

FEMME

April-May 2025

South Africa

Ashleigh Herman

**REAL
TALK
ONLY**

YOU

**GRAB YOUR SNACKS,
WE'RE ABOUT TO BINGE**

MULISA MUDAU

**ON THIRTY AND THRIVING IN
CAREER, LOVE & LIFE.**

**HOW TO
SHOP ON A
BROKE GIRL
BUDGET**

**WINTER FITS
YOU NEED RN!**





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The Rundown

APR/MAY 2025



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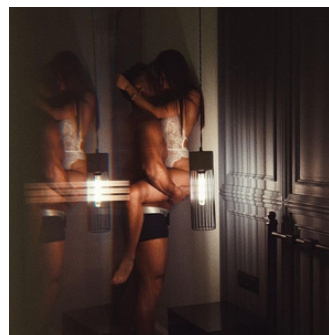
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South Africa

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We want your FEEDBACK!!!

What do you love about Femme'? What do you loathe? The staff at Femme' Magazine want to make sure that we include more of the content that YOU want, and eliminate more of what you don't want. So help us out, and contact us. The best way to have your voice heard and join our mailing list is to send us a DM / email





it's coat season and we're not mad about it), plus a spotlight on the trailblazing women living their best lives.

But this issue also holds space for the real, the raw, and the heart-heavy. In "Sometimes Almost Is Enough," we explore the quiet ache and psychological aftermath of sexual assault — a story that reminds us why believing women always matters. We also share one woman's vulnerable journey through infertility, reminding us that behind every "just relax, it'll happen" is a silent struggle we don't always see.

Ed's Note

I don't know who needs to hear this, but: you are allowed to be both soft and strong. This month, as the leaves turn and the world shifts (hello, new seasons, new energy), we're holding space for women in all their layered, complicated, powerful glory.

Some days, you'll wake up ready to take over the world in red lipstick and heels. Other days, you'll want to curl up in sweats, turn off your phone, and just breathe. Both days are valid. Both are part of what makes you a woman. And this issue? It celebrates every version of you.

Gracing our cover is the ever-radiant Mulisa Madau — an actress, entrepreneur, MC, and now, a Miss South Africa 2025 entrant (yes, she really does do it all). You might know her as one of the scene-stealers on Muvhango, but beyond the screen, she's pure boss babe energy with an authenticity that lights up any room. Trust us when we say: you're going to be just as obsessed with her as we are.

Inside, you'll find your regular dose of fashion and beauty inspo (spoiler:



So, wherever this issue finds you — in a coffee shop, at your desk, under your duvet — I hope you feel seen, celebrated, and maybe just a little bit more powerful. Because you are.


Stay fearless. Stay fabulous.



Raihanna Amod
Editor-in-Chief







*AN ENDING
FOR
THE BOOKS*

A NETFLIX SERIES

YOU

ONLY ON **NETFLIX** | **APRIL 24**



First things first: Why is this the final season?!

Netflix confirmed that Season 5 will be the last time we get to hear Joe's disturbingly calm voiceovers — and while we're lowkey devastated, it makes sense. I mean, how many bodies can this man bury before karma digs him up? Penn Badgley (our problematic fave) has hinted that Joe's story needs a proper end... and something tells us it's not going to be a happy one.

Where did we leave off?

ICYMI (but how dare you), Season 4 ended with Joe returning to New York, reclaiming his old identity, and doing a total PR makeover to become a public darling again. He even has a rich girlfriend now. Classic Joe — new zip code, same terrifying emotional unavailability. Oh, and he fully accepted his dark side. No more pretending he's just a misunderstood bookworm. He's owning it now. Terrifying? Yes. Iconic? Also yes.



What's the final season really about?

We know Joe's back in New York, he's rich, powerful, and completely unhinged.

Translation: he's more dangerous than ever. The final season is expected to bring his past crashing into his perfectly curated present, and if we've learned anything, it's that Joe can run, but he definitely can't hide.

The writers have also hinted at a full-circle ending — so don't be surprised if characters from Season 1 reappear. (Beck, girl, if you're haunting him from beyond, we support it.)

HELLO, YOU...

Everything You Need to Know About YOU Season 5 — The Final Chapter of TV's Most Lovable Psycho Before Your Weekend Binge

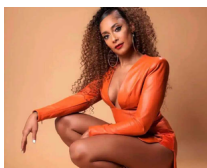
Ladies, sharpen those knives (just metaphorically... unless you're Joe Goldberg). The final season of You is officially on here — and it's bringing one last whirlwind of obsession, murder, and seductive inner monologue to our screens. Yes, Netflix's favourite stalker-slash-bookworm-slash-murderer is back, and honestly? We're not ready to say goodbye. So what exactly can we expect from You Season 5? Here's your full Cosmo-approved breakdown of the final chapter in Joe's bloody little love story.





The Receipts Podcast

A podcast that is unfiltered, unapologetic, and so addictive — this UK-based trio spills the real tea on dating, friendships, and figuring life out in your 20s and 30s. It's like a WhatsApp group chat turned podcast, and it never misses.



The Receipts Podcast

Amanda drops sharp, hilarious, and thought-provoking “doses” of reality on everything from self-worth to social justice to celebrity culture. It's bold, unfiltered, and so needed. She calls it “edutainment” — education + entertainment — and it's honestly the vibe.

CATCH



The Life List

If *Eat Pray Love* and *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* had a grown-up, soul-searching baby, this would be it. When a career-focused woman finds her late mother's bucket list, she sets off on a heart-tugging, joy-filled adventure to tick every item off — and in the process, rediscovers herself. Expect tears, laughs, and serious wanderlust.



Good American Family

If you're intrigued by real-life stories that blur the lines between truth and deception, *Good American Family* is a must-watch. This gripping Hulu series, dramatizes the astonishing true story of Natalia Grace—a Ukrainian girl with a rare form of dwarfism adopted by an Indiana couple, only for them to later claim she was an adult posing as a child.



READ



This Booker Prize-winning masterpiece tells the interconnected stories of twelve Black British women. It's poetic, powerful, and packed with heart. The storytelling style is fresh and bold — perfect if you're craving something different, meaningful, and rich with perspective.



This one's a self-love revolution in hardcover. Glennon gets real about shedding expectations, setting boundaries, and embracing your inner wild woman. It's empowering, emotional, and will make you want to rewrite your own rules — and actually live by them.



This is the pep talk your creative soul didn't know it needed. Whether you're a writer, artist, entrepreneur, or just someone trying to live a little bolder, *Big Magic* is all about embracing curiosity over fear. It's warm, whimsical, and a total mindset shift for anyone stuck in a rut or craving inspiration.








Mulisa Mudau

is in her
girl-boss era



She's booked, busy, and unbothered—well, mostly. From juggling scripts and strategy sessions to slaying red carpets and self-care Sundays, Mulisa Mudau is the walking definition of a woman doing it all with style.

At 30, she's embracing her power, prioritizing peace, and pushing past fear (hi, Miss SA entry!) to chase her wildest dreams.

But don't get it twisted—behind the glam is a powerhouse who's not afraid to cry on set, stand up for her mental health, or wear PJs while debating life at 3am. She's honest, hilarious, and beautifully human—and in this tell-all, she gives FEMME the inside scoop on her chaotic calendar, pinch-me career moments, self-love rituals, and the wisdom that's carrying her into her next chapter.

So what's it really like being Mulisa? One word: magic. Let's dive in.

**Your calendar must be wild
—what does a week in the
life of Mulisa really look
like?**

As an actress and entrepreneur, my weeks are always packed! Here's a sneak peek:

Monday:

Morning: Scan through my scripts if I'm not on set.

Afternoon: At my store.

Evening: Social media content creation.

Tuesday:

Morning: Session with acting coach.

Afternoon: Business strategy planning.

Evening: Networking event.

Wednesday:

Morning: Teenage Junction meeting. (NGO for women and children that I work with)

Afternoon: Content creation. (vlogging)

Evening: Personal development time. (reading)

Thursday:

Morning: Photoshoot.

Afternoon: At the store.

Evening: Relax.

Friday:

Morning: Wrap-up any pending work.

Afternoon: Planning for upcoming project.

Evening: Relaxation time!

Weekends:

Self-care and personal time with family and friends.

This is just a glimpse, but I hope it gives you an idea of my busy schedule!

You're killing it on Muvhango! What's one lesson the set has taught you that you'll carry for life?

ADAPTABILITY IS ESSENTIAL!!! Acting is all about being adaptable, embracing different

characters, adjusting to script changes on the spot and working closely with directors to bring their vision to life. It's not always easy but it's what makes the job exciting! By staying flexible and open, I can tap into my creativity and deliver performances that feel true to the story and its characters.

You wear so many hats—actress, MC, entrepreneur—how do you shift gears without losing your mind (or your edges)?

I'm a list-maker (On my notes app)! I try to stick to a schedule, buttttt it's not always perfect hey. What really works for me is prioritizing tasks for my set life, business and self care. Allocating time accordingly helps me juggle the multiple hats and keep my edges intact!

What's been your 'pinch-moment' at work—the one that made you stop and say, "Wait, this is my life?"

I had an unforgettable experience recently! When Dr. John Kani, the legendary actor joined our acting workshop!! I was incredibly inspired by his energy, wisdom and stories. Meeting him was a dream come true and I felt super motivated to keep pursuing my passion for acting. It was simply amazing!

Have you ever had an epic flop or fail at work that you can laugh about now? What did it teach you?

My epic flop still makes me laugh! On my first "set life" experience, I totally freaked out! Tears and all, overwhelmed by the earpiece, cameras and lights. Mortifying! But that experience taught me that it's okay to feel overwhelmed and learning to cope with stress is key. Now, I've developed strategies to handle the pressure and I'm a more resilient performer because of it.

What's one thing people totally underestimate about what you do?

The emotional labour that comes with acting. People think that acting is just about pretending but it's emotionally draining.

Tapping into deep emotions and portraying them convincingly takes a toll. It's not just about reciting lines, it's about bringing a character's emotions to life and that residue can linger long after the cameras stop rolling. It's a heavy emotional investment, but it's what makes the performance authentic.

In a world obsessed with hustle culture, how do you protect your peace while still chasing the bag?

Honestly, setting boundaries has been a lifesaver for me. I've learned to say no without guilt and prioritize my own sanity. I make sure to make time for myself and communicate my needs to those around me. It's not always easy but it's worth it. My peace of mind is everything!

**"It's okay
to feel
overwhelmed
and learning
to cope with
stress is key."**





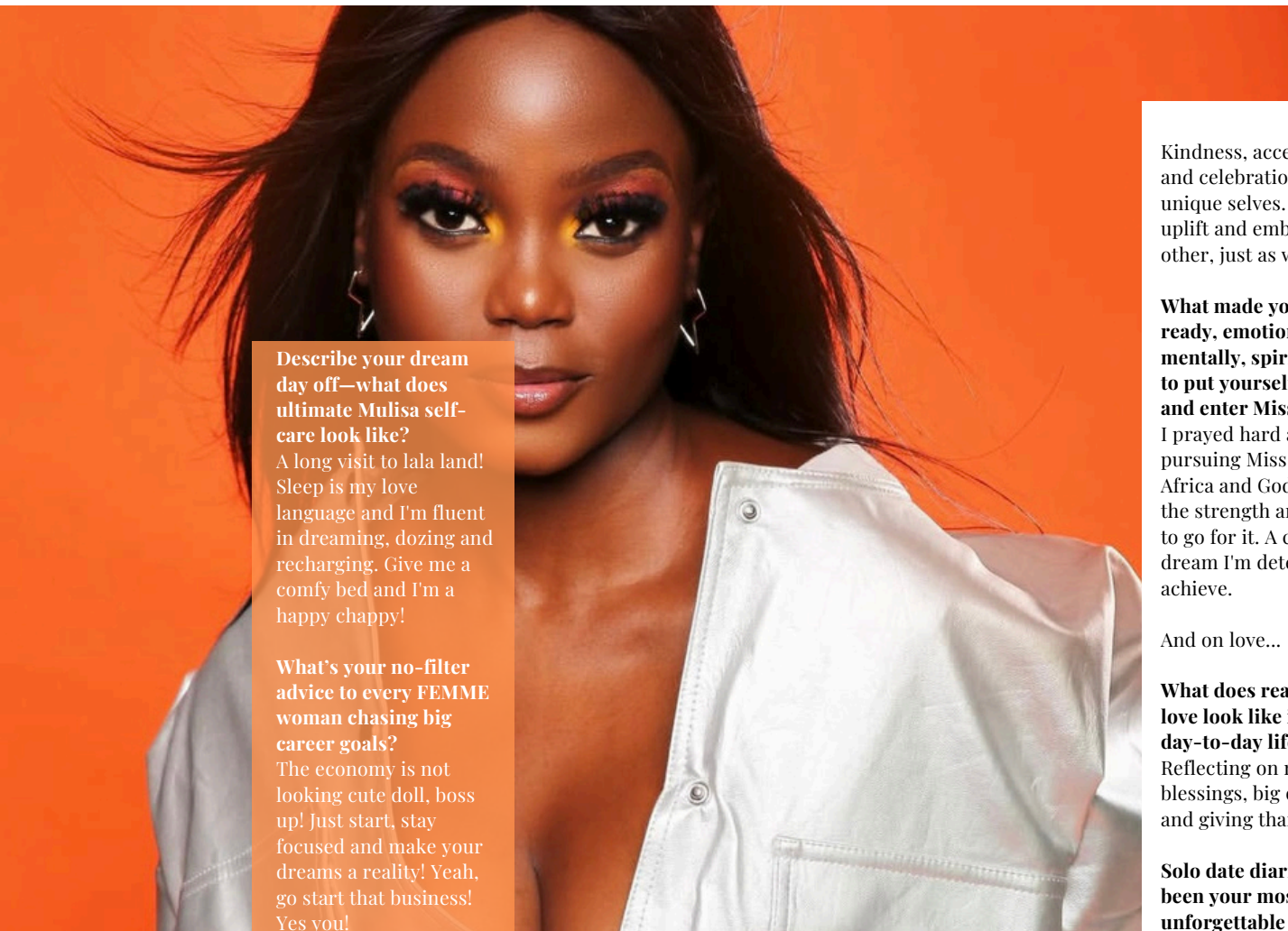
Image details:

Photographer: Murunwa Communications

Hair: Kayla's Hairworld

Makeup: Roshuma Matsheketsheke

Stylist/wardrobe: Glamed Lookz by Mulisa Mudau



Describe your dream day off—what does ultimate Mulisa self-care look like?

A long visit to lala land! Sleep is my love language and I'm fluent in dreaming, dozing and recharging. Give me a comfy bed and I'm a happy happy!

What's your no-filter advice to every FEMME woman chasing big career goals?

The economy is not looking cute doll, boss up! Just start, stay focused and make your dreams a reality! Yeah, go start that business! Yes you!

Kindness, acceptance and celebration of our unique selves. Let's uplift and embrace each other, just as we are.

What made you feel ready, emotionally, mentally, spiritually – to put yourself out there and enter Miss SA this?

I prayed hard about pursuing Miss South Africa and God gave me the strength and courage to go for it. A childhood dream I'm determined to achieve.

And on love...

What does real, self-love look like in your day-to-day life?

Reflecting on my blessings, big or small and giving thanks.

Solo date diaries: what's been your most unforgettable me-myself-and-I moment?

My car ride solo concerts! Singing along to my favourite songs, feeling the music and enjoying the solitude is incredibly liberating and uplifting for me. It's a great way to unwind, express myself and have some quality time with my own thoughts.

What's your advice to FEMME girls going through heartbreak?

Healing is a journey and it's okay to take your time! Please don't forget to be kind to yourself.

We know the powerhouse—who is Mulisa when no one's watching?

When no one's watching, I let my guard down fr! My quirks shine through. I'm the person who wears comfy PJs, eats breakfast for dinner and have heated debates with myself at 3 am! I also do a lot of self-reflection, which helps me understand myself and my place in the world better. Just for clarity and insight into my own thoughts, feelings and aspirations.

When life gets chaotic, what's your go-to move to calm the chaos?

I'm blessed with a strong and amazing support system. I always reach out to my loved ones, even at the slightest inconvenience, they are always there for me.

So... 30! How does it feel waking up in a whole new decade—has anything clicked yet?

Officially 30 today, but mentally still 29! With a dash of 'I have no idea what I'm doing' so nothing's clicked yet, I'll figure it out one day at a time.

What's one thing your 20s taught you that you're taking with you into this next chapter—and what are you leaving behind, no regrets?

I'm taking my risk taking spirit! And definitely leaving behind the fear of uncertainty.

They say 30 is the age where you stop shrinking yourself. What are you unapologetically owning now more than ever?

Pursuing my passions! Whether it's a creative

Pursuing my passions! Whether it's a creative outlet, a sport, or a hobby. I want to make more time for the things that I love.

What's your ride-or-die skincare routine? We want every step.

My ride or die skincare routine consists of... (in no particular order) a gentle cleanser, hydrating moisturizer, daily sunscreen and glycolic acid the perfect combo for glowing, healthy melanin skin!

What's the best piece of advice someone's ever dropped on you—the kind that stuck?

"Do it because you're scared." That piece of advice was a powerful mindset shift for me. It made me realise that regardless of what cards I'm dealt with, I have to take action anyway.

We saw your Miss SA entry video, and we LOVE IT!!! What was going through your mind the moment you hit 'post' on your Miss SA entry video? Nerves? Excitement? All the feels?

Girll! Anxiety swirled in my stomach and my heart pounded with anticipation. Fear of judgment, rejection and the unknown outcome gripped me but I took a deep breath, clicked share and posted my Miss SA entry, vulnerable and raw. I've never been so nervous about an audition in my life!

Miss SA is so much more than a crown—what message do you hope to bring to the stage?

In a world filled with challenges, let's focus on what truly matters.



FEMME

South Africa



We want to be your first. Got a story to tell? Don't hold back—let your voice be heard. Hit us up at femme@femmeonline.co.za

Sometimes, almost is ENOUGH

By Shasthra Maharaj



Let's be real: April isn't just about stats and headlines. It's about us. Our bodies. Our voices. Our safety. It's about women who survived and the ones who almost didn't.

This is my story. And yes, it's personal.

It was meant to be a simple weekend getaway. The kind that sounds like a warm exhale after a long, exhausting week. A little celebration. Some family time. Familiar faces. Safe spaces. Except, it wasn't.

I had worked earlier that day, so I slipped off to bed around 11 p.m.—a solid head start on beauty sleep while everyone else stayed up. It was supposed to be peaceful. But at 2 a.m., the door creaked open. Footsteps. A presence. It was one of my brother-in-law's friends. Barely dressed, drunk and very much in my space. He stood at the edge of my bed. He asked if I wanted to cuddle.

I said no.

Then he asked, "Are you scared your cousin will find out?" I froze. I turned away, I hoped the silence would make him stop. Eventually, he rested on the next bed in the room. I couldn't sleep as I felt unsafe. There was a drunk man—someone I didn't know—just a few feet away. And I was alone.

Thirty minutes later, he woke up and went to the bathroom. I pretended to be asleep. But when he came back, he didn't return to his bed.

He got into mine.

He put his arm around me. All I could smell was alcohol mixed with lust. His hands were ready to explore territory that wasn't his. I turned to him, trying to wake him up—again and again. Eventually, he did. But the damage had already been done. I called my family. They told me to wake my cousin. But getting to the door meant passing him. And in that moment, terror took over. He was bigger. Stronger. What if he pinned me down? What if I couldn't get away?

Eventually, I found the strength to leave. A friend was called to come get me. And I left. Shaken. Silent. Broken.

No, I wasn't raped.

But I almost was. And that "almost" was enough to scar me.

People don't talk about the almost—the close calls that leave you spiraling with "what ifs." But sometimes, the "almost" is just as damaging. The fear, the helplessness, the betrayal—it all stays with you. I've always been strong. Independent. Grounded. No one has ever made me feel small. Or unsafe. But in that moment, he did. He made me feel weak. Vulnerable. Broken.

And since then, I can't stop wondering—was that his plan all along? Was he waiting for that moment? Do other men look at me that way too? Do they just see a body? A sex object? That night didn't just change how I felt about him. It changed how I look at people. How I move through the world. How safe I feel in rooms I used to trust.

This is what Sexual Awareness Month is about. The stories that don't make headlines. The pain that doesn't come with a crime scene. The trauma that lingers from what almost happened.

To every woman who has lived through her "almost"—you matter. To those who stayed quiet because "it could have been worse." To those who felt their fear dismissed because it didn't end in catastrophe—I see you. I believe you. You are not alone.

Sexual Assault in South Africa: The Reality Behind the Silence

□ South Africa has one of the highest rates of sexual violence in the world.

□ According to SAPS crime stats (2023), over 42,000 cases of rape were reported in just one year—and that's only what's reported.

□ It's estimated that only 1 in 9 rapes are reported in South Africa.

□ Over 40% of survivors are under the age of 18.

□ In most cases, the perpetrator is someone the survivor knows—family, friends, or acquaintances.

If you or someone you know needs support, please reach out:

□ **GBV Command Centre (24/7)**
0800 428 428

Or send "Help" via SMS to 31531

You can also use Skype: HelpmeGBV (especially helpful for people with hearing impairments)

□ **Lifeline South Africa (emotional support, trauma counselling)**

0861 322 322
www.lifeline.org.za

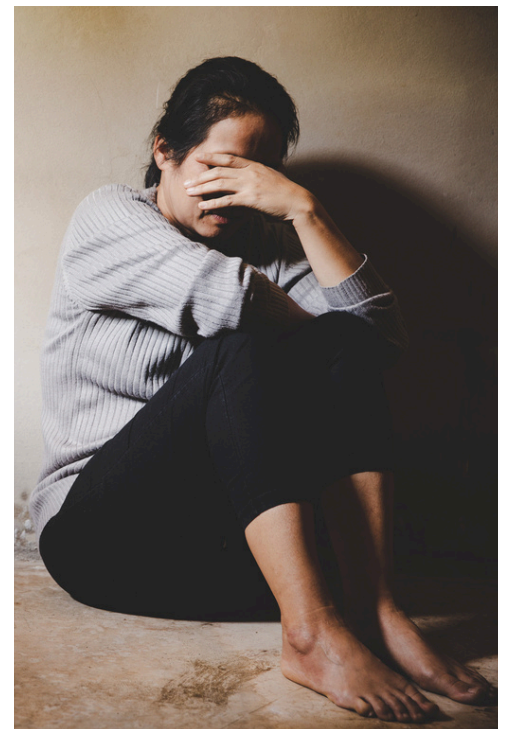
□ **Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust**

021 447 9762 (24-hour helpline)
www.rapecrisis.org.za

□ **Tears Foundation (SMS-based help)**

SMS "HELP" to 4357
www.tears.co.za

Let this month be a reminder: Awareness is not enough without action. Check in with your loved ones. Believe survivors. Educate yourself. Speak up. And never underestimate the impact of a story—because sometimes, "almost" is more than enough to break someone. And more than enough to make us rise.





Barefoot,

bold

and built for

the spotlight



"I want young women to

see that her highest self always

knows what is best for her"

Strip away the Fashionnova fits, the glow-up reels, and the flood of fire emojis on every post — and you'll find Ashleigh Herman (aka Ashher, aka ashleighhermanofficial) exactly where she loves to be: barefoot in the kitchen, coffee in hand, and vibing in her comfiest sweats.

"At home I love dancing," she says, and you instantly believe her. You can see it — windows open, music playing, that effortless flow. "I enjoy sharing my space with family and friends. It's a safe space. A place where my personal growth happens."

Ashleigh's home isn't just four walls — it's her sanctuary, her creative lab, her center of gravity. "I really love whipping it up in the kitchen with my sister sitting on the other side of the counter waiting patiently for whatever comes out of it." And if she could press pause on the world? "I'd spend all my time in the garden listening to the birds in the trees. To allow for this, I do most of my work outside."

Let's get one thing clear: this girl is about fashion, dance, and music. Full stop. "Fashion has always been my thing — ever since I can remember, my mom and I shared a big love for fashion and culture. My mommy has always been my fashion icon."

So, how does a day in the life of Ashleigh actually go down when she's off the grid?

"It usually starts with a cup of coffee. Two sugars, oat milk. After this I pray and ask God to direct me into the rhythm of the day." Then it's movement — maybe a workout in the park, 30 minutes on the stairmaster, or even just a 10-minute YouTube yoga flow. "Usually at this time it's time to get to work. I pull up my laptop and check in on my responsibilities for the day."

She's got a thing for spicy snacks too — "There's always a bottle of Tajin around. A sprinkle of that and a lil bit of sugar fr gets my childhood tastebuds tingling." When she's not in the mood for series? "I'm always down to play some YouTube music." And when she wakes up? Spoiler alert: there's no chaos, just clarity. "First thing I do is pray, pick up my phone, and then brush my teeth and wash my face."

Now let's talk model life. From South Africa to shoots around the globe, Ashleigh's been living what looks like a dream — but she's quick to say it's all part of the plan. "Honestly speaking, the places I've been throughout my life have always been in my plans. 7-year-old Ash was telling her friends about it."

Of course, being in the spotlight means there's always someone ready to question your vibe. But Ashleigh's not worried. "I don't really mind those who don't get it. I am here living a human life and being in the public eye will always leave room for the opinions of others. My journey is my own, and with purpose comes scrutiny." And that — the grace, the boldness, the no-explanation-needed aura — is exactly the Ashher vibe. "I want young women to see that her highest self always knows what is best for her and

moving with good intention is a full circle motion." Oh and, yeah, sometimes she does scroll through her feed and think, "I'm too hot to be this online." But she also sees the beauty in everything around her.

And while she may look like a modern goddess serving looks, even Ashleigh needs a lil' pep talk from time to time. Her go-to?

"Some affirmations, a good podcast, or a Nicki Minaj album in the gym." (Honestly, same.)

She's a Capricorn with a Taurus moon and Aries rising — in other words, a determined, swaggy powerhouse who doesn't back down. If you're wondering about her aesthetic? "Swaggy, determined and driven."

And if there's one beauty trend she swears by? "My cool tone brown lip liner. She's such a lifesaver — sometimes it can even help me out with a smokey eye at the same

time. I like experimenting with trends, so saying I would never do one again could be a bit extreme." Now let's talk about that DM. "The wildest DM I have ever received was when Liltunechi messaged me. This was wild for me because growing up, Young Money was everything to me. It always seemed like a fairytale but so far far away. So waking up and seeing that... damn, I didn't know how to act. Big respect to him."

If Ashleigh had a reality show, she knows exactly what it'd be called. "Ashher All Round. That seems more like a movie though."

And if she had five minutes to pack for an international shoot? She's not panicking. "Passport, neck pillow, latest Fashionnova package, hair and makeup bags — that's it. In the future I might toss some of my husband's money in as well."

So what's next for Ashher? "I feel that destiny is already set, so I just want to make it to the next level I guess. A Euro Summer doesn't sound like a bad idea though."

So whether she's manifesting her next passport stamp or plotting her takeover one lash flick at a time, one thing's for sure—Ashher isn't waiting for permission. She's booked, busy, and blissfully unbothered.







FLU
SEASON



Winter Skin Drama? Here's How to Rescue Your Face (and Sanity)

Oh hey, cold season. The time of year when your skin decides to have a full-on meltdown — literally. Between freezing winds, steamy heaters, and a non-stop snuffle-fest, your glow can go from 100 to "someone get me a humidifier" real fast.

But don't worry, babe. We've got the lowdown on exactly why your face is acting up — and more importantly, how to fix it before your mirror stages an intervention.

Puffy, Sleepy-Looking Eyes

What's happening:

Your sinuses get clogged, fluids throw a party around your eyes, and boom — you're rocking that half-asleep, "I swear I'm awake" look. Thanks, biology.

Your skin-saving move:

Grab some cooling beauty globes (or even chilled spoons, if you're a DIY queen) and gently roll them around your eye area. This helps drain puffiness and wakes your skin up faster than your morning coffee.

Think of it as sending a 'get it together' text to your face.

Sore, Angry Nose

What's happening:

Blowing your nose 24/7? Yeah, your skin barrier isn't loving it. Constant rubbing strips away natural oils, leaving your poor nose red, flaky, and ready to tap out.

Your skin-saving move:

Slather on a rich barrier cream packed with soothing ingredients like panthenol and shea butter. It's basically a cozy hoodie for your face — and who doesn't want that?

Lips That Feel Like Sandpaper

What's happening:

Between mouth-breathing, cold air, and zero humidity, your lips can end up drier than your group chat after you suggest a 7am hike.

Your skin-saving move:

Swap the shiny gloss for a hardworking lip balm loaded with oils and waxes. Bonus points if it's fragrance-free — because cracked lips are drama enough.

Cold season is rough. But your skin doesn't have to suffer along with your sinuses. Treat it like the queen it is, and you'll be serving fresh, glowy realness — even with tissues stuffed in your sleeves.

Trying to Conceive: The Silent Struggle No One Warned Us About

By Kiyara Soobramoney

Ever felt defeated when trying to fall pregnant? If you haven't, you've either decided to wait until you're ready, or you are part of the lucky lot of women who have an obliging reproductive system. But did you know, that there are 1 in 7 couples that struggle to conceive at their desired time?

Even though people don't always open up about their journey at the risk of feeling vulnerable, there are so many travellers on this very challenging road to parenthood. As stressful as it is on both men and women, women are the ones who usually carry most of the burden. It's more than just simply wishing for a child—it is a deep trauma that so many tend to overlook. To give you an accurate breakdown of how this phase of a woman's life is massively affected, I'll share my story.



I have been actively trying to conceive for the past 2 years. I've done all the necessary gynae appointments, I've made provisions I needed to make to welcome a child, and I've trained my mind to adjust to the eagerly anticipated change. But little did I know that sometimes the journey to motherhood looks a lot different than what stories and movies show as the norm. At first, I was shaken after being diagnosed with PCOS. After a period of moping, I pulled myself together and summoned up my determination. I went on treatment and filled my body with an alarming amount of medication, expecting that surely this time my wish would be fulfilled. To my surprise, even after feeling better physically, pregnancy tests kept screaming negative. I went back to my gynae and requested a pill to fast-track conception, but after a quick scan, I was given the debilitating news that I have stage 4 Endometriosis and needed surgery ASAP, because without it, pregnancy will be impossible. I threw a temper tantrum—it was valid in my defence—and scheduled my surgery. It took 6 weeks for me to heal and thankfully I had no organs removed—some women aren't that lucky. 2 months went by and I finally got a glimpse of my long-awaited dream. 2 pink lines on 5 separate tests—of course I had to make sure! I scheduled my appointment for a scan and was over the moon. But this dream came to an abrupt end when I went in for what was supposed to be an 8-week scan and while expecting to hear a heartbeat, all I heard was, “Your uterus is empty”. These words felt deafening and it's a moment I will never forget.

In my delusionally hopeful state, I begged the doctor to check again and insisted that maybe I just needed more time. But I didn't. What I needed was emergency surgery because this was an ectopic pregnancy and I was bleeding internally. I didn't have time to think or to digest that all my plans have come to a shattering end. If I had waited five minutes longer, I probably would have lost my life. I immediately called my family to let them know, struggling to find my own voice, as I wondered if I'll survive the surgery. This led me to have 2 panic attacks as I waited for the dreaded procedure while trying to appear as a normal functioning woman, even though I was breaking down from the inside. Another agonizing surgery followed by another intense 6 weeks of recovery, every morning waking up feeling more emptier than before. But during my time of healing, I realized that I still want to try. I haven't skipped a day of meds and positive thinking. I have one fallopian tube removed, a higher risk of a second ectopic pregnancy, and I'm doubling up on my iron dosage to make up for the 1.7 litres of blood loss.

I'm also in a biological race against time to conceive before another endometriosis surgery is needed. Yes, it may take me longer than others, but I am determined not to give up on my dream of becoming a mother.



I believe that one day I will stand at the end of the line—child in hand—thinking about how much sweeter motherhood is going to feel after everything I've tried and been through. A few months or a few years? Only time will tell, and some things are certainly worth the wait.

Here is my advice to all women trying to get their rainbow baby—be relentless and don't feel ashamed for trying after failure. You may lose a few battles, but rest assured, you will win the war. Motherhood can find you in so many ways—adoption, fostering, surrogacy, IVF, and if you're determined to wait a while, naturally, too. You are not defective, no matter how many times you have previously believed it. You are not sabotaging yourself with fear and stress, it is only normal on this journey. You are strong and fighting for a something worthwhile. Whether you are motivated by getting to finally hear the word “mum”, by the thought of raising a good human being to contribute to this world, or if you're just driven by the mental image of warm cuddles and innocent eyes gazing at you, use it to fuel your energy and resilience. You are more than doctor's appointments, pills, internal examinations, menstrual tracking obsessions, and more than just a woman trying. You are a fighter who will one day live in their triumph.

I would also like to encourage you to use your own story to inspire other women who share your challenges. Let us stop being afraid by the limiting belief that we will be judged. Let us use our voices to strengthen the women who are left without a support structure. Every woman deserves to feel understood, supported, and motivated. Sending baby dust to all mothers in waiting.





Hot girl energy

with a side of Pasta

She's got the glow, the vibe, and a TikTok that'll make you wanna dance in your pajamas while devouring pasta at midnight. Model, content creator, foodie adventurer, and all-round radiant soul—Mishqa Achmat is the multi-hyphenate muse we're obsessing over. With a scroll-stopping feed and an even more magnetic personality, she's proof that staying real online is still the ultimate flex.

From oysters in Sea Point to shoulder shimmies on your FYP, Mishqa's journey is all about optimism, authenticity, and knowing when to pause life for a solo coffee moment (in cute pajamas, obviously). In this friendly sit-down, she spills all the things—her favorite guilty pleasure, her go-to glam, and the lasagne that changed her life.

Buckle up, babe. Mishqa's about to give you the inside scoop—unfiltered, unbothered, and 100% fabulous.

Give us the inside scoop on who you are. Mishqa! Tell us a little about your journey—everything you think our readers should know.

I'm fun-loving, who thrives on creativity and connection. My journey has been about embracing every opportunity with optimism whether it's modeling, creating content, or exploring food. I always see the glass half full. My goal is to resonate with my followers by keeping it real and spreading good vibes.

You're the ultimate multi-hyphenate: model, YouTuber, foodie explorer, and TikTok queen. What's your secret to balancing it all without losing your vibe

Patience, tolerance and me time. Even with a chaotic schedule, I take time out to recharge, whether it's a solo coffee break in my pajamas. I also prioritize tasks and stay flexible; thinking on my feet helps me adapt without stressing.

Your social media content has *major* energy! What's one moment that made you realize you were building something special online?

When followers started tagging me in posts saying, "This is SO Mishqa, it hit me that my authenticity was resonating. People weren't just here for the content; they were here for my perspective. That's when I knew I created a community, not just a feed.

You're known for your foodie adventures—what's the weirdest (or most delicious) thing you've ever eaten, and where can we find it?

Oysters was the weirdest thing for me the texture and taste, at Bobo's Sea Point

What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about the "real" Mishqa behind the scenes?

I'm obsessed with bad reality TV. Behind the glossy posts, you'll find me in sweatpants, binge watching Netflix series, It's my guilty pleasure!

If you had to pick one word to describe your energy, what would it be?

"Radiant." I aim to light up spaces—whether it's through a TikTok, a conversation, or just my attitude.

If you had to live off one type of cuisine for the rest of your life, what would it be, and why?

Pasta it is versatile dish and can play around with many flavours.

What's your go-to, no-fail dance move when you just need to get in a good mood

The shoulder shimmy. it's impossible to do without laughing! Instant mood booster.

What's your all-time favorite outfit that makes you feel like you can take on the world?

A red and black dress, powerful statement and elegance

How do you keep your content true to yourself, even with pressure to 'perform' online?

To express myself, connect with my followers and to share something meaningful. I prioritise content that resonates with me, staying authentic and true to myself is what contributes to my success. My followers can smell inauthenticity from miles away.

What's the one destination or dish that totally blew your mind?

I had the most delicious lasagne in this cute restaurant in Phuket, Thailand, it was wholesome and full of flavour. This to me felt like home



What's the one beauty product you swear by?

Mac face and body foundation is my go to product

If you weren't doing everything you do now, what career would you have pursued?

I would be doing interior design and home improvement and flipping houses

What's the one comment you get online that never fails to make you smile or laugh?

You feel like a friend! That's the ultimate compliment, it means I'm keeping it real.

You always seem to radiate positivity. What's the one thing you do when you feel that helps you get back to your happy place?

Prayer and a outing with mom

We all know you've got a killer taste in food but what is one unexpected food pairing or combo that you think everyone needs to try?

Cream cheese with sweet chilli sauce with fresh coriander finely chopped dip the spicy Doritos

What's something that's on your bucket list whether it's a crazy adventure, a skill you want to master or you always wanted to try?

Bungee jumping even though I am afraid of heights.

Last question If you could ever have dinner with any three people dead or alive who would it be and what would you eat?

Fatima Sydow was a good cook. I would have loved to have dinner with her and eat her aLmb curry and Rooti



From holy-grail mascaras to glow-boosting mists, these budget-friendly buys are serving luxe vibes without the luxe price.



Let's be honest—there's something deeply satisfying about scoring a beauty gem without blowing your entire paycheck. The drugstore aisle? It's basically a treasure hunt for glow-up gold. From skin-saving serums to makeup that seriously delivers, these beauty bargains prove you don't need to spend a fortune to look like one. Whether you're ballin' on a budget or just love a good deal (who doesn't?), these fab finds are proof that flawless doesn't have to be fancy. Ready to fill your basket and your beauty bag? Let's go shopping.

Essence Lash Princess Curl & Volume Mascara

We're calling it: the Essence Extreme Lashes Mascara (pink tube) is your lashes' new ride-or-die. This little pink powerhouse delivers bold, dramatic volume that legit looks like falsies—without the glue drama. The brush grabs every lash, lifting, separating, and coating them in jet-black magic for that wide-eyed, flirty finish. It's smudge-proof, flake-free, and under-the-radar affordable (aka more money for cocktails and cute shoes). If you want lashes that flirt before you do, this mascara is it.



Catrice Sun Lover Glow Bronzing Powder

Say hello to your glow-up BFF: Catrice Sun Lover Glow Bronzing Powder in 010 Sun Kissed Bronze. This dreamy bronzer gives you that radiant, sun-kissed look without the sunburn drama. The formula is silky, buildable, and leaves your skin looking like you just came back from a beach vacay. No glitter, no chalkiness—just a flawless, lit-from-within glow. Trust us, your cheekbones will thank you.



Catrice Blooming Bliss Slim Eyeshadow Palette

The Catrice Blooming Bliss Slim Eyeshadow Palette is giving romantic daydream meets everyday slay. With its mix of soft neutrals, petal-pinks, and a touch of shimmer, it's basically spring in a compact—and yes, we're obsessed. The shades are buttery, blendable, and perfect for everything from subtle brunch glam to full-on date night drama. Bonus: it's slim enough to slip into the tiniest clutch, so your eye game stays strong wherever you go. Cute, compact, and crazy pigmented? We'll take two.



Essence 8H Matte Comfort Lipliner

The Essence 8H Matte Comfort Lipliner is the low-key MVP your makeup bag didn't know it needed. Creamy enough to glide on like a dream but matte enough to stay put for hours—yes, even through coffee, kisses, and chaotic girl dinners. It defines, fills, and flatters without drying your lips out (because crusty is never cute). The best part? It's budget-friendly and boujee-looking. Longwear, comfort, and major lip game—all in one swipe.



Catrice Ten!sational 10 in 1 Dream Primer

The Catrice Ten!sational 10 in 1 Dream Primer is literally your whole skincare-meets-makeup routine in one chic tube. It hydrates, blurs, smooths, mattifies, evens skin tone—and that's just the start. This multitasking miracle preps your skin like a pro while giving you that soft, photo-ready finish we all crave. It's the kind of product that makes you wonder how you ever lived without it. One primer, ten benefits, endless slay.



Catrice Endless Pearls Beautifying Primer

The Catrice Endless Pearls Beautifying Primer is basically a soft-focus filter in a tube—and yes, we're obsessed. Infused with light-reflecting pearls, it blurs, brightens, and gives your skin that lit-from-within glow before you've even touched your foundation. It smooths like a dream and makes your makeup stay flawless all day (no sliding, no fading, just slay). Plus, it looks just as cute on your vanity as it does on your skin. Radiance + staying power? We're sold.



Catrice Hydro Hyaluronic Face Mist

Meet your skin's new obsession: the Catrice Hydro Hyaluronic Face Mist. One spritz and boom—instant hydration, glow, and a refresh that feels like a mini spa moment. Packed with hyaluronic acid, it quenches thirsty skin without messing up your makeup (aka the ultimate midday pick-me-up). It's lightweight, dewy, and smells like you've got your life together. Glow on the go? Yes, please.





Champagne Style, Soda Budget:

By Mbali Dube

How to Slay the Fashion Game Without Breaking the Bank

Let's be real for a second: we all want to look like a walking Pinterest board, but not all of us have Beyoncé's budget. And yet, the world still expects us to serve lewks Monday through Sunday like we have a team of stylists hiding in our closet. Sis, the math is not mathing.

So how do you turn heads, without your bank account side-eyeing you? Grab your iced coffee and your Wi-Fi, because it's time to level up your shopping game — on a budget.

1. Channel Your Inner FBI Agent: Price Stalk Like a Pro

Before you hit "add to cart", wait. Breathe. Check it again in three days. Retailers love to play games — but you? You're the main character. Use price tracking tools like Honey or Karma to stalk your favourite finds like they owe you rent. Hot Tip: Sign up for the store's newsletter just long enough to get the 10% discount — then unsubscribe like a toxic ex. This is very popular with international brands as well.

2. The Thrift Is a Gift

Gone are the days when thrifting meant scratchy grandma cardigans. Vintage is the new black, and Gen Z is eating it up. From denim that actually fits to luxury brands for less than brunch, second-hand stores are where fashion dreams go to be reborn.

Pro move: Follow your favourite thrift stores on Instagram. Yes, even your mom's favourite charity shop has a highlight reel now. Or hit the CBD streets, you'll find no shortage of second hand vendors.

3. Rent the Runway (Literally)

Only need that outfit for the 'gram? Don't buy it. Rent it. Platforms like Stylerotate let you borrow designer for a fraction of the cost. Bonus: no closet guilt or buyer's remorse. Slogan of the week: If it didn't spark joy AND make it to your feed, did it even happen?

4. Stack Coupons Like It's a Game

Budget shopping is 50% strategy, 30% vibe, 20% luck, and 100% slay. Use Superbalist discounts and watch out for seasonal sales. Apparel retailers such as Woolies, Poetry and Foschini also have rewards cards which you can utilise to your advantage.

5. Learn the Art of the "Rich Girl Staple"

You don't need 20 tops. You need five that look like they flew first class. Invest in neutrals, quality fabric, and pieces you can mix and match like you're starring in your own fashion montage. Icon energy: Think Sofia Richie, but your debit card isn't screaming.

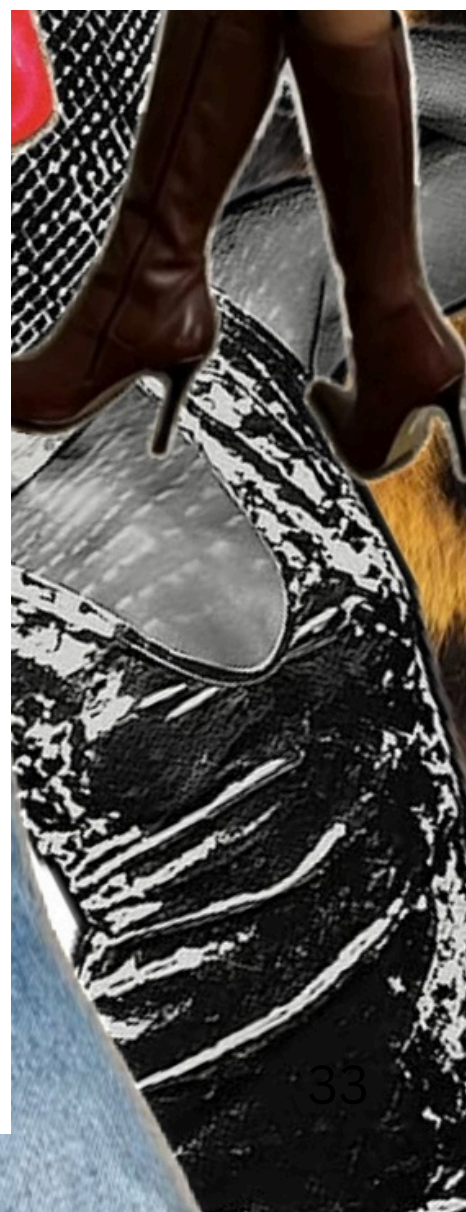
BONUS ROUND: Care for Your Clothes

Because what's the point of that gorgeous linen shirt if it ends up in the dryer looking like a crumpled dream? Read care labels, wash smart, and rotate your wardrobe. You'll save money

Looking luxe on a budget isn't about how much you spend — it's about how you spend.

Confidence, creativity, and a little savvy will take your look (and your wallet) a long way. So go ahead and wear your affordable designer dupe like it's couture.

Because girl — you've got main character energy, and your closet should too.



All day boss-babe



Corporate slay



Lunch with the girls







Grab your mirror and your matcha, it's time to decode your closet and find out what your wardrobe reveals about your main character energy.

What's your go-to outfit when you want to feel unstoppable?

- A) A tailored blazer, matching pants, and sharp heels
- B) A flowing maxi dress and layered jewellery
- C) Vintage band tee, ripped jeans, and boots

Your friends describe your vibe as:

- A) Sophisticated and goal-oriented
- B) Dreamy and poetic
- C) Rebellious and unpredictable

What's your ideal Saturday plan?

- A) Power brunch then networking event
- B) Flea market stroll and an indie bookstore
- C) Thrifting + late-night concert

You're running late. What accessory do you never forget?

- A) A structured handbag
- B) A stack of rings and bangles
- C) Your signature necklace (probably sentimental)

You walk into a room and people say:

- A) "She's the CEO."
- B) "She's ethereal."
- C) "She's got stories."



**What Does Your Style
Really Say About
You?**

A^s

The Power Muse

You dress like you own the building—and you probably will one day. Your style says you're driven, decisive, and not here to play small. Main character? More like executive producer



B^s

The Romantic Soul

Your style flows with your moods—soft fabrics, delicate details, and a hint of whimsy. You live in your own indie film and never forget to romanticize the little things. You are the pinterest board



C^s

The Wild Card

Your closet has no rules—and that's the point. You mix eras, moods, and moments with confidence. People never know what to expect from you, but they always remember your outfit.





The Talk Before the Talk: Questions You Actually Need to Ask Before the Hookup

Because sexy doesn't mean silent, babe.

Let's get real for a second. You wouldn't buy a mystery meal without asking what's in it, right? So why are we out here getting naked with people without having the talk first? You know the one. The slightly awkward, slightly spicy, extremely necessary pre-hookup convo that makes sure everyone's on the same page (and not just the bed).

Having "the talk before the talk" doesn't kill the mood—it sets the damn stage for fireworks, mutual respect, and the kind of chemistry that doesn't leave you crying in your car afterward.

Here's your no-BS guide to the questions you should be asking before things get hot, heavy, and possibly complicated.

1. "What are you actually looking for?"

Say it with me: clarity is sexy. Are they in it for fun? Something casual-but-consistent? Plotting the rom-com-worthy situationship of the year? Don't assume—ask. This question can save you from spiralling later when they "didn't think this meant anything."

Pro tip: If they dodge this question, that's already an answer.

2. "When were you last tested?"

Not awkward. Just necessary. Your body is your business, and STIs don't care if they have a good smile and Spotify premium. Normalise this convo like it's ordering your coffee. **Bonus move: Share your own status first to make the vibe open and non-judgy.**

3. "Do you use protection—always?"

Some people say yes and mean "when I remember." Others say no and expect you to just... go with it? Nope. This is your chance to lay down the boundary before clothes hit the floor. If they flinch, flake, or act offended, show them the door, not your body.





4. “Are you seeing anyone else?”

Not to police their entire dating life, but this is about knowing what you're walking into. Whether you're down for something exclusive, open, or still figuring it out—this question clears the air faster than a Dyson.

5. “Any dealbreakers I should know about?”

This one's low-key iconic. It opens the floor to talk about turn-offs, boundaries, and the unsexy-but-super-important stuff. Do they need the lights off? Are cuddles post-hookup a must or a no-go? This is where honesty turns good sex into great sex.

6. “Are we spending the night or...”

Look, logistics matter. Are you expected to stay over? Do they disappear at 2 a.m. like Cinderella with commitment issues? Planning ahead makes everything smoother and saves you from a “should I Uber or just cry?” moment.

7. “What makes you feel good?”

Simple. Sexy. So underrated. Asking what they like shows you care—and opens the door for them to ask you the same. Welcome to your grown-up hookup era, where communication is the ultimate foreplay.

8. “What are your hard no’s?”

We're not mind readers, babe. It's not just about the yeses, it's about the firm no-thank-you's too. Whether it's certain acts, pet names, or anything in between—knowing what's off the table keeps things respectful and sexy.

9. “How do you like to communicate after?”

The ghosting epidemic is real. Are they the “text me tomorrow” type or the “see you when I see you” kind? This helps manage expectations—and saves you from a week of decoding silence like it's Morse code.

10. “Are you emotionally available right now?”

Okay, yes, this one's deep—but necessary. Some people hook up to escape their feelings, others because they're feeling everything. Knowing where they stand helps you protect your peace (and avoid becoming someone's rebound therapist).

11. “Is there anything I should know before we do this?”

A catch-all question with main character energy. It gives them a final chance to mention anything important—like if their ex lives next door or they sleepwalk. Nothing kills the mood like a surprise mid-hookup plot twist.

12. “Do you want to do this... or feel like you should?”

Consent is way more than a “yes.” It's about checking in with real vibes, not just vibes-of-convenience. Make sure both of you are here because you want to be, not because it feels expected. Enthusiastic consent is sexy consent.

Hot people ask questions. Full stop. If you can't talk about protection, consent, and expectations like two responsible adults, you probably shouldn't be naked together. These convos are your green flag checklist—if they can't handle it, they definitely can't handle you.

So next time you're gearing up for a hookup, have the talk before the talk. Trust—it'll make the rest so much hotter.

FEMME

South Africa

Let's stay in touch

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