

3.

“The heart that loves is the heart that suffers. It’ll be left reeling, like a ship lost in a stormy sea”

Estelle jolted awake to the slamming of the door followed by the harsh voice of her father, “I don’t care how you’re going to do it, but I want that get rid of before words get out. Crap, I don’t want a word about it getting out”

Estelle's brow furrowed in confusion, and she slowly opened her eyes into her dimly lit childhood room. Get rid of what? What are they talking about? She wondered but didn't make a move to stand up as she eavesdropped on her parent's conversation outside her room door. She's aware of the event of the day. It was all behind her eyelids when she was unconscious; the memory had stayed with her like glue all through.

“Christian, we can’t...” her mother whispered weakly in the same soft voice that always calmed Estelle.

“We can, and we will,” He bellowed. Estelle peeked an eye open but couldn't see anything other than her blue walls and her wooden door. What could they be talking about? The temptation to stand up and plant her face on the door so she could hear everything was great, but she couldn't risk getting caught before she knew what they were talking about.

“There is no way she would keep the child of that bastard after he disrespected her, disrespected us.” Her father whispered-yelled and Estelle stiffened. “No daughter of mine would be permitted to drag my name and reputation into the mud, so when Estelle wakes up, you'll inform her of the pregnancy and coerce her to abort the baby while I work on their divorce paper.”

“Christian, maybe we shouldn't. You know how much Estelle loves him, and you know...”

“Love, love, love! Where has that got her? I never wanted her to get married to that boy even though he is my friend's son, yet I listened because you wanted me to follow her wish. But right now, you both must follow my wish.” He stated angrily.

Estelle's heart palpitated at the revelation. She's pregnant with Hunter's child. Tears gathered in her eyes. She's nally pregnant. What good news at the wrong time? It would have been good news if she were in a different situation. Images of Hunter kissing his rst love ashed through her mind again, and she squeezed her eyes shut like it could help reduce the pain in her heart and the acceleration with which it was beating. It was a good thing she wasn't at the hospital with a heart monitor attached to her or her parents would have been notified of her consciousness. Her hands instinctively went to her stomach. There's a life in there - Hunter's child. Maybe, just maybe, if she went home to tell him the good news, maybe he would come to his senses and return to her.

The sound of a door slamming shut again snapped her out of her daze, followed by retreating steps. Her parents had probably left to argue in their room. She's got a few minutes, she thought. Quickly, she detached the syringe attached to her hands, lunged for her wedding purse, then froze.

Oh Crap! She was still in her wedding dress.

She limped in a rush into the bathroom and froze again when her eyes met her reection in the mirror. She was a total disaster, like an evil spirit come to life. Her disheveled hair owed all around her black-stained face. Christ!

She opened the faucet and began washing her face in a rush. After that, she packed her hair in a messy bun and then proceeded to rip her dress in haste with tears gushing out of her already swollen eyes since she didn't have much time to change. Her heart ripped in sync with each rip of the dress. She found herself grappling with whirlwinds of emotion as she did, but it was nothing new. She had experienced something akin to this, she had beat it, and she was sure she would this time around too. But she couldn't shake off the fear and lack of condence she felt even as she sneaked out of the house with luckily no reporters in sight.

She got to her matrimonial house in no time. The house was empty and the same as they left it in the morning - evidence that no one had been in there after they left for the hall that morning. One reason was that they had given all the workers a holiday so she and Hunter could have the house all to themselves. Her heart ached at the thought that he was somewhere with Carla not caring about her. He left her outside their anniversary hall, yet he didn't look back. He had done it; broken her the same way before, but she had never thought he would again.

She sat on the bed, tears trickling down her eyes. Who would have thought the day would turn out this way? Just that morning, in front of the mirror that had turned blurry through her teary eyes, he had promised her a hot night lled with passionate love. He had looked at her with love and longing, she felt her heart dance in joy. However, right now, her heart was in pure agony, and nothing close to what she had felt earlier that morning. And to top it up, she's pregnant. What if he doesn't want the baby?

No, she shook her head. He will. There is no reason for him not to. It's their baby, and he is still married to her. Although she wouldn't lie about ling for a divorce just as her father had said was tempting, but, she was no one to give up. She didn't give up in her teenage years when he cheated on her with this same Carla, a devil beneath an angelic face she assumed to be a friend of hers or throughout the strife of their marriage, and now that she found out that she was pregnant with his child, she had no reason to give up now too. In fact, the impulse to ght stood more prominent than ever.

A car honked and Estelle jerked up from bed only to realize the room was bright and that she had slept, and it was morning. Hunter had spent the night out and was nally back. She couldn't stop her heart thudding hard against her chest as she rushed out of the room and down the stairs to meet him halfway into the sitting room. Just like her, he was still in his wedding attire looking sleep-deprived but not worse than she was. His expression conveyed the shock he felt on seeing Estelle. It was like he wasn't expecting to see her in their home?

He did a once over on her, his eyes lingered on her ripped dress and her bandaged ankle and something akin to guilt manifested in his tired face. Why wouldn't he feel guilty when he had left her for his ex?

“Estelle” he nodded in greeting, walking past her.

“How's Carla?” Estelle asked with a smile, taunting him. She knew he had spent the night out with Carla, the thought alone riled her up, waking up a beast inside her. Hunter halted, then turned to regard her with a stunned look, making Estelle reward him with a painful smirk.

“You don't expect me not to ask, after leaving me at the hall, for her, do you?”

Hunter's jaw tightened, and his shoulders rose and fell as he took a deep breath, avoiding her gaze. “I'm sorry.”

“You're sorry?” Her voice rose with disbelief and anger. Seeing him acting like the stunt he pulled wasn't a big deal, like a common sorry would make the embarrassment and pain he made her go through disappear spark up re in her, “You think a simple apology can x this? You left me at the hall, Hunter,” she screamed. Tears pooled in her eyes and her chest raged to jump out of her chest

Hunter ran his hand through his hair, with a pained look on his face for a few seconds, before nally making eye contact with her. “Okay, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that, but that was Carla.” He said like she was supposed to be okay and understood him.

“And I am your wife” She spat, tears now streaming down her face. “You kissed her right in front of me, in front of the whole world, Hunter.” Estelle had thought that catching Hunter and Carla kissing behind her room door through her room camera when they were teenagers was traumatic until the very moment she watched him, in real, her husband kissing the same woman at their anniversary in front of the whole world. Estelle felt the world tilt beneath her and her chest tightened as if an invisible hand was squeezing air out of her lungs.

Hunter winced, guilt ashing across his face, “I know I probably shouldn't have done that.”

“Probably?” Estelle gasped in disbelief, her red eyes snapped up to meet his emotionless ones.

“But it was at the spur of the moment. I couldn't control myself,” Hunter argued, and Estelle just stared up at him with wide eyes and mouth agape.