Twist of Fate

Um_royhan

STORYPDF

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Prologue

Prologue

“Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or more parties is married without his or her consent or against his or her will” - Wikipedia.

~**~

"No, papa! I can't marry him! How could you ever expect me to marry the person I don't even know? That too, when I'm still so young, papa?!" The girl stated incredulously to her father while her eyes brimmed with tears.

"This is final! You are marrying him," her father replied decisively, scrutinizing his gaze on her.

"But, papa, why do you want me to marry him? Is it because of his wealth or reputation, huh?!" she said vehemently. "Is this how your parents forced you as well? No, papa! Please...why me? Can't he find another equally beautiful, rich woman other than me? I don't have anything; I'm not special and I don't know how to do anything…I'll only disturb and trouble him. I will only frustrate him, papa," she pleaded with her father, trying to reason with her old man.

"You either marry him or I disown you as my child," her father said dismissively and went inside angrily.

Still weeping, she knelt to the floor. But suddenly, she started laughing maniacally, an idea brewing in her head.

"I will make him regret the day he set his eyes on me. I'm going to destroy him; I'm going to make him divorce me" She vowed.

~**~

“O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, that ye make takeaway part of the dower ye have given them, except where they have been guilty of open lewdness, on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good”. (Q4:14)

From the Quran it's crystal clear that forced marriage is haram.

Abu hurairah (RA) said that prophet Said(SAW), “A matron should not be given in marriage until she is consulted, and a Virgin should not be given in marriage until her permission is sought and her silence is her permission”. (Sohih)

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Chapter 1

“I plan; you plan; we all plan, but Allah's plan is the best”.

Sofia's POV.

"Ya Allah! What should I even do? Should I accept this or run away?" I whispered to myself with my head down.

"Goodness! I'm just going through my high school and college is still left. Oh my, what am I going to do? But Nikkah is a Sunnah and completion of half deen, SubhanAllah! But I'm not even ready and if I say no then papa is going to disown me. Ya Allah, help me!” I mumbled, nibbling on my trembling lips in worry.

I stood up and went to perform ablution to pray to my lord of the whole universe because He is all seer and all hearer. I raised my both palms to the Qiblah and prayed to Allah loudly.

"If this man that my father wants me to marry is good for me in this life and hereafter, Ya Allah let me be able to love him. If not distance us how you distance west from east." I murmured, weeping my tears stain cheeks, "Oh Allah guide me" I sighed.

“I don't even know what he sees in me, though I'm not pretty, intelligent or good; what I know is that I'm just an ordinary girl. I don't know what he sees in this plain Sophy, I thought loudly, staring at my plain hands.

After I was through with my prayers, I went to the dining table for my breakfast. My dad, mum, my younger brother and I-all started eating in awkward silence, everything and everyone was tense before papa decided to break the silence which made me almost choke on my food.

"Oyin*, you will be getting married next week," papa said while handing mama a black credit card. A tear glistened in my eye but I was stopped from shedding it. *(honey).

"Um…, papa can I meet Maryam after Zhur?" I timidly asked and waited patiently for his reply silently praying that he would allow me to.

"You are..." he paused a little, wiping his mouth, "free to go!" he replied slowly. I was already sweating, nervously playing with my food. I beamed with uncontrollable excitement when I heard his response.

Do you know why I was happy?.

Do you know how it feels to have a person who understands you before you can open your mouth to talk?.

She was like a sister to me more than any of my best friends. We were quite opposite. Well, opposites did attract. I was still wrapped in this excitement when I found myself knocking on her door.

She opened the door, staring down at me with chips in her mouth, "Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, sugar bunny," I greeted her in a sad voice, pushing her away from the door.

"Sugar sweetie, what happened to you? You saw a ghost or…?" She tried to lighten the mood but that was not what was worrying me. She waited for me to reply but I couldn't.

"Have you been crying? What happened to your face? Who's the motherf**k that made you cry?" Well, as I said, opposites did attract. She was so possessive of me like an elder sister. I loved her and everything about her but she liked swearing a lot. Tapping her foot impatiently with her arms rested on her waist, she raised her perfect brows in question, "Sophia, I am asking something and for God's sake answer me."

"You know,…um..," I broke down in tears for the tenth time today, "I am getting married next week Insha Allah," I blurted out through hiccups, rubbing my running nose.

"What?" she yelled and stood up from the couch on which she was sitting while rolling her long sleeves dramatically and continued, "How? Why? Who? When? Where? " She bombarded me with these questions.

"Where-I don't know. How-I's not sure. When -next week. Why?-Ask papa. To whom-I don't know him physically but I know his name is Umar Yusuf," I replied and closed my eyes as the pain rose to my forehead because of too much stress.

"Oooh! Gurly, you f***ing mean Yusuf? That hottie, special made creature? Wow! You are so lucky! I wish I was the one. He is freaking handsome and rich. I envy you!" she reacted with dreamy eyes as I chuckled upon seeing her reaction.

"Maryam is that all you're going to say? I said expatiate, caressing my temple softly. "I am getting married next week with the person I don't know anything about!" I almost screamed at her to reason with me.

"I know, but why would papa do something like that? Well, there's nothing you can do. You will have to accept your fate. And if he dares to hurt you by any means, I will kill him and bury him under my house," she stated strongly and I felt overwhelmed by her love. "But let's talk about reality. How does he know you? Why you? With all the girls he has been with?" my foolish, crazy heck of a friend was just using her brain. But I love her anyway.

I cried out in frustration. "I don't know!, but darling, I will make him regret marrying me. He has shaken up my plan and future," I vowed venomously.

"Um, well, nobody knows tomorrow," she said in a singing voice. "You could be the one who would be head over heels in love with him," she teased, pinching my chubby cheeks adoringly.

"I don't think so," I said doubtfully because I'd never seen him and neither did I know his personality. Besides, he was older than me by five years and I was only eighteen. I did not know what Allah had planned for me but I know His plans were always the best for me.

"Well best of luck honey, with your sexy hottie," she said winking at me and then hugged me.

I shook my head, sighed and whispered, "What a foolish girl she is!".

Chapter 2

Yusuf's POV.

"Alas! I'm free!" The meeting was so boring. Still standing in his chair he called Rim his driver to pick him up and within thirty minutes he had arrived.

"Good afternoon, sir," he greeted and as usual Yusuf nodded his head to acknowledge his greeting. He didn't give a damn about anyone except his family. His family is his priority.

"Go," Yusuf commanded Rim. Entering the back seat and rolling up the window. Yusuf was busy typing on his phone and when he raised his head to look outside the window, he saw an angel!-a very beautiful angel playing and laughing hysterically under the pouring rain. His blood was pumping vigorously; his cold heart beating widely and his mouth wide apart. His mind was screaming, 'she is mine! I will take her, love her, cherish her, protect her...'

"Stop the car now!" he growled out, not wanting his angel to disappear. Rim parked at the roadside. Yusuf watched his angel, how she was laughing in the rain. Within no time, he had started laughing together with her.

"Excuse me, sir, I hope there's no problem?" Rim commented looking at Yusuf through the rear mirror. He didn't bother answering him, because he was busy watching his beautiful angel.

~** ~

Reaching the office, Yusuf called Royhan, his best friend.

"What's up guy, how are you doing?" He said through the phone.

"I'm fine but I need some help from you. Can you help me with Ali Sofia's detail, please?" he had asked the ice-cream shop earlier about her name.

"Wow! You just begged? I can't believe it! Am I dreaming?" He said, sounding genuinely surprised before continuing. "I hope there is no problem?"

"No, there isn't. Thanks, bro."

'I can't believe I begged him,' Yusuf muttered to himself as he dropped the phone on the desk before adding, "But if it's because of my angel, I will do anything". A few minutes later, a message popped on his phone-a message from Royhan.

Name: Sofia Ali

Family: Parent alive and one brother

School: High School Graduate

Friend: Maryam

Age: 18

Relationship: single

After reading her profile, Yusuf decided to call his father well knowing he would help him out.

"Salam dad," he greeted.

"Uhm, I want to tell you something..." he trailed off,tugging his tie.

"Yes, tell..." the dad encouraged.

"Uhm... You remember that day when you and mum were hard on me to get married?" Yusuf asked rather nervously.

"Yes...so?".

Urg! Why is it so difficult?.

"Actually I found someone." He said and closed his eyes in nervousness. Yusuf explained.

"Really? Wow! Who is that unlucky girl?" Dad asked playfully.

"Dad, I am serious." Yusuf exclaimed.

"Sorry. Ok tell".

"Her name is Sofia Ali," Yusuf revealed. and told him about her family and everything and he was pleased.

"Ok, I will try contacting her family," his dad promised.

"Thanks dad."

"It's a pleasure son." He could hear the smile in his voice.

Yusuf's dad was about to disconnect when Yusuf interrupted.

"Dad, wait! I have another request," he cut in before hastily adding, "I want this wedding to happen before next week". He couldn't wait to have his angel with him.

"Why? Is everything alright?" he asked curiously.

"Yes dad.' Yusuf assured.

"Oh, so my son is getting desperate to have her with him so soon?' the dad teased.

"Dad!" he said in a groan accompanied with a short laugh.

The door to his office was knocked and he commanded the person to enter. His secretary - labibah entered. A middle aged woman who was dressed in a white Shirt and a black pencil skirt. Her heels clicked the ground as she walked in elegantly. She was like a mother figure to

Yusuf at work. She had Yusuf respect, she had been working with Yusuf's father before he retired.

"Sir, you've an appointment at 1:05 pm" She read out of the booklet while he grunted in reply.

"Is that all?" he asked tiredly, all he wanted now was his princess.

She was one in millions.

"Yes sir" the middle aged woman chirped.

"OK" he said dismissively as she wanted to open the door, he stopped her "wait".

"Sir?".

"Please cancel all meetings today" he spoke and stood up before walking out.

He needed to clear his head and the only way to do that, was to have a long drive. Then he thought of visiting his friend - Royhan who was a computer guru.

He arrived at his friend's office, the receptionist greeted him while opening up her cleavage and fluttering her artificial eyelashes. He rolled his eyes and walked to the elevator.

Why can females understand that no man knows what a cheap product is? He thought.

The elevator dung and he went out of it only to meet with his friend who was putting on his Harry Potter's glasses.

"Bro" they hugged each other before Royhan turned to just the office.

They entered, Royhan called his PA to bring them refreshments.

"Sophia Ali, Uhn?" Royhan asked inquisitively because the Yusuf he knew does not date or have flings. Even though he was an arrogant guy when first known.

"Yeah" he caressed his smooth beard.

"She is beautiful and quite knowledgeable. She is a good catch" Royhan complimented while Yusuf scowled at him.

"Don't you dare go there" he glared, "she is mine".

"ooooh, what did I miss?".

"Nothing" Yusuf bit out.

"Okay bro, what is the deal because I know you don't date?" he spoke with seriousness while he shrugged his shoulders.

"I saw her this morning after my meeting with the Russian company. She is beautiful, she looks carefree with this money. She has a sense of purity and innocence around her" he wetted his lip, "I want her" he announced.

"You know she's not a property to want".

" I know that's why I want to marry her," he responded.

"What?" Royhan's mouth was opened because he was surprised and shocked.

"Marry her".

Chapter 3

«No matter where or what you do, what is already written for you will always come true».

«Marriage is a sacred bond from Allah, no one can tear it apart except for Him».

«No one knows tomorrow except He who is Alimi gaybi Wash Shahada (The knower of the hidden and opened)».

****

I was finally getting married to a stranger; a stranger I knew nothing about, a stranger I never saw before, a stranger who I only knew his name.

"Ya Allah, make it easy for me". I whispered silently.

If someone told me or informed me that I would get married at the age of eighteen, I would have exploded like a time bomb. But here I was, well dressed like a true princess, when actually I was a pauper who only knew how to disturb and create troubles.

"Sofia, get ready the car will be moving in 10 minutes," I heard papa's stern voice calling me out.

"I'm coming," I replied dejectedly while checking the mirror again, before descending down.

Reaching the car, I turned around and looked at everybody and tears filled my heart.

Was I really getting married?

This was really not a joke or prank? The man I was to marry, I didn't know anything about him.

I had thought it was an expensive joke or prank but it wasn't.

I started crying.

Was I really getting married?

Maryam came beside me and patted me, reassuring me that everything would be good and cracked some jokes to lighten up the atmosphere. I smiled and entered the car and I felt nausea by thinking I would not be coming back here as a girl but as a married lady.

I was going to miss them all. Mama's food. Papa's scolding. Brother's pranks. And lastly Maryam craziness.

I would miss them all.

**

We entered different cars after the sermons and vows had finished. I couldn't believe I got married within thirty minutes. It was a small wedding, papa said he wanted it to be a small wedding because of some unknown reasons to me.

Well, he was the only one who understood his reasons.

I cried and cried harder; hugged papa, mama, brother and my friends.

The car stopped at the front of a gigantic gate and my mouth flew open in surprise.

Maa sha Allah! I didn't know that he was very rich. May Allah continue to shower His blessings on him.

Aameen ya rabbul Aalameen.

I'd never really seen a big house before apart from movies, but this was a mansion- I mean an actual mansion. I entered the house, tip toeing on the floor like it was breakable. The house was silent, if a pin was to be dropped, it would have resonated around the house. I sat down on the couch, waiting for my husband. The husband I didn't know and I'd not seen before. I was damned!

I heard the front door open and his voice came, "Assalamualaikum, wifey," a velvety smooth, deep voice resonates around the silent building.

Subhanallah! The voice. I couldn't even reply; the voice had cast a spell on me to be rooted at where I stood. The voice could lure me to sleep without thinking of tomorrow.

This man in front was a typical definition of beauty; this man was extremely handsome, not handsome! He was beautiful. He was 6'ft tall compared to my 5'4ft; I shrunk a little feeling intimidated. His suit fitting shows his prominent broad chest. I raised my head to study his face, I was shocked; I gasped. He had a sharp jaw with a black full beard. His brown chocolate eyes twinkled with amusement as if he knew what I was thinking. His pink lips- kissable lips twitched revealing his dimples. His long eyelashes testify to his beauty.

Lower your gaze!. My brain commanded my eyes but the treacherous eyes of mine, sarcastically replied to me, "he is my husband and I can check him out".

I thought I'd fainted!.

The man in front of me wasn't handsome but he was beautiful.

I couldn't believe it. I was married to beauty while I was plain Jane. I was still gawking at the man in front of me. I didn't know when he moved closer and tapped my nose. As his hand touched me, I felt shivered in delight because the warmth the little touches passed to me was unspeakable.

"Um, ahem... I'm sorry! I spaced out. Argh, I'm Sofia Ali," I introduced myself. I groaned out, introducing to my handsome, sexy husband, was that a good impression?

He laughed out loud. Wow! His laugh did something to me. It made millions of butterflies swim in my stomach.

"No need for any introductions, Mrs Umar. I know almost everything about you."

Mrs Umar!.

Mrs Umar! .

I stared at him dumbfounded.

"You are Sofia Ali, best friend Maryam, no favourite food because all food is your favourite, colour blue, k-drama fan, obsessed with ice cream, hobby-sleeping, eating and watching films," he replied with lips twitching to smile. He knew everything-I mean everything about me." Should I continue wifey?" he asked teasingly.

I was dead.

"Welcome home wifey," he said, moving closer as he touched me.

I snapped. "Don't touch me," I moved away from him.

"Why, wifey?" he asked, confused by my reaction.

"You," I pointed my index finger at him.

"I hate you (lies my eyes rhetorically replied), I can't live with you, plan wrecker. You destroyed my plan. I will make you regret the day you saw me, the day you thought of marrying me. I will make you regret marrying me. I'm going to frustrate you into divorcing me," I said with promise lingering around the words and walked out.

I'd been obsessed with his beauty to forget that he was the reason my plan was destroyed; he was the reason papa slapped me for the first time, the reason why papa wanted to disown me.

I would make him regret marrying me.

Chapter 4 👇

«I'm a patient man. I will always wait for you, no matter the time, distance, situation, even for thousands of years-I will. I promise you».

Yusuf POV

To say this lady in front of him, was not a beauty, it'd be a lie.

"Finally, she was mine-all mine! She took my breath away. Am I even breathing?" He thought.

She looked like a princess and he would always treat her like that.

He knew that she did not like him, but the way she was looking at him. God!

He was fifty per cent sure that she would love him in a matter of time with the way she was looking at him.

She was already attracted to his physical appearance.

***

Wifey was angry.

Wow!.

"My feisty lionesses " he grinned cheekily.

He liked it. Wifey. She didn't even know her way around here. He laughed, she would come back soon enough.

He wouldn't mind waiting for thousands of years for her to love him.

Well, hatred was also a feeling, and she had that for him. What a lucky guy he was?.

Walking to the bar to have a drink, he popped the bottle and poured it and sat down as he sipped it.

"You drink," he heard her sweet, angelic voice around the bar. He was startled. Her melodic voice calmed him down.

"I never drink and I'll not drink. I'm just having a cup of fruit wine," he replied while having a gulp. "You can have a taste if you don't mind" he pushed the glass forward. She looked at him sceptically, eyeing the wine before collecting it from him.

"Wow!, it's delicious" She giggled while taking another gulp.

"Do you want more?" He asked. He stared at her lips before shaking his head away from his bad thought.

Wifey wasn't ready.

When my wife is ready, I'm going to take her to heaven and back. He thought.

She coughed to gain his attention, little did she know that all his attention was always on her from the moment he saw her.

"Um, you know everything about me. Don't you think I should know you, too, as I'm going to be living with you," she said softly, putting the cup down.

"Okay."

"What's your favourite colour?" She asked.

"Black" he replied while she giggled, clapping her hands.

"Why the colour black? boys are very obsessed with the colour black" she furrowed her brows.

"Boys?" I asked her incredulously.

"Yeah boys," he shrugged. "Don't tell me you aren't a boy" She teased softly while he chuckled. She was relaxed on the chair. He was enjoying the moment, he prayed silently to make the time long because he was comfortable and happy.

"Well black shows strength" he smiled at her.

"How?" Her eyes widened while she nibbled her lips.

"Because when everything is dark, you fight your way to the light. It shows the strength of not giving up. Even in the dark, your shadow leaves you, it remains only you." He shrugged his shoulder.

"Woah" she beamed excitedly while jumping up and down. "This is the first time I'm hearing that but I think blue is the best" she scoffed dramatically.

"Why?" he inquired.

"Because blue shows nature. The sky is blue, the ocean is blue..." she muttered looking downcast while he smiled at her.

" Then blue is the best "he agreed with her so that he could smile and he rewarded him with the fullest of her smiles which made him happy.

"Your favourite food" She inquired, cutting her fingernails.

"Any homemade food" he replied, he didn't care if she knew how to cook or not. He didn't marry her to be his cook or maid. He would cook if she didn't know. He grinned at the thought. He would be the chef and served her in the bed and dining room.

"Your favourite book?" .

"ARB101 and Adiya Amir by Um_royhan" he replied.

"Awww, who could take you like a romance sucker" she snickered.

"Well, I love fantasy, action, thriller and suspense books but those books were different" he spoke with excitement. He liked talking about his favourite books.

"Why?" .

"Is this an interview question?" he chuckled while she smiled shyly at him.

"Answer, maybe I can read it".

"The ARB101 book is a short story but I love the beginning of the book. It started with Whatsapp chat while Adiya Amir is the sweetest of all. The book inspires me a lot" he finished.

" How? ".

" Because it shows the struggles, challenges. It talks about suicide. Everything in life is a challenge, don't give up because surely, you will pass through and I quote the writer, 'Everything that happens in our lives is challenges that we need to conquer' " he added.

"Woah" She beamed with happiness, "I can't wait to read it" she screamed happily.

"Yeah".

"TV series or music?" .

"I do not like movies or watching TV and listening to music," he shrugged. He didn't see anything bad in it.

"OK, old man" she scrunched her nose, "Coffee or tea".

"I'm a sucker of black coffee".

"Rainy or sunny?" .

"Rain because it is always weather for two" he wiggled his eyebrows while she turned away embarrassedly.

He has no shame. She thought.

"You are perv" She muttered but he heard.

" I'm not but if it is with my wife then I'm a perv" he winked at her.

"Your favourite place to be?" she asked.

"Library" he responded Immediately.

"Hehe... Who could think a man like you can be in the library" she teased, wiggling her brows.

"A man like me?" He frowned.

"Yes, a man like you - I mean a beautiful front page model like you...." She gasped and clamped her mouth shut then she ran away.

He laughed out with his body shaking. When was the last time he laughed hard.

He enjoyed his time with her, how flustered she was when he was adding some innuendo to her questions.

"We are already one step forward," he thought happily.

Chapter 5

Before the wedding

Yusuf POV

He was checking the papers on his table when his office door was yanked open abruptly.

His best friend- Royhan entered with a scowling face and muttering some harmless curses under his breath yet he heard it perfectly.

He was surprised because his friend often curses. Something must have happened. He chuckled lightly.

"What happened bro?" he asked him curiously with his brows knitted together.

Royhan raised his head up and said, "I met a devil in disguise today".

"Devil?" He asked while Royhan nodded comically as he held his red ear.

"I saw a beautiful lady this morning when I was coming. I was awestruck by her beauty, then I wished to meet her and.." he stopped, looking embarrassed with a flustered face, " Then, I followed her to the mall, waiting for her outside. On her way out, I talked to her and she abruptly left me standing. Then I followed her to her car but mistakenly hit her on her butt. Sincerely, I didn't mean to" Royhan stopped talking, he was in deep thought.

What has happened to him? Yusuf wondered.

"Then?" Yusuf waited patiently for him to continue.

"Then...." he trailed off, scratching his head.

"Then what happened?" Yusuf was impatient now.

"She slapped me hard on my face" he replied cheaply, holding his right face.

The palm print was there.

Wow, the lady must have smacked him hard. Yusuf thought.

Yusuf was shocked, his mouth was opened, he couldn't close it.

"She what!!" Yusuf stuttered with widened eyes.

"Slapped me, after that she kicked me on my..... Then she...."Yusuf was short of words, he was surprised. The lady was an iron lass.

" This girl was really intimidating, she gave me a chill around my body. She... Bang her car door on my face, only God saved my fingers from the car, it would've been squashed And I tried to

tell her I'm sorry but she took off making all the dust to cover me. " He shook his head as if he wanted to forget the bad event.

"What if she is the princess you've been waiting for?" Yusuf teased him.

"What" he shrieked, "she will kill me or probably skin me alive" he blurted out but there was hope in his eyes.

"You know? nobody knows tomorrow. Allah...." Yusuf's words were cut off by a loud bang on his door.

"Enter," he said, sitting straight on the chair.

A fair tall lady strolled in, with her head up. She was pretty intimidating. She glanced at the corner of the room and her expression changed to furious. Yusuf looked at Royhan and he looked like he wanted to pee on his body.

"You!!!" her loud voice boomed out, "what the fuck are you doing here?" she asked, grinding her teeth together in anger.

"Have I not made it clear that we must not cross paths again?" She took a long step towards him but stopped and shook her head.

"Before I forget, I came for you Yusuf," she said and smiled at Yusuf while Yusuf adjusted his tie.

She walked towards him and took a seat without him offering her. She sat and crossed her leg. Picking her perfectly manicured nails as if it was the most important thing in the world.

She cleared her throat, changed her sitting posture and looked at me hard on the face. She was intimidating, yeah he knew but this girl was... She slightly intimidated him.

A badass.

"You know Sophia Ali" she stated in a statement, his heart limped a bit. His angel.

"Yeah" he answered with a smile playing around his lips.

"Good" she looked pleased.

"Bros" she called, "I'm here because of her, she is my best friend and my twin sister from another mother." He intended to ask her but she interrupted him with a raised brow. Hang it.

She shunned him.

"I'm here to give you a warning," she said, her voice changed from sweet soft to a deep threatening voice.

How could a girl have an intimidating voice? He wandered.

"My baby girl Sophie is the apple of my eyes. If you hurt her-I mean a strain of her hair. I swear to God I will find you and if I?" she shook her head as if she was pitying him.

He gulped, losing his belt a little.

"I will break your bones slowly, after that I will kill you then I will put you under my bed for you to decay before I give your bones to my Shepard dog. And trust me, I never talk without sticking to it. I'm a girl that always fulfills her promises and that's my promise to you. Do you understand? "She asked and he nodded his head quickly for her to know he was following her threat.

" Now, let's leave the story for the gods. I'm Maryam - Sophia's one and only friend." she chimed. Was she bipolar? First, she was threatening him, now she was exchanging pleasantries.

"Erm... I'm" she raised her hands up 'leave it'

"Sophia is a meek girl- she has the courage of a tigress, adorable as a kitten and brave as a lioness" she smiled knowingly at him. Her eyes twinkled with happiness.

"Do you want her to love you?" She asked while he nodded.

"She's obsessed with kdrama, her favourite colour is blue. She doesn't have a favourite food either. I hope that helps you to gain her heart" he was really grateful for giving her the information he needed.

"Well" she dragged, "if you want her to be happy with you, just buy her chocolate." She grinned cheekily. "She doesn't like material things, you can't use the money to buy her love but just use attentiveness and chocolate. I swear to God she will fall for ya. Trust me" she stood up.

"That's all that I came to tell you but if you make her cry. I swear to God who created me, I will become your worst nightmare" she threatened.

Ohhhhh.

Chapter 6

Sofia

Since my encounter with my husband, I'd been hiding in my room except to come out of my hiddens for meals.

The room was so big that it had its own big jacuzzi, mini library and a dinner room. I loved the room, it was full of books that I loved to read.

I woke up with a running stomach, I groaned and got out of the bed,tip-toeing to the kitchen to find something to eat. It was only food that could get me out of bed.

I entered the kitchen and the aroma of brewed coffee made my stomach growl.

Sorry baby, mama gonna feed you now,I patted my stomach dramatically.

I settled myself on the counter, took two slices of bread with noodles, yummy!!.

After the meal, I retracted back to my room, to dwell myself in my work-books.

The house was silent, Yusuf had gone to work, Jane - our househelp wasn't here because it was her day off.

Upon getting to my room, I felt the urge to make a little garden. I put on my yoga cloth with my cape and went out.

Yusuf POV

He entered the house and saw everything was cleaned. He wondered who cleaned and rearranged the setting of the house but wow it was beautiful.

He entered the second sitting room and saw his beautiful princess on the couch.

Her head was on the floor while her legs were hung on the couch, there were many used toilet rolls on the floor. She was watching a movie and crying - what was wrong?.

He was concerned about what had happened to her.

He cleared my throat, "what happened?" He asked worriedly.

"Are you here to mock me or what???!!!" she backed at him while scowling.

"I'm sorry wifey but can I ask you the reason why you are crying?" he asked softly while looking at the TV and noticed she was watching the movie 'Five Feet Apart' movie. He groaned tiredly.

He preferred the novel that the movie. The movie was emotional, it was about two teenagers who had cystic fibrosis (CF). They had an instant flirtation, though restrictions dictate that they must maintain a safe distance between them. Because CF patients are strictly kept six feet

apart to reduce the risk of cross-infection, as contracting bacterial infections from other CF patients can be dangerous. Which must be five feet apart. As their connection intensifies, so does the temptation to throw the rules out the window and embrace their attractions.

"I was happy watching this movie but then it makes me emotional because peo died and when Will left Stella" she sniffed, another pool of tears started.

"Sorry" he said concerning.

"I don't want your sorry, it's just that it came unprepared. It makes me feel like shit, like now. My stomach is aching serious but I've used Felvin for it and I'm..." she trailed off.

"What makes you feel like shit?" he asked her dumbfounded because he didn't understand the damned thing she was talking about.

"It" she made a puppy face.

Awww. She was cute and all his.

"Don't tell me you don't know what I'm talking about." she said, frowning.

"I don't know," he replied honestly.

"Leave it, if you don't know what I'm talking about" she said harshly moving past him.

He shook his head, she was behaving weird.

He looked at her retreating figure and saw a blood stain on her white lace.

"Wait" he called her.

She faced him and he was short of words because he didn't know what to say.

"uhn?".

"erm...., you've got a blood stain on your cloth."he said, scratching his neck nervously and not looking at her.

He was embarrassed.

" This is it, I was talking about " she pouted.

"What are we going to do?"he asked her.

"You are asking me?"she spoke incredulously with a raised brow.

" Uhn? ".

"Or you should be asking what you are going to do"

"Uhn?. What should I do?" he asked.

" Now you are talking sweetheart" she pinched his cheek, "You buy me sanitary pad and bars of ice chocolate then we will complete the rerun of the movie". She said with mischief.

What?!.

~~~~

He entered the mini mart, looking around maybe he could find a male but nay!, all were females.

He brought his hood to cover his face, how was he going to ask?.

He walked to the staff, he was extremely embarrassed. He didn't know what to do without them thinking of him as a perv.

"Ma'am, can you please get me..."he was embarrassed, he didn't know how to ask.

" Good evening sir"She bowed politely, "What should I get you?" she asked.

" I want a glass of water"he blurted out, yeah he needed water to calm his beating heart.

He fanned myself nervously.

The lady came around and gave him what he requested.

"I hope you are okay sir" the lady asked concerning.

He nodded his head because he didn't trust his words at that moment.

He summoned courage,this was it.

"I want to buy that lady's things"he breathed out quickly while the lady smiled softly at him as if she understood his feelings.

"What type sir?"she inquired.

"Which one do you think is the best?" he requested.

"That is the section for woman sanitaries"she responded pointing to the ladies personal use shelf.

He was more embarrassed now.

Some ladies were giggling and pointing to him, he was mortified. He was grateful that no one could recognize me with his hood on.

This was it.

This was because my wife was in pain .

He took the first one his hand reached and went to the cashier before he ran out without checking the name of the product he picked.
~~~~

Phew.

~~~

He got home and showed her the one he bought. She screamed at him and threw it on his face telling him to return it because she didn't use that type of product.

"I use Always, not Diva" she yelled.

He was royally screwed .

$Chapter r8
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Chapter 7

Sophia

It had been weeks since the incident with my period. I giggled, remembering what happened to my poor husband. He was stuck with me forever.

****

"Is this what I asked you to buy?" I yelled at him and threw it away,it hit him on his forehead. He could never feel the pain because it was soft and fluffy.

"Buu_t you didn't tell me what to buy," he stuttered, looking mortified while I grinned wickedly at the back of my mind.

Pay back to the bitch because I never forced you to marry me and this is what my father used to do whenever I was on my period. I smiled evilly at my thought.

"I can't go back" he shook his head, as if he was trying not to remember what happened.

Whatever who cares. I rolled my eyes

"I don't care, I need it," I said softly, looking at the floor,faking tears.

"Oh who could think you'll be good in crocodile tears?" my brain snickered while I replied "shut up".

"Okay" he sighed agreeing, "what should I buy?" he gulped, looking everywhere but me.

"Tell the lady, you want to buy 'Always '. She will show you. And please when you are coming back, don't forget to buy me bars of ice chocolate" I said with excitement. I smiled sensually, nibbling my lips.

Who doesn't like chocolate!

He stared at me and smiled sheepishly while scratching his neck, before retracting to the door. He shut the door behind him and I jumped on the couch happily.

Here I come!.

I was rewatching "The Fault in Our Stars ". I'd watched it almost like a hundredth time. I'd read the book but I preferred the movie more than the book.

I started crying, the movie was emotional. It wasn't easy to be a cancer patient. I pitied Isaac, Augustus and hazel. The movie plus stomach cramp would never let me be.

I hate menstruating!!, Humph!.

It used to make me emotional.

I cried unnecessarily, ate gluttony, and slept unconditionally.

I hated it!.

Why was I even a female?.

I heard the front door open, and I marched to the door. "Who's there?" I asked in a high pitched voice, using the remote control as a source of defense.

I was foolish right?, I know.

"It's me wifey" I heard Yusuf's voice, another set of tears formed, I wailed loudly.

He rushed towards me while coming and he dropped all that he was holding.

He carried me to the nearest couch and put me on his leg. He soothed me, rubbing my back,telling me everything was okay.

I sobbed loudly, when I was done. I looked at him with my wet lashes, he rubbed my cheeks cleaning the traces of tears.

"What happened?" he asked gently, still rubbing my back.

I hip-cupped, "The boy in the movie died and you were late. I thought - thought, something has happened to you. I was scared" I told him. He shushed me and was telling me, sorry, that there was traffic on the way while I yawned.

"You wanna sleep? " he asked me, looking at how my eyes were closing tiredly while I nodded.

He carried me to my room, tucked me under the blanket, he switched off the light and turned his back.

I held him back and shook my head, "please don't leave me" I whispered,before I was carried into the dreamland.

I woke up the next morning with the aroma of a brewed coffee. I smiled knowingly that he has made it for me.

For the next five days of my periods, he used it at home.

We watched films together, ate and played.

During that time, he was my comforter. My punching bag, my chef, maid.

****

I was carrying my food from the kitchen to my room, when I heard my phone rung.

I rushed to the cabinet while I was chewing some of my food, playing chase and chewing with my teeth.

Tell me, who doesn't eat-walk?

I saw my mom's name flashed on the screen, I smiled widely.

"Assalamualaikum, Ummi*" I greeted her, I'd missed her, especially her food. (my mother in Arabic).

I heard sniffing from the other side, my smile reduced. 'tell her' I was hearing my uncle's voice in the background.

"Mom , what happened?, you're scaring me" I asked worriedly.

'has something happened?'..

'is father okay?' ..

'is my brother okay?'

Millions of scenarios were going through my head.

Stop Sophia, you are thinking too much. Nothing happened. I barked at myself.

It calmed my beating heart a bit.

"Is your husband there with you?" my uncle asked.

"Yeah, he's in his room" I responded shakily.

"Tell me please, what happened?, both of you are scaring me" I said.

He sighed, "your father has...." he trailed off.

"What happened to my father?" I shouted.

"Your father has collapsed and he has been admitted." he said in one breath.

The plate I was holding slipped, my world literally stopped moving. Everything stopped moving, it was like I was in kind of trance. I was hearing voices but I didn't know whose voice it was. My head started to spin, I held on the counter for support.

"What happened farosha*, I heard your voice. What happened?"he shook me, I shivered and looked him in the eyes. (butterfly in Arabic)

Tears were bawling out of my eyes, I didn't know what to say. I wanted to but my vocal and brain weren't compiling right now.

He shushed, telling me everything was okay. I shook my head vigorously in disagreement.

"Papa" my voice crooked, he nodded, showing me he understood what I wanted to say.

"Papa" I said again but no words were coming out.

"He's- - he's in the hospital" I bursted out in another wave of tears.

"Shhh,it's okay"he whispered.

"It's not"I shook my vehemently,"but he was okay last week, nothing happened to him"I rambled on while choking on tears.

"I understand,"he said, getting up.

"Where are you going?"I asked him,I needed him here.

"The car key,"he said,taking the key from the table along with his jacket.

He came to me and put it on his jacket and crouched down to put on my socks for me.

Then we headed out to the hospital.

Chapter 8

Sophia

We rushed down to the hospital, I and Yusuf. I was rambling and sniffing because I didn't know what the future held.

I was scared.

"It's okay,he will be fine," he said,rubbing my back soothingly with one of his hands and the other to drive.

When we arrived at the hospital, I rushed out of the car without waiting for Yusuf to park.

I walked straight into the elevator without seeing the security man who wanted to question me. Yusuf stood behind, answered all the questions. I'd pressed the button where papa was before he jogged inside the elevator before it closed.

I strode out of it and saw ummi ,uncle shuaib who was my maternal uncle and my younger bro. Ummi was on the floor crying while Uncle shuaib was comforting her.

I ran to ummi and started to tear up.

"Mum,what happened?"I asked ,using my hand to wipe my running nose.

"I don't know_know"she stuttered,"we were eating this morning, then _then he..."she sobbed.

"Then what..."my words were shut when the Doctor came to us.

I stood abruptly,"what happened to him?,how is he?,_is he okay?" I bombarded the Doctor with questions.

He smiled softly at me "he's doing well but he asked his daughter, who is she?"

I stood straight,"me,I'm his daughter"Yusuf stood beside me.

"But before you go in,he wants your husband to check on him" he glanced at Yusuf as if he knew he was my husband, "He asked of you too"he faced Yusuf while he nodded his head.

"Wifey,I'm coming. Be strong"he whispered and kissed my forehead before he left.

"Mom, what do you think papa wants to see Yusuf?"I asked confusedly.

"I don't know binti*." She replied. (*my daughter)

I saw Yusuf coming out of the room looking in deep thought, I shook him."What happened?, is he okay?" I asked.

"He's fine,he wants to see you now" he tried to smile to reassure me but he was really failing at him.

I entered the room and saw papa on the bed ; like a lifeless body but the beeping of the monitor-helped me to know he was living.

I rushed to him ,"papa" my voice croaked.

"Beti*,I'm okay. I just wanted to see you for the last time"he kissed my forehead. (Dear).

"I love you binti*,but promise me you will try to love your husband" I wanted to talk but he held his hand. (My Daughter)

He touched my cheeks, wiping any traces of tears before he continued,"Let me talk please, it wasn't because of his money or fame that I wanted you to marry him. But because of his love for you that showed clearly in his eyes ,when he came with his father. And I'm sorry for slapping you that day; I wanted you to see that I was trying to protect you from Him" his voice broke while I shivered. " It pains and hurts a good parent to not able to save his daughter and he's the only one I think he can, I'm sorry beti* if I've wronged or crossed you"he said apologetically. (dear)

"No papa, you never wronged or crossed me"I said ,shaking my hand and holding our hands together.

His breathing changed, the monitor was beeping loudly, he was moving or shaking vigorously on the bed,I tried to hold me but it was in vain. I rushed out of the room shouting "doctor!!!!" .

The doctor and nurses followed me, "I don't know what happened, the monitor won't stop beeping"I could not stop rambling.

The doctor told me to stay with my family outside,that they need to check on him. I nodded and went to Yusuf.

YUSUF POV

As the doctor to him that his father in law wanted to see.

Why?. He was dumbfounded.

He entered the room after saying his Teslim, he walked to him.

"Sir" he called softly.

"Oh you came" he asked surprisingly,"I've a request from you" he said softly.

"Na'am*, I'm hearing" (Yes)

"Please protect that child, don't let her go. No matter how bad she treats you ,please endeavor.." he coughed.

"Promise me you will protect her, love her, cherish her and care for her. She's the apple of my eyes, please don't let anything happen to her. She put on a strong facade but inside she's a broken, damaged girl that needs to be protected" her father held his hands, begging him.

"Because he is still coming back for her," he said and looked at the other side.

"Who is he?" Yusuf asked and he never replied.

*****

He raised his head and saw wifey coming toward him,she looked broken or dead inside.

He vowed to protect her from bad people.

He held her close to my heart, she was still weeping but silently.

The doctor came to them and asked if he could see Yusuf but wifey didn't allow it.

"If you want to say anything, say it here"she said boldly.

He loved her boldness when with all the tears up.

"We are sorry, we tried our best but the person who owns life has taken it back"he said sentimentally and walked away.

"Whhhhatttttttt"she wailed while Yusuf gulped nervously.

"Inna Lillahi Wa inna ilahi rojiun" he murmured under his breath.

"That's impossible, I saw him now, we were talking and and and...."her legs gave out while Yusuf quickly snaked his arm around before she fell.

She scouted toward him, then looked at him with a stained cheek "is this how people die?"she asked softly.

"Shhh, issokay"I said, rubbing her back.

"It's not,you don't understand. He's my role model, my father, he's my rock..."she sobbed. It pained him to see her crying, he hated seeing her crying.

"I understand,then I promise to be your rock,your comforter, your companion, your friend" he promised her.

"Can I hug you"she asked timidly, Yusuf was shocked before he regained himself and wanted to reply before she cut him off. "It's okay if you don't want to, I just want some hug. I want you to hold me and feel your body..." he didn't let her finish before he scooped her.

And he hugged her.

Chapter 9

Yusuf

He had been watching her since the previous week that her father had taste to death. She hadn't cried out, her lips were always quivering and he always noticed a lone tear on her face which she quickly cleaned, murmuring some words under her breath.

He was tired of this brooding even though she disliked him which was 100% opposite, he missed her. He missed her lively presence, the twinkled of her nose, the mischief in her eyes and the knit of her brows when she was concentrating on something. Or the glimpse in her eyes when she opens a new book to the emotional breakdown when her favorite characters were killed. He knew the pain of when someone close to us died but this was too much. She wasn't crying out, she was killing herself inside little by little.

She was miserable.

He'd called her best friend to come so maybe she could cheer her up but it was futile. Both of them just wallowed in their miseries. Even though when his friend- Royhan came to visit for condolence, Maryam didn't even glance at him nor threatened him as usual. Everything and everywhere was dull without her Ray of light.

He went to the kitchen and brewed a coffee; she never joked with her food nor coffee but since the incident she hadn't been eating. She'd been skipping meals and drowning in caffeine.

It was depressing and hurting.

He went to where she sat at the corner of the room that had become her favorite place in the whole house.

He crouched to her eyes level, and handed her the coffee.

"It has enough sugar with milk, how you like it" he said softly staring at her big doe eyes that he had fallen love with.

"I'm reading"she replied weakly while she tried to wipe the tears.

" Ok" he replied.

"Don't mind me, this book is making me emotional"she sniffled while he shook his head softly .

"No wifey, I've given you enough space. Let it out love"he said gently, hugging her closer to him,making her head rested on his shoulder.

"He left,he...he left ..me" she cried, her lips trembled while he patted her head.

"It's okay ,let it out," he said, disheartened.

She cried till there were no tears in her socket.

She raised her head and smiled a bit "I'm sorry, I've ruined your shirt"she sniffed,straightening the wrinkles on his shirt.

"Issokay"he said softly and handed her the cold coffee.

*****

Sophia POV

"Sit down here" I yelled at him while he grumbled.

I used the pillow beside me to smack his head,"this is not how to behave with your teacher" I smirked, rubbing my hands together evilly.

"Ouch,it's painful" he rubbed where I hit him.

"Okay I'm ready teacher" he said, rolling his eyes playfully while I scowled.

I'd been teaching him some adzkar* because he absolutely know nothing but he is an Hafiz*. (remembrance or dua - prayer, someone who memorized the complete Quran).

Could you see?, an Hafiz that didn't know adzkar. It was absurd right?,but it was true.

~~

I woke up beside Yusuf, but how did I end up here?. I wondered, looking freakishly, Yusuf was snoring softly while he was tangled with the duvet and I shook my head.

I nudged to wake Yusuf up

but it was futile. An idea came to me and I smirked evilly. I went to the kitchen and returned with a chill of water. I smiled.

"Wake up"I nudged him again.

"Fifteen minutes more please" he mumbled, turning to the other side.

I sprinkled the water on his face and he stood abruptly like a person that wasn't asleep before.

I laughed hard, holding my stomach. His face looked comical, I wished I'd camera so that I could snap it.

He yawned and walked out of bed. He grumbled, rambling about how it wasn't fair, and I replied sarcastically that, 'life is not fair'.

"You look beautiful when laughing wifey, it's good to have you back" he complimented me, entering the bathroom as if nothing happened when butterflies were swimming in my stomach.

He walked out of the bathroom adjusting his shorts, I turned my head and looked at the wall shyly.

"You can turn back,I'm through," he called. " Well, there's nothing bad there in seeing me," he wiggled his brows.

"Nah,I don't want to corrupt my virgin eyes" I responded dismissively.

"I noticed something, when you woke up; you didn't say any adzkar and likewise before going to the bathroom, you didn't" I furrowed my brows confusedly.

"Is it compulsory?" He asked, discarding the towel on the floor and went to put on his shirt.

"Whaat?!" I screamed with widened eyes. "Do you know the importance of Adzkar?" I asked while picking up his used towel.

"Is it important" he asked in a small voice like a kid being afraid of being scolded.

"It is very important and part of our life. Adzkar is remembrance of Allah and the prophet (SAW)" I said " adzkar is the weapon of a believer" I added softly.

"Well, truth to be told, I don't know any," he said sadly looking down, I was shocked and surprised. It baffled me .

"How" I inquired inquisitively.

"My papa didn't allow it when I was Young. He just wanted me to learn the Quran to show off to his friends that his son is a Hafiz. And here I am with full Qur'an up here" he gestured to his head. "But without having the knowledge of Hadith or adzkar" he said sadly.

"I want to but there's no time," he said dejectedly.

"There's always time if you leave the time". I lectured, "but I can help" I announced.

"How?" he asked in a small voice.

"I will teach you" his lit up like a baby given a present on his Eid*. (Muslims festivals).

"Then will you be my teacher?" he asked softly, afraid whether I would change my mind.

I smiled and nodded my head in affirmation "yes ,I will".

And then he .....

Chapter 10

Sophia

"Adé mí*, your food is ready. It's on the table," I called out to Yusuf- my husband. (my crown).

I didn't know what else I could do again. I was tired of making his life hell because he said it made him fall harder. He was such a cheesy cool guy.

Since past months, I'd been trying but didn't stop myself from my wifely duties like cooking, maintaining the house, caring for him-because that was my duty.

Well, I was grateful to Allah for granting me him because he was very tolerable, understanding and patient with me even after all my tantrums. He said I was a fire and he was a moth who was always drawn to me.

He liked to tease me with every opportunity he had. He also cherished me with gifts and surprises, especially the bars of vanilla chocolate.

Oh my goodness, that was my weak point.

"Assalamualaikum. Good morning, wife" he planted a soft kiss on my forehead. "How was your night? I hoped you dreamt about me?" He wiggled his eyebrows at me while his eyes twinkled with amusement making me blushed and shook my head.

"Waalaikumsalam, morning! My dream was blank, no need of flattering yourself. I would rather dreamt of SpongeBob than dreamt of you," I playfully sneered at him, playing with my fingers.

"Wow, that's nice and cool. I know you are obsessed with SpongeBob; I think I will have to compete with it now. Thank Allah, not with Tom and Jerry," he fake- gasped, holding his chest in a painful manner.

"Your food is on the table," I said dismissively, trying hard not to laugh.

"Thanks wifey, your food is the best. I couldn't even bring myself to eat any other food except yours," he mumbled walking towards the table while I scrutinized my eyes on him like a hawk.

"OK, well.. My mother's food also" he raised his hand in surrender while scrunched my nose not in dismay.

"Yummy my favourite. Thanks, wifey," he stood up and pecked my cheek before sitting.

After my father's death, he had used the opportunity of telling me to hug me to start pecking and holding my hand but I didn't repulse him.

Why would I reject him?.

When he's my husband. My brain chirped in, dancing dramatically around.

He was kind and cute,I gasped out internally.

Cute, my mind taunted me with raised eyebrows.

Yes, cute. I responded, rolling my eyes.

A typical me always having conversations with myself.

He rubbed his stomach like a starved man, sighed and uncovered his food. He waved his hand and started eating.

"Do you say azkar before eating?" I asked him.

"Oh! Subhanallah, I've forgotten, wifey."

I stood up from where I was sitting and held his left ear. "Didn't I always tell you to say your azkar before eating?" I said sternly with my other hand at my hip.

"Please, I'm sorry. The food is delicious and yummy, that was why I forgot to say it," he pleaded with his puppy eyes.

"Well, what are you supposed to say?" Still holding his ear.

"Bismillahi," he mumbled out and started eating. I quickly held his hand before he put it in his mouth.

"Is that what you're supposed to say?" I scowled, giving him a nasty glare.

"Yes. If not, you've to teach me." He grumbled, staring at the food longingly.

I sighed, still holding his hand. "When you forget to say Bismillah before eating, in the middle of eating, you should say "bismillahil awwaluhu wal akhiruhu," I told him and asked him to repeat it after me.

"Why did it change from bismillahi?" he asked inquisitively.

"If you don't say bismillah before eating, then shayton is eating the food with you but if you remember in between the meal, you say-bismillahi awwalu wal akhiru. Shayton is going run away" I explained while he nodded his head.

"You'll be a great mother to our children" he commented.

Mother!. I shrieked but internally.

****

"Bye, wifey, I'm going to the office" he announced, carrying his office bag.

"Bye," I replied, he came near me and pecked my forehead.

He walked out from the door while waving his hand and blowing me kisses.

"Make sure you catch it, wifey. Don't let it waste," he winked before driving off.

I sat down on the couch and brought out my phone to call my Bestie - Maryam.

"Assalamualaikum, sugar." She greeted me excitedly.

"Waalaikumsalam, Mariam. How are you?" I replied with enthusiasm. Sitting Indian style on the couch.

I'd missed her craziness.

"Me? Fine and you? How is your handsome hubby?" She asked teasingly.

"He's fine, Alhamdulillah." I replied, munching my homemade chips.

"I hope you guys, you know..." She said smugly, I was sure she would've been wiggling her brows.

"No, we haven't." I replied sweetly.

"Why?!" She yelled, making me distance the phone from my ear, not wanting to damage my earbud from her shout. "I need to be an aunty soooooon" she whined.

"Hatred." I replied gruffly.

"HATRED?!! I know you are already smitten with him, no need of saying hatred. I know you are just scared." She responded softly.

"Me, SMITTEN??? No" I screamed.

"Yes, since the first day babe. He is a catch" She said.

"No" I grumbled.

"Say that to your heart" she snickered, "but what of your periods. I hope you don't make the gentle soul to suffer"

"Well, I made him suffer a little bit, you know. I sent him out to buy me pads in the middle of the night and get me chocolates. He watched movies with me, gave me a massage, cooked for me." I laughed widely.

"No need of telling me, I know how you behave when you're having your cramps," she responded.

"Bae, I need to go. Boss is coming... Talk to you later!" She mumbled. "Before I go,I know you're whipped already,it showed clearly in your eyes the other day." She laughed mockingly.

"Assalamualaikum." I said.

"Waalaikumsalam." She replied and I sighed.

"But before I go" I heard her say while I hummed.

"I need to be an aunt soon" she screamed as she hung up.

Was I really smitten?.

Chapter 11

“One thing about betrayal is that it never comes from your enemy”.

~***~

I have been feeling amazing since I woke up. I couldn't stop the radiant smile on my face as I entered the bathroom for my daily routine. I performed wudu*(ablution) and face the qiblah*(where Muslims face when praying), pray two rakatain*(standing) Fajr*(dawn) and Subh* (morning prayer). After praying my obligatory prayers, I sat on the musolah* (praying mat) and ask forgiveness. May He, the one who forgives, forgives, pardons all my mistakes that I did intentionally or not.

My beautiful smile never left my face till I entered the kitchen and started to cook my husband's favorite food. When I was through with cooking and arranging the dishes on the table, I went to his room to call him only to meet him halfway, looking unorganized.

"Your food is ready," I smiled shyly, fiddling with my fingers. I still got flustered around him almost every time. He hummed in response, checking his golden wristwa before he sighed, running his hand through his hair.

"Oh wifey" he smiled lightly almost discomforted, "I won't be able to eat my breakfast today" he shot me an apologetic smile before doing his cufflinks, "I've an important client to meet today and he's waiting for me at office" he said, walking passed me to the door while I trailed after him pouting and disheartening. My radiant smile has vanished.

I stopped him before he could go out, holding the bread that I took from the table, "But wait, at least take a slice of..." I hurried after him to give it to him but he interrupted me.

"No Sofia" he groaned, "I promise to be home earlier than before" He said hurriedly while I flinched a little with rejection. My heart constricted with pain and rejection but I swallowed it.

His phone started ringing,

"Hello?... Okay... On my way.... Bye," He left me standing at the door not even looking back to say goodbye or kissed me.

"What's wrong with him today?" I thought as I sat on the couch contemplating. "First, not eating his food. And he never even leaves for office at this time. Secondly, he called me Sofia. He never called me by my given names, only pet names. I didn't even know my name was Sophia if I was around him because I was used to him calling me wifey. Thirdly, he never leaves without kissing my forehead or teasing me. If he forgot all these, this means the client must be a very important person." I concluded, sighing tiredly but the rejection still burned deep in my heart.

Almost five hours had gone when I stood up from the couch, as I was passing through the table, I saw his medicine. "Look at him-rushing out of the house without even taking his medicine. Tsk, tsk, he behaves like a baby sometimes." I shook my head, smiling softly and picked the medicine.

A thought popped up and I stood up, went to the kitchen and packed some sandwiches in a lunchbox. Maybe I can visit him. I smiled impishly walking to my room to change my dress.

After getting dressed in my blue floral gown which stopped at my feet and my white cape, I went out of the house but not after locking all the doors, windows and saying my adzkar*(prayer).

I called out my assigned driver to take me to his company. I'd never been to his office ; it was my first time giving him a visit. I felt giddy and nervous of visiting him as many thoughts were running on my head.

Will he be happy?.

Will he be ashamed of me?

Will he get mad or send me away?.

All my thoughts went to the dustbin when we arrived at his place, "Wow" , his company was gigantic, I'd never seen a company as big as this except maybe in the movies. May Allah continue to shower his blessings on him.

The driver opened the car for me and I stepped out of the car like a kid going to the aquarium for the first time. I walked straight to the receptionist who was calling and chatting on the phone.

"Excuse me, please. I'm here for Yusuf Umar," I smiled sweetly at her. She checked me out from head to toe and shook her head before returning back to her phone call.

When she noticed my stare on her, she gave me a nasty look and sighed, "Who are you? Do you have an appointment with him or... are you one of those unwanted house flies who don't have any job, more than running after a rich man?" she barked.

I sighed and rubbed my temple worriedly. "Well, no. I'm Mrs. Sofia Yusuf Umar- his rightful and lawful wife" I responded, upon hearing my response, the receptionist straightened up, looking scared frantically, "I'm sorry, ma'am, for my rude behaviour. Go straight down there, you will see the elevator".

Stepping out of the elevator, I went to the lady behind the desk. "Excuse me, I'm here for Yusuf," I said, smiling at the lady.

"He is very busy right now, ma'am. He doesn't want to be disturbed. He is in the middle of a meeting with an important client," she responded, continuing typing furiously.

This important client again!

"He's my husband. I need to see him now-right now!" I said angrily and walked away without waiting for her reply. I heard her calling me but didn't answer.

I was furious I didn't have time. Important client. Hmph! I was even curious about this client, who the heck he is?.

I reached the door-should I knock or not? Well as his wife, I chose the latter.

When I opened the door, the door was not even locked and the secretary said he was in a meeting. Tsk, tsk.

Opening the door, I peeked inside. But what I saw made my world come crashing down.

I ran out of the company like a manic with tears falling down my face as the secretary and receptionist called after but I couldn't stay a minute there.

It hurt!.

The rain was all it might when I got outside, I cried harder in the pouring rain. Crying out all the pains I had buried in.

I knew, I can never be enough!.

I'm nothing!.

I didn't even call my driver; I needed to get away from there. I left with tears brimming out of my eyes ducts while walking to the direction of the house , not home.

I'd never felt betrayed before in my life-this was my first.

And I cried like never before.

Chapter 12

Sophia POV

I was drenched from head to toe when I entered his house that I called my home. I didn't know how I got my way home or how I entered the bathroom, removed my soaked dress and changed.

I was heartbroken, I was hurt. My heart was bleeding with betrayal and my soul was crumbled with lies. All his promises of love and caring was just a game to him.

I knew I was nothing compared to his handsomeness, wealth but why did he marry me?.

It hurt.

After I was through with my two nafila*(two volunteer prayers), I took the Quran and read it because I know that He who heals the heart would heal mine. The recitation soothing my soul and heart, luring me to a peaceful slumber.

I woke up around 7:00 pm when I heard the horn of Yusuf's car. I got up from the praying mat, making my way to the living room.

I entered the kitchen and microwaved his breakfast that he declined to eat. I couldn't waste the food. I set it on the table quickly to avoid confronting him only to be stopped by his voice.

"Assalamualaikum, wifey. I'm back," he smiled brightly as if he didn't do anything to hurt me. He entered, removing his shoes.

I couldn't look at him in the eyes. if I did, I would tear up again.

It hurt.

I swear, even though I said I didn't like him but it hurt.

"Waalaikumsalam, welcome. Your food is on the table," I rushed out to escape him.

"Goodnight, I'm tired. I want to go to sleep, assalamualaikum." I didn't even wait for him to reply or asked anything before I dashed to my room. I was emotionally and physically drained. I couldn't stay in the same room with him without crying.

I detest lying.

~*~

I woke up the following morning, feeling headache brewing. I groaned tiredly. I did all my morning routine quickly to escape him.

"Good morning, sweetheart," he greeted, smiling while descending down.

"Morning" I replied curtly.

"Your breakfast is on the table if you wish to eat or reject it to meet your important client again" the jealousy and anger laced my words. "I'm going to my room. Don't forget to lock the doors while going to your office" I said walking back to my room.

Yusuf POV

What was wrong with Sofia? She never behaved like this.

No smiling, no looking at him. No waiting for him to finish his food, no seeing him off. Something was really wrong.

Reaching the company, he greeted his secretary -Lubaba shortly, before retracting to his office gloomy. Not in the mood to talk, smile or laugh because his angel was not happy with him. He was really in a sour mood.

"Sir" his secretary called slowly, testing whether he would explode or not.

"What!" he barked, rubbing his forehead, he couldn't concentrate. His mind was on his gloomy wife.

"A woman came yesterday and claimed she is your wife" she paused while he raised his brow, "but upon opening your door" she gulped, fiddling her fingers, "she ran out of the office with tears," she said.

She saw him yesterday!.

Damnation!. Yusuf thought, standing up from his seat, taking his keys and phone going back home.

He drove his car to the nearest shop and brought some bars of chocolate with candies. When he arrived home, his heart was beating dub-lub at a high rate, his fingers were sweaty as he turned the doorknob.

"Assalamualaikum, I'm back " he cheerfully greeted, wiping all the traces of nervousness. If she was angry or upset with him, he knew what would make her smile- chocolate. She was very obsessed with them. Her eyes would light up like a child that was given a present on his birthday.

"Ayomi*, I brought you chocolates," he smiled widely waiting for his hug but found nothing; he only received silence. (my joy).

But...

He sat on the couch and placed her on his thigh while holding her leg which made her rest her head on his broad chest.

"Sofia" when he called her by her name, he noticed that she flinched away.

"Olami*What have I done wrong? Please, forgive me". He pleaded. (my wealth).

He wasn't himself today at all. He was just snapping at everyone today and had fired almost a quarter of his employees. When his wife was sad he too was sad, when she was sick he too was sick.

"Whatever it is that makes you upset, please know that it is not intentional. Please, don't shut me out. I'm nothing without you. You are like the oxygen I breathe in"He begged softly, caressing her back slowly.

" I couldn't smile or even function at all when I know my heart is not happy with me. Please, my love, forgive me," his voice broke, a lone tear escaped his eyes.

"Okay, I've heard enough but I want the truth. Please, answer me honestly," her voice shook with suppressed tears.

"Whatever made my girl cry would face my wrath" he vowed to himself. (Little did he know that he was the cause of her tears.)

She cleaned the traces of tears on her face and faced him with determination. "Who were you talking to yesterday at your office?" She asked tipped lips.

" Client. I told you yesterday, I had an important meeting," he responded calmly because he really went to meet the client before she came to visit him.

She stood up aggressively and poked his chest. He'd never see her behave like that but wow she was hot.

Her nose flared up, "You, liar!" she screamed, hitting his chest.

"What do you mean?" He was surprised by her attitude. Him, liar? What has he done wrong? He looked at her gently with affection and adoration.

"Don't look at me like that! You are a cheater, deceiver. I came to your office yesterday to give you your medicine that you forgot at home but upon reaching your office. I opened the door and I saw you and your important client hugging each other intimately. No, I didn't want to believe it but you came home yesterday with a print of lips on your shirt," she screamed out while crying, shaking furiously.

"You lied then you came home. You never rejected my food; you never call me by my name; you never go to the office without kissing my forehead. But because of that important client-she is better than me?!" she shouted at him while gesturing to her forehead.

He was shocked with her revelations, he studied her. She knew he never used her food to play. Woah, she was jealous and that made him happy but he had to make her calm before getting too happy with her jealousy.

She was crying too much and it was hurting him. He didn't know what to do- he hugged her tightly and let her thrashed and sobbed on his shoulder.

"I'm sorry love, that wasn't what happened. After the client left, she came and started crying telling me about her father's death. I was just trying to comfort her, that was all" he replied.

" Please, forgive me" he hated to know he was the one hurting her when he vowed not to.

She was still hiccupping before she asked. "Then who was she?" she asked, looking at me in the eyes with a red puffy face which sickened him to the core.

"My ex," he replied.

Chapter 13

Sophia POV

"My ex." The word resonated round the defending silence of the house. I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

Was he cheating behind my back?.

Why did she come back?

Was he going to leave me for her?.

Millions of unanswered questions swam in my head.

When he noticed my unresponsive self he continued,"But it is not what you're thinking, wifey," he rambled quickly.

My nose flared up. Lying again, how dare he!.

"Then explain to me, what is it?" I said calmly, trying to calm the rate of my beating heart.

"After I was through with the client, she came crying; telling me about her dead father and I was just comforting her, that's all. I swear to Allah, there's nothing between us. Everything was over between us since last year," he defended, looking sad.

I was over boiled. I swore if I was a cartoon, hot steam would have been trying to escape from my ears. "Your ex?! Can you hear what you are saying, your ex came to you?" I poked his chest angrily.

"You of all people? Didn't she have any friends? Anyone but You?! Wait tell me, are you a person who goes around comforting every person who comes to you? No. A Samaritan?" I said angrily. He looked like he wanted to talk but I was hearing nothing.

"Let me finish. Don't you dare interrupt me" I warned, pointing my index finger at him. "How would you feel if one day, when you came home from work and saw me hugging another man? And not just any other man but my ex?!" I screamed. "Telling you I was comforting him" I said sweetly with mockery.

I saw him clenching his fists with jealousy.

The nerve of him to be jealous!

"Tell me, how would you feel?" I said with a stream of tears. How I wished it could be raining so that I could pour all my heart out.

"I'm sorry darling, forgive and pardon me," he begged.

"No," I replied.

"Please honey. I'm sorry" he said softly, holding my cold hands in between his warm hands while I jerked my hands away from his and folded it then turned to stare at the wall.

"Darling, this young man is wronged. Please kindly find a place in your heart to forgive him" he said softly while caressing my hand.

"Do you still want her?" I asked softly. I needed to know if he still loved her or might have a chance with her. I braced myself for the rejection to tell me he was in love with her.

"No" his voice void of any emotion. "I don't love her,you are the only one for me. You've captured my heart, senses, eyes since the moment I saw you" he said with adoration. And I smiled,I smiled widely and hugged him then clung him round his neck, wrapping my legs around his waist securely to prevent me from falling.

"I'm sorry for screaming and doubting you" I mumbled at the crook of his neck.

"Issokay to protect what you have," he said, playful.

"What?" I teased.

"Me" he pointed to himself, "your sexy handsome husband" he wiggled his brows.

"Whatever" I muttered while waving my hands dismissively.

"Chocolate" he said.

My eyes lit up,"chocolate " I screamed happily.

"With..." My eyes twinkled with mischief, "movies" I beamed.

"Not again" he groaned, carrying me to his room.

Next morning

"Wifey, I'm sorry for yesterday." He pecked my forehead.

"It's okay." I smiled, touching his face.

"Ahem, you know Zainab? She is coming today, with her husband," he said nervously.

"Zainab? I don't think I know her." I replied confusedly.

"Um... My ex," he blurted out, not looking at me while I retracted my hand like I was being burned.

"Your ex?" I asked in a small voice.

"I'm sorry I told her about the incident and she is coming to know you and settle it," he said.

"Okay," I replied with a high pitch voice, detaching myself from him.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"What does it look like I am doing?" I replied sarcastically,walking out of his room to mine.

I avoided it throughout until when his visitors arrived.

She has arrived!. I thought, mumbled some prayers.

"Assalamualaikum, yusluv," I saw the girl running to meet my husband hugging him like there was no tomorrow.

"Waalaikumsalam, how are you, zainbee," my husband greeted her.

Wow, what am I missing out here?

Yusluv?!

Zainbee?!

My ass!

Their nerves!

How dare the two of them, using those nicknames and flirting while I was standing.

I was sad and angry, seriously.

I looked at her and I immediately felt insecure because she was taller, curvier, more beautiful than me and had an angelic voice. She was the definition of beauty. Why wouldn't he want to comfort her and receive her hugs?' I thought bitterly.

"Zainbee, meet the love of my life," I was snapped out of my dwelling thoughts.

"I'm Zainab, Yusluv's childhood friend and best friend," she said proudly with mischief in her eyes.

I thought this girl was up to no good. All I wanted to do was to snub her but my mama and religion didn't teach me that.

We must be nice to our visitors.

"I'm Sofia, Yusuf's wife," I said and she smiled.

"Okay, let's get inside," he clapped his hand and gestured for us to get in.

I sat beside Yusuf and Zainab sat beside her husband - Khaleed.

I stood up from the couch. "Let me go get the food ready," I walked towards the kitchen.

"Oh wait, Sophy, let's go together. We can chat and they can talk, man to man," she walked towards me and winked at my husband- my Husband!. I was already feeling a ball of anger and jealousy but I prayed to Allah to give me sabr* (patience).

We entered the kitchen and I started cooking.

"Sofia, how did both of you meet?" She asked curiously.

"We met by Allah's grace," I replied shortly. I was not here for questions and answers.

She held my hand forcefully. "Little girl I'm talking to you." She gritted her teeth, making her look like the stepmother in Cinderella.

I tried to remove my hand from her grasp but I couldn't; she held me in a strong grip. She was really strong for a female. I thought.

"Zainab, please release my hand. I need to check what I'm cooking, and you are hurting me," I pleaded out. She was letting the memory resurface.

The memories I wanted to keep hidden.

The memories that haunted me.

She laughed at my weak state. "Yusluv can never be with you or love you. He is created for me, only me. He's just deceiving you, he only loves me. I'm his Zainbee. And if you want to test it out, you can. He only loves, believes and trusts me," she still held me in her strong grip and eyes glistened with pure evil.

"Leave me alone, you manic. He can never love you. I'm his wife. He's mine not yours," I seethed.

Before I knew what was happening, I felt a hard sting on my cheek. She slapped me.

Ya Allah!

The last string of sabr cut.

As I raised my hand to retaliate, I saw my hand was being held by Yusuf.

"Sofia, what's wrong with you? Why did you slap her?! I told you there was nothing between us." he accused me.

"But she's the one that slapped me," I said, trying to remove my hand from his hold when I glanced at her and saw her crocodile tears while holding her cheek.

"Sofia, I can't believe that you can stoop so low like this. You slapped her," he said while shaking his head.

"I didn't."

"You did."

"I swear, I didn't."

"You did."

"You don't believe me?" I asked slowly.

"I believed you but all of this is pointing towards you," he said.

"I hate you. Even if I had done it, you were supposed to stand by me" I snapped at him while retracting backward.

"That's what a husband is supposed to do. I hate you!" I said and ran out of the house with a pool of tears.

Chapter 14

Sophia POV

I couldn't believe he didn't believe me. It was true no one could love me.

I was nobody.

He could never love someone with a disturbing past. I was nothing, just a pawn. My insecurities were really surfacing. The memories, I wanted to forget. I didn't want to believe it but...

He never gave me a choice, except to accept that I was no one.

I sat at the fountain crying when I heard my phone rang, "Assalamualaikum. Who is this?" I hushed out and looked at the screen, seeing it was an unknown number.

"How are you, Sophy babe?" I heard Zainab's voice on the other side of the phone.

The nerve of her!

How dare she!.

"What do you want?" I growled. This woman was really getting on my nerves. I felt like smashing her head on a surface but I shook the bad thought away.

"Not so soon, baby girl. Can't you see? What did I tell you-he can never love or believe you. He will always choose me over you. You are a pathetic excuse for a wife," she seethed out.

"And don't you see? He didn't run after you like how a husband is supposed to. But no, he stood by me, held my cheek, felt it up for me and soothed me. Well, what I want to tell you is that you should leave him for me. He is mine," she snarled and hung up while I yelled out in frustration. I tugged my hair furiously, I could feel the pain in my scalp but the pain in my heart was greater.

Another stream of tears started again. It was true. He did not love me and I believed that. I was nobody; nobody loved me.

I was all alone. He didn't even run after me. Another waved of anger and jealousy hit me and I threw the phone away and the screen broke into pieces.

I walked home at night and as soon as I entered the house, "Wifey, where are you coming from?" he rasped out, "I've been searching for you everywhere".

"From the garden," my voice broke as it had become hoarse from crying so much.

"It is not that I don't believe you, it's just that..." he trailed off while scratching his head apologetically.

"Please, Yusuf. I'm not in the mood. I'm tired." I said dismissively.

"I'm sorry."he said remorsefully.

"Please don't tell me you are sorry. Always saying sorry but you are not. You never respected me as a wife. Even today, you believe her over me. Spouses are supposed to be each other's rocks; stay and stand by each other. Did you know what she said to me? Did you know she was the one that slapped me? There is still a mark on my cheek if you still trust her over me," I yelled angrily as I showed him my cheek and walked out.

"but..." I interrupted him.

"I don't hate you sincerely but I hate myself for falling in love with you. I'm the fool" I walked out.

~

Some months had passed after the incident and we had moved on forgetting about the past. We started sharing the same room, hugging, touching but that didn't stop our fight or argument about Zainab, that devilish witch.

"Who is the heck that calls someone at 3:00am in the middle of the night? This better be important or else," Yusuf grumbled out and picked the call. I raised my head from his chest while caressing his lovely beard.

"Hello..." he sat up straight, distangled his legs from mine.

"What happened? Who, when?... Today?! Okay... Stop crying... Shush... It's okay. I'm coming now... let me get my car keys," he stood up abruptly and hung up the call, taking his jalabiya from the nightstand.

"Oko mi*, what happened? Who was that?" I asked softly. (my husband).

"It's Zainab" I mentally groaned, what was the color of her problem. "She called to tell me that her husband has been arrested by the police, I'm going to her place now," he said urgently.

I rushed after him. "Wait where are you going?" I asked.

"I'm going to her place," he looked at me, trying to read my masked emotions.

"Let's go together," I said and went to take my hijab and get dressed but he stopped me, shaking his hand.

"Sweetheart, you stay at home. Let me go," he patted my head adorably.

"Okay darling, please take care. Call me as soon as you get there and be careful."

'Bye, make sure you lock the doors and windows. Love you," he pecked my forehead slowly, smiled at me and went out.

Zainab, I hated her. I didn't know what I could do again. She was a devil in disguise. Could she find another person to call?. I huffed in anger.

I knew that my husband loved me but with her my insecurities were getting worse. And her husband too was creepy, all that he did when they visited was for him to blatantly stare at me without blinking or try to touch me. I even talked to Yusuf but he dismissed it, saying it was just that I was paranoid.

As I walked down to the kitchen to drink a glass of water to clear my head. I couldn't even get back to sleep when I knew my husband was out there in the cold. I was worried sick. I cracked my fingers in anticipation.

About to turn around, I felt a sharp pain at the side of my neck. Ow! What was that? I hissed out touching my neck. What? My fingers felt against something as I backed up in confusion only to stumble into something or someone! I yelped, turning around to look but they were quick to restrain and muffled me.

They hit my head with the counter as I immediately felt liquid gushing out from there.

Blood!.

Panic fired through me as I wriggled against them trying to put up a fight but I felt weak slowly, I leaned into their hold.

I'd been kidnapped!.

Chapter 15

"Please, I'm sorry! What have I done so wrong to deserve this?!" The tied little girl said looking nowhere in particular.

The room was dark. The cold night breeze was entering through the opened high window. The girl's half naked body reacted to the cold tied to the chair.

The girl was slapped on her cheek making her taste the metallic substance in her mouth-blood.

"You! You are an error since the moment you were given birth to. You are a mistake. Unfortunate, failure, ill fated. You destroyed my life. I don't know why your stupid, fool of a mother gave birth to you. No one will love you. This is where you will rot," the unknown person said while holding her hair tightly, as if wanting to remove her hair from the scalp.

"Please P..." She was interrupted by a hard slap on her cheek.

"If you dare complete your sentence, I'll gladly kill you" the person seethed, breathing heavily with his mouth while the girl nodded fearfully.

The person loosen the rope around her and dragged her to another room. He threw her on the wall, her tired body slumped down the wall. She looked frantically to the new cell she was thrown into. She gasped when she saw a scrawny boy around the corner who was shivering. She forced her pained body to help him, she crawled to while her injuries were protesting.

She reached the boy and touched his shoulder gently, the boy raised his head up with fears shining in his eyes.

"What - -wrong?" she asked slowly, her voice was jumbled together. The boy didn't reply, he was just looking at her as if he was analyzing her.

The door opened and a guard threw a piece of cold bread on the floor for the girl. The girl took it eagerly and scouted closer to the boy. The boy looked at her with hungry eyes and gulped before looking away.

"You want?" she asked and the boy nodded quietly. She shared it into two and gave him one. The boy devoured it quickly while looking at the other one expectedly and she gave him while smiling at him.

When the boy was through with the bread, he hugged her," I will never forget you and I shall protect you from all arms because you are my angel" he vowed while she smiled shyly.

"I shall save you and always come for you because you are mine"

"I'm yours also" She responded.

"When I'm free, I'll save you and take you" he smiled, revealing his dimples. "Let's promise pinky" he said, holding his little left finger out for her, she crossed it with hers and they erupted in a fit of laughter.

They were happy with no worries of what tomorrow had on store for them.

They became bestest friends, she shared her meal with him and they played together. And one unfortunate day, a guard dragged the boy away.

Seconds passed; minutes passed; hours passed; days passed; weeks passed; months passed after the boy was dragged away.

The girl felt weak tied to the chair with several lashes on her but the girl never once gave up. She had Allah with her and with Allah everything was possible.

One day, a guard came in to serve her food-her meal as usual, a cold bread. He forgot to take the keys beside the tray.

The girl saw the key and started to wiggling her way out, this was her chance. She removed her hands out of the tightened rope. After freeing her hand, she loosened the remaining rope.

She opened the door, looked right and left for any sound but found none.

This was her chance.

She ran like never before.

Back in the cell, the unknown person had realised that she had escaped.

"Guards, run after her. I love this little game of chase." He licked his lips sinisterly.

The girl was running with tattered cloth. Her legs were not saving her because the legs hadn't been in use for so long.

She heard trashing and clearing of leaves and branches behind her from people who were running after her.

"I can do it," she told herself. She ran to hide at the back of a tree; little did she know the monster was waiting for her to swallow her. She was doomed.

The person's eyes danced with amusement and laughed maniacally.

"Running, are we? Where do you think you are going, little Sophy? Do you think you can escape me?" the person said shaking his head. The person held her cheek tightly.

The little girl shook her vigorously and whispered out a small "no".

"Good girl but also a little bad girl," the person said.

"Please don't hurt me. I won't do that again, I swear," the girl begged out with a stream of tears.

"Ah, Sophy, I'm not hurting you. You can go-I'm leaving you. Go, now because my boy has paid for your freedom" the person said while pointing to the pathway.

She glanced at the person and then the pathway.

"Go now before I've a change of heart" the girl took her heel and ran but not before going too far she heard a promising raged dark voice.

"I will come back for you, little Sophy," the voice echoed round the dark, thick forest sending a dark chill all over her body.

She ran till she felt herself lost to blackness.

SOPHIA POV

"I'm still coming back for you."

The voice-I jolted up from the tied chair with a throbbing head. I was tied again!

The memories were starting to resurface. He was coming back.

He would break me more than before. Damaged me more than before. The carvings were still on me to remind; I could never escape him.

Used. Damaged. I could never be free. I thought I escaped but here I was. I was brought out of my self-wallow when the cell was unlocked and a deep voice boomed out. "The sleeping beauty is finally awake." I was definitely not escaping this.

Ya, Allah, save me!.

Chapter 16

Sophia's POV

A man in a blue polo walked inside the dark room and I sighed in relief because he was not the person I was dread to see.

My nightmare.

"How was your trip to wonderland," he sang, walking toward me and clapping his hands before taking a wooden chair and sitting in front of me.

"Think, Sofia; if Maryam is in this situation, what would she do? She is extroverted while I am not"I thought bitterly while I shook my head.

"Come on, be yourself," my subconscious responded. Alhamdulillah that it was not giving me snarky comments, I hated it sometimes but I loved it so much.

I looked the man in the eyes. This man had a boyish face: I thought he would be in his early twenties. He was taller than me but definitely not tall like my Yusuf.

My Yusuf!

I liked how it sounded, my heart yearned for him. Would he miss me? Would he find me?

Well, no. He is with Zainab, having fun, the darker part of me taunted me.

I missed him and I needed him.

He was my drug and I was addicted to him. He was my rock.

He had always been there for me through papa's death, nightmares, terrors and illness.

You never know the worth of something until it gets lost.

And even after what I did to him, he still loved me.

"Love you?" The taunting voice in my brain said, laughing wickedly. "If he loved you, he would not have left you to go to her. You are nobody. Who will love a broken, scarred girl? Just wait and let him see your body covered with all the scars, then you will see how he will be disgusted with you," This voice was really taunting me; wanting me to dwelled on my misery.

"No" I screamed mentally.

"What?" the voice mocked, "you are no one!, you are a mistake!" the voice laughed darkly.

"I am myself, I am me!" I replied weakly, shaking with tears.

I was lost in my head, I was lost in my memories.

"You are better off dead failure" the voice asked, "Just tell the man to end your pathetic life".

"I want to live," I cried.

"This life is not yours" the voice yelled, "because you are no one!, you are miserable that is why he left you. He's with her not you, yuy are..."

"No wifey" I heard Yusuf's voice.

"Don't answer him, he's lying. If he loves you, he won't have left for her".

"You know I'm always yours" his voice calmed my raging heart.

"Don't list.." the voice faded to the dark.

"You can do it, wifey. Don't let the voice get to you. I'm always by your side," the smooth voice of Yusuf said, clearing the remaining dark voice.

Why won't I fall for him-when all he had ever done to me was cared, admired, loved and cherished. Stayed with me and supported me.

Why won't I?

A lone tear escaped my eye ducts for my loss.

I was still looking at the man yet my focus was not on him. With a determined face, I said, "You will regret ever laying your hand on me or kidnapping me because when my husband gets aware, you are all going to die. I think you know who my husband is."

The man visibly gulped with fear flickering in his eyes before it disappeared. "Are you threatening me?" He growled in anger, kicking my leg.

"No, why will I? I was just telling you," I responded sarcastically.

Where is all this boldness coming from?. I wondered out loud.

Because you are stronger than you think, his voice again.

He moved closer, looming over my small frame, grabbed my chin forcefully as his manicured fingers pierced my skin.(AN : I don't know why all her oppressors are so obsessed with her cheek or hair).

"Do you think your husband will come? Nah, he is having fun at Zainab's place right now," he said manically with evil glistening in his eyes and he slapped me hard across my face.

"I don't believe you. I trust my husband. He could never do that and the last time I checked there was nothing between them," I snarled at him, shaking on the chair which I was bound on.

"Aw, little Sophy," I flinched at that name. "Oh, I'm sorry, does it bring back memories?" He taunted slowly, circling me and laughing sinisterly.

I hated this man.

"Then prove it " I challenged, looking at him in the eyes while he looked shocked before he smirked and brought out his phone then it rang out.

"Hey zay, how are you?" he greeted chirpy.

"I'm fine, very happy... ah, I can't believe it finally happened," she paused catching her breath."Sophy, babe ,you are really a bad girl. Leaving your husband with needs was not good for his health. Here I was to help him get some relief," she asked. Some minutes passed, moans and grunts were heard before the phone was disconnected.

Tears welled up in my eyes. "How can he do that ? No he can't. I don't believe you, I trust him. I don't believe in what I hear. Seeing is believing, if I see it then I will believe," I said coldly.

He couldn't do that to us, he promised to wait till I was ready.

The man was shocked but before he had the time to talk, I cut him out. "If he says yes that he did it with her then I will believe him because I understand. And if he says no, then no."

"Well, Zainab is coming for you." he raised his brow, playing with the pocket knife which he was holding.

"Is she the one behind this?" I asked, wanting to be sure before conclusion.

"Yup," he said, popping the p.

Zainab!

I saw red-enraged and hurt.

Zainab was behind this! That devilish bitch!. An excuse of a whorish slut!

She kidnapped me!



Chapter 17

Yusuf

Something did not feel right. He had a gut feeling that something bad was going to happen. Since the moment he left home, he was feeling like something was not right, but he shook it off and drove off.

Zainab was in need of assistance; she was his childhood friend but everything changed since the last three years. He dated her for six months before he broke up with her and realised that she was like a younger sister. He wished he had realised that sooner.

Even his parents wanted them to marry each other except his granny. Her parents too were wealthy but not like them. Her parents were divorced when she was still little but her father still loved her mother; he could always see it clearly in his eyes when he talked about how amazing she was his wife.

Reaching outside her apartment, he knocked on her door. "Zainbee, open the door. I'm outside," he called her softly.

He chuckled at the memories of how they gave themselves nicknames. He remembered how Zainab was so obsessed with bees when she was young, always running after it before she was tired of it and named her Zainbee. When she couldn't come up with a name for him, then she started calling him Yusluv.

But since he met his wife and married, he had been searching for the opportunity to tell her to stop calling him that. His wife was somehow jealous and hated the lady but she had a forgiving time.

When no one answered the door, he noticed that it was ajar and he entered and sat on the couch.

She came out of her room, crying and hiccupping.

"Zainbee, calm down and tell me what happened," he told her whilst holding her hand and rubbing it, trying to comfort her. She leaned forward and rested her head on his shoulder, he wanted to say he was married but brushed it off for the moment to sooth her.

Zainab was crying. He was surprised. The Zainab that he knew never cried. She must really be in love with Khaleed because to her someone who cried was weak.

"I never believed you could cry zainbee?" He said to light up the atmosphere.

She smiled softly. "I never believed it, too but love makes someone go crazy and do some crazy things".

"So..." he trailed off while scratching my head awkwardly.

"Let's go," he said, pushing her head softly but he noticed she was snuggled closer to him and he stood up from the chair.

He didn't know whether she was still in love with him or not. Zainab was hard to read, you could not know what was running in her mind. She was somehow obsessive and aggressive sometimes if she did not have what she wanted.

She was a complicated human being.

They went out together, locking the door behind them before she put his hand on her the middle of her back.

"Tsk, tsk. You still behave like a baby," he chuckled, tapped her forehead with the other hand while she stuck her tongue out. He shook his head in amusement before he stylishly removed his hand from her back without hurting her feelings.

"You know, I only behave like that with you because I am your baby," she winked at me.

"My only baby is my wife" he said but never said it out and he smiled remembering her.

"What are you smiling at?" she asked curiously, raising her brows.

I flickered her forehead again and left her standing.

**

Time had really gone by the time he reached home-it was already 5:00 am in the morning.

After they bailed Khaleed out, he took both of them home and drove happily to meet his baby at home.

His angel.

His light and all his.

He knew she would be worried sick about him not around and she wouldn't be able to sleep. He has stopped by at the nearest shop and bought bars of chocolate.

Bribery,he thought and smiled, caressing his beard.

When he got home, he knocked and received no response.

Maybe, she has slept. He wondered.

Don't let me disturb her and sneak in. He thought.

He knocked again and still no response. He took out the spare key and opened the door gently not wanting to wake his wife up.

He said his Teslim and switched on the light.

"Wifey" he called out while he shrugged his shoulders. Maybe she was asleep. He entered their room and found nothing.

He went to her personal room; maybe she was angry with him because that was where she stayed whenever she was upset with him. But he found nothing again. The bed was neatly spread, the books on the shelves were arranged in order and her study table was neat.

His heart was beating harder than normal. He went to the living room and did nothing again.

Where could she be!. He thought loudly.

He called her phone but it was off.

Shutting the living room door behind him, he strode to the kitchen. He turned the kitchen knob but it was already unlocked.

"Wifey, what do you think you are doing?" He said he was trying to calm his heart but found nothing. Except broken plates and smeared blood.

He rushed back to the living room and grabbed his phone dialling Royhan.

"Oh God," he muttered, now the panic had set in.

"Sofia!" He shouted out of rage and hurt.

"Sophia," he growled, sending his fist into the glass as the glass shattered around his hand. The broken glasses pierced his skin but he didn't feel anything.

His body was numbed because his drug wasn't around.

He felt rage like nothing before as blood pumped through his body.

He was going to kill the person behind it himself without the help of the police. If they ever think of laying or hurting her, they were going to pay.

He vowed to himself.

Chapter 18

Yusuf

He was sitting in the library when his phone rang.

"Hello, Yusluv," Zainab's voice slurred out.

"I'm busy now," he said agitatedly, ready to hang up before she interrupted him.

"Wait, what happened?" She asked worriedly.

"I'm alright. How is your husband? My regards to him," he said tiredly.

"Yusuf, you know that you can tell me anything. We are always each other's rocks."

"OK. Later, please. I'm coming to your apartment," he hung up, sighed, then pinched his nose bridge in frustration.

He rested his head on his hands. He couldn't even think without her. The CCTV cameras didn't show anything-everything was blurred. The person behind it knew him very well.

He sighed and got to his room to freshen up and got some sleep.

***

"Assalamualaikum," he entered Zainab's apartment and took a seat.

He sat on the chair and heard her say, "a minute, I'm coming".

He was busy typing furiously on his phone, giving orders to his PA, when he felt a soft hand on his shoulder. She was massaging him softly like luring him to sleep, but that was the least thing on his mind..

He needed his drug- Sophia.

He missed her.

He just wanted her with him.

He swatted her hand away displeasing.

He glanced up to look at her and he saw she was only in her lacy underwear.

He shrieked and jumped up from his seat as he put some distance between them.

" Zainab, what's all this," he growled, looking elsewhere.

"Yusluv," she purred in a low seductive voice. Her voice sounded like a shriek in his brain.

She tried to move closer but he shouted at her. "Zainab, are you drunk?! I'm married and I love my wife," he yelled.

"Okay. Can I help you with your needs?" She blurted out whilst stalking towards him,swaying her hips.

"Thanks but I've my wife for that," he responded dismissively.

"This wife, that wife, everything wife! A wife that doesn't care about you! Is she the only one?! Why her? You knew me before her. I don't even know what you find in her. A plain, naive girl with nothing. She is just a wench and pauper girl with low... ," she screamed, she was really getting on his nerves.

"Stop," his voice boomed throughout her apartment.

She came closer, trying to touch and kiss him but he pushed her away and got ready to storm out but her words made him stop in his tracks.

"If you dare to walk out on me, trust me, just one call and your wife will be dead," she said with so much hatred, malice and hurt that it left him bewildered.

What happened to the sweet little girl who he took as a sister. He thought.

"You, yusluv, I love you so much. I was the one who kidnapped your wife. I hated to do that but I will do anything to get you. Even if it means I kill her like I killed your lovely granny." She revealed sinisterly.

He was seeing red. He moved to her at the flash of light and grip her neck ready to choke her to death.

"Kill me and you kill your wife," her eyes twinkling with pure madness.

He released her as she coughed and tried to catch her breath, laughing evilly.

"Did you know why I was crying that day? Because you are mine. I've taken her away. I felt so overwhelmed that I didn't even know when I started crying." She laughed maniacally.

He picked his phone to make a phone call but it was snatched from him. "One call from you and your wife is finished," she laughed.

"Now, Yusluv, let's go meet your wife to say her last wish or prayer."

***

They entered into a tattered room and he saw his girl being tied up on a chair-gagged and bruised.

It killed him and broke him to see his wife like that when he was alive.

He'd never felt so useless before. It pained him that he couldn't do anything.

The man beside her removed the gag from her mouth and she exhaled and inhaled sharply.

"Sophia," his voice cracked.

"What are you doing here?" She asked worriedly.

"Cut the crap," he heard Zainab's voice in the background but his focus was solemnly on my girl.

"What do you want Zainab? Tell me, I will give you anything-Money? Car? Company?!" He asked frantically.

"Oh, I don't want all that. All I want is you. Marry me-I don't care if you love me or not because I know that with the matter of time you will be begging for me" he looked back and forth from her to his girl but his girl shook her head no.

"Or..." She dragged out.

"I will let my boys have their way with her and you watch; I think that will be the best," she mocked out.

She moved forwards to her and took out a knife and she cut her wrist with it, as blood oozed out from there.

He'd never been so useless in his life. He felt like he was nothing. Worthless.

As he took a step forward, a loud bang was heard and everything was in flame, it was like fog happened.

After some minutes, he looked in front of him and saw that Sophia was no longer tied to her chair. She was nowhere to be found. He glanced around and saw Zainab's dead body who had a bullet hole on her forehead.

It was like a dream-everything happened so fast in puff.

Sophia was not there and Zainab was dead.

But how?

SOPHIA POV

Everything happened in a blur. I saw flames and then I felt someone carrying me.

After some minutes or hours of struggling, I was thrown down like a sack. Trying to move, I heard the voice that always taunted me in my dreams. All my fears and terrors were in front of me.

He was back

"Welcome back, little Sophy, we meet again," the voice greeted.

I'd been kidnapped again!!!

Ya Allah help me. I'm surely doomed.

Chapter 19

THIS CHAPTER HAS SOME VIOLENCE IN IT, IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE. PLEASE SKIP TO THE NEXT CHAPTER.

YOU'VE BEEN WARNED. NOW TO THE CHAPTER

Sophia

I was praying to Allah because he was all Hearer and Seer. This pain was too much for me, being kidnapped twice! One by a maniac, obsessed Ex and now by this man.

"Ya Allah save me, let me be free. He's going to truly break me this time. Ya Allah, you were the one who saved and protected prophet Yunus inside the fish. Please hear my cries. Ya Allah, guide, protect and pardon all my sins." I was visibly shaking with fear of the unknown.

"Bring her out," a voice boomed out.

Some men came inside and held my hand. I thrashed around "Please save me, don't take me to..." My words were cut off by a slap.

"Say one more word there and then I will be glad to make your death painful and slow" snarled the man, making me shrivel away.

"Chain her down," the person growled out and I physically tensed as he looked at me with so much hatred.

What had I done so wrong to deserve so much hatred? What were my mistakes that he wanted to destroy me so badly?

I was already brimming with tears.

I missed you, mama,Lut, Maryam and especially Yusuf. I loved you all. I was saying my last prayer.

"Cuff her hands and legs, discard her clothes. I'm going to destroy and damage you so badly that even your husband won't be able to repair you," the man said with complete wickedness.

"What did I say about us meeting again, little Sophy," he said.

"What a pleasant way to meet you," I reply sarcastically in my head.

My hands and legs were cuffed to the chair and with nothing except for my underwear and I started crying profusely.

"Little Sophy, I just want to ask you some questions, but now you are a crying mess" he shook his head in disapproval

His voice changed; it was hard, dark. "What did I tell you about crying?" he asked, taking a whip out and whipping me on my exposed leg.

I cried out in pain. It hurt more than what I was used to from him. I choked and replied, "It is a sign of weakness sir" my body was trembling tremendously

"And what are you doing?" He spat in my face.

"I'm crying," I was a sobbing mess now.

"What's the punishment for it?" He asked tilting his head, his eyes glinted evilly.

"Twenty whips," I whimpered.

He patted my head adorably when it was nothing. "Even after many years, you still remembered." chuckled the man.

"No, don't hurt me, please," I wept but he only gave me a sadistic smirk.

"Sorry is not good enough. You will receive the whippings and with each one of it, you will feel the consequences of crying," he explained while I wailed loudly.

Without warning he brought his whip and slashed it against my open thigh. It felt like my breath had been sucked out of me as I jerked against the chair. I tried to push myself up but the cuff forced me back.

I counted to twenty and by the end, my voice was hoarse from screaming. Black dots started forming in my vision as I finally succumbed to darkness.

***

The torture, brutal abuse continued every day and I wished to die. I was only safe when I blacked out.

This was one of the beatings that I could never forget and forgive.

I was broken; destroyed completely. I felt numb. I didn't even scream anymore-it only gave them joy and excitement to continue.

I was sitting in my cell when a man walked in and yanked a fistful of my hair and started to drag me out of the cell, taking me somewhere I had no idea about. I screamed at the pain and the roughness of the floor scratching my skin.

My thrashings fell on deaf ears when he finally reached a room and pushed me so hard that I hit my head against a table. I held my head as it throbbed; my whole body shook with fear and terror.

When would I be free?

The person flicked his hand to that man in command and the man came to me and trapped my wrists, held them together and bound it with rope. My eyes went wide as I continued to shake my head, tears falling from my eyes.

Suddenly, I heard a cluttering of belts and my body tensed. I felt the belt running down the middle of my back, the cold leather making me cry out in pain.

I heard the person telling the man that she was a murderer; she killed her. That, this was what he had been punishing me for-I killed her but I didn't know who the 'her' was.

I shook my head vigorously,"I'm not a murderer" I whimpered.

The man didn't react as I received blow after blow, equal in force and I continued to scream and cry my eyes out.

I didn't know how much he was beating me but when he paused, only then was my breathing heard. I was no longer thrashing as I curled into a ball in one corner of the room.

I didn't even move when I felt cold metal pressing against my ribs. Something pierced my skin and I began to cry again. All I could do was whimpered and sobbed from the pain.

I couldn't move my body; the pain was too much and unbearable. The beating had never been as horrible as this. I felt like dying.

I closed my eyes as the pains and tiredness washed over me.

***

I felt a rush of cold water against my body. The pain shot up my back like fire and I screamed. The pain was like needles that had been in alcohol and pierced me.

"Get up now!" the man that poured water on me said and walked out.

I couldn't move my body. The striking burn on my back multiplied when I writhed. But no matter how much ever I did not want to cry, the tears fell.

My vocal cavity hurt like hell.

I tried to limp into the tiny bathroom inside the dark room that I was in and I looked at the mirror, staring at my reflection. I swallowed the lump in my throat as I wondered how damaged I was. This was going to leave a scar that will haunt me forever.

Just as I was about to leave, something caught my eyes. I moved closer to the mirror and saw another writing. I could remember the man piercing me with cold metal and I shredded at the memory.

When I finally saw it, a loud scream ripped through me. I wailed louder than ever.

Murderer.

Killer.

My legs started to move on its own accord and the world was whirling around me as I leaned on the wall. The pain was uncontrollable and I ran to the room with blurry vision. Was he not satisfied with the one he had written before?

Used, damaged, and now murderer and killer?

"No! make it stop!" I screamed, shaking my head as I cried. The word continued to ring over and over again.

I couldn't stop the tears from falling.

He had finally broken me-damaged me.

I was nobody.

No one would love me or save me.

I was pushed into a hug and I glanced up through my wet eyelashes, seeing at Khaleed. He looked at me worriedly.

"What's he doing here" I wondered.

"Why do they hurt me so much? What have I done? Is it a crime to wish to live?" I said. "Please, make it stop. Make it go away. Please, it hurts..." My voice suddenly broke off into a low whisper. "It hurts so much".

His hand went behind me and brought me to his chest, indicating me to rest on it. "I'm here for you, love. I'm sorry for coming late." I pushed him away.

A man came and dragged me to an open arena. I didn't protest or trash, as I allowed him.

"Your knight in shining armour is around," he said mockingly.

I didn't feel anything-happiness, relief, or sadness. Nothing.

Scar of the soul was worse than anything.

My soul felt broken. I just couldn't feel anything.

I saw him-Yusuf. He had changed a lot in the past months. He looked tired, furious, sad as he looked at me with guilt, love, pity.

But I looked like a walking corpse.

The person walked to me and gripped me tightly and said, "Why don't you introduce me to you lover-boy?"

I said nothing because there was nothing to say. If I talk, I'll get beaten and besides, I won't even remember how to talk.

"Oh, little Sophy can't talk. I've trained her to become a mute," he said proudly.

.

.

.

"I'm proud to say that I'm Zaid Brown-the real father of Sofia. She is my illegitimate daughter."

Chapter 20

Yusuf

It was like his world stopped moving,when zaid said those words.

Father

Father

The word was repeating itself like a mantra in Yusuf's mind.

How dare he!.

How could a father subjected his daughter to this kind of pain!

He was shocked,surprised, angry ,furious but what he felt most was rage.

He felt an unfathomable rage.

Yusuf moved near Zaid while Zaid raised his hand in mockery.

"Not so soon son in law" zaid said mockingly.

Yusuf glanced at Sofia,her face was motionless, no emotion,nothing. Her eyes were distant. She looked at him warily like a stranger.

He had damaged her soul.

This man had killed her soul,the sprinted fire,cheerful girl.

"Let's get inside son, we won't want your wife to be standing" his eyes twinkled with mockery.

They went inside, zaid sat on a throne-like chair. His face looked familiar to Yusuf, but Yusuf was not here to dwelled on it.

Yusuf was served a drink, but he didn't trust him to drink it.

"What do you want,tell me? " Yusuf said, going straight to the point. He did not have the time for pleasantries.

Those past months without her were an executing pain for him.

He missed her, her voice, touch, scolding _everything.

"Wow! ,I like that tone son-in-law...." Yusuf cut him off.

"I'm not your son in law" he gritted out. "You weren't the one that gave her hands in marriage to me" he said, keeping his cool.

Zaid looked at him with a sadistic smirk.

"What has she done to you ,to deserve all these? " Yusuf said, trying to reason.

"Why?" asked Yusuf, in a softened voice.

"She did so many things, I can never leave her alone ,until she feels what I felt,she hasn't felt like dying or wishing to kill herself" zaid replied while smiling looking at Sophia like a toy.

Yusuf was shocked!,this man was mentally disabled.

"This girl," he said ,pointing to Sophia with hatred.

"She is the one who made me like this and I haven't done half of what she did" he yelled.

He moved closer to her and tugged her hair roughly, then pushed her down with so much force but her expressionless face did not filter.

Yusuf couldn't move from his place because he was being held down by guards.

"I was once a happy man"he said with so much emotions ,sadness, grieve...hurt, pain

As Yusuf looked at him, he remembered where he'd known him but he didn't interrupt him, he wanted him to finish his pathetic story.

Subhanallah, how was it possible?

"I was happily married to my wife Sarah and my daughter. I couldn't live without her,she was my drug and I was addicted" his eyes glistened with tears ,and smiled softly as if he was remembering those moments.

"We had an argument that day ,she left for her parent's house. I went out, on my way back home, I was drunk. I saw her mother, walking through the dark alley and went after her. I sexually assaulted her ;I mean raped her" his voice was breaking with emotions- shame.

"I couldn't leave her in the dark alley, I took her home .I was the one who took her virginity. One month later,she came and told me she was pregnant. I was furious, how can I tell my wife. I gave her money to abort it ;because I didn't want a child that wasn't from my wife" said the man with pain.

"Some months later,I heard she didn't abort the abomination. I called her ,she said she couldn't because it was the matter of life and death". He sneered.

"One day I forgot my phone at home ,I remembered when I got to the office and rushed back home but what I saw broke me". He sobbed.

"My wife left me because her mother called my phone!!!,she left with my little gem,because of this abomination." He growled out while pointing his accusing finger at Sophia.

"She was the reason, while she left me with my precious gem. If she had not been given birth to everything wouldn't have happened". He yelled, "She is a mistake, error and abomination" he spat out.

He broke into another tears, "I begged her, explained but she turned deaf hears to me.I went back home, as I was entering I saw her" he pointed at Sophia, "smiling at me calling me Dada". He mocked.

"I hate that smile,I was heartbroken ,she was smiling. That was when my hurt changed to anger and took it out on her. It was fun to tortured her and I enjoyed every bit of it with no regrets' '. He confessed.

"Her mother married and took her away"

"When she was 13 ,I took her back because I was her father. I really enjoyed beating her" he said laughing happily.

"I released her last two years, because my boy here was in love with her and had to pay for her," he said, pointing to Khaleed while Khaleed was smirking.

"I realised her, so that he could have her, like the whore she is buying she caught your eyes".

"Her pathetic fake father came to me and said I should leave her alone .I was enraged ,I killed him. Nobody talks to me like that. I was happy because I killed but was angry that you were there to comfort her" he smiled like he had won the lottery.

"Then my little gem came crying and told me you were getting married, and nobody makes my gem cry and go away with it".

"I heard Sophia was kidnapped, I told my guys to bombed the house little did I know it was my daughter, it was my gem that kidnapped her and she was dead"

She was a murderer.

She killed my little gem.

She killed Zainab.

Before he could continue two gunshots were heard .

Loud thud was heard .

He saw zaid body fell down

Sophia 's body fell with a loud thud.

Everything froze.

He was frozen, shocked, broken.

Noooooo ,don't leave me. He shouted.

Chapter 21

Yusuf

It was the fifteenth day at the hospital, she regained consciousness yesterday after losing her coma.

The doctor had said her brain and body had shut down due to the abuse, so they should be wishing for Allah's shifa and miracle.

Zaid was shot by Khaleed. That was what they thought because Khaleed had escaped in the blink of an eye and others had been arrested. It was Zaid that shot Sophia because he saw it with his own eyes.

Something was still baffled by Yusuf or wondered if before Zaid's death ,he had willed all his properties for Sophia.

Crazy!

That man was a psychopath.

The doctor said Yusuf should search for a therapist for Sophia, because of the terror and trauma.

Whenever she woke up, she looked fearful, afraid and nervous. Whenever he tried to touch her, she flinched and begged. Her heartbeat changed, it started beating faster that the monitor beeped furiously round the room.



Yusuf and Sophia met the therapist, she called Yusuf and talked to him privately.

"Hello Mr Umar " greeted the doctor while smiling.

"Hi doc ,you asked for me" said Yusuf slumping on the wooden chair in her office because he was tired and frustrated of all that was happening.

"It is about your wife" her expression changed slightly, reading from her clipboard, "her conditions are worse than we think of it. She has been subjected to abuse since her childhood" she took a breath and pause ," by the person that was supposed to protect her, we will try our best but in Allah we trust because He is the one who heals and you've your role to play to help her".

"Some people have how they deal with abuse, some shut themselves and your wife is among them" said the doctor softly, raising her brows at him as he was following her discussion.

He nodded.

"Be patience and understanding; because healing takes time. Don't judge her reaction against your response or anyone. Always try to talk to her and listen. Sir, don't pressure her to talk; it may lead to her having panic, crying or flashback but always be there to listen. Don't let her be isolated, so that she won't dwell on her thoughts. When bad memories are hunting her, let her talk, don't cut her or shun her. Show sympathy, empathy but not pity. Talk to her with gentle and soothing words. Always praise her" she said looking at him.

He nodded his head as a sign he understood what she was saying.

He would always be there for her.

He would help her forget all those bad memories.

Ya Allah help me . He thought.

*****

Sofia

Blackness, that was all I could see, I was sure I was currently swimming in darkness.

I did hear Yusuf's voice, urging me to wake up, telling me how he missed me and loved me, it was his fault. I shook my head vigorously,I was the cause I screamed in my head.

I could never be free, no matter how I ran, I always met myself in the basement.

I always found my way there.

*****

Today we were meeting the therapist, I entered her office and she greeted me .

"Assalamualaikum".

"Waalaikumsalam" I replied quietly, it had been so long I used my voice. When people talk to me, I don't sign or didn't answer at all.

Why should I talk?, when my voice brought me so much pain.

"How are you feeling" she asked softly, looking at me with pity.

I hated it!

Don't pity me, I deserved it. I yelled in my head but couldn't voice it out.

"I'm fine," I whispered, looking down casted.

"Please, take this paper and write how you are feeling," she said, pushing the paper to me. I collected it and started writing while my hands were trembling. My body was shaking, head throbbing and sweating profusely.

"Easy dear" said the doctor softly.

"Thanks" I replied shakily, still with trembling hands.

I wrote "Numbed,Guilty, Scared, Murderer, Hurt, Damaged, Hopeless, Fear, Depression, Suicidal, Failure, Abomination...."

After I was through, I gave it to her .

She glanced through it, smiled softly and said we were through for the day. I scrambled away from the chair and bolted off. I felt suffocated.

"Are you through?" Yusuf asked, smiling softly at me.

I didn't answer him, he moved forward to touch me but I flinched; thinking he was going to hit me.

I hated it when I flinched away from him but I couldn't help it.

It hurt.

I was a shell of myself.

He looked hurt and retracted his hand back.

"Hmm, let's go home" he said with hoarseness in his voice.

Every two days in a week was my appointment . We did interact little by little at my pace, I'd not trust her yet because I was doing it for Yusuf's sake.

Yet!

I trusted Yusuf but not fully.

During the session, we did talk about what I'd written in the paper about what I felt.

"Why do you feel guilt?" she randomly asked me, one day when I was in her office during one of my sessions.

"Because I'm a murderer"I whispered out in a crooked voice while looking at the window because the rain calmed me down, folding my legs up as a shield to protect me.

"Why did you say that?" she asked softly, looking at me with tenderness, pity, sympathy and care.

I hated that look!I didn't need their pity.

"Because..."I stuttered, my heartbeat was raising, I was hyperventilating.

She came to me and soothed my back. "If you don't want to talk about it, it's okay ,I understand," she said.

Hell to understand!

You can never understand because you are not the one who experiences it. You only know the theory but I go through the practical. I thought.

"No, you don't, And I want to talk about it" I paused and took a deep breath.

"He said I'm a murderer, I killed her and crave it on my body, so that I won't forget. " I said slowly, remembering the pains, my scream from help till I passed out.

"No Sophy, you are getting it wrong, just because he said you're a murderer don't make you one". She continued while soothing my back.

"Just because I tattooed 'I'm a dog on my body', doesn't mean I am one or behave like one. And Sophy did you kill her?" She asked while I shook my head.

"That means you are not a murderer, he was trying to manipulate your brain and heart" she said.

"No, it's my fault".

"No dear" she hugged me,"not yours" and then closed my eyes.

For the first time after the incident, I felt relieved.

I felt I was feeling better.

Chapter 22

Sofia

Feeling emotional or physical numb or a general lack of emotions, it could cause a sense of isolation or emotional disconnection from the rest of the world. The numbness could be unbearable for many people who experienced it.

My therapist said many things about the numbness and shut down I was having.

She said I was physically and emotionally damaged because of the abuse I'd passed through.

Emotional damage could lead to someone to have anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, self blame, withdrawal, sadness, hopeless, disconnected and numbed.

Physical damage could lead to insomnia, nightmare, racing of heartbeat, edginess and agitation.

Sometimes some events might trigger painful memories.

If you'd been traumatized, it could leave you struggling with upsetting emotions, memories and anxiety wouldn't go away. It could leave you numb, disconnected and unable you to trust other people.

When bad things happened, it could take a while to get over the pain and feel safe again. But self-help and support could speed up the recovery.

Whether it happened yesterday or years ago, you could make a healthy change and move on with your life.

For a while your response will be normal to abnormal reactions.

But when the pain wants to kick in; learn to move your legs. When feeling disoriented, confused, upset, learn to take a mindful breath to calm down; take 60breath - in and out.

Learn how to express your feelings, don't bolt it in, either write it down or talk about it.

And lastly, if you are experiencing emotional numbness, no matter how you feel, you're not alone, it couldn't last forever. Reach out to people who love you, let them in. It could help you to bridge the gap and begin a new life.

****

I still remember all what my therapist did tell me, it had been a year now. And I was already moving on, getting to step on my own. But I always flinch when people yell around me.

Today Yusuf sent me a message to get ready by 7:00pm, he was taking me out.

I was very happy I loved him so much. He had always been there for me; patience, cared for me.

And today I was going to declare my love to him and make a move. (It had been two years ,we got married and hadn't done the deed).

By 7:00pm he was waiting for me in his suit, I walked downstairs slowly like a princess I was. According to him. I was his princess.

I called Maryam earlier to pick a dress for me with makeup .

I wore a long red gown. The gown was very beautiful, it hugged my body very well, my makeup too was red but minimal with a red heel .

Smoky red

As I was descending down, everything seemed to freeze. We stared at each other, he didn't blink his eyes. I reached down, he took my hand and kissed the back which made me shivered.

"You look beautiful my princess" he husky voice was so deep with hunger.

"Thanks,you look good yourself"I replied shyly. He looked like a model from the front page of a magazine.

We did go out together -date but today I felt this would be different.

"Where are we going handsome" I asked in a low seductive voice.

"It is a surprise," he replied breathing heavily. I caught him there. I touched his thigh, I was not a touchy person but tonight, I wanted everything to change.

We got down from the car,he took my hand and blindfolded me,but before he could, my breathing was high, he soothed me and told me to trust him.

We walked for a while before he unfolded the blindfold but what I saw made my eyes and mouth open in awe and surprise.

Red candles were used to decorate this place, with red petals on the floor. We were in an open area, when the cool breeze was breezing gently, the moon was up in the middle, shining it fullest. The stars bear witness to the beauty.

He took my hand, held out the booth for me to sit, I sat down and he went to his and sat. He called the waiter, the waiter served us while smiling cheekily.

As I was eating, he was busy looking at me, imprinting my image to his brain. His hand cleaned the chocolate on my lips and he licked it while groaning.

So hot!!!.

The red fruit wine was inviting in the glass. I was tempted to drink and I gave in to it. I drank it down, it was superb as I was about to return it, I saw a round like metal in the glass. I took it out and found out it was a ring.

"Alhamdulillah, she found it. I was already getting scared whether you didn't find it or you've gulped it down" he said nervously.

He stood from his seat and came to me.

He gulped, looking nervous and scared . "Sophia Ali ,for the first time I set my eyes on you. I've known you are mine. I love you and you are everything I ever wish for. And I promise to always be there and stay by your side. You are my Angel, Queen, Other half deen,and heart. I promise to protect, cherish, love, care for you to my best ability and may God make it easy for me. I will always be at your side in the good and bad. Without you I'm like a walking dead. Please don't leave me, I don't know maybe I will be able to recover. You are my drug, medicine, therapist.... And my backbone. I was a man with no light but now, you are my source of lightness. I was lost before but with Allah's will, you guided me to Him. I don't think I will be able to live without you. Without you, I'm brainless, mindless, senseless, functionless, unhappy, fake, crumbled, shattered. Please don't leave me. And Sophia, please give me a chance to prove myself, to be a husband and better man". He said holding my legs softly. My heart was full of love, joy and excitement, he was everything I could ever wish for .

I looked at him with eyes glistening with tears. It was overwhelming "I love you Yusuf, without you ..." He didn't allow me to finish before he stood and scooped me up. My legs immediately wrapped itself around his waist.

"You love me?" He asked like he didn't believe his ears and I nodded happily with tears on my face.

"Please can you say it again" he asked softly.

"I love you Yusuf Umar"I screamed at the top of my voice before I smiled widely at him.

He looked at me in the eyes and to my lips. He stared into my eyes and smiled. His eyes filled with love, protection, security, safety, respect, adoration and patience.

Our lips met, it was as if fireworks exploded throughout my body, I shivered and heard him groan.

At first the kiss was gentle, softly with promises and tenderness but then it grew bigger and intense .

He raised me up, I opened my mouth to gasp when he lunged his tongue in my mouth, tasting and sucking my lips, his hand roamed around my body, making me hot.

I was hot!

I needed him now!

We parted because we were mortals and needed air to breath. I looked at him to his lips, his lips were swollen from the recent activity.

I bent my head to take his lips but he moved his head. I let out a whiny sound while he chuckled and put me down on my shaky legs.

"Home" he rasped out in his husky deep voice. I was trying to know what he meant before he kissed me softly. He looked at me to him and him to me gesturing... I understand.

I laughed, I understand. Couldn't wait again .

"Home"

That was my first kiss.

Chapter 23

Sofia

I was currently in pure bliss, cloud nine, smiling cheekily, happy because we did the deed the previous night.

There was nothing more blessed than a couple to copulate their marriage.

The aftermath, I was sore. I meant I couldn't walk properly. It was painful, pleasurable and was enjoyable.

It was bitter sweet.

He carried me to the bathroom and bathed for me like a baby.

We cuddled and I slept like I'd never, waking up from my long nap, I felt a gentle hand touching me, urging me to wake up. I woke up and saw it was Yusuf; waking me to eat .

He was so handsome and sexy.

All mine.

I was shy with all the scars on my body but he kissed all and told me I was beautiful and didn't change his love for me.

It mended my soul and heart.

It made my love to multiply more than before.

It made me forget all my insecurities.

It made me forget all the bad memories and made me have confidence in my body.

The other night was memorable and awesome.

*****

We were in the sitting room cuddling and watching a film together when a question popped into my head. The question I'd been meaning to ask but always waved it off.

"Ife Mi*, let's play twenty questions"I said looking at him with pure love and he hummed in response. (My love)

"How and when did you start loving me or how did you know me upon all the beautiful girls outside there" he frowned his face then pecked my lips murmuring, "I shouldn't say that".

"Since the first time I set my eyes on you, when you were playing in the rain. You look happy and carefree, I love the bubble, cheerful girl I fell for. I've loved you from that moment till now and forever because when I set my eyes I know that I was already lost. Babe I'm lost in you."

"What of you wifey ?" he asked in a low voice, sitting upright and gazing at me softly.

"Do you want the truth or the other?"

"I want both".

I sighed, "when papa told me I was getting married, I was shocked and furious. How could he do that?, the husband I don't know and during that time I'd been madly in love with Abdulrahman -- Maryam's older brother. We were in love with each other and promised to marry each other then you came into the picture, you know how it feels. I'd vowed to make your life living hell till you divorce me, so that I could go back to him. That was my plan ; I plan, you plan, we all plan but Allah's plan is the best."

"The first day I saw after the wedding was when I knew I was gone because I'd already fallen for you but I held myself because I'd Abdulrahman, I couldn't do that to him."

"Then why didn't you show it, because you really hate for months" he grumbled.

"I was protecting you from him, because if he knew that I love you, then he would have used you to get me and I to get you. And that was the worst of it. Well now I think what I had for Abdulrahman was infatuation because he was a genius and his voice in the Quran was maa sha Allah. Even maryam didn't want us to be together".

"That means our love was love at first sight " he said while smiling widely whilst I nodded in agreement.

Indeed. I giggled slowly while he looked at me dumbfounded.

****

Days went by days, weeks by weeks, and months by months. I noticed some changes in me. I'd been eating extraordinary food, I meant to eat anything in a large amount, especially junk foods.

Who doesn't like junk foods, I thought.

I was sitting on the couch eating popcorn with chocolate, when Yusuf walked towards me and pecked me softly on my cheek.

"Ife*you have been eating too much nowadays, by this rate I hope you can pass through this door." He teased sitting beside me. (Love).

"Whatever" I waved my hand at him dismissively.

I was busy stuffing my chocolate in my mouth. When I felt a wave of nauseous, I felt like puking all the content in me. I ran into the bathroom and puked all that I'd eaten. I was groaning when Yusuf came to pat my back gently.

"What happened, what have you eaten, that was...." he asked worriedly, I cut him out of it .

"I don't know "I cried out, scrunched my nose from the disgusting taste.

As I was about to move I felt lightheaded and drowsy and I gripped tight on the door frame for stamina before I knew it, I was falling not before hearing my name being called.

*****

I groaned out from my deep sleep, my stomach grumbled out, I was damn hungry..

Yusuf walked with a bowl of food, I smiled at him lovely and grinned widely.

"Thanks Okon mi* like you've known that I'd be hungry"I spoke, starting to eat the meal.

I was busy engrossed with stuffing my food when I heard Yusuf telling me congratulations. I was surprised and wondering what had happened to him when I fainted earlier.

"Whatcha you comgchatshulatshing me for" I rambled all my words together.

"We are having a plus one with our family" I looked at him, bewildered.

Was he really okay?.

"How would you feel when someone calls you mum?" He asked excitedly.

"I would feel happy and the happiest person on earth" I grinned cheekily while he chuckled lightly.

"But why are you asking me?" I asked confusedly.

"Because Wifey you make me the happiest man on earth because you are.." and he took a lungful of breath and one word that made me choke and cough vigorously.

.

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.

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"Pregnant" he exclaimed.

"Pregnant?"I asked, shocked and paled like I'd seen a ghost.

"Yes pregnant" he replied and kissed me with gentleness and tenderness.

Please, wait !!! Was that how females get pregnant????. I screamed out in my head .

Chapter 24

Sofia

"A boy or a girl" I asked Yusuf, titling my head a little too and looked at him, because we were both wrapped up in each other's arms.

"Any gender, I don't care" he responded.

"I wish for twins, a boy and a girl" I beamed happily.

"Then it's okay by me" he replied then pecked my lips.

The bump in my stomach was prominent now, it was clear that I was pregnant for real.

I'd freaked out when we did the first ultrasound. I couldn't believe I was having a little life in me.

"What should we name him or her?" I raised my brow.

"Any name you like or want"he said curtly, giving short answers. I was feeling waves of anger building up in me waiting to be released.

"What of abdullahi or amatullah?" I asked then he hummed in response.

I stood up abruptly "why did you hummed, can't you answer or my questions are too much?" I inquired, putting my two hands on my waist .

He shook his head and said"no" looking confused.

"I was suggesting a name for the baby but you chose to hum in response" I accused him while pointing to him.

"I'm sorry" he muttered, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"You are sorry?" he nodded in agreement.

"But did I tell you I'm angry" I narrowed my eyes on him.

"Don't sorry, what do you want me to say" he sighed.

"What did I want to say?,uhn ? My troubles are too much right?" I stomped my feet angrily.

His eyes widened before he said " no you aren't, I like you for that".

"You like me because of my disturbance?"I exclaimed dramatically.

He moved closer to me "I love everything about you" he said then wiped off the tears.

I didn't know why I was always more emotional and hormonal than normal.

Was it because I was pregnant?

****

It was 1:00pm, I woke up urgently because I was craving for Amala*. (a Nigerian food made from yam flour).

I was hungry.

Yusuf woke up groggily, yawned and glanced at me.

"Why aren't you sleeping?" he asked.

"I'm hungry " I replied, sulking my lips.

"Hungry!!!" .

"The baby and I are hungry " my stomach used that time to grumble .

"Lemme go get you food" he turned to leave but I called out to him then looked back.

"I don't want homemade food, I want down the street amala" I said.

"Buttt- she would have closed"he stuttered out.

" I don't care, just get me the food" I ordered him.

"Alright, I'm going" he came to me, pecked my forehead and walked away.

Around one hour after he arrived, I was sulking around the house.

"I don't want Amala" I whined.

"What!!!" He exclaimed.

"Yeah, the baby and I don't want Amala" I pouted, "we want spaghetti" I beamed while caressing my bump.

"Are you sure you want spaghetti?" He asked skeptically.

"Yes" I nodded eagerly.

"Okay"

He went to the kitchen to cook me spaghetti while I trailed behind him like a lost puppy.

"Spaghetti" I sang out.

I watched him as he cooked the spaghetti while staring at his muscles how it was flexing.

When he was done, I stood up to take the food from him when I felt a sharp pain below my navel and I screamed.

"What's happening?"I asked him, getting scared and afraid.

I felt myself peed on my body. "Did I just pee on myself" I asked him embarrassingly.

"I think your water broke," he said.

"What"

"The baby" he breathed out.

****

I was carried to the hospital, I was rushed into the labour room, starting to prepare myself.

I asked about my husband from one of the nurses and he said he went to bring my mum. I was happy even though I was in pain because I had told him that I wanted my mom and him to be there with me when I wanted to give birth.

"Push" I heard the nurse beside me say.

"Push harder ma'am, the baby is on his way" she said, encouraging me.

I was hearing groans and grunts that I knew were coming from me.

As I pushed harder, I felt my eyelids giving up, my body complaining, tiredness watched over me. I fell into a peaceful sleep hearing incoherent voices telling me not to close my eyes, but it was too late.

*****

I met myself on a roadside with my hospital gown drenched with blood .

I walked forward and stopped. When I saw Yusuf's car coming towards me. Smiling that he was coming but in a blink of eyes a tainted black car ran across him and hit his car making the car tumble .

I shouted and ran to him, he was soaked in blood like me but he was more than mine.

I touched his check and he smiled at me, wincing a little but coughed out blood.

He smiled down at me, he held my hand and placed it on his beating heart .

"How is our baby?I hope he is doing great?Tell him that papa always loves him more and never loses hope. I love you and him, please take care of yourself...."he trailed off and his eyes closed to their own accord, his beating stopped.

I screamed his name out loudly enough for all mankind to hear.

I felt myself being shaken up by someone, I woke up with tears in my eyes and sweating profusely..

"Yusuf, where is my husband?" I asked frantically.

The nurse looked at me with pity, concern, worry, pain.

" You've been out for three hours but congratulations you gave birth to a bouncing baby boy." she said with so much sadness.

"I knew but where is my yusuf? " I asked impatiently because I had a gut feeling that something bad had happened because of what I dreamt earlier.

"We are sorry, we tried our best but He who gives life has taken it" I looked confused. I didn't understand what she was saying, she was talking in parables and it was scaring and confusing me.

"We lost him in the car accident...

He

is

Dead".

I felt an agonizing pain throughout my body.

I felt pain more than what I was subjected to before.

I felt my world shattered into pieces.

Happiest moments became saddest moments.

And I screamed like I'd never before.

But upon all, I felt numbed.

Epilogue 1

Sofia

Ya Allah!

Why me?

He left me, when he promised to stay forever.

I cried as I shouted my voice out.

It couldn't be, he could never leave me.

He promised and he had broken his promise.

No one could fill the void of my husband.

I wouldn't be able to hear his laughter, his voice.

He was my rock.

He left me alone.

Everything was numbed, I didn't feel anything, it was like a part of me was dead with him. I was losing myself to the abyss of darkness, I was wallowing to the darkest part of me.

But where you now?, I whispered to no one as I stared at the gloomy sky which matched my feelings.

It had been 2months since he left but I was still thinking of him and living in the past with his memories. I still hope he will come back to me and tell me, it's a prank. I missed you.

«Death is our friend and foe.

But we don't want to know that.

All that we think is, it is a homewrecker.

A Place where death visits.

The place darkened and the aura changed to gloomy.

Death and humans are strangers, but when it is time to taste death, it becomes our friends.

Death becomes our friend irrespective of our; image, age, race, complexion, religion, height, attitude, popularity...

When it's our time.

Death doesn't care whether humans are prepared or not.

It takes the child away from the elder.

The wife leaves the husband.

The mother leaves the baby.

Takes brother, leaves sister.

Vice versa

Death visit when it's human time, without asking or given permission to take.

It doesn't give a warning.

It either takes gently or roughly

Aggressively or calmly.

Death leaves a great scar on each and every one of us when it takes our loved ones.

Our memories with the dead would become a treasure.

We will keep it till that same death visits us too.

It can never be erased or stolen.

No matter how you try not to remember, it surfaces when least expected.

The more you try to forget, the more you remember.

We will be thinking how, why, when, did it happen.

Death is heartless, cruel, why did it take our loved ones!.

But we already know it is their time, but we try to reason with it but it is impossible.

When death takes our loved ones, we will be sad, upset, destabilised living dead, broken, betrayed and furious. But it's natural.

The memories can never be stolen, it would be imprinted on our brain, especially if we witness how our loved ones taste to death.

The lifeless cold body.

The moment they gasped for the last breath.

The memory will be hurt and taunting

It becomes our great nightmare sometimes.

Even though the person is our enemy.

Death never hears plead, when it is time, it takes.

It takes it in the blink of an eye.

It never hears, comes back I'm not ready

Or take me, I'm ready.

We don't believe in death until it happens to our loved ones.

We will say we understand the feeling until it happens to us.

Death is time.

Time is death.

It works with time, spend your time wisely, cherish, share, use it before it's too late, because you never know when last, you will talk or see them before they taste to death and start blaming and regretting.

Death is true

Not illusion

It comes and goes

It takes and leaves

Till there remains nothing left.

We will all taste to death but the way or cause of death might be different.

And one day, death would also taste himself».



The End.

Prologue 2

It had been 5 years .

It had been 5 years ,he had left me.

He left me alone in this cruel world with a baby, when he vowed that he would always be there.

I didn't think I would be able to forget even though it was a dream, his cold body fell limp, his soulless eyes staring at me, his dry lips and pale face.

He would always have a space in my heart that no one could replace or steal.... But I'd to move on.

It was my wedding day. I was getting married to my childhood love--Abdulrahman.

He stood by my side and helped me through all those years that I thought I could never pass through.

I didn't want to reminisce about those periods, I'd moved on, I chanted to myself. I'd moved on for my son .

I loved Abdulrahman, he proposed to me some years ago but I was still drowning in misery. I accepted his proposal last year and here I stood before the mirror like a new bride.

Please help me through ya Allah, I prayed silently.

"Here comes the beautiful bride" Maryam screamed happily.

I smiled at her and glanced at my husband's two-bedroom, he smiled at me showing his white pearls teeth with his prominent dimples. My heart skipped.

After the Nikkah, we drove to our house. My new house and home. The house was cozy, it looked normal, not like Yusuf's gigantic house.

He unlocked the door, we entered together and said our Teslim.

I walked past him but he lifted me up suddenly and instinctively I wrapped my legs around his waist.

He looked at me with adoration "do you know how many times I've dreamt of this" he whispered huskily, he looked at my lips.

I knew what he wanted, I nodded my head giving him permission. His mouth descended to mine.

As the kiss deepened, I felt myself yanking away from him and my body hit the wall hard. I groaned out, looking at him confusedly.

"You," he yelled, his face contouring red in anger.

"What happened?" I asked in fear and confusion, what had I done wrong?.

"You dared moan out his name while I was kissing you. I know you are a whore. You left me for him because of his money and fame" he yelled while walking towards me. I shook my head vigorously, not wanting him to come near me. He looked like a predator ready to pounced on his prey.

He laughed maniacally"where is he now".... He scowled "oh ,I remembered, he's under the ground 6ft" he taunted me.

"I will make you regret ever leaving me for him. All the pain you caused me ,I'm going to enjoy inflicting it on you."he spat out with disgust and so much venom.

He slapped me hard, I felt my consciousness zoning in and out.

Blackness came to greet me and I happily embraced it.

"I hope I've not married wrong " was the last thought on my mind before everything disappeared.

BK 2 Chapter 1

Sofia

"Sofia, please just eat a little out of your food" mama was trying to persuade me to have something, since I'd been discharged. I'd not taken anything since and it had been one week. I'd fallen into a state of unconsciousness for four days after his death was announced. I still couldn't believe it because it felt like a nightmare to me.

"Please omo mi* take something, if not for me but for your baby" mama pleaded with me with her eyes.*(my child).

When the doctor declared that Yusuf was dead, I went into a shocked state before I was retrieved by Allah's grace. But till now my brain couldn't comprehend it. Was it true or not. I was still confused. I just dreamt of it, did it mean my dream came true?.

No, not that type of dream come true. I shook my head in denial.

"Mama, is that how people die" I whispered brokenly, staring at nothing.

"Mama, but ....he ...promised that he will never leave me, he will always be by my side, he said.." My voice broke with tears. I was a sobbing mess.

"Mama, but..." mama cut me to it by pulling me in a hug, engulfing me with the warmth of motherly care.

"I understand Darling but trust and have faith in Allah" I hugged her back, needing a shoulder for comfort. "Mama he left me, he left me" I sobbed loudly while shaking with emotions. No one could understand the inner turmoil I was going through. My world was falling apart.

"Mama, I can't do anything without him, he's like oxygen I breathe in maa" I cried while mama patted my back soothing and comforting me.

"Baby, your baby is crying" mama said, bringing the little half me and him to me.

Since I'd given birth to him, I'd not looked at him in the eyes, afraid of the accusation in it. I'd not carry him too because I was afraid he could fall down from my hands. And I failed him as a mother. I caused his father's death, I made him lose the fatherly love and care. He could never know the feeling of father in his life and I was the one to blame.

"Dearie, just look at him, he's your son". Mama said suggestively, encouraging me.

"Mama, he will fall from me, I can't carry him,he will..." I started blabbing and crying.

"I can't" I shook my head vigorously. "I can't, he will fall" I responded frantically, searching for a way out. My heart constricted as I felt my hands trembling with fear of my baby falling down and dying.

"Murderer killer" I heard the voice, the voice was back taunting me everyday. I was going back into the darkness.

"He will fall mama, I will kill him" I said breathing heavily, shaking my head vigorously.

"Mama, he will die if I carry him, I'm a murderer, Zaid was right - I was the one that killed Yusuf too. If I'd not told him to bring you that day, he would have been here with me mama" the panic and terror set in as I felt my breath swallowed.

My heart constricted, my breathing heaved, tears glistened in my eyes. I heard a frantically distant voice but I couldn't hear anything.

"Breath wifey, for me" and I heard his voice.

In out

In out

My breathing changed to normal, I exhaled and inhaled loudly.

I stood up and pushed mama gently away from me.

"Where are you going?" mama asked. "Yusuf was here mama, he told me to breathe, I breathed and the panic went away. I want to follow him, he said I should follow him" I replied happily, beaming with happiness and walking through the door. "No" mama said and shook her head. "He's dead, he is not here" mama told me, staring at me with pity and concern.

"No mama, just wait here for me, let's follow him." I said trying to catch up with Yusuf.

I heard mama calling me but I was too engrossed in following Yusuf's image to where he was taking me.

I followed him till we arrived at a cliff , "yusuf wait up" I shouted behind me confusedly.

"Do you love me?" He asked slowly.

"Yes, I do " I responded eagerly.

"Then let's jump together and follow me so that we can continue our love" he said trying to jump.

"We should jump but..."

"You love me?, why can't you jump, but you were the cause why I'm like this" he stated while muttering out, "I'm sorry".

"I'm sorry babe, let's jump and make sure you hold my hand tightly" he said, bringing his hand forward and I put mine in his.

As I wanted to jump with Yusuf, I was held back by someone. I turned sharply to glare at the person who stopped me from following my love only to see my first love - Abdulrahman whose

face was marred with worries. I was shocked, I'd seen him since six to seven years ago. He shook his head 'no' for me.

I looked beside me and saw Yusuf was no longer beside me, I got scared and shouted, "Yusuf", only to meet with perfect silence.

"Yusuf was here and he said I should jump but ...." I said dumbfounded, searching frantically for him.

"It was your imagination," he said softly.

He tried to hold me back, " no" I shouted and pushed him away. "He was here, he told me to jump" I looked down the cliff and saw nothing.

"Shh, it's okay"

"No, it is not" I screamed, clutching my head.

" Okay, I understand he was here," he said softly, opening his arms to hug me.

"You believe me?" I asked hopefully that someone could understand my plight while he nodded in understanding.

" It's okay" mom came from behind and patted me before I felt a cold needle piercing my neck. I was injected.

I tried to fight it but I black dots covered myself and I embraced the darkness not before hearing; we are sorry.

****

BK 2 chapter 2

Sophia

Life had been faring since the moment I'd woke up from being injected by my mom. I was furious initially but with time, I'd moved on for my son. He was my only reason. He brought the light back to my life and joy.

My little blessing.

I was brought out of my thoughts by the sound of my boy's happy voice.

He's back, I smiled.

"Assalamualaikum momma, baby is back from school" my little boy greeted, showing his sets of milk teeth as he ran to me and crushed me in a bear hug before he pecked me on my both cheeks happily. I smiled happily and ruffled his hair playfully.

"Wa'alaikum Salam warahmatullahi wabarakatuh baby" I smile lovely at him before collecting his backpack. I fake-sterned at him while tapping my foot on the ground, "what are you supposed to do when you arrived from school?" I asked my little gem, rubbing his chubby cheeks adorably.

"Oh!" he scratched his neck while smiling sheepishly at me. One trait he took from his father. I felt a pang in my heart but shook it off and stared at my joy.

"When baby is back from school; baby greets momma, baby lunchbox in the kitchen, baby off the uniform, baby shower and baby comes to the dining room to eat" he beamed excitedly, clapping his hands together excitedly.

"Then what are you still doing?" I asked in a fake serious voice, fighting off the twitching of my lips.

As he was running to the kitchen, he ran back to me in full speed and pecked me on my right cheek before he ran off again.

I shook my head in adoration while my smile broadened.

He was the apple of my eyes.

He was my living prayer.

He was my hope.

"Baby is going now" he elongated the last word in a singing way and ran off to the kitchen.

With him always running, I hoped he wouldn't slip and fall hard on his face, I thought before shaking the bad thought away. And I smiled because my boy had become my source of happiness.

I didn't hear his sound again and thought whether he had gone to the bathroom.

"Boom" I dropped my phone abruptly, breathing furiously while my little boy was laughing holding his tummy. "Momma is scared, momma drops the phone," he said in between his laughter. I was glaring at him but with his laughter, I became a softy bear and I laughed along with him, pulling him to me as I ruffled his hair and rubbed his cheeks.

His laugh was contagious like his father.

He sat beside me momentarily after our laughter, "momma, baby has a question" he said, furrowing his brows as he looked at me.

"Before the baby asked his question," I used my index finger to shush him, "how was today in school?" I asked my boy, twirling his hair, playing with the end.

"Momma, the school was su_su_" he struggled to pronounce the word. My eyes twinkled with happiness as I laughed hard holding my stomach. I remembered using the word last week to describe how I felt when he recited the dua before eating. Children's brains were like a magnet, they caught anything catchable. That was why it wasn't good to say bad or obscene words when children are around. I just said it once and my son had grabbed on it.

He pouted, "momma laughed at me" he whined, stomping his feet on the ground.

"Oh sorry bibi" I tickled him.

"Momma ssssttopp," he said in between his laughter. "But momma, I don't like it" he grumbled, pouting his lips.

"Sorry bibi, momma loves you" I pecked him affectionately on his cheek.

"Momma, correct me" he pouted, sullen his face while I cooed.

"It's superb" I pronounced it slowly to him and elongated it for him to be able to pronounce it.

"Yay!" he clapped his hands excitedly and squealed, jumping up and down. "Momma, I've learned another word" he beamed excitedly while I nodded.

"Yeah, baby," I said, "another word to that little brain of yours" I poked his head while he grumbled.

"Momma, teacher give me candy" he said, going inside to bring the unwrapped candy and show it to me.

"Bibi" I called out softly, patting his head, "not give but gave. Remember past tense" I chuckled lightly.

"Oh," he exclaimed with widened eyes. "Baby forgot" he smiled sheepishly, flickering his head softly while I shook my head.

"What were you taught in school today?" I asked, bringing out his book from his backpack to check what he was taught.

"We were taught to write the number '3'" he beamed, "teacher said we should write curve and curve forms 3" he clapped his hands together while jumping before stopping abruptly.

"Momma, baby want to ask something," he said sadly, I sat upright 'what happened to my baby?'.I wondered.

"What happened bibi," I asked in a concerned tone and turned to him, giving him all my full concentration.

"All my classmates do.." he trailed off, looking down unhappy.

What could cause my little gem to be disheartened, I wondered.

I hoped he wasn't bullied in school. I thought angrily.

"What happened to your classmates?" I rubbed his arm and carried him on my lap to comfort him.

"And the teacher said...." He turned his gaze away from me, staring at the marble floor. Tears glistened on his eyes. My heart was torn.

"What did the teacher say?" I asked worriedly, rubbing his back.

"Momma, where's dada?" he let the cat out of the bag while I was shocked. My breath hitched, I didn't know what to say or what to tell him. What should I tell him? dada was dead or what?. How would he understand?.

"Where is he?" he asked again, which left my heart pounding more than normal and my hands shook. "All my classmates make fun of me and the teacher asks too?" his lips trembled, tears were falling from his eyes ducts.

Oh my baby!, my heart ached.

"Bibi, Dada is...." And that moment the front door opened, revealing ...

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BK 2 chapter 3

"Come back here" I yelled after my three years old boy who was running butt-naked around while giggling.

This was what I used to face every day. He didn't like bathing or showering generally.

Always running around when it was time for bathing. I groaned internally, massaging my temple tiredly.

This boy would be the cause of my death. Always giving me exercises to do early in the morning.

"No momma catch me" he grinned cheekily, showing his white pearls of milk teeth before sticking out his tongue.

Oh my goodness, this boy is mischievous. I groaned.

He is more energetic than me, I face-palmmed myself.

"Come here" I ordered softly but he shrugged his shoulder a little, scrunching up his nose.

"Catch me momma" he giggled loudly, sticking out his tongue again.

"Come have your bath" I started gently and stopped running after him to catch my breath.

"Tired already momma" his eyes twinkled with mischief while I shook my head.

Only God knows where he has taken that mischievous from?. I thought.

He was so energetic for his age.

"Momma, shower cold and baby cold". He whined, stumbling his foot on the floor.

"But I've mixed the water" I reasoned with him, taking a step to him but he caught me and he ran away again.

"No momma, no school today then no bath today" he stuck his tongue out again for the third time.

Enjoying my miseries in chasing him.

I laughed lightly, "Dirty boy" I scrunched my nose.

"Momma, I am not dirty, I am a fine boy" he responded, fanning himself.

Abdulrahman entered at that moment and stood by the door watching both of us. He ran to Abdulrahman and tugged his leg, hiding behind him as if I could not catch him.

That boy!.

"What's going on" he smiled softly while I sighed and pinched my nose. "It's Abdullah, he should have his bath but no, he was running around doing hide and seek with me" I grumbled out.

"Oh sorry S, the boy is so energetic" he chuckled lightly and handed me cold milk from the counter while I gulped it down greedily.

"Baby" Abdulrahman called him.

"Dada" he screamed happily.

"Bibi, no shouting," I said sternly and walked towards them.

"Baby sorry momma, no shouting," he said while holding his lips.

"Where were you running to?" Abdulrahman asked him.

"Momma bath but no school today because of no school, no bath today" he explained his intuition, showing his milk teeth.

"Okay," Abdulrahman said and started tickling him while he laughed out and I stared at them.

Is he not supposed to reprimand him for not showering, I thought.

He sat on the couch comfortably and carried him on his lap, smiling softly at him.

"No school, no bath right?"Abdulrahman asked him while he nodded vigorously.

"Okay, no bath no ice cream," Abdulrahman responded.

"Noooooo" he cried.

"No dada, ice cream but no bath" he bellowed.

"Ice cream" he whined.

"You will follow your mom now and have your bath then ice cream" Abdulrahman said while he yelled out "ice cream" and ran to me.

He came to me and tugged my cloth." momma baby sorry. Baby bath" he said softly staring at the floor. I huddled him up and looked at his unshed eyes and pecked him.

~**~

Abdulrahman had gone to work after he stopped by to say greet us this morning as usual.

My boy and I were sitting in the garden, plucking some flowers while he turned to me and dropped the bomb shell.

"Momma, why baby not like dada," Abdullah asked me, knitting his brows.

"What" I stared at him dumbfounded because I didn't understand him.

"Dada is black, me light. Dada black eyes me brown eyes" he stared as if he was reading the newspaper. I was shocked because I didn't know how to reply.

How did he know or notice all these different features in them? He was smarter for his age.

The one he asked earlier, it was my mom who had saved my trembling self.

"Momma, where is dada" at that moment the front door opened, showing my mom.

"Dada is here" my mom replied, smiling knowingly as she made herself comfortable on the couch.

"Where?" He turned around but did not see anyone.

"Dada is uncle Abdulrahman," my mom said, I wanted to butt in but she shunned me, raising her lashes.

"Dada is uncle Abdulrahman," he asked while dancing around then he stopped and looked at me to mom and from mom to me.

"But why is he not living with us," he asked inquisitively while furrowing his eyes.

"Oh my boy this boy is inquisitive" I laughed nervously.

"Momma?" he waited impatiently.

"It...bec..." I stuttered because I didn't know what to say. I looked at mom and mouthed 'help me'.

"Abdullah, come here" mom touched his cheeks softly and ruffled his hair playfully.

"Sometimes I do think whether you are a three years old boy or not," mom smiled.

"Why Nana?" he pouted.

"Because you ask questions that are bigger than your age. Well, your dada is not living with you guys because he is busy with work". I sighed and prayed silently to Allah to bring mom here this morning because I would make a fool out of myself.

"But why will dad be so busy with work?, did he not want us or like us?" he asked again downcasted while I was fiddling with my fingers awkwardly.

"You ask too many questions bibi" my mom patted his head.

"But..." My mom cut him off.

"Another time Abdul" my mom replied.

The front door opened and Abdulrahman came in. My boy stood up and ran to him, shouting dad while Abdulrahman looked at me dumbfounded while I shrugged my shoulder.

I was jolted away from the awkward memories when I felt a pinch on my nose while I released an "ow" sound.

"Why?" I asked him while rubbing my stinging nose.

"You were not replying to me" he pouted.

"Baby another time, momma tired" I changed the topic and went inside.

BK 2 chapter 4

~**2 years later**~

It had been six years now since Yusuf had left me but the memories of us together, I still held it to my heart. It could never be stolen.

It hurt so much that sometimes, I thought of killing myself because the pain was too much but I'd to be strong for my son- Abdullah.

I loved my son so much; he and Abdulrahman had become my source of happiness and my joy.

Since Yusuf's death, I have been in control of his company and Zaid's company. I merged both together and changed the name.

I was the CEO of the company and my company was the number one and the main source of income to the country. The company had expanded and blossomed. It had many quarters in a different part of the world.

I was not that weak girl again. I became fearless that both males and females were afraid to face without nearly shitting themselves. It was rare to see me speak or laugh only with my close relatives.

I dressed in my long A-shape skirt, pink shirt with my pink cape. I strode out of the house with my clutch bag to my personal car and drove off to the office.

I put on my strong facade outside like I was not dying inside.

My strong mask was on. I'd become a chess master in the business world.

After the death of Yusuf, I've taken an online class, having my Bsc in business before doing my masters. I achieved my long dream to study and I'd acquired it yet not all because he wasn't with me through all.

Abdulrahman was always by my side, always there for me. I'd also started my therapy session because of my suicidal attempts but I didn't think it was working because I still cried myself to bed and had a series of nightmares.

~**~

"Good afternoon ma'am, Abdullahi is with his dad," the caretaker said while collecting my overall coat. I only nodded and went to the terrace. I didn't talk or smile much except with my babies- Abdulrahman and abdullahi.

I called out my five years old boy. "Abdullahi, momma is back" I laughed. Alhamdulillah for having him, he was my morenikeji* and remilekun*. (My second half* and Ease my cries*).

"Momma, momma hide me. Dada wants to catch me'" he grinned, hiding behind me.

"Where are you?" I heard Abdulrahman teasing voice calling from a near distance.

"Did you see that little cupcake?" Abdulrahman asked in a singing voice.

I shook my head, "no, I've not..." I was cut off by my boy, coming out of his hiding place.

"Momma, you are lying but you said..." he said while pointing an accusing finger to me.

"I'm sorry bibi. Momma's sorry. Momma was hiding you away from this man" I pouted, downcasting my eyes.

"Momma doesn't cry, momma, please. Bibi is a bad boy" my little boy said with remorse contouring his face.

I laughed out loud, what I'd not done for years- happy tears welled up in my eyes.

"It's okay baby, momma forgives you," I said hugging him.

"Momma here," he said pointing to his left cheek for me to peck it.

"No way boy" I grumbled.

"Yes, way momma. Momma angry?" he mumbled silently.

"No" I shook my head.

"Here," he pointed to his cheek.

"Okay"

I knelt then pecked him on his cheek and he retaliated.

"Happy birthday S," Abdulrahman said behind me.

"Momma birthday today" he yelled excitedly.

"Oh, thank you so much my boys," I said happily.

"Wow!, I can't believe I'm now 27 years old. I feel so old" I laughed lightly while Abdulrahman chuckled.

"S you are not getting old. You need to move on and search for another man. You are still young." He said gently, staring at me intensely while I lowered my gaze.

"I should search for a man?" I asked skeptically while he nodded affirming my suspicion.

"Yes," he voiced out.

I saw my boy looking at us confusedly and I tried to hold myself together not to break down, "Bibi, inside!" I said sternly while he ran inside without looking back.

I faced Abdulrahman with tears glistened eyes, "Tell me, what type of man is going to marry me for who I am not what I am? Or marry a broken weak abused widow girl plus a baby?"I asked in a high tone, feeling frustrated.

We'd talked about this many times, but he seemed not to let go of it.

"You are not weak S. You are strong. Look at you, here you are with your boy happily." He mumbled softly, staring at when Abdullah ran to.

"No one could love me like him and I still love my husband". I choked on tears. My strong wall was cracking. "No one could understand me like him" I sniffled.

"S he's gone." I flinched as he said it."I don't say that you don't love your husband but please do give another man a chance".

"Then will you marry me?" I asked softly, nibbling on my lips furiously.

He didn't even skip a second before he said 'yes'.

"Okay, I want to but please give me time to think about it and say my last goodbye." I murmured, wiping the tears stain on my face.

"Okay, I understand. Take your time" he smiled slightly at me.

I needed to move on but I hoped I was not making a mistake of remarrying.

~**~

About Sophia's age, she was married at the age of eighteen. After some months of making him regret his decision. She fell in love with him and that was when Zainab appeared. She was nineteen when she was kidnapped by her; she used two weeks with her before she was taken by her manic father -Zain. She was abused for 9 months by that time she was 20 years. She was rescued and stayed in a coma for 15 days, and therapy sessions for a year. She got pregnant at the age of 21 and gave birth at the age of 22, plus her son's age. She is 27.

BK 2 Chapter 5

"Assalamualaikum bunny" Maryam greeted me and strode to the kitchen majestically while I rolled my eyes at her.

I turned and smiled sweetly at her, "waalaikumsalam sugar".

"Whatcha cookin, miss cook" she inhaled the aroma of the food.

"I'm cooking what's cook-able," I replied, stirring the dish.

"I'm famished" she yawned, patting her stomach while it growled in response and I chuckled lightly.

"If you want it to be cooked quickly, come help me" I slyly said while slicing the onions.

"Me! What?" She screeched like a banshee while I'd to cringe internally.

"You" I grinned, wiping the tears forming in my eyes due to the onion.

"I can't darling, I'm a visitor and visitors don't help in the kitchen" she smiled sweetly.

"Visitor?!"I exclaimed comically.

"Yes, babe, visitor" she smiled innocently and winked at me.

I took the frying pan to get the fish. "What are you doing?" she asked.

"What does it look like I'm doing?" I asked sarcastically.

"Frying" she replied in a duh- tone.

"Then why are you asking jamb questions?" I spoke mockingly.

"You are no fun girly" she playfully punched me.

"Thanks, fun-bae" I grinned and stuck out my tongue playfully at her.

After cooking and setting up the dishes, I called out to my foolish friend who was busy fighting with the remote control.

"Honey, food is ready"

"Boo, can you please bring it here with a drink because I don't wanna miss this scene" she pleaded with her eyes glued to the TV.

No way!

I went to the sitting room and sat on the floor to eat my food. As I was about to dig in, she held my hand arching her eyebrow.

"Mommy, where is my food?" she pouted.

"In the kitchen doll," I grinned cheekily.

"But I told you, I don't want to miss the film. You can't even help a friend out" she whined....and went to the kitchen for her food. She sat comfortably on the couch with her legs crossed on the table, moaning. She was having foodorgasm.

She liked food!

No!.

Loved food.

"Wallahi, you are one of the best cook ever seen" she moaned while I shook my head. She took another spoon, "you are the best monkey" she hummed while holding her hand to me 'thumbs up'.

"What of you gorilla?" I asked her, taking a spoon.

"Lazy ass, chimpanzee" she replied, taking a full-mouthed spoon.

After we were through with eating and little bickerings, we washed our dishes and returned to the living room. I sat on the couch while she sat beside me on the floor.

There was a public holiday, I was free. Abdullahi had gone to the amusement park with Abdulrahman, leaving only me at home with my crazy friend.

"Wow! see his abs. I love you Shaurya" she made a dreamily face, I turned and stared at her.

We were watching the rerun of Mehek.

"Kangaroo, stop staring. You're creeping me out" she said in a high pitched voice before throwing the pillow at me. The pillow fell on the floor, I picked it and dusted it before putting it back.

"Talk, stop staring" she whined.

"When are you getting married?" I asked her.

"I'm not ready" she replied in a clipped tone, wanting me to leave but I was not this time around.

"You are twenty-eight this year, please move on bae," I said softly.

"No man is looking at me" her voice showed finality not wanting more questions but I was not having that.

"No stupid, there is a man who loves you but you are too busy dwelling in the past to see," I said tapping her on her forehead.

"Who?" she asked, raising her brows.

"Hmmm, Royhan".

"Whatttttttt" she shrieked. "I and him, olorun maje*. That man, I hate him with every fibre of my body" she shrieked while I rolled my eyes. (God forbid).

"Why?" I asked while she glared at me.

"Forget about me, now to you", she wiggled her eyebrows.

"Babe, I know it's hard but please move on for abdullahi," she said softly.

I nibbled on my lips before I replied, "I'm thinking of saying yes to your brother's proposal" I said not looking at her, I knew she would flip because she was not happy with my relationship with him at first.

"No way" she screamed, standing from where she sat and narrowed her eyes at me.

I gulped!

"Why?"

"You can marry any other man but him, I can't allow you," she said in disgust, eyeing me.

"Why, but you said I should move on, then why with your brother. Is it because I'm a single mother?" Tears brimmed out of my eyes while I used the back of my hand to wipe it harshly.

"I love him Maryam," I said softly, she came to me and hugged me.

"Sophia, I don't want to hurt you but you can't marry him," she said while I pushed her away and stood abruptly.

"Why!!!" I screamed and I was super annoyed.

"No Sophia, I don't mean it like that"

"Then what did you mean? explain?".

"My brother is suffering from an anger issue" she replied softly.

"I know but he never flipped out whenever I'm with him"

"No Sophia, he just wants to win you over. He has changed, he is not that cool gently boy since the day you left him" she stressed the 'left'.

"What did you mean that I left him?. What you are trying to say was that I broke your brother's heart and you are protecting him from me. Uhn?" I asked.

"Do you know what happened to him when you left?. He nearly went mad. He was chained down in the mosque and nearly beaten to death for months before he got back to himself. This

Sophia, that Sophia. He is obsessed and crazy for you. Abdulrahman is a crazy guy, he is not normal" she raised her voice.

"Get out"I pointed to the door.

"What?"

"You heard me loud and clear. I said get out of my house" I shouted.

She looked at me pained but I didn't let it guilt me up because I too, I was hurting and dying inside.

She opened and looked at me and said "I may sound like a selfish bitch but I'm just protecting you from him. He is not the right guy for you" lone tears escaped her left eye. She closed the door while I went to the door and locked it. I slumped down the door and cried my heart out.

This was the first disagreement I and Maryam would have that leads to both of us shouting on ourselves.

I was desperate.

I didn't listen or reason to her point of view.

This was the first time Maryam cried since the death of her baby when she was 15.

This was the first time I ever cried hard after my husband's death.

I felt lost.

****

BK 2 chapter 6

I and Abdulrahman sat on the couch with my baby separating us. We were supposed to be watching the film but here I was staring at Abdulrahman. He was an epitome of beauty; my eyes trailed from his lashes to his cheekbone, to lips. His chest was showing under his white shirt. I didn't know when he used his flicked me on my head. I was thinking of saying yes to him but I was nervous.

Maybe he would reconsider and reject me.

Whatever, I'm telling him today, I thought.

"Quit staring, you can take a picture," he said smugly. I cleared my throat," who said I was staring " I said nonchalantly. Abdullahi turned to me and to Abdulrahman.

"Dada momma, why is Dada not living with us?" I and Abdulrahman glanced at each other before focusing our gaze on him.

"What am I going to do with you boy?, you always have a question to ask" I pinched his cheek to divert him from the subject.

"But momma, you have not answered. ." I shooed him.

"Watch it" I pointed to the television screen.

We turned our gaze to the TV before he stood with narrowed eyes.

I gulped, this boy always behaved like an adult.

"What now bibi?" I groaned.

"Why is Dada not living with us and why have you guys not kissed?". He said huffing while crossing his arms.

"What?" I shrieked.

"Where did you hear the k-word?" I stuttered while he shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, the teacher said parents kiss each other to show love and my classmates do ask too". He rolled his eyes as if it was not a big deal.

"Momma, I'm waiting..." He said impatiently, tapping his foot on the ground. That moment Maryam entered. I sighed in relief because I didn't know what to say.

"Assalamualaikum guys" I turned my eyes away from her.

"Walaikum salam" I mumbled.

She crouched down to Abdullahi's and patted his cheeks. "Can you go inside little one, aunty wants to talk to Dada and momma?" she said softly while my boy nodded and entered his room.

She slumped beside me, and we stared at each other awkwardly. We both cleared our throat.

This was it, let me talk to her.

"I'm sorry" both of us blurted out at the same time.

"Stop copying me!" We yelled at the same time.

"You first" we grumbled at once and pointed at each other.

"This is annoying" the same time again. We laughed out.

"Talk" the same thing again.

"You" we both groaned.

"Will both of you stop that childish game, you are distracting me" Abdulrahman butted in. I'd forgotten him, that he was with us.

I stopped," bunny, I'm sorry," she said remorsefully.

"I too bear," I said softly and we hugged each other.

Maryam yanked the remote from him while he yelled.

"What evil now" he growled.

"Nothing crazy wanna talk to you" she stuck her tongue out.

"I hope what you want to say has some sense with it because you never say something with sense, idiot," he said.

"You fool" she screeched, "you are saying I don't have sense" she exclaimed.

"Whatever you want to think," he said dismissively.

She stood up, head high. She had that intimidating vibe. I gulped.

"Abdulrahman, I swear to God, I won't think you are my bro" she dragged the bro. "If you hurt her" she pointed to me. "I swear to god, I will burn you alive." She said dangerously.

"Chill is, I know but she has not agreed to my proposal," he said nervously, glancing at me at her.

"You stupid, she loves you. Just waiting for you to re-propose to her" she said, smirking at him.

"You crazy fool" I mouthed to her.

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A year later

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It had been 5 years.

It had been 5 years, he had left me.

He left me alone in this cruel world with a baby, when he vowed that he would always be there.

I didn't think I would be able to forget, his cold body fell in limp, his soulless eyes staring at me, his dry lips and pale face.

He would always have a space in my heart that no one could replace or steal... But I'd like to move on.

Today was my wedding day. I was getting married to my childhood love--Abdulrahman.

He stood by my side and helped me through all those years that I thought I could never pass through.

I didn't want to reminisce that period, I'd moved on, I chanted to myself. I'd moved on for my son.

I loved Abdulrahman, he proposed to me some years ago but I was still drowning in my misery. I accepted his proposal last year and today here I stood before the mirror-like a new bride.

Please help me through ya Allah "I prayed silently.

"Here comes the beautiful bride" Maryam shouted out.

I smiled at her and glanced at my husband-to-be, he smiled at me showing his white pearls teeth with his prominent dimples. My heart skipped

After the Nikkah, we drove home. My new house and home. The house was cosy, it looked normal, not like Yusuf's gigantic house.

He unlocked the door, we entered together and said our Teslim.

I walked past him, he lifted me up, and instinctively I wrapped my legs around him.

He looked at me with love "do you know how many times I've dreamt of this" he whispered huskily, he looked at my lips.

I knew what he wanted, I nodded my head giving him permission. His mouth descended to mine.

As the kiss deepened, I felt myself being yanked away from him and my body hit the wall hard. I groaned out, looking at him confusedly.

"You", he raged out.

"What happened," I asked in fear and confusion, "what had I done wrong?.

"You dared moan out his name while I was kissing you. I know you are a whore. You left me for him because of his money and fame" he yelled while walking towards me. I shook my head vigorously, not wanting him to come near me.

He laughed maniacally"where is he now"... He scowled "oh, I remembered, he's under the ground 6ft".

"I will make you regret ever leaving me for him. All the pain you caused me, I'm going to inflict it on you." he spat out with disgust and so much venom.

He slapped me hard, I felt my consciousness zoning in and out.

Blackness came to greet me, and I happily embraced it.

"I hope I've not married wrong " was the last thought on my mind before everything disappeared.

BK 2 chapter 7

"Where is my food" Abdulrahman growled, descending from the stairs while cuffing the sleeve of his shirt. My heart skipped with fear of what he could do. He was unpredictable.

"Your food is on the table" I replied shakily, afraid of his outburst.

He yelled and shouted at me but never yelled whenever Abdullahi was around. He was the perfect father to Abdullahi yet a great oppressor to me.

I didn't know why he married me, if he knew he had fallen out of love with me.

"What is this? ," he asked in disgusted, raising his brows while holding the plate.

"Food," I replied meekly, walking backwards slowly.

"I know, explain" he said exasperatedly, slamming his fist on the table which shook all the plates on it.

"You didn't tell me what to cook," I said softly, moving backwardly while he took other menacing steps forward while I gulped in fear. I wetted my dry lips which didn't go unnoticed by him,"So, I thought to cook..." he cut me off abruptly.

"Is your mental health not stable?" He snarled, shaking in anger, "is this what you called food?" he bellowed, glaring hard at me.

"A'udhu Billahi mina shaitan nirrajeem*" I whispered silently, asking Allah refuge against shaytan. (I seek refuge from Satan the stoned one).

"What did you just say?" He asked, gripping my jaw tightly, making his sharp nails to pierce my tender skin and I whimpered.

"Nothing," I replied quickly, and didn't want to anger him further.

"Is this how you used to cook for your dead husband" I flinched, tears welled up in my eyes but I refused to shed it then he continued. "Did it hit a nerve?" He taunted me, hovering over me, "but S, he's dead. I mean DEAD" he laughed maniacally. "Or maybe it's your food that caused his early death" he shook his head in a fake pity way yet his eyes held amusement.

He cornered me to the wall and then poured the hot droll soup on me and dropped the plate down; making it shattered into pieces. I bit my lips hard to stop me from screaming while he smiled mockingly.

He licked my cheek, bit my cheek and groaned, "Wow , it tasted nice on you" he groaned, winking at me yet they did not stop my body from shivering to his intimate advance.

He left me standing while he went to the chair. "Now go clean all this mess" he pointed to the floor and me. "And cook me a food within fifteen minutes" I sniffed, wiping my nose and eyes. In that process, I'd used pepper stained hands to rub my eyes and nose.

"Your fifteen minutes has started" he muttered, staring at me disgustingly.

I picked all the broken pieces, some pierced my fingers while some grazed my knees. I glanced at him so he would feel remorse or help but found nothing.

He turned his head to the other side, drumming his hands on the table as he gripped the glass cup in his hand.

I went to the kitchen, opened the tap. The water rushed out, making my wounded fingers sting while I winced.

When I was through with the new meal, I placed the food on the table and silently prayed to make him eat peacefully without any complaint.

I stood beside him as I fidgeted with my hands anticipatedly.

"Emmm ... Abdulrahman" I called timidly.

"What?!" He shouted with his mouth full.

"Ermm...you know" he slammed his fist on the table, making me flinched back.

"What the heck is your problem woman?" he snarled, "Can't I eat peacefully in my house again?" he yelled.

"Nothing" I stuttered.

He stood abruptly and backhanded me hard on my face while I tried to muffle the scream which wanted to escape due to the pain.

"Why can't you let me be at ease for once?" I received a blow on my stomach.

"I love you so much but all I received back from you is betrayal" he sneered while I cried.

"Oh S" cooed, caressing my cheek. "I hate seeing you cry," he said softly, his voice turned to octave.

"But" he gritted, "I want to let the world know you are mine from the beginning and you will be mine till the end." He stated dangerously.

"No one can love you as I do, you are mine" he stepped on my hand before walking out of the door, shouting 'I love you' as usual.

I crawled painfully to my room because I couldn't lift myself, as I wanted to enter the bathroom for the first aid kits, I heard my boy's cheerful voice making me smile painstakingly.

My pains worthed all that I was going through.

"Momma" he called excitedly but upon seeing my position, he dropped his toy car and hugged me.

"Momma, what happened?" He asked softly, caressing my cheek. A lone tear escaped from my eyes

"Oh, bibi don't cry" I sniffed, seeing my boy crying because of me.

"But momma, you cry?" He said, wiping the tears away.

"No bibi" I choked on tears while wiping my tears away.

"See momma is not crying" I laughed lightly.

"But momma, what happened?" He asked softly.

"Momma fell" I bit my tongue, I hated lying to him. I couldn't look at him because he was guilty.

"Momma lying?" He asked gently, weeping the bloodstain on my lips.

"No, why would momma lie?" I laughed awkwardly while he furrowed his eyebrows like he was thinking hard.

"Because when you said that, you were not looking at him" he caught me red-handed.

I smiled and hugged him, patted his back. I couldn't leave Abdulrahman because he made my baby happy. I couldn't break my baby's heart. I couldn't leave because I loved him.

I would be strong for my baby.

I needed to be strong for him.

I would be strong for myself also.

It was my challenge.

BK 2 chapter 8

I've been living constantly with fear of Abdulrahman. He loved me yet that didn't stop him from making my hell.

I sat down idly on my bed, humming an unknown tone while playing with my fingers when I heard him roar my name from the room. My body trembled with fear as I gulped down the anxiety I was feeling.

"SOPHIA" he yelled my name from downstairs. I dropped what I was doing and prayed silently to Allah to give him sabr*. I was scared, I didn't know what had gone wrong because he never called me by my name except if he was angry-- extremely angry. I rushed down the stairs; taking two steps as one. (Patience).

I saw him shaking in rage with a piece of paper in his hand, clenching his fist.

"Take" he gritted his teeth, holding the paper out to me. I didn't have time to stare at him before I collected quickly not wanting to anger him more.

I opened the paper, my eyes bulged out nearly out from the shock of terror as I gasped out, using my hand to cover my mouth. I shook in pure fear.

Dear my beating heart ; Sophia Alli,

How are you sweetheart?, it has been so long I've met you and heard from you. I missed you and miss you but worry less babe,I'm back. I'm coming for you .

Xxx

Yours completely.

"What is the meaning of this?" He took a menacing step towards me as my hands trembled and I was covered in fear. "You are planning to leave me?" He asked in a low voice before he chuckled darkly.

"No" I shook my head frantically for him to believe me but I knew that was impossible.

"How dare you S?" He grinded his teeth together, walking to me and shook me hard, making me feel dizzy before he slammed me against the wall. I groaned painfully, holding my head as I felt thick liquid oozing out from my forehead.

I am bleeding again. By this rate, I don't think I would have enough blood in my system, I thought bitterly.

He parabulated around me before he stopped and raised my head up to look at his eyes.

"Where is your phone?" he asked in a hard voice, I flinched from his hard tone.

"You have collected it from me," I replied shakily, not looking at him.

"You are lying Sophia" he tutted, caressing my cheeks softly, his eyes darkening, "where is the small phone with you?" He growled while I fidgeted with my fingers.

"emm..." I didn't know what to say.

How did he know?.

He has seized my cell phone since our wedding night, forbade me from calling anyone or seeing anyone.

"I know" he grinned manically, "you want to leave me?" He asked while I shook my head.

"Stop lying" he slapped me hard which I cried out from the impact of his hand. He yanked my hair in a tight grip as I thrashed around. It hurt. The pain intensified as I felt my head pound continuously. I just wanted everything to stop.

The pounding of my head intensified which made my consciousness fluctuate to and fro as black dot clothed my eyes making me blacked out.

~**~

"Momma" I heard a distant voice calling me which belonged to my son- Abdullah.

"Momma, what happened to your head?" I groaned, opening my eyes and my boy crouched down beside me with a worried gaze. I looked around disorientedly and noticed he left me at the ground where I fainted.

"Nothing bibi" I mumbled, trying to get up.

How can I tell my son that the person he adores as a father is not his father and he is the cause of my injuries. I thought sadly, fighting off the tears.

It would break me and him. He wouldn't trust me again that I lied to him about his father. Oh Allah, I hope I'm not making a mistake in staying in this marriage. I whispered.

"But momma, what happened to your head?" I touched my head and noticed the bleeding had stopped and dried. I sighed tiredly.

"Oh" I widened my eyes, "I'm getting old" I laughed nervously, "I didn't face where I was going and hit my head on the wall" I laughed awkwardly, patting his head.

"But momma, you've been falling or hitting the wall lately" he narrowed his eyes at me, telling me he wasn't buying my lame excuses.

"Almost everyday, you either hit or slip. By this rate I hope you won't fall on pooh" he grinned impishly and I laughed widely, wincing at the pain at my head.

I stood up slowly, walked to the fight as he trailed behind me before taking a seat on my lap. "How was school today?" I asked, removing his backpack.

"School was fun today" he grinned happily, "We were taught 'Table manners' today.

"Woah dear, what's table manners?" I raised my brows.

"Table manners, table manners. Wash your hands before eating, say bismillah before eating, eat with your right hand, eat from what is near to you, don't talk while eating, don't overfeed yourself, say alhamdulillah after eating and wash your hands after eating" he clapped and sang aloud excitedly.

I stared at my son's face and felt nostalgic about his father but I shook the feeling away. "You seem happy today?" I asked.

"Yes momma, I'm very happy" he grinned.

"Maa shaa Allah, Baraka llahu fih bibi" I smiled, "am I privileged to know the causes of your happiness?" I bowed dramatically while he waved his hand and giggled.

"It's Captain Z, he came today" I'd never seen my son smile so radiantly like this that I felt like crying happily.

I arched my eyebrows in confusion, "who is captain Z?" I asked curiously.

"Our teacher's husband" he answered, jumping happily on my lap.

"We played together and he taught us some games too" he filled in my curiosity.

"Maa shaa Allah" I exclaimed while I laughed widely at him because I could see the happiness shown clearly on his face.

"When am I going to meet that captain Z" I teased him, pinching his cheeks.

"Soon momma ,soon " he smirked.

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BK 2 chapter 9

Life had not been easy for me since I got married to Abdulrahman. I lived in a frightening life. He was a living-bomb, didn't know when he would explode. I was always free from his beating or abusive words when bibi was around.

I was deep in my thoughts; thinking about my life, from my marriage to Yusuf to Zainab, my father and Abdulrahman.

When the bell jingled, I sighed and shook off the bad memories. I opened the door and searched for the intruder but found nothing except a well-packaged box that had my name written on it.

I carried it inside then unwrapped it. I opened it and saw a different kind of jewellery and chocolate. I smiled, who knew that I liked chocolate.

I picked up the envelope that was attached to the box, I opened it but the content inside it made my breath hitch. I scrambled around trying to burn or throw it away and praying that Abdulrahman should not be back but it was like fate wasn't on my side. He entered smiling cheekily, when his eyes moved to the box on the couch and the envelope I was holding, his expression changed to fury. The letter trembled in my hand and he took a long stride to me, yanking the envelope from me. He opened and brought out the pictures of me smiling and a letter. He read out the letter.

Dear sweetheart,

Awalewami(my exceeding beautiful woman). How are you?I've missed you. I miss your smile that always reaches your eyes when smiling. I miss the twinkling of your eyes when you are excited and I miss the glistening in your eyes when thinking of doing mischief. I miss the nibbling of your lips when you are nervous and the fiddled of your fingers when you are scared. I miss the narrowness of your eyes when you are suspicious and the furrow of your eyebrows when You are trying to concentrate. I miss the scowl on your face when you are angry and the smugness in your voice when you win. I miss everything about your love. I'm coming back soon to retrieve you from him. Worry less babe, I'm going to return all the cheerfulness and happiness back to your life with your son. I love you Sophia Alli

Xoxo

Yours Truly.

He laughed maniacally when he finished reading it while holding his stomach. I shivered in fear.

"What's the meaning of this, my dearest wife," he said calmly, too calmly for the vibes - he was emitting.

"I don't know" I replied shakily, while he read and reread the letter again. As he was reading it, his jaw and his was clenched.

"Do I need to brand you or get you to the collar before this damned world knows that You are MINE" he snarled. He walked towards me and choked me but not hard for me to breathe but to leave bruises before he slammed me against the nearest wall. I howled in pain.

"Do I need to lock you up?, do I need to tattoo my name all over your body for them to know you are mine" he yelled, chanting 'mine' repeatedly.

He was releasing a dangerous aura, he stalked towards me like a predator to prey.

"I've known what I will do to you" he grinned sinisterly while I shook my head frantically. I wanted to protest "no" but it was like my vocal cord wasn't passing word through.

He dragged me by my hair towards the stair while rambling, "I need to show her, she's mine"

We reached where the rooms were but he dragged me towards the room he forbade me from entering. I scrambled away from him, thrashing around. I didn't know what was inside the room but the room sent a bad chill over all my body.

He unlocked the door and came to me, caressing my cheeks in a soothing way but it was making me hyperventilating. "MY sweet Sophy, I need to keep you from prying eyes" he growled.

He dragged me to the darkroom while I thrashed around, making the rough surface to graze me. I bit my lips hard to stop me from screaming in pain on my body and scalp.

"Please don't take me there" I pleaded while he raised his eyebrows at me.

"Yes, Darling, my sweet obedient wife. I know you can never cheat on me" I sighed in relief that he believed me but my relief was cut down when he said his next sentence," I need to do it" he said sadly.

He pushed me in and slammed the door shut behind him. The room was dark, I couldn't see anything before I heard a click sound- the light was on.

He carried me to the bed and dropped me like a sack on the bed. He used his right hand to hold me down on the bed while he used his left hand to tie my left hand on the bed. I tried to wiggle away but it was impossible before I bit him on his hand, making him growl in anger and frustration. He punched me on my eyes while I cried out in pain. My eyes were paining me, it was like my eyeball wanted to be removed from its socket.

He tied me down on the bed to every four sides of the bed. I cried and cried until there were no tears in my eyes.

I used three days in the darkroom without food but with a little water before he came to untie me.

~**~

"Your food is on the table," he said and left me in the house.

Before going down, I went to the bathroom and had my bathe not after seeing my black eye revelation in the mirror.

I went downstairs and took my food as I wanted to sit, the home phone rang. I dropped my food and rushed to it.

"Hello" I heard Maryam's unsure voice.

"Maryam" I greeted dully.

"Oh baby, I've been trying to contact you but your phone wasn't going through and I came to your house too, you were not around," she said.

"I was not around" I replied curtly.

"Where are you now?" She asked silently.

"I'm not at home," I replied quickly.

"Are you lying?" She asked suspiciously.

"No, why would I lie?" I laughed awkwardly.

"Okay, Sophia turns around," she said silently, immediately I whipped my head to the back and saw Maryam with her phone. I was shocked!.

"Ummm... I was going out now" I shuttered. I looked everywhere but not her. She would detect that I was lying.

"Okay," she said. I was surprised, she did not interrogate me.

I headed to the kitchen without raising my head.

"Take" I handed her the water. As I stretched my hand to give her the water, she helped my wrist by staring at it.

"What happened to your wrist," she asked, I noticed the rope mark was on my wrist.

"ERM..... The bangles I put on were tight, that was why it left a mark" I said sharply.

"This is unlike you. You don't put on bangles" she said, still holding my hand. I yanked my hand away from her.

"What I wear or not is not of your concern," I said coldly, mistakenly raising up my head. Maryam gasped, using her hand to cover her mouth.

"Who did this?" She growled, inspecting my body.

"I fell in my eyes... Behind the kitchen door" I lied again.

"Cut the crap Sophia" she yelled as I wanted to reply as the front door opened revealing Abdulrahman.

Maryam marched to him and punched him on his eyes.

"How dare you hurt her," she yelled. "I told you not to harm her but you beat her," he growled.

"Why won't I? She left me and now has some secret admirer" he replied nonchalantly.

Maryam came to me and tore my cloth, leaving me in my underwear. The scars on my body were prominent, showing clearly. I saw Abdulrahman flinched away.

"Do you know what she had passed through?" She asked softly. She held up my hand and showed him the scars. " She was abused by her father and now you are too. Do you think she can forget or love you" she mockingly.

"No one can love you. You crazy man" Maryam taunted while tears glistened in his eyes

"What?" His eyes widened while tears brimmed from my eyes.

"She is leaving you Now. I'm taking her to court" she said, taking her bag on the couch.

"For what?" He asked softly.

"Divorce you" she snarled.

BK 2 chapter 10

It had been a month since I'd left Abdulrahman's house. I sighed tiredly and rubbed my temple, I'd been feeling a slight headache. Abdulrahman used to visit once a week and pleaded for me to come back but I couldn't because I wanted him to know my worth.

Maryam visited me every weekday after work. I'd returned back to the office after I'd left it in care of my younger brother- Lut.

The person sending the letters was still a mystery. I received gifts and letters almost thrice in a week.

~**~

"Divorce you".

"No, she can't do that?" He said anxiously.

"She can't leave you, uhn?. You never make her happy except by adding pain to the opened scars." Maryam yelled at him.

"She can't leave me" he laughed nervously, looking at me skeptically waiting for me to reply but I didn't.

"You will leave me?" He asked while I turned away from him.

He fell on his knees and crawled to me. "Sophia please don't leave me, I love you. I'm a shattered man without you." He said agonizingly.

"No," I said coldly, my voice void of emotions. He looked astounded and happy while Maryam looked shocked, "I'm not divorcing you" I said firmly, then he stood and hugged me. "But..." I continued, "I need a space without you," I said not looking at him while his shoulder slumped.

"Sophia, please don't do this. I'm sorry, I've realised my mistake." Wheezed. "Please if you leave me, I will go crazy and I don't want to go back there again." He bawled. "You were the drug that always keeps me sane" he choked on tears. When you left me, I was chained for months; beating till I fell unconscious and resumed when I regained consciousness "he said frantically while I shuddered in fear.

How could someone be so cruel!.

"Please don't leave me, I swear to God, I've changed" he cried out.

"Even though I still love you but you've lost some part of me and you need to win me back" I sniffed, my heart was breaking inside with the steps I was taking away from him but I need to.

"Sophia, I love you. Please forgive me" I left the house without looking back.

When I and Maryam reached the car, I burst out in tears. I cried while Maryam patted my back gently, telling me everything would be alright.

"Maryam, I love him but.."I hiccupped while my lips trembled, "I'm afraid of him. He's a ticking time bomb. He loves me too" I crouched down.

"Yeah," she said sentimentally.

~**~

I was still reminiscing the incident when Abdullahi came and shouted behind me.

I jolted out of the past while releasing a frightened shriek, panting heavily. I was scared, my heart was pounding like it wanted to remove from the rib cage.

"Momma, what happened?" He asked, concerned.

I didn't know how this small baby knew when I was feeling good or not.

"Why?".

"Because you've been thinking too much lately. Is it because of Dada?", he furrowed his eyebrows while he continued," he will come home soon. He loves us" he said softly.

"When did you enter?" I changed the topic.

"Now" he shrugged his shoulder, "I've been saying Teslim and no one answered me," he said disappointedly.

"Sorry".

"Mom, what is today?" He asked cheerfully, beaming with happiness.

"Don't know?" I said dismissively.

How would I know!, when all I've been doing was crying and thinking!.

"Oops momma" he looked dejectedly.

"What?" I said confusedly.

"Even strangers remember today is my birthday" his voice wavered while tears gleamed in his eyes.

"I'm sorry bibi".

"You forget my birthday" he cried while I tried to shoo him.

I shook my head vigorously 'no', "how would I forget my baby's birthday?" I lied while he raised his head, smiling widely.

"I was just teasing you" I tapped him on his forehead.

"Momma, let's go to the pack. We've not been there lately" he grinned.

"Who is that stranger?" I raised my eyebrows inquisitively.

"Captain Z" stuck his tongue at me.

"Captain Z?" I asked inquisitively.

"Yes" he nodded," he said we should call him that," he said swirling his backpack around.

We headed out of the house going to the nearest entry to buy ice cream. He never stops talking about captain Z. He continued that captain Z was this and that. I couldn't wait to meet that mysterious captain Z of my son. After we ordered our ice cream and went out of the shop he danced and laughed widely as I laughed along too.

When was the last time I laughed happily without fear!.

I held his hand tightly because we were on the roadside. When he tugged my hand for attention. I whipped my head around and faced him," what is it Bibi?" I asked while he pointed to the other side of the road. I squinted my eyes because I didn't know what he was pointing to.

"Momma, see captain Z" he beamed excitedly. I squinted my eyes very well then I saw the person's back. The person's posture looked familiar. My chest beat frantically while I turned to the woman I was talking- wanting to leave her.

I released Abdullahi's hand while holding out my pulse to pay for the balloon. I turned to hold Bibi when I noticed he was running to another side of the road. I screamed loud because the incident was repeating itself. The balloon and the pulse, I was holding fell down from my hand while I stood still. My baby's body fell on the ground with a loud thud while everything seemed frozen because it happened slowly.

So much blood!.

My eyes were deceiving me!.

The same way his father died?. My thoughts were about highways.

Everyone was running to help him, calling an ambulance but here I was, still fighting with my brain to comprehend.

"No!" I screamed frantically, seeing my baby's blood paint the floor red.

"Abdullahi!" I released an agonizing scream.

BK 2 chapter 11

Everything happened in a blur, I felt the tightening in my chest, throat as well as shortness of breath while my hands clammed with sweat.

My eyes glued to the spot. Flashback of Yusuf's death replayed back as one of my favorite movies. My body felt like someone was controlling it and that nothing could save me. I just wanted to fade into nothingness. My breathing became shallow and hyperventilating, I began to shake while my mind went black, I was unable to think at all. I felt lightheaded and collapsed on the floor, crying uncontrollably and having breathing difficulties. My hands tensed up and went tingly from lack of oxygen due to hyperventilating.

No, I screamed internally in anguish.

I felt a warm hand, soothing my back and put me into a hug. I couldn't make out the person's shape or figure but the person looked familiar. The person instructed me to breathe in and out. After my breathing had been back to normal, the person left me alone. I felt cold instantly. I wanted to tell the person to stop but my voice wasn't working.

I heard the ambulance blaring from afar. I looked at my boy with my bloodshot, puffy, crying face on the ground; gasping for breath. He went pale and limp. A pair of hands pulled me back. His body was channelled onto the stretcher and into the ambulance with me. The van stack of sulphur-like chemicals. I sat on the provided bench with my sweaty hands clambered together while the paramedics seized up my boy for breathing.

Ya Allah, the King of kings, please save my boy. You are the one who heals, please save my son. You are the one who cured prophet Ayub sickness, please do save my son. I sobbed silently while muttering some prayers.

The road to the hospital was terrifying with every pothole the ambulance bumped in, made my anxiety reeled up.

Oh Allah, the Creator creators please save one of your creations. Oh Allah, the lord of west and east please save my son. Oh Allah, don't....,I bit my lips to stop where my thoughts were going

As we reached the hospital, the stretcher in which my boy was strapped to was rushed inside the hospital with the nurses running up and down to attend to the emergency.

I ran to the doctor and held his hand, "please save my baby" I pleaded hoarsely. "Please, save him" I whispered, clutching the doctor's sleeve.

"We will try our best ma'am but Allah is the only one who could save your baby" he replied shortly before he entered the ER (emergency room) for medical intervention.

I've been walking to and fro the ER, praying and crying before I saw Abdulrahman, Maryam, mom and Lut walking to me.

I burst out another wave of tears.

I was scared!.

Expect the unexpected!.

Abdulrahman came to me and pulled me in a comforting hug while I accepted it without missing a bit.

I needed it desperately!.

I wailed in pain while hitting him on his chest, biting my lips and in and out breathing was hard.

"Wi--will h--ee be ooookay?" I hiccupped while he soothed and rocked my back.

"Sophia, he will be okay. Remember the boy is strong" Maryam joked softly but I didn't see it as a joke.

"Sis, my nephew is fine. He is coming back" my younger brother - Lut assured me, smiling softly.

"Yes, he will be," Abdulrahman replied, his voice wavered while sniffing and biting his lips. I knew he was trying to be strong for me and my baby.

I don't think I would be able to be myself again if anything happened to my baby, I cried.

I smiled at them for having faith where I had lost mine.

After several hours of waiting at the ER door, still, the doctor wasn't out. I started to feel a wave of panic again.

Is he okay?.

What is delaying them?.

Has he de--ad?. No, it can be?!, I shook my head vigorously.

My boy is strong.

Maybe he has a d.....

No way!.

The door was opened and a doctor came out with a worry expression. I stood abruptly while leaning on Abdulrahman. My chest tightened, I choked on sob thinking of the worst.

"How is my son? is he okay?" I asked panickedly.

"Ma'am" I held my breath, " your son is okay" I exhaled, "but.." My heart beats raised.

"But what?" Abdulrahman asked, soothing my back.

"He has lost a lot of blood. We need a blood transfusion from his father within twenty-four hours or what we are saying, won't be what we will be saying" the doctor stated while I screamed as Abdulrahman continued to rub my back. I was very grateful he was here because I didn't know what to do without his support.

"I'm his father," Abdulrahman said. The doctor glanced from him to me, I tugged his cloth while he looked at me with tears glistening in his eyes.

He left with the doctor to the laboratory but came out after some minutes, looking down.

"What's wrong," I asked urgently, feeling scared as my anxiety spiked up.

"Nothing, the doctor said my blood wasn't compatible with his" that was all I heard before I collapsed on Abdulrahman's hand.

~**~

He stood in the hallway; watching the scene before him. He was sad because Sophia was sad yet angry because the excuse of a man - Abdulrahman - was comforting whereas he was supposed to be the one.

He helped her with her panic attack earlier and called for the ambulance. He wanted to stay with her then but he didn't want to uncover himself.

He took his phone out from his pocket and dialled a number.

"Hello doc," he said goofily.

"Find suitable blood for the child. And if the boy dies, All your family members will pay for it" he said dangerously and hung up.

"I'm coming for you soon Sophia" he whispered to himself and left.

BK 2 chapter 12

Here I was sitting in the doctor's office nervously, the doctor requested to see me in his office.

"Hello ma'am", he greeted me with a small smile while taking off his coat. I nodded my head in acknowledgment and slumped down on my seat.

"The reason I called you here was because of your son's health" my heart spiked at the mention of my son's name.

"What's wrong" my voice croaked, it reflected my feelings.

"Well, thank God. A good Samaritan donated his blood, luckily it matched your son's own" he smiled lightly while I grinned widely in return happily.

Alhamdulillah!, my son is okay.

"When is he getting discharged," I asked excitedly, I couldn't contain the immense joy I was feeling. I'd missed my boy so much.

"He will be discharged soon but we need to carry out some tests because he might be having some internal injuries" he responded while I hummed.

"When will that be," I asked anxiously.

"Today, when he regains consciousness" he replied shortly then continued," he will be having CT (computerized tomography); a test performed for any traumatic brain injury. It's a scan with a series of x-ray to detail the view of the brain or quickly visualizing fractures and uncover shreds of evidence of bleeding in the brain" he explained, adjusting the rim of his glasses.

I left his office to the waiting room for sometime before standing outside while the nurse wheeled my son out of the ICU to another room - I guessed the test room.

Abdullah has been transferred to another room and I was called back to the new room with my boy unconscious on the bed, breathing softly.

"When some get in an accident like your son, sometimes, some have external injuries like; fracture of the leg or hand while some have internal injuries like; hearing loss, memory loss, speech disorder - and that's very dangerous" he looked at me warily while I nodded my head for him to continue.

"Ma'am, please can I ask you something," he asked sceptically.

"Yeah" I replied softly while using my hands to hug myself.

"Do you have any ideas on speech disorders?" He asked, jotting something down on his clipboard.

I raised my brow, "No" I replied softly.

Why is he asking me this?.

What happened to Abdullahi?.

I hope he...

"Ma'am!" I jerked away from my thought while the doctor shot me a disapproving look, eyes narrowing slightly.

"Sorry" I smiled sheepishly, slumped on my seat wishing to evaporate or dissolve to nothingness.

"Speech disorder has three different levels of classification when determining the types and the proper treatment or therapy,1) sound the patient can produce; phonetic or phonemic. 2) stimulate sound; easily stimulated or stimulated after the demonstration. 3) cannot produce the sound; cannot be produced voluntarily or no production ever observed" he said looking at me while adjusting his glasses again.

"There are different types of speech disorder - Apraxia of speech; may result from stroke or progressive illness, and involves inconsistency production of speech sound and rearranging the sound in words. Example in a case of a person wanting to say; potato not it may come out topota or tatopo. Production of words becomes more difficult with effort, but common phrases may be spoken spontaneously without effort." I gawked at him in surprise. I've never heard anything like that before in my three decades.

Upon all, I'm grateful to Allah that I don't have any speech disorders.

"Then there is Cluttering; it is the opposite of stuttering, a speech and fluency disorder characterized primarily by a rapid rate of speech, which makes speech difficult to understand" I cut him off abruptly, knitting my brows in confusion.

"I don't understand you" I furrowed my brows.

"What I meant is that those people with this disorder, talk faster without full stop like (my name isabdulkjdsgkkzkkjlkl)" he said in a breath while I nodded in understanding then gestured for him to continue.

"We have Dysantria; weakness or paralysis of speech muscles caused by damage to the nerve or brain. It's often caused by stroke, Parkinson's disease Als, head or neck injuries, surgical accident, or cerebral palsy. Then we have Stuttering; Is a problem that interferes with fluent (flowing and easy) speech. A person who stutters may repeat the first syllable in a word (as in ra-ra-rabbit) or hold a single sound for long (baaaaaaaaall). There's Muteness, Dysprosody, voice disorder, speech sound disorder and so more." He waved his hand dismissively before he continued, "some of this disorder may connect to hearing loss" he sighed, rubbing his face.

"People with a speech disorder may be frustrated with how they speak or always complain, especially those who stutter when the listener tries to complete their sentences. Or the listener pitied them by saying 'slow down' or 'take it easy'. While some people tend to look at them with pity or avoid looking at them. And people with the disorder often open to being bullied and have low self-esteem" the doctor stared at me while I watched my boy who was sleeping peacefully on the bed.

"Why are you telling me all these?" I asked in a low voice which resonated around the room. I fiddled with my fingers anticipating for him to reply.

"Because" he drew out slowly, "we think your son has a stuttering problem due to the accident" he smiled softly at me then he walked out, leaving me to wallow on my sadness. I used my hands to clamp my mouth shut from crying out, I sobbed gently while my body shook.

My baby has a stuttering problem. I thought sadly.

It was my fault if I've not taken him out that day. I sobbed silently.

I walked to my body and touched his cold cheeks adorably while sniffing, hot tears were streaming down from my eyes to his while I used my free hand to wipe them away.

I turned around as I reached the doorknob to open, I heard my baby's croaked voice making me rush to him and cry my eyes out.

"Mo-mo-momma I'm o-o-okay".

BK 2 chapter 13

Abdullahi was discharged two weeks after going through some tests. The doctor has appointed him to a speech therapist; the disorder could be short or long term.

He had been on bed rest for a month at home, I never let him out even at school. I locked him up and he had been pestering me on it while I always shrugged it off.

"Mo-mom-ma, I'm fiiiiine!. I don't liiiike staaaaying iiin beeeed" he whined.

"You need more rest baby," I told him softly, pinching his chubby cheek.

"I'm fine" He grumbled, "buuuut schooool?" His eyes lit up.

"No school" I grinned at him, "I'm gonna homeschool you" I replied while crunching plantain chips. He stretched his hand to pick but I swatted his hand away and stuck my tongue out.

"Noooooo" he exclaimed with wide eyes, "moooomma you can't teach me" he pouted, down casting his eyes.

"Why" I gawked at him then he put the chips in my mouth.

"Youuu have work" he smiled innocently.

"No work for me" I replied sweetly.

"Whaaat of my friiieendss and claaaasss maaaate?" He asked confusedly.

This was the question I'd been avoiding. How would I tell him 'I didn't want him to be mocked or bullied?. I would rather have him homeschooled than to be subjected to being bullied.

"Mooooooom!" He called, I jerked away from my thought.

I used my hand to rub my eyes, tiredness has been watching over me. "You are not going to school anymore," I said gently.

"Nooooo" he screamed, "whaaat of myyyy teeeacheeer and friieeendss?" He cried breathing heavily, "whaaat of captain Z" he started to hyperventilate while I panicked and touched his chest and stroked it gently, telling him to calm down.

"Shh, baby your friends will come to visit you"

"Buuut whaaaat captain Z?" He said while his eyes twinkled with happiness.

"No captain Z," I said sternly.

"Whyyy moooomma" his voice broke.

"You've been at home since a month and used three weeks in the hospital, your captain Z has come to visit you" I replied trying to keep my tone.

"Buuuut he came " as he was talking I felt a wave of annoyance watching over me, "he toooold me he miiiissed me that I should open my eyes," he said with adoration.

"And captain Z.." I cut him off

"Shut up" I shouted at him, he flinched away. Tears glistened in his eyes.

"This captain Z that captain Z. He never visits you at the hospital" I yelled, "he never visits you at home too, not bothering about you not being in school." I was breathing heavily with all the words I was saying.

"Heeeeee caaaame" he whispered.

"I don't bloody care!" I screamed, "he came or not." I stood up now.And he was the reason you were in an accident " I yelled. "And let this be the last time you utter that name again" I gritted. "The name is forbidden for you to utter" I screamed. After I was done with my scolding, I looked at my boy, seeing him biting on his lips trying to muffle the cries. My heart broke.

I shouted at him.

It was the first time.

"Baby, momma is..." He didn't let me finish before he ran outside.

I let him be, I needed to cool down. I supposed to not have shouted at him.

After an hour I went outside and saw him behind the tree. His face was puffy, mucous was running in his nose. When he saw me, he turned his back to me.

"Baby, momma is sorry" I whispered, crouching to his size.

"I didn't mean to shout at you. I was just frustrated and tired..." He didn't let me talk before he lunged his arm around my neck; crying.

"Mooommma, I'm sorry for making you sad," he said while I patted him.

"Momma too" I pecked him all over his face while he giggled out.

We'd settled our differences.

As I carried him up, my phone dings, I brought it out and saw a message.

Dear S,

Are you free tonight? I wanted to take you out.

Xxx

Abdulrahman

I read Abdulrahman's message out while Abdullahi was trying to peek to look at my phone.

"Baby, I'm going somewhere with Dada tonight" I beamed excitedly while he nodded his head in understanding.

"I will go stay with Nana but moooma make sure you bring Dada home," he said while laughing and ran inside.

~**~

"Enter Milady" he smiled cheekily, showing his perfect dimples.

My heart raced over miles, I'd missed him.

His breath.

His Cologne.

His arms.

His everything.

I dropped Abdullahi at my mom's place while I waited for him at the nearest bus stop.

I slid into the front while he turned and sat on his seat.

He moved closer to me, I thought he wanted to kiss me, I closed my eyes instinctively. I waited patiently while wetting my lips but all that I heard was the click of the seatbelt. He chuckled lightly while I was embarrassed.

"Where are we going," I asked looking at the window.

"Where do you think?" he teased smugly.

"Whatever" I grumbled.

We didn't say anything until we arrived at a cosy restaurant.

He opened the door for me and linked out arks together.

"Welcome to the Pauline restaurant" the waiter greeted, smiling and showing his teeth.

"Table for two" he replied.

The waiter pointed to our table and we walked there. He let me sit down first before he slumped on his own.

"I'm sorry," he said while I looked at him dumbfounded.

"It is not like all those big restaurants but I assure you that they have good food here," he said softly.

I laughed lightly, "it's beautiful, I love it". I told him with sincerity.

"A minute," I said, I needed to go to the ladies to rehearsal my killer seductress.

As I walked not looking up, I collided with a strong well-framed chest, I fell back waiting to fall on the ground but fell on a strong warm arm .

I opened my eyes and all the colour drained from my face.

Bk 2 chapter 14

I was shocked would be an understatement. I looked pale the moment I saw his face.

His arm still snaked around me, I struggled to get out of his arm but he smirked at me and pulled me harder to him.

He is alive!.

I couldn't believe it?.

How?.

"Are you okay?" he smiled while his eyes twinkled with mischief.

I scrambled away from him and went to the gents while my heart was beating erratically.

I rushed to the basin, I splashed water on my face. And I cleaned the bead of sweat on my face while looking at the mirror. I saw a shadow flashed at the mirror, I turned back quickly but found nothing.

Maybe I am hallucinating!.

I splashed some water again on my face, as I was raising my head, I saw another image flashed again. I gripped the basin tightly with my trembling hands.

Am I going crazy?!.

I needed to tell Abdulrahman to let us go home, I couldn't stay here again or else I would be crazy.

As I turned to go, I saw him holding out my handkerchief while I released a gasp.

"Shocked to see me, love?" He said slyly. I took a step back while he took one forward. He was stalking me.

I ran to the door, I held the doorknob trying to open it but found it was locked.

He has locked me in!.

He trapped me!.

He chuckled loudly while walking towards me. "Why are you running from my love?" I raised my hands to push him away but he used his hand to caged my hands to the wall.

He trapped me!.

"Don't you miss me?" He held my chin up while looking at me. "I've missed you," he said softly while putting his head between the croak of my neck and he groaned.

"I've been watching you" he kissed me on my cheek trailing it down to my neck," searching for an opportunity to meet you but don't know how" he licked the tears that were escaping from my eyes," but look at fate, he let us meet coincidentally " he laughed. He frowned when he noticed the tears on my face, he released my hands and stepped back. "Are you not happy to see me back?" He asked softly while he tried to touch my cheek but I flinched away.

I've left everything behind, why does he choose now to come back!.

"I'm sorry Sophy, I don't mean to make you cry" he raised his hands.

"Why," I asked and crouched on the ground. "Why did you come back? Why did you come back? are you back to make my life hell?" I screamed in anguish.

"I'm back to claim what is mine!" He shouted," I'm back for my love, I'm back for the purpose of my life" he turned his back to me.

"I was never yours, I'm not yours and I'll never be yours!" I whispered lightly but he heard.

As I said that he looked tense before he clenched his fist," you are mine since the beginning and you will always be mine" he gritted. "Only death can separate us" he growled lowly.

"Go now Sophy" he spat angrily," but remember " he took a step, "no matter where you can be" he dragged the words, "no matter where you are " he smirked while looking at my shaking form, "you are always Mine " he pushed me to him and kissed my forehead.

He unlocked the door and went out not before asking me if I liked all his gifts and messages.

I ran out of the gents, looking at my back maybe he could be behind. Abdulrahman stood up when he saw my disoriented figure.

"What happened?" He asked worriedly.

"I'm okay" my hands were trembling when I held his suit, I was crumbling it.

"Please let's go home" I pleaded with tears glistened in my eyes. I needed to wash his touch away from me.

I felt dirty.

"Why? don't you like their food?Was it...? He rambled.

"No" I shouted at him, "I said I want to go home " I yelled. "Please just take me home" I sobbed uncontrollably.

"Okay," he said sadly while he tried to touch my back but I swatted his hand away. "Don't touch me because I'm not clean?" I said.

The car ride was filled with uncomfortable silence. Abdulrahman tried to make conversation with me but I didn't reply.

I got down from the car, he opened his own door too and came out.

"Let me walk you to the door?" He asked unsurely.

"No, thanks for today" I sniffed, "but can you please tell Maryam to come tonight? " I asked.

"Okay, bye," he said and went away.

I entered the house and on the light, I walked inside lightly. I was afraid of meeting him inside.

When I found nothing, I was just paranoid for nothing. I went to the kitchen to take water. When I was done, I took a glass of water with me to the sitting room but upon getting there I saw an envelope that wasn't there before and I gasped while the glass of water fell and shattered on the ground.

I walked trembling on the shattered glass on the floor but felt nothing, I took the envelope and opened it with shaky hands. Different pictures of me scattered on the floor with a letter; the picture of me bathing, the picture of me creaming my body, the picture of me smiling. I opened the letter and it said,

"Remember Sophy, you are mine"

At that moment the front door opened revealing Maryam. I ran to her and hugged her while crying.

"He's back Maryam, he's back to take him" I hiccupped.

Maryam patted my back and took me to the couch to sit. I sat down and narrated everything to her unknowing of the other presence in the room. Maryam shooed me and soothed me, as I raised my head up, I saw the shaking volcano- Abdulrahman seething and clenching his fist.

"Who is he?" His voice boomed out.

"I said who is he, Sofiyyah Alli," he gritted my full name.

"ermmm... It's...".

(I think of stopping here but I don't want to. Maybe I should stop here *grinning*)

"It's Khaleed, my stepsister- Zainab's husband. The man my father sold me to" I yelled at them and ran upstairs.

BK 2 chapter 15

I ran to my room hastily without glancing back at the people I left in the sitting room. I banged the door loudly after me and slumped down the door.

Why me?!.

Why can't I be free for once?!.

The pounding on the door intensified, never ceased to stop as I was hearing Maryam and Abdulrahman the other side of the door, urging me to open but I didn't answer them. By the time they realized I would not answer their request by opening the door, they left me alone to wallow in my self-pity.

"Ya Allah!, why?" I sobbed loudly, hot tears streaming down my cheeks with my fingers trembled.

"These are too much for me, I never pray for these oh Allah" I went on. "Ya Allah, I know this is my challenge, please help me. You are the one who saved prophet Yunus inside the belly of the fish. Please help me. Give me steadfastness, perseverance and patience in my belief and faith" I prayed silently with tears brimming out of my eyes.

I stood up to pray to Allah because he is the all hearer and the seer. He knows what I want and what I need. He heard my prayers. And I remembered my mom's saying "when you are; depressed, sad, heartbroken or don't have the will to move on, just read the words of Allah, it will ease you".

"Allah I'm overcome, come thou my help. Surely, I know with every difficulty is ease, Allah please ease my affairs. And it is written in the Quran that ' no evils befall on the earth nor in your souls, but it is in a book before we bring it into existence. Surely that's easy to Allah: so that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you; and Allah doesn't love any arrogant booster'. Allah forgive me for all what I've missed or misdo, ya Allah you are the most forgiver and the most pardoner." I whispered silently. No need for me shouting, because Allah knew what I wanted to say before saying it. And Allah said 'And certainly We created man, and We know what his mind suggests to him, and We are nearer to him than his life-vein'.

Sometimes what you needed might not be what you wanted, and what you wanted might not be what you needed but He knew what your heart desired.

"Ya Allah, grant me my heart desires".

After I was done with my nafilah (two volunteer prayers), I went to the kitchen to quench my thirst after so many cries. When Abdulrahman saw me entering the kitchen, he stood up and walked towards me.

"Sophia, I understand," he murmured softly, "no need of talking. We are going to pass through, it's just an obstacle that needs to be solve" he patted my hands and pecked my forehead which lingered.

"Your mom has called earlier," he informed me.

"What did you tell her," I asked with hoarseness in my voice.

"I told her.." I cut him off, "please don't tell her anything. I don't want to bother her with this" I whispered.

"I understand. Come here dear" he motioned for me to come nearer.

He took my hand and made me sit on the couch. He held me closer to him, making me snuggled to his chest, the rhythm and of his heart, luring me soothingly.

He read some verses of the Qur'an to me softly, my heart was content, my tensed shoulder was eased with the recitation and I was lured to a peaceful dreamless sleep.

~**~

"Mom I'm not goi-ng to that scho-ol a-gain" Abdullah huffed angrily and sat beside me.

"What happened Bibi?" I took his hand and drew him towards it. I caressed his face while pecking him all over his face.

"My class-ma-te are moc-king me be-cause of my tal-king" he muttered.

Oh, my baby!.

My heart bleeds.

My baby!.

"Who?" I asked with concern.

"The tea-chers al-so moc-ked me, they won't stop them. Tea-chers don't a-llow me to talk be-cau-se I a-a-am" he was sobbing profusely, "dis-tur-bing" he was breathing heavily. He needed to breathe orelse he would go into a panic attack.

"Abdullah sweetie, breath for mom," I instructed worriedly.

"No-ooo mooooommmy" his eyes dilated, his chest heaving vigorously.

"Ch-es-t pa-in-ing" he touched his chest painfully, smacking his chest softly.

"Baby breath!" I cried out while shaking him.

"I I I cannot breathe".

"In baby" he inhaled.

"Out baby" he exhaled.

"That is it, baby, breath for mom," I said softly, patting his hands.

When he had relaxed, I cradled him on my lap while peppering all his face with kisses.

He is alright and fine!.

Nothing happened.

My baby is okay!.

My baby!.

"Mo-mmy crying?" He asked softly.

I wiped my tears quickly, shaking my head, "no baby, something entered my eyes" I sniffled.

My baby is my life!.

He is my everything!.

Alhamdulillah he's okay!.

I couldn't have him sick again!, I thought.

"Mo-mmy do-n't cry be-cau-se of me. I hate see-ing you cry-ing. I'm a bad ch-ild. It's a bad ch-ild who ma-kes his pa-rents to cry, " he said dejectedly, staring at the floor unhappily.

"No baby,you are the best baby any parents will ever wish for" I kissed his forehead adorably. Staring at him happily.

My living dua*!.(prayers).

I was really grateful to Allah for blessing me with him.

"A-bout scho-ol..." he said, pouting his lips.

I cut him off, I didn't want him to get into another fit of panic attack.

"What should we do today?" I changed the subject.

"Cartooon" he beamed with happiness.

Alhamdulillah, he had forgotten but he would soon ask of it again.

BK 2 chapter 16

"Are you going?" He asked me for the nth time.

Abdulrahman came early to check on me whether I was doing great or not.

I told him I was going to Abdullah's school to meet the headmaster. He said the headmaster needed my attention.

"Is it necessary?" He whined, "can't you go out with me today".

"Abdulrahman!, I said this earlier that I was needed in his school and you didn't tell me you are coming today" I raised my brow to validate my point.

"Huff, but Sophia I wanted to talk to you" he resat on the couch, facing me.

"What do you want?," I asked him.

"Sophia, sincerely I've changed, I'm now a changed man. Please forgive me for all I've done. I can't change it but I can make the present" he pleaded. I sighed tiredly and pinched the bridge of my nose.

"I've heard but please let me be back from Abdullah's school" I replied.

"Should I tag along?" He asked, buckling up his shoes.

"Yeah, if you want to babe" I winked.

"I'm going to shower, I'm coming," I said walking to the door.

"Should I come and join you?" He grinned.

"In your dream honey," I said sarcastically while the grin wiped off from his face.

"You are now a tease S" he groaned while I smirked at him.

~**~

"Assalamualaikum ma'am and sir, you are welcome to At-Tawheed school" the receptionist greeted us.

"Walaikum Salam warahmotullahi wabarakatuh" I replied.

"How may I help you," she asked.

"I'm Abdullah's mother, it was said that the headmaster wanted to see me" I replied.

"Okay ma'am, let me call him," she said and took the line phone.

"It's Abdullah's mother".." she's waiting here"...," she should come in?", "Okay sir" she finished the call.

"Ma'am, you are free to go" she smiled cheekily at me.

I went straight to the headmaster's office while Abdulrahman trailing behind me mumbled some words under his breath, "stupid school rules,

ewk!".

When we got to the door I knocked on the door softly and heard 'come in'.

"Assalamualaikum ma'am, welcome" the headmaster stood from his seat and motioned for two free armchairs for us to sit.

"Walaikum Salam warahmotullahi wabarakatuh" we replied in unison.

"I've been meaning to talk to you about your son," he said while I nodded for him to continue.

"Abdullah is a smart and intelligent kid, he has a sense of humanity" he smiled," he wises more than his age and is a very inquisitive child. He wants to know and learn more" he said.

I smiled sheepishly because I knew it was through, my boy behaved like an adult. He was responsible and protective. He was what you could ask for in a child.

"Well, the reason for this talk is that I don't want you to feel disheartening. I think your boy is not suitable for this school anymore. I think he needs a special school" as he finished his talk, I stood up abruptly clenching my fist.

"How dare you!" I shouted I couldn't keep it in anymore. "My boy doesn't need a special school, he's alright and okay" I gritted my teeth.

"Ma'am, calm down," he said softly, "what I meant was that your son stuttering is affecting the students" he replied calmly.

"My son is not disabled" I shook my head," my son is perfectly fine, just because of his stuttering that doesn't mean he's not human" I cried.

"Ma'am.."

"Shut the crap, stop calling me ma'am. You stood there doing nothing while my son was being bullied and making jokes. And you call yourself a headmaster" I huffed, "you are nothing but a piece of excuse" I bang my fist on his table. He flinched back.

"Even though my son is disabled, does he mean he'll not be successful. Why do we humans look down upon those who are disabled? They have feelings and emotion. They can sympathize, empathize. They have blood running through their stream. Why!. Why can't we take them for who they are? Just because they are disabled doesn't mean they can't feel. Yeah!, I know my son is stuttering but nobody knows whether you'll be the one in his position" my body shook while sobbing.

"Why can't he be with his peers and friends he has known from a young age. Why did you allow my boy to be isolated" Abdulrahman was patting my back softly and whispering for me to calm down?

"Is my boy not human? Why should I push him away to the disabled school?" I whispered, "I can leave my boy, he's my everything, my strength, my power. He's the reason I'm moving on when I wish to give up" I cried, clutching my chest. My breathing changed, it was like the air was seized, I couldn't inhale or exhale.

"My--bo-y" Abdulrahman shooed me.

"S, issokay, breath in and out for Abdullah," he said softly.

"In" I breathed in.

"Out" I breathed out.

When I felt my breathing return, the headmaster asked, "are you alright ma'am".

I glared at him, "Just give me the withdrawal letter, I'm a boy and there is no more school here" I sneered.

"Okay ma'am, let me take you to his class".

As we entered Abdullah's class, I noticed his female teacher was glaring at me.

What's her deal, I thought.

"Moooom" my boy squealed at me before he jumped at the arm.

"Baby" I kissed him all over his face, before putting him down.

"What a-re you do-ing here mo-om" I'd forgotten I was in the middle of the class before I heard the class erupted in laughter.

I raised my head and saw the class were making fun of my boy. I was angry and super annoyed.

I marched to the teacher angrily," can I have a moment with you" I seethed.

"Yeah" she scowled back.

"My baby..." She cut me off rudely.

"What are you doing here, nobody wants you. Why are you here? Plans wrecker" she snarled, looking around frantically," he can't even remember you because..."

The door opened, I was backing the door, "mom me-et cap-tain Z" I heard my boy's happy voice.

As I stared up, I was shocked and surprised, my breathing hard. Dizziness washed over me.

Not again, I thought. Shaking my head furiously.

My chest constricted, everything was turning. I couldn't see anything clearly.

I must be going crazy!

And I mumbled out a word that I'd buried deep down my soul.

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"Yusuf" and everything went black.

BK 2 chapter 17

I woke up groggily, I groaned tiredly, scrutinizing my eyes. The ray of light was too bright. The smell of disinfectant made my heart constrict.

I hated the smell of the hospital!.

I hated hospitals!.

They held too many unwanted memories.

But wait!.

Yusuf!.

Yusuf was alive!.

Where was he since all these years!.

My eyes sting with unshed tears. I felt turned and betrayed.

He left me.

He didn't want me.

Why couldn't he divorce me and tell me he wasn't doing it again?.

Why did he make me suffer so much?.

What have I done so wrong?.

I cried silently in my palms, my body trembling with different kinds of emotions.

I heard footsteps coming closer to me but I didn't raise my head. I wasn't ready to face the reality and truth that Yusuf was alive.

It must be a dream.

I must be hallucinating with all that was happening.

"Mom" I heard my boy's voice calling me out of my misery.

"Uhn?".

"Arrre youu crying," he asked softly, I knew he wasn't the only one in the room.

"No baby" I sniffed, "something entered mom's eyes" I hated lying to my boy. I raised my head up slowly, using the opportunity to quickly wipe any trace of tears away from my face. I knew my eyes would give away that I'd been crying because how red bloody shot it was and puffy.

"How are you feeling ma'am," he asked in his manly deep voice which made me freeze in my position.

My eyes brimmed with eyes, I bit my lips hard to stop it from trembling.

From wifey to ma'am.

From best friend to stranger.

It hurt so much, for the person you care and love should deny you.

It hurt to be rejected.

I heard my boy's voice in the background telling me he would be outside.

I stood on my shaking legs and went to him, holding my breath. I needed to know if he was real. That I wasn't imagining it.

I touched his face with my shaking hands before whispering out "Yusuf".

He held my hand away from his face gently, "ma'am, it is very nice to meet you at last. Your son said to do much about you but I'm sorry to meet you like this and by the way" he wrinkled his nose, "I'm not Yusuf ma'am" he smiled softly at me before he continued, "My name is Zubair that's why my pupils called me captain Z".

My broken heart broke into millions of pieces. I wailed loudly, hitting him on his chest.

Where was he since all these executing years of pains?

He hurt me.

He is not Zubair!.

He is lying!.

He is my Yusuf!.

I must be going crazy!.

Yusuf died, he was announced dead at the hospital then why was he standing here?

Could a dead body wake?!.

No that was impossible!.

I screamed again, "my Yusuf is alive and doesn't want me" I shook my head in denial.

"Ma'am are you OK" he moved forward to touch me but I shouted at him to stop.

I hate being lied to!.

He denies me!.

"What's happening here?" I heard my son's teacher's voice from a distance.

"Wifey, I don't know" I flinched away, as he called her wifey.

The name he used to call me.

His endearing name for me.

The name I thought was the only mine.

The name I thought was special.

The name... I screamed again holding my heart.

It hurts everywhere, especially my heart.

My heart bleeds.

"She continued calling me Yusuf and I told her I'm not," he said to her, "is she crazy", he asked in a hushed voice but I heard him.

Was I crazy?.

No!, I wasn't.

He was my Yusuf.

"Hello ma'am, you are Abdullah mother right?. Sorry to meet you in the position" she rolling her eyes, "but I'm Khadijah, Zubair's fiance and his soon to be wife by next two weeks" she sneered at me before she dragged Yusuf by his arm and walked out.

My world collapsed.

My soul shattered.

My legs gave out and I fell on my ass. I used my hands to cover my mouth trying to muffle my son.

Soon after that my mom, Abdulrahman, Maryam entered. My mom rushed to me patting my back gently, talking to me in a soothing comfortable voice but it didn't relieve me. I was in pain.

I was pained emotionally, mentally also.

"Mom he's alive" I sobbed.

"Shhh, it's OK" mum shooed me.

"No mom, he was alive since all these years and he does not remember me" as I said that mom didn't look at me but before she turned her head her eyes swirled with guilt.

I took in a breath, calming myself down, "mom what are you not telling me?" I asked meekly, afraid of her response.

"Nothing" she bit out.

"Then why are you not looking at me in the eyes," I asked, looking at others. They stood some feet away but did not look at me.

"Mom, look me in the eyes and tell me it's nothing" I ordered.

She glanced up, her eyes were filled with unshed tears. "I'm sorry baby" she clamped her mouth.

"What are you sorry about?" I wondered.

"I've hurt you, I hate lying to you but I need to protect both of you" " she sobbed.

"Mom explains, I don't understand," I said.

"We know, we all know he was alive" as I heard her confession, I detached myself away from her quickly as if she burnt me.

I felt betrayed.

"You know," I asked weakly to be sure of what I heard and she nodded in confirmation.

I gulped, swallowing the thick lump in my throat before laughing like a maniac. I clutched my stomach while laughing because it hurt but I needed to laugh then tears began to prick from my tear duct.

I couldn't freaking believe it.

I couldn't comprehend.

No one to trust.

"what of you?" I faced Maryam.

She looked away shamefully before whispering out "yes".

I grinned widely while sniffing, "and you call yourself a sister".

"And you too?" I asked Abdulrahman.

"Yes, but it was recent. I was told when you fainted" he grumbled.

I was surrounded by betrayals.

I was kept in the dark for so long.

"We are sorry Sophia, he lost his memory and couldn't remember you because he hit his head" mom tried to reason with me. But that didn't justify their betrayals.

It hurt so much, being betrayed by loved ones.

I felt suffocated about how I was seeing them in the same room with me.

Mom crouched to my level and touched me. I flinched away before shouting "don't touch me".

All of them disgusted me.

"Get out" I yelled at them, they still stood their ground looking at me with tears in their eyes.

I didn't care.

I was hurting.

"Get out" I yelled again, throwing anything within my arm's length at them.

I shouted. I wanted to vest my frustrations, hurt, betrayals out.

They lied.

They deceived me.

They made me a soulless lady.

"Please let us explain," mom said but I was having that.

"Out ".

"It was not our fault, it was his parents' ideal because....", I shut the door on them, and didn't let them finish.

I didn't need an explanation.

They were all betrayals.

They broke my trust.

They shattered my soul.

Then I heard the voice again. The dark voice, the voice that taunted my dreams, that always gave me chills and sleepless nights.

"You are nobody, no one will love you".

It was true I was nobody.

I was no one.

BK 2 chapter 18

I'd been discharged from the hospital a week ago, I'd been indoors since then. Always locked my door.

Mum had been trying to get me out of my room, trying to talk to me but it hurt. I couldn't look her in the eyes without feeling betrayed.

She would knock on my door, urging to open the door for hours but I didn't open the door. I needed space.

It hurt.

Its pain.

I was folding the masala (praying mat) when my room door was knocked.

I paused for a while before saying, "who is there?".

"It's me sis" I heard Maryam's hoarse voice. She had been crying.

It hurt me to hurt them.

"What do you want?" I asked her coldly. Turning my back away from the door as if she could see me.

"I just want to see you" her voice crossed.

"No, I'm busy" I replied curtly.

"Sophia opens this damn door now before I break it down" she growled angrily. "And trust me I will" she banged the door heavily. I was shocked, I knew she could break the door as she promised.

"No" I whispered.

"Open the door Now!" she screamed, I went to the door and unlocked it. I didn't want a damaged door.

I moved away from her. "Sweetie " she called softly, moving closer to me.

"Sophia, you know deep down your heart that we are sorry. It wasn't intentional to hurt you or keep you in the dark" she said smoothly as if it was easy.

I moved away from her and faced her, "it was not intentional" I scoffed. "Then it is what?" I asked sarcastically.

I moved closer to her and poked her on her chest, "you hurt me" I said brokenly. "You broke my trust in you" I screamed.

"It was said by Yusuf's parents not to tell you..." I cut her off by screaming at her.

"Cut the crap, Hurt me with the damn Truth and Never freaking Comfort me with Lies." I was breathing heavily.

"I know sis but..." she trailed off.

"But...What?"

"I'm sorry, please just forgive me" she begged, "I hate the distance between us" she cried.

"I too hate it but I don't think I can't forget what you guys did. It hurt me " I sobbed, "You all lied to me and you know I detest being lied to" I cried.

"I'm sorry Sophia" she pleaded remorsefully.

What is done is done, it can never be redone.

"I forgive all of you, but I can never forget the pains you guys made me go through" I seethed.

"Thank you for forgiving me," she sniffed. "Yusuf's parents and ustadz are waiting for you downstairs," she said.

"OK, I'm coming" I replied before she went out of the door I called her. "Remember, trust is like a mirror but when it gets broken, it can never be fixed back to its form again".

I locked the door after her and put on my black Abaya before going out of the room.

"Assalamualaikum" I greeted everyone. Mom, Yusuf and Maryam were sitting at the three-seater chair. Yusuf's parents were sitting at the two-seater chair while my Ustadz was sitting at the armchair.

"Walaikum Salam Wa Rahmatullah wabarakatuh" they all replied in unison.

"Please, sit down," My Ustadz said, then I sat on the floor.

"Innal hamda lillah..." Ustadz stated. He faced me and said, "Umu Abdullahi, I heard everything that happened recently. I was told by your mom" he cleared his throat and continued, "she asks me to come to you because she knows maybe Allah can use me to make you forgive them" I looked downcast.

"Umu Abdullahi, I know what they did hurt you but can you find in you to forgive them because we human beings are not perfect are we are bound to make mistakes. Even though we make mistakes to Allah and we ask for forgiveness; He the most forgiver, forgive us" he said calmly.

"Just remember prophet Yusuf (As) who was betrayed by his own brother. This is your challenge and test. Allah tests those who He loves the most" as he said so and I felt like crying and poured my heart to Allah. He was testing, He was testing my faith.

What have I faced?.

I've not faced the grain of what the companions of the prophet (SAW) faced and here I was, lamenting. Here I was crying.

"And if you are in a problem there's no way out, remember prophet Yunus (As) who was stuck in the belly of a whale. Surely Allah showed him the way. Allah will also surely show you the way. It might be hard now sister in Deen but everything will later become history" I was crying heavily, I crawled to my mom's leg. I just needed a motherly comfort.

"I'm sorry ma for shutting you out. I'm sorry ma..." I hiccuped while she wiped my tears and pecked my forehead.

"I understand baby, I'm also sorry" she cried.

"The Prophet (SAW) said: The greatest reward comes from the greatest trial. When Allah loves people, He tests them, and whoever accepts it gains the pleasure of Allah and whoever complains earns His wrath. May He saves us from His wrath and punishment" he lectured.

He stood up ready to leave our melodramatic family reunion not before saying, "Oh Allah, help us to remember you, to be grateful to you, and to worship you in an excellent manner!" and we all replied with "Ameen".

Yusuf's mother came to me and held my hand, stroking it gently. "We are sorry to use our selfishness to hurt you, my wife," she said softly, still stroking my hands, "we don't mean to hurt you. It was the doctor's order. The doctor said Yusuf's memory loss might be short-term or long-term. After Yusuf's accident, Yusuf was in a coma for two years before he opened his eyes. We wanted him to wake up before we told you he was alive but when he woke up and we talked to him about you, he did not remember you. We wished to tell you but the doctor said we shouldn't do anything that can trigger his memory because his brain could unexpectedly shut down. That was why we kept it from you. We were selfish, we didn't want to lose our only son. But we forget that humans are like water, water does flow from one place to another and meets another " she told me softly while tears were streaming down from her eyes. "We are sorry" her body shook with emotions.

I was short of words, Yusuf had gone into many pains.

Two years without opening his eyes, feeling the world.

And here I was crying that they kept it from me.

She put me into a bear hug, "Khadijah was Yusuf's nurse when he woke up, she was there with him. She took care of him and helped him stand fit again. We hired her as his private nurse. Her and Yusuf teach at Abdullahi's school but she knows you are Yusuf's wife " Yusuf's father chirped in.

"I understand" I replied weakly.

The front door opened and revealed my son practically dragging Khadijah.

"Assalamualaykum," they said while we replied and I dislocated my hands from Yusuf's mother's hand and quickly wiped my eyes before Abdullahi noticed because I knew he would ask what happened to me.

That boy was inquisitive.

"Mom, tea-cher wants to see you," he said happily.

Not teacher dear, your soon to be a stepmother. I thought.

"Oh ma'am and PA, I don't know you will be her" she joked lightly.

"What are you doing here?" Yusuf's mother asked her coldly, scrutinizing her gazed at her while she scrunched her nose in mockery.

"I never liked her" I heard Yusuf's mother say under her breath but I heard her clearly.

"I just came to see her, not your old woman," she sneered at her.

"Do you know she's an elderly person?" I asked her.

"An elderly person that snoops around" she seethed," we whatever, I just come here to give you our invitation card. Yusuf, my soon to be husband. And you are invited with my "he eyed up Abdullahi," soon to be stepson" she threw the invitation card at me then walked out.

"That witch" Yusuf's mother breathed heavily, "Since ever my son has proposed to her she has been misbehaving," she said sadly.

I smiled softly and said what made everyone open their mouths and gape at me.

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"I'm going to the wedding, and I shall make Yusuf remember me".

BK 2 chapter 19

"Are you sure you are going?" mum asked me for the twentieth time today while I hummed in reply.

I checked myself in the mirror to see whether I was decent enough to go out. I put on my silver Abaya with my blackhead cape which was shoulder length. I went to the closet and put on a black matching wedge and bag.

"Won't you apply makeup?" mom asked, trailing behind me worriedly.

"No mom, I'm not putting," I replied to her.

"What is lip gloss or mascara?" she asked rhetorically.

"Mom" I groaned, "you know I don't do all that. I'm beautiful like this and how will I apply it when I'm not wearing a niqab?" I told her softly. "And I'm not going to the party" I looked everywhere but not her.

"What!" she shouted, making me cringed. "Then where are you going?" she glared at me.

"erm..." I trailed off nervously.

"mmmm what?" she asked.

"Well" I shrugged my shoulder nonchalantly, "I'm going to Yusuf's house" I fiddled with the hem of my sleeve.

"But I thought you were going there?".

"I want him to remember me, that's why I'm going this early in the morning to face him," I replied, taking my keys, passport, and atm card off the shelf.

"OK, best of luck dear. May you be successful" she prayed and I replied with "Ameen".

My phone rang in my bag, I unzipped the bag and received the call. "Assalamualaikum" I heard Yusuf's mom voice on the other line.

"Walaikum Salam Wa Rahmatullah wabarakatuh" I replied breathlessly because I was rushing through the stairs.

"Are you coming?".

"Yes ma, I'm on my way" I replied. We exchanged some words and I hung up not before saying our slim.

I arrived at his house - his father's house. I looked around, the house has not changed.

"Assalamualaikum" I greeted waiting by the door. If I was practically their daughter in law, I couldn't enter their house anyhow because it wasn't mine. I would wait for permission before entering and I wasn't given the permission then I would turn my back and move home.

"Walaikum Salam warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, enter" I heard from the other side. I opened the door gently and took a step inside before I was engulfed in a crushing bear.

"Alhamdulillah, you are here. He's in his room. You've one hour before the wedding. May Allah let him remember before then" she said sadly, wiping the tears that were trailing down from her eyes duct. I took her hands in mine and kissed, telling her "I'm coming".

As I walked through the stairs, I felt my heart beating loudly. It was as if it wanted to be removed from my ribcage. I was scared and nervous. Would he remember me?.

When I got to his door, I cleaned my moist hands with the handkerchief with me. I was fretting at the door. I knocked softly, I was anxious. "Assalamualaikum" I squealed out.

"Walaikum Salam, enter".

I entered the room timidly, clutching my bag to my side as if it could relieve my anxiety.

I saw him at the window side buttoned up the sleeve of his cloth. I stared at him, taking in his features while I gulped nervously.

"Oh ma'am, it's you" he smiled at me, going in to take his cap.

"Yes," I replied weakly, "I want to see you before the wedding," I told him still, fiddling with the sleeve while twirling my leg nervously.

"OK ma'am, I'm hearing" he brought a chair for me to sit.

"OK" I inhaled shakily while his cologne calmed me down. I exhaled.

"I wanted to tell you a story" I smiled softly at him, "I'm sorry for taking your time but I wish for you to know before your wedding. When no one is telling".

"Which story?".

"It's the story of an eighteen-year-old girl" I began.

"Twelve years ago there was an eighteen years old girl who was forced to marry a man by her father" I sighed, "when her father told her she was getting married to a strange man; she was angry, sad and heartbroken. But what could she do?" I stopped, looking at him whether it was ringing a bell in his heart.

"She could run away" he shrugged his shoulder, "or tell him she wasn't interested" he furrowed his brows while I chuckled lightly.

"A week after, the wedding took place. Both of them met at the guy's house. Have I told you the guy was freaking rich? That was the first time they met, the girl was already attracted to the

guy. Why wouldn't she because the guy was gorgeous. And the girl had vowed to make the guys live a living hell so that he could divorce her, little did the girl know that the guy was extremely head over heels for her" I laughed, remembering my eighteen years old self.

"Then what happened?" he asked excitedly.

"Then, the girl made him suffer, the girl taught him adhkar, the girl changed him. Then the guy ex came into their life and kidnapped her" I widened my eyes to exaggerate it.

"Ex!" I nodded in confirmation.

"The ex turbulent their life, when she saw there was no way for her, she kidnapped the girl. The ex called the guy and told him to divorce his wife and marry her as a ransom. That was when the guy knew it was his ex who kidnapped his wife".

"What did the guy do?" he asked impatiently.

"Well don't let me go deep into the story, the guy went to tell the girl but fortunately the ex was bombed and unfortunately the girl was kidnapped again".

"Again!" he asked while I nodded.

"The person who kidnapped the girl damaged her soul. He craved some nasty words on her body. He abused her for three months before she was saved but when the guy got there, her happiness had already been sucked away from her. It remained to get a body. The person who kidnapped her was her real father while the guy ex was her stepsister" I choked on my tears, I shivered when remembering all that I had passed through.

"Oh my" he exclaimed, "how can someone be cruel to his daughter?".

"Because she wasn't wanted, because she was a failure. Well after she was saved, she had PTSD".

"What's PTSD?" he asked.

"Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a serious mental condition that some people develop after a shocking, terrifying, or dangerous event. These events are called traumas. ... But if you have PTSD, these thoughts and feelings don't fade away. They last for months and years, and may even get worse. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event — either experiencing it or witnessing it. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. Usually, PTSD doesn't just go away on its own. Without treatment, symptoms can last for months or years, or they may come and go in waves. Getting treatment and support can make all the difference. ... In some cases, medicines can help reduce symptoms of anxiety, panic, or depression. And usually, PTSD doesn't just go away on its own. Without treatment, symptoms can last for months or years, or they may come and go in waves. Getting treatment

and support can make all the difference. ... In some cases, medicines can help reduce symptoms of anxiety, panic, or depression."I explained.

"Woah, that was dangerous. I hope she recovered? "

"Yes, she recovered with the help of her therapist and her husband. A year after the incident the girl was back in fit and she was pregnant. On the day she wanted to give birth, she instructed the guy to bring her mom. The girl wanted her mom and husband to be there when she would be labouring "as I said it, I glanced at Yusuf and saw him clutching his head. His breathing came out in short pants but I continued.

"On the guy's way to bring his wife's mother, he met with an accident. He..." I stopped, looking at Yusuf who had crouched on the floor, holding his head painfully.

I wanted him to remember.

Ya Allah!, let him remember.

Memories are a hard thing to forget because they surface when least expected and we are never prepared for it.

"The doctor told the girl that her husband met with an accident and had tasted to death. She was left with the baby. She cried, screamed, and wailed because she couldn't accept it. She nearly committed suicide because of her love"

"Stop" Yusuf's voice croaked out.

"Then after suffering for three years, she later married to her childhood crush but the childhood crush was suffering from an anger issue. Well, she lives through her second husband's abuse. Five years later, fortunately, she met her first husband but unfortunately, the husband did not remember her, telling her that he was her Yusuf, he was Zubair " I sobbed, I moved closer to him to touch him but he pushed me away.

"Don't touch me!" he eyes glistening with tears, "my head" he cried. "Mom!" he shouted for his mother.

Yusuf's mother came to him worriedly, he held his mother's hand vulnerable. "Mom, my head. My medicine" the clutched his head.

"Go to the shelf there my wife, his medicine is there," she told me and I went to the shelf as I took the medicine, the medicine slipped from my mind and fell. The pills scattered on the fall.

I rushed to his mother's side, "the medicine has.." I sobbed on my shaky hands.

He held his head, breathing heavily. His eyes were opening and closing as if he was fighting consciousness. I and his mother tried to make him stand, as he stood up he fell down with a loud thud.

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He fainted.

BK 2 chapter 20

We had been patrolling the ER (emergency room) since Yusuf had been rushed in. The doctors and nurses were going and coming out of the room. They were carrying out some tests on him. One of the doctors came out and told us he was fine but we should wait for some hours for the medical report.

Yusuf's mother had called Khadijah that the wedding had been postponed because Yusuf unexpectedly collapsed and called her husband to come to the hospital.

Yusuf had been moved to a private room after he had regained his breath but hadn't opened his eyes yet. The doctor said we could go meet him in the room but no shouting and he told Yusuf's father to see him in his office.

We entered the room saying our teslim, Yusuf was lying on the bed unconsciously with the IV connected to his bloodstream. His face looked pale.

Yusuf's mother sat beside him on his bed, crying softly, urging him to wake up while I stood at the corner looking at his mother.

I was the cause of this.

If I had stopped when he told me to stop, this would not have happened.

If I had not visited him.

Too many if's were going through my mind.

Ya Allah!, the giver of healness, please heal him.

The doctor had said not to trigger him but I had done the opposite.

This was what his mother was protecting him for.

I felt guilty.

If I...

Khadijah barged in without greeting anyone and glared at me with so much hatred.

What have I done?, I thought.

You caused her wedding to not take place today, my brain replied.

"Why was he not taken to the family hospital? And why was he not given his drug when he was having his episode" she scowled at Yusuf's mother who was crying.

"Erm.." she cut me off.

"I'm not talking to you" she clenched her teeth, "I'm talking to her" she growled, pointing to Yusuf's mother.

"When Sophia came this morning, she was talking to him when he started holding his head then I told Sophia to bring his medicine but it slipped and fell and when we were coming we thought the family hospital was far that was why we brought him here" she replied, wiping the tears.

"What?" she exclaimed loudly.

"You" she yelled at me, "You are always the cause of everything. The drug should have calmed him down but you let it slip" she said with so much venom.

"You destroyed my plan, since the first day I saw you I knew you were an abomination. You let the drug slip when it was one hour for me to achieve my plans but you" she lunged at me and clawed my face with her artificial manicured nails.

"I've been planning this for so long that I couldn't wait to rejoice" she cried and at that moment Yusuf's mother coughed painfully, using her handkerchief to cover her mouth as she removed it there was a blood stain on it.

I went to her worriedly, "What happened" I asked.

"Oh dear, it has been a while that I've been coughing blood but it will soon go" she smiles and starts coughing then Khadijah starts laughing maniacally.

"It can never leave you" she smiled sardonically while I stared up at her like she had grown another head.

"What do you mean?" she asked her in between her coughing while I patted her back.

"Because the Aconitum flower that I planted in your room is poisonous as you are inhaling it, it is deterring your health. It will kill you slow" she sat on the extra chair while picking her nails.

"God loves your son sincerely, he supposed to have died because the drug he was using was mixed with benzodiazepines, propranolol and lead. The truth he didn't remember you when he woke up but with the use of that drug, it would be slowing it down" she sighed, rubbing her forehead dramatically.

"I remembered you straight away when I saw you five years ago when Yusuf was rushed on after his accident. I knew the opportunity had come for me to destroy your family and mine was destroyed by yours. Yusuf was not supposed to be in a coma for two years but I used that two years to plan. The nurse in charge of Yusuf that time was indebted to me and I told her to do anything that could make Yusuf be in a coma when she was transferred that was why Yusuf woke up. She didn't have any choice but to do it. Your family doctor was also part of the plan because I'd the sex tape he and the nurse with me. I told him to lie to you guys. I told him that you should not let me be triggered and I should be his personal nurse so that I could monitor

him how he should be using the drugs" I was a sobbing mess, I was sobbing hermetically while Yusuf's mother was coughing, cursing her in between her coughing but Khadijah just stood up and walked around the room as if it was hers.

"Then I heard that Yusuf had a son. I convinced Yusuf to let me write an application letter to be a teacher so that I could be familiar with kids. Do you know what?" She directed her question to me.

"Your son's accident was not a mistake" my breath hitched, "because I was the one who hit him and it was intentional, I wanted him gone" she smirked. "But by the time I reached home Yusuf had gone to donate his blood because" she paused, "this witch" she shouted, glaring at Yusuf's mother, "told him that one of his favourite pupils was in need of blood blah blah..." she trailed.

"But you came along" she sneered at me, "I supposed to have deleted you".

"Why are you doing all this?" Yusuf's father whispered in disbelief as he was coming in.

"Because I do not want any Umar's bloodline alive. I wanted them to die as my family too" she shouted breathing heavily.

"You killed my family," she pointed an accusing finger at Yusuf's father. "You made me an orphan," she shouted." Yoruba people do say,'Eni to su le gbagbe sugbon Eni to ko o let gbagbe'. You've forgotten. Fifteen years ago because my father stole from you, you removed him from his workplace. The money he wanted to use to pay for my mom's health. But because of your selfish self, you fired him. My mother died, my father died because of the pain and depression. I dropped out from school and became a beggar. I came to revenge. Your family will pay for it because Yusuf would have already been diagnosed with a poison in his system. Your wife also will soon die and I know the pain of your son and wife's death will raise your already BP (blood pressure). You will be depressed and you will die afterwards and all your properties will be mine but this girl came to crash everything" she snarled and pushed me to the wall. I hit my head on the nearest wall. She tackled me on the floor while choking me, screaming "die". I was thrashing on the floor, trying to push her off but her strength surpassed mine.

"Security" I was hearing in the background. I felt my consciousness slipping as she was choking tightly. People were entering and shouting but my hearing and sight organs were not working.

My breathing slowed down, I couldn't feel my body and I succumbed into the darkness, not before hearing...

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"SOFIA".

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The rough translation :

Eni to su le gbagbe sugbon Eni to ko o let gbagbe: that's you could forget you hurt or wrong someone but the person you wrong or hurt could never forget.

BK 2 chapter 21

I woke up groggily; groaning, squinting my eyes because of the light. I felt a wave of nausea wash over, I stood up quickly, went to the nearest washing basin and puked all the contents inside my stomach. I rinsed my mouth and face as I was walking out of the bathroom, I felt lightheaded. I held the nearest door for support or else I would have fallen with a loud thud on the floor.

My family rushed inside, coming to my side. Abdulrahman helped me to the bed and gave me a glass of water. That was what I needed.

I drank the water greedily like a thirsty camel. The water went down from my mouth to my stomach, my stomach rumbled. That was what happened to drinking water when you wake up with anything in the stomach.

"What happened?" my voice croaked, my throat was paining me as I talked. Then I remembered everything. Khadijah choked me to death.

"The doctor said, you shouldn't stress your vocal cord. You shouldn't talk till it healed" Abdulrahman said while giving me a notepad and pen, "anything you want write it here" he opened a blank page for me while I scribbled down "where is Khadijah" and showed him.

Yusuf's mother came to me, patted my head softly, "she has been arrested by the police. Our family doctor with the other nurse has been arrested also" she replied while I took my notepad to ask another question.

"What happened to me?"

"Due to some stress, and her choking you made you collapse" she stated, "I am sorry," she said while I shook my head, why sorry?.

"Her father was my driver. Her father was a gambler, drunkard but he was one of my favourites that time because he was always punctual" I heard Yusuf's father say from behind. "I always lectured him to change but he never listened, then I started searching for any mistakes of his to make me fire him. One day he stole from me, he told me he had a debt to pay that was why he stole then I sacked him. Was I at fault that her father was a gambler or he stole my money?" he asked softly. "I never meant any harm to people, I knew her father had been stealing from me but I never caught him red-handed but when I did, I sacked him. Then why did she come to destroy my family? Why?" he cried, a lone tear escaped his eye duct.

Who said the man never cries? It was only a weak man that didn't cry. I thought.

"I did nothing wrong but she came to destroy me. Yusuf, my son has been detected to have cancer due to the drugs she used on him and the doctor said he has some months left before he would taste death. My wife's health is also there and mine" he sniffled.

I took my notepad and scribbled angrily, "Don't be sad, Allah knows what you are passing through. The doctor just said, only Allah knows when and how a person died. Doctors don't know when someone will die, it's only Allah that knows. These are challenges we are supposed to conquer. The challenges make us who we are. Have faith in Allah because He is Ar-Rahman (The Beneficence), AR-Raheem (The Merciful). He hears and sees our cries and despair because He's As-Sami' (The Hearer) and Al-Baseer (The Seer). Allah (SWT) said: "He's the First and Last, the Evident and the Hidden: and He has full knowledge of all things". And He (SWT) also said: "No kind of calamity can occur, except by the leave of Allah: and if anyone believes in Allah, (Allah) guides his heart (aright): for Allah knows all the things. So obey Allah, and obey His Messenger: but if ye turn back, the duty of Our Messenger is but to deliver (the Message) clearly and openly. Allah! There is no God but He: and on Allah, therefore, let the believers put their trust". And He (SWT) also said: "He who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed:...". "Do you people think that they will be left to say, 'We believe' and not be tested?" I threw at them after I was done with furious writing, I sighed. I wanted to talk but my throat was paining. Screw doctors, screw their predictions. Screw them constantly putting human in a state of fear. They would say something wasn't possible, were they the Creator? ; who gave and took.

I looked at my family; mom, Lut, Maryam, Abdulrahman, Yusuf, and his parents.

"Oh dear," Yusuf's father said softly, "Allah really blesses you with knowledge. You are knowledgeable, I wish I was blessed with a daughter like you. May Allah bless you. I've learnt something new today" remarked, wiping his face.

"And He said in surah AL-Israa," Say: "Call upon Allah, or call upon Rahman: by whatever name ye call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. Neither speak thy prayer aloud, nor speak it in a low tone, but seek a middle course between." Say: ", Praise be to Allah, Who begets no son, and has no partner in (His) dominion: nor (needs) He any to protect Him from humiliation: yea, magnify Him for His greatness and glory!". As I finished writing the verse, I felt another wave of nausea, I pushed myself up, scrambling to the toilet, holding my mouth. I groaned as I was vomiting, it was disgusting. I hated vomit!.

Abdulrahman came inside, patting my back softly. I rolled my eyes, pushed him away. I got up but fell immediately onto his arms. He carried me back while I hid my face on his chest. This was embarrassing. All families were here.

He tucked me gently on the bed and moved back to his position.

My mom came to me and smiled, "how are you feeling dear?" she asked while I took my notepad. Alhamdulillah to we that have our speech organs that could talk. Only Allah knows how those who could not talk feel.

"I'm feeling lightheaded, nauseated, tired" I doodled it down.

"Well" she smiled, "Abdullah is now a big brother" she stated in parable because I didn't understand her.

"Meaning" I mouthed.

"You are pregnant" they screamed, I meant all of them except Yusuf and Abdulrahman didn't scream. I put my hands protectively on my stomach. I was having a young me and Abdulrahman. I smiled at the thought but when I glanced at Yusuf, he looked so broken that my smile vanished. Others stopped jubilating when they noticed my gaze on Yusuf. They all walked out leaving Abdulrahman, Yusuf and me.

We need to sort out our shits and mistakes.

Abdulrahman came to me, sat beside me while I snuggled closer to him because I needed it. I took my notepad, "I'm sorry Yusuf, I really waited for you to come back for two years. I cried, prayed, wished and hoped that one day but Allah knows. Abdulrahman stood beside me in all those years of pain, hurt, depression. Even though he hurt me, I can't leave him because he is the love of my life "I choked on my tears.

"What of me?" his voice broke me.

"I don't know but I know Allah will give you your own spouse. Someone that will love you more than I will ever love you. Someone that will never leave you. Your joy and happiness. She'll be your queen and you will be her king." I cried.

"No" he shook his head, "I can't agree to this, you are my wife" he growled.

"Yeah, I know. I was your wife but now I'm my husband - Abdulrahman's wife. If you really love me as you said, you will let me go because I've let you go. If you really love someone, you will do anything for his or her happiness even if it means you let go" I wrote and mouthed to Abdulrahman "let's go".

Abdulrahman carried me out in bridal styles leaving Yusuf who was crouching on the floor crying his bleeding heart out.

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And I pray to Allah to bless him with the coolest of his eyes.

BK 2 chapter 22

I'd been discharged from hospital a month after Yusuf incident. I'd felt bad for him but there was nothing I could do.

My life went back to normal, no drama. Abdulrahman became the most caring and sweetest husband. He attended to all my needs before battling my eyelashes. He knew what I wanted and needed.

We were back together, living peacefully. I was happy and content. I'd have him all the permission to my properties, he was my husband and I trusted him.

I sat on the couch, thinking about how I could talk to my boy about his father. I couldn't deny Yusuf's rights as a father. And my son had the right to know the truth but how can I go about it?.

Children were complicated, how would I explain to him, I thought aloud.

The man he knew wasn't his father?

The boy was inquisitive, how would I explain?.

Should I call my mom?.

I shook my head at the thought, the drama I put her through was enough.

She would be worried, mothers were always worried!.

All your truth would be doubted when you tell a lie once.

I took my phone and called Yusuf's mother, "Assalamualaikum ma" I greeted her. I'd not talk to her after the hospital scene.

"Walaikum Salam warahmatullahi wabarakatuh dears, how are you?" I heard her reply tiredly.

"I'm fine ma, sorry for disturbing you" I proclaimed.

"No dear, what do you want?" she asked, going straight to the point. She was cutting around the bush.

"erm.." I stuttered, she caught me off guard, "I wish to talk to Yusuf this Sunday..." I trailed, twiddling with my fingers.

I bit my lips nervously, waiting for her reply, "OK" she said and hung up.

I sighed and pinched my nose tiredly. That was a heck of a conversation.

Now, it was time to face my boy. He was playing ball with Abdulrahman in the corridor. "Baby" I called out softly.

Ya Allah!, help me.

"Ma" he replied, beaming with radiant happiness while I smiled.

"Baby, mom needs to tell you something" his heart pricked as I talked, he came to sit beside me.

"OK," he smiled.

Is it possible some should have two daddies? "I widened my eyes in exaggeration. To make him understand. Children needed gesticulations so that they could understand quickly.

He furrowed his brows in confusion before shaking his head and whispered out "NO".

"Good," I praised him, "but there's a boy I think that has two daddies," I stated.

"Who?" he asked?.

"See" I began. How could I explain this to the boy? This was difficult to do.

"The boy's dad was in an accident when the boy was born then the mother had another husband. That means the other husband was also his dad but no real dad. Now real dad is around and mom wants to show his dad to him" I explained gently while he nodded his head.

"Mom, are you talking about mee?" he asked while I gaped my mouth at him.

"What, how" I stuttered.

"Mom, I know thaaat daaad iiis nooot myyy daaad" he confirmed my surprise.

"How?"

" I heard wheeen you were talkiiiing with graaaandma that captain Z iiiis my real daaaad" I choked on tears.

"I'm sorry baby" I hugged him. I didn't think his mental logic could comprehend it but Allah gave me a brilliant child which I was always grateful for.

"Now wheeeen are yoooou telling real daaad?" he asked.

I laughed nervously, "he is coming on Sunday" I added.

"OK," he responded.

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I told Abdulrahman about the meeting with Yusuf, he was angry that I didn't ask him before calling Yusuf's mother. I apologized for my mistake and we settled it.

Yusuf had been welcomed by Abdulrahman, I was bathing Abdullahi when he and brother Royhan came. I heard their laughter. Men were easy to get along. I'd called Maryam earlier to come today, we needed to talk.
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I said my teslim to them and walked to the fridge, bringing smoothie to serve them.

I set them down on the middle table and went to sit beside Abdulrahman which was opposite to when they sat. I took a look at Yusuf and noticed, his eyes looked dull as if there was no soul in it. There was a bag under his eyes, his face looked pale. Wrinkles were on his face and he looked thin also. I noticed his gaze on my bump.

"Thank you for honouring my call" I smiled softly.

"It's a pleasure" he replied, his voice was void of emotion.

"Abdullah" I called softly.

"Baby, come here" I ordered gently. When he reached my place, I stroked his head soothingly.

"I and my husband" I saw him clenching his fist but I chose to continue "think we shouldn't deny your father's right. We have agreed to let me stay with you doing weekends" I said.

"He will stay with you from Friday evening to Monday morning so that you could bond together. I've told him about us" I pushed Abdullahi softly towards him.

"Daddy" as Abdullahi called him, he choked on tears. He sniffled and hugged him tightly.

Abdulrahman and brother Royhan left both of them to bond like a father to son, not a teacher to pupil.

"Please have you help me to talk to her?" brother Royhan asked.

"Maybe you should talk to her, my husband, he is her guardian" I replied, leaving the guys to talk.

Maryam came in shortly after I went inside. She made herself comfortable on my beside, bouncing up and down like a baby.

"So what's up vanilla?" she asked.

"Let's talk," I demanded.

"Sometimes there will be what to say but no time for discussion and sometimes there will time for discussion but nothing to say."

"What's with you is your parable now strawberry" She groaned.

"When are you getting married?"

"I'm not ready," she snapped at me.

"When are you gonna be ready" I inquired, sitting down.

"None of your concern" She replied curtly.

"Maryam sugar, it's time to move on. Move on with your life. Will you be ready when Abdullahi will be going to his convocation?".

She stood up, "Sophia, you are not the one that is supposed to be mocking me, upon the fact that you know what I had passed through" She yelled.

"I know but let's talk. Don't bolt it. Please talk" I begged.

"Sophia, I can't trust a man again in my life" she cried, shaking her head.

"You can baby, if you are saying all men are the same, you won't know when the good one would pass by. And the bad men have damaged the good men's identity" I explained.

" Sophia, My step-dad" she croaked, "He abused me mentally, physically, emotionally and sexually. He will lock me in the basement, torturing me."She whispered, crying.

"It's okay, you are safe," I cooed softly.

"It is not okay, I was pregnant for him, you know. The baby. I still have the nightmare till now. I never escaped it. It always haunted me in my sleep" She muttered.

"It's okay".

"No man could love a damaged good" She whispered.

"You are afraid of love?" I pointed out while she scoffed.

"Well, love is sweet with the right person. Make it halal." I chirped in.

"Who will marry an old lady like me?" she sighed.

"I've someone," I blurted.

"Who?"

"Royhan"

"Not him" she groaned.

"He has talked to your brother, just your yes we are waiting for"

"He talked with Abdulrahman," She asked in disbelief while I nodded.

"Something something " I wiggled my brows.

"Nothing nothing" She shook her head shyly.

"Something something" I giggled, wanting her to say yes.

"Nothing nothing" she replied.

"Nothing nothing"

"Something something" I beamed with unfathomable happiness. She had agreed.

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And Maryam was getting married.

BK 2 chapter 23

We had been preparing for Maryam's nikkah (wedding). I was very happy for my friend, she was a sister I never had to me. I should make it a memorable day for her. Whenever I teased her being a wife to be, she always shies away. It was rare to see a bossy lady like her shy away from but it was fun, watching her. She was becoming herself back.

She had hidden herself in pain and hurt. When someone is greatly hurt, he or she either becomes rude or silent. Maryam had a bitchy, bossy behaviour but I knew it was her past that made her that way. She was protecting herself from being hurt again. Don't judge people by their attitude, it was their past experience that changed them.

I was dragging her to the mall, I needed to change her closet.

"But it doesn't mean" she whined while I gave her deaf ears.

"See, I'm gonna transform you. Even when brother Royhan sees you he would be gawking at you" I smirked.

We went to the night-dress section, I smiled knowingly at my thoughts but I didn't let her suspect.

"What are we doing here?" she asked, rolling her eyes.

"What does it look like?" I replied sarcastically.

"Buuut" She stuttered, I meant Maryam freaking stuttered. I made her flustered. She was embarrassed.

"I'm buying you a killer dress that when you put it on, bro Royhan would never know what he will be doing again" I winked while laughing.

"Stop it joor" she mumbled, smiling softly at me.

I took a white lacy nightdress which was strapless and it would reach the midthigh for her. It has a V-neck structure. I took another black lingerie and a smoky red dress. The clothes were beautiful.

"What is this?" she shrieked, covering her eyes.

"What is covering?" I replied mockingly.

"These dresses are..." She gulped and turned away in embarrassment.

"There is nothing wrong with these dresses. Firstly, this white dress you are going to wear on your wedding day to show your innocence. I mean; purity, peace, calm blah blah blah" I waved my hand in a dismissive way. "Secondly, this red lingerie" my eyes twinkled with mischief, "Is

for inner seduction. It shows love, passion, desire. Whenever he sees you in this dress, he wouldn't be able to say no to you. This is for calling him to eat. We have two foods; one in the room and the other in the room" I chimed in.

"What two food and what" She banged her head softly on the wall. "You are confusing me," she blurted.

"Let me explain" I sighed, "you know this quote, 'through a man's heart is food" right? "she nodded her head in confirmation.

"Before you get to a man's heart, you must know how to cook food. One is dinner food and the other is bed food" I explained while realizing what was shown on her face.

"You know cooking is like sex, everyone can do it, but only some make it delicious" I giggled mischievously at her while she screamed like a banshee and blocked her ears.

"Sophia when do you become so corrupt like this?" her eyes widened comically.

"It is not corrupt dear," I said slyly, "I'm a married woman sugar and I must know what my husband likes" I winked. "And there's nothing corrupt about being married," I shrugged, "You go down and dirty with your husband. If you understand you understand if you don't then don't".

"What's the meaning of going down and dirty with my husband" she furrowed her brows in confusion but I changed the topic.

"As I was saying before you decided to interrupt, and the black dress is for when you want to be in control" I smirked. I took another blue dress while she was eyeing me.

"This blue dress is just normal, I mean when your husband is not around" I shrugged my shoulders.

After we were done packing, we went to the jewellery store. Abdulrahman called us earlier to ask us where we were.

" I thought when someone is pregnant, she would be tired, not hyper but this friend of mine is high," she muttered tiredly.

I took out the lollipop from my mouth which made a pop sound, "not every pregnancy makes someone tired joor" I rubbed my bump happily, " it makes me energetic" I laughed.

I was looking around the store when my eyes caught a small ruby moon crescent earrings. I dragged Maryam there while shouting at me to stop dragging her.

"See" I pointed at the earrings.

"Woah" she gawked at it while I used my hand to cover her opened mouth. "It's beautiful," she mumbled.

"Yeah, we are buying it" I exclaimed.

I saw a two Gucci wrist watch beside the earrings and brought it along with it for my Kings- Abdulrahman and Abdullahi.

I brought some baby dresses also for Fatimah - my unborn child. I couldn't wait for her to arrive. We wished the baby should be a girl but whichever one that Allah gives us was the best.

We went to the nearest junk store to buy a menu. Who doesn't like junk food?

I brought candies, bars of chocolate, cheesecakes, biscuits. I knew when I got home, all would be long forgotten.

When we got home, Maryam was physically, mentally tired because of my lectures. Abdulrahman hugged me and carried all the bags inside before he came to carry me bridal style also. He put me on the couch, went to the kitchen and got me a chill smoothie. I drank it greedily, resting my head at his shoulder. He took my hands and massaged it softly while sighed comfortably.

What was bad in what I said?

Nothing na.

You must do anything to keep your husband. Even though it was his destiny to marry more than one, that doesn't mean you shouldn't dress well. Dress well that whenever he went outside he would reply my wife is at home. My wife is better than this. My wife. This my wife that my wife. I thought.

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Maryam dressed in a pink floral gown. Her white wedge complimented her dress. Her face was covered with a white linen veil which her minimal makeup face was underneath. She looked like a princess.

"Who wears a pink dress on her wedding day?" I snorted playfully.

"Stop nagging like an old woman about my dress," she proclaimed.

"You know you look like a girl"

"What do you look like in a blue dress?" she asked rhetorically.

"Blue is the best. You know blue represents nature. The ocean is blue, the sky is blue. The.." I stopped when I didn't know what to say while she laughed out loud.

"Nothing to say?" she stuck out her tongue.

"You know.." my mom cut me off.

"Both of you stop bickering, you are adults not babies anymore" she cautioned us dramatically. We looked at her and each other, we rolled our eyes and we guffawed at her. This was crazy. She tsked and shook her head before smiling at us.

The nikkah (wedding) was a small wedding - Parlour wedding. The wife and husband were in a separate chair. The husband was looking at the floor like it was the best thing in the worst while I snickered. Every eye turned to me while I mumbled out sorry.

Abdulrahman was Maryam's guardian since the death of their parents. The ustadz asked my husband to confirm whether he accepted or not. Brother Royhan glanced up looking at my husband expectantly whether he would change his mind but when he heard him say yes. He sighed in relief.

The Ustadz turned to the husband and said, "See my dear brother, pray to Allah to grant you Hikmah (wisdom), Sabr (patience) and 'Ilm (knowledge) because you'll need it. Females are complicated, you can never understand them. They change like the weather. Treat them with care. Give them a house, they will give you home. Give them food, they will give you a meal. Give them attention, they will give you all. Women are gentle, kind in nature but treat her badly she becomes cruel and hard. Treat them with care, love, understanding. Sometimes you would have gone to work since 7:00 am, you would be back around 9:00 pm at night. You would be tired, all you want to do is to relax then she would be telling you about what happened, blabbing and rambling everything without asking her. When you give her respect, she'll be submissive to you naturally. May Allah grant you marriage without divorce. Children without illness" he lectured.

After the Ustadz was through, we served the menu to our guests.

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And that was how we concluded Maryam's wedding, everyone was happy and everything was going smoothly.

But it was usually calm before the storm.

BK 2 chapter 24

I snuggled closer to Abdulrahman, needing his body heat even though I was under the duvet when my phone rang. I checked the time and saw it was 3:00 am in the morning.

Who the heck calls at midnight?. I thought.

I groaned still feeling sleepy, removed the duvet and picked it without looking at the caller.

"Sophia, please help me" I heard Maryam's urgent voice. I sat abruptly, straightening my back, my sleep was long gone.

"What happened?" I asked, now biting my own lip furiously in concern.

"It is Royhan" She called out frantically.

"What's wrong with brother Royhan?" I panicked, switching on the light.

"erm..." She trailed off, "you know..." She gulped because I heard the sound.

"You know what?. You are scaring me" I shouted at her before I woke Abdulrahman gently. "what?" he asked huskily while I gulped in excitement. His voice always did something to me. I shook my head and mouthed, 'Maryam'.

"What happened?" he yawned, flexing his muscles while I drooled over it before cautioning myself I was on the phone.

"I'm coming" I whispered to him then turned to talk to Maryam.

"Help me" She pleaded. I tried to detect any sound in the background, maybe her husband and she were having arguments but heard nothing.

"Okay, I'm coming" I stood up, taking my hijab at the bedside while searching for my flip flop to wear.

"Noooo" She screamed, "I just wanted to ask you something," she said sheepishly, I was sure she would be biting her fingernails.

"What?"

"How to do puff puff" she answered slowly.

"Is that why you called me at 3:00 am?"I bellowed," when I was sleeping, can't you wait?" I was annoyed. She woke me up, just to ask how to do puff puff. 'Arghh" I yelled.

"What happened?" Abdulrahman asked concernedly while I shook my head.

"Sophia are you there?" she asked softly.

"Wallahi, if I've known that this is what you wanted to ask, I wouldn't have answered the call" I gritted my teeth.

"No na, I just want to do it before he wakes up. He said he loves snacks" she cried, "am at fault for trying to make my husband happy?" she sobbed on the phone while I scratched my head.

"I'm sorry for yelling at you. You scared me when you called I thought something bad has happened" I blurted.

"OK. Do you have flour; yeast, nutmeg, sugar..." I listed the ingredients to her while she was replying with yes.

After I'd explained how to do it to her, "am I free to go?" I asked, yawning.

"No, please stay on line till I'm through with it. Please" She begged while I grumbled.

"I'll buy you bars of chocolate and candies" She bribed me while I reluctantly agreed. It wasn't good someone should have a weakness, she knew my weakness was chocolate.

"You can go back to sleep, it is nothing" I pecked him on his lips, "I'm going downstairs" I went out of the room with my phone.

The one that I would use to sit around without doing nothing, I did ablution and pray (Tahajud). After I was done, I revised the Quran. There's something about the Quran; if you leave the Quran for a day, I mean you don't revise it. It will leave you for three days like that till you forget, you even memorize the Quran. May Allah not let me forget because the punishment for a person who memorized the Quran and forgets is great.

"Thank you sugar pie. You are the best. I don't know what I could do without you in my life. I love you" She appreciated.

"OK" I replied shortly and hung up then continued my revising.

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"When you get to grandma's place, make sure you are a good boy to your grandparents and dad. Make sure you read a little and play a little and don't forget to do your morajia' (revision of the Quran)." I lectured my baby boy. He was going to Yusuf's side. I dressed him in a blue shirt and jeans with blue snickers."Make sure you eat with courtesy, use your right hand. Wash your hand, say 'Bismillah' before eating and after eating 'Alhamdulillahilladzi ato ammonii adha rozaqoh nihi min ghairi awlin mini walikuwa'. When going to the toilet ' Allahumma inni a'udhu bika minal kubth wal khabaaith' and when leaving the toilet 'ghufranaka' "I explained." When it is time for solah, follow your father to the mosque. Do you hear? " I asked him while I nodded. I felt like crying, my boy had never left my surroundings. I was going to miss him.

"When you.." I choked on tears. I sniffed while Abdulrahman was rubbing my back, telling me what I was doing was good.
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"Mom are you carrying?" he asked, looking at me with his chocolate orbs.

"You know mommy loves you. Momma is gonna miss you. If you are a good boy to grandparents" I hiccuped, "I'm going to buy another set of books" I promised, ruffled his hair. I tickled him down while he laughed out, running away from me.

"Youuu arrrre wriiiinnkklliing my cloooth," he said in between his laughter.

Yusuf's dad came to take him, I waved at him and blew him a kiss as I turned back to go inside, the reality kicked in that my boy was not going to be with me during the weekend. I knelt on the floor and sobbed.

"Shhh, it's okay he is with his father. Nothing will happen" he said soothingly but that didn't help.

How could he cope, no one knew his favourite food. No one knew when he liked to sleep. I thought.

"It's just two days Sophia, he is coming back on Monday" he reassured me while I nodded my head. Just two days.

"Now, go in and have a nice shower. I have a surprise for you" he smiled at me.

"Surprise?" my eyes lit up. I liked the surprise.

"I'm taking you on a date, just me and you" he grinned cheekily at me.

"What should I wear?" I nibbled on my lips.

"Just put on the casual dress but make it red because.." he winked at me while I giggled.

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BK 2 chapter 25

I dressed in my smoky red dress which hugged my bodice perfectly. The sleeves were long which had some different patterns at the hem. The dress was beautiful and it made me gorgeous in it. I wore my black wedge which had some stony particles on the top that was used to form love. I put on my black lengthy cape which compliments my smoky red dress. I left the room not without carrying my handbag along with me which was filled with my purse, keys, Atm and my ID cards.

I opened the door and saw Abdulrahman had changed his outfits. He put on a black turtleneck polo which hugged his perfect chest. His V-line showed clearly with his scripture abs and his flexible muscles. His blue tailored pants reaching his enemies. The glasses he put on added more to his beauty. Men with glasses were cool. He parked the car at the front of the house while he was jiggling the car key.

"Do you like what you see babe" he winked at me while I smiled in return.

He opened the front door for me, I entered gently and he pecked me before going to his side. He ignited the engine to life, he helped me with my seat belt not after stealing another kiss from me.

"We are going" I voiced out, looking outside the window. The October breeze was coming in softly.

"We are going to a restaurant after that we will think of what to do" he responded, glancing at me.

He parked at the parking slot, opening the door for me like the gentleman he was. He held my right hand to his lips and kissed it before pulling me inside with him. He talked with the waiter and he said we should follow him. He took us to a reserved area at the top. It was different from the one downstairs.

Abdulrahman pulled out the booth for me to sit while I awed at him.

He sat in his own booth, taking the menu book to order. I took mine also, peeking through it to stare at him. He changed tonight because his beard look fuller and blacker than I remembered. Men with beard were super cool and hot.

The waiter served us with snacks before giving us what we ordered. I ordered fried rice, cream salad and chicken while he ordered fried rice and chicken. A few minutes later, the waiter made a cake with what we ordered. I said my bismillah quickly and devoured the food. As the food touched my taste bud, I savoured the moment while moaning in delight. The food was superb. After I was done with eating and drank the fruit wine, I burped loudly before using my hand to clamp my mouth shut. Abdulrahman smiled softly at me, "is okay S, it is only you and I here" he

said wiping his mouth with the napkin. He leaned to me and brought his hand to my lips to clean the cream. He put his hand that he used to clean my lips to his mouth licking it and hummed, "it tasted better on you" he grinned mischievously while I shook my head.

The waiter came and packed the used plant and brought the desert along with him.

"Thanks for the date Ruhii" I smiled at him.

"This is nothing S, the date just begins" he spoke with enthusiasm.

"S, I love you so much. Everyday your love continues to grow in my heart. You complete me. I'm a blessed man having you as a wife" he admitted, taking my hand under the table.

"I love you too sweetheart" I choked on my tears, "you complete me also. Please do not let me go" I voiced out my biggest fear. Letting go.

"I would never dream of it," he announced. He stood up, helping me stand up. He snaked his arm around me, pushing me closer to him. He murmured some sweet words to me before his lips came crashing down with mine, making me release a blissful sigh.

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He put the bills on the table and we left the restaurant. He drove to an amusement park.

Who didn't like the amusement park? I became a child again. I couldn't wait to drive the roller-coaster.

He paid for our tickets while I went to buy ice-cream for both of us.

We entered there, giving the tickets to the bouncer at the door. I jumped excitedly like a baby given a present. The place was crowded. Some couples were holding arms, some with their child or children. I felt a pang of hurt.

Abdullah wasn't here

What would he be doing now

Was he playing

Was he missing me also

Was he crying? Millions of questions were flowing through me without an answer.

Abdulrahman sensed my discomfort and came to be, "don't you like it" he asked concernedly.

I shook my head and replied dejectedly, "I love it but my son".

"Oh?"

"I don't know whether he is happy there or he is..." I trailed off.

"Nothing would happen to him S, he is safe" he comforted me.
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"See," he said pointing to a game played by rolling a ball down an alley and trying to knock over a triangular group of ten pins; ten-pin bowling. Some couples were playing. I tugged his hand telling him to let's go.

"New set," a man with the hat said.

I and Abdulrahman stood in beside each other on our line when the other opponent stood on theirs.

Abdulrahman rolled his sleeves up, flexing his arms before throwing the ball, the ball hit none while I pouted my lips. Well, it was not the end. Our opponents played, they hit the bottles and all fell. Everyone screamed in happiness. Our opponents smirked at us. Arrogant much!

"If you win sweetheart" I breathed softly on his ear, "when we get home, I'm gonna kiss you the hundredth time," I said sultrily. I thought that triggered him. After promising him, the ball he threw next hit all. We won the game and were given bars of chocolate. I squealed and hugged him while he swirled me around.

"Now to the merry go round" I giggled loudly but the rain used that moment to show its presence. The sky was not even cloudy or dark.

Our fun was cut short. He carried me bridal style outside. "Wait here S, lemme go drive the car," he said and left me under the shade because of the rain. I loved the rain to let it pour all it might without showering me. I went inside the rain, playing and laughing around.

My laughter and jumping around was stopped by the image of a person walking to me.

I stood still where I was, looking at him with fear. I wanted to run but the fear I was feeling made me frozen in my position. Abdulrahman came to me and shook me from my hypnosis but I was not because the fear in me was greater. I knew he didn't see who I saw, who was coming but I knew he was coming for me. My vocal cord couldn't work.

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BK 2 chapter 26

Why did he have to come now!.

Why is it that every moment of happiness, he always comes to damage it, I wondered.

I couldn't move from where I stood, I was frozen.

Abdulrahman was talking to me but I didn't respond because the fear I was feeling was greater than my auditory sense.

I wanted to talk but my vocal cord to carry the sound was not working. I wanted to move my hand to point but my hand was not working also. I was feeling lightheaded, my breathing was coming out in a short pant. The world was spinning around

Not again, I thought.

Today was going smoothly, I was enjoying today outside with my husband but I felt like puking.

I didn't know how it happened but I was puking all the content in my stomach while Abdulrahman was patting my back softly. I groaned, he gave me water to wash the disgusting taste of the food from my mouth. I also used the water to clean my face. I felt dizzy. Abdulrahman had carried me to an open store, he took the chair for me to rest. The rain was still pouring all it might.

"How is she now?" I heard someone asking Abdulrahman while he answered. The voice sounded familiar to me. I couldn't see that person because Abdulrahman was standing at my front.

Our clothes were drenched, "S, how are you feeling now?" Abdulrahman asked worriedly while I shivered whether because of the cold or fear.

I nodded my head slowly in answer.

Maybe I was dreaming, maybe he wasn't the one. Maybe I was hallucinating, I thought.

"What happened earlier?" he asked, "and I was talking to you, you didn't reply, it was like you were in some kind of trance," he told me softly while I wetted my dry lips.

"Nothing".

"If not because of that brother, I don't know what to do. You just went down and collapsed before you started puking" I added, handing me the extra coat in his car to me.

"Who?"

"That brother" then pointed to the person that caused all these and he smiled at me.

Smile!

Those smiles that haunted me, that always made me check my back every time.

Those smiles that made me jumpy all the time.

He came forward, with every step he was carrying to us, my breathing was changing and it was hurting my rib cage.

"I'm Khaled" he introduced himself and shook Abdulrahman's hand.

What was he doing?

Don't shake his hand. I wanted to say but I couldn't.

Abdulrahman did not know him, did not know what he was capable of doing. He came to me. I wanted to scream but I just sat without doing anything.

"Thank you," Abdulrahman said while smiling at him.

"It is a pleasure and nice to meet you" he bowed his head a little like a gentleman he was not.

"And meet my wife - Um Abdullah," he said looking at me dearly.

Cut the crap. Abdulrahman!. He knows me, I yelled out but in my head.

Abdulrahman looked at me expectedly to reply or say anything.

"What are you doing here?" I blurted out in my shaky voice which laced with fear.
Abdulrahman looked at me dumbfounded. He was shocked while Khaleed looked surprised.

After everything, he has done! He was introducing himself. How dare he!, I thought.

"Do you know each other?" Abdulrahman asked slowly, enunciating the words one by one. At that moment the thunderstruck, making me flinched.

"Yes," he responded, "and I came to see her," he added.

"Sophia" he started, "I'm sorry for all that I've done in the past. I'm sorry for all that I've put you through, it was time for ignorance time" he said remorsefully while I looked at him with a grimace.

"I don't expect you to forgive me now but please, find a place in your heart to forgive" he pleaded.

"Why?" my voice cracked, "Is this another game of yours?" Abdulrahman stood still, looking at both of us to unveil the veil to him.

He sighed and took a seat, "The day I cornered you at the restaurant, I waited outside for you to return home. The moment you arrived at your house and entered, I sneaked in and put the

envelope at the table when you went to the kitchen. On my way home, I met with an accident" realization drowned on Abdulrahman. He remembered our first date together.

"You are the Khaleed guy" he didn't ask, he made a statement accusing. He clenched his fist, "you were the causes of the conflict between the two of us" he seethed.

"Yes, I was the one" he nodded his head in confirmation.

"I was hit by a man. He carried me to his house and took care of him. He nursed me back to position. He helped me. I've never felt love, care or affection before. But this man showed me all apart from you. He didn't know me and he and his family took me as a family. I never have what to call home but this man's family showed me what is called home" he sniffled, his eyes glistened with unshed tears.

"I never knew who my father was but I heard he was a friend to your real father. They were in a gang. My mother left me because of who my father was. I was treated like a man when I was a boy. Any mistake, I would be beaten and starved. Everyone was on his own" he wiped the lone tear that was escaping.

"The day your father was beating your young self for letting his wife leave him, I was touched by you. You were beaten and hungry but you saw me get beaten. You treated my wound, cried for me and fed me your food. That was when I vowed to repay you. Then I told your father to keep all my dad's properties in exchange for him to free you" I was crying softly, this was too much.

"Then I started planning everything I could do to make your father fall so that I could come to claim you. Then you got married, I was furious because I exchanged everything I'd for you but you repay me by marrying another guy. I and Zainab planned. She wanted Yusuf and I wanted you but unknowingly to you, he killed Zainab and took you for repayment. I was the one who tipped Yusuf where you were. I called him and told him to trace the Sim" he revealed.

He was the one who called Yusuf, I was surprised.

"But why call Yusuf when you want me for yourself " I wondered out loud.

"True, I wanted you for myself but I needed someone to keep you free so that I could finish your father. He shot you but I wasn't the one who shot him" he raised his hands in surrender.

"Then who?" I blurted out.

"It was David; your father's right man. I narrowly escaped the incident," he replied.

"Then why this change?"

"Because Allah showed me the way through the man. I was a Muslim with a name then but now I'm a practising Muslim. Whenever I was reminiscing about the past, I always remembered I'd wrong you. Please forgive me" he pleaded.

"S, we are sinning to Allah and we asked for forgiveness, he forgives us. We make mistakes at the time of ignorance but when we know, we should correct our mistakes. S, he had known he had done something very wrong but can you please forgive him?" he asked softly.

I sighed softly, the rain had stopped raining heavily, it was drizzling softly like a melody.

" I forgive you" I smiled slightly at him.

"Thank you, Sophia, may Allah answer all your silent whispers, wishes, hopes, cries and prayers" he prayed.

"Ameen thuma Ameen. Jazakumu llahu Khair (may Allah reward you with goodness)".

"Wa anti fa llahu Khair (and may Allah reward you too with goodness)" he responded and stood, "before I go, I'm getting married next month, you are invited with your family," he said and walked away.

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Alhamdulillah.

BK 2 chapter 27

"Who knocks by this time of the day" Abdulrahman grumbled, tossing on the bed.

"Just go back to sleep, I'll go check" I smiled sweetly at him while I was feeling mad at the person who was knocking.

Maryam!, I yelled in my head because she would be the only one to knock by 3:00 am. She might have been trying my number. I'd switched it off because I didn't want any disturbance. I needed my perfect sleep.

The rain was pouring vigorously, the cool breeze of the rain was entering through the opened window.

"No, you wait here" he groaned, taking his jalabiya. I went out without waiting for him.

Wallahi, I'm going to deal with Maryam today, I thought angrily. I went to the kitchen to take a spatula to hit her head with it.

Maryam, Maryam Maryam!, I chanted in my head.

The banging on the door never ceased to stop. I opened the door, "Maryam...." My eyes widened and my mouth shut when I saw it was Yusuf's mother who was drenched and was shivering in the cold.

"Who is there S?" Abdulrahman spoke while flashing his flashlight.

"Ma, please come in," I said worriedly while she shook her head.

"No" her voice cracked while her eyes glistened with unshed tears. "I'm not coming in" she sneezed, "please just follow me" she pleaded, kneeling on the floor while I crouched to her position immediately.

"Please come inside, the rain..." I urged her but she didn't move.

"My son-Yusuf is not himself again. Since the day he returned from your house. He has changed" she sobbed, "he's aggressive, angry, he is not eating even his drugs sometimes he either does not use it or overdoses it. He is killing himself" she proclaimed while crying.

"What I need from you is to follow me, I can't take it anymore" She shook her head vigorously.

I patted her back gently, "Ma, it's 3:00" I gulped.

"Yes, I know," she replied.

I glanced at Abdulrahman for permission while he nodded, "Okay ma, let me go take my overall" I said, walking inside.

I came back shortly after, "your car ma'am?" I asked her so that we could take it to her place but her reply shocked me to the core.

"I didn't bring a car" she sniffled, "I trekked down here" she responded.

"What!, an hour distance?" I screamed.

"There's nothing a good mother can't do for the goodness of her child" she replied tiredly before she started coughing hard.

I eased her, how did you get out of the house?" I wondered loudly.

"I sneaked out"She laughed softly.

Subhanallah!, true. There's nothing like a good mother.

We arrived at Yusuf's place at 4:30 am because of some traffic.

We entered the warmth of the house, she turned on the light and went inside her room whether to change her drenched clothes or to wake Yusuf's father.

"I'm sorry to wake you guys up at midnight but you can stay in the guest room till the sun rises," She said in between her sneeze.

I didn't sleep, I couldn't get back to sleep because I was a light sleeper. I didn't like someone waking me up because if so, I wouldn't be able to go back to sleep.

I prayed and read the Quran. I sought for Allah refuge and forgiveness. I did my morning azkar.

I yawned and stretched my hand, I went to the kitchen for a glass of water when I met Yusuf on the way. The glass fell and shattered on the floor because I was shocked. Yusuf's hair was dishevelled and dirty. He had many black bags under his eyes, his light chocolate eyes were dull like a soulless being. He had loosened weight, he looked thin like malnutrition.

"What happened to you?" I asked him dumbfounded. He eyed me from toe to head before he walked past me. He had stepped on the broken glass and never winced. I shrugged my shoulders, bent to pick up the broken glass before it pierced my tip finger and I released a painful "ah". He came back to where I stood, he crouched on the floor picking the shattered glass. As he wanted to touch at my bloodied fingers, I moved it away quickly. "Go" he spoke with void emotion.

This wasn't the Yusuf I knew, this was another. The pain had changed him into a rude person.

I gulped nervously, "I want to see you" I dragged the word, "can we meet at the terrace.." he interrupted me.

"I'll meet you there" he turned his back at me while I nodded and clapped my hand embarrassedly.

He never shunned me before but he shunned me twice!.

I waited for him at the terrace for more than thirty minutes, maybe he stood me up. I thought. Before I heard his voice behind me, "Are you already tired of waiting?" he remarked sarcastically.

I didn't answer him, "how are you?" I asked, smiling tightly.

"Do you want the truth or lie? " as I wanted to reply he cut me off again.

"I'm shattered, dying, drowning, miserable, fake, useless, misfortune, but all I'm fine. I'm living and alive" he was franked with me.

"Yusuf, I just came today to talk to you. Please do hear me out" I pleaded with my eyes.

"Ok," he grunted in reply.

"Yusuf, what you are doing to yourself is not good. You aren't only hurting yourself, you are hurting others who are close to you like your parents. Even though your father never shows it, he is crying silently. Please don't do this to yourself. Your mother was crying at my doorstep today because of you. Don't let them blame themselves for giving birth to you. You've so many things to do on this earth" I paused a little, "please take care of yourself if not for your sake, do it for your loved ones. Your mother isn't herself, she is dying. She is crying for you. What hurt most is a mother seeing her child dying and unable to save him.

"No one cares," he said.

"Everyone cares, everyone around you cares about you. You are the one pushing them away. Your mother cares, your father cares and I care also" he snickered.

"Why do you care?" he said softly, "it is none of your business to care" he yelled at me while I flinched.

"I care" I sobbed.

"If you care, you won't leave me. If you care you would have waited longer" he screamed.

"If I don't care, I wouldn't be here telling you to save yourself" I shouted at the top of my voice, my body shaking because of the emotions I was feeling.

"No one knows tomorrow, only He Al Alimul-gaybi (knower of what is hidden) knows. Have faith and belief all these that are happening are tested. It will pass soon" I admonished him.

"But what is my essence when the doctor said..." he was crying.

"The doctors are only suggestions but none of them knows. Only Allah knows one time of death because it has already been written. And sometimes what we thought might not be what would happen and what would happen might not be what we thought. Please eat on time and use your medicine at all times. Pity your parents and I pray to Allah to answer all your silent whispers, wishes, hopes, dreams, cries and prayers. May He bless you with the coolness of your

eyes. May He provide a spouse till Jannah for you. May He forgives and pardons all our mistakes" I prayed and left him at the terrace.

BK 2 chapter 28

Life was fairing, everything had been going smoothly with Allah's will. Abdullahi was doing okay with his father during weekends. We went to Khaleed's wedding ; Allah blessed him with a niqobii and a hafizoh. I was extremely happy for him. We were expecting our little buds - Rodiyah and Mor'diyyah. The scan I did showed that I was having twins. I couldn't be happier. We'd been preparing because at any moment the babies would arrive in this world.

"Mom, wheeen arrre my sisssters coooming out?" Abdullah asked, poking my bump.

"I do not know baby but they are coming soon" I prolonged the 'soon', "you'll soon see and carry them" I said rubbing my stomach tenderly.

"S, how are you" Abdulrahman asked, walking toward me.

"I'm fine but my back is aching me" I whined softly while he chuckled.

"Daddy" Abdullah called him. We'd cake into a term that he would call Abdulrahman 'daddy' and Yusuf 'dad'. "I can't wait to see my sisters" he clapped his hands together, jumping up and down.

"Yeah, you'll be their big bro" Abdulrahman proclaimed, "and you'll protect them from big bad wolves when they are growing" he said dramatically while I nudged his side and rolled my eyes.

"Why?" he asked knowingly.

"Are you supposed to be telling a small boy that?" I exclaimed.

"But he supposed..." he interrupted Abdullah who was scowling.

"Mom, I'm not a boy" he said dramatically, "I'm a man" he punched Abdulrahman before high-fiving Abdulrahman.

I shook my head then muttered, "boys" and they groaned..

The bell rang, showing there was someone at the door.

"Go check who is there?" I told abdullahi while I went inside to put on my hijab.

"It's brother Royhan" he beamed, holding the polythene bag that I knew it would fill with bars of chocolate.

"Tell him to enter and give him a glass of water also" I ordered him softly.

He and Abdulrahman were in heated discussion, talking about Islamic books. Men!. Well, I was happy that they weren't soccer fans. It sucks!.

"Assalamualaikum" I greeted, padding my way inside the room; parlor.

"Walaikum Salam warahmatullahi wabarakatuh umum" he replied, smiling softly while looking at the ground.

Maa Shaa Allah, he was lowering his gaze.

"Lemme, get you food" I stood abruptly, ready to make my way to the kitchen before he stopped me.

"Thank you umu but I will pass this" he declined politely.

"Why?" I asked intriguingly.

"Your friend will skin me alive" he announced while shrugging his shoulder.

"Why?" I smiled.

Maryam!, drama queen.

"If I eat here, I won't be able to eat at home. All her stress to cook for me has wasted" he responded with so much enthusiasm.

"True, all her efforts shouldn't be futile" I agreed, nodding my head.

"I'm sorry," he said sadly.

"No need, I understand" I assured him.

"So let me give you guys a chance to talk," I said and walked out while my little pumpkin was trailing behind me with his face smudged with chocolate.

The day went slowly before Maryam called me that she was coming.

When I heard the bell rung, I went to open the door for her.

"Sugarplum, you look like an elephant" She came forward to hug me but my big bump didn't allow her to.

"Then you look like a cow" I replied rhetorically.

"No babe, I'm straight" she stuck her tongue at me.

"Come in" I spoke, opening the door wider for her.

"Even though you didn't tell me to come in, I'll make myself home" She winked, walking past me.

She slumped to the chair and sighed, "What do you have at home?" she asked.

"We have television, water..." I listed while she slapped my arm softly.

I stood to get her food but as I was coming back, I saw her brows furrowed in worry while she shook her head. She was bruising her lips furiously while tapping her feet on the ground.

Something must have happened. I thought.

"This is food" I served her the food, she removed the cover. She took a spoon and tasted before she threw it away, cursing out loud.

I came to her and rubbed her shoulder gently, "What happened dear?" I asked softly..

"Foolishness!, I can't even taste the food" She yelled,wiping the tears that glistened in her eyes harshly.

"Okay" I nodded. It sucks when the tastebud doesn't work, I thought.

"Men are animals"

"Why?" I asked worriedly.

"Because.." She trailed off.

"Is OK if you don't want to say. Well, your marital affair is personal and private".

"Not that, he made me mad this morning and I started talking" she said, "maybe when I was talking, I'd uttered some words I shouldn't" she spoke with sadness, "and he left without eating" she cried out, "even though, my meal I cooked always have some error, he always eat it and encourages me" sobbed. "He's patient with me, he pampered me and...." hiccuping.

"It's okay sweetie, he came to our house this morning and I offered him food but he said you would have cooked that I shouldn't worry".

"I love him, I swear. It's just that.." She cried.

"It's okay but I can teach you what will make him forget all this and when he comes home he will be head over hill for you" I said slyly, winking at her.

"Are you sure?" she said skeptically.

"Are you doubting me?" I scrunch my nose.

"No"

"Okay" I sat upright, "when your husband is angry like that sometimes, you'll leave him to cool down for some minutes, hours but not day" I warned. "We women have the power but we don't know how to use it" I chimed.

"What power?" she asked while I shushed her.

"Shhhh, you are interrupting me!" I scolded her gently.

"When your husband is angry with you or you have a heated argument, before he comes back from wherever he went, Make sure you've cleaned the house. Use air freshener to the scent of the house to make it warm and cozy when he comes back, he would feel the warmth and fragrance of the house, he would feel homely. Then you shower; you shave both areas. Men like

bare land because it would be inviting not a bushy one that would give them work to do. Are you following?"I scowled my face while she nodded meekly.

" Then, put on one of your lingeries that you know he loves on you" I winked at her, "and put on makeup not that you would cake your face up ooo because no man; I mean no man loves a cake up face. You are a chimpanzee and you make you become a baboon, even though they are the same mammalian family, they are different" I advised.

"Okay, that means I'm a chimpanzee right?" she nodded while I giggled.

"Less I forget, you prepare his favorite meal so that when he arrives, you offer him to shower before eating. When he's eating, try to caress his hair soothingly to ease him of the stress and call him his native name attractively, bite his ear softly and smile sensually. After eating the meal then you'll offer him another food.." I felt a sharp piercing at my back but I shook it off, I changed the position I sat in," then after everything, you should talk out your difference"I shrugged my shoulder, I winced again when I felt another pain. "Don't let the agreement be a day and there's nothing bad there saying I'm sorry first. It is not that you are stupid but you are saving your marriage" I screamed out in pain. I was feeling an executing pain in my lower stomach.

"What happened?" she shook me.

"My back" I cried out.

"Sophia!, you're peeing on the floor" she exclaimed, trying to let me stand on my feet.

"Foolish, I didn't pee" I yelled in pain, "my water broke that means my babies are coming" I breathed out.

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BK 2 : Epilogue

8 months later.

My life had taken a roller-coaster-like movie from one scene to another but alhamdulillah through the journey of my life, I'd learnt, experienced and been more mature. I was able to stand firm with my beliefs on the Creator of the creators, the King of kings.

Allah tested us to know who would stay and believe and He said: "Verily after every difficulty is ease". No matter the challenges or situations we found ourselves in, know that Allah would make the way.

Who could believe with everything I'd passed through or with everything that had happened I would still be happy in the end But alhamdulillah I was very grateful to the Almighty for giving me patience and steadfastness to pass through it.

It was said in a hadith that, 'the earth is a prison for the believers and paradise for the unbelievers'. You could never be a strong believer if you don't pass through the challenges, struggles Allah had written for you.

Sometimes we would feel depressed, disheartened or sad or angry, saying 'am I the only one?' but trust me. Someone else was passing through what was harder than yours. Then when you feel the sadness and disheartened, perform ablution and pray to THE King of kings. It's only He, Allah who could help no matter when you run to, no one could help except Him.

Our fate had already been written, and everything that had been written inside the book would definitely come true. When something would happen, how it would happen, where it would happen and what would happen. You could never escape it, you just pray to Allah to make you have the patience, faith, belief to pass through it.

And marriage wasn't a bed of roses, the marriage took turns. Sometimes it could be sweeter than honey and sometimes it could be bitter than bile.

Sometimes what you wished for, might not be what you hoped for. And what you hoped for might not be what you wished for. And sometimes what you desired might not be what you deserved and what you deserved might not be what you desired. But I pray to Allah to give me what would be the best for me, whether I wanted it or not. Whether I desired it or not.

If someone told me, I would get married when I was eighteen years old, I would have snorted at the comment. Or if someone told me, I would remarry in my life, I would have fought the person because I would have thought the person was cursing me because I never prayed to remarry in my life.

But here I was happy with the man I later married to even though with all what he did in the past, I'd forgiven him and loved him. And his love continued to grow every day.

Abdullah and his sisters became our source of happiness and I prayed to Him who was the giver of joy, happiness to make them the coolness of our eyes in this world and hereafter.

By the age of six plus, my Abdullah was a hafiz. We were getting ready for Abdullah's final national competition for quranic memorization.

Wallahi, Allah does make it easy for those who memorized his book. My boy could stutter with words but when it came to the Quranic recitation. He was Maa Shaa Allah.

May Allah guide him to the right path and make the Quran be useful to him this life and hereafter.

I carried Rodiyah who was Taye* and twirled her around, she was giggling showing her gum while Mor'diyyah who was Kehinde* started crying. (Taye - the first among the twins and Kehinde the last).

I carried her also, "awww, jealous baby" I cooed at her while she started to giggle, also showing two pearls of milk teeth. "Aww baby, you've poo" I wrinkled my nose.

"Darling, can you please come?" I called Abdulrahman who was buttoning his sleeve. He came to me and pecked my lips softly before kissing the little stars in my arms.

"What happened S," he asked.

"Sweetie," I said sweetly, "I want to go shower to get ready but these babies, I can't leave them alone. They could roll on the couch and fall" I caressed his beard playfully while he hummed.

He carried both of them without effort. The kids were chubby, for me to carry them together sometimes it made me have aches in my shoulder blades.

"Okay S, bath for Abdullah also and dressed him up" he called, when I got to the stairs I turned around and winked at him with mischief.

"See Ade Mi*, Kenny has poo and she needs her diaper to be changed by helping me with that. And there are some clothes in the washing machine, please continue it and the food is on fire, please check that also and help me to iron Abdullah dress" I said, looking apologetic when I was feeling none. (My Crown).

"What!" I laughed sinisterly in my mind before giving him my best puppy eyes.

"Please, this is what I always do every day. I just want you to help me" I blew a kiss at him before running off, laughing out loud seeing his expression. It was hilarious.

"Abdullah, come have your bath".

"Mom, will dad come?" he asked softly, looking downcast. I felt disheartened to see my boy like this. I hugged me and spoke to him softly.

"Yes baby, he will come" I reassured him with a smile.

"OK," he said with less enthusiasm.

After I was done with bathing, I went down the stairs running with my stiletto in my hand. The food was burning.

"Baby, the food is burning?"

"S" he sighed, looking sorry and slumped on the chair, "Thank God you are here. I don't even know what to do, I was confused"he spoke.

"It's okay"

I went to the kitchen, switched off the cooker before taking out the clothes in the washing machine for spinning.

"Mommy, my shoes "I heard Abdullah screaked.

" I'm coming, bibi" I replied while serving the food on the tray.

I went inside for another diaper to change when I heard the babies were crying.

Oh my God, I groaned internally.

"I'm coming"

I changed their diapers before dressing them in the same dress as mine and Abdulrahman. I took Abdullah's shirt and started to iron it when I heard Abdulrahman shriek. I went there and saw one of the twins had puked over his shirt.

I giggled when I saw him wrinkling his nose in disgust.

"Is not funny" he grumbled, putting off his shirt.

"Yeah, I see," I said sarcastically.

I collected his dirty shirt and took it to the laundry bin before going to dinner to have my meal. I was breastfeeding Taye when she used her free hand to tug my plate and it fell.

"Good, this is good. I don't think we will meet up with the time because we are late already" he announced.

"Issokay, we will. Go wait for me in the car, I'll meet you guys" I responded.

After I was done with the mess, I was sweating profusely. I went to have a quick shower.

I went to meet them in the car, then we drove off. Abdullah with her sisters was sitting in the back seat while I had the shotgun. When we got to Victoria Island, the traffic was super bad.

By the time we got there, everyone was anticipating us. The program was coming to an end and the judges were waiting for my boy's arrival.

"Abdullah Yusuf Umar" the Mc called while I lifted my boy to the stage. Both of us all looked dishevelled, the December dust was over our dress. I used my cloth to clean my boy's face.

My boy sat on the available chair, the micro-speaker was hung to his ear for his voice to be loud. My boy introduced himself and the judges asked him whether he was ready and he nodded.

The judge was hard. They gave a break to know the winner.

The judges were looking at everyone while I was biting my nails furiously, I was nervous. I silently prayed that my boy should win.

"And the winner of the 2019 Quranic memorization competition is Abdullah Yusuf Umar," he announced while I screamed in joy. Then I kissed my boy all over his face while crying in happiness.

He made me proud.

He made us proud.

He made me proud as a mother.

I was happy.

I clapped and went to the stage not without giving a speech.

"A child's success is on his mother. Why? because mothers are the bedrock of the world. It is rare to see a young boy like mine to be a hafiz at this age without the mother being a hafiz of. The first teacher of a child is a mother. If a mother is illiterate, it is very rare to see the child be literate. And time also. Let our parents make time for our children, they need us. We have to make them feel loved and not neglected. When a child is lacking in school, do not blame the teacher. Ask the mother, because teachers can do everything. It is now our work to make our children successful in this world and hereafter" I smiled softly and everyone clapped for me.

Abdulrahman came to meet me as I was getting down from the stage. He pecked the side of my neck and whispered, "I'm very proud of you S".

Yusuf came to me and smiled, "you did great Sophia".

I was happy he was not brooding and angry again.

I was happy he was happy again.

I was happy for him

And we all were happy because verily after every difficulty is ease.

The end

~**~

And this book comes to an end today. I'm very grateful to Allah (SWT) who made it easy for me to start this book and finish it.

Without Him, I don't think I can think of writing these pieces.

And then all thanks to you readers, commenters and silent readers too. I'm very grateful. Without you, I don't think I will be able to write this.

Preview

Not an update

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh 🫀

As the heading stated this is not an update.

Most of you weren't happy how Sophia chose Abdulrahman over Yusuf, I'm very sorry for that 🙏. I've said earlier that Sophia would get a happy ending but not with Yusuf.

Sophia can't be back to Yusuf because

1. Yusuf was announced dead.

2. I didn't stated she did idah* but she waited for two years, wishing for him to come back (waiting period).

3. She had to move on for herself and his son. Every child needs parental love. She wanted her child to have a father figure and not to be mock for being fatherless. As it was stated when Abdullahi was asking her who was his father.

4. She is married, even though Abdulrahman was a jerk. He has pleaded to be forgiven and she forgave him, giving him a chance before she met Khaleed.

5. She's now pregnant and she can't possibly divorce Abdulrahman.

6. Our hearts do change, we do fall out of love. She can't never forget Yusuf because he was her first husband and the father of her child.

7. Time changes, people are left but valuable memories stay behind.

And remember just because he is my first love doesn't mean he would be my last love.

The reason for me writing this is that I want to plead 🙏 on Sophia's behalf to forgive her. And she has talked to the writer to give Yusuf a happy ending without him experiencing any pain .

Now the writer wants to give him a happy ending, but what is pleasure without pain? What is victory without a fight? What is success without failure?

Human beings are not perfect, we keep trying. We would face some challenges in life that we would feel like 'am I the only one?' or 'why only me?' but remember Allah is with us.

Yusuf is getting a happy ending 🤰🤰🤰 but it will be short, maybe 20 chapters Sha.

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Blurb to Yusuf story 👇
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This is the Spinoff of Sophia story. It can be read alone. But I suggest reading "Sophia's Heart".

~**~**~

Finding Us

BOOK 2

"What's pleasure without pain, what's victory without fighting and what's success without failure".

He was broken.

She was traumatized.

He was wallowing in heartbreak.

She was fighting depression.

He was drowning in darkness.

She was searching for light.

He was older.

She was younger

He had a son.

She was a widow.

He did not want love.

She needed love.

He wanted to be left alone.

She wanted a companion.

He was losing himself.

She was finding herself.

Follow both broken souls how they heal themselves.