

Chapter 15

A King's Birthday

Unedited

I practiced a few times. I told myself that I would ask him for a child. I wanted to do it but this time with his permission. I didn't have a chance to talk to him during brunch because the girls wanted to sit between the two of us.

At first I wanted to wait until the Uyota's case was resolved but there is no time better than the present. I knew if I waited any longer I would chicken out and I really want to be with child again, to feel the kicks and the cravings. Experiencing all of that the first time was painful because as much as I loved my daughter, I had so much shame because of what I did and how I did it.

I love my daughter and long for a son I can't hold because I have so many secrets to protect. I almost lost my daughter so many times because of the stress, being in and out of hospital and being monitored because I almost miscarried 4 times.

This time I want it to be less selfish, and learn to put everyone else before myself. I want a pregnancy and life we can all be a part of.

I excused myself from the table first and went to the study, and on the way I asked one of the maids to tell him to meet me there.

He walked in but I could tell he was in a mood.

"Hey Zee", he said while walking over to the cabinet.

"Rafiki, is everything okay?", I asked.

"Yes. It's nothing. Don't worry about it. The helpers said you wanted to talk to me."

"I wanted to ask you something."

"Yes.", he said eagerly. "What is it?"

"It's about the girls and us. It's about our family".

“Yes baby”, he asked with a smile.

“I want to have another baby”. I said gently.

“Another one? We discussed this. Once you find a sperm donor, than we can do it”.

“Well, I was thinking I could ask your friend”.

“Uyota? Sure.”

“No. Shuuja. I want to ask him because he and Uhuru...”

“He and Uhuru are?”, he asked. I could tell he was getting annoyed.

“Close... They are close”. I know overheard Rafiki and Shuuja arguing over the dream, so I assumed he knew that Shuuja was Uhuru’s father and that was why he was upset, however it’s normal for a man to be upset

that his best friend was dreaming about sleeping with his wife.

Maybe this wasn't the right time for this. I could see he had other things on his mind.

"Hmmm... Maybe we can talk about this later."

"Yes", he said. "Was there anything else?"

"No", I responded. "That's all. Uhm... I think I have to do something with the girls now."

"Okay sure. Go ahead", he said sarcastically.

"Rafiki, is everything okay?".

"Yes. Yes. It's fine. Go before Uhuru gets moody. You know how she is when you are late for your little dates".

"Oh. Okay". I walked away. I didn't want to push further. He was clearly in a mood and I didn't want that to ruin my excitement of having a child.

I went to Uhuru's room and knocked gently. I opened the door and felt it slam in my face. I pushed gentle and it hardly budged and then I heard the lock click.

"Uhuru", I whispered.

"Password". She responded.

"Really baby?"

"Yes mom. A different one this time pleaaaaase".

"Okay. Knock, knock.", I said in a playful voice.

"Who's there?", she asked.

"Stopwatch."

“Stopwatch who?”

“Stopwatch you’re doing and let me in”, I said with a smile.

She burst out laughing and opened the door. Quickly trying to hide her smile and keep her composure.

“Come in my lady”, she said. *“This way to your table”.*

“Thank you very much for the invite. What shall it be today? Tea and mud pies again?”.

A password was customary for these kind of events. One of the maids let her watch an old gangsta movie and she started treating our play dates like a secret club; A secret knock, a password or some handshake we have to do before she starts talking.

The one upside was that the food improved. We moved from pretend cookies made of dried mud to real

cookies, muffins she'd take from the kitchen or leftovers from her breakfast.

Even her decorating skills had improved. The decor was at the expense of my living room but she was trying and I had to commend her for that. We no longer sat on plastic chairs, instead she'd take my throw pillows and place them on the floor. Take my best cups and fill it up with different drinks. Coke was coffee and apple juice was tea.

"Baby, how would you feel about having another sibling?"

"Do you and daddy want to have another child?", she asked while stirring her tea.

"Yes baby".

"Will it be a boy or a girl? Can I name the baby?".

“Yes baby. You can. I want a boy now because I have you and Dada, so a baby boy would be a change for the house and daddy won’t be the only man in the house”.

She took a muffin and cut it into pieces. I could tell she was doing it without thought and that something was on her mind.

“Baby, what’s wrong? Do you not want a sibling?”, I asked.

She kept quiet. Chewing her muffin. Maybe I had upset her. She was used to being the youngest and the idea of a sibling meant that she would have to share attention.

“Baby, it’s okay. We won’t have another baby, if you don’t want us to”.

“Mommy... ”, she asked while looking into her cup, *“... Why won’t daddy let uncle Shuuja see his daughter?”*

“Uhuru, what are you talking about baby?”.

“The other night when you were asleep after the accident, Uncle Shuuja and daddy were fighting and I know I’m not supposed to eavesdrop on other people’s conversations but uncle Shuuja said that he won’t let daddy keep him away from his daughter.”, she said while sipping her tea.

I was surprised and caught off guard, firstly I did not know Shuuja had a daughter and why would Rafiki want to keep him from his daughter.

“Baby, are you sure about what you’re saying? You know it’s not good to tell lies”.

“No mommy, don’t do that, you must sip the tea and not drink it. Lift your pinky finger, just like this”. She said a little agitated.

“Sorry baby, show mommy again. I will get it right. Just tell me if you’re sure about what you’re saying”.

Shuuja doesn't have any kids. If Rafiki were threatening him, it means that they were talking about Uhuru. I guess that meant that Shuuja knew about Uhuru after all, and maybe his confession in the car was his way of hinting that he knew everything.

The two of them are at odds again and to make matters worse I just asked Rafiki to let Shuuja be a sperm donor.

"Mommy, would you let anyone keep me from you?"

"Baby, nothing in this world would keep me from you."

"I know mommy", she put her cup down and gave me a hug. "I know you would never separate any child from their parents".

"You know what Uhuru, pour me another cup of tea and I will go talk to daddy and sort this all out. I'm sure this is a misunderstanding okay baby... And I promise I won't tell daddy you told me, so don't tell anyone else what you heard

until I get back to you. This is going to be out little secret. Okay? Promise promise?" .

She held out her hand and we locked our pinky fingers. *"Promise, promise mommy"* .

I couldn't imagine what she was going through, fearing that someone would keep her from her parents. Also the thought that her father is a monster. I need to go speak to Rafiki and sort this out. I also need to come up with a lie for him to tell his Uhuru.

As I was walking towards the study, I felt someone grab me from behind.

"Mapenzi, we need to talk" , he said.

"Shuuja, can this wait?" .

"No, it can't wait. We have to talk about this" . He said surprisingly calm and together.

“Really? What is it?”

“It’s about Rafiki. I...”

“Shuuja, I don’t think he wants to talk to you right now.” I didn’t want to fight over Uhuru and I knew eventually we would have to talk about it but now wasn’t the right time.

“I know that, it’s just that I was hoping today we could...”.

He must have felt that I was anxious about something because he put his hand on my shoulder to try and calm me down but I quickly shrugged it off. With the way things are currently, it wasn’t appropriate for him to be touching me so carelessly.

“Shuuja, if that’s all you want to talk about, it can wait this is not the time.”

“Mapenzi, listen we are running out of time...”

“Time for?”, I asked puzzled but before he could respond, Mfariji interrupted us.

“Zee, where have you been? I have been trying to call you. Something has come up at the station. I need you to come to the station with me”.

“Mfariji, what’s going on?”.

“It’s about Uyota’s case. Apparently things have gotten worse. The sergeant refused to tell me what was going on over the phone. He said I must come there in person and I think you being there with me would help.”

“Okay. Let me get my bag. I will be back”. Every time I think I have something under control, something else in my life goes wrong. I just wish one day could go well for us.

It seemed like everyone had something to say to me today. As I was making my way to the study, Dada called out to me.

“Mom, Mom. I need to talk to you. It’s about dad.”

“Dada, what’s wrong? Is your dad hurt?”

“No mom, it’s not that. I just had an idea for later. I think it could be really fun.”

“Okay my love, since it’s for later, we have plenty of time. I have to go sort something out at the station. Something is wrong with your uncle’s case and your mom needs me.”

“Is everything going to be okay?”

“I don’t know baby but your mom sounds a little worried, so I have to go. We can talk about your dad later tonight if you are still awake or tomorrow morning when I get back.”

“But mom...”

“I’m sorry sweetie”.

I rushed from the hallway to the study, trying not to bump into anyone. I got there only to find my mother and Rafiki walking out of the study. They were smiling with one another until he saw me coming. He looked at me disappointed. He walked away and before I could follow him, my mother stood in my way.

“He needs space. Let him be Mapenzi.”

“How do you know what he needs? Are you busy scheming again?”

“Scheming? Young lady remember who you are talking to.”

“I am talking to one of my citizens. You seem to forget your place mother. I am queen now. I am tired of you always trying to butt in.”

“Mapenzi, I will...”

“You will what mother? You and your theatrics can wait. I have to go to the station. I will deal with this when I get back”.

Speaking to my mother that way was out of line and surely I know I took my frustration out on her but who was she to tell me to give my husband space and what were they doing having conversations behind my back.

I knew my mother wouldn't let it go either, I had challenged her head on and one of these days she would find a way to put me in my place. My mother was always petty and out to prove a point, so her revenge would not be petty but she could bring her worst, at this point almost everyone knew that Rafiki wasn't Uhuru's father, also I know she would not hurt Uhuru; so she was welcome to do her worst.

I got to the car and we started driving to the station.

“Sorry I took so long Mfariji”.

“It’s okay, I was on the call with the sergeant. He said that the press is swarming the station, so he has arranged for us to enter through the back. Did you finish cooking?”

“What?”

“Zi. You begged everyone to cook tonight.”

“I totally forgot, can I use your phone? I think I left mine in my purse and it’s in the boot.”

“Sure”, she said as she pointed me towards her phone.

I make it a habit not to use anyone’s phone but my own. They say if you are looking for something then you will find it.

I opened her WhatsApp to text Dada and ask her to make dinner or order pizza if we didn’t get back in time. As I waited for her to respond, I opened the tab with Whatsapp statuses and I saw Rafiki’s pop up.

Curiosity got the best of me and I opened it. It was a picture of a box and the caption read, *“Thank you Queen Mother for the birthday present, I love it.”*

Out of shock I yelled out to Mfariji, *“STOP THE CAR!”*.

“Zi, what’s wrong?”.

“What’s today’s date.”

“It’s January 2nd. It’s Rafiki’s birthday.”

It slipped my mind. It had totally slipped my mind. Somehow I managed to forget my husband’s birthday. Instead of showing him love and affection, I asked him if I could have a child with a friend he is no longer getting along with.

Surely I must be the wife of the year.

