

FATAL CONCEPTION

CYNTHIA WANGECHI

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For mum

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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
CHAPTER ONE	7
CHAPTER TWO	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER THREE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FOUR	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FIVE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER SIX	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER SEVEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER EIGHT	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER NINE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER ELEVEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWELVE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER NINETEEN	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER TWENTY- FIVE	Error! Bookmark not defined.

CHAPTER ONE

Pauline sat on the toilet bowl and stared at the white door before her. How many other women had stared into nothing like her? She anxiously waited for the snail-like seconds to tick by, gripped by the fear of being momentarily balanced in the unknown, unable to make a certain step in any direction. Involuntarily, her thoughts drifted to her mother; dead by the time Pauline was eleven. Relieved that she could still conjure her mother's face even after so long, she delicately went through the memories of the time before as if she were turning the pages of an old brittle book.

How she wished her mother was here now! Maybe the future wouldn't look so glum. Maybe now they could sit as adult daughter and mother and engage in earnest heartfelt and mature conversations as she saw other mothers do with their grown up daughters. Pauline felt the familiar stabbing in her chest as she mulled over how little time she had spent with her mother. Frankly, she couldn't say she knew her mother too well because in all truth, how much does a young child know her parents?

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