

Chapter 2

The Introduction To My Story

Edited by Serendipity

I often find myself staring at her, wondering if she really came from me. How could I give birth to someone so beautiful, so curious and so perfect?

Sometimes I think I see her that way because that's who she really is and other times I think maybe it's because I am her mother.

Maybe I should feel more remorse but the moment I heard her heartbeat, all guilt faded and all I wanted to do was hold her. I have made a lot of mistakes in my life but she was not one of them.

A child can never be a mistake, even one who never knows when to keep quiet.

"Mama, today in class, we were discussing children and my teacher said that we are actually 9 months older than we really are, is that true mommy?" She asked with her brown eyes fixed on me.

"Baby, how would mama know that? I've told you many times before, mommy doesn't know everything."

Hoping to get a break from our usual back and forth banter, of who to listen to, me or her teachers. "*Didn't I tell you to trust what your teacher tells you?!*", I asked.

My daughter has a neck for starting debates and refuses to quit till she wins, if only she put that much passion into washing dishes then maybe there wouldn't be so many maids in our home.

"*Mommy, you have the answer to every question... Is there anyone else you trust me to ask other than you?!*", she asked while batting her eyes.

"*Fair enough. Technically a baby is only born 9 months after she or he is made inside their mommy's tummy. It's a process called, conception!*"

"*Con-ception.*", she mouthed.

Nodding I said, "*Yes baby, conception, you were conceived in December 2005 and born September 26th, 2006.*"

"*So since today is my birthday, then I'm technically 13 years and 9 months old!*", she beamed.

"Yes Uhuru, you are 13 years and 9 months old". To think that it had actually been 13 years since that night. What I did was shameful and fortunately, I only had to do it once.

Even if I wanted to do it again, I don't think I would have had another chance. I wasn't happy that he was drunk that night but I knew that meant he probably wouldn't remember it ever happening. I offered to drive him home because I needed a break from everyone. It was the day Mfariji and my husband were celebrating the birth of their daughter; it was her naming ceremony.

Maybe if there was less pressure on me to have a child I wouldn't have felt the need to be unfaithful. I wouldn't feel like I needed to find a new way to have purpose.

If anyone found out, I'm sure they would judge me. How could I have given myself to a man in the backseat of a car, in an open veld? I knew we wouldn't get caught because most of the town was at the party. My husband and the elders let me leave because they wanted to save me the shame, something they should have considered before marrying him off.

I don't know if it was my desire for comfort or my tendency to be self-destructive but that night lasted longer than it should have.

I was supposed to just drive him home, do what needs to be done, hope it works, live with self-hate for the rest of my life and love my baby unconditionally. A simple plan.

A plan that was going well until he put his hand under my dress with no hesitation and whispered how he couldn't wait to rearrange my insides. I didn't know if he was talking to me or if his mind made him believe I was someone else but I knew I wanted to feel desired and he made me feel that way.

You see, at the time, my husband was romantic but not very spontaneous, so having sex in a car made my shameful deed easier to bear. Had I suggested doing such with my husband, He would ask "*What would people say if they caught us or rather what would you do if you found yourself on the front cover of a magazine? After all, we are important people, or at least you are*".

I hoped God would forgive me, that my husband would forgive me and if he ever found out the truth, my daughter's father would forgive me too.

After all, I had forgiven them. I forgave my husband, my people and Mfariji. Mfariji didn't want to be a second wife and my husband wanted to only be with me but they forced him to marry her. They claimed she was nothing more than a surrogate, that she was there to bear a child for us until I could carry my own.

Initially, she refused to marry him, she told the elders she could never disrespect me and what I stand for by making me share a man but she had no choice in the end. She simply had to conform and open her legs, for a man she didn't love, a man who didn't love her.

We had been married for 3 years before they brought her into the picture. Her entire existence felt like an insult to mine, especially when she announced that she was pregnant. I saw how he would look at her whenever she said the baby kicked and how he would leave our bed in the middle of the night to keep her company whenever he saw she was struggling to sleep.

In the beginning, he didn't want her around and she was a means to an end but when he found out he was going to be a father, I saw his heart soften and with each doctors visit and sonar, he came back a little bit more in love with her.

My friends always blamed me for their love; asking how could I let it happen? How could I let them bond over a baby? They said that I should have been the one going for all the appointments and checking on Mfariji but I didn't want her in a marriage with a man she didn't know, I didn't expect them to fall for each other.

Also, I didn't really have the freedom to do whatever I wanted. I had to always be home. I had duties to fulfil.

Looking at my life now, so much has changed. I have a daughter whom I love with all my heart and soul. I have a husband and he has a second wife, who also gave him a daughter.

We weren't best friends and I wanted to hate her in the beginning but she wasn't an evil bitch or anything you see in the movies, she was simply sweet and respected me and my position.

She did everything that was expected of her and eventually, I felt pity for her, it's why I let them get so close. My husband and I were part of some grand plan and she was added on because I took too long to conceive.

If the elders had waited a little longer, she wouldn't have had to marry a man who didn't love her, a man who belonged to

someone else, a man who lacked the spontaneity and finesse required to please someone with a youthful heart. However, she soon fixed that, she had him falling in love with her modern nature, her creative personality and still somewhat pure views of the world.

I blamed myself on many nights, wondering what I could have done differently to have him look at me like that. It was only when he met her, that I wanted him to look at me.

She changed him; he didn't love me less but surely he didn't love me more.

I have caught them in the laundry, the shower, the jacuzzi and even on the kitchen counter. Sometimes I'd just stand there and stare. I'm sure the correct reaction would be rage or to set rules on where and when they can have their escapades but to see such a sight, to see a man who never liked the idea of me on top because it was disrespectful to me; was now covered in whipped cream and chocolate sauce.

There was this one time I really had to watch, I also had to fight the urge to touch myself because in seeking the truth, in confirming that the man who refused to kiss me all over, was the one currently doing unspeakable things with his tongue, I myself

got turned on and wanted to be lusted over and touched like that, loved and wanted like that, I simply wanted to matter again.

If I ever told any of this to anyone, they would think we weren't happy, that my husband didn't love me than his desire to have a child or that I wasn't willing to satisfy him. That he began to love her more than he did me and I lost my place in his heart but it wasn't like that. He was forced by culture, by my own people.

They turned on me because they wanted an heiress to the throne.