

Introduction

I have yet to encounter anything quite as exhausting or more brutal than trying to fall asleep on the pavement at the height of a Johannesburg winter. The benefits are few, and the nights are long, but for me, there is nothing more distressing than the extreme loneliness that comes with the territory.

I actually envy the junkies on these streets because they all have something that binds them together. While rifts and rivalries undoubtedly develop in their ranks, they still interact, barter, trade, and share. Each drug addict has a genuine appreciation for what the other is going through, and when the chips are down, they stick together.

I deserve to be here as payment for my many imagined sins, but I certainly don't belong here, which has not gone completely unnoticed.

"Why are you on the streets, chief?" one of them asked me.

Of course, I didn't ask him for a name, and I am pretty certain I would have forgotten it anyway.

"Because I don't have a place I can call home," I responded.

"Nonsense. Everybody has a home," he said, with a surprising air of confidence.

"Is that so?" I asked, fearing I was about to be subjected to some form of life lesson from a bona fide drug addict.

"I have been watching you. You are not a junkie, you don't drink, you don't smoke, and you don't do drugs. You don't even hustle."

And here it comes...

"The streets of Johannesburg are no place for somebody like you. Look around, this place will eat you alive. Swallow whatever pride you think you have and find a way off the streets. Just look around you; it's not hard to see where these roads lead. Take the exit while you still can."

I opted for silence while staring blankly ahead. I decided not to argue the point, partly because the junkie's argument had merit but primarily because I was not in the mood for company, not while I was still coming to terms with life at the bottom of the barrel.

Frankly, I could live with being homeless and unemployed. I am even completely comfortable with the idea of death, which I am told is inevitable on these streets, but the thought that the only people missing me right now are probably prostitutes and strippers is just soul-destroying.

I am pretty certain Wolfgang Storm's name has featured in at least one WhatsApp group associated with the strippers and hookers of Cape Town, but I can't imagine I have been so

much as an afterthought to peers, colleagues, and even family since wandering into the concrete wilderness.

Money can't buy you happiness, but at least I was able to rent it for large portions of my adult life.

Now, there is no cash to splash; I have become John Cena...invisible. What worth am I to anybody beyond the material?

Every minor victory I have totted up during the past 20 years has, in fact, been hollow, and everything I imagined I achieved as a working professional has fizzled to nothing.

My severe lack of social development has never been more cruelly exposed, which is an extraordinary reality to be faced with, but when I reflect on it now, my days of 'happiness' have always been numbered.

Some people who fall on hard times have a life worth fighting for, but what awaits me when I emerge from this gutter? And it really is a question of WHEN, as opposed to IF.

"So, what's your deal?" asked my new hobo in arms. I had actually forgotten about him. While I really didn't see the point in getting into that with him, it remains a pertinent question.

How on earth did I get here?

How It Started

Chapter One

The 40-minute journey back home from Central Cape Town was tedious but unavoidable. For most of the working week, I completed the journey on Metrorail, usually via the Century City Line.

But I relied on Chris, a talkative Nigerian cab driver of Ibo extraction, for social evenings. At times, he could be a little overwhelming, but I trusted him, and that was enough for me. His constant judgment seemed a small price to pay in the greater scheme of things.

"Wolfman, my brodder, what are you doing tomorrow?"

I already knew where this discussion was heading, but fortunately, I had prepared an ironclad defense.

"I have to work, bru."

"On a Sunday?"

"Yeah, nature of the beast, hey. Double shift, too. A lot of ground to cover."

The bullet was successfully dodged, or so I thought.

The appropriately named Chris never squandered an opportunity to shove Christianity down my throat, which seemed a common feature of Nigerian expats settled throughout South Africa, but hell would freeze over before I walked into one of those happy churches again.

Far be it for me to pass judgment on their faith, but I was pretty certain the church was nothing more than a viable business venture to them. 'Go to South Africa and become a Pastor; you will make money.' That is the barbeque conversation I always imagined.

"Wolfman, you need to make time for God, my brodder. All the things of this world are worthless. You need to start investing in the afterlife." continued Chris.

"Chris, you are worse than a Jehovah's Witness. Why can't you just be happy with the blessings I shower upon you every weekend?"

"Those are God's blessings, my brodder. Also, you are not my only client on a Saturday night."

"How many of your clients live North of the Boerewors Curtain? I chose you, Chris, despite the presence of more legitimate e-hailing services. God sent me to you, so why do you have the additional urge to pick my pocket on a Sunday morning?"

"I must honor my God by guiding one of his lost sheep. It is not about the money."

"Oh please, money is all your happy churches care about. If anything, God needs to save me from you."

"God needs to save you from those coloured whores."

While I tried to conceal it, that comment stung a little, as it was a painful reminder of my own insignificance. A reminder that I so repulsed women I had to pay them for company, and that didn't always come with guarantees either.

I keep trying to convince myself that I chose this life, but in truth, it chose me. I couldn't even blame the path I had taken on years of stone-cold rejection; one has to actually pluck up the courage to court a woman for that to happen.

No, I was born gutless and lonely.

"Whores of all races make me happy, Chris, especially those of the coloured variety." I retorted.

"Then why do you look so bleak?"

"I am just drunk."

Chris burst out laughing...so loud it probably sobered me up.

“That was funny, but you are lying to yourself, Wolfman, my brodder.”

What if I was?

The working women of Cape Town helped fill a void in me that nobody else could. They provided a service that men like myself so desperately needed, a service that I could never reasonably expect a ‘respectable’ servant of God to provide.

My options were seemingly limitless, too. Bars, strip clubs, and brothels were scattered all over Central Cape Town, from Barrack Street to Loop Street. Most of them were packed with coloured women, who happened to be just the tonic for me.

We all have a type, don’t we?

Coloured women have always been my kryptonite, but while they certainly have the most redeeming features and qualities, I now suspect there is more to it than just that, and I figure it all started with Aunty Mavis about three decades ago.

I only knew Aunty Mavis for one year, but I fear our brief association had lasting consequences, certainly for me. I was just 12 years old when I first met Mavis, who lived in the landlord's cottage on the same property as us, while my mother and I lived in the servant's quarters.

We were not equals, but Mavis never reminded me of that.

She was a mature coloured woman - the first coloured woman I had ever met - possibly well into her fifties, although I couldn’t tell you for sure. I know she had two adult children - one actually married.

She could have been my grandmother.

Mavis worked in sales, which meant she was often on the road, but when she was home, she was usually alone, which provided fertile ground for us to develop a formidable and, as it turns out unhealthy attachment. We became bosom buddies in more ways than one.

“You mustn’t be shy in this cottage; you are completely at home here.” she once told me, and it certainly worked out that way, too.

I was in and out whenever I pleased and stuck my head in her fridge whenever my stomach growled. If there were ever any boundaries when I first met Mavis, they had long since been eroded.

One morning in particular, I was feeling a little peckish, and, craving Mavis’s cook sisters, I decided to pay her a visit. While I usually just waltzed into her cottage uninvited, on this particular Saturday, my gut told me to knock.

It is extraordinary how things just align that way sometimes.

“Come in, Wolfie,” Mavis shouted from what sounded like a fair distance. Perhaps she was freshening up in the bathroom, I thought, and subsequently let myself in.

I didn’t notice anything untoward when I walked into her cottage, which merely confirmed my earlier suspicions. I then turned around and absent-mindedly shut the door.

“Hey there...” she said, startling me.

Still suspecting nothing, I then turned around, with my mind now firmly on the golden brown and juicy cook sisters in the kitchen, and as I looked up to locate Mavis, I got a lot more ‘golden brown and juicy’ than I could possibly have bargained for.

Mavis was standing just outside her bathroom door, completely naked. She hadn’t even toweled herself down yet.

I was at that type of age when I had become increasingly curious about the female body, and this was something I had already noted at school about a year earlier when I no longer regarded the likes of Miss de Waal, Miss Hulley, and Miss Davidson as just my teachers.

That curtain of innocence had long been lifted, never to be lowered again. All three teachers had become subjects of my boyhood fantasies, but I had never seen any of them naked or even partially naked.

Mavis’s stunt had taken me into uncharted territory, and despite not quite knowing what the protocol was, I managed to compose myself.

“Hey, Aunty Mavis. Was just stopping by for some cook sisters. Never mind me.” I replied rather nonchalantly.

I kept talking as I quickly disappeared into the kitchen.

“It looks like I have caught you at a rather bad time. Are you rushing out to a sales meeting?” I continued as I opened the fridge.

“I do have a meeting, but I am in no rush.” That comment was loaded with innuendo, but even if I knew how to react, I was determined to downplay the moment’s significance.

“Coolio,” I said blankly.

“Aren’t you playing tennis today?”

“Nope, got knocked out of the current tournament last weekend. A bit of a relief, actually. I am sick of traveling.”

“You young people have no patience. Westridge Park is only 90 minutes away. I am on the road all the time.”

“I honestly don’t know how you do it, Aunty Mavis.”

“You make it sound like I have a choice. Money talks, my boy. Money talks.”

And so, the small talk continued until she eventually asked me to her room...something to do with not hearing me clearly at the other end of the cottage. When I got to her doorway, I was horrified to learn that she had yet to put any clothes on.

What witchcraft was this?

It was only then that she casually walked towards her closet, slowly and deliberately, as if she had intended for me to capture every inch of her gorgeous figure. She never looked back the whole time, which was actually a relief.

The last thing I needed was to be caught in the act.

My eyes were firmly fixed on Mavis's body, examining every curve, every mound, and every slit.

Her skin was flawless, which feels like an extraordinary thing to say about a woman well into her fifties. There was not a varicose vein in sight, and the few wrinkles I spotted actually enhanced her appearance.

I just gawked as Mavis bent over to rummage through her lingerie selection. She eventually settled on a blue floral outfit, which featured an embroidered mesh underwire bra and cute matching panties - both seemed to reveal more than they hid.

Given the reason Mavis had called me to her room, there was astonishingly little conversation going on at this point. She first slipped on the panties while facing the other way.

The lining hugged her butt cheeks perfectly, while the mesh merely gave off the impression of them being covered. I absorbed all the details, from the small of her back to the tiny slit that separated her butt cheeks.

I was salivating aggressively now and swallowing what felt like a bucket of water with every gulp. Mavis stole a quick glance in my direction and turned back to the closet without saying a word. She noted that my pants were starting to stretch, as there was no hiding my state of being, and I was a little embarrassed by it.

What was this woman playing at?

Mavis then turned around slowly, giving me just enough time to study her breasts up close and personal. She was a mere meter away from me at best, but that didn’t stop her from taking an additional step forward anyway. The heat radiated off her body, and I took in another massive gulp while she just smiled.

Her breasts stood up perfectly, and while I was no expert on the matter, it seemed to me she did not actually need a bra. Her breasts were full and firm, while both nipples appeared erect.

It is a peculiar business, really, because on the face of it nipples are actually odd physical features, yet the first time I encountered them on Mavis, I could be left in no doubt as to their sexual appeal. I wasn't just drawn to them; I was totally aroused by them.

She had the bra in her left hand.

"Do you think you can help me with this?" she asked gently.

Stunned into complete silence, I just nodded my head, which was accompanied by another massive gulp, while she just smiled again.

Mavis clearly didn't need my help with this, but I obliged, taking a step closer to her...our bodies were almost touching now. I could feel her breath on me, and am pretty certain I could even hear her heart beating, or was that my heart thumping? I seemed to have lost all perspective.

She handed me the bra, and for that fleeting moment, I was slightly amused by her total faith in the ability of a 12-year-old boy to manage this monumental task.

The polyester and spandex fabric had some stretch, which was actually a tremendous relief, as when Mavis was still holding the bra, I wasn't entirely sure it would manage to hold her breasts, but it was now apparent to me that there would be no need for any extensive maneuvering, pulling or tugging.

The bra fabric was also extra soft and sensual, carrying Mavis's scent. I so desperately wanted to press it against my face but feared that might seem a little uncouth, even in these bizarre circumstances. The designers of lingerie do not get the credit they so clearly deserve, I thought to myself.

Mavis rotated her body ever so slightly, her hip bumping against me - my body shuddered so violently I almost dropped the bra.

"Relax, it's just me," she said before lifting up her right arm.

Grabbing her right arm, I threaded it through the first strap carefully, not passing up the opportunity to stroke the arm gently, albeit tentatively.

Mavis let it play.

She then rotated a little in the other direction, allowing me to thread her left arm through the second strap.

Sensing I was slightly daunted by what came next, Mavis grabbed one of my wrists and pulled it towards her breast. I couldn't stop shaking, and at that moment, I was less terrified by the great West Indian fast bowler Curtly Ambrose.

Gently, she helped me cup her breast and lift it slightly so as to fit perfectly into the bra.

"Take your time," she said.

I took the hint, in what I imagined to be the spirit that was intended, and felt out every inch of her breast, all the while rubbing at the surprisingly firm nipple with my thumb. The more I rubbed it, the firmer it seemed to get. 'The Aunty' never moved.

"I see you have been watching some late-night television," she said.

While I initially hesitated, I decided to continue, increasing the intensity with every stroke. I was not entirely sure what this might have been doing to her, but I could now feel the blood in my body rushing towards the slab of muscle between my legs.

'Aunty' then rotated the other way, allowing me to repeat the procedure with the other breast. Once both breasts were comfortably in the cups, Mavis turned around completely and faced the other direction as I attached the bra clip behind her.

The moment it clipped into place, I stole a glance at every inch of Mavis's back, examining every curve and every dent right down to the small of her back.

I took my time admiring every element of her butt cheeks, and just when I thought Mavis wouldn't move, she grabbed both my hands and helped me cup her buttocks. I was pleasantly surprised by just how firm they were.

First, I prodded, then I squeezed, and then I rubbed, desperately trying to explore every aspect of my sexuality. She took a step backward and pressed her butt against my crotch, rubbing against it gently a couple of times and then suddenly stopping.

She then told me to sit on the bed almost dismissively as she walked towards the closet again, this time to grab the rest of her clothes, while I just sat and watched.

When Mavis was done dressing, she grabbed her personal belongings and work items before making for the door, and I followed her obediently. When we arrived at her car, she paused and looked down at me, her face a little difficult to read.

"I hope you enjoyed your education," she said.

She opened the door and disappeared into the car, but the image of her lingered for the remainder of that weekend.

Suffice it to say, Mavis has become a point of reference for me ever since, from the shape of a woman's breasts to the curvature of her butt. Almost three decades later, I remain a certified ass and breasts man, but the greatest sticking point of all is my almost uncontrollable desire for coloured women, almost at the total exclusion of others.

For a very long time I had taken that Saturday encounter with Mavis for granted, and even blocked the entire event out my mind. But when I reflect on it now, that was the day my toxic journey began, and it did not take long for things to escalate, either.

I already had unfettered access to Mavis's cottage, as she had given me her spare set of keys a while back to water her plants and raid her fridge at leisure while she was on the road. I had never imagined I would need her keys for anything else, but that all changed following the events of that fateful Saturday morning.

The next time I entered Mavis's cottage, I swerved the kitchen before letting the plants wither and die, heading directly to her bedroom instead.

Without giving it a second thought, I began to rummage through Mavis's underwear, which was actually eye-opening, as she seemed to own more knickers than I had clothes. I had seen store displays with less underwear than this.

Could a 12-year-old boy ever feel more spoiled for choice?

"Mavis, you saucy minx," I said, thinking out loud.

It wasn't just the sheer scale of what was in her underwear closet, it was also the extraordinary range. I wondered if this was just for her, or was she living some kind of double life?

There were bra and underwear sets, exotic lingerie sets, teddies, bodysuits, body stockings, negligees, bustiers, corsets, costumes, garters, nightgowns, standalone panties, standalone bras, petticoats, and chemises.

There was lace, silk, cotton, polyester, and spandex. There were high-waist, low-waist, see-through, and fully-covered outfits. And buried under all of that, every sex toy available to man, or so I imagined anyway.

Who was this woman?

I knew why I was there but had no idea where to start, so instinctively, I grabbed the first set of knickers I could find and stretched them out in front of me to get a good look, taking in as much detail as I could, allowing my imagination to run wild.

I imagined Mavis standing in them, walking around in them, putting them on, and taking them off. Fortunately, it wasn't difficult to picture it all, given the image of Mavis's magnificent body was still fresh in my mind.

I remembered her full thighs, her curvaceous hips, her bootylicious buttocks, her perfectly shaped breasts, and two sets of juicy, thick lips. My eyes rolled back into my head, fuelled by nothing but my vivid imagination.

My pants were also stretched to their limit now, which meant merely adjusting them was no longer useful. I needed to remove them altogether before gripping my crotch with one hand and using the other to stuff Mavis's black mesh knickers into my mouth.

Upon reflection, it seemed an odd thing to do, but at the time, it couldn't have felt more natural.

Scenes like these played themselves out with increasing regularity for the remainder of the year without me ever being bothered by the prospect of being caught.

The reckless behavior started to filter out into other aspects of my life, too: cricket tours, tennis tours, swimming pool change rooms, and even boarding school dormitories.

Where there weren't clear opportunities to expand on my deviant behavior, I created them.

There were glaring examples of this at the start of my final primary school year, about a month after Aunty Mavis relocated and when I moved into my school's boarding establishment. Misses de Waal, Hulley, and Davidson were all house mistresses, which felt like a tremendous blessing.

Miss de Waal was particularly interesting to me because she enjoyed spending weekends poolside, playing lifeguard to about 100 boarders.

I never spent much time in the pool myself and preferred to hang out in the swimming pool change rooms, where the large mirror on the wall provided a meaningful view of Miss de Waal in tight shorts and a bikini top, which was all I needed to capture my imagination.

I needed the change room doors to remain open so as not to obstruct my view, but that did not stop me from masturbating right there on one of the change room benches. Doing it with my speedo on mitigated the risk of leaving clear evidence or being caught in the act, but it was a glaring risk, nevertheless,

It seems extraordinary to me that I was only ever caught in the act once, by one of my seven dorm mates late one evening, about two years after I ventured down this sordid path.

I actually remember the question like it was yesterday.

"Wolf, are you wanking?" Siphon could see my duvet cover moving suspiciously after lights out. I didn't admit it, but I didn't deny it either. Ambiguity really is something that society ought to embrace a whole lot more.

If Mavis ever knew what was going on within the confines of her bedroom or how distorted my thinking had become subsequent to that, she certainly never let on. Our cordial relations continued for the final ten months of our companionship, her commitment to my 'education' unwavering.

In all honesty, I never needed much more than the visual. I certainly wasn't physically ready for it either, and whatever Mavis's motives were, she also seemed to have a set of red lines that she was never prepared to cross.

When Mavis finally moved to Cape Town at the end of that year, where she was set to help raise her new-born grandchild, I felt like a massive part of me had been lost forever, and perhaps it was.

Perhaps I have been trying to compensate for that loss ever since.

Chapter Two

When I first arrived in Cape Town just over a decade ago, I managed to secure an apartment a brief distance from my offices. I took a train to work every morning but took a 45-minute stroll back home every evening.

It could have been a 30-minute walk if I wanted it to be, but there was nothing and nobody to rush home to. I also enjoyed the regular walks home because I always imagined they kept me healthy and helped lend some perspective.

It seems extraordinary that Aunty Mavis never cropped up in my thoughts in all that time of deep introspection. Nor did Misses Hulley, De Waal, or Davidson, for that matter.

That part of my life was well and truly behind me, but unbeknownst to me, a more terrifying beast was lurking, waiting patiently for the right moment to surface.

Some days, I worked well into the night, and every night, without fail, I bumped into the same set of young women on the way home. Some stood at intersections, others strolled around the block, and there were those who seemed permanently perched at the local bus stops.

I never picked up on the pattern for several weeks, and even then, it had to be spelled out for me. I was so naive that I used to greet the girls every evening before the great revelation.

Oh, to be innocent again!

One night in particular, I burnt the midnight oil with a colleague, who offered to drive me home afterward. On the journey home, I noticed a woman I had never seen before, who wore excessive make-up, an exceedingly short skirt, and a wide open top.

"Wow, that girl is dressed like a prostitute," I remarked, having only seen this sort of thing on the tube.

"That's because she is; they all are," Gareth replied.

"What do you mean?"

"All the girls on this stretch of road are on the clock."

“All of them? Holy shit, and everybody living in these apartments knows this?”

“Dude, how could you not know?”

“I’m a small-town boy.”

“Clearly. I feel sorry for these girls, you know. I can’t even begin to imagine how desperate they must be to pursue this line of work. It’s an enormous sacrifice to make.”

I stayed silent, primarily because I had nothing meaningful to add but also because I was now doing my own calculations. I had never slept with a woman before.

In a world where all my peers had featured in some or other rumor about a girl crushing on them, I always felt like the exception that made the rule. Nobody loves me, I always thought, but I could now pay for somebody to act like they did, even if it were just for 60 minutes.

The women of Claremont Main Road had just opened me up to a world of fresh opportunities, a journey of discovery. Yes, it would come at a fee, but most women did anyway. A glass of wine here, a romantic dinner there...and no guarantees.

Access and the removal of rejection from the equation made the women of Claremont Main Road unique. I had never known what that would look or feel like, so this was uncharted territory.

Naturally, I felt guilty about it, which is why I remained hesitant for several weeks, but there was definitely some planning going on. I had played the scenarios over in my head time and time again.

How did all of this work?

Did one just walk up to the girl?

Was there some kind of code?

Did I send over some kind of signal?

Was any of this even legal?

I needed to do some extensive research beyond a few episodes of Miami Vice but had no idea how to go about it. This was more daunting than anything I had ever done.

This fresh assignment was my Everest.

It got to a point where I was even volunteering to work all the late shifts at the office just so I could walk past the Claremont prostitutes every night, and with every trip home, I made mental notes.

Previously, I had never really paid any attention to how they all looked; all that mattered to me was that they were available, but now I needed a few more questions answered.

Did any of them look too young?

Did any of them look malnourished?

Did any of them look trafficked?

How do you spot somebody with an STD?

Which ones were the most attractive?

Which ones were the most approachable?

After weeks of internal deliberation, I decided the time had finally come to take the plunge. I had picked my target; astonishingly, she wasn't a middle-aged coloured woman. Aunty Mavis was a distant memory; this felt like progress.

The chosen one this time was slim, black, and pretty young. I estimated she was a year or two younger than me, so she was of age.

She had neat, relaxed hair - I think the local stylists called it a straight back - and she didn't overdo the make-up, which I appreciated more than anything else. I would have preferred it if she wore no make-up at all.

I thought she was a genuinely pretty girl who could quite easily have passed for a Pastor's daughter. She had a pleasant smile, too, and that is probably what did it for me in the end.

All of this made her seem the most approachable of the group.

It didn't hurt that she was also regularly stationed at the intersection closest to my apartment block, making her literally the last girl I saw before entering my home. The intersection was also in a slightly more secluded area, which allowed for a little more discretion. That helped eliminate any fears I might have had about encountering some form of law enforcement.

She wasn't the most breath-taking of the girls, but she was the most practical, and that was good enough for me.

As I finally approached her on my way home, I slowed down a little and glanced in her direction. Not a word was exchanged as I simply tilted my head slightly to the left, indicating that she should follow me.

She didn't respond immediately, which sparked a little anxiety. But after about 30 seconds, I heard the distinct crackling sound of high heels against the tarmac, which was a tremendous relief, as I didn't want to have to look back and signal again.

I had always wanted her to follow at a safe distance to help curb any suspicions but had no idea how to indicate that. In the end it didn't matter because she understood exactly what I needed; a seasoned pro at just 19 or 20, which should be a little depressing when you think about it.

But any guilt I might have felt was quickly eroded. She was of age, and it's not like I was one of those dodgy university professors who thought it appropriate to shag their students.

Thankfully, my apartment was on the ground floor and closest to the gate. I opened the gate with my remote and let it run all the way open, which would give my new female acquaintance enough time to make it through before the gate closed.

The distance between us remained the same throughout.

When I entered my apartment, I left the door slightly ajar with the main light on, and she knew exactly what to do. I didn't even need to stand at the door to offer some level of assurance. This entire adventure had already been so enthralling, and I looked forward to what would come.

While still fixing a drink in the kitchen, I heard my main door shut. So seamless, I thought to myself.

"I never thought this day would come," she said.

"Whatever do you mean?"

"I thought you were disgusted by me, by the work that I do."

"What made you think that?" I inquired as I gingerly handed her a drink.

"All the girls talk about you, you know. And all I ever heard from them was how you smiled at them politely and greeted them every night you walked past. I don't remember being afforded that courtesy. If anything, you looked at me with disgust. I was pretty ashamed, you know."

"Please accept my apologies. That was never my intention."

I couldn't remember if I treated her any differently from the other girls, and didn't want to make a meal of things by arguing the point.

Upon reflection, I do think hers was a fascinating observation, though, as it exposed, even back then, my apparent bias against black women. It is an issue I certainly need to confront, possibly with the help of a professional, at some point.

"Do you work somewhere around here?"

"Yeah, near Claremont Station."

"And what kind of work keeps you at the office late at night?"

“Content syndication. We have a lot of Asian and North American clients. I am not actually required to work late every night, though. I volunteered. Don’t have much of a social life anyway. Are you a student?”

“Depends...”

“On what?”

“Would you be fine sleeping with a student?”

“I suppose it wouldn’t matter. I was just a little curious. I recently read a book called Disgrace by JM Coetzee, where similar circumstances confront the main character. I am a little worried that I might be wandering down the same dark alley.”

“Well, for starters, you aren’t a university professor, and I am not your student.””

“But you are a student?”

“How do you draw that conclusion?”

“You read JM Coetzee. That stuff is not for everybody. It is the kind of thing a student would read.”

“Maybe I just watched the movie.”

“I pity you. It was a genuinely dreadful piece of cinema. I wouldn’t watch it again if you paid me.”

“Please don’t feel guilty. This is my job, and you are my client. Nobody is exploiting anyone here.”

The moment she said it, she flicked the light switch and seemed to glide across the floor before grabbing my arm. She walked towards my bedroom, and I followed like the obedient puppy that I was.

“Relax,” she whispered in my ear, almost as if she could sense this was my first time.

She gently removed my sweater and undid the buttons of my shirt before going down on her knees and unzipping my trousers, pulling them down with my trunks at once. She seemed to be in a hurry.

And in that moment, nervous as I was, I recalled Chris Rock’s joke about fellatio. This would be the ultimate test, I thought, before letting out a slight chuckle.

“Tickled already,” she whispered as she quickly went to work on me. I let out one huge breath and closed my eyes. This was it. There are simply no words to describe the ecstasy I felt in that moment.

I would have absolutely no control over how this would play out, but she was prepared, as she released me in what seemed to be just the nick of time.

Suffice it to say, I ejaculated violently, and she emerged completely unscathed by it all.

“Did you enjoy that,” she asked, but I couldn’t muster a response of any kind. The entire experience had sapped me completely.

“Good,” she added. She thought she had me just where she needed me now.

“That will be R800.”

“What?”

That certainly sobered me up.

“My services are R800.”

“For a blowjob?” I cried. The miser in me came to the surface faster than she could have imagined.

“You ejaculated.”

A brief silence followed, and perhaps sensing that this might not end well, she said she would throw in the sex "for free". I took the deal but swore to myself this would never happen again. I felt swindled, the kind of feeling you get when you walk out of a casino for the first time.

Whatever my sexual curiosities were, this hardly felt worth it. I was genuinely incensed by it all.

Now I know, I thought to myself, but unbeknownst to me, I would write several new chapters on this journey in the coming weeks and months.

The “Lady in The Red Shoes” - I never bothered to remember her name - was just the beginning.

In the immediate aftermath of my disastrous encounter with the "Lady in The Red Shoes", I requested fewer evening shifts at work, and when I did find myself burning the midnight oil, I opted for a new route back home.

Upon reflection, it was obviously ridiculous that I felt compelled to alter my movement patterns just to avoid a street whore, but there's the breaks. In subsequent years I have openly regaled others with tales of my sordid past, but I have never uttered a word about the "Lady in the Red Shoes" to another soul.

I was certainly embarrassed by the manner in which events played out that night, but I couldn't possibly tell you why I was so determined to wipe the entire episode from my memory.

Nevertheless, it was not long before opportunities to pursue more conventional and sanitary courting methods presented themselves when a dish called Candice joined the editorial team at work.

Everything about Candice made considerably more sense to me than the "Lady in the Red Shoes", apart from her being distinctly out of my league of course. There was never a hope in hell there, but I always liked to think there was.

Candice was older than me and was coloured, but getting her to fall for my non-existent Zulu charms would be nothing short of a miracle. Minor details like these have never been enough to stop me from abandoning all judgment in the past, though.

The lunacy started and, thankfully, ended with an email. Throughout my engagement with Candice, I never mustered the courage to walk up to her desk, which was just two meters away from mine.

Now that I think about it, I didn't even need to get up and approach her, as I could quite easily have initiated a verbal exchange from my workstation without unduly interrupting other colleagues or, indeed, embarrassing Candice.

Candice and I corresponded regularly for about a year when I learned a lot about her. She was astonishingly open and trusting about every aspect of her life, but that was perhaps as sure a sign as any that I had unwittingly stumbled into the dreaded friend zone.

That's what I try to tell myself anyway. But in truth, I simply never mustered the courage to make any significant advances, and for all I know, Candice was patiently waiting for me to show some pluck.

Suffice it to say, the Candice opportunity was wasted, and we were nothing more than pen pals.

When I wasn't at work, I could be found making love to my whiskey and gin at a local watering hole called Hobnobs, just around the block from my apartment. Hobnobs were convenient, but there was nothing particularly compelling about the joint.

The place was an old house that had been converted into a pub, one might even say a typically English pub. Beyond booze, the specialty in this neck of the woods was bangers and mash; as it turns out, bangers and mash would become my dinner at least five times a week for about a year.

While Hobnobs had clearly become a second home to me, I never took the time to mind my surroundings. It might have been a public facility, but it had also become a place of solitude, where I could just stare blankly at the sport on the big screen or listen to AC/DC blaring in the background.

One evening, in particular, I was awakened from my trance though, when two young coloured women walked into the venue. This might have been Cape Town, but two coloured women walking into Hobnobs was unusual; in fact, I would go so far as to say I had never seen a coloured woman in the place before.

They both found seats in my direct line of sight, distracting me from what was a compelling game of Super rugby. While I was incapable of taking the plunge and making any meaningful advances, I did eventually ask one of the waiters to give the women another of whatever it was they were drinking.

But I didn't so much as glance in their direction when the drinks were delivered, having decided that the Sharks driving maul against the Bulls was too great a thing of beauty to be ignored.

Granted, I never actually knew what the protocol was when buying women's drinks, but I was also too terrified to find out, and far more comfortable watching 30 grown men chase after an oval ball for a living.

When it became increasingly apparent that the girls were about to leave, I decided to disappear into the pub bathroom and stay there for as long as I thought would be necessary to avoid any contact with them. When I returned, both girls were thankfully gone, and it did occur to me that perhaps they were also grateful they never had to bump into me on their way out either.

What a mess!

I wanted something conventional and pure but wasn't adequately equipped to pursue it, not in Cape Town, anyway.

Chapter Three

After about a year on the job, I had a monumental fallout with my editor, prompting me to leave the company and Cape Town. By any measure this was a calamitous event, but for me, it would also prove an enormous blessing on multiple fronts, not least in my private life. But there will be more about that later.

I only returned to Cape Town two years later, just in time to attend an end-of-year function at my new company. I can't for the life of me remember the name of the party venue, but it was an establishment with a distinctly African vibe about it, that is all I can tell you.

Once the function was done, I decided to take a stroll around the block and get to know the City Center better. During my previous stay in Cape Town, I seldom ventured beyond my neighborhood, so this was uncharted territory.

I was drawn to one venue in particular, where the music seemed to be blaring louder than anywhere else, and in broad daylight, too. So, I decided to search for an entrance.

While it was peculiar that both of the doors to the establishment were closed, the significance actually flew over my head completely. I was too naive to know any better. After all, I came to Cape Town from a small rural town. What was I to know about big city operations?

Once beyond the doors and thoroughly searched by two heavies, I was confronted by a R100 cover charge in what was essentially broad daylight. That was a little strange because I had always associated cover charges with late evenings.

But even then, I had no idea what I was walking into.

The two dark curtains beyond the cashier, which suggested there were immense secrets being protected in this building, really should have been my biggest clue, but what could a small-town boy like me possibly understand about the city?

While I had returned to Cape Town for work, my decision was partly driven by an attempt to forget Stacy Jantjies, with whom I had an extended entanglement during my two years back home.

When it dawned on me that Stacy wasn't searching for more from our relationship, it felt like rejection, and I simply couldn't handle it. Stacy was many things. She was bisexual, sexually liberated, adventurous, and she was coloured.

While I was now doing everything possible to try and forget her, Stacy honestly felt like the best thing that ever happened to me, the only thing that ever happened to me! I was the wandering bark, and she was my North Star. Only God will ever know what I might or might not have been to her.

Frankly, nobody will ever truly replace Stacy, but on that fateful Friday evening in Central Cape Town, I stumbled into a treasure trove that would allow me to block her out of my mind for a few hours, which felt like progress.

When I emerged beyond the two dark curtains, I was confronted by this enormous cage to my left and an upper platform littered with poles and railings that belonged on the set of Mad Max.

As it turns out, the name of the establishment was The Cage, and you didn't need silly little things like signage to confirm that either.

The place was absolutely choked with men from all backgrounds. There were coloured men, white men, black men, Indian men, young men, old men, rich (looking) men, working-class men, single men, engaged men, and married men.

Deviants united!

There were even men who thought it prudent to bring their wives and girlfriends along for this sordid experience, but far be it for me to question the relationship dynamics of others.

If I were a gambling man, which I am, I would wager there was one thing that most of these chaps had in common - they were lonely. I certainly fell into that bracket. If there were one word I could use to describe my entire existence, it would be loneliness.

Without fully understanding what I just walked into, I could already tell that I was in the right place, among brothers.

All seats were taken, but those left standing clearly didn't mind this minor inconvenience. It was a small price to pay for what they were getting in return, which was a level of visual stimulation and, in some cases, even physical fulfillment, unlikely to be matched anywhere else in their dreary old lives.

The Cage harbored scantily clad women everywhere you looked. To the left, to the right, in front of you, behind you, hanging off the walls, and hanging off the ceilings.

Every inch of The Cage was accounted for by a selection of Cape Town's finest beauties. Well, some of them weren't particularly breath-taking, but they were naked...which can often feel like the same thing.

The vast majority of those women were coloured too, which was just up my alley. I felt like I had died and woken up in heaven. In circumstances like these, you would think it impossible for any of the women to stand out, but a girl stood out to me in and amongst all of that splendor.

Beyond her many redeeming features, she was a pretty spectacular pole dancer, and the sports fanatic in me genuinely appreciated Sky's athletic attributes. This was no longer just sexual; I was now recognizing somebody with athletic ability, a kindred spirit.

I subsequently stopped by The Cage every evening after work to catch my daily glimpse of Sky. I called it Woman Appreciation Without Approach or WAWA, but in English, it is more commonly known as stalking.

I would be at The Cage for breakfast on my days off and only leave when the sun came out the next morning. Sky had reeled me in without even tugging at a rod, and so far, as I could tell, there was no escape.

Who would want to escape this anyway?

The only thing that could break the cycle at this point was a three-month sabbatical in Johannesburg to participate in a company workshop. While free of Sky, whom I had never actually spoken to or touched, I was not free of the bug that now lived inside me.

A monstrous seed had been planted.

Chapter Four

I actually did the research before I even landed at OR Tambo International. I was to stay at a company-owned apartment in Rosebank, and down the road from that, you had the Moody Muse and The Lodge in Rivonia.

I never made it to The Lodge because the advertised prices were eye-watering, but I did conduct some personal inspections at the Moody Muse...not really my cup of tea, if I'm honest.

While the Moody Muse was very famous, as was its owner, Kolbein Luring, I swiftly determined I wasn't going to get any value for my buck there. The girls weren't very generous with their time or emotions, and the place was devoid of any curvature whatsoever.

Even if the girls of Moody Muse unexpectedly made a more concerted effort to stroke my fragile ego, I simply could not see the value in paying top dollar for a plate of bones with no meat on them.

But then again, it did occur to me that I wasn't the target market for these girls.

Why would a skinny white girl waste her time and emotions tending to the fragile ego of some random black fellow from the sticks?

This was South Africa, after all, where the argument is consistently made that lions don't mate with zebras. In the eyes of many, I am a completely different species altogether, and I couldn't reasonably expect the precious girls of Moody Muse to think otherwise.

Sitting back and observing the movements at the Moody Muse, I vaguely recalled Kolbein Luring telling some or other journalist that he fired girls who developed any cellulite.

Almost instinctively, I found myself conducting my own inspections, and at the end of it all could only conclude that these poor women looked hungry. I couldn't help but feel that King Kolbein, as he was more fondly known in the criminal underworld, was doing his clients a massive disservice here, rich white male client or not.

Nevertheless, the search continued unabated, and it led me to a little treasure trove in Randburg called the Honey Pot. I had actually heard about this establishment before, in some or other documentary, but I wasn't in the least bit deterred by the prospect of being associated with something dodgy. This was a strip club, and I doubt it gets much dodgier than that.

I decided I was in the mud anyway and had absolutely no intention of getting out either. Every cent I made went to rent and strip clubs, with the Honey Pot the main beneficiary.

When I wasn't at the Honey Pot, I was at Slay Queens in Hillbrow on the outskirts of the Joburg CBD - it might actually be a part of the CBD. The point about Slay Queens is that it couldn't possibly be in a dodgier part of Joburg, yet I was prepared to risk life and limb just to encounter the scent of its women.

Among the more compelling features at Slay Queens were affordability and variety, where zebras and lions were encouraged to mate. It wasn't just zebras and lions; though, that place was the Kruger National Park of strip clubs, and I didn't need to burn through my pocket to experience any of it.

The cover charge of just R100 was nothing, especially for what you were getting in return, as the Slay Queens of Hillbrow took men beyond the borders of South Africa, from Brazil in the West to Laos in the East.

While I never actually spoke to any of the girls back at The Cage in Cape Town - my visits there were purely experimental - I was actually starting conversations with many of the girls in Joburg.

In one of my initial conversations, I spoke to a girl called Lisa at the Honey Pot. Lisa was a tall and slender Sotho woman and one of just two black women in the establishment.

She was a goddess in my estimation, a woman with flawless features and a charming personality. What on earth was she doing in a place like this?

If I hadn't known any better, she could have passed for one of those Top Billing types with strong but mellifluous voices.

Come to that, Lisa actually reminded me of Kgomotso Christopher, the only reason I watched a local soapie called Isidingo.

The first encounter with Lisa was always going to go well for both of us. Lisa and I laughed a lot, and genuinely laughed. She was a woman after my own heart, and when I reflect on it now, I don't think I have experienced as much joy with anybody since.

If Lisa was acting, she deserved a role of her own on Isidingo, but I always got the impression we enjoyed each other's company.

When I was with Lisa, I rarely thought about the private rooms at the Honey Pot. I just enjoyed sitting with her at the bar and gladly paid her for the time, too. Physical stimulation isn't everything.

It was a win for her, too, not having to fulfill any serious physical obligations when I was around and still getting paid for it.

You see, bar conversations weren't on the official menu at the Honey Pot, which meant no bookings needed to be made for private rooms. It also meant that Lisa could keep 100 percent of how much I decided to slip under her knickers at the bar; no rental fees or commissions for the owners, provided they never discovered the skulduggery.

These were the kinds of details that helped ease my guilt. While I am sure that nothing could have stopped me from transacting with women in houses of ill-repute, I still had a basic sense of right or wrong, and paying a woman to humor you physically or otherwise is not normal.

On my first visit to the Honey Pot, I encountered a slightly more sophisticated atmosphere than anything on offer at The Cage, or Slay Queens, for that matter. This applied to everything from the lighting arrangements to the styling of the furniture. The music at the Honey Pot was less rowdy, and the interior design was a lot softer and easier on the eye.

Make no mistake: a strip club is a strip club. You can spot it from a mile away, but the Honey Pot was more tasteful, which I struggled to reconcile with the mere R100 I was expected to fork out for entry. This R100 seemed to be a standard cover charge at facilities like this, regardless of quality.

Nervous as cats I decided to make my way to the bar, where I spotted the only other black man in the joint - the barman. I needed a soft landing here, and this dude was it.

I then ordered an exorbitantly priced Carling Black Label. So, this was where they hit your purse, I thought to myself.

I stared directly ahead to calm myself and sipped very slowly at my Black Label while counting all the bottles on the bar wall when a strong but comforting voice caught my attention.

"My sources tell me you are only interested in the white girls," she said. A question disguised as a statement. It wasn't the first time I faced this accusation either, but this was the first time a stripper had seduced me.

What was the protocol here?

Did I just play it cool?

Did I source the deepest voice my vocal cords could muster?

Did I just splash the cash?

How did any of this actually work?

"Are you on the clock?" I asked tentatively, trying as hard as possible to appear assured.

"Not yet," was the reply.

Lisa's voice was a little more playful now, which helped ease my mind. But I still had to wonder, was I in the middle of some test, and what was the penalty if I failed?

"Is that your only evidence?" I asked.

"What do you mean?"

"You said your sources told you I was only interested in white girls. Is that your only evidence?"

"No..."

"I'm listening."

"I have been sitting next to you for 15 minutes, and you haven't so much as blinked. I figured you were waiting for Marietjie to come along."

"So, why did you even start this conversation?"

"This is business. I don't get to pick and choose. Every man is an opportunity, even coconuts like you."

"Ouch."

"What, have you never been called a coconut before?"

"I have, far too often actually, but it has never been delivered with such malice."

I eventually decided to steal a glance directly to my left, not realizing just how close Lisa was to me. She had me with her voice, but nothing could have prepared me for her breath-taking beauty.

"It took you an eternity to even look at me, even after I had initiated the conversation. Even now, I detect disdain as if to say I am ruining your prospects with Marietjie. I can leave if you want me to, but just know that the Marietjies of this world are not searching for clients like you. Black men are a last resort, on a slow night."

I can never wrap my head around women this beautiful languishing in a place like the Honey Pot. All the evidence I have seen suggests that pretty women always get ahead.

They quickly climb the corporate ladder; if they don't land a rich husband. What the hell was Lisa doing here? What happened to pretty privilege in her case?

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph," I exclaimed, ignoring all the bile about black men and slow nights.

"What?"

"Exactly..."

"I don't follow."

"What sin have you committed to find yourself hovering around a loser like me?"

There was a moment of silence as I stared directly into her eyes while she stared into mine. I had no idea what might have been going through her mind, but my trousers had stretched in record time, and my zipper was starting to force itself open.

“Your sources are unreliable,” I said, glancing down in the direction of my crotch. It is not the kind of charm one can expect to work on any woman, but Lisa managed to crack a smile before discretely reaching down to cop a feel with the tips of her fingers.

“Are you on the clock yet?” I continued, very conscious still of my experience with the Lady in the Red Shoes.

“We will play it by ear,” she whispered back.

All thoughts of Marietjie seemed to have faded into oblivion, as Lisa played with the tip of my swollen penis, and my eyes closed shut while my erection stiffened. The adrenaline was pumping uncontrollably.

What sorcery was this?

Lisa was also taking a bit of a risk because "hanging onto men" at the bar for too long was frowned upon and even punishable with a fine.

“Wow, that is rock solid. What will happen when you see me undressed?”

The moment she said it, my penis flicked upwards in uncontrollable fits.

“I am already picturing it.”

“I can tell,” Lisa held back her laughter as she gladly played along when my penis slapped her fingertips vigorously.

And just then, the music started blaring loudly as the lights went out for the next evening show on the main stage. I don't know if it was the night's first show, but it was certainly my first at the Honey Pot, yet I never even bothered to turn around. My attention was clearly elsewhere, and nothing could distract me from that.

The timing of the show was most opportune, too, as Lisa started rubbing the tip of my penis with her fingertips, starting slowly and gently. I guess she knew how long the show would last, knowing how much she could get away with while the lights were out.

While she was in no rush, Lisa's strokes became more defined as the intensity increased noticeably. I glanced at her out of the corner of my eye, trying not to give too much away despite the relative safety that came with being in the dark.

I am certain the barman knew exactly what was happening, but there was no need to rub it in his face, especially when he was taking one for the team.

Lisa also played along, staring blankly at the bottles in front of her as if to study the quality of each design. All the while, her right arm was tucked away at her side, barely moving, as her fingers did all the heavy lifting.

“You should have been a cricketer,” I shouted, the sound of 3 Doors Down drowning us out now.

“Why?”

“Finger spin is a dying art, but you definitely have the requisite skills to revive it.”

She burst out laughing, almost enough to give us both away.

“I certainly hope you aren’t picturing Saqlain right now.”

“Ah, an aficionado nogal. Woman after my own heart.”

Another burst of laughter.

“Never judge a book by its cover.”

“Said the pot to the kettle.”

We weren’t dating by any stretch of the imagination, but we were becoming friends...with material benefits.

“What is the meter reading on the clock?”

“This round is on me,” she said.

Lisa knew exactly what she was doing. Women are skilled at spotting the misers, and she clearly understood that I was one of them. Misers don’t part ways with their cash without being guaranteed a return on their investment.

Just by keeping at it in this way and asking for nothing in return, Lisa had successfully trapped me. She understood that I would be back for more every opportunity that I got.

“Generous, too,” I said.

“I have a good feeling about you, mister.” That was just about the nicest thing anybody had said to me in ages.

“Wolf’s the name.”

“I am Kgomotso, but you can call me Lisa.”

“Kgomotso?”

I couldn’t help but chuckle.

“Nice to meet you,” I said.

“Meet you? I would say we already know each other pretty well.”

Her fingers now pulled away at the zipper, just enough to slip the top half of her hand in.

Lisa gripped the top half of my shaft with considerable authority, like a NASCAR driver, and for a fleeting moment I had a thought about Danica Patrick.

The intense stroking evolved into a full-blown massage. Up and down, up and down, slowly but definitely, and with a bit more purpose now.

The second song was over, and with two songs to go, which meant our little adventure was fast running out of road. There was a decision to be made, complicated by the small matter of an impending ejaculation, which I was determined to avoid at all costs. I didn't care how dark it was.

I slipped R500 under Lisa's skirt, just enough to clip onto her dark knickers, when she grabbed my left hand and held it firmly in place, encouraging me to explore a little longer.

She helped me brush her mound using gentle strokes. The decision to brush above the underwear was justified, as it allowed for a smoother stroke, enhancing our experience.

This was getting wild, but extraordinarily I hadn't ejaculated yet. The Lady In The Red Shoes would have been furious.

"I see you also have some stamina, or is it just exceptional control?"

"I was an opening batsman." This was total bullshit of course. I am just a product of Stacy's advanced training. That was the first time I had thought of Stacy in ages.

"Explains the elegant strokes," she said, almost flippantly, as she got up from her seat before grabbing my left arm and whisking me away from the main lounge.

Usually, in these circumstances, the customer decides what to pick on the Honey Pot menu, but Lisa took total control of the situation and made the menu selection for me. It was the High Evolution Dance, which was the highest-paying item on the dance menu.

I was completely fine with that, too, and didn't even blink as I pulled ten R100 notes out my wallet. I wasn't sure what her cut would be, but that seemed an insignificant detail in the greater scheme.

Lisa just smiled before whisking me along a dark corridor and into a private room. I took it for granted that I was just getting a highly eventful dance and had no idea Lisa was intending to break all the rules for me that night.

As soon as the door shut, Lisa grabbed me and threw me onto the bed. Where did all that strength come from?

Before I could even register what was happening, she then leaped on top of me, placing a knee on either side of my thighs, squeezing them together like a vice grip. Again, where was all this strength coming from?

With her skirt slipped up, she began to rub her vagina against me, slowly but intensely. She did this without removing her knickers and without unzipping my trousers. I gathered this was the very definition of a dry hump.

Although it was getting considerably less dry with every motion, as Lisa straddled me tightly.

She held onto the back of my head with one hand, and with the other, she removed the two top buttons on my shirt. Effortlessly, she transitioned both her hands and lifted the shirt up and over my head.

At this point, Lisa started rubbing both of her hands on my chest, where she discovered that whatever I might have lacked in muscle, I certainly made up for with hair.

“Wow, you really are a Wolf...” Lame jokes would prove our bread and butter.

She then propelled herself upwards while pulling my head down with both hands as she pressed her triangle against my face.

“This is better than anything you will come across in the Valley of 1000 Hills. More pronounced, lush, and much sweeter, I imagine.”

Valley of 1000 Hills? She had obviously deduced I was Zulu. Was it that obvious?

I took a good whiff before gripping her two thick lips with my mouth, knickers still on, which I felt actually enhanced the experience.

“Grab a taste, Wolf, don’t be shy. When you are done with this, you will never see ordinary meals in the same way again.”

Not one to argue, I swiftly used my teeth to pull down on the black (that color is my kryptonite). lingerie, just enough to slip my chin in first before strengthening my tongue and pressing as hard as I could with every stroke.

She thrust her pelvis forward with every stroke I made while digging her nails into my back. This was certainly the most intense dancing I had ever experienced, pure unadulterated ecstasy unlikely even to be matched at a rave.

“What do you think about Marietjie now?”

It was a rhetorical question, but I pretended I never heard it at all. Instead, I grabbed Lisa’s buttocks even tighter, locking both our bodies together. Suffice it to say, no penetration was required.

Lisa's hands made their way up and down my back, digging in deeply at every opportunity. It did hurt, but what was that saying about pain and glory?

Lisa started thrusting her vagina into my face harder and harder with every movement, and while this whole experience was supposed to be about me, the paying customer, I could tell she was reveling in it, too.

I could not stop rubbing her everywhere, and anywhere my hands could reach. From the small in the back, down her butt cheeks, down her thighs - inside and out. All the while fully immersing myself in her folds and soaking up all her juices.

Then suddenly, she just shuddered and dropped into my lap as her head collapsed on my shoulder. I couldn't for the life of me remember what number song we were on, and frankly, it didn't even matter.

As Lisa continued to shake, I decided it was my turn now, and I pushed her vagina right up against me. I didn't even stop to think about the fact my trousers were still on as I kept pushing, riding, and grinding away. This hump was only dry in name as I, too, began to shudder uncontrollably.

"Thank you," she whispered in my ear.

What a night. The objective had been achieved for both of us. She had her client and I felt wanted, needed even.

I returned to the Honey Pot thrice weekly, parting ways with an eye-watering amount of cash while at it. Every time, not a word needed to be spoken on entry, as I completed the transaction at the cashier, and didn't even bother entering the main lounge.

Lisa, who received word of my arrival before I even made it through the turnstiles, always stood waiting for me in the main foyer.

The moment Lisa spotted me, there was not so much as a wave or acknowledgment, as she just swiveled on her heels and walked. I followed like the obedient pet that I was.

Every time, Lisa allowed me to walk into the room before slamming the door shut with extraordinary zeal and an alarming sense of purpose. Every time we met, the experience got wilder and more adventurous, and yet no penetration was ever required.

There sometimes comes a point in a couple's life cycle where each party understands the other perfectly well. Most couples never actually achieve that level of understanding, yet here we were, Lisa and I, fully in tune with each other's bodies in less than a week.

This was awfully grand, and I never wanted it to end. I kept coming back for more, like Oliver Twist

After a few weeks, I managed to convince myself I was in love with a stripper and, worse still, that she loved me back, but I had been down a similar road with Stacy before, and I knew where this would lead. If I didn't know any better, I would have thought it a cruel joke that women enjoyed playing on me.

The reality, of course, is that I was the problem. What man in my condition could reasonably expect a woman to fall in love with him? I have the looks of a low-grade bank clerk and the personality of a damp rag.

I blame this all on The Big Bang Theory because there are no Pennies and Bernadettes in the real world, and frankly, Howard and Leonard had a considerable amount more going for them than me.

A conversation with Lisa brought me back down to earth in a matter of seconds.

“So, Lisa, how long have you been in this line of work?” Upon reflection, it was such a patronizing question, and Lisa was well within her rights to treat it with the disdain that it deserved.

“Long enough.” I suspect Lisa could already see where this conversation was heading. I wasn't the first man who thought he could save her and certainly wasn't going to be the last.

Lisa had to nip this conversation in the bud and seemingly knew just how to go about it too. She was a seasoned pro, which I had taken for granted.

“Do you ever want to leave?” I continued.

“Why would I want to do that?”

“So, you like this work?”

“Yes.”

“Oh...”

“Wolf, please don't ruin what we have going here. The past few weeks have been great, truly memorable even, and I genuinely mean that. Please, don't fuck it up now.”

“What do you mean fuck it up?”

“Wolf, you aren't the first love-sick puppy to cross paths with me, and you won't be the last. But you can't save me, and I am not asking to be saved.”

“What if this isn't about you and more about me?”

“If that is the case, I am sorry I misled you. I thought we had an understanding here. This is a transaction, Wolf. I am having tremendous fun at work with a customer I thoroughly enjoy being around. But don’t mistake that for love. This isn’t Moulin Rouge.”

“Diamonds are a Girl’s best friend...”

“Precisely. The only condition that would drag me away from this job is a man that could afford me. Wolf, you need to understand I make more in one night than most of these men make in a month. It would take a tremendous amount for me to give that up.

“The men who come in here with serious money aren’t searching for a wife. So, in a way I am stuck here, but this is far better than anything out there.”

“I hear you.”

“You sound disappointed.”

“Are you surprised?”

“No.”

And just like that, the whole Lisa project was doomed. I was devastated but determined to move on. I always did.

Chapter Five

For the sake of variety, I ventured back to Slay Queens for a few days, just to cool off a little and dust myself down. It was a pretty hard fall, but not one I hadn’t experienced before. Like Forrest Gump, I was always running.

Running to escape the hurt, erase the humiliation, and forget. The antidote was always the same too.

The first woman I ever ran away from was Stacy, who remains the love of my life. If she were to rock up at my door today, more than a decade after we parted, and asked me to run through a brick wall for her, I would do it. No question.

Every password on my computer is a variation of her name. Stacy is literally the key to my life, and no woman on the planet could replace her, not even Lisa.

I first met Stacy at the local watering hole in my hometown, where I had been out to watch a rugby game with William, my closest friend at the time.

William and I were at one end of the bar, watching the Springboks lose to some or other opponent, probably the All Blacks, but I don’t care enough to remember. In the greater scheme of things, the defeat was of little consequence anyway.

The Springboks were the defending World Cup champions and had just won the Lions series. As far as I was concerned, every match between then and the next World Cup was purely preparation, nothing worth fussing a tremendous amount about.

Most people in the bar area seemed to feel the same way, but Stacy wasn't one of them. She could not for the life of her understand why Morne Steyn was not on the field, and as far as she was concerned, that was the only reason the national team lost this particular outing.

And boy did she make her feelings known, although I suspect a little liquid courage had helped her along.

"Oh great, another Blue Bulls fan," said William.

I had a good chuckle.

The thing about Bulls fans is they think every Bulls player should be a Springbok, and they are pretty vocal about it, too. Suffice it to say, Steyn was the darling boy of Loftus, home of the Bulls.

While I appreciated William's sense of humor, I did think there was something more to Stacy, but I had no idea just how unique she would turn out to be. Stacy was an older coloured woman. If this was a race, she already had the inside lane, even if she didn't know it.

Just two days later, not knowing if Stacy would recognize me in her sober state, I made the bold decision of walking straight into her office unannounced, and before I knew it she became the most important person in my life.

We went to work together, spent lunch hours (sometimes two hours) together, went home, went out, and drank together. While we met at a bar, I wasn't much of a drinker at the time, but under Stacy's tutelage, I evolved into a fish, a drunken master. It felt like an accomplishment.

Oddly enough, amongst all of that, I only ever slept with Stacy twice in two years, and the second time doesn't really count because neither of us had a clear memory of it. But it was one of those relationships where sex hardly mattered anyway, and my entanglement with Lisa reminded me a little of that.

When I reflect on it now, I am prepared to accept that perhaps it should have mattered and that maybe, just maybe, we would have had a chance. I read something to that effect in *Cosmopolitan*.

It did get to a point where I was searching for something more from the relationship, but Stacy was never on the same page. My massive insecurities exacerbated things, as I never thought I deserved Stacy from the outset. She was breath-taking, and I was Shrek.

Sensing that there was no future to be had, after two incredibly memorable years, I started searching for my distance. In a crude attempt to justify my running, I have always sought to blame Stacy for pushing me away, but in reality, I am the one who pushed her away.

I was bringing nothing to the table physically or materially, and because I couldn't face up to my own failures and shortcomings, I decided to create some distance by moving 1000km away.

I had moved to a new job, which was the perfect justification for migrating to Cape Town, but deep down inside, I felt like I just needed a fresh start, and Cape Town was it.

When I walked into The Cage for the first time, I was a wounded animal seeking refuge, not realizing how much I would come to rely on these houses of ill-repute for the next ten years of my not-so-precious life.

Strip clubs and brothels had become my drug. If it wasn't The Cage, it was the Honey Pot. If it wasn't the Honey Pot, it was Slay Queens.

And Slay Queens was merely the next stop on my depressing journey. .

Slay Queens was better stocked than any other strip club I had visited, but there were tremendous drawbacks. The patrons weren't just a rowdy bunch but also pretty comfortable with pickpocketing and outright mugging. The place was unsafe, but I never expected it to be safe.

The service from the bar staff was also lousy as if they were doing you some kind of favor by being there.

As bad as all that was, the women themselves were the major drawback, believe it or not. No effort, no wit, no charm, no professionalism. I get it; by being there, I was the pathetic one, but losers like me are also paying customers. The least the so-called Slay Queens could offer me in return was some value for my buck.

Splashing the cash usually solved all my problems, but not at Slay Queens. Most of the girls in these parts, probably because they were so stunning, felt like they didn't even need to try.

One of the older Slay Queens (Maggie) caught me off guard at the bar though. While age was no longer on her side, she was still a seasoned pro, a rare breed in these quarters.

The younger men might not have been chasing after her like dogs in heat, but she could still snuff out a wounded puppy in need and knew exactly how to tend those wounds.

I honestly can't even remember what Maggie and I spoke about. In fact, I don't even think there was much of a conversation. She merely produced a masterclass in seduction, although it generally didn't take much to seduce me.

Maggie was in her mid-to-late 40s, a real industry veteran. The beauty about it was that she knew it. Without any warning whatsoever, Maggie swiftly crept into the stool next to mine, like the Scarlet Pimpernel.

I initially ignored her as my mind was still set on Lisa... discarding her from my memory was proving impossible. Slay Queens was merely meant to be a distraction, visual stimulation at most, and nothing more.

I was never really that interested in the shows - and this goes for all the strip clubs I would go on to frequent in my life. If I wanted to witness a stage performance, I would have gone to the local theater, where I was guaranteed much better quality.

Scantly clad girls swinging on poles and dancing around chairs in silly costumes didn't really cut it for me.

It was partly why I was never really that interested in pornographic films, bondage, or role-playing, or any of that weird shit. It is either you were seductive or not, and no bunny outfit was ever going to change that for me.

At least Maggie seemed to understand that. I always give credit where it is due. Come to think of it Maggie wasn't even scantily clad the day she snuck up on me.

She just got straight to the point, and I appreciated that. She was also coloured, with strong shades of Auntie Mavis about her, and that helped her cause a little. I might have ignored her otherwise.

"Can you smell that?" she asked.

"What?" I snapped back.

"Can't you smell anything?"

Okay, I take it back; she was beating around the bush a little bit.

"I smell beer, some tobacco, possibly some marijuana, and a lot of stale perfume."

"No, man, can't you smell it? It smells like pussy."

"I don't doubt that at all. The place is full of it."

She chuckled.

"Smell this. Here, smell my fingers. It smells like pussy, doesn't it?"

"Nothing some soap and water can't take care of. No need to panic about it."

"Do you like the smell of pussy?"

"Depends."

"Perhaps you could smell mine. Tell me how it smells."

"I think I already know."

"And do you like the smell?"

"Manna from Heaven," I said with a straight face.

"Then you should come upstairs with me."

"Nah, I would rather just sit here and drown my sorrows thank you."

"What's wrong? Women trouble?"

"Something like that."

"She doesn't deserve you."

"Honestly, I don't deserve her." I wasn't sure if I was talking about Lisa or Stacy.

And as I said it, Maggie's hand slipped down towards my crotch. Was there some kind of stripper training manual for this?

Hers was a similar technique to Lisa, but a little fuller. A lot less ambiguity and certainly no attempt at discretion. Maggie knew what she wanted, and she was certain to get it, as my manhood stiffened immediately.

Man, I was weak.... I still am.

"Ah, there we go. I knew what you needed."

And in a flash, she wrapped her entire hand around my shaft...I was doomed, as all manner of resistance failed. She loosened my zip a fraction and slipped her delicate hands down my trousers, and just like that, the screen broadcasting the Premier League football just above the bar faded into this massive blur.

"Do you feel a little better?"

I just groaned a little, the pleasure outweighing the shame of it all. I let Maggie work, as disrupting her made no sense anymore. She rubbed, and she rubbed, and she stroked, and she rubbed. My goodness, such a simple yet critical skill.

She never stopped until I was completely satisfied.

And for her extensive efforts, all she asked for was R50. I was on the other side of town now, shopping at Hillbrow's very own Bargain Wholesalers.

"Thank you," I whispered after letting out a light groan. Now, this was a pure transaction. No emotion involved whatsoever.

Maggie walked away, chest out and satisfied with her work. As far as she was concerned, the mission had been accomplished. Little did she know that she had merely reeled in the fish for somebody else, a lass from Laos called Minjee. Not a woman of many words, I might add, but who needed words in an environment like this?

“Do you want to fuck?” she said.

“Hi, my name is Wolf. How do you do?”

I also did that racist thing of speaking slowly, as if it was going to make any kind of difference here.

“Do you want to fuck?” she repeated.

I could see there wasn't going to be much progress. I just nodded my head and followed her lead. Who needs words at a time like this?

For all my strip club adventures, I hadn't actually shagged anybody yet. I could tell that this was going to be a first, and a voice inside my head told me it would be worth it.

Minjee was honestly spectacular looking and properly fit in every place that mattered. Her calves, thighs, and breasts were immaculate. Some parents merely produce offspring, while others produce art, and Minjee was a work of art.

It was all-natural, too. I could tell she wasn't one of those gym types based on her flat butt cheeks, the only drawback on her otherwise spectacular body.

Minjee had many redeeming features that more than made up for it, including the most stunning mound I had ever seen between a pair of legs. I cupped it at the first opportunity I got.

Neither of us bothered with the small talk as she swiftly removed her clothes, exposing the most beautifully shaped breasts I had ever seen. Not too big and not too small. They were about the size of a lawn bowl, fitting perfectly into both my hands. And they were so firm, too.

What witchcraft was this?

Minjee then pulled me closer to her bed, slowly but decisively, and the moment she sat down on the edge, I collapsed onto my knees. I wasn't weak or anything. I just couldn't wait to stick my tongue between her thighs. This vagina was unlike anything I had ever encountered before. Perfect in every way.

“Ohhh, ahhh. Yes,” she said.

At this point, Minjee whipped herself into quite the frenzy as if I had done something out of Hogwarts. Tongue work had become a signature of mine now, and Stacy deserved all the credit for it...out of sight but not entirely out of mind.

“You are very good,” added Minjee.

While it was likely she said this to everybody who paid for her company, I didn’t doubt my skills in this sphere, which made up for all my other physical shortcomings.

Once again, I wasn’t actually interested in penetration, and there was none in the end despite all the preamble, much to Minjee’s confusion.

“I thought you want to fuck?”

I didn’t answer, and thankfully she didn’t press me too hard on this.

I never saw Minjee again. In fact, I was pretty much done with Slay Queens after my encounter with her. Physical perfection isn’t always enough. It was time to return to women who knew how to handle broken toys. It was time to face my Honey Pot return.