

The morning sun rose with the softness of innocence that was Amy. At the age of six with full cheeks and a wide illuminated smile. No fault in this world of hers as she lay in bed with her older sister in their pink room with toys and stuffed animals spread on the floor from the tea party they had with them the night before. They had both assigned to each other a male teddy bear and kissed them passionately pretending to be at the table with their husbands. Innocent little dramas formed from what they had seen in movies they weren't supposed to watch. Movies they managed to sneak peeks at as their nannies watched them in the afternoon when their father was out at 'work' frolicking with a mistress and their mother was in a small gathering of housewives as they conversed about the latest bleaching creams and the best places to get wigs and manicures that they all desperately seemed to need amidst their newly done nails.

The day before, her and her sister sat at the corner of the visitor's parlour that their mother had prohibited the nannies from using but they still utilized. Legs spread across the leather sofa, when their 'madam' was not around. The DSTV channel was changed to an African magic movie played by dramatic shinnny women and men even more glamorous. The y2k theme that swept through the times made the aesthetic of the movie. The actors spoke with curved tongues and r's placed in every corner of their dialogues to feign an American accent that none of them had. The lip gloss applied on the lips of the women shone, glittered and smacked as they talked and the bellies of the actors protruded through their tight shirts, and these men were supposed to be the handsome dare devils of the film.

The scenes were explicit in the best ways they could and since they were mostly of moments where people were caught in bed cheating there was a lot of messy kissing scenes with smeared lip gloss and audible spit transfers. But that was what sold and that was what was interesting to the nannies. The girls sat at the corner with toys in hand but eyes firmly planted on the screen with their mouths half open in shock as each explicit scene played before their eyes. Amy thought this could help spice up their plays and tea parties. Just imagine her with Mr Teddy, kissing, as her sister walked in and screamed in surprise at the betrayal, what could be more wonderful than the scandal

But she knew all too well these intimates of life and the real mechanisms behind them. She knew these stories were exaggerated and the movement of the bodies were too scripted to equal the things she knew. The summer before, she had walked into the guest room as her uncle lay positioned on top of a lady friend he had snuck into his room. He was so engrossed in what he was doing he hardly noticed as she stood by the door staring at his jerks and grunts and then at the obliging face of the woman he was positioned on top of. There was a final groan and he fell like mould of wet clay on the lady who in turn shock in surprise at the feel of his heavy body resting completely on her. It was not until then that he turned to see the innocence of Amy's face slowly fading away. He immediately got up, to the relief of the woman, and tied a towel around his waist as he escorted Amy out of his room.

"You should not have been here, this is my room. Go back upstairs."

"What are you doing to aunty?"

"It's something special. I'll show you later. When you're older. Just don't tell anybody. If youu tell anybody I won't get presents for you anymore Amy."

"Okay uncle."

She went upstairs that day crippled with fear but soon forgot about the ordeal when she begun to play with the toys her uncle had just bought for her sister and her. But once in a while the thought would resurface, jumbled up with the memories of cartoons she had watched and games she had played but she discarded it. But whenever she heard grunts and moans from the guest room she would know not to go there. One day she heard the same type of grunts from her parents' bedroom and wondered if it was the same thing her uncle had done that her parents were doing but she never opened the door. She didn't want to know. It was from those gifts that she had become a collector of all the latest toy and always had stories to tell her mates in school about how much fun she had. She was practically an ambassador for most of these brands. After her recommendation most of her classmates would rush to get the toys.

During the next Christmas holidays, she saw one of her previous nannies go into her uncles room. Before that she had often seen her uncle spend time with the nanny. She even saw his hand up her skirt once but discarded it and continued to play with her sister. A few months later her mother found out the nanny was pregnant and sent her back to the village they had brought her from. Back to the trials and tribulations of no money and being forced to marry a man who would leave her with ten children and the struggle to feed them all which would lead to sending the girl's away when they get older to the cities to continue the circle of life when they become nannies and house helps. A painful cycle of zero possibilities and a stagnant world.

Her uncle walked into the house the next afternoon for yet another business trip in the city. Most of these trips included him sneaking numerous girls in and out of the house or teasing the nannies during the day when his brother and his sister in law weren't around. These business trips included a lot of grunting and panting noises from his room. These trips were when Amy grew her toy collection. He walked in one afternoon with a heavy musky smell of suffocating perfume and a gold chain around his neck. His white t-shirt was too tight for his growing bear belly and his jeans style were always bellbottom jeans with patterns on them. He dressed very much like the men in the movies that the nannies watched. Maybe that was where they got an idea of what a man should look like and why they were so attracted to him. When he walked in they rushed to his side and genuflected with their chests out as he nodded down at them in approval. Her sister ran into his arms as he carried her up in a long embrace. He did the same for Amy too.

And this hug was different from all the others. This one had a different sense to it as he hugged her tightly, clutching firmly on her chest and waist so her dress was pulled up in the embrace and revealed her tiny pink colored underwear. He had started to hug her sister like that when she turned seven and now had proceeded to do the same with her. He reached into his bag and brought out two little blue water guns wrapped in plastic bags with a label with mandarin written on in in bright colours for her and her sister. That's how most of the toys were. Most of them had mandarin words written on them. Her uncle always said he had just gotten the toys from china and they should be very careful cause they were very rare. She often wondered how it was true. She had always seen the same toys in the stores she followed her mother to.

Later that day she awoke late and ran to her parent's room just to see they had both left. Her sister was still asleep and so were the nannies who often went back to bed after their Madame had left the house. She walked to the guest room to see if her uncle was around. He met her in front of the stairs with only his boxers on.

"What are you doing awake Amy?" he asked with is sideways smile

"I was coming to your room so we can play with the guns together."

He walked hand in hand with her to his room. His belly vibrated and jiggled with each step he took and she forced herself to hold back laughter. Immediately he opened the door he carried her up and pinned her on the bed with tickles.

"Shhhh. Don't laugh Amy. Be quiet."

He pulled down his boxers and forced himself into her mouth.

"This is the special thing I promised to show you when you got older." He said with one arm in her dress and the other squeezing her mouth open. "You see it's not a bad thing."

He stayed that way for a minute more and was soon finished. He reached into his bag and brought out a can of Fanta.

"Drink this to wash it down." He said with a similar smile on his face. He reached into his bag again and brought out a bag of sweets. He held it in her face.

"Don't tell anyone okay? Or do you want to stop getting sweets and toys."

"I wouldn't tell anyone."

She could feel a difference in the way she felt. She could feel some part of her removed. But she continued with the secret and every time he touched her she could feel the loss of something. When she turned 15 her parents were yet again no were to be found. In the past 9 years she had welcomed three more siblings and two more nannies. Her mother was still on a rejuvenation journey to relax from the pain of childbirth and the stress of breastfeeding. She went to spars every other week with her house wife friends as they discussed the latest bleaching creams and the best ways to slim down from all the weight they had gained from child birth. Her father was still away with his 'work' that he seemed to do at night now. He would come back home fully fed and go straight to bed to awake only 4 hours later to continue the cycle. Sometimes he never came back home. They had moved to their new house now and she no longer had to share a room with her sister who was now in boarding school.

Her sister had become distant and begged to be sent to boarding school. Her uncle was now married with one son. A son he seemed to carry everywhere with him but their house. He now only spent one or two nights as opposed to the weeks he spent when they were younger. His wife who was a barely educated woman from a neighbouring village, was chosen by his mother to keep him company and give her more grandchildren. The old woman liked that she had many children playing in her compound during family events in the village.

During those nights when he was around he would call her to his room where he would first marvel at her growing body before proceeding to have his way with her. She now knew what he was doing and what she was losing. They taught these topics in school and even had a guidance counsellor to help the students through difficult problems. She just could never tell anyone because of his new threat.

“You’re a big girl now oo. Ehn Amy? If you like tell someone. Who would even believe you? They will send you to the village for being loose. Ehn? Tell them. My brother would believe me over you of course.”

At the age of 17 she was used to it and looked forward to it. She could only see her classmates as immature. One boy in particular never listened to her when she said she was not interested. He would stay by her side during class and walk her to her car every day. During weekends he would visit her. He was the kind of love that any young girl would be happy to have as a first love but she sat by the door every day after school hoping her uncle would walk in and grab her forcefully to spread long across the guest room bed. She now knew what it meant to have unexplainable psychological compulsions and she used her knowledge to come to terms with the last 11 years. She embraced her broken with a strength that hurt the very essence of her youth.

As she waited one day for her uncle to come through the door, she found that the very classmate in perpetual infatuation with her was at her door. That day in frustration she took him up to her now black room and did to him what her uncle did to her. The boy was more shocked than pleased and from that day reduced how frequently he visited.

Her sister came back home from university one day with a story. She ran to their parents with a claim to have knowledge of what their uncle did to Amy and to her. When her sister was 8 she realized what their uncle was doing to her and stopped him with a threat. He stopped buying toys for her and only bought for Amy or would get a bigger one for Amy but she never minded because she was free finally. She had suspected that he had continued with Amy but was never sure and kept finding ways to avoid staying home for too long. Her parents called Amy in a fit to confirm the allegations but she denied them all. To her, her sister was only jealous of the relationship she had built with her uncle and her parents believed her. Her sister was sent away once again to school in a different country while Amy continued to a university that was only an hour away from home.

One day she went back home to find him in the guest room. She lay in submission. She was powerless beneath his aging old body. She took in his breaths as he grunted like a pig above her and she smiled in completion when he finished. It was by far the best kept secret she ever knew and looked forward to.

“Your father was asking me some questions about what I did to you when you were younger. Ehn? What did I do?”

“It was nothing uncle. I’m sorry.”

“Promise you wouldn’t tell.” He said with his smile.

“I wouldn’t tell.”