



LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

PROLOGUE

Thoughts of what awaits me today deprived me of sleep, I lay awake the entire night tossing and turning because my anxiety wouldn't let

me rest. Fear ripples through me everytime I remember what today is, I know I should be happy and excited but I'm not. I'm so nervous I can literally hear the sound of my heart beating, my mother thinks I'm afraid of change but not being liked is what I fear the most. I wish I can be like those people who don't care if you like them or not but that can never be me, I care too much about how other people feel about me that I sometimes do things I am not comfortable with or don't want to do just so I can gain acceptance.

Today is a big day, my first day at work. I'll be working as a high school teacher, not just any high school but one famous for low matric pass rate, high rate of teenage pregnancy and drug

abuse. I guess now you know where my anxiety stems from right, question is will I fit in? Will the learners listen to me and give me the necessary respect as their teacher seeing that I'm only a few years older than them? And most importantly will I be able to perform a miracle and improve the school's reputation by improving pass rate for Life Sciences- one of the most failed subjects in the school!

All is not gloomy though, I'm happy to have finally found a job I studied for. I will finally extend my parent's house and buy myself a car now that's exciting, independence that is.

Having to depend on my boyfriend for every single thing is not ideal, yeah he doesn't mind he loves doing things for me matter of fact but I

need my own money so I can spoil my parents and show them my gratitude, I owe those two my life.

I changed outfits four times in the last half an hour and I still cant seem to find one that's good enough, first impressions last angithi? I could wear the black formal pant with a white crisp shirt but I hate how the trouser hugs my legs it's a skinny leg and I'm gifted with thick legs shem and I hate it when people look at my legs and say " yho une zitho" so I don't like anything leg-hugging.

“Wear the dress” my mom says walking into my room

“Ma you know how I feel about dresses”

“I don’t get it, so many people would die to have your beautiful legs but you keep hiding them under jeans and long dresses no man wear the dress and show off what God blessed you with!” she says handing me the dress

I reluctantly take it and wear it over my head, my mom says a woman or a girl child needs to wear a dress over her head as to why that is I don’t know! I just do what she says without questions to avoid her long unending lectures,

my mother is a talker once she starts talking then there's no stopping her.

“Bheka umuhle njani?” she says as I smooth my hands over the dress.

It's a black formal knee length pencil dress, with a slit at the back I take a look at myself in the mirror gotta admit though I look good in this dress

“That's my girl” she has a proud look on her face

I smile and step closer to the mirror and remove the stocking from my head, another

struggle hiding my big forehead! I undo my pony and run my hands through my hair thinking of a perfect hairstyle to hide my big forehead to the world.

“No my girl no hiding your pretty forehead fasa iphondo nje kuvele wena”

(tie a bun, so all your features come out)

If only my mom knew how disrespectful school kids are, the last thing I want is to be labelled ‘sphongo’ on my first day of school. I was dubbed with my forehead throughout high school which is why I got through varsity wearing weaves and doing those forehead hiding hairstyles- you know your razor cut, bonding with a side stitch, French n them and

the comments on girls with foreheads on social media didn't do any justice to my confidence shem.

The school is pretty big, there are a couple of cars already parked in the yard, learners walking in and out of the school gate while others are standing in groups chatting. I remember I used to be like them, on Mondays my friends and I would put our bags in class, stand outside and chat away- kushe umgosi kuphela!.

The cab is parked outside the school gate, I thank the driver and step out after doing breathing exercises. Like my mother suggested I have my hair tied in a high bun so all the

sphongo is out to play and knowing my forehead I am sure it's shining I don't know why but it shines nje naturally no ponds or face powder is good enough shem. I take calculated steps towards the gate passing a few learners in the process, I wave to security guard and walk as good as I can master in this six inch heels I'm wearing.

I pass two teachers standing next to the their cars and chant " Good morning" flashing nervous smiles all the way till I reach the office, luckily I already know my way the principal showed me around when I came to sign the contract last month so I know my way around here. I sign the time book and sit awkwardly in the staff room pressing on my phone. You

know that thing of going through your phone just so you look busy? That's exactly what I'm doing now, there's nothing interesting in my phone just messages from friends and my boyfriend wishing me good luck on my first day of work.

" You're welcome, looking forward to working with you"

"Thank you"

" Welcome ntombi, we are pleased to have you in our team" – another one adds

The principal officially introduced me to everyone after briefing, most of the teachers here are more or less in the same age group as me. A large number of them are female and that can only mean one thing- izindaba!

“ That will be all from me colleagues, Miss Khumalo Mr Mathobela will show you around. Welcome once again, I hope you’ll enjoy working with us and please don’t hesitate to ask if you need anything”

“ Thank you” I say and offer him a small smile

He saunters out of the staff room and everyone follows suit, only me and Mr Mathobela are left in the room now.

“This is you”

He says handing me a box with textbooks, ATP and my personal timetable. He’s my HOD, so I guess it’s his responsibility to show me around and help me settle in.

“ Thank you so much”

I say and skim my eyes over the timetable

“ Let me show you to your office, I have class in ten minutes”

He says looking at his wrist watch

The school is built in an upstairs fashion, it has the ground floor, the first and second floor. I'm sure I'm going to shed a few kilos going up and down these stairs daily. I scurry behind him and follow him all the way to the first floor, he opens a door revealing a vast room with various charts on the wall. There's a cabinet with a structure of the digestive system, the heart, the brain and the structure of the human skeleton, the cabinet next to it is filled with beakers, test tubes, test tube racks and other lab equipment so I'm guessing this is the Life sciences laboratory.

“ This will be your office, please use that cabinet for your things.”

He says showing me a tiny office in between the two laboratories

“ Okay thank you”

“ This is your key, we don’t take the keys home with us. Please hand them to Junior before you leave after school”

“ Junior?”

“ He’s the caretaker, don’t worry I’ll introduce you to him but for now I really need to get to

class do you think will you be alright on your own or you need me to show you to your first class?"

" No I will be okay, go to class don't worry about me"

He grabs a textbook on top of the desk and dashes out of the room. I pack my things neatly in the cabinet, check the ATP and textbook preparing myself for class. When the clock strikes 9 AM I say a quick prayer, take my textbook and head to class.

Finding 12B wasn't hard I met a learner met on my way up here and she showed me, I could hear their noise all the way from the stairs oh

my gosh this is one noisy class I take a deep breath, push the door open and walk in.

Awkward silence lingers in the room as all eyes fall on me from the moment I walk in from the door until I reach the table on the far left corner of the class room

“ Good morning class, my name is Miss Khumalo and I’ll be your new Life sciences teacher.”

No one replies they all stare at me with no expression on their faces, oh gosh this is going to be harder than I thought.

“ What is the last chapter you did with your previous teacher?”

(Silence)

“ Haibo am I talking to myself or what?!”

I say with a firm tone

I expect them to respond but NO these little devils do the unexpected- they laugh making me look like a fool! I’m trying so hard not to cry right now, how am I going to teach these kids?

I’m tempted to walk out of here but what’s going to happen tomorrow because I still need to teach this class, running away will not solve the problem I need to deal with this right here

and now. Maybe I should make an example
with one of them

“ SHUT THE FUCK UP!”

I’m still thinking of a way to send a message to
these kids when a deep voice from the backseat
commands and the class instantly grows quiet.

“ Please carry on ma'am"- He says

My heartbeat accelerates as I stare into the
eyes of my ‘Hero’, who the hell is this boy and
why does he have so much authority?

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#1

Given the things I've read about the school from the internet and print media I've always known working here wasn't going to be easy I was mentally prepared for a challenge but I didn't imagine it would be something like this, I didn't think I'd face so much humiliation on the very first day of work. What the pupils did to me killed every bit of confidence I had to stand in front of the class and teach but the words 'giving up' don't exist in my vocabulary, I

might be sensitive but I'm not one to back down from a fight I always finish what I start.

After the chatter ceased I took a deep breath, said a silent prayer and started teaching the class. It was hard at first because my voice was quavering, my hands were shaking making it difficult for me to flip the textbook with ease. Seeing what was written on the textbook was even harder because my vision was blurry due to my tears, tears I fought so hard to hold back. I wasn't okay, everyone could see it but I had no choice but to fake it till I made it.

Standing in front of a crowd is not easy, whether you're teaching, delivering a speech or a sermon doesn't matter standing in front of a

crowd takes courage and that's why some people prefer having family or a friend in the crowd so they can look to them and draw strength from them whenever they feel like giving up. In that emotionally overwhelming moment in class looking to the boy's direction gave me the courage I needed to do what I needed to do.

The rest of my classes weren't as bad as the first one, they were good matter of fact the learners were surprisingly engaging and participating in the lesson and gave me the respect I deserved as their teacher.

“ How did it go?”

Mathobela says when I walk into the office

“ Not so bad”

“ Really?”

He asks with a quirked eyebrow

“ Yes, really”

**“ You’re lucky, most teachers complain about
Grade 12B learners”**

**“ Yeah they were bit difficult at first but I was
able to deal with them”**

More like the 'boy' dealt with them

**“ Okay, shout if you need help those rascals
can be difficult to deal with”**

“ Yeah I will”

**I'm in my room listening to music while playing
a game on my phone, my lips stretch into a big
smile when I receive a call from my bae. I
pause the song and take his call**

“ Lover!”

I say in a jubilant tone

He giggles

“ Sthandwa sam”

“ How are you baby?”

“ I’m okay and you”

“ I’m fine now that you called” I say

“ I love the sound of that, so tell me how was your first day at work my love?”

“ Overall it wasn't bad but yo babe Grade 12B gave me a problem at first”

“ Problem how?”

“ So I walked in and introduced myself but none of them replied all they did was stare at me, I tried to exercise my authority by hardening my voice you know be a bit firm oho those rascals laughed at me I swear I wanted to cry shem”

Even thinking about it now gets me emotional, my heart sinks to the pit of my stomach when I think about that class shem.

“ Eish I’m sorry my love, you need to be firm with them chase them out of your class if you must. Punish one and make an example out of him, do whatever you need to ensure they respect you and take you serious and most importantly don’t forget to pray. Banikezele ku nkulunkulu ngomkhuleko sthandwa sam”

(Surrender them to God in prayer)

“ this is why I love you, you always know what to say to make me feel better”

“ You’re my woman, it’s my job to make sure you’re okay”

“ Ncoah my love, so sweet”

“ I got you, you know that. Babe let me cook, I’ll call again before I sleep”

“ Ok do what you must my love, I love you”

“ I love you more, sharp sthandwa sam”

Musa is my boyfriend, we have been together for almost four years now. Growing up I always knew I would end up with him, we grew up in the same church and the idea of the both of us

as a couple was instilled in us from a young age. His mother blatantly told him she would never accept any other girl who wasn't me as her daughter in law, Musa says his mother loving me didn't influence his attraction towards me it just served as a confirmation that him and I were always meant to be together.

I must admit Musa knows what to say to make me feel better, I'm blessed to have such a loving, supportive and considerate partner like him I count him twice when I count my blessings.

A knock on the door pulls me from my thoughts

" Its open"

Melo walks in and drops her weight on my bed

“ Ses'Ndalo how was your first day at work?”

“ Yo awangidelelanga kangaka ama 12B shem”

(12B disrespected me)

“ Bayenzi?”

(what did they do)

I narrate everything that happened

“ Yo askies shem”

“ But at least that boy stepped in and stood up for me”

“ Yeah”

“ The small intestine is divided into three parts namely the duodenum, jejunum and ileum. The duodenum is the first part of the small intestine which is... “

The sound of the siren cuts me short

“ Iphelile i period yakho ma'am” they chorus

“ Oh niyangicosha ok then ithi ngihambe”

(oh you’re chasing me out, let me go then)

**I say with my hand on my chest pretending to
be hurt**

They all laugh

**“ No ma'am asikucoshi, yi period ye maths and
siyabhala” Kwazi**

**“ You don’t need to explain it’s ok let me say
this quickly Grade 11J you’re writing a test
next week and the digestive system is in the
test, please go through the notes at home so**

that it'll be easier when I explain tomorrow in class. We are behind, we really need to wrap nutrition and get started on cellular respiration."

Moeng walks in and stands next to the door waiting for me to finish to packing my stuff.

" Goodbye kids, see you tomorrow"

" Bye ma'am"

The moment I've been dreading the entire day has arrived, is it necessary for me to teach 12B mara ye? Like yesterday I can hear them talking all the way from the stairs, I push the

door open and walk in. Talking ceases when they see me walk in and they stare at me like they did yesterday. I don't bother myself with greeting them I take the duster, wipe the board and start writing notes on the human reproduction system. To my surprise they all take out their notebooks and copy the notes on the board.

“ I'll explain the notes tomorrow but I'd advise you to go through them on your own at home so that it'll be easier for you to understand when I explain in class, I don't know how your previous teacher taught you but this is how I do it. It's easier to understand something you've done on your own first because that way you

can ask for clarity on things you couldn't understand on your own"

" Your homework will be reproduction in invertebrates I made you copies of activities from an old textbook, I need one of you to come with me when my period ends. Who's your class rep?"

" Thato Mazibuko"- they chorus

I'm only seeing them for the second time this week, I'm yet to know them by their names.

“ Okay Thato you’ll come with me after class, please write your homework we will do corrections in the morning class”.

#indistinct chatter#

“ If you have something to say I suggest you raise your hand, we cant all talk at the same time so is there anyone who wants to say something?”

A hand goes up, it’s a girl with a long thin twist hanging over her shoulders. Are they allowed to come to school looking like this?

“ Yes”

I say motioning her to speak

**“ Ma'am you said we should go over the notes
but manje sewuthi sibhale ama activity”**

“ Your point is?”

**“ What I'm trying to say that is a bit too much
for a day in one subject, asifundi I life science
kuphela we still have other subjects” she says
and flicks her twist**

The class laughs

“ Listen up, I will not tolerate disrespect in my class. I’m here to teach not to babysit anyone, honestly whether you write or not I really don’t care because awenzeli mina you’re doing it for yourself. Anyone who doesn’t want to obey my instructions shouldn’t be in my class in the first place so ntombo you’re welcome to leave”

I wait for her to stand up but she doesn’t

“ The reason why you’re sitting down listening to me teach is because I know better, I’ll chase you out of my class the next time you want to show off”

“ Sorry ma'am" she mutters barely audible

I wouldn't have heard her if she wasn't sitting in the front row.

“ That's all for today, Thato please come with me”.

It's been a month since I started working here and I'm slowly but surely adjusting and adapting to the new environment, learners in Grade 12 B are no longer as disrespectful as they were when I first started teaching them. I listened to Musa's advice and surrendered them to God through prayer, I also pray for my other classes. Nothing is as painful as spending your time teaching learners only for them to end up failing, so I always pray before class so God can

help me explain concepts in a way that will make it easy for my learners to understand.

Its Lunch time Miss Phakathi and I are in my office having lunch, out of all my female colleagues she's the one who was the most welcoming. I enjoy spending time with her, she's talkative and fun to be around.

“So you mean to tell me that you've only had one dick in your life?”

She bellows on top of her voice causing me to feel a bit embarrassed

“ Shh keep it down hao”

“ Chill dude, it’s just the two of us here”

“ Still, there’s no need for you to scream the roof down”

She roll her eyes

“ Urg haele lona bazalwane and acting holier than thou”

“ Whatever” I say

“ So your boyfriend is your first and only?”

“ Yebo”

“ And you’re okay with that?”

“ Yes, Nthabiseng Phakathi”

“ Then you’re definitely a better person than I am, nna I’d never be happy with not knowing what the world has In store for me outside of my relationship”

“ Lucky for you then because you’re not me”.

“ Yo..”

The siren goes off cutting her short

“ You were literally saved by the bell, this conversation is not over my dear”

I laugh

She hurriedly clears the table, takes her lunch box and walks out of the room.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#2

Now that you've ventured a bit into my life allow me to introduce myself, I am Buhlebendalo Khumalo 25 years of age the first daughter of Muziwakhe Khumalo and Lilian Selepe. I was born and bred at Embalenhle- a township in the Govan Mbheki municipality in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Embalenhle was first established in the 1970s to be a black-only township, I have two younger siblings Melokuhle and Anele they are a year apart from each other unfortunately my parents were not blessed with any male children.

Melokuhle followed in my footsteps she's doing her second year in Education at the Tshwane

University of Technology, my youngest sister Anele is unfortunately not academically gifted like Melo and myself. She's finally in her grade 11 but that was after she repeated her 10th grade twice. Although not academically smart, Anele is very talented she's been doing art for as long as I can remember. She is part of a community project that aims to take children off the streets by keeping them busy with art, Anele is a very good singer, dancer and actor. Showing support and being there for one another is one of the values we live by in my family so we always attend her concerts even though art is not something we are interested in.

Teaching here isn't as bad I thought It would be, like any other job there are some challenges but it's nothing I cannot handle. I was raised to pray my way through everything, it doesn't matter what I'm facing I always pray my way through it and trust God to give me a solution and show me a way.

“ We should really stop eating fat cakes every morning yaz sizobhamuka stru nasi”

(We will gain weight)

Nthabi says putting Atchaar and polony in her fat cake

“ You said the same thing last week”

“ Ay this time I’m serious, we really need to stop”

“ Ok then, we are eating them for the last time today tomorrow we are not buying them”.

“ Hay' chomi asicale kahle next week”

I laugh

“ I knew you’d say that”

“ Can you blame me though? Ay amnandi lamagwinya walo mama shem yo ngathi yi

**buns awana mafutha ey uyaliyenza igwinya lo
mama ay no ngiyamvuma"**

**(Her fat cakes are so delicious, they taste like
buns. They don't have too much oil, I must
admit that woman is good)**

" I agree with you, she's good"

The siren goes off

**" Don't tell it's 8 o' clock already, yo iskhathi
siyagijima yo"**

(time flies)

“ Dude tell me about it, please pass me my timetable ngibheke kuthi ngicala kuphi manje eksen”

(so I can see what my first period is)

She wipes her hands with toilet paper and passes me my timetable, my heart sinks when I see what my first class is.

“ What, why do you look like that?”

“ I always dread going to this class”

She glances at my timetable

**“ 12B, vele those kids are the devil’s minions
no educator likes them”**

“ Yeah eish, don’t you have class?”

“ No, I’m free”

**“ Ok I’m leaving please lock the door when you
leave”**

I say placing the padlock next to her

“ You got it”

I slowly wipe my hands and take my textbook lord knows how much I dread going to that class. The learners no longer give me a problem, there has been a tremendous improvement in their behavior in the past couple of weeks. They engage and participate during lessons and I'm very happy with the marks they got on their last test, well not all of them passed though but majority of them did well. If that isn't proof of how hard I work then I don't know what is.

The reason I dread going to class has a name, Sabelo Meyiwa. Yes that's the name of my 'hero' I don't know what's with me but I've taken a huge liking into the boy, please don't look at me like that I know it's wrong but I

can't help myself my imagination always runs wild everytime I look at him. I know he's only a kid but dammit he's so attractive, minus the uniform there's nothing about him that screams '18 and in high school' he looks like a grown man especially with all that moustache and facial hair.

The weirdest or is it creepiest part about this whole thing is that I always imagine him doing the naughtiest things to me, like him pounding me hard from the back. I mentally slap myself for allowing myself to think like that of a kid, a damn 18 year old gosh what's wrong with you Ndalo he's not only younger than me he's younger than my youngest sister!

Honestly I'm worried, seeing that I entertain such thoughts about someone seven years younger than me does that make me paedophile? I remember I once saw a movie of a maid who used to sleep with her boss's son, the boy was only 13 and the lady was a grown woman I was so disgusted by that woman but am I any different to her? Here I am imagining a 18 year old boy doing the wildest and dirtiest things to me.

The first thing I do when I walk into class is to glance at his chair, I sigh in relief when I see that he's not in class. For someone who's in matric being absent from school is not ideal and I know as his teacher I should be worried concerned even but I'm not, I'm relieved if

anything because his presence in class makes it very difficult for me to teach.

“ Good morning class”

“ Good morning miss Khumalo”

“ Please take out your textbooks and go to page 170”

While they shuffle through their backpacks for the textbook, I use the time to reply to a message from Musa.

I wish you a day as beautiful as you are, I love you baby# his message reads

***# Thanks my love, I love you so much
more#***

I reply and slip my phone in my pockets

**“ Okay kids, I believe everyone is on page 170
right?”**

“ Yes ma'am"

**Fifteen minutes into the lesson I'm disturbed by
a knock on the door**

“ Come in!” Kamva bellows

The door opens and Sabelo walks in hypnotizing with his handsomeness, is it legal for one person to look this good? Don't get me started on his walk, he knows he's the shit and he owns it. There's nothing more attractive than a confident person, I said confident not arrogant! I mentally curse myself when I remember that he's nothing but a 18 year old boy!.

“ Sabelo Meyiwa is this the time to come to my class? Go back to where you're coming from!”

“ I'm sorry ma'am but I started at Home Affairs before coming here, I told my class teacher I thought she would tell you”

He doesn't even have an ID yet, haha ya neh

“ Okay, go sit down you've disturbed me enough already”.

“ Thank you ma'am”

Damn that deep voice of his sends signals down south, how did I suddenly become this person who gets turned on by the sound of someone's voice? Musa has to perform magic tricks and stunts to get me in the mood yet the sound of Sabelo's voice has my clit twitching nonstop, ya bophelo ke fatuku straight.

**With great difficulty I continue with the lesson,
I can't wait for this year to end. Truly speaking,
Sabelo Meyiwa will be the death of me.**

**I'm in my office changing into my kicks after a
very long day of walking in heels**

**" So what are your plans for the weekend"
Nthabi**

**" You need to stop asking me that, you know
what I'll say."**

**" Did I have to befriend such a boring friend
though"**

She whines

“ Khethile khethile sisi”

We laugh

“ Thatha nayi I fridge yakho iyakhala”

(Take your phone it’s ringing)

Any phone that’s not an iPhone is a fridge to her, according to her only iPhone is worthy of being called a phone.

“ Who’s calling?”

I ask and continue tying my shoe laces

“ Mfundisi”

“ Give it here”

“ Baby” I say when I answer the call

“ Sthandwa sam, guess where I am?”

“ Your apartment?”

**He knows I’m not good at this guessing games
yet he insists on making me guess every single
time**

He chuckles

“ You’re so bad at guessing, I’m outside your school”

“ Woah what? Don’t joke like that”

I say already heading to the door

“ Come out quickly, I miss you”

He says and drops the call

I run back to my office when I see his car parked outside the school, take my bag and carelessly throw everything inside.

“ Wow, umfundisi uyakuhlanyisa shem”

(The pastor drives you crazy)

“ leave my pastor alone”

No, Musa is not a pastor but Nthabi insists on dubbing him with that name. To her bonke abo ‘ brother’ abo pastor.

My relationship with Musa is perfect, he’s never given me a reason to complain in the four years I’ve been with him. That’s why I always

beat myself up for allowing myself to look at Sabelo like that, Musa doesn't deserve any of this. I know people believe that every man cheats but that's not true, mine doesn't. I know he loves me and I'm certain I'm the only woman in his life which is why I feel so guilty for imagining myself with another man well another boy.

We were friends for a year before agreeing to take our relationship to the next level, he's my first- the plan was to wait for marriage but our feelings got the better of us we fornicated. Once we started it was hard for us to stop so we consoled ourselves with the fact that we would get married one day so it wasn't as bad, four years later Musa is still everything I need and

want in a man, he's a dedicated man of God, a good boyfriend, has a well paying job, an apartment, a car and is very generous- he's everything women want in a man and he's all mine.

I can't let lust jeopardize the relationship I built for years, I need to forget about Sabelo and get rid of all the unwanted feelings I have for him. Musa is the one for me, he treats me like a queen and he's someone I see myself having a family with.

He steps out of the car when he sees me approaching, I half run and throw myself in his arms. He attempts to pick me up but fails, I'm a size 34 and he's a size 30.

“ Damn girl you’re getting heavier, what do you eat?”

“ Magwinya” I reply

“ I can tell, you’ve gotten fatter please stay away from fat cakes my love they’re not good for your health”

“ I will”

“ Hop in, let’s go” he says

He opens his door and gets in, I go around to my side and get inside the car.

“ I miss you chubby cheeks”

He says pinching my cheeks

“ Baby man, stop doing that. I miss you too”

I say giggling

He brings the engine to life and joins the main road

“ How was your day at work?” he asks

“ fine and how was yours?”

**“ Amazing but I was missing you so much,
you’re spending the weekend with me right?”**

“ is that you asking me to?”

“ Yeah”

“ of course I will my love”

**Maybe this is exactly what I need, a weekend
with my boyfriend to get over the silly feelings I
have for a damn kid. I have a man who loves**

**me and treats me like a Queen what more do I
want?**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#3

**“ Come back quickly, I don't want to be stuck
in traffic”**

He says and parks outside my house

“ I'll be back before you know it”

I see the kitchen curtain move as I walk towards the door. I know my mother was peeping through the window.

“ Good afternoon mama”

I say when I enter the kitchen

“ Afternoon Buhle, why didn't Musa come inside with you?”

Didn't I say it?

“ We are in a hurry ma, I'm only here to take my clothes and toiletries”.

“ You’re spending the weekend at his place?”

She’s not happy about this, her facial expression gives her away.

“ Yes, ma”

I walk out the door and head to my room, I have an outside room dad built it for me when I turned 21. He said I needed my privacy, I was so happy because sharing the bedroom with my sisters wasn’t ideal especially because Melo is a slob so we were always at loggerheads.

“ Hai Buhle you want your father to give me a lecture, you know how he feels about you spending the night at Musa's place”

She says trudging behind me

My father doesn't like it when I spend the weekend at Musa's apartment, he says Musa should marry me if he wants a wife and that no daughter of his will play the role of a wife while she's nothing but a girlfriend.

“ Mama please cover for me”

“ Hay Buhle mina ngizothi uyephi?”

(Where will I say you are)

“ Ngiye ku Pretty e Goli, please ma”

(You’ll say I went to Pretty in Joburg)

Pretty is my best friend, my parents and hers were the best of friends well that was until her father passed away and her mother relocated back to Gauteng. The distance didn’t affect our friendship that much, we try to see each other at least once a month.

“ Ai okay ke, but this is for the last time. I’m only agreeing to this because I trust that boy I know he wouldn’t touch you”

My mother thinks I'm still a virgin, Musa and I sleep in separate bedrooms as far as she knows. Musa was living in his parent's house all along he moved to the Kinross five months ago, so me spending weekends at his place is something we started recently.

" Thank you ma, you're the best. Please lock the door for me"

I don't wait for her response, I peck her cheek and run out of the room.

Today marks the end of the beautiful weekend I spent with my boyfriend, I get emotional everytime I have to go back home. I wish I could spend another night here, that's how much I enjoy spending time with my bae

“ Babe hambo geza the water will run cold”

He says nudging me with his elbow

“ Do I really have to go?”

“ I also wish you didn't have to go but you can't sleep here tonight, we both have work tomorrow you didn't bring any work clothes so you'll have to start at your house before you go

to work and that means you'll have to be up early and we both know how much you love your sleep".

“ Eish you're right, there's no use moping let me get myself cleaned up"

I take my towel, shower cap and head to the bathroom. I scream when the hot water hits my back and quickly step out of the shower and adjust the water temperature. I test the water with my arm before jumping back to the shower, twenty minutes later I'm out of the shower wiping myself with a towel.

“ Let me"

He says taking the tub of oh so heavenly pomegranate lotion from my hands

“ Oh okay”

He carefully smears and applies the lotion on every part of my body, starting down from my legs up to my arms. He throws the tub on top of the bed when he’s done and spanks my ass.

“ Atchu! That was painful!”

“ I’m sorry babe but my hands couldn’t resist your firm round ass.”

“ Please pass me my underwear and clothes behind you”

“ Okay lovie”

When I’m done wearing my clothes I pack everything I own into my bag and spritz perfume.

“ Haisuka nini madoda, umuhle ntombi yakwa Khumalo.”

(you’re beautiful)

He says whistling

If I was light skinned I swear my cheeks would be maroon right now.

“ Umuhle MaKhumalo”

“ Thank you baby”

Seeing that I lied to my father and made him believe I was in Johannesburg Musa couldn't drop me off at my house, he drove me to the Kinross taxi rank and I took a taxi from there to my house.

My father and Anele are so engrossed on the TV screen they don't even see me walk in, they're watching wrestling #eyeroll# Anele is

the son my father never had if you know what I mean. She's the one who's closest to our father, they do everything a father would do with his son- they watch sports and wrestling together, go on fishing trips and talk about cars I wouldn't be surprised if Anele turned out to be lesbian because wawu!

“ Good afternoon family”

They don't reply more like they don't hear me so I stand in front of the screen and obscure their view

“ Buhle move!” dad commands

“ Hao baba are you not happy to see your first born after not seeing her for the entire weekend?”

“ Buhle ngithe suka!”

(I said move)

I know that look, he’s getting impatient so I move from the TV screen and toddle out of the room to look for my mother. I find her in her bedroom reading her bible

“ Ma wami”

“ Hey Buhle, sewubuyile ntombi yami”

(You’re back)

Lol people and asking rhetorical questions

“ Yebo ma sengbuyile, uphi u Melo I didn't see her around the house?”

(yes I'm back, where is Melo)

“She went back to Pretoria yesterday, your father drove her”

“ Ha uziphethe kabi u Melokuhle, she didn't think to tell me she was going back to school. Why didn't she call?”

“ I don't know my love, how was your weekend?”

My lips break into involuntary smile

“ It was amazing ma”

“ Okay my love, there’s food is in the kitchen if you’re hungry okay?”

“ Thank you ma but I think I’ll head to bed, I’m tired I need all the energy to deal with those kids tomorrow”

“ Okay my love, goodnight”

“ Night mommy”

“ So tell me everything don't leave anything out" – Nthabi

She's been annoying me since morning demanding I tell her everything that happened over the weekend, there's no getting out of this one I might as well

“ Okay I'll tell you, what do you want to know?”

“ Everything”

“ I’m not a good storyteller but I’ll try, nothing talk worthy happened on Friday. We went out on Saturday and then yesterday I came back”

“ Wow, you really suck at explaining. I feel sorry for your learners, how do you explain things to them? I want details girls details, come on I can’t teach you everything”

We laugh

“ Come on give me details, I know you can do so much better than this”

“ Ai Nthabi nawe uthanda izindaba shem, what should I say because I told you everything that happened”.

“ So boring, you really need to loosen up my friend you’re so uptight uziphathisa sa gogo nyana”

(you act like an old woman)

She says and laughs at me

“ Mxm”

“ Okay, I’m kidding. Since you can’t tell me about everything else at least tell me about the sex then, how was it?”

The naughty glee on her face is hard to miss

“ It was good”

**“ Excuse me, did you just say good?!” she
exclaims**

Nthabi is dramatic shem

“ Yep”

A frown covers her face

“ Just good? What happened to amazing, where’s the twinkle in your eyes when you talk about this supposed ‘good sex’ of yours with mfundisi?”

“ Come on Nthabi, I’m not comfortable talking about my sex life. That’s not me”

She stares at me for a while

“ What?”

“ Pastor isn’t any good is he?”

“ No, he’s amazing. I’m just not like you, I’m not comfortable talking about my sex life to

anyone either than the person I'm having sex with"

" Hmm if you say so but ngisasho pastor akakwazi ukwenza uyakurobha nje, yo ni strong Ndalo man four years yonke ubekezelele umdavazo obhedayo? No ngyakuvuma u strong"

(pastor doesn't satisfy you sexually, you're strong tolerating bad sex for four years you real are strong)

Well we didn't start having sex four years ago, we only started two years ago but I don't have to explain myself to her

“ He’s good I’m telling you”

**I don’t know if its Nthabi I’m trying to convince
or myself**

**“ One day you’ll meet someone who’ll give it to
you so good you won’t have to convince me or
anyone else about how good he is because your
glow will do the talking for you, angeke uthi
ubuya ku bae ubuye umbashe so? Never ngyala
I refuse abantu abaphiwe kamnandi ubabona
ebusweni awubabuzi, wena ubonakala nje
kuthi urojiwe”**

**“ Clearly you’ve made up your mind, there’s
nothing I’ll say to convince you otherwise”**

“ That’s because you know I’m right, uchamile nje?”

(Did you even cum)

“ Yeah, obvious”

I mutter, lying through my teeth. I’ve never experienced what cumming feels like. Like ever, I only read about orgasm from books I’m yet to experience it myself. That’s if I ever will.

“ Hmm”

It’s the last period before school out, I’m in 12A doing corrections with the class. Out of all my

classes 12A is the one I enjoy the most, pupils in this class are so eager to learn, they ask questions, participate and challenge each other. I'm always looking forward to teaching them because with them I know none of the effort I put into teaching them is in vain, I don't mean to have favourites but this class is close to my heart.

" Ngena"

(Come in)

I say when a knock on the door disturbs us, the door opens and Sabelo walks in

Did I tell you about his walk? I don't know how to explain it but there's so much confidence in each and every step he takes, Kanti usathane unjani ye? The devil is after my life stru nasi, he keeps tempting me with this boy I'm sure he wants me to lose my job. I thought spending the entire weekend with bae would help me get rid of these stupid feelings but it seems I was just fooling myself because here I am drooling over the damn kid.

Don't judge me but I quickly glance at his dick print as he walks towards me and damn the kid is packed down there, a tap on my shoulder pulls me out from my day dream. It's him, he's standing next to me looking at me with confusion mirroring his features. I look at his

hand on my shoulder, he quickly retracts it from my shoulder when he sees starring at it.

“ How dare you put your hands on me?”

I mutter through gritted teeth

“ I’m sorry ma'am but you looked a bit out of it for a moment there, I only touched because I was worried about you.”

This is the effect the kid has on me, I wonder what the learners in this class think of me after watching me zone out while starring at a high scholar like that.

“ What do you want, shouldn't you be in class?”

I say in a reprimanding tone trying to conceal how embarrassed I feel.

“ Miss Moloji sent me to ask for coloured chalks”

“There they are”

I say showing him a box on top of my table, he saunters to the table, picks out 3 different colours and walks out. I only release my breathe when the door shuts close behind him, wanna know something weird? I can still feel

his fingers on my shoulder even though he removed them over 2 or 3 minutes ago.

This is going to be a long year!

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#4

As a teenage girl dating was the last thing on my mind, while girls my age were being dribbled by mjolo I was committed to school and church. Musa and I started dating when I was 21, he's my first boyfriend and the only

person I've ever been with. In the four years that we've been together I've never looked at any other man I have always been content with what we share until now. A part of me feels guilty for feeling what I feel for the scholar, it feels as though I'm cheating on him.

I don't know what else to do to get rid of the feelings I have for Sabelo, the only way I know to overcome things is through prayer and it has never failed me up until now. I really need to talk to someone about this before I drive myself crazy and who better to talk to than Pretty, my best friend. My nerves shoot up as I put the phone against my ear waiting for her to pick up

“ Friend!” she exclaims in jubilation

“ Bestie”

I say trying to match her exhilaration

“ What’s wrong?”

Like always, she sees through me

“ I really need someone to talk to before I drive myself crazy”

“ I’m here, talk to me my love”

“ Eish. So the thing is...”

This is not something I can casually confess to someone else , I feel guilty and ashamed of myself for having these feelings for Sabelo so it's a very difficult for me to come out and say it. Pretty is my best friend and I know she will never judge me but I can't summon the courage to tell her this. I'm honestly ashamed of myself

“ The thing is?”

“ I don't know how to say this”

“ Is it that bad?”

“ It's horrible friend”

“ You know I’d never judge you but if you’re not ready to tell me then don’t”

“ No, I want to tell you.”

“ Okay, whenever you’re ready”

“ I think I have a crush on someone”

She releases shaky breath

“ Yeses! Otlampolaya man, I thought it was something big I thought you cheated or something”

(You'll kill me)

“ Trust me this is as bad as cheating”

“ Come on Ndalo you're being too hard on yourself, you're only human dating Musa doesn't mean you wont see other guys. Most people have a crush, I'm also crushing on that guy Mic Nash from idols so bad”

She doesn't get it

“ Okay maybe 'crush' is not the right word to describe what I feel for this person, like he's all I think about and what I feel for him grows

everyday, being around him gets harder and harder everyday.”

“ Yoh, that sounds serious who’s this guy?”

Here comes the difficult part but here goes nothing

“ It’s my student” I whisper

“ What? Please tell me you’re joking?”

“ I wish I was”

“ Ndalo! I don’t care how you do it but you need to get over whatever you think you feel for the boy, this could cost you your career!”

“ I know”

Awkward silence befalls us

“ How old is he?”

She says breaking the silence I guess she was still digesting the news

“ 18”

“ At least he’s not underage, friend forget about the boy and focus on your relationship. Don’t let infatuation ruin the your beautiful relationship with Musa, resist temptation my friend don’t risk your career, reputation and relationship over this please”

She beseechs

“ I won’t”

At least I hope I wont

“ Yo I’m so tired” Nthabi says

“ Yeah me too, at least it’s Friday” I say

**“ Let’s go out tomorrow, we won’t go clubbing
or drinking we can go to the mall or something”**

**“ Rain check? I already have plans with Musa
this weekend”**

She grimaces

“ And then?” I ask

“ Yilokuthi ngiyazi kuthi usayorojwa chommie, why do you insist on putting yourself through this?”

“ I don’t know what you’re talking about and unfortunately I don’t have time to find out because I’m leaving, see you on Monday bye”

I say already trudging to the door

“ Yeah run, deep down you know I’m right”

I’m on my way to Kinross, Musa's place. He doesn’t know that I’m coming the plan is to surprise him, I have the keys to his apartment

but I've never used them before and I think now is the perfect time to do so.

“ Sawubona buti kunjani?”

(Greetings my brother, how are you)

I say greeting the guard at the gate

“ Ngiphilile sisi unjani wena?”

(I'm okay my sister and you)

“ Ngiyaphila nami buti”

(I'm okay as well)

“ Angazi noma kuzoba yinkinga na kodwa ngize la e second floor yi apartment ye boyfriend yami, he’s not here but I have my own keys”

I say dangling the keys in my hand

“ Oh ngiyasho ukuthi ngiyakwazi man, cha sisi akunankinga as long as nivumelene nomnikazi mina angina nkinga”

(Now I know where I know you from, it wont be a problem as long as the owner agreed I have no objection)

Sigh

“ Thank you buti”

The first thing I do when I open the front door is to discard the clothes I’m wearing and slip into one of his shirts and my leggings, unfortunately my boyfriend’s shirts don’t look like dresses on me like they do on girls we see on the movies.

I initially wanted to prepare his favorite meal but time is not on my side so I settle for something quick and easy to make- grilled hake, mashed potatoes and a garden salad. When the clock strikes 6PM I run to the bathroom and take a quick shower, apply lotion, spritz my lady million paco rabanne perfume and wear my new lingerie haha I’m

trying to spice things up and get out of my comfort zone who knows maybe just maybe I will finally get my big O.

When I hear the sound of dangling keys I press play on my phone and Bruno Mars's Versace on the floor booms through the speakers, I'm so nervous I've never done anything like this before I hope Musa will like this. A pucker forms between his eyebrows when he walks into the room and finds me dressed in nothing but lingerie and high heels.

“ Welcome home daddy!”

I say in what was meant to be a seductive tone but because of my quavering voice I sound like I'm being strangled.

I don't know what reaction I expected but it definitely wasn't this one, no I'm lying I know what I expected I expected him to lose his mind at the sight of me you know look at me like I'm the most sexiest thing he has ever laid his eyes on and pounce on me like a wild animal seeing it's prey.

I thought he'd rip off my lingerie and have his way with me right then and there but here he is looking at me with disapproval mirroring his features, making me feel dirty like I've just committed the biggest sin.

“ Love what is this?”

“ Don’t you like what you see?”

I ask feeling despondent

“ No I don’t, why are you acting like this what’s going on this is not you my love come on put something on”

I honestly don’t understand why he’s acting like this, he has seen my nakedness a thousand times already so this can’t be so bad. Feeling like a wet dog, I shamefully toddle to his room and wear my robe over the lingerie. I feel so

low and so dirty right now, what was I thinking anyway? I shouldn't have allowed Nthabi to put ideas into my head, our sex life is fine as is!

“ Now this is the Ndalo I know, now come give me a hug”

He says with his arms stretched wide open, I throw myself in his arms and sink in his embrace. I wish I could evaporate and disappear right this minute, he tightens his arms around me and plants a peck on my forehead.

“I think your new friend is not good for you look it's not even six months since you met her and already you behave like a hooker”

Wow! So me trying to look sexy for my boyfriend is behaving like a hooker? I shove him off and walk away Musa can be rude when he wants to!

“ That came out wrong I’m sorry babe but it’s true love you can’t act like a straatmate you’re a born again Christian and we don’t act like unbelievers that’s why the bible says do not be yoked together with unbelievers”

The same bible says sex before marriage is a sin but you don’t see him refusing sex talk about double standards! Musa killed my vibe and dampened my mood all the energy I had

before he got here is gone all I want to do now is sleep.

“ At least eat first, we can't let the food you prepared go to waste”

He says when he sees me getting under the covers

“ No, please leave me alone. You've said enough already”

He kicks off his shoes, gets under the covers and holds me from behind

“ Sthandwa sami ngiyaxolisa please forgive me, I know you were only trying to spice things up but I’m happy with how things are between us. I don’t want you to feel pressured, our sex life is okay as is and I’m happy with how things are don’t be swayed by what people say out there. You have my heart, you don’t need to dress in skimpy clothes to impress me”

I’m not happy though, I need my orgasm!

“ Please future wife yami”

Now that, that has me blushing.

“ Get up and let’s go eat”

I oblige and get out of bed, we eat while listening to music. Musa won't stop moaning and complimenting my food, yeah the food tastes good but I think he's exaggerating.

“ Thanks again for the lovely meal my future wife”

He says wrapping his arms around my waist from behind, I'm standing behind the sink washing dishes.

“ Pleasure”

“ Let me help you with the dishes”

He lets go off my waist, takes another dish swab and wipes the dishes. I love that he helps out where he can, he's very hands on when it comes to house chores.

“So are your colleagues warming up to you yet?”

We are in bed now, he's facing skyward and I'm sleeping on my side and have my head on his chest.

“ I guess so but Nthabi and Mathobela are the only two people I'm close to”

“ I knew they would warm up to you, who wouldn't you're an amazing person”

My colleagues weren't exactly welcoming at first, yeah they weren't acting rude or anything but they were not welcoming either.

“ I love you”

He says and plants a long peck on my forehead and tightens his arms around me for a while then trails his fingers to my ass, I changed into a night dress before getting to bed he cups my buttocks and slightly squeezes. He's definitely turned on, his harsh breathing gives him away.

He puts his finger under my chin and pulls me in for a passionate kiss, the kiss is amazing I can't help but moan in his mouth. His hands move from my buttocks to my boobs, he cups my boob with one hand while kneading the nipple with another driving me crazy with lust. He puts his hand inside my underwear and encircles his finger around my opening, I involuntarily spread my legs apart giving him access to my haven. He dips his finger inside my wet nuna and finger-fucks me for a while and before I know it both my nightdress and underwear are being thrown across the room and he's getting on top of me.

His shaft feels hard as steel against my stomach, he's about to push himself in when I push him back halting his movements.

“ What is it baby?”

He asks looking at me with red half hooded eyes

“ I want us to try something”

“ Something, what is that?”

This is going to be hard

“ Uhm ...I”

“Come on, baby I’m dying here”

**“ You know like when two people are in love
and ..eish”**

**He sighs heavily, gets off me and plops beside
me unable to hide his irritation**

“Look at what you’ve done”

He says showing me his now flaccid dick

“ I’m sorry”

I feed bad

“ Arg never mind tell me what you wanted to say I’m all ears”

“ I wanted to say we should try oral sex”

I blurt out and hold my breath after uttering the words from my mouth, you never know with Musa

“ What!”

“ Yes”

“ No we will not do any of those ungodly things, you see why I was saying your friend is not good for you? Since when do you want to have oral sex, You’ve changed come down let’s pray”

I have no choice but to climb down the bed and kneel beside him and hold his hand while he prays, maybe Musa is right I’ve changed a lot since I started hanging around Nthabi. I am lucky to have Musa by my side, because I know he will never allow me to stray from the path of righteousness.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#5

I spent the entire weekend listening to Musa go on and on about how bad my friendship with Nthabiseng is and to be honest he's right, all Nthabi talks about is sex, orgasms and more sex! I've neglected my relationship with God, I can't remember the last time I took on a fast, attended the evening prayer or woke at midnight to pray. Lately all I do is fantasize about Sabelo nothing more, hear me well I'm not saying Nthabi is responsible for any of that but y'all know 'birds of the same feathers flock

together' we spend so much time together it was either I influence her or she influences me.

“ U snux namhlanje what's up?”

I've been trying to find a good way to break the news to her, the last thing I want to do is offend her.

“ I don't know Nthabi I don't think our friendship will work, we are two different people and maybe we shouldn't be friends”

“ Wow!”

She exclaims and claps her hands

“ Let me guess Pastor put you up to this?”

“ What? Of course not”

“ Don’t patronize me wena, I know what you are and aren’t capable of and this? This definitely has Mfundisi all over it”

“ Nthabi please don’t make this any harder”

“ There’s no getting rid of me, you and I will keep being friends. For the first time since I started working here I have someone who I connect with and actually consider a friend, there’s no way I’m letting your boyfriend come

between us. I promise I'll stay out of your business from now on"

Now I feel bad

" Aw Nthabi you're making me feel bad"

" Don't feel bad he's your boyfriend so I get it"

Ishu!

Today Nthabi wanted to have pap and steak for lunch so we drove to the local chisanyama five minutes before lunch to buy the takeaways, when we came back it was 11:45 exactly 15 minutes before lunch ends so we had no choice

but to eat in her car because going all the way up to my office would waste our time.

“Damn it this boy will have me breaking rules”

She says and takes a huge bite of her steak, y’all should see how fast we are eating right now. It’s hilarious

“ Who?”

“ That one”

She points at a guy who has a girl on his lap I can’t see his face because his head is buried on her chest, Modimo is this even allowed on the

school premises? When he looks up I see it's Sabelo, I feel a sharp pain in my heart at the sight of him with someone else. Am I jealous?

“ Yabona ngwana ona o hot my friend, I don't do kids but I would definitely do him”

She says completely oblivious to the change in my mood.

“ Don't tell me you'd be willing to lose your job because of someone like him, I know he's cute and all but definitely not worth you losing your job”

I wish I could listen to my own advice, I don't know how many times I have tried to shove the feelings I have for the kid down the drain and instead of going away they grow stronger each and every day.

“ To be honest I don't want to date him, ke ngwana ketla omo etsang? The only thing I want from him is one round, he looks like he can give a good fuck!” she says

I have nothing to say so I keep quiet

“Look at those hands damn I can already imagine them spanking my naughty ass”

I cross my legs when I feel my clit twitch as I imagine him doing exactly that to me

“ Stop it he is a kid!”

She should really stop before I pool my panties

“ A hot one at that, don't tell me you don't find him attractive”

“ He's cute but he's nothing but a kid so no I don't find him attractive, I'm not attracted to kids!” I say

I wish that was true

“You can’t call someone like him a kid Ndalo, trust me I’ve been around for a while and I know these things that boy is anything but a kid. Have you seen his dickprint? He’s bigger than some of the guys I’ve been with”

I squeeze my legs tighter as I feel my panties soak, my heart is suddenly beating fast and I’m sweating damn I need air!

“ What’s going on, why are you fidgeting? ..oh my goodness you’re even sweating. Are you okay?”

The siren goes off saving me from Nthabi's million questions.

“ I’m okay, I just need the bathroom”

I don’t wait for her to reply, I step out of the car and run towards the bathroom. Thank goodness there’s no one inside, I unbuckle my belt and lower my jeans together with my panties and just like I thought my panties are soaking wet! I quickly take them off and slip them in my pockets.

I almost cry when I check my timetable, I have a double period at 12B I’m going to need strength to do this. I say a quick prayer before walking inside, everyone settles down when

they see me walk in except for this one girl I think her name is Zandile.

“ Am I invisible to you Zandile?”

“ Yo umuntu azokubangela iscefe uzibuyela e break(ini)” she says

Her classmates gasp and exclaim in shock while a few are trying so hard not to laugh.

This girl has been giving attitude from day one, she’s the same girl I asked to leave my class that day. I don’t know what she has against me but the way the girl has been giving me attitude

one would swear we are sharing a dick or something like that.

“ Zandile, take your bag and leave my class!”

She ignores me and presses her phone.

“ Well I won't teach until Zandile leaves the class”

I announce to the rest of the class

“ Never we will not suffer because of Zandile Class, makaphume lo!” kamva says

“ Vele maka phume thina sifuna ukufunda”

(She should leave, we want to learn)

Thato adds

“ Phuma Zandile!”

(Get out)

All the learners chorus

**Zandile has no choice but to leave seeing that
some of her classmates are already standing
next to her ready to forcefully throw her out of
the class**

“ Oh and one more thing, never set your foot in my class again. When I walk in, you walk out. Understood?”

I say before she walks out of the door

“ Listen up class, we are all adults here and everyone knows what’s right and what’s wrong. I won’t tolerate being disrespected, if you feel like I’m wasting your time by standing in front and teaching you then you are more than welcome to leave, no one will stop you.”

A hand goes up, it’s Kamva

“ Yes Kamva”

“ Ma'am I know we were disrespectful when you came to class for the first time but we have been behaving, we love and respect you please don't punish us for Zandile's sins, please don't give up on us. Personally my marks for Life Sciences have improved since you started teaching us, you're a great teacher ma'am”

“ It's true ma'am you're a good teacher or ngingamanga class?” Linda

“ NO!!!”

Oh my God I'm so emotional right now, I catch Sabelo looking at me with wide smile on his

face. Sabelo rarely speaks, he only speaks when spoken to.

It's a Sunday morning and like every Sunday morning in the khumalo house we are budding heads running around like headless chickens preparing ourselves for church, my sisters and I prepared the salads last night before going to bed, so today my mother is only cooking rice, meat and gravy.

“ Ses'Ndalo can I please use your shower Melo is in the bathroom please” Anele

I've done a lot of things in my house since I started working, I added three rooms to my parents house- dining room, guest bedroom and another bedroom for Melo. I also added an ensuite bathroom in my parents bedroom so that they don't share with my sisters and added a shower to my room, if it was up to me I'd knock this house to the ground and build my parents a big house but they refused when I suggested it they say they would rather I build myself a house than to spend all my money on them well it's not like I earn that much anyway but I'd do anything for my parents.

“ Angiwuthandi umuzi omkhulu mina” that's what my mother said when I pitched the house idea to them

“ Ok but make it snappy I also want to shower”

I say to Anele

“ Thanks sis”

She runs to her room to fetch the towel and toiletries and runs outside to my room.

At exactly 10 AM my father drives out his bakkie from the garage we all know if you're not done he's going to leave you, fortunately everyone is done so we drive to church listening to Ntokozo Mbambo, my mother loves her music.

The service was amazing and powerful like always, after church my sisters attend youth meeting while I attend the young adults meeting.

“ Good afternoon young adults”

Greets Pastor Zabeko, the young adults pastor.

“ Afternoon pastor” we say

“ Today’s meeting will be brief unfortunately I don’t have good news, during the service I received a message from brother Sizwe's mother. It is with a heavy heart and great

sadness that I announce the passing of our fellow member brother Sizwe Nxumalo"

People gasp in shock, I'm also shocked this guy was perfectly fine last week what could've happened to him suddenly and claimed his life?

" Pastor what happened to him?"- Tumiso

" He had a severe headache yesterday and died on his way to the hospital"

People mumble amongst themselves, sadness and shock evident in their faces

" Let's keep quiet please" – Pastor Zabeko

They stop talking and lend him an ear

**“ Since he was a member of the young adults,
every member is therefore requested to
contribute at least R50 each.”**

**“ Oh and another thing, avail yourselves
tomorrow at 5 in the evening for cry cry at his
house”**

**“kuzwakele mfundisi” - Khetho
(we hear you pastor)**

**“ Ok ningakhululeka ke”
(meeting adjourned)**

We all stand up and go our separate ways

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NARRATED

The Khumalo's are sitting in their car waiting for their daughters so they can all drive home and have their Sunday meal as a family

“ Sanibonani”

Says a smiling Mrs Sibisi standing on the passenger side

“ Sawubona ma kunjani?” – Khumalo says

(Greetings, how are you)

“ I’m okay sir can’t complain, can I please steal your beautiful wife for a minute?” MaSibisi

“ it’s okay, I don’t have a problem”

MaKhumalo steps out of the car and follows MaSibisi to the tree, they stand under the shade protecting themselves from the scorching sun.

“ Don’t look so worried it’s nothing bad”

MaSibisi says when she sees how restless the other woman is

“ What’s going on sisi?”

“ It’s about our kids my friend, my son told me and his father that he wants to take your daughter as his wife”

MaKhumalo ululates pacing up and down drawing the attention of the other church members who are now starring at them with curiosity on their faces.

“ I was just as happy when he told us, we are finally going to be family. I’m so happy”

The two ladies hold each other tight in an embrace

“ Khumalo will be so happy when I share the news with him” MaKhumalo says when they break the hug

“ Sibisi was also thrilled when he heard the news, we have been waiting for this for years and I couldn't be happier now that it's finally happening”.

MaKhumalo drops to her knees and looks up to the sky with her hands stretched up to the heavens

“ God you’re wonderful, first you gave my daughter a job now this. Oh how can I thank you for all you’ve done for my daughter, oh Lord you’re truly amazing my father”

LOVE KNOW NO AGE

#6

“ Oh baba siyabonga konke okwenzileyo nakonke okunye okuhle okuzayo”

My mother has been singing this song the entire drive from church

Something is definitely going on between my parents, I noticed how they keep smiling at each other every two minutes. We are in the dining room now setting the table and plating the food, mom is humming a song with a wild smile pasted on her face.

“ Mama what’s going on, why are you so happy?” Anele

“ I’d also like to know mama” Melo adds

“ Patience my girls patience, Nele please tell your father we are done he can come and join us”.

Anele walks out and returns to the dining room two minutes later with my father on her tail, we all settle down and say a prayer before we dig in. I’m yet to meet a person who cooks as good as my mother does, the woman can cook!

**“ Nkosikazi tell Buhle what MaSibisi told you”
Dad**

“ Buhle today after church MaSibisi asked to have a word with me, you’ll never guess what she told me my child”

She says unable to conceal her happiness

“ What did she say mama?”

“ She told me Musa wants to get married to you, isn't that great news?”

Both my sisters scream in jubilation

They stand up and wrap their arms around me squeezing the life out of me, everyone is happy about the news and lord knows I've wanted this since we started dating but I'm not happy as I thought I would be now that it's finally happening.

**“ Let go of my child, you’re suffocating her”
my mother says**

My sisters laugh and let go of me

“ I can’t believe my sister is getting married”

**“ Better believe it Nele, my daughter is getting
married. I had doubts about that boy but he
proved me wrong by doing this, he’s a good
man.”**

**My father singing Musa's praises? Now that’s a
first**

“ I always knew he would do the right thing, he was raised well”

Musa's biggest supporter this one

“ So sis are you happy?” Melo asks

“ What are you saying, of course she’s happy isn’t it Buhle?”

“ Of course I’m happy ma”

“ Hmm”

Melo says clearly not satisfied with my answer.

Musa's proposal becomes the topic throughout our lunch, wait can I even call whatever this is a proposal?

**“ Wow ses'Ndalo soon you'll be Mrs Sibisi”
Anele**

“I am so happy God is really good” Dad

“ Please excuse me I have scripts to mark”

“ I'm very happy for you my girl, you've made your father and I very proud congratulations once again”

“ Thank you ma”

The first thing I do when I get to my room is call Musa, he has some explaining to do.

“Musa Sibisi!!”

“ Love what’s wrong, why are you shouting?”

“ How can you do this?”

“ What did I do?”

“ You told our parents about your intentions to marry me without talking to me first?”

“Ndalo I’ve made my intentions with you known from day one and you never objected, not so long ago you loved the idea of being my wife now tell me would telling you change anything?”

“ No but a heads up would’ve been nice”

“ You no longer want to get married to me is that it?”

“ What? No, of course I want to get married to you”

“ Then why are you complaining? Do you know how blessed you are, many girls would kill to be in your place right now”

“ You’re right, I should be happy and trust me I am happy but I think it’s a bit too soon”

“ Wow, after four long years together you’re telling me it’s too soon for marriage?”

Okay that didn’t come out well

“ What I mean is, I just started working and I still want to help out at home before I get married”

“ What’s going to stop you from doing that when we are married? That’s an excuse and you know it”

Maybe I’m being ungrateful, I mean here’s a good man asking for my hand in marriage and I don’t appreciate him. Other people can only dream of something like this and here I am rejecting God’s blessings and being ungrateful.

“ So he didn’t bother proposing or anything like that?”

Nthabi asks after I tell her about Musa’s “proposal”

“ Yeah”

“ Okay!”

**“ Khuluma I know you want to say something”
(Talk)**

“ No, I promised to stay out of your business”

“ Are you seriously going to make me beg? Just talk already I know you’re dying to talk”

“ I don’t know friend but pastor sounds a bit...controlling. Does he normally do this?”

“ Do what?”

“ Tell you what to do and make decisions without consulting you first?”

“What no never! Musa is not like that, he didn't tell me about this because he knew I'd agree I mean we've wanted this for a long time now”

“ Okay I hear you but I'm not convinced darling you don't sound exactly thrilled about this whole marriage idea, do you even want to get married to him?”

“ Of cause I do, don’t you?”

“ We are talking about you here but to answer your question no I don’t want to get married, I don’t see myself as someone’s wife I value my independence too much to give it up to a man all in the name of marriage”

I don’t reply, it’s obvious Nthabi and I are different and want different things from life maybe Musa is right. Nthabi isn’t exactly the type of person I should keep close, maybe it’s about time I created a distance between us.

I know I said I wasn’t ready to get married yet but I do have intentions to get married in the future, Musa is right why delay the inevitable? I

will get married to him anyway so why not do it now? Why wait for later? I can't wait to be Mrs Sibisi I know his family adores me, not many women can say the same I'm blessed to be honest. From here things can only get better and better

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. .
. .

SABELO

“ Hey! Bring that back”

I bellow behind her, this girl just snatched my drawing and ran.

“ Nope I want to see who you’re always drawing”

“ Sphehleh I’m not playing with you give back my drawing!”

“ No!”

I catch up to her and snatch the paper from her hands, the paper gets torn as a result.

“ Geez all that because I tried to look at your drawing!”

“ I told you I didn’t want to show it to you, did you have to insist?”

“ When did you start keeping things from me, you used to share everything with me Sabelo what changed?”

“ I grew up! you should also try it sometime and please stop budging into my room like this. Now get out!”

She blinks repeatedly and saunters to the door, I know she’s about to cry and I hate it when she cries. I cant help but run behind her and wrap my arms around her

“ I’m was a jerk and I’m sorry”

“ What’s happened to us Sabelo?”

She asks when we break the hug

“ What do you mean?”

“ Come on, you know what I mean. You and I used to be tight, you could talk to me about anything and everything. I used to be the first person you showed your drawings to but lately you’ve been.. I don’t know, distant”

“ I’m sorry you feel that way, it really wasn’t my intention to make you feel that way. You know I love you right?”

“ I know”

“ Then stop worrying yourself unnecessarily, you and I are fine. We will never not be fine, you’re a part of me and I’m a part of you we are connected for life. Not even death can separate us, come on Sphe you know this”

She giggles

Damn that giggle warms my heart

“ Yeah I know”

“ Now stop talking nonsense, you and I are okay but you need to understand that there are things I can't share with you”

“ But why?”

“ Come on Sphe, I'm sure you also don't tell me about every little thing that goes on in your life”

“ But I do”

How do I get out of this one?

“ Okay but you need to respect my privacy like I respect yours, we are no longer kids. You can’t just budge into my room as you please and go through my things without my permission”

“ Okay I get it, I’m sorry”

“ It’s okay, as long as you don’t do it again”

“ I promise I won’t, I love you Sabelo”

“ I love you too, now please leave my room”

“ Geez you can be so rude mawuthandile”

She says and walks out of my bedroom.

Whew that was close, she almost saw my drawing. She's my sister and I know what she'll say when she sees who I've been drawing, I'm not ready to be judged. For now I just want to enjoy what I feel without anyone else's interference, I know I shouldn't be feeling the way I do but tell that to my heart!

Sphesihle is my twin and only sibling, my mother had multiple miscarriages before she conceived us. Everyone had given up on my her ever carrying a pregnancy to term and dad's family was even suggesting he take a

second wife, someone to bare him children since my mother couldn't.

Everyone had given up on my mother, including herself but God being God did the unthinkable and blessed my parents with not only one but two healthy babies a son and a daughter to complete their family. My father was so happy when the doctor told him that his wife gave birth to two babies, his response was " Sabelwe Isphehleh" and that's how we became Sabelo and Sphehleh.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#7

Death is something else, we all know we are going to die some day yet we can never get used to the pain of losing a loved one. The pain cuts deep everytime, I can't imagine the pain Sizwe's family is going through right now. As a parent it can't be easy to see your child lying in a coffin, parents shouldn't bury their kids it's not right but what can we say? Life doesn't always go the way we want or plan, like Pretty would say ' we plan but God decides'.

Today is Saturday, the day of Sizwe's funeral. Members of the church and of the young adults came in numbers to say good bye to one of

their own, the sadness that is reflected in people's faces is heart-breaking Sizwe was so young and had so much to live for. I think premature death hurts more than any other death because we cant even console ourselves by saying 'he lived', I mean his life was just getting started and I'm sure he had many hopes and dreams for the future, death be not proud.

The worship team is in front singing Sizwe's favourite song ' in the shadow of your wings' by Ntokozo Mbambo, almost everyone inside the church is in tears but his mother's loud sob is distinguishable from everyone else's, it's heart wrenching and brings tears to my own eyes.

“ Brethren please give our lovely worship team a hand, thank you my kids you may go back to your seats” Pastor Mahlangu

We clap hands as members of the worship team walk back to their seats.

“ Hurt and Grief are guaranteed in this world. When you read John (16:33) Jesus tells us that we will have trouble but that we can take heart because he has overcome the world, through the scripture we can be comforted by knowing that God is faithful, and is always looking over us. He truly cares and is our protector and comforter in times of need. Whatever the circumstances may be, we can always rely on

**the word of God to find a peace that surpasses
all understanding amen bazalwane”**

“ Amen!”

**“ I would like to dedicate my message to the
young people I know most of you are hurt and
questioning God. Sizwe was still young and had
a lot to live for, but reality is nowadays we are
burying more young people than old yet we still
find people who think they are too young to
walk in the path of righteousness because they
believe they still have time ‘ I still want to
enjoy my youth, I will repent at a later stage'
they say. I feel sorry for those who still believe
they have time, tomorrow is not promised to
anyone, no one knows when the lord will**

remember them we are living on borrowed time so living in sin because you think you still have time is utter foolishness. Death doesn't give notice, it comes when you least expect it so repent and accept Jesus as your lord and saviour while you still have time. I know most if not all of you feel sorry for Sizwe but I'd say feel sorry for yourselves if you're still not saved, Sizwe accepted Jesus as his lord and saviour and he died while walking on the path of righteousness- the word of God says blessed are those who die in the Lord that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them! So instead of feeling sorry for Sizwe ask yourself this question if you were to die today where would your soul go? If you are unsure of the answer then I suggest you fix your relationship with God because death doesn't

give notice, it comes like a thief in the night.
However death is not an enemy of a believer in
Jesus Christ because through him we don't die
but receive eternal life. Repent and accept
Jesus as the only lord and saviour of your life
muntu omusha!"

Silence lingers in the room as we all digest the
pastor's words

"John 16 verse 22 says so with you: Now in
your time of grief, but I will see you again and
you will rejoice, and no one will take away
your joy. To the Dlamini family ngithi dudu
kini, hlalani enkosini nase mandleni ayo
amakhulu. Ngizovala ngo Matthew 11 verse 28
to 29 ' come to me, all you who are weary and

burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. With this words I would like to say to the Dlamini family- don't move from your position, this is the time to stay in the house of the lord, the time to glorify God more than before, Sizwe fulfilled his purpose sekusele mina nawe ngabe thina siyofelaphi na?"

The pastor continues to preach until the mortuary people arrive, he quickly wraps up the sermon when he sees them and says a quick prayer. The worship teams sings a hymn as the men dressed in black and white carry the coffin to the hearse outside, his mother and the rest of the Dlamini family leave first then we all

follow behind them. Y'all know when it's time to go to the cemetery, everyone looks for that one person they know has a car so they can be their transport because let's face it no one enjoys taking the bus we all use it as a last resort but fortunately for me I don't have to worry about how I'll get to the cemetery because my boyfriend has a car so I'll ride with him.

“ The service was very sad and emotional I swear I almost shed a tear" Tokello

We are not driving to the cemetery alone, Musa's friends from church Tokello and Hloni are riding with us.

“ You and me both man, life is so short who knew that we were seeing Sizwe for the last time week before last?” Musa

“ Tell me about it man.” Hloni

His mother cries hysterically when she has to throw soil to his grave, I look around and see a couple of girls from church crying as well. I won't lie I am also emotional but I didn't cry I was not used to Sizwe, I only knew him as a member of the church nothing more. After the very heart-breaking send off we all go back to his house to eat.

“ Musa I'll go sit with Thuli ne”

I say after getting my plate

“ No you’ll sit with us, if Thuli wants to sit with you then she has to come here”

“ Aibo Musa let the girl be it, think about it being surrounded by males must be uncomfortable for her” Tokelo

“No, she’s very comfortable here right my love?”

He says and flashes me his beautiful smile and I can’t help but nod

“ Tell her to come here then” Musa

#* T come join us*#

I send a text to Thuli who replies almost immediately

#* Nope, I want us to talk freely you know how your boyfriend is*#

#* I guess we will talk some other time then*#

“ What did she say?”

“ What she wants to talk to me about is private, so we will talk another time”

“ There are no secrets between us so clearly she wants to tell you ungodly things that’s why she wants to target you alone, she knows you’re weaker”

Wow!

“ Come on man it’s probably girl stuff” Hloni

“ That’s bull! How come I can talk with you guys in Ndalo’s presence yet Thuli can’t do the same? It’s obvious that whatever she wants to talk to her about is not good”

**“ You’re being crazy, Ndalo go to your friend
don’t mind him he is being crazy” Tokelo**

I offer him a thin smile

“No it’s fine I’ll talk to her some other time”.

**It’s been four months since I started working
here and what I feel for Sabelo can no longer be
called a ‘ crush’, what I feel for him is foreign
it’s something I’ve never felt for anyone before-
well not for Musa. My body is aware of him, I
can always feel his presence before I even see**

him it's like the world stops moving everytime he walks in the room. I don't know if he can see that I'm attracted to him but boy be starring at me every time I'm in class, he never says anything but the look in his eyes speaks volumes.

Remember Zandile the girl I threw out from my class for giving me attitude? Yes her. I wasn't playing when I told her to leave the class everytime I walk in, she probably thought I was joking because mogirl came to my class the following day and I threw her out- this went on for weeks until she brought her mother to school. When the principal summoned me to his office, I expected to find those typical kasi moms who come to school with the intention to

‘ tell off the teacher' but I walked into a humble and down to earth mother instead the lady forced her daughter to apologize to me and that’s how I allowed Zandile back in my class and she’s been behaving ever since.

I tried to create a distance between Nthabi and I but she wouldn’t let me, she kept pushing and forcing her friendship on me until I had no choice but to give in to her. I love Nthabi and I enjoy being friends with her, she’s different from me and that’s what I love about her the most so to save our friendship I decided to stop telling her about my relationship seeing that the topic was always the source of our disagreements in the past.

Musa doesn't like her so when Nthabi and I fixed our friendship and reconciled I chose not to tell him about it, those two have never met but the way they hate each other! It's a pity because both of them are important to me and I wouldn't want to lose either of them.

On other unrelated news, I feel more and more emotionally detached from Musa. I don't know if the detachment results from the feelings I have for the scholar but I no longer enjoy his kisses and my blood runs cold everytime he tries to caress my body, and sex? Well that's pure torture, I make excuses everytime he initiates it but I don't know how long he'll keep taking my excuses.

You must be wondering about the wedding, well his parents and mine are so excited about the wedding and want it to happen as soon as possible but if I'm being honest I'm not sure this is what I want. How do I get married to someone whom I'm emotionally and sexually detached to? What will our marriage even be like, will I be one of those women who fake orgasms in order to pacify their husbands so that they feel men enough?

I know breaking up with him seems like the right thing to do at the moment but this is not just any relationship, families are involved and emotionally invested in our union so if I were to break up with him a lot of people would be affected, my family being one of them so I

cannot afford to be selfish and think only about myself .

Breaking off the engagement would hurt my mother not to mention shame her in the society, we all know the girl always takes the blame everytime things don't work in a relationship. I am willing to put my parent's happiness above my own, getting married to Musa cant be that bad right? I was in love with this person at some point and I know I can learn to love him again so yeah I'm going through with the wedding, my parent's happiness matters more than my own.

It's a few minutes after 2 in the afternoon, if there are people who know what school out

means in the entire school then it has to be Grade 8C those kids packed up their bags and ran out of the classroom as soon as the siren rang. I'm packing my bag preparing myself to leave when I feel a presence behind me, I expect the person to say something but there's nothing. I can feel his presence but that would be plain crazy, why would he sneak up on me? It has to be Moeng.

" Moeng"

I say without turning around, lately he has a tendency of sneaking up on me. few seconds pass without a reply, but I can feel him walking closer and closer to me from the back. This is getting creepy, I quickly swivel around only to

**come face to face with Sabelo imagine my
shock!.**

“ What are you doing here?”

**I ask with my hand on my chest trying to
steady my breathing**

“Ndalo I...”

“ Miss Khumalo, it’s Miss Khumalo to you”

**I say cutting him short, how the hell does he
know my name?**

He clears his throat and takes steps towards me closing the distance between us.

“Yes miss Khumalo”

His breath is fanning my face and making me uncomfortable so I step backwards to create a distance between us but the boy keeps taking steps forward until I’m backed in a corner. He towers over me and rests his hands on either side of my waist

Don’t ask me why I’m letting this happen

“ You’re so beautiful”

He whispers looking at me like I'm the most precious thing his eyes have ever seen, it's like he's trying to figure out if I'm real or not.

Now that I'm looking at him this close I notice that his iris is blue instead of the normal black or brown colour that most black people have making him look even more handsome.

His hands slowly move from my waist to my hips and down to my thighs, my heart drums in my chest and my breathing hitches as my body trembles under his touch. The weather is a bit chilly today so I'm wearing a black leather skirt, knee high maroon boots and a maroon coat.

“ Wwhhat do you think you’re doing Sabelo?”

I say in what was meant to be a firm tone but my voice comes off like a whisper making me sound like those girls who say NO while their body language says YES

Instead of answering my question he continues to caress my thighs, the skirt rides up to my waist leaving all my thick thighs out for Sabelo to feast his eyes on. I feel heat all over my body when his hands land on my bare thighs

“ Let go off me Sabelo”

He doesn't reply but keeps caressing my thighs and hips instead. An involuntary moan escapes my lips, damn the things the boy is doing to me! He bows his head and locks eyes with me, I don't know what to make of the look in his eyes but it looks like he's seeking my permission to go further and in that moment reality kicks in what am I doing? For goodness sake I can lose my job, reputation, family and fiancé over this.

I use all my strength to shove him off and give him a tight slap.

“ If you ever repeat what you did I promise I will report you!”

He cradles his cheek in his palm

**“ You can fight it all you want but you’ll
eventually be mine in the end because we both
know that you belong to me”**

He says and walks away

**The confidence and certainty in his voice
leaves me bewildered, what does that even
mean?**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#8

I still can't believe I had my thighs out, panting and breathing heavily completely under Sabelo's spell imagine if someone had walked in on us? I don't even want to think about what will happen to me if anyone finds out what I did with Sabelo. In my entire 25 years of life no one has ever made me feel like the boy did, he looked at me like I'm the most precious thing he has ever laid his eyes on, for the first time in my life I didn't feel insecure or the need to hide myself because the look in his eyes told me I am perfect the way I am and I loved it!

I have this burning desire to tell someone about what happened with Sabelo but I don't think there's anyone I can trust with this, I know my sisters would judge me and possibly tell my parents if I were to tell them about any of this. I also can't tell Nthabi about this, I don't know her well enough to trust her with something of this magnitude what if she's those type of girls who air your dirty laundry when you fight or have a disagreement? I could lose my job over this so I can't risk it!

I hope Sabelo won't go bragging to his friends, y'all know teenage boys and their ego's! they can do absolutely anything to be known as panty-droppers and 'almost shagging' his teacher can do wonders for his rep, this could

be part of some stupid bet with his friends for all we know. Ask me why I let him go that far with me. What have I done? How do I stand in front and teach him? Will I be able to reprimand and rebuke him when he's wrong or will he disrespect me because he has seen me in the most vulnerable position? I don't know what's going to happen from here going forward but I know one thing for certain- I'll never look at him the same way.

“What's on your mind my friend?”

“ Nothing why?”

“ I don't know but you don't look okay”

That's because I'm not okay

“ You're seeing things, I'm okay Nthabi”

“ Could've fooled me, we both know you're not okay but I promised to butt out from your business and I'll do just that. I know you no longer trust me with your private life but for what is worth, I've only ever wanted what is best for you”

Her words sting because it's true, she's been nothing but a good friend. Yeah she is blunt at times but I know it comes from a good place.

“ Nope, friend it’s not that. I’m just not ready to talk about it but I promise I’ll tell you when I’m ready”

“ You shouldn’t feel forced to tell me anything my love worry not, when you’re ready just know I’m here”

“ I know and I appreciate your presence in my life”

Nthabi has been nothing but a good friend to me, I know she genuinely cares about me I may not agree with her approach sometimes but I know it all comes from a good place.

The siren goes off marking the end of my free period

“ There goes my free period”

“ Shame, mina ngisese free namanje”

(It’s still a free period for me)

“ Hah Nthabi angeke show me your timetable”

She hands me her timetable, my eyes widen in shock when I see the number of free periods she has on her timetable

“ Nthabi angeke nami ngibonise lomuntu omuhambayo never wena why unama free angaka”

(Show me the person who gives you muti, why do you have so many free periods)

We laugh

“ Let me go to class”

“ Sharp”

I’m not looking forward to seeing Sabelo but ke Ndalo Khumalo is many things but a coward isn’t one of them, I don’t shy away from challenges I face them head on. This is another

milestone I have to overcome- facing Sabelo for the first time after what happened yesterday.

I knock once and push the door open, I'd give anything for him to be absent today but ke I know that is nothing but a far-fetched dream Sabelo is never absent from school. I glance at his direction expecting to see a arrogant and boastful smug look on his face, I mean the boy did get me all hot and bothered surely he must be proud of himself but I see none of that. He's looking at me like yesterday never happened, he's looking at me like he always did. He's the same old Sabelo Meyiwa.

“ Good afternoon 12B”

“ Good afternoon ma'am" they chorus

“ Okay today we will start a new chapter, the human endocrine system. I will write notes on the board to simplify some of the things from the textbook and explain tomorrow, you all know what to do right?”

“ We go through them on our own”

“ Good”

There’s shuffling for a while then the room goes silent as all the learners copy the notes on the board to their notebooks, when my period ends

I go to the maths office and find Moeng and Mathobela inside.

“ Don’t tell you guys are also free”

“ Yes we are actually” Moeng

“ Yo, Gwala definitely has a problem nami you should see how packed my timetable is. I free ngiyay'qabuka”

(I hardly get a free period)

They laugh

“ Nonsense, I think it’s because you’re teaching all the grades while I only teach 10 to 12”

Mathobela

**“ Wena uyi HOD ngeke sphike nawe” Moeng
(you’re a HOD we won’t compare ourselves to
you)**

“ True” I say

**“ What’s up? You don’t look okay?” Moeng
asks**

Am I really that easy to read?

Moeng had a thing for me and to be honest he's the type I'd go for, he's a committed man of God, well mannered and very down to earth but unfortunately I'm already taken so he settled for friendship. You know men always say they don't mind being friends but keep making advances? Well not Moeng, he has never tried anything with me since I turned him down and I respect him for that.

“ Eish, I'll be fine”

“ What is it, is it the kids or it's something private”

“ No it has nothing to do with my private life, I’m just worried about the upcoming exams I hope my learners perform well”

“ Don’t worry they will, with a teacher like you they have no choice but to pass. Relax “

Mathobela

“ Wow, thank you sir it means a lot coming from you”

We keep the conversation going until two PM- School out. Attempting to go to my class now will be taking chances, all the learners are rushing to be the first one’s out of the gate so I’d rather wait for a couple of minutes before

heading out. When I get to my class I'm shocked to find Sabelo inside.

“ What do you want here?”

“ I want you”

“I don't know what you think this is but I'm not your friend, I'm your teacher and you're my student so please respect me don't force me to report you to the principal”

“ You are allowed to do what you think is right Miss Khumalo just like I'll do what is right for me”

He closes the gap between us

“ And this feels right”

He says moving his forefinger between us

**“ I don’t have time for this, Sabelo please leave.
Don’t force me to call security”**

“ You don’t have to, I’ll leave..for now”

He winks at me and walks out

**How an 18 year old possess so much
confidence and authority is a mystery to me,**

why is he not intimidated by me? Ngeke Sabelo is not a boy, he's a man trapped in a boy's body
stru nasi!

**

It's been a few days since I threatened to report Sabelo to the principal, I wish I can say it worked but I'd be lying it didn't the boy keeps coming to my class everyday. I'm honestly running out of things to threaten him with, I've never met anyone as daring as he is and it's kind of sexy. Hey don't give me that look.

If it was anyone else I would have long reported him but I happen to have real feelings for this person so reporting him is not an

option, they could suspend him and he can't afford that not with June exams approaching and I honestly don't know how long I'll be able to resist him, truth is I'm dying to be with him it takes me reminding myself what's at stake to resist him.

I'm marking the 8C Natural Science's test scripts when the door opens, I sigh heavily when I see him walk in. I honestly don't have time for this today

“ What do you want Sabelo, I'm very busy I don't have time for your nonsense today”

Of course he doesn't reply, he walks towards my desk and takes one script from the table

“ I can help you mark”

“ What do you want from me Sabelo? Whatever game you’re playing is starting to annoy me!”

I snap

You’d expect him to look scared or something but not him, he looks completely unaffected by my outburst.

I jolt up from my seat and attempt to drag him to the door but it’s a futile exercise, boy doesn’t shift an inch despite my attempt to push him.

He pulls me to his arms and my lips are

covered in his within a blink of an eye, holy Mary his lips taste better than I've ever imagined.

I wish I can say I pushed him off or gave him a tight slap like the last time but I didn't, I reciprocated the kiss and clung to him for dear life instead. I feel my panties soak, damn no one has ever kissed me like this I never knew a kiss could be so sexual.

I forget all about Musa, my family and everything else and enjoy the kiss. Without a warning he whisks me off my feet like I weigh nothing, I have no choice but wrap my legs around his waist and cling to him for dear life

“ Baby just relax okay, I won’t drop you”

Can you blame me though? Musa couldn’t lift me up after all so I’m not used to this, I always believed I was too fat to be picked up.

“ Please trust me okay, I would never let you fall”

He clears the table with one hand throwing my scripts all over the floor and gently puts me on top of the table, before I know it my lips are covered in his while his hands roam all over my body making me feel all sorts of things I knew I was capable of feeling. He lifts up my dress, pushes my underwear to the side and spreads my legs apart.

That look again, he's seeking approval and something tells me he won't continue until I give my consent.

" Please don't stop" I beseech

My words give him the approval he so desperately needed, he immediately drops to his knees and buries his face on my nuna and swipes his tongue on my wetness. I bite my lip to muffle the moans that threaten to escape my lips, so this is the pleasure Musa has been denying me all this time? That's plain evil!

The way he licks, bites and sucks on my nuna has me breathing like a tired dog, I don't know what to do with my hands I find myself tightening my legs around his face and grinding my nuna on his face. Oh my goodness I've never felt so much pleasure in my life, this feels so good I'm trying so hard not to burst to tears- have you ever felt so much joy that you wanted to cry? That's exactly how I feel at the moment.

He spreads my buttocks and guides his tongue to my ass, a loud moan escapes my lips thixo I couldn't hold myself this is too good! My toes curl and a wave of pleasure washes through me and I cum all over his face, creaming him with my juices. Damn that felt great, orgasming that is!

He licks me clean then pecks my nuna, takes off my panties and pulls down my dress.

“ You were amazing” Sabelo

He’s on his feet wiping his face with a tissue

I honestly don’t know what to say so I smile in return. He sniffs my panties and put them in his pockets.

“ Why are you taking my panties?”

Instead of replying he pulls me by my neck and assaults my mouth with a kiss, I can taste my salty juices on his tongue and I love the taste for some awkward kinky reason. He gives me a bone crushing hug when we break the kiss, his heart is beating so fast I can literally hear the gugu sounds. I hold him back and sink in his arms, I don't know but being in his arms like this feels like home, like this is where I belong.

“ Thank you”

He says when we break the hug

“ For?”

“ Never mind”

**With that said he plants a peck on my forehead
and walks out.**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#9

**How I went from the conservative Ndalo to one
who gets muffed on school premises beats me, I
know I’m about to be someone’s wife and I
should feel bad for doing what I did with Sabelo
but I don’t feel even an ounce of guilt. Given a**

chance I'd definitely do it again maybe I would do it at a different place but I don't want to lie I don't regret spreading my legs for the boy it was so worth it. He managed to do in a day what Musa couldn't do for two years, how someone so young has so much experience beats me otherwise Sabelo yinja ye game!

If I wasn't his teacher I would think he's lying about his age but I've seen his Identity card Sabelo is definitely eighteen years old, for once I agree with Nthabi- Sabelo is anything but a kid, he's a man and a half! Everything about him is manly- his touch, his aura, how he walks, speaks and gazes into my eyes entlek everything ai that's a man bantase!

A part of me feels somewhat shitty for cheating on Musa, I'm bound to feel this way because I've never done anything like this before but I guess I'll have to convince him to try oral sex because after today I don't see myself being okay with not being muffed not when I know how good it is!

"Come in"

Anele walks in

"Ses'Ndalo mom says I should call you, dinner is ready"

One thing about my family, we always have dinner together.

“ I’m right behind you”

I switch off my TV and walk to the dining room, everyone is already on the table I’m the only one who was missing.

“ I’m sorry to keep you waiting”

“ It’s okay mntami sit” my mother says

(My child)

My mouth waters when I see what's for dinner, samp and beef stew. My mom is a very good cook if I can be half as good as she is with them pots then I'll be sorted.

My father blesses the food before we all dig in

“ When is the wedding Ndalo?” Dad

You must be wondering about the lobola, well my parents and Musa's don't believe in lobola. I know it's unusual but it's true, we don't do that this side so we will only have the wedding celebration.

“I'm not sure baba”

“ What do you mean you’re not sure? Aw ngeke I must have a word with MaSibisi, I feel like if we don’t intervene there will be no wedding, you kids don’t take this as seriously as you should”

Mom says

“ I spoke to Musa today and he says he’s ready and can marry our daughter anytime but apparently Ndalo keeps making excuses everytime he comes up with a date”

Mara my father is hyper yo, what was the need to talk to my fiancé behind my back?

“ I’ll plan the wedding myself since ehluleka u Buhle, we’ve already wasted enough time”

Mom says

Another phaphiyosi! No one planned her wedding, u girl must rest shem.

“ Dad Mom I know you’re excited about the wedding and can’t wait to see your eldest daughter walking down the isle, dad I know how proud you’d be but I’m not ready to get married I think we are moving too fast”

I announce and hold my breath, I hope they'll see things from my perspective.

“ Did you just say too fast? Too fast, you've been with him for 4 years now what exactly is fast lapho? Make me understand”

Mom yells

The way she's so worked up, she even has veins on her neck.

“ Ma I just started working, there are things I want to do before getting married and I haven't done them yet”

“ What things?”

**“ I want to buy myself a car, travel the country
I don't know but I want to live a little before I
become someone's wife”**

I honestly don't know what to say

**“ Hehehe wathi ' live a little' ya neh I wash my
hands off you like pilato”**

**“ You have changed Buhle, my daughter would
never go against me or question me. This one
sitting here and telling us about living a little is
definitely not my daughter” My father declares**

He then jolts up from his seat and storms out of the room leaving behind a tense mood around the table

“ Look what you have done? You ruined our dinner, I hope you’re happy nxn!”

She also stands on her feet

“ Just so you know, you either get married to Musa or you’re on your own. I won’t let myself be embarrassed in society because of you, get married or forget you have a mother!”

My heart breaks into a thousand pieces as I watch her walk away from me.

I don't know what outcome I expected but I didn't think my parents would be so furious, out of everyone I thought my mother would understand. I mean she's my mother, I thought mothers always have their children's best interest at heart but who was I fooling my mother would be willing to give up her own happiness if it meant pleasing other people.

"I'm sorry sis, give them time to digest this I'm sure they'll come around"

Melo says trying to reassure me but it's fruitless because I know my father, there's no way he will accept what I'm saying. He's so stubborn, it's always his way or the highway.

I've fallen out of love with Musa but the thought of losing my family is not a pleasant one so I guess I have no choice but to get married.

I'm with Nthabi in my office and she's not her normal talkative self, she looks so down and sad. She insists she's fine when I ask her what's wrong but I know that's bull, she's not fine something is definitely up with her.

" Please tell me what's wrong, I can't stand to see you look this sad it hurts me"

" it's my boyfriend, he hurt me Ndalo"

I'm such a bad friend, can you believe I didn't know she had a boyfriend till now? I feel so bad right now.

“ I'm so sorry babe, what did he do?”

“ I've been such a fool Ndalo, I mean I've been with this guy for two years now but I've never been on his status or his profile picture, you know how girls normally leave some of their clothes or toiletries at their boyfriend's place?”

“ Yeah”

“ Well not me, guy doesn’t want any of my stuff to be left behind. I remember he once snuck me out of his room this other day when his mother arrived unexpectedly, who does that? He’s a grown man for Pete’s sake, the red flags were always there but I chose to overlook them”

Yoh I don’t know what to say

“ He’s getting married Ndalo, I had to find out on Facebook. He didn’t even have the decency to tell me about it”

She says and burst to tears

I pull her to my bust and wrap my arms around her

“ I’m so sorry my friend, I know it hurts now but one day you’ll forget a person like him exists. He doesn’t deserve you, you were too good for him anyway I doubt anyone else would’ve tolerated his nonsense for so long. No girl wants to feel like she’s a hidden secret, he’s such a jerk”

I suck at comforting people, I never know what to say.

“ You’re right, he doesn’t deserve me. To think I was there when he wasn’t working and girls didn’t want him, I was there I loved him and

**gave him my all but what did he do? He threw
all that back in my face”**

She says in between sobs

“ I’m sorry babe”

**“ The signs were always there I foolishly chose
to ignore them, I mean his actions always
spoke for him. He never enjoyed having me
around, I only visited him on weekends but I
remember this other time during school
holidays I spent three days at his place do you
want to know what he said when I was
leaving?”**

“ What did he say?”

“ This time uhlalile yo”

What? That guy is a total douchebag

**“ I’m sorry you were going through all of that
and I didn’t even notice, I know it hurts
because you love him but babe you’re so much
better without him”**

**Men are trash ele kannete shem, what that
stupid guy did to my friend is pure wickedness.**

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SABELO

From a young age I've always looked older than my actual age, my naturally buff and tall physique didn't help my case. It got worse when I reached puberty and had hair growing in my chest, legs and face just to name a few. My voice also changed, it used to sound squeaky at first but became deeper overtime. However those were not the only changes in my body, my penis also grew larger and wider attracting older women as a result. Believe it or not I've never been interested in anyone older than me before, well that was until I met Buhlebendalo Khumalo.

The woman stole my heart from the moment she walked through the door, something about her always leaves me breathless and I felt a painful pang in my heart when my fellow classmates disrespected and laughed at her. For some reason the pain that was reflected in her eyes brought an indescribable pain to my heart so I had to step in and chastise my classmates.

At first I couldn't figure out why I cared so much about her I mean she was nothing but a stranger, I convinced myself that the reason why it bothered me so much to see her in pain was because I felt sorry for her and was only sympathizing with her like I would've done for anyone in her place but I could no longer use

the 'sympathy' excuse when she became the only person I thought and dreamt about.

Thoughts of her would deprive me of sleep as I imagined myself with her, not in a sexual way but I just yearned to be next to her and I'd wonder how it would feel to spend time with her and listen to her angelic voice all day long. Before I knew it I had more than 20 drawings of her in my room that's when it dawned on me, what I feel for her couldn't possibly be sympathy.

My feelings for her grew with time, I thought I would wait until the year ends before making a move on her but I couldn't hold myself any longer I had to do something before my feelings

consumed me. I'm sure you're wondering if I was scared or not, the answer is yes I was so scared to approach her because I mean I'm just an 18 year old kid and she's this exceptionally beautiful teacher who probably has a long list of guys waiting to date her but I was raised to go after what I want so I had to shoot my shot and hope it works out.

Being close to her for the very first time I knew my feelings were reciprocated, she wanted me as much as I wanted her but I know she wouldn't have acted on her feelings so to save her career I mean its understandable but I couldn't help myself I had to taste those thick pouty lips of hers and I want more now that I have. That Wednesday afternoon is all I think

about, I still can't believe I kissed and did all that to her it feels like a far-fetched dream. If I didn't have her panties with me I'd think I was hallucinating and it didn't happen, but seeing them gives me all the proof I need.

I know she has a boyfriend, I made it my duty to find out everything about her when I realised what I feel for her. Her boyfriend won't stop me from going after what's mine, Ndalo is mine, only mine and I'm prepared to do anything for what's mine.

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NDALO

My feelings for Sabelo multiplied after what happened between us the other day, at first I thought what I feel for him was love but now I'm certain I love that boy. I love him so much like I've never loved anyone before, knowing that him and I will never be together hurts me so much.

I wish I was bold enough to choose love over everything and anyone else but unfortunately I'm not that brave and besides I don't even know what Sabelo feels for me, he's still young he's yet to go to varsity and meet beautiful girls his age and fall in love so choosing him over my family and Musa would be both stupid and crazy because him and I would never work.

He's young, handsome and every girl wants a piece of him. I'm probably just an experiment to him, a bet and who knows what else? But I know he doesn't love me, I'd be crazy to think he does there's no way a young handsome boy like him would fall for someone like me. I'm not even that good looking, handsome guys like him go for drop dead gorgeous girls.

Musa sent me a text inviting me to his house for lunch, apparently his mom is the one who invited me. I was not given a chance to refuse the invite so he's on his way to fetch me, my mother is excited you'd swear she's the one who was invited. My parents and I made up,

well that only happened after I agreed to go ahead with the wedding.

I just got out of the shower, I'm draped in a towel looking through my wardrobe for something to wear. I pick out two dresses and lay them on my bed, I'm really not sure if I should wear the burgundy or the blue one- the burgundy one is a chiffon dress and I think it looks too formal while the blue summer dress looks too casual for my liking, I know I sound confused but I want something in between not too formal or too casual.

"Wear the blue one, this is a laid back lunch nothing formal"

She says walking into my room

“ Ok ma”

**“Why do you think they invited you for lunch?
Do you think he wants to propose officially?”**

She says with a big smile on her face

**Didn't she just say the lunch was laid back?
Anyway what she means by him proposing
officially she refers to the romantic proposals
we see on TV and read about in books,
unfortunately it appears things don't work like
that in Musa's world I don't even have an**

engagement ring on my finger ya neh to go is to see shem!

"I don't know ma"

If it was up to me I wouldn't go, I'm not looking forward to this lunch shem

" Ok dress up you don't want to keep your future in laws waiting"

I slip into the blue dress and tie my braids into a high bun revealing all my sphongo, I've grown to love my forehead by the way I no longer feel the need to hide it and it's funny how no one has dubbed me with it like I

thought they would especially the kids but nothing so far it's like people don't even notice it.

Anele runs into my room breathing heavily

“ U bhuti Musa sekafikile”

(Brother Musa has arrived)

“Ok I'm coming”

I grab my black sling bag, toss my phone and lipstick inside before walking to the car with my mother trudging behind me. When we get to his car mom greets him and goes back to the

house, he then starts the ignition and joins the main road.

“You look beautiful”

“Thanks”

I feel so uncomfortable, this is the first time Musa and I meet after I did what I did with Sabelo. It's only now that I feel guilty, I don't know but it's like he'll just look at me once and see everything I did with the kid. I have my hands in my lap, holding my bag tightly trying to hide my trembling hands from Musa.

**“Don’t be so nervous my family already knows
and loves you baby”**

**I flash a nervous smile and look to the front,
when we get to his place his mother calls me to
the kitchen the moment she hears my voice. I
leave Musa and his father in the lounge and
join his mother in the kitchen**

“Afternoon ma”

“ Oh hello my love”

She says pulling me into her embrace

“Please help me with setting the table, the food is ready”

“ No problem ma”

She shows me where to find the plates and the cutlery, I set the table and go back to the kitchen when I’m done.

“ Take this and put it on the table”

She hands me a big bowl of rice, I take the bowl to the dining room table and go back to the kitchen to fetch the salads. I keep doing the up and down till all the bowls of food are on the

table, we all sit and wait for Mrs Sibisi to join us.

“ Thank you mkami the food smells delicious I can’t wait to dig in, let’s say grace”

We all hold hands as Musa prays and blesses the food, Mr Sibisi wasn’t joking when he said he couldn’t wait to dig in he immediately starts eating after Musa says amen causing us to laugh.

“ So Ndalo my wife and I called you here because there hasn’t been any progress with regards to your wedding, mind telling me what the hold up is and don’t be afraid to be honest with me” Mr Sibisi

I wish it were that easy to be honest, how do I look at him in the eye and tell him I've fallen out of love with his son? That he doesn't satisfy my needs in bed so marrying him would be subjecting myself to a life full of unhappiness?

“ I haven't had time to think about the wedding Baba, I'm still new at work so I've had to work extra hard to prove myself and ensure my learners pass. They are writing their June examinations soon so we have extra classes for revisions and preparations, I hardly have time to myself”

“ It sounds hectic, please allow me and your mother to plan the wedding for you”

Mrs Sibisi interjects

Why do these people want this wedding so bad?

“ I can even hire a wedding planner who’ll plan the entire thing, you don’t even have to lift a finger” Musa adds

“ I love that idea, so how does December sound?” His father suggests

It’s clear the wedding would mean a lot to a lot of people, I don’t have the heart to disappoint all these people.

“ Yes sir December sounds perfect”

I mutter trying so hard to sound excited

**Musa grabs my hands under the table and gives
it a gentle squeeze, I’ve never seen him look so
happy. I really hope I’m not making a mistake.**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#10

I'm driving the love of my life back to her house, today is the happiest day of my life I've been looking forward to this day from when we started dating. Truth is I love Ndalo, she is a self respecting woman who's God fearing and humble. Any man would be lucky to have someone like her in his life, and I thank the lord daily that I am that man.

“ You don't know how happy I am that soon you'll be called Mrs Sibisi”

Her lips break into a beautiful smile, my woman is gorgeous bafethu.

“ So tell me what did Thuli want to talk to you about on Saturday, the day of Sizwe's funeral?”

“Oh that we never really got to speak”

I sigh in relief

Wu that was close, Thuli should stay the hell away from my woman. Ndalo listens to everything I say, maybe if I plant ideas in her head she'll stop talking to her.

“ I don't think she's a good friend for you”

“ Why? Unlike Nthabi she is from church and you know she's a good girl, vuma nje ukuthi you don't want me to have friends you have a problem with everyone I befriend!”

“ That’s not true, I like Pretty”

“ That’s because she’s your biggest fan”

True

“ Please consider my advice, you know what they say about bad company right?”

“ Thuli is not bad company”

“ You see that’s why I always tell you that you’re weak the devil always attacks from your side, her being a churchgoer doesn’t make her a

good person many people go to church but live in sin"

" Do you know anything about her?"

She asks with a quirked brow

" That doesn't matter just break whatever friendship you have with her, I don't know why you don't befriend my sister she is a good person"

She chuckles

" No offence baby but your sister is not my type"

“ What do you mean?”

**“ We just don’t click, she’s too..how do I put it?
She’s too pompous”**

**Her remark about my sister annoys me so I opt
to keep quiet until I park outside her house**

“ Wont you come inside and greet my father?”

**“I wish I could but I’m rushing somewhere
greet mom and dad for me”**

She nods and climbs out of the car and waves me goodbye, I drive off and dial Thuli's number, my phone is connected to the car's Bluetooth.

“ Musa”

That’s her response when she takes my call

“ Where are you, I need to see you?”

“ My house”

I end the call and speed to her house

“ How many times did I tell you to stay away from my future wife?”

I ask the moment she climbs inside the car

She looks at me and chuckles bitterly

“ Future wife? and what does that make me?”

“ You know how our arrangement works so it’s not my fault you caught feelings”

Thuli and I are fuckbuddies well that’s what we use to be, it started a year ago. The young adult’s had an all night prayer, Ndalo couldn’t attend the prayer I think she was sick or something so Thuli asked for a lift and I didn’t

have a problem with her request. The prayer was starting at 8pm and it's not safe for a woman to use public transportation at that time of the night, considering how high the rate of crime is at Emba.

I was driving to church when out of the blue Thuli bobbed her head, unzipped my pants and took my member in her mouth. I froze for sometime but that didn't stop her from sucking and licking my joy stick until it was fully erected, she gave me the wildest blow job of my life that I lost control of the car and swerved from my lane and almost crashed into a truck but thank God for my fast reflexes I managed to swerve the car to the right lane on time.

We started having sexual relations from that day, she is very good and satisfies my needs in bed but I don't love her nor have any feelings for her to me she's nothing but a fuck buddy but Thuli is a typical woman, she caught feelings and fell in love with me.

She threatens to sing to Ndalo if I don't break up with Ndalo and marry her instead, but that won't happen. Ndalo is the one my heart beats for and I won't allow this promiscuous woman to jeopardize that, in my defence she came onto me knowing very well who Ndalo is and what she means to me.

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NDALO

Nthabi didn't come to work today so I'm in my office having lunch on my own when Tsotetsi, one of the teachers in the school walks inside without even knocking.

“ Haibo you can't just waltz in here, at least knock and be given permission to enter. Simple mannerisms nxn!”

I'm so annoyed yerr

“ WOW, look who's talking about mannerisms”

He grins at me

“ What do you want here?”

“ I came to see you”

“ For what? You and I have nothing to talk about”

“ Oh that’s where you’re mistaken, you and I have lots to talk about Miss Khumalo”

I don’t like the look on his face, what’s his story?

“ Just say what you want to say and leave my office”

I don't like Tsotetsi, he's one of those men who call every girl with 'baby/love" and all those other names and he always talks about sex.

He once told me he always imagines me naked everytime he jerks off, he said it was a joke when he saw the horrified expression on my face. That's when I noticed how he wets his lips with his tongue everytime we meet in the corridors during period change, I don't know but the man gives me the creeps

“ I prefer to show you instead”

“ Ok go ahead”

I almost fall off my chair when I see multiple pictures of myself in his gallery, it’s pictures of me with Sabelo. Pictures of Sabelo buried between my thick thighs eating me up like I’m his favourite dessert, it’s pictures from that fateful Wednesday afternoon.

He laughs when he sees the shock on my face

“ And now Miss Khumalo do I have your attention?”

“ How...how do you have those?”

“ Those?.. oh you mean the pictures, simple I took them”

My stomach turns at the thought of him seeing my nakedness.

“ Yeah I saw you two, the boy was feasting on your black forest until you came on his face. I was there I saw it all, I swear I got an erection just from watching you two. Y’all have amazing chemistry”

“ What do you want?”

“ You and your toyboy should seriously consider joining the sex industry, yall would make loads of cash”

“ Tsotetsi ngithe ufunani?”

(I said what do you want)

“ Huh?”

“ You heard me, why are you here showing me these instead of being in the principal’s office reporting me. What do you want, you must want something from me”

“ Clever girl, you’re right I want something from you. At first I wanted to sleep with you, I

mean look at you. You are a walking temptation, I can just imagine how sweet those pouty lips taste and honestly they would look good wrapped around my shaft"

I almost vomit at the thought of myself in that position

“ You’re a full package miss Khumalo, you’re a beautiful woman I love your skin tone, your plump behind, your not thick nor slim thighs and not forgetting your beautiful legs"

“ You still haven’t told me what you want?”

I ask losing my patience

“ I wanted sex before I knew you’re not as innocent as you look, I mean if you can do that with the boy on school premises who knows what else you get up to so no kerata dibunu but ke tshaba AIDS”

He’s so condescending

“ Ok, there is no need to be impatient I’ll tell you. I want a blow job, you give me the best blow of my life, I’ll delete all the pictures from my phone and forget about what I saw”

“ What?”

“ Don’t worry you don’t have to give me your answer now, I’ll give you two days to give me your answer. Two days, nothing more or less”

He looks at his wristwatch

“ And your time starts now, tick tock tick tock”

He laughs and walks out of my office

I retch and vomit on the floor when he walks out

“ What am I going to do?”

I burst into tears

I'm so done for!!!

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SABELO

Ndalo didn't come to class today and that's so unlike her, I have a feeling something is wrong with her. I waited for 30 minutes in her class after school, thinking she'll walk in like she normally does but she didn't so I'll go and look for her in her office I hope she's there if not I'll have no choice but to go to her house since I don't have her numbers.

The school is a bit empty now, I walk through the flight of stairs and knock on her office, no one replies but I can hear someone sniffing inside so I push the door letting myself in. My heart breaks when I find her bawling her eyes out on her desk

“ Baby”

She looks up at the sound of my voice, her eyes are red and swollen it's obvious she's been crying for a while now.

“ What are you doing here?”

“ Why are you crying my love, what’s wrong?”

“ Leave me alone Sabelo, this is all your fault!”

She bellows

“ Me? What did I do? Please talk to me”

**“ Leave Sabelo, I never want to see you again.
You have succeeded in destroying my life,
congratulations”**

That could only mean one thing

“ Does anyone know?”

“ What the hell did you expect, of course someone knows....he saw us”

“ Who?”

“ He has pictures you know, hard evidence against me”.

“ Who has pictures baby?”

“ Stop calling me baby, just stop! Why do you want to know? It’s not like there’s anything you can do. You are nothing but a boy, a kid your arrogance won’t solve this so leave!”

“ Do whatever you want, swear, yell, slap me if it makes you feel better but I’m going nowhere until you tell me who has the pictures”

“ Gosh you’re so stubborn”

She chuckles

I crouch next to her and take her hands into mine, I expect her to claim her hands back but she doesn’t. I guess she has finally accepted that there’s no getting rid of me.

“ Talk to me sthandwa sami who has the pictures”

“ It’s Tsotetsi”

“ Okay, did he show you? What I mean is how do you know it’s him who has them”

“ Yes, he showed them to me”

“ What is he threatening you with?”

“ How do you know he’s threatening me?”

“ It’s obvious, so what does he want?”

“ A blow job”

“ Uyanya!”

**I wipe her tears with my palms and plant a
peck on her forehead**

**“ Don’t cry anymore, I’ll fix this. You’re not
giving that old geezer a blow job okay?”**

“ Okay”

“ Now where’s that beautiful smile”

She giggles

“ Uyathanda ukuzenza mdala”

(you love acting old)

She says laughing

**“ I’m not acting like it, I am old. I’m an old soul
sthandwa sam”**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#11

**I told Ndalo to stop worrying and promised to
fix this yet I don’t know where I’ll start, seeing**

her in tears broke my heart so I had to say anything to put her at ease. I managed to calm her down and accompanied her to the rank, I only went back to school when the cab she was in drove off. Now I'm in my room going out of my mind trying to find ways to get rid of the evidence Tsotetsi has against Ndalo, I love that woman and I wouldn't want her to lose her job because of me.

“ Sabelo I..”

She stops talking when she sees the tears in my eyes, she rushes to the bed and sits next to me

“ What? Sabelo are you crying, what's wrong talk to me”

“ Nothing”

“ No, it can't be nothing if you're crying. You never cry, what's wrong?”

“ I messed up Sphe, like always I fucked up!”

“ What did you do, I'm sure it can't be that bad”

She's looking at me with eyes glistening with tears, oh my poor twin.

“ Believe me it is bad”

“ Please tell me, maybe I can help”

“ You can’t Sphe, please give me some time alone”

“ No, I’m going nowhere”

I know she means it, let’s just say being stubborn runs in the Meyiwa family

“ So, will you talk?”

“ I did something that may put someone I love at risk”

“ Woah, stop right there! Did you just say someone you love?”

“ Yeah”

“ OMG what? You and love same sentence ndiyaxaluyiva ke leyo”

“ Come on Sphe this is not the time”

“ Okay but I’m shocked, it’s the first time I hear you talk about love. You know yourself, you’re the trash women refer to when they say ‘men are trash’ “

“ Whatever”

“ You know it’s true, so who’s the lucky lady?”

“ I can’t say, I’d be risking her career”

.

“ Woah did you just say career? Does that mean she’s older than you”

“ How old?”

She asks when I don’t reply

“ She’s 25”

“ What? What the actual fuck Sabelo?”

“ This is why I didn’t want to tell you, I knew you’d judge me. I love her and I don’t care what you or anyone else thinks about my feelings for her”

“ Wow, you have it bad don’t you”

“ You have no idea”

“ Wow, you really love her don’t you?”

“ So much, Ngimthanda ngenhliziyo yami yonke”

(I love her with all my heart)

“ What about her, does she love you too?”

**“ Honestly I don’t know but I think she
does”**

**“ I hope you won’t get yourself heartbroken, I
mean you’ve broken so many people’s heart I
hope this woman won’t be your karma”**

I hope not

“ So what did you do?”

Telling her what I did would be risking her finding out Ndalo's identity, she's smart this one. She'll know it's her should I disclose what I did.

" Let's just say someone has compromising pictures of her and is using them to threaten her into giving him a blow job"

" Yuck, that's sick. Where does he have the pictures?"

" On his phone, well that's what I think I'm not too sure"

“ Okay, that’s easy we can hack into his phone using Hoverwatch, mSpy or Flexispy. All you need to do is to download the app into your phone, create an account and password then log into the software and then make a call on your phone to the target cellphone. When you make the call, a record will be generated and this will lead to the linking of your phone and the target phone you’re going to hack. If you don’t want to call you can enter a few details of the target phone and send a text to the target phone, then viola your phones will be linked then you’ll access all his calls, messages and multimedia then you can delete pictures he’s blackmailing your lady with”

Wow

“ You’re such a genius”

“ I know”

**She says wiping imaginary dust from her
shoulders**

“ But I’ll kill you if you hack into my phone”

She laughs

“ I won’t relax, your sugarmama is safe”

I cringe at the word

“ Nah, she’s no sugarmama she’s a very young, beautiful and sexy lady you’ll say I told you so when you see her one day.”

“ Wow, how’s she like vele?”

“ She’s dark, not too dark she’s just the right amount of dark. She’s not thick nor slim, ukahle nje. She’s got the most beautiful legs I’ve seen, my dick twitches everytime I see her wearing a skirt or a dress yo une sitho esihle usisi hay' lemicondo yakho”

We laugh

**“ Oh wow, I think I know someone like that..
wait let me rephrase I don't think, I am sure it's
the same person.”**

**Me and my big mouth! I got carried away and
described her**

“ I doubt you do”

**“ I do, ok let me describe the one I know. She
has doe eyes, pouty lips and a well defined
nose ngathi sanodoli nyana nje usis wakhona
muhle nje uyindoni yamanzi. She has a big
forehead but it suits her and extra teeth making
her look super cute when she smiles or laughs”**

Damn it, it's her

“ I'm right ain't I?”

“ No, you're far from the truth”

I say with a serious look on my face, she studies my face for a while before she speaks.

“ Hmm, ngiyoze ngimthole ok'salayo”

Whew at least she took my word for it.

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NDALO

Sabelo promised to fix this, I don't know what he's going to do but something tells me I can trust him. I made up an excuse when my family asked me why I came back home late and why my eyes look so swollen, I'm not a good liar I'm still surprised that they actually bought it. I'm in my bed now talking to my friend on the phone when I hear a knock on my window

" Hold on, I think someone is knocking on my window"

" What? At this time. Don't open, drop the call and send your father a message ai nawe uhlala kude nendlu man"

Says Pretty

“ It’s probably nothing, let me sleep its late”

“ Ngo 9 ku late? Come on”

**My eyes hurt, I cried a lot I really need to shut
them and sleep**

**“ Please friend, I promise I’ll call again
tomorrow “**

“ Okay then, goodnight I love you”

“ Night, love you too”

I drop the call and switch off the lights

**That knock on the window, oh my goodness I
should have listened to Pretty. What do I do?**

“ Baby, please open up it’s me”

**No it can’t be, what’s he doing here at this time
of the night?**

Ask me why I’m opening the door for him

“ Sabelo are you crazy, it’s late and you know it’s not safe to roam in the streets at nights do you want to die boy?”

“ I love it when you fuss over me but relax love, I’m okay”

He goes straight to my bed when he walks inside my room, when did he take off his shoes?

“ Haibo, sorry buti wenzani?”

(Excuse me what do you think you’re doing)

“ Sleeping, won’t you join me?”

**“ Sabelo, this is my home. My parent’s house
we can’t do this here, please leave”**

“ Hah baby at this time, you want me to die?”

Nawu umhlolo wami

“ Wena bewuyaphi?”

(Where were you going)

“ Bengiza ku muntu wami”

(I was coming to my woman)

I won’t lie that line has me blushing

“ Come to bed baby”

Sabelo Meyiwa ne? I have no words shem

I have no choice but join him in bed, he spoons me from behind and wraps his arms around my waist

“ I’ve always dreamt of this you know”

He says after a long moment of silence

“ Really?”

“ Yeah, having you in my arms like this feels like the best thing in the world”

My heart is doing a vosho, I can't believe my ears

“ Why?”

“ Why what?”

“ Why does it feel like the best thing in the world?”

I really need to know

“ Because you are my world so everything is right when I have you in my arms, please don’t marry him Ndalo. I know I’m only a kid with nothing to offer you at the moment, he has everything you need but please don’t. I promise I’ll work hard and give you everything you need, it may not be today or tomorrow but I promise you’ll get everything you want. I just need a bit of patience, please don’t marry him”

So he knows about Musa and the wedding? But how?

“ Sabelo..”

“ Please Ndalo don’t break my heart, I love you. I love you so much, please don’t do it”

Lord knows I've been dying to hear those words from him but unfortunately I can't give him what he wants, I can't choose him over my family.

“ Sabelo I'm sorry but I can't, I have no choice but to go ahead with the wedding. I'm sorry”

He doesn't reply

“ Sabelo?”

I turn my head to look at him and I find him in tears, I feel a sharp pain in my heart when I see him look so broken.

“ Sabelo, please don't cry you're breaking my heart”

“ Is it because I'm younger than you?”

“ What? NO”

“ You know what never mind, go ahead and get married it's okay”

“ Please don't make me feel bad”

“ Do you know Tsotetsi's number?”

“ What?”

“ Do you have the old geezer's number or not?”

“ I do why?”

**We have a WhatsApp group chat for the staff, I
can get his number from there.**

“ Please give the number to me”

He gets off the bed and puts on his shoes

**“ Sabelo, what are you doing you can't go out
at this hour”**

“ Give me the number Miss Khumalo”

“ Sabelo please”

I try to touch his hand but he yanks it off

**“ I guess you’ll give it to me tomorrow, bye
ma'am”**

**He says and walks out the door, he doesn’t
leave alone he takes my heart with him. I cry
myself to sleep, now I know what they mean
when they say love hurts!**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#12

I don't know what Sabelo did but the pictures Tsotetsi had on his phone disappeared, he was here yesterday accusing me of witchcraft apparently I performed some black magic and made the pictures disappear y'all should have seen him he was really spooked out. Sabelo may have helped me with the problem but he wants nothing to do with me since that night, I miss the attention he used to give and how he'd

call me 'baby or sthandwa sam' damn it my heart would twerk and do backflips just at him saying those simple words to me, I don't know but there's just something about the way he says them that makes my heart dance.

I love Sabelo Meyiwa and I miss him a lot, he probably thinks I'm with Musa for the money but that's not true I'm doing this for my parents they want this wedding so bad.

“ Good morning class”

“ Good morning ma'am”

“ Where is Sabelo Meyiwa?”

“ He left the class when the English period ended” Kamva

He’s been doing this since that night, he never attends my period and exams are starting in a week so he can’t afford to slack now.

“ Okay, let’s continue. Where were we?”

“ We were revising meiosis and mitosis” Thato

“ Ok let’s carry on”

After class I ask Thato to send Sabelo to my office the moment he comes back to class.

Nthabi is fine now, she's back to her bubbly self

I don't know if she's really okay or she's

putting up a front to conceal how she really

feels, I tried reaching out but she blew me off. I

honestly don't have time to beg someone to

open up, I have a lot on my plate so angina

skhathi nje.

“ Come in”

Sabelo walks in

“ Miss Khumalo”

“ Yebo Sabelo Kunjani?”

(How are you)

“ I’m okay miss Khumalo”

Why does it hurt so much when he addresses me as miss Khumalo? I wish he’d call me baby or sthandwa sam like he used to

“ I called you here because I’m worried about you, you’re missing my classes and exams are approaching well more like they are already here. I want you to do well, I know you can do well please put whatever happened between us aside and focus on what’s important which is your education”

“ I don’t need to attend your class to pass, there’s youTube, google and those programs on the Television to help me. We both know I don’t need to be in class to do well”

It’s true Sabelo is the brightest student in my class, he doesn’t answer or participate in class but come test boy will leave you wowed. His competition is Sphehile from 12A, that girl is number 1 in the entire school.

“ Wow, I tried and failed. Ok Sabelo you can leave that’s all I had to say to you today”

“ Ok bye ma'am”

He walks out

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SABELO

I love Ndalo and I was prepared to fight for her and our relationship but it seems we are not flowing in the same wavelength, it's clear she doesn't love me like I do her because I know she would also fight for our love if she truly loved me.

“ Hau, sekuphelile fast so?”

(it's over so soon)

**I love my sister but she's annoying sometimes
yo**

**“ What did I say about budging into my room
Sphe? Please leave”**

“ Yo I'm sorry”

“ I don't need your apologies I said leave”

**“ I'm not the one who broke your heart so
please don't take out your frustrations on me”**

“ Yewena ngamehlo aluhlaza ngithe phuma la”

(Hey you blue eyed person, I said get out)

She laughs

“ Ay baku hurt(ile) mntasekhaya shem”

I give her a look trying to scare her, the idiot cracks up even more I end up joining her.

“ Ukwenzi u mistress Khumalo?”

(What did miss Khumalo do to you)

“ What are you talking about?”

I ask feigning ignorance

“ I’m not a fool, out of everyone I expected you to know that. I know she’s the one you’re in love with, so spill what did she do”

“ Nothing, I’m not discussing my private life with you”

“ So you agree it’s her you’re in love with?”

“ Yeah Sphe, are you happy now?”

“ Yes, she’s beautiful.”

“ Phuma ke”

(Get out)

“ Not before you tell me what she did to you”

“ Sphe don’t you have a boyfriend or friends to annoy?”

“ You’re my twin dude, there’s no getting rid of me”

“ Uthanda izindaba shem, get a boyfriend to keep you busy because you’re really annoying”

“ So?”

I give up shem, if the word nosy had a face it'd be my sister's face.

“ She didn't do anything, she is getting married to her boyfriend of four years. He has a car, an apartment and a well paying job I was crazy to think I could compete with that. Women go where there's money not love, I don't blame her though 'love doesn't pay the bills' angithi nisho njalo"

(isn't that what you say)

“ I'm sorry hey, I think you should fight for her because it looks like you really love her"

“ Yeah I do but I cant fight for someone who isn’t willing to do the same, I’ll be wasting my precious time”

“ Fight for her Troy, fight with all you’ve got so you don’t have regrets in future. If she gets married even after that, you’ll know you did your best”

“ You think so?”

“ I know so, Sabelo Troy Meyiwa is not a coward. Go get your lady, sex her back to her senses if you must. You know her better than me, you know what to do to get your way with her”

I didn't expect my sister to support me but I'm glad she's on my side and not judging me like I expected her to. I guess it's time to stop feeling sorry for myself and fight for my love.

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NDALO

I don't know how far the mothers are with the wedding preparations and to be frank I don't care, my heart is broken I hate the distance between Sabelo and I. I thought I would get over him but living without hearing his deep voice, without looking into those blue eyes and

without his caresses and sweet kisses is absolute torture.

“ Mama I’d like to have a word with you please”

She’s watching House of Zwide with Anele, dad just came back from work he’s in the bathroom taking a bath and Melo went back to school.

“ Can’t it wait at least until the story ends?”

“No, it can’t”

If I wait any longer I’ll lose the courage I’ve summoned to tell her what I feel

“ Eish uyahlupha Ndalo man”

**She stands up from the couch and follows me
to the kitchen**

“ So I’m here now, talk?”

“ How did you end up marrying dad?”

She frowns

**“ What are you asking me Buhlebendalo
Khumalo?”**

“ How did you end up getting married to my dad, like was it your choice or he was chosen for you?”

“ Where are you going with this?”

“ Ma, I don’t want to marry Musa and you know that. Why are you forcing him on me?”

I feel a burning sensation on my cheek and that “ twiiii” sound in my ear then it clicks, I’ve been slapped!

“ Watch your mouth!”

Anele runs to the kitchen, I guess she heard the loud echo from the slap I received.

“ First of all I didn’t force you to date Musa, you chose him and introduced him to us. So what do you mean I’m forcing him down your throat?”

“ So since I introduced him to you it means I should get married to him by force?”

She throws a jab on my mouth causing me to bite my tongue

“ Close that big mouth of yours”

“ But ma, you’re not fair”

**“ Oh you’re a woman ne that’s why you
backchat when I chastise you. Nele bring me
my tight ngifuna mina nalo mfazi we
sphongokazi sibambane namhlanje, si trapane
goet skhiphane inkani”**

**(I want me and this woman with a big forehead
to fight it out like women)**

“ Mama No!”

Anele exclaims

**“ Are you bringing what I asked for or should I
do it myself?”**

Anele gives me an apologetic look before walking away

I didn't see this coming and I honestly don't know what I'll do but I know I won't fight my mother.

"Nayi ma"

(Mom here)

Mom takes the tight from Anele, wears it and takes off her dress. She's left in her bra and the tight, so she's really doing this?

"Nele vala lo mnyango uphume"

(close the door and get out)

Anele does as mom says

**Mom shifts the table from the centre and
pushes it next to the kitchen unit along with
it's chairs**

“ Woza ke”

(Come)

“ No, I won't fight you mom. I'm sorry”

**“ Only now you realise I'm your mother after
disrespecting me so much?”**

“ I’m sorry ma”

She slaps me countless number of times and pulls me down my braids and knees my face. All I do is cry and try to escape from her clutches but she’s got a tight grip on my hair. When she’s satisfied, she lets go of me and walks out of the kitchen and leaves me bleeding on the floor.

I don’t have to look at my face in the mirror to know that it’s swollen. I hate my mother, who does this to their own child?

I'm trying to pick myself up from the floor but I keep falling back on my butt causing myself more pain, Anele walks into the kitchen and tears flood her eyes when she sees my condition. She places my arm over her shoulder and helps me stand and slowly walks me to my room.

“ Anele!”

My mother bellows from outside the door

“ Ma”

“ Ungangidini wena phuma lapho”

(Don't annoy me get out from there)

Anele is stubborn so she doesn't pay my mother any attention, she continues helping me.

" Please go I'll be fine, I don't want you to find yourself in my position"

" No, I'm not like you mina. I won't let those two walk all over me like a doormat"

" No Nele, don't do this. Go back inside I'll be fine"

" Sure?"

" 100%"

“ Okay then”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#13

My sister is right I have to fight for Ndalo with everything I've got at least that way should it not work out I'll know I did my part and fought for love. The plan was to talk to her during lunch or wait for after school to talk to her but I haven't seen her in school today, she didn't come to class as well so I'm now standing at

the door of her office summoning the courage to knock and ask sir Mathobela about her whereabouts, she's my teacher so me asking about her won't look suspicious right?

"Meyiwa"

"Kunjani sir"

(How are you)

"I'm okay boy, how can I help you?"

"I'm looking for Miss Khumalo, she didn't come to class today and there's something I wanted to ask her about the scope she gave us"

“ Eish mfana I am sorry but miss Khumalo is not in today, she is sick so her doctor gave her a few days off. I know how much you love your school work, you can ask me anything I will gladly assist”

My heart just sank, so Ndalo is sick? How, she was okay yesterday

“ Ok sir, I wanted to ask about human endocrine system some of the things in the chapter are a bit confusing for me”

I lie through my teeth

“ Okay come tomorrow I have a free period before lunch I’ll explain everything to you”

“ Thank you sir”

I don’t know how I got through the rest of the day because my heart and mind were no longer in school they were with Ndalo, I wonder what’s wrong with her I hope it’s not serious but it must be if she was given days off from work. What could be wrong with her? I hope it’s nothing chronic

“ Uhlikaphi mfana?”

(Where do you get off)

The cab driver asks, damn I've zoned out

" e khoneni"

" Okay"

**He stops the car at the corner and waits for me
to get off before driving off**

**Now I have to knock on her door and ask her
parents about her, hopefully they'll let me in
when they see my uniform.**

" Who is it?"

Shouts someone from inside

“ Yimi”

(it’s me)

I never know what to say when I’m being asked

“ wubani” it tends to be a bit awkward for me.

“ Ok yimi stand there until you remember your name”

Ngaze ngavelelwa!

“ It’s Sabelo”

I always feel strange after shouting my name behind a closed door, I don't know but kuba ngathi azithi mzala la kimi.

“ What was so hard about that?”

Says a young girl when she opens the door for me

“ Hello”

“ Hi, what can I do for you?”

“ I'm one of miss khumalo's learners from 12B and I have to give her my assignment”

“ Miss Khumalo is sick, didn't they tell you at school?”

“ They did but I really need to submit to her”

“ Ungumhlobo bani?”

(What race are you)

“ What?”

“ No, I'm confused. Are you black or colored?”

I don't see how my race comes into the conversation but I choose to answer anyway

“ I’m black why?”

“ The colour of your eyes, your skin tone and hair...you look coloured”

I get that a lot

“ So will you take me to her?”

“ Maybe I will, only because you’re handsome”

Haibo, what’s going on here

“ Follow me”

She says and sways her ass, haha girls ne.

“ Ses'Ndalo”

“ N..nele”

Ndalo says then grunts in pain inside her room.

**“ Some hot boy is here to see you, he says he’s
your student”**

**She says this looking at me, no let me
rephrase..she is drooling at me.**

“ Let ...leet him in”

“ Ngena ke charmer boy”

This girl is forward shem, girls like her annoy me to the core. I’m only tolerating her because I have no choice, otherwise ngabe kudala ngimkhiphe skhwameni sami.

She walks away when I walk in, thank the lord. I thought she would stick around

A sharp pain shoots straight to my heart when I see Ndalo's face, she’s covered in bruises barely recognizable. I rush to her bed and sit next to her

“ What happened to you baby, who did this?”

She doesn't reply she only cries

“ Please don't cry, you're grating my heart to pieces”

She wraps her arms around my waist and lays her head on my chest and bawls her eyes out, I'm trying so hard not to cry. This right here breaks my heart. She calms down a couple of minutes later and tries to break free from my embrace.

“ Please let me hold you for a few more minutes”

“ Okay”

“ So tell me my love, who did this?”

“ It was my mother”

“ What, why?”

“ Because I told her I don’t want to marry Musa”

What kind of mother does that?

“ I don’t get it”

She tells me the entire story and I’m not sure what exactly but something is off about this entire story, why do her parents insist on her marrying this guy what will they get out of this marriage?

“ I don’t know baby but I smell a rat, something is off about this whole thing”

“ I didn’t make much of it before, but my mother beating me up because I refuse to get married has raised quite a few suspicions”

“ So what are you going to do?”

“ I’m not getting married to Musa, not now not ever. I’m tired of living for other people, I’m going to put my happiness first from now on, what my mother did opened my eyes”

“ I’m sorry she did that to you my love, I’ll come sleep here tonight. Don’t lock your door ”

“ You don’t have to”

“ I know but I want to, you are hurt and you need someone to take care of you”

“ What about school?”

“ What time does your father wake up in the morning?”

“ 5 AM”

“ I’ll leave at 4:30 then”

“ But Sab..”

“ Shhh, allow me to take care of you”

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NDALO

I still can't wrap my head around the fact that my mother did this to me, if I didn't know better I'd say she wanted to damage my face. My face was her target during the beat down and I look so messed up right now, I don't think I'll look myself in the mirror for a very long time because what I saw staring back at me when I looked in the mirror wasn't the Ndalo I know. I look so battered up and bruised that I can barely recognize myself, I'm surprised Sabelo didn't freak out when he saw my face.

Anele didn't go to school today because she wouldn't let me go to the doctor by myself, I'm grateful for my sister's support but I don't want her fighting with my parents because of me.

The first thing I'll do when I recover is to look for another place to stay, I can't continue living here after what my mother did it's clear my safety is compromised here.

" Ses'Ndalo"

Anele's voice wakes me up from my sleep

" Where is Sabelo?"

" He left when you fell asleep"

I don't even know when I dozed off

After telling Sabelo the truth, he silently held me in his arms and massaged my scalp with his fingers. The feel of his fingers on my scalp was soothing and relaxing I guess I must've doze off then.

“ Please sit up, I brought you food”

She puts the tray on the bedside table and helps me sit up.

“ So that guy”

“ What guy Anele”

“ Sabelo, he's freaking hot yo”

She fans herself and I cant help but feel jealous

“ He’s younger than you Nele forget it”

Look who’s talking

“ How old is he?”

“ 18”

**“ Ah kanti, I’m only a year older than him mos
Ses'Ndalo it’s not that bad plus he doesn’t look
his age. He looks older than me so will you
hook me up with him?”**

“ Haibo Anele”

“ Please, I’m begging you. Just get me his number, I’ll handle the rest”

“ You can’t be serious”

“ I am”

“ What if he’s dating, he doesn’t look single”

“ I don’t care, stena ke bozza his girlfriend better prepare herself because I’m coming in with my guns blazing”

This conversation is very uncomfortable for me

“ So will you help or should I find another way?”

“ Find another way darling, I’m his teacher not his friend I can’t hook him up with my sister it’s not professional ngingabe ngizidelelisa ngengane”

There’s no way I’m handing her my man on a silver platter.

When I’m done eating I tell Anele to go back to the house, mom doesn’t want her even her

bringing me food is because of her stubbornness and insistence if not I'm sure I wouldn't eat. A knock on the door disturbs me from my game, I know it's Sabelo because Anele doesn't knock and my parents have no business coming to my room since my mother beat me up. It's obvious dad will take her side, he didn't even come to see how I'm doing mxm to think there was a time I regarded those two as the best parents!

“ Enter”

He walks in and locks the door

“ Baby, I'm back”

“ I see”

He takes off all his clothes including his underwear and I can't help but stare at his manhood. He's big, really big!

“ Sabelo why are you taking off your clothes, I hope you don't think I'll have sex with you”

“ What do you take me for mara baby? Why would I even think of sex in your condition?”

“ Then why are you undressing”

**“ Because I’m coming to bed and I sleep naked,
I can’t sleep with clothes on”**

Iyoh

**“ So am I allowed to get under the covers or
should I sleep on the floor?”**

“ No, it’s fine you can get in bed”

**He gets behind me and pulls me to his chest, I
can feel his shaft on my back. Will I be able to
sleep mara?**

“ So have you broken up with Musa yet?”

“ No, not yet”

“ What are you waiting for?”

“ I want to do it face to face so I need to heal first then I’ll talk to him”

“ Ndalo I know you’ve been with him for years and everything but I’m not going to share you with another man, you are mine and only mine so please fix this”

Did I tell you Sabelo is a man? Well I repeat, Sabelo yindoda bafethu. He gives instructions akabuzi.

“ Okay baby”

“ Please repeat what you said”

I giggle

“ No”

**“ You just called me baby for the first time,
does that mean you’re mine now?”**

“ Didn’t you just say I was yours?”

“ Yeah, you’ve been mine but I need to know if you’re giving us a shot or not?”

“ Yeah, I’m giving us a shot. I love you Sabelo please don’t hurt me”

“ Please say that again?”

“ What?”

“ That you love me, wait look at me when you say it”

I look into his blue eyes and get lost in them, my heart threatens to fall off my chest when he gazes into my eyes.

“ Tell me, tell me you love me”

He whispers

“ I love you Sabelo”

“ I love you too Ndoni yamanzi”

**He leans in for a kiss and I wince in pain when
he sucks on my swollen lip**

“ Sorry baby, it completely slipped my mind”

“ It’s okay, so do you have any girlfriend?”

I need to know I cant just assume

“ Yes”

My heart right now, I drop my eyes to his chest
but he places a finger under my chin forcing me
to meet his gaze.

“ Why don't you ask me who my girlfriend is?”

“ Who is she?”

“ Buhlebendalo Khumalo, indoni yamanzi
yami”

Sabelo is really an old soul, the way he melts my heart everytime he speaks!

He laughs

“ Next time ask don’t assume, assumption is the mother of all fuck ups. I’d rather you ask me, I promise I will never lie to you”.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#14

There's just something about sleeping on top of your man's chest that makes you sleep peacefully nje, I can't pinpoint it what it is yet but kona there's a difference between sleeping on a pillow and on top of your lover's chest. Unfortunately Sabelo had to leave at 4 in the morning before my dad woke up, we initially agreed on 4:30 but to be on the safe side he left at 4 am. I feel so giddy, like a teenager who just had her first kiss yeah that's how Sabelo makes me feel.

I can't wait for him to be done with school so we can date freely, keeping our relationship a secret will be hard because even now kuthi mangiposte umuntu wami yo guys kumnandi

emjolweni shem. The way I'm so happy I even forgot that I still have to dump Musa but here he is making his presence in my life known by calling me

" Good morning"

" My love how are you?"

" I'm okay Musa"

" Musa? What's going on?"

" What do you mean?"

“ You never refer to me as Musa..yini were you speaking to that friend of yours?”

“ What are you talking about?”

“ Never mind, so uthi kwenzakalani”

(What’s going on)

“ With what?”

I can’t wait for this call to be over honestly

“ You sound off”

“ that’s because I am, mom beat me black and blue so my face is injured and my body is in pain”

“ What? What did you do for her to hit you?”

“ I told her I didn’t want to marry you anymore”

There’s silence for a while, I didn’t mean to blurt it out like this but I took the opportunity when it presented itself. I know myself, telling him was going to be hard for me so this way is best.

“ Oh?”

Oh??

“ Is that all you’re going to say?”

“ Funa ngithini sfebe?”

(What do you want me to say bitch)

This is the first time I hear Musa speaking profanities(using vulgar language)

“ Why are you swearing at me?”

“ Am I lying? Are you not a bitch?”

“ Ngiyisfebe mangiyenzeni Musa?”

(What did I do that makes me a bitch)

He laughs sarcastically

“ No, please humor me”

“ Okay, I’ll tell you why I’m saying you’re a bitch. You got a Kimberly hole bengiminza lapho kuwe your pussy doesn’t have grabbers it’s too loose nje I was doing you a favour by sleeping with you...to think you wanted me to lick your tin fish smelling pussy”

He laughs

“ Such a joke, that’s why I refused there’s no way I’d go down on you shem. You’re so cold in bed, uvele uphenduke inkukhu nje awunyakazi awuthini nje.”

I don’t know why I’m still listening to him

“ I know you’re crying now, that’s how weak you are. No backbone whatsoever, you are such a feeble woman who can’t stand up for herself. You always put other people first and that has been your biggest down fall, I only wanted to marry you so I could make you my slave, and oh I cheated on you with your friends Pretty and Thuli”

“ You’re such a liar, Pretty would never do that to me unamanga”

Thuli and I are not close friends but Pretty? My best friend no that can’t be true

“ You’re so naïve, of course she would and she did. Wena your problem you think everyone who laughs in your face loves you, you’re so gullible shem”

“ Okay, thank you for telling me bye”

“ Bye Sphongo”

Saying I'm heartbroken would be an understatement, I don't know how to describe the pain I feel in my heart right now. Am I cursed or what? Why does everyone in my life turn out to be a backstabber?

“ Best friend!”

“ is it true?”

“ What are you talking about?”

“ Did you sleep with Musa?”

“ Look friend, I can ex.”

I drop the call and release a loud sob. What have I done to deserve so much pain and anguish?

Pretty tries to call me back but I reject her call and block her number, who needs enemies when you have friends like Pretty? I don't know what to do with myself I'm so tempted to slice my wrist and end it all, I don't want to live like this, no one truly loves me not even my own parents. My happiness is always short lived I guess I'm not destined for happiness.

I jolt up from my bed and shuffle through my drawer looking for something sharp to slice my wrist with but it's difficult to find anything with

tears blinding my vision. My chest feels so tight, it's like there's something sitting on it making it difficult for me to breathe, I want to scream but even my voice is failing me. Failing to find anything sharp enough to cut myself with I throw myself on top of the bed.

My alarm beeps reminding me to drink my pills, why didn't I think about this before? What would happen if I took all the pills at once?

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MUSA

I cant believe Ndalo is willing to throw four years down the drain for a high school kid, yes I know about her silly little crush on some high school kid she made the mistake of telling Pretty about it thinking her secret would be safe with her, little did she know there's nothing Pretty doesn't tell me about. Ndalo is an ass-kisser, I know she would do anything to please her parents so I know that high school kid is her motivation for ending our relationship.

I didn't mean any of the things I said to her, I just wanted to plant self doubt and insecurities I know her like the back of my hand, if she thinks she has a big hole and that her pussy smells she will never open her legs for that kid.

In the meantime I will put pressure on her parents to force her to marry me that way I know she will come back to me untouched. I wont allow a kid touch what's mine, Ndalo is and will always be mine some young boy wont change that.

When she finally comes back to me I'll drill into her head that no man can truly love her, that way I know she will never even dream of being with another man who's not me.

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SABELO

I just came from school and I find my mother
baking in the kitchen

“ Mommy!”

I say and peck her cheek

“ Sabelo sami”

Only my mother calls me that and it always
leave me smiling like a fool.

“ Tell me where were you coming from in the
morning?”

“ Ma?”

“ Ntlwa! This is my house, I know everything that goes on in this house so tell me where did you sleep last night?”

“ Eish ma, I slept at Xolane's house. He was home alone and asked me to sleep with him”

“ You’re lying, I don’t know if you think I was born yesterday. I hope you’re not involved in anything illegal Sabelo. You have no reason to, your father and I do everything in our power to give you and your sister everything you want. You have no excuse to lead a life of crime”

“ Haibo ma, sikhona isgebengu esihle nje ngami?”

(is there a criminal who looks as handsome as I am)

“ I don’t know Sabelo, what do you expect me to think when you leave the house at night and come back in the wee hours of the morning or yini ungene ku sanatism?”

My mother and her wild imagination though, why would she even think that.

“ I’m not involved in anything shady ma, I promise you”

“ Where were you then?”

“ I can’t tell you but trust me it’s not illegal nor satanic”

“ Sabelo I’m begging you my child please stop roaming the streets at night, you know it’s not safe out here. I couldn’t sleep until I heard you walk in around 4 in the morning, the thought of something happening to you deprived me of sleep”

My poor mother

“ I’m sorry ma”

“ It’s okay, just don’t do it again. Where’s your sister?”

“ I don’t know ma, she’s probably studying back at school”

“ Ok go and change your uniform, I’ll make you something to eat so long”

“ Thank you ma”

I head to my room and change into sweats and a long sleeved vest, it’s June so it’s a bit cold. I should take Ndalo's number today, I want to call and find out how she’s doing today but I can’t because I don’t have her numbers I guess

I have no choice but to wait until tonight to find out.

I will have to sneak out of the house so my mother won't lie awake thinking of my whereabouts, I don't like it when my Queen worries she has sugar diabetes and stressing causes her blood sugar levels to rise which can pose a serious threat to her health so I need to avoid causing her stress by all means.

It's 9pm when I leave my house and Uber to Ndalo's house, as usual I jump over the wall fence and sneak to her room. The lights are off and the door is locked, this is strange I think she didn't hear me when I told her I'm coming back tonight. I wouldn't be surprised if that

were the case, she was so sleepy when I left this morning.

I've been knocking but there's no response, I can't even shout her for fear of her parents or sister hearing me. I knock and knock until I decide the best thing for me to do is to go back home less I want to spend the night outside in the cold, I think the medicine knocked her out that's why she can't hear me she did complain about it yesterday saying it makes her drowsy.

It's been a week now and I still haven't seen Ndalo and I'm going crazy with worry, I went back to her house for three consecutive nights and I always found her room dim and the door

locked. When I went back the last time somehow I knew something must be wrong , something definitely happened to Ndalo I can't say what but something definitely happened to her.

I'm on my way to her house to find out what happened to her, I'm hoping to find her talkative sister at least she knows me and I would like to believe she'd be willing to disclose what happened to my girlfriend.

Unfortunately for me she's not the one who opens the door, another girl who looks exactly like Ndalo opens the door. Damn she's her replica the only difference between them is complexion this one is light skinned.

“ Hello, I’m Sabelo one of Miss Khumalo's students”

“ Hello, I’m Melo. Her little sister”

“ Who’s that?” Says someone behind Melo

“ Hello, who are you?”

A Woman who I’m guessing is their mother asks

“ He said his name is Sabelo, he’s one of Ses'Ndalo’s students”

“ Okay, so what do you want here boy?”

She asks sizing me up

“ Ma'am hasn't been at school for two weeks now so I'm really worried about her I thought I should come and see her"

“ What business do you have with my daughter?”

“ Mama!”

Melo says seemingly embarrassed by her mother's behavior

“ Like I said ma, she's my teacher”

“ Out of all her students you're the only one who is worried about her why?”

“ I..uhm”

“ You what? Do you go to all your teacher's houses to check up on them when they don't come to school?”

“ Mama please” Melo

“ Shut your big mouth wena”

Melo immediately keeps quiet

“ Wena hamba la angifuni kuphinde ngibone le minconjwana yakho la kwami ngike ngiphinde ngikubone la kwami uzongazi kahle”

(You leave my house and never set your foot in my house, If I ever see you here again you’ll know me)

**I have no choice but to leave with my tail between my legs, I wonder where Ndalo is.
Sthandwa sami ukuphi?**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#15

I've been going out of my mind trying to think of a way to get the answers I seek about Ndalo from her sisters, I don't know maybe I should camp outside her house and wait for her parents to leave before going in.

“ What's on your mind?”

“ I haven’t seen Ndalo in a week Sphe and I’m getting worried”

“ I don’t mean to sound otherwise but we are in the middle of exams Sabelo, the only thing you should be stressing about is your books not a grown woman who clearly doesn’t care about you”

I shoot her a look

“ Yeah, I know I encouraged you to fight for her and all but seeing how you’ve been stressing ever since she came into your life made me reconsider. Maybe you should let her be, you’ll find someone else to love”

Wow

“ Do you even know what love is Sphe? You don't switch your feelings on and off as you please!”

“ Oh and you do? Come on Sabelo, you're only 18 you can't seriously tell me you're in love. She's beautiful and older than you, being with her must be exciting and makes you feel like some sort of a man and maybe that's why you mistake what you feel for her for love”

“ You were on my side Sphe, rooting for me and encouraging me to go for her what changed suddenly?”

“ I see how you're always worried about her, you take risks for her and I can't help but wonder is it worth it? Does she love you as much as you do? Come on Sabelo wake up and smell the coffee, she's 25 and has a job if she loved you like you claim she does she would've moved out from her parent's house by now"

“ It's not that simple, there are so many things to consider"

“ keep lying to yourself”

“ She loves me, I know it. I think something happened to her, I mean she wouldn’t just disappear like that.”

“ Whatever makes you sleep better at night, you’re my brother and I won’t stand by and watch someone make a fool out of you. If you keep going out at night to see her, you’ll leave me with no other choice but to tell the rents. Akuna buti wami ozodlalwa ngikhona!”

She storms out of the room after her declaration.

I know how it looks like but I know Ndalo loves me and wouldn't just disappear on me like that, something must've happened to her. And I need to find out what that is before I drive myself crazy with assumptions.

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NDALO

It's been five days since I woke up in a hospital bed but the pain in my heart is still as raw as it was when I learnt that the people who I considered my friends are sleeping with my boyfriend well ex. He could've cheated on me with anyone but it had to be Pretty and Thuli, who are both my friends and the people I grew

up with. If that isn't evil then I don't know what is, both were there from the beginning they watched me fall for Musa and would listen to me go on and on about our relationship knowing very well that they spread their legs for him behind my back.

I can't help but ask myself, did they plan this or they did it individually? I don't know how to deal with the pain I feel in my heart, I know I'm not innocent I mean I cheated on Musa with Sabelo and even started a relationship with him before ending things with Musa but I would have never slept with his friends or anyone close to him.

I don't know what I did to deserve so much pain, I don't know why everyone around me keeps betraying me who's next will it be my sisters or Nthabi? Can I even trust anyone? Apparently Anele was the one who found me in my room lying unconscious and called the ambulance, the doctor managed to drain the pills out of my system and I'm okay well physically that is. The only reason why I'm still in hospital is because I attempted suicide and the doctor won't discharge me until the psychologist gives the go ahead, the psychologist is an Indian lady with a petite frame and a welcoming smile but I don't see how talking will get rid of the immense pain I feel in my heart so she talks to herself during our sessions.

It's visiting hours and people are walking up and down the hospital corridors coming to visit their loved one's while I pray that those pretentious people I call my parents don't visit me today but like always God doesn't hear my prayers because here they come and guess who they came with today? Yeah, you guessed it.

“ My child how are you feeling today”

Lilian asks caressing my cheek with her thumb, yeah its Lilian she doesn't deserve to be called my mother after what she did to me especially because I did nothing to her to deserve that brutal beating. It's been over a week since the incident but my face is still bruised, the

swelling has gone down but I still don't look like myself.

I turn my face the other way avoiding her touch, what was once a soothing mother's touch now serves as a painful reminder.

“ Come on Ndalo you cant stay angry at your mother forever”

Her husband defends her

I don't reply, I owe these people nothing

“ Musa was so worried and wanted to come see you when he found out you were in hospital, at least talk to him since you won’t talk to me”

Some things will never change, she still puts Musa’s feelings above me?

“ We will give you two space”

My father announces before they walk out of the ward

“ I’m so sorry MaKhumalo, I know its my fault you’re lying here. I never meant any of the things that I said, I just wanted to hurt you as much as I was hurt when I found out about

your crush on the scholar. I'm sorry Sthandwa sam, I love you so much and I would never lay with your friends"

This one must think I'm a fool, now it makes sense why he always got uncomfortable everytime he saw me and Thuli talking. That's because he was scared she would reveal his secrets, everything makes sense now.

" Please forgive me and let's fix things please"

" Who told you about my crush on the scholar?"

I know the answer but I need confirmation

“ It doesn’t matter”

“ It was Pretty wasn’t it?”

I have turned my face to his direction so I’m looking at his face when I ask this, the look on his face confirms what I already knew.

“ So how was it?”

“ What?”

“ Being with my friends behind my back?

Knowing that I didn’t suspect anything, I am

sure you'd laugh at my naivety after making love ne?"

" What? I told you I only said those things because I wanted to hurt you, I've never been with your friends babe I swear"

" Don't call me babe, you and I are over and quit pretending Pretty already confessed"

His eyes bulge out in shock

" she did what? She's lying baby, she's always been envious of our relationship. She wants me for herself that's why she's doing this, don't let her win baby"

I release a sarcastic laugh

“ She can have you because I sure as hell don’t want you anymore, I’ve got to give it to you though hay unesibindi shem whoring with your whack bedroom skills”

Something snaps in him and he kicks the foot of the hospital bed so hard the bed moves, I won’t lie I’m scared.

“ Shut your mouth! You’re a chicken in bed and completely clueless that’s why I couldn’t perform”

I laugh at him

“ Yeah right, blame your incompetence on me”

“ Pretty and Thuli never complain, you’re the one with a problem”

The truth always comes out!

“ Really? I guess it’s because they’ve never been with a real man before”

“ What’s that supposed to mean?”

He's breathing fire and screaming on top of his voice

I laugh at him in response

" TELL ME, FUCKEN TELL ME DAMMIT"

" I'm sorry sir I'm going to have to ask you to leave"

The nurse says running into the ward

" I'll leave"

He gives me a murderous look

**“ And wena sphongo this is far from over,
uzonya!”**

**“ I’ll have you know that you’re making threats
to my patient sir, if anything happens to her I’ll
know who to lead the police to”**

He clicks his tongue and walks out

I burst into tears once he’s out of sight

“ I’m sorry”

Says the nurse holding me in her embrace and
brushing my back.

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SABELO

I was writing Physics today and the paper
wasn't bad, most of the things that came out
are things we went through in class with Mrs
Mbhele during our exam preparation and
revision. Well they're not exactly the same but
you get what I mean.

" Let's go grab a few drinks " Xolane

“ Nah, I’ll pass”

“ What’s up with you these days boy, you never want to spend time with us” Khutso

“ I have a lot going on”

“ Like what?” khutso

A missing girlfriend for example

“ I can’t say”

“ Hmm, let’s go Khutso I really need a beer”

“ Okay, sure man”

They throw their question papers in the dustbin and walk away.

“ Where are you Ndalo, I miss you so much”

I quickly wipe my tears with my thumb before they roll down my cheeks, I don't know where to look or who to ask if only I had her number or she had mine then this whole thing would've been easier.

“ Hey Sabelo, what are you still doing here?”

Asks miss Phakathi when she finds me sitting on the stoep an hour after the exam ended.

“ Nothing, I just wanted to be alone”

She picks up a paper on the floor and lays it on the stoep before lowering herself next to me

“ You can talk to me boy, I can tell you’re going through something”

“ I’m fine ma'am”

“ Nonsense, I can tell you’re not okay”

**She places her manicured hand on my lap
making me shift uncomfortably**

“ Oh, I’m sorry”

She looks down, looking rather embarrassed

I stand up and dust my trouser

“ I hope I didn’t make you uncomfortable”

Of course you did

“ No, I have to leave. Bye”

I walk away

**I'm on my way home, minding my own
business when someone calls out my name.**

“ Sabelo! Sabelo”

**I stop on my tracks and look behind me and
guess who is running towards me? Ndalo's
talkative younger sister**

“ Hey, I knew it was you.”

She says when she gets to me

“ Hey, uhm?”

“ Anele”

“ Yeah, Anele”

She’s wearing Thomas Nhlabathi high school's uniform, oh so she attends school there, nice!

“ How are you? ”

“ I’m okay, I’m actually ecstatic now that I see you”

She smiles widely at my confession

“ Really?”

“ Yeah, where’s your sister?”

Her smiles instantly becomes a frown

“ She’s in hospital”

“ What, what happened to her?”

**“ She tried to commit suicide last week, I still
can’t get the picture of her looking lifeless on
her bed out of my head. I thought she was
dead”**

Gone is the happiness that was displayed on her face a minute ago, only sadness rests on her face now.

Ndalo did what??

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#16

I knew something happened to Ndalo but I never imagined it could be this, why would she

want to take her own life? I thought she was happy at least that's what it looked like the last time we were together, I mean we had just made our relationship official and spent the entire night in each other's arms planning our future together. What could've gone wrong all of the sudden that she saw death as the only way out? Did she even think about me when she made a decision to take her own life? I feel hurt and betrayed.

Feeling my presence in the room, she looks up from her phone and our eyes lock. We hold contact for a few of minutes before she averts her eyes and cracks her knuckles. I didn't waste time after Anele told me, I took the first taxi to the hospital I didn't even go home to

change my school uniform first. The urge to see her was too strong, nothing mattered I needed to see her.

“ How could you even think of doing this?”

I say breaking the silence, instead of replying tears shamelessly fall down her face

“ Did you even think about how much pain I would be in if I lost you?”

“ I’m sorry”

“ I’m in the middle of exams Ndalo, did you think about how your death would affect me, my education or you simply didn’t care!”

“ I’m sorry okay..I’m sorry, my intention was never to hurt you I promise”

“ But you did Ndalo!”

“ I’m sorry I wasn’t thinking straight, I allowed pain to consume me and death seemed like the only option”

“ Taking your own life is never an option that’s cowardice! What happened to the Ndalo who stood tall in front of 12B and taught them even

after they laughed in her face and made a mockery of her?"

" I'm sorry"

" Don't apologize, tell me why you did it?"

" The pain was too much for me to bear"

" What pain?"

(Silence)

" What pain Ndalo?"

She opens her mouth but nothing comes out

“ Please talk to me, I’m begging you Sthandwa sam”

“ Musa called on Thursday so I seized the opportunity to tell him I wasn’t going ahead with the wedding, at first he just said ‘Oh’ then he started cursing calling me a bitch, said I was cold in bed and told me my cookie smells of tin fish that’s why he never went down on me he said a lot of things that shattered my confidence as a woman. After that he confessed to cheating on me with my friends, one of them happens to be someone I considered my best friend. Our parents were friends so we grew up together, she was practically my sister I never

imagined that she would do something like this to me”.

What kind of grown man talks like that? He’s so petty and childish!

The pain she feels in her heart is mirrored on her face, yes I’m angry at her but I can’t stand to see her in so much pain. I’ve been fighting the urge to pull her to my arms and hold her tight from the moment I walked in, I give in to my feelings and hold her tight. She cries her heart out in my arms clinging to me for dear life.

“ I’m sorry my love, this is what he wanted. Don’t give him the satisfaction of seeing you

broken and miserable, he said all those things out of spite. Imagine how he must've felt when you told him you no longer want to get married, he was probably hurt and betrayed so he wanted to make you feel the same pain he felt that's why he said all of those things. I know you were hurt but think about it, is taking your life over someone like him worth it?"

" No"

" You were willing to break the hearts of people who truly love you for a jerk like him? You were willing to die and leave me Ndalo, do you even know how much I love you?"

Tears mock me and flow down my cheeks, I can't fathom the thought of her dying on me. It petrifies me, I don't want to know how my life would be like without her in it.

"I'm sorry"

" I think you have low self esteem baby, that's why every little thing people say about you gets to you. You care too much about other people's opinions of you because you don't know who you are, it's important to know who you are because people will come to your life and want to define you but when you know who you are you will not be swayed by people's opinions of you. How can you possibly love other people when you don't love yourself first? I think you

need to talk to someone and get to the root of your esteem issues."

" Oh you're wise way beyond your years, you are right I'll talk to the psychologist, thank you baby"

" Pleasure my love, I will be with you every step of the way. Never think of doing what you did ever again, I would die if I lost you"

" I'm sorry for being selfish and only thinking about myself"

" It's okay, never ever give anyone so much power over you. People always have something

to say unfortunately you can't control what they say but don't allow any of the things they say about you change how you see yourself'

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NDALO

I still can't get over how wise and mature Sabelo is for his age, what he said helped me a lot. I listened to his advice and opened up to the psychologist during our sessions, opening up has helped me a great deal. I discovered a lot of things about myself and got to the root of

my insecurities, I'm slowly learning to love and accept myself.

During one of our sessions I discovered the reason why I put other people's feelings above my own is actually not because I'm nice or due to my kindness it's actually my desperate need to be accepted and loved. It's amazing what self love can do for a person, a person who loves themselves would never subject themselves to any form of unhealthy relationship. Their peace and emotional wellbeing means so much to them that they would be willing to cut off anything or anyone that tempers or disturbs their peace.

On that note, I moved out from home because it's clear my parents will never accept that the relationship between me and Musa is over so moving out was the best option. I'm renting a flat in town, I must admit living alone with no one to tell me what to do or how to do it feels great plus Sabelo can come and go as he pleases. I miss my sisters though I hope my parents will allow them to visit me, but knowing the kind of people they are I won't hold my breath.

My face is slowly going back to normal, I bought skincare products to speed up the process- removing the marks and scars I received from my mother's assault. School is closed for June holidays but not for the matric

learners who are still going to school to attend SSIP, fortunately for me I don't teach SSIP classes yet so I'm home getting all the rest I need to prepare myself for the next term.

It's a few minutes after four in the afternoon and I've been on couch all day binge watching movies and series on Netflix. I get up from the couch when I hear a knock on the door, it's Sabelo he has a duffel bag hanging over his shoulder shame my poor boyfriend looks so exhausted.

" Good afternoon baby"

"Afternoon, let me take that you look tired"

I take the bag from him and go put in my bedroom, I find him on the couch when I get back to the lounge.

“ How was your day?”

“ It was okay my love yours?”

“ It was fine, should I make you something to eat?”

“ No, I know you're still watching but can we please go to bed. I just want hold you in my arms, I miss you"

Sabelo is so clingy y'all but I'm not complaining, I actually enjoy the attention he gives me. We spend so much time together, and no we haven't had sex yet.

“ Ok go ahead I'm coming, I want to switch off the heater and the TV first”

“ Ok, don't take too long”

I switch off the heater and the TV and join him in the bedroom. I find him stripping his clothes off, I always have a hard time sleeping next to him because I crave him so bad but akazingeni he says I should focus on my therapy for now sex will come later. “ We have all the time in

the world to make love baby" that's what he says.

I change into my pajamas, join him in bed and rest my head on his chest. It doesn't take long before I hear him snoring shem he must be tired.

I've been sitting in front of the mirror for the last thirty minutes trying to put make up on, y'all should see my eyebrows they look like door handles kanti how do other get girls do this? I bought those eyebrow shaper things at clicks and watched numerous eyebrow tutorials on YouTube but still ishiya lithi andizi. I wipe

my face for umpteenth time in the last half and an hour and accept defeat clearly drawing is not one of my strengths.

I settle for my normal routine- mascara, eyeliner, face powder and of course lipstick. I look beautiful but nothing different from how I always look, I wanted to look hot like a heater and turn heads the moment I walk inside the church. I wanted Musa and that backstabber Thuli to see that their betrayal didn't break me but I guess simple will have to do for today. I'm dressed in a white suit, it's a long sleeved blazer, crisp shirt and a button skirt. The skirt is two centimeters above the knee and it does wonders for my plump behind, I'm wearing stockings underneath just so I don't draw too

much attention to myself and I paired the suit with 6 inch black stilettos.

By the time I walk inside the church the service has long started and heads turn as I walk from the door to my seat, I greet the people sitting next to me and fix my attention to Ma'am Simeno who's standing in front. From the corner of my eye I can see Musa gawking at me and I couldn't be more pleased with myself.

" Sister Ndalo the pastor would like to have a word with you"

I'm already at the door when Khetho says this

“ Now?”

“ Yeah, that’s what he said”

“ Okay thanks”

I get an idea of what the pastor wants to talk to me about when I see my parents, Musa's parents and Musa sitting with the pastor. My respect for the pastor is the only reason why I didn't go back the moment I figured what this whole meeting might be about.

“ Sanibonani”

I respectfully greet

“ Good afternoon sister Ndalo, I’m glad to see you in church today”

“ Thank you Pastor”

“ Please take a seat”

He says showing me a seat next to Musa, ya neh!

“ I think you know why we called you here”

“ No, I have no idea Mfundisi”

I feign ignorance

“ Okay, MaKhumalo would you like to tell her why she’s here?”

“ Ndalo you’re here because your father and I feel like you’ve changed since you started working, you no longer listen to us. You backchat when we chastise you and you even called off your wedding to Musa, your father and I think you’re possessed by a demon that’s the only logical explanation as to why you’d change overnight and become this person you are now. Can you believe she tried to take her own life and moved out from home pastor? Please help our child pastor, deliver her from this demon that’s tormenting her”

Wawu!

“ Sister Ndalo what do you have to say about everything your mother has said against you”

“ Pastor my job didn't change me, I fell out of love with Musa and I was honest with my parents and told them I didn't want to get married to him but they forced me and threatened to disown me if I didn't marry him...”

“ Wu amanga Buhle! You see pastor, the demon has turned her into a liar as well”

Lilian says cutting me off

**“ Please give her a chance to speak
MaKhumalo, we are trying to resolve an issue
here. Please carry on my child”**

**“ My family means so much to me so I chose to
obey my parents and go ahead with the
wedding but I wasn't happy Mfundisi, Musa is
very controlling and would even go as far as
telling me who I could and couldn't befriend..”**

**“ That's because the people she befriends are
not good for her, I was only doi..” Musa**

Pastor raises a hand

“ Please give her a chance to speak you’ll get your turn to speak, carry on my child”

I love pastor shem, he knows how to put people in their place.

“ There’s so many things I was unhappy about with regards to my relationship with him but I’ll not mention them out of respect for my elders, I went back to my mother to try and make her understand why I didn’t want to get married to Musa but my mother didn’t listen she beat me up instead”

You should see the shame in my mother's face, she probably wants the ground to open up and swallow her. Haha serves her right.

“ She beat you up?”

He asks looking at my mother, who is looking everywhere except the pastor's direction

“ Yes, she wore her tight and beat me up with fists. She didn't let go of me until I was bleeding, I could barely recognize myself when I looked in the mirror after the incident”.

“ Eh eh all that only because you told her you didn't want to get married to Musa?”

“ Yes, Pastor”

“ MaKhumalo mind telling me why you beat up the child?”

“ She was very rude and disrespectful pastor, I didn't beat her up because she didn't want to get married anymore it was her choice of words I despised”

Habeh!

“ But still there are other ways to discipline a child, violence isn't a solution. They say you

tried to take your own life why did you do that Ndalo?"

" Musa called me and said so many despicable things to me and also confessed to cheating on me with Pretty and Sister Thuli"

" Eh eh, there's clearly a lot of things I wasn't told about"

Halala, liyabachitha icala. Abasashalazeli, that'll teach them not to mess with me. Gone is the Ndalo they used to play with!

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#17

NARRATED

“ But still there are other ways to discipline a child, violence isn’t a solution. They say you tried to take your own life why did you do that Ndalo?”

“ Musa called me and said so many despicable things to me and also confessed to cheating on me with Pretty and Sister Thuli”

“ Eh eh, there’s clearly many things I wasn’t told about” Pastor

Saying Musa is mortified would be putting it lightly, he immediately casts his eyes to the ground and fix his gaze there.

“ He did what!?”

Khumalo asks already charging towards Musa riled by the boy’s disparagement, how dare he drive his daughter to suicide and still want to marry her? The boy clearly has no regard for him as Ndalo’s father.

“ Mr Khumalo please calm down and let’s resolve this matter without violence”

The pastor beseeches shielding the frightened young man from the indignant father.

Khumalo is seeing red no amount of talking will be able to calm him down, he’s baying for blood this boy disrespected him and no one gets away with disrespecting him. Christianity aside, he needs to teach the boy a lesson and maybe after that he might consider ‘talking’ like the pastor suggests.

“ Khumalo please”

His wife pleads stroking his arm, it seems to work because his rapid breathing and meteoric heart rate slow down.

“ I’m sorry pastor but there’s nothing I’ll say to this boy. I always knew he was not good enough for my daughter but I gave him the benefit of doubt when he asked for her hand in marriage but clearly my intuition was always right about him”.

“ Khumalo let’s talk about this please, I agree my son made a huge mistake but he regrets it. Let’s please sit down and resolve this”

Mr Sibisi pleads his son’s case

“ I’m getting out of here, Lilian are you coming with me?”

He says completely disregarding Mr Sibisi’s request. He might have asked a question but Lilian knows her husband well enough to know it’s not a question but a command so she takes her bag and darts behind her husband.

The Khumalo’s departure leave behind a sombre mood, Ndalo is the first one up she her grabs her handbag and struts to the door elegantly swaying her hips side to side.

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NDALO

What an unexpected turn of events, I don't know what the quintet had in mind when they reported me to the pastor but I'm sure they didn't expect the meeting to end the way it did. I'm glad my father stood up for me, his reaction when I revealed what Musa did moved something inside of me it reminded me how it used to feel like to have a father who loved and protected me, a hero who was willing to fight off all the monsters and keep me safe.

I hope my parents will finally get the idea of marrying me to Musa out of their minds

especially my mother, the way she was so desperate for this marriage to happen I was starting to suspect that maybe she has something to gain out of it but let's hope she'll finally get the hint and stop playing cupid in my life. I'm allowed to choose who I want to spend the rest of my life with, I'm the one who'll be stuck with that person after all. Parents need to stop choosing partners for their children because they're not the one's who'll spend the rest of their lives with the people they choose for us, imagine getting married to someone you're not attracted to-now that's pure torture!

One thing I love about living in my own place is that I get to eat whatever I want when I want it, I'm not forced to eat everything my mother

prepares without question. Today I woke up craving Mogodu and since it's at my house my rules situation Mogodu is what I'll have for dinner, the pot is already on the stove cooking and I can't wait to indulge ave kumnandi ukuhlala kwakho!

Some dishes don't want you put too many ingredients and Mogodu is that dish for me, spices and all the other extra ingredients take away the delicious taste for me.

" Almost there"

I close the lid and reduce the heat.

 Oh, her eyes, her eyes

Make the stars look like they're not shinin'

Her hair, her hair

Falls perfectly without her trying

She's so beautiful

And I tell her everyday 

Sabelo is the one who sent me this song and I loved the message in the song, it instantly became one of my favourite songs and my ringtone. I sprint to the lounge at the sound of my ringtone, it's a call from an unsaved number but I pick up anyway.

“ Hello”

“ How could you Ndalo?”

**It's Thuli, I would recognize her voice
anywhere**

“ How could I what?”

**“ Ruin my reputation like that. I know you love
Musa, you're hurt and you tried to commit
suicide when he broke up with you but did you
have to run to tell the pastor? You know he'll
tell pastor Zabeko and you know how he is,
he'll direct all his sermons at me”**

Pastor Zabeko is the youth pastor, he's the leader of the young adults and he's those judgemental pastors. He once preached about cohabitation the whole month because he found out one of the ladies in the church is living with her boyfriend, let's just say you become the subject of his sermons if he happens to know something about you.

“ Nawu umhlolo wami uthi kwenzakalani wena?”

“ You heard me the first time, I thought you'd take the break up like a lady but no you had to be bitter and petty sies have some self respect Musa doesn't love you anymore”

I can't help but laugh

“ Instigating your father against him was not enough, you had to run and tell the pastor about us. Ruining my reputation won't make him take you back, do yourself a favour and accept that it's over.”

**I break into a belly laugh unable to hold myself,
haibo amanga ka Musa!**

“ What's so funny wena sphongo?”

Her retort propels me to laugh even harder

“ Ukhohlakele yezwa!”

(You're so evil)

“ Ngifuze wena ne ndoda yakho engakwazi ukwenza!”

(Like you and your man who doesn't know how to satisfy a woman in bed)

“ I can't believe I once felt guilty for chowing your man behind your back, what a waste of guilt. You deserved it all!”

“ If only you knew how much you have helped me, I'm not ungrateful so let me thank you. Thank you so much Thuli for freeing me from oppression, thank you so much friend unkulunkulu akwenze kahle”

(God bless you)

“ What? You’ve definitely gone nuts but I completely understand it can’t be easy to lose a man you’ve been with for four years to your friend but it’s life what can we say?”

If only she knew what she’s getting herself into then she wouldn’t be so proud, I’d warn her but its her turn bantase let her feel it!

“ I understand, we can’t go against destiny. You and Musa were meant to be together”

“ Exactly, I’m so glad you get it but I don’t understand why you had to run and tell the pastor”

**“ Tell your boyfriend to tell you the truth
uphume kimi”**

(and leave me alone)

**I end the call and immediately block her
numbers, yo ngaze ngavelelwa bo!**

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MUSA

I still cant believe Ndalo did that, stand up for herself that is. Damn she looked so sexy and confident, she's always been a beautiful woman with an equally beautiful body but she was always insecure and self conscious so that kind of dimmed her light. What I saw today was a completely different person, she looked so confident and sure of herself from the way she walked and carried herself I couldn't keep my eyes of her damn I love the new Ndalo.

Well that's what I thought until she aired my dirty laundry, I've never been so ashamed in my life. I felt like I've just been stripped naked on the streets and everyone could see my nakedness, it felt like people were pointing fingers at me and mocking me.

She knows how much my reputation means to me, I have a very good reputation at church. I'm that brother who carries the pastor's bible to the pulpit every Sunday before he starts his sermon. The brother who's trusted with church keys, the one who always lends a helping hand and loved by all, the one who is wanted by all the ladies in church entlek I'm that brother all the mother's wish they had for a son in law.

What Ndalo told the pastor definitely knocked my reputation to it's knees, I don't know how I'll go back to church again after this? Just a few more years then I would've been ordained as a pastor but now that will never happen all thanks to Ndalo and her wet mouth but I won't

take this lying down I'm going to fight back with everything I've got. I'm going to start with that job she loves so much, she wasn't this bold before she started working. Having a few thousands in her bank account has made her think she can take me on so I will start there, I will ruin her reputation and make sure she never works as a teacher in this country again.

She will pay for messing with me, she was exposed to my love all this time but now she'll feel my hate! I hate the bitch and I will make her pay for ruining my reputation. Since Ndalo broke up with me I decided to make things official with Thuli, I don't love her or anything but she loves me so I thought why not give it a try.

“ Musa tell me the truth what really happened?”

She just got off the phone with Ndalo

“ What are you talking about?”

“ U Sphongo said I should ask you to tell me the truth, she didn't even sound hurt she gave us her blessings matter of fact so tell me what really happened?”

“ I told you what happened, what do you want me to say?”

“ I don’t know but there’s something about the way Ndalo laughed at me when I told her to move on that doesn’t sit well with me”

“ Ai I don’t know what you want me to say, I told you the truth its your choice who you believe me your boyfriend or Ndalo my bitter ex”

“ But Musa you know how Ndalo is, she wouldn’t run to the pastor ...”

“ Ever heard of the phrase ‘ hell hath no fury like a woman scorned’?”

“ Yeah”

“ A hurt woman is capable of anything, Ndalo is hurt that I left her for a better person so she’ll do anything”

“ No, something doesn’t make sense here. You’d go on and on about how much you love Ndalo, how you’ll marry her and all boom suddenly you broke up with her? Ai it doesn’t make sense”

“ It does, don’t think too much about it. I fell out of love, it happens people fall out of love all the time”

“ I hope you’re not lying to me”

“ Of course I’m not, why would I lie to you?”

“ Who knows, people don’t need a reason to lie”

“ I’m not people, I’m Musa Sibisi your future husband”

Her lips stretch into the biggest smile I’ve ever seen, the way woman love the idea of getting married though

“ Are you serious?”

“ Of course”

“ Wow! What about your parents, your mother loves Ndalo?”

“ That was before she showed us her true colours, don’t worry about my mother. You and I are getting married whether she approves or not”

“ Ncoah, thank you baby”

She throws herself in my arms

There’s no way I’m getting married to Thuli, she’s not a wife material but I had to say

something so she would stop questioning me about Ndalo.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#18

Things between Ndalo and I have been incredibly amazing, who knew being in love with someone who loves you just as much feels this amazing. Sphe once said something that had me questioning my feelings for Ndalo, she said I've never been in love with anyone before so why was I so sure that what I feel for Ndalo

is indeed love? At the age of 18 most teens are still finding their way through this life thing, trying to understand their emotions but here I am claiming to be in love. Feelings and emotions can be complex and difficult to understand, there's a thin line between love, lust and infatuation.

Since I didn't know how else to verify if what I feel for her was indeed love and I couldn't really ask anyone else without risking her career I had no choice but to go to the internet haha I'm sure it sounds crazy but what choice did I have? Most of us are quick to say we are in love yet we can't even define what love is, what is love vele?

According to the internet love is viewed as varying levels of passion, intimacy and commitment. There are eight questions from the sternberg model that one needs to ask themselves to attest to the truth of their love, the questions are merely samples to spark thought, they are not a validated measure of love.

- 1. How often do you think about this person?**
- 2. Do you miss him/her when you're not near him/her?**
- 3. Is it exciting, thrilling, or otherwise psychologically stimulating to see this person?**
- 4. How connected do you feel to this person?**
- 5. To what extent does this person know your emotions and feelings**

6. Do you have a strong level of mutual understanding?

7. Do you feel personally responsible for this person?

8. Are you "all in" when it comes to being with this person?

The first three questions target the idea of passion, which is tied to sexual attraction.

Mutual sexual desire might promote romantic love, but sexual interest can be found in other relationships (example of this would be one night stands, no strings relationships and friends with benefits) in which someone can be sexually attracted to someone they're not in love with. Therefore sexual attraction is

necessary but not sufficient for defining romantic love.

The next three focus on intimacy. Intimacy is tied to liking. Liking is part of romantic love but like passion it can be a component of other relationships like friendships, it is therefore not exclusive to love. The final three target commitment, which according to Sternberg is a decision, in other words we choose to commit ourselves to the people that we love. If passion is hot, and intimacy is warm then commitment is the cold component of love, because it is a choice. Consummate love also known as complete love reflects all three aspects of the love triangle

On that note, I can say with absolute certainty that I am in love with Ndalo.

Sphe walks in and finds me on my phone texting with Ndalo, damn she's so naughty I don't know how long I can hold myself for.

“ So you and your sugar mommy patched things up?”

She has her nose wrinkled as she asks me this, I don't know why she suddenly has a problem with Ndalo and quite frankly I don't care.

“ What do you want Sphe?”

“ I’m only asking “

“ Why should I tell you huh? You never have anything good to say about our relationship”

“ That’s because I’m trying to protect you, this whole thing is just so wrong. She’s using you to get over her ex”

“ Uyaphapha that’s your problem, who asked for your protection? you need to butt out of my business and find a boyfriend or some hobby because clearly you’re bored”

“ Not everyone wants to be in a relationship, some of us just want to be rich and successful”

“ Good for you but please stay out of my business ke”

“ Yo ai shem ngiyamuvuma u ma'am Khumalo shem, she has you going crazy over her. She must be good in bed ne?”

“ Sphehlehle kuya la uzongidina khona, ngizosho futhi phuma ezindabeni zami”

(I’m slowly losing patience with you, I’ll say it again stay out of my business)

“ Okay”

“ Thanks”

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SPHESIHLE

At first she was in support of this relationship because she saw how in love her brother was with their life sciences teacher but no man whichever way you look at it this relationship isn't right. Why would a 25 year old woman fall in love with a 18 year old student? Yes her brother is definitely in love with her, she knows how much he has changed since he met her. Before her, Sabelo was what people call a fuckboy he never tied himself down to one person. He had so many girlfriends, some were even more beautiful than Miss Khumalo but he

never wanted any serious relationship with any of them he only wanted sex. He good looks helped his case, girls bay for his attention so he never struggled to get what he wanted but all that changed when he met her.

He has changed, he's always fussing over her, leaving the house in the middle of the night just so he can see her hell he even cries for her! It's clear he's in love with her, and she is sure he would do anything for her and somehow that stings because once upon a time she used to be the center of his attention but he forget all about her the moment she came to the picture. She can't remember the last time she spent quality time with her brother, she has tried several times to trick him into a movie date

night but he ends up talking about her the entire time.

She doesn't hate her or anything but she wants her brother back, is that too much to ask?

Would it be wrong for her to report them to the principal? She did her research and she knows it's a crime for a teacher to date a pupil, consensual or not it's illegal for a teacher to date a student!

If found guilty Miss Khumalo could lose her job and be stripped off her right to teach in this country, is she willing to watch another person lose her career over her jealousy?

“ Damn it!”

“ And then wena what’s eating you?”

Keletso, her friends asks.

“ I’m stuck between a rock and a hard place”

“ Tell me about it, who knows maybe I can help”

“ Okay, so I know of a teacher who’s dating a student. I don’t know if I should report them or not “

“ So, how old are they?”

**“ There’s a 7 year age difference between them
“**

**“ Not bad, so why do you want to report
them?”**

**“ Come on, I can’t believe you just asked me
that. It’s wrong for a teacher to date a learner”**

**“ What I’m trying to understand is if they’re in
love or not?”**

**Why doesn’t Keletso see things from her
perspective?**

“ Well?”

“ They are, at least that’s what they say”

“ Then don’t report them, what if the girl is the teacher’s true love? Don’t ruin things for them, I know of teachers who got married to people who were once their students. Stay out of their business please friend”

Of course the friend thinks the teacher is a male, but it’s understandable its not everyday you find a female teacher dating a student.

“ What if the teacher is taking advantage of the learner’s naivety?”

“ Then it’s her lesson to learn, don’t meddle in their business please. They know what they’re doing”

“ But it’s illegal”

“ Why do you care? Do you want the teacher for yourself?”

“ What? Of course not! You know I don’t have time for relationships”

“ Then stay out of their business”

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NDALO

I've always wanted to be with someone who'd be so afraid to lose me, someone who would understand how rare I am. How down for them I am, someone who isn't willing to allow one 'moment of weakness' to jeopardize our relationship. Someone who appreciates and adores me, well that used to be nothing but a dream until I met Sabelo.

With him I don't want to fall in love, I fell for Musa and I ended up with bruises. Falling

always ends up hurting, so I want to walk into love and watch it blossom and grow. I want to ease into it and take my time, I don't want to make any more mistakes, I don't want anymore disappointments. I'm happy, genuinely happy and enjoying being in a relationship with Sabelo.

He's mature but I'm always reminded of the fact that he's younger than me everytime we talk about our future, we both want different things out of life- he's at that age in life where he wants to study and make something out of himself while I'm at the age where I want to settle down, get married and have kids.

As much as I love him and he loves me too I'm not certain about the future of our relationship, I don't want to be negative and think negatively but reality is our age gap is always going to be a stumbling block in our relationship. Our future together is not certain, so I'm going into this with no expectations I'm just going to go with the flow and enjoy our relationship who knows how long it will last? As much as we would want for it to last forever chances of that happening are slim, so it's best to live in the now and have lots of sex while at it!

He's sleeping skyward on the bed and like always I have my head on his abs. His fingers are on hair massaging my scalp while his left arm is locked around my waist, I always look

forward to being in his arms like this it always makes me feel serene.

“ Babe I think I’m ready to take things to the next level”

Who knew good old conservative Ndalo would initiate sex one day? But I can’t wait any more.

“ We spoke about this Ndalo, focus on your mental health for now we..”

“ We have all the time in the world to make love”

I finish off his sentence

**“ Okay, I can see this is not just about sex.
Talk”**

**“ That’s the thing Sabelo, we don’t know how
much time we have”**

“ Where is this coming from?”

**“ Let’s be honest with ourselves Sabelo, you’re
going to varsity next year and I’ll be here. What
if our relationship doesn’t survive the
distance?”**

“ Don’t be negative”

“ It’s called being realistic”

“ I don’t know what you want me to say “

“ Don’t say anything, make love to me”

“ Or you don’t want to?”

I say when he doesn’t reply

“ Don’t do that, you know I want you more than anything”

“ Then make love to me”

“ The thing is I wanted our first time to be special you know”

“ We love each other and we connect, what can be more special than that?”

“ You really want this don't you?”

“ I do, don't you”

“ I do but..”

I cut him off with a kiss, he replies with the same intensity and passion. I can never get used to how soft his lips are, his kisses are slow and sensual there's just something about the

way he kisses me that makes me need him like I need oxygen. My hands go below his waist fishing for his member, a loud groan escapes his mouth when I grab his hard shaft.

His member keeps growing in my hand and becomes hard as steel, he buries his face on the crook of my neck and sucks on my long neck. An involuntary moan escapes my lips as I throw my head backwards giving him access to my neck, he hurriedly takes off my pj top and buries his face on my boobs I get hot flashes all over my body when he twirls his tongue around my nipple and latches on it like a toddler. Once he's done giving attention to my boobs he trails his kisses down to my belly button and

sucks on it driving me insane with lust and then plants wet kisses all over my stomach.

“ Babe, you’re tickling me”

I say in between giggles

He takes off my PJ short along with my wet thong and flips me over so that I lie on my stomach and immediately buries his face on my buttocks, he sucks and slightly bites on them.

“ Baaabbe”

I breathlessly moan

I almost pee on his face when he blows hot air on my ass damn it I've never felt anything like this. He has me in a chest down, ass up position and my nuna is wide and ready to eat. I'm drenched I can literally feel my juices leaking from my nuna, he spreads my buttocks and trails his tongue from my crack down to my wet nuna. He licks and sucks on my twitching clit and labial lips and laps on my juices like a dog slurping water. My heart threatens to jump out my chest from sheer pleasure, I'm a moaning mess and I don't know what to do with myself so I end up pushing my ass all over his face so his tongue can delve deeper into my greedy nuna.

My toes curl as an intense wave of pleasure ripples through my body from the strands of my hair to the soles of my feet, my body spasms and I cum all over his face creaming his face with my juices.

He cleans me up with his tongue swiping it on my wetness and drinks my juices like a hot beverage, when he's done cleaning me up he crawls to my side and guides his hard rod into my mouth. I don't ask questions, I immediately wrap my hands around his shaft and suck on his member like my life depends on it. I don't even know what I'm doing but from his loud groans I know I must be doing something right, I suck my cheeks in and massage his balls out

of the blue he grabs my hair and pushes all of himself in my mouth making me gag.

It doesn't take long before his body goes rigid and he empties all his sperm bank in my mouth, I swallow trying my outmost best not to vomit yerr how do you guys do it? Swallowing that is, yazi sizofa sibancane stru nasi!

“ You okay?” he asks

“ Yes”

Within a blink of an eye my lips are covered in his, his tongue is delving into my mouth chasing mine and they dance in unison sending

signals down south causing a puddle between my legs. I lie on my back and pull him on top of me I need him inside already I've waited long enough, its like he read my mind because he spreads my legs wide open and slides his tip up and down my wet folds and clit.

“ Stop teasing, put it in already”

Our eyes lock as he guides his hard rod inside of me, pushing all his length inside of me burying himself to the hilt causing me to yelp in pain

“ I'm sorry”

He stops moving

“ Please, don’t stop”

“ You sure?”

“ Yes”

He buries his face on the crook on my neck and thrusts in and out of my wetness, my loud moans fill the entire bedroom I never knew I was a screamer until now boy be doing me so good and I have no choice but to moan out loud. His strokes are slow at first then deep and fast driving me insane with pleasure. I lose my senses when he circles his finger around the

wrinkles on my asshole, I swear he wants to kill me with pleasure damn it he's doing me so good.

He looks at me with red half hooded eyes reflecting nothing but lust.

“ I love you Ndoni yamanzi yami”

“ I love you more”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#19

I think I need to see Sabelo's parents because there's no way he can be 18, the department of Home Affairs must have made a mistake I mean it wouldn't be the first time something like that happens. It's 12 midday yet I'm still in bed, unable to do anything because my body feels numb Sabelo thoroughly dealt with me shem. How can someone so young know so much about sex? Ngeke there must be a mistake, Sabelo cannot be 18.

" Babe wake up, your food is getting cold"

He's been trying to get me out of bed for a while now

“ Give me five minutes”

“ That’s what you said an hour ago”

“ I’m tired Sabelo, please let me be”

“ I wont eat without you, please come”

“ Sabelo I’m tired”

“ Please”

He makes a puppy face, he knows I can’t refuse him when he looks at me like this. I get off the

bed in my nakedness and skim my eyes around the bedroom for something to wear

“ You don’t play fair”

He hands me my gown and sleepers, I get dressed and go to the bathroom to freshen up before following him to the lounge. Guess what I was dragged out of bed for? Fat cakes!

“ What’s wrong?”

He asks when he sees the expression on my face.

“ You woke me up for amagwinya Sabelo, like really?”

I say unable to conceal my disappointment

“ What’s wrong with amagwinya sthandwa sam?”

He’s confused, so he really doesn’t see anything wrong with this?

“ I was expecting toast, eggs, bacon etc not amagwinya”

“ You watch too much TV sthandwa sami, please sit down and eat”

Don't get me wrong I love fat cakes but I thought he'd be romantic and prepare something mushy especially after last night but he's still 18 after all, he'll learn.

" Please"

Let me not be ungrateful, at least he tried. It's the thought that counts right?

" Tea or Coffee?"

" Coffee"

" Coming right up"

He's really trying his best shem, he's never done anything like this before. I'm the one who always prepares our food, well that's if I can call buying fat cakes and making a cup of coffee "preparing food".

"Thanks love"

He winks and saunters to the kitchen to make my coffee.

Surprisingly I enjoy my food, the fat cakes were so delicious I ended up taking two from his plate and like the perfect gentleman he is he didn't have a problem with that. When we are

done eating he helped me with the dishes which weren't many by the way then we took an innocent shower together, of course he wanted some but my nuna is still sore from last night so I refused.

“ Do you have to leave?”

“ Babe, we spoke about this”

“ Stay one more day please”

It's 5 in the evening and he has to leave but my heart is not ready to let him go even after spending the entire day with him.

**“ You know I would if I could but I can’t love,
my parents would flip.”**

“ Ok, I understand”

He cups my face in his palms

**“ I also don’t want to leave my love but you
know I have to”**

**He always tells his parents he is going to visit
his friends everytime he spends the night with
me, I don’t want to think about what will
happen when they realise he’s been lying to
them all this time.**

“ You don’t have to explain, I completely understand but my heart still breaks everytime you leave”

“ I know, I also hate leaving you but I have no choice”

“ It’s okay, I love you Sabelo”

“ I love you so much more, thank you for last night”

I smash my lips into his, the kiss is slow and sensual I can’t help but moan in his mouth I don’t know if I’ll ever get used to being kissed like this.

His phone rings disturbing us

**“ It’s the Uber driver sthandwa sam, he’s
outside”**

Why do I feel like crying?

**“ Come on, don’t do that. We just spoke about
this”**

“ Yeah, I know but it still doesn’t hurt less”

“ I’m sorry, one day I won’t have to leave”

He pulls me to his arms and gives me a bone crushing hug

“ I love you so much”

“ I love you more”

He breaks the hug, plants a peck on my forehead then takes his duffel bag and walks out the door. I release a loud sob once he’s out of sight, why does seeing him leave hurt so much?

“ Stop being a cry-baby Ndalo” I chastise myself.

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SABELO

Don't let them fool you sex is not the same, it's completely different with someone you love. Its much more than just physical pleasure, it's spiritual and sacred you can literally feel your souls connecting amazing stuff I tell you. I didn't delay sex with Ndalo because I didn't want her, it's true I wanted her to be completely fine mentally and psychologically before we engaged in sex but another reason why I was delaying it is because I was scared I wouldn't be able to satisfy her. Ndalo is different from all the girls I've been with in the past, unlike them she's not a girl but a woman.

It was perfect, better than what I imagined. I love her so much and I hope distance wont come between us next year, I know she's scared and I am also scared to be honest. What if she meets someone better than me-A guy in her age group who has a stable career and income? I know she doesn't mind the fact that I'm unable to provide for her at the moment but how long until her friends tell her about everything their man do for them and she feels left out? I don't know much about woman but I know they love being pampered and how will I do that if I do without an income, unlike my exes she wont be just satisfied with being taken to movies or a simple ice cream date.

I would go all day long if I were to talk about my fears when it comes to our relationship but I don't want to dwell on the negatives and deprive myself of a chance to enjoy what I have, she's mine now so I intend to enjoy every moment with her and love her like I've never loved before. The last thing I want is regrets, so I'm going to give this relationship my all and hope it works out.

" Good evening family"

" Good evening"

They all reply except Sphe, they are in the lounge watching idols well my dad is reading a newspaper. I know he'd rather be in his room

than here but I know my mom can be
persuasive sometimes

“ Sisi didn’t you hear your brother greeting?”

Mom asks her

“ Oh, sorry bro. I was engrossed on Berry’s
performance, girl is good”

“ Okay, I’ll be in my room”

“ Won’t you eat?”

“ No, Thanks ma but I’m fine “

“ What did you eat?”

What did I eat vele? I last ate those fat cakes during the day but I don't have appetite I just want to get in bed and reminisce about last night.

“ I ate..uhm I ..”

“ I won't listen to you, sisi go dish up for your brother”

My parents hardly call us by our names it's always Sisi and Buti but mom sometimes calls

me Sabelosami I don't know kusuke
kwenzakalani when she calls me that.

Sphe gets up from the couch and the irritation
on her face cant be missed, I wonder what's up
with her

“ Ushwabanisele bani ubuso wena?” Mom
(Who are you making that face for)

I guess I'm not the only one who saw that

“ It's fine ma, I'll dish up for myself. You can sit
down Sphe”

I say saving Sphe, I know once my mom starts talking she doesn't stop shem.

" No, you will do no such thing. Sphe will dish up for you"

" Ma please"

" Sisi what's your problem with your brother? You've never had a problem with dishing up for him before, what has changed?"

My father asks with a soft voice

My father is not a man of many words and I'm yet to hear him shout, he's soft spoken and very humble.

" I have no problem babami"

She says yet her eyes are glistening with tears

" Manje ukhalelani?"

(Why are you crying)

My mother interjects

" Ma it's fine, I'll talk to her. Mntasekhaya can we talk in my room?"

She nods

I take her hand and lead the way

“ Talk to me Sphe, what’s going on?”

I say when we get to my room

“ You no longer love me Sabelo, Miss Khumalo is all you care about. You’re always so rude to me and telling me to keep my nose out of your business”

“ How can I stop loving you Sphehlehle? I would never stop, even if I wanted to. No one can take your place, you’re not only my sister but you’re a part of me. Yes things have changed between but that's because we are no longer kids Sphe, we’ve grown up and I have a girlfriend now who needs my time and attention but that doesn’t mean I love you any less now”

“ I understand, I guess I wasn’t ready for this”

“ It’s okay I understand, come here”

I wrap my arms around her and hold her tight, lord knows how much I love this soul. I hate it when we fight but one needs to practice tough

love on her sometimes otherwise she takes advantage.

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NDALO

Holidays are over, school is reopening on Monday and I'm honestly not looking forward to it. Will I be able to behave professional around Sabelo, I'm so used to addressing him as baby I hope I don't slip up in class and call him "baby" in front of the other learners.

I'm on WhatsApp chatting to Nthabi when I get a call from Melo

“ Melokuhle”

“ Ses'Ndalo”

Gosh, I miss my sisters

“ I miss you”

I confess

**“ Well it’s your lucky day then because I’m
outside your door”**

“ What?”

“ Yes”

Then she giggles

“ You better not be playing with me”

“ I’m not”

I run to the door to open and guess what? she’s really here, I throw myself in her arms causing the both of us to fall to the floor.

We help each other up while laughing

**“ Ah mara Ses'Ndalo ungathi ungaka
uzozilahlela phezu kwami”**

**(How can you throw yourself on top of me
when you're this size)**

“ What size am I ?”

“ Usdudla hau!”

(You're fat)

I chuckle

**“ Uyathanda ukuzenza islender ngami shem,
mina nawe siyalingana”**

(you like acting like you're thin, you and I are the same size)

“ Never, angikho ngaka mina uzibonile iybunu kuthi zingakanani?”

(I'm not this big, did you see how big your ass is)

“ Keep lying to yourself”

“ I'm not lying to myself, you're bigger than me”

“ What size is that jean you're wearing?”

We are now in the guestroom

“ 32”

“ Hah Melo unamanga”

(you’re lying)

I say while laughing

**Melo is in denial she doesn’t want to accept her
actual size**

**“ Ok take it off let me wear it, so that you’ll see
that you and I are the same size”**

“ Uthatha ma chance, ngeke ungene la”

(you’re taking chances, it won’t fit)

She says already taking it off, I cant believe I’m actually going ahead with this but I need to shut this girl up so I slip out of my jogger pants and take the jean from her. I wear it and guess what? It fits like a glove

“ So you’re telling me I’m this big?”

Her eyes are widened in shock

“ Yebo sisi, you and I same WhatsApp group.

Stop forcing things, accept that you’re a size 34

now”

“ Never, I’ll exercise”

I laugh at her

Melo and I look the same and have the same body shape and size the only difference is that she’s light skinned, most people actually think we are twins.

“ We are not fat, you’re exaggerating”

“ I’m five years younger than you Ses'Ndalo I cant be the same size as you are, no I refuse”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#20

Melo is still at my place she's doing her practicals and will be staying in my house until she's done. Our parents don't know that she's in town, she came straight to my place from Pretoria she says if she went home first mom wouldn't have allowed her to visit me so that's why she came without telling them.

I'm happy to have my sister around even though we fight sometimes because of her laziness, yo u Melo is a slob I feel sorry for the man who'll marry her shem u girl is lazy and very unapologetic about it. Mogirl is very comfortable with her laziness and isn't willing to change imagine a whole ntombazana yomzulu! Honestly speaking I can't wait for her to leave, I love my sister and I love having her around but with her around Sabelo and I don't see each other like we used to and I miss my man.

“ Is there something you want to tell me?”

Nthabi asks and looks at me expectantly

“ No, why?”

“ This glow, you’ve been glowing since schools re-opened, your skin is popping nje umuhle uyakhazimula. You don’t look like someone who just lost a fiancé and tried to commit suicide”

“ So you want me to look like my problems?”

“ No, of course not. You know what I mean”

“ I don’t actually”

“ Ok, I’ll spell it out for you then. Bitch who you f*cking with?”

I laugh, Nthabi is crazy shem.

“ Me? I’m not f*cking anyone, I just got out of a 4 year relationship for Pete’s sake why would I jump into another relationship?”

“ Nice speech, but I know sex glow when I see one and wena bakupha kamnandi that’s why you’re glowing”

How I wish that were true shem

Sabelo and I hardly see each other much less spend time together, he’s busy with school work and he cant even come to the house since

Melo is around. I miss him so much and I can't wait for Melo to leave hey don't look at me like that.

“ So tell me who is it? Is it someone I know?”

“It's nothing like that Nthabi, I'm single and not f*cking anyone”

“ OMG! Don't tell me it's a no strings, I didn't think you had it in you!”

I give up

“ Nthabi I told you I'm not sleeping with anyone, why don't you believe me?”

“ Because your glow says it all”

“ Ai anghazi, can't a girl just glow because she's finally independent and learnt how to love herself and put herself first?”

“ I don't believe you, but it's okay I'll drop it”

“ Thank you! How are you doing? You know since you broke up with your boyfriend”

She sighs

“ I’m okay, I still love him but I’m learning to live without him”

“ That’s good, I’m proud of you”

“ Thanks, I’m proud of you too. You finally learnt how to stand up for yourself and broke up with that controlling boyfriend of yours”

“ I still can’t believe I did that, it wasn’t easy”

“ I’m glad you did it, so you will not fix things with your parents?”

“ I will, they are what they are but they are still my parents. I will fix things with them but not now, I need time”

“ I completely understand”

“ Thanks”

Fortunately since school re-opened I haven't made a mistake and addressed Sabelo by ' baby' like I was scared I would, in class he acts like he's always did before we started dating nothing has changed I guess that's what makes it easier for me to behave in a professional manner around him, teaching him isn't as bad as I thought it would be.

“ Ok class that’s it for today, Sabelo please collect the study guides and bring them to my office”

The number of study guides the school has is less than the number of the grade 12 life science learners, so students are only allowed to use them in class. I always take them back after my class and I normally ask Thato to collect them for me but I’m desperate here I really miss my boyfriend.

It’s my free period and there’s no one in the office that’s why I asked him to come, I just want him to hold me in his arms for a few

minutes and maybe even steal a kiss oh how I miss those lips of his.

“ Ngena!”

(Come in)

He makes his way inside with the textbooks in his hands

“ So where do I put them?”

“ Here”

I show him a cupboard next to my desk.

“ Done”

He says and pops his knuckles

“ I miss you”

I throw myself in his arms and wrap my arms around his waist, he holds me back.

“ I know sthandwa sami, I miss you too. It’s hard for me to concentrate in class because all I think about is having you in my arms, uhamba nini u Melo?”

(When will Melo leave)

I laugh

**“ She’s still going to be around for a while,
maybe I should book us into a hotel or lodge
angeke phela ngizofa yinkumbulo”**

(I miss you)

“ No, I’ll book us into one”

He instantly breaks the hug

**Did I ever mention how proud he is? He doesn’t
let me do anything for him, I think he’s being
too hard on himself he’s still in school so I
don’t expect him to spoil me but does he listen
to me? NO!**

“ Ok love, please kiss me”

I digress, I didn't bring him here to argue with him.

“ You know what happened the last time we acted recklessly”

“ Admit that you don't want me anymore, that you got what you wanted and now you no longer have any use for me”

“ What? That's crazy, I'm only looking out for you here. You know I want you, I want you so bad and if I'm not giving in to my feelings right

this moment is because I love and care about you I don't want to risk anyone seeing us. I still remember how stressed you were when Tsotetsi was blackmailing you, I don't want to put you through that again"

" You're right I'm sorry, I don't know what's going on with me nowadays"

I wipe my tears with my thumbs, I'm such a cry baby these days.

" It's okay my love"

He opens the door and looks outside

“ The coast is clear, I think we can steal a kiss”

You should the smile on my face right now, I think I'm obsessed with his kisses.

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.br/.**

SABELO

School has been hectic since the third term started, every teacher is rushing to finish the syllabus before trial exams so there's just so much work to do. I hardly see my melanin Queen as a result and it doesn't help that she's very emotional lately, she literally cries over everything and accuses me of all sorts of

things. For the sake of peace I always apologize but yo I'm getting tired of her behavior if it wasn't for the love I feel for her I would have long broken up with her but I love her and have no choice but to tolerate her mood swings.

I can't wait for her sister to leave maybe it's salt that's making her behave this way who knows. I'm going through the internet looking for an affordable lodge around Mpumalanga when Sphe snatches my phone from my hands.

“ Why are you looking for a lodge?”

“ When will you learn what the word 'privacy' means and start respecting mine?”

“ You were so engrossed on your phone so I wanted to see what had your attention, sorry”

**I can't keep up with the females in my life
shem, one is too noisy and the other one is
moody and needy!**

“ Will I ever get a break mara?”

“ I'm sorry”

**“ Stop apologizing, I'm getting tired of your
apologies because you always end up doing the
same thing you apologized for”**

“ So..”

“ Don’t even say it!”

“ Ok, why are you looking for a lodge?”

“ Do I need to explain myself to you Sphe?”

“ No, I hope you’re not cheating on your girlfriend”

“ Oh, now you care about her? Please”

“ I know I was against your relationship but I know how much you love her and I know she makes you happy so I have come to accept her”

I'm so happy to hear her say this

“ Thanks mntasekhaya, don't worry I'm not cheating on her. I'd never do that, I love her way too much to hurt her like that”

“ Then why are you looking for a lodge, I thought she has her own place now”

“ She does but her sister is visiting her now so I can't go to her place for the time being, a lodge will do for now”

“ So she's hiding you?”

“ No, of course not”

“ Of course she is, why else is she keeping your relationship a secret from her siblings? I know about her so why cant she tell her sister about you?”

“ You know our relationship is complicated, she could lose her job if this came to light”

“ Her sister wouldn't tell anyone”

“ Ndalo thinks she would tell her parents and we cant trust her mother, what if she tells her ex and he takes this to the principal? That guy is way too petty”

“ I understand, I thought she’s ashamed of you or something”

“ It’s nothing like that sis wami”

“ So what’s your budget, I can help you look?”

“ Really?”

Truth is I’m clueless I don’t even know where to start, I’ve never done anything like this before.

“ Yes”

“ Wow, thanks sis”

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MUSA

It’s been over a month since Ndalo tainted my reputation at church and I still haven’t found a way to make her pay, I don’t even know where she lives yet. I put on a remorseful act and asked her mother to give me her address so I can go and apologize to her but the woman refused apparently her husband forbade her from talking to me. I don’t know what I’ll do

now, she was my only option she's the only one who genuinely liked me in that house.

“ Welcome home daddy!”

That's what Thuli says the moment I walk through the door, she's wearing lingerie and heels damn she looks so sexy

“ Thank you, my love”

She's been in my house for the past week now.

“ Do you want to start with main course or dessert?”

She asks seductively

“ I’d advice you to eat first, you’ll need the energy for everything I have in store for you”

I wonder

“ Okay”

She takes my laptop bag and jacket to the bedroom and comes back to the kitchen to plate for us

“ Did you wash your hands?”

“ Yeah”

“ Okay, please bless the food baba”

**I almost laugh when she addresses me as ‘baba’
hay Thuli is too desperate if you ask me**

**“ Father God we thank you for the food we are
about to eat, bless it and the hands of the one
who prepared it. In Jesus name we pray,
Amen”**

“ Amen”

“ Please enjoy my love”

“ Thanks”

Her cooking is not bad but not great either, I miss Ndalo’s cooking to be honest that woman can cook shem.

“ And how is it?”

“ Amazing”

“ Really?”

“ No, it’s okay”

The smile on her face disappears

“ What?”

“ You asked, I’m a man of God I don’t lie”

“ I’ve lost my appetite”

She says pushing away her plate

“ I’m sorry love, the food is delicious I was just pulling your leg”

“ Don’t play like that”

I help her with the dishes after eating then we head to bed

“ Yaz’ I haven’t found anything on Ndalo”

“ Really? Are we going to talk about her even in our bedroom. You spoke about her throughout dinner, can’t you forget about her for a minute?”

“ I’m sorry but I can’t, I won’t rest until I make her pay for ruining my reputation like that”

“ To be honest with you I don’t understand why you’re angry”

“ What?”

“ Serious, if she was the one who cheated on you wouldn't you also report her to the pastor?”

“ But..”

“ No buts, you wronged her first and you have no reason to be angry at her. Let her be”

There's no way I'm letting her get away with this. I'll hire a PI to help me look for her and all her dirty secrets.

So bathong there's someone who transferred money into my account last week Saturday(4 Sep), I've been waiting for the person to come forward so we can discuss the details of her sponsorship but there's been nothing for over a week.

When you want to sponsor an insert get in touch with me don't get my details madala side(from other people) and then keep quiet, I'll assume you're blessing me mina

 but I'm not a dishonest person hence I'm posting this. You know yourself next time please communicate or ngizozidlela imali mina ngizthulele.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#21

“ Good morning sister”

**I greet in jubilation when I walk into the
kitchen**

“ Someone is in a good mood today”

**I am actually, Sabelo and I are spending the
night at Bushwise Safari Lodge. It's a Lodge**

located in a nature reserve on the southern boarder of the Kruger national park called Marloth Park, it's situated next to the banks of the crocodile river and has an incredible view of the Kruger national park. Apparently the animals wander freely around the lodge- which is both exciting and scary at the same time. I checked it out online and I've got to say I'm impressed the place looks amazing, I can't wait to create great memories with my boyfriend I hope this trip will be the first of many trips we will take together.

“ Yeah, it's a beautiful day. There's every reason to be happy”

**“ Wow, there’s nothing beautiful about today
it’s chilly outside. I’m so happy it’s month end”**

**“ You’ll wish it was winter when August starts
with its boring weather, gosh I hate that month”**

She laughs

**“ I’m glad to see you happy, yo phela ama
moods wakho!”**

**“ What? Mina moody? Please don’t play with
me”**

“ Yes, you've gotten quite moody lately I was also surprised because I've never known you to be a moody person.”

“ I don't know what's going on with me to be honest with you”

“ I wonder what's wrong shem, anyway will you tell me why you're so happy?”

“ Unfortunately nope, I'd have to kill you first”

“ I wonder”

“ Keep wondering mntase”

I take a tub of yogurt from the fridge and head back to my bedroom to look for something to wear, I want to surprise Sabelo today I want to wear lingerie and blow his socks off. I'm so ready for tonight, I shaved my nuna and I've been watching p*rn all week hoping to learn new tricks.

“ I can help you pick out something to wear”

She's walking inside my bedroom with a bowl of cereal in her hands

“ Udlela ekamereni, must be nice”

(You're eating inside the bedroom)

She laughs

“ Come on, let me be. I would’ve gone home if I wanted to deal with mom”

“ I’m just saying”

“ Don’t just say, you’re also eating yogurt mos”

“ Yes, it’s my house”

“ Yo, ngaze ngasha!”

We laugh

**“ I think you should wear your leather pants,
knee high boots, black turtle neck and your
maroon knitted jersey”**

“ You think so?”

**“ Yeah, you’ll look good. If only you would tell
me where you’re going then I would be able to
assist better since I’d have all the details”**

Melo is sly shem

“ I’m not saying anything forget it”

“ Ai okay then, what time are you leaving?”

“ Around 3/4, and please don't wait up. I'm not coming back"

“ Hehehe ay asazi"

“ And please don't say a word to your mother about any of this"

“ I won't”

“ You'd better”

The drive from Embalenhle to Marloth Park is one hour twenty nine minutes it can be more than that depending on traffic, I wanted us to use Uber but Sabelo refused and said it will be too expensive but I honestly wouldn't mind. He said he'll borrow his father's car, I don't know what lie he told his father for him to agree to give him the car and yeah he has a license he took it immediately after he got his ID.

He cant fetch me from my place for obvious reasons so we will meet at the filling station next to N12, the way I'm so excited to see him one would swear I didn't see him yesterday at school. After checking if I have everything for

the umpteenth time I take my duffel bag and handbag and walk out of my bedroom.

“ You look so beautiful sis”

“ Thank you, please don’t destroy anything while I’m away”

“ You’re only going for a day sisi, rest tu!”

We laugh

“ I’ve always wanted to say that”

“ You’re crazy, you look beautiful. Enjoy your day or should I say your night?”

She says and winks

“ Hey! I’m still older than you”

“ I’m just happy to see you so happy, whoever he is I like him already because he makes you happy”

“ Ncoah, thank you so much. It means a lot to me”

“ I hope I’ll meet him soon”

“ Now you’re pushing it”

“ You can’t blame me, I’ve never seen you so happy. I’m curious to see the person behind your happiness”

My phone rings disturbing us, it’s the Uber driver he’s here. He’ll drop me off at the garage

“ I better get going before the driver leaves me”

“ Bye sis”

I peck her lips and make my way to the gate
but someone violently grabs my hand before I
even get to the gate.

“ What do you want?”

I say when I turn around and see who it is

“ Long time no see Ndalo, I swear your beauty
grows everyday. You look better than the last
time we met.”

“ What do you want from me?”

“ Patience”

“ Well I don’t have time, I’m on my way as you can see. Bye”

I turn and attempt to walk towards the Uber but he grabs my arm once again.

“ Take your hand off me!”

“ Tell the driver to leave, I’ll take you”

“ Why would I want to do that?”

“ Because I know where you’re going and trust me you want to go with me, that’s if you don’t want me to kill your ben 10”

What?.

“ Shocked how I know about your secret right? Well let’s say I hired someone, a PI to give me all the information about your comings and goings. Imagine my shock when I found out you are sleeping with your student”

How did he find out?

“ Impressive right, he’s that good my love. So are you coming with me or should I order a hit

on your ben 10? I have eyes on him, I know
he's waiting for you on his father's car at Engen
garage bloody cheese boy"

My heart momentarily stops beating at the
thought of Sabelo dying, I would die if I lost
him.

" Please don't do anything to him, this is
between me and you"

" I agree, that's why I suggest that you tell the
driver to go"

" Okay, I'll do it"

**I pay the driver and apologize for wasting his
time**

“ Get in”

“ Where are you taking me?”

“ I said, GET IN!”

**His tone sends shivers down my spine, I scurry
to the passenger side and get inside the car. He
starts the ignition and drives off the moment I
close the door**

“ Where are you taking me?”

“ Don’t worry, you’ll find out soon”

After driving for 15 minutes the car stops moving, we are parked outside a hotel. Why did he bring me here, what’s he playing at?

“ Get out’

“ Why did you bring me here?”

“ I said get out, I hate repeating myself”

I step out the car and follow him to the reception. He checks in, takes the access card from the receptionist and walks to the elevator.

“ Where are you taking me?”

“ I want to fuck you”

What?

“ What? No, didn't you say I reek of tin fish why would you want that?”

“ I only said that because I wanted to get back at you”

“ Please don’t do this Musa”

I drop to my knees with my hands clasped together like I’m praying and plead with him.

“ Get up!”

He says through gritted teeth, people are looking at us. I know he hates being in the spotlight so I’ll use this to my advantage.

“ Please, I’m begging you”

“ Get up or I’ll order a hit on your toy boy”

He wouldn't do that or would he?

It's like he read my mind because he dials a number and puts the phone on loudspeaker

“ Boss, I have eyes on the target. Should I take him out?” a voice behind the speaker says

“ What will it be Ndalo?”

He asks with an evil smile on his face, I don't know the devil but I swear he looks like him right now.

“ Boss?”

The man again

**I immediately get up from the floor when he
looks at me**

**“ Stay in position, I’ll let you know what to do.
Don’t let him out of your sight”**

“ Roger that”

The man says and ends the call.

" Is there a problem here?"

A man who is dressed in formal asks looking at me, I think he's one of the hotel staff

" No, there's no problem"

"Are you sure ma'am?"

" Yes, I'm sure"

" Okay"

He looks at Musa for a while and walks away

“ Undress"

That's the first thing he says when we get inside the hotel room.

“ Please don't do this, I'm begging you. I can do anything”

“ Anything you say?”

“ Yes, I can do anything”

“ Lick my toes”

“ Okay”

He takes off his shoes and brings his right leg forward.

Licking his toes is better than sleeping with him so I drop to my knees and take his feet in my hands and guide it to my mouth, Lord his toes look so ugly but I'd take this any day over sleeping with him.

" I'm kidding"

He says when I attempt to put his big toe in my mouth

" Nah, that's too easy for you"

**Tears shamelessly flood my face, what did I do
to deserve this?**

**“ Undress, I want to fuck you and send your
toy boy a video”**

“ No, please don’t that”

That will kill Sabelo

**“ You’re wasting my time, start undressing or
should I help you?”**

I need a miracle

“ No one is coming to save you, make it quick”

I recite a prayer in my heart as I take off my clothes

“ Wow, your boobs look bigger. Yini did you gain weight?”

He asks with a look of disgust on his face

“ Never mind, I only want to fuck you. How your body looks is no longer my concern, you better wipe those tears from your face and pretend for the camera otherwise I’m going to kill your ben 10 got it?”

He says switching the camera on and placing it on top of the chest of drawer, facing the direction of the bed.

“ Come”

I wipe my tears with my palms and join him in bed, he doesn't even kiss me or try to get me on the right mood. He wears a condom and penetrates me, I'm as dry as mam'G's scones down there so it's super painful but I have no choice but to moan and pretend like I'm enjoying it even though it hurts as fuck. I'd rather go through this pain than watch Sabelo die because of me, he tears my soul to shreds with each and every one of his thrusts.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#22

I've been waiting for iNdoni yami for a while now I don't know what's delaying her, she doesn't pick my calls when I call and I'm so tempted to drive to her place to look for her. She sent a text twenty five minutes ago telling me she's leaving the house, the drive from her place to the garage is five minutes she was supposed to be here by now so I wonder what's taking her so long. I get off the car and walk to

the garage to buy something to drink so I can pass time while waiting for my woman.

Things are expensive as f*ck here but it makes sense because it's a convenient store, I grab 125g packet of Simba snacks and a 2L bottle of coke and head to the counter to pay

“ Hey, can you please also add a packet of Orbits”

“ No problem”

After paying I take my things and walk back to the car. I open the packet of snacks and nibble

on them while waiting for Ndalo, I'm not a patient person so the wait is unbearable.

There's a red car with tinted windows parked on the other side of the road now that I think about it the same car has been tailing me since I left home, what should I do? Think fast Sabelo I can't tell my dad he will blow things out of proportion let me call my uncle he'll know what to do

"Meyiwa"

"Sawubona babomncane kunjani?"

(Greetings uncle how are you)

“ I’m okay and you”

**“ I’m good, babomncane there’s a car that’s
been on my tail since I left home”**

“ What? Where are you?”

“ I’m at Engen garage next to N12”

“ You’re driving your dad’s car?”

“ Yebo babomncane”

“ Ok can you see the car's registration number”

“ No, it doesn't have a license plate”

I reply looking at the car

“ Ok, the model of the car?”

“ It's a red BMW 325is”

“ Don't panic ok son, I'm not far from you I'm coming just stay where you are. That fucker will know me”

“ Please don't tell my dad”

“ What do you mean I shouldn't tell him?”

“ Please..I’m begging you”

“ Okay, stay on the line my boy I’m coming.”

**It doesn’t take long before I see my uncle’s
Toyota Hilux 3.OD-4D double cab speeding
towards the garage leaving behind a trail of
smoke**

“ Uphi lomasaka?”

(Where’s the fool)

**That’s the first thing he says when he steps out
of the car, I show him where the car is parked**

and scurry behind him as he brisk walks to the car

“ Open this bloody window before I break it down with my fist”

He bellows standing next to the driver’s window.

The window rolls down revealing two people inside, the man's aura gives out gangster vibes and the lady looks like a prostitute of note.

From the skimpy clothes she’s wearing, the excessive make up on her face and how she’s chewing on the gum there’s no question about it- this one is definitely a hooker! Their high

pitched breaths and the girl's messed up hair
give us an idea of what they've been up to.

“ Zikhiphani madala”

(What's going on)

He says with a deadpan tone, the ferocious
look on his face sends cold chills down my
spine

“ Voetsek wena mhlathi wenja! Ubheka bani
kanjalo?”

My uncle retorts

“ What do you want, can’t you see we are in the middle of something?”

“ Middle of something yok'nuka! Why were you following my boy, what do you want from him?”

He sizes me up with a frown on his face

“ What could I possibly want from this small boy, I have nothing to do with cheese boys. Yazini mabhebheza as'vaye la before kuchitheka igazi”

He says already starting the car’s ignition

“ Usabisa bani wena your msothovithi!”

(Who are you threatening)

He drives off but not before my uncle lands a hard punch on his jaw, I expect him to stop the car and fight back but he speeds off instead

“ I can’t believe you made me drive all the way for nonsense”

“ I’m sorry but I swear that car has been on my tail since I left home”

“ It’s probably a coincidence, you watch too much TV. Go back home son”

I hear what my uncle is saying but I don't think it's a coincidence, that guy was definitely tailing me why else would he park in the middle of nowhere? I drive back to Ndalo's place constantly checking the rearview mirror for any sign of that car but I don't see it, I'm left with no choice but to knock and ask Melo about her sister I'll beg her not to reveal anything to their mother if I have to but I can't stand not knowing what's going on with Ndalo.

“ Hey”

Melo says when she opens the door for me

“ Hello, is your sister in?”

“ No, she’s not. She left about an hour ago”

What

“ Did she say where she’s going?”

She quirks her eyebrows in suspicion

“ Why would I tell you?”

“ Trust me I’m not a threat, just tell me where she said she’s going to!”

I unintentionally raise my voice

“ What’s your story, how come you always show up looking for her?”

“ She’s my teacher I told you the last time “

“ You expect me to believe that? Yeah right”

“ Just tell me what I’m asking”

“ Answer my question first”

Girls are the same, they’re all nosey as f*ck

“ Let’s get inside then”

I follow her to the lounge and take a seat on the one seater couch, she seats on the two seater and looks at me with curiosity mirroring her features

“ I need you to promise me that you’ll not breath a word about what I’m going to tell you to your mother or anyone else”

“ I promise”

She replies quickly

How quick she replies tells me she’s only promising me because she’s dying to hear the

news, which means she may or may not keep her promise.

“ Ndalo and I are in a relationship, she’s my girlfriend and we love each other. We should be on our way to Merloth park now but she didn’t arrive at the place we were supposed to meet, my calls are no longer going through I have a feeling something bad happened to her where did she say she was going when she left?”

Her eyes are as wide as saucers, clearly shocked by my confession

“ Wow, so you’re dating Ses'Ndalo?”

“ Is that the only thing you heard, please answer what I’m asking I just told you I think something might’ve happened to your sister and the only thing you heard is that I’m dating her”

“ I’m sorry I’m just shocked, she didn’t tell me where she’s going to. She only told me not to wait up, she was excited and happy about her trip though”

“ What time did she leave here?”

“ Around 3:45 I’m not too sure”

“ I have a feeling something bad happened to your sister, please call her from your phone and let’s see if she’ll pick up your call”

She dials Ndalo’s number with trembling hands, I think it just dawned on her that her sister might be in danger.

“ Voicemail”

“ Ok thanks, I need to leave”

I say already dashing to the door

“ Please find my sister”

She bellows behind me, the desperation in her voice cant be missed. Where's Ndalo? I hope that Musa didn't kidnap her or so help me God.

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NDALO

**“ Damn, were you always this tight and warm?
I swear I can't get enough of you”**

**He's on top of me doing his thing while I'm
immobile like a corpse, this is the third round I
thought he'll regain his senses and realize how**

inhumane what he's doing is but I thought wrong! When did Musa become so cruel, has he no conscience. How can he do this to someone he claims to have loved? His groans fill the room as fills the condom with his cum and gets off me, thank God.

I cried until there was no more tears left to cry, Musa has succeeded in breaking me to pieces and stripping me off my dignity.

“ You got what you wanted tell your man to stop following Sabelo around”

He chuckles

“You really love the boy ne? I mean he’s the first thing you think about after our mind blowing sex”

“ Musa call him and tell him to stay away from Sabelo, you got what you wanted!.”

“ Okay, okay no need to get worked up. Your toy boy will live as long as he stays far away from you and I’ll make sure of that by sending him our video”

He’s going to be so hurt, I wish there was something I could do to spare him the pain he’ll feel when he sees me with Musa.

“ He loves you shem u boy, he used his savings to book you into a lodge and even borrowed his father’s car so he could drive you there ncoah such a gentleman”

So Musa had to wait until today to strike? The day I was supposed to spend quality time with Sabelo, just how cruel is he?

“ Why?”

“ Why what?”

“ Why are you doing all of this?”

“ Because I hate you Ndalo, you ruined my reputation at church. The pastor no longer trusts me because of you so I had to make you pay, at first I wanted to report you so you could lose your job but I changed my mind when I realized that you and your boy actually love each other. You would’ve kept your relationship going even after you lost your job so I had to go back to the drawing board and that’s when I came up with this brilliant plan”

“ You’re so evil”

“ Not more than you, you called off the wedding after I spent so much money paying the wedding planner! I had to make you pay and what better way to do that than separating

you from the one you love? He'll never look at you the same way after I send him the video of us having sex, he'll hate you and that'll kill you and that's exactly what I want- to kill you emotionally, I want to see you suffer!"

His words are laced with venom, he means each and every word that came out of his mouth he really does hate me.

" How can you blame me when you're the one who dragged me to the pastor in the first place? You cheated on me with my friends, including my childhood best friend Musa wasn't that enough?"

“ No, it’ll never be enough until I see you all alone with no one by your side. Don’t even think about reporting me to the police or going back to your toy boy, if you do I will leak our video on the internet and get you fired from your job. A lonely miserable life awaits you, you messed with the wrong person bitch. You should thank me at least I was kind enough to let you keep your job”

Musa can’t be normal, he’s definitely crazy angeke.

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SABELO

“ And then what are you doing here?”

Mom asks when I walk through the front door

**“ Xolane had an emergency so we had to
cancel the trip”**

“ Thanks dad”

I say giving him his car keys

“ No problem, Meyiwa”

I head to my room and I can feel Sphe's
footsteps on my tail

“ What do you want Sphe?”

“ What happened, ain't you supposed to be
with iNdoni yakho now making love next to
wild animals or something?”

She jokes

“ She didn't come”

“ What?”

“ I think something happened to her, I went back to her place to look for her and her sister told me she left around the time she sent me a text telling me that she was on her way”

“ Woah, do you think she was kidnapped?”

“ Yeah and something tells me it was that ex of hers, I need to do something Sphe”

“ Report her missing to the police, that’s what you must do”

“ You know police take too long, can’t we hack his phone like we did with Tsotetsi and find out where he’s keeping her?”

“ That could work but ..”

**My phone beeps with a message cutting her
short**

“ Is it her?”

**“ No, it’s a WhatsApp message from an
unsaved number “**

**“ Open it, it could be her contacting you from
someone else’s phone”**

I open the chat, it's a video and a message “
Thank you for taking care of my woman but
I'm back now boy, f*ck off”

I download the video and press play, I
immediately regret it when I see Ndalo having
sex with her ex boyfriend or should I call him
her boyfriend?

“ What is it, let me see”

“ No, Sphesihle!”

“ Please”

She tries to forcefully grab the phone from my hands but I haul it against the wall, it breaks to pieces and falls to the floor.

“ Why did you do that?”

She asks looking me with a horrified expression on her face.

“ Imali yendoda yami le?”

(Is that my husband’s money)

Mom asks standing at the door looking at the broken pieces of what used to be my phone on the floor, she must’ve heard the noise.

“ Khulumani who broke the phone?”

“ It was Sabelo mom”

“ Buti yi R15 000 yendoda yami le oyisakaze ebondeni kanje? I told your father not to buy you le iPhone yakhona bheka manje”

(Is it my husband’s money that you threw against the wall like this)

“ I’m sorry”

“ Sorry? Is that all you’re going to say?”

“ I’m sorry ma but can I please be alone?”

“ You think you’re some spoil brat ne? Can you please be alone in whose house?”

I love my mother but she’s annoying the f*ck out of me right now, to avoid saying things I will end up regretting I decide to leave the house.

“ You’re walking out on me while I’m talking? Yey wena Sabelo buya la!”

She bellows behind me

I keep walking until I’m at the park

Sphehile was right all along Ndalo never loved me, she was only using me. I gotta give it to her though she's good she should really consider acting, she managed to fool me I thought she really loved me. How she looked at me, how responsive she was to my touch, how she kissed me, how she made love to me, how she touched me and how she called out my name with so much love I was convinced that she's in love with me as much as I'm in love with her.

Hurt doesn't begin to describe what I feel inside, I have no words to explain the great pain I'm in. Is this my karma for all those girls I hurt in the past? If so it's indeed a bitch like people say!

Women always say men are dogs but I think women are worse, dogs are at least loyal to their owners. Women are nothing but snakes, did she have to watch me go through all the trouble of planning the trip, borrowing my father's car only for her to make me wait for her at garage like a fool? She's evil I give her that, I never saw this coming and I wouldn't have believed it if I didn't see the video with my own eyes. Tell me why I'm still in love such a woman?

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#23

To say I'm shocked would be putting it lightly, so Ses'Ndalo is dating that fine looking guy? Wow I never saw it coming but now that he confessed it to me it actually makes sense hey, I remember how worried he was that day he came looking for her in my house then my mother threw him out. He really loves my sister, I mean to go as far as coming to my house to look for her says a lot and judging from how happy she's been since I came here its quite obvious she's also in love with him, oh my goodness those two are just so cute man.

I've never liked Musa for my sister, he's always portrayed himself as this humble, loving and caring man of God but somehow my spirit

didn't agree with him shem ever heard
someone say 'igazi lami nelakhe alihambelani'?
Well that's exactly how I feel about Musa, I
didn't even know anything bad about him but I
didn't like him. However I had no choice but to
accept him because my sister loved him. I
wouldn't be surprised if he has anything to do
with my sister's disappearance, after
everything we found out about him over the
past few months I believe he's capable of
anything.

The front door opens and my sister toddles
inside, the condition she's in breaks my heart
to shreds she looks so broken and powerless.
Her face is stained with her tears and snorts,
while her eyes look swollen and red it's clear

she's been crying for a while now. I run to her side and pull her in my arms she doesn't fight it, she holds onto me and breaks into a gut wrenching sob.

" I'm sorry sis"

I'm battling my own tears, I don't know why she's crying but my heart can't take seeing her in so much pain liyaphukela.

" I curse the day I allowed Musa into my life"

So I was right, he did something to my sister.

" What did he do?"

“ He raped me Melo!”

She says and starts crying all over again. That bastard did what? We can't let him get away with this he needs to pay!

“ He's an animal Melo, a disgusting animal!”

“ You can't let him get away with what he did to you Ses'Ndalo, you need to file a case against him”.

“ He recorded a video Melo, if I file a case against him I have a lot to lose. He'll leak the video and ruin my reputation and I'll also lose

my job, you know how corrupt the justice system in our country is. How many of the women who are raped and killed by men everyday get the justice they deserve? How many perpetrators do you know that get arrested only for them to be released a few months later now tell me how will getting him arrested help me? Musa deserves so much more than just going to jail, death will also be too easy for him I want him to suffer I want maggots to eat his flesh while he's still alive. I want him to wish death upon himself but not die, I want him to live a long life filled with pain and suffering”

“ You're scaring me”

“ Don’t worry, Musa will gets what’s coming to him each dog has it’s day.”

“ Come, let’s get you to bed”

“ I don’t want to go to bed, I want to take a shower and wash away Musa’s disgusting scent off my body”

Oh my poor sister, she doesn’t deserve any of this.

“ Ok let’s go”

“ Do you know what that bastard did? He sent the video to my boyfriend, I’m sure he thinks I cheated on him. He probably hates me now”.

“ He would never hate you sis”

“ You don’t know that”

“ I know it, he came here looking for you. I know what I saw in his eyes, that guy really loves you sis”

“ What do you mean he came here?”

“ I mean exactly that, I know who your boyfriend is sis and I won’t judge you. I

understand why you would keep this from everyone but from me ses'Ndalo? I would never judge you much less tell mom about it"

“ I’m sorry but this could put my career at risk so I had to be careful. Sabelo was here?”

“ Yes, he was very worried about you. He’s the one who told me that the two of you are in love with each other but it was only because I left him with no other choice”

“ How was he?”

“ He was very worried about you, I think it was before Musa sent him the video because he

didn't know where you were but he had suspicions that something might have happened to you”

“ He must be so hurt, he probably thinks I went back to Musa”

She swipes her hand on her face wiping her tears but it's a futile exercise because tears keep falling from her eyes.

“ But I don't regret it Melo, I'd do it all over again if it means saving his life. Musa is so heartless if he can do what he did to me, someone he once claimed to be in love with then he would've surely killed Sabelo”

Musa is a bastard

“ I’m sorry sis but I believe that if you guys are meant to be together then you’ll find your way back to each other.”

“ Honestly I don’t think it’ll happen, even if we get back together things will never be the same. He’ll never look at me the same way”

She takes her toiletries and her towel and heads to the bathroom. I hate Musa and I’m going to make him pay for this, I have no idea how I’ll do it but mark my words Musa will pay for everything he put my sister through!

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SABELO

I didn't sleep a wink last night because every time I closed my eyes the video of Ndalo with Musa would play in my mind like a broken record, I've been cracking my brain trying to understand how things went from Ndalo and I going on a trip to her sleeping with Musa I just don't get it! How can she go back to the same man who humiliated her and called her names, the same person who caused a rift between her and her parents it doesn't make sense to me.

Was it all in my head? All the beautiful moments we shared together, was it pretence or did I imagine the whole thing? I'm not sure what's real and what's not I'm a ball of confusion, for a moment there I thought she was kidnapped and taken against her will but after seeing the video I'm not really sure what to believe and the only person who'll take me out of my misery is her, I need to look her in the eye and ask her why she would do this to me.

A knock on the door pulls me from my thoughts

“ Come in”

My mother walks in

“ Good morning buti”

She lowers herself on the foot of the bed, I sit up and lean against the headboard.

“ Good morning ma”

“ What’s happened yesterday?”

“ Nothing ma, I’m sorry for walking out on you and breaking the phone.”

“ Did you forget that you are my son and I know you, I can tell you’re not okay.”

“ I’ll be fine mama”

“ You know you can talk to me about anything right?”

“ I know mama”

“ Okay, I know maybe you might not be comfortable talking with me about some of the things but please consider talking to your father”

“ I will ma”

“ Okay, I love you my son”

“ I love you mom”

She stands up and plants a peck on my forehead and walks out.

“ Hi Sabelo”

“ Where’s your sister?”

“ I’m fine and you Sabelo”

“ I don’t have time for your greetings Melo, I asked you a question. Where is Ndalo?”

“ Why should I tell you?”

“ You chose the wrong day to work on my nerves girl”

“ What’s that supposed to mean?”

“ Angazi nami, Google it”

**“ Yo uyadelela wena shem... she’s in her
bedroom and you better not think about being
rude to my sister”**

(You’re disrespectful)

**I shove her from the door and make my way to
Ndalo’s bedroom. She looks up when I walk
through the door and our eyes lock, her eyes
are so swollen I can barely see her sclera but I
can see the pain they hold in them.**

**She clears her throat and leans her back
against the headboard**

“ Hey”

“ What happened yesterday, I waited and waited but you didn’t show up”

“ I’m sorry”

“ Don’t apologize, just make me understand how you ended up with Musa while I was waiting for you like a fool at the garage”

Instead of replying she cries

“ Don’t I at least deserve an explanation?”

“ You do”

“ Then explain”

(Silence)

“ Did he find out about us and blackmail you to sleep with him like Tsetetsi did?”

“ No”

“ Okay, tell me what happened then”

“ I’m sorry Sabelo”

“ Stop apologizing, I want to understand I’m confused make me understand. Was it all in my head our entire relationship that is”

“ I’m sorry”

“ I don’t want your sorries, make me understand I don’t understand anything I mean we were happy and in love what happened suddenly”

“ I realized that I’m still in love Musa”

A sharp pain shoots straight to my heart, it feels like someone is repeatedly twisting a knife on my heart.

“ That’s a lie and you know it, yini are your parents forcing you?”

“ No, no one is forcing me”

I swallow the lump on my throat trying so hard not to cry in front of her

“ Then what about me? Did you ever love me?”

“ I don’t know”

What?

“ What about everything we’ve shared was it a lie?”

“ I’m sorry Sabelo, it was fun while it lasted but now it’s over I need you to respect that”

“ No, you don’t mean that. I can see it in your eyes, you love me”

“ You just see what you want to see, please leave”

“ What?”

“ I said leave”

She slides back into the covers and pulls them above her head.

“ WOW!”

“ I’m sorry, but you need to leave” Melo

What’s she doing here? All these girls are just too nosey and I’m afraid I’ll lose my temper with one of them one of these days.

“ Don’t worry, I’ll leave. I wish you and Musa a happy and healthy relationship Ndalo, congratulations on breaking my heart. For what is worth, bengikuthandile Ndoni yamanzi

**bengikuthande ngenhliziyo yami yonke but
love cant be forced. I can't force you to love me
back, as hard as it will be I'll respect your
choice and keep my distance. "**

**(I really loved you black beauty, I loved you
with all of my heart)**

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NDALO

**A loud sob breaks out of my mouth once Sabelo
is out of sight and Melo holds me in her arms**

" I'm so sorry sis"

“ I think you’re making a mistake, you should have told him the truth instead of lying to him and breaking his heart”

“ Musa wont let us be together Melo, he will report me if Sabelo and get back together”

“ You give Musa way too much power”

“ You’re allowed to say whatever you want Melo, call me weak and every other word you want I don’t care it wouldn’t be the first time someone did. I think I should just resign and relocate to another province”

“ So you’re just going to give up on the love of your life just like that?”

“ We will never know peace as long as Sabelo is still a learner Melo, we will always be under attack and threatened”

“ But what if you lose him forever?”

“ Then it means he wasn’t mine to begin with, what is meant to be will be Melo. I’m tired of living like this”.

“ Wow, so uzophisana ngendoda yakho just like that?”

(You’re just going to give up your man)

“ I’m doing this for him, he’s in matric what he needs now is to focus on his studies without constantly looking over his shoulder. Musa is hell bent on making my life miserable, as long Sabelo is in my life then he’ll never know peace”

“ Stop saying that”

“ What?”

“ That you’re doing this for him, stop saying that because you’re making me angry”

“ Don’t forget who you’re talking to Melo”

“ I know you’re older than me but I need to tell you mawubheda, so you’re willing to give up on true love? Do you know how lucky you are to find someone who loves you like Sabelo does?”

“ Phuma!”

(get out)

“ You were lucky enough to find someone who genuinely loves you and you’re willingly letting him go, fight for your man. Fuck Musa and his threats, fight for your man”

“ Ngizokusakaza nge nkuzi ye mpama uma ungathuli Melokuhle”

(I'll slap you if you keep talking)

**“ Ngishaye mangabe ufuna ukungshayela
icinisiko kodwa ngeke ngithule!”**

**(Slap me if you want but you know I'm telling
you the truth)**

**“ Do you want to go to your parents house
Melo, you no longer enjoy staying with me
is that it?”**

**“ You can even throw me out it's fine kodwa
icinisiko lona ngizabe ngikutshelile, mlwele
Ses'Ndalo don't just give up on him”**

(But I'm telling you the truth, fight for him)

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#24

I don't know what was in the video Sabelo received that day but whatever it was must to be something big because in all my 18 years of life I've never seen Sabelo so vulnerable and broken like he is now, he's a shell of himself- he's not living he's merely existing. He is always cooped up in his room listening to depressing music, it hurts seeing my brother so miserable I wish he would open up and share his pain with me. If I didn't see miss Khumalo at school I'd think she is kidnapped like we

thought and that's why my brother is acting the way he is or maybe they broke up?

I mean It's the only logical explanation but I don't know why they would fight so hard to be together only for them to break up, I have nothing against miss Khumalo but she's not someone I'd prefer my brother to date and yes it's because of the age gap between them. A relationship like theirs isn't something we see everyday it always feels like one of them is not genuinely in love with the other but I have seen how much they love each other and I've learnt to accept their relationship even though it was not easy at first but who am I to stand against two people who truly love each other?

A cloud of smoke greets me when I open the door to his bedroom

“ What the...”

I don't get to finish my sentence because I start coughing violently, I dash to the window and stick my face out for fresh air

“ You wouldn't be choking if you stayed in your own room”

“ Sabelo since when do you smoke? Weed nogal?”

“ Sphesihle please leave me alone”

He throws the blunt out of the window

“ What has happened to you, you’ve changed!”

“ I told you to leave me alone”

“ Do you even study Sabelo, we are writing trial exams soon”

(Silence)

“ Wow, so you’re going to smoke your life away? Well if you’re acting like this because of whatever happened between you and miss

Khumalo then remember that the she already has a degree and she shows up at school every single day to do her job"

" Sphe I don't need a lecture aseblief"

" Sabelo I don't know what happened between the two of you but you shouldn't let whatever it is break you, don't give her the satisfaction of seeing you suffer. Study, pass with good grades and make something out of yourself and that'll be your revenge against her"

(Silence)

“ Mntasekhaya please talk to me, I’m begging you”

“ What for? So you can tell me you told me so”

“ I would never rejoice in your suffering, you’re my blood your pain is mine”

“ You were right Sphe, you were always right about her. She doesn’t love me, she only used me as a rebound and went back to her boyfriend.”

A gut wrenching sob breaks out of his mouth afterwards, Sabelo doesn’t cry easily so seeing him break down like this breaks my heart. I

immediately wrap my arms around him and let him rest his head on my bosom

“ Why do women do that huh? Go back to the same people who hurt and mistreat them. I love her Sphehile and I would have done anything to make her happy but she chose to go back to the same guy who humiliates and insults her, that guy doesn't love her Sphe.”

“ I'm so sorry”

“ Do you think they're forcing her to be with him?”

“ Who?”

“ Her family maybe?”

“ I don’t know, what really happened Sabelo?”

“ You remember the day we were supposed to spend the night together at the lodge?”

“ Yes”

“ I got a video from her boyfriend ...”

He explains everything that happened

“ I think he’s blackmailing her Sabelo, I don’t know but it doesn’t make sense for her to just change overnight. You say she told you she was coming right?”

“ Maybe I would agree with you if I didn’t see the video for myself, you should’ve seen them Sphe ...”

It seems the memory of them together breaks him but who wouldn’t be shattered after seeing the woman they love under someone else?

“ Did you ever feel like she is pretending when you guys were together?”

“ No, everything always felt so real. I was convinced that she loved me as much as I loved her”

“ Maybe she does, you can't fake being in love”

“ Well she doesn't, she looked at me in the eye and told me that she is in love with Musa”.

“ But what if she's being blackmailed or threatened? I mean all of this doesn't make any sense to me honestly”

“ That's what I also thought but she told me no one is forcing her, can you believe she even threw me out?”

“ She’s not my favorite but I know she loves you, I don’t think she would go back to Musa after everything he did to her. All of this doesn’t make any sense, we should try... “

“ No we won’t do anything Sphe, Ndalo knows I love her and I would do anything to protect her. I asked her if she was being forced and she said no, if she wanted my help she would speak up so I’m not going to force my love on her, yes it hurts now but I’ll get over her eventually”

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NTHABI

I don't know what happened to Ndalo but I know it's something huge, if I didn't know better I'd think someone in her family or really close to her passed on. I tried my best to get her to talk to me but all she does is cry and not reply, if she was still dating Musa I would think it's him but they broke up and she moved out from home and got her own place so it can't be her parents or him. I've decided to be there for her without asking questions, she probably doesn't trust anyone after how the people she thought were her friends betrayed her which is understandable but she needs to talk to someone about what she's going through it doesn't have to be me but she needs to talk to someone before she falls into depression well that's if she's not depressed already.

**The siren goes off indicating the end of my
Geography period**

**“ Ok class that brings us to the end of today’s
lesson, Sihle please collect the maps and take
them to Mrs Mbonani”**

**Exams are only a few days away so I’m busy
with map work revision**

“ Okay ma'am”

“ Let me walk you out ma'am”

Nandipha says already taking the box of chalks and the duster in my hands and leads the way, she always does this. Accompanying me to the next class that is, she's one of those sweet girls that you cant help but fall in love with.

" Good morning miss Khumalo"

Nandipha greets Ndalo when we meet her in the corridor on our way to my next class.

" Good morning miss Dlomo"

Ndalo replies causing Nandipha to smile sweetly, oh I just love Nandi shem she's just so nunus

“ Hey friend, how are you?”

“ I’m o..”

She puts her hand on her head and drops to the ground before she can complete her sentence, I crouch next to her and check her pulse. It’s faint but at least it’s there

“ Call Sir Mathobela”

I say to the frightened Nandipha next to me

“ Okay ma'am”

She runs around like a headless chicken not knowing where to go

“ Look for him in the Life sciences laboratory Nandipha!”

“ Okay”

Mathobela and I are in the waiting room waiting for the doctor to give us an update on Ndalo’s condition, he drove us to the hospital when Ndalo fainted and the nurses immediately attended to us when we walked into casualty with a unconscious Ndalo in Mathobela’s arms.

“ You need to tell her family”

She’s not on speaking terms with her parents so I’m not sure what I should do, I went through Ndalo’s phone and used Melo's contact details as her next of kin on her admission form. We had no choice but to call and tell her, she wanted to come but Mathobela managed to convince her not to come but that was after he promised to keep updating her.

“ I don’t have their numbers”

“ Call Gwala and ask him to give them to you, they must be on her employment contract”

“ Let’s rather wait for the doctor before telling them, we wouldn’t want to worry them unnecessarily”

“ Unnecessarily you say? Khumalo fainted and you call that unnecessary!?”

The way he’s so overprotective when it comes to Ndalo one would swear he’s her big brother

“ Stop shouting at me, I’m not your child!”

I shout back

“ This is not the time or place for your tantrums Phakade!”

“ Oh look who’s talking!”

Mathobela and I are always at loggerheads, I don’t know why but I just can’t stand him.

There’s just something about him that irks the sh*t out of me and it seems the feeling is mutual because he also can’t stand me.

“ I’m not going to do this with you here”

“ Good”

“ Buhlebendalo Khumalo”

Mathobela and I trudge towards the doctor

“ I’m sorry but who are you?”

“ I'm her friend and he's her boyfriend”

Mathobela frowns at my declaration but quickly catches on when I give him a look

“ Yes..she's my girlfriend and I'm her boyfriend"

If it was any other day I'd be laughing my lungs out right now, the way he said it lacked conviction I wouldn't be surprised if the doctor doesn't believe him.

“ I’m sorry but I can’t disclose any information about her condition to anyone who’s not her family or relative”

“ It’s okay we understand doctor, has she regained consciousness can we at least see her?” Mathobela

“ Yes she’s conscious, you can go ahead and see her”

“ Thank you so much doctor”

I run to her bed and engulf her in a hug the moment we walk inside her ward

“ Nthabi! I can’t breathe”

I immediately release her from my embrace

**“ I’m sorry, you scared me. I thought I lost you,
never scare me like that again”**

“ No one chooses to faint dumbo”

Mathobela interjects

“ Please don’t start with me wena nobubi”

“ I’d rather be ugly than be dumb like you”

Ndalo laughs

“ When will you guys date vele?”

“ What!” we both say at the same time

“ You must be out of your mind Ndalo, I’d never date him”

“ More like I’d never date you”

“ You guys need to f*ck already, I’m tired of your stupid fights”

**“ I’m glad to see you’re well Khumalo,
unfortunately I have to leave I can’t stand to be
in her presence any minute longer”**

**“ It’s okay, the nurse told me you were the one
who brought me here thank you Thobzini”**

“ Don’t mention it beautiful, bye”

“ Bye”

“ Yeah, hamba vele nobubi”

Ndalo cracks up infuriating me

“ Uhlekani?”

(What are you laughing at)

“ Your tantrums, you act so childish around him It’s so cute”

“ Mxm, why did you faint what did the doctor say?”

Her right hand protectively goes to her stomach

“ I haven’t been eating well and my blood pressure is too high because of stress and all the crying I’ve been doing, he told me I’m five weeks pregnant can you believe it?”

**The happiness on her face is so contagious I
cant help but smile back**

“ Congratulations my friend”

**“ After everything I’ve been through the past
few days it’s a miracle this baby survived, I’m
going to be a mother Nthabi”**

**For the first time in almost two weeks she is
smiling genuinely**

“Who’s the father?”

I can’t help but ask

“ I don’t know”

What?

“ What do you mean you don’t know?”

**“ I mean exactly that, I don’t know who he is.
You were right Nthabi ...about the glow, I had
sex with a stranger”**

**“ Why would you sleep with someone you
don’t know?”**

“ I was drunk when it happened”

“ Yeah right, did you forget that you don’t drink?”

“ Yeah, it was once”

“ You’re lying Ndalo, you don’t drink and you’d never sleep with a stranger much less unprotected. It’s fine, you don’t have to tell me who the father is congratulations once again”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#25

I've had my hands on my tummy incalculable times in the last hour, I'm so happy that I'm going to be someone's mother even though I still don't understand how it happened I mean I've been on contraceptives for over a year now and the injection was working just fine until now. Musa and I weren't using protection and I never got pregnant so I didn't think I'd be pregnant, even when my moods started acting up pregnancy was the last thing on my mind because I thought I had it covered. I love kids and to know that one is growing inside of me brings an indescribable joy to my heart, my anguish is miniature compared to how elated I feel everytime I think about my baby. I'm going

to be a mother, I'm going to mother Sabelo's baby.

My high blood pressure dropped after being treated and I was discharged, the doctor gave me pills, a diet plan and a long lecture about how fatal stress could be for the baby. I've been miserable since Musa had his way with me, I couldn't eat nor sleep I don't know what I would have done if Melo wasn't by my side but the news of my pregnancy has given me the will to live. I fell in love with my baby the moment the doctor told me about my pregnancy, I need to take care of myself so that I don't end up losing this baby.

When I got discharged Nthabi went back to school while I took an Uber back to my place. It's almost midday when the Uber drops me outside my place and to my surprise Melo is in the kitchen making food, isn't she supposed to be at school?

“ What are you doing here?”

That's when she sees me, she drops the food in her hands to the floor and runs to me and engulfs me in a bone crushing hug

“ That's enough now you're hurting me”

I expect her to let go of me but she doesn't

“ Melo”

She sniffs and that's when I realise she's crying

“ Shhh it's okay don't cry, I'm okay”

**“ I was so scared when I heard you were in
hospital, I thought you tried to take your life
again”**

**I break the hug and cradle her tear stained face
in my palms**

“ I’d never do that again, I’m sorry I scared you okay”

“ What did the doctor say, why did you faint?”

“ Can we at least sit down first, I still feel a bit woozy”

She carries my handbag and holds my hand as we walk to the lounge, I don’t know what I would have done if it wasn’t for her continuous support I’m blessed to have a sister like her.

“ I’m okay Melo, stop fussing I’m not dying I only fainted please”

I say when she tries to help me sit

“ Why did you faint?”

“ I haven’t been eating well and my blood pressure was way too high you know how much I’ve been stressing lately but I’m fine now”

“ I’m so going to force feed you shem, I cant lose a sister because of your stubbornness.”

“ Don’t worry, you won’t have to force me to eat. I’ll eat on my own, I can’t put my baby at risk again”

“ What baby?”

“ I’m pregnant silly”

“ Woah what? Congratulations sis”

She engulfs me in a hug

“ I’m going to spoil you rotten little one”

Her hands are on my stomach

“ Oh sis, we are having a baby. I can’t wait to be a mother”.

“ An aunt you mean?”

“ No, a mother. Yours and Nele's kids are my kids as well”

“ Ncoah how sweet Melo”

“ So who’s the father? Don’t tell me its Musa”

“ Yo I would have had an abortion immediately after receiving the news, angeke ngathwalela leso skhohlakali umntwana mina”

(I will never bare that evil man’s kids)

“ So it’s Sabelo’s? Have you told him yet”

“ No, and I’m not going to tell him”

“ What? Why”

“ Come on Melo, Sabelo is 18 what will he do with a baby and besides he needs to focus on his exams I don’t want him worrying about me when he’s supposed to be studying”

“ Well you’re unfair, you didn’t get yourself pregnant you made this baby with the same 18 year old kid and you need to tell him about HIS baby”

She says putting emphasis on “his”

“ I’ll tell him, just not now”

“ When?”

**“ I don’t know Melo, let me enjoy the news of my pregnancy without causing me stress
aseblief”**

“ I told you to tell him about what Musa did but you refused and I let you be, now you want to keep this from him as well? I’m giving you until December to tell him otherwise I’m going to tell him myself”

I rue the day I started discussing my private life with Melo because she has forgotten her place, I'm sure she thinks we are friends or something now.

“ Yewena Melokuhle I'm not your friend, stay out of my business”

“ Ngeke ngikhone ses'Ndalo, you have up until December to come clean to Sabelo”

She says and storms out of the room

Wow! How can someone call you sis but still disrespect you? I'm the only child who's

obedient kwa Khumalo, Melo and Anele are stubborn like my father shem.

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SABELO

I'm in my room trying my utmost best to study but I'm failing dismally the pain in my heart wont let me be, it's been almost two weeks since I saw the video but it feels like yesterday every time I close my eyes. I can vividly see Musa pumping in and out of my Ndalo. It hurts so freaking bad to watch someone you love allow herself to be used by someone else, I

don't know why girls put themselves through so much humiliation. Sphe seems to think she was blackmailed or threatened but no matter how much I try to believe that my mind refuses to accept it, I don't know but I believe Ndalo knows I'd go to any lengths to protect her so why wouldn't she tell me? This whole thing is just so confusing!

“ Come in”

Sphe walks in and I instantly clap hands for her

“ What?”

She asks in confusion

**“ You finally learned how to knock,
congratulations you passed the first stage of
mannerisms. You’re through to the next round”**

“ Hahaha! Not funny”

“ How can I help you?”

**“ I’m glad to see you on your study table with
books in front of you instead of smoking weed”**

**“ Well I’m trying to study but angikhoni maybe
weed could help me”**

“ You’re already addicted?”

“ No, I only smoke when I feel like I can’t take it anymore”

“ Why weed? Cant you gym or do something except smoking weed?”

“ What’s wrong with smoking?”

“ Are you really asking me that?”

I chuckle

“ I’m kidding, it’s not easy but I’ll try jogging when the pain in my heart and the myriad thoughts in my head threaten to drive me crazy”

“ Thanks, please throw away the weed”

“ I can’t throw away my money, at least let me finish it first”

“ No Sabelo, I wont watch you turn yourself into an addict”

“ I can handle myself, I’m not addicted I told you”

“ That’s the same mentality addicts had when they started”.

“ Okay, I’ll do it. I hate it when you speak so much sense”

“ Give it to me, I’ll throw it for you”

“ Sphe come on, you don’t trust me?”

“ I do, give me the pack”

I stand up from my chair and walk to the closet to take the weed where I hid it and give it to Sphe

“ Thank you, I love you Mntasekhaya”

“ I love you more sisi wami”

“ I forgot to tell you, miss Khumalo fainted today at school and had to be rushed to hospital”

“ What? What’s wrong with her?”

“ I don’t know bro”

I immediately jolt up from my chair, kick off my slippers and wear my sneakers and hoody

“ Where are you going?”

Sphe’s question snaps me back to my senses, where am I going vele? She’s no longer my problem, why should I worry about what happens to her. Let Musa worry about her, he’s the one she chose!

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NDALO

It’s been a couple of weeks since I fainted, Melo went back to Pretoria and I miss her so much the house feels so lonely without her

even though we were fighting half the time. Sabelo has changed a lot, he no longer comes to my class and his marks have drastically dropped not just on Life sciences but on other subjects as well. I'm afraid he'll fail his matric if he keeps this up so I took it upon myself to talk to him seeing that I'm the cause of his behavior.

I asked Thato to tell him to come to my office whenever he comes back from wherever he goes to everytime it's my period.

“ What is it?”

This is what he says when he walks into my office without knocking, did I mention his attitude?

“ Please take a sit”

“ No, I’ll stand”

“ Okay then, I'm concerned about your academic performance Sabelo. You’re dropping the ball and I am afraid you’ll fail if you keep this up”

“ Why do you care anyway? Its my future ungenaphi wena? Uhlanganaphi?”

“ Wow!”

“ Is there anything else”

“ You know what Sabelo, there’s nothing else. Umdala une pasi uzabona wenza njani, I can’t be worrying about my baby ngiphinde ngizo stresswa yindoda endala ene ntshebe nama shishi!”

I snap

“ Wait, did you just say your baby?”

“ What? No, I said my body. I’ve gained weight and it’s stressing me, I don’t like being fat”

**“ Don’t make me stupid I know what I heard,
so you’re pregnant?”**

**His hand catches me off guard and inspects my
belly before I can stop him, I’m not showing yet
but my stomach is a bit hard.**

**“ Explains the moods, the weight and
complexion gain”**

**“ Sabelo please remove your hand from my
stomach”**

**My body is still very aware of his touch, I’m
afraid I might pounce on him right this minute**

**if he doesn't remove his hand especially
because of how horny I've been lately.**

“ Who's the father?”

**“ You know it's risky to have this conversation
here”**

“ Just answer me dammit!”

He bellows

Will he believe me if I told him the truth?

**“ I asked you a question Buhlebendalo
unganginyanyisi!”**

**He’s standing way too close, I can literally feel
his breath fanning my face. I’ve never seen him
look so vexed before.**

“ It’s you Sabelo, you’re the father of my baby”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#26

Being a father at the age of 18 was never part of the plan, I wanted to study and be financially stable first so my children wouldn't lack anything and the last thing I wanted was to be one of those boys whose kids are raised by their parents. Being a father now isn't ideal but I'd be lying if I said I'm not happy that the baby is mine because I'm ecstatic, my heart wouldn't have survived it if the baby was Musa's. As unready and petrified as I am to be a father I'm so happy the baby Ndoni is carrying belongs to me but wait what if she's lying? I can't just take her word for it.

“ How do I know you're not lying to me?”

“ Why would I lie? What could I possibly gain from lying to you?”

“ I don't know you tell me”

“ I'm not going to force you to believe me or accept my child Sabelo, I'm telling you that you're the father of my baby it's up to you to believe me or not”

“ You can't expect me to take your word for it Ndalo, not after you slept with Musa how do you expect me to trust you”

“ I'm telling you that the baby is yours Sabelo, I know it's yours”

“ I won’t believe you until we take a DNA test”

**“ I won’t put my baby at risk to pacify you
mina, if you can’t take my word then it’s okay
fuck off I won’t force you to be a father. I know
so many kids who were raised by single parents
and turned out fine, my baby wont be the first
nor the last”**

Her words cut deep

**No matter the circumstances I would never let
my child grow up without me.**

“ You can’t blame me for being sus..”

“ Save your speech, get out of my office”

“ What? No. I’m going nowhere until I get to the bottom of this whole thing”

“ You will leave”

I stare at her as he flips the papers and books on top of her desk searching for something, I’ve never seen her so riled up she’s even sweating

“ What the fuck!”

**I exclaim when she throws a duster to my face
thank the lord for my fast reflexes because I
duck in time and the duster hits the wall behind
me.**

“ Ngithe hamba la!”

(I said leave)

“ Okay, I’m leaving”

**I couldn’t concentrate in any of the classes I
attended after Ndalo broke the news of her
pregnancy to me, Ndalo and I never used
protection so chances of the baby being mine
are very high. I don’t know what to think but
why would she lie about the pregnancy, she**

loves Musa and he's the one with the money while I'm nothing but a kid who depends on his parents she has nothing to gain by pinning the pregnancy on me. I'm broke and she doesn't love me so why would she pin the pregnancy on me? But still I can't just trust her not after she betrayed me gosh I don't know what to believe.

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NDALO

As much as I would've loved to keep the news of my pregnancy from Sabelo I hate Musa too much to say he's the father of my baby, if anyone finds out about the baby being Sabelo's I might as well kiss my career goodbye and that's why I didn't want to tell him but fate had other plans. I completely understand why he would think that the baby is not his especially after I told him I'm in love with Musa but I don't know what happened I just lost it when he accused me of pinning the pregnancy on him.

I'm so happy that it's Friday at least tomorrow I'll sleep in, I've always loved sleeping but I have gotten worse since I fell pregnant ai ngiyazi lalela shem angidlali njalo.

“ Yo I’m tired shem, let’s go to a spar tomorrow and get a hot stone massage” Nthabi

“ I love the idea, what time?”

“ We can meet around 11”

I’d love to go for the massage my body could use one I have been through a lot in the past two months, getting a massage before final examinations start isn’t such a bad idea can this year end already, its been a stressful one for me shem! Where was I? Oh the massage I’d love to go but I sleep in on Saturdays I only wake up after 10

“ So early why not me around three in the afternoon?”

“ Late so? I doubt the spar will still be open by the time we get there”

“ Yo ai okay”

“ Is there something you want to do in the morning?”

“ Yes, I’ll be sleeping”

“ Are you for real?”

“ Yes, I’m for real. I wont sacrifice my sleep for anything, I wake up early six days a week I need Saturday to rest”

“ Yo ai khona your pregnancy is making you lazy”

“ Mina lazy never, I just love sleeping cha”

Bruno Mars’s just the way you are plays disturbing us, I should change my ringtone this one reminds me of Sabelo.

“ Won’t you answer?”

“ I don’t answer calls from unsaved numbers”

“ Why?”

“ Pretty has been calling me lately, I don’t know how many numbers I blocked already”

“ What? What does she want?”

“ To apologize”

“ Yo she’s crazy, what she did is unforgivable you can’t do something like that and expect sorry to fix everything. Answer babe, it doesn’t look like the person will stop calling”

“ Okay...hey”

“ Ndalo”

It’s Sabelo

Why is he calling me from a different number? I never blocked his number if I remember correctly.

“ Uhm...hi”

The way Nthabi is looking at me though I even reduced the volume of the speaker, I can't risk her hearing this conversation.

“ Can you talk?”

“ No”

“ Are you with someone is that why you're giving me one word answers”

“ Yeah”

“ Okay it's fine then I'll end the call but I really need to talk to you Ndalo, has Melo left yet?”

Melo left shortly after I found out about my pregnancy, she was in my house for the 6 weeks duration of her practicals.

“ Yes, she left”

“ Okay, I’ll come to your place tonight”

“ Why are you calling me from this number?”

I cant help but ask

“ My phone broke so I currently don’t have a phone, I’m calling you from my sister’s phone”.

“ Okay bye”

“ You’re no longer angry?”

He asks supressing a chuckle, I can’t help but laugh. I seriously don’t know what got into me

“ No, I’m okay now”

“ That boy better not to turn you into a crazy woman, tell him I’ll whoop his ass”

My heart you guys! Does this mean, he accepts the baby?

“ You hear me?”

“ Yeah”

“ Okay, sharp see you later then”

“ Who was that?”

**Nthabi asks the moment I remove the phone
from my ear**

“ Hah Nthabi uthanda izindaba yo”

“ The way you were blushing!”

“ Goodbye Nthabi see you on Monday”

She laughs

“ What about tomorrow, si on or?”

“ Told you I’m sleeping in, bye girl ”

“ Bye, vila!”

**I’m watching House of Zwide when I hear a
knock on the door, my heartbeat accelerates**

because I know who it is and I'm so not ready
for the conversation we are about to have

“ Please come in”

I open the door wider for him to enter

“ Thanks”

“ Let's go to the lounge”

“ Okay”

I lead the way to the lounge and take a seat, he sits on the couch across mine and looks at me expectantly.

“ I’m sorry for how I behaved earlier on, I don’t know what got into me but it’s no excuse for my behavior”

“ It’s okay, I understand. So tell me why are you so sure I’m the father of your baby?”

I guess we are going to get straight into it no small talk

“ Because the dates correspond, you’re the father there’s no doubt about that”.

“ Okay”

“ We can have DNA tests if you think I’m lying to you but you’ll have to wait until the baby is born”

“ No, there’s no need for that I believe you”

“ Really?”

“ Yes, why would you lie about the baby being mine? It’s not like you love me and I’m broke so it wouldn’t make any sense”

Yoh! If he said that to hurt then he has succeeded

“ About that, I love you Sabelo like I’ve never loved anyone before and I’m sorry I lied to you and broke your heart but I only did it to protect you”

“ Stop it okay! You don’t love me, you wouldn’t do what you did if you loved me like you say.”

I can tell he’s trying so hard not to cry, his eyes are glistening with tears and his voice is quavering.

“ I’m sorry”

“ I still don’t understand why you waited until the day we were meant to spend the night together to do what you did, you could’ve told me you didn’t want me anymore before that but no you had to keep me waiting at the garage like a fool knowing very well you wouldn’t come and give your boyfriend my number so he could send me a video of you having sex with him, how could you be so cruel Ndalo?”

He loses the battle against his tears, they’re rolling down his cheeks like a water on a waterfall now.

“ I would never do that to you Sabelo, you know how excited I was about our trip. You I know I wanted to pay for the lodge but you wouldn't let me, do you think I'd want to use my money if I knew the trip wouldn't happen?”

“ Then explain to me, how did you end up moaning under Musa while I was waiting for you to come to me?”

“ Musa hired a PI to look into my life and give him every single detail about my life, that's how he found out about our relationship but he waited until that day to strike, he grabbed me before I could make it to the Uber and told me to go with him or he'll kill you. I didn't know if he was bluffing or serious but I left with him

because I couldn't risk with your life, I'd die if I lost you"

" What? I remember a red BMW 325is tailing my dad's car that day"

" Yes, that's how he knew where you were he hired a hitman to tail you. He took me to a hotel and told me he wants to sleep with me, I tried creating a scene but he called someone the hitman that's when I realized he wasn't bluffing so I had no choice but to do what he wanted in order to save your life"

" What did he want?"

“ He wanted me to sleep with him not only that he wanted the whole thing on tape so he can send it to you, he told me to moan and pretend like I’m enjoying or he’d tell the man to kill you”

“ You should’ve let me die Ndalo, I’d rather be dead than to see someone else huffing and sweating on top of you. That’s worse than death, it’s been over a month since the incident but I still can’t get rid of the image of the two of you together why did you have to sacrifice yourself for me Ndalo?”

He’s on his feet pacing up and down in anger, he has veins all over his forehead he looks ready to kill.

“ I’m sorry Sabelo but I couldn’t let him kill you”

He stops pacing and looks at me and before I know it, I’m swaddled in his arms. The hug is too tight I can barely breath but I’d take this suffocating hug over the emptiness I have been feeling in my heart since our break up.

“ I’m sorry Sthandwa sami, please forgive me. I should have known you’d never do something like that to me”

He's crying as he says this which propels my own tears to roll down my cheeks, hurting him was never my intention.

“ You couldn't have known Sabelo, don't blame yourself”

“ I'm sorry, I'm so sorry for what he did to you I promise that bastard is going to pay for what he did to you!”

He breaks the hug and cups my face in his hands

“ Why did you lie to me that day I came here looking for answers?”

“ He told me he will leak the video and report our relationship to the principal if I ever got back together with you, he said he wants me to live a long and lonely life”

“ Uyanya! He can't dictate your life, how long are you going to keep letting him get away with things? Mara nawe Ndalo you should've told me, I would've found a way to deal with Musa”

“ I'm sorry I just didn't want you to stress about Musa, you had trial exams coming and all”

“ So you thought making me believe you don’t love me and that you cheated on me would help? Well it didn’t I flunked my exams. I’d prefer to stress about how to deal with Musa than to think that the woman I love with my all heart and soul doesn’t love me back and that everything we shared was a lie”

“ I’m sorry Sabelo, I thought I was doing the right thing”

“ The right thing by stressing yourself while you’re pregnant? You could’ve lost our baby Ndalo, you should’ve just told me and let me handle it. The only person who benefitted from the decision you made is Musa while the both of us suffered, the fact that he slept with you

**while you were pregnant with my child
infuriates me Ndalo did you already know you
were pregnant when you gave into his threats?"**

**" No, I didn't know I found out a week before
trial exams started"**

" Were you ever going to tell me?"

" Yes"

" When?"

" December, after your final exams"

“ I know I’m younger than you but you seriously need to stop treating me like a kid, I’m your man and I need you to treat me as such and stop trying to protect me. Yes I agree I’m still young and having a baby is the last thing I want right now but I would never shy away from my responsibilities, I knew the consequences of having unprotected sex when I made love to you unprotected”

“ I’m sorry I just didn’t want you to be distracted”

“ And you thought making me believe you cheated on me would help?”

“ I’m sorry”

“ It’s okay stop crying now, you’ll upset our baby”

His hands are on my belly gently brushing it.

I’ve been dreaming about this day since the day I found out I was pregnant but I never thought it would actually come true. He goes down on his knees, push my top up revealing my not so there belly and plants kisses all over my stomach.

“ Hello baby, it’s your daddy”

I'm so emotional right now, my baby won't grow up without a father. I hope this isn't a dream.

“ Stop crying my love, everything is going to be okay. I don't know how we are going to do it but I promise we will get through this together, I will be here every step of the way I won't leave you alone. We will face all the challenges coming our way together but you need to promise me something?”

“ What?”

“ This sort of thing will never happen again”

“ I promise”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#27

**I pull him to his feet and smash my lips into his,
we kiss each other pouring our emotions into
the kiss and tasting each other's tears**

**“ I'm sorry for the attitude I've been giving you
lately”**

He says when we break the kiss

“ It’s okay my love, I understand”

“ I love you both, you and our little miracle”

“ We love you too, wait do you smoke now?”

“ Not anymore but it wasn’t an everyday thing I only smoked when the pain got too much for me to bare”

“ I’m sorry that I put you through all of that”.

“ It’s okay don’t worry I’m not addicted and I won’t be smoking again. My priority is passing my matric so that I can be the father and boyfriend both you and the baby deserve. I can’t wait to be done with school so we can love each other openly, I’m tired of loving you in private I want everyone in my life to know about you”

I don’t think I’m ready for that, for everyone in his life to know about me that is.

“ I want that too but I know many people will be against our relationship”

“ I honestly don’t care what people will say, I love you and that’s all that matters”

“ I love you too”

“ I’ve missed you so much”

He smashes his lips on mine, I don’t know when or how but I find myself lying skyward on the carpet completely naked with Sabelo’s head buried between my thighs. He bites on my inner thighs before burying his face on my wet nuna

“ I miss you so much sthandwa sam”

I’m so wet and my clit won’t stop twitching, anticipation is killing me. I’m dying to feel his

tongue on wetness, he spreads my folds with his fingers and stares at my drenched nuna.

“ You’re so sexy my love, I love your cookie. I love it’s sweet smell and how it tastes on my tongue”

His confession has my core pulsating in need

“ Please baby, I’m dying here”

He doesn’t need to be told twice, he starts swiping his tongue on my nuna and eats me up like his favourite meal. He puts his hands under my buttocks and holds my ass in the air, his tongue delves into my asshole and tongue fucks

me oh my goodness it feels so good I have no choice but moan out loud.

It doesn't take long before my toes curl and a wave of pleasure washes over me and I cum undone with my thighs vibrating violently. He doesn't wait for me to recover from my mind blowing orgasm he immediately strips off his clothes and slips his hard shaft inside my wetness and fucks me senselessly until I feel my orgasm coming but he does the unexpected, he slips out his rod before I reach my destination.

“ Why did you do that?”

I'm close to tears, why would he deny me my orgasm

He doesn't answer but shuts me up by putting his hard rod in my mouth, I can taste the mixture of his and my juices as I suck on his member. It doesn't take much effort for him to reach his climax and shoot up his junk in my throat, I swallow and orgasm just from seeing him cum I'm not a selfish partner I love pleasuring him as much as he loves pleasuring me.

We go on and on until I feel my nuna burning from being ravished but I'm not complaining I wouldn't have it any other way I missed him so much.

“ Let’s get you fed sthandwa sami”

**“ I’ll eat but for now I just want you to hold me
in your arms. I missed you so much”**

**“ You have no idea how much I missed you ,
come here”**

**I throw myself in his arms and sink in his
embrace taking in his musky scent, he holds me
back locking his legs around me. We are both
sweaty and sticky but being in his arms like this
is still my favourite thing in the entire world.**

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SABELO

After weeks of not kissing, holding and being with my woman I had to spend the night last night making up for all the time we spent apart. We couldn't get enough of each other, we only slept in the wee hours of the morning which is why Ndalo is still sleeping and I can't bring myself to wake her up she needs the rest.

I've been up for a while now watching her sleep and damn she looks so beautiful and peaceful in her sleep. I've been fighting the urge to suck those pouty lips of hers. It's mid October and it's way too hot to sleep with blankets, we slept with the duvet cover but Ndalo has her leg on

top of the covers revealing her nakedness.

Damn I love this woman.

To be honest I'm not ready to be a father, the thought of being one petrifies me. The thought of being responsible for a whole human being is scary but there's nothing I can do at this stage because it's already done I'm going to be someone's father whether I like it or not, and I'll need to step up and be responsible for my baby. I don't want to be a deadbeat father, I want to be there for my child and provide for his needs I don't know what I'll do but I need to find a way to make money.

I wanted to wait for Ndalo to wake up before I leave but it doesn't look like she'll wake up

anytime soon so I write her a letter and leave it on top of my pillow before going to the bathroom to take a shower, I hope to find her awake after my shower but no such luck because I find her still deep in sleep. So I have no choice but to leave without telling her

“ Good afternoon bazali bami”

I greet when I find them sitting under the veranda outside

Mom is drinking soft drink and my dad is sipping on his beer. I admire the love my parents have for each other, they never get enough of one another. For as long as I remember these two are always together, the

only time they are apart is when my father is at work other than that khohlwa bangu Ndondo no Nono baya match(a).

“ Ulelephi wena, sewuvela ngabo good afternoon!”

(Where did you sleep)

Did my dad have to choose such a loud wife though? Look now I’m paying the price for his inability to choose well hey that’s a joke, I love my mom.

“ Sewuyabhema Sabelo!”

(You smoke now)

“ No, mom I don’t smoke”

“ Don’t lie to me wena, Sisi told me that she found you smoking weed in your room”

Sphe and her big mouth!

“ It was a once off thing ma I promise”

My dad is not saying anything but the look on his face tells me he’s disappointed in me

“ Once off thing kabani? Kukwami la Sabelo ungadideki ngoba naku une room”

(In whose house? It's my house Sabelo don't let the fact that you have a room confuse you)

If I got a dollar everytime my mother reminds me that this is her house I'd be a millionaire by now.

" I'm sorry mom it wont happen again"

I apologize for the sake of peace

" It better not"

" You're getting out of control Sabelo, you come and go as you please. Where did you spend the night, how do you think your mother

and I slept last night without knowing where you were?"

His tone is soft but firm

" I'm sorry it'll not happen again"

" I don't want your apologies Buti I want changed behavior, this is not how we raised you. We raised a responsible young man not this person who acts without thinking"

I feel terrible, the last thing I want is to disappoint my parents.

**“ I’m sorry babami, I promise to be the son
mom and you raised”**

**Sphe and I used to fight as kids on whose father
our father is, we’d both say “ wu babami” and
that’s how we ended up calling him that. We
got used to it that calling him ‘baba’ like other
people call their fathers sounds weird and
foreign.**

“ It’s okay son”

“ Uhm there’s something I’d like to tell you”

“ Go ahead son”

“ Before I start I’d like to say, it was never my intention to disappoint you two”

“ Kaze sewenzeni mtwana ka Brandon Meyiwa”

(I wonder what you did now)

“ Oh when he messes up wu mtwanami ngedwa?”

“ Ya ewakho wedwa, angina mtwana ose nje ngalo mina”

(Yes he’s only yours, I don’t have an unruly child like this one)

There’s no easy way to say this

“ I got someone pregnant...I’m going to be a father”

My mother chuckles and its not a pleasant one.

“ Father? You’re still a baby yourself what do you know about being a father?”

She says

“ Who is the girl?” Dad

“ Uhm she’s not a girl babami..she’s a woman, she’s 25”

“ Haibo are you hearing yourself wena mtwanandini!”

Mom exclaims with her hands on top of her head

“ Sabelo bese kuphele o ntanga mase ulala ne ntanga yami khona ulala ulalisani umncane kanje?”

(Were your age mates finished, is that why you resorted to sleeping with someone my age, Why are you even having sex at your age)

My mother is dramatic shem sekana 25 manje yena?

“ Cha ma kodwa ngithanda yena”

(No ma but I love her)

“My liefde are you listening to your son?”

(My love)

“ I am listening my skat”

**“ I warned you about giving him too much
freedom”**

**She stands up, takes her glass and walks away
leaving me with my father**

“ Sit down Troy and tell me everything from the beginning don’t leave anything out”

I tell him everything he listens attentively until I’m done.

“ I’m very disappointed in you son I wont lie, having a baby is not easy as it looks. You know I can raise my grandchild but you’ll never be a man if I do that, I’ll help you where I can but you need to step up and be a father look for a part time job or sell something I don’t know what you’ll do but you need to make money and support your child”

“ I will”

“ Good, I know the mother is working and would be able to provide for the baby without your assistance but don’t be that father my son, you knew you were not working when you ejaculated inside of her and now it’s time to face the consequences of your actions. A father is a provider- it’s your responsibility to ensure that your children’s need are fulfilled, you instil discipline, you nurture your children and you love and protect them siyezwana Meyiwa?”

I’m what I am today because of my father’s teachings, I have so much respect for this man.

“ Yes, I understand babami”

“ It’s time to grow up and be a man now, you have someone to think about now you’re no longer just living for yourself every decision you make will affect your child one way or another. If you decide to smoke and fail your matric, it’s your child who’ll suffer the consequences stop being weak and be a man. Pass your matric and go to varsity so you can provide for your offspring, the time to think like a boy and want expensive phones is over the needs of your child come before your own now. It’s my grandchild then you”

Yo looks like I have a difficult journey ahead of me

“ For now focus on your exams my boy and leave that Musa guy to me, he won’t leak the video and he won’t threaten maKhumalo or touch her again I promise you”

My father always fulfils his promises

“ Thank you dad”

“ I know you think you love her now but you’re still way too young to be so sure what you feel for her is really love, maybe you truly love her maybe you don’t only time will tell. I need to meet the woman who’s been making you misbehave, you should bring her for lunch sometime”

I'm sure I love her but I guess I understand
where my father is coming from

“ No, she's not the one making me misbehave
I'm responsible for my...”

His laughter halts my ramble

“ I was just pulling your leg, rest 'father to be'
rest”

He laughs

Haibo who's teaching my father these things?

Yo ngaze ngasha!

**“ Kodwa Sabelo niyasigugisa shem, cabanga
mina ngi fresh kanje sengiwu mkhulu”**

**(You're making me old, imagine young as I am
I'm already a grandfather)**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#28

To say I'm happy would be an understatement, I'm over the moon it feels like I'm walking on clouds I can't believe I've been putting myself through so much over nothing I should've listened to Melo and told Sabelo the truth then all of the stress I subjected myself to could've been avoided. I'm just grateful that my baby survived I don't know what I would've done if I lost him, yeah I'm hoping for a son but I'll still be happy even if it's a girl.

Sabelo was nowhere to be found when I woke up but at least he left a letter telling me he had to rush back home since he spent the night here without informing his parents about it, Sabelo ravished my nuna yesterday shem it was as if

he's making up for all the time we spent apart. I woke up craving Morvite, I don't even like that thing but what can I say Sabelo's baby wants it so I'm on my way to the shop to buy it when I receive a call from Nele

" Hello putsununu"

" I'm angry at you"

" Ha what did I do?"

" Melo told me she was at your place for six weeks but you never ask me to visit you, why ubandlulula Ses'Ndalo?"

(don't you treat us the same)

“ What? You know I love you both equally”

“ That’s not true, you’ve always loved Melo more than me I always had to fight for your attention”

“ Anele I’m sorry you feel like that but that’s not true, you’re both my sisters and I love you both equally”

“ Then why haven’t you invited me to your place yet? You don’t even call me Ses'Ndalo it’s like you forgot about me the moment you moved out from home”

“ I’m sorry mntasekhaya but it’s nothing like that I’ve just been through a lot in the past few months but that’s no excuse, I have never invited you to my place because I thought mom wouldn’t let you visit”

“ I spoke to mom and she doesn’t have problem, should I ask dad to bring me today?”

“ I have no problem as long as mom agrees, you can come little sister”

“ Yees thank you Sis wami omuhle kunabo bonke osisi emhlabeni let me go pack”

I can’t help but giggle

I knew I missed Anele but I didn't know how much I did until she walked through the door, I literally ran to her and engulfed her in a bone crushing hug. I almost did the same with my dad but I stopped myself when I remembered everything him and my mother put me through. Anele is in the guest bedroom, my dad and I are in the lounge sitting in uncomfortable silence it's been five minutes since he asked Anele to excuse us but he still hasn't said a word to me. There's just awkward tension lingering in the room, it doesn't feel like I'm with my dad it's like I'm sitting next to a complete stranger

“ Ubaba angakujabulela ukudla?”

(Can I make you something to eat)

I say breaking the awkward silence

**“ Yebo Ntombi yami ubaba angaku jabulela
kakhulu okuya ngase thunjwini”**

**(Yes my daughter, I would really appreciate
something to eat)**

**When Nele told me she is coming to my place I
had no choice but to whip something for
dinner, I cooked spaghetti, meatballs and a
garden salad. I quickly dish up for my dad and
serve him with a glass of Coke and change the
TV channel to wrestling so he can watch while**

he has his food I know how much he loves wrestling.

“ Thank you mtanami, the food was very delicious”

He says when he’s done eating

“ Thank you dad”

“ Buhle mtanami I want to ask for your forgiveness for what your mother and I did, as your father it was my duty to protect you but I failed and allowed that boy to disrespect you and I am sorry for that. You don’t know how

ashamed I was at church when you told us about what Musa did"

I know it took a lot for him to apologize and humble himself before me and I'm so glad he did but I cant help but burst into tears when I think about how much I suffered because of his and my mother's fear of "abantu bazothini"

" I'm sorry Buhle don't cry my child"

He's now awkwardly standing next to me watching me bawl my eyes out, I can tell he's not sure what to do. He wants to embrace me but he's not sure if I'll allow him to.

“ It’s fine baba, you can hug me”

He immediately engulfs me in a hug and I sink in his embrace, oh how I miss being in my father’s protective arms. I can’t believe my own father had to get my permission to hug me this just goes to show how distant we’ve grown from each other.

**.
.br/.**

NARRATED

The two brothers are watching a game of football in the lounge while Mathapelo and

Sphehile are busy preparing lunch in the kitchen and Sabelo is in his bedroom doing God knows what.

“ Zalo you haven’t told me why you summoned me here”

Ntsika says looking at his elder brother

“ There’s someone I need to teach a lesson and I need your help finding them”

Ntsika looks at him with a frown pasted on his face

“ What's going on, you're a calm and peaceful person you don't teach people lessons that's something I would do not you”

“ Ntsika I didn't call you here to give me a lecture, will you help me locate this person or should I ask for help from someone else? I can simply ask Sabelo for his address but I don't want my son getting involved in this”

“ Of course I will help, so who's this person?”

“ Musawenkosi Sibisi”

“ Never heard of that name before, what did he do?”

**“ He messed with my son that’s what he did,
can you believe that asswipe had a hitman tail
my son while he raped his girlfriend who is
pregnant with my grandchild”**

**Just thinking about it riles him up, he’s itching
to put his hands on that boy.**

“ Uthi wenzeni?!”

(He did what)

**“ Keep your voice down, I don’t want my wife
and daughter to hear us”**

“ I hope it’s not the same guy who followed him to the garage the other day, I warned that fucker to stay away from Sabelo”

“ What did you just say?”

“ Eish, what I mean is that bastard deserves to die”

Ntsika says avoiding his brother’s piercing stare

“ Ungangiphenduli islima wena, you just said someone was tailing my son and you knew about it but never told me about it”

(Don’t make me a fool)

“ Buti begged me not to tell you”

“ And you listened to him? Who’s older between the two of you Ntsika, what if that bastard went ahead and killed my son then what huh?”

“ I’m sorry Zalo but I went there myself and dealt with the situation”

“ Dealt with it how because that fucker still raped Sabelo’s pregnant girlfriend and blackmailed her to break them up, so don’t come here and tell me you dealt with the situation”

“ I’m sorry zalo, So uthi uSabelo umithisile?”

(So Sabelo got someone pregnant)

**“ Don’t even go there, lomtwana umithise
umuntu omdala nakuye omshiya nga 7 years
yonke”**

**(He impregnated someone who’s 7 years older
than him)**

The younger man erupts into a belly laugh

**“ Uthi wenzeni? That’s my boy izinja madoda
suka emabhozeni”**

“ Ntsika come on stop laughing this is not funny, I was so shocked isbindi sika Sabelo zalo!”

“ Yindoda leya zalo, so wasimithisa isgogwana sakhe”

(He’s a man, so he got his old lady pregnant)

Ntsika asks finding the whole thing hysterical

“ Sabelo should not hear you say that, akafuni lutho ngaye”

(He’s overprotective of her)

Ntsika laughs even harder than he did before

“ Hay' zalo ngiyafisa ukumbona u sisi yazi, I'm so curious to see the girl shem kaze unjani”

(I wish to meet her) (I wonder how she's like)

“ Nami ngiyafisa ukumbona u 'woman' phela u Sabelo usho njalo mangibuza ukuthi who's the girl he impregnated, he told me she's a woman not a girl.”

Brandon says causing Ntsika to start laughing all over again

“ Hayi ukuhamba ukubona shem, Sabelo is still way too young to be a father does he even know the price of milk and Pampers?

“ He'll know very soon, I told him he needs to support his child”

“ You have more than enough money to support the child, you are being too hard on him it's his first child I would understand if it was his second child”

“ This will teach him responsibility and that every action has consequences, If I don't do this he'll continue messing up because his knows his father will come to the rescue. Its expensive to raise a child so I'll obviously help him with some of the things but not everything”

“ Well I didn’t look at it like that, you’re truly a wise man congratulations grandfather to be, mele sihlangane nabakibo ‘woman’ sikhipe inhlawulo umtwana azobiza isibongo sethu makazalwa”

(We should meet with her family and pay for damages so the baby can use our surname when it’s born)

“ Yes you’re right that’s why I told Sabelo to bring her for lunch because I want to talk to her about that, she’ll help us get in touch with her family”.

“ Brandon Meyiwa you did what?”

Mathapelo asks walking into the lounge with a tray of food in her hands

“ My skaat please”

(my love)

“ No, I wont allow that girl inside my house. I can't believe you're even considering this, that girl should be reported she broke the law and slept with her student. Sabelo is 18, she should have known better than to open her thighs for an 18 year old boy sies ngiya ku Gwala Monday I'm going to report her ngeke I took my child to school to learn not to be sexually abused by a grown woman yeses”

After Sabelo's big reveal Mathapelo backed her daughter into a corner and asked all about her son's relationship with the 25 year old woman he impregnated

" Sisi I understand why you're angry but your son loves her so if you report her you might lose him".

" Of course you'll say that because it's not your son who was sexually violated by an older woman"

" My skaat you can't talk to my brother like that, you know he loves Sabelo like his own"

“ That girl is not welcome in my house Meyiwa, I don’t want to see her or that child she’s carrying in my house”.

“ That’s our grandchild you’re talking about”

“ How sure are you that the child is really Sabelo’s? If she could easily spread her legs for a boy she was meant to teach who knows who else she sleeps with. Sabelo is still a boy I understand why he’d believe that the child is his but I didn’t expect you to be so gullible, I don’t want that girl or her bastard child in my house finish and klaar!”

“ Then you leave me with no choice but to move out, I wont stay in a house where the mother of my child is not welcome mother”

Sabelo says and storms out of the house

“ You will lose your son if you keep up with this tyrant behavior of yours, don’t say I didn’t warn you”

Ntsika says and follows his nephew

“ I’m so disappointed in you Mathapelo, you of all people know how it’s like to be called names by your in laws”

“ You’re right, my in laws! That girl is nothing to me and she’ll never be my son’s wife. I will never let my one and only son even think of getting married to that paedophile, it’ll happen over my dead body.”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#29

I knew it wasn’t going to be easy for my parents to accept the relationship between Ndalo and I but what I didn’t expect was for my mother to call Ndalo names and make

accusations of the baby not being mine, I won't tolerate anyone who speaks ill about Ndalo in my presence she's already been through a lot she doesn't need anymore stress.

“ Sabelo wait!”

My uncle calls out behind me but I don't stop I keep walking

“ Ngikukhabe mina ke, I'm not your age mate don't you dare disrespect me”

(I'll beat you up)

I know he means it so I stop on my tracks and wait for him to catch up with me.

**“ Why are you acting like a spoilt brat Sabelo?
Since when do you walk out while your parents
are talking, don’t let the fact that you got
someone pregnant fool you in this house you’ll
always be a boy and you’ll show your parents
respect are we clear?”**

**How can he defend my mother after what she
said?**

“ I won’t ask you again Buti”

“ Yes, we are clear”

“ Clear bani slima?”

“ Yes, we are clear uncle”

“ Catch”

He throws me the keys to his bakkie

“ Let’s go for a drive, you’re the one driving”

**We drive around the hood until we end up at
Embalenhle mall**

**“ Let’s go in, I’m hungry I left your father’s
house without eating because of your tantrum”**

I didn't ask him to come after me

" So where should we eat?"

We are walking inside the mall now heading to the food court, I don't have appetite but I know my uncle wont let me be

" Mugg and Bean"

" Mugg and Bean it is then"

A waiter attends to us the moment we walk through the door and leads us to a corner table next to the window, he then takes our drink orders and excuse us.

“ So why didn’t you tell me the entire story that day maybe I would have been able to help and your girlfriend wouldn’t have been raped”

I guess my father told him everything

“ I don’t know, I just didn’t think Musa would do something like this. Ndalo has already been through a lot babomncane, dealing with mom's drama is the last thing she needs right now”

“ I understand but look at it from her perspective son, to her you’re her son who’s 18 and Ndalo is this grown woman who took advantage of you.”

“ I get that but does she have to call her names? Her relationship with her parents got ruined when she broke up with Musa, then the same bastard raped her and drove us apart I can only imagine how she must have felt. Raped, threatened and alone”.

“ I understand son, I think she needs to see a professional she can't just sweep everything that happened to her under the rug and pretend it never happened she needs to deal with it so that she can be in a good emotional space to love and raise the baby”

“ Yes, you're right”

“ You’re so mature and considerate, now I see why Ndalo fell for you. You’re a good man son and I’m proud of you”

“ Thank you so much babomncane, your words mean a lot to me”.

“ Don’t let this situation get to you, focus on your final exams your father and I will deal with Musa”

“ What about mom?”

“ She loves you, I know she’ll come around give her some time this can’t be easy for her”

“ Okay”

“ You can come stay with me until the dust settles”

“ Thank you so much babomncane, you’re the best father anyone could ever ask for”

“ Thank you son, kanti kuphi lokudla”

(where’s the food)

He’s looking around the restaurant for the waiter.

When we leave the restaurant my uncle says we should go to Woolworths, I thought he wanted to buy something only to find out he brought me here to buy something for Ndalo

“ She’s your woman you know what her cravings are”

“ We just got back together uncle I don’t know what her cravings are”

“ Thatha konke ke kodwa angeke ufike lapha ulengise izandla”

(Take everything then but you can’t show up empty handed)

“ Why not?”

“ Usabuza? Eh bazokulahla wena awazi kuthi umuntu wesmame uyam’ spoiler akusi wuwe obewu tshela mina ukuthi she’s been through a lot?”

(You’re still asking, you’ll get dumped don’t you know that a woman needs to be spoiled. You were telling me she’s been through a lot just now)

“ Ndalo doesn’t mind, she knows I’m not working”

“ She didn’t mind before but now she will, she’s pregnant and pregnant women have cravings she will constantly want to eat something nice”

I know nothing about pregnant woman but he does so I guess I should take his advice, I take a shopping trolley and start filling it with goodies, from snacks to ice cream to chocolates I buy her everything I know she likes.

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NDALO

“ Ses' Ndalo why sewumhlophe? Don’t tell you’re one of those self conscious women who

bleach their skin because they are under the impression that you have to be light skinned to be beautiful, umuhle kabi nobumnyama bakho sis wami"

(Why do you look lighter) (you're so beautiful in your dark skin tone)

Anele might not be book smart but she's definitely mature and wise

" No, it's nothing like that. I'm pregnant so weight and complexion gain are some of the things that came with my pregnancy"

" You're pregnant? For who, Bhuti Musa?"

“ No, for my boyfriend”

**“ Ha Ses'Ndalo you already have another
boyfriend so soon”**

**She’s definitely judging me even though she
tries to conceal it but her facial expression says
it all.**

**I might as well tell her because she’s here now
and Sabelo will come here and they’ll obviously
see each other, this time I won’t play hide and
seek like I did when Melo was visiting**

“ Yes Anele I have a boyfriend”

“ Yo, who’s he?”

“ You remember that guy who came to the house to see me when mom beat me up?”

“ Yes, the super hot one who looks like a coloured....wait, why are you asking me about him?”

“ It’s him, he’s my boyfriend”

“ What?”

“ Yes”

I'm tired of living my life trying to please other people and thinking about what they'll say or think, I love Sabelo to hell with what anyone else says!

“ Wow, now it makes sense why he came to the house to see you and I remember how worried he was when he asked me where you were that time you were in hospital. How could you watch me crush on your man, knowing very well I'll never get him. Ah mara nawe Ses'Ndalo”

Wow, that wasn't the reaction I expected

“ So you won't judge me for dating someone who's younger than me?”

“ No, he doesn’t even look young plus he’s tall and muscular thixo!”

“ Hey watch it, that’s my man!”

“ I’m happy for you sis but I still think it’s too soon for you to already be pregnant for him”

True

“ Yes but what can I do? We plan but God decides. Everything happens for a reason, I’ve been having unprotected sex for two years with Musa but nothing happened yet once is all it

took for Sabelo to get me pregnant. It's not a mistake, God gave me this baby for a reason"

" I'm so happy for you, you look so content and happy"

" I don't just look it, I am happy"

" I'm so happy for you"

" Thanks mntasekhaya"

I guess I was wrong for thinking my sisters will judge me, if only I knew they wouldn't then I would've told them sooner.

“ Please bring me yogurt from the fridge”

“ Okay”

**I pay attention to the movie playing on TV
when she walks out of the room, the movie has
been playing for 33 minutes but I won't even
tell you what it's about because Anele and I
were talking the entire time.**

“ Sthandwa sami”

(My love)

When did he get here?

“ Baby?”

He’s standing at the door and Anele is behind him smiling none stop

“ Your sister is the one who let me in”

I look at Anele and she’s still smiling like a fool whilst looking at my man like he’s some snack.

“ Anele where’s the yogurt I asked for?”

“ Oh that, sorry sis I’ll bring it just now”

She scurries to the kitchen

“ I think your sister likes me”

**He says and lowers himself next to me and
leans in for a kiss**

“ Not here Sabelo, what if Nele sees us?”

**“ Then what? Akabazi yini abantu
abacabuzanayo?”**

(She’s never seen people kiss)

“ Come on, you know what I mean.”

“ No, I don’t”

“ You do, where are you coming from?”

“ From the mall, I bought you some sweet delicacies”

My mouth instantly waters when I think about what those delicacies might be.

“ Really?”

“ Yeah, they’re in the kitchen. My uncle was right after all”

“ About?”

“ He’s the one who said I should buy snacks for you, apparently pregnant women are always nibbling on something”

What

“ Your uncle knows about me?”

“ Yeah, my parents too”

“ And?”

“ And what?”

“ How did they take the news or they don’t know that I’m older than you?”

“ They do, they know everything even about the pregnancy”

When he told me he wanted everyone in his life to know about me I didn’t think he meant now, I thought he’ll wait until he’s done with school before telling his family.

“ Don’t look so worried babe, they took it better than we thought except for my mom”

Anele walks in disturbing us

She gives me the tub of yogurt and a spoon

“ And then?”

**I ask when she stands rooted on her spot
looking at Sabelo with a big smile on her face**

“ So Sis won't you officially introduce us?”

“ Anele musa ukuphapha tu, angiyena untanga”

(Stop being forward, I'm not your age mate)

“ I'm sorry, I'll be in my room”

“ Sthandwa sami you didn't have to be so rude, you can't blame her you were exactly like that when you saw me for the first time”

Amanga!

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#30

I'm in my room packing my clothes inside my duffel bag while Sphe is sitting on my bed watching me pack

“ So you're going to be a father huh?”

“ Yeah”

“ And how do you feel about that?”

“ To be quite honest I'm scared and overwhelmed but a big part of me is happy excited even, I'm going to have a baby with the woman I love”

“ Ncoah you really love her ne?”

“ I do Sphe, I love her so much. I love my baby too I know I haven’t met him yet but I already love him so much.”

“ I know initially I was against your relationship but you guys are just so cute, the way you love each other it’s beautiful to witness”

“ Thank you”

“ Don’t worry mom loves you and she’ll come around, give her time this can’t be easy on her”

“ Yeah I love her too that’s why I need to move out for some time, I don’t want to end up hating my mother Sphe because it’ll get there if I keep hearing the things she says about my girlfriend and my unborn baby”

The things my mother says about Ndalo and the baby are heart breaking shem

“ Eish, I hope you guys resolve this soon. Home wont be the same without you”

“ Don’t worry I’ll be back before you know it”

“ Study for your exams and pass, you have a baby on the way do this for him/her”

“ Don’t worry I’ll do my best”

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At this day and age living without a phone is hard if not impossible so my uncle got me a phone, it’s a Redmi 9A I know right from iPhone to Redmi how the mighty have fallen! But what can I say I’m the one who hauled my phone against the wall at least I can WhatsApp and call my girlfriend anytime I want now and that’s all I’m grateful for.

My uncle is here to fetch me, I’m going to stay with him for a couple of days until the dust

settles. My mother didn't say anything or ask where I'm going when she saw me with the bags that hurt I don't want to lie, I love my mother and I hate how things are between us currently I really hope she comes around soon.

" If it was up to me you wouldn't leave but I understand where you're coming from, study and ace your exams I will talk to your mother she'll come around"

" Thanks babami"

" Don't worry zalo I'll take good care of your son and make sure he studies"

“ Ngiyabonga mtaka baba”

(Thank you brother)

“ Bye, better half" Sphe

**Her eyes are shimmering with tears you'd
swear I'm leaving the country with the way
she's acting.**

“ Come here muhle wasekhaya"

(My beautiful sibling)

**She throws herself in my arms and I hold her
tightly, only God knows how much I love her.**

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NDALO

Sabelo told me his parents want to get in touch with mine so they can pay for damages so that the baby takes his surname when it's born, I'm not ready to tell my parents about the pregnancy because I know how much they'll judge me for getting pregnant before marriage but I have no choice but to do it.

Anele is going back home today and since I'm accompanying her I'll use the opportunity to tell my parents about my pregnancy and the

damages, I hope for once my parents will put me first and do what's best for me as their daughter without worrying about what other people will say

“ I can't believe it's already been a week, I enjoyed my stay here can I come visit again when school closes for December holidays?”

I love having Anele around but I hate how she looks at Sabelo everytime he's around, she always undresses him with her eyes I don't want to end up fighting with my sister because of a man so maybe it's best she doesn't visit.

“ I don't know about that Anele, I don't like how you look at my boyfriend everytime he's

here. It's like you're undressing him with your eyes and the comments you make about him are inappropriate, I used to think you're joking but I'm not so sure anymore"

" I'm sorry I didn't even realise I was making you feel like that, honestly I'm over the silly crush I had on your boyfriend. It's not like he'd look at me twice anyway, that guy only has eyes for you"

" I'm not the only one who feels like that, he also picked it up and he doesn't like it. If he hasn't said anything yet it's because he respects you as my sister"

“ I’m sorry for making the both of you uncomfortable, I promise I’ll change”.

“Okay let’s go, you packed everything right?”

“ Yes”

I don’t know if it’s my imagination but I feel like my stomach grows bigger the more people I tell about my pregnancy, that’s why I’ve resorted to wearing summer dresses nowadays at least the batiste fabric doesn’t hug my belly like most of my clothes do.

The uber just dropped us at the gate, it feels like years since I’ve been here even though not

much has changed. MaMphuthi, our neighbour stops sweeping her yard, drops her broom to the ground and walks towards the fence when she sees me walk through the gate.

“ Ndalo is that you my child?”

How I wish I can ignore her rhetorical question right now but I can't because I wasn't raised like that so I put on the biggest fake smile I can master and approach the fence to greet her.

“ Yebo ma, it's me”

“ You look so beautiful, where do you stay now I haven't seen you in ages?”

“ In town ma”

“ Wow, that’s good I’m happy for you my child if only Nonka was like you and went to school instead of making endless fatherless children.”

“ Uhm..”

How does one respond to this mara?

“ Can you believe she’s pregnant with her third child? Ai mina angisazi shem”

(I don’t know anymore)

Nonka is my age, we grew up together and used to play together as kids but I wouldn't say we were friends or anything like that.

" Ses' Ndalo dad is calling you inside"

Nele says rescuing me from the rather uncomfortable conversation

" Go on my child, it was nice seeing you again Ndalo. Your parents are so blessed to have a daughter like you, you're a good role model to your sisters"

" Thank you ma"

I say and scurry to the house, yerr that was uncomfortable. I wonder what she'll say when she finds out that I'm not as perfect as she thinks I am

“ Thank you”

“ No problem, Mangobhozi that one I know her”.

We laugh

The moment I've been dreading for the entire day is finally here, I'm so scared I can literally hear my heart beating I am so not ready to do this but I have no choice I must do it sooner or

later so might as well do it now and get it over
and done with.

“ Sanibonani ekhaya”

(Greetings)

“ Sawubona Buhle mtwanami”

(Greetings my child)

Dad says with a big smile on his face

“ Yebo kunjani Buhle” Mom

(How are you)

“ I’m good ma”

Anele greets my parents and excuses herself, to give us privacy I assume since she knows what I want to tell my parents.

“ I cooked sunday koos should I plate for you?”

“ Yes, please ma”.

I'm not really hungry but I miss my mother's cooking, ngiyapheka nami kodwa angifiki ku Lilian shem (I can cook but I don't match up to my mother)

“ Okay my child”

She stands up and walks to the kitchen.

**Fortunately pregnancy isn't showing me
flames, I still eat everything I used to eat before
I fell pregnant it only tampered with my moods,
weight and complexion.**

**“ How was Anele, I hope she didn't give you a
hard time”**

**Anele is dad's favourite I know this past week
without her must've been really tough on him**

“ No, I can handle her”

**“ Ok my child, ngiyabona ukusebenza
kuyakuthanda bheka umuhle kanjani ugcwele
uze umhlophe”**

**(I see having a job agrees with you, look how
beautiful you are. You even gained weight and
complexion)**

**My mother walks in with my plate before I can
reply, my stomach instantly grumbles at the
sight of the food I cannot wait to indulge yo.**

“ Thank you ma”

I dig in after blessing the food

“ Buhle my child I’m sorry for everything I did to you, for beating you up and forcing you to get married to Musa I’m really sorry my child please forgive me”

“ It’s okay ma I forgive you”

“ Why didn’t you tell me Musa was doing all of that to you?”

Like she would’ve listened to me if did

“ I wanted to ma but you were not willing to hear me out”

“ I’m sorry once again, we used to be so close I would like us to work on our relationship I hate this distance between us”

I hate it too

“ I want that two ma but there’s something I need to tell you and dad first”

“ Sounds serious”

“ It is ma”

“ Go ahead my child, we are listening” Dad

“ I’m pregnant”

**I say and fix my gaze on my plate, I cannot
bring myself to look at their faces because I
know I won’t like what I see on them**

“ Who is the father, is it Musa?”

**I can tell he’s trying so hard not to raise his
voice**

“ No dad, it’s Sabelo Meyiwa”

“ Who’s that?”

Mom says in a high pitched tone unable to conceal her disappointment or is it anger?

“ My boyfriend”

“ Boyfriend? You already have another boyfriend so soon after you broke up with Musa? Where’s your self respect Buhle?”

“ I’m sorry ma”

“ Nyorry! it’s not even six months since you broke up with your long time boyfriend but you’re already pregnant for someone else. Is he the reason why you didn’t want to get married to Musa anymore?”

**So I guess we're just going to forget everything
Musa did including cheating on me with my
friends**

**“ No, I broke up with him because I fell out of
love”**

**“ Wow, uhlushwa yilokufuna ukuthanda indoda
your job as a woman is to respect leave the
love duty to the man”**

(your problem is that you want to love a man)

**“ I was never going to be happy with Musa ma,
he was controlling, manipulative and a
cheater!”**

“ Show me a man who doesn’t cheat?”

Does this mean my dad also cheats?

“ Mama why did you apologize?”

“ Huh?”

I can see my question caught her off guard, she wasn’t expecting it.

“ Why did you apologize because you don’t see anything wrong with what you did. Clearly you

still blame me for how things turned out with
Musa"

" No, it's not that I just think you should have
given Musa a chance"

Wow!

" Why?"

" Because at least he loved and respected you
unlike your boyfriend who couldn't wait to bed
you and impregnate you, is he even born again.
Does his family know the lord, the last thing
you want to do is to have a baby with someone
who is from a family that worships ancestors!"

“ Wow, I can’t believe you right now. Why do you love Musa so much ma? Musa is the biggest asshole I’ve ever met, did you know that your precious Musa held me against my will and raped me! Not only that the bastard recorded the entire thing and sent it to my boyfriend!!”

For the first time in my life I’m shouting at my mother

“ He did what?”

My father asks with anger written all over his face

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#31

“ Khuluma Ndalo uthi lo satan wenzeni!”

(Talk, you say that devil did what?)

“ He raped me baba”

I say and burst into tears

Within a blink of an eye I'm swaddled in my
mother's embrace wetting her top with my
tears

" I won't let him get away with this, he got
away with a lot in the past but not this time
around"

He says pacing the lounge in anger

" I'm sorry my love please forgive me"

My mother says rubbing my back soothingly

" We must get him arrested" Dad

**My father's statement has me raising my head
from my mother's bosom**

" No baba, you can't get him arrested"

**Both him and my mother look at me in
confusion**

" Why not?"

They say at the same time

**" He has something on me, if I report him I'll
lose my job "**

“ What does he have against you?” Mom

“ Stop twiddling your thumbs and tell us what that bastard knows!”

My father bellows in anger, I swear I can see smoke come out from his ears yeah that’s how angry he is.

“ He know..”

I tell them the entire story, I have my head down the entire time I only raise my head up when I’m done narrating the entire story and

**the look on both their faces has me feeling like
the worst sinner on earth.**

“ Angazi ngithini mina Ndalo”

(I don't know what to say)

My father says sounding defeated

**“ I never meant for it to happen I swear it just
happened”**

**“ Yilo mbovana weza la azokufuna that time
you were in hospital?”**

**(Is it that light skinned guy who came looking
for you here)**

“ Yebo ma”

(Yes)

She claps her hands and folds her arms to her chest looking speechless

“ Pray his family doesn’t get you arrested because I know if it was my son I would get you arrested, yimbi lento oyenzile Ndalo sies uvulela ingane encane amathanga”

(What you did is wrong opening your thighs for a small boy)

Dad says clearly disgusted by the mere thought of me with someone younger than me

“ They know and they want to pay damages for my baby”

“ Waze wasifaka ehlazweni Buhlebendalo awungtshele ngiyobabhekelwa ubani abantu, kona ngizohamba kanjani emgwagcweni emva kwalento oyenzile?”

(You have shamed our family, how will I look at people after what you’ve done. How will I even walk in the streets without feeling ashamed after what you did)

Mom adds

It's been an hour since I came back from my parent's house and I've been crying ever since, the things they said to me broke my heart to shreds it shouldn't hurt because I know how they are but I guess I expected them to put me first for once. I don't even want to think about what other people will say when they find out about this if my own parents are the one's who are judging me and calling me names.

I have an incoming call it's Sabelo so I quickly wipe my tears and clear my throat before I take his call

“ Love”

“ What's wrong?”

“ Nothing why?”

“ Don’t lie to me Ndalo I can hear you’ve been crying, who made you cry?”

“ It’s nothing I swear just my hormones baby, your baby is making me emotional”

I say trying to pull off a cheerful tone

“ Let’s video call then”

“ Why?”

“ I want to see your face”

He ends the call before I even reply

**“ Why are you crying and don’t even think of
lying to me”**

He says the moment I answer his video call

“ It’s nothing hectic, it’s silly”

“ Tell me about it then”

“ I told my parents about us and they didn’t take it well, they said some really hurtful things to me”

“ I’m sorry my love, give them time they’ll see that you and I love each other then they will have no choice but to accept our relationship”

I doubt it

“ I hope so”

“ Stop crying, you’ll upset our little miracle”

I can’t help but smile, I still cant believe how fast he accepted this pregnancy.

“ Okay I’ll stop”

“ I love you sthandwa sam, it won’t be easy a lot of people are going to be against us but I will never let you go no matter what.”

“ Thanks my love I guess I needed to hear that”

“ Ngiyakuthanda Buhlebendalo Khumalo, you’re my chosen one inhliziyo yami eyakho sthandwa sam no one and nothing will ever change that. I know you and everyone thinks that I’m still young to be sure of my love for you, you think I’ll meet someone better and forget about you but that will never happen

because only I know how much I love you and I don't think I'll ever stop".

I'm in tears

“ Love knows no age, no colour or bank balance. When you truly love someone none of that matters, I don't see an older woman when I look at you I see the woman my heart beats for. The mother of my unborn child, my happiness, my smile keeper and someone I want to grow old with.”

“ Sabelo please stop”

**Tears won't stop rolling down my cheeks gosh
I'm such a cry baby**

**“ No, I want you to understand how much I
love you Ndalo maybe then you'll stop letting
other people's opinions get to you.”**

“ I love you too baby”

**“Stop worrying about what everyone else says
or thinks about our relationship, the only thing
that should matter to you is the love we feel for
each other”**

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NARRATED

According to google VW is the first on the list of the ten most hijacked cars in South Africa so anyone who owns a VW is at a higher risk of being hijacked than the people who don't but Musa didn't allow all of that to stop him from buying his favorite car-a VW polo tsi, he loves the car and has been driving it for two years now sometimes it's late at night like today since he got held up at work and nothing has happened to him well up until now. A Toyota double cab bakkie just parked in front of his car blocking his way and two tall men step out of the bakkie, they have guns pointed at him as they approach his car.

“ Move to the passenger seat”

Ntsika commands

Terrified and scared for his life Musa doesn't ask questions he does as they ask with his hands raised in the air as a sign of his compliance.

“ You can take the car but please don't hurt me”

He beseechs with glassy eyes when Ntsika gets inside the car, the brothers look at each other and laugh at his expense.

“ I didn’t expect so much wimpiness from a man who rapes and threatens helpless women zalo” Ntsika

Rape? They must be mistaking him for someone else, he’s never raped anyone in his life!

**“ I'm not surprised I knew he was weak, only a weak man can force himself on a woman”
Brandon**

“ No, no! You definitely have the wrong guy bo baba I’m a Christian I would nev..”

A blow on his jaw cuts him short

“ Shut the fuck up! Zalo get in the car”

Brandon takes the sjambok from the bakkie and locks it before getting inside the tsi.

They've been on the road for a while now, Ntsika is the one driving while Brandon has a gun pointed at him. He realized that this is not a hijacking like he initially thought it's personal these men want to settle a score with him- they believe he raped someone. He's been praying since the car started moving, asking God to spare his life he can't be punished for something he didn't do.

“ Phuma!”

(Get out)

It’s only now that he realizes that the car has stopped moving.

“ I’m sorry, please forgive me for whatever you think I did”

He’s pleading with his hands clasped together and trembling in fear.

“ Yewena ngithe phuma la, angina skhathi phuma”

(I said get out, you're wasting my time get out)

After that jaw numbing blow Ntsika gave him he has no choice but to step out of the car, he notices that they're parked in a middle of bushes and weeds he doesn't know where they are and it doesn't help that he can't see anything from here it's dark making the car's headlights and the big Olight marauder torch Ntsika has in his hands their only source of light.

“ Khumula!”

(Undress)

“ What? No please!”

He's on his knees begging but his pleas fall on deaf ears because he gets a kick on the butt instead of sympathy he was hoping for

" Didn't you hear what he said? Take your clothes off" Brandon

The man's voice is low but it somehow sends shivers down Musa's spine, unlike Ntsika this one doesn't talk much he's a man of action the kick Musa got on his butt proves it so Musa stands on his feet and starts peeling off his clothes while bawling his eyes out like a little b*tch

“ Lose the boxer as well”

“ No, please don’t do this to me”

He’s back to begging again

“ When will you realize that you’ve got no choice but to do as we say? To be quite honest I’m disappointed for someone who rapes and threatens helpless women I thought you’d have more guts and be more daring you know”

Ntsika says, he’s getting annoyed. It’s sickening to watch a man beg so much, isn’t this the same man who forced himself on a pregnant woman? Let him own up!

They expected a challenge, him to fight back and make this more interesting by being a worthy opponent but not Musa all he does is weep and plead for his life its disappointing really!

“ That’s the thing you have the wrong guy, I would never rape or threaten anyone I was born and raised in church I’m not the guy you think I am. Please let me go this is nothing but a misunderstanding”

“ So you’re not Musawenkosi Sibisi? The same one who took Buhlebendalo Khumalo against her will then you raped her, filmed the whole

thing and threatened to report her if she ever reports you or goes back to her boyfriend?”

Ntsika asks

His eyes are wide open in shock, he was sure these people have the wrong guy but now it's clear that it's him they want! How will he get himself out of this one? Damn you Ndalo

“ Cat got your tongue?”

“ I don't know what Ndalo told you but she lied, I never raped her. She slept with me willingly, she came onto me matter of fact. Don't be fooled by her innocent looks that girl

is a pathological liar, why do you think her parents turned their backs on her? That girl is nothing but trouble, I don't know how you know her but I promise she's not who you think she is!"

He's grasping at straws here it's clear these men won't believe him but it wouldn't hurt to try right

“ Zalo why are you even talking to this fool? Get the sjambok from the car wena take off your boxers akusheshwe!”

(Hurry)

The brothers laugh until they have tears rolling down their cheeks at the sight of his manhood.

“ Yini yona le?”

(What’s this)

Ntsika says flashing the torch on Musa’s manhood.

When the laughter ceases the two take turns whipping Musa’s manhood with a sjambok, it looks red and swollen now. His face has dried up tears now, he cried and begged them to stop but they didn’t. His hands are equally swollen, they got whipped everytime he tried to cover his shaft with them.

How can these people do something so inhumane?

His eyes pop out from their sockets when Ntsika walks towards him carrying an axe in his hands, after the painful 'dick whipping' he thought they were done but clearly he thought wrong.

“ Put your hands on the ground”

“ What are you going to do?”

“ I'm going to chop them off because clearly you cant keep them to yourself, you're a man

of God then I'm sure you know Matthew 5
verse 30 but I will gladly recite it to you ' if
your right hand causes you to stumble cut it off
and throw it away, it is better to lose one part
of your body than for all of it to go to hell'.
Take this as a favour.. we are helping you here,
you're a good person but your hands have
made you sin so I'm cutting them off to stop
you from committing more sins"

“ No, please. Don't this I'm begging you!”

“ This has dragged on way too long, give me
the axe and hold him down Ntsika"

Ntsika does as instructed

For a minute there Musa thought they were joking and they wouldn't actually cut off his hands and only said they would to scare him but they weren't joking, he's bleeding profusely after both his hands were cut off from his arms. He's never felt so much pain in his life, he thought he knew what cruel was until he met these men- they have completely redefined the word!.

He's never wished for death like he's doing now, he would give anything to be dead now and not feel this unbearable pain and mortification but that's nothing but a far fetched dream because those evil men had the audacity to admit him at the hospital after their

brutal assault and claimed to have found him on the side of the road looking like that, you must be wondering why he hasn't said anything yet well he can't because his hands were not the only body part that was cut off, His tongue also fell victim to Ntsika and Brandon's wrath!.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#32

“ Wow!”

That's all I can say after seeing the Oscar award winning performance my uncle and father put on national Television, apparently they are the good Samaritans who 'found a bleeding Musa next to the road and rushed him to the hospital' but I know that's bullshit, I don't know how I feel about this whole thing I hate Musa and I wanted him to be punished for what he did but this...this is something else.

I don't know how the media found out about Musa but what happened to him is all over the news.

“ My big brother and I will cooperate and help the police to find the person who is behind this monstrous act”

Can you believe my uncle? Do I even know these people.

I switch off the TV screen I can't take anymore of their pretense.

“ Hey, I was watching that”

Khethelo whines

Khethelo is my uncle's daughter, she's two years older than Sphe and I.

“ That’s boring let’s watch something else”

“ Boring? There’s nothing boring there, baba and babomkhulu are practically heroes”

Yes, that’s what everyone on social media is calling them. Heroes!

“ Ok I’ll be in my room then”

“ Urg so moody, you’d swear you’re the one pregnant not your girlfriend”

“ Whatever!”

I say and head to 'my room' my phone rings
when I walk through the door, It's Ndalo.

“ Sthandwa sam”

“ Was it you?”

“ Was it me who did what?”

“ The one who cut off Musa's hands and
tongue”

“ What? I'd never do something like that”

“ Yeah right I believe you”

The sarcasm in her voice is hard to miss

“ It wasn’t me I swear”

“ You’re lying Sabelo, when you told me Musa would pay I never imagined it was something like this. You’re so evil Sabelo”

She sounds disgusted by me

“ No, no believe me Ndoni yami it wasn’t me”

I say desperate for her to believe me

I check my phone when she doesn't reply and that's when I realize that she dropped the call on me.

What have my fathers done!

“ I'm sorry son but he was never going to let you guys be, he had to be stopped”

My father nonchalantly says

“ Couldn't you find another way to do it ?”

“ Like how?”

**My uncle asks and they both gaze at me
expectedly**

“ I don’t know but there must be another way”

“ Unfortunately there’s none and it’s done”

Uncle

**They came back a few minutes ago and I
confronted them the moment they walked
through the door.**

“ Don’t tell Ndalo about this, she’ll think we are bad people” Uncle

But aren’t they bad?

“ We don’t care what she thinks of us but it wont be good for you if she learns what lengths your family is willing to go to protect their own”

My father adds

“ It’s already too late, she’s angry at me because she thinks I’m the one who did this”

“ You didn’t do it and she’ll realize you’re telling the truth well that’s if she knows you well enough to know when you’re telling the truth” Uncle

I hope so because I’ve never lied to her in the past

“ I’ll do that but I still think you guys went a bit too far”

“ Who is guys to you mawune ncondo?”

My uncle barks

“ I’m sorry”

“ I’m leaving, I’ll see you zalo.”

My father says and stands on his feet

“ Come back home after your exams, your mother is finally open to the idea of meeting Ndalo”

I don’t know if there’s still a Ndalo to meet

“ Thanks dad but I don’t think she’ll want to come, she sounded very angry on the phone earlier”

“ Nonsense, what happened to Musa must’ve shocked her. I’m sure she’ll come around soon”

I hope my uncle is right.

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NDALO

After the rape I wanted Musa to pay, I would’ve paid millions to see him helpless but what happened to him is cruel as evil as he is he doesn’t deserve this. I cant begin to imagine how he must feel without hands or a tongue, so basically he can’t speak nor write then how will

he communicate with other people? Yo shem
whoever did this to him is cruel and something
tells me Sabelo had something to do with this.

I'm on video call with Melo, she called me the
moment she saw the news.

“ So you think it's him?”.

“ Who else can do something like this?”

“ I don't think it was him, didn't you say you
told baba too it could be him”

No, my father would never do something so inhumane. The worst he would've done would be to beat him into a pulp that's all

“ No, dad wouldn't do something like this”

“ And Sabelo would? Come on Ndalo Sabelo is only 18, you're giving him too much credit”

“ You think so?”

“ I know so, at least that bastard will never mess with you again”

“ But I cant help but feel sorry for him, how will he live without hands and his tongue?”

**“ He’ll get those artificial one’s impilo iqhubeke
as for tongue I guess he’ll have to forget about
ever talking again, and it’s not like he spoke
sense anyway!”**

(life will go on)

I cant believe how lightly she’s taking this

**“ I feel so sorry for him shem, I wonder how his
family must be feeling”**

**“ Bazaba strong angisho they failed to
reprimand their son when he did wrong.”**

“ Yo”

“ Enough about handless Musa how’s my nephew doing?”

“ Good just craving braaid chicken feet and gizzards”

She laughs

“ Yo you’re in trouble shem”

“ I know eish, I finally told your parents about the pregnancy”

“ And how did they take it?”

“ You should’ve heard the things they said to me Melo they were so hardcore and brutal”

“ I’m sorry love but at least they know now”

“ Yeah”

“ What’s the next step?”

“ Damages”

“ Good luck you’ll need it”

“ Thanks ubuya nini?”

(When are you coming back)

“ Soon”

“ Ok love good luck on your exams”

“ Thanks, talk to Sabelo stop acting crazy he didn't do this to Musa and even if he did it was all for you”

“ But it's too extreme, if he's capable of doing this what will he do to me should I make him angry in the future?”

“ Stop overthinking, it wasn’t him but whoever it was did an excellent job Musa was a nuisance”

“ Wow, it’s your lack of compassion for me!”

“ Not all of us are forgiving like you Ses’Ndalo, I feel nothing for Musa nothing at all”.

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MUSA

I heard the doctor tell my parents it was only by the grace of God that I survived considering how much blood I’ve lost, my mother has been

praying thanking God for sparing my life and I couldn't be more annoyed after everything that happened to me she still believes there's God? Where was he when those men brutally assaulted and stripped me off my pride and dignity? Want to know what's worse- it's having to watch them receive all the praise for 'saving me', they are made to look like heroes when in fact they're the perpetrators who did this to me.

I have no choice but to watch because there's nothing I can do about it and that's exactly what they wanted " Death will be too easy for you, you deserve to live a long miserable life for what you did to Ndalo" that's what they said when they drove me to the hospital, I don't

want to live anymore but those bastards made sure I can't take my life even if I wanted to how can I do that without hands? I can't even tell someone else to help me do it because I will never be able to talk again. I regret the day my path crossed with Ndalo's, I should've stayed away look at what loving her led me to.

What kind of life am I going to live if I can't communicate? I might as well forget about my job, Thuli and about ever being a pastor there's no way I'm keeping my job or my girlfriend after this- how will I do that without hands and a tongue, it wouldn't make sense honestly! I have no choice but to pray for my death to come sooner rather than later while everyone lives their lives to the fullest, I have a lonely

**and miserable journey ahead of me all because
of Ndalo I curse the day our paths crossed.**

“ He’s awake babakhe”

Mom says to my dad and rushes to my bedside.

**“ Let me go look for the doctor, he said he was
stable maybe he’ll discharge him.”**

My father says and walks out

“ Oh my poor son”

Her eyes well up with tears when our eyes lock

**“ I’m sorry you had to go through all of this,
God will surely punish whoever did this to you”**

**I can’t help but bawl my eyes when I think
about how much my life has changed in a blink
of an eye, I wish for all of this to be nothing but
a terrible nightmare this can’t be my life how
do I go on like this?**

“ Please don’t cry my son, it’s going to be okay”

**She’s wiping my tears with her soft thumbs but
my tears are relentless they keep falling
causing my mom breaks into tears, she lays
her head on my chest and cries her heart out.**

She wipes both our tears when we both calm down, pulls a chair and lowers herself next to me.

“ Look who I ran into when on my way to look for the doctor”

My father says walking inside my ward, a frown instantly covers his face he sees my mother’s face

“ What’s wrong my love?”

He brisk walks to her side and pulls her to his broad arms

“ Maybe I should come back another time”

That voice!

I face his direction to confirm what I already know, I honestly cant believe the nerve of this guy!

“ No Mr Meyiwa you don’t have to leave, thank you once again for what you and your brother did. You saved our son's life”

My father says

The respect in his voice when he talks to the man you’d swear he’s deputy Jesus.

He's dressed in black pants, a white crisp shirt and black loafers I can tell he's well off from the watch and clothes he's wearing. Not to mention his expensive cologne that filled the entire ward the moment he walked inside. He looks nothing like the heartless bastard he is, he looks like a humble and respectable man, no one would suspect him of doing anything like this. I guess that's why it was easy for everyone to believe that him and his brother are the ones who 'saved me'.

" No need to thank me ma, I did what anyone would've done in my place. I thought I should come check on him and see how he's doing"

I can't believe this, has he no conscience?

" No need to explain Mr Meyiwa"

Mom says and turns to me

" Son, this is Mr Meyiwa one of the men who saved your life. Come closer sir"

**The bastard walks towards my bed smiling like
Cheshire cat**

**" Hey son, how are you doing I brought you
fruits"**

He says showing me a basket of fruits in his hands

If this isn't torture then I don't know what is!

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#33

“ That was kind of you thank you so much Mr Meyiwa but unfortunately Musa can't eat through his mouth, a large part of his tongue

was cut off and he had surgery so he only eats through a gastrostomy feeding tube"

My mother says accepting the basket from Meyiwa's hands.

“ Oh I’m sorry I guess you and your husband will help yourselves then”

“ Thank you”

“ I'm sorry once again ma'am I didn't mean to be insensitive, I honestly had no idea”

The man says and smirks at me when my parents are not looking.

“ You don’t have to be sorry sir, you’re a good man may the lord bless you abundantly”

“ Thank you so much ma'am, now that I’ve seen you son I think I should take my leave now. It’s a pity you can’t eat the fruits I brought you”

Then he winks at me

Talk about kicking a dog when it’s down!

“ Thanks for coming Ndoda yamadoda I’ll escort you to your car”

My father says

“ I’d appreciate that, goodbye Mrs Sibisi”

“ Goodbye sir”

**Mom stares with a smile on her face as the man
and my father walk out of the ward**

“ He’s a good man”

If only you knew mother!

**I wonder how Ndalo got herself mixed up with
these people, does she know how heartless**

they are? Today it might be me but I know tomorrow it'll definitely be her people like them can't be trusted and I can't wait for the day they'll turn on her.

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NDALO

A persistent knock on the door pulls me from my sleep, I wonder who's knocking at my door at this hour. I hate being woken up from my sleep, I'm so annoyed right now the person better have a good reason for waking me up from my sleep or else.

“ I’m coming!”

I yell when the knocking persists

“ What are you doing here?”

**That’s the first thing I say when I see who’s
behind the door.**

“ To see my girlfriend”

**“ Did you have to come at this hour of the night
Sabelo?”**

“ If you answered my calls then the wouldn’t be a need for me to come at this time”

“ Get in”

I say and blow out a heavy sigh

He gets in, locks the door and follows me to my bedroom

“ So tell me what’s your problem, why are you ignoring my calls?”

“ Are you seriously asking me that after what you did to Musa?”

“ I don’t know what’s worse between the fact that you are accusing me of such a despicable thing or that you’re angry at me because of your fucken ex!”

“ Don’t talk to me like that!”

“ How do you expect me to talk to you then huh? I came here with the intention to apologize but why do I need to apologize, I did nothing wrong.”

“ You don’t see anything wrong with cutting of someone’s hands and tongue wow!”

“ I don’t know how many times I should tell you this, it wasn’t me I didn’t cut off your precious ex's hands but whoever it was did me a huge favour at least now I know what you think of me”

“ What is that supposed to mean Sabelo?”

“ Nothing, I’m sorry I woke you up from your sleep. Goodnight”

He says then head towards the door, oh my goodness what have I done! I can’t let him leave like this so I trudge behind him and grab his hand

“ I'm sorry please don't leave”

I say pleadingly

“ Tell me why I shouldn't leave when the person who supposed to be my girlfriend thinks the worst of me”

His words are laced with pain

“ I'm sorry but I don't know what to think, you promised to make Musa pay and then this happens to him..I'm sorry but I didn't know what to believe”

“ But I told you it wasn’t me, isn’t my word good enough?”

“ It is”

“ No It’s not, if it was then you would have believed me when I told you it wasn’t me like I believed you when you told me the baby was mine, I had every reason to think otherwise but I chose to believe you because I trust you and I know you’d never lie to me”

If he’s saying all of this to make me feel bad then he has definitely succeeded, I feel like sh*t

“ I’m sorry”

“ It’s okay, get back to bed I’ll lock up”

“ Babe I’m sorry please don’t leave, spend the night with me. Please muntuwami”

(My person)

He doesn’t reply so I stand in front of him and look into his eyes, my heart breaks when I see the pain his eyes hold.

“ I’m so sorry please forgive me babe”

I’m on standing on my tip toes cradling his face in my palms and planting wet kisses all over his face.

“ It’s okay, I’ll spend the night”

I know it’s not okay, I can see it on his face.

“ Come let’s get you to bed”

**He whisks me off my feet and carries me to bed
and tucks me in**

“ I’m really sorry sthandwa sam”

**I’m sleeping on my side watching him undress
and I can’t help but apologize again, I feel
terrible.**

“ I said it’s fine my love stop apologizing it’s okay”

He gets in bed and pulls me to his chest and plants kisses on the top of my head. I wrap my arms and legs around him and sink in his arms, his arms always feel like home.

“ Do you still love Musa?”

He says out of the blue

“ What?”

“ Do you feel something for him?, I’m asking because of the way you were so angry at me when you thought I had something to do with what happened to him”

“ No I feel nothing for Musa, you’re the only one I love but thinking you were capable of doing that somehow scared me”

“ You sure it’s only that?”

Good job Ndalo now he doubts your feelings for him

“ Yes, I’m sure. I feel nothing for Musa. I love you with all of my heart Sabelo, you need to believe that”

“ I do, come on let’s sleep it’s late”

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NARRATED

Mathapelo is sitting in front of the mirror applying her ponds age miracle night cream on her face when her husband walks in from the bedroom with a towel around his waist, he’s so sexy for a man in his late forties if it was any

other day she would be drooling over his chiselled abs but not tonight when she has so much on her mind.

“ Ok what’s wrong my wife would be begging me to fuck her by now”

Brandon says when he doesn’t get the reaction he wanted after prancing half naked in front of his wife

“ It’s hard for me to accept that my son is in love with someone who’s 7 years older than him Brandon, was it me didn’t I give him enough motherly love that he went to seek it in the arms of a woman older than him?”

A sharp pain shoots in Brandon's heart, he kneels before her and takes her hands into his. He can't stand the sadness in her eyes

“ You're a perfect mother, our twins are lucky to have a mother like you and they know it”

She may be strict at times but she's a good mother to both her children that's not questionable

“ Then why did my son fall for someone older than him, isn't it most young girls who date elder men usually do it because they never knew a father's love?”

“ Mama wabantwana bami our son knows that you love him and he loves you so much more, I know it’s not ideal but he truly loves Ndalo and his attraction towards her is not motherly he loves her just like any men loves a woman”

(Mother of my kids)

“ But why her, she’s so much older than her why not someone his age?”

“ I don’t have the answers but love is love it doesn’t know age, nor race or bank balance his heart chose her and hers did the same with him”

“ You think she loves him too?”

“ Yes she does, why else would she put her job at risk for someone she doesn't feel strongly about?”

“ Eish”

“ I know this is hard on you but please give her a chance, our son loves her and he's a wise young man there must be something special about her for him to love her that much”

“ I will try”

“ That’s all I ask, who knows maybe you’ll see what he sees in her but honestly she sounds like a good person.”

“ Wu awusamkhulumeli!”

(The way you’re speaking for her)

They both laugh

“ Have you met her yet?”

She asks when the laughter ceases

“ No, not yet. But from what he told me about her she sounds like a nice person”

“ What did he tell you about her?”

He looks at her with a quirked eyebrow

**“ What? She’s the mother of my grand child I
have every right to want to know about her”**

**“ Did you just say your grandchild? Does that
mean you believe the baby is Sabelo’s?”**

“ I didn’t say that”

“ Hmm, so what do you want to know?”

“ Everything”

“ First let’s get in bed then I’ll tell you while eating you up”

Mathapelo’s cheeks turn crimson, trust her husband to say that

“ And she’s still shy after all these years, aw tshitshi lami madoda”

(My virgin)

Yes, she was a virgin when they started dating. Brandon is the first and only man she’s ever been with.

“ Baby man, stop it”

“ What?”

He lifts her up bridal style and gently lays her on top of the bed before taking off her night dress and settling between her legs

“ So mama wezingane zami uthi ufuna ukwazini ngo Ndalo”

(Mother of my children what do you want to know about Ndalo)

He says and puts her nipple in his mouth causing her body to tremble

“ Ye?”

**He asks and dips his finger inside her wetness
causing a moan to break out of her lips**

“ Aaaaah”

She cries out in pleasure

“ Huh? Angizwa my liefde”

(I didn't hear you my love)

**He's doing her so good that she doesn't know
what to do with herself, it's been over 35 years**

**with this man and she'd still choose him over
and over again.**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#34

**When I open my eyes I find Sabelo starring at
me**

“ Hey”

“ Good morning sthandwa sam”

He holds the back of my neck and sucks on my lips, I can't help but moan in his mouth damn it the kid can kiss!

“ What's wrong?” I ask

I don't like the way he's been gazing at me since the moment I woke up

“ Nothing, I'm just wondering if you know how much I love you”

“ I know, I love you too”

“ Hmm”

He’s acting strange, I wonder.

“ My parents want you to come over for lunch”

**My heart rate instantly increases at the thought
of meeting his parents**

“ What?”

**“ Yes, don’t worry you still have time. I’m only
going back home after my exams”**

Speaking of that, I never asked him why he moved out.

“ Why did you move out in the first place?”

“ It’s nothing you should worry your pretty self about, you’ll come right?”

Do I have a choice?

“ Yes, I’ll come”

“ Thanks my love”

He plants a peck on my forehead

“ Don’t worry no one will say anything to you, at least not in my presence I won’t let anyone disrespect you sthandwa sam”

At least that’s comforting but I wouldn’t want him to disrespect his parents because of me

“ No, you don’t have to defend me. I’m a big girl I can handle the heat”

He laughs

What?

“ Did I say anything funny?”

“ No, don't mind me sthandwa sam.”

**He gets off bed and wears his boxer shorts, yes
he still sleeps naked.**

“ Where are you going?”

**“ To make you breakfast, I need to go back to
my uncle's to study I'm writing tomorrow”**

**“ I'm sorry, I shouldn't have asked you to
spend the night”**

I would never forgive myself if he ends up not doing well in his exam because of me

“ Don’t apologize my love, I’ll be okay I have been working hard and studying for this exam don’t worry I’ll definitely ace it”

I don’t trust him, he could be saying this to make me feel better.

“ Go home and study, I’ll make breakfast for myself don’t worry”

“ No, allow me to do this for my baby. It’s not for you ke sisi it’s for my son, wena noma ungalamba angina ndaba”

(I won't care even if you starve)

“ Hah!”

He breaks into an enormous belly laugh

**“ I'm just pulling your leg sthandwa sam, relax
in bed I'll bring your breakfast”**

**“ I hope you are not referring to amagwinya
and tea”**

He laughs throwing his head back

“ Of course not, just wait and see wena.”

Sokhe sibone!

(we shall see)

Like he promised breakfast wasn't fat cakes, I don't know if I should call whatever Sabelo served me English breakfast because it doesn't deserve to be called that! The eggs were burnt, the sausages were undercooked nje everything was a mess he tried shem but it's clear cooking is not for him. He ended up cooking me oats at least it he got it right, he left after washing the dishes and cleaning the kitchen or better yet tried to clean shem my baby is really trying and I know one day he'll get it right I appreciate his efforts.

I should be at work but I was feeling lazy and ended up sleeping half the day, I will get a sick note to give to Gwala tomorrow when I get to work. At least I finished with the syllabus and revision, there's not much to do at work now well with my matric classes that is I still have to finish up the syllabus with the other grades.

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SABELO

" Good morning"

I greet Khethelo when I pass her in the lounge on my way to the bedroom

“ Where did you sleep last night?”

She likes acting like my mom, maybe it's because she's been playing a role of a mother to her siblings ever since her mother passed. It's been 5 years but my uncle hasn't moved on, sure there are women he entertains from time to time but none of them are serious enough for him to bring home and meet his children.

“ My girlfriend's place”

“ Ncoah young love, you really love her ne?”

“ I do sisi wami, I really love her”

“ I wish you all the best mntasekhaya”

“ Thank you, it means a lot coming from you. I thought you’d judge me for loving someone older than me”

“ Age is just a number, I only want you to be happy. Who you date is none of my business, whether she’s blind or missing an eye angingeni lapho mina”

(it’s not my problem)

How I wish my mother felt the same way

“ I wish mom saw it like that too”

**“ Give mamkhulu some time I know she’ll
come around.”**

(Aunt)

**“ Dad said she’s finally open to the idea of
meeting Ndalo”**

**It bothers me that I haven’t spoken to my
mother since I left home, we’ve never gone
without speaking for so long.**

Her lips break into a wide smile

“ You see? She’ll definitely warm up to her as time goes”

“ I hope so, I love my mom and it would make me so happy if she were to get along with my woman”

“ Wu safa wu woman!”

We laugh

“ You sound just like your dad right now”

“ Yini did you recently discover the word na”

I cackle, trust Khethelo to say that

“ Naze nahleka kamnandi nami ngicela
ukuhleka”

(Please share the joke I also want to laugh)

My uncle says when he walks into the lounge

“ Wasiza wafika baba yo besengifile wu
woman”

(Thank goodness you came dad, I was getting
tired of the word 'woman')

My uncle laughs

**“ Ah kanti, I know him too well ngo woman
mtanami”**

They both laugh at my expense

“ Ulele malundi?”

(You slept out)

My uncle asks

“ Ulele ka woman baba”

(He slept at his woman’s place)

Khethelo interjects

“ I hope you’ve been studying Sabelo, I promised your dad I’d make sure you study and pass your exams.”

“ I have been studying babomncane, I’m going to pass don’t worry”

(Uncle)

“ You better, I don’t want your father on my case”

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NOKUTHULA

What happened to Musa is all over the news and everyone at church and at work is speaking

about what happened to him, it's been over a week since it happened but I still haven't found the strength or is it the courage to visit him. I don't know but I'm not ready to see him like that, how are we even going to date if he can't speak or write? I love Musa but I honestly don't see how this is going to work out shem.

“ Thuli you need to go check up on him, you're his girlfriend it won't look good if you don't go”

My friend and colleague Nwabisa says

“ I want to but what do I say when I get there because he can't respond?”

“ Haibo Thuli!”

“ What?”

“ Do you even love the guy? If you loved him like you claim to then you wouldn't need a reason to visit him, he's at his lowest he needs you by his side”

“ He can't talk nor write Nwabisa!”

“ So?”

“ I can't believe you're asking me that, how is it going to work between us?”

“ I don’t know but the least you can do is visit him in hospital”

“ I will just not now”

“ You never loved him right?”

“ Wow!”

She says when I don’t respond

“ How could you allow him to break up with his long-term girlfriend if you didn’t love him? Now that’s plain evil”

“ I thought I was in love with him okay!”

She scoffs

“ When did you realize that you don’t?”

“ After he broke up with Ndalo, I realized that maybe I only wanted him because he was hers”

“ What are you saying?”

“ At church they like to make Ndalo seem like this perfect person and it annoys the shit out of me, she was always in the program and given

leadership roles I remember while we were still part of the youth she was voted treasurer.

Ndalo was seen as perfect in the eyes of everyone- the pastor and the elders at church, they always raved about how well mannered she is talking about how she's never went clubbing or tasted alcohol in her life and they always praised her for being a "virgin" at 25 lapho ngazi kahle kuthi she's sleeping with Musa. Musa's mom also adored her and was proud that she was going to be her daughter in law"

(I knew very well that)

" You sound jealous of Ndalo kanti weren't the two of you friends?"

“ No I’m not jealous of her, I’m more beautiful than she is why would I be jealous of her? I just hate how we were made to look like we’re not good enough because we drank alcohol and went to grooves while she was made out to be a saint when she’s not”

“ So is that why you dated Musa?”

“ Yeah”

“ Wow! I’m shook”

“ I’m not proud of what I did, with that being said I don’t think I can continue being in a

relationship with him I just feel bad that he dumped her for me"

" No you don't, you only feel bad because he has lost his hands and his tongue otherwise you'd still be 'in love with him' sies Thuli!"

" I only told you this because you're my friend I didn't expect you to judge me"

How dare she

" Everyone who doesn't want to hear the truth claims they're being judged when you tell them the truth, I'm not judging you I'm only being honest with you. You are a jealous and envious

person, you seduced Musa because you were jealous of Ndalo, if you can do that to someone whom you call a 'friend' then I don't think I want to keep being friends with you who knows what you'll do to me 'friend'!"

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#35

I've changed my outfit and hairstyle more times I can count in the last hour trying to look perfect for the lunch I have with Sabelo's

parents this afternoon, scared doesn't begin to describe how I feel I'm so nervous I'm even trembling. Nothing I wear seems good enough, I'm so tempted to bail out on them but I can't because this is important to Sabelo it's all he's been talking about all week.

I plop to the bed and video call Melo and anxiously wait for her to answer

“ Ses'Ndalo”

“ Thank goodness you picked up your phone
Melo, I desperately need your help
mntasekhaya”

“ Okay shoot”

**“ Today is the day of the lunch with Sabelo’s
parents and uncle”**

“ Okay, what do you need from me?”

**“ I don’t know what to wear, what does one
wear to lunch with the parents of her boyfriend.
A boyfriend who happens to be 7 years younger
than her?”**

“ No don’t do that to yourself”

“ What? It’s the truth mos.”

“ Yeah but Sabelo’s parents have probably accepted your age and that’s why they invited you to lunch”

“ Maybe, so what do I wear?”

“ Wear anything you’re comfortable in”

“ You’re not helping”

“ I am, go there and be yourself sis wami”

“ Okay, thanks. I need to hang up now Sabelo will be here to pick me up any minute now I need to get ready”

“ Okay sis, all the best and please don’t allow anyone to make you feel otherwise yeah?”

“ Yeah”

“ Okay bye”

She says and hangs up the call

Simple is always the way to go so I settle for a blue summer dress and sandals and tie my

braids in a high bun. My phone reverberates on the dressing table and I half run to pick it up

“ Babe”

“ Sthandwa sam I’m outside”

His statement has my heart beating rapidly and perspiration running down my spine, this is it- its finally happening, I’m meeting his parents.

“ Okay, give me two minutes”

I say trying so hard to hide how nervous I feel

“ There’s no need to be scared, I’ll be right by your side okay?”

“ Okay”

“ Bye for now”

He says and cuts the call

After a 360 degree twirl in front of the mirror I spritz perfume, take my handbag and make my way outside.

Can you believe Sabelo lied to me and said he’s here when he’s not? Yes, I’m standing outside my gate looking to all directions hoping to see

him but he's nowhere in sight. A white Mercedes-Benz GLA appears from the corner and stops next to me, the window rolls down revealing Sabelo inside, haibo!

“ Come on get inside, my mom hates waiting”

He says and opens the passenger door.

He smooches my lips the moment I'm inside the car and starts the ignition afterwards

“ Whose car is this?”

I can't help but ask

“ It’s my dad’s car sthandwa sam”

“ Hmm”

My hand is locked in his left hand the entire drive to his house

“ We are here”

He says after parking outside a beautiful single storey house, with my hand clasped in his we walk towards his parents. They’re sitting under the veranda next to the pool, judging by the dishes and bowls on the table I assume this is where we will have our lunch. My knees shake

when I meet their piercing stares- the look on his mother's face has me untangling my shaking hand from his, let's just say if looks could kill I'd be dead.

“ Bazali, babomncane this is Buhlebendalo Khumalo the woman I'm in love with”

(Parents, Uncle)

His dad and uncle look at each other and laugh, okay!

“ Ndalo, this are my parents and uncle”

“ Aw' Indoni yamanzi madoda, umhle ntokazi”

(Black beauty, you're beautiful young lady)

His uncle says already on his feet with his hand stretched out for a handshake

“ Ngiyjabula ukukwazi muntomuhle”

(Pleased to meet you beautiful)

He says when I shake his hand

“ Pleased to meet you too sir”

“ Sir? Come on that’s too formal, call me babomncane”

“ Stop it Ntsika can’t you see you’re making the lady uncomfortable”

Sabelo’s father says

“ I’m Brandon, his father and this is Mathapelo my wife and Buti's mother, welcome to our home my child you can take a seat”

“ Thank you”

Sabelo leads me to my seat and settles next to me.

“ Tell us about yourself muntomuhle”

The uncle says, I've only been here for a few minutes but I already know I'm going to like him. He seems cool and fun to around.

I never know what to say when I'm asked this question shem, I clear my throat and look at them as I prepare myself to speak but immediately regret it when I meet his mother's cold stare. The woman hasn't said one word since I walked inside her yard but I know she doesn't like me, how she's looking at me says it all.

“ I'm Buhlebendalo Khumalo 25 years of age, first of three children to my parents Muziwakhe

and Lilian Khumalo. I'm a Life sciences and Natural Sciences teacher at Sabelo's school".

“ Does the principal know you're sleeping with the same students you are meant to teach?”

Her question has me bowing my head in shame

“ No”

I reply

“ Sies! You should be ashamed of yourself sleeping with an 18 year old boy, we send our kids to school to learn not to be molested by horny teachers”

“ Ma!”

“ My liefde!”

Sabelo and his father exclaim at the same time

**“ What? I’m not about to sit here and play
happy families with this despicable girl! She is
nothing but a pervert”**

“ Sisi please calm down”

“ Don’t tell me to calm down Ntsika, if it was Khethelo who was impregnated by her teacher would you still be this calm?”

“ Let’s go Ndalo”

Sabelo says clearly annoyed

“ Sit down Sabelo, you’re going nowhere. Mama wengane zami please pull yourself together, I didn’t invite Ndalo here to be insulted”

The authority in his voice! He doesn’t need to raise his voice to get the message across,

there's just something about him that demands respect.

Sabelo lowers himself back on his seat

“ I'm sorry for my wife's behavior Ndalo, all this is new to her please give her some time to get used to it. Will you do that for me?”

He's back to the soft and calm man who welcomed me to his home a few minutes ago.

I nod my head in agreement it's not like I have any other choice, I understand where she's coming from it can't be easy to accept that your eighteen year old son is in a relationship with

an elderly woman not just any woman but one who happens to be his teacher!

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SABELO

I didn't expect my mother to treat Ndalo the way she did, my father assured me she was fine with this before I moved back home. She's been the loving mother I've always known her to be since I moved back home so I thought she was finally okay with my relationship but it's obvious I thought wrong, she's not okay and I don't think she will be okay with it anytime soon. Yes she didn't say anything condescending or spiteful to Ndalo after my

father called her to order but the look on her face everytime she looked at my girlfriend spoke volumes.

That's why I dragged Ndalo out of there the moment we finished eating, I don't know how she managed to eat with my mother was throwing daggers at her the entire time. Thank God my uncle and father were at least nice to her and seemed to genuinely like her, I'm driving her back to her place now and she's been quiet since we left my house.

" I'm sorry about what my mother said"

I say breaking the silence

“ It’s not your fault you don’t have to apologize, your mother behaved the way any mother would in her position”

She’s sensitive, I know what my mother said got to her.

“ No, she had no right to talk to you like that”

“ It’s fine love, I expected something like this so don’t worry I’m cool”

“ Sure?”

“ Yeah, your dad and uncle were nice to me. I think I am going to like your uncle, he’s funny”

She digresses

“ He is, he’s the best uncle ever”

“ I’m sure you’re always laughing when he’s around”

“ Wait until you meet Khethelo his daughter, she’s just as crazy”

“ I can’t wait, you have a beautiful family. Now I know why you look so handsome, your parents and uncle are good looking yoh!”

“ Thanks”

I dropped Ndalo off and drove back home, she wanted me to stay for a while but I couldn't I had to call out my mother on her behavior toward Ndalo today I didn't like it one bit.

“ Can we talk?”

I say when I find her in the lounge watching TV, I don't know where my father is he probably left with my uncle.

“ Yingoba ungaboni ukuthi I’m watching or yenziwa yindelelo?”

(Can’t you not see that I’m watching or you’re just being plain disrespectful)

“ I’m sorry ma but I really need to talk to you”

“ Talk”

I lower myself next to her on the couch

“ I really didn’t like how you treated Ndalo, I know how it looks but she’s really not a bad person mamami. I’m the one who pursued her, she tried to fight what she feels for me but I

wouldn't let her so if you want someone to blame, blame me your son not her"

" You're young, she should've known better"

" I love her mom, can you not try to accept her for my sake?"

" What do you know about love Sabelo, you're still young"

" That's the thing ma, love is love there's no labels when it comes to love. There's no age, no race, no bank account or nationality it's just two people who love each other and want to spend the rest of their lives loving each other"

“ Wow, you really love her ne uze ukhale pho!”

(You’re even crying)

**I didn’t realize I’m in tears until she mentioned
it.**

We laugh

“ Yes ma, I love her”

“ Okay then, I’ll give her a chance”

“ Thank you so much ma”

I say and plant kisses on her face causing her to giggle

“ Stop it, I don’t promise to like her but I’ll try to be civil towards her from now on”

“ That’s all I ask, I know you’ll eventually love her too when you see the kind of person she is”

“ Don’t hold your breath”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#36

It's been a week since schools closed and each day that passes reminds of how little the time Sabelo and I have left together is, initially I didn't want to have any expectations when it comes to our relationship to avoid getting heartbroken should things go different from how we have planned but all of that changed when I fell pregnant- I desperately want Sabelo and I to work now, my child deserves to have both parents in his/her life. I know we can still co-parent if things don't work out between us but that's not the kind of life I want for my child.

The main reason his parents invited me for lunch was to talk about the damages and find a way on how to go about it, apparently my family has to take me to the Meyiwa's to report my pregnancy then after Sabelo accepts the pregnancy the damages will be paid afterwards. I don't know if my parents will be willing to honor the tradition, like I've said before my parents don't follow traditions or any cultural practices but I hope they will be willing to compromise on this for the sake of my child and I.

I'm on my way to my parent's house, I haven't been home since I broke the news of my pregnancy and my relationship with Sabelo I don't want see them and I wouldn't go home if

I had a choice but this is not something I can discuss over the phone- it needs to be done face to face and the Meyiwa's want to pay damages before Sabelo goes to varsity that's why I need to do this now, I don't have much time.

Anele runs to me and engulfs me in a tight squeeze the moment I walk through the front door

" I missed you"

She says after breaking the hug and taking the handbag from my hands.

“ I missed you too little sister”

“ You look so beautiful”

“ Thank you”

“ Stop it”

I say when she pinches my cheeks

**“ I can't help myself, uyisbutubutu kamnandi
umuhle unonile uyangiqhaza nje ngathi
ngingadlala ngey'hlathi zakho”**

**(You're chubby and beautiful, your chubby
cheeks scream 'play with me')**

“ That’s enough! Move, move Nele I also want to hug her”

Mom says pushing Anele from me

“ How are ntombazana ka mama”

(Mommy’s daughter)

**She asks with her hands on my shoulders
looking into my eyes with a smile on her face**

**Okay what’s going on? What happened to my
mother. She hasn’t been this warm and loving
since I broke up with Musa.**

“ I’m okay ma, umama yena unjani?”

(How are you mom)

“ I’m okay my child, how’s my grandchild treating you? I hope she’s not giving you a hard time”

Her hands are now on my belly lovingly caressing it, someone please tell me I’m not dreaming!

“ No mom he/she is not giving me a hard time, my pregnancy is quite smooth I just sleep a lot that’s all”

“ Oh that’s good, and stop saying he/she you’re carrying a girl. Sit down and relax I’ll whip up something for you quickly”

She drags me to the couch and disappears to the kitchen

“ What’s going on?”

I whisper looking at Anele once mom is out of sight

“ I think she finally realized how unfairly she’s been treating you but you know how she is, she won’t apologize she’ll just act like nothing happened”

“ Wow! Where’s dad?”

“ At work”

Oh konje it’s during the week, I sometimes forget that not everyone goes on holiday on December like me.

“ Ses'Ndalo remember you promised to buy me a phone if I pass?”

“ Yes, I remember”

“ So?”

“ Bring your report card Anele I want to see it and decide which phone to get you depending on your results”

She scurries out of the room to fetch her report card I presume

I’m channel hopping looking for something entertaining to watch when Anele shoves her report card on my face obscuring my view, I grab it and look through it.

“ And?”

She questions after a few minutes of silence

“ Good work I’m impressed, if you keep this up next year you’ll pass your matric well and get university admission”

“ Thank you”

“ I’ll buy you a Huawei P40 you deserve it”

She passed really well, only maths is level 4 she got 5’s and 6’s for all the other subjects. She must’ve worked really hard to get these marks, I’m really proud of her and I’ll get her the phone to motivate her to work even harder next year.

She screams my ear off and suffocates me in a hug chanting endless "Thank you's" and showering my face with kisses

" Enough let her go so she can eat" Mom

Anele breaks the hug and runs outside the house, I know she's going to tell Lindi, her friend about this.

" What did you say to her that got her so excited?"

Mom asks and hands me my food, a steaming plate of chicken Alfredo.

“ Thank you mom, this looks delicious”

**I say already shoving a spoonful inside my
mouth**

“ Careful you’ll burn yourself”

**Her cooking is the only thing I miss about
staying at home, uyapheka lo mfazi shem!**

**“ Tell me phela, what did you tell Nele that got
her so excited?”**

**“ I told her I will buy her a phone for passing
her grade 11”**

“ Oh wow, ngiyambongela ses'wakhe”

“ Don't mention it”

**“ You're a kind and generous person my child,
and that's how you've always been.**

**Unfortunately not everyone is like you, people
take advantage of people like you”**

I don't know where this is going but okay

“ Are you sure this boy really loves you?”

I know she's referring to Sabelo

“ Yes, I’m sure he loves me”

“ Don’t get me wrong my child but you need to be careful nowadays young boys date women older than them for money, I don’t want anyone to take advantage of you”

“ I understand but Sabelo is not in this for the money, it’s not like I have much anyway you know how little teachers earn. He’s from a financially stable family and he never accepts money from me or allow me to do things for him”

“ Okay, that’s better then”

She blows out a sigh looking relieved

“ I actually came here to talk about the damages, his parents invited me for lunch a week ago and apparently you as the Khumalo's were supposed to take me to their house to report the pregnancy”

“ I don't know much about those things but I think your aunts are the one's who are supposed to take you there and not me, I'll talk to them and get back to you”

Wow, I didn't expect her to agree so easily

“ Thank you mom”

“ Don’t mention it, it’s my duty as your mother to support and stand by you please forgive me for how harshly I’ve been treating you since the whole Musa saga. I’m sorry I failed to recognize your pain and only cared about people’s perceptions of me, I’m sorry my child”.

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SABELO

Schools are closed for December holidays I have so much time on my hands, time I spend

with my lady. The plan was to get a holiday job at a shop or restaurant and save the money I'll make so that I can help out once the baby is born, I sent out CV's to a number of places after my last exam I hope to get something soon I was thinking of selling something in the meantime I just don't know what at the moment I have quite a few ideas in mind but I'm still deciding which one out of all would be the most profitable.

" I can't remember the last time you and I spent time together"

Sphe says walking into my bedroom

“ I know right but I’m trying to spend as much time as I can with Ndalo before I move to Gauteng next year”

“ Do you think your relationship will survive the distance?”

“ I don’t know but I hope so, I want it to because I honestly don’t see myself loving anyone else who’s not her”

“ I also hope it works out, please don’t get tempted when you get to Joburg and meet beautiful girls your age”

“ I think it’s a good thing that I started with the play boy phase before I met Ndalo, I don’t think I will jeopardize what we have over meaningless fucks”

“ Wow you sound so sure of what you want, you’re so mature”

“ I have no choice but to be, I’m going to be a father soon I can’t afford to reason like a boy. Too much is at stake here, I can’t afford to lose Ndalo and my baby because of meaningless things”

“ Mabizwa sabele”

**Khutso says as him and Xolane walk inside my
bedroom**

“ Waz' mina, who let you in?”

(That's me)

“ Maouledy wakho, Sphesihle mntwana”

Xolane

“ Hey guys, bye guys”

She says and walks out of the room

Xolane sits on a chair next to my study desk and fiddles with my computer while Khutso throws himself on my bed.

“ Asisa kwazi mjita” Khutso

(We no longer see you)

“ Ngikhona majita”

(I've been here)

“ Ay u scarce, yini sewuya hlomba?”

(You're scarce, are you in a relationship)

“ Mina nok'hlomba? Y'all know that's not my style”

(Me and dating)

I can't tell them about my relationship with Ndalo, too much is at stake. I don't know if I can trust them to keep it a secret

“ So what's been keeping you busy?”

“ School, I didn't do well on my preliminary exams so I had to work extra hard for my final exams”

“ Excuse leyo, we are done with exams now but you're still unavailable” Xolane

“ I promise to make time for you guys from now henceforth”

“ I know you’re hiding something from us, since when do we keep secrets from each other or yini we no longer your friends usitshela phela mjita sazi” Khutso

(Tell us so that we know where we stand with you)

“ Stop being dramatic of course you’re still my friends but there are things I can’t tell you about and this happens to be one of them”

“ Why not?” Xolane

“ A lot is at stake”

They look at each other and have a silent conversation with their eyes before looking back at me

“ What’s up?”

“ Na nex, let’s go e chillax. We’ll buy and braai meat, drink beer and play pool like the good old days”

“ Ok asivayeni”

(Let’s go)

My friends and I spent all afternoon at Chillax drinking, playing pool and catching up it's 7:45 in the evening now and I'm exhausted plus the place is getting packed I don't like crowded spaces.

“ Majita asivayeni”

(Gents let's go)

Xolane digs his hands inside his pockets and glances at the screen

“ Let's chill kancane sizovaya ngo 8”

(Let's chill a bit we will leave at 8)

He says and Khutso agrees with him

“ Relax ntwana what’s the rush?” Khutso slurs

**Out of the three of us, he’s the most wasted
one.**

“ Do you mind if we join y’all?”

**We look up to find four girls dressed in skimpy
outfits, have the longest nails and lashes I’ve
ever seen and make up on their faces, I don’t
know if the alcohol in my system has anything
to do with this but the make up looks horrible
yoh- I hate the hideous thick black eyebrows
they drew on themselves ngathi**

amashishiboya, why do girls draw eyebrows again?

“ Of course you’re more than welcome to join us”

Xolane says already making space for the girls to sit, they scatter and plant themselves in between us.

“ Hey handsome what’s your name?”

The one sitting on my right hand side says looking at me with a huge smile on her face.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#37

“ Majita mina ngiyavaya”

(Gents I’m leaving)

I say blatantly ignoring the girl's question

“ Ah yini manje Sabza? Ungabi yilezo”

(What’s wrong, don’t be like that)

Xolane says unable to conceal his irritation

“ No I’m leaving”

**I attempt to stand up but fall back on my chair,
my knees are weak I’ve had too much to drink**

“ Asiringe”

(Let’s talk)

Xolane says already on his feet

**I stand up slowly, take my phone and follow
him outside. Walking is a mission my legs feel
heavy and I feel a bit woozy I haven’t drank
alcohol in a long while.**

“ Yini manje why are you acting up?”

**That’s what he says the moment I catch up to
him**

“ What do you mean?”

**“ You causing a nuisance wanting to leave
early, what’s that about? uyambona umntwana
uzishayile nge stayela sakho but wena
uyatanasa ufuna ukuvaya”**

**(You see the girl likes you but you act pricey
and want to leave)**

“ So manje wena uдинwa yini lapho? Angimfuni lomtwana mina mos”

(So what annoys you there? I don't want the girl)

“ Since when? Sonke siyazi kuthi wena uyazi thandela umdavazo so what changed?”

(We all know that you love sex)

“ Sithini istory sakho ndoda? Why do you want me to sleep with that girl so bad?”

(What's your story)

“ Ah nex, I am just concerned because you're my friend and I've never known you to reject a free pussy so I thought I should ask”

**“ Well things have changed, I’m no longer that
guy”**

**“ Okay let’s go back and drink two beers then
we’ll leave after that”**

**“ I’m not going back inside, I told you I’m
leaving so bye please extend my apologies to
Khutso for leaving without bidding him
farewell”**

“ Wow!”

**I ignore him and press on my phone going to
the Uber app and order a ride to my girlfriend’s**

place, the driver closest to my location is 30 minutes away. It's a bit chilly outside plus I'm only wearing a thin short sleeved t shirt so I can't wait that long and I can't go back inside either I know Xolane will try to shove that girl down my throat again so I decide to walk.

Walking is a mission I'm staggering but I'm determined to walk to my girlfriend's place I don't know if it's the alcohol but I suddenly miss her, a lot. I'd give anything to have her in my arms damn it I love her

“ Ya wena masaka!”

(Hey you fool)

Says one of the two guys blocking my way, they look young around the same age group as me. They're probably a few years older than me.

“ We can do this the easy way or the hard way, you give us what we want and we leave or you resist and suffer the consequences”

The short one lifts up his shirt and reveals a huge knife tugged in his pants

“ So what's it going to be pretty boy? Will it be the easy way or the hard way?”

The other one asks licking his okapi in a threatening way

I won't lie I'm shaking in my pants right now I don't even feel tipsy anymore, I can't help but regret going out with Xolane and Khutso I should've stayed at home.

“ Take this and leave me alone”

I say waving my phone in the air

“ Ey wena san' ukhuluma nobani kanjalo why ngathi uyaqina so?”

(Hey you boy who are you talking to in that manner, why does it seem like you're resisting)

**The short says stepping closer to me closing
the distance between us**

“ Ai small yeka lentwana”

(Small leave the boy)

“ No man ujwayelana kabi lo cheese boy”

(He’s disrespectful)

“ Myeke uyasinika I phone mos”

(Leave him, he’s willing to give us the phone)

**“ Nope, uyadelela lo, he needs to be taught a
lesson”**

(He's disrespectful)

He says and smacks me across my face, he slapped me so hard that I lose my vision for a few seconds.

There's nothing as embarrassing as being slapped, I think it would have been better if he punched me I don't know but being slapped by your peer makes one feel a great deal of humiliation.

“ Usese nomlomo cheeseboy?”

(Do you still have something to say)

He says poking my forehead with his forefinger, another mortifying act.

It sends me over the edge I lose my shit and punch him on his face, he wasn't expecting it so he reels backwards. I keep the punches coming, he tries to fight back but he doesn't stand a chance not when I'm this angry. I feel a sharp pain on my back and look back, his friend just stabbed me at the back.

I stagger and hold my back the short one pulls the knife from his pants and stabs me on my stomach repeatedly, I drop to my knees holding my stomach feeling myself get weaker and weaker by the second. I'm bleeding profusely

my shirt is soaked in my blood some of it is dripping to my pants and the ground.

“ Fuck! He’s dying”

That’s the last thing I hear before I drift into darkness.

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NDALO

I spent the afternoon with my mom and Anele and only left around 7 in the evening when my father came back from work, Sabelo and I have been seeing each other everyday since school

closed but we couldn't see each other today for obvious reasons so the plan was to spend the night together since we couldn't spend the day together. I don't know but I think I'm addicted, I can't get enough of him and by the look of it neither can he.

“ Are you expecting a call?” Anele

I had to take her with me when I left my parent's house so tomorrow we can go together to Embalenhle mall to buy her phone.

“ Yes, why?”

“ You’ve been starring at your phone for a while now”

“ Yes I am, please call my phone”

She looks confused but does as I ask nonetheless

“ I wanted to check if it was working, I thought maybe it’s network that’s why Sabelo hasn’t said anything”

“ Oh you’re waiting for his call?”

“ Yeah he should be here by now, he said he was on his way here ngabo 8”

“ He'll come don't worry he probably got held up somewhere”

“ I don't know I have a bad feeling about this, let me call him”

I dial his number and wait anxiously as it rings

“ is it voice-mail?”

“ No, he didn't pick up”

“ Eish he's probably on his way relax, he'll come”

I want to relax but I can't, I have a bad feeling about this.

" Borrow me your phone let me call him maybe he'll pick up"

He did say he's at Chillax with his friends who knows maybe he's ignoring me.

I dial his number using Anele's phone and get the same results.

Last night I stayed up the whole night waiting for Sabelo but he didn't come, I don't know how many times I called him. He ended up switching off his phone. My heart is heavy, I honestly don't understand why Sabelo would do something like this to me I thought we were happy what could have gone wrong suddenly? He's never done anything like this before, what if something happened to him on his way here? I refuse to believe that he would intentionally break his promise. He's not one to lie or make false promises he always fulfills his promises.

“ I'm not hungry”

I say to Anele when she hands me a bowl of
oats

“ Come on sis you need to eat, do it for the baby you’re carrying if not for yourself”

She has a point

“ Thanks, do you mind if we go tomorrow to the mall?”

“ I don’t mind”

Thank God she agreed to postpone our trip to the mall to tomorrow, I don’t have the energy to leave my house I hardly slept so I feel like shit. I need to take a long shower and try to get some sleep.

“ Can I watch Blood and water?”

“ Yeah, I’m not watching”

“ Okay thanks”

After eating I wash my bowl and go to my bedroom and take my phone from the charger hoping to find a missed call from my boyfriend but no such luck, there’s absolutely nothing from him not even a message. This is unlike Sabelo, now more than ever I believe something happened to him. He probably lost his phone at Chillax or something, it wouldn’t be the first time someone loses a phone at a

groove. I take a long shower and get in bed and try to get some sleep.

“ What?”

It feels like two minutes ago when I fell asleep and this girl is here shaking me

“ Anele didn't I tell you I didn't sleep last night? Why are you waking me up?!”

I bellow trying so hard to fight the strong urge to strangle her.

“ I know, I'm sorry but there's a man in the lounge looking for you”

“ Didn’t you tell him I’m sleeping?”

“ I did but he says what he wants to talk to you about is important”

“ Who is he?”

“ He didn’t tell me his name, he only said he is Sabelo’s uncle”

I immediately jump to the floor and run to the lounge at the mention of Sabelo’s uncle.

“ Sawubona babomncane”

(Greetings uncle)

“ Muntomuhle I’m sorry for waking you up but I desperately need your help?”

“ Ubabomncane ngingamsiza kanjani?”

(How can I help)

“ Sabelo didn’t go back home last night, he’s not taking our calls which is unlike him. I came here because I thought he’s here but your sister already told me you were waiting for him last night but he didn’t pitch”

“ Yebo babomncane he also doesn’t take my calls, I don’t know how many times I called

him last night he ended up switching off his phone"

“ That sounds nothing like Sabelo, he’s a responsible young man he would never disappear without telling anyone his whereabouts”

“ He was with his friends at Chillax yesterday maybe he slept over at their house last night”

I can’t afford to think negatively, stress is not good for the baby or me.

“ Friends? I only know two of his friends, Khutso and Xolane. Sphe knows where they

live, she'll take me there you can go back to
sleep I will keep you posted “

“ No, I'm coming with.”

“ You don't have to, you look drained get some
rest please muntomuhle”

“ No I'm coming with, please wait for me to
change into something decent”

I don't wait for him to reply I scurry to my
bedroom, take off my pajamas and wear a jean,
an oversized tee and my slides. My braids are
untied, my looks are the last thing on my mind

right now I really don't give a damn about how I look right now.

" Let's go"

I say already heading to the door

I hear him chuckle and then says

" Damn you're so stubborn"

We first drive to Sabelo's house and pick up Sphe so she can show us to Xolane and Khutso's houses.

“ Stay in the car muntomuhle, remember you’re the boys’ teacher so them seeing you here will raise suspicions”

He says when we park outside Xolane’s house, he’s our first stop.

“ Okay I understand”

Him and Sphe step out of the car and walk towards the gate, I watch them until they are allowed inside the house. Not knowing what’s going on inside the house is killing me.

“ What did he say?”

I ask the moment they get inside the car, they didn't take long inside.

“ He says he left Chillax around 8 last night apparently that's the last time he saw him”

He says and buries his face on the steering wheel

Oh goodness I hope nothing bad happened to Sabelo.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#38

I don't know what to think I was so sure we would find Sabelo with one of his friends or that his friends would know about his whereabouts, it feels like we've hit a dead end and I have a bad feeling about this. Something happened to my boyfriend, I don't know what but something definitely happened to him at this moment I can only pray he's still alive wherever he is. After leaving Xolane's house babomncane drove me back to my place, I tried to put up a fight but he wouldn't hear it so I had no choice but to wait on him for updates- him and Sabelo's father are looking for Sabelo

everywhere including in hospitals, morgues and even prisons in and around Embalenhle.

“ Calm down sis they’ll find him”

“ I have a bad feeling about this Nele, what if he’s lying dead in ditch somewhere?”

Tears are flowing down my face like water on a waterfall

“ Be positive”

“ I’m being realistic, oh God please don’t let him die. What will I tell my child, how will I survive without him?”

“ Don’t do this to yourself please”

“ I can’t lose him Anele, I can’t”

I say and release a gut wrenching sob, Anele pulls me into her embrace and brushes my back soothingly.

“ You won’t lose him, calm down please remember stress is not good for the baby”

She’s right but how do I remain calm when I don’t know where the love of my life is?

**“ Please bring my phone I need to call his
uncle”**

**We exchanged numbers when he dropped me
off**

“ Why?”

What does she mean why

**“ I want to ask him if they haven’t found
anything yet”**

**“ If he had something to tell I’m sure he
would’ve called you”**

“ I can’t stand the suspense I shouldn’t have allowed him to convince me to stay behind”

“ He did it for you and the baby, you hardly slept last night you need to rest”

“ I won’t be able to sleep knowing Sabelo might be in danger Anele so I won’t even try”

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NARRATED

Brandon thought Sabelo slept over at his girlfriend's place that's why he didn't worry when he didn't come back home last night but he didn't expect him not to pitch in the morning knowing very well that they had to drive to Kinross together for Sabelo's 9AM appointment with one of his friends, Mr Sebata- a friend who is willing to mentor Sabelo and give him business advice and tips since the boy is looking into starting a small business.

Embarrassed doesn't begin to describe how he felt when Sebata called and asked him where Sabelo is, this is a busy business man who took time from his busy schedule and agreed to meet with his son because they were friends but his ungrateful son didn't honour their appointment.

He was so angry when he called wanting to give him an earful but couldn't because the phone was on voice-mail, that's when he sent his brother to fetch him from Ndalo's house what he didn't expect was to hear that his son is missing.

He's been driving around like a mad man looking for his son and showing his picture to everyone he meets and asking if they have seen him but no one knows anything, his phone rings on the passenger seat he parks his car next to the road and takes the call.

" Tell me you found my son Brandon"

He sighs and rubs his head

“ I’m sorry my liefde but I haven’t found anything yet”

“ What about Ntsika?”

“ He hasn’t contacted me, it means he also hasn’t found anything”

“ Find my son Brandon, you’re not allowed to come back in this house without my son. Bring my son back home Meyiwa”

His wife says and drops the call

He blows out a sigh and mops his face with his hands, what could've happened to his son?

He's a strong man who can face anything and everything thrown at him but there's one thing he'll never survive- his son dying on him.

He clasps his hands together, shuts his eyes with his face raised to the heavens and begins to pray.

" Baba I know I'm a sinner who doesn't have a right to ask for anything from you but please spare my son's life protect him wherever he is, I would never survive losing my son Amen"

He's not a person who prays hell he doesn't even know how to pray but someone once told

him God hears and answers honest, earnest and sincere prayers and he prayed sincerely God will surely answer his prayer.

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SPHESIHLE

A myriad of thoughts are running through my mind everytime I think about what could've happened to my brother, Sabelo is more than just a brother to me- he's a part of me and I don't think I'd survive living without him, I won't and I don't want to live without him. How would life even be like without my loving brother? No I can't lose him.

My mother has been cooped up in her room since we realized that Sabelo could be in danger and that he's not with miss Khumalo like we initially thought, it's been more than three hours since my father and uncle went looking for him and they still haven't found anything about him or what could've happened to him. Each second that passes without knowing anything about my brother, my other half is torturous. A knock on the door pulls me from my thoughts, I jolt up from the couch and run to the door to open.

" Mtasekhaya"

Khethelo says and engulfs me in a hug, I burst into a loud sob and weep in her arms.

“ Shhh, don’t cry baba and babumkhulu will find him and bring him home”

“ We don’t know that Khethelo”

“ You need to remain positive my love”

She wipes my tears with her palms when we break the hug and pecks my lips

“ Don’t cry nana wami ne?”

I nod vigorously

Khethelo is only two years older than me but she always behaves like she's my mother, there's just this motherly warmth about her. I guess it's because she's been playing the motherly role to her siblings ever since her mom passed.

“ Sisi Sphesihle”

Nomcebo says launching herself in my arms

“ Hello nunu”

I kiss her forehead and whisk Junior off his feet taking him into my arms.

“ Hello boy”

“ Hello Sisi Sphesihle”

My uncle’s children feel like my siblings, my dad and uncle Ntsika are close so we were raised as siblings not cousins.

“ Did aunt cook or should I?”

That’s Khethelo for you

“ Mom hasn’t left her bedroom since dad and uncle went looking for Sabelo so I guess you can cook”

“ Okay”

She says and disappears to the kitchen while I join Nomcebo who’s already made herself comfortable on the couch with the remote in her hands watching cartoons, I guess I will watch my soapie on catch up then.

“ How are you doing boy boy”

I say pinching Junior’s chubby cheeks, he’s so adorable you guys. He’s 5 years old, his mom

passed away a few months after he was born.
He's my uncle's only son I guess that's why he
named him after himself- he is Ntsika Junior.

“ I'm okay sisi Sphesihle”

“ Okay cutie pie”

I say and kiss his tiny lips. I'm so glad they are
here with me, their presence is just what I
needed in this difficult time since my mother
chose to lock herself in her room and go
through her emotions alone.

It's a few minutes after 5PM when my father and uncle walk through the door looking defeated, judging from their facial expressions it's obvious they don't have any news about Sabelo. Junior runs to his father when he sees him, my uncle picks him up and throws him in the air a couple of times causing him to giggle gloriously

" My boy"

Dad says taking him from my uncle

" Any news on Sabelo?" Khethelo asks

“ Unfortunately nothing my child, we won’t give up though your uncle hired a PI to help us look for him. We will find him don’t worry”

He lifts Nomcebo from the couch and lowers himself next to me putting her on his lap.

“ Where’s your mother?”

Dad asks looking at me

“ In your bedroom, she hasn’t left the bedroom since you left.”

“ What?”

“ Yes, Khethelo cooked and took her food to her room but she wouldn’t open the door”

He puts Junior down and walks away without saying anything

“ I’m so hungry ngicela ungiphakele mafungwashe ka baba”

(Please dish up for me)

He says looking at Khethelo who immediately stands up and heads to the kitchen

“ Do you think he’s dead babomncane?”

“ What? Of course not. He’s alive I know he is”

I don’t know who he’s trying to convince, me or himself.

“ Then why can’t you find him? People die all the time, let’s not pretend like we don’t know how dangerous Emba is especially at night”

“ Stop talking nonsense, your brother is okay and we will find him”

He’s upset so I let him be, my uncle has a quick hand I might just earn a slap from him if I don’t control my tongue.

“ Ngiyabonga sthandwa sam”

(Thank you)

He says when Khethelo hands him a dish with water to wash his hands. Who Khethelo, wife material that one!

“ Wow must be nice you’re eating while my son is missing”

My mother says when she walks into the lounge with my dad behind her, her face looks red and swollen it’s clear she’s been crying.

“ My liefde ...”

“ Don’t you dare talk to me, I told you not to come back here without my son. Take your brother and leave my house”

“ Mama wengane zami please don’t do this..”

“ Ungangihlanyisi Brandon ngithe phuma!”

(Don’t make me angry Brandon, I said leave)

She bellows like a mad woman

I’ve never seen my mother act like this, yes she’s loud but I’ve never heard shouting at my father much less in front of us.

**“ It’s fine, we will leave asambe zalo” uncle
(Let’s go brother)**

“ I’ll bring our son home I promise”

Dad says before following his brother to the door, Junior attempts to follow them but my mother grabs his hand halting him from his step and the boy starts crying.

“ Don’t cry mfana ka mamkhulu”

Mom picks him up and walks away with him in her arms

“ Yoh!”

Khethelo exclaims once my mother is out of sight

“ I’ve never seen aunt act like that”

“ Me too”

“ I understand she’s worried about her son but did she have to throw them out?”

“ Yeah, mom is dramatic shem”

I hope the PI they hired finds Sabelo alive because I don't see my mother surviving if anything happens to my brother.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#39

"Please don't tell me you cried yourself to sleep again last night"

" I can't help it Melo, I feel empty without Sabelo"

Melo arrived two days ago and I'm really grateful for her presence here

“ You can't keep doing to yourself Ses'Ndalo yini do you want to lose the baby?”

“ Of course not”

“ But you'll lose it if you keep behaving this way”

“ I'm trying not to stress but its not easy okay, it's been days Melo and there's still no news even after a PI was hired”

“ I understand but think about your child, Sabelo will want to come back to his child not to news of you having a miscarriage”

“ Do you think he’s still alive?”

“ Yes I do, don’t you?”

“ To be honest with you, I lose hope of finding him alive with each day that passes. What if he was robbed, killed and his body was thrown in a forest or the river?”

“ No no don’t think like that, your boyfriend will be found and he’ll found alive”

I wish I was as optimistic as Melo is about this but hopes of finding him alive diminish with each passing day and it kills me inside.

“ I made you breakfast”

Anele walks into my bedroom with a tray of food.

“ Thank you sis”

My sister's have been so supportive during this tough time I don't know what I would've done if they were not here with me.

“ Please eat and finish everything on the plate ”

**It's a fruit salad and a tall glass of mango juice,
I really cannot stomach anything heavy and
I'm glad Anele understands that.**

“ What are you doing?”

**I ask Melo who's going through my closet
taking out different outfits**

“ Picking out an outfit for you”

“ What for?”

“ Come on sis it’s your antenatal check up, I can’t believe you forgot about it”

“ It completely slipped my mind, how did you know?”

“ A magician never reveals her tricks”

I know she went through my things I don’t know if I should chastise her for going through my things or thank her for reminding me of my appointment.

Two hours later Melo and I are waiting for an Uber to take us to the doctor, mogirl insisted on

coming with me since Sabelo isn't here to go with me. I'm blessed to have a sister like her

“ Its ringing”

She says handing me my phone

“ Sawubona babomncane”

(Greetings uncle)

“ Yebo Kunjani Muntomuhle?”

(How are you)

“ I'm trying despite the circumstances”

He's been checking up on me daily since Sabelo went missing

“ That's good, the last thing I want is for you to stress and end up losing my grandchild.”

The Uber arrives, Melo opens the door and waits for me to climb in before getting inside.

“ Are you on your way somewhere?”

He probably heard the doors opening and shutting

“ Yes, I'm going to the doctor for my antenatal check up”

“ Why didn’t you tell me I would’ve asked Khethelo to take you there, you don’t have to go through your pregnancy alone we may not be Sabelo but we are all here for you”

“ Thank you babomncane but I’m not alone my sister is coming with me”

“ Okay let me not keep you then”

“ Okay babomncane”

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NARRATED

“ What’s on your mind?”

**Brandon says disturbing Ntsika’s trail of
thought**

“ Nothing why?”

**Things have been difficult between Brandon
and his wife following Sabelo’s disappearance,
she’s miserable and pushes him away so he’s
been living with his younger brother for the
past week.**

“ Because you’ve been starring at that phone since I walked in. I heard you talking on the phone who was it?”

“ It was Ndalo, she’s going for her prenatal check up”

“ Should I be worried zalo?”

He asks with a quirked eyebrow

“ Worried about what?”

“ About you having feelings for my son’s girlfriend”

“ What?”

“ Cut the bullshit, I know you Ntsika!”

**It's no use lying to him, his brother knows him
like the back of his hand**

**“ I didn't mean for it to happen, I don't even
know how it happened I swear I didn't mean
for any of this to happen”**

**“ Wow I can't believe this, and here I thought I
was seeing things! I kept telling myself my
brother would never do that”**

“ I know and I’m sorry, you know I love Sabelo and I would never do anything to hurt him zalo”

“ Falling for his girlfriend qualifies as hurting him”

“ I didn’t plan to okay, it just happened”

“ Ndalo is a child, not only that she’s your nephew’s girlfriend and she’s carrying my grandchild Ntsika how do you have feelings for her?”

“ I don’t know”

He says brushing his head in frustration

The lord is his witness he never meant for any of this to happen. He just wanted to be there and support her during this difficult time, it's what Sabelo would've wanted what he didn't anticipate is falling for her- in the few days that he's known her he already picked up that she's humble, soft spoken, respectful and kind qualities he always yearned for in a woman.

But she only sees him as an uncle nothing more, that girl loves his nephew immensely and that's why he tried so hard not to see her as anything but his nephew's girlfriend. Lord knows he tried and failed dismally because even after trying so hard all he sees when he looks at her is a beautiful woman.

“ I don’t want you anywhere her, I’ll communicate with her from now on. I entrusted you with this because I thought you loved Sabelo like your son but it’s clear I was wrong”

“ That’s not fair, you know I love Sabelo”

“ Delete her numbers from your phone, I’ll communicate with her from now henceforth”

He instructs with a deadpan tone, Ntsika knows not to bullshit him so he presses on his phone for a while.

“ Done”

He says showing his brother his screen

**Brandon is about to reply when his phone rings
disturbing him**

“ Tell me you have something for me”

It’s the PI

“ That’s why I’m calling, I found something”

“ Talk man”

Ntsika nudges him and tells him to put the call on speaker when he looks at him, Brandon gives him the evil eye before doing what he asked.

“ I found Sabelo”

“ What!”

The two brother’s exclaim at the same time

“ Yes he’s at Evander hospital, apparently someone found him lying on the street bleeding with stab wounds on his stomach and his back and rushed him to the hospital”

“ What?” Brandon asks

“ We are coming there right now”

“ He lost a lot of blood- almost one third of his blood. You should thank God or whoever you pray to that your son survived, he would’ve died if the woman who found him wasn’t a nurse. She applied pressure to the wound and kept his legs elevated above the level of the heart to reduce the rate at which he lost blood.”

Sabelo’s doctor explains

“ How’s my son doing doctor and where’s the woman who saved his life I need to thank her?”

Brandon

“ Unfortunately your son hasn’t regained consciousness but he’s stable, the woman who brought him here left when he was admitted.”

“ Strange” Ntsika

“ It’s been days doctor why hasn’t he woken up? Should we be worried?”

Sabelo has been unconscious since he was admitted that’s why it took the PI this long to find him, no one knew who he was at the

hospital because he had no identification on him. The boys who stabbed him took his phone and wallet, so there's no way anyone could've known who he was.

“ There's no medical explanation as to why he hasn't woken up, all his tests came back clear he should have regained consciousness by now”

“ I want to move him to a private hospital close to home can I do that?”

“ Yes, you can sir I'll prepare the paperwork”

“ Okay thanks doctor, will he ever wake up?”

“ Yes, he will.”

The doctor says and leaves the ward

“ He doesn’t know what he’s doing, I don’t trust him.”

Brandon tells his brother once the doctor is out of sight

“ Me too, how can he tell us he doesn’t know why Sabelo hasn’t woken up. Didn’t he go to school for this, he’s supposed to know”

**“ I’m just grateful to have found my son alive,
God answered my prayer I wouldn’t have
survived it if I lost him”**

“ Me too”

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SPHESIHLE

**“ Come on let’s go to Evander hospital, your
brother has been found”**

My mother says barging into my room

“ What?”

I’m already on my feet changing my sleepwear

“ Yes, hurry up. Your father said we should call that girl and notify her, what’s her name again?”

“ Ndalo”

“ Yeah, do you mind calling her?”

“ I don’t mind mom, I’ll call her”

My mother really doesn't fancy Ndalo but she's trying her best to be civil towards her.

" Ok be ready to leave in 10 minutes, I can't wait to see my son"

" Okay ma"

I dial Ndalo as soon as mom walks out and put the call on speaker so I can talk to her while preparing myself.

" Hey"

" Miss Khumalo"

It feels weird to call her by name

“ Oh Sphe hi”

She sounds shocked to hear from me but I cant say I blame her, this is the first time I’m calling her

“ My brother has been found, he’s at Evander hospital”

I expect her to say something but she doesn’t respond so I don’t know if she heard me

“ Ma'am did you hear what I said?”

“ Yes, I heard you”

She says and sniffs, OMG she's crying.

**“ I'm sorry but I had lost all hope of finding him
alive so I'm happy”**

“ No it's okay, you don't have to explain”

**“ Thank you for telling me I'll uber to the
hospital”**

“ Don't mention it, bye”

“ Bye”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#40

**Tears are shamelessly pouring down my face,
my heart is filled with so much joy. The love of
my life has been found, he’s alive I don’t have
to raise this baby alone.**

“ Your father has come back to us my angel”

I say with both my hands on my belly

The possibility of my child not knowing her father tore me apart, I was raised by both parents and I want that for my child too- for her to know a mother and father's love, yes you got that right. It's a girl, mom was right after all I'm carrying a girl, a little princess. I can't wait for her to grow up so we can wear matching outfits you know serving mother and daughter goals, damn I can't wait for my baby girl.

I head to the bathroom to wash my face, all the tears and snorts ruined my make up. After wiping it with a bath towel I only apply ponds

and wear earrings and leave my braids untied, I need to take them off soon they're getting old.

“ Where are you going?”

“ Melo I don't report to you”

“ I'm just concerned”

“ I'm going to Evander hospital, Sabelo has been found”

Relief floods both my sister's faces, they may have acted strong but I know they were scared on my behalf. They know how much Sabelo

means to me, losing him would've left me in tatters.

“ Praise the lord, you almost died” Anele

“ Yo wena she even developed eye bags from crying herself to sleep”

Melo adds

“ One day you'll fall in love with someone and he'll be the center of your life then you'll understand how I felt”

“ Ncoah”

They both say

“ Love is beautiful” Melo

“ Mxm let me get going the Uber is two minutes away”

“ You should consider buying yourself a car, you’re spending a lot of money on Uber” Melo

“ I will, especially now that I’ll have a baby. I will need a car to take her to doctor appointments and check ups”

The idea of using an Uber with a new-born unsettles me, babies are super sensitive.

“ Yes, let me love and leave you girls”

“ Bye sis”

**The Uber just dropped me off at the hospital,
Sphe didn't tell me which ward Sabelo is in so I
had to send her a text when I got to the
reception so she can come and get me.**

“ Miss Khumalo!”

She calls out, I look up from my phone and see her approaching me

“ You should stop calling me that”

I say when she finally gets to me

“ Calling you any other way sounds awkward”

“ It’s okay I understand”

“ Please follow me”

She says and leads the way to Sabelo’s ward

“ Sanibonani”

(Greetings)

**It’s a full house, there’s Sabelo’s parents, his
uncle, a girl and two kids I’ve never met before.
Is this even allowed?**

**They all return my greetings then Sphe
introduces me to the three people I’ve never
met**

**“ Family this is Buhlebendalo Khumalo,
Sabelo’s woman”**

She says then they all laugh well except for you know who, I wonder why they always laugh everytime the word 'woman' is mentioned I should ask Sabelo about it when he finally decides to wake up.

“ Skoni sami, the beautiful lady over there is Ntombizokhethelo my sister, the cute girl is my little sister Nomcebo and this handsome young man is my brother Junior”

(Sister in law)

It seems everyone in this family is light skinned, I'm yet to meet a dark skinned person from this family.

“ Nice to meet you all”

“ Pleased to meet you too Ndalo, you’re beautiful” Khethelo

Look at the kettle call the pot black, this lady is gorgeous!

“ Alright family let’s leave and give Ndalo time alone with Sabelo”.

Mr Meyiwa says

They all head to the door, only Mrs Meyiwa remains behind. To say I’m feeling uncomfortable would be an understatement I

don't know what to do or where to look so I
have my eyes fixed on the floor, my hands are
on my braids pulling them.

“ What's your story?”

She says after a long moment of silence,
awkward silence I must say.

“ Ma?”

“ Ntlwa! You heard me, I asked what your story
is”

“ I have no story”

She looks at me intently

Now I see where the twins got their blue eyes from, she's such a beautiful woman if only she wasn't such a sferb.

" You see him? That's my one and only son if you dare hurt him you'll have me to deal with, he loves you and you better not be taking him for a ride"

" I love him too ma and I would never hurt him, intentionally that is"

“ You better not, or else you’ll have me to deal with and I promise you don’t want to get on my bad side”

So there’s another bad side? I thought this was her bad side mos

“ I won’t hurt him ma, I promise”

“ I’ll be watching you”

She looks at me from head to toe and strolls to the door, I sigh in relief when the door shuts close. Yerr that was H for hectic!

Tears burn my eyes when I see how pale Sabelo looks, he looks nothing like himself he looks so frail and weak. His lips look dry and purple, he looks bad but he's still the most handsome man I know. Seeing him like this tears my heart to shreds. I pull a chair and sit next to him taking his hand into mine

“ Sthandwa sam I almost died when I thought I lost you, I always knew I loved you but this past week made me realise just how much. I love you Sabelo, with everything in me and I don't see myself loving anyone like I love you. You complete me, you're everything I want and need in a man. You're my safe haven, my happiness and my soul mate life is not worth living without you in it. Please wake up, I need

you, your family needs you, your daughter needs you.”

I bring his hand to my lips and kiss his knuckles

“ I went to the doctor today and guess what we are having a girl, our own little precious. I would’ve given anything to have you by my side when the doctor broke the news, I know you would’ve been so happy vuka Meyiwa I can’t take this any longer. How am I supposed to live without hearing your deep husky voice, you know I’m always horny nowadays so who do you think satisfies my ever needy nuna? You know how addicted I am to you, oh gosh I miss you Sabelo”

I say and wipe my tears

“ Please open those blue eyes of yours and look at me like only you can, I miss you handsome”

“ Ungabe usakhala Ndoni yami yamanzi ivukile indoda yakho”

(Don't cry anymore, your man is awake)

I can't help but scream in excitement and throw myself in his arms planting kisses all over his face

“ Ouch!”

He yelps in pain

“ I’m sorry, sorry”

I say pulling away from his arms

“ Sthandwa...sam..can I..wattter”

“ Oh water, water you want water?”

He nods

**I run around the ward like a headless chicken
looking around for water**

He shows me where the water is with his forefinger, I pour the water in a glass and help him drink.

“ Thank you”

He says after drinking

“ Come join me”

“ Sabelo we won't fit in that bed, I'm fat remember”

I've gained a lot of weight since I fell pregnant

“ Come, you’ll sleep on top of me if you must. I need to hold you in my arms”

Sabelo wami mara!

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NTSIKA

I’m standing outside Sabelo’s ward looking through the glass on the door as the two love birds profess their undying love for each other, I didn’t leave when I saw Mathapelo stay behind while everyone else was leaving. I thought she was going to insult Ndalo so I

stayed behind in case I needed to defend her from my sister in law. I know I should've left when Mathapelo left but I didn't, I only moved away from the door so she wouldn't see me and returned when she disappeared down the corridor.

“ She loves him, you need to forget about her”

I turn around and come face to face with a woman I've never seen before. Trust me I've met many woman in my life but I've never met anyone as beautiful as her.

“ And then wena?”

I ask with a frown on my face

“ Ubiza bani ngo wena, wena?”

She says glaring at me

Yo ayideleli nayi intombazana

“ Oh no, you didn't!”

**“ Uzama ukusabisa bani? Lo buso nyana bakho
abung'thusi, wubani ongathuswa yindoda
empofu awuthi uyadlala bhuti”**

(Who are you trying to scare, I'm not scared of your face, who gets frightened by light skinned man tell me you're joking)

I can't believe a woman just spoke to me in this manner.

“ Uthini?”

(What did you just say)

I'm looking at her with a disquieting look on my face, one that gets big men trembling but guess what? This beautiful stranger looks indifferent and unaffected

**“ Ungizwile akuna moya, hluhana nengane
khehla.”**

**(You heard me there’s no air, leave the child
alone old man)**

Ay shem kuyeyisa loku!

**If she keeps this up then I won’t be held
responsible for what I do next**

“ Phuma kimi sisi wabantu ngiyakukhuza”

(Leave me alone, I’m warning you)

**“ Aisuka pervert busy lusting over a young girl,
you’re so shameless that girl is young enough**

to be your daughter. Its man like you who give other men a bad name"

She says and shakes her non-existent ass walking away from me, yes non-existent because there's nothing there. Unesishwapha usisi esho ngokuma kabi ngathi yinja iwomelele i dustbin sies.

How can someone so beautiful have a body that looks like that? I guess it's true what they say- one can't have it all.

It wasn't her place but she's right I need to stop this nonsense, Ndalo loves Sabelo she would never look at me twice. Maybe seeing them together is what I needed to get over her, those

two love each other. I need to get rid of whatever I think I feel for Ndalo, my nephew doesn't deserve this. I'm so ashamed of myself.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#41

To say I'm happy would be putting it lightly, I'm grateful to be given another chance at life but I'm most grateful for the daughter God has entrusted me with. I'm a firm believer in the notion that everything happens for a reason, my daughter might have been unplanned but

she's anything but a mistake- she's a blessing and I can't thank God enough for her. I was hoping for a son but a princess will do just fine.

After bonding and reconnecting with my woman, she called Sphe and told her I am awake it didn't take five minutes before my family walked into my ward and I received hug after hug and I'll admit it felt good to receive so much love from my family. The doctor also came and examined me, he said everything looks good but he'll keep me in the hospital for two more days and monitor my progress to be certain but for now there's nothing to worry about I should recover without any problems.

It's been over two hours since my family and Ndalo left I'm tired of sleeping so I'm sitting on my butt with my back against the headboard starring at the white walls, it would be better if I had a phone I'd be keeping myself busy with it right now but I don't because those bastards took it. I'm in a public hospital and there's no TV here so you can imagine how bored I am.

A fair skinned lady walks inside the ward and looks around as though searching for something or rather someone, her lips stretch into a big smile when our eyes lock. I'm still confused trying to figure out why she's smiling at me like we're the best of friends when I see her approaching my bed.

“ Hey”

**She greets still wearing the same big smile on
her face**

“ Hi, who are you?”

I’m so confused right now

“ Damn where are my manners, It’s Xoliswa”

Okay!

“ Okay Xoliswa what can I do for you?”

“ Nothing, I just thought I should come and see how you’re doing. I’m glad you survived, you were barely breathing the day I found you lying on the street”

Oh so this is my saviour?

“ You’re the one who found me?”

“ Yes”

I lost hope of ever meeting the nurse who saved my life when I learned that she left immediately after I was admitted and refused to give anyone her name.

“ Wow, I thought I’d never see the face of my saviour. I was told that you left after I was admitted and refused to give anyone your name”

“ That was the plan, when I left I didn’t think I’d come back”

“ Well I’m glad you did so I can thank you for saving my life, tell me what can I do to repay you for saving my life?”

“ You don’t have to do anything, I’m a nurse and saving lives is my job you don’t have to thank me”

**“ I know but I still want to thank you please
allow me to show you how grateful I am”**

**“ If you really want to thank me then you can
do so by being my friend”**

“ Huh?”

She chuckles

**“ I know it’s weird but I could really use a
friend, I’m from Gauteng I transferred to
Mpumalanga a month ago so you can imagine
how lonely it feels. I’m in a different province
far from all my family and friends, I could**

really use a friend well that's if you don't mind being my friend"

" I don't, but I think my girlfriend would make a better friend than me"

" I need friends but I'm not desperate, if you don't want to be my friend it's okay but don't push me to your girlfriend"

" I'm sorry if you feel that way but that's not..arg you know what it's okay I'll be your friend"

" Really?"

“ Yes”

That’s the least I can do for the person who saved my life right?

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NDALO

The word happiness doesn’t begin to describe how I feel, my boyfriend is awake it’s only a matter of time before the doctor discharges him. His dad wanted to transfer him to a private hospital but he’s awake now and getting discharged in two days so moving him to a different hospital will be a waste of time, I

wanted to use an Uber to come back home but Mr Meyiwa wouldn't have it he offered me a lift and guess who sat in the back seat with me? Yes you guessed it, the one and only Mrs Meyiwa while Sphe occupied the passenger seat.

To say the drive was awkward would be an understatement, why was she sitting at the back anyway? She didn't say anything to me but I could feel her piercing stare the entire drive but I didn't dare look at her I pressed my phone the entire time, I've never been so happy to be home like I was when the car stopped at my gate- I could finally breath again!

I'm with my sisters in the lounge telling them all about Sabelo's recovery and the awkward trip back home with his parents.

“ So let me get this straight, he was unconscious all this time but he woke up when he heard your voice?” Melo

“ Yeah, that's basically what happened”

“ If that's not love then I don't know what is..you two are just so nusus man” Anele

“ I know right, they are proof that true love still exists.” Melo

“ Come on, it’s not that deep” I say

“ I’m glad he’s finally awake, that means you will finally get me that phone”

That’s her way of reminding me about the phone

“ Yes, I’ll buy your phone Anele”

“ I’m jealous, why is she getting a phone while I get nothing?. I also passed mos”

“ Come on Melo you can’t compare yourself to me, you have allowance from Funza Lushaka

plus the one dad gives you I'm sure you can afford to buy your own phone"

" Dad also gives you money doesn't he? Plus you make money from the shows you and your group always host"

" Be considerate Melo, Ses'Ndalo has a baby on the way she can't buy both of us phones"

" In that case you shouldn't get a phone as well"

" Aibo.."

" That's enough both of you!"

“ But it’s true Ses'Ndalo Anele and I are both your sisters you should treat us equally”

“ I honestly don’t know what to do, if it’s not Nele accusing me of loving you more than I do her then it’s you doing the same thing. Kanti mele ngenze njani kuthi nibone kuthi I love you both equally?”

(What should I do so you can see that)

“ Treat us the same”

“ But I do njena”

Or don’t I?

“ No you don’t treat us the same, you talk to Melo about everything I’m always the last one to find out about things. Im sure if I wasn’t here when Sabelo went missing you wouldn’t have told me about it”

I’m about to reply when a phone rings disturbing our conversation, it’s Melo's phone. Her cheeks turn crimson when she glances at the screen and see who’s calling her

“ Sunshine”

She says when taking the call and then walks out of the room, leaving Anele and I in awkward silence.

“ I’m hungry ses'Ndalo, should I dish up for us?”

I’m equally hungry but we should wait for Melo, the last thing I want is to be accused of favouritism again. I honestly don’t know what I should do for my sisters to see that I love them equally, they each play a different role in my life so obviously the relationship I have with Anele is going to be different from the one I have with Melo.

“ Let’s wait for Melo to wrap up her phone call so we can eat together”

“ Okay”

“ Ses’Ndalo mina ngyaphaka angeke sizofa yindlala simele umuntu ojolayo”

(I’m dishing up we will die from hunger waiting on someone who’s talking with her boyfriend)

Anele complains, rightfully so

It’s been an hour since Melo took the call, she’s in the bedroom but we can hear her giggles and laughter from the lounge. It’s clear that

**whoever she's busy with on the phone is her
boyfriend**

“ Let's give her five more minutes”

“ What if she takes another hour?”

**“ Then we'll eat without her, if she's not done
in five minutes we are eating with or without
her”**

“ Hmm”

**It must be two minutes later when Melo walks
into lounge, Anele doesn't waste time she**

immediately jolts up from her seat and trudges to the kitchen yeah she loves food that one.

“ Sunshine huh?”

I say beaming at her

“ My lips are sealed”

“ Come on Melo, spill! Who’s he?”

I’m normally not a nosey person but this I’ve got to hear

“ Promise not to judge?”

**“ I’m pregnant for an 18 year old boy trust me
I’m the last person who should judge anyone”**

**“ Okay, Sunshine is my boyfriend. He’s 11
years older than me”**

“ That’s his name, Sunshine?”

She laughs throwing her head back

“ Of course not silly, that’s his pet name”

“ Hmm”

“ 11 years isn't that bad, so tell me everything where did y'all meet. How long have you guys been together, everything nje”

“ Our relationship is still new, I don't want to say much for now I want to give it two or three months then I promise I'll tell you all about it. I promise”

“ Okay I understand, you look happy and that's all I want. You'll tell me everything when you're ready”

Just then Anele walks in with our food and serves me first then Melo

“ Thank you little sister”

“ Thank you skeem” Melo

What I love about the relationship I have with my siblings is that we fight but never hold grudges against each other.

“ Pleasure, can we bless the food already I’m really hungry”

Melo and I laugh

It’s really nice to have my sister’s around it would be nice to permanently live with them again but we can’t, my parents wouldn’t allow

it my dad is already complaining about both of them being here so they have to go back home tomorrow.

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NARRATED

“ Baba”

Khethelo calls out but her father doesn't reply, he didn't hear her. His body might be here but his mind is far away.

“ Baba!”

She says a bit loud this time and it works

“ What’s going on? You haven’t been yourself since we left the hospital, is there something wrong?”

Of course she noticed, if she’s not mothering her siblings then she’s acting like his wife.

Ntsika has no problem with her cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing his laundry but he hates it when she expects him to talk to her about his personal life.

“ I’m okay”

“ No, you’re not okay. Please talk to me daddy”

**“ Khethelo I said there’s nothing to talk about
now get out of my sight!”**

“ But dad..”

“ Ngithe out!”

(I said)

**Khethelo looks at him with tears shimmering in
her eyes before running out of the room.**

**Hurting his daughter is the last thing he wants
but he knows her, she wasn’t going to stop**

prying until he told her what she wanted to hear. Now tell me how can a father tell his daughter that he's in love with a girl who's 20 years younger than him? Not only that but one who happens to be his nephew's baby mama? This is fucked up, he knows it's not right and could potentially ruin the relationship he has with his nephew but tell that to his heart!

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#42

I'm conflicted I honestly don't know what to do, I promised Anele the phone and I feel the need to buy it for her I mean she kept her end of her bargain and passed well so it would be wrong of me not to keep my promise. But there's also Melo who insists I should also buy her a phone if I buy it for Anele, I think Melo is being unfair and dramatic.

I'm on my way to Evander hospital to visit Sabelo, I left an hour before visiting time so I can make a quick stop at the mall and buy him goodies and something to eat at Spur I've been in hospital before and I know how horrible hospital food is. There's a host of people waiting outside the hospital gate, like myself they are here to visit their loved ones the time

is 15:55 visiting hours starts at 16:00 to 18:00
so there's five minutes left before the gates can
be opened and the security allows us to walk
inside the hospital premises. I keep myself busy
on the phone until the gate opens.

" Sthandwa sam"

**That's the first thing he says when I walk
through the door**

" My love"

" Come here"

He has his arms stretched wide open, I sink in
his embrace resting my head on his abs taking
in his scent.

“ How’s my daughter doing?”

He asks with his hand on my small bun
caressing it

“ She’s fine daddy”

I pull a chair and sit on his bedside when we
break the hug

“ I brought you these”

I say showing him the plastic with his goodies

**“ Thanks my love put them in the drawer, I
can't wait to indulge”**

**I see snacks, a bottle of tropica, a basket of
fruits and a take away bag from ocean basket
when I open his bedside drawer**

“ Who brought you these?”

“ Xoliswa”

“ Who's that?”

“ A friend”

I’ve never heard of a Xoliswa who’s a friend of his before but okay

“ Okay”

“ You look stressed what’s up?”

“ I’m okay there’s nothing wrong”

“ Don’t lie, I know there’s something bothering you”

Sometimes I forget how well he knows me

**“ It’s my sisters they are stressing me out
shem”**

“ What’s happening?”

**“I promised to buy Anele a phone if she passes
her grade 11 well and she did and now that I
want to buy her the phone Melo also wants
one.”**

“ Melo is being unfair”

“ Exactly what I thought, now I’m being accused of favoritism I honestly don’t know what to do”

“ Buy Anele the phone, you promised her and it’s only fair for you to keep your promise. If you can afford to you can also buy one for Melo but if you can’t then you shouldn’t”

“ I wish it were that easy”

“ It is, you shouldn’t allow your sisters to manipulate you Melo is being unfair”

“ Yeah, you’re right. This is why I love you so much, you’re so wise”

He grabs my hand and plant his soft lips on my palm

“ You’re amazing don’t forget that”

He says looking into my eyes

Someone clears their throat behind me, I shift uncomfortably and try to retract my hand from his grasp but Sabelo doesn’t let me.

“ Xoliswa”

He says looking at this person standing behind me, I haven't seen her face but from the whiff of her perfume I already know she's a sophisticated lady.

" Sabelo"

" Please come closer"

She shuffles towards the bed and stands next to me and that's when I get a chance to look at her face. Damn she's so beautiful if he didn't refer to her as 'Xoliswa' I would think that she's Amanda du Pont, she looks so much like her.

“ Sthandwa sam this is Xoliswa the nurse who saved my life, Xoliswa this is Indoni yami yamanzi the woman who has my heart Buhlebendalo is her name but you can call her Ndalo”

I jolt up from my sit and stretch my hand out to her with a big smile on my face

“ Nice to meet you sisi and thank you for saving his life, you have no idea what you did for us. I’m very grateful”

“ Nice to meet you too what’s your name again? Oh Ndalo”

She says and turns her head to look at Sabelo completely ignoring the hand I stretched out to her, I shamefully retract my hand and slowly sink back to my seat.

“ How are you feeling today handsome?”

Sabelo looks at me and then her

“ I don't appreciate you treating my woman like that, if you want our friendship to work then you'll need to treat my woman with the respect she deserves. I won't tolerate anyone who treats her badly”

“ What did I do? I’m sorry if there’s anything I did to offend you Ndalo”

Such a pretender!

“ It’s okay” I say

“ No it’s not okay. Xoliswa do you mind coming back some other time? As you can see now is not a good time I’m with my lady and we need to bond”

The way I’m so ashamed right now, Sabelo is rude yoh!

“ Ok no problem it was nice to meet you Ndalo”

“ Nice to meet you too Xoliswa”

**“ Oh and next time don’t show up
unannounced”**

**Mara Sabelo! It’s not like she can call him or
did he forget that he doesn’t have a phone?**

“ Oh okay”

**She says with a low voice and half runs to the
door**

“ Sabelo you were so mean to the poor girl, the same one who saved your life”

“ Serves her right for thinking she can treat you like that, saving my life doesn’t make her the boss of me”

“ But she apologized mos”

“ Angihlangani mina, I miss you so much my love I can’t wait to leave this God forsaken place and be with you behind closed doors”

(I don’t care)

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NARRATED

“ Good evening family”

Junior runs to his father, Ntsika bends to catch him and throws him in the air a couple of time causing the boy giggle's to fill the entire lounge

“ Princess”

He says ruffling Nomcebo's big puffy afro

The girl flashes a smile acknowledging her father before her focus goes back to the screen,

he settles next to Khethelo placing Junior on his lap and looks at his daughter.

“ Mafungwashe didn't you hear me greeting you?”

“ I heard you baba”

“ So why didn't you respond?”

“ I did baba maybe you didn't hear me”

She's lying and he knows it

“ Are you angry at your old man?”

“ No baba I’m not”

She says yet her eyes are glistening with tears

**“ I’m sorry for how I spoke to you yesterday,
please forgive me my love”**

“ I forgive you”

**“ Thank you, I’m going to my room to take a
quick shower please tell me when your uncle
gets here we are going to the hospital to visit
your brother”**

“ Okay, I’ll send Cebo to call you when he gets here”

“ Thanks sthandwa sika baba”

He says pinching her cheeks

“ Baba stop it”

She says giggling

“ That’s the beautiful smile I wanted to see”

Brandon left his car at his brother's house then the two brothers drove to the hospital in his bakkie with Ntsika behind the wheel, there's no way Brandon would drive when his younger is there in this family it doesn't matter how old you think you are but elders are always shown respect. Ntsika might be rude and cheeky but he has never back chatted or raised his voice to his older brother.

“ I saw you yesterday”

Brandon says suddenly

Ntsika's heart jumps to his throat, his hands shake and sweat runs down his down his spine when he thinks about Brandon seeing him

peeking at his nephew and Ndalo. Did he see him?

“ What did you see zalo?”

He asks trying to hide the fear in his voice

“ I saw you looking at Sabelo and Ndalo”

He swallows nothingness and fixes his gaze on the road

“ You’re my little brother, my only sibling and the only surviving direct relative I have except for my wife and kids”

Brandon says in soft yet cold voice.

**Ntsika doesn't respond he just keeps
swallowing nothingness**

**“ If you keep doing what you're doing, I'll be
forced to forget all about the love I have for you
and snap your neck. Don't tempt me
Ntsikayomzi, don't!”**

**And he knows not to mess with Brandon, like
they always say beware of the quiet ones!**

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SABELO

It's seven in the evening we just had our supper, I'm sleeping on my back starring at ceiling counting to 100 trying to get myself to fall asleep I was told counting down helps one to fall asleep.

“ Meyiwa”

My father calls out just when I feel myself drifting off to sleep visiting hours are over how is he here?, I open my eyes and find him and my uncle standing next to my bed.

“ Sanibona”

I fix the pillows and sit up with my back against
the pillows

“ How are you doing my son?”

“ I'm okay dad feeling better than I did
yesterday”

“ That's good, you'll be getting out of here
soon”

My uncle says

I don't know but he doesn't look like himself, he looks uneasy nje and I sense some tension between him and my dad, if I didn't know better I'd say they're fighting but that's not even a possibility these two love each other and I've never seen them fight since I was born.

“ The nurse who saved my life came to check up on me yesterday”

“ Wow, who is she?” Dad

“ She said her name is Xoliswa”

“ You should take her number the next time she visits, I’d like to properly thank her for saving your life”

“ I tried but she says she was only doing her job, she only wants me to be her friend in return”

My father looks at my uncle and they simultaneously shake their heads in disapproval

“ That’s not normal, why would she want to be your friend? I don’t trust her”

Uncle says and my dad echoes his sentiments

“ Yeah why would she want to be your friend, out of everyone why choose you?”

“ She says she just moved to Mpumalanga from Gauteng a month ago so she doesn't have any friends”

“ But still why you? I hope you refused to be friends with her” Uncle

“ Of course he did, he's not stupid he obviously wouldn't agree to befriend that girl right son?”

My father asks looking at me but I cast my eyes down

“ Don’t tell me you stupidly agreed to being friends with her, I thought you were smarter than this. I don’t trust this girl too many unusual things about her, first she brought you here and refused to give anyone her name then she suddenly reappears after you woke up wanting to be friends with you”

“ I agree with you Zalo something doesn’t add up here, what if she’s working with the people who stabbed you” Uncle

“ No, I don’t think so. I was stabbed by two novice criminals- they’re new to this, they didn’t know what they were doing. It was probably their first time doing this”

“ Yet they still stabbed you and left you for dead, what exactly happened Meyiwa?” Dad

I narrate everything that happened that fateful night not leaving out a single detail

“ We need to talk to your friends something doesn’t add up here” Dad

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#43

“ Time for your medicines big boy”

A nurse says pushing a trolley towards us, I turn around and guess what? It’s that disrespectful assless lady from the other day oh so she’s a nurse.

“ Gentleman I’m sorry but my patient needs to take his pills and rest so I’m going to ask you two to leave”

Damn she’s so beautiful, I have never seen an angel in my life but I promise she looks like one.

**“ No problem sisi we will leave, goodnight son
I’ll pass by here tomorrow after work to pick
you up alright?”**

“ Alright dad”

**My brother fist bumps his son and walks out of
the ward**

**“ And then wena usakhamiseleni la?
Angishongo kuthi nihambe?”**

**(Why are you still here didn’t I say you should
leave)**

**She says in a low voice I don’t think Sabelo
heard her**

Ay cha kuyadelela loku shem, funny how she was speaking respectfully when my brother was here. So it's me she's not scared of?

“ Ukhuluma nobani kanjalo wena?”

(Who are you talking to like that)

“ Do you see anyone else here?”

She says and bumps me on purpose

I watch as she sways her non-existent behind underneath that navy skirt, she's so confident and so sure of herself it's evident in the way she walks.

“ Bye son I’ll see you soon”

“ Bye uncle”

“ Bye nurse...”

**I squint my eyes and read the name on her
name tag**

“ Nurse Ziphozenkosi”

“ Bye jerk”

She says with a smile that she quickly tries to hide when I look at her, damn there's just something about her.

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NDALO

I'm with my sisters at the mall doing grocery shopping, I took Sabelo's advice and bought Anele the phone- Melo has more than enough money to buy herself a new phone if she wants I made a promise to Anele not to her for obvious reasons. She mopped around for sometime after I bought Anele the phone and got over it when neither of us entertained her

**tantrum eh ngingatshobela amabele abo
Melokuhle yo asoze!**

**Anele is the one pushing the trolley, y'all know
Melo is lazy mos so she is just toiling behind us
with her phone in hand taking selfies on snap
chat. I reach for the only all gold tomato sauce
left on the shelf but someone beats me to it and
grabs it before I can.**

“ You snooze you lose”

**I lose my balance, trip and almost fall when I
see who the voice belongs to.**

“ It's you!”

“ Are you okay Ses'Ndalo?”

Says Melo standing next to me

“ I’m fine Melo”

“ No you’re not, you almost fell”

**Melo and being dramatic same WhatsApp
group**

“ I’m okay, trust me”

Xoliswa clears her throat to gain back our attention

“ I’m sorry I took it first but the early bird always catches the fattest worm”

She says then laughs

“ Ok who are you and what do you want with my sister?” Melo

“ Aw easy tiger, I’m a friend tell her Ndoni yakhe yamanzi”

Aibo what’s this girl playing at?

“ Ok bitch who are you and what do you want?”

Anele asks sizing her up

My sisters are always ready to fight shem

“ Anele leave her alone, she’s not worth it let’s continue with our shopping”

“ That’s not a very nice thing to say to someone who saved your man’s life, thanks to me your child will get to meet his father”

She says looking at my stomach

**“ You’re getting on my last nerve wena,
Ses’Ndalo why are you letting her speak to you
like this?”**

Says a fuming Melo next to me

“ Push that trolley Anele and let’s go” I say

“ What!”

My sisters exclaim at the same time

“ Listen to your sister girls, she knows best. Bye preggy”

This girl is definitely up to something shem, I have a bad feeling about her.

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.br/.**

SABELO

“ Time for breakfast big boy”

Nurse Ziphozenkosi says and hands me a bowl of porridge

I like this woman, she's been taking good care of me since I regained consciousness. She's so kind and ever sweet, nursing is definitely her calling- she's passionate about her job. She feels like a mother away from home, I'm not the only one who likes her though everyone in the ward sings her praises.

“ Umdoko ma ouledy?”

(It's porridge)

“ Hey wipe that look off your face, porridge is good for you big boy dlana ke mfanami uzoba strong ndzee”

(Eat so you will be strong)

You'd swear she's talking to a toddler shem

" Okay ngizodla ma ouledy"

(I'll eat)

" That's my boy"

She pulls my chin and moves to serve the next patient

I love porridge but I can't stomach the one they cook here iyo I don't know how they cook it but it tastes horrible plus you can't even taste the sugar, well that's if they add sugar ngeke uthembe e South Africa who knows maybe the

hospital's director chowed the money to buy sugar haha I'm kidding.

I force myself to eat the horrible porridge because I know Nurse Z won't play with me when she gets here and finds the bowl still full. The doctor normally does his rounds around 11 in the morning, so I know it's 11 when he walks inside the ward and approaches my bed with nurse Ziphozenkosi next to him. He's carrying what I presume is my file

" Good morning...Sabelo Meyiwa"

He says reading my name from the file

“ Good morning doctor”

“ How are you feeling this morning?”

“ I’m feeling much better than I did yesterday”

“ That’s good, untie the bandage I want to see how his wounds look today”

He instructs Nurse Z who does as told

“ Looks good, how’s the pain? Rate it on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the extreme”

The doctor says

“ It’s not too bad so I’d say 4”

“ Good good, I don’t see why I should keep you here any longer I’m discharging you. Zenkosi please wash and dress his wounds, bye boy I never want to see you in hospital again stay away from trouble”

“ Thank you doctor will definitely do that”

“ Bye”

He walks away leaving me with the nurse

She keeps the wrapper of the gauze sterile while wetting the new wound dressing with a saline wound wash, then she carefully cleans my wounds with saline spray and gently wraps a fresh bandage around my wounds.

“ I’m going to miss you when you leave”

“ I’ll definitely miss you too ma ouledy”

“ As much as I’ll miss you Sabelo I never want to see you here again, stay out of trouble my son. You’re still young and you have a your whole life ahead of you, study and make something out of yourself so your child can be proud to call you her dad”

Yes she knows about the baby, I told her about it.

“ Thank you ma”

“ Pleasure my son, I’ll have to love and leave you now. Bye”

“ Bye”

I know it’s 4 in the afternoon when Ndalo walks in with a plastic from woolies in her hands

“ Sthandwa sam”

“ Baby”

“ Come give me a kiss”

“ Ha Sabelo what will people say”

I laugh, I knew she would refuse

**“ Come on baby just a peck ke, I miss those
juicy lips”**

“ Sabelo”

“ Please mamas”

She laughs

“ Ew don’t call me that, I hate that name”

“ Aw ngizathini kunini ngincenga, woza phela hawu”

(What can I say, I’ve been begging. Please come)

She checks the coast before leaning in for a kiss, I wrap my arm around her waist and suck on her lips.

“ Sa..hmmm...ba..hmmm”

She eventually stops fighting it and we kiss until we hear people cheering and whistling pulling us back from the world where only the two of us exist.

“ Mara Sabelo!”

She says hiding her face in the crook of my neck feeling shy

“ There’s no need to feel shy babe, you only kissed your man there is absolutely nothing wrong in doing that”

I shift and make space for her to sit on the bed

“ But this is a hospital not our bedroom”

“ It’s all your fault baby why did your lips have to be so damn appetizing”

“ Stop it”

“ Yini is your clit twitching?”

“ Come on baby stop talking dirty”

“ You want me too, I can see it in your eyes”

**“ Mxm u dom yaz', kanti ain't you discharged
why are you still here?”**

**“ Yet you're here, ufunani nawe la if I'm
discharged?”**

She laughs

“ I was taking chances”

**“ I am discharged but I'm waiting for my dad to
pick me up”**

“ Does it have to be him?”

“ Yini do you want me to go with you back to your place and do naughty things to you?”

“ Sabelo stop it”

“ Okay I’ll stop, how’s my daughter doing today?”

I ask with my hand under her top brushing her baby bun

“ She’s good, she’s a sweet girl who never troubles her mommy”

“ That’s good I can’t wait to go with you on your next doctor’s appointment with you”

“ Me too”

“ What’s in that plastic?”

“ I was doing grocery shopping and saw this beautiful t shirt for you at woolies, I swear it will suit you so I bought it for you”

“ You know how I feel about you buying things for me”

“ Come on Sabelo stop being a spoilsport I saw a t shirt and loved it for you is it so wrong for me to buy something for my boyfriend?”

She bellows drawing the attention of the other patients in the ward

“ No, please don't get upset”

“ Tell me you'll accept my gift then”

“ Okay I will, pass me the plastic let me see”

She hands me the plastic, I open it and find two t shirts and a pair of jeans from Markham. I look at her and she looks at me with puppy eyes

“ No Sthandwa sam this is too much”

“ Please accept it , I swear this is the last time I buy you clothes”

She’s such a liar, I know this is not the last time. Am I blessed or am I blessed?

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#44

“ Bitch where are you?”

“ I’m coming”

**“ That’s what you’ve been saying for the past
15 minutes”**

I giggle

**“ I’m for real this time give me two minutes
then I’ll be there”**

“ Okay”

She hangs up

I'm meeting with Nthabi for lunch and I'm running late, I woke up in time what delayed me was not finding anything to wear. All of the clothes I normally wear when I'm going out don't fit. I literally cried for a good five minutes before slipping into a maxi dress, I didn't want to look average I wanted to look great but I guess I have no choice but to accept I've gained weight and start buying new clothes.

“ Hey”

“ I'm so angry at you right now, do you know how long I've been waiting?”

“ I'm sorry friend, come on give me a hug”

She rolls her eyes and presses her phone

“ Come, you know you want to”

“ Only because you look so cute”

**I pull her into an embrace and hold on to her
tight the moment she stands on her feet, I've
missed this crazy girl.**

“ Awusemuhle nje, entlek u yellow yeva”

**(You look beautiful, you've gained
complexion)**

“ Come on”

“ No I’m serious umuhle my chomi, hey little one”

She says with her hands on my baby bun

“ She says hello aunt Nthabi”

“ I can’t wait to meet you”

“ That makes the two of us friend, have you ordered?”

We break off the hug and settle down

“ No, I was waiting for you I didn’t want to order incase there’s something you don’t eat”

“ I eat everything my love, this pregnancy is a breeze”

“ Lucky fish, so you still don’t want to tell me who the father is?”

“ I’ll tell you in due time”

“ Hmm”

She snaps her fingers and a waiter comes running to our table, he takes our orders and excuses us.

**“ So what’s been happening in your life?
Anything interesting to tell me about?”**

“ Of course there is”

“ Spill the tea girl”

“ Says someone who’s hiding things from me”

“ Come on Nthabi”

**“ Okay I’ll tell you ngoba vele iyangishisa yoh
kunini ngifuna ukuk'tshela, angina sfuba mina I
can never be you”**

**(I can’t keep it in any longer, I’ve been
meaning to tell you. I’m not secretive)**

We laugh

“ Ngikwazi kahle shem”

(I know you too well)

**“ So masivala ngihambe no Madontsela,
Mathobela, Tsotetsi no Mnguni saya ka
Tsotetsi”**

**(When we closed at work I left with
Madontsela, Mathobela, Tsotetsi and Mnguni
and went to Tsotetsi's house)**

I hate Tsotetsi, he's such a pervert

“ So you were the only female?”

**“ Yeah, you know how the girls at work are
mos so nje angibakhoni ngingagcina ngiba
shayile mina shem you're the only girl I chill
with at work”**

**(I can't stand them I'd most probably end up
beating them)**

“ Okay khuluma phela what happened next?”

(Talk)

“ Hao safika sawosa inyama sathenga utshwala sabudedela goet, angazi kwenzakaleni but ngivuke ngincunu and guess who was next to me?”

(When we got there we braaid meat and bought alcohol and drank ourselves crazy, I don't know what happened but I woke up naked)

“ Tsotetsi”

“ Hai sies wena! It was Mathobela”

**An involuntary scream escapes my lips causing
all the patrons inside the restaurant to look at
me**

“ I’m sorry”

They look at me and go back to their food

Nthabi breaks into a fit of laughter

“ Unamanga wena”

(You’re lying)

“ Stru, I am telling you”

**“ I told you that you guys want each other
ayikho le yenu”**

“ Ya”

“ So how was it?”

**“ Wait mzala don’t rush, so we woke up and
looked at each other hao jiki jiki umuntu starts
kissing me and I kissed him back yuuuu that
kiss was magical wena it had giant butterflies
fluttering inside my tummy yey icabuzana leya
ndoda embi ungayi nyatsi”**

**(That ugly man can kiss don’t underestimate
him)**

I squeal like a kid seeing candy

“ When we broke the kiss bengimanzi nte ngimfuna la, yo ngamtshela mina ngathi angizwise plus vele angikhumbuli nex yey wakhipha ukhono umuntu wangphendu phendula angazi ngiqhame kay'ngakhi”

(I was wet, I told him I wanted the D plus I couldn't remember what happened the previous night. He showed off all his skills and flipped me around doing positions I'm not familiar with, I don't know how many times I reached my climax)

“ Wow”

“ And we’ve been shagging ever since but I want us to be official now how do I tell him?”

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SABELO

It’s been a week since I was discharged from the hospital, my mother cleans and dresses my wounds with antiseptic everyday so I'm healing just fine. There’s only a week left before we welcome the new year, hopefully the new year will be good to me. A lot of things happened in the present year but falling in love with Ndalo has to be the highlight.

My dad went to Xolane and Khutso's homes to question them regarding the day I was stabbed and left for dead on the street but he didn't find them apparently both of them are out of the province visiting their families in the rural areas for December holidays.

Mom still doesn't like Ndalo but she has finally realised how much I love her and that there's nothing she can do about it so she has no choice but to tolerate and be nice to her everytime she comes to visit me, yes Ndalo has been visiting me every single day without fail since I got discharged from the hospital. It feels nice to love her openly I no longer have to hide her like she's some dirty secret, everyone who

matters to me knows about Ndalo and they all accepted her well except for my mother.

I'm in bedroom with Junior playing video games when a knock on the door disturbs us

“ Ngena!” Junior

I can't help but laugh, the little man has grown.
In walks my mother with Xoliswa behind her

What the fuck is she doing her, how the hell did she know where I live?

“ Sabelo this girl here says she is looking for you”

“ Okay thank you ma”

**I expect my mother to walk out but she doesn't,
she stands next to the door giving me a look I
can't decipher.**

“ Ma, is there anything else?”

“ No, nothing come boy”

**Junior runs to the door and leaves with my
mother**

“ What are you doing here?”

“ Ain’t we friends? I came to visit you”

She throws her handbag on my bed and looks around my room with her hands tucked in her back pockets

“ Visit me? How did you know where I stay?”

“ I asked around”

My father was right, this girl is definitely up to something

“ Look thank you for saving my life I really appreciate what you did but I don’t think it’s a good idea for us to be friends”

“ Wow, let me guess sphongo is the one who put you up to this?”

No, she didn’t!

“ Excuse me who?”

“ U spho..”

I throw a back clap before she can complete the sentence. She cradles her cheek in her palm

and looks at me like she doesn't believe I just slapped her.

“ Tell me you didn't just slap me!”

“ Yes I did, and I'll do it again if you ever think of disrespecting Ndalo in my presence ever again”

“ You'll regret this I swear, you better watch your back”

“ Voetsek!”

She grabs her bag on my bed and storms out of the room. Damn the nerve of that girl to call my

girlfriend names in front of me, I'm not one to put my hands on a woman but I'd be lying if I said I regret smacking her because I don't the bitch deserved it.

My mother walks in a few minutes after Xoliswa stormed out

“ Sabelo who taught you to put your hands on a woman?”

She's fuming, I've never seen her look so angry

“ She deserved it”

She grabs everything she finds next to her and throws it my way, I duck and dive until there's nothing else she can throw at me.

“ I will not have a son who beats up woman you hear me? I don't care what she did but you had no right to put your hands on her I didn't raise you like that!”

“ I'm sorry ma”

I apologize for the sake of peace but I still don't regret smacking that girl, angifuni kabi ukujwayelwa kabi mina!

“ Who's that girl anyway?”

“ She’s the nurse who saved my life”

“ The one who didn’t want to tell anyone her name?”

“ Yes, she came to see me at the hospital a week ago I thought dad told you”

“ No, he didn’t tell me anything”

“ Okay, she’s the one who saved my life”

“ So why did you slap her, what is she even doing here?”

“ She’s my friend”

I lie, telling her the truth would definitely cause her to worry. There’s a reason dad didn’t tell her about this

“ Friend? Then why did you slap her?”

“ I..I..”

How do I get myself out of this one?

“ You you what? She’s not your friend right?”

“ Ma please what’s with the 21 questions”

My statement infuriates her, she starts yelling at me.

“ This is my house and I’ve got every right to question you, look Sabelo you came here no gogo wakho telling me you’re in love with her. U gogo wabantu is even pregnant for you, I told you are still young and know nothing about love but you assured me you loved her hell you even cried begging me to accept her. I don’t like her but I tried to accept her because I love you”

Where is she going with this?

“ This is my house if you want to learn to be a player go do your nonsense somewhere else not in my house, you introduced us to your old girlfriend and that’s the only person who’ll be allowed inside this house. Yes I don’t like her but I won’t stand by and watch you play with that poor girl while she’s pregnant with your child, the poor child has been coming here all week to check up on you and you go and do this to her? I don’t know ubufundephi ubufebe kodwa ngeke ubenze la kwami. Kukwami la akusise tavern la kungena isdudla namhlanje islender ksasa, omhlophe omnyama no green ngazi ugogo mina and wuye kuphela uzongena la”

(where you learnt whoring but you'll not do it in my house. This is my house not a tavern where you'll bring a fat girl today and a slender one tomorrow, a light skinned one, a dark one and a green one. I know 'gogo' and she's the only one who'll be allowed inside this house)

Damn does this mean mom finally accepts Ndalo? Wow I never saw it coming. Who would've thought that one day she'd be so angry even sweating while defending Ndalo against me, the same Ndalo she hated? Mehlolo can happen!

“ Usinekani wena?”

(Why are you grinning)

“ You like her ne?”

“ Who?”

“ Ndalo”

“ Mxm uyabheda kanti, I’m serious Sabelo I don’t ever want to see that girl in my house again. Today better be the first and last time she came here”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#45

There's no way you can be with Nthabi and not have a good time, yesterday was fun I was laughing non-stop from all Nthabi's crazy talk I always suspected that there was something between her and Mathobela but thought maybe I'm seeing things when both of them kept denying it. I hope Mathobela is on the same page as Nthabi because my friend honestly deserves to be happy, she's been through a lot she needs a break. All her past relationships have left her broken, she deserves to experience the wonderful feeling of being in love with someone who loves you just as much as you love them. Amazing I tell you.

I just got out from the shower I'm applying my pomegranate body lotion and reaching to my feet is proving impossible with each passing day, my phone reverberates on bed, it's Sabelo. His father bought him a new phone, losing his Redmi was a blessing in disguise because his dad bought him another iPhone. Talk about being privileged!

“ Baby”

“ Sthandwa sam, please tell me you're on your way here”

“ Lutho I’m still struggling to apply lotion on my feet, awazi ngijuluka kanjani before I can do it”

(How I sweat)

“ Askies, wait for me I’ll come pick you up”

“ Okay”

“ Yes don’t strain yourself I’ll come help you out”

“ Thank you baby”

“ See you soon”

I just lay on the bed in my nakedness until I hear Sabelo's knock on the door, I wear a gown and head to the front door to open for him.

" Sthandwa sam"

He pulls me into his arms and plants a kiss on my forehead

" I miss you"

We didn't see each other yesterday because I went out for lunch with Nthabi and came back home late.

“ I miss you too”

I lead the way to my bedroom, remove my gown and throw myself on the bed after giving Sabelo my body lotion. He holds my feet and laughs out loud instead of applying the lotion

“ Yini?”

(What’s wrong)

“ Le nyawo aligezwanga angeke! Ulibonile li mpunga kanjani ay ngyala”

(You didn’t wash this foot I refuse! Did you see how ashy it is)

He says in between laughter

“ Are you trying to say I don’t know how to wash myself properly?”

“ No my love, don’t feel bad you can’t reach your feet so it’s understandable if you can’t wash them properly”

“ Wow”

“ There’s absolutely nothing to be embarrassed about my love, you’re pregnant you shouldn’t be living on your own you need someone to help you out”

That’s true

“ Let’s go take a shower I’ll join you”

He takes off his clothes and the sight of his member has me squeezing my legs together, it’s been a while since him and I got intimate. We couldn’t exactly have sex in his parent’s house especially since I go there during the day

After adjusting the temperature of the water we step into the shower and he lathers my body with shower gel and delicately washes my body with a bath towel

“ Ahhhh”

I cant help but moan, his hands feel so damn good on my body.

“ Babe you better stop moaning otherwise I’ll have you right here and now”

How can I stop when his touch sends waves of pleasure all over my body?

“ What if I want you to have me?”

I say stroking his big meat with my hand

He smashes his lips into mine and kisses the living daylights out of me, my hands roam all

over his body not knowing where to touch....#
removed

After our steamy session in the shower we take another shower, an innocent one this time then he helps me lotion and to put on my clothes and shoes.

“ Do we have to go to your house? I mean you’re already here cant we spend time together away from everyone?”

“ I’d love that but we have to go to my house, the thing is Khethelo woke up early and prepared some amazing dishes for you since she knew you were coming. She’ll be so disappointed if you don’t come”

“ Okay, let’s go but tomorrow you’re coming here right?”

“ Definitely”

“ In that case let’s go mister”

He holds my hand and leads the way to the his mother’s car, a red BMWX5. We sing along to the songs playing on the radio until we drive into his yard

“ Ndalo!”

Junior says when we walk through the door, he runs to me and hugs my knees, I wish I could pick him up but he's too heavy so I just brush his head and pinch with his chubby cheeks.

“ Sanibonani”

They all return my greetings

“ Where is mom?”

Sabelo asks looking at his sisters but they both blatantly ignore him looking everywhere but his direction

Okay what's going on?

“ Where’s mom Cebo?”

“ I don’t know buti Sabelo”

She replies quickly before her focus goes back to her cartoons, this girl loves TV shem. She hardly ever speaks.

“ You’ll find me in the bedroom sthandwa sam”

“ Okay love”

He pecks my forehead and walks away

“ Hao girls why are you giving my man the silent treatment?”

Like no man I’m hurt on his behalf

“ Ask him” Khethelo

“ And he better tell you the truth” Sphe

I wonder

“ Anyway I hope you’re hungry because I prepared something delicious for you, I hope you eat oxtail and dumplings”

“ I do”

“ Thank God, let me dish up for you”

She says already making her way to the kitchen, mabathi umuntu unempatho basuka bekhuluma ngo Khethelo ai shem the girl will feed you and make you feel comfortable.

“ Results are coming out in less than two weeks are you not scared?”

“ I’m terrified but I know I passed I only hope I got at least four distinctions”

“ Stop doubting yourself I wouldn't be shocked if you happen to get all 7”

“ You think so?”

“ Yes”

Sphe is so intelligent shem, she's one of those learners who will have you think twice before you think of going to class unprepared.

The delicious smell of Khethelo's food hits my nostrils before Khethelo emerges from the door with a tray in her hands.

“ I hope you'll enjoy it”

“ Trust me I will”

Like they say we eat with our eyes before we eat with our mouths and this food before for my eyes looks delicious.

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SABELO

It's been over an hour since I left Ndalo with my sisters in the lounge, knowing Khethelo she's probably feeding her everything we have in the house and Ndalo is just too nice she'll probably eat everything not wanting to

disappoint her so I wear my shoes and head to the lounge to rescue my woman . I find her sitting on the couch while Khethelo is sitting cross legged on the carpet with Ndalo's foot on her lap applying nail polish on her toenails, how sweet is Khethelo kodwa?

“ Sthandwa sam I've been waiting for you”

“ Sorry love, wait for me Khethelo is almost done.”

“ No come let's go I'll pick up where she left off”

“ Thank you so much Khethelo”

Ndalo says standing up

“ My pleasure Ndoniyamanzi”

“ What’s going on between you and your sisters?”

That’s the first thing she asks when get to my bedroom

“ First sit on the bed and put your leg on my lap”

Funny enough she doesn't protest, she does as I ask and I apply the nail polish on her toenails

" So what happened?"

" Xoliswa was here yesterday, I don't know where she got my address from but she rocked up here asking for me. Now my mom and both my sisters believe I'm cheating on you with her, I tried to explain myself but they won't hear it. They think I'm cheating on you that's why they're not talking to me."

" Shem my poor baby being punished for something you didn't do, wow didn't think your sisters loved me to that extent"

“ Well they do”

“ I’m blessed”

“ Yes you are, I think Xoliswa is up to something”

“I thought the same thing when I bumped into her at the mall the other day and she said some things to me trying to get me riled up but I didn’t entertain her I just ignored her, not every situation deserves a reaction”

“ What things?”

“ She said a lot but I remember her saying I should thank her for saving your life because thanks to her our baby will meet his father, abo you snooze you lose it’s a lot I think she also said something about the early bird catching the fattest worm”

“ When was this?”

“ The day you were discharged from the hospital”

“ Why didn’t you tell me Ndalo? Didn’t you promise me that there would be no more secrets between us what happened to that huh?”

**“ I thought I could handle it on my own Sabelo,
I can't be running to you with every little thing"**

**“ Little huh? That girl rocked up in my house
without being given an address and she
happened to be at the mall at the same time as
you that's anything but little Ndalo. What if she
knows where you live? You live alone for
goodness sake, she told me to watch my back
what if she comes after you and hurts the baby
who knows what she's capable of"**

**I am terrified I can handle anything that comes
my way but I can't bare the thought of anything
happening to the baby or Ndalo**

“ Oh my goodness you think she’d go as far as harming me?”

“ Yes, we don’t know who she is or what she wants from me so we can’t afford to underestimate her, think about it Sthandwa sam this girl showed up on the same day I woke up from the coma wanting to be friends with me. She happened to be in the same store as you and now she’s showing up here, what are the odds? That girl is definitely up to something”.

I drove Ndalo to her place and helped her pack her clothes into a travelling bag before I drove her to her parent’s house, she can’t stay alone

it's not safe because we don't know what Xoliswa is capable of and she's pregnant she shouldn't live alone- she was meant to move back home on her 7th month but she had to do it sooner for obvious reasons.

“ Dad I need to talk to you it's urgent”

“ Okay let's go to my office”

I lead the way to his office and pace up and down while waiting for him, he walks in two minutes later with a glass of amber liquid in his hand.

“ I'm here Meyiwa talk to me”

“ Ndalo says she bumped into Xoliswa at the mall on the day I was discharged and Xoliswa said some mean things to her, yesterday Xoliswa showed up here looking for me and told me she asked around when I asked her how she found out where I lived. She called Ndalo ‘sphongo’ when I told her our friendship wouldn’t work, I lost it and gave her a tight back slap she was so angry and told me to watch my back and something tells me that she wasn’t joking she meant it”

“ What? This is getting out of hand there’s more to this than what meets the eye and I can bet on my life that girl is not working alone, someone is helping her and it’s not just anyone

but it's someone who knows you and knows you well but who can it be?"

" I'd say it's Musa but he's mute and can't write so it can't be him, I can't think of anyone else except for him."

" Fear not, I'll deal with this. For now tell me everything about this girl"

" I don't know much I only know her name and that she's nurse who transferred from Gauteng to Mpumalanga a month ago"

" Where does she work, we can start there"

“ I don’t know babami, she never told me and I never bothered to ask”

“ What’s her surname?”

“ I don’t know”

“ Where in Gauteng is she from?”

“ I don’t know”

I feel so useless right now because I know nothing about this girl, nothing except for what she told me.

“ Wow, so we are fighting against a ghost. At this point we aren't even sure that Xoliswa is indeed her name. I'll get my PI to look into this don't worry I'll get to the bottom of this, for now you and Ndalo need to be protected”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#46

I'm woken up from slumber by my ringing phone, I quickly swipe my hand on my face and rub my eyes to clear my blurry vision. I have a

terrible headache, I slept late last night talking to my dad about the Xoliswa situation and now whoever is calling is waking me up from my sleep. I sigh in relief when the phone stops ringing but my joy is short lived because it starts ringing again

“ Hello”

“ Hey Sabelo...this is Melokuhle, Ndalo's sister”

My heartbeat accelerates and my breathing hitches, why is Melo calling me?

“ Hey Melo why are you calling me?”

I ask sitting up with my back against the headboard

“ Something happened to my sister, you need to come to my parent’s house it’s urgent”

She says in a breaking voice, barely audible.

“ What happened to Ndalo? Is the baby okay?”

“ I can’t tell you over the phone ...you need to come, bye”

She says and drops the call.

I jump down the bed and go up and down the room looking for something to wear, a pair of jeans and a black t shirt Ndalo recently bought for me are the first things I land my eyes on. I quickly slip into them and wear my Adidas slides bolting out of my room.

“ Where are you rushing to?”

Mom says when I pass the lounge running

“ Something happened to Ndalo, her sister just called I need to go there now”

She lets the broom in her hands fall to the floor and take big strides towards me

“ Calm down and tell me what happened”

**“ I don’t know for sure but something
happened to Ndalo ma”**

**Tears are shamelessly rolling down my cheeks
when I say this**

**“ Don’t cry my son, let me get your father to
drive you there. You can’t go alone okay?”**

“ Okay”

“ Wait here I’ll go get your father”

Myriad thoughts are running through my mind threatening to drive me crazy, I hope nothing happened to her or I swear I won't survive it.

"Let's go"

My dad says taking big strides to the front door, I scurry behind him following him to his car. We are parked a few houses away from Ndalo's house within 15 minutes of leaving the house, we couldn't park outside her gate because there's an Ambulance, a police van and a host of people blocking the gate.

**My head is buzzing and my chest is on fire I
don't know what to think**

“ Be strong son”

Dad says with a gentle squeeze on my shoulder

“ Let's go in there and find out what's going on”

**He climbs out of the car and I follow suit, we
approach the gate and force our way through
the crowd blocking the gate.**

“ Where are you going? This is a crime scene”

The chubby policeman standing at the gate declares when we attempt to walk inside.

“ We are family”

My father replies

“ Family? Do you want to know what the funny thing is?”

“ What?”

“ I know the Khumalo's and I know you're not family”

“ Wow so you know all their relatives?”

“ Awungeni baba, move!”

(You’re not getting in)

“ I’m not going to ask you twice, let us in!”

**Dad says through gritted teeth clearly running
out of patience**

“ You are not getting in”

**“ It’s okay officer you can let them in, they are
family”**

Melo says approaching the gate, she looks like a mess. Her eyes are puffy and swollen it's clear she's been crying for a long time.

There is a staring contest between my father and the police man before he permits us to walk inside the yard.

“ Melo this is my father, dad is Melokuhle Ndalo's sister”

“ Nice to meet you Melokuhle, what's going on what happened to Ndalo?”

Dad asks, I can't bring myself to speak.

“ Please follow me inside my father will explain”

She leads the way to the lounge where her parents and sister are, Anele is bawling her eyes out in her father’s arms while her mother is speaking to who I assume is a detective.

“ Sanibonani ekhaya”

Dad greets

“ Yebo”

Ndalo’s father replies with a frown on his face

“ Family this is Mr Meyiwa Sabelo’s father and Sabelo, Ses'Ndalo's boyfriend”

“ Detective can we continue later?”

Mrs Khumalo says wiping a wayward tear with the sleeve of her jersey

“ No problem”

The detective nods and walks away giving us privacy

“ Please take a seat Meyiwa”

Mr Khumalo says

My father and I settle down on a two seater couch across Mr Khumalo.

“ I’m sorry to come to your house like this I mean no disrespect, I know we still owe you damages for the baby please forgive me”

“ No it’s okay sir we understand”

Mrs Khumalo says with a breaking voice

“ What happened, why are the police here?”

“ Someone broke into my daughter’s room at dawn... and stabbed her to death”

No, my ears must be deceiving me, Ndalo can’t be dead. I refuse to believe that.

“ No, that’s not true”

“ I’m sorry son but it’s true, my daughter is no more someone mercilessly killed her and snatched her from us”

A gut wrenching sob breaks from Mrs Khumalo's mouth, her painful cry prompts her daughters to cry.

No this can't be happening, I must be dreaming. Ndalo can't be dead.

“ Where is she can I see her?”

Maybe then I'll believe but for now I can't believe that my Ndalo is no more

“ Yes, the photographer is still busy taking pictures of the scene but I'll talk to the detective and ask him to let you see her”

I nod and swallow the painful lump on my throat

The detective agrees to let me see her and tells the photographer and his team to step out of the room and give me privacy, my dad wouldn't let me come inside on my own and I don't have the energy to fight him so I let him be.

I release a loud scream when I see her lying on the bed in the pool of her own blood with a butcher knife lodged on her stomach, it's true she's gone. She's dead, they killed her not just her but my daughter too. I'm in pain, in disbelief it's like I've lost touch with reality I don't know what's real and what's not. This must be a dream it can't be true, my Ndalo can't be dead.

“ I’m sorry son”

**He pulls me into his arms and I weep like a
baby soaking his shirt with my tears**

**“ I’m so sorry, I’m sorry I failed to protect
Ndalo and my grand daughter”**

**“ Please tell me this is nothing but a dream,
please dad tell me it’s not true”**

I pull away from his arms

“ Please tell me this is a dream”

I plead desperately while looking into his eyes

“ I’m so..”

“ I don’t want to hear your apologies, you always fix everything please fix this dad. Make her live again”

He looks at me with commiseration on his face

“ Please dad, you know people I’m sure you must know someone who can bring her back to life”

He looks at me like I just told him pigs can fly

“ What are you still waiting for babami, take out your phone and call your friends I can’t lose her”

“ Sabelo she’s gone there’s nothing anyone can do to bring her back to life son, I’m sorry”

“ No, she’s not dead. She’s alive, she'll wake up when I ask her to you’ll see”

I approach the bed and take her hand into mine.

“ Sthandwa sam”

Dad gives me a pitiful look

**“ She’ll wake up you’ll see, Sthandwa sam
wake up and prove to everyone you’re not
dead”**

**“ Sabelo stop doing this to yourself please my
son, let her go you’re tempering with police
evidence”**

**“ No, she’s not evidence she’s my woman. The
mother of my unborn child”**

“ Oh my son”

He pulls me into his arms, I resist at first but he doesn't let go of me. I weep and sink to the floor in my father's arms.

It's been an hour since dad and I came back from Ndalo's house, we left after the morgue van came to collect Ndalo's body. I still can't believe she's gone just like that, I keep closing my eyes hoping this will be nothing but a horrible nightmare when I open them again.

I'm in my bedroom going through our WhatsApp conversations and playing her voice notes over and over again, I can't believe I will never see or hear her voice ever again.

Someone snatched the love of my life from me

in the most brutal way and I won't rest until I make them pay with their life

It feels like someone is twisting a knife in my heart everytime I think about my unborn child, my angel who was robbed a chance at life. She was unplanned and I'd be lying if I said I was ready for her because I wasn't but I fell in love with her from the moment I knew about her and losing her before I even met her hurts like hell. I was looking forward to being her father, I was ready to do anything for her and I know I would've done my best to be a good father to her.

I wonder who she would've looked like, me or her mother? I would've wanted her to take her

**mother's beauty and her beautiful body, how
do I move on from this? How do I live without
air- Ndalo was that to me, she was the oxygen I
need to breathe. A knock on the door disturbs
me from my thoughts**

The person knocks again when I don't reply

**Sphe walks inside the room without being given
permission to enter**

" I'm sorry"

She says sitting next to me on the bed

“ I need to be alone Sphe please leave me alone”

“ I want to be here for you Troy, you’re not the only one who’s hurt. We are all hurting, miss Khumalo was a good person”

“ Exactly, miss Khumalo was only a good person to you but she was more than that to me. She was the love of my life, my first love and the mother of my baby so don’t come here and tell me you’re hurt. You know nothing about losing someone you love with every fibre of your being, I had nothing to offer her Sphe but she still loved me and respected me. Not once did she make me feel like I’m not good enough for her because I couldn’t afford to do

things for her, she would try and do things for me instead now tell me how do I come to terms with her death? How dammit?”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#47

I wake up drenched in sweat panting heavily damn it the dream felt so real, my face is wet with tears- I must've cried in my sleep. There's a sharp pain in my heart the pain is too strong almost tangible, the dream felt so real I'm so glad it was only that-just a dream I would

literally die if anything of that sort really happened. I've just been so paranoid since I realised how dangerous Xoliswa might be, I guess that's why I ended up having this nightmare because of this fear I have of Xoliswa doing something to Ndalo and the baby.

I wipe my tears with my palms and grab my phone under the pillow and call Ndalo, I know it was just a dream but I need to hear her voice to be sure. She picks up on the fourth ring

“Daddy”

Call me weak I don't care but I break down at the sound of her voice.

“ Sabelo are you crying? What’s wrong baby”

Her words are laced with worry

“ I’m okay Sthandwa sam...don’t mind me I’m fine just glad to hear your voice”

“ Tell me the truth Sabelo, what’s going on?”

“ Like I said Sthandwa sam there’s nothing wrong everything is perfect I’m just glad to hear your voice”

“ Uze ukhale pho?”

I chuckle, she wouldn't understand.

“ Tears of joy baby”

“ You sure?”

“ 100% Certain, how's my daughter treating you?”

“ She's okay my love, you know she's a good girl”

**“ Ngiyakuthanda MaKhumalo ngenhliziyo yami
yonke, you and our baby mean the world to
me”**

(I love you MaKhumalo with all of my heart)

“ Ncoah, we love you too daddy”

“ Where did you sleep last night?”

“ In my old room why?”

“ Alone?”

“ Was I supposed to sleep with anyone else?”

“ I think you should sleep in the main house with one of your siblings”

“ No, Sabelo I need my space and privacy”

“ I know but I’m asking you Sthandwa sam please consider it, you can be in backroom during the day but sleep in the main house so you can be close to someone in case something happens in the middle of the night”

“ I think you’re exaggerating, I still have four months to go before I give birth so I don’t think anything will happen to me”

“ Please do this for me”

“ Okay fine, I’ll sleep with Anele happy now?”

“ Ecstatic”

**“ We will talk later there’s someone at the door
bye”**

“ Ngiyakuthanda Ndalo”

(I love you)

“ Uthandwa ndim”

(I love you)

I'm not willing to take chances with Ndalo's life dad must do something hire a bodyguard for her or something, I can't live like this I cannot live in fear. I pick up the clothes I was wearing last night from the floor, slip into them and make my way to the lounge.

" Good morning family"

" Morning"

They all respond including Khethelo and Sphe, we are okay now but it took Ndalo explaining to them for them to trust me.

" Have you been crying?" Mom

“ Yes, I had a terrible nightmare ma I woke up in tears”

My statement grabs everyone’s attention, now all eyes are on me.

I sit on the couch and put the cushion on my lap.

“ Tell us Sabelo what did you dream about?”

“ Ndalo was brutally murdered and her stomach stabbed with a butcher knife”

“ God forbid! It’ll never happen, maybe this is a sign. You should pray for Ndalo my son, her life might be in danger” Mom

I don’t pray, I wouldn’t know where to start but I’m willing to try if it means saving Ndalo’s life.

“ I’m sorry brother” Khethelo

“ it’s okay sis wami it was just a dream even though it felt so real, my heart is still broken I thought hearing her voice will help but it didn’t. Nhliziyo yami isese buhlungu maybe if I see her I’ll feel better and believe that it was nothing but just a dream”

(My heart is still sore)

“ Oh my son, you really love this girl ne?”

“ I do”

“ I’m sorry I was too blind to see that all along, I realize how wrong I’ve been now, your happiness means the world to me my child and if Ndalo is your happiness then I have no choice but to accept her as your choice. She’s not that bad, she’s actually a nice girl very down to earth and humble. Uzilungele umtwana bantu I’ve been so mean to her but she’s never talked back to me or gave me any bad looks”

(She’s a good person)

“ We’ve been telling you aunt but you refused to listen” Khethelo

“ Aisuka wena it was not easy for me to accept this, but I realize now that I’ve been unfair on the poor girl”

“ I’ve been yearning to hear you say these words for a long time ma, thank you so much” I say

“ Ok'salayo usese wu gogo loko akujiki”

(She’s still ‘gogo’ that hasn’t changed)

We laugh

My mother though

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NTSIKA

For some obscure reason I find myself parked outside Evander hospital, don't ask me what I'm doing here because I also don't know I just found myself here and now that I'm here I realize how stupid it was of me to come here, I should be at my brother's house checking on my kids not here.

A knock on my window pulls me from my thoughts, it's Nurse Ziphozenkosi and she looks furious.

I roll down the window and look at her

“ What are you doing here?”

“ Excuse me?”

“ You heard me, what are you doing outside my workplace?”

“ Ngazongi sanganela wena, can't I come to the hospital because you work here?”

“ We both know you came here because of me”

**I laugh, like really laugh throwing my head
back**

**“ Haibo! Waze wazithanda bo. You think too
much of yourself”**

**“ Stop following me around, next time I won’t
be so kind”**

**She’s pointing a forefinger at me as she says
this**

Tell me why I find her disrespect attractive?

“ Wake up because you’re clearly dreaming, I’d never follow you around. Get over yourself, you’re not my type I prefer my woman with ass”

There’s a twinge of pain I see in her eyes as she mumbles the words ‘Oh, my bad. I’m sorry for accusing you falsely’ and walks away from my window.

Something shifts inside of me after seeing the sad look on her face I climb out of the car and go after her, she increases her pace when she feels my footsteps I run and catch up with her. I wrap my arms around her from the back

holding her close to my body, her small body
feels so delicate in my big arms. She smells so
good

“ I’m sorry”

I whisper in her ear

“ Let go of me!”

“ No, I won’t until you tell me that you accept
my apology”

“ I accept your apology now let me go”

“ No, I am so sorry. I didn’t mean to offend you”

“ Let me go, people are watching”

“ I don’t care about people, please forgive me Zenkosi I didn’t mean to offend you I’m sorry”

“ Okay let me go”

“ I’ll only let you go if you promise to allow me to make up for this”

“ How?”

“ Let me take you out for lunch”

“ No”

“ Please Zenkosi”

“ Okay, only on one condition”

“ Name it”

“ We go to a place of my choice”

“ Done”

“ Then I’ll go out with you for lunch”

I release her from my arms and step in front of her, her eyes are glistening with tears. I must've really hurt her

" I'm sorry"

" I said it's okay"

" No it's not because you're crying"

I wipe her tears with my thumbs

I've never felt so horrible n my life like I do now, I didn't mean to hurt her I swear. I hold her soft hand and take her phone

“ What are you doing on my phone?”

“ Dialling my number”

She doesn't have a password so I punch my numbers and call my number, I cut the call on the first ring.

“ Please save my number, I'll call you tomorrow. I'm sorry once again”

**I give her back her phone and walk back to my
car**

“ Hey you didn’t give me your name!”

She bellows behind me

“ It’s Jerk or Pervert whichever one you prefer”

A beautiful smile graces her face

“ You’re such a Jerk!” she says

I laugh and get inside the car

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NDALO

It's so good to be home and have mom fussing over me, it feels good to be nurtured and feel loved by my mother after everything that happened between us I had no hopes in us ever being close again but I'm glad I was wrong because this honestly feels so good. I don't know where Melo is she's been gone since the morning but I think she's with her boyfriend, Anele is also not here she went to her rehearsals her group is invited to perform on some show in Gauteng on Saturday, I don't know where my father is I'm with my mother in the lounge watching Mehek- an Indian series.

**My phone rings on top of the coffee table, mom
grabs it and gives it to me. You should see the
smile on my face when I see who's calling**

" Sabelo"

**I say trying to get up from the couch and it
proves to a problem, one would swear I'm nine
months pregnant the way my stomach is so big.**

" Sthandwa sam I'm outside"

" Okay"

“What’s happening why are you breathing heavily, is the baby okay?”

The fear in his voice cant be missed

“Calm down babe I’m okay, mom was helping me get up from the couch”

I’m walking out of the lounge now

“ Okay, I came with my mom’s car”

“ Okay”

I cut the call and walk to the gate, his mom's car is parked four houses away from my house. He climbs out of the car when he sees me

“ Sthandwa sam”

He says when he meets me half-way and immediately squeezes me in his arms before I can respond.

“ I can't breathe Sabelo”

“ I'm sorry”

He says loosening his arms around me but not breaking the hug

“ Baby what’s wrong you’re behaving strange”

“ Nothing I just missed you, come let’s go to the car. Should I carry you?”

“ Yes baby”

The way I love being carried okare ke ngwana shem, there’s nothing like being in your man’s arms ninani! Musa always made me feel like I was fat because he couldn’t pick me up and now that I know I’m ‘gugeble’ angizibambezeli shem. I never miss any opportunity to be ‘guged’

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#48

“ So what do you think?”

Melo says holding a beautiful red dress

“ When are you going to wear it?”

I ask and shove a spoonful of ice cream in my mouth, I'm so addicted to ice cream these days especially tin roof from woolies .

“ Tomorrow, Sunshine asked me to go with him to a family lunch at his sister’s place”

Tomorrow is the 25th of December, Christmas day.

“ You think the rents will allow you spend to Christmas away from home? Dream on girl”

“ I won’t ask, I’ll shoot straight to Boksburg after church”

There’s a Christmas service at church tomorrow morning and of course everyone in the Khumalo house is attending

“ His sister lives in Boksburg?”

“ No, she lives in Pretoria- Newstead residential estate. He’s the one who lives in Boksburg, Fish eagle estate. I’ll go to his house then we’ll drive to Pretoria together”

“ Okay so you want to know if this dress is appropriate to wear to the lunch at his sister’s place?”

“ Yeah, he plans to introduce me to his two sisters, the sister’s husband and his son”

“ He has a son?”

“ Yeah, he’s 6 years old and the cutest boy ever. He looks like his father but he’s cuter, apparently he took his mother’s doe eyes and dimples”

“ Where’s the mother?”

“ She passed away immediately giving birth to their son”

“ That’s so sad, so he raised the boy all alone?”

“ Yeah with his family’s help of course, it’s sad hey I feel for him. I’ve never met his son though, I’ve only seen him in pictures his dad

always posts pictures of him on WhatsApp. He loves his son and that's why I want his son to like me"

She sounds desperate for the boy's approval
shem

" Relax, I know he'll like you I mean what's not to like about Melokuhle Khumalo"

I say in a chirpy tone trying to cheer her up but it doesn't work

" You don't get it sis Sunshine loves his son so much and I don't see him settling down with someone his son doesn't fancy"

“ I think you’re getting yourself worried over nothing, the boy is only six I’m sure he’ll like you and if he doesn’t then I know you’ll find a way to win him over. You’re good with kids, relax the lunch will go well and the boy will accept you okay?”

“ Okay”

Melo is in foundation phase unlike me, she love kids and knows how to handle them. I love kids too but I don’t think I can handle primary school kids iyo imagine dealing with things like ‘ma'am uBanele ukakile’ thixo ngathi ngiyabona! It can never be me shem.

“ So do you think the dress is fine?”

“ Yes I think you’ll look beautiful, I’m so happy for you little sis I hope this guy treats you like the queen you are”

“ He does yoh, he’s so handsome, financially stable so you’d expect someone like him to be a player or a jerk you know how stinking the attitude of these extremely handsome guys normally is but not him sis he’s the sweetest”

“ Ncoah I wish you nothing but the best hey”

“ Thank you, so you’re spending Christmas here?”

“ Yeah, where else would I go?”

“ Ext 26, Sabelo’s house”

**“ Yo and subject myself to his mother’s bone
chilling stares nge Christmas? Wu ngeke shem
I’d rather be here and enjoy mom's cooking”**

“ Plus uyapheka u girl”

(She can cook)

“ Yeah”

“ Kaze ukubangisani u girl njengoba uzilungele kanje”

(I wonder what she has against you because you’re a good person)

“ Ai nami angmazi shem but Sabelo says she’s cool with me and actually defended me from him the other day because she thought he was dating Xoliswa but that’s not what I see when I look at her yoh, uvele angibheke kabi umama ngivele ngibe uncomfortable”

(I also don’t know) (She gives me ugly stares)

“ Mele uke umbuze kuthi yini inkinga yakhe”

(You should ask her what her problem is)

“ Yo ngizizondise ngaye worse”

(You want her to hate me more than she already does)

“ Athi dankie uthole wena mina bengizomkhombisa shem”

(She should be grateful it’s you and not me because I was going to show her flames)

“ Aibo I’m not doing that mina”

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NTSIKA

I'm so nervous for my lunch date with Zenkosi I haven't wooed a woman in a long time, well five years to be specific. Since the death of my wife this is the first time I'm going on a date with someone, yes I've had woman here and there but it was nothing serious it'd be a situation of two adults helping one another- I gave them money in exchange for sex. Yeah I bought it, I preferred it that way because I wasn't emotionally ready for a relationship and Ndalo is the first woman after 5 years to make me think long term, I still have feelings for her but I'm hoping to get over her in time.

I don't know what I feel for Zenkosi, it's not a secret that I find her extremely beautiful and

intriguing but I wouldn't say I'm in love with her at least not yet. For now the only person who rules my heart is Buhlebendalo Khumalo but I know she can never be mine so forgetting about her is for the best, I thought not seeing her will accelerate the process but it seems I was wrong because it happens at a rather slow and daunting pace getting over her that is.

I just got a text from Zenkosi asking me to pick her up outside the hospital, she refused to give me her address which I don't mind it's not safe out here women are being killed everyday so she's well within her rights to protect herself from me. I'm still a stranger after all. I kill the engine and fish for my phone in my pockets to call her, it only rings once before she picks up

“ Hey Jerk”

“ Hi Sdeleli, I’m here”

“ I can see your car”

“ Where are you?”

I ask looking to all directions and spot her strutting towards the car with the phone against her ear, damn she’s so beautiful I love how she walks there’s conviction in every step she takes and I love how her hair bounces elegantly as she sways her hips side to side damn!

“ Close your mouth”

**Her voice booms against my ear frightening me,
I’ve been so engrossed in her glorious sight that
I even forget that I’m on call with her.**

“ Hey”

**She says when she stops next to my window,
her intoxicating scent is all I can smell. I can’t
get used to how good she smells**

“ Hey, get in so we can get going”

“ Tell me you’re not serious”

I’m lost

“ What’s wrong now?”

“ I’m waiting for you to get my door”

Oh lord! Chivalry has never been my thing, I’m a Zulu man but I’m still skating on thin ice with this one so I have no choice but climb out of the car and pivot to her side and get the door for her

“ Thank you”

**I wait for her to settle in before closing the door
and rounding to the driver's seat**

“ Where are we going?”

“ Secunda, Lake Muzi”

“ Are you talking about Muzi lodge?”

“ Yes”

**Surprisingly we manage to hold a conversation
the entire drive to Secunda, getting to know
each other better without fighting like cat and**

dog knowing how fervid we both are I didn't expect it.

“ So where do you want to eat?”

I'm holding her handbag like the perfect gentleman that I am while she leads the way swaying her hips

“ I love sea food so Ocean Basket it is”

I didn't expect her to choose such a simple restaurant, I thought she would demand I take her to a five star restaurant but she surprised me. I didn't expect this

“ Are you sure that’s where you want to eat?”

“ Yes, I’m certain come on let’s go”

**Life is something else hey, who would’ve
thought that I would find myself in a restaurant
looking into the eyes of the most disrespectful
woman I’ve ever met dying to know her better?**

“ What?”

**She asks feeling shy, I can’t say I blame her I
have been starrng.**

“ You’re beautiful”

Her lips breaks into a beautiful smile which
shes tries to hide it but fails dismally. I don't
know a lot of things but I know one thing,
Zenkosi likes me!

“ Thank you”

“ So while we wait for our food mind telling me
about yourself?”

I ask relaxing my back on the chair and giving
her all my attention

**“ I’m Ziphozenkosi Gwebu, a 39 year old nurse
I stay in Embalenhle ext 12 ...I think that’s all
there’s really nothing much to tell”**

“ Okay, any husband or boyfriend?”

**I know she’s not married because she’s not
wearing any ring but one can never be too sure**

“ I wouldn’t be here if I was with anyone”

“ Okay, any kids?”

**Pain flashes in her eyes before she looks up
preventing the tears in her eyes from rolling
down her cheeks**

Why do I always say the wrong things? I put my hand on top of hers on the table caressing it softly

“ I’m sorry”

“ Excuse me”

The waitress says

She claims back her hand and grabs her handbag on the chair next to her and looks for something inside, I can’t say anything not while this girl here

**“ Please enjoy your food and please don’t
hesitate to call me should you need anything
else”**

**The waitress says and walks away, phew at
long last!**

**“ I’m sorry for ruining our lunch with my big
mouth I ..”**

“ I can’t have kids”

She blurts out cutting me short

“ What?”

“ Yes, I can’t conceive”

The look of pain on her face can’t be ignored

“ Why?”

**The words roll from my tongue before I can
stop them**

“ I’d rather not talk about it if you don’t mind”

“ I’m sorry”

What else can I say?

“ Don’t apologize it’s not your fault, I love kids and would’ve loved to have my own but unfortunately God didn’t see it that way and it’s okay”

Not it’s not okay because it’s clear she’s hurting

“ And you how many kids do you have?”

“ Three”

I love my kids, they’re my pride and joy and I’d normally say more when I’m asked about them but how do I do that with Zenkosi without

hurting her and reminding her of what she can't have?

“ Tell me about them”

“ Zenkosi please”

“ Don't feel sorry for me I'm a big girl so tell me about your kids, I'm sure they're the cutest”

“ Wait, are you trying to say I'm good looking?”

“ Wu shem get over yourself!”

She says laughing, at least I managed to make her laugh

“ Let’s me eat while you tell me all about your beautiful children”

“ Okay my first born is 20 this year, her name is Ntombizokhethelo but we call her Khethelo

I go on and on telling her all about my kids

We are strolling around the lodge holding hands when we end up in the pool area, it’s

brimming with kids they are swimming while their parents watch over them.

“ Let’s go back” I say

“ No, let’s stand here and watch them swim. Kids are beautiful I don’t know why God chose not to give me my own but that doesn’t stop me from appreciating and loving them”

She’s not just saying it she genuinely loves kids, it’s written all over her face. How I wish I had the power to fix this, I’d definitely fix this for her. She’s a beautiful woman who deserves to be a mother.

“ What are your plans for tomorrow?”

“ Nothing, why?”

“ Join me and my family for lunch please”

“ What?”

“ I know it’s too soon but I enjoyed your company and I’d appreciate an opportunity to get to know you better, you’ll come as a friend but please say yes”

“ I don’t know”

“ Please”

**She looks at me thoughtfully, I hope she says
yes.**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#49

NARRATED

**The two sisters have been up since the wee
hours of the morning making preparations for**

the Christmas lunch, they went all out and prepared a feast. Today is a very important day to them, for the first time in years their brother is bringing someone to their gathering. So everything needs to be no less than perfect. Nthathi went as far as asking him what his girlfriend is allergic to and what beverage she prefers.

Happiness doesn't begin to describe how they feel now that he's finally moving on, it's been 6 years since the mother of his son passed. It took him years to come to terms with her death, those two loved each other immensely so her death almost destroyed him. He changed and became someone they didn't recognize, he turned into a sensitive, defensive and

aggressive person who fought with everyone over the smallest of things but thank God he found help and now he's back to the brother they know and adore.

“ What time did he say they'll get here?” Nthati

“ 1PM ”

Dineo replies and takes a big sip of her champagne

“ Okay let me go get the boys ready, please watch over the oven please”

She beseechs causing Dineo to laugh

“ Relax sis, I won’t let the cake burn. Today is just as important to me as it is to you”

“ Thanks”

She says and walks up the stairs to the main bedroom where she finds her husband laying skyward on bed with their daughter in his arms

“ Is she sleeping?”

She says whispering

“ No, she’s wide awake. You know how she enjoys being in daddy’s arms”

That’s true, Reitumetse is a daddy’s girl she loves being in her father’s arms.

“ Well I’m afraid I’ll have to disturb your bonding session, Themba will be here in an hour I need to get the kids ready”

“ No you don’t, you need to relax you’ve been on your feet since 4AM. I’ll get the kids ready, you need to rest.”

“ Thanks my love, she must be hungry let me feed her then”

She says lowering herself on the bed taking their 7 month old daughter into her arms, her husband leers at them with a smile on his face while Reitu kicks her leg in the air latching on Nthati's breast.

“ She loves her food”

“ And I enjoy breastfeeding her but yo wang'kukuna ngwanao Kagiso bona ke masapo jwang”

He laughs

**“ Come on babe you’ve never been thick,
you’ve always been a slender”**

“ But this is too much now”

**“ If you say so, I’ll get the boys ready while
Reitu has her breakfast I’ll give her bath when
I’m done with them.”**

**“ Okay love don’t forget to tell your daughter to
bath”**

“ Okay Bokamoso baka”

Nthati’s cheeks redden.

The name still gets her heart swelling with joy even after seven years of being together.

Kagiso doesn't find the boys in Omphile's bedroom so he goes around the house looking for them until he finds them in the backyard playing soccer.

“ Boys!”

He calls out and the boys stop chasing the ball giving him attention

“ It's time to bath now, come on let's go”

“ Please give us five more minutes dad”

Omphile negotiates

“ I wasn’t asking you Omphile, get yourselves inside the house now”

“ But dad..”

“ No buts we don’t have time, your uncle is on his way”

Bophelo takes the ball and follows his cousin to the house sulking.

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MELOKUHLE

I shouldn't have gone to church, going there was a waste of time because I didn't hear a word the pastor said because all I had in my mind was the lunch with Themba's sisters. He tried to reassure me saying his sisters are nice people and that they were looking forward to meeting me but I still feel nervous about the lunch, this is the first time I'll be introduced to a boyfriend's family so I feel uneasy about the whole thing. I left church immediately when the service ended and took an Uber to Boksburg, of course I didn't pay for it bae did.

We must've been on the road for approximately 39 minutes when he drives into Newstead residential estate, he's on the visitor list so we are allowed inside the estate without signing in. The ambience that surrounds this place screams serene, chic, upmarket and smart ya ne some people are living large

With my arm tugged in his we walk towards the beautiful double storey house with a beautiful lawn and garden, even the grass looks different from the one back in my house I don't know maybe I'm seeing things. He rings the bell and the door opens revealing a light skinned lady dressed in a yellow silk crisscross back high split dress with lace heeled mule heels, her lips break into a warm smile when our eyes lock.

“ Hey, you must be Melokuhle.”

“ Yes, I’m Melo and you are?”

“ Nice to meet you Melo, I’m Dineo”

“ Nice to meet you too Dineo”

She pulls me in for a hug, well that’s if I can call it that. You know that two seconds hug we give to the opposite gender in church? Yes that’s the hug she gave me

“ Mina awungboni vele” Themba

(You don't see me)

We laugh

“ Askies buti wami, how are you?”

“ I have this beautiful lady next to me so I'm definitely doing great, where are the others?”

“ They are still getting ready, please follow me”

Themba holds my hand and leads the way to the elegantly decorated dining room, the walls are panted in white. The Raph Lauren Mayfair rectangular dining table is on the center of the room making it the first thing I land my eyes

on, the table is set with Ella teilvergoldet
cutlery set and Maxwell Williams dinner set
ngisasho namanje some people are living large.

“ Please have a seat I’ll go get my sister and
brother in law”

Dineo says excusing herself

Themba pulls a chair for me and settles next to
me intertwining my trembling hand with his

“ Babe there’s no need to feel nervous, my
sister and brother in law are good people you’ll
see”

Just then a handsome God of man walks into the room carrying a cute chubby baby girl in his arms, his aura demands respect and attention there's just something about him that makes the room feel smaller.

“ Sware”

(Brother in law)

He says fist bumping with Themba

“ Bro”

“ Hello beautiful niece”

Themba takes the baby from him

“ Beautiful lady you must be Melokuhle”

He has a kind smile on his face, damn he is so handsome.

“ Yes, I am and you must be Kagiso the brother in law”

“ I am, nice to meet you. Welcome to our humble abode, my wife should be down soon”

“ Nice to meet you too and thank you for welcoming me into your home”

“ It’s a pleasure”

“ Malume!”

“ Sunshine!”

Two boys exclaim at the same time when they walk into the room and see Themba, they immediately drop the toy cars in their hands and run to him.

Themba wraps his left arm around them pulling them to his embrace but it seems like the princess doesn’t like sharing so she starts crying.

“ Reitu is so jealous!”

Says the boy who looks exactly like Kagiso, he must be his son.

“ She is, she doesn’t want us near uncle or sunshine”

Says Themba’s son, he looks much cuter in person.

“ Leave her, she’s the princess of the house”

Says Themba showering the little girl with kisses causing her to giggle and show off her toothless smile, damn she's so adorable.

“ Hey, you must be Melokuhle. I'm Nthati it's an absolute pleasure to finally meet you”

I've been so focused on Themba watching him play with the little one that I didn't see the sisters walking in. Damn Nthati is beautiful

“ Nice to meet you too”

I say stretching my hand for a handshake but she pulls me in for a hug, and just like her

husband she smells good I should ask her what perfume she uses.

“ I’m so happy to finally meet the lady who stole my brother’s heart, pictures don’t do you justice you’re even more beautiful in person”

She says when we break off the hug

“ Thanks, you’re equally beautiful”

“ I’m not sure if you’ve been introduced to the kids so I’ll do the honors this is my daughter Warona, my son Omphile and the chubby princess is my last born Reitumetse”

Her kids are so adorable

“ You have such beautiful kids”

**“ Thank you, and this here is my lovely nephew
Bophelo. Kids this is aunt Melokuhle”**

“ Nice to meet you aunt Melokuhle”

**Nthati’s kids say while Bophelo remains mum, I
crouch to his level and greet him with a smile
on my face**

“ Hey Bophelo”

The boy just gawks at me with a blank look on his face.

My biggest fear is manifesting, the boy doesn't like me!

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SABELO

Mom woke up early and cooked up a storm, there's all sorts of food on the table starting from turkey, roasted lamb, barbecue, trifle kere bona the dining room looks like a mini buffet. Big bowls of various foods and desserts are

lined on the table and everyone is serving themselves it's a feast.

You'd expect Junior and Nomcebo to be the only one's who are wearing new clothes today but that's not the case in this house, mom, Khethelo and Sphe are all wearing new outfits dresses to be specific and they look absolutely stunning with all their hair and make up done. My mother hardly puts on extensions or wears any make up so she looks extra beautiful today, I don't know how many times I've caught my dad drooling over her. My mom is a such a beauty shem.

“ I can't believe you all started eating without my brother”

Says my father while stuffing his face with food

“ Look who’s talking”

Mom says and we all laugh

“ I’m getting worried, this is unlike him. Please try him on his phone Mafungwashe wakhe”

“ There’s no need for that, sengikhona!”

(I’m here now)

Uncle says making his way in with nurse

Ziphozenkosi in his arm, when and how did

this happen? We all stop eating and stare at them

“ Good afternoon family, this is Ziphozenkosi my friend. Zenkosi this is my brother, his beautiful wife Mathapelo, you already know his son Sabelo that’s his twin sister Sphehile. That one over there is my beautiful daughter Ntombizokhethelo, my other daughter Nomcebo and my son Ntsikayomzi Junior”

I don’t remember the last time I saw him look so happy

“ Aw Ntombenhle we meet again, welcome to our home”

**My father is already on his feet giving kissing
her hand like the perfect gentleman he is much
to my mother's disapproval**

**“ Thank you so much for the warm welcome
Meyiwa”**

I also rise to my feet and give her a hug

**“ Welcome to our home maOulady I never
thought I'd see you again so soon”**

“ Thank you my boy”

She's such a warm and lovely person.

“ I'm sorry who are you? It seems you're well acquainted with the males in my family”

My mother questions sizing her up with a scrunched nose

“ Mathapelo there's absolutely no need for you to be rude to our guest, Ziphozenkosi is a nurse at Evander hospital that's where she met us”

My father says unable to conceal his disappointment

“ Oh I’m so sorry forgive me, I thought...I don’t even know what I thought but please forgive me. Please take a seat, it was kind of you to join us”

“ Thank you”

My uncle pulls a chair for Nurse Z and settles next to her, there’s definitely something going on between this two I don’t buy this whole friendship story. I hope they date, Nurse Z is the right person for my uncle she would make a good mother to my cousins.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#50

“ Somebody better tell me where Melo is!”

Mom bellows

**Just like I thought my parents don't appreciate
Melo being absent from the 'very important'
family Christmas lunch.**

“ Ask Ses'Ndalo they never tell me anything, if anyone would know where Melo is then it has to be ses'Ndalo”

Anele says putting me on the spot, now the rents are looking at me expectantly. I shove a spoonful of food inside my mouth and chew slowly

“ Hey unganginyanyisi wena Ndalo, tell us where your sister is!”

(Don't annoy me)

“ I don't know dad I last saw her at church like the rest of you”

“ Unamanga man, you know where she is. It’s written all over your face, you’ve never been a good liar” Mom

(You’re lying)

She’s right I’m not a good liar but I stick to my story

“ I’m not lying ma, I really don’t know where she is”

“ Okay call her and put the phone on speaker”

Dad suggests and mom agrees with him

“ I don’t have airtime”

Stupid excuse but I didn’t know what else to say

My mother puts her hand inside her bra and the hand comes back with squashed R100 notes, she separates them and gives Nele one R100 note

“ Go buy your sister airtime”

Anele doesn’t waste time, she jolts to her feet and leaves the room in a flash.

“ Melo will know me today, how can she disappear today of all days? She knows how important it is for us to spend Christmas together as a family”

I grab my phone and go to WhatsApp attempting to send Melo a warning but mom snatches the phone from my hand before I can send the message

“ What the hell are you hiding Ndalo?”

She says after reading the message I was about to send to Melo, mom can shout as much as she likes but I’m not saying anything I won’t betray my sister.

“ At long last”

**Mom says when Anele emerges from the door
holding the airtime voucher in her hand**

“ Recharge your phone and call her”

**She gives me back my phone and I have no
choice but to do as she says**

**“ Yo Ses’Ndalo I’m so glad you called, the
meeting went better than expected..”**

I fake a cough halting her from revealing more than she already has

“ Ses’Ndalo are you okay?”

She asks, the worry in her voice is almost palpable

“ Yewena Melokuhle ukuphi? Why are you not picking up our calls, come back here right this minute!”

(Where are you)

My mother interjects

“ Uhm Ma I’m in Pretoria I can’t come back now”

“ Wenzani lapho?”

(What are you doing there)

“ I had a meeting with the bursary people”

“ On Christmas day? Ungangenzi ugogo wakho mina get on a taxi to Embalenhle right this moment”

(Don’t make me your fool)

“ Did you hear me?”

She asks when Melo doesn't reply

“ Kwenzakalani why angasaphenduli Anele?”

(What's going on why is not responding)

“ She dropped the call ma”

“ She did what? Call her again!”

Anele calls but the phone rings unanswered

“ Where is your sister Buhle?”

My father asks giving me a stern look

“ She’s in Pretoria meeting with the bursary people”

I’d rather die than sell my sister out!

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SABELO

You know how usually the woman is the one who plates for the man and serves him his food? Well it’s the total opposite with my Uncle and Nurse Z, he’s been serving her and asking her if she’s okay every 2 minutes. All of us are surprised because my uncle is as lazy as they

come, he never does anything for himself not even dishing up but here he is going out of his way playing the perfect host to Nurse Z yet he claims they're only friends? Yeah right, something is definitely going on between the two of them.

Seeing them and my parents together made me wish Ndalo was here with us but she refused when I invited her to come have lunch with us which is why I'm on my way to see her. Nurse Z and Khethelo are in the kitchen washing dishes well Sphe is the one who was supposed to help Khethelo with the dishes but when Nurse Z offered to help lazy Sphe used that as an excuse not to help out.

“ Khethelo will wash aunt Zenkosi will rinse and wipe them what will I do, I’ll just cause unnecessary traffic in the kitchen”

That was her excuse as if my mother’s kitchen is not big enough to fit all three of them

Mom was ready to chew and spit her out but Nurse Z told her it was fine Sphe didn’t have to help, she and Khethelo would be okay without her.

“ Dad please borrow me your car keys?”

He’s with my uncle outside sitting under the veranda drinking whiskey

“ Where are you going?”

“ Ndalo’s house”

“ Okay”

**He digs his hand in his back pocket and it
comes back with the car keys**

**“ Why didn’t you invite her to have lunch with
us?”**

Uncle asks and my father gives him a look which has him looking uncomfortable, okay what's going on?

“ She always spends Christmas with her family, it's their family tradition”

“ Understandable”

“ I'll be on my way then”

“ Okay”

It takes longer to get to Ndalo's street than it normally would because of traffic, it's definitely Christmas today the streets are brimming with

people who are going up and down the streets with bottles and cans of different alcohol beverages. Even young kids who I'm sure are still in primary school are holding bottles of alcohol but who am I to judge, I'm the same 18 year old boy who's about to be a father in a few months time after all.

“ Baby”

Ndalo says when she picks up her phone

“ Sthandwa sam I'm outside”

“ I'm coming give me two minutes”

“ Okay”

She says and cuts the call.

I connect my phone to the car’s Bluetooth and play Teeks- first time while waiting for Indoniyam. It doesn’t take long before I see her approaching the car, she looks so gorgeous in a Ditsy floral print knot dress and white sandals. The dress has a side slit revealing her dreamy chocolate thighs and beautiful legs I love her thick legs unyathela ngabantwana umuntu wami bafethu, her baby bump is so big one would swear she’s ready to pop kanti kuphi la we still have a long way to go.

When she finally gets to the car I jump out from my seat and round to the passenger seat and get the door for her but not before giving her a tight squeeze

“ You look beautiful Sthandwa sam”

“ Come on ngiyi gwinya kanje”

(I look like a fatcake)

She has gained some weight but it's nothing to write home about, I think the weight gain suits her matter of fact.

“ Uyigwinya lami angisho”

(You're my fatcake)

“ Sabelo! That’s not sexy”

“ Askies ke muntu wami”

(I’m sorry my person)

“ You just said I’m fat so I’m not letting you off the hook so easily”

She folds her arms and fixes her gaze on the people walking up and down the street pretending to be angry at me, I’m tempted to play with her chubby cheeks she looks so cute when sulking.

I reach my hand in the backseat and grab the gift bag and place it on top of her lap.

“ What’s this?”

“ Your Christmas present”

“ You got me a gift? I’m sorry I didn’t get you anything.”

She says feeling bad

“ It’s okay there’s no need to feel bad, open it”

**She opens the gift bag and unwraps the box,
the corners of her lips curl into a smile when
she sees what's inside the box**

“ Babe you didn't”

“ Oh yes, I did”

**I'm glad she's likes her gift, I didn't know what
to get her with my miniature budget. I ended up
buying her Drip sneakers and I'm so happy she
likes them**

“ Thank you”

**She says with a smile that reaches her eyes.
She really likes them, she's not pretending to
just to make me feel better.**

“ Only a pleasure I'm glad you like them”

**“ Like? I love them, thank you so much baby. I
feel bad for not getting you anything”**

“ Don't worry, it's okay”

“ I can't wait to rock my new sneakers”

**She says hugging my waist resting her head on
my stomach.**

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MELOKUHLE

I didn't expect to receive such a warm welcome from everyone, I didn't anticipate things going the way they did but I'm glad Themba's sisters are nice people I was more anxious about meeting them than I was about Bophelo but it seems I was worried for nothing. They're good people just like Themba said, Nthati advised me to give Bophelo some time to get used to me the boy is not used to sharing his father's attention with anyone so he probably sees me as a threat someone who's going to take his sunshine away from him.

Nthati is such a good cook the food was delicious I enjoyed every single dish she prepared and even went for seconds hey don't look at me like that, ngiyazidlela mina angidlali nje kanjalo. My parents have been blowing my phone with calls and I've been ignoring them because I know they'll force me to come back home, when I got a call from my sister's number I didn't think it could be them so I started blabbing telling her all about my trip fortunately she stopped me before I revealed more than I should then mom started yelling at me demanding to know where I was. I didn't know what else to say so I said I'm meeting with my bursary sponsors but my mother is no fool she didn't fall for it she knew right away that I was lying so I had no choice but to cut

the call, I know I'm in deep shit but for now I'll push all of that to the back of my mind and enjoy this wonderful afternoon with my boyfriend's family.

The kids are outside playing, I'm with the sisters in the lounge Nthathi is breastfeeding her daughter who's slowly dozing off to sleep.

Dineo is drinking Champagne, I don't remember seeing her eat she's been drinking like a fish since I got here yet she's still sober. She's probably used to drinking like this, I mean that's the only logical explanation as to why she'd drink alcohol like she's drinking water and not get drunk.

“ Let me go put this one to sleep I’ll be back”

Nthati

She stands up and walks away with her daughter in her arms, she makes motherhood look so easy.

“ So Melo what do you do?” Dineo

She asks after a few minutes of silence

“ I’m a second year education student at TUT”

“ Hmm, how old are you?”

“ 20”

“ Okay, so do you think you’re ready to be in a relationship with someone who’s not only 11 years older than you but has a 6 year old son too?”

“ What are you trying to say Dineo?”

I don’t like her tone

“ Nothing, I’m just asking”

“ Asking what? Ask clearly so I can reply, don’t beat about the bush if you want to come for me you better come straight”

“ Oh wow, ain’t we hot tempered?”

“ Bitch do you have a problem with me?”

“ Wow, you’re ratchet! I wonder where Themba picked you up from”

Picked up? Wow If I haven’t slapped this girl it’s because her sister is such a nice person and I don’t want to disrespect her by starting fights in her house and I also don’t want to embarrass my boyfriend.

So I choose to stand up and leave the room, trust me it’s the best thing to do right now. I

give myself a tour around the house and admire the beautiful interior decoration and exotic furniture, whoever designed this house did an impeccable job. I bump into Nthati on my way up the stairs

“ Where’s Dineo I hope she didn’t leave you alone?”

“ No, I got bored sitting there so I decided to give myself a tour of your beautiful house I hope you don’t mind”

I can’t tell her about her sister’s attitude, she might like me but Dineo is her sister at the end of the day.

“ No, I don’t mind. But I think you should’ve asked her to give you a tour, this house can get confusing”

If only she knew what a bitch her sister was to me a few minutes ago.

“ Did you see the pool?”

“ No”

“ Come with me I swear you’re going to love it”

She doesn't wait for me reply she immediately holds my hand and drags me outside the house.

“ Wow, it's beautiful”

“ I know right, wait until you get inside”

“ What? I didn't bring a swimsuit”

“ Come on don't be a party popper, I'll borrow you something to change into”

“ No offense but your clothes won't fit me have you seen my ass girl”

We laugh

**“ Come on stop bragging girl I have mine
alright”**

**True she has ass but it matches her petite body,
there’s no way her clothes will fit me.**

“ How do you do it?”

I ask

“ Do what?”

“ Look so good even after giving birth to three kids”

“ Nothing yaz I took after my paternal aunt”

“ Wow you’re blessed hey”

“ Not really, I’d give anything to gain some weight at least be a size 36 or 34 ke but it doesn’t want to happen regardless of how much I eat. I want to try herbal life after getting Reitu off the boob”

I think Nthati and I will get along, I find it so easy to talk to her like the conversations flow we don’t have to force it.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#51

“ Can I come in?”

He looks up from his computer and nods his head giving me permission to enter

I walk in and close the door behind me

“ So what? Are you just going to stand there and stare at me?”

“ Uhm I wanted to ask if there’s been any update from the PI, it’s been over a week dad”

“ I know, I’ll call him and find out if he has anything but I told you that it wouldn’t be easy because we know nothing about the girl so this is like looking for a needle in a haystack”

“ I understand but I can’t live like this babami, I don’t sleep well at night because I always dream of her doing something to Ndalo and my baby”

He stands up from his seat and rounds the oak desk to stand next to me

“ I’m sorry you’re going through all of this, you’re only 18 you should be enjoying your teenage years and having fun not worrying about someone harming your girlfriend and baby.”

“ It’s okay dad”

“ No it’s not okay, I’ll talk to Greg and find out how far he is with his investigation. We need to put this Xoliswa issue to rest before you start varsity”

“ Thanks dad”

“ Don’t mention it, you’re my son and I’d do anything for you.”

“ Thank you”

I leave his office and head to Sphe’s bedroom, I need to check up on her. She’s been cooped up in her room since morning, something must be wrong this is totally unlike her.

“ Come in”

She yells from inside, I push the door and let myself in.

“ Hey”

“ Hi”

“ What’s wrong?”

“ Nothing why?”

“ You can’t lie to me Sphe I know you, tell me what’s bothering you?”

She blows out a sigh and lies on her back pillowing her arms. I take that as an invitation

to join her, so I kick off my slides and lay next to her.

“ Talk to me what’s up?”

“ I want to study medicine”

“ Okay, that’s good but it doesn’t explain why you look troubled”

Can’t say I’m surprised Sphe has always wanted to be a doctor

“ I want to study it in Cuba”

“ What? Why Cuba, there’s Medicine in Wits, UFS, UCT, UP, UKZN, Walter Sisulu University, Stellenbosch, UL and Sefako Makgatho health sciences University with so many options in South Africa why Cuba?”

I know all these universities offer medicine because she applied to all of them

“ Cuba invests a lot of money in health care which means it offers a very high standard of medical education”

“ We have many doctors who studied medicine in our country and they’re all doing just fine”

“ I don’t dispute that but I don’t want to study medicine in South Africa I want to study in Cuban universities because they are globally known to be highly competitive in the medical field, Cuba is well known for cutting edge advancement in medical research and healthcare. I need this please don’t make me feel bad for wanting this”

“ But Cuba Sphe, that’s in the Caribbean North America what about us- your family?”

“ Come on Sabelo don’t make me feel bad for wanting this, can’t you support me in this?”

She’s right I need to support and respect her choice but the thought of her being so far away

from home unsettles me, we've never been provinces apart since we were born now I'm expected to be okay with her being in another continent with no one to protect and look out for her?

“ Please Sabelo I need your support in this”

“ Okay tell me more”

“ So every year the South African government offers a scholarship to top students around the country to study Medicine in Cuba, If I'm selected I'll have to go through a bunch of entrance/interview tests, a full medical test before a final selection is made on who gets to go Cuba”

“ Okay so do you randomly get selected or you have to apply?”

“ I have to apply, the application forms are found at the nearest Provincial hospital or district department of health and applications normally close around March or April the closing dates vary between provinces so I need to apply by end February to be on the safe side”

She did her research and knows all there is to know about this, this goes to show how important this is to her

“ Okay tell me more”

“ To qualify I obviously need to pass my matric well, with a minimum average of 70%”

“ That’s nothing you’ll definitely qualify, so how long will it take for you to finally be doctor Meyiwa”

“ it’ll be one year of learning Spanish and foundation courses then five years of Medical studies in Cuba then I’ll complete the last 2 years of my medical degree back in a South African university since I’ll be serving here”

“ Okay how often will you come back home?”

“ Eish”

“ Don’t say eish, tell me”

“ I won’t come back home for the first year and will only be allowed to come back once a year starting from the second year”

“ What?”

“ Wait, I can come home often if I can afford to pay for the plane tickets myself”

“ Yoh, I don’t see the rents agreeing to this especially mom. You know how possessive. she is, she’ll feel like she’s losing you if you’re so far away”

“ She’ll have a grand daughter who’ll take all her attention, she won’t even know I’m not here”

“ Asaz’”

(We don’t know that)

“ Come on give me some hope, I really need this”

“ Talk to dad first I’m sure he’ll find a way to get through to her”

“ You’re right I will do that”

“ So what happens if you fall pregnant during the course of your studies?”

“ It’s either I abort my child or I’ll be forced to come back home”

“ Really?”

“ Yes, nakhona there’s a number of abortions one can have before they’re disqualified from the program. They’re looking for students who

are eager to study and abstain from sex for the duration of their studies or at least practice safe sex”

“ Yo so are you like going to learn everything in Spanish or whatever language they speak in Cuba?”

She laughs

“ No silly most of medical courses are offered in English”

“ What accompanying documents do you need?”

“ Why do you ask, do you want to apply?”

“ No never, I have a baby on the way leaving South Africa is not an option for me and besides I don't want to be a doctor”

“ Okay, I need to submit a CV, a copy of my ID, mom and dad's ID copies, passport and my matric certificate, mom and dad's proof of income and proof of residence..oh I think I'll need a visa as well”

“ Wow, I can see how much you want this I hope the rents will allow you to apply and go for what you want so I can brag to everyone about my sister whose a doctor”

We laugh

I really don't know how I'm going to cope with her continents away from me but I can see how much she wants this and I'm more than ready to support her, I guess this is part of growing up. We need to separate and find our way through this life thing individually and not as twins like how we've done everything in life well except sex.

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NDALO

Melo didn't only miss the Christmas lunch and cut the call while my mother was still talking, she switched her phone off and came back home the next day. Mom was so livid she wanted to beat her up but dad stopped her and reminded her of what happened the last she beat me up, I was bruised for days that woman is brutal she doesn't know how to discipline a child she'll beat you like she's fighting you.

" You still owe me details" I say

We haven't had chance to speak about the lunch she had with Themba's sisters since she came back, I've been going to Sabelo's house and only coming back home when it's late at

night much to my parents disapproval but they're still tip-toing around me trying to make up for their mistakes so I'm taking advantage of knowing they'll not say anything

“ Yo Ses’Ndalo her house is beautiful chic and everything classy, her husband Kagiso is a walking temptation yangizwa he’s sex on legs muhle nangu muntu”

“ Haibo Melo, you can’t talk about someone else’s husband like that”

“ I don’t want him hao I’m just complimenting God’s divine creation”

“ I can't with you”

“ Nthathi, the wife is also beautiful and they have three adorable kids. Warona I think she's 10 then Omphile is the same age as Themba's son then their last one is 7 months old, Reitumetse she's so adorable”

“ They sound like a lovely family what about the other sister, doesn't she have a boyfriend or kids?”

“ Leso shlama leso, I don't know she didn't say much about herself all she did was question me and drink alcohol like a fish”

“ Yini was she mean?”

**“ Not really but her questions were
condescending and undermining”**

“ I hope you didn’t fight with her phela wena”

**“ I almost slapped her trust me but I chose to
be the bigger person and excuse myself”**

**“ Good, imagine fighting your boyfriend’s
sister”**

**“ Ay kunani? Muntu makangiphaphela
ngiyambhibiza mina kuthi wu sis ka Themba
kuza ngamva loko”**

(What's wrong with that? I beat up anyone who disrespects me, I don't care if she's Themba's sister or not)

“ Ay Melo”

“ I won't let anyone disrespect me shem askies yo ngeke kunganyiwa!”

My phone rings saving me from the rather uncomfortable conversation with my sister

“ Baby”

“ Sthandwa sam do you have any plans for tonight?”

“ No, I don’t why?”

**“ Because I’d love to spend the night with you
and welcome the new year with you in my
arms”**

**Oh konje it’s the 31st of December today, the
last day of the year.**

“ I'd love nothing more but where?”

**“ Your apartment or better yet let’s book into a
hotel”**

“ Only if you’ll let me pay”

“ No, I’ll pay”

“ With what money?”

“ I have savings”

**“ We will go to the hotel only if you’ll let me
pay”**

“ Okay, you win. You’ll pay then”

“ Yaay!”

“ Is that a yes?”

“ Of course it’s a yes my love, I can’t wait. Let me make the bookings right away”

“ Okay I’ll borrow my dad’s car, what time should I pick you up?”

“ 7 should be fine”

“ Alright see you at 7 then”

“ Bye”

“ Bye”

“ At least one of us has plans for tonight”

Melo says when I end the call

“ Don’t you have plans with ‘Sunshine’?”

“ No, he’s going back to his sister’s house and obvious that stuck up bitch Dineo will be there and I’m so not in the mood to see her face”

“ Melo don’t call her names, she’s still your boyfriend’s sister and he won’t appreciate you calling her names”

“ But she’s a bitch mos”

“ I give up”

I open my pc and make a booking at Oleratong guest house, I know Sabelo wanted a hotel but this is the only thing I can find at the last minute. I can’t wait to welcome the new year in my man’s arms but the new year brings about a reality I’m not sure I’m ready to face, a reality in which my boyfriend and I will live provinces apart. Will our relationship survive the distance, will he be faithful to me and not cheat, will he keep all the promises he made to me? I don’t have the answers nor does he, the answer lies on time, only time will tell.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#52

“ Damn I look good!”

I exclaim looking at my reflection in the mirror.

I'm wearing solid ripped skinny Jeans, a plain white t-shirt, a white bomber jacket and white Jordan courtside sneakers. I love the colour white and I think it looks good on me, I'm not trying to blow my own horn but I look great especially with my new haircut.

After putting on my cologne I grab my phone and wallet and make my way to the lounge.

“ Wow you look good I wonder uyaphi mase uzimanzise kanje!” Sphe

(when you look this good)

She’s wrapped in fleece blanket on top of the couch eating jumping jacks straight from the packet.

“ I’m going out with my girlfriend”

“ You look good”

“ Thanks, have you seen dad?”

“ He’s outside with uncle Ntsika and their friends, what do you want from him?”

“ Haibo! Why are you questioning me?”

“ I’m just asking”

“ I want to borrow his car”

“ Hmm”

“ Let me get going, I don't want to drive at night it's festive season the roads are busy and people are driving under the influence the last thing I want to get caught up in a car accident”

“ Yes, it's not safe so you better get going”

“ See you tomorrow, happy new year in advance”

“ Happy new year mntasekhaya”

“ Come on give me a hug”

**She picks herself up from the couch and
snuggles in my embrace holding on to me for
dear life**

“ I love you Sabelo”

“ I love you too sis wami”

**I find Dad, uncle and three of their friends in
the backyard. Dad has a bottle of beer on his
left hand while he flips the meat on the braai
stand using his right hand, he gives the fork to
my uncle when he sees me approaching and
takes big strides towards me meeting me half
way.**

“ What’s up son?”

“ Please borrow me your car”

**“ At this time Sabelo, on a busy day like today?
Where are you even going, don’t tell me you’re
going to turn up. Don’t tell me you forgot what
happened the last time you went out partying”**

**“ I’m going to a guest house in Evander with
Ndalo”**

**“ You know the risk Sabelo I can’t let you go,
what if something happens to you out there?”**

“ Dad please”

“ No Sabelo, I can’t take that risk with your life”

“ But Ndalo already made payments and it’s non-refundable”

He looks at me for a while seemingly deep in thought

“ Dad please”

“ Okay, I’ll drive you there myself”

Talk about cramping my style

“ It’s either that or you’re not going anywhere”

**Not what I wanted to hear but it’s better than
cancelling right?**

“ Okay”

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NDALO

**Today is one of the days where I hate being
pregnant, I’m spending the night with my
boyfriend so I wanted to look sexy but I can’t**

because of this big belly now most of my clothes and the sexy lingerie's I bought are too small and this outing wasn't planned it's a spur of the moment thing it happened spontaneously so I didn't have enough time to go shopping for a sexy little number to blow Sabelo's brains out and have him lusting over me.

“ Yoh what the hell happened here!”

Melo exclaims when she walks into my room and sees the mess I made while looking through my clothes for something to wear.

I huff and lower myself on the vanity chair, it's a bit uncomfortable for me but it's the only

thing I could find in this room that didn't have a heap of clothing on top.

“ I can't find anything to wear Melo and Sabelo will be here any minute now”

I feel so overwhelmed and frustrated I'm so tempted to cancel this whole thing.

“ Shh don't cry sis, I'll help you find something to wear there must be something”

Just then I get an incoming call, it's Sabelo. I wipe my tears and clear my throat before taking the call

“ Baby”

“ Sthandwa sam are you okay?”

“ Yes, I’m okay”

“ You sound like you were crying”

“ No, it’s nothing. It’s my sinuses”

“ You have sinuses since when?”

**“ Stop with the 21 questions Sabelo, I’m sure
you didn’t call to interrogate me”**

“ Woah, calm down baby there’s no need to get yourself worked up. I’m outside”

“ What?”

“ Yes”

“ I can’t find anything to wear Sabelo, let’s cancel”

“ What? No, we are not cancelling anything. I’m giving you five minutes to get your pretty self here or I’ll come and get you myself”

He says and cuts the call

“ Look at what I found” Melo

How I wish I had her enthusiasm right now

**She’s holding a button front belted tie dye
dress.**

“ You’re a lifesaver”

**“ I know right, now stop crying and put this on.
Your bae is already here and I’m sure you don’t
want to keep him waiting for long”**

Like a bat out of hell I quickly slip into the dress and tie my hair in a high bun. Melo helps me apply make-up, she keeps it natural nothing too fancy or too colorful. I say my goodbyes to my parents in the lounge and walk out of the house with Melo, she walks me to the car carrying my small luggage bag.

The way Melo babies me, she insists on getting the door for me. She opens the door and starts talking without looking up.

“ Yaz’ Sab..”

She stops mid-sentence when she raises her head and sees Mr Meyiwa inside the car.

“ I'm sorry sir I thought it was Sabelo”

“ It's okay ntombi, MaKhumalo please get in the car we don't want to be stuck in traffic”

Don't tell me he's coming with us

“ You can relax, I'm not tagging along. I'm only driving you to the guest house”

The horrified expression on my face must've given me away, without wasting more time I hug Melo goodbye and hop in the backseat.

Sabelo's father drove back to Embalenhle after seeing the room and making sure it was safe. Since Xoliswa threatened Sabelo, him and his father are strict when it comes to our safety and security that's why the old man took it upon himself to put on hold the plans he had with his friends and drive us here.

The room I booked has a deluxe double bed with a shower, the hospitality we received was excellent we were warmly welcomed by the lodge personnel and the room looks even better than what was shown in the advertisement.

“ I'm hungry”

That's the first thing I say after settling in

“ Okay love, sit down and make yourself comfortable. I'll go get our food”

“ Okay”

I undress all my clothes only leaving my panties on, wearing a bra is so uncomfortable lately because my boobs have grown fuller and sensitive. I wear a gown and browse through Netflix on my PC looking for a nice movie to watch.

“ Babe unfortunately you can't eat in here we have to go to dining hall to eat”

Sabelo says when he walks back into the room

Kill me now!

“ I’m so not in the mood for clothes”

“ Please love, you need to eat”

“ Okay ke”

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SABELO

The plan was to spend the night together and welcome the new year in each other's arms, it's only ten pm but Ndalo is already snoring softly in my arms she slept in the middle of the movie leaving me to finish the movie alone. This is not what I had in mind when I proposed this outing but this is better than nothing at least we are together and that's all that matters.

My phone rings snapping me out of my reverie, I immediately pick it up before it wakes Ndalo.

“ Sabelo hello”

The caller says nothing but I can hear him breathing.

I slowly move Ndalo from my chest gently lay her on the bed and carefully get out of bed careful not to wake her.

“ Hello!”

I say once I’m in the bathroom

“ Sabelo”

I release a dry chuckle when I realize who it is

“ What do you want?”

“ Sabelo please, don't drop the call hear me out”

“ I have nothing to say to you Xolane, neither you or Khutso”

“ I deserve that but please hear me out”

“ Why? Why should I listen to you?”

“ Because I want to tell you the truth”

Now that grabs my attention, I lower myself on top of the toilet seat.

“ Talk”

“ Firstly I'd like to apologize for my involvement in all of this but I swear I didn't know that you would end up getting hurt much less be stabbed”

“ So you were involved in my attack, wow I can't believe this!”

“ No listen man...a man came to us and gave us instructions regarding you and..”

“ Wait, what do you mean a man approached and gave you instructions regarding me? What does he look like, how old does he look?”

I have no idea who that could be, I don't anyone who'd want to hurt me except for Musa but he can't speak nor write so I really have no idea who this 'man' could be

“ He's old more or less your father's age. He is dark skinned with a beard, he looks like a typical man from the village”

I don't know anyone matching that description

“ I don’t know anyone like that, what did he want to know about me?”

“ Khutso and I were on our way from the soccer field when a van came out of nowhere and parked in front of us blocking our way, then three man dressed in Brentwood and those Zulu ingwe vest stepped out of the car. They told us they knew who we were and where we lived and that they wouldn’t hesitate to kill us if we didn’t do what they asked”

“ Okay, what did they want?”

“ They told us to come get you from your house and take you to Chillax, I’m sorry but we had no choice but to do it”

“ Stop apologizing and talk, I don’t have time for your apologies the time for that is over”

“ Remember those girls who came to Chillax that night? They were sent by them, your drink was spiked that’s why you got wasted quickly”

Wow, just wow!

“ I swear I don’t know what their plan was but you pissed them off when you left and didn’t want to entertain the girls that’s why they sent those two guys to attack you and leave you like that so Xoliswa can come and save you”

“ What the fuck! You know who Xoliswa is?”

“ Xolane!”

He doesn't reply but I hear shuffling and heavy groans before the line goes dead. I jolt up from the toilet seat and call his number but it sends me straight to voicemail, what the fuck is going on? A cold chill runs down my spine when I remember that I left Ndalo in the bedroom alone, I sprint to the bedroom and sigh in relief when I find her on the bed snoring.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#53

This is way bigger than I imagined, why would anyone go through so much trouble just to hurt me? I honestly have no idea who could be behind this whole thing I don't know anyone matching the description Xolane gave me, as much as I wanted to spend some time alone with my woman to bond and have mind blowing sex you know count down into the new year with my dick buried balls deep inside her warm nuna but spending the night here is no longer an option we need to leave.

I mop my face with my hands and blow out a sigh, this is fucked up and more serious than I thought. I glance at Ndalo on the bed, she's still sleeping soundly totally unaware of what's happening. She looks so beautiful in her sleep it's such a shame I'll have to wake her up, but first I need to call my dad and tell him.

“Meyiwa”

There's jazz music playing in the background, I'm interrupting his plans yet again but this can't wait it's urgent my life is at stake.

“Babami something happened”

“ What?.. Hold on let me find a quiet spot”

There’s shuffling for about a minute or so

“ Talk to me, what happened is MaKhumalo okay?”

He is freaking out, his voice gives him away.

“ Ndalo is fine dad, Xolane called a while ago”

“ What did he want, is he back from the village?”

“ I don’t know, he called to tell me the truth about what happened that fateful night and even confessed to knowing Xoliswa but there was shuffling and heavy groans before he could tell me more then the call got disconnected. I think whoever is behind this whole thing probably attacked him as a way to prevent him from telling me the truth”.

“ Shit! This is bigger than I thought, you need to come back home Sabelo I can’t have you far from me amidst all of this. It’s obvious whoever is behind this is dangerous and I wouldn’t be surprised if Xolane winds up dead, pack up your things I’m coming to pick you up. Lock the door and don’t let anyone in until I get there okay”

“ Yes dad”

I say and cut the call

“ Sthandwa sam”

“ Hmm”

She says and pulls the covers to her face

“ Sthandwa sam you need you wake up”

I say gently stroking her arm

“ Sabelo what’s wrong why won’t you let me sleep?”

Her eyes are still shut but the annoyance masking her features can’t be missed

“ I’m sorry for waking you from your sleep but we need to leave, it’s not safe for us to be here”

Her eyes snap open and the fear they hold rips my heart to shreds

“ Why, did something happen?”

“ Yes but I don’t want you to worry about it, all I need you to do right now is to get dressed my father is on his way to fetch us”

“ Okay”

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NDALO

I'm starting to believe the universe is against my relationship with Sabelo, something always goes wrong everytime we try to spend quality time away from everyone. Last time when we booked into a lodge Musa kidnapped me and raped and now it's this what's going to happen

next time? I don't know but what if this is a sign that Sabelo and I will never be happy together?

We've been on the road for a while now I'm at the backseat with Sabelo, his father is the one driving and he's been asking Sabelo questions about Xolane's call since we left the guest house

“ So he told you three men dressed in Brentwood and Ingwe vest approached him and Khutso and told them to take you to Chillax?”

“ Yes”

“ I just don’t get it, what were they hoping to achieve by doing that?”

“ I don’t know but I remember they didn’t want us to leave Xolane kept insisting on us staying longer then these four girls came out of nowhere and came to our table asking to join us, apparently they were sent by those same men”

“ You never mentioned any girls joining you” I say

“ Because I left when one of them started flirting with me, apparently the attack and

Xoliswa saving me was all part of their master plan”

“ I seriously don’t know anyone matching the description Xolane gave you but I’ll talk to Greg maybe this information will help make his work a whole lot easier but we can’t only rely on him we need to get hold of Khutso ASAP. He’ll give us all the answers we need, try calling him now” Mr Meyiwa

When Sabelo bought a new phone he had a sim swap done and retained his old number, all his contacts were saved on his Gmail account not on the phone that’s why he still has Khutso’s numbers.

“ It rang once and sent me straight to voicemail, I think he blocked my number”

Sabelo says looking defeated

“ We will find him don’t worry, I’ll ask Ntsika to track his location using his phone number when we get home. We’ll find him one way or another, he’s not getting away with this he needs to account”.

“ What about Xolane? He put his life in danger trying to warn me, he could be dead for telling me the truth we need to find him”

“ Don’t beat yourself up about it, you’re not responsible for anything that happened to him. He chose his fate when he chose to sell you out to those men instead of telling you the truth, I know he’s your friend but you’re not responsible for anything that might have happened to him.”

Mr Meyiwa says trying to reassure him

“ Can’t we track his location as well? I just need to know if he’s okay”

Mr Meyiwa sighs looking at his son in the rear view mirror

“ Okay we will, he might have betrayed you and led you to the lion’s den but he’s also a victim in all of this”

“ Thank you”

The rest of the drive to the Meyiwa residence is filled with silence. Each one of us battling with their own thoughts, it’s the last day of the year we are supposed to be having fun enjoying ourselves not stressing about an enemy we don’t know.

“ Take maKhumalo inside and wait for me in my office I’ll go get your uncle” Mr Meyiwa

He climbs out of the car and races to the veranda where a group of his friends and uncle Ntsika are gathered twittering drinking their beverages, one is on his feet dancing to the Hugh Masekela song booming on the Bose surround speakers a few feet away from them.

Sabelo takes both my hands in his and looks into my eyes

“ I’m sorry, I didn’t mean for our night to end this way”

“ Don’t apologize baby it’s not your fault”

“ I know but ..”

I shut him up with a kiss

“ Stop apologizing for things you’re not responsible for, go to your father’s office and get to the bottom of this whole thing. You’ll find me waiting for you in your room when you’re done, I don’t promise to be awake though”

We laugh

“ You’re amazing you know that, thank you for loving me Ndoniyamanzi”

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SABELO

“ Sabelo cant have an enemy who’s your age it doesn’t make any sense, this are your enemies and they are probably using Sabelo to get to you” Uncle

I’m with my dad and uncle in my father’s office, their friends left I don’t know what excuse my dad gave them but they were not at all pleased when they left here.

“ I thought about that but I don’t know anyone who wears a Brentwood zalo”

“ Ya kodwa izitha zakho lezi, they can't be Sabelo's enemies”

(They are your enemies)

“ I wonder who those bastards are, Sabelo give Ntsika Khutso's number so we can track his location”

“ Okay”

My uncle has an app on his phone called Verified lookups it gives you the name, address and location of the person using only their cellphone number.

“ Guess what, Khutso is not in the village he’s here in his house”

Uncle says after fiddling with his phone for a few minutes

Why would his mother lie and say he’s at the village when he’s right here?

“ Let’s go there bafo, let’s not waste anymore time we need to get to the bottom of this”

Uncle

“ I agree with you Zalo, we need to find the bastard who’s behind this we have tolerated his nonsense for way too long”

“ Please check Xolane’s location”

I ask looking at my uncle

“ Okay give me his number”

“ He’s in Evander... Oleratong guest house”

“ What!”

**My father and I exclaim at the same time
looking at each other, that’s the name of the
guest house Ndalo and I were booked into.**

“ What?”

My uncle asks looking confused

“ That’s the name of the guest house Ndalo and Sabelo were in”

“ Fuck! This is deeper than we thought, so what now?”

“ Let’s get Khutso first we will deal with Xolane later”

My father suggests

“ Yeah, I agree let’s go” Uncle

The three of us race out of the house, my dad and I are the first one’s out of the yard and my uncle drives behind us with his bakkie.

Khutso’s house is not far from my house so within five minutes of leaving the house we are parked outside his gate

“ Let’s go inside”

My father says and leads the way to the front door.

“ I don’t think there’s anyone home”

My uncle says sussing out the dim house

“ Yeah it looks like it but I still think we should knock” Dad

He hits his knuckles on the wooden door and takes a few steps backwards

“ I’m coming!”

A voice yells from inside, a voice I know all too well. It’s Khutso’s mother, she sounds irritated but I don’t blame her my father’s knock was hard he knocked exactly like how the police knock when they come into one’s home.

“ Hao Mr Meyiwa wa kokota habohloko so?”

(Why are you knocking so hard)

**That’s what she says when she opens the door
and comes face to face with my father standing
on her door step**

**“ Ngiyaxolisa maMasipa kodwa kuyaphuthuma
ngingam’thola uKhutso?”**

**(I’m sorry maMasipa but it’s urgent, can I find
Khutso)**

“ Hobaneng?”

(Why)

She questions with her arms folded to her chest and wearing a suspicious look on her face.

“ We just need to ask him a few questions ma that’s all”

I say stepping forward standing next to my dad

“ Oh Sabelo I didn’t see you, how are you?”

“ I’m good ma, how are you?”

“ I’m good. Mr Meyiwa I’m sorry for being rude it’s just that strange men have been showing up on my doorstep lately looking for

my son so I got a little defensive when you said you're looking for him".

" What strange men?"

My uncle asks behind me

" Haibo, what's going on here? The whole Meyiwa clan in my house at this time of the night looking for my son?"

She asks when she sees my uncle

" Mama we are sorry for showing up here at this time of the night I promise we didn't mean to disrespect you or your home but we really

need to talk to your son about something important” Dad

“ What’s that?”

“ Sabelo was stabbed and left for dead a few weeks ago and we believe Khutso knows who did it”

“ Aowa why would my son know anything about it? He’s Sabelo’s friend”

She says defensively

“ Mama your son’s life could be in danger, those strange men you were talking about just

now will end up killing him if you don't allow us to talk to him now. If we talk to him now we can protect him" Uncle Ntsika

" What?"

" He's telling you the truth maMasipa those men are dangerous and your son's life is in danger, allow us to talk to him please" Dad

" Okay, I will take you to his room"

She says after a few minutes of contemplation

We get in and follow her to Khutso's bedroom

“ Khutso!”

“ I think he’s sleeping”

She says when he doesn’t answer

“ Keep knocking”

Uncle Ntsika says

She sighs and goes back to the task at hand

“ Khutso! Khutso!”

“ I’m coming in my son”

She twists the knob and the door opens, the lights are off so the room is dark. She presses the switch next to the door, the room comes alight revealing a lifeless Khutso hanging from the ceiling.

“ Khutso!”

A gut wrenching sob breaks out from her mouth, she runs inside the room and grabs her son’s legs trying to pull him down from the ceiling.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#54

After finding Khutso's lifeless body hanging from the ceiling we called the police, MaMasipa couldn't stop wailing but I don't blame her if I feel so shattered about Khutso's death she must feel worse. Khutso was her son, her one and only child I can't begin to imagine how she must feel. I've never met my daughter but I know losing her would kill me so imagine how the poor woman must feel after seeing her son's lifeless body hanging from the ceiling, a son she raised and lived with for the past 18 years.

MaMasipa asked the police to perform an autopsy saying she knows her son would never cause her so much pain by taking his own life, everything points to this being a suicide we even found a suicide note in his room but we all know that's nothing but a lie, they killed him- whoever those Brentwood wearing men are they are the one's who are responsible for this. They got rid of him before I could get to him which makes me wonder if Xolane is still alive but by the looks of things the chances of that happening are very slim but I'm hoping for the best, I'll remain hopeful until we find out what really happened to him.

We told the police all our suspicions but knowing them I won't hold my breath, this people hardly solve any cases I still don't know why they are getting paid because instead of protecting civilians from criminals they help the same criminals get away with killing and hurting other people because of greed.

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss MaMasipa please don't hesitate to tell us should you need any assistance with the funeral preparations”

Dad says

Khutso's mother nods with tears rolling down her face pooling under her chin.

“ Thank you so much Mr Meyiwa”

Her neighbour says

**The neighbour came as soon as she heard
MaMasipa’s piercing cries and has been
comforting her ever since.**

“ It’s a pleasure ma we will take our leave”

**“ Goodbye ma, I’ll come check up on you
tomorrow”**

I say giving her a hug

“ Okay my boy”

I walk to the car feeling low, Khutso betrayed me but he was my friend and his death hurts. He was still way too young to die, he didn't deserve to die like this he had his whole life ahead of him.

“ I'll drive you home and go with your uncle to Evander”

My dad says when we get inside the car.

“ No, I want to come with”

“ Sabelo please”

“ No, I want to go with you”

“ Sabelo stop being stubborn, you just lost your friend. I’m taking you home”

“ To do what?”

“ To be with your pregnant girlfriend, cry your eyes out because you lost a friend and it hurts. I don’t know but let me and your uncle handle this”

“ But Xolane is also my friend and he risked his life for me so this is the least I could do”

He pulls my face and links our forehead
cupping my cheeks in his palms

“ Hey look at me, this is not your fault. You did nothing wrong, if there’s anyone at fault then it’s those men and not you. I don’t want you feeling guilty or blaming yourself, you are a victim in all of this you’re not responsible for anyone’s death okay?”

“ Sabelo?”

I nod my head and tears spill from my eyes like water on a waterfall

“ It’s okay to cry my son, it doesn’t make you weak it only makes you human”

He pulls me into his arms and I cry releasing all the pain trapped inside my chest

“ It’s okay”

He says squeezing me in his arms

“ Zalo!”

My uncle bellows hitting his knuckles on my dad’s window

I release myself from my father's arms and wipe my tears with my white t-shirt, my father rolls down the window to speak to my uncle

“ What's going on, what are we still waiting for?”

My uncle asks with his eyes darting between me and my father but I look away avoiding eye contact with him

“ Nothing zalo, let's go home to drop off Sabelo then we will drive to Evander with your car”

“ I can drive myself home, go with uncle to Evander”

I suggest

**“ Nope never, I’m not letting you drive alone.
Not after what happened to Khutso, Zalo drive
out we will follow you”**

“ Okay zalo”

**My uncle walks back to his bakkie, he parked
behind us so we need to wait for him to drive
out before driving out. We drive to my house
following him behind my dad steps out of the
Mercedes-Benz and rounds the car to go join
my uncle in his Bakkie, my uncle hoots once
and drives off.**

“ Where’s Ndalo?”

I ask Sphe when I find her in the lounge

She looks into my eyes and immediately jolts to her feet and paces towards me with a worried look on her face

“ Were you crying? What’s going on, why are you here? Why didn’t you and miss Khumalo spend the night at the guest house?”

“ Sphe please tu”

I say blowing her off

“ Please Sabelo tell me what’s going on?”

“ I asked you where Ndalo is or yini you don’t want to tell me?”

“ She’s in your bedroom, I think she’s sleeping. She said she was tired”

“ Where’s mom?”

“ She didn’t come back from aunt’s house”

“ Okay good night”

“ Come on Sabelo don’t leave me hanging tell me what’s going on?”

“ Not now Sphe”

I say and walk to my room

Sphe is too inquisitive and doesn’t let go until you tell her what she wants to know but I know she won’t follow me to my room while Ndalo is here. She is nosy but she has so much respect for my girlfriend.

Like Sphe said Ndalo is under the blankets sleeping, I take off all my clothes including my

underwear and join her under the covers pulling her warm body to mine. She's sleeping naked, that's how she sleeps since she fell pregnant apparently her pyjamas are too hot and make her uncomfortable during the night so prefers being naked.

“ You're back. What time is it?”

She says under her breath pushing her butt to my groin area

“ Sleep baby”

I say trying to swallow the painful lump on my throat

“ What’s wrong Sabelo?”

She turns around to face me

“ Khutso passed on and I’m afraid Xolane could be dead too”

“ Oh my goodness Sabelo, what happened to him?”

“ It looks like he committed suicide but I think he was murdered”

“ Oh I’m so sorry babe”

**She wraps her arms around me and lays my
head on her bosom**

“ I’m sorry baby, I’m so sorry”

**We hold each other silently until we hear
firecrackers and people screaming in jubilation
outside wishing each other a “ Happy new
year”**

“ Happy New year Sthandwa sam” I say

“ Happy New year baby”

I smash my lips into hers smooching the living daylights out of her soft lips, she replies to the kiss with the same passion and intensity.

“ I love you”

I murmur in between her sultry kisses

“ I love you more”

My hands are all over her body caressing her soft smooth skin, I'm rock hard it's been ages since we had sex I want her and she wants me too judging by how wet she is.

“ Fuck me baby”

**She says barely audible panting heavily, high
in the throes of passion.**

“ You want to me fuck you huh?”

“ Yes please”

“ I’ll fuck you then”

**I’m top of her in an instant my hard dick
knocking on her wet hot entrance**

“ Stop teasing baby, put it in!”

“ Patience Sthandwa sam”

I hold my hard shaft and slowly guide it inside her warm nuna, she spreads her legs giving me access to her haven. I thrust all the way to the hilt and feel warm sensations all over my body as her warm nuna stretches and swallows my cock

“ Damn you’re so tight”

I say with my eyes shut savouring the moment.

“ Aaah harder please”

**She pleads with a low voice driving me insane
with lust**

“ Are you sure?”

“ Yes”

**I rotate my waist and pump in and out of her
hard, my strokes are fast and impactful. A loud
scream of pleasure breaks out of her mouth**

“ Babe! Don’t forget that Sphe is in the house”

**I croak trying so hard to swallow the groans
that threaten to escape from my lips.**

“ Sorry but I can’t help it, you’re doing it so good”

“ Try to keep it down”

“ Okay”

I thrust into her, she moans scratching my back. I smash my lips into hers to swallow her beautiful moans of pleasure, this is why we needed time away from everyone so my lady could scream and moan in peace!

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BRANDON

When we get to Oleratong guest house we find police cars parked on the driveway, Ntsika parks his bakkie a few feet away from them and kills the engine.

“ Shit! The police are here, this can only mean one thing!”

Ntsika says

“ I wonder who these people are, they are a bunch of cowards killing innocent little boys!”

I'm so disgusted right now

“ Let's get inside” Ntsika

We climb out of the car and follow each other to the entrance.

“ I'm sorry but you can't come in there's an on going investigation taking place inside”

Says a female police officer standing at the door

**“ Please let us in, we really need to get inside”
Ntsika**

“ I can’t sir please don’t make my job difficult”

The female officer replies unable to mask how irritated she is with Ntsika

“ Ntsika stop forcing the lady already told that we can’t go in, respect her and allow her do her job” I say

The officer smiles while Ntsika looks at me with disbelief on his face

“ I know we can’t go in but can you at least tell us what’s going on inside?”

“ I can’t do that”

“ Please tu, I was planning to bring my wife here so I need to know if this guest house is not safe don’t you think?”

She looks at me with indecision dancing in her eyes. I glance at the name written on her uniform.

“ Please MaRadebe”

I purr looking into her eyes

“ Okay, I’ll tell you only because you’re nice unlike your arrogant brother over here who thinks he can get away with anything”

Ntsika and I might not look exactly alike but we have similar features, anyone can tell that we are brothers.

“ Haibo! We sisi shono kahle mawufuna ubafo ungasebenzisi igama lami”

(Tell my brother if you want him and stop using me as an excuse)

“ Ntsika! Respect the lady, that’s not how we talk to women” I chastise

You should see the smile on the lady's face, her cheeks must be painful from all the blushing she's been doing.

“ Ngiyabonga buti”

(Thank you)

She says with a low voice sweeping the floor with her long lashes sending Ntsika into a fit of laughter.

“ Never mind my brother he's not normal, he didn't take his medication that's why he's behaving like this.”

“ Oh that's why enje!”

If looks could kill I'd be six feet under, the look Ntsika is giving me! What can I do, a man's got do what a man's got to do!

“ Tell me Ntokazi what happened?”

“ What happened here is really sad, a teenage boy was found dead in one of the deluxe bedrooms”

“ Eish how unfortunate, was he sick or something?”

“ No he was strangled to death”

“ Did you manage to catch the murderer?”

“ That’s the strange thing none of the staff members or guests remember seeing the boy check in, no one saw anything but there’s a dead body. We don’t know if he died here or he was already dead when he got here”

“ Yoh that’s hectic what about the CCTV footage, didn’t it pick up anything?”

“ The footage has been wiped off”

This is getting deeper at each turn, I wonder who is behind this and what do they want from me? I just hope my son won’t be blamed for

**this, he's after all the last person to speak
Xolane before he met his untimely death plus
the bastards brought his dead body to the same
guest house my son was checked in- he could
easily be the prime suspect in the murder
investigation.**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#55

“ Happy new year my love”

“ Happy new year my sunshine”

“ So am I seeing you today?”

“ I don't know”

“ Come on, I need to see you I miss my woman”

“ Okay but only if you're picking me up”

“ Done, what else?”

“ I want to spend time with you, just you not your sisters and your brother in law”

“ Did my sisters say or do anything to offend you perhaps?”

“ No, but I want to spend time with you away from other people”

I’m not the girl who runs to her boyfriend with every little problem, I take care of things.

Themba doesn’t need to know about his sister’s bitchy behavior, I’ll handle her.

“ Is that your way of saying you miss Lehoko?”

“ Babe! Come on, it’s not even that I just miss being with you. Okay I miss him too but I miss spending time with you more”

“ I miss you too babe, pack an overnight bag because there’s no way I’m letting you out of my sight after not seeing for so many days plus you know I’m addicted to my vanilla cake”

By ‘so many days’ he means the 5 days between the 26th of December and today.

“ Babe man stop it, you’re making me horny”

“ Really? Let’s video call then I want to see your clit twitching and swelling”

My heart swells threatening to jump out of my chest, my body temperature sky rockets I won’t

mention the pool forming between my legs.
That's the effect Themba has on me, he doesn't
need to do much to get me all hot and bothered

“ No, Themba we can't “

“ Says who?”

“ What if someone walks in?”

“ Lock the door then, I want to see my vanilla
cake”

Yo, I can literally feel the juices oozing from my
cookie.

“ Okay baby”

He immediately cuts the call without so much as giving a warning. I walk to the door and lock it before undressing and climbing on top of the bed naked, I'll probably laugh at myself when I think about this later-the things we do for love kodwa.

It doesn't take long before my phone chimes next to me, it's Themba's video call. I accept the call and put the phone between my parted legs

“ Damn! How I miss sucking and eating you up baby”

“ Baby please”

“ Look at how wet you are, I wish I was next you so I could drink all those delicious juices. I love how you taste on my tongue”

“ Baby stop it”

“ Flick your engorged clit”

I move my hands to my cookie and play with myself

“ Finger fuck yourself and imagine it was me”

I balance my phone with a pillow and lay on my back working my fingers inside my pussy

“ Increase your pace, go deeper and faster!”

With my eyes closed I do as he says and the pleasure I feel is out of this world

“ That’s it, push your finger to the roof of your vanilla cake and rub on your g-spot”

“ That’s it..now cum for daddy”

His words send me over the edge and my body convulses as I reach my high and cum undone. I never knew I could reach my climax so easily until I met Themba, like I said he doesn't need to do much to get me there yeah that's the effect he has on me.

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BRANDON

If it was any other day I'd be in my house enjoying the comfort of my king sized bed while buried deep inside my wife's warmth but

I can't do that not when there are people after my son's life, it's the first of January people are sleeping tired from pulling an all nighter while others are awake drinking themselves crazy and some are nursing a hangover but I'm here in the middle of nowhere waiting for Greg because some cowardice people from the bundus thought it better to mess with my son.

His car pulls up from the corner and parks next to my car, he climbs out of the car and wears shades to hide his bloodshot eyes before walking towards me.

“ Meyiwa this better be good”

“ Good morning Greg”

“ Fuck your good morning I should be in my house, it’s a holiday for goodness sake”

“ Stop whining I’m paying you, I gave you one simple task. To get me information on Xoliswa but there’s still no progress so stop complaining and listen to me”

“ I tried my best man, there’s only so much I can do with only a name”

“ Stop with your excuses, your job is to give me solutions not to complain. I have another task for you”

“ What?”

“ There are people after me and my son..”

**I tell him all about the Brentwood wearing trio
and what they've been up to**

“ Damn this is deeper than I thought”

**“ That's why you need to stop complaining and
start working, find out who these people are
Greg. I'm giving you 48 hours”**

“ Come on Meyiwa that's a tight deadline”

“ I don’t care, you’ve had enough time to find these people but you didn’t. I’ve done your half your job for you now the least you can do is find out who they are”

“ I’ll try my best”

“ I don’t want you trying anything Greg, I want you to find them”

It’s time I deal with those rural cowards who use and kill innocent kids to fight their battles

“ You have 48 hours Greg, I promise you don’t want to get on my bad side. Find those people

and bring them to me, 48 hours Greg only 48 hours nothing more nothing less”

I say and walk to my car, start the ignition and drive off leaving behind a trail of dust.

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NDALO

Last night or should I say this morning was absolutely amazing I enjoyed every single moment of the fucking and love making sessions I had with my bae, what a way to start the new year. Is this is what they refer to when they say ‘songena nge vosho’ ai ngoba nami

ngingene nge vosho enyakeni omusha. I've been awake for a while now starring at this beautiful blue eyed man next to me. I still can't believe he's in love with me, he's so handsome he could have any girl he wants but he chose me. Me, simple Ndalo with a big forehead ya neh who could've thought that one day I'd be in love with someone who's not Musa and be pregnant for them.

My phone rings disturbing me from my pleasant thoughts, I pick up on the second ring and climb out of bed so as not to wake Sabelo. He needs to rest.

“ Mama”

“ Ndalo ukuphi?”

**She asks in a hushed tone, why is she
whispering?**

“ I’m with Sabelo”

**I don’t understand why she’s asking me
because she knows I left with Sabelo.**

**“ You need to come home, the police are here
looking for you. What did you do?”**

What?

“ I didn’t do anything ma”

“ Then why are the police looking for you?”

“ Angazi mama”

(I don’t know mom)

“ Let me talk to her”

**An unfamiliar voice says in the background
then I hear shuffling before a male voice speaks
into the receiver**

“ Good morning Ndalo you’re speaking to detective Ngcobo, what time do you think you can get here?”

“ 15 ..15 minutes”

“ Okay we will wait for you then”

He says and cuts the call.

Why would the police be looking for me? In all my 25 years of life I’ve never done anything that will put me on the other side of the law except for dating my learner. Could my relationship with Sabelo be the reason for the

unwelcome visit from the police? Oh my goodness I don't know what to think!

I rush to the bathroom to freshen up. When I'm done I wear my summer dress and sandals, I don't know if I should wake Sabelo up and tell him I'm leaving or I should just leave and send him a text when I get home.

A knock on the door interrupts my contemplation

“ Come in”

The door opens then Sphe walks in

“ Good morning miss Khumalo please forgive me for interrupting you but the police are here looking for Sabelo”

“ What?”

“ Yes, apparently it has to do with Xolane’s murder”

“ Xolane was murdered?”

She nods and looks up to prevent the tears in her eyes from rolling down her cheeks

“ Please tell me my brother didn’t do it”

**She pleads and breaks into loud sob causing
Sabelo to wake up**

“ What’s going on, why are you crying Sphe?”

“ Please tell me you didn’t do it Sabelo?”

“ What are you talking about?”

“ Sthandwa sam what’s going on?”

**I can hear him but I can’t bring myself to speak,
it’s like I’m stuck in a trance everything is
happened all at the same time. One minute**

myself and Sabelo are going out for a night then the next minute Xolane is dead and we are caught up in a middle of it all, I don't know what's real and what's not. I don't know if I'm hallucinating or if this is really happening. This is all too much for me to bare

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SABELO

“ Sthandwa sam”

I say shaking Ndalo

“ Sabelo we are going to jail for a murder we didn’t commit”

She says crying

“ Stop crying my love, we won’t go to jail we didn’t do anything wrong okay please stop crying”

I had to ask Sphe to leave my room so I could get out of bed, get dressed and tend to Ndalo. She really freaked me out, how she just froze and looked at me blankly completely unresponsive scared me.

“ Okay my love”

She nods her head vigorously and uses her palms to wipe her tears.

“ Let’s go”

We walk to the lounge hand in hand

“ You finally decided to grace us with your presence Sabelo and who’s the beautiful lady?”

One of the two men we found waiting in the lounge says

“ She is Ndalo my girlfriend, I’m sorry for taking long how can I help you?”

I’m shit scared right now but I need to be strong for both Ndalo and I.

“ I’m detective Masondo and this is my colleague Sergent Sereme, it’s a good thing you’re also here miss both of you need to come with us to the station for questioning regarding Xolane’s murder”

“ They are going nowhere!”

I’ve never been so happy to see my father like I am right now, he came just in time. We all

watch as my father confidently strides inside the lounge.

“ What brings you to my house gentlemen”

He asks towering over them, my father is really tall. I take after him.

“ We are investigating Xolane’s murder and your son is the last person to speak to him before he died” Sereme

“ So?”

“ We are only doing our job sir your son was the last person who spoke to Xolane on the

phone literally two minutes before he died, the same Xolane who was found dead in your son's room after him and his girlfriend checked out in the middle of the night. I'm sorry sir but everything points to them being the one's responsible for the murder of Xolane Nkosi"

" That's bullshit and you know it, my son didn't run away he checked out and the staff at the guest house came to check the room when he checked out. I was there and there was no dead body, even a fool can tell that someone is trying to frame my son for a murder he didn't commit"

" You'll explain that to the judge because I don't care, all I know is that Sabelo and his

girlfriend need to come with us down to the station for questioning” Masondo

“ Go I’ll follow you with my car, they are not criminals and I’m not going to allow you to treat them like one”

The detective looks at my father with a smug look on his face

“ How arrogant, Sereme let’s get out of here. You and your girlfriend won’t get away with this”

He says with his eyes darting between Ndalo and me and then he follows Sereme out of the house

“ Please don’t panic nothing is going to happen to you, I won’t allow you to go to jail for something you didn’t do. You trust me right?”

I nod

“ MaKhumalo I know this is stressful and you’re scared but try not to stress yourself, I don’t want anything happening to my grandchild I’ll fix this I promise. No one is going to jail”

I don't doubt my dad but it doesn't look good for us, those men planned this to the last detail I'm starting to suspect that maybe even Xolane's call was part of their grand plan to frame me for his murder. Is it a coincidence that they got to him just when he was about to tell me about Xoliswa? I fell right into their trap when I left the guest house now it looks like I killed Xolane and ran away, making Ndalo my accomplice.

I can take anything but Ndalo is too fragile for jail she won't survive it, oh please God in all this please don't let anything happen to my child.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#56

“ You need to do everything in your power to get these charges off their backs Clifford, I trust you.”

“ There’s nothing to worry about here Sabelo and Ndalo can’t be arrested for this, there was no cadaver when they checked out and the guest house staff is their alibi. Why would Sabelo kill Xolane and leave him in the same room Ndalo paid for? It doesn’t make sense. The police should be investigating how the

cadaver made it into that room not trying to pin murder charges on a teenage boy. It's clear they were paid to do this, whoever these men are they have the police on their payroll but unfortunately for them I won't let them win"

He says confidently

" You really think so?"

" I'm sure of it Meyiwa, I mean if I was the police I'd look into the guest house staff- one of them is working with whoever killed Xolane.

How did the cadaver make it passed the reception and end up in the room without anyone seeing anything, how did the CCTV footage get wiped? Someone from the guest

house staff is working with the criminals who did this”

“ You’re absolutely right, why didn’t I think of this before?”

“ Don’t be too hard on yourself man, all this can’t be easy on you so you are allowed to miss a few things”

“ Eish I haven’t slept in two days”

“ I’m sorry but I’ll help you get to the bottom of this. Greg must find a way to recover the CCTV footage from that night, I’m sure we will find something we can use to prove Sabelo’s

innocence and that's why they wiped it off. By so doing you'll kill two birds with one stone- finding the men behind all of this as well as getting proof that Sabelo didn't do it"

" Thanks man, you just removed a huge burden off my shoulders. I can see the light at the end of the tunnel, Sabelo is starting varsity in a few weeks he doesn't deserve all of this nor does pregnant Ndalo"

" That's what I'm here for"

" I owe you one"

Clifford is not just a lawyer but he's also a very good friend of mine

“ So you seem fond of this Ndalo girl”

“ I am, she's a good girl plus she loves my son and makes him happy”

“ So you don't have a problem with him being with someone older than him?”

“ Honestly when he told me about it I thought his feelings weren't real, that whatever Sabelo feels for her would fade with time but now I know that I was fooling myself because what he feels for her is real.”

“ So you’ve accepted them?”

“I wont lie and say I accepted their relationship from the get go because I didn’t but I couldn’t show Sabelo that or tell him to dump her like his mother did because I know how it feels like to be in love with someone who your family doesn’t approve of. I’ve been there myself with Mathapelo and I wouldn’t want to put my son through that so I supported him even though I didn’t agree with his choice”

“ I understand hey”

“ Yes, Sabelo loves her and he is happy with her and that’s all that matters.”

“ These kids grow up so fast hey imagine at 18 Sabelo is already expecting his first child”

“ I know right but it’s done there’s nothing anyone can do to change it, I already love my grandchild and I can’t wait for her to be born”

“ I know how much you love kids, I have no doubt that she’ll be the most spoilt little girl in the world. How did Mathapelo take the whole thing?”

“ She hated Ndalo at first called her all sorts of names and accused her of pinning the pregnancy on Sabelo but she is gradually starting to accept that our son loves her and there’s nothing anyone can do to change that”

“ I can imagine, I don’t know what I’d do if I was in your place man. I’m sure I would’ve gotten the girl arrested or something”

“ I know hey but it’s not as bad as you think, she’s a bit older than my son but their relationship is normal just like any other relationship out there”

**“ It’s not everyday this sort of thing happens
it’s usually the man who is older not the
woman”**

**“ Yeah but young as he is Sabelo is the man in
that relationship, he’s dominant and takes
charge and for some weird reason Ndalo
doesn’t disrespect or try to control him because
she’s older. They respect each other and treat
each other well”**

“ You’re sound so fond of this Ndalo girl”

**“ Once I got to know her I realised that she’s a
nice girl, soft spoken, down to earth and very
humble.”**

“ Yeah she does sound like a good person”

“ I hope Sabelo won’t cheat on her when he gets to varsity and sees beautiful girls his age, I would never choose who he should be with but I like Ndalo for him. She is the right woman for him”

“ I trust Sabelo he has a good head on his shoulders plus he has the best example, his father. You my friend are the most loyal man I’ve ever met”

I’m a man I get tempted to cheat sometimes but I love my wife and thinking about the

possibility of her finding out about my betrayal and leaving me is enough to snap me back to my senses everytime I attempt to cheat. She is loud, rude and a bit dramatic sometimes but I love her and I'd choose her in all the lifetimes I find her in. I love her aw itshitshi lam' madoda!

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SABELO

I haven't seen Ndalo since the day the police showed up in my house, the last time I saw her was when my father and I dropped her off at her house- the police didn't have enough evidence against us to charge us with Xolane's murder so they had to release us but we are

still the prime suspects in his murder. She doesn't answer my calls nor reply to any of my messages, it's been two days now and I'm starting to get worried about her. I hope she's not thinking of breaking up with me because I don't think I'll survive it, I'm stressed about my matric results coming out in a few days and the unknown men who are trying so hard to make my life a living hell getting dumped is the last thing I need.

“ Catch!”

Sphe says throwing an ice pop to my direction, I catch it and thank her.

“ What's wrong?”

She says sitting next to me on the couch

“ Nothing”

**“ Is it the results coming out? Don't worry I'm
sure you passed, you worked very hard for your
final exams”**

“ I know, I'm not worried”

“ What is it then, is it the case?”

“ No, they have nothing to against me all the evidence they have against me is circumstantial”

“ Then what, is it miss Khumalo?”

“ Yes”

“ What happened this time?”

“ She’s been ignoring me Sphe, I think she blames me for everything that happened.”

“ No, I don’t think so. She would never blame you for something you’re not responsible for”

“ Then why is she ignoring my calls and messages?”

“ I think she’s still shocked and dealing with everything that happened the past few days”

“ That’s the thing Sphe, why is she shutting me out. Why can’t we deal with it together?”

“ I know people who prefer dealing with things alone and maybe miss Khumalo is one of them”

“ One doesn’t have that option in a relationship, we are meant to be together through the bad and the good times. She can’t

push me away everytime she's going through something denying me the right to be there for her, she did the same thing when Musa raped her- she pushed me away and lied, ended up hurting me and herself in the process”

“ I don't know what to say maybe you should go see her”

“ Her mother is rude and doesn't really like me so I doubt think she'd let me in”

“ Stop making excuses and go see your babymama, I remember how miserable you were the last time you guys broke up. I don't want you to go back to that state, fix things with your woman”

“ Don’t worry I will never allow myself to go back there again, I have a child to think about now.”

“ That’s the spirit, do you think the rents will allow me to go study medicine in Cuba after everything that’s happened?”

“ I doubt it, maybe if dad finds the men responsible for everything that’s been happening to us but if not then I seriously doubt it”

“ I hope they find them soon then because I really need this”

“ I’ll miss you so much but I’m happy and proud of you mntasekhaya”

“ Thank you buti wami but let’s not count our chickens before they hatch let’s wait for me to apply and get accepted first before we start celebrating”

“ I have no doubt you’ll get accepted”

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NDALO

Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think nor imagine myself in an interrogation room as a suspect to a murder. I still can't wrap my head around the whole thing, I get shivers down my spine everytime I think about it that experience it was nothing short of terrifying and traumatizing and I never want to find myself in that position ever again. I love Sabelo, I love him a lot but I love my daughter more and I don't want to lose her and that's what will happen if I keep hanging around Sabelo. It's clear that whoever is out to get him and his father will do anything to see them suffer, after Khutso and Xolane were murdered like their lives didn't matter I can't help but wonder if I'm not next.

I know staying away from Sabelo doesn't guarantee my safety but being with him is more risky at this point. The sun is scorching hot outside like they normally say 'likhipha umkhovu etsheni' so I'm in my room naked with the 1,8L container of ice cream on my lap munching away with Anele, Melo is in Boksburg visiting her boyfriend but she promised to come back tomorrow.

“ Yo ai it's too hot shem”

“ Ya it is hot yo, I'm even thinking of laying a fleece blanket on the floor and sleeping on top of it maybe the cold tiles will cool me down.”

“ I’m sure the heat is not that bad now that you’ve taken off your clothes”

“ It’s bad”

She laughs

“ I never want to be pregnant if this is how you people suffer”

“ You don’t want to be pregnant trust me, it’s..”

My phone rings disturbing me, Anele climbs off the bed and leaves the room giving me privacy after I show her who the caller is.

“ Hello”

“ Sthandwa sam”

“ Ngenzeni MaKhumalo ngitshele ngixolise”

(What did I do tell so I can apologize)

**The raw pain I hear in his voice cuts my heart
into a gazillion pieces**

“ You didn’t do anything Sabelo”

**“ Then why are you ignoring my calls and
messages”**

“ I needed time to deal with everything that happened”

“ So are you going to shut me out everytime you’re going through something?”

“ Stop it don’t make me feel bad, this is not a movie it’s my life and I will end up dead if I keep hanging around you!”

“ Wow!”

“ I’m sorry I didn’t mean it like that but being around you is risky right now”

“ So I was right, you blame me for everything that happened the past few days?”

“ No, I don’t”

“ You do, that’s why you chose to distance yourself from me. I don’t know how you love but I know I would never walk out of your life when you need me the most but I guess we different as people and I expected a lot from you and now I’m being hurt by my own expectations”

“ Sabelo please don’t talk like that, I’m sorry I didn’t mean to say that I lov..”

He cuts me off

“ You don’t have to apologize for doing what you feel is right for you, bye Ndalo”

He says and cuts the call

What does he mean ‘Bye’? Does it mean he’s breaking up with me, what have you done Ndalo I shouldn’t have said that to him.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#57

**“ Where’s this guy we’ve been waiting for him
for over five minutes now”**

**Ntsika croaks tapping his boot impatiently on
the floor**

“ He’s coming be patient”

“ Aisuka he’s been dragging his feet”

“ Here he comes”

I say showing him Greg at the entrance of the restaurant

“ About damn time!”

I snap my fingers in the air so Greg can see us, it works because he sees us and walks to our table carrying a brown envelope under his arm.

“ Gentlemen”

“ Gentlemen yamasimba we’ve been waiting for you.”

Ntsika hates waiting

“ I’m sorry I got held up in traffic but I have all the information you need”

I sigh in relief, it’s time I put this matter to rest

“ Who are these men?”

“ Why don’t you open the envelope and find out”

He says pushing the thick envelope towards me.

“ Vula bafo sibone”

(Open let's see)

Ntsika impatiently says

I blow out heavy breath and tear the envelope open and take out the contents

“ What!”

Ntsika and I exclaim at the same time when we see who the people in the pictures are, we don't know who the other two are but we know one of them. We know him really well I must say.

“ But why would he do this to you, I don't get it?”

“ Beats me”

I wouldn't have guessed it was him who was responsible for all of this, not even in my wildest dreams. I don't know how I feel but I think hurt is the dominant emotion.

“ I paid the security guard who works at guest house and he gave me the CCTV footage from that night, it shows everything these men carrying Xolane's dead body into the building, passing through reception and getting into the room while the receptionist kept watch” Greg

“ Thank you man”

“ My pleasure man, I have another appointment with a client I need to get going”

“ Bye man, thanks for everything”

He stands up, gives me a pat on my shoulder and walks away.

“ So what are you going to do zalo?”

Ntsika questions looking as defeated as I feel

“ I don’t know, I didn’t expect it to be someone so close to me. I honestly don’t know what I should do”

“ I say you deal with him like you would have dealt with any enemy”

“ But he’s my br..”

“ Don’t even call him that, brothers don’t do that to each other. Bongane is not our brother, he proved it when he had your son stabbed, killed two innocent boys and framed your son for it. I say we kill him”

He's fuming now gone is the defeated looking
Ntsika from a minute ago

The person responsible for all this is none other
that Bongane, my brother! His father and mine
were brothers and in Zulu, your paternal uncles
are the same as your father making their
children your siblings and not cousins. Bongane
is my brother and I've always seen him as such,
how he could do this to me is a mystery

“ Who are the other two idiots helping him?”

I ask browsing the pictures

“ I don’t know, maybe they are his friends or his skivvies. I don’t care to know who they are!” Ntsika

I’ve never seen him look so pissed, I feel sorry for Bongane I don’t want to see what Ntsika will do to him when he finally lays his hands on him. Me on the hand I feel numb, hurt and maybe a bit in denial I wasn’t ready for this, nothing could’ve prepared me for this.

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NDALO

“ Sanibonani!”

Says Melo walking inside the house wearing a big smile on her face

“ Ai wena aw’kahle umsindo!”

(You’re making noise)

My mom chastises her but Melo won’t allow anything to bring her jovial mood down so she laughs at my mother’s rebuke.

“ Sis let’s go talk in my bedroom uyambona mos u Lilian u grumpy”

(You see that)

**My mother throws a remote to her direction but
Melo ducks and the remote falls to the floor**

“ Uyadelela wena!”

(You’re disrespectful)

**“ I’m sorry di mamzo hao ungakwati ntombi ka
baba”**

(I’m sorry mom don’t be angry)

Anele and I laugh

“ Phuma tu Melokuhle, bekumnandi ungekho”

(Get out, it was fun when you weren’t here)

“ Ungkwatele? Ungakwati naSlembe”

(Are you angry with me, don't be angry)

She says with humour in her voice, if I didn't know better I'd say she is determined to push my mother's buttons.

My mother's maiden surname is Selepe so my paternal family calls her naSlembe

“ Yo Melokuhle unesdina shem”

(You're annoying)

“ Ngiyadlala mama I missed you”

(I'm playing with you mom)

She throws herself to mom's arms and squeezes her into a hug, mom protests at first but eventually gives in and hugs her back.

“ I love you mama”

“ I love you too kodwa suduka ngifuna ukubona ukuthi u Shaurya uzomthola na u Mehek”

(But shift I want to see if Shaurya will find Mehek)

Mom loves her Indians telenovelas shem

“ Let's go talk in my room sis”

“ Nami ngize?” Anele

(Should I come with)

“ Don’t answer it’s fine”

She says when Melo doesn’t reply

**“ Come with Anele I’m sure Melo won’t mind,
right Melo?” I say**

**“ No, it’s okay Ses’Ndalo I’ve accepted that I’m
not part of you. You always exclude me in your
conversations it’s fine”**

She wipes a wayward tear and fixes her gaze on the screen, I give Melo a look.

“ I’m sorry Nele you come with us, I have no problem” Melo

“ No it’s fine, I don’t want to know your news anyway”

Ah She’ll join us when she’s done sulking.

“ So spill”

I say when Melo and I walk into her bedroom

“ I had an amazing time with Sunshine yo , I enjoy single moment I spend with him. The sex, the kisses, the cuddles but waking up in his arms takes the cake yey kumnandi emjiolweni”

(it’s nice to be in love)

The way she beams everytime she talks about her boyfriend is priceless, she’s really happy with him and I’m happy for her.

“ That’s good hey I’m happy for you”

“ He bought me a beautiful watch, wait let me show you”

She looks through her bags and comes back with a black accessory box and gives it to me, I open it and my mouth hangs open when I see that it's a Rolex pearl master 34 Goldust Dream roman diamonds watch. Wow!

“OMG it looks so beautiful”

“I know right, I went crazy when I saw it. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the price”

“I'm happy for you mntasekhaya”

“Thanks, and you where's your handsome boyfriend?”

“ Eish, I think I may have ruined things with him”

“ What did you do?”

“ You remember the police saga right?”

“ Yeah”

“ I ignored him after that because I felt like being around him could cost me my life, I was scared and not thinking straight and I..”

I tell her all everything

“ I’m disappointed in you Ses’Ndalo you keep repeating the same mistakes, you keep hurting him by doing the same things. Do you love him?”

“ Of course I do why would you even ask that?”

“ Yet it’s so easy for you to push him away everytime you face troubles, this is when you should be together be each other’s strength and help each other through this difficult phase in your relationship not breaking up”

“ I know, I just got scared when I ended up in the interrogation room and I didn’t think straight.”

“ You need to stop acting impulsively and dumping him at every sign of trouble, you’re older than me I don’t need to teach you about relationships but I think growing up at church not exposed to things may have slowed down your growth in other ways. Relationships are not for the faint hearted, you cant break up with him everytime something happens he loves you but you might end up losing him”

“ I know and I think I lost him. I’ve been calling him and sending him messages apologizing to him but he doesn’t return nor pick up my calls”

“ Give him time, I’m sure he’ll come around he loves you but you also need to stop taking

advantage of his love for you. He's handsome and every girl's dream and I'm sure there's someone out there who's more than ready to take your place in his life"

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SABELO

Matric results are coming out tomorrow and I'm starting to feel anxious, I know I passed but I don't know if the hard work I put in for the final exam was enough to compensate for the bad marks I got for my trial exams. Sphe is equally nervous and she's been snacking the entire day, now she's eating a slice of chocolate

cake and washing it down with a tall glass of mango juice.

“ Uzonona wena”

(You’ll get fat)

Mom says looking at her coming back from the kitchen with another slice

“ She’s stressed about tomorrow” I say

“ There’s nothing to worry about my baby I’m sure you passed”

“ I hope I got at least 4 distinctions” Sphe

She says slumping next to me

“ I know you got more than that, you’ve got this you need to stop doubting yourself. Have you decided which university you’ll go to?”

“ Let’s wait for the results first ma and then I will make a decision”

This was her chance to tell mom about Cuba but I guess she’s not ready

“ Wena Sabelo?”

“ I’m going to Wits, I can’t be too far from my baby”

“ Shem poor gogo will be left alone here when you go to varsity, please don’t cheat on her I was serious I wont allow you to bring different girls in my house. If she wasn’t pregnant I wouldn’t have allowed you to bring her here but she is and you said you love her so she’s the only person I expect to see here, if you break up with her I’ll only allow the girl you’ll marry into my house. This is a respectable home not a tavern you cant bring different girls here”

“ I don’t think we have anything to worry about ma, he loves her and I know he’ll be faithful to her” Sphe

I wish I was confident about my relationship with Ndalo like Sphe is, it’s no secret that I love Ndalo with everything in me but I don’t think she and I will work out especially since she has this tendency of pushing me away everytime she’s going through something. What’s going to happen when we are in different provinces, miles away from each other? I love her but sometimes love is not enough.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#58

I thought I understood the depth of the phrase 'you don't know what you have until it's gone' until everything I shared with Sabelo became nothing but a distant memory. Not long ago he was mine, all mine but I failed to appreciate him so I ended up losing him. It's been over a week since he ended the conversation with the word "bye" leaving me confused unable to understand what his bye meant was it bye for now or bye for good? It's been a week of nothing but complete silence from him and I'm starting to think that his bye might have meant the latter.

He passed his matric very well and scored 3 distinctions (Mathematics, Life sciences and Physical sciences) but his sister topped the entire school. She bagged all 7 distinctions making it to the front page cover of the local Newspaper and did an interview with the local radio station yeah you got that right Sphe is a genius but I can't say I'm surprised I knew she was capable, Sabelo too if only he didn't fail his third term I have no doubt he would've gotten more distinctions than the three he got but even after all that he still managed to pass very well and I'm proud of him.

I bought him a present but I don't know how I'll give it to him since he's ignoring me, I went

to the Meyiwa house wanting to talk to him but he refused to see me so I guess I should just wait for him to calm down first I wronged him and I have no choice but to wait until he's ready to hear me out and hopefully accept my apology.

I didn't know what to buy Sphe so I gave her a gift voucher from Woolworth, she was so happy and wouldn't stop thanking me. At least the distance between Sabelo and I didn't cause a strain on the relationship I have built with his family, Sphe and Khethelo still call and talk to me like they used to before I had a fallout with their brother.

Dad is at work and mom went to church, there's a conference next week so she and the other ladies from church went to clean the church in preparation for it. Anele went to her friends, Melo is in Boksburg visiting her boyfriend and I'm home alone bored out of my mind. I don't know how many times I have slept and woke up but it's still mid-day time is moving at a rather slow pace.

I decide to take a walk and stretch my legs apparently being active during pregnancy comes handy during labour. After freshening up I slip into a shirt dress and wear leggings underneath and pair my outfit with sandals, the sun is too hot outside so I take an umbrella and

make my way out of the house wearing
headsets listening to music.

After walking for five minutes or so Adele's
easy on me pauses before Bruno Mars's just the
way you are booms on my ears indicating an
incoming call, I stop on my tracks and bring the
screen to my eyes to check the caller ID, it's
Khethelo.

“ Hey”

“ Hi, how are you?”

“ I'm good and yourself”

“ I’m good, are you coming to the braai today?”

“ Braai?”

“ Please tell me you’ll come”

I have no idea what braai she’s talking about.

“ What braai Khethelo?”

“ You don’t know? I’m sorry I thought Sabelo would invite you”

“ He didn’t”

“ Well I’m inviting you, there’s a braai at my uncle’s house to celebrate Sabelo and Sphe’s matric results you should come it will be fun”

There’s a huge lump on my throat, I’m hurt that Sabelo didn’t see the need to invite me.

“ You’ll come right?”

I clear my throat

“ No, I can’t come I’m sorry I have other plans”

I say trying so hard not to cry

**Sabelo didn't invite me to the braai it's obvious
my presence isn't needed**

“ What plans?”

“ Plans with my family”

**“ Be ready at 7 I'll come pick you up and please
bring your pyjamas, you're sleeping over”**

“ Khethelo I..”

**“ I'm not taking no for an answer, I'll be there
at 7”**

She says and drops the call not giving me a chance to protest.

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SABELO

I passed my matric really well and I got accepted to study actuarial science at Wits, checking for my exam number on the newspaper under Sizwakele secondary school was a bitter sweet moment for me because Khutso's exam number was on top of mine and seeing that he passed with admission to bachelor's degree but he isn't here to celebrate his victory hurt. I cant believe I lost both of my friends on the same day, I still don't understand

why would uncle Bongane kill two innocent boys because of whatever grudge he harbours against my father.

I couldn't believe it when my father told me that he is the one responsible for everything that happened to me, I wouldn't have believed it if my father didn't show me the footage of him carrying Xolane's dead body inside the room we booked into on that fateful night. My father's associates are holding uncle Bongane and his friends hostage until my father decides what to do to him much to uncle Ntsika's disapproval, according to him Bongane should be dead and for the first time I agree with him- Bongane needs to do die for everything he put

me through and for robbing two innocent boys a chance at life.

My father is yet to confront him and find out why he did what he did, I wonder what his excuse is for doing something so malicious and evil.

My family and I attended both Xolane and Khutso's funerals, and it was so sad to see their families broken knowing that their lives were cut short by someone I'm related to. I felt guilty and blamed myself, because they wouldn't have died if they didn't know me- they were casualties in a war between my father and his brother.

I haven't spoken to Ndalo in over a week and I miss her so much but I can't give in too easily otherwise she'll never learn, she'll keep on doing this. Push me away when she's going through something and want me back when the dust settles, I can't be in a relationship like that and I won't be.

“ Why didn't you invite your baby mama to the braai? Do you know how hurt she was when she heard about it from me”

Khethelo says letting herself inside my room without knocking

“ We are not talking at the moment so I couldn't exactly invite her”

“ Why, what’s going on?”

“ I’d rather not talk about it”

“ Come on, tell me who knows maybe I could help”

“ No, I know you’ll take her side either way”

Sphe likes Ndalo but Khethelo adores her, in her eyes Ndalo is an angel who can do no wrong.

“ Sabelo I hope you’re not acting up because you’re going to varsity in a few weeks and trying to find an excuse to break up with her”

“ Wow!”

“ Don’t say wow, I know you Sabelo. You love girls”

“ Then maybe you don’t know me like you think you do, I agree I have a past of messing around with girls but I love Ndalo and I would never intentionally hurt her”

“ Then what did she do that was so big it made you stop talking to her?”

She's not going to let this go so I might as well tell her

“ Everytime we go through a rough patch in our relationship Ndalo pushes me away, about 5 months ago she and I booked a lodge planning to spend the night together but her ex found out about our plans and took her when she was on her way to meet with me. He raped her and forced her to moan and pretend she's enjoying and sent me the video of the whole thing, I was hurt because I thought she cheated on me but even so I went to her apartment the next morning and asked her if she was forced but you know what she did?”

“ What?”

“ She lied to me and told me that she’s in love with Musa, sure Musa was blackmailing and threatening her but she chose to hurt me with lies instead of telling me the truth. We could have found a way to deal with the problem together”

“ Maybe she was scared her ex would hurt you”

See what I mean? Ndalo can never be wrong in her eyes.

“ That’s the thing Khethelo I don’t need Ndalo to protect me, I know she loves me I have no doubts about that but she doesn’t consider me as a man in her life she sees a boy that’s why she doesn’t trust that I’ll protect her with everything I’ve got.”

“ Oh mntasekhaya I’m sorry, maybe you guys should talk. You need to tell her how you feel, maybe she doesn’t see it that way”

“ She does, if she considered me as her man she would never doubt my ability to protect her”

“ I can’t speak for her but communication is important for the success of any relationship, if

you still want this relationship to work talk to your baby mama and tell her how you feel or you no longer want a relationship with her?"

" Of course I do, ngiyamthanda u Ndalo Khethelo and I won't give up on her because of something that can be fixed but she needs to learn a lesson"

(I love Ndalo)

" I'm sure she has learned her lesson Meyiwa hah iviki lonke ungakhulumi nomunye umntwana"

(you've been ignoring her for an entire wee

" And I miss her so much"

**“ Ncoah, I’m sure she misses you too. Call her
I’m sure she’s dying to hear from you.”**

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NDALO

**“ So his sister is the one who invited you to the
braai and not him?”**

**I’m talking to Melo on the phone, I just told her
about the braai and about Khethelo being the
one who invited me.**

“ Yeah”

“ So will you go?”

“ Khethelo has been very nice to me since I met her, I will only go because I don't want to disappoint her”

“ Okay”

“ I wish you were here then I'd take you with me”

“ Take Anele mos”

“ Yeah you right, I’ll ask her to come with me when she comes back from her friend’s house”

“ Okay, let me freshen up Themba is taking Konke and I to gold reef city”

Konke is Bophelo’s second name, it’s actually Snakhokonke.

“ How is he though, is he finally warming up to you?”

“ Yeah he is, he’s a cool boy very sweet. He’s just not used to sharing his dad’s attention that’s why he acted the way he did when we met for the first time.”

“ At least, I’m happy for you. I know how much him accepting you means to you”

“ Yeah, I’m meeting Themba’s mother next month”

“ Isn’t his mother late?”

“ She is but he considers Nthati and Dineo’s mother like his own”

“ Okay, things are moving fast in that relationship hey”

“ When you both love each other and see a future together then there’s no need to wait”

“ That’s true hey, let me get ready we will talk soon”

“ Bye, please fix things with your baby daddy”

“ I will”

As promised Khethelo came to fetch me at 7 in the evening and didn’t have a problem when I told her Anele is coming with, the two of them actually clicked and by the time we drove into the Meyiwa residence they were talking like old

friends. The backyard is brimming with teenagers, Sphe's classmates and friends from school are also here my heart almost stopped beating when I saw them. I shouldn't have come, how will I explain my being here? That's why I've been cooped up in the house while everyone else is outside dancing to the loud music, at least they don't come inside the house.

I don't know where Mr and Mrs Meyiwa are but they left after eating and Sphe says they won't be coming back tonight.

Anele is a people's person so she gelled with everyone and I can see she's having a good time. She is trying to hide it from me but I

know she's been drinking alcohol, but I know Khethelo won't allow anything to happen to her and that's why I didn't say anything when I caught a whiff of alcohol in her breath.

“ My father said we should finish everything by midnight but everyone still wants to go on, we are in no mood to sleep so we are taking this to Koko lounge can Anele please come with us?”

Sphe

“ I have no problem as long as she promises to take care of herself, I don't want you waking up next to some strange boy Anele”

“ I promise I won't Ses'Ndalo”

“ And I’ll make sure of that” Khethelo

“ Okay, it’s fine she can go”

“ Thank you”

The three of them scurry out of the house leaving me alone in this big ass house. Their voices go lower and lower until I can’t hear them anymore, I’m not sure if Sabelo left with them because I last saw him when I arrived here. He was outside and didn’t even bother to look at my direction, not even after Sphe nudged him with an elbow and told him I had arrived.

I feel so low and out of place I shouldn't have allowed Khethelo to convince me to come. Now I'm left alone in this house feeling sleepy but not sure if I should go sleep in Sabelo's room since we are not on speaking terms, what was I even thinking coming to a braai full of teenagers? Oh I know I thought Sabelo and I would talk and fix things but I thought wrong, I should've stayed at home!

The front door opens and my nerves shoot to the roof, my heart thuds hard against my rib cage and I clutch my hand to my chest trying not to breath heavily.

“ I'm sorry for scaring you, it's me” Sabelo

He walks towards the couch I'm sitting on with a bottle of Heineken in his hand and lowers himself next to me, the strong smell of beer fills my nostrils the moment he opens his mouth.

“ Look at me”

I swivel around to face him resting my back on the couch's armrest. He puts the beer bottle on the floor, inches towards me and takes my hands into his while looking into my eyes.

“ I'm sorry for ignoring you but you hurt me when you distanced yourself from me, two friends of mine were murdered and I was

stressed about an unknown enemy I needed you by my side Ndalo but you decided it was best to leave me”

I really hurt him, the pain I see in his eyes says it all.

“ I’m sorry..”

“ Shh..let me speak”

He says pressing his forefinger on my lips.

The feel of his finger on my lips awakes my carnal desires and I find myself tempted to part

my lips and suck his finger but I don't, this isn't the time.

“ I love you Ndalo, I love you a lot but I won't allow you to play yo-yo with my feelings. You can't walk in and out of my life as you please, if you want us to work then you need to learn to communicate with me and stop making decisions that affect the both us on impulse. You need to stop treating me like a boy, yes I'm 18 but I'm a man the same man who fucked you pregnant. Stop treating me like a kid because I'm not, I'm your man and you need to start seeing and treating me as such.”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#59

UNEDITED

“ What am I?”

“ You’re a man”

“ Whose man?”

“ Mine”

“ That's right, I'm your man and I expect you to treat me as such. I missed you”

“ I missed you too baby”

He puts his hand on the back of my neck and smashes his lips into mine. I wrap my arms around his neck and kiss him back, the kiss feels nothing like what I'm used to how he brutally sucks on my lips, the taste of beer in his tongue and how he pinches my nipples is different from what I've grown accustomed to but good nonetheless.

He takes my right hand and guides it between his legs making me touch his erection.

“ This is how much I missed you”

I unbuckle his belt, take out his hard member from his pants and wrap my hand around it giving him a hand job.

“ Fuck!”

He groans in my ear making me work my hand faster on his hard shaft. He starts sucking my earlobe and shoving his tongue inside my auditory canal yerr who knew the ear was connected to the sex organ? I swear I’ve never been so wet in my life.

“ Lie on your back baby”

He helps me out of my dress and moves my drenched panties to the side and buries his face on my wet sex eating me up like I’m his favourite dessert. He drinks my juices like a dog slurping water and shoves his tongue deep inside my sex touching my sweet spot, my thighs vibrate as a huge wave of pleasure washes over me.

The pleasure I feel is so immense I don’t know what to do with myself I end up bucking up my hips and grinding my pussy on his face. He spreads my folds and moves his tongue down to my crack. My heart almost stops beating when his tongue circles the wrinkles around my

ass, my body convulses and I orgasm coating his face with my juices.

“ Will you treat me like a man now?”

“ Y..yes”

I mutter trying to catch my breath

Without warning he shoves his hard dick inside of my mouth and I suck on it like my life depends on it.

“ Now tell me, would a boy do this to you?”

He asks and pushes all of his dick inside my mouth causing me to gag

“ I asked a question Ndalo”

How do I reply when his dick is filling my mouth almost touching my epiglottis? He pulls himself out of my mouth when he sees tears rolling down my face.

“ I’m sorry love”

“ It’s okay”

“ No it’s not, come here”.

He pulls me to his arms and gives me a hug or what was meant to be one, I mean we can't have a proper hug with this big belly between us.

“ How's my baby?”

The baby kicks the minute Sabelo puts his hands on my belly. He beams looking at me with indescribable joy on his face.

“ Tell me you felt that too?”

“ I did, I felt it ”

I say with tears rolling down my cheeks, oh my goodness I can't find the right words to describe the joy I feel in my heart right now. I swear there's just something magical about feeling your baby kick from inside your belly.

“ Oh my baby do it again my angel kick for daddy”

His face falls when his angel doesn't kick again

“ Is it normal to love someone you've never met so much?”

“ Yes, it’s completely normal baby. I know exactly how you feel, I feel it too. I love her so much”

“ I love you Ndoniyamanzi, thank you so much for our angel. I was not ready or even thinking of being a father when she came into our lives but now I can’t imagine my life without her in it”.

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.br/.**

SABELO

The girls came back from Koko lounge in the wee hours of the morning and I had to wake up

and open the door for them, it was 4AM then and I haven't been able to fall asleep since. I've been starrng at my beautiful woman and kissing her forehead repeatedly Lord knows how much I've missed this beautiful soul. We had a lengthy conversation before we fell asleep and she promised to do better and I trust her, she looked sincere when she apologized and promised never to repeat her mistakes again.

I've never been one to cuddle after sex, I used to hate cuddling matter of fact but with Ndalo everything is different I just want to hold her in my arms the entire night but she only allows me to hold her for some time and then starts complaining " your legs are too heavy" " it's

too hot I'm sweating" then I let go of her but only for some time before I wrap myself around her again I just can't help myself. It happens involuntarily and I believe that's what happens when you truly love someone, you just can't get enough of them. You could spend the entire day with them and still feel like you didn't spend enough time, that's the amazing power of love.

" Good morning sleepy head"

" Good morning baby"

I lean for a kiss but she moves her head back

“ And then?”

**“ I haven’t brushed my teeth Sabelo, morning
breath”**

**“ Urg kanti, I don’t care about all that. I love
you come here”**

“ No”

She protests with her hands covering her mouth

**“ Let me tell you something baby ne there are
people I’d never go down on noma bathi she
just got out of the shower but I’d never put my
mouth there ngeke kodwa wena Sthandwa sam**

I'd go down on you at any time without thinking twice"

" Yo mara Sabelo"

" I'm telling you, when you truly love someone there's nothing too hard for you to do for them. In this case to them, so come let me suck those lips"

" What to you want to eat for breakfast?"

I say when we break the kiss

" I feel like muesli and yogurt"

“ Eish I don’t think we have muesli hey”

**“ Then go buy it babakhe your daughter wants
muesli”**

She says and pouts her lips

Ya ne, ngaze ngaba wu baba ngimncane!

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NARRATED

Mathapelo and her husband spent the night at the hotel making sweet love and professing their undying love for each other, it's been a stressful couple of days for Brandon. He's been trying to find the enemy after his son's life, the same enemy who turned out to be his brother.

Since he now knows who the enemy is he decided to spend the night in a hotel with his wife away from the kids and make up for neglecting her physical and emotional needs for the past few days.

Right now they are driving back home, holding hands with him stealing kisses every now and then like a young couple in love. It's been years of marriage but the love between them makes

those who don't know them think that they got married recently.

“ Thank you for a beautiful night baba wengane zami”

(Father of my kids)

Brandon doesn't reply he brings her hand to his lips and plants a peck on her knuckles

“ I hope I won't regret allowing those kids to host a braai in my house”

Mathapelo says

“ Don’t worry my love, I’m sure everything is the way we left it. I trust Khethelo plus Ndalo was there so I’m sure there’s nothing to worry about” .

“ You trust Ndalo ne?”

“ Are you trying to pick a fight after the wonderful night we just had?”

“ No, I’m not. I just don’t understand why you like her so much”

“ I like her because our son loves her and because she’s a good self respecting young lady”

“ Hmmm but I still wish Sabelo went for someone his age”

“ Do you realise you’re doing to Ndalo exactly what my parents did to you?”

“ You’re not being fair Brandon, I wasn’t 7 years older than you like Ndalo. Your parents had no right to treat me the way they did.”

“ So Ndalo being 7 years older than our son gives you the right to treat her the way you’ve been treating her”

Mathapelo scoffs

“ What did I do to her? I no longer insult or say anything to her mos”

They are now parked outside their house

“ But you still haven’t accepted her as the woman in our son’s life”

“ Haibo! Angsazi ufunani kimi!”

(I don’t know what you want from me)

She says and angrily climbs off the car pacing to the house in anger. She finds Ndalo cooking her food in her kitchen using her pots and the sight of her in shorts infuriates her even more.

“ What are you doing in my kitchen?”

She spits her words laced with venom

“ I’m sorry ma, I was hungry and I thought I could whip up something to hold my hunger until Sabelo comes back from the mall with my muesli”

Mathapelo chuckles, not a pleasant one but one that leaves Ndalo feeling uncomfortable.

“ Not only are you prancing in my kitchen in shorts showing off your huge ass but you’re

sending my son on errands like he's your skivvy"

Ndalo is taken aback by her statement, she doesn't understand what she wrong she did.

" What? Are you just going to stand there and keep pretending that you're humble and.."

" THAT'S ENOUGH!"

Brandon's voice reverberates inside the kitchen startling both women, the man never raises his voice so he must be pissed for him to shout.

“ MaKhumalo I’m sorry for your mother’s behavior please excuse us my child”

Ndalo nods and bolts out of the kitchen trying so hard not to burst into tears.

“ What’s your problem with Ndalo Mathapelo? I’ve been tolerating your nonsense for way too long but I’m starting to get annoyed with you”

“ You see this? How you’re defending her right now is my problem!”

“ What?” He asks

Surely he didn’t hear his wife well

“ You heard me Meyiwa, I hate how you always defend her and make me look like the bad guy. You didn’t sleep for days running around like a headless chicken because she was a suspect in a murder case”

“ What? Uyahlanya wena, have you forgotten your son was also a suspect in the very same case?”

(You’re crazy)

“ Mxm we both know you didn’t want your precious Ndalo ending up in prison”

“ Damn right I didn’t want her to end up in prison for something she didn’t do especially in her condition”

“ Mxm! She’s not the first person to fall pregnant wayenza ngathi I pregnancy siyicala ngaye”

“ Ungenwe yini we mfazi ndini”

(What has gotten into you)

He asks feeling defeated

“ I don’t want Ndalo in my house Meyiwa I’ve tried to pretend but I can’t pretend anymore, I don’t want her in my house”

“ But why?”

Mathapelo opens her mouth to speak but the words don't come out. She then looks at her husband and blow out shaky breath

“ I don't want that girl in my house Meyiwa”

She says and storms out of the kitchen leaving her husband confused.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#60

NARRATED

“You were right” Those are the first words out of Mathapelo’s mouth when Lettia opens the door for her.

Mathapelo and Lettia met during a parents meetings at Sabelo’s school, they spoke briefly before the meeting and exchanged contacts and that’s how their friendship started.

“I’m right about a lot of things, you need to be more specific” Says Lettia following a frustrated Mathapelo into the lounge.

“Please don’t say you told me so”

“Okay, shoot.”

“You were right about Ndalo wanting Meyiwa”

“I knew it! What did she do to prove me right?”

“I found her making food in my kitchen wearing a short, you should’ve seen her. The short was tight showing off her huge ass.”

“What? How do you dress like that when your ‘father-in-law’ is around? She obviously wanted

to tempt him, but it serves you right Mathapelo
I long told you to report this girl to the
principal. I told you she's after your husband,
but you thought I was crazy and making things
up. Look at what she did after you gave her a
chance and welcomed her in your home”

“Lord knows I tried; I was willing to accept her
for my son's sake. I was starting to warm up to
her yaz, starting to accept her but what she did
today threw me off”

“I told you to report her to the principal for
having a relationship with a learner, report her
and let her lose her job.”

“My son loves her Lettia, he’ll never forgive me if I do that.”

“ Aisuka, Uyamzala uSabelo ngeke akukwatele unomphela. I know one day he’ll thank you for rescuing him from that woman”

(You are his mom; he won’t stay angry at you forever)

“She’s pregnant with my grandchild, if I do this my grandchild is the one who’ll suffer the most”

“Your grandchild you say? Stop being a fool my friend why would a 25-year-old qualified teacher get pregnant by a boy who doesn’t

have a penny to his name? that child is not Sabelo's I can bet my life on it!"

"What you saw today was only a preview of what will happen when that girl finally takes over your home, keep playing the good girl and you'll live to regret it" Says Lettia seeing the hesitation and reluctance in Mathapelo's eyes.

"So, are you finally going to take my advice and report her?"

"I don't know Lettia, I don't know if I want to be responsible for ruining someone's career."

“That will teach her to stop lusting on young boys”

“But what if we are wrong about her and she really loves my son?”

“There we go again, Mathapelo you’re kind and naïve and that will be your biggest downfall. Let’s be realistic here why would someone so beautiful, a qualified teacher fall for a boy who can’t take care of her? Women love to be pampered and spoiled especially the educated one’s, have you ever seen an educated woman dating an unemployed man?”

“ Lettia..”

“Would you be with Meyiwa if he didn’t take care of you and the kids?”

“It depends, if he’s striving to change our situation then yes but if he is comfortable and not doing anything to improve our situation then no”

“Unfortunately, this generation doesn’t believe in building a man, abo bob the builder baphela ngey’nkathi zethu. These young girls want a finished product, they want to live a comfortable life. They want a man who has everything, and they don’t care who they use or hurt in the process as long as they get what they want.”

Ndalo doesn't look like someone who is capable of doing that or is she?

“ Wake up that girl wants your husband she's only using your son to get to him, keep playing the good girl uzakhala esika Nandi ngiyakutshela”.

“Meyiwa loves me, he would never cheat on me much less with our son's girlfriend.” Says Mathapelo causing Lettia to break into a fit of laughter

“Kuyasho ukuthi you didn't date much during your youth, you dated one man and ended up

marrying him. Men cheat, there's no such a thing as a man who doesn't cheat. I hate to break this to you but look into the mirror, you're no longer the beauty queen you used to be, and your body has changed. Ndalo is young with a beautiful firm body, I'm sure she doesn't have stretch marks and cellulites and has energy to keep up with your husband's high libido, she is probably flexible too and would be willing to bend to any position Meyiwa wants without complaining about muscle pain like you do. Are you sure you want to wait until that happens before you get rid of this girl? Can you compete with that? Take your phone and call Gwala." Mathapelo looks at Lettia not sure if she should do what she says

“Think about it, ever since that girl came into your lives nothing has been going right in your family. You fought with your son, he even moved out which is something that has never happened before that girl came along. You and Meyiwa are constantly bickering because of that girl, what must happen for you to realize that this girl came to disturb the peace in your home and to destroy your marriage? Today you found her in your kitchen but next time you’ll find her in your bedroom on top of your husband.”

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NDALO

I don't know what I did to Mrs. Meyiwa for her to despise me so much, the things she said to me were completely uncalled for. Maybe I shouldn't have entered her kitchen without her permission, some people are possessive when it comes to their kitchens my mother is one of them so maybe I shouldn't have entered her kitchen without being given permission. The first thing I did when I came back from the kitchen was to take a shower, all I'm waiting for now is for Sabelo to come back from the mall so Anele and I can go back home we've clearly overstayed our welcome here.

“Good morning miss Khumalo” says Sphe standing at the door. The door is wide open so she didn't knock.

“Hey Sphe, where’s Anele?”

“She’s making food in the kitchen with Khethelo” I hope Mrs. Meyiwa wont flip when she finds my sister in her kitchen.

“Okay, when you go back tell her to prepare herself. We are leaving as soon as your brother comes back from the mall”

**“Okay will do, my father sent me to call you”
My heart just leaped to my throat, what does Mr. Meyiwa want from me?**

“Did he tell you what he wants?” Sphe chuckles

“Relax, don’t look so scared my dad is harmless I promise. He’s the sweeter and kinder parent between the two” I know but I’m still scared of him.

“ Is he with your mother?” I don’t have the energy to deal with Mrs. Meyiwa

“No, mom isn’t home.”

“Okay, I’m coming” When she walks out I take a deep breath and calm myself down before heading to the lounge.

“You asked to see me baba” I say walking into the lounge

“Yes, please take a seat.” I sit on the couch across him and wait for him to speak.

“I’ll start by apologizing for your mother’s behavior my child, what she did was completely uncalled for, and you didn’t deserve it”

Phew! I thought he was going to chastise me for walking around the house in shorts, in my defense I didn’t expect them to be back so soon.

“It’s okay baba there’s no need to apologize I shouldn’t have entered the kitchen without asking for her permission, my mom is also possessive of her kitchen, so I understand where she’s coming from.”

His lips curve into a smile, which makes me feel uncomfortable because I’m not sure how to react.

“You’re kindhearted, now I see why my son loves you so much. Please don’t tell Sabelo about what happened here today, he won’t see it the way you do. He will be angry, rightfully so but I’m asking you not to tell him. I promise it’ll never happen again; I’ll talk to your mother”

I don't like hiding things from Sabelo, but I understand where Mr. Meyiwa is coming from, Sabelo tends to overreact at times, and I wouldn't want to be the reason he fights with his mom.

“I won't tell him baba”

“Thank you, my child. I don't know if Sabelo told you about the damages”

“ He did baba”

“ Did you talk to your parents?”

“Yes, I did. My parents are not traditional, but they have no problems with Sabelo paying damages”

“Okay that’s good, I’ll make sure to meet and have a conversation with your father soon”

“Okay baba”

“No problem my child, we are done. you can go back to what you were doing.”

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NARRATED

Its not a secret that Brandon has taken a life before, more than once even but having to kill his own brother isn't an easy thing to do that's why Bongane is still alive but the sooner he takes care of this the quicker it'll be for him to get over it. Him and Ntsika are on the way to a warehouse located in the outskirts of Mpumalanga where Bongane and his friends are kept hostage by his friend Zweli.

“Zalo, I know you feel bad maybe even guilty about what we are about to do but there's absolutely no reason why you should feel bad about this, Bongane is a bastard, and he needs to pay for what he did.”

“I don’t understand why he’d do this to me”

“You don’t need to crack your brain trying to think of reasons why, he’ll tell you why and I’ll make sure of it.”

Twenty minutes later the two brothers finally reach their destination and one of Zweli’s men opens the gate for them.

“Ta” Ntsika says to the man who just opened the gate for them.

“Bo Meyiwa” says Zweli approaching them, the three men exchange pleasantries and have

a brief chat before walking inside the warehouse.

“Where are his friends, did he say anything?”

Asks Ntsika looking at Bongane who has his hands and feet tied.

“Lutho, I tried every trick in the book, but the bastard still wouldn’t speak. I killed his friends trying to get him to talk but the bastard didn’t flinch.”

“That explains the bruises” Brandon says looking at Bongane’s battered body and face.

**“He’ll talk, I’ll make sure of it. Ya wena
mhlath’wakho” Ntsika**

He removes the gag from Bongane’s mouth

**“Khuluma why did you kill those innocent
boys?”**

(Talk)

**“Shut up wena, this has nothing to do with you.
Musa nje ukuphapha, this is between your big
brother and I” Bongane says grinning at
Brandon**

Ntsika throws a hard punch on his stomach that immediately has him coughing violently and gasping for air.

“My brother and I are one, you should know that by now.”

“Trust me, I know that very well. You’ve been fighting each other’s battles since childhood; I’m surprised you don’t share women judging by how clingy you are on each other!”

He spews when he finally recovers from Ntsika’s punch. Ntsika attempts to punch him again, but Brandon holds his hand mid-air

“Zalo let me punch this idiot”

“I’m not a coward I don’t fight against people who can’t defend themselves, untie him”

Brandon orders Zweli’s men. One of them runs to untie Bongane.

“Between the two of us one is going to die today, you and I are going to fight it out like men. If you get an opportunity to kill me, please use it because if you don’t, I will definitely kill you.”

“Bring it on.” Says Bongane with a smug look on his face.

“Gentlemen please excuse us” Brandon

“No bafo, you don’t have to do this.” Ntsika

He is scared for his brother’s life. Bongane is a well known stick fighter in Mahlabathini, he trusts his brother’s fighting skills but Bongane has never lost a fight.

“ Zalo please leave” Brandon

He says folding the sleeves of his shirt

“ Asambe Ndoda” Zweli

(Let’s go man)

Although Ntsika doesn't want to, he has no choice but to leave.

“ I've been waiting for this day for years now”

Bongane

“ Dala zibatlana zi kopene” Brandon replies

“ Allow me to tell you why I hate you before I kill you, you deserve to know why you're dying”

“ Talk”

“ You’re a selfish person who thinks good things are only good for you, what did you do when I told you about the crush I had on Mathapelo? You went ahead and made her yours to prove that you’re better than me!”

“ You know it didn’t happen like that”

“ Of course it did then when she failed to give you kids your parents arranged for you to take Thandazo as your second wife, you should’ve refused because you knew you weren’t going to go through with it but you didn’t. You agreed only for you to flee on the day of your traditional wedding humiliating the poor girl making her the laughing stock in front of the entire village. I had to step in and marry her in

order to protect the family name and her dignity. You crushed her self esteem, she'd cry for days on end but I helped her pick up the pieces and made her feel worthy again but even that was not enough to win her heart and love. I'm always compared to you and made to feel bad because I couldn't afford to give her the life you gave to Mathapelo, I tried my best but I'll never be good enough for her. Want to know why?"

" Why?"

Asks Brandon in a pained voice, he had no idea his brother was suffering this much because of a mistake he made years ago.

“ Because I’m not you. Thandazo loves you, she’d rather be married to you than to me. Even after you humiliated her in front of the entire community, she would rather be with you than with me.”

“ I’m sorry Meyiwa I never meant to be the reason for your unhappiness, you know I’ve always loved you like a brother. But you should’ve punished me not my son”

“ That would be too easy for you, I wanted you to suffer like I did for all of those years being married to a woman who didn’t love me nor appreciate my efforts. I wanted you to feel like how I feel everytime she compares me to you, like I feel everytime she looks at you with love

in her eyes when she thinks no one is watching.”

“ I’m sorry”

“ I wanted Sabelo to sleep with those girls from Chillax and I was going to send pictures of him having sex with them to Ndalo, she doesn’t look like the type who forgives cheating so she would definitely dump Sabelo and then I’d find away to feed her abortion pills. But your precious son ruined my plans so I had to improvise and bring Xoliswa as plan B, Xoliswa the beautiful nurse who saved his life. Sabelo was supposed to fall for her and cheat on Ndalo with her but that also didn’t go according to plan so I had to think out of the box and

unfortunately two boys had to die so I could frame Sabelo.”

“ Bongane you’ve gone insane”

“ No, I’m perfectly normal brother. Want to know what I was going to do to Sphe? I was going to have her gang raped and trafficked to Russia, I wanted to crush her little soul.”

“ You’re a sick bastard why would you want to hurt innocent kids like that?”

“ That’s simple, I hate their father. The children will pay for the sins of their father’s I don’t

know if I'm saying it correctly but I've heard of something like that"

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#61

NARRATED

It's been over an hour since Mathapelo came back from Lettia's place and her eyes have been fixed on her screen gawking at Gwala's

phone number not sure if she should call him and report Ndalo. She needs to think about this carefully, because once she makes the call then there's no going back.

“ Ma are you okay?”

Asks Sabelo dumping his body next to his mother on the couch.

“ Sabelo man! You scared me”

Startled, she quickly presses the power button dimming her screen.

“ What's wrong ma? You look troubled”

Mathapelo sighs heavily and looks at her son

“ Nothing is wrong my son, it’s nothing you should worry yourself about.”

She says forcing a smile but her son sees through her pretence.

“ I can see that something is bothering you, but since you don’t want to tell me about it I’ll advise you to pray about it like you always tell me to everytime I find myself trapped in a difficult situation.”

Prayer ne, why didn't she think of it? God must be speaking to her through her son.

“ Thank you my son, I'll definitely do so.”

“ I love you mom”

He plants a kiss on her forehead before standing up and dashing out of the room, leaving Mathapelo to her thoughts. Two minutes later she picks herself up from the couch heading to her bedroom where she goes down on both knees next to her bed, shuts her eyes, clasps her hands together and begins to pray.

“ Modimo ntate modimo amatla ohle ketla ho wena tsatsing lakajeno ke qakehile aketsebe ke etseng, nthuse ntate ompontshe tsela. Please show me a sign my lord, show me what I need to do from here. What step do I take from here? I’m afraid of making a mistake and ruining someone else’s career over suspicions that can turn out to be lies, please show me the way my lord. Amen”

(Lord my father, lord almighty. I come to you today confused not knowing what to do, help me my father and show me the way)

This might not be a well constructed prayer but it was a sincere one, one that comes from the depth of her heart and expresses exactly what’s in her heart and mind. She then stands on her

feet and picks up the Bible on top of the bedside table, it's been a while since she read the Bible and today feels like a perfect day to go back to the word of God- the best way to defend oneself against Satan's many distasteful tricks and attacks is through the word, the word of God is the best weapon one can use in the warfare against the devil.

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“ F*ck this sh*t! I'm going in”

Ntsika says already approaching the door but Zweli grabs his hand, halting his steps.

“ Please let your brother do this alone, he needs this.”

“ No, Zweli we don’t know what’s happening inside. Bongane has been fighting all his life what if he kills my brother huh?”

“ Ntsika you need to trust your brother, I know he’ll come out of this battle as a victor.”

For sometime now Ntsika, Zweli and his men have been listening to heavy groans and grunts coming from inside the warehouse but before then it sounded like the brothers were having a

conversation accompanied by apologies from Brandon.

“ No, I can’t stand out here and watch my brother possibly get killed I’m going inside.”

He says when another groan reverberates from inside.

“ Ntsika please”

“ It’s easy for you to say this, he’s just a friend to you but to me he’s a brother- the only sibling I have. The only person who I know will always have my back, I can’t stand by and watch that

bastard kill him. Never! It'll happen over my dead body!"

If it was under different circumstances Zweli would laugh in his face. Who knew that the mighty Ntsika is scared of something? The possibility of losing his brother petrifies him.

" Have faith in your brother..."

" Shut up! I don't want to hear it I'm going in"

He paces to the door but Zweli's men stand at the door blocking him from walking inside.

**“ Zweli aw’tshele labantu bakho basuke
endleleni yam’ ngingaka casuki!”**

**(Tell your men to move out of my way before I
get angry)**

“ Hlehlani madoda” Zweli

**They shift from the door making way for Ntsika
to pass but the door creaks open before Ntsika
can touch it. Everyone sighs in relief when
Brandon walks out but their excitement is short
lived because he soon sinks to the floor, his
shirt soaked in blood. Ntsika holds him before
he can hit the ground.**

“ Sh*t! He has a stab wound on his back.”

Zweli

“ That bastard cheated, I wonder what he stabbed him with.” London, one of Zweli’s men mutters under his breath.

“ Call an Ambulance!”

Bellows Ntsika with tears swimming in his eyes. He shouldn’t have listened to his brother, he knew leaving him alone with Bongane was a big mistake. Yes, Brandon killed Bongane but what good is that if he can also lose his life?

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NDALO

“ What are we going to cook for dinner today?”

Mom

“ I don’t know ma”

**“ I feel like eating something different I don’t
know maybe a kota or something”**

Anele and I laugh

**“ My father will never have Kota for dinner
mama” I say**

Angalwa kabi uMntungwa

“ Eish naye u babakho uyahlupha ngalokuba yixaba, akakhathali yipapa?”

(Your father though, doesn't he get tired of eating pap everyday)

We laugh

“ Asizingeni thina mama wumuntu wakho uz'khethele” Anele

(We are not getting involved ma, he's your man. You chose him)

“ Ai kona ngiyak’thanda ukupheka kodwa hah njalo yimi ne bhodo”

(I love cooking but I get tired of cooking everyday)

“ I can cook today”

I offer

“ No, you’re pregnant my child and shouldn’t overwork yourself. I’ll cook.”

“ Yes I’m pregnant, not disabled ma. I’m the one cooking today and I’m not taking no for an answer.”

“ Okay, plus I missed your cooking phela you know kuyambulwa kuyembeswa kubo dade”

Mom

“ Hah mama, are you trying to say we can’t cook?” Anele

“ I never said that”

“ But you implied it.”

She says pouting

“ Askies ke, magcina ka mama”

“ It’s okay ma but ung’hurtile shem ngathi ngizimisela kangaka kanti angiyenzi zona”

We laugh

“ So ngiphekeni ma?” I ask

(What should I cook)

“ Angazi yazi mtanami you can cook anything but not pap I’m tired of eating pap”

(I don’t know my child)

“ I will make spaghetti then.”

Anele laughs

“ I foresee dad complaining about not being full, I suggest you cook pap for him in a separate pot.”

Anele adds her two cents

“ No, your father will eat spaghetti, he can't eat pap everyday it's not good for his health.” Mom

“ Let me get started then”

I'm moving around the kitchen taking out ingredients preparing myself to cook when Anele bolts inside the kitchen with my phone in her hand, it's ringing.

“ Thank you”

I murmur the words before accepting the call from Gwala, the principal.

“ Good evening miss Khumalo”

“ Evening Mr Gwala”

Schools only reopen in two weeks time so why is he calling me?

“ Miss Khumalo unfortunately I don't have good news for you, I need you to come to

school tomorrow. One of the parents from last year's matric class has filed a complaint against you."

" What?"

" Yes and I'm afraid the allegations against you are serious."

Thixo! What could this be about?

" Okay sir."

" Please meet me tomorrow morning, let's say 9ish is that fine with you?"

“ Yes, I’ll be there at 9 sir.”

**“ Thank you, enjoy the rest of your evening.
Bye”**

“ Bye”

**I’m shaking, my hands are trembling I won’t
mention my heartbeat. It’s so loud it feels like
it’s beating in my ears, I’m suddenly sweaty
feeling extremely hot in this cool weather. Oh
my goodness who could’ve complained about
me and what did they say?**

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SABELO

I'm on the floor doing push ups when my phone rings disturbing me. I get up from the floor and answer the call.

“ Sthandwa sam”

“ Sabelo my life is over!”

Croaks Ndalo in a quavering voice

“ Woah calm down and tell me what happened”

“ I just got off the phone with Gwala, he wants to see me tomorrow apparently one of the parents from last year’s matric class filed a complaint against me. He says the allegations are serious, oh my goodness Sabelo do you think your mother is the one who complained about me?”

“ What? Please calm down and try not to overthink and stress yourself. It’s probably not what you think, my mother would never report you. I know my mother, if she wanted to report you, then she would’ve done it a long time ago.”

“ If it’s not her then who Sabelo? Your mother is the only parent I know who has a problem with me.”

“ Okay, there’s no need to get worked up. I’ll ask her if she’s the one who complained about you, will that make you feel better?”

“ Nothing will make me feel better at this point, I hope it’s not her because if she’s the one then I might as well kiss my career goodbye.”

“ Let’s not jump to conclusions my love, wait for tomorrow and hear what Gwala has to say then we will take it from there okay?”

“ Okay.”

“ Ngiyakuthanda Ndalo, whatever happens tomorrow just know I'll be with you every step of the way. You and I will face everything together.”

(I love you)

“ Okay, I have to go. Bye”

“ Bye”

I will never forgive my mother if she's the one behind this like Ndalo thinks, but a part of me believes that my mother would report Ndalo because she knows how much it would hurt

me. I know my mother would never intentionally hurt me.

I'm on my way to her bedroom when I meet her outside my door, it looks like she was about to knock when I opened the door.

“ Thank goodness I found you, hyoohmlsg fbonvf”

That's what the rest of her sentence sounds like, she rushed through her words and swallowed her syllables .

“ Ma please calm down and repeat what you just said”

I say with my hands on either side of her shoulders, her body is trembling.

“ You’re shaking ma, what’s going on?”

She looks up and swallows nothingness before tears escape from the corner of her eyes.

“ Talk to me mama, what’s going on?”

“ Your uncle just called, your father has been admitted at Evander hospital.”

“ What happened to my father?”

What could've happened to my father, he was in good health the last time I saw him.

“ I don't know, your uncle didn't say. Bring the car around we need to leave, your father needs us.”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#62

To say I'm scared would be an understatement, I feel like all the words in the dictionary will not be enough to describe how terrified I am. The cab just dropped me outside the school gate, it's 5 minutes to 9 I should be making my way inside the school but here I am stuck on the same spot scared to walk in. Sabelo thinks I may have been summoned to the meeting for a different reason and not because of my relationship with him, but there's that nagging feeling in my stomach that tells me it's definitely about him. I mean I can't think of any other reason why Gwala would summon me here.

A few cars are parked inside the school yard and I spot Gwala's Polo VW 1.6 amongst them,

I should walk in they're probably waiting for me inside. The distance from the gate to the office is long and being pregnant doesn't help the situation, when I finally reach the office I make my way to the staff room. All eyes fall on me as I walk through the door and I can't help but notice how everyone is looking at me with a wrinkled nose like I stink, now I have no doubts they definitely know about Sabelo and me.

“ Goo..good morning, apologies for being late.”

Only Gwala returns my greetings while everyone else gawks at me like I'm the worst sinner on earth. There's one lady looking at me like she's ready to spit on my face, the look of

disgust she wears on her face when her eyes settle on my baby bump makes me wish for this whole thing to be nothing but a nightmare. I've never felt so small in my life- it feels like I've been stripped naked and everyone can see my nakedness.

“ Please take a seat miss Khumalo so we can start”

Gwala says gesturing towards a chair in the center of the room while everyone else is sitting on the other side of the room facing me, I feel like a criminal facing the Jury.

“ As you can see miss Khumalo we have members of the SMT and Mrs Makgatho who is representing the SGB”

He says after I settle down. Guess who is in the meeting as part of the SMT?(is an acronym for school management team. Which comprises of the principal, his deputy and the HOD’s for each subject) it’s the one and only Tsotetsi, and he’s looking at me with a smug look on his face.

“ I’ll get right into it, miss Khumalo what does your contract say about relationships between educators and the learners from this school?”

“ It says they are unethical and unlawful.”

I say in low tone full of shame.

“ Right, miss Khumalo it was brought to my attention that you are in a relationship with Sabelo Meyiwa, who was a learner in this school last year. It is said that you’re pregnant with his child, do you know anything about this?”

So I was right, Mrs Meyiwa is the one who reported me. That was low, even for her.

“ Miss Khumalo, do I need to repeat the question for you?”

He says when I don't reply

“ We are doing you a favour here, the least you can do is reply when you're being asked a question. This meeting shouldn't even be happening, Gwala should've taken the matter straight to the department of education and let them handle it and we all know what's going to happen when that happens right?.”

Tsotetsi says enjoying every second of this

“ I still say we should report her to the department.”

Says Mrs Makgatho, the SGB member.

If they report me to the department of education, the department will call me for a hearing and my certificate will be revoked once I'm found guilty. Which means I will no longer be allowed to practice as a teacher in South Africa.

“ I like you and I think you're a lovely young lady with a bright future ahead of you, I love the work you've done with last year's matric class. Our life sciences results improved a great deal, I want to find a way to deal with this calmly. A way that doesn't result in you losing your SACE certificate, you're a great asset to the education department and it would be such a shame to lose someone with your expertise

and talent. But I need you to work with me to ensure that it does not happen.” Gwala

He’s the only one here who isn’t speaking to me harshly or looking at me with judgmental eyes.

“ So?” he asks

I honestly don’t know what to say, whether I agree or deny the allegations against me I’m screwed either way. There’s nothing Gwala can do to protect me unless he doesn’t report me which I don’t see happening because the SGB and SMT will not allow it.

“ Stop begging her to talk Gwala, just report this paedophile to the department of Education, she’s clearly not willing to cooperate.” Tsotetsi

“ I’m sorry Ndalo there’s nothing I can do if you don’t talk to me. Meeting adjourned”

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NARRATED

While cleaning and stitching the wound doctors found rust pieces of steel on Meyiwa’s back, meaning that Bongane stabbed him using one of the equipment or objects inside the warehouse. He lost a lot of blood on his way to

the hospital because of the severity of his injury, the doctors had to perform a blood transfusion in order to save him and fortunately Ntsika was a match.

He's still unconscious but stable, the twins and their mother broke down when they saw him lying in a hospital bed. Meyiwa is not a sickly man so seeing him in such a vulnerable position was hard on all of them especially Sphe who wouldn't stop crying.

Only Sabelo and Sphe went back home when visiting hours were over. Mathapelo slept on the chair by her husband's bedside, it was not comfortable but it's better than sleeping in their king sized bed alone while her husband is

fighting for his life in hospital. She had to beg and plead with the doctor for him to allow her to spend the night, Zenkosi brought her a mink blanket to see her through the cold night.

Her phone chimes in her pocket waking her up from sleep, she dips her hand inside her pocket to retrieve it. A frown forms on her face when she sees the caller ID, why is Gwala calling her? But she picks up the call anyway

“ Hello.”

“ Good morning Mrs Meyiwa, how are you doing today?”

“ I’m good and you sir?”

“ I’m okay thanks for asking, I’m calling to give you an update on the complaint you filed against miss Khumalo.”

“ Excuse me, what?”

“ The complaint about her dating and being impregnated by her student, Sabelo your son.”

“ I’m sorry but I don’t know what you’re talking about sir.”

“ I don’t understand, you called me yesterday and filed a complaint against her.”

“ What? I never called you sir, someone must’ve called you from my phone because I’m certain I never called you.”

“ You didn’t call from your phone, the call was made from a private number but you explained the reason for using a private number.”

“ Which was?”.

“ You said your phone was off so you borrowed a friend’s phone.”

After praying and asking God to show me the way I made a decision not to report Ndalo, if

there's anyone who called Gwala and reported Ndalo pretending to me then that person is Lettia. There's no one else but why lie and pretend to be me?

“ I'm sorry but it wasn't me, I have no idea what you're talking about. Someone must've called you pretending to be me”

“ Okay ma'am I hear you but I'm afraid the allegations against miss Khumalo might be true, one of my educators says he once saw them having oral sex in one of the classrooms after school.”

What? How could they be so careless to have sex inside the school premises!

“ What?”

“ Yes ma’am, so I have no choice but to report the case to the department of Education so that miss Khumalo can be punished accordingly if she’s indeed guilty of what she’s being accused of”

Sabelo will never forgive me for this

“ But Sabelo is not a minor, he’s 18 and considered an adult capable of making his own decisions according to South African law.”

“ I know Mrs Meyiwa but unfortunately the SMT and SGB want me to report her to the department, my hands are tied there’s nothing I can do.”

Damn you Lettia!

“ Okay, I understand sir.”

I regret telling Lettia about this, I’m screwed!

“ I will keep you posted, bye”

“ Bye”

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SABELO

I couldn't sleep last night after seeing the state my father was in, aside from the stab wound on his back he has bruises all over his body and my uncle refuses to tell us what happened to him. In all my 18 years of life I've never seen my father sick not even from flue or fever, for some reason I've always seen him as this strong person who can never get sick so seeing him looking so beat up was difficult for me. It tore my heart apart, my father is my hero and I don't know if I can survive it if anything happens to him.

Sphe slept in my bed last night, the way she was crying I didn't think she would fall asleep but here she is sleeping in my arms. I'm glad that at least one of us managed to get some sleep, I don't want to think about how my mother must be doing. That man is her lifeline, my father better survive this because I don't see my mother surviving his death.

My mother made arrangements for my father to be moved to Med clinic in Trichardt later today, Sphe and I will drive to see him during visiting hours. I carefully move Sphe's head from my shoulder blade to the pillow and get out of bed to make a call.

“ Hello”

“ Hi, who’s this?”

“ It’s Anele, Ses’Ndalo is not feeling well.”

“ What’s wrong is it the baby?”

“ No the baby is fine but she’s been crying ever since she came back from the meeting she had at school with principal Gwala.”

“ Did she say anything?”

“ No, she refuses to talk. The only thing she said was that her life was over”

That can only mean one thing

“ Okay, thanks Anele. I’m on my way.”

**I drop the call and scurry to my closet looking
for something to wear**

**“ What’s happening, did something happen to
dad?”**

**Ask sphe in a sobbing voice behind me. My
shuffling must’ve woken her up.**

“ No, dad is fine.”

I say turning around.

Her eyes are so swollen making it obvious that she cried herself to sleep.

“ Then what’s wrong because I can see that there’s something wrong with you?”

“ Something happened to Ndalo, I need to go and see her”

“ What’s wrong is it the baby?”

She asks in a panicky voice

“ No, I’ll tell you when I come back.”

I say slipping into sweatpants, a plain white tee and Adidas slides.

“ Bye, I’ll see you when I come back.”

I sped to Ndalo’s house and arrived within ten minutes of leaving my house, her mother doesn’t like me. She loved Musa and wanted her daughter to get married to him, to her I’m the one who stopped her dreams from materializing. She gave me a mean look before allowing me to go to Ndalo’s bedroom but I

really couldn't care less my woman needs me,
her hate for me is the least of my concerns right
now.

I find Ndalo curled In foetal position on top of
the bed bawling her eyes out, seeing her in this
state breaks my heart into a gazillion pieces.

“ Sthandwa sam.”

I climb on top of the bed and wrap my arm
around her waist

“ I was right Sabelo, your mom is the one who
reported me.”

She says in a breaking voice

“ I’m sorry my love.”

I know ‘sorry’ is not enough but I have no words. I'm feeling a lot of things right now and disappointment is one of them. I didn't expect this from my mother, the last thing I wanted was to be the reason she loses her job. How can my mother do this? I thought she was finally warming up to Ndalo.

“ My career is over, just like that. After all the years of studying and dedication, couldn't she think about our child before doing this? How will I support this baby if I'm unemployed, what am I going to do Sabelo..teaching is all I

know, I've never imagined myself doing anything else other than teaching.”

I will never forgive my mother for putting Ndalo through this pain, she doesn't deserve this. I don't know what to say because I'm partly responsible for what's happening to her, I should've waited until I matriculated before pursuing a relationship with her. I shouldn't have allowed my feelings for her get the better of me, I feel terrible that our relationship has led to this painful outcome. I hope she will not resent me for this.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#63

“ I know nothing I say right now will make you feel better but whatever you do please don't break up with me, I know I'm being selfish right now but I swear I won't survive losing you Ndalo.”

She doesn't reply she just keeps on crying. I tighten my hold around her and kiss the back of her head.

“ I’m sorry that my mother is the reason why you’re going through all of this, I’m sorry that you’re about to lose your career because of loving me but please don’t leave me Ndalo....I swear my heart won’t take it.”

I say fighting back my tears

“ Sthandwa sam please say something, are you going to leave me?”

“ Sabelo please”

“ Please don’t break up with me Ndalo I’m begging you, I know my love doesn’t mean

much because I can't afford to take care of you but I swear I love you so much."

I put my hand on her baby bump and my daughter kicks. Something moves inside of me everytime I feel her kicking, her kicks always lighten up my day no matter how gloomy it may be but today feeling her kick fills me with immense sadness. I'm not working and Ndalo might lose her job, what will become of my daughter? Will she come into this world only to suffer, now more than ever I'm motivated to make money I don't want my angel to suffer or lack anything especially the essentials.

" I'm going to resign."

“ What?”

“ You heard me, I’ll resign and use whatever money I’ll get to start a business so I can support my baby.”

“ Are you sure?”

“ Yes, I’m sure. That way I can leave with my dignity intact.”

“ Okay, I’ll support what decision you take.”

“ Thanks”

“ What about me?”

I know now is not the time but I need to know

“ What about you Sabelo?”

Ouch!

“ Will you dump me?”

“ No, then losing my job would be in vain. I love you and I’m not breaking up with you for something you didn’t do but I will never forgive your mother for doing this to me.”

Neither will I

“ I understand, thank you for not breaking up with me.”

“ Breaking up you with you wouldn't have solved anything Sabelo and besides I have learned from my mistakes.”

“ You have made me the happiest man alive, I know I've told you so many times before but I love you Ndalo and I'll be with you every step of the way holding your hand through it all.”

“ I know and I'm grateful to have you in my life.”

“ I’m the one who should be grateful that a beautiful woman like yourself looked at me twice, I’m one lucky bastard!”

She giggles

At least I’ve managed to make her laugh

“ Come on, I’m not that beautiful.”

“ That’s because you don’t see yourself the way I see you, you are perfect. You’re every man’s dream, beautiful, humble and kind hearted.”

“ Stop it, you’re making me blush.”

“ Blush away my love, you deserve it.”

“ It’s not going to be easy you know that right?”

She says suddenly sounding serious again

“ I know, and I’m willing to go through it all as long as I have you by my side.” I say

We fall into comfortable silence in each other’s arms until my phone rings disturbing us, I retrieve it from my pocket and answer

“ Sabelo where are you? We need to go to the hospital.”

“ I’m not coming”

“ What? Are you crazy, dad is in the hospital fighting for his life and you’re telling me you’re not going to visit him?”

The thought of seeing my mother angers me, I don’t know what I will say when I see her so I’d rather not visit my dad today.

“ I didn’t stutter “

“ Wow, so how am I supposed to get there since you took mom’s car and uncle hasn’t brought back dad’s car?”

“ I don’t know, take a taxi or call an Uber I don’t know umdala Sphe you’ll find a way.”

Ndalo turns around and grabs the phone from my hand and put it’s on speaker.

“ Hello Sphe, I’m sorry about Sabelo’s attitude. Wait for him, he’ll come to pick you up just now.”

“ What are you doing?”

I murmur but she ignores me

“ Thanks miss Khumalo, Sabelo said you’re not okay what’s wrong?”

“ I’ll be fine Sphe, prepare yourself Sabelo will pick you up shortly.”

She says and cuts the call

“ What was that? I'm not ready to see that woman.”

“ That woman happens to be your mother, why didn’t you tell me your father is in hospital.

What happened to him?”

“ I’m sorry it slipped my mind, he was stabbed.”

Her eyes pop out from their sockets

“ Are those men behind it?”

“ No, relax. Those men will never bother us ever again ”

“ Wait for me to change, I’m coming with you to the hospital.”

Now it's my turn to be shocked, she's coming with me?

“ What?”

She asks when she sees my expression

“ You want to come with, after everything that happened?”

“ Your mother is the one who reported me not your father, Meyiwa has been good to me since you introduced us so yes I'm going to the hospital to see him.”

Her kindness always leaves me in awe, she's definitely a gem.

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NDALO

My heart is broken, I am so sad that everything I've worked so hard for will go up in flames just like that because of a woman who couldn't accept that I'm in love with her son because of our age difference. I've always respected Mrs Meyiwa and not once did I ever talk back whenever she said something bad or negative to me, in a way I understood where she came from that's why I tried not to take anything she says to heart but what she did was the final

straw. She broke me and destroyed everything I worked for years to achieve. I will never forgive her for doing this to me, never!

We just parked outside Med clinic, Sabelo is at the reception desk asking the receptionist for his father's ward number while Sphe and I wait for him on the chairs.

“ Come on let's go.”

He says giving me his hand. I hold his hand because I know he won't let me refuse, he's been holding my hand ever since we found out that someone posted my picture on social media and called me a paedophile and all sorts of names you can think of. On our way here we

stopped at Embalenhle mall to buy some goodies for Mr Meyiwa and that's when people started pointing fingers at me and calling names, I won't lie it hurt to receive that kind of treatment from strangers and I badly wanted to bawl my eyes out and cry but having Sabelo by my side holding my hand and reassuring me of his love for me gave me all the strength I needed to tackle that experience head on and not crumble and cry in front of people.

I don't know how this made it to social media so soon, it's barely been 24 hours since the meeting but I'm already trending and being called names. I may have not cried in front of everyone inside the store but I cried my eyes out when we finally got inside the car. I don't

know what will happen when my family sees this, I hope people won't crucify them for being related to me. I'm most worried about Anele, high school kids can be mean and they can bully her for being my sister. My mother will probably resent me for this, she cares so much about what people think of her.

I'm tempted to pounce on Mrs Meyiwa the moment we walk through the door and I see her face but I breathe in and out to calm myself down, she's responsible for all of this. I hope she's happy now that my name is being dragged through the mud on social media.

“ Ndalo I..”

“ Don’t even say her name mother!”

Sabelo cuts her sentence short, he’s fuming. I swear I can see the fire in his eyes

“ I swear I didn’t do it, please believe me.”

She says desperate for us to believe her

“ Mama how can you do something like this to Ndalo? You’re a mother too, how would feel if someone else did the same thing to me?”

Asks Sphe with tears rolling down her cheeks prompting my tears to cascade down my face,

maybe I shouldn't have come. Seeing her face is torturous for me.

“ Are you happy now that people are calling her names on social media, are you happy Mathapelo?”

Bellows Sphe in anger

“ I swear I didn't do it, Sabelo my son please look into my eyes. I promise it wasn't me.”

The way she's crying I almost believe her, ai shem the woman can act.

**“ You’re dead to me mother, from today
consider yourself dead to me.”**

**“ Sabelo, please no don’t say that. Ndalo please
believe me my child I didn’t do it, it wasn’t
me.”**

I’m suddenly ‘her child’ now

**She tries holding my hand but I shift my hand
and look away.**

“ Please trust me, it wasn’t me.”

**She says and cries into her hands. It’s difficult
for me to see someone her age crying and**

pleading so I dash to the door and leave the ward.

A knock on the passenger window snaps me out of my reverie, it's Sabelo and Sphe. When I ran out of the ward Sabelo followed me. He wanted us to leave but I refused and convinced him to give me the car keys and promised to wait in the car, and that's where I've been waiting for them while they were inside talking to their mom.

I roll down the window and give him the car keys, he takes them and rounds the car coming to the driver seat while Sphe gets in the

backseat. I'm not sure what happened inside but they look like they were crying, Mrs Meyiwa is a great actress I wouldn't be surprised if the twins believe that she's not the one who reported me. I mean I almost fell for her stellar acting skills, that's why I had to get out of there before I fell for her lies.

“ I'm sorry Ndalo, I know sorry is not enough but I'm sorry for everything my mother put you through.” Sabelo

“ Stop apologizing, you're not responsible for her actions.”

“ How's your father doing?”

I can't believe I came here to see Mr Meyiwa but ended up leaving without seeing him because Mrs Meyiwa made the whole thing about her. How selfish!

“ Nothing has changed, he's still the same.”

“ He'll pull through, he's a strong man.”

“ I hope so.”

“ Have some faith and please pray for him.”

“ I will.”

“ Miss Khumalo I know this is not the time but what if my mother is telling the truth, what if she’s not the one who reported you?” Sphe

**“ Shut up Sphe if you have nothing to say”
Sabelo**

“ It’s just that she looked so sincere *sigh* I don’t know but I don’t think she’s lying”

Didn’t I say it? That woman’s acting is very good, it’s only a matter of time before Sabelo believes her too.

“ No offense Sphe but I don’t care about your mother’s sincerity, she’s the only one who hates me and no one knew about my relationship with Sabelo except close family.”

“ I understand.”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#64

The receptionist just paged me apparently there's someone looking for me downstairs, I hope it's not Ntsika phela that one can show up unexpected but I'm not complaining. It's been years since I felt so wanted and desired by a man so I'm enjoying every single moment of the time I spend with him.

“ Who wants to see me?”

I ask the receptionist and she points behind me, I turn and come face to face with the last person I expected to see. Mathapelo!

She sees me and approaches me, she looks like a hot mess. There are dark circles under her eyes and she has lost a lot of weight, her

husband's sickness must be taking a huge toll on her.

“ Thaps”

I say giving her a hug, we are not friends or anything but I'm dating her brother in law so I need to be civil with her because one way or another I'll be forced to be in the same room with her. More especially because the brothers are close.

“ Zenkosi, you must be shocked to see me”.

I am but I don't tell her that

“ Not at all, come let’s go outside and talk in my car. We’ll have better privacy there.”

I say when I see the receptionist leering at us. ukuthanda izindaba comes with being a receptionist or it’s a requirement to get the job? Because wawu receptionist are nosy as f*ck!

“ Okay, no problem.”

I lead the way to my car and get in the backseat, Mathapelo follows suit. A moment of awkward silence befalls us, she looks like she wants to say something but she’s not sure how to say it.

“ How’s Brandon doing?”

I say to break the ice, I know how Brandon is doing. Ntsika keeps me in the loop, he hasn’t regained consciousness yet everything checks out from a medical standpoint.

“ I don’t know what to do anymore Zen, the doctors say he’s okay but he still hasn’t woken up. It’s been over a week now”

She says then breaks down

I immediately regret asking her, now I have to comfort her. I don’t even know what to say.

I pull her to my embrace and brush her back soothingly

“ It’s going to be okay sis”

“ Everything is such a mess Zen, my kids are not talking to me and my husband is stuck in hospital. It’s all too much for me to handle.”

“ Why are the kids not talking to you?”

She immediately moves from my embrace and wipes her tears with a tissue.

“ It’s okay if you don’t want to talk about it” I say when I see her face changing

“ No, I want to talk about it. That’s actually the reason why I’m here.”

“ Okay, I’m listening.”

I say leaning my back on the seat giving her all my attention.

“ I’m not sure if you have seen on social media how people are thrashing Ndalo for dating Sabelo?”

“ Oh yes, I saw. Poor girl doesn’t deserve any of this, she’s such a lovely girl I spoke to her once when she came to visit Sabelo while he

was still admitted here. Those two love each other I wish people could release themselves from the opinions they exercise over people's lives, so what if she's older than him? Love knows no age."

She swallows hard and looks down after my little speech

" I'm sorry I got carried away, I just hate people with backwards thinking."

" No, you don't have to apologize. I wish I met you sooner then maybe I wouldn't have committed the mistake I made."

“ I’m not sure I follow”

“ The twins are not speaking to me because they think I’m the one who reported Ndalo.”

Hectic!

“ Why would they think that?”

“ I haven’t exactly been welcoming towards Ndalo and I’ve always expressed my dislike towards her, it was just hard for me to accept her as my son’s girlfriend. To me Sabelo is still a little boy so I saw Ndalo as this grown woman who’s taking advantage of my son.”

I understand where she's coming from in a way, maybe it was easy for me to accept the idea of them being lovers because I'm not Sabelo's mother.

“ I understand but why would they think you're the one who reported her? I mean I don't think you'd do something like that especially knowing it could ruin her career.”

“ Well..”

She tells me about her friend Lettia and how she's been poisoning her mind filling it with absolute nonsense

“ Can I be honest with you?”

“ By all means?”

“ Lettie wouldn't have succeeded in manipulating if you weren't insecure, why are you so insecure. You're a beautiful woman, you live in a beautiful big house, you have two beautiful kids and a husband who loves and takes care of you.”

“ Before we got married Meyiwa always told me about his dream to have 4 or more kids, Ntsika is his only sibling so he wanted to have more kids to grow his surname but I failed to carry my pregnancies to term and miscarried numerous times before having the twins. We

tried having more kids after the twins turned two but nothing, I know how much he wants kids and I'm afraid one day he'll leave me for someone who will give him the kids he desires.”

I'm in tears, this woman has been through a lot.

“ I am so sorry to hear that Mathapelo, be grateful that God blessed you with not one but two kids. I would give anything to have my own little human even if it's just one but unfortunately I can't have kids. Meyiwa would have left you long ago if he wanted to, the man loves you and chose you amongst many other women. Enjoy your man and stop being insecure.”

“ I’m sorry sis, miracles happen. Keep praying and trust God, like isiah 60:22 says ‘when the time is right I, the lord will make it happen.’ Who knows maybe you’re already pregnant with a little Meyiwa.”

She says and I laugh through my tears

“ Use your own advice Thaps, don’t lose faith and keep trying and one day you’ll give Meyiwa more children.”

She chuckles

“ I’m getting old, I’m turning 46 soon. Maybe it’s time to give up.”

“ You’re never too old for God, don’t lose faith.”

“ Thank you so much. I needed this.” She says

“ It’s a pleasure. I know it wasn’t you who reported her but you indirectly contributed to the situation, you owe Ndalo an apology. Give yourself time to know her, you might find that she’s the best person you have ever met. And also forget about her wanting Meyiwa, that girl only has eyes for Sabelo. Even if Meyiwa wanted her, she wouldn’t even see it because

she's so in love with your son that he's literally the only man she sees."

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NDALO

I've deleted all my social media accounts except for WhatsApp because of all the garbage people say about me, people can be so mean out here. I'm shocked as to how people can be so cruel to someone they don't even know. I'm with Nthabi in my room she came to check up on me and at least she's not judging me.

“ How’s he between the sheets?”

Trust Nthabi to ask this

“ Come on Nthabiseng, my life is falling apart and all you care about is his sex game?”

“ I’m sorry but I’ve always been curious that kid is packed!”

“ Stop calling him a kid, he’s anything but a kid”

“ Okay, that statement says a lot. Are you happy with him though?”

“ Yes, I am. He makes me happy, I’ve never been loved like how he loves me.”

“ Ncoah how sweet. Do you have pictures of the two of you together ?”

“ Yes”

“ Please show them to me”

I scroll my phone and go to our folder before giving her the phone.

“ OMG You guys look so cute together, he doesn't look younger than you. No one would know you're 7 years older”

True, Sabelo does look a lot older than his age.

“ He matured fast, even his body, the beard and his deep voice he's a man!”

“ Geez stop it Nthabi!”

I kind of hate it when she talks about Sabelo like that because in the past she once mentioned wanting to sleep with him, after what Pretty and Thuli did I don't trust friends, even family when it comes to my man.

“ I’m sorry, I was only complementing him, you know I’m in love with Mathobela.”

They’ve been official since the new year started.

“ Yeah but I don’t like it when you talk like that about Sabelo in front of me, he’s my boyfriend you need to respect that.”

“ Okay, I’m sorry but he’s hot and so freaking sexy”

“ NTHABI”

She laughs

“ I’m playing hao but muhle shem”

I give up!

“ I’m sure your daughter will look beautiful with a father like him, so is he coloured?”

“ No, he’s black.”

“ Why does he have blue eyes and hair like that?”

“ I don’t know but he takes after his mother”

“ Speak of the devil, he’s calling.” She says

“ Give me my phone then”

She doesn’t, she answers the call and put the call on speaker instead. Can Nthabi leave already!

“ Sthandwa sam” he says

Nthabi screams and fans herself

“ Ndalo, what’s wrong why are you screaming?”

“ I just saw a cockroach baby”

I say trying so hard not to laugh. Nthabi gives me my phone and stands up to go laugh in a corner, she’s so stupid.

“ Oh okay, I miss you.”

“ I miss you too baby”

“ So can I come pick you up?”

“ Yes”

“ Okay my love, I’ll be there in 15 minutes. I love you mamakhe.”

Wu alingbhorile gama nkos’yam!

“ I love too daddy”

“ So you’re going to your boyfriend?” Nthabi

“ Yebo yes”

“ Hmm, okay mamakhe. I guess that’s my cue, I’ll visit again soon, work won’t be the same without you.”

Sabelo and I are taking a walk around the park while having ice cream, he doesn't come with a car anymore he takes a cab. He believes that the more people get used to seeing us together the quicker they'll get used to the idea of us together, I wanted to hide from the world but Sabelo wouldn't let me he's forcing me to face everything head on. Some people no longer look at us or say anything bad when they see us together but others still throw derogatory remarks when they see us but I'm growing a thick skin with each passing day.

“ Sabelo let go of my hand, how am I supposed to eat my ice cream with one hand?”

“ Use your mouth”

“ Haibo, Sabelo”

The way Sabelo likes touching me especially when we passing or walking near a group of girls, I don't know if he's being his normal clingy self or he's trying to prove a point but ay shem uyenza kakhulu u brothers shem.

I finally get my hand back when he receives a call.

“ Sphe”

“ Sabelo you need to come to the hospital, dad woke up.”

His phone is loud so I can hear everything

“ I’m on my way”

He says and hangs up

“ Will you come with me to the hospital?”

The smile on my face right now, Mr Meyiwa is finally awake. I feel like doing a vosho right now.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#65

NARRATED

**“ I should be unconscious more often if I’m
going to wake up to so much love”**

Brandon teases and everyone laughs

“ Don’t you dare Meyiwa!” Says Mathapelo

“ Ngivumelana no sesi Zalo, I don’t think anyone of us would like to see you like that ever again. You’re the pillar of this family, you hold everyone of us together. It’s only been a week but everything almost fell apart in your absence.” Ntsika

(I agree with sis)

“ What do you mean? What happened while I was unconscious.?”

“ Ndalo lost her job because mom reported her”

Sabelo blurts out putting his mom on the spot.

“ She did what? Mathapelo is this true?”

“ No it’s not true Meyiwa, I can explain.”

**“ Vele you have a lot of explaining to do
Mathapelo.”**

Meyiwa is fuming but he has so much respect for his wife, he would never rebuke her in the presence of other people much less in front of their kids.

“MaKhumalo angazi ngithini ntombi yami ngoba ngiswabile, I will do everything in my power to fix this okay?”

**(I don't know what to say because I'm
ashamed)**

He says looking at Ndalo

“ Yebo baba.”

**“ What's going on, why do I sense tension
between the two of you?”**

**He asks darting his eyes between Sabelo and
his wife.**

**“ Sabelo no longer speaks to mom since she
reported miss Khumalo to principal Gwala.”**

Sphe

“ I thought I would wait till I was discharged to solve this but it seems things have really gone out of hand, we are fixing this now.”

He says sitting up leaning his back against the wall

“ Mathapelo I’ll start with you, why did you report Ndalo to Gwala. What compelled you to do that? Didn’t you stop to think about how your pettiness would ruin her career?”

“ Meyiwa it wasn’t me, I didn’t report Ndalo to Gwala. I swear on everything I hold dear it wasn’t me.”

She says with tears swimming in her eyes desperate for her husband to believe her, he must believe her. When everyone else doesn't believe her, when everyone else thinks she's lying she expects her husband to know that she's telling the truth. They've been married for years and surely Meyiwa knows when she's telling the truth.

“ I believe you. Sabelo your mom didn't report Ndalo, I know her. She didn't do it.”

Mathapelo sighs in relief

“ But if it’s not her who did it then who? No one knew about my relationship with Ndalo, only close family. Mom is the only person who has a problem with Ndalo, so if it’s not her then who?”

“ Mathapelo care to explain?” Brandon

“ It was Lettia, she’s the one who called Gwala and reported Ndalo pretending to be me.”

“ How did loyo Lettia wakho find out about Ndalo’s relationship with Sabelo because we all agreed that this should be kept within the family?”

“ I’m sorry Meyiwa, I just needed someone to talk to.”

Tears are rolling down her cheeks as she says this

“ Mathapelo you knew what was at stake, I’ve always given you an ear whenever you wanted to talk. If you couldn’t talk to me then you should have done gone down on your knees and spoke to God, we’ve been through so much in our marriage and prayer has always been your refuge what changed this time? Or you didn’t care if Ndalo lost her job that’s why you found it so easy to discuss her with your so called friend?”

He hisses in anger

“ Zalo calm down, you just woke up. You need to take it easy.”

“ I’m disappointed in you Mathapelo, this is not who I got married to.”

He says ignoring Ntsika

“ I’m sorry Meyiwa.”

“ Well you’re apologizing to the wrong person, I’m not the one who lost a job because you failed to keep our private family matters private.”

“ Ndalo I’m sorry please forgive me, I know my apology will not give you back what you’ve lost or take back all the mean things people said about on you on social media or alleviate the pain you feel everytime people give you a mean look or throw derogatory remarks in public but I’m truly sorry my child. I never meant to hurt you I swear.”

“ Ndalo you’ve heard your mother, what do you have to say?”

“ I understand that she’s not the one who reported me but she indirectly contributed to the situation. I had to delete my social media accounts because of the hurtful things people are saying about me, I can’t walk to the shop

without people pointing fingers at me and saying bad things about me. Even if you manage to fix this baba and get me my job back, I don't think I'll ever be able to teach again. My credibility will always be in question, people will always think negatively and assume the worst everytime they see me with a male learner, parents will never trust me with their kids and I don't think the learners will give me the respect they used to give me before they found out about this. My reputation is ruined, I am sorry but I don't think I will ever forgive her for what she did at least not now. Maybe in the future but definitely not now."

" I understand my child. I think Mathapelo will have to earn your forgiveness, I can't force you

to forgive her especially after everything you've gone through because of her mistake”

“ And I'm willing to do anything for your forgiveness Ndalo.” Mathapelo

“ Sabelo, I understand you're angry and disappointed by what your mother did but that doesn't give you the right to disrespect her. She's still your mother and you'll respect her no matter what. You will reply when your mother talks to you, I won't allow you to disrespect my wife not while I'm still alive ngeke nje. You'll respect her, siyezwana?”

(Understood)

“ Yes, dad.”

“ Mkami the next time you take our family matters to outsiders will be the end of us, I will not be married to a girl trapped inside the body of a grown woman. You’re a married woman, act like it and stop acting like a naïve teenager.

Lo Lettia wakho uzow’khomba umuzi onotshwala ung’jwayela kabi shem, who does she think she is airing my family’s business!”

(My wife) (that Lettia of yours will know me well)

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NDALO

Schools have reopened and it feels weird to be at home while everyone else is at work or at school, Melo is still around but it's only a matter of time before she goes back to Pretoria to start her third year. I don't know how Mr Meyiwa intends to do it but he's confident he can get me my job back, I've thought about it long and hard and I don't think I want to go back to being an employee. The fact that it's possible for me to lose my job within a blink of an eye made me view the concept of being an 'employee' with a different mind-set, I don't want to be an employee I want to be my own boss, be the employer and not the employed.

I know it's difficult to start from scratch and I'll probably go for months before I start making profit but once everything starts working out I'll be making more money than what I would make as an employee. I'm still not sure what business I'm going to venture into at the moment, I still want to do my research and see which one between the three business ideas I have in mind will be most profitable.

Mr Meyiwa is friends with entrepreneurs and big company owners, he promised to get me acquainted with them so I can get sound business advice from them and possible coaching, there's a statement I read from one of my contact's WhatsApp status that says 'when you focus on problems, you will have more

problems but when you focus on possibilities, you will have more opportunities.' So I stopped seeing the loss of my job as a problem and started seeing it as an opportunity for me to start my own business.

Now I understand what they mean when they say that everything happens for a reason, If I didn't lose my job I would have never had the courage to start my own thing. I would've been comfortable with receiving a salary when I could be making a profit, yes I could afford to live and pay for my day to day expenses from my salary but what's going to happen in the next 15 to 20 years when I have more responsibilities? Will my salary still be enough to pay for my children's university education

and afford me a comfortable lifestyle at the same time?

“ What documents do I need to register my business”

Says Melo reading what I typed on my browser

“ You know it’s rude to peek on people’s computers”

I say closing my laptop

“ You’re serious about starting a business ne”

“ Yeah I am, I want to break the circle of poverty. I want to be monied, I’m tired of settling for an average life”

“ Thatha sisi wami, ai no ngiyakuzwa and I’m very proud of you.”

“ Thanks, I want to enrol at Unisa for business management do you think late applications are still open?”

“ I don’t know but you can google mos”

“ Yeah I’ll do so, if I’m going to start a business then I’ll need to know the fundamentals.”

“ Chesa mogirl!”

“ Yeah, I’m not opening a spaza shop here I want the real thing so mele ngiyenze izinto kahle.”

(I need to do things the right way)

“ What?”

I ask because she’s leering at me with a stupid smile on her face.

“ Uyangichaza, I was afraid you’d fall apart after everything you’ve gone through over the past few weeks. I mean you lost your job, got dragged on social media and bashed by society

for dating someone 7 years younger than you but it seems like what you went through strengthened you instead. I love seeing you like this.”

“ Thanks, it’s all God mntasekhaya. I’ve always drawn strength from the word of God so when my world fell apart and turned upside down, I went back to God and sought refuge in his word. That’s where I received the strength to face everything with grace and bravery. Sabelo has also been my source of strength, urging me to face everything with my head held high. He’s been amazing, he has so much wisdom for someone his age.”

“ I’m just glad you’re okay and didn’t attempt to kill yourself or break up with Sabelo phela wena!”

We laugh

“ Khululeka mntasekhaya sengayeka ukuhlanya. I believe that everything that I went through has made me stronger, I have grown so much in a matter of weeks than I have in years.”

(Relax sis, I’ve stopped being crazy)

“ I guess not every hardship we face is meant to break us.”

“ Yes, it all depends on how you perceive the situation. All I know is that there’s definitely a lesson from every difficulty we face, it’s your choice to learn or mope around and feel sorry for yourself. Everything has a positive side it all depends on how you look at it.”

“ Hai I need to thank Mrs Meyiwa for running her mouth yabo? Thanks to her my sister has turned into a motivational speaker/ entrepreneur”

We laugh

“ Yaphapha wena!”

(You’re forward)

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SABELO

Another week has gone by and my father is back home recovering. Things between my mother and I are not good but not bad either, it'll take some time for our relationship to go back to what it used to be. She betrayed my trust, yes it wasn't her who reported Ndalo but she's to blame for telling her friends about our affairs. I'm more disappointed than angry, I never thought my mother would do something like that.

Sphe finally told the parents about her wish to pursue a career in Medicine by studying in one of the Cuban universities, surprisingly my parents were understanding and supportive of her decision. She has sent out her application now we are crossing fingers hoping for the best outcome, I know she'll definitely be awarded the scholarship. Her matric results are impressive.

We are so very proud of her, dad plans to buy the both of cars before we start our varsity journey-he did the same thing when Khethelo passed her matric, I was expecting him to still buy me a car because he's the one who will pay for most of my daughter's expenses once she's born.

I'll get a part-time job when I get to Joburg so I can also help out with some of the expenses, I'm the father after all and I don't want to be those boys who are comfortable with their parents raising their kids for them.

“ Can I come in?”

My mom says standing outside my door

“ Yes, you can.”

She walks in and sits on my bed

“ Please come sit here”

She says patting a space next to her. I stand up from my chair and sit next to her.

“ I don’t like how things have changed between us and I know I’m to blame for the gap between us, you’re moving to Gauteng in a few weeks and I will go for months without seeing you. It would really break my heart if you were to move to another province without mending our relationship, I love you so much my son and it hurts me to see how much we’ve grown apart because of my mistakes.”

“ I love you too ma and I hate it when we fight but I honestly didn’t like what you did, you hurt

me- when Ndalo told me it was you who reported her, I didn't believe her because it was hard for me to believe that my mother would do something like that to me."

" I'm sorry my son, I never meant to hurt you or Ndalo. My first mistake was telling our family issues to an outside entity, I have learnt from my mistakes and I will never ever repeat them please forgive me."

I hate to see my mother begging. To be honest it was very difficult for me to keep this up because I love my mother a lot, she's my queen but I had to put my foot down so that she would learn and never think of repeating her mistake.

“ I forgive you mawami”

(Mom)

I say embracing her, she snuggles in my arms and cries in my chest.

“ I’m sorry mom, I’m sorry for the harsh treatment I’ve been giving you lately.”

“ It’s okay, I understand. You had to support your woman.”

I’m glad she understands. If there’s one thing I’ve learnt from my dad, is to always put my woman first and do whatever it takes to protect

her even if it means protecting her against my family or myself.

“ I wanted ask Ndalo out on a spa date but I’m afraid she will not agree.”

She says sheepishly

My heart right now, I hate seeing my mother in this state. I hope Ndalo will agree to go to the spa date with her not that I’d blame her should she decline but I hope she does. My mother is really trying.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#66

With my breath held and my heart jack hammering inside my chest I meander to the living room where the noise came from, my fingers are tightly wrapped around the baseball bat ready to attack whoever thought it best to come inside my house without being invited. It must've been fifteen minutes after I got into bed when I heard a loud bang coming from the living room, feeling frightened and perturbed the first thing I did was to try to call the police but my phone suddenly didn't have network so the call didn't go through leaving me with no other option but to go out there and confront

whoever entered my house without my permission.

I couldn't come out here without anything to defend myself with, after rummaging my room for almost two minutes looking for a weapon to use for protection, the baseball bat was the only useful thing I found. I'm scared out of my mind right now but I'm ready to fight for my life, I won't go down without a fight.

Attempting to fight off the intruder in a pitch-black house would be suicide so I've been switching on the lights in every room I pass. Light illuminates the dark room when I press the switch in the living room. Freaked out by

the sight of two men before me, the bat slips out of my hands and falls to the floor.

I don't know whether to be relieved that the men who are in my house turned out not to be thieves but people I know or to be worried that they're in my house at this hour of the night- could it be that they found out about what I did? These two men are people I know all too well and I happen to have strong feelings for one of them but the expressions on their faces tells me that they're not pleased with me, f*ck that foolish Mathapelo probably ran her mouth and snitched on me.

Brandon is sitting on the couch with his left foot on top of his right knee while Ntsika is

standing a few feet away from him holding a packet of chips chewing with an open mouth making an annoying loud chewing noise.

“ Sit down.”

Commands Brandon in a low voice but the acuteness of his tone has me immediately dumping my body on the couch, having lost all the determination I had to fight back.

“ Zihloniphe uzixoxe nje ngomuntu wes'mame”

Brandon

(Respect yourself and sit like a lady)

I cross my legs in shame.

**“ Awusho Lettia uPhaphiswa yini ngampela?
What forced you to report Ndalo to Gwala?”**

(Why are you forward)

**“ I didn’t report Ndalo, Mathapelo is the one
who did even after I advised her not to.”**

The brothers look at each other and laugh

**“ Wena umtheth’wakho ucabanga ukuthi thina
sineskhathi sok’dlala ne” Ntsika**

(You think we have time to play)

“ I know you believe I’m the one who reported Ndalo because your wife told you so, I don’t blame you she’s your wife after all it’s normal for you to believe her over me but I’m telling the truth. I’m not the one who reported Ndalo, she did.”

I say looking at Brandon dead in the eye. Lying with a straight face happens to be one of my many talents.

“ Why would Mathapelo do that?”

“ Because she thinks Ndalo wants to take you away from her, she feels threatened by the girl and has somehow managed to convince herself that she wants you. She’s been complaining

about her ever since Sabelo introduced her, she loathes that girl but was trying her best to accept her for your sake but seeing her dressed in a short inside her kitchen was the final straw. She lost it and decided to finally report her, Mathapelo has been threatening to report her but I always managed to convince her otherwise but that day I failed to convince her I'm sorry Meyiwa."

He looks at me with a clenched jaw clearly angry, does this mean he believes me and is angry at his wife? Halala, that'll teach Mathapelo not to mess with me.

" Zalo she's sicker than I initially thought"

**Says Ntsika looking at his brother, the “her”
he’s referring to must be Mathapelo.**

**“ I've never laid my hands on a woman before
but this one is literally begging me to do it.”**

Brandon replies

Halala, bayom’shaya u Mathapelo.

**“ I know you’ll probably beat yourself up for
doing it afterwards so rather let me handle it for
you. Unlike you I don’t waste my guilty
conscience on garbage, I’ll beat her up and
sleep peacefully afterwards.”**

Ntsika says nonchalantly not feeling even a bit of shame for wanting to beat up a woman, sies that's why I fell for Brandon instead him when Mathapelo played cupid and tried to set me up with her brother in law.

“ Go ahead, I won't stop you.”

What does he mean go ahea..a hard slap across my face pulls me from my confusion. So I'm the 'her' they've been referring to? So I'm garbage, hai uyeyisa uNtsika shem.

I can't feel my face for a few seconds after the slap, is his hand made of steel or something?

“ You bastard, how dare you lay your hands on a woman.”

I manage to eke out, ignoring the pain I feel on my face.

“ I’m going to set you straight tonight, I’m going to help you learn how to keep that mouth of yours shut and to take your nose out of other people’s business.”

He says folding the sleeves of his shirt while Brandon relaxes his back on the couch. Am I crazy to still love him even after he practically gave his brother permission to beat me up?

“ Undress”

“ What?”

“ You heard me, I said undress.”

I want to put up a fight but the look on his face tells me I won't like what he will do to me should I refuse. So I slowly slip out of my sleeping dress.

“ Take off the underwear as well”

“ What?”

“ Yay! I don’t have time to play, I said take off your underwear.”

Are they planning to rape me? Not that I’d mind Brandon’s dick inside of me, it would be a dream come true actually. It’s Ntsika I don’t want near me.

“ Get over yourself, we won’t sleep with you.”

Brandon says shattering my confidence.

Ntsika breaks into a belly laugh

**“ You thought we would sleep with you,
Aw’kahle wena what do you take us for?”**

Ntsika

“ Then why am I naked?”

**“ Because I want you to know how it feels like
to be mocked and called names by people who
don’t know you, I want you to feel what Ndalo
felt.”**

**And that’s when I notice the camera in his
hands, the bastard has been recording me!**

“ Don’t worry you’ll be a celebrity when you wake up tomorrow morning, you’ll be trending all over social media.”

Ntsika says with a smug look on his face when I try to cover my nakedness.

What?

“ No please don’t do it, please.”

I’m on my knees beseeching with tears falling down my cheeks like a water on a waterfall

“ Please forgive me, I am so sorry for what I did. I was only jealous of Mathapelo’s life and

wanted it for myself but now I have realized my mistakes and I'm prepared to atone for my sins. I'll do anything you ask but please don't post the video, I'll go to Gwala and withdraw the complaint please just don't do this."

I croak in a breaking voice

" Unfortunately I'm not Jesus I don't believe in forgiveness, I believe in settling the score bathini zalo konje an.."

(what do they say)

" An eye for an eye" Ntsika says finishing off his sentence

“ Please don’t do this, how will I look at my son after this...please don’t do this.”

I grovel at Brandon’s feet

“ You should’ve thought of that before you ruined Ndalo's reputation and aired her business on social media. Zalo come on let's go.”

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MATHAPELO

I open my eyes when I feel eyes digging holes into my skin, I force my heavy eyelids open and come face to face with my husband.

“ Good, you’re finally awake.”

He says with deadpan tone that instantly has my insides turning.

“ What’s going on Meyiwa, why ain’t you in bed?”

I say and look at the clock on the wall

“ It’s 2AM Meyiwa why are you still dressed like that?”

He's wearing a black pant, with a golf shirt and a black hunter boot.

He doesn't reply he keeps gawking me with a nipping expression on his face instead. I sit up with my back against the headboard and pull the covers to my bosom and rub my eyes to ward off the drowsiness I feel.

“ How long have you known me?”

That's random but I answer anyway

“ More than 26 years now.”

“ Do you have any idea how much I love you?”

Ok, what’s going on?

“ I do”

“ Yet you believe that I’d cheat on you with Ndalo, uNdalo Mathapelo ingane yay’zolo?”

I drop my head in shame avoiding eye contact with him.

“ I’m so disappointed in you Mathapelo, I feel like I don’t even know who you are anymore.”

He says, his words laced with disappointment or is it disgust?

“ I’m sorry I don’t know what got into me
Meyiwa, I’m so sorry please forgive me.”

“ Don’t ask for forgiveness, tell me why you’d
think that of me?”

“ I’m sorry I allowed Lettia to fill my head with
nonsense.”

“ Don’t put the blame on Lettia, you’re a grown
woman- why would you allow an outsider to
tell you things about me your husband? ”

“ I’m sorry Meyiwa, my insecurities got the better of me.”

“ What insecurities? What are you insecure about?”

“ I have an incompetent womb Meyiwa, I’m unable to bear you more children.”

He picks himself up from the chair and comes to the bed

“ What are you talking about Mathapelo, we have two beautiful children together what nonsense are you spewing?”

“ We tried to have other kids after the twins were born, you might have not said it out loud but I know how much you want to have more kids. I saw the pained look in your eyes everytime the pregnancy test came back negative, I can’t give you anymore kids Meyiwa. I have failed to fulfil my duty as your wife.”

He looks up with his hands covering his eyes

“ I know you want more kids and I’m scared that one day you’ll leave me for someone else who can give you the kids you want.”

“ Wow!”

He says in a pained voice

“ You keep disappointing me, is that how little you think of me? That I would leave you after you gave me two beautiful children while I stayed when we struggled to conceive for years? Mathapelo I don't know what you want from me, I don't know how to love you in a way that will be satisfactory to you because clearly nothing I do will ever be good enough to show you how much I love you. Unfortunately I gave you my all and if my all was not enough for you to realize the depth of my love for you then I have nothing left to give.”

“ What are you saying?”

“ I’ll go sleep in the guest room.”

He says taking his pillow.

I climb off the bed and trudge behind him

“ Meyiwa don’t do that, we’ve never slept separately and we won’t start now.”

“ What good is it to sleep next to a woman who doesn’t trust me, a woman who believes I’d get into a relationship with someone young enough to be my daughter. A girl who’s pregnant with my grandchild!” he hisses

“ I’m sorry Meyiwa please forgive me.”

“ Let go of my hand Mathapelo.”

“ I’m begging you baba wengane zami, I’ll do anything to earn your forgiveness just don’t leave our bedroom I’m begging you.”

“ Mathapelo I’m going to count to 3..”

“ What will the kids say when they see us wake up from different bedrooms?”

I say cutting him off

“ Ngithe ngyeke Mathapelo!”

(I said leave me)

**I let go off his hand and watch him walk out of
our marital bedroom. I throw myself on the bed
and cry into the pillow, what have you done
Mathapelo? Befriending Lettia was a curse**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#67

Sleep evaded me, I couldn't fall asleep regardless of how much I tried because my heart is heavy. I feel a huge void in my heart, there's hollowness that I can't explain in words. I know Brandon is sleeping in one of the rooms in the house but to me it feels like I have already lost my husband, the love of my love and I know I won't survive it if it happens. How do I even I start living life without him? someone I've slept next to for more than two decades? The possibility of our marriage coming to an end because of my insecurities eats away at me and denies me peace of mind.

I don't know how many times I had to stop myself throughout the night from following him to the guest bedroom, the only reason I didn't

is because I know he needs space. I cast my eyes on the clock on the wall and see that it is seven in the morning- I haven't slept a wink, I've been awake since Brandon woke me up when he wanted us to talk.

I wonder if he managed to fall asleep without me in his arms, oh I'd give anything to have him wrap his arms around me and hold me tight like he always does every single night. I can't believe I failed to realise how much my husband loves me, I allowed the devil to whisper into my ear and drive me crazy with insecurities.

I swipe my hands on my face to wipe the tears cascading down my face and climb out of bed

putting on my silk gown and slip my feet inside my morning sleepers. After washing my face and mouth, I stare at my reflection on the mirror- I look like a mess but I surely look a lot better than what I feel inside.

“ Good morning”

I say making my way into the lounge

“ Good morning ma...were you crying? Your eyes are red and swollen?”.

Asks Sphe, her voice laced with worry.

**“ I’m okay my child, don’t worry about me.
Where’s everyone?”**

**She looks at me like she doesn’t believe me but
opts not to say anything further, which I’m
grateful for. How do I begin to explain my
stupidity and naivety to my child?**

“ I haven’t seen dad or Sabelo”

“ Okay, I’ll prepare breakfast for us.”

“ I’ll help you.”

**Now that’s a first, Sphe is lazy. She never helps
with anything unless I force her.**

Cooking has always been therapeutic for me, everytime I feel low or sad cooking always managed to lift my spirit and lighten up my mood but today it didn't, I still feel horrible even after cooking. With a tray of breakfast and a steaming cup of hot coffee I make my way to the guest bedroom and knock on the door.

“ Come in.”

He says from inside

I push the door open and let myself inside, my heart breaks at the sight of him. He looks like a mess, it's clear he didn't sleep and knowing I'm

responsible for his condition makes me feel worse than I already feel.

“ Good morning Meyiwa, I made you breakfast.”

“ Good morning.”

He sits up leaning his back against the headboard. I place the tray on the bedside drawer and sit next to him on the bed.

“ Sthandwa sam I would like to apologize for what happened and everything I said, I’m sorry the last thing I wanted was to hurt you. I know you love me and I’ve never doubted that not

even for a second, you've been the best husband to me ever since we got married and I'm sorry if I made you feel like I don't appreciate nor see your love because I do. Your love is enough for me and it has always been, I love you so much Meyiwa and I hate myself for hurting you please forgive me baba wengane zami bambo lwami ngixolele Gasa."

(Father of my children, my soul mate. Please forgive me Gasa.)

He looks at me and blows out a heavy breath

" You hurt me Mathapelo, a lot. I never expected you of all people to think like that about me, have I ever given you a reason to

believe that I was unhappy or not satisfied with the number of children you've given me?"

" No, but I know you've always wanted a big family "

" True, but I've never pressured you to give me more kids or did I?"

" No, you never did."

" So how did you make the conclusion that I'd leave you and go have kids with someone else? I'm almost 50 for God's sake, having a new-born is the last thing I want especially if it's with anyone who's not you. Can't you see that

you're the only one I want and love? Sure I'd love to have more children but I don't want them if it's not with you, you're the only woman I want to have kids with."

He says with tears in his eyes. This is the first time I see Meyiwa cry and it's wounding to know that I'm the cause of his pain

" Ngiyaxolisa Meyiwa, please forgive me Myeni wami."

(I'm sorry) (My husband)

" I've given you my all but even that didn't satisfy you, you hurt me Mathapelo and it'll take time before I can forgive you."

“ I’m really sorry Msomi, I don’t know what got into me. It doesn’t matter how long it takes for you to forgive me, I will keep apologizing until you accept my apology”

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.br/.**

SABELO

Mam’Lettia is trending on every social Media network, someone leaked a video of her naked. I couldn’t bring myself to watch the video until the end, I found it very disturbing. People are saying all sorts of hurtful and mean things about her, its only been hours since the video

was posted but people have already made memes of her. I know I shouldn't be feeling sorry for her especially after everything she did but I can't help myself, she's an elderly lady. She doesn't deserve to have her nakedness exposed to everyone, I can't believe there are people who find her nakedness funny. The things people are saying about her are heart-breaking I feel sorry for her son. I know I'd be crushed if something like that happened to my mother

My dad left before I woke up and mom is locked in her bedroom, Sphe says mom woke up with swollen eyes while dad woke up in the guest bedroom I don't know what but something is definitely going on between them.

They've never slept separately and dad always spends weekends at home with my mom, he never leaves the house unless he's compelled to.

“ Do you think they'll get a divorce?”

Sphe says breaking the silence

“ No, of course not. Why would you even think like that?”

“ I don't know Sabelo but this has never happened before. I don't want them to separate, I don't want to have step parents I

want my parents together loving each other like they've always done.”

She says in a breaking voice

I pull her to my embrace and hold her tight

“ That will never happen, don't even think like that.”

I don't know if it's Sphe or myself that I'm trying to convince.

“ Do you think I'm the reason they fought?”

“ What? That’s crazy.”

“ Mom didn’t want me to go to Cuba but dad forced her to accept my decision, they probably fought because of that. It’s the only logical explanation...”

“ That’s not true my baby, your mother and I are happy for you. We are extremely proud of you and we would never stand in your way or stop you from following your dreams, your mother only had reservations about you going to Cuba because she’s worried that you’ll be continents away from home with no one to look out for you.”

He says making his way inside the lounge

“ Then why are you two fighting babami?”

“ Princess I don’t want you to worry yourself about adult matters, you’re a child enjoy being a child and stop burdening yourself with things that don’t concern you.”

“ But it concerns us dad, are you and mom getting a divorce?” Sphe

“ Like I said, stop worrying yourself about things that dont concern you. Your mother and I are not getting a divorce, we are just going through something at the moment but I promise we’ll be fine.”

“ Come here.”

He says with arms stretched wide open. Sphe jolts up from the couch and throws herself into his arms.

“ Your mother and I are so proud of you my child. Don't spend your last days at home stressing yourself over silly things when you should be enjoying us because you'll surely miss us when you're all alone in that foreign country.”

He says trying to lighten up the mood but it doesn't work because Sphe starts crying ave

etetema uma ebona ubaba shem. (she's a cry baby when she sees dad)

“ Phephisa phela nana, ungakhali nkosazana ka baba uyaz' anghandi maw'khala”

(Don't cry my princess, you know I hate it when you cry.)

He says picking her up, imagine ugogo ongaka! I love the relationship my father has with Sphe though, that's exactly the type of relationship I want to have with my daughter. I want to be her first love just like dad is to Sphe.

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NDALO

I'm at the salon waiting for my turn in the queue while chatting with my boyfriend on WhatsApp, he's leaving in a few days so we see each other everyday trying to cover up for the weeks we will spend without seeing each other but I know it still won't be enough. My heart sinks everytime I think about him living so far from me, it'll be difficult to go from seeing each other everyday to seeing each other every once in a while but I hope our relationship will survive the distance, it has to because I don't see myself loving anyone who's not him.

“ Ndalo!”

One of the hairdressers calls out my name

“ Yes”

“ I don't mean to offend you but can I please ask you something?”

Everyone's eyes fall on me after her question

“ Okay, go ahead.”

“ Is it true that you're in a relationship with one of your learners and that he's the one who got you pregnant?”

It's the liver for me!

" Yes, why?"

" No, nothing. It's not something we come across everyday, a woman dating a younger man that is."

" A boy you mean" her colleague says causing everyone inside the salon to laugh

" Hmm" I say

" They say he's 18 so I'm curious, were you the one who asked him out or he's the one who came after you?"

Asks one of the customers

“ I don’t have to answer that, my relationship is not anyone’s business.”

“ Well you made it our business when you dated your pupil and went as far as getting pregnant for him!”

Another lady sitting next to me says and everyone in the salon echoes her sentiments. I won’t stand for this so I pick myself up from the plastic chair and walk out from the salon but I can’t walk as fast as I’d like to because of my pregnancy.

“ She’s so shameless, imagine getting undressed for and sleeping with an 18 year old boy!”

“ She even got herself pregnant!”

I attempt to run but trip on a stone and fall fell on the ground landing on my stomach.

“ Serves her right!”

Tears blind my vision as I cry my eyes out, how do I forgive Mrs Meyiwa if I’m constantly reminded of what she did everytime I step out

of the house? She asked out for a spa date and I refused.

A lady selling chicken feet across the road runs to my aid and helps me up

“ I’m sorry, didn’t you hurt the baby?”

“ No, I’m okay. Thank you.”

At least that’s what I hope

“ Let me call someone to come and pick you up, you shouldn’t be alone in your condition.”

She says when I try to walk away. I made a promise to myself to be strong and never cry in public regardless of what anyone says but today I couldn't hold myself. Here I am breaking down in the middle of the street.

“ Come with me.”

I follow the lady to her stall where she braais and sells chicken feet, heads and gizzards. She gives me a bucket use as a chair

“ Who do you want me to call?”

“ My sister, Melo.”

I hand her my phone after unlocking it using my fingerprint.

“ She’s not picking up.” She says after a while

“ Call Sabelo.”

She calls and they talk for a few minutes before she ends the call.

“ He said he’ll be here in 15 minutes.”

She says giving me back my phone

“ Thank you.”

“ Don’t mention it, I’m sorry for whatever you’re going through. You look like a nice lady, you don’t deserve to suffer.”

“ You don’t know?”

“ What?”

“ About me dating my learner and getting pregnant by him”

That would explain why she’s helping me instead of crucifying me like how everyone else has been doing since they found out about me dating Sabelo.

“ I know, I read about it on Facebook.”

**“ Then why are you being nice to me?
Shouldn't you be mean and calling me names?”**

**“ No, I have no right to do that. Who you fall in
love with is none of my business.”**

“ Wow!”

**Sabelo wanted to beat up those ladies from the
salon when he picked me up but I was able to**

convince him that they are not worth it, he insisted on taking me to the doctor even after telling him I am fine. The doctor confirmed it I'm fine there's nothing wrong with the baby fortunately my fall didn't affect her. We used the opportunity to get an ultrasound scan, Sabelo was so emotional when we listened to our daughter's heartbeat from the monitor.

We ended up going shopping for a few cute baby outfits, hearing my baby's heartbeat and buying all of these cute little clothes for her made me forget about my bitter experience at the salon earlier today.

We went straight to the park when we came back from town, we are sitting on a wooden

bench watching kids play while having ice cream.

“ Baby”

“ Hmm”

“ Can I please have your ice cream?”

He looks at me wide eyed, seemingly shocked by the fact that I’ve already finished my large cup.

“ Please”

“Mi ithathe Ndalo ngizathini?”

(Take it Ndalo, what can I say?)

If he thinks I'll feel guilty and not take it then he has another thing coming. I immediately snatch the cup from his hands and start munching.

“ Awuhali nje!”

He says and we both laugh

“ I'm going to miss you so much Sthandwa sam, if I could I'd stay and not go to varsity this year but I can't. The sooner I finish with my degree the sooner I'll start providing for you

and our baby, I can't wait to spoil you and take you on trips. Send you money to spoil yourself and buy you a proper gifts on Christmas and on your birthday."

" Those things don't matter to me, just keep on loving me loving you've been doing all along"

Of course I'm lying, money is important in a relationship and it would be nice to be spoiled by my man but he's still studying at the moment I can't expect him to bless me financially- at least he tries to do things for me, they might be little but they mean they world to me because I know he's trying his best.

“ I will. I won’t lie, I’m scared that I’ll lose you to someone better than me. I’ve always been afraid but now I’m terrified because I will be away from you.”

“ I’m also terrified of losing you to some beautiful girl in Joburg.”

“ That won’t happen, we need to start praying for our relationship. Being apart will test the strength of our love and commitment to one another and I hope we will survive the test of time.”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#68

My heart is heavy, I feel very sad almost as sad as I felt three years ago when I was told that my paternal grandmother has passed on. I want to be happy for him, support and encourage him to enjoy and make the best out of the wonderful experience that awaits him in Joburg as a tertiary student, but I can't do that because him going to tertiary means us living miles away from one another. I tried not to think negatively but I can't help but feel scared, honestly speaking how many relationships survive long distance? I know of people who broke up with their long-time partners because

they met who they believed to be their 'soulmates', their 'meant to be's' people who had them asking themselves 'where have you been all my life' type of questions and professing statements such as 'You were made for me' when they got to tertiary and I can't help but think, what if our relationship will suffer the same fate?

It's been raining all day so Sabelo and I have been in bed, under the covers canoodling and enjoying the warmth of each other's bodies, I've lost count of the number of rounds we've had since morning. The sex was different from the many other times we've had sex, it was filled with emotions and every stroke was meaningful and impactful, each thrust from him

felt like some sort of a message, a message that can only be understood by two hearts beating for each other.

Since the men who were posing a threat to our lives have been dealt with, I didn't see a reason to keep living with my parents, so I moved back to my apartment much to my mother's disapproval because according to her a heavily pregnant woman shouldn't live by herself. I know she's right but I need my own space, I'll move back home on the final month of my pregnancy.

I wanted to use my savings to pay for rent but my father wouldn't have it, he insisted on taking care of the rent and utility bills until I get

back on my feet. Speaking of which, I officially resigned from Sizwakele Secondary School- Gwala tried to stop me from doing it and said there's a high chance that department will choose not to re-hire me if I decide to go back to teaching in the future, but that didn't change my decision, I am done with teaching and there's nothing anyone could have said to convince me otherwise, my mind was made up. I don't know what happened to the case he was meant to open against me, but I never received any communication from the department, so I guess that means he didn't file the case after all. I will use the money I'll get from UIF to fund my business.

Mr Meyiwa wanted to give me the start up capital, but I rejected his offer because I need to do this on my own. I'll forever be grateful to him for introducing me to Mr Hatla Natlane, a qualified quantity surveyor who holds a Bachelor of science in quantity surveying from the university of Durban. He has over 30 years' experience in the property industry and serves as the executive chairman of Peer property and partners. He's also a chairman of Wessel M Holdings LTD and executive director at EDCON SA, he's a multi millionaire but he's ever so humble one would never guess the amount of money he has in his bank account by just looking at him and judging by how polite he always is to others.

He likes to impart knowledge and empower others especially the youth, so he was more than happy to be my mentor, he advised me against starting the business in my condition he reckons that for now my focus should be on my pregnancy. I won't be sitting idle though, I will be getting my business registered and attending the seminars he often hosts to empower other SMME owners, I intend to milk this opportunity for all it's worth and acquire as much knowledge as I can from those who have walked the journey I'm about to embark on.

“What's on your mind?”

He asks gently stroking my bare arm

“Nothing.”

“Don’t lie, I know you.”

I heave a sigh and swivel to face him

**“I’m scared Sabelo, what if you get to varsity
and realize that what you feel for me is nothing
but infatuation?”**

I say, laying myself bare to him.

**“I understand your fear, I’m scared too but we
shouldn’t allow our fears to stop us from
enjoying what we feel for each other. Let’s ride
on this wave of love without holding back, let’s**

not deny ourselves the pleasure of enjoying this beautiful feeling of being in love with one another because of negativity. I don't know what's going to happen, but I know that if you and I are meant to be together then nothing will come between us, not distance or the beautiful girls I'll come across nor the handsome guys you're yet to meet.”

His wisdom always leaves me in awe

“You're right, I should stop worrying unnecessarily.”

“You have nothing to worry about ngoba mina ngiyakuthanda sphongoria wami”

(I love your big forehead(ed) self)

“Wow!”

He laughs out loud after seeing the expression on my face.

“What’s wrong sthandwa sam?”

This is the first time Sabelo makes a comment about my forehead, I was starting to believe he doesn’t see it.

“You’re dubbing me with my forehead” I say

“No, I’m not. I’m only appreciating my woman. Your forehead is part of you, it’s one of the things that make you look so damn pretty, without it you’d look ugly I’m telling you.”

I’m melting like butter, y’all should see the smile on my face this instant.

“You’re such a liar!”

“I’m serious; this forehead is the reason I fell for you.”

Amanga ka Sabelo Guyzini!

“You don’t believe me? It's the first thing I saw when I met you for the first time, it was out there shining at me, drawing me in and I couldn’t resist.”

He explains causing me to crack in laughter

“You’re stupid”

“I’m your stupid ok’salayo.”

He wraps his arms around me and plants a peck on my forehead.

“Stop stressing yourself over nothing, mina ngiyakuthanda Ndoni yami”

His tone has my heart racing and butterflies dancing in my stomach.

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MATHAPELO

It took a week of groveling, apologizing, cooking, and doing all forms of sucking up including one's I prefer not mention for Meyiwa to forgive me. I still can't believe that he had me begging for so long, but I guess that's the price I had to pay for being naïve and discussing my family affairs with that snake I once considered a friend. To think that I

thought she was a good woman and even tried hooking her up with Ntsika two years ago, but I am grateful my plan didn't succeed imagine if it did and I had to have that snake as part of my family. Who knows what damage she would've done to this family?

Zen is the perfect woman for Ntsika, she's kind, warm, loving, gentle and wise. She's exactly what Ntsika and the kids need in their lives after five years of living without the warmth that can only be brought by the presence of a woman in a house. That womanly magic touch that transforms any house into a home, Ntsika tried his best to give his children a home full of love, but there's that homey warmth that can never exist in the absence of a woman.

Since the day I rocked up at her place of work unannounced and confided in her about all my troubles, she and I have grown close, and I can even go as far as labelling the relationship we now share as friendship. When she told me she's not working today I seized the opportunity and asked her to meet me at Secunda mall, I am shopping for a few things Sabelo will take with him when he moves tomorrow.

“Will he need this?”

She asks gesturing towards a stainless steel Russell hobbs kettle on the shelf

“Yes, take the iron as well”

She takes the kettle and iron from the shelf and place them inside our trolley

“So how do you feel about him moving to another province?”

“I’m sad that he’s leaving but I can’t say I didn’t know it would happen one day, I knew they will grow up and want to explore and experience life on their own, far from us. I always thought I had prepared myself enough for this day but I’m so sad now that it’s finally happening.”

“Eish, I can imagine plus Sphe is going all the way to another continent at least Sabelo will still be in the country. You can drive to see him anytime you miss him.”

Sphe’s application was approved. She was called for an interview and she passed, after which she had to take several health tests and was granted the scholarship when all her tests came back clean. It’s official my little girl is going to Cuba.

“It's going to be hard I won’t lie but it’s what she wants and as her mother my duty is to support her.” I say

“Yeah hey, should I also take this?”

“No, we’ll buy the duvet cover at Sheet Street or Mr price home at least they have better quality there. I don’t know how it slipped my mind, I wanted to buy one at Home choice or Presles.”

“Okay, has Ndalo come around yet?”

“No. I regret allowing that Lettia woman to fill my head with garbage because now my intentions will always be questioned. Ndalo will never trust me, she’ll always think there’s a motive behind every thing I do. Lord knows I genuinely want to get to know her better, she’s my son’s choice and the mother of my grandchild after all.”

“Give her time, I’m sure she’ll come around.”

“Yeah, it’s not like I have any other choice, I want to play an active role in my grandchild’s life, I want to be her crutch throughout her pregnancy since Sabelo will be far and won’t be able to do that for her. Pregnancy isn’t easy but it’s better when you have support”

“She’s a good girl I’m sure she won’t keep the baby away from you.”

“I honestly hope so, anyway how are the kids adjusting to you being in their father’s life?”

“Better than I expected, I thought I would experience a problem with Khethelo because she’s older and has been filling in her mother’s shoes for all these years, but she did the unexpected and accepted me as the woman in her father’s life. I love that she also respects me a lot.”

A smile graces my face

“Yeah, that’s Khethelo for you. Very loving and respectful”

“Junior was also very welcoming, the only person I’m struggling to connect with is Nomcebo yoh.”

“What did she do?”

“That child never speaks, she’s always watching TV. I don’t know if I make her uncomfortable or what but that child doesn’t even spare a single glance in my direction, she makes me feel irrelevant .”

“No, it’s not you Cebo is just like that. Unlike her siblings she’s an introvert and takes time to get used to new people. You’re not the only one she doesn’t give attention to, she does it to all of us so don’t give yourself sleepless nights over this.”

“ Yo waze wangisiza wangikhulula, I thought she's like that with me because she doesn't like me.”

(You have relieved me)

“ No, she's like that. It's her personality but she's a good kid though, you'll see that once you get used to her. Sizikhulisa kahle ingane zethu ka Meyiwa.”

(We raise our children well in the Meyiwa family)

“ Yeah, that's true. The kids are well mannered, I love Sabelo the most. He's so wise for someone his age.”

“ True, but if you look at all of them carefully you’ll see that they’re all like that. Sphe is also very mature and wise, Khethelo too but I feel like she’s worse than the twins she’s such a strong young lady.”

“ That’s true, for someone who’s only turning 21 this year she’s done a great job raising her siblings and taking care of her father while also juggling her school work.”

“ Yes, I agree. I hope she’ll finally consider moving closer to campus now that you’re there. I hated the idea of her driving to and from campus, she’d spend hours on the road we tried convincing her to stay in res but that stubborn girl refused.”

“ She was traveling to campus, did house chores and still managed to pass?”

She exclaims in shock

“ Yeah, hence I said she’s strong. She did all of that without complaining.”

“ Wow, Ntsika raised her well.”

“ Yes, I feel sorry for the man who’ll marry her.”

“ Why?”

“ The brothers will make him pay a hefty amount for her, she’s our flower. The first daughter, she’s her uncle and father’s treasure.”

” I think she once mentioned that her uncle is the one who bought her a car when she passed matric.”

“ Yeah, there’s nothing Meyiwa wouldn’t do for that girl. UMafungwashe wethu loya.”

(She’s our first born)

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#69

“Max and I are heading to the shops to buy beers, want to tag along?”

Says Molefi, my roommate sticking his head on my door.

“No, I have a lot of schoolwork I need to get done. I’ll sit this one out.”

“Sure.”

Molefi is not a bad roommate but he's not someone I'd like to befriend. He's doing his second year in logistics management at UJ but the guy hardly ever attends any of his lectures, he doesn't miss any opportunity to drink alcohol and turn up. He changes girls like he changes his underwear and is forever trying to hook me up with some girl. According to him what Ndalo doesn't know won't hurt her.

It's early April, almost two months since I moved to Gauteng and started varsity.

Adjusting to the new environment and being provinces away from my woman was and still is difficult to get used to. Juggling school and working part time at Mr. price is not as easy as

I thought it would be, but I have no choice but to do it, I don't want to be a useless father. I don't want to be a father by name, I want to be a father who provides for his child. Speaking of which, Ndalo is due to give birth in two weeks, and I'm excited I can't wait to meet my princess.

My phone rings, disturbing me from my books.

“Miss Cuba.”

Sphe giggles on the other end

“Come on, how long are you going to call me that?”

“Until you’re called Dr Meyiwa”

Sphe is still in the country, we were all under the impression that she would start her academic journey this year but apparently that’s not how things work. She and five other selected candidates will leave for Cuba end of October after being addressed by Mpumalanga’s MEC of health and social development Miss Lindiwe Ntshalintshali. They will be in Cuba for a month for orientation and then come back to South Africa to spend the Christmas holidays with their families before going back again next year February to officially start with their medical studies.

“Okay future Actuary.”

An actuary is someone who studied Actuarial sciences. Actuaries are problem solvers and strategic thinkers, who use their mathematical skills to help measure the probability and risk of future events. They use these skills to predict the financial impact of these events on a business and their clients. Business and government increasingly depend on the skills of actuaries and analysts to help them model and plan for the future. As the world changes at an increasingly rapid pace, risk management expertise can help businesses navigate this evolving landscape.

Actuaries possess a unique mix of mathematical, analytical, communication and management skills. They apply their abilities to create social impact, inform high-level strategic decisions and have a significant impact on legislation, businesses, and peoples' lives.

Actuaries are creative, curious, and adaptable and it's this learning mindset that helps them succeed in the digital age. Actuaries' unique combination of technical skills and professional acumen ensure they will continue to make a difference, guarding against the impacts of future uncertainty.

Although actuaries are often associated with traditional fields such as life, pensions and insurance, there are an increasing number of

actuaries moving into a hold range of new areas. Health, banking and finance, technology, and climate change are just some of the areas where you can now find actuaries. The rise of artificial intelligence and data science is challenging actuaries to think differently and is creating new opportunities that previously never existed. Whether you work in in-house within an organization or in a consultancy firm supporting different clients, you will enjoy a financially rewarding career where can grow, develop, and be challenged.

Employers generally expect entry-level actuaries to have completed one or two certification exams by the time they graduate university. A total of seven examinations is

required for associate-level certification. This process typically takes between four and seven years, as each test requires mandatory e-learning courses, hundreds of hours of study, and months of preparation.

After becoming an associate, you can complete three more exams to earn full fellowship status. Working professionals can generally achieve this goal in an additional two to three years. Actuaries participate in continuing education to maintain their certification status, with seminars often sponsored by their employers or the professional societies.

With all of that said, I still have a long way before I become a qualified actuary, but I can

get a job as risk analyst, investment analyst, secondary mathematics teacher, business analyst, actuarial consultant, or an insurance actuarial analyst after completing my three-year undergrad degree in actuarial sciences.

“I still have a long way before I get there.” I reply

“But it’ll be worth it in the end”

True, actuary is among the ten most paying jobs in the country.

“Yeah, how are the parents doing?”

“Good but home is not the same without you, mom is also hell bent on fixing her relationship with Ndalo before the baby is born.”

“Yeah, Ndalo mentioned something like that in passing. She should give her time; I know she’ll come around.”

“Guilt is playing with her; I honestly feel sorry for her.”

“Yeah, me too.”

“Anyway, how’s varsity, is it everything you’ve always imagined it to be?”

“It’s not bad but it’s completely different from what I’m accustomed to, plus I live off campus, so I’m exposed to a lot of new things.”

“That’s not a very detailed explanation.”

“I’m sorry but you caught me at a bad time, I have to study I’m writing a test next week.”

“Okay, talk again soon.”

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NDALO

Being close to giving birth is the only reason why I haven't packed my bags and got on the first taxi to Johannesburg to visit my boyfriend or asked him to fetch me, saying I miss him would be an understatement. I knew going from seeing each other every day to living provinces apart would be hard what I didn't expect was for it to be this difficult. Not a day goes by without missing Sabelo and wishing for all of this to be nothing but a dream, but sadly this is my new reality. A reality I have no choice but to accept. I moved back home a few days after Sabelo left for Wits but Anele goes back to the apartment to clean from time to time, I'm so fat that eating is pretty much the only thing I can do without assistance. I can't wait for this baby to be born so I can start working out and get back to my banging body.

Mrs. Meyiwa has been trying everything and anything to get close to me, she even comes with me to my check ups and is constantly blowing up my phone asking if I'm okay and what I am craving for. It was hard to trust her at first after everything I've been through because of her, but I slowly began to trust her when I saw how genuine she is. We are not besties or anything but at least now we can talk without anyone being insulted or offended by the other.

I'm in my room with Anele, she just walked in from school and offered to cut my toenails.

Apparently, they are long and look like those of a witch, her words not mine.

“ How is the second term treating you so far?”

“ It’s not bad but the teachers are moving too fast in class and you know I have to go over something a few times before I can grasp it.”

“ Since you discern what the problem is, how do you plan to deal with it?”

“ I’ll increase the time I spend on my books and seek help if I get stuck”

“ Good, I love your spirit.”

“ Yes, I want to pass well and go to varsity. I can’t be the only one who doesn’t get to tertiary, I can’t drop the ball. I have to follow in your footsteps.”

Proud doesn’t begin to describe how I feel right now, I know how she has to work two times harder than us in order to get a mere 50% but I’m glad she’s determined.

“ Super proud of you.”

“ Thanks sis.”

“ Are the pupils from your school still making snide remarks about my relationship with Sabelo?”

“ No, not anymore. I think they finally got over it but the first few weeks after schools re-opened were hell!”

“ I’m sorry that you had to go through all of that because of me.”

“ Don’t apologize, it’s not fault plus ke you know me mos. I won’t allow anyone to bully me, bengiba phendula strong nje ai ntozok’dlala.”

(I would clap back)

I laugh

“ I know you all too well.”

Unfortunately Anele isn't the only one who experienced negative remarks from people because of me, mom's friends from church distanced themselves from her when the news of my relationship with Sabelo went viral. I expected her to be angry and blame me but for the first time in her life, she didn't care about what people said. She put me first and defended my honor as her child.

“Your mother-in-law is here.”

She says with her gaze fixed on the window
behind me

I roll my eyes causing her to laugh

“Don’t be like that, the poor woman is trying.”

“She’s trying a bit too much if you ask me.”

“There’s nothing wrong with being a
responsible grandmother.”

“Mxm” I say

The Meyiwa's paid damages a month ago so the baby will be born a Meyiwa. My father says the baby belongs to them, I guess that's why Mrs. Meyiwa thinks it's okay for her to show up unannounced but what can I say when the owners of the house don't see anything with it?

“Buhle, uGogo ka Ntombifuthi is here to see you!”

(Ntombifuthi's grandmother)

Bellows my mother from the lounge

Mom wants me to name my daughter

Ntombifuthi because she'll be yet another girl child in a house full of girls. I agreed because I

didn't want to offend her but there's no way I'm putting that name on her birth certificate, it's 2021 for Pete's sake! Who still names kids after the situation they are born into?

“Okay, ma I'm coming.”

With Anele's help I slowly pick myself up from the bed and amble towards the lounge. I believe even a tortoise's pace is faster than mine, after what feels like forever, I finally reach the lounge and walk into mom conversing and laughing with Mrs Meyiwa who has a tray of biscuits and a cup in front of her, knowing my mother I wouldn't be surprised if she served her tea in this heat.

“Sanibona ma ninjani?”

(Greetings, how are you)

“I’m okay my child, how are you and the bay doing today?”

She asks with her lips spread into a big smile, showing off her pearly whites. She’s a beautiful woman, I never really discerned just how beautiful she is because she was always frowning in the past but now that she’s always smiling, I realize just how extremely beautiful she actually is.

“We are fine ma thanks for asking.”

I reply and lower myself next to my mother on the couch

“Anghlelanga, I just came to drop off these.”

(I won't stay long)

She says giving me a plastic from Woolworths.

I take it and take a quick look inside, my mouth instantly waters when I see the Caramel Swirl cake and Tin roof ice cream amongst other things, she's really making it hard for me to stay mad at her shem.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#70

“Want a slice?”

Ndalo says swiveling the camera to reveal the Woolies caramel swirl cake.

“Uzonona wedwa shem sesi angizingeni mina, keep stuffing your face with food.”

(You’ll gain weight alone)

“Ngenze njani kodwa ngoba umawakho uhlezi engthengela amalekese”

(What can I do, it's your mother who keeps spoiling me)

“Dlana sesi asina mona shem”

(Eat, I'm not jealous.)

We laugh

“On a serious note I miss you Sabelo ubuya nina kanti?”

(When are you coming back)

“You have no idea how much I miss you, for now I'm not sure when I'll come back. I'll tell you when I know for sure”

A frown covers her face

“What do you mean you don’t know when you’ll come back?”

“Eish Sthandwa sam the workload at school is too much plus work ngapha I barely have time to myself.”

“So does this mean you won’t be home for the birth of your daughter?”

“Eish..”

“Wow! You know what, don’t answer that.”

She says and ends the videocall before I can reply. I try to call her number again, but she doesn’t pick up my call. The only option I have left is to send her a text.

STHANDWA SAM YOU DIIDN’T GIVE ME A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN, I WANTED TO TELL YOU THAT I MIGHT COME BACK HOME DURING RECESS BUT IT WILL ONLY BE FOR A WEEKEND. I LOVE YOU.

I toss the phone on top of my bed after sending the text and head to the kitchen to drink water. The front door opens and in walks Moeketsi, Max and three girls I’ve never met before.

“Hey roomie!”

Says a jovial Moeketsi in exhilaration when his eyes land on me.

“Hey”

“Ladies this is my roommate, Sabelo. Roomie, this is Paulina, Lerato and Dieketseng you already know Max mos.”

“Nice to meet you handsome.”

Paulina says with her hand stretched out for a handshake.

“Nice to meet you too, can we talk?”

I ask looking at Moeketsi ignoring Paulina’s stretched out hand.

“Sure. Ladies, please make yourselves comfortable, Max you can fetch my pc and the speakers from my room and get the party underway while I chat with my roomie.”

He says and follows me to my room

“What’s the meaning of this?”

That's the first thing out of my mouth the moment he walks through the door. I'm pacing up and down trying so hard not to wring his neck.

“Ukhuluma ngani?”

(What are you talking about)

He asks feigning ignorance

“I'm talking about you bringing girls here and hosting a party without my consent.”

“I'm still waiting for you to tell me what the problem is.”

“The problem is that you share this room with me, and that means you can’t host parties without telling me.”

“I knew you’d refuse that’s why I didn’t bother asking, are we done? ...I think we are, please keep the ladies’ company and make sure they don’t steal anything. You can never trust these b*tches, Max and I will go buy the beverages. What should I get you?”

Wow, I can’t believe this guy.

“Never mind, I will buy corona.”

He says and dashes out of the room before I can get a word in.

I pick up my phone from the bed and check if Ndalo has replied to my text but there's nothing. I don't know if it's her hormones or what but Ndalo snaps a lot lately, she's very impatient as well. I'll give her time to cool off and try calling her again later, hopefully she'll pick up.

Moeketsi is crazy if he thinks I will babysit those girls for him, they can steal everything he owns for all I care. I kick off my shoes and throw my tired body on the bed and pluck my earphones and plat 2PAC's album. I appreciate his music

I turn my head to the door when I hear it see it opening

“And then?”

I ask already on my feet.

One of Moeketsi’s girls just budged into my room.

“What do you want in my room?”

I ask in a dead pan voice

“I’m sorry for coming in without your permission but I knocked and you didn’t answer.”

“ So that gives you the right to invade my privacy, what if I was naked?.”

“ I’m sorry okay but I need help, I’m desperate.”

“What do you mean?”

She looks at me like she’s contemplating whether to tell me or not.

“Lalela, I don’t have all day. Talk or leave my room.”

(Listen)

“I need to get back to my res before those two guys come back and demand we sleep with them.”

“What are you talking about?”

I ask with a quirked eyebrow

“That guy, your roommate he ..him and his friend bought alcohol for us at the club and brought us here to so they could have sex with us.”

“What did you think would happen after they bought alcohol for you, of course they’ll want sex from you.”

I don’t agree with what Moeketsi is doing but I hate girls who go to clubs with the intention of getting “some guy” to buy them drinks.

Amantobazane ngeke ayiyeke lento yawo kunini akhuzwa!

“I know I was stupid but please help, I’m desperate here.”

“And what makes you think I want to help you?”

“Please tu, you look like a good guy. Please help me.”

She asks with her hands clasped together like she’s praying. The desperation reflected on her eyes weakens my defenses and I find myself agreeing to help and asking how she wants me to help.

“I know you have a car, please drive me to my res. I swear, I will never bother you again after that.”

“Please.”

She says when she sees the hesitation on my face. Honestly I'd rather not to get myself involved in this.

“Can't you uber?”

“I don't have money, remember?”

“I'll pay for it.”

“ It's almost midnight, I'm scared of using an Uber alone at this hour of the night. What if I get raped or killed, please help me, I promise I won't bother you again.”

“ How about I pay for the Uber and you go with your friends”

“ Those two won't want to leave, they're not my friends. I shouldn't have allowed them to convince me to go out with them, I barely even know them. I only know Dk from res.”

“That's my res.”

She says pointing at a tall building in the heart of Jozi, downtown CBD, Bree Street. One of the most unsafe streets in Johannesburg.

Yeah you guessed it, she convinced me to drive my new car to Joburg CBD at this hour of the night. My dad will kill me if I get hijacked.

“You live here?”

“Yes.”

I don't mean to be judgmental, but the area doesn't look safe. There are nyaope sleeping on the floor draped in dirty blankets and cardboard boxes not far from the entrance of her residence, I won't mention how dirty the street is and the horrible stench floating in the air.

“Why did you choose to live here?”

“My NSFAS got approved late and this is the only place that was still available, I was desperate so I took it ”

“ Okay, you should move when you find a better place.”

“ I will.”

“Hmm. I better get going before someone takes my car or worse my life”

She laughs

“Yeah, I wouldn’t put it past the criminals in this place. Thanks once again for helping me out.”

“My pleasure just don’t land yourself in this situation again. Next time stay in bed and read novels when you’re bored, because you wont always be so lucky.”

“I’ll definitely do that, thanks once again.”

“Sharp.”

She climbs out of the car, shuts the door close and bends abit so that she's level with the window.

“My name is Lerato by the way.”

“Okay.”

“You’re Sabelo right?”

“Yes ma’am.”

“Okay, bye.”

“Bye.”

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NDALO

I know Sabelo has his hands full with school and work, but I wil appreciate it if he came home for the birth of his daughter, he’s been going on and on about how excited he is about the birth of the baby but now that it’s here he can’t make time.

“I honestly think you’re overreacting didn’t you say he’ll be here for the weekend?” Anele

“What if I give birth after he leaves?”

“Ai you’re being dramatic Ses’Ndalo cut him some slack he’s trying his best.”

I can’t believe I’ve turned into this person who takes relationship advise from Anele, ya neh I really need to start making friends.

“Ungakhohlwa ukuthi ukukhuluma nobani wena Anele, ngangiphapheli nje mina angiyena u ntanga wazini nje futhi wena ngo mjolo?”

(Don’t forget who you’re talking to, I’m not your friend. What do you even know about relationships?)

“Yo, askies.”

“Next time stay out of my business.”

She nods her head and leaves my room with her tail between her legs.

Once she’s out of sight I pick up the phone and call Sabelo.

“Sthandwa sam”

There’s loud music playing in the background and girls screaming that “yebo!” girls do when they hype each other in parties and groves.

“I thought you said you were in your room.”

“I am.”

“Then who are those girls screaming in the background?”

“I don’t know, they came with my roommate. Told you how he is.”

“Hmm”

“Why ngathi awukholwa nje”

(Why does it sound like you don’t believe me)

“I do.”

“You need to trust me for this to work.”

“Wow, so you’re putting the blame on me?”

“No, I’m not blaming you. I’m just telling you that you need to start trusting me like I trust you.”

I scoff

“Of course you trust me, it’s not like I’d cheat on you with this big belly anyway.”

“Did you call me to pick up a fight with me?”

“No, I wanted to talk to you.”

“Then talk and stop picking unnecessary fights with me.”

“You know what yekela Sabelo.”

(Leave it)

“Okay.”

“Bye”

“Bye Ndalo.”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#71

My ringtone wakes me up from sleep. I instantly get a headache, I don't know when or how I fell asleep but it feels like it was two minutes ago. After Ndalo disconnected the line, I tossed and turned for almost three hours. I couldn't fall asleep because all I had in mind was the argument I had with Ndalo.

My head pounds from the back when my phone starts ringing again. I take it from my bedside drawer and answer the call

“ Ma.”

“ Sabelo the Khumalo’s just called, Ndalo is in labour”

What?

“ What?”

“ Yes, I just wanted to let you know. Your father and I are on the way to Evander hospital,

I'll call you again when I get to the hospital and give you an update."

" Ok."

" Bye my boy."

I look at the time when she hangs up, it's a few minutes past 4 in the morning. I immediately jump out of bed and wear the first thing I land my eyes on, take my car keys and phone before bolting out of my room. I need to be there when my princess finally makes her grand entrance to the world, hey world I'm about to be a father!

It's still early so the roads are empty which works to my advantage because I make it to Mpumalanga in half the estimated arrival time, I call my mother when I join Lausanne road.

“ Sabelo.”

“ I just joined Lausanne road, what's happening?”

“ The doctor hasn't told us anything my son, we are still waiting.”

“ Okay, I'll be there..”

I stop talking when I hear someone speaking in the background

“ Congratulations, she just gave birth to a bouncing baby girl.”

Screams of jubilation boom through the speakers of my car as I listen to my family celebrate and hear numerous “Thank you lord's”, tears roll down my cheeks before I can stop them.

“ Did I hear the doctor well ma, am I a father?”

“ Yes, my son. You’re a father.”

The joy in her voice is almost palpable. This moment feels surreal, I can't believe I'm someone's father.

“ Congratulations son.”

Says my father engulfing me in a hug the moment I walk through the door of Ndalo's ward.

“ Thank you dad.”

“ She's so beautiful.”

Mom says beaming ear to ear

“ I’m so happy Sabelo, my very own grandchild.”

Mom says with tears swimming in her eyes

“ She’s happy because the baby looks just like her. You should see her son, she looks exactly like your mother.”

My father mutters under his breath.

“ Where is she? I want to see her.”

I ask feeling impatient, anticipation is killing me. I can't wait to see my child.

“ She's with the nurses.” Dad

“ Why, is there something wrong with her?”

“ No, my son relax everything is okay. It's just routine check up.” Mom

I sigh in relief

“ I think we should give the new parents some time alone.” Mr. Khumalo

They nod and follow each other out of the room. Leaving me alone with Ndalo, my poor baby looks so drained.

“ You came.”

“ Of course I came. How are you feeling?”

“ I feel nothing for now just exhaustion but mom says the pain will kick in once the injection starts to wear off.”

“ Thank you for making me a father.”

I say gently caressing her cheek.

Her lips spread into a thin smile

“ You already saw her?”

“ No, but mom says she looks like her.”

**“ I didn’t see her properly but my mother said
the same thing.”**

**“ I can’t believe she’s finally here, ngiyabonga
mama ka Ntombifuthi.”**

(Thank you Ntombifuthi’s mom)

“What? There’s no way I’m naming my child that.”

I said it on purpose, I know how much she hates the name.

“ Ngiyadlala Sthandwa sam.”

(I’m joking my love)

“ Sambonani bo!”

Says nurse Z walking inside the ward carrying who I assume is my baby in her arms, she’s walking too slowly for my liking so I trudge towards her and meet her halfway.

“ Can I hold her?”

My hands are itching to hold her

“ Of course.” She replies with a big smile on her face.

She gives my daughter to me and shows me how to carry her. I instantly fall in love when I hold her in my arms, uyisbutubutu nje esbovu aw bafwethu yintle ingane yami.

**“ Wozani phela, I also want to hold her.” Ndalo
(Come)**

Yo, I thought I knew love what love was until I met this precious girl in my arms. It's like I'm looking at my heart beating, she's a part of me and I love her more than anything in this world.

“ Aw bantu, give her to Ndalo Sabelo I want to show her how to breast feed her.” Nurse Z

I walk as slowly as I can towards Ndalo's bed and give her the baby after nurse Z helps her sit up. I take countless pictures as my daughter suckles on her mother's breast, now my family is complete. I'd die for these two people.

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SPHE

My niece is the cutest, I can't get enough of her cute chubby self. Mrs. Khumalo even joked and said I should permanently move in since I'm always there, I'm not the only one who's obsessed with her though my mother is the worst. She's so in love with that little human, I think she likes her more because she's her photocopy. I look a bit like my mom but my niece is completely identical to my mother, I've never seen such a cute baby before. Most newborns I know look scary and weird for the first few days after they are born but not my niece, she looks like she's a month or two old.

Sabelo only stayed for the weekend and had to go back to Johannesburg for school and work. There were no complications with Ndalo or the baby so they were discharged a day after my niece was born.

“ Uyaphi ses’Sphe?”

(Where are you going)

Asks junior following me everywhere I go.

“ I’m going to Ses’Ndalo’s house to see the baby.”

“ Oh uyobona umlungu?”

(You’re going to see a white person.)

He says and I crack in laughter

“ Wubani umlungu Junior?”

(Who’s a white person)

“ Umtwana ka Ses’Ndalo, uwu mlungu!”

(Ndalo’s baby, she’s a white person.)

“ Wahleka kamnandi nje yini?”

(What are you laughing at)

Asks Khethelo when she finds me laughing.

“ Ngihlekiwa wu Junior la uthi umtwana ka miss Khumalo wumlungu.”

(It’s Junior, he says miss Khumalo’s baby is a white person.)

She also cracks up

“ Ah mara angabuye athini kodwa umntasekhaya, ubovu u girl umfuze wangamshiya ndawo u gog’wakhe.”

(Do you blame him though, she’s too light skinned. She looks exactly like her grandmother)

“ At least uMa sekano wele.”

(At least my mother has a twin now.)

“ Yeah, As’hambe phela mfazi kunini ujika jika la ekamereni ungacedi.”

“ Ok, let me put on my perfume then we will go.”

“ Angithi nami ngi hamba nani?”

(I’m coming with you, right?)

Asks junior giving us puppy eyes.

“ Yes, sihambani sonke.”

(We are going together.)

Khethelo and I literally raced to Ndalo's bedroom because we both wanted to pick up Hlelo first. Yep, that's her name. They named her Hlelolwenkosi Thandolwethu Meyiwa, beautiful names for a beautiful princess.

“ Sam'bonani wena man.” Khethelo

She won the race so she's the one carrying the baby while I'm impatiently awaiting my turn. She's still young so only close family members are allowed to see her.

“ How do you feel mara?”

“ Drained, angilali Sphe liyamemeza le gundwane lakini ebsuku.”

(Drained, I don't sleep at night. The baby cries at night.)

“ Askies shem.”

“ But my mother takes care of her during the day so I can get some sleep, I don't know what I'd do if it wasn't for her.”

“ Uyak'sukela umama angithi wena Thando wami, wena awukhali you're the sweetest baby ever.”

**(Your mother is lying, you're the sweetest baby
you don't cry.)**

**Khethelo says looking at my niece with nothing
but love in her eyes**

“ Hai mlethe Khethelo kunini umphethe.”

(Give her to me, you've been carrying her.)

“ Nizom'jwayeza izandla bo mbekeni phantsi.”

(Put her down, she'll get used to being carried.)

**Mrs Khumalo says walking into the room with
a tray in her hands.**

It has three glasses of cranberry juice, a bowl with biscuits and another bowl with soft porridge for Ndalo. Ngeke uphume ungadlile kwa Khumalo, Mrs. Khumalo knows how to take care of guests plus I enjoy her food, the woman is good with them pots. Whether it's cooking or baking she makes the things that make the pots to be done shem.

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NDALO

I still can't believe I'm a mother, sometimes I wake up during the night and just stare at my

beautiful princess. She's so cute I could literally eat her up, I feel betrayed though imagine after carrying her for nine months she came out looking like her grandmother such betrayal kodwa bafethu.

She just ate so I have her on my chest trying to get her to burp so I can put her to sleep. My phone rings next to me on the pillow startling my baby and causing her to cry, it's a video call from Sabelo.

“ Baby.”

“ Uyiyezani ingane yami Ndalo?)

(What are you doing to my child)

“ She got startled when my phone rang and started crying.”

“ Maybe you should put your phone on silence.”

“ Okay.”

“ Ninjani kodwa bantu bami?”

(How are you guys doing)

“ We are okay and you babakhe?”

“ I’m not okay, my heart is not here it’s there with you guys. I can’t wait for Friday so I can come and see my daughter. “

“ Askies baby.”

“ Please turn the camera to her, I want to see her.”

I lower the camera to her tiny face

“ Oh my goodness, I can’t get over how beautiful she is. I wish I was there with you guys.”

Sabelo is so obsessed with the baby, he asks me to send him pictures of her everyday.

“ Work hard and pass so that you can come back to us soon.”

“ Eish, ya neh. How are you mara Sthandwa sam?”

“ I’m okay baby.”

“ Okay, are you healing?”

Hlelo was too big I couldn’t push her out, they had to cut me for her to come out.

“ Yeah, it’s no longer as painful like it was before, I can sit up without flinching now.”

“ Okay, that’s good Sthandwa sam. Look I just wanted to wish you guys a good night, I’m revising for my test tomorrow.”

“ All the best baby.”

“ Thanks mamakhe, kiss my baby goodnight. I love you both.”

“ We love you too daddy.”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#72

It's been 6 months since Ndalo gave me the most precious gift anyone could ever give me, my baby I'm so obsessed with that beautiful girl. The more she grows, the more she resembles my mother.

“ Did you even hear what I said mara Sabelo?”

Kevin

“I'm sorry what?”

Cameron laughs

“ Come on ma'am, where's your head at?”

“He's staring at pictures of his daughter, what else.” Cameron replies.

“You need to focus man, we need to ace this assignment.”

Kevin is the strict one in the group, he doesn't joke around when it comes to his education and that's why I befriended him. In a place full of students who sometimes forget why they're here, Kevin is the perfect person to have in

your circle because he'll always steer you to the right direction when you forget what you're here for.

“Okay, I’m sorry. I’ll concentrate.”

“ Thank you. So Cam, you’ll do questions 3 and 6 while I handle 5 and 4 then Troy will do 1 and 2. Is everyone happy with their parts?”

Kevin is coloured and Cameron is Indian so they use my English name Troy, instead of Sabelo.

After delegating, we all agree on the submission date. Cam and I will submit to Kev, who’ll

proof read and compile the assignment and then give it to us to proofread before we submit it to Turn it in for plagiarism.

“ I think we are done now, you can go back to drooling over your cute baby.” Kevin

We all laugh

I'm about to reply when a pair of soft hands cover my eyes. I know whoever is covering my eyes is a girl judging by how soft her hands feel and scent of the perfume she's wearing

“ Can you guess who it is?”

I've heard her voice before but I can't remember from where.

“ I don't know, you better stop with the games and tell me who you are.”

She laughs and removes her hands from my eyes. I turn around and come face to face with Lerato, the girl who made me drive all the way to Joburg CBD late at night.

“ Hey.”

She says with a big smile on her face

“ Hi, please take a seat.”

**My friends are gawking at me with those
'judgy' eyes.**

**“ Guys meet Lerato, Lerato these are my
friends Kevin and Cameron.”**

“ Nice to meet you guys.”

She says smiling at them

“ I need to leave, see you tomorrow man.”

**Kevin says already on his feet packing his
books inside his bag**

“ Yeah, me too. See you tomorrow man.”

Cameron

“ Okay, see you tomorrow then.”

I fist bump with both of them and watch them walk out of the library.

“Phew! I thought they’d never leave.”

“ What do you mean?”

I ask giving her a quizzical look. She swivels to my direction and looks into my eyes

“ I won’t beat about the bush, I like you a lot and I’ve been beating myself up for months for not taking your number that day. The only reason I didn’t rock up on your door step is because I didn’t want to risk seeing that roommate of yours.”

I don’t know what to say, I’m all for people going after what they want but girls like Lerato turn me off.

“ I hear you. Look Lerato, you look like a nice girl and some guy out there would be lucky to have you as his girlfriend but unfortunately I’m not that guy.”

“ Why not, am I not beautiful enough for you?”

“ You’re gorgeous but my heart already belongs to someone else.”

“ I know silly! It would be foolish of me to expect a handsome guy like you to be single, I don’t mind being the other woman. Like I said, I like you. I’m not trying to marry you and have kids with you, I only want us to f*ck.”

She says and laughs like she didn’t just drop a bomb.

“ Well unfortunately I’m not that guy, I really love and respect my girl. I’d never do her like that.”

“ Wow, she’s so lucky to have you.”

“No, I’m the lucky one.”

“Can we at least be friends since we can’t be lovers?”

“ I don’t think that’s su..”

“ Come on, please I promise I’ll respect your relationship and won’t try anything.”

“ In that case, it’s fine I guess we can be friends then.”

“ Okay, you can start by giving me your number then friend.”

She says giving me her phone.

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NDALO

It’s been six months since the heavens smiled upon me and blessed me with an angel, she’s

growing up so fast at least she no longer cries at night. I moved back to my apartment when she turned 5 months, being at home was nice and I had help but I really missed having my own space. It took time for me to adjust to my new routine, juggling between taking care of Hlelo, house chores and handling the business all on my own. Back at home my mom handled the chores, looked after Hlelo during the day while I napped and did her laundry too.

Initially I wanted to start an online business but got another idea when the Meyiwa's wouldn't stop complementing my mother's culinary skills. I thought why not start a catering business ? Mom has exceptional talent in the kitchen, not only that but she loves and enjoys

being in the kitchen- so why not make money whilst doing what she loves. She liked the idea when I first presented it to her and couldn't wait to start, so I registered the company and advertised our business on social media. Mr Hatla was the first client we catered for, and he referred our company to his acquaintances.

My mother is so good at what she does, so people fell in love with her work. Her weekends are always busy, she's always booked. I'm talking parties, weddings, baby showers, formal functions you name it.

I didn't expect the business to kick off so soon but I'm glad it did, mom and two of the ladies we hired to help us are the one's who cook and

attend the functions that we cater for while my focus is strictly on the marketing and the finance aspects of the business. Catering is a good business, it will always be relevant because people will always eat food but it won't make me a millionaire at least not in the next ten years.

So I used the money I got from UIF to buy shares in several companies and one of them happens to be an online company, it's still new so it'll take a while for me to make money from my investment but once it starts taking off I will be rolling in dough. It'll be more or less like Take a lot, the only difference is that it'll focus on selling to businesses not individuals.

I'm going through my emails to check if Unisa hasn't responded to my application. I applied for a Business management course, I wasn't joking when I said I wanted to learn. The seminars I attend and being affiliated with the likes of Mr Hatla have taught me a lot about business but I still have a lot to learn.

Hlelo's piercing cry has me jolting up from the couch and bolting to the bedroom.

“ Sambonani Hlelo ka mamakhe. Uvukile yena wakhala makangaboni umamakhe nze!”

She giggles and shows off her toothless smile

“ Woza la, sdudla sa mama.”

(Come here, mommy’s big girl)

**I cradle her in my arms and give her the boob.
She latches on it and holds on for dear life, she
loves her food this one.**

“You’re so beautiful my baby.”

**It’s been six months but I still can’t believe
she’s mine, hay kabi kodwa muhle umtwanami
bafethu. Mom says she looks like her
grandmother because I hated her during my
pregnancy, well more like she hated me but I
didn’t want to tell my mom about what Mrs
Meyiwa did. I wouldn’t want to ruin the good**

relationship they have built over the past few months because of something that happened in the past.

“ Good girl.”

I say when she burps.

“ Let’s call daddy.”

Her little eyes wander around the room, she knows who ‘daddy’ is because he video calls us every day an hour before Hlelo’s bedtime. She also knows because Sabelo always calls himself daddy everytime he talks to her, it’s like he wants to instil in her that he’s her father. I

wouldn't be surprised if the first word out of her mouth is 'daddy'

“ Sthandwa sam.”

“ Hey love, how are you?”

“ I'm good and how are you guys?”

“ We are fine.”

“ Hey princess it's daddy.”

If Hlelo could she'd jump up and down everytime she sees her father. The way she

goes crazy with joy everytime she hears his voice, always leaves me feeling jealous.

“ Oh maGasa wami omuhle, daddy misses you so much.”

(My beautiful maGasa)

Gasa is the Meyiwa clan name.

She smiles like she understands what he’s saying. She always pokes the screen trying to touch his face everytime we videocall.

“ When are you coming back, your daughter misses you.”

“ I miss her too but I’m not looking forward to that painful cry she pulls off everytime she sees me, it breaks my heart everytime.”

I don’t know what goes on in Hlelo’s mind when she sees her father, she first pokes his face with her small fingers as if she’s trying to confirm that he’s really here and then bawls her eyes out. She always clings to him when she finally recovers from whatever is going through her little mind at that time.

“ I know, me too.”

“ I wish there was a way to stop that.”

“ Yeah, let me hang up. I was going through my emails when your daughter woke up.”

“ Okay Sthandwa sam, I’ll call again before my baby goes to bed.”

“ Okay, say bye daddy.”

Sabelo laughs

“ Udlala ngengane yami.”

(You’re playing with my child)

“ No I’m not, I’m teaching her.”

“ Okay bye baby, I love you both”

“We love you too daddy.”

I honestly didn't see Sabelo and I making it this far but I'm glad we are still going strong. I always pray for our relationship every night before I go to bed, I've decided to stop worrying myself unnecessarily and just let God handle it. If it's meant to be then it'll be

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SPHE

The time I've been waiting for has finally arrived, tomorrow I'm leaving for Cuba and I'm so excited and a bit nervous of course but excitement is the dominant emotion. I've been waiting for this day for years and I can't believe it's finally happening, I can't wait shem.

I'm with Khethelo at Embalenhle mall doing shopping, there was no way I would go to Cuba with my old clothes. Dad gave me money to buy new clothes and I asked Khethelo to come with me and help me choose, I value her fashion advice mogirl can dress shem. She's in the wrong career, she should've gone for fashion design or something related to that.

“ I can’t believe you’ll be on the other side of the world.”

“ Come on, don’t make that face. You’ll make me cry and I don’t want to cry, I want to be happy because I’ve always wanted this and now it’s finally happening.”

“ You’re right, I should be happy for you not crying like this.”

She wipes her tears with her thumbs and looks at me with a big fake smile on her face.

“ I’m not crying, see?”

“ Oh mntasekhaya.”

I pull her to my embrace and we both weep in each other’s arms. I’m going to miss my sister, she’s the best big sister anyone could ever ask for. She’s my best friend and my confidant, I love her so much.

“ I love you big sis.”

She giggles and breaks the hug wiping her tears

“ You won’t bribe me by calling me big sis.”

She’s always on my case about being older than me, and once said Sabelo and I should call her

big sis but we obviously refused, today is the first time I call her big sis.

“ Come on, smile I know you’re happy that I finally called you big sis.”

I say snaking my arm around her tiny waist

“ Okay fine, I’ll admit. That felt good, say it again.”

We laugh

“ Ave uthanda ukuba mdala Khethelo.”

(You love acting old)

“Yingoba ngimdala vele.”

(That’s because I am older than you)

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#73

“What?”

**I ask Cam who has been giving me a
monstrous look since yesterday.**

**“I don’t like what you did the other day.” He
says**

“What did I do?”

**I ask with a quirked eyebrow, confused by his
statement. I don’t remember doing anything
that could’ve upset him.**

He scoffs and doesn’t reply.

“Do you know what he’s on about?”

I ask looking at Kev but he shrugs his shoulders before his focus goes back to the laptop in front of him.

“Okay guys I’m getting worried now, what’s going on?”

Cwaka!

“Cam?”

He ignores me

“Kev?”

“You’re a cheat and I told you when we first linked up that I don’t want to associate myself with cheats, one rotten apple can spoil the whole packet.”

Haibo!

“Me, a cheat? Who did I cheat with?”

“That skinny light skinned girl you were with the other day” Cameron adds

“What? Are you guys talking about Lerato? I haven’t seen that girl in months.”

I can't believe they think I'd cheat on my girlfriend with Lerato of all people!

“How come she's so comfortable around you? In my culture no woman is allowed to get that comfortable around you unless she's your wife.” Cameron

“I understand but her covering my eyes means nothing, things aren't that strict in my culture so relax. I'm not cheating on my girlfriend.”

“Deny it all you want but that girl definitely wants you.” Kevin

**My phone chimes in my pocket just when I
open my mouth to reply**

“Hold on, I need to take this. It’s my uncle”

They nod.

“Babomncane”

“Sabelo, you need to come back home.”

**There’s something different in his tone, I don’t
know if it’s sadness or downheartedness.**

“Uncle, you’re scaring me. What’s going on?”

**“Sabelo angeke ngilibeke nawe ulibeke ngithe
yehla ubuye khaya!”**

(I don’t answer to you, I said come back home.)

He bites my head off and drops the call.

“Yoh!”

“What’s wrong?.”

**Asks Kevin with worry lines etched on his
forehead.**

“That was my uncle, he just summoned me home. I picked up some sadness in his tone, I don’t know what could be wrong.”

“Sitting here and thinking about it won’t help, go home like he says.” Kevin

“But It’s Thursday and I can’t miss tomorrow’s classes.”

“Just go man, we’ll jot down notes and take recordings in every lecture.” Cameron

“Thank you, guys. I’m blessed to have you as my friends”

Kevin laughs

“Stop with the mushy stuff and go home.” He says

I carelessly throw everything inside my sling back and run off to the parking lot.

I make a quick stop outside my res and hurriedly pack a bag of clothes since I’m not sure how long I’ll be home for and then drive to Mpumalanga using N17. On my way I try to call my parents but both their phones don’t go through, I try Sphe and get directed straight to her voice mail. That’s when I remember that she left for Cuba yesterday, it takes 25 hours 25 minutes to travel from Oliver Reginald Tambo

international airport in Johannesburg, South Africa to Jose Marti international airport in Havana, Cuba. Her flight took off at 15:00 yesterday, she should be in Cuba by now. She's probably still settling in and will call us from her new number soon.

One hour and twenty minutes later I'm driving through my parent's gate, I park my Hyundai i10 on the driveway behind my uncle's bakkie. I see more cars parked in the yard as I walk towards the door with the duffel hanging over my shoulder.

More than 20 sets of eyes fall on me when open the door, okay! what's going on? Do we have a function that my parents forgot to tell me

about? I'm asking because the most of our relatives are in the lounge. Speaking about relatives, where are my parents?

“You must be looking for your parents, they are in their bedroom waiting for you.”

Aunt Thandazo, Uncle Bongane’s widow says when she sees me looking around the room.

“Okay, Ngiyabonga ma. Ngiyaxolisa ukunga bingeleli. Sanibonani bantu abadala”

(Thank you. I’m sorry for being, greetings my elders.)

I say with my head bowed respectfully.

“It’s okay my son, go to your parents”

Says uncle Mabutho, uncle Bongane’s eldest brother.

Something is definitely going on if Uncle Mabutho is letting me off the hook that easy, the man doesn’t take kindly to being disrespected and not greeting your elders is considered as an act of disrespect in my family.

Still in my confusion, I first stop in bedroom and leave my bag on top of the bed before heading to the master bedroom.

“Ngena!”

(Come in)

**Shouts my uncle’s voice from inside after I
knocked on the door.**

**I turn the knob and make my way inside,
emergency bells go off in my head when I walk
into my father sitting on the bed straddling my
weeping mother in his arms. My father’s eyes
also look bloodshot red and he has veins on his
face like he's trying so hard not to break down
and cry.**

“What’s going, why is my mother crying?”

I ask looking at my uncle for answers, he's the one who summoned me here after all.

“Sit down”

“No, I don't want to sit. I want to know what's going on”

“Sabelo, please listen to your uncle and sit down my son.”

Croaks my mother in a breaking voice.

I sit down and stare at him expectedly. He sighs and looks up brushing his bald head with his hands.

“We received a call from the MEC’s office, the flight Sphe was on to Cuba didn’t make it to Jose Marti airport.”

“Okay, where’s Sphe? Why are we not fetching her?”

I’m already on my feet flipping my pockets in search of my car keys.

“Sabelo, wait.”

My uncle says when I’m about to turn the knob on the door. I stop but I don’t turn around to look at him.

“The flight didn’t make it to Cuba because it crashed and unfortunately no one survived, I’m sorry but we lost your twin.”

“What?”

I ask turning around daring him to repeat what he just said to my face. I must have wax in my ears, I couldn’t have heard him right. My twin can’t be dead, I refuse to accept that.

“It’s true, I’m so sorry son.”

My mother says and breaks into a gut-wrenching sob.

“Tell me it’s not true.”

I ask looking at my father

“I’m sorry but it’s true my son, your sister is gone.”

“No, I refuse to accept that. I’m her twin, I’d know when something happens to her right?”

“We are still waiting for forensics to confirm DNA, but she’s gone my son.” Uncle

“Lies, you’re speaking nothing but lies!”

“SABELO!”

My mother calls out when I bolt out of the room running, Uncle Mabutho tries to block my way when I try to go through the living room door, but I push him off and run off to my car and immediately start the ignition reversing out of the yard. I see my father running after the car when I look in the rearview mirror and step my foot on the accelerator, speed off and leave behind a trail of dust.

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NDALO

My heart is torn to pieces I don't think I've ever felt so much pain in my life, not even when I lost my blood relatives. Hlelo's grandfather just called and broke the saddest news to me, Sphe's plane crashed, and she's gone just like that. I pray that her parents won't blame themselves for allowing her to go to Cuba because no one could have anticipated or imagined that this would be the result.

Apparently Sabelo drove off after being informed about his sister's death, his parents are worried about him. I'm not only worried but I'm terrified, what if he gets into an accident and dies? I know I shouldn't be thinking like this, but I can't help it, God

wouldn't do something so cruel to the Meyiwa's or would he? Hlelo can't lose her aunt as well as her father, not my baby. She doesn't deserve to grow up without her father.

“Sabelo please call me back when you get this message, please I'm begging you. Your parents are worried about you, I'm also worried about you. Please don't do anything stupid, at least think about Hlelo, your daughter. I love you, bye.”

I say leaving him a voicemail for the umpteenth time since 6:45 this evening.

“Don't cry sis, nothing will happen to Hlelo's father.”

Says Melo walking with Hlelo in her arms. I left her sleeping in my mother's bedroom, I was here to see my mother to discuss some business staff when I received the call from Mr. Meyiwa.

“Oh Hlelo wami, mommy cant take you right now.”

I say to Hlelo who tried to jump from Melo's arms immediately when she saw me.

“Mthathe, akusizi.”

(It's no use resisting, take her.)

She says when my daughter starts crying.

“Okay, thula ke. Mama uzokuthatha, yo ang’funi nex nges’dudla sami.”

(Don’t cry. Mom will take you, mommy wants nothing with her big girl)

She giggles

Oh, how I wish I could swap places with her and have no clue of what’s going on around me, I’d only be worried about food and nothing else.

Bathong I woke up feeling under the weather, I actually forced myself to write this insert. I

might disappear for a few days, it'll depend on how long it takes for me to feel better. I hope it's just flue and not Covid 19, thanks again for liking the pic. If you still haven't liked it please do so. Thank you

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#74

“I'm coming!”

I say when I hear a loud bang on my door. I jump out of bed and put on my gown before heading to the kitchen to get the door.

“ Sabelo!”

The keys in my hands slip and fall to the floor as I throw myself in his arms and engulf him in a hug. He smells like a walking brewery but he’s alive that’s the only thing that matters right now.

“ Where have you been baby, your family has been worried sick about you?.”

I'm inspecting his face and body for bruises, a sigh of relief escapes my lips when I don't find any.

“ Come, I'll whip you something to eat.”

He releases a loud burp when he opens his mouth, the smell is nauseating. I've never seen Sabelo in this state.

“ I don't want food, I want my daughter where is she?”

He slurs

“Princess!”

“ Princess daddy is home.”

**He shouts and stumbles to the bedroom
bumping into things.**

**“ Shhh, you’ll wake her up. You know she gets
cranky when woken up from her sleep.”**

He swivels to face me

**“ So are you trying to insinuate that I’m a bad
father?”**

He asks glaring at me and I gasp in shock

“ No, of course I didn’t mean it like that.”

“ Whatever!”

He toddles inside the bedroom and bangs the door. I lock the door and follow him to the bedroom, he’s already under the covers when I walk in but I know he’s not sleeping. I take off the gown and join him in bed, snaking my arms around him and putting my leg in between his.

“ Not today Ndalo.”

He says removing my arms from his defined and chiseled abs and moves away from me,

creating space between us, my heart shudders and a lone tear runs down my cheek. I quickly wipe it off and walk to Hlelo's cot to check if she's still sleeping and I find her sleeping with her lips pouted, a smile embraces my face as I stare at my beautiful daughter. I bend down and give her a peck on her lips and another one on her forehead before going back to bed.

Sabelo is always preaching about the importance of dealing with things as a couple but now that it's him who's going through something the rules have changed and he's pushing me away, I won't lie it hurts but at least he came to my place. He could've gone anywhere but he's here with me and that should count for something right?

I don't know how I managed to fall asleep but it seems I did because his ringing phone wakes me up from my sleep. I expect him to answer but he ignores it until I decide to wake up and switch it off because clearly the caller won't stop calling, but I answer the call when I see that it's his mother calling.

“ Gogo ka Hlelo.”

“ Oh thank God he's with you my child, I was worried sick about him.”

“ I’m sorry I forgot to tell you when he arrived here yesterday, I’m sorry I don’t know how it slipped my mind.”

“ No, it’s okay my child. How is he?”

What do I say?

“ He’s broken mama.”

I reply looking at him. He’s awake now, sleeping on his back pillowing his arms and blankly staring at the ceiling.

“ Oh, my poor son. Please tell him to come back home, there’s been new developments on Sphe’s case.”

“ Okay, I’ll tell him mama.”

“ Please come with Hlelo, I know I’m asking for too much but I think being with my grandchild will lessen the pain I feel in my heart.”

She says in between sobs

“ No problem, I’ll bring her ma.”

“ Thanks my child.”

“ Pleasure gogo wakhe.”

“ Ndalo?”

“ Ma?”

“ I want you to know that I’m really sorry for everything I’ve ever done and said to you. I want you to know that I mean it from the bottom of my heart, I love you Buhlebendalo and I’m sorry it took so long for me to see that you’re the perfect person for my son.”

I never thought I’d hear those words coming from her so I’m an emotional mess right now,

crying my eyes out. Not because I'm sad but because I'm happy, extremely happy.

" Ngiyabonga mama, this means a lot coming from you."

" I'm sorry it took this long. Bye my child."

She says and cuts the call.

I wipe my tears with my palms and look at Sabelo, who's still in the same position.

" I guess you heard what your mom said, she's asking for you to come home."

He doesn't reply so I'm not sure if he heard me or not.

“ Sabelo, did you hear me?”

I ask putting my hand on his arm

“ I heard you Ndalo.”

He says shrugging my hand from his arm like I'm dirty or something. That hurt but I won't give him the satisfaction of seeing my tears, so I swallow the painful lump clogging my throat and get out of bed to prepare for Hlelo's visit at the Meyiwa's.

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SABELO

I'm on my way home with Ndalo and my daughter, they're sitting at the backseat and I keep glancing at them in the rearview mirror every two minutes. I hate myself for treating her like I did last night and this morning but I'm not in the best of moods and I'm afraid I might just hurt her to the point of no return if I allow her to get close to me, I feel like a raging lion ready to devour anything and everything in front of him. It's like I have a beast locked inside me threatening to burst out of my chest,

I've never felt like this before and I don't know how to handle it or calm my raging emotions.

She steps out of the car the moment I park in the driveway with our daughter in her arms, I take Hlelo's bag and follow her to the house after locking the car. It's still a full house and now that I'm aware of what's happening, I notice how everyone is looking at me with pity. Oh how I hate being pitied!

I greet and walk off before anyone tries to talk to me and head straight to my room where I find Ndalo and my baby, Ndalo is sitting on the bed with Hlelo on her lap. I walk in and head straight to my duffel bag looking for something

to wear, I really need to change into something clean. The clothes I'm wearing reek of alcohol.

There's a faint knock on the door. Ndalo looks at me and shouts 'Come in' when she sees that I'm all dressed up now. Mom walks in with bloodshot and swollen eyes and instantly smiles when her eyes land on Hlelo. Hlelo is equally happy to see her, she's bouncing on top of Ndalo's lap wanting mom to take her.

“ Sanibonani.”

She says after taking Hlelo from Ndalo and smothering her chubby cheeks with kisses.

“ Sabelo, we received another call from the forensics team working on Sphe’s case. None of the bodies they found match with Sphe’s DNA.”

“ Thank you lord!” Ndalo

“ So I was right, Sphe is alive?”

I ask pinching my ass, desperately waiting for her to confirm my suspicions.

“ We don’t know that for sure my son, the records at the OR Tambo international airport show that Sphe was inside that plane.

Apparently the plane disintegrated into three major parts before crashing into the ground, the

investigators think that her body might have flown about 500 or more meters away from where the other cadavers were found. She's probably badly injured or dead where she is."

Her last statement diminishes all the hopes I had of her being alive, if she's still alive then she must severely injured

" So what are we going to do?"

" The investigators have started searching the area where the crash happened and hopefully they will find your sister soon. I want my daughter back home Sabelo, dead or alive."

A lone tear runs down her cheek as she says this tearing my heart to pieces.

Hlelo pokes her face with her small fingers wearing a confused expression on her face, mom quickly wipes her tears and looks at her grand daughter with a forced smile.

“ Let me leave you two alone.”

With that said she walks out with Hlelo, leaving Ndalo and I in awkward silence.

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KHETHELO

Tears cascade down my cheeks as I keep re-playing the videos we took together on Tuesday, a day before she left for Cuba. The door opens and Mam'Zen walks in and joins me under the covers, she doesn't tell me it's going to be okay or that she's sorry for my loss or force me to tell her how I feel like everyone around me has been doing since we found out about what happened to Sphe. She just pulls me to her embrace and squeezes me into a tight hug, I hold her back and cry my eyes out wetting her blouse with my tears.

She allows me to cry to my heart's content while rubbing my back soothingly until I calm myself down. She then breaks off the hug and

wipes my tears and snorts with her palms and plants a long peck on my forehead.

“ Ncese sisi yezwa”

(I’m sorry)

She says with a soothing tone, I find myself nodding vigorously.

“ You need to eat something, I’m sure Sphe wouldn’t want you to starve yourself. Should I make you something to eat?”

“ Yes please.”

“ What do you feel like eating?”

“ Noodles please.”

She looks at me ready to protest but I plead before she can say anything further.

“ Please ma.”

“ Did I hear you right?”

“ Yes, you did. I just called you ma.”

She beams and smothers my face with kisses. I giggle, I can't remember the last time I felt like

this, like a child that is. My mother's death forced me to grow up and woman up before time, my dad was a mess after my mother died so I had to do what needed to be done for my siblings. I couldn't stand by and watch them suffer while I was still alive, I was only 15-years-old when my mother passed on. I was still a kid myself who needed to be loved and protected but Cebo and Junior needed me to be strong so I had to stop whining and feeling sorry for myself and be strong for them.

“ Did I do something wrong?”

She asks worry dancing in her eyes. She's probably alarmed by the tears she sees glistening in my eyes.

“ I’m sorry if I over stepped my boundaries, I’m sorry I didn’t mean to.”

She’s rushing through her words, looking panicky.

“ Ma, relax please. Take a deep breath.”

Although confused, she does what I ask of her

“ You didn’t do anything wrong, it’s just that it’s been so long since I felt like a child.”

A lone tear rolls down her cheek

“ Oh my baby, I understand. I’m here now, you no longer have to carry the burden of running this house. It's time for you to go out there and have fun like other kids your age.”

I giggle

I’ve never really pictured myself living like a young adult, it’s always been books and family I didn’t have time for anything else.

“ Do you even have a boyfriend?.”

My cheeks turn crimson from feeling embarrassed.

“ Ma!”

**“ What? You’re old enough to get a boyfriend,
so do you?”**

I can’t believe she’s asking me this question.

“ I’m waiting.”

Bathong!

“ No, I don’t have a boyfriend.”

“ Haibo, namanga wena!”

(You lie)

She says dramatically causing me laugh

“ Aw’na boyfriend njani umuhle kanje?”

(How do you not have a boyfriend when you’re so beautiful)

“ I guess I never had time for all of that.”

“ Well that’s about to change, you need to stop worrying about your siblings and enjoy your life like all the young people your age.”

“ I will.”

I don't even know where to start, I don't even have friends. My siblings are the only friends I have, with Sphe gone I literally have no one to talk to. It's not like I can talk to Sabelo, knowing him he'll start acting like a protective big brother and forbid me from dating completely ignoring the fact that I'm 2 years older than him.

I'm still not A-okay but I'm feeling better, thanks for your well wishes and prayers.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#75

WRITER'S POV

I'm certain that most of us would expect a plane crash to result in an explosion, well in reality it is unlikely for the aircraft to “explode” in a crash, like we often see in films. To attain that effect in films, explosive charges are set, and cans of gasoline are placed among the charges to create the fireball. Real crashes usually end with a thud and some flying dirt, as a result of the impact. If fuel tanks split, fuel

will spill and ignite a few seconds later, but the flame does not cause the pressure and debris scatter of a true explosion.

Here's the thing about plane crashes, they come in all sorts of flavors.

Firstly- a plane can land with its gear up and 'belly whop' and slide down the runway.

Officially, that's a 'crash' but you'll also call it a 'gear up landing'. The Survival rates in those crashes are actually very good.

Second scenario would be a plane lands, and after landing, the gear collapses and you get a plane sliding, right-side up, down the runway, or a part of the plane sliding, while the rest of it

remains upright on the remaining landing gear. Survival rates in these crashes are also good.

Sometimes the plane slams into something- for example trees, houses or buildings. This type of crash is bad and often proves dangerous, survival rates vary at this point, but 'doom' is not certain in a lot of cases.

Lastly, the plane could lose control and plummet to the ground like a brick. This type of crash is extremely bad news, survival rates aren't great with this type of crash.

Whether or not there's a post-crash fire, depends on a lot of factors most notably, how much fuel vapor is present, or how much

aerated fuel (fuel droplets sprayed in all directions) there are and whether an ignition source hits them to start the fire.

Planes don't typically 'blow up' like a huge fire cracker. What happens is that the fuel and vapors spill out in large quantities, and the fumes find an ignition source (like those hot engines that were running up until the aircraft wrecked), and the fuel vapors ignite rapidly, producing that rather sudden fireball that you might expect to see, in the case of a high-impact crash.

High impact crashes are the final two examples I cited and labelled as 'bad news' or 'extremely bad news'. Those are 'high impact' crashes that

rip wings off and bend the airplane into unusual shapes and tear it into multiple pieces. High impact crashes, even without the big fireballs are often violent enough to kill the pilots and passengers anyway.

Low impact crashes do not usually result in a large scale explosion and fireball. Some fuel may spill out of the wings or other tanks or fuel lines and catch on fire, and that fire may grow as the leaks worsen but that's about it. Any competent airport fire crew can deal with that and still get the survivors off the airplane.

Unfortunately for the Meyiwa's the aircraft that was meant to fly from South Africa to Cuba lost control and disintegrated into 3 major sections

at cruising altitude and cruising speed. Bodies of the victims were accordingly found over a very wide area as many victims were thrown out. Most of the bodies were found nearly totally nude as clothing was blown off because the flight disintegrated at 500 miles per hour.

As soon as a plane crashed, the whole situation was investigated by multiple parties, including the National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Investigation is one of the most important aspects because it helps to determine how the plane crashed and who could be considered to be at fault.

If the investigation proves that the crash happened as a result of negligence, it's important to understand a couple of different factors. It must be shown that the responsible party had a duty of care to the victim, that duty of care was breached, the breach resulted in the accident, and the accident is the direct cause of the injury. Proving this requires extensive work and investigation, as well as thorough evidence from the crash.

An injured victim or a family member of a victim who lost their lives as a result of negligence can take legal action, but taking legal action alone is never advised. Having a skilled and experienced attorney on your side

helps you with the necessary resources to move forward in either settlement or trial.

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SABELO

One would expect me to be relieved since there's a possibility that my sister is still alive but I'm not, how can I be relieved when I don't know the condition we might find her in. My mistake was staying up all night last night researching everything about plane crashes and that ended with me looking at images of victims who died from a plane crash in America a few years ago, what I saw birthed this fear and anxiety I now feel.

Some of the victims were found in pieces, there was one picture where investigators found an arm a few feet away from the body, completely dislocated while another picture showed a body part (I couldn't look at it long enough to discern which part of the body it was) hanging on top of the tree. I wish I didn't look at those pictures because now I keep picturing the state we might find my twin sister in, will she be the Sphe we all know and love or will she be someone different?

When I finally fell asleep after spending hours gawking at the computer screen researching my mind decided to play cruel jokes on me, I had several dreams in which we found Sphe

injured but there's one that stood out from all of them- in that dream Sphe was found but the condition we found her in was heart wrenching, she was without all her limbs (no arms or legs). The dream felt so real that I woke up with a heavy heart, feeling like someone was constantly twisting and turning a sharp knife in my heart and tears were rolling down my cheeks, that's how real the dream felt and that's why I've been praying to God asking for it not to be true.

Sphe doesn't deserve that. I can't take seeing my sister, the only biological sibling I have in that condition. I would never survive it, it would kill me more than it would kill her so I pray it doesn't materialize, that it remains

nothing but a terrible nightmare. Since there's a possibility that Sphe might still be alive, most relatives had to go back to their homes only two aunts from my mother's side of the family didn't leave.

Mom wanted Hlelo to spend the night last night but since Hlelo is still young and can't exactly sleepover without her mother because she's breastfeeding and cries her eyes out when she wants her milk. Mom asked Ndalo to sleepover but my girl came up with all sorts of excuses for why she couldn't spend the night in our house, mom bought it but I know I'm the reason she refused and I feel really bad for treating her the way I did.

I'm walking into my bedroom coming from the bathroom when I hear my phone ringing on top of my bed, I run to pick it up and disappointment creeps in like a fog when I see the caller ID. I thought it was Ndalo

“ Hi.”

“ What's up? You don't sound happy to hear from me.”

“ No, it's nothing like that. I just thought it was someone else.”

“ Who?”

“ Kev, come on. I’m sure you didn’t call me to fish for news.”

“ Yeah, you’re right. I wanted to find out how you are.”

He knows about the situation with Sphe, I told him and Cam about it.

“ To be honest with you man, I don’t know. But It feels like a huge part of me is missing.”

“ Makes sense, she’s a part of you. Don’t lose faith, they’ll find her alive and kicking.”

“ I hope so, I really hope so.”

“ You’re in my prayers.”

“ Thanks, I really appreciate all your support.”

“ That’s what friends are for, so do you want to tell me whose call you are impatiently waiting for?”

“ Ndalo’s.”

“ I don’t get it? Shouldn’t she be there supporting you and making sure you’re okay?”

“ I fucked up man, I pushed her away when she tried to be here for me man.”

“ Damn, why would you do that though? I thought you love this chick?”

“ Don’t call her that, she’s much more than that. She’s my first love, the mother of my beautiful daughter and the owner of my heart.”

“ Wow, then why would you treat someone you claim to love that much like that?”

“ I’m scared I’ll hurt her man, I’m not in the right frame of mind. I might say or do things that will hurt her and I can’t have that.”

“ But you’re still hurting her by pushing her away.”

“ I know and I feel terrible.”

“ Call her and apologize, you need her and I know she’s dying to be there for you.”

“ Yes, you’re right I’ll do that. Sharp.”

“ Bye man.”

I receive another call immediately after getting off the phone with Kevin.

“ What?”

“ That’s not how friends take each other’s calls.”

“What do you want Lerato? I’m not in the mood, I’m going through enough as it is.”

“ Woah, there’s no need to bite my head off I only wanted to check up on you.”

“ Well, you can hear that I’m fine so you can drop the call now.”

“ What’s going on with you, why are you being such a jerk? This is so unlike you.”

I blow out a sigh

“ I know and I’m sorry, you didn’t deserve that. I’m just going through a lot right now.”

“ What’s up?”

“ My sister is missing...”

I go on and tell her the entire story

“ Oh my word Sabelo, I’m so sorry.”

“ It’s okay, I’ll be fine.”

“ No you won’t, I’m coming to see you.”

“ what? There’s no need for that”

**“ Don’t even think of trying to change my mind,
you’re going through a difficult phase right now
and you need friends by your side.”**

“ I have support..”

“ I’m not taking no for an answer, just send me the directions to your house I’ll find my way there.”

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NDALO

“ Shouldn’t you be at the Meyiwa’s?”

That’s the first thing mom asks when I walk through the door, I haven’t even taken a seat but she’s already bombarding me with questions.

“ She’s not a Meyiwa bride, she’s just Sabelo’s baby mama and his girl friend so she’s not forced to be there.” Melo

“ Shut up wena, I’m not talking to you. Buhle, I know the Meyiwa’s didn’t pay lobola for you but they are your daughter’s family and they are going through a difficult situation at the moment, Sabelo needs you. I might not like that boy but I know if it was you in his place, he’d be there for you.”

I never thought I’d see the day where my mother speaks for Sabelo

“ That’s true but how do I support someone who doesn’t want my support mama? Sabelo is pushing me away and shutting me out.”

“ Men are not like women, they don’t like discussing their feelings. Just be there for him, even if he doesn’t talk to you it’s fine but be there for him my child. This is not just anyone, he’s not just your boyfriend. He’s the father of your child too.”

“ I was on my way to his house, I just passed here because I wanted us to talk about those invoices.”

“ Go be there for your baby daddy, he needs you. Invoices can wait.”

I know she's right but I've been dreading going to Sabelo's house since I woke up, I want to be there for him and support him through it all but knowing that he's going to push me away makes me dread going there but mom is right. Sabelo needs me, he might not say it out loud and pushes me away when I'm next to him but I know he needs me and I'll be there for him every step of the way.

The plan was to own a car by the time Hlelo was born but unfortunately things didn't go as I planned so I'm doing what I said I'd never do, Using an Uber with my baby but in a few months I'll be able to buy myself a car. I meet

Sabelo at the gate, he was about to drive out but he drives back into the yard when he sees me. He kills the engine and rushes to my side and takes Hlelo from me and like always she starts crying, I don't know why Hlelo does this everytime she sees him.

“ She breaks my heart everytime she does this, she makes me feel like I once abandoned her and now she's hogging on to me because she's scared I'll leave and never come back again.”

He says trying to calm her down

“ It's not like that, I just think she loves you too much that she doesn't know what to do with

herself everytime she sees you so she ends up crying.”

Hlelo is calm now, Sabelo managed to calm her down.

“ I know, I love her too. Maybe she does this because she doesn't see me everyday ”

“ It's possible.”

We find his mother and aunts in the lounge when we walk in, as usual Mrs. Meyiwa is happy to see Hlelo. She tries to take her from Sabelo but Hlelo refuses

**“ Konje unjalo wena maw’bona ubabakho,
uzohamba abuyele skolweni ngizok’thola.”**

**(This is how you behave when your father is
around, he’ll go back to school and I’ll get back
at you for this.)**

We all laugh

**“ And mama Hlelo bengcela ungam’ncengeli
nami mase ngimqhomela ne.”**

**(And please don’t plead on her behalf when I
do the same to her.)**

“ Khululeka mama angeke.”

(Relax ma, I won’t.)

I say laughing because I know she will not be able to do what she says.

“ Yekelani u girl azizwise ngo babakhe asese khona ngoba soon he’ll go back to school.”

(Let the girl enjoy her father while he’s still around)

Says Aunt Mamy in Hlelo’s defense

“ Batshele mamncane, ifelani ingane yami.”

Sabelo

“Aisuka ngizomthola lo” Mrs. Meyiwa

Hlelo introduced me to a Mrs. Meyiwa I never thought exists, one who's happy, charismatic, playful and full of jokes. Now I understand what they mean when they say children bring happiness to a home, Hlelo is proof of that.

Sphe is missing, possibly injured or dead wherever she is. Mrs. Meyiwa is worried about her like any mother would be, but it's like everything is alright again everytime she sees her grandchild. That's why I don't refuse whenever she asks me to bring Hlelo because I've seen the amount of peace my little angel brings her.

I'm in Sabelo's bedroom with him, Hlelo eventually agreed to go to her twin(azingenwa

indaba zabo zingahle zisale nawe) so we left Hlelo in the lounge with her grandmothers. Sabelo wanted to speak to me in private

“ Please take a seat.”

I seat and he sits next to me taking my hands into his

“ I’m sorry for pushing you away, I’m just afraid I’ll end up hurting you...”

His ringtone cuts him short, when he takes the phone I see that ‘Lerato’ is the one that’s calling him.

“ Hello.”

“ Hey Sabelo, I just got off the taxi. The driver dropped me off at the Blue taxi rank, please come and fetch me.”

The volume of his speaker is loud so I can hear everything

“ What? Are you crazy, I told you not to come!”

“ And I told you I’m coming because you need me, so what’s it going to be? Will you come and fetch me or will you let me wander around in a place I don’t know and potentially get mugged or even worse raped?”

Haibo, who's this Lerato girl and what gives her the right to talk to my man like that? And what does she mean Sabelo needs her?

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#76

"I can explain."

Those are the first words out of my mouth when Lerato drops the call.

“Go ahead.”

Ndalo replies with her arms folded to her chest, wearing an unreadable expression on her face.

“Lerato is a friend from varsity.”

“Still doesn’t explain why she’s here or why she spoke to you in that manner.”

“She said she wanted to come and support me when I told her about Sphe, you heard it yourself. I told her not to come, I don’t know why she still came even after I specifically told her not to.”

She looks at me at me for a while before
breaking into an inopportune laugh

“What’s going on? Why are you laughing?”

I ask, taken aback by her reaction.

“I’m laughing because you think I’m a fool, I might be naïve but I’m definitely not stupid. I heard how that girl spoke to you, she spoke with so much entitlement. Like she knows that you’ll do whatever she says regardless of what you say at the time, that’s why she came even after you told her not to. Who’s this girl Sabelo?”

“Babe can I please explain when I come back, it’s getting late, and you know it’s not safe for a female to be wandering alone on the streets at this hour. I promise I will answer all your questions when I come back.”

She chuckles

“You must think I’m crazy, awuyi lapho”

(You’re not going)

“Ndalo come on, don’t be like that. I know it was wrong of her to come even after I told her not to, but she’s here now. I can’t leave her

stranded on the streets, what if something bad happens to her?."

"Ngithe awuyi lapho, if you go know that you and I are done."

(I said you're not going.)

What

"Babe, come on that's not fair."

"What's not fair is for you, my boyfriend to run around like a headless chicken at another girl's command, if you walk out that door usale sew'jola naye loyo Lerato wakho."

“You’re bluffing.”

“I dare you to try me, ngizame Sabelo ubone if I’m bluffing or not.”

“Sthandwa sam she doesn’t know anyone here, it’s almost 8pm.. ..”

“Read my lips, I DON’T CARE. You can go and play her hero if you want, I Buhlebendalo Khumalo will not stop you but know that once you walk out of that door you and I are over.”

With that said, she stands up and walks out of the room.

The look in her eyes when she told me she'd break up with me tells me she wasn't bluffing. I don't know what to do, I've never been so confused in my life. I can't risk my relationship with Ndalo for Lerato, but at the same time it would be cruel of me to leave Lerato stranded at the rank knowing full well that I'm the only person she knows in Embalenhle. I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place!

My phone rings while I'm still thinking of a way to help Lerato without losing my woman, it's Lerato.

“Hi”

“Sabelo how far are you, the rank is getting desolate please hurry up.”

“Sabelo?”

She says when I don't respond

“Lerato”

“Did you hear what I just said?”

“Yeah.”

“So, where are you. Are you almost here?”

“I’m sorry Lerato but I’m not coming.”

“What? No Sabelo you can’t do that to me, I came all the way from Joburg to support you.”

“I told you not to come Lerato, it’s not my fault you chose not to listen.”

“Sabelo please, don’t do this to me. I’m begging you.”

She beseechs in a crying voice

“I’m sorry but I can’t. Bye.”

I say and drop the call not giving her a chance to reply, this is probably the hardest choice I've ever had to make in my life.

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NDALO

All this time I was under the impression that Sabelo was pushing me away because he's hurting over Sphe's disappearance and that's why I took it silently but it turns out there's another girl in the picture. What I will not do is to allow myself to trust a man blindly like I did with Musa, been there done that and I got the t-shirt for it. I'm not putting myself through that again. I'm so angry I'm even shaking, when I

walked out from Sabelo's bedroom I came straight to the kitchen and drank a glass of water hoping it'll calm me down, but it didn't because I'm still very much upset.

“Yini kwenzenjani mama Hlelo.”

(What's going on)

Asks aunt Mercy when she finds me pacing up and down in the kitchen.

“It's nothing mam'ncane.”

“It can't be nothing when you look so upset, is it Sabelo did he do something?”

“No, it’s not him. It’s my sister Melo, she took my money and used it without my permission.”

I lie, I don’t want to involve his family in our affairs.

“I know you’re lying but I won’t force you to talk to me if you don’t want to, but you need to talk to someone before you end up doing something you’ll regret.”

“I will. Is Hlelo sleeping, I didn’t see her in the lounge when I passed the lounge on my way here.”

Maybe I should be with my daughter, who knows maybe seeing her beautiful face and hearing her sweet giggles will calm me down.

“She’s in the master bedroom with her grandfather.”

“Okay thanks aunt.”

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LERATO

“Lady it’s getting late I need to leave, call your boyfriend again and ask him how far he is.”

Says the queue marshal, I asked him to wait with me until Sabelo arrives. I had to lie and tell him I'm waiting for my boyfriend to stop him from making advances at me.

“Okay, let me call him.”

He nods and shifts to give me privacy. I can tell that he's running out of patience but I'm hoping that he'll be patient until Sabelo gets here.

“Hi”

“Sabelo how far are you, the rank is getting desolate please hurry up.”

“Sabelo?”

I say when he doesn't answer

“Lerato”

“Did you hear what I just said?”

“Yeah.”

“So, where are you. Are you almost here?”

“I'm sorry Lerato but I'm not coming.”

What? He can't do this to me, I came here to support him.

“What? No Sabelo you can't do that to me, I came all the way from Joburg to support you.”

“I told you not to come Lerato, it's not my fault you chose not to listen.”

Ouch!

“Sabelo please, don't do this to me. I'm begging you.”

I say pleadingly, at a brink of tears.

“I’m sorry but I can’t. Bye.”

I hear a beep after his statement and I just knew that the bastard dropped the call on me, what am I going to do? Where will I go, I can’t go back to Joburg. The last taxi to Joburg left about 15 minutes ago and I also can’t afford to Uber back to Joburg it’ll be too expensive for me, not that I’d afford it even if it was cheap. I don’t have any money on me, I used my last money to come here.

“What did he say?” asks the marshal impatiently looking at the watch on his wrist.

“He’s not coming, bastard just dumped me and blocked my number.”

I say and break down afterwards, this whole thing feels surreal.

He looks at me with eyes full of pity

“I’m sorry he did that to you; I wish there was a way for me to help but there isn’t. Isn’t there anyone you can call to come and pick you up?”

I shake my head no

“Eish, I would take you with me to my house, but my wife might not appreciate that. I’m

sorry but I really need to leave, I have waited long enough.”

“It’s okay you can leave, I’ll be fine.

He runs off and crosses the road to the other side, I watch him until his figure disappears into the darkness. This is it, I’m all alone in a place I’m visiting for the first time. What was I thinking, I shouldn’t have come here. I sit down on the pavement, pull my knees to my chest, and bury my face between my knees and pray no harm comes my way. The rank is not completely empty, there are still few people walking up and down which is why I wasn’t alarmed when I felt a heavy presence behind me, well that was until the man spoke.

**“You must be Lerato.” he says in a deep
baritone voice**

**Fear paralyzes me on the spot, his menacing
aura holding me in tight grip.**

**“There’s no need to be afraid, I was sent by
Sabelo ”**

**Relief washes over me ,I knew Sabelo wouldn’t
be so cruel to leave me out in the cold. I knew
he had feelings for me the day he drove me to
my place at night, it's only a matter of time
before he professes his love for me.**

I stand up instantly and turn around to face the man. He's light skinned and tall, if someone asked me to guess his age, I'd say he is in early forties or late thirties. He looks like someone who frequents the gym judging from how sexy his body looks. I didn't know chiskop (baldhead) could look this good on a man until I met him. He's very charming especially with that trimmed goatee that has a few strands of grey, I see beauty runs in the Meyiwa family.

“I'm Ntsika, Sabelo's uncle. Come with me.”

What did I just say? He loves me, why else would he tell his uncle about me.

He says with that deep voice of his before he leads the way to a double cab bakkie parked a few feet away from the rank. I might be mistaken but he looks annoyed.

“That seat is reserved for my woman, get in the back.”

He says in a deadpan tone when I attempt to sit in the passenger seat. I go the backseat with my face buried to the ground feeling very embarrassed.

“Umtheth’ wakho ukuphapha yinto zakho ne?”
(Being forward is your thing.)”

He's looking at me in the rear-view mirror wearing a scowl on his face seemingly irritated by me.

"I don't understand." I say sheepishly

"Why are you here? What did you think would happen, where did you think you'd sleep? Did you foolishly think you'd sleep in Sabelo's house? Well, you thought wrong Sabelo has a girlfriend, stop acting so desperate."

"I know about her, he told me. Him and I are only friends."

"Manje mawazi ufunani la?"

(What do you want here since you know)

“I only came to support him during this difficult time in his life.” I utter with a low voice unable to meet his intense gaze

“There must be a loose screw in that head of yours. Stop throwing yourself to a man that doesn’t want you, it’s repulsing nxn!”

To say I feel ashamed would be an understatement, I wish I had a magic wand and wish all of this away.

“Get out!”

That’s when I realize that the car as come to a halt, I step out of the car with my bag clutched under my arm and follow Sabelo’s uncle inside of what looks like a lodge. He talks to the receptionists for about a minute or so before she gives him a set of keys.

“These are keys to your room. I only paid for tonight, I want you in a taxi back to Johannesburg first thing tomorrow morning angithi siyezwana?”

(Are we clear)

The acuteness of his tone tells me I will not like what he will do to me if I don't do like he says, so I nod vigorously.

“Good girl.”

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SABELO

Ndalo hasn't come back since she left the room, but I know she didn't leave because I keep hearing Hlelo's giggles somewhere in the house. I know she would never leave her behind, not even if she wanted to. My daughter is not a fan of tinned milk, she loves her breast

milk so until Hlelo stops breastfeeding the two of them will remain a package. Ndalo threatened to dump me if I leave the house, so I had to call my uncle and beg him to fetch Lerato from the rank.

My door flies open before an angry looking uncle Ntsika walks inside.

“What do you see when you look at me?”

He looks like he’s ready to kill me

“I see my uncle.”

I reply, hoping that my response will not infuriate him further. He has a quick hand, one wrong move I might earn myself a beat down from him.

“That’s right, I’m your uncle not your friend. Ungijwayezwa wubani? I had to leave my woman and run to take care of the mess you created!”

“I’m sorry it will not happen again.”

“Damn right it won’t! I thought you were a man but it’s obvious you’re still nothing but a boy, where have you seen a man and a woman being friends? Didn’t the Xoliswa thing teach you anything, keep befriending these

promiscuous girls you'll lose uMaka Hlelo I'm telling you."

He says and walks to the door but stops on his tracks as if he remembered something

" Oh, another thing Ndalo is a very beautiful woman. She's kind, humble and very loving. Just because you're stupid and you don't see her worth don't think everyone else is as stupid as you are, keep doing what you're doing and watch another man snatch her from right under your nose and immediately marry her. You have a gem in your hands but you don't know how to treasure and take care of it because you're still a foolish stupid boy."

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#77

“And then wena? You’ve been wearing a disgruntled look on your face since you had the “talk” with Sabelo, what did he do?” questions Mrs. Meyiwa

Despite believing that being with my daughter would calm me down right now, I chose not to interrupt the bonding session with her

grandfather and joined the ladies in the lounge instead.

“I thought the same thing when I found her pacing in the kitchen, but then she told me she’s angry because her sister used her money without asking for permission when I tried to ask what’s bothering her”

Aunt Mercy remarks, darting her eyes between her sisters.

“She must think we were born yesterday, Ndalo bua Sabelo o entseng?”

(Talk, what did Sabelo do)

Asks Aunt Mamy changing from her slouching posture and sitting upright on the couch.

Now all three women are glaring at me expectantly, hawing for an explanation and I'm not sure telling them about this would be the right thing to do.

“Is he cheating on you, you can tell me my child.” Mrs Meyiwa

“I'll tell you what happened.”

Says uncle Ntsika pacing into the lounge coming from Sabelo's bedroom

**“You know what happened? Ok go ahead.” Mrs
Meyiwa**

**Everyone’s ears are peeled waiting to hear
what uncle has to say, including mine.**

**“That stupid boy went and befriended a girl by
the name of Lerato, and this Lerato character
travelled all the way from Joburg to “Support”
him the moment she found out about Sphe.”**

“Eng?” Aunt Mercy

(What)

**“So ngwanana teng ona nahana hore otlo
robala kae?” Aunt Mamy**

(Where did she think she would sleep)

“Exactly what I asked her when I picked her up from the taxi rank, where did she think she would sleep? What infuriates me is that I had to drop my plans with Zenkosi and run around fixing the mess that boy created, ngingam’shayanga namhlanje uSabelo ngeke ngiphinde ungidinile lomfana” says an outraged uncle Ntsika

(I’ll never beat him up, if I didn’t do it today. That boy annoyed me.)

Mrs. Meyiwa claps her hand with her mouth agape seemingly lost for words. So, uncle Ntsika is the one who went to pick up this Lerato girl from the rank, wow!

“Don’t tell me you took to that tikiline to your house!”

Remarks aunt Mamy.

“Of course not, I took her to Muzi lodge. Honestly speaking I didn’t have any other choice, taxis heading to Joburg are not available currently and apparently, this girl doesn’t have family or friends from around here”

“Manje wena ungenaphi lapho? Yena bekayaphi, yo namanje athi dankie athole wena

**mina bengeke ngimyise kwalapho kuleyo lodge
bekazabona ulalaphi.” Aunt Mercy**

**(So, how’s that your problem? Where was she
going, she should thank her ancestors that it’s
you she dealt with because I wasn’t going to
take her to the lodge had it been me. She
would’ve made a plan on where to sleep.)**

**“I wish she came here, yerr bengizom’shaya
goet ujwayelana kabi akazi ukuthi uSabelo
unomuntu no mtwana?”**

**(I was going to beat her up, she’s disrespectful.
Doesn’t she know that Sabelo has a girlfriend
and a child?)**

**Spits Mrs. Meyiwa, finally recovering from her
consternation.**

“I was going to help you beat her up, I’m sure she knew about Ndalo. Basile hampe banana ba, barata hampe hokena dipakeng tsa batho ba babedi baratanang!” Aunt Mamy

(These girls are like that, they like getting between two people who love each other.)

“I agree with Mamy, iyaphapha leya ntombazane ngabe niyibonile sey’funa ukuhlala nami ngaphambili”

(That girl is too forward, you should’ve seen her trying to sit in front with me.)

Uncle says looking appalled causing the three sisters to break into a fit of laughter.

**“Unamanga! Yo ngaze ngafisa ukumbona” Aunt
Mamy**

(You’re lying. Now I wish to see her.)

**“Ithi dankie ungam’bonanga, iyaphapha
leyangane too much ai into zok’dlana. Sabelo
must play far from her.”**

**(Be grateful that you didn’t see her, that girl is
too forward.)**

**“Askies Buhle, usile u Sabelo I’ll tell his father
to talk to him about this.” Mrs Meyiwa**

(I’m sorry Buhle)

This is exactly what I didn't want, his parents getting involved in our business and reprimanding him. Sabelo is old enough to differentiate between what's wrong and what's right there's no need for anyone to "talk" to him for him to do what's right. The reason I fell in love with him was because he handled himself like a mature man and not a boy, but his recent behavior proves otherwise. I didn't sign up for this!

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SABELO

"Oh, another thing Ndalo is a very beautiful woman. She's kind, humble and very loving.

Just because you're stupid and you don't see her worth don't think everyone is as stupid as you are, keep doing what you're doing and watch another man snatch her from right under your nose and immediately marry her. You have a gem in your hands, but you don't know how to treasure and take care of it because you're still a foolish boy."

It's been a little over an hour since my uncle left my room but still, I can't seem to get what he said out of my mind, I now realize that it was wrong for me to befriend Lerato especially after she confessed to having feelings for me but am I such a bad boyfriend to Ndalo that my uncle would feel the need to say those things to me? I'm not perfect but I think I've been a good

boyfriend, who was he referring to when he said “Not everyone is as stupid as you are, keep doing what you’re doing and watch another man snatch her from right under your nose and immediately marry her” I don’t know but something about the way he said those words made me feel like he was speaking about himself or someone he knew but that can’t be right. He’s in love with nurse Z and he knows how much I love Ndalo, he wouldn’t do that to me, right?

The door opens and Ndalo walks in while I’m still bundled up in confusion trying to make sense of what my uncle said.

I look at her face and I see that she's still upset, the expression on her face gave her away.

“Ndalo, Sthandwa sam can we please talk.”

She pivots to look at me

“Please.”

I plead

She huffs and dumps her body on the bed, I guess this means we can talk. I lower myself next to her and attempt to take her hands into mine, but she retracts them from my grasp and folds her arms to her bosom.

“First of all, I want to apologize for upsetting you it wasn’t my intention...”

“What was your intention huh?”

She interjects not letting me finish what I wanted to say.

“I know you’re upset, and I understand why but please let me speak, give me a chance to explain then you can shout and say whatever you want afterwards okay?”

She nods her head in agreement

“Like I was saying, it wasn’t my intention to hurt you, but I admit it was wrong for me to befriend Lerato especially after she confessed to having feelings for me. But I made it clear to her that I’m in love with you and that I’m committed to you, she then promised to respect our relationship and not try anything funny, and I trusted her which was foolish of me and for that I apologize, it will never happen again.”

“I hear you, but I still don’t understand how she ended up coming here, did you tell her that you needed her because that’s what she said when you two spoke on the phone earlier.”

“To be honest with you, I don’t know why she thought it would be a good idea for her to come

here but I told her not to come and I never told her nor imply that I needed her.”

“Hmm, but from what I heard from your conversation you’re not assertive with her that why she came even after you told her not to come. Why is it that, why didn’t you set any boundaries with her?”

“To be honest, Lerato and I haven’t been friends for long. We forged our friendship a day or two before the whole Sphe thing.”

“Really? And she’s already so comfortable with you?”

She asks looking at me with doubt in her eyes

“I swear that’s the truth, you can go through my phone if you don’t believe me. You’ll see that we just started chatting recently on WhatsApp.”

I say giving her my phone. She looks at it for a while but doesn’t take it.

“No, I don’t want to be that girl. I won’t play the insecure girlfriend; this is not an Indian series. I want to be able to trust your word without going through your phone for proof.”

“And do you trust what I’m telling you?”

I ask looking into her eyes, desperate for her to believe me.

“Yes, I trust you, but you really need to stop befriending girls especially ones who are attracted to you. I’m sure you wouldn’t like it if I did the same.”

“You’re right, I’m sorry it’ll never happen again.”

“It better not.”

“Can I get a kiss now?”

A smile embraces her lips before she looks down blushing. I lean in for a kiss but a knock on the door disturbs us just when our lips nuzzle, talk about bad timing! I huff in frustration and tell whoever is on the other side of the door to come in, the door creaks open before my dad walks in cradling a sleeping Hlelo in his arms.

“Sorry to disturb but my princess is sleeping.”

He says looking at Hlelo adoringly. My daughter is very loved shem, she has grandparents and parents who love her so much and would do anything to see her happy.

Ndalo is already on her feet, walking up and down the room preparing the bed for Hlelo. She only has one crib so sleeps in between us when they sleepover. Ndalo gently takes her from my father's arms when she's done preparing and climbs the bed on her knees and gently lays her on the bed and fixes the covers to cover her, all this while my father and I are looking at her. I still can't believe that this little human is mine

“Let me excuse you two. MaKhumalo, I know I've never told you this before but thank you for this precious beautiful girl. You have no idea what she means to my wife and I.”

Ndalo only smiles in response.

“Goodnight kids.”

“Goodnight dad.”

I look at Ndalo and get heart palpitations when I think about what my uncle said, I would die if I lost her. I’d have to die before I watch her with another man.

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LERATO

I've gone through every contact well most contacts on my phone asking for help and no one is ready to help, everyone is coming with one excuse or the other and that left me with no choice but to contact the only person I've been avoiding to call Sabelo! I didn't have airtime; I only have WhatsApp data and I tried sending him a text on WhatsApp, but it didn't go through and that's when I realized that bastard didn't waste time, he blocked my number. I should've known it when I didn't see his profile picture and last seen but stupid me didn't want to believe that he could do something like that to me well that was until I tried to send him a text and only got one tick. Now I had to borrow R5 airtime just so I can call him, I'm calling using private number and pinching my ass hoping and praying that he

doesn't cut the call the moment he hears my voice.

"Sabelo's phone hello."

Says a feminine voice which I conclude belongs to his girlfriend.

"Hi, can I please speak to Sabelo."

"He's in the bathroom at the moment, you can leave a message or call again after 30 minutes or so."

Judging from how politely she's talking to me, she's a nice person like her boyfriend. Here goes nothing

“Uhm, it's fine I'll talk to you instead.”

“Me? Haibo, we don't even know each other.”

“I know but please help me out I'm really desperate. I need your help.”

I ask in the sincerest way I can master

“What?”

She sounds shocked

“Forgive me for being rude, it’s Lerato. I need money to go back to Joburg, please help me I’m desperate I don’t know anyone around here please, please”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#78

“Forgive me for being rude, It’s Lerato. I need money to go back to Joburg, please help me

I'm desperate I don't know anyone around here please, please."

"Hello?"

She still doesn't reply so I remove the phone from my ear and check my screen, guess what? The b*tch hung up while I was still talking to her, how rude! What am I going to do now, how will I go back to Johannesburg? OMG what was I even thinking coming here without the return money? My time is up in this Lodge I need to check out plus Sabelo's yummy uncle threatened me, so I can't afford to spend another night in Mpumalanga I need to go back to Joburg as in yesterday. I don't want to know what he'll do to me when he finds me here

I sigh in relief when I see that I still have R2 left from the airtime I borrowed from Cell C, at least with that I can call my mother and ask her for money.

“Lerato ngwanaka.”

(My child.)

That’s what she says when she picks up my call, inarguably happy to hear from me. The gladness I pick up from her tone has me feeling warm and fuzzy inside.

“Ee mme lekae?”

(How are you mom)

“Ke teng ke ka utlwa wena ausi”

(I’m well and you.)

“Lenna ke teng, mme neke hloka thuso yahao.”

(I’m good too. Mom I need your help.)

I mutter under my breath and bite my bottom lip, awaiting her response.

“Keng? Oso batla tjhelete hape, Lerato keo file 500 beke tse pedi tse fitileng.”

(What? You want money again, Lerato I gave you 500 two weeks ago)

“Eya mme kea tseba empa ke hloka tjhelete ka potlako, honale ntho tsa skolo tse ke tshwanetseng hodi reka.”

(Yes, I know but I need the money urgently. There are things that I need to buy for school.)

“Wasokodisa Lerato man, obatla bokae?”

(You’re a handful, how much do you want)

“R300”

“Tjhelete ekana hara kgwedi!”

(So much money mid-month!)

She exclaims in shock, yeah R300 is a lot of money to my mother.

“Mme please, I really need the money. If I don’t buy what they want I’ll fail the module and it’s my major, I can’t afford to fail it. I’ll lose my funding if I fail.”

There’s silence for a while, knowing my mother she’s still contemplating whether to give me the money or not.

“Okay, ketla rumela Thabiso Shoprite.”

(I’ll send)

She says after a few seconds of silence

If I'm not jumping up and down screaming my lungs out now expressing my jubilation it's because my mom is still on the line.

“Kea leboha mme waka.”

(Thank you mom)

I could kiss her feet right now; how I hate lying to my mother, but it had to be done there was no other way.

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SABELO

It's been over five days since the plane crashed but there's still no news on Sphe, I hope she's still alive wherever she is, and I pray that the investigators find her soon. My father said that I should go back to school and try to catch up on all the work I missed, I know he's right, but I doubt I'll be able to concentrate at work and at school while my sister is still missing possibly injured or dead wherever she is.

I walk into the bedroom coming from the bathroom and I find Ndalo sitting cross legged on the bed with my phone in her hands gawking at the screen.

“Sthandwa sam, what’s wrong?”

She jerks up with her right hand set on her chest, conceivably startled by the sound of my voice.

“Ndalo what’s going on, you don’t look well.”

I ask standing in front of her with my hands on her shoulders

“Your phone rang while you were in the bathroom and I answered the call, it was Lerato.”

“What, that can’t be. I blocked her numbers yesterday.”

Or maybe she called using a different number?

“Yeah, I know, she called using private. She asked to speak to you at first but ended up talking to me when I told her that you’re in the bathroom, can you believe that girl asked for money from me?”

What

“What?”

“Yes she did, she said she doesn’t have money to go back to Joburg. She sounded desperate so I don’t think she was lying when she said that kanti Sabelo who exactly did you bring into our lives? That girl doesn’t sound normal, the things she does are not normal at all.”

I think so too, there must be a loose screw in that girl’s head

“Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sam, I never meant for any of this to happen.”

(I’m sorry)

“How did you even meet her?”

“She came with Moeketsi, Max and two other girls to my room then the guys went out to buy more booze leaving the girls with me, but I wasn’t with them in kitchen I was in my room. Lerato came to my room and and asked me to drive her back to res because apparently Max and Moeketsi wanted to sleep with her and the two other girls after buying booze for them in the club they were in, I wanted to call an Uber for her, but she refused and claimed that it wasn’t safe to use Uber at that hour, it was late almost midnight so I drove her back to her res.”

“Wow, then you wonder why she’s so entitled? You didn’t set any boundaries from the start, why would you put your life at risk to help a girl you’ve just met?”

“I know it looks bad, but I promise I only wanted to help.”

“But clearly that’s not how she took it.”

“I’m sorry sthandwa sam, I promise I’ll set things straight when I go back to Joburg.”

“You better, I won’t stand for this.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Keep bringing these girls into our lives and you’ll see what I mean.”

“Once again, I’m sorry Ndalo.”

**“Hmm, I’m going back to my apartment today
will you drive me there or should I call an
uber?”**

Yoh ai no, kubi.

**“I will take you there, give me five minutes to
lotion and get dressed.”**

“Ok, I’ll get Hlelo ready so long.”

I'm approaching the front door, having come back from driving Ndalo to her apartment. I hate how awkward things are between us, she's acting different since yesterday I tried to talk to her about it but she said she has forgiven me with regards to the whole Lerato issue, but I know she's lying because things are tense between us even more so after Lerato's recent phone call.

I really need to have a word with Lerato when I go back to school and set things straight, I really cannot afford to lose my girlfriend because of her. I should've listened to Cam and Kev when they warned me about her then none of this would be happening right now.

“I’ve been waiting for you Meyiwa, come and join me.” Says my father

He’s sitting under the veranda reading a newspaper. I walk to the veranda, pull a chair next to him and take a seat.

“Your mother told me about what happened yesterday.”

He says folding the newspaper and putting it on top of the table

“What happened yesterday?”

I have no idea what he’s talking about

“Yes, she told me everything about your female friend. The one who came all the way from Joburg to “support” you, what was that all about Meyiwa. Are you cheating on maKhumalo?”

His tone is soft but the expression on his face tells me that he’s disappointed angry even.

“No, I’m not cheating on Ndalo babami. I love her and I’d never intentionally hurt her, Lerato is only a friend of mine. Well, that’s what I thought until the stunt she pulled yesterday.”

“Have you ever heard me saying I have a female friend?”

“No.”

“I’m not saying people of the opposite gender can’t be friends, but Sabelo you ought to remember what happened the last time you befriended a girl, two boys lost their lives and you ended up as the primary suspect in Xolane’s murder. I don’t know if you’re kind or you’re just plain stupid but I don’t understand how you reason, how did you end up befriending that girl anyway?”

“She came to my room with my roommate ...”

I narrate everything that happened

“And you still thought it was wise to befriend her even after she suggested that the two of you should be fuck buddies?”

“I know it was naïve of me to believe her, but I’ve learnt from my mistakes now.”

“I’ve been married to your mother for more than 20 years and I’ve never cheated on her not even once do you think I never got tempted or that I didn’t meet attractive women? I was tempted, numerous times even and I’ve met many beautiful and interesting women whilst

married to your mother. According to you, how do you think I managed to remain faithful to your mother throughout all these years?"

"I think you managed to be faithful to her because you love her."

"That's true but there are so many men out there who are in love with their wives or girlfriends, but they still cheat on them, truth is love alone is not enough. That burning desire, that passion you feel for the first few days, first months or the first years after falling in love with someone eventually fades away and I believe that's when true love begins. When you start getting used to the person, and you start seeing all the bad things about them, things you

didn't see when the relationship was still new, it's worse when you live with them because you start seeing all their bad habits and mannerism so tell me how do you keeping loving and being faithful even after all of that?"

"I don't know."

His lips break into a thin smile

"That's when commitment, devotion and loyalty to your partner and your relationship comes to play. It's not good enough to just be in love with someone but you need to be committed, devoted and loyal to them for your relationship to survive the test of time. Praying

for your relationship is also of paramount importance. ”

“Do you even know how to pray babami?”

I ask, amused. I’ve never thought of my father as someone who prays.

“Haibo Sabelo ung’thatha kanjani? Your mother and I pray for our marriage, our children and all our family members every night before we sleep. There’s so many things that happened in our marriage that I know we wouldn’t have survived if we weren’t a praying couple, okay maybe your mother prays more than I do but I do pray my son.”

Wow

“I hope you’ve heard what I said my son, relationships aren’t always rosy. You’ll come across many challenges and difficulties, you’ll meet many beautiful and amazing women as you walk this journey called life and some of them will make an impression and leave a mark, but if Ndalo is the one you want to spend the rest of your life with then you’ll remain loyal, devoted and committed to her.”

“Thank you so much dad, I needed to hear this.”

“No problem my son, stop befriending women if you want your relationship with maKhumalo to survive.”

“I won’t, I have learnt from my mistakes.”

“I hope so.”

“Dad can I ask a question?”

“Okay, ask.”

“There’s something uncle Ntsika said to me yesterday and it hasn’t left my mind since, the way he said it made me feel like he was

speaking about himself the more I think about it. Do you think he has feelings for Ndalo?”

“What did he say?”

“Something about Ndalo being a gem and someone snatching her from right under my nose and marrying her immediately if I keep treating her the way I do.”

“What? That’s absurd, your uncle has a girlfriend and Ndalo is young enough to be his daughter. He would never do something like that, so you need get rid of those thoughts. There’s nothing like that, I agree that your uncle loves Ndalo but it’s only as a daughter and the mother of his grandchild nothing more.

He only said what he said because he was angry, I would've probably said the same thing. What you did was wrong and very disrespectful to maKhumalo, we will never stand by and watch you disrespect her. We are not the type of parents who watch their children do wrong and keep quiet, your uncle was speaking as your parent who loves and wants the best for you my son nothing more”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#79

The bakkie just drove inside the yard, Ntsika steps out and rounds the car to open the passenger door for Zenkosi, with one hand holding her purse and the other entwined with hers the two approach the front door talking under their breaths. Whatever they're talking about is surely silly because Zenkosi has been giggling and her cheeks have turned crimson from all the blushing she's been doing. All this while Brandon, who's sitting under the veranda is leering at them reading their body language and facial expressions. They both look happy together, for the first time in years his brother is in love and is genuinely smiling again.

“I'm here zalo.”

Brandon says when the couple walks past him, completely unaware of his presence. That's how engrossed they are on each other.

“Oh, we didn't see you there, good afternoon buti.”

Greets Zenkosi with a shy smile pasted on her face.

“Sawubona koti kunjani?”

(Greetings, how are you)

He says returning the smile

“I’m okay thanks and you?”

“I’m okay koti, Mathapelo is in the kitchen with my sisters in law.”

“Okay, thanks I’ll go inside and join them.”

She says taking her purse from her boyfriend and attempts to walk towards the house, but Ntsika grabs her hand, halting her from her step and snakes his arm around her waist pulling her towards his body, he then leans in and starts tenderly sucking on her lips. Zenkosi is a blushing mess when they break the kiss, she scurries off to the house feeling shy avoiding

looking at Brandon's direction. Why did Ntsika do that, kiss her in front of his big brother that is. Damn this man is naughty but funny enough she likes it, she enjoys the spontaneity that comes with being in a relationship with him. It makes the relationship more fun and youthful; she feels like a teenager in love and the feeling is one she gets the kick out of.

“Zalo”

Says Ntsika pulling a chair and sitting next to his brother

“What was that for?”

He ekes out cradling his jaw where a hard punch from his big brother just landed. Instead of replying Brandon lands another one on his stomach that leaves him gasping for air with his head dropped to the floor.

“Ntsika, I had a lengthy conversation with Sabelo a day before he went back to school, and he said something that caught my attention.”

He mutters with his forefinger under Ntsika’s chin jerking his face up so he can look at him dead in the eye, the younger man fidgets and swallows nothingness but doesn’t say anything.

“Is there something you wish to tell me zalo?”

“No, there’s nothing I wish to say.”

He mutters under his breath

“Ntsika you have Zenkosi, a beautiful woman who loves you and loves your children like her own. She came into your lives and brought back happiness that you all lacked for years, so tell me why do you want to ruin that?”

“I love Zenkosi, she’s a remarkable woman and I’m lucky to have found someone like her but for some reason I can’t seem to get over Ndalo zalo. I swear I don’t want to feel this way but my heart swells with joy every time I see her.”

He shamefully admits

Brandon sighs heavily, he doesn't know what to say. He could've sworn Ntsika was over Ndalo, judging from how happy he looks when he's around Zenkosi.

“Zalo you need to get over whatever it is you feel for Ndalo, she's my son's girlfriend and he loves her. Stop whatever this is before you lose both Zenkosi and Sabelo because of this, he's not foolish whatever you said to him when you reprimanded him the other day raised a suspicion. I managed to convince him that it was innocent, but I know my son, he'll be watching your every move from now on so you

better act right I don't want my son to hate me when he finds out that I knew and didn't say anything about it."

Ntsika nods his head looking down unable to hold his brother's piercing gaze.

"Stop this nonsense Ntsika before I make you to."

INSIDE THE HOUSE

"Good afternoon, dumelang ,sanibonani avuxeni, thobela ai anghazi."

Zenkosi says when she walks into the kitchen and starts giving all the ladies kisses on their cheeks.

“ Someone is in a good mood.”

Mathapelo says, she was the last one to receive a kiss so Zenkosi and her are standing side by side.

“ Yeah I’m happy my friend.”

Zenkosi says wearing a wild smile on her face.

“ Nna Zenkosi ake mobatle hampe onkile Ntiska waka ke mfumbezi waka.” Jokes Mamy

(I don't like Zenkosi, she took my Ntsika. She's my rival.)

She's standing behind the stove stirring the pot of stew with a wooden spoon.

They all laugh

“ Ai yeka umkgobolo Mamy ushadile.” Zenkosi
(Stop being greedy Mamy, you're married.)

“ Okay ngizok'yeka ngoba umphethe kahle,
ngyambona ujabulile.” Mamy

(Okay I'll let you be because I can see you're treating him well, he's happy)

“ I agree, she makes him happy. Now all he needs to do is marry you, you can’t keep playing wife on girlfriend terms ha nyale.”

Mercy

(let him marry you)

“True.”

Mathapelo and Mamy say at the same time, agreeing with Mercy.

“ Don’t you guys think it’s too soon for marriage? I mean we haven’t dated each other for long.” Zenkosi

“ Aibo wena, you’ve been together for almost a year and you’re practically his wife now so let him marry you. He can’t keep chowing you ka skoloto, he must pay lobola and marry you.”

Mamy

(On credit)

“ I agree with Mamy my friend, it’s about time Ntsika does the right thing. You can’t keep playing the role of his wife on girlfriend terms, let him marry you.” Mathapelo

“ But I can’t force him to marry me, I want it to be something he wants. I don’t want him to marry me because I told him to, I want him to do it because he sees me as the woman he wants to spend the rest of his life with.”

“ Men need a little push sometimes, you are not getting any younger ntombi. You can't keep playing girlfriend, the man better get his priorities straight and make his intentions clear.” Mamy

“ She's telling you the truth my friend, the both of you are so old to be girlfriend and boyfriend for this long. Ntsika must marry you, I mean what's he waiting for? You're a gem, he must put a ring on it already!.” Mathapelo

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SABELO

It's been two days since I came back to Joburg and I haven't seen Lerato or bump into her on campus, with Kev and Cam's help I was able to catch up on all the work I missed out on. It's not easy to concentrate and focus during lectures but I had to force myself because I can't afford to fail, I know how much Sphe values education she wouldn't want me to fail so the best thing I can do is to study hard and pass so that my sister can be proud of me when she's found and brought back home.

I'm with my friends at the student center having lunch, we still have an hour before our last lecture for the day starts.

“So, there’s still no news on your sister?”

“No, it’s weird man. I mean all the passengers who took the flight have been found except for her.”

“Sorry, just keep on praying for her. I’m confident they’ll eventually find her.” Kev

“Yeah, me too. You would’ve felt something if she died, so relax she’s still alive man.” Cam

“Yeah, y’all won’t believe what that Lerato did.”

I say changing the topic, talking about Sphe always leave me feeling sad and my spirit low so I'd rather not.

“What?”

Asks Kevin sitting upright and placing his elbows on top of the table

“She came to my hometown when I told her about Sphe’s situation, according to her I “Needed” her so she came to “Support” me.”

They look at each other and immediately start laughing

“I warned about you that girl man, she was just too comfortable around you way too comfortable for my liking I knew she was trouble.” Cam

“I want to give her a piece of my mind, I almost lost my girlfriend because of her.”

“We told you, I hope you have learnt from your mistakes.” Kev

“I have, trust me on that one.”

I say remembering what my uncle said.

“That’s good then, I would hate to see you lose your girlfriend because of someone like that girl. She’s not someone who you can build something solid with, she’s too forward.”

Cam says with a wrinkled nose, this one detests forward girls.

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NDALO

“So what flavor should mom take?”

I'm looking at Hlelo who's sitting inside her pram smiling at me.

"Come on Hlelo, help mommy choose."

She giggles showing off her toothless smile, damn my baby be so adorbs

"OMG such a beautiful baby, ku social media bathi abantwana babi aku step-father(deki) but for this one I would gladly be the step father"

Says a hoarse voice behind me. I turn around and my eyes land on a tall, dark man who's looking down at me with a big smile on his face showing off his extra teeth.

“Hi I’m Neo.”

He has his hand out, stretched for a handshake.

“Hi.”

I say pivoting back to the shelf without shaking his hand.

“And you are?”

He’s now standing in front of me. He came to the front when I gave him my back.

“I’m Ndalo, can you please shift I’d like to continue shopping.”

“Oh sorry, I can push the trolley for you if you don’t mind.”

“No, I’ll manage thanks.”

“Stop being stubborn, you can’t push the pram and the trolley at the same time you’re not superwoman. Allow me to lessen the burden and help you.”

His hands are already on the trolley. He doesn’t look like the type who takes no for an answer

so I let him push the trolley, I could use his help honestly.

“Cute baby by the way.”

“Thanks.”

“So where do you stay?”

“Emba.”

“What, quit joking. I’d know you if you were from Emba, there’s no way I wouldn’t know a beautiful lady like yourself.”

“Buti weeh, I’m taken so stop wasting your time with all these compliments.”

Without a warning he grabs my left hand and pulls it to his face

“What are you doing?”

“Looking for the wedding band, you said you were taken so I’m surprised there’s no ring.”

“I might not be married but I’m in a relationship so still I’m taken.”

I say snatching my hand back. He looks at me and starts laughing

“in that case you should say you’re seeing someone, not taken. A person is only taken when he/she is married, before then you are still very much available my dear. Tell your man to get ready because I won’t rest until I make you mine, I’m coming in guns blazing.”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#80

We spent days distressed, feeling miserable and uncertain of the condition we will find my sister in, with chances of finding her alive getting slimmer which each day that passed. It was hard to get through those days not knowing where she is, we appeared to be handling her disappearance well, but deep down we were all broken I mean how could we be okay when one of us was missing? My mother lost so much weight in a matter of days, but thankfully the Lord saw the sadness we carry in our hearts and answered our prayers, my twin sister was found and like I had hoped, she was found alive.

The investigators suspect that her body was tossed out of the flight as the plane was

disintegrating into three parts, she was found injured and unconscious. Her body was inclining by a tree a couple miles away from where the plane crashed with the ground, in Paarl. She was found by a group of men who were on a hiking trip, they immediately rushed her to the hospital upon realizing that she was still alive. Since no one knew who she was, she received medical treatment as an unknown patient and the location she was found in was then used as her address.

Since no one came looking for her, the hospital had to get the department of home affairs involved in her case. Her fingerprints were taken to identify her and that's how we found her and instantly had her transferred to

Evander hospital. I was so happy when I received the news from my father, but my happiness was short-lived, I couldn't help but break down and weep like a baby when I saw her lying in that hospital bed with all those tubes and machines connected to her. She's not missing any of her limbs like I had fretted but her face is badly wounded we could barely recognize her when we first saw her, the bruises covering her body are just the tip of the iceberg compared to the damage the crash caused internally. She broke a few bones, sustained a spinal cord and brain injury. She hasn't regained consciousness and the doctors are not sure if she'll ever wake up and if she does, they say there are high chances that she won't be the same person we all knew and loved.

I'm in the middle of my final exams and I just can't wait to finish and go back home so I can be able to visit my sister as often as I can, I don't know what I would have done if I didn't have my friends and girlfriend's support. Ndalo has been my crutch throughout this whole process, praying for and with me and making sure that I'm okay. If I loved her before then I'm madly in love with her now, she's an amazing woman and I intend to wife her one day.

“Here comes that forward chick.”

Cam says looking behind me and I turn my head only to see Lerato approaching our table.

I sigh and stand up from my chair and walk towards her meeting her halfway.

“Hey Sabelo.”

I grab her forearm and pull her outside to the lawn

“Geez dude, what was that about?”

She asks when I let go off her, because she’s light skinned she is left red and bruised where I held her.

“I don’t appreciate the nonsense you did, what was that all about? Did you really have to come to my hometown?”

“I’m sorry I only wanted to support you like a friend.”

“Uyihlanya yini wena, support me yani, ngangithe ngidinga I support yakho mina? Buka la Lerato uke uphinde wenze lento owayenza uyong’thola kahle.”

(Are you crazy, did I ever ask for your support? Look here Lerato, if you ever repeat what you did, you’ll know me well.)

“I’m sorry it’ll never happen again.”

“Damn right it won’t, now delete my number.”

“What? I no longer have your contacts.”

I haven’t heard from her in weeks, but you can never be too sure with this one.

“I’ll only believe after confirming it myself, give me your phone.”

“What? NO!”

“Lerato angidlali nawe, letho iphone.”

(I’m not joking with you, give me your phone.)

She gives me her phone and I dial my number and guess what? This lunatic still has my number, not only that but she has them saved as 'soulmate'

"I've always suspected but now I know for sure, you're not stable wena angeke!"

She buries her head down in shame. I delete my number and give her back her phone.

"I hope this is the last time I'm dealing with you nxn!"

I still can't believe I befriended this lunatic

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NDALO

It's been a difficult couple of weeks, Sphe was finally found but the condition she's in is disheartening. Sabelo has been going through the most but I'm glad that this time around he didn't push me away, he allowed me to be there for him and be his shoulder to cry on. Sphe's situation brought us closer to each other, we've grown closer and are now connecting in a special and significant way, there's just something about praying together

that has made us connect in a much deeper level, one I'm unable to explain in words.

“Don't look now, but a snack just walked inside the restaurant.”

Says Nthabi fanning herself.

She called me this morning and told me to meet her at Secunda mall with Hlelo, she bought Hlelo so many cute outfits and now she's treating me to some lunch. Now tell me, am I blessed or am I blessed?

“I thought you’d stop checking out other man now that you’re in a relationship with Mathobela.”

I reply, feeding Hlelo yogurt. You should see how wide her mouth opens every time she sees the spoon, she’s a foodie this one no wonder she’s this big.

“Ah mngani ngigeza mehlo phela mathobs idumbe nawe uyaz’ so allow me to look and complement handsome man. He’s fine I’m telling you.”

(I’m just checking him out, you know Mathobela is ugly)

She says and we both laugh. This girl is crazy

“Mngani ngiryt? I think he’s coming to our table.”

She says patting her face while looking at her reflection on her phone.

“Ladies.”

Not him again!

“Do I have to get a restraining order against you?”

Neo has been a pain in the butt since the day we met at the grocery store, he's one of those persistent dudes who just won't take no for an answer and he's starting to annoy me.

“Okay mngani what's going on?”

Nthabi asks seemingly confused by my reaction.

“Please Ndalo, I only ask that you give me a chance.” He replies

“Chance yani? I told you I'm not interested so please leave me alone.”

“Ndalo please, I love you and I won’t give up on you until you’re mine. I’m even willing to share you with your boyfriend, that’s how much I want you in my life.”

“Mana buti ungasibangeli iscefe, uyasho ukuthi akak’funi so manje inkinga yakho yini?” Nthabi (Wait, don’t annoy us. You heard her; she doesn’t want you so what is your problem?)”

“I know this looks bad sisi, but I really love your friend, she stole my heart the first day I laid my eyes on her. Please try and convince her.”

For the first time Nthabi doesn't have a comeback.

“Ndalo ngiyak'cela tu, ngiyakuthanda tu ngicela unqiphe ithuba mama.”

(Ndalo I'm begging you; I love you please give me a chance.)

“Mina angik'thandi Neo mele ngisho kanjani, I'm in love with my partner so please tu.”

(I don't love you, how many times should I say it.)

“But what if I'm the one for you, please Ndalo ungayenzi lento mama. My heart tells me you're the one for me, my missing rib please

ngicela ungvumele ngik'thande. I promise I will love you and treat you like a queen.”

(Please don't do this.) (Allow me to love you)

“Ncoah!”

Exclaim a few females inside the restaurant and only then do I notice that we have earned ourselves spectators, and some people in the crowd already have their phone's out recording a video of us.

“Neo stop this, ungibukanisa nabantu.”

I hiss under my breath

“I don’t care who’s watching, I love you and I don’t care if the whole world knows that I’m crazy in love with you.”

I stand up and carelessly throw my things inside my bag, strap Hlelo inside her stroller and leave the restaurant with Nthabi behind me. I can’t believe this Neo guy.

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.br/.**

SABELO

I’ve been practicing and solving math problems for the past three hours, but my mind isn’t

cooperating as much as I'd like it to, it takes longer for me to solve a problem than it would on a regular day maybe I need to take a break and have a cup of coffee who knows maybe the caffeine will assist. I'm writing mathematics statics in two days, and I really need to study, I didn't qualify with the best mark so I really need to work hard if I want to pass this exam.

“You're still alive.”

Remarks Moeketsi when I make my way into the kitchen.

He just took a beer from the fridge, I've never met anyone who drinks as much as he does. I was surprised when I saw his marks, I wonder

how he does this and still pass or maybe his course is just too easy?

“Yeah, I’m alive it’s just that some of us have to study.”

He chuckles

“You’re too stuck up for a kid your age, you really need to loosen up.”

I ignore his comment and proceed to my cupboard and take out a cup and pour a spoon of coffee inside.

“Did you see this video?”

He puts his phone on top of the kitchen island before me and I press play, my heart almost stops when I see that it's Ndalo, my Ndalo in what appears to be a restaurant. She's with Nthabi and my daughter, there's a tall dark guy with them professing his love to her and by the looks of it the crowd is swooning over them.

“Wtf man!”

Bellows Moeketsi when I almost drop his phone to the floor due to the sudden quiver on my hands.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#81

I don't know what to make of what I just saw, is what uncle warned me about finally materializing? Will I lose the love of my life to that guy? He does look like a stable man who can afford to do all I wish to do for her one day when I'm financially stable, for now I can barely afford to do anything for her with the peanuts I make from working part time at the

retail store I mean I can't even afford to pay for all my daughter's monthly expenses.

“Are you sure you're alright man?”

Asks Moeketsi staring at me with worry lines etched on his forehead.

“I'm good man.”

I say dismissing him

“No, you're not. You look pale yini do you know them?”

I put both my hands on the kitchen island and slowly sink to the cold tiled floor

“Yeah, that’s my girlfriend but I don’t know who the guy is..”

“Oh, I knew I’ve seen her face from somewhere! She’s the lady decorating the walls of your room.”

I printed a couple of Ndalo and Hlelo’s pictures in A4 size and pasted them on the four walls of my room. The first question anyone who walks into my room for the first time asks is ‘who are they?’. Living provinces apart means I don’t get to see them as often as I’d like and I miss them like crazy sometimes, so seeing their beautiful

faces every now and again when I'm in my room somehow fills the void I feel in my heart from being away from them.

“Sh*t man! I'm sorry.”

“What are you sorry for?”

I ask with a creased eyebrow

“Nawe uyaz'bonela man, that man looks well off you can tell from the clothes and accessories he's wearing. He just oozes money, while you on the other hand are nothing but a student so it's obvious who she'll pick between

the two of you, women always go for the bag man.”

“Shut up!”

“I’m sorry but it’s the truth, you might be the better looking one but..”

“If you don’t shut your mouth right now, I swear I will make you.”

I rise to my feet and stand next to him, my chest slightly touching his. My breath fans his face as I glare into his eyes daring him to say another word.

“Do it, give me a reason to use you as an outlet for all the rage I feel.” I challenge him with my knuckles balled into a fist.

He doesn't respond, he holds my gaze for a few seconds before retreating backwards creating a distance between us.

“Good choice.”

“You seriously need to calm down man.”

He says and disappears into his room.

I blow out heavy breath and mop my face with my trembling hands. Once I'm calm I retrieve

my phone from my pocket and search for the video online, it's not difficult to find it because most people have shared it on their Facebook timelines. From Ndalo's facial expressions and body language she looks annoyed by the guy's advances and even tells him she's not interested and threatens to file a restraining order against him. My lips curve into a smile when I hear this, but my smile disappears when I realize what this means, this means that it wasn't the first time this guy approached her, but Ndalo never told me anything about him, why is that?

My phone rings snapping me from my thoughts, it's her. I accept the call but remain mute.

“Baby.. are you there?”

“Yes, I’m here Ndalo. What’s up?”

I reply heading back to my room.

“I don’t know if you’ve seen it but there’s a video circulating online.....and I’m in the video.”

“Continue.”

I'm in my room now, standing next to the window looking at the people going up and down the streets.

“There's a guy, his name is Neo. He's been asking me out for a while now, I told him I don't want him but he refuses to take no for an answer. He showed up today while Nthabi and I were having lunch and caused a scene, you know how people are mos. They recorded us and put the video online.”

“Baby did you hear me?”

“Yeah, I did.”

“Why aren’t you saying anything?”

“What do you want me to say Ndalo?”

“Anything, just don’t keep quiet.”

“Well, I have nothing to say Ndalo, we spoke about this many times before, but you still keep things from me. If someone didn’t record you, were you ever going to tell me about him?”

“Yes.”

“When?”

“When you came back home from school, babakhe you’ve got your hands full with exams and Sphe I just didn’t want to add this to your worries.”

“I appreciate you worrying about me, I know it comes from a good place but if there’s someone messing with my woman I want to know. It doesn’t matter how burdened you think I am, but this is something I’d want to know about.”

“I’m sorry...”

“It’s okay, you don’t have to apologize. I guess it’s time this Neo guy and I met.”

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NARRATED

“You’re trending man.”

“I know. That’s exactly what I wanted.”

“What?”

Asks Casper, Neo’s friend wearing a confused expression on his face.

“I love this girl man, she’s everything I want in a woman. She’s beautiful, soft spoken and don’t

get me started on her beautiful body. She's got the sexiest legs I've ever seen, a round firm butt You know what she's just perfect man. I want her boyfriend to see the video and go crazy”

Neo confesses and takes a huge gulp from the glass of alcohol in his hands.

“Yeah, she's beautiful I admit but she's still someone's girlfriend.”

Neo chuckles

“Come on, don't tell me about that kid. He's not man enough for her, Ndalo needs a man not

a boy like him. Have you seen him, he's a yellow kid with curly hair and blue eyes psssh he looks like a girl."

Neo says rolling his eyes sending Casper into a fit of laughter.

"But she loves her 'girly looking boy' man, she even gave him a baby."

"That means nothing, I want Ndalo and I won't rest until she's mine."

"She doesn't want you; you can't force her to love you. I know you love her, but she loves the

boy man, she even resigned from her job as a teacher just so she could be with him.”

“What, she was a teacher?”

“Yeah, they were trending early this year. I don’t know how you didn’t know about them but those two love each other. I don’t see Ndalo leaving him for you or any other guy for that matter, she’s crazy about her ben 10 and from what I’ve heard no boy uyaz’fela ngo sugar mama wakhe myeke ntwana uzothola omunye umuntu.”

(He’s crazy about his sugar mama, leave her you’ll find someone else.)

“That’s the thing. I don’t want anyone else; I want her.”

“Hay I guess you’ll have to kill the boy then because I don’t see her leaving him for you, the girl doesn’t look interested in you kau.”

“You’re so smart, why didn’t I think about this before!”

“What, what did I do?”

“You’re right, the boy needs to die so I can get my woman. Ndalo won’t love me as long as he’s still around.”

“No, no no no no and no! I wasn’t serious man. You can’t kill the boy, think about it man she’ll hate you for killing her boy toy.”

Casper says trying to convince him. Neo looks at him with a devilish grin on his face

“She won’t know that I’m the one who killed her pathetic boyfriend.”

He declares and grins like a kid seeing candy

“I have just the perfect plan, you’ll love it.”

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NDALO

“This is a sign; fame loves you sis. You should consider a career in the entertainment industry.”

I’m on video call with Melo

“Haha very funny Melo.”

“But seriously sis, you’re always trending.”

“Eish tell me about it.”

“What did your man say, has he seen the video?”

“Yeah, he didn’t say much but I know he’s upset that I didn’t tell him about this guy wanting me.”

“Vele why didn’t you?”

“I just thought I had it under control man but clearly I didn’t. This guy is becoming a pest, he’s charming and all but I don’t want him I’m very content with my choice.”

“Guys like him are so annoying, maybe he’s not used to girls rejecting him because he’s good looking and looks like he’s well off.”

“Well, my man looks way better than him and I don’t give a chicken’s ass about the amount of money he has, I have a man and I’m content with everything he gives me.”

Which is not much honestly but I know he tries his best, so I really appreciate everything he does for me.

“Ncoah Sabelo is so lucky to have you.”

“Yeah, just like I’m blessed to have him.”

“No lies detected, you two are good for each other. Where’s my niece I miss her cute chubby self.”

“She’s sleeping, yo akasindi umtwana Sabelo shem bese kanti ngapha uthanda nezandla.”

(She’s heavy plus she loves being carried.)

She laughs

“Wena umgugelani?”

(Why are you carrying her)

“It’s not me, it’s her father’s family.”

“Shem askies, I guess I’ll call her tomorrow then.”

“Okay you can call anytime between 9 in the morning and three in the afternoon, I’ll be at the hospital at 4.”

“Oh yeah I almost forgot about that, how’s Sphe doing now?”

“She’s still the same, there’s no change in her condition”

“I’m sorry hey, the family must be going through hell.”

**“They are hey, especially Hlelo’s grandmother.
She looks so thin now.”**

**“Aw shem poor woman, I’ll put Sphe in my
prayers.”**

**“Please do so. Let me hang up now, I’m tired I
need to rest it’s been a long day.”**

“Okay, bye sis.”

“Bye Melokuhle.”

I hang up the phone, switch off the TV and the lights and head to my bedroom but a knock on the door halts me on my step. Who could be visiting me at this time?

“Who is it?”

I bellow still rooted on the same spot

“It’s me!”

It’s Neo’s voice. Gosh what does he want now?

“What are you doing here, how did you even know where I stay? That’s it, I’m calling the police.”

“No, please don’t. I want to apologize for everything I did, especially what I did today. I saw the video, I’m sorry I know you have a boyfriend and him seeing the video might cause problems between you two so I’m sorry that was not my intention. I promisecan you at least let me in so I can apologize properly, I can’t keep yelling behind the door at this hour it doesn’t look good your neighbors might call the police on me.”

I hope they do.

“I don’t need your apology, If you don't leave now I'll call the cops on you.”

I say approaching the front door

“Okay, once again I’m sorry.”

“Just go Neo! The next time you show up here I promise I’ll call the cops on you; stay away from me I don’t want you and I’ll never want you. Get that through your thick skull.”

“Okay, I’m sorry once again.”

He says before I hear his footsteps shuffling away, thank God.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#82

SPONSORED ANONYMOUSLY

Seeing Ndalo's video with the so called Neo guy distracted me and flushed all the enthusiasm I had to study, but I had to force myself to keep solving the math problems from previous question papers regardless of how I feel, it was either that or risk failing the module so I chose the former.

I'm still busy practicing when my phone lights up, I cast my eyes on the screen and see an incoming call from Ndalo.

“Sthandwa sam.”

“Sabelo.”

She croaks out under her breath, if I didn't know better I'd think she doesn't want someone hearing her which would be strange because she lives alone or maybe she doesn't want to wake Hlelo from sleep?

“Is Hlelo already sleeping, is that why you're whispering?”

I ask even though I know it's way past her
bedtime

“ No, I’m scared baby. Neo just left so I don’t
want him hearing me incase he’s still lurking in
the shadows.”

What?

“What do you mean Neo was there, did you tell
him where you live?”

“Of course not, I can’t believe you asked me
that. I don’t know how he found out where I
live but it’s obvious that this guy is stalking me,

first he showed up at the restaurant I was in and now he's here that can't all be a coincidence I'm certainly not safe here."

"Call the police and report him, I'm on my way."

I place the call on speaker and run around the room inattentively throwing my books inside my bag.

"What? You can't come here, you're in the middle of your final exams."

"Yes, but I can't sit here while there's a psycho after you."

“No Sabelo, I won’t let you do this...”

“I’m coming you won’t change my mind, call the police and file a complaint. I’ll be there in less than two hours, don’t open the door for anyone until I get there okay?”

“Okay.”

“Ngyak’thanda mamakhe.”

(I love you)

“I love you more daddy.”

“See you soon.”

I hang up and throw the first thing I find when I open my closet inside the duffel bag.

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.br/.**

NDALO

I called the police like Sabelo suggested and two officers came and searched around the area to ensure that Neo wasn't hiding somewhere inside the complex like I feared, the security at the gate was warned not to grant him access to the complex should he come

back again. The officers advised me to come to the station tomorrow morning to file a restraining order against him before they left and that's exactly what I'll do first thing tomorrow morning. It's almost midnight, almost two hours since I last spoke to Sabelo on the phone. I'm getting worried he said he'll be here within two hours, so where is he? let me call him before I drive myself crazy with worry.

“Hi you've reached Sabelo Meyiwa, please leave your name and number and I promise to get back to you as soon I can bye.”

My anxiety just shot through the roof, I shouldn't have allowed him to drive so late at

night. What if something happened to him on his way here? Oh goodness please don't let anything happen to him, please.

I see a figure passing next to the window in the lounge, my heart races and my breathing hitches when I hear footsteps followed by a knock on my door .

“Sthandwa sam.”

Reverberates Sabelo's deep voice on the other side of the door.

A wave of relief washes over me. I jolt up from the couch and race to open the door, I throw

myself into his arms clinging to him for dear life. He wraps his arms around me holding me back

“You scared me, I thought something happened to you.”

I say tearing up.

“I’m fine Sthandwa sam.”

This feels good, being in his arms like this taking in his scent and feeling the warmth of his arms around me. It’s been a while and I’ve honestly missed this, being in his arms that is.

“Let’s get inside, it’s quite chilly out here.”

“Of course.”

I break off the hug and pick up his duffel bag from the door, it fell when he gave me a hug.

“Did you call the police?”

“Yes, they came and searched around the complex to ensure that he really left. They told me to come to the station tomorrow to officially file a restraining order against him.”

“At least, that’s good.”

“Why is your phone off, I tried calling you.”

“ Sorry love, I ran out of battery.”

We’re in bedroom now, I’m watching him get undressed. Looking at his nude body gets my clit excited, he looks sexier or it could be cerebos speaking.

“I was scared thinking something happened to you. I almost had a heart attack.”

“I'm sorry I scared you sthandwa sam. I’m so tempted to wake her up I miss her so much”

He says standing next to Hlelo's cot admiring her in her sleep.

“No, Sabelo ufuna asikhalele ub'suku bonke ngeke myeke alale you'll see her tomorrow.”

(You want her to cry the whole night, leave her)

“Eish you're right.”

He bends and plants a peck on her forehead and another one on her lips.

“ I missed you two.”

“We missed you too baby.”

“Come here.”

He has his arms stretched wide open, I don't need to be told twice. I throw myself in his arms and sink in his embrace, we silently hold each other for a while until I feel his member poking me.

“You see that I'm not the only one who missed you.”

He says in a hoarse voice laced with nothing but lust, my clit instantly twitches and warm liquid oozes out of my slit like blood from an open wound.

“Your member is not alone, my nuna is also excited to see you.”

“Are you for real?”

“I’ll let you confirm that for yourself.”

I say guiding his hand inside my soaked panties

“Sh*t!”

His exclaims when his fingers roam inside my soaking panties separating my wet folds

“I want to taste you.”

He whispers, speaking with so much anticipation. There’s a quiver in his tone, he sounds like an addict desperate for his next fix.

“What’s stopping you then?”

I slip out of my soaked panties and sleep on the bed with my back and spread my legs wide so that my nuna is wide open and ready to eat.

“Holy mary!”

He says looking at me lustfully

He drops to his knees and pulls my legs to the edge of the bed and buries his face between my legs, my heart almost jumps out of my chest when I feel his tongue on my wetness. He puts his hands under my butt and holds me in the air so that my nuna is level with his face, he flicks his tongue on my engorged clit and sucks on my labial lips. I moan out in pleasure when he dips his finger inside my warm asshole, the pleasure I feel is out of this world I don't know what to do with myself so I push his head deeper into my nuna.

“Yes baby, eat that pussy. Oh yes, suck it like that ...aahhh...It's yours baby.”

The words escape my mouth before I can stop them. He obliges and sucks the living daylights out of my nuna and a wave of pleasure washes over me, I explode and cream his face with my juices while my legs vibrate violently.

“ Damn that was awesome.”

I say trying to catch my breath.

He holds my legs and put them on his shoulders burying himself inside of me with a single thrust, I feel slight discomfort in my neither region as my nuna stretches to accommodate him fully.

“Oh damn you’re so warm.”

He says thrusting in and out of my cookie while his lower lip is sucked between his teeth, his face is wet from the sweat that's carelessly rolling down his face.

.”Aaah...harder.” I plead

“ Okay Sthandwa sam, I’ll go harder.”

He says and pumps in and out of me rapidly.

“I’m sorry.”

**He says after shooting his hot cum deep inside
my womb**

“It’s okay.”

**“No it’s not okay, I’m sorry I’ll make it up to
you in the next round. I promise”**

“Stop apologizing, it’s okay baby I understand.”

**His juices trail from my slit down to my ass and
thighs when he pulls his now flaccid dick out, I
can see he feels bad for orgasming before me.**

**“Babe, there’s no need to feel bad. It’s not like I
didn’t climax.”**

I say, trying to reassure him.

“But still...”

“Shhh..stop stressing unnecessarily, we still have 9 more rounds to go so there’s plenty of chances for you to redeem yourself.”

He laughs

“9? Somebody has a big appetite.”

He says and pokes the sides of my tummy

“You can’t blame me, I’ve been starving.”

I say giggling and kiss him

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NEO

If I haven’t shoved a bullet into that stupid boy’s head is because Ndalo is here and I don’t want to traumatize her and our little princess, I can’t believe Ndalo actually called the cops on me and I’m sure her little toy boy came running to the rescue when she told him I was here. My car was parked a few feet away from the complex when the police van drove in I had no

choice but to flee the scene to save myself from suspicion, I was outside the complex, hidden away in the shadows chances of them seeing me were slim to none but I couldn't risk it so I drove back to my place and only came back this morning.

I managed to sneak inside the complex without the stupid guard seeing me and went straight to her apartment, since it's still very early in the morning I thought I'd break into her apartment and watch her sleeping. I'm sure she looks like an angel when she's sleeping but all of that changed when I heard moans and groans the closer I approached her apartment. I peeked through the bedroom window, luckily the light

is switched on so I am able to see the stupid little boy pumping in and out of her.

My blood is boiling as I watch this stupid boy fuck my woman, what hurts me the most is that she looks like she's enjoying every single second of it. She's moaning his name out loud, scratching his back and...oh my goodness she just squirted, can you believe that little boy just made her squirt? Now more than ever I'm convinced this boy needs to die, he can't keep chowing my woman like this not under my watch I refuse.

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MELOKUHLE

“ Melo wami.”

“What do you want?”

He smiles innocently

“Hao baby, what makes you think I want something?”

“That’s because I know you Themba, once you start calling me like that I know you want something.”

“I don’t want anything.”

“Hmm.”

I say and fix my gaze back on my phone

“Okay you’re right.. I want something.”

I laugh

“I knew it, okay talk..what do you want?”

“It’s my sister’s graduation party, please be my plus one to the party. Come with me to Daveyton.”

By his sister he's referring to Dineo, she was doing her honours degree in Mechanical engineering. She's a b*tch but at least she's book smart, yeah she's still bitchy towards me but pretends to be civil with me in front of other people and me being me I play along so no one really knows about the beef between us.

“I have exams to study for babe I can't.”

“ Come on babe, just a couple of hours I promise we will be back before midnight so you can study.”

There's no way I can refuse him when he's giving me that look, it's the look that has me

**dropping my panties all the damn yeah he's
seducing me plus my man be hot ey**

“So?” He asks

“Okay, we'll go.”

“Thank you, thank you.”

He says and adorns my face with wet kisses

“Okay baby stop it.”

“I'll stop only if you promise to suck my cane.”

“What, angeke!”

(Never)

“Please tu, I promise I won’t ask again for the next six months.”

“Yeah right!”

“I promise.”

“You know you’re lying.”

“Please baby, look at it. Please help me..”

The head looks like it’s about to pop

“Why can’t we have sex the old traditional way, why do I have to put my mouth there?”

“No, I want head.”

Thixo! I love Themba but damn I hate it when he wants a blow, I just don’t like putting the d* in my mouth it wasn’t meant for that. I hate whoever came up with oral sex, mouths were never meant to suck genitals they were meant to eat food and talk ai loku okunye eseniyenzisa kona ai mara yaz’ sizofa thina yilok’thanda izinto!**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#83

Sabelo and I f*cked and made love throughout the night and only fell asleep around five in the morning, we had many rounds following the one where I didn't orgasm and boy did he not redeem himself! Boy made me squirt more than two times in one night, I missed this and I enjoyed every single moment of it all. I know I was against the idea of him coming but I'm glad he's here, I missed my man- not just the sex but everything about him, kissing him, being in his arms and most importantly how he looks at me

like I'm the most precious thing his eyes have ever seen. I'm in love with Sabelo Troy Meyiwa, I love him with everything in me and I love him more with each day that passes. It's been almost two years with this man and still can't believe he's mine and that he loves me so much.

I thought I knew what being loved felt like until he came into my life and loved me like I never thought possible, he didn't only love me but he also gave me the most precious thing anyone has ever given me- our daughter, I love that little girl with all my heart she's my life. I was sleeping when Hlelo woke me up, she was crying so I quickly took her from her cot and

left the room with her before she woke her father up with all the noise she was making.

I'm in the lounge now watching TV while she's suckling on my breast, kicking her leg in the air seemingly enjoying herself. I love breastfeeding her, my obstetrician advised me to stop breastfeeding and introduce formula when Hlelo turned 6 months but I didn't stop because I enjoy feeding her. There's something magical about breastfeeding your baby, there's some type of special bonding that goes on there and I'm not ready to let go of these precious moments I share with my little human.

“Good morning to my two favourite girls.”

Hlelo hears his voice and her eyes wander around the room in search of him. They glisten with tears when she sees him and her lips quiver before she breaks into a shrill cry.

He rushes to my side and takes her into his arms

“Thula phela Thando wami.”

(Stop crying)

He says trying to hush her down and eventually succeeds.

“I wonder when she’ll stop doing this.”

I ask when he settles on the couch across mine, he's wearing shorts without an underwear and from where I'm sitting I can see his shaft and testicles peeping from inside his shorts and it gets my clit excited especially when my mind goes back to this morning's events.

“What time are you going to the police station?”

“I want to go now but I want us to drop Hlelo at my mother's place first because I want you to come with me.”

“I don't mind coming with you but I still want to spend some time and bond with my

daughter, I really missed her. Can't we take her with us?"

"I know but I don't think it's a good idea to take her with us to the police station."

"I'll remain in the car with her when you go inside the police station, I'm writing my exam tomorrow so I need to go back to Joburg tonight. I was hoping to spend the day with my princess."

The way Sabelo loves his daughter though, no scratch that- the way father and daughter love each other melts my heart into liquid gold even though sometimes they make me feel like a

third wheel when I'm with them. Kuvele kucace nje ukuthi angiyena wakwa Meyiwa mina.

“Okay baby, that sounds like a good plan.”

“You'll drive right?”

“Please baby, you know how Thando is she wants all my attention to herself it's not easy to drive when she's with us.” He says

It's true, Hlelo is very territorial when it comes to her father. She doesn't want anyone next to him, not even me.

“Okay fine, I'll drive.”

“Alright let’s go shower so we can get going while it’s still early.”

“Let’s have breakfast first.” I say

I’m so tired and I could really use one or two hours of sleep but I can’t because I need to deal with this Neo thing once and for all, I hope the restraining order will keep him away from me.

We just left the police station after I filed a restraining order against Neo, he should be served in the next coming days. A restraining order can be filed against a person to protect

them against family violence, or personal violence such as harassment, intimidation, whether once or ongoing. A restraining order essentially makes contact, communication, or even being near another person illegal. I hope now Neo will stay the hell away from me, and stop trying to force his love down my throat. He's a charming guy, I'm sure there are many girls who would kill to date him. He should try his luck elsewhere and leave me the hell alone, I'm very happy in my relationship.

“Let's go to my parent's house, I want to greet them before we go to see Sphe.” Sabelo

It wouldn't be right for him to go back to Joburg without seeing his parents, I'm sure they would be offended if not angry at him.

He's sitting at the backseat with Hlelo in his arms, the way she's silently laying her head on his chest one would assume she's sleeping but she's wide awake. I guess I'm not the only one who enjoys being in Sabelo's arms, because here is Hlelo laying calm like still waters in her father's arms, it must be nice to have a father hey.

I notice several cars parked inside the yard when we drive in, uncle Ntsika's bakkie is amongst the cars parked in the driveway.

“It looks like we came at the right time.”

Sabelo jokes seeing the number of cars in the yard

“Yes.”

He gets off the car first and walks to the house carrying Hlelo, I follow behind him after locking the car. We hear loud voices when we approach the door, the door is wide open so aunt Mamy who’s sitting on the couch facing the door sees us and notifies everyone in the room of our presence. Everyone’s attention is on us by the time we walk through the door

“Sanibonani ekhaya kwa Meyiwa.”

(Greetings Meyiwa family)

Sabelo greets in a chirpy tone. They all return his greeting with a smile on their faces probably because of his playful salutation.

“Nibuyaphi senibahle kanje?” aunt Mercy

(Where are you coming from looking so beautiful)

Aunt Mercy is one of those people who always compliment you, no matter how crusty you might look she'll always have something good to say. She's just a kind and sweet soul, I absolutely love her.

“We are from Ndalo’s apartment.” Sabelo

We agreed not to tell the family about the whole Neo thing, everyone’s having a difficult time with Sphe in the hospital and not showing any signs of recovery, the last thing the Meyiwa’s need is to stress about Neo on top of everything they’re dealing with.

“Won’t you talk to your grand daughter?” Mr Meyiwa

The question is directed to Mrs Meyiwa whose focus has been on Hlelo from the moment we walked in.

“No, Hlelo is her fake friend she only loves her when Sabelo is not around.”

Says aunt Mamy causing everyone to laugh

“Hao kanti uqhomela unkosikazi wami mawubona ubabakho Hlelo, usile kanti unjalo.”

(So you turn on my wife when you see your father, you're a bad girl Hlelo.)

Mr Meyiwa says defending his wife

“Ai baba niyam'yeka umtwanami yo angeke.”

Sabelo

“I knew he wouldn’t let it slide, akafuni nex ngo mtwanakhe uSabelo.” Mr Meyiwa

We laugh

“Ave nifanelane nkosi yami, Sabelo uwakhipha nini ama lobolo mfana?”

(You look good together, Sabelo when are you paying dowry)

Asks Aunt Mamy swooning at us. We are sitting next to her, it was the only available couch.

“Soon aunt, very soon.”

He replies looking into my eyes. Okay! I don't know anything about this, we have never discussed marriage or lobola.

“Usheshe mfana otherwise bazomthatha yambona muhle kanjani umaka Hlelo, buka nje isitho sakhe ai sukanini madoda umona phantsi yintle intombi yakwa Khumalo.”

(You better hurry otherwise they'll snatch her from you, she's a beautiful woman. Look at her legs, jealous down she's beautiful)

Says aunt Mercy causing me to blush, see what I told y'all about her being generous with compliments. If I keep listening to her I'll end up contesting for miss South Africa, she's such

a confidence booster this one . Everytime I see her ungithi fa fa with drops of confidence.

“I told him the same thing the other day.”

Uncle Ntsika adds and Sabelo’s face changes into a frown

“Sanithola ninonke niphelele yini is there a function we weren’t told about?”

(You’re all here gathered in one place)

Sabelo says changing the topic

**“Eish my son, I was just about to call you.
Sphe’s health is deteriorating, her doctor called
this morning. Sphe slipped into a coma.” Mrs
Meyiwa**

**Ya neh, when it rains it pours sometimes I
wonder if we’ll ever have peace. It’s always one
thing after the other, we don’t know peace.**

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MELOKUHLE

**I’m dressed in a backless bodycon dress and
I’ve got to say I look good, my ass is sticking
out like a sore thumb in this dress and the**

material accentuates my snatched waist in a sexy elegant way. I've been exercising and I've got to say I love the results, body yinto zethu ka Khumalo kodwa ke a little toning here and there wouldn't hurt anyone. I've never been one to exercise but I had to start when I saw how sexy my big sister looked that too after giving birth, I couldn't allow myself to look shabby next to her.

I remember how she used to say I should enjoy it while it lasts everytime I dissed her and called her fat while she was still pregnant, I didn't know what she meant until she started exercising immediately when her stitches healed and lost all the baby fat. She looks so sexy now that I sometimes find it hard to

believe that she looked like a cow a couple of months ago.

“Ai asambe phela kunini uses’bukweni”

(Let’s go you’ve been staring at yourself in the mirror.)

Says Themba sticking his head inside the bedroom.

“Perfection takes time.”

He laughs

“Perfection yani?”

What? No he didn't just ask me that

“What do you mean, don't tell me you don't see my beautiful make up.”

I rotate to show him face, he skims his eyes on my face for a few seconds and erupts into a belly laugh.

“What's funny?”

I ask looking at my reflection in the mirror trying to find faults and I don't find any, I think I look perfect.

“Don’t tell me you spent all that time in the mirror just so you could look like a this, ngathi uyi spoki.”

(You look like a ghost)

What?

He laughs even harder when he sees the horrid look on my face

“I’m joking love, you look like perfection. Shall we go now?”

Someone better explain how I’m still in a relationship with this guy because wow!

We just arrived in Daveyton, Dineo's home where the graduation party is held and I've got to admit everything looks exquisite from the décor to the flower arrangement and everything else nje. I never thought simple black and white could look so elegant and classy, the confidence I had when we left Boksburg just vanished into thin air now I suddenly feel under dressed when I see everyone else's outfits. The party hasn't started but a few guests have arrived.

“Come, let's go greet my mom. I'm sure she's inside.”

I've met mam'Oratile before and she was welcoming to me like Nthathi and her husband were but she had reservations like anyone would when they know about the age gap between us. She doesn't think I'll be able to love Bophelo like my own and give him the motherly love he deserves considering that I'm only 21, which makes me no less than a kid in her eyes. I hope to make her realize how mature I actually am as time goes, age doesn't always equal to maturity sometimes the experiences and things we go through in our tender age force us to grow before our time.

“ Look who decided to show up.”

Says Nthati giving me a hug. She looks beautiful as always, she's holding her youngest hand while Omphile and Warona are behind him holding each other's hands.

“Where's bae?”

I ask when I don't see Kagiso, it's just the kids and her.

“There's a crisis in one of the offices he owns so he had to rush there, he'll come later.”

Themba clears his throat making his presence known, Nthati and I look at him and laugh. I honestly forgot about him

“I see you two are get along, babe I’ll leave you with her then. Dineo sent me a text asking me to fetch her friend from the rank, apparently she’s lost.”

“Okay go babe, I’ll be with your sister.”

I reply smiling at Nthati, he plants a peck on my cheek and walks off.

“Aunt where’s Bophelo?” Omphile

“He’s at his grandparent’s house.”

“ Mama can I go to grandma’s house?”

He asks giving his mom a puppy look

“ Yes mom, can we please go. It’s boring here.”

Warona adds

**“Can you please come with me to Soweto,
please please.” Nthati**

**“You don’t have to beg so much of course I’ll
come with you.”**

The party hasn’t started so I don’t see why not.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#84

Most guests have arrived and since Nthati had to drive the kids to Soweto Diketso, Mmaletsatsi's daughter is the one who is entrusted with the responsibility of receiving the guests at the door and offering them a drink or a snack while they wait for the party to officially start. Dineo is in her bedroom getting dolled up by the MUA(Make up artist) hired by

her big sister, this is a very proud moment for her and the rest of the family. No one expected her to graduate especially after the difficult year she had but God being God, here she was getting ready to celebrate her graduation with close friends and family.

“You seriously need to stop crying, you’re ruining your make up.”

Remarks the make-up artist getting impatient, she’s been working on Dineo’s face for over an hour now because tears keep sprinkling out of her eyes like rain on a stormy night.

“I’m sorry.”

She meekly replies fanning her face with her hand and takes a deep breath trying to calm herself down. Just then her phone vibrates on her left hand, the corner of her lips curl into a smile when she glances at the screen.

“Chom’, how’s is it going is he there yet?”

“Yeah, we are at the filling station now. He went inside the store to buy wine gums for his girlfriend, apparently she’s addicted to them psssh.”

Ntsiki says rolling her eyes when she utters the word “Girlfriend”. Dineo chuckles on the other

end of the line as she picks up the irritation in her tone.

“Anyway, why didn’t you tell me he’s so hot? Damn girl he’s hot, pictures don’t do him justice.”

“What did you expect, I mean look at me and look at my sister of course my brother would be hot duh.”

Dineo proudly says

“Ai no muhle plus he’s financially stable judging by the beast he’s driving.”

“You haven’t seen the least of it, he’s a senior software developer at Microsoft.”

“What? Shut the front door! He’s loaded mos.”

“Yeah, he is. He just comes from humble beginnings, so he didn’t allow money to change him, but he’s loaded. Do what you need to do to make him fall for you. I can’t stand seeing that girl with my brother.”

“You never told me why you don’t like her?”

“No reason, I just don’t. Plus she’s 11 years younger than him, there’s no love there she’s in it for the money.”

“Yeah, she’s still a kid.”

“Themba deserves someone mature, one whose settled and has a kid of her own. How can she possibly love Bophelo when she doesn’t have a child? You’re the perfect person for my brother, you have Lindo he has Bophelo and together you make a perfect family.”

“Yeah, I give his son a mother’s love and he gives my daughter a father’s love.”

“Exactly, I can’t think of anyone more perfect for my brother than you. You’re exactly what he needs.”

“Don't worry about it chomam’, I have this on lockdown. You know me mos, no man can resist my charms Themba will be mine.”

“That’s the spirit, sis in law”

Ntsiki giggles already picturing herself as Themba’s girlfriend, they would make a perfect couple. They would definitely serve couple goals, alongside their kids they would be a perfect family.

“ You got it skoni, I should hang up now. He’s coming back to the car.”

“Okay, bye b*tch.”

“Bye.”

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MELOKUHLE

When we got to the Mofokeng residence I opted to stay back in the car when Nthati and her kids went in, this is Koketso’s parents house, so I didn’t think it’d be a good idea for me to go in with Nthati especially because I’m with Themba now.

“Hey, sorry if I took long but my youngest wanted to leave with me.”

Nthati says when she gets back inside the car

“It’s okay, I had my phone to entertain and keep me company.”

She smiles kindly at me and starts the car

“So, Melo I don’t think we have given each other a chance to really get to know each other better. So how about we do that now, tell me more about Melo?”

I rejected two of her lunch date invites because I knew Dineo would be there and I'd rather not be around Dineo well unless I'm compelled to, so we didn't really see each other much after the first time we got introduced. Which was last December.

“Uhm.. I honestly don't know what to say so how about you ask me questions and I'll answer.”

“Okay that works for me, so do you have any siblings?”

“Yes, two. Buhlebendalo, my big sister and best friend and Anele the last born but I'm only a year older than her.”

“So, you’re the middle child?”

“Kahle kahle.”

I say and we laugh

“Have you introduced my brother to your parents yet?”

“What? Ukhumalo akahlanyi nje ngathi ngiyabona sengithi “dad meet my boyfriend” yo that would be literally my last day on earth. My parents are old school, the only time they would allow me to introduce my boyfriend to

them is if I'm pregnant or when he's marrying me other than that, forget it."

She titters

"You're crazy, I like your energy."

"Well, I like yours too."

We smile at each other and fall into comfortable silence

"Haw' sewucedile ngemibuzo njalo?"

(Are you done with the questions)

I say after a few minutes of utter and complete silence, I'm a talker I can't keep my mouth shut for too long.

“I didn't want to bombard you with questions but since you don't mind, I'll ask. Please don't take this the wrong way ne but are you sure you'll be able to love my nephew like your own? I'm asking because Bophelo lost his mother when he was born, he has never experienced a mother's love is-he's only ever known his father's love and the love he receives from us and his grandparents. Do you think you'll be able to love him as your own even when you and Themba have your own kids in the future?”

“I could lie and say yes I will love him like my own and treat him the same even when I have my own kids because that’s what you want to hear but I won’t, I’ll be honest with you. I love Bophelo, I love him because he’s Themba’s son but him and I haven’t bonded as a mother and son yet. The relationship we have is good, but we don’t have that mother and son bond, but I hope we’ll get there one day. I love kids and I would never discriminate between them, so yes I’ll treat him like I would do my own.”

“Thank you for your honesty.”

“Sure.”

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SABELO

After praying for Sphe's life with the family, Ndalo and I went to visit her at the hospital. I will never get used to seeing her in that condition, just lying there with all those drips and machines connected to her and bruises covering her face. She looks better than she did when we found her, in terms of the bruises that is but her health keeps deteriorating which each passing day and I'm afraid we might lose her. Dad is looking to find a specialist who can help Sphe, I hope he finds one before it's too late, it'll take a miracle for Sphe to recover because it honestly doesn't look good. But, If there's anything I've learnt since I started

praying and reading the word, it's that he's a God of impossibilities there's nothing impossible for him.

When I finally got to my place after spending more than an hour behind the wheel, I freshened up and started practicing math preparing myself for my exam tomorrow. A hard knock on the front door disturbs me, since I'm not expecting any visitors I ignore it with hopes that Moeketsi will tend to it soon, but the knocking persists until I have no choice but to get up from my chair and go get the door.

“Hey”

Says a chubby caramel skinned girl.

“Hi”

“I’m sorry for banging on the door but I really need to see Moeketsi.”

She doesn’t look anything like the type of girls Moeketsi hangs around, I could be wrong but she looks reserved, calm and somewhat innocent. I wonder what she’s doing with Moeketsi but ke it’s none of my business, I open the door wider allowing her in and retreat to my room without saying a word.

“Uhm..”

She says standing on my door

“What?”

“I’m sorry but I didn’t find him in his room.”

“So, what must I do?”

**I’m losing my patience; time is not on my side I
need to study and this girl keeps disturbing me.**

“I thought you’d tell me where to find him”

“I don’t know where he is, I’m not his keeper.”

**I expect her to leave after my harsh response
but she asks more questions instead.**

**“What are you studying, is it mathematical
statics?”**

Now that gets my attention

“Yeah, how did you know?”

“Because I’m in the same class as you.”

“What? You lie!”

I say after taking a good look at her trying to remember if I've seen her face before.

“I'm telling you, you're always with the tall buff Indian guy and the cute colored one.”

She definitely knows me

“Why have I never seen you before?”

“I don't know, I guess I'm invisible.”

“Come on, that's not true.”

“Yeah right, says someone who didn’t notice me after being in the same class as me for an entire year. Yeah right, I believe you.”

“Come on, now you’re making me feel bad.”

“Don’t, anyway it seems like you’re struggling that’s why you’re being so rude. Mind if I help?”

“You?”

“Yes, me.”

“No, thanks.”

“Wow, you doubt my capabilities right? Never judge a book by it’s cover, you’d be surprised.”

“Okay but I’m really okay.”

“You sure?”

I’m not but I don’t need another Lerato in my life, I just fixed things with my girlfriend.

“Yep.”

“Okay.”

The door opens and I hear Moeketsi's voice,
he's talking with someone else. I think it's Max

“He's here, I'll leave you to your books then.”

“Yeah.”

“And by the way, the answer to 11.3 is 12 not
10.”

She says looking at my answer sheet

“What?”

“You’re doing it wrong but like you said, you’re fine so I’ll leave you to it.”

She says with her arms raised as a sign of surrender and walks off, I check the answers on the back of my textbook and she’s right the answer is 12, damn I thought I was doing it right OMG maybe I shouldn’t have gone to Emba. The exam will most likely show me flames tomorrow!

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NEO

I waited until it was dark and sneaked inside the complex, like yesterday the guards didn't see me. How could they see me when they're busy playing a game of cards and discussing the beautiful women who live in the complex, bloody perverts! When I get to Ndalo's apartment I notice that all the lights are switched off, that boy probably tired her that's why she retired to bed early tonight. Just thinking about it has my blood boiling and bile rising to my stomach leaving a bitter taste in my mouth, how dare he? He should be playing with other kids his age not having sex with an older woman, he should seriously find someone his age and leave Ndalo to me-she's too much of a woman for a boy like him anyway.

Breaking inside her house was easier than I thought it would be, I amble around the house with my phone in hand, with the flash light on careful not to make a noise and wake her. My member tightens and grows inside my pants when I find her sleeping in her bedroom, her back is against the headboard she's topless straddling my princess in her arms. She probably dozed off while breastfeeding her, she looks so beautiful.

My dick throbs when I look at her swollen breasts, they look better than I imagined them she's just so perfect. She has a duvet cover on her lower body, my dick grows harder when I imagine her naked underneath those covers I'm tempted to pull them and check but I can't risk

her waking up and seeing me here now that would definitely make her to hate me. I'm sure she'll think I'm crazy or something so I guess for now my imagination will have to do. I lower myself on the single couch across her bed, unbuckle my belt and drop my pants pooling them on my knees and give myself a hand job looking at her plump boobs imagining my dick sandwiched between them now that would be a pretty sight. I bite my forearm to swallow the loud groans that threaten to escape my throat when I reach my climax, fuck I can't wait for the day where I'll bury myself deep inside her warmth.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#85

After long speeches from Dineo's family and friends expressing how proud they were of her for graduating despite everything she's been through it's finally time for food, what Melo noted is that everyone who stood in front to give a speech all mentioned how strong she was for graduating even after everything she went through in the past year. Whatever happened to her sounds big, her eyes shine with unshed tears everytime someone praises her strength for soldiering on and for the first time Melo can see the pain hidden underneath

all her bitchy behavior. Could it be that Dineo is not actually a bad person and is only treating her like she does because of the pain she's been through or rather is still going through- because it's evident that she's still in pain, whatever it is that happened to her is still hurting her.

Sometimes pain changes people and Dineo wouldn't be the first one, maybe she should try being more kind to her instead of matching her behavior and being a b*tch. She sinks her teeth on the chicken, takes a bite and chews with her eyes shut savouring the delicious taste tantalizing her taste buds, her phone pings on top of the table disturbing her intimate moment with food. She glances at the screen and sees that it's a message from Themba, she sucks the

sauce from her fingers and wipes her hand with a serviette before tapping the screen to open the message.

I MISS YOU, PLEASE COME HERE OR SHOULD I COME THERE.

A smile embraces her face after reading the message and swivels to look at Themba, their eyes lock and he gives her a puppy look she sighs finally giving in to his demands and stands up with her plate in her hands heading towards his table.

Like any other graduation party Dineo and all the other graduates have their own separate table. Themba, Nthathi and her husband are

graduates so they are sitting on Dineo's table dressed in their graduation gowns, everyone looks so good seeing them like this gave Melo the determination to pass and graduate. There are a few things that can't be bought and education is one of them, she can't wait to finish school and be a graduate like them.

She can already imagine the pride that will grace her parents faces, her mother was so excited and couldn't wait to tell everyone who was willing to listen about her graduate daughter when her sister, Ndalo graduated. Mam'Oratile looks equally proud of her daughter, and Melo can't wait to make her own mother proud.

At first Themba didn't want to sit with the other graduates because he didn't want Melo to sit with strangers, he didn't interrupt her study plans and bring her so far only for her to feel neglected and alone but Dineo wouldn't hear it she wanted her brother dressed in his regalia and sitting next to her. Melo assured Themba that she would be fine on her own and didn't need to be babied "it's not like you're going far, we'll be in the same room so stop being dramatic" she had said, giving Themba no choice but to give in to his sister's demands.

"I missed you."

Themba says when Melo sits next to him

“I drama yakho buti.”

(You’re dramatic)

She replies with a smile on her face

“I really missed you.”

“I missed you too babe.”

They look at each other and smile as though they haven’t seen each other for years.

“Uhm I’m sorry Melo but only graduates are allowed to sit here.”

Dineo says with a big fake smile pasted on her face, putting on a show for her brother.

“Aw’ kahle Dineo, the formal part of the event is over let my girlfriend be.”

“I’m sorry, I was just saying.”

“Don’t say anything, rather keep quiet if you don’t know what to say.”

“Babe, take it easy.” Melo

Knowing that Dineo is going through something has changed her perspective, she’s hurting and being scolded is the last thing she needs.

**“I’m sorry buti I didn’t mean to offend anyone,
I’m sorry Melo.”**

Apologizes Dineo with a low voice

“It’s okay.” Melo says with a sympathetic smile

“So, how old are you?”

**Asks Dineo’s friend Ntsiki, the question is
directed at Melo.**

“Excuse me?”

“I asked how old you are.” Ntsiki

“21”

“Hmm, This pork is so delicious don’t you want to taste?” Ntsiki

She says already pushing her fork towards Themba’s mouth. He pushes her hand off making it slip from her hands landing on the other side of the table missing Nthati’s face only by a few inches. Nthati who’s been so engrossed on the conversation with her husband looks up with confusion clouding her features. Confused as to why food is being thrown at her

“Don’t you ever do that again, we are not friends ngicela ungalinge nje ung’jwayele kabi yeses!”

Themba spits boiling in anger

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean any harm” Ntsiki

“What’s going on?”

Nthati asks, her eyes darting between Themba and Ntsiki.

“I’m sorry, I just wanted Themba to taste the pork. I didn’t mean any harm, I’m sorry.”

She stands up and runs out to the door with tears rolling down her cheeks, Dineo looks at her brother with disapproval before running after her friend.

“Let’s go.”

Themba says looking at Melo

“Babe, come on”

“You’ll find me outside”

With that said, he stands up and walks out.

**Nthati stands up and follows her brother to try
and find out what happened.**

**“ Great just great! Themba just gave his sister
more reasons to dislike me.”**

Melo mutters under her breath

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SABELO

Like I predicted the exam showed me flames but I'm hopeful that I'll pass if I don't then I hope I got enough to qualify for supplementary exam, I have to pass I can't afford to repeat a module. That would mean adding another year to my studies and I honestly can't have that.

“I respect math”

Cam says when he walks out of the examination room looking flushed or is it defeated?

“I'm sure you did better than me, I'm hoping for a 50% at least.”

“You’ll pass man stop stressing. Kev won’t come out until the invigilator says time up.”

He says looking at the door as students keep walking out of the exam venue, one after the other.

“You know him.”

The chubby caramel skinned girl from yesterday walks out and smiles when her eyes land on me. I smile back, she then walks towards Cam and I.

“Hi”

Cam greets back

“Do you believe me now?” she says

“ Yeah, I honestly thought you were lying.”

“Well I wasn’t.”

Cam clears his throat, I look at him and remember that I haven’t introduced him to this girl.

“Oh excuse my lack of manners, Cam this is?”

“Katlego.”

“Yes, Katlego. Katlego this is Cam.”

“Nice to meet you.”

He says shaking her hand

“Nice to meet you too, I should get going. It was nice seeing you again Sabelo.”

“I never told you my name”

“Yeah, I know but your roommate did. Bye guys.”

“Bye.”

Cam and I say at the same time and watch her until she disappears into the corner taking the stairs.

“I hope this isn’t another Lerato.”

He says still looking at the corner where Katlego disappeared to.

“I’ve learnt from my mistakes man, you can relax. I’m not befriending that girl.”

“You better not, you don’t want to lose Ndalo. Trust me, she’ll leave you this time.”

“I know.”

“Katlego looks innocent and harmless but you know what they say, never judge a book by it’s cover.”

“I heard you man.”

“Yeah, I just want to drill it into your head. I don’t want you to lose your baby mama, I know how much you love her”

“I already told you that I won’t repeat my mistakes, leave me alone man!”

“I only want the best for you, it all comes from a good place.”

I walk away when Kevin walks out of the exam venue

“And then?”

I hear him asking Cam behind me

“He’s angry because I told him the truth.”

“What did he do?”

I hate how these two treat me like I'm some sort of player who can't resist any girl that comes his way, I made mistakes in my relationship but I've never cheated on Ndalo. These two should just chill and stop trying to parent me, I left my father in Embalenhle.

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NDALO

"I don't want to come between siblings."

I'm on videocall with Melo

“But you didn’t do anything wrong Melo, she did that all on her own. I still don’t understand what this Dineo girl has against you.”

“I wish I knew, but maybe she’s acting out because of whatever she’s going through. I don’t know what happened to her but whatever it was, it’s a big thing.”

“So, does that mean she should give you attitude? Everyone is going through something, imagine if we all treated people badly because we’re going through something.”

“You’re right but I don’t want to come between them.”

“I know but she’s the one who started this whole thing, you didn’t have any problem with her.”

“Yeah eish, anyway where’s my beautiful niece?”

“Here she is”

I say rotating the phone to show Hlelo who’s on the floor crawling

“Mami!”

She startles when she hears Melo's voice and looks around the house in search of her.

"I'm here my baby."

She looks at the screen and smiles when she sees Melo and pokes my phone trying to touch her

"I miss you wena"

Hlelo giggles and replies with those baby sounds

"Ya mama uzomphathela i chocolate yena"

Melo

(Yes, I'll bring you a chocolate.)

“Yo angeke Melo, iyandenda lengane. So please, strictly no sweets.”

“Ah mara ses’Ndalo mos uyay’thanda.”

(But she likes it)

“No, Melo. Hlelo isn't supposed to eat sweets.”

“Eish I'm sorry little one, your mother said no. What should I buy then?”

“Anything as long as it’s not sweets. On second thoughts do buy that chocolate, I’ll eat it Hlelo uzayithola ebeleni.”

(Hlelo will get on my breast)

She laughs

“Awusanga nje!”

(You’re silly)

“Nex, I’m her mother I’ll eat on her behalf.”

“Poor Hlelo.”

“Mtasekhaya something weird happened this morning yaz.”

“What?”

“Last night before going back to bed I took a bath and hanged my underwear on the bath tub, I thought I’d hang it outside this morning but I didn’t find it this morning when I wanted to take it outside. I only found my bath towel.”

“What, did you check properly?”

“I did Melo, countless times and my underwear is still missing. I honestly don’t know what to think.”

“Yo, do you think someone broke into your house while you were sleeping?”

“I don’t know what to think, everything was the way I left it when I went to bed only my underwear was missing.”

“I don’t know but you shouldn’t take this lightly, people have done despicable things to other people using their underwear. Bangaku loya uSabelo akuzonde”

(They can bewitch you and make Sabelo hate you.)

Sabelo hating me is the least of my worries, people can do a lot of things using your underwear including blocking you from getting married or having kids and many other scary things.

“I know that’s why I’m worried, I asked the security at the gate and they say they didn’t see anyone coming to my room.”

“What about the CCTV footage?”

“It only covers the entrance.”

“Yo Ses’Ndalo please don’t take this lightly.”

**“I won’t but at the same time I don’t know
what to do or where to start, who would take
my underwear and for what?”**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#86

“How was your exam?”

My question is accompanied by a yawn

“Yoh, don’t even ask.”

“Was it that bad?”

“It was but I’m hoping for a 50%”

“I know you did better than that, I trust you.”

“Ngiyabonga Sthandwa sam.”

(Thank you my love)

**“Uyoze unigwinye shem ncono ulale
Sthandwa sam plus I need to study.”**

**(You better sleep before you end up swallowing
me my love)**

Sabelo says when I yawn for the fifth time in the last two minutes, I don't know what's wrong with me today but I feel so sleepy I can barely keep my eyelids open. Nginesinye isthongwane esinzima kabi.

“No, there's something I want to tell you first.”

I want to tell him about my missing panties

“You'll tell me about it tomorrow, you can barely keep your eyes open I think it's best if we talk about it tomorrow.”

“Okay.”

I say and yawn yet again. He laughs

“Ai shem, I’ve never seen you like this lala
Sthandwa sam we’ll talk tomorrow.
Ngiyak’thanda.”

(Sleep my love) (I love you)

“Goodnight, I love you more.”

He blows a kiss, I snatch it and lock it on my
heart. He laughs and ends the video call. I
switch off my data and drift to sleep the
moment my head hits the pillow.

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SABELO

Moeketsi and his friend Max keep walking in and out of the room and speaking on top of their voices disturbing me from my books, I can't have what happened today repeat itself on my next exam so I have no choice but to pack my books and take an elevator to the ground floor. Everyone's eyes momentarily fall on me for a few seconds when I walk through the doors of the study room, I look around the room and sigh in relief when I spot an empty seat. I feel eyes digging holes on my back as I maneuverer my way to the empty seat.

I switch on my PC, pluck earphones on my ears and listen to music while studying blocking out everyone in the room. Unlike yesterday, today my brain is absorbing everything I'm studying like water to a sponge, I'm lost in the moment when I feel a tap on my shoulder

“Can you please keep it down, you're making it hard for me to study.”

Was I singing out loud?

“I'm sorry.”

“It's okay.”

Her focus goes back to her books. Someone giggles next to me and I look up only to come face to face with Katlego, i can't believe I didn't see her.

“You were in the zone ne, I'm not surprised that you didn't see me”

She says still laughing

“Tell me about it.”

“Shhh!”

Says the girl who just warned me about my noise

“Sorry.”

**I mouth to her but she rolls her eyes causing
Katlego and I to laugh**

**“Can you guys keep it down, we are trying to
study here.”**

**Shouts a tall guy sitting next to the door. I turn
and fix my gaze on the screen in front of me but
Katlego pokes the side of my tummy with her
finger disturbing me, my mistake is turning my
head and looking at her face because we both
burst out laughing as soon as our eyes meet.**

“No, this is not on. You guys should leave, we are trying to study here.”

The tall guy next to the door says sounding irritated and everyone inside the room echoes his sentiments.

“Let’s go.” Katlego

She says still laughing, already on her feet shoving her books inside her backpack. I stand up and pack my books and laptop inside my bag before following her to the door, we instantly start laughing all over again the moment the door shuts close. We laugh for a good 2 minutes before the laughter dies down

“You’re such a bad influence, you got me kicked out of the study room on my first day.”

I say wiping the tears rolling down my face. I can’t remember the last time I laughed so hard, my tummy even hurts from all the laughing I did.

“I’m sorry but I couldn’t help it, you should’ve heard yourself singing yo you were totally off tune.”

“What? you lie. I sing very well.”

“Kuphi ubhimba kangaka”

(You are a bad singer.)

“Mina? Bhimba! You wish, my vocals are on the same level as John Legend's.”

My statement causes her to laugh hysterically.

“Wow! You just bruised my ego.”

I have my hand on my chest pretending to be hurt

“Damn, you’re so funny. I can’t remember the last time I laughed this much, thank you.”

“You’re welcome I guess.”

I answer with a shrug

“So, what’s the plan since your terrible singing had me chased out from the study room?”

“I don’t know about you but I’m going back to my room, hopefully Moeketsi will keep it down so I can study.”

“Knowing him I doubt it, why don’t you come with me to my room. It’ll be fun, we’ll study together and avoid making mistakes you know like getting 10 instead of 12.”

“I don’t think that’s such a good idea.”

“Why not, what are you scared of?”

“Nothing, it’s not appropriate for me to be in your room.”

“Why?”

“Because I’m someone’s boyfriend, my girl won’t appreciate it.”

“Wow, sounds to me like mogirl is insecure but I don’t blame her. You’re quite a catch, I wouldn’t let you out of my sight if you were mine.”

“She’s not insecure, there’s no reason for her to be insecure because I only have eyes for her.”

“In that case, there shouldn’t be a problem if you to come with me to my room.”

“Nah, I’ll pass. Sharp Katlego.”

I say and call the elevator to the ground floor, it doesn’t take long before the steel doors open and I make my way inside

“I hope you're not thinking of following me to my room.”

I say when she gets inside the elevator with me

“Psssh, get over yourself. I’m going to my room.”

“Hmm.”

We fall into awkward silence until the elevator stops on the fourth floor

“Happy studying.” Katlego

With that said she steps out of the elevator, I guess her room is in the fourth floor.

“Thanks, you too.”

I say and press the button to close the elevator doors.

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NEO

Last night when I was here I saw an empty glass of milk on top of Ndalo’s bedside table, assuming she’s one of those people who take a glass of milk before bed I crushed a number of sleeping tablets and poured them inside a jug of milk I found inside the fridge. Getting off while imagining my hard shaft in between her

swollen boobs was amazing and I want to do it again, but I can't risk her waking up and catching me in the act especially with the restraining order she has against me so I was left with no choice but to drug her.

I was looking forward to this moment the whole day and sniffing her panties made my anticipation soar, all I had in my mind the whole day was seeing her nakedness and getting myself off while looking at her beautiful body.

Just like yesterday, getting inside the complex was easy and swift. From her faint breathing and soft snores I know she's sleeping, and the empty glass of milk on top of her bedside table

confirms what I already knew- she drank the drugged milk. I switch on the light to gauge her reaction and see whether the sleeping pills have knocked her into a state of total unconsciousness like I wanted. She's sleeping on her side with the covers under her chin, her mouth slightly open drooling on the pillow- my heart swells at the beautiful sight before me and I give in to the sudden urge I have to take pictures of her. She looks like an angel, so beautiful and sweet.

Her beautiful melanin skin looks soft like a baby's bum, damn I'm tempted to sing Beyoncé's brown skin girl everytime I see her- I swear whoever wrote it had her in mind. Those thick pouty lips are tempting, I wonder how

amazing they would feel wrapped around my shaft. With lips that look like that I'm sure she gives the best head. I amble next to the bed and peel the covers to reveal her body, damn she's naked like I thought.

I pick up her hand and watch it drop back to her chest, good this means she's totally out and won't wake up while I'm busy with her. I discard all off my clothes and peel the covers to reveal her entire body, my dick throbs and releases precum at the sight of her shaved fat pussy. I carefully push her body so that she's lying on the bed skyward so that nothing is hidden from my greedy eyes.

“You're so beautiful.”

I say and cup her breast in my hand. Damn, they feel so full and heavy, it must be Hlelo's milk. I have a sudden urge to put her dark nipples inside my warm mouth and suck on them and the thought of tasting baby's milk intensifies my desire. I get on top of her and suck on her boobs while grinding on top of her naked body, damn this feels even better than what I had in mind.

I suck and swallow the breastmilk, I then move my kisses down to her stomach and loins. I put my hands under her butt and put her legs on my shoulders and dip my head on her fat pu***, the smell is intoxicating but the taste is

even better I alternate between sucking, biting and licking on her clit and labial lips.

The baby cries inside her cot startling me just when I'm about to plunge my dick inside of her, I jump down and pick Hlelo up trying to hush her down but she cries even more probably because of an unfamiliar face. I put her back in her cot and pick up my clothes and escape through the window before a neighbour or security budes in here to see what's going on.

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NARRATED

Hlelo's piercing cries wake Busi from sleep. She shakes her boyfriend waking him up from sleep.

“What?”

The boyfriend asks, eyes heavy with sleep.

“Can you hear that? It sounds like Hlelo is crying.”

“Yeah, so? Kids cry all the time ”

He says unable to mask his irritation.

“Something is wrong, Ndalo never let’s her daughter cry this much.”

“Mind your business Busi.”

He says and goes back to sleep giving Busi his back. Busi sighs and sleeps on her back, maybe her boyfriend is right she should probably mind her business.

Five minutes later the baby is still crying, she kicks off the blankets and wears her robe and sleepers before heading to the front door. She’s been occupying the apartment next to Ndalo’s for months now and she’s never heard the baby cry so much, something is definitely wrong.

“Ndalo! Ndalo!”

**She bellows hitting her knuckles at the door
but there’s no reply yet the lights are switched
on.**

“Security!”

One of the guard comes running.

**“Something is wrong inside here, please open
the door for me.”**

“Ma’am I can’t do that without getting permission from the owner.”

“Are you crazy? Can’t you hear the child screaming her little lungs inside? Do you think her mother would let her cry like this, open up I think something is wrong with Ndalo.”

“Yes, I agree with her. Open the door, something is wrong, I’ve been this girl’s neighbour since she first moved in here and I know her well enough to know that she would never let her daughter cry this much unless something is wrong with her open up.”

Says another one of Ndalo's neighbours. More people have woken up and are standing outside Ndalo's apartment.

“Open, what if she's in danger? Do you want to wait until she dies for you to open the door?”

Spits another tenant

“Okay, I'll open. Ndlovu, please bring the spare keys for room 12 on second floor.”

He says speaking into the microphone.

A minute later his colleague runs up the stairs with the keys dangling in his hands.

“Apartment number 12?” security1.

“Yes.” Security2

“There’s a key inside, the door won’t open.”

Security2

**“So? Kick it down, do we have to tell you
everything.”**

Says a panicky Busi

**“These people are useless.” Remarks someone
from the crowd**

“It’s open.” Security2 says after successfully kicking it down

Busi is the first one inside after the two guards, Hlelo’s cries lead them to the bedroom but the guards halt at the door when they see Ndalo’s nakedness. Busi rushes inside and covers her with the blankets before anyone else sees her while another female neighbour gets in and takes Hlelo from her cot. She instantly stops crying

“Ndalo! Ndalo!”

Busi screams trying to wake her but nothing seems to work

“Something is wrong, akekho nje umuntu olala afe kanje noma sekuthiwani.”

(No one sleeps like this.)

One of the guards says

“Mtheleni ngamanzi.”

(Pour her with water)

Security2 suggests.

Someone from the crowd bolts to the kitchen and comes back with a bucket of cold water, the guard takes it and splashes Ndalo with it.

“What’s going on? Where’s my daughter?”

Those are the first words out of her mouth when she opens her eyes and sees people surrounding her. She's shivering and drenched

“Do you know what happened?” Security1

“I don’t know anything, please don’t tell me something happened to my daughter. Where’s she, where’s my daughter?”

Ndalo asks in a panicky tone, tears already rolling down her cheeks.

“Relax, nothing happened to your daughter. That lady has her, she was crying hysterically so your neighbours got worried and asked us to open the door.”

“What?”

She asks feeling like the worst mother on earth, what kind of mother is she to sleep peacefully while her daughter is crying?

“Please give her to me.”

The lady holding Hlelwenkosi steps forward and gives her to her mother. Ndalo plants several kisses on her face, her heart breaks when she sees the dried up tears on her daughter's face- what kind of mother is she? Sabelo will go crazy if he finds out that his princess was crying her eyes out while she slept.

“Did you take anything before bed?” Security2

“Nothing, I only drank a glass of milk.”

“You drank from that glass?”

Busi asks pointing at the glass on her bedside table

“Yeah.”

“I think we should call the police, I suspect someone drugged you. We found you lying on the bed naked.”

More tears pour down Ndalo’s face at the thought of someone touching her inappropriately in her sleep, first it was her underwear now this. She wasn’t sure before but now she’s sure, someone breaks into her house in the middle of the night while she’s sleeping. Who knows what he does to her, no wonder

she felt so sleepy- the milk she drank was drugged!

Her heart drops at the thought of him touching her daughter, Hlelo no longer cries at night what if he was trying to molest her and that's why her daughter cried?.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#87

“Please stop crying, your daughter will sense that you're not okay.” Busi

She hasn't left my side.

The police took the glass of milk for testing and took fingerprints around the house, if the culprit wasn't wearing gloves when he broke into my apartment he'll be found and brought to justice, Hlelo and myself went to the hospital for an examination to be certain that the intruder didn't do anything to us and fortunately he didn't. He only drugged me but there's no sign of penetration.

After what happened I no longer feel safe and I can't keep staying here so Busi is helping me pack mine and Hlelo's clothes into traveling

bags, the other neighbours left when the police left.

“Why would anyone drug me and break into my house in the middle of the night, to do what?”

I still can't wrap my head around what happened

“Because they are sick that's why, have you told your mom to pick you up?”

“No, not yet but I'll tell her soon.”

“Okay, you should take a bath while I finish up here.”

I shake my head

“No, I’ll bath at my mother’s house. I cant wait to get out of here.”

“Understandable.”

“When are you telling your boyfriend?”

“I’ll tell him.”

“When? I think you should tell him.”

“I know, and I’ll tell him...”

“When?”

“Busi if you’re tired of helping me pack you can go back to your apartment.”

“I’m sorry.”

I sigh

“I’m sorry, I was rude and you don’t deserve that.”

**“No, don’t apologize. I forgot my place,
Masbulele always tells me to mind my business
because this always happens to me everytime I
try to help someone.”**

Ouch!

“I’m sorry, you’re right. I’ll call him.”

**I pick up my phone and head to the kitchen to
make a call, Hlelo cries crawling behind me. I
pick her up and carry her on the side of my
waist**

“Sthandwa sam.”

“Hey, can you talk?”

“Yes, what’s wrong? Have you been crying?”

“I need to talk to you.”

“Sounds serious.”

“It is, two days ago I took a bath before heading to bath and hanged my damp underwear and bath towel on the bath tub but the underwear was missing yesterday morning when I wanted to hang it outside.”

“What?”

“Yeah, I looked everywhere and I didn’t find it. I asked the security guards if they saw anything but they said they didn’t see anything strange nor see anyone who isn’t living in the complex inside the yard.”

“Why didn’t you tell me Ndalo?”

“I wanted to but I could barely keep my eyes open, you even suggested that I sleep.”

“Don’t make an excuse, why didn’t you tell me as soon as you realized that your underwear is missing? I’m sure you realized first thing in the morning”

“Sabelo you were writing your exam yesterday so I didn’t want to disturb you.”

“You still should’ve told me!”

“Don’t shout at me!”

He sighs

“You’re right, I’m sorry...I’m just scared okay, there’s not much I can do to protect you from here. I feel useless.”

“No, you’re not baby. Don’t think like that..”

“Of course I’m useless, I can’t even protect you because I’m far from you.”

“Baby come on, stop beating yourself up over something you can’t control. I’m fine, nothing happened to me.”

If this is how he gets over the missing panties it means he’ll go crazy when I tell him about what happened yesterday, I think I shouldn’t tell him. At least not until he’s done with his exams

“I think you need to install cameras inside your apartment, or maybe move to another place.

That complex is not safe, if someone can walk in and out of your apartment undetected then your life is in danger. You need to move.”

“You’re right, but for now I’m moving back home.”

“Do that, it’ll put my heart at ease.”

“I am moving today.”

“Yeah, the sooner the better. I suspect that guy whose obsessed with you, who is it again? Oh yeah it was Neo. I think it was him, he’s the only one I can think of.”

“You’re right, it makes sense. I’ll tell the police my suspicions.”

“Yes, do that. I only have two exams left, then I’ll be home with you.”

“I can’t wait.”

“Or maybe you should come down to Joburg, we’ll go back together after my exams what do you think?”

“What? That’s crazy.”

“Please love, I’ll talk to my roommate and bribe the security at the gate. Please say yes”

“Won’t I disturb you?”

“No, you’ll have Hlelo to keep you company while I study.”

I laugh

“ As if your daughter will let you study, she’ll be clinging to you for dear life.”

“I’ll study in the study room then please say yes.”

I can't imagine myself at my big age being sneaked inside a student accommodation that too with my daughter it sounds silly but fun nonetheless.

“Please mama we ngane yami.”

(Mother of my child)

“Okay.”

“Yeeees, I'll be there in the afternoon to pick you up.”

I hope I don't regret this.

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KATLEGO

I can't seem to get Sabelo out of my mind, he's so handsome but what attracted me to him was his personality not his striking good looks. He's just so calm and humble, I've always seen him but was always afraid to talk to him because I thought he was rude but he's a total opposite. How we laughed ourselves silly yesterday at the study room was fun, we connected like we've known each other for years and I can't help but wonder how we would be as friends. I'm pretty sure we would make good friends, I can't wait to see him again

“Madam what’s on your mind?”

Says my roommate sitting on my bed

“Nothing, shouldn’t you be studying?”

“I wont let you change the topic, tell me about the guy you’re day dreaming about?”

“What guy?”

“So it’s a girl, olalala!”

I Laugh

“Lentle!”

“So, tell me. Do I know her?”

“Please leave, I want to study.”

**“I’m not going anywhere until you tell me
about that girl.”**

“Okay, I’ll tell you.”

**Her face instantly lights up, she loves news this
one.**

“ It’s not a girl, it’s a guy. I don’t know if you know him, he’s Moeketsi’s roomie. Sabelo.”

She screams

“OMG! You’re talking about the cute coloured guy, I also had a crush on him at some point.”

“Lol, why am I not surprised?”

She chuckles

“Well he’s everyone’s crush, he’s so hot and has a body to die for it’s a pity he’s committed to his girlfriend.”

My heart sinks, so it's true? I thought he was just joking. I've never seen him with anyone.

"Have you seen her? Is she beautiful?"

"No, I've never seen or met her but Max says her photos are all over his room. He's so in love with her."

"Wow, he really loves her ne?."

"From what I heard, yes he does and they have a daughter together."

“Yoh that’s deep.”

I say feeling defeated

“Yeah, don’t worry you’ll get over fantasies you have of the two of you together.”

“What? I don’t have any fantasies, I only like him as a friend.”

“If you say so, let me go back to my books.”

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SABELO

**“Can’t believe you really came, you’re crazy
wena yaz”**

“About you, yes I am.”

**“Okay let’s go drop off some of my luggage at
my mother’s house and leave for Joburg.”**

**“No problem but you’re driving, I want to bond
with my baby.”**

“I knew it.”

I Laugh at her

“You didn’t tell me why your door is broken?”

“I lost my keys so I asked my neighbour to kick it down.”

“When?”

“This morning”.

“You’re lying Ndalo, what really happened?”

“I swear you can ask him, should I call him for you.”

“Are you sure you’re not lying to me?”

“Yes, I’m sure.”

“Okay, let’s go.”

I lead the way taking my daughter with

I live at an off campus residence and the rules are not as strict as on campus would be, but even so they only allow visits not sleep overs but people always bribe the security and sneak their partners in for the entire weekend. I never thought I’d be one of those but I really miss my girl and after what happened yesterday with

her missing panties, I need her next to me. At least Hlelo no longer cries unnecessarily so I doubt anyone will know there's a baby in my room.

I gave Douglas R200 and just like that Ndalo was allowed inside the building. We are in my room now, I just walked back inside the room I was downstairs picking up our dinner from the delivery guy.

“This is beautiful.”

She says looking at the pictures on the wall with a smile on her face.

“Yeah, I wanted to feel you close.”

“You’re so sweet baby but I still think we should’ve booked into a hotel, I don’t want us to get caught.”

I laugh

“Relax ma ka Hlelo, no one is getting caught. No one cares, they don’t check our rooms so you can relax.”

“You’re silly, we should’ve gone to the hotel.”

“No I didn’t want you spending money unnecessarily, Christmas is upon us you’ll buy me Christmas clothes with that money.”

She laughs

“Haibo, njani!”

“Kahle, bathi omdala ku relationship should buy the younger one Christmas clothes.”

(They say the older one in the)

She laughs

“Forget it, I’m not buying you anything.”

“Ouch, that hurts. Let’s eat before the food gets cold.”

“Ok let me put her to sleep.”

She puts Hlelo under covers

“Sabelo how are we going to sleep with the baby ku single bed? Angeke we need to book a room.”

“I hate to admit but you’re right it won’t work, that part totally slipped my mind. Hold on let me talk to my roommate, you can eat so long.”

“Okay.”

A cloud of smoke welcomes me from the door the moment I open the door to Moeketsi’s room, he’s lying skyward smoking weed.

“Hey man, I need a favour.”

“Sure, what favour?”

“Can you like borrow me your mattress for tonight, I’ll put it on the floor so my daughter can sleep there. The three of us won’t fit on a single bed.”

“What?”

“Please man, I’ll pay you if I have to. Just for tonight, tomorrow I’ll take them to a hotel, I would do it now but its already late and you know Jozi ain’t safe. I can’t take risks with their lives.”

“Okay, there’s no need to do beg man. I’ll crash with one of the girls I bang with, I really don’t mind. Anything for the little Queen”

“Thanks man.”

“You’ll tell me when you want to sleep.”

“Thanks again man.”

I go back to Ndalo and tell her all about it, she suggests that we be the one's who sleep on Moeketsi's matrass because who knows what he's done with whom on that matrass, Hlelo will use mine.

A knock on the door disturbs us, it must be Moeketsi.

“Come in.”

I say and in walks Katlego

“Hi.”

“Hi, what can I do for you?”

I ask wearing a stoic expression on my face, I really don't get why she's here at this time.

“Hi.” Ndalo

“Hi...I'm ...uhm..Sabelo I'm sorry, I didn't know you had company. I'm struggling with chapter 7 and I wanted to ask for help.”

She says waving the textbook in her hands

“Well as you can see, I'm with my girl so I can't.”

“Come on Sabelo don’t be rude, help the poor girl if you can. I can wait.” Ndalo

“No, it’s fine I’ll be okay.” Katlego

“No, he’ll help you. Babe, help her I’m sure it won’t take long.”

She says and gives me a look. I sigh and lead Katlego to the kitchen.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#88

“Look Katlego I really don’t want to be mean but I don’t appreciate you coming to my room especially at this time, you and I are not friends don’t mistake my kindness for friendship.”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to cross any boundaries.”

“Next time you show up to my room at this hour I won’t be so kind, as a matter of fact I’d appreciate it if you didn’t show up here at all.”

Yoh, I've never been so embarrassed in my entire existence. Tears are burning my eyes fighting for an escape

"I'm sorry, it'll never happen again."

"Yeah, what are you still waiting for? Take your book and leave."

I guess I spoke too soon, he's rude as f***

"You're right I'll leave."

I croak out in a low voice.

I turn on my heels and run to the door with a tight chest and a heavy heart, I've never felt so embarrassed in my life.

“What's wrong, why are you crying?”

Lentle asks when she sees my face, she's in the kitchen with her friend.

“Nothing, hi.”

“Hi”

Lebo greets back.

“ Lentle please.”

I say when Lentle walks inside my room

“What’s wrong, why are you crying?”

“Nothing, I’m just being a cry baby.”

“No, it can’t be nothing if you’re crying this much. Talk to me what’s wrong.”

I look up and release a heavy sigh

“It’s Sabelo, he was so rude to me.”

“That jerk, what happened?”

**“I went to his room to ask for help from him
and...”**

I narrate the entire story to her

“Stupid a, he’s trying to impress his girlfriend
with you. Report him and pluck out his wings, I
know Ziyanda she’s going to throw out his
girlfriend.”**

**“No, Lentle it’s late where will she go? Plus she
was kind to me.”**

“I don’t care, there are always casualties in every war. This is the only way you have to get back at him, it’ll hurt him more than it’ll hurt her think about it. Don’t you want to hurt him like he hurt you?”

“No, it’s not that deep. Let it go Lentle, I want to sleep. Go back to Mbali.”

**“Let me know if you change your mind, I’ll gladly buy you airtime so you can call Ziyanda
“**

Ziyanda is the owner of the residence

“I won’t change my mind, please respect my decision.”

“Okay good girl, people will keep hurting you because you let them get away with it.”

“Let it go Lentle, rest tu.”

She chortles

“Okay.”

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SABELO

I woke up at 5 in the morning and studied until around 9 when Ndalo and the baby woke up. I prepared breakfast and we ate together, I'm with Hlelo in the bedroom while Ndalo is in the bathroom taking a shower. Her phone rings on the bed, it's a call from a landline number. I pick the call

“Good morning miss Khumalo, this is detective Zwane. The one in charge of your case, I prioritized your case like I promised to. I have the results from the lab, the milk you drank was laced with triazolam a type of sleeping pill that stays in the system longer than others which explains why you couldn't wake up even when the baby was crying. We didn't find anyone's

fingerprints on the glass except for yours but I'm confident we will find the culprit using the prints we found in the apartment. He won't escape."

"Hello? Miss Khumalo are you there?"

I cut the call and toss her phone on the bed.

Hlelo pulls my leg, I look at her and she smiles at me. I pick her up and head to the bathroom, to say I'm angry would be putting it lightly.

Like always Ndalo chose to conceal things from me, she turns off the tap when she hears the door open

“Am I taking too long?”

She asks sticking her head in between the glass shower doors.

“Ndalo, why do you insist on lying to me over and over again?”

“What are you talking about?”

“Drop the act, I know about you being drugged and my daughter crying her lungs out while you were out of it.”

“I can explain.”

She steps out of the shower and grabs a towel and ties it around her body.

“Explain.”

“Can we talk in your room?”

“No, I want to talk here.”

She gasps

“I don’t know what happened but you remember I was sleepy and drowsy?...I slept and woke up to..”

She explains her version of events

“Why did you hide it from me? How many times have we gone through this Ndalo, I’ve warned you numerous times to stop hiding things from me and you always promise to do better only for you to go back and do the same thing.”

“I was going to tell you after your exams.”

I look at her and shake my head

“You’ll never see me as the man in your life ne?

It doesn’t matter what I do but I’ll forever

remain just a boy in your eyes, you always do this to me. Every single time and I keep forgiving and giving you second chances but you keep ripping out my heart.”

“I’m sorry baby I’ll never do it again.”

“I’m the one who’s sorry that I couldn’t be the man you need.”

“Please don’t talk like that, I swear I’ll never repeat my mistake. I promise.”

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NDALO

I've never seen Sabelo look so shattered and I'm afraid this time I may have gone too far and reached the limit, I can see it in his eyes he's done.

"Sabelo please."

"Stop crying in front of my daughter, what impression of me do you want to give her?"

I wipe my tears with my palms

"I'm sorry."

“Not as sorry as I am, get dressed I'll drive you back to Embalenhle.”

My heart just dropped to the soles of my feet, he's taking me back to Emba? Weren't we supposed to go back after his exams?

“Why?”

“What do you mean why? Awuhlali yini Embalenhle, ubosho phela musuthole enye indawo.”

(Don't you live in Embalenhle, tell me if you have found another place)

“What happened to booking into a hotel and going back together after your exam?”

“That was the plan before I found out that you lied to my face and made me a fool, get dressed I still need to come back and study.”

“Sabelo please.”

“Can we not do this in front of my daughter, I don't want her to experience any toxicity my parents never subjected me to such so I also won't expose my daughter to such.”

Iyo!

“Ok.”

“Let me give you space, you’ll tell me when you’re done.”

With that said he walks out of the room I grab a pillow on top of the bed and scream my eyes out, lord knows I never meant to hurt him I was going to tell him but I didn’t want this affecting his studies. If I knew I’d lose him then I wouldn’t have hidden the truth from him.

We are driving back to Emba in awkward silence, Hlelo is sleeping. I haven’t stopped

crying since we left his res and it hurts that he hasn't said anything to console me, it's like he doesn't care. He's looking ahead ignoring my sniffles, and it hurts like hell.

“Don't you want to see your parents?”

I say when he takes the road that leads to my parents place

“I will but after dropping you off at your house.”

“Okay, I thought we'd go together.”

“You thought wrong.” He says

That is enough to shut me up until he parks outside the gate and carries the sleeping Hlelo inside, I follow behind him and meet him at the door. He's already on his way out.

“Won't you stay?”

“So you can lie to me? No. Bye Ndalo.”

He walks past me taking my heart with him. I swivel and look at him as he walks to the gate, my chest tightens and tears blind my vision as a painful lump clogs my throat.

“Sabelo, please don't go!”

I say and run behind him.

“Please, hear me out.”

“For what? So you can tell me you wanted to protect me?. I’ve been excusing the sh that you do because I thought it was hormones but you’re no longer pregnant Ndalo, what’s your excuse now huh?”**

“I’m sorry, please forgive me.”

“Why do you like keeping things from me?”

“I was going to tell you, I promise.”

“You’re lying, you always say that but you only tell me after getting caught. Truth is I’ll never be man enough in your eyes Ndalo, I will forever be nothing but a boy you feel the need to protect. Unfortunately I can’t be with someone who doesn’t regard me as a man, I can’t. I love you with all of my heart but it’s clear I’ll never be man enough for you regardless of how much I try.”

Tears are rolling down his cheeks as he says this, breaking my heart into a million pieces.

“Babe please don’t do this, we can talk about this and fix it.”

He wipes his tears with the hem of his shirt and opens the driver's door.

“Please don't go, at least not like this.”

“Tell my daughter I love her.”

He gets inside the car and drives off leaving behind a trail of dust. I put my hands on my face and cry in pain as I watch his car until it disappears into the corner, I have lost him for good this time I can feel it in my gut.

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NEO

“Isn’t that Ndalo’s cheese boy?”

**Casper says gesturing towards a white Hyundai
i10 waiting at the robots. I look at him carefully**

“I think it’s him”

“And he’s alone in the car.”

**I’ll never get another chance like this, I grab my
car keys and trudge to my car**

“Neo! Uyaphi manje?”

(Where are you going)

“I’m following him.”

I start the ignition and my engine roars heating up. I hit the accelerator and speed after him, I overtake all the cars and drive behind him.

When I’m driving on the lane next to his I roll down my window

“Cheese boy!” I bellow

He turns to my direction

“Stop the car and let’s have a man to man conversation.”

“Follow me!” He challenges.

I must admit he’s got balls for a boy his age but unfortunately for him, today is his last day on earth. I follow his car to an open field, he’s already waiting for me when I park my car. I grab my gun from the glove compartment and put it on my waist before climbing out of the car and walking towards him.

“How dare you drug my woman you piece of sh*t!”

He says throwing a punch on my face.

“Wow, I’m impressed cheese boy!”

“I’ll show you what a cheese boy can do, you’ll learn to never underestimate people I will teach you a lesson.”

He throws another punch to my jaw that instantly has me spitting blood, he’s definitely stronger than I thought.

“You asked for it cheese boy, I’ll beat your ass today.”

“Come, I’m ready for you.”

He says with hands balled into fists, I try to punch him but the boy ducks so I miss. Due to the force I threw the fist with I stagger and almost fall to the ground.

He laughs

“You’re so pathetic you don’t even know how to fight like a man, all you know is to drug defenseless women and assault them in their sleep. Ndalo is mine, mine alone. She’ll never love you, no matter what you do because I rule her heart like she rules mine.”

“You’re not man enough for her. You are nothing but a boy.”

“Love knows no age Neo, Ndalo is mine always has been and always will be. Accept reality and stop acting like a lunatic busy using distasteful methods to make her yours. She’ll never be yours, want to know why? because she’s mine”

His mockery infuriates me, I stand up and throw a punch on his stomach.

“You punch like a girl”

He laughs and sends a jab under my chin and grabs my head bringing me down and bashes me repeatedly with his knee. I wrap my arms around his legs and try to drop him to the

ground but the boy grabs me and drops me on the ground like a bag of potatoes instead.

“You’re here busy calling me a cheese boy when you’re the one who is a cheese boy, you’re such a disgrace. You can’t fight like a man.”

He laughs.

His laughter fuels the hate I feel towards him so I draw my gun and pull the trigger, I may not be good in fist fighting but I’m an expert when it comes to shooting. I never miss the target, the first bullet lands on his stomach while the last two land on his chest.

A smile embraces my face when he drops to the floor, blood oozing out of his wounds and from his mouth.

“Die, so Ndalo and I can be happy with your daughter.”

I laugh

“He who laughs last laughs the hardest, that’s what English says.”

I say and head back to my car leaving him on the ground grunting in pain.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#89

Meyiwa and I have an appointment with a specialist, Dr Merafe who is said to be one of the best in the country. From what we've heard, the man is good at what he does and I guess that's why his services don't come cheap. To pay him, we might have to use all our savings and even sell Sphe's car yeah that's how expensive he is but that's nothing compared to our daughter's life. It's been weeks of nothing but anguish, having our daughter fighting for her life in hospital has

been one of the most difficult times we've had to go through in our marriage. I hope the specialist and his team can help my daughter. Im scared but I have faith, not just in science and medicine but in God too, I've been praying and fasting for my daughter's health and I'm confident that she'll be okay. She must be.

My house doesn't feel like home without my kids, it feels empty and cold. It's even worse without Mercy and Mamy, at least they kept me company while they were here and kept me from thinking too much about Sphe but they couldn't stay in my house forever, they had to go back to their lives at some point.

With Meyiwa back at work I spend my days praying, crying to God asking him to show my daughter mercy and spare her life. I don't have appetite so I hardly eat. I only eat when Meyiwa is at home and it's only because he forces me to. My heart clenches painfully each time I see my reflection in the mirror, I look like a shell of who I used to be. I have lost so much weight and all my plumpness is gone. I look horrible, nothing like the woman Meyiwa got married to.

“What's keeping you?”

That's what he says when he walks in from the lounge and finds me still dressed in my undergarments. I look at the heap of clothing

on top of my bed and a lone tear rolls down my
cheek.

“My dresses don’t fit me Meyiwa.”

He looks at me and sadness embraces his
features

“Mama wengane zami?”

(Mother of my kids)

“Yes?”

I watch as his lips part, I'm waiting for him to
say something but he blows out a heavy sigh

and saunters towards me instead. He whisks me off the ground without a warning and carries me to bed.

“We’ll get through this; I don’t know how but I know we’ll get through it. I trust God and my ancestors; our baby will recover and be the doctor she has always wanted to be.”

“I don’t know Meyiwa; a huge part of me is scared I don’t want to lie. I’ve been praying tirelessly pleading for her life but there’s still no change in her condition.”

“No Thapi you cannot afford to lose faith now, it’s always darker before dawn. Our breakthrough is near, I can feel it in my bones

so please don't give up now. We are almost at the finish line, keep fighting I need you to be strong one last time. Sphe will be fine, Dr Merafe is the best in the game. He'll help our daughter, Sphe will be fine."

I don't know what I'd do without this man and his support, he's my strength when I'm weak. He's been my crutch throughout this whole daunting process carrying me through, I'd probably be six feet under if it wasn't for him.

He wipes my tears with his palms

"You're breaking my heart, please stop with the tears. Sphe will be fine, okay?"

I nod vigorously

“I’ll quickly head to the mall and buy you a few outfits, what size should I buy?”

“I think 32 or 30 should be fine.”

I can’t believe I went from size 38 to 32 in such a short period of time.

“Okay.”

He plants a peck on my forehead and moves me from his lap to the bed.

“I’ll be back soon.”

He says already on his feet. His phone rings in his hands, he picks up heading to the door

“WHAT?”

That’s what he says before the phone slips from his hands and falls to the floor cracking the screen in the process.

“What’s wrong Meyiwa, who was on the phone?”

I ask standing next to him. I ran to his side the moment I saw the hurt look on his face

“My liefde talk to me, what’s going on?”

“Put something on, we need to leave.”

His eyes are shining with tears, to say I’m worried would be an understatement. I’ve never seen Meyiwa cry in my life, not even when we thought Sphe was dead.

“Meyiwa, Khuluma nami ngiyacela Msomi.”

(Talk to me I’m begging you)

“Get dressed or I’ll leave without you.”

He says in a stern tone

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NDALO

I don’t know what to do with myself to get rid of the horrible pain I feel, I don’t know what hurts the most between the throbbing headache I have and or the pernicious pain in my heart. I want to cry but the tears won’t come out, I knew I was in love with Sabelo, but I never realized just how much until he ended things with me. The pain is so deep one would swear

that I've lost him to death, I wish he would understand that my decision not to disclose what happened had nothing to do with his masculinity, I did it to protect him from himself. I don't doubt his ability to protect me but I know how he is when it comes to me, I know he'd go to any lengths to protect me even if it means jeopardizing his education. I didn't want him to jeopardize his education and career because of something that didn't even happen so that's why I wanted to tell him after his exams. I have lost him and my only mistake was trying to protect him from himself.

“Buhle you're starting to worry me now, yini kwenzenjani?”

(What's wrong)

“I don’t want to talk about it mom, please understand.”

“How can I understand when you’re in pain, is that boy cheating on you?”

I shake my head

“Then what?”

My phone rings just when I open my mouth to answer

“Baba” It’s Mr. Meyiwa

“Ma ka Hlelo Kunjani?”

(How are you)

I could be wrong, but it sounds like he’s been crying but it wouldn’t make sense for him to cry, imagine a whole Brandon Meyiwa in tears!

“Ngiyaphila baba ngingezwa kuwe?”

(I’m okay and how are you)

“Is it Meyiwa?”

My mother asks in a whisper and I nod my head in agreement before my attention goes back to Mr. Meyiwa on the line.

“When last did you see Sabelo?”

My heart thuds hard against my chest at his question, could it be that something bad happened to him?

“Today, he dropped me off at my house over an hour ago. Why abuza ubaba?”

“Because something terrible happened to him. I need you to be strong, do it for Hlelo”

“What happened to him baba?”

I'm at a brink of tears I can't help but think about death, I can't think of anything else that would make Meyiwa cry except for the death of his beloved son. And I pray my suspicion is wrong.

My mother snatches the phone from my hand when she sees the tears in my eyes

“Meyiwa, it's Lilian here. Tell me what happened to Sabelo?”

I can't hear Mr Meyiwa's response but whatever he told her must be serious because

dejection instantly embraces my mother's features.

“Ma, what's going on. What did he say?”

“Buhle change into something not this shorts and crop top that you're wearing.”

She orders skimming her eyes up and down my outfit.

“What's wrong with my outfit, mama what's going on? Is Sabelo in danger?”

“Wear a dress and look presentable we need to leave.”

She says completely ignoring my questions

“No, I’m not going anywhere until you tell me what’s going on!”

“Change, I’ll bring the car around so long.”

She says and leaves the room leaving me in a bundle of confusion. So she’s going to let me get away with shouting at her? U Lilian Khumalo wonke is over-looking my disrespect, something is definitely up.

We've been driving around in silence, mom refuses to say anything regardless of how much I plead with her to tell me what Mr. Meyiwa told her about Sabelo. I left Hlelo with Anele, I tried to call Sabelo's number but it took me straight to voicemail, Mrs. Meyiwa's too while Mr. Meyiwa's phone rang unanswered after his call. I'm going out of my mind with worry that I'm even tempted to call Babomncane Ntsika since I'm struggling to get hold of Sabelo and his parents on the phone, Khethelo is the only one who answered my call but it was useless because like me she doesn't know anything- she's still in Res and in the middle of her final exams.

"We are here." Mom

I shift my gaze from my phone and check my surroundings, and that's when I realize that we are in Evander hospital.

“What are we doing here? Is Sabelo injured, did he get into an accident?”

“Let's get inside Buhle.”

With that said she climbs out of the car and I follow behind her to the waiting area like a lost puppy

“Oh, there they are.”

She says gesturing towards the Meyiwas. My heart drops when I see the expressions on their face, it's clear that they've been crying. Mrs. Meyiwa's red and swollen eyes are enough proof

“Ma, please talk to me what's going on?”

I ask looking at Mrs. Meyiwa

“You didn't tell her?”

Mr. Meyiwa asks looking at my mother.

“No, I couldn’t bring myself to do it. I thought I’d bring her here so you can break the news to her.”

“What news, baba what’s going on? Uphi uSabelo, why won’t anyone tell me anything!”

He looks at me with eyes full of pity

“I’m sorry Ndalo but Sabelo was shot, three bullets. One on his stomach and two on his chest, one went through the right ventricle of his heart....”

“No, no please don’t tell me he’s dead please don’t tell me Sabelo is dead. Please tell me he

survived, he can't die, we need him. Hlelo needs her father.”

I'm trembling uncontrollably, my vision is blurry because of the tears that keep pouring out of my eyes like water from a waterfall. No, it can't be true, Sabelo can't be dead.

“He's alive but his condition is critical, the doctor said there's a high chance he won't survive the operation. He needs all the prayers he can get to survive this, please pray for him. He's the only child I have left.”

Says Mrs Meyiwa, gloom embracing her skeletal face. She looks so frail and older than her real age, I hate seeing her like this.

“What do you mean he’s the only child you have left?” I ask

“Sphe is gone, my little girl is gone Ndalo she...shhh...she’s goneeee.”

She says and bites her lower lip to stop herself from crying out but it proves to be a futile exercise because she ends up breaking into a gut-wrenching sob. Her cry is disheartening, it tears my heart to shreds and prompts a shrill cry to escape from my lips. I’m in disbelief, no parent deserves to bury their child.

“Baba is this true?”

I ask looking at Mr. Meyiwa desperate to hear the opposite, this can't be true. Sphe cannot be dead, not when Mr. Meyiwa has found a specialist who can help her, no it can't be.

“It's true my child, she passed on this afternoon.”

“How baba, it doesn't make sense..”

I know her health was deteriorating but her death is still a bitter pill to swallow.

“Nami angazi Ntombi yami maybe she felt it when her brother got shot..and you know how

twins are, they feel each other's pain ...who knows what happened maybe her fragile body couldn't handle the pain..I don't know maKhumalo all I know is that she's gone, my one and only daughter is gone and my son could follow”

He says and wipes the lone tear rolling down his cheek.

I'm shattered but I know what I feel doesn't come close to what the Meyiwas must be feeling, they just lost their daughter and there are high chances that they could lose also their son.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#90

Sphe was in hospital for almost two months, getting worse with each day that passed but even with that I can't say I was prepared for her death. I was hopeful and thought it would only be a matter of time before she woke up. She was always in my prayers, I prayed for her more than I prayed for myself, and I was hopeful that she would survive especially when Mr. Meyiwa found a specialist who could help her. I'm shattered, broken and in disbelief. This can't be true; I must be having a terrible nightmare. Sphe is still alive and I'm sleeping

and having a horrible dream, what I've heard can't be real or else my conscience won't hold up the guilt weighing heavily on my soul.

I feel responsible for her death, maybe if I told Sabelo the truth then none of this would've happened. Sabelo wouldn't be in hospital fighting for his life because we would still be in Johannesburg, in a hotel spending quality time as a family while he studied in preparation for his last two exams.

I can't bring myself to hold eye contact with the Meyiwas because I feel responsible for the pain they feel. I'm sure Sphe would still be alive if Sabelo didn't get shot, it's my fault Sabelo got shot. I pray Sabelo survives the operation

because I won't be able to live with myself if he dies, how will I look at my daughter in the eye knowing I'm responsible for her father's death? How will I face the Meyiwas knowing that I'm the cause of their suffering? Sabelo must survive, for his parents and his daughter's sake they all need him alive. The Meyiwas don't deserve to bury both their kids at the same time, no parent deserves to go through so much pain.

Uncle Ntsika and Aunt Zenkosi emerge from the corner holding hands, aunt Zenkosi breaks free from her boyfriend and half runs to Mrs. Meyiwa's side and engulfs her in a bone crushing hug, uncle Ntsika pushes himself to his brother's side and gives him a tight hug and

the two brothers sob in each other's arms. It's such a poignant sight to see two proud Zulu men in tears, they must be really hurt to break down like this in public and seeing them in this state amplifies the guilt I feel.

"I'm so sorry my child."

My mother says wrapping her arms around me and pulling me to her warm embrace.

"He'll be fine, he's a strong young man I know he'll make it."

She mutters in a soft voice while her palm moves up and down my back caressing me in a

soothing manner, her actions prompt me to cry my eyes out in her arms releasing all the agonizing pain I feel inside.

“Askies sisi, he’ll survive he’s strong.” Aunt Zenkosi

She takes me from my mother’s arms and pulls me to her own.

“Stop crying and pray for him, he needs you now more than ever.”

She says when we finally break off the hug. She then wipes my tears with her palms and plants a peck on my forehead.

“Thank you, aunt.”

“Don’t mention it, we are family.”

“Love can’t you go and check on my nephew, my brother says it’s been almost two hours since Sabelo was taken to the operating room, and no one has come to give them an update since.” Uncle Ntsika

Like most nurses who work in a government hospital aunt Zenkosi works seven days in seven days off. Today is one of her off days so she has no knowledge about Sabelo’s condition.

“The duration of an open-heart surgery depends on the actual procedure that is being performed. On average, it takes three to four hours to complete this kind of operation. I know and understand that the wait is unbearable, but I think we should allow the doctors to do their jobs without interrupting them, the best thing we can do for Sabelo right now is to pray for him.”

“You’re right.” mom

We hold hands, bow our heads and pray for Sabelo’s operation to be successful or rather I listen as everyone else prays for him because I can’t bring myself to pray, I want to pray but words fail me. Knowing I can still lose him

regardless of how hard I pray and pour my heart out denigrates the faith I had in prayer prior to Sphe's death.

“Amen!”

We all say as we conclude our prayer session. We sit in comfortable silence, each one of us lost in their own thoughts.

“Did you find the bastard that shot him?”

Uncle Ntsika says breaking the silence

“No, we don't know who shot him. The nurses told us the person who brought him to the

hospital said he found him alone bleeding and unconscious lying on the ground next to his car. The police are still investigating and hopefully they will find something soon, I can't wait to deal with whoever it was thought that it best to mess with my son.”

The look on his face tells me he's baying for blood, he's always so calm and soft spoken it was hard to imagine that he could be capable of murder but looking at the expression on his face now..he looks capable of more than just murder.

“Who was it, the one who found Sabelo?”

Ntsika

“I think they said his name is Zweli or something. Remind me to take his number from the nurse, I need to thank him for saving my boy’s life. If he didn’t bring him to the hospital when he did, we would be preparing for two funerals instead of one.”

Maybe it’s time I tell the elders about Neo and everything that has happened in the last couple of weeks, I could be wrong, but I suspect Neo is the one who shot Sabelo. I mean it makes sense especially after the break ins in my apartment, the missing panties and the drugged milk incidents I’m beginning to discern that Neo is much more dangerous than what we initially gave him credit for.

“I’m sorry to interrupt your conversation but there’s something I should tell you.”

“It’s okay my child you can tell us, we are listening.” Ntsika

Everyone’s eyes are on me eager to hear the news I have for them.

“There’s a guy who was asking me out and wouldn’t take no for an answer regardless of how many times I rejected him so one day he came to the restaurant I was in with Hlelo and Nthabi and...”

I narrate the whole story to everyone, and they all listen to me attentively until I'm done.

“Do you realize what your silence has resulted in? You were almost raped and now Sabelo could lose his life!”

Shouts uncle Ntsika boiling in anger. I nod and drop my head unable to bear the look in his eyes.

“Buhle why didn't you say anything?” Mom

Unlike uncle Ntsika she doesn't sound angry but disappointed.

“The family was already going through a lot with Sphe’s poor health, we didn’t want to burden anyone. We thought we could handle it on our own.”

“By doing what, getting a restraining order? Yeah right.” Uncle Ntsika

He is irritated and annoyed by me, the look on his face gives him away. I wouldn’t be surprised if he also blames me for this like I blame myself. Sabelo’s parents and aunt Zenkosi haven’t uttered a single word since I told everyone the news, I wonder if they also hate me and blame me like uncle Ntsika does.

“I’m sorry.....I didn’t mean for any of this to happen.”

I say with tears shamelessly rolling down my cheeks

“Sabelo could die and all you have to say is sorry huh!” Uncle Ntsika bellows in anger

“You can’t blame my daughter for this, she didn’t know that this would happen. She loves Sabelo with all her heart, he’s the father of her daughter and we all know she would never intentionally cause him pain. She could lose the love of her life and I’m sure she already blames herself and feels bad for this even though she couldn’t have known that this would happen,

so she doesn't deserve this treatment from you she's not the one who shot Sabelo. She's scared to lose him like you all are and needs your support. Being blamed by you is the last thing she needs now" Mom

"No one blames her mamKhumalo, forgive my brother he's speaking from a place of hurt and frustration. You're right Ndalo couldn't have known this would happen, the only person who should be blamed for this is that so called Neo. I'm sure he's the one who shot my son." Mr. Meyiwa

"He's the one who shot him. He better run and make sure I don't find him if he knows what's good for him because once I'm done with him,

he'll rue the day he chose to mess with Sabelo.”
uncle Ntsika

“Ma ka Hlelo I know you thought you were doing what was good for everyone but please take this as a lesson. This better be the last time you and that hotheaded boyfriend of yours hide something of this magnitude from us, I don't care how burdened you think we are; but you should always tell us about things like this siyezwana Ntombi yami?”

If he makes it, I don't think I'll still be his girlfriend. I don't think our relationship will survive this. He'll probably blame me for Sphe's death.. but I agree anyway.

“Yebo baba.”

Phew! It's comforting to know that he doesn't hate me.

“I can see that you feel bad and blame yourself because you think that this is your fault, you shouldn't because it's not your fault, Neo is the one at fault and your father will make him pay for everything he has put you and Sabelo through okay.”

Hearing those words from Mrs. Meyiwa's mouth puts my heart at ease, I was sure she would go back to hating me after what I just told them.

“Your mother is right my child, there’s no need to feel bad for anything that happened. Your only mistake was keeping quiet even when things spiraled out of control, but I understand why you did it so there’s no need to feel bad.”

Mr. Meyiwa

“And I’m sure it was Sabelo’s idea not to tell us, I know my son uthanda kabi ukuzenza indotyana.” Mrs. Meyiwa

(He likes acting like a man)

Her lips stretch to form a thin smile then curve upside down as a tear rolls down her face probably when she recalls that her son is in hospital and could possibly lose his life.

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MELOKUHLE

My heart bleeds for my sister and the Meyiwa family, I can't begin to imagine what they all must be going through. Losing a loved one is never easy especially when their death is premature, Sphe was still young and had a lot to live for. On the other hand, Sabelo is in hospital fighting for his life. I'm not close to him, but I couldn't help but break down when my mom told me about him over the phone, I know how much my older sister loves him, so I know she'd die if she lost him. Sabelo needs to

live, for my sister and their daughter. Hlelo doesn't deserve to grow up without her father.

“What's wrong love?” Themba

He asks when I take a sit next to him. I excused myself from the table and went outside when my phone rang.

“I'll tell you about it when we get home.”

I don't want to spoil everyone's fun with my sorrowful news.

“No, I want to know now. I know you were crying, talk to me love what did your mom say?” Themba

“We can excuse you if want.”

Nthati says probably seeing the hesitation in my eyes

“No, please don’t go.” I say holding her hand on top of the table “Sabelo, my sister’s boyfriend is in hospital. He was shot three times and one bullet passed through the right ventricle of his heart.”

“Oh no!” Nthati

“That’s not even the worst of it, his twin sister who had been in hospital for weeks prior to that passed on today when her brother got shot.”

“Oh my word, that’s so sad. My condolences to him and his family.” Nthati

**“I feel for his parents, I can imagine their pain.”
Themba**

“I’m sure they are shattered, they only had two kids. Him and his twin sister.”

“Yoh this is so sad; they lost their daughter and could potentially lose their son as well. I know I’d go crazy if I was in their shoes.” Nthati

“I can only imagine how broken and helpless they must feel.” Themba

**“What did the doctor’s say, will he survive?”
Kagiso**

“Mom says chances of him surviving are less than 1%”

“I’m sorry to hear that but miracles happen all the time my love, doctors are not God they don’t know everything. His family should put

him in their prayers, he might recover and shock everyone it wouldn't be the first time a miracle happens." Themba

"Themba is right, I'm a doctor myself and I've seen people survive the worst-case scenarios. Don't be disheartened, I believe Sabelo will make it." Kagiso

"Yes, don't cry. He will make it; we serve a God of miracles."

Nthathi says brushing my hand with her thumb

"Thank you so much for your words of encouragement, Sabelo will definitely make it.

He has survived the worst, what's three bullets?"

They laugh

"Yes, that's the spirit. We don't have the spirit of fear but power, love and a sound mind.

Second Timothy chapter 1 verse 7" Nthati

One thing I love about this woman is her faith in God, it's inspiring to see someone with such an unshakable faith in God. She says she wasn't always like this apparently, she used to be the black sheep in her family and always got up to mischief but looking at her now I find that hard to believe.

“Thank you.” I say

“Themba you should drive her home, I’m sure her sister needs her.” Kagiso

“That’s a good idea, let’s go my love.” Themba

“Thank you once again and I’m sorry for ruining our lunch.”

“You don’t need to apologize, go and be there for your sister she needs you more right now and don’t you dare think you’ve escaped from me you still owe me a girls weekend away.”

I laugh

“You’ll get it, December ngingawe.”

(I’m with you)

“I’ll hold you to it, bye love”

“Bye.”

**Kagiso stands up from his seat and gives me a
hug**

“He will make it.”

“Thank you buti.”

“Love, come on let’s go!”

**Themba bellows making us laugh. He’s waiting
for me at the door with my purse in his hand.**

Nthati squeezes me in a tight hug

**“Go before your boyfriend complains, again..
I’ll call you.”**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#91

“Love I know what you said about giving the doctor’s time to do their job, but can you please go to the operating room and try to find out what’s happening with Sabelo, it’s been over four hours now.” Ntsika

Balls of sweat are rolling down his face as he says this. The collar of his shirt is damp with sweat; sweat that gushes out from the pores of his skin every time his mind harks back to the possibility of losing Sabelo to death. He’s more than just a nephew to him, he’s more like his own son.

“Okay, I’ll try but I’m not making any promises. I won’t insist if they don’t want to tell me anything.” Zenkosi

“That’s fine, we just want to know if he’s still alive that’s all.” Ntsika

She stands up and walks to the direction of the operation room leaving everyone in silence, MaKhumalo had to go back home and relieve Anele from her babysitter duties. Anele is in the middle of final matric exams so she needs all the time she can get to study.

Ndalo asks to be excused and rushes to the bathroom, her boobs are painful, full and leaking with breast milk. Hlelo is probably

hungry and crying for her milk where she is, the last time she suckled on her boob was over five hours ago. The thought of her daughter hungry and crying hysterically grates her heart to small fine pieces, but since she doesn't want to leave the hospital without getting an update with regards to Sabelo's surgery she opts to dial her mother's number and find out how her daughter is doing.

“Buhle”

That's what maKhumalo says when she picks the call on the second ring.

“Ma how is Hlelo doing. Is she crying, she's probably hungry? The last time she ate was

before she fell asleep in the car on our way back from Johannesburg.”

Ndalo says not giving herself a second to breathe in between her sentences.

“Buhle relax would you, your daughter is fine. I raised three kids including yourself so trust me I can handle Hlelo just fine.”

MaKhumalo replies fighting the urge to roll her eyes. Is it just Buhle or all new mothers are paranoid?

“I know but I can’t help but worry about her. We’ve never been apart for so long since she

was born and you know her, she hates formula.”

“I know that’s why I didn’t give her formula; I gave her pap and maas.”

“Mom! She shouldn’t be eating pap, she’s already too big. I feed her mashed potatoes and pumpkin”

“Aw’kahle Ndalo, I know what I’m doing. Uzayilambisa wedwa ingane mina ungangifaki lapho.”

(You’ll starve her on your own don’t involve me)

Ndalo sighs feeling defeated.

“Hold on, Melo wants to talk to you.”

The older woman says and gives her second daughter the phone.

“Hey sis.”

“Hey, when did you arrive?”

“A few minutes ago, Themba drove me. He said I should tell you not to worry, Sabelo will be fine he’ll put him in his prayers.”

“Thanks, he sounds so sweet I can’t wait to meet him”

“He is, you’ll meet him soon. How is Sabelo doing, should I come there?”

“I don’t know we are still waiting for communication from his doctors and no don’t come, I’ll see you when I come back home.”

“Okay, he’ll make it. There’s no way he won’t survive, he has too many people praying for him.”

“Haw really, like who?”

“Themba’s sister and her husband.”

“Oh, that’s so thoughtful of them. You should thank them on my behalf, they sound like really nice people.”

“They are, you’ll meet them one day.”

“I hope so, I have to go. We’ll chat more when I get home.”

“Bye, I love you.”

“I love you more.”

Ndalo drops the call and buries her face under the tap splashing water on her face to wash away the dried-up tears and mucus mixture off her face. When she's done, she takes a paper towel and wipes her face heading back to the waiting area. She finds the Meyiwas on their feet when she walks back to the room, Ntsika and Zenkosi are nowhere in sight.

“MaKhumalo we were waiting for you the others have left, Sabelo's operation was successful. The doctors moved him to the ICU.”

Ndalo's lips stretch into a big smile, she excitedly throws herself in Mathapelo's arms squeezing her in a hug.

“He’s alive mama, he made it thank God!”

The happiness in her voice is almost palpable, Mathapelo smiles hugging her back.

“He’s alive my child.”

The two ladies hold each other for a while before breaking the hug. All this while Meyiwa is looking at them with a smile on his face, pleased with what he sees and proud of his wife for how she handled the news. Like Ndalo, he also thought Mathapelo would go back to hating and being mean to her.

“We should go back home; we need to start making arrangements for Sphe’s funeral and call the rest of our relatives to notify them about Sphe’s death.”

I can only imagine how difficult this might be for both of them.

“I still can’t believe she’s gone; she was such a young bright girl with her whole life ahead of her.” Ndalo

“Neither can I my child, I kept expecting her doctors to waltz through the door and tell us that they made a mistake-our beautiful Sphe is still alive.”

Mathapelo says at a brink of tears, Meyiwa puts his arm around her and pulls her towards his body. He rubs his palm on her bare arm and kisses the crown of her head while battling with his own tears. Regret covers Ndalo like a blanket, maybe just maybe Sphe would still be alive if she told Sabelo the truth.

“It’s been a long day; we should go home. I’m sure my princess wants her milk now.”

Meyiwa says as an attempt to lighten up the mood.

**“Aw’ umkhozi wami bakithi ave
ngimkhumbulile.”**

(My friend, I miss her so much.)

**“I’ll bring her to your house tomorrow, first
thing in the morning.”**

“I’d be so grateful my child, asambeni.”

(Let’s go)

“I’d like to see Sabelo before I leave.”

**“I don’t think they’ll allow you to see him, they
refused when we asked to see him earlier.”**

Mathapelo

“I’ll take my chances; I’m not going anywhere without seeing him.”

“Okay, we’ll wait for you then.”

“No, it’s fine baba you don’t have to. I’ll call an Uber.”

“I wasn’t asking you, I’m not leaving you here all alone after someone tried to kill Sabelo ..that reminds me, I need to call and hire people to take turns guarding Sabelo’s door. I can’t take chances with his life. Neo will probably want to come back and finish him off when he learns that his plan to kill him didn’t succeed.”

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NDALO

After pleading and shedding tears Sabelo's doctor finally gave me permission to see him for five minutes. My knees are knocking against each other as I approach Sabelo's bedside, he looks so weak and helpless with all those machines and pipes connected to him. I wipe my tears with my shirt and take his big hand into mine

“Baby...” I sniff and look up to prevent my tears from cascading down my cheeks but it proves futile because they still roll down either way “I don’t want to cry but seeing you in this condition breaks my heart....I love you so much Sabelo and I’m sorry that I made you feel like you were not man enough for me because that was never my intention, I didn’t want to distract you and shift your focus from your exams. I don’t think you’re a boy, I’ve never seen you as such...to me you’ve always been a man and that’s one of the reasons why I fell in love with you, please fight and come back to us. Your daughter needs you; your parents need you and I also need you. Please fight and come back to us my love.”

I lift his hand to my lips and plant a long peck.

“I love you so much Meyiwa and I can’t lose you, I’d rather lose you as a boyfriend than lose you to death. Please fight and come back to us. Your daughter can’t grow up without you.”

The door creaks open, I turn around and look behind me. A sigh of relief escapes my lips when I see that it’s a nurse. My raging thoughts had me believing it was Neo coming to finish what he started.

“I’m sorry ma’am but your time is up, my patient needs to rest after the long surgery he just had.”

“Okay.”

I bend and plant a peck on his lips. His face looks pale and lifeless, one would think he’s been in hospital for weeks, yet it’s only been a day.

“I love you.”

I say and let go of his hand and walk to the door.

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NEO

“Keep checking... there must be something.”

Casper looks up and sighs

“I looked everywhere, there’s nothing.”

“Even on his wall?”

“Yes, Neo even on his wall.”

“What about hers?”

“There’s nothing about Sabelo’s death on her wall either.”

“I don’t get it, I killed him. Why isn’t there nothing about his death on social media yet? Shouldn’t his friends and family be posting him all over social media expressing their anguish over his death?”

“Not everyone takes their private life to social media, other people prefer to keep their lives and affairs private.”

“Even so, that boy is a 2000 and you know how these kids are. One of his friends should’ve posted him by now.”

The more hours pass without hearing about the news of his death the more my anxiety spikes, could it be that someone found him and rushed him to the hospital? But it can't be I made sure to aim for his heart, even if he made it to the hospital before he died there's no way he'll survive I will make certain of that.

“Take this and stop pacing up and down, yerr you're making me dizzy.”

Casper says giving me a blunt. I take it and pull a drag and return it to him after blowing out the smoke using my nostrils.

**“He’s dead stop worrying. Your name is Neo,
and you never miss.” Casper**

**“You’re right, I’m Neo. The best the ever was,
and I never miss.”**

We laugh

**“That’s more like it, now stop doubting your
skills and wait for people to spread the news of
his death.”**

**“Yeah, how long do you think I should wait
after his funeral to make a move on Ndalo?”**

He laughs

“You’re such a bastard, you’re already thinking about making moves on his girlfriend while the poor boy hasn’t been buried yet.”

“I’ve waited so long to make her mine; I don’t know think I can wait for more than a month to make her officially mine.”

“Yo, that’s too soon man. You should give her a year at least.”

“Udakiwe, I can’t for that long. Someone else might snatch her from right under my nose.”

I stand up and walk to my bedroom to take her panties under my pillow and sniff them. Damn they smell so good; my dick jerks up when I think up how sweet her p**** tasted on my tongue the other day.

“What are you doing with panties, are you gay now?”

He asks with confusion mirroring his features as I walk back to the longue holding Ndalo’s panties in my hand.

“No, I love p**** too much to be gay.”

“So, what are you doing with those?”

He gestures at the panties with his eyes

“They are not mine of course; they belong to Ndalo.”

“What? the Fk man! How did you get her panties?”**

A smile embraces my lips when I think about all I had to do to get hold of these panties. She’s definitely worth the risk!

“That’s for me to know and for you to never ever find out.”

Just then someone bangs on the front door

**“I wonder who has the guts to knock like that
on my door.”**

“I don’t know.”

**He says shrugging his shoulders. I head to the
front door to open, my hands tremble when I
find the police on my doorstep.**

“Are you going to let us in?”

“Uhhh...why? Did I do something?”

My voice comes out squeaky and shaky.

“Did we disturb something, who are you with inside?”

The dark skinned one says poking his head inside and then looks at the red lace panties in my hands.

I lick my lips and swallow nothingness trying so hard to hide how terrified I am.

“Yes, you disturbed a very heated passionate moment with my girl.”

I say faking a laugh

“Who’s at the door kanti kau?”

Casper bellows from the lounge

The police officers look at each other and have a silent conversation before the short one turns around and looks at me with a menacing expression on his face

“I’m detective Zwane and this is my colleague constable Jiyose, Neo you’re under arrest for violating the restraining order Miss Khumalo has against you and for trespassing, breaking into miss Khumalo’s apartment and for

**drugging her and assaulting her in her sleep.
Jiyose cuff him and read him his rights.”**

“Neo Moloko you’re under arrest, you have the right to remain silent anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to speak to an attorney, and to have an attorney present during any questioning. If you cannot afford a lawyer, the government will provide you with one.”

Jiyose says cuffing my hands on my back

“I’ll take the underwear, who knows it might be the one miss Khumalo reported missing.”

Zwane says with a smirk on his face

I'm done for! There's no getting out of this one

“What's going on here!”

**Casper bellows as the police drag me to the
back of the van**

**“Call my lawyer!” I shout back before Jiyose
closes the doors of the van.**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

92

While love leaves a memory no one can steal, death leaves a heartache that no one can heal. Whoever said loss gets easier with time was a liar. It's been a week, exactly seven days since Sphesihle met her untimely death and left us with agonizing pain and deep sadness and the pain of her loss hasn't gotten better, instead it gets worse with each day that passes. I don't think I'll ever get over the pain of losing my daughter, my princess and the apple of my eye so abruptly. She was only 19 and had a lot to live for, she had so many hopes and dreams for her future and death robbed her of a chance to

fulfill them, I was looking forward to seeing her grow and mature into a woman.

Death denied me the joys of being a father to a girl child. I didn't get to experience my daughter falling in love for the first time, I'll never feel the joy other fathers feel from walking their daughters down the aisle because fate denied me the opportunity to see my daughter grow in front of my eyes, now all I'll ever do is wonder and imagine because death came in like a thief in the night and claimed her life before she could grow up and be her own woman, before she could blossom into a beautiful flower that I know she would have been.

My girl didn't get to live her life to the fullest, she didn't get to be a woman, a wife and a mother. I know some would say she was in hospital for a while and in poor health so I should've prepared myself for her death, but truth is I was hopeful, had faith and was convinced that my daughter would survive. It didn't matter how she'd come out of the surgery, with quadriparesis (partial paralysis of all four limbs- hands and legs) and/or with speech issues and hearing loss like Doctor Merafe predicted, all I wanted was my daughter alive. How she was wouldn't have mattered to me, I would still love her the same.

I'm starting to believe that I might be cursed, because why else would all my seeds perish?

First my wife had multiple miscarriages before she gave birth to our twins and after loving and raising them for 19 years, we lose them to death? What is my sin, what kind of man will I be without an offspring? I've worked very hard over the years accumulating wealth but what good is that without an heir to inherit it when I perish?

I pick up the photo frame on top of the vanity table, it's a picture of me and Sphe- she's in my arms wearing a yellow two piece with white sandals. She has a big smile on her face revealing her two missing front teeth. I think she was 8 years old here, I remember how much of a daddy's girl she used to be, always pestering me to pick her up and put her on my

lap. I thought she would change as she grew older, but she didn't, my girl loved it when I carried her in my arms. Even so, I'm certain that she couldn't have loved it more than I did, because there was nothing I enjoyed more than pampering her with love and affection, I will forever cherish the beautiful memories we shared together, especially the heart to heart conversations we used to have during our father and daughter movie dates in the lounge over a cup of hot chocolate and marshmallows.

If there's anything that I'm grateful for, is that at least she knew how much I loved her because I was never shy to show her. I know wherever she is now, she knows that her father loved her with all his heart. I've lost a huge part

of myself, and I don't know if I'll ever be whole again.

“I knew I would find you here.”

Ntsika says as he walks into Sphe's bedroom. His lips curve into a thin smile when his eyes dart to the photo in my hands

“I remember this day; it was on Christmas. You wanted to take a picture carrying them both, but Sphe wouldn't let you pick up Sabelo”

We laugh going down memory lane

“She pushed him and said “wu babami lo” but Sabelo didn’t fight her, he just looked at her and came to me.” Ntsika

“Yeah, she’s always been territorial when it came to me and Sabelo has always acted older than his age. Always so understanding and patient with her”

“True, you remember how much of a bully Sphe used to be.. she’d leave her dolls and want to play with Sabelo’s cars.”

“And Sabelo would never fight her, he’d always give her his toys and start making drawings on his books.”

“But your bully daughter would still go after him and snatch his paper and run with it.”

He says and we laugh harking back to those times. Life used to be so simple then

“I think Hlelo will take after her, that girl is so territorial over her dad. It’s like she forgets about everyone when she sees her father. It’s so sad that she may grow up without him.”

Sabelo has been in ICU since his surgery. There hasn’t been an improvement in his condition.

“No, don’t think like that. Your son is strong, he’ll wake up.”

“I won’t hold my breath; I’m starting to think that maybe I am cursed I mean how else do you explain everything that has happened?”

“No, don’t say that.”

“You know it’s true Ntsika...how many kids did I lose before Mathapelo conceived sisi and buti? And now Sphe is gone, I’m starting to make peace with the fact that I’m not destined to be a father.”

“No, don’t speak like that. Sabelo is still alive..”

“Until when? I don’t want to raise my hopes up only for them to be crushed when he dies, I don’t want to keep hurting myself by having high hopes.”

“Zalo no! Sabelo will not die, he’ll live. He has to, for you, his mom, and for all of us especially for his daughter.” He says

A lone tear runs down his cheek and pools under his chin

“He will make it Zalo.”

I don't know if he's trying to convince me or himself.

“I'm scared Ntsika, I am so terrified. I know everyone expects me to be a man and be strong for Mathapelo but I can't do it anymore...I can't even pray anymore because I feel like it's a waste of time, I prayed tirelessly for Sphe's life but God still took her and I'm afraid he'll also take my son and leave me without kids to call my own but at least I have a grandchild ..”

I say and look up to prevent tears from rolling down my face

“I'm sorry zalo, I know you're hurt and feel a terrible aching in your heart. I've been there

before and I know how it feels; I lost the love of my life and mother of my children six years ago. I cannot promise you that the pain you feel will lessen with time because sorrow and loss are constant, but if we were to go all our lives carrying them the whole time then we wouldn't be able to handle it. The sadness would paralyze us; in the end we have to pack it somewhere and find somewhere to leave it.”

I sigh and look at him fighting back my tears

“You need to find a way to keep living, please don't allow yourself to drown in your sorrows. Yes, you have lost Sphe, your princess and it hurts but you need to keep living for the one's for are still alive. Mathapelo, your son and your

grandchild need you, Hlelo doesn't deserve a depressed grandfather. She doesn't deserve to get bits and pieces of you, she deserves all of you. The loving grandfather I know you can be, Hlelo won't replace Sphe but look at the bigger picture with her you can get the experience raising a daughter all over again."

"You're right but it's not as easy as you make it."

"I know but you can't keep locking yourself in Sphe's bedroom and thinking about what you've lost. It's been a week already, but you still haven't decided when the funeral will be."

“I know but I thought Sabelo would be awake by now, how do we bury his twin sister without him? They are twins and you know what Sabelo needs to do on the day of the funeral so that he doesn’t follow his sister.”

“Yeah, I know but you can't keep delaying the funeral, all these relatives who came here to support you have lives to get back to.”

For the first time in my life, I don’t know what to do. I’m stuck!

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.br/.**

THEMBA

“How’s Melo? Have you spoken to her today?”

“She’s okay but she says her sister is falling apart, Sabelo is still in hospital and isn’t showing any signs of recovery.”

“Eish, that’s hectic but there’s still hope as long as his soul is still in his body there’s still time for God to manifest himself and improve his situation. Kagiso and I will keep praying for him.”

“Thanks, I’m also praying for him.”

“He’ll be fine, I know it.”

“He should because I miss my girl, but I can’t be selfish and expect her to come and see me knowing that her sister needs her more than ever.”

“I understand, maybe you should attend the funeral.”

“Hah Nthati, I didn’t even know the girl.”

“Yeah, but you’ll kill two birds with one stone- see your girl and get a chance to meet her sisters and who knows you might meet your mother-in-law.”

We laugh

“You’re crazy, it’ll be a funeral not a party and I don’t think anyone in Melo’s family would be interested in meeting me especially her elder sister.”

“I know but I seriously think you should go to the funeral then be with your girl for an hour or two after the funeral. It’ll be better than not seeing her at all.”

“You might be on to something, but I can’t go there alone if I do then Melo will feel forced to entertain and fuss over me and I don’t want that. I want her to be fully present for her sister

without worrying about me at least until the funeral”

“So, who did you want to take with you?”

“You.”

“What? hai angeke Themba.”

“Come on, sis.”

“No, ask Dineo to go with you.”

“You know our relationship is a bit shaky after the stunt she pulled at her graduation so pretty please.”

“Ai Themba..”

“I’ll pay you.”

She laughs

“Yo ai Themba uyahlupha, it’s okay I’ll come with you. When is the funeral?”

“I don’t know yet, Melo says the family hasn’t decided on a date.”

“Ok let me know as soon as you find out”

“Okay.”

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NDALO

Detective Zwane called me a week ago and told me he has taken Neo into custody. Apparently, when he went to question him at his place he found with a red lace underwear in his hands- one matching the description of the one I lost. And just like I suspected his fingerprints matched with the one’s found in my apartment,

so there's no doubt about it he's the lunatic who broke into my house in the middle of the night, stole my panties and laced the milk I kept in the fridge with sleeping pills. Who knows what else he did to me while I was asleep, he's deranged so I wouldn't be surprised if he also assaulted me in my sleep but since the hospital ascertained that there was no sign of penetration there's no way to prove that he touched me.

It's been a week since Sabelo's operation, and he still hasn't woken up. His doctor says his operation was successful and that there's no medical explanation for why Sabelo hasn't regained consciousness yet. I haven't been able to sleep since he was admitted, I don't think I

will ever forgive myself if Sabelo dies especially because he was angry at me when we parted and had even broken up with me.

Everyone keeps saying it wasn't my fault, but I know it was, none of this would have happened if I told Sabelo the truth when he asked me about the broken door. I feel guilty everytime I look at my daughter and think about the possibility of her growing up without her father.

“She’s crying I think she wants breast milk”

Anele says walking in with a crying Melo in her arms. I sit up and take her in my arms, her

small hands reach for my breast attempting to free them from my bra.

“Wu! Mele aliyeke maseka zikhiphela ne bele.”

(She must stopping breastfeeding now that she’s able to take out the breast from the bra)

“Hai Anele mncane kabi lomtanam’ she’s not even one yet.”

(My baby is still young)

“Ain’t you afraid that you’ll have saggy boobs? I hear breastfeeding makes boobs saggy”

“I enjoy breastfeeding and breast milk is good for babies and I’ve been breastfeeding her since

she was born, I think they would be saggy by now.”

“Ai shem uyam’tefisa”

(You’re spoiling her)

“Zala Anele sibone ngeke umtefise ewakho na.”

(Give birth and let’s see if you won’t spoil yours)

“I’m not saying it in a bad way but uyam’thanda awufuni nex ngaye, you don’t even trust us to take good care of her.”

(You love her and you’re protective of her)

“It’s not even that, I trust you to take good care of her ...you know what, you’ll be a mother one day and you’ll understand where I’m coming from.”

“Hmmm, I heard Melo talking on the phone earlier. Apparently her boyfriend will come to Sphe’s funeral.... I can’t wait for the drama to unfold, I know the rents won’t approve of their relationship phela that guy is way older than her.”

“And that would make you happy right?”

“What?”

“Stop pretending, you can’t wait for Themba to come here because you think mom and dad won’t approve. You can’t even hide it, tell me what’s your problem with Melo?”

“I don’t have a problem with her, she’s the one who has a problem with me.”

“it doesn’t look like that from where I’m standing, you’re the one who’s always starting fights and unnecessary quarrels about favoritism and all that. Fix yourself Anele before you lose your sister for good.”

“I knew you’d take her side. I know you love her more than me but you don’t have to be so obvious about who you love more.”

She says and storms out of my room

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#93

It's been a difficult week for the Meyiwas especially for Mathapelo who according to tradition must sit on the matress and mourn for her daughter, the only problem she has with this tradition is that it prevents her from paying a visit to her son who is in hospital fighting for his life and showing no signs of recovery. She

feels terrible, like she's neglecting her son when he needs her the most but then again, it's her duty as a mother to sit on the matress and mourn for her daughter and unfortunately that means there are some things that she is not allowed to do during this period and leaving the house every day to go to the hospital is one of them. If only she could split herself in half, the other half would be in hospital sitting on her son's bedside and praying for his life. She would feel better if her husband was at least visiting their son in hospital, but he doesn't all Meyiwa does lately is to lock himself inside Sphe's bedroom and cry himself silly.

No one can understand his sorrow better than she does because she feels the same way but

that doesn't mean they should wallow in self-pity and forget about their son, Sphe was not their only child. Sabelo is also his son, and he needs Meyiwa's love and support now more than ever, but Meyiwa is far gone in his grief to realize just how unkindly he's treating his own son. At least Ntsika and Khethelo go to the hospital daily without fail. It comforts her to know that there are people in the family who still care about her son's wellbeing apart from herself, it puts her heart at ease to know that Ndalo is not carrying the responsibility of visiting Sabelo on her own. Poor child is devastated and blames herself for what happened to Sabelo, Mathapelo tried on numerous occasions to make her realize that she's not responsible for what happened and therefore should not blame herself for it, but it seems

nothing anyone says is good enough to take away the guilt she feels. Sabelo needs to wake up before she loses her husband to depression and who knows what Ndalo might end up doing to herself out of guilt?

“Ma, I’m on my way to the hospital.”

Ndalo whispers kneeling next to Mathapelo on the matress laid on the tiled floor.

“Ok my child, don’t forget to tell him I love him.”

Mathapelo replies and wipes the tears that just escaped from her eyes.

“I’ll do that ma. Are you sure you’ll be fine with her?”

Ndalo asks looking at Hlelo who has fallen asleep in Mathapelo’s arms

“Of course, I’ll be fine with her baby you don’t even have to ask, you know I love taking care of her.”

“I know ma, but you know how mischievous Hlelo has gotten lately and the last thing you need now is to be shouting and reprimanding her every two minutes.”

A smile embraces Mathapelo's face

**“That's exactly what I need my child...go on,
you will be late.”**

“Ok bye ma.”

**Ndalo stands to her feet and saunters out of the
room careful not to step on anyone's feet.**

**“I still can't believe you allowed your son to be
in a relationship with a grown woman!”**

**One of the aunts sitting next to the door
remarks wearing a scowl on her face.**

“Amanyala wodwa!” Another one adds and spits on the floor

“Don’t reply, that’s exactly what they want. Your reaction.”

Mamy whispers looking at Mathapelo.

Mathapelo sighs and blows out heavy breath, Mamy is right she shouldn’t allow these judgmental people to get her riled up. Sabelo needs to wake up so they can get the funeral over and done with, and everyone can go back to whatever hole they crawled out from. She appreciates their support during this

emotionally taxing time, but she has had enough of their snide remarks and stupid comments about her son's relationship.

Ndalo is standing outside the gate waiting for an Uber when Ntsika appears from behind and stands next to her.

“Going to the hospital?”

He questions and buries his hands inside his pockets.

“Yebo babomnance.”

Ndalo has been uncomfortable around him following his outburst at the hospital's waiting area a week ago. He sees her discomfort and feels compelled to apologize.

“I never got to apologize for my behavior the other day, I'm sorry. It was not your fault, I'm sorry I said all those things to you.”

“It's okay babomncane you were right to blame me because I also blame myself; If I had been honest with Sabelo from the start then none of this would have happened.”

Hearing her blame herself like this for something she had no control over tears his heart to shreds, now he feels horrible for having

spoken to her in the manner he did on the day of Sabelo's operation.

“No, don't. There's no need for you to feel bad, you're not responsible for what happened Neo is and it's not fair for you to carry guilt over someone else's actions.”

“I know but it's hard not feel responsible because Neo wouldn't have shot Sabelo if it wasn't for me, he probably shot him because he thought I'll date him when Sabelo dies.”

“No, it's not your fault. You cannot be held responsible for anyone's actions, especially those of a grown man. He'll pay for what he did to my nephew I swear.”

Ntsika says with a clenched jaw

“He’s already paying. The police found him with my underwear and apprehended him, he’s in custody as we speak. Now Sabelo needs to wake up and tell the police that he shot him then he’ll have attempted murder added to his long list of charges.”

He shakes his head in disapproval

“Jail is way too easy for him Makhumalo, my brother and I will deal with him. But for now, we are still grieving Sphe, let him enjoy himself and think he has gotten away with trying to kill

Sabelo. We will retaliate, and I swear it won't be a pretty sight."

The cold look on his face scares Ndalo and makes her realize that maybe she doesn't know the Meyiwas as well as she thought she did.

"I have to go babomncane my Uber is here."

She says gesturing towards a charcoal Toyota Corolla Hybrid MPG that just parked next to them.

"I'll pick you up from the hospital when visiting hours are over, there's no need for you to waste money on Uber while we have so many cars in

the yard or better yet why not use Sabelo's car?"

The Uber driver looks at Ndalo impatiently

"I need to go he's getting impatient with me, bye babomncane."

"Bye."

Ntsika eyes land on her butt as she paces to the Uber.

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NDALO

I received an email from Unisa about two months ago but because I haven't checked my personal emails in a long while I only saw it yesterday, I've been accepted for the Bcom Business management degree I'm so happy I can't wait to tell Sabelo all about it. He might not be able to reply but his doctor says he can hear me, so I've made it a habit to keep him updated about any new things in my life every day when I visit him. Getting reported by Lettia was a blessing in disguise, it gave me the courage to do what I never thought I would do and I'm glad the catering business is growing and doing well so well that mom bought herself a car. She wanted me to buy the car first, but it

made more sense for her to be the one who buys a car before me because she's the one who travels every weekend catering to different events, I can wait a few more months to buy myself a car.

I greet the nurses I meet on my way to Sabelo's ward.

“Ma ka Hlelo.”

Someone calls behind me and I look back, It's aunt Zenkosi.

“Hello sweetie.”

She gives me a hug when she finally catches up to me

“Kunjani mamncane?”

(How are you aunt)

I ask when we break off the hug. She smiles shyly

“You guys should stop calling me that, Ntsika and I are not married yet.”

“It’s only a matter of time. It’s obvious he’ll marry you; I mean who wouldn’t?”

Her cheeks turn crimson as she blushes. She's crazy about uncle Ntsika even a blind man can see that, I wonder what uncle Ntsika is still waiting for. He should hurry up and marry her before someone else snatches her, she's such a wonderful woman and I know no man would hesitate to wife her.

“You're so silly ma ka Hlelo yaz, let me not keep you. You'll come see me before you go home ne?”

“I wouldn't think of leaving without bidding goodbye to my favourite aunt now would I?”

She laughs and smacks my shoulder playfully.

“Uphapha kabi yaz’ wena.”

Like always Sabelo is lying still on the bed with machines connected to him. I wonder when will God hear our prayers and wake him up because we need him, things are falling apart. Especially with his parents, Mr. Meyiwa has changed into someone none of us can recognize while Mrs. Meyiwa is a walking skeleton carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders, it’s too much.

“Baby it’s me again.”

I take his big hand into mine and intertwine our fingers

“We miss you Sabelo please come back to us, everything is falling apart without you...please come back.”

I promised myself that I wouldn't cry today but I can't help it, seeing him in this condition stings. Tears fall involuntarily from my eyes when I think about what everyone is going through, and it takes a while before I can calm myself down.

“Enough with the tears... I have good news”

My voice comes out hoarse and low

“Unisa accepted me, isn’t that good news baby?”

I ask looking at his pale face. My heart bleeds when I see his dry and cracked lips, I look through my purse for a lip balm and gently apply it on his lips.

“This is no longer funny Sabelo, you need to wake up already..your daughter misses you, we all miss you please my love come back to us..”

I bury my head in my hands and start crying all over again. I’m reached a state of complete

helplessness, I can't even pray anymore. It's pointless to do so without faith.

I scream and jump to my feet whipping my hair back and forth in terror when I feel something moving on top of my head.

“I....would laugh at you if my ...throat wasn't so dry.”

What?

I look up and guess who is looking right back me?

“Oh my goodness I can’t believe you’re awake.”

“Ouch!”

He exclaims and bites his lower lip grunting in pain.

“I’m sorry.”

I threw myself on top of him the moment I saw that he’s awake and in doing that I might have hurt his operation.

“I’m sorry so sorry, hold on I’ll call the doctor for you”

“No..I’m fine.. give me a glass of water.”

I do as he asks and help him drink the water in small sips.

“Thank you.”

“My pleasure.”

“Kodwa unjani mawunje Ndalo? You look nothing like the Ndalo I know, kanti how long was I out for?”

He jokes, humor dancing in his eyes.

“More than a week.”

“What?”

“Yes, I was worried sick about you that’s why I look so horrible.”

“I’m sorry sthandwa sam but I’m back now. There’s nothing to worry about, where’s mom and dad why are they not here with you or they were here and left?”

Now comes the difficult part, telling him about Sphe’s death. I don’t even know if it’s my place to do so.

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MELOKUHLE

I'm home alone watching TV while chatting with my boyfriend on the phone, him and his sister have been so supportive throughout this whole process. I feel blessed to have people like them in my corner. The door opens and in walks Anele with two girls on her tail.

“Sanibonani.”

Her friends greet and sit in the L shaped couch.

“I’ll be back now now give me a moment.”

Anele

“Okay usheshe ke.”

(Hurry)

One of them says

“Am I invisible to you Anele?”

I ask when she attempts to go to the bedroom without so much as acknowledging my presence. She doesn’t reply, she keeps walking like she didn’t hear me. Her friends look at one another and gasp, I stand up and follow her to

her room. She turns around when I shut the door.

“Leave my room!”

She says wagging her index finger at me showing me out.

“Or else what?”

“Melo, I won’t ask you again. I said leave my room.”

I sigh and sit on the edge of her bed

“Anele what’s wrong, what’s your problem with me?”

“Get over yourself Melo, I have nothing against you mina.”

“Okay then why didn’t you greet me just now when you found me in the lounge?”

“I don’t remember binding myself in a contract to greet you Melo, I don’t have to greet you I’m not forced to do so.”

She’s half naked now looking through her closet for something to wear

“That’s both rude and disrespectful Anele.”

“So, what do you want to do about it?”

She has her hands on her hips looking into my eyes challenging me, I really don’t want to do this with her because I swear, I will break her skinny bones if I put my hands on her.

“You’re not worth it.”

I say and leave the room.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#94

Sabelo's doctor asked me to excuse them so he can perform a few examinations to ensure that everything is well with him, I used this time to go find aunt Zenkosi and tell her the news.

“I'm happy that he's awake.. things almost fell apart”

“Yes, but I'm worried.”

“About?”

She asks arching her eyebrow in confusion

“About how he’ll receive the news of Sphe’s death, we all know how much he loved her.”

He didn’t only love her but the two of them were close and she was the only sibling he had.

“Eish that part completely slipped my mind.”

“I don’t even know if it’s my place to tell him about it.”

“No, don’t tell him. Let his parents be the ones to tell him.”

“That reminds me, I should call and tell them he’s awake ma will be so happy. She’s been so worried about him and the fact that she couldn’t come and see him made it worse.”

“Eish it couldn’t have been easy for her.”

“Yeah, let me call her.”

“Okay.”

I dial Mrs. Meyiwa’s number and anxiously wait for her to pick

“Ma ka Hlelo.”

**Funny how almost everyone in Meyiwa family
calls me like that now**

“Ma, guess what?”

“What?”

**The exhilaration in her voice matches up to my
own. I’m sure she has guessed the news I want
to share with her.**

“Sabelo is awake.”

“What?”

“Yes ma, he’s awake.”

“Oh thank you lord.”

“Yini?” asks someone in the background

“Sabelo is awake.”

Mrs. Meyiwa replies before screams of jubilation boom through the speaker as the relatives celebrate Sabelo’s recovery.

“Thank you, my child. I’ll tell his father.”

From her hoarse voice I know she’s crying but I don’t stress too much about it because for a change I know it’s tears of joy.

“Bye ma.”

“I’m sure she’s happy ne?” Zenkosi

“Very happy. I got carried away happy that he’s awake and completely forgot that Sabelo dumped me hours before he was shot, now I don’t know if the breakup still stands.”

She laughs at me

“Why? what did you do to him?”

“I didn’t tell him about Neo drugging my milk and possibly almost raping me.”

“Why didn’t you?”

“Aunt you don’t know Sabelo, he’s hot headed. I knew he would drop everything and come to me the moment he found out. Since the rape thing, it’s like he constantly wants to prove that he can protect me and most of the times he does so impulsively without thinking about the consequences.”

**“You should tell him exactly how you feel
maybe he’ll understand, wait what rape thing?”**

“Yeah, my ex raped...”

I tell her the entire story.

**She’s next to me in an instant squeezing me in
her arms.**

**“I’m sorry that happened to you, please tell me
you got that bastard arrested?”**

**Her eyes are glistening with tears as she asks
this**

“No, I didn’t but karma dealt with him, he got hijacked and ended up losing his tongue and hands. I’m sure you must’ve heard about him, his story was all over the news and I think he was admitted here”

“I think I remember him, bloody bastard! To think I felt sorry for him kanti he’s nothing but a bloody rapist.”

“I don’t blame you because I also felt sorry for him when I heard the news, imagine not being able to communicate with others for the rest of your life.”

**“Maybe he learnt how to write with his feet
kwaz’ bani”**

(Who knows)

She laughs

“Aunt no, this isn’t funny.”

**“Oh maybe he sticks the pen up his ass and
writes with it, you know I’ve always heard
people say “ubhala kabi ngathi ubufake ipeni
emdidini” and now that I think about it maybe
the first person who said that actually saw him
do it.”**

She says and breaks into a belly laugh. I try to remain serious, but her laugh is so contagious I find myself laughing my lungs out.

Who knew aunt Zenkosi was so silly?

“Enough with the jokes, did you see a professional about this?”

She says wiping her tears, yeah she laughed until tears came out of her eyes.

“No.”

“You need to do it, this isn’t something you can sweep under the carpet and pretend it didn’t

happen because one day it'll catch up with you.
I know someone who can help you.”

“But I’m fine aunt.”

“That’s what you think, but you’re not. There’s no way you can be fine after something like this happened to you. I kind of understand where Sabelo’s fixation to protect you comes from, he probably blames himself for what happened to you thinking it wouldn’t have happened had he protected you.”

“He didn’t know, there’s no way he could’ve protected me.”

“But he still feels responsible for it, probably thinks if he fetched you from your apartment instead of waiting for you at the garage then Musa wouldn’t have raped you.”

I keep quiet and look at her

“Just like you feel responsible for him being shot even though you’re not responsible for it, he probably feels the same way. The both of you need help, you were raped it happened and you two can’t go on like nothing happened.”

“But we are fine.”

**“Oh, really? Is that why you guys broke up?
Stop being stubborn Ndalo and seek help, what
you went through was traumatic not just for
you but for him as well. You two need to get
help before these underlying issues ruin your
relationship for good.”**

“I hear you aunt I’ll think about it.”

**“Please consider it, Hlelo doesn’t deserve
broken parents. What she deserves are parents
who have healed from past traumas with good
mental health to raise her, do it for her if not for
your relationship with Sabelo.”**

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NARRATED

The news of Sabelo's miraculous recovery have left Mathapelo elated and in a lighter mood, she cannot stop thanking God for the mercy and grace his has shown in her life.

"Please watch over her. I don't trust them with her."

She says to Mamy in hushed tone referring to Hlelo who is still sleeping

"Don't worry sis I'll guard her with my life"

She stands up and fixes the mini blanket on her shoulders and walks out of the room heading to Sphe's bedroom.

She hits her knuckles on the wooden door and steps back waiting for a response

“Who is it?”

Meyiwa croaks out in a low voice inside the bedroom

“It's me Meyiwa, open.”

He doesn't reply but she hears shuffling and footsteps before the door opens. She gets a

painful pang in her heart when her eyes meet with her husband's eyes, this is not the Meyiwa she knows. The one she knows is handsome, confident and bold not this one with sunken eyes and unkept beard and hair. Has it been that long since she saw him?

“My liefde.”

The happiness she felt a minute ago has dissipated into thin air and sadness has taken over. She has never seen him look this broken, without thinking twice she wraps her arms around him and gives him a tight squeeze. He reluctantly holds her back and the two cry in each other's arms tightening their arms around

each other more with each whimper that leaves their mouth.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t there for you like a husband should, I’ve been so absorbed in my own loss and pain that I neglected my duties as both a husband and a father.”

“It’s okay Meyiwa don’t apologize..”

“No, it’s not okay. I shouldn’t have carried myself like that, I’m ashamed of myself what kind of man am I?”

Mortification covers him like a blanket when he thinks about how he’s been carrying himself for

the past week, what kind of man behaves like he did? He's no white man, he's a Zulu man.

“You're being too hard on yourself Meyiwa you're only human and you are bound to break at some point, we've been through a lot in the past two years and you've been strong through it all. 'Taking it like a man', being there for everyone and not dealing with your pain and I guess all that unresolved pain and hurt finally caught up with you. I'm sorry I couldn't be strong for you the one time you needed me to be your emotional crutch, instead I judged you and expected you to “be a man” about it I'm sorry.”

“No, it’s okay my skaat there’s no need to apologize.”

“No, there’s always a need to apologize Meyiwa. I was wrong and I’m sorry.”

Meyiwa looks into the eyes of the woman who owns his heart, he cradles her face in his palms and plants a peck on her lips.

“It’s okay mama wengane zami. I forgive you.”

(Mother of my kids)

“Thank you. I actually came here to tell you something.”

“What, tell me?”

Meyiwa says retreating backwards

“Sabelo is awake, our son is awake.”

A ghost smile embraces Meyiwa’s face and he starts to recite the Meyiwa clan names while pacing the room in jubilation.

“What are we waiting for, let’s go.”

He says already heading to the door

“Go with Ntsika, I can’t come...”

He's about to ask her why not when he remembers that their daughter is no more. Sadness and gloom rest on his face. How will he break the news to his son?

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MELOKUHLE

I just got off the phone with Ses'Ndalo and I'm so happy about Sabelo's recovery, him being stuck in a COMA without a plausible explanation was causing my sister so much distress not to mention Hlelo who was missing

her father and probably wondering why she didn't see him anymore. Now the Meyiwas can decide on the date for Sphe's funeral, I know this might sound otherwise but I can't wait for the day of Sphe's funeral so I can see my boyfriend.

He's coming with Nthati and Kagiso, I'm humbled by their support I've never seen a family support a mere girlfriend so much and I'm so excited because I'll finally introduce my sister to the love of my life- I've been waiting for a moment like this and I'm so excited now that it's finally happening.

Mom hasn't come back, she's at Delmas catering for a wedding and Dad is at work. It's just me and bitchy Anele in the house

“So your sister called to tell you about Ssbelo but didn't see the need to call me and do the same.”

Here we go again, I'm honestly getting tired of Anele's behavior. I'm five minutes to slapping the attitude out of her stru nasi

“You two have always sidelined me in this sisterhood of yours and made me feel like an extra, if I didn't look like dad I'd think I was adopted.”

She says when I don't reply

“I don't know what you want Anele, must we carry you on our backs to show that we love you as our sister?”

I snap

“No, that's not what I want. I want you guys to talk to me like you talk to each other about absolutely everything and anything and actually include me in your relationship and conversations instead of making me feel like a third wheel...do you know how much it hurts

when you start reminiscing about things I know nothing about.”

“I’m sorry if that’s how you feel Anele but it wasn’t our intention to make you feel that way, Ses’Ndalo loves you I mean she even bought you a phone a flippen Huawei p40 for God’s sake! Not even your parents have bought you a phone worth that much and you know she would buy you an iPhone if she could.”

“Exactly, I know Ses’Ndalo loves me don’t get it twisted. You’re the one who hates me!”

What?

“Where do you get that from?”

“Go on and pretend like you don’t know what I’m talking about but we both know how you always exclude me in your things, I’m always the last one to find out about things. We are almost the same age Melo why can’t you talk to me? Ses’Ndalo is 5 years older than you but you can tell her about your boyfriend and not me, why is that? Is it because I’m not academically gifted as you are so you think I’m stupid and my opinion isn’t worth much? Or is it because you two look the same and have those big butts and curves while I’m skinny and straight or is it the fact that I’m not as pretty as the both of you are ...tell me why am I so hard to love Melo ..tell me dammit!”

She's looking at me with so much sadness and the tears rolling down her face break my heart to pieces. I didn't know that this is how she feels

"I'm sorry Anele I swear it wasn't intentional."

She retreats backwards and runs to her room, she locks the door just when I'm about to turn the knob

"Anele! Anele! Please open the door so we can talk about this."

Tears are burning my eyes fighting for an escape.

“Go away Melo and stop acting like you care about me!”

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#95

When the doctor told me he wants to perform a few examinations to ensure that everything was well with me I didn't anticipate being subjected to so many tests. The first thing he checked was movement and reflexes, response

to painful stimuli, and pupil size. He then observed breathing patterns to help diagnose the cause of the coma, checked the skin for signs of bruises due to trauma. He pressed on the angle of the jaw or nail bed while watching for signs of arousal, such as vocal noises, eyes opening or movement. He also tested reflexive eye movements and squirted a warm liquid into my ear canals and observed eye reactions, and now he's drawing blood from my arm taking a sample for blood tests.

“Please tell me this is the last test doctor?” I ask feeling jaded from all the tests I've been subjected to in the last hour. He looks at me and chuckles

“Stop complaining, I’m doing this for your wellbeing. Khoza please take this sample to the lab.” The nurse takes the sample from him and leaves the room

“And that Mr. Meyiwa was the last test, for now.”

“Finally!” We laugh

“For now, everything checks out but I’ll only be certain after I get your blood test results, I’ll come to check on you again tomorrow bye.”

“Bye doc.”

He bumps into my father and uncle at the door on his way out.

“Welcome back to the land of the living ntwana yami. Talk about a cat with nine lives, ama die hard ao izinja madoda.” Bellows uncle Ntsika causing all my co-patients inside the ward to turn and look at him.

“Babomncane” I reply trying to match his exhilaration

“Meyiwa.” My father says while ruffling my hair with his hand.

Worry seeps in like a fog when I take in his appearance. Something is off with him, from his unshaved hair and unkept beard to his sunken eyes. He looks older than he normally does, I don't know about many things, but I know my father is going through a lot.

“Babami are you okay?”

“Yes, yes. I'm okay my son just happy to see you.”

He says and flashes a big smile, a fake one of course. My heart sinks to the pit of my stomach, I've never seen my father look this miserable before. I wonder what could be wrong with him.

“Babomncane what’s going on?” He also doesn’t look good, but he looks better than my father.

“Nothing son. Tell us who shot you, was it Neo?” I guess Ndalo told them about Neo.

“Yes, it was him.”

**“That bastard! I will make him pay for this.”
My dad says and I know he means every word.**

“He’s such a coward he couldn’t take me on in a fist fight, so he resorted to using his gun on me.”

“Kodwa nawe Sabelo what did you think fighting that man, you should’ve given him to us to handle.” Uncle Ntsika

I’m tired of them “handling” things on my behalf maybe that’s why Ndalo doubts my abilities because my father and uncle always save the day!

“So, you won’t tell me what’s wrong?” I change the topic; I don’t want to talk about that coward Neo.

“There’s nothing wrong.” I don’t buy that one bit

“You both know that I’m no longer a kid, right? I know something is wrong, I can feel it. I’ve been feeling somehow since I woke up from the COMA but didn’t make much of it. But seeing you two now, I know something is wrong...what is it, please tell me.”

They look at each other and have a conversation with their eyes. My dad nods his head as though giving my uncle approval to tell me whatever it is, my uncle looks at me and blows out heavy breath.

“There’s no easy way to say this” he sighs and looks up “Sphehile is no more, she passed on the day Neo shot you.”

What? I heard what he said but my mind refuses to accept it. She can't be dead, no that can't be true.

"I'm sorry but it's true."

I look at my dad and the pain I see in his eyes confirms what I already know. From the moment I woke up, I felt like a part of me was missing like I was slumped in deep dejection but couldn't understand why. I thought the pain I felt was from the stitches I got after the open-heart surgery, but it seems my body and soul knew about my loss before I did. My heart pounds violently against my chest, my chest

tightens and breathing becomes a challenge and it feels like my soul is leaving my body.

“CALL THE DOCTOR!” That’s the last thing I hear before I slip into darkness.

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NARRATED

Meyiwa is pacing up and down the waiting room desperately begging God to save his son’s life, his body is trembling violently while tears burn his eyes fighting for an escape. It’s been five minutes since Sabelo’s doctor asked him and Ntsika to wait outside, it all happened too

fast. One-minute Ntsika was telling Sabelo about Sphe's death then the next minute Sabelo is struggling to breath and the machines are beeping loudly like they do in movies when someone is dying, he can't help but blame himself. They shouldn't have told him so soon; he just woke up from a COMA for Pete's sake they should've waited until he was strong enough before breaking the news to him.

After what feels like forever the doctor emerges from the corner, Ntsika jolts up from his seat and the two of them rush to his direction meeting him halfway.

“Is he okay doctor?” Meyiwa

“Calm down Mr. Meyiwa, your son is fine. He had a panic attack but he’s fine now.”

Sighs of relief escape from both brother’s lips

“Can we see him?”

“Yes, you can.”

“Thank you doctor.”

Meyiwa is the first one through the door, he rushes to his son’s side and engulf him in a hug. Sabelo clings to his father and cries his eyes out.

“It’s okay my son.”

The older man says slowly rubbing his son’s back. Ntsika is standing at a distance watching the poignant scenery at the brink of tears.

In the parking lot Ndalo and Zenkosi are sitting the backseat of Zenkosi’s car when Zenkosi’s phone chimes disturbing their conversation.

“Love.”

“Sthandwa sam.”

Ntsika croaks out in shaky and low voice.

“What’s wrong?” she asks picking up his sad tone

“We just told him.”

“How did he take it?” Zenkosi asks

“Not well, he even had a panic attack.”

“But he’s okay now, right?”

“Yes, he’s okay. He’s bawling his eyes out in his father’s arms, it’s so heartbreaking to see

my heart can't take anymore of this can I come there?"

"Of course, you can, you don't even have to ask. We are in the parking lot."

"Okay, I'm coming."

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MELOKUHLE

"Good morning sis."

"Morning Melo."

Ses’Ndalo says and leans her back against the headboard. I open the covers and join her on the bed, Hlelo slept at the Meyiwas last night. She no longer feeds during the night so it’s now possible for her to sleepover without her mother.

“You don’t look too good, what’s up?”

“It’s Anele, she said some things to me yesterday and I haven’t been able to get them out of my mind since.”

“What did she say?”

“That you and I treat her like a third wheel. We always exclude her in everything we do, she was crying, and you know she rarely cries so I think this really upsets her. She even brought up her poor academic performance and body structure saying maybe we treat her like this because of how different she is from the both of us.”

“Yoh, let me call her. This is clearly bigger than I thought.”

She’s already pressing on her phone calling her

“Ses’Ndalo.” Anele

Her voice sounds groggy, I'm sure she cried herself to sleep last night.

“Please come to my bedroom.”

“Okay.”

A minute later she's walking through the door. Her eyes are puffy and swollen, I feel terrible seeing her like this especially because I feel responsible for her pain. She did say I'm the one she has a problem with after all.

“Please join us, I want us to talk about what happened yesterday.” Ndalo

“Please little sister.”

I beseech when she stands rooted in her spot even after being invited to join us. She sighs and rounds the bed and slides inside the covers putting Ses’Ndalo in the middle.

“What’s wrong mntasekhaya talk to me.” Ndalo

“I understand that as siblings it’s impossible to have the same relationship because we are different from each other and connect in different ways, I don’t expect the relationship you share with Melo to be the same as the one you have with me, but you and Melo make me feel like a third wheel. When all of us are together you should at least try to

accommodate me and include me in your conversations, but you guys go on and on about things I have no knowledge of and make me feel like a third wheel. Whenever anyone of you has a problem, you only ask each other for advice and never seek my input, I'm always the last one to find out about things and it hurts because it means that my opinion doesn't matter or maybe because I'm not smart as the both of you so what I think is insignificant and doesn't count. I've always asked myself why is it so hard for you guys to love me like I do you, what is it about me that is so hard to love?"

That was a loaded statement, and just like yesterdays she's in tears after coughing out what's in her heart.

“I’m sorry you feel that way Anele but that was not our intention and we never realized that’s how we made you feel.” Ndalo

“It’s okay, I guess I’ll get used to it.” Anele

“No, that’s not something anyone needs to get used to. I’m deeply sorry we made you feel excluded, it was not our intention I promise but in my head you’re still the Anele who used to run around the house in her underwear.” Anele giggles as her cheeks flush in embarrassment.

“Serious in my head you’re still that Anele who’d go to fishing trips with dad, who enjoys

watching wrestling. You know that Anele who always talks about cars and football. Me not confiding in you wasn't because I don't value your input or because I think you're stupid but it's because angikhohlwa umncane and no it has nothing to do with the fact that you're still in high school but for some awkward reason you didn't grow up in my eyes. You're still my cute baby sister that would play soccer with boys outside.... to me you're still wet behind the ears and know nothing about boys and relationships.”

“Ah mara Ses’Ndalo.” Anele

“Stru! Ngiyakubona uyakhula but to me you're still that little baby I want to protect. I

understand where you're coming from and I'm sorry we hurt you, I promise from now I'll try to see and treat you like an adult that you are. You better get ready because starting from today, your ears will bleed from listening to my endless problems.”

We all laugh

“I'm ready.”

“I'm sorry ne nana, I love you so much mntasekhaya and I'm sorry that we have been hurting you and making you feel excluded.”

“I love you too Ses'Ndalo and I forgive you.”

“Hug?”

“Haibo, now I’m the one who feels excluded!”

I say and they laugh

“Anele I know you think I hate you, but I don’t. You’re my sister and I love you. The only reason I never discuss my affairs with you is because I never thought “mjolo” is something that would interest you, like Ses’Ndalo said to me you’re that girl who enjoys soccer and wrestling more than feminine things. I can’t remember the last time I saw you with long hair, you’re always rocking short hair and you

dress like a tomboy I honestly thought you're a lesbian so I didn't think the things I enjoy talking about would interest you that's why I never bothered."

"Wow" Anele

"Serious"

"But why didn't you try me and see my reaction?"

"I don't know."

"Why didn't you ask if I was lesbian or not then?"

“ I didn’t want to offend you or to make you think that I’m judging you for your preference.”

My statement sends her into a fit of laughter

“So, you honestly think I’m lesbian?”

“Yes.”

“Wow! I’m not lesbian, I’m very much into men and I have absolutely no feelings for women. I just love baggy outfits just like you prefer short and tight clothing I happen to prefer baggy clothing; it has nothing to do with my sexual orientation. I can’t stand sitting for hours at the

salon doing my hair, so I prefer short hair because it's easier to maintain, I also don't like make up that's why I'm always natural."

"Now I understand why they say assumption is the mother of all f*ck ups because wow! and to think you guys are siblings, yet you don't know each other." Ndalo

"I know right, I just realized that there's a lot I don't know about Anele." I say

"And that needs to change starting from today. Anele next time please don't bottle things up, communicate-talk to us and tell us when we mess up or hurt your feelings because keeping

things in will cause you to carry unnecessary anger and pain thus making you unhappy.”

Anele nods in understanding

“Now that everything has been tackled can we please hug it out?”

Ndalo says with her arms spread open

“Of course.”

Anele and I say at the same time and sink in our big sister’s arms and share a group hug for the first time in years.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#96

How do I begin to live my life without my twin? Someone who I shared the same womb with and went through every milestone in life by her side, from learning how to open my eyes, to suckling my mother's breast, learning how to sit up, to crawl and how to walk- she was there through it all. Having a twin is like having your shadow physically with you, to care for you, to love you unconditionally and always be there for you. The bond shared by twins is more sacred than that of mere siblings, you connect

in a much deeper level and feel each other's emotions- it's like you're the same person in two bodies so in losing her I've lost a huge part of myself that I'll never get back, I am incomplete without her.

The aching pain I feel in my heart is unbearable, and instead of getting better it gets worse as the day of her funeral nears. I can't believe she's gone, that I will never see her beautiful face again. I'm even tempted to take my own life so that I can be reunited with my twin because I don't know if I can do this life thing without her, but I chastise myself for even entertaining those thoughts everytime I think about my little girl my beautiful Hlelolwenkosi. I don't want her to grow up without me, for her

to resent me for not choosing to live for her. I don't want her to go through life wondering how her life would've turned out if I was still alive.

I want to be the father my father is to me- always be there for my daughter protecting, guiding and loving her unconditionally. Ndalo is a good mother and I know she'll raise my daughter well but each parent has their role in a child's life and I won't deprive my child a father's love. For her I'll endure the agonizing pain of Sphe's loss, immense pain that I can't escape even in my sleep and hope it gets better with time, time heals all wounds they say.

My phone chimes snapping me from my reverie, it's a group WhatsApp call with Kevin and Cameron.

"Troy man we just left Johannesburg we'll be there in two hours or less." Kevin

They are coming for my sister's funeral, it's tomorrow morning.

"Yeah we already made a reservation at Muzi lodge." Cam

"Thank you so much for your support, it means a lot to me. After Xolane and Khutso I never thought I'll make friends with anyone else but

you two have proved to be more than just friends, you're more like brothers and I'm really grateful to have you in my life"

They are the most supportive friends I've ever had, for the first time in my life I feel like I have brothers who will always be there for me.

People who want the best for me and who don't hesitate to correct me when I'm wrong.

"Don't mention man, we are brothers." Cam

"Yeah man, we are brothers. Was your application for special exams granted?" kev

"Yes, I'm writing early January."

“Alright we’ll help you prepare for it, all of us will go to second year by fire by force.” Cam

“Amen to that, we’ll call when we get to your hood bye man.”

“Bye.”

After the call I lie skyward on my bed and get lost in my thoughts until a knock on the door disturbs me

“Come in.”

The door opens and Khethelo walks in with a tray of food and a tall glass of juice in her hands. Her face is red and swollen, the pain her eyes hold is heart breaking.

“Mtasekhaya aunt Mamy said to give you this so you can take your pills.” She croaks out in a hoarse voice.

“Thanks.”

I take the tray from her hands and place it on the vanity table and hold her hands.

“I’m sorry, I know how close you and Sphe were.”

She sniffs and bites her lip looking up and tears roll down her face shamelessly

“God’s will is painful Sabelo, I still can’t believe he took her from us just like that.”

I pull her to my arms and hold her tight. She breaks into a loud sob, her cry is disheartening and provokes my own tears. We cry in each other’s arms for a while and let go of each other after calming ourselves down

“You are not alone, I know I can never replace Sphe in your life but I’ll always be here for you everytime you need me.”

“I know mntasekhaya I know.”

We wipe each other’s tears and smile

“Eat up so you can take your pills.”

**She has her hands on my shoulders while
looking into my eyes with a thin smile on her
face, I kiss her forehead and pull away from her
arms.**

“I will eat, have you seen Ndalo?”

“She’s in the kitchen preparing tea and scones for the mourners.”

“Ndalo works too hard for my liking, please ask her to come and see me when you go back.”

“Will do.”

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NDALO

As expected Sabelo took Sphe’s death hard at one point I was scared he’d take his own life, I’m always worried about him especially since he likes to lock himself up in his bedroom. I’m

scared of what he might end up doing to himself inside there when the pain gets too much for him to bare, I tried being there for him but he kept pushing me away so for the sake of peace I'm keeping my distance.

At this point I'm not sure of what we are to each other because we haven't spoken about our relationship but I can guess judging from how cold he's been towards me since he learnt about Sphe's death, at some point I convinced myself that I would be satisfied with having him in my life only as a baby daddy rather than losing him to death but I lied to myself because the possibility of him going through with the break up stings. How do I go on without him, I love him so much and I don't see myself loving

and giving his place in my heart to someone else. At the same time I don't want to be insensitive and talk about our relationship when he's just lost his twin his other half and is obviously going through a lot, all I know is that I don't want to lose him.

I'm in the kitchen making tea for the mourners when one of the aunts from KwaZulu-Natal walks in. She takes a glass and heads to the sink and fills it with water while I pack the cups in the tray preparing to take them to the lounge to the three ladies who just walked.

“Where do you think you're taking that?”

She asks looking at the tray in my hands

“To the lounge, there are three ladies who just walked in.”

“Put that tray down, I’ll take it myself. You’re not our daughter in law so stop being forward and behaving like one, you’re nothing but a mere baby mama in this house so know your place and stop being forward. You have no business being in this kitchen so leave.”

She says showing me to the door. I swallow the painful lump in my throat and leave the kitchen. One thing I’ll not do is cry, I’m tired of crying so I’ll just to be strong since I can’t talk back because I wasn’t raised like that.

“Ma Ka Hlelo!”

Khethelo calls behind me just when I’m about to exit the house through the lounge. I turn around and wait for her to catch up to me

“Where are you going?”

“Outside for fresh air.”

She studies my face for a while and sighs

“Let me guess, one of the aunts said something to you.”

“Yeah.”

“I don’t understand why you allow them to speak to you in that way Ndalo, I get that you’re a sweet and kind person but you can’t keep letting people get away with treating you like shit...clap back the next time they say something to you, it’s not like they are close relatives anyway.”

“No, it’s fine. That’s not me.”

“Yo mina sometimes you bore me shem, you’re too good for your own good anyway your boyfriend is calling you.”

“Told you he broke up with me.”

“Nonsense you two will kiss and make up I know it, go he’s waiting.”

“Okay.”

I walk to Sabelo’s bedroom and hit my knuckles on the door.

“Come in.”

I push the door and make my way inside. I look down when he looks into my eyes.

“You asked to see me.”

I say still standing at the door

“Please come in.”

I walk in and sit next to him on the bed, he puts his plate on the floor and grabs my hands.

“I’m sorry for the treatment I’ve been giving you the past few days, you didn’t deserve it I’m sorry. I just don’t know what to do with myself, it feels like I’m losing my mind like the everything is closing in on me...I don’t know how to handle the pain I feel.”

“It’s okay I understand. I know what Sphe meant to you so losing her can’t be easy.”

“But you still didn’t deserve the cold treatment I’ve been giving you, I just needed time alone to come to terms with her death.”

“I get it.”

“Thank you for understanding , where’s Hlelo?”

“She’s with your mom.”

“Okay, I miss you two. I miss being with you two. I know what I said before Neo shot me but

I don't want to break up with you Ndalo, I love you and I want us to try again."

"I love you too Sabelo but I think we need to get professional help. Aunt Zenkosi said something about the rape incident that made me realize a lot of things. Following the rape incident I never received any professional help we just carried on with our lives like nothing happened. We don't even speak about that day and how it affected both our lives because believe it or not, it did."

"I hear you and I'm willing to do anything to save our relationship, I don't mind going to therapy."

“Thank you. But If we are going to do this I need you to stop being insecure about your age, everytime I keep something from you the first thing that comes to your mind is that I kept it from you because you’re younger than me. I don’t care about your age Sabelo I wouldn’t be with you if I thought you were nothing but a kid, but being a man doesn’t mean risking your life by acting impulsively just to prove that you’re capable of protecting me. Look at how you provoked Neo and ended up shot just because you wanted to prove that you’re not a kid, you could’ve died and left our daughter without a father because of your desperation to prove that you’re a man.”

He sighs and looks at me thoughtfully

“All of this could’ve been avoided if only we told your father and uncle from the beginning, they would have dealt with Neo before he did all that he did.”

“I didn’t want to burden them, they were already dealing with a lot. We had just found Sphe, she was in hospital and her health was deteriorating. My parents were already stressed I didn’t want to add to their worries.”

“That’s an excuse and you know it, you wanted to handle it yourself to prove to me that you’re capable of protecting me.”

“Maybe, it’s just that my father and uncle always save the day everytime we are in trouble. I wanted to do this without their help.”

He admits

“I understand how you feel but we’ve been dealing with dangerous and sick people that we couldn’t handle on our own. Seeking help from your father doesn’t make you weak or less of a man it only makes you wise and level headed. A wise man isn’t afraid to ask for help but a fool doesn’t ask for help because he thinks seeking help from others will make him look like a fool. No man is island Sabelo you can’t do everything on your own Sabelo, you’ll always need someone’s help.”

“I hear you sthandwa sam I will work on my insecurities but please also try to be transparent with me. I hate it when you hide things from me, it makes me think you don’t trust me.”

“I’ll never hide anything from you ever again, that is my promise.”

“We’ll be fine right babe?”

He asks looking into my eyes

“Yes we will be fine. Detective Zwane called to tell me Neo is out on bail and awaiting his trial,

I just hope he won't do anything stupid while he's out I swear that guy is deranged."

"He won't try anything if he knows what's good for him, I still can't believe he drugged you and tried to have his way with you."

"I still can't believe it either."

"He's sick, he can't be normal."

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#97

It's Saturday the day we lay Sphesihle Gabrielle Meyiwa to her final place of rest, it's been over ten days since she passed on but it's still hard for me to come terms with her passing. I'd give anything for this to be nothing but a horrible nightmare, she can't be gone just like that. This cannot be her end; I know people always say it's the will of God whenever something of this sort happens, they even go to say his will shouldn't be questioned but maybe it would be easier not to question his will if we knew the reasons why some people suffer a bit more than others in life. I know all about God giving his toughest battles to his strongest soldiers but what even qualifies one as a strong soldier? if

being strong means finally falling pregnant after suffering from multiple miscarriages only to have your child die on you after you've raised them for 19 years then I don't want it! I know of people who suffer until they die and people who never struggle for anything, unlike the rest of us they get a job as soon as they graduate from tertiary and get married to their first love, have kids and live happily ever after while the rest of us must struggle and suffer before things fall into place, what differentiates us from them?

My spirit is low, and my heart is heavy, I can't believe we are burying yet another young person whose life has been cut short. Except this time, it's not just anyone it's not a stranger

someone I know nothing about, this time it's my boyfriend's twin sister and someone who I had grown to love. She was Hlelo's aunt, a bright young girl who had so much to live for so the anguish in my heart is greater than what I normally feel when a young person dies. My family and I are on the way to Matshiding community hall where Sphe's funeral service will be held, normally mom plays gospel songs when we drive in hers or dad's car but today the car is teeming with silence and each of us is lost in their own thoughts.

It's 9:15 when we park outside hall and by the look of things the service has already started. There are several cars parked outside the hall and I spot Nthabi and Gwala's cars amongst

them. With Hlelo in my arms I climb out of the car and follow my family to the entrance, the choir is singing joyous celebration's 'Ndenzel' Uncedo'Hymn 337 when we walk in. Melo is on her phone sending her boyfriend the location pin so that they don't struggle finding the hall since he's not too familiar with Embalenhle. The Meyiwa family is sitting on the row parallel to ours, my heart shudders when I see the anguish and sorrow mirrored on their faces.

"And now I'll call Mr. Ntsika Meyiwa to speak on behalf of the Meyiwa family." The MC says

The choir sings "Ke nale modisa" as uncle Ntsika stands up from his seat and makes his way to the front.

“Greetings my name is Ntsika Meyiwa, Sphe’s paternal uncle ...Her father is my elder brother. I never thought that one day I will stand here and talk about Sphe on the day of her funeral, I thought she’d bury me not the other way around” he drops the mic from his lips and looks up as an attempt to stop the tears in his eyes from rolling down his face “ I still remember how scared my brother and his wife were when they found out they were expecting, scared because they had suffered various miscarriages prior to that pregnancy.” He blows out a heavy sigh before continuing with his story “they thought the same thing would happen to this pregnancy but by the grace of God my sister-in-law carried the pregnancy full time and they were blessed with two babies

while they expected one, I still remember the excitement in my brother's voice when he called me and told me his wife has given birth to two kids instead of one. He was so elated he named them Sabelweisphehle which means 'we have been given a beautiful gift' and just like her name, Sphe was nothing but a beautiful gift to our family...she was so full of love and life, so focused and well mannered. She had a zest for life and had big dreams and aspirations for her future. She was a go-getter and never settled for average, she was an angel and that's how we will always remember her...zalo, Sabelo nawe sisi I know you've all lost a part of you that you can never regain by losing her but those who we love never truly leave us, she's an angel now watching over you. Lala ngoxolo maMsomi."

Just then a tear rolls down his face and I can't help the tears that flow down my face after hearing the beautiful things uncle Ntsika had to say about Sphe, she was truly an angel. Death be not proud.

Aunt Mamy was the one who spoke on behalf of the Moloji family (Mrs. Meyiwa's Maiden surname) and just like uncle Ntsika she only had good things to say about her niece, Khethelo was meant to speak as a friend because they were not only sisters but best friends too, but she couldn't utter a single word because she couldn't stop crying. Her cry was gut wrenching and left almost everyone inside

the hall in tears, Gwala was the one who spoke on behalf of the school.

“Good morning brethren, I stand here today with a heavy heart. I didn’t know Sphe personally I just knew her as the number one top student in my school but judging by what everyone said about her, she sounds like she was an amazing girl.... Because of time I will not be long, let’s quickly go to Isiah 57: 1-2 it reads.. ‘The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart; devout men are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous man is taken away from calamity; she enters into peace; they rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness’ to the Meyiwa family I know your hearts are broken because you

have lost your daughter and Sabelo has lost his other half, his sister and only sibling but I would encourage you not to shed tears anymore crying for Sphe because she has been freed from all the pain and suffering of this world, just like the bible says the righteous shall be taken away from calamity.. she was in pain, and I believe she is in much better place now free from all pain and suffering. She has run her race and fulfilled her purpose, let us not cry for her anymore but let's be happy that the lord has given her rest. The bible says the Lord heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds, seek his face and he shall heal you from your heartache and bind up their wounds, Unkulunkulu useduze nani bantu baka Meyiwa seek comfort in him and he shall heal your broken hearts.”

(God is not far from you Meyiwa family)

After Gwala the pastor gives a sermon until the gentlemen from the funeral parlor arrive and wait for him at the door. A sign that we have ran out of time.

“Brethren my time is up, let us please bow our heads and pray.” Pastor Khuzwayo

We all bow our heads and listen as the pastor leads us in prayer.

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MELOKUHLE

Sphe's funeral was sad, it was heartbreaking to see her previous classmates break down and cry when her casket was lowered to the grave. I didn't know her well, but I also found myself crying, the sight of her parents and brother in despair and my sister who couldn't stop wailing in pain was too much for my heart to take so I ended up bursting into tears. When we were still in church ses'Ndalo cried silently and hid her tears from her daughter, but all that composure flew out the window when Sabelo broke down at the cemetery, Hlelo also ended up crying when she saw her mother cry. Sabelo didn't only break into a heart shattering sob when Sphe was lowered into the grave, he collapsed and dropped to the ground. But at least all that happened after he went inside the

grave and laid on top of the reed mat. It's tradition for the surviving twin to go inside their twin's grave before the one who is late can enter with a casket; this is done in order to break the bond the twins share and to prevent the surviving twin from following their twin to death.

As promised Themba made it to the funeral with Nthathi and her husband Kagiso, but I didn't see them until we came back from the cemetery, Themba didn't want me to divide my attention between him and my sister that's why he told me to come to him only when I was done with everything. It's almost three in the afternoon and the number of people walking up and down the Meyiwa yard has decreased,

many of those who are still left are those who are related to the family. Most are sitting in groups drinking alcohol and chatting loudly, I think it's safe to say that after tears has started. I'm chilling with Kagiso, Nthati and Themba inside the tent having drinks over mild conversations.

“I've never been to such a sad funeral, I found myself shedding tears even though I didn't know Sphe.” Nthati

“Yah, I know I swear I almost shed a tear especially when Sabelo broke down and fainted at the cemetery.” Themba

**“Don’t remind me I’ve never cried so hard
shem, tears just kept pouring down my face
uncontrollably.” I say**

**“Eish I can imagine it couldn’t have been easy
for you to see your sister breaking down like
that.” Kagiso**

**“Yeah, it wasn’t and top it all off Hlelo started
wailing.”**

**“Eish, where’s your sister vele? I’d like to meet
her and your younger sister.” Themba**

“I’ll go find them; I can’t wait for you to meet them and maybe now you’ll stop feeling like I’m hiding you.”

He laughs

“I never thought you were hiding me; I understand that you’re still young and can’t really introduce me to your family over lunch or dinner like I introduced to mine.”

“I know sunshine, I’m only pulling your leg. Let me go look for my sisters, Anele is talkative so prepare yourself.”

“I’m ready.”

He's a bit nervous I can tell by how he keeps popping his knuckles, now I wonder if he'll handle meeting my parents. On my way to house I spot Khethelo in a corner with her cousins and I change my direction and make my way to them.

“Hey.”

“Hi”

They all reply and look at me expectantly

“Uhm.. Khethelo did you by any chance see my sisters?”

“No, did you look for Ndalo in Sabelo’s bedroom?”

No, and I don’t think it would be appropriate to do so especially with the house still buzzing with relatives. I’ve heard it all about how rude the aunts from KZN are, the last thing I want is to fall victim to their bitterness because I know myself I might clap back.

“No, do you mind going to check for me?”

I ask pulling a puppy face. She laughs

“Yini, usabani?”

(What are you afraid of.)

**“Hai yoh ufuna abo auntie bakho
bangihlafune.”**

(You want your aunts to shout at me)

**“Nawe uzabahlafuna haw’...just go inside
Melo, no one will do anything to you. Those
greedy people you’re so afraid of are probably
still busy monitoring the bucket of scones and
watching over the room where alcohol is kept
making sure that no one takes the alcohol, so
you can relax they won’t see you.”**

We laugh. This girl is crazy, I give her that.

“Vele ngeke uye?”

(You really won't go)

“No, Melo I like you nawe uyazi kodwa ngeke sisi ziyele.”

I would call her, but I left my phone with Themba and I'm so lazy to go back to the tent so I summon the courage and make my way inside the house, pinching my ass that I don't bump into one of those rude aunts Ses'Ndalo told me about. I heave a sigh of relief when I make it to Sabelo's door without running into anyone.

“Come in.” Sabelo’s voice reverberates from inside.

I push the door and let myself inside. My heart melts into chocolate gold at the sight before me, Sabelo is lying skyward on the bed holding ses’Ndalo with one arm and Hlelo on the other while their legs are crossed together. They look so cute together, I even feel bad for disturbing their moment.

“I’m sorry to disturb your family moment but Themba would like to officially meet you and Anele.”

“No, it’s no problem. I also want to meet with him” she says climbing down the bed and slips

her feet inside her slippers “Baby I’ll be back
ne, I won’t take too long.”

She says looking at her boyfriend

“No, it’s fine. Take all the time you need; I’ll be
fine my daughter will keep me company. Give
me a kiss.”

Ses’Ndalo bends down to meet his mouth and
the two of them smooch right in front of me!
Have you ever seen two people kiss and
instantly miss your partner? Well, that’s me
right now.

“Do I look okay?”

She asks smoothing her hands over her dress when they finally break the kiss. Yeah, they took their sweet time kissing I'm sure they even forgot that they have company. Poor Hlelo!

“Yes, you're okay. Let's go.”

“Bye baby.”

She says to Hlelo who doesn't spare her a single glance, that's Hlelo for you no one else exists to her when Sabelo is around.

“Where's Anele?”

She asks as we walk out of the house

“I don’t know, please call her.”

She calls and asks Anele to meet us inside the tent where Themba and his family are waiting for us.

**“Ok guys this is my beautiful sister u
Buhlebendalo Khumalo, but you can call her
Ndalo she’s not only my big sister but she’s my
best friend too. Anele will join us shortly”**

**“Sanibonani, I am very happy to finally meet
you. I’ve only heard good things about you all
from Melo.”**

“Nice to meet you Ndalo, you’re so beautiful.”

Nthati

She’s already on her feet giving my sister a hug which Ndalo gladly returns.

“Ngiyabonga sisi nawe umuhle”

(Thank you, you’re also beautiful.)

Ndalo replies with so much humility in her voice. When they say a person is calm, they refer to my sister, she’s ever so calm and humble.

“Melo is not good with introductions; she didn’t tell you who everyone is, so I’ll do the honors ...this is Themba my brother and Kagiso my husband.”

Nthati says with her one arm around my sister’s waist. I’m glad they get along but who wouldn’t get along with Ndalo mara?

“Pleased to meet you sisi I’ve heard many good things about you.” Themba

Ndalo offers her hand for a handshake, instead of shaking her hand Themba plants a peck like a gentleman he is.

“Happy to meet you sisi.” Kagiso

He’s a bit reserved this one, so he doesn’t shake her hand or hug her like the two siblings did.

“I’m so happy that you guys have finally met.”

I say

“Me too, Melo is always going on and on about ‘ses’Ndalo’ so I was so looking forward to meeting the face behind the beautiful things Melo says about you.”Themba

“I thought I’m the only one who had to endure her never-ending talks about ‘sunshine’ whenever we are together.” Ndalo

We all laugh

“But I understand why she can’t keep your name out of her lips, you’re everything she said you were and more.” Ndalo

“And what would that be?”

Themba curiously asks causing all of us to laugh.

“My lips are sealed.”

Ndalo says with a finger on her lip.

“Hmmm okay.”

“My condolences to your boyfriend and his family Ndalo, from what everyone said about her Sphe was an angel.” Nthati

“Thank you and thank you so much for coming.”

We keep the conversations going while waiting for Anele, she better come. The last thing I want is for her to accuse me of excluding her.

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#98

Kevin and Cameron didn't stay long after Sphe's funeral because they had to rush back to Johannesburg, I'm grateful that they came all the way to support me and glad that I got a chance to introduce them to Ndalo and Hlelo. They couldn't stop raving about how cute Hlelo is, and as soon as Ndalo excused us they warned me not to mess up with her because she's the perfect woman for me like I'd ever

think of messing things up with my heart. It's Thursday today, most relatives have gone back to their homes and it's only now that the reality of Sphe's death starts sinking in, I don't know how many times I went to look for her in bedroom wanting to talk to her and only to be viciously snapped back to reality by the empty room. Suddenly there's this loneliness that lingers in the fore walls of our home, it's daunting and it feels like walls are laughing at us mocking our pain, crazy I know but that's how I feel. Sitting around the dinner table as a family is a thing of the past in the Meyiwa household, we tried it on Sunday but it only reminded us of how incomplete we are without her I don't know maybe it's too soon but for now everyone eats in their bedroom, something that my mother didn't tolerate in past.

I went to the hospital for a check up yesterday and the doctor was very happy with my progress, my stitches are healing nicely, and I'll be removing them soon. I'm on my phone chatting with Ndalo when the door creaks open and my mother walks in.

“How are you doing Sabelosami, we never since you were discharged from the hospital” She lowers herself on my bed and scoots next to me

“I'm not okay ma but I have no choice but to soldier on, I have a daughter who needs me.”

“Oh, my son, I know you want to be strong, and take everything ‘like a man’ but I want you to cry and go through the pain because if you don’t it will catch up with you in the future. You have to face it and deal with it now.”

“I don’t think you understand ma, I am not bottling up the pain or avoiding dealing with anything. I cry when I feel like crying and allow myself to go through the emotions, what I mean is that I won’t allow the pain I feel to drag me into a dark hole and prevent me from going on with my life. Hlelo needs me and I can’t afford to disappoint my daughter.” A smile embraces her face.

“You grew up so quickly, I am proud of you my son and Hlelo is very lucky to have a father like you. Boys your age normally don’t pay attention to their kids because they are still kids themselves but you’re such a good father to that little girl.”

“That’s because I have the best example, my father. He’s the best father ever.”

“That’s true, your father is a very good father my child and I’m glad you look up to him.”

“Yes, ma. While other kids look up to celebrities I don’t look too far because I look up to my father, he’s my role model.”

“Meyiwa would be so happy to hear you say that.”

“Don’t tell him, he’ll grow a big head.” She laughs

“Awusanga nje! I’m going to tell him what you said”

(You’re silly)

“Please don’t, you know how he is.”

“Ngizomtshela.”

(I’m going to tell him)

With that said she stands up and rushes out of the room. I get up and run after her, she looks back when she feels my footsteps behind her. She giggles and attempts to run but obviously I'm faster than her, so I catch up to her in no time and wrap my arms around her small frame and start tickling her. She erupts into a belly laugh asking me to stop

“Hey wena you'll kill my sister let her go.”

Says aunt Mamy when she finds me tickling my mother. I let her go and smile as I watch her wipe away her tears, at least I was able to wipe away the sorrow that lives rent free on her face and made her laugh even if it was for a few

minutes. I hate seeing my mother like this, so thin and scrawny.

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NDALO

Melo's boyfriend and his family were so sweet and welcoming. Within a few minutes of meeting them I already felt like I have known them for years especially Nthati, now I know I will have nothing to worry about if Melo gets married into their family, I know there wouldn't be anything to worry about. Anele eventually came and as expected she bombarded Themba with a lot of questions about his intentions with Melo and all that jazz brothers say when they

want to scare off our boyfriends, I think now I understand why Melo was convinced that Anele is lesbian because wawu!

“Will you go to the Meyiwa’s today?”

“No, being there gives me heart palpitations Melo.”

“What do you mean?” Her eyes are wide as saucers in shock

“There’s just too much sadness in that house, they no longer even eat together...a lot of things have changed, and I find myself wanting to cry every time I’m there and I can’t keep on

crying, how will Sabelo heal if I keep reminding him of his sister's death?"

"Eish sounds hectic, maybe they need to consider going to therapy as a family."

"Speaking of therapy Sabelo and I need to see a therapist. I'm tired of all the fighting and arguments I just want us to be happy and enjoy our relationship. Just love each other without dealing with any problems."

"If you think it'll help then go for it sis, I know I would do anything to save my relationship with Themba. So do all you need to do for the survival of your relationship, you two love and make each other happy it would be a shame if

you had to break up over something that could easily be fixed.”

“That will never happen Melo, Sabelo is my lifeline.”

“Ncoah, to be honest with you when your relationship started, I didn’t think it would last but I didn’t want to say anything and burst your bubble.”

“Why?”

“Because it’s not every day we see an older woman and a younger man who truly love each other, it’s always the case of the man being

with the woman for money or the woman using the younger guy for sex. I honestly thought Sabelo will cheat on you when he got to varsity, I'm sorry but I didn't think your love would stand the test of time."

Wow!

"I didn't think we would survive either but look at how far we have come...and I believe we are still going far."

"Yes, you will."

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NARRATED

Neo hasn't left his house ever since he was granted bail, his lawyer warned him to stay out of trouble to avoid adding more charges added to his long list of charges. It still puzzles him how Sabelo survived those gunshots because he made sure to aim for his heart, it infuriates him that he'll go to jail and leave Ndalo and Sabelo to carry on with their pathetic love story..all the risks and sacrifices he made to win Ndalo were all in vain, he risked his freedom for nothing it would be better if Sabelo was dead. It's a few minutes after 1 in the morning when his eyelids snap open. He removes the covers and jumps out of bed as he hears a noise coming from the kitchen, it

sounds like a thief is breaking into his house. He immediately takes his gun under his pillow and swiftly walks to the kitchen careful not to make a sound. A man dressed in black clothing and gloves kicks the gun from his hands when he appears from the corner, it slips from his hands and falls on the floor. Him and the man look at the gun on the floor and race to pick it up, Neo realizes that his luck has run out when the man beats him to it and picks it up first, scared for his life his body begins to tremble and warm pee runs down his legs.

“Sies!”

Ntsika says and spits saliva on the floor whilst aiming the gun at Neo’s chest. Accepting

defeat, Neo raises both his hands up as a sign of surrender.

“You can take anything but please don’t kill me.”

“There’s no escaping your destiny, you are screwed!” Ntsika says

He gets on his knees and grovels at the Ntsika’s feet. Ntsika swings his foot forward kicking Neo’s mouth with his CAT safety boot, Neo yelps in pain holding his now bleeding mouth.

“Masaka!”

Ntsika exclaims and advances towards him.

Neo retreats backwards with his hands on the floor like a four-legged animal trying to escape the angry man, his fear intensifies when he bumps into something on his back. He looks up and comes face to face with another man, Brandon.

“Please... just let me go.” He pleads with tears in his eyes

Brandon steps on his right hand that is still on the floor and tramples on top of it causing a shrill cry to escape from Neo’s lips.

“I didn’t do anything please let me go..” He croaks out while a mixture of tears and snorts rolls down his face.

“I hate it when people beg, get up!” Ntsika commands. Neo gets up ignoring the severe pain from his right hand as a result of being trampled on.

“Get undressed.”

“What?” he asks in shock

“Hey, undress wena!” says Brandon behind him and for some reason Neo knows not to mess with this one so he slowly takes off his clothes.

“Not bad zalo, he’s better than Musa.” Ntsika

Why are these men talking about his dick, will they rape him? He has always heard of men being raped but he never thought he would someday be counted among victims of rape much less it happening in his own home, he’d expect this sort of thing to happen in prison not here.

“Bend and hold on to the armrest so your asshole sticks out.”

“Tape his mouth Ntsika he’ll make noise and wake his neighbours; we don’t want any trouble.”

His heartbeat accelerates as this ‘Ntsika’ person looks through what looks like a toolbox, his hands come out with a silver sellotape, the one they use to gag people in movies. No, he can’t allow himself to go down without a fight he needs to fight for his life. He can’t allow these men to rape him so easily, he needs to fight. He skims his eyes around the room looking for something he can use to defend himself with.

“What are you looking for, you want to defend yourself is that it?” Questions Brandon

“No...iiii”

“Calm down, don’t look so scared. I want you to defend yourself, it would make this even more interesting and ease up my conscience at least I won’t feel guilty knowing that you fought back so let’s go.” He says and balls his fingers into fists. Ntsika laughs and begins shifting furniture around creating more space for the fight.

“No, I don’t want to fight.” Says Neo in a shaky voice and the two men laugh at his expense

“Come on Neo, you were brave when you broke into Ndalo’s apartment and drugged her. You had balls when you shot my son, now come on where did that courage disappear to...don’t disappoint me man come on.”

Brandon says coaxing him to fight.

“What? so you’re Sabelo’s father?” Emergency bells go off in his head when it clicks that these men are not here to rape him, they are here to kill him! why didn’t he pick it up when he saw the resemblance?

“You’re correct but let’s reserve chatting for later... for now let’s fight it out like men.

Come”

“I’m sorry sir, I didn’t mean to kill Sabelo I only wanted to scare him off. I was never going to do anything to Ndalo, I love her and only wanted her to love me back.” He’s back on his knees begging again. Ntsika laughs

“He’s a coward like Sabelo said, he’ll waste our time with all this begging. Let’s get to business zalo”

Ntsika picks up Neo’s boxers on the floor and forcefully shove them inside Neo’s mouth and tapes his mouth with a sellotape.

“Listen Neo this is how we are going to do this. If you obey our instructions, we won’t have any reason to kill you but if you think of resisting, I

won't hesitate to chop your head off you get it?" Neo nods vigorously with tears in his eyes "Good boy, now bend and hold on to the armrest."

Brandon holds Neo's hands in place while Ntsika takes a dry corn cob and shove it inside Neo's ass causing him excruciating pain, his painful cries are blocked by the boxers and sellotape in his mouth. Making the tears flowing down his face the only evidence of the pain he feels from the painful intrusion in his ass. He fidgets, twisting and turning fighting with all his might to escape but Brandon holds him in place until Ntsika is satisfied. When Brandon releases him, he slumps to the floor

like a bag of potatoes curling himself like a foetus and weeps in pain and mortification.

“You’ll have all the time to cry later for now let’s get back to business.”

Brandon says and grabs his hands and ties his wrists tightly together with a cable ties.

“Don’t try to remove this, you’ll only cause yourself pain because it’ll dig into your flesh and slice your wrists.” Brandon

Ntsika takes pliers from the toolbox and pinches Neo’s balls with them until they are red and bruised.

“Zalo I say we chop off his manhood.” Ntsika says with a cold look on his face and Brandon nods in agreement.

Ntsika picks up a grinder from the toolbox and plugs it on the wall socket, Neo cries out in horror when he sees the abrasive grinding disc rotating. Brandon puts his knee on top of Neo’s chest holding him in place while Ntsika chops off his dick and balls with a grinder causing blood to spring out like water from a tap staining the walls and the floor.

“You messed with the wrong family my friend. Don’t cry we are almost done.” Brandon

What's left now is to cut off his tongue and hands, they wouldn't think of leaving any loopholes behind now, would they?

"I think we should feed him his dick before he loses his ability to taste, what do you say Neo?"

Brandon suggests

Neo shakes his head vigorously

"Uhhala mahala, we weren't asking for your permission. You will eat your dick!" Ntsika

(You're wasting your energy by refusing)

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#99

“Thank you so much detective Zwane.”

“Bye.” He says.

I cut the call and slowly sink on my bed.

**“What?” Melo asks when she sees the defeated
expression on my face**

“That was detective Zwane, the one in charge of the case I have against Neo.”

“What did he say, you look pale?”

“He called to give me an update.”

“The case is going to court first week of Jan, right?” I sigh and shake my head in disapproval

“Not anymore, apparently Neo fled the country. He sent a message to his friend from a +265 NSN number two nights ago telling him he’s fleeing the country because he won’t survive being imprisoned he says he knows that’s where he’s headed because the state has an

airtight case against him. His friend is the one who took the information to the police station, they verified it and it's true. They have CCTV footages showing someone matching his description crossing the border illegally”

Zwane says his face is not showing clearly on the footage because he's wearing a cap to hide his face from the cameras but the body matches his so they believe the man in the footage is him, especially since he used the Lebombo border post so they assume he used the Maputo route to go to Malawi.

“Wow, some friend he is! I'm not saying what Neo did was right, he's a terrible person and he deserves to be convicted for his crimes but

what kind of friend is he to report his friend to the police?” Anele

“A fake one but I’m glad he’s fake because now Neo won’t get away, what’s going to happen to the case now?” Melo

“Zwane says the number he sent the message with is from Malawi, the Malawian police have been notified and have already started searching for him.” I say

“At least, I hope they find him soon. He needs to pay for what he did, he can’t just get away with everything he did to you and Sabelo and who knows who else.” Melo

I don't know how I feel about this whole thing, I wanted Neo to pay for his sins in prison. I didn't want him to escape and roam about like he didn't turn our lives upside down. I know he is said to be in Malawi but what if he comes back someday when everyone has moved on and forgotten about the case and does what he failed to do? I hope he gets caught because I don't want to look over my shoulder for the rest of my life, scared of what he might do when he decides to come back from hiding.

“Exactly, he needs to pay for what he did. Sabelo almost died and maybe Sphe would still be alive if he didn't shoot Sabelo.” Anele

“True.”

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KHETHELO

When I lost Sphe I didn't only lose a sister, I lost a friend, someone I could always rely on and my human diary. I know picking up the pieces and moving on without her will be difficult, it already is. I still cry every time I go through our pictures and videos in my gallery. Everything I see reminds me of her, and seeing a person dressed a white coat saddens me because I know how much she wanted to be a doctor and I know she would've been a great one. I always listen to her voice notes and call

her number just so I can listen to her voicemail. I exchanged numbers with my cousins from KZN after the funeral, and we have been talking over the phone and on social media trying to build a close relationship as cousins, but I know none of them will take Sphe's place in my heart. She was very dear to me, and I miss her every second of the day, how I wish she was here because I could really use her advice; I'm facing a predicament and I'm not sure what to do- do I follow my heart and risk coming between friends or do I ignore my feelings and pretend like I'm okay with it?

CAN I VIDEOCALL?

A text from Kevin reads

YES, BUT PLEASE CALL IN FIVE MINUTES.

I reply and run to the bathroom to wash my face then apply ponds and some gloss on my lips. When I'm done freshening up, I return to my bedroom and anxiously wait for his call, I'm nervous we will be video calling for the first time- we have been speaking over the phone and texting via WhatsApp ever since we exchanged numbers on Saturday and please don't ask me how we exchanged numbers because wawu I still can't believe I gave him my numbers that easily. He's the predicament I was referring to, I don't know if I should be talking to him and feeling the way I do for him because I don't know if Sabelo will approve.

My phone rings snapping me from my thoughts, it's him. I clear my throat and accept his video call.

“Hey.” My voice comes out thinner and softer than normal.

“Hey beautiful.”

There's something about the way the word 'beautiful' rolls off his tongue that leaves my insides melting

“How are you doing?”

“I’m great now that I’m looking at your beautiful face.”

His voice, how he’s looking at me and how his lips move when he speaks! Damn this colored boy be making me feel things I never thought possible.

“I want to see you again, please allow me to take you out on a date.”

He says and sucks his lower lip between his teeth. There’s this whole ‘I’m hot and I know it’ vibe about him, I never thought I would be so attracted to someone like him, I don’t like abo ‘I’m hot and I know it’ kind of guys.

“Kev stop it, I told you my brother won’t like this...we shouldn’t even be talking, I shouldn’t have given you my number.”

“I know what you said but I can’t control how I feel Kate, I can’t get you out of my mind since the day of the funeral...you’re all I think about.”

He prefers using my second name Kate instead of Khethelo for obvious reasons

“But..”

“Stop with the buts, I know I’m friends with your cousin and all that jazz about you being two years older than me, but I can’t get you out of my mind Kate. I’ve never wanted anyone like I want you.” Why is my heart suddenly racing and beating fast?

“I don’t know Kevin; I don’t think I want my first relationship to be a long-distance relationship because from what I have seen and heard long distance relationships never work one of the two ends up cheating. I also don’t want to ruin your friendship with my brother. He cares about you; he even considers you his brother so I wouldn’t want to come between the two of you and ruin the beautiful friendship you guys share.”

“Look Kate I also don’t want to jeopardize my friendship with Troy, and I know this is somewhat not ideal and that’s why I tried to forget about you, but I can’t Kate you’re all I think about. I wouldn’t pursue a relationship with you if I didn’t have good intentions with you, I wouldn’t betray my friend like that. I know you think my friendship with him will be ruined when he finds out about us, but your cousin is a good guy and he’ll give us his blessings when he sees how serious I am about you. I swear I don’t want to play games with you, I know I look like a player and all, but I promise I’m not ..I want something real with you...I want to be your man and I want to make you my woman.”

My heart you guys, this boy is making it so easy to fall for him.

“That’s the thing Kevin, I don’t know if what I feel for you is love.”

“I know how I feel about you Kate and I know that I want something serious with you, I think I love you and I want to grow in loving you with each day that passes...give me a chance to love you, please say yes it’ll give you a chance to explore your feelings for me.”

I know it's too soon, but I think love him too but he doesn't need to know that at least not yet.

“I don't want to hurt you so I'd rather we take things slow, maybe be friends for a while.”

“That's also fine by me, we can be friends as long as you know what my feelings for you are.”

“Ok no problem.”

“Thanks. So do you want me to tell Troy about us?”

“Whoa slow down tiger, don’t tell him anything yet. We will only tell him if we decide to date.”

“No, when we decide to date, and it’s only a matter of time before that happens.”

He says with a lopsided smile on his face

“You sound so sure.”

“That’s because I won’t rest until you’re mine.”

The way I’m blushing right now

“Look at that smile, you’ll definitely give me beautiful babies when we are married.”

Jesu wase mazulwini!

“What about the distance, how will we work around that?”

I digress because my cheeks hurt from all the blushing I have been doing

“That’s not a problem, we both have cars so we can make it work. I have a bachelor pad so we can see each other anytime we want plus you are in Pretoria most of the time and that’s not too far from Johannesburg.”

Sounds like he has everything figured out, I hope Sabelo won't get angry with me for this because lord knows I also want to love and feel loved. I want to give Kevin a chance, who knows he might be the one. I can already imagine our cute coloured babies!

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SABELO

“Dad please tell me you have nothing to do with Neo’s disappearance?”

“He disappeared?”

He asks with his eyes wide open faking shock; I would fall for it if I didn't know him as well as I do.

“Dad stop pretending I know you had something to do with this.”

“I know this sounds like something I would do but I'm afraid this time you're wrong I am innocent. So, this boy disappeared, damn it I was still thinking of the perfect way to make him pay for what he did. Wait, how do you know he disappeared?”

I can't believe this man. So much acting and pretense!

“The detective in charge of my case just called and told me, apparently he fled the country and went to Malawi.”

Ask me why I'm telling him all of this because he knows everything and I'm sure he planned it. I wouldn't be surprised if Neo winds up dead.

“Bastard! He better not think of coming back because I'll be waiting for him when he does.”

Oh please!

“Anyway, where are you going all dressed up?”

He asks looking at my outfit

“I’m taking Ndalo and my daughter out for lunch, we’ve been through a lot we need time out away from everyone and everything.”

“True, go and enjoy yourself with your little family and tell me if you need money.”

“No, I’m okay but thanks for offering. I’ll be on my way.”

“Bye son.”

Ndalo, Hlelo and I are having lunch at Cappuccinos at Secunda Mall. Ndalo was craving their pizza and since her wish is my command we are having lunch here. Hlelo has started walking and my girl is so excited about this milestone and she’s walking all over the place making me work overtime because I must get up every five minutes to get her when she disappears to a corner where we can’t see her from our table, toddlers are a handful yoh especially when they start learning how to walk and start pulling everything they can get their

hands on but I still love being her father. I'm learning a lot from raising her.

“Your pizza.” The waiter says placing the pizza on the table

“Would you like a refill on your drinks?” he asks

“Yes, please. Sthandwa sam wena?” I ask looking at Ndalo. Instead of replying she puts a hand on her face blocking her nose and mouth.

“What's wrong?”

She retches and vomits all over the floor drawing attention to herself. Alarmed and worried, I get up and rush to her side

“I’ll bring a bucket and a mop.” The waiter says before rushing off

“What’s wrong baby, here drink this.”

She takes the glass of water from my hands and takes a big sip

“I’m okay, don’t worry. It’s the pizza, it has a certain smell that makes my stomach turn.”

“What, I don’t get it. You like this pizza, it’s your favourite.”

“I know but I won’t be able to stomach it today. Can we go somewhere else, I’ll pay?”

“No, it’s fine love you don’t have to. I’ll pay the bill and we can go anywhere you want okay.”

“I will take Hlelo and wait for you outside, I really can’t stand the smell of the pizza”

“No problem.”

We went Spur when we left Cappuccinos and luckily Ndalo didn’t have a problem with their

food, then we spent the rest of the day at Lake Muzi swimming well that's if I can call having your legs inside the pool swimming. Minus Ndalo vomiting at the restaurant, I had a lovely day with my little family. When it was time to go back home neither of us wanted to part ways so we booked a room at Lake Muzi so we would spend the night in each other's arms. I'm sitting on the couch chatting on my phone, she's on the bed putting our daughter to sleep.

“Finally, she's sleeping.” Ndalo

“Come on, she's not that bad.”

“She is.”

“You’re exaggerating, come sit here.”

I say pointing at my lap. She obliges and sit on top of me with her legs on either side of my waist

“I miss you.”

I say grinding my erection on her mound. She wraps her arms around my neck and pulls me in for a kiss, the kiss is sultry and sensual and I get lost in her juicy lips. I have my hands all over her body, groping and caressing her beautiful body when she stands up and takes off her dress in haste motioning me to do the

same with my clothes. When we've discarded all our clothes, our mouths link again in a French kiss. The kiss is sloppy and messy, we are breathing heavily and have our hands all over each other like dogs on heat.

“Turn around and hold on to the armrest.”

She turns and holds on to the couch armrest. My dick twitches at the sight of her cookie glistening with her juices. I spank her causing her to moan gloriously while her ass jingles, I slowly move my fingers down until I reach her warm and moist hole and insert my finger fingering her.

“Aaaah.”

Her moans drive me crazy I end up on my knees with my face buried on her wetness slurping on her juices like a dog, I alternate between her nuna and her ass and licking her crack in the process. I know she's close when her grip on the couch tightens and her body trembles. I circle my finger around the wrinkles on her ass and she comes undone creaming my face with her salty juices.

“Woah that was amazing.”

I lie on my back on the fluffy carpet that's laid on the tiled floor.

“Come on top, I want us to try something.”

“I think I know what that is”

She replies with a naughty smile on her face.

She climbs on top of me, her face facing my legs putting her cookie on my face. I spread her butt cheeks and start eating her up, I almost cry from sheer pleasure when she puts my member inside her warm mouth and sucks on my cockhead after spreading it with precum, I groan with my mouth on her pussy when she sucks her cheeks in while my member is inside her mouth the pleasure I feel is out of this world and ripples through my body like an

**electric wave damn I think I will love this
position.**

LOVE KNOWS NO AGE

#100

FOURS YEARS LATER

NARRATED

**“Oh, my goodness Ses’Ndalo you look
breathtaking WOW!”**

Exclaims Melo when she walks into Ndalo's room and sees her in a dazzling strapless tulle ball gown with a ruffled skirt overlay edged with horsehair. The bodice has a small, dropped waist and accentuates Ndalo's figure and is covered in crystal beading.

"She is beautiful right?" Asks the designer as she helps Ndalo with the dress.

"She's more than beautiful, my brother-in-law will definitely shed a tear or two when he sees her."

Her eyes glisten with unshed tears looking at how beautiful her sister is, Ndalo has always looked beautiful but today..today she looks perfect. Lilian walks into the room and smiles

with tears in her eyes as she takes in Ndalo's appearance.

"You look beautiful maKhumalo." She says softly, her words laced with pride.

"Thank you, ma." She says and tearfully stares at her reflection in the mirror, this is it. She's getting married to the love of her life.

"Can you please give me a moment alone with Ndalo."

Lilian says her eyes darting between the designer and Melo. The two ladies leave the room giving the mother and her eldest daughter privacy. Lilian lowers herself on the edge of the bed.

"You look so beautiful my baby." She says and wipes a wayward tear "Oh my baby I still remember how I almost ruined our relationship

when I wanted you to marry Musa, I failed to recognize how unhappy you were with him because I desperately wanted you to live the life I had envisioned for you in my head. I thought Musa was the perfect man for you because he had me fooled into thinking he was a good person, so it didn't make sense to me how you could choose a high scholar over him. I thought you were crazy and possessed by the demon of lust." Ndalo laughs "I didn't think it was love, I despised that light skinned boy so much and I was so sure that your relationship with him wouldn't last but here you are today getting married to him well you're already married to him.... My point is, I have watched the two of you grow and loving each other immensely throughout the years and now I know there's no one who can love you better

than he does. He loves you my child and I have no doubt that he'll make you happy."

"Thank you, ma."

"I've been married to your father for almost thirty years now, and I can tell you that marriage is not easy, you'll come across many challenges in your marriage. Marriage is a sacred union that is blessed and recognized by God and that is why the devil attacks marriages so much, my marriage to your father didn't last this long because I'm the most beautiful woman there is, or because I'm the best cook, or because of the three beautiful children I bore for him. My marriage lasted because we made God the center of our marriage ...Nowadays marriages don't because you young people don't pray, you discuss everything with your

friends and fool each other into using muti thinking it'll help keep a man. My child never ever discuss your marital affairs with anyone not even Melo or me, you grew up in church Buhle you know the lord so I want you to learn to kneel down and pray whenever you come across difficulties or challenges in your home, in your marriage and with your children always kneel down and pray. The bible says in Psalms 71v1 'those who put their trust in the lord shall never be put to shame', put all your trust in him my child, make him your friend and confide all your troubles to him. He's not man he doesn't change and will never wake up one day and turn on you like people do, hear me well I'm not saying don't have friends all I'm saying is that your friends should never know about your marital affairs. I know how you

youngsters are, you tell your friends everything including what goes on in the bedroom, I need you to stop it if you were doing it before ayenziwa leyonto mtanami.” (You don’t do that my child.)

“Thank you so much ma.”

The door opens and Melo, Khethelo, Anele, Nthabi walk in looking beautiful in their long matching champagne bridesmaids’ dresses with each holding a bouquet in their hands. Melo’s dress is slightly different from the rest, unlike others hers has a slit on the side revealing her firm yellow and toned thigh.

“Wow!” the girls say in awe when their eyes land on Ndalo causing her to blush incessantly

“You look beautiful my girls, where’s Hlelo we need to get going?” Lilian

Just then Hlelo walks in dressed a cute ball gown that looks identical to her mother's wedding gown. A smile embraces Ndalo's lips as she looks at her beautiful daughter, the hairstyle and those beads in her bun make her look like the princess that she really is. Hlelo runs to her mother and wraps her arms around her hips.

“You look so beautiful mommy” for a five-year-old her English is too good. She speaks it so eloquently like those model C kids who go to private schools. Ndalo bends to her daughter's level with her lips pursed for a kiss, Hlelo stands on her tip-toes and pecks her mother's lips.

“Thank you, my love. You also look beautiful.”

“It’s time, we need to get going.” Lilian says giving Ndalo her flower bouquet and covering her face with a veil. The relatives who are inside the house ululate, dance and sing wedding songs as Ndalo and her entourage make their way outside to the limousine decorated with balloons while Anele follows behind holding the dress’s tail.

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SABELO

My anxiety shoots up with each second that passes, I don’t know why I’m so nervous because this is only a celebration Ndalo and I are already married and have been married for

almost four years now. We got married shortly after we found out that we are expecting.

Meyiwa wasn't pleased when we told him the news nor was Khumalo but only because we were having another child out of wedlock, Mr. Khumalo said having one child with his daughter out of wedlock was already bad enough having another one would be pushing it so I had no choice but to step up and pay Ndalo's lobola- with my father's help of course.

I was still in school then and Ndalo's business was still taking off and barely made enough profit to finance the wedding of our dreams, so we only signed at the commissioner's office and had a small celebration with family and friends afterwards. After the celebration my father

gifted us with an apartment in Johannesburg-Auckland park. I moved out of res and moved in with my woman and our daughter. Juggling between school, being a full-time father and husband wasn't easy, seeing someone occasionally or spending some weekends together is different from sharing the same bed with them every night, when you live with someone you to get to know their true self, pick up their bad habits and constantly discover new things about them.

Eventually the butterflies in your tummy disappear and you no longer get goosebumps from just looking into their eyes, all that crazy love you used to feel for them fades away and I believe that's when true love starts. With all of

that said, I have no doubt in my heart and mind that Ndalo is the one for me, my missing rib and the one specifically created for me. I'm completely certain that I want to spend the rest of my life with her.

Kevin, Cameron, my two cousins, my sons and I have just climbed out of the car at Didingwe River lodge where our wedding ceremony and reception will take place. Ndalo and I couldn't think of a more perfect place to say 'I DO' than right next to the river, tranquil mountain views and under the spectacular sunset. Surrounded by a beautiful bush veld and a serenade of love all around.

A smile embraces my lips when I walk inside the venue and see the beautiful decor, it looks exactly like how my wife wanted it. I skim my eyes around the room and look at all the relatives and friends who came in numbers to witness us declare our love and commitment to each other, my parents are sitting next to my uncle and his wife- aunt Zenkosi. Aunt has their two year old son on her lap, I smile when I remember how happy they were when they found out about aunt zen's pregnancy.

My groomsmen walk in first and I follow behind them with my sons on either side of me, people ululate cheerfully as I make my way to the front and stand next to the reverend. After some time, the bridesmaids walk down the

aisle and join the groomsmen in the front row seats, first time by Teeks booms through the speakers as Hlelo walks down the aisle scattering flowers on the red carpet damn my baby looks so cute. Mr. Khumalo walks in next with my beautiful wife in his arm. I look at her walking towards me, her hips swaying side to side and everyone else disappears. Damn she looks so beautiful and I can't help but tear up finding it hard to believe that she's really mine, Khumalo gives me that 'you better take care of her' warning look before turning away going to his seat.

I look at her with a broad smile and stretch out my right hand to her, Melo rushes over and takes Ndalo's bouquet. Ndalo holds my hand, I

cover her small hand with mine and give it a gentle squeeze then we both around and face the reverend.

“Dearly beloved we are gathered here today to join Sabelo Troy Meyiwa and Buhlebendalo Khumalo in holy matrimony. I feel honored to be part of the beautiful couple’s celebration, love is such a beautiful thing brethren look at how these two look at one another ey they remind me of my wife and I when we fell in love.” He looks up and stares into space causing everyone to laugh

“I won’t be long I’m sure the couple can’t wait to leave for their honeymoon, so I won’t waste their time with a long sermon.” Laughter fills the venue as people laugh at the pastor’s joke

“First Corinthians 13: 4-8 reads... ‘4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.’ Buhle and Sabelo these are the qualities or rather characteristics of love according to the word of God, when you truly love someone, your love will come with all of these attributes. Everything is effortless, no one forces anything or tries too hard everything just flows when two people are truly in love with each other.”

I'm standing anxiously waiting for the pastor to get to the part where Ndalo and I kiss. I can't wait to make love to my wife all night and brand her with my love, I want to tattoo my love in her soul and engrave it on her brain. I snap out of my reverie when the pastor calls out my name, I look at him hoping he'll repeat whatever he said. He shakes his head and chuckles probably seeing my confusion before repeating his question.

"Do you wish to say your own vows?" I nod my head in agreement.

I wrote them down but decided not use what I wrote at the last minute, it's always better to speak from the heart.

"Lovely, can we get the rings please." Kevin jolts up from his seat and gives the rings to the

pastor. He prays for them before giving them to us.

“Please face each other” we turn and look at each other “Ok Sabelo you can say your vows to your wife.”

“6 years ago, you captured my heart by being exactly who you are. The sweetest, most loving, compassionate and sensitive person I have ever known. You have been my best friend through the good and the bad, you are my reason to smile, and you have given me comfort beyond measure when I go through difficult times. You believed in my love for you regardless of the ‘worldly’ standards of what love should be like and you have taught me how to love with passion, purity and unconditional acceptance. I’m not sure if a

lifetime is long enough to return all you have given me, but I promise to spend the rest of my days by your side. To laugh and cry with you, to believe in you and support you. In poverty I promise to do everything to make our love rich, and in riches I promises to never allow our love to go poor. Together we are better than we can ever hope to be alone, today I give you my love, my trust and fidelity forever. You will always be the best part of me mother of my beautiful kids, with this ring I pledge to you my love and commitment to you until death do us apart.” Tears are rolling down her face as I slide the ring in her finger.

“That was beautiful daddy thank you.” She mutters in a hushed tone.

“Wow, if this is not love then I don’t know what is. Buhle sisi, it’s your turn.”

“Now how do I compete with that, that was beautiful ngiyabonga Meyiwa.” She takes a deep breath and looks into my eyes “I love you because I'm at my happiest when I'm with you, I love that you love your family just as fiercely as I love mine. Also, I love that your family has become mine just like mine has become yours. You are my best friend and I'm so happy we are on the same team, you are the love of my life and you make me so happy than I ever imagined and thought possible, I am proud to call you my husband and I promise to make you proud to call me your wife. I vow to listen and learn from you, and I vow to cry and laugh with you. I promise to value our differences as much as I value our similarities, I vow to put all

the effort in strengthening our marriage and giving you the best version of myself on good and bad days, rain or shine. You might be younger than me but you have taught me a lot including how to love myself and how to receive love, I will forever love you and I'm so blessed you're mine. This ring is the symbol of my love and commitment to you, I will love you until death do us apart"

Oh my goodness that was beautiful. I smile when she slides the ring into my finger, people are swooning admiring our love. There was a constant anthem of "ncoah's" from the guests when we exchanged vows.

"I'm blown away and lost for words brethren these two truly love each other and it's so beautiful to watch. Let me not say much I

might end up ruining, by the powers vested in me I now pronounce you Mr. and Mrs. Sabelo Troy Meyiwa you may kiss your bride.”

I remove the veil from her face and snake my arms around her waist pulling her body closer and go in for a kiss. We pour all our emotions to the kiss, pouring our hearts and souls into it allowing our mouths to communicate what’s in our hearts, our tongues fuse in the throes of passion and we get lost in each other arms. Guests ululate as we kiss. We kiss until the pastor tells us to stop.

This is the best day of my life.

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MATHAPELO

Losing Sphe changed our lives drastically and left us with a deep wound that we believed could never be healed, moving on without her was difficult for all of us especially on her twin and her father. It took them a lot of time to adjust to the new reality but I'm glad that my son didn't sink into depression, he picked up the pieces and made his wife and kids his reason to keep living. Despite the challenges that came with being a father, a husband and a student plus working part time Sabelo worked hard and completed his degree in record time, he still has a long way to go before he becomes a qualified actuary but with his undergrad

degree, he got a job as a risk manager at an insurance company.

I'm proud of everything him and his wife have achieved over the years, there's nothing more inspiring like seeing young lovers grow and elevate to new heights together. They have worked hard to create a comfortable life for their kids, they bought shares in several companies. Now they want to venture into business together- buying flats in Johannesburg and Pretoria, renovating them and getting them accredited by public universities and colleges so they can rent them out to students.

After their beautiful wedding, the lovely couple flew to Mauritius for their honeymoon. Their wedding was beautiful, their vows took me

back to my wedding day. Those two really love each other and it's so beautiful to watch, how Sabelo looks at Ndalo like his world is in her eyes is amazing to behold. I won't lie at one point I didn't think their love would survive the test of time, Sabelo was only 18 when they met and at that age teens are still discovering themselves. Being certain of his love for Ndalo at that age was hard, but he proved everyone who doubted his love for her wrong. I wish them a very long and happy married life together.

It's almost 9pm, I'm in bed reading my bible when Meyiwa walks in with the kids on his tail. "Gogo!" Alwande and Uthando say at the same time and race to the bed.

Alwande and Uthando are Sabelo and Ndalo's 3-and-a-half-year-old identical twins. They look exactly like their father, one would swear Sabelo was denying them the way they look so much like him. I lift them up, take off their sleepers and put them under the covers next to me. Shortly after Sphe died, God blessed us with these two wonderful human beings to soothe our broken hearts and restore the happiness and joy in our home. Being their grandmother is a bliss and it gives me so much joy, they fill the void and emptiness I had always felt in my heart. It's true what they say, grandparents love their grandchildren more than their kids- it's safe to say I'd kill for my grandchildren.

“Khulu ngicela ungene engubeni.”

(Grandpa please get in bed.)

Hlelo says standing impatiently next to the bed.

Meyiwa looks at her and chuckles

“Why?” he asks holding in his laugh

“So I can sleep on top of you hao khulu you know your princess can’t sleep if she’s not on top of you.”

She’s such a diva this one, exactly like Sphe she’s forever abusing my husband demanding to be carried but I don’t get involved in their business because Meyiwa loves pampering her so I turn into the bad guy everytime I get involved. Meyiwa takes off his sleepers and slides under the covers. Hlelo follows suit and sleeps on top him. We always wait for them to fall asleep and take them to their room.

“Gogo please call mom and dad.” Hlelo

I take my phone and call Sabelo via skype.

“Mom and Dad!” the kids bellow as soon as they see their parents faces on the screen.

“My babies!” Ndalo says matching their excitement

“How is Mauritius?” Hlelo

“It’s very good my baby, we just landed. We’ll take pictures and videos to show you and your brothers when we come back.” Sabelo

“Mama mina ngifuna wena” Alwande says in a breaking tone, he’s such a mama's boy this one.

“Oh my baby, mommy will be back soon don’t cry big boy. When you cry mommy will be sad, do you want me to be sad?”

“No.” he says shaking his head vigorously and wiping his tears with his palms.

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NDALO

I look at the ring on my finger and a smile covers my face, who knew that Sabelo and I would end up married? Our love went through a series of tests and I remember at some point I wanted to break up with him because the downs were too much for me to take but I'm glad Sabelo didn't let me because here I am today married to the love of my life.

"Hey, what's on your mind?" he asks when he walks out of the bathroom and finds me deep in thought.

“Nothing, just thinking about how far we’ve come and everything we’ve been through together, Musa, Lerato, Neo and all the other challenges we went through.”

He sits down and takes my hand into his

“I know right but I’m happy we made it, I love you Mrs. Meyiwa and I’m so lucky you are mine.”

“I’m the lucky one.”

“No, Sthandwa sam I’m the one who is blessed to have you. You didn’t only love me but you gave me three beautiful kids and now you’re about to give me the fourth one I’m such a lucky man.”

“What are you talking about?.. I’m not pregnant.”

“I know, I’m talking about the baby we’ll make now. Hlelo needs a sister don’t you think?”

“What, you’re crazy I’m not having more kids.”

He gets on top of me and tickles me

“Who are you calling crazy? You better respect me woman I’m your husband.” Tears flood my eyes as I giggle uncontrollably

“I’m sorry my husband please stop.”

“Give me a kiss, I’ll stop.”

THE END
