



BOOMERANG

Stemming from childhood

A typical story, in a typical day to day life. Life is best when lived right with the right people. Don't be afraid to love, you can only learn more about yourself through it. "Faith. S. Mwangudza"

Author's Note

This is a story about a couple trying to find their way through life. The characters are fictitious.

The places mentioned are also fictitious unknown to the author. This is a story that tries to explain about narcissistic behaviour. The story compilation originated from a series of research, interviewing of people, materials gathered from articles on the internet. The gathering for this story was also inspired by an article done by Lynne Namka, Ed. D. who wrote about elements of narcissistic adult behaviour where she explained that mostly it stems from childhood.

Boomerang effect means going back to originality. As you would see from the story how many things are either related with the origin or things tending to go back to their original state. Or at times bouncing back, like the real boomerang tool used by the Aborigines. I tried to create a storyline out of that article based on that knowledge. Narcissistic behaviour is very broad, and it may or might not result to physical confrontation. Mostly Narcissistic behaviour could lead to emotional damage than physical damage. If you feel like in any way your partner or associate exhibits any form of narcissist behaviour and in away affects your well-being, try getting help if possible.

Enjoy the read.

Yours,

Faith S. Mwangudza

THE LAST STRAW,

...After a long sigh, he muttered to Cassie, "Look, I don't think this is working out the way it should. Don't you think that, maybe it's time for us to go separate ways? We are not doing each other any good, especially me, and I need you to save yourself from this madness before it gets messy."

Sniffing and wiping off her tears, holding on to her cheek that was now hot from the slap she received. She then let out a weak shriek and said,

"I don't understand what has come over you lately. Maybe we can consider getting help. I love you, I want us to,,,to,,,, in between sniffing and blowing her nose, to, maybe,, we could give us a chance to go back to how things were, we can still go back to being team Amil and Cassie once again. Remember those days when everyone called us the dynamic duo? Why can't we work on going back to that?"

"Look", She said, rummaging through her purse, "I got the contact of Maggie, she can slot us in sometime soon, "I still think we need to give ourselves time to go over what has been happening to our relationship. Your sister recommended counselling, maybe this counselling will help us understand each other and what has been happening to our marriage."

Looking up and commenting sarcastically, "Do you believe talking to a stranger about our marital affairs is going to work miracles about us? You think so! Just go ahead then, attend

those, those counselling's or whatever's but for me, I am not lifting a darn foot to see a shrink who will internalize me. In fact, were it not for your stubbornness, we would not be here, pshhtt!" He muttered walking away from her.

Amil never liked being confronted about anything. In fact, he never envisioned himself being helpless. He did not believe he could ask for help, let alone get one. So anytime they got into an argument and he felt defeated, he just shrugged, and always walked away,,,,,,,,

"Hallo, Mackenzie, its Cassie..."

CHAPTER 1- PLOT

They had been married for thirteen years before she finally conceived. They never knew they were trying, but indeed they were. Family and friends came at them severally, asking, whether they were okay, whether they needed to get checked or something because it had been way too long. Others even recommended special fertility doctors, some even proposing traditional healing to open her womb. Little did they know that she had been on her pills and she was too careful not to conceive. Especially at that time where her husband had been away on travel for work and only occasionally came home once a year. She had thought that it would have been a bad idea conceiving and carrying her pregnancy to term all by herself. She never thought she was that strong or capable even. So, when he told her, on his last visit that he was no longer going back to Wotown, and that he would now be stationed back home, she thought that, maybe, it was about time. Time for her to conceive and start a family. Their perfect family.

Within three months after that annunciation, they got to 'work' and in no time she became pregnant. The news of her pregnancy travelled far and wide, with her every kith and kin offering unwarranted advice, of how she should carry herself during the pregnancy. Some even recommending that she ought to step down from the Mayoral position which seemed stressful at that time, to enable her to carry the pregnancy stress free. Well, while some meant well, she was still convinced that not all of them did, especially where she might have overheard some rumours spreading about her being barren. They referred to her as the Barren Mayor. After the first trimester, she took a rest, and her deputy took charge of the town.

"Selpha, you have made me the happiest man on earth, I am very elated, and I am looking forward to the birth of our son." I will name him after my maternal grandfather Lieutenant Amil. He always took me for fishing and camping when I was a little boy whenever he was off duty". "Look, he even gave me this fishing rod that I had mounted on this wall. What a way to remember and honour him. I am sure he would be proud, may his soul rest in peace."

Selpha just smiled as she stirred the pot of boiling soup, while she made them dinner. "You are going to make a good dad too Jethro, I certainly have no doubts about that", he let out a big smile too, planting a huge kiss on her forehead as he caressed her tummy which was now beginning to show.

The next couple of weeks, Selpha's sisters and friends trickled into their home, with pots of hot cooked food, freshly baked breads, and soups, just to ensure that she had enough food as she waited for the day. They really cared about her and were happy that she was soon going to be a mother just like them. Her belly was now fully grown, her feet swollen, her face and eyes puffed. The little guy had been kicking profusely in anticipation of the day when he would finally be out of the womb and straight into the world. As fate would have it, just as Jethro walked into the house that evening, shortly before she served him the food that her sister had brought for them, she tried getting up to reach for the plates on top of the cabinet, her water suddenly broke. Letting out a big gush. It was a painless moment of confusion at first, luckily Jethro was able to rush her to the Health Centre in good time. Her midwife had already been informed of her massive dilation, and she made it just in time for the delivery. Four painful breath-taking

pushes, amidst two heavy feisty wails, he was out. A tiny little boy. He came out with his hands folded into a fist. Small tiny fists. Like he was ready to fight the world or with the world. He let out beautiful cries to signify that he was finally around and at the same time to dramatically usher his own entry into the world. When the doctor came in to review the health of mother and child, he said to her, "Congratulations Selpha on delivering a beautiful healthy baby boy, have you thought of a name yet?" he asked, "Yes I have, he is Amil, Amil Sandey", she responded, as she struggled to offer the baby the breast.

In a couple of days, it was life as usual, trying to embrace the joys of the birth of their son. More family members and friends trickled into their home, with them, they carried all types of gifts and food to welcome the birth of baby Amil. Some said he took after the mother, some said after the father, and some even witfully said he looked like the Sherriff. One of the market women shyly said that, but Selpha never took her remarks any seriously. The Sheriff had grown so close to Selpha since she spent time with him solving a couple of cases at the town council. The two had been seen together several times, sometimes just the two of them, sometimes in the company of her deputy, but never did a relationship spur between them. It somehow seemed like a miracle that a couple as old as Selpha and Jethro were able to conceive in their mid-forties. Some even told her that she shouldn't wait for too long before she got her second child.

After seven years of having little Amil in their lives, Wotown came calling, and Jethro had to take up another assignment, which meant leaving Selpha all by herself once again. Selpha had long

since resumed her Mayoral duties at the town council. The decision to move to Wotown again was met with a lot of resistance by Selpha who claimed that she needed Jethro back home. She needed him even more now that Amil was growing up and needed his father's presence. They spent that night arguing and bickering at each other.

"Why is it so easy for you to just pack and leave? she asked, don't you ever think of little Amil and I? You promised that you will not be going back to Wotown, and that we shall make do of what we have here in Wanda Jeth", She usually calls him Jeth whenever she is either too angry to complete his full name or either too in love and she just needed to express her love by referring to him by his puppy name Jeth. So, this time she was angry. He couldn't even look at her, but just mumbled a few words beneath his hat, "This time I will try to be around often whenever I can".

With Jethro gone, Selpha had to take up duties of being both mother and father to Amil, who was now almost approaching his teenage years. He had watched how his mother and father had related over the years and never envied their relationship one bit. He watched how his mother had always taken the lead in roles of the household with his dad only making a few appearances. Selpha became sterner in terms of how she raised Amil. While he appreciated her sternness, which at times came out too strong, he would have loved her to be gentler and soothing just like other mums as he had observed from his friends. He also wished that his dad had been home more often to watch him grow and become the man he was almost turning into. He wished he had been more present to offer support to his mum who seemed to be

constantly overwhelmed by governance and parenting roles. His dad would make appearances into their home, and each time he left, he would always leave in a fight. Selpha always accused him of neglecting the family and refusing to own up to his responsibilities. He never liked making decisions, especially where Amil was concerned, and that he left all the parenting and upbringing work to Selpha. What they did not know was that, shortly before Jethro returned home at that time when little Amil was conceived, he had met a woman in Wotown. Maya was her name. She had some random affairs with Jethro, got pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl called Huddah.

Maya was the daughter of the Chief Commissioner of Wotown, the office where Jethro worked. He was his Deputy. She had threatened him that she would reveal that he sired a child with her and left her. So now she threatened him that if she doesn't take up the assignment in Wotown once again, where he would be near their daughter, she would be forced to reveal the truth to her father, and he could lose his job. Losing his job was the least of things he needed happening to him at that time and so he decided to leave Wanda and move to Wotown again. Huddah was a couple of months older than Amil. Amil only got to learn about Huddah when he went to study for his Political Degree in Wotown Campus. Wotown was the main city of their province. They met over coffee and a couple of lunches here and there. They got to know each other well and sanely chose to leave behind their parents' past and become the half siblings they were. Huddah always had her dad around, something that Amil secretly envied. They spent most of their time discussing their father Jethro.

CHAPTER 2- CASSIE

The black Volkswagen pulled over Yemi's Cafe'. A lady in red heels emerged from the vehicle. She got out, pecked someone who was inside the vehicle and joyfully walked into the Cafe'. She was wearing an almost knee length, yellow and white polka dot dress, a massive blue hat on top of her black hair, big sunglasses clipped at the nape of her dress' neckline. She oddly and strikingly looked lovely in that yellow, red, and blue colour combination. What was even more noticeable besides her figure, was the amazing dimples she had chiselled deep into her cheeks that got dipper every time she smiled. Those made her look even more beautiful even the barrister must have acknowledged that from the intense glares he kept giving her. She smiled with a certain surety of knowing that she had either the most beautiful smile, or an interesting facial physique that everyone would be turned on by staring at her, and that was true. She chuckled even more as they threw a few jokes here and there with the barrister who was packing her coffee take-aways.

"Here you go maam, two coffee lattes, two cinnamon pastries with extra cream just the way you love it".

"Thanks Hudson, you are always so kind, saying as she giggled, "I will tip you tomorrow' she said shyly as she walked away.

"You always say that, Hudson shouted as he bid her goodbye. Later C."

"You are running late again Huddah, you know how I don't like being kept waiting!" You know how I am very conscious of my time. It's about time you started respecting people's time too."

Amil said as he almost hung up the phone.

"Oh, jeez you are too uptight, relax bro, I am actually pulling over at the café. I ran into an old roommate of mine from my college days. I am just saying a quick hello before I come in."

"You see, wasting more time Huddah!" He clicked.

"By the way did you see her? She retorted, completely ignoring the anger in his tone,

"See who"? he asked,

"Whoever doesn't get to notice C, must be a walking zombie." She said, laughing very loudly.

So, when Amil looked outside, he saw her sister Huddah conversing with the lady. The lady in that gigantic blue hat, and the yellow and white polka dot dress. The lady who had come in to grab coffee lattes and pastries from the cafe'. The same lady whom he had been ogling over the last couple of minutes. So, she happened to be someone well known to her half-sister Huddah. From the look and how they conversed, they seemed not to have seen each other in a long time.

"Ciao, we should catch up more often, now that we moved back here in Wotown, Mackenzie is so pleased to finally have me here", she said." He had become too worn out making trips to Ziliah every weekend."

The two ladies bid each goodbye. She passed over the cups of coffee to the gentleman on the driver's seat as she got in and off, they drove.

Huddah walked into the cafe' where Amil was seated. The two have been meeting here almost weekly, sometimes even twice or thrice a week. He was waiting patiently for her so that they can go over the campaign materials. Amil was running for congress. Huddah was his campaign manager. They were doing last minute checks before the voting which was coming up in a couple of months. He always wore suits, even on his last year of university, his mother always teased him that people would mistake him for one of the deans. He always looked sharp. No, he loved been seen sharp.

"I take it you already met C", she said as she clumsily took her seat.

"Who is C?", he asked, "And what kind of a name is C anyway?"

"Oh boy please, I saw you checking us out through the window". Huddah responded as she smiled shyly,

"Oh, you mean the lady in that gigantic blue hat? She is quite something." He slowly muttered, still looking at the black Volkswagen that was now disappearing at the corner.

"Oh yes indeed she is. Her name is Cassie we called her C in school. Cassie and I were roommates in college. She tells me that they are moving back to Wotown and that she managed to get a job here. I never got to ask her where exactly she would be working though."

After that little introduction, the two went over the campaign proposals, flipped through the charts and even the speeches. They reviewed their manifestos and ideologies in readiness for the voting. They were also to organise a party that consisted of his top campaign supporters. So that is what they discussed for the better part of that morning. They also occasionally talked about their parents, but mostly about Jethro given he was their common parent. They teased at the thought of how their mothers would be shocked to learn that they have known each other for way too long, longer than even Selpha got to learn about Maya and Huddah.

Cassie had a fiancé by the name Mackenzie. The two had been courting for a while, mostly when they were in school. Now that she graduated, she had secured an internship at the Commissioner's office in Wotown. That meant she will be moving to Wotown from Ziliah where she stayed with her parents. Cassie was rather a soft-hearted lass compared to her siblings or peers. She loved the good life. She never talked much but loved to enjoy herself a lot. She was the eldest girl amongst her siblings who constituted of two girls and two boys. All her siblings had completed their learning apart from their youngest who was in high school. Most of the time he would accompany Cassie to town whenever she went to the library. ***Amil envied the relationship between Cassie and Joel and he wished he too had had a chance of having a

younger sibling***. Cassie's parents had long retired, they lived in Ziliah where they took care of farming and other agricultural activities.

One Monday morning, three weeks after that interaction at Yemi's cafe', Cassie reported to her new role. She reported to the Commissioner's office, to begin her internship. Her role majorly involved planning for conferences, meetings and attending seminars. She enjoyed her work, even though it didn't pay much, she was saving the little she could for her master's degree. That afternoon, she was meant to schedule a meeting on behalf of the Commissioner to discuss governance issues, and this meeting was to happen in Amil's office. As soon as she was done preparing her invitations, she walked across her office into the congress' office where she met Amil's secretary. Right before they could even begin conversing, Amil walked out of his office with other two dignitaries. He had come out to see them off before he cloaked eyes with Cassie who had been sitting at the waiting area.

"She is here to see you boss, regarding the congress party," said the secretary, "Should I let her in?"

Oh yes please do", Amil quickly said, feeling rather shocked and happy at the same time.

"My name is Cas, she began introducing herself as she closed the door of Amil's office, and he interrupted,

"Cassie, I think I know who you are. Just that today you are not in that gigantic blue hat from Yemi. What was that all about anyway?" Cassie took her seat looking rather confused because that was the first time, she was seeing him and wondered how come she didn't notice him especially his well-built physique.

CHAPTER 3- BUTTERFLIES

They worked late most of the time. Their meetings and engagements would always end at almost midnight, at times even way past midnight. The election was almost coming up and everything was all over the place. Emotions were running high as the campaign period was coming to an end in preparation for the voting. Cassie had volunteered to work part time in Amil's office in preparation of the upcoming elections. The two offices worked closely together since the commissioner's office was majorly interested in Amil's win as far as business was concerned. So, Cassie being one of the interns running with the campaign, had to be majorly involved to offer the needed support.

Huddah was with them most of the time, but not all the time because she needed to rest as her pregnancy was almost taking a toll on her. So, most of the time it was just Amil and Cassie. The two seemed to work closely with very good interpersonal skills. Amil had a certain way of how he needed things done, he was quite demanding, expecting a lot of perfection. Many a times he had Cassie re do some of the presentations because in his eyes, they were imperfect. Cassie on the other hand, seemed not to see much of Mackenzie, who had become increasingly weary of her late-night work schedules. He was not pleased with that. There were days when he would come pick her and some days when Amil would organise an uber for her home.

It was finally the election day. It was all pomp and colour during the evening at the final tally. And there he was, donned in his usual suite regalia, as he took to the podium to address the citizens of Wotown. He was happy, very happy, his mother had been there the whole day, giving

her mayoral experience as she saw through the electoral process. His dad had long retired but never managed to come and offer his support. He was never present for anything that was important for him not even his graduation where he had scooped a first class honors.

"Congratulations son, Selpha said as she hugged him. "Your father, any word from him?"

"No, not at all, but I don't want anything to do with that loser. Nothing I do will make him give me the attention I deserve."

"Or maybe I should become President, then I can probably summon him to my office." he said sarcastically and they both laughed.

"Don't worry son, Selpha said, "President or not, I will always be here for you, rallying behind you to see you win."

Later that evening, Amil ran into Cassie, he looked so happy and a part of him would have wanted to bust into her arms, to hug her and thank her for being a part of that win. But because he did not intend to communicate his intentions early towards her, and given the fact that they had a working relationship, he refrained.

"We have an appreciation dinner tonight and I would love it if you came along Cassie," Said Amil. He knew that since Cassie played a major role in his campaign and finally helped in his win, he thought it was only fair to include Cassie in the dinner plans too.

"Aah, well, I had my own plans for the evening, Mack,, and I, even before she finished, he interrupted, "He could join us too for the dinner, nothing intimate just an appreciation dinner and since you are also a part of the team I would be honoured to have you there".

"Okay, I could work with that, but I promise not to stay too long." She added.

"That is fine with me as long as you are there," Amil retorted.

When she walked into the restaurant, Amil was quick to notice that Cassie was not accompanied by anyone, but she was by herself. A little boyish naughty part of him was pleased. Mackenzie had not yet returned from his trip as Cassie had anticipated him to. There was an impromptu cancellation on his flight that evening that made him to postpone his trip.

"Come sit with us," Amil beckoned. She slowly walked towards the dinner table where Amil, his secretary and a couple of guys Cassie had seen in his office were seated, talking, and laughing victoriously.

"You look lovely tonight, he said, and where is your date?" He impolitely asked, "I thought he was to come along with you, not to say that I am super glad he didn't". He chuckled.

"His flight was cancelled, so he had to postpone his trip," She said as she took sips of the champagne that the waiter poured in her glass.

There were lots of thank you speeches, and lots of accolades towards Amil who was the newly sworn in Wotown's Congressman. The rest of the evening was all fun and colour with amazing awards, and dances.

"Huddah is missing out, she should be here to celebrate, she said, sad that she had to take care of a new-born," Said Cassie.

"Don't worry much about her, she will have plenty of time to celebrate with us when she resumes from her maternity leave," Amil said.

"There's a club in town where I had made some reservations after this party, would you like to check out the VIP?" Amil asked and expecting a yes at the same time.

"I am not sure about that, since I still need to get up early, besides, Mackenzie may call, and I wouldn't want him to get the wrong impression with the noises of the club."

Something about Amil, that Cassie had not known, but came to learn later was that he never liked taking no for answers, he believed it was either his way or no way at all. He had a conniving persuasive way of letting someone follow his way. Cassie agreed to accompany him to the club, under the condition that she would only have two drinks then head home.

The two got into to the club straight to the VIP lounge, accompanied by a few of Amil's friends. They toasted champagne to more victorious accolades. It was an extension of the fun and

glamour from the restaurant where they had their celebration dinner. They took to the dance floor with Cassie screaming each time, that's my favourite song. She left her purse on the table whenever she took to the floor, the music in the room was so loud that she didn't hear the almost ten calls from Mackenzie. Soon it was way deep into the night, they left the club.

"I could take you home, I can't let a lady as beautiful as yourself and tipsy take themselves home. He offered; I will let one of my friends drive us home".

When they got to Cassie's house, He walked her to the door, carefully holding her hand as she was indeed tipsy. She managed to retrieve her keys and asked Amil to help her open the door.

"I could let you in, but my house is a mess, she said," He opened the door, and before she went inside, he bent over and kissed her goodnight.

The Chief Commissioner was pleased with Cassie's progress and how she spearheaded the Congress' elections. He offered Cassie a permanent position at the company but this time, she was to mainly work in the congress' office as the PA to the Congressman.

The two had not seen each other for a week especially after the kiss they shared the previous night. Each one of them trying not to feel ashamed as they both agreed that it could have happened because they were tipsy. Being his PA meant that they would spend even more time together including times he needed to travel, she had to accompany him. That was not a problem because she loved her job, she loved to travel, and she also enjoyed planning

corporate events and rallies. It was her core duty. While Cassie was busy doing her work, on the other hand Amil was also doing his other 'work' too.

"We have been working for a long time, maybe we should take a break," Amil said as he opened the bottle of whisky on his table.

"Care to join me for a drink Cassie," offering her a glass.

"Sure, thing why not, maybe you can tell me something about you that I don't know, Cassie said. The two had wholesomely grown into becoming more than just colleagues but friends too.

" Well I am an only child to my mother, but you have met Huddah my half-sister. My parents have not been together for a while, my dad left us when I was nine, he only came home to check on me and a couple of years later. After that his visits were just inconsistent. I just don't like how he and my mum related, most of the times they were constantly at war. He just didn't like making decisions at all. You see he's never even congratulated my appointment to date, let alone make time to see me or at least call. Anyway, enough of mine tell me about yours".

"Wow Jethro is quite something isn't he, does Huddah share the same sentiments with you? For me it's been a bit different from yours. Ours looked like what people would call the perfect family. My parents have always been together ever since I was born. They have seen each other at their bests and worse, if any. Something quite admiring. It's my dream to get married and be

as happy as them." We are two sisters and two brothers I am the first born, our youngest is in high school, his name is Joel, we call him kiddo."

They drank pretty much for the rest of the evening as they shared intimate parts of their growing up, family and school. Soon it was time to go home. Amil offered to drop Cassie home but needed to pass by his house to collect a gift that he had been meaning to gift her.

"Come in, I'll just take a minute", he said walking towards his restroom, "Make yourself comfortable." Shortly after, he appeared with a painting, something he had been working on. It was a picture of Cassie and what was amazing about that picture was Cassie was wearing the same outfit she had when Amil first saw her. The yellow and white polka dot dress, red heels, gigantic blue hat, and the sunglasses clipped on her dress. Oh, my Amil, this is so beautiful, I never knew you could paint like this. You truly have a photographic memory. Thanks, Amil." She shyly said.

In a couple of weeks, the two became inseparable. They had become an item. An enviable couple. Cassie was so beautiful and any man in their senses would have loved to be a part of her life. Amil on the other hand, was a successful politician who was the envy of his peers because he began his career at an early age which spurred into his current Congressman position. It was all about Cassie and Amil. Some even branded them, the dynamic duo. They seemed to be people of different personalities yet at the same time a good match for one another as people thought.

Their relationship culminated during one of their business trips. Where Amil had cornered Cassie into booking for a business meeting only to find out it was just the two of them on that trip. He had all along been planning for it, for the day when he would propose.

***Mackenzie had come in from his work trip one evening. He had wanted to surprise Cassie and so he didn't let her know he was coming. He had never made it clear to Cassie about his intentions nor did he convey the same intentions to Cassie's parents. Just before he knocked the door, from the window, he could see his girlfriend Cassie barely dressed and with him in the kitchen holding on to her waist as she cooked, was Amil Sandey. He had heard about the relationship between the two, and he had come back home not to just surprise Cassie, but talk to her about that. On seeing the two fondly and lovingly holding onto each other, just affirmed the rumours. He never confronted them, but walked away ***

CHAPTER 4- WEDDING BELLS

Cassie's Mother was over the moon about her daughter's engagement and more so being engaged to the Congressman of Wotown. She had always been planning for the day when she would walk both her daughters down the aisle. She kept talking about the engagement, the wedding, she even began planning about the wedding even before the dates were announced. She had contacted the florists, the caterers, the cake vendors, even her dress, she had begun scouting for it. The news of their engagement had travelled all the way to Wanda town, where Selpha was also making plans of her own about her son's wedding. She however had some doubts about the engagement, mentioning that it was too soon for him to marry, having known her for just a short while. On top of that, the fact that his career had just begun and that she thought he would settle down on it first before engaging in a marriage.

"Aren't you moving a little too fast Amil?" Selpha asked, on one occasion when Amil had flown to Wanda to discuss about his upcoming wedding with his mother. She had been concerned because, Cassie was the first lady that Selpha had gotten to know, so she was utterly concerned that he perhaps needed to have been in a couple of relationships that would maybe grow him before settling down.

"We both love each other, and we want this, besides shouldn't you be happy for me that I am settling down?" he retorted.

"I know our marriage was not been the best of example to you, but it's my wish that you understand that marriage is not an easy journey. You don't just get in it because you are just in love. It's a lifelong commitment Amil that requires a lot of maturity," she said," Your father and I could have wished for ours to turn out differently, but it turned out the way it did. I wouldn't want you to make the same mistakes we did. Cassie is a beautiful young girl, who has a lot of life ahead of her, it's my wish that you take good care of her, "She added.

Their wedding happened just four weeks after their engagement. Everyone was happy for them. The ceremony was simple and elegantly done, with just a few close family members and friends in attendance. Everything was well thought of, with Cassie looking happily beautiful, her mother being extremely the happiest. They received lots of gifts, from families, his colleagues, and friends too. After their wedding, that evening, they planned the departure for their honeymoon which was happening the following morning.

Amil had carefully thought of their honeymoon destination, where they went to his favourite place. He had not consulted Cassie about it as he wanted it to be a surprise. Cassie had loved the ocean, and she thought, they would be going somewhere with an oceanic ambience. On the other hand, Amil was more of a nature person. So, for their honeymoon he chose that they go for a safari instead. They both had fun, where they got to explore the beautiful Tatuu city, with all kinds of animals, and lots of nature walks. She rode on an elephant which was a bit dangerous and fun at the same time. They explored the culture of Tatuu, including their food

and their ethnic customs. What they liked the most was their music and dancing culture. They bought lots of gifts and memoir pieces to remember their stay in Tatu City.

On their last night of their honeymoon, they wanted that day, more so the night to be as memorable as possible. Amil had made reservations for their dinner in one of the restaurants near the cottage they stayed. He had carefully selected Cassie's outfit for the night, something Cassie never liked because she liked being in control, whereas Amil on the other hand, liked doing things with minimal to zero regard to what Cassie would feel. He always liked being in control of things his own way. Even when he shouldn't.

"But I had already selected my outfit for the night," Cassie asked as she tried to show Amil the dress she had chosen for herself.

"No dear, just wear what I have selected, this one makes you even more beautiful, besides the other one is a bit too short and I wouldn't want people staring." He said, barely recognising her displeasure.

The two almost got into a brawl but Cassie just decided to wear what Amil had chosen and besides it was their honeymoon, a place of peace, love, and joy. She never liked fighting him back because Amil had a polite way of coming out strongly at getting away with what he wanted. Cassie had taken note of this but chose to ignore. They proceeded to the restaurant where Amil had made reservations. They had a good night, exchanged lots of pleasantries and

promises for love towards each other. It almost seemed untrue that they got married, Cassie thought she must have been dreaming, because everything seemed surreal.

When they got back to Wotown, as husband and wife, they looked happier than before. Huddah paid them a visit when they got back, since she missed out a lot of their celebrations while she nursed and took care of her preterm baby.

"You mean, I leave you guys working and taking care of my campaign projects and three months later you are already husband and wife? Bro you move quite fast, "she jokingly said." I am happy for the two of you, you quite make a charming couple. I must admit I have never seen Amil looking this happy. I hope he hasn't started with you on his strictness for time, has he? she added laughing.

They exchanged lots of pleasantries, they talked about the campaign, the election, the win, the wedding, the honeymoon, because it had been a while since Huddah had seen Amil and even seen them courting. It's like she wanted to see it for herself. She could have also almost agreed with Selpha that they settled a little bit too fast. Mostly because she too had never seen Amil with another girl, let alone know of anything about his dating life. But she wished them well.

*** "I would want us to get married, said Amil to Cassie, on one evening in the office as they wound up work.

"Why so soon she asked?" though not looking shocked as if she had been anticipating that request from him.

"We have been spending so much time together and I know I am falling in love with you, I know you love me too and I would wish to spend the rest of my life with you"

"That took me by surprise, I love spending time with you, maybe we could just wait a little bit longer, after I am done with my schooling before we think of settling in" She said, Besides, Mackenzie is still in the picture." She added.

The two had not officially brought their relationship to an end with Amil being in the picture, she had already began cutting ties slowly with him.

After a few days of thinking, and deliberating, especially with Amil's ultimatum, she agreed, and that is how he proposed, within two months of knowing her. ***

CHAPTER 5. THE STORY

On one afternoon, Huddah ran into Amil at their local cafe' and amidst their chit chat, she mentioned to him that she was to meet Cassie later in the evening for some girl conversation. Amil looked back at Huddah and said, " No I don't think that is going to be possible, Cassie never mentioned anything like that to me, besides, I had planned to take her for dinner tonight," He retorted.

"But it wouldn't even take too long, we just need to have some girl talk that's all," Huddah added,

"I cannot make to change the plans I already had with my wife, so you girls can have your own time some other day. My word is final. No mention of any of this to Cassie". He added.

"Okay, if you say so," Huddah responded, already not convinced that Amil just cancelled the date that she and Cassie had been planning for a while.

When Amil got home in the evening, he found Cassie dressing up, and for sure he had not communicated to her about the dinner plans he had in place, also neither had Huddah called to tell her about the meeting she had with Amil during the day. So, she might have assumed that Amil had informed Cassie that he would be going out with her instead.

"Welcome home honey, dinner is ready, I can serve you before I leave, or you could warm it up when ready," she said to him. Amil not looking like he was even moved by Cassie's words, he asked, " And where will you be leaving to? , In fact I had booked us for dinner tonight, so this food, pointing at it, "Please store it for another day." He responded.

"What do you mean we are going out, had I not told you that Huddah and I had plans this evening? You know we have not seen each other in a while, with her pregnancy, her new-born and all, I'd love it if we did some catch up."

"You can plan that for another day, we leave in thirty minutes." He bluntly added.

The mood at the restaurant was not one of the pleasant ones that both were used to. The atmosphere was foul and off, something that was quite shocking even to the attendants as this was a common place where the two often had dinner. Cassie couldn't bring herself to understand what could have happened that made her plans suddenly changed. Why Amil was suddenly becoming bossy. Amil on the other hand, couldn't understand why Cassie was mad as she was in one of their fancy restaurants also her stubbornness was getting out of hand. He expected her to be happy and wowed at the thought of eating out.

"The earlier you get to understand that I am your husband and that I can change your plans any time, the better for you and us," He said to her almost not noticing the frown and shock in her brow. He then proceeded to order Merlot Champagne to make more toasts that Cassie was not subscribing to. There was something about Amil, that Cassie slowly came to learn, when they

were deep into the marriage, that, he never knew how to read emotions. He could get so full of himself, thinking that he was doing the right thing for them, only to realize he wasn't. From the start, he never let Cassie make any decisions about anything in their life. He always assumed that he could take charge of everything. Same thing that made his other two previous PA's leave him without notice. Unlike them, who had a choice of quitting, Cassie couldn't imagine quitting her marriage because she believed in it, she believed in their relationship, their marriage, the vows they exchanged, and that, she was willing to fight for to keep their relationship steady. This she did, even as she was as sure as death that Amil just needed to change and tone down his egoistic and demeaning behaviour a bit.

Weeks later after that restaurant ordeal, the two had managed to call it a truce and things had almost gotten back to normal. Things at work were also getting busier and busier, Amil's obligations were increasingly growing day by day with lots of responsibilities, meetings, and planning all for the good of Wotown. He was always at the neck of things, because he couldn't keep up with the exits of his PA's. They all said that he was very demanding and that he couldn't just listen to them. He even got a male PA whom he thought they could get along, but even Sam had to leave. With the worries of these exits, people had begun questioning as to whether Cassie was the only one who could understand Amil and his demands or was there something not right about him. There were suggestions to bring Cassie back to work since she was the only one who knew her way around the office better. After Amil took into office, he decided to let Cassie stay at home, take care of the home while he went to work. Something that Cassie didn't quite like but agreed to. Eventually even her own parents had gotten concerned about that

move. As Cassie saw that Amil's life at the office was beginning to take a toll on him, she offered to help.

"Maybe I can come and help with some of the work while you interview for a new PA. Or would you like me to help you with the recruiting? I would certainly know the kind of person that you need as a PA, since this is a job I perfectly did."

"I will be just fine Cassie; besides, I wouldn't want people to think that I cannot run my own show without my wife's help." He said.

"Again, there you are going on with that, people thinking about this or that. Why are you always concerned about that? What people are thinking about you should always be the last thing on your mind, Cassie added. I had almost forgotten to mention that I will be traveling to Ziliah to my parents' place, for a few days, mum needs help with the farm and Joel is in school. Dad is unwell so I offered to help."

"This seems like an already made decision Cassie, and at this time I don't think there is time for me to change your mind. Or were you asking whether I could let you go or were you informing me? How many times Cassie have I told you that you need to run everything with me before agreeing to anything? "So, when exactly is this trip? When exactly do you intend to go home to your parents, and how long will you be staying?"

Even before Cassie could respond, Amil just walked out, leaving her in utter shock. This was something that Cassie had never experienced before. Cassie never liked seeing Amil getting mad, she would try as much as she could to avoid anything that could create conflict between them. Later than evening, she rung her mother and informed her of the sprawl she had with Amil after telling her of her trip to Ziliah.

"Cassie is everything okay, she asked, you don't sound your usual self, is everything okay baby girl? her mum asked over the phone.

"Everything is alright, something just came up, I may not be able to come over as I had earlier promised, but I promise to make it up to you." Her mother was a bit concerned because Cassie was not someone who backed down from a promise especially at the last minute. She never made much from it but just had to agree.

"I will find time and come over, see how you guys are settling in as soon as this farming season is over. I am just not fully convinced with the tone in your voice."

"I don't think that will be necessary mummy, we are fine, besides who will take care of dad if you come over? she added. "Amil and I will work out just fine."

Cassie's mother just hang up the phone, but deep down she might have sensed that all might not be well with her daughter. Cassie was one of the people who liked speaking their minds, she never hid any emotions from anyone, so it was a bit of a concern that her own mother started to

believe that something just wasn't right with her. When a young couple gets married, most of the times, parents want to stay away from their children's home, as they give them time to settle in, learn and know one another. The more reason she needed Cassie to be the one to go to them instead. Selpha too had gotten worried because she had sent Amil to bring Cassie to Wanda where she could have taken her around town and even get to know where Amil grew up. But he had not responded yet.

"Amil son, is everything okay? I am yet to receive your response. When are you bringing my daughter in law over? Remember I asked you about this, some days ago and you said you will discuss about that with Cassie? How long does it take for you to discuss about such a simple matter with someone you live with?" She asked on one evening when she called Amil. "Or is she there, can I speak to her myself?" She added.

"No mum, no need for that, we have already spoken about it and right now may not be the best time, but I will tell you when."

"Please ensure you do and don't keep me waiting," Can I at least speak to her before you hung up."

"She is in the kitchen, I will have her call you," He quickly responded as Cassie walked into the room. "Later mum,"

"Was that Selpha, why couldn't you let me speak with her? It's been a while since we last spoke, she asked.

"No need for that, you can call her some other time." he responded.

What Amil was doing, was rather dangerous as everyone came to learn. He tried cutting off Cassie from everyone who knew her, everyone who cared about. He had even made her postpone her master's degree program saying that they had just gotten married and that they needed time to know one another and her studying at that time may be a distraction to their marriage as he claimed. Even though Cassie understood she needed to take charge of her life because the master's degree was important for her career and all, she decided to shelve it a side first. She did this in agreement to Amil's proposition that maybe they truly needed to learn and take care of each other first before going back to school. He even told her that they needed to plan on a family soon. What Amil did eventually was make Cassie's world very small that she had no one else to turn into, she was slowly cut off from the world.

Days turned into weeks and weeks into months. They had good days and bad days that usually went unresolved. Amil seemed to now have full control over Cassie and her thoughts. Cassie also on the other hand was not sure as to whether she had grown afraid of Amil, or she was trying so hard to please and work hard towards their marriage. They had not conceived yet, even though they had not been trying much. Amil had taken assignments off town which involved frequent travels. Occasionally he would carry Cassie along but most of the times he ended up going by himself. A couple of months earlier he had gotten a new PA Sheila, who

seemed to be the one almost trying to occupy Cassie's place. It was rumoured that Amil and Sheila had been spotted working late most of the nights just the two of them at times even seen having drinks at the local bar mostly when doing work related projects. Rumours that Amil was quick to dismiss whenever Cassie confronted him. He kept assuring her that there was nothing going on between them and that they only met for work.

CHAPTER 6: THE GENESIS

One evening when Amil returned from school when he was about eight or nine, he walked into his parents, having a very heated confrontation. By then he was too young to understand what the sprawl was all about. Things at home had almost gotten out of hand, his parents seemed to be at it most of the time. But this time, even though he never understood exactly what was happening, he must have figured that it was very bad. As he entered the house, he was met with suitcases and other luggage that he came to realise belonged to his dad Jethro. He was leaving. He didn't know where to because the amount of luggage in question was a lot for someone who may be going away for two weeks or so as he was used to.

"I have to go, and I don't think I will be coming back anytime soon son, take care of your mother," He said to him as he picked his luggage and drove off. Selpha on the other hand was drenched in tears. She sobbed very heavily and bitterly cursing and saying all kind of things. After all this was expected, her husband had left. What wasn't clear was whether he had left or left her and that made her cry even more. He had moved to Wotown. Something about a job offer, that Jethro had made it a do or die affair that he either had to leave or lose something very important. At that time, the only important people were supposed to be Amil and Selpha who were his family. And it could have made much sense if he stuck around with them.

The two had been fighting for some time and had become so confrontational about many things to a point that Jethro could no longer take it but maybe opted to leave. The fights were either about their finances, or the fact that according to Selpha, Jethro never seemed to be

interested in taking care of Amil or even showing concern in terms of creating proper family structures. She was always saying that she was the one who did all the work. The fights might have started a couple of months before that. Soon after a call that Jethro received. He never disclosed who or what the caller wanted but just suddenly after that, the two just never seemed to see eye to eye. It was just a fight and picking on each other here and there until that evening when Jethro finally decided to leave. Amil was too young to understand. He had gotten close to his dad to a point that he tried sneaking out several times to go searching for him. He had always thought that the dad left him. That he no longer loved him. He spent a major part of his early adolescent life questioning wasn't he good enough? Why did his father leave? Did it have something to do with him?

When children are much younger, they don't usually understand adult fights and Amil being just like any other child, never understood why his parents fought or even why his dad left. His mother was too bitter to explain, too bitter to come to the realization that her husband might have walked out on them. So, it was just the two of them. Amil didn't have much of male presence in his life as he grew up. He had to tone up or down to his mother's ways of upbringing. She was a bit tough on him at times, way too tough on him. Amil had always wished that if his dad had been present, he would be the stern on him, and his mother would have been the sweet soul he could run to. He had watched his friends several times being pampered by their mothers. He blamed Jethro for not being there, for not raising him to be a man like he would have wished. He blamed him for letting his mother take care of him alone which might have made her way too strict. Selpha on the other hand, she had to do what she he had to do to

raise her boy well. At times, her brothers would take him occasionally, but a big part of his upbringing was done by Selpha. Years later when Amil had become much older it's when Selpha got to learn about Maya. The lady who her husband left her for.

So, on the day Amil told Selpha that he was going to get married, she was a bit concerned. She knew he might have relationship troubles given the fact that he had a lot of daddy issues. Amil couldn't hear any of that and after all they were in love. In love with Cassie.

Amil had never gotten physical with Cassie. Never had he even lifted his hand in fury or because of an outburst towards her. While that might have felt safe, on the other hand Cassie knew that there was something about Amil that she just couldn't understand.

One Morning when Amil was about to leave the house, just before she served him breakfast, he came from the bedroom shouting,

"What the hell is this Cassie!" pointing at some stain on his shirt." Didn't you have a look at this before pressing it? Now my suit is ruined, can't you just do one thing, right? He kept shouting while all along Cassie wondering what the big deal was. He was particular about his attires, he always looked neat and sharp. If they still awarded the neatest employee, he would have scooped not just one but all the awards. Something as small as a stain spiralled into a blow of confrontation. Cassie never fought back, she always kept quiet or just ignored him, whereas Amil had always expected that she would engage him in the fight as well. The more he talked, and Cassie was quiet, the more he became furious.

"That must have been picked from the dry cleaners, I am sorry I never checked that out earlier."

She finally responded. I will have it redone." She added.

"Next time please check, these are expensive suits and I would appreciate if you handle them extra carefully," I think I will just have my breakfast in the office." He responded as he went back to the bedroom to change the clothing and then walked out.

Later that evening, maybe after realising the mess he had created, he came home bearing a bunch of flowers and a bottle of wine as a peace offering for the morning outburst. He then proceeded to tell her about his day at work, without any care of finding out how her day was. He went to talk about the business deals he had been signing up and the money he had created for the county. He talked about his colleagues and work and this went on and on. Any time Cassie would try interrupting just to say something he would brush her off continued pouring accolades to himself.

So, things were often like these, with good days, coupled with bad days. He at times seemed to have gotten out of hand. He would quarrel at the sight of any small thing that did not warrant a fight. He did all these and did not expect Cassie to react or show any emotion towards it. He was always guiding and directing the things that Cassie should do, and how she should say including deciding what she should wear.

Later that afternoon, Cassie just rang Huddah. The two had not seen each in a while neither had they gotten to speak after the incident.

"I am sorry to say this Cassie, but from what you have explained to me, I think my brother is a narcissist. I knew something may have not been right with him for a long time, but I just thought he was being too stubborn. He shouldn't get to decide things for you, you are a woman with your own sound mind, you have your own voice that you ought to listen to and act if possible. I am not too shocked, but I might have thought he wouldn't be like that with you. One time I remember we had a small fight about it, but never made so much sense until now. While in the university, he had come to pick me for our usual lunch meeting. So, when he came in, he found me in bed, I was not anywhere near to being ready. Of course, we had agreed to meet at a couple of minutes before that, can you imagine, what he did. Instead of maybe just letting me prepare very fast, he just left. He walked out and I never heard from him for a couple of days. I just thought he needed to cool off or needed time off but never made much sense of it. So, I think I am now joining the dots."

"Well Huddah, that's your brother and I am just not sure how much longer I can take this. When he means well, he does well but when he decides to turn into someone else, he does. It's hard to know which character to follow. Can you imagine, after he creates all the chaos, he is just quick to make up for it, even without us having to talk about it. He comes back home with gifts and then takes you out for dinner or something. Most of the time I just end up forgiving him, but I am not sure for how long. Are there people who we can talk to who can help couples that are going through such things?"

THE LAST STRAW

"Just like every other couple, each relationship may be unique, but suffers almost the same challenges, Maggie said. We all just need to know what we need from each other. When people get married, at times they tend to forget that each one of them has their own unique abilities, their own unique minds that makes them different from the other partner but at the same time complement each other. And that is where loves come in. She concluded. Here is my card, when you and your partner are ready to get help, please call me. Thank you for stopping by."

Cassie had opted to seek help from Maggie, the marriage counsellor as she was advised by Huddah from the talk they had. She had been waiting for Amil to get home that day so that they get to discuss about it. Amil never came home that evening. Efforts to reach him on the phone were not successful. Occasionally he had spent nights out, but for work purposes and Cassie never bothered about it. He would then later call to say that he had maybe at a late evening event or had to travel on short notice. She waited until the following day maybe to discuss about seeking the services of the marriage counsellor.

Two days before that, even before she decided to go to the marriage counsellor, they also had another confrontation that led to his no show that day. A colleague at the office who had gotten close to Cassie, rang her to inform her about the relationship between Amil and his new PA Sheila. He mentioned that they had gotten oddly close and that rumours had it that the two were planning on going for a vacation dubbed a work-related tour. So, since she knew about

them and Cassie was well known to her she just decided to let her in on what had been going on.

The same evening, when Amil came home he asked her to help him pack his suitcase and that is when she pounced on him with the words,

"I know about you and Sheila and this trip..."

***** The end *****