



OH BUT DIVORCE!

Introduction

Port Elizabeth's wind was at its worst, lifting everything that lay on the ground. The four family members pressed on. Each one was wrestling with the wind, trying hard not to submit to the wind's force which was shoving them backwards. Silently through the biting cold, taking it one step at a time, they made their way forward. Breaking the silence with a pure, sincere voice, the 3-year-old son said, "Oh but divorce!" No one answered him, yet everyone heard him. That murmuring line stabbed the mother deeper than a murderer's knife. Her eyes grew moist, but she continued pressing through the wind silently. As they were walking down the street that led home, the skies turned darker by the minute and soon the family felt the unpleasant cold showers on their skin. This brought relief to the mother as none of her kids was going to witness her tears. In a few minutes they reached home.

The mother rushed into the toilet, the elder daughter switched on the heater and the younger daughter warmed the food while the son helped setting the table. The family had an early supper, and that meal was prepared with the last items of groceries that were left in the cupboard. To save the last litre of paraffin that was left, as soon as the house was warm they switched the heater off and quickly tucked themselves into the same bed. The mother told stories from her childhood. After hearing that his grandma used to tell his mother tales before bedtime, the son had requested for one. After telling the tale of how the jackal tricked the wolf, the mother felt a deep sense of relief when she saw her kids sleeping on a full stomach. The question now was: what kind of magic was she to perform to make tomorrow as much of a success? "Well, the Lord will provide as He did today", she comforted herself. She closed her eyes resting from her cares. With the rain humming in the background her son's tiny voice echoed, "Oh but divorce!"

This is a situation my family and I found ourselves in. We now took on new titles and identities. My mom was now a Divorcee and my siblings and I were Children of Divorce or CODs as I'd like to put it. This was new to us; in fact, this was sudden and it changed our lives forever. Every day the Bible verse, "what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Matthew 19:6), is sadly fading away. In South Africa, more than four in ten marriages end up in divorce (IOL, 2018). It is due to these statistics that numerous authors and counsellors have written books on this subject. So, I have recently become an author but I am not a counsellor. By this book I am not trying to add to what has been written or oppose it. I am simply telling my story as a child who has been affected at first-hand experience by the divorce of her parents. I feel that as a child of divorce, I was often misunderstood or at times not understood at all by my parents, family, the stepmother and the community at large.

To be honest, I too at times never understood myself, why I felt the way I did and why I said certain things and acted in a certain way as a result. To understand my feelings, I wrote them down as I always kept a diary from when I was a young girl. So yes, your prayers are finally answered! You are reading someone's diary! By this open diary I am not trying to justify how I acted or to defend or condemn anyone's actions. I am simply taking you inside my head, telling you how I saw and interpreted the situation and helping you to paint a picture of a divorce through the eyes of the affected child. Whether that picture is worthless and you feel like painting a different one, or see that picture as a work of art worthy to be displayed in a gallery, you will decide. Well, my family did not immediately fall apart. There were many events that led to our calamity. In the next chapters, I will be taking you down memory lane. Please note that unless I state otherwise later, most of the people's characters are still the same. However, I have written them in past tense as I am looking back.

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CHAPTER 6: FALLEN, FALLEN IS OUR HOME!

Imagine a citywide disaster. Let's take fire for an example. The morning sun forces its way through your curtains. Recently it was spring. Although you often can't feel the difference, you are certain that today is definitely summer. You are grateful that summer has chased the winter chills away. Finally, it's the season you have been longing for all year. You are mindful that the sun will not always be smiling, that every now and then the night will give the sun rest. You are mindful that this blissful season will have to step aside for autumn who always paves a way for winter. You don't mind those; in fact you prepare for them as you indulge on the sweet fruits summer has to offer.



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You notice a dark cloud. It looks darker than a normal cloud. "It's probably rains", you think to yourself. You're not comfortable with this thought as you were still enjoying the sunshine. "A few showers can't disturb me that much", you convince yourself. Just after you have convinced yourself that you will endure this rain you realise that it's not a cloud but smoke. As the old saying goes: where there is smoke, there is fire. You do all you can to extinguish the fire but unfortunately everything is beyond your control. You regrettably watch the fire destroy all that you have worked so hard for.

You helplessly watch your valuable assets and possessions crumble into ashes. Each one burning a piece of your heart along with it. You find a burnt patch and with a heavy heart you sit down. Tears uncontrollably roll down your cheeks. People are frantically running around you. Sitting down makes them feel guilty, therefore they feel obliged to do something. However, all that they do is null and void. My family and I were in a similar catastrophe. We had to witness our home virtually burning down. Everyone felt like doing something but our efforts were in vain. My mom and siblings are the ones who eventually sat down and faced the reality as reflected in the narrative. They gave themselves time to immediately respond to what was going on. I, on the other hand, was the one who ran around the most. I did not absorb all that had happened and the realities thereof.