

THREAD OF HOPE

*Is There Light
At The End Of The Tunnel*

*Author
Keabetswe Mahlaba*

THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 01

SAMMY

Sammy



I check the time on my worn
out plastic watch

Me : oh God !

I am three hours late

I know this won't look good at
all

The teacher will give me hell

Damn !

I got so caught up

With wanting to cover as many
shifts as I can

Only , I lost track of time

And now I am late

I take out my work uniform

And change into my clothes

I grab my bag , and run out

My car is the only car left in the parking

People have long left

Me : shit !

I get in the car and drive out

I pay no attention to the red lights

I keep checking the time

And it's sure moving fast

My phone rings

Me : not now !

I switch it off

Because I know she will call
back again

And I can't talk right now

It's not like it's going to be a
pleasant conversation after all

I know it's about the rent I owe
her father

I am already stressed

I don't need to add on that stress

I race against time to at least get there before 18:00

It's the last I can do , being this late

But it wasn't deliberate

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RIVERS

Rivers



I keep looking around

I don't see her car

I look at the teacher

I can tell she's not happy

Me : she's coming

She smiles

But even I can tell it's not real

Me : mommy works too hard

Mrs Evans : I am sure she is

I hold my stomach tight

It feels like my intestines are
gripping together

Mrs Evans : you're hungry ?

I shake my head

I don't want trouble

Mommy won't be happy

If she knows I told the teacher I
am hungry

But I haven't eaten anything
since morning

I just had a slice of bread

And that was it

Mrs Evans : Rivers ...

She takes a deep breath

I look at her

Mrs Evans : can I ask you something ?

I nod

Mrs Evans : is everything okay at home ?

I nod

Mrs Evans : it's okay , you don't have to be scared . You can talk to me

I move my eyes from hers

Mrs Evans : are you and your mother homeless ?

I look at her with glossy eyes

Mrs Evans : it's okay , you can
tell me

Me : we

The car stops abruptly

I get up as quickly as I can

I grab my bag

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SAMMY

I look at her

She grabs her school bag

I turn my eyes to the teacher

Me : I am sorry , I had a meeting it ran ...

Mrs Evans : Ms Everdeen , it's almost 18:00

Me : yeah , yeah I know that . I am here , and I am sorry . It won't happen again

Mrs Evans : how can you forget your own child ?

Me : I said ...

Mrs Evans : even if you had a meeting

I shake my head

Me : I didn't forget her , so please . Let's refrain from saying such things

She takes a deep breath

Mrs Evans : can we talk ?

Me : as you can see , it's late .
We have to get home . So I can
help her with homework's

Mrs Evans : I waited here for 3
hours , for you . Surely , you
can spare me a few minutes . I
also have a life , I have a family

. But I sat here , with your child
and waited for you

I take a deep breath , shaking
my head with a sigh

I look at Rivers

Me : baby , go wait for me in
the car

She waves at her teacher

I watch at her , until she gets
into the car

Me : what ?

Mrs Evans : if Rivers is not
picked up late , she's brought in
late

Me : I said it won't ever happen

Mrs Evans : how many times
have you said that ?

I shake my head

Mrs Evans : if you need help
just ...

Me : hey ...don't go there , I
don't need anyone's help or
yours . Have you never met a

single hard working woman ,
who has no one to fall on ?

Mrs Evans : you're neglecting
your child ...

I chuckle annoyed

Me : say whatever you want to
say about me , but don't talk
about my child . Don't provoke
me like that , cause you don't

know me like that . Please , I
break my own back for that
child

Mrs Evans : I know you're
homeless struggling with
accommodation , and Rivers
comes to school hungry . She
doesn't even have lunch

Me : I will respect you and
leave

I turn

Mrs Evans : if you don't get
yourself in order , I will call
child services

I close my eyes

As pain strikes my heart

I turn my head and look at her

Me : don't , please don't . I am asking you nicely , Rivers is my child . And no one is going to take her away from me , not even you . Let's not have this conversation again

I turn and walk to the car

I get in , and close the door

Me : damnit !

I hit the steering wheel

And catch a glimpse of her
looking at me

She shakes her head , and
walks to her car

Me : seatbelt Rivers !

Rivers : I swear , I didn't say anything . She was asking me , I said nothing . My stomach just grumbled , but I didn't say anything

I take a deep breath

Closing my eyes briefly

I drive out of the school premises

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 02

SAMMY

She looks at the food

I sigh

Me : Rivers eat

Rivers : noodles again

Me : please eat

I get up and place the plate in
the sink

Rivers : can we eat something
else ?

I glare at her

She turns her head and looks
down

She picks the fork and starts
eating

Me : thank you

I pull a chair and sit down

Just as my phone rings

I should have just let it off

Me : oh ...

I really don't want to talk to her

I just don't

Me : Chloe

Chloe : hey , what's going on ?

I sigh

Me : nothing

Chloe : I am worried , my dad called and he wasn't happy

Me : I will give him his money

Chloe : he says you haven't paid rent for three months Sam , that's a lot of money . How will you even cover it ?

As if my problems are not enough

I have to be reminded

Of just how they keep on piling
up

Me : hey I knowand I will pay
him

Chloe : are you in trouble ?

Because now he's angry at me ,
I got you that place

Me : no ...it's fine , look I have to go . It's been a long day , I have to rest

Chloe : please pay my dad , because this will now affect our friendship

Me : who needs enemies with friends like you ?

Chloe : you cannot ...

I drop the call

When it rains surely it pours

I feel it right now

A text comes through

“He wants to kick you out , and
I won't stop him . You're

ungrateful , and you used my
friendship . Pay my dad , or we
are done”

Tears burn my eyes

Could this get any worse ?

I've lost a friend now

I get up and grab a glass of
water

I walk to the bedroom

And grab my bag taking out my
migraine pills

I take two , and down the water

Tears stream down my eyes

Nine years ago , I thought I
could do this

I thought it was possible

But it's hard

And I am drowning

Maybe I didn't make the most
clever decision

Who was I fooling ?

I can't do this

I fail to take care of my
daughter

It breaks my heart

Every day I wake up and look at
her

I see my reason to live

But I wonder if she even
understands our life right now

I thought I would make it
through

I didn't anticipate the father
going to jail

My family kicking me out

And I had no one

It was a mess

From the beginning

I didn't want to take the easy
way out

And abort

I kept my baby

Maybe not such a wise decision

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RIVERS

I watch her standing at the
door

I know she's crying

And it hurts

I don't want to see my mommy
crying

I walk in slowly

And come behind her

Me : I am sorry

She sniffs

Mom : go finish eating Rivers

Me : I am done

She sighs

Me : I swear I didn't tell her
anything

She lifts her head and looks at
me

Her eyes are reddish

Mom : come here

She pats next to her

I walk over and sit next to her

Mom : I know it's hard , and
maybe you don't understand
yet . But I am tryingI really

am . Everything we have , and
what we need . I need to work
hard , so we have a home . I am
sorry , if it looks like I am
neglecting you

Me : I know

She takes my hand into hers

Mom : and you can't tell
anyone what's happening , you

just can't . Not even Mrs Evans ,
because they will take you
away from me . And we don't
want that

I shake my head

Me : we don't want that ...or do
you want them to take you
away from me ?

Me : no

I say shaking my head

I love my mommy , and I don't
want to be taken away

Mom : good , now go brush
your teeth and get ready for
bed

I get off the bed

Me : I love you

She nods

Mom : I love you more kid

I walk to the bathroom

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SAMMY

Right now I am asking myself so many questions

I am asking if , maybe I didn't make a mistake

By making this decision to keep her

Having no support

And now , I am struggling still

I can't take care of her

I am failing so badly

And it hurts

Cause I anticipated life to be
better than this

If I knew better

Maybe I would have made a
better decision than this

Because each day , I just feel
like I am sinking

I can'tit's a lot

I regret a lot

Having a child so young

Not finishing school

And falling for that deadbeat
man

Worse giving him a child

As much as I regret having a
child with him

I don't regret my child at all

She's my everything

My whole world

The one and only reason why I
haven't given up on this life
thing

If only , I have better means to
make a better future for her

To give her an opportunity that
I ruined

So she can make something out
of herself

And turn out way much better
than I did

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 03

JACK

Jack



Me : is this okay ?

Liv : yes

I go ahead and get dressed

Only when I grab my tie

I see she was answering me
from the bathroom

She's still in there even now

I don't take that long to get
dressed

I take a deep breath

We are about to get married

But it feels like she's bored
already

Or maybe it's because I'm just a
simple man

And she knows me way too
well

Now she knows , what I want

Even before I say it

She knew I will be okay
dressing like this

And she just agreed with me

Without even seeing what I had
taken out

I don't know if this is the kind
of a life I want to settle on

Me : breakfast ?

Liv : I've made your usual

I nod slowly grabbing my laptop
bag

Me : thanks

I guess it doesn't even matter
to ask

What I would want to eat

Just the usual

Because the usual is what I
prefer

I shake my head walking out of
the bedroom

Best I just leave for work

And leave the usual right here

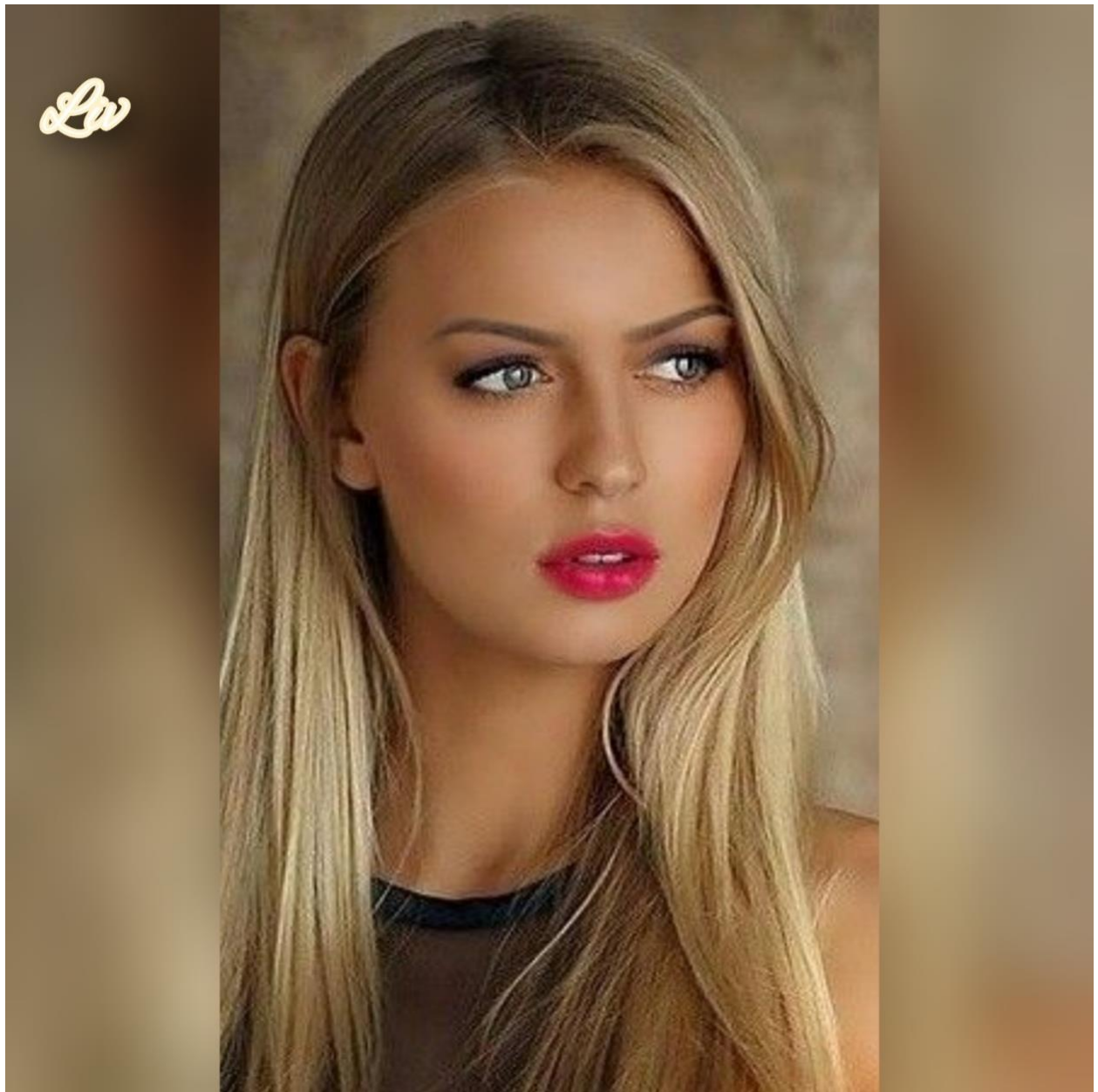
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LIV



Well , this is a shock

He didn't eat

Like he just left without eating

Now , that's a first

I grab an apple and my bag

The helper will get rid of those

For whatever reason he didn't
see the need to eat

It's just so basic living with Jack

He always does the same thing
everyday

It's not rocket science to read
him out

He's just a simple man

Doesn't require much

And that's boring

Basically that's just Jack

But , in a way

That's also good

Because I don't have to worry

I know where he is at all times

So , I am safe

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SAMMY

Me : grab a jacket , we cannot
be late again . And have your
annoying Mrs Evans on my back

She walks to the wardrobe

I lift the mattress and take out
the money envelope

I open it and count the money
out

And I'm just R200 short to
cover the fall for the rent

For all the months I am owing

I put it back

And fix the mattress

Me : let's go

She grabs her school bag

I grab my bag and the car keys

Me : come on , hurry up

She picks up her pace as she
comes behind me

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I crouch down to her level

And fix her jacket

Me : I promise , I will not be
late again

She nods

I know she doesn't believe me

I've promised many times

And still disappointed her

Me : okay , now go in . I love
you

Rivers : I love you

I peck her cheek

I get up

Me : bye

She opens the door , just as
Mrs Evans appears

I wanted her not to see me

That's why I dropped Rivers at
the door not walking in

Rivers : good morning

Mrs Evans : Rivers hi good
morning , Ms Everdeen

I turn and run off to my car

I get in and drive away

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RIVERS

That was embarrassing

The way my mommy just ran
off

She was running away from
Mrs Evans

I know that

I look at her

She lets out a smile

I am sure , to make me not feel
embarrassed

By what my mommy just did

Mrs Evans : are you hungry ?

Me : no

I walk inside the school

And walk to my class

I won't say anything to anyone

I don't want them to take me
away from my mommy

I will be okay

I will just drink water when I am hungry

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 04

JACK

Evan : how are you ?

I chuckle

Me : I couldn't be better

He pulls a chair and sits down

Evan : must be excited

Me : for ?

He laughs

Evan : come on man , you're getting married soon

Me : oh yeah ...that

He scoffs with a chuckle

Evan : oh yeah that ? What's going on , like what am I missing ?

Me : hey Nothing

Evan : that's not convincing

Me : mhm , really leave it . It's nothing

Even : everything okay between you and Liv ?

Me : hey man , everything is fine . Do you have the report I asked for ? My father will be

coming in , and he wants an
update

He sighs

Evan : okay fine , yeah I have it

Me : then ... let me see it

Evan : I don't think you will be
pleased with it

Me : and why ?

He pushes the file to me

I open it

Evan : you see James offered them way above what they are supposed to be getting

Me : what ?

He nods

Me : who gave him the go
ahead for that ?

He shrugs

I pick up the office phone and
call him

And he doesn't answer

As always

Evan : what are we going to do
, because they'll be expecting
what he promised ?

Me : leave me , let me work on
this and see how I can avoid
getting us in hot water

He gets up

Evan : call , if you need help
with anything

Me : sure

He walks out

I just feel so damn frustrated

Trust James to mess up things

And never be available to clean
his own mess

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JAMES

James



Girl : your phone has been
ringing off the hook

She grabs her jacket

Girl : thank you for a great night

She looks at me

I rub my forehead , and grab
my pants

I take out my wallet

Taking out a few notes

Me : leave !

She smiles taking the money
and walks out

My head is pounding

Feels like it'll break in half

I get up just as my phone rings
again

I look at the caller ID

Me : ah the golden son

Not even my wife calls me this
much

I click my tongue

Walking to the bathroom

Leaving the phone ringing there

I open the tap and rinse my
mouth

Drinking some water

I need a glass or two

To get over this hangover

Jack can wait

Whatever reason he's busy
blowing my phone like this

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LIV

Me : are you good ?

She nods with a smile

Me : what's wrong ?

Her eyes are reddish

I can tell she's been crying

No doubt it's that James

Only he can get her like this

I don't understand why she
doesn't leave his ass

Lindsey : he didn't sleep home ,
his card was swiped at a hotel
in Sandton

Oh yeah

Only James is capable of doing
such

And doesn't care about his wife

Or how much he hurts her

Or even embarrass her

Girls are mean and they don't
care

Even if they see them together

And they know that they're
married

They still don't care

Because he gives them that
power

By disrespecting his wife

Me : oh Lindsey

She tears up

And I feel for her

No lies !

Lindsey : I don't know what to
do anymore , I am tired

Leave his ass girl !

Of course , I can't tell her that

Because she seems to have
patience

Enduring all of James nonsense

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SAMMY

Anna : what ?

I sigh

Me : please , I just need 30 minutes and I'll be back

Anna : Sam , when I asked you if you want this job . And you agreed , you knew you will be working more extra hours . Including the night shift

Me : yeah , I get that . And I know you gave me a chance , one I begged for

Anna : I saw you were already struggling , with your normal shift . But you wanted this one as well

Me : I need this job okay , please . I did my morning shift , I came for my cheque . I need to cash it , and pay my rent .

Fetch my daughter from school
, and I'll be back I promise

She shakes her head

Anna : this seems to be too
difficult for you

I shake my head

Me : no , no it's not . I can
handle myself

I take a deep breath

I am tired as it is

I don't need to be told I am a
failure

Anna : 30 minutes , and that's it

She hands me my cheque

Me : thank you

I walk out of her office opening
the envelope

And this money is nothing

It doesn't feel like a pay cheque

For those many hours I worked

But I'll get to cover rent

Even though I won't have much
left for anything else

I'll just have to make do

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 05

RIVERS

I keep looking

I am crossing fingers she comes
early

I hate it when Mrs Evans treats
me differently

Just because she can see we
are suffering

I don't want her to threaten my
mommy again

The door opens

I swallow hard , looking if it's
her coming out

My heart sinks as I see her

Most kids have left

I'm at the gate

My mommy still hasn't arrived

I look down

And I can see she's coming to
me

I hold tight on my school bag

Just then , my mother parks at
the gate

Mrs Evans : Rivers ...

She calls me out

I run towards the car and get
inside

I put on my seatbelt and look at
her through the window

She's standing there , with her
hands on her wait

My mommy drives

I am glad she didn't forget me
today

And she came early

This is early for her

Because school hasn't been out
for too long

Mom : why did you run ?

I say nothing finding my arms

Mom : I am talking

She turns her head and looks at
me

Me : I am hungry

She sighs shaking her head

She says nothing , and drives
headed to our home

I wonder if she's not working
tonight

As it seems like we are going
home

It's still early

I know she works until late

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SAMMY

This is crazy

What kind of a mother am I ?

I've even taught my daughter
to lie

Now she saw me running away
from her teacher

And she runs away too

I am setting such a bad
example for her

I should be ashamed of myself

I look at her through the mirror

And she's quite still

She sure must be hungry

After getting petrol , I can
maybe get her something
different

Something that's not noodles

I park at the building

Me : don't get out , give me
your bag . I am coming

River : are we not coming home
?

Me : your bag Rivers , I still
have to go to work

River : and me ?

Me : you're coming with me

River : but I am hungry

Me : don't sulk , you look like a
dog

She sighs and hands me her
school bag

I take it

Me : don't come out , don't talk
to any strangers . I am coming

I take the money and run inside

Getting to our door

I see the handle is messed with

I open , and it just falls off

Someone broke in here

Me : no ...no

I drop the bag on the floor and
run to the bedroom

I lift up the mattress

And the envelope is gone

I move the mattress down to
the floor

And it's really gone

Me : nono ...

I let out a scream

As tears stream down my face

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This is not bad luck

I don't even know what to call
it

I am definitely homeless I know
that

There's no way I can stay here

I am done for

Without that money to pay the
rent

I have nothing

What I have right now , can't
even pay for a single month

And I owe for three

What am I going to do now ?

Me : fuck ...

I turn punching the wall

Hurting my arm

But I don't even care about the
pain

My problems just keep on
piling up

I walk to the kitchen

And grab the black refusal bag

I walk back to the bedroom

Open the wardrobe

I take Rivers clothes , and a few
of mine and her doll

This is all I can take

We don't have much

But I can't take anything else

I grab her birth certificate

I have my ID and licence in the
car

This is it

Now I have to look for a new
place to stay

I don't know where I'll find the
deposit for the place

But I can't stay here

I will be just causing more
problems for myself

No one will believe I got robbed

It'll be like I am just making up
a story

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RIVERS

My tummy hurts so bad

I am really hungry

I wipe my tears off

As I see my mommy coming

The way she's in a hurry

And she keeps looking on her
sides

She's running away from
something

Or someone

I know

I look at the plastic she's
holding

She opens the back door

Mom : move

I move to the other side

She puts the plastic next to me

Mom : Seatbelt Rivers

I sigh

She could have just come to
this side

And let me sit where I was
sitting

I say nothing , and put on the
seatbelt

She closes the door and goes to
the drivers seat

She gets in and drive off

I am feeling emotional

I feel like crying

But , I don't want to make her
feel bad

Mom : we can't live there anymore , so I am going to work . And you're coming with me , we also have to find a new place

She turns looking at me

Mom : you understand that right ?

I nod

Mom : good

I can see she's not okay

Mom : we will be okay

I nod

I can't say much

What will I say ?

Mom : now we have to find a
new place

Me : we are homeless ?

Mom : don't say that , we
won't be living on the streets

I move back laying my head on
the seat

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 06

JAMES

I open the door

He just pushes his way in

I heave a sigh

Me : what do you want ?

He shakes his head

Clearly not hiding his
disappointment

I swear , you'll think he's my
father

And not my brother

He just deems himself so
perfect

And better than me

But I don't blame him

Our parents are to blame

They are the ones who put him
on this pedestal

Making him the golden boy

While they discard me outside
in the cold

Jack : aren't you ashamed of
yours ?

I laugh

Me : please , give me your
lecture and go

Jack : this place reeks of alcohol

I shrug

Me : yeah so ? I don't care what
you think about me Jack , I

don't give a damn . And you
can go ahead , and judge me all
you like . At least , I am not
programmed like you . I make
my own rules , I live my life for
me . Unlike you , busy living for
your parents . Trying to please
them , to an extent they had to
choose a wife for you

He looks at me

And for once , he seems like he has nothing to say

Me : you didn't even want this , you know very well this is not your dream

Jack : get yourself in order , we have to meet with dad and mom in 30 minutes

He walks out

I chuckle shaking my head

What our parents have done to
us

It's the most painful thing ever

We don't even like each other
anymore

All because , all my life I've had
to live under his shadow

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JACK

Dad : where is your brother ?

Me : on his way up

I am holding my breath

And just hoping , crossing
fingers that really he's coming

With James , one never knows
anything

What annoys me , is that we're
here because of him

And the bad business decisions
he keeps on making

Wanting to take over the
company , and be in charge

When he fails to even please
clients

As much as I know him

I know this company would
grumble and die in his hands

Mom : trust James to be this ...

She's getting impatient now

And it won't be nice for him

Dad : he better

Me : he's here

I jump in saying , as he walks
over to our table

He looks like a mess

He sits down

I look down

As I catch the look my mother is
giving him

Dad : you don't know how to
greet anymore ?

He rubs his palm

Mom : sit up straight , and
greet us

He lifts his head and sits back

Mom : good day mom , father

He says with a nod

I chuckle

Cause I know he's annoyed

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JAMES

This seems to be like a grill
James meeting

Dad : how can you make such
stupid decisions , that not only
affect us but the business as
well ?

Mom : you can just never do anything right !

Me : I tried , it looked like a good decision at the time

Mom : you embarrass us , and you embarrass yourself with your incompetence

Me : I

Dad : Jack , can you fix this ?

I look at Jack

Jack : yes

I knew it

Dad : good then just

I get up

Mom : what is this ?

She glares at me

Her eyes furious

Me : why am I here ? I get he's
your golden son , you will
always choose him over me .

Even though we know well , he
wants nothing to do with this

business . It's not what he
wants

Mom : unlike you , your brother
knows his priorities . This
business , it's our family legacy

Me : yeah , your family . We're
grown now , and maybe we
need to work ourselves

I walk away

I know they won't come after
me

They'll rather let me walk away

Than to cause a spectacle of
themselves

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JACK

At least the mood has calm
down now

James just has a way , to rub
everyone off

I don't even want to say where
I found him

We've had enough drama for today

Mom : how is Liv ?

Me : she's good

Mom : and the wedding preparations , how are they coming along ?

Me : good

I just wish we can just not talk
about that

I am not even sure about this
marriage

I just go on to do what pleases
them

Despite what I want

That's one thing James was
right about

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 07

A MONTH LATER

SAMMY

I look at her

I don't even know what to say

But this ...it's just not on

I cannot keep on sleeping in my
car

Bathing in public toilets sinks

I just can't

I need a place for my child and I

But how will I do that , when I
keep earning less and less

Me : Anna ?

She sighs

Anna : Sam please , that's your
pay

Me : I did almost every hour of my shift

Anna : well ...we had to deduct the money from the food services ...

Me : what ? I am an employee of this company , the food is free

Anna : no it's not

Me : what ?

She sighs

Anna : it's only free for the
executives

I chuckle annoyed shaking my
head

Me : this has got to be a joke

Anna : I am afraid not

Me : they're rich bastards , and still they get food free while we have to pay for it . But we work for them ?

She shrugs

Anna : I don't make the rules

Me : well , stuff their rules

I take my cheque and walk out
slamming the door

I was so hopeful

That this month , I'll be able to
get a place

Tears burn my eyes as I walk
out to the parking

As I'm about to cross heading
to my car

I am almost hit by a car

Me : what the fuck !

I slam my hand on the bonnet

The passenger door opens

Me : what the fuck ? Are you
fucking blind ?

The guy walks over

Him : whore watch your fucking
tone

I raise my hand to slap him

He grabs my arm and slightly
twists it

The driver's door opens

I yank my arm off this guy

Him : this is a car , fucking
watch where you're going

The other guy pushes this one
off

Me : don't piss me , you be driving like ...

The driver looks at me

Him : lady , it's not my fault you walked right into my car

Me : and it's my fault that you can't drive ?

The passenger chuckles

He's got attitude for days

Me : fuck off ! You're simply an
idiot

I turn and walk to my car

I get in and find Rivers looking
at me

I take a deep breath and start
the car driving off

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JACK

James : mhm , what the hell
was that ?

I take a deep breath

James : you're so weak , that's
why people always dance on
top of your head

Me : watch ...

James : you let that whore just
...

Me : respect , you don't even
know that woman to call her a
whore

James : I fuck whores for a living , I know one when I see one

Me : look ...I'll see you at the meeting . Go get yourself together

I leave him and walk to my office

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LIV

Mrs Union : wow ...

She says as I look at the mirror

I let out a smile

Mrs Union : I love this one

Me : yeah ?

Mrs Union : you're an angel , so
beautiful my baby

I let out a slight laugh

She's right

I am beautiful

This dress , was created for me

Mrs Union : Jack is the luckiest
man ever

Me : I am the lucky one

Mrs Union : I swear , the
universe didn't make a mistake
when they gave you to us

I smile

Mrs Union : we raised you well
, and now you'll be our
daughter forever

She fans her face

I chuckle

I don't believe this woman ever
gets emotional

She's as hard-core as ever

Mrs Union : okay ...okay , now
this is the dress

Me : yes , I agree

I face the mirror

A lot of thoughts go through
my head

But I know this

I have to marry Jack

When my parents passed away

His parents took me in

And they raised me

This is the least I can do

After every they have done for
me

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RIVERS

She parks the car at the school
gate

She gets out and opens my
door

Mom : okay , time to go

She helps me off the car

Mom : be good for me

I nod

Mom : I love you kid

Me : I love you

She crouches down and gives
me a kiss

Mom : bye

I walk a bit and turn looking at
her

Mom : what ? Did you forget something ?

Me : are we ...

I swallow

Mom : what Rivers ? You will be late

Me : do we have a home now ?

She sighs shaking her head

Mom : I am working on that

I look down

And say nothing waking inside
the school gate

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 08

SAMMY

I look at her

And she looks so scared

I mean , I would be too at her
age

She's only 9

But she's like an adult

Life has been tough for her

Ever since she was born

As if that's not enough

Now we are here

At a shelter

Me : I am coming

She says nothing

I walk out of the car

I look at her through the door

Me : remember the rule , don't
talk to strangers

She says nothing

I heave a sigh walking away
from the car

I stand in line , while I keep on
looking at her

Me : I am sorry kid

It pains my heart

I wish I can do more for her

But I've failed her

I've always failed her

And it seems like there's no
escape from this

I know she needs proper care

But I can't have her taken away
from me

I just can't

Voice : I don't have the whole
day ...

The guy in front of me gets me
out of my thoughts

I look at the line

And seems like people are
annoyed

I didn't realise the line is
moving

And I'm in front

Me : I am sorry I ...

Him : name

I take a deep breath

Me : uhm Sammy Everdeen

He writes on the board

Him : grab a blanket and go in

Me : uhm , I ...I have my
daughter with me and ...

Him : no children allowed here

Me : please , we have nowhere
to ...

Him : everyone here has
nowhere to go

Me : please , I am begging you .
Even if it's for a week , it's okay

He looks at me bored

Me : please , I beg of you . Just
for a week , we'll appreciate
that

He looks around and heaves a
sigh

Him : alright go in , but if something happens to your child here . That's on you , and I will not be held responsible

I nod with a smile

Me : thank you so much

Him : go on

Me : uhm , can I come back
after 22:00 ?

Him : Lady , you seem to be a
lot of things

Me : please , I am sorry . I just
have to be somewhere right
now

Him : everyone here needs a
place

Me : I know and ...

Tears stream down my face

I hate myself for this

Being weak in front of people

And not having control over it

Him : it's fine , just ask for Phil
when you get here

Me : thank you so much

I move away from the line

And rush to the car

I wipe my tears off as I get in
the car

Me : I am going to work for a few hours , so you'll have to come with me again

She says nothing

I'm sure she's just saying it's the usual

That's how I've managed to work night shifts

While looking after her

By taking her to work with me

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LIV

Clara : yes ...we needed this

I laugh as she raises her bottle
of Savannah

Me : oh yes

Clara : so how's the final
wedding preparations ?

I chuckle

Me : good

Clara : just good ?

I nod with a fade smile

Me : yes , I've had my fitting
and Mrs Union loves it

She laughs

Clara : she loves it ? What
about you ?

I shrug taking a sip of my mojito

Clara : she's going to be your mother in law , it's your wedding and not hers

Me : yes I know , but I really don't care . She's happy , so am I

Clara : whatever you say , but I know they raised you . All I am

saying is , you don't have to
feel like you owe them

Maybe I do owe them

Where would I be if it wasn't
for them ?

Just because they knew my
parents

And they were friends with
them

It didn't mean they had to take
me in

They did it , when no one asked
them to and I had no one

So

Clara : enough of that , you're not getting married today you still have enough time to decide what's what . So check on Jack , tell him you'll be late

I laugh

Clara : what ?

I take a sip again

Me : I don't need to check on Jack , because I know where he is

She smiles

Clara : when did you call him ?

Me : I didn't , but I know he's at work . So let's have fun

She laughs

Clara : I swear , you two are the most awkward couple I've ever met

I shrug as I go on for a sip again

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 09

JACK

Evan : go home , you've done
your best so go home and rest .
Tomorrow is yet another day

I chuckle

Me : yeah

Evan : even I need the rest ,
sounds like Liv and Clara are
just having fun

Me : they are ?

Evan : yeah , call your fiancé

I chuckle

Me : bye

Evan : I am

I drop the call

And get up from the chair

I am glad this deal is done with

So my dad can be off our backs

I would be a fool again

To let James take care of
anything

Because he almost just cost us

I get up and stand by the
window

As days near , to the wedding

I feel absolutely nothing

I am just empty

And it worries me

But I cannot express that

My parents are looking up to
me

And I have to make them proud

No matter what

At least , so they can have one
decent son

Who hasn't disappointed them
as of yet

I just can't

It will break their hearts I know

Besides , I've known Liv for way
too many years

We grew up together

So we know each other

So what's the worst that could
happen ?

Surely marriage between us , it
wouldn't be so bad

I turn back , and kick something

I look down , and it's a bottle of
water

Me : damnit !

This carpet in here , it's one of a kind

That cannot take a single drop of anything

It'll have to be cleaned

Otherwise , this may cause a stain that's gonna be hard to remove

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SAMMY

I know everyone has left

It's a crappy job

But it's one I have to do

I don't like it either

People have families

And that's why most of the
times

I do the night shifts alone

I can't help it

I need the money

And well , at least I don't have
to worry about Rivers being
alone

Because she's right here

I move to the cafeteria area to
just take out the bins

At night , there isn't too much
work

Unlike in the morning

When they arrive , and they
have breakfast

Just filling their rubbish bins

And spilling everything
everywhere

These people can be so
annoying

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JACK

I turn by the door

As I see a figure by the fridge

I know it's not a thief

Besides , the fridge is locked

I peek in , and I am shocked to
say the least

I look at her , as she moves
around the room cleaning

I lean by the door just watching
her

And it's when she finally turns

That she sees me

She's shocked

I don't blame her

She must have thought she's
alone

Her : what ?

The attitude

That's one thing I will always
recognise her with

Besides everything else

Her : I mean ...why are you
staring at me like that ?

I chuckle

Me : are you always this rude ?

She chuckles annoyed

Her : you don't know me like that !

Me : I know you enough , to know you're a vile woman

She chuckles and shakes her head

Her : fuck off !

She walks over and walks past
me

I am left puzzled

As to who is this woman ?

I've never even seen her before

Until the parking lot situation

Not that I wish I had

But , with they way she is

I doubt she's a peaceful person

Surely , there should have been
many complaints about her as
it is

My phone startles me ringing

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LIV

I am drunk

No , I am totally wasted

And I don't even know where I
am

I feel nothing

Like , I've never been this
happy

Clara : okay ...okay ,Jack ,
you need to come pick her up .
She's drunk , and she can't
drive like this . I would bring
her , but I have to go home to
my husband and kids

I laugh

Me : no ...don't call him , he's
going to kill my fun

Damn !

Clara : shhhhhh

I let out a burp

Me : damn that man is so
uptight , he's only 30 but he

lives like a 90 year old man .

He's boring

I laugh loud

Me : so not my type

Clara : okay , that's going too far . You've had too much to drink

I let out a loud scream , just as
my eyes get blurry

I feel like I am going to pass out

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 10

JACK

Me : what is this ?

I place her on the bed

I've seen Liz drunk

But nothing like this

She can't even talk

She keeps stuttering

Never mind being balanced

This is crazy

Me : I am going to make you
coffee

She laughs

Liz : oh stuff that

She tries to sit up

Me : just sleep then

Liz : oh , you're so boring Jack
...like you're such a bore .

You're so uptight , you never do
anything fun . You're so
predictable , there's nothing
fun ...about being with you

Me : what ?

She laughs

Liz : the sex is boring , it's
always one thing all the time .
You make love , you never fuck
me . You don't choke me ...you
don't slap me ...your sex game
is boring . Oh you're so boring ,
you're no fun . We will have a
very boring marriage , I can't
wait

She laughs throwing her head
back down

And seconds later , she just
snores

I shake my head

As her words keep on ringing in
my head

I can say she's drunk

And not take what she said to
heart

But one thing about drunk
people

It's either they'll tell you tale
stories

Or spit out the bitter truth as it
is

Of which , I think she just did
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SAMMY

I can't sleep , and I need to
sleep

Because I have a shift in the
morning

And also at night

But this shelter is so scary

And it freaks me out

There's so many people

I look at Rivers

At least she's sleeping

I'm keeping her close to me

So I can hear anything

I try closing my eyes

Maybe I'll be able to sleep

For like an hour or so

I do need the rest

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I open my eyes panting with a
scream

Startling Rivers and she wakes
up

The guy quickly moves back

I fix my jersey , he was trying to pull it off

I grab Rivers and her small bag

I run out , even the door is not locked

I head for my car in the dark

River : mommy , I am scared

Me : it's okay

I strap her in

And get in my seat

Rivers : what's going on ?

I say nothing , driving off

My heart is pounding so fast

I look at her

And she's emotional

Me : I am sorry kid

If maybe we didn't get out of
there

Who knows what would have happened ?

What if I didn't feel the guy grabbing the blanket

He could have hurt us

We are never going back there

I don't know what we'll do

But for now

We'll just have to live the way
we have been living

The car will become our home

Safety is a priority

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LIV

There's no part of my body

That is not painful

My head is pounding

I feel like throwing up

I sure had a rough night

I just wish I didn't remember
anything

I sure did embarrass myself

I don't even know how I'll look
Jack in the eye

After everything I said to him
last night

I'm alone in bed

It seems like he has left already

Maybe he's avoiding me as well

Me : oh God !

I close my eyes taking a deep
breath

I can't stay in here all day

I have to go out there

And face the world

Even Jack

Since we don't even check on
each other

I will not bother call him

I will see him later on

For now , I need to get to work
as well

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SAMMY

It's a very quite morning

She hasn't said anything to me

I can tell she's not okay

I know I burden this poor child

At only nine years

She seen things her age mates
haven't seen

She's been through a lot

And I blame myself

I look inside my purse

Taking a deep breath

Me : you want to have some
Dagwood ?

She lifts her eyes and looks at
me

River : yes ...please

I let out a smile

I don't have money

Just R50

But it does cost only R30

So I'll buy one for her

Anything to get her smile

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 11

A WEEK LATER

JACK

She walks in

And puts her bag on the chair

She pours coffee for herself

I get up

Me : bye

Liv : no

I look at her

She sighs

Liv : why are we doing this ?

Me : what ?

Liv : please , let's talk . It's been a week now , we don't talk to each other . It's like we're two strangers living together

Me : what's there to talk about ?

Liv : what I said when I was drunk , I was just drunk

I chuckle

Me : everything you said , can be rectified . I heard your complaints , and I'll work on them . That was your cry , for me to listen and I did

Liv : please , it's not like that

Me : it's okay really , there's no need to talk about this . I heard you crystal clear

Liv : I am sorry

Me : for the truth ? No don't be

I grab my laptop bag

Me : just tell me ...do you still
want to get married to me ?

Liv : of course I do

Me : then , I'll fix myself and be
what you want

I turn and walk out

Driving to work

I don't know what to make of
what she said

But , I also know it's the truth

And only because I don't feel
romantic love for Liv

She was raised in our home for
goodness sake

I just care for her

This is what my parents want

Because they have some
attachment to her

I just have to sacrifice myself

I can't fuck her

Cause it'll feel like I'm using her

If I loved her

I would do it , without even
thinking twice

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LIV

I sure messed up

I know Jack

He might pretend like he
doesn't care

But surely what I said got to
him

I just don't know what to do

Or how to make him feel better

The last thing I wanted to do

Was to make him feel like less
of a man

It wasn't my intention

As much as I said my truth

And it being something I've
always wanted to say to him

I guess , I just chose the wrong
timing

And now , I don't know what to
do

Mrs Union : you don't seem
okay ?

I let out a fake smile

I don't want to tell her anything

Me : I'm worried about Lindsey

I'll rather talk about her

Than to talk about myself

And her favourite son

She won't take it well

That much I know

Mrs Union : oh

She takes a sip of her Chai tea

The woman is not even
bothered

I know she doesn't like Lindsey

So she won't say anything

Me : she's really not okay , last I
saw her she was crying

She smiles

Mrs Union : I don't want to get involved , she chose to marry James . Even after we attempted to stop this sham of theirs , but she went ahead . This is her bed she made , so she better lie on it

Wow !

It's so sad really

Lindsey is married to a jackass
James

Who doesn't give a shit about
her

Worse , even his family

They don't care about her

Just because she's not the
woman they wanted for their
son

If only James truly loved
Lindsey

And treated her right

Did right by her

Loved her right and loud

He would disappointment his
parents so much

But right now

He's playing into their hands

So they can keep throwing
what a failure he is , on his face

All because he keeps on
proving them right

By treating his own wife like a
whore

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SAMMY

Me : okay , I'll come check on
you in two hours . Remember

as always , don't talk to
strangers . And don't make
noise or come looking for me .
Even if you wake up , and I
don't come . Only make noise ,
if someone is trying to hurt you

She nods

I peck her cheek

And tug her

Me : goodnight

She nods , cuddling her doll

I heave a sigh walking out

I grab the cleaning machine

And walk downstairs

I hate doing this

Making her suffer like this

But there's nothing else I can
do

I have to work

And I can't leave her alone in
the car

Late at night , in the parking lot

It's better she sleeps in here

Where I can still go and check
on her

So far , we haven't got caught

So we're still safe

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 12

JACK

What in the world is this ?

I don't know what to say right
now

Because she's also just looking
at me

More like starring at me

Who is she ?

I wonder what insane person

Just decided to leave a baby
here

I heave a sigh

A ton of questions are going
through my mind right now

Maybe she's lost

But she doesn't look like she is

But who could leave her here ?

And I thought I'm the only one
left in the office

Me : hi

She says nothing but nods

I hope she can talk

That's the only way , I'll know
what's going on here

Me : uhm ...who left you here ?

She says nothing

But I am certain she heard me

So I cannot say she speaks
another language

And maybe she doesn't
understand me

Me : if you don't talk , I won't
be able to help you

Her : I don't need help

Oh okay

She can talk for real

And she knows and
understands English

She's in my company

Sleeping in my storeroom

And she says she doesn't need
any help

Me : who left you here ?

She goes quite

Me : I won't hurt you

Her : I am not supposed to talk
to strangers

Me : I

Her : please , my mommy won't
like that

Is she scared ?

I mean , it's like she's afraid of her mother

Her : do you work with my mommy ?

Me : yes , I do . And she's in my office right now waiting for you , so come with me

Her : no

She shakes her head

Me : I am serious , she sent me
. Or did anyone know you're in
here ?

She shakes her head

Me : see , that's why I asked
who left you here . So I can
know if it's you I'm looking for
you or not

She nods

I hold my hand out

Me : let's go

She slowly get up

My heart breaks

She's only covered in a fleece

It's very cold

What is the cement doing to
her tiny small body

Some women !

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SAMMY

Oh my goodness

I am going crazy out of my mind

Where is she ?

Who could have taken her ?

I know my child

And I know Rivers would have
never left on her own

She would have never

Someone must have found her

And took her

Why didn't she scream like we
always agree ?

I wipe my tears running
upstairs

I have looked for her
everywhere downstairs

I don't even know where to
begin looking

I open each and every single
office door

Me : Rivers ...

I run around opening doors
that can open

Me : Rivers ...baby come on ,
don't play like this . Come out ,
please you're scaring mommy

As I'm about to get to the last
door

A pain strikes my heart

I almost fall down

But I balance myself with the
wall

As tears stream down my face

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RIVERS

I can hear mommy crying

I get up in a hurry

I open the door

And she's sitting down on the
floor

Me : mommy

I am scared to go to her

She doesn't hit me

But I know when she tells me
not to do something

She really means it

And I left our spot

I got her worried

And now she's crying

I am scared

She looks at me with reddish
eyes

Me : I am sorry

She gets up slowly

Me : I am sorry

The man stands by the door

And they look at each other

Mom : you ...you took ..

Him : lady , don't start with your drama . You should be ashamed of yourself , leaving your child in danger like that . Don't come here with your attitude , really child services should be called against you

Me : please no , I don't want to be taken from mommy

I look down , with tears streaming down my cheeks

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 13

SAMMY

Me : don't threaten me , you
don't even know me like that

Him : I don't need to know you
, to know what kind of a
careless mother you are

Me : don'tnow you're taking
this far . Do whatever you want
to do , call the boss on me and
report me . But don't threaten
me , where my child is
concerned . You don't know me

Him : go wait for us in my office
, and ...

Rivers : no , mommy I am sorry

I look at the man

He has on this expression

That has me calming down

Me : it's okay baby , let's go

She walks over to me

Him : my name is Jack Union ,
can we have a minute to talk ?

I look at Rivers

She has her head down

Me : you shouldn't have taken
her

Jack : it's cold and dangerous in there , a box of detergents could fall and hurt her

Me : I was checking on her

Jack : she's been with me for about 3 hours

I swallow hard

The last thing I need or want

Is to be seen as an incompetent
mother

Me : go into Mr Unions office , I
am coming

She says nothing

And walks back in the office

Me : don't judge me , I am a single mother . Doing the best that I can do

Jack : you know , when I was 5 I almost died . I wanted a bicycle , and my mother refused . But my father went ahead and bought it , I was happy like any child . Not seeing that it was putting a strain on my parents , because they didn't agree . One day , I was ridding the bicycle . I

wasn't even that good at it , I ran into a truck and it run me over . For three months , I was in ICU . That led to my parents separating , because they blamed each other . My father said my mother was careless , and she didn't watch me because she was unhappy he got me the bicycle . And she said , he wanted me to die that's why he bought me that bicycle . Knowing very well ,

that I don't know how to ride it well

Me : and you're telling me this because ?

Jack : you have a lovely daughter , don't put her in situations that if something happens to her . You will be liable to be blamed , even though you meant good . Both

my parents meant good , but it
didn't turn out that way

I take a deep breath

Jack : I'll call her for you

He turns to walk back in the
office

Me : what happened after that
?

He turns and looks at me

Me : your parents ?

Jack : they got back together ,
after realising that kids will
always be kids . And you cannot
manual control them

He walks in his office

And Rivers comes out

Rivers : I am ...

Me : it's okay , I am not angry
let's go

I take her hand and we walk
outside heading to the car

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JACK

This woman is just a lot

Like , she really is a handful

And just then , she opens the
door

Me : I thought you left

Her : uhm ...I am not a bad mother

Me : I did not say you are , but I am concerned

Her : don't be , my baby sitter just wasn't available tonight .
And I had to work , so I couldn't leave her at home alone

I chuckle

Me : your child is scared of you

Her : no

Me : yes she is , she kept saying
mommy will not be happy I left

Her : yeah so ? She knows not
to leave with people she
doesn't know

Me : she was really scared ...

She laughs annoyed

Her : I am a lot of things , but I don't hit my child . I've never laid a hand on her , never . I don't know what you think I am , but I am a parent and not a monster

I heave a sigh

Her : you don't know me , you
know nothing . I don't hit my
child

She turns right there at the
door

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SAMMY

As if things cannot get any
worse

We just had to be out of gas

I am so tired

I don't know what to do right
now

It's quite a distance , from here
to the garage

I can't walk that long distance

Especially if that means I have
to leave her alone

I take a deep breath

And her stomach just grumbles

She's hungry I know

There's nothing I can give her
to eat

I look at her

And she's looking outside the
window

I take a deep breath

A car passes us in the parking
lot

But drives back again

The driver's window winds
down

Me : fuck !

Jack : hi

I say nothing

Jack : it's not safe here , any particular reason why you're sitting in the parking lot?

Me : please , just leave me alone

Jack : I am sorry , if I offended you

I am not doing this with him

He needs to leave us

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 14

SAMMY

Can he just get away already

Jack : it's not safe out here ,
why are you parked here still ?

Me : I'm We're leaving now

Jack : okay , bye

He winds his window up and
drive away

I take a deep breath

Laying back on the seat

I think we're stuck here for the
night

I can't go anywhere

With a car that doesn't have
petrol

I look up

And see he's just made a U-turn
by the traffic lights

Me : ah , what now ?

He drives back

And parks back next to my car

He winds down his window

Me : what ?

Jack : are you perhaps waiting
for someone ?

I clear my throat

Whatever gave him that idea

Me : yes

Jack : okay then , I will wait
with you

Me : no , there's no need . The
person will be here soon

Jack : good then , because soon
I will leave

Now he's trying to get clever on
me

Me : we're okay really

Jack : no , it's not safe

He gets out of his car

And walks around my car

He comes to the passenger side

Jack : open the door

It's not even locked

And he catches on that as he
opens the door

He gets in and closes the door

Jack : you don't even have your
doors locked ? Like are you that
brave , or you don't think
anything can happen ?

Me : you really don't have to do
this

Now how will he leave ?

Because there's no one coming

And I can't drive away from
here

Unless I can make up a lie

But what will I say

He looks back and smiles at
Rivers

Jack : hi

Rivers : hello

He chuckles

Jack : what's your name ?

She looks at me

I say nothing

Rivers : my name is Rivers

Jack : ah , that's a beautiful
name

She giggles

He turns his attention to me

Jack : so how far is the person
you're waiting for ?

Me : you can leave really

I look at him

Me : you don't have to wait
with us , he could be a while

Jack : you said soon ?

Fuck !

Can he just get away ?

Jack : so he ...husband ?

I show him my hand

He chuckles

Jack : a friend ?

Me : my boyfriend

Rivers : what boyfriend ?

Oh this child

Me : Rivers , just close your
mouth please

Jack laughs

Jack : I like you

She laughs

Me : she doesn't know him
okay !

He leans over

Jack : you're a liar , you don't
have a boyfriend . And you're
not waiting for anyone here , I
don't know why the lie

Mxm !

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RIVERS

I bend a bit

Holding my tummy tight

I am hungry

So hungry it's painful

But I don't want my tummy to
grumble

I know mommy has nothing for
us to eat

I won't even tell her that I am
hungry

She can't do anything

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SAMMY

One thing about Rivers

When she's hungry

You can just tell

Right now , I know she is
hungry

I look at Jack

Me : okay , you caught me .
Really now you can leave

Jack : leave you here ?

Me : we will leave

He chuckles

Jack : I wasn't born yesterday ,
and I know an empty car when I
see one

Shit !

How did he even figure that
one out

That we're just stuck here

With no means of getting out

Jack : so how will you drive out
of here ?

I take breath

Just as Rivers stomach
grumbles

Jack : are you hungry ?

He asks looking at her

Rivers : yes

Me : Rivers it's late now and ...

Jack : and I know a pizza place ,
just around the corner . We can
just walk there

Me : no , we're ...

Jack : not for you , but for her

Wow !

Now he wants me to feel like
shit

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 15

SAMMY

The pain

Just seeing my baby being this
happy

All because of pizza

I sure have deprived this child
of life

Always the little things

Making me feel like I've failed
her

And it hurts

Jack : are you not eating ?

I shake my head

He insisted on me eating

And now , I am thinking I can
save my pizza for Rivers
tomorrow

At least , she will have
something to eat

Jack : eat

His tone has changed

Even his domineer

Me : what?

Jack : I am saying eat , you can
always get a take away for her .
Don't worry about it

Me : I am not a charity case

Jack : I never said you were

I heave a sigh

Jack : I don't know what's going
on , but

I shake my head with a chuckle

Me : please , don't try and
analyse me

Jack : I saw those plastics in
your car , and I know you sleep
in the car

Me : oh well , thanks a lot

I get up

Jack : sit down

He grabs my arm

And now Rivers is looking at us

Rivers : I'm still eating mommy

Jack : sit down

I sit back down

He clears his throat

Jack : you want to tell me
what's going on ?

I chuckle

Me : you don't even know me

Jack : I don't need to , but I
know enough . And you also
know the dangerousness , of
what you're doing with her

Me : I am doing my best okay ,
so please spare me

Jack : yeah , I am sure you are

Me : be judgemental all you like
, you don't know me

Jack : I know you enough , to
know you threw yourself in
front of my car and called me
names

Oh no !

I thought he looked familiar

But I wasn't sure where I could
have seen or met him

Oh shit

Jack : you know your liabilities
at my company , and well your

car is your home . Now you're
stuck at my parking

Can this get any worser than
this ?

Me : Mr Union

Of course ...of course

He's Jack Union

The CEO

I don't think I will ever be this
embarrassed

In my entire life

-
-
-
-

Things have been awkward in
this table

Just Jack and Rivers talking
alone

I don't know what to say

Or how to react

Especially after realising this is
my boss

And he's seen me at my worst

With everything

The way I spoke to him the first
day we met

When he walked in on me in
the cafeteria

And finding Rivers in the store
room

Parking at the parking lot
stranded

Now seeing we are homeless

It's all just too much

Jack : do you want to go and
play ?

Rivers : yes

Me : no ...you can't , I don't
have money to pay for that

Jack stands up

Jack : come

He takes Rivers hand

She looks at me

Rivers : mommy ?

I nod

She giggles and they walk off to
the game machine

I take a deep breath

And look at the lasagne dish in
front of me

I am hungry

They ate the pizza that was
supposed to be mine

And he told me to order
something else

I've only taken two spoons

I turn back and look at them

They are focusing on the game

I grab the spoon and start eating

Within a few minutes I am done

Jack : you could have choked on that

I cough taking a glass of water

He chuckles sitting down

Jack : are you okay ?

I nod

Jack : she's a great kid

I let out a smile

Me : I wish I could do more for
her

Jack : it's not my business , but you can't live like this with a child . You could go to jail

Me : please spare me , I am doing the best I can . Her father denied her and went to jail , and my family kicked me out . I've been on my own ever since I found out I was pregnant , and it's hard okay . Not all of us , are born with a silver spoon in our mouths . People look at the

colour of our skin , and they think life was paved for us . It's been hard , and I am doing everything that I can . It's not like there's much I can do with a cleaners salary , do you even have an idea of how much we get paid ? I work day and night , yet my salary cannot afford to rent me a place never mind buying one . The reason I still haven't sold this car , it's because it's the one thing I

have and I know it's mine . And
comes through for us , when
times are tough

He looks down

Me : life is easy for those at the
top , and that's just the reality
of our lives

I get up

Me : thank you for this , and I am sorry for how I've spoken to you before . Before you fire me , please think of my daughter

I open the bill

Jack : I paid for the bill , don't worry about it

I take the R200 from the tip leaving R100

Me : like it was just a service of
pizza , what's the dramatic tip
for ?

He laughs shaking his head

Me : Rivers let's go

Rivers : mommy , I am still
playing

Me : and I am not playing with you , let's go

She frowns sulking

Jack : let her be , I'll give you accommodation for the night , this joint doesn't close until midnight

Me : we're not beggars

Jack : your problem is thinking ,
you got this when you don't

Ouch !

Okay , that hurts

And very brutal

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 16

SAMMY

I sit down

Taking a deep breath

Me : thank you for this

He nods

It's almost midnight

And he's still here

I don't even know why

He booked us a room at the
hotel

Not just any hotel

But a five star hotel

Rivers is very happy

We have room service and all

Me : don't you have to be home ? To a wife and kids maybe

He laughs

Jack : I don't have a wife or any kids

Typical rich men

I am not shocked

They fear commitment , with
their dear lives

Me : so how does it feel ?

Jack : in due time , it'll happen

I chuckle

Me : I mean , being a boss of
such a huge company.

He smiles

Jack : oh that ? I actually don't care much about it , I don't feel anything

Me : and that's why we earn peanuts

He frowns

Me : I mean ...you have a cafeteria with all kinds of food , but it's for executives . They earn big , and eat free . We earn nothing , yet we have to pay for whatever we eat

Jack : that's ...

Me : that's selfish and inconsiderate , I am sure the whole lot of you don't even

know how much a cup of coffee costs

Jack : uhm ...

Me : do you ?

He keeps quite

Me : exactly , I would like to get some sleep . I have to take Rivers to school in the morning

, and go to work to earn my
keep

He gets up

Jack : goodnight

Me : yeah

I walk him to the door

Jack : for your information , I meant I don't care about being a boss . Because I'm just standing in for my parents , it's not my company but theirs

Mhm , trust funds kids

Oh lord !

I wonder why you gave me the parents you gave me

Jack : I do have my car company on the side , now that's what I care about . Cars , that's my passion . Not running that company , not to say I don't care about the employees there

Okay

He's actually sad saying that

I guess he really doesn't care
much

He turns and walks out

Me : okay !

I take a deep breath closing the
door

I lock and switch off the light
going to bed

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LIV

I have never cared

And I know he works late

That's all he ever does

But , this feels different

And something is different
about him too

I don't know what

But , he's rather strange this
morning

After he arrived almost at dawn

I don't think he was still at the office till that time.

Jack : what ?

I shrug

Jack : you've been looking at me all morning , and you're not saying anything

Me : you arrived late last night
....well this morning , it was
after midnight

Jack : yeah

He gets up

Me : yeah ? That's all you're
going to say ?

Jack : I was working

Me : I see

Jack : what ? You don't believe me ?

I say nothing

Jack : since when do you even care about my whereabouts ?
Or what time I arrive at home

Me : I don't , it was just a question

Jack : okay

Me : we're meeting with the décor people today at lunch , I think maybe you should join us

Jack : uhm , you know I am not involved in the wedding preparations . I can't

Me : it's our wedding

Jack : finefine I'll be there

And he just walks out

Without giving me a kiss

Or even saying he loves me

No ...

I can't let my mind run wild

Jack would never do anything
out of the ordinary

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SAMMY

It's a happy morning

I don't even remember when
last I saw my baby this happy

Rivers : we live here now ?

I better not lie to the child

As we leave , we are gone

Rivers : I love hotels

I laugh

Me : what ?

Rivers : I do

This is a lie

Me : you've never even been to
a hotel before

Rivers : but now I have

Me : okay , please get done . So
we can eat and leave

Rivers : we have breakfast ?

Me : yes , we have breakfast

She laughs putting on her shoes

With the R200 I took last night

I can afford to make sure she
eats for a few days

I know it won't last though

But it'll be better than nothing

If she can eat

Even if I don't eat , it's fine

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 17

JACK

The door opens and Evan walks
in

Me : what happened to
knocking ?

He pulls a chair and sits down

Me : what ?

Evan : what is it I hear , that
you've made changes around
the company ?

Me : what did you hear ?

Evan : I ...

And James just budes in as
well

Me : what do you think this is ?

James : what are you doing ?

He's clearly not happy

Not that he's ever happy about anything

Unless it benefits him

James : now we have to eat and
mingle with peasants ?

Evan throws his hands in the air

I guess they're both in
agreement

As to why they are here in my
office

I chuckle

James : you have got to be kidding me

Evan : really Jack , what's this ?

James : your lovely parents know you have done this ?

Me : everything that happened in this company is my doing , so

even the changes are mine .

Make peace with them

I open my laptop

James : this is crazy

Me : you earn those workers salaries five times , if you can't eat where they eat . Then buy your own food , surely you can afford to buy it . And that goes

for everyone else who has a
problem with what I've said

James shakes his head

He walks out

Me : follow him

Evan : are you being serious
about this ?

I shrug

He laughs

Evan : whatever is happening to
you ?

Me : get out

He gets up

Evan : fine

He raises his hands up and
walks towards the door

Me : wait ...

He turns back and looks at me

Me : a normal cup of coffee
costs how much ?

He frowns

Evan : what ?

Me : how much is a cup of
coffee ?

He laughs

Evan : I don't know ..maybe
R30

I nod slowly

Evan : what's this ?

Me : nothing , leave

He walks out laughing shaking
his head

Like R30 really ?

Surely the rest of us can afford
that

We won't even feel we took
that money out of our pockets

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SAMMY

Me : uhm ...what time do we
have to check out ?

I ask as we pass reception

Receptionist : your room
number ma'am ?

Me : 220

She clicks on the computer

Receptionist : uhm ...the room
is booked for the whole month
, including all services

Me : what ?

Receptionist : Mr Union made the payment , but the room is booked under Ms Everdeen

I nod

Receptionist : yes , it's booked for the whole month

Wow !

He didn't tell me this

I wanted to be sure

So we can take all our things

Me : thank you

She nods with a smile

I take Rivers hand and we leave

I find my car parked right across
the street

I am shocked

Because it was at the company
parking lot

We walk to the car

Me : get in

I open the door for her

She gets in , I strap her in

I get in , and turn the key

To my surprise

The car is full tank

Me : what ?

Like ...what is this ?

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It's been a morning

But I am glad I'm at work in
time

And Rivers wasn't late at school

I open the door

And as always Anna is on her
desk

Me : good morning

Anna : oh Sam , excuse my
mess cone in

Me : I heard you asked for me ,
as soon as I arrived

Anna : yes , take a seat

I sit down

Me : are you firing me ?

Anna : what ?

Me : why did you ...

I take a deep breath

Jack can do this ?

I mean , the man surely has
nothing good to say about me
like absolutely nothing

Maybe he thinks I'm not even a
good employee

Me : please whatever I did ,
don't fire me . I need this job ,
you more than anyone know
this

She smiles

Anna : I don't know what
you're talking about

Me : I

She places a contract in front of
me

Me : what's this ?

Anna : your new contract

Now I am scared

I look through it

And I am just shocked

More than hearing the hotel
room is booked for a month

Or the fact that my car now has
petrol

Me : is this correct ?

Anna : yes

Me : but ...

We've been given access to
have breakfast , lunch in the
cafeteria

And there's a stipend of food ,
for night shifts

When we work night shifts , we
get double pay

I mean ...

This is crazy !

If I work the day , and night
shift

I have triple my pay

Like , this is just unbelievable

Me : what

Anna : the big man seems to have a lot of change as of this morning

This is a huge change

With that much , I'll be able to find us a place

Anna : are you going to sign that ?

Me : of course

She hands me a pen

I take it and sign

Me : thank you

Anna : I don't know what Angel
is looking out for us general
workers

Indeed

I need to see him

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 18

SAMMY

It's been a day

Seeing the general workers
happy

And having to eat at the
cafeteria

Without having to worry

That our pay will be cut short

Because we'll have to pay for
the food we ate

That has been something else

I'm on my way to fetch Rivers
from school

We might have a place now

But I know I still can't leave her
there alone

It's a hotel

That would just be careless of
me

To leave a nine year old alone

I guess , I will still be taking her
with me to work

My phone rings

And it's a landline

One I do not know

I hope it's nothing to deem my
better day

Because I've never seen a
better day than this

Me : hello

Voice : Ms Everdeen ?

It's a woman

I hope it's not one of those
promotions

Me : speaking

Her : this is Sasha from Lake
hotel

Oh my God !

What now ?

I know we didn't leave a mess

Or break anything

I didn't see nothing

We most definitely didn't steal anything

We just left our clothes

After hearing that the room is booked for a month

Or maybe they made a mistake
?

And now they want us to come
take our things

Me : okay

Sasha : I wanted to ask if you'll
be bringing your daughter for
after care , seeing that she's
been registered . We need to
alert the caregiver

Me : what ?

Sash : is there a mistake maybe
?

Me : I ...I didn't register ...

Sasha : Mr Union paid for the
after care , for a whole month .
For Rivers Everdeen , and
you're her next of kin ...her
mother

What else is this man going to shock me with

Me : its paid for ?

Sasha : yes ma'am

Me : what time ...do you close ?
The after care I mean

Sasha : oh we don't , it's also for the hotel staff who have

kids and are single parents . So
the whole night it caters

Wow !

Me : I knock off near midnight

Sasha : you will still be able to
get her

Me : oh okay , yes I will be
bringing her

Sasha : alright thank you , and
have a great day

Me : bye

I drop the call

Feeling all emotional

How will I ever thank Jack for
all this ?

I mean , even what happened
at work

It all cannot be a coincidence

Now I won't have to worry
about my daughter

Sleeping at my work place
while I work

I wanted to talk to him

But I still haven't seen him
today

And I can't disturb the man in
his office

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RIVERS

I couldn't stop telling my
friends at school

That I live at a hotel

Me : so we live here now ?

Mom : yes we do

I jump up and down

She laughs

Mom : okay come on , tone
down the excitement . I have to
get to work

Me : and I am coming ?

She crouches down

Mom : no kid , you will be here
at an after care with other kids

. When I knock off , I will come
get you ?

Me : you promise ?

Mom : yes , I promise

We do a pinky swear

Mom : okay , let's go

She takes my hand , and we
walk inside the hotel

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SAMMY

She was so happy

She didn't even give me
problems

There were other kids too

And she was sold

The after care looks so nice

There's toys and places where
they sleep

They even offer food and
snacks

Like , it's everything

Now I know , I can work in
peace

Without having to worry much

I could stop the night shifts

But my salary tripled , surely it's
much better than an increase
of a single salary in a month

I will work these shifts

Until I have enough

And I am able to save for us

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 19

LIV

Me : I am telling you , if I didn't
know any better I'll say he's
seeing someone

She laughs

Clara : come on

Me : seriously

Clara : what if he is ?

I laugh

Me : I know he's not

That one it's just in my mind

As a woman

It's only normal , that I would think he's cheating

When he starts acting out of character

Clara : are you sure ?

Me : yeah ...

I chuckle

Me : I mean , this is Jack ..if it was James . Then I would most definitely believe he's up to no good , but Jack never . He's Jack , lives with morals and all

Clara : a woman's intuition

I shrug

I don't need to stress

Me : never , not Jack . Maybe
he's got a good deal , or its
wedding jitters

Clara : come on , this wedding
has long been coming

Me : yeah , but it's near now .
And one is allowed to feel
however

Clara : I don't know , if it was
Evan I wouldn't be this calm

Me : they may be friends , but
those two are different .
Besides , Evan loves you

Clara : you two just have a
strange relationship , you don't
even check on each other

Me : we just prefer it that way

Clara : because you know each other way too well

I nod with a smile

Clara : well then

She shrugs

I so hope I am right

Because I will not take being
made a fool

And being embarrassed

Not when wedding invites have
been sent out already

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SAMMY

I open the door

And put the light on

I get the scare of my life

That I scream my lungs out

He quickly gets up and rushes
to me

He holds my hand

Jack : it's just me

Oh my goodness ...

I thought it was a thug or
something

Me : I feared for my life

Jack : I am sorry

Me : why are you sitting in the dark at night ?

I touch my chest , trying to calm down

Jack : I am sorry , I thought I'm alone in here . That's why the light were off

I shake my head , taking a deep breath

Jack : I'm sorry , I didn't mean
to scare you . I really thought
that I'm alone

I heave a sigh

Jack : can I get you some water
?

I shake my head

Me : I'm fine ...I'm fine

He moves back a bit

Jack : okay , I am sorry

Me : stop apologizing

Jack : I'm sor... Okay

He chuckles

I shake my head

Me : don't you have a home ?

He puts his hands inside his
pants pockets

Jack : I do

He says walking back to his
desk

Me : no one works until this late , honestly you seem like you have problems

He says nothing taking a deep breath

Me : okay , I will come back . I wanted to clean , I thought you were long gone

Jack : no , it's okay

Me : I can't clean , with you in here

Jack : I will leave soon

Yeah right !

We both know what soon is to him

Me : no ..

I turn back

I stop at the door and look at
him

Me : thank you so much

Jack : for what ?

I smile

Me : are we really going to do that ?

Jack : what ?

He chuckles

Me : I don't know how I will ever thank you

Jack : how about ...

And then he goes quite

Like his mind just reprimanded
him

Me : what ?

Jack : I did what I did ,
expecting nothing in return

I nod slowly

Me : thank you

He nods and once again heaves
a sigh

Me : are you stressed ?

Jack : I am ...not

I laugh

Me : you're such a bad liar , I
have nothing to thank you with
. But maybe this will help

I take out my phone and walk
to his desk

Jack : what ?

I walk to his side , behind his
chair

Jack : what are you doing ?

I press play on Libianca –
People

Putting it on repeat

Jack : music really ...what's
this?

I turn his chair , placing my
hands on his shoulder

Jack : okay ...you don't ...

I start massaging his shoulders

And that deep groan escapes
his mouth

I don't even think he's aware of
it

It sounds so sexy

As he throws his head back ,
with his eyes closed

What a handsome man !

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 20

JACK

This feels so relaxing

The music and the massage

I don't remember when last I
had such

Where I can just relax

Not think about work

Or the coming wedding

Just being me , and for me

I sure needed this

Sam sure came through for me

She moves back , as I'm still lost
in thought

I turn opening my eyes and face
her

Me : what ?

Sam : I didn't mean to overstep

...

I chuckle

Me : come on , you didn't

Sam : you're my boss , I should
respect that

I get up

She leans over reaching for her
phone

I grab her arm

Sam : I must get back to work

Me : have lunch with me
tomorrow

Sam : I can't

Me : please

I can't believe I am begging

Just for her time

Sam : Jack

Me : just lunch

She nods slowly

Me : thank you

She lets out a fade smile

Sam : I must go

Me : yeah

She moves back

But I keep on walking towards
her

She's blocked by the window

I stand in front of her

Sam : I ...

She looks down

I lift her chin

Me : go home

We just stare at each other in
the eyes

I feel things I haven't felt in like
many many years

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SAMMY

Oh Sam

That man is your boss

What am I even doing having
such thoughts about him ?

I knocked off , and came to the
hotel

I found Rivers sleeping already

I picked her and came to our
room

I'm wide awake

Just thinking of that moment

It was something I cannot even
begin to explain

Having him that close to me

His masculine cologne
engulfing my nostrils

I can still smell his scent on me
even now

It's like , I had him pressed on
me

I thought he was gonna kiss me

And just have me

This is insane !

I need to get my head back in
the game

I haven't had a relationship
since when Rivers was born

I can't do this

Not with my boss

Besides , I doubt he feels
anything for me

Maybe it's just out of pity he's
being nice

And I am misreading that for
something else

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LIV

Me : leaving early this morning
?

Jack : yes

Me : mhm , these days you
leave early . And you arrive late

Jack : as always

Me : is it ?

He looks at me

Jack : what ?

Okay !

Now I am sounding like a
jealous or an insecure woman

This is not me

What am I doing ?

Jack : is there something you
want to say ?

I swallow hard

Me : no

Jack : okay

He's never been affectionate

But these days

He's even cold

It's like he doesn't even try to
make an effort

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SAMMY

I thought maybe he would have
changed his mind

But no

Here we are , having lunch at
the park

This is more like a picnic

Me : what is this ?

Jack : what ?

Me : us ...this , one thing about
me I hate uncertain things .
Especially because I have ...

Jack : what do you want this to be ?

He's caught me

I can't say it though

Jack : it can be anything you want it to be

I let out a smile

Me : but you're so tense , even on a lunch at the park . You're wearing your expensive suits , what happened to casual clothing ?

He laughs

Clearly amused

Jack : well , my bad

Me : next time , just be a little
bit more relaxed

Jack : oh , there's a next time ?

Me : well , I thought ...

He leans over shutting me up
with a kiss

One I gladly accept

Like I've been long anticipating
for it

He moves back , just as I was
enjoying myself

Jack : uhm ...I'm sorry

I pull him closer , taking his lips
into mine

We kiss , but I can feel he's
holding back

Jack : I can't ...

He pulls back

And I look at him shocked

Jack : I can't do this , let's go

Me : what ...

Jack : no , let's go

I cannot believe this

Me : you have got to be kidding me , so what ...you just wanted a quick one and pass . Then you quickly figured , I'm not in the standards of your calibre ? Or I just don't do it for you

Jack : that's not ...

Me : you know what ? Actually
save it for someone who
actually cares , I'll call a cab

He grabs my arm

Jack : Sam ...

Me : don't you dare

I yank my arm off of him

Jack : it's not what you think

I chuckle annoyed

Me : and you know what I think
?

Jack : I like you , more than I
should

I shake my head

Who is he fooling ?

A man like him , can never like
a woman like me

Jack : I don't want to use you ,
I'll never do that . The thing is ...
I am engaged to be married

Oh wow !

Now I have heard it all

This from the same man who
said he's not married

But forgot to mention that he's
about to

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 21

LIV

He walks in

Much earlier than usual

Even I am home early

Me : hey

Jack : hi

Okay

There's just something off
about his tone

I get up

Me : is everything okay ?

I get up and lean by the counter

Jack : yeah

Me : you don't look ...

He grabs the back of my neck

Smashing his lips on mine

I kiss him back

Without holding nothing back

He picks me up , placing me on
the kitchen counter

Now , this is different and
exciting

I want to ask him what's up

But that can wait

This has never happened in this
house

Sex is always missionary

I hope today ...it'll be different

If we ever reach there

Just as I'm in my thoughts

He rips my blouse , the buttons
falling all over

I gasp at how he's taking
charger

He unbuttons my pants

Pulls them down along with my
panty

Me : baby what

He roughly brings me down

And turns me around the
counter

And parts my legs

I hear him unzipping his pants

And soon he shoves his dick in

Taking me from behind

He fucks me so hard

I let out screams of pain and
pleasure

I can literally feel his dick inside
of me

Just stretching my pussy

I'm dripping with sweat

My palms are slipping off the
counter

Me : baby please stoooooop

He lifts my leg up

As I shiver all over my body

Me : oh shit

I let out , not being able to hold myself

Squirting all over the floor

I pull off from him

But he drags me back to him

And walks towards the kitchen
sliding door

He presses me hard against it

Lifting my leg up

I look at him with eyes of mercy

As he slides through

His eyes piercing into mine

He doesn't waste time just
pounding in

Fuck !

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SAMMY

My phone rings

It's still early

We haven't even gotten up

I reach for it

And it's a number I don't
recognise

Me : hello ?

Voice : can we talk ?

Oh no !

Not this early

Me : whatever this was it's
done , and ...

Jack : you can keep staying at
the hotel

Me : I don't ...

He drops the call

Where did he even get my
number ?

I lay back

I barely slept

Thinking of what I would have
done

I know I am nothing

But I'll never stoop that low

He's a taken man

And I need to stay away

And respect that

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LIV

Jack : what ?

I have my eyes popped

I am shocked to be honest

Me : what's going on ?

Jack : with what ?

Me : you're dressed casual

Jack : yeah

Me : where are you going ?

Jack : to work

Okay !

This I have never seen

Me : since when ?

Jack : you're not making sense

Me : since when do you go to
work , dressed like that ?

He shrugs

Jack : it's a casual Friday

Me : something has changed
about you , last nightyou
fucked me ...like you were
making love to someone else

He says nothing

I turn over to the side

And something catches my eyes

It's a strand of hair

A long dark brown strand of
hair

I take it

Jack : you said I am boring , so I

....

Me : what's this ?

He looks at me

Me : it's a strand of long dark
brown hair

He chuckles shaking his head

Jack : I won't stand for this

He grabs his watch and laptop
bag walking out

I take a deep breath getting up

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THREAD OF HOPE

INSERT 22

LIV

He looks at me

I take a deep breath

Me : I will straight out ask you

He says nothing

I could be wrong about this

But then again , they say a
woman always knows

This is not the same Jack

He's changed so much

I can see something is different
about him

And without a doubt

It's another woman

I could be wrong though

I just hope I don't ruin things
for myself

Me : do you still want to get
married ?

He looks at his watch

Me : please , forget about work
for a minute . I am talking to
you

Jack : I've called a meeting ,
please be there tonight

Me : what ?

Jack : I have to go , I have a
meeting to get to

Me : Jack , I am talking to you

Jack : and we will talk later , at
the family meeting

Just like that , he leaves

Me : family meeting ?

His mother didn't say anything
to me

What's all this about ?

I grab my phone and call
Lindsey

But then again , I am sure she
doesn't know anything

I drop the call

If it was about them

Then , Jack wouldn't have been
the one calling the meeting

Unless it's about us

But what

Me : oh my God !

Quickly I dial his number

And his phone rings
unanswered

Me : shit !

Can he please just not
embarrass me

Not in front of his family

Like please

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SAMMY

I open the door

And he walks in

I haven't talked to him

I don't want to

Because I don't want to be the
reason another woman goes to
bed with a broken heart

That's not me

So Jack is a no go area

Jack : hi

I nod

Jack : I am sorry for just turning
by

Me : what do you want ?

It's my day off today

I could have chosen to go to
work

But , I am tired

I figured , I can use the rest

Just for today

Jack : I am ending it

Oh no !

Jack : I just can't pretend
anymore

Me : please don't , I am not a
home wrecker

Jack : of course you're not , you
just made me open my eyes .
This is not for me ,
unfortunately it took to meet
you for me to realise

I shake my head

I had fears

But I didn't think this will get here

Me : please don't

Jack : it's you that I want ...

Me : Jack no , wether you end your engagement or not . Me and you , we can never happen

Jack : not now maybe , but if its
meant to be then it will be

He walks closer to me

I take a deep breath

Jack : I am thankful that I met
you , because I would have
made the biggest mistake of my
life . Now , it's time I do me and
I live for me . I have been living

under my parents shadow for a long time , and trying to please them . But now I am done

He tilts my chin

We lock eyes

Jack : I love you , there's no doubt about that . I can't have you , and that's okay. But whatever happens , know that I

love you . And please , don't
keep Rivers away from me

Me : I ...Jack please

He shuts me up with a kiss

I get lost being in his embrace
for a few moments

And he moves back

Jack : I am glad I met you

He pecks my lips and walks out

Me : oh God !

Tears blurry my eyes

Why did he have to be a taken
man ?

My phone beeps

I wipe my tears , and check the
message

It's a bank notification

Of a whole one million rand
from Jack Union

Me : no

I pop my eyes out in shock

Another text comes through ,
from him

“It doesn’t hurt to always hold
on a thread of hope , light is
always there at the end of the
tunnel . And this is only the
beginning for you , maybe what
you need is a fresh start . If it’s
meant to be , it will be”

Tears steam down my face

As I cannot keep in my
emotions

This is not a dream is it ?

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JACK

Me : I should have long done
this

Mom : what's this ?

Dad : give him a chance to speak

Me : I love you all , and I respect you mom and dad . I've done my best , all my life . To be the son you desire for , and I tried to make you proud . But I can't do this anymore ...

Mom : what are you talking about ?

Me : I am leaving the company

Dad : you're what ?

Me : I have given my all to that company , and I made it what it is today . But it's not mine , nor is it my passion ...

Dad : this is business son ..

Me : I know dad , but I also have my own business . And now , it's time I start focusing on that . I resign with immediate effect , given my opinion I would suggest you make Evan the CEO . He's a much better option than James , and he knows the company much better

Dad : this is nonsense

Me : again , I have met
someone

I look at Liv

And she gives me those begging
eyes

Me : she

Mom : I think we have sat here and listened to your nonsense enough ! What kind of a woman is she ? Breaking a home and ...

Me : now that I stand for myself , I spit nonsense . All my life , I've lived for the two of you and I am done . I don't love Liv , you know this . But I was willing to sacrifice , for you

mom . You raised her , she can still be your daughter

Mom : a daughter that you slept with

Me : fulfilling your wishes , but this doesn't need to go any further

Mom : this woman has no shame , where are her morals ?

Me : she doesn't want to be
with me , because of Liv . But I
am willing to spend the rest of
my life , trying to have her . I
love her , something I don't feel
for Liv . Not in that way

I look at them

And I can see the
disappointment on their faces

Me : for what it's worth , I am
sorry

I get up

Mom : sit down Jack , don't you
dare embarrass us . The press
will have a field day with this

Me : I am done caring what
people say about me mother

Someone claps hands behind
me

I turn and it's James

I am not in his mood

James : finally brother , you
have grown some balls . That's
good for you , I am happy for
you really . This means now I

can get what's due to me , and
you do what you love as well

I don't have time for his
nonsense

He's happy I will be out

James : now , we're just the
same you and I

Me : I am nothing like you

I turn and walk out of the
house

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LIV

Mrs Union : Liv ...

Me : it's okay

I get up

And run out after Jack

I don't know how I am feeling

I catch up with him

As he gets in his car

Me : hey ...

Jack : Liv , I am sorry . This wasn't my intention , but both you and I know the truth . This wouldn't have worked out

If I am being honest , as much as it hurts

He's right

It wouldn't have worked

We would have just forced
ourselves

Just for the sake of his parents

Pretending like we are happy

Me : you really love her ?

Jack : more than anything , and
I don't even know how I got
here

I smile as tears stream down
my face

Me : I wish you all the best ,
don't give up on her . Fight , if
you know she's worth it

Jack : she is

I nod , wiping my tears off

Me : I hope you find what
you're looking for

Jack : you too

I nod moving back

And he drives off

I stand still watching him drive
out the gate

When all this started

I didn't think it will end this way

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A FEW DAYS LATER

SAMMY

I haven't talked to Jack

I haven't seen him

From what I've been hearing at
the office

He is out of the country

I don't know when he'll be back

I have been having so many
thoughts

Thinking of what am I going to
do with all this money he gave
me

It's clear we need a house

And I need to make sure I do something

Something that will ensure ,
that me and Rivers never suffer
ever again

Me : what do you think we
move out of here ?

She looks at me with a frown

She looks very funny

She has the ribs sauce all over
her cheeks and chin

Rivers : and we will be
homeless again ?

I laugh

Me : no , we have money now .
We will buy a house

Rivers : a nice one ?

Me : yes

She nods

Me : so , we are in agreement ?

She smiles with a smile

Rivers : a house with a pool will
be nice

Me : of course , and maybe we
can have a business

Rivers : I will work there and
have an office ?

Oh my goodness

I laugh

Me : maybe when you're all
grown up

Rivers : oh

Me : now I am thinking , maybe
we can start small with a diner

Rivers : then we will serve ribs ,
feed hungry people

I let out a laugh

Me : yes , but they will pay of course . So we can always have money

She gets off the chair and walks to me

Rivers : when are we moving ?

I smile

Me : we just can't wait huh ?

She laughs

Me : I love you kid

Rivers : I love you mommy

This is it !

I just have to make sure this is a success

Rivers : I am going to pack

She walks over to the wardrobe

I take a deep breath grabbing my phone

“I don't know when you will be back , but I hope you will be

back . But even if you don't ,
always remember to live for
yourself . We will be running a
diner , hopefully one day we
can be the ones to serve you .
Don't forget who you left
behind , and thank you a
million times”

I let out a smile and send the
text

Strange enough , he reads it
immediately

And I see him typing

I thought maybe he would be
using a different number
wherever he is

Unless , he is not out of the
country as the rumours say

I mean , he called off his
engagement

Left the company , and now
he's nowhere to be seen

His reply pops up

“Maybe not today , but
definitely one day . I will never
forget , I take responsibility of
what's mine”

I smile putting my phone on the
counter

I look at Rivers

Something tells me , even if he
doesn't come back for me

He will come back for her

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THE END