

**A 16 YEAR OLD GIRL**



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## **Blurb:**

Hi I'm Maya and well this is my story. I wouldn't like to call this a memoirs because I'm not that old in fact I got all my life to live considering I just turned 16. But at my age already I feel like my whole life has been 1 big roller coaster ride i know it sounds cliché but just like a roller-coaster ride I've had my share of highs and my lows which have both molded me into the person I am today.

From the very first time I saw my mom being beaten by dad to watching my bro become a drug addict and even being beaten by my dad myself and not feeling safe around him of fear of being raped. I've experienced it all.

Half of the stuff that I speak about no one really knows about me, yes there are a select few that do know but even they don't know the full story.

This is the story of my deepest darkest secrets as some may call it, the story of a little girl who's pain has been caused by a man she calls dad a man she looks up to even at this moment because well he still is my dad .I may not approve of all the things he has done but i do love him as my dad.

This is the story of a girl who is sick and tired of crying herself to sleep on so many nights because well i was alone with no one turn to but an imaginary friend. This is the story of all my truths.

This is my story.....

## **Worst 10 days of my life:**

- 1) The first living memory I have of seeing mom being beaten
- 2) the day Joe left me.
- 3) The Eid where we were forced to play house with dad's mistress followed by mom getting beaten.
- 4) The day dad showed promise of actually beating me.
- 5) The night before Eid where I, mom and Sally were basically homeless.
- 6) The day dad first told me he loved me.
- 7) The day Joe went missing.
- 8) The day dad beat me to a pulp and stripped me naked.
- 9) The day that dad humiliated mom by standing up for one of his whores.
- 10) The day I realised that I wasn't safe in my own house because my dad was a fucking pervert and pedophile.

## Prologue:

I'm a 16 year old girl whose felt oppressed all 16 years of my life.

I'm a 16 year old girl who loathes her own father.

I'm a 16 year old girl who's thought more about suicide during the cover of night than live on another day.

I'm a 16 year old girl who's begged and pleaded with God to end her misery and yet more came tumbling her way.

I'm a 16 year old girl who's spent her life crying about it than actually living it.

I'm a 16 year old girl who's been silenced all her life because I was just a 16 year old girl and didn't know better.

I'm a 16 year old girl who always put up a brave face as a front just so people wouldn't find out about my crappy life.

I'm a 16 year old girl who's heart has been ripped out of her so many times that you'd expect it to stop beating.

I'm a 16 year old girl who had to learn to be a mother to another human being while I myself was still a child.

I'm a 16 year old girl who's spent her life wiping her mother tears away but with no one to wipe hers away.

I'm a 16 year old girl who was raised by a mother who taught her to be independent and yet she does the opposite.

I'm a 16 year old girl who had to live with the burden of knowing that she was the reason her mom was being beaten.

I'm a 16 year old girl who's had to live with the notion that I had to be my mom and sisters saviour.

I am a 16 year old who just wants to be given the opportunity to be a 16 year old girl.

I'm a 16 year old girl who says you will not break me down.

I'm a 16 year old girl who says I am better than you, than this.

I am a 16 year old girl who refuses to live in a world dominated by men who think that it is ok to abuse women just because we have different appendages.

I am a 16 year old girl who says down with the patriarchy, down with toxic masculinity, down with raping our woman and girls. Down with murdering our woman and girls.

I'm a 16 year old girl who says enough is enough.

I'm a 16 year old girl who says you can't hurt me anymore, I won't allow you to.

I'm a 16 year old girl who says this is my story because you no longer have

power against me.

**This is the story of my 16 year old self....**

## CHAPTER 1: Meet the parents:

Why don't I begin from the beginning: I have a mom and dad who once upon a time used to be in love and got married at such a young age, mom was 15 and dad was 18. When I was younger and sometimes now still my mom would tell me, how dad used to chase her around town just so he could get her attention but then she'd pretend like she didn't notice him eyeing her. To me this seemed like one of those fairytale moments most of us so desperately yearn for, including me. But I guess all fairytales come to an end.

And at some point during their life the love that they so passionately shared slowly turned into this deep hate that even I can't explain. I mean how do two people who loved each other just suddenly despise each other.

To be honest I don't really know exactly when things went wrong between them, but from the furthest memory I have of the 2 of them together, they've never really been much of a married couple. Always on each other's throats and bringing out the worst of each other. They'd be 2 feet away from each other and yet they'd scream at each other, as if they were miles away and all for the most stupidest thing.

For example dad would come home late (only later do I realize late nights were an indication of cheating) and wouldn't find food out so he'd yell for mom and mom would yell back: "it's in the oven you just need to warm it up" but dad already grumpy from whatever he'll while he crept out from (definitely not work) would yell for her to do it, but mom as tired as she was and it also being in the middle of night, would still walk out of bed to warm it up for him, but then for some unfathomable reason dad would find something wrong with the food, and well they'd start screaming at each other to a point where you'd swear someone would be murdered that night if they didn't stop. Eventually dad would lose his temper and mom being who she was, wouldn't back down either, which ultimately leads to her on the floor bleeding while dad storms out of the house yelling for everyone in the neighborhood to hear.

And so you can only imagine that I've always had a hard time growing up. I've basically grown up trying to wipe mom's tears away, but no matter how hard I try I can still see the sadness in her eyes. It's like it's become a part of her being, I mean she tries so damn hard to pretend that it's OK, and I know she only does that for me and my siblings, and sometimes I blame myself but mostly I blame him.

Because to be frank my dad's a lying cheating bastard. Now don't get me

wrong i love my dad i mean he is my dad after all ,it's just that i love my mom more ,and not because she gave birth to me ,just the fact that she's ,well my mother: the person who shared a bed with me until i was 9 because i was afraid of the dark and didn't like being in my room alone, the person that woke up in the middle of the night to help me switch on the bathroom light because I was too short to reach it, the one who always protected me from my father's wrath when he showed sign of turning his attention to me, the one who was always by my bedside whenever I was sick or feeling down and well so much more.

I'm not trying to say my dad hasn't been a great dad in fact he kind of has been in his own way, it's just that with him all the bad outweigh the good. For starters he isn't really home much and for good reason to, or that's what he keeps telling us. I mean, i get that he has to work to put food on the table and ensure we get an education , but i don't think a person works till about 23:00.

And let's not get started on the emotional side because for that I'd rate him a 0.He has never really been there for me.I mean how could he if I barely see him ,and when I do see him his starting a bloody war with mom, and even back in the earlier days when we all still lived together and he was actually home ,all he'd do is shout at an 8 year old me to be quiet and stop fussing with my then 10 year old bro.so as u can see I'm not really fond of my dad and I have good reason not to be, and I'm afraid it gets worse over the years.

## **CHAPTER 2:Non-existent siblings:**

Let's forget about my parents for a while because I forgot to mention my siblings. I have 5 siblings excluding me but I only really consider 2 of them as real siblings.

The other 3:The first born my sister and the 2 almost twins(almost meaning 9 months apart, because the second 1 was in a rush to be born) haven't really been there for me and therefore have never really played big roles in my life. Besides having the title of being called my siblings they've always just been in the background. And by that i mean: Where were they when dad was beating up mom? Where were they when an 8 year old me was trying to protect mom from the lashes that dad kept giving? Where were they all those nights when mom cried herself to sleep because she thought we were asleep? Did they not really care or did they enjoy seeing mom in pain all the time?

In fact where are they now as I speak. They out living their lives as adults as they probably should be, but it still hurts that they could just sit back and let all this happen ,I mean i was a kid ,I still kind of am, but I'd always try to protect mom from him even when she'd push me away I'd still go to side and try to take some of the beating for her, and what about my crying? What about all the times I begged them to do something, to make him stop? But they never did, they just stood idly by while mom got battered and i wailed my lungs out, pleading.

They could've done something, anything but they didn't. They just watched everything happen from the side lines.

So it's even pointless for me to mention their names...



## **CHAPTER 3: Peas in a pod:**

Then we have Joe my annoying older brother who's always been on my nerves from the day I came into the world. Me and Joe have always been together, when the other 3 were so stuck up on growing up, me and Joe were living our childhood, from sneaking out of the house when mom wasn't looking so we could go play outside in the rain, to learning how to ride bikes together and occasionally him combing my hair when he wasn't annoying.

But my fondest memory of Joe and me was when he tried to be Spiderman. It was hilarious. We had just watched the movie Spider-Man and him being about 9 wanted to show a 7 year old me that he could be just like Spiderman, so he climbed to the top of the bunk bed that he shared with the younger almost twins. He basically wanted to jump from the top, but missed a step and he fell flat down to the floor. I couldn't stop laughing, even thinking about it now makes me laugh, but then he wouldn't get up and started crying. So I had to go call mom and it turns out he broke his arm and had to wear a cast for about a month.

I still can't believe he flipped it and made it my fault, he told mom I was the one that told him to do i.e. mean I didn't tell him not to do it, I might have even encouraged him, but he was the one that wanted to be Spider-Man. He made his choice and well there are consequences to be paid. We gave mom a hard time growing up considering we were always bickering and arguing as siblings do, well at least we did, like cats and dog as my mom would put it.

## **CHAPTER 4: Shoulder to cry on:**

To be honest Joe never really cried that much, I was the one that did most of the crying. Maybe it was because at one stage he said: "I don't cry because you do enough crying as it is and if I were to cry then who'd wipe away your tears."

But even though he didn't cry I always knew he felt the same way I did. He was the only one that really understood what I was going through and how I was feeling.

And on those really bad nights where mom who had just been beaten is asleep, and dad is nowhere to be seen, and I couldn't stop crying, Joe would tell me about how things weren't always like this between them. I don't know if that is true because as far as I'm concerned they'd never really loved each other. Joe would say: "When I grow up I'm going to get us out of here, I promise, me, you and mom."

But u sees that was Joe's greatest mistake: he promised me something he couldn't deliver and the naive little girl at that time believed him, I really did...

But all in all when we weren't listening to our parents bickering and quareling.And weren't in the middle of one of their fights.

On those very rare occasions we actually had a great childhood. Me and Joe.

## **CHAPTER 5: Froggy:**

Growing up I looked up to Joe because even though he's been through so much in his own personal life he always pushed through. Considering all the stuff going on with mom and dad as well.

Not many people know this but when Joe was little when I was just a little baby he got into an accident and he lost 2 off his toes, and as a result of that his 1 foot is bigger than the other and he always had to fill the one shoe with material so it would fit, and to make it worse when he was around 8 he got bit by a dog on the same leg and due to that he walks sku.

Growing up he wouldn't let anyone see his feet, he'd always wear socks and he never wore slippers, not even around the house. So as a little joke I'd always make fun of him by calling him froggy. My froggy. I wasn't being mean in fact it was to make him feel better about himself and I'd always tell him it was actually kind of cool. Because it was and I still loved him even though he was a froggy.

But one day I might have taken it a bit too far when I basically called him a cripple and told him no one would love a frog. I mean I was really angry but I didn't mean it. I was really sorry considering the fact that I know how it gets to him when people stare and make fun of him for walking sku. I'd never ever thought of it as a disability and I did apologise and well he did forgive me. Because in the end he'd always be my froggy no matter what

## **CHAPTER 6: Mathematical problem:**

But the thing I loved about me and Joe was that no matter how much we'd fight deep down we really loved each other and we both hated people messing with our sibling. Like for instance and I'm not very proud of my reaction to the situation:

I was in grade 4 in the middle of a math's class, last period of the day in the last 10 minutes: I hear this boy making fun of how Joe walks and I literally saw red. I was so damn mad. Like, how dare he make fun of Joe! And to make things worse he had the audacity to actually laugh. No one gets to make fun of Joe and actually laugh about it. **ONLY I CAN DO THAT!**

Next thing I do is jump on him, knocking him to the ground and just start hitting him. I know it doesn't sound so dramatic but bear in my mind that even though I was ten I was actually the size of an 8 year old and the boy in question was 3 times my size. So you can only imagine.

So I'm still on top of this boy on the ground hitting him and then I feel the maths teachers hands pulling me away from the boy ,but I kept on trying to get another shot at him, but I seem to be missing all my shots, so that makes even madder if that's even possible, so I start yelling at him: "never, ever make fun of my bro!"

At that point the maths teacher loses it with me ,because most of all he was dissatisfied in me, like he'd never expected me to behave in such an atrocious manner(me being his star student and all). So he yells at me: "Stop it, that's enough!"

I don't know what happened so let's just say his words knocked some sense into me. So when I finally do cool down and get back to my seat the bell rings, but we have to stay in for another 15 minutes due to my apparent misconduct...

My class probably hated me that day for keeping them in late but I didn't really care. At that moment all I know is, is that scumbag deserved it.

So if u were in my class in grade 4 I'm really sorry, that was not my finest moment. But I will not apologise for hitting that dude because to be honest he had it coming.

Well I did apologise the next day but that's only because my mom forced

me to ,and its not like I meant it.Its like Adele says in one of her songs:"Just because I said don't mean i meant it."

## **CHAPTER 7: Moment of weaknes:**

Lets fast forward to about a year later with the arrival of my baby sis Sally who I adore.Funny thing with Sally is: we'll she kinda was/is a mistake.And I say this because ,we'll my parents weren't sleeping in the same bed in fact they slept in different rooms(my dad had moved into my older sis's room).

So,I don't even knw how it happened because as far as I was concerned they couldn't stand each other,they basically loathed each other. so wat ever might have happened to let them forget about the enmity they shared only God knows.but during that moment of weakness where they both let their guard down sally was born.

And obviously the 11 and 1/2 year old me at the time was completely oblivious to how that 1 moment of weakness could change my life.Because with that one moment of weakness came peace and solitude.My parents stopped fighting and ultimately my mom got beaten less and less.

So moment of weakness or not it was a blessing in disguise Or so I desperately hoped for it to be...

## **CHAPTER 8:Big sis here I come:**

Considering the fact that my whole life I despised being the last born, because well: no one ever took me seriously, they always treated me like a baby and never told me anything important and even if they did I always found out last.

So as you can imagine I'd always wanted a baby sis or bro, it really didn't matter to me, as long as "I" wasn't the baby anymore. So during the first 7 months of pregnancy not knowing that I was going to be a big sis, because again no one told me. I was basically constantly nagging my mom to have a baby because I was so tired of living with the injustice of being the last born, not knowing that my wish had already come true.

When I finally did find out, only 2 months away from the delivery date. I was ecstatic.

I wasn't a baby anymore! I was going to be a big sis! Me!

From then on it was down hill for me. I went into total baby rampage: I learned everything you needed to know about babies from changing diapers, to the right way to give them a bath, how to check the temperature of their formula, the right way to hold them. You name it I learnt it.

I even went as far as buying a present for the baby. Mom and everyone else thought I was being a bit too much, but for me it was a matter of: What kind of big sis would I be if I didn't buy the baby their first present? So I ended up buying her an oversized elephant which is still way too big for her, even now.

## **CHAPTER 9:Repeat of a gender mismatch:To be or not to be?**

Every weekend from when i first found out there was a baby on the way I forced mom to go shopping with me,where we only bought girl clothing, even though none of us knew the gender ,which was really hypocritical of us considering the fact that, that has happened once before:

Before Joe was born my mom only bought girl clothing.Don't ask me why because I don't know either.I guess she wanted to have another girl after having those almost twins who were both boys.I guess she thought that if she bought girl clothing it would magically be a girl.

So long story short Joe had to wear girl clothing for most of his infant period.And ironically enough mom always said that even though he wasn't a girl he actually looked like one.

So here we were making the same mistake...

But luckily for us we didn't have a repeat of the Joe incident and it was actually a girl.which was super great since I basically told my mom if she had a boy I wouldn't love the baby.

Ofcourse that was a lie,because deep down even while saying those words I knew:that boy or girl I would've done anything for this baby.

But thank the heavens it was a girl.

## **CHAPTER 10:Our little miracle:**

Most 11 and 1/2 year olds in my shoes would have probably been upset. Why wouldn't they be? I mean, a new uninvited guest was coming into their lives. They didn't ask for this. And due to the popular belief that last borns are spoiled rotten, and a new baby means a transfer of love and time from them to the baby. This is actually true in most cases.

But for me, if I had known sooner that a baby meant my mom would get beaten less then I'd have given up all the love that was given to me just to have this baby come into our lives sooner.

Sally's birth meant a step in the right direction for my family and for a millisecond it was, I actually felt like we were an actual family in as long as I can remember. Because when she arrived in the family, everyone was happy even Joe, considering he didn't want her as he'd once said: "what is wrong with u people how could u bring this thing into our lives?"

We were actually happy, my mom wasn't crying in the middle of the night's because she thought I was asleep and couldn't hear her, instead the only crying we heard was Sally's, as an indication that she was hungry. Dad was home a lot earlier. I mean granted it was to see Sally but he was home, and that was enough. I actually believed that Sally would heal my family. I mean she'd gotten to Joe who was recently always grumpy and mad at the world. I mean if she could make him smile then surely we'd be ok, we'd be better than ok, we'd be a family. A happy family.



## **CHAPTER 11:Back to reality:**

Unfortunately it didn't last. Within days of Sally's birth my dad had to leave. He had some business he needed to do in Uganda. And well my mom was left to fend for her cubs. I tried as much as I could to help her around the house, because if I didn't no one else would. I mean that's when Joe started hanging around the wrong people and got swept up into a life of drugs, so he was barely home. After school he'd just disappear and only reappear in the middle of the night when everyone was asleep.

Mom tried to talk him out of his state but as a teenager like we all do, he didn't really give a damn.

And so mom eventually gave up. I mean, what more could she do? She still had an infant and me to take care of. And with a husband that would not return for a couple more months, she needed to find a way to put food on the table. Either that or well, we starve.

So she enrolled Sally who was barely a month old into a day care centre while she went to go look for a job. She eventually found one as a maid, which granted I wasn't so thrilled about, but as they say beggars can't be choosers, and it did put food on the table. Yes, I hated seeing my mom work, especially since she had just given birth, but due to that: there was not a single day where any of us went to bed hungry. So for that I am grateful to her.

## **CHAPTER 12:Workload:**

So there i was, the now 12 year old me watching my mother work herself to the core just so she could take care of us.

Mom worked 7 days a week from 08:00 to 17:00 on week days and 08:00 to 13:00 on weekends. Looking at those times you'd think that she had a hectic schedule but that's not wat hurt.Wat hurt was: the fact that when she came back home she still had to worry about Joe's sudden rebellious behaviour ,me and a 2 month old Sally,while dad was nowhere to be seen on his so called business trip.

On most nights even though she so desperately needed the sleep,she wouldn't go to bed untill Joe came back.And by the time she did hit the sack,she still couldn't catch a break because occassionally Sally, who as sweet as she was, and hardly ever cried that much,would wake up in the middle of the night to breast feed,and formula was definately not an option. (considering Sally was only 2 months old and couldn't handle formula).

## **CHAPTER 13:Im ghosted:**

While mom was drowning herself in work I'd try to reach out to my older sis to ask if she could help out, but on the numerous occasions I'd called it always seemed to go to voicemail ,and at some point i just stopped calling. I mean how many more times could i call ,like i got the message she clearly wanted nothing to do with us. I mean she could call at any time she wanted,even if it was to find out if mom was ok, if we were ok,but she didnt. I get it, she had her own life and she too had just given birth but that didn't mean she could shove us aside like we didn't exist.

Sometimes i think to myself and wonder if she had picked up even one of my calls maybe things would've been different.I knw its not her fault but aren't we family. Like does she not give a damn about us.I geuss not. And I probably shouldn't have but when I'd decided to stop calling her I'd completely written her off. She was no longer my sister. I mean,she was never really a sister to me, she just carried the title but didn't knw wat it meant.

Growing up I'd always craved that sisterly bond with her and maybe i had a role to play in her coldness towards me,but damn she was the worst big sis ever.And i kinda hate her to be honest, not because of the beef between us ,but the fact that she'd let it come between her and mom.I mean, i wasn't calling her for me (because she had made it clear to me a long time ago that she disliked me)but for mom,clearly she cared about mom.Didnt she?

I guess all the missed calls answer that question...

## **CHAPTER 14:Sis becomes mom:**

So things were really bad at home but no matter how hard they got the only person I really felt for,was Sally.Sure she didn't understand what was go in on all around her, but I don't think anyone her age should've gone through that.She had a dad she'd barely seen since she was born and a mom she'd only see at night.

She'd practically been raised by the people at day care centre for the first few months of her life.And I didnt want that for her.I wanted her to be loved,to feel like she belonged.And at some point I'd decided that no matter how hard shit got at home I wouldnt let her carry any of those burdens on her shoulders.So I kinda became her mom not that I could replace mom because no matter how hard I try I'd never be able to.I just did it because I wanted her to have a better life,a life filled with only pure happiness,unlike mine.

So whenever I was home I'd spend most of my time with her.I'd even moved her crib into my room so she wouldn't disturb mom.And whenever she cried Day or night I was there ,and i wanted her to know that.I wanted her to know that someone loves her.I loved her.I did before she born, I do know and I'd always love her.

## **CHAPTER 15:Contact with dad:**

For the 6 months that dad was away on his so called business trip he'd occasionally call mom and ask to speak to us but on those very rare occasions id make myself scarce or pretend to be doing homework.And to be honest we all knew he wanted to speak to sally which was pointless since she'd barely said a single word but how would he know that since he's been absent in her life.

I know it was wrong of me but I was mad at him and I blamed him for everything that was happening.I mean even If it was for business how could he just up and leave his wife who had just given birth alone with 2 other kids to look after, and that too without leaving money behind. What did he expect us to eat and wat about sally:Sally was a baby she needed things like diapers.

And he expected his calls if one would even call them that to fix things.My family was falling apart and wat was he doing ,he was in another country visiting relatives.

How ironic he can't even look after his wife and kids but has time to look after distant relatives.if anything he was a bloody coward trying to run away from his responsibilities.

## **CHAPTER 16:Froggy erased:**

With dad abroad Joe was losing it. When ever you'd look into his eyes all you'd see was emptiness because at this point he was pumping himself with so many drugs that you'd swear the real Joe was dead. I Didn't know what to do for him, should I have told mom . I mean she noticed the late nights but she knew nothing about the drugs, and I don't even blame her. I mean she was always so busy trying to put food on the table, that I guess that whenever she looked into his eyes she never saw what I saw. How could she? Because their eyes were basically mirror reflections of each other. And I didn't want to bother her, considering all the stress she'd been under.

I knew if I did nothing I'd lose Joe: my froggy, and yet for some reason I thought if dad came back things would change. Joe's only doing this because dad's not here but boy was I wrong. Joe was doing that because he was hurting just as much as I was and for him the drugs were an escape because he didn't know how to make the pain go away. So I guess the drugs did erase the pain but with that , they erased Joe , my froggy

To this day I curse myself for not telling mom about the drugs. But what could I do I was at a crossroad: Damned if I do, Damned if I don't. So ultimately I was doomed to be Damned..

## **CHAPTER 17:Dad returns:**

When dad eventually decides to grace us with his presence things start of weird at home, It's like everyone's walking on eggshells.No one knew exactly wat to do but at least we were all togetger.Dad doesn't say much about his trip but shows us lots of pictures of the amazing time he had while we were here going through hell.But at least theirs no shouting, and Joe looks sane enough considering the state his been in, the past couple of months.Mom well she doesn't look happy or sad she's well, blank.Sally however is as happy as u could ever be ,because for her,her dad's home.But for how much longer.

## **CHAPTER 18: Moms acting weird:**

So here we were again pretending to be a happy family with dad back in the picture. But I guess theirs only so much pretending we could do.

Barely a month after his back dad already starts with his old tricks of coming home late which is no surprise to me. Once an ass always an ass. Mom however, never really minds that much, which is a bit weird coming from her. Moms never really been one to accept things even though she knows she'll probably get beaten. She's always stood her ground. So I'm was a bit taken back by her sudden quietness to his late night stays. I mean she's never really been up front to him about his dealings but when she thinks no ones listening she'll mumble little comments in swahili like: "Wat does he see in those sluts is he that desperate." So her sudden acceptance of his cheating really got to me. Was she suddenly ok with it? Was she sick? At some point I'd even thought that she was losing her mind. I mean why the sudden change of heart?



## **CHAPTER 19:Independency:**

While dad continued living the bachelor's life mom continued working as a maid, she'd never really told him she had a job and he didn't ask,so I guess it wasnt a big deal.I mean i once asked her why she was working since dad was back and she merely replied:"I'm just so sick of relying on your dad,I know its not the most convenient job but its something and look at it this way maya, your dad keeps throwing money at these sluts and have u noticed how asking him for money is such a big task lately."

I didn't really know how to reply to that which which is really shocking since I always have a response.But all I know is I was actual proud of my mom for taking her life back.In fact I was inspired by her.yes I knew that when dad found out he'd be furious, but I also knew that it was time for my mother to stop living in his shadow.He's never gonna change and so maybe she should.

## CHAPTER 20: Moving backwards:

With everything that was going on at home at that moment I'd always find myself thinking back to the first time I'd ever really seen my dad beat my mom. I don't even think that was actually the first time but it was the furthest memory I had of him beating her. And from what I've heard from Joe it definitely wasn't the first time.

I don't know why I chose to remember it at that moment because I'd honestly thought it had been erased from my memory, and considering the fact that: well things weren't that bad at home. Yeah dad wasn't home and we all knew why. Joe was still out and about getting high.

But mom was doing great, besides worrying about Joe she seemed happier. She was actually spending more time with me and Sally which was amazing. For the first time in a long time I had a mom, my mom. I could actually be a child and I didn't have to be Sally's mom because Sally could actually have a mom, a real mom.

That should've been enough for me right? I mean one would expect me to be happy and not be dwelling on the past. Because for as long as I can remember I would've died to see my mom like that.

But yet there I was in the middle of the night thinking about that incident. And I remember feeling so mad. In fact I still am. But I didn't know who to be mad at.

Should I have been mad at him for cheating and beating my mom for bringing it up? Should I have been mad at myself for not protecting mom? Or should I have been mad at the women who he cheated with, because she had pretended to be my mom's friend while secretly stabbing her in the back.

I really don't know who to blame or be mad at but the one person that I know that is definitely not to blame is mom. She's always just been the victim, his punching bag if I can call it that.

So that night I thought back to that beating and I remember crying myself to sleep, just for the mere fact that he was the reason I felt that way, he was

the reason i couldn't get that beating out of my mind, and the reason that that beating will always stick with me for the rest of my life as a beating to remember...

## **CHAPTER 21:A beating to remember:the actual beating:**

When i was about 9 my dad used to give lifts to these 2 kids who went to the same school as me.At the time I just thaught my dad was being nice and considerate because well: my mom knew their mom and they were kinda friends.Little did I knw that he was screwing their mom.And if i think about it now it was actually for quite a while because as far as i remember we'd been giving them lifts for almost a year.And I don't really know at what point they started hooking up but the point of the matter is:he was screwing one of moms friends.And for me that was down right disrespectful.

So basically what happened was we were nearing end of term and you knw how after exams no one really goes to school.I mean wats the use.But the kids in question wanted to go to school for some or other reason and me and Joe obviously didn't.And my mom kinda forgot to tell dad that we weren't going ,so in the morning he gets a call from that bitch telling him that she was waiting for him to pick up her kids ,more like waiting for him to screw her if u ask me.

So dad gets mad and starts yelling at mom,but mom tries reasoning with him:"Wats the point, they not doing anything".

But dad doesnt back down either:"Wat'd you mean their not doing anything,if that's the case then why are her kids going!"

Mom:"I don't know why her kids are going and why u asking me why don't u ask her when you head over there to screw her!"

At that point dad looses it completely and starts hitting mom.

If u ask me i didn't really know what they were arguing about to me it

seemed like they were arguing about why me and Joe weren't going to school while that bitch's kids were. I knew nothing about what my mom meant by "screwing". I mean I was only 9. I doubt even Joe knew what they were arguing about, I mean he was 11.

So while dad keeps beating mom little old me and Joe try protecting mom from his lashes but mom kept pushing us away while yelling: "let him hit me he thinks I don't know that he's sleeping with her"

Dad keeps taking shots at her though and me well I start crying and begging my mom to stop but she won't

Mom: "How could you do this to me, do you have any idea all the things people are saying about me"

With every word that mom said it seemed like dad was getting madder and that meant the shots were harder. At one point mom was on the floor and dad started kicking her with his leg. And then Joe said something that no one expected: "Maya get your bag and get into the car we going to school." Dad stopped hitting mom after that and just simply walked out of the door leaving mom bruised, battered and bleeding while I continued to wail.

## **CHAPTER 22:A beating to remember:Mom has had enough:**

After dad's disappearance from the bloody crime scene I quickly rushed to mom's side and instead of comforting her I cried some more. I don't know how long I sat with mom on the floor wailing but eventually mom got up and decided she'd had enough and was leaving him. So she started packing clothes and stuff and was like we leaving now and so I did just that I started packing and when I was done. She looked at me and she told me: "Everything's gonna be ok, we gonna look for a job and me and you are gonna be together."

I didn't know what to tell her so I simply nodded my head. What did she expect me to say? So we did what she said me and mom. We went job hunting.

You guys are probably wondering: What about Joe? To be honest I don't really know because after my dad walked out he did too. He might have probably gone to our neighbour's house. I don't know.

But during our job hunting expedition I'd asked mom: "What about Joe what's gonna happen to him?"

Mom: "He'll probably stay with dad"

Me: "Why couldn't I stay with dad?"

Mom: "Because you're a girl and I can't trust you alone with your dad:"

## **CHAPTER 23:A beating to remember:Going back:**

Mom and i carried on walking around town looking for a live in job but no one was interested in hiring someone with a kid.So after some time I got really tired and mom could see it too, so we decided to take a break.

As I sat with her on the side of the road with my head in her lap.I kept thinking about joe and dad.I mean:What did this mean for them?Were mom and dad getting divorced?Would i see Joe again?Would i see dad again?

I know it was really stupid of me to be thinking about dad but I couldn't help it.I knew I hated him for what he did to mom and i probably would all my life.

In that moment i also realised that it was selfish of me to be thinking about myself considering the fact that I wasn't the one that got battered and bruised,but I couldn't help it.I was a 9 year old girl who'd just seen her mom bleed right in front of her while her dad kept beating her.

When I finally lifted my head from moms lap I saw her wince as she nursed her index finger.I felt so ashamed of myself during that moment.I was so caught up in my feelings that I'd forgotten that dad had stepped onto mom's index finger, and clearly it was sore from the look on moms face.So I did wat i had to do and practically dragged mom to the clinic to get it checked out.Yes she argued with me the whole way there about how unreasonable I was being ,because it wasn't so sore.

But we did eventually get there and mom did have it checked out.The doctor said that even though she'd broken a bone she'd be ok because given time it would heal.And so he gave her one of those fancy

finger guards and told her to avoid putting pressure on it.

After our little visit to the clinic, thank God it wasn't serious, mom and me continued wondering the streets while mom figured out what to do. We were basically at a crossroad. Do we go back home or do we carry on searching?

Inevitably after about an hour of aimlessly wondering the streets mom decided that it was probably best that we went back home and so we did.

We went back to a life filled with more cheating, more beatings, more yelling but mostly more sadness and tears...

Looking back at that moment I don't know if coming back was a good idea because it wasn't like my dad changed. The cheating continued the beatings did to. So sometimes I wonder maybe we should've searched for a while longer. Who knows, maybe then I'd be singing a different tune right now.



## **CHAPTER 24: Dirty laundry:**

So fast forward to after that night that I spent looking back on some really dark times, to about 3 years after the actual incident took place. Because as expected nothing had changed. He was still a lying cheating bastard.

But this time it was different. Mom clearly didn't give a damn anymore and dad stopped coming home.

I mean it's not like he'd been home that much because the only time he was home was when the world was asleep. But this time he stopped coming back completely.

So when mom realised he wasn't home anymore, they had this really serious conversation in the middle of the night, that I wasn't supposed to hear. Mom basically told him that if he was out messing around then he should stay away from her. Only later do I realise that this conversation was in reference to STIs.

But dad not being home wasn't really a bad thing because for some reason, when dad wasn't home, mom actually smiled all the time. So I'm kinda glad that he didn't come back home and I kinda didn't want him to come back.

But occasionally he'd pop up at home with a bag of dirty laundry for mom to wash. If you ask me that was down right disrespectful. And if I were in her shoes I would've thrown his bloody laundry at him. But mom actually washed his laundry, she'd even iron it for him.

I don't know why mom put up with his crap, but all I know is: Moms always been too good for him. She's just too nice, and that leads to her being taken advantage of. Don't get me wrong there's nothing wrong with being nice. It's just that, there's a limit. And at some point you need to realise when people don't deserve your kindness.

## **CHAPTER25:Elephant in the room:**

So dad was back home living with us again. Who would have thought?And honestly I didnt really know how I felt about him moving back.All I knew was:I was confused.I mean, I was just getting used to the idea of not having him around and mom had just found her happiness.

But atleast mom and him weren't at each others throats like usual,but i think thats mainly because mom avoided him at every turn.She basically pretended like he didn't exist and barely spoke to him unless necessary.And by neccessary I mean reminding him to pay our school fees.

So things were a bit tense ,but to be honest:When have things never been tense, with mom and dad in the same room?With them it always seems like there's an elephant in the room.And this time, we all knew who the elephant was.

All I'm saying is:Couldnt he have stayed in whatever hell hole he'd been in for the past couple of months?Because clearly none of us wanted him around,besides Sally of course.But to be honest Sally was just 1 and a half,so of course she'd want her dad around.

Like was he not seeing what he was doing to us.Every time he came back home from work the atmosphere would automatically turn cold.And what about what he was doing to mom? He was slowly turning her recently found smile upside down again.

Everyday he was home I could see the life being drained out of her. And not for the first time either.I was loosing my mom again,Sally was loosing her mom again and i hated that feeling.But I mostly hated him, because he was the reason I felt that way.He was taking my mom away from me.

Again..

## **CHAPTER 26:New year,new beginnings:**

So here we were approaching the beginning of another year. Another year that would be filled with cheating, sadness, crying and occasionally blood would be added into the mix.

At this point of my life I had stopped hoping for change to magically come our way, I'd realised that in order to get away from this life, I needed to do something.

I needed to pull up my socks and make something of myself. I wasn't a little girl anymore. I couldn't hide behind mom anymore. I needed to learn to stand on my own two feet.

If not for me, then for mom, because surely I couldn't stand around and watch her get beaten all the time. And if I wouldn't do it for her, then I'd do it for Sally, because she deserved a better life. And what kind of big sis would I be, if I didn't want what was best for her?

So that year as I prepared myself on the first day of school. The first day of grade 7. I promised mom and Sally that things wouldn't always be like this. That I was going to be their knight in shining armour, because I was going to go to school and make something of myself so that they could live better. So that we could live better.

But I guess the cards weren't really in my favour that year. Because in that year alone my family went through so many difficulties that to this day that was one of the worst years of my life. And to be honest I don't even know how we survived that year.

Because that was a year of turmoil....

## **CHAPTER 27:A year of turmoil:Only the beginning:**

Right from the bat things started going wrong for my family.Firstly if any of you can remember we were still living with dad.And living with dad meant mom was always sad.And with mom sad,no one was really happy,including Sally.

And Joe not being home all the time wasn't really helping the situation.And yes, mom still didn't know about the drugs,so ultimately she'd concluded that Joe was acting up because he was a teen.

You'd think that, that was the right opportunity for me to tell mom about the drugs but I couldn't.Because some small part of me wanted to believe that she was right.

Maybe Joe was acting up because he was a teen.This was all just a phase.I mean how much more drugs can he pump into himself.Sooner or later he'd come to his senses and realise that the drugs aren't helping.

But sadly for me he never did realise it.And from then on,Joe went spiraling out of control.I mean he'd kinda been erased about a year ago,but from then,it only got worse....

## **CHAPTER 28:A year of turmoil:Robbery or pettiness:**

Life wasn't so bad the first 2 months of the year.I mean besides the fact that mom and dad couldn't stand each other.Life was pretty good.It was quite and uneventful (minus Joe's drama).

But one night something unexpected happened.In the middle of the night someone broke into our house and broke the back mirror of dad's car.

At first everyone thought that it must've been a thief trying to break in but it was only later that we found out that it was some bitch that dad was screwing.

At first I had a hard time wrapping my mind around the idea.I mean firstly how did she know where we lived?What did he do to make her angry?Why did she choose to break his cars window ,of all things?

But all was revealed after a while by the man of the hour himself:What happended was that dad cheated on her,and obviously when she found out,she decided it was a great idea to get revenge.And what better way to get her revenge then to target his car because she knew how much dad loved his car.

It was really hard to comprehend.Like was my dad such a huge ass.He bloody cheated on mom with this lady just to go cheat on her with someone else.Like what the fuck.

And why tell the women where you live?Like what if she decided to do something drastic,the women was clearly crazy,I mean she literally broke into our house and broke your car window.Who knows what else she's

capable of.

He should've thanked his lucky stars she didn't hurt anyone of us, besides him of course. I mean, clearly he would have deserved it.

Anyway that situation happened and let's just say karmas a bitch because my dad actually had to toil to get the money to have the window fixed.

## **CHAPTER 29: A year of turmoil:Joe loses his marbles:**

So life moved on after that.Dad obviously stopped seeing that bitch.I'm not so sure if he stopped seeing the other one though(the one that he cheated with). And frankly i didnt care because that was his problem not mine.

So it was a Saturday and mom was out working and wouldn't be back for a couple more hours,and i was home babysitting Sally as usual.I was in the kitchen getting sally something to eat and Joe was in the living room watching some show on tv.

You all probably thinking:Why is Joe home?I was just as surprised.Considering that it was a Saturday so he should've been out with friends,and well he never really is home.But nevertheless he was home and i don't know why, but it was good to see him.

So after feeding Sally me and her head to the living room and as soon as we hit the couch Joe decides to leave.Which kinda annoyed me, but I decided to push that feeling aside.

I then change the channel to Jim jam because Sally loves it.And me and her spend the next half an hour watching tv.

Next thing I know Joe's snatching the remote from my hand and changes the channel.Then Sally starts crying because Joe changed the channel.So then I start yelling at him to change it back,because sally won't stop wailing.

Then he starts yelling at me to make her stop crying because she's making his head hurt.At this point I'm just glaring at him,because he made sally cry

and I hated seeing sally cry.

Then he did something that took me by surprise:he motioned for Sally,meaning he wanted to carry her.I didnt know what to do because honestly I didnt trust her with him.I know he was sallys bro but I just couldnt risk it.I mean 1. he was angry and 2.He was clearly high.So for Sallys own safety I put her into her baby walker.

But my action just made him madder.Because after that he started yelling at me:"I just wanted to pick her up You know."

Me:"You can't pick Sally up,because you're high,I mean look at you."

Joe:"Don'tell me what I can and can't do,and stop acting like sally's only your sister and I'm just some stranger."

Me:"Then maybe you should act like her brother and actually be there for her."

Joe:"Just shut up,you so annoying."

At that point I'd had it with him so I went looking for Sally who had walked all the way into the kitchen.But Joe clearly wasn't done with me,because he followed me into the kitchen.In the kitchen I found Sally and I took her out of the baby walker,when at the corner of my eye I saw the fridge fall over.It fell right on top of sallys baby walker.

Joe had pushed it over.I couldn't believe it.Joe had pushed the fridge over and Sally, she could've been hurt.I could've lost Sally.

Me:"Why did you push the fridge over!?"

Me:"Sally could've gotten hurt!"

Joe:"So!All you care about now days is sally"

Me:"Joe you need to stop this ok,how can u even say that sally's just a



baby"

Joe:"Sally!,like wats so special about her!"

Me:"Maybe because she's your baby sister."

I was really afraid of Joe then.Mom wouldn't be back for another 2 hours.And I knew that I couldn't stay in the house with him for that long.So I did what I had to do to protect not myself but Sally.I took the knife that was on the kitchen counter and I held it at arms length pointing it at him.

Then Joe started laughing because he thaught I was messing around.

Joe:"You won't do it."

Me:"Joe,I dont want to do this.Just let me and sally go."

Joe:"Why should I ..."

I couldn't stand around waiting for Joe to make up his mind so I quickly rushed to the kitchen door that led to the backyard and once outside I locked Joe in.

But I couldn't just stay there because Joe would probably go looking for the keys to the front of the house.So me and little old Sally went to our neighbours house where we awaited moms arrival.

I had never been afraid of Joe before that.I mean why would I be he was my froggy.But that day I realised that the Joe that I knew and grew up with was long gone and I had to live with that.I couldnt keep holding on to the past,because I needed to look out for Sally now.

## **CHAPTER 30:A year of turmoil:Saving Joes butt:**

As expected mom gets back home 2 hours later and well,we had to explain the fridge on the floor and sallys broken baby walker.I knew if I told mom the truth she'd be mad at Joe and then she'd probably tell dad and who knew how dad would react.So I did what I had to do,and took the blame for the whole scenario.

I explained that it was an accident.That I was the one who'd pushed it over while looking for sallys ball because she'd thrown it underneath the fridge.Mom clearly wasn't buying my story and when she asked Joe where he was.I quickly interjected that he was asleep in his room the whole time and this was the first time he was seeing the mess.And when she asked why we left the house.I told her our neighbours kids wanted to play with Sally so I decided why don't me and sally go there instead.

After answering all of moms questions I think she finally believed me.And that was the last we spoke of it.Mom called dad to come home early so he could help her get it up right again and to see if anything was wrong with it.But the fridge was just fine.Sallys baby walker not so much.Mom was really mad about that,but Sally ended getting another one,so it wasn't so bad.

And as for Joe.He owed me one.Big time.I could've thrown him under the bus,but I didn't ,because I knew that both mom and dad would be furious.I get that he was high but he practically tried to murder a baby.Not just any baby,our baby sister.

And whatever way you look at it,high or not I'm just glad Sally was ok.Because she's the only one I really cared about.

## **CHAPTER 31: A year of turmoil:Tensions run high:**

After that, life went on, as its supposed to.I mean Joe still didn't want to quite drugs.So I'm only guessing that he found what he was looking for in them.

And at home life was was ok.As ok as it would ever get with us. Mom and dad weren't really fighting or arguing but you could see that none of them were happy.And occassionally mom would worry about Joe. Sally was happy thaugh.So that was enough for me.And me,well I was partly happy.

I mean I still had my own problems to deal with, without having to worry about them.You see I had an aptitude test that I was writing the next day.It was for placement in a highly ranked highscool that Joe attended and God willing I would too.Joe wasn't too thrilled about me enrolling there but that was his problem, not mine.

Because for me getting into that school meant that I was one step closer to delivering on the promise that I had made to mom and Sally.And unlike Joe,I didn't make promises that I didn't intend on keeping.

That aptitude test was literally my make or break momet.If I blew that test then it would be the end for me.So I needed to bring my A-Game.

So while I was stressing my head off about that test,my parents where at it again. There weren't really fighting or anything but you could literally feel the tension between them.Like God,could they give it a break.We got that they couldn't stand each other.But were they that oblivious to me freaking out.

I don't know what got into me but at that point I was just so mad at them and I basically yelled: "Would you guys stop it, if you really can't stand each other then don't be in the same room as each other, like grow up. Some of us have real problems."

And then my sister did the last thing any of us expected: She started laughing, like proper baby laugh. I don't know why but after that I started laughing too. But the weirder thing is, after that laugh I was no longer mad, stressed or freaked out.

I'm not sure if any of the tension between my parents disappeared that night but I didn't give a damn about that anymore. That was their tension to solve, not mine.

And my aptitude test actually went good the next day. So I was happy.

## **CHAPTER 32:A year of turmoil:Religion comes into play:**

I kind of left out a very important aspect about my family.You see, mom and dad don't really share the same religion.Dads Christian and moms Muslim.Me and 4 of my siblings are Muslim and Joe's Christian. I dont really know how they worked that out but thats my life.

Growing up I never really minded ,in fact it was actually kind of cool.I got to experiance 2 different religions.I mean granted I'm more Muslim.But I've been to a church a couple of times in my life.I was even there when joe got baptised.And i practically celebrated Easter and Christmas with joe and dad every year.And dad has never minded me making salaah,going to madrassah and even celebrating Eid every year.So as you can see dad and mom having different belief systems wasnt really an issue.

But sometimes when dad got really mad at mom he'd bring religion into the picture.Often he'd say things like:"Is that what your religion teaches you to do."

And mom being holy would be offended,as she should be.

Sometimes it would get as far as dad saying that mom always making salaah and reading the Qur'an every chance she got was the reason for her being so hot headed.

And sometimes on our way to school dad will tell me things like:"don't let your mom and her religion lead you down the wrong path.I mean you don't want to be like her.Look at her."

So you can only imagine how that made me feel.I didn't want to pick

sides.Especially when it came to religion.

As if things weren't bad enough on their own when they were just fighting.

But bringing God into the picture.Like could things get any worse.

## **CHAPTER 33:A year of turmoil:1)Not a very Eid mubarak(The meaning of Eid):**

If u are a Muslim you already know that Eid is a really important day for us muslims because it holds a lot of religious purpose. But I don't really want to get into that. So besides the religious aspect of Eid, it really holds a special place in my heart because to me it meant a whole lot more.

Eid was the one solid day that I actually really had my mom. Because on Eid no matter how hard things were at home she was always happy. And it was on that day each and every year, from as far back as I can remember, that I could actually be a child, that I was actually able to receive my mom's undivided attention and love:

Whether it was helping her out in the kitchen while she prepared a feast fit for a king, Or just going out to the park with her, and having her watch me as i played on the swing, Or even sometimes just staying in at home with her and doing the most basic thing like watching a movie.

Eid meant quality time with mom. Because even though it was never anything fancy, I didn't care. Because the fact of the matter was, I was with mom and that was enough.

And it was always on Eid that me and mom formed my most special memories.

Memories that looked at from an ordinary persons point of view wouldn't seem so special. But to me they were everything.

And she knew it too, because every year a few months prior to Eid she'd start fussing with me about what I wanted to wear. And we'd go

shopping for the perfect dress for the perfect day.

We'd obviously always end up buying a fancy dress that I'd probably only get to wear on that day and after that it just got stuck in my closet, because there wasn't another day fancy enough for it. She'd still buy it for me though. And I loved her for that. Just the simplest fact that she knew how much I loved fancy dresses, and actually bought them for me.

And besides the actual dress she'd still get me all dolled up the day before by taking me to go get my hair done and to put mehndi on. Which was a plus because if you haven't noticed I'm a real girly girl, so getting my hair done and putting mehndi on, really makes my day.

So in essence Eid was my favourite day of the year. I loved it even more than I loved my own birthday.



## **CHAPTER 34:A year of turmoil:1)Not a very Eid Mubarak(homeless):**

So just like every night before Eid mom takes me to the salon to get my hair done and to get mehndi put on. But this year it takes us longer than usual because even though I'm at the same salon I always go to, we get held up. It seemed like this year lots of girls wanted to get dolled up too. So even though we'd been there since 16:00 we only end up leaving at around 19:30.

So naturally considering what time we left the salon we end up getting home really late at around 20:00. So when we do get home dad's waiting at the door and he looks furious. He immediately starts shouting at us.

Dad: "Where have you been!"

Mom: "Maya and I just came from the salon.."

Dad: "Do you take me for a fool, What salon is open at this time of the night!"

Mom: "Tomorrow's Eid, so they close very late."

Dad: "Don't lie to me!"

Mam: "I'm not.."

Dad: "You seeing some guy aren't you"

Mom: "What? No."

Dad: "Don't test me, just tell me the truth."

Mom: "Look just because you are a cheater that doesn't mean that I am to, like I got self respect and why would I bring my kids along if I was out seeing some guy. Look it's really late and the kids have had a long day, so can we please come inside."

Dad obviously wasn't expecting mom's response so I think at that moment he was just being spiteful because he knew mom was right and he hated it

when mom was right, and well his ego wouldn't let him admit that she was right. So instead of letting us in he does the complete opposite, he locks me, mom and Sally outside.

Me, mom and Sally spend the next 15 minutes sitting outside on the front door of our house. When dad does eventually open the door he starts throwing clothing out. Our clothing. After he's thrown everything he had he starts yelling: "I don't want you guys here, get off my property!"

Mom: "Don't be ridiculous, where'd do you expect us to go at this time."

Dad: "Go back to where ever you came from!"

Mom: "Look, at least let the kids in, and I'll go!"

Dad: "No, they came with you, so they go back with you!"

It was after that, that he shut the door in our faces.

You all wondering where Joe was, to be honest I don't know. He might have been in the house, he might have not, and even if he was home and he did witness his mom and little sisters being kicked out of their own home: what could he have done? And in his high state he wouldn't have been able to do a thing.

Eventually my mom decided it was best to just go and so as cold as it was that night we walked all the way to the nearest street where you could catch a taxi, which was about a 20 minute walk from my house. The three of us got into a taxi and went to one of mom's friend's workplace.

Luckily for us the friend was able to help us out and she gave us keys to her house. Where we spent the night before Eid.

So as you can imagine, that Eid was really bad considering it started off on a

rocky note. But we ended up making the most of it because like I said before no matter how hard things got at home mom didn't let it phase her on Eid. And plus we had Sally who was always happy, so with her happy we were both happy. It might not have been a very Eid Mubarak but we had each other and as always that was enough for me. And this time it wasn't just me and mom, but Sally too.

CHAPTER 35: A year of turmoil: The pressure is on:

So after that incident of being homeless for the night and practically spending Eid roaming the streets. We ended up going back home, which if you ask me was a big mistake, but as usual mom thought it was a good idea.

You see at this point mom was only with dad for our sake, because she had this idea that leaving dad meant that we would practically be homeless. In the sense that she wouldn't be able to provide for us.

From that day on mom kept repeating the phrase: "You're the only reason I put up with him, so if you want to help me, go make something of yourself." Those words had become my mantra. And I didn't realize it at the time but whether I wanted it or not, I had just received a whole lot of unwanted pressure.

I mean how did the world expect me to deal with all this. How do you comprehend the fact that: I was the reason mom kept clinging to dad and I was the reason she kept enduring the pain.

She could've walked out on him a long time ago, but I was standing in her way. I was the one that tied her to him.

So that day when we walked back into dad's house. I had a new found purpose, and I couldn't afford to fail, because mom was counting on me and I wouldn't let her down.

## **CHAPTER 36:A year of turmoil:Shit happens but drugs don't make it easier:**

So that scenario carried on for a while at home, but I didn't let it get to me, because I was more worried about Joe at this point. I mean I know we weren't talking that much and we'd basically become strangers but I missed my froggy. And I hated the fact that he was turning into dad, in the sense that I didn't see him that much because he'd only come back home in the middle of the night.

At this point with mom's hopes on my shoulders I was so focussed on my studies. So one night while I was studying for a test that I was writing the next day, Joe comes into my room and sits on the floor. I don't know why he decided to see me, but I wasn't really in the mood for him. Mainly because he was high and I couldn't handle him like that, especially not that night.

I don't really know what had gotten into him that night but then he just started talking: "I'm sick of all this shit with mom and dad, don't they get tired of it, look at me, look at what they've done to me, I don't know who I am anymore" he probably won't even remember telling me this.

But after that one-sided conversation all I remember thinking was: We only had each other and I knew he was hurting but so was I. In fact I was hurting more because I didn't have an escape route, I couldn't just pump myself with drugs to make me forget. I just couldn't and I wouldn't. Unlike him I still had to take care of mom and Sally because he couldn't.

I'm not saying he wasn't hurting because he was but while he was away getting high. I still had to deal with the shit he spoke about. He wasn't home when the shit went down. Because while he was on cloud 9 I was living in

the real fucking world.

At one point during that night I even got mad at him. He had abandoned me. And that hurt because a few years back wasn't he the one that promised me he'd get us out of here.

I guess talk is in fact cheap.

## **CHAPTER 37:A year of turmoil:The big result:**

You all wondering what happened to the test I'd been studying for, and to be honest I don't really remember. Whether I aced it or not that was the least of my problems.

A few days later when I get home from school mom starts rambling on about how I had failed the aptitude test that I'd written not so long ago. The fact that mom was home at that time meant that it was serious, because mom should've been at work, and I didn't even know the results were out yet.

When I actually get the chance to put my bag on the floor mom yells at Joe to read out the results.

You all wondering why mom didn't read it herself. You see mom isn't really that good with understanding as what she'd call fancy English. So even though she could read, she had a hard time understanding what some stuff meant.

Joe, with a smug look on his face calmly tells me that I failed and well it was off to my second choice.

I was devastated. That couldn't be right. I'd aced those papers, I swear I did. It felt like my whole life was crumbling down.

Most of you might think I was over reacting, but what you didn't understand was that getting accepted into that school was my gateway out of this place. It was a chance for me to do something for mom, for Sally. A better life. Away from dad.

And there I was hearing that I blew it. Mom wouldn't stop yelling at me. She herself was just as confused because she too knew that it was impossible for me not to have been excepted. Like how did that happen. Mom quickly tried to reassure me: "We can always go back and broker a deal with them even though you didn't pass the test."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Was she serious? I'd be getting placement there based on money instead of actual merit. Now don't get me wrong I always wanted to go there, but I would not except handouts. I wouldn't do it. And to be honest there were a few kids that actually took that route, but I was just too proud. So I suckcked it up, snatched the letter from Joe and started reading it for myself. I had to know for myself.

Funny thing is instead of hearing wat Joe had said I actually hear myself say accepted followed by congratulations. I couldn't believe it, well I actually did. But that lousy Joe said I didn't get it. When I glared at him he just started laughing and I swear if mom wasn't there I would've strangled him.

Joe aside, because he was clearly mad at this point. I was ecstatic and so was mom. So I guess our plan was still on the right track.

Their was still hope. We could do this. We could actually get out of here. Me mom and Sally.



## **CHAPTER 38: A year of turmoil:2)Not a very eid mubarak(Big surprise):**

It was Eid again.You all probably thinking: What?You see we have 2 Eids in a year,and well this was the second one.So there I was feeling happy because it was Eid.Because I believed that dad would not ruine this one for me.Not again.I wouldn't allow him to.

So there we were carrying out our normal eid routine:Take showers,make whudu and then get all dressed up for Eid salaah.When we were all ready we made our way to the masjid where we made our Eid salaah.

This time mom had made sure thst the day before we went to the salon way earlier than usual,so as to avoid what happened the last time.Everything was going according to plan so far.It was turning out to be a dramaless day.Which was amazing.

But this time things were a bit different thaugh,because after salaah mom had to work,because she couldn't get off.Normally what would happen is after salaah mom would cook a feast.She'd make all her Tanzanian specialities,and it was great.

But this year was different so after salaah me and Sally went back home while we waited for mom to get back.Because even though she she couldn't get off she'd be back earlier and we'd still have time to go to a theme park,because I thaught Sally would like it,it being her first time.

So there I was at home with Sally,both of us all dressed up,waiting for mom to get back.But when mom got back at around 12:00 you could see that she was in no mood to go to a theme park.She was furious.

Me seeing mom like that frightened me. I mean mom didn't get mad on Eid. So I decide to confront her about it. But she basically screams my head off: "What is it!?"

Me: "We not going, are we?"

Mom: "No, we not going and you have your dad to blame for that."

Me: "What did dad do?"

Mom: "Forget it it's not your problem. Why don't we just go out to a restaurant for lunch? "

I didn't know what to do. The day was quickly turning into the worst Eid ever. First mom has to work, then our outing gets cancelled and to top it off mom's furious with dad.

I know you all thinking I was being selfish but I wasn't. Considering what the other Eid was like this year, we needed things to run smoothly that day. I needed it. I was just so sick and tired of nothing going my way. All I asked for was one day. One day to just be happy, to see mom happy. But no, I couldn't even have that.

We did end up going out for lunch though just like mom promised. But neither of us were really in the mood. Both of us clearly only went to make Sally happy, so we decided to go to Mc Donalds because Sally likes the toys you get in the happy meal. And I honestly wasn't in the mood to go anywhere fancy.

After that we headed back home. And as if things weren't bad already, what we saw just made the day a whole lot worse.

Dad was in the house which was not a surprise since he comes home early

on Eid. Don't ask me why. But that wasn't the problem, the problem was the lady with him. Dad had brought a woman into our house. Like how dare he, the bitch didn't even look older than my big sis who was in her twenties. Like had dad lost his mind? She could've been his daughter. Like what the fuck.

At that moment I honestly thought my eyes were deceiving me. I mean I knew dad was a cheat but he never brought any of his floozies home. And one that was as young as she was.

I literally walked into the house and walked straight into my room, I was not going to be apart of this madness.

Outside my room I could hear dad introducing her to everyone: mom, Joe and even Sally. Like were these people insane. This wasn't normal. And that bitch: Couldn't she see that dad was married? He had kids. And he could've been her dad. Maybe it's just me but why would you wanna mess around with a married man, who's probably the same age as ure dad if not older.

## **CHAPTER 39:A year of turmoil:2)Not a very Eid mubarak(mistress plays house):**

That bitch actually ends up spending the rest of the day with us.The whole time there she presented that what was happening was actually normal.How was any of this normal?Was I the only sane person in the house?

What got to me most of all was that:she had the audacity to pick up Sally.She actually payed with Sally,obviously Sally didn't mind.But come on:Sally didn't understand any of the things that were going.

I respected her more when she didn't know about us.When she didn't know he was bloody married and had 6 kids.Yeah, 3 were adults,but come on.She was a fucking who're if you ask me.

## **CHAPTER 40:A year of turmoil:2)Not a very Eid mubarak(Whore):**

And if that wasn't bad enough she stayed over for dinner as well.Way to overstay her welcome.Didn't she have have any where better to be?Like maybe breaking some other family up.

I clearly didnt want her there and I didnt see what dad saw in her.Ok she was way younger than mom.But besides that,dad clearly didn't have taste.

I mean she was as thin as a stick and not to be mean but not too good on the eyes either.So i'm guessing that's why she smothered her face with so much make-up.What did she have that mom didn't because if you ask me,mom packed way more than she could ever handle.

Even after giving birth 6 times mom still had a smoking hot body and curves to die for.And God when she dressed up she was a real stunner,one look and boom your hypnotised.

But I guess because he never really deserved her he couldn't see her worth.

She was right in front of him and yet he kept on looking at skanks.Talk about lack of standards.And anyway that's his loss,because she's always been too gud for him.

## **CHAPTER 41: A year of turmoil:Open your eyes:**

So the bitch finally leaves and dad decides to give her a lift home. Like does she fucking not have feet or are they too precious to walk.

Maybe it's a good thing he went along because I was furious with him, like how dare he bring another woman into our house, if she can even be called that, because compared to mom, she was a child.

I was literally heating up and when I look at mom she looks no better than me. But instead of anger there's sadness in her eyes. Raw sadness.

At that point Joe decides that it's a great idea for him to disappear into the night. And honestly I didn't give a damn, because if that's how he wanted to make himself feel better then he might've well pumped himself with all the drugs in the world.

So me and mom are left alone with Sally and when I finally ask if she's ok she merely stares at me with her soulless eyes. So I try again.

Me: "Ma"

Mom: "Yes"

Me: "So dad, did you know about that, the woman?"

Mom: "Yes, I saw them together earlier today on my way back home from work"

Me: "You did? Is that why you were so mad earlier on?"

Me: "Maya, just leave it, you won't understand, maybe you will one day when you're older, inshaallah your husband's isn't like your dad."

That was basically the end of our conversation. But what Mom didn't understand was, I did understand even at the age of 13. I think I might've

understood more than she did. Dad was cheating on her with that bitch, and earlier on she'd seen them together in dad's car. And in some way she felt betrayed, because deep down my mom was secretly hoping that one day he'd magically come to his senses and notice her. Because well, she still loved him. But it's not real because she's clinging to the past of when they really were in love or she thought they were. But in honest fact, their relationship has always been one-sided.

The past was gone and she needed to accept that, so that she could live in the present. Dad would never change. In fact he was always the same. It's just that in the beginning when mom thought they were in love, dad was testing the waters with her. "Grooming her". He never loved her, and he never would.

And mom needed to get that into her head. She needed to wake up and smell the coffee before it was too late, if it already wasn't. She needed to wake up from whatever dream she was in and open her eyes, because they were clearly closed.

## **CHAPTER 42: A year of turmoil:2)Not a very Eid mubarak(Who's the real man of the house?):**

About half an hour later dad comes back home and well he just starts yelling at mom.Me and Sally were on the couch watching Barney.Mom immediately asks him what his talking about but dad won't listen and continues yelling:"Whats this I hear of you working!"

Mom:"I don't know what you talking about"

Dad:"Dont lie to me,Sandra told me me she saw you with a mop in your hand!"

So the bitch had a name afterall.But forget about that bitch because clearly she's a snitch as well.

For the past year and a half I'd been dreading this conversation.As you know moms never stopped working even after dad did come back from his trip.I'd always known that sooner or later dad would find out And when he did all he'll would break loose.And I was right.

Mom:"I was going to tell [you.it](#)'s..."

Dad:"You were going to tell me!Do you know how disrespectful this is,what will people say about me,that I can't take care of my own wife that she has to go work.It'll be a scandal,and that too as a maid!Like wat do u take me for!You will go and quite your job tomorrow!I will not allow this!Do u hear me! "

Mom:"No I won't,you act like me having a job is such a bad thing,and I understand that me being a maid isn't convenient for you and doesn't meet your standards,but it puts food on this table.Where do think all this food comes from?Did you really think you were paying for it?You haven't paid a single cent towards groceries in this house since u came back from



Uganda. Yes I've been working during that time and I'm glad I did, because while you were out there throwing money at relatives I was working night and day to make sure our kids don't go hungry, that including Sally's necessities like diapers, formula and food. I did all that. And even when you did come back, every time I asked you for money to go buy groceries what did you say to me, you yelled at me for being a pain, So my bad for not wanting my kids to go hungry while u threw your money at women like her. So no! I will not leave my job! Because I have children who depend on it because their dad isn't man enough."

## **CHAPTER 43: A year of turmoil:2)Not a very Eid mubarak(Redirection of anger):**

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Was that mom speaking? Half an hour back you'd swear she'd lost her voice and yet there she was, standing her ground. I was so proud of mom. She was standing up to dad. Like really standing up to him.

While I was contemplating how happy I was for mom, dad was slowly losing it. We all know by now what happens when dad loses it: Mom gets beaten. And that's exactly what happened he literally took off his belt and started lashing at her.

I didn't know what to do. But what I did know was I didn't want Sally to see any of this. So I quickly took her to my room and as a distraction I played nursery rhymes for her on my tab. While Sally was distracted I headed back to the crime scene where dad kept the blows coming. I could already see the marks on mom's hands and I could also see that she was holding back tears.

I decided then that I wasn't going to be the little girl that cowered behind her mom's back while she got beaten. Mom had protected me so many times before that it was my turn to return the favour. I mean dad would never hit me. So if I were to come between them he'd stop hitting mom.

So that's what I did, I rushed to mom's side and I stood as a barrier between them, mom kept trying to push me aside but I wasn't going to let that happen. I was her protective shield against him. So whether she wanted my life line or not I would stand my ground. And like I said, dad would never lay a hand on me. Never.

And i was right dad did stop when he saw me in front of him protecting mom and I could see him let his guard down. But that only lasted a second. After that momental sign of life I saw something else in his eyes. Hate. Anger.

And this time it was directed at me. He actually looked like he'd turn his lashes to me. And I think from behind me mom saw it too. Because just when dad was about to hit me with his belt she pulled me aside and took it for me.

I couldnt believe it. That lashing was meant for me. Dad wanted to hit me. He would've if mom didn't get in the way. Moments ago I would've sworn on the moon and stars that dad would never lay a hand on me let alone think about it. And yet there I was. I had come so close to a first real beating from dad.

I quickly got out of my head because I realised I needed to put a stop to his madness. So I yelled: "just stop it dad, its enough, moms not quitting her job and instead of looking at it the wrong way, look at this way, you won't have to worry about lots of stuff anymore, like food, I mean aren't you the one that's always complaining about money and how mom does nothing, well this is her doing something. So instead of hitting her you should be thanking her."

I guess my words got through to him because he actually looked sane again, well not sane per say but he stopped glaring at mom like he'd murder her. So I guess it had worked.

I then took mom's hand and dragged her to my room where I locked the

door behind us, because to be honest I didn't trust him at that moment.  
So it was a case of better safe than sorry.

## **CHAPTER 44:A year of turmoil:2)Not a very Eid mubarak(Realisation):**

I'd never really been scared of my dad until then. Yes he'd beat mom which I hated, But I'd never been afraid of him. Because there was always this tiny part of me that believed he'd never hurt me, because he loved me and well, I was his daughter.

But that night I remember feeling afraid, really afraid. I was afraid of my dad, of living in the same house as him.

After I helped mom put a cream on her scars we all went to sleep in my room. Sally in her crib while me and mom shared my bed.

I didn't really sleep much that night. Just contemplated how that was definitely the worst Eid of my life because obviously it went on the top 3 of worst days of my life.

I remember thinking back to the day when mom said that she couldn't trust dad with me. Was this what Mom was referring to?

And then my mind drifted to that bitch Sandra's age. I mean she was basically my older sister's age and yet dad was clearly screwing her. If he could screw her what about me? I mean we weren't that far off in age. What happens as I grow older. Would have to live with the constant fear that there's a possibility that my dad could rape me. I mean we hear about these things all the time. Could I be a victim of such a crime?

My mind was clearly not in the right state of mind because how could I think of my dad in that way. But then I thought to what happened earlier. I mean I

did think he wasn't capable of hitting me but look at how that turned out.

With that thought in my mind as I quietly(so as not to wake Sally and mom up) cried myself to sleep again,like so many times before I found myself thinking about the first time my dad has hit me....

## **CHAPTER 45: A year of turmoil:Eid comes to an end(Corporal punishment):**

You see,dad has hit me once before but I don't really count that time.

You know how sometimes as an African growing up our parents hit us as punishment, for misbehaving.It was the same scenario, and to be honest I've gotten hiding from mom on countless occassions growing up.I mean its not a big deal.U misbehave so their are consequences,that kind of thing.

I was 8 and me and Joe who was then 10 were arguing about something.Which is no surprise.I started screaming at Joe because we was really getting to me.

Me:"Joe give it back its mine!"

Joe:"No it's not,its mine"

Me:"Joe don't lie you know its mine"

Dad:"Will you 2 stop it,Joe just give it to her."

Joe:"But its mine"

Me:"Ma!tell Joe to give it to me."

Mom:"Joe,Give it to Maya your ones in your room"

Joe:"No this ones mine."

At that point dad's had enough of our quareling and he snatches the pencil out from Joe's hand,breaks it in two and then throws it across the room.

Dad:"Happy now!"

Joe and me glare at each other because now the pencils broken and I stick my tongue out at him and we at it again

Joe:"Your such a liar maya,"

Me:"No I'm not.Ma!Joes calling me a liar"

Joe:"Lier,lier,pants on fire."

Dad who had already had it with us loses it more and well me and joy both get hiding:

Joe takes it quite well if you ask me.When it was my turn I literally ran behind mom's back begging her to do something,but try as she might to keep me hidden behind her back away from him,dad eventually gets hold of me.

But what worse was,while I was getting hiding I actually peed in my pants and if you add the crying as well, let's just say it was horrible.

Joe never really let me forget that,in fact he even went as far as telling our neighbours how I humiliated myself by peeing in my pants while getting hiding.Even years after that I never heard the end of it from Joe.

And worst of all is: the pencil was actually mine.Because that night just like mom said Joe found his in his room..

So besides that incident dad's never really hit me.And so him showing sign of their being a possibility that, that could change. It frightened me.I was frightened of what my dad was capable of.



## **CHAPTER 46: A year of turmoil: Calm after the storm:**

So the truth was out in the open. Dad finally knew that mom was working.

Granted things weren't pretty when the truth came out but it was out, and we could all move on.

And we did. Even though dad wasn't too pleased about it, they had reached an agreement that mom would take care of all household costs and dad was responsible for education and the mortgage on the house. And if you ask me that was the best decision they'd made so far.

Granted things were really tense between them. But they managed. They mostly avoided each other, but for me, them avoiding each other was so much better than seeing them fighting. Yes, they occasionally gave each other looks that suggested they wanted to claw each other's eyes out, but things were quiet.

And quiet meant no scars on mom's body. So I was happy.

## **CHAPTER 47:A year of turmoil: Things look up:**

A week after the Eid incident dad decides to move out.He had simply decided that he was sick and tired of living under the same roof as mom.He basically sat us down and calmly stated that he was moving out because he needed a new start,away from moms drama.

To be honest that was the best descission he had made in a really long time,considering everything that had happened.So dad was moving out.And this time it looked like it would last.This time he left nothing behind.He packed up all his clothes and walked out the door.

He never really did tell us where he was moving to,so I'm guessing that he was moving in with that bitch Sandra.But I didn't really.The fact of the matter was, he was gone.

It felt like I could breathe again because clearly I couldn't handle being in the same house as him.I mean after that incident where he almost beat me,I was clearly afraid of him.I spent every waking moment fearing that he'd beat me.And I didn't like feeling that away.

I was actually really happy.It looked like luck was on our side after all.Dad was gone.

And with him gone maybe things would look up for Joe as well.I mean what more could go wrong.Things were actually looking up for us,anything was possible at this point.

So I guess it was back to just me, mom, Sally and Joe (if and when he decided to grace us with his presence). Like it's always been.

## **CHAPTER 48: A year of turmoil: Joe goes AWOL:**

Fast forward to a month later. Life was great. Mom was always out and about smiling. Sally's crib even got to move back in with mom. And me I was at my best, besides occasionally worrying about Joe.

You see, Joe was becoming more and more relentless as the days went by. Anything you said to him resulted in you getting your head bitten off. And you could actually see from his eyes that he was high all the time, add the extremely late nights and you got yourself a recipe for disaster.

One night though Joe didn't come back home. I know that because when I woke up the next morning he was nowhere to be seen. You see there was a routine we had every morning. Whenever I woke up Joe would be in the kitchen just about to finish his cereal. That morning Joe wasn't there.

Most of you are thinking maybe he woke up earlier or maybe I woke up late. But it wasn't the case because I checked the time and when I went into his room, his bed was clean. Maybe he decided to clean his bed? Wrong, Joe never cleaned his bed. In fact I was the one that cleaned his bed for him.

At that point I was freaking out. What if Joe had an overdose and was in a ditch somewhere? What if he was mugged and then beaten? What if he was kidnapped?

What if he was murdered?

My froggy could've been anywhere at that point. I mean in the kind of world we live in anything's possible. So I rushed into mom's room to tell her the news. Mom completely loses it when she finds out. And she immediately

starts cursing herself for not staying up to wait for him like she usually does. I don't really blame her I mean she probably dosed of at some point during the night.

Mom in complete freak mode rushes into his room and starts looking for something I don't really know what exactly, but I just see her flinging stuff across the room, clothing, books, anything and everything. When she doesn't find what she's looking for she yells at me to bring me her phone and then go wake Sally up. So I do just that.

When I hand her phone she immediately calls dad who rushes over. When dad arrives mom's in a complete state. She's crying on the floor. Dad starts yelling at mom for being so stupid but mom won't even look at him.

When mom finally gets her emotions in order she tells me to go shower because I was going to school. I don't even know why she insisted on my going since I was already an hour late. But to not make a bad situation worse I do what I'm told. Then I head outside where they all waiting for me in the car.

I didn't even have breakfast..

Apparently mom and dad where headed to his school to see if he was there, and well they basically decide to leave me stranded at school.

Joe was not home.....

That was just one of many incidents where Joe had completely lost his mind due to the fact that his body was pumped with so many drugs he couldn't think straight. and for a while it worked he was still much pumping

drugs but he wasn't hurting me or Sally. And their was pierce and quite.

But that all quickly changed when 1 day Joe didn't come back home I mean we were all used to him coming home late but he'd always come back my mom began to worry and so did I so she phoned my dad and let him knw.The next day my mom and dad went to his school and asked everyone that knew him if they knew where he was but no one did and well instead of finding out his location they found out from a friend that he was basically a drug addict.I'd always known from the beginning but of course I'd never tell my parents and looking back now, maybe I should have maybe then it wouldnt have gone so far.So cpbaducally for the next few days my parents do everything to try to find him but come up empty the newspaper refuses to label him as missing because we'll its hasn't been 48 hrs.I remember the one time I went with my mom and we were just handing flyers out of his picture to anybody and ever body but came up with no luck.

## **CHAPTER 49:A year of turmoil: Awaiting news:**

I don't know how I survived that day at school, considering I was extremely late and couldn't stop worrying about Joe. I mean what if I'd lost Joe. What if I never go to see him again? I know we've never really been that close the past couple of years but I still loved him. I mean he was my froggy. And I don't think I could handle losing him, and I wasn't talking about drugs this time, I mean really lose him.

So naturally the first thing I do when I get home is ask for an update on Joe. I don't know what I was expecting to hear from my parents but I clearly was not expecting what they told me...

## **CHAPTER 50:A year of turmoil: The secret comes out:**

What happened was:

When they arrived at school they immediately headed to the office. It was there that they asked the receptionist if Joe was at school. The receptionist checked out with Joe's class and as I had suspected he wasn't at school.

When mom heard the news she went into total melt down mode. She literally started crying in the middle of the office. The receptionist must have felt sorry for because she then went to Joe's class where she found a group of people that were suspected to be Joe's friends.

Those so called friends were then sent to the office where they were questioned about Joe: When questioned about Joe's whereabouts they all replied that they had no idea where he was, when questioned if Joe had been acting strange lately or perhaps hanging around the wrong group of people they all replied that they knew nothing about that.

Mom was clearly not buying their story so she demanded to see the principle, and would not take no for an answer. The principle was then brought into the office. and all of a sudden they all start talking.

From the moment the principle walked into the room they turned their back on Joe. They sold Joe out and spilled everything they knew. They told mom and dad everything. From the drugs to Joe's apparent bragging of his late night endeavours spent getting high.



## **CHAPTER 51:A year of turmoil: Denial turns to blame:**

At first mom wouldn't believe it. She simply refused to accept that Joe was taking drugs. She swore up and down that Joe would never go anywhere near those things. She had even taken things as far as accusing all the witnesses of being complete liars. She was so convinced that it was a case of mistaken identity.

I think mom reacted the way she did because deep down she felt like she'd let Joe down. That somehow it was her fault. Because all this time she had dismissed Joe's behaviour as normal. To her it had seemed like Joe was being your regular teenager. Doing things to despise your parents. Attention seeking as she'd once called it. A phase that would eventually wear off as he grew older.

But what failed to realise was that our circumstances at home weren't that normal. So naturally Joe couldn't act like your regular teenager. He needed a way to blow off some steam and sadly he saw drugs as the solution.

## **CHAPTER 52:A year of turmoil: Cool, calm and collected:**

Dad however was as cool as can be. Once the group of boys were sent back to class. Dad thanked the principle and receptionist and he and mom left the school premises. Once in the car he simply told mom to get over herself because her feeling sorry for herself wasn't helping the situation.

To be honest in the beginning I was actually impressed with dad. I mean I had expected him to loose his temper or something. But this. I had never seen this side of dad before. Normally he was the one that was quick to jump to conclusions.

From the moment they had entered the office he was just calm. It was as if he hadn't just found out that his son was missing and was apparently taking drugs. And at some point I'd actually considered that maybe he just didn't care, or that maybe he was glad that Joe was missing.

I know some people say that in difficult situations it's always good if one of the parties involved keeps sane. But from my understanding when in the moment all logic gets thrown out the window. Maybe it's just me but he was too calm for my liking.

## **CHAPTER 53:A year of turmoil: Visit to the station:**

At some point during the ride back home mom gets her bearings. She immediately yells at dad to turn the car around because they were going to the police station. Dad actually complies with mom and turns the car around. That was another surprise to me.

At the police station mom tries to lay a missing persons case but the police won't open one since Joe has barely been gone for 24 hours which annoys the crap out of mom. But keeping her cool she calmly tells the police officer they were dealing with that they couldn't wait for 24 hours because who knew what could happen to Joe during that time period, if nothing hasn't already happened. The police officer unfortunately doesn't budge but rather advises mom and dad that if Joe doesn't show up in 2 days time they were more than welcome to open the file then.

I couldn't believe it I mean I know that there's this 48 hour rule with missing cases, but this wasn't just anyone this was Joe. I know that's what everyone says, but I just couldn't handle something happening to Froggy.

Thinking about it now Joe's case aside, the 48 hour rule is actually kind of dumb in my opinion. I know there's also the fact that Joe was a teenager, and it is often believed that we do this kind of thing all the time, but we eventually find our way back home. So in essence to spare the police's valuable time they've enforced the 48 hour rule.

I'm not saying that those scenarios don't take place, because they probably do. But what happened to better safe than sorry. I mean we live in a very dangerous world where every second matters. A second could literally symbolise your death. And isn't it the police's job to reduce deaths, well at

least unnecessary deaths that could've been prevented if they actually did something.

## **CHAPTER 54:A year of turmoil: Newsroom:**

After not much luck at the police station mom was basically grasping at straws. So she decided to do the next big thing that popped up into her head. Heading to a newspaper office. I mean people read the newspaper all the time.

So that war they did they went to a local newspaper office where they asked to have a story about Joe written because he was missing.

The newspaper unfortunately declined because they said that because mom and dad hadn't really opened a case yet it was basically not worthy to be published.

Like wow is that what the world had turned into? A 15 year old boy was missing and the paper didn't care because it wasn't a juicy enough story. Whatever happened to being decent human beings? Clearly there weren't any left. And it really was a jungle out there...

## **CHAPTER 55:A year of turmoil: The story reaches my ears:**

So there I was listening to mom narrate that whole story to me while I made my own little comments about how I felt about everything.I still couldn't believe that we couldn't rely on the police or media.Like my bro was missing and no one was willing to help look for him.I don't even remember how I felt at that moment because I think I had just lost my sense of feeling anything. Froggy was gone and there was no way of finding him apparently.

## **CHAPTER 56:A year of turmoil: Making a descission:**

I didnt know wat to do.My mind was all over the place.Like do we just sit and wait and hope that Joe reappears or do we get out there and do some of our own searching.

Dad was clearly opposed to searching for Joe because he believed that we were overdramatising the situation.To him Joe was out with a bunch of friennds doing what boys do at his age.But as some point he'd get tired of it and then come back home.

Mom on the other hand wasn't so sure,because she had a feeling that Joe wasn't planning on coming back home and well she was worried that he wouldn't be able to rough it out on the streets.

Soon after that dad decided that we had wasted enough of his time and that he had to go work.He basically left us stranded.It was about 16:00 at this time.

I don't know why but the more I stood there waiting for Joe to magically walk in through the door the more anxious I got.I couldn't just stand there and do nothing.So I did the next best thing,I went snooping around in our photo album looking for a very recent photo of Joe.When I had found what I was looking for I ordered mom to get up because we were going to look for Joe.

## **CHAPTER 57:A year of turmoil: The search for Joe begins:**

I didn't know what I had expected mom to do but I was glad that she had agreed to come along. During our search we never really did any heavy searching, We just walked the streets showing everyone that passed us Joe's picture. We went to every shop, every salon, every internet cafe but no one had seen Joe.

Like how is it possible for a 15 year old to just vanish. Surely someone must have seen or heard something. We walked those streets till the Sun went down and even after it went dark. I wouldn't give up. We had to find Joe, we just had to.

I know it was selfish of me considering Sally was still only 1 and a half and she was probably exhausted. But we couldn't just stop looking. I'd even carry her on my back if she wanted sleep but we had to keep moving. And we did just that we carried on searching.



## **CHAPTER 58:A year of turmoil: Consequences of being a girl:**

It was getting darker by the second and we still had no sign of Joe.I was beginning to loose hope I could feel Joe slip away from me with every second that passed.

Mom was starting to loose it again but this time she wasn't worried about Joe but me and sally.

Mom:"Maya,maybe we should go back home, its getting really late."

Me:"But ma we still haven't found Joe."

Mom:"We can't do anything now,what if something happens to us."

Me:"What do you mean,we're just fine."

Mom:"You not listening to me.It's really dangerous out at night especially if your a girl,and you not a little girl anymore."

Me:"But Joe."

Mom:"I know but you can't help Joe if something happens to you,and I might not be able to protect you if something were to happens,do you understand what I mean,and besides maybe Joe decided to come back home."

I didn't know how to respond.I mean I knew that being a girl has always had its cons,living with my mom all these years. Mom was really backward thing when it came to gender.She still had the mindset that a womens duty was to cook,clean and take care of the kids.So growing up she'd drilled this into me.Joe could go and do whatever he wanted but I couldn't do anything without asking for permission and even than she'd have to triple check if I would be safe.When it came to chores around the house Joe didn't have to lift a finger while I was basically forced to.So growing up I was always moaning about how unfair it was that just because I was a girl their were all

these rules I needed to follow. Dont sit like that,always dress decently,stay away from boys.On and on it went.I mean its not like I chose to be a girl.

But that night I'd realised that there was more to it than just household duties and the etiquettes that came with the gender. Because unfortunately we lived in a world where being a girl meant that you were never safe.You could literally be on your way home and then find yourself being raped and murderd.

We were practically living in a war zone where you had to constantly look over your shoulder.No place was safe and no one could really be trusted including relatives.

## **CHAPTER 59:A year of turmoil: Joe's really gone:**

Taking what mom said into consideration I eventually gave in and decided that going back wasn't such a bad idea. And maybe mom was right, maybe Joe was at home waiting for us at the gate.

With Joe in mind we practically rushed back home. It took us about an hour to get back home but we eventually go there. And as expected Joe was nowhere in sight.

To be honest I was a little dissapointed to not see Joe at the gate even though that thought was in the back of my mind the entire journey home.

I was crushed, because this meant that Joe was really gone. He wasn't coming back. He'd given up on me, on us. It felt like a part of me had been ripped out. Joe was ripped out of my life.

That night I didnt get a single second of sleep in because I was still clinging to the hope that maybe Joe would walk through the door and just start laughing because it was one big fat joke. But that didn't happen. And even after mom had dosed off sometime during the night I still stayed awake.

I'd only gone to sleep at 05:00 in the morning after I had made my morning prayer. And 2 hours later I had to get back up because wether Joe was missing or not, life carried on. I had school to go to because life didn't care whether you were going through crap. It never stopped moving. Not for anyone and certainly not for me even though I so desperately wanted it to.

## **CHAPTER 60:A year of turmoil: A dreadful week:**

That week was one of the worst weeks of my life.I couldn't stop thinking about Joe and whether he was ok wherever he was.

Mom was slowly slipping away from me too.So as always when mom started slipping away I needed to pull up my socks.I basically needed to become sallys mom again.Because well if I didn't look after her no one else would.

You all probably wondering what about the search for Joe.After the first night of Joe not being home dad had begun singing a different tune.He too began worrying about Joe.So he began a search party for Joe.They looked every single night for Joe with no luck.

But to be honest no matter how much dad looked for Joe I still blamed him for Joe's disappearance.If only he had cared from the beginning and took it seriously.In actual fact everything Joe was going through was his fault from the drugs to the late nights.Because Joes behaviour was a result of how dad treated us.

That whole week I had been confined to stay home while mom and dad did all the searching.They said that someone needed to be home if Joe ever decided to come back home.But boy was the waiting killing me.

So as a distraction I'd always play with Sally because as usual her smile always brightened my day.But seeing mom and dad come back home every day without Joe,it felt like my heart was being trampled on.Every day spent going to bed without seeing joe on his phone listening to music was torture.

I know I had always complained about the noise but in that week I would've given anything to hear it again. He could've turn the volume to super loud and I wouldn't have minded, as long as he was home.

I just missed Joe so much, my heart couldn't take another day without him. I just wanted to have my froggie back. Like could the world not understand that? Or did it just enjoy seeing me in pain?

How much more could it take from me? I had nothing left to give. Joe and Sally were all that I had left but there it was taking Joe away from me.

## **CHAPTER 61: A year of turmoil: Joe's sudden reapearence brings a twist:**

One day though after a whole week of constantly searching for Joe on my way back from school.I saw Joe.It was really him.Joe was back!! I couldn't believe it. I had prayed for this moment every single day during the past week.God had heard my prayers.

I practically ran out the car door to give Joe a hug almost knocking him over.Joe not wanting me anywhere near him practically shoved me off him,when dad got to Joe he basically started screaming at Joe.

Dad:"Where have you been!"

Joe:"I'm not here to cause trouble,just came to get my things."

Dad:"What did you say!"

Joe:"Just open the door for me and let me get my stuff and you guys will never have to deal with me again."

Did I hear correctly.Joe was leaving.He didn't come back to stay.How could he just decide to leave?What about me?What about Mom?What about Sally?What happened to I'll always be there for you and I'll get us out of here?He promised.He just can't leave me.

At that point I start yelling at him too.

Me:"Joe you promised!You can't leave me."

Joe:"I can and I will,You guys are wasting my time ,I have places to be."

I start crying.

Me:"Joe,please!Please!You can't leave me!You promised!"

Joe:"Grow up Maya,that was a long time ago,and not everything is about you!I'm doing this for me,because I'm sick of all you guy's shit!"

Dad:"So you think you're a man now,that you can take care of yourself

fine, but just know if you leave you are never to come back here! Do you hear me."

## **CHAPTER 62:A year of turmoil: Dead serious:**

Dad then proceeds to open the door and Joe casually walks inside and goes to his room where he packs all his stuff. Mom who notices the commotion quickly comes over outside where me and dad are waiting for Joe.

Mom: "What's going on, did you find Joe."

Dad: "Do not start with me, this is all your fault, you've always been too soft on them,

look at him, did you see the way he spoke to me."

Mom: "So Joe's here, my baby is here."

Mom clearly ecstatic by Joe's appearance heads back inside. I'm guessing that she went to go speak to Joe, maybe drop some sense into him.

Whatever mom went to do it clearly didn't work because 15 minutes later Joe comes back outside with a bag in his hand and literally walks past us.

Joe wasn't messing around. He was dead serious. This was his last straw. He'd truly had enough. I couldn't just let Joe walk away from me. I mean surely he still cared for me as his baby sister?



## **CHAPTER 63:A year of turmoil: Family reunion:**

At that point mom decides to join us again and well she tells Joe to stop walking.

Mom:"Joe don't you take another step,come back hear right now."

Joe however sent falling for it.

Mom:"Joe!I know about the drugs!And I'm sorry I didn't notice sooner,I know you were hurting and that was my fault,I should've paid attention to you.I'm really sorry,but this what you doing won't make things any better.If you come back I'll try my absolute best to make things better.Things will be different this time."

Joe:"That's what you always say!"

Mom:"That is true,but think about this if you leave where will you go,you just a kid,How long do you expect to live on the streets."

Joe:"I managed just fine this past week."

Dad:"You got lucky..."

Mom:"Can you just shut up,I'm trying to have a conversation with my son,so stop pretending like you care all of a sudden."

Joe:"There you go again."

Mom:"I'm sorry.That won't happen again,if you were home lately you would've realised that your dad had even moved out 2 months back,I don't know if you remember that."

Joe:"He did?"

Mom:"Yeah and things have been better,just ask maya."

Me:"They have,like we doing so much better please don't go."

Joe:"No more arguing or fighting?"

Mom:"None."

Joe then turns around and well he gives mom a hug and starts crying.Joe actually cried.It has been a while since I saw Joe cry.And seeing him cry

made me cry.

You all wondering what about dad,well he couldn't have left our house fast enough.One minute he was standing besides me and the next he was in his Carr speeding off.And I didn't give a damn.

All I cared about was Joe and well he was back.Feeling a bit left out I headed to join the hug and I felt so welcome.You could literally feel all the love we shared for each other.We were a family.A real family,one that didn't include dad.

My family was finally complete.

## **CHAPTER 64: A year of turmoil: Surprise visitor:**

After that things were really great at home. Joe stopped taking drugs which was great because then he was actually home A lot more. Mom had to go find another job because she got fired from the other one when she had taken a week leave searching for Joe. But she eventually got back on her feet. I was so happy. We never really saw dad that much besides when he was dropping me off at school and taking me back home. Joe obviously decided against travelling with dad and chose to rather take a taxi everyday.

A few days later though dad showed up at home and announced that we were having a guest over. That was a surprise to us all. Like what we he doing here and who was this surprise visitor. But we all obliged and prepared ourselves for whatever was coming our way.

## **CHAPTER 65:A year of turmoil: Family intervention:**

I couldn't believe my eyes. The surprise visit was a psychologist. I didn't know dad believed in that stuff, let alone knew one. But there he was. Apparently we were having a family intervention to delve into Joe's problems.

So that's what we did that night for about 5 hours all we did was speak about Joe and how our behaviour affected him. At one stage me and Joe had to write a list of things that we wanted the other person to do for us. On Joe's list he'd asked that I stopped being the golden girl because he believed mom and dad loved me more than him. I didn't really know how to feel about that one but I promised that I'd try for his sake. On my list I basically asked him to be my froggie again. The big bro I'd always loved growing up.

So if you ask me I thought that session went really well. We really delved deep into our emotions. We didn't really talk about mom and dad and how they fighting affected us, and that's ok because well if they weren't living in the same house then it wouldn't happen again. So it was a case of let's leave all that in the past and just move forward.

I was really proud of Joe that night he'd showed me who the real Joe was. I just hoped and prayed he'd stay that way and not go back into those dark times.

## **CHAPTER 66:A year of turmoil: A new dawn for Joe:**

After the intervention Joe still went for regular meetings with the psychologist, but this time it wasn't a family thing, he had to deal with it on his own.

At one stage he'd even started thinking about his future and what he wanted to do career wise. He eventually decided to do the engineering on aeroplanes. His psychologist was even kind enough to put in a good word for him with people that he knew that worked in that industry. After that every Saturday Joe was off learning more about his interest.

I was so proud of him. Joe was pulling his life back together and he seemed so willing to put in all the work. After everything he'd been through he was still fighting back. He was still standing. We were still standing. As a family.

## **CHAPTER 67: A year of turmoil: The end of primary life:**

With Joe's life coming together nicely for him I was saying goodbye to a life of my own. It was the last 2 weeks. You all wondering why I was still going to school, I mean exams were over.

I just felt like I needed to say goodbye properly to my school. Because it was here that I had formed some pretty special memories with some very special people in my life. They might not have known anything about what I was going through at home but they were always there for me.

And considering how hectic this year had been I just needed to say goodbye properly to them. So me and my squad had decided to come to school every day for those last 2 weeks and we made so many more memories.

We danced like crazy in the library and though we weren't that good, we enjoyed ourselves. There was a game or 2 of spin the bottle where some of us were forced to do some pretty crazy things.

All in all besides the one time in grade 6 where I was forced to kiss a guy friend on the cheek that was one of the craziest weeks of my life. It was good crazy though.

It was one of the best ways to end off a bitter sweet moment.

## **CHAPTER 68:A year of turmoil: Late December madness:**

Joe was at it again.I couldn't believe him. He'd just gotten his life back together.To make matters worse we were just a few weeks from the beginning of school next month.

I couldn't handle his bullshit anymore. There's only so much I can do for him.It's like the saying that goes you can't help someone who doesn't want to be helped.I'd tried everything to help him but he wouldn't accept my help.He'd even stopped going to these therapy sessions and apparently dropped out of the aeroplane programme.

This time I didn't care if he'd hate me for snitching on him.From the word go I told mom everything.I couldn't afford to be dealing with his shit alone.I was going to highschool in a few weeks.And all I knew is Joe needed to get his shit in order before the year ended.

He'd be in grade 10 next year so he needed to get his head in the game.Not for me but for himself.This was his life after all.And he couldn't afford to be playing with it this way.

## **CAPTER 69:A year of turmoil: Ending the year off:**

I know my life's always been messy but that year things just kept coming at us from every angle. It was like the world wanted to see us fail. To see us come crumbling down.

We'd been through so many challenges and obstacles but somehow we always kept coming back up.

To be honest I don't even know how I managed to pass grade 7 that year, let alone survived it. At so many different points during that year I'd felt like I couldn't take anymore of the pain, heartache and constant struggle to get back up every morning. And as soon as I had just wrapped my mind around one situation another was thrown my way.

Somehow though, by the grace of God we'd managed to pull through as a family. Granted Joe was starting his tricks again, but I had hope that we could get him on the right path again. As a family we could overcome anything. A family that didn't consist of dad of course.

That year we had taught the world a valuable lesson. If it really wanted to see us on our knees then it needed to try a little harder. Because it didn't matter how many punches it kept swinging our way because we'd always find a way to avoid them. And to be honest it chose the wrong family to pick a fight with. Because together we were the equivalent of Mohammed Ali.



## **CHAPTER 70: Highschool begins on a rough note(Transport drama):**

I couldn't believe it. It was here. My first day of highschool. From the moment I got out of bed I was ecstatic, because this day marked the beginning of the rest of our lives. This day meant that I was one step closer to changing our lives and finally getting rid of dad. There was still hope. We still had a chance of a normal life.

So as I would normally do I went to stand outside while I awaited for dad to arrive. When Joe came outside he literally walked straight past me.

At that point I was confused. Was he taking a taxi. Why would he do that? We went to the same school. I mean one would assume that the fact that we went to the same school now, meant that he didn't need to travel by taxi anymore.

But knowing Joe I shouldn't have been surprised. Always wanting to do things the hard way. If you ask me I think he probably did it to spite dad, which was a bit childish of Joe. I mean I get that he hated dad and therefore wanted to see as less of him as he possible could, I did too. But Joe took it to a whole nother level.

With that said I wasn't going to be the one that confronted him about it. I didn't need the unnecessary drama. Not today.

When dad arrived and I got in the car the first thing he asked was where's Joe and I simply replied he took a taxi. Dad was clearly mad. You could literally see it on his face. And when he thaught I wasn't paying attention he mumbled to himself: "I'm not gonna let a kid disrespect me like this." I didnt

really know what dad meant by that statement but from what it sounded like Joe had clearly pissed dad off.

I did arrive at school in one piece though so clearly someone was looking out for me. With family drama out of my mind I focused on the first day of the rest of our lives.

## **CHAPTER 71: Highschool begins on a rough note(Car mania):**

The day at school had been completely uneventful except that Joe was really late which was weird considering he had left home 30 minutes before I did.

I wasn't keeping an eye on him or anything I just happened to notice because in the hall everyone who was late was made to stand. So it was the case of you couldn't miss him even if you were blind.

So when it was time to go home after a long day I went to wait for dad and when he arrived I climbed into the car. I'd expected dad to start driving but he was clearly waiting for someone else. He was waiting for Joe. And I didn't know how I should've felt about that.

In the back of my mind I somehow knew that Joe would rather take a taxi than go home with dad. But some bigger part of me wanted Joe to be the bigger person. I mean I'm the one person that knew exactly how he felt. I too would rather not see dad at all even during these short drive sessions. But we can't always be bitter all the time. I mean dad was clearly not living with us anymore so no harm was being done. I just hoped Joe saw things from my perspective and decided that it was time to be the bigger person.

So we waited for Joe for about 25 minutes. When dad spots him he tells him to get into the car. I was so tense at that moment.

Things could go either way. I mean with Joe and dad things always turned ugly. I crossed all my fingers and desperately hoped that Joe got into the damn car. Because besides having them pull each others eyes out the last

thing I wanted was for them to cause a big scene in front of everyone.

Joe clearly thinking what I was thinking got into the car. But as soon as, we were a good enough distance away from the school he all but yelled for dad to stop the car.

I guess I was right all along Joe clearly couldn't be the bigger person and I know I shouldn't be thinking this but he was just like dad. I was so disappointed in Joe. I honestly thought that what happened in the morning was just a moment of childishness. A petty act to get on dad's nerves because Joe clearly knew how to push dad's buttons.

Like couldn't they just be civil with each other for once? I'd even be ok if they pretended to be civil. I mean the ride back home wouldn't even last 20 minutes. All they needed to do was sit in the same car without making a scene.

Dad who was clearly not in the mood to have a repeat of the morning and he did the next big thing. He locked the car doors. I couldn't believe it. At that moment I was freaking out. Things had taken a complete turn. There was no knowing what would happen next. Dad could literally do anything to Joe at this point.

Joe however was clearly determined to put up a fight. Honestly at that point I thought he was just being stupid and looking for reaction from dad. He was clearly asking for it.

He then yelled at dad even louder to open the door and stop the car. Dad wasn't budging though. He just kept his cool and kept on driving. Joe clearly not taking the hint kept on screaming at dad. At one point he had even

turned to shaking the car door as if that would make it magically open.

We spent that whole ride home like that. One would swear that the whole world could've heard Joe's constant screaming. And when he wasn't screaming he was shaking the car door. But dad didn't look like he gave a damn. So I guess this was his way of getting revenge, of teaching Joe a lesson.

## **CHAPTER 72: Highschool begins on a rough note(hidden stash):**

You can only imagine what it was like sitting in the back seat watching as that whole scenario unfolded.I honestly didn't know what to do.In my opinion they where both acting really childish and were just looking for a reason to get on each others nerves.But by the grace of God(as always) we made it be back home in one piece.

When dad finally opened the door Joe all but ran out of the car into the house.He was clearly furious.Dad who was supposed to be leaving followed him into the house. He was just as furious as joe was,if not more.

Disgusted by their behaviour I simply followed suite.I was right behind them.But I wish I wasn't so quick to follow them in. Because we were clearly walking into the lions den.And inside all hell would break loose.

When I finally got to the kitchen everyone was still.Their should've been screaming and yelling.Or did I misunderstand all the anger they had for each other a few seconds ago.Was that it?They'd just magically cleared all the bad blood between them.So focussed on Joe and dad I was completely oblivious to mom,who standing in the middle of all this madness.She was waving a stash of cash in the air.

I was so confused why was mom waving a bunch of 100 rand notes in the air.Did we win the lottery?I thaught mom thaught gambling was haraam(wrong).Nothing was making sense to me.

Then mom did something totally out of the blue.She threw the money at Joe and it landed at his feet.What the fuck was going on?No one was

saying anything but clearly something was wrong.

Dad who was just as confused as I was just stood there blankly staring at mom, Joe and occasionally the money that was scattered on the floor. Mom however was in a world of her own, you could clearly see the confusion, anger and hurt in her eyes. Yet she found the courage to ask what most would assume was a really simply question.

Mom: "Joe, where did you get the money from?!"

## **CHAPTER 73: Highschool begins on a rough note(Spring cleaning uncovers real dirt):**

What was mom talking about?I mean Joe didn't even have a part time job so where would he even get the money from?And why wasn't Joe saying anything?He just stood there staring at mom as if that answered her question.

Dad:"Joe,is that money yours?"

Joe:"It's not mine."

Mom:"Dont lie to me Joe!If its not yours then why did I find it in your room?"

Joe:"You went snooping in my room!"

Mom:"I was not snooping,I went in there to do some spring cleaning."

Joe:"You went through my stuff?"

Mom:"Me going into your room isn't the point.Where did you get the money from?Did you steal it?"

Joe:"I didn't steal it.I worked for it."

Mom:"You don't even have a job."

Joe:"I do."

Mom:"Why didn't you tell me you got a job and what exactly do you do."

Joe:"Just something me and my friend started and the money isn't mine its his."

Dad:"What friend."

Joe:"Someone I know."

Dad:"What do you guys actually do to earn that much money?"

Joe:"It's not a big deal its just something on the side."

Mom:"Something on the side.Joe stop messing with me ok.This isn't a joke.Tell me where you got the money from or I'll be forced to phone whoever this friend of yours is."

Joe:"You wouldnt do that."



Mom:"Dont test me Joe."

Dad:"That's enough.Joe you better tell me where you got the money from or I'm dragging you and this money to your friend and then both of you are going to jail."

Mom:"Theirs no need for that.Joe just tell me the truth."

Dad:"I dont have time for this crap."

It was then that dad started collecting all the money that had accumaled on our kitten floor and when all of it was off the floor he literally dragged joe out of the house by the ear.Joe resisted of course but dad clearly had the man power.So Joe was essentially fighting a loosing battle.When they got to the car dad all but threw him into it.

Mom:"What are you doing.Don't you dare handle my son like that."

Dad:"Don't start with me.Not another word."

That's when dad got into the car and rode off into the sunset with Joe.Who knew what he would do to Joe.I honestly feared for Joe's life.Mom was clearly just as worried as I was.I mean we both knew very well that when dad was mad he was capable of anything.And this time he wasn't just mad he was furious.Blood would definitely be spilt.I was just hoping it wasn't Joe's.

## **CHAPTER 74: Highschool begins on a rough note(Anticipation):**

Naturally me and mom went into panick mode as soon as dad rode off.We were clearly freaking out.But to keep our cool we both needed to find distractions.I had turned to wrapping my school books while mom paced around the house making dua for Joe's safety.

The waiting was torture.Every second that passed I felt like ripping the wrapping paper apart.I felt like I needed to be doing something but I wasnt sure what.I mean I was still trying to figure out where Joe got the money.And the fact that dad who was already mad at Joe from the moment Joe got into the car earlier on was even madder.Dad was clearly not thinking straight and neither was Joe.

And honestly that combination was a disaster in the making.Who knew how either one would behave.So help me God Joe kept his cool because if he pushed dad too far over the edge,not even God could help him then.

## **CHAPTER 75: Highschool begins on a rough note(The truth about dad and talk of being sent abroad):**

An hour later they both come back into the house.Dad was yelling at Joe.

Dad:"I just don't understand you.Why would you do that?What have you ever asked of me that I didn't buy for you?"

Joe:"That's your problem.Whenever you look at us,your kids,your own flesh and blood all you think about is money.How expensive we are and so on. The only thing you've done for me all your life is throw money my way.Whether it was paying for my clothing,education etc.But besides that all you've been good for was hurting mom.You've never really been my dad.Not the way a real dad should be.And I just feel sorry for you,because you still think you're the victim."

Dad:"You kids are so ungratefull.I do everything for you guys.I work my ass off everyday and this is the thank you I get. Next you gonna tell me I was the reason you started selling drugs."

Joe:"Yes,because I would rather sell drugs than to take another cent from you.I wanted nothing to do with the filthy money you kept on shoving in front of my face."

Dad:"You could've gone to jail if you were caught."

Joe:"That didn't matter. I'm just so sick of living with your bullshit. You beat mom to a pulp and its her fault not yours.You cheat on mom and yet you act like their's nothing wrong with what you doing.You even have the audacity to bring one of them into our home.You always think you the good guy when in actual fact you're the bad guy."

Dad:" What do you want from me?What more do you want me to do?You clearly don't appreciate what I do for you..."

Joe:"There you go again.."

Dad:"I don't know what to do for you.Maybe I should send you to Uganda."

Joe:"Please do.You'd actually be doing me a really great favour because then I'll never have to lay eyes on you again. I'd go anywhere if that meant I was away from you.The further the better."

It was then that Joe decided to excuse himself and went to his room where he locked himself inside.

You all probably wondering What the fuck is going on.They sending Joe to Uganda?I was just as confused.I mean they were gone for only an hour and now Joe's being sent abroad.Things had gotten out of hand way to fast and we needed to fix it before it got worse.

## **CHAPTER 76: The hour that changed Joe's life:**

You all probably wondering what had happened in that 1 hour, well here's the basic low down:

When dad had ridden off with Joe he'd forced Joe to tell him where this so called friend of his stayed but Joe wouldn't sell out his friend. So dad already pissed with the situation drives them to the police station where he asks one of the officers to lock Joe up. The police officer clearly confused asks what's the crime. At that point dad realises he can't necessarily tell the officer that Joe had a stash of cash with him. I mean what does Joe having money with him prove? So dad opts for: "I just wanna teach him a lesson."

The police officer clearly insulted that his time had been wasted tells dad that they don't do that, and that Joe and dad should just go home and sort their problems out.

Joe however does something unpredictable. He tells the police officer that dad is abusing him and that he'd been forced to come here. The police officer now intrigued because child abuse is a big deal starts questioning dad. Dad obviously denies all the allegations but Joe had so called proof of the abuse.

When dad had pulled Joe by the ear earlier he had created some kind of bruise or scar. Joe shows it to the police office but apparently it was barely visible so the officer now annoyed kicks them out of the station.

Once outside dad and Joe get into a screaming contest. They just keep yelling at each other about what had happened inside. They were both clearly angry that the other person had tried to get them arrested.

When they finish screaming each others heads off.Dad asks Joe the big question.

Dad:"Where did you get the money,the truth please."

Joe:"Fine,I sell drugs."

Dad:"You're a drug dealer.But why?Did you really need the money?"

Joe:"Maybe.And you don't have to pretend like you care about me or what I do in my life.Theirs no point in trying to be a dad now anyway.Can we just go home."

....

## **CHAPTER 77: Highschool begins on a rough note(The blame game = more Joe being sent away):**

When Joe was gone dad started yelling at mom.

Dad:"This is all your fault!You always allow him to do whatever he wants!"

Mom:"Do not blame me for this I had no idea that's what he was doing."

Dad:"How could you when you are busy working!"

Mom:"This has nothing to do with me working,we both know that Joe's problems were because of you.So if anyone should feel guilty its you."

Dad:"So you talking back at me!"

Mom:"Look can you just go.I'll talk to Joe on my own."

Dad:"I'm not going anywhere.I've made my descission I'm sending him to Uganda to go live with my family."

Mom:"What?You can't do that!You can't send my child away!! I will not let you!"

Dad:"I wasn't asking for your permission.

Dad had clearly made up his mind,and it didn't matter what mom and I said .Joe was going to Uganda.

But I didn't expect him to arrange everything for that night.But that's dad for you.His never been one to beat around the bush.So if he said he was going to do something you could bet your life on him doing it.

## **CHAPTER 78: Highschool begins on a rough note(preparations are made):**

As soon as dad had made up his mind he started making phone calls.Mom obviously tried changing his mind every second chance she got but dad wasn't budging.

Soon dad was heading into Joe's room to tell him to pack his bags and joe clearly happy about the descission did just that.When Joe was done packing dad and him went to go see a travel agent about Joe's visa and the earliest plane that left for Uganda.

I couldn't believe how fast things were moving.So I prayed for them to slow down.But the more I prayed the faster things developed along.

In a matter of 2 hours my house had been filled with close relatives who had come to bid Joe farewell.While everyone was fussing over Joe in the living room I had locked myself in my room.I just couldn't face any of them.They were pretending as if Joe being sent away was a great idea.And I just didn't get how my brother being taken away from me could be great.

I know it was selfish of me to be thinking about myself but I couldn't help it.I mean after that night I'd never see Joe again. How did they expect me to process that?I mean how did I simply just part with a piece of my heart?I'm not saying they weren't hurting but they'd get over it after a while.But me, I'd always be able to feel his absence in my heart.That pain would never go away.I mean did they not realise how much pain taking joe away from me would cause or did they just no care?



## **CHAPTER 79: Highschool begins on a rough note(Abandonment):**

At 20:00 it was time for Joe to leave.And I remember crying and begging Joe to not leave me.I mean how could he just leave me?

But Joe didn't seem to care.No matter how much I wailed he still ended up getting into the car.He didn't even say goodbye.He simply just walked away from me.Joe had abandoned me and that hurt more than anything.His willingness to just walk away from me shattered my heart.

And after feeling sad and sorry for myself I remember feeling mad at the world.I mean why was it that it kept on taking from me?What had I ever done that was so wrong that the world hated me so much?I'm not saying I was an angel but there were people out there in the world like my dad that were doing despicable things and yet I was the one being punished.

I hated the world at that moment but I hated my dad and Joe more.But the thing is I didn't know who I hated more between the 2 of them:Dad for coming up with the idea or Joe for going through with it.But all I know is on that day they stole the last piece of happiness I had left.

I remember crying myself to sleep that night.I don't think I'd ever cried that much in my life than on that night.I cried for everything that was taken away from me,and everything that would be taken away from me.

Because knowing dad he'd always find a way to make me hurt.It's like his whole life's purpose was to make me feel miserable.And clearly the world had his back.

## **CHAPTER 80:17/03/2018**

It was exactly 2 months, 60 days, 3 600 hours, 216 000 minutes and 12 960 000 seconds since I last saw Joe on that fateful day when dad sent him away.

It was Joe's birthday.He was turning 16 and I wasn't even there to spend it with him.I couldn't even wish him happy birthday.And that made me miss him even more.I just wished he was here.

But not matter how much I wished,Joe was gone.I needed to learn to live without him.I needed to get used to the the idea of him not being around.Because as hard as it was for me to accept his absence,life went on.And we can't keep holding on to the past because then we forget to live in the present, and we miss out on so much more than we were holding onto.

But more than feeling sorry for myself I felt sorrier for Joe.I mean I could still have my usual birthdays but he could never get his back.This would be the first but certainly not the last birthday he'd have to spend alone,so many miles away from home.

Him being away from us meant that he'd miss so many special moments like this. He'd never get to receive presents from us on his birthday,never get to see me and mom again and never get to see Sally grow up.He'd just miss out on our entire lives.

His 15 years of life with us would ultimately become a thing of the past.Distant memories that would perish after a few years,like they never happened in the first place.

## **CHAPTER 81:Joe's life in Uganda(Boarding school):**

When Joe arrived in Uganda he was immediately sent to a boarding school where he was expected to complete his schooling.

You all probably wondering,why boarding school?You see in Uganda the quality of education in a boarding school is much higher than that of a public school.So dad always wanting what was best for us when it came to education chose the best for Joe. But if you ask me,all the money that dad was pouring into Joe's education there was wasted.

Joe who had barely been there for a full term was already causing trouble.He had gotten into a fight with one of the students he shared a room with.Apparantly the other student was going through Joe's stuff and Joe hated people touching his stuff.So when Joe found out he got mad and basically beat the poor guy up.

This obviously caused a huge spectacle for the other kids,and soon teachers were braught into the picture to try and stop the brawl.

I know it wasn't necessarily Joe's fault,and I didn't expect him to do nothing but Joe took it way too far.And if you ask me,the only people who gained from that whole situation were the other kids.For them it was a case of break time entertainment and something interesting to talk about for the next week or so.

And like they say,all actions have consequences and Joe would soon be facing them big time.

The school body had zero tolerance for fighting.So ultimately they decided

to suspend Joe for a month. And after that they'd reconsider whether he deserved to come back.

I know it wasn't my place to judge Joe but I couldn't help it. Joe was in one of the best schools in Uganda and he blew it over a guy snooping through his stuff. Like come on Joe! He needed to learn to grow up. Sometimes people did things that you didn't like but that didn't mean you could lose your temper with them.

I mean whatever happened to talking it out like normal, decent people? I was just so disappointed in Joe. I thought that a change of scenery would help knock some sense into him but I guess I was wrong. I mean how do you even get suspended after 3 months, and over something so senile?

At that moment he reminded me of dad and how irrational and impulsive he could be. I guess it was a case of, he is his father's son after all because the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

## **CHAPTER 82: Joe's life in Uganda(A month spent on a farm):**

After Joe was suspended dad sent him to live on a farm with his family. Joe wasn't too thrilled about this of course but he needed to get over himself. Because as far as I remember he brought this onto himself.

During the 1 month period he was on the farm, moms phone kept ringing with calls from her in-laws. Nothing but bad news.

Joe was being his old rebellious self who didn't like taking orders from anyone. And dad's family didn't like being disrespected by a kid, but they couldn't really beat Joe up. So they'd take it out on mom. Telling her she needed to control her son, but mostly blaming her for his behaviour.

I thought that was so unfair at the time. I mean moms not the one who was misbehaving. But I was yet to realise that being a mom meant that when your child misbehaved you were the one that was blamed.

No one cared about the circumstances you were faced with. All they did was question the manner in which you raised your child. And if that wasn't bad enough, everyone else started gossiping about you. Little comments like: "Did you see what her son did, and she lets him get away with it, What type of mother is she."

Instead of trying to help make the situation better or asking what they could do to help they added fuel to it. It was just an endless cycle that never ended.

But what none of them realised was that mom had nothing to do with Joe's

actions. Yes she was his mom but it wasn't like she forced him into doing all those things. And no matter how much mom tried talking to Joe, he never listened. And as cliché as this sounds everything mom said to him always seemed to go through one ear and out the other. Because according to him she didn't give a damn about him.

My heart broke for Joe in those moments. I mean how could he not see that mom loved him? In fact besides me, mom was the only one who truly gave a damn about him.

And for his sake I hoped he got that into his thick skull before it was too late. They were on the same team after all, and the sooner he realised that and stopped fighting against her but with her, the better. Not for mom or me, but for himself.

## **CHAPTER 83: Joe's time in Uganda(An ego gets in the way):**

After Joe's 1 month suspension he was sent back to the boarding school,where he would receive his judgement.

I was so anxious for him,so to ease myself I stared daggers at moms phone.If eyes could kill and phones were living things mom's phone would've been dead(A gruesome bloody murder).I know you all thinking chill out but thats the thing I couldn't.How could I?Joe's education was hanging in the balance.

But while I was slowly tearing my hair out from all the waiting,on the other side of the continent Joe was about to make the biggest mistake of his life.

Naturally Joe had to go into the principles office where him and the so called victim were forced to act civilised with each other.Joe was then basically orderd by the principle to apologise to the victim and promise that he would never do something that scandalous and disruptive ever again.

But Joe being his usual self took the mention of an apology as a bruise to his ego.And Joe loved his ego too much to simply just sit back and let it be trampled on like that.So he did wat the egotistical Joe would do.He refused to apologise.

But that wasn't enough for Joe because when he felt like his ego was being threatened all he'll went loose.Joe then went on and on about how insulting it was for him to be expected to apologise,and how they should've been thanking him for beating up the guy.Because according to him they should've been asking him to beat the pimp harder.

I know how that whole scenario sounds. It still sounds so ridiculous to me even now. If the principle wasn't the one that told mom this story I would've thought they were conspiring against Joe like he'd told me when he called later that that day.

I didn't really know who to believe. Joe or the principle? Joe didn't necessarily deny the allegations but he swore up and down that it wasn't a fair hearing. That they were out to get him. I mean I knew how Joe was, so I didn't have a doubt in the world that he'd refused to apologise. I mean I'm his sister and I've never heard him apologise to me so why would he start with a total stranger, that clearly had it coming.

And to make things worse he spun the whole story around making himself the victim of some unfair trial. I was so annoyed with his attitude but I guess just leave it to Joe to turn beating a guy up into a good thing.

I don't even need to explain the outcome because we all know that after that shocking display of arrogance and lack of respect towards authority Joe's suspension was turned into an expulsion. He was basically ordered to then pack his bags because he was being kicked out. It was time for him to hit the road. And honestly I don't feel sorry for Joe. I mean what did he expect? For them to congratulate him and hand him a noble peace prize?

Joe really needed to learn that in life we all do things that we don't want to do and sometimes we have to suck up to people we don't want to. But that's life. So I don't know what world Joe was living in but he needed to get off his high horse so he could finally live in real world with real people.



Having an ego that costs you an education is a pretty useless ego. Because the truth of the matter is, no one really cares about your ego when you're living off the streets. So for his sake I hope protecting his beloved ego was worth losing an education.

## **CHAPTER 84: Joe's time in Uganda(an alarming phone call):**

So after Joe's expulsion he was sent to live with one of my moms sisters because as you all know my dads family wasn't too fond of him.Over here Dad was trying yo find him a good school.Technically speaking no other school would be better than the one he was expelled from,but beggars can't be choosers.

So out of desperation dad had him enrolled into a public school.Nothing's wrong with public schools its just that in Uganda it doesn't offer the best quality education if anything at all.But Joe would have to deal with it.

2 weeks from the beginning of his school term Joe phones me.He actually phones mom and asks to speak to me.So anyway he sounds weird,and I was surprised since he never wanted to speak to me before.He starts of by specifically asking me to not tell mom and dad about our conversation.

Joe:"This stays between us,mom and dad can't know."

Me:"Ok,what's going on,are you ok."

Joe:"Promise me."

Me:"Just tell me what's wrong."

Joe:"Ok fine but I can't talk now.Phone me tomorrow using this number."

Me:"Ok but why..."

He'd hung up on me.I was so confused.Was he in some kind of situation?And why didn't he want mom and dad to know?

Hehadput me in a difficult position.My parents and Joe.Who Should I side with?Where did my true loyalties lie?What part of my bloodline ran deeper?The brother sister type,or the daughter type?I didn't know what to

do. But what I did know was that I was going to call him tomorrow just like he instructed. And until then I needed to come up with a plan of action.

## **CHAPTER 85: Joes time in Uganda(Do or die):**

Phoning Joe seemed like an easy task. All I needed to do was punch his number into my phone and then press the call key. It couldn't have been simpler. More like it couldn't have been harder. Since I'd decided last night that my loyalties lied with I needed to find a way to get airtime. I mean I couldnt let him down.

I could've easily asked my parents but that would make them suspicious. I mean I never called anyone. And Joe specifically asked me not to tell them about the call. I could've also used some of my pocket money but R20 isn't enough to makeva long distsnce call and I had a feeling that me and Joe would be talking for a while.

When mom got back home from work I asked her to give me R50. Obviously she was a bit concerned with what I wanted to do with the money.

Mom: "Tell me what you want and I'll buy it for you."

Me: "Just give me the money and ill sort the rest out."

Mom: "Tell me what you want."

Me: "I can't."

Mom: "Ok then suit yourself."

I couldn't just let mom walk away this was important and I couldn't ask dad. I mean he was staying with us anymore and secretly I was too proud to bring myself to do it.

Me: "Mom please, it's really important."

Mom: "I get that do tell me and I'll buy it for you."

Me: "Ok fine, I need R50 airtime."

Mom: "Who you calling?"

Me:"Maa please!"

Mom:"Tell me who you want to call?"

Me:"Forget it.I hate you,you ruin everything for me."

Mom:"You'll thank me one day,I can't have you walking here one day with a belly."

Me:"I don't even have a boyfriend!"

Mom:"He doesn't have to be your boyfriend to get you pregnant.I know how you kids are today."

Me:"Says the woman who had her first child at 16."

Mom:"Yes I did,but I was married,so unless the guy marries you you are not coming here with a baby."

Me:"And what a lovely marriage you have."

Mom:"Thats not fair."

Me:"You want to know what's not fair?The fact that you won't buy me airtime!!"

Mom:"You not angry about the airtime.Tell me the truth.What's wrong"

Me:"Nothing,just stay out of my life!!!"

We had left it at that.I went into my room where I stayed the whole night and mom stayed clear of me.I was so mad.Joe would probably think I didn't care about him.And the was no way in hell I'd tell mom about the call.So I ended up going to sleep clueless about the fact that,that missed call was the reason that I would never hear from my brother again for a whole year.

## **CHAPTER 86 :17/01/2019: A full year spent without Joe:**

It was exactly a year since Joe was sent away.

A full year spent missing my big bro every second chance I got. A year that was filled with constant heartache because I didn't know whether Joe was really ok. I mean once a month he'd call but I never really got to speak to him and the one time he actually wanted to speak to me, I had messed things up.

I had spent every second or third day that year crying myself to sleep, thinking about how his life had taken a complete turn for the worst. I still didn't get how so much could happen in 1 year. A year before that things might've not been that great between us but at least Joe was here.

I didn't even know who to blame for the series of incidents that had occurred during that year. Did I blame dad, mom, myself or Joe? Who was the villain of the story? Was there even one villain or did we all play a role in what happened.

Maybe if we'd all paid more attention to Joe and his feelings. Maybe if dad was less hard on him and mom a little harder on him. Maybe if dad hadn't been too quick to send him away.

Who knew maybe things would've been different. I would still have a brother, Sally would get to grow up with him. And every time we looked at a picture of him Sally wouldn't look so confused, and mom wouldn't look like she'd drop dead on us from complete heartache and longing for her son.

Maybe we could've pulled off being a family. An actual family, not just bits and pieces that were scattered between two different countries.

I hadn't even heard from Joe since that call I didn't make 3 months ago. Who knew what Joe was up to now. Because of the simple fact that I couldn't make a simple phone call Joe had gone rogue. And this time was different. I mean how do you look for a 16 turning 17 year old who was Mike's away from you. In a whole different country. Who knew if he was ok.

I just prayed to God that this year was a little nicer towards Joe. God only knew how much he needed it. And that wherever he was God looked out for him because I couldn't. I really hoped God would be able to answer my prayers because then I could actually stop crying myself to sleep. And honestly I don't think my body could handle another tear drop let alone another 12 months of complete utter misery worrying about Joe.

## **CHAPTER 87: Transport issues:**

The first few months of my grade 9 year were drama free. I hardly cried that much anymore which was a good sign. I didn't even cry on his birthday, and for me that's a huge achievement. I mean I still wasn't so sure about Joe's safety but I had left that in God's hands.

One day after school though dad tells me that he is planning on flying to Uganda for a few weeks to go look for a Joe. Dad's sudden urge to go there made me realise the seriousness of the matter. So that made me worry. I mean how did I know that Joe was alive and well. For all I know he could be dead.

So while dad was out for a few weeks I needed to find a transport driver. This drove mom insane because the last time she got me a transport driver she nearly beat the man up, because he thought he was making moves on me. Obviously nothing happened. It's just that mom thinks that I'm a bit too friendly and she hates that. If she had things her way I'd never be able to speak to a guy. But if I'm honest has always been way over protective of me when it came to men. And for good reason too considering the type of country we live in. But sometimes it got too much.

So anyway I was dreading going with transport because I was afraid of what crazy scenarios mom would get into her head. But this time I didn't have a choice. Either that or walk to school. And it would only be for a few weeks. To be fair that was exactly how long I lasted with the other driver. So fingers crossed.



## **CHAPTER 88: News of Joe's appearance then disappearance creates a spark:**

A few weeks later dad comes back as promised bearing not so good news. Apparently he was able to track Joe down but unfortunately Joe got away. I didn't know how to feel about this. I mean how did a 17 year old just manage to get away.

Me: "What do you mean he got away."

Dad: "He got away.."

Me: "No, your lying. You let him get away. How do I even know you went there looking for Joe?"

Maya: "Maya enough."

Me: "Its true. I mean you never wanted him here. That's why you sent him away."

Dad: "I sent him away to get him away from his life of drugs."

Me: "Dont lie!! Joes not the first kid to start taking drugs but you don't see other parents shipping off their kids to some strange country!!"

Dad: "Uganda isn't strange that's your birth place and you've been there so many times."

Me: "You ruined Joe's life!!"

Dad: "Joe ruined his own life."

Me: "Its you and those people you call your family. They practically kicked Joe out. You all the same!"

Dad: "Those people are your family too..."

Me: "They are no family of mine, if they were they wouldn't have kicked Joe out."

Dad: "I am not going to argue about this with a kid."

Me: "I don't know where Joe is and its all your fault."

Mom: "shhh.."

Dad:"If you want someone to blame blame your mom and her so called sister.All she had to do was watch Joe.He was there with her for a few weeks and look his gone."

Me:"You always right!No ones ever wrong!!Why can't you just admit that you were wrong,if you hadn't sent him away none if this would've happened."

Dad:"I've had enough!!"

That's when he walks out the door and drives off.To this day I stil believe that everything that happened to Joe and is happening to Joe is his fault.It always has been and always will be.Yes granted that Joe had played his own role in the matter,infact even me and mom had played a role.But the truth remains that he is the ultimate villian of our story.

Me and dad weren't on speaking terms after that but I didnt care.So when I stopped going with transport and started going with him again it was awkward.The only words I spoke to him was when I was telling him what time school came out.And I was ok with that.I had said everything that needed to be said.And if he expected an apology from me,he was out of his mind.

I mean not a single word that I had said was a lie.So if anyone should be apologising it certainly wasn't me.

## **CHAPTER 89:nudes=jail time:**

One would think that the whole Joe drama would make him swear off woman but it didn't. In fact I think it made him more desperate to get screwed. Clearly he wouldn't get it from mom so as always he turned to a bunch of whores. But I guess even that wasn't enough for his appetite. Things were so bad that occasionally he turned to looking at nudes. Disgusting if you ask me. And the one time his disgusting ways caught up to him.

I'm not really sure what happened between them but from what I'd heard from mom and my uncle it was somewhere along the lines of her finding some incriminating pictures of another woman on my dad's phone. (For those of you who are confused incriminating pictures are nudes).

So long story short she wasn't too pleased about it and well she confronted dad about it but he tried to play it off as cool. At some point I guess she lost it and well she grabbed dad's phone from his hand and literally threw it against the wall. Obviously the phone didn't survive the accident. And well dad short tempered as he was lost it too. He thought he could pull a mom move on her by hitting her. But she was not having any of it and well she basically went walking to the police station and laid a charge. Dad still seething followed her to the police station. Which if you ask me was really stupid of him. Because as soon as he got there he was thrown into a cell and had to spend a night there.

## **CHAPTER 90:Girl power:**

You all probably wondering about what happened to the woman.I really don't know. It's like she just disappeared into thin air.We never saw her again.

I know I should've been happy because we'd finally gotten rid of her.But to be fair wether she was gone or not it didn't really matter because the damage had been done.It's not like her disapearence could make me forget that she'd been screwing my dad and well breaking up my family. Maybe not breaking it up because how can you break something that's already broken.So maybe it was the case of adding fuel to a fire,but still.

For the two years that she was screwing dad I hated her,in fact I still blamed her for some of my parents problems.But in that moment I kinda looked up to her because she was able to do something that mom couldn't in all the years she was with dad.She stood her ground and she didn't accept any of his bullshit.And for that I say snaps to you girl.Like respect all the way.

## **CHAPTER 91:A fucking joke:**

So dad had spent a night in jail. And everyone was fussing over him when he got released the next morning. But me I didn't give damn.

On our way to school when we stopped to pick up this kid my dad gives a lift to because we go to the same school. (No he was not screwing the boys mom). His mom was actually my grade R teacher and well she needed a helping hand and mom always being so nice forced dad into it.

So there we were waiting for the boy in question to come out, and dad for some reason tries to have a father daughter moment with me. As if he ever really cared that much about me or my feelings. So anyway, he starts rambling on about how when he was in jail the night before he only thought about me, Joe and Sally and how everything he does is for our best interest and that his trying his best. The whole time his talking I'm rolling my eyes so far back in my head you'd swear they'd pop out the back any moment.

But then he starts crying, like really crying, like a fucking baby for that matter. For a second when I looked at him I wanted to feel sorry for him because that was the first time I saw dad cry. But only for a second because after that second I was mad. How could he do that to me? How could he try to make me feel sorry for him by putting me in that situation?

And I just remember thinking: Does he fucking think that his crocodile tears make everything ok. After everything we've been through because of him. Is he fucking kidding me!

And even after all that he still had the bloody audacity to tell me that he loved me and all my siblings. At that point I lost it but lucky for him the boy we were waiting for showed up. Dad then quickly dusted himself of leaving me awestruck.

The one time I see my dad cry and he tells me loves me, is spent sitting in the passenger seat of his car 15 minutes before school starts on the day I have a paper to write. The universe was clearly fucking with me that day.

## **CHAPTER92: My Dad's a criminal:**

So I ended up spending the next 10 minutes sitting next to a man who I despised at that moment. Like how dare he pretend as if he were the victim.

Firstly he behaved as if he'd been wrongfully arrested. When in actual fact he was guilty. What did he expect her to do? She clearly knew her worth and wouldn't stand for his crap. To be honest I think that he'd gotten so used to dealing with mom, who had always taken his bullshit lying down. And at some point during his life he reached the conclusion that there was nothing wrong with it. When in actual fact everything was fucking wrong with it.

Besides the actual reason behind why he had spent the night in jail, he had the audacity to say that everything he did was for us.

Was beating mom all those times for us? When he went around screwing all those women was that for us as well? He was bullshitting and he knew it. None of that was for us, because they never really was an us to begin with.

And him loving us was hilarious. I don't know what he was on that morning but clearly it was the cheap stuff. I mean who was he fucking kidding? If my memory serves me right, he didn't know what love was. In fact the word love shouldn't even escape his escape his foul mouth. He never really cared about any of us. To him we'd always been burdens. Responsibilities that he needed to take of but never really wanted to.

You know how most dad's get this sparkle of proudness in their eyes when you ask them about their kids well my dad's never had it. When you'd ask him about us all you'd see is disappointment in his eyes and after that, the first word he utters is "money."

So if that was what he was referring to when he said he loved us, I wanted none of it.

I was so mad at him. I mean how could he just sit there and pretend as if he was the one that had been wronged. At that moment I actually cursed the world for not keeping him in that prison cell longer. He was a downright criminal that deserved to be in jail.

He was a murderous thief who'd stolen everything I had and loved. He stole my childhood, my mother and my froggy, and if that wasn't enough he'd murdered my mom's soul. Because ever since froggy left it's like she's no longer here.

And poor Sally he just keeps taking from her too, she's never really had a dad or a mom and then he had to take froggy away from her too. Like what did she ever do to deserve this.

If there was justice in this world he'd pay for everything he did. I mean, how could he get away with it?

He was a criminal and criminals deserved to be locked behind bars. But I don't think even a jail cell had enough room for him and his crimes, he **needed to be thrown** down the deepest pit of hell.

## CHAPTER 93:I throw a tantrum:

If you want to know about the paper I was writing that day,I honestly can't remember.Whether I passed it or not it doesn't really matter that much.I mean how did the universe expect me to write a maths paper in my state.

Anyway paper aside I had the crappiest day.I guess all my days are pretty crappy but this one went on the top 15 list.So obviously as per my schedule crappy days equaled me crying myself to sleep.But this time I wasn't just feeling sorry for myself and the situations the world kept putting me in.I was mad.I was mad at dad,the world,my mom.I was just mad at everyone and everything including myself.

I was so mad that I started screaming my heart out.Mom startled by the sudden noise comes into my room.

Mom:"Maya are you ok?"

Me:"I'm fine,go back to sleep."

Mom:"Did something happen,Did someone do something to you."

Me:"I'm fine!"

Mom:"Please tell me what's wrong,I can't help you if.."

Me:"Just shut up!You keep saying that I should tell you what's wrong,but it really doesn't matter,because even when I do tell you all you tell me is that theirs no use feeling the way I do,because crying doesn't solve anything right!"

Mom:"I.."

Me:"You what?That's right you never do anything!You always let him get away with everything!Why?!"

Mom:"You know why,its because if you."

Me:"Stop using me as a way to hold onto dad!Just tell me the truth!You still love him!And I don't get why?!I mean how could you love a monster like him!Don't you see what his doing to you!To me!"

Mom:"Maya,I'm sorry..."

Me:"I can't do this anymore mom!! can't!! wanna be happy!! don't want to feel like this anymore!Please!"

Mom:"I don't know what to do for you."

Me:"Lets go,well leave right now.Pack up whatever you can and well take Sally and go."

Mom:"We can't do that."



Me:"Why not!Please mom!I'm begging you!Please!"

Mom:"I can't."

Me:"I hate you!!I hate all of you!!"

Mom:"Dont say that,I'm doing this for you."

Me:"No you not!How can this be for me."

Mom:"You still too young to understand."

Me:"No mom I understand just fine!You guys took everything away from me!"

Mom:"I.."

Me:"Why do you think Joe's gone!Because of you!Both of you!You took Joe away from me!!"

Mom:"There was nothing I could do..."

Me:"Theirs always something mom!You just stood there and let him take Joe away!How could you!!How do I even know that you won't let him take me away when he decides I've become a nuisance!"

Mom:"I'd never let him take you away."

Me:"I hate you!!!!"

Mom:"Maya.."

That's when I covered myself with my blanket and cried some more.Mom tried pulling the blanket away from me but I wouldn't let her.After an hour of me crying and mom just sitting there she got the hint and left my room.

I know I shouldn't have said those nasty words to mom but in that moment I trully did hate her.I felt like instead of fighting for us she was just an onlooker.I know that's not neccesarily true because mom has always protected me against dad,but I can't help how I felt in that moment.

## **CHAPTER 94: The silent treatment:**

I know it was really petty of me but I didnt speak to mom that whole week.I basically ignored her.My routine was go to school, come home,eat lunch,do homework,eat dinner and go to bed.For a whole week that's all I did.Mom stayed clear of me which was the best thing she did for me at that time.

We had basically become complete strangers living in the same house.Sally was our only link to each other because occassionally Sally would try to get us to talk to each other but I wouldn't do it.

Judge me all you want but I was still mad at mom.I mean I hadn't heard a word from Joe in months and dads bullshit wasn't helping the situation.I just had so much on my plate and I felt like mom wasn't doing much.Obviously that's not true but what did you expect from me.

## **CHAPTER 95: Making up with mom:**

**After a week of being mad at mom I had** come to the conclusion that being mad at mom wasn't helping. My anger wasn't going to bring Joe back.

And if I was honest with myself I was more mad at myself than mom. I mean I was the one that couldn't handle a simple phone call. And I guess I was taking it out on mom.

She was like my scapegoat because I couldn't come to terms with the fact that it was my fault.

When I was finally ready to let my anger go I seemed mom out in the kitchen when she got back from work.

Me: "Maya."

Mom: "Are you hungry."

Me: "No, I just ate."

Mom: "I can make you something if you want. You way too thin you need it."

Me: "I'm fine."

Mom: "Sure. Ok fine. I'll just make for me and Sally."

Me: "I'm sorry."

Mom: "For?"

Me: "You know."

Mom: "No I don't."

Me: "Maa."

Mom: "Just kidding. It's ok I know you didn't mean it. You were just angry. And I know how much its killing you to apologise. You just like your dad in that department."

Me: "No I'm not! I'm nothing like him."

Mom: "Ok fine, chill. I don't want you getting mad at me already. You just said sorry. We don't want to inconvenience your ego twice in one day. It might

not survive."

Me:"Haha, really funny."

Mom:"You know you shouldn't get angry fast, its not a good look on you."

Me:"Maya.."

Mom:"I'm serious have you seen what it does to your face, and your nose, its hilarious."

Me:"This is so not funny."

Mom: "(Laughing) See you doing it again."

Me:"What you making?"

Mom:"scrambled eggs."

Me:"Make me some."

Mom:"I thought you already ate."

Me:"I did."

....

Just like that everything was ok with me and mom again. We were pitch perfect. Like nothing ever happened.

## **CHAPTER 96 :A bit of my story reaches the first human ears:**

We were coming to the end of term 3 and as always my school has what we call MR and Mrs.Its basically a beauty pageant to see whos the best looking couple.

So I don't know why but I wasn't really feeling it that year like I did last year.From the moment I got to class I was Moody.I kept to myself and tried not to talk to anyone.And no I was not on my periods.

Things were going good besides the fact that I was moody but somewhere along the line I started crying.I wasn't like out right crying just silent tears.Obviously the two people sitting close to me asked if I was ok and at first I tried to play it off but I couldn't.For the first time in my life I told people about my family issues.Well I mostly spoke about Joe disappearing and how sad I was because I didn't know if Joe was dead or alive.

Just as people were starting to stare my way because well I was causing a scene.I mean how could you miss a girl crying while her friend tried comforting her by rubbing her back.But luckily for me I was saved by the announcement for us to make our way down to the hall for the even.

I quickly composed myself and put on a brave face.I couldn't believe I had actually told people from school about my problems.That was the first time I actually told a real live person let alone people.But as soon as I got into the hall I put my problems aside and tried to enjoy the show,but I couldn't.My day was already ruined.I guess I can put this on the list of things dad kept taking from me.

## **CHAPTER 97: Best December:**

We were coming to the end of our December holiday. And as far as December holidays went that was one of my favourites. I mean we didn't end up going to Uganda or Tanzania as usual because dad couldn't afford it but I really enjoyed it.

As December holidays went it was pretty uneventful, mom was still working so I had to babysit Sally until she came home. But I didn't mind at all. Why would I? I mean Sally was the apple of my eye and the more time I got to spend with her the better.

And plus me and Sally slept in through most of the day so when mom came back home around 16:00 our day had just begun. We'd first help mom cook dinner.

Well she'd cook, I'd watch and Sally would do all the tasting. After dinner we'd watch some tv together and then we'd play all sorts of games from monopoly to charades to snakes and ladders.

Obviously the games didn't really last long because Sally would feel left out because she couldn't play. And Sally loved being the centre of attention so ultimately she'd cause a huge scene by pushing our tokens over ever few minutes.

Mom and I eventually gave in to her cry for attention and decided to humour her. She always was very eager to tell us something, and she always had something to say. Mom says she takes after me in that department and I actually agree with her on that. I can be a chatter box at times.

So naturally on most days Sally would just start babbling about random things and me and mom would pretend to be listening to her. But on those very rare exciting nights Sally would feel like showing off some of her non-existent dance moves. So me and mom would put some music on and she'd sort of dance. It was hilarious. She'd even try to sing along to the song

.But she never did manage to get the lyrics right or the tune of the song.It was a complete catastrophe if you ask me.But the best catastrophe I had ever seen.When mom went to bed me and Sally stayed up a little longer watching YouTube videos and playing criminal case on my tab.

For most this might seem like one of the most boring and uneventful December holiday ever but for me that was by far the best December holiday of my life,even though we never got to go abroad.If I had known that staying home for a December holiday would be that fun.I would have given up all those trips to Uganda/Tanzania in a heartbeat.Just so I could experiance one day that was spent that December.

You all wondering where's dad.During the whole of December I only saw dad on christmas.Call me heartless if you want but instead of hoping to see more of him I was hoping to never see him again.At least not before school started.I mean I didn't want him ruining one of the best holidays of my life.But as always the universe had other plans for me.

## **CHAPTER 98:Dad moves back in:**

It had been nearly 2 years since dad stayed with us.And to be honest those were the quietest 2 years of my life.Besides the time I yelled at mom and threw a tantrum there wasnt any yelling and screaming at night.So I guess my life was ok.

But dad obviously couldn't help seeing us peaceful so one day in the middle of the night he just shows up saying that his moving back in.Again.

I wonder what happened this time.I mean couldn't he just let me have my moment. Like did he really have to gate crash my holiday.Up untill he showed up I was having one of the best December holidays of my life.

From then on I was practically forced to spend my last few weeks of holiday under the same roof as him.And as you all know by now,him and mom being in close proximity with each other never ends well.

So I wasnt suprised that on thst samr night they got into an argument.All I could say was mama mia here we go again...



## **CHAPTER 99: Personalised lullaby:**

The first week spent with dad wasn't so bad. Obviously they argued almost every night but it never reached the point where dad had to do damage control (beat mom up). So in my eyes we were ok. But after just a week of him being back they got into a huge argument.

Me and Sally were in the living room watching television and apparently dad didn't like the idea of us being up so late. So he tells me to switch off the tv and orders me to go to bed. But as soon as I switch off the tv Sally starts crying. So dad gets mad and starts yelling at me to make her stop.

Mom then walks in and starts yelling at dad for making Sally cry. While mom and dad are at each others throats I'm trying to get Sally to quite down. I do everything I can, I even turn to bribing her with free access to my tab but she just won't stop wailing. And her consistent wailing makes them scream at each other louder.

To be honest I don't even remember what exactly they were arguing about. Maybe they weren't even arguing about me and Sally being up late. And to be honest I didn't want to wait around to find out so I drag a wailing and resisting Sally into my room where I basically force her to sleep.

I can't believe that I had forced my 3 and half year old sister to sleep while she was crying her lungs out. But to be fair I was stuck between a rock and a hard place. I mean I didn't want her to hear any more of our parents yelling than she already had. So it was a case of desperate times call for desperate measures.

Naturally it broke my heart seeing Sally fall asleep with tears in her eyes. Seeing her like that made me feel like crying. But I didn't. Because I needed to be strong for her. Well I could at least pretend to be strong for her sake. There was no use having her see me break down. My conscience wouldn't allow me to.

But as soon as Sally was fast asleep and in baby dream world I cuddled with her and cried. I cried my heart and soul out while I held Sally close to me. She was the only thing keeping sane. I eventually drifted off to sleep listening to my silent crying mixed with my parents yelling mixed with Sally's heartbeat.

How lucky was I to fall asleep listening to my own personal lullaby?

## **CHAPTER 100: The beauty of Sallys innocent heart and soul:**

The next morning I wake up to Sallys screaming and tugging at my blanket  
Sally:"Maya,wake up!wake up!Wake up!"

You'd think she'd want to sleep in after last night.But no Sally had to be awake at 09:00,and that meant I had to be awake wether I liked it or not.

Mom and dad were obviously not home.I mean they still had to go to work.So naturally I had after I got up I had to make Sally her breakfast.After force feeding Sally her breakfast we sat on the couch as she watched Tally tubbies. Normally I would've gladly watched along with her but sadly I had other things on my mind.

I mean I couldn't just be a carefree 3 and a half year old like she was.I really wish I could but I couldn't.And that's why I love kids.But Sally in particular of course.I mean she has the biggest and most forgiving heart I've ever met.For example she could be super mad at me one second. Like pulling my hair,crying and yelling at me and all this for not giving her what she wants.But the moment I apologise and give her what she was yearning for,she simply just wipes away her tears,apologises for pulling my hair and yelling at me and then hands me her pinky to shake.And all i have to do is shake her pinky finger with my pinky finger.Once thats done she gives me a kiss on my cheeks,lips,nose and forehead.She even smiles at me afterwards.

But sometimes she's the one who's in the wrong.And even then you just need to giver some time alone, and after a while she'll come begging to apologise.I don't even need to force it out of her.I mean who begs to apologise,shouldn't it be the other way around?To top that all off she never

lies.I've never in all the years I've known her heart her lie.Whenever mom wants to know who messed something in the house she asks Sally.And even if she's the culprit she'll stand there all shy and go:"I did."

I'm still amazed by her every day.I mean how do you just brush of everything like its just water under the bridge.When ever I'd ask her if we were friends just seconds after our war shed always reply best friends.Granted sometimes shed say no at first snd be like im breaking up wiyh you but when i make a show to be really upset shed go:fine,were friends,best friends,forever."

Sometimes she makes me feel like I'd imagined our whole quarrel.Because with her its like nothing happened.She goes from crazy nad to giggles and smiles faster than I can blink.

Like who does that?How do u forgive and forget that easily?If it were me in her shoes I wouldn't have spoken to her for at least a day.That's probably one of the main things that separates me from her. Sally never holds a grudge.But unfortunately for me,my heart just aint big enough.I mean theirs only so much I can take.And to be fair I'm not fighting over changing the channel,getting peoples attention,a tablet or candy.I'm fighting over the heartache that has been caused to me countless of times.So forgive me if I'm not so forgiving and willing to forget so easily.

## **CHAPTER 101:My own angel:**

In the midst of daydreaming about Sallys beautiful heart I take a wrong turn.Because from having happy memories of me and Sallys frenemy I start thinking about how I can't stay there anymore.

To be honest I dont know how I got to that point but once I got the idea I stuck with it.I left Sally who was still engrossed with whatever was playing on tv and headed to my room where I packed my backpack with as many clothes as I could fit in.When that was done I sneakily walked out the door and locked Sally in.I know that was very risky.I mean how do you leave a 3 and a half year old home alone?

To stop myself from going mad with guilt and worry I comforted myself with the fact that mom and dad had their own keys so Sally would be ok.I mean it wasn't like she was some kind of prisoner.She'd just have to wait till 16:00.It wasnt do bad,and it was already 12:00.

But Sally aside the whole thing was a bad idea and I knew it.I mean I was running away from home and I didnt have a clue where I was going.

I dont know if what happend next was fate or just pure coincidence but whatever it was to this day I am thankful for it.She just saved saved me from making the biggest mistake if my life.

Just as I was about to walk away I see Sally at the gate.She asks me where I'm going and out of fear of telling her that I'm leaving her I ignore her and continue walking.But then she starts crying and that makes me stop.I mean Sally isn't much of a crier.Obviously she cries but its hardly ever the heart stopping and blood boiling kind

I mean this sure as hell wasn't Sallys cry for attention or give me what I want cry.This was real.This was gut wrenching and heart smashing.I could feel her pain all the way down to my bones,and that gave me chills.I mean she was wailing because somehow she knew that I was leaving her. And she was absolutely right.At least I was trying to but her wailing wasn't helping.It just made my decision so much harder.

But as soon as I gathered up some courage and the ability to sort of try to mute her wailing and try to soften the ache in my heart. My feet began moving. I walked all the way out our front yard and about 10 steps into the unknown. I could still hear Sally crying though but then again even a deaf man would be able to.

Every part of my body ached. I mean what did I do? Walk away? I was stuck. I really wanted to leave but I also couldn't handle hearing Sally cry like that. In the end my heart made the decision. It just couldn't stand hearing Sally like that. Stopping Sally's wailing was more important to me than the supposed freedom that would've come from running away. So naturally I turned around and I went back.

When I got to the gate Sally was still wailing so I sat on the front gate and I reached for her hand between the bars of the gate. I don't know why I didn't open the gate but I just didn't. Sally then sat down too on the opposite side of the gate. She still cried but it wasn't as loud anymore.

We probably sat like that for an hour or two and the whole time none of us moved. Sally had stopped crying somewhere in between that time so we just sat in silence. I mean still didn't know what to do. And this time Sally made that decision for me.

Sally: "Open."

She clearly meant the gate but we both knew she didn't want me to leave and apparently I didn't want to either. Not anymore I didn't.

Who knew one word could hold so much power over me. Hearing her say that literally brought me to tears. But in my rage of tears I actually did manage to open the gate. As soon as I do Sally rushes towards me knocking me over. She then gives me the tightest hug and smothers me with kisses all over my face.

After our very emotional reunion I carry her inside and instead of wanting to watch tv she says: "undown." Which in her language meant she wanted me to pick her. So I lay on the couch with her rested on top of me. She never said a thing. She just lay there. She looked so peaceful for someone who'd cried their lungs out seconds ago. Who said angels didn't exist?

## **CHAPTER 102: Soulmate:**

Mom had always said me and Sally had this unbreakable bond between us ever since she was born. I kinda always did believe it with all the little things she did.

Like how mom would spend an hour trying to get her to eat and it would take me 15 minutes, and without yelling at her or forcing her. Like how she only ever gives me kisses to the lips. How whenever I feel sad she always lays down with me and tells me not to cry. How she always shares her candy with me and when she goes out to buy something edible she never eats it until she gets back home so we can eat it together. How she always woke up in the morning just so she could see me off to school because when she didn't she got cranky. And the one time when I was really sick and I was asleep mom told me she cried so much it was as if she was the patient not me.

But up until that point I only knew it but never really felt it. It was only then that I could see how much she loved me. Just the simple fact that she looked so peaceful with her head on my chest. She didn't even care about the cartoon that was playing all she wanted was me. My presence made her happy. It always has. And how could I take away the one thing that really made her happy?

I'd always loved Sally from the moment I first laid eyes on her in that hospital room. But it was only in that moment that I realised that I loved Sally more than life itself. I would give anything for her. So even though my life was pretty crappy I'd stick it out for her, even if it killed me. Never in a million years would I let Sally live without me. We could be starcrossed lovers and I still wouldn't abandon her. I mean I for one knew how that felt, and I wasn't going to let her experience that. Because after all she was the Juliet to my Romeo.

My other half.

## CHAPTER 103: Mom finds out:

A couple of hours later I get woken up by mom. I didn't even know I had fallen asleep. My sudden movement wakes Sally up. It's mom. She's back from work.

Mom clearly suspicious of me and Sally sleeping on the couch asks: "Are you sick."

Me: "No, I'm fine. What time is it?"

Mom: "16:10."

Me: "Oh ok."

Sally: "Mommy."

Mom: "Did Sally eat her lunch?"

Me: "No she didn't."

Mom: "Maya, come on you know Sally needs to eat, how many times do I have to tell you not to baby her, Force her if you have to. You know she's really underweight for her age, so please."

Me: "I know, sorry we fell asleep. I'll go get her something to eat now"

Mom: "It's fine I'll do it."

Mom begins walking away in the direction of the kitchen.

Me: "Ma, I tried to runaway."

She turns around.

Mom: "What!?"

Me: "I'm so sorry.."

Mom: "Are you ok! Did something happen!?"

Me: "No nothing happened I didn't do it. Sally started crying for me ...."

Mom: "It's ok.."

Me: "You not mad?"

Mom: "No I'm not mad."

Me: "Are you going to tell dad?"

Mom: "No, you didn't do it, so we're fine, I'm glad you didn't. You know how much I love you right. I know the past few days you've been blaming me for..."

Me: "I know it's not your fault mom, I'm really sorry."

Mom: "As long as you're ok. You must be hungry?"

Sally: "Porridge!"



That's when me and mom start laughing. Sally has never willingly asked to be fed. You literally had to bribe her into eating. But I didn't blame her, she hadn't eaten in ages.

As I continued to laugh at the turn of events I felt myself calm down. It was as if I could finally think clearly. My thoughts weren't cloudy anymore because all my problems had flown away with my laughter.

That night dad didn't come back home and it's a good thing too, because I don't think I would've been able to handle seeing him. Not then at least.

So that night as I lay my head in mom's lap and Sally a bit jealous of the affection I was receiving was trying to get me away from mom. She was constantly yelling that I was too old for that but I remember thinking I don't think I'll ever be too old for this. And in that moment with just the three of us in the house it felt like all was right in the world. Like the world was straightening itself out after a major storm. But to be honest as long as I had mom and Sally by my side I'd always find a way to be happy again.

## **CHAPTER 104: Current year:**

So here we were again, the beginning of yet another year. This time I was going to grade 10. And as always I was optimistic because another year meant that I was one year closer to making my dreams a reality, and that meant that I was one step closer to getting mom and Sally away from dad.

But unlike the previous years this year actually started off on a really good note. I mean I still hadn't received word from Joe and I was still crying myself to sleep at night worrying about him. And mom was constantly watching my every move because she was afraid I'd run away. And to be honest I didn't really trust myself either. Who knew maybe the next time I'd decide to run away with Sally. But besides me and Joe's drama it actually seemed like this year would be a great year.

I mean Sally was going to school. More like kindergarten but still. She'd been looking forward to it ever since we went stationery shopping a few weeks ago. I know mom was still worried and thought it was a bad idea since Sally wasn't even 4. But technically speaking she would be soon, mom just needed to give Sally another 4 months.

So from the looks of things we were going to have a wonderful year. But looks can be deceiving and this was only the beginning. So who knew what the rest of the world would bring. And you know what they say, don't count your chickens before they hatch. I mean we should all know by now that life is unpredictable.

## **CHAPTER 105:Sally's big day:**

I was so excited for Sally it was her first day of school. That's like one of most important days of anyone's life. Most kids would've cried their eyes out begging to not go to but Sally was as cool as can be. I guess she takes after me in that sense.

So mom had to obviously come along on the trip to help Sally settle in. Dad wasn't too happy about that but that was his problem. I wasn't going to let him ruin Sally's day. But what was so cute was when we reached her school she gave me a kiss on the cheek got out of the car and said: "I'm going to school now, like you." She then waved goodbye to me.

Obviously mom and dad were confused because most of the time when Sally spoke it seemed like she was mumbling a bunch of words together, that shouldn't even be in the same sentence together. But over the years I've mastered her language. I'm practically the only one who understands what she's saying half the time. And to be honest it makes me feel special. It's like me and Sally have our own secret language that no one but me and her understand.

As Sally was waving at me I felt like a proud mamma bird seeing her chick fly out into the world. Obviously I was kind of sad because it's never easy to let go of your young. But I was proud.

When I got back home from school Sally practically attacked me, she clearly couldn't wait to tell me about all the new things she'd done. She'd talked the whole night of nothing but school. How she'd coloured in her colouring book and how she wrote in her book. But she mostly spoke about all the songs they sang.

Soon after that the house was filled with her voice resinging all the songs she could remember. Obviously she'd get stuck at a verse and would be like: "aggh! I don't know." For me that was super cute, she looked really sad about it like her forgetting the words was the end of the world.

But most surprising and interesting of all was that she'd made a friend. She couldn't stop talking about her. It was Sabrina this and Sabrina that. Sabrina likes this and Sabrina said that. It was like they'd known each other forever. It seemed like I didn't carry the title of best friend anymore.

To be honest I was kind of hurt. I mean I wanted her to make friends her own age but at the same time it's always just been me and her. Ever since she could actually construct proper sentences I was her best friend, sister and sometimes mom. I was practically her everything.

So it kind of hurt that someone she'd met a few hours ago could replace me that easily. I know you all thinking that that Sabrina girl could never replace me and I know she can't because well I'm me, one of a kind. But jokes aside I was kinda jealous of a 4 year old. I mean it was because of her that I'd have to settle for second best.

Life really threw me a curve ball with that. I mean how do I process losing my sis to a 4 year old? But I guess that's life for you. I was being dumped by my almost 4 year old sister and I had to learn to accept that.

## **CHAPTER 106:Potty mania:**

But in all the commotion of news Sally had forgot to mention a really important detail. She'd pee'ed in her pants because she was afraid to tell the teacher she needed to go to the bathroom.

So when mom picked her up she was advised to start making her wear diapers again. Mom obviously refused. I mean why put sally on diapers again? Sally hadn't worn diapers since she was 1, and she was so used to her potty by now.

You all probably thinking that 1 is a very early age to start potty training. And no it wasn't to save costs on diapers it actually is a really funny story.

So it goes like this: When Joe was little mom potty trained him at the recommended age of 2. But Joe took a while to get used to the potty because he didn't feel comfortable on it. When Joe got a little older when he was around 3 and a half he'd pee and poo wherever instead of using the potty. Gross I know. But really funny. I never let Joe forget it. I think mom should've put it him back on diapers but mom wouldn't. She thought he was too old for diapers.

You guys need to also realise that mom was still living in Uganda at the time. And in Uganda all the neighbourhood kids would play outside in the streets together. So whenever Joe messed wherever he found a place mom was called to do the cleaning. Mom obviously went and cleaned up after Joe but the problem was that mom had this weird idea that some of the times it wasn't even Joe. Because when she'd check Joe so she could clean him up his was as clean as can be. Mom obviously didn't say anything to the other moms she just went with the flow until Joe finally grew old enough to know that you should use the toilet.

But secretly mom made a vow that she'd never go through that again with any of her other children which included me at the time. So I was potty trained from when I was just 6 months old. She had this whole schedule where every hour she'd place me on the potty to do my business, and over time I got used to it. When I started talking she taught me to tell her when I needed to go and I did. No Joe drama. Another funny story: The word "toyi" was my first word which actually means toilet in Uganda or in this case

potty.

12 years after my birth Sally comes along and its the same drill with her.6 months and she begins potty training. And just like me by 1 Sally was off diapers.But Sally was a bed wetter and mom couldn't handle waking up every hour during the middle of the night to take Sally to her potty so she made an exception with Sally.Sally was allowed to wear a diaper at night.But as Sally grew older she stoped bed wetting because just before she went to bed she'd go use the potty.

So as you can see mom was not about to have another Joe incident so she simply told the teacher Sallys toilet schedule. Obviously it took Sally a couple of weeks to get used to the teacher so occassionally she still pee'ed in her pants and mom was forced to carry an extra pair of pants with her.

## **CHAPTER 107:Extra baggage to weigh the car down:**

I kind of feel like an idiot.Why don't I learn?I keep hoping that things at home would change,that dad would automatically just stop being an ass. But as you know by now nothing ever goes good in my life good.And I was right.Dad clearly still had no respect for mom,which wasn't suprising to say the least.But I didnt expect him to be so obvious about it.I mean show some respect for me if not for mom.Like God.

If you already guessed that it was another woman then you were spot on.So he'd started his I'm just helping her out game again.And thinking about it now dad really needed to find a better cover up story, because no one was buying his whole mother Teresa act.

Basically he started giving lifts to this lady and her kids.Her kids went to my old primary school which really wasn't that far off from my highscool.Call me petty or whatever but I didnt want those kids anywhere near me.Whenever we picked them up I'd make sure that I sat as far as possible away from them. I mean I know they had nothing to do with what was happening between dad and their mom but I kinda hated them.Dad was even really nice to them which pissed me off even more.I mean it was bad enough that he was screwing their mom but now he had to play their dad.That was just disgusting.Like he clearly felt no shame.

To this day I thank the Lord that Sally didn't have to see any of that.Thank the Lord he had the decency to drop Sally of at school first before picking his skank and her kids up.Sally wouldn't have minded ofcourse.I mean she wouldn't understand what was going on,but I still prefer that she didn't have to see any of it.She was just too young to be subjected to dad's disgusting behaviour.

But besides being disgusted by dad's behaviour I was actually creeped out by the whole situation. If you guys remember a few years back the same scenario unfolded. Same school, same number of kids (2) and dad was screwing the mom. I don't know if it was just a coincidence or the universe's sick way of bringing back the past. Call me crazy if you want but I seriously thought the universe was playing mind games with me.

Anyway this time was different though because instead of just giving the kids a ride he was giving their mom one too. I couldn't believe him. And the witch clearly had no self respect, she even had the fucking audacity to sit in the front seat right next to dad. I know you all thinking that I'm overreacting. I mean it's just a seat? WRONG. Because with my dad her sitting in the front seat proved a lot.



## **CHAPTER 108:Dads cars have allergic reactions to mom:**

You see dad and his car well all the cars that he has ever owned were kind of allergic to mom.I say allergic because dad hated mom being in his cars.Mom was basically not allowed to sit in his car unless absolutely neccesarily.Even after all the years they'd been together from as far back as I can remember mom either walked or took a taxi depending on the distance.She'd literally walk or take a taxi,when her husband had a car in the garage.I don't even know what to call that.

But of course there were occassions were mom really needed a ride so she'd phone dad and ask him.No he didn't leave her hanging he'd actually go and pick her up. But looking back at it now maybe she would've been better off if he'd left her hanging.Because trust me when I say that the other options would've caused her less heartache.If you ask me I don't think getting a ride from him was worth all the indignified,ruthless,scornful and hurtful words that he hurled at her the whole time she was in his car.

The minute mom stepped foot in his car he started yelling at her about how busy he was and how mom didn't understand the value of his time among other nasty things that shouldn't even be mentioned.One would swear that moms presenence in the car was like having an uninvited guest over.One you despised but didn't have the heart to tell,out of fear of being rude.But I guess dad never got the memo on how to treat your guests because he clearly didnt have a problem telling mom how he felt about her even though it hurt her.He literally broke moms soul with all the nasty things he'd say to her face.Things like:"You are my biggest regret.I can't believe I fell for

**your bullshit."**

**Till today I still don't get what the big deal is. I mean mom even made a note to never sit in the front seat because the one time she did he all but threw her out and ordered her to go to back because he was afraid she'd curse his car. That's the most ridiculous thing I've heard, I mean mom would just be sitting on the seat not preparing some weird concoction to have him bewitched.**

**But the thing that disgusted me was that dad didn't mind all these tramps sitting in his car. He was practically their personal chauffeur. Like god! He wouldn't let his own wife in the car but he gladly opened those doors for bitches like Sandra. Like wow. Talk about being hypocritical.**

## **CHAPTER 109: Chasing after a hoe:**

So here we were on yet another morning where we had to go pick up that bitch. But this particular morning we were running a bit late. But to be honest haven't we all had those mornings where you overslept for some reason because you didn't hear the alarm and by the time you get out of bed you practically running around like a headless chicken to try and get ready as quickly as possible.

So I'd basically had one of those morning's and somewhere in between me running around like a headless chicken dad gets a phone call from her. He tells her his on his way and because of that call I end up missing breakfast that morning.

Anyway when we are approaching her street I catch a glimpse of her. But from the looks of things she'd decided that she couldn't wait for us because then she and her kids climb into a car. Dad obviously sees what I'm seeing so he phones her but she doesn't pick up.

You'd think that dad would get the idea but I guess dad's ego was hurt. From all the years I've known dad he was a cheating bastard that didn't like to share his cake with anyone else. That's why he always clinched on tightly to mom even though he never really wanted her anymore. He was like a little insecure kid who didn't want to share his toys with anyone else. Because I guess he thought that that would make him less of a man.

So instead of just driving me to school considering that I was already late he follows the car that they climbed into. I was really annoyed then. I fucking missed breakfast and I'm late and his chasing after that bitch like a little lost

puppy. For a man his age he needed to get his shit together. Like how desperate can he be?

So there we were following a strange car, but somewhere during the traffic we lose them then dad starts taking random routes trying to catch up with them. But we end up driving all the way to the kids school without any sign of them, but dad still hangs around for a minute or two before things finally click in his head. He then drives me to school with a sunken look on his face.

Obviously by the time I reached school I was super late, but I wasn't even worried about that anymore. I was just fucking pissed at dad. So what if she decided to hitch a ride that's her own bloody business. I mean wow.

And considering how he always treated mom I hated that bitch even more. I mean what did she give dad that made him chase after her like that? The only thing I could think of was that she was probably giving it to him real good. I mean what else could it be.

That day I secretly hoped and prayed that one day one of his lousy hoes would cheat on him. Then we'll see how much his manhood likes that. He'll be a laughing stock, and I'd be the one that laughs the hardest. Because you know what they say: "Karma's a fucking bitch!"

## **CHAPTER 110:I become a snitch:**

So after the whole late to school drama I decide to tell mom about the hoe.I know I shouldn't be snitching and should rather keep my nose out of their business.But I trully believed that mom deserved to know.

So during our mother daughter talk I brought out the topic of dad seeing another woman.At first mom doesn't seem to mind but then she asks:"How do you know?"

Me:"Dad gives lifts to her and her kids."

Mom:"What do you mean he gives them lifts."

Me:"He drops them off to school every day."

Mom:"How long has this been happening?"

Me:"two weeks."

Mom:"Do you know who the lady is."

Me:"No not really,have never met before."

Mom:"Her name?"

Me:"I don't really know,but she mentioned that she used to teach and now she does tuition."

Mom:"Thanks for telling me,Maya."

Me:"Please don't tell dad I told you."

Mom:"Dont worry about that,its our secret."

So there you have it I'd officially become a snitch.But technically speaking dad never said anything about not telling mom,so I didnt really do anything wrong.And if I'm honest,my loyalties lie with mom,they always have.So in my mind I was just looking out for mom and I kinda of owed her that,considering that she's always looked out for me.

## **CHAPTER 111: Her royal highness:**

You guys might think that I shouldn't have told mom, but if I think about it now mom would've found out either way, so I'd basically done her a favour. I mean dad wouldn't have told her so the only other way that she would've found out was catching them red handed. And that I think would've been much more painful for her.

But mom aside, I still can't believe dad went back to giving her lifts. I mean after what she'd done. Kill me if you want but I just didn't understand how he just let it slide. But I think I have a pretty good idea of how age was able to get her claws back into him (she made it up to him by sleeping with him). And you know what they say about make-up sex. So clearly she'd outdone herself in that department.

So anyway we were still giving her lifts. But this time instead of dad's usual car dad was driving me to school with a bakki.

I should probably explain the whole bakki situation: So my dad's a mechanic and sometimes if he doesn't finish a customer's car and it's really urgent he'd bring the car back home to finish it up there instead of staying up late at the workshop. So this time it was a bakki.

So we were on our way to pick them up and the minute she saw the bakki she had that hell no look on her face. I guess she thought that a bakki was beneath her, too low class for her. Like who did she think she was? The queen?

Dad however completely oblivious to her reaction suggests that they sit in the back of the bakki. She automatically refuses so dad then suggests that I

should sit in the back while her and her kids shared the front seat. Unbelievable! Why should I sit in the back? That's so unfair! Just as I was about to voice my wining.

Bitch: "It's ok, we'll walk."

That statement really put a spin on things, that together with the manner in which she carried herself. She simply just walked off with her kids. No thanks but no thanks, no goodbye, or I'll see you when I see you. Her walking away was a real punch in the face for dad.

As soon as they had walked quite a distance dad begins fuming, because clearly he'd been disrespected. I didn't really care about his anger though, I had my own anger to deal with. I mean he would've made me sit in the back if she didn't say no. Like how dare he? I'm his daughter aren't I? And yet he'd throw me to the curb for that bitch. So much for the father daughter bond.

The whole way to school dad was mumbling on about how disrespectful that was and how he'd stop giving her lifts because she was spoilt and that nothing was wrong with a bakki. I think dad was talking to me when he was mumbling but I was clearly in a world of my own and I wasn't in the mood to talk to him, considering what he would've done to me.

And to be honest I always try to switch myself off when dad starts rambling about stuff. It's always best to not get involved. Rather let him get it all off his chest while he thinks that I'm listening to him. Obviously I catch wind of the basics but the rest is just banter that gets carried away by the wind.

I'm not trying to be rude or anything but when it comes to dad and women talk I don't want to hear about it. He is a grown ass man and he shouldn't even be looking to his 16 year old daughter to comfort him in that

department.He braught it onto himself and he needed to get himself out of it.

And I couldn't afford to get caught up in his love webs.So I'd stay quite and try to focus on my my happy place untill we got to school.As soon as we do I tell him what time I come out and practically escape his clutches.



## **CHAPTER 112: Skin and bones tries body shaming:**

So the situation with the lifts was still going on even after that scandalous incident, and I was getting more and more annoyed with that bitch by the day. I mean I'm a really nice person but she shore as hell knew how to push my buttons. I mean didn't she get that I didn't want to make small talk with her.

She was always on my case about something. It never ended. I think she was trying to form a bond with me. But what she didn't get was that I wanted nothing to do with her. She was nothing to me but some hoe I had to deal with because dad was screwing her. So if she thought that asking me questions about my life and trying to make small talk with me would make me like her, she was dead wrong. Nothing she did or said would make me like her.

I obviously answered all her questions even though some of them were a bit inappropriate. I mean I didn't want to be rude to my elders and mom taught me better.

But this one time she caught me by surprise. I really wasn't expecting her to ask me this. Like really? She'd asked me if I was pregnant because according to her I was gaining some weight. Like what the fuck! Was she serious? And I know I'm gonna sound like a bitch with my next statement but she really pissed me off: Just because she opened her legs for every man she comes across regardless of whether his married or not doesn't mean that the rest of us are just as loose as her.

Like what the fuck? I was 16 for Pete's sake. And just because I was gaining a little weight that didn't mean I was pregnant.

Sometimes people gain weight. It's part of life and shoot me if I didn't have the time to look after my figure. I mean I got more important things to do then exercise.

And honestly I've always believed that your body size shouldn't define you. Women come in all shapes and sizes, and for her to be body shaming me because she was a skinny ass bitch was very hypocritical of her. And if you ask me someone needed to give her a sandwich or two before she turned into a living skeleton.

And even though I gained a little weight I shore had a more smoking hot body than her. I mean at least I had curves while she was as straight as stick. And as far as I'm concerned guys don't really want to feel skin and bones if you know what I mean.

## **CHAPTER 113:First meeting:**

So as you guessed I was still mad at that bitch. She'd practically tried to body Shame me. She's bloody lucky I didn't voice all my thoughts and let her get away with it scratch free. I just measly replied: "I should probably hit the gym soon." But that earned me a snicker from her. At that point I was really annoyed. Like I couldn't roll my eyes back enough to show how I felt. But lucky for her again she was saved by our arrival at my school.

But let's forget about me, because while I was at school Mom was about to meet the devil in carnate. From what mom told me when she got back home from work, mom knew her personally.

So basically mom was on her way home and while passing a group of ladies she hears talking of being with a man. But mom never one to poke her nose in other people's business keeps walking but that bitch recognises mom and stops mom for a quick chat where the bitch let's her encounter with dad slip. Not really sure what she said because mom wouldn't tell me.

Anyway even after all that the bitch still had the audacity to ask mom if I needed a tutor. More like a way to weasel her way into my family. Mom obviously tells her no and she gracefully says goodbye and carries on walking home.

I can only imagine what it was like for mom. I mean I know it's not the first time dad's cheated and moms found out. But I don't think finding out gets any easier. I mean how do you get used to hearing that your husband's a bastard? And that too with someone you know. I actually feel sorry for mom. Like really sorry for her. She doesn't deserve this.

But to be brutally honest mom kind of has a role to play in everything. I mean why does she just keep letting him walk all over her and then when his down and out she takes him back in? When she's going to realise that dad's never going to change? She's practically placed herself in a cycle with no end unless she decides to put an end to it. And I hope for her sake it's soon.

## **CHAPTER 114:Going around in circles:**

So as you guessed dad was still planning on being their personal chauffeur despite all the empty claims he'd made the other day. So I only guess they'd sorted their issues out.

This time we were back with dad's car and what do you know. All of a sudden walking wasn't an option anymore. So I guess that meant that dad was back in business.

The rest of the week was very uneventful, but then sometime during the next week mom and her met again. This time in the lions den.

So for someone reason unknown to me mom needed to go to the school office. I didn't even know she was coming along until she'd walked out the door with sally. Dad was clearly just as surprised because before she'd even set foot into his car he'd asked where she was off to.

Mom: "I need to go to the office."

Dad: "Why didn't you tell me yesterday you were going."

Mom: "Did I have to tell you."

Dad: "Yes, you could've warned me."

Mom: "Why should I be warning you, do you have something to hide."

Dad: "No I'm not hiding anything, just get into the car."

And the circus was about to begin. Lord have mercy on us. It was way too early for this. The whole way to sally's school things were tense. I felt like my head was about to explode. But thank God Sally got to escape when we reached her school. Mom decided to take Sally in today instead of me, which was great. They clearly needed the space to cool off.

While waiting for mom to get back dad was losing his temper. I don't really get what he was mad at. I mean he was the one that was cheating and about to be caught.

When mom got back the heat automatically rised up again. Mom knew what game dad was playing and she was basically taunting him. She was watching dad like a hawk, and she never took her eyes off him even though she was sitting in the back seat. Dad was lucky she was only staring at the

back of his head because Lord have mercy if she were to stare at his eyes.

I dont know how she was able to multi task like that. But besides having an eye out for the back of dads head she had her other eye on the road. She was constantly on the lookout, she even noticed the slightest misplacement. Like the supposed wrong turn dad took.

Mom: "Why are we taking this road? It's the longer way, you missed the turn."

Dad: "I know, I just felt like changing my usual route."

Mom: "Why?"

Dad: "Cant I change my usual route."

Mom: "It just seems so sudden and you always like using the same route, so I'm just surprised."

Dad: " You act like im committing a crime."

Round and round they went, with the same question. The conversation was clearly going nowhere but none of them was willing to back down out of fear of seeming weak. It was getting tiring. They were like two five year olds fighting over who won a stupid little game. I mean couldn't dad just end all our misery by telling her the truth. Mom clearly knew he was lying no thanks to me. But he wouldn't admit it which made mom even more angry and pushy.

I was loosing my cool and my mind and it was only 07:00. Could the day get any worse?

## **CHAPTER 115:Sidechick starts a fire:**

I guess the day could get worse because soon we'd reached our destination and were awaiting the arrival of our VIP guests.

Mom:"What are we doing here?"

Dad:"Picking up someone."

Mom:"Who?"

That's when the stars of the show arrived.At least the bitch was able to see that she was not wanted and she seemed to be turning around.Probably deciding that walking was a better option.But the damage was done.

Mom:"Come in well give you a ride."

Bitch:"Were good,well walk."

Mom:"Walking now will only make you late."

Bitch:"ummm..."

Mom:"Just get into the car."

The bitch finally realising that she was not getting out of this decides to go with the flow.But instead of opening the front door she opens the back.

Mom:"Why don't you sit in the front,its too crowded over here."

Bitch:"I'm sure well fit."

Mom:"I don't think so.And anyway its not like you haven't sat there before."

Way to throw some shade.I couldn't believe mom had said that.But that moment of proudness for mom was soon shattered because dad who'd been quite the whole time finally graces us with his voice.

Dad:"Just sit in the front."

She reluctantly does but for show she drags her daughter in the front with her.Mom looses it then.I do to.I mean during all the weeks that I've known her she has always sat in the front with dad and now all of sudden its no longer an option.She even had the cheek to force her daughter to sit between her and dad.I mean who does that?Who uses their own daughter as a cover up for their own lies?

Mom:"I'm not some idiot.You don't need to use your child like that.Do you

think having her sit between you will distract me from what's going on between you two. Shame on you two. Disgusting!"

Bitch: "...."

Mom: "What you don't have anything to say. Just the other day you had so much to say about my husband. Why don't you tell us all again how good my husband is to you...."

Don't tell me you don't remember. Ok I guess you need to have your brain checked out by a specialist."

Bitch: "You misunderstood me."

Mom: "I know what I heard. And unlike you I have a pretty good memory. But I don't really care that my husband is screwing you or that his throwing his money at you. All I ask is that if you want to meet up with him don't do it while my daughter is around. Because unlike you I don't like subjecting my kids to this type of behaviour. He can still give your kids a ride. But if you want a ride from him get it when my daughter isn't in the car."

Dad: "Can you please keep quite you making a noise."

Mom: "I'm making a noise, look at her. What do you call this..."

That's when we pulled up to the kids school and them and their bitch of a mother walked out. First time she'd ever left the car with her kids. And I'm glad she did, because from the look on moms face mom would've wringed her neck in two if they'd spent another minute together. She basically just walked out of there like nothing happened.

But my parents were far from done fighting. She'd started a fight that only my parents could finish. And we all knew how far they could take it. I just hoped they didn't have to do it with me in the car. But when have they ever cared about whether or not I was listening. But just this once I wanted them to care. I mean it was way too early but I guess it was their way of saying good morning to me.

## CHAPTER 116: Mom grows some balls:

As soon as they left dad who had been mostly quite the whole time turns on mom.

Dad: "Don't you ever talk to her like that again!"

Mom: "I shouldn't talk to her like that. Why not?"

Dad: "Don't push me!"

Mom: "Or what?! You going to beat me up like with the first woman you were giving rides to! I'm not afraid of you anymore!

You can beat me up all you like if that makes you feel better but I'm not going to keep quiet!"

Dad: "We'll see about that when we get home."

Mom: "Why wait till we get home why not stop the car and beat me now?! What you waiting for!? You know what I can't believe I fell for your bullshit! You're no man! You just a coward. You've always been one!"

Dad: "I'm a coward? And yet you still stick around!"

Mom: "(laughing) I'm not with you anymore, in fact the only reason I'm with you is because of Maya. You already took Joe away from me and therefore I will not let you take her away from me too. So stop fooling yourself because I want nothing to do with you."

Dad: "Then fine we'll get a divorce!"

Mom: "(more laughing) You're making a fool out of yourself in front of your own daughter. We both know that won't happen, because you're obsessed with me. You obviously don't want me but you also don't want me to move on to someone else."

Dad: "You don't know what you're talking about."

Mom: "Why else didn't you divorce me by now...?"

Look we don't feel anything towards each other but hate and we can't get divorced because we each have our reasons. And I don't expect you to deprive yourself because you aren't getting any from me. But when trying to fill up your urges try to not let Maya be around. I mean for once in your life act like her father."

That was a lot to take in. I had zoned out of their conversation a long time ago but it didn't stop my tears from streaming down my face. I didn't know what else to do. I mean how do I live with the fact that the reason my parents were stuck together was me? How do I live with the fact that mom was giving dad permission to go messing around? It was just too much to handle.



## **CHAPTER 117: Melt down at school:**

As soon as we reach the school I all but run out of the car mom quickly catches up to me and tells me to stop crying.

Mom: "Maya crying won't help anything ok, and you at school you shouldn't be crying just go wash ure face in the bathroom or something, get it together, we don't want people knowing our personal problems ok."

Mom then leaves me to go into the office. I end up doing exactly what mom said though. I rush into the bathroom where I cry for a while before I quickly regain my cool and head out to class. I was already late so I needed to hurry. On my way to class I get stopped by two of my friends who were worried about me because a couple of girls told them they saw me crying in the bathroom.

Their fussing over me just made me loose it again. They kept asking me what was wrong but I just couldnt tell them. That's when the tears came pouring down again but luckily we were really close to the second bathroom so I rushed into it with them where I cried for less then a minute while they kept asking what was wrong. But as I had trained myself to, I kept repeating that I was ok while I fixed myself up. When I was ready the three of us headed to class.

I know I cry a lot at home when I think the whole house is asleep but I've never cried about my problems at school. I've always managed to keep my cool, because even though things were bad at home I never let it project at school. I know most kids my age hate school but I've always loved going to school and funny enough it never had anything to do with education. Granted education was really important to me but I loved going to school because it made me feel free. Like I could stop holding my breath and actually breathe. It's my sanctuary. The one place I can really be myself and not have to worry about Joe, dad, mom or even being a mom to Sally. I can just be me, Maya.

But yet there I was letting him steal something else from me..

## **CHAPTER 118:Fake it till I make it(The mask is put back on):**

When I head into class I greet my teacher, apologise for being late and take my paper from her desk.Oh I forgot to tell you,I was writing my Afrikaans essay final draft that day.

To be honest seeing that folio paper put everything into perspective for me.I needed to get my head in the game.So I quickly composed myself and wrote that Afrikaans essay while trying my utmost best to get my emotions together.But there were times during that essay where I could feel my tears trying to escape,but I always managed to blink them away and in essence avoided creating a scene.I mean I didn't need my class seeing me cry.

So I spent the next 80 minutes of the Afrikaans lesson finishing my essay and then listening to my friends ask me if I was ok and if I wanted to talk about it.I know I could've easily told them about my problems and how my dads a real asshole but I didnt.Because I was so scared of being judged and pitied by them.I didn't want them to feel sorry for me or look at me differently.Becsuse trust me if I had told people about the shit that I had to face at home everyone would act differently around me,including close friends.They'd start treating me like some delicate object that needed to be watched out for so I didnt break.They'd start walking on eggshells around me as if any sudden movements from them would result in a melt down.So believe me when I say that that's the last thing I wanted.And plus I'd always dealt with it on my own.I was doing just fine.Just two more years and I'd wouldn't have to deal with him.

So as usual I put on my big girl pants and a smile on my face and I told them I was just fine.There was no need to worry about me.I wasn't fine of

course but they didn't need to know that. That was my little secret. It always has been.

## **CHAPTER 119: Romance novels are my solitude:**

You know how most kids can't wait for the school holidays? From the minute the term starts their timer starts ticking for the end of term. But it's not like that for me. My timer actually starts ticking for school to start. It's not that I don't have stuff to do in the holidays because there's plenty.

When I was younger me and all the neighbourhood kids including Joe would play all sorts of games outside and it was fun while it lasted but then I'd have to go home and listen to mom and dad bickering and fighting. I was literally stuck with them with no escape 24/7. Mom never used to work then so she was home all the time so we'd spend lots of time together. She actually even played with me. That's why all the neighbourhood kids loved her because while their mom's were cooking and cleaning my mom played with all of us. Anything and everything from skipping, monkey in the middle, hopscotch, you name it. So it wasn't that bad. Things only got bad when dad came home. Because that's when mom who was so happy playing snakes and ladders with me a few minutes ago turned mad. One would swear she wasn't the same person.

As time went on I grew older and mom being overly protective of me stopped me from going out that much. So I was basically stuck doing nothing but watch tv and play games on my phone. Mom had stopped playing with me. I don't really know why and I didn't push her about it. So as you can imagine holidays became more and more boring. Now I was just stuck at home the whole day and then in the evening I'd listen to a show from both of them. I was always the guest of honour. Lovely late night shows they always put on for me. If only someone told them I didn't enjoy listening to a single one of their shows.

Not all the school holidays were filled with arguing and fighting though. I mean during the Dec holidays we'd normally fly out to Uganda or Tanzania. So mom and dad wouldn't fight as much as pretence for their families. Which I hated. I mean why did we need to pretend to be this happy little family when we weren't? But they weren't fighting so I guess December wasn't so bad.

I grew even older and then I found a new pass time. To this day I thank whoever created books. Best idea ever! God bless you wherever you are. I completely fell in love with reading and books. Not only where they

entertaining they actually got me through my parents screaming contests.

Whenever mom and dad would start bickering I'd just lock myself in my room and read. I'd read until they stopped fighting and even after they did I'd read some more. Reading became my lifeline. It helped me forget about the shit going on in my life and instead made me feel sorry for the shit going on in the characters' life. It made me forget I even had problems.

Granted I mostly read romance novels and most people that know me have always asked me if I read anything besides romance novels, so to answer their question, I do. But I prefer romance more because they give me hope that maybe true love does exist.

And yes I know life doesn't work out the way books do. So I'm not expecting love to necessarily be the same way it's projected as in books but something close to that. I'd even accept the tiniest fraction of that picture. I just need to know that not all relationships are doomed to work out the way my parents did. And that maybe just maybe I'll be able to find true love one day, someday.

But the downside of reading was that when I closed a book whether it was romance, fiction, fantasy or whatever, the calmness and peace that I had felt while reading the book would immediately get crushed with the closing of the book. I was abruptly brought back into my reality. It was like a rude awakening. The universe's way of telling me: "That's not the real world sweetie. Your life, this is real, so you better get used to it."

Thing is I could never get used to it. I don't think I will ever be able to. Because no matter what the universe says I will fight it. This is only my life now, things change. And I will make sure they change in my favour. Because I deserve a better life than this.

## **CHAPTER 120: 15 minutes returned:**

After the whole lift drama dad had stopped "helping" her out. I was actually quite shocked the next day when we didn't take the route to her house. But all was forgotten by the second day.

That was one of the most monumental moments of my life. Wow! Like for once in his life dad actually listened to mom. The cherry on the top was the fact that they were over. I mean I'm not really sure if he was still meeting up with her behind closed doors but as far as I was concerned she was out of my life, so that was good enough for me.

I actually do see her sometimes even now still but it's always passerby vibes, but she she never seems to see me. No I'm not stalking her. I can't help if I just happen to see her when I'm out. I mean it's not my fault that my eyes seem to have special radars for her. And to be fair how am I supposed to forget her after everything she's done. Forget her and dad I'm talking about me. I still feel insulted by her little weight joke that was not so funny. But no need to dwell on her because she's not worth it.

It took a while for dad and me to get back to our schedule but we did. I'm not really fond of my dad but sometimes during those rides to and from school I feel like I actually have a dad. I mean if I had to look on the bright side of things at least I have 15 minutes with my dad (granted not all of them are good) and that's more than I can say for some kids. Some kids aren't fortunate enough to even have a second with their dad's let alone 15 min. I know I probably sound like a spoiled brat who's being ungrateful. I mean at least I have a dad, at least he's alive and healthy, at least he didn't walk out on me.

But with dad's case I'd rather be a spoil brat any day. With dad there is no bright side to look at. Just plain darkness. So excuse me for being ungrateful but I don't think that two 15 minute rides a day can or will ever be able to change a whole life's worth of heartache. And I know that I'm not the first teenager to have daddy issues but I just can't help how I feel.

But out of this there's one thing I'm truly grateful for: at least I didn't have to share one of those 15 minutes with that skank anymore, because she'd already taken up too many of my 15 minutes. And sorry for her but I wasn't planning on sharing them with her. She needed to go get her own 15 minutes.

## **CHAPTER 121: Pre-lockdown drama:**

So the whole lift drama was finally over and things were looking up with me and dad's 15 minute routines do all as good on that front. But things weren't so good at home as usual. There was no physical fighting but the other type was clearly evident.

It had been a few weeks after the lift incident and one night mom and dad were at each other and dad decided that it would be best if he didn't spend the night home. I didn't even know that dad had left until the next morning. I was probably fast asleep with Sally. I mean it was a school night and I needed my 8 hours of sleep.

The next morning I get up and mom's shouting at me to hurry up. When I look at my phone it's 06:30.

Me: "It's only 06:30"

Mom: "Your dad's outside, and you know he doesn't like to wait."

Me: "But.."

Mom: "Get into the shower now!"

Not to make a bad situation worse I got into the shower and 15 minutes later when I'd just gotten out of the shower I hear mom and dad arguing.

Dad: "What's taking her so long!"

Mom: "She'll be here soon."

Dad: "I don't have time for this crap! Don't you guys know how to keep time. I've been waiting over here for 30 minutes!"

Mom: "Look it's not my fault that you decided to not sleep at home. And I will not allow you to take it out on her."



Dad:"How dare you talk to me like that!Maya!!"

Mom:"Can you stop shouting none of us are deaf."

Dad:"None but you.You such a disgrace!Maya!!!"

It was just way too early for this bullshit.I mean I could hear him in fact the whole neighbourhood could.When I ws finally dressed I headed to the kitchen to grab my breakfast but I found dad there watching me.

Me:"I'm just having breakfast,we still have time its only 07:00.

Dad:"Get in the car!"

Me:"But my breakfast..."

Dad:"I said get in the car!"

That's was flippen bullshit.I mean he can't deny me breakfast.I know it was stupid of me to back chat but I ws really hungry.I mean I hadn't eaten in the last 8 hours.And I get really cranky if I don't eat breakfast.So being my usual stubborn self.

Me:"Ok fine,but I'm taking my tea and toast with me."

Dad:"What?!"

Me:"In the car,I'll eat it on the way.

Mom:"Maya just leave the tea and toast."

Me:"But mom..."

Dad:"I said get in the car."

Me:"I'm not going unless I've eaten!"

Mom:"What are you doing?"

Dad starts dragging me trying to get me out of the house but know I'm mad.I mean what the fuck does he think his doing?He can't force me to go with him.

Me:"Let go!!"

Mom:"Please your hurting her."

Dad:"Shut up!!"

Me:"Dont tell her to shut up!You shut up!"

Mom:"Maya keep quite."

Me:"Why!?"

Dad:"You think you tough!"

Me:"I don't need you to take me to school!! I have feet!"

Mom:"Keep quite."

Dad:"Fine then!From now on you take yourself to school!Well see how long you last!"

Me:"Best idea ever!"

That's when he grabs Sally and drives off with her.He was probably going to drop her off at school.

Mom:"What is wrong with you.Do you always have to say what you thinking.Can't you keep your mouth shut!"

Me:"Why should I God gave me a mouth so I'm using it."

Mom:"Thats why I can't leave!Imagine me leaving you alone with him!He'd probably murder you!"

Me:"Maybe you should try standing up to him more!You keep doing nothing!And I'm sorry if I don't want to be like you!! I can't keep quite!"

Mom:"But look at what your big mouth did.How you going to go to school everyday."

Me:"I'll take a taxi."

Mom:"No you won't its dangerous!Your a girl,its not safe."

Me:"Mom ill be fine.Relax,No one will want to kidnap me..."

Mom:"This is not funny!Just be safe."

Me:"Ok."

That's when I walked out the door and headed to the nearest road where I could take a taxi to school.To be honest it wasn't that bad.I mean I wasn't kidnapped or snything.So you see there was nothing to worry about.I even managed to get to school only 20 minutes late.

Things at school went smoothly.Went to all my classes,hung out with my friends.It was just another day in Paradise for me.Well untill I heard that school would be closing due to some virus.Most of my peers were elated.Why wouldn't they be,I mean there would be no school for a while.

But me I was dying inside.Because that meant that I'd be stuck at home with dad.My own home would turn into some kind of prison cell.There was no escaping him.And after what happened this morning I had it coming.

## **CHAPTER 122: Lockdown begins(night time affairs):**

The first few weeks of lockdown weren't that bad everyone kept to themselves. Well actually I spent my days with mom and Sally and dad spent his alone. Occasionally dad would yell at us to keep it down but that was it.

Obviously my nerves were all over the place. I kept waiting for when he'd finally want to take his revenge. I mean dad wasn't one to forget such forms of disrespect. I know some may say that I was becoming paranoid. But his dad. I couldn't just accept that he'd somehow changed overnight.

I prayed every night for the lockdown to just end. I mean yeah I was enjoying spending time with mom and dad. But I was also freaking out, I was on the verge of paranoia. Sometimes during the night when I'd open my eyes for a few seconds I felt like someone was watching me. I thought I was going crazy. But one morning I woke up and I was covered with a second blanket. I mean I specifically remembered that I only had one blanket the night before. So when I asked mom she said it wasn't her. So by process of elimination it had to be dad and I was right. Apparently he came to check up on me and thought I was feeling cold. That worried me. I mean he never ever checked up on me. So I told mom. And mom started worrying too. I know he didn't do anything but I was still afraid. I know his my dad, but these things happen all the time. And mom always warned me about dressing decently.

What did she expect from me I dressed decent when I was not home so I think I deserve to dress comfortable in my own home. I mean it wasn't anything revealing. Regular old shorts and crop tops.

But I guess mom was right in that department. I know I didn't know for sure

that that's what he was thinking but better safe than sorry.

But besides the weird night hallucinations, we were 2 months in and not a single scene had been caused. And that was a huge Guinness world record for dad.

## **CHAPTER 123:Escape gone wrong:**

So the whole night thing happened and from then on I took mom's advise and stopped wearing shorts.I even started locking my door so there weren't any more late night visits to my room.I think things were ok after that.

But one night just as my paranoia was slowly fading dad finally let his true colours shine.That night dad was sort of drunk which suprised me.Dad hardly ever drank.I culd literally count the number of times I saw him drink on one hand.So in his drunken state he called Sally over and tried giving her sip.

Me:"Sally come here."

Sally:"Daddys giving me juice."

Me:"Come here,I'll give you juice."

Dad:"What is wrong with you leave the child alone!"

I then go and grab Sally and walk her to the kitchen where I get her real juice.To be honest I expected dad to come barging into the kitchen yelling at me but he didn't do any of that.In fact he was right where I had left him.I guess he was too drunk to do anything.

Anyway 2 or 3 hours later me and Sally start fighting over what to watch on tv.Sallys sreaming at me because that's what she does when she wants something.I'm trying to reason with her,because I just want to watch one show and then she can watch what ever she wants.I literally start pleading with mom to get Sally to stop but but she just sits there and laughs.Atleast mom got to watch tv,and it wasn't even through a tv screen.

Feeling fed up I decide to put an end to it, so I grab the remote and change the channel.This makes Sally mad so she starts crying.The kind that breaks your eardrums.Really annoyrd with her I change it back just to get her to stop making tgat noise.But no she doesn't stop, in fact she cries louder.

A couple of minutes later dad walks in and starts yelling.

Dad:"Can't you see she's just a kid."

Me:"I changed it back."

Dad:"Dont talk back!"

Mom:"Maya go to your room."

Not wanting to aggravate the situation, I actually end up leaving. Mom and dad obviously start fighting the moment I'm out of sight, which made me feel like crap. I mean did I really have to watch the stupid show. In fact I won't even get to watch it anyway. All I did was make dad angry. I just gave them another reason to hate each other. I was the reason they were fighting. I've always been the reason for their fights. Whether I did it intentionally or not. I was the root of all their problems.

So while I'm in my room trying to drown out their shouting I remember that I left Sally behind. I should've just left her there because when I go to get her I'm greeted by hell itself.

Dad: "I told you to go to your room!"

Me: "I just came to get..."

Mom: "Maya just go..."

I couldn't be there anymore. I know mom meant, go to your room but I remember thinking I'll just go and get out of their lives. So I went back into my room and this time I packed a bag with clothes.

When I went back into the living room mom and dad were still arguing. But I didn't really care. I wasn't going to be here anymore. I wouldn't have to listen to this again. I know I had promised myself that I wouldn't leave without Sally. But I think I deserved to be selfish. I mean shouldn't I be number one on my agenda. I mean I can't keep putting other people's happiness in front of mine even if one of those people was my 4 year old sister.

Mom: "Maya where you going?"

Me: "I'm leaving, I don't want to be here anymore!"

Mom: "You don't know what you're saying.."

Dad: "You want to go!! Then go!!"

Mom: "Don't listen to him Maya, put the bag down. It's late.."

Dad: "What are you waiting for go!!"

I started walking to the door, but just 5 steps from my original position and I felt dad pull me back roughly. I tumbled backwards and landed on the floor. Mom quickly rushed to my side and formed a barrier around me.

Mom:"What are you doing!!"

Dad:"She thinks she's tough!You want to leave right!Then go!!But if you do you not going with anything!

Me:"Fine!!! don't need anything from you anyway!

Mom:"Shut up Maya,keep quite!"

I take of my bag and throw it on the floor I push mom away from me and stand up to start walking again.But again dad grabs me and throws me to the floor.

Dad:"That includes the clothing you have on."



## **CHAPTER 124:Striped butt naked:**

I couldn't believe my ears.Dad was serious.For a second I felt like I should just do what mom does,be passive.But that's just not who I am.I was determined to leave.So I stopped myself of every last piece of clothing I had on untill I was in my underwear and bra alone.

Mom:"Maya what are you doing!"Don't do this!What do you think you doing shes your daughter!!How can you make her do this!!

Dad:"The underwear as well!"

So as humiliated as I felt I took it off.I stood but naked in front of my dad. When I finally unclasped my bra and it had dropped to the floor I walked past him making my way to the door.I didn't even think about the fact that I would be heading out in the dark naked.I was a flippen 15 turning 16 year old and I was ready to walk out of my house naked in the middle of the night.Who knew what would happen to me that night.The chances were high that I would be raped,but I didnt care about any of that.All I cared about was getting as far away from my dad as possible.

But I guess dad felt challenged by me.I don't think he expected me to go throuh with it.I think deep down he wanted me to apologise and beg for his forgiveness.But sorry for him,because I'd never beg him for forgiveness,because I did nothing wrong.

So if stripping me down naked wasnt enough just as I was opening the front door he grabbed me and this time he threw me against the wall.Mom obviously came running to protect but dad was already on me.He was beating the crap out of me.But instead of protecting myself I let him.I don't know why but I kept yelling:

Me:"Hit me!!!"

Over and over again and he did.When mom made it to my side she took some of my blows but I kept pushing her aside yelling:

Me:"Move mom,let him hit me!!!"

Mom:"Keep quite!!!"

Me:"No,let him hit me!!!"

I don't know how long that carried on for but the blows kept coming at one point he even started stamping in my head with his foot but I still didn't protect myself.My mom still calls me crazy for that.She seriously thinks I

had a death wish that night and she swore he would've killed me.Maybe she's right,maybe I did have a death wish.I mean it wouldn't be the first time that I thought killing myself would've been easier.

Anyway when dad finally looked like he had, had his fill I stood up and walked out into the front of the yard.But clearly I was wrong about dad.He ends up following me into the front yard with a wet mop in his hand.When i reach the gate obviously it's locked.And now I'm cornered again.Dad starts hitting me with the mop pushing Mr into the gate.

Dad:"You want to leave right!!Then go!!Get out of my life!Gooooooooo!!!!

Me:"Wheres the key!"

Dad:"Go look for it yourself."

Mom:"Maya what you doing,just stop this!"

So i turn to go back into the house but he still keeps hitting me.By the time I get to the door he manages to block my entrance.

Me:"I want to go in,to look for the key!"

Dad:"You will not step foot into this house!

Me:"Exactly so let me get the key and I'll go!"

Dad:"You decided to walk out right well you should've thaught about that."

Me:"Fine!"

I head back outside and find a spot to sit on in the front yard.I end up spending the next hour sitting in my front yard in the middle of a cold night completely naked.Mom and Sally were forbidden to see me but mom found a way to get to me.

Mom:"Why are you doing this."

I hated seeing mom like that,her eyes were blood red and she looked horrible.Like she'd just been in a war.

Me:"I want to leave."

Mom:"Are you crazy.You can't.."

Me:"I want to leave."

Mom:"Please,don't do this to me,I already lost Joe."

Me:"I want to leave."

That's when dad walks out and standing a few feet away from me.He starts talking about how disrespectful I am and how I'm hurting him.To be honest I wasn't even listening to half the rubbish he was talking about,because I

already knew that it was total bullshit. It was the same old lecture: I work so hard for you guys, everything I do is for you. Flippen bullshit.

Me: "I want to leave!"

Dad: "Where you going to go."

Me: "I want to leave!!"

Dad: "You.."

Me: "I font want to be here with you, I want to leave!!!"

Dad: "Fine then I'll leave."

That's when he opens the gate and a screaming shouting me tries to get out but he pushes me and I fall down to the ground while he makes his escape. By the time I get bsck up hid long gone.

I don't know why but I start banging on the gate yelling let me out!!! You can't do this to me!!! Let me out!!!

## CHAPTER 125:Consequences are felt:

For 5 full minutes all I do is yell and bang as hard as I can on the gate. But then my head starts hurting, like really hurting. And when I touch it my hand comes back bloody, and given my phobia for my own blood I become hysterical and start yelling at mom:

Me: "Maa!!! I'm bleeding! Please do you have the other key! I need to get to the hospital!"

Mom: "Calm down it's probably just a scratch!"

Me: "Ma, it hurts!"

Mom: "I know you'll be fine. Come let's go inside and I'll get you cleaned up."

Me: "I'm not going inside!"

Mom: "Stop being so stubborn."

I don't know why but going inside seemed like a good idea and not to get cleaned up which I need since my head was dripping blood but I had other plans of my own. So I end up going inside and the first thing I did was look for my phone. I needed to call the police. I mean I was beaten to a pulp by my dad. When mom found me in my room frantically searching for something she was concerned.

Mom: "What are you looking for?"

Me: "My phone."

Mom: "Why?"

Me: "I'm calling the police, please help me look."

That's when mom who had been standing in my doorway comes to my side.

Mom: "You can't do that."

Me: "Why not. He's a criminal."

Mom: "He's also your father."

Me: "He doesn't know what it means to be a father!"

Mom: "You not thinking straight."

Me: "Do you enjoy being beaten up?"

Mom: "Of course not."

Me: "If I do this we might have a chance to be free of him."

Mom: "Then what! Who'll look after you and Sally!?"

Me: "You have a job..."

Mom: "Don't be stupid, my job can barely put food on the table! What about school?"

Me:"Well figure it out!"

Mom:"You not thinking straight becuse you head hurts.You don't know what you saying!Just forget all this jail nonsense ok!"

Me:"But.."

Mom:"But mom what,I told you to keep quite,but you just wouldnt now look!You have to stop being so hotheaded.You a girl soon you'll be woman.What happens when you get married,and I'm not there to protect you."

Me:"Who says I'm going to get married.And anyway theirs no way in he'll I'm going to marry a guy like that."

Mom:"Did you think I knew that this would be my life once I got married.I was your age when we got married.And you know he said he loved me.."

Me:"I know,but this isn't love,and thst was a long time ago.

Mom:"Lets go check out your head."

So that's what we did we went Ingo the bathroom Where Mom soaked my head with salt and warm water.That thing hurt.And to be honest I have a low pain acceptance rate.So naturally I cried the whole time.When mom was done she made me take a bath in the same warm and salt concoction to help my bruising.Lucky thing I'm generally dark in complexion.I mean i could still see the marks but they weren't that visible if you looked at them from a distance.

Once I was done I headed into moms room where I just laid my head on her lap while Sally lay hers on my mine.

Mom:"I just hope I'm still alive when you get married.So I can help you heal your wounds."

Me:"If I do get married I won't let my husband abuse me."

Mom:"Thats what we all say."

Me:"I'm serious,if he lays a hand on me I'm divorcing him."

Mom:"Then you should prepare yourself for lots of divorce cases."

Me:"Its not funny."

Mom:"Just saying you too hotheaded for marriage,and men don't like being questioned."

Me:"I just don't get why you have to listen to everything a guy says without questioning him,even if his wrong."

Mom:"You just got beaten up and you might need to have your head checked up tomorrow and you still insist on speaking your mind.Lord help you.Why can't you be like other girls."

Me:"What do you mean like other girls.You know me, I'm not like

that.What's the big difference between a man and a women,its just that we have different appendages."

Mom:"Its more than that.What about religion."

Me:"Does religion say that its ok for a man to beat up his wife and strip his own daughter of her dignity and then beat her too."

Mom:"Lets just leave it.I won't be changing your mind anytime soon.Maybe I won't even have to stay alive."

Me:"What you talking about?"

Mom:"Sally can help you heal you wounds."

Laughter.

Me:"Really mom."

Mom:"Thats only if you'll even allow her into your house.Who knows your husband might leave you for her."

Me:"Gross mom,Sallies 12 years younger than me and she's my sister."

Mom:"Exactly she's 12 years younger than you.What's that song you listen to?"

Me:"Which one?"

Mom:"Youngblood."

Me:"Ewe mom..That's not what the songs about."

Mom:"I'm kidding.Inshaallah you'll find a nice husband who treats you right.Because if he touches you he shouldn't be worried about a divorce but me."

Me:"Thanx mom."

Mom:"Its really late get some sleep."

I don't know how but I managed to get some sleep that night.Not right away ofcourse.I ended up staying awake untill I heard dad get back home.And after a while I fell asleep.My last thought before I fell asleep was inshaallah I find someone nothing like my dad if I do get married.

## **CHAPTER 126:Shower attack:**

The next morning I got up and dad was out in the front yard washing his car.Wow!So I guess his not going to apologise.Anyway I decide that its best to avoid him.Not that I was afraid of him,because technically speaking how am I supposed to fear someone who always picks on people who he knows have no power against him.I guess he hadnt herad the saying,go pick on someone your own size.His a coward if you ask me.

Anyway I spent that day in my room because mom thought it would be a good idea if we weren't in the same room,since we were forced to live under the same roof.

Nothing dramatic took place the whole day untill I decided to take a shower.I had just taken my clothes off when he barges into the bathroom.I just didnt get it,did he loose all his sense of decency the night before.He had never done anything like that before.I mean i didn't even expect him to do that.I mean wasn't the decent think to do wait or go use the other bathroom.I mean the water was running do clearly he could hear that someone was taking a shower or about to.And he knew very well that it was me, because Mom had her own bathroom in her room.

I was really weary of him at that point because one mom was out.She had gone to buy groceries and that meant I was alone in the house with him.Realising that I was still stalk naked in front of him I grab my towel close the taps and put my dirty laundry in the basket.

Suddenly I wasn't in the mood to take a shower anymore.So I rush out of there and head into my room where I lock myself in untill mom gets back home.

When mom gets back home I tell her everything.I mean that is her husband and she deserved to know that I don't feel safe around him.

Me:"Maya,when I was in the shower dad walked in."

Mom:"What do u you mean?"

Me:"I was going to take a shower and then he walks in."

Mom:"For real."

Me:"I wouldn't lie about this."

Mom:"I know.I'm sorry.."

Me:"What you going to do?"

Mom:"I guess I can't leave you home alone anymore."

Me:"Maya,this isn't a joke,I don't trust dad."

Mom:"I'm not joking."

Me:"Think about it mom,yesterday he makes me take off my clothes and today his walking into the bathroom while I'm about to shower.What could happen tomorrow."

Mom:"I know,buts its not my fault you actually took off your clothes."

Me:"Wow,thanx mom."

Mom:"I'm just saying,what did you expect."

Me:"Just make sure he doesn't do it again."

Mom:"It won't happen again."

I really hoped for moms sake it didn't happen again.Because I couldn't live in a house where I didn't feel safe.I wouldn't.It's bad enough thst I have to guard myself against outsider.So she shouldn't expect me to do that in my own house.The one I should feel safe.I mean it's just sick.My own dad.The man who helped create me.Disgusting.



## **CHAPTER 127: Paedophile and pervert in the house:**

For the next few weeks I didn't get a repeat of that. Mom tried her absolute best to be around when dad was in close proximity with me. And I stopped using the general bathroom altogether. I started using mom's bathroom and even then I made sure to close both doors. The bedroom door and the bathroom door.

I know it was a bit much but I didn't feel safe with him in the house. And to be honest I'm glad I took all those precautions. I mean whom I knew what he was capable of. I was so afraid for my well-being that I never went to sleep without locking my bedroom door again. I meant it wouldn't be the first time that he crept into my room. And I doubted that this time it would be innocent. Mom was just as paranoid as I was. I mean she's always been paranoid about my safety but this time she had every right to be. We were clearly facing a huge threat.

So things weren't that great. I was watching my own dad like a hawk. But one day I let my guard down. Not exactly since mom was in her bathroom and I needed to take a shower so I decided to go back to using my one again. So I'm in the shower and guess what. Dad walks in. So do the first thing that comes to mind and scream, then I grab my towel and quickly cover myself up.

A few minutes later mom's in the bathroom. She too had a towel wrapped around her. She'd just gotten out of the shower.

Mom: "What are you doing get out!!!"

Dad: "I didn't do anything, I just wanted to use the bathroom."

Mom: "When Maya is inside! Get out!!!"

Dad: "You making a big deal out of nothing."

Instead of standing there and watching them go back and forth I get out of there and head to mom's room where I complete the rest of shower.

I was really afraid now. I mean once is an honest mistake but twice. It was just unacceptable. So when mom came back in I went all crazy.

Me: "Maa, he has to go!!!"

Mom: "What were you doing in that bathroom?!"

Me: "I wanted to take a shower and you were using your bathroom. But that's not the point. You have to talk to him!"

Mom: "I..."

Me:"You what,he has to know that what his doing is unacceptable."

Mom:"Ok,I'll talk to him."

Me:"Can you please go get me clothes from my room."

Mom:"His not gonna do anything to you."

Me:"I don't know that anymore!"Please!"

Mom:"Ok fine."

When mom brings me my clothes a few minutes later I quickly get changed and then drag her to the living to speak to dad.

Mom:"What are you doing?"

Me:"You said you going to speak to him,so come let's go."

Mom:"Now?"

Me:"Yes now,I want to sort out everything now.The sooner the better."

Seconds later we in the living room.

Mom:"Joe you can't be walking in on Mays when shes taking a shower."

Dad:"You still on that."It's not a big deal."

Me:"It is a big deal..."

Mom:"shhh.."

Dad:"Its not like its the first time I've seen you like that."

Wait what did he say.Was I hearing right.Was he referring to the time he made me strip naked or the other shower incident.I was at a loos for words.Was my dad one of those psychopath paedophile stalkers that looked in through unsuspecting girls windows while they showered?

Mom:"What do you mean?"

Dad:"Nothing forget about it."

Me:"Do you watch me when I shower?!"

Mom:"Maya.."

Me:"No mom the guy you call your husband is a bloody paedophile!!

Dad:"Watch those big words of yours.I never did anything."

Mom:"Maya lets go.."

Me:"Why!!"

Dad:"Look if I wanted to hurt you I would've done that a long time ago don't you think."

Me:"Your disgusting!!What type of father are you!!"

That's when mom drags me away into my room and shuts the door behind

us.

Me:"What was that!Did you hear him!"

Mom:"I did,and I'm going to take Cate of it.I just need you to calm down."

Me:"Dont tell me to calm down tell that to your disgusting husband."

Mom:"Maya please.I'm going to go talk to him and sort all of this out.But you need to stay here and calm down,freaking out won't help anything."

Mom then basically walks out the door.I couldn't believe it,before that whole I'm leaving incident my own dad was secretly spying on me every time I took a shower.How the fuck did I not notice.And for how long was this going on without my knowing.Did mom know.Ofcourse she didn't.But know we all knew.It's one thing living another same roof as him when I didn't know.But know that I did I didnt want to be anywhere near him.It's either he left or I did.And I wasn't messing around this time.

## **CHAPTER 128:Results:**

I don't really know what mom and dad were talking about but for her sake I hope she was telling him where to get off. I know its not easy hearing that your husband had Bern keeping an eye on your 15 turning 16 year old daughter while she showered. But for my sake she needed to forget the fact that he was her husband. I mean I'm her daughter. She gave birth to me. Surely I weigh more value to her than he does.

So while I was racking my brain over the fact that my dad was a paedophile mom came back into my room 30 minutes later.

Me:"And?"

Mom:"As soon as this lockdown thing is sorted his moving out."

Me:"For real."

Mom:"Yes. You dont have to worry. You just have to stick it out for a little while longer."

That was the best news I heard that day. I mean granted I still had to wait for the lockdown scenario to blow over but I could handle that. I'd just have to go back to using moms bathroom and locking all doors. I could survive that. I mean how long could the lockdown go on for?

## **CHAPTER 129:Dad moves out for good:**

So the lockdown situation took a little longer than I had expected but it did eventually end.About a month after that incident dad finally moved out.

I mean I was elated that he was moving out but the other part of me was afraid for the woman he was moving in with.I mean who knew how bad he'd treat her.But you know what they say sometimes its ok to think about yourself.And I deserved it.

So the next few months that was left of this miserable school year I only saw dad when he took me to school and braught me back.And instead of having our usual civilised drives I became hostile towards him.I mean I no longer had any respect for him as my father.And to be honest I didn't trust myself to be left alone with him.So I only spoke to him when I needed to.This included telling him when I wasn't going to school and informing him of my visions to study abroad.

I know I said I'll be selfish but Sally clearly missed having dad around.Every morning when he came to pick us up she was do elated to see him.And that broke my heart.Because honestly Sally has always loved dad,infact she loved him more than she loved mom.So so,e part of me felt like I was taking something special away from her.But the bigger part of me knew that she was better off without him.And she'd get used to it eventually.I mean him not staying home was for her own good.

## **CHAPTER 130:Present day:**

When school was over and we finished writing our last paper I never saw him again.From my last exam paper till today I only saw him 10 times.And it wasn't like I wanted to.It was a case of my circumstances demanded I see him.

So this brings me to my present day.I currently spend all my days sitting at home with my now 4 and a half year old baby sister Sally while mom goes to work.In fact go this year I don't plan on being here anymore.

God willing I'm planning on finishing my schooling abroad.I'm not running away this time.Well I kinda am,but this time it has more to do with my actual education.I actually trully believe that this is the right opportunity for me.And I guess the fact that it's a traveling school is just the cherry on the top.

As far as Joe is concerned about 2 months ago he made contact with me and my parents.It was well overdue considering that I hadn't heard from him for nearly two whole years.I'm glad he got in touch and I'm glad his doing ok.I mean I don't support any of his life choices.And if you asked me he shouldnt have dropped out of school.But his 18 now,so that means his an adult and by now he should know the difference between right and wrong,and he should be able to make his own descissions.And it really doesn't matter wether I agree with him or not.It's his life afterall so he should live it as he wishes.To this day I'm really sorry about how his life turned out because of dads selfish actions, but as much as much as I'd like to blame dad for his role at some point we all need to take responsibility for our own auctions.

Mom and Sally are goodSally passed her first year at pre school and she was top student.I'm really proud of her for that.It just proves mom wrong,her big head is infact not a waste of space.Shes actually got a brain somewhere in there.

Mom on the other hand uses every second chance she gets to try and make me rethink my going abroad for school.But I don't plan on changing my mind.I know she's going to worry about me all the time if I do get accepted but she'll just have to live with it.And as harsh as this sounds I can't be her crutch anymore.So her non-existent brokrn leg needs yo heal

soon. Because she needs to learn to stand on her own two feet.

But besides that mom needs to look at the bigger picture. I mean if I get accepted to this school that means that dad won't have a hold over her anymore. She'll be able to start her own life. I'll be out of the picture and with me out of the picture there is no picture to hold on to. So instead of being against the whole idea she needs to get on the train and move along with it. I mean my dear lady wished for acceptance is win-win situation. And it's not like she won't see me again. I'll be back after every two months for holiday.

So as you can see the new year brings lots of desperately needed gifts. I mean things could change for my family and hopefully it's for the better. But let me stop right there before I jinx anything. I mean we all know that life is unpredictable. So I leave the rest of my life in God's hands where it has always been.....

## **Additional words from author:**

All names given to me and me and anyone mentioned in the book are fictional. But the events that took place are all true. If you a friend of mine you'll be able to work out who's who. If you don't know who I am that's also cool since I'd like to say anonymous. I hope you enjoyed my book. And please bear in my mind I'm not a writer this is my first book so if you don't like it that's ok. Because the only reason I wrote this book was to release some of the unwanted baggage I'd been carrying around for so long. I know I'm not special in fact so many other girls my age go through the same thing if not worse. In fact I was lucky to get out of it with no physical scars for example being raped. But I honestly think I went through all the emotional stages. I don't want anyone's pity all I want is to get my story out there. To break the silence. And considering the fact that I consider myself a huge feminist I can't expect other women and girls to share their stories while I keep mine hidden. That would be really hypocritical of me. And you know what they say practice what you preach, So this is me doing just that. If anyone felt like they related to my story in any way I'm glad I could help. I know it's not my place to say this but keeping quiet and bottling it up inside doesn't help the situation in fact it only makes it worse. I don't want to sound like I'm preaching but I think I know how it feels. Like I'm thankful for my imaginary friend who was there but the fact of the matter is he couldn't really respond back and even if he did it was my imagination formulating what I wanted him to say. So it's good if you have an outlet like a diary or imaginary friend like me but you can only carry on like that up to a point. One day it'll become too much where you feel like you're about to burst unless you tell someone. So to avoid reaching that point confide in someone you trust I promise you you'll feel a whole lot better. I know I did.

Here's to ending the silence because one of my favourite feminist Mona Elathway once said patriarchy feeds off silence, it loves silence. And I totally agree with her. I mean the only reason my dad had such a huge hold against me was because he knew I'd never tell anyone about it and that meant he could carry on with his shifty behaviour because there were no consequences to be paid. But then I decided to speak up. I might not be doing it upright and in his face but it's no longer a secret. I feel free. I know it sounds cliché but I actually do. I feel like my life truly begins after this book because before this book I was just a shell of who I'm meant to be. And I don't want to be a shell anymore I want to be me. The real full



me. So go out there and speak your truth in your own unique way. And don't let anybody make you feel worthless. Because the only person that can make you feel like that is you. Stand strong and always keep fighting. Because your whole life is waiting for you.

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