

# Fattily

*Ever After*

SAMPLE

*A Black Fat Girl's Guide  
to Living Life Unapologetically*

**Stephanie Yeboah**



Hello! I want to thank you so so much for ordering my book. I hope you have a wonderful time reading it as I did writing it. In a time where we are surrounded by so much noise regarding body politics, body image, inclusivity and racial issues, I felt as if there were specific voices that were being left out of the conversation; the voices of fat, black women. This book is my love letter to black women, a small way for our voices and experiences to be heard and shared, and I hope the stories contained within the book resonate with you.

Happy reading!

**Steph**

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*Hardie Grant*  
BOOKS

## You can't force it, babe

A simple subheading, but it really is what it is. Non-conformity is a strong theme running within this book, but it's absolutely true – absolutely no one should feel the pressure to conform to what is essentially, a damaging stereotype exacerbated by patriarchal standards! Do womxn with these body shapes receive more attention? Of course they do, but it doesn't – and shouldn't – make us feel any less of a person because we don't have those attributes. I have a flat butt (in my opinion) and a wide waist. My top half is also much bigger than my bottom half, which means my body type is almost like an inverted triangle of sorts. I hated it. I wished that my body could swap around, with the heaviest part of me being on the bottom as opposed to the top.

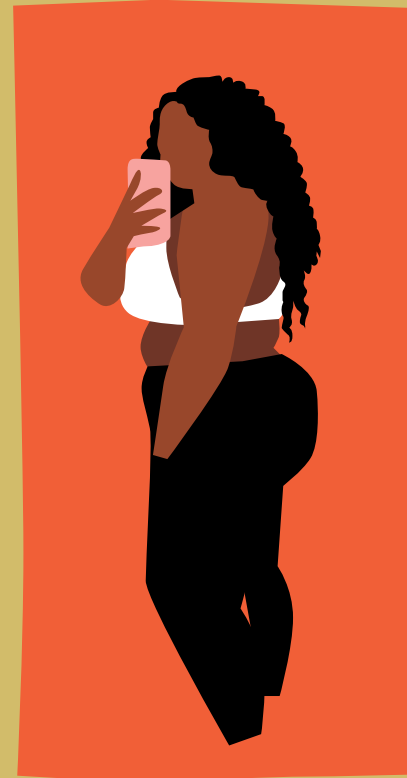
When I entered my first relationship, I would be lying if I said my mind wasn't slightly blown by the fact that someone actually 'allegedly' found me attractive. This person had a penchant for curvier womxn, so I'd be lying if I said that during the early stages of the relationship, I didn't try and make myself smaller (whilst trying to make the 'right' sides of me bigger) in a bid to try and appear more attractive, and more acceptable. Although I was generally happy, I couldn't help but be mega aware that the person I was with had a preference for curvier, black womxn and although I had been 'chosen', I still didn't feel that I fit the right 'type' of fat.

When undergoing the break-up a couple of years later, I actually ended up losing a significant amount of weight due to heartbreak and depression completely robbing me of my appetite. I remember one day taking a mirror selfie, and noticing that my arse looked HUGE, because of the weight that I had lost around my back/middle. I was HYPED I have to admit. I'd never seen anything like it and for a split second, a part of me wished I could have stayed this shape forever.

Eventually the weight came back as my appetite returned and when it did, it really forced me to think about my position as someone who preaches about self-love, yet still heralded a specific body type as the 'supreme'. Not for 'society' in general, no. But because men liked it. I had to sit with myself for a while and ask myself why

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I was so hell bent on receiving validation from men, when (for the most part) all they do is go around causing drama and heartache, LOL?!

So, for me, it spoke to a deeper issue about how I viewed myself and my body. Although I was lightyears ahead in confidence, it was clear that there were some self-esteem issues and a bulk of un-learning that still had to be done.

And that my friends, is the short tale of how I tried to change my body in order to feel more African.

It's weird isn't it? The things we sometimes do in order to feel like we have to fit in. Today, more and more womxn are undertaking BBL and hip surgery in order to look like their favourite female rappers and Instagram stars. The hourglass shape is officially in, and I can't see it going anytime soon. It's not only white womxn such as Kim and Khloe Kardashian who are going after these body shapes (in a bid to attain a more 'ethnic' body shape used to attract black men in my opinion), but it's black womxn who are also desiring the extreme, exaggerated body shape, and why wouldn't they? The stereotypical 'black female shape' has been celebrated, fetishized, and desired within our communities for hundreds of years.

These days, we are hearing more and more in the press about the womxn who are killing themselves (literally) in the quest to have the perfect hourglass-shaped body, complete with big booty. Brazilian butt lifts are big business, especially in European countries where they are often cheaper (or even free, if you have a decent enough Instagram following), and flocks of black womxn are heading overseas to undertake these risky procedures.

In 2018, it was reported that a second womxn, Leah Cambridge, 29, had died from having a Brazilian Butt Lift procedure, suffering from three heart attacks while under anaesthetic. Leah was reportedly unhappy with her body shape after having three children and wanted to re-shape her stomach and bum. In the same vein, 24-year-old Joy Williams from London sadly passed away after her wounds became infected after having surgery in Bangkok in 2014<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-london-29791057/cosmetic-surgery-warning-follows-joy-williams-death>

The British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS) calls it the most dangerous cosmetic procedure to undergo (with as high as 1 in 3000 deaths being reported)<sup>10</sup>, because of the high risk of blood clotting and cardiac arrest due to the super important nerve endings and vessels that are located within that area. Knowing this, scores of womxn still choose to fly out to undertake this life-threatening surgery. I have – on many occasions – considered having the procedure due to the pressure I felt I was under to look a specific way, especially on Instagram.

It's not something I think I would ever do as I'm an absolute COWARD when it comes to surgery and being put to sleep, but there are days when I do fantasize about having a huge, round posterior. At the end of the day, even though most surgeries carry the risk of potential death, is even the slightest risk of death worth it?

The pressure on black womxn to have the 'supposed shape of a black womxn' is absolutely crippling; and if you're plus-size, there's this automatic assumption that the 'more' body you have, the more your fat will be stored in the 'right' places, i.e., our butts and our breasts, but fat doesn't work like that. Fat will store itself wherever it damn well pleases on our body, and we can try and manipulate and shift it to where we think it would look the most attractive but at the end of the day, it isn't going anywhere. I spoke to a couple of my black, plus-size followers on Twitter to pick their brain on whether they had ever considered having an augmentation:

<sup>10</sup> [https://baaps.org.uk/media/press\\_releases/1630/the\\_bottom\\_line](https://baaps.org.uk/media/press_releases/1630/the_bottom_line)

**‘I’ve definitely felt like I wasn’t living up to the ideal by having a flat ass.’**

*‘Both my sister and Mum have been blessed with THEE buttocks and I have the big boobs. Which can be a blessing but mostly a curse and when people see the front, they generally assume the back matches. It’s definitely an insecurity of mine and I’m in the process of trying to get some squats in regularly. The reason why I wanted it was mainly because of the stereotype – I’ve been told that I don’t have a black girl’s bum – and my mum and sister have both poked fun at me. I don’t want an outrageous bottom but one that definitely suits my body being plus-sized and not having one seems wrong in a way.’*

**– @Lesley\_Louise**

*‘I’ve definitely felt like I wasn’t living up to the ideal by having a flat ass. I think that hourglass shapes are privileged and with the accessibility and visibility of plastic surgery, obtaining an hourglass shape has always felt so attainable and also far-fetched at the same time due to financial constraints and the fact that they don’t really operate on plus-size patients. I’ve always wanted a fat ass tho.’*

**– @BadFatBlackGirl**

*‘Only fairly recently did I start to despise and begrudge my body shape. The trigger was my last and my first boyfriend. During the relationship he would point out other womxn with a bigger bum and say “We’re gonna get you like that”. I remember his exact words because it shocked me so much. I also remember when he grabbed my back roll in public and said it was unacceptable for me to have fat. He would also point out and make fun of how small my bum is considering the rest of me and say “it doesn’t make sense”. He cheated on me with a girl who was also overweight but had a significantly bigger bum. He’d also talk about how it was “in my genes” to have a big bum and a small waist, because I’m black. We broke up, needless to say.*

*I used to spend hours every day watching BBL vlogs, surgeries and before and afters. It got to a point where out of 500 people I followed on Instagram, more than half were BBL patients or surgeons. It was very unhealthy for me to consume that sort of content every day. I also started comparing myself to white womxn on a daily basis which I think made me really bitter.’*

**– @BadBlackBruja**

Of course, we also know that a lot of these societal pressures also stem from – you guessed it – the *patriarchy* \*shakes fist\*. Men seem to have very strong ideas about what the ideal black body should be like. Not just black men, no! All races too. When I found out that my ex had broken up with me because he wanted someone with a more ‘hourglass’ shape (which included the small waist/big bum combo – yes I did ask him for details, self-sabotage innit), I was absolutely dumbfounded. Not because his reasons were absolutely shit and shallow to begin with, but because he too, had imposed his own impressions of what the stereotypical ‘black body’ should look like, and looking back, it was almost fetishistic in its approach. What a dick.

As with a lot of body politics surrounding black womxn, a lot of this can be traced back to the fetishism of the black, female body like I discussed in previous chapters.

The age of the ‘music video vixen’ in hip hop videos also did nothing to curb this obsession with having acceptable curves. I grew up idolising these womxn and praying that one day, the puppy fat would just drop off and I would be reborn into a body like the ones I saw on TV. I know this sounds cliché AF but at the end of the day, we are so much more than the ideologies and the expectations put on us by men. When you really have a sit down and think about WHY you want a specific figure, and eventually realize it’s because men set the standard (and we all know that men perpetually move mad), it can really help as a catalyst towards shedding all the patriarchal toxic behaviour and thoughts that have been ingrained in us since childhood.

## Let our bodies just ‘be’ bodies!

Whether you are slim or fat, tall or short, black, Asian, Latina, Middle Eastern, white or mixed race, it’s important to acknowledge that there is absolutely no such thing as ‘The Perfect Body’ and growing up, we have never had a realistic expectation of what an ideal body should be. Why? Because body shapes appear to us in the form of ‘trends’. What is deemed as beautiful RIGHT NOW? Which brands and companies can make money off of our fleeting insecurities? How many new clients can plastic surgeons

get in the next 10 years? From the heroin chic phase of the Nineties, to the lithe, athletic phase of the Eighties, to the current Kardashian body craze, we’ve been taught as womxn to never feel at home with our bodies and to see our bodies as spare parts, to be replaced every six years or so. Our bodies shouldn’t be trends: we should be allowed to just...be.

Body types shouldn’t have to come in and out of fashion, and just because my body or yours isn’t what is currently seen as the accepted trend, it doesn’t mean that we should wait around until it is. It’s not your job to be beautiful, and when you stop equating the ideal body with happiness, it is so much easier to love yourself completely!

Beauty does not align with happiness, friends, love, etc. Being a size 10, having an absolutely MASSIVE butt, or having the desired hourglass shape will not make your life happier. You were made to do whatever you want with whatever body you have, so it’s important not to focus on other peoples’ bodies, because at the end of the day the only one you have is your own. Just try existing in this amazing, marvellous, unique, splendiferous, miraculous, sexy, gorgeous body you were born in. You are in competition with absolutely NO ONE.

So, NO! Just because I am FAT, does not mean that I have to have big boobs, a big bum, or a small waist in order to ‘pass’ as attractive.

Just because I’m black, does NOT mean I have to have the body shape expected of me. My blackness is not invalidated because I lack a butt, or big hips and a small waist. Our beauty is non-conforming, and we should be able to celebrate our curves in, however, they choose to present themselves – hourglass, pear, apple, rectangle, bin bag shaped, or not.

\*SHAKES FIST AT SIR MIX-A-LOT AND HIS INVOLVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING THE DESIRED ‘36-24-36’ BODY MEASUREMENT AMONGST BLACK WOMXN!\*



Featuring stories of every day misogynoir and being fetishized, to navigating the cesspit of online dating and experiencing loneliness, Stephanie shares her thoughts on the treatment of black women throughout history, the marginalisation of black, plus-sized women in the media (even within the body-positivity movement) whilst drawing on wisdom from other black fat liberation champions along the way. Peppered with insightful tips and honest advice and boldly illustrated throughout, this inspiring and powerful book is essential reading for a generation of black, plus-sized women, helping them to live their life openly, unapologetically and with confidence.

Thank you for ordering **Fattily Ever After!**

The full book will arrive with you shortly after publication:

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 (UK) | 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 (US)  
2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 (Australia & New Zealand)



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