

A Bit Of Bad Luck Part 1

Bad Luck

“It’s just a bit of bad luck,” Jules said, his voice steady despite the tremor in his hands as he pulled Rose into a tight embrace. “We’ll get through this. We always do. I promise we’ll work it out.”

Rose leaned into him, her cheek pressed against the soft cotton of his shirt, inhaling the familiar scent of his cologne mixed with the faint stress-sweat of the past few days. At twenty-two, they were still the high school sweethearts who had navigated the awkward throes of adolescence together, their love as deep and unyielding as ever. Back then, in the bustling halls of their suburban high school, they had found solace in shared glances across crowded classrooms and late-night study sessions that often dissolved into stolen kisses. Both from comfortable, upper-middle-class families, they had approached university with wide-eyed optimism, enrolling at the same institution but pursuing passions that highlighted their individual strengths.

Rose had thrived in the studies of Environmental Science, her days filled with lectures on ecosystems and labs dissecting climate models. She excelled, topping her classes and joining the sustainability club, where she forged bonds with like-minded friends over debates on renewable energy. Jules, meanwhile, dove into Digital Media and Journalism, his creative mind buzzing with ideas for interactive stories and viral campaigns. He led the campus newspaper's tech team, surrounded by a circle of fellow geeks who geeked out over the latest editing software and indie documentaries. Their university years had been everything they dreamed: top grades, vibrant social circles, and a shared apartment that served as a cozy haven for their growing intimacy.

Now, with graduation behind her, Rose had returned for a fourth year to tackle advanced courses in Climate Policy and Data Analytics. These specialised classes, tailored for high-achievers like her, promised to sharpen her skills for roles in environmental consulting or international policy. She buried herself in data sets and policy simulations, her blonde hair perpetually twisted into a no-nonsense bun, her curvaceous figure concealed under baggy sweaters and jeans. She loathed the stereotype of the ditzy blonde, the way heads turned not for her sharp insights but for the sway of her hips or the fullness of her chest. Intelligence defined her, and she dressed to ensure the world saw it first.

Jules, ever the devoted partner, had launched into the workforce with infectious enthusiasm right after his degree. He secured a junior content producer role at a bustling digital marketing firm, crafting engaging online narratives for brands. The position paid just enough to cover their rent and lifestyle, and he revelled in the responsibility.

“I’ve got this,” he would tell her, eyes shining behind his wire-rimmed glasses. “You focus on your studies. No part-time job for you. I want you to chase your dreams without worrying about bills.”

His ginger hair, often disheveled from late nights at the office, and his softening midsection from skipped workouts did nothing to dim her affection. Their love ran deeper than physical perfection; it was forged in mutual respect and unwavering support.

But then the recession struck like a thief in the night, gutting the media sector with ruthlessness. Jules's first three months on the job had been a whirlwind of triumphs: successful campaigns, praise from superiors, and the thrill of financial independence. He and Rose celebrated small victories with takeout dinners and dreams of a future of financial and career success for both of them. Then came the whispers of budget cuts, followed by the harsh reality of forced salary reductions across the board. Their income almost halved overnight, stretching their savings thin. Rent payments became partial at best, scraped together from overdraft fees and skipped groceries. The landlord, a grizzled man with a perpetual scowl, hammered on their door with warnings.

“Two months to catch up, or you're out,” he growled, his patience as thin as their wallet.

Rose watched Jules's optimism fracture under the pressure. He worked longer hours for less income, pitching ideas hoping to stem the bleeding, but the layoffs loomed inevitable. When the redundancy notice finally arrived, it was a pink slip that shattered their fragile stability. Jules stared at the email in disbelief, his face paling as he realized they teetered on the edge of ruin. No severance, no references glowing with promise; just a curt acknowledgment of economic necessity.

“We can always call my parents,” Rose suggested one evening, her voice soft as she curled up beside him on their worn couch. “They'd wire us money in a heartbeat. Just enough to bridge the gap.”

“No,” Jules replied firmly, his jaw set. “Absolutely not. We're not going to them. Or mine. I'm the one who said I'd provide. We'll figure this out ourselves.”

Pride burned in his chest, a fierce determination to prove he could stand on his own. Their families' wealth felt like a safety net he refused to grab, a symbol of failure he couldn't stomach. Asking for help would mean admitting defeat, especially to Rose's parents, whose subtle judgments already made him feel inadequate.

The weeks blurred into a desperate haze of job applications. Jules polished his resume, highlighting his fresh degree and innovative portfolio, but the recession had flooded the market with overqualified candidates. Interviews trickled in; awkward Zoom calls with skeptical hiring managers, but offers never followed. Even entry-level gigs at supermarkets and retail chains bounced his applications back with polite rejections: *‘Overqualified for the role; unlikely to be a long term hire.’*

He pounded the pavement, his frame slumping under the weight of rejection, while Rose attended her classes with forced focus, her mind divided between algorithms and their crumbling life.

Last night, the truth had erupted. Jules could no longer hide the eviction notice crumpled in his desk drawer. As he confessed, tears welling in his eyes, Rose's shock turned to hurt.

“Why didn't you tell me we had a final warning?” she demanded, her voice breaking. “We're a team, Jules. Partners. You can't keep things like this from me, it's not your's to carry alone.”

“I didn't want to worry you,” he murmured, pulling her close. “I thought I could find a quick job to get us through, fix it. But the job market... no one is hiring people like me.”

But there was no fixing it now. Their bags sat packed by the door; clothes, laptops, a few cherished books, meagre remnants of their life together. The landlord waited outside, arms crossed, ready to seize the keys and change the locks.

Rose glanced at the door, her heart pounding. “What are we going to do now?”

Jules squeezed her hand. “We’ll start fresh. One step at a time.”

With the last of their cash, they trudged the few blocks to the nearest hotel, the evening air cool against their flushed skin. The fancy sign flickered invitingly, a temporary refuge in the storm.

“We’ll stay here tonight,” Jules said as they approached the entrance.

“You were right Rose, I should have done it months ago, rather than be so proud and stubborn... but, tomorrow, I’ll call my folks. They’ll help top up the account, give us breathing room to find a new place and enough time for me to find a new job.”

He swallowed hard, the words tasting like ash. Relying on his parents stung, but it beat the alternative of begging Rose's family. That would seal his sense of emasculation.

Rose nodded, though worry etched lines around her eyes. She trusted him, but the uncertainty gnawed at her. The lobby buzzed with activity past seven o’clock in the evening, the after-work rush filling the space with harried travellers and weary business folk. A small queue snaked toward the reception desk, murmurs of frustration rippling through the line as guests griped about delays. Jules and Rose joined the end, shifting their bags and exchanging quiet reassurances.

At the counter stood a tall handsome Black man, his movements precise and commanding. He handled each complaint with quiet efficiency, his deep voice soothing frayed nerves. “I understand your concern, ma’am. Let me check that reservation right away.”

He delegated a minor issue to a colleague with a nod and a few crisp instructions, turning potential chaos into smooth resolution. By the time he finished, the once-grumbling crowd dispersed with smiles, thanking him warmly.

Jules squinted, adjusting his glasses. “Isn’t that... Bad Luck?”

Rose followed his gaze, her eyes widening. “No way. It can’t be.”

But it was. Amari Luck, their old high school classmate, now five years removed from the chaos he once sowed. Back then, he had been the epitome of disruption: the star jock who dominated the basketball court but treated classes like a playground for his childish pranks. Tall and athletic even as a teen, with a mischievous grin that masked deeper troubles, Amari breezed through hallways causing uproar wherever he went. He dated a string of girls, leaving whispers of broken hearts in his wake, and his antics; talking back to teachers, starting fights, halted lessons more often than not. Being sent to the principal’s office was part of his daily routine, and pupils like Jules and Rose, who craved order and knowledge, viewed him with disdain.

To them, he was “Bad Luck,” a nickname born from late-night rants over how his presence jinxed their study groups and exam prep.

“That guy’s a lost cause,” Jules would say. “He’ll never amount to anything but trouble.” Rose agreed, her focus on grades leaving no room for his brand of foolishness.

Yet here he was, transformed. The boy who once embodied mayhem now exuded competence, his broad shoulders squared under a crisp uniform, his close-cropped hair neat and professional.

“He’s changed,” Rose murmured, a mix of surprise and reluctant admiration in her tone.

The queue dwindled, and soon they stood before him. Amari looked up, his piercing brown eyes locking onto theirs. Recognition dawned, lighting his handsome features with a genuine smile.

“Well, if it isn’t Jules and Rose. Long time no see. What brings you two to my hotel? Don’t you guys live in the area?”

Jules blinked, caught off guard. “Amari? Wow, yeah. It’s been forever. We’re just... looking to stay a couple of nights. Caught between apartment moves.”

Rose managed a smile, her posture straightening. “Hi, Amari. You look... different. Good different. Matured.”

Amari chuckled, a low, warm sound. “Life has a way of doing that. What have you two been up to? Still buried in the books, I bet. Always knew you two would still be together and going places!”

“We graduated Uni last year,” Rose said, warming to the familiarity. “I’m back doing some extra courses in climate policy and data analytics. Get me sharp for entering the job market, next year.”

“And I finished my degree in digital media,” Jules added. “Was working in media and content production until... well, things shifted with the recession the last few months.”

Amari nodded approvingly. “That makes sense. You two were always the smart ones, heads in the library while the rest of us fools ran wild. Glad to see it paid off. Wish I’d spent more time there myself. Might’ve avoided a few detours.”

Jules’s gaze dropped to the name badge gleaming on Amari’s chest. “Come on now... Amari Luck, Night Manager. You’re not doing too bad for yourself. Very impressive.”

“Thanks, man. Landed on my feet with this gig. It’s cushy enough; quiet nights, pay’s not bad too with that nightshift allowance on top. Anyway, what can I do for you? Looking for a double room?”

“Yeah, for two nights if possible. Breakfast included?” Rose asked.

“Absolutely. Let me pull up availability.” Amari tapped at the computer, his fingers flying over the keys. “Got a standard double, ensuite available. That’ll be two-eighty total, paying by card?”

Jules handed over his debit card, watching as Amari swiped it. The machine beeped negatively.

“Declined. Let me try again, it’s sometimes a PDQ issue.”

Amari ran it once more. Another beep. “Still no go. Want to try another card?”

Jules’s face flushed crimson, heat creeping up his neck. “Uh, no it’s fine. We’ve had a little cash flow hiccup. Could you switch us to one night? There should be enough on the card to cover it.”

“No problem.” Amari adjusted the booking and processed the payment. It went through this time, draining their account nearly to zero. “You guys sure you’re alright? Never imagined you two would be strapped for cash... but it’s nothing to be ashamed of. Happens to us all. You need some help?”

As the receipt printed, an embarrassed Jules hesitated, then plunged ahead.

“Thanks, Amari... it’s been a rough few months. The recession hit my industry hard. Salary cuts first, then redundancy. We couldn’t keep up with rent, and now... eviction. We’re out on our asses. This is our last night with any dignity. Tomorrow, I’m calling my parents for a bailout. Hate to do it. Hate to think of being seen as a failure like this... but we have no choice.”

Amari’s expression softened, sympathy etching his features. “Damn, that’s tough. Economy’s a beast right now. You two don’t deserve that. Hang in there.” He opened his mouth as if to offer more, but a commotion erupted nearby; a guest clutching their arm, blood seeping through a bandage.

“Excuse me a sec,” Amari said, already moving. “Look’s like a first aid situation. Great seeing you both again. Thing’s will turn around!”

He vanished into the back, leaving Jules and Rose in silence amid the lobby’s hum. Rose gripped Jules’s hand tighter. “He’s really different,” she whispered.

“Yeah,” Jules agreed, a knot of unease twisting in his gut. “Who’d have thought ‘Bad Luck’ would turn out be so responsible and mature? Maybe we should have skipped class and dropped out early ourselves!” He joked.

They both laughed, collected their key and headed to the room, the weight of the unknown pressing down as the door clicked shut behind them.

A Change Of Luck

The hotel room enveloped Rose and Jules in a fragile sanctuary, its walls a bland expanse of cream paint that seemed to absorb the day’s harsh edges. The queen-sized bed, with its sagging mattress and threadbare duvet, claimed the lion’s share of the space, while a rickety nightstand bore a single lamp whose bulb flickered like a hesitant heartbeat. Their

duffel bags, stuffed with hastily packed belongings, leaned against the dresser like weary travellers, unzipped and spilling forth the remnants of their disrupted life. The air carried a faint, institutional tang; air freshener mingled with the ghost of housekeeping's attempts to eliminate the evidence of the previous occupants; but it was a roof, a pause, a breath before the plunge.

Rose peeled off her sneakers, her feet sinking into the carpet as she perched on the bed's edge. Her blonde hair, usually pinned up in a practical bun to downplay her features, had loosened during the walk from their old apartment, strands framing her face in soft waves. She balanced the poise of a woman pursuing her passions with the quiet vulnerability of someone whose world had tilted. Studies consumed her days; late nights poring over climate models and policy drafts in her fourth year, an extra push to prove her mind was as sharp as her resolve. She dressed to deflect: loose blouses and skirts that skimmed her curvy figure, hiding the swell of her hips and the fullness of her breasts from prying eyes. Yet tonight, in the dim light of their hotel room, her shirt hugged her form just enough to hint at the body she guarded so fiercely.

Jules collapsed beside her, his ginger hair disheveled, glasses slipping down his nose as he rubbed his temples. Pride armoured him, a shield against the humiliation of leaning on his affluent parents, but cracks showed in the slump of his shoulders, the way his fingers drummed anxiously against his thigh.

Rose's thoughts drifted to the erosion of the last few months, a slow unraveling that had frayed not just their finances but the intimate threads binding them. Jules's reserve in the bedroom had always been part of his charm; his touches deliberate, like footnotes in a cherished book, footnotes that explained rather than overwhelmed. She adored the safety of it, the way he made her feel seen beyond the physical. But there was a quiet hunger in her, unvoiced, for the fire that occasionally flared during their escapes: weekend getaways where hotel anonymity unlocked him. Lips crashing, bodies urgent, sometimes spilling into a second round before dawn, leaving her skin tingling and her heart full. Those moments teased a deeper satisfaction, one that eluded their routine nights at home.

She'd never complain; their love was a steady current, not a storm. Still, the stress wrapped around them like barbed wire, dulling even the spark of this unfamiliar room. Rose reached for Jules, her hand gentle on his shoulder, drawing his head to rest in her lap. Her fingers wove through his hair, massaging his scalp in slow, circular motions, each stroke a silent vow of endurance.

"We're fortunate, Jules," she said softly, her voice laced with the optimism she'd honed through policy debates. "This mess is awful, but we have a lifeline. Calling your parents in the morning... it'll sort us out. Not everyone gets that kind of backup."

He shifted, his cheek warm against her thigh, eyes lifting to hers with a mix of gratitude and chagrin. "I get it, Rose. Logically. But it gnaws at me. I pictured myself as your provider, the one shielding you from all this. Not crawling back home with my tail between my legs."

"And you still are my provider. My protector," she countered, her thumb tracing his jawline. "Just in a different way right now. I love you for fighting so hard for us, but leaning on family doesn't erase that."

A small smile tugged at his lips, the first genuine one all evening. "High school feels like a lifetime ago. You in that blue dress, me tripping over my feet trying to dance. Yeah, we're tougher than all this mess. I love you; more than words can do justice."

He sat up slowly, the bed creaking under his movement, and cupped her face in both hands. His kiss began as a whisper of lips, tentative and reassuring, but deepened with the raw need for connection. She melted into it, her hands sliding up his back, pulling him closer until their breaths mingled in shared rhythm.

The knock came sharp and loud, yanking them apart. Jules blinked, disoriented, and padded to the door, rising on tiptoes to squint through the peephole. "It's Amari," he announced, surprise colouring his tone as he twisted the lock.

Amari filled the doorway, his tall frame commanding yet unthreatening, trays balanced effortlessly in his grip. The hotel uniform; crisp white shirt and black slacks, clung to his athletic build, a far cry from the loose jerseys of their high school days. His dark skin gleamed under the hallway lights, and his smile carried the easy charisma that had once gotten him out of detentions and into hearts.

"Hey, sorry I had to cut short our conversation earlier," he said, stepping inside with the grace of someone used to navigating crowds. He placed the trays on the desk, uncovering steaming burgers piled high with lettuce, tomato, and melted cheese, alongside heaps of golden fries and a slab of chocolate cake glistening with ganache. An ice bucket with 4 beers hiding amongst the cubes.

"Figured with all you've been going through, you could use a proper unwind. Burgers and fries, cake for after, and these to wash it down. House special; nothing fancy, but it'll fill you up and take the bite out of the day."

Rose rose, her cheeks flushing with unexpected warmth, her posture straightening as she smoothed her shirt; unaware of how it accentuated the curve of her waist. Amari's eyes met hers briefly, a flicker of appreciation passing over her form before he busied himself with the trays and cutlery, his gaze respectful but undeniably drawn to the subtle allure she rarely revealed.

"Amari, this is beyond kind," Jules said, clapping a hand on his old acquaintance's arm, his voice rough with unshed emotion. "We were just... hanging in there. You didn't have to."

"Yeah, really thoughtful," Rose echoed, her environmentalist's practicality shining through in her sincere nod. "Makes a huge difference after the past few days. Thank you."

Amari shrugged, his broad shoulders rolling modestly as he cracked open a beer and passed it to Jules. "It's nothing, really. Grew up with you two; can't go letting old friends crash and burn. Speaking of which, I mulled over what you shared at the desk. Hate seeing solid people like you hit this wall. Got a proposition of you Jules, if you're game. How do you fancy some Night reception shifts downstairs?"

Jules froze, bottle halfway to his lips. "Really? You have a job opening?"

"Spot on. My opposite shift; they're going to be down a body and prepping to advertise the position in the coming days. Give me the nod, and I'll grease the wheels. Can make sure the job is never advertised and it's yours instead. It's straightforward work once you get used

to the hotel computer system. Just checking guests in and out, taking payments, handling the quiet evening chaos till sunrise. They really want dependable types on the nightshift, you'd fight right in. And the Night premium adds thirty percent to the base pay, and overtime? It's endless. I'm cashing in vacation soon, so you'd snag a pile of my shifts on top of your own. Perfect for helping you to start building that bank balance up in no time."

Rose's pulse quickened, her hand instinctively gripping Jules's sleeve, her analytical mind already calculating the stability it promised. "That sounds incredible, doesn't it, Jules? A real turning point to get us through these months."

Jules's eyes widened behind his glasses, a rush of hope chasing away the shadows. He set the beer down, words tumbling out. "I... wow. I've been slamming doors for weeks; interviews that ghosted, applications into the void. But this? It'd get us breathing room, pay down debts, scout a new place. Amari, you're handing us a lifeline. Thank you doesn't even cover it. From both of us."

Amari leaned against the desk, arms crossed over his chest, his posture relaxed but his eyes sharp with sincerity. "Thought it might be the perfect fit, just glad I can help. And hey, no stopping there. My pad's no mansion; it's only a one bedroom in a solid building, open layout, killer view. But if you need a spot to land for, say, a couple months till paychecks flow, my door's always open. No rent. Just save up and get yourself back on the right path."

Rose leaned forward, curiosity piqued, her fingers twisting the hem of her shirt. "That's incredibly generous, but we couldn't. I mean, that's your own space Amari. And logistics-wise, 3 into 1 wouldn't work... would it?"

"I don't mind doing some Hot bunking," Amari replied with a light laugh, the sound warm and disarming. "Navy style; rotate the bed like shifts on a sub. I wrap nights, you two clock in or crash. You finish up, I slide in. Flip it around when Jules is working."

Jules tilted his head, practical concerns surfacing. "And if schedules overlap? All three of us home at once?"

"We'll be on opposite shifts, so can't see it happening too often, but the bed's a king; spacious enough. I'll rig a second duvet, boundaries clear. No drama. Free digs while you stack cash. What's the downside?"

The room fell quiet, the offer's practicality warring with its intimacy. Rose caught Jules's eye, a silent exchange of weighing risks against relief.

"I know it's not ideal long-term," Amari added, pushing off the desk. "But the offer is there. Job and apartment. One or both. Whatever you guys need. Take some time to chew it over. I've Comp'd you a second night here; breakfast and dinner included... I'll be behind the desk again tomorrow night. Drop by and let me know what you think then, ok?"

"You're a lifesaver Amari. Thank you! We appreciate this more than you know," Rose said, her voice steady with gratitude, standing to clasp his hand briefly.

"Absolutely," Jules chimed in, rising too. "You're turning our nightmare around and giving us options. We won't forget it."

Amari nodded, hand on the knob. "Rest easy. Catch you tomorrow."

The door latched with a soft thud, the savoury scent of burgers filling the void. They dove in, plates balanced on knees, fries crunching between bites. The beer cut through the grease, its chill easing the tension in Jules's jaw. Rose enjoyed the simple indulgence, the chocolate cake's decadence a rare treat.

"Unreal," Jules murmured around a mouthful, wiping ketchup from his chin. "That job offer, it's custom-built for us in this moment of need. I can hammer those overtime shifts too, pad the account. Economy is due to start rebounding in half a year; I'll pivot back to searching for that perfect career job when it does. But short-term? This buys us peace of mind and time."

Rose nodded, licking frosting from her fork, her mind mapping timelines like a data set. "Exactly. Stability first. And what about his other offer? The apartment? Remember how you hated the parent bailout idea? We might be able to dodge that entirely... if we are willing to share his space for a month or two. What do you think?"

"It does give us the chance to do it all ourselves," he conceded, though a furrow creased his brow. "Sharing space with Amari, though? The bed thing... feels awkward. Like we're invading his life."

She placed a hand on his thigh, her touch reassuring. "Temporary awkwardness for long term security. He's not the kid from school anymore. Look at how he was working at the reception with people. And now his generosity. He's grown up. Sharing his apartment and bed? It'll be fine. We're all adults."

Jules exhaled, draining his beer. "Yeah, that's fair. Let's not decide tonight; we can sleep on it. But damn, what an offer. Feels like fate intervening."

They tidied the remnants, the clink of bottles a punctuation to their meal. Lights dimmed, the city's glow seeping through curtains like distant stars. Rose shed her clothes under the covers, her skin prickling in the cool air, and welcomed Jules's warmth. Their union was a gentle unfolding: kisses feather-light on collarbones, his fingers mapping her curves with devoted slowness. She guided him, their bodies joining in a seamless, unhurried cadence; thrusts measured, breaths interweaving.

Pleasure simmered for Rose, her hand drifting low to tease her clit in tandem, building toward a soft crest that left her humming with closeness rather than explosion. Jules peaked with a muffled groan, collapsing into her embrace, his head on her chest. She stroked his hair again, the rhythm lulling them both, their love a quiet fortress against the uncertainty.

Jules stared at the ceiling, the hotel room's shadows dancing faintly from the neon bleed outside the window. Rose's breathing rose and fell in soft, even waves beside him, her body curled into the curve of his arm, skin still warm from their lovemaking. The tenderness of it lingered; a quiet anchor in the storm of their lives, but sleep eluded him. His mind, restless as ever, snagged on threads from the day: Amari's easy grin, the job offer like a rope tossed into their abyss, the apartment proposition with its odd intimacy. Hot bunking. Sharing a bed between them all. It stirred something uneasy in his gut, a whisper from the past he thought buried under four years of adulthood.

He closed his eyes, willing relaxation, but the memories flooded back. Prom night, senior year, the afterparty at Tyler's sprawling house on the edge of town. The air had thrummed with bass-heavy music, laughter cutting through the haze of cheap beer and stolen sips from parents' liquor cabinets. Jules and Rose, fresh from the dance floor where they'd swayed awkwardly to slow songs, had arrived hand in hand, buzzed just enough to loosen the knots of teenage self-consciousness. She wore that blue dress, the one that hugged her figure in ways she usually pretended it didn't, her blonde hair loose for once, cascading over her shoulders like a golden waterfall. He'd felt invincible then, arm around her waist, whispering promises of forever amid the chaos of confetti and cranked-up speakers.

The house pulsed with bodies; classmates in tuxes and gowns, the popular crowd holding court in the kitchen, the geeks like him clustered in corners nursing drinks and trying to fit in. Jules spotted familiar faces: his friend group from debate club and gaming sessions, Tyler manning the makeshift bar with a red Solo cup in hand. Rose giggled at something he said, her cheeks flushed, leaning into him as they navigated the crowd.

"This is the perfect way to say goodbye to High-School," she'd murmured, her breath sweet with punch. "Us, our friends and the world waiting beyond for us all."

Then, a ripple through the room. Heads turned toward the front door, murmurs rising like a wave. Amari Luck sauntered in, his presence slicing the air like a blade. Tall, broad-shouldered even at eighteen, he moved with the swagger of someone who owned every space he entered. His dark skin gleamed under the strobe lights, white shirt unbuttoned just enough to show the hard planes of his chest, jeans slung low on his hips. Whispers followed: *'Bad Luck's back?' 'Heard he dropped out of school last fall; some beef with the principal and his wife.'*

Nine months had gone by since Amari had vanished from School, after that infamous fight in the parking lot between him and the principle, the principles wife crying and holding him back. Rumours swirled that he had banged the Principles daughter. Other rumours said it was the principles wife. But yet here he was, grinning like he'd never left.

Jules tensed, his hand tightening on Rose's. They'd all known Amari's reputation; the jock who skipped classes for flings around the back of the bike shed, the charmer who left a trail of broken hearts and jealous exes.

"What's he doing here?" Jules muttered to Rose, who shrugged, eyes wide with curiosity.

"Beats me. Thought he was gone for good."

Amari scanned the room, locking eyes with a few girls before nodding at Tyler, who clapped him on the back like old times. The party absorbed him seamlessly, the energy shifting, electric.

Hours blurred in a tipsy haze; dancing, shots that burned going down, Rose's laughter pulling Jules back from the edges of overwhelm. But then, commotion erupted near the makeshift dance floor. Amari swayed with Kendra, one of the cheerleaders, her red dress riding up as she ground against him, hands tangled in his shirt. The crowd whooped, phones flashing. Suddenly, a shriek cut through the music. Brittany, Kendra's rival for homecoming queen, lunged from the sidelines, fingers yanking Kendra's hair hard enough to snap her head back.

“You bitch! That's my man!” Brittany snarled, nails raking across Kendra's arm as they tumbled into a heap, skirts hiking, elbows flying. The room exploded in chaos; guys yelling, girls screaming encouragement or pulling them apart. Amari stood back, arms crossed, laughing deep and unrestrained, his white teeth flashing in the dim light. No move to intervene, just amusement as if it were a show staged for him. Tyler and a couple others hauled the girls off, dragging them toward the door amid curses and threats.

“Out! Both of you are barred!” Tyler bellowed. The door slammed, the music cranked louder to drown the drama, but the buzz lingered, Amari already turning to the next cluster of admirers.

Jules shook his head, pulling Rose closer. “Some things never change... once Bad Luck, always Bad Luck.” he said, voice low.

Rose nodded, sipping her drink. “He's trouble. Always was.” They drifted back to their friends, the night reclaiming its rhythm.

Later, as the party thinned; couples pairing off, the air thick with sweat and spilled beer, Jules noticed Amari again. This time, he had his arm around Mia, the quiet girlfriend of their mutual friend, Ethan. Mia, with her straight brown hair and shy smiles, usually stuck to Ethan's side like glue, part of the friend group that included Jules and Rose. They'd dated since sophomore year, the picture of steady high school romance. But there she was, giggling as Amari whispered in her ear, his hand low on her back, guiding her toward the stairs. Ethan was nowhere in sight; probably outside smoking or grabbing air.

Jules frowned, unease prickling. Rose tugged his sleeve. “You okay?”

“Yeah, just... Mia is with Amari? Ethan's gonna flip.” They watched as Amari led her up, her hand in his, disappearing into the upper hallway.

Time stretched. Ethan stumbled into the kitchen where Jules and Rose nursed waters, trying to sober up. His eyes were red-rimmed, face crumpled.

“Ethan? You ok? Where's Mia?” Jules asked, but Ethan's sob answered first.

He collapsed onto a stool, head in hands. “She... she is upstairs with him. Amari. I saw them together. How could she do this to me?”

Rose's hand flew to her mouth. “Oh no, Ethan. Maybe it's... you know what she's like when she's drunk. She doesn't know who's who! You need to go get her.”

“I can't...I won't go back up there.” Ethan sobbed.

Jules's stomach twisted at the sight of his friend torn apart like this. He stood. “Stay here, Rose. I'll go check it out. See if I can get her to come downstairs”

The hallway stretched dim, doors ajar to empty rooms reeking of pot and perfume. But one door at the end stood slightly open, light spilling out in a sliver. The noises grew clearer: rhythmic thuds against wood, wet slaps of flesh on flesh, a woman's voice rising in raw pleas.

'Yes! Fuck me harder! Oh god, your big black cock; it's splitting me open! More, please, I need more!'

Jules froze, breath catching. Screams for more, filthy words he'd only heard in hushed locker room boasts. He crept closer, pulse thundering, peering through the gap. Shadows writhed on the wall; two figures, entangled in frenzy. The man pinned the woman to the bed, her legs wrapped high around his waist, heels digging into his ass as he drove into her with brutal force. Thrusts deep and relentless, her body arching off the mattress with each plunge, breasts bouncing free from her torn dress. She clawed his back, nails leaving red trails, her cries peaking in shuddering waves; wet orgasms that soaked the sheets.

It wasn't like the fumbling encounters Jules knew from his limited experience; stolen moments with Rose, careful and sweet. This was primal, filthy: the man growling commands, *'Take it all, slut, milk this black dick,'* as he pounded without mercy, her juices splattering with every withdraw and slam. The intensity bordered on violence, her screams a mix of pain and ecstasy, body convulsing in multiple releases that left her trembling, begging incoherently.

Then, the man pulled back abruptly, the shadows clarifying in the lamp's glow. Between his legs hung something monstrous; thick, veined, glistening with her arousal, easily twice times the length and girth Jules had ever imagined possible. Foreign, impossible. Jules blinked, alcohol blurring the edges. It had to be the darkness, the shadows mixed with the drink distorting reality.

The girl slid off the bed, dropping to her knees before it, hands wrapping around the base; taking two hands to be able to hold it. Her face tilted up, illuminated fully: It was Mia. Ethan's Mia, makeup smeared, lips swollen, eyes glazed with a lust Jules had never witnessed, not even in the steamiest fantasies. Pure hunger as she parted her mouth wide, tongue flicking out to lap at the tip before stretching her jaws to engulf the head. She gagged, saliva trailing down her chin, but pushed forward, cheeks hollowing as she sucked greedily, bobbing her head with desperate slurps. The man; Amari, tangled fingers in her hair, guiding her deeper, hips bucking to fuck her throat. "That's it, choke on this Big Black Cock. You love it, don't you?"

Jules recoiled, stomach churning, backing away silently. The door clicked shut in his mind as he fled downstairs, the image searing; that thing between his legs, her abandon, the betrayal raw and visceral.

He found Ethan still weeping, Rose hovering anxiously.

"We should go," Jules said, voice tight, avoiding details. "It's getting late. Let's take Ethan back to mine to crash. Call it a night."

Rose searched his face but nodded, helping Ethan to his feet. They left without goodbyes. Back at home Jules sat in silence, questioning what his eyes had seen in that upstairs bedroom. The haze of booze, making him doubt his own sanity. Mia never spoke of it; her and Ethan going their own way as they ventured out into life after high school. The group fractured quietly after. And Amari vanished again soon after.

Laying awake in the hotel bed, Jules exhaled sharply at the memory of that prom night, Rose stirring faintly beside him. He had never told her exactly what he thought he had seen. And now as he remembered it all back, *It must have been the drink, the darkness*

playing tricks, he told himself. No one was built like that; monstrous, unreal. Like he was forged from another species. Another planet. It was all a fever dream from a wild night.

Amari had been a kid back then, reckless, chasing thrills with zero regard. But four years on, he was steady: night manager, offering jobs and shelter without strings. A changed man, clearly. Why poison their shot at stability over ghost images from half a decade ago? The job alone was gold; the apartment? Free rent, time to rebuild. Rejecting it for what—paranoia about his old antics? Stupid. He was worrying over nothing.

Jules turned, pressing a kiss to Rose's temple, resolve settling. They'd take the offers, move forward. Let the past stay buried.

Making Themselves At Home

Jules shifted in the dim hotel room light, the decision settling over him like a warm blanket after a long debate. Rose lay beside him, her fingers tracing circles on his chest, her blue eyes searching his face for any lingering doubt. They had slept on the proposal and then talked it through during the course of the day, weighing the downside against the lifeline Amari had thrown them. The job promised steady pay, enough to claw back from the eviction's shadow, it was a no brainer. The sharing the apartment? A temporary bridge to let their bank balance regrow. If it wasn't working or grew too awkward, then they could hit the emergency button and seek a loan from Jules's parents to help them with a deposit for a new place. But for now, this felt right. A fresh start, however unconventional.

Amari had appeared delighted when Jules had visited the reception desk on that second night to inform him of their acceptance and gratitude. His response was immediate, laced with that easy confidence he always exhumed.

“Nice one Jules, I’m so glad to hear it. You’ll make a great part of the night team. We can sort the paperwork for the job tomorrow. How about you guys meet me down here in the morning, we’ll get you checked out and I’ll take you back to the apartment and get you settled in!”

Jules felt the relief of weeks of stress fade away as he returned back to Rose in the bedroom, who smiled softly, pulling him down into the pillows. The air between them hummed with a new comfort, the weight of uncertainty lifting just enough to allow for playfulness. Rose propped herself on an elbow, her hair falling loose over one shoulder, the curve of her breast peeking from the sheet. She let her foot trail up his calf, a deliberate tease that made his skin tingle.

"Now that that's settled," she murmured, her voice dropping to a husky whisper, "we should make the most of this bed. Who knows when the next time we'll have the space and freedom... all to ourselves. No interruptions."

Jules chuckled, his hand settling on her hip, feeling the familiar softness there. “You feeling a little horny, huh?”

She leaned in closer, lips brushing his ear. "Well... We'll be sharing Amari's bed soon enough. And do you really think, even when he's on shift and we're there alone, that we will be wanting to make love in 'Bad Luck's' bed?"

Jules laughed then, the sound breaking the tension as she pulled him atop her.

"No, that's what I thought. So get your clothes off and come make love to your girlfriend!" She teased.

Their laughter mingled, light and freeing, as clothes whispered to the floor. Rose straddled him, guiding his hands to her breasts, arching into his touch with a sigh. Their joining was gentle, bodies moving in the rhythm they knew so well; slow thrusts, her hips rolling to meet him, breaths syncing in quiet harmony. Jules kissed her neck, her shoulders, murmuring endearments that made her heart swell. She clung to him, nails grazing his back, chasing the warmth of their connection.

Yet, as pleasure built, a subtle ache lingered in Rose. It was always nice; loving, reassuring, but she craved something more, a spark to ignite the edges, to make the tingles explode into fire. She wasn't sure what: a firmer grip, a deeper urgency? Her fleeting climax always came soft, a gentle wave that left her content but yearning for that little bit more to fully unleash herself, her body shuddered softly against his as he followed soon after, spilling into her with a low groan.

They collapsed together, limbs tangled, her head on his chest. Jules's fingers combed through her hair, lulling her toward sleep. Before drifting off, he reached for his phone, setting the alarm. "Amari finishes at eight. We need to be ready downstairs to head to his place."

Rose nodded sleepily, her mind wandering to the unknown. Wonder what it's like, she thought, not expecting grandeur. Four walls and a place to crash; after this week, that kind of safety feels like luxury.

Morning light filtered through the thin curtains as the alarm buzzed. They dressed quickly, packing the last of their things into worn duffels. Down in the lobby, Amari waited, his tall frame leaning against the counter, a broad smile lighting his face. No sign of fatigue from the overnight shift; his eyes sharp, tall athletic build relaxed in a fitted polo and jeans he had changed into after his shift. Rose blinked in surprise as he pulled them into quick hugs, his arms strong and brief.

"You two look fresh and ready for this, must have had a good nights sleep!" he said, clapping Jules on the shoulder. "Glad to be heading home, long shift with another worker calling in sick. That's why we need good reliable men like you on the team Jules! Come on, the apartment is just a couple blocks away. Let me grab some of those bags."

He insisted, hoisting the heavier ones effortlessly, leaving Rose with only her small rucksack. As they stepped into the crisp morning air, the city stirred around them; horns blaring, pedestrians rushing. Amari fell into step beside Jules, launching into job talk.

"You up for starting in two nights time? The other night manager's eager to get you trained up right away. Get you in the swing of check-ins, reservations, the works."

Jules nodded, relief flooding him. "That sounds perfect. I appreciate you pushing it through so fast."

"No problem. We'll fill out the forms today, and I'll drop them at work tonight. You'll be all set to start tomorrow. Can't wait to have you on board; team needs fresh energy."

Rose listened, smiling at their easy conversation, the walk passing in a blur of urban scenery. They arrived at a sleek mid-rise building, the doorman nodding at Amari as they entered the elevator. Up on the fifth floor, he unlocked the door to unit 512, swinging it open with a flourish.

The apartment unfolded before them, far swankier than Rose had imagined. Sunlight poured through floor-to-ceiling windows in the open-plan living room and kitchen, offering panoramic views of the skyline and distant park. Potted ferns and trailing ivies softened the modern lines, while plush rugs anchored leather sofas and a glass coffee table. Abstract art adorned the walls; bold strokes in deep blues and golds, and the kitchen gleamed with stainless steel and marble counters.

"Wow," Rose breathed, setting her bag down. "This place is incredible, Amari. You have amazing taste."

Jules echoed her, eyes wide. "Seriously, man. It's like a magazine spread in here."

"I have an eye for the finer things in life." Amari grinned, his gaze lingering on Rose for a beat longer than necessary. "Makes life worth the hustle. That's why I insist on sharing the bedroom; happy to have you guys here, but the living room furniture's too new and pricey for guests crashing on it. Hope that's cool."

"Absolutely," Jules said. "Your house, your rules. We're just grateful."

Rose nodded, following as Amari led them through. The bedroom was a sanctuary: a massive king-sized bed dominated the space, draped in crisp white linens and piled with pillows. A walk-in wardrobe branched off, rails half-cleared for their belongings.

"Made some room in here, for your guys stuff." Amari said, gesturing. "Plenty of space to hang up and store your regular stuff. Keep the non essentials in the bags and I'll store them in the hall cupboard."

He led them next into the ensuite bathroom and it stole their breaths; a spacious retreat with a double vanity, heated floors, and a walk-in shower boasting dual rain heads.

"This is my favourite part of the apartment. Got two shower heads in there, and the water pressure is incredible. Leaves you feeling like you've spent an hour with a masseuse!" Amari explained, pointing out the different controls and settings.

"Set up should be handy if you're both waking up at once and in a rush. You can jump in together, save time. Anyway, that's the grand tour. Give me a shout if you need anything. Make yourselves at home; I'm sure we'll get into the rhythm of living together soon enough. Fridge is stocked; help yourselves to food and drinks."

He turned to Jules, pulling him aside into the kitchen while Rose explored the living room. From his wallet, Amari drew a stack of one hundred dollar bills, pressing it into Jules's hand.

"Square me up when you're back up on your feet, but take this. Keep you and Rose going till then; groceries, basics, whatever."

Jules's throat tightened, the gesture hitting deep. No fanfare, no pity; just quiet support that preserved his dignity. He pulled Amari into a hug, fierce and genuine. "Thank you so much. Seriously, you're saving us."

Amari clapped his back. "Anytime, brother. Glad to help."

Rose rounded the corner then, catching the tail end, arms crossed in mock suspicion. "Hey, you trying to steal my man?"

The three burst into laughter, the sound filling the space with warmth. Amari winked at her. "He's a good one, but not quite my type, I'm afraid. You guys have a great morning; I'm going to bed to crash for a few hours. One last shift tonight. I left spare set of keys on the coffee table for you both."

"Sleep well," Rose called as he headed to the bedroom. Jules and she turned to each other in the kitchen, pulling into a tight hug amid the gleaming counters.

"Can you believe this place?" she whispered, awe threading her voice.

"Better than our old apartment by a mile," Jules agreed, spinning her gently. "Big guy's got great taste. We're lucky."

The day unfolded like a dream, the gnawing stress of the past weeks dissolving in the simple joy of togetherness. They ventured out, hands linked, wandering the nearby park where leaves rustled underfoot and joggers nodded hellos. Sun warmed their faces as they settled on a bench, enjoying some coffee from a corner cart; black for him, latte for her. Laughter came easy, stories of high school days mingling with plans for the weeks ahead. No eviction notices looming, no skipped meals. Just them, breathing free.

Evening brought them back as the sun dipped, Amari had already gone for his shift. The apartment felt like theirs in his absence; cozy, inviting. They ordered takeout, settling on the sofa for a movie, some light rom-com that had Rose's head on Jules's shoulder, his arm around her waist. As credits rolled, Jules stretched, yawning. The two of them sleepy.

"Let's get ready for bed," he said, padding to the bedroom. He sank into the king bed, sinking into the plush mattress with a groan. "Holy crap, this is the most comfortable bed ever. We need to find out what this mattress is!"

He cracked open his book, glasses perched on his nose, the lamp casting a soft glow.

Rose lingered, drawn to the ensuite. She stripped and stepped under the rain heads, twin streams cascading over her body, pressure massaging knots from her shoulders and back. The heat soaked in, steam enveloping her like an embrace, washing away the last traces of hotel staleness. She emerged refreshed, skin flushed and scented with Amari's sandalwood soap, wrapping in a towel.

"That shower is incredible," she announced, sliding into bed beside him, the sheets cool against her warmth. "Wherever we land next, that's topping the must-have list on what we want in our next apartment."

Jules set his book aside, pulling her close. Their lips met in a lingering kiss, hands roaming lazily. "God, this bed is amazing," she confirmed, nestling into his embrace, content and secure.

As sleep tugged at them, the city lights twinkled beyond the windows, a promise of stability in the quiet night.

The next day dawned with a buzz of anticipation humming through the apartment, the kind that chased away the last shadows of their recent turmoil. Sunlight slanted across the kitchen counters as Jules and Rose sipped coffee. Jules's first shift loomed that evening, a milestone after the eviction's sting and the job hunt's endless rejections. They decided to hit the stores, turning the errand into a small adventure to kit him out properly for the new role.

Rose linked her arm through his as they strolled down bustling sidewalks, the air crisp with leaves crunching underfoot. She wore a simple sweater that hugged her figure just enough to draw his gaze, her blonde hair tied back in a loose ponytail. At a modest chain store, they rifled through racks of button-down shirts and slacks, selecting pieces that screamed professional without breaking the bank. Rose held up a crisp navy shirt against his chest, her eyes sparkling.

"Are you looking forward to it? Your big debut tonight?"

Jules grinned, the fabric soft under his fingers. "Yeah, I really am. I know it's not the job of my dreams, but after everything that's happened lately, it's like hitting reset after that whole nightmare. Steady hours, plenty of overtime opportunities. Feel like a man again. Able to provide!"

She nodded, adding the shirt to their pile. "You are always my man. You're too hard on yourself sometimes Jules, you aren't to blame for stock market crashes and recessions. But I'm glad that is all behind us... you deserve this. We've been through the wringer, but look at us now. Finding ways to resurface and flourish again."

They bantered lightly as they checked out, the cashier's smile mirroring their optimism. Back at the apartment, the afternoon unfolded lazily. Rose curled up with a book on urban ecology, her passion for environmental science peeking through in highlighted notes. Jules reviewed the job paperwork Amari had filed, mentally mapping out the hotel's front desk routines. Lunch was simple sandwiches from the stocked fridge, eaten at the window overlooking the park, where joggers dotted the paths like distant figures in a painting. Jules napping in preparation for his nightshift, whilst Rose relaxed on the sofa and watched one of her tv shows.

As evening approached, the excitement sharpened into focus. Jules retreated to the ensuite to prepare, the spacious bathroom a luxury he still marvelled at. He lathered his face with shaving cream, the razor gliding smoothly over his jawline, trimming the ginger stubble to

a neat edge. Steam from Rose's earlier rinse lingered, fogging the mirror slightly. He wiped it clear, adjusting his glasses to inspect the clean lines.

The door swung open without a knock, and Amari strode in, fresh from the gym, sweat glistening on his dark skin. A white towel wrapped low around his hips, clinging to the V of his torso. His broad shoulders rolled as he stretched one arm overhead, muscles flexing in cords of power, his athletic build dominating the room's confines.

"Sup, man," Amari rumbled, his voice low and easy, flashing that confident grin that crinkled the corners of his eyes. "Hope you don't mind the intrusion. Just back from the gym, and I reek. Need to hit that shower bad. You geared up for tonight?"

Jules paused mid-stroke, razor hovering, caught off guard by the casual invasion. Heat crept up his neck, but he recovered quickly. Sharing the bathroom came with the territory of their new living arrangements, after all. A month of this rhythm loomed ahead, shifts flipping like clockwork. He dipped his chin in acknowledgment, resuming the shave with deliberate strokes.

"No worries Amari, it's fine, get that shower. And yeah, think I'm as ready as I'll ever be. Got the uniform sorted, ironed and hanging. Feeling solid about it."

"You'll crush it out there. Mark my words, you'll be gunning for my night manager spot before long." Amari laughed approvingly, peeling off the towel with unselfconscious ease and tossing it onto the counter.

Jules let out a short laugh, tilting his head to rinse the razor under the faucet. He glanced up into the mirror, intending to respond, but the words died on his tongue. There, in the reflection, swinging free between Amari's powerful thighs: his cock. Not just big; monstrous, even in its limp state, a heavy slab of dark flesh that hung low, brushing against the inner curve of one leg before swaying back. It looked thicker than Jules's forearm, the shaft ridged with prominent veins, forking like rivers toward the base where it rooted thick amid neatly trimmed black curls. The head, broad and flared, nestled partially sheathed in foreskin, dusky purple against the rest, while below swung a pair of balls, plump and pendulous, shaved clean and slapping softly against his thighs with each step. It moved like it had its own gravity, a thick pendulum arcing side to side, the weight pulling it downward in a way that screamed raw potency.

Jules felt like his heart had stopped and he had forgotten how to breathe, razor still in his grip as the sink edge bit into his palm. The image seared through him, as the memories surged like a gut punch: prom night, the afterparty haze sharpening into cruel clarity. The bedroom door ajar, Mia's lithe form dropping to her knees in the dim light, her hands; small, tentative, wrapping around that same beast as she stroked it with awe. Amari's hand in her hair, guiding her mouth forward, her lips stretching around the girth, gagging softly as she took the first few inches. That was no dream, no booze-fuelled blur; Jules had watched, hidden in shadows, his own cock twitching in futile envy even then. And now, confirmed in the harsh bathroom light, Amari wasn't just built like a god; he was hung like one too, dwarfing Jules's modest five inches erect by a humiliating margin. *How the hell did he walk around with that? Did it ache, that constant weight?* Jules's mind reeled, a hot coil of inadequacy twisting in his gut as he imagined Rose's eyes on it, her curvy body responding in ways his never could. His own dick stirred in his pants, a pathetic half-chub against the fabric, underscoring the gap.

Oblivious or uncaring, Amari stepped into the glass-walled shower, the enclosure fogging instantly as he cranked the handles. Water thundered down, pounding his shoulders in hot jets that sluiced over his pecs, carving paths along his abs before swirling over the weight of his cock under the spray. It swayed once more, glistening now, before he soaped up, lathering his chest with broad hands.

Jules wrenched his eyes away, pulse hammering in his temples. He finished the shave in jerky motions, blade scraping too close once, nicking his skin; a tiny bead of blood welling up. Cold water slapped his face next, shocking the flush from his cheeks, but the imprint lingered, burned into his retinas. He dried off in the bedroom, hands trembling slightly as he buttoned into the uniform: starched shirt hugging his slimmer frame, slacks cinched at the waist, the fabric feeling constricting now, aware of the inadequacy beneath.

Stepping into the living area, the air cooler and less charged, Jules spotted Rose sprawled on the sofa. Her legs curled beneath her in loose shorts that rode up her thighs, hugging the soft swell of her hips, while a thin tank top stretched across her full breasts, nipples faintly outlined against the cotton in the room's chill. She glanced up from her phone, her face blooming into a warm smile that eased the knot in his chest, if only a fraction.

Rose's eyes sparkled as she set her phone face-down on the coffee table, her gaze raking over Jules from head to toe. The uniform fit him well; crisp shirt tucked into black slacks, the fabric smooth against his lean build, a name tag pinned neatly over his chest.

"Wow, you look handsome," she said, her voice warm and teasing. "I'd totally be losing my keycard on purpose, so I could come visit the cutie on the reception desk."

Jules forced a grin, her praise landed soft, yet it twisted deeper into the knot of unease coiling in his stomach. There she sat, the thin tank top clinging to the swell of her large breasts with each breath, shorts riding high enough to expose the creamy expanse of her thighs. So relaxed, so utterly trusting in this fragile new normal. And tonight, he'd walk out that door, while she stayed here. Alone. With him. Amari's deep laugh echoing in his head, his massive frame soon to dominate the space, that king-sized bed waiting like a trap, bodies inches apart in the dark.

She tilted her head, dark hair cascading over one shoulder, her brow creasing with concern as she patted the cushion beside her. "Hey, honey? You okay? Your face just went pale. Jitters about the job kicking in?"

He crossed the room in three strides, the carpet muffling his steps, and sank down next to her. The sofa dipped, pulling her closer, her warmth seeping through the thin barrier of their clothes. Jules took her hand in his, fingers interlacing, her skin soft and familiar against his palm.

"Nah, the job's fine. I'll handle it, no sweat. It's just... leaving you here by yourself. This whole shared arrangement. Starting to feel like maybe we jumped in too quick."

She reached for his hand, squeezing gently. "Nonsense. I'm not on my own. Amari's here; he can keep me company if I need it. What's really bothering you?"

The words landed like a slap; *Amari keeping her company*. In the kitchen, laughing over pizza. On the couch, shoulders brushing. And later, in that vast bed, the mattress conforming to their weights side by side. Jules's throat tightened, a chill prickling his spine

as he pictured it: Amari sliding under the covers, that enormous cock just one wrong move away from being pressed against his beautiful girlfriends body. Ice water flooded his veins. He cleared his throat, the sound rough in the quiet apartment.

"How's the whole sleeping bit going to work though? With me working, you'll be sharing a bed with him? It just makes me feel a little... uncomfortable. Where will you sleep?"

She blinked, surprise flickering across her features before dissolving into a soft chuckle that bubbled up from her chest. Leaning in, she nudged his shoulder with hers, her breast grazing his arm in the shift.

"In bed, obviously. Where else? It'll be fine, Jules, there's plenty of room in that huge bed. We'll each have our own blanket, so it will be like separate zones. It's no big deal. Jules, seriously, you've been off since you came out of the bathroom. What's gotten into that head of yours all of a sudden?"

Amari's monster cock, he thought, the words screaming silently. The image flashed again: That veined monster dangling heavy, slapping against his leg as he moved, the sheer scale of it mocking Jules's own shrinking length. But he couldn't voice it, couldn't shatter the fragile normalcy or make Rose aware of it's existence. Instead, he mustered a weak smile, pulling her into a half-embrace.

"Nothing. Just don't like the idea of leaving you... just want to make sure my Rose is happy and safe. That's all."

She rose fluidly, wrapping her arms around his neck, her body pressing close. The scent of her filled his senses, grounding him.

"I love you, Jules," she murmured, lips hovering near his ear, breath hot and sweet. "So much. I'll be perfectly fine; promise. Knock 'em dead on your shift. Text me if you can, okay?"

He cupped her face, thumbs stroking her cheeks, and captured her mouth in a kiss that started tender but deepened fast; tongues sliding together, wet and urgent, his hands tangling in her hair as he poured every ounce of possession into it. She moaned softly into him, hips shifting once against his growing hardness, but he pulled back before it escalated, heart racing.

"I love you too. More than anything."

At the door, keys in hand, doubt clawed at him. He paused, glancing back. Rose waved, blowing a kiss, her form silhouetted against the warm lights. The shower's roar cut off abruptly from the en-suite bathroom, water droplets pattering to silence. Amari would emerge soon, towel-clad, that presence filling the space Jules vacated.

Jules stepped into the hallway, the door clicking shut behind him. The elevator descended, carrying him toward the unknown night, but his mind lingered upstairs, tangled in worry and unwelcome visions.

Shared Space

Rose lingered in the living room, her bare feet sinking into the plush rug, arms wrapped around her midsection as if to hold herself steady against the sudden solitude. The space felt vast now, the high ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows amplifying the quiet hum of the city below. She exhaled slowly, rubbing her palms along her arms, the thin fabric of her tank top whispering against her skin. Jules would be back by morning, his first shift a stepping stone to stability. But the absence gnawed at her, a faint thread of vulnerability weaving through her chest despite the reassurance she had just given him moments ago.

Rose busied herself by wandering to the kitchen island to pour herself a drink, tracing a finger along the cool marble countertop. Footsteps approached, light but purposeful, and there he was; Amari stepping into the open-plan space, clad only in a pair of loose gray athletic shorts that clung just enough to hint at the power beneath. Water beaded on his dark skin, tracing paths down the defined ridges of his chest, over the swell of his pectorals, and along the deep V of his abdomen. His shoulders were broad, capped with muscle that shifted fluidly as he moved, and his thighs, thick and corded, flexed with each step toward the kitchen. The air seemed to thicken around him, carrying the clean, soapy scent of his shower gel; something fresh and masculine.

Rose's eyes lifted to greet him, but they betrayed her, snagging on the sheer physicality of his form. The way his biceps curled as he reached for a cabinet, pulling out a pot with casual strength. The trail of fine hair dusting his chest, narrowing to disappear beneath the waistband of his shorts. Heat bloomed in her cheeks, a flush she felt creeping up her neck. She dropped her gaze to the floor, but not before her vision dipped lower, catching the subtle sway of fabric between his legs, before she snapped her gaze away. Yet her body responded traitorously, a subtle tightening in her core, her nipples brushing sensitive against the cotton of her top. *I should tell him to put some more clothes on*, she thought. *But then again, this is his home. Who'm am I to tell him what he should or shouldn't wear?*

“Hey,” Amari said, his voice a deep, rumbling warmth that filled the space. He glanced over his shoulder, a easy smile tugging at his lips. “Jules make it out alright? First shift in a new job is always a nervy thing.”

She nodded, forcing her eyes to his face; those sharp cheekbones, the full mouth curved in amusement. “Yeah, he did. He was a little tentative, but I think it'll go well.”

Her words came out steadier than she felt, but inside, her mind raced. *Why does he have to look like that? Like some sculpted adonis fresh from the gym.*

Amari hummed in approval, filling the pot at the sink, water gushing over his hands. “He's got the right temperament. This place'll suit him, and the people he's working with are all pretty easy going. He's in good hands.”

He set the pot on the stove, twisting the knob with a click, blue flames leaping to life. From the fridge, he retrieved, fresh tomatoes, garlic, and a wedge of parmesan, and picked up a box of linguine from the pantry, his movements efficient. As he bent slightly to grab a cutting board from a lower drawer, the shorts pulled taut across his backside, outlining the firm globes of muscle. Rose found her eyes staring at his muscular butt, her breath catching in her throat as her fingers gripping the edge of the counter. She tore her gaze

away, focusing on the cityscape outside, but the image lingered, imprinting itself. *Why am I checking him out?* She asked herself.

He started chopping, the knife's rhythmic thwack punctuating the silence. "You hungry? I'm throwing together some pasta; simple primavera, nothing fancy. Plenty to go round if you're peckish."

"Sure," she replied, her voice lighter than intended. "If it's not too much trouble."

Ask him to put on a shirt, a voice in her head urged. *Set some boundaries from day 1*. But the words dissolved on her tongue. His house, his rules.

As the sauce simmered, filling the air with garlic and basil, Amari turned to stir it, his body pivoting in a fluid arc. That's when it happened; his shorts shifted with the motion, the thin fabric moulding briefly to something substantial beneath. An outline, thick and heavy, swung pendulously, the ridge of it pressing outward before settling. Rose's eyes widened fractionally. It couldn't be real, that size wasn't possible. A figment of her imagination, surely. Her eyes glanced back at his crotch, but the angle of his shorts now didn't show her what she thought she had just saw. Looking back up to his face, she saw him smiling at her. Her face ignited, scarlet heat flooding her skin, and she knew; instinctively, that he'd caught her staring.

Amari's eyes met hers, dark and knowing, a smirk playing at the corners of his mouth. "Like what you see?" he asked, voice low and playful.

'I—' She sputtered, setting down an imaginary utensil, her hands twisting in her lap.

"I can see that hunger in your eyes. You're a pasta lover! Dig in." He plated the pasta with a flourish, steam rising in fragrant curls, and slid a bowl toward her.

They ate side by side at the island, forks twining noodles, the rich sauce bursting on her tongue; tangy tomatoes, sharp cheese. Conversation started safe: the hotel's night crowd, Jules's potential overtime hours and the nightshift allowance. But as bowls emptied, Amari leaned back on his stool, elbows on the counter, his bare chest rising with a deep breath. The position accentuated every line, the play of light over his skin.

Conversation turned to relationships, Rose questioning if Amari had settled with anyone yet.

"Me? Not yet. I know you and Jules are locked in like that. Have been since school, right? Solid as they come. Me? I'm just juggling a couple girls right now. Casual. Keeps life spicy."

Rose rolled her eyes, the gesture automatic, a shield against the intimacy of the topic. "That's predictable, Amari. Back in school, you were the king of all that even then; womanizer central, leaving a trail of broken hearts. Girls fighting over you like you were some prize."

The words carried an old edge, laced with the disdain she'd cultivated to protect herself.

Amari laughed, a rich, unfounded sound, as he rinsed the dishes, water splashing. "That's fair. But not every girl fell for me. You? You wouldn't even give me a second look."

The admission yanked her back, unspooling the memory like a reel in her mind. High school gym, post-basketball game, the air thick with sweat and cheers. Amari, jersey damp and clinging, had dominated the court; dunks that shook the rim, steals that left opponents scrambling. Afterward, the popular girls swarmed him in the hallway: cheerleaders with glossy lips and tiny skirts, vying for his touch, their laughter shrill. But he'd spotted her; Rose, lingering by her locker in her oversized sweater, hair in a practical bun, books clutched like a shield, and pulled her aside into a dim corner near the vending machines. His hand on her arm had been warm, firm, sending an unexpected spark up her skin.

“Look at this circus,” he'd murmured, nodding to the flock of his admirers. “All these girls chasing me. But you, Rose; you're the one I really want.”

His eyes, intense, raked over her, seeing through the facade. “They all see the bookworm: baggy clothes, ponytail, no makeup. But I see you. That fire in your eyes, the real beauty underneath. And that body you're burying under those bags clothes, curves that could stop traffic. One day, I'm gonna break you out of this shell, Rose. Unleash the woman you're hiding.”

Her heart had thundered, a shiver racing from her spine to her toes. No one had ever pierced her defences like that, spoken to the hidden parts she barely acknowledged; the swell of her breasts under the loose fabric, the sway of her hips she minimised with baggy straight-leg jeans. The star athlete, the bad boy everyone wanted, choosing her? For a flicker, something stirred inside her. But reality crashed in: the girls calling his name, their painted nails flashing as they beckoned. He was a charmer, a hunter with pretty words he used on all the girls, to ensnare them. She would just be another conquest to him.

“Nice try, Amari,” she'd said, pulling away, voice steady despite the tremor in her limbs. “You're not my type. And I've got a boyfriend.”

He'd grinned, predatory yet playful, his gaze dropping deliberately to her chest, then lower. “Little Julie? I've seen him in the locker room after gym class, that little thing is no match for a body like yours. You need a real man to tame you!”

Then he'd walked away, leaving her breathless, nipples pebbling against her bra from the sheer audacity.

The memory of that encounter faded, leaving Rose's skin tingling as if his words echoed in the present. She blinked, fork scraping her plate.

“That whole player vibe back then, got you dubbed 'Bad Luck' for a reason. You were always trouble Amari. I thought maybe the past few years had mellowed you. Matured you. Guess not, you're still out there hunting?”

Amari dried his hands on a towel, leaning against the sink, his shorts riding low enough to reveal the sharp cut of his obliques. That outline teased again, a subtle shift as he crossed his arms, biceps peaking.

“Guilty. I do love the chase, the fun. But it's surface stuff until I find the real thing. Haven't found her yet; the one who could rein me in, tame me. But I know she's out there... waiting for me to tame her too.”

His eyes held hers, the words laced with heat, implication wrapping around her like smoke. *Tame me*, her mind echoed. *Like I can her*. A flush warmed her thighs, her body responding to the unspoken promise. She shifted on the stool, crossing her legs to quell the ache.

“Got any friends you'd want me to set you up with?” he asked, breaking the tension with a wink.

Laughter bubbled up, genuine. “Not a chance. I couldn't unleash you on someone I care about.”

He clutched his chest dramatically, muscles rippling. “Damn, that hurts. I'm not that bad am I? You've got me painted as the devil incarnate!”

Rose hesitated, her gaze wandering despite her resolve; over the smooth expanse of his chest, the way his skin glowed under the pendant lights, down to the powerful thighs straddling the stool. He'd been nothing but good to them: the job, the apartment, the cash without expectation. A quiet admission slipped out.

“No. You're... not bad at all. A catch, even. For the right person.” The words hung, her pulse thrumming in her ears. As he flashed her his big bright smile in response to her compliment.

Dinner cleared, they drifted to the living room couch, the leather cool against her bare legs as she tucked them beneath her. Amari sprawled at the other end, remote in hand, still gloriously shirtless. They selected a comedy; raunchy jokes and physical gags that had them chuckling, the shared mirth easing the undercurrent. His laughter rumbled deep, vibrating through the cushions, and she found herself relaxing, inching closer without realising, the heat from his body a subtle draw. His scent lingered, mingling with the pasta's remnants, and her eyes traced the flex of his forearm as he gestured at the screen.

This shouldn't feel so easy, she thought, but it did; comfortable, charged.

The movie ended too soon, credits scrolling as her phone lit up. Jules: *Shift's going smooth. My manager is chill, showing me the ropes slowly. How's your night? You good?*

Fingers flying, she replied: *All good here. Had dinner and watched a flick. Heading to bed soon. Amari says hi. Crush the rest of it. xx*

In the bathroom, Rose brushed her teeth, the minty foam grounding her in familiarity. But as she rinsed, her reflection caught her eye; her nipples erect, straining visibly through the pajama top, dark peaks against the pale blue cotton. Her arousal, undeniable, from the evening's flirtations? His body, the closeness, the memories of the words he spoke to me back in high school? She cupped her breasts briefly, thumbs grazing the sensitive tips, a soft gasp escaping. *God, what's wrong with me? He's not even my type at all!* Shame and excitement warred as she padded to the bedroom.

The king bed dominated, Amari already under the silk sheets, the thin duvet draped low on his hips. Moonlight slanted through the blinds, casting shadows over his form. “Made up the spare duvet for you; only have that thick winter one spare.”

“That should be perfect. Thank you, Amari. Goodnight,” she murmured, slipping under the heavy coverlet. It enveloped her like a weight, fibers rough and insulating, trapping her body heat almost immediately. The mattress dipped slightly under her, but the separation felt stark. Lights out, darkness bloomed, and sleep tugged at her edges.

But the duvet turned suffocating, sweat beading on her skin, her tank top beginning to dampen. She tossed, the thickness pressing, her body overheating in the cocoon. Minutes blurred into restlessness.

“Amari?” she whispered finally.

“Mm?”

“Is it okay if I... come under yours? This one's too heavy. I need the silk.”

A pause, then his chuckle, velvet in the dark. “Knew you couldn't stay away from me for long.”

She slid over, and got under the sheets, cool and luxurious against her legs as she settled inches from him. “In your dreams. I'm just too hot.”

“You are that,” he replied, voice dropping an octave, flirtation threading through.

Laughter escaped her, cheeks burning anew. “You're impossible.”

The flirtation faded, silence wrapping them. Exhaustion pulled her under, deeper than she'd known; a profound, healing slumber. Warmth cradled her, body melting into bliss that seemed to last forever.

“Mmm,” she sighed in her sleep, instinctively curving closer, hand gliding over firm, yielding flesh. A heartbeat thrummed beneath her palm, strong and rhythmic, syncing with her own. A masculine essence enveloped her; musk, warmth, safety. *This... I could stay here forever*, her subconscious purred, limbs entangling, cheek nestling into the curve of a solid chest.

Dawn's light pierced the curtains, rousing her gently. Disorientation hit first; the lavish room, the arm pillowing her head, her cheek pressed to smooth, warm skin over unyielding muscle. Her hand spanned a torso, fingers tracing the etched valleys of abs, holding him captive. Panic flared. *What the hell?*

Rose's eyes opened, meeting his and his soft smile. “Morning, Rose. Gonna release me? Been awake thirty minutes, but you were out cold; wrapped around me like a vine, sleeping deeper than I've seen.”

She bolted upright, duvet pooling, heart hammering. “Oh my God, I'm so sorry! I didn't mean... I'm just so used to cuddling up to Jules, I mean, habit. Must have rolled over in my sleep.” Her face blazed, but fragments of the night surfaced: unparalleled rest, a serenity she'd craved.

He stretched languidly, sheets shifting. “Hey, no issue. Actually kinda sweet, seeing you that peaceful and content.”

Rose escaped to the bathroom, splashing cold water on her face, but the truth lingered; *that was the best night's sleep I've ever had*. Leaving her yearning for more despite the guilt twisting in her chest.

The key turned in the lock with a satisfying click, and Jules pushed the door open into the quiet expanse of the apartment. Sunlight streamed through the large windows, casting long shadows across the open-plan living room and kitchen. The place felt eerily still without Rose's presence, the air carrying a faint trace of her vanilla-scented shampoo. He dropped his keys on the counter and spotted the note immediately, propped against a bowl of sliced fruits on the kitchen island: apples, strawberries, and bananas arranged neatly, a small gesture that warmed his chest despite the fatigue tugging at his limbs.

Hope your first shift went well, love. Prepped some fruits for breakfast, there's some delish yogurt in the fridge. Sleep tight, and I'll see you when I get back from class today. Miss you already. - Rose

Jules smiled faintly, rubbing the back of his neck as he peeled off his uniform shirt, the fabric stiff from a long night of check-ins and small talk. He sank onto a stool at the island, fork spearing a strawberry, the juice bursting sweet and tart on his tongue. The shift had gone better than expected. The manager, a no-nonsense guy named Victor, had clapped him on the shoulder at the end, promising a stack of overtime if he wanted it. Double pay, holidays stacking up like bonuses.

"You've got the makings of a solid night guy," Victor had said. "Stick with it, and we'll keep you busy."

Jules chewed thoughtfully, his mind replaying the rush of the lobby: guests dragging suitcases, the click of keyboards as he mastered the reservation system, the satisfaction of smoothing over a double-booking mix-up. This job was more than survival; it was a foothold, a way to claw back some self respect. No more scraping by on ramen and pride. He could build something here whilst he waited for that ideal career role to open up, provide for Rose, let her focus on her courses without the weight of bills crushing them both. But as he finished the fruit, wiping his hands on a napkin, a pang hit him. He wished she were here, curled against him, her head on his shoulder, sharing the quiet victory. A simple cuddle, her soft curves pressing into him, would make the exhaustion fade.

He wandered to the bedroom, the king-sized bed still ruffled from the night before. At the foot, folded haphazardly on the floor, lay the thick duvet Rose had mentioned. Jules picked it up, the heavy fabric cool against his skin, he was so thankful she had this to protect her and keep her separated from Amari. Otherwise, she'd have been under that thin silk sheet with nothing but a whisper of material between her and... him. That monstrous cock! The thought clawed at him, visions of Rose's body shifting in sleep, vulnerable to the heat radiating from Amari's form. But this duvet, at least, had cocooned her, kept her safe in its bulk. He shook out the duvet, sliding under them on the bed, the weight pressing down like a shared embrace. Her scent clung faintly to the fibers, and he pulled it close, letting sleep drag him under.

Rest came in fits, the thick duvet trapping heat until sweat beaded on his forehead, the afternoon sun glaring through half-drawn blinds. He tossed, dreams fragmented with hotel lobbies morphing into shadowed bedrooms, Rose's laughter echoing just out of reach. By

mid-afternoon, he stirred fully, the clock on the nightstand reading three. Energy buzzed through him now, anticipation sharpening his senses. Rose would be home soon from her classes, and they'd have a few precious hours before his next shift. Time to talk, touch, reconnect.

Jules rose, stretching his arms overhead, and set to tidying. He straightened the living room cushions, wiped down the kitchen counters, the simple tasks grounding him. In the fridge, he pulled out some items Rose and he had bought the day before, chicken breasts, bell peppers, and rice, chopping vegetables with rhythmic slices, the sizzle of oil soon filling the air as he prepped a stir-fry for them to tuck into together later. The domesticity soothed him, a promise of normalcy amid the upheaval. Finished, he glanced at the clock; still time. He wanted to be fresh for her, smell like soap and not the stale coffee from the hotel break room.

The en suite beckoned, steam already curling from the hot water as he stripped and stepped under the first shower head. Water cascaded over his shoulders, pounding against his soft belly and down his legs, his dick small and shrivelled in the warmth. He lathered soap, eyes closing in bliss, until the door creaked open.

Amari limped in, sweat-soaked from head to toe, his hiking gear clinging damply. Dirt streaked his calves, and he winced with each step, face twisted in discomfort.

"Hey, man," Amari grunted, tossing his backpack by the sink.

Jules startled, hands flying to cover his groin, soap suds dripping down his chest. Heat flooded his face as he hunched slightly, his modest length easily hidden behind his palms.

"Everything good?" Amari added, peeling off his shirt to reveal the glistening expanse of his torso, muscles pumped from the exertion.

"Uh, yeah, all good!" Jules mumbled, shifting to make space. "You look beat."

Amari nodded, kicking off his shoes with a thud. "Hiking trail kicked my ass. Pulled something; top of the quad or maybe the groin. Hurts like hell."

Jules glanced at the pronounced limp, concern flickering despite the awkwardness. "You okay? Need ice or anything?"

"Nah, just need this heat to loosen it up. Mind if I get under the other shower? I'm a mess; stinking up the place. We're both men here, right? No big deal."

Jules swallowed, water streaming into his eyes. "No, I guess not. Both men. Go ahead."

Amari dropped his shorts and towel in one motion, stepping under the second shower head. The air thickened with steam, but Jules's gaze snagged involuntarily. Close up, Amari's cock was even more obscene; thicker than his forearm, veined ridges pulsing under the dark skin. Even soft, it dwarfed anything Jules had seen, swinging with the water's flow. Memories of late-night pornos flashed: those black performers with endowments that stretched actresses to their limits. But Amari eclipsed them all, a beast

that made Jules's own feel like a child's toy. He turned away sharply, focusing on rinsing his hair, heart pounding at the shame. *Both men?* He thought to himself, mockingly.

"So, how was the first shift?" Amari asked, voice echoing off the tiles as he soaped his chest, suds sliding over the deep cuts of his abs.

Jules cleared his throat, forcing normalcy. "Good, actually. The reservation system's a pain at first; all those codes and menus. Real ball-ache getting the hang of it."

Amari chuckled, the sound deep and rumbling over the water's rush. "Yeah? But once you nail the shortcuts, it flows. Victor's a good guy to learn from, will show you exactly how to navigate it."

"Exactly," Jules replied, eyes fixed on the wall. "The shortcuts he showed, made it easier already. He's already offering me some overtime with double pay if I want it."

"Smart move. Might as well grab it while it's there. You'll probably end up covering some of my shifts, I have a boatload of vacation time I need to take before I lose it."

The conversation lulled, broken only by the patter of water, Jules's mind screaming to escape the proximity of that swinging mass just feet away.

Outside, Rose bounded up the stairs to the apartment, her backpack light on her shoulder, a spring in her step that surprised even her. The day had flown by in lectures and notes, but beneath it all thrummed a vitality she hadn't felt in months. Last night's sleep had been a revelation: no tossing in the cramped old bed, no interruptions from the city's distant rumble, just deep, enveloping rest in the king-sized expanse, her body cradled by soft sheets and an unspoken presence that had left her refreshed, alive. And horniness, insistent and warm, pooling between her thighs during idle moments. Images had crept in unwanted: Amari's bare chest, the flex of his arms, that teasing bulge in his shorts. But she shoved them aside. *He wasn't the reason she was horny, it was the absence of Jules. It had been years since they had spent a night apart; her body was showing her how it craved him, his touch, his familiar weight.* She smiled, key in hand, picturing his arms around her, lips on hers. *Please, let Amari be out.*

The door eased open to a hush, the air inside carrying the remnants of garlic and soy, a stir-fry's echo that made her stomach twist with sudden hunger. *One of Jules specialities,* she thought as she kicked the door shut behind her, letting the backpack slide to the floor in the entryway with a muffled thud, toes wiggling free from her shoes as she padded across the cool tile toward the open-plan living area. No voices, no footsteps; just the faint hum of the fridge and, from deeper in, the steady roar of running water. Her pulse quickened, a playful thrill bubbling up as she veered into the bedroom. The king-sized bed dominated the space, its thick duvet ruffled and piled high in the center, as if Jules had burrowed deep for a quick nap before his shift. A faint indentation lingered on the pillow, his scent clinging to the fabric. The en suite door stood slightly ajar, steam curling out like an invitation, the shower's relentless pound vibrating through the walls.

"Jules?" she called, her voice light and laced with anticipation, a smile tugging at her lips as she imagined his surprise, the way he'd pull her under the spray.

"In the shower!" His response bounced back, muffled and distant over the water's rush, but it sent a shiver racing down her spine.

A thrill shot through her, naughty and bold. Joining him; surprising him, felt perfect, a way to channel this pent-up desire. She stripped quickly, tank top over her head, bra unclasped to free her large breasts, nipples hardening in the cool air. Jeans slid down her hips, panties following, revealing the blonde curls at her mound. She shook out her hair, the blonde waves tumbling past her shoulders, and bit her lip, pulse racing at her own daring. Barefoot, she slipped into the bathroom, the humid air enveloping her like a blanket. Steam clouded everything, the large glass enclosure fogged opaque. Both shower heads ran full blast; *how wasteful*, she thought absently, but the heat beckoned. She stepped in quietly, water misting her skin, droplets beading on her curves. A shadowy figure loomed ahead, broader than she remembered, steam playing tricks to make Jules seem towering. Her eyes adjusted slowly, heart leaping as she closed the distance, inches from pressing against him.

He turned then, water falling in heavy streams over his powerful shoulders and down the chiseled planes of his chest, and his cock swung free with the motion, thick and weighty, slapping wetly against her stomach with a resounding, meaty thwack that jolted through her core. Rose's shriek pierced the steam, high and raw, her hands flying up to her mouth as shock pinned her feet to the slick tile, body frozen in the spray.

Her eyes dropped on instinct, locking onto the sight before her: Amari's massive black cock, no longer hidden by fabric, now stark and undeniable in the shower's unforgiving light. It hung semi-erect from the warmth, girth and length of her forearm, the dark shaft etched with bulging veins, the flared head a smooth, blunt crown glistening with water. Her mouth went dry even as saliva pooled under her tongue, a treacherous rush of arousal slamming into her. It was obscene, impossible, the kind of endowment that reshaped fantasies into fevered obsessions, dwarfing every vague notion she'd harbored from those stolen glimpses or the rumours she had heard back in school.

"Looks like it's a family shower!" Amari's voice cut through, deep and amused, laced with a husky edge that vibrated in the humid air. His eyes raked over her unabashedly, dark and intent, taking in the water-sheened curves of her naked body: the hard peaks of her nipples jutting from her heavy tits, rising and falling with her rapid breaths; the soft flare of her hips; the blonde bush framing the pink slit of her pussy, lips parted slightly from the shock.

Rose's gaze snapped up to his confident grinning face, then dipped back to that mesmerising cock, watching it twitch and thicken just a fraction under her stare. Heat scorched her cheeks, spreading down her neck, but she couldn't stop the way her thighs pressed together instinctively, seeking friction against the throb building there. She scrambled to cover herself, one arm crossing over her chest to mash her breasts together and making them look even more tempting, the other hand dropping to cup her mound, fingers brushing her clit accidentally and sending a jolt through her. The steam offered no real shield, only amplifying the intimacy, her skin flushing deeper under his open appraisal.

"Rose?" Jules's voice rang from the side, strained and urgent, as he twisted under his own stream, hands scrubbing furiously at his face to clear the soap stinging his eyes. He blinked through the lingering suds, water streaming down his features, turning toward the sharp cry and the sudden tension thickening the air.

Her eyes darted to him then, really seeing for the first time in this charged context: his pale body under the spray, the gentleness of his soft belly from lazy nights and comfort food,

water pooling in the subtle folds; his dick tiny between his legs, barely popping out of the ginger pubes: small, pink and unassuming. The contrast struck her like a physical blow; Jules's length seemed almost delicate, boyish in its size, a stark diminishment next to the raw, overwhelming potency of Amari's beast mere feet away, which now stirred visibly, veins standing out as blood rushed in response to the scene. She'd never truly compared before, never wondered if he was bigger or smaller than other men. But now he was lined him up against something so profoundly dominant; her boyfriend appeared reduced, endearing in his familiarity but lacking the sheer, intimidating power that made her knees weaken. A pang of guilt twisted in her chest, chased by an unwelcome spark of curiosity, her pussy aching with a betrayal she couldn't name.

"What the hell, Jules? Why didn't you tell me Amari was in here?" she shouted, voice cracking high with a mix of mortification, anger, and that darker undercurrent of intrigue, her words echoing off the tiles. She scurried backward out of the enclosure, feet slipping slightly on the wet floor, water slicking every inch of her skin as she burst into the cooler air of the bathroom proper.

She snatched a towel from the heated rack, the fabric rough and warm against her chilled flesh, wrapping it tightly around her curves; tucking it under her arms to shield her breasts, the hem brushing mid-thigh but doing little to quell the persistent throb between her legs. Heart hammering like a drum in her ears, she fled the steam-filled space, door banging shut behind her as she retreated to the bedroom. Behind her, in the sudden quiet broken only by the dual sprays, Jules's eyes dropped once more to Amari's cock; water beading along its length, swinging lazily as Amari soaped his thighs without a care. Panic clawed up Jules's throat, hot and choking; *had she seen it? The steam had been thick, swirling like a veil, but had it parted enough to expose the devastating truth?* He prayed not, twisting the faucet off with trembling hands, the silence amplifying his dread as he grabbed his own towel, mind reeling with the image of her wide-eyed shock.

Outside sitting on the edge of the bed, Rose was already re picturing the scene. The moment that huge cock had slapped against her stomach. The sheer impossible size of it. The comparison to her beloved Jules cute dick. *How does a girl even take something that size?* She wondered with curiosity. *It doesn't matter. Size isn't important.* She told herself, even as her right hand gripped around her left forearm about half way up, as if to imagine what it would feel to hold it.

Only love is important. Only Jules and I. She convinced herself as she pushed the moment to the back of her head and got dressed trying not to think about how the night will unfold with Jules at work, and her left alone with Amari. And a bed to share.