyiwa standing there, with the lady from last night. It wasn't because she came back after she'd made it clear that she was going to find a better man, but the fact that the Amish, ankle-length, very unsexy garment she wore made her look like a hospital patient.

Where the hell did she get this granny gown from and how was she able to come all the way from where she slept last night to this place wearing this? The Muyiwa I know wouldn't look at such a dress even if it had *Oscar de la Renta* as its brand name.

"Hi," I said to the lady, and her response was to roll her eyes and turn her face away. The lady's strong cheekbone and afro wrapped in a scarf like a pineapple gave her a Nubian Queen look.

I recognized the *go to hell you asshole* gesture. *Well, you go to hell too miss strong cheekbone*. I shut the door on the lady's face and marched through the room to the bar where I had sat the rest of the night out, nursing a double scotch, browsing through blog posts.

Muyiwa and I needed to talk. I had to explain what happened yesterday to her and by God! She had to tell me what was going on between her and that loser, Richard.

Perching on the barstool, I tried gathering my thoughts together before Muyiwa returned from the room. When she didn't, I got down to seek her out. She was in the villa's mini dressing room, furiously throwing clothes into an opened suitcase.

For a moment I stood watching, filled with confusion. Then reality hit me, and I roared. "What are you doing?" It was obvious she was making do with her threat. She was moving out.

"I have had enough," she said tightly. Her face contoured with fresh fury. "I

am done…wiping your ass…” More clothes, shoes, and lingerie were thrown inside the suitcase.

She wouldn’t dare leave! Not now for fuck’s sake.

But you wanted her to leave, the little voice in my head chipped in.

Not anymore.

“I thought you came over to talk?”

“I don’t want to say anything to you.” She zipped one suitcase and opened another, picked a silk shirt, and was about to throw it in when I held her hand.

“I know I’ve been such a jerk but don’t leave me, please.”

She froze, eyes fixed on our joined hands. For a split second, I felt her vulnerability. Guilt plagued me as I remembered the sincerity in her eyes when she said she had wanted me to love her.

The clothing in her hand slipped off as she brought her face up to meet my eyes. My heart began to pound so hard I could hardly breathe, then she slowly pulled her hand away and a sense of hollowness overtook me. It was as if my heart was yanked out of my chest.

Again, Onahi was right. I had fallen in love with my wife, and I felt so handicapped to do anything about it.

Or was there a way to salvage what was remaining of this relationship?

“Don’t you dare play this game with me Lucas, it doesn’t suit you. Save your acting for the movies. You know very well that there is only one reason you are acting like a lonely puppy right now, you can’t take it that I walked out first. No woman is supposed to dump Lucas Opeyemi.” She said and returned to stuffing her things inside the suitcase.

Done, she slammed the case shut, walked past me to get to the phone, then she dialed and spoke into the receiver.

A few minutes later, she answered the door, letting Dom and the Lady in. They helped her move the bags out.

“Wait!” I rushed to her, “Where will you be staying?”

“It is none of your concern now.”

“I brought you to this Island, and I am responsible for anything that happens to you. Please let me know where you will be staying - “

“Give her some space,” the other lady roughly cut in, disgusted.

I stared into the emptiness as they left, hoping Muyiwa would turn back, wanting her to turn back. I could hear her voice in my head, telling me she wanted us to build something beautiful again. Could still feel the warmth of her soft skin as I held her hand some minutes ago. A reminder of her body melting into mine the night we made love, how right it was to have her writhing with pleasure underneath me while I whisper into her ears, sucking the sweetness of her cunt and her mouth…

“She’s not coming back.”

“Jesus H Christ!” I gasped out of startlement rather than anger as I turned sharply to meet the old woman standing behind me. The head of her little dog popped out of her hand-woven bag.

“You don’t deserve her.”

Yeah…hate me world. Punish me. I knew this old woman had been sent by the universe to torment me. How does one begin to explain her appearance every time I had an issue with Muyiwa?

How did she even get close without being heard or noticed?

“Shameless man.” She glared.

Her stupid dog growled.

A heavy hiss slipped out of my mouth as I hurried past the old witch, shut the door, and walked through the room which reflected what I was feeling in my heart without Muyiwa, emptiness.

Thirty-Three

Muyiwa

HIS MOCKERY WAS SUBTLE. EVIDENT in the crinkle that formed at the tail end of his eyes, the lips twist, the squint, I knew he was stifling laughter when he saw me.

My immediate thought of action was to leave some terrible nail marks on his handsome face. Then he made another move when he realized I wasn't there to fall at his feet as he expected.

"Please, don't do this." His voice , that auditory caramel I once fell in love with, magnetized my fading feelings. The force was so strong, it almost made me tell Izzy not to bother, and run into his arms.

His breath had grazed through my neck, resonating in my core, awakening a sexual frisson that had refused to die down even now. It was difficult to curb the wild impulse to lean against his chest and beg him to caress me.

He knew how weak I was, how much of a fool I'd become after the night of our passionate lovemaking. He was playing on that - seducing me to desire him so senselessly, enough for me to want to stay.

"You were strong back there." Izzy patted my back as Dom loaded the last of my suitcases inside the shuttle.

Twirling the rope at the neck of my dress, I swallowed hard and mouthed a 'thank you.'

In one fluid moment, I turned my eyes towards the room's window. And Lucas was there. Our eyes locked, lasting long enough for me to see the flash of pain that crossed his face and for him to read through the hardness of my demeanor.

"The shuttle rider is waiting, ma'am," Dom reminded me.

"Okay." I settled in, waved at Izzy who claimed she had somewhere else to go from there. It took everything in me to order the rider to move.

I hated him now, so much that I wished he could have all his teeth knocked out by something or someone. Better still have his nails pulled out one by one.

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Beatrice picked up her fruit juice, one of the ladies that came into Gobota Specials with her, lifted white wine, the other reached for a second mimosa.

“To us,” announced Beatrice. “For our happiness,” she added.

The ladies drank.

“And to Muyiwa.” Beatrice was on one of her high moments. She looked like she had just been fucked. The old brood seemed to be having the best of time and I was sincerely happy for her. “We are officially welcoming her to the free women’s club,” she added, letting off high-pitched laughter.

I stared at my drink with no interest, regretting why I even chose to come down here. Lucas could walk in any minute, and I doubt if I would be able to contain my emotions.

Stroking my chin, I allowed my thoughts to wander.

My marriage with Lucas was actually ending. Everybody in the resort knew this, yet nobody had approached me to talk about it.

Surely, life is a bitch. One moment, you are the queen. Everyone wants to be around you because you are married to a rich, powerful, handsome Nollywood actor. And the next, the celebrity carpet is pulled off from under your feet because you chose to scrap the dickhead’s name off yours.

I watched Beatrice and the two misfits she hooked herself up with. Where had she found time to meet them? In between vacation fucks?

We made an incongruous quartet as we sat on the round table. The lady sipping white wine looked so young and pretty, and obviously painfully out of place here. The other one - designer labeled to the eyebrow, frighteningly skinny, her wig looked so full that I felt a slight headache looking at it. Beatrice, old enough to be the mother of those two, what was she doing with them?

“I almost fucked Lucas once,” the one with the 100-ton wig said, a faraway look in her eyes.

“Yeah, yeah. He must have died and gone to hell and then given a cold fish like you to fuck as a punishment,” the other one retorted, earning herself a

stinging stare.

I didn’t need anyone to tell me that the two were Locals— their heavy accents gave them away, even though they seemed to be trying so hard to sound American.

“I had followed Memia to Nigeria to produce a movie and he was there the movie star, Lucas, he was at the location…I and Memia weren’t dating then, but he was into me…” Miss heavy wig defended.

“Your Memia is always into everything that wears a shirt,” the other lady remarked loudly.

“Shut up, Senait. You know, you are jealous that no man has approached you for a committed relationship after your sick husband died on top of another woman.”

“And you are a bloody liar, you have never been to Nigeria not to talk of having the movie star honoring you with a glance. You don't even know him.”

“Come on girls, shush!” Beatrice intervened, “Muyiwa doesn’t want to hear all this, she is going through a lot now.” She gave me a patronizing gaze, making my discomfort more ‘discomforting.’

I shouldn’t be here, not with these two wannabe’s Beatrice brought with her to my table.

“I am so sorry sweetie, I saw you from the entrance and thought you would need company,” she crooned, “After what happened between you and Lucas, you know.”

And you chose to tell these two dimwits about it, as if that wasn't bad enough, you brought them to ruin my day? I wanted to ask.

“You see, Fatimah here is dating the biggest producer here in Gobota.” She gestured at Miss heavy hair who eagerly nodded. “And Sanait moved back to the single women market four months ago.”

“What happened to her man?” I asked, not interested.

“Dead. In active service, if you understand what I mean,” Miss big hair sniggered.

“He deserved worse,” Beatrice added.

I turned to Beatrice, “Oh, so you knew him?”

“Not personally. I heard them talking about him at the Park, that’s where I met these two…”

“Everyone knew Sanait’s husband,” Miss big hair interrupted, I could see how much she was trying to impress me. “His dick stood at attention whenever a good-looking woman entered a room.”

“Thank you for reminding me,” the offended friend snapped.

“Don’t be angry dear,” Beatrice came in, “Which man in the entertainment industry doesn’t have a straying dick? Dogs - all of them. Look at Muyiwa’s husband for example…”

I shut her an *‘I don’t want to be discussed, thank you very much’* stare. Why did I change my mind about hopping into the next flight back to Lagos? That would have been the best thing for me but there was going to be a wedding at the resort tomorrow, Lucas would be there, so should I. To prove to him - to myself, that I could have fun without him.

Really

Shut the fuck up

I was about to tell Beatrice that I couldn’t stand any more of these two ladies with their uneven makeup and annoying bush attitudes when I caught Dom approaching us, his eyes on me.

Lucas has sent him, I thought as he scurried to my side, bent, and whispered into my ears. I excused myself from the ladies who were ogling at Dom so shamelessly.

Nymphos.

“I am so sorry for the inconvenience, ma’am.” He bowed respectfully, his hand behind him.

I stopped in my stride and asked him. “Who is this lady?”

“Awate, the lady that you…uhm…that was with your husband.”

I should be angry, but I wasn’t - I poured the last of that emotion out like a cup of bad coffee while I was having my bath this morning.

“You know her?” I faced Dom.

“Yes, Ma’am. She works…used to work here.”

Interesting. We’d been here for just five days and Lucas had already fucked one of the resort staff and promised her marriage? How many more? How many did he shag?

“Since when?”

“Uh?”

“You knew my husband was seeing her.”

The big man tugged on his tie that looked like a strangling rope, glanced at me with discomfort. “I know she had her eyes on him from the first day you people arrived.”

“And what else?”

“I don’t know…he called me to come to pick her from the villa…that’s all I know,” Dom said. “But she is sorry. That is what she wants me to tell you,” he added immediately.

“I don’t understand.”

“She wants to meet. To apologize to you personally.”

“And why isn’t she here? Why send you?”

“She no longer works here,” Dom said solemnly. “The management heard about last night and relieved her of the job. Our guests-you are special to us and her actions were grossly inappropriate.”

I struggled to make sense of what Dom was saying. The spidery lady wanting to see me was a little bit mind-boggling. Last night, the lady had specifically called me an intruder, had referred to me as the second woman, the one stopping Lucas from being true to his vow to her.

I shook my head. “I refuse to go see her.” Why should I? I was no longer with Lucas and shouldn’t bother about this girl’s apology.

“She said she wants to tell you everything concerning her and Lucas, she wants to bare her mind and be free. She said you would understand.”

Well… what do I know…this could be the content I need to make the perfect comeback. What other story would best appeal to the emotions of followers?

Thirty-Four

Lucas

“I WANT TO SEE YOU in Lagos first thing tomorrow morning!”

“Huh?” I trapped the phone between my ear and my shoulder while working on my shirt’s cuffs.

“Get your ass down to Lagos tonight or kiss this MTN endorsement goodbye!”

Sunny was on the phone yelling as usual. And when Sunny yelled, everyone scurried like rabbits to do his bidding.

“Why would you even pack up and leave just like that? You have two movie scripts waiting for you to look at, one unfinished shoot, and an endorsement that is about to be called off if you don’t get your ass down here!”

I could visualize Sunny pacing around his office. His craggy face, lined, wrinkled. A stick of cigar hung loosely between his lips.

Has he heard about the fight too?

“And what is this thing about you and Muyiwa going dirty on each other?”

That answered my question. Sunny had definitely read about our shameful act. The old bull ate social media for breakfast.

“You know what this could do to your career?”

The hell I do, I huffed. I am a badass actor; producers wouldn’t resist the hunger for me because of a mere squabble with my wife. I was a walking blockbuster.

“Are you an idiot?” Sunny barked.

I’d love nothing more than to tell him to go fuck himself. He was acting as if I wasn’t the best thing he has attached to his career. I was the name that brought the deals and the money. I, not his big fat face. Without him, companies would still choose me for endorsement, producers would still want me in their movies.

But then, I wouldn't want to cross Sunny. While he may not have done much to push me up the ladder, he was capable of ruining me. Sunny has been known to come from the streets - his *'hood'* approach towards business said it all.

"I haven't spent up to a week here."

"I don't give a fucking shit! You hear me? I don't give a damn," he bellowed. "A huge amount of money is about to be taken away from us all because you couldn't get your shit together. Your split is 60 million for a five-year endorsement. I need you here!"

It was always about the money.

"I will be coming back soon."

"Don't try this shit with me. you are meeting me tomorrow morning, 9 am, at the MTN plaza so we can salvage the situation."

"Can't do it," I replied, taking a final inventory of my look.

"Why not?"

The old man must be choking on the smoke from his large cigar now, his voice came out hoarse.

"Have an important meeting with someone this evening," which was true. I was supposed to meet a dude - Tobe, at the party… said something about making me the new face of his brand. But that wasn't the whole reason. Muyiwa was. "I will not want to call off the meeting."

"You chump. I want you here in the morning, period!"

The old man must be steaming hot from his ears now.

"And come with Muyiwa." He added.

"What?"

"She is your ticket to getting the deal back!"

"How?"

What kind of fuckery is this? When has Muyiwa become the criterion for any of my endorsements and roles? For Christ's sake, my name alone sells products, my face on a coffin could raise the dead! They know this.

"It's MTN 'love unlimited bundle,' and you don't blame them for reconsidering their choice after the video that went viral. If they see the both of you, they may reappraise."

"Jesus Christ, old man," I growled. Glanced at my watch. Half an hour has

passed since the bachelor's party started and I was sure Tobe would be thinking I'd decide against his offer and wasn't bold enough to say it to his face. "Muyiwa wouldn't even talk to me."

"Isn't she your wife?"

"She alone can answer that. Come on Sunny, Muyiwa is breathing fire right now…"

"If you have to convince her or drag her by force, do it. Just get her down here for this deal. Promise her a percentage or something… just get your ass down here by morning."

I scratched my head, glancing at the television where an advert of the Resort was playing.

"Are you still there?"

"I think you should call Muyiwa yourself."

"Don't try to be funny Lucas because you suck at it. Get your wife down here or you will watch this deal slip off our hands. I will not forgive you if it does."

After the call ended, I thoughtfully shook my phone, chewing on my bottom lips while thinking how messed up the situation was. A five-year endorsement worth 60 million Naira annually - too big to ignore.

But Muyiwa…Christ!

I have had a rough time trying not to think about her so much. Yet, everything seemed to remind me of her, the bathroom that still smells of her scented shampoo, the toothbrush she left over the sink, the one bra that sat at the corner of the wardrobe. She must have left that on purpose, and now Sunny and his MTN deal.

I flumped my bulk on the sofa, abruptly closing my eyes as anger washed through me.

Muyiwa had suddenly become indispensable to my career and my peace of mind.

Christ! How was that even possible?

Flashes of white-hot pain hit me hard as I pictured Muyiwa pulling her suitcases out of this room. The hurt I saw in her eyes - the regret.

Thirty-Five

Muyiwa

I GLANCED AT MY WATCH, 6:46 PM

“So, where is she?” I asked Dom, worried that we’d been here in the past seven minutes and she was yet to make an appearance. And why didn’t anyone warn me that the mosquitos here have teeth and claws?

Then, there was this bald dwarf man with a face shaped like a defeathered chicken butt, an 8% downloaded jaw size and abundant hair sprouting from his ears, standing beside me - ogling and grinning like a mad man in a trance.

“She said she would be here waiting,” Dom replied, looking more worried. “I don’t know what is keeping her…”

The bald man now had his eyes fixed on my chest, sucking on his bottom lips. “Nutter,” I muttered, shuffling three steps farther from him.

“She is here,” Dom hissed.

My gaze followed his finger to the other side of the road where a girl with carrot-colored hair just alighted from a tricycle and was making it towards us.

“Is that her?”

The hair. Was that a disguise? Her wig was a lush black weave the other night. This one reminded me of hay in a cattle pen, my teeth gritted at the sight of it.

“She has been crying,” Dom said. “I tried telling her it wasn’t her fault—what Mr. Lucas did to her was terrible.”

“She told you?”

“Yes.”

I gave the girl a close scrutiny. With eyes the size of a saucer, and dark shadows under protruded cheekbones, she looked so frail.

Is this who Lucas chose over me?

“I…am sorry for keeping you,” she said. “It wasn’t easy to get a transport from the village to this place.”

“Dom said there is something you want to say to me.” There was no need hiding my disgust for her.

“Yes,” she replied, her head down, her fingers plucking her hair. “I know you don't want to hear anything I have to say but....”

“For the life of me, I don't,” I snapped. Why did I even agree to be here in the first place? This girl that looked like a rabid dog wasn't worth my time.

“Please, you have to hear my story, then you will understand why I did what I did.”

“And why do you think I give a fuck about you and whatever shit you want me to hear?” *You’re here already, no need to throw a tantrum.*

“Because...because you are a woman like me and wouldn't want to crucify me without hearing me out. I heard you have a good heart.”

Good heart my fat ass. I should give her the middle finger and walk away, then I glanced at Dom, and he nodded his plea.

“10 minutes,” I said.

“Not here.” Her eyes darted from side to side. “Let me take you to a place where I can speak freely.”

“What? Hell, no!”

“Awate,” Dom spoke. “She is not going with you to the village, tell her everything here and leave.”

“Security will have me arrested if I am seen here. I swear I will not harm her...believe me Dom. You can come along if you don't trust her with me,” the girl said, then turned to me. “I only want a place where I will not be looking over my shoulders, you will be back before total darkness. And I want to show you some things...”

My phone vibrated and I retrieved it from my pocket. Lucas. What does he want?

“I will lose my job if the boss finds out that I am not in the resort,” Dom was saying.

The phone vibrated again, and I checked. It was a message from Lucas;

Where are you? We need to talk.

We need to talk *bawo*? How dare he? I hissed and shoved the phone back inside my pocket. What does he want to talk about? Did anyone tell him about my meeting with this lady and he…

That could be it!

“Dom. I will go with her.”

“But ma’am.”

“Don’t worry, you can alert uhm…some security operatives if I don’t get back soon.”

“I will not keep you more than necessary, I promise,” the girl said.

Thirty-Six

Lucas

“HEY! MR. MOVIE STAR!”

I turned to the jeering croak.

Mathias Cookey. I ignored him and increased my stride.

“I heard your woman abandoned you.” He fell in line with me, panting heavily. “Phew, how do you young men walk so fast without feeling it?”

“Because we are young men,” I bit off. “And you, old man, should consider shedding some weight. It would do you some good.”

The guffaw that roared out of his throat made me slacken my pace. “Me? Cut down some weight? Boy, I am not about becoming the next James Bond.” A snort concluded the laughter, “Ladies like me as I am.”

“What do you want?” I asked.

“Oh, to let you know that you are an asshole.”

“What?”

“An asshole. That’s what you are.”

“I can’t believe this. You ran all the way from there,” I pointed, “To me, just to call me an… asshole?”

What was wrong with everyone today? First, it was Onahi calling me a sonofabitch and a dick over the phone when I wanted to explain what happened between Muyiwa and I. Then Sunny ordering me to get Muyiwa down to Lagos, as if it was so easy to deal with pissed-off women.

Now this one. Really?

“Are you high on cocaine?” I asked.

“No. Asshole with a pretty face,” he snared. “I know an idiot when I see one, and you are an idiot.”

Two girls approached us, all teeth, tits, and hair. One was the girl with the halter top I met the first time I visited the Gobota Specials, the other a tomcat, smiling and pushing her wares for me to notice.

“That, my friend, is what made you an asshole.”

“Huh?”

The man pushed his face towards the girls. “You will never learn,” he mocked. “Chicks like those should be left for men like us. But you dear boy, have a woman who is heavily endowed. Yet you rather prefer Beavers.”

“I don’t have time for this.” I resumed walking.

Nice, I thought. I’d go from the most celebrated star to the most scorned cretin in just two nights. Swallowing back the fresh anger speeding up my throat, I grabbed the Eclipse club’s door handle.

“I will make sure she never remembers your name when I finally have her,” the man shouted.

Withdrawing from the door, I marched back to the man. Jabbed my finger on his nose. “You will never have her,” I gritted, “Not in your life.”

Aware of Passers-by who had their eyes on us, I retracted my finger and tapped on the man’s lapel patronizingly. “I will decapitate your fat neck if you get any close to my wife,” I said through clenched teeth.

“She is no longer your…”

“I will kill you,” I said, inserting enough threat in my tone for him to understand that I meant every word. Convinced, I acknowledged the onlookers with a nod and walked into Eclipse club.

Thirty-Seven

Muyiwa

“ARE WE THERE YET?”

We have been walking for the past fifteen minutes since we alighted from a tricycle and guided our feet into this godforsaken part. My legs hurt terribly, and I swear I would collapse if the building ahead wasn’t the local bar she talked about.

“Almost there,” the girl replied.

I was seriously regretting not declining this senseless journey. How would I find my way back to the resort if this lady decides to leave me here?

I could call Dom or Lucas. No, Dom.

My feet jabbed on something and slid in different directions. Next thing, I was executing a graceless split, landed on my butt, and sat there for a while.

Great, just great, I thought, as I rose to my feet. Now I had the pains that spiraled through me, and the ruins that have befallen my white knickers to also worry about.

“Hey, lady!” I slipped my sandals off my feet, one had lost its heel while the other - well, it was as good as gone too. “There goes my expensive BY FAR Bibi sandals,” I muttered under my breath and threw the sandals over my shoulders. “Lady…” I called out again. “Wait up!”

She stopped, turned to face me. “We are almost there,” she said, “Please.”

The bush part was gradually turning into a forest with a snake road in the middle. “I don’t think…I can…continue…this journey…anymore,” I panted.

“But we are almost there. Look!” She pointed towards the building.

“That looks more like a ghost house to me.”

“This is a village,” she spat. “The government has not sent development down to this place.”

She resumed walking. Meandering through the bush path with surprising agility— one I hadn't seen in her earlier. Deciding against following her, I fished out my phone and peered at the surface.

"I cannot do this anymore."

The girl turned abruptly. "We must continue."

It was casket black around us but I could still see that something had changed about her - I could feel it, hear it seeping from the tone of her voice.

"What? Hell no, I am not moving a foot from here."

The girl walked a few steps back and leaned her face towards mine, I could smell garlic from her breath. "You husband snatcher, what were you thinking when I asked you to follow me?"

I captured the hideous gleam of her eyes, the ghastly smile that grazed through her face before my phone screen turned dark.

"I don't know what is going on, but I am getting out of here now." I turned my phone on, ready to dial a number. "I am calling Dom."

"No, you are not," she moved so fast, slapping the phone off my hand, it landed at the other side of the bush.

"That is an iPhone you just threw away - it's worth a lot of money!"

"You are not just a fool, you are vain." She hissed. "Your life is about to end and all you care about is your phone?"

My life is about to end?

No Lord, not today. The plan was for me to join the heavenly orchestra at a very ripe old age, the method of dying? I have not discussed that yet with God but it sure wasn't going to be in the hand of Lucas' vindictive wife…girlfriend whatever.

Seeing an opportunity, I pushed the girl aside. Dived into the bush where I was sure the phone must have landed and searched furtively, pulling grasses and stuff I don't know.

"Where is it…where is it…where is it…" I found the phone the same time the girl grabbed me by my ankle.

I kicked her with my free leg. She yelped as her hands slipped off taking my ankle beads with her.

Now on all fours, I scurried off to the opposite direction and kept going. My ears picked up murmurs and footsteps. I turned my head and narrowed my eyes

in search of any human figure. None was in sight.

“The bitch was going to kill me!” I muttered as I released the air trapped in my lungs

Not that I couldn’t take down the spidery girl if it was fist combat, but she was acting like she had been possessed by a demon. How does one fight a witch? I’ve got no holy water, cross, or priest.

My knees were on fire. I couldn't continue the aimless crawling, so I sat on the ground and brought the phone to my face. My pulse rose as I punched rapidly. Dom didn’t pick.

With my heart in my mouth, I searched for Lucas’ number - my eyes multitasking, searching the screen, and combing around.

I dialed.

Tears of frustration filled my eyes as he didn’t pick.

Where was Lucas when I needed him?

Probably screwing another woman.

My fear turned to horror when I heard a rustle nearby, then approaching footsteps and voices.

Tucking the phone back into my pocket, I crawled deeper into the bush, wishing I could become invisible.

The voices were getting louder. I could hear the girl, she was saying something in a language I couldn't understand.

God, please help me. I could deal with one sick girl, but adding two or more weirdos to herself? Saving my precious life was the best bet.

While I was still contemplating how to make myself invisible, I felt some itsy-bitsy teeny legs crawling around my feet and arms like water. In no time, they were running up my thighs and my shoulders, heading towards my butt and my neck.

Clenching my teeth, eyes tightened, I suppressed the urge to jump up, scream, and shake those weaponized, armored plated soldier ants off my body. The girl and her squaddies were out there, searching, listening. One movement, one scream, one involuntary gasp and it would be over.

My mind and limbs were on fire, the stings of the ants on my thighs and arms weren’t stopping. Then I felt them on my face, my stomach, my back. In seconds, the air was rent with my scream, I ran, blindly, deeper into the bush.

The girl and her minions gave hot pursuit and in minutes, I was on the ground struggling to free myself from the grip of my captor, as well as get rid of the ants that had declared war on my body.

A sharp pointy object pressed against my ribs. “Get up, slowly.” A deep rough voice commanded.

“I don’t want to die…”

“Up!” The girl added.

“Okay…okay.” I staggered to my feet, yelped as a terrible pain shot from my ankle to my brain.

What have I broken? Oh God…I have a wedding to attend tomorrow.

“Your phone.” one of the men demanded.

“Huh?”

“Do it!” The tip of the weapon pressed deeper against my skin.

“Okay.” I handed the phone over and watched them deliberate among themselves. I counted three men - added to the girl, muttering in their native language.

“How do you turn it off?” The girl asked.

Who is the dumb one now? “It’s an iPhone, highly sophisticated, only the owner can turn…”

One of the men turned unexpectedly and struck me full force across the face, screaming his displeasure in his language. The force of his blow threw me to the floor, and I laid there, stunned, suddenly realizing my peril. My body was burning from the stings by the ants, my cheek from the latest punch. I want to close my eyes and die, but I thought of designer iPhone pouches. Something to take my mind off what was happening.

“Press and hold the side button until the power off slider appears.” The instruction rolled out of my mouth.

The girl did the job.

“Now, get up and keep walking,” the one that smote me ordered.

Heartless animals, I thought as sobs rose from my bowel. I whimpered, sniffled and swallowed the metallic taste of blood. Scrambling up to my feet, I winced as the pain in my ankle became unbearable.

“Move!”

Where the heck was I supposed to walk to? It’s fucking dark and the last time I checked; I wasn’t a nocturnal animal.

The one behind me nudged me roughly and we continued the journey.

Thirty-Eight

Lucas.

I HAD ALREADY DOWNED HALF of the red wine served me by the bartender, with some Twin Bliss delicious tidbits, and Tobe was nowhere in sight. Swiveling on the stool, I searched faces trooping in and out for Tobe while wishing that somehow…maybe…Muyiwa would walk in.

“Muyiwa,” I growled. Since she moved out, I have been thinking about her a lot. I’d tried to reach her, but she kept making it difficult for me. Her friends were not helping either, they have sworn to make the rest of my stay in Twin Bliss miserable.

“For goodness’ sake, Muyiwa, have a heart,” I dialed her number again. Switched off.

Oh, come on! Why was Muyiwa being unreasonably difficult? She gave me a call some minutes ago, which I missed - not deliberately, now she switched the damn thing off?

Upset, I texted her and hoped she would at least reply.

Pulling my face up, I watched a couple getting it down on the dance floor. A beep from my phone captured my attention.

“Sunny.” I hissed and dropped the phone on the bar top. Refilling my glass, I returned my eyes to the floor. My gaze locked with a redhead, and I gave her a cursory nod, sipped and decided to busy myself with my phone.

“Hi, handsome,” a sultry voice crooned close to me. When I looked up, Redhead was standing before me. “Want to get a pretty lady a drink?” she bent forward and whispered to my ears. I flinched, her alcoholic breath could fill a perfume bottle.

Downing the remaining wine in the glass, I gave Redhead my attention.

“Let me show you what I can do,” she said, turning her back on me, ass arched, she began to grind on my groin. I thought it was only people of class that

visited this place, but I guess getting tipsy can make some lower themselves.

“Mama! Mama! I died and went to pussy heaven!” A guy commented beside me, his hungry eyes on the Redhead.

“Dream on, asshole,” Redhead replied.

“Right between your legs babe!”

Redhead hissed, turned, and sat astride me, putting her tongue to work immediately. I might as well indulge since Muyiwa had moved on with her life.

If coldness had a face, it would be me at that moment. I couldn’t feel a thing. No fire, no warmth.

What a waste, I thought. Normally, it wouldn’t take any honeybun half of this effort to get me hard and ready for action.

But my little Lucas seemed to have developed this numbness towards other women after the night I made love to Muyiwa. It was a sweet, mind searching, body possessing lovemaking— like we have not had it for a very long time. Maybe because I wanted to remind her that she was mine...

Whatever was the reason for that night of passion didn’t leave me the same man I was before.

Redhead was becoming restless. She was executing her best moves— thrusting her barely covered breast dangerously close to my mouth. Her tongue, still working hard, has moved towards my left ear, and surprisingly, I was getting pissed by it all.

Muyiwa has undone me. God! I craved her. She should be the one astride me, groping around my face, her tongue working wonders on my earlobes.

I wanted a repeat of that night— over and over again.

I suddenly got up, sending the Redhead flying. She was about to spew a tirade of insults when I searched in my pocket, took out several twenty-dollar bills, and handed it to her, “Not in the mood,” I said.

Coming to the bar was a bad idea— there was nothing for me here and Tobe wasn’t showing up either. I was going to call it a night when I saw Tobe waltzing towards me with another guy. I relaxed back on the stool.

“Sup, Luc,” Tobe said, slapping palms with me, “This is my guy, Tyrell. Ty, meet Lucas Opeyemi, Nollywood’s hottest sensation.”

Nollywood’s hottest sensation. Ha! More like Nollywood’s bum.

I turned to Tyrell. This is the guy screwing another man’s fiance? I thought

the sorrow-soaked man I met here two nights ago was… my bad.

“Hey,” Tyrell said, pumping hands with me.

“Hey, Tyrell.” Quite handsome, I observed. Though he looked a little distraught.

“Oh, and this is Rasheed,” Tobe says, pointing at the bespectacled face guy that had been sitting two stools away from me. “He’s Dexter’s head of IT. I’m still trying to poach him for Rodio.”

Dude had his eyes on his phone all the while and didn't bother to throw me a ‘Hello’. Or maybe he wasn't aware of me.

“Keep wishing,” Rasheed replied.

“Wishes come true,” Tobe said and turned to me. “When did you get here, man?”

“I was here before you, that’s what matters.”

The four of us burst out laughing.

“So, Lucas,” Rasheed started. “You know this pain in the ass, Tobe.”

“Yup, via mail. Met him one on one for the first time during the tour.” Tobe was the first to recognize me that day.

“Dude, you ignored me, I had to introduce myself anew to you,” Tobe cut in.

“I am sorry,” I said. “You guys want something to drink? Bill is on me.”

“You owe me a deal, not a drink. You are becoming the new face of my brand.”

“Come on, we haven’t talked terms.”

“Will send mine to your email tonight, you send yours.”

“You know that’s not how these things work…”

“That’s how it will be for us, sexy face,” Tobe added.

A fascinating young man, that one. With the patience of a dove. He had been pitching for this deal for months now, religiously sending emails that I didn’t think necessary to reply to. Sunny didn’t pick interest either.

“Okay, I will be expecting the documents.” I got off the stool as the DJ began a mad scratch on Burna Boy’s *Ye*. “But you know I don’t come cheap,” I shouted over my shoulders as I strode off, moving my body to the music.

I was gradually pushed my way towards the exit when I sighted Dom.

Thirty-Nine

Muyiwa

THE SCUTTLING FEET ON MY body had reduced, but the pain lingered. Once in a while, the man guarding me would grunt, slap and scratch a part of his body while muttering under his breath. I guess he was having a share of the ant bites.

“Where are you taking me?” I asked, my terror intensifying as we got to a cave and the man behind me pushed me in.

My eyes strained to pick their faces in the darkness. “I can transfer you some money right now if that is what you want.”

A billion-fold hiss of water dripping in the cave aggravated my fear. Relief washed through me when illumination came, each of the men had a torch and had turned them on at once.

My relief was short-lived after my eyes adjusted to the light and I saw their faces. Fierce! That was the only word that could describe their looks.

“How much do you want? I can give you any amount you ask for...just name the amount.” I pleaded.

“Your life,” the girl retorted.

“What? Why?”

“With you out of the way, Lucas will have no problem taking me back to Lagos as his wife and I will have all the money I want.”

“Wait,” I turned to her. “You think… He wouldn’t accept you back because of me?”

“Don’t play ignorant with me, fat woman.”

“He wasn’t going to keep me,” I cut in. Engaging her in a discussion could buy me some time. “We are getting a divorce.”

“You are lying.”

“I am not!” As much as I wouldn't want to give this spidery girl the pleasure of gloating, I had to play this card so she could leave me the fuck alone. “I mean…it was all fake…whatever we did in public. Our marriage is dead”

She leaned her face to mine; I could see triumph dancing in her eyes. “It worked.”

What worked?

She turned away from me, gave off a throaty laughter. “The mothers, they weren't lying to me.”

I didn't understand a single thing she just said but I felt the tension around us relaxing, to my advantage. “You will let me go now, won't you?” I asked.

She gave me an intent stare, for a millisecond I thought she was going to set me free.

“Move!” she ordered.

“What now? I just told you Lucas and I are…”

“I am no fool, fat one. I know what you're doing, and I will not fall for it. Move!”

Asking me to move my legs was like asking a cripple to walk. I must have fractured a bone. “I can’t take another step forward!”

The four engaged in another incomprehensive argument.

“I don’t have time for this,” the girl growled, “Get her to the place anyway you can!”

“My legs can’t move,” I protested again.

“Shame. I would have loved to give your body a befitting burial at the bottom of the river.”

The she-devil was planning to drown me?

“You don’t have to do this. Lucas isn't worth this whole effort, trust me.”

The girl’s face tightened. “No more words from you,” she hissed. Turning to the men, she said; “We are wasting time.”

Forty

Lucas

“I BEG YOUR PARDON?” I spaced my words carefully so Dom would understand the effect of what he just told me.

What could Awate want from Muyiwa?

Money?

Awate wasn’t smart enough to pull this kind of stunt, someone must have helped her - must be using her. Someone interested in cashing out big-time… I flashed Dom a suspicious glance.

Oh, God! let it not be what I am thinking.

“I swear I know nothing about it,” Dom said, reading my thoughts.

“You let her out of this resort, handed her over to a woman she doesn’t know anything about, someone that swore to harm her!” It was hard to believe this guy had no hand in this, even his sudden fidgeting was a giveaway.

“She pleaded with me to allow her to meet with your wife, that was all I did.”

“But you saw how mad she was the other night!”

“I thought - ” Dom frowned. “She told me things about you. things that you did to her.” His voice mellowed, “I thought I was helping.”

I stared at the huge man with disbelief. How can one be this big but lack a working brain?

“Dom. I am going to call your boss this minute if you do not tell me exactly what is going on. What does Awate want with my wife!”

“I don’t know…” he repeated, “She said she wanted to meet your wife and I arranged it…I was only trying to help.”

“The hell you were trying to help,” I snapped. Grabbed the big man’s shoulder and propelled him towards the elevator. “We are going in search of her.”

“But…”

“I will make sure you never work anywhere in your life again if anything happens to my wife.”

Jesus H Christ! I felt like smashing Dom’s head on the elevator metal wall right now. And Muyiwa - how could she be so stupid to follow a total stranger, a woman she’d seen and heard raving madness the other day?

“How do we get to the village by this time of the night?” I asked, glancing at my wristwatch.

“It will be hard, sir. Most taxi drivers must have retired.”

“Jesus.”

I retrieved my phone from my pocket, dialed Onahi, it rang but he didn’t pick. “Where are you man,” I gritted and redialed the number. Same result. I decided to send an SMS, hoping he would read it early enough to send some help. I wasn’t going to trust Dom - dude could have some of his associates waiting somewhere.

“I just called someone, a shuttle rider who would get us to the exit.”

“How would that erase the fact that my wife is alone with a madwoman, somewhere? I don’t know what she has planned for her. What she’s doing to her!”

I swallowed hard to curb my apprehensiveness. Muyiwa is a strong, independent woman who surely knows how to take care of herself.

Yet I couldn’t help the chill that ran down my spine at the thought of what could happen to her.

Jesus! Muyiwa what have you gotten us into, going off with that deranged woman?

“I know someone that would take us to her place tonight. He owes me one.”

“Well, give the dude a call!”

The shuttle rider arrived, and we hopped in with all earnestness. “Can this thing run faster?” I shouted at the rider as dread and anger warred within me.

I will kill Awate. Once I get to her, I will kill her.

And Muyiwa. If only she had told me about this visit. If she had at least picked my calls. A vice clamped my chest, I struggled to even my breath. I care about Muyiwa - much more than I could have admitted before now.

It was all my fault, I thought, my grip on the shuttle sidebar tightened. Awate was going to harm my wife because of my stupid, unguarded action. I felt the muscles of my face stiffened at the thought of this.

“What does she want?” I asked Dom without facing him.

“Sir, she only told me she wants to tell ma’am the story of both of you,” the big guy stuttered, “And apologize for causing her trouble. I swear I didn’t suspect she had something else in mind.”

“And why did it take you this long to report her disappearance to me?” I could taste my anger. “You left my wife out there alone, Dom.”

“Awate was supposed to bring her back…she promised to do so…”

I was no longer listening. What mattered to me was to get to my Muyiwa before it would become too late.

After waiting for almost an eternity, the taxi driver Dom called arrived and we set out for the journey. I wished the taxi could take to the air. For fuck’s sake, every passing minute seemed to send fear racing down the pit of my stomach.

“It’s over there.” Dom pointed as the taxi came to a halt. I hopped down, threw three money notes at the driver, and followed Dom who had veered off the road to a footpath that ran between acres of farmland on both sides.

I took several deep breaths to slow my escalating heartbeat as we walked down the road.

We got to a gate and Dom knocked. Waited. Knocked again. After a while the gate swung open and the light from Dom’s torch captured the time-ravaged face of an elderly woman.

She slapped the touch off, moving the direction of light away from her face as she swore in what must be her native language. Dom said something to her.

As the two converse, the woman’s voice rose progressively until she was almost screaming. Then she turned to face me, her nefarious breath grazed through my nose.

“What do you want here?”

“Ma...”

Ptua! She spat on my face, a stinky goo that slithered down from the bridge of my nose to my lips. I wiped it with the back of my hand and cleaned my hand on my trousers.

“You don’t have the right to show your face here.”

“Please, my wife is in danger.”

“That is your problem, not ours.” The woman made to retire but I held her arm. “Let go of me, you son of the devil.” She twisted her hand to loosen my grip, but I held firm.

“I don’t deserve your mercy, I know. But please. help me.” Every fucking passing minute could be disastrous for Muyiwa. “I will do anything you ask of me as long as my wife returns to me.”

Dom came in at this point. In their native language, the two spoke some more, all I had to do was wait, and pray.

“She is not here,” Dom announced with resignation.

“Who?”

“Awate.”

“She left with my wife! You said so yourself…”

“My daughter hasn’t been home since yesterday,” the woman cut in.

“What are you saying?” Fear rose from my bowel to my throat like fireballs.

Dom had slid back to speaking with the woman in their native language.

“If you say she showed up at the resort and took his wife away, then I am assuring you she didn’t return here. I have been home all day,” the woman said.

“Then, where could she take her?” Dom asked.

The woman shook her head. “That night you sent her home, I saw the devil rose in her. She was bitter and I feared she was nursing evil.”

“Where could she be?” I shouted.

The woman stared hard at me. “Do not raise your voice at me. You brought this upon yourself. I am only sorry for the woman that is suffering because of you.”

We slid into silence - the woman, she should know where Awate is, she had to know.

“There is one place she must have taken her,” the woman finally said. Dragging her feet forward, she pointed up the road. “The forest. It is on the other side of the major road.”

“What?”

She glared at me and turned back to Dom. “If she is with her, then she would take her to the sacred forest.”

“Why?” Even before the question left my lips, I knew the answer. Awate wasn’t going to ask for money to let Muyiwa go. There was something evil, something dark going on and Muyiwa would be the sacrificial lamb.

The woman, pointing her finger at me, said. “You made her this way. It was all your fault. I hope by the time you get there, your wife is still breathing, if not…”

She hissed, then walked inside her compound, shutting the gate on our faces.

Forty-One

Muyiwa

MY SKIN WAS IN A sorry state by the time we left the cave to the other side of the forest that looked primordial.

The dense air, mixed with a pungent odor, made it difficult to breathe. I coughed hard, hitting my chest to prevent myself from choking to death.

One of the men with the flashlight cursed loudly. I guess they weren't aware that coming to this part of the forest was part of the deal.

The second guy switched his light on, illuminating the forest even more while giving me the most frightening view of my life.

The entire area was ideal for people who adored the night, as well as a good home for flesh-eating beasts.

I shuddered to the wailing sounds that suddenly ghosted through the trees. Squeezed my eyes shut until it quietened, then I slowly opened them.

The girl whose frame had turned into a silhouette in the dark, seemed to have sensed that nobody had moved a foot since we entered into this horrid place, she shouted something in their dialect, words that snapped the men from their state of perplexity.

"Move!" One of them pushed me.

The girl resumed walking as I neared her, her excitement was blatant.

"What are you going to do to me?" I asked.

She slowed her stride, cast her Lilithian eyes on me with a baleful smile on her lips. "I was thinking of killing you, but then…I changed my mind." She laughed. "Maybe…I should leave you here…"

What? No…no…no… she wouldn't do that!

"Killing you will be too much trouble…" She continued. "Turning you into an old, wrinkled, ugly woman seems more appealing now."

“Jesus!”

She laughed again, retrieving something from her pocket, a bottle that had liquid steaming inside. “They say it takes away one’s youth.”

“You are going to pour it on my face?”

“Patience…” she drawled. “You will see...”

“You don’t want to do this, trust me. He will still not accept you back if he doesn’t want you!”

“But he will,” she said, turning sharply to face me. Her cold fingers grazed my cheek like a knife about to slice through the flesh. “The next time he would see me, I would be everything beautiful, flashy…I would make him want me. You will not interfere this time.”

A sob escaped from my mouth as we approached a place that looked like a riverbank and the girl became elated.

She was going to drown me, I thought. Then I remembered she said something about taking my youth and allowing me to roam this place. Goodness! That was even worse.

God! Please don’t let me die here.

Hadn’t anyone in the resort discerned my disappearance?

And Lucas, hadn't he noticed too? He must have seen my calls, or was he hammering a pussy and felt I should go to hell?

I thought of Dom. That Buffalo promised to come look for me if I don't return when I should!

Cold sweat broke out on my skin as I tried to think.

I had to get out.

Had to run.

I didn’t understand the voodoo balderdash the girl was talking about, but nobody was going to destroy my beautiful face.

Swerved backward, meandering out of reach from three men who were caught off guard, I took the leap to save my life. Limping and hopping across trees, I pushed forward, praying to get to the cave at least.

Angry branches slapped my body. Weaponized leaves sliced through my skin.

Sighting the cave, the thought of how I would push past the little opening unnerved me, yet I headed towards it. A loud guttural cry pealed out of my

mouth as I thrust myself into the cave.

I was stuck in-between. My head to my midriff was in, while I kept squeezing and pushing my fat butt so the rest of my body could be hidden from sight.

The rapid footsteps announced the closeness of my pursuers.

“Find her, bring her back!” *The angry she-devil.*

Filling my lungs with air, I placed my arms on both sides of the opening and pulled with all my might.

Freed! With more bruises…but freed!

Balancing my weight on my good leg while dragging the other, it dawned on me that it wouldn’t take long before they caught up with me, I needed to think.

Light from their torch had started filtering into the cave. My pulse spiked as my eyes darted around for somewhere to hide. Every curve seemed to disappear into somewhere unknown.

On all fours, I crawled behind a huge stone that stood like a deity. My body quaked with fear as the girl’s voice echoed in the cave, her desperation to find me evident in her tone. Boots creaked the rough ground, kicking pebbles. Angry curses bounced off the men’s lips as light from their torches sipped from both sides of my fortress.

They would find me at any moment.

Damn you, Lucas!

Squeezing my eyes shut, I could hear my heart drumming so loud that anybody who’d pay attention would have located me with little effort. Then the voices and the footsteps gradually thinned out until I was surrounded by silence and darkness that permeated through my eyelids.

After crouching there for another long minute, I crawled out and scrambled to my feet.

Not knowing if it was the determination to get out of the damned forest, the fear that dominated my whole being, or the thirst squeezing my throat that propelled me, I started moving, mentally numbing the pains recking my whole body.

My feet directed me to the entrance of the cave, and I hurried out as if any delay would mean death. It would mean death.

Filling my lungs with the cold, fresh air, I started walking. Every step was a carefully, calculated one. My ears picked sounds, my eyes darted from side to

side, I jerked at every rustle. I couldn’t count how many times my soul left my body at every little noise.

I didn't know how long I walked before a firm hand grabbed my shoulder, pulled me against a hard chest, and another clamped over my mouth. Without giving the attacker the time to do me harm, I gave him a back kick with my barefoot, wishing I had heels.

The momentum sent him staggering backward as his grip loosen. He grabbed my arm before I could run, flipped me over and both of us landed on the ground with his body on top of mine.

“Stay still, damn it,” he commanded in a rough whisper.

“Lucas?”

“Muyi.”

Jesus! I have never been so glad to see my husband like I was now. The warm air from his mouth stroked my face as he called me ‘Muyi,’ sending a river of calmness down my spine. I could hear the emotion-laden in that word that just left his mouth.

Then I remembered he did this to me. It was him that triggered this whole situation.

“Why are you here?” I asked.

Forty-Two

Lucas

MUYIWA'S QUESTION SENT A COLD ting of disappointment, hurt, into my heart. She must be blaming me. And I deserve it. I've done a lot of things that have put her in both emotional and physical pain.

"To save you," I whispered.

"To what? Ha! I was doing alright before you strolled into the scene, thank you!" She struggled to free herself, but I held her still. "Let me go," she insisted.

The anger she harbored against me sipped out from the harshness of her tone, reminding me of her flared temper at the resort bar where she'd walked out of our marriage as if five years meant nothing.

Does it mean anything to you?

It did… it does.

I wished I could erase that night, and the other night, and the night before that. So many memories I wished to wipe from her mind. So much I wanted to apologize for but now seemed not to be the right time.

"Stop struggling Muyiwa," I whispered while wondering what must have become of Dom. We'd take different directions after Awate and her men took their search elsewhere. *'Finding Muyiwa would be easier that way,'* Dom had said, even though I felt it would have been better if we stuck together.

Gazing down at the woman fighting to get away from me, my heart was filled with gratitude and something else.

Our hopes of finding her did soar when we picked her discarded slippers. Hopes turned to horror when the search for her was becoming futile. My head had gone into a state of panic at the thought of the many possible dangers she might be into.

"I thought I had lost you," I said, my fingers grazing her forehead. "My heart left me, piece by piece with each passing minute when we couldn't find you."

The words came out from the depths of my heart, and I wished there was a way to convince her that I meant them.

“I am madly in love with you Muyi, I’d die if anything had happened to you.”

It was a brutal realization, one that left me devastated and guiltier than ever. What would I have done if something had happened to her? how would I live with myself?

Muyiwa drew in a breath. Her gaze fixed on my face. I guess she was searching for the truth in my words. Then she narrowed her eyes. “Where are the cameras hidden?”

“What?”

“The cameras. Where are they hidden?”

Does she think I…

“By God Lucas, if this is being filmed, I will kill you.” She resumed struggling to free herself from me.

“Keep still Muyiwa. They will hear us!”

“Whatever, but get off me,” she snapped and pushed harder on my chest. “Or I am going to scream.”

I growled my frustration, secured her hands above her head. “Except you want both of us dead, you have to shut up and quit struggling so I can think of how to get us out of here since Dom isn’t back yet.”

“Dom!” Her voice rose. “He is here with you? That pretentious cow planned this with your mistress!”

“She is not my mistress.”

“She is your mistress!” Muyiwa retorted, “The crazy bitch wants to kill me because of you…she thinks it is the only way you will accept her back.” Her voice cracked. “I didn’t ask for all this Lucas, I would have quietly left you alone to do anything you want with your life…”

I felt her body shaking with sobs and didn’t know what to do. How could I tell her that I hadn’t been able to live since she walked out with her things that morning? That she left me feeling drowned. Shattered like a piece of expensive fragile China.

“Muyiwa, we need to get out of here before those guys return,” I said. The reality of the danger we were in, wiped away the urge to convince her of my sincerity.

“Stop yelling at me as if I am a child!” She muttered furiously. “I have been through a lot tonight,” she sobbed.

“You are the one yelling!” She should please stop trying to pick a fight with me here. “We are not out of danger yet. Please.”

Her body went lax, I felt her fear and her hard nipples straining against the fabric of her shirt, subtly stroking my chest as she breathed in and out. Her nipples had always betrayed her every emotion, fear, excitement, cold, hot. Those titties tips were always alive to feelings.

Oh no. Not now. I inhaled deeply as the burgeoning arousal at the thought of having one of them in my mouth washed through my senses. Why wasn’t this a normal situation? Why aren’t we in a secret love garden, just us. I would have loved to…

Fuck, what was wrong with me? I should be thinking of getting us out of danger, not making sweet love to Muyiwa.

“Let's go.” Helping her up, I was grateful for the darkness that made my swollen member invisible.

“What of Dom?” she whispered as I strained my eyes to see through the darkness.

“He would find his way back. This is his village.” I slipped my hand around her waist. “Come on, let’s go.”

I realized there was something wrong when she took a few steps and groaned. Her gait that was smooth the last time I saw her was now faltering and uneven.

“Shit. You are hurt.” Why didn’t I see that earlier?

Without giving her the chance to object, I knew she would, I scooped her off the ground and settled her on my shoulder, her legs dangling before me.

“This wouldn’t help, Lucas. You can’t carry me out,” she said with exhaustion.

“I am not letting you hurt anymore and yes, I am carrying you out of here.”

I couldn’t recall how long I had walked when a blow landed at the back of my head, blurring my vision while Muyiwa slipped off my shoulder as my feet faltered. Another punch on the ear sent me reeling. I couldn’t hear a thing for some seconds.

Where the fuck is Dom? I thought as I struggled not to crumble to the ground. My eyes caught Muyiwa crawling towards me but was dragged back by some…

thing…huge…a man?

My attacker was right behind me, probably about to launch beatings, I needed to get Muyiwa away from her captor. Pondering on a perfect move, my foot felt a wood, I bent at the same time my attacker flung his arm towards me.

He missed and was yet to balance his feet when I landed the wood on his head with full force. The man slumped instantly. Then I turned towards my wife's captor.

"Get your hands off her," I said with every strength remaining in me. "Don't touch her or I will kill you."

I lunged head first toward her captor, the guy must have pushed her aside in readiness of my attack. He grabbed my head with his Kong-like palm, pushed it off before it could make contact with his stomach. I lost my footing and landed on the ground.

The guy was no human, he had the strength that all my years in the gym and the little taekwondo lessons I took a few years ago couldn't match. But I was a man. One whose wife was now throwing fists and kicking frantically in the firm grip of a man who seemed to be dragging her farther away from me.

I was no Matt Damon nor Jason Statham, but no man watches his wife being treated with such brutality except he was a defective imbecile, and I wasn't one. I would do anything to keep my woman alive.

"Leave my wife alone!" I threw at the man and both of us landed with a thud on the ground. "Muyiwa run! Get out of here!"

Muyiwa stood there screaming like a ninny.

Picking a stone from the ground, I crawled up the fallen guy's back before he could get up and administered the first hit on his head. Then another…and another…. Someone hit me hard on the neck, the impact set off a loud groan from my throat and the stone slipped off my hand. The beast pulled me off the back of his colleague and started landing kicks and slaps all over me.

I fought back, swerving punches. Only a coward would surrender to his fellow man in a wrestling match without a try. This was a bloody fight, and I wasn't ready to bend.

My opponent was precise and tactical. I was no match to him.

Christ...no! Muyiwa shouldn't get involved, she'd been hurt enough already, I thought as Muyiwa limped towards the man, grabbed his shoulder and gave him… a… bite? The man groaned and smacked her so hard that the force of it

sent her crashing to the ground.

He dared to lay his hands on her! That man hit my Muyi! My inner beast was set loose, and I flung the whole of me on the man, every part of my body worked simultaneously. Scratch…hit…hit…headbutt…kicks. My upper hand was short-lived as the man yet overpowered me and resumed landing punches indiscriminately on my body.

The realization that I may not live through this night settled into me with cold clarity. And what would they do to my Muyiwa?

I couldn't recall how long the beating had gone for. Only an animalistic grunt from my opponent before he hit the ground announced the end of my peril temporarily, I guessed.

Muyiwa was sobbing like her heart had been snapped into two, and that added to my pains.

Someone was saying something in a rapid, harsh tone, a man, Dom! I struggled to get up but fell right back. Spitting out, I scooped my shirt up, wiped my face and crawled to Muyiwa.

"Muyi…sweetheart…are you okay?"

My arms tightened around her while she sobbed freely.

"You can't stop me, Dombra…if you care as much as you claimed, you will help me get justice!"

Awate. When did she get here? The light from Dom's torch helped me get a clear view of her face. Grotesque. Hideous.

"You have done enough," I heard Dom say. "I will not allow you to do more harm to this couple."

Enveloped with a new wave of strength and anger, I staggered to my feet. "Dom. You betrayed me and my wife, why?"

"May the spirit of my late mother come after me if I ever think of hurting you, sir."

"Then what is all this?" I stood shoulder to shoulder with Dom.

"She did it. I didn't know this was her plan. She lied to me."

I turned to Awate.

"You deserved death!" Awate spat.

"Then why come for my wife? You had the chance to kill me, why my wife?"

“She is not your wife.” Awate charged like a triggered snake towards Muyiwa, but Dom reached and pulled her back. “She has to go.”

“I will never choose you.”

“You chose me before.”

“I was young and stupid.”

“Old enough to slip your manhood inside me, old enough to trick me into going to Lagos with you and played the wife role for two years.”

“It was a long time ago, we are matured now.”

Awate groaned loudly, snapped out of Dom’s grip, and rushed towards me.

Wham! Awate was on the ground whimpering, with her hand on her nose.

“Wow…this bitch is a pack of hard bones,” Muyiwa said, massaging her fist.

“How...when...you did that?” I asked Muyi in awe. I thought she was hurt, how the fuck was she able to reach to Awate so fast.

“Yeah, I did. Punched her ugly face.” She nodded in satisfaction. “…have had enough of her bullshit.”

Something slipped out from Awate’s pocket, a little bottle with a glistening liquid content. Picking the bottle, I gave it a close look.

“Give that to me!” Awate got on her fours and crawled towards me. “Give it to me now.”

“Smash that thing before she gets her hands on it,” Muyiwa insisted.

I sniffed the bottle and scrunched my nose to the strong smell that greeted me. “What is this thing?”

“This bitch was going to use that on me.”

“Please Lucas, give it back to me and I swear you will not see me again.”

“Come on now Awete, let me take you home.” Dom pulled Awate to her feet.

“Get away from me!” Awate shrugged away. “Lucas…the vial…please,” she cried.

A vial? Like a poison? She had wanted to poison Muyiwa?

“You were going to use this on my wife?” My grip tightened on the bottle.

“It wasn’t meant for her…that was the only way…”

She wasn’t making sense.

“I don’t want to die,” she continued. “Please show mercy.”

I was right. Beneath the beautiful surface of this town. There was something sinister going on. Black magic, voodoo, and Awate seemed to be deep neck involved in it.

“What are you talking about…what is she saying?” I asked no one in particular.

“My life…the vial…The mothers said if a non-initiate opens it, I will die.”

“Oh, how nice. Lucas please open that bottle and snuff the life out of this bitch.” Muyiwa said.

“Please!” Awate fell on her knees in front of me. “Don't listen to her...don’t let me die.”

“She’s pleading now?” Muyiwa squatted to look Awate in the face. “You are begging for your life when you almost took mine?”

“Please, Understand. I did what I had to do. But I am sorry”

“Mr. Lucas, please,” Dom said. “don't destroy her.” What the actual f… this dude knew that Awate wanted to kill my wife?

“She doesn't deserve pity.” doesn't the bible say that the merciful shall be shown mercy? Awate knew not mercy.

“There is still something good in her...I will bring it out.” Who was Awate to Dom? Why was he pleading for her?”

I gazed at Muyiwa and then back to Dom. “The Vial…”

“I will force her to destroy it, she wouldn't bother anyone with it again.”

“Argh… Lucas, why are you listening to these two fools?” Muyiwa was becoming inpatient.

“I will take care of the vial, Awate, and these men. Please ma’am,” Dom turned to Muyiwa who was now sitting on the ground. My gaze returned to the tiny bottle. The urge to force the witches brew down Awate’s throat came so strong.

However, “Here.” I handed the vial to Dom. “If both of you ever come close to my wife and I again. I will not be this merciful.”

“You are letting her go?”

“It’s better that way.” I pulled Muyiwa to me. Secured my arms around her waist. “Come Muyi, let’s go.”

“She was going to kill me,” Muyiwa muttered as we took steps that shot pain

from our wounds and bruises up to our brains.

“I know.” We leaned on each other’s little strength, on our conquest and the hope that maybe…just maybe…we have found each other again.

We met a little crowd when we got to the resort. A search party was sent, someone said. Security has been alerted.

Everyone could see us beneath the headlamps. People had their phones out, capturing every one of our imperfections.

Our bruises.

Bloated faces.

Muyiwa’s head on my shoulder.

My hand around her waist.

And somewhere behind us…cameras managed to capture the guy that offered us a ride back to the resort. The guy whose script I was yet to read.

Forty-Three

Muyiwa

“HAVE YOU TAKEN YOUR SHOWER this morning?” Doctor Melody asked.

“I wish I hadn't.” The ice-pack massage brought me much needed relief. “The water seemed to worsen the itches.”

“The blisters are seeping because you were scratching them.”

“What was I supposed to do? Not scratch them when they itch like crazy?”

“You should have waited for me. I came with a pack of oatmeal for your bath. Oatmeal helps ease the itching.”

“Oatmeal?” I chucked. “I’ve not heard that before.”

“Now you know,” Melody reached for the bucket of ice cubes across the bed and packed more ice into the towel.

I allowed her to work on my skin in silence. Grateful she’d agreed to attend to me at short notice. After visiting the clinic, Lucas had insisted she attended to me in my suite. He didn’t want me crowded upon by story hunters disguised as guests.

Thinking about Lucas now sent me back to last night. That terrifying moment when I thought those guys were going to kill him. The realization that I was going to lose him had torn my heart. If he was going to be killed by a human, it should be me, not some village people far away from home.

“Has the physiotherapist been here this morning?”

“Yes, he woke me up.” Melody was done with my back. On her cue, I rolled over to face her.

“He must be with your husband then.”

“Oh.” I swallowed hard. “How is he?” I was itching to see Lucas, because… well… I owe him that.

Crap! Who was I kidding? Every fiber of my being wanted to be with him, to wrap my arms around him and plant soft kisses on every part of his body that was bruised.

“He’ll be fine. Doctor Ajololo attended to him last night.”

We slid into silence while I allowed my mind to wander back to last night, before the peak of the horror, that brief moment when Lucas had caught me in his arms and both of us had fallen to the ground. How it had felt being trapped underneath him.

I’d forget the danger that surrounded us and had wanted to remain there, wrapped up in him forever.

I am madly in love with you Muyi, I’d die if anything had happened to you,” he’d say with no teasing gleam in his eyes, no wry smile at the corner of his lip. Yet, I knew I couldn't believe him.

“You were brave out there,” Melody commented. Now graciously applying an ointment on my skin.

“How would you know that? You didn’t witness what happened.”

“Femi was with Lucas last night.”

“Lucas was the hero,” I said. Picking my loose shorts that were on the bed, I rolled over and slipped my legs in them.

Melody got my top from the bed end and handed it to me.

“He fought for me.” I said as I donned the cloth. “They would have killed him, I saw it. Those men relentlessly hammered him with everything they could lay their hands upon. I was so scared...”

Melody listened patiently while I told the story.

“You know,” she finally spoke, “Both of you are meant for each other.”

I had wanted to be infuriated by her comment, but I felt a cold tinge of sadness instead. “We have done nothing but scream at each other.”

Emotionally opening up to anyone about Lucas is something I’m learning. Doing it now felt so good, especially with this doctor. I found myself pouring out my fears, my frustrations, the new feeling growing inside of me for him. Everything came tumbling out.

“I love him too much,” I concluded as Melody smiled at me. “But I hate him too…I thought I hated him.”

“And now?”

“I don’t know…Lucas can be so…so… stupid!”

“Muyiwa,” Melody began, “I think life is giving you both another chance to build what has been broken.”

“We had nothing in the first place. This whole thing was a mistake.”

“Yet he was ready to give up his life for you yesterday.”

“Isn’t that what husbands do?”

“You love him.”

“I don’t!” I snapped. “I have succeeded in not caring about him. Then we came here…it was this place…it made me fall in love with him again.”

“Isn’t that a good thing?”

“I don’t know. I don’t want to love him like this.”

A knock on the door interrupted our conversation. Melody checked her watch and gasped. “Didn't realize time had flown so fast,” she said and stood up.

The knock came again.

“Don’t worry.” Melody stopped me from getting out of bed. “I will tell the person to leave. You need more rest, your body is still healing,” she said, gathering her things.

I watched her walk to the door and spoke with the visitor for a while, then opened the door wider to let the person in.

Lucas!

“Uhm…I have to run along now, need to catch up with something. You two should take it easy on yourselves,” she said and left.

He had his back against the closed door for a while, then he leaned off, grunted, and made a few lopsided steps through the room. My heart fell right through my toes. He was more black than brown, his left eye was swollen too. I bet he wouldn’t be seeing a thing with that eye for a while.

Oh God. he shouldn’t be here…his legs…. My breath hitched as my eyes walked from one dressed injury to another, taking in the mess that was Lucas, the superstar, Nollywood finest, and sexiest.

Don’t feel for him…don’t show him you give a shit about his mashed face. He deserves it and worse…dickhead…scumbag…*omo ale*…

But I want to run to him right now…the raw need to weep for him, for us, poked so hard.

He stopped walking when he got to the center of the room, his hands rested on the top of the back cushion. My name breezed out of his broken lips and I abandoned the bed, against the will of my joints, I hobbled towards him.

“Lucas…oh Lucas. How are you able to…”

“Painkillers. And I snuck out.”

“You shouldn’t have.”

“I had to see you.”

You don’t know how much I want to be with you too, Lucas, my husband.

“You look terrible. So…reddened…bloated and funny.” His arms tightened around me.

I’d take that as a compliment.

“And you are no better. Your face looked like it was pounded in a mortar.”

“That bad, huh?”

I nodded.

He cracked a laugh. “It will take some time for me to get back to my good looks.”

“I don’t mind the way you look, Lucas. The most important thing is that you are alive and here with me.”

He stiffened. A deep frown crossed his face. “Muyiwa, we need to talk.”

Forty-Four

Lucas

THE SHADOWS OF YESTERDAY'S HORROR were on Muyiwa's skin and definitely in her heart. The knowledge that I was the person that brought this upon her broke something inside me, something that would remain broken long after our bones and bodies were healed. I couldn't look her in the eye. So, I gently pushed her away and dragged myself to the sofa. I have never felt such shame and self-loathing in my life.

Shutting my eyes, I rested my head on the headrest and chewed on what I'd love to say to Muyiwa.

Last night I had come this close to losing her. I would have lost my wife! It was a life-changing moment for me. For once I realized I could die for someone and that someone was Muyiwa, my wife.

I felt her hands on my thighs and jerked my eyes open. She was bent over me, worry written on her face.

"You shouldn't be standing," I moaned. "You heard the doctor; your body needs to heal."

I wished she wouldn't touch me. Her softness made me feel like shit, a wretched filth, undeserving of any good woman - a woman like her. A woman who would fight the devil for the man she once loved.

"I feel a lot better, and my weight is on your thighs," she replied. Her voice, packed with motherly concern, crushed me the most. I didn't want that, she shouldn't treat me as if yesterday didn't happen.

"Lucas, are you okay?"

It wasn't the bodily injuries that discomforted me but the guilt-like-jagged-blade that scratched within.

"I don't know." I shuffled my buttocks on the sofa to ease the soreness in my hips. "You need to sit down, Muyi."

She stared at me for a while and sat on the sofa opposite mine.

“You are not feeling strong. You should have sent for me,” she said.

She was right, I felt like my limbs didn’t belong to me. Every damn part of my body hurt, yet I wanted to do this, to ease the ache in my heart.

I was expecting a cold, silent treatment, or a furious outburst when I stepped into her room. But she’d wrap her arms around me as if it was the best thing that has ever happened to her.

“You are hurting,” I said.

“I am fine.”

She wasn’t. I saw her wince when she moved, her grimace and soft groan didn’t escape my notice either.

“No, you are not. Admit that you are hurting right now and that you want to punch me in the face for putting you through this.” My voice gradually scaled. “For once Muyiwa, don’t let me get away with this shit.”

It wasn’t how I wanted to start this talk. But I was confused, angry, ashamed, my heart was about to burst into pieces. I had been an idiot all my life.

Loved by many but still an idiot.

Nollywood sensation, yet an idiot.

Idiot!

Why did Muyiwa stay all these years?

“What do you want, Lucas?” Her voice calm.

“Yell at me, for fuck’s sake.”

“I have been yelling at you for the past five years.”

“Yes…but mean it this time…tell me you are walking away for good and mean it!” The conflict going on inside her was evident on her puckered lips. If she needed permission to spit on my face, I was giving it to her. “Hit me, Muyiwa. Hit me hard and leave my miserable life without looking back.”

“Is that what you want?” She wore her emotional bruise in her voice.

“Yes…no…I don’t know…” I hated that she was fighting to be calm. Her outburst would have given me comfort. “I can’t apologize to you. I don’t want to make you pity me because I don’t deserve it.” I brought my voice down, “I don’t deserve you…I am no good.”

She choked out a sob. “You are the movie star, a role model to a lot of

struggling big screen dreamers. The media loves you…everyone loves you…"

"You, what am I to you? Muyiwa, what have I been to you?"

"You came for me last night, you fought to keep me alive." Her silent sobs wracked me. "You saved me…"

She was doing it again. Numbing the emotional pain I caused her, ignoring my 'assholery.'

Grab that lamp over there Muyiwa, hit me with it until I bleed. That's what a raging wife would do to an idiotic husband like me.

"You gave me fame and money. That is worth something…"

"Stop! What is wrong with you? Can you not make it any easier for me?"

She turned her face to look at me. Her lips tightened - I wish she wasn't trying to take control like a fucking perfect Nollywood wife.

"Why did you stay with me all these years?" I asked.

"You know why."

"I told myself that it was because we were good together at the red carpets. That you enjoyed the attention that came with being my wife."

"Add money to it…I love the cash…the luxury…and diamond bracelets." She nodded, pointing a finger at me. "I love them so much."

"Liar," I retorted.

"But I am not lying. I love spending your money."

"You could have grabbed as much money from me as Barbie did, if not more, and still divorce me. But you didn't."

"Maybe I was planning a bigger surprise." She laughed sadly. Tears trickled down her cheeks and she brushed them off with the back of her hand.

I rose from my seat, pains spread through my muscles as I moved towards her and knelt. "The night you walked in on…that disgusting scene, you said you wanted us to start all over…you wanted us to build something beautiful again."

"I…I didn't mean any of that shit."

"The other night I made love to you?"

"You have been making love to me."

"You and I know that what happened that night was different from the sex we've been having."

“I was under the influence of an influence, and you were drunk.”

“I wasn’t drunk.”

“It’s this place then. There is something in the air or in their water that turns people on against their will.”

Maybe she was right.

Maybe she wasn’t.

“I craved for you as I have never done for a long while, it was like magic, a dream I didn’t want to wake up from. I couldn’t remember the last time I enjoyed making love to you, the last time I yearned to sink my teeth into your rolls of sweet-smelling flesh, lick your stretch marks, bury my head between your suffocating thighs.” She turned her face away. The emotions raging in her were only visible through the vibration of her lips and flow of tears. “I didn’t want that night to end.”

She moaned.

“Muyi, we bonded in body and soul that night like we have not been able to do since the first day we met. You knew it, that was why you left before I woke up, you didn’t want to face me in your conflicted state.”

“You don’t know what you are talking about, Lucas,” she snapped.

“I reached your soul that night, didn’t I? You gave all of you to me. There was no restriction, no holding back. I heard the words that poured out of your mouth.”

“What do you want?” She screamed, her eyes shut.

“When you left…with Awate and…you couldn’t even think…you didn’t call me or anyone.” My muscles cramped, making it more difficult to stand, I gave up trying and remained on my knees that seemed to have gotten comfortable in that position.

“I didn’t know how much you meant to me until I heard you were gone with her. I didn’t want to lose you for anything in the world. This thing we just discovered- this exciting feeling you re-enkindled in me, I want more of it, with you. If anything had happened to you, that would have been the end of me.”

She snorted.

I knew she didn’t believe me, but it was true. Something in me would have died. I wouldn't be able to pick the pieces of my life and move on.

“You would have come looking for me anyway. I am still your wife and your

responsibility until the divorce is completed."

"Which divorce?"

Her mouth tightened into a thin line.

"You are planning a divorce?" I asked.

Wasn't that what I've always wanted?

"You were going to divorce me," she finally said. "I heard you that morning. Our wedding anniversary, you and the loser that couldn't even give you head properly."

My heart sank into my stomach as I remembered that day, the foolish words I spewed to keep Bisola going. That old broad whose cock sucking skills weren't worth a nickel compared to Muyiwa's.

"I-" I searched for the right word. "I didn't mean tha-, I am sorr - "

"Don't say you are sorry, Lucas. My superstar husband doesn't feel sorry for shagging other women and promising them shit."

The cold despair in her words wrapped around my heart like frozen water. She sounded like she'd lost hope, like what we rediscovered on this island didn't mean anything to her.

I wanted to ask if there was any way she could love me again. If asking for her trust was asking for too much. I wanted to fall on my face, at her feet, and plead for her love and trust.

Muyiwa, please don't do this to me, my heart cried out. Give me another chance, my eyes pleaded. I can be better, let me pay for my wrongs, to you, what will it cost me? I can give my blood.

But I wasn't going to ask her to stay. I wouldn't accept myself back if I had the power to throw me away so why would I want her to take me back?

Getting up, I walked through the room to the door. "We are going back to Nigeria tomorrow," I said. "I will only drop by the house to pick some few things before moving out. You can stay in the house until you figure out what you want to do." Why couldn't I stop the pain rumbling inside my heart from slipping into my tone?

"Don't be silly, Lucas. It's your house. I should be the one moving out."

I braced my hand on the door to support my weight, my head lowered. "You are not going anywhere," I said, didn't mean it to come out as an order. "The house is yours," I said in a calmer tone. "Until you decide otherwise."

I wanted her to sleep and wake up on the sheets that smelt of us, her eyes would constantly see our portraits, my aftershave in the bathroom. She would use my perfumes, she loved to mix mine with hers, and would be forced to think of me the way I would be thinking of her.

“People would talk.”

“Not as much as they would if you are the one moving out.”

An uncomfortable silence followed. Then I heard the sofa squeak and her feet trudging towards me.

“Where will you go?”

Her voice came out just above a whisper, soft and throaty. A groan rumbled in my chest, I swallowed hard, stifling the groan so it wouldn’t escape through my lips. Then I turned to face her.

Damn! I shouldn’t have. Now it was difficult to keep up with this pretense. I didn’t want her to see how much I was hurting- my misery should remain with me. Muyiwa frowned. It seemed like she’d seen the emotions warring inside of me.

“To my parents,” I said.

“They are not yet back from their mission work in Malawi.”

“That’s why I am going to stay there, I want to be alone for a while.”

“Lucas, I don’t want…can’t we…” she sighed her resignation. Her frown deepened. “I guess you have thought this through.”

Was she going to ask me to stay? I shook the thought away. Muyiwa was scared of giving me another chance. I knew this like I knew the varying emotions she was trying to suppress right now.

I cupped her cheek with my palm, wishing everything was different. “You are right, great sex doesn’t make a marriage. Trust does. And I’ve broken the one you have for me - uncountable times. I am no-good and I will not have you manage me.”

Closing my eyes, I tried to regulate my breathing, to curb the crazy desire to brush my lips against hers. Aside from my broken, swollen lips, the fear of her rejection held me back from fulfilling that craving.

Then I opened my eyes. She held my gaze as if waiting for me to do something, to say something, what?

“Muyi, I-” Christ! What I wanted to say to her would sound crazy. “A shuttle

will come to pick you up by 8 am tomorrow."

I left the room before she could respond.

I felt wetness on my cheeks and wiped them off quickly, wincing as my fingers stroked my hurting chin.

"Damn!" I swore as I wiped my palms on my shirt. For the very first time in my life, Lucas Opeyemi was shedding tears for a woman.

Jesus H Christ! The pain of losing her stung so bad, it shot through my jaw from my clenched teeth as I trudged the corridor to the elevator.

Coward

Fool

My phone vibrated and I retrieved it from my jean pocket. "What?" I barked. leaned against the wall to give my legs some rest.

"Ho ho ho…my boy!" Sunny's booming voice invaded my eardrum. "That was a perfect stunt you pulled out there…wow! The media is going wild with the story. You are everywhere my boy, every blog…you did it!"

"What in Jesus' holy name are you prattling about?"

"Muyiwa missing and your heroic rescue journey balderdash…"

Typical of Sunny to think that every incident was a show for relevancy and attention.

"Brilliant, just brilliant. companies will piss on their pants to have you as their brand ambassador. We are tripling our charge!" He laughed. I could imagine him rubbing a hand on his drooping stomach.

"You are out of your mind."

"No, my boy…" Another burst of guffaw. "I am a businessman leveraging this to win big for all of us. And you know what? I got a call from the MTN guys ten minutes ago. They are ready to wait for you and Muyiwa to recover properly. I told them both of you sustained serious injuries and need to be flown abroad for treatment…"

"You are mad," I hissed.

"Madness has kept me in this industry," he agreed. "I already have a meeting scheduled by 11 am with Marshal Jones on your behalf. He wants you as a lead character in his movie at all costs. I also got a hint from my friend Bosco that the Total Family Health Program wants you and Muyiwa in, as ambassadors…"

“Dismiss them.”

“What? You can’t…”

“I can and I will. Dismiss all of them.” I eased my back off the wall as the ding of the elevator announced my arrival to the ground-floor.

“We are talking about hundreds of millions if not bill…”

“I know. I don’t care.” The only thing I cared about was my Muyi, and I've lost her Oh, God. What have I done?

“You have lost your mind. And I will not dismiss any of these men. They will wait until I reset your brain.”

“Good luck trying,” I said as I stepped out of the building.

****

The plane ride was bumpy, and by the time our landing was announced, it was raining.

Nothing like an ‘after August break rain’ in Lagos, I thought. Looked out the window. Black clouds, angry raindrops that descend like hailstones, and a humid heat that never quits.

I leaned back and closed my eyes. The pounding in my head and the burning in my throat intensified. The painkillers I took earlier seemed not to have worked. I discarded the thought of taking two more tablets, who wants the complications from drug overdose?

Rubbing on my temples, I concluded that this persisting, raging headache must be a result of the hangover from my discussion with Muyiwa yesterday and the fear of the obvious.

I and Muyiwa would be officially calling it quits any moment and I was already feeling a sense of forlorn.

I turned my head towards Muyiwa. She had her eyes fixed on the window, “Lots of paparazzi down there, even under the rain,” she deadpanned.

Hearing her voice, relief washed through me. We’ve not spoken to each other since the jet took off from Gobota, she didn't even want to look at my face.

“Screw paparazzi,” I muttered, hoping I wouldn’t have to punch someone in the face to send the message that we didn’t need them swamping us.

“I don’t want to face them,” she said in resignation.

“You will not face them. Sunny will be here to help. And I have also called the family doctor to come and look at you once we get home. You need privacy.”

“What of you?”

“I will stay until you are strong enough, then…” I shrugged.

She didn’t say anything for a while, then; “Thank you for everything.”

I love you, I wanted to reply.

Good lord! How I itched to wrap my arm around her and pull her close.

“Make way guys…I told you, no comment!” I heard Sunny talking his way through. “No comment! Lady. Yes…No…not now…kiss my ass…punks.”

The old man pushed himself inside the jet. “Ho ho ho…my favorite couple...” he hailed, then turned to Muyiwa, offered his hand but dragged her up and into an embrace. “Sweet bunch… you look like a roasted potato,” he mused.

“I look better than I was yesterday.”

Yeah, ignore me, Sunny. And he did, prattling about deals and endorsements to Muyiwa, who didn’t seem interested, while protectively leading her to the waiting SUV.

Forty-Five

A Week Later

Lucas

TWENTY MINUTES AFTER I'D LEFT Muyiwa at the breakfast table. I was throwing shirts, pants, sneakers into a duffle bag.

The past six days had seen us sink deeper into the ocean of tension. Like I envisaged, our bodily pains healed faster than our hearts - than Muyiwa's heart. Mine only craved for her to look at me without making me recoil with shame and guilt, to give me another chance so I can prove to her that I can be that man she wants me to be.

Swiping three sweatshirts off the hanger and dumping them on top of the bed, I wondered why Muyiwa hadn't come up yet. Was she afraid it would break her heart to see me packing my stuff?

Then she walked in and I couldn't get myself to continue acting normal. My fingers shook as I picked materials and dumped them without folding.

"Hey, uhm…" she started and then stopped.

"Are you okay?" I asked, fumbling a piece of cloth. She seemed tired but not in so much pain.

She shrugged.

I wished she'd quit with her tepid attitude.

Shaking my head, I threw the clothing into the bag and zipped.

"What are you going to say to the media? Soon they will find out you moved out and will come for you." She was now standing at arm's length.

"That's if I give them any audience." I hung the bag on my shoulder, my eyes were everywhere but on Muyiwa. I couldn't look at her. She made me feel so unworthy, so…unfortunate.

"Sorry for everything I have made you go through. I have no excuse. If you

can…it’s not just…” No word was enough to express what was going on inside me. “I will keep in touch every day. maybe…somehow, I will be able to make you trust me again.”

Once in the car, I regretted leaving. It was hasty, much too hasty. But I didn't want her to see me cry.

God! I had no idea it could hurt so much to love someone and not have her. Was that the way Muyiwa felt those years I had ignored her? If I had known, I would have tried to make it easier in some way - in many ways.

Pulling the car out of the compound. I drove furiously on the strip while battling the pain that was wrenching my heart. I hated that this was happening, and the fact that Muyiwa looked unperturbed made it worse.

Veering towards Victoria Island. I thought of what would happen if Muyiwa didn’t want me back after everything? I would forget her immediately. A quick divorce and my life would go back to normal.

I gave off a bitter laugh. Who was I kidding? I would always be torn to shreds each time I remembered her, which would be every damn day.

Why did I ever think of leaving? That was one of the dumbest decisions I have ever made. I slammed my foot hard on the accelerator, feeling sorry for myself and angry at Muyiwa, I turned the stereo volume to an ear-deafening level. The music blasting out from the speakers depressed me more.

It seemed I would be brooding for a very long time.

Forty-Six

Muyiwa.

AT FIRST, I STARED AT the emptiness. Then I blinked and shook away raging tears from my eyes. “Fool, fool!” I muttered, walked through the room and flumped myself on the bed. I didn’t know if I meant Lucas or me. Or perhaps we were both fools.

Reaching for a bolster pillow, I hugged it tight and thought of the good times. The first two years of our marriage. The fun. The laughs. Those were the best times of my life. The only real relationship I had ever experienced.

It wasn’t love at first sight but lust, sexual adrenaline pumping, hunger for fleshly pleasure. Yet, he’d cared in his little way.

A sigh shook my body, and I discarded the pillow and hugged my knees to my chest.

If only one had acted when one should, I thought wearily. I would have told him my mind, then he would have decided to stay. Perhaps.

I saw something in his eyes that day when he came into my suite at Twin Bliss, felt an electric spark when he held my knees. I was considering giving us a chance. Then he had suddenly come up with this crazy idea of leaving.

Fool!

Left me with a flimsy ‘I am sorry.”

He was sorry? He was sorry? Who the hell did he think he was talking to like that? spewing that rubbish from his mouth and straying off like…like...

Now I know he had wanted to leave after all, and I just gave him the opportunity.

You wanted him to leave.

He chose to leave.

You should have called him back.

I couldn’t, I wasn’t sure…I didn’t want to hurt again.

You didn’t trust him, what is love without trust?

It was difficult to erase the man he had been all these years.

What if…

SHUT THE FUCK UP!

Anger and frustration rumbled in my belly. I hated that I still wanted to pick up the phone and call his parent’s residence, to be sure he had headed there and not to some hotel where a whore was waiting.

Which of the women would he be meeting?

The brown-skinned *‘Mark of love’* female lead character he was spotted with at a hotel the same night we were supposed to be receiving an award. Or the unfortunate actress I did spy him with on our anniversary. Or the one he’d flown to see in Port Harcourt last Easter.

I felt a brief flash of jealousy, an emotion I didn’t want stroking my heart.

It was better this way, I thought, massaging my knees. Much better.

I didn’t need a man who shamelessly sticks his dick in every well-known pussy home and abroad. As far as I was concerned, Lucas was one of the biggest scum the world of men had ever produced.

Because he played the hero by coming to my rescue in a situation he was responsible for, he felt he could warm himself into my heart?

Fuck him. Bloody fool!

By that time, I felt composed enough to leave the room. Chekwa was lolling in the kitchen. Legs stretched before her, a comedy show blaring on the television. “Just taking a lunch break, ma’am,” she said, her eyes lowered.

Ignoring her, I walked out the front door.

PART FOUR

Forty-Seven

Seven Months Later

Muyiwa

FIVE OUTFITS DISCARDED, I DECIDED on palazzo pants, a silk violet blouse with my bone-straight wig. I added a gold cuff, a set of diamond stud earrings, and a diamond cocktail ring and oh my God! I looked exotic.

It was the premiere of *Scandal*- MY OWN SHOW! Created by me and sponsored by entertainment.

 needed something big to replace *Joy Makindeh's* popular tv show, '*Celebrity Face-off,'* and Sunny suggested it might be a better idea to grab the hottest, trending wife of a Nollywood star - me to run the show.

"What does she have to offer?"

"Glamour. Style. Plus, sensational knowledge of gossip that is capable of capturing a lot of attention and forcing brands to advertise. More brand sponsorship, more money and everyone goes home happy,' he'd told them.

Also considering that they were itching to be the first to film me recounting the good, the bad, and the horror of the Gobota vacation, they had fallen in love with the idea.

"You don't have to do anything you have not done before. Just do your background check on the celebrities that would be starring on the show. Write your script and look beautiful for the world," Sunny had encouraged me.

That spelled a lot of work.

"Come on sweet bunch, you can do this. These people are not strange faces. You'd probably met them before. Just dig out some dirt about them and get the ball rolling. You have fans already."

And that's how Sunny talked me into this.

Arriving at the headquarters, I stepped into a group of waiting paparazzi,

turned and twirled as cameras came to life. The entertainment giant sure knows how to make loud statements the way I love it.

I stepped inside the studio, greeting everyone with exceptional friendliness. It was my big day, and I wasn't going to spend it thinking about Lucas.

Proud, arrogant Lucas.

Whom you're dying to have back.

Who would send banks of flowers, with penance notes tagged on every delivery, rather than swallow his shame and return home? It'd been difficult seeing his face everywhere, smelling him on every corner of the house. Battling the loneliness I strangely felt only him could fill.

I'd almost called him a million times, but my heart failed me. What would I say to him? For two months, he had constantly buzzed, but I refused to pick. Then the internet gossip sites went on overdrive about his disappearance from the public eye and the possibility of a career downward spiral and he had stopped calling.

I'd later met him a month after.

The first was at the premiere of the movie, *'The Judge.'* He was seated four spaces away from me on the same row. I tried to avoid looking at him. When I finally turned, I caught him staring. For a moment I was stunned at the intense solemnity that passed over his face, like a storm cloud. It was gone just as quickly, and his lips had curled up in a bitter smile as he gave me a nod.

I had blinked away the urge to run to him and beg him to quit this self-punishment and return to me. But that would mean he'd win the game, as that was what the whole thing had turned into, a game of who got broken first.

After a moment, when I was sure I had succeeded in calming my pulsating heart, I'd glance up, my eyes fixed on the movie I came to see, smiling and laughing at every scene - both funny and not-so-funny, hoping that I looked like a normal person and not an escapee from bedlam.

The second time was worse than the first. A dinner party which the organizers conspicuously placed both of us on the same table with four other celebrities.

I didn't know how I got through the dinner as I tried to avoid staring so much at Lucas, and I knew he was also attempting to do the same with me, but it was impossible. Our eyes had met constantly and those times, the heat we generated seemed to ignite the entire room.

The hunger to touch him oozed out from my pores and his need was equally

plastered on his forehead.

When I couldn't take it anymore, I had pleaded dizzy and was about to leave when my eyes were drawn towards Lucas. He gestured imperceptibly towards the door, and I nodded my agreement.

Out at the event center garden, with my heart beating erratically and my body trembling to the regret that would consume me after that night, I waited for and he arrived shortly.

There were plenty I had wanted to say to him, questions I had wanted to ask like *'have you fucked someone else since you left?'* for starters. But words were elusive. I just wanted to feel him like I did that night at the resort.

He was ready for me too.

I spun around, grabbed him selfishly and kissed him. My hands caressed his face. All my senses were heightened at the sound of his breath, the feel of his body against mine, the way he smelled, his touch…my hand brushed through his iron erection beneath his jeans, and I couldn't help myself. The desire to have him fill my mouth suddenly gripped me. I tore my lips away from his and moved down his body with indecent haste and not once did I ever think that someone might walk in on us.

"What are you playing at, Muyiwa, why are you teasing me?" He had asked in a strangled voice.

"I never tease," I said. Unzipped his fly and sank to my knees. "I go for what I want, and I want this."

His protest turned to a moan as my mouth covered his dick. With both hands, I encircled his balls and the root of his shaft, caressing and absorbing him, taking him to heaven and back and I had swallowed the evidence.

"I have been thinking about doing that to you all through that boring dinner," I said as I wiped my mouth with the hankie he gave me while he dressed up.

"You will think me crazy if I tell you what I was thinking about - still thinking," he replied.

"Goodbye, Lucas," I said, smoothening my hair.

"Is that a farewell present?" he groaned, gripping me by the hand. "You think I will be okay with one blow-job?"

"Get your hands off me," I had said sharply, wishing both of us would quit acting like kids and admit what we fell for each other. "While we are asking questions now, do you think sending trailer loads of flowers and miserable notes

would convince me you are changed? Do you think it will be enough to ask you back into my life?"

To answer my question, Lucas had pulled me against his body, bending me backward while bringing his head down to my breasts. "Let me ease your lust the way you did mine."

"No!"

"Yes," he'd insisted. "Oh, yes."

Lucas gently moved me until my back was against a tree. While bathing my face and neck with kisses, he scooped my leg up and I wrapped it around his waist. His fingers lifted my skirt and shifted my panties. "It's a pool down there," he'd whisper into my ears as his fingers sought the entrance of my pussy. "You want me as much as I want you."

"We are crazy." I'd moan as he started feeling me - with two fingers, then three. "Bloody crazy." I panted-moaned.

"You don't need to continue saying it, I am convinced." He chuckled at my helplessness. Stuffed my mouth with his embroidered handkerchief, "Bite on this for me when you are ready to cum, I don't want anyone walking in on us," he had instructed.

It's been four months since then. Four freaking, miserable, conflicting months. We'd gone back to him sending flowers, notes, and gifts. The last one had come in a tiffany box - an opulent diamond choker that had a huge heart at its center, a personalized diamond tennis bracelet that had the word *'mine'* attached to it, a cocktail ring, which was resting beautifully on my finger. And a note that read:

Each night in my dreams I hold you close, breathe in your scent, kiss your chubby cheeks. My heart rips to shreds when I awaken to the empty arms that feel so heavy. Tell me you want me forever.

Luc.

Tell him I want him forever? Ha! He wanted me to beg.

"You need a quick face fix," stated my makeup artist of many years. The producers had agreed I had her on set.

"Whatever you say," I made my way to the makeup chair, leaned my head back and closed my eyes. "Make me divine."

"Make way…a huge celebration gift coming through…"

I lazily opened my eyes; a lady was zigzagging her way towards me with a large box.

“For you ma’am,” she said, carefully dropping the box on the dressing table, grinning. “Oh, and look, it has something written on it… *I can no longer pretend, I want you.* …aww… so sweet.”

I didn’t need to guess where it came from.

“Hmm,” commented my makeup artist. “Somebody is already having a crush on you while Lucas hasn’t officially announced his total exit.”

“Could be an innocent well-wisher,” I countered, knowing full well that the gift came from no innocent well-wisher.

“An innocent well-wisher my foot. Tell me something else,” my makeup artist dismissed.

“It must be a man who knows what he wants and is coming straight for it,” the lady that brought the box said.

“A real man. No playing around. Straight to the point.”

“Oooh, I love real men!”

“Don’t we all? And there are not many of them around,” my makeup artist added.

“Tell me about it,” I muttered for want of something to say.

“So, are you going to open it?” my makeup artist freed me, and I rolled with the chair to the dressing table. A familiar pleasant fragrance romanced my nose. A sense of thrill enveloped me, spreading my lips into a smile. I would have been so crossed if I didn’t receive one of these or read Lucas’s note today it had been five days since the last one.

Warmth bloomed within me as I loosened the ribbon and uncovered the box.

The ladies gasped as I opened the lid and picked up the sterling silver rose.

“Oh my gosh! Where did that come from?” Someone gasped as I picked up a bunch of sterling silver roses.

“Lucas…” I whispered and plucked the note that was attached to the bunch.

‘I want you, Muyi. I want you.’

“Oh, Lucas.” I tried to quieten the tingling of my heart.

The other contents in the box were a mixture of many things- many beautiful, branded, expensive things. A pave diamond panther brooch studded with

cabochon rubies and emeralds, gold button earrings, a small top handle bag that must have cost a pretty penny, another necklace, another wristwatch - probably he didn't remember he got me one five days ago.

"40 seconds to go live!"

Thank you, Lucas. You have successfully messed up my brain and are about to screw my show. I placed back the box lid, eased off the chair, and walked towards the stage.

****

"Who am I interviewing?"

I asked for the umpteenth time, adjusting my lapel mic while my eyes grazed through the script that contained only the intro and the conclusion.

"You know him already," the director said, handing me a notepad. "You will need those to write follow-up questions. And…here is your iPad."

"Are you people setting me up for failure or what? I don't understand how I am supposed to interview someone I know nothing about, no background check, how do I even introduce him?"

"Sweet bunch. You got this, alright?" Sunny came to the rescue. "It's a blind interview and you are a smart woman; you will know what to say, trust me."

"Nobody told me about any blind interview. You promised to send me details yesterday, I waited for it."

"I didn't send it because there is nothing to send."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"So, you will back out?"

"We are going to live on five…four…"

Sunny led me to the cushion on the stage, gave me a thumbs-up. "Kill it," he said and stepped back.

"Three…" the director gave signs and everywhere became dead silence.

"Hi," I began. "You are welcome to Scandals with Muyiwa, live in Lagos, Nigeria. It's the first episode of this amazing show and I bet you it's the program you have been waiting for…"

Smile…body movement, very important…you got this.

"…to open this amazing show, we have a special guest. Very special because he came from the time machine Nollywood invented fourteen years ago and he had worked his way up to become one of the most sensational male actors the industry has ever produced…"

Doesn't this description sound familiar? I asked inwardly for the fourth time since I got the script.

"…I know you are itching to know his name, but you are not going to get that from me- yet." *Giggles.* "It's a blind interview, people… you have to find..."

Then he walked in.

Lucas Opeyemi, with his face that could freeze the air. Sexy son of a gun that had gotten used to the sudden pause in people's natural expression when they look his way. He compensated the crew members and the audience that were howling and clapping out of awe, with a nonchalant gaze and a weak smile. The wave that accompanied the smile was a giveaway that he was enjoying the attention.

Then he returned his eyes on me, my heart dropped to the floor and there was no time to pick it up. It didn't help that he wasn't modest about his indecent hunger for me.

He walked regally towards me like an Alpha lion, graceful, sure-footed, and dangerous. The many months of self-imposed solitude didn't dull his formidability. Lucas Opeyemi is a special scent that sends elation into everyone that breathes him in.

A dose of sensuality that leaves one hungry.

The closer he came, the more I panicked. The connection between us was thick in the air.

He offered his hand for a shake. "It's an honor to be the first to grace your show, Mrs. Muyiwa Opeyemi." He stressed the *Mrs.*

"The honor…is all…mine."

"You look amazing." His thumb caressed the back of my hand. His voice twirled an invincible robe around me, and I swallowed hard. This sensation was everything I needed, yet I was so scared.

"I missed you so much, my darling," he whispered.

I was so sure this was the show wanted, the show Sunny planned. Was Lucas involved in the planning?

Forty-Eight

Lucas

ONCE SETTLED IN MY PARENT'S house, I had no drive to do anything other than come on Muyiwa with vengeance. I had high hopes, so I pushed every day with the belief that she would eventually soften her heart towards me. But she kept proving she was done with me.

These past months, I had felt like I was hit by a large truck and yet not been mortally wounded. Just sick in the stomach. The thought of Muyiwa got me high one minute, low the next. Starving, hungry, but unable to eat. Hot, cold, horny, lingering depression and sense of guilt.

Add the many endorsements I had lost and a fifty-million Naira lawsuit hanging on my head because I couldn't go back to complete a movie contract I signed, and you would understand that I was qualified for the award of 'the loser of the year.

But I didn't care. Muyiwa was my obsession. The only woman I realized I could gladly rip and drop my heart at her feet. I'd booked appointments with a therapist and had been flipping through the pages of my father's bible since I arrived, something I've not done in years. Anything that would help me become a better man was welcomed.

Oh, Muyi. Even from afar, you torment me. It was bad enough that I couldn't get my eyes and mind off her at the movie premiere, then we met at that dinner and every pretense crumbled.

One look at her dreamy eyes, one feel of the sexual heat emanating from her and my pride divorced itself from me. I needed to get laid and by her.

The blowjob wasn't enough. It has been so long. I wanted the whole of her, the total package.

And we met again, on her show, Sunny talked me into it.

"It's your best shot. You want her back right? Go for it."

“Does she know?”

“If she does, it wouldn’t be a surprise.”

I had welcomed the idea then, as I was ready to do anything to prove myself to Muyiwa. Now, I regret ever agreeing to it. It would have been better if I had driven to the house and talked things through with Muyi.

Scratching my head, I thought of that interview and wondered how both of us were able to go through it seamlessly, without faltering. All through the interview, I kept staring at her luscious lips.

Gosh! How I hungered for her mouth. Heat had risen from my stomach to my chest just by watching them move. Each time she parted them; I’d feel waves of warmth. Then she laughed at my response, I loved the sound of it and the spark in her eyes. It was as if…she was sending off…

Oh, goodness. Thinking about it now seemed to unfurl every one of my senses.

Why was it so impossible to look at Muyiwa and not think of making love to her? Protect her. Provide for her. Make her feel special and be loyal to her. Why had she consumed me so much that no other woman interests little Lucas anymore?

After the show, when I told her *I am sorry for everything, I wished we could start all over*. It wasn’t to impress her, but because my heart would burst if I did not find an outlet for the thoughts that burn my soul.

She had stared at me, her head cocked to one side. Her lips slightly parted but before she could say something, we were crowded by crew members celebrating the success of the show…

She’d stare at me with those crazy, gypsy eyes, dark and wildly sensuous. Like the dinner night where we couldn’t hold our longing for each other, the unspoken signal was there. Yet, I wasn’t sure she would come for it this time.

She might have decided to…

The doorbell chimed to my annoyance.

I ignored it.

The damn thing went off again.

Christ! I slapped my palms on my knees, sighed, and heaved up from the sofa, couldn’t a man reminisce in peace?

I unlocked and jerked the door open, about to tell who it was off, but my

mouth hung open as the woman, the center of my fantasies, stood at my doorstep.

She ignored me and walked in not entirely in but enough to allow me to close the door and moved to stand in front of her.

We stood there, eyes locked. Mine drowned in her wild, beautiful orbs. I stifled a growl when my gaze came down to her cleavage and I felt my cock expand in the confinement of my briefs.

“Why did you do it?” She asked, reducing her stare to a squint.

Don’t ask me anything lady queen…because right now I’d sound dumb.

“Having me fooled, you and Sunny planned this whole blind interview, made me think it was my big day while it was all about you.”

Okay…she said it as if I was the egomaniac of the century, maybe I was, but I didn’t do this for me, not the way she meant. I just wanted to…wanted to…I didn’t know what to say. Everything seemed inappropriate, hey the big movie star was speechless. How convenient.

“How are you?” I mumble.

That must be my dumbest moment.

“How am I? Lucas, how am I?” She shook her head in awe. “You made me fall in love with you again and left me heartbroken with no reason, only a pathetic ‘I am sorry.’ Appeared few months then got me sucking your dick like a fucking horny bitch and disappeared again. Practically turned my house…”

“My house actually,” I stupidly added.

She gasped, her eyes widened. “You are unbelievable.”

Yeah, she said it.

“You practically turned my house…your house…whatever.” She shook her head furiously “…into a flower garden with short notes pledging your celibacy every few days without showing your face! And then…and then…you sauntered into my show like a…a…I don’t know.”

I do.

Her voice shook. Her eyes threatened to rain down tears, but she blinked them away.

“You are so heartless,” she moaned.

I am ashamed.

“You care about no one but you.”

I care about you so much that it was starting to drive me nuts.

“I have tried to forget about you because you are nothing but a senseless dick, but you keep showing up, making it so difficult.”

Wish you knew the dark hole I’ve been in because of you.

“I miss you so much but again…you don’t care. What matters to you is how to bring back your dead career, so you chose my show for it.”

Wait, what?

“…bringing your sexiness along to…confuse me…Gosh! I wanted to fuck you so much right there, yet I want to hate you for the rest of my life.”

“Shut up, Muyiwa.”

“Do not tell me to shut up…”

Then I shut her up myself.

Forty-Nine

Muyiwa

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD ON LUCAS' side and my back was against the door. A gasp lodged in my throat as I felt wet warmth gushed out of my canal of pleasure. "Don't come closer," I warned. Yet, I wanted him close, closer than my own skin.

"You think I don't care? I died that night at the resort, when you walked in on…uhm…I didn't do it with her or anyone. I was battling with what I was feeling for you, that new sensation."

"Liar!"

Lucas placed his hands on each side of my head and leaned in, trapping me to the door. His arousal pressed against my pelvis. "You know nothing about missing someone Muyiwa, I wake up every morning thinking about you, and go to bed dreaming of you loving me back."

"You are lying," I breathed. My brain was filled with the image of me freeing his entrapped hardness and have him fuck me against the door.

"I reached out to you; I kept my promise to you."

"Get away from me Lucas." Every part of me yearned for him. So loud. So shameless. He could smell my lust. "I have to get away from here."

"You want to run as you've always done for the past seven months?"

"I am not running away from you. You left me!"

He leaned much closer, his body caressing mine and his stiffness pressed harder against my groin. A moan bubbled out of my throat.

"You want me," he whispered.

"It's a lie."

"Are you sure Muyi? Or you are afraid to own up to the desire raging inside you." He brought one hand down and stroked my cheek, "Every time you try to

hide your desire for me, your cheeks turn red."

"Uh…uh." my breath hitched.

"Why are you really here, Muyi?" His other hand slid down the door and grabbed a butt cheek, "I bet you think about me all the time, nonstop, like I do about you."

"You are insane."

I was the one insane. This was supposed to turn into a fight, a huge one that could make me hate him more. Not my body betraying me as if someone injected me with a dose of that Marula juice.

His other hand left my cheek, slid down, both his hands ceased mine. Swiftly, my arms were up above my head cuffed in his.

"Yes, Queen. I am insane. Wanting you so much and not having you has driven me to this." His gaze lowered to my lips, mine parted. I knew what was coming next. I had dreamt it, desired it.

There was a moment of hesitation. Then he spoke, "I am not going to make do with just once like I did the last time. I need you," he muttered. "All the time. Everywhere, I need you as my wife."

The awareness of his rigid dick against my groin was all my brain could think of. Having him plunder me here and now was what I cared about, not any word pouring out of his mouth now.

Lucas gathered my trapped arms in one hand, brushed my lips with the other and I heard his breath hitched.

"Tell me Muyi. Tell me now that you want me back."

Oh, God! Who makes decisions in the heat of passion?

"I don't want this life, Muyi. Allow me to prove to you that I can be a better husband, give me the chance." A trailer load of flowers, trucks filled with expensive gifts, all the money in the world didn't matter to me at that moment. His promise, what he was offering, was what I needed, because… "I love you Muyiwa. I fucking love you and I didn't realize that early enough."

Was he serious? Would he give up the Lucas Opeyemi who would turn around and fuck any woman that caught his fancy? Believing him was what I didn't want to do, but I was tired of fighting the resurging feeling of love for him.

"I will do anything to become the man you want. I have even started making steps." He grimaced. "Just tell me you want me back as your husband, and you

will see. I'll show you...”

I swallowed and nodded.

“Say it, damn it!” He gritted. “Stop torturing me.”

“Yes.” I might regret this later but, “Fuck yes!”

Another moment of hesitation, as if he didn’t believe what I just said.

“I want you back,” I cried. “I have wanted you back since that horrible night at Gobota forest. But you chose to go…” I sniffled. “How could you not see that all I’ve done all this while was to call you to me?”

“Muyi…. Oh Muyiwa. “Why didn’t you tell me?” He murmured, his warm breath stirring my hair. “You had me making a fool of myself for this long.”

“You deserve it.” I shivered as his thumb caressed my lips again.

“That I agree, I do deserve it.”

Then he bent over and started kissing me like his life depended on it. His tongue slipped into my mouth, demanding, probing. His hand abandoned mine and grabbed me by the waist, pulling me closer to his body.

Every inch of me wanted to melt into him. I brought my hand to his head and pulled him closer. I didn’t think I have ever wanted anyone the way I wanted Lucas, my husband.

His hand balanced below my ass, and he lifted me as if I was made of air. My legs wrapped around his waist and we moved right, knocking over a standing lamp, but he didn’t give it a thought.

What would he tell the good reverend ministers of what became of their beautiful lamp gotten from Israel?

Our lips remained sealed as he kicked his father’s room door open, and we stumbled in. Lowering my hand, I tugged on his shirt. His damn buttons wouldn’t give, it was stuck. I wiggled down until my feet touched the floor, then I got hold of his shirt and yanked. He broke apart long enough to pull the shirt off his shoulders, slid his shorts down his legs, and kicked them aside.

“You want me,” he muttered as he pulled me back to him.

“All of you.”

Soon, my blouse joined his, then my palazzos, my panties, bra. His hand slid down to my ass and he scrunched a large chunk of flesh. “You don’t know how long I have waited to do this to you.”

Yes. It was exactly what I’d craved for.

Moaning unabashedly, I licked every part of his face.

He was propelling us backward. The back of my leg hit the bed and we went down. A tangle of legs and hands moving, exploring.

“Beautiful,” he murmured and took a hard nipple in his mouth, bit on it while flicking the other with his fingers.

“Oh, God!” The warmth of his mouth sent waves of pleasure down to my toes. I felt hot fluid flooding my core. My pussy yarned for his thrust; I fucking want this hardness buried deep down there. So, I moved my hips suggestively closer, against his dick.

He understood, turned me up, and mounted me. his hardness rested against my slit while he ran his hand leisurely from my belly button to my neck. “You are overwhelming. Glorious.” He caught hold of the end of my wig and pulled, removed my cap as well.

“I want to slip my fingers in your hair while making love to you,” he said, leaning down to capture my lips with his again. His hand reached down my pussy and he slid two fingers. His other hand gripped my hair and held my head in place while his tongue mirrored the action of his fingers, claiming me. My legs began to stiffen as I pushed against his hand, then he eased his fingers from my pussy, and I was brought from the brink.

“What are you doing?” I asked in a voice I didn't recognize as mine.

“Punishing you.” he said, licking off my juice from his fingers while holding my gaze. “I’ve missed this sweetness. Muyi, you taste divine.”

“I can’t take it anymore. Fuck me now!”

He gave off a throaty laugh. “Not yet, Muyi. I want you to remember this moment.” He began to lick my skin, no part of my body escaped his tongue as he tasted. Venerated. Loved. And worshiped me. His tongue trailed down my belly, to my navel, then through my pubic hair to my clit. I heard him growl as if something was let loose inside him. “Oh my fucking gosh!”

His fingers parted my labia, one swipe of his tongue on my throbbing bud and I dissolved in pleasure.

Then he brought his head up, “Your cunt is begging for my tongue,” he grinned.

I desperately grabbed and pushed his head down, “I am begging you to suck the hell out of me, Lucas.”

“Yes, Queen.”

He loved my eagerness - it turned him on.

Fifty

Lucas

I DROVE MY TONGUE INTO her, setting off another shattering moan - music to my ears. She was quite an instrument to play, so finely tuned. One of the things I missed about her. Muyiwa made the most glorious sounds during lovemaking, raw, intense, absolutely delicious noises as I plundered her with my tongue.

With her thighs gripping both sides of my head and her hands pushing my head even closer to her cunt, my tongue swirled inside her carnal while I drank in her scent and her reaction.

If I had to be buried inside Muyiwa's cunt, I wouldn't mind.

Goodness! Muyi was so sweet! Why didn't I know this before?

Her grip on my head became firmer. Her breath, quicker. I knew she was about to bless me with the gush of her juice. Slipping two fingers inside her, I crooked and hit her in the spot that turned her moaning into a long, high-pitched orgasmic scream.

She shuddered against me, her legs quaking.

"Lucas…oh, my babe boy," she moaned.

How I've longed for her to call me that, her babe boy. One of the things I missed about us - the beautiful name only she could call me perfectly.

I took my place on top of her while slapping her titties. "Muyi, let me fuck you with my cock now."

"Yes. Please, yes."

That was the only invitation I needed to invade her cunt with my hard, eager cock. While I plundered, she writhed in pleasure, her hands gathering up the sheets at her side in knots.

"Fuck! Lucas, feed my pussy with your dick," she moaned.

She called it pussy, I liked cunt better. But hey what did it matter? I was ramming my rod inside her, stroking every part of her wall with my need.

“Has there been any other cock beside mine?” I shouldn’t have asked her that, what mattered was that we were finally together, as husband and wife. Cementing our reunion on my parents’ matrimonial bed.

“No…oh babe…no.”

“Good. Because I have been saving this for you alone. And will never ever give it to any other but you. So. Help. Me. God,” I declared as I punctuated each word with a savage thrust.

As my plunges grew intense, her body turned pink, and the nipples of her breast looked as hard as tiny stones- not too tiny. I couldn’t resist them.

Leaning forward, I trapped one with my teeth and bit on it, then sucked while I thrust harder, faster.

My mother’s standing mirror at the far end of the wall gave me a full view of our raunchiness, it turned me on and made me consider changing the position of Muyiwa’s when we get to our house.

Seemingly, I wasn’t the only perverted one. My wife’s eyes met mine in the mirror and she grinned a kind of dirty grin that sent excitement down my loins.

“You bad girl,” I grunted and gave a hard thrust. “Naughty, wild girl.”

Oh. I felt her cum building again and I almost lost control. “Come on, my Muyi…give it to me…owe me…mark my cock with your juice.”

And she did.

Her cunt gripped my cock like a vise, massaging and stroking as spasm after spasm overtook her and she shuddered again screaming my name.

When I finally found my release- it was the most fulfilling, the most beautiful, it was inside my wife.

My Muyiwa.

Epilogue

Lucas

AND THE BOY WAS…

A smash.

The movie was a hit.

With my lustrous wife, Muyiwa of course seated by me at the cinema, we clapped and cheered as the boy, Marcus took the stage.

Today wasn't about me but about the struggling kid I once met inside a shuttle at Twin Bliss Resort, who wanted his script read and turned into a movie.

Weeks after I made up with my wife, she convinced me to look into the many contracts I abandoned and try to fix things. And trust my Muyiwa to pursue the best spot in this industry with all vigor - *"I will not allow you to even go down to the second spot - you are the hottest in this industry and must remain so,"* she had said.

With a few round table meetings, I got back some offers and lost some. The date for the resumption of the *'Hitched Road,'* shooting was fixed. Raymond Alabi didn't prove difficult, he patiently listened to my story and told me that his offer was still open for me.

However, I lost the MTN and Total deals but hey - I got Femi Bakare throwing something my way, a role in a new movie he was working on, *"It's going to be a big one and I want you in it."* he said over the phone. Then there was Tobe and his Rodio deal - the money was not that heavy, but I was happy to work with new friends.

I felt Muyiwa's head on my shoulder and grinned. I was proud of the woman she'd become. Though she still loved the good things of life and would go all out to make her haters choke on jealousy. She partnered with a charity organization, sending proceeds from her show - which was doing amazing too - to them. I must say she had finally found her calling, brands have been calling to get on her show, Muyiwa is the viewer's choice. I guess Twin Bliss brought the best out of

the both of us.

Slipping my arms around her waist, my fingers stroked the protrusion of her stomach wishing I could feel the baby move. The cozy little thing wouldn't grant me that wish right now. Probably eating popcorn in there, watching the scene unfolding before us.

Leaning my head over my wife's, we watched Marcus, the young star, make his first public speech - Sunny with him.

"I am proud of you, my hero," Muyiwa muttered and squeezed my hands.

"I did nothing. The kid was good, he was already heading for greatness."

"You helped him, and he will be forever grateful to you."

I sighed. I was proud of the kid, proud of me for sticking to my guns on this one script. I remembered how Sunny had acted when I turned the story over to him. Till the time I reconciled with my wife, the old man hadn't even read the story.

When he eventually did, he loved it. It was a hilarious comedy and had huge prospects. He did start looking into financing and every producer turned us down. The old man had come back to me, suggested that both of us produce the movie.

"Give it a shot," Muyiwa encouraged.

Why not?

Within three months, a contract was drawn, and the movie was set to be shot.

The rest was history. *"Private Jet Wahala'* was a major hit and I instantly added a successful movie producer to my title.

"Aren't you supposed to be up there with them?" Muyiwa looked up at my face, smiling. I was drawn to her eyes and the movement of her soft lips stirred something in my pants.

She was beautiful - extremely sexy.

"Woman, don't you think we should ditch this party and go somewhere… private?"

She giggled shyly. "They will want you up there."

I couldn't help stroking her soft cheeks. "It's not my day, girl. Let's go have our own private party - no clothes on." I winked.

She lifted a finger to my forehead, trailed it down my chest, "You…" she

murmured huskily, “Are a raunchy man.”

Catching her arm, I sucked the finger, my eyes holding hers. “And you are a raunchy woman.”

“That makes the two of us, then.”

“It sure does.”

I heard my name and cameramen swung to action - capturing our little romantic play and every other thing.

“Shall we?” I stood up, offering my hand to my wife.

“Oh…it’s you they want; you are the producer.”

“And you are the manager behind the camera. Come stand by me the way it should be.”

I knew she would love nothing more than being up that stage. Muyiwa loved the spotlight, and I would make sure I give her that and more, as long as we live.

With a standing ovation, my hand on my wife’s back as support and smiles on our faces. We climbed the stage to join the cast and crew.

“We are still having that private party with no clothes on,” I whispered into my wife’s ear before I took the mic to make an unprepared speech which would turn out fine by the way.

A Note From The Author

Dear Reader,

Paradise is a book I dreaded writing because I had not explored writing about Nollywood or Vacation Spots. But once I got a grasp of what my characters wanted me to share with you, the work became easier. Unfortunately for all my research and readings, they made the story more about themselves and less about Nollywood and Twin Bliss resort.

The main female character is an attention seeker - a strong woman with plenty of attitude and wouldn't want the opportunity to share her story with anyone, place, or thing. And her husband? In all, these characters guided me on this journey. Opened my eyes to deeper parts of them I didn't know existed.

I hope you enjoyed this book and will drop a review and rating on all platforms.

Thank you,

Rosemary, O.



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Now it's time to read:

Haven by Timi Waters

She's autistic; he's gay. A marriage of convenience seemed like the perfect plan. Until it wasn't.

Tyrell Alagoa, a die-hard romantic, only believes in one thing—loving the right woman. When he found his missing piece in Janelle Lafayette, he wasted no time beginning plans to seduce her. Then he discovered she was not only engaged to be married to Ahmed Gusau, a northern billionaire and influential politician, but Ahmed also had a burning grudge and an unsettled score to even out with him.

Delight by Glory Abah

Destiny has failed in many things, but she is not a quitter. When an opportunity to research a new business idea during an all-expense paid High School reunion to Gobota Island comes her way, she grabs it with both hands. Unfortunately, Rotimi Daramola, her high school nemesis turned popular singer is going to be there.

Rotimi has always loved Destiny, even though she views him as her worst enemy during their high school days. The trip to Gobota Island is an opportunity to win her heart. Will he be able to turn her hate into love?

Euphoria by Jessica Tagbajumi

Duncan Dugo, a charismatic, driven multi businessman with his fingers in many pies across the world.

A trauma from his past has him dependent and addicted to things best left alone.

Carmilla Grey, the beautiful, confident, and demanding girlfriend of Duncan desires commitment and stability but her flippant attitude may just have become a thorn to her own needs.

Together, the couple go on an adventure at the luxurious Twin Bliss resort situated in Gobota Islands, but will the tides of the past and Duncan's randy habits pull them apart?

Escape by Margaret Adetimehin

An escape from reality becomes so real, it threatens the ideal.

When her work husband chooses someone else, Lola the Brand Guru, finds herself heading to the exotic Twin Bliss Resort to lick her wounds. Arriving at the tropical resort and seeing all it has to offer - luxury, fun, and the added bonus of handsome rich men - she changes her plan.

Recoiling from his fiance’s betrayal, Onahi buries himself into trying to resolve the conflict of interests brewing at the Twin Bliss Resort’s boardroom and to complicate matters, its sacred grounds.

A chance encounter brings Onahi and Lola together as he tries to unravel the puzzle of why a stranger is occupying a villa reserved for his old friend.

Sparks fly and they both get more than they bargained for.

Rapture by Mobolaji Olanrewaju

Asher Fabian will trade anything for peace of mind. An unknown force existing long before he was born wants something from him. The solution might lie with a mysterious young woman,who he met through his company's General Manager, Lishan Wilson.

Sappirah Wilson's wants to leave a legacy for her twin brother, Lishan. Asher seemed the perfect candidate for her plan. Can she achieve her plan with the help of the legendary marula?

Sparks fly and there is sizzling passion. But time, fate and an unknown foe from the past become obstacles set to keep them apart forever.

Pleasure by Timi Waters

Izonbou Diete-Spiff is determined to become CEO of Dexter petroleum. It doesn’t matter that Dexter already has her elder brother Nengi as prime heir to the throne. Or that she believes her father a misogynist. All she’s set to do is prove to him and the board that she’s the right fit for Dexter.

Rasheed Adams is on a quest to bring his sister’s killer to justice. Between his demanding job at Dexter and his endless search for a killer who rapes and burns women with acid, he believes he has no room for love and romance.

Still, looks linger, touches burn, and both their desires spiral to becoming their worst nightmare.

Ecstasy by L. Leigh

Melody is ready to begin a new chapter in her life, so when a colleague pulls out as the keynote speaker at a prestigious medical conference. She jumps at the opportunity to take over. The organisers grateful for bailing them out, throw in an all-expense paid vacation at the luxurious Twin Bliss Resort.

Femi an award-winning screenwriter and author is looking forward to his time alone at Twin Bliss - securing finance for his next blockbuster project and reflecting on his past. An email arrives which makes him question what he wants, as the trouble and drama he ran from follows him to Twin Bliss.

About Rosemary Okafor.

She is Rosemary Okafor. The woman who tells you what really goes on in marriages after the wedding guests are gone and the couples have each other's shits to deal with. From newly-weds to older couples, from ordinary next door married partners to celebrity partners. She prowls for dirt in marriages and makes something beautiful out of it.

With many of her stories packaged in anthologies and sold in different countries, and a debut standalone novel titled "One more night," which was released August 2020, she's known for giving readers insider knowledge of marriages while icing the stories with hot sex scenes.

Rosemary writes about real people with real issues, sometimes in the most funny way, because, hey, we need to smile.

Visit Rosemary Okafor on linktr.ee/Rosemarywrites and follow her on twitter @authorrosemary_ok Facebook @ www.facebook.com/rose.angel.754

Also, by Rosemary Okafor

Akwaugo

Marriage vows signed in blood, witnessed by the deities, with death, the only way to divorce.

Shunned by society, family, and friends for being childless, Akwaugo seeks the help of another man to save face.

Spending the Christmas season in his hometown, Nnewi, isn't as bad as Tobe thinks it would be - it is turning out to be more than perfect - until he crosses paths with the village goddess.

They are not supposed to fall in love. So much is at stake. Until fate makes the forbidden desirable.

Available March 2022

Many Waters.

After three failed relationships, Elizabeth gives up on finding love, until the

day a stranger plays her a song and gives her a wink.

Ebube is a soldier with a troubled past, a haunted present, and an uncertain future. When he is transferred to Port Harcourt, falling in love with a stubborn, plus-size woman is not part of the plan.

While nurturing their young union; duty calls, and an old enemy comes calling. With Ebube gone, Elizabeth must face this enemy to protect her children.

Available December 2021

One More Night.

A night with Grace's ex-husband reignites old feelings she thought long buried and provides a second chance for her dead marriage. With a world of uncertainty between them, they must determine if the reasons that tore them apart in the first place will do so again.

Imelda has known one kind of love—hard, stressful, and abusive. Then she crosses paths with Kolawole, a far cry from her usual taste in men. With an old debt to pay, forced loyalty, and blackmail, can she walk away from an old relationship that threatens to tear her apart?

Chinyeaka's life has not been easy. But she's determined to get the future she deserves by any means necessary.

One More Night weaves the stories of these women as they search for love, second chances, forgiveness, and self-rediscovery.

Available now.

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