

Chapter 3

The Dynamics of A Triangle

Edited by Serendipity

Sometimes things get lost in translation, being a mother gets confused with being boring, being a wife means having someone to answer to and being a woman speaks to how one thinks with her emotions and not logic.

A home is built by a woman, so it's normal for her to set the tone. Women are constantly plagued by stereotypes, they are supposed to be neat, great cooks and caregivers.

I was taught how to cook and clean, not because I needed to make a man happy one day but because those are things a woman should know in order to be considered a woman. Quickly I moved from being a little girl who knew the warmth felt from sitting on her daddy's lap to someone forced into adolescence. My life settled into a routine of dance lessons, lessons on etiquette and how to handle myself in front of guests. I was being groomed for my role in future and no matter how many times I ran to my father to make the lessons stop, he would just smile and tell me that it is all for my own good. That was the only time my father ever let me down.

With time, I found my life flowing in and out of routine. Wake up, eat, sit on the throne and do it again the next day. My life on most days is the definition of routine.

I love my family and I am learning to accept the life we live, with its flaws and all.

At times I wonder if blissful ignorance could be the solution to my problems, would I be happier not knowing my husband has a second wife, that he has a daughter with someone other than me?

Maybe that would have been enough a few years ago and I would have found it easier to sleep back then but now, we are family and everyone has a place and a part to play. Everything is calculated and meticulous, life on a schedule.

Mondays and Fridays are dedicated to me, Tuesdays belong to Mfariji, on Wednesdays we give Rafiki a break and Thursdays, I let him decide who he wants. Saturdays are for him to spend time with Uhuru and Dada, while we spend Sundays all together as a family.

Mfariji and I do a lot of travelling, so we try to capitalise on any moments we get with the girls between their lessons. I have tried to advocate for more time for them to just be children but the elders are against it, especially with Uhuru. They say I should just be happy that the girls have fewer teachers than I did.

Usually, when he spends time with the girls, Rafiki takes them to the theme park or movies, some times they just sit and read in silence and on rare occasions, he does things out of the ordinary. I'll never forget the day he took them to the Zoo, Uhuru came back demanding a lion and Dada developed a deep dislike for animals, which in all honesty was the expected result, Uhuru has always been in favour of learning new things while Dada is the textbook definition of an introvert and hates change.

Ironically, our daughters match our personalities. The only time Mfariji is loud is either on Tuesday nights or when she is shouting at the girls. She herself is a down to earth, short-haired lady. Always quiet and observant, minding her own business but loves sharing gossip with me every Saturday, during our afternoon tea. She is simple and full of passion, she is also very mature for someone who was forced into marriage at the age of 19.

We all live in the main house with the exception of Rafiki. He lives in the cottage and that's normally where I walk in on him and Mfariji. I don't do it intentionally but that is where the home office is. I struggle to sleep on most days and so I spend most nights working, even when it's my turn to be with Rafiki, if I can't sleep I would sneak out of bed to get some work done.

When Uhuru was younger, she always wondered why her father wasn't allowed to live in the main house. I used to come up with different lies until one day Dada said he slept outside in the cottage to keep us safe, and the reason Mfariji and I would take turns sleeping at his place was to keep him company.

Uhuru can be a lot to handle and her inquisitive mind can push you to the edge of insanity but Dada knows how to calm her little sister. The girls are also very competitive, often making bets to see who will score the highest on a test, wins a game of chess or who memorises a section of the dictionary first. Every so often, even against my wishes, Dada let's Uhuru win. I am against it because my mother taught me to earn every victory and never have anything handed to me. I used to be very strict with the girls but Mfariji taught me how to be a better mother. Before her intervention, my parenting style mirrored that of my mother, a woman born and bred to lead.

Mfariji and I clash from time to time but I think that is natural as women, we often disagree on the little things, like who is hotter, Brad Pitt or Will Smith and which show we get to watch first, Criminal Minds or the Kardashians, personally I prefer Criminal Minds, yet what woman doesn't have a passion for fashion?

One thing we agree on, is how our daughters should be raised. With class and morals, and that they are sisters, blessed with two mothers.

Another thing we usually agree on, is to have pizza on speed dial every third Sunday. Sunday is family day, usually, we start off with breakfast made by the house chef and then we either watch a movie or go play outside.

For lunch we have made it a tradition to cook together as a family, we each take turns to pick what we are going to cook.

When I decide on the meal, it is normally something inspired by an episode of Masterchef. I love the creativity showcased in the episodes and how the contestants always have a variety of dish ideas.

Mfariji, on the other hand, is a huge fan of Siba Mtongana and when she cooks, she even tries to imitate her. Most times it's spot on and she adds her own humour.

Rafiki normally cooks the most complex meals, he says he likes a challenge and wants food to be an experience. He is fascinated with molecular gastronomy. He loves to fixate on details.

Now the reason for having the pizza delivery number on hand every third week is because the girls get to pick what we eat and since Dada lost the last bet, Uhuru been picking the dishes for the past few months and she has a habit of always wanting to try the things she sees on Instagram. Last time, we cooked pickled lamb, I'll admit it looked amazing but never had we been so happy to eat pizza before.

If I had to try and recall all the good times I had with my family, I would be sitting here for decades. These have been the best and worst years of my life. These people have made me smile and cry, brought me joy, laughter and made life worth living. I have bad memories too but I choose not to dwell on them.

I admit I wasn't happy when Mfariji joined the family but with time I learnt how to love her and her quirks. I think it's the different personalities that make the Muujiza family so special. Most importantly we know we are there for each other, we'll always protect each other and no one should come between us.

I always wanted a family of five, God answered my prayer in his own way.