

Chapter 14

One More Night

Edited by Serendipity

Often we make mistakes and most times we disguise choices as mistakes. Maybe I should have known better; I can list as many excuses as I want to but I know that night shouldn't have happened.

Once again we were together, alone in a car, in the dead of the night and I was feeling vulnerable.

My mother was once again getting the best of me and the fact that she was using my son as a weapon was really getting under my skin.

"I can't stand her. She's so condescending. She always has to have her way and prove that she's right. Always one step ahead, sometimes I wish that she wasn't my..."

"Look out", he yelled.

"What?"

I was so caught in my rage I forgot I was driving. If Shujaa hadn't spoken out in time, I would probably have crashed into the dog. I am not a fan of pets but Uhuru would never forgive me if I

killed one, even by accident. She would use it as an excuse to get a pet in the house, her version of punishment and atoning.

I swerved just in time to avoid the dog and Uhuru's wrath but Rafiki is going to be upset that I crashed his car.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

"Yes, I'm fine. Let's just get out of here".

"You're not. You're bleeding".

He wiped his hand across my forehead and asked me to look at his fingers.

"It's just a small cut", I responded.

"Let me drive."

"No Shujaa, I'm fine", I insisted.

“Let me drive. Maybe getting you home safe will score me some points with Rafiki”.

“Maybe”, I said sarcastically.

We both laughed and then he insisted on driving again until I gave in. I must have been in shock because once I settled into the passenger seat, I could feel my head pounding.

“Are you sure you’re okay?”, he asked.

“Yes. It’s nothing.”

“It looks like you’re struggling to keep your eyes open. Are you in pain? I can drive you to the hospital?”.

“No, I’m fine. Let’s just go home”, I insisted.

“We’ll get the doctor to come to the house”.

“Sure, we can do that but I’m fine. Let’s go”.

I heard the engine stutter and saw him fiddling with the keys.

“You know how to drive right?”, I asked jokingly.

“Yes. I know how to drive but the car won’t start”

“What do you mean?”

“It refuses to start. I will go and take a look.”

He undid his seatbelt, stepped out of the car and popped open the bonnet and to check what was wrong. A few minutes later he came back.

“Well?”, I asked. “Did you fix it?”

“Hmmm... I just remembered I know nothing about cars.”

“Then why did you go take a look?”

“Isn’t that what the guy is supposed to do in such situations?”

“You’re an idiot, do you know that?” I said with a giggle.

“Ouch. Your majesty you are mean.”

“I missed you. You were gone too long”.

I said the words without thinking it through. He and Rafiki were in the middle of their feud and I should be on my husband’s side but Shujaa was a good man, one of the few good people Rafiki brought into my world. He was also my daughter’s father. His presence was needed in our lives.

“I’m sorry”, he sighed. “It’s just that work has been keeping me busy”.

“Since when do you lie to me?”

“I’m not lying”.

I wanted to push further. I wondered if he was still comfortable with me. Our friendship was instant the first time we met. Rafiki was shy and awkward, mostly speaking when spoken to while Shujaa and Hatari were exact opposites. Hatari was very much

the same clown he is today, finding humour at the expense of others. Shujaa on the other hand was and still is more of a people's person and a social butterfly.

Whenever he speaks, it warms your heart and you feel like you are the most important person to him in that moment. Maybe that's why I chose him to have an affair with; I wanted his traits to be my daughter's inheritance.

He was handsome and his voice hypnotic, something you get lost in without trying.

"Zee... Are you listening?"

"Sorry... Yes, yes, I'm listening"

"Are you okay?"

"Yes, I'm okay. I was just trying to figure out how long it will take before someone comes to get us".

“I think it shouldn’t take that long, you sent a message to Mfariji and it’s rather dark, I’m sure they will send someone over as soon as possible.”

“Look on the bright side, this will give us a chance to talk and catch up. So tell me everything”.

We spoke about his life and how his career had progressed since we last saw each other. The conversation jumped around between his family and friends until we started talking about his love life. I always assumed that he got married and never told any of us but I was shocked to hear how much he struggled to find love and keep it because of me.

It must have been eating him up inside; the guilt of his impure thoughts. He confessed the dream to me, how it was still recurring and giving him restless nights. I did my best to pretend like that this was the first time I was hearing about it. Egging him to go into more and more detail, telling him that I was not offended and that it was okay.

With each moment of the dream he described, I relived it. It replayed.

How it felt the first time he made me climax.

I wanted to feel bad that he was being tormented but that night with him was the first time I experienced an orgasm that wasn't from self-pleasure.

A big part of me was happy that our night was as memorable for me as it was for him, that even after all these years he still remembered every detail. He spoke of details only someone who'd seen me with my clothes off would know, saying specifically where my birthmark was and the sound I make when I bite my lips.

Listening to him speak was refreshing. I was unaccustomed to being around the truth and hearing someone just speak from their heart. I found him really liberating.

Honest to a fault actually and every word made it clear to me why Rafiki was better suited for me.

His demons would respond to mine unlike Shujaa's.

Shujaa deserves someone better than me, one without secrets, someone who listens to their conscience.

Shujaa continued talking and got lost in his thoughts a few times, saying half sentences and backtracking the story.

“I’m sorry, I know it is a lot to process”, he said, “I didn’t want to say anything, I wasn’t going to say anything but my psychologist said I would not be able to move on from this unless I told you everything”.

“It’s okay. I’m a big girl. I can handle the truth”.

“Yeah... So what was I saying again? I think it was about the backseat”.

“You already mentioned that”, I said, “I think you said I was moaning or something”

“Yes... Do you really want to hear all that?”.

“Yes, the psychologist said it would help right? All I want to do is help”, I said with my most innocent smile.

I suppose it was sadistic of me to push for the truth but we were out in the dark and I needed something to keep my mind distracted from the headache.

“Yes. You were on top and you were moaning and then you called out a name. Someone called Michael”.

“I did?” I asked surprised, “I mean in your dream, that’s what I did?”.

“Yes, that’s how I knew it was just a dream. If I were having any thoughts of you or anything like that, you would have called out to Rafiki and not a random name.”

The act of hearing another woman’s name while intimate with me would make me go numb but to have to hear it every day in my dreams would drive me insane.

It’s crazy to think that calling out Michael’s name 16 years ago is what kept Shujaa at bay.

He thought it was a mistake but I remember the state I was in all those years ago. As much as I was glad for that night with Shujaa, the one I really longed for was Michael.

Michael had the ability to make time stand still, nothing mattered whenever I was around him. He was the perfect escape and I only settled for Shujaa because he wasn’t available.

As Shujaa continued telling me about the dream, I felt my eyes getting heavier and somehow I ended up cuddled in his arms with my eyes closed.

He must have thought I was asleep because a few minutes later he went silent and I felt his hand caress my face. First his hand on my face, then a kiss on my forehead and another on my lips.

It was brief, a short kiss but I knew I wanted to experience it again. It felt better than the first time because this time he was awake. In that moment I knew I wanted it again, I wanted him to have his way with me and give me a child again but this time I wanted it with my husband's permission.

I didn't know how I would ask Rafiki but I knew it was something I'd have to deal with once I got home.

A few hours later, I woke up in the main bedroom with Rafiki by my side. He was staring at me and I could see the worry in his eyes.

"You're awake. Finally", he said relieved.

“Yes. I’m great. Who came to get us?... Also, I’m sorry about your car”.

“Don’t worry about it. It’s a small dent. The car is perfectly fine”

“Really?”.

“Yes. Shujaa drove you home. You were asleep. I also had the mechanic check the car, he said nothings wrong with it.”

“What?”, I ask confused.

“Don’t worry. You rest. The doctor said you need to rest, I will go and get you something to eat.”

Rafiki quickly got up and rushed to the kitchen.

Shujaa said he failed to start the car but now Rafiki said the it was perfectly fine and that Shujaa is the one who drove us home.

I wasn’t sure what to believe but if what Rafiki said was true, it meant that Shujaa lied to me and used the car as an excuse to stall us, just so he could tell me about his dream.

Maybe I was overthinking the whole situation and maybe Shujaa fixed the car after I fell asleep. He wasn't the type to do anything deceitful.

Of all the people I've met, he is one of the good men in the world. What could he gain by telling me about the dream?