



It's not funny

Terry-Jo Thorne

CHARACTERS:

Nosi:	Schoolgirl, with visible scars on her face	Kay:	Schoolgirl
Jordan:	Schoolgirl, Nosi's friend	Davis:	Schoolboy bully
Sipho:	Nosi's brother	Frank:	Schoolboy
Teacher:	English teacher at school	Mbu:	Schoolboy

SCENE 1

Nosi and Jordan are sitting in Nosi's room. They are browsing through Nosi's phone and Nosi is distraught.

JORDAN: I'm sure nobody cares, Nosi. He's stupid, just forget it.

NOSI: *(crying)* You can see the comments. They all saw the photo and read what he said. Look how many shared it. I can't, I can't ever go back, Jordan.

JORDAN: Where? To school? What do you mean, don't be stupid. Because of a silly Instagram post?

NOSI: Jordan, if Davis posted this, what will he do at school?

Nosi grabs the phone and paces the room, reading the post out loud.

NOSI: "Dis girl think she has a chance with me, look at this ugly kind. Yesterday I can see her eyeing me so I ask her to come to meet me after school. She comes and she's acting like she's gonna get some action from me so I ask if I can take her pic and so the idiot poses. Look at this picture. Now tell me who would want a hyena like that? Does she think I'm a park ranger? Hahahahah"

Jordan buries her face in her hands. Nosi is crying, pacing up and down. But she can't stop. She reads some of the comments on the post.

NOSI: Carmen commented, "Haha Davis don't be so cold. She probably doesn't have a mirror at home. Give the girl a break."

JORDAN: Stop, Nosi. Please.

NOSI: Mbu wrote: "I'll take this girl off your hands. I like the ugly ones, they easy."

JORDAN: Just give me the phone. You're killing yourself.

NOSI: *(whispering)* Maybe I should.

JORDAN: Please. Just give me the phone.

Nosi sinks onto a chair, lets her arms dangle at her sides.

NOSI: Maybe I should, Jordan. I don't know how to live after this.

Jordan stands up and then bends down to put her arms around her friend. She takes the phone gently from her.

NOSI: Why would he do that, J? I didn't care if he didn't like me; I didn't even expect him to. But just tell me why he would want to do that to me? To make me look like that – so desperate. Do you think I'm desperate?

JORDAN: He's evil, Nosi.

NOSI: He's not evil. And look at all the comments. Is everyone evil then?

Jordan steps back and sits down again on the bed. She reads through some comments on the phone.

JORDAN: Not everything everyone is saying is bad. Look at what Neo said. Neo said –

NOSI: I read it.

JORDAN: Neo said, "This girl doesn't deserve this Davis. #wannabeplayer #loser"

Nosi touches the scars on her face.

NOSI: I thought – just for a moment – that he could like me, you know? Even though I have all this. I shouldn't have thought a guy like him would like me. What was I thinking? Why did I go meet him?

JORDAN: How could you know? Why shouldn't he like you? How can you sit here and blame yourself when it's him doing this? Do you think you're the only one he'll do this to?

Nosi groans, burying her face in her hands.

NOSI: I should have known. Of course I should have guessed it was a joke. He would never like me. I even wondered, just for a second, if it was.

JORDAN: But nobody would expect that. I'm telling you, he's evil. Him and that whole group of his.

NOSI: Did you see how many people viewed the post? The whole school must have seen it. People outside of the school. Everyone, Jordan. Everyone saw it.

Nosi takes the phone from Jordan and reads through the comments again, groaning occasionally as each one stings. There is a knock at the door and then a head appears. It is Sipho, Nosi's older brother.

SIPHO: I know what you're crying about.

NOSI: *(to Jordan)* You see? Even my brother knows about it.

SIPHO: Who's this boy Davis? I am going to find him. Where does he live?

NOSI: Sipho, don't. Don't make it worse.

SIPHO: How does it make it worse? I'm going to make him pay for what he says about my sister. He can't get away with this.

JORDAN: Maybe you could just speak to him..?

SIPHO: Speak to him? Are you crazy? I'm going to let my fists do the talking.

JORDAN: But then you will get into trouble.

SIPHO: I don't care. No-one can talk about you like that. He needs a lesson.

NOSI: Wait, Sipho. Let me think about it, OK? Don't do anything yet until I tell you it's OK. Promise?

SIPHO: Ooh sisi, it's hard to make this promise, But yes, for you I promise.

He leaves the room.

JORDAN: You have a good brother. I think my brother would just laugh.

NOSI: *(looking at her phone again)* Oh, now there are even more comments. Even Phillip said something.

JORDAN: Just don't go on the phone for a few days. Leave it now.

NOSI: But I'm going to see them all tomorrow at school. And I can't undo my face. I'm done. I knew they hated me, but I didn't know how much. I can't face it. Maybe I should just get Sipho to beat him up.

JORDAN: I know how tempting that is. But it wouldn't solve anything. You know.

NOSI: I don't know how I'm going to manage. I don't want anyone to look at me. And we've even got English orals. I can't face it. I can't.

SCENE 2

It is at school the next day. Students are milling about in the school foyer. Nosi arrives and everyone hushes. One girl sniggers. One boy makes a barking sound and many students laugh. Some have sympathy for Nosi but are too afraid to speak up. Nosi keeps her head down and walks past. Everyone goes to their classrooms.

TEACHER: I know it's Monday but keep your energy for break. Now quieten down.

KAY: Yes, Davis, calm down, we don't want you exciting some of the girls here.

Nosi looks straight ahead not showing any emotion. Not all students are joining in the laughter. Davis's group start joking and play-fighting.

TEACHER: Davis! Calm down. I need five minutes to prepare for your oral presentations, so sit quietly.

Davis laughs more quietly, but he and his friends are still joking and looking pointedly at Nosi. One of them pulls out his phone and takes a photograph of her. The teacher is called out suddenly from the classroom by a student from another class.

TEACHER: (crossly) Will you please be quiet, class. I have to go to the office quick. No phones! Do you want me to confiscate them? I'll be back in five minutes.

The teacher leaves and within seconds the class is rowdy again. Nosi's phone beeps.

JORDAN: Nosi, don't look. Ignore them.

Nosi just shakes her head and looks at her phone. A few other students look at their phones and giggle. Some look but roll their eyes and turn away.

KAY: Hey, Nosi, I'm saying something nice. I said everyone deserves love, even donkeys. There's always another donkey out there for you. Maybe Mbu here.

MBU: Haai, shut up, I don't mess with animals.

KAY: That's not what you said, you said you like the ugly girls, you –

DAVIS: Nosi, you know I was just joking. Some girls can't take a joke. Hey Sindi! You can take a joke, can't you? You and me, we're good, aren't we?

Frank, a boy in the class, gets up and starts rubbing his hands on his back (as if someone is holding him) and making kissing and moaning noises. He speaks, pretending to be Sindi.

FRANK: Oh Davis! I love you Davis! I'm saving myself for you Davis!

Everyone is now laughing at Sindi, who has her head down. Nosi looks away, still silent.

DAVIS: OK Nosi, I'll make it up to you, I'll take you out this weekend. Maybe we can take Sindi with? Hey Sindi, how about you, me and Nosi?

NOSI: *(to Jordan)* I've got a plan, Jordan. This can't go on.

JORDAN: Please tell me it doesn't involve Sipho.

NOSI: Wait and see.

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