

## goodbye

Vanessa's p.o.v

"Nessa, why don't you serve your husband lunch sweetheart?" mom asks me, but you can hear the attitude in her voice. She hates it that I put my kids rst. Mom has always believed the man comes rst. She always put dad rst, and stood by him, even throughout all of his cheating. "Mom, Eric has hands, he can serve himself if he is hungry." I tell her and walk away to serve my kids and get away from her. It is Sunday and we normally come to my parent's house for lunch. It is a tradition. Mom always hosts big lunches on Sundays. "It is alright Stephanie, Nessa has her hands full with the kids" Eric, my husband, tells my mother, but he has a frown on his face. I know he is upset that I dismissed him, but he doesn't want to show it in front of my family, but I am sure he will let me know how bothered he is when we get home. "Nessa, your husband should always come rst." she tries to scold me, but I just glare at her and keep in what I really want to tell her which is "Yeah mom, what good did putting your husband rst do for you? He still cheated on you with every woman he could." But I swallow it all down like I normally do and just smile. I serve my kids lunch and grab a mimosa to try to take the edge off. My family is so stressful and Eric and I are not in a good place right now. We are having money problems or he claims we are. He works with my father and, from the purchases that are on our bank account, my husband is exactly like my father. There are purchases at ower shops, restaurants and hotels. I never received any owers and Eric never takes me out anywhere and if it was business related, the company pays for the hotel rooms, so he would not have to pay for it, therefore all I can think of is that he is saying we have money troubles, but he is wasting money elsewhere. I nish my drink and grab another, wondering where things went wrong. "Change your face." Eric whispers as he gets close, grabbing a drink for himself. I ignore him and walk away to check on my kids.

I have 3 kids. A boy, Julian, and my twin girls, Valeria and Victoria. "You should really dye that girl's hair. She looks like a grandma with that grey patch of hair." My mother tells me and I groan. My mother always has something to say. "I know you don't like it when I tell you things, Vanessa, but they are for your own good. A lady should always look her best. You keeping her hair this way only means that other kids will bully her when she starts school." she tells me. "Mom, I will raise my kids how I want, okay." I say. "Tori's hair is Silver Grammy and it looks really cool," Julian tells her. "Adults are talking Julian. We didn't say you could speak." she tells him and I am on the point of snapping. I am getting to the point of no return. I am about to get very unlady-like and I know they will not like that. "Pack up kids, we are going home." I say, and walk away to get Eric. "Vanessa, you need to educate your kids better. They are just running wild." she says, and I look at her and can't believe her right now. "I will not have my kids grow up feeling like they are in a prison and can't even speak mother. I am not you." I tell her and walk away, but of course she follows me. "Vanessa, I had high hopes for you. Do not tell me you are going to be just like your good for nothing sister Verlene." she tells me. "Verlene got lucky, she left before you ruined her life." I spit. I turn around and Eric and my father are both standing there looking shocked. "Bye dad, we are going home." I say, and walk out. I nish loading the car as Eric walks out. He gets in the car and looks pissed and I know that I only have a couple of seconds to mentally prepare myself before he begins talking sh!t to me.

"Why are you so dicult Nessa?" Eric asks and I roll my eyes and look out of the window. Here we go. "I am talking to you. Your mother means well, why can't you just listen?" he asks me. "Eric, can we discuss this later, not in front of the kids." I ask him and he nally shuts up. Too bad it doesn't last that long. "We should be able to speak anywhere Vanessa. The kids need to learn not to interfere in adult business. Whatever they hear, they need to know not to repeat." he yells. I don't bother arguing. "Daddy, don't yell at mommy." My daughter Valeria says. "Shut up Val, I am speaking to your mother, not to you," he snaps at her. "Eric, do not speak to her that way." I tell him. "You are too soft with these kids Nessa. They will walk all over you. I will have to pick up all of your slack. You are such a bad mother." he tells me, and I feel the tears in my eyes.

We get home and he stomps up the stairs. The kids all go to their rooms. I go up to my room and he grabs me and shoves my face into the wall. "I let you get away with so much dearest wife, but I am getting so tired of your attitude and the way you treat me. Who the h3ll do you think you are to dismiss me? Next time your mother tells you to serve me, you serve me. Got it bltch?" he yells in my face. I nod, not wanting to ght with him and risk my kids hearing him. He shoves me and I fall to the ground. He stomps away and I hear the shower turn on. At least he didn't hit me this time. I think to myself. I get out of my clothes and get dressed in more comfortable clothes. I hear a ding, but ignore it as I collect clothes to do some laundry. I am shaking as I look around the room. I have all of these nice things and I am so unhappy. None of this is worth it to me. I hate my life. My kids are the only thing that mean anything. I can't even go to anyone for help, my parents will take Eric's side if I told them how abusive he really is. I can already hear mom saying "Nessa, you need to take it and be a good wife or it is all your fault, if only you did as he asked, you wouldn't be in this situation. It's all your fault." I chuckle, my mom is a sad excuse of a mother. I hear the ding again and look around and it is Eric's phone. I grab it as it dings again and I see that it is a text message from Beatrice, his assistant. I decide to open it, because if she is messaging him on a Sunday, it must be important.

I stand here in shock, Beatrice, I should have known she is the one sleeping with my husband. Beatrice is such a skank's name. I quickly grab my phone and take pictures of the whole message thread, which is disgusting. They send each other nude pictures and videos. I will read it all later. Right now I just need the proof. With this I can get a divorce. Maybe things will be easier with this proof, but who am I kidding, Eric will make it dicult, but I do not care, this is what I need to get away from him. I don't want my kids having to grow up thinking their father's behavior is okay or the way he treats me is how they should treat people or allow to be treated. I also do not care what my parents think or say about it. I can't keep living this lie. Eric has changed so much and I think it is about time I change and start over. I think my kids will be happier too. The phone dings again and I pick it up and my heart drops. It is a positive pregnancy test. He got her pregnant. Oh well, he is her problem now. This is the biggest push I could have received that I didn't even know I needed. I quickly go through the rest of the phone to see if there is anything else that can be of any help and I see that he is on a bunch of dating apps as well. Wow. Who did I marry? I have always trusted him, never thought of checking his phone. I never wanted to be that nagging wife. Mom hammered it into me to be the perfect wife and I tried to be, but I wasn't good enough, apparently, and for once I am thankful for that. Eric changed a lot recently after he got this huge deal with dad's company. He got a new position and a huge bonus, but now put our family on a budget and does not want to give me any money. He never wanted me to work and now more than ever do I regret it. Luckily, I haven't been an !diot for too long. I have been saving money whenever I could in a box in my closet and I am so glad I stopped listening to my mother and will not listen to her when she tells me not to leave Eric, because I know she will. "Thank you God." I whisper, and put his phone back down when I hear the shower door close. Tomorrow when he leaves for work, I will get my kids and leave this house, because I know he will not leave and try to ght me. "Your phone kept beeping." I tell him and I watch as he gets nervous. "Did you check it?" He asks, but I just roll my eyes and grab the laundry basket and walk out. He can fu.ck off. Anything I could have still felt for him died when I saw that positive pregnancy test. Even if I had the tiniest thought of working it out with him or going to counseling, that thought ew out of the window along with any love I had left for him which is none.

"Nessa, I have an emergency I need to go do." he says, walking into the laundry room. He tries to kiss my head, but I dodge it. "Beatrice?" I ask and he stops in his tracks and just stares at me. "You have to go do Beatrice?" I ask and I chuckle at his face. "I mean you have to go do something work related, with her right? I saw that she texted you. It must be an emergency for her to be bothering you on a Sunday." I say and he lets out a breath, and chuckles nervously. "Yes, I have to go sign some paperwork and meet with a client that is in town, he will probably want to go have drinks, so don't wait up for me." he tells me. "Oh, I won't." I say and walk out of the room and back upstairs.

I hear his car pull out of the driveway. "Julian, go pack a backpack with some clothes, a pair of shoes and your most important toy." I tell my son. "Why mommy?" he asks. He is 6 now and I feel like he understands so much. "We are going to go away. On a vacation." I tell him. "Just you, me and my sisters?" he asks and I nod. "Okay, mommy, I won't be long." he says and runs off. I go into my twin's room and pack a duffel bag. Screw waiting until he leaves to work tomorrow. I am grabbing my kids and leaving right now. I don't want to wait for him to return home drunk, who knows what he will try to do to me then. I pack my girl's things. They have so much and I have no idea what I should take with us. My girls are 4 and super girly and attached to all of their things, so I feel like they might want to take a couple more things than Julian. I grab some clothes and pull ups for Valeria, because she is still wetting herself a bit. I pack clothes, shoes and toys and put the bag in the living room. I grab another bag and pack some clothes and shoes for me and all of our important papers. I place that bag in the living room too. My little man runs out with his bag and puts it down. "I'm ready mommy," he says, and I nod. "Good job Julian." I say. I walk around, trying to make sure there isn't anything else we might need to take, because we will never come back here. I am moving away and giving my kids the life they deserve, where no-one will ght or yell at them. They will never have to live in fear ever again. "Ready to go?" I ask Julian as I put both girls in the wagon along with all of our bags. I look around one last time and say goodbye to my rst house. I loved this place when I rst came here. With so many hopes and dreams. Now, I hate it and can't wait to leave. Although I leave behind wonderful memories, I am excited to make new ones with my kids and away from my horrible family. I refuse to damage my kids the way they damaged me. I place down the letter I quickly wrote to Eric telling him I am leaving him and to have a nice life with Beatrice. I truly mean everything I wrote. I close the door and walk away from everything I know, feeling scared, but happier than I have felt in a long time.

I walk us to the train station and buy 4 tickets to Boston. I need to get as far away as I can and then I will gure out what to do from there. I refuse to take any car or anything Eric can track me down with. I decide that when I get to our destination, I will call my sister Verlene and hopefully, she can help me. She has lived in Boston for years now. She settled down there with some guy she fell in love with. The train arrives and the kids all get in and we get into our booth. "Mommy, this is amazing. You are the best mommy. I love you." Julian tells me and I smile. I know he loves trains, so this is also a treat for him. We sit back and after a while they all fall asleep. I sit here and cry in peace. I let it all out. I promise myself and my kids that once we get off this train, I will never cry for a man ever again. I will be strong for my kids. They are my motivation to keep going.