

Once Beaten

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5 pairs of shoes, a make up set, 3 dresses, a brand new iPhone 13 pro max, I kept counting the items I got as valentine gifts. I couldn’t believe my eyes, I was super elated. Suddenly I felt someone nudging my sides, the nudging continued and I woke up to reality.

Mtcheeeew It was my friend Asma’u. How dare she wake me up from this wonderful dream of mine.

“Dan Allah standup,you just dey turn for bed since day don break”,

Asma'u was looking at me mischievously, she handed me my phone and I eyed her suspiciously.

“15 missed calls? Ah! Ahmed won’t kill me.”

I was still contemplating on calling him back when my phone rang again, Asamau smiled as I picked the phone, she seemed to be on Ahmed’s side.

My name is Zaynab, and the event I’m narrating occurred in February last year. It was the season of love, valentine was around the corner, I sat on my bed after I had finished talking to Ahmed.

“Babe nor dull o, I no know wetin dey do u”, Asamau teased.

I sighed, Ahmed’s proposal was juicy and risky too, I am a lover of mischief so I decided to give in to Ahmed’s proposal, besides I had nothing to lose, or so I thought.

I sluggishly put on my jeans as I scanned my wardrobe for a top to wear. I was determined to make Ahmed wait.

“Afterall na him want am.”

I powdered my face a little, and wore a pair of sandals. I was satisfied with my looks, I smiled at the mirror over and over again, thanking God and my parents for my looks. What more could I have wished for; height, complexion, beauty, and intelligence.

“hehehe”, I laughed mischievously, still admiring myself.

” Madam”, Asamau’s voice snapped me out of my reverie

“pesin yaro dey wait for you outside o.” I laughed and went out to see Ahmed!

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I came back to my hostel with a package, my roommates looked at me with eyes seeming to say “as usual, every outing she gets a gift.”

I opened it and there it was! A dress and a pair of shoes with accessories to match, the channel designer purse caught my eye. Ahmed was really serious with his plans, I would make my hair with the fifty thousand he just gave me. I hoped it would be enough, the cost of human hair was fast increasing like the cost of fuel, my phone rang again, this time it was my boyfriend.

“Babbbbyyyy ”, the ever familiar voice of my boyfriend could be heard from my phone speaker, we spoke at length and he informed me about his trip to Kano and that he wouldn’t be around for valentine. I was hurt, but then, fate seemed to be on my side, I would have time to execute my plan with Ahmed.

My boyfriend whom I fondly call “my baby” cheered me up and I was happy again. Little did he know the reason why I was happy.

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It was a Big Day, Perfect day! What could ever go wrong?

That was the first thought on waking up. A few yawns and a good stretch did it.

But not after rolling back under the covers for one last snooze..... Ten minutes more wouldn't hurt, right?

The prayer was for clear skies and clear skies meant a clear mind.... Thus, no dark thoughts, and no giving up!

My phone started ringing it was Hannatu my coursemate.”Babe did you check the department WhatsApp group chat today” she laughed joyfully “Babe ASUU declared their warning strike starting from today Omo this Valentine's day will be the best we won't have to worry over Professor Olusholar's test tomorrow”

Though I want to graduate on time but I'm so excited about this ASUU strike this semester has been so hectic if only I know Biochemistry was this hard I would have applied for a change of course but now I have a month to rest and that Chem 303 test I wasn't even ready for the test.

Monday February 14th 2022, my phone rang again. It was Bahago, my new catch. I had never seen him, but he seemed really rich. He said he got my number from a friend. Who cares? He's rich, that's all he has money. He said he had seen me before, and so he was getting me valentine gifts. I went out to meet him, and to my own amazement, I saw a very short ugly guy coming towards me. I walked past him, and went towards the parking lot.

“It's me Bahago”, he said, trying to get my attention.

I pretended like I wasn't aware of his presence, and thought to myself "What da fuck?"

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I was boiling with rage, I had already told my roomies of the gifts I'll bring back. I decided to ignore them as I walked into my room, got dressed as I waited for Ahmed.

"Bahago!Bahago!! Ahhhh, I've been scammed. Bahago is a dirty, poor, and ugly man my mum buys red oil and cooking gas from. He had told me over the phone that he dealt in oil and gas. I thought I had caught a big oil money fish.

The tears stung my eyes. I'll never do phone runs again. I've been beaten at my own game. I waited for Ahmed, we would have a nice night together. I'll try and forget Bahago, after all Ameen had just gotten back from Dubai, and Malik (my side niggur) would get me gifts too. I consoled myself.

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Ahmed had paid for a V.VIP table for two at the valentine splash dinner in school, I was looking angelic in the dress he bought for me. I was the cynosure of all eyes. Ahmed was feeling proud, I was too! The feeling of being wanted by all eyes seemed to quell the frustration I felt about my disappointment from Bahago and I looked forward to collecting gifts from Malik and Ameen.

Ahmed wanted to get back at his ex for breaking up with him, and so I was to act all romantic with him. Ofcourse she was at the event and she looked on jealousy, taking note of all I wore from head to toe, knowing fully well that Ahmed got them for me. She was filled with anger; turning deep green with envy. Ahmed noticed, he was happy his plans had worked. He pulled my head closer, bent his, and kissed me for the umpteenth time.

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My phone vibrated. An sms from my Malik ``Babe I'm really down at the moment I'm not feeling well, I'm having stomach trouble. I'm so sorry, forgive me; today was meant for us, but I can't leave home. I will make it up to you." My heart sank, was this going to be the second disappointment of the day? Of all people, Malik? Oh my God! I looked at the time. It was 8.30pm. Malik has been a good boy, I dismissed all doubts. The stomach trouble must be serious.

"Sweetie, any problem?" Ahmed patted me, "not at all", I answered with a smile. Ahmed is really handsome; tall and dark. One of the reasons we got along though.

Another sms came in, Ameen! I quickly thought of what to do. "Erm hun, I guess my sanitary pad is soaked, gotta go to the hostel to change." "Okay dear", Ahmed replied. I hurried to the hostel, my intelligence was paying off.

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I met Ameen in front of my hostel, I recognised the face of the guy he came with, I had to do something fast. I called Ameen's phone, "hey dear, come to love garden, I can see you, come alone." I hung up, my heart kept beating fast! I was confused, scared, and felt cheated.

The night was becoming something else. I wondered what would happen next. I saw Ameen approaching, I called him softly, almost in whispers, I looked straight to his hands, I was satisfied, he was holding a package. Alas! One reward for tonight, I hugged Ameen, he gave me my package and I hugged him again.

“Ameen who came with you?” I questioned

“That’s my friend, he came to see a girl he met yesterday, he is heartbroken, he just found out that he has been an assistant boyfriend to his supposed girlfriend, so he brought the gifts he had bought for her with the intentions of giving it to the girl that told him the truth. Are you okay Zaynab?”

I wanted the ground to open up and swallow me. Malik had found out, Jamila had told him, she was the only person who knew Malik was a substitute. I swore in my mind to kill the bitch! So Malik and Ameen are friends? Such a close shave, I sighed!

I prayed Ameen and Malik shouldn’t find out they both had something to do with me. Meanwhile I was grieving, Malik lied to me, not his fault though, any guy could do the same. I deceived him.

I know Malik, he would have bought lots of gifts, and he would give them to Jamila. I was in pain. I had lost a treasured Maga. Not like I loved him, but I enjoyed the gifts that came with his ignorance. And yes! He loved me.

I hoped he did not buy the latest iPhone 14 pro max because that would only make Jamila proud. Jamila! That slut! Bitch! Betrayer! Snitch!

“Ameen, I’m on my period, I have cramps, I have to go and sleep now”

I hugged Ameen and saw him off to his car. I ran to my hostel, dropped the package on my bed, and ran back to meet Ahmed at the valentine show. As I walked back to meet Ahmed, I wondered “How bad could today be? Of all days! The second disappointment.”

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Ahmed felt happy and relieved to see me return, I casted a glance at his estranged ex girlfriend. Ahmed was enjoying it all. I had hardly settled down when I got another text message. I unlocked my phone, fearing the worst, but was relieved when I saw "His royal highness" that was my baby. I opened the sms and the content got me sweating profusely,

"I am at the front of your hostel baby, suprise suprise."

At that point I almost urinated in my pants. Ahmed could sense my discomfort.

I quickly replied "you kidding right?"

"Baby I came back for you! I Love You", was the nervous reply I got.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the dinner ended. I hurried to my hostel with Ahmed, he couldn't understand why I was rushing, I couldn't explain. I had told Ahmed I was single. I got to the front of my hostel, scared of the worst. Only for Ahmed to pull me closer and give me the "kiss of life." It felt so good, an antidote for all the disappointment I had gotten earlier. I got lost in the kiss only to be awakened by a violent pull. For a split second, I thought I was dead. Right there, looking at me with red angered eyes was my baby.

"Dave!" I gasped,

"What's going on here? Ahmed asked

"Who dafuq is this nigga", my baby retorted.

Ahmed looked at me intently, I swallowed hard.

"Thatsssss my bbbooyy-friend" I stammered. "Didn't you say you were single?" At that point I was between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Dave's eyes had now turned ultra-violet, his face became straight and scary. I could smell the anger. I stood in shock as I watched tears rain from his eyes!

I burst into tears while hitting my head in an act of a typical woman in distress.

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iPhone 13 pro max was just launched in September 2021, it was every girl's dream phone as of early 2022. It became a rave towards valentine, and my baby had travelled to Kano to get it for me. What I had been wishing for.

He held it in his hands, tore out the pack in anger. It was a blue iPhone 13 pro max the exact color I wanted. I prayed in my heart of hearts. Dave shouldn't do what I was thinking.

I watched the brand new iPhone 13 pro max fall from his hands, he had flung it deliberately. "Oh my God!" I gasped, How could he, oh why? Oh my God! The tears stung my eyeballs. I almost burst into tears, but I was in front of my hostel. Ahmed was there too, and so I just let the tears flow, and stood in distress as I watched Dave grind the phone with his timberland boot.

Dave walked away from me. I called his name but he didn't turn to look at my face and so did Ahmed. I ran to my room crying. The height of all disappointments. At this point all I wanted was my baby, I had hurt him. I hope he forgives me. Nothing else mattered, not Ahmed, not Malik, not the iPhone 13 pro max and definitely not Ameen, not to mention Jamila. I cried with the thoughts of Dave, my baby! I entered my room to find my roomies eating chocolate, they had gotten it from the package Ameen brought. He had brought only chocolates all the way from Dubai, what a waste. I was heart wrenched, I sank into my bed, and cried all night. I thought I was going to die and not even Asamau could comfort me.

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It is February again! 2023! My baby is not in town again, and God knows I ain't going nowhere on val's day. No more games! I've learnt my lessons. I went through hell to get my baby back. Dave and I love each other so much. He forgave me and never spoke about it. But I never forgot it.

Unless he is in town for val, no val date with anyone, not even my bestie! I'll be indoor and remain a good girl. As the saying goes "once BEATEN twice shy." I was beaten at my own game last year. This year I am gonna be a good wife to my Dave, I just hope he springs a surprise with an iPhone 14 pro max this time. Dave and I plan on getting married after graduating. I have learnt my lessons and so should every girl who reads this. It ain't all about the dates and the gifts. It is indeed about LOVE