

Year of the Gentlemen

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Stefan

There I was lifting my 5, 9 body from off the floor. I had just finished doing my 500 sit-ups and 300 pushups, and as I was wiping the sweat off my face, my cell phone rang. When I looked at the time, it was almost midnight.

“Hello,” I answered.

“Hello, Stefan, you’re still up, babe? I have something to discuss with you!”

Now, what could be so important that Michelle couldn’t wait until the next morning to call or text me? As I was wiping my sweat off and thinking Michelle and I met each other at the 40/40 club, we have been dating one another for almost one year. We just finished making love to one another hours ago. My mom didn’t like Michelle because she wasn’t a Church going woman. Every time Mom tried to get her to come to St. Anthony’s, she’d say she either had to work or that she needed to someplace her boss needed her to be. I always told my mom to let Michelle be; you never know a person’s situation. Paying rent out here in NYC is a lot of money. My Mom and I bumped heads a few times because of Michelle. If Michelle was calling me this late, I knew it had to be important.

“What’s on your mind, Michelle?” I asked.

“Stefan, babe, I’m going to always love you, I’m taking my life in another direction.”

“What are you trying to say, Michelle? Just come out with it.” I said because anytime a person, man or woman, says—we got to talk, 9/10 times it means trouble or break was coming.

“I quit my time full-time to pursue my weekend job. Stefan, in just a month, I made 10,000 dollars.”

“By doing what Michelle?” I was now fully awakened, and regardless of me being tired, my eyes were wide open.

“Look, Stefan, I’m trying to make this breakup clean because I’d like us to still be friends.”

“Give me that shit!” Someone shouted in my ear.

“Look, homeboy, what she should have just told you is she got a new daddy. I was her weekend lover, but now I’m her full-time daddy and Lover, and we getting money.”

The guy’s voice said as he hung the phone up. I wasn't going to the dark side called hell anyway, because where I’m from in Rutland, the 90’s, we don’t do that. Was I upset? Hell yes, but it is what it is, but I never pictured my lady being pimped.

The next day, while I was driving to work, still thinking about what Michelle told me. I wasn't mad at all, but I was surprised. Surprised that Michelle allowed herself to be pimped. These days, you had to do whatever you had to do to survive out in NYC. I worked at JFK airport for a federal security company, and as I parked my 2012 BMW X6, this is very important. It's unusual for Mr. Adams; he was standing waiting for me. I thought to myself, Why?

"Good morning, Stephan. I'd like for you to come straight to my office." Mr. Adams said.

'Another promotion, damn God is good.' I said to myself.

Moments later, as I walked into Mr. Adams I saw Adriana, Adriana was a colleague and co-worker of mine, come out of the office crying. Now, all of the years I've known Adriana, I never saw her crying. We met one day when we were online registering for at York College. We exchanged numbers and discovered covered we had much in common that day. We were both from Brooklyn, and both of our families were from Atlanta, Georgia. When Mom found out where both families were from, she immediately made calls to make sure we weren't related, but it was already too late. By the time I introduced Adriana to my mom and little brother, z we had already slept with one another at

least four times. Even though we found out we weren't related, Adriana and I broke up, she felt things were moving too fast, we ended up becoming the best of friends, so it was unusual to see Adriana crying.

When I entered Mr. Adam's office, both he and his boss, Mr. Wash, were in there.

"What was Adriana crying for?" I asked as I sat down in the chair.

"That's not important now." Mr. Wash said.

"Look, Stephan, I'm going to cut to the chase. We love the work you've done over the years you've been here. But the company is downsizing." I looked at both men, who were so basically I'm fired?"

"No, it just means we're laying you and a lot of others off." Mr. Adams said.

"We've decided to go in another direction." Mr. Wash said.

I shook both men's hands, wishing I could slap fire out of them, but I understood business is business. As I cleaned out my locker, I was upset, no, I was pissed off. Because I had to think and think fast. How was I going to pay my rent, not to mention I still owed \$ 10,000 on my car note and another \$14,000 in school tuition.

*The next day, I woke up at my regular time, 6 am, ready to go to work, but it hit me that I was no longer working at the airport. I went to turn on the radio while making breakfast. Listening to Steve Harvey, Shirley, Nephew To, and my Carla was always an inspiration. Steve Harvey was talking about his book **Like** Act Like a Success. He was also talking about his book Act Like a Lady and Think Like a Man. I like the fact that Steve Harvey was showing women and brothers that read and understand his message. After eating, I checked my mailbox, phone bill, cable bill, and, not to mention, rent is due next Friday. Also in my mailbox was a BlackLoveEntertainment magazine. I was very happy for my childhood friend Daniel and the success he was having in the Publishing industry. -The title of the cover was why most women think they can change a man.*

‘Interesting topic, but true, most women do feel they can change a man.’

The first paragraph said. Ladies know that having a man’s baby does not mean he’s going to change or stay with you. If he was hustling on the corner, he’s going to keep doing it until he wants to stop and get a real job. If he were a womanizer and 9/10 times the signs are there to see. *Don’t think having his baby will stop him from being a better man for himself and his*

family. Before I could finish reading, my phone rang. It was my mom.

“Hello, Mom, good morning,” I said.

“Stefan, I called your job, and they said you no longer work there.”

*“No, I don’t, Mom. The company was downsizing.”
And they let my baby go? How dare they, those ass
holes. Well, Stefan you know I’m here for you, and if
money gets tight, you can always move in with me, and
you’re.”*

*“I appreciate the offer, Mom, but that isn’t going to
happen.”*

*‘I love my mother to death, but moving back in with
her was a no, no. I needed some type of income, and I
needed it quickly. I quickly turned on my laptop and
started searching the internet for a job.*

Lisa

While at work, I was thinking about how Maurice loves to suck my breasts and rub my thighs. I was preparing all day to make love to Maurice. Because my man can lay it down. The rough day I had in this office, I couldn't wait to get my hair and nails done. Looking back, it was a year ago, Maurice and I met about one day when I was running late for work. He helped me catch a train headed to Grand Central by holding the door until the button was pressed. That's right, my man is a Train Conductor. I gave him my number when I got off 42nd Street. After a Street few phone calls and about seven dates, we became a couple. It took about two months before I even gave it up to Maurice, but when I did, I made sure it was worth the wait.

Today was taking me back to the first time Maurice, and I made love. I was very anxious about the lovemaking Maurice, and I will be having tonight.

Three and a half hours later, after getting my hair and nails done, I met up with Maurice, and our tongues intertwined. As I entered our place comfortably at our place Maurice quickly got on his knees, unbuckled my pants, and put my panties on the floor. He carried me to our bedroom, lying on the bed, and put his tongue

right to work. I guess he was just as anxious as I was about the intimacy we were ready to have.

“Damn, babe, that shit feels good,” I said.

Right to left, left to right, left, and in a circle, Maurice’s tongue was doing its job. I was almost there in the zone, ready to cum. I quickly grabbed Maurice’s head as he went on to spread my legs wider so his tongue could go deeper. “OH God! Owwww!” I came, and it felt damn good, I mean, really good.

“What the fuck?” I shouted out.

Maurice turned his head, and we both saw a guy tip toeing tying outside my bedroom, holding his clothes in his hand until they dropped to the floor.

“Babe, I can explain, you ass hole I told you.”

“Sorry, man, I had to use the bathroom.”

Once I saw who it was, I couldn’t believe my damn eyes. “Jason?”

“I’m sorry, Lisa, it was just a one-time thing. I’ll let you and Maurice figure things out.”

Jason, my damn boss, was gay and sleeping with my man. What the hell is this world coming to?”

I quickly went to the kitchen and grabbed a knife. Maurice looked at me, about to say only God knows

what, but I immediately cut him off. Get the hell out, out, out. How could you fucking do this? I said in tears.

“Lisa, again I’m sorry, Lisa! Jason said it was a one-time thing.” Maurice said.

Wham! I slapped Maurice as hard as I could in the face. And ready to stab him.

“You think I give a damn how many times it was. Just pack your shit and leave.”

“Wait a minute, now I pay rent in here just like you.”

I quickly threw on a pair of pants on and went to the kitchen.

“Nigga my name on the damn least, now take your fucking homo ass and get out of my damn house.” I said, holding a knife in my hand. Maurice looked up and down at me.

“Look, babe, I can’t help what I’ve become.”

I quickly swung for Maurice’s heart, but he turned around, and I stabbed him in his arm. “Now get the fuck out.”

Wham! I couldn’t believe what just happened. Maurice, for the first time, had put his hands on me. My nose was bleeding, and as I fell to the floor, Maurice was standing over me.

“Now I love you, Lisa, we’re going to get through this.”

“Freeze! Put that knife down now!”

“Do as Sgt. Brown said.”

Two officers stormed into my apartment. y forgot I didn’t lock the door when Jason left. ‘Thank God for nosy neighbors.’ “Put your hands behind your head.” Maurice was put in handcuffs immediately.

“Wait, this bitch stabbed me.”

“It’s obvious she was defending herself.”

“That’s the damn problem with the law in the U.S.A. They are quick to take a dwoman’soman side. Always think a man is wrong, but don’t pay attention to what leads that man to...”

“Shut the hell up! Mam did you stab this man?” the Officer asked.

Tears quickly started coming down my face, and within seconds, I was in handcuffs as Officer Real read me my rights. “You have the right to remain silent. You have the right to an attorney. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.”

20 Minutes later, I found myself in a car being charged with assault with a deadly weapon. I only had

one phone call to make, so I called my parents. At 4:00 am, I was released on \$75,000 on bail. After lying to my parents about what happened, and what drove me into a rage.

They understood but didn't condone it at all. "That still doesn't give you the right to try and take a man's life." My father said.

"Yes, Lisa, we raised you better than that. Besides, that's for God to judge, not you."

"Now you and Maurice both have an order of protection against one another, so stay away from him."

I was really tired, and I guess my father could tell because even at age 56, my father carried me in his arms like I was a baby. My father laid me on the couch until I fell asleep.

The next day, I didn't bother going to work. I didn't even call to let them know I wasn't coming into work. I just didn't show up I didn't want to see Jason's face ever because I might have gone into a greater rage than I did with Maurice. I saw a BlackLoveEntertainment Magazine in the kitchen with a man holding a woman's hand like he was proposing. The topic said learning to forgive those who have hurt

you. "Whatever!" I said as I threw the magazine back on the table.

"It's true, princess, holding on to anger is not healthy at all." My father said.

My father went on to tell me the time my mother forgave him. 15 minutes later, my father told me something; I would have never believed. If it didn't come directly from his mouth. Dad told me he was a recovered alcoholic and how he got help with his drinking.

"You see, Lisa, back when you and your sister were very young, I was a young policeman. I was a community Officer in what was flagged as a red zone, which is a high-crime area in Brownsville. I tried my best to be an influence on young men and women as well as children."

"Yes, Daddy, I know that," I said, smiling.

"But what you and your sister didn't know was that it was a very stressful job. I worked the day shift, and it takes a very strong man or woman not to bring their problems from work to their home and their problems from home to work. But I was not successful at doing that. I took all my anger out on your mother. I couldn't take it anymore. I brought my work problems home, and that's something no one should do." Dad

went on to tell me how he became an alcoholic and would beat on Mom at least twice a week. My father admitted to me he had hit Mommy at least ten times when he was drunk. He even told me what made him realize he had a problem when Mommy almost lost Chenille, while she was still pregnant. A tear came down my father's face as Dad continued to reminisce. I guess he was having a flashback, although Chenille is 25 and I'm currently 28.

"You see, princess, it was a blessing that your mother didn't lose your sister. And that blessing woke me up because I checked myself into rehab, and a week later, I got a call from the post office. I turned in my badge, and the rest is history."

Daddy was right, it is history because he and Mommy have a wonderful marriage. The 2 of them have what me and Chenille want. I guess I can forgive Maurice, but I damn sure won't be getting back with him. My cell phone rang, and I glanced at it and saw it was Chenille. I didn't bother answering it. "Daddy, please tell me you and Mommy didn't go tell Chenille what happened?"

"Of course, we did, princess. This is when a family has to be there for each other." Dad said as he left the room. I laid down, ready to go back to sleep but Chenille came barging in and smacking her gums,

going on and on and on. For five minutes without taking a deep breath, Chenille was going on about how low-lifefe Maurice is and how less of a woman he made me feel by leaving me for a man. I finally got off the couch.

“All right, Chenille, calm down! You’ve made your point! Now know the man in the world cannot make me feel less of a woman. Now, I love myself way too much to let any man or any woman bring me down in my self-esteem.”

“Now that’s the big sister I know and love. The girls and I are going to the 40/40 on Friday, and you’re welcome to come.” “I’ll be their sis,” I said, trying my best not to show how hurt I really was.

The next day, I walked into Jason’s office to get my things out there. You had all the ex-coworkers looking at me. Jason closed his door and looked at me. “Lisa, I’m so sorry about all this. I’d hate to lose you because I love the work you do...”

“Shut the hell up, Jason, because you know you’re not sorry, you’re only sorry you and Maurice got caught.”

“Look, Lisa...” I immediately cut him off. Jason, it’s all good. I’m a strong black woman who’s leaving your company, so have my 401 transferred to my bank account. As a matter of fact, I’ll do it myself. And

again, don't beat yourself up, you and Maurice had to come out of the closet sometime." I said, leaving the office, I was really proud of myself the way I handled things with Jason, and now that it was Friday, it was time to treat myself to a nice Massage before I go out with my sister tonight.

Bruce

I came home tired as hell but happy at the same time, because of the overtime I put in this week, my check is going to be looking just right.

60 minutes later, after taking a shower and doing my 300 pushups. I was ready to fall asleep, but I looked at my cell phone and saw I had a text message from Veronica. Veronica and I had been seeing each other for a year and a half. We met at Deron's birthday party last year. Deron, my brother Steph and Deron's brother Dennis all grew up in Rutland Plaza together. They watched me grow from a boy to a man who's now a young Detective. Veronica kept it real with me from the time we were introduced. She told me she was in school trying to become a lawyer like her cousin Katrina. We didn't have sex until three months after we met, and when I finally let her meet my mom, that's when I felt we could one day start a family, but Veronica let me know she would not be having any kids until she finished law school. I respected that, and it was fine with me because I was only 22 and she was 24, getting ready to turn 25. As I lay down, the doorbell rang. When I went to open the door, I couldn't believe who it was, and I was happy my mom wasn't home. It wasn't Veronica at the door; it was my former lover from high school, through my

sophomore year in college, Kim. "Kim, what're you doing here? And whose baby is that?" I asked. I really didn't even care because a part of me was still upset the way we broke up. Kim had light brown skin with a slim waist and weighed about 120. I broke up with Kim about a month before Veronica and I met each other. Even though we were in college at the time, I didn't like the people she was hanging around. Especially when she started smoking cigarettes, which led to marijuana, followed by crack and other drugs. That's what made me leave my first love. Even though I was tired as hell, my eyes were wide open, because I was not going to lose my job/ career because of this girl. "It's nice to see you too, Bruce."

"Ok, again, Kim, why are you here? And whose baby is that?"

"It's yours. His name is John."

"And what makes you think that's my son? When we've been apart for almost two years." Tears were coming down Kim's face as she laid little John down. "Look, Bruce, this is your son. I already had a DNA test done with Michael."

"And?"

"And when he found out little Johnny wasn't his, he put us both out of his house."

“That still doesn’t explain why you think this baby is mine?”

“Bruce, you and Michael were the only ones I was sleeping with.”

“And those orgy parties you used to go to?”

“Look, Bruce, for the last time, this is your baby. I wouldn’t come here and dump this on you if I wasn’t sure and needed a place to stay.”

“So that’s what this is about, well, that’s not my problem.”

“How can you be so cold to me? You used to love me.”

“That’s the keyword use too, and you hurt me as I remember, so take yourself and that crack head baby of yours out of here.”

Kim immediately took a swing at me, but I weaved it and grabbed her wrist, letting her know I’d arrest her. I quickly pulled out my badge. “Kim, things have changed. I’ve changed, but before I could finish, she cut me off. “I don’t give a fuck if you don’t respect me, but you will show my son respect. Take a look at him, he looks just like you.”

“Looks can be deceiving, Kim; now I don’t know what kind of game you’re playing.”

Before I could say another word, Kim's tongue was in my mouth, and I welcomed it. For some reason, I didn't try to fight it because it felt right. Kim quickly took her shirt off and unbuckled her bra.

"Don't you miss this?" She said.

Kim knew I was a breast man. I went to kiss her neck, then sucking on her breast, and she moaned as I licked her nipples. Before things could get real heated, I heard a key turn. Kim heard it too because she quickly ran into the bathroom to put her bra and shirt back on. As my mom came inside, she looked directly at me, asking whose baby this was? And as Kim came out of the bathroom.

"Hello, Ms. Right, that's my son and your grandson."

My mom's eyes lit up, and she quickly started hugging Kim. "Oh, I'm a grandmother. Oh my God, I'm a grandmother."

"Don't get ahead of yourself, Mom. We don't know that yet."

It was too late; my mother was already holding little Johnny. "I finally have a grandchild." My mom said. "Mom, for the last time, that's not your grandchild, Mom, and that's not my son."

"Look, Bruce, I know this is a shock and a lot for you to take in, but John is your son."

“Then why the hell am I just now finding out about him? What made you all of a sudden want to come here, dropping this bomb on me?”

“He’s right, Kim, why now? You just now realizing everyone needs a helping hand raising a child! Now what you 2 need to do is go in the hallway and talk, cause this baby does not need to hear you’re arguing.”

I was glad Mom came back to her senses, but I wasn’t happy about her suggestion.

“Are you happy now, Kim?” I said silently in front of Mom’s door.

“Bruce, again, I’m sorry about all of this. You have no idea how hard this is, but I feel better knowing you were told the truth.”

“Kim, it can only be the truth if that’s what you were telling us, but we both know about your drug habit and your lies.”

Kim’s face became angry. I could tell she didn’t like the fact that I kept bringing it up. “Look, I’m a changed woman. I have responsibility now.”

“To who your child or your drug habit?”

Ok! I had to admit that was a low blow, but I really didn’t give a damn. Kim stared at me with an evil

look, but I had already warned her. Kim stood there with her hand trembling like she was in shock at what I had to say. I looked at Kim as I sat on the couch next to John.

“I don’t even know why I’m here, thinking we could be a family.”

“Kim, what did you think was going to happen? We’ve been broken up for almost two years. You don’t come to my house and bring a child here, saying it’s mine.”

I must have really gotten to Kim. Tears started coming out of her eyes, and I could see the rage in her face.

“Bruce, why won’t you believe me? This is your son. If you want a DNA test done, we can do that.”

“You damn right we will.” I said. Before I could say another word, my phone vibrated. It was a text from Veronica saying she was on her way and that she’ll be upstairs in 20 minutes. I just knew I was going to have to explain things to Veronica. The timing just

It’s not right, especially since I wasn’t sure if I was a father or not, I just knew I had to get this drug addict out of my mom’s house.

