

A smiling bride with long dark hair, wearing a white lace wedding dress, holding a bouquet of yellow flowers. The background is a soft, light pink.

THE BRIDE

*"With or without you, I will walk
down that aisle..."*

SNVL

THE BRIDE.

“With or without you, I'm going to walk down that aisle...”

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WARNING VS NL

The story contains explicit and vulgar language, sex, violence and nudity. It has scenes that may be insensitive and disturbing. As I said the story is fictitious, the scenes of it DOES NOT signify my beliefs or values

Prologue.

“By the power vested in me I now pronounce you one. Mr Ndabezinhle Mkhize, you may kiss your bride.” Announced the pastor. My old husband looked around the audience contemplating on whether to kiss me in front of his sons, daughter-in-laws and grandchildren or not. The man was old enough to be my father's father, her oldest grandson was old enough to be my husband. Don't look at me like that, marriage was my dream and it had to come to life no matter what. He smiled at me revealing his empty gums, at that moment I felt every contents of my stomach threatening their way

to my throat but I stood there bravely as he kissed me. Damn! The old man sure knew how to kiss unlike most of the frogs I had to kiss before I walked down the isle. People cheered for us as he continued to kiss the living daylights out of me. To my surprise the old man knew how to control his saliva despite being toothless.

“Congratulations dear brother.” His sister, Sensile, emotionally hugged him. She then came to me and hugged me too. “Wamukelekile kwaMkhize ntombi yakwaNgwenya (Welcome to the Mkhize family).” At that moment I was floating, flying high on cloud 99. Against all odds I became Mrs Mkhize and my dream came to pass. No one from my side of the family attended the wedding but what the heck? It was my wedding day not theirs. “As long as I'm happy nothing else matters.” It was my mantra and still is. After almost everyone congratulated us it was time to go and change to our next attires, Zulu/Ndebele cultured attire. Ndebele culture because my husband was raised by the maternal side of his family who hailed from the Ndebele

kingdom.

“You looked so beautiful in your wedding dress.” My friend Nomzamo complimented. I looked at the mirror and realized she had tears in her eyes.

“What now Zamo?” I loved that friend of mine like a sister although she sometimes irritated me with her never ending tears. It was the happiest day of my life and I wanted nothing to spoil it for me.

“This day reminds me of my failed marriage. Why did Tshiamo break up with me in such a painful manner just two days after our wedding?” My friend broke the record. It wasn't a nice way to find herself in the books of history but yeah, that shit story of her marriage made a name for her. Not everything is always bad as it seems.

“Zamo? Can we talk about your failed marriage later? Honestly, today I just want to be happy and enjoy being Mrs. I don't want to be depressed on my first night as Mrs Mkhize--” Qhubekani flew in the room like a raging bull. He grabbed me by the neck and pinned me on the wall.

“What the hell are you doing Zinhle? Huh? Do you have a death wish?” He pressed his elbow harder on my neck. “I asked you a question bitch!” I summoned all the strength that was left in me and kicked him on the groin. He quickly let go of me and collapsed on his knees holding his package. “Fuck! Are you crazy?”

“You are the crazy one Qhubekani!” I yelled. “What kind of a step son are you? Is that how you treat your mother--”

“Don't you dare insult my mother you piece of shit! Do you think you can walk into my home and automatically become my mother? Huh? After all the kinky fuckery sex you and I had? ” He hissed still kneeling on the floor.

“We fucked, so what? I'm married to your father now Qhubekani will you please respect my new position in this family? Or you will find yourself homeless with your fat wife and obese kids!”

“Zie--”

“Lower your voice. My husband who is also your

father is in the next room. Imagine how he will react if he finds you kneeling before me with both your hands on your groin? Get up and leave from here before I lose my temper!”

“I’m going to kill you!”

“Many have tried but they ended up three two feet down only to be found two or three weeks later by the always sniffing dogs. I’m sure you don’t want to meet with the same fate.” He gasped. “Now get out and stop disturbing my peace!”

INSERT 1.

Two years earlier.....

Zinhl’ Intombi zakwaNgwenya is the name. Twenty one years on this earth, born and raised in the dusty rural areas of Zhombe, Tombankala in a family of eight. It is said that everyone is born with his/her gift in her fist but I wasn’t born with a gift rather a

dream. A dream to become Mrs Somebody before reaching twenty five. I always had to compete with my siblings in everything until I stopped trying all together. I wasn't good in the kitchen, on the fields or even st school. I felt useless at some point and my mother never missed a chance to remind me of a useless person I was. I then started my own journey, journey to becoming a Mrs Somebody. My whole life has been about experimenting how those tails between men's legs work. If I can be asked to gather all the frogs I have kissed and all the dicks I have sucked and fucked, I will definitely need two trains. Yeah, that's how far I went with this experimenting thing until I met Qhubekani Mkhize. He was everything I prayed for, ticked all the boxes from my list of the ideal hubby, knew how to touch me in the right places, promised me heaven on earth, even proposed with the most beautiful ring which had the biggest diamond stone I've ever seen but it was all a lie, a fatal lie.

“Babe, I think we should take a break. I just started working in our family company as the Managing

Director and the pressure is too much. I'm unable to keep up with work and my personal life." He softly said.

"You are joking, right? " He looked at me, unblinking. Realizing he was dead serious about breaking things up I felt dizzy. That was not what I wanted to hear from him. "Babe no! You can't break up with me--"

"This is not a break up but taking sometime off this relationship." Tears streamed down my cheeks, my world collapsed around me. My world, Qhubekani was everything I needed and more. He was the only thing that made sense in my life after my parents threw me out of the house for bringing home ten O'level U's. "Zie please don't be childish you know how much this opportunity means to me. I have to impress my family by taking the company to greater heights. Wait for me I will come for you my bride." He said wiping my tears.

"Qhubekani you can not leave me alone. You know my situation, you know I don't have anyone in this world except you. Please don't do this--" I begged

him but he did not give in. “Fine. I will give you the time you want to prove yourself to your parents but I want you to leave me with something to hold on to.”

“Something like what? Zie you have the house, the car and bank cards what more do you want?”

“A child.” He looked at me like I had just grown horns on my forehead. “Yes. Give me a child as the assurance that you will come back for me--”

“Are you nuts? How can you ask for something absurd like that! I don't have the time for this I'm leaving--” I grabbed the kitchen knife from the coffee table and pointed it straight to my heart.

“Then I have no reason to live.” He swiftly turned and froze on the spot.

“Babe what are you doing? Please stop this--”

“Give me a baby or I will kill myself--”

“Okay. Okay. I'm going to give you everything you want just put the knife down.” I obliged. He charged towards me and slapped me hard I saw shooting

starts during the day. “Don’t you ever threaten to kill yourself ever again!” His hands were pressing hard on my neck. My gagging sounds turned him on. He became as hard as a rock by just watching my helpless self. He unzipped his trousers using his other hand while the other one moved from my neck to my breast. I coughed continuously trying to catch my breath. #Removed.

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Read the #Removed. part on our private group.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 2.

I woke up to find myself sleeping alone on the sofa.

Qhubekani left me a note apologizing for breaking up things. At that moment I felt like dying, I felt my heart breaking into tiny pieces. The witch that was his mother had succeeded in breaking us apart. I knew it before it happened that they would ask him to choose between us and the position he had always yearned for. I took my phone and dialed my friend Zamo, the one I can entrust my life to. I told her everything that had happened, she sympathized with me but like a Dr Phil she is, she told me to forget about Qhubekani and focus on myself. How was that even possible when I used to dream and live for one thing; marriage. Two months down the line I found that I was pregnant! The thought of raising the child alone scared the heck out of me and I reached out to him.

“I’m pregnant Qhubekani.” I blurted out. He laughed because to him it was a joke. “I’m not joking.” I had to say it.

“What? Who's the father?”

“What do you mean who's the father? You slept with me without a condom and now you have the

audacity to ask me such a question? Are you out of your mind?" I yelled at him.

"Maybe I'm out of my mind because a child was never part of the plan." He dropped the call. I cried until no tears came out of my eyes anymore. I looked myself in the mirror and told myself "enough with the crying". That was the last time I shed a tear. All thanks to Qhubekani I cried all my tears to the last drop. I started hustling and he kept depositing money to my bank account until someday I came across a picture of him in a suit next to a bride. I lost it, I went to meet him raging with fury.

"You promised me Qhue? You were supposed to come back and marry me!" I punched him over and over again.

"Zie? Stop this madness! We both know my mom was never going to accept you as my wife let alone her daughter-in-law. I'm sorry Zie but you will have to be my side chick--" I slapped him hard.

"I'm not going to be your side chick Qhubekani! I have dreams and I'm not about to let you squash

them!”

“Dreams you say? What dreams are you talking about? Are you talking about the dreams of trapping rich men so you can squander all their money? Huh?” I was so furious that I felt like squeezing the life out of him. “Zie if you can't be my side dish then you will have to disappear from my life and never show your face in front of me again. My wife is a royal princess from a very reputable family and I'm not about to humiliate her by letting a slut like you destroy our blissful marriage.” He mocked.

“You know what? You are right. I'm not going to humiliate her royal highness but there's something I will definitely do. With or without you, I will walk down that aisle. Mark my words. And I hope and pray we don't ever meet each other again. Congratulations and have a happy married life.” I pushed past him heading for the exit.

“Get rid of that thing or else I will kill you.” I turned back and smirked.

“I dare you Qhubekani Mkhize!”

After another three months of trying to survive alone his mother came to see me. I hated that woman with everything in me and I still blame her for separating us. I tried to be a little kinder to her but the witch wouldn't stop bothering me.

“You have to get rid of this child!” She kept preaching those words until I got fed up of them. It was a question of my baby not some trash I could just wake up in the morning and get rid of.

“I'm getting tired of your sermon. I'm not and will never get rid of this child! Please leave me alone!” The witch couldn't have it. She kept on and on being a nuisance and I decide to end my problems. I grew up fighting my own battles so taking care of my own problems was not something I wasn't used to. Just one stab on the neck ended all my problems. I dumped her body at Pumula old whereas I was staying at Makhandeni A. They searched for her for about a week until someone found her body and it was said to be a robbery or something. The question everyone still has no answer to is why a

lady of her calibre was out during the night and that too at Pumula old when she was from Morningside.

What happened after that were so many twists and turns until one lucky day when I meet my husband Ndabezinhle Mkhize, Qhubekani's father. I'm his stepmother now and he has to deal with the fact that his father is eating from my cookie jar now or go jump to the nearest cliff.

NOW.....

“Good morning sweetheart.” My seventy five year old husband gives me a peck on the cheek. He looks fresh and appears to be in a happy mood.

“Morning darling. You are up early today?” I say smiling at him.

“I had promised your grandchildren and our son to drop them at school today.”

“Oh? They are so lucky to have you around. You are really amazing.” I don't know if I love this old man or not but one thing I know is that he's quite amazing

and he's good with kids which makes him even more of a remarkable husband.

“Am I really amazing?”

“Yes darling. One of the many reasons why I love you this much.” His smile grows even wider.

“What about the bedroom issue darling? Are you going to cheat or leave me because of it?” My poor husband he's still worried that he couldn't get it up yesterday.

“I won't do any of the two. I love you darling and we'll deal with this together. We can go and see a doctor about it if you don't mind.”

“I wouldn't mind doing something that will make my beautiful feisty wife happy.”

“Okay then. Let me get up so we can leave and be back early before your son comes back from crèche. You know how he behaves when he doesn't see both of us after school.”

“You are right. We will eat here or we'll grab something on the way?”

“Anything you choose I'm fine by it. Let me get ready quickly.” He sits on the heart shaped chair watching me making the bed. My mom really did not teach me how to be a great wife but I've seen it in the movies that man actually like women who can cook, iron their clothes, make the bed and clean their own bedrooms not the ones who rely on their domestic helpers. There are so many helpers here but none of them has ever cleaned our bedroom. I'm very strict when it comes to what's mine.

After cleaning and getting ready I head to the kitchen where Anelisa, Qhubekani's wife, Gugu, the eldest daughter-in-law of the family married to Khulekani the eldest son are busy preparing breakfast.

“Good morning mother-in-law.” Gugu jokes. She's such a sweet woman this one.

“Morning darling daughter-in-law. How are you today?”

“I'm fine just a little bit tired. Your grandchildren kept me up yesterday because of that 1000 pieces

puzzle you got for them. Next time they ask for puzzles please don't buy them.” She flashes her innocent smile. Anelisa is staring at me like always. I don't have anything against this fat princess but I feel like her behaviour towards me is starting to get under my skin.

“Noted Makoti. I wanted to let you know that your father-in-law and I will eat breakfast out today--”

“Is there something wrong with our cooking? Why eat outside mother-in-law?” Gugu says. Her face is now plastered with worry.

“Nothing like that. We have an important meeting. You know I will always tell you if your father-in-law complains about something. For now we are all good.” Khulekani walks in and kisses me on the cheek as a way of greeting me. He's a great guy and I think I like him as a son despite him being twenty four years older than me.

“Morning mom.” Him calling me mom always make me feel some type of way. It almost makes me feel guilty for killing his bitchy mother. My husband

honks outside, I say my goodbyes and leave. I bump into Qhubekani by the entrance. Like always he grabs my hand and pins me on the wall.

“What are you still doing here? What do you want from me--”

“Don't flatter yourself Qhubekani I want nothing from you and I'm here because I'm married to your father not whatever the crap you think of me!” I say through gritted teeth.

“Leave from here Zie or I will kill you and your son. I can't bear to see you here everyday--”

“Touch my son and your whole family will pay for your sins! Hell, even your distant relatives will suffer the consequences of your foolishness! Don't push me Qhubekani. I'm sure you don't want me dealing with your family alphabetically as we know the royal highness will be on top of that list followed by your obese kids--”

“Zinhle!--” He almost slaps me but I grab his hand.

“Don't you even think about it! Stay the fuck away from me or you will meet with the same fate as your

mother.....”

THE BRIDE.

“With or without you, I will walk down the aisle...”

Insert 3.

Zie’s POV

“You killed my mother you bitch!” He hisses.

“I warned her but she wouldn’t stop. We kill pests because they don’t stop bothering and your mother was worse than a mosquito--” I fire back.

“Why did you lie about it? Why did you lie to everyone--”

“Uh-uh,” I shake my head to emphasize my point. “A liar is the one who denies the truth but in my case no one ever asked so how am I a liar?”

“Bitch!--” He tries to punch me but my stiletto is already on his balls.

“Don’t play dirty with me Qhubekani I’m worse than those men you owe. I can be your very beautiful nightmare darling and only you will be bothered by it because Zinhle is such a darling and a charmer--”

“Honey I’ve been waiting for you.” I knew my husband would come for me.

“I’m sorry darling your son here was trying to sweet talk me into making you agree to something that’s a little absurd. ” I have the most bright smile on my face. I check Qhubekani through the corner of my eye and he’s throwing daggers at me. Dude? Get a life I’m so over you and your spoiled brat tantrums.

“What is it that he wants? I hope he’s not in trouble again--”

“No darling it’s nothing like that. I will tell you about it on our way to our meeting. Since we are running late I think I should drive.” Only I can drive above 120km/h not my husband here.

“And kill us both before we reach our destination? ” He jokes putting his hand around my tiny waist heading to the car. He opens the driver’s side for me

and I step inside. While in the car her tucks my 22 inch Brazilian hair behind my ear and buckles me up. Always so caring and attentive. One of the many reasons I said yes to his proposal.

“Ready for a hell of a ride?” He nods smiling as I start the car. To him I will always be the worst reckless female driver he's ever met. The day I met him I was so pissed I felt like running over everybody who was standing my way. He was leaning on the side of his Legend 45 when I parked my Audi almost knocking him down. I walked out slamming the door behind me and charged towards him yelling.

“Why are you standing there you old man! Do you have a death wish?” I was so close to his face that we were breathing the same air. He just glared at me but said nothing. “I asked you a damn question?” I don't know where my manners were that day but my mouth kept on running and running until he pulled me to him and engulfed me in his surprisingly warm arms. For some weird reason I missed the good old days with my father and I

cracked. I found myself sobbing in his chest while he kept quiet rubbing my back.

“Whatever you are going through will pass. It's just a phase. You are angry at the world and everyone in it I understand that but one day you'll remember this day and smile.” I looked up at him rubbing my nose with my oversized hoodie. “Here.” He gave me his handkerchief which I used to clean my face.

“Nothing beats the smell of strong black coffee, wanna join me for a cup?” It was more of an offer than a question. I was pregnant at the time and you all know how most of the pregnancies can make one feel hungry all the time and I'm sure my lips were dry and cracky.

“But I don't have money to pay for coffee?” I retorted. I'm a girl who likes to be spoiled but I couldn't and still can not risk being the laughing stock on social media after failing to pay for a cup of coffee.

“Who said something about money? I invited you which means I'm going to pay.” My baby was doing somersaults in my tummy. The way I always craved

for a steaming hot cup of coffee at that time was crazy.

“Babe? Darling? Zee?” I snap out of it. “You jumped a red robot what's wrong? What did Qhubekani say to you that is making you so worried?” He's now looking at me with great concern plastered all over his face.

“Oh no! This has nothing to do with him I was just day dreaming.”

“About?”

“The first time we met.” He smiles. My husband doesn't have most of his teeth but with the little he has he still manages to cause butterflies in my stomach with his smile. “Why didn't you slap me that day?”

“Because at that time Melisa(his last born daughter) was also going through rough times like you were so I understood your problem was not me but life in general. And I'm glad I didn't slap you, you wouldn't be here if I did.” That's true. I can't stand a man who raises his hand to a woman. Let's go and eat

breakfast at that same café?”

“Really?” The baby in me is about to come out. I'm so happy about this it feels like an anniversary or something.

“Yes honey. Anything to see you smile.” Oh? We are at the doctor already.

Gugu's POV.

“Princess?” I call out to Anelisa. She loves it when people acknowledge her royal status.

“Huh? Why are you looking at me like that?” She queries with a frown on her face.

“Why don't you greet mother-in-law? She came here and you did not even acknowledge her. I don't know what's your problem with her is but I think as a sister I have to tell you the truth if you are straying from the path. What you are doing is utter disrespect and father-in-law won't like it if he ever finds out.” I hope she understands my point

because father-in-law won't care about the royal blood running through her veins if he ever finds out. Not only him but his sister and his two daughters too. They all like Zee as much as I do. She's very young but she's not childish.

“So I should play happy mother and daughter-in-law with a mere twenty-one year old?” She quips.

“How old are you Ane?”

“25. Why?”

“Khulekani is 45, I'm 38 but you've never seen one of us disrespecting her. Father-in-law chose her and we ought to respect his choice if we want to keep this family together. Your behavior towards her has my children asking questions--”

“What questions? ”

“They are teenagers so they are not observing everything blindly. I love you Ane and I enjoy being here with you please don't mess it up.”

“I agree with you sister-in-law.” I turn around. What? Did Qhubekani just say he agrees with me? This

one is a shocker. “Yes I do agree with you--” I hope he's not in some kind of trouble and trying to get me to his side. Qhu is the bad apple of the family.

“Babe what are you saying? You also think I'm being hostile towards her?” She feigns being hurt.

“Baby? She's married to my father and that makes her your mother-in-law. If you keep doing this we will find ourselves homeless. Remember I'm still trying to be my own man.” He warns.

“But--”

“But nothing. Just follow in sister-in-law's footsteps then everything will be fine.”

“Why do I feel like you have a crush on her or she knows you the way I do?” Qhubekani laughs, I suppress my own laugh. If my brother-in-law here had a chance with Zee then her royal princess wouldn't be here. Zee is every man's dream, I also wish to be half the woman she is. I mean she was given the body of a goddess, her beautiful smooth innocent face, her smile which can light the entire room during the power cut, her wisdom and

kindness despite all the bad memories surrounding her childhood, she's just a whole package. Whereas my sister-in-law here only has the royal title. It will be an insult to Zee to even compare the two. I mean no offense just stating the facts.

“You are imagining things and it's not even funny. Don't start with the insecurity all other women display. It's such a serious turn off.” He walks out leaving me to deal with a fuming princess.

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This insert is sponsored by me, for all my darlings from Lesotho, Zambia, Namibia and Swaziland. A special shout out to you my darlings I love you countless times. Enjoy the rest of your day and remember to wash your hands, sanitize the surfaces and stay at home, it can save many lives. Mega love for you all my darlings.

I will go live tomorrow morning (9 AM) to greet all of you please do tune in

THE BRIDE.

“With or without you, I will walk down the aisle...”

Insert 4.

Zinhle’s POV

My husband fulfilled almost all my wishes today. Sometimes I just say things just for the sake of it but he notes them down and make them happen. Today he even allowed me to snap a few photos when we were at the café. He's not fond of taking pictures because sometimes people steal his photos for all the bad reasons. He's the owner of one of the biggest companies here in Bulawayo and every reporter will pay any amount to have a little scoop of him.

“Honey? It's almost 1 o'clock we have to go and pick up the kids.” He says reminding me of the self imposed duty he got himself into.

“Okay darling. Am I driving or you are?” I ask as we

make our way to the pay point. I bought a few dresses, shoes and hair. I really don't need all of these but he insisted. I even got some for Zamo. My lawyer friend doesn't have party clothes. The advocate in her only sees formal black and white clothes when she enters the shop. It's my duty to always help her out because I need her to go out and party with me most of the times.

“I will drive baby. I'm sure you are really tired today.” He says tucking my hair behind my ear.

“Not at all. It feels good to be outside the house for some hours. I also enjoy spending time with you away from everyone.” The cashier looks at me then back to my husband and furrows her brows.

“Married? To this old--”

“Your job is to serve customers not to pry. What's your problem if we are married? Would you rather he married your mother instead?” She shakes her head. “Good because that will never happen anyway.” My husband puts his hand around my waist. He's used to me fighting people for us.

People should just get a life and stop poking their noses in our business. This is our marriage not a public affair!

“You shouldn't let people get to you. We love each other, our family has accepted our relationship, we don't need the world's approval sweetheart. I love you and will love you till my last breath.” He squeezes my hand assuring me. I reach for my phone. Shit! I have missed calls from Gugu, Qhubekani? What did this idiot want from me now? And a long message from the talkative granddaughter ever.

****Grandma, if you knew you and grandbae were going out for funny you should have at least sent a driver for us! We are stranded here and I'm even thinking of kissing a taxi driver only so he can take us home. Hurry up!****

Nothabo is really frustrated and I understand her pain. My poor granddaughter.

“Honey, your Nothabo is fuming you better hurry up.” He sighs and steps on the accelerator.

Nothabo is the kind of a girl who will tell you exactly what she thinks and feels every time. She never sugar coats anything. I don't know who she took after because her parents Gugu and Khulekani are not so talkative. We finally arrive at their school. Nothabo has her earphones on, Amkela is tapping on his phone, I'm sure he walked here after communicating with his sister about transport arrangements. Their grandfather honks, they turn and come running to the car.

“A whole vice head girl of Dominican Convent High was stranded at the school gate for hours because the lovebirds decided to treat this day as bae outing? I'm really pissed and I'm hungry.” She complains buckling herself up.

“I'm sorry your Majesty we lost track of time. ” This is the only way to get to her when her temper is this high.

“Where's the food grandma? I only care about food right now we will talk about you being late some other time.” Amkela says.

“I understand your frustrations my darling grandchildren. Here's the food for the three of you--”

“Wait? Owami is still at crèche? No grandma this is so unfair to him. You guys are bad, really bad.”

Nothabo continues to rant. I receive a message from Qhubekani telling me that he just picked up Owami from school. That son of a bitch! I feel like I'm going to explode anytime soon. What the heck? Why is he interested in my son all of a sudden?

“Honey are you okay? ” My husband asks, I force a smile.

“Yeah. Qhubekani just picked up Sbusiso from school.” My son's real name is Sbusiso but ever since Mr Mkhize called him Owami it became his second name and everyone loves it.

“My sweet young beautiful grandma--”

“What do you want my beautiful granddaughter. I now know that you don't just sweet call for fun but because you want something. No puzzles, you kept my daughter-in-law up yesterday. Ask for anything else.”

“It’s my friend's birthday party tomorrow at her house in Hillside, can I go? Please.” What did I just get myself into? How do I respond to this one?

“Mmm....Thabo a party supervised by teenagers just like you is not a good idea. Who is hosting? Your friend or her parent?”

“My friend's sister. Her parents are in Australia--”

“Then I'm sorry but you are not going sweetheart. I'm not doing this because I hate you but because I love you and I don't want you to find yourself in a situation you won't know how to get out of because of a birthday party. Bad things happen in such kind of parties sweetheart. ”

“It’s okay I won't go. You know I always listen to you because you don't just shout at me but you explain things in a way that I understand them. Last time you saved me from going to that vuzu party and saved my life. I would also have eaten those cupcakes and found myself in the ICU. No hard feelings granny, I love you.”

Qhubekani's POV.

How did I end up here? Mom died because of my mistakes and I can't even tell anyone about it. The moment everyone find out about the father of this boy then my life will be over. Either dad will dis own me, kill me or my in-laws will slit my throat and throw my body in a deep trench and leave me for the wild animals to feast on. What do I do? Should I kill the boy? But knowing Zie, she will turn the whole Mkhize household upside down until everyone finally pays for my actions.

“Where is my mom?” The boy asks.

“She's at home. Why?” He hugs his bag and keeps silent. I think he's scared of me. I haven't been the best person to him so it's understandable. My friend's call comes through.

“Was sup dawg?”

“Did you do it? Tell me your problems are over

now?”

“I can't. As much as his existence is a threat to my entire life I can't ignore the fact that he's my only son. What if Ane doesn't give birth to a boy? What if he's the only son I will ever have--”

“So are you gonna let that bitch win?”

“No. I think I know her weakness. I doubt dad still has the stamina to keep with her sexual hunger--”

“No! Are you planning what I'm thinking?”

“Yes. This dick got us here and it will get us out of this mess.”

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The following inserts will be very sensitive, I'm sorry but I won't sugarcoat the following activities.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 5.

Zie's POV.

“What the fuck is wrong with you dude?” I yell as I push Qhubekani's office door open. He's busy kissing a young girl who's sitting on the table with her dark thighs exposed. I pull him by his tie while the other hand pushes the girl far away. “Don't fuck with me Qhubekani. You don't know who I really am-”

“He's chocking! You are going to kill her--” I kick her hard she falls face down on the tiled floor.

“You shut the fuck up when Zinhl' Intombi zakwaNgwenya is talking you idiot!” Qhubekani desperately holds on to my hand. “Why are you trying to befriend my son all of a sudden? Do you want war Qhubekani? Huh?” I finally let go of his tie before I kill this idiot who thinks because he's a man he can do anything he wants to women. He coughs repeatedly trying to catch a breath.

“Are you a woman or what? You almost killed me

Zie, what's wrong with you?" He says with a soft tone which makes me even more curious. Why is he not screaming at me? Definitely up to something and you won't have your way with me anymore Qhubekani. "Zie I'm sorry, okay. Please let's stop this fighting like enemies. We love each other Zie." I laugh out loud.

"Love? Where was that love when you decided to marry your pig? Where was the love when you decided not to be part of your son's life? Where was the love Qhubekani?"

"I'm sorry--" I slap him hard he staggers backwards.

"Don't you ever use that word in vain! You don't deserve my forgiveness and I will never fall for your tricks ever again. Stay away from my son Qhubekani or you and I will kill each other--" I'm still fuming when he silences me with his tongue searching for mine in my mouth. I involuntarily give in and kiss him back as I feel my whole body welcome his advances and I'm at his mercy. He's always been good when it came to this department. His hands press my butt cheeks and I can feel the

evidence of my power over his body on my stomach. He's hard as a rock and I'm enjoying every part of it. My hands find his tie knot and the next thing clothes are flying everywhere in the office. I push him back until he falls on his chair and me on his laps. He now has my medium sized breasts in both his hands fondling them, everything south my waist tightens as the wave of pleasure washes all over my body. I tilt my head backwards giving him room to do as he wishes with my body. I'm still concentrating on him nibbling my tits when he.....
#Removed

“Fuck!” I curse.

“The condom! Damn it Zie, I'm sorry baby you were so sweet that I completely forgot about it and pulling out proved to be even more harder--”

“Do you realize what you just did Qhubekani? What will my husband--”

“Shh!” He puts his finger on my lips. “Nothing will happen. I will go and buy the after pill and we'll be

fine. Can we do this a little more? I really miss us--”

“Nooo!” The girl I knocked down earlier screams and runs for the door. I grab her and pull her back by her braided hair.

“Where do you think you are going? You wanted his dick, right? You will have it.”

“What are you saying Zie?” Qhubekani is confused.

“Continue from where you started. I want to see how you fuck other girls--”

“I don't want to. Please let me go.” She attempts to scream but I cover her mouth.

“Give me your underwear Qhubekani someone really needs to be gagged right now.” He speechlessly stare at me as I gag the the girl before pushing her down on the couch and tearing her clothes off. “Come on Qhu, give this girl what she wants--”

“Zie--”

“I'm not stupid Qhubekani! I know you want me to sleep with you behind my husband's back so you

can have me kicked out of the house and then your problems will be over. Go on and I'm recording this for my insurance. I like your dick but I need leverage --”

“I cant--” I take out his very own gun from my purse.

“Either you fuck her right this instant or the newspapers will be painted with your picture tomorrow. ‘Qhubekani Mkhize the gambling addict finally takes his own life’, what a perfect headline--”

“Zinhle!” He yells.

“Yes baby. Please save us from all the yelling and start working.” He finally kneels on the floor and opens the girl's folds.. “That’s not how you arouse a girl baby. Please make this thing look real like you were doing when I came in here. Be quick before someone comes in here.” He leans forward and kisses the girl all over her body. Tears are streaming down the poor girls eyes but I'm not even moved by her tears. Shit happened to me so it sure can happen to her too. He grabs his full erect dick and slowly lowers it in.

“Please stop! I'm begging you, I'm a virgin--”
Qhubekani freezes.

“Go on baby virgin or not I want this video. Fuck this girl Qhubekani or I will shoot!” I hiss. A tear escapes his eye as he forcefully penetrates and breaks the girl's innocence. The girl sobs even more. I let him go in and out of her for a few seconds and I aim my gun at the girl. The bullet hits her skull and blood splashes his face.

“Nooo!--” He falls back with his hands on his head.
“No! Zinhle what have you done?” He cries.

“Now, we are going to play this game on my own terms. Before taking any stupid decision remember this is your gun and the video has you forcing yourself on her--”

“I have a family Zie. You can't do this to me please. I'm begging you Zie--”

“Clean up this mess baby and you better grow up and be a man because you stand to lose everything if you utter a word about this to anyone.” I put my clothes on and reach for the door handle. “Oh and

your friend is also anyone. Tell him a thing and you will kiss him goodbye. ”

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How will Qhubekani get out of this mess? Who is Zinhl' Intombi zakwaNgwenya? Is she the sweet wife and grandma or a murderer?

THE BRIDE.

Insert 6.

Mr Ndabezinhle Mkhize's POV.

The way Zee walked out of here after finding Owami sitting alone in the corner and hugging his bag got me worried. She's always been overprotective of her son. She will rather die than let any harm come his way and Qhubekani is not a good example to kids. My son is different, bad different. I have tried

everything to get him back on the right path but I've given up.

“Daddy.” Owami comes running carrying his plate full of food.

“Hey son. Why are you running with a plate?”

“Umm..mom is not around and I need someone to get rid of all the vegetables in my plate so I can have my food.”

“You want me to eat the vegetables? ” He nods.

“Okay then come let's sit here.” I remove all the vegetables for him and he starts eating. “What did brother Qhubekani do to you?” He looks at me but quickly looks back to his plate. “I won't tell anyone.”

“I don't like him. He smokes smelly things and drink alcohol which is bad. He carries s gun too.” What the hell? Qhubekani shows his gun to kids?

“Oh? So that's where the problem is?” I try not to sound angry.

“Not exactly. I don't like him, he's not good like brother Khulekani and Khaya.” Khaya is the

youngest of my sons. He's studying in Germany.

“Don't send him to pick me up ever again.” Knowing my little son, he means every word of it.

“Okay I won't but don't be afraid of him. He won't harm you, you are his little brother and blood relatives don't hurt each other.” Zee walks in and she seems distant. I've grown to know if she's sad, happy, angry or just her regular mood swings.

“Mommy!” Sbu runs to her and hugs her tight. I notice Zee is literally squeezing the boy as tears run down her cheeks. I silently step closer to her and hug them. She sobs even more.

“Whatever it is sweetheart, you can share it with me and I will do my best to make you feel better. I can't bear to see you like this.” It breaks my heart to see her sad or crying. It feels like I'm failing as a husband and as the protector I promised to be. She's been through a lot, I'm trying my best to wipe all the sad memories but something always come up and trigger them.

“What if he was high? What if he bumped into

another car? What if he--”

“Shhh... It's fine, our son is here, safe and sound. Stop crying baby.”

“Mom stop crying I'm fine. I just a little sad that you went out and forgot about me but I'm fine now.” Shbu says wiping his mother's tears.

“Son? Take your plate and go to your room. Mom is sad now and she needs sometime.”

“Okay. Bye.” He runs outside. I sit on the couch, take Zee on my laps and shield her from whatever is troubling her with my arms. I may be a 67 year old man but I still know things about women. If you treat her well then your arms become her home, her place of sanity and her sanctuary.

“Do you wanna talk about it?” She shakes her head.

“Okay tell me when you're ready to talk.” She nods and struggle closer. I hold her for a few minutes until I hear her snoring. This can only mean that she's not comfortable sleeping here. I still have some strength left in me so I put her to bed and attempt to leave but she pulls me back. I crawl behind her and

put my arm arm around her before dozing off.....

Qhubekani's POV.

I'm doomed! How do I get myself out of this shit? I always thought Zie was only good at talking but no action until today when she decided to show me her real self. I'm sitting on the floor with my back on the wall and the dead body next to me. Tears are freely rolling down my cheeks, I thought I was strong but Zinhle is one hell of a woman who always make me cry. I dial my friend, Zinhle's words ring in my mind and I quickly cut the call. Someone is knocking, my heart is now vigorously pumping in my throat, I'm sweating, I feel like I'm going to faint anytime soon. But I can not afford to faint, be strong Qhubekani.

“Sir, someone wants to see you. It's the client from Dubai--” Fuck! How do I clean this mess and manage to be in a meeting with the client too?

“Okay. I'm coming soon.” Think Qhubekani, think Brother Khule! He answers the call on the second ring.

“Don't tell me you messed up the Dubai deal?” That was expected. I'm a mess myself and I always leave my mess wherever I go.

“Not yet but it's about to be messed up if you don't make your way to the office right this instant--”

“Why? You wanted this project, what happened now --”

“Ask all those later. The client is waiting in the conference room. Be here soon and thank you brother.” I hate my brother for being the perfect ideal son but sometimes he helps me a great deal. If not for him then my father would have disowned me a long time back. Time to clean up the mess.

After wrapping up the dead body in a black trash bag I roll it behind the couch and mop the floor. After disinfecting the whole place it still smells of blood, I realize it's me who has blood all over my body, I get into the small shower and let the water

wash away the blood although the blood of that innocent girl will always be on my hands. Could I be the reason Zinhle is becoming a monster? Did I destroy her that much?

*****Zie, I'm sorry. I will apologize to the boy and I promise to never come anywhere near him.*****

I wait for minutes hoping she responds to my message. When I'm about to exit my office, my phone rings and it's her.

“Zee--”

“What do you want from me son?” Fuck! It's my dad.

“Dad I'm sorry--”

“Sorry? Will you always be sorry the rest of your life? I'm really disappointed in you.” What is he talking about? Did Zee tell him everything about us? No! Dad will kill me. I feel like I'm going to shit on myself right now. “My wife is in a state because of you. Why did you pick Owami at school? You are not good with kids Qhu or you want to add to the number of children you've killed because of your negligence? Do I have to remind you that you killed

your nieces? Your sister still doesn't talk to you because you killed the triplets. When will you grow up?" I swallow a painful lump on my throat. Dad had to remind me of that horrible accident as if I don't have enough problems already. The worst part of it is that I still don't remember how I veered off the road, I woke up from coma only to be told that I had killed the triplets and since then I've never seen or talked to my sister. She hates me with every fibre of her being.

"Dad- i- I'm --" I struggle to form a sentence. I smash my phone on the wall and collapse on the floor as once again my world comes crumbling down around me....

Zie's POV.

I wake up with a banging headache to find my husband screaming to someone on the phone. I don't who might be on the other side of the call but I can guess. Only one of my family members can

make him get so worked up like this. I slowly crawl off the bed and go to where he's standing. I put my arm around him, my head on his shoulder and he relaxes a bit. I briefly look at him, he smiles and drops the phone in his pocket.

“You are awake honey, how are you feeling?”

“Like someone is banging drums in my head. That call sounded pretty tense, was it who I think it was?” By the look on his face I know he's thinking of lying to me. “Don't say it if you are going to lie. You are a terrible liar sweetheart.” We both laugh.

“Why were you so angry?” I knew this question would come at some point.

“If your son dares gamble with my son's life like that ever again, I swear on my ancestors I will kill him!”

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 7.

Zie's POV.

“I know darling. I know you can murder anyone for Owami and I understand you. It's every parent's duty to protect his/her children and a mother will do anything for her child. I adore how great of a parent you are despite being a young mother. Sometimes I think you were born for this, motherhood really suits you--”

“Are you telling me being a mother to your old children suits me?”

“Yes. It really suits you and I'm glad I found you. My children really love you. Khaya and Nomsa called when you were asleep, they were angry at me can believe that? They thought I was the reason behind your tears.” Ncoow! My poor children. Yes they are mine and I'm proud of myself for winning their

hearts. Before you all judge me for killing their mother let me permit you to do that freely. I will murder that witch again if given a chance and continue loving her children with no ounce of guilt.

“I’m sorry darling. You know Khaya doesn't want anything bad near his mother so you will have to put up with him every time something enters my eye and I shed tears--” A video call comes through on his laptop.

“I think Khulekani needs my consent. He’s having a meeting with the Dubai client since my other stupid son decided not to pitch.” Oh that idiot failed to clean his office and attend the meeting! I wonder how I even fell in love with such a weak man before? Disposing off one dead body has him down on his knees already. Mxm!

“Okay I remember you telling me about the deal. I will go and find something to eat while you at it--”

“Mom don't go anywhere at least until you hear the client's request.” Khule says. Okay? This sounds interesting. Khulekani turns the laptop to the client.

“Good afternoon Mr and Mrs Mkhize.” He struggles with the Mkhize part but at least he tried. Not many people from different corners of the world can do that.

“Good afternoon Mr Yousouf Abudullar Ali Ahmed. I understand you are a very busy man so I won't waste your time. Let's hear the request and see if we can agree on it.” My husband is now in the professional mode. He turns me on big time when he does this serious work related shit. His soft yet authoritative voice sends messages to my lower abdomen.

“Well, I like the deal you're proposing here if it was up to me I would sign on the dotted line but for that my wife and business partner have to be present. That's where my request comes in, it would be of great pleasure if you and your Queen bless us with your presence on the other side of the map to finalize this deal.” Mr Ahmed rubs his palms together waiting, waiting for my husband to agree or crush the request. My husband looks at me, searching for an answer in my eyes, I've realized

ever since we got married he needs my approval and insight before taking any decision. I'm not educated but I can say some wise things most of the times. I'm sure my eyes are glowing with happiness already! Show me a girl who doesn't want to fly to Dubai with her rich husband?

“We have a deal Mr Ahmed. You can finalize all the details with my son then I will be in touch. Thanks for coming through.” Mr Ahmed smiles in relief. It's not easy to get this old man to agree to something when business is in question. He's so strict about how he does his business.

“My great pleasure Sir, Ma'am. Enjoy the rest of your day.” He turns the laptop back to Khulekani. Can they disconnect the call already, I can not keep on holding to this happiness I feel right now. I want to allow the girl in me to come out and scream like a mad woman.

“Thanks mom. I love you.” The call is disconnected, finally!

“Yeeeeeeey!” I jump on him and hug him tight. I feel

warm liquid running down my cheeks, I hate tears but these I love. These are of joy!

“Do you have to cry about everything?” He smiles kissing my tears away. I'm at a loss of words, I want to tell him he's the best man in the whole world but that wouldn't be enough to describe him. I quit thinking of ways to express my gratitude to him and decide to show him instead. I briefly look deep in his eyes tears still streaming down my cheeks and invade his mouth. He tastes like mint, this old man of mine sure still loves himself. He kisses me back pulling me closer to him. By the time we pull out the kiss we are both panting. “Thank you.” He says kissing my forehead.

“I should be thanking you?” What is he thanking me for?

“No. My father taught me to always thank the woman who makes me feel good and powerful. You make me feel young Zee, as old as I am I'm still enjoying my married life.” If he continues I'm going to cry.

“I love you Ndabezinhle Mkhize--” He hugs me once again. He's been waiting for me to say the three magical words. I wasn't sure before but now I'm sure I love my husband and I love only him. It's not about the money, the trips, the mansion, expensive cars and clothes, it's all about how he makes me feel. With him I have a sense of belonging, a purpose to wake up with a smile everyday, I feel loved and taken care of and most of all, I feel deserving of the Mrs Mkhize title. If a man can make all these things possible then what more reason will be there for a woman not to love him?

“Zee--” His voice trails off. He's so emotional right now. I know how much this means to him.

“I love you hubby. Now let's stop being emotional before one of our grandkids come in here. I saw you holding my phone, I have to call Zamo.” He takes my phone out of his pocket and hands it to me. I have nothing to hide so I don't mind him having my phone. My friend answers. “What kind of a woman sleeps at this hour?” I taunt her.

“Zee, I was thinking about you before I dozed off.

I'm working on a divorce case and it's taking me back to my own divorce.” She sighs.

“Forget about the divorce and the cases. Pack your bag mogirl we going to Dubai!”

“What? Did the old man agree to this--”

“I'm not that old Zamo. Pack your bags maybe you will find a man that side and stop crying on my wife's shoulder.” My husband jokes. I don't mind him joking with Zamo but with my sisters I do mind, in fact I don't want him talking with any of them.

“Dubai here we come!” Zamo and I scream in unison.

Anelisa's POV.

It's 12 midnight and Qhubekani didn't bother to come back home. He didn't call, text or anything he just vanished to God knows where. I've been tossing and turning, my mind is racing, what if he's cheating on me with a slim girl like Zinhle and her friends? What if some woman out there is making

him experience the best ever woman on top? No! Qhubekani can not do that. He knows what he stands to lose if he cheats on me. I'm a princess and I should be treated with love and respect. I guess he has a valid reason why he's not home at this hour.... My phone's ringing.

“Babe?” I can hear noises in the background. Girls screaming “Pop champompo!” and the loud house music, ‘Jerusalem’ in particular.

“Hey it's Nomonde your husband is in a state here. We were having fun but I think he overdosed--”

“What? Where are you? Is he alright?”

“At an adult club I will send the GPS. Come and get him before anyone who works for the tabloids notice him like this. Be fast.” The line goes dead. How could you do this to me Qhubekani? Having fun with other girls while I'm waiting at home for you? Maybe this is what the elders meant by saying it won't always be rosy. I should go and help him otherwise if father-in-law finds out about this, Qhu will be as good as dead!

I quickly put on my clothes and rush to the garage. The guards asks questions but I manage to convince them. I get in the car and sigh looking at the time. Dear God, please protect me. The streets are not safe at this hour but my safety is out of the question right now. My heart is pounding as I join the main road heading to the club. I hope he's not on drugs...

“Hey lady. Where is your pass?” The guard at the club blocks my way. Pass? Do I need a pass to get in? What do I do now? I'm not that attractive to get things done my own way by just flashing a smile to the opposite gender.

“I don't have one. My husband is in there and he needs my help--”

“You can't get in without a pass.” He sternly says. I decide to call his phone maybe the girl who called me will answer. She answers at the second ring and tells me to wait outside. I'm waiting here feeling cold and scared as hell. This place has my skin hairs rising. I keep repeating a silent prayer until I see a super hot girl in her barely there dress and

high stilettos approaching followed by two shirtless men who are carrying what looks like my very own husband.

“Hey princess. Your husband is out but I kept his things safe. Here.” She gives me his wallet and jacket. I open his wallet and there's no even a single cent in it. Not even his bank cards are anywhere to be seen. I look up at the girl who smiles and says “Give him this address of mine so he can come and collect the rest of his things. Don't worry I just want to talk to him about his drinking behavior. I'm trying to help a friend, Qhu is my friend.”

“Okay. Thank you.” I swallow hard looking at her instruct the two men to help my husband in the car. They do as instructed. I get on the driver's seat and start the car. Just when I'm about five minutes away from the club, I glance at my husband sleeping soundly beside me. He coughs, blood drips from his mouth and nose.....

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Good morning darlings.

Remember how you engage with the post/insert determines when you will get the next insert. If you like, comment and share the insert then I will keep them coming but if you don't I will also relax. Hit the like, comment and share button. 150 likes minimum, 50 comments and 150 shares. Let's go.....

THE BRIDE.

Insert 8.

“Qhu! Qhubekani!” I almost lose control of the car. He coughs once again and blood drips from his mouth. I'm panicking and I don't know what to do.

“Qhubekani what's going on?” I dial sister-in-law Gugu but her number is unreachable. Brother-in-law Khulekani's number is not reachable too. “K-khaya?”

“Sister-in-law? Are you alright? It's past midnight--”

“Qhubekani is bleeding, I don't know what's wrong with him--”

“Okay. Where are you?”

“Near some club in the CBD.”

“Okay. Cut his his wrist--”

“What? Khaya what are you saying? He will die--”

“He won't trust me. I think someone overspiked his drink hence the bleeding. Cut him then he will wake up.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes and get out of that place as soon as possible.”

“Okay thank you brother-in-law.” I shakily search for a razor blade I know I always carry one or two in my handbag. I find one and and cut his left rib. He groans, I cut him once more and he lazily opens his eyes. Thank goodness he's alive.

Zinhle's POV.

I'm woken up by a loud knock, this can only be my crazy granddaughter.

“Grandma open up! Grandma!” Nothabo shouts.

“Come in you crazy girl--” She's already jumping on my bed before I even finish talking.

“Aunt Lisa and uncle Khaya are on the call. You are nicely covered up so here they are.” She turns her Apple tab to my direction.

“Hey mommy!” Melisa says cheerfully.

“Hey baby. You look chubby what's up? I hope it's not what I think it is--”

“Come on mom. I'm still a virgin, your son visited and he's spoiling my diet. He's been feeding me all the junk food there is in the whole world.”

“That's a lie mom. She likes food and can not hold back when she sees my plate--”

“You should go back to your apartment! You ruining my lifestyle! Mom, he got dumped by a Chinese girl and now he can't stay in his apartment because they are neighbors. ” Trust them to call me this early in the morning to blabber such nonsense. I guess it's one of the joys of being a mother to

people who are older than you. Khaya is four years older than me while Lisa the baby of the family is a year older. I'm just glad they don't care about my age, they see a mother when they see me and I always try my absolute best to be a good mother to them.

“I dumped her not the other way around. She's lying to you mom. Anyway, dad said you are going to Dubai, are you excited?” You don't have to ask that son I'm sure the glow on my face is visible. I even got up to some mischievous sweet acts with my husband yesterday. The medication the doctor gave us really helped, can you believe he lasted for three rounds yesterday? We getting there and I'm happy for my old machine.

“Very excited son now waiting for the dates. I can already see myself landing in Dubai! Your faces tell me that you did not call for a chit chat, what's up?” They suspiciously look at each other.

“Guys talk or I will tell her. You know I don't like gossiping.” Says Nothabo.

“Firstly, I think brother Qhu is back on drugs--” Fuck! That idiot! I'm really going to kill that weak bastard! “Mom, please help him before dad disowns him. Brother doesn't have anything in his name, not even a form four certificate. Please mom, I know brother Khule and Dad have given up on him but he's still our blood mom.” Khaya will now start crying.

“How did you find out?”

“Sister-in-law called after midnight. Qhu was bleeding and I knew instantly that it had to do with drugs. She doesn't know about it yet so I lied to her. She doesn't have to find out otherwise my brother will have the King to deal with and we all know how he loves his daughter.” Damn you Qhubekani!

“Okay son I will talk to Khule I'm sure he will do something.”

“Okay enough about my depressing brother. We need a new apartment mom. This one is too small for the both of us. This son of yours wants to move in with me and I'm using a bachelor pad. You know I want my space--”

“No baby that won't work. You are a grown up, you have boyfriends and we all know Khaya won't let you sleep with them while he's there. Khaya can move out from his apartment then problem solved. I don't want you killing each other over there.”

“Mom? You are the best, thank you for the advice. Kiss dad for us. Bye.” I have to see that idiot before anyone else see him. Nothabo receives another call and leaves. I get up, make the bed before taking a quick shower. My husband went to the office today since it's month end they need his signatures. After getting ready I run downstairs and find Ane crying in Gugu's arms. Heavenly Father please help me not kill that idiot.

“Good morning mother-in-law. ” For the first time her majesty recognizes me.

“Ane, what's wrong? Why are you crying?”

“H-he is cheating on me.” She cries and my heart shatters for her. She hates me but her pain is somehow getting to me. Why should women always cry because men just can't deal with their own

problems without hurting the marriage? “Please talk to him? I'm begging you, they listen to you--” I pull her in for a hug and hug her tight.

“It's okay stop crying. I will go and talk to him right now.” I pull out of the hug and head to their bedroom. I'm fuming not because Qhubekani is back on drugs but because a woman is crying. I may be heartless sometimes but I will always be a sister's keeper. I violently push the door, pick up the water filled jug from the bedside table and pour it over his head.

“What the hell--”

“Hey, hey? Wake up--” I shake him.

“Zie--”

“What's wrong with you idiot! Do you enjoy being a nobody or you want to go back to the streets? You listen to me and listen very carefully, you are going to get your shit together, apologize to your wife, don't ever look at drugs or mention the word coke, be at home by 6 o'clock latest, prove yourself to your family and be a man not a sissy. Remember

you still have a dead body waiting for you to dispose. If Anelisa ever cries because of you I swear I will castrate you....”

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Is Zee fixing Qhubekani for Anelisa and the family or she's avenging whatever shit Qhu made her go through?

THE BRIDE.

Insert 9.

Zie's POV.

“What's wrong with you idiot! Do you enjoy being a nobody or you want to go back to the streets? You listen to me and listen very carefully, you are going to get your shit together, apologize to your wife, don't ever look or mention the word coke, be at

home by 6 o'clock latest, prove yourself to your family and be a man not a sissy. Remember you still have a dead body waiting for you to dispose. If Anelisa ever cries because of you I swear I will castrate you....”

“Zie I'm sorry--”

“I will slap you hard you will feel like your cheek is on fire if you say those two words ever again! Do you want the king to find out that he married off his daughter to a junkie? Qhubekani Ishmael Mkhize, I won't let you destroy my husband's image because you can't be a man that you are supposed to be! Get up!--”

“Zie my head--”

“GET UP!” He tries to get up but staggers and almost fall. “Go in the shower, vomit all the shit you sniffed yesterday, dress up like one of the Mkhize sons and do what you are supposed to do. Do the opposite of that and I will put an end to your life. Don't ever again trouble Khaya with your problems you are an older brother act like it. One more thing,

what happened in your office doesn't mean I still feel a thing for you. I love my husband and you better respect that. Get on with it, remember, I'm watching you." My phone rings in my pocket exiting their bedroom.

"Ntombi--" I hate the name with every fibre of my being. It reminds me of my cruel father.

"If it's about the unprotected sex we had you can relax I took my pill and went to the doctor in case you infected me with your STIs. Now go in there and face your demons. Come out looking like a man."

"Sweetheart." I answer my husband's call.

"Good morning my beautiful wife. I left early and I didn't want to disturb you. I still remember that you wake up after 0830 hours. How are you?" I can tell he's smiling.

"I'm fantastic honey. Spoke to your last borns earlier."

"They wanted money, right? I'm sure going to be bankrupt before I die--"

“That’s not true. You have millions in the bank let my children enjoy your hardwork. They didn't ask for money but I sent the money anyway. Khaya will be moving out of his apartment I'm sure he will need cash.”

“That’s very thoughtful of you baby. Listen, I have a surprise visitor here and you won't believe who it is-”

“Visitor?” Who could it be.

“ZakwaNgwenya--” I'm screaming and jumping up and down like a baby who just got a new barbie doll.
“Ntombizakithi--” Oh my gosh! He's going to make me cry right now.

“Mtimande.” I'm crying right now.

“Mus’ ukukhala mntakababa ubuyile uMtimande konke kolunga. Bengikukhumbule dadewethu. (Stop crying my sister, I'm back and I will make everything right. I really missed you sister.)” How can I stop crying when the two men I love the most are being this sweet to me at the same time? Mtimande, is my brother who is also my father's first born. Him and I

have always been close and we are the only two children who disappointed our parents at a very young age. My brother ran away from home when he was 15 and boarded a plane to South Africa. He later came back looking like a man and all, he was also working in South Africa. Now he's the well known tax boss in Johannesburg.

“Ngikukhumbule nami Mtimande. Shesha ufike angisakwazi ukulinda.(I missed you too brother. I can't wait to see you).” My brother doesn't know how to speak English. I was dull and dumb but I can understand and speak English unlike my brother. He doesn't even wanna try it.

“Ngizofika kungekudala ngisalinde les'gwili esingumkakho lokhu sicofacofana namalaptop okungapheliyo.(I'm waiting for your rich husband. I will be there soon)” I can hear my husband's laugh in the background.

“See you soon dear brother.” I disconnect the call. I'm so so happy right now floating in my own bubble. I run back to the living room, Ane has stopped crying and I'm relieved.

“Mother-in-law? What did he say?” She's anxious.

“I spoke to him and he will never make you cry ever again or he will have me to deal with.”

“I'm sorry for hating you for no reason.” She's says looking down embarrassed.

“It's okay. Zee can be a thorn sometimes, I hate her too. Only sometimes.” Both my daughters in-law laugh. “Listen your father-in-law will be here in a few minutes and he has visitors--”

“It's not Aunt Sensile, right?” I laugh at their scared faces. Aunt Sensile is one hell of a woman.

“No. It's Mtimande--”

“Huh?” They say in unison. “Did I hear you say Mtimande?” I knew they'd be scared. He almost burnt the Mkhize mansion down when some of the Mkhize elders refused to accept me as my husband's wife. It wasn't very easy to calm him down, I don't know who was stupid enough to call the police that day which ended up costing someone's life. “Mother-in-law? You playing a prank on us, right?” Gugu is sweating already.

“He’s not as bad as you make it sound. Mtimande is very calm, he just doesn't accept shit. That's all. ”

“What if the food we serve him is too salty or spicy? I haven't forgotten how angry he was that day--”

“You both calm down please. I will cook, you can just help me then you won't have to deal with him if he doesn't like the food.” They nod.

Zamo’s POV.

This dry spell is going to kill me, I swear. It's been 3 years 6 months since I got laid. I thought I would survive this but it's messing up my professional life. I'm horny and my finger isn't doing the trick anymore. I wish I can be like my friend who goes out partying for no reason maybe I can get some there. Every time I go out on a date and the guy asks about my profession I always know that's it. What's wrong with dating a famous advocate? My being an advocate has nothing to do with my sex life why can't these men understand that I won't go

“advocate” on them whenever they do something wrong.... I'm startled by the door opening. My ex husband storms raging like a wounded bull.

“Hey, hey! Get out of my house, now!” I yell at him. I'm tired of being his last option whenever he fights with his wife. “Leave now before I call the security to throw you out--”

“Zamo listen--”

“I don't want to listen to you today. I'm so tired of you using me. Why did you leave if I'm your support system? Why? Get out of my house now!” I scream louder this time.

“Nomzamo Langa, who do you think you are? You think because you now have money you can treat me like trash? Huh? I made you Zamo, I helped you climb the ladder of success but now you acting as if you don't know me. You are still the same skinny, poor girl I met along the streets of Bulawayo after being raped by her own family--” I slap him hard.

“Don't you ever use that information against me!” I hiss.

“You slapped me Zamo? Huh?” He charges towards me. I'm already closing my eyes waiting for a hot slap or punch. At some point I had gotten used to his beatings.... Someone clears his throat from the entrance. I slowly open my eyes, the size of the shoe tells me that the person standing at my doorstep is a giant. “Zamo you now date thugs--” I don't know how my stupid ex fell face first on the ground.

“Sukuma wena sdididi.(Get up you fool!)” Mtimande? “Angiz' ukuyis ho kabili le--(I won't be repeating myself)” His voice still sends cold chills down my spine. If I say I'm scared of him that will be an understatement. Zie's brother terrifies the life out of me. This idiot has already peed on himself.

“Akaphathwa kanjalo owes imame(You do not treat women like this).” Mtimande grabs my ex by his neck and throws him outside. I look on in horror as he rolls down the steps and hits hard on the car wheel. Mtimande claps his hands together and blows air on them as if cleaning some sort of dust before turning to me. “MaLanga, sabona ntokazi(Hi

Zamo.)” He smiles. His smile is even scarier than his serious face.

“Hi bhuti Mtimande. Ubekwa yini lapha? (Hi. Why are you here)” He scratches his head.

“Ngiyaxolisela ukukungcolisela indlu. Indaba nje angizwani nezishimane. Uthe angikulande uZinhle. (I'm sorry for messing your house up, the thing is I don't like idiots. Zee asked me to fetch you)” I'm awestruck. This man can talk sense and calmly but still sound as terrifying as ever? Mtimande is the tallest muscular man I've ever seen. He has a handsome face but with all the intensity his eyes emit it's so hard to admire his features.

“Sizohamba noma cha? (Are we leaving or not)” I clear my throat, grab my phone and follow him outside. Oh my goodness! The guy drives a Lotus Evija! Did you hear that, Lotus Evija.....

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Good morning darlings.

Today my special shout out goes to my darling readers in Botswana, Zimbabwe, UK, Nigeria and the powerhouse South Africa. I love and appreciate you darlings a lot. Remember to wash your hands regularly, stay home and stay safe. #Fight_COVID-19

THE BRIDE.

Insert 10.

My ex husband is still lying flat on the pavement. Mtimande unlocks his car and waits for me. I can tell in his eyes that he's becoming impatient. I briefly glance at my stupid ex then to him.

“Sizomshiya lana?”

“Angazi. Ubuthi kwenziwanjani MaLanga?” His smile should be assuring me but now all I see are red flags everywhere. “Ngiyakwazi ukuyombeka kubo kodwa-ke wena uzobe uzosala la ngizokuthatha ma sengibuya khona--”

“Cha. Kulungile asambe.” My heart is in my throat already. My imagination is running wild, I can see Mntimande beheading him and cutting him into small pieces before throwing his pieces into a shallow pit. Everything is possible with this beast next to me. I get in the car and sit in silence. I watch his hands as he turns the ignition key, the way his hand moves has my clit throbbing already. I can imagine those hands on me. His broad shoulders hovering over my slim body and me totally submitting myself to this yummy man...

“Nomzamo?” He touches my thigh, my whole body is on fire. “Ngabe konke kulungile MaLanga? Ubukeya ukude ngemicabango (Is everything okay? You seem to be lost in your own world).” He removes his hand, I breathe. His beautiful car has become too small for both of us, my whole body is on fire. If I had the guts I would ask him to pull over and ride him like my life depends on it but then this is the most terrifying man I've ever seen we are talking about. He's playing Bhekumuzi Luthuli's song without any care in the world. He doesn't even

realize he just ignited my body. He takes out a cigarette, put it between his lips and takes the lighter. I didn't know people can smoke and still have soft lips and perfect white teeth. “Bengis acela ukuthunqisa?(May I please smoke here?)” Even if I say no he won't listen to me. He's the type to do whatever the heck he feels like.

“Kulungile qhubeka (Yes you may).” I look out of the window trying to calm myself down. His phone rings in the car speakers.

“Cishalanga lami (My sunshine).” I'm brought back to where I am with a pang of disappointment. What was I thinking? That all the women in South Africa are blind not to see him?

“Kutheni ungangis hayeli ucingo? (Why didn't you call me?)” The woman sounds angry.

“Uxolo Sthandwa sami ngisuke ngabambeka. Uxolo MaNkosi. (I'm sorry I was held up, forgive me.)” Wonders shall never end. The Mntimande I saw a few minutes back is the complete opposite of this sweet man right here. “Ngiyas hayela Sthandwa

sami ngizokufonela ma ngifika kuZinhle. (I'm driving sweetheart let me call you when I arrive at Zie's place.)" He drops the call. I'm so disappointed right now it's evident on my face.

"Ushadile? (You married?)" I'm sure I sound like a scorned side chick right now.

"Yebo MaLanga (Yes)." He's not even looking at me. Am I not attractive anymore? He should at least acknowledge me as a woman. The car has stopped and I realize we now at the Mkhize mansion. I better force a smile on my face before Zee goes all aunty Dolly on me. I watch Mtimande throwing two mentos gums in his mouth and gets down stretching his yummy body. I better go inside before I rape this guy.

"Mntimande!" Zee comes running and jumps on her brother who spins her around like a baby before kissing her all over the face. "Ubuyile bhuti? (You came?)" She's becoming emotional. Zee had no emotions left in her when I met her but it seems bab' uMkhize did a great job in helping her heal.

“Uthe angiphuthume ngenza njengoba ushilo. Ngibuyile ngane yakwethu. (You asked me to come and I did just that)” He puts her down and hugs her tight. “Ukukhala akukufanele Zinhle. Uqale nini ukubabuthakathaka kanje? (When did you become this soft? Crying doesn't suit you)” He wipes her tears and kisses her again. Such love and care for his sister, how adorable. I wonder if my brother would have loved me like this had he survived that school bus accident.

“Zamo.” My friend hugs me before leading us both inside.

Zie's POV.

I'm so happy right now. I know I mean the world to my brother but I never thought he'd come so soon. I called him after that confrontation with Qhubekani and told him I was failing to guard my feelings and emotions. I was so emotional that he decided to

come and meet me in person. Now here he is, in flesh and blood. He has a lot in his plate but family always come first for him. My daughters-in-law are anxiously waiting in the living room. Only Qhu is chilled until he sees the brother everyone was talking about. His eyes almost pop out in shock. Qhubekani has been on the receiving end of my brother's wrath more than I have.

“Khululeka Mkhize ngize ngokuthula (Calm down, I come in peace.)” My brother pats him on the back.

“Nkosazana. (Princess)” He bows before Ane.

“Mama kaNothabo. (Gugu)” He smiles greeting them. My husband comes downstairs. He had gone up to change from his suit.

“Hey Zamo. You look like someone who was sleeping or overworking.” My husband greets my best friend.

“Still working on that case old man. I wouldn't mind your take on it.” Zamo says looking away from him. Something seems to be bothering her, I will ask that later. If Nothabo and Sbu were here we wouldn't have survived the screaming and shouting they'd

have done after seeing Mtimande. They love him like no one else's business. We all sit down and have our breakfast. Today I'm sitting next to my brother and I'm glad my husband doesn't mind that. Everyone is quiet until my husband asks Mtimande how the business is going in South Africa.

Qhubekani is playing with his food, he seems to be in the faraway land of thoughts and depression. I need to talk to Khule before Qhu decides to take his life. I know I'm being hard on him but this is the only way Qhubekani will ever learn. When I found him on the streets of Jozi I had to force him to go to rehab because he was a mess. I cleaned him up thinking that he'd be my husband but it didn't work. I can not really let him go back there now. I owe it to my husband to help better his son's life. His family doesn't know about that part of his life because they all thought he was schooling.

“Honey, may I have juice please?” Husby politely asks. Sometimes he doesn't want tea or coffee just to try and keep his body clean. My brother and Zamo watch as I serve him the juice. Qhu asks to be

excused, Anelisa follows him. The two businessmen are still talking about business, economy and all the business world stuff. After eating I help Gugu clean the table, Zamo also joins in.

“Wanna talk about it?” I whisper in my friend's ear while loading dishes in a dishwasher.

“Nah not now. Maybe later.” She faintly smiles.

“Mother-in-law, Mtimande is calling you.” Gugu announces. I wipe my hands and leave Zamo with Gugu. These two really get along so I have no problem leaving them alone.

“Mkhize, bengis acela ukuxoxa noZie ngasese okwesikhats hana. (May I please talk to Zee in private for a while?)” I'm a little bit nervous about this.

“Akulankinga babazala khululeka (No problem, go ahead)” Husband grants us permission. My brother respects him a lot and vice versa. The two have a healthy in-law relationship. I lead my brother to the guest bedroom. He locks the door and turns to me

with his arms folded and intently looking at me. Years back this would have made me pee on myself but not anymore. I know he can still beat the shit out of me but I'm no longer scared of him.

“Ngiyaxolis a Mtimande bengingaqondile ukuyibulala leyangane. (Brother I'm sorry, it wasn't my intention to kill her).” It's better we get this done and over with.

“As ilichithi igazi labangelacala Zinhle. Bekutheni? (We don't kill innocent people. Why did you do it?)” He's calm but I know better. It's when he's this calm that he can rearrange my face and this place in a second.

“Ngiye ngalingeka ngalala noQhubekani leyangane ibhekile. (I got tempted and slept with Qhu while she watched everything).” He shuts his eyes clenching his jaws.

“Uwabonge amadlozi akini ngoba namhla angifune kushaya umuntu bengizokuhlanganisa nebonda khona manje. (Be grateful to your ancestors I'm not in the violent mood today otherwise I would be

smashing your body on the wall right now)” Thank goodness he woke up on the right side of the bed today. My brother can be something else.

“Uxolo bhuti (I’m sorry).” He pulls me in for a hug.

“Kulungile. Ngithemba awumithanga ngoba ngizokubulala ngezami izandla ungaphula inhliziyo kaMkhize. Liyakuthanda leliyakhehla Zie. Ngicela uziphathe kahle ube umakoti wakwaMkhize oqotho ungangidanisi. Yimina okulwele ukuze ushade noMkhize ungenzi ngizisole ngalokho, ngiyakuncenga zakwaNgwenya (I hope you are not pregnant because I will kill you myself it that's the case. Your husband loves you Zinhle please be a good wife to him. I fought for you to be here please don't make me regret standing by your side).”

That's true. He even risked being disowned by our father when he ignored dad's warnings and accepted the lobola money from the Mkhize family.

“Angisoze ngikudanise Mtimande ngiyabonga ukuba uzile ngesikhathana (I won't disappoint you brother and thanks for coming soon).”

“Ungowakithi Zinhle ngizohlala ngikhona ma ungidinga. Kuzomele utshele umkakho iqiniso ngayo yonke lenyakanyaka. Imfihlo azilungile mntakababa yima isibindi ulibhoboze lelithumba ngaphambi kokuba u Qhubekani abenguye oxoxela uyise lendaba. Um’ umthanda ngempela uMkhize mxoxele konke okwenzakalayo uzodana ekuqaleni kodwa ngeke akulahle. Ukukhonzile Zie (You are my sister and I will always be there when you need me. You need to tell the truth to your husband about all of this. Secrets destroy everything, be brave and tell him everything before Qhubekani tells his own version of the story. He will be shocked or heartbroken but he won't leave you. He loves you.)”

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THE BRIDE.

<<<<Introducing my sister Princess Nothabo as the cowriter. Those who have read Love, Greed and

Desire know her but don't worry you will soon love her.>>>>

Insert 11.

Zinhle's POV.

Is my brother listening to himself right now? How do I tell my husband that I dated his son for a year plus, got pregnant for him, he dumped me for a princess, I killed Mrs Mkhize, how? Where do I get the guts to say all these things out loud?

“Ngizothini ma engilahla uMkhize? Angikwazi ukulahlekelwa ngumkami bhuti-- (What will I do if he divorces me? I can't lose him--)”

“Zee mamela, hlala phansi.” I do as I say. He sits next to me and puts his arm around my shoulder.

“Ngeke akulahle ngimbonile indlela akubheka ngayo ukuba ukukhonzile, kakhulu futhi. Inkinga izovela emva kokuba ayithole lento komunye umuntu.

Njengonkosikazi wakhe kwamele umthembe,
ukwazi ukumxoxela loba yini ngisho lale eyokuhlab
unkosikazi wakhe ngommese. Umxoxele yonke
lenkemenkeme oyenzile nalesiya silima
sakwaKhabazela esinguQhubekani kanye nale
oqeda kuyenza manje. Neyokulingeka Zee.
Akukhonto ejabulis a owes ilisa ukwedlula iqinis o
nokwazi ukuba owakwakhe uyamthemba ukwedlula
bonke abantu. Ngithembe Ntombizakithi
izosebenza. Akudingeki ukwazisa abantwabakhe
okwamanje kodwa yena kumele alazi iqinis o.” (He
won't divorce you Zie, I saw how he looks at you it's
obvious he's in love. Tell him everything including
what you just did. Nothing excites a man more than
knowing that his wife trust him. Please trust me on
this.)

“Angazi bhut kodwa ngizomts hela. Ngiyathembisa.”
(I'm not sure about this but I will tell him, I promise.)

“Kwakhule ukuzwa lokho. Ngikukhathalele Zee
yikho ngingeke ngikwekele unhlanhlatha iganga.
Iphutha leli olenze manje libe elokugcina. Ukhulile
ZakwaNgwenya bhekana nemuli yakho uhlukane

nokuzijabulis a ngokwenyama.” (I'm glad to hear that. I love you Zee and I won't let you stray from the path. Let this be the last time you do something like this. You are grown up now, be a responsible wife and mother. Stop chasing after physical pleasures.)

“Ngiyakuzwa Mntimande, enkosi.” (Thank you.)

“Kubonga mina Ntombizakithi. Kuzomele ngiphuthume ngiyofika eZhombe--” (Zie, I will have to rush home, in Zhombe--)

“Ngoba? Ngiyazi awuvakashhi nje?” (Why? You don't like going there for casual visits?)

“Ngiyobon iNgwenya kukhon' okuthile okumele sikuxoxe mayelana nengane yakhe uSmilo--” (I'm going to meet father we have to talk about his daughter Smilo.)

“Kuhambani? Itheni uSmilo?” (What's wrong with her). Smilo is the last born in our family.

“Uye wamithiswa ngumageza oqhas hwe yimina Zie. Angali ngumuntu leyanto kodwa indlela ephuza ngakhona utshwala nensango zibuzwa kuye

ngizomthini ma seyaqala edakelwa enganeni yakithi?
USmilo ngudadewethu engimhambise eyunivesi
ngilethemba lokuba uzophumelela abe owesifazane
ozimeleyo kodwa ungibuyela nomageza athi
mangivume loyamuntu agane kithi, kanjani
ZakwaNgwenya? Ngimyeka kanjani umntanakithi
ewela egodini ngimbhekile? Angazi kumbe
ngiyaphazama dadewethu.” (She's was
impregnated by one of my drivers. That thing is a
drunkard, chain smoker and all of that bullshit!
What will I do if he starts abusing alcohol together
with my sister? I sent Smilo to university so she can
be an independent woman but now she wants me
to accept a next to nobody as her husband? Am i
wrong for feeling this way about this whole
situation?)

“Ukhulile uSmilo bhuti. Meke azithathele esakhe
isinqumo wena yazisa ubaba uphume kukho kodwa
-ke angiboni iNgwenya ivumelana nalombhedo.
UNku uyazi?” (She's a grown up woman let her
make her own decisions. Just let father know
although I don't see him agreeing to this. Does

brother Nkululeko know?)

“Cha. Kube uyazi nga kudala wayixazulula ngesbhamu lendaba uyamazulu nawe ikhanda lakhe libila kanjani. Ngaphandle kwekaSmilo ngifun' ukwazisa ingane zami emadlozini unyaka ungakapheli ngalokho kumele ngimazise ubaba loma benze amalungiselelo.” (No he doesn't. We wouldn't be here discussing this if he knew you know how hot headed he is. He would have long pulled the trigger and solved this mess. Besides the Smilo issue I want to introduce my children to the ancestors so I would want our parents to prepare for that)

“Ngiyakuzwa Mntimande. Uzoya emakhaya ngalemota oze ngayo?” (Are you taking the Lotus to rural areas?)

“Cha. I Legend 45 ne Cruiser zikhona emzini wami eKhumalo ngizothatha enye yazo.” (Not really. I have the Legend 45 and cruiser at my home in Khumalo, I will take one of those.) He touches my cheek and looks at me with eyes full of love and lots of it. “Uhlale umoyizela dadewethu. Uyikho konke

empilweni yami Zee, ngiyakuthanda dadewethu.(May this smile be always on your face. You are my world Zee, I love you Sis)” I'm gonna cry now. My brother has always been so sweet to me and I can confidently say that this man here can cross rivers and oceans for me. True loves leaves between us.

“Ngiyabonga ngakho konke. Ungikhonzele kubaba nomama loba besangidinelwe. Ngizokuthinta ecingweni.” (Thank you for everything brother. Say hi to my parents although they still hate me.)

When he left I went upstairs in my room and sat quietly on the bed. My mind was racing, my thoughts jumbled and I couldn't start to think of what my husband's reply to all my secrets will be. I'm still sitting here when Zamo comes in with a glass of juice.

“Are you okay, friend?” I guess I hear her say that. “Zee? What's wrong?” Tears stream down my cheeks. I can not get myself to even utter a single

word, I feel like I'm going to lose it. "Zee you scaring me--" She hugs me tight, I scream. I let all my emotions out. I'm angry, sad, feel betrayed, I have a hell lots of mixed feelings and above all, I'm scared. Scared of the unknown, scared of losing someone who just made my life worthy living again. What will I do if he divorces me?

"I heard someone s-screa-- Honey? What's wrong?" I'm in his arms in a flash. My home, my place of warmth, my sanctuary, where I can be sane until he hears the ugly truth about me of course. "What's going on? What happened Zamo?" He's rocking me back and forth like a child.

"I don't know I found her sitting here and crying." My friend says. I'm now shaking, it's hot outside but I feel cold in the inside.

"Sweetheart, please talk to me what's the matter?" The only thing I can do is stare at him. I don't have the guts to say any word. "She's shaking Zamo. Let's take her to the hospital--"

"Noooo!" I scream my lungs out shaking my head.

“What’s wrong Zie?”

“I can't do this! I'm sorry, I'm sorry for everything--” I break free from his embrace and run as fast as my feet can...

Qhubekani’s POV.

Zinhle’s brother gave me a stern warning before leaving. I have received more punches than I can count from that beast. At some point he even stomped on my groin and I woke up on a hospital bed with drips all over my body only to turn to my left and find him smiling at me. The sight of him only, knocked the life out of me. I know better not to mess with him but how do I stay away from something my heart desires? I love Zinhle more than I've ever loved anyone. Marrying Ane was a forced mistake, mom orchestrated everything and I thought for once I'd make my father proud by marrying a princess but then I was wrong. Khule is

still the perfect son, Khaya too is an ideal son but not me. I have demons, serious demons I don't know how I will be able to manage them without Ane finding out. If she finds out then I'm dead meat, that cruel King won't hesitate to behead me with his royal sword. I know Zee can help me overcome this like before but then I'm unable to think straight when she's around.

“Brother Qhu?” My brother answers the phone.

“Hi brother. Are you at the office?”

“No. I'm quite engaged right now let's talk later.”

What? He just hung up on me? What kind of a big brother does that? Maybe he's busy. I take my phone and go back to my bedroom where I know a three hour lecture is waiting for me. Ane hasn't spoken today I really disappointed her and I have to apologize. She's busy packing ironed clothes in the wardrobe.

“Hey baby.” She briefly looks at me but says nothing. “I'm sorry. I was so stressed yesterday and I went out to have a few drinks with friends and--”

“And what Qhu? I had to drive through the night to come and get you! Who in their right states of mind drink until they can not walk, sit or do anything? Are you on drugs Qhu--”

“Baby no! How could you think that of me. I only had drinks but I guess someone spiked my drink. I'm sorry for what I did yesterday it will never happen again.”

“You always say this until it happens again. Why can't you tell me to my face that you are disgusted by fat body? Tell me Qhubekani Mkhize! You were drinking with “friends” who wore barely there clothes while I was here waiting for you! Why are you doing this to me? Why? Were you forced--”

“Will you stop shouting! I'm trying to apologize but you are busy going on and on about your body! Why is it everything I do you bring your body into it? Are you blaming me for your body? No man blame your mother who gave birth to you, not me! Nx!” Some people do not deserve my apology.

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After Zie's peptalk I thought it will be a smooth ride but after Zie's brother Ntimande's visit I knew my doom was near. Ntimande was and is the biblical Amos or was Hosea who was the prophet of doom. Zie is a beautiful nightmare then there's her brother, if I say he's the horror reality of my life I'd be lying. Mntimande is everything I fear in one. Not only did he turn my life upside down with his visit, my fat wife too couldn't accept my apology! What the fuck am I supposed to do to please everyone? I tried to sober up and act responsibly but all I see is four-in-one faces in front me, my mom who died because of me, the virgin girl whom I raped under duress at gun point and was shot dead by Zie because of my stupidity, my beautiful Zie whom I turned into a monster because I couldn't be strong and man enough to fight for her and broke her heart, the last face is of Mntimande whom when I see him, I see red flags and hazards. I can not take it anymore and the only way to forget about my misdeeds is to turn to alcohol and drugs. After a failed apology I left the

house and went to private lounge to drown my sorrows away and forget about all my responsibilities and my non-active-stubborn wife.

“Hey sugar what can I get you today?” Asks the girl with Pamela Anderson's boobs, J LO and Kim Kadorsian's booty and Shakira's waist. You know us guys the first thing we notice in a girl is how God gifted her, as Snoop Dogg says “you got a great future behind.” Well, this lady has a very bright future behind, sideways and ahead. Her red lips are so full, ready to be plucked very ripe and ready, her skin is flawless like she is an angel or fallen one as this is an adult entertainment club. Without thinking I hear myself replying to her question.

"You can get me yourself and another you for the whole night honey.”

“It will cost ya sugar are you sure you can afford us?” She seductively asks.

“How much are you worth honey because I can afford to buy this club just like this!” I snap my fingers and with that she whispers her price in my

ear blowing hot spicy breathe down my neck and I'm turned on already.

“Shall we take this party elsewhere orrrrr?” She asks. I motion for her to follow me outside. This whole time my best friend is listening to my dialogue over the phone and he tells me to go to Holiday Inn presidential suite he's bringing extra booties and white line to get us high up. On the other hand this work of magnificent art also calls her friend from the club to come join the party and we leave.

When we get to the hotel my friend has already booked the room, we are ushered in and we find him with two other girls. The party is already in full swing as the nude girls are lining Columbia's finest coke on the table. This is how we party! The Qhu's style! We sniff and drink and we all know what happens when you get high on coke and drunk. I start kissing my four in one. My tongue twirls around hers and I feel myself getting even more high, it's like her tongue is the best A grade of coke I've ever had. One thing leads to other and we are

both naked. I'm still seeing everything in fours so I have to do my absolute best to leave a lasting impression on her..... #Removed

THE BRIDE.

Insert 12.

Mr Mkhize's POV.

Seeing my wife so broken like that really broke my heart as well. You see Zie can be all kinds of characters and moods and breaking down has never been her trait. She can cry and be emotionally wrung out just like any other female specie, her feminist ideology combined with a bit of masculinity is what really attracted me to her in the first place, she is a go getter and she knows what she wants out of life and being Mrs Somebody was one of her dreams. Besides that she has a good head above her shoulders although she failed her

Olevel, she is good with my kids despite the age difference. One thing I love about her is she never tried to replace their mother but instead she brought them closer to her by being their friend and on their own the kids warmed up to her and she became their second mother who instilled values in them, she did not become their stepmother you know stepmothers are evil, most of them but with her you would swear they are her kids from the her own womb despite the age difference. She respects my kids and the grandchildren love her to bits. I know my wife thinks she has a dark secret that if she tells me I will freak out and divorce her but I guess she doesn't know what I know. I think it's high time I put her out of misery and let her enjoy life to the fullest. I also know that when she married me she didn't love me she just wanted to be someone's wife at all costs but now she has fallen head over heels for me and that's why she is breaking down like that. I need to pacify her before everything goes east because I love that woman more than I loved my first wife, you see she has given me a second chance to love. With my first wife it was a marriage of convenience,

I wanted stature and recognition and her money that she stood to inherit when she turned 25 years so I became her ideal husband. Her money was to make me “thee business man” of the century.

Although to the public we were a darling couple, at home it was a different tune, she was arrogant, spiteful, vengeful and sometimes I will sleep on the couch and we only had sex when she was ovulating and wanted to add the number of kids in the family. She was always reminding me that it was her money that made me who I am and you know what that does to a man's ego but with Zie it's different. She makes me feel like a king, a precious egg to be cherished and to be held dearly. I snap out of my reverie and decide to follow my heartbeat or else I loose her for good. It's been 3 hours since she left and that has been the longest she has ever disappeared. I'm beginning to worry, lucky her car is traceable so I can locate her whereabouts. I think because she is so confused she decided to check herself into a hotel to gather her thoughts but I won't let that happen, I have to strike the iron while it's still hot.

“Zamo? You coming with me or not?” Zamo is still here pacing up and down trying to figure out what's wrong with Zie.

“Do you know where she went?” She snaps out of it.

“Yes. She's my wife and I know where she always run to when she's stressed about something. Come on let's go before she calls her brother... She left her phone, that's a good thing.” Zamo gets in the passenger seat and me on the driver seat and off we go. I know my wife more than she thinks I do. Before i fell for her, I used to be her go to guy whenever life knocked her down. I became a pill for her sanity, a rehab because honestly, the real Zie is nothing like the sweet girl you all know. Pregnant or not she'd still start a fight with five or more guys and fight them. Zie has been through rough times starting from being rejected by her parents, being used by many boys out there only so she could find Mr Right, all she ever wanted was to be truly loved and to walk with the love of her life down the aisle.

I park the the car in the visitors parking lot at Rainbow hotel, I know she's here and I can feel her

presence.

“Here? Do you think she came here?” Zamo is doubtful.

“Come with me. I can never be wrong when my wife is concerned.” We get to the reception and as I predicted she's in her usual room. At first the receptionist refuses to let us in reminding me of the hotel protocols and all the stuff but I manage to convince him with our wedding picture in my wallet and he calls her up but she doesn't pick the call.

“It's okay. I'm her husband, she's her friend and we here to surprise her.” I lie flashing a smile at the receptionist. She let's us go. Zie, you better not be thinking something stupid up there.

“Honey, open the door!” I can hear her sniffling inside. We knock for more than ten minutes but she's not saying anything. Zamo is about to give up when my dear wife finally speaks.

“I'm sorry. Please leave me alone--”

“And say what to your children please stop being childish and open this damn door or I will break it

down.” I can hear the key slowly turning and she opens wearing the hotel fluffy gown with eyes blood red and puffy, my poor baby has been crying her heart out I can tell. “Shhhhh baby it's okay I'm here now don't cry, I'm here to wipe away your tears.” I reassure her as I envelope her in a big hug and she cries even harder breaking my heart to pieces.

“I-m I'm --” Her voice trails off breaking my heart. She's sobbing painful I feel my heart breaking with every sob. My poor baby!

“Shhhh! It's okay, I know.” Both Zamo and Zie are shocked as Zee wriggles free of my embrace. “I've always known the truth long before I even fell for you Zee. I know everything, I was waiting for you to someday make a decision to free yourself from all the guilt--”

“You--you--” She collapses on her knees and screams her lungs out. I quickly kneel next to her hugging her tight.

“Yes baby, I know. I'm not that old Zie, I put together two and two and found the solution to the equation-

–”

“And you still went ahead and married her? Is this some kind of revenge or something?” Zamo fumes. This one always fume when her friend is concerned you'd swear she's Zie's mother by the way she always protect her.

“I love Zie that's why I married her. I will never hurt her. I was devastated at the beginning but something showed me she was put in a dilemma. A mother can do anything to protect her child--”

“Im--I'm sorry--” Zie stutters.

“You don't mean that Zie I know you not sorry for killing her. Don't apologize for something you are not really sorry for. What are you sorry for, my love?”

“I'm sorry for not telling you the truth. I'm sorry--” I crawl closer to her and hug her tight. She cries her heart out she ends up sobbing painfully. Zamo too is crying and now I have two ladies crying their hearts out like someone just died. Zie's phone rings, Nothabo is calling. What do I do now? Could it be no

driver went to pick them up?

“My darling granddaughter.” I'm trying by all means to sound normal. Nothabo's gut is too sharp she will start asking questions and what's worse, my children always think I'm in the wrong whenever my wife sheds a tear. I have a tainted history and I don't blame them for that.

“Grandpa, the driver came without food. What's this?” Sometimes I wonder if this kid is really Khule and Gugu's daughter. She's the complete opposite of her parents.

“Thabo? I'm in the middle of something right now, something important I will make it up to you guys later. Please take care of Owami, I'm not home and so is your grandma.”

“Is grandma okay?” See what I'm talking about? I have become irrelevant to them, it's their mother/ grandmother who matters not me.

“We are all fine. Please go home will see you later.” I drop the call and heave a huge sigh of relief. “Zamo? Do you mind waiting in the other room I would like

to talk to my wife in private, please--”

“No! What if--”

“I would have strangled her a long time ago if I wanted to kill her. Zamo, I love Zie more than I love my own life. I won't hurt her, I promise.”

“Zee--” My wife nods with tears in her eyes. I don't like seeing her like this, I want my feisty no nonsense lady back not this weak woman with tears all over her face. Zamo hugs Zee and leaves. I scoop my wife up from the floor and make her sit on the bed.

“I'm sorry, I'm really sorry--” I put my finger on her lips silencing her.

“I understand. You were put in a tight corner Zie and I understand the need for protecting your son. I'm not angry anymore, I was shattered before but not anymore. I know you want to know how I found out about everything. When you told me your ex boyfriend story I was curious to know who the pig was. I was sad thinking how can a man do that to a young beautiful lady like you. That very same day

something urged me to look at the office CCTV cameras, I saw you Zie. I saw you arguing with Qhubekani and the intensity of the fight answered my questions. MaMkhize I have something I need to tell you, a secret I haven't told to anyone, I love you my fieristy one more than you can imagine and I want us to be together no matter what. We have defied the odds so far so we shouldn't let our dark secrets destroy what we have, our love is special you know that." She looks at me as if I have grown a third horn on my forehead

"You Mkhize what dark secret could you possibly have?" She asks to which I tell her about my first marriage and that I have known about her and my son Qhue. I even tell her that I know that her son "our son" is actually my grandson. I tell her that the day she squashed that 'mosquito' which was my first wife is the day that she freed me from my prison and us meeting at that Cafe wasn't a coincidence I was actually waiting for her. I told her that was the day I fell in love with her.

"Huh? What do you mean prison?"

“My wife and I were secretly divorced but we had to come up with an arrangement for our family and the society. My family still don't know that except Qhubekani. My son was my wife's partner in every crime they committed. To protect my name in the business world and to save what was left of our family's dignity we got divorced and lived together under the same roof. We were good as parents to our children but we were enemies behind closed doors. A lot happened between the two of us but that's a story for another day. I want you to know that I love you sweetheart with all your flaws and shortcomings.” If I tell her what I've done before she'd run and never turn back. I have done some crazy things before.

“But babe you don't know the whole truth, I did something terrible recently and I'm afraid and scared that it will be the final nail to our coffin.” She says sniffing.

“Oh you mean the day that Qhu took our son at school and you confronted him and he forced himself on you taking advantage of the fact that you

have been sex starved as I couldn't have sex with you the previous night or about you going over the edge and forcing him to have sex with that girl he was with in the office and then you shooting the poor girl, I know everything my love and I don't blame you, I would have done the same thing if I were in your shoes" I tell her. She even cries harder and tells she doesn't deserve me that I'm too good for her and she tells me she is sorry that she broke my trust in her of which I tell her she didn't and if she didn't love me as much as I think she does she wouldn't have asked her brother to come and intervene that alone has made me love her even more. I tell her all this as I kiss her softly.

"I'm sorry--"

"It's okay. Don't ever do something like that ever again. I love you Zie, please be mine and mine alone."

Today I have made a vow to really show her how much I love her and how much she matters to me. To hell with the high sex drive and libido medicine I was given at the men's clinic, today I'm doing it

without help only my mind body and soul and of course dick will do my job to satisfy her to the fullest.

I kiss her again and she let's my tongue prob further into her mouth, I have kissed many women but Zie takes the trophy I hear her moaning softly
.....#REMOVED

THE BRIDE

Insert 13.

Khaya, Khule and Zie pace in the hotel with their hearts in their throats. Qhubekani has been missing for the past three days and Anelisa has threatened to inform her father about everything. Zie asked for twenty four hours to find Qhu, if she fails then Ane will call her father.

“Good afternoon. We looking for Qhubekani Mkhize whom we have valid reasons to believe he's been staying here for the past three days.” Says Zie

seriously looking at the receptionist.

“I’m sorry. It’s against our rules--”

“Rules my foot!” Khaya is already searching for Qhu’s name on the computer. “Nothing on his name here. Any more suggestions?” Zie and Khule look at each other trying to think of something.

“Zenzele! His friend Zenzele.” Shouts Khule.

“Gotcha! Thank you so much for nothing beautiful lady. See you around.” Khaya winks at the receptionist and they run to the elevator, hoping and praying he's still alive.

“I’m going to kill this boy I swear!” Khule curses rubbing his head. The elevator is taking forever to arrive.

“Trust me I will do the same too. Whatever our brother ate will have to vomit it today. I can't be flying back home whenever he feels like partying and leaving his wife alone at home. I have a life too, who made me his next of kin anyway? Bitches call my number every time he gets his pants down and forget who he is. I'm so fuckin tired of his behavior!

” Khaya curses.

“I understand you son but now let's focus at the problem we are facing. If the King finds out about all of this then my husband, your father will face the King and we all don't wanna know what will happen then. We have to find him, perform a miracle for him to be sober before 24 hours elapses.” Zie says as the elevator ding in front of them.

“We also need an excuse to cover up to Ane. I hate doing this to her but we have no other choice.”

Reasons Khule. Khule is not the type who likes trouble but he can be a perfect mess cleaner when he's forced to. They get to the room in one of the presidential suites, Khule kicks the door open. The room is misty and smoky, there are moans everywhere. It's a full house of bitches and erect dicks all in their birth suits.

“Shut up!” Khule shouts and the room goes dead silent. Zenzele's slowly pulls his manhood out of the girl's pussy and it goes soft in a matter of a split second. Zie looks at him and fumes, there's no love lost between the two. Zenzele has always been the

cause of all Qhu's problems even back when Zie used to date him.

"Dude! This is intrusion! What the fuck Mr--" One of the party guests hisses walking towards Khule with his dick pointing upwards. Khule shocks everyone when he pulls out his gun and and shoots the man dead. All the ladies in the room scream.

"Shut up! J ust shut the fuck up!" Once again the room is dead silent. Zie is already trying her tricks on Qhubekani who is out and his body looks like there's no life left in it.

"Where the fuck is the injection! Come on you whores, where's the injection!" Zie yells. Khaya paces to her and plunges the injection he brought on Qhu's neck. Qhu groans but goes back to sleep. "I think we need to try something else." Zie says tearing Qhu's shirt off.

"Not here mom. The police might be here anytime, we have created enough noise in this hotel already. Let's take him out and put the blame on the hotel. The management will have to explain how our

brother passed out on their hotel--” Khule is full of surprises today.

“What about the drug in his system?” Questions Khaya.

“We change the blood samples. It's that simple.” Khule says helping Qhu sit up in his unconscious state. “Infact, call the dam police and have all these bitches arrested and this idiot before I put a bullet on his forehead. ”

“I can't go to jail. I have a family--” Zenzele is trembling already.

“My brother also have a family you idiot! This is not up for discussion, you all going there.” Khule is really furious. The ladies are already in tears. “If you help me I will get you out of jail in less than 6 hours. For that, two of you ladies have to face the wrath of my sister-in-law, the princess. You know what this means, right?” The ladies nod.

“What are you up to Khulekani?” Zie doesn't understand Khule's plan.

“A perfect cover up story. Every man does have a

fantasy and can seek physical happiness elsewhere when the wife is angry and he's angry. Let's do this, mom, I trust you to deal with the commissioner. Whatever it takes, make sure our name is not tainted in all of this.”

“But,” Zie lowers her voice. “These people here?”

“I'm sure we will be glad to get rid of all of them. This will work, trust me.”

Gugu's POV.

I don't know if I'm reading too much into Qhubekani's disappearance? I feel like there's more to his behavior than what only the naked eye can see. He was fine all along but all of a sudden he's back to being the absent husband? Something is wrong here. Anelisa is fuming, she's threatening to call his father and that cruel King will sure chop Qhu's body into pieces before feeding them to his

dogs. I wonder if brother-in-law has forgotten that his in-laws are crazy.

“Darling?” I snap out of my thoughts and answer my husband's call.

“We found Qhu. I need you to do something for me, this is a secret mission babe.” Something is definitely wrong here. I can sense it.

“I'm scared but go on.” My heart is pounding already.

“I need you to put on your nurse regalia and head to work. I know you are on leave but I need you there. Pull all the stunts you can and make sure you are the one to attend to Qhu. He's unconscious and I'm sure his blood will be sampled. See you in five minutes, I love you.” What? Five minutes? How in the hell do I get to Mater Dei in five minutes when I'm not even ready? The real duty of being a wife, I guess it starts by breaking the law to protect your in-laws' name and dignity.

I see mother-in-law's car the moment I park my car at the hospital. I'm almost late, I hope Khule won't

snap. But what could I have done? He should buy a chopper for me if he will need me to be always where he wants me to be in less than ten minutes. Luckily, the reception area is crowded with the police and doctors so I make my way to the emergency ward. I'm shocked to see Khaya there, I didn't know he's in the country. He briefly hugs me and whispers something in my ear.

“Okay. I'm on it I hope you guys know what you are doing. I'm not losing my job because of you.” I say through gritted teeth.

“We love you.” He winks at me. I get in the room where Qhu is. He has drips all over his body and blood dripping from his nose. I'm about to touch him but I sense my husband behind me.

“Thank you. Now take my blood samples and send them to the lab.”

“Huh? He needs help else we will lose him.”

“My blood Qhu's name. Forget about his life, this idiot brother of mine died before but he came back. Qhu won't die so easily. I love you wifey.” He kisses

me on the cheek.

“What do we do with him?” From the look of his skin, he overdosed drugs and he won't be sober anytime soon. This is a disaster, father-in-law will surely snap.

SIX HOURS LATER.

Khule's plan worked with the police, Zenzele got blamed for the death of his friend and the untraceable drug they fed Qhu. If the police were to find coke in his blood then Qhu was going to be in trouble because he has a history with drugs but now the real work begins. Convincing Anelisa that Qhu was drugged by his friends so they can spend his money without him being a nuisance about it.

“How's the cut?” Mr Mkhize questions. Khaya is a medicine student so he performed his tricks to try and resuscitate Qhu. I don't know why he did that but he cut him on the chest and did somethings I can't even explain. Qhu convulsed once after the cut

but now he's sleeping peacefully and his skin is regaining its color.

“Not bad dad but now we have to face the King. Why did you let Ane call him?” Khaya asks frustratedly.

“That man thinks he's the ‘It guy’ but I guess its time he meets the real Ndabezinhle Mkhize--”

“Daddy?--”

“It will be fine son don't worry about it. Make sure your stupid brother doesn't choke on his blood or foam. He's my son and I still love this sperm of mine which somehow got polluted.” Khaya laughs at his father's statement.

“If you say so father. Please be careful dad, mom won't handle it if your blood pressure shoots up the sky. That woman loves you dad.”

“I love her too.”

Zie's POV.

I'm sitting here watching Ane throwing tantrums.

The Queen and the King are trying to have her calm down. To me, this is all funny. I've never seen a fat woman this angry so it's actually funny watching her.

“I'm going to kill him dad! How could he humiliate me like this, how? Two sluts, whores--” Screams Ane.

“Princess this is your in-laws house calm down.” The Queen sounds reasonable.

“You promised to talk to him! You said he will never hurt me! Is this your doing? You hate me Zinhle, you put him up for this so you can hurt me--” Jehovah Jireh! I'm being tested for real! “You did this bitch--” I slap her hard, the pain radiates from her cheek to his father's.

“You slapped my daughter! The Princess--” The King is furious but I'm blazing fire. His anger has nothing on my fury.

“Nkosazana yokunuka! Nx! (Princess my foot!)” I risked my freedom for her but she's here vomiting shit. I hate showing the other side of me but I can

not someone excuse her anger as the reason she walks all over my head.

“You skinny thing--” The King is about to behead me with his sword but my husband becomes my savior.

“Don’t you dare come here and disrespect me in my own house. NginguMkhize mina, uKhabazela uGcwabe, ungazongidakelwa Nkosi yamasimba.... (<<Swearing on clan names>>, don't test my patience)”

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The Mkhizes vs The Royal family, whose owner will prevail? What will become of Qhubekani Mkhize when he wakes up? Is Khule’s plan still in motion now that the King is here?

THE BRIDE.

Insert 14.

Zie's POV.

“Don't you dare come here and disrespect me in my own house. NginguMkhize mina, uKhabazela uGcwabe, ungazongidakelwa Nkosi yamasimba.... (<<Swearing on clan names>>, don't test my patience)” What? Did my husband just swear to the King.

“Mkhize--”

“Lower your voice, this is my damn house!” My hubby hisses.

“I'm the King, the great Ndlangamandla--”

“To your people not to me. I don't have any relative in your kingdom nor do I wish to have any. If you are used to ruling by decree, you are in the wrong place “King Ndlangamandla! No man will ever raise his voice in my house, over my dead body!”

“Then take this--” The King swings his royal evil sword, I silently scream.

“Drop it or I will blow your mind right this instant!” Khule appears from nowhere and has the gun on the King's head. “Not in my father's house! I will die before letting anyone disrespect the Mkhize family like this.” All of a sudden we are all surrounded by the King's guards, swords and shields in their hands. Who in the hell still fights using swords in this era?

“Kill them! Kill everyone!” Yells the King. I still have my gun from the man hunting I did earlier I pull it out and point it to the Queen.

“I don't think so!” The three of us have our backs on each other surrounded by the King's people. “A an average bullet travels at 2000 feet per second I'm sure you are wiser than this my dear King.” The gangster in me is out to play. It's been a while.

“Killl them--” A bullet grazes the King's ear.

“Tell them to back off or the next one will be on your skull!” Mkhize is shocking me today. Ane is now hiding behind the couch or should I say the couch is in front of her since half of her body is not hidden. The king wipes bloods dripping from his ear.

“Ndabezinhle! You have grown some balls, huh? You think you can defeat me? ” He's furious.

“Last time you defeated my brother not me. I am me and you will never disrespect me not even in your dreams--”

“Please stop! All of you stop! We are not here to fight but to find out why the princess is not taken care like she should be! Our daughter is crying because of your son, you let your dog disap--”

“You should have thought about the dog's traits before marrying off your daughter to him. You know that a dog doesn't have a specific wife, right? And you insinuating that my son is a dog doesn't make your daughter a chicken either. Because if she was a cat, she wouldn't have married a dog--”

“You--” The King moves his hand but Khule presses his gun on his skull.

“Did you even ask your daughter why she's crying or you just decided to blame my son for your gold-blooded Princess's tears? Last time I let you beat my son but not today. Because of your daughter my

son ran away from his bedroom and went to seek fresh air outside. Unfortunately, he met devils out there who decided to rob him of his money, you know I have lots of that, right?” The King fumes looking at my unfazed husband. “My son is in hospital and all you care about are a few tears your daughter just shed? What about my own son? Do you want me to let you kill him because your daughter thinks being a Princess somehow excludes her from doing her wifely duties? I love my daughters in-law a lot but that doesn't mean I love my sons any less. If you all thought Qhu won't have anyone on his side then you came to the wrong place. Qhubekani Ishmael Mkhize is my son and i will die before letting anyone disrespect my family. Now you may sit down or get the hell out of my house!” This is all shocking. Who is Ndabezinhle Mkhize? Have I been sleeping with the devil? The King's silence tells me there's no love lost between the two. Their eyes tell me there's more to this than just the Qhu issue. What could it be?

“Daddy! I'm so hurt, my heart is broken--” Ane

dramatically cries. Her mother hugs her, the King steps away from my husband and signals his guards to leave.

“Wise choice Ndabezitha. Now can we talk as adults without showing off our powers?”

“Dad, I think they should take their daughter with and get the hell out of here. Anelisa, what relationship do you share with Qhubekani?” Khule is calm.

“He’s my husband.” She gloats.

“And instead of finding him you saw it fit to call your crazy father here--”

“Young man, watch your words. I’m the great King Ndlangamandla I can behead you right this instant!

” The King warns Khule.

“I’m waiting for an answer Ane! What kind of a wife are you? How many times has mom defended you from her own son? We all defended you even when you were wrong, when you were busy reminding my brother of your royalty blood, when you couldn't even cook or boil water to make him tea but today

he messes up just this once, because of you, you call the whole of Ntabeni valley? Really Ane? Are you sure you want your marriage's dirty laundry out there in the open for everyone to see? I guess not. If you finally calm down, ask your father where he spends a night after a fight with your mother? If your father really loves you then he will tell you the truth that will make you understand why Qhu left that day. It's okay to be angry but you don't involve parents in such trivial matters. What will you do if they kill Qhu? Will you rejoice and celebrate being a widow at this age? I don't hate you Ane I hate how you think and do things. Just because you are a Princess doesn't mean the world revolves around you. I guess you owe my dad, your father-in-law an apology. Your husband is also unconscious at the hospital.” Khule briefly looks at Ane who's in tears and leaves the lounge. That's it! Khulekani won't ever again say a thing about this issue. That's just how he is, passive, straight forward talker, quiet most of the times, intelligent and forgiving.

“Stop crying Princess these people will pay I

promise. Mkhize, you just started a war and it won't end well for you and your family. Let's go Princess, take your bags let's go." The King orders.

"If you step out of that door don't bother coming back."

Qhubekani's POV.

I try to open my eyes, they are heavy, my head is feels like it will split in four. I involuntarily lift my left hand but quickly puts it down wincing. My chest feels like I'm carrying a 50 kg bag of cement. Where am I? Why am I feeling like shit?

"Welcome back." Khaya? Or am I losing my mind? Khaya is in Germany. Am I dreaming or am I dead already? "You are not dreaming. How are you feeling?" Khaya questions.

"I feel like shit. What happened to me? Where am I?" I'm confused and I don't remember where I was the

last time my mind was sober

“Brother, you are in the hospital. You overdosed on drugs and you are in the hospital.” Huh? Hospital? Overdose? How? When did I do all these things? I don't remember doing that.

“Khaya what day is it today?”

“Four days after you left home and never came back. I don't know if I should press that cut on your chest and watch you die slowly or slit your throat open with a surgical blade. Brother I asked you, not once, not twice but countless times, I wanted to help you overcome addiction but you lied to me. You broke the brotherhood code! We don't lie to each other!” Now he's yelling and in my head it sounds like 7 chorused voices. “Why brother? Are you tired of living? What about your wife, kids, what exactly is eating you up brother? Please talk to me before dad and brother Khule get here. I've never seen our brother that angry and if he spares your life today, you are one lucky bastard!” Only if he knew that I'm not afraid of the two, my worst ever nightmare will be Zinhl' Intombi zakwaNgwenya

walking in here with a straight face then I'd know I'm dead, instantly.

“What exactly happened? How did I get here?”

“Brother. Your bitches called me, you were unconscious and I had to fly back here because I knew dad and brother Khule won't understand me. I spent over 24 hours looking for you until I decided to call brother Khule and mom. Mom is the one who suggested we check high profile hotels--” Oh no! Zie will castrate me this time. If not her then I'm sure dad will do the honors.

“Does my wife know?”

“Qhu sometimes you think like a stupid person. What do you think? Do you think Ane is still sitting at home waiting for you to descend from heaven like Jesus? No! Your wife is mad, throwing tantrums and she called her parents--” My heart skips a beat. Last time the King gave me four good strokes for sleeping out only one day today he will definitely kill me. “You are doing a great job of destroying yourself, your marriage, Anelisa and the Mkhize’s

honor. I don't know what dad has in store for you but I'm not going back to school until I personally admit you into a rehabilitation center. You will stay there until you decide what you want with your life. I don't mind you having sex parties, threesome, whatever your fantasies but I'm very much anti drugs. Until you get over your drug addiction you won't get out of the rehabilitation center--”

“You can't do this to me Khaya! I'm your elder brother--”

“Watch me dear ‘elder brother’ who behaves like the family last born. I'm done making excuses for you, its e time you face your demons, fight them and win. Life is precious brother, we do not gamble with life when other people out there are fighting to hold on to their last breath. I'm not doing this to spite you but because I care and love you. I'm not ready to lose you brother and I still believe you have brains in that head of yours. Please do this for me, your family and your father who grabbed a sword on it's sharp edge for you!”

“What? What happened Khaya? Did the King hurt

dad--” A tear escapes my brother's eye. I wasn't moved by his speech but now I am. Khaya is not the emotional type. “I'm sorry brother--”

“Sorry? Then what brother? You go back to the same place after getting out of here? When will you understand that we all love you? When will you stop blaming the world for all your failures? Huh? What do you want us to do? Do the thinking for you? Pamper you like a toddler when your own children have grown past that stage? No brother, no man!” What have I done? My brother is really hurting. “Man up, fight your own battles and conquer! We don't owe you shit brother, the world definitely doesn't owe you anything and as for me, I'm done covering up for you. Own up to your shit man!” He storms out of the ward trying very hard not to burst into tears. For the first time I'm also shedding real tears, not even my mother's death moved me the way my younger brother just did.

I'm still trying to recollect my thoughts when dad and Zie walk in. Their faces speak volumes I don't even want to imagine what dad will say to me.

“Dad I'm sorry--”

“Qhu? I love you son but I've heard that sorry word more than I can remember and I don't want to hear it from you anymore. I want you to do just one little thing for me and my family name son, you are my son I won't kill you or disown you because even if I do, it won't change the fact. You are a Mkhize, get up from that bed and clean your mess. Your wife is fuming at home, do something about it else I will do what I think it's best for everyone.” No! Not my dad. My dad can not be the one to solve this otherwise everyone will be in trouble. I know my father and I know what he's capable of.

“I will go to rehab.” I blurt out without thinking twice.

“Wise choice. You will be discharged from here today and you will only come back to the mansion when you have no cravings for drugs or alcohol. This time surprise me son. All the best Khabazela.” And just like that, the two of them turn and leave. Zie didn't say anything to me and it hurts. I expected her to scold me at least, what if she's also given up on me? I can't lose her as my support system, I

need her....

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THREE MONTHS LATER.....

THE BRIDE.

Insert 15

Qhu's POV.

THREE MONTHS LATER.....

I've been locked up in this place for three good months. Khaya made sure to be the one signing the papers and handing me over to these shrinks. I haven't seen brother Khule since then he did not

even bother to call or text but I don't blame him I really disappointed my family way beyond one's imagination. If I wasn't my father's duplicate I'd have long asked for my real parents but I know I'm a Mkhize, a Khabazela. I just don't know why I'm so different from others maybe it's because mom spoiled me a lot. My mother was my partner in everything she even made me do things I never thought I would be engaged in. If it wasn't for her I'd be a father to more than ten children but she took care of all of that. All she ever wanted was for me to marry the princess. I don't know what she gained by forcing me into marrying a fat egomaniac girl.

“Hey Khabazela. You have a visitor.” Announces the lady who runs this jail disguised as a rehab.

Everything we do here is scheduled. We have time to eat, bath, play, go to the loo, sleep, everything is done counting seconds and minutes.

“Hey. Is it a lady or he?” I smile hoping for it to be Zie. Ever since she walked out of that hospital ward without saying a word she never called, texted or came to visit. Only dad comes here three times a

week. Anelisa still doesn't know I'm in rehab I don't know what lies they told her but she thinks I'm on a business trip of some sort and she's super proud of me.

“It’s a beautiful young--” Before she finishes her statement I'm already flying out of the room. I run until I have her in my arms! She smells so good, so comforting and having her in my arms has never felt like this good. She doesn't push me away or anything and I'm grateful. I put my hands on her shoulders and look deep into her eyes. She's still that beautiful girl I met on the streets of Jozi years back. Back then I had this street friend of mine who would go out and bring food for us. He would go and come back clean bathed and his clothes changed. I always wondered how in the hell a street guy like him could always be clean until he told me that there was this girl who does everything for him. I was so curious about the girl and their relationship until someday he took me to meet Zee. I fell in love at that very first sight and I'm still in love.

“Zinhle? You came?” I hug her again to make sure

I'm not dreaming. "You look different, good different and you are glowing even more." A tear escapes my eye. It's true that you never realize what you have until you lose it and the worst part I lost her to my very own father.

"How are you Qhu? You look better?" She pulls a chair and sits down. I notice she's wearing a flared dress, Zie doesn't like such kinds of dresses something is wrong here.

"Zie are you pregnant?" I swallow hard praying there's no such thing I'm just reading too much into her dress code.

"Sit down Qhu." She says softly. I obey her orders and take her hands into mine. She's so warm my dick is throbbing already by just touching her hands. She notices the effect of her touch and pulls her hands back. "How are you holding up?" She ignores the subject.

"Better I guess. I haven't had drugs or beer in three months I guess that's a good thing." She smiles revealing her dimples.

“That’s good. Do you still have cravings?”

“Not really. Two weeks back these people tested me by leaving coke lying around on my bed but I did not feel tempted. I think I’m doing great.”

“I have never told you this before, I’m really proud of you Qhu.” My eyes are tearing already. No matter how much I try to be a strong man in front of her, she will always be my weakness.

“Thank you.” I say wiping a stray tear. “Have you forgiven me?”

“I was never mad at you I just wanted you to deal with your demons on your own, to reflect on your life and decide what you want without my words ringing in your head.”

“What took you so long to come and see me? I missed you Zie, why can't you continue to be my sanity pill? I miss you Zie, I miss us, everything we did together Zie--” A painful lump rises in my throat as he takes my hand and puts it on her belly.

“Be sane for your second heir--” Huh?

“What?”

“You heard me. Be sane for your children Qhu, be a responsible man so you can be a responsible father. You will have the right over him only when you are sober and finally be a man you are supposed to be. Until then continue trying and working harder.” I'm shell shocked! This means Zie did not take the pill? Dad will kill me for sure

“But baby--” She puts her finger on my lips. I'm tempted to lick it but I restrain myself.

“Be a responsible man I will take care of everything else.”

Zamo's POV.

It's been three months since I started seeing this mechanic guy. My car broke down on my way to Gwanda and that company had to send the sexiest mechanic I've ever seen! I watched him get down

the company Toyota Hilux, he had an overall tied on his waist, a golf T-shirt and a cap on. When he came closer I had to rub my eyes because that felt like a dream. The guy is super hot, I don't like them light but this one changed all that for me. He's light skinned, tall and well built, damn his voice! I am lost came undone when he said "Beautiful lady, hi". Everything about him challenged my view of mechanics I always thought they are the guys driving nice cars wearing greasy clothes and with smelly armpits. Melisizwe is different, he's always super clean you wouldn't know he's a mechanic unless he tells you. I watched open my car bonnet, the way his muscles flexed had me swallowing hard imagining how those strong hands could handle my very sexy portable body. I found myself drinking water but it was too late the guy had seen how much I wanted to explore his body. He put down his spanners, wiped his hands using the overalls sleeves and stepped closer to me.

"I can be your saviour darling. I know the effect I have on women but with you it's different I also

wanna put you over that bonnet and explore your body.” He said in my ears, my insides clenched. I couldn't resist the temptation, one thing led to the other and we found ourselves naked in his car. The sex was mind blowing that I woke up hours later to find him done with my car and looking at me like I was some kind of snack. I didn't know men can last up to 9 rounds until I met Meli and the best thing about it was the flesh to flesh contact! Oh my gosh! I'm wet already by just thinking about it.

Fast forward to now we are now officially in a relationship and our bedroom game is still top notch. He makes me feel so good I forget about all my troubles.

“Honey? I'm home.” That's him. My clit is throbbing already. Ever been fucked by a guy who has a combination smell of grease, oil and the most expensive cologne? Ladies, try it and I promise you won't regret listening to me.

“Hey babe. I missed you. How was your day?”

“Too long I wanted it to end already so I can be in

my warm favorite place--” I grab his collar pulling him to me, our lips crash.....

THE BRIDE.

Insert 16.

Zamo's POV.

I grab him by his collar pulling him towards me as our lips crush together hot lips against cold lips. We passionately kiss like our lives depends on it and I'm becoming feverish as this kiss takes me greater heights, I can't take it anymore I need to feel his skin to my skin and I have no patience to unbutton his shirt instead I rip it in two sending the buttons flying everywhere and I unbuckle his belt and hank his trousers away. He senses my urgency and how my body temperature is rising and he also rips my dress in two, finally its skin to skin but it's not enough I need more. He pushes me to the door and

pinches my already erect nipple while sucking its twin and the sensation is too much I'm already throbbing down there in desperate need of his touch and release. I gyrate on his #REMOVED

Zie's POV.

I'm craving something hot, like hot wings and Fanta orange. I don't drink fanta when I'm me but these days it's my staple food. I dial my hubby and like always he answers the car on the first ring.

“My sexy pregnant glowing wife.” I blush. “What can this old man do for you right now?”

“Hot wings, fried okra, fanta orange and--”

“Babe wait? Where do I get this fried okra from? What are you busy feeding my baby woman?”

“Daddy please be here in five minutes otherwise my cravings will change directions.”

“Okay baby I will try.” I disconnect the call and dial Zamo but she's not picking my calls. Im sure she's

busy fucking her newly found hot dude. She was so lonely when we went to Dubai and I felt for her. Worst part we ended up taking Qhu and him having to spend most of the time with her made it worse. My friend was so sex starved at the time it was not funny any more. I'm really glad for her. Things ended up getting pretty bad too fast that side we were forced to pull one or two triggers. That Mr Yousof had his own twisted agenda when he invited my husband there. Him and his friends wanted me and Zamo for a one night stand in exchange for the deal. My hubby lost it and the hotel got bloody in a nanosecond. Ane brings me back to reality when she sits on the garden chair next to me. I hope the chair won't break.

“Good afternoon mother-in-law. ” She says softly.

“Afternoon daughter-in-law. You look worried what's the matter?”

“The twins have skin rash all over their bodies. I went to the doctor he said I should limit their sugar intake and put them on a diet. How do I put 2 year olds on a diet?”

“Simple. You cook and feed them, they don't have much of a say in what they eat or don't so just limit their portions and stop giving them sugar. Feed them meat, veges, milk not the processed one and stop giving them things like bread toast, cheese and cakes. You are not spoiling them but killing them by giving them all of that junk food.”

“Do you also think they are fat?”

“I don't think so, I know so.” Even a blind person can see those children are obese why doesn't she see it? I know I'm hurting her in a way but she has to hear this.

“Mother-in-law? I know I'm sometimes cruel but you've never used that against me. Please bear with me. Do you think I'm attractive? ” I fight the urge laugh. Attractive? Really Anelisa Khumalo? “Be honest.”

“No. You used to be the ideal thick African woman when you got married and that was a little bit appetizing right now you don't even have a neck, its like your head is sitting on your shoulders. I don't

even want to imagine how your thighs look like I'm sure it takes more than an hour to reach other places of your body when bathing. You are young Ane, 32, is not an age to be letting yourself look like big mama fix your body. Exercise and eat healthy then your body will be attractive once again.”

“Any idea of the diet route I should take?” I'm glad she's not offended.

“That depends on your blood group. Go to the dietician he will help you with everything. Claim your confidence back before you lose yourself forever.” She tearfully looks at me.

“Thank you I will try my best.” She quietly stands and leaves.

“Honey? I'm home!” I can hear my husband's voice from the inside. I'm salivating already.

“I'm here darling.” He has two takeaway bags in her hands. “Did you find okra?”

“Yes but not the fried one. I found the traditionally cooked okra I hope you don't mind and start vomiting.” I'm disappointed but I can do with that.

He puts the bags on the table, bends and kisses my belly before kissing me on the lips. “How are my two important people doing?”

“We will soon die if you don't dish for us.” One of the workers brings two glasses and plates. I quickly dish for myself and start eating. My hubby looks at me in awe as I pick my hot wings and dip them in okra before eating. “Mmmmm!” Ever felt the taste of food tingling your taste buds that you find yourself closing your eyes and savoring all the taste? If not, you haven't tasted something this good. “This is so good hubby. Mmm I love you so much.” I can feel him touching me but I don't want to open my eyes. I want to enjoy this feeling with my eyes closed. You know what they say, right? If it doesn't make you close your eyes then it's not enjoyable enough.

Back at home in Zhombe kwaNgwenya Mntimande had everything under control about the Similo situation until his younger brother Nkululeko got

wind of the news. He came guns blazing. The guy who impregnated her came with his family from South Africa to pay damages but Nkululeko is not having it.

“Le yona ngeke yenzeke Mntimande ngifung’ amathonga akithi angale komfula! Uyiyeke kanjani ingane yakithi iwela egodini kanje? Huh?

Ngwenya?(Over my dead body! How can we let our sister stray like this?)” Nkule turns to his father.

“Ulambile Mthiyane-- (Are you in dire need of money father)”

“Bhambolunye!(Nkululeko!)” Mntimande hisses and everyone find themselves in the corner of the rondavel.

“Cha Mntimande angizukuthula! Uye wangifihlela kumanje uzonikela ngengane yakithi kumageza? Oqhashwe wuwena--(Today I won't be quiet! You his this from me now you are going to hand her over to a taxi driver? The one you sign his paycheck?)

“I love my boyfriend--” Similo tries to defend his

boyfriend. A hot slap sends her crashing on the floor as she sees only shooting stars.

“Uzothula ma kukhuluma mina! Yangizwa? (You don’t interrupt me when I’m talking! Do you get that?)” Smilo nods rubbing her burning cheek. Her boyfriend tries to help her up. “Hee imihlola yami ke lena! Nizodlal' umathandana emzini kababa? (I'm being tested for real! So I slap my sister, you feel the need to intervene? Huh)” Nkule is fuming. Their father has his head buried in his hands. He knows there's nothing he can do about his sons when they start throwing fits like this. “Get out of my father’s house! Now!” Nkule roars. Mntimande silently grabs his younger brother by the collar and takes him outside.

“Angazi kumbe baye bakufundisa ukudelela la esikoleni sakho kumbe udakiwe? Yeka lento Nkule ngingakaze ngikuphule amathambo khona manje. Siyezwana? (I don't know if you were taught disrespect at university or you just drunk? Stop this madness before I break your bones right here, right now!)” Nkule looks into his brother's bloodshot eyes

and swallows hard.

“Uxolo Mntimande (I'm sorry brother)” Mntimande let go of his color.

“Kuhle-ke ukuzwa lokho. Ungaphinde udlalele la kimi ngizokuhlenganisa lamathonga akini kungekudala!” There's a grave warning in Mntimande's tone. “Ucingani wena? Uba ngiyathanda ukubona ingane yakithi iyilaxaza kanje? Cha Mthiyane angiyithandi nami lento kodwa ngizothini? Ukhulelwe udadewethu, ngesintu sakithi indoda iyazakhela izikhulisele umuzi wayo asimnike ithuba lomageza engaphazama--” (Good to hear that. Do you think I like seeing my sister ruining her future like this? No, I also don't like this but she's pregnant. A responsible man takes care of his children, let's give him a chance but if he messes up --)

“Simcish' umphefumulo kanye nengane yakhe. (We kill him and his child)”

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Good morning darlings.

As requested by many of you, Mntimande is back with his other crazy brother. It seems the Ngwenya people are all crazy and hot headed. I will try as much as possible to include their part in the book.

You all have forgotten the warning I gave before we started. The book is not for the fainthearted, especially when you have soft spots for children. We will be serving disappointments, heartbreaks and mini heart attacks in large portions. Brace yourselves things are about to get even more real. Qhu is coming out of the rehab facility tomorrow, let the fatherly duties begin. Ndabezinhle Mkhize vs his very own son, Qhubekani Mkhize, who will be the best father?

THE BRIDE.

Insert 17.

Zamo's POV.

“Not now baby can we just cuddle for now and you tell me what just happened right now as I do not understand myself what happened.” he says. I snuggle closer to him and lay on his chest not sure how to answer him as I'm also not sure of what just happened. Tears fall afresh from my eyes. “Baby?” He tilts my head so I'm looking at him. “What's wrong? Did I remind you of something?” His eyes are filled with love and care.

“I love you Meli.” I blurt out. He cups my face and flips us, he's now on top of me.

“Marry me Zamo....” My heart stops for a moment. Did he just ask for my hand in marriage? He must be joking.

“You joking, right?”

“No I'm not. We love each other Zamo so why waste

our precious time? We are both old enough to know what we want. I know I want this pussy everyday every hour and anywhere in my own house. I want to own your body and soul Zamo, please, marry me baby.” My heart is now throbbing in my throat as my own tears choke me. I love Meli but marriage is a step way too forward. I'm scared, scared of opening my heart only to be hurt by the same person who claims to love me unconditionally. Tshiamo was also a great guy at the beginning but on our first day of marriage everything changed. Instead of a love bite he gave me a black eye. Up until today I still don't know what wrong I did by wearing my very sexy lingerie on our first day.....

“Zamo? Baby?” I snap out of it. I now have tears rolling freely down my cheeks. “Are you okay baby? Did I say something wrong?” I jump on him pulling him closer to me in a hug. I want to feel him closer, I want him to help MD forget my horrible past marriage.

“It's not you baby, I'm sorry for being an emotional wreck--”

“Shhhh! Only an asshole can complain about a lady who is comfortable enough to be herself with him. I have no problem with your emotions, in fact I want to be the one to wipe your tears for the rest of my life.” He says kissing my tears away and I melt. Only the doubts I had are gone. If it's only his sweet tongue then I'm ready to be burned by his reality as his wife.

“Yes.” I say with a big smile plastered on my face.

“Really?” Excitement is written all over his face. I nod, he hugs me tight before kissing me all over my body. I feel my temperature hitting 40 too fast and my breathing has accelerated.

“I love you Zamo. I can't wait to walk down the aisle with you my sexy soon-to-be wife.” He plants kisses on my body, I'm still trying to figure out what just changed in us when I feel his lips on my clean shaven pussy. His hot breath hitting my bare skin is sending greater and sweeter messages to my clit. “I wanna muff you baby. Open your legs for me sweetheart.” My thighs involuntarily part giving him room to enjoy my cookie. “Wider baby..”.....

Zie's POV.

I'm woken up from my sleep by someone touching and kissing my belly. It feels soothing and relaxing. I slightly raise my head. My husband's busy smiling at himself.

“Hey. Good morning baby. I was talking to my son here telling him to behave otherwise him and I will have a problem.” He smiles. After eating hot wings and okra yesterday I vomited like no one's business. My ribs are still hurting from all the groaning and involuntarily bending on the toilet seat I found myself doing yesterday.

“Morning husband. You look happier today?”

“I've been happy ever since I married you Zie. You make me happy but there's something else. Wanna take a guess?” Mmmh! What is this man up to now?

“Tell me? What is it?” His smile grows even wider.

“Your favorite people are here--”

“What? My brothers are here?” I'm about to run off the bed but he pulls me back laughing.

“There's no way you are going outside without taking a shower first. Not after all the things you made me do yesterday, it felt like you wanted to kill me with your sweet honeypot.” I blush embarrassed. After seeing him naked in the shower yesterday I couldn't help but want him inside me.

“I'm sure I'm clean down there. The way you cleaned my kitty with your tongue I doubt any juices were left to flow down my thighs--” He spans me.

“Ouch!” I'm turned on already. This pregnancy is going to be the death of me or not my husband.

“Don't do that otherwise you will have to do what you did to me yesterday and I'm worried about your back but I can not guarantee to let you off the hook later today.” I kiss him on the cheeks. “Why didn't you wake me up when my brothers arrived?”

“Mntimande advised against it because when he called you were busy emptying your stomach so we

had to let you rest. Before we go to meet them I have to tell you something--”

“What?”

“Your younger sister--”

“Ooh that. I will try to be mature about it. I haven't forgiven my sisters but I will try my best I promise.”
I don't know if I'm ready to visit that dark past.

“Good girl. Now go and take a shower I will make the bed.”

After cleaning myself up I make way to the lounge where everyone is seated. Nkule leaps to his feet, scoops me up and spins me around making me wanna empty my stomach once again.

“NK stop!” I scream.

“Ooh sorry. I forgot you are carrying someone in here.” He bends and kisses my belly. “Hi little one. I'm uncle NK and I can't wait to teach you how to hold a gun--” Everyone bursts into laughter. My

brother is crazy with capital letter K.

“Why did you bring her to my house?” I whisper.

“Brother insisted you two have to talk. I support him too.” He smiles apologetic.

Mntimande is looking at me with his eyes glowing with love. I sit on his lap and hug him. Some may deem this appropriate but this is my brother so spare me the aunt Dora talk. We exchange pleasantries, breakfast is served and everyone enjoys their food. While still eating, Khule walks in followed by Qhu. I almost freeze but I control myself. He looks like one of the Mkhize brothers. Cleanly shaven, his signature hairstyle, the broad shoulders, he doesn't get more handsome than this. My throat is dry already but I dismiss all the crazy thoughts. Ane leaps off the chair and attack him with a hug.....

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Good evening darlings. I'm sorry for being short I'm really tired today. Excuse the typos and missed words. I love you darlings. Keep Safe.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 17 continuation.

Zie's POV.

My throat is dry already but I quickly dismiss the crazy thoughts as Ane leaps to her feet and hugs him. I decide to concentrate on my plate. Smilo keeps stealing glances at me trying to gauge my mood, I smile at her she smiles back. I don't know how I feel about her sitting across the table after all the shit she and Sinanzeni (elder sister) put me through. Over the years I felt like murdering them but not now. Now I have some important things to focus on. Sbu pushes his plate to me.

“I don't want carrots!” He yells.

“Where are the carrots son?” Hubby inspects his plate.

“They hid them in my food!” He's sulking already.

“Mshana? Yiza uzodla nami. (Come and eat with me)” Mntimande says, Sbu smiles. I knew where this was going. There are no carrots in his plate he just wants to eat meat with his uncles. My brother's breakfast is strictly meat and a bottle of beer. Sbu jumps on Mntimande's laps and starts eating.

“Daddy? Mom?” Qhu says sitting down.

“Hi son. Welcome back.” My husband smiles at his son. Ane is blushing nonstop and I'm irritated already. Qhu greets my brothers and my younger sister who stares like him like he's a piece of something she's craving especially now that she's pregnant.

“Mom, I'm sorry I won't be sitting down I have to be somewhere else. Remind dad to sign those documents and send them back. I only came here because my brother wanted me to pick him at the airport. See you later.” Trust the Mkhizes to lie to

everyone about Qhu's three months disappearance. He kisses my cheek, pats his father's shoulder before tickling Sbu. "Ndlelanhle Mntimande, NK(Have a safe journey)" Khule says to my brothers and leaves.

"Can I taste your drink?" Sbu asks his uncle as the awkward silence ensues after Khule's exit.

"Eyabadala lento mshana wena phuza u orange juice wakho uphume lapho singakaxabani (This is for older people. You drink your juice and leave my drink alone before we have a problem here)."

After eating Smilo tries to apologize but I tell her I'm over whatever shit they put me through. Just when my brothers and Smilo are about to hot the road she receives a call from an unknown number.

"Hello?....What?.....No!" She collapses on the paved floor. I'm still trying to figure out what is going on when Nkule picks up her phone and speaks to whoever is on the other side.

"Okay. Thanks for letting us know." He turns to Mntimande.

“Leyanja iye yathuzana neyiny imoto kumanje imoto yami sey--”(That dog just wrecked my car)

“Uphi lomuntu Nkule? Kwenzekeni?”(Where is he? What happened?) Mntimande is panicking.

“Udabula mafu bafo kodwa umdeni wakhe wona usaphefumula.” (He's dead but his family is still alive)

“Wena ukhathalele imoto kuyonke lenyakanyaka? Uyas angana Nkule? Ungowakwabani wemfana?” (And all you care about is your car? What the hell is wrong with you Nkule? Who are you?)

“Hayibo! Yini engitheni--” (What have I done now--)

“Ubong uZie bengizokuqum amaphambili khonamanje--” (Be grateful Zie is here otherwise I'd castrate you!)

“Aniyeke ukuxabana ingane yakini ifun usizo phambi kokuba ilahlekelwe yingane!”(Stop fighting and help your sister before she loses the child!) I scold them. Call me heartless or whatever you want but I don't feel anything for Smilo. She can die for all I care! Her and Sinanzeni threw me in the well

and left me to die. It took more than 10 good hours of fighting with water in a 17 meter long deep well to survive. They did not see anything wrong with what they did so forgive me for feeling nothing in return. Mntimande buckles her up in his car and drives off to the hospital leaving NK behind.

“Zie? Give me your car I have to be at the accident scene. How in the hell I allowed that idiot to drive my car is something I will regret forever. I should have let them take the bus!” My brother is really furious.

“Don’t wreck my car. If you do don't bother coming back. Let me get the keys.”

Qhu’s POV.

As I walk into the bedroom I notice the change in many things. The bedroom setup is changed completely and now there's a touch of nature in it. A few flower vases are at the wide window and I'm must admit, I'm impressed.

“Wow! You changed our bedroom?” Ane is standing at the door shyly looking at me. “Come here.” She slowly steps closer to me. I hug her before French kissing her. “It’s beautiful I love it.” For the first time ever in three years our marriage I’m actually complimenting something she’s done. Her eyes tear up. “I missed you baby.”

“I missed you too. I’m sorry, I’m sorry for involving my father in our marriage I know it’s the reason you volunteered to go and work on the Australian deal. I’m sorry, I’m really--”

“Hey look at me. It’s okay I’m not angry anymore and I did not go there because I wanted to be far from you. I went because for the first time dad asked me to do something for him and this family. It had nothing to do with you. Stop beating yourself about it. So tell me? Why did you change the room?” She blushes.

“Mother-in-law kinda advised me on how to treat my husband. I’ve been dieting and trying to do my duties as a daughter-in-law and a mother. Now that you back I want to be a good wife--” I knew Zie had

a hand in this. What is that feisty girl of mine up to? Surely she's not doing this out of the goodness of her heart not especially now that she's carrying our second child.

“And you listened to her?”

“Yeah she's not as bad as I thought. She's a good person Qhu. She and Nothabo helped me repaint and redecorate the room. I'm glad you love it.” She smiles. I love everything that has Zie's touch woman. Anything, as long as Zie is part of it then I'm happy.

“Thank you for doing a these things to make me happy. I'm really happy. How are the twins?”

“Good actually. Mother-in-law helped me admit them to a crèche so they won't spend the entire day eating and going weight. ” Wow! Zie is playing her cards pretty well she's fixing her step children before she can officially become mine and give me another child. This time I'm going to be a responsible father and a husband. I know she won't say no if I ask for her hand in marriage but then

uKhabazela will kill me for real this time. Maybe I should ask her to elop with me then we can get married in another faraway country. I can't wait to have her all to myself.

Zie's POV

I just spoke to Zamo on the phone and she told me the greatest news ever. Melisizwe popped the question and she said yes. I'm so happy about it and I can't wait for the wedding to take place.

“Honey? Mntimande just called Smilo woke up.” My husband informs me.

“That's good. How's the baby?”

“They both fine. I hope she will be able to handle the grief. How old is your sister?”

“20. Zamo called and you won't believe this?” I'm sure my face is glowing already for her already.

“What? Did she find herself a good vibrator--”

“Honey!” I slightly smack him. “I told you about that Meli guy, right?” He nods. “He proposed and my friend said yes.”

“Wow that's good. Now my wife can rest--”

“You boring me now. Get away from here.” He laughs.

“I'm sorry.” Just then there's commotion in the house. “What now?” He helps up and we make our way back inside.

“How is this possible? You were all drunk and you had sex with all of the so why is my husband responsible for your pregnancies?” Ane is fuming. What? Pregnant?

“What's going on in my house?” My husband hisses and everyone goes silent.

“Qhubekani Mkhize got us all pregnant.” Four girls say in unison.

“What?” My husband can not believe his ears. This is the Qhubekani Ishmael Mkhize I know. He doesn't

shoot blanks and he knows how to choose them fertile ladies. I already see four mis carriages.....

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What just happened? Four women? All pregnant for Qhu? And Smilo's boyfriend? Hmmmm..... Let me grab a chair and a bucket of popcorn.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 18.

Zie's POV.

My husband looks at the women and shakes his head in disbelief. Ane is crying already but Qhubekani is nowhere near this scene. I wonder how he will get himself out of this one.

“And what makes you so sure my son is responsible?” Asks Khabazela calmly.

“He is the one who slept with all of us!” Replies the other girl with a high pitched voice. Only if she knew who Khabazela is she'd get down her high horse before everything goes wrong for her.

“You were at the party with many other guys why my son in particular? Is there some agenda behind all of this? Because if that's the case you came to the wrong house. In this house we do not entertain bitches only married people have a say and as far as I know, my son is happily married. If you girls couldn't be responsible for your own healthy and safety that's not my problem. Get out of my house!” He hisses.

“We not leaving! He promised to marry us after all he's bored with his fat wife--” Ane slaps the girl hard she crashes on the floor.

“Don't you dare disrespect my marriage!” She mutters.

“Ladies, if I remember correctly you drugged my

son and had your way with him. I doubt he even remembers having sex with you but as I said before, not in my house. Get out before I lose my temper.” He says calmly. Qhu makes his way downstairs in his casual clothing. He looks dapper in jeans, t-shirts and Jordan sneakers. He's busy tapping on his phone with no care in the world until he comes face to face with his sins.

“What’s going on here?” He feigns to be surprised. Ane is about to snap but I signal her to play it cool in front of the bitches.

“They are here for you claiming to be carrying your children in their bellies. I don't know how you will fix this but do it fast before I become the fixer.” Qhu smiles at the ladies before changing his face to stern-cold. My husband makes his way to our bedroom but I'm not leaving. I have to play my cards wisely here.

“Baby I don't know what they are talking about.” Qhu says to Ane.

“I believe you sweetheart. I'm sure they just want

your name, money and status but that's not happening. Over my dead body!" The princess is really angry.

"We are going to report him and we see who's going to have the last laugh--"

"Remember to mention to the police that he's legally married to a princess and has two kids. And ooh? You drugged him, the proof of that very same particular day can be found at the central police station now get out of here!" Well done Princess my teachings were not a waste after all.

"We didn't drug him--"

"I said get out before I lose my temper!" Ane yells. They all hurriedly turn towards the door in their high heels. I trip one of the girls and she falls over screaming and rolling down the steps until she hits hard on the toddler's scooter outside. Oops! That was a creepy accident! Minus one problem, three left.

"She's bleeding please call an ambulance!" One of the girls screams.

"Ambulance my fat ass!" Well, Ane is doing the

things today. I don't have to do the talking.

Qhubekani looks at me in awe but I keep a straight face.

“Call the police Ane. That way the Mkhize name won't be tarnished, this is a private property and the ladies were intruding. It's a pity they don't even know how to walk in heels.”

“On it mother-in-law. ” She rushes to the landline dialing the police who quickly arrive. Once again Ane does the talking and as she's believed. Who wouldn't believe the wife? The officers even asked if she wants to press charges for home wrecking but she said no. Well, that went well time to rest with my precious baby.

“Husby? What are you doing?” he's busy on his laptop.

“I'm helping Zamo with that divorce case. She sent pointers and all the case details just wanna help her win it you know how much this will mean to her. I hope you don't mind?”

“I don't mind sweetheart. I trust Zamo and I know

you two wouldn't dare betray me because you both know what I'm capable of." I smile, he smiles back.

"Is that a threat?"

"A friendly reminder. I can kill anyone for you Mkhize so before entertaining crazy thoughts think of the danger you will be putting that someone's life in."

"Do I smell jealousy here? Well, the feeling is mutual honey I too can murder anyone for you." I chuckle uncomfortably. "What happened back there?" I tell him everything and he smiles in satisfaction. "I'm glad daughter-in-law is fighting for her marriage. Thank you honey for giving her the much needed support and confidence. You are a great mother Zie, I will forever be grateful to God for allowing me to meet you. I love you honey."

"I love you too daddy. Can I rest now?"

"Ooh okay. Come let me put you to bed I will continue later." He leads me to the bed, makes me lie down and he lies next to me with his hand on my belly. "Sleep well my two beautiful people, I love

you.” He kisses my lips then my belly as I doze off.

Anelisa’s POV.

I’m really angry right now I feel like ripping someone in two but then it was my anger that drove him out. I will let this one slide and behave like a cultured wife.

“Baby I’m sorry--” I hug him and let my tears flow.

“I’m really sorry.”

“It’s okay sweetheart you were drugged and not the only male in that party. Those girls probably want your money nothing else. Do something about it before father-in-law loses his cool. You know he doesn’t want any negative news associated with his name. I’m with you in this, you are my husband and we are a team.” It’s painful saying these words but if that’s what it takes to gain my husband’s trust and love then let me feel the pain.

“Thank you.” He kisses my forehead. “It’s past three already when does the the twins knock off? Who

picks them up from creche?”

“They arrive around 5 PM and they have a driver assigned to them only.”

“Can I pick them up today?”

“Really?” He nods. Qhu doesn't really love our children or maybe it all has to do with the being overweight? At least he's warming up to the idea of building our happy family. This has to work I love Qhu and I want to be with him for the rest of my life. If I lose him now then what I, dad and his mother worked hard for will go down the drain.

“Okay the baby, I have to pass by the office. See you later.” He kisses my forehead and leaves. As soon as he leaves I lock the door and start researching on my laptop.

<How to terminate pregnancy leaving no trace?>

I get many links to various websites explaining about abortion. This other websites gives me the names of the abortion pills; mifepristone and misoprostol. But then how do I give the pills to all four of them?

<How to get away with for murders?>

Many of the sites lead me to various movies. I don't want a movie here but this is a real life situation. Fuck it!

<How to bio-cremate a human body?>

Alkaline hydrolysis, 160°C, it takes 4 - 6 hours for the body to be dissolved. No this will take forever to achieve. I guess a gun will do...

THE BRIDE.

Insert 19.

UNEDITED.

It's been two days since Qhu got out of the rehabilitation center, since the bitches came to the Mkhize mansion and Smilo's boyfriend wrecked NK's car. Smilo is still at the hospital, unconscious

and now the family has to make a decision whether to save the baby or the mother? Worst part of it, the paternal family of her child have forgotten about her.

“Ngwenya? Ngenzenjani? (Dad? What should I do?)” Mntimande asks his father who arrived in Bulawayo with his wife yesterday. As the elder brother, Mntimande was given the responsibility of taking care of his siblings at the age of 21. He has done a great job at it but this Smilo issue is bigger than him.

“Angazi mfanawami. Lami sengicabange ngaphelelwa. Uke wazama ukufonela abakibo lomntwana? (I don't know son I've also exhausted my options. Did you try reaching out to the boy's family?)” Ngwenya sighs.

“Kudala ngizama baba kodwa ababambi incingo zami. Angazi nami? Ngizothini ma bebuya befuna ingane yabo? (I tried calling but they are not taking my calls. I don't know what to do anymore. What will I say to them when they come asking for their child?)” Mntimande too is confused.

“Asikho isdingo sokba ngibukeke nidangele kanje

nobabili ingane yakithi ilele kuloyambheda!
Mntimande? Uhlala uthi wena ingane zakini ziza kuqala yonkenye into emuva pho ukudideka kwakho kuqhamukaphi manje? Loya mgodoyi ushayise ngemoto yami kumanje nizoyeka udadewethu are ngenxa yosana okungakazalwa? Olungaselayise? Baba? Uqale nini ukucabangela amagola? Akusuwe oye waphoqelela uSindiso ukba ayibulale eyakhe ingane ngoba ingenayise? Ngokunjalo mayife lengane-- (There's no need for both of you to be confused. Brother, you always say our sisters come first then everything else later now what's your problem? That idiot wrecked my car and I'm not about to lose my sister because of him too! Father, you forced Sis USindiso to abort her baby because she wasn't married. In the same way, let Smilo's child die--)"

“Nkululeko Ngwenya!” Hisses Mntimande.

“Kudala ngiyenzile lento akukho okunye ongakwenza ukukuntshintsha lokho. Kumanje, odokotela bayamhlinza umntanakini ngeke sifelwe ngudadewethu ngento engenayise-- (It is done

brother and there's nothing you can do about it. Smilo is being operated on as we speak. We can't lose our sister because of a fatherless child--)"

"Wathathwaphi kodwa Nkule? Kutheni ungenanembeza?(What is wrong with you Nkule? Don't you have a heart?)" Mntimande sits back down on the hospital bench feeling defeated. In all of seven of his siblings, it has always been two of them who has the guts to challenge him and they are still doing a good job at it. Nkule and Zie are the replicas of him, hot headed, short tempered and don't hesitate to take life altering decisions. They know he can beat the crap out of them but that has never stopped them.

"La kwathathwa khona wena bhuti (Where you come from is the same place I come from)." Says Nkule with a smile on his face. "Mus' ukukhathazeka bafo udadewethu uzodlula kulezinhlungu. Inhlungu azizanga ukuzobhidliza kodwa ukuzokwakha (Stop worrying brother, our sister will be fine. Pain is felt not to destroy but to build)." They hug each other. Ngwenya emotionally

looks at them, the puzzle is incomplete. Because of him the brothers are short of one partner in everything, their beloved sister Zinhle. He knows Zie won't come anywhere near him after all he's the one who disowned her in front of the whole world. He does miss her but his pride and principles won't let him grab that phone and call his daughter asking for forgiveness. He can't even ask the brothers how she is because they will remind him of that fateful day.

At the Mkhize mansion everything is surprisingly flowing smoothly, Anelisa is still continuing with her duties shocking all of them including her husband. Qhubekani is itching to touch Zie but he has not had the chance to meet her alone and Zie seems to be playing her game very smart.

“Good morning grandma. ” Nothabo greets Zie with a long face.

“What’s your problem today? Why the long face?”

Questions Zie who's busy folding clothes.

“I hate him! I hate him!” Nothabo smashes her phone. Zie raises her eyebrow and let her continue with her tantrums. “I don't ever want to see him!” She cries throwing herself on the bed.

“Are you done?” Zie asks.

“Huh? Grandma--”

“Are you done messing up my room?” Nothabo looks at the cushions, clothes and pieces of her phone on the floor. “Get to work young lady or else you and I will have a problem--”

“But grandma--”

“No buts. Clean my room, channel all your anger into cleaning then when you calm down you can tell me what happened.” Nothabo sulks but starts cleaning anyway. After about 15 minutes she sits next to Zie.

“I'm sorry I lost my temper right there.”

“Good girl. A woman doesn't go around throwing things like a mad person. A woman behaves in a

dignified way, you just don't throw tantrums because you feel like it instead you control yourself. You are a woman, the one who will always be blamed for everything that goes wrong in this world so tread with great care. Controlling your anger doesn't mean you are weak but as women we are the epitome of peace. We can not behave like men and expect the world to be a peaceful place. We are what makes this earth rotate and for that reason we should learn how to behave and when to show our anger. If you keep throwing tantrums every time a small misunderstanding takes place no one will ever take you seriously. Be calm, and only roar when it's necessary to.” Zie failed all her school subjects but she deserves an award for passing all her real life lessons. “Now tell me what happened?”

“There’s a guy I like, he's been showing interest but I saw him kissing a girl from Montrose High. I was hurt grandma, the girl is not even as beautiful as I am. I mean who leaves me for an ugly girl? I feel disrespected.”

“Thabo. Crushing on someone doesn't mean you

love them, you are too young to be angry and smashing things because some guy you like kissed someone. You don't even know what love is, I bet the guy is cute, a nerd wearing glasses and his shirt is always clean?" Thabo blushes. "You see? It's not about what you feel in here," Says Zie touching Nothabo's chest. "It's because you are fascinated by his cuteness and cleanliness nothing more. Forget about boys for now and try to concentrate on your books. Boys come and go but books will forever stick with you. When you finally have your own meaning of the word love, come back to me and I will advise you accordingly. Okay? Now cheer up." She smiles and jumps on Zie completely forgetting about the baby in her belly. "Ouch!" Zie cries out.

"Sorry grandma, sorry. Sorry dear uncle in there." Thabo kisses Zie's belly.

"What makes you think it's an uncle?"

"Because all my uncles are cool, I want the baby to be a he then I will always babysit him. Girls are not really cool, look at the twins always crying and what

not.”

“That’s why you always leave them when going to shops and take Sbu instead?” Thabo nods. “That’s not cool Thabo. Try are your younger sisters and you are the only girl in this family at the moment please do try to accommodate them else they will feel unwanted. If they start realizing that you have favorites that might hurt them in the long run. Girl or boy, children are the same, okay? ”

“Okay grandma. Now I don't have a phone what do we do?” She smiles naughtily.

“Not we, I did not force you to smash your phone.”

“You didn't stop me either. Let's call grandpa--”

“No. You deserve a week punishment without a phone then I will see if I can get you a new phone. Now let's go and clean the kitchen we are the only ones at home today--”

“No grandma mom will do it--”

“I will slap you if you continue like this. Your mother is working a six hour shift and you want her to

come back home to dirty dishes and empty pots? How would you feel if you were her? Do you know how taxing her job is? Come on let's go.” Thabo smiles.

“Calm down grandma I was provoking you. I love how you change from being sweet to being a strict grandma. But honestly granny, why are you still paying those maids? We do everything on our own?”

“We can not fire them because they too are fending for their families and they are not lazing around you know that. We have to help them, now they are busy in the laundry room and taking care of the twins. Stop being lazy, let's go.”

NEWS BULLETIN!!!

“Three young ladies who are well known for their illegal prostitution were found dead in their

apartment in Khumalo. It is alleged that they may have consumed an untraceable poison as they were found with blood on their mouths and noses. One of the girls who is also their best friend expressed her horror when our reporter questioned her. She's been admitted in the hospital for the past two days after slipping and losing her baby. And I quote "I don't know what happened to my friends but something seems to be fishy here. I lost my baby, they died with theirs--" she couldn't elaborate any further as she received a call that left her skin pale and went mum thereafter. " Khule switches off the TV and turns to his brother who is also shell shocked.

"I didn't do anything. It didn't even cross my mind that I should get rid of them in such manner." Qhu pleads innocent.

"Then who did? Do you think Ane can do this?" Qhu looks at his brother thoughtfully and shakes his head.

"No. She doesn't have the guts but her father does have the guts--"

“Do you think the King did this?”

“I’m shocked. I don't know what to think but I will find out.” Qhu says grabbing his phone.

“Now you have to get rid of the one in the hospital else you are doomed.” Advises Khule. Qhu dials Zee, she answers on the second ring.

“What the hell Zie? Why did you do that--”

“Qhubekani? Are you drunk? What the fuck are you talking about? Can you be clear?” Zie hisses lowering the volume on the speakers.

“They are dead Zie--”

“Who is dead? What's going on Qhu?” Zie is confused.

“Those girls... The pregnant ones--”

“And you are breathing through the wound because? Are you guilty of something Qhu? If you are then you better start covering your tracks else your father will kill you if his name is linked with such news.” Warns Zie.

“I didn't do anything! Did you kill them Zie? I saw

you tripped the girl--”

“You should know by now that if I murder someone it will take the entire police and army force to find the dead body so the answer is no I didn't do it. Are you thinking what I'm thinking?”

“She didn't do it Zie, she doesn't have the guts to do such we both know this!”

“Well, whoever did it, good riddance.”

“No! The one you tripped is alive, lost the baby but alive.”

“Mission accomplished. Her being alive is your problem not mine. I killed the baby because it was my problem now this is not my business. All the best Qhu.” Zie drops the call smiling thoughtfully.

Ane listens to the news in the car and screams almost swerving the car off the road.

“God no! It was just angry thoughts I didn't kill those women.” She pulls over and cries. Her phone rings it's Qhu. “I didn't kill them.”

“I know baby I know. Why are you crying? Where are you?”

“In the car on my way home. You didn't kill them did you?”

“No I didn't. Did you tell your father about this?”

“No. After what happened last time I made a vow not to involve my parents our marriage.”

“Okay baby. Go home and rest.” Qhu sighs frustratedly. Who killed the ladies?

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Ladies and gentlemen, I'm really struggling to keep up with my work these days and it's affecting my writing so badly. I'm going to take a break, refuel and rest my body a little, I will be back before you know it. Thank you for always understanding and supporting me, I love you all

THE BRIDE.

Insert 20.

Zinhle's POV.

I'm just chilling with Thabo outside deciding on the colors of my baby's room. Thabo is a very intelligent girl with a great touch of interior designing and so far she's done a great job in showing off her skills. She helped me repaint and redecorate my bedroom so I trust her to help with the baby room. I see Khule's reflection on the mirror and he doesn't look good.

"Mom can we talk?" He asks rubbing his head.

"Hi dad." Thabo greets him.

"Hi sweetheart."

"Umh let's go and talk in the guestroom. "You don't look good what's wrong?" I ask closing the door behind me.

“Mom? Where is dad?” That sounds like an accusation of some sort.

“Why? What's wrong?”

“Does he have anything to do with the deaths of those girls? If yes then I have to know the truth right now. Qhu is losing his mind trying to figure out who did and what's worse is that the other girl is alive. She will talk and we are doomed--”

“Khule?” He looks straight into my eyes. For the first time ever since I met him I notice how sharp his gaze is and I feel my insides tightening. The way he's intensely looking at me right now I swear I'm about to lose myself.. What the fuck? Did I just entertain such a crap thought? “Your father has a business meeting with a client at Meikles Hotel. I can vouch for him that he did nothing of the sort. You know your father better than I do, do you think he would be so careless about the whole murder thing?” He closes his eyes and sighs.

“No he wouldn't. Dad may be all things but not stupid. Whoever killed those girls better not be one

of us in this family else we will be doomed. The police will check fingerprints, do the autopsy, find clues that can come back and haunt us. I just want to be sure it has nothing to do with us so I can relax. Can you please try to talk to Ane for me? Qhu thinks she has no guts to kill but I don't trust women. I wouldn't even vouch for my own wife when my one night-stand who is pregnant ends up dead. Women are unpredictable dangerous species. Please talk to her and find out the truth." Seems like Mkhize only gave birth to one foolish son. Khaya and Khule are really his children, you can not get away with murder with them involved. I pity whoever killed those girls.

"Okay I will do that. Stop stressing and focus on your work everything will be fine."

"Thanks mom." He hugs me.

Things are about to go crazy in this mansion! I can smell quarrels, fights, pointing at each other and hell is about to break loose. I wonder what Princess has in her tank because tables are about to turn here. At this point in time I will just sit back and

watch the drama unfolding. I have my baby to think about not the useless dead bodies.

“Uhhh... Mother-in-law, come in.” Ane sniffles and blows her nose using one of the twin's sweater.

“Are you okay?” She runs to me and squeezes me in a hug.

“No I'm not.” She confesses. I raise my eyebrows. “I didn't kill those women mother-in-law please believe me--”

“Hey sit down.” I push her down on the couch.

“Right now you sound guilty stricken take a deep breath and relax.” She does. “Now tell me what happened.” I hope she's not the murderer.

“I went to their flat, fought with them, I wanted to shoot them but I couldn't. I couldn't do it I'm not a murderer--” She's crying once more.

“Ane? You will go to jail for a crime you did not commit if you fail to control your emotions. Calm down and tell me everything.” She narrates the whole story from googling how to get away with murder to her confronting them. “I did not kill them,

I didn't--”

“Why are you crying then?”

“Qhu thinks I did it.”

“No he doesn't. I'm sure he was just asking you gave to relax yourself. It won't be long before the police knock on our door because you left your fingerprints on their door. You just told me anything but you never mentioned gloves. Also, find an IT whiz to wipe your search engine results otherwise you are doomed--”

“I didn't kill them--” Now she's hysterical. Holy Maria! What do I do now? How do I console this foolish Princess? Who goes to attack without gloves, really?

“I believe you Ane. Now it's not the time to cry but to act fast.”

At the hospital Smilo tries to wake up but she feels sore on the abdomen.

“Hey.” NK greets her.

“Hi brother. I'm thirsty.” He's about to give her water but decides against it as he's not sure if it's safe to drink water a few hours after the operation.

“Let me call the doctor first.”

“No. I don't need a doctor I want to get out of here. I had a dream and these people were fighting with me and they took my baby away.” NK pitifully looks at his sister who touches her stomach and screams.

“My baby! Brother where is my baby--” The doctor rushes in followed by a nurse.

“Please calm down. You just had a surgery--”

“No! I want my baby--” She winces trying to fight the doctor off.

“I want my child! Brother do something! I told you about my dream--” She's still trying to fight them off when the nurse injects her. “I want my ba--” She dozes off. Nkule's tears fall on her.

“Doc, will she be fine?” He queries with a shaky voice.

“She will need all the emotional support you can all

offer to her. I will explain to her what led to the decision and also assign a therapist for her. You should all be strong for her because she's gonna need all the support you can give her. It's not easy losing a child after bonding with him for over seven months. She might retreat to a dark place only you as a family can help her out of. Be there for her in each and every step if the way.”

“I understand doctor.” Says Nkule as Mntimande walks in.

“Kuhambani? Uye waphaphama? (What's going on? Did she wake up)” Questions Mntimande.

“Yebo bafo kodwa akekho kahle. Sengiyazisola— (Yes but she's not in the right state of mind. I'm regretting--)”

“Akulon iphutha lakho Mthiyane. Yek' ukukuzidla ngento ongeke usayiguqula okwamanje kuzomele siphume neqhinga lokumsiza ukuze akwazi ukudlulisela inhlungu abhekene nazo (It's not your fault. Stop beating yourself about something you can not change for now we need to come up with a

plan to help her heal.)”

“Angazi bafo. Asethembe kuzodlula (Let's hope she will be fine)” Nkule sighs.

“Qina mfanakithi. Enye yezinto ezenza ubeyindoda uqobo yikuma nezinqumo zakho kuzekube semaphethelweni. Uye wathatha isinqumo Nkule yek' ukuzisola manje ngoba kungasekho ongakwenza ukuyiguqula lento. USmilo owakwaNgwenya, uMntimande, amanxebakhe kazukopha unomphela uzophola kungekudala. Qina mfanakithi (Be strong boy. One of a strong man traits is to stand by his decisions till the end. You took a decision, now stop regretting because nothing can change now. Smilo is a Ngwenya, she won't be down forever she will fight the pain and heal)” Mntimande says patting his younger brother's shoulder. “Ngiye ngathinta uZinhle ukhathazekile naye kodwa sobabili siyazi ngeke alubhade la kuleNgwenya khona (I called Zie, she's worried about Smilo but she won't come here because dad is here.)”

“Iyeke leyo bafo. INgwenya izoyixazululela yodwa

udaba lukaZie. Mina angizi shame (Count me out of that one. Father started this he will finish it I'm not getting involved).”

Zamo's POV.

Life is Good! I have been a successful lawyer for over five years now but I never thought having a man in my life was the missing piece of the puzzle. Meli makes me feel whole, feel like a woman and he makes me super happy. There were times when my wine also betrayed me and started tasting like shit but now, I can enjoy my wine as much as I enjoy my man's always dripping dick.

“Knock! Knock!” His voice echoes from the door. My inner goddess is doing somersaults already. Oh my gosh! I love this man of mine.

“Come in.” He comes in smiling and looking dapper in his jeans and a golf T-shirt. He looks rather too

clean and fresh which means he went home first.

“Hi hun.” He bends and kisses me on the cheek sending electric shockwaves all over my body. His cologne hits my nostrils and I inhale, it feels like heaven I swear.

“Hey babe. What's up?” I know he's romantic and all but coming to my office is not his everyday routine. I get a feeling he doesn't want to feel belittled or seeing me in power. Most men, no matter how strong they are, they are not fond of seeing their women calling shots. Men like women who are submissive and they want to always feel in power and in control. In this office I call the shots and that is not something he likes or will ever get used to.

“I came to take you out for lunch. You've been working all the time. You need to relax your busy self a little.” He smiles, I melt.

“Okay let's go.” I've gotten used to him taking me to the restaurant of his choice so I long quitted asking “where to?”

“I'm driving. You can leave your car keys.”

“But--”

“Babe? I told you I have a car, right?” Oh flip! I totally forgot about that. “Dad managed to buy a car for my younger sister to use and I got my car back.”

“That’s great babe. Speaking of of your family when am I meeting my future in-laws?” He smiles before responding.

“Patience. It's you educated people who say patience is virtue.” He says putting his hand around my waist. The receptionist looks at us and smiles at my man. It takes every decent vein in me not to snap! These ladies should understand that he's mine and mine alone and stop drooling over him.

“Good afternoon Ma'am.” Greets Emma, the receptionist.

“Afternoon Emma. Please take down messages for me if someone comes looking for me. Don't forward calls to my office until you see my PA walk up the stairs to his office. That's all thank you.” She nods still glaring at my Meli.

We get to the restaurant and the place seems too quiet for my liking. I don't like crowded spaces but this restaurant is so empty as if it's haunted. I'm about to ask him what's with his choice of restaurant today when people shout "Surprise!" O. M. G! It's our surprise engagement lunch. I spot Zie who waves smiling from ear to ear.

"Babe you--" My voice trails off as tears stream down my cheeks. I've been heartbroken in the past and now I'm being blessed and treated like a Queen that I am. I'm still trying to take it all in when Meli gets down on his knee, takes out a Tiffany small box from his back pocket, opens it and says.

"Nomzamo Langa will you please make me the happiest man in the entire universe by accepting my proposal for a life filled with joy, laughter, steamy sex, tears of joy, happiness, growing together, getting old together and be always happy together? Marry me Zamo?" I've always practiced how I will accept my marriage proposal but now it's all blank. Only tears are running unshed down my cheeks as he waits for my answer. I take a quick

glance at Zie, she smiles nodding her head and I find myself screaming “Yes! Yes! Yes!” I don't know whether I'm dreaming or not but it sure feels good. I watch him slid down the ring with a pink diamond stone before he picks me up and spins me around. People cheer for us asking for him to seal it with a kiss. He slowly puts me down, grabs my waist pulling me to him and our lips crash in a slowly sensual passionate filled kiss. We are both panting when we pull out. He wipes my tears just as Zie pulls me to her hugging me tight.

“Congratulations friend.” She's now emotional. Zie and I come a long way back and our bond is more than of friends, we are more like sisters. You won't me believe me when I say twelve years older than her. Yes I'm 33 and that's the truth. What led to our friendship is a story for another day. “I'm really happy for you Zamo.” She hugs me again.

“Thank you.” We wipe each other's tears. “You knew about all of this?”

“I planned it–” I pinch her, she winces. How could she be so secretive about it. More people

congratulate me including my PA which makes me realize he was also part of the ply.

“Congrats Zamo. It's good to finally meet you.” A beautiful young lady, in a kinda creepy way says hugging me. “Cebolenkosi, Meli's younger sister.” Now it makes sense. Meli told me all his siblings are cute but I never thought he meant this doll-like cute.

“Oh? Pleased to meet you too Cebo.” I hug her. She seems like a bubbly soul.

“Can I have my wife to be? Time to meet your in-laws--” Huh? Did I hear correctly? My heart rate has accelerated already. What if they don't like me?

“They are great humble people.” He whispers in my ear. We approach a table where two people, seems like a couple are seated. The man looks like the older version of Meli. “Hi mom, dad.” They smile. “She's the one.” Now I don't know if I should be the one to greet them first or not.

“Glad to finally meet you Zamo.” His mother stands up and hugs me.

“Me too.” That's all I can manage to say.

“Meli, she's not the woman you showed me on your phone?” His father is looking straight into Meli's eyes. Meli chuckles uncomfortably. Who is the other woman? Am I being played here?

“I know dad. I broke up with the one you know--”

“She was a great humble woman I googled her and read articles about her.” His father says. I feel like I'm being compared to a stranger, someone I don't know and Meli didn't even see it fit to give me heads up.

“Darling please not today. Meli is a man let him make his own decisions. If they broke up it means something went wrong. Be happy for him and our future daughter-in-law. She's a great woman too, a successful lawyer--”

“I know who she is. Nice meeting you young lady now if you will excuse me please? My lunch hour is over.”

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THE BRIDE

Insert 21.

Zamo's POV

“Dad--”

“Some of us have to work to put food on our tables son. We are not all privileged and blessed like you are. I've seen your fiancé, she's beautiful, educated and a tough lawyer but I guess you owe her an explanation. Young lady I'm not rude I'm trying to look out for you because I know my son better than you do. I raised him, he's my blood and all I can say is don't look only at his handsome face but read between the lines. Meli, if you really love her you

better tell her the entire truth. Have a good day Ms Langa.” I feel like I'm going to faint any moment from now. What's going on? Have I been blinded by love that I failed to see the red flags?

“Don't mind him daughter-in-law.” Too late I'm already minding him and my mind is racing.

“I need fresh air--”

“Babe wait!” Meli tries to grab my hand but I yank it and push past him. I need to get out of here before I embarrass myself by fainting. I run to the car and get inside as I burst into tears.

“Zamo? Zee?” Meli is banging the windscreen. I ignore him and let the flood gates of tears open wide.

“What did you do to her? Huh? Three months down the line she's already crying because of you? You better pray it's nothing serious boy or I will burn you alive. Move aside!” Zie is here. I open the door and fly into her arms. I sob even more. “Get the hell out of here boy I want to talk to her alone.” Meli hesitantly leaves. “It's okay honey let's get in the car

and talk.”

“I think Meli's been lying to me. It seems there's a woman he showed to his family before me and now the father is not having the crap. I feel betrayed Zie, I love Meli with everything in me--” My voice trails off.

“Shhhh. It's okay stop crying now baby. Everything will be fine don't jump into conclusions without hearing his side of the story. What if they really broke up? Zamo talk to your man instead of crying your heart out for something you are not sure of.” I guess Zie is right I should hear his side of the story first. What if that old man just doesn't like me and decided to tell me things that happened twenty million years ago.

“Thank you.” I hug my friend.

“Now you look horrible.” We both laugh as she reaches for my handbag to look for a wet towel to fix my face. I always carry a damp towel and wipes in my handbag. “Should I call him so you guys can straighten out things before gossip mongers take

this to social media and ruin your name?”

“I guess that's a good idea I have to know who this lady is and what happened between the two of them.”

“Okay. I will be inside if you need me.” She squeezes my hand and leaves. A few minutes later Meli walks towards the car. I sigh looking at him boldly stepping on the pavement like a man that he is. He opens the door and gets in, I just stare at him trying to get answers from his eyes.

“Zamo I'm sorry.” My heart is now in my throat I hope this is not going where I think it is.

“For what exactly?” My voice is now shaky and my whole body is shaking.

“There's a girl, my ex, we broke up before I met you. My family know here because we were kinda engaged and she was pregnant--”

“You have a child?” No, God no! I can't deal with baby mamas.

“Can you please let me finish?” I nod. “She was

pregnant and as the only male child in my family they were happy the family was growing but it was all a lie. The girl lied to me of which I later found out that the child wasn't mine.” I heave a huge sigh of relief I didn't even realize I was holding my breath. “My father is still fond of her because he doesn't believe that the child is not mine. I once saw pictures in his phone with the girl and they looked happy together.”

“The girl? Your supposedly child?”

“Yes. She's five years old now and they stay around here in Bulawayo although I'm not sure of the exact location. I haven't spoken to my ex for the past year Zamo and I swear on my life nothing is going on between me and her. I'm sorry my dad made you cry on our engagement day.” He smiles, I melt. All the doubts I had are now cleared. I knew he wouldn't cheat on me with some cheap lousy girl out there. I have everything a man needs from a woman. Money, fame, body, respect, submission, good sex and I can even give him a number of children if he so wishes.

“I love you Melisizwe.”

“I love you more MaLanga.” He baby kisses me on the lips.

“Do you mind telling me your ex's name? In case she comes after me you know how exes and weddings can be.” He smiles at me his eyes looking deep into mine and I realise how much I love this man of mine.

“Nontokozo Khwali Mwelase is the name.”

QHUBEKAN'S POV.

I drive through the gate and I'm welcomed by the flashy blue lights of police cars. My heart is now pounding in my chest it feels it will fall out of the ribcage. What are these people doing here? Who are they after? I park the car and run inside the house where I find four officers struggling to cuff Ane as she keeps fighting back.

“Stop!” I shout. Ane runs to me and hugs me tight.

“I didn't kill those girls!” She yells.

“Officer what the hell is going on here?”

“We are here to arrest Anelisa Khumalo-Mkhize for the murder of the three ladies who two of them were carrying your children--”

“Huh? What are you talking about officer?”

“Your wife went to their flat and she was caught by CCTV cameras pointing a gun to them a few minutes before their death. We also found her fingerprints on the pot that had poisoned food--”

“I didn't kill them! Yes I went there but I didn't kill them--” Ane wails.

“I think there's been a misunderstanding here officer. My wife is not a murderer--”

“Mr Mkhize please step aside and let us do our job--”

“Qhu please don't let them take me away. I didn't kill those girls--” I grab both her hands and hug her tight. I don't know what is going on here but my gut

refuses to believe that Ane could be the murderer. She might have gone there but someone killed the girls not her. Ane doesn't have the guts to murder anyone, she's weak.

“I believe you baby. Officer can you let me drive her to the police station? I believe there's been a misunderstanding here and my wife is innocent. Please I will personally bring her in for questioning.”

“Fine! Let's go!” The officer says impatiently.

“It's fine baby let's go to the station. Let me call dad and our lawyer.”

“Son?” He answers immediately.

“Dad the police are here for Ane. They are accusing her of the murder of those girls--”

“What? What evidence do they have?”

“CCTV footage and fingerprints.” I can tell dad is getting angry on the other side.

“Okay. Let them take her in but she shouldn't say anything until the lawyer arrives. I will be there in a few minutes.”

“Thanks dad.” At least he sounds understanding. I know the lawyer won't be able to save her but only one person can save Ane right now. “Khaya?”

“I'm kinda busy at the moment bro be quick.” He responds sounding distant.

“Ane's been arrested and I need you to help me convince dad when the lawyer fails to help her. I can not let her go to prison for something she didn't do.”

“Okay count me in whenever you need me. You know I will always have your back. All the best brother. Sorry to sound distant I'm putting someone's life at risk right now. I'm at work.” He disconnects the call. I know my little brother will always have my back.

“We should call mother-in-law before she hears it from someone else.” The way Ane is blindly trusting Zie will someday backfire and she won't even see it coming. I know Zie too well to place all my cards on her. She's the kind of a lady who can commit a perfect murder, hand herself in but the court still

won't be able to prove her guilty. That's how dangerous and smart she is. “Hello mother-in-law? ”

“Ane your father-in-law told me what happened. I'm sorry you have to go through all this but I promise we will help you prove your innocence. Those people have nothing solid against you just listen to the lawyer, okay?” Ane nods looking at me with her teary eyes.

“Thank you.” She drops the call and bursts into tears.

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 22.

Qhu's POV.

At the police station Ane has cried all her tears out now she can only sob. For the first time in my entire life I feel sorry for her. I know for sure that I don't love the princess but what she's going through right now breaks my heart and to think I'm the initial cause of all this crushes me even more. Maybe if I had dealt with my anger in a different way we wouldn't be here, maybe all I needed was some fresh air not drugs, or maybe all I needed was a hot slap from Zie to come back to my senses before messing everything up. Now I can't even tell Ane how it all started, I don't even know how to help her out of this situation.

“Qhu?” Zie walks in followed by Zamo. I don't know how but I find myself in her arms and for the first time after hearing the breaking news I let my tears fall. She rubs my back before pulling out of the hug. “How is she holding up?”

“In a very bad state. She didn't do it Zie but how do I prove that to the officers? I know my wife she wouldn't kill even a helpless baby because she's weak. Anelisa is weak Zie killing people can not be

something she's capable of.”

“I don't know Qhu. Part of me believes her, part of me has doubts, I mean I'm a woman and I know what a woman is capable of when wronged. Now is not the time for all of that. Your father sent Zamo to help with the case he will be here in a moment.”

“I will need to know what the police have against her and what happened that night Mr Mkhize.”

Zamo doesn't like me and I think the feeling is mutual but our differences can wait. Not only Ane is on the line but my family name too. I know she's a tough lawyer and she can help us out of this.

“I willing to go into detail about that night. I later passed out but I vividly remember what happened before that.” I narrate the whole story from the apology that went wrong, driving to a club, inviting that lady over to the hotel where we found my friends waiting for us and all the kinky fuckery that happened in that room to the part where everything went dark for me.

“Zie told me what happened when they got to the

hotel and how your friend was forced to take the fall for illegal stuff you guys were doing. Now, when did you last speak to your friend?”

“My friend wouldn't target Ane to get back at my brother--”

“It will be best if you stick to answering my questions Mr Mkhize and let me worry about who would do what and who wouldn't after all that's what I'm paid to do. Please answer the question.”

“Yesterday. He called asking me if I had killed the girls to protect my name--”

“Did you?”

“No! I didn't kill anyone hell I didn't even think about it. I was going to meet them and offer them money to abort their babies but someone beat me to it.”

“I would appreciate your complete honesty Mr Mkhize in order for me to know what I'm going against and to prepare my weapons. You had every reason to murder those girls after your father told you to clean up your mess, did you clean your mess as instructed by the man you so desperately want

to prove yourself to?”

“What the fuck--”

“Lower your voice before the police throw you behind bars as the second suspect. Did you kill the girls?” What the hell is this woman grilling me with questions instead of going in there and help Anelisa?

“No I didn't. I didn't even contact them or go near them after they left the house that day. Why are you questioning me? Whose side are you on?”

“Your side Sir I just wanted to clarify a few things before throwing myself into the Lion's den. If you follow high profile cases you should know by now that I have a twenty wins to two losses, I don't take chances with my work Sir. I have a reputation and status to protect forgive me if I came out as rude.”

She turns to her friend Zie. “You confessed to tripping one of the girls did you follow up what you started?” This I will have to witness shame! Zie versus Zamo in a question and answer session.

“No I didn't.” Zie is keeping a straight face her eyes giving nothing away. “I commit a perfect murder not

a blunder. Whoever killed those girls is an amateur and it's definitely not me. I don't leave clues behind instead I give clues to the police to help their lazy minds solve one of the perfect crimes I commit.”

“Well, I guess I'm done with you two now I will have to meet the investigating officer but before that I have to speak with Mr Mkhize Senior. I hope you don't mind Zie--”

“No problem Advocate Zamo. Anything to help my daughter-in-law.” Dad parks his car a little afar from us and Zamo goes to meet him in private.

“I know you didn't kill those girls but I don't know about Ane. Do you have Plan B?” Zie questions.

“What do you mean? ”

“I mean Zamo might be a tough lawyer but she's not Advocate Amanda Daniella Dlamimi who can prove that the evidence was falsified and turn the tables against the prosecutor in less than twenty four hours. The prosecutor has Ane by the collar and it doesn't look good from where I'm standing. You should have plan B to save your wife. Remember,

you still have to prove yourself to me and fate has presented yet another opportunity for you to do so. Don't disappoint me and my unborn baby. All the best.”

The following day Smilo is discharged from the hospital. Mntimande drives them to his mansion in Khumalo. Their parents are extra quiet and Smilo has been crying ever since she woke up.

“Singakhuluma Ngwenya? (Dad can we talk?)”
Mntimande asks after helping his mother put Smilo to bed rest.

“Kulungile mfanami singakhuluma. (Yeah we can talk)” Ngwenya sighs looking at his son.

“Uzomshayela ucingo okanye uzoqhubeka ufela ngaphakathi? (Will you call her or you will keep on hurting silently?)”

“Ukhuluma ngani Mntimande? (What are you talking about?)”

“Zinhl’ Intombi zakwaNgwenya.”

“Angazi Mntimande kodwa yena ngiyamkhumbula. Ulekhandela elishisayo uZie ngeke angemukele empilweni yakhe kanjalo nje. (Zie’s hotheaded she won't just accept me back into her life although I really miss her.)”

“Ngeke wazi impfumela yalokho ngaphambi kokuba uzame. Yingane yakho uZie, udadewethu loyamuntu uzokuzwisisa baba. Zama umthintela ocingweni mhlawumbe usaba umnyama ongelampisi. (You will never know until you give it a try. She's your daughter I'm sure she will understand. Maybe you just scared for nothing.)”

“Enkosi Mntimande ngiyaziqhenya ngawe ndodana (Thank you son, I'm really proud of you.)”

“Kubonga mina baba. Ngisayobheka uNkule ekamelweni lakhe (It's my pleasure father. I'm going to check on Nkule in his room).” Ngwenya smiles proudly watching his son leave the sitting room.

Mntimande knocks on Nkule’s room and walks in without waiting for an answer.

“Ngiyazi umbulele loyamfana-- (I know you killed that boy)”

“Kanjani nje? Ubulewe ingozi hayi mina--

“Angis on is phukuphuku Nkululeko. Yini wenza kanje kodwa? Ibiyingane yomuny umuntu loyamfana enjalo lobugeza bakhe, ubaba wengane kadadewenu uphi unembeza wakho NK? Uqale nini ukubulala abantu abangenacala? Ubekwenzeni uz’ umbulale kanje? Ungiphoxile mfanami (I’m not stupid Nkule. Why him? He was someone’s son despite being a close to useless taxi driver! When did we start killing innocent people? What did he ever do to you for you to kill him in such a painful way? I’m really disappointed in you.)” Mntimande is really disappointed.

“Le angizukuyixolisela Mntimande bengisiza udadewethu (I won’t apologize for this brother, I did it for my sister)”

“Izokudla uze uzisole lento. (This will eat you inside until you regret ever doing it). Ngis ayobona uZie noMaLanga baye bangithinta (I’m going to see Zie

and Zamo they called earlier)”

“Angithembe uyawukhumbula umndeni wakho owushiye emuva. Muhle yena uMaLanga kodwa-ke leliyaXhosa lakho las eMtata liyokungcwaba uphila (I hope you still remember your family back home. Zamo is beautiful and all but that Xhosa wife of yours will bury you alive if you even entertain the idea of cheating)” NK warns.

“Ayinjalo Mthiyane ludaba olubucayi (It's not like that instead it's a complicated issue.)”

Zamo's POV.

One of the toughest things about my job is having to step on people's toes a little just to get the truth out of them. Anelisa is denying killing the girls and I believe her unless she's really good at this pretending thing.

“The police have evidence against Anelisa. They have a CCTV footage, her fingerprints were found

on one of the girl's face, on the poisoned pot and surfaces. They also have DNA test results which will bring us to Mr Qhubekani Mkhize being called to the stand to explain himself and I hope we will work together in this Mr Mkhize just answer their damn questions leave the theory out of it. The girl who tripped is under police protection of which I'm sure they are going to use her as a witness. I want to know if you all agree with me that we take this thing to court as soon as possible? ” I ask looking at the Mkhize family. Khule and Gugu have also joined us. I questioned them just for clarity. I don't think they had anything to do with the killings as they were on call for two hours when those girls got murdered. The poison which was used kills in seconds.

“What do you have? What's your weapon?”
Qhubekani asks.

“That's for me to worry about but I promise you this, she won't go to jail.”

“If you trust yourself I don't see why not.” Mr Ndabezinhle agrees.

“Good. I guess we are done here I have to go and brief my team so we can all start working on it. Before you hear this from the court, your wife used her laptop to search things that have everything to do with this murder--” My phone rings. It's a call from the prosecution.

“Advocate Nomzamo Langa, hello?”

“Since when do you defend criminals? I thought you were better than this. Not only are you defending criminals but you are working with them to eliminate evidence--”

“Please slow down and do clarify your baseless accusations?”

“Your people just killed the girl--”

“What?” What have I gotten myself into? What the hell is going on here?

“What is it Zamo?”

“The surviving girl has been murdered--”

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THE BRIDE

Insert 23.

Zamo's POV.

“The surviving girl has been murdered--”

“What the hell? Who is killing those people? We are all here clearly someone is trying to frame us. Qhu where is your friend?” Khule questions.

“At his flat I guess. Why would he target Ane if the person he wants to hurt is you? Something is not adding up.” I also agree with this idiot. It would be impractical to crucify Ane instead of Khulekani who forced him to go to jail.

“Whoever is doing this didn't know Ane went there. Ane just happened to be in the wrong place and the wrong time.” Mr Mkhize too is making sense.

“Dad? I think I have to step in, the police are not doing their work accordingly and our name is on the line here. Qhu and I will go and find his friend then get the truth out of him.” Khulekani says rubbing his head frustratedly.

“I wouldn't want you guys to interfere with the case this might spell doom--”

“Do your job as a lawyer Ms Langa and let me do my duty as a son. Don't you even think of stopping me because not even my dad will stop me from doing this--”

“Awukhulumi kanjalo nowes imame Khulekani (That's no way to talk to a woman)” Mntimande walks in. Khule glares at him, Qhu looks at his brother and shakes his head signaling him not to start trouble with Mntimande. For the first time ever since I met him he hugs me before Zinhle.

“Ukahle? (Are you okay?)” He asks.

“Ngikahle Mntimande. Ubuyile? (I'm okay. You came?)”

“Ngenza loba yini eshiwo udadewethu yebo

ngibuyile ntokazi. Bab' uMkhize kwenzekani?
Asiyibambeni kanjalo ngikhulume nodadewethu kuqala. (I do anything my sister says I should do that's why I'm here. Greetings Mr Mkhize, what's going on? Hold it right there let me speak to my sister first.)” He turns to Zie who looks like she's miles far away from here. “Zinhle?” She slowly looks at him. “Ukahle dadewethu? (Are you okay?)” Zinhle shakes her head and burst into tears. I'm sure the hormones are contributing to her mood swings.

“Cha Mntimande angikho kahle. Kunomgodoyi phandle le ofun ukucikela umndeni wami phans-- (No I'm not okay! There's an idiot out there trying to defame my family--)”

“Ngiyakuzwa zakwaNgwenya mus' ukukhala dadewethu ngiyabathemba oMkhize ngiyazi bazoyilungisa lendaba. Cabangela lomphefumlo owuthwele uzame ukuma isibindi. Unjalo umendo dadewethu lezizinto zimane zenzeke ungalindele kodwa kuzolunga, ngiyakuthembisa (It's okay Zie stop crying. I trust the Mkhize men and I'm sure

they will sort this issue out just be strong. We come across these things in our adult life although we all wish it was all a smooth sail. Everything will be fine I promise)." He hugs her tight. Zie is a very strong woman but she doesn't believe in tears being one's weakness.

"We have to go before that idiot flees the country." Khulekani says impatiently.

"Yeah you are right. I will stay behind with my wife please inform us when you find something. If you happen to bump into the police officers there please don't fight just let them do their job." Says Mkhize who sounds stressed.

"Okay dad. Mntimande?"

"Ngiyeza bafo(I'm coming.)" He turns to Zie. "Ulale kancane uthol' ukuphumula. Masambe MaLanga (Please get some rest, let's go Zamo)." I briefly hug my friend and follow him to his car. This guy seems to have a thing for nice cars today he's driving a G-Wagon.

"Do you have a thing for nice cars?" Shit! I hope my

language won't embarrass him I've never heard him speak English and everyone around him speaks vernacular.

“Ungasho kanjalo (You can say that.)” Oh? So he does understand English.

“You do understand English?” For the first I see a soft smile on his face. He's always serious it's not even funny given the fact that he has a cute scary face.

“Uzungayithi vu komnye umuntu le. Yebo ngiyasizwa isingisi njalo ngiyazi nokusikhuluma kuphela nje angithandi (Don't tell this to anyone. Yes I do understand English and I can fluently speak but I'm not fond of using foreign language.)”

Anelisa's POV.

What have I gotten myself into. Why did I go to that flat? My life is ruined and I can't even tell dad about

it. He will go to the Mkhize mansion and cause trouble or even worse, him and father-in-law might kill each other. It's in times like these when I wish Qhu's mother was still alive. She knew how to make things happen, these officers wouldn't have touched me if she was still alive. She was influential, dangerous and impulsive. Qhu's mother and my dad were high school sweethearts but their parents wouldn't let them get married because she wasn't from the royal family. My father chose the throne over the love of his life while Qhu's mother chose to have a dignified status in the society by marrying father-in-law. They were never in love, I know this because her and my dad were still madly in love until the day she died. I found out about their affair and in order for me to keep my mouth shut I asked for Qhu's heart in a silver platter. He's handsome, any girl can dream of having him, you also know what they say about the bad boys' sex game. It's top notch! I knew he had a girlfriend, I knew he had issues with drugs and I know Zie was his girlfriend whom he's still madly in love with but that did not stop me from wanting him even more. It was easy

to defeat Zie because she has a serious ego and wouldn't be the kind to be a side chick so I won the man. I was surprised to see her years later marrying father-in-law, I thought she wanted Qhu back but no, she's happy with father-in-law and I don't think she's the vengeful type to try and harm me. Sometimes I feel bad for hurting such a sweet soul like her but what could I have done? I too wanted Qhubekani Mkhize and we all know in this game of love only the fittest survive.

My point is that's the only thing I'm guilty of, as for those ladies I don't know who killed them and why? The only person who can be capable of this is father-in-law but I doubt he did it. If he did he wouldn't left behind the evidence pointing at me, his name is more important to him than anything else. I just hope they find whoever did this, I can not go to jail for something I didn't do. The officer tells me I have a visitor.

“Hey.” Qhu looks sad.

“What’s wrong? Why the long face?” My heart is pounding in my chest already.

“Two more people are dead--”

“What? Who are those people?”

“The girl who tripped and my friend whom we thought was the culprit--”

“What? What's going on Qhu? Who is after me or our family?”

“I don't know and I don't even know what to think anymore.” He sighs defeated.

Zamo's POV.

I walk inside the flat, everything in my stomach makes it's way to my throat and I run to the bathroom. I've never been to a crime scene before. Qhubekani's friend is dead!

“Holy crap! What the fuck is going on here?” Khule says reaching for the folded paper on the dead body.

“It's a suicide note--”

“Aiyos uicide le Mkhize. Angilon iphoyisa kodwa lana kukhon oukunuka santungwana. (This is not a suicide Khule. I'm not an officer or something like that but something is not adding up here.”

Mntimande says walking around the bloody dead body.

“Uchaz ukuthini? (What do you mean?)” Khule too is confused as I am.

“Akazibulalanga lomuntu Khule. Bheka kahle ingalo zakhe nobuso bakhe kusobala kunomuntu oqale wamhlukumeza phambi kokuba amdubule. Kungani bekumele azizwise ubuhlungu ngommese yena ephethe isibhamu? (He didn't kill himself. Look closely at his wrists and face it's clear someone tortured him before shooting him. Why would he cut himself with a knife instead of shooting himself at once?)”

“Wait? Are trying to say that there's a serial killer out there?” Khule asks in disbelief.

“Cha kodwa ukhona onesandla kuyoyonke lenkemenkeme (No but someone else is killing

these people.)” We hear the police sirens. “Kwamele sihambe (We have to go.)” Khule folds the letter and puts it back where it was as Mntimande drags me to the fire escape. I feel weak, nauseous, like I'm going to faint any moment from now.

“Do you think the killer might be following us?” I ask with a shaky voice.

“Angicabangi kanjalo. Uchwepheshe lomuntu akadingi ukuba seduze nathi ukuze akhande lecebo. (I don't think so. This person is a pro and he/she probably doesn't need anything from us to plan his next move.)” Mntimande sighs.

“Can you take her home I will go and tell this to my father and mom. I don't know what else to think or do.” Khule also looks defeated.

“Kulungile Mkhize unginthinte ma ungidinga ngingakwazi ukusiza ukumthola lomuntu. (It's okay. Call me if you need my help I can help track this person down.)”

He takes me to a restaurant before taking me home.

At first I refused coming here but he insisted and I ended up giving in. We are waiting for our order when his phone rings and he steps outside to talk to his wife. I asked him why he doesn't wear his wedding band, he said his wife bought a pure 24 carat gold and it's not something he'd always want to carry around. I take my phone out of my handbag, I have missed calls from Meli probably wondering where I am, the office and from Mr Mkhize. I really don't know if I want to take this case anymore, what if the killer comes after me to cover his tracks? I'm too young.... OMG! I hope my eyes are not playing tricks on me. I can not be dreaming or am I? I'm face to face with my younger role model, my inspiration, my hero in human form, the lady I've always wanted to meet. Strangely she pulls a chair opposite me and gracefully sits down.

“I get the impression you are one of my secret admirers?” She smiles. Oh my gosh! I've followed her ever since she started writing but I've never seen her smile revealing her teeth. I always thought maybe she has dental problems.. “Hello!” She

snaps her fingers.

“Uhhh...sorry. It's just that I've never thought I'd meet thee Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa in person.” I hope I don't sound stupid.

“Nomzamo Langa, the tough lawyer. I hate law but I'm a fan of women who stand by the truth.” I'm not sure I'm even listening to what she's saying I'm so excited I could scream like a baby right now. “Well, seems you won't stop day dreaming. Have a good evening.” She stands and leaves. The way she walks in her heels, oh my gosh, everything about her is just perfect.

“MaLanga?” Mntimande brings me back to where I am. I see my favorite author turning back and walking towards our table once more.

“By the way, congratulations on your engagement....”

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 24.

That felt really really awkward. How does she know I'm engaged? Could it be that she follows me on social media? No! Not her. My colleagues thinks she's one prideful woman why would she follow me on social media? Although I do not believe the prideful part, I'm confused as to how in the hell does she know about my engagement.

“Uze wamthola umaqondana. Amhlophe MaLanga (You finally found your soulmate, congratulations Zamo).” Mntimande says touching my hand.

“Ibukeka ibiza ke le? Usebenza kuphi umkhwenyana? (The ring looks expensive where does he work?)”

“He’s a mechanic--”

“Umakanika okwazi ukuthenga lendandatho?

Ngeyakhe inkampani okanye uqhats hiwe lapho? (A mechanic who can buy this ring? Is he the owner of

the company or he's an employee?"

"What are you saying? Do you mean this ring is worthy more than he can afford?" First my hero congratulates me now this? What the hell is going on here? Could there be something shady about Meli?

"MaLanga, lendandatho ibiza phose inkulungwane ezingamakhulu amane amane amaRand. Angis hukuthi kungakukhona okugida kuziqakezela hayi bengisho nje ntokazi ngimangaliswa ngumsebenzi wakhe. (Zamo this ring is worth at least four hundred thousand rands. I'm not saying something is fishy I'm just shocked a mechanic can afford it.)" Now my mind is racing. What if Meli is a thief or something? A drug dealer or arms dealer? Oh no! What will I do if he turns out to be one of those? "Bengingaqondile ukukwethusa, uxolo MaLanga (I didn't mean to alert you. I'm sorry.)"

"Are you some kind of a secret agent or something? Honestly I don't understand where you get all the things you've been saying today." First it was Qhu's friend, now the ring. What is he hiding? Could he be

a special trained secret agent?

“Angikho kulokho ntokazi nginguMntimande usomatekisi iphele lapho. Aside kuyoze kuqande ukudla. (I'm not any of those I'm just a taxi owner, that's it. Let's eat before the food gets cold.)” I had no appetite, now I feel like closing my eyes, doze off and wake up tomorrow. How can a day go from being joyful to being the saddest day of my life? Why am I even sad? I don't know why I'm sad but what I know for sure is that I will not be able to win Anelisa's case. I will have to humble myself and make a call if I'm to figure out even the slightest clue in this case.

After eating Mntimande takes me home where I find Meli washing my car. I knew he'd go and collect it from my office that's how sweet and thoughtful he is.

“Zamo you back?” I run into his arms and let my tears flow. I don't know why I'm crying but I need to get rid of this feeling, this uncertainty in clouding my mind is not good for my emotional being. I'm always in control of what I feel and what happens

around me so having doubts and many unanswered questions is not something I want to feel right now. “Babe what's wrong? What did this man do to you?” I sob even louder. He lets me go and charges towards Mntimande, dear Father who art in Heaven, I'm not in the mood for all this please perform a miracle and stop whatever is about to happen here. “What the fuck did you do to my fiance? Huh?” Mntimande ignores him and walks towards me carrying my laptop bag and phone. “I'm talking to you--” Meli is about to grab Mntimande by the collar. “Ungalinge ungidakelwe mfanandini! Angiyon' insango mina angibhenywa. Siyezwana?(Don't you dare disrespect me! Are we clear?)” Mntimande has Meli's hand in his one hand firm grip. “Ayenziwa phambi kwesithandwa sakho le ofun' ukuyenza. Angilonivaka mfanakithi kube bengimfuna uZamo bengizomthatha ubhekile ngimdala kabi ukuba ngidlala umacats helana. Ngiganile bafo, nginemuli nomuzi angizanga kuzochitha owakho umuzi ngithemba uyangizwisisa. (This is not to be done in front of your fiance. I'm not a coward who would

sneak around to get something he wants. I would have come straight and clear if I wanted your fiancée but fortunately, I'm a happily married man.)” He lets go of Meli's hand. “Uqine ntokazi uZie ubheke ngakuwe njalo ukuthembile. Ma ngibe yindlela.(Be strong, Zie is putting all her hopes on you and she trusts you. Let me leave.)”

“Thank you.” He smiles and nods.

“Uxolo mfowethu (I'm sorry brother.) ” Meli apologizes, Mntimande pats him on the shoulder and leaves.

Mr Ndabezinhle's POV.

I don't understand any of this, I don't know who's trying to frame who but I'm pretty sure there's a conspiracy in all of this. Qhu wouldn't have killed those girls, my son can be ruthless but not to women. Women are his biggest weakness. Khule?

That always quiet son of mine is capable of anything but not hurting an unborn child. Khule is tough, impulsive and sometimes doesn't even feel any remorse for anyone but not children. Children are his weakness hence his organization which campaigns against illegal and legal abortion. He believes that every child deserves a chance to live, to fail and to prosper. Gugu? My daughter-in-law can do anything to protect this family but I don't think she can be ruthless enough to slaughter a human being like they did to Qhu's friend. My daughters and Khaya are all out of the picture because they are not even in Africa. My wife? Zinhle can do anything to get what she wants but this time I'm convinced she's innocent. I know she still hates Ane but not to the extent of framing her for murder. I didn't do it and with this analysis I'm sure all of us in this house are innocent which brings me to the list of my enemies. The King is on top of that list, he can do anything to see me crashing but not at the expense of his own child unless his mission went wrong. I will have to give him a call and find out what he's been up to.

Zie wakes up and hugs me from behind.

“Hey hun.” I sigh pushing all the things I have in my mind to the back of it. I have to give her undivided attention, she's my everything.

“Anything from Zamo?” She questions.

“Nothing except that Mntimande thinks and strongly believes Qhu's friend was murdered.”

“Can't you pull your own guitar strings and let whoever is doing this this dance to your own tune?”

“I can but now is not the time. I want to focus on the princess getting out on bail then I will play my cards.”

“I trust you.” She kisses me on the cheek. “I'm really hungry I hope they prepared something edible in the kitchen.”

“Yeah I saw daughter-in-law Gugu and Nothabo busy in the kitchen. Let's go and have something to eat.” I put my arm around her waist and lead her to the dining room. She cried enough for a day I don't want to see her crying anymore. I receive a

message from a private number.

****Let's see what you got? Game on!****

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Sorry for being short and late. I got busy somewhere, thanks for understanding.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 25.

Anelisa's POV.

TWO WEEKS LATER...

I was denied bail! The motherfucker out there is trying to frame me but I'm not going down for something I didn't do. I'm the princess and I get

what I want all the time. My dad came to see me, he also thought I had a hand in the death of those women but I don't. Someone's trying to frame and only I can save myself from this. This place is stinky, I don't even trust the water they give us to drink, hell I haven't even touched their food that looks like a mixture of all disgusting things one's wild mind can ever imagine. The lawyer they found for me is also useless! I mean who fails to get bail for her client with all those accolades? Shouldn't lawyers be able to defend criminals who get away with everything? I'm here and I'm innocent.

“Hey you fat princess!” A female officer says hitting the burglars with a stick. I just stare at her with no words coming out of my mouth. I have so many insults to hail at her right now but I have to save my energy for something useful. I have to get out of here before Qhu starts falling for his stepmother once again. I swear I will kill Zinhle if she ever dares to touch him.

“What do you want officer?” I sigh.

“Your father is here to see you.”

“You should have said so officer instead of wasting your precious energy. This government is paying you peanuts, you really can't afford to waste your energy on useless things.” She scowls, I smile with my eyebrows raised. “Hi dad.” I greet him while pulling a chair opposite him. I haven't been proven guilty but they still won't let me hug or touch anyone. I don't know who passed the bill for such a useless law.

“Princess? What is going on? My men have been working tirelessly to try and find out the killer but with no luck. What the hell is going on?” My dad is really frustrated.

“I don't know father. Maybe I was at the wrong place during the wrong time. I know who can only help me out of this.”

“Who?”

“You. Tell your boys to steal the docket and the evidence then the court won't have anything against me--” He rubs his stubble on his chin trying to digest what I just said. “You have done worse

before dad. This will be like flashing the toilet, as easy as Abc. I'm not asking you but giving you and your boys an order--”

“Princess!” He hisses.

“She may be dead but I haven't forgotten. You slept with her on your marital bed, you betrayed mom, you two killed my father-in-law's brother! I'm not bluffing dad, I have evidence. ” If I can't have it my way then I can always try other means.

“You think you can come after me?”

“Not if you do what I ask you to. It's simple, the rule of the jungle is give and take. You get that docket I destroy the evidence I have.”

“How do I trust you?”

“Don't trust me. Just do as I say.”

Zie's POV.

Qhu sent me a message requesting to see me and his child. I will have to cut the guy some slack and give him maybe five minutes of my time. The truth is I don't think I still love him the way I did before. Qhubekani really hurt me and the love I had for him turned to hatred although I'm still trying to control my hate for him.

“Zie? You came?” He's grinning like a toddler in a toyshop. I feel like puking already but I will have to control myself.

“Yeah. What do you want Qhu?” He has a nice picnic cloth spread out on the lawn and a basket with different kinds of fruits and other goodies.

“I thought we should spend some time together. You, me and our unborn child--”

“You still haven't saved your wife from the clutches of the law, how do I know you are not the same Qhubekani who's only good for sex and for taking selfies to show off on Instagram?”

“I'm trying Zie. I've been clean for almost four months please don't do this to me. Don't I deserve

to be happy? You are my happiness Zie, I don't mind sharing my happiness with my father just give me a little of your time.” He's becoming emotional already. How in the hell did I ever love a weak man like him is something I'm still trying to figure out.

“Your father will be home soon I can't stay I'm sorry-” I turn to leave but he grabs my hand.

“Please. I'm begging you Zie, just a few minutes with my child.” Well, this emotional side of him can be useful to my plan. He continues to beg me.

“Fine.” I say pushing him far off and rolling my eyes. He smiles and starts opening the bottle of juice.

“Are you going to tell Anelisa about us?”

“No. Unless you agree to elope with me--”

“I'm not a coward Qhubekani. Only cowards elope why can't you publicly declare your love for me if you love me this much or you don't?”

“I love you Zie but you had to complicate our relationship even more by marrying my dad. How do I humiliate my father like that by declaring my undying love for you? He will die Zie.”

“Do you care? The man has never cared about you even a single day?”

“I know he cares. Dad cares about me it's me who's been constantly disappointing him.”

“Were you forced to marry the princess?”

“Mom made me swear on her life to never marry you. To her you were this ghetto girl who would never be good enough to be the daughter-in-law of the Mkhize family.” I feel my temper rising as I grab a bunch of grapes and squash all of them in my fist. My lips are trembling, the inner me is telling me to go for a kill but not now I still need this idiot. I gulp down a glassful of juice and feel a little better. “Are you okay?” He touches my hand, I feel like my boiling blood is going to melt my bones but I fake a smile anyway.

“I'm fine.” I'm not fine! That woman destroyed my life, she made me feel less of a woman and I will never ever be fine!

“Can I feel my baby? ” That's it! I can't pretend anymore I have to get out of here before I kill

someone. He moves his hand to my belly, all the pain I went through working at a Chinese shop while carrying his son comes rushing to my mind and engulfs my body. No no no!

“Don’t touch me!” I yell.

“Zie? It's me--”

“So? It's you Qhubekani the same old weak man who has a spaghetti for a spine! The same guy who only has fertile sperms but his head is just an empty vessel! The same idiot who can't stand up for himself and will always be hiding behind something! Drugs, sex, tears, family name, fake love, that's all the things you know how to use as a front! I hate you Qhubekani Mkhize, hell I curse the day I met you under that bridge, I hate the fact that I, Zinhle Intombi zakwaNgwenya loved and still loves you! I hate that you can't even think for yourself, I so wish I could have left you die on the streets! Why did I even pity you? You are not worth it and you are definitely not worth of my marriage to your father.”

“Zinhle?” He's in tears.

“You can drown in your tears for all I care! Useless, spineless, good-for-nothing son of a bitch! Nx!” I kick him on the forehead and step on his torso on my way off.

Zamo’s POV.

“Advocate Amanda Daniella Dlamini, hello?” Finally? I’ve been trying to get through to her for weeks now and her PA is always telling me the same “she’s unavailable” story.

“Uhhmm... Good afternoon Advocate it's Nomzamo Langa from the Khuzwayo Law Firm.”

“Good morning. How may I be of help?”

“I’m working on a case of an innocent woman who's being charged with murder. I was wondering if you can help me crack the case?”

“Nomzamo, right? I’m sorry to say but I’m a very very busy woman. I don't know how the Khuzwayo

Law firm is failing to work on a murder case when it has more than 50 advocates on its payroll. What are you looking at?" Huh? "I mean the evidence against you and your plea?"

"Fingerprints, CCTV footage and a suicide note from one of the dead bodies claiming that my client indeed sent him on a killing spree."

"Anelisa Khumalo Mkhize?" How does she know my client?

"Yes that's her."

"She didn't kill them but her hands are not clean either."

"What do you mean?"

"Find out. I'd love to help but I don't associate myself with shady people. Have a great day Miss Langa." She disconnects the call. What the fuck? Now I'm even more confused. "She did not kill them but her hands ain't clean either..... I'm sorry but I don't associate myself with shady people?" What is Advocate Dlamini trying to tell me? I guess I need a strong whiskey before my medulla bursts. I'm on

my way to the bar(I have a bar in my house) to get a bottle of whiskey when Meli's phone flashes. He's off today and I also decided to work from home. I don't know why but I feel drawn to his phone more than ever. He's been zoning out a lot lately and his phone is always on silent and put upside down. Whenever I ask him he says it's his father and the wedding preparations stressing him. My paranoia is getting the best of me and I can't help but find myself trying to unlock it.

“Babe? Are we stalking each other's phones now?” I jump startled and almost drop his Huawei P30 Pro.

“Uhhmm.. It was ringing.” I stammer.

“I sure heard that hun now give it back.” I shamefully hand the phone over to him. He punches a couple of numbers and starts smiling. I'm tempted to ask who it is but then we promised not to step on each other's privacy.

“You seem to be enjoying?” My curiosity betrays me.

“Ooh this? It's a joke from one of S-Kay Books' WhatsApp groups.”

“Who is S-Kay?”

“The famous author Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa. You haven't heard anything about her?”
He says still enjoying whatever he's reading.

“I know her but I didn't know she has WhatsApp groups. What do you guys talk about there? Is it a fan group or she's also in the group?”

“She has two of them, one it's for free and the other you pay to read her books. Damn! You should read LOVE, GREED AND DESIRE from her paid group and I promise we will never ever have vanilla sex again.”
He smiles while typing using both his thumbs.

“She's actually the one running the groups.” I swallow hard. I don't know why but after seeing her that day and realizing how enchanting her smile is, I wouldn't want my man fantasizing about her. She writes the best sex scenes ever, what if she's also a pro in bed and she happens to take my man? Huh? I slap myself for even thinking of such. Why would a gorgeous, successful, sought after lady like her fall for Meli? I'm beautiful yes but she's the definition of beauty. I have a portable body, she has the most

flat tummy I've ever seen. She values her body and doesn't go out half naked like we all do trying to garner a thousand likes on Instagram. She did post her after gym photo on Instagram and Twitter and almost broke the internet! I'm a woman but damn! When a girl is hot, she's hot. I wonder what she eats to keep her body in shape? I mean she's not like the likes of Kim Kardashian no. She has medium breasts which can never be seen in public not even a single day, a flat tummy, I mean a defined six-pack, a medium firm ass and hips to die for....“Zamo? Are you there?” Meli waves his hand in my face and I snap out of it.

“Yeah sorry just this case is stressing me out. Let me grab what I initially came here for and go back to my office.”

Zie's POV.

I'm yanked out of the car I almost fall hard and hit

my head on the car body.

“What the fuck Qhu--” Mntimande slaps me hard I swear I see stars falling from the sky.

“Yini ngawe Zinhle? Ubabulaleleni? Huh? (What the hell is wrong with you Zinhle? Why did you kill them? Huh?)” He's about to slap me again but I grab his arm. Yes you heard me right, I'm a Ngwenya too.

“Ungalinge uphinde ungifake is andla! Ngiyakuhlonipha kakhulu Mntimande kodwa soze ngikumele ukushaywa nguwe– (Don't you dare lay your hand on me! I respect you a lot brother but I will never stand for this--)” A tear runs down his cheek. I on the other hand, I'm breathing flames.

“Bakwenzeni Zie? UQhubekani omfunayo nje? Awuyen umbulali Zie– (What did they ever do to you? You want Qhubekani not them? You are not a murderer Zie--)”

“I didn't kill them....”

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COMPETITION TIME.

Win yourself a Precious Rosé/ My Dad My Life T-shirt or cap. To enter;

1. Mention at least 10 friends on the comments section.
2. Share the post to at least 5 groups or 3 pages.
3. Join our discussion group Books and Poems by Sukoluhle N. Mdlongwa.
4. Keep sharing the inserts.

Ten winners to be randomly chosen and announced on the 30th of May. Good luck darlings.

THE BRIDE.

Written by Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa & Princess Nothabo Mlevu.

Insert 26.

Zie's POV.

“I didn't kill them...” Tears stream down my cheeks.

“Angiyibhemi insango Zinhle! Angidakwangwa-- (I don't smoke dagga Zie! I'm very much sober--”

“Kholwa lokho ofuna ukukholelwa lokho Mntimande. Angizizwa kahle ngicel' unganzezeleli ulaka lwami-- (Believe whatever you want. Can we not step on each other's toes? Not today I'm not feeling too well --)” He pulls me in for a hug and I let all my frustrations out. When I remember all the things I went through with Qhu only for him to dump me for a fat princess I feel a painful lump rising in my throat and chocking the life out of me. I'm so angry I'm even finding it hard to breathe as I cough repeatedly.

“Hlis' umoya dadewethu konke kuzolunga ngiyakuthembisa. (Calm down Zie everything will be

fine I promise.)” Hearing those comforting words from make sob even more. I'm an idiot! How in the hell did I allow myself to believe in love fairy tales? All I ever wanted was a wedding not the whole complicated love relationship. Now how do I rid myself of this love-hate emotion I feel for Qhubekani? How?

“Babazala? (In-law?)” My husband's voice says. “Kwenzenjani? (What happened?)” His voice is laced with worry.

“Akusilutho Khabazela ngicing uba yizo ihormones lezo.(It's nothing serious just the hormones playing tricks on her.)” He lies. My brother hate lies but for me he can easily lie to anyone.

“Hun? I'm so sorry my love come here.” I fly into his open arms, my home, the only place I feel safe, my sanctuary. “Ngiyabonga babazala ukungikhangelelela yena ithi ngiyemphumuza mbijana ngiyabuya. Asingene ubone abazukulu bakho. (Thank you in-law for looking after her in my absence. Come in and wait for me while I put her to bed.)” My husband is one in a lifetime. My brother

hesitantly follow us inside. In our bedroom he scoops me up in one swift move and lays me on the bed. He slowly unbuttons my dress while looking straight into my eyes. The things his gaze is doing to me are beyond my comprehension. My clit is throbbing already.

“What’s wrong my son? Why are you troubling mom?” He says slowly kissing my belly, the baby moves for the very first time. Tears freely flow down my cheeks.

“He-he-he just moved--” I’m so happy and I feel connected to my baby more than ever.

“I felt that baby. He couldn’t resist talking to his father.” He says smiling and cupping my cheeks.

“Sweetheart, I love you.” Hearing those words escaping his lips I melt and attack him with a passionate deep French kiss. My hand moves to his belt but he stops me.

“Your brother is out there waiting for me hun. Let daddy give it all to you after talking to him, right my baby?” I nod while anticipation takes over my whole

body. “For now get some rest. I'm coming. ” He kisses my forehead and leaves.

NARRATED

These past few days have been the hardest for Qhue and he's feeling a great need for a distraction. Unfortunately the only distraction he knows is Zie but after burst out the other day which was followed by him begging for forgiveness. She forgave him but the condition of proving himself still stands. He knows that if he wants to be a good father, son and husband he has to let go of Zie for a while, so there are two more options left one of them is doing drugs but since he wants to portray a good name of himself drugs are out of the picture, he's left with one option, a bootycall and one name comes to his mind; Amara his frenefit. He takes out his phone and dials her number,

“Amara speaking.” The girl answers.

“Is this how you answer to your frenefit Ammy baby, have I been gone for so long that you even

deleted my number? C'mon I'm so hurt right now.” Qhue answers back. Amara asks him what is wrong and why the random call after three months of being MIA (missing in action). Qhu tells her he was away on business and was busy he couldn't even call his family let alone her. He even reminds her that she owes him a wallet which she took the other time at the club when she called his wife to come pick him up. After chatting for a while he then asks if she is free to see him and help him relieve some pent up tensions that were building up and she tells him he can come to her place after 20 minutes.

When he gets to her house she's already in her black stilletos, leather lingerie and holding a small leather whip.

Qhue's POV

When I get to her house, Amara is already in her role playing costume. This is the reason why I'm friends with her, she can make any of your fantasies

become reality. At one time she was dressed as a maid and I had to fuck her in a maid submissive on all fours position and the other time she had to dress up like a female cop and had to fuck me handcuffed to the bed. We have tried the judge, nurse, fireman and almost every role playing you can think so that's why today she is in femdomatrix attire because I need to be beaten and fucked to release pressure I'm feeling and be high as I can not go back to drugs. Amara gets me on my wilderness and freakiness while Zie gets me on every level as she is the love of my life. As I enter into Amara's house I feel like I'm being watched but I just ignore it as I think it paranoia that's making me think things that aren't. I quickly strip my clothes and I'm blindfolded and led to her bed where she ties my hands on the head post with my tie. She caresses my body with her whip and while I'm in anticipation she whips my left nipple, the pain I feel is making my man small nipples hard, #REMOVED

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“What is that Amara?” I’m asking because I have never seen anything like it.

“Oh you mean this, it's a condom.” She says.

“How can it be a condom when I didn't feel it and it felt like I was tapping it raw?” I'm confused.

“That's the whole point darling, its a female condom us women we wear it eight hours before so that it climatize with our honeypot temperature and when we have sex you will think you are having it raw while we are protecting ourselves from sexual transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies because you guys don't want to have protected sex munoda nyoro and kana tava nenhumbu modziramba nhumbu dzacho or ndoita siki moramba kuti ndimi matizadza wutachiona ndiko takuzvidzivira necondom revakadzi (you like having raw sex and when we get pregnant you deny responsibility or you guys infect us with STDs then blame us for having the virus and that is why we are protecting ourselves using the female condom)” she says. Wow what a clever wise girl so all that time we were having what I thought was raw sex

she was protecting both of us and here I thought I was a lucky bastard to be served raw by Amara.

NARRATED

Some is watching the whole scenario between Amara and Qhue and is fuming. A message from an unknown number is sent to Qhue's phone

should the number of body bags increase?*

After reading the message he tries to reply back but the message bounces back and again his fone rings this time its a voice call but with a blocked number.

“Hello.” He answers the call. On the other hand the voice that answers back is digitalized you can not tell if it's a woman or a man.

“Go back to your wife and family and try to clear her name instead of fooling around or there will be more than six corpses and you are the reason behind their deaths.” The voice says. Qhu can not believe what he’s hearing because as far as he

remembers there were only five people dead so far so what does the voice mean by six corpses? He dresses up quickly like Barry Allen in Flash and dashes to his car driving back home like a maniac. When he gets home every one of the family members are present except for his Wife Ane because she is in police custody awaiting for another bail hearing.

“Why are you budging into the house like a madman?” Mkhize Snr asks. Before he could answer his cell phone has a message alert which he swiftly opens only to drop his phone on the floor and holds his head screaming

“No no no no no!”

“Qhubekani get hold of yourself first you budge into the house like a madman and now you screaming like a lunatic are you back on drugs?” Questions Zie.

“No no no no she can't be dead! I was with her less than forty five minutes ago--” he keeps on chanting

“What can't be and who were you with and who is dead? What are you talking about son?” Mkhize Snr

asks.

“Amara is dead dad and I was the last person to see her.” Qhue says trembling. Every one is shocked and can't comprehend what Qhue is talking about and who is Amara, Zie rushes to the kitchen and makes him sugar water and gives him to drink then she picks up the phone that was dropped by Qhue on the floor and sees the dead girl floating in the swimming pool which was now red with blood in her birthday suit, upon seeing this she faints. It's mayhem at the Mkhize mansion one is chanting like a Nigerian madman while the other has fainted and is as pale as chalk! The ambulance is called and Zie is rushed to the hospital while police sirens are heard coming to the Mkhize mansion.

Who killed Amara, at what time was she killed and are the cops going to arrest Qhubekani Mkhize? What do you think will happen to Qhubekani and why was he behaving like a madmad? To get all the

answers stay tuned to the bride and wait until the drama unfolds.

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Darlings you are not liking the insert, commenting or even sharing. Please do tell if the story is boring so we can just abort it without wasting anyone's time and data. I want to post twice a day but who will I be posting for? Am I wrong for feeling demotivated? Or am I feeding you something you can not stomach? Communication is the key, please let's hear your views and frustrations clearly I'm not the one feeling that way.

Good night.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 27.

UNEDITED.

NARRATED.

(CLAN PRAISES)

Mkhize

Gcwabe

Khabazela kaMavovo kaZihlandla

Gubhela, Mumbo mhlomphe, Wena was eMbo

Wena okhanya amasi esiswini

Nhlama eyaphelel' etsheni

Ngunezi, Mumbo ombulazi

Nina enadla umuntu nimyenga ngendaba

Sibi eside esimajembelezana

Sibi side esimaphandla esaphandl'abeNguni
bavungama

Nina bengwazi' emabhudle,

Eth' isabhudla yabuya yaphinda yabhudla

Malala amahle Nin' enalala nomunwe navuka
nakhwif'ilanga

Nzalo kaSambela, Nina bakaSidaphudaphu
ngokubadaphunela, Nzalo kaLuzalo.

“I come before you burning this incense, I have nothing in my hands for I couldn't think of anything to offer to you at this moment, my forefathers, I humbly beg you not to punish my unborn son for his parents' sins. Please revive his mother, forgive all our mistakes and don't let any harm come to my unborn son. In the mighty name of the Mkhize clan I pray, Amen.” Mr Mkhize begs the ancestors to save Zie and the baby. The doctors tried all they could and the only option they had was to save one of them, the baby or the mother. Mkhize couldn't make a decision, it's hard for him to sign on the dotted

line as he needs both of them.

“They heard you father. Our ancestors never disappoint.” Khulekani says entering the ancestral room. He bows his head with his hands folded showing respect to the elders who paved way for the now generation. “Gcwabe.” He bows once more and turns to his father.

“What now son?” Mkhize looks tired and defeated.

“I managed to get Qhu out on bail the police have nothing against him except he was the last person to see Amara. Strangely, Anelisa’s fingerprints were found on Amara’s clothes. Ane is in pris on dad how is this even possible?”

“Someone is after Qhu, I can feel it in my bones that this is just the beginning of my son's doom. It's unfortunate that we will also have to bear the consequences of his foolishness. Where is he?”

“He went to see mom. He's a mess and I'm afraid he might go back to drugs. This whole thing is straining him too much and we have to help him dad.”

“I will always help my sons. He will be fine.” Mkhize sighs. “The King was here trying to pinpoint this whole thing on me but I showed him the door. I'm not in the mood for pep talk with that useless King. I have so much to say and to do to him but my wife and son are more important to me.”

“I understand you dad. Did you know about the King and my real mom?” Mkhize's eyes almost pop in shock. “I'm not stupid father. I'm your son after all. No need to be shocked I got to know about it sometime before Ane and Qhu got married. I overheard the King and mom arguing that Ane and Qhu might be siblings.”

“You are all my children I have proof of it and yes I knew about the King and your mother. It's because of that secret that my brother is no longer with us today they killed him.”

“You didn't fight back why?”

“A true soldier doesn't go to war without a proper attacking strategy. I will attack and avenge my brother's death. Can we go to the hospital now?”

“Of course dad.”

TWO WEEKS LATER....

Today is the biggest day of them all for the Mkhize family and Anelisa and Zamo too. The court will announce it's final verdict today. The king's men failed to steal the evidence and Ane's freedom is slowly slipping into the darkness as Zamo and Sizalobuhle Moyo, the newbie, in this advocacy world have no idea how to save their client.

“Hey. You seem a little more scared than ready?” Zie says hugging Zamo. Zie and the baby survived and Qhu felt better afterwards.

“For the first time in my entire years of practicing law I'm scared, I feel like I'm fighting an invisible demon, nothing makes sense.”

“I understand you darling. Anelisa will be just fine.” Says Zie.

“I don't know friend. What if I dis appoint her and my record will be gone just like that? ” Zamo snaps her fingers.

“You won't lose. We are taking Ane with us home today.” Zie spots her husband. “All the best.” She hugs Zamo and then Siza.

In the courtroom everyone is seated, the only audible sound is their heartbeats. Mntimande walks in followed by Nkululeko and sit next to Zinhle.

“ZakwaNgwenya.” They greet her in unison.

“Mntimande, Mthiyane.” She greets back with a smile.

“All Rise!” In one swift move everyone is on their feet as the judge walks in and takes his seat. Zie stares at the King until he feels uncomfortable and looks away. Ane is escorted in at least they did not cuff her. It was going to break the Queen to see the Princess in cuffs. She now looks dark and has shed a lot of weight as her formal dress looks like someone hung a cloth on a moving log. The prosecutor let's the court know what charges are

laid against Anelisa. She's being charged with murder on five accounts.

“I, Princess Anelisa Khumalo-Mkhize swears to tell the court nothing but the truth.” She shakily says with her hand on the bible. The prosecutor throws a dagger at Zamo before starting with his questioning. Ane is asked her plead and she pleads not guilty.

“Princess Anelisa, you went to the girls’ apartment armed and with the intent to kill. True or false?”

“True but I didn't kill those girls--”

“Your Honor the accused just admitted to the intention--”

“Objection Your Honor!” Zamo blurts out.

“Overruled. Mr Nyathi you may continue. ”

“The accused just admitted that she indeed had every intention to murder those innocent girls. There's evidence proving that she indeed went there and her fingerprints were found on the poisoned pot. Given the fact that the girls were pregnant for her husband, I would like to believe that any woman can

act out of anger--”

“I didn't kill those girls!” Ane yells cracking her already cracked lips even more.

“Your Honor may the court please allow me to present the evidence.” Mr Nyathi is given a green light. Zie takes her phone out of her handbag the same time Khule and NK also starting tapping on their phones. “This is the CCTV footage we got from the crime scene--” Mr Nyathi presses the remote only for the projector to play a pornographic video.

“What?” The court attendants exclaim in horror as the lady on the video inserts moans while the man thrusts in hard.... The video is immediately stopped.

“What is going on here Mr Nyathi? Is this a courtroom or some kind of an adult entertainment club?” The judge is furious. Everyone else is shocked to the core including Zamo and Siza.

“I apologize your honor I don't know where the data got mixed up. Please allow me to present the suicide note we found on the victim's body.” He hands in a brown envelope. The envelope is opened

and the judge's jaw drops to the floor. There are several photos of the prosecutor, Mr Nyathi, in several sex positions with different women.

“Mr Nyathi is this all a joke to you?” They all turn to the judge, puzzled. “What do these pictures have to do with this court? Clearly you think all of us here have nothing to do with our precious time!” Mr Nyathi reaches for the pictures and almost faints.

“Your Honor I-i don't know what's going on here?” Mr Nyathi tries to defend himself.

“This is the waste of time for all of us. You made us wait for months for this nonsense? This case is hereby dismissed!” Zie smiles victorious, Ane can not believe her luck. As for Zamo and Siza their mouths are still hanging as the judge walks out and people are mumbling all around the room.

“What the fuck just happened here?” Qhu is perplexed.

“I wish I can explain but I'm at a loss too.” Khule says looking at Mntimande whose eyes gives nothing, nothing at all. Ane runs to her family and

emotionally hugs all of them.

The media is buzzing. Everyone wants to know what exactly happened in court. Zie switches off the television, takes a tray and makes way to Anelisa's room. She lightly knocks and the emotional Ane opens the door for her. Ane attacks Zie with a hug as soon as she puts the tray down.

“Thank you so much mother-in-law--” Zie slightly pushes her away.

“I didn't do anything for you princess.” Zie walks to the window and looks outside with her hands in her jacket's pockets. “I did everything for myself. Yes, for me, what did you think dear Princess?” Zie turns and her face is now as cold as ice. “You reaped where I sow princess time to reclaim my throne--”

“Huh? What are you talking about?” Ane is confused.

“Qhubekani Mkhize is the product of my hard work princess. I haven't forgotten and I'm here to take you to your cunning witch of a mother-in-law!” Ane looks like she just saw a ghost. “Ooh? I guess you

are smart enough to figure out who sent you to that stinky place.” Zie’s upper lip curve in a very scary way sending chills down Ane’s spine.

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 28.

NARRATED.

“Qhubekani Mkhize is the product of my hard work princess. I haven't forgotten and I'm here to take you to your cunning witch of a mother-in-law!” Ane looks like she just saw a ghost. “Ooh? I guess you are smart enough to figure out who sent you to that stinky place.” Zie’s upper lip curve in a very scary

way sending chills down Ane's spine.

"Mother-in-la--" Zie slaps her hard she tastes blood in her mouth.

"Quit pretending!" Anelisa can not believe this other side of Zie. Zinhle puts her foot on the coffee table, her elbow on her thigh looking straight into Anelisa's eyes. "You knew? You knew he was in a relationship yet you couldn't resist! You knew my child needed a father but you couldn't think about that even for a second! You killed the girl you thought was me, you fed her flesh to the stray dogs, I watched all of that you know why? Because back then I used to care, I cared even for people who hurt me the most, I cried, my heart bled for that innocent girl.." Zie pauses and smiles. "that's all in the past now. I'm here, you are here, Qhu is the trophy--"

"Zinhle--" Zie's foot lands on Anelisa's throat almost knocking all the life out of her.

"I don't love him not anymore but I didn't clean him up only for a fat useless princess to enjoy the fruits of my hard work--"

“He’s your stepson Zie.” Ane says with a shaky voice. This side of Zie comes as a great shock to her. Zie laughs out loud.

“Stepson you say? Hahaha! So funny, you know what? I love my husband as much as I hate my stepson. Because of you and his selfish mother he's going to be hurt, because you think being royalty is some kind of mighty power handed to you people in a silver platter all hell is about to break loose! I made a promise Anelisa, I promised my son, Qhu’s heir that he will not celebrate his 6th birthday without getting what's rightfully his. I don't know how you will repay the time he spent without a father, all those sleepless nights I had alone while you enjoyed what I made? Qhubekani is the product of my love and determination, do you get that!” Zie stomps her feet on the tiled floor making Ane almost piss on herself. “You played God in my life time for me to return the favor. Now we both don't have to hide behind the fake smiles you hate me I detest you!” Zie pushes the coffee table sending all the dishes crashing on the floor while some the

glass filled with juice crashes and splashes Ane's face. She gasps wiping the dripping juice off her face. Zie grabs her by the chin. "This is me, this is Zinhl'Intombi zakwaNgwenya!" She let her go and is about to exit the room when Ane asks with a trembling voice.

"H-hod di-did you kill them?" Zie turns with the most evil smile plastered on her face.

"Oh that!" She picks an apple and takes a bite. "That was easy as wiping my ass you know?" Ane feels like she's dreaming. "Unlike the stupid princess I didn't have to google the fastest killing poison, how to get away away with murder, no. I planted an idea in your dull mind you took the bait. Whatever shit you googled reported to my phone, yes you heard me right. I may have got 9 U's at ordinary level but I'm the only best hacker you will ever meet in person. Since I knew all your stupid plans I also knew you are weak, you wouldn't kill those girls and that wasn't working well with my plan. I ordered the poison using your account. Ever heard of the dark web? Probably not. That's where I got the poison.

When you called your friend and told her you were gonna give those girls a visit later that day I had to be there before you and I succeeded. I made a digitalized phone call to the girls and offered them an amount they couldn't resist for a foursome, just like you they also too the bait. I went to their high security system flat and hacked my way into the flat. Luckily they had left a pot of beef stew on the stove, I mixed a few little drops of poison and my job was almost done--”

“My fingerprints? How did you manage to get them?”

“Remember I showed you a nice dress that day which you couldn't stop drooling over? Oh yeah that's where I got your fingerprints darling all I had to do was to do my magic and transfer them to the pot. Done deal!” She bites her apple again watching Ane sheds tears.

“You are so evil--”

“Nah sweetheart. I haven't started these were just the highlights of what's to come.” Zie's laugh

echoes in the room deafening Anelisa. “Oh the one from the hospital? That was too easy you know how these police officers can be lazy and sleepy sometimes. I just walked into the safe house the boom!” Zie laughs. Ane covers her ears with both her hands.

“Stop! Please stop!–”

“Oh but I haven't told you about the suicide note guy? That's where the real funny is--”

“Stop stop! I have heard enough please leave my room! Go--”

“Careful how you talk to your mother-in-law--” Zie scolds as Gugu walks in.

“Mother-in-law? I've been looking for you...” She spots the pieces of plates on the floor. “And then?”

“Oh this? My daughter-in-law is having hallucinations I guess that place really tortured her emotional being.” Zie says with a genuine smile on her face.

“Hallucinations?” Gugu is confused.

“She’s not over the fact that she was in there and her mind keeps playing tricks on her. Can you imagine she thought she saw a cockroach in her food? A cockroach in this house?”

“Oh dear Ane!” Gugu hugs her. “You will be fine I will book therapy sessions for you. The lady is really good and I trust her to help you past this trauma.” Ane says nothing except sob. “You will be fine darling.” Gugu rocks her back and forth until she calms down. “Do you know who helped you out?” Gugu asks cheerfully.

“No. I’ve been trying to figure out.” Ane responds while Zie innocently looks at the two of them.

“She did. Mother-in-law came up with the plan of foiling the evidence which father-in-law and the rest of us supported. You should really thank her maybe take her out for a massage or lunch. She’s been working hard trying to help you and I’m glad we all supported her. Welcome back sister-in-law.” Gugu hugs her once more. “I will get the dustpan and clean this.

“See? I'm not all bad. By the way, your father doesn't deserve to be a King he's a loser!”

“Zinhle!” Ane screams at her.

“Intombi zakwaNgwenya.” Zie sneers.

“Don't you dare talk about my father like that!”

“Oh the princess is back. Welcome back Your Highness. Now let's see what your stupid father's sperm produced in you.” Gugu walks in and saves the day.

“I will go and check on your father-in-law.” Zie exits.

“Are you okay?” Gugu again asks Ane.

“I'm fine I just need to sleep a bit.” She says in a low defeated voice.

“You will be fine.”

Suku walks in the restaurant holding the phone in her ear while the other hand has her laptop bag.

“Hey baby. They said you were sad what's up?” She says to the receiver.

“Your niece broke my iPad!” A young girl's voice shouts.

“That’s why you didn't even eat your lunch?” Suku asks pulling a chair for herself.

“I’m very angry mom! I hate your niece--”

“No baby. Hate is a very strong word. I understand your frustrations hun. What can mommy do to make you feel better?”

“Take me out on weekend to my favorite Mexican food restaurant and buy another iPad.” Responds the girl.

“Done. Can mommy work now?”

“Yes mommy. I love you.”

“I love you too baby.” She disconnects the call with a smile. The waitress takes her order.

“Drink?” Asks the waitress.

“The usual will do.” While waiting for her food she

receives another call.

“Sweet pie?”

“Hey babe. When are you coming back? I really miss you. Our daughter misses you too.”

“I don't know you know the weather this side keeps changing slowing the shooting. I want to get done with this film and come back home already.” She lies.

“I wish I could just up and join you that side. You know I love England so very much one day we will relocate. ” The guy on the other side says.

“Mahle won't agree she hates snow. Listen dear husband I have to get back to work. I will talk to you later.”.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 29.

UNEDITED.

Suku looks at her wedding picture on her Samsung Galaxy Tab, a tear runs down her cheek but she quickly wipes it off taking a deep breath. She switches on her laptop and starts typing an emotionally draining poem titled “They think they know”. She continues to type until her cheeks are a mess. The waitress brings her a box of tissues.

“Need an ear?” The young lady smiles at her. Suku sniffles and wipes her face.

“No. I'm good thanks.” She smiles with reddish eyes.

“I know you will get through whatever is troubling you. I know you and I have never liked any regular client like this. I even follow you on social media you are a good person and I love your books. I wish I can afford a hardcopy then I will cherish it like my

precious life.” The waitress says shyly smiling at her. Suku takes out her business card and gives to the girl.

“When you see a post about any of my book launch or movie premiere give me a call.” The girl screams like she just won a lotto.

“Thank you thank you so much ma'am!” She hugs her.

“Can I get back to my work now sweetheart?”

“Yes. Yes please.” The waitress turns and leaves her smiling. Her phone vibrates.

“Lee?” Suku answers and takes a deep breath.

“You should stop this! Amahle will soon find out the truth from everyone just tell the kid the truth and move on with your life. I hate seeing you hurt like this, you worked your ass to the top, not to be traumatized by a dick but to inspire young people out there. I know you are back in the country and you are stalking your husband but that's not healthy darling. Stop this madness. For how long are you going to suffer in silence? Do you think your mother

will be happy to hear about this?”

“You don't understand Lee--”

“Don't! Don't you even try that card with me. I understand everything, you are too good, too perfect that you see good in every situation. Sweetheart, there's nothing good in what's going on in your marriage. Is it even a marriage or it's void already? I love you baby girl but that won't stop me from telling you this truth. You even gave your directing duty to someone else, are you really go let this pig mess with your mental health after everything you did for him and his family?” Lerato, Suku's friend is fuming.

“What should I do then? I don't know anymore--”

“You do know! You know you have to get out of that marriage while you still can manage your pain! I won't let you get out of that marriage in a body bag. I love you Suku, your parents love and are proud of you, you are Amy's world, young girls out there are looking up to you, do you want to disappoint all of us because of a Mrs title? There's life after divorce,

do the right thing before I do it for you. I don't mind meddling in your personal business if that will save you from yourself and this fairytale love stories you believe in. This is not fiction darling it's the reality of the things you write about. Stop living in a fantasy world and stop this madness. Set an example for all the women out there who tolerate cheating bastards in the name of marriage.”

“I hear you Lee. I will talk to Amy and explain everything to her. Can I get back to my work now--”

“No! Leave that restaurant, go back home and sort your issues. I will personally kill you if you slip back to depression.”

Zamo's POV.

Meli is acting strange these days. Whenever I try to question his actions he touches me where my weakness lies and I end up giving in to what my clit

wants. I hate feeling paranoid, I don't know what's going on with my life anymore.

“Hi babe.” He kisses me on the cheek.

“Hey. Can we talk?” He scratches his beard thoughtfully.

“Not now babe. I'm going to meet my uncles about the lobola negotiations. If I'm late they will bite my head off. We will talk when I come back. Right baby?” I nod. “I love you sweetheart.” You see? Every time I try to talk to him he always gets busy. I want to get this feeling out of me. I let him go while I go to the fridge and get a drink. My phone is ringing.

“Zinhle? What the hell happened in there? You've been ignoring my calls--”

“I saved your reputation and I won't even get a “thank you”? Come on baésty?”

“You hacked the government system Zie? That's a crime--”

“A crime is one which is known. This was just an experiment. Enough about the case how are you?”

“Meli is acting weird. I don't know what's going on. He says it's the pre lobola negotiations stress. I don't know maybe I'm being paranoid.”

“I'm not a good person to give advise about men but I can check him out if you want--” What? No! Knowing my friend's shrewd skills she will find information about Meli from when he was a kid up to today. I don't want to be the kind of a wife who doubts her husband.

“No thanks. I will pass darling. You sound rather too hyper are you okay?”

“Never felt this good. I'm super good!” Only God knows what she's up to I hope it's not to sex Qhu once again. I don't trust that old Mkhize man. I'm not ready to lose my friend. There's a knock on the door. I open the door to find Mntimande standing with a bunch of flowers and a box of chocolate.

“Zie? I will call you back in a minute.” I drop the call. “Ubekwa yini lapha Mntimande? (Why are you here)”

“Ngizevalelisa. Ngiyahamba ngibuyela egoli khona

manje. (I came to say goodbye. I'm going back to Johannesburg.)”

“Ooh? Thank you so much for these.” I don't know why I feel sad that he's living. He has a whole family in South Africa so its practical that he has to go back.

“Ukahle? Ngathi kukhona okukudlayo? (Are you alright? You seem a little stressed?) ” I'm teleported to his arms, he hugs me back and the flood gates of tears open wide.....

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THE BRIDE

Insert 29.

Zamo's POV.

“Ntokazi? Yini? (What's wrong Zamo?)” The care and love lacing his deep voice has me sobbing even more. “Khuluma nami Zamo kwenzakalani? Angiwashayi amathambo MaLanga ngeke ngazi udliwa yini ungangits helanga. Ungangithemba MaLanga. (What's going on Zamo? I'm not a prophet to know what's eating you unless you tell me.)”

“I think he's cheating on me. He-he- reads and is always glued to his phone--” My voice trails off as a painful lump rises in my throat threatening to choke the life out of me. I swallow hard trying not to choke on my pain but the opposite happens as I cough repeatedly and the worst happens.

“Nkosi yami! (Oh God!)” He says helping me bend and vomit every drop of Margarita I drank earlier on. He keeps rubbing my back as I vomit till I can't anymore. “Sikuphi is ambuzi?(Where's the toilet?)” I'm so embarrassed I can't even get myself to utter a single word I just point to the direction of the toilet. He goes into the toilet and comes back with a damp

towel which he uses to clean me up. Tears start afresh. Why is he so caring? Why? He goes back into the toilet, comes back and mops the floor. When he comes back he has removed his shirt and left with his vest. His defined muscles has me forgetting about my ordeal and admire the beauty that's in front of me. He sits down and looks straight into my eyes.

“Ngiyabonga. (Thank you)” He just smiles.

“MaLanga uneminyaka emingaki? (How old are you Zamo?)” The question comes as a shock.

“32. Why?”

“Umdala kabi ukube ulilela indoda ohlangane nayo kungekudala. Ma ekuthanda loMelisizwe wakho kakumelanga akushiye wedwa lana endlini ukhala uphalaza uzibuza uziphendula. MaLanga mhlawumbe abakini abakaze bakuts hela lento kodwa indoda ekukhalisa ungakashi ayishints hi ngemva komshado. Ums hado awuguquli lutho Zamo njalo ukuba uzibuza uziphendula akuyikukusiza ngalutho. Hlala phansi noMeli ufune

iqiniso. Abadala bathi alibuqedi ubuhlobo. (You are too old to be crying for a man you just met. He shouldn't be leaving you alone in such a state and with unanswered questions. Maybe the elders will be biased but the truth is marriage doesn't change a man. If he makes you cry right now when your love should be fire and rosy imagine when he has you in here as your wife? Sit him down and ask the burning questions. The truth shall always set one free.)” He takes my hand in his. “Umuhle, uqeqeshile, ungumfazi ozimele okwaziyo ukuthi ufunani ngempilo yakhe ungazithengisi ngentengo ephansi. Uthando akumelanga lukuphuce inkululeko yakho nokuthula kwengqondo yakho. Kubuye njalo nina abesimame ninokufela ngaphakathi nicine senibona nento ezingekho. Funa ukhathazwa ngezamalobolo uMeli okanye abadala bamhlaba ngembuzo engasile. Sizinsizwa kodwa-ke nathi kuyakufike la siphela khona umoya sicine senza izinto ezingasile. Umshado awuwona umdlalo MaLanga khuluma noMeli mhlawumbe ukhathazekile naye kodwa wesaba ukubizwa amagama ngoba nisuka nithi asiwona amadoda

masiletha inkinga zethu kini. (You are beautiful, educated, independent and you know exactly what you want out of this life. Love shouldn't cost you your freedom and peace of mind. Sometimes you may be worried for no reason at all, women analyze every little thing and end up seeing things that doesn't exist. Maybe he's just worried about the lobola negotiations or the elders are giving him hard time asking endless questions. Marriage is a huge step, Meli might be scared but afraid to let you know because when us men cry you women say we are weak.)” I think maybe he's right. What if I'm seeing things like all other women before me and the ones to come after?

“Thank you so much for everything. Uhmhhh I'm sorry for messing up your shirt.” I look away.

“Kulungile laloba umfanami sezobona into ezingekho naye. Ucing uba siyathandana. (It's okay although now my young brother will start taunting me. He thinks we are lovers)” I gasp in shock. How could NK think of something like that? I feel things for Mntimande but I will never act on it unless he

does.

“He’s crazy.” I dismissed the crazy thoughts. He glances at his Rolex then back to me.

“Kumele ngihambile ntokazi. Iyobonana. (I should take my leave. Stay well)” He hugs me his warm body feels like an electric current is charging my own body. The feeling is alien, confusing yet so good. I don't know what pushes me but I find my lips gunning for his. “Cha. Mus’ ukuyenza lento MaLanga angiyona indoda edlala abantwana bomuny umuntu. Ngishadile MaLanga nawe ulungiselela owakho umshado. Udidekile ngiyazwisisa kodwa le ofun ukuyenza izokudida ukwedlula zonke. Zazi umenjalo. (Don't do that Zamo I'm not a heartbreaker. I understand you are confused and frustrated but kissing me won't solve your problems instead it will add to them. Know yourself and stand by your truth.)” Twice in a few hours I feel like a complete idiot.

“I’m sorry.”

“Ngiyazwisisa. Uye emtholampilo ngiyasola ngathi

ukhulelelwe ntokazi-- (It's okay. Please go to the clinic I think you are pregnant.)”

Anelisa’s POV.

It all still feels like a dream, a horrible nightmare. Zinhle can never do that to me, she loves this family, she protects all of us and gives the best advice. She's young but mature and a very sweetest mother-in-law I've ever met. How can she be a murderer? How can two opposite personalities exist in one tiny body? I'm dreaming, yes I'm dreaming.

“Babe? Babe?” Qhu shakes me and I jump almost falling off the couch.

“Hmmm!” I'm so scared I'm even shaking. Zinhle’s words keep ringing in my head. How cruel can one human being be? How could she kill those girls? They were young and pregnant for crying out loud!

“Are you okay? You look like you just saw a ghost?”

Qhu is looking at me with sad eyes.

“Zi-zinhle--she-she killed them--” His eyes pop out in utter shock and his jaw is on the floor.

“Are you sure you are not drunk?” He asks after a few minutes of recovering.

“I’m not crazy Qhubekani! I know what I heard she told me herself that she’s out for revenge! She’s a murderer! She’s evil--”

“No she’s not! She might have killed them but she’s not evil, okay? I can’t bear to hear such negative things about her. She’s not evil--”

“You are blinded by love! She’s not who you think she is!--”

“Wait? How do you know I love her? What are you hiding from me Anelisa?” He’s vigorously shaking my arm demanding answers.

“I always knew about you and her! I know Sbusiso is your son! You never loved me Qhubekani--”

“I’m glad you knew what you were getting yourself into. Now it’s up to you to pack your royal shit and

get out if my life or stay to protect your status. Yes I never loved you, I used you to get what I wanted happy now?" I slap him hard. He glares at me and slaps back even harder I smell blood. He grabs me by the neck choking the life out of me. "This is not America darling where you slap a man and be rewarded with a kiss. I will kill you and bury you myself if you ever again lay your hand on me!" He pushes me I fall hard hitting on the edge of the headboard, blood drips from my forehead. "You better get your shit together if you value your precious life!" He slams the door on his way out, I flinch and wail like a baby. How did I end up here? How could he lay his hand on me? It's all because of that Zinhle girl! I drag myself to the bathroom and clean myself. I look like a breathing skeleton, I have sagging skins all over my body, my eyes are deep inside their sockets, my skin is pale like that of a dead body. Am I dead? No not yet. I'm Princess Anelisa and I will always get what I want. Qhubekani is what I want and I will have him at any cost! Even if it means destroying that one thing they have in common; SBUSISO MUST DIE!

NARRATED.

“Mommy!” Amahle runs to her mother and jumps on her. Suku picks her daughter up and spins her around before doing the same to her niece, Prudence.

“Hey baby. How was your day?” Asks Suku putting her bag down still carrying Prudy.

“Not bad except for Prudy smashing my iPad. I'm sorry I troubled aunt Charity I'm sorry mommy.” Amy apologizes touching both her ears.

“What happened? Why did you smash the iPad, Prudy?”

“She was ignoring me! I wanted to play outside but she kept on playing the boring game I wanted to get her attention!” Responds Prudy.

“And you are not sorry?” Suku raises her eyebrows.

“I’m a baby and playing is my right. I’m not sorry for being denied my right!”

“See? This is what I have to deal with everyday she has no manners!” Amy shouts.

“Prudy? Playing is your right but not at the expense of Amy's valuable gadgets. Those things cost money and we can't be smashing them whenever we feel frustrated. You are a young lady have a little class, okay? Women don't behave like maniacs instead we control our emotions at all times.”

Charity comes out of the kitchen.

“Good afternoon Sisi.”

“Afternoon Charity. I hope they didn't give you too much trouble. They can be very stressful at times.”

“They are nice kids although quite a handful.”

Charity, the helper says with a smile. “Should I bring your food?”

“No sweetheart I'm not really hungry. Go on and study I will take care of these troublesome rats--”

“We are not rats!” Prudy and Amy say in unison,

Charity stifles her laugh.

“Okay you are my two favorite troublesome girls. I finally found your textbook Char, it's in my bag I even bought the other ones you said were not really useful. Go on and study for that Bachelor's degree--”

“But--”

“No buts. I will personally serve you dinner in your room. Go on.”

“Thank you.” Char says emotionally.

“Girls come on let's go have fun in the pool!”

“Yay!” They both run to their respective rooms to change into swimwear. “Don't forget your cap Prudy otherwise your hair will misbehave!” Amy calls out. A message comes through Suku's phone she ignores it and switches off all her phones.

Zinhle's POV.

I never planned to avenge all the pain I went through because of Qhubekani until I found out that Anelisa is not innocent. Now I'm going to make sure everyone pays for all the shit I went through.

“Sweetheart? You look lost in your own world?” My husband hugs me from behind.

“I’m okay hun. Where did you go?”

“I was in the ancestral room thanking them for everything. Now I can go back to bonding with my son without distractions.” He says rubbing my small bump. The baby starts moving. I never knew how fulfilling it is to feel your baby moving in your womb until recently. With Sbu I was always too busy and emotional to realize if he even moved.

“Thank you.”

“For?”

“For being here and supporting me and the family every step of the way.” Oh? I love you darling but for now I have other pressing issues to take care of. I don't know if he will hate me after this but people have to pay! Time to unleash the beast in me.

“I love you dear husband.” I mean it.

“Grandma? Uncle NK and Mntimande are here to say goodbye.”

“I’m coming Thabo.”

Goodbyes are always emotional but at times like this they are necessary. My brothers are my strength and my weakness at the same time. I need them gone to go on a warpath that way no one will stand in my way.

“Uzobasharp? Ngiyazi ucabangani khonamanje. (Are you going to be alright? I know what you thinking of right now.)” Mntimande says cupping my cheeks.

“I will be fine. I will call you when I need and thanks for having my back.”

“Uyinakekele. Ngiyakuthanda zakwaNgwenya. (Take care of yourself. I love you Zie.)”

“I love you too brother. Please do convey my greetings to my troublesome nieces. I will visit

soon.”

“Ngizoyenza njalo. Umakoti wakho yena ngingambingeleli? (I will do so. What about your sister-in-law?)”

“Her too. Tell her I miss causing trouble in her hood. You know I love that wife of yours because of how she thinks and acts. Safe journey my dear brothers.”

“Ingane kabani le oyikhulelwe Zinhle? (Whose child are you carrying Zie?).....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 30.

Zie's POV.

“Ingane kabani le oyikhulelwe Zinhle? (Whose child are you carrying Zie?)” What? Did he just ask me that? Is my brother for real?

“Eyami lengane bhuti--(This is my child--)”

“ZakwaNgwenya!” He hisses making me flinch.

“Yehlis a umoya bhudi uzakufa usasemncane. Ngakuthembisa angithi? (Please calm down you will die young. I promised you, right?)” He nods. “Good. I will never break the promises I make to you. You are more than a brother to me you are like my father and never will I ever disrespect you. You can trust me.”

“Ngiyajabula ukuzwa lokho. Uziphathe kahle– (I'm glad to hear that. Take care--)”

“Mntimande you are not dying please let's go before her hormones start causing trouble for us. These days I'm failing to understand her.” NK says impatiently holding the steering wheel.

“I’m not part of your electrical engineering studies bro, stop studying me because you will fail dismally.” I taunt.

“I will find out what you are hiding. You know I can be very snoopy.” He winks.

“Sale kahle dadewethu. (Goodbye Sister.)”

Mntimande gets in the car and NK drives off. I watch them exit the gate and sigh sadly. The things I've put my brothers through are indescribable but they never left me yet my father couldn't even forgive me for loving a junkie.

“Zie? I've been looking for you--” These days his voice makes me wanna puke, the sight of his once handsome face makes hate myself for ever loving someone like him.. “Zinhle?”

“What? What do you want Qhubekani? I'm not in a very good mood today!” I snap.

“Did you kill those girls?” Mxm! Who else could have killed those bitches if not me?

“Yes I did. What now? What do you want me to say? Wanna hear me say I'm sorry for killing your unborn

babies? You want me to apologize for sending for fat pig to jail? Or you want me to go I'm there and scream to everyone else that I killed those girls? What exactly do you want?"

"I'm not fighting babe I just wanted to know if Ane was telling the truth." He says softly making me feel slightly sad for his stupid ass.

"I'm tired of you and your wife always making everything about you! Have you ever thought about your son even once? Do you even sometimes ask yourself how I raised him alone while you played "happy couple" with her highness? I bet not! Please stop irritating me before I squash you like how I do to every mosquitoes--"

"Zie? Its me Qhubekani? Can you kill me too?" He's shocked.

"Honey I can kill everyone including myself. Just steer clear from me or stop annoying me."

"I'm sorry--" I push past him and dash inside. Nx! What the hell is wrong with everyone? I killed them so what? I won't repent for avenging myself. Hell,

everyone who crossed me will have to pay with their own lives!

I walk inside the house to find my husband pacing up and down talking on his phone.

“I didn't send anyone--”

“What's going on? Why are you screaming on the phone?” It's so unlike to be this agitated by a phone call.

“Owami--”

“What happened to him? What happened to my son?”

“An unknown man picked him up at school...”

BREAKING APART

Everyone is busy

With their own life

Too busy to notice
What's happening around them
I try and hold it all in
I smile with a bleeding heart
I don't wanna be the reason
They stop their business.

But the truth is
I'm breaking apart
I'm losing the will to live
The desire to fulfill my dreams
Is vanishing through thin air
I can not keep on
Chasing my destiny
My body is also failing me
Who do I turn to, for help?
Who will better understand my predicament?

Only my pen can comfort me.

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Suku swims to the other side of the pool her eyes burning with tears. She wipes her face failing to hold all her pain inside.

“Mommy what's wrong? Are you crying?” Amy asks concerned for her mother.

“No baby its the water flowing down my face.” Suku genuinely smiles looking at the only precious valuable thing her husband ever gave her. “Mommy is fine darling.”

“Where’s dad?” Amy's question almost knocks the life out of Suku. She takes a deep breath and remembers Lerato’s words but Amy is too young to be burdened with such news.

“Dad traveled out of the country honey. He will be back soon.” She lies.

“Why doesn't he call me anymore? He used to call

me everyday even when he was in Australia where our time zones are very much different. Doesn't he love me anymore?" Amy sulks.

"He does love you sweetheart. I'm sure he's busy with work please don't think like that. Your father loves you."

"I hope so."

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Sorry for being short and a little late. Good night darlings.

THE BRIDE

Insert 31.

NARRATED.

TATIANA MANAOIS-LIKE YOU

Lyrics

You gotta get up

You gotta get up and make a move

'Cause the world won't ever see you 'til you do

No, they don't really care what you're going through

So, you gotta show 'em, baby

You gotta show 'em the real you

You gotta give 'em what you've got

No, don't let them see what you're not

'Cause you are strong

You are wise

You are worth beyond a thousand reasons why

And you can't be perfect, baby

'Cause nobody's perfect, darling

But no, no, no, no, there's nobody in the world

Like you

What do you do when you can't let go?

What do you say

When you just don't know how you feel?

And you know nobody knows how you feel

'Cause everybody's got their own damn problems

So everybody's tryna find their way

And day-by-day is a struggle

In this world, you know you have to hustle

Just know, that you're not alone

You don't always have to be strong, all by yourself
(By yourself)

I said it's okay to ask for help

Now listen

People will find you, but they don't define you

And you will find people, who help redesign you

People will find you, but they don't define you

And you will find people, who help redesign you

You are a work of art

Bet you didn't think you'd come this far

Now, here you are

Baby, you are strong

You are wise

You are worth beyond a thousand reasons why

And you can't be perfect, baby

'Cause nobody's perfect, darling

But no, no, no, no, there's nobody in the world

Source: Musixmatch

Songwriters: Tatiana Manaois

Suku's humming along her get up song while frying bacon.

"Baby you are strong you are wise..." She smiles dishing up for the four of them. Prudy runs downstairs carrying her school bag.

"Good morning auntie." Prudy jumps on kitchen stool and kisses her aunt.

"Morning sweetheart. You smell nice?"

"Aunt Char bought perfume for us from one of her crazy friends." Says Prudy picking a pear from the fruit basket. "Where's aunt Char? We bathed ourselves today how is my hair?"

"Your hair is perfect darling. Adjust your tie then you will be good."

"Morning mom! Why are you cooking breakfast today? Is aunt okay?" Amy comes in the kitchen fixing her tie.

"Morning sweetheart. I'm cooking because I can, aunt Char is fine just a little bit tired so today we will

do without troubling her, okay?”

“Okay. Mommy you lied to me?”

Suku’s POV.

My heart skips a beat as those words hit my eardrums. What is this clever child of mine talking about? I hope that soon-to-be ex husband of mine didn't post things on social media. My daughter is disciplined, she knows social media is off limits for her but she sometimes view statuses on my Whats App.

“What are you talking about sweetheart?” My heart is beating in my throat right now.

“Dad is getting married to someone else mom! He doesn't love us anymore, he loves his new family and you've been crying alone. Why mom? Why would he do this to us? We have everything in this house why is he leaving us?” Oh no! Who told her?

“Amy--”

“Mom don't! Grandpa told me everything. He also told me that you are a good person and will always try and defend other people. You didn't leave us he did stop feeling sorry and guilty about it. I love you mom.” She tearfully hugs me. I fight the urge to cry, not in front of my children. I'm strong and I will be strong for them.

“I'm sorry I'm really sorry baby--” Prudy also joins in the hug. “We will be happy without him I promise you guys. I will never make you feel sad about it but he will still be allowed to visit us, right? I will tell you all about it on weekend.”

“If you say so.” My girls wipe each other's tears. Amy is 8 years old while my niece, Prudy, is five. When I had Amy I was young and in love. My then boyfriend promised me heaven on earth and I fell for it. But like they say, good things don't last for long. Our love has run it's course I'm going to gladly let him go praying he doesn't develop the habit of marrying, gain something from it then leave the woman to take care of his seeds.

“Sisi! Why didn't you wake me up?” Charity says

tying her hair into a ponytail.

“You were tired honey. I know how it feels to study at night and do all the household chores during the day. You don't have to fret about about it.” I smile assuring her.

“You are too good Sisi. Why are you like this?”

“I don't know and I don't think I'm as good as you make it sound. Char?” She turns and looks at me. “I couldn't help but overhear your conversation with your mother. What's going on?” Her face changes to being sad. “I'm your sister, we are a family and we don't hide things from each other. What happened to your siblings school?”

“They haven't paid their fees. They don't have all the necessary things needed--” She's about to cry and I hate tears.

“It's fine please don't cry. You know I don't like tears. I can help--”

“What? Sis no! You are already paying my university fees--”

“Char I want to. For you to pass and get that degree we need your mind to be at peace. You helping me with my children why can't I help you and your family? Let's do this, send me their school banking details I will pay for this year then they will have to apply for a scholarship programme at Hope/Tsholofelo Foundation if they don't qualify I will continue paying for them until you and your family are good to stand on your feet again. Take my debit card go to town and buy everything they need including groceries. Don't worry about the total amount you spend meaning don't buy cheap brands for them like that rice you once bought for them.” She crushes on me hugging me tight.

“Okay you two if you don't stop some of us will be late for school.” Teases Amy. I wipe Char's tears and she smiles.

“Thank you I will never ever disappoint you.”

“It's not me shouldn't disappoint but yourself. Do everything for you and not for anyone then you will forever be happy.”

Zie's POV.

Anelisa! That pig sure doesn't know who I am. I'm going to make her regret ever touching my son! How could she? I storm out of our bedroom to Ane's bedroom.

“Where the hell is my son bitch!” She laughs.

“What? Did I touch the nerve? Zinhl'Intombi zakwaNgwenya? What did you think? That you can just trample me, the princess? You must be very delusional if you thought so. I'm the daughter of the great Ndlangamandla, the descendant of Mzilikazi-”

“Where is my son Anelisa?” She lights a cigarette and draws in the smoke before blowing all of it to my face. I feel dizzy as the smoke hits my nostrils. I'm even surprised she smokes marijuana.

“Your son? Oh you mean my husband's son? He's

somewhere safe and you hold the key to his freedom--”

“I’m not in the mood Princess. You sure don't want me to turn this entire city upside down all the way to your village and you better believe me the sight won't be friendly. You don't touch my son and get away with it--”

“Or what? What Zinhle? You think you are the Hitler of this era but you are wrong! I'm going to show you what I'm capable of and I can go to any lengths to get what I want. What I want is Qhubekani and I won't stop until he's all mine.”

“Don’t start something you won't finish princess--”

“I’m not innocent Zinhle. If I can have my father, the King, at my mercy imagine what I can do to a tiny thing like you? I'm going to show you how this game is played darling. I'm the best in this one, I'm going to kill you slowly and painful the same way you killed those people.” I slap her hard. She pulls out her gun.

“Try something else. I'm not scared of bullets dear

princess, hell I'm not even scared of death because death and I are one thing. If you ever touch even a single hair on him I swear to everything that's dear to me even your generations to come will pay for it!" I slam the door behind me and activate my tracking app.

"Hun? I requested the security footage from the school--"

"You can watch it I'm going to get my son."

NARRATED.

In a secluded location Owami screams calling out to his mother.

"Mommy! Mommy! Please save me-- I want my mother!" He tries to run but one of the guys in balaclavas grab his tiny arm and inject him. He slowly collapses on the floor.....

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THE BRIDE

Insert 32.

Zie's POV.

I've been driving around this place for over four hours now. My head is spinning, my heart rate is on the highest level and I still don't know where my son is. I know I'm not perfect or innocent but what did my son do to deserve all this?

“Why my son Anelisa? Why? Why didn't you kill me?” I hit the steering wheel countless times until my hand is bloody red. “Fuck you Anelisa! Fuck you Qhubekani for ever being part of my life! You all going to pay for this!” Just then my phone rings. “Husband?”

“I found Owami's bag and a left shoe in a secluded place near Mthwakazi—” I feel my stomach tightening, tears stream freely down my cheeks.

“Babe--” I sniff. “We will find him. Khule and Qhubekani are also doing their best to find him. Let me keep searching--”

“How will we find him? The tracker is on his bag now searching for him is useless--” A painful lump rises in my throat threatening to choke the life out of me. I drop the call, I have to think like a gangster that I am and for that I have to put my emotions aside. “Dear God, You and I don't see eye to eye hell we don't even see things the same way but please don't punish my son for my sins. If You have the word fair on your vocabulary then You will protect him. Amen.” I wipe my face using both my hands and take a deep breath. “Think Zie, think!” I close my eyes and lay my head back and my mind drifts to back when I was in South Africa. My brother, NK, and me had an ongoing feud with the boys from Alexander. Mind you we were mistaken for the snobbish Sandtonians simple because we had cash and nice cars. I learnt driving at 15, Mntimande was my driving instructor. Those boys were becoming a constant pain on our necks and they had to go. We

captured them, took them to Umtata, yes that's right we needed the crime to be never traced back to us. I still remember the roadblocks we encountered but we arrived at our destination. We didn't kill them we just tortured them a little before a casualty happened and one of them collided with a bullet.....

“We didn't kill them.... That means my son is not dead yet. I still have time to find him. Siya, mom is coming for you son!” I turn the ignition key and make a sharp u turn heading to Matopos...

Zamo's POV.

I went to visit my doctor and I'm still... I don't know how I feel. I throw myself on the couch and hug myself. I feel cold, dizzy and nauseous. Meli is not even at home and his phone is unreachable. Zie's phone too is busy now who do I share my predicament with? I don't have family except my little brother who's still studying for his degree at

the University of Zimbabwe. Who do I talk to?

“Hey babe I saw your missed calls I was busy at the workshop. Are you okay?”

“Please come home--” I'm crying already.

“What's wrong sweetheart?”

“Just come home Meli I really need you right now. Please.”

A few minutes later Meli dashes inside

“Babe what's wrong?” He asks taking me on his lap.

“I'm-I'm pregnant--”

At a dilapidated house behind the Mthwakwazi shops Ane and her boys are planning their next move.

“Boss? What do we do when your husband or anyone from your family finds us?”

“Kill everyone except my husband. I love that son-of

-a-bitch more than my life itself.” Ane takes a swig of her Hunters.

“Are you sure boss--”

“Sure as death. Those people don't give a fuck about me so why I should I? This is war!” Just then the door flies open. Zie is fuming and her reddish eyes burning with fury. Ane's boys points their guns to her, she raises both her hands.

“I'm unarmed. I don't want trouble please just give me my son--” Ane slaps her hard she falls on the floor hugging her tummy tight. Ane stomps on Zie's chest making it hard for her to breathe.

“What did you think bitch! I told you I'm the pro--”

“Mommy--” Sbu tries to run to her mother but Ane clicks him hard he falls on the floor and blood oozes from his nose. In one swift move Zie pulls out her gun and shoots Ane's leg who wails in agony.

“Sbu run! Run son! Daddy is around the corner--”

“Mommy! Mommy get up let's go--”

“Get out of here Sbu! Run mommy will be fine--” The boys tries to shoot Zie but she rolls taking Sbu with her on the ground.

“Shoot them! Kill the both of them--” Ane screams. Zie pushes Sbu outside and stands up carrying two guns on each of her hands. She shoots one of the guys the same time Khule pushes the door and Ane faints upon seeing him. He also fires the gun and Mkhize Senior pushes the door.

“Hubbby---”

“Daddy!!!” Khule screams as Ane secretly pulls out her gun and fires aiming Zie’s belly.....

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THE BRIDE.

Sponsored by the WhatsApp crew

Insert 33.

“Daddy--!” Khule shouts the same time Zie pushes her husband to the side and takes two bullets for the family. Blood oozes out of her chest and stomach.

“Zie!” Mr Mkhize holds her before she can fall on the down.

“Mom!” Khule removes his shirt and uses it as a bandage while Ane limps to where the Mkhizes are and points a gun on Khule’s head.

“Mommy!” Sbu runs back in and kneels next to his bleeding mom.

“Mom will be fine son, she will be fine.” Mr Mkhize says more to himself than convincing Sbu otherwise.

“What the hell is wrong with you Anelisa! Are you nuts--” Khule is fuming.

“Nuts for your brother yes. Yes I've gone crazy, yes I'm crazy because I love your useless brother and

I'm ready to kill you for it! Yes I've gone gaga because he's the only man who's ever made me feel whole again and I won't let Zinhle take that away from me!" Mr Mkhize flinches as if in some sort of pain pressing on Zie's wound so she doesn't bleed too much.

"What are you talking about?" Khule is confused. Ane's taunting laughter echoes in the empty building deafening even the innocent lizards on the wall.

"Ncoow! Daddy dearest kept this one a secret after all? I'm impressed father-in-law! You didn't tell your dear son that you and your useless son I so much love are eating from the same honeypot--"

"Ane--"

"Shut up Khulekani! J UST SHUT UP! Don't you get tired if always being the only person talking? You have a PhD we get that but doesn't mean only you have valuable things to say! We also have things to say, secrets that might help you see that your father is not a saint as he pretends to be! He's just a devil

in sheep's clothing! Who marries his son's lover, huh? Can you marry your son's lover Khulekani? Does that make sense to you or just like all of you he has a personal vendetta against me--"

"My-my-baby--" Zie stutters trying to hold on to her breath. Tears stream down Mr Mkhize's cheeks. He's about to bring out his gun but remembers Sbu is in the room and might get hurt.

"Take us to the hospital Khule please--"

"No no no! Zinhle has to die then you my dear family will live our happily ever after." She smiles. Khule gauges the distance between him and the two remaining of Ane's goons. He slowly retreats backwards, unfortunately, Ane figures out his intention. "Don't even think about it! I just told you your father is sleeping with your brother's lover but you are not bothered--"

"Because that's no news to me Anelisa! I know who Zie is, I know things you don't even know ever happened! Zie is younger than me but I respect her you know why?"

“Are you also sleeping with her?” Ane smirks.

“She’s loosing a lot of blood please let's go--”

Mkhize tries to reason with them.

“No father-in-law! She's dying then we are leaving here with her corpse.”

“You have lost it! I will never forgive you for this you are going to pay!” Khule threatens.

“Pay? With what? Never mind that brother-in-law we will talk about it after the funeral--” Sbu spots a gun and remembers his sessions with his uncle NK. He quickly grabs it, closes his eyes and fires the bullet which misses Khule’s head and hits the wall.

“Shit! Sbu get down--” Khule pushes him down and Zie summons all the strength left in her and fires the bullet which hits Anelisa’s shoulder. The goons try to do what they were instructed to do but Khule is a step ahead of them and they are both almost dead on the floor.

“I-i-love you--” Zie fails to finish her sentence as her her eyelids involuntarily close.

“Zie! Babe? Don't you dare die on me sweetheart please hold on, keep listening to my voice--” Mkhize is trying his best to keep her awake. Khule picks Sbu up and runs to the car which he reverses and his father gets in and Khule speeds off.

Zamo's POV.

“I'm pregnant--” Meli blankly looks at me before screaming in joy like a madman.

“Zamo? Are you sure babe?” I nod tears of joy running down my cheeks. I thought he'd flip and run to the nearest mountain but here he is, celebrating this blessing with me. I know it came sooner than I had imagined but I'm glad it did now Meli have more reasons to marry me. I know most men love their firstborns and will do anything to see them happy. “Thank you so much babe this is the best gift I'm receiving in years.” He envelopes me in his strong arms and I feel at home. We stay in each other's

arms for a few minutes before he asks if I want something to eat. That's a first! Meli can keep me up all night but he has never prepared food for me except pouring a drink.

“Are you preparing for becoming the father of the year?” I ask raising my eyebrows.

“Father of the century darling. Wait and watch how I will love and pamper my boy. I hope you prepared to feel jealous.” He kisses me on the neck with his warm lips sending shivers all over my body. My clit is happy already. Ever since I met him I'm trying to control my sexual desires but failing dismally.

Whenever he touches me I feel everything down my worst tightening and anticipation taking over my whole being. With Meli you never know what to expect he's a pro when it comes to sex positions and knowing exactly where to hit. I tilt my head trying to kiss him but he stops me.

“No not right now. I know you can't get enough of me but food is important especially now that you have to eat for two. Now come with me to the kitchen let me show you my culinary skills. He

scoops me up and goes to the kitchen where he makes me sit on the counter. He opens the double door fridge taking out spring onions, tomatoes, eggs, thyme and the whole enchiladas.

“Do you even know how to cook? Forget cooking, can you make a cup of coffee?” I tease.

“Wait and watch. These hands are not only good for turning spanners but in many other things too.” Hearing him say that I chuckle. He's right those hands are blessed in so many ways one can never imagine. I watch him slicing the tomatoes nicely his muscles flexing making me drool. Dear Almighty, thank you for such a yummy and caring soon-to-be husband.

“When are we going to tell your parents about the baby?” He hesitates for a moment before smiling.

“Not now. For now let's keep this a secret until the first trimester is over. According to tradition that's the right way of doing these things.” Oh? I know nothing about traditions, social norms and all of that. My parents died before they could teach me all

of those things. I wish they were still here to see how great I've done for myself and my little brother, they'd be so happy.

“It’s okay. I don't know much about traditions except for those regarded as binding as law so I will follow your lead on this one.” He steps closer to me and kisses my forehead.

“Good girl. Mom was asking when you will visit them?”

“Father-in-law doesn't like me darling. I don't know why but I feel like until he accepts that you broke up with your ex will he find a place for me in his heart.”

“He will come around don't worry about it. I will convince him that you are the one that I love.”

The omelette looks really appetizing to eye and I'm salivating already. He prepared a very nice breakfast and I'm surprised he even knows how to set the table putting cutlery, platters and glasses like how they do in movies.

“I'm impressed. Who taught you to do all of this?”

“My ex--- shit I'm sorry. I didn't mean to--”

“It's fine. You don't have to guard your mouth always and keep tiptoeing around her name. She's your past and I'm your present and the future.”

Honestly I'm hurt that there's a girl out there who taught my man how to cook and to set the table. What else did she teach him? How to muff a pussy?

“Babe? I'm sorry I brought her name up.” I'm sure the hurt and jealous is visible on my face.

“It's fine.” I smile. He dishes up for me and pours juice in my glass while he serves himself coffee.

“Why am I not drinking coffee? ”

“Because you are pregnant darling. We don't want the little one to be affected by caffeine.” Oh? He knows tips about pregnancy too? I think I'm reading too much into this. His phone rings.

“Dad...yes...okay I'm on my way.” He drops the phone on the table and sadly looks at me.

“What?”

“I have to go and meet dad and the uncles. It's about the lobola negotiations.” Oh? When is all this coming to an end? I'm trying to enjoy with my husband. “I will be back before you know it.”

NARRATED.

Suku's white MASERATI GRANCABRIO MC V8 drives through the Ncube house. Meli's father sadly steps out of the house and look at her as she parks the car and gracefully walks towards the entrance. Whenever she visits her in-laws she makes sure to dress accordingly and today she even has a stylish headwrapper on.

“Father-in-law.” She respectfully greets him.

“Daughter-in-law.” He greets back. “Where is my granddaughter?”

“I'm sorry father-in-law but I'm trying to protect her from all of this. I don't want my girl to grow up an angry and bitter girl because she witnessed the

arguments of her parents. She's precious to me and I will do anything to protect her--”

“What are you doing here bitch!” Meli’s mother cusses at Suku who genuinely smiles in return.

“Good afternoon mother-in-law.” Suku greets her.

“Are you here to destroy my son's newly found happiness? How much do you want now? Since you are used to chowing his money!” Suku sadly looks at Meli’s mother. Meli drives in and his heart almost stops when his eyes land on his forever gorgeous wife. He quickly gets out of the car and literally runs to her attacking her with a hug. Suku tearfully hugs back but quickly pulls out.

“When did you arrive babe? Why didn't you let me know? Amy will be very happy she's been missing you--”

“Can we all get inside?” They all follow Meli’s father inside. Meli’s mother keeps throwing daggers at Suku.

“What is all this? Dad you said something important but now I find my wife here of which I didn't even

know she's back in the country--”

“It’s important Meli.” His heart almost stops. She never calls him with his first name. “I’ve been in the country for long enough to know that you have a new family. I’m not hurt because you are leaving me but I’m disappointed in you for trying to hide such a big thing from me and your daughter--”

“Babe--”

“Let her finish Meli.” His father reprimands.

“I believe love is a sacred feeling to be shared with only one partner not two. For that reason I asked father-in-law to call you here so we can end this before you build your new relationship on lies. A strong relationship foundation is build on honesty, trust and love. I won't ask you what went wrong between us--”

“Can you just shut up and give him the papers to sign! My son is well off and now can enjoy his money without funding your expensive lifestyle with your spoiled brat daughter--”

“Mom can you shut up! I dont have money but she’s

multimillionaire.... ”

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 34

NARRATED.

“Mom can you shut up! I don't have money but she's a multimillionaire--”

“What?” Meli's mother looks she just saw her ancestors in flesh and blood. “Son what are you saying? Are you sure you are not drunk? Did she bewitch you or something--”

“Mom when I got Suku pregnant she was just starting her degree and we later got married

because I love her. She always had a dream, not only a dream but a vision which she worked hard to see it materialize--”

“Go straight to the point Meli! This bitch can not be richer than you? Let's not talk about Zamo--”

“Mom you don't know my wife because you've always hated her. She's a multi award winning author, scriptwriter, film director and a financial advisor who owns that very same company your boss always takes financial advice from, Tsholofelo Investments and Advising Firm--”

“Meli are you sure you not confusing her with someone else--” Meli's mother is in denial.

“Can you let me finish? She's the same person who wrote your favorite series ‘Invisible Scars, Broken’ and wrote the book you always quote from when reprimanding dad! She wrote Precious Rosé! She's Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa!” Meli's mother faints upon hearing Suku's full name.

“Mother-in-law?” Suku runs to the kitchen and brings water for Meli's mother. After a few minutes

she regains her strength but is still in a state of shock.

“You-you knew?” Meli’s mother asks her husband.
“You knew but you let me continue to hate and abuse her? How could you?”

“I tried telling you but you said you didn't care who she was. Even when she got married you were not interested in hearing who she was. I'm sorry to say but she's also the founder of Tsholofelo/ Hope Foundation--”

“No! This can't be true-- You mean she owns the organization that pays for my brothers’ fees and even helps poor people. No this can not be true! You are all lying to me--” She removes her Brazilian weave feeling hot all of a sudden.

“Next time you log in to the internet do your research woman. Also don't judge people without knowing their truth. Not all rich people flaunt their riches on Instagram and Facebook. Where did you think she got the Masseratti? Or you thought it's just a car like your Honda fit?”

“How come? How did she become a millionaire? I mean that only happens for the likes of Beyonce, Kim K and Rihanna?”

“Her films mom, her films are a hit and her two companies are doing great. Many businesses ask for her financial advice before taking a decision, people respect her except you of course!”

“Uhhmm... I think that's irrelevant can we continue with the order of this meeting. I asked my lawyers to draft the divorce papers here they are.” Meli feels like air is leaving his lungs, like someone just punched him on an empty stomach.

“Babe you can't do this to me. I can explain please give me a chance--” Suku sighs handing him a pen.

“Meli? You made a choice when you mocked our marriage. Marriage is a sacred bond not to be toyed with and what you did is the utmost disrespect to the holy matrimony I've ever witnessed. I left for three months and you are already engaged to someone else? Is this how little you valued our marriage? You even lied to your daughter, please

sign the papers--”

“It was a game! Zamo was a stupid bet game my friends put me to--”

“A what?” His father is shocked so is Suku and his mother.

“It was a bet father I'm sorry, I'm sorry babe please forgive me. Zamo was a regular client at the garage everyone adored her but I just didn't see what the hype was about because I already had a sophisticated woman in my life. One day my coworkers were talking about her slim waist and what not that's when I asked what was so special about her and got to know she's a tough lawyer. There's a theory about lawyer ladies being the hardest to knock off their feet because of their educational background. My friends placed a bet of a Legend E45 to give to whoever among us get to lay her first. I took the challenge, to me it was all a funny game. When she called one day saying her car broke down out of town I took the chance to win the bet. I went to help her and she couldn't stop looking at me until we had sex in my car. I thought

I'd just show the recorded video to my coworkers, get the car and walk away but she saw a potential husband in me. She continued coming on me until I lied to our daughter and Char and moved out to a rented full furnished apartment. I tried telling her the truth but after knowing her truth I felt sorry for her and I couldn't add to her sorrows. I thought I'd talk to you babe when you come back and explain everything I'm sorry. Please help me explain this to her.” Suku wipes tears from her face.

“A bet? Really Meli? Is this how you see women? You have a daughter but you saw Zamo fit to be equaled to a car? A car Meli? How could you do this to a human being?” She closes her eyes fighting her tears. “You know what? I'm no longer hurt that you made a mockery of our marriage but because you see women as objects exchangeable for any engine.”

“I'm sorry please help me out of it--”

“You are not getting out of this Meli. Sign the papers, go and tell Zamo the truth and start on a clean slate with her. I can't believe even after watching me fight

for women ever since you met me you still became just like all of them! You are not different to all the predators we so ever work hard to protect the girl child from. Please sign I have to go and pick my children from school.”

“Daughter-in-law can't you please forgive him for this mistake?”

“No father-in-law I'm sorry. Not when he sees women as things. I'm sorry I can't--”

“I'm begging you babe--”

“If it's about the cars you can have them Meli they are registered in your name after all. You can still visit your daughter anytime you wish to but communicate with me first. One more thing I wanted to gift you this on your birthday but I might as well do it now.” Suku gives him another envelope.

“The garage and the hotel?” Meli asks.

“It has always been your dream to own the two. I bought the garage before I left for the shooting and the hotel deal got finalized yesterday. You can keep all the money in our joint account--”

“I don't want money! I want you please forgive me--”

The Mkhizes pace up and down in the waiting room.

“Mommy is going to be alright, right daddy?” Owami says sniffing.

“Yes son mommy is going to be alright. ” Just then the doctor comes out of the operating room with a sad long face.

“Doctor what happened?” They all stare at the doctor waiting for answers.

“I'm sorry--” Qhu grabs the doctor by the collar as Mkhize's knees fail him and he collapses on the floor.

“Sorry for what doctor? What happened in there? Tell me--” Qhu says shaking the doctor.

“Stop! Qhubekani stop!” Khule pulls him back separating him from the doctor. “Doctor what are you sorry for?” Khule calmly questions.

“We lost the baby--”

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THE BRIDE.

Thank you so much for the 2022 followers I'm really grateful and honored.

Insert 35.

Chapter Song: Deborah Fraser - Uma kungenxa.

Zie's POV.

Uma kungenxa yezono zami mkhulule ahambe baba ubengakakoni. (If it's all about my sins let his spirit rest in peace dear father for he was just an angel, he never wronged you.) Life. It is the Lord

who gives and it's Him who takes too. I know I've done so many horrible things in my life I certainly won't see the gates of heaven but what was my son's sin in all of this? My mother, long before she forgot she has a daughter by the name ZakwaNgwenya used to tell me that every and each person shall atone for his or her sins, why did my son have to die for my sins? Are my sins so unforgivable that God decided to punish me in such a painful manner?

I used to be a good girl, people called me names, they slapped me on the right cheek and I happily gave them the left one, they stepped on my toes and I apologized for their mistakes, I helped everyone I saw in need, my father always said I had a heart of gold, people did horrible things to me but they continued to live their lives like nothing happened! I waited for karma to at least knock on their doors but she never came! I kneeled down and prayed to God asking for him to at least make them realize they were wrong but Him too turned his back on me! I decided to be the karma and I get the worst

punishment ever? Why? Why are you so unfair dear Lord? Mom believes You are fair and just God but where is justice in all of this? I didn't start the war they did! I didn't order a hitmen on Anelisa she did, not once, not twice, countless times but still she's a happy free woman. Whatever unforgivable sin I did to You don't ever forgive me for it because I'm going to commit an unforgivable sin with everyone watching and not even the gates of hell can stop me from doing so. That's a promise!

“Sweetheart--” Hearing my husband's shaky voice throws me off the edge I let the flood gates of tears open wider. “It's okay my love--”

“It's not! It's not okay! My son didn't deserve to die for my sins! I put Anelisa in jail not him, I'm the one taking revenge on them not my son-- he's innocent, an angel with no sin at all, he deserves to live, he deserves to see the world like every other children--” The painful lump in my throat threatens to choke the life out of me as I cough hard and start vomiting blood!

“Darling--” Air is leaving my lungs, it feels like my

diaphragm is cut into too, I gasp struggling to breathe. “Doctor! Nurse! Doctor--” I'm drifting, drifting away to the familiar dark place, it's cold it's not suitable for a human body.. “Doctor--” I faintly hear my husband screaming. “Zie stay with me babe please don't do this to yourself--” His voice is becoming more faint each and every passing second while the darkness becomes even thicker around me I swear I can slice it with a knife.

“ZakwaNgwenya--” That sounds like my brother's voice but I can't feel him, I'm shivering, it's super freezing here.

“Ntombi--” Only my older sister uses that name but I can't feel her too. She hates me why would she be here to welcome me in this dark place? Why is she calling out to me all of a sudden?

“Mom!” Mommy!” I can clearly tell it's Sbu's voice calling out to me. It feels like I'm falling into a dark endless pit and not even Mntimande is strong enough to help me out. I'm trying to call out for help but this darkness engulfing me is blocking my voice and my view, I can't scream nor am I able to see

anything. All I see is infinite darkness.

“Zee! ZakwaNgwenya--” It sounds like my father, the man who named me ZakwaNgwenya calling out to me. I know most of you think it's a surname but it's a name. Yes ZakwaNgwenya is my third name. My grandmother named me Zinhle then my father completed it by “Intombi ZakwaNgwenya” meaning the Ngwenya girls are beautiful. I'm still trying to find my way out of this thick darkness when baby cries deafen my ears and everything goes blank.....

NARRATED.

“Doctor what's going on?” Mkhize Sne asks with fresh tears streaming down his cheeks.

“She just slipped into coma--”

“What? Doctor no! Do something I can't lose my wife--”

“Calm down Sir. Sometimes when a person goes through a very painful ordeal his/her mind system

decides to switch off until he's able to deal with the pain. Sir your wife has two bullet wounds and she just lost a baby, she woke up before the expected time and now her body is failing to deal with her pain.”

“I can't lose her--”

“I promise you won't lose her Sir. She will be well taken care of and she will regain her consciousness.”

“After how long?” Khule asks running his hand through his hair frustratedly and fighting his own tears.

“I can not guarantee that Mr Mkhize. For now we all have to let her rest and no one should remind her of her pain.” They both nod.

“Thank you doctor.”

Drips all over her body, a heart monitor, the ECG machine which keeps beeping are the things surrounding Zinhle right now. Mkhize walks in but quickly turns away wiping his tears. Khule comforts tries to comfort him.

“I need fresh air.” Mkhize Snr saying hurriedly walking towards the exit. Khule receives a call from Gugu whom he informs in which ward they are. He walks into the room where Zie is sleeping peacefully like she's not in pain at all.

“Mom?” He sighs. “I've never told you this before but I love you. I love you so much mom for bringing happiness into our lives. We had everything, the money, the social status, expensive cars but not the genuine love you have shown us. Please be strong for us mom. If you become weak then dad will die and the whole family will fall apart. I know you can do it please pull through if not for us do it for Owami --” Khule wipes a stray tear.

“Hey.” Gugu wipes her own tears before hugging her husband.

“She's not responding?” Says Khule trying hard not to cry.

“She will pull through. She's strong and tough and she will never leave father-in-law alone. Did you kill Ane already?” Gugu changes the subject.

“Let's talk outside.”

Meli's POV.

She's left! My wife of eight years left me just like that! One silly mistake cost me a virtuous woman this world will never ever be able to produce again. A woman of substance, a woman of valor, I don't read the bible much but Proverbs 31 was sure written about her. I met Suku when she was doing form one at Makhandeni secondary and I was in doing form five at Njube High. She was tiny, almost invisible until she delivered her speech from her head, I was left in awe. From that day I knew she had a greater future in whatever she would choose to do although my school mates called her a feminist I saw a young girl prepared to change the world starting by herself. I never saw her again until when she started doing Accounting and Finance at Lupane State university. She was still still the same

girl who stood by her beliefs and I fell in love with her. We dated for about a year without sex then one day she kissed me and we ended up having sex which gave us our child. We were madly in love, she never regretted falling pregnant on her first semester and her parents trusted and supported her in everything. Her biological parents died when she was two months old then their family helper adopted and raised her because the relatives only cared about the riches but not her. Suku was never a rich kid hell she and her family wouldn't even afford a meal sometimes but that never stopped her from dreaming.

She was already a published poetess and would sometimes called to recite her inspiring poems and to talk to school children motivating them. She worked tirelessly every day, not even once did she fail her exams while she kept writing her scripts and books. To her writing is therapeutic and keeps her sane. She never broke through the film industry until after graduation when she volunteered to edit

someone's script for free and the movie made waves internationally. The producers were kind enough to mention her and that's how her film production career kickstarted. During her university years her mother was taking care of our Amahle because my mom hated Suku from the onset. I was hustling for my family in every way I could until she started earning.

I'd be lying if I say in all these years my wife ever made me feel less of a man or did she ever disrespect me. Even when her bank account kept increasing zeros she continued to be a respectful wife who did her all of her duties without complaining. No helper of ours ever cleaned our bedroom, cooked for me or washed my clothes she did all of that by herself.....

“Dude your phone is ringing--” The barman brings me back to reality. Zamo is calling me what do I say to her? Do I want to see her? My life is ruined because of the stupid bet!

“I hate you!” My phone smashes on the wall breaking into tiny pieces. Tears fall afresh, I find

myself lost and missing my wife. The pain cuts in my chest and slices through the soft part of my heart. “I love her-- I love her man--”

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 36.

Suku's POV.

Love is a beautiful thing. It brightens and add colors in one's life when it comes but when it leaves it breaks one's heart into tiny pieces until there's nothing left. How could Meli do this to me? We vowed before the Lord to be each other's everything until death do us part but he had to mock our marriage like this? How could he?

“Tsala! Chomi! (Friend!)” Lee’s voice defies the the soundproof walls as it echoes. The door flies open and she walks in still wearing her white coat and high heels. I wonder how she manages to take care of patients wearing such high heels. “Hayibo wathula ngikubiza kuhle? (Why are you not answering when I’m calling out to you?)” This friend of mine is a pure Motswana who dated a Ndebele guy and now she speaks Ndebele like one of us.

“Lee? My children are busy studying can you turn your voice down please--” I try to divert her from my burning eyes.

“Friend you are crying?” She envelopes me in her arms and I scream all the pain out. It hurts, the pain is deeper than I had imagined.

“It hurts Lee--” My voice breaks as a painful lump rises in my throat. “It hurts--”

“Shhh it's okay my friend. Love and pain are part our our lives friend. Cry all those feelings out, get up dust yourself and live again. You will be fine sweetheart.” She wipes my tears and hugs me once

again. “It’s okay to cry my love yes even the CEO of the great Tsholofelo companies is permitted to cry.” I find myself smiling with fresh tears on my face.

“Thank you.” Where would I be without my dear friend?

“Friends don't thank each other sweetheart. It's my duty as your friend to see to it that you are okay. Now that we've taken care of that painful lump in your throat what was his excuse?” I narrate the whole thing to her. “A bet? Like stupid Meli risked your marriage for a Legend 45 when he has a fleet of cars? What's wrong with these men?”

“I feel sorry for that lady. What if she loves him while he's busy betting on her feelings? I hope and pray she's strong enough to handle the truth else this will break and ruin her forever. I know what these kinds of things can do to a woman's self-esteem. I've consoled and comforted many of them some committed suicide after learning the truth. I'm really scared for her--”

“Nono? I know you want to change the world but

worrying about everyone out there is not your duty. You have Amy and Prudy to worry about and me of course that lawyer lady is a grown ass woman she'll will sort out her issues. You might be surprised to see Meli marrying her and living a happily ever after. Men are confused beings and they don't really know what love is as long as there's a pussy involved then they are ready to settle down. Stop worrying yourself too much about it nurse your heart and move on with a smile that you always carry on your face.”

“Thank you once again--”

“I will slap you if you continue thanking me like that. Let's go downstairs I brought the whole Italian restaurant with me--”

“You did?”

“Anything for my little Princess. Char called me earlier and told me the little ones are craving Italian food and she was scared to leave you alone in the house so I promised to sort the matter out.” I hug her once more. Dear God thank you for sending

these two beautiful souls into my life. Parenting is easier when your child has other people she knows she can rely on. My mom, Char and Lee are my superheroes I will forever be grateful for their presence in my life.

Qhu's POV.

Even the finest A grade of cocaine straight from Colombia is not doing the trick. The pain I'm feeling right now is deeper than all the pains I've ever felt combined. How could Ane do this to Zee? She doesn't deserve all the pain! She deserves a break from all the heartache. All her life she's been trying to belong somewhere, to find genuine true love but fate is always in her way. My child? How could God allow this to happen? Why? Why?

“Why?” I grab the sheet with cocaine on it and dispose it into the trash bin. I feel like someone just stabbed me in the heart. “Zie? My true love--” The

door flies open and I'm face to face with my emotional angry dad. He grabs me by the collar and slams me on the wall.

“Where is she? Where is she?” Tears stream freely down his cheeks.

“I--I don't know--”

“I said where's she damn it!” He hisses making me shiver.

“I-im sorry--”

“Sorry for what? I want to see your wife right now!” He stomps his foot on the ground.

“Dad she ran away I can't find her--”

“You better find her before I do because then your children will be motherless. That's a promise!” He slams the door behind him and I collapse on the cold tiled floor taking my head in my hands and tears flow freely down my cheeks.

Zamo's POV.

It's after midnight and Meli still hasn't come home yet, called or texted. I called his sister and she told me he left from there a long time ago now I'm getting worried about him. What if something happened to my fiance? The door creaks open as he staggers in holding a bottle of Castle Lager.

"Sweetheart?" I dash to help him he misses a step and lands on his knees and hands, the bottle shatters spilling the beverage all over the place.

"Meli?" I try to help him up but he pulls me down for a kiss on my lips.

"I love you wifey." He says smiling. Wifey? I know he's drunk but this makes me blush.

"Meli stand up. Come on babe help me out here stand up--" He tries standing up but staggers forward taking us both down. "Ouch!" I cry out. He massages my ankles looking straight into my eyes with his sleepy drunk eyes and my clit is happy already.

“Sorry wifey husby is a little drunk today.” He moves his face to meet mine and French kisses me. He tastes of tequila shots, Castle Lager, mints, his warm tongue twirls around mine as I moan. He trails his fingers on my bare thighs his lips not leaving mine. He's drunk but the speed at which he unhooks my bra is amazing. With one swift move he tears off my T-shirt exposing my breasts. He fondles my breast with the other hand while the other moves to my already wet panties and draw circles on my vulva. My body involuntary shakes under his touch, he pushes my panties to the the side and his fingers play with my folds.

“Babe--mmh--” I moan. He stops but before I can express my disappointed he starts nibbling on my already pebbled nipples. He continues to nibble and suck my breasts while his fingers tease my folds. He fumbles with his belt which I help him to unclasp and pull down freeing his erection....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 37.

NARRATED.

The next morning Zamo wakes up earlier than usual and goes to the kitchen to prepare a non-greasy breakfast for Meli who vomited through out the night. Having a drunk men in the house somehow got her tired but part of her is happy he didn't take any whore from the bar and woke up God knows where. The fact that he came back to her in such a drunken state fulfills her inner soul. She's busy humming to Mafikizolo's song.

“You know that I love you baby

Angifun' omunye I want you baby

I could do anything for you

Sthandwa sam' yeah

My baby I been thinking about you

What is it that you done to me oh

Njalo ngak'cabanga

Hlala ngithetha ngawe

Did you pour me a love potion oh

My baby I can't stop thinking about you....”

“Hey.” Meli hugs her from behind still feeling a little bit fuzzy. “Good morning. I'm sorry about yesterday--” Zamo turns and kisses him on the lips despite him having not brushed his teeth yet.

“It's okay. It's normal for a man to get drunk sometimes just don't make it a habit else I won't tolerate it.”

“Noted babe. I hope I didn't disturb you too much. I'm sorry--”

“It's okay hun. Come one go take a cold shower and come down for breakfast.” She watches him as he climbs the steps. His behavior somehow reminds

her of her father. He wasn't a drunkard but he'd sometimes get really drunk to an extent of coming home around 4 in the morning. He would loudly knock on the main door and if their mother took more than ten seconds to open the door he would slap her hard for disobeying the man of the house and in the morning she'd prepare a very tasty breakfast for him. They'd be so happy together like her father wasn't the same man who slapped her in the wee hours of the morning. At least Meli did not hit her instead he made love to her. A call comes through her phone and she answers.

“Advocate Nomzamo Langa, good morning?”

“Good morning ma'am. I'm calling to remind you of your eight thirty meeting with Mr Mandisa--”

“Flip! Thanks for reminding me I will be there on time.” She disconnects the call and dashes upstairs to join Meli in the steamy warm shower.

At the Mkhize mansion the mood is very somber as they all try to force breakfast down their throats.

Gugu looks at the whole family and finds herself feeling emotional all of a sudden. The family is incomplete without her mother-in-law. Khule sighs before pushing his plate aside and walking away.

“I don't think I'm hungry mom. Can I go see grandma after school?” Thabo asks hiding her tears.

“I will take you to her.” Responds the dejected Mkhize.

“Thanks. Bye.” Thabo and her brother pick their school bags and leave.

“Father-in-law? I think you have to try and eat something--”

“How? How can I allow myself to eat when my wife is lying on that bed almost lifeless? How do I enjoy my food when I just lost a son? My son daughter-in-law? My last born is gone--” His voice trails off and he angrily pushes the chair and leaves in a huff.

Qhu remains seated on the table wondering if his father knows that Zie was carrying his son?

“Don't you fucking tell me that shit!” Mkhize yells on the phone. “How come all of you are failing to find a

single injured woman? Huh? Do you want me to do the job I pay you for?” He's fuming.

“Boss we--”

“I want results damn it! I want that woman in my warehouse in the next five hours if not consider yourselves dead!” He frustratedly smashes his phone on the wall.

Somewhere on the main road to Harare Ane is fast asleep in the back seat while her driver is driving at 220 km/h listening to music. Another driver going the opposite way flashes at him alerting him of the traffic cops that are a few minutes away. He slows down and Ane opens her eyes.

“What’s wrong?” She asks with a sleepy voice.

“Traffic cops ahead boss nothing serious. How's your leg?”

“I think the pills are still working. It's hurting but not too much. Remember we have to stop in Gweru and

exchange cars. We could have used the plane but then Zinhle would know about my travel arrangements.”

“I understand boss. You also have to change your clothes before they put us in trouble.”

“Yeah yeah. Make sure those cops don't make us pull over I'm really not in the mood to deal with these hungry slaves.”

At Suku's house Char is busy preparing breakfast for her boss who seems to have overslept today because even the children have gone to school. She puts everything on the tray and goes upstairs. She lightly knocks and goes in. Suku is still fast asleep so is Lee in the next room.

“Sisi? Sis Suku?” Char shakes her and she wakes up.

“Eish Char? Good morning what time is it?” Suku asks rubbing her eyes.

“Forget about the time Sis I brought you breakfast.”

Says Char opening the windows.

“Lee? Has she gone to work? We slept late.” They drank wine drowning Suku’s sorrows until they felt a bit fuzzy.

“No she's still asleep.”

“She has to be at work by 10 am latest please do wake her up. I think I'm going to work from home today I have a serious headache. Mom called me yesterday--”

“And you cried yourself to sleep. I know you miss him but please don't be too hard on yourself Sis. He doesn't deserve you.”

“What do you know about love Char?”

“I know that whenever I decide to fall in love I'm going to photocopy my heart, carry the copy and leave the original one at home.” Suku laughs in disbelief.

Zie's POV.

The place looks beautiful, it's muddy and smells of fresh flowers. My siblings and I are running around playing. NK tries to catch me but I run faster than him and he catches Smilo instead.

“I won I won!” He screams jumping up and down.

“No you didn't. You haven't caught me. Catch me first--” He runs towards me I try to run but I slip and fall face first losing my two front teeth in the process. Blood drips from my gums as I scream like a lunatic. I'm scared of blood, it makes my skin crawl, my hair rises and I feel like my death is near whenever I see blood although I don't know how and what death looks like.

“Calm down Zie. Zie don't cry--” My siblings are now surrounding me trying to comfort me. Mom comes out of the kitchen and rushes to us.

“What happened!”

“She fell--”

“Eish Zie! How many times do I have to tell to stop playing like boys? Playing is the only thing you are good at yet you can't even write a proper sentence

at your age! You age mates fluently speak English but you are about to write your grade seven exams yet you still struggle to even write in your own native language--”

“Mom she's bleeding--”

“Let her bleed to death if she wishes.” She clicks her tongue and leaves me still bleeding.

“Come on let's clean help her up so we can clean her up.” NK says helping me up while Smilo runs to the kitchen to bring warm water and salt.

“Here!” She's also terrified. They help me clean my mouth.....

“ZakwaNgwenya mntakababa--(Zinhle my sister--)” My brother's voice sounds so near and so far at the same time. “Vuka ntombiyakithi. SingoNgwenya thina asililahli ithawulo kanjalo nje vuka dadewethu siyixazulule lendaba. Um' ungavuki ngizobabulala bonke oMkhize kanye nomangoye bakubo....(Wake up Zie. We are the Ngwenyas and we don't give up just like that. If you don't wake up then I will wipe out all the Mkhizes including their pets--)” I can tell

he's hurt as his tears fall on my face.

“Zie wake up Sis. Wake up and avenge yourself--”

“NK!” Mntimande scolds.

“Hayibo mfowethu kwamele avuke lomuntu ayiphindisele kungenjalo ngizomphindiselela mina! (She has to wake up else I will avenge on her behalf!)” Am I dreaming or my brothers really here?

NARRATED.

Mkhize receives a call from his boys informing him that they have found Anelisa the same time at the hospital the ECG machine makes odd sounds.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 38.

Mr Ndabezinhle Mkhize's POV.

After receiving a call about Anelisa I also got a call from Mntimande that my wife has been woke up. I had to rush to the hospital and meet my girl. I went and found her in her brother's arms with no emotion on her face at all. The had removed most of the drips from her body.

"Hun please talk to me." I tried to talk to her but she didn't respond.

"I think we should give her time to adjust. She just woke up from a coma and it's normal for her to be shocked." Says NK.

"I guess you are right." I said convincing myself.

"Take me home please--" Zie blurted out.

"Hun? Zee?" Hearing her speak really brought joy to my heart.

“Asimuseni ekhaya uzokwazi ukuphumula akudingayo ekhaya hayi la (Let's take her home where she will get all the rest she needs)” Mntimande reasoned.

We took her home and now here she is glaring at Anelisa like she's a stranger. Her face is giving nothing off at all. Ane wet herself the moment I walked in with Zee. To think this fat pig is still my daughter-in-law makes me wanna puke. I know my son is stupid but marrying this Princess was the most stupid thing he's ever done in his life.

“Let her go.” Zie says and leaves the warehouse. What? How in the hell do I just let her go?

“Zee--” She raises her finger silencing me. I know she means every word of what she just said and I guess this fat pig is one lucky bastard because I'm not about to disobey my wife's orders. “Boys? Let her go.” Ane smiles her devilish smile which screams victory.

“And then? What re you doing father? Why are you

letting her go?” Khule is confused and angry at the same time.

“Zee wants her to be set free—”

“Come on dad mom is not thinking straight she just woke up from a coma. Her mind is probably still deep in sleep you can't really listen to her. This arrogant and ungrateful princess killed your son dad! My brother or have you forgotten that? Well, I haven't forgotten dad—” Khule pulls out his gun but his father steps in front of him.

“You not disrespecting my wife while I'm still alive. Wait until I die not when I'm still breathing.” Khule calms down and puts his gun back while Anelisa laughs out loud clapping her hands.

“I told you brother-in-law! I told you this old man will always choose his wife's side—”

“Shut up!” Khule screams. “Just shut the fuck up okay?” Khule fumes.

“Well let me shut up and leave this madhouse. By the way I will be throwing a party to celebrate my victory, go on vacation then I will be back in this

mansion. I'm still the daughter-in-law of this family enjoy your freedom while it lasts.” This daughter of a bastard! I'm sure going to kill her not today but I will definitely kill her.

Zamo's POV

Everytime I want to ask Meli something he always finds a way to distract me. I don't know why I feel like he's hiding something from me. This feeling is like the same feeling I felt when Tshiamo divorced me nine days after our marriage. Today I will have to find out what he's hiding before I lose it trying to figure it out on my own. The drive to my house is a very long one today, I'm really tired from all the talking and negotiating I did with the client. He's one hell of a client and working with him is always a challenge.

“Nomzamo Langa on speaker, hello?”

“Sawubona ntokazi (Hi lady)” Mntimande’s deep voice has me blushing already. I don't know why he makes me blush but anyway, he's a charmer.

“Hi. To what do I owe this surprise?”

“Bengikukhumbule nje bengifuna nokwaz ukba wasala njani. Ngiyaxolisa angikwazanga ukukushayela ucingo masinya ngasuka ngabambeka emsebenzini. Ukahle kodwa umuntu wakoLanga? (I just missed you and I wanted to know if you are okay. I'm sorry I couldn't call earlier I got busy with work. How are you Zamo?)”

“I'm good and thanks for checking up on me. How's Zie? I couldn't come to see her today I got held up at work.”

“Uvukile kodwa uthukile kafune kukhuluma namuntu ngicabanga ukuthi umqondo wakhe awukafuni ukubhekana nalento eyenzekile. Inhliziyo yami idabukile ngoba angikwazanga ukumsiza udadewethu (She woke up but she just zoned out. I think she's not ready to deal with what happened to her. I'm really sad I wasn't there to protect my little

sister it really breaks my heart to see her like that.)

“It’s not your fault Mntimande don’t beat yourself about it. Zinhle is a fighter I’m sure she will fight this and come out victorious.”

“Asethembe njalo (Let’s hope so).” He disconnects the call as I drive through my yard. Talking to him is always a breath of fresh air. He’s not a man of many words but his few words are soothing. I park my car and sigh before stepping down and locking it.

“Honey I’m home!” I shout kicking off my stilettos.

“Hey babe.” He comes downstairs busy with whatever shit he’s always doing on his phone.

“What’s amusing in your phone?” He’s smiling to himself like a lunatic.

“Nothing serious. It’s the comments from one of S-Kay Books WhatsApp group. Can you believe this Mihla guy is hitting on his best friend’s sister? Oh and Elena has her eyes on this new kid--”

“Melisizwe!” I yell at him feeling all the anger in me

filling every vein of my body. “Why are you so obsessed with this Sukoluhle girl? Huh? You follow her everywhere like her little puppy and you blush at the mention of her name what's wrong with you? Why did you come to me if it's her you want--”

“Zamo it's just her books--”

“I'm so fucking tired of hearing about her and her crappy books! You better know where you stand or get out of my house!”

“Zamo--”

“Just just leave me alone don't touch me! What are you hiding you pig--” Meli slaps me hard I stagger back and hit my head on the wall. He pins me on the wall and I swear I see my life flashing past my eyes.

“Don't you ever call me names! Don't provoke me Nomzamo. I've been really nice to your pathetic rejected self! How dare you call me a pig--” He raises his hand once more and I feel warm liquid flowing down my thighs.....

NARRATED

[<<The beginning of an end to the Mkhize misery.>>]

It's been like a ghost house in the Mkhize mansion, there's no joy or laughter heard in the children, it's like a part of them died with the silence of Zie.

Mkhize Snr is always locked up in his bedroom, Nothabo has started to be rebellious and Gugu seems to be the only sane member of the family. Being a health practitioner, a nurse, she has seen worse and secretly she has consulted a therapist and that is why she is the only one who seems sane and has her wits together but now she needs to help her family especially Zie to find closure and move on or this family will be in tatters so she asks her therapist if he can recommend a family therapist who deals with difficult traumatic non communicative patients for her family and is given a number.

She dials the number and after two rings the phone

is answered.

“Share my life center how can I be of service?”
answers a sweet hypnotic voice.

“Uhhh I would like to consult a therapist, can you book me an appointment with your head therapist because that's who I want, I was referred to by Dr Furgerson and he told me your CEO is the best.”
Gugu says.

“I'm afraid our CEO no longer consults patients except for high profile figures and non communicative trauma patients.” replies the voice.

“Thank you, you have actually grabbed it by its horns and said it correctly, that is the reason I was referred to the Dr especially for that reason, I'm high profile and the patient I want to commit is non communicative.” Gugu answers back. The voice asks who it is but Gugu can not divulge information she just gives the name ‘Mrs GKM’ and tells the voice she is going to drop by in a few minutes to make an official booking and see the head therapist herself.

After a few minutes Gugu walks into the Grey fourstorey building and is met by a female guard who frisks her and asks her to walk into the metal, gun, weapon detector before proceeding to the reception area. This place is a fortress, Gugu can see that there are so many cameras installed some are visible but her coming from the Mkhize family she can also identify spy cameras that look like paintings in the foyer area. When she gets to the reception she gives her initials and her thumb print that is pricked a bit when she presses on the pad and they instantly have all her information, she's then given an identification tag and key card before being instructed to get into the red elevator where she will use her key card and will be transported to the head therapist's floor. Gugu is impressed, she didn't expect the place to be this fortified but she now understands that this centre needs protection if they are to attend to high profile figures.

Gugu's POV

From the background check I made coming here it all makes sense now. Not everyone wants the world to know that they have problems and they consult therapists, because people deem therapy as a white man mentality, Africans don't do that. Share my life in my shoes center was founded by the head therapist because of certain social abnormalities, mostly it was founded for men who are being sexually, physically, mentally, emotionally and psychologically abused in the society but because they are men considered to be the stronger specie of human kind they can not voice out those abuses hence this centre. At this centre you get to share your life, bare your soul out and no one judges you, you are free to be yourself and not pretend to be what the society wants you to be. In this centre you are understood and they help you to understand yourself and be a better person.

Not only is this place about sharing your life but also deals with psycho traumatic patients or mentally challenged people like an asylum. Here in

Zimbabwe most people are taken to Engutsheni mental hospital and the deadliest of them all are found in the Mambo ward. Some of these people are misunderstood by the society hence they are labelled (inhlanya / mipengo). Judging from what my family is going through very soon we will fall under the society's label. Mother-in-law does not talk to anyone she only stares into space and rocks her chair or screams her lungs out breaking everything within her reach. She rarely eats at all, father in law also on the other hand has become the lunatic from hell if he is not holed up in his room, he is barking at everyone or talking to nobody in the ancestor room. Qhue also has become a zombie and back to drugs, he also talks to his mother and the twins. I don't know if he really sees those dead people or drugs are just playing tricks on him. My husband buries himself in the office which has become his sanctuary.

I don't even realize that the elevator has stopped and opened, I'm still deep in my thoughts when I

feel a soft hand touching my hands that's when I snap out of my reverie and I come face to face with a medium height lady in blue stilettos, blue pencil skirt, matching blazer, sky blue blouse and pinkish, purplish oval spectacles and has her hair tied into a Pearl Thusi African hair puff style. This woman smiles at me and says,

“Welcome to my office Mrs Gugulethu Khulekani Mkhize this way please, please be at home and forgive my secretary for being rude to you earlier she didn't know what to do, it's not every time that we see people on this floor. What should I offer you, tea, coffee, water, soda or 100% juice?” Holy cow! How did she know my name because at the reception I only gave my initials I ask myself and choose the latter, 100% apple juice . I think she realizes my frown on the forehead and tells me that they do a background check on every client that walks into the building hence the cameras and the thumb print for security reasons. She tells me that some people come here in the name of consulting but they will be after her clients or fishing out

damaging information about her clients.

“Forgive me for my lack of manners, I have you at a disadvantage I'm Dr Princess Nothabo Ndhlovu-Mlevu. No I'm not a medical doctor I'm an academic doctor but yes I'm a therapist.” She tells me. I ask her how she is a therapist when she didn't study clinical psychology and neither is she a psychiatrist of which she laughs and tells me she did study psychology but majored in the study of the society's behavior ‘Sociology’ instead of the study in an individual's behavior. Wow this woman is so free about herself and because I want to know more about her and her centre before I can commit my family, I ask her a lot of questions and she gladly answers telling me I have nothing to fear for she herself at one time was once in my shoes when she consulted a therapist back in her days. Wow this woman is something else she is actually sharing her life with me no wonder she is successful and respected by other shrinks.

After sharing her life she then asks how she can be

of service and I tell her about my family and how it's on the verge of destruction if they don't receive therapy especially my parents in law Zie and Mkhize Snr. After listening to my story while writing down things in her notebook she asks me how I myself feel of which I tell her that I feel like I'm in a sinking ship and I can't swim. She tells me I did the right thing by taking the first step to healing. After one hour I realize that all the shit load I have been carrying is now lightweight and I didn't even realize I was a patient at all. After we are done she tells me this session was on the house she will bear the cost herself and gives me a signed cheque to drop at the reception and tells me she will make a house call to assess the situation at home then take it from there. She even tells me that it has been ages since she did house calls but because she sees something of herself in one of the family members she will make a house call but the service fee will be the same it won't change. After shaking hands, she herself walks me to the elevator and bids me farewell. It is then that I look at the cheque and file which is written classified that I gasp, one consultation fee

with the head therapist costs US\$1000 but with other therapists in the center ranges from US\$50 to 500 depending on the nature of the therapy, no wonder this place has high tech security and its successful. I sign the classified file and give it to the receptionist and I'm escorted outside to my car by two security detail in plain clothes and told to have a safe journey.

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 39.

Anelisa's POV.

I never thought that defeating Zie will be this easy. I

always thought she was as tough as everyone made her to be. Seeing her so dejected and broken gave me a satisfaction I never thought I was really craving. It had been a while since I saw fear, grief, helplessness and grief all in the face of my enemy. I haven't forgotten Mkhize's threat but if he really is a ruthless dog that he claims to be then he'd have at least tried to avenge his brother's death but because he's just a figure in a suit he let my father go free. Defeating Zinhle feels good and calls for a celebration but I'm not done with the Mkhizes. Qhu is mine, till death do us part and I'm not about to let my children grow up without a mother while I'm still breathing. I will be back and I will rise above to rule that mansion and inherit everything they own. Together with my Qhubekani we will stand against all odds and build an empire that's never been seen before. For now, Ntabeni village here comes your Princess.

“Princess! You are alive?” Dad is so happy to see me.

“What can kill me dad? I'm your daughter after all,

we the Khumalos get whatever we want either the easy way or the hard way.” I smile at him while he inspects my arms which is hung on a sling.

“You were shot? Are you okay my baby?”

“I’m fine dad you know in every war casualties are bound to happen. I’m here and still breathing you must be bringing out your best expensive whiskey and toast to my victory--”

“First tell me what happened? Why did Mkhize let you go? Your boys told me his men abducted you? ”

“That’s because I hit them where it hurts the most dad. I always tell you to think strategically when attacking. Killing your enemy is not an enough punishment but taking away that thing they love the most is. I killed that very thing that bonded them now they are mourning and don't even have the guts to kill me because I won. I defeated Zinhle dad--”

“The Mkhize I know doesn't give up just like that. I think your life is more in danger now than ever before. These people are going to mourn their child

and come for you guns blazing--”

“Dad please! Don't spoil my mood I beg I came here to celebrate then I'm going on a vacation, Mauritius, I guess. Instead of worrying about those toothless dogs please slaughter one of your best well-fed cows and distribute the meat to your people in fact make then ten. Princess is back and everyone has to celebrate with me--”

“I'm doing no such thing! Have you--”

“That wasn't a request daddy dearest but an order. Don't forget my tongue can slip right now and all of this will be over--” My brother, Nqobizitha, the heir apparent to the throne walks towards us with a big smile on his face.

“Anelisa? You are alive you crazy Princess--”

“You didn't even come to my rescue what kind of a brother are you?” I ask hugging him.

“Dad told me today. I didn't know you went to war with your in-laws until earlier today. Are you okay?” Nqobi is not my favorite person and he knows it. At some point I almost killed him, he enjoys throwing

his title to my face and I hate that. I don't know who have informed the maidens of my arrival, they come running to me in order to welcome me. I really don't miss this life of having maidens following on my tail every second of the day. Freedom is out there not in this palace full of rondavels. Sometimes I wonder if it's against the village rules to build a nice house in this palace or my father just enjoys staying in grass-thatched rondavels? Anyway, my beer is calling me in my room and the finest marijuana from Gokwe. Come on let's party the royal style!

Zamo's POV.

After what Meli did to me the other day I don't know if this love I still feel for him is genuine or I'm under a spell. I still can't believe he slammed me on the wall, his face was so scary I peed on myself. Instead of apologizing he just left and never called, texted or even to check on me and the baby. My dad

would do the same thing, he had a secret home where he'd just disappear to after a fight with mom and mom would call him asking him to come back home. They'd be in love for sometime, they fought but it was not an everyday thing and mom swore dad loved her until her last breath. She used to say that a man who loves you has the right to discipline you when you are wrong and it's you who should apologize to keep the peace at home. If apologizing is what it will take to bring Meli back then so be it. If Zie was here she'd tell me what to do about these feelings but my friend is still mute. I went to see her a couple of times and it really hurts me to see my powerful Stallone like that. She's now more of a dead person than a living girl she's always been. I'm not a doctor but I think there's more to her condition than just losing her baby. She only speaks after a few days, she says only a few words and goes back to her mute self. I really miss my friend but I miss my fiance even more. I'm driving to his flat praying and hoping I will find him there, alone. If I ever find him with someone else then I will die. I park my car take a deep breath and step down. My heart is

beating so vigorously it feels like it will fall off the rib cage. Before I can knock a lady storms out of the house screaming at Meli.

“You are abusing my patience Meli and I fucking hate it!”

“Babe wait I'm sorry I lied about my health--” I'm standing right there frozen on the spot. What is this woman doing here? Meli is even addressing her as “babe”? Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa in Meli's flat? I want to run as fast as I can but my whole body has been paralyzed not even my lips are able to move. “What are you doing here Nomzamo?” Huh? It feels like he just punched me on the stomach. I open my lips to say something but my voice too has betrayed me.

“You haven't told her the truth, have you?” Sukoluhle says pitifully looking at me while Meli looks down like a husband who's been caught with his pants down.

“Please don't--” He begs her.

“She deserves to know! You owe her the truth--” And

it's all lights out as I hit hard on the paved surface.....

I woke up with a severe headache it feels like someone is banging drums in my head.

“Hey.” Meli says smiling apologetically.

“What happened?” Just then my memory rewinds and I remember seeing “her”! “What was she doing here?”

“Drink some water first then I will tell you the entire truth.” I shakily take the glass and down the water.

“Please don't tell me you are sleeping with her--”

“She's my baby mama....”

NARRATED.

After Gugu left Share My Life In My Shoes clinic center Dr PNNM as known by the whole world does her own investigation on the Mkhize family. She does this to all her high profile cases so she can help them better. From what she finds there's no mention of the love triangle that Gugu told her about, it seems like in the eyes of the public everything is normal and that's gives Dr PNNM the kicks. She studies the behavior of a group of people be it a community, family or friends and she always finds the root of the problem. There's more than meets the eye with this family and she wants to help them heal and find closure with whatever means necessary. For now it's only Gugu Mkhize who knows about her so she can infiltrate the family and study them before commencing on her real job so she sets up an appointment with Khulekani at his office.

She disguises herself as intern so she can get to know him well unguarded. Because no one in the real world really knows what PNNM stands for she

uses her real name but leaves the Doctorate and masters qualifications out in her resume and uses her bachelor's degree in Sociology to get an intern job. Khule is impressed with her experience and is hired to work closely with the Public Relations officer in the mornings. After a week of working at the Mkhize firm she has an answer to who Khule is and her next step is Nothabo.

She goes to Nothabo's school and becomes a relief teacher in English and communication skills, counseling and guidance subject to teach the afternoon class which Nothabo attends. PNNM can be a chameleon when she wants to, she can blend in any profession that has to do with talking and people. She stalks Nothabo for the duration she is a relief teacher and gets to know her as well. When she sees that she is done she targets Qhue of which it's not hard as he is always found in night clubs at night and this time Dr PNNM disguises herself as the escort. She doesn't indulge in any sexual activities but watches and observes from the

terreces. Where ever Qhue is she is always there but she has taken an initiative to stop him from abusing drugs hence instead of heroine she has taken it upon herself to give him the drugs which are not drugs but saline injection and vitamin pills crushed into white powder.

Qhue doesn't realize that what he is taking are not drugs at all but because his brain thinks he is on drugs he gets high. She is working three shifts a day every day to get to know her patients outside the therapy room and she can't get close to Mkhize Snr because he is always holed up in his house. In all her disguises she always maintained her afro Pearl Thusi hairstyle and her pinkish, purplish and blue clothing attire. When she is in public relations team her attire is always blue framed spectacles pink purplish Ankara fabric clothes and royal blue stilettos and as a teacher she's into floaty flared skirts and dresses in pink or purple colors, sky blue stilettos and baby blue oval nerdy framed spectacles and when she's an escort by night she

wears blue contact lenses and skimpy pink or purple short dresses or skirts and knee length pink boots.

DR PNNM's POV.

My name is Dr Princess Nothabo Ndhlovu Mlevu in the public I'm known as Princess Nothabo Ndhlovu or Mlevu. I'm businesswoman in the eyes of everyone I own restaurants, events clothing boutiques, an events management company, a mother, wife, therapist and I cowrite books with Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa the famous award winning novelist. Yes you heard me right when Suko started her Tsholofelo/ Hope Foundation I also started my own therapeutic clinic center that helps abused men mostly but also helps families and couples fight either their relationship demons, fucked up lives, sexual demons and as in the case with Mkhize family a very traumatic fucked up lives. I will not say I'm a Saint I'm not I used to be fucked

up as well but someone with a good heart helped me pull through.

My clinic's services doesn't come for free like Suko's foundation, like I said I'm a businesswoman so I cater for the haves of this world, the politicians, business tycoons and all with discretion and that is why my center is a fortress for I fear someone might get hold of damning information about my clients. I'm a diploma holder of social work, honors degree in Sociology, masters degree in international relations and a PhD in human rights and security. I have been many things before so I understand people in all forms. I have been an adultress after finding out that my boyfriend of six years the father of my two kids was a serial cheat and infected me with HiV, I have been a swindler and a drug addict, I have suffered from post traumatic epilepsy and brain tumor and that there was no coming back, I have killed in my quest for vengeance all the women that were involved with my boyfriend and sent him to prison for infecting me HIV knowingly, I

was bloodthirsty, so if I say I see something of myself in one of the Mkhize family members believe me. It was after a good Samaritan had taken pity on me and dusted my dirt that I became the new me that I am today and would like to help others in facing their demons. The colors I always adorn symbolize hope and pain but to the naked eyes I'm just a fashionista whose favorite colors are purple blue and pink.

It's been a month now since Gugu Mkhize walked into my office like a lost sheep deep in her thoughts. Although to an unobservant person she looked like she had it together but I could see that whoever her last shrink was didn't do his or her job thoroughly. I respect all shrinks out there but most of them use academic theory what I term "go by the book" not real life theories. My therapy is different I don't tell them what to do to feel better, I listen to them, even tell them about my experiences and then ask them to make their own decisions as they see fit. If it's a family I prefer to see them as a whole not individually and if they decide to fight each other

shout at each other I let them vent until they are spent then we start from there. I could tell from her facial expression and eyes that what she had been looking for has been found.

She called to confirm if I was still taking her family case and I assured that she should not worry. I knew that for some people if they see a shrink not forthcoming for a month it means that they don't want the case but can't bring themselves to say so but I'm different. I told her I was doing some investigations and background checks and organizing security detail so that no one gets to know that they are my clients. What I did not tell her was that I had invaded their privacy by installing spy cameras in all the rooms except their bathrooms and toilets, call me insane but sometimes a subject can never be truly honest with you in your sessions so you have to see what they do when they are not with you. From the footages so far Zie is the most interesting subject behind her silence I can sense something from her and it's not grief, she hasn't mourned the death of son unlike

Mkhize Snr who is still in the mourning process and Qhu is not mourning in self pity. He blames himself for everything that has happened and Nothabo does not mourn the loss of her uncle but the loss of her grandmother who is her role model. Khule and Khaya blame themselves for not standing upto their mother when she was still alive. They blame their mother's adultery for its because of this that they are in deep shit today. Now that I have read everyone it's show time!! I'm going to love this.

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I know you all miss Zie she will be back in the next insert.

Goodnight and have a fantastic weekend. I love you loads

THE BRIDE.

Sponsored by the WhatsApp crew

Insert 40.

Suku's POV.

Why is Meli doing this to Zamo? This woman is losing it and from the look of things she doesn't know the whole truth. She's been busy attacking me on social media calling me a sour baby mama, a filthy bitch, a whore, this whole thing is messing up my Foundation and if she doesn't stop I will have to sue them for defamation of character. Meli hasn't called ever since I stormed out of his house when he lied to Amy saying he's really sick. Amy begged me to go check on him only to find him playing a game on his smart TV.

“Lee?” I don't need to check the caller ID to know it's her calling, the ringing tone makes it easier to tell

it's her.

“Nono what's going on? You are trending and someone even found Amy's picture to comment with it--”

“What?” No God no! Not with my baby please. Not Amy on social media!

“I don't like this even one bit! Why the hell have you not paid that woman a visit? Since my girl was born we've never posted her on social media but these people have the nerve to do that? Please fix this before I do it myself! I don't mind that idiot name calling you because you are too soft but not with Amy and Prudy. Call that good for nothing ex husband of yours and tell him to put his dog on a leash else--” She drops the call.

I quickly log in to my business Twitter account. This is how dirty Zamo is playing this game of hers I don't even know why I'm part of it because I divorced Meli already. Holy Heaves! I'm on number #3 worldwide trending. Zamo posted a picture of

me which I'm very sure she found in Meli's archives and captioned it "The bitch who's trying to steal my man while hiding behind the expensive clothes. #Removethemask"! What the hell? People retweeted and still are.

"I personally know Suku and she's nothing but an angel. This skinny lawyer is just bitter!" Says the tweep.

"I doubt this lady has time to run after men she's busy saving the world." Another tweep retweeted with a response.

"Rich women are very good at trapping poor men. I believe you Zamo fight for your man girl!" Reads another response. There are over 100k replies under this comment.

"Wake up from your dream girl! Suku and Meli have been married for 9 years and have a beautiful daughter together. Stop dreaming!" Responds another tweep with a picture of Amy. That's it! You've gone too far Zamo and this is where my patience wears off.

“Sis are you okay?” Char asks as I take the car keys and about to head out.

“I think it's time I see the record straight. People are now abusing my patience and I hate it--” She stretches her hand out. “What?”

“I'm not letting you drive in such a state--”

“I have to go Char--”

“Yes you are going and I'm driving you there. The last thing I want is for you to run over someone or skid off the road you look really pissed. Let's go.” I sigh in defeat. There's no defying her if she sets her mind to it. When I first Char Prudy was throwing tantrums in the middle of the street because she had dropped her ice cream. Char consoled her and insisted on buying her another one. I was so tired I couldn't even argue with her later on she told me I could use some help to raise them troublesome kids. She even asked the children to beg me to hire her and guess what? I did hire there and then and it's been one of the best decisions I've ever taken in my life.

“You are not gonna go ghetto on her, are you?” I look at her with a smile on my face. This is what these women in my life do to me I'm here trying to be angry but she wants to crack my ribs.

“It won't work--”

“Already did.” She knows I hate fighting and I will never be involved in a fight. The last time I fought with someone was when I was 16 when I fought with my brother, Prudy's dad. He's not biological brother but I only knew that when I was 18. “We are here please don't cause a scene just warn her.”

“Okay second mother!” I get down the car and head to the double glass door. Passing through the reception area proves to be a very big task. These people are busy asking me 101 questions when the only thing I want is to see Zamo.

“What's your name Miss?” Well now that she has asked I guess my full name can do the trick. I hate throwing my name on people's faces but right now, right here I'm going to break my own rules.

“Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa--” Holy Mary! The

entire office is on me with hugs, kisses, snaps, oh that went from zero to hundred pretty too fast. So this girl was busy questioning me before looking at me? Such arrogance at work is common but that's very stupid.

“Ma’am we are really sorry please go in.” Says one of the girls in formal black trouser and white long sleeved shirt buttoned up to the last button.

“Another selfie please--”

“Not here ladies and gentlemen. This is your workspace and professionalism is mandatory. Selfies in the office, nah.” I smile at them and leave with a card labelled visitor.

“What are you doing here bitch--” Zamo snaps. Meli is also here busy on his phone.

“I think I've had enough of your stinking attitude Nomzamo! Right now you are behaving like an uneducated woman and it doesn't suit you even one bit. I kept quiet when you were busy attacking me on social media but right now you and your fans are pissing me off. I'm a mother who will do anything to

protect her child please don't push me to take extreme measures against you--”

“What are you talking about?”

“Your fiance is busy attacking me on social media and I don't like it even one bit! Not with my daughter Meli--”

“What? Zamo you did what? ” Meli is angry.

“I hate you!” Zamo screams at me.

“I didn't dispute that please respect my privacy! As for you Meli I guess you owe your fiance the whole truth I'm not your baby mama but your ex legal wife!” Zamo's eyes look like they can pop out anytime.

“W-what?” She stutters.

“Tell her the truth before she loses herself fighting battles she doesn't even know about. For your own first hand information Zamo I divorced Meli after finding out about you--”

NARRATED.

Dr PNNM walks upto the door of the Mkhize house in her signature dark blue pencil skirt showing off her small curves, her heels accentuating her small portable round behind, figure hugging baby blue blouse that shows her small round breast, dark blue figure hugging blazer and her pinkish purplish oval nerdy framed spectacles, anyone who doesn't know who she is will mistake her for a snobby British Barrister (Advocate) who has come to put Mkhizes house in order before meeting his makers.

Dr PNNM's POV

I'm shown to the room where I will be conducting my therapy sessions and I must say the house is exquisite you would swear it was the Buckingham palace back in England. Gugu comes in with the family members that need counseling the most and I ask them to sit comfortably on any of settee.

Nothabo is the first to throw herself like a bag of hot potatoes and with the corner of my eye I see Zie flinching then goes back to "spacing out" the rest take their sits and I introduce myself and ask them to do the same.

“Hello everyone my name is Dr PNNM, HIV positive, recovered drug addict, former adultress, unconvicted murderer of eighteen girls, a mother, wife, business woman and your shrink today.” I introduce myself and see eyes popping out of their sockets from some of them and a little smile from Zie.

“Hi Dr PNNM my name is Nothabo I'm a high school child, a daughter, granddaughter, sister, a rebellious wild horse and vuzu party goer.” OK at least this one knows herself and is not scared to express herself.

“Hi Dr I'm Khulekani, a business man, father, son, uncle, husband, I don't know why I'm here and have we met before?” I didn't see that coming but I ignore the question and look at Qhue.

“Hi doc I'm Qhubekani the black sheep of the family, drug addict, a cheat, killer not worth to be called a husband, brother, son, father and boyfriend and are you my dealer and pimp escort?” This is so much fun almost everyone is coming out of the closet before we begin and I also ignore his question.

“How are you Dr? I'm Mkhabazela, a father, husband, grandfather, business man and recently lost my son.” Again Zie flinches.

We all turn towards Zie but she has coiled back to her shell and starts rocking herself hugging herself tightly. I can see that she has dysregulated and shut down emotionally. We call this dissociation which is a disruption of or discontinuity in the normal, subjective integration of one or more aspects of psychological functioning which includes memory, identity, consciousness, perception and motor control. Although I know clinically I have to remove her from this group therapy a part of me want to see what other buttons can be pushed so she can be normal again. So we continue I ask them why they are in this situation

and they start to argue among themselves and I sit back and watch and listen. Nothabo blames her Mkhulu for not protecting her uncle Owami and grandma. She blames all the adults for not finding Sbu in time resulting in her granny being shot and now no one is there to guide her through life.

Khule blames Qhue for being a mommas boy always hiding behind their mother when things went wrong and not standing up to their mother and have his own voice. He blames him for always running to drugs and prostitutes instead of concentrating on his wife and family and accepting that he is the one that dumped Zie not the other way round, he blames his mother for not being a mother that she was supposed to be and then he also blames himself for not being a good supporting brother to Qhue but instead was competing to outshine him in everything. Mkhize blames himself for not having a firm hand on son and not killing Ane while he had the chance. These Mkhizes are really baring their souls out and not leaving any

stone unturned of which it's good if they are going to move on past this ordeal. After eight good hours of bickering, name calling, cursing, screaming punching of each other among the Mkhize men I see light at the end of the tunnel. I normally do thirty minutes to one hour session but this I needed it to be a marathon therapy session.

During the eight hours Zie was always on my sight, I kept observing her to see if she was responsive but she was in a trance like behavior but not maintaining eye contact. I wanted a one on one with so I wrapped up the session by asking my four responsive patients to hold each other's hands in a circle and pull hard while rocking for twenty minutes and not let the circle break. To my satisfaction they did that and I knew there was no more blaming of each other or themselves, they now had each other's back no matter what. As I was about to exit the door I turned and said,

“Yes we have met before, Khule I have been working for you for the past month as a PR intern, Nothabo I

was your English language and communication skills, counseling and guidance teacher for the past month and Qhue you have been clean of addictive drugs for the past month, I was your dealer and escort” then winked and sashayed out of the room leaving their jaws on the verge of falling off their mouths.

After two days I came back wearing yoga pants, a vest and trainers in my signature colors and a yoga mat. Before coming I had called Gugu and asked her to give Zie yoga clothes, I'm sure in her mind she thought I was also becoming a nutcase, I chuckle thinking that. As I enter into Zie's room I find her ready and I tell her that today we are going to mediate and not talk at all of which she just stares at me and sits into a meditation pose and I do the same. She starts to meditate and I see she's not new to this kinda thing, I guess she likes her solitude after all. In a hypnotic voice I ask her to channel her emotions whatever they into something or somebody after thirty minutes I ask her again to filter her emotions, starting with love into any object

or person in her mind, I ask her file up her different emotions into different objects or people and since I'm not in her mind space I don't know if she is doing that or not because for the past forty five minutes she is in her meditation space zone. I tell her that I will count up to ten then she has to come back to mother earth but I rather disappointed as she remains in a trance so I leave again with no positive results.

I know most of you might be wondering what I'm doing, well I'm trying to help find her grounding and return to the present and gain her sense of control.

It's been a week now I have tried everything I can think of like throwing her a squishy ball of which she misses every time and doesn't catch it to playing music but nothing is helping she is a lost case but giving up is not word that is found in my vocabulary or dictionary. As I'm driving towards her house a thought comes to mind, all this time maybe I have been doing the wrong way so I quickly make a u-turn and head back to the office and retrieve my

colt 39mm, five dummy dolls, cyanide acid, drum, scalpels and a fire extinguisher gas tank and go to her house again. As I enter the house I ask my security detail to carry my stuff into Zie's room, I enter her room with a springy step and greet her smiling.

“Good morning Zie, how are you today?” Silence.

“Today I brought you a present I realize I have been a bad person visiting you almost every day and not bringing any present, well look what I brought today” I say in a bubbly voice “I brought you, your frenemies Princess Anelisa, the King, the Queen and the goons that helped Ane to kidnap Sbu.” I continue talking as if I didn't see her eyes changing from being sombre to being alive with lightning, “I'm going to make them disappear from this earth but I need your help in choosing the mode of their transport, here I have a doctor's scalpel I can slice their flesh bit by bit until they are no flesh but only bones or I can throw them in this drug and pour cyanide acid on then and they liquidate or I put them in a windowless room with no ventilation and

suffocate them with cyanide gas and a gun to shoot them executioners style on the head and blow their brains off, you can get up from your bed and help me choose.” She quickly gets up and looks at me with disbelief in her eyes and bursts out laughing.

“Hi Doc PNNM my name is Zinhl'izintombi zakwaNgwenya Mkhize, I'm a mother, I have gotten away with murder countless times like you, I'm a bride, a, sister, friend, I just lost my son but I'm not going to mourn him until my quest is done and I'm on a vengeful warpath and you damn too good you don't give up do you? You know right here you have just provided me with almost five ways of committing a perfect murder, are you really sure you are a shrink or you are a hit man?

ZIE'S POV

I have heard stories about therapists but this one that Gugu brought to my house is something else. On the first day she came I thot she was a model c

woman who doesn't know the streets and it's hustling but when I heard her introduction I was left in awe, how can a tiny body like that get away with so many murders, live with HIV but look sexy as hell and have gone through all those hardships. When they were talking I could hear everything they were saying my heart broke for Nothabo and Khule who were lost without Me, my husband who was also lost and mourning our son but my brain and body refused to respond to anything. I was kind of trapped in my own body, I could say I was comatose those I was walking and eating and everything except my cognition. Even when Dr PNNM came to see me every two days my body and brain refused to work together, I guess I can say I was becoming a pain in the ass to her and I was transferring my craziness to her for to her bring out murder weapons to lure me out of earth twenty three I was stuck in. The minute she mentioned Sbu and my brain wires got connected remembering my last moments when he pulled a trigger trying to help me out and I snapped out of it, I had forgotten that I had son who needed my love and I have neglected

him for so long. But I must say this shrink really knows her game in the street language I would say (uyinja yegame, uyayishayinto yakhe) she even tried to get into my mind by her hypnotic meditation even though my brain was blocking her. Right now we are talking actually I'm the one talking about my life and she is just listening then she asks me one question.

“In your self introduction you said you a bride I never heard you saying you are a wife can you tell me about it.” Yeah this woman doesn't miss a thing but anyway that's a story for another day so I tell her that I prefer not to answer that question.

“I think your job here is done doc. You can uninstall your spy cameras you won't be needing them and expert a huge fat cheque from me before tomorrow. Thank you so much.”

“How did you know about the cameras?” She's shocked.

“Don't play with tech if you want to outsmart me. My brain was dead but not my eyes.” I smile. As

soon as she exits I take my phone which I last used I don't even remember when and dial someone.

“Hello?” She answers with a high pitched voice.

“Anelisa Khumalo--”

“Zinhle? How come you are calling me I was told you are as good as dead--”

“Princess Anelisa Khumalo? Run....”

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 41.

Zie's POV.

I don't usually thank people for their good deeds but I'm really grateful to Dr PNNM for getting me out of

the dark pit I found myself in. What's shocking is that my mind shutdown but at some points I found myself in that very same place I used to call my sweet home. That very place that used to be my sanctuary until my parents decided to plant a seed of hatred amongst all of us. Things got really bad when mom started to beat me because I'd fail all my subjects at school. I drifted away from everyone and slowly the angel in me died a slow painful death and was replaced by devil's mother. I really didn't see any need to put in the effort after that ugly teacher told me that the only thing I'd ever be good at is being a trophy wife! Not really a wife to boast about in the public but one to take with to dinner parties, galas only because she has the face and the figure. His words cut deep and I set on a journey to find a husband who will be proud of me in everything. I found him, I picked him from the streets, cleaned him but what did I get in return? A plate full of shit!

“Honey? Zie?” I turn looking at him with a smile on my face. He hugs me tight and sobs on my

shoulder.

“I’m sorry--” I find myself becoming emotional.

“I thought you left me for good Zie--” My husband's voice trails off. “I felt lost without you please don't ever scare me like that.” Oh dear husband! I love with every part of my body but for now those emotions need to be kept in check I still have a mission to fulfill before I can express my undying love for you.

“I will never leave you.” He cups my cheeks and kisses my lips. I feel my body being ignited by his touch. How I've missed to feel him, to be in his arms, to listen to him talking endlessly about his business.

“Welcome back honey I really missed you.”

“I missed you too sweetheart. ” He kisses me once more still in disbelief. I'm also still in doubt I hope I'm not dreaming. “How are the children?”

“Broken. We all recently got help from Dr PNNM a few weeks back. We were all lost without you.” He says his voice filled with tender and care.

“My poor children can we go and meet everyone?”

He smiles and puts his hand on my back leading me outside.

“Look who's joining us for lunch today--”

“Mommy!” Sbu jumps on me and kisses me all over the face. Only God knows how much I've missed my son and his kisses. “You are okay now mommy?” I nod tears of joy running freely down my cheeks.

“I'm fine now son.” I convince him.

“I hate aunt Anelisa for hurting you--” My hearts shreds into tiny pieces. Everything that fateful day floods my memory. The picture of Sbu holding a gun vividly replays in my mind as I flinch feeling the same pain I felt when I saw his life flashing in front of my eyes. I hug him tight without a word. Anelisa you are going to pay dearly for this!

“Grandma!” Nothabo too jumps on me almost taking us all down to the floor.

“Thabo!” We hug for the longest time ever since we met letting our emotions do the talking for us. Gugu, Khule and Qhubekani also joins us in celebrating

my return. Qhu is unable to keep eye contact with me, all the anger and hatred I have for this idiot rises threatening to choke the life out of me.

After having a lengthy conversation with my family I decide to call my brothers.

“ZakwaNgwenywa.” He answers and my heart melts.

“Awumangali ngani ukuthi ngivukile? (Why are you not surprised I'm awake?)” I thought he'd be surprised or scream like a madman with happiness.

“Ngingowakini Zinhle ngiyabe ngithule ngibhekile. Batheni abakini obubavakashele? (I'm your brother Zie I know a lot more than anyone can imagine. What did your ancestors say?)” Now he's pulling my leg.

“Bathe sokuyisikhathi-- (They said it's time--)”

“Cha Zinhle awuzukuyenza lento ofun' ukuyenza. Impilo yakho iqakathekile sisakuthanda Zee yek' ukubheda ngiyakucela ngane kababa. Angikwazi

ukuphila ngaphandle kwakho ZakwaNgwenya
ngiyakucela dadewethu--- (You doing no such thing.
Your life is important us, we love you Zee please
stop this madness. I can't leave without you Zee I'm
begging you--)"

"I'm doing this brother. If something happens to me
please do finish what I started. I love you brother."

Zamo's POV.

I take out the hundredth outfit from the wardrobe.
They say if you can't beat them join them. That
Sukoluhle girl who does she think she is? She was
married to Meli for nine years and have a child
together so what? What's so special about nine
years in marriage and a daughter? He was married
to her because at the time he had not met me, the
classy lady with a sweet pussy. She probably was
trying to make herself feel better when she said she
divorced Meli I'm sure Meli is the one who dumped

her fat ass after meeting me the real deal, a wife material, a trophy wife, a bitch in the bedroom, a beautiful all-in-one any man can never resist. I know you all probably thinking if no man can't resist me why did Tshiamo leave? The guy plays for both teams because he's afraid of what the society and his parents will say if he discloses his sexuality.

“Why are you hell bent on wearing long or knee-length skirts or dresses these days?” Questions Meli.

“Do you like my new look?” I ask with a big grin on my face. I know he loves seeing me wearing these clothes.

“No. Zamo it's like you want to be Suku the same person you claim to hate the most. Every outfit of yours these days is inspired by what you see on her Instagram, Twitter and articles. You are slowly becoming her shadow while trying to outsmart her. Be you and stop competing with my ex wife you will never be half a woman that she is. Just stop this obsession of yours it's beginning to annoy me--”

“But babe--”

“Just change that damn outfit Zamo! She's not even the one running those social media accounts chances of her seeing you in the same outfit as her are very slim. Just stop this madness and be you.”
Wait? Who runs her social media accounts?

“Who runs her social media accounts then?”

“There are people paid to do that on her behalf Zamo! Suku is too busy to be on Twitter, Facebook and Insta sometimes she doesn't even know that her picture is posted on social media. You are a lawyer, she's a walking brand stop trying to be her before you lose yourself. I'm going to work.” He says picking his bag and he leaves without even giving me a kiss or a hug just to say goodbye but no problem very soon that bitch will be out of his system and all he's going to see and crave will be me. I found Meli, he proposed to me and I'm not leaving him for anything. I'm getting old and I need to get married sooner than later.

Standing in front of a full length mirror I snap a picture of me using my iPhone 11 yes you heard me right I use the best of everything. I'm becoming a little chubby, glowing like never before and my bump is starting to show. I post the picture to all my social media accounts with a caption #CanYourGirlEven? #SoonToBeWifey. I now have about 100k followers altogether and I enjoy reading their comments. When in the car I go to her Facebook there's a post that reads:

Baby doll your dreams are valid.

For only these six useless words she has over 100k likes and over 89k comments in less than an hour. Are these people stupid or pretending to be? What's there to like here anyway? Mxm! I leave her page and browse through other pages looking for something to raise my spirits this bitch's post is about to get to me this early in the morning.

NARRATED.

Somewhere in the hotel in Mozambique Anelisa is shouting on the phone.

“Find her before she finds me!.... No no no! I want to see her dead else I'm going to burn your entire family!” She fumes as she disconnects the call.

“Fuck!” She kicks the chair hurting her toe in the process. “Fuck you Zinhle I'm not gonna leave in fear because of a tiny thing like you.” She downs a bottle of water before taking out a cigar and lighting it. Before she can draw in the smoke her phone screen flashes and she quickly draw her pattern unlocking it. She reads the message and she freezes as the phone slips from her hand and crashes on the floor.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 42.

TWO DAYS LATER....

Dear Husband

First and foremost I would like to thank you for all the love, care, adventures, gifts and lastly but not least the family you gave me. When I first met you I was a lost soul, an orphan with her parents alive, a violent young girl but you changed all that when you gave me your hand to hold; you led me to the greener pastures of life I never knew existed. I always thought a perfect family was a thing only to be witnessed in films but you changed my perspective. You showed me and taught me how to see only good in people's imperfections. You challenged my small dull brain to understand that imperfections makes us unique in our own way.

From where I come from an imperfect child is termed a “rebel” in your world it's called “Crying For Help”, thank you for the second chance of being me and letting me enjoy who I am without anyone judging me.

I know you probably think why I'm telling you all of this out of the blue, chances are we might never get a chance to hug let alone cuddle and let our hearts speak to each other. I made a promise to myself and to my son to set the world on fire if I fail to change it the loving way. I tried to be a loving, understanding and caring Zinhle but what I got in exchange of all my efforts was a bag of shit and a minced heart. I can not go on with this pain I'm carrying inside of me I need to release it, I'm going to set the world on fire and all the evil ones will be sanctified in the name of Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya and by the burning fire. My son will not grow up with grudges, I'm doing this for Sbusiso, for myself, for all those who committed suicide after being used and later dumped into a trash bin

like used toilet paper and for all the people out there who are crying out for help and for all the generations to come. I know I will be going to hell after this but can you at least make the world understand that using someone for your own selfish reasons and dumping them later is more painful than putting a bullet in their skulls. Let every boy child out there understand that women are not objects to be used and dumped later for new ones. We are all human beings and we all bleed the same reddish liquid (blood).

Thank you once again for everything you did for me. You can change Sbusiso's name to Owami for he's yours and yours alone. I know he can be hard sometimes but I know you will give him everything he will ever need. I love you now and forever I will do. Till we meet again my hero, my father figure, my sunshine after the storm and my husband who fulfilled the only wish of mine that I ever held dearly.

With love and lots of respect

Zinhl'Intombi zakwaNgwenya Ngwenya-Mkhize.

“Nooo! No no no! This can't be she can't leave me alone--” Mkhize Snr screams pushing everything on the table to the ground.

“Grandpa!” Nothabo sprints into the house alerted by the screams. “What happened grand--”

“She left.”

“What do you mean grandpa?” She snatches the letter and reads it, she almost faints before she can even finish reading it. “We--we have to find her! Dad!”

Gugu's POV.

I don't know what mother-in-law is planning but whatever she's planning doesn't feel good. I can feel it in my bones. Her brother just arrived and is turning the city upside down trying to locate her. We've even tried to track her phone and car but to no avail. Whenever they try to track her number it says it's here in the room. Khule and the other guys are also out there looking for her. I hope she's safe and won't do anything to harm herself.

“I think mother-in-law left her phone in here--” My daughter is still in tears run to her grandparents' bedroom dialing Zie's number. She comes back almost immediately holding the phone.

“She left her phone....maybe her car is here too?” She runs to the garage and comes back shouting. “Her car is here too.”

“I think she used the scooter and we can't track it because it has no tracker on it.” Father-in-law flatly says. My phone rings and I tremble looking at Mntimande's number.

“Gugu speaking?” I try to sound confident. That

guy's voice always sends chills down my spine.

“Kulencwadi kaZie utshilo mhlawumbe enye into eshaqisa umzimba? (In Zie's letter did she mention something unusual or scary?)”

“I didn't read the letter let me find out...” Nothabo gives me the letter. I quickly scan through the letter. “She said something about... “I'm going to set the world on fire and all the evil ones will be sanctified in the name of Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya and by the burning fire”... that's the only suspicious thing on the letter.”

“Ngiyabonga. Sengiyazi ngizomthola kuphi ngizolazisa ma ngifika khona. (Thank you now I know where to find her.” Dear God please protect her. If not for anything please do it for father-in-law, my children and Sbu they really need her.

NARRATED.

Somewhere in the neglected dilapidated house in Mzinyathi Zie hops down the scooter wearing all black, she's even wearing a hoodie to cover her head.

“What are we doing here?” Qhubekani asks following closely behind her carefully stepping on the dried grass and thorny twigs.

“This is where our fate will be decided honey.” She smiles.

“What do you mean--”

“You talk to much for a man. Please just follow me and stop irritating me else I will change my mind.” Like a toothless-useless dog that he is he quietly follows her sensing nothing at all. What he doesn't know is that shit is about to get real. She slowly opens the door startling Anelisa and shocking Qhu at the same time.

“What the hell is going on here?” Ane and Qhu are confused.

“Only one of us will have the answer to that later and definitely won't be the two of you--” She pulls

out her gun and points it to Qhu. “Oh yeah tie your fat pig on that bed of logs--”

“Huh--” The two are shocked.

“I won't be repeating myself please save us the trouble and for once in your life just comply to something without being forced.” Ane looks at the thorny logs piled up next to the wall and tries to defend herself but Zie is faster than her as she sends one bullet into her thick leg. Ane screams in agony, Qhu tries to run but Zie points a gun at him. “I'm not yet in the mood to kill someone please don't push me! I said tie her to that bed of logs damn it!” She hissed sending chills down their spines.

“Zie you sent me a picture of my child's head please where are their bodies--”

“I don't have time for this. Qhubekani you are wasting my precious time I have other things to do.” Qhu reluctantly forces Ane down the said bed and ties her up using copper wires. He's about to turn to Zie when she plunges an syringe on his neck and he

weakly falls on the dusty floor. Zie drags him to the pole in the middle of the room and ties him up. “You won't die sweetheart that was to make you weak so I can easily tie you up my dream husband. Forget that, your highness needed to know about her children.” Zie's lips curve forming the most dangerous and spine chilling smile ever on her face. Tears fall down Ane's cheeks. “I hate tears you should know this by now. Since you want to mourn them first then I guess it's time for me to add energy to my body before we get down to business--” Zie sits on the chair while and removes her 22 inch Brazilian wig revealing her haircut, Zozibini Tunzi's signature haircut.

“Zie please don't do this you are not a murderer--” Ane tries to reason with Zie who in turn her laugh echoes in the building threatening to shake the already damaged structure.

“Clearly you don't know me honey. It's amusing though to hear my enemies trying to convince themselves that I'm just a sweet soul.” She chews on her bubblegum.

“Zie I love you please let us go and I will do anything --” Zie swiftly stands and kicks him on the stomach and he grumbles unable to even touch his aching stomach.

“Love?” Zie blows her chewing gum into a large ball and chews it once again. “Hahaha very funny! I loved you Qhu, I gave you a second chance in life even when everyone saw a junkie and a lost cause. I stood by you, I fought with my brother to allow you to move in with us, I did odd jobs like washing old people's underwear just so you could see your dreams of trying to outsmart Khule by getting a First Class degree materialize, I stayed up all nights researching for you when I don't even know the gate to any university! I had to go down on my knees to beg my brother to keep helping you, he warned me about everything, not only him but many people told me you were gonna chew me and spit me out like a chewing gum and I was naive enough to even believe that true love really existed. I made you who you are but you left me without even thinking twice! For her! For a fat useless princess you left me

Qhubekani!” Now Zie's in tears and pain is written all over her face. She steps closer to Ane, “You knew he had a girlfriend, you knew of all our struggles but despite all of that you chose to hurt another woman. On numerous occasions you tried to kill me! What happened to being a sister's keeper? What happened to women standing together in unity to fight the dominant specie? What happened to putting yourself in another woman's shoes before stepping on her toes and crushing her altogether? You failed to kill me physically but I bet it would have been better if you had succeeded then I wouldn't have to deal with so much pain--” Tears run freely down all their cheeks.

“I'm sorry please forgive me--”

“You are sorry? You are sorry Princess and how will your sorry help me in any way? Where will I get the heart you crushed before trampling over it with your dirty shoes? My conscience? How is it possible to get it back? Do you perhaps have any idea if where I can get the spare reserved ones?”

“My children are innocent Zie--”

“Unlike you I don't harm innocent souls. My only sin in that department is the virgin girl I shot in Qhu's office. I don't harm helpless children that was just to lure you and I'm glad it worked--”

“What?”

“Graphics darling and Photoshop then boom I had this perfect bloody picture of your daughter....

Enough about the talking time is not on my side.”

Zie drags a toolbox next to Ane before removing all the bullets from her pistol. Ane secretly smiles

thinking Zie has changed her mind. “I like to see my enemies suffer and killing someone is not

punishment enough.” She takes out a small axe,

pliers, hacksaw, hammer, wire nails, electric cables...

“What are you gonna do with those?” Qhu questions with a shaky voice.

“Oh these? Let me highlight for you.” She picks the axe and smiles running her tongue on the sharp

edge of it. Blood drips down her tongue and she

smiles swallowing her own blood. “This leg has

been giving is problems let's deal with it!” Zie saying

smiling and wiping Ane's wounded leg. Ane tries to wriggle free but instead the copper wires cut deeper into her skin. Tears fall afresh as she watches Zie raise the axe above her head...

“Nooo.....”

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NEXT CHAPTER will be a little too oversensitive I apologize for the explicit content in advance.

Whenever you strongly feel against the book please do refer to the first page(insert) of this book.

Next insert tomorrow morning. My other readers on the other side(Paid Whatsapp group) miss me more than you can imagine and I owe them a few inserts. Please bear with me.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 43.

VSNL

THE CHAPTER CONTAINS EXPLICITLY WRITTEN
AD VERY SENSITIVE CONTENT. READER'S
DISCRETION IS ADVISED.

“Noo!” Ane cries out as blood oozes out of her limb. Zie picks Ane's thick bloody leg and throws it in front of Qhubekani who's wailing like a woman who just lost her millionaire husband and soon found out she's not included in the will. “Zinhle please--”

“Shh! The party just got started honey don't be a crybaby. You know I've heard stories about how tasty human meat can be. Ever since I was a child I've always wondered how true that statement is. Maybe we should experiment--” Ane cries as the pain in her leg washes over her body and she feels her heart breaking into pieces as her soul takes a sit at the back of her mind.

“Zie please don't do that--” Qhu tries to say but the deadly glare he gets from Zinhle has him putting his

tail between his legs and keeping his mouth shut.

“As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, Princess And?” Zie smiles sharpening her double-edged knife. “I heard that you had a braai with your people to celebrate your victory bad thing I wasn't invited. Let's rewind your victory party and I'm gonna be your chef. Ladies and gentlemen, Chef Zinhle!” Ane flinches as tears run freely down her cheeks. She thought Zinhle was just a toothless dog but maybe she was wrong.

“Zie please stop! That's witchcraft Zie you can not eat human's meat—” Ane's throat dries up as she watches Zie carefully slicing her leg separating meat from the bone.

“I must commend you dear Ane, if having enough fat in your body was something to get an award for you'd sure get an Oscar. This is some serious fat and I can already see how good this braai will be.” Ane and Why helplessly watch Zie. “Oh you said something about witchcraft. You know what witchcraft is? Forget the encyclopedia meaning and listen to this; witchcraft is reaping where you did

not sow. That my darling is pure evil mixed with witchcraft. You are the witch not me.” There's a fire already blazing hot and Zie carefully puts the meat pieces on the grill made of rusty wires. Fat drops on the fire and a blue-reddish flames erupts followed by a cloud of smoke which fills the entire building.

“Zie this is not you please. You are not a murderer Zie, I'm sorry I lied to you I'm sorry I hurt you beyond the word hurt, I'm sorry I couldn't be the man you wanted me to be--”

“You had a fucking choice Qhubekani and you chose her! You chose her after everything I went through for us! After all the pain we went through to be where we were you still chose her! It's funny how I was stupid to a point of neglecting even my family for you but I'm not stupid anymore. I loved you and this is the result of my love for you! My love for you is now a deadly poison not even the greatest scientists of this era can diffuse. It's burning, it's burning in my veins, in my head, it's like there's a chemical reaction taking place in my entire body and I can't stop it. The only thing I can do is to set

the entire world on fire using this burning fury I feel inside of me. And yes you are right about one thing. I'm not a murderer but a purifier. That's who I am and I this you have been pretty too relaxed lover boy. What do we do with you honey? Come on Ane help me welcome our boy to the party which of these should I use?" Asks Zie who's now holding a hacksaw and a scissors.

Ane cries even harder while Qhu tries to free himself but his body betrays him as it feels jelly-like. Anelisa tries to say something but words fail her as her pain chokes her. "This will do. My dad used to cut corrugated sheets using this one I'm sure it can survive cutting your sweet cute lips my darling. You know the first thing I notice in you when I met you at that dumpster is your smile. Your perfect smile had me feeling things I wasn't even familiar with ignoring your stinking-dirty body and clothes. I won't another girl fall victim to your smile." She roughly forces the scissors between his upper lip and gums and slices his lip ignoring his hushed

cries. She carefully cuts a perfect round-like shape around his mouth leaving his gums and teeth exposed. “There you go honey!” She throws the lips on the grill while Ane summons all the strength left in her and screams for help. “Keep screaming darling then the wolves will come to your rescue. We are 20 kilometers away from anyone in this place it's only the three of us and the wild animals.”

“My father will find me and you will be in trouble. Please Zinhle let's us go then all of this will be over-”

“No sweetie I'm not going to jail for a half-done job. Your father will find us yes but only after two days or more. Not even my brothers will be able to locate me but yes I left a message for your father and my darling father because this party will of no use without them.” It's not her axing Ane's leg or cutting Qhu's lips that's terrifying, it's her calm and collected voice that screams serious danger.

Meanwhile Mntimande's stopped by the traffic cops on the Harare-Bulawayo road. He frustratedly parks his car as instructed by the officer. The officer knocks on the windscreen, Mntimande rolls down the window.

“Mambo. (Chief)” The officer greets him.

“Yini manje eningimisele yona? Ngiyaphuthuma ngicela wenze le ongingimisele yona ungeke ngidlule mfowethu ngingakazidluleli ngokwami. (Why did you stop me? I'm in a hurry, please do whatever you stopped me and let me go or I will do what's best for me.)”

“Your license and the car papers?” The officer sternly says. Mntimande takes out his leather folder and hands it to him.

“Ngicel' usheshe-- (Please hurry--)” The officer looks at him then to the G-Wagon and back to the papers.

“Who's Sibangilizwe Ngwenya judging by your clothes I don't think you are the owner of this car. You look like a thug what are you hiding in here? Mister get down!” Mntimande slowly gets down the

car as the officer alerts his colleagues.

“Amasimba angizwani nawo hayi nakancane, yangizwa? Ma kini nisehlulwa yikuthenga unit akusidoko eligayelwe mina lelo nginike amaphepha ami ngihambe kumbe uzolandela nawo? (I'm not a fan of bullshit not even a bit, do you get that? If only thugs own cars from where you come from then that's not problem give back those papers unless you wanna follow me with them?)” His ses Mntimande.

“Put your hands on the bonnet--”

“Ngazongis anganela wena nx! Ngipha amaphepha ami ngihambe ngingakahlanganisi ubuso bakho lobo obubi nalebonnet othi ngiyibambe--(Don't test me nx! Give back my papers before I smash your ugly face on that bonnet--)” Mntimande's phone buzzes in his pocket. He fishes it out and reads the caller ID before answering with a soft tone.

“Ngwenywa.”

“Kwenzakalani Mntimande? UZinhle ungifakele umlayezo kumakhalekhukhwini ethi ngibuye

eMzinyathi kulani khona-- (What's going on? Zinhle sent a message instructing me to come to Mzinyathi what's happening there--)" Mntimande cusses under his breath.

"Uthini kimi baba? Uwubone nini lomlayezo? (What are you saying dad? When did you see the message?" Mntimande is confused.

"Namhla ekuseni yini Mntimande? Kwenzakalani khonapho? Awuphongubuya ekhaya phakathi kwenyanga kunje kungelasizatho esibambekayo wenzeni uZie? (What's going on that side? It's unlike you to just up and come without a valid reason what has Zie done now?" He runs his hand on his hair frustratedly as the officers continue to closely listen to his conversation.

"Kuzomele uze Ngwenywa indodakazi yakho iyakudinga uzungangiphoxi Mthiyane. Ngizofaka imali yepetrol kuecosh uzothena eKwekwe. Usheshe if I keep kungakonakali. (You will have to come your daughter needs you and please don't disappoint me. I will send money to fuel your car to your ecosh wallet do fuel your car when you

arrive in Kwekwe)” He drops the call before his father can ask more questions. “Phoyisa impilo kadadewethu is engcupheni ngicela ukuhamba-- (Officer my sister's life is in danger please let me go --)” It's evident on his face that he's trying with every vein in him to suppress his temper lest he loses it and ends up in jail in this crucial time when his sister needs him the most.

“Mntimande? Nguwe nkosi yami-- (Mntimande? It's you my lord--)” Says the other officer approaching.

“Next time feed your dogs before I feed their asses to the stray dogs! I'm in a hurry and now I have to prove if I'm really Sibangilizwe? Really mate? You guys should respect us then we will respect you else we can also be rude. Don't ever do that to me ever again else I will blow your brains off trust me.” It's not everyday when you hear Mntimande speaking in English and that alone screams danger. He snatches his folder, gets back in the car and makes a sharp u-turn almost knocking their drums down and speeds off dialing Khule's number.

“Mzinyathini. Angazi somthola kanjani kodwa

kuzomele atholakale. (I don't know how we will find her but we will have to turn the place upside down--)"

"Qhu is missing too--" Says Khule.

"Fuck! Wenzeni Zinhle? (What have you done Zinhle?)"

Meanwhile in the dilapidated house Zinhle forces meat into Anelisa's mouth. She tries to spit it out but Zie holds her jaws together as Ane silently cries swallowing her own flesh. Zie let's her go and Ane spits saliva to her face. A hot slap crosses Ane's face and she sees falling stars.

"I'm trying to be nice here don't provoke me!" Zie picks and bucket filled with warm salty-vinegar water and pours it over Ane's limb who in turns wails in agony. "I tried to be nice with you people but you keep spitting my kindness back to my face! Do you think I enjoy seeing people starve? No I don't that's why I'm trying to feed you--"

“Zinhle please--” Qhu begs.

“I told you to shut the fuck up!” She grabs a pliers and smiles wolfishly looking at it. “I think this can shut you up for sometime.” She squats and unzips Qhu's trousers.

“W-what are you doing?” Qhu stutters with his hands tied behind him.

“Ever ate a bull’s balls? My dad always gave them to my brothers apparently they are good for your sex drive--” Tears run down Qhu's cheeks.

“You-you can't do this to me--” Blood drips afresh from his cut lips.

“Watch me.....”

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THE BRIDE

Insert 44.

NOT EDITED.

“Watch me—” She grabs his balls and squashes them in a fist. Qhu cries in pain and for the first time Zie's holding him down there and he feels nothing but pain. The girl of his dreams, the love of his life, what has he done to her? The sweet soul he met a couple of years back has now manifested into a demon not the devil can be as evil as the girl squatting in front of him.

“Zie I will give you anything you want please don't do this to him. I blackmailed his mother and my father to get me married to him. I'm sorry I'm reason you two broke up kill me and leave him alone--” Ane says with a strained voice from all the crying and screaming for help.

“You don't have anything valuable you can give me darling. Our dear Qhu here is as guilty as you because he had a choice! He had a fucking choice

but he chose you and threw my kindness and love back to my face. He even had the nerve to send his mother after me because he didn't have balls to do that himself. He's the reason his mother is dead! What kind of a man allows women to make decisions for him? Huh?" She pins his balls with a pliers.

"Zie you are hurting me--"

"That's the point honey. I was going to cut them and feed them to you but I think castrating you will do. You already have three children I'm sure they are enough--"

"Just kill me--"

"No one is dying today here darling. We are just having a party then we will go on and live our happily ever afters. That's what everyone wishes for, right? Wishes? Well, that's a tricky word but it's not my duty to educate people about wishes." She presses the pliers even harder before twisting it. Qhu groans in agony not really sure what is more painful, the pliers on his balls or the permanent

wound around his mouth. He feels as if something is breaking down there, like a vein just broke, the pain is now unbearable as his lungs and the fighting spirit fail him and he blacks out.

“You killed him--” Ane sobs.

“He's not dead he's being purified he will be born again just a few hours later. Stop crying princess you know I hate tears. You make me look evil right now--”

“You're evil! You're a witch!”

“Thanks for the compliment darling now can we get back to business?” She says putting on a heat resistant glove on her left hand. Ane looks at her trying to figure out what she's up to. Her leg is killing her already and she's not sure if she can take more pain. “Before my father disowned me he used to force me to brand cattle. That's the only thing I was apparently good at and I fell in love with tattoos after getting used to playing around with hot pipes, wires and the likes. Now my princess we going to tattoo your fat body with this hot wire nail--” Ane

almost died looking at the red-hot wire nail.

“No you can't burn me--” Zie ignores her and wipes Ane's forehead. Ane has run out of tears as she watches Zie bring the hot nail to her forehead. The way Zie is calm and chilled you'd swear she's possessed by some kind of a ruthless demon. The hot nail lands on her forehead, she screams in pain but Zie throws a piece of Qhu's lips in her mind.

“Keep screaming and I will keep feeding you your husband's flesh!” Hisses Zie. Ane's muffled cries are now the only audible sound in the room. “There you go princess. Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya Ngwenywa nicely scribed on your forehead. I tried to make it look nice because this is something you are going to live with for the rest of your miserable life!” Ane now has fresh wounded prints on her forehead, an abbreviation of Zie's names; ZZN. Imagine having to live the rest of your life with a mark like that? Zinhle has really lost it. She moves on to the unconscious Qhu and tattoos the same on his forehead while Ane prays to God for the first time in her entire life.

“Heavenly Father I know I'm a bad person I'm sorry for every wrongdoing I ever did in my life please don't let Zinhle slaughter me like an animal. I'm begging you dear Lord, I'm sorry for snatching her boyfriend, I'm sorry for blackmailing my father into marrying me off to Qhu please forgive me. I'm sorry for killing innocent people, I'm sorry for being rude and arrogant forgive me Heavenly Father and fight my battles for me. Amen.” Zie claps for Ane.

“It's working you're being purified! Little by little we are going to have a new reborn Ane. And it's all thanks to the fire and of course Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya!”

32 HOURS LATER....

“I don't understand a thing. This place is too small for one to hide from all of us. We have to find her before she kills my daughter. If anything happens to my daughter I won't spare you Mkhize!” The King

hisses glaring at Mkhize Snr who looks unbothered by the King's threats.

“My daughter is not like this--” Ngwenywa says.

“Just shut up dad! You created the monster in Zie and you will have to find her before anything happens to her. If anything happens to my sister I will never forgive you!” NK fumes.

“I don't think this is the time to be fighting against each other. Time is not on our side we have to find her else she will do the unthinkable. I have seen how mom deals with those who cross her path--”

“Mom? Are you for real now? That butch is about to kill your brother but you still call her mom?

Unbelievable? Did you also taste her pussy? It seems it's driving all the Mkhize men mad--”

Mntimande punches the king hard he staggers back and hits on the tree.

“Ngikuts helile ngathi ubangis cefe kodwa awuzwa angithi? Anginendaba ukuthi uyinkosi ngizokukhahlela ungakhuluma kabi ngodadewethu! (I told you to shut up! I don't care who you are I will

kick your ass if you dare say a thing against my sister.)” Mntimande says wiping his hands with a towel.

“You hit me--”

“Ngizokushaya iqiniso mungakwazi ukuvala lelogabha elingumlomo wakho. (I will surely beat you if you can't keep your mouth shut!)” Police cars surround them. Mntimande shakes his head in disbelief.

“Hands up!” Shouts the officer.

“Angazi kumbe udakwe yilots hwala benu obuts hiphileyo okanye ubhemi imbanje--(I don't know if you are drunk or you just high on marijuana--)”

“We got a call from someone who said is Zi--”

“Where is she? Where did she say she is?” Mkhize finally speaks.

“She directed us here and we saw you here--”

“We have to call her back now or track her calls--” Suggests the king.

“We failed to track her calls but if you call the phone does ring. What's going on?” Asks the officer.

“You can't track Zie unless she let's you. I won't be surprised if he has you tracked not the other way round. Call her.” Orders NK as they all stand there their hearts throbbing in their chests.

“Mr officer! I knew you could be trusted. I heard my family talking right there can you put me on speaker _-”

“Ntombi--”

“Hahaha this just got better. You came daddy dearest I also heard the King's voice I think it's time I direct you to exactly where I am. Do you know a dilapidated house just off the dust road? I'm waiting I hope you brought refreshments because the braai we are having here is one of a kind.” She disconnects the call. They all get into their respective cars and speed off.

At the dilapidated house Qhu is awake with a left arm and right leg missing while Ane's left hand is

also missing. Zie braaied her hand with the pure gold wedding ring still on. The two are no longer crying but wishing to be dead instead. The cars park outside as the officers run holding their guns. Zie's standing in the middle of the house waiting for them with two knives on both her hands.

“Zinhle you are surrounded please drop the weapons and come outside with your hands on your head--”

“This is going to be funny!” Zie smiles.

“Daddy? Daddy she's unarmed--” Ane screams. The King pushes past everyone and runs towards the entrance.

“If she hasn't done more damage already, she's about to kill someone I swear. Brother-in-law this is your call. As crazy as she might be only you and us can stop her--” NK says. Mntimande is already in the house.

“Zinhle! What the hell is wrong with you! You cut them into pieces--”

“They deserve it brother. I don't need you here but

your father. That man owes me my childhood years.” They all walk in and almost faint looking at Ane and Qhu. The King bends over puking.

“Yeka lento ngiyakuncenga dadewethu-- (Please stop this I'm begging you Sister--)” They all continue to beg her but she's not budging. Not even her husband is getting through her thick skull. One of the officers fires his gun, Zie jumps and pushes Mntimande down as the bullet grazes her arm. She furiously turns and throws her knife which hits the officer's neck and his body blows up into flames. Everyone is horrified except the brothers.

“Go and learn to aim the gun before you go around shooting!” Mntimande tries to grab her but NK pulls him back.

“She has a bomb on her! Those ain't knives but bombs she can blow us all off by just a touch on the control device. Officers please put your guns down let's hear her out I know she just wants to talk nothing else. My sister just want to be heard that's all! It's all because of you dad no one ever listened to her and now she's doing this to be heard please

don't shoot im begging you--” NK collapses on his knees begging. A tear runs down Zie's eyes. She angrily throws another knife and the cars are up in flames in a nanosecond.

“Noo!” Everyone exclaims in horror.

“Either you listen to me or we all die here---”

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THE BRIDE

UNEDITED.

Insert 45.

NARRATED.

“Ntombi my child I know I wronged you please don't kill them it's me you want not everyone. Let them go and I will listen to everything you have to say--”

Tears stream down Zie's cheeks as her lips tremble with fury.

“Zie my love can we untie them and send them to the hospital please we will talk about everything later.” Mkhize Snr pleads with his wife. For a moment Zie is moved by his words but the pain the two caused her is bigger than the human being left in her.

“No! No one is leaving until I'm done talking and if anyone tries anything stupid I swear I will blow your bodies into pieces that even your families won't know which piece belongs to who.” The officers helplessly look on, at this moment there's nothing they can do. Zie takes out two injections to numb Qhu and Ane's pain. “See I'm not that evil just that you people don't listen.” She says plunging the injection on Ane's neck who now feels too weak to even cry. The only thing she ate in the last 48 hours is her own and Qhu's flesh.

“Ntombi my child this is not you--”

“You are right father! This is not me but the monster you, your wife and that teacher created! Yes you are to blame for how I turned out to be! I came to you father I pleaded, I even fell on my knees touched your feet and even licked them but you never believed me! You thought I was being a spoiled brat --” Her voice trails off and pain chokes her remembering a particular day.

“Yima? Ukhuluma ngani ZakwaNgwenya ngathi suyangiphica manje dadewethu. Yini let ebuhlungu kangaka ayenzile uNgwenya? (Wait? I'm lost here Sis what exactly are you talking about? What did father do that hurt you this much?)” Mntimande is confused so is NK who glares at his father waiting for a reply.

“Will you tell them or should I? Speak up damn it!” Mntimande is even more shocked now looking at Zie's state and his father looking down guilty stricken.

“Kwenzekeni Ngwenya? Isho yini lenkulu kangaka

oyenze udadewethu? (What happen father? Tell us what is that you did to my sister!)” He's now becoming impatient and the beast in him is slowly getting awakened.

“Ngiyaxolis a-- (I'm sorry--)”

“Asingafakani ezilingweni mntomdala ungalinge udlale ngengqondo yami siyezwana baba? Angifikanga emfundweni ephezulu loses ngiyezwa kukhon okunuka santungwana lapha ngicel' ungimele ngokuxolis a uyiqale phansi lendaba. Khuluma Ngwenya! (Don't you dare test my patience father! I may not be educated but I can tell you are hiding something huge and please dont start with the apologies rather start from the start. Talk!)” The beast is now in full control of his every being as he hisses and his father flinches.

“Okay I will talk. Your mother and I wronged your sister--” Zie angrily throws one of her knife-like bombs taking part of the building down.

“Aaaah!” They all scream.

“How? How did you wrong me father? Are yoi afraid

of telling the entire truth now? Huh? It's fine i will tell my story and the world will know what kind of parents you and your goody-two-shoes of a wife are! I came to you father i told you that teacher was doing things to me that i didn't understand. He used to tell me things like “you are so cute how I wish we are India any country where child marriage is legal then I'd make you my wife”, he'd call me to his staffroom and touch my private parts! I was only ten years old father! I didn't even have breasts at that time hell i even knew nothing about oral sex and the likes. I came to you and mama and told you everything but you never listened! You thought I was being a brat until that teacher finally raped me when I was in grade seven. I never failed my exams because I was dull but I stopped going to school altogether!” Tears are continuously falling unshed down her cheeks. NK too is in tears.

“ZakwaNgwenya--” Mntimande's own pain chokes him.

“Zie babe please stop I can't listen to this anymore. Please stop--” Mkhize Srwipes his own tears.

“How could you? How could you let your daughter suffer so much? What kind of a father are you?”

Mkhize Snr painfully asks.

“Not today! Today I'm going to talk and free myself from this pain. I suffered alone, I cried until I couldn't cry anymore! I silently suffered, it was painful, I bled like never before and i thought I'd die only for your wife to tell me that I have to be strong like a woman! Have you ever seen a thirteen year old woman? Can you even undress in front of such a kid? Not only did that paedophile rape me but impregnated me!”

“What?” Everyone is shocked.

“I only saw my period once before i fell pregnant. I didn't even know what was happening to me. You took me to that old lady MaTshuma who gave me bitter things to drink and I almost died. You lied to everyone saying I was suffering from a contagious disease and kept me locked in that hut. You kept on giving me those bitter things until I started smelling like a dead rat. Mntimande came home and you lied about my whereabouts you denied me my brother's

love! You almost killed me and on top of that you told me to keep quiet about it because you were only worried about what the society was going to say! You didn't even ask how i was feeling why father, why? Am I not your beautiful daughter? Am i not the girl you'd carry on your shoulders and take me with to the kraal every morning to check on your cattle? Why dad?" Mntimande looks at Zie and his heart pounds as the pain becomes unbearable. He walks out lighting his cigar.

Zamo's POV.

I've been trying to Zie but her phone is unavailable. I tried even the Mkhize land-line number but no one answered. Meli walks in and switches on the television and changes the news channel.

"We are reporting live from Mzinyathi where a young girl has held a number of people hostage. She's said to be armed with a dangerous bomb that

can wipe out the entire Mzinyathi in less than a second. Her family is also among the people she has in custody and the police officers are unable to do anything. We still waiting to hear to hear what matter is--”

“Tyooo! I wonder what they did to her for her to hold people hostage?” People do crazy things oit there.

“Women are just crazy creatures you mind find out it's nothing serious.” Meli remarks.

“Zie stop!” My heart almost falls from it's ribcage when i see my friend standing right there on the screen.

“That's your friend--”

“Let the world see everything! Let it be known to everyone that my own father silenced me when I was supposed to talk! You know what i did? I killed the man yes i was already a murderer at the age of fourteen! You refused to listen to me and that ruined my childhood! I was forced to grow up! You made me believe i wasn't good enough when you are the one who failed to do your duty as a father! I

hate you!” She throws a knife which surprisingly explodes into a flame. What has gotten into my friend?

“The bomb squad has arrived and we are hoping for a best outcome!” Says the reporter.

“Freeze!” The Army has also arrived!

“Freeze my foot! You shoot and the nation will cry for sure! Step back!” Zie shouts! The army men are about to shoot when Mntimande steps in front of her.

“Stop!” NK screams helplessly watching as the defence force point their guns to Zie. Mkhize tries to think for a way out but his head is blank. All of a sudden there's a sound of a gunshot as a cloud of smoke.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 46

PART 1 FINALE

NARRATED.

“Stop!” NK screams helplessly watching as the defence force point their guns to Zie. Mkhize tries to think for a way out but his head is blank. All of a sudden there's a sound of a gunshot as a cloud of smoke erupts making everyone cough and sneeze. “Zie! Zinhle!” NK tries to search for his sister. Mntimande runs inside not even caring about the gunshots and the smoke.

“ZakwaNgwenya!” Zie pushes him down as another bullet grazes Zie's ear and blood drips from her wound. Khule sees this as an opportunity to save Zie and grabs one of the army men, chokes him with a gun on his head the same time Mntimande grabs the only guy they are relying on to diffuse the

bombs.

“You shoot her we all die here. I'm sure you guys are smart enough not to die for other people's sins.” Khule mutters.

“Hold the fire!” The man in charge of the operation says and they all stand back with their guns. He turns to a furious Zinhle. “Can we talk? I heard everything you said on the news what your parents did is unforgivable. I'm a human being and I understand the pain you went through as a child but this is no way to deal with your pain--” The men keeps walking closer to her.

“Stop! I know what you are trying to do but it won't work stand back before I also blow your brains off! I don't enjoy killing innocent people but I can't help it if you people keep on provoking my already agitated self. I just want everyone to hear me out! Is that too much to ask for? For over fifteen years I've been crying out but no one heard me except my husband of course. I just want to release this pain inside me after that I can die peacefully.” Tears fall afresh down her cheeks.

“Fine. What do you want to say?” The men signals his men to grab her while still talking.

“Ungakulinge sots handini! Tshela izinja zakho zihlale ndawonye kungenjalo kuzonyiwa lapha ngudadewethu lomuntu. (Don't you dare! Tell your boys to stand down else they will be hell to pay this is my sister we are talking about here!)” Mntimande fumes and chokes the bomb squad guy.

“This is my fight brother let me deal with it. King Ndlangamandla you thought you were untouchable! You thought you were beyond the law but you never thought your karma will come in form of Zinhle. Do you remember the girl you helped your sons chop into pieces after they raped her?” The King almost faints as his palms starts sweating already.

“Who-who are you?” He stutters as everyone stare at him.

“I'm someone who's going to put an end to all the suffering women go through because there are men like you who think their daughters are special but see the girl child from next door as an object you

can do anything you want with it. I don't know who the girl was but seeing you do all those things to her without the slightest remorse gave me an idea of how to make you realise that every girlchild is as important as everyone else irregardless of their societal status. Not only did I chop your daughter into pieces I also fed her her own flesh--” The King faints. “I'm not done getting justice for that girl sleep for now King till we meet again soon. Father, tell your wife I will be waiting for her at the gates of hell. Anelisa and Qhu, teach your children to never feel superior to others and to never reap where they didn't sow. My brothers and Khule thank you for always standing by my side no matter what. My dear husband, I said everything I wanted to say on that letter thank you for loving me. Always kiss Sbu on my behalf before going to bed and teach him to be a good man. Mntimande, Zamo needs your help before she ruins her life please do help her--”

“Zie what are you doing? Please stop--” NK cries helplessly.

“I have to do this brother I'm sorry. Officer arrest

me.” A tear runs down Mkhize's cheek and he secretly wipes it away.

“I will always love you till we meet again soon my love.” He emotionally says.

“Ntombi I'm sorry--”

“Go to hell father!” She brings both her hands forward. The officer cuffs her and she smiles at her brother who lets the guy go free. The paramedics quickly untie Qhu and Ane and rushes them to the ambulance. The officers walk her outside to one of the army cars.

People are now gathering outside we all know how us Africans love breaking news. The reporters are trying to get a scoop from any family members and the police but they are pushed away. Mntimande looks on as his sister is taken away his heart breaking with every she step she takes. NK screams his lungs out punching the wall while for some weird reason Khule looks at his phone and smiles secretly. Mkhize looks at his wife who's about to get

into the car when a tear gas is thrown and everyone covers their burning eyes and by the time they all look around Zinhle is nowhere to be found.....

Suku's POV.

It's been two days since the hostage situation took place and I must say the girl is now famous with the majority siding with her. Every news channel is about her and the horrible things she did. The two victims of her wrath are recovering at the hospital so says the reporter but will they ever enjoy their lives? I don't know.

“Tjoo! I partly understand this girl's pain but for her to feed someone her own flesh? That's inhumane! I just hope they find her and help her as soon as possible the girl needs serious help.” Honestly my whole board is shivering at the thought of eating my own flesh even the contents of my stomach threaten to force their way back to my mouth.

“I don't blame her at all. Those two deserved what they got. You don't let a woman work her ass off for you then dump her only because you are not man enough to make your own choices. I salute this girl for her courage and sending a clear message out there to these men who think we are just cheap things like toilet paper.” Lee sips her cocktail.

“Nono you are too quiet twinny what's eating you? It's so unlike you to have nothing to say?” My crazy friend is awfully quiet and it's bothering me.

“I think she wasted those resources she had there I'd have done worse. No one walks all over my heart and walks away just like that!” Oh oh! This is the Princess I know. Her bluntness used to make me uncomfortable but not anymore.

“But she cut them into pieces--”

“The point is they still breathing on their own. She should have at least left them needing oxygen machines for the rest of their miserable pathetic lives--” Says Princess.

“Okay I hear you friend please don't plant ideas in

Lee's head you know that boyfriend of hers is giving her a hardtime.” Lee has a loose screw and I wouldn't be able to control her if she goes all crazy on that guy worse knowing Princess she might help her commit a perfect murder.

“Luckily I don't have the guts else I'd have long strangled the life out of him.” Says Lee laughing.

“Just walk away Lee he's not worth it.” I try to reason with her.

“Unfortunately God only had one golden heart suitable for lady and He gave it to you. I'm not an angel like you so stop trying. I will walk away after making sure he loses at least five major business deals--”

“I have to make a call I will be back.” Princess looks really distant today I wonder if the girl on the news triggered something in that little head of hers? I have to talk to her in private she can not relapse after all these years of being a normal human being.

“Something's wrong with...her. The devil just walked in don't look up else she will start with her drama

and the next thing you will be trending.” Oh gosh! Can't I have a normal day for once? What is Zamo doing here now? This woman is starting to be a pain in my ass and God knows I don't want to be the one to break the news to her. I'm not into hurting the other woman to get my message across.

“Where's Nono? I think this is our cue--”

“No. We won't someone control our movements mom never raised a coward. Let's continue with our business.” I look up and my eyes come across Meli who's staring at me like I'm some project study. I took a deep breath and ignore him while Zamo drags him away and secretly turns winking at me. Poor you Zamo.

“Oh oh! Look at that yummy guy walking in!”

Exclaims my friend. This is the reason Lee always sits across the door she likes seeing everything. The said guy walks towards Zamo's table his face looking more than serious I swear there's nothing yummy about him. Scary maybe?

“Zamo siding' ukukhuluma. (Zamo we need to talk)”

His voice is wow! Forgive me for listening in other people's conversations but I'm a Kwesta fan guys.

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ANNOUNCEMENT!!!

SEASON 2 of The Bride to come after my exams. I need time to relax my mind and prepare myself. In my absence my twinnny Princess Nothabo Ndhlovu-Mlevu will be entertaining you she has a solo project to bring to you guys. I love you all and please be safe till we meet again in a few weeks.

Thank You.

Signed.

Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa.

THE BRIDE

SEASON 2.

Insert 46.

NARRATED.

“Zamo siding' ukukhuluma. (Zamo we need to talk)”
His voice is wow! Forgive me for listening in other people's conversations but I'm a Kwesta fan guys.

“Dude you dis respecting our peace. Don't you have any respect left in you? My fiance and I are busy here please leave. Zamo tell your side dish to leave or I will be the one leaving and you will never see me again.” Meli firmly orders.

“Nomzamo Langa anginalo usuku lonke sizoyihlinzela ebandla noma uzongilandela phandle?
(I don't have the whole day Zamo, should we talk

here in public or you will follow me outside?)”
Mntimande stands firm despite Meli's warning.

“I said get the fuck of out here dude--”

“Nanko nginyelwa ilanga libalele linje. MaLanga ungabona ngifulathela ngiphuma lana phinde uzwe ngingena endabeni zakho. UZie uthe unenkinga kusobala ubephuzile udadewethu. Kulungile nisale kahle. (I'm being disrespected for sure. Zamo if I leave from here you will never see me helping you with your problems ever again. Zie said you had a problem but I guess she was drunk. Have a good day.)” He turns and leaves the teary eyed Zamo trying to say something.

“Why did you chase him away? He's just a friend--”

“So you now discuss me with your boyfriends? Do you think I'm unaware of your shenanigans? You think you can just use me and continue leaving your best life with your thug boyfriends and slutty friends but I'm sorry disappoint Zamo you will not hurt me instead it will be vice versa--”

“Babe what are you talking about? I didn't even

know he was around the hood I'm not dating him--”
Tears are already streaming down her cheeks.

“I came here to have fun and not to be disrespected and now you shedding your crocodile tears! I'm out of here don't wait for me.” He downs his drink, leaves a \$100 note inside the menu. Nomzamo stares at him in shock as he surely exits the restaurant. Lerato looks at Nomzamo and shakes her head feeling pity for her. A few seconds later Nomzamo takes her handbag and shamefully leaves the restaurant tears blurring her vision.

“Was Meli a douche bag when you two were together?” Lerato asks Sukoluhle.

“Not really, why?”

“I just saw him mistreating his fiance and I feel sorry for her. That lady used to be the esteemed lawyer but now she's taking every bulls hit from a man who doesn't even deserve her while crying like an orphan who just lost her parents! Why can't women stand their grounds? Does love make one weak?”

“Lee love makes us do crazy stupid things. I'm surprised you feeling sorry for her?” Sukoluhle raises her eyebrow waiting for her friend to defend herself.

“I'm not evil darling I do still have my heart. Speaking of hearts and evilness when are we visiting mom? I miss that woman and you know she has a funny way of making me understand things. The only older woman in my life who understands me for who I am.”

“I'm not sure honey.”

“How about Friday after working hours? We will take the children and Char with us if she wants to go and before you complain about the potholes I will be driving.” Says Lerato as Princess joins them looking worried.

“Where did you go? Trouble with our brother-in-law?” Sukoluhle is worried about her sudden change of mood.

“No it's nothing personal. It has to do with my job and before you start poking your nose Lee, you

know that topic is off limit. I think I need something strong to get a bit tipsy this wine is not doing the things.” Adds Princess signaling the waiter.

Mr Mkhize's POV.

I admit my agemates long died and are now skeletons but I never thought I would live to witness this I'm still in shock after everything I witnessed. I have never seen someone so angry to a point of chopping someone into pieces but still leave them to live. Is there another painful punishment that can be worse than this? How could Zinhle, my dear wife do this to my son? I agree they wronged her but this is totally inhumane. How will Qhubekani live with himself after all this? Will he even get past the traumatic experience that he went through?

“Dad are you okay?” Khulekani asks taking a seat on the bench next to me. It's been a while since I came here to clear my head. This part of the garden

used to be my sanctuary long back when I was married to the mother of my children. Her presence suffocated me and this is the only place I could freely breathe.

“I'm fine son and how are you holding up?”
Khulekani doesn't always display his emotions.

“A little bit worried about you and your relationship with Qhubekani and mom. How do you feel about everything?” He asks the question I have been dodging for the past two days. “I won't judge you dad.”

“I don't know how I feel. My heart yearns for Zie while my brain and the father in me keep reminding me that blood is thicker than water. Qhu is my very own seed and Zinhle is my wife. How do I start to feel anything? How do I get my heart and brain to work in harmony and solve all this for me? I'm confused, heartbroken, at a crossroads and I don't know which road to take.” I sigh.

“Take your time father you will be fine. You are Mkhize and you always bounce back. In whatever

you decide you will always have my support.”

“Thank you son. Did you speak to your siblings?” He chuckles uncomfortably. “They blame me for everything, right?” I wouldn't be surprised if they do.

“No dad I don't blame you at all! I cried for over 7 years waiting for karma to visit Qhubekani and I'm glad I'm still alive to see all of this. He deserves it and I hope and pray he lives with his new found disabilities to witness everyone he wronged enjoy their lives to the fullest!” Sisanda, my first born daughter mutters.

“He's still your brother my baby--” I say calmly.

“No he isn't! He broke our relationship when he decided to kill my babies! I'm childless because of him I hate him! I hate him dad--” Her voice tears off as she crushes on my body crying hysterically. She will never get over the pain of losing her sons only to find out that she will never be able to carry another baby in her womb ever again. I pray she learns to live with the pain.

NARRATED.

Gugu steps down the car and looks around before Khaya and Nomsa also step down.

“We have to hurry up!” Orders Khaya.

“What's the plan?” Queries Nomsa.

“Burn the car to ashes and later burn the clothes we have on. As far as our phones' GPS is concerned someone has already taken care of that and our plane ticket bookings have also been corrected. Sister-in-law Gugu you clocked for a double shift yesterday so you also safe. Let's do this.” Says Khaya pouring petrol all over the car.

“Won't the flame attract unwanted attention?” Gugu asks feeling a little bit shaky.

“There are no homes this side and I don't think there can be someone out here in this cold weather.” Nomsa assures her. They all step a few meters away from the car and Nomsa lights the lighter. A

reddish flame ignites burning the brand new SUV to ashes. They quickly remove their hoodies, shoes and scarfs and throw them to the flame while a car flashes the lights coming their direction....

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ANNOUNCEMENT.

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Thank You.

THE BRIDE

Insert 47.

“There are no homes this side and I don't think there can be someone out here in this cold weather.”

Melisa assures her. They all step a few meters away from the car and Melisa lights the lighter. A reddish flame ignites burning the brand new SUV to ashes. They quickly remove their hoodies, shoes and scarfs and throw them to the flame while a car flashes the lights coming their direction.

“Fuck! We have to run!” Khaya says looking at his two accomplices.

“How do we run barefooted brother? Our shoes are in the car?” Melisa disagrees. Gugu looks at the two siblings and the approaching car flashing blue lights, she thinks of her children, her marriage, her freedom, her career, no she's not going to let all her efforts go in vain. Melisa on the other hand is already crying. She hasn't even finished her first degree but now she has to go to jail for trying to free her family. Khaya reaches his back taking out

two silenced guns and throws one at his sister.

“Shoot to kill or be killed. Do you understand?” She nods in agreement.

“Good. If they overpower us we surrender and I will take the fall for this. Tell them I forced you into this and that's all you will both say to anyone--”

“You are surrounded put your hands up where I can see them.” Barks the officer pointing a gun at them. They all put their hands up but does not move from where they are standing. The officers slowly approach them, just when they are about two metres away from them Khaya shoots taking one of them down. All of a sudden bullets are flying left, right and center. Gugu is shot on the shoulder while Melisa takes cover and retreats backwards switching her phone on. Khaya is still trying to take all of them down but he realizes there are too many of them and there's no way out.

“Fine! You can have me--” He surrenders. A helicopter flies closer to the scene and a bomb is thrown taking everyone down.....

At the hospital the King and his wife have cried all their tears out now they can only stare not even their dry cracked-lips and scratchy throats dare not to say a single word. The King is blaming himself for everything while the queen wonders if her daughter will survive after everything she went through? How does one heal after everything that happened to her? Will she ever be able to eat anything else after being forced to eat her own flesh?

“You caused all of this! Your adulterous affair with that woman is what led to this? A king who failed to keep his zipper closed and now we all have to bear the consequences of your lust! I will never forgive you for this!” Tears stream down her face as her heart shatters into smaller pieces the pain of watching her daughter suffering slits across her already bleeding heart straight to the vulnerable part of her being, her motherly soul. “You ruined my daughter’s life! First you sold her to those people in order to cover up your deeds and now she has to pay for yours and your sons’ sins!” She sobs.

“How was I supposed to know that Mkhize would marry that psychopath? The Princess asked for that useless Mkhize son and I gave him to her. I thought I was doing anything a great father who loves his daughter could do. I didn't know the boy was in a relationship with a mad girl if I had known I would have stopped the wedding. Now will you stop blaming me and pray for your daughter since you always say prayer and your God solve everything. Tell your God to give back my daughter's leg, arm, dignity and her sanity! Tell your God to reverse all of this if He's merciful like you always say--” Tears blurr his vision and for the first time after everything that happened he really breaks down. He lets his tears fall unushered and welcomes every atom of his pain. His father told him a king never cries in public but he forgot to teach him how to deal with his pain. His wife briefly looks at him and walks out of the room heading to the toilets where she cries her heart out.

“Sir can we talk in my office?” The doctor brings the King's mind back to where he is. The King wipes his

face and silently follows the doctor to his office.

“You may sit down.”

“Don't even beat around the bush tell me exactly what you want to say I'm already broken and nothing else will break me more than I already am.”

“My King.” The doctor chuckles. “The Princess's brain is not responding--”

“Meaning her brain is as good as dead.” The King adds flatly.

“After everything she went through it's understandable that her brain could shut down--” The King blankly stares at the doctor and stands up walking away. He exits the hospital, he doesn't know where he's going but as long as it's far away from all the stress. His body guard calls out to him but his mind is too occupied to even register anything. He keeps walking to God knows where, cars hooting as he absentmindedly crosses the street.

Back in the hospital Anelisa is awake but she's not

responding. She just stares but her brain is still not responding. The Queen sits next to her taking her hand in hers and prays to the Almighty.

“Heavenly Father, You said we should cast our burdens to you, here I am I have nothing to offer just my soul and a broken heart. Please help my daughter go through this I don't know if it's possible for her to live after everything but You know better. Help her dear Lord, in Jesus name. Amen.”

Nkululeko's POV.

I'm heartbroken, shattered, angry and helpless. I hate being helpless but at this point my mind is blank. How do I even eat this food when I still haven't heard from Zinhle? Mntimande says I shouldn't worry too much Zinhle is fine wherever he is but I need assurance. I need to hear this from Zinhle herself. I won't be at ease until I'm hundred percent sure that she's fine. The police asked us

questions, they think we helped her to escape but those are just baseless accusations.

Mom walks in and I feel like puking already. To think I used to worship the ground this woman walked on? In my own opinion she was the best ever mother any mother could wish for but I was wrong. Everything I once believed in was a fatal lie, a great misconception!

“Nkule can we talk--” Mom says pretending to be hurt or whatever fake emotion she's trying to display.

“No. I don't want to hear anything coming from your mouth. I'm keeping my peace because I've heard that arguing with your mother may bring bad luck and eternal curses so please allow me to be. I already have my own stress at the moment and your fake emotions are not some things I want to deal with at the moment.” I leap to my feet ready to exit the kitchen but dad blocks me.

“That's no way to talk to your mother!” He mutters.

“Says the man who watched his 9 year old daughter getting sexually violated and went as far as imposing an abortion on her--” He raises his hand and I close my eyes waiting for a tight slap but instead I can only hear silence in the room. I open my eyes to find someone with a familiar scent holding dad's hand and the shock in my parents' faces is picture perfect.

“Z-z-zibus is o?” Mom finds her voice. Huh? Did I hear that correctly? Zibus is o is serving a life in prison sentence he can not be here.

“You should be in jail?” Dad says, Zibus is o laughs letting go of dad's hand.

“Why old man? You want me behind bars because you know your sins are fast catching up with you? Sorry to disappoint old man I run these two countries and I wouldn't be here had you protected your own daughter. There's something I don't understand though? Mom? Were you also part of this?” He steps closer to mom and she retreats backwards sweating already. Zibus is o is my brother, fourth born in my family. He's been in jail in South

Africa for five years now. He was sentenced to life in prison after brutally murdering the minister, three officers and burning one of the government's properties. The minister was involved in their drug and human trafficking business. If you thought Mntimande is dangerous then meet the most ruthless and dangerous man I've ever met. Calm and collected, calculative and concerning his conscience, God forgot to give him one.

“Zibusiso leave me alone! I'm your mother you can't hurt me--” Once again he laughs.

“I'm not here to harm anyone I just want answers. By the way Zinhle is fine thank you very much for doing nothing to save your daughter from going to jail even when you are partly to blame for how he turned out to be--”

“Wait brother? Zie is okay?”

“Yep. She must be enjoying the beach in Thailand as we speak but knowing her I'm sure she's up to no good already.” I jump on him and hug him tight. I'm so relieved and now I can go back to working on

that dissertation.

“ZakwaNgwenya deserves to go to jail--” My father roars. “I’m going to report this--”

“Say that again old man sokuculela amagugu akulelizwe ayosal’ emathuneni kungekudala (you will be dancing with your ancestors very soon.)” He takes out his knife before picking an apple which he slices into eight equal pieces. With him it’s not about the apple, it’s a statement which is loud and clear and my dad sits down with his tail between his legs.

“How did you find out about Zinhle?” Dad asks, mom is wiping her tears already. She always wonders where she went wrong in raising brother Zibusiso.

“I’m the state’s enemy which means one of you can be kidnapped or killed any time so I got protection for my people that’s how I know about Zie. I answered all your questions now it’s your turn--” Just then Mntimande walks in looking a little bit off. Him and Zibusiso stare at each other for almost

over a minute without any word or emotion in their faces. “Ngesaba wena kuphela was emanzini, Mntimande gazi lami. (Greetings my blood brother.)” Zibusiso speaks first.

“Uphi uZinhle? (Where's Zinhle)” Questions Mntimande.

“Yazi wena uhlala njalonje umuncu ngathi awushadile. Uyakulambisa umakoti? Yimi omele abesour hayi wena Mntimande so awungiyeke ngisematasana lana kumele ngibuyele eStates kungakas hayi ihola lesithupha-- (You always sour like a bachelor. Is your wife not good in bed? It's me who should be always frustrated not you, please stop with your silly questions I'm busy here and I must be back in jail before 6PM--)” Mntimande laughs. Zibusiso takes out his phone and gives it to Mntimande. Mind you Zibusiso is still wearing his orange uniform.

“We Nja! Uyithaphi iP40 edanyani? (How in the hell did you manage to get a Huawei P40 in jail?)” Mntimande laughs but is not surprised.

“MntakaGod umkaminister uyazifela ngami phela ngabulalainja ngawina umfazi uzithwele ngikhuluma so-- (The minister’s wife is head over heels for me I killed her husband wnd got rewarded with a wife, she's pregnant as we speak--)” It all happens so fast all I see is Zibusiso's hand on our mother's throat while his foot crashes her phone.....

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I would like to apologize for mixing the characters yesterday. Sisanda is the Mkhize first born followed by Khulekani, Qhubekani, Khayelihle then Melisa. The girl with Khaya and Gugu is Melisa not Nomsa. Please forgive my mistake.

Please do like my fellow writer's page qnd check the story out.

<https://www.facebook.com/100794581282985/>po

sts/275226687173106/?app=fbl&refid=12

THE BRIDE

Insert 48.

Nkululeko's POV.

“MntakaGod umkaminister uyazifela ngami phela ngabulalainja ngawina umfazi uzithwele ngikhuluma so-- (The minister's wife is head over heels for me I killed her husband wnd got rewarded with a wife, she's pregnant as we speak--)” It all happens so fast all I see is Zibusiso's hand on our mother's throat while his foot crashes her phone. Mom eyes look like they will fall off their sockets.

“Yekela umfazi wami wena sathane-- (Leave my wife alone you devil--)” Says dad charging towards Zibusiso.

“Asinganyanyisani Ngwenya angifuni kuchitha igazi lomndeni. Awuchume ufak' amaphaphu phansi kafi

lodevil ombiza ngomfazi-- (Let's not irritate each other Ngwenya I'm not ready to kill family members. Stay right there your devilish wife is not going anywhere--)" Warns Zibusiso. I dare not to say a word, this devil's son I call a brother is so unpredictable that I always keep my distance. Mntimande sighs putting Zibusiso's phone on the table and steps closer to him. He grabs his arm and yanks it off mom's throat as she coughs repeatedly urine flowing down her legs to the tiled floor. She sits there shaking and crying.

"Kukwami la son siyezwana? (This is my home are we clear?)" Roars Mntimande.

"Yebo Mntimande." Zibusiso responds quickly getting rid of the frown on his forehead. Zibusiso is only afraid of one thing in this world and that one thing is pissing off Mntimande. Mntimande is tough and can be intimidating but my brother's hands are clean. He's never found himself in a situation where he has to kill someone himself. He has errand boys to take care of his dirty business. Zibusiso on the other hand is a murderer who doesn't hesitate to slit

someone's throat.

“Tshona phansi ngedolo mfana ubabize bonke oMlots hwa ucele intethelelo kubo kungenjalo uzozithola susesihogweni. Ngiyazi ukwatile kodwa usengumama wethu ngokunjalo awuvumelekile ukumfaka isandla. Kube okokuqala nokokugcina ukuzokhonya esibayeni sami ngizokukhahlela isifuba les o uvele uye komhlabuyagcina. (Kneel down and ask for forgiveness from her ancestors otherwise you will be doomed. I know you are angry but she's still our mother and you are not allowed to hit her in any circumstances. Let this be the last time you raise your hand on someone under my roof, this is my territory boy I will kick you once and you will be dancing with your ancestors.)”

“I'm sorry mom it was never my intention to disrespect you like that. I freaked out seeing you with that phone on your ear after threatening to call the police. Please do understand that by calling the police you not putting my life in danger but yours. The police is not to be trusted mom and I have too many enemies around the world I wouldn't want any

of you to pay for my sins. I'm sorry." Mom sobs even louder.

"I don't ever want to see you in my house I disown you!" Hisses dad as he finds his voice. Mntimande has done his job and left. He knows Zibusiso will not harm them now that he has put him back to order.

"You mean like how you disowned Zie after watching her suffer and when she finally found happiness your guilty conscience couldn't take it? You can disown me a million times but that won't change the fact that your blood is running through my veins. I'm a Ngwenya by default and you can not do anything about it except sucking it up!" Dad stands there looking pale like someone who just saw a ghost.

"Will you ever forgive me for what happened to Zinhle?" Questions dad.

"Uxolelwa kanjani Ngwenya ungakaze ucele uxolo? Ngokubona kwakho uJesu uzoyehla azokuxolisela? Cha Ngwenya lesisphambano ngesakho zithwalele

sona. (How do we forgive you when you haven't even asked for forgiveness? Do you think the son of God will descend and apologize on your behalf? No father this cross is yours to carry.)” Responds Mntimande the moment there's a loud knock on the door.

“Did the call go through? Fuck!” Cusses Zibusiso pacing in the living room. Mntimande says he will get it but Zibusiso stops him. “I will get the door.” He sighs and opens the door only to come face to face with officer Mlambo who tried so many times to lock Zibusiso up when his illegal businesses were based in Zimbabwe but failed. The shock on the officers' faces is Kodak perfect!

“Zibusiso?” Mlambo finds his voice.

“Mina self Bab'uCaptain. Mehlomadala mngane wami wakudala. (In flesh captain. It's been long since we last met my old friend.)” Mocks Zibusiso.

“I know you? You trended a few years back for killing the minister in South Africa?” Says the female police officer.

“I like you already Sister Betina. I like them fresh, beautiful and with brains.” The officer blushes.

“Inkinga ngihlala ewhite house and le oyigqokile umzala uTrump uyinyanya kabi. Yikhiphe ulandele mina ntombemhlophe-- (The problem is I stay at the White house and my cousin Trump hates that uniform you have on. Just lose it and follow me beautiful woman--)”

“This is Captain Mlambo I need back up--” The captain says on the transmitter.

“If I were you I wouldn't do that. Look at the rooftop.” Says Zibusiso as chilled as ever. I also look at the rooftop... HOLY MARIA! There are over 20 guys in South African's defence force uniform their guns ready to fire and a helicopter on standby.

“Shit!” Mutters Captain Mlambo.

“Relax Mr Captain bullets are too expensive to waste on a nobody like you. I want the Zimbabwe Defence Force minister, the commander and his boys. You are just but a nobody. Now take your fake guns and ugly faces out of my yard and don't ever

look back!”

“You should be in jail?” The third officer who has been quiet all this while says.

“Let's get out of here.” Orders Captain Mlambo.

“Good choice useless Captain. By the way tell your boss I said hi and soon he will receive a message from me to remind him I'm still alive.” They leave, Zibusiso sighs.

“How do you do it?”

“I have a very strong muthi from Nigeria mixed with a portion I got from Malawi just imagine the combination.” He laughs but that freaks the hell out of me. I hope he's joking.

“Kumele uhambile Zibusiso ngingenkinga zami nami emzini wami ukuvikana nenhlamvu yinto yokugqibela engifun' ukuzithola sengiyenza. (You have to leave Zibusiso I have my own problems and ducking bullets is the last thing I want to find myself doing.)”

“Kulungile bafo. Uthinte kuthwa ngubani lojaha

kaMkhize omdala umtshele ayothatha abantu bakhe emzini wami kunabantu lapho bazomvulela isango. (Call Khulekani and inform him to go and fetch his people from my house, there are people there who will open the gate for him.)”

“Angiqondisisi? Bangenaphi oMkhize lana? (I don't understand what does the Mkhize family have to do with this?)”

“Phambi kokuba uZie ayenze lomsangano wakhe uye wakhuluma lothiwa nguKhaya kumbe Khulekani angisazi wamnikeza igama lami nenombolo zocingo ukuthi bangithinte kungabheda. Ngiye ngafonelwa yibo ngesikhathi ebhed' uZinhle kodwa baye baphambisa ekumncediseni ukubaleka bants hontsha imoto enetracker amapholisa abathola beyitshisa. Kube nokudubulana thize kodwa ngazile ukubasindisa. (Before Zie went gaga she spoke to Khaya and gave him my name and my cellphone number to get in touch with me should the need arise. They called when she held people hostage but they messed up. In their attempt to help her escape they stole a car with a tracker and

the police found them. There was a little bit of shooting but I managed to rescue them.)”

“Ohata bona? Bazobajikela ejele-- (What about the police? They will arrest them--)”

“Khululeka bafo bekuliqhinga lami lelo kunomuntu ongikweledayo eChikurubi maximum prison sokuyisikhathi sokuthi akhokhe. Ngithethe oMkhize ngafaka izinja zami lapho eziyokwenza umsebenzi zeqe ijele zijike kwelemzansi. (Don't worry yourself brother that was my well thought about plan.

There's someone who owes me at Chikurubi maximum prison and it's pay back time. I saved the Mkhizes and replaced them with my people who got arrested, after the job is done they will escape prison and come back to South Africa.)”

NARRATED.

At the John F Kennedy International Airport Zinhle

pulls her small suitcase headed to customs. She looks different with blonde hair on and rocking an Indian saree. She went as far as wearing their accessories from head to toe and her makeup was done Indian style. She smiles approaching the customs male officer who gets lost in her eyes that he doesn't even realize that Zinhle is using someone else's passport. With her hacking skills, she hacked God knows what they call it in India and found a perfect match to impersonate.

“Namastey.” The officer bows his head handing back the passport. She pulls her empty suitcase and exits checking her phone. Her phone screen continuously flashes green and a map appears a seconds later.

“I can see you.” She says as she approaches a black SUV.

“Boss.” A tall guy with a Nigerian accent says.

“Take me to my destination.” She orders.

After a few minutes of driving in silence the guy parks in front of a huge mansion.

“The security is tight. The male boss said I should help you--”

“No thanks. Give me the parcel and get lost.” She says looking at the electric gate. The guy gives her something wrapped with a cloth. She quickly undrapes the saree and puts on a tank top and sneakers the guy brought since she already has her jeans on. “Keep your phone on. Now you can go.” She gets down the car and waits for him to drive off. She touches her wedding ring, the gate slowly opens while she puts a silencer on her beautiful shining toy. She gets in and looks around before walking to the front door. She rings the bell and two guards in royal uniforms open the double door and the next thing they are all lying flat on the floor in a pool of blood. Once again she touches her ring locking all the doors so that only she can unlock them.

There's a guy sitting in the lounge with only his bathrobe on.

“Prince Mabutho Ndlangamandla!” The guy jumps from the couch almost falling off.

“Who-who are you? How did you get?” He's shocked.

“Forget all those details just know your countdown to death has begun and I'm your one way ticket to hell where you truly deserve to be!” Realization hits the guy hard and he tries to pick his phone, Zie is faster than him and she knocks him down with a gun....

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NEXT INSERT.

Qhubekani is finally awake and getting better but his worst nightmare is the first thing he sees after regaining consciousness. Meanwhile an ultimatum is put on the table and the Royal family has more reasons to shed tears.....

It's 0100 hours and I just finished typing the insert.

This is how much I'm dedicated to this writing journey of mine and how much I care about you darlings. I won't be available during the day I have a few pressing issues to attend to. I will respond to all your messages when I'm done with my errands.

[Thank you for 2.3k page likes and your comments yesterday. Let's continue inviting others to this one big happy family]

THE BRIDE

Insert 49.

NARRATED.

Zinhle opens the double door fridge looking for something to snack on while she waits for the Prince to wake up. She takes out double plain yoghurt, grapes, strawberries and honey and mixes it together. Sitting on the couch with her left

sneakers on the Prince's chest she enjoys her snack. The Prince's phone rings, Zinhle picks the phone and sees a familiar number and answers.

“America Zie? Are you nuts? Why did you let me rescue you then if you were going to throw yourself into the lion's den?” Zibusiso is furious.

“Chill brother. Sooner or later my sins are going to catch up with me and I don't want to die with unfinished businesses. When all this is done, there's only one way to my destination.”

“I won't let that happen--”

“You control your world full of crime but not how the universe works. In the real world if you commit a sin you have to atone for it. Thanks for checking on me brother see you soon.” She drops the call and continues eating not even bothered by a single thing. After eating she washes the bowl and just then she sees pictures of a beautiful brunette on the table. She picks the photo frame and studies it. With her brand new Samsung Galaxy A50 she takes a picture of the photo concentrating on the face and

goes back to where she was seated before. She types a long set of numbers and symbols on her phone and it starts loading. Her huge marriage ring starts flashes and she touches it stopping the flash. Now the screen has a number of names and locations written on it. She logs in to Facebook and searches the Prince's name and in a matter of seconds she has his account and confirms whatever she's looking for.

The Prince coughs waking up and is startled to find Zinhle staring at him. He uncomfortably ties his robe.

“What do you want Zinhle? How much–” She laughs.

“I'm glad that knock reminded you of my name. I don't want money you stupid Prince!” She hisses.

“Then what? How did you manage to escape anyway? You should be in jail for what you did to my sister--”

“Yet you are here living the best of your life after raping, chopping a girl into pieces and feeding her

to your dogs? Huh? Why should the hands of law be full of discrimination?” Her eyes are blazing with fury. Prince Mabutho swallows hard looking at her, he tries to reach for his phone. “Go ahead and call whoever you want to then our party will be even more enjoyable! You should call your sister first and let her fill you in on the details of the kind of parties I enjoy.” Says Zinhle throwing his phone at him. He decides against calling someone and reaches for Zinhle's gun.

“Get out of my house or I will kill you!” Yells the Prince.

“Stop being dramatic! You pull that trigger and we both perish in this big mansion.” He looks around trying to make sense of what she's saying.

“Shit! You planted explosives in my house?” He says after noticing the explosives.

“Very well yes. Now can we talk about what I want?”

“What is it?”

“Marriage.” Mabutho chokes on his saliva and Zinhle laughs at him. He opens his mouth to say

something but words fail him. “What do you have to say Mr Khumalo the heir apparent to the throne?”

“I'm engaged to someone. Please don't do this to me she's seven months pregnant with my sons I can't hurt her like that.” Begs the Prince.

“Chantelle Meagan Clarke.” Mabutho freezes and starts sweating.

“Ho-how do you know her?” He stammers.

“I'm tired of hurting innocent people while the guilty ones continue with their lives like nothing happened. Don't make me cut your girlfriend into two with a kitchen knife and remove those two sons of a wicked man and send them to an orphanage in Spain where you will never ever see them again. Next time don't post your personal life on Facebook you are too easy to figure out. A Prince should be discreet especially when you have enemies like me. Here is what you are going to do; marry me, take me back to Zimbabwe since you are my ticket to going back home. When we arrive at the Royal palace, kill your father and be crowned a King after that I will

kill you and forfeit the throne. Do we have a deal?”

Qhubekani's POV.

My legs feel numb, like they not part of my body while my head is pounding. I taste my tongue to see if I can talk and surprisingly I can still talk although it's painful. I haven't fully healed. I can sense a presence, someone is in the room and when I raise my head I come face to face with my sister Sisanda.

“I have waited to see you suffer for your sins for over seven years now. I'm glad karma finally knocked on your door I was starting to accept that my babies' murderer will go unpunished.” A tear runs down her cheek, pain is written all over her face. I can not even begin to imagine how she feels and the worst of all this is that I still don't remember a thing about that particular accident.

“I'm sorry--”

“Sorry for your pathetic self! I wish you nothin but pain, sorrows, heartache and doubled curses! I pray for lightning to strike your chubby children then you will understand how it feels like to bury your own children!” She slams the door behind her shattering my already shattered heart even more. A few seconds later Khaya walks in.

“Hi brother.” He says sitting down. “How are you feeling?”

“I don't what hurts the most? The physical pain or the emotional pain? I'm shattered brother, I know I deserve all this but why should my children pay for my sins?”

“I don't understand?”

“Sisa hates me and she just threatened my children. Yes I wronged her but my children are innocent. They know nothing about my sins!” I can't keep on holding my tears I let them fall.

“She's angry and it's understandable. Sisa will never hurt your children she said that out of anger. We will protect your girls even if it means protecting them

against our very own blood.”

“Did Zinhle get arrested?”

“No she escaped and is on the top of the list of the wanted people.” I know she's the reason I'm now a cripple but I would never wish bad things upon her. She's suffered a lot in this life and she deserves a break. I will not be laying charges against her and I will be even more happier if dad can continue to love her. She deserves all the love this world has to offer. She's my one true love and I'm ready to let her be with whoever makes her happy. “What are you thinking about?”

“Nothing serious I'm just glad she managed to escape.” He looks at me like I have grown a horn.

“Are you sure about that?”

“Yes and I have a feeling my family helped her escape. I'm perfectly okay with that too. She deserves to be happy not behind bars.” He hugs me. “The doctor says she castrated me and I will never be able to get it up ever again.”

“I'm sorry brother. I can't imagine how it feels like to

be right now.”

“It feels like I've been reborn with a new purpose in life and that is to teach my fellow men that there's nothing fancy or thrilling in cheating but the real joy is in sticking to one partner and knowing exactly where you stand.”

NARRATED.

The Queen is trying to feed Anelisa when the doctor walks in and informs her that Anelisa will not be able to eat anything through her mouth until her brain starts working again.

“But she's hungry doctor—”

“Feeding her won't help. Her brain is dead at the moment and she won't chew or swallow the food because the only thing responsible for those actions is missing in action. We chew using our teeth but it is the brain that administers everything

our bodies do.” Clarifies the doctor. The Royal guard flies in breathlessly.

“His Majesty has been hit by a car...”

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THE BRIDE

Insert 50.

NARRATED.

“His Majesty has been hit by a car!” Says the breatheless Royal guard.

“What?” The Queen collapses on the chair asking herself what sin did she commit to deserve such a punishment. The guard and the doctor run to the corridor where the other guards and nurses are pushing the stretcher bed. The King is groaning in pain as blood drips from all over his body. He's

taken to the Emergency room...

Back in the ward the Queen folds her hands and prays. She cries her heart out casting her burdens to God. Anelisa is sleeping peacefully on the bed with drips all over her body and a brain monitor on her head. By the time she opens her eyes she comes face to face with a ghost from the past. She screams trying to run away from the room but the ghost is now standing by the door.

“Please please don't kill me--” Cries the Queen.

“What was my sin? What wrong did I ever do to you? Was your greed and desire to be the Queen of Ntabeni Kingdom so pressing that you killed me your own sister? I'm your blood sister Tholakele!” Hisses the ghost. The Queen tries to look at the ghost but the blinding light covering the ghost makes it hard to face her.

“I'm sorry I was just a naive eighteen year old girl--”

“So naive that you were able to consult a traditional healer, buy poison and kill me your only sister!”

Roars the ghost deafening the Queen's ears. With her fingers the ghost points at the wall and a slideshow of pictures emerges. The Queen chokes on her breath looking at Zinhle pointing a gun to the Prince.

“No! Mabutho is the future King! He's your son sister--” Cries the Queen.

“I don't know who the girl is but I trust her to deliver the message on my behalf. I will protect my sons but who will protect you sister? You turned your back to your own ancestors when you decided to forcefully take what's not yours. The countdown to your misery, suffering, pain and death has just begun..” The ghost disappears and the Queen runs out of the room.

Zamo's POV.

Only if Zinhle was here she was going to help me

kill that girl. Melisizwe is failing to love me because that slut is always on his face flaunting her shapeless body and shiny face! Mntimande walked out on me and now I don't know where Zinhle is or how to contact her. Melisizwe is mine if I have to kill to have him all to myself then I will.

“Nomzamo angison isiduli samazinyane mina. Sewufunani manje? (I'm not a playground Nomzamo! What do you want now?)” Shit! Mntimande is really pissed off.

“I'm sorry.” I say and wait for him to say something but he keeps quiet.

“Suqedile? (Are you done?)”

“Mntimande I'm sorry I need your help. Please help me kill someone, if Zinhle was here she was going to help me--”

“Ufun ukubulala leyanja oyibiza ngendoda kumbe njani? (You want to kill that dog you call a husband or what?)”

“Meli is not bad his babymama is the problem. She wants to tie him down with her child who might not

be Meli's daughter for all we know. She's very cunning and devious.”

“Ngubani igama lakhe? (What's her name?)” He asks.

“Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa.” I inform him and he cuts the call. What the fuck? Did Mntimande just cut me off? Screw all of them I'm killing her with or without their help. With or without them I have to walk down that aisle! I switch on my laptop and start googling, uncle Google never disappoints. I'm now looking at over thirty thousand ways of killing and getting away with murder. I'm pregnant and no one will really think a pregnant woman killed someone. Meli baby, if I can't have you the loving way then the bloody way will do.

Nkululeko's POV.

Mntimande barges into my room carrying a laptop.

He looks disturbed, he turns the laptop to my direction.

“Do you know her?” He asks as I scan the screen.

“Brother? What's going on with you? You are married or have you forgotten that?” He smacks my head. “Okay I only saw her in person once when she had a book signing in Johannesburg. She is an author, film director and script writer and I'm reading her book as we speak. Why do you ask?”

“Zamo wants to kill her.” My eyes pop out in shock.

“W-what? For what exactly?” I don't understand any of this. Why would Zamo want to kill such a humble soul?

“She's Meli's ex wife from what I read here and they recently got divorced. Zamo says she's cunning and devious but my gut and these articles say otherwise. I even checked her social media accounts and people love and look up to her. What do you think is wrong here?”

“That Meli guy is wrong. Sukoluhle and Zamo are both successful and honorable ladies, I doubt they

have time to fight for a man. I don't know about Zamo but I can vouch for Sukoluhle not to be any of those things you just mentioned. The lady is too focused and I doubt she has time to play with. Even her close friends are successful women, you know what they say about successful women, right?”

“They don't have time to fight for love.”

“Exactly! Isn't Zamo the one who tried hitting on you?” He nods. “I don't trust that girl even one bit. She's too horny to think straight you better tell her to stop this nonsense.”

“I will talk to her and also visit this Meli guy. Now I feel like I have to protect this lady from Zamo. Women in love can be very stupid look at what Zie did to those two people.” He sighs and leaves. Women and their crazy love fantasies. They think life is fiction, poor women.

NARRATED.

Prince Mabutho tiptoes from his bedroom with a backpack on his back and shoes in his hands. His heart almost stops when he sees Zinhle sitting on the kitchen stool having tea.

“Uhm...”

“Going somewhere my Prince?” Asks Zinhle taking a sip of her steaming hot tea.

“I wanted to go and check a friend.” He lies.

“Okay you can go.” He smiles and walks to the door while Zinhle climbs the steps going upstairs to her self appointed room. A few minutes later Mabutho knocks on the door. “I thought you were going somewhere?”

“What did you do to my doors?” She ignores his question.

“Your father was involved in an accident--”

“You killed my father you bitch!”

“Careful with your words my dear Prince. I'm here practising to be a good wife but you insulting me?”

Don't test my patience! Your useless father is not dead and I wasn't involved in his accident. Now back to our yesterday conversation, you have three months to take me back to Zimbabwe.”

“Go to hell!”

“When I'm done with you and your family I will definitely go to hell. I don't have the rest of my life to do this so please be quick, inform your father about your marriage then I will do the rest.”

“How do I tell my father that I'm marrying you?”

“What's wrong with me?”

“You are Zinhle!”

“Oh that? Relax, for now I'm a Punjabi lady and Sarika is my name. Three months or you die.”

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THREE MONTHS LATER...

THE BRIDE.

Insert 51.

[This insert is sponsored by a reader whose comment on yesterday's insert was the first and only one of its kind. Thank you for a well detailed and motivating comment.]

THREE MONTHS LATER....

NARRATED.

At the mall, Charity and Amahle run up and down desperately looking for Prudence who just vanished into thin air when they were busy shopping.

Amahle's cheeks are now decorated with tears and Charity is sweating and shaking. What will they tell Sukoluhle? Forget her, what about the crazy Prudence's father? He will surely clean the whole mall with Charity's face.

“We have to inform mom.” Amahle blurts out.

“She will kill me Amy.” Charity's heart pounds.

“After finding Prudy. For now she will focus her anger on finding Prudy. We have searched the whole place but we can't find her. We need help and we need it fast. What if one of the things we always watch on those human trafficking documentaries--”

“Amy please don't say that. Okay okay let's call your mom.” She says dialing Suku's number but it goes unanswered.

“Call aunt Lee or aunt Nothabo.” Suggests Amahle. Lerato answers the call on the first ring.

“Sis Lee Prudy is missing--”

“What do you mean Prudy is missing? Weren't you guys shopping?”

“We can't find her. We have been searching for over an hour now. Please help us I think someone took her.” Charity cries.

“Okay I'm calling Nothabo and Suku I will be there in a flash. Don't panic else you guys will be hit by cars.

Stop searching and stay in one place. I'm coming.” She drops the call. Charity and Amahle hug each other and hysterically cry as passers by watch them quizzically. A street kid runs by and steals one of their plastic bags.

A few minutes later Dr Princess parks her car and leaves the engine on running to them followed by Lerato.

“What happened?” Questions Princess Nothabo with a calm voice. Charity looks at her with red already swollen eyes.

“We were at Choppies buying her favorite lays chips, she excitedly ran to the paypoint leaving us behind and that was the last time we saw her.” Charity informs them.

“Any screams or unusual activities?” Asks Lerato but Charity shakes her head. Princess is talking on the phone already.

“I need all the CCTV footages in and around Bulawayo Centre as soon as yesterday. You have

five minutes to do your thing and send those to me.”

“I'm afraid that's impossible ma'am--”

“I don't pay you to tell me about that shit! My niece might be in trouble and you have the audacity to say that shit?”

“I'm sorry ma'am.”

“Better be! Now do what I pay you to do.” Princess and Lerato's eyes meet and they speak at once.

“Are you thinking what I'm thinking?” They both pause.

“I guess yes. After that accident that almost costed us a friend I wouldn't put anything past that psycho of a woman. I also heard that Meli moved out after she tried killing Amy.”

“I told you guys that lady is a psycho but our dear friend saw a victim in all of this. Nomzamo is crazy and her madness runs deeper than what meets the eye. Meli might have triggered the already loose screw in there but the girl was already crazy if you ask me.” Says Princess as her phone beeps.

***** A male figure whose face is unrecognizable took her. Seems like Prudy knew what was happening and she puts her phone on flight mode. I have sent the current location.*****

The message reads. She shows it to Lerato and they decide to go to the said location.

“Char, a driver is coming to take you home come and get in the car so you can wait in there. Nono was in a meeting when I tried to call, be calm when she calls and don't worry we will find Prudy, okay?” Both Amy and Charity nod.

At the Mkhize mansion, Mr Ndabezinhle wakes up with a huge grin on his face. It's been a while since he smiled like this and it's surprising to see him with a huge smile on his face. Today he even overslept, it's so unlike him to sleep till past twelve noon. Owami slowly pushes the door and watches his father smiling to himself. Owami shakes his head before jumping on the bed startling his father.

“Hey little man!” Mr Ndabezinhle tickles him.

“Hey dad. You look happy today, was sup grandpa?”

“Is it a crime to be happy? You are also happy, was sup?” He decides to change the subject before his happiness gets him in trouble.

“Mom video called me yesterday. She said she misses me and to remember she will always love me. She looked beautiful and had so many beads on her. She looked like an indian Goddess.” Says Owami who is now lost in his memories. The surprise video call had him sleeping peacefully after months of having nightmares and starting to believe his mother was dead wherever she was.

“She loves you man. Can I tell you a secret?” Asks his father putting Owami on his torso. “When she's done with her work we are going to relocate and be a happy family. Do you enjoy farm life? With horses, dogs--” Owami jumps hugging him. They stay like that until Qhu pushes his wheelchair in. He looks clean and today he even made an effort to find new clean clothes.

“Good morning dad. Hey little man.” Greets Qhubekani. During the first days Owami was scared of him and the family looked at him in a funny way. We can't blame though, it's not everyday people get to live with someone who has no lips and his teeth are always out there in the open.

“Hi son. You look clean today.”

“Thanks dad. I have a business meeting can you drive me there and sit in the meeting. I need your legal opinion on their proposal.” That's a first. Qhubekani never cared about his father's opinion.

“You didn't tell me you wanted to venture into the business world?”

“That's because for once I wanted to do something on my own. I know you no longer believe me but one day I will make you proud.”

“I'm waiting for that day son. And yes I will come with you. Let me freshen up.” For the first time in ages Mr Mkhize smiles proudly. It's been his wish to see Qhubekani turning his life around and it looks like the day has finally come.

“Thanks dad and I won't disappoint you.” He says and pushes his wheelchair out.

“Please do call a helper for me if you happen to bump into one of them. My bed needs to be done.” Says Mr Mkhize.

“Zie won't be happy about this when she finally returns. Rather have Nothabo do that for you or do it yourself else you will be dead meat when that crazy wife of yours returns.” They both laugh. At first it was hard for them to talk about Zinhle but Qhubekani finally told his father that he's happy for him and won't stand in his way if he still loves Zinhle.

“I guess you are right.”

“Dad? Can I exchange bedrooms with Khaya or the inside guest room? I feel like I'm a burden to the the helpers who have to help me up and down the stairs. I want to do these things by myself, I want to embrace this new me and not to be a pain in people's necks.”

“Okay son I will tell daughter-in-law to make

arrangements for that. Speaking of daughter-in-laws have you seen Anelisa?”

“She's at a private apartment with all sorts of doctors and she's still mute. They say her brain is dead but her heart is still pumping. I wonder if she will ever be okay.” Qhubekani sighs.

Mntimande's POV.

After my wife's death I haven't been feeling okay. We had an argument, she drove off and a few minutes I received a call informing me of the fatal accident. I made it to the hospital when she was still alive but she couldn't make it and just like that she left me with a huge responsibility of raising our children alone. I tried being strong, I tried not to break down in front of people but the pain was just too much to keep inside. Her family blamed me for everything, took half of my wealth as if they didn't realize how much of pain I was in. If not for my

brothers, my in-laws would have taken everything I own but my family fought for a fair share. I tried getting up and dusting myself but everything in South Africa reminded me of her, I ended up coming back home with my children. It's been two months since I settled in here. At least this house has no memories of her, she hated Zimbabwe and never really was fond of tagging along everytime I came here.

I really don't care about the money, the business or the diamonds what do I need all those for when the person I was working hard for is no longer alive? A tear runs down my cheek, my daughter sits on my lap and hugs me tight.

“Mom is now an angel looking down at us and protecting us. You have to stop grieving and find something else to live for.” I stare at her speechless. “Starting with you taking a long hot shower and getting rid of those hairs all over your face like you are a mad person. We love you and you can at least try to live for us, your children.” She's 15 and

already she speaks like an adult.

“Awumkhumbuli wena? (Don't you miss her?)”

“I do but crying will not bring her back. Accepting that she's gone and learning to live without her physical being but only her memories will liberate you from being a slave of grief. People die, we cry, we accept they are gone and move on making them proud--”

“Daddy--” Ntsika my son screams his lungs out. We both run to his room and the sight in front of me has me frozen on the spot. She runs to me and hugs me tight crying hysterically. It's the pain in her voice that has me snapping out of my frozen state and hugging her back. She's really here, she really kept her promise and she came back.

“I'm sorry--” She says wiping my tears. I wasn't even aware of the tears.

“Ubuyile ZakwaNgwenya-- (You came back ZakwaNgwenya--)”

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 52.

[SPONSORED INSERT.]

Mntimande's POV.

Having my dear sister in my arms after long torturous months of her absence feels like heaven. I can feel a part of my heart being healed. Zinhle has been and will always be my sanity although she's not even close to being sane. She has always been crazy, not really crazy but she has a loose screw in her head.

“Can we also be recognized please?” Liqhawe, my daughter, says seperating us. Zinhle hugs her and

strangely Liqhawe starts crying too as Ntsika joins them. They all cry their hearts out, my daughters don't have a strong bond with any of their grandparents. My parents hated their mother and it led to them also not accepting my children as part of the family while my in-laws always thought I was a criminal and labelled my children as thugs too. The only people they know and have a bond with are Zinhle, Smilo, Nkululeko, Zibusiso and the only sane brother we have in our family, Mpilo. My other two sisters behave like the holy angels who by mistake fell from heaven and they found themselves in the Ngwenya homestead. They don't really mingle with the rest of us, according to the two of them we are sinners.

“You scared me aunt Zie.” Says Ntsika wiping his tears.

“I'm sorry boy I didn't know you were in here. I'm sorry, okay?”

“And the Punjabi s aree?” Liqhawe asks frowning.

“It's a long story sweetheart I will tell you later. For

now can you two give us space I need to talk to your father.”

“Okay.” Says Liqhawe taking Ntsika with.

“I'm sorry about your wife brother. I couldn't come for her burial since I'm still on the wanted list. I'm really sorry. How are you holding up?”

“Ngiyancenga dadewethu. Inhliziyo yami ibuhlungu, umoya wami uphukile, umzimba wami ukhathele kanye nengqondo angazi nokuthi ngisaphilelani. Yonkinto iduma nje, akula nokukodwa okungenza ngizizwe ngcono. (I'm trying my sister. My heart is shattered, my spirit is broken, my body and my brain tired, nothing excites me anymore and nothing is worthy living for.)” I finally have someone I can pour out my heart to and I know she will never judge me or say I'm weak.

“It's okay to feel like that after losing a loved one. I can't say I understand your pain because I don't. Just don't entertain suicidal thoughts, find another reason to live for and take one day at a time.”

“Kunzima Zie. Ngizamile konke otherapy, ukugijima

ekuseni, ukuyawosa namajita kodwa angikwazi ukukhohlwa ngaye. Indlela engambona eyiyo phami kokuba adlule emhlabeni iyawuhlukumeza umoya wami. Mhlawumbe kwakungamelanga ngixabane naye ngento engekho, mhlawumbe kwakumele ngimzwisis e– (It's hard Zie. I tried going for therapy, exercising, going out with the guys but I'm unable to forget her. The way she looked before she passed on keeps on tormenting my soul. Maybe I shouldn't have fought with her for something so silly, maybe all I had to do was to put myself in her shoes–)” A painful lump rises in my throat choking me.

“It's okay brother. Don't be too hard on yourself everything will be better as time progresses.” She hugs me and lets me cry my heart out. “Now that you don't have any tears left, I have to ask you this because maybe this is the last time I will ever have the chance to--”

“Uthini Zinhle? (What are you saying Zinhle?)”

“I still have to complete my task. What will happen after that will be decided by fate and destiny.”

“Zie awukwazi ukungitshiya lawe. Ngiyakudinga dadewethu, ngizozikhulis a nobani ingane lezi? (You can not leave me Zie. I need you sister, how will I raise the children by my own?)” I can't lose her too.

“You raised me, you raised the most difficult siblings any brother can ever have and we came out very nice and well. Whatever wrong things I did and still going to do have nothing to do with the way you raised me. Don't ever question your parenting skills, you are a great brother and a wonderful father. Liqhawe and Ntsika will be just fine, be there for them and everything will be fine.” She says as my phone rings but I mute the call.

“Ngithembise ukuthi kukho konke lokhu angisoze ngikungcwabe Zinhle? Angeke ngikwazi ukuphila ngemva kokulahlekelwa nguwe. (Promise me in all of this you will not die. I won't be able to continue without you.)”

“I won't die, I promise.” I emotionally hug her. “Why did you fight with your wife over Zamo? Do you like her?”

“Cha. KuZamo angiboni mfazi kodwa udadewethu, umkami wayengazwisisi ukuthi kungani ngangifonelwa ngokubheda kukaZamo engathi yimi umkakhe. Uye wazama ukubulala i ex kaMeli lomntanakhe--- (Nope. Zamo is like a sister to me I have no romantic feelings for her. My wife was angry because someone called and informed me about what Zamo had done as if I'm his husband/lover. Zamo tried to kill Meli's ex and his daughter--)”

“What?” Zinhle is shocked. My phone keeps flashing and I end up taking it.

“Mntimande--”

“They took her! They took my sister please save her just like how you saved me. I'm begging you--”

“Amahle?”

“Bazombulala ngicel umsize. (They will kill her please help her.)”

“Okay okay ngiyakuzwa Amy. Uphi umamakho? Bamthathe nikuphi? (Okay okay I understand Amy. Where is your mom? Where was she kidnapped?)”

“My mom is not answering her phone. Please don't tell her I called else she will kill me.” And the line goes dead. Fuck!

“And then?”

“Suku's niece has been kidnapped! Suku is Meli's ex. I have to help them find Prudy I think Zamo took her --”

“I asked you to look after Zamo and what did you do? She's on medication and if she misses her doses she loses it! Zamo is mentally unstable!”

NARRATED.

Lerato and Princess step down the car and run to the location where Prudy's phone directed them to.

“Wait?” Princess stops Lerato.

“What now?” Asks the confused Lerato.

“It's a trap. Prudy is not here, don't look up or on

your side we are being watched. Can you shoot?”

“I'm not ready to die--” Lee is already shaking.

“Either you kill or be killed. There are two guns on my waist, under the jacket take one and run from here and call the police.” Orders Princess.

“I'm not leaving you--” A gun is fired startling Lerato who quickly fires back covering Princess who runs inside the house. A bullet grazes Lerato's arm and she's pushed down by a strong hand.....

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We have another sponsored insert coming up later today. Around 2000 hours. Have a splendid Sunday.

To the dear readers reading Precious Rosè on Wattpad. I will upload more chapters today.

THE BRIDE.

[Sponsored Insert.]

Insert 53.

Zamo's POV.

If Meli doesn't come today and make me his wife today itself then his daughter will breathe her last. I will kill his family one by one until he realizes that

rejecting me was not a good idea. How can he tell me I'm not good enough to be his wife? What's wrong with me? Am I not a woman like that shapeless ex wife of his? On another note, the bitch is everything a man can dream of. She has the shape, the money, the brains and looks like a woman who doesn't waste her time fighting for things that doesn't add value to her life. But I'm also a beautiful successful woman, she might have divorced Meli because she found out he cheated with me but that doesn't make her an angel and me a slut. I have always been unlucky when it comes to love and now God decided to give me a man in a platter and that man decides to be stuck in the past! No Meli, this relationship of ours will end with us living a happily ever after or dead. That's the only way out babe.

“Boss the guys are under attack. Apparently there are more people involved than you expected.” One of my goons informs me. Shit! How do they know I have Meli's daughter? I have to take this girl and run before they get here.

“How did they find them?” I thought we had everything under control.

“I don't know. Maybe the girl has a tracker?” I look at the girl and feel like puking. It has nothing to do with her face and big eyes but my pregnancy just hate girls.

“Do you have a tracker Nana?” I ask the little girl.

“Yes! And my aunts will find me and kill you all! You are bad people! You are bad people! You are had people!” My head starts spinning as her high pitched voice echoes in my head. I put both my hands on my ears trying to block the noise but it feels like the noise is coming from within.

“Shut up!” I yell at her and she shivers. My head is pounding already and this brat has added to it. “Get up we are leaving!” I hiss at her but she remains seated. “I said get up--”

“No! I'm not going anywhere until my mom comes and rescues me!” She yells back and I slap her hard she hits on wall and screams her lungs out. I really didn't want to hurt this brat but she's starting to get

under my skin. I plunge the injection into her neck and after a few seconds she's out. "That was a double dose nana, if you die then it's your problem." I say rubbing her long hair and get out followed by my goons.

NARRATED.

Lerato is pushed down by a strong hand as bullets fly over their heads. The man fires three shots and picks her up running to the car. She looks at him still wondering where this Greek god came from.

"Uhlale lapho um' usafuna ukuphila. (Stay in there if you love your life!)" He orders. Damn! Forget the gunshots his lips are inviting and Lerato can only imagine how his mouth tastes like. She's still lost in her thoughts when a woman on a scooter drives by taking all men in her way down. Lee takes her phone out and records a video to share later. It will be awesome to be the one with the hot video of the

day. Her phone is snatched and crushed by a timberland boot.

“I’m already on the wanted list so please stop with the nonsense.” Says the girl as she drives off with her scooter approaching Princess who has blood on her shirt. Lerato is shocked as to who the girl might be. Zinhle removes her helmet and Princess smiles looking at her.

“I knew you were smarter than those assholes.” Praises Princess.

“I’m not proud of my intelligence. What are you doing here?” Zinhle replies.

“Your friend is playing with fire. I can murder anyone for my loved ones, including you Zinhle. I’m worse than your mind can ever imagine.” Princess threatens.

“Hold it right there. Let’s not flaunt our capabilities here, it’s not about us but my friend and your niece. We have to find them before Zamo can hurt her, she’s mentally unstable.” Suku’s call comes through on Princess’s phone but she mutes the call and

runs to the car.

“You found her?” Zinhle asks on the phone. “Okay don't hurt her please, I'm on my way.” She speeds off and Princess and Lerato follow her.

Meli's POV.

I'm chilling in my office having tea and muffins. After moving out of Zamo's house I've been feeling good and the guilty of seeing her loving me everyday when I don't feel a thing for her is starting to subside. God will forgive me on this one because I don't see myself married to Zamo or anyone else. If I can't win my wife back then I'm ready to die alone. I don't think I can ever love anyone when my love for my wife is still this deep.

“Melisizwe Ncube's office--” I answer the office phone.

“If that psycho of your girlfriend kills my niece I

swear with everything that's dear to me I'm going to kill you!" What? What is Suku talking about?

"Babe I don't understand—"

"Stop babe-ing me and go and stop your mad girlfriend!" Her voice is shaking and horse I'm sure she's been crying. Damn you Nomzamo! I pick my car keys and run to the parking lot dialing Zamo but her phone goes unanswered. If you dare touch even a single hair on her head I'm going to kill you Nomzamo! No one makes my wife cry and gets away with it.

NARRATED.

Mntimande parks his car at Nomzamo's parents house. Her car is parked outside and two guys with guns are standing by the entrance.

"Shit! I'm out of bullets, I'm not a murderer and shooting people is not my style." He mutters more to himself.

“Who are you?” Asks one of the guys pointing a gun at me.

“Ngize ngokuthula madoda. (I come in peace)” I say raising my hands. One of the guys searches Mntimande and he takes it as an opportunity to knock out the guy pointing a gun at him. One side kick on his throat and he's already down but it seems Mntimande just invited trouble for himself as more guys surround him. “Ngifun ingane kuphela angizanga ngempi. Akalacala uPrudy. (I just want the baby then I will leave. Prudy is innocent.)” Zinhle flies in with her scooter firing her gun and stops the moment Nomzamo comes out of the house holding a knife on Prudy's neck. Prudy looks unconscious and she's bleeding. Zinhle removes her helmet and Zamo looks like she just saw a ghost.

“It's me friend. Let the kid go, she knows nothing about your fight with Meli she's not even Meli's daughter--”

“No! You are lying to me you are not Zinhle, my friend will never support that bitch!” Says Zamo as the knife cuts Prudy's neck. Blood drips from her

neck as Princess parks the car followed by Meli. Mntimande tries to distract Zamo but she's not listening to any of them. They beg her to release the girl but she keeps the knife on her neck. Princess tries to use force but seeing the unfringed Zamo Mntimande holds her back. Suku arrives and faints the very moment she sees a knife and blood on Prudy's neck. Seeing this Zinhle pulls out her gun and shoots Zamo on the chest and she falls on the pavement.....

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THE BRIDE.

[THANK YOU SO SO MUCH FOR THE 4.1k

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Insert 54.

NARRATED.

“No! You are lying to me you are not Zinhle, my friend will never support that bitch!” Says Zamo as the knife cuts Prudy's neck. Blood drips from her neck as Princess parks the car followed by Meli. Mntimande tries to distract Zamo but she's not listening to any of them. They beg her to release the girl but she keeps the knife on her neck. Princess tries to use force but seeing the unfringed Zamo Mntimande holds her back. Suku arrives and faints the very moment she sees a knife and blood on Prudy's neck. Seeing this Zinhle pulls out her gun and shoots Zamo on the chest and she falls on the pavement.

“Nomzamo!” Meli rushes to Zamo while Mntimande

tears his shirt off and bandages Prudy's neck. He looks at Zinhle and shakes his head feeling disappointed. Lerato and Princess try to resuscitate Suku but she's not moving and her breathing is shallow.

“You killed my child--” Melisizwe yells at Zinhle as tears stream down his face falling on Zamo's face.

“You caused this you idiot! Don't you even think that I don't know what you did because I know and you are going to pay. Move!” Zinhle pushes Meli aside and unbottons Zamo's jacket. Just then Princess is about to stab Zamo with a screwdriver but Zinhle stops her. “Not in my presence! You may have killed and got away with multiple murders but until you can kill ZakwaNgwenya don't you ever think you are the “It Girl”! Zamo needs help, she's sick and she didn't know what she was doing. You deal with crazy people, you are crazy yourself so please don't start trying to play holy Maria. Take your friend to the hospital I will deal with my friend.” Zinhle yanks Princess hand off as the screwdriver hits the pavement. Princess fumes and fires a shot of a fist

on Zinhle's face which has her bleeding already.

“Can you both fucking stop this nonsense! We might be looking at two corpses here and you are busy proving the strength of your egos! What the hell is wrong with the two of you? Give me the car keys let me take my friend to hospital then you two can kill each other for all I care!” Mutters Lerato as she snatches the keys from Princess and walks away following Mntimande who has Suku in his arms. Melisizwe swallows hard looking at them driving off with his wife whom once again, he just failed.

Police sirens are heard from a near distance and Zinhle panics.

“Who the hell called the police? Fuck! Princess I'm sorry for being a jerk please helpy friend--” Zinhle apologizes wiping blood off her nose.

“Help her how? You just killed her--” Meli interjects, Zinhle knocks him out with a gun.

“She's not dead, that was a tranquilizer, I have dealt

with her episodes before and I knew what to expect from her. Please do help my friend, for the sake of humanity.” Zinhle begs Dr PNNM.

“Why should I help someone who almost killed my niece?”

“Because you wouldn't want to brag about killing a mad woman, would you?” Princess remains silent.

“I thought as much. I will forward her medical record I have to go before these idiots get here.”

She hops on her scooter and they all look at her speechless. “I owe you Dr PNNM and I always pay my debts. Remember, I will know if you kill her then you and I will have some real life problems.”

“Daughter of a bitch!” Princess mutters kneeling next to the unconscious Nomzamo.

At the hospital Mntimande runs in carrying Prudy in his arms. The nurses take Prudy from him and rush to the emergency room.

“Dokotela ngicel uyisize leyangane. Ngiyakuncenga-
- (Doctor please save her. I'm begging you--)” The
image of his wife after the accident flashes in
memory and the pain slices into his heart. He
closes his eyes massaging his chest as the
emotional pain turns to physical pain.

“Are you okay?” Questions the doctor.

“Khohlwa ngami siza uPrudy. (Forget about me and
help Prudy)” Mntimande says taking a seat on the
hospital bench still holding his chest. He thought he
had gone past this pain but it seems every sight of
blood brings back those memories. Once again he
closes his eyes breathing in and out until the pain
subsides. When he opens his eyes he comes face
to face with Lerato who offers him water.

“Ngiyabonga mntomuhle. (Thank you beautiful.)”
Lerato blushes.

“You look like you are in pain? Did you get shot?”

“Cha ntokazi ngikahle ungazikhathazi ngami. Unjani
umngane wakho? (No I'm fine don't worry about me.
How is your friend?)” He changes the topic but as a

doctor Lerato can see that something is wrong with him.

“She's fine. She just woke up, I came to get water for her when I saw you groaning in pain.”

“Ngiyabonga kodwa kumele ubuyele kuye ngiyazi uyakudinga mina ngizohlala lana ngilinde udokotela -- (Thank you but I think you should go back to her, I will wait for the doctor here--)”

“Who are you? Why do you care this much for Prudy?”

“Akuqakathekanga ukuthi ngingubani uzobangazi ngelinye lamalanga. (My identity is not important, one day you will know who I am.)” He stands up and leaves her with unanswered questions.

A few hours later Mntimande sneaks into the room where Prudy is sleeping unaware that Amahle is also there. Amy runs and jumps on him kissing him all over the face.

“Thank you for saving her. Despite having a gun you

are a good man.” Mntimande smiles and puts her down.

“Angiyen' umuntu olungileyo kodwa angithandi ukubona abantu behlukumezekile. Unjani usisi wakho? (I'm not really a good person but I hate seeing people in trouble. How's your sister?)”

“The doctor said it's a small not so deep cut I guess she will be fine soon. They bandaged her neck.” She tells him.

“Kwakhule. Ngimphathele nanka amaluba hayi ukuwants hontsha angikuthembi wena mahlakanipheni. (That's great. I brought flowers for her don't steal them. I don't trust you clever girl.)” They both laugh waking Prudy up.

“Hey.” Mntimande kisses her on the forehead.

“Hi. What happened to me?”

“You died and now you are a ghost.” Amahle teases, Prudy frowns.

“Do ghost have feelings? I can feel your touch?” Prudy is confused.

“Silly! You were kidnapped--” Amy is about to refresh Prudy's mind but Mntimande stops her.

“You went for a drive with mom and you guys had a minor accident. You are fine nothing happened to you.” He lies to her.

“Is mom okay?” They hear Suku's voice from the corridor.

“I have to go if she sees me here she will be mad.” He says kissing the girls on their cheeks.

“What's your name caring stranger?” Amahle asks.

“Sibangilizwe Ngwenya.” He tells them and leaves.

At the Royal Palace, the maidens and the people from the village are busy preparing for the Prince's traditional wedding. The Queen is happy about the marriage but the King is disappointed in his son.

“How are you going to rule this Kingdom with a white woman? These people know nothing about our traditions all they know is to sunbath and tan

their skins!” Says the disappointed King.

“Father I love my wife. She has already given me two beautiful children what more do I want from a woman? White or not, I love her.” Mabutho fires back

“I’m your father son I know what’s good for you and I can tell you now that this woman is not good for you and this Kingdom!”

“Then you are free to give the crown to my younger brother I’m not even interested to be the King.”

Mabutho walks out leaving his parents dumbfounded. The Queen makes a mental note to visit her sangoma before things spiral out of control.

“What happened to my son? He doesn’t sound like himself.” Stresses the King.

“I guess it the pre-marriage stress.”

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 55.

NARRATED.

Suku frowns looking at the man who just walked out of the room where Prudy is. Looking at his height and back it looks like it's she has met before. Lerato is busy typing on her phone and smiling as they walk into the room.

“Aunt what happened to me? Mahle says I'm a ghost?” Prudy is worried about being a ghost.

“She's lying to you. You know she likes teasing people especially when they are at their lowest.” Suku notices the fresh white and red roses on the small chest of drawers beside the bed. “Mahle where did those flowers come from? The hospital can not afford those for all patients here?”

“A friend brought them.” Responds Amahle.

“What friend?” Suku frowns.

“The man who saved Amy when she was kidnapped brought them. He is our dear friend--” Says Prudy.

“Wait? You are friends with older men? What if he steals or rapes you? Who gave you the permission to befriend a stranger? What is his name? And why am I hearing this today? Mahle, the police said they were the ones who rescued you then what is this now?”

“Which one of your questions should I answer mommy--”

“Amahle Kelly Ncube!”

“I'm sorry mom. I don't know who his name is, and no he would never rape me or Prudy because he really cares about children and he has his own children too. Sorry we didn't ask for your permission to befriend him, we are really sorry. When I was kidnapped, he came before the police and slapped that woman who kept me captive. He is the one who called the police who arrested that lady, I don't know why the officers said they saved me when they didn't.”

“You are not going to be friends with strangers, are we clear?” The children nod. Lerato finally has time to talk to her friend.

“If he's the guy who was too concerned about Prudy I saw him but I didn't get his name--”

“What do you mean Lee?”

“There's a guy who brought us here, he didn't talk much in fact he saved me from the shooting scene, he is the one who found Z-- that psycho of a woman and I haven't seen him before. His accent is one of those South African rude taxi guys even his language.” Amahle heaves a huge sigh of relief. The thought of Lee telling his name to her mother almost stopped her heart. Now that they all don't know his name she can continue talking to him on the phone. After all he's the only man in her life right now. Her own father has never bothered himself to visit her ever since the divorce and her grandfather also hasn't visited her.

“And you didn't think of telling me this?”

“Nono please stop worrying. That guy looked

decent to me and he's cute.” Suku shakes her head defeated. Lee and cute boys are inseparable.

“How are you feeling sweetheart?”

“I'm okay mom. My head hurts a little but I want to go home already. Amy will eat all of my chocolates and tell my friends at school that I'm a ghost if I stay here.” They all laugh.

In the car driving back to the mansion, Qhubekani and his father are lost in a business conversation when Qhu's phone beeps. He takes it out of his pocket and frowns looking at it.

***** I deposited money into your account go and fix your lips, you can try and find a fake arm too. It was not nice knowing you but I'm glad to see that you are a changed man. Take care of that old man you have turned into your chauffeur.*****

“Are you okay? You look like you just saw a ghost?”
Asks Mr Mkhize.

“Have you heard from Zie?”

“No. Why?”

“She's in the country. She sent money to my account using her Zimbabwean bank account she says I should fix my lips? Are you hiding her dad? You just showed me that flyer about fake lips and all, now this message from Zie? Dad if you are hiding her then you should be ready to face the law with her. I don't wish her to go to jail but the police do want to put her behind bars. If you really love her please just elope, take Sbu with and leave from here.”

“Thank you for caring son but I'm not hiding anyone. Zinhle called me yesterday, we spoke about you but she didn't tell me she was around. I guess she's old enough and smart enough not to hand herself over to the police.” Says Mr Mkhize parking in front of Qhubekani's favorite restaurant.

“Dad?” Qhu's eyes light up in excitement. “You still remember?”

“I remember everything son. Are we getting inside

or should order takeaways?”

“Takeaways will do. There are waiters I used to shag in here and looking at them right now when I'm literally dead down there will spoil my mood. Today I just want to be happy and celebrate my first business deal without overthinking anything.”

“Okay son. I will be back in a minute.” Qhubekani smiles looking at the old man making his way into the restaurant. He rereads the message and shakes his head smiling. He types a reply.

****Thanks mom. If I knew that you crippling me will change me for the better I would have messed up a long time ago. I will get the lips, the arm and leg but there's one thing that will make my life worth a living; Seeing you and my father happy will be the best gift this life can ever give to me. Be safe and remember, I will forever love you from a distance. *****

At the private apartment where Ane is being kept.

Zinhle presses her ring and waits for the motorized gate to open. A call comes through her phone and she answers.

“What do you want?” Zinhle questions.

“Making sure you keep your end of the deal?” Says the voice.

“I’m not stupid! I’m keeping to the end of my deal. If you mess up my plan I’m going to blow your brains off!” Threatens Zinhle.

“No need to bite my head off. Be quick, I’m suffocating here and seeing her face makes me wanna squeeze the life out of her--”

“Phone calls are not safe you idiot! I’m a wanted woman keep calling me like that you will share a cell with me!” She drops the call and deletes the call history from the network server. She once again presses her ring and the door opens. The nurse wearing a pink dress screams seeing her.

“Can you please shut up and show me where Anelisa is?” The nurse shakily points upstairs. Zinhle runs upstairs locking all the doors and

turning on the fire protection system of the apartment.

“No one is allowed in here.” Says the female security guard.

“I'm not no one, I'm Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya!” Hearing her name, all the guards remember how she had blown up people in flames before and step aside. “Good choice.” She pushes the door. Anelisa is looking into space. Zinhle sighs and walks closer to her. “Okay let's see if their science works.” She takes Anelisa's hand in hers while pressing her phone. “She's not moving what do I do now?”

“Talk to her. You put her in that state so your voice has to register something in her dead mind.” Says the voice.

“Okay. Ane it's Zinhle I'm not here to apologize but to take you to someone who deeply cares for you--”

“Can you be fuckin' serious Zinhle! How do you wake someone from the dead like that? Can't you say you are sorry at least even if you a lying to her?”

“I'm not sorry and I won't lie! Your science is not

working now just cut the call let me do this my own way!” The nurses are standing by the door watching Zinhle while one of the guards calls the police. “Can I have a plate with meat and a knife please?” One of the nurses runs to the kitchen and brings fried beef and a kitchen knife.

“Here. What are you doing?”

“Waking her up. Can you remove all these drips all over her?”

“We can't do that she will die--” Zinhle stabs the meat frustratedly. She's never been fond of people who defy her orders. The nurses quickly remove the drips leaving the brain monitor on.

“Princess Anelisa I don't have the whole day. Can you wake up?” She brings the meat closer to Anelisa's nose, the moment the smell of meat hits Ane's nostrils her pupils dilate and the brain monitor beeps. The nurses look on in horror as Zinhle brings Anelisa back to life. Anelisa is scared, tries to sit up but Zinhle pushes her back down, she screams. Zinhle smiles tapping her phone.

“Is it done?” The familiar voice asks.

“Yes dummy! You should burn that medical license of yours it's useless! Now what?”

“I don't know how but get her out of that apartment, bring her to me--”

“Are you nuts? How in the hell do I do that?”

“You outsmarted the police now figure out a plan!”
Mutters the voice.

“Brother Maghawe!” Anelisa screams.

“Well-done crazy girl. Now bring her to me then I will deliver the King to you and make sure your marriage certificate with Mabutho is verified in the next 24 hours. He's getting married the day after tomorrow....”

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THE BRIDE

Insert 56.

The police sirens are heard from a near distance. Anelisa is still screaming like a mad woman.

“Think Zinhle Think ZakwaNgwenya!” She says pacing up and down in the room. “Can you fucking shut up!” She yells at Anelisa who flinches and seeing Zinhle's angry yet calm face has urine flowing down Anelisa's thighs.

“You have to leave. The police will start shooting and some of us will get hurt--” A female guard says.

“SHUT UP! i'm trying to think here.” One of the guards downstairs tries to open the door but it's locked not even the key can unlock the doors. Zinhle calls Maqhawe.

“What now beautiful?” He teases.

“I need a chopper on the roof in the next five minutes--”

“What? And where will I get this chopper? I'm not

some filthy rich president's son--”

“Save your speeches for those who care. A chopper or you will never ever see your sister. These stupid people called the police--”

“Turn on the fire protection system and set the house on fire then you can escape... Wait? Can my sister walk?”

“How the hell do you think she can walk with one leg? Why are you so dumb? Just send the chopper damn it!”

“You can unlock the doors, my boys are on the roof and two of them are coming.”

“At last! Thanks for nothing!”

“The hate feeling is mutual beautiful! I hate you too!” Zinhle drops the call and unlocks the doors the same time Maqhawe's boys enter the house from the roof. One of them throws a teargas and by the time the police reach upstairs, Zinhle, the boys and Anelisa have vanished into thin air.

“Where is she?” Asks Captain Mlambo.

“They escaped--” A nurse responds coughing.

Dr PNNM's POV.

I can not believe that I'm here babysitting a woman who almost killed my Prudy! My niece will suffer from nightmares, flashbacks, yet this woman will just continue with her life like nothing happened. She's here lying peacefully on the hospital bed with no care in the world at all. My mind tells me to suffocate her with a pillow but then, she's just a crazy woman who was a victim of love. I wonder when will these men be burnt to ashes so we can live in peace and harmony. But why didn't Nomzamo go after Melisizwe? Is it possible Meli lied to her leading to her obsession with my friend? I would have long killed Melisizwe if I were in Nomzamo's shoes. No man can bet on me and live to tell the tale, never! In fact no man plays with my heart and survive to see the following day.

Nomzamo wakes up and screams then starts giggling. She's really losing it, I have to do something before I end up murdering her.

“UMeli ngowami...siyavuma..uMeli ngowami... (Singing)” Oh no! She's really lost it.

“Melisizwe Ncub--”

“We have to talk. I will be in your office in the next five minutes.” I don't give him a chance to give me excuses. He has to atone for his sins like everyone else. He doesn't get to hurt a woman and gets away with it just like that! No Melisizwe Ncube, you hurt a woman you pay!

“Hun?” I answer Suku's call.

“Where are you?”

“At the mental hospital, Nomzamo has gone completely gaga--”

“No! Which hospital exactly?” Knowing my friend and how she always want to carry everyone's burden, letting her come here won't be a good idea.

“She has a police case pending it won't be good for

your organization to be seen around her. Remember what happened the last time you sympathized with a person who was later found guilty?”

“I understand love. Do you think she will harm the baby?”

“I don't know yet we are waiting for test results.”

“Okay. Prudy has been discharged we are going back home.”

“Will you be pressing charges?”

“No. She's a victim in all of this I'm just happy my girls are fine. My brother called--”

“Finally! That good-for-nothing brother of yours finally got out of the sweet pussy and used his brains for once!” Honestly, I don't understand why Suku still respects him so much even after choosing his woman over his own daughter.

“He's not that bad Pri--”

“You know what? I will talk to you later.” I'm angry already and I don't want to vent my anger out on her.

At Mntimande's house, he walks in as his children are busy cooking in the kitchen. It's been a while since he smelled aroma from the kitchen and seeing them play around the kitchen with smiles on their faces has him smiling too. He takes out his phone and snaps a few shots which he sends to someone via WhatsApp. Liqhawe turns and sees him.

“Hi dad! Come and join us.” She says cheerfully.

“He believes this is girl stuff so he won't come into the kitchen.” Ntsika says. He knows his father likes challenges and he doesn't back down.

“I had a wife back then--” Both their eyes pop out in shock. “What?”

“Ukahle baba? Ayifan nawe le yokuthetha ulwimi lwasemzini? (Dad are you okay? It's so unlike you to speak in English?)” Says Ntsika who mixes Xhosa and Zulu whenever he tries to use vernacular.

“I think it has to do with those cute girls. They look like Sandtonians to me and I doubt they even know a single Ndebele/Zulu word.” Liqhawe says dicing

carrots.

“Sandtonians? Kusho wena ohlale lapho kus ukela uzalwa? Bayazi ukukhuluma isiNdebele njalo abazoni imbulu. Zingane nje ezibekekileyo.

(Sandtonians? Says you who lived there for fifteen years? They know how to speak vernacular and they are not as prideful as you think. They are just nice kids.)” Mntimande defends his little friends.

“If you say so. Did you manage to rescue her?”

“Yeah. Ngingubani kanti mina? (Who am I?)”

“Bhambolunye zingambili zobe zifuze ekhaya konyoko; Mntimande! (Clan name praises.)” Praises Liqhawe while Ntsika whistles.

“Ungazi kahle yimi ke loyo (You know me very well, that's me right there.)” Mntimande smiles rolling his sleeves and washes his hands.

“I would love to meet them someday. I hope their mom doesn't have a problem with that?” Ever since Liqhawe saw Amahle and Prudy's picture on her dad's phone she's been wanting to meet them.

“It's complicated my baby. She doesn't even know who I am, the day she finds out better start preparing for my funeral because she's going to kill me. That I know for sure.” Says Mntimande.

“Is she your ex or did you rape her--” Ntsika asks and they all laugh.

“Awuhlekisi ndodana. Cha akayoni ex, angikaze ngamdlwengula kumbe wonke lodoti omcabangayo. Ngizonichazela ngoluny usuku okwamanje ngifun ukudla besengiyobona uZamo esibhedlela. (That's not funny son. No she's not my ex, I didn't rape her or is it anything you are thinking with your twisted mind. I will tell you all about it someday for now I want to eat then go and visit Zamo at the hospital.”

At the witchdoctor's hut somewhere in the bush at Ntabeni village the Queen walks in. The hut is smokey, smells of all the herbs used to bewitch people and a lot more. An old lady who has a red cloth wrapped around her burps and starts chanting

calling out all the demons of the dark underworld. The Queen stands, strips naked and then sits cross-legged in her birthday suit.

“Ask in faith and trust in your mother and it shall be given.” Says the old lady her mouth emitting fire while scary worms come out of her eyes and ears as she gradually changes from human form to a big snake with ten heads. The Queen bows her head, the snake runs its longest tongue on her breasts.

“He is starting to behave stubbornly and my sister's ghost is after me. I have a feeling a storm is brewing.” Says the Queen with her head still bowed down.

“An outsider has corrupted their minds. She's coming after you and she won't rest until you are exposed but worry not for that will never happen for as long as I live.” A voice echoes in the hut.

“What do I do mother?”

“She is smart and she's not alone. She's disguised as the sun, her heart is burning with fury, she is out for revenge, the spirits of all those you and the King

killed have located her and they are using her burning desire for revenge to their advantage. She's powerful but just like any other person she has a weakness. Children are her weakness, she will never harm children for her inner soul is still pure and untainted. She is a child at heart and that is what you are going to use against her.”

“Thank you mother.” The snake vomits something and a baby's cry echoes around the hut.

“Take this child. Her cries will drive your enemy crazy and out of the palace. Return the baby when the job is done.” The voice instructs. The Queen grabs a white cloth and covers the crying baby as the snake changes back to human form.

Somewhere in the Ntabeni village, a chopper lands in the beautiful well taken care of yard. Anelisa is still out, she was screaming and they ended up drugging her. Zinhle jumps down first and walks towards the house. Everything here looks beautiful,

you would think it's one of those houses we see on TV.

“Hello crazy girl--” Maqhawe opens the door for her. Zinhle ignores him and invites herself in.

“Where is my marriage certificate?”

“Slow down boo. I want to see my sister first, if you drugged her then we will wait until she wakes up--”

“I'm not here to play your silly games Maqhawe! Your fat crippled sister is alive and yes, the smell of meat still drives her crazy I don't think she will ever get over the fact that she ate her own flesh--”

Maqhawe slaps Zinhle hard she staggers back holding her cheek.

“Don't you ever gloat about crippling my sister! You ruined her life!”

“Your brother and your sister ruined my life too!”
Zinhle yells back.

“Zinhle? Don't provoke me, okay? I'm not scared of you, I can kill you if I want to but killing you won't help me with anything so please for once just shut

the fuck up and behave like a lady that you are!”
Maqhawe is frustrated. Zinhle looks at him and sits down. Ever since she started to deliver karma herself she had never met someone who thinks like her until she met Maqhawe. “Good girl. Did you tell her the secret--”

“How many times to I tell you that I don't care about your mothers killing each other for a dick and switching babies to cover up their evil deeds? I only want the certificate that you decided to block me from getting it myself. I don't want anything else from you.”

“She's going to outsmart you--”

“Who are you talking about? As far as I'm concerned I'm not after any woman?”

“The Queen. She knows you are coming and she's going to use your love for children against you. You don't know yet but my mom's spirit borrowed your body.....”

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 57.

“The Queen. She knows you are coming and she's going to use your love for children against you. You don't know yet but my mom's spirit borrowed your body.” Maqhawe finally tells Zinhle the truth.

“What? What do you mean? How can my body be borrowed without my consent? This can't be!”
Zinhle is shocked.

“It can be. The ways of the dead are different from our ways. You presented yourself to them when you started acting crazy and blood hungry.”

“I don't understand?” The news have weakened the tough Zinhle.

“Anger, hatred, resentment and the spirit of vengeance. You possess all these negative feelings, your hatred knows no end and your desire to

revenge overshadows your reasoning. No sane human being can do what you did to my sister.”

“Are you saying I'm insane?”

“Yes and no. You are angry Zinhle and so are these spirits. The anger is from your side but the passion for revenge is fueled by the spirits because they are angry too. They chose you because you have mutual enemies, if you win this battle they will also win and go back to rest in peace. My mother never rested so is the girl that my father helped cut in pieces. The girl's family cursed those who killed her and until they pay for their deeds she won't rest in peace. You also promised to avenge her death because it was you who was meant to die not her. You are being used Zinhle. Now you have to choose whether to fight and accept the spiritual help or walk away from everything.” Zinhle takes her head in her hands and screams her frustration out. Maqhawe opens the mini bar fridge and gives her sparkling water. “I'm sorry, I hate you but I don't have it in me to wish bad upon any human being.”

“How do you know all of this? In fact how did you

find me?" Maghawe steps to the window and looks outside.

"I dream. How old are you Zinhle? 22, right?" Zinhle doesn't respond. "My mother died when you were not even born, you were not even a thought. I'm 28, my mother died when I was three. It was a strange death, so I'm told. When I was 10 mom started visiting me in my dreams but my father thought I was just being a troubled kid. I have always been different from my brother and trouble loves me. One day I woke up with a strange bracelet which when I tried to remove I failed dismally. Everything was later clarified by my maternal grandmother. Mom kept appearing, she told me how she died and how she was going to avenge herself. I saw you in my dreams when you were around 6 years or so. I just couldn't understand everything. When you came after my sister, I knew before it happened. I wanted to stop you but I couldn't because killing you would mean disturbing my mom's plans. Finding you was easy because as long as my mom's spirit is in you, I can connect with you. I can control my mom's spirit

using the necklace I don't even know where I got.”
Maqhawe drops a bombshell.

“Does this mean this is where my plan foils?”

“Not when you work with the spirits. They will help you succeed but for that you will have to trust me--”

“Are you kidding me? How do I trust a stranger? Not even a stranger but my enemy?”

“It is said we should keep our friends and family closer and trust the enemies. I have nothing to gain by betraying you and you have nothing to lose by trusting me.”

“I need ammunition and remember I don't have time, my destiny awaits at the other side of the world.”

“I knew you will say that. I will give you ammunition but for that I need a promise from you.”

“What?”

“Do not kill my brother. I know he wronged you but he's my mom's son it might lead to your death. He's protected by our mother. I will kill him--” Zinhle's eyes widen in shock.

“Huh? Maqhawe do you see ‘FOOL’ written on my forehead? There's no way you can kill the only family you have left. Stop trying to fool me try something else.”

“He wronged you, yes I agree and I remember your silent sobs, I was there and watched everything unfold. Please don't touch my brother, expose him and let the village people deal with him.”

“What do I gain in all of this?”

“Freedom. I know you never intended to hurt anyone you just wanted to be heard.”

“Okay fine! Now stop reading my mind it makes me feel like a loser.”

“Good girl. Anelisa is not a Khumalo nor is she the Queen's daughter...”

Dr PNNM barges into Melisizwe's office startling Meli who spills coffee on his white shirt.

“It must be nice being you, right?” Dr PNNM says

putting her screwdriver on the table and sitting on the chair opposite to Melisizwe's chair.

“W-what do you want?”

“Justice. For my friend, for my niece and for that woman you decided to toy with and later throw her away like used toilet paper. You do not treat women like that! Not when I'm still alive.” Says Dr PNNM tapping her stiletto on the floor.

“Who are you? What makes you think you have a say in my life? You are Suku's friend not her advisor or mom stop assuming duties that are not meant for you! You should be chilling in your house raising your kids or sexing your husband if at all he can still get it up! Get out of my office you skinny thing--” Dr PNNM slaps him hard he wonders if there's a third person in his office. He looks at her tiny hand, opens his mouth to say something but closes it again.

“You were saying?”

“Damn you witch! Are you a he or a she?”

“I'm whatever you think. Now here's what I came

here for. You are going to rectify your mistakes by marrying that same woman you played with and now she's losing it--”

“You must be crazy too--” It all happens too fast Meli finds himself under the upside down table and Princess's stiletto on his forehead. He breathes heavily trying to free himself but the table is just too heavy.

“My craziness runs deeper than you think. I have personally taken up the responsibility of taking care of Zamo and she will be fine in the next 72 hours. You will go to court and marry her. Run if you can, I will find you, torture you before handing you over to the police for forcing yourself on mentally unstable woman. Try me Melisizwe Ncube, I dare you!” Princess says and walks out leaving him on the floor.

Back at Maqhawe's house Anelisa wakes up and screams seeing Zinhle.

“She will kill me! She-she's going to feed me my own flesh--” Maqhawe sits next to her hugging her tight.

“She will do no such thing. I'm here baby sister and no one can harm you--”

“She's evil! She is not a good person--” Zinhle pitifully looks at Anelisa and walks out sighing. What Maqhawe told her is beyond what her mind can comprehend.

“Gosh! How did I get myself into this? Fuck!” A part of her wants to dial Mntimande but then he will worry too much about her. She sits on the swing as her mind wanders. She sure really needs a break from everything.

“We have less than 24 hours left.” Maqhawe startles her.

“Did you tell Anelisa the truth?”

“I'm bad but not that bad. You destroyed her, she might never behave like a normal person ever again and I'm not about to put the last nail on her coffin.”

“I wish I can say I'm sorry but I will be lying. About your stepmother's son, where is he? Does he know he's a prince?”

“No he doesn't. The plan was to kill me and my brother first then bring him in. He doesn't even know his mother. He stays with his adopted family.”

“How will you get him?”

“Zinhle if I managed to find you, the girl who outsmarted the entire Zimbabwe Police Service and Zimbabwe Defence Force in New York what can stop me from finding a cheese boy? Worry not about that, the question is, do you accept to work with my mom's spirit or you are walking away from all of this? If you are walking away I will have to make sure you forget everything I told you. Are you in or out?”

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NOTICE.

I'm sorry for not uploading more chapters of Precious Rosè on Wattpad and LOVE, GREED AND DESIRE on Visionary writings. I'm out of internet data bundles. I tried using the free Wattpad but it kept giving me errors. When I recharge I will post. I apologize for the inconvenience caused.

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 58.

THE RECKONING

[Contains explicitly stated sensitive scenes.]

Reader's discretion is advised.]

Platform One's songs are on the repeat as pure maidens in their traditional attires dance, while the eligible bachelors whistle watching the beauty of the Ntabeni village. Prince Mabutho is being dressed up by his two uncles while Maqhawe sits on the stool by the window looking outside.

Maqhawe sighs and looks at his brother imagining the worst scenario that can befall him today should Zinhle decides to betray him.

“Please beautiful crazy girl don't betray me. I don't ever want to find myself pointing a gun to you, I have killed before but you don't deserve to die Zinhle. You have been through hell and you deserve a new life. I'm not God or the ancestors but if you do this I swear on my mother's grave I'm going to help you find your way back to who you used to be before everything else happened. Don't betray me Zinhle.” He says to himself holding a strange necklace on his neck. The King walks in, for the first time since Maqhawe returns, they lock their eyes

and what the King sees in his son's eyes has him sweating unwittingly. The King blinks rapidly but Maqhawe keeps his stare.

“Dad are you okay?” Asks Mabutho.

“Um-- I'm fine son. I came to check if you are ready. I will be in the throne room come and meet me before going to the venue.” Orders the King.

Maqhawe walks out heading to the throne room where he picks his father's crown and puts it upside down.

“What are you doing?” Roars the King. It is a taboo to put the King's crown upside down. It signifies the beginning of the end of the kingdom.

“They are coming. They are angry, they want justice and they are here to put this cursed throne on fire. Mom, the real Queen, your first wife is leading them-
-”

“Are you high on drugs or something? What are you talking about?” The King is confused.

“I have never tasted drugs in my entire life. I'm sober, I'm telling you what is going to happen. You

can stop it, you can change your fate. If you don't repent before the bride walks down the aisle then rest in peace father--” The King slaps Maqhawe hard the slap sounded like thunder. Maqhawe wipes his cheek and smiles. “This is nothing compared to what will happen to you in the next few hours. The judgement day is here and everyone will be rewarded as per his works. Have a good day father.” Says Maqhawe and walks out.

The Queen who was eavesdropping is now in her bedroom mixing different herbs with a blood like substance and feeds it to the baby that was given to her by the witchdoctor. The baby starts crying hysterically and she smiles.

“I have come too far to lose this battle when I'm about to get what I want. My sister should suck it up and continue resting in peace. The dead don't belong to this world even the bible does say that they do not have a share in this world.” Says the Queen tying black and red threads around her waist then put on her Royal regalia.

In the other room Chantelle is getting dressed by the elders of the village. Her twins are peacefully sleeping on the bed. Chantelle smiles looking at herself on the mirror. When she first came here the King wasn't very welcoming but Prince Mabutho promised to make them accept her. It seems he really kept his promises because if not this day wouldn't have come.

“Are you happy?” Asks one of the elders dressing her.

“Very happy. I don't understand much about your culture but I'm willing to learn. I wish my parents were here to witness this day.”

“Why didn't they come?”

“We don't talk anymore. I supported the #Black Lives Matter movement and my father disowned me. They hate black people and they have never met my girls or my husband. They said I should do what pleases me but never to show my face to them.” Says Chantelle wiping her tears.

“I'm sorry to hear that. They will soon come around, interracial marriages are not easy for every parent to accept because of the culture differences. But you don't worry yourself everything will be fine.”

In one of the huts in the Royal homestead Prince Maqhawe sneaks in with a covered plate.

“You really took your time. I'm feeling nervous.”
Says Zinhle fastening her skirt.

“You are bound to feel nervous. Many evil spirits are surrounding this place. I brought you food and came to check if we still on the same page.”

“We are but I'm not hungry.”

“Suit yourself. When it's time I will send a message to your phone. Make sure your face is covered the police are looking for you and my family knows you took Anelisa from the apartment. I know you are smart and I trust you.” He walks out dialing his boys to be on standby. In the hut Zinhle removes her regular wedding ring and puts on the one only she knows what's so special about it. She looks herself

in the mirror, memories of her wedding day with Mr Mkhize flood her memory, tears of helplessness run down her cheeks. She switches on her other phone and types a long message to her husband Mr Mkhize, one to her brothers and the last one to Zamo. She schedules the messages to be automatically sent tomorrow morning.

“The day is finally here. Your destiny awaits Zinhl' Intombi ZakwaNgwenya.” She says to herself.

Sukoluhle's POV.

I'm busy on the phone with my lawyer. I have had this issue pending for a very long time now and I have to fix it before it is too late.

“Why do you want to change your will?” My lawyer asks.

“In my previous will my ex husband is supposed to get fifty percent of my estate while my children

share the the thirty percent, mom gets fifteen and my brother gets five percent. I want to totally erase Melisizwe from my will and include someone. I also want to entrust someone to run the businesses until my daughters are twenty one years of age.” I explain to him.

“I understand. I'm free tomorrow I will come over wherever you feel comfortable.”

“Okay. I will text the details. Thank you Mr Moyo and have a blessed day.”

“You too Ms Mdlongwa.”

I'm about to call my assistant to bring breakfast when someone knocks. I tell whoever is at the door to come in. Surprisingly it's a delivery guy.

“Good morning ma'am.” He says putting a huge bouquet of flowers on the table.

“Good morning. This is for me?”

“Yes ma'am. Please sign here.” This is a first. Whoever sent these know me way more deeper, not even Meli knows I hate roses but love lilies and

orchids. Melisizwe used to send me roses, I would be happy because you can't really reject a gift but they are not my favorite. I tear off the plastic bag, OMG! My favorite chocolates are also part of the gift. A pink and white card catches my attention.

****Beautiful flowers for a beautiful lady. Enjoy the chocolates but do keep your weight in check. Take this card to the restaurant downstairs your breakfast is served.****

What? Who could this be? Maybe its one of my fans, those who follow me closely they know my favorite things because I do answer personal questions sometimes. There's another small card.

****Stop cracking your head trying to figure out who I am. Today, before you go home you will meet me. Have a blessed day.****

Back at the Royal homestead, people are singing and waiting for the big moment. The MC orders everyone to sit quietly as the poet chants the

Khumalo clan names. Prince Mabutho walks out of the hut followed by his brother, people cheer and there's excitement all over the place. They choir sings a song, the princes do the traditional dance and sit down.

“Are you happy?” Maqhawe asks his brother.

“Very happy.” Responds Maqhawe. The choir sings another song for the bride to come out. The only sister the King has stands by the door waiting for Chantelle. The Queen starts feeling uneasy, the need to visit the loo presses until she excuses herself and leaves the venue. A whirlwind is seen coming from the West moving at a slow motion coming straight to the tent. Maqhawe's necklace glows, he smiles as his eyes glow like fire.

“They are here father. The day of reckoning has come.” The King is about to respond when he sees the shock of his life; two brides are standing side by side. The slimmer one steps on the carpet first, Chantelle tries to fight her, the girl keeps on walking as the whirlwind stops by the carpet. Prince Mabutho is shell shocked, the Queen returns and

almost faints. Zinhle walks over and kneels before the King but the King doesn't move. She stands and removes the traditional hat giving everyone the shock of their lives.

“Zinhle?” Prince Mabutho can not believe his eyes.

“I Zinhl' Intombi ZakwaNgwenya is here to personally deliver your karma--” The Queen tries to salvage the situation by using her muthi to silence Zinhle. She attempts to slaps her but Zinhle appears to be her dead sister!

“No! You are dead! You don't belong here you are dead!” People stand frozen on their spots.

“What? Why are you talking about My Queen? ”

“Mabutho what is going on?” Chantelle is fuming.

“He lied to you. The Prince and I are legally married.” Responds Zinhle handing over the marriage certificate. Chantelle runs back into the house crying. Mabutho wants to follow her but Zinhle stops her. “Today is the day this community learns of what you and your father did to me!

Whether you deny it or not, today I'm going to talk

and kill you after!” From nowhere the police arrive, guns pointing. Zinhle expected this and she's prepared. She grabs the King's neck with a knife on his throat.

“The whole village, I mean this kingdom is trapped! Do the right thing and put down your guns!” The officers are stubborn, Zinhle releases the King, touches her ring and starts counting. “One.... Two.... Boom!” One of the Royal huts is up in flames within a nanosecond. People scream kneeling down and covering their heads.

“Fuck! Zinhle stop--” Maqhawe was never ready for this side of Zinhle.

“Don't you even think about it! Stay there or your brother goes up in flames!” Warns Zinhle. Maqhawe reaches for his necklace but its no longer glowing. “I'm not just any clever girl but I'm ZakwaNgwenya!” She shows Maqhawe the strange bracelet. She puts it on and her body slowly starts transforming.....

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I decided to tell this part in detail. More scary things to happen on the next chapter as the Queen tries to hold on to what is not hers and Maqhawe resorts to plan B in order to stop Zinhle.....

May you please visit my personal Facebook account @Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa , like, comment and share the last post. 100 shares unlock the Saturday bonus. Thank you in advance.

Please do support an upcoming writer. Like and share the 'MPILO' page.

<https://www.facebook.com/Mpilo-102055048217678/>

THE BRIDE.

Insert 59.

NARRATED.

“Don't you even think about it! Stay there or your brother goes up in flames!” Warns Zinhle. Maqhawe reaches for his necklace but its no longer glowing. “I'm not just any clever girl but I'm ZakwaNgwenya!” She shows Maqhawe the strange bracelet. She puts it on and her body slowly starts transforming.

“No no no!” Maqhawe paces up and down trying to think of something to stop whatever Zinhle is about to do. Dark clouds gather as the palace gets surrounded by whirlwinds, the animals all around the kingdom growling and running to God knows where. Maqhawe's necklace glows again, he looks at Zinhle and comes face to face with his mother.

“This can not be happening! Queen Mother?” Exclaims one of the elders. The Queen is sweating while the King is confused. Why would his wife come back to life through a murderer like Zinhle?

Maqhawe tells the police to stand back for now until he gives the next order.

“This is nothing but an illusion! My wife had a pure heart and can never come back to life through Zinhle! This girl is a witch and a murderer!” Roars the King.

“Who are you to judge when your own hands are covered in blood? Is it because your own sins are hidden in the dark while she never hid behind anything?” The King almost pees on himself upon hearing his wife's voice coming from the new transformed Zinhle.

“My Queen what brings you back here my love? Is something wrong?” The King humbly asks.

“I want you and your wife to release my spirit. It's been over twenty years but I'm still wandering between the two opposite worlds. I want to rest in peace.” Commands the voice.

“I don't understand your Majesty?” Queen Mother had royal blood running through her veins. She was the only surviving child of the great King Mabhena

after the war between the three neighboring villages. Her mother had an extra marital affair with the great King Mabhena and when the Royal family was wiped out the only surviving child had to take over the reign. In the Ndebele culture, a woman can never be a King while there are still men alive in the community. She had to be married off to someone whose origins could be traced back to royalty. The Khumalos are believed to be related to King Lobhengula hence the now King Ndlangamandla was elected as the deserving candidate. In simple terms, the throne belongs to the Mabhena clan not the Khumalos.

“My half sister here does understand everything--”

“I don't know what you are talking about!” Yells the Queen.

“Yes you do! Tell them what you did to me, to my child and to my husband! Talk and save this kingdom--”

“You belong to the world of the dead not here! Just go and leave us alone!”

“Is that why you killed me?–”

“What?” Everyone is beyond shocked.

“What is she talking about? What did you do to my wife? Talk!” The King is furious. Prince Mabutho is frozen on the spot while Maqhawe smiles looking at his necklace. At least for now Zinhle is tamed. A thunderous slap from the King almost sends the Queen straight to the cold world. People open their mouths but no words come out. The King is now like a raging wounded bull as he serves hot slaps right, left and center. Blood is oozing out of the Queen's nose and she's getting weaker by every slap she receives. Her witch doctor enters her body so does the small child.

“Stop!” She yells small snakes coming out of her mouth and some from the ears. People run to one corner shivering and scared to death.

“Come on mom! She can not defeat you, not when you are a pure spirit--” The even Queen grabs Maqhawe by the neck with her hand which now has long claws like that of a beast. “I'm not scared of

you and you can never harm me!” Maqhawe dares her. The transformed Zinhle opens her arms, her hands collecting lightning from the clouds and directs it to the evil Queen.

“Noooooo!” Roars the evil Queen letting the anacondas loose. The pure spirit's eyes blaze with fire and in a nanosecond the two of them are surrounded by a huge flame of fire. It's now all weapons out, one of the snakes bites the transformed Zinhle, Maqhawe feels a sharp pain in the leg. He holds on tight to his necklace. The Royal seer chants the Khumalo and the Mabhena clan names hoping for the ancestors to show him something but everything is blank. Queen Mother unleashes the fire in her and the evil Queen falls on the ground. People are about to heave a huge sigh of relief but what they see has them even more spooked. A creature with ten heads of snakes, a big tortoise body and four legs like that of a chimpanzee is now standing in front of Queen Mother. Maqhawe remembers his grandmother's words and runs back to his hut and comes back

with a young man who is a replica of the King. The strange creature attacks Queen mother and she falls on the ground bleeding.

“Call out to that evil mother of yours--”

“She's not my mother--”

“I'm not arguing with you!” A cold metal on the guy's back has him screaming “mom!”. The dark clouds die down as the evil Queen transforms back to her real self.

“Mbuso? What are you doing here--”

“Who is he?” Finally Mabutho says something.

“Tell them what you did or I will blow his brains off! Don't forget to mention that you stole someone's child too!” Mutters Maqhawe holding a gun to Mbuso's head.

“Okay okay I will talk.” The Queen says looking at the King. “I was jealous of my sister, I wished to be the one in her shoes. She had everything going well for her and to think that she was royalty while I was just a commoner did not sit well with me. I

blackmailed her to let me be the King's second wife but she did not take the bait. My sister was a strong and determined woman. I became fed up of her thinking that she was better than me and I went to the witch Doctor Who gave me poison to kill her. I poisoned her food and left the village so that no one could suspect me--”

“Are you telling me that you killed my wife--”

“I'm sorry--” The King pulls out his sword but Maqhawe stops him.

“There's more to her story. You can kill her when she's done talking.”

“When she died I came back and pretended to be heartbroken but still the King didn't recognize me as a woman for he found comfort in my sister's friend's arms. I was angry, I killed the friend too and bewitched the King who later slept me under the influence of the spell. I got pregnant and he married me but I never loved him I just wanted the throne to myself. When I gave birth to my son I gave him to my trusted friend who now lives in London and

stole a baby girl from the hospital. I don't even know who Anelisa's parents are. I stole her and raised her as my own--” The Queen's head falls on the ground followed by her heavy body, blood oozing, and the whole community watching goes dead silent. The King wipes his sword and is about to leave the venue but Zinhle is back and she's not done sit the royal family.

“Not yet your Majesty! You also have to confess your sins! Those two people standing right there have served you for almost their entire life yet you did not hesitate to cut their daughter into pieces and feed her flesh to the dogs--”

“What are you talking about young lady?” Asks one of the elders.

“Will you tell them or should I?” Zinhle is determined but Maqhawe is not about to let her humiliate his brother. “One step closer to me and I swear on all the dead and alive Ngwenyas I will kill everyone present here. Don't dare me!” She says touching her ring and it's a warning that Maqhawe understands pretty well. The King sits on his chair feeling

defeated.

“My son, the crown Prince raped a girl who happened to be this lunatic standing in front of me. When she threatened to talk I had to act like any father would do but my plan got messed up. We got the wrong girl and killed her. To the Mdluli family I apologize for the pain my son and I caused you--” Mrs Mdluli faints. After all the years of serving the royals as their trusted people this is the thank you they get from the King. Their only daughter died for something she knew nothing about and they never got the chance to bury her or to even confirm her death.

“My King how could you?” People are angry and shouting “Let's burn them! Let's burn them!”

“You can kill me but please don't hurt my son that's all I'm asking for.” Begs the King.

“Zinhle I'm sorry I found out later that it was you. I'm really sorry--” Zinhle slaps Mabutho hard as tears stream down her face, her lips trembling with anger. Seeing the anger on her face, Maqhawe signals to

the police officers to arrest her. Consumed in her emotions, Zinhle does not realize this until she feels cold handcuffs on her wrists. She looks at Maqhawe as tears run down her cheeks. Maqhawe looks away feeling a little bit guilty but to save his family he had to gain Zinhle's trust, use her then betray her.

Journalists are now busy clicking photos of Zinhle being escorted to the police van. She tearfully smiles to them and gets on the back of the van with four armed officers. The driver starts the car and as soon as the car exits the royal gate Zinhle touches her ring and the Royal palace goes up in flames.....

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Before you come to my inbox guns blazing. There's a huge difference between a Sangoma/traditional

seer/healer and the witch doctor. Understand me very well, I'm not insulting the gods or anyone's belief. Witch doctors do only pure evil while the traditional seers help people connect with their ancestors.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

More chapters of LOVE, GREED AND DESIRE to be uploaded today on Visionary writings and Precious Rose too on Wattpad.

Meet the girl behind the books you love and can not live without. I attached a picture and you can follow her on all her social media platforms.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 60.

BREAKING NEWS!!!

“The infamous Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya finally got her match. Prince Maqhawe of Ntabeni village managed to play Zinhle at her own game. He single-handedly defeated the girl who outsmarted the police.” A reporter says. “As you all can see, she's being escorted to the holding cell where her case will be registered.” Cameras flash, Zinhle smiles waving at everyone. The reporters try to get a scoop from the officer in charge but he chases them away promising to answer all the questions soon.

“Dad? Dad? Mntimande?” Ntsika calls out to his father.

“Awu kodwa Ntsika yini lenkulu kangaka ongimemezela yona?(What now Nails?)” Mntimande grunts.

“UZakwaNgwenya useTV baba bambethe ngezankosi- (Zinhle is on TV dad, she has handcuffs on--” Responds Ntsika.

“Ini? Awuthi uyadlala? (What? Say you are joking?)” Mntimande switches on the television in his bedroom and confirms his fears. “ZakwaNgwenya!”

He mutters frustratedly as his phone rings.

“I thought we agreed not to let the police near her! What's this on the news? The death of your wife has weakened you--” Zibusiso barks on the other side of the phone.

“Awubowabala amagama akho mfana ulimuke ungangidakelwa! Nx! (Be conscious of your words boy and don't disrespect me!)” Mntimande drops the call and dials someone but the call goes unanswered. Seeing the frustration on his face Liqhawe knows exactly what her father will do in a split of a second. “ZakwaNgwenya!” Mntimande screams sending everything on the bedside table down. His children flinch watching him, Liqhawe tries to be brave and hug him but he punches the wall breaking one of his fingers.

“Baba yeka lento oyenzayo! (Dad stop!)” Liqhawe screams tears running down her cheeks.

“Hambani lapha-- (Go away from here--)”

“Baba ngiyakucela-- (Dad please I'm begging you--)” Liqhawe cries. Seeing tears on his children faces

brings him back to sanity. Mntimande has spent all his life protecting the one he loves from violence and now he's setting a bad example of how to deal with frustration to his children. He sighs and opens his arms, they both run and hugs him tight.

“Uxolo boMthiyane. (I'm sorry my children.)”

“Indoda iyazi ukuyiqanda imizwa yayo. Uhlala usho uthi i discipline iqala ekwazini ukulawula imizwa yakho pho wenzani wena manje baba? Akusikho osifundise khona lokhu okwenzayo. (You always say discipline starts by knowing how to handle your emotions then what is it that you are doing? What you are doing is not what you taught us.)” Liqhawe reminds Mntimande of his teachings.

“Uxolo ndodakazi bengingaqondile ukuphuma endleleni. (I'm sorry I didn't mean to stray from the path.)”

“Kulungile. Ithi ngibone isandla sakho. (It's fine. Let me see your hand.)” Liqhawe says taking his hand in hers. Ntsika runs to the kitchen and brings the first aid kit. Mntimande smiles watching his

children clean and bandage his hand. “Ngicabanga ukuthi umunwe wakho uphukile kuzamele uyefika emtholampilo. (I think you broke your finger you will have to go to the hospital.”

“Ngiyayizonda leyandawo nje? (I hate that place.)”

“Actions have consequences dad. We are accompanying you to make sure you go there and get the help you need.” Ntsika says as Mntimande's phone rings. His smile grows seeing the name on the screen. He answers the phone and his children ask him to put the caller on loudspeaker.

“Hey stranger. I just saw that beautiful lady you said is your sister on television. Are you okay?” The caller whispers.

“I'm not really okay but I will be fine.”

“Do you need a hug?”

“Definitely.”

“Okay. We are going to the movies later tonight, be at the door by 7 PM I will give you a hug.” She whispers once more.

“Any particular reason why we are whispering on the phone Amy?”

“Mom is working from home today. I just got back from school and I'm in the bathroom.” Liqhawe and Ntsika burst into laughter.

“I understand friend.”

“You are with your children?”

“Yes.”

“Hi Liqhawe. Hi Ntsika.” Liqhawe and Ntsika look at each other wondering what more Amahle knows about them. They continue chatting and for a moment Mntimande forgets his pain.

At the court, Nomzamo and Melisizwe are dressed up in their matching suits waiting for their names to be called. Dr PNNM, Nomzamo's brother and Melisizwe's parents are also present. Melisizwe's mother is happy that she will finally brag about having a lawyer as her daughter-in-law. So what if

she couldn't brag about her first daughter-in-law? Now she's been given another chance to brag to her friends and colleagues. Melisizwe's heart pounds as their names are called. Nomzamo smiles looking at him, this is the day. The marriage types are explained to them but Melisizwe is not listening. He looks at his parents grinning, Dr PNNM who gives him a deadly stare and Nomzamo who looks happy and glowing for the first time ever since she became obsessed with Sukoluhle. He says a little prayer asking God to forgive him but the prayer is a little too late as he opens his eyes to find out that he's now a married man. Not only married but forced into an alliance he will never be happy in. His heart still beats for his first wife and this feels like the most betrayal ever. A tear escapes his eye, he walks outside rubbing his eyes and gets in the car where he screams his heart out. He takes out his phone and dials Sukoluhle.

“What now Meli? I'm kinda busy here.” Sukoluhle answers the phone. There's no emotion in her voice, nothing but just a flat voice.

“They forced me to marry her--” His voice breaks as he sobs loudly watching his family pose for photos with their daughter-in-law.

“I don't understand?”

“I'm married to her legally but I don't love her. Why can't everyone understand that and leave me alone? I can't do this, I want my family back.” He snorts.

“You can not always hurt people and expect to have what your heart yearns for. Consequences are results of our actions which we have the right to choose from the right and the wrong actions. You messed up really bad now deal with the consequences like a man that you are. I also think you should stop calling me everytime you are sad because you are sending a wrong message to Nomzamo. She won't hurt you but my children who are everything I have got. Please prioritize your new family and call me only when it's about our daughter.” That breaks his heart.

“Are you going to move on?”

“I have already moved on Meli. I cried my feelings

for you out of my system now I'm free.”

“You are hurting me babe--”

“Bye Meli and hey, congratulations.” Sukoluhle drops the call leaving Melisizwe's heart shattering to tiny pieces.

Back at the Ntabeni village only glowing coal and the dying down fire are the things visible. The whole village is dead silent, not even birds chirping, no animal sounds, no footsteps and definitely not even a single voice is heard from near or far places. A dark cloud of smokes looms over the village, piles of bodies which have turned to ashes are all over of the palace. The throne also turned to to ashes, nothing escaped the fire and definitely no one had the chance to escape. Just like she promised, everyone and everything has been sanctified by fire in the name of Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya Ngwenya. It's just after midday but it's dark here in the village, will the new dawn ever

come or it's the time to start writing history about the once great kingdom? I guess only one who has the keys to tomorrow also have the answers. For now we say with respect;

Mntungwa

Mbulaz' omnyama

Nina bakaBhej' eseNgome

Nin' enadl'umuntu ninyenga ngendaba

Nin' enadl' izimf'ezimbili ikhambi laphuma lilinye

Lobhengula kaMzilikazi

Mzilikazi kaMashobana

Shobana noGas a kaZikode

Zikode kaMkhats hwa

Okhats hwe ngezind' izinyawo nangezimfis hanyana

UMkhats hwa wawoZimangele

UNyama yentini yawoZimangele

Mabas o owabas' entabeni kwadliwa ilanga lishona

Bantungwa abancwaba

Zindlovu ezibantu

Zindlovu ezimacocombela

Nina bakaMawela owawel' iZambezi ngezikhali

Nin' abakwaNkomo zavul' inqaba

Zavul' Inqaba ngezimpondo kwelas eNgome
zahamba

Nin' enalukudl' umlenze kwaBulawayo

Mantungwa Aluhlaza

Mantungwa Amahle

Bantwana benkosi

Nina abakwaNtokela

Inkubele abayihlabe ngamanxeba

Inyang' abathe beth' ifil' iZulu kanti isiyethes we

Yethes we ngoNyakana kaMpeyana

Ubando abalubande balushiy' uZulu

Untshwintshwintshwi kaNoyanda noNdaba

UNKone evele ngobuso emdibini

Maqhawe amakhulu! (Khumalo Clan Praises)

Aniyosikhonzela kwabadala ngale ngaphesheya
kwethuna. Ikhothame iNkosi, bavumile abaphansi.
Lalani ngoxolo makhosi amahle! Mntungwa! (Rest
in Peace great warriors.)

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All those who promised to teach me various
languages please do whatsapp me on
+263775907564 or inbox the page.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 61.

NARRATED.

Mntimande

*****Beloved brother. If you are reading this message it means the police finally got to me. I know you will be angry, punch walls, scream and probably break your bones but please remember I love you and I wouldn't want to come out of jail to a crippled brother. I know you still remember what I said when I started my revenge mission, I told you to hold back and let me fight my own battles and even today I'm still asking you to stand back and support me. I don't need a lawyer, no escape plan, no protection, I just want to set a good example to my son. You break the law you face the wrath of it and I also owe it to those innocent people I killed to pay for my sins. Even if I get sentenced to life imprisonment, don't try to manipulate the law I deserve all the punishments I will get. Don't blame yourself for what I turned out to be, you are a great

brother, parent, teacher and more. I love you brother and please do make sure Zibusiso, Nkululeko and the Mkhizes understand this too.

Take care. Till we meet again....soon.

Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya Ngwenya.*****

Tears stream down Mntimande's face. He locks the door of his bathroom, opens the tape and screams punching the wall. He hates being helpless, he hates it when the one he loves and vowed to protect always puts him in a position where he questions his love and capabilities. Going against her will break their trust and bond but then watching her serving a life imprisonment punishment won't be easy either. Nkululeko will die slowly, Mkhize will probably have a mini heart attack, Sbu will grow up without a mother and their parents will die of guilty. He is at the crossroads and he can't really choose which way to take. He is about to punch the mirror but remembers how his children cried earlier today. If he's to make a decision then he has to be able to

control his emotions. He takes a cold shower and rebandages his hand afterwards.

“What the hell is wrong with Zinhle? How can she say we should let her rot in jail?” Zibusiso says frustratedly through the phone.

“‘Iyangidida nami lendaba ngiding' ukuphuma ke ngishaywe ngumoya kancane sobuya skhulume. (I'm confused too. I need fresh air we will talk later.)’” The helplessness can be detected in his voice and it doesn't go unnoticed by Zibusiso.

“Ukahle bafo? (Are you okay brother?)”

“Ngazikhathazi ngami ngizobasharp. (Don't worry about me I will be fine.)”

“Uyinakekele ziyakudinga ingane zakho nezami ngokunjalo--(Please take care of yourself your children need you and mine too--)”

“Ush' ukuthini mawuthi nezakho? (What do you mean by yours too?)”

“The minister's wife gave birth to two beautiful girls. I'm planning to get rid of her--”

“Zibusiso ungayenzi leyonto ingane zakho ziyamdinga unina yeka ukuba ngukhandashisa uke ucabangele abany' abantu nawe. (Please don't do that your children need their mother. Stop being hot headed and selfish and think about other people too!)”

“Okay ngiyakuzwa bafo. Uzoyambona nini uZie? (Okay I hear you. When are you going to meet Zoe?)”

“Namhla lokhu. (Today.)” They talk a little bit more before saying their goodbyes. Nkululeko calls too, they debate the issue and promise each other to figure something out.

At the Mkhize mansion Khulekani blankly stares at the message sent to his father by Zinhle. A part of him wants to believe this is all there is to the story but there's a tiny part of him that refuses to understand.

“Father I don't understand. Mom and you were

happy together, even with your first wife you were not happy how then are you going to let the only person who makes you smile rot in jail?" Questions Khulekani.

"It's her wish son. I love Zinhle a lot and God knows I will do everything to protect her--"

"Yet you didn't protect her when the police were after her! Now she's going to rot in jail!" Khulekani snaps.

"I understand your frustration but don't you dare raise your voice at me I'm still your father!" Muttered Mr Mkhize.

"I'm sorry dad."

"Sit down and all of you listen very careful." They all respect his order. Nothabo has been crying ever since she saw the breaking news. Social media is not making it easy for her either. Her many social media friends tagged her asking if the cuffed woman is not her grandmother. She ended up deactivating all her social media accounts. "Zinhle has a plan and if it works she will get out. Son you

said I didn't protect her but I did. Zie is been living with is for the past three months although you all never saw her--”

“Huh?” They are all shocked.

“I'm the one who brought her back into the country, I used my international connections and I knew about her deal with Prince Maqhawe. She told me everything and how she intended to execute her plan. Maqhawe might have betrayed her but she was going to hand herself over to the police anyway.”

“Why?” Gugu can not understand any of it. “Didn't she think of Owami, you and us while taking that decision of hers?”

“She feels guilty for killing the innocent people that got in the cross fire. You don't have to worry about her, she will be fine that I can promise you. As for Owami I will try to make him understand. He's an intelligent boy and I'm sure he won't give anyone problems.”

“If you say so father-in-law.” Gugu sighs defeted. A

notification comes through Khulekani's phone and he reads the message. His eyes pop out in horror.

“What happened?”

“The whole Ntabeni village perished in the fire!”

They all look at him like he has grown a horn on his forehead.

“What?” Gugu turns the TV on as the reporter takes them through the kingdom. Nothing, absolutely nothing was left except ashes. It is also reported that only a few unnamed people managed to escape and the investigation team is still trying to figure out what caused the fire. “Did mother-in-law?”

In the interrogation room Captain Mlambo glares at Zinhle and she glares back.

“Detective Captain Mlambo please don't tell me on my own million first degree murders you are going to add my brother's sins too?” Captain Mlambo hits the table between them feeling the anger rising deep inside him. “I don't even know why I'm here

because I have no intentions to run, deny my sins or kill anyone I just want to experience how it feels like to be in jail. Someone said it's peaceful, gives you time to introspect, is it true?"

"Shut up!" He screams at her.

"Well then seeing that this case is very close to your heart can't you at least give it to someone else? Honestly, killing a police officer is not even in my fantasy list but bad tempers and me have a bad history--" Detective Mlambo grabs her by the neck choking her.

"Captain! Captain stop!" Says the junior officer. He releases Zinhle's neck while panting with anger.

"I think I have to report this. Criminals are not to be violently handled and I know my rights very well--"

"Take her out of here!" He kicks the wall feeling the urge to just let his temper loose and punch the walls. For over ten years he has been trying to put the final nail on Zibusiso's coffin but the mission proves to impossible. Now he has Zinhle in custody but she too seems to be a tough cookie who will not

break no matter what. If only once, God can give him superpowers to finally get Zibusiso back for humiliating him.

At the Ncube homestead, the mood is jolly and everyone is celebrating except Melisizwe. He has cried all his tears out but the pain won't go away. The thought of Sukoluhle moving on with another man, possibly a more passionate and attractive guy is slowly killing him. If the man is a good man then his daughter will never need him and will replace him like he never existed. A tear runs down his cheek, his sister hugs him.

“You can talk to me brother. You are sad instead of being happy, what's wrong?”

“I'm not happy sister I wish things were different.”
He says.

“Does she know that marrying her brings nothing but pain and regrets?” Queries her sister.

“No she doesn't. What if I tell her and she loses it?”

“I don't think Nomzamo is crazy. She might have a mental breakdown here and there but something tells me that kidnapping stunt was staged. If she's really crazy why is she fine all of a sudden because you agreed to marry her? Something is fishy here.”

“Do you really think so?”

“I think you should tell her the truth. Not only your life will be miserable but yours too.”

“I guess you are right. Maybe this step might bring me closer to my wife again.” He smiles hopefully.

“You should forget about Amahle's mom she's gone and you will never get her back. She doesn't look like a woman who will go back with an ex, she respects herself.”

“I love her--”

“My back--- Ouch!” Nomzamo cries out.....

7 PM sharp! Mntimande is standing at the Ster-Kinekor entrance in Bulawayo Center. His heart pounds as he waits in anticipation. There's something special about Amahle and Prudy that he can't help but feel connected to them. He starts going through his messages just to pass time. He reads Nomzamo's message informing him that she finally got married. He dials her number but she it rings unanswered. This means she had a small quick wedding, if not then Zinhle would have known about it. He visited Zinhle earlier today and they had a serious talk which lifted some weight off his shoulders and ignited the lamp of his hope.

A familiar voice catches his attention and looks down smiling at their oblivious faces. He clicks the video recording button and records them playing. His camera catches their mother but he quickly stops the recording. Amahle recognizes him and smiles waving at him. Sukoluhle notices this but acts ignorant. She purposely walks fast and gets inside leaving the children with Charity. To confirm her suspicions they exchange hugs and chocolates.

She can't help but feel like she has seen this man before, he really does look familiar but if he's the same person she thinks is then her life is about to take a turn for the worst which might force her to relocate if ever she wants to protect her daughters.....

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Good morning darlings

I have errands to run in the morning so I decided to post at this hour(00:27). This is how much I love you darlings and how committed I am to my writing. Reading your comments and seeing reactions keeps me sane and hopeful that not all is lost and one day I will surely make my mom proud. Let's keep commenting and inviting more friends to like the page.

If you want to sponsor an insert or advertise your business inbox the page or whatsapp me on +263775907564. To those reading on Wattpad and Visionary Writings, I really wish to post two inserts a day but I'm currently struggling, I'm broke and I have no internet bundles. If you can help please do feel free to do so. My numbers are +267 73 245 320 Bemobile or +267 71 612 512 Mascom.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 62.

NARRATED.

At the hospital, Melisizwe paces up and down in the corridor his mind racing at an unimaginable speed. The baby is going to ruin everything, it's going to make him stay even though he wants out of this joke of a marriage.

“You should sit down before you make all of us here

dizzy.” Says his sister.

“I’m going to lose my mind Sis. I can’t pretend anymore, I can’t lie to the innocent child. The child deserves a father who will love and hold his/her hand through it all but I can’t do that because this child was made out of a joke. How do I love a child I made through a mere bet? What do I tell him when he starts questioning me?” Melisizwe sighs frustratedly.

“I’m sorry to say this but you made your bed brother now lie on it.” His sister hugs him sympathetically.

“Will I be able to love this child? This will make Suku hate me even more--”

“She doesn’t hate you she moved on. A woman who knows her worthy doesn’t spend much time crying over a man who is weak and fails to control his sexual desires. Unlike all those women who stay with a weak man all in the name of stability, what will the society say and for the sake of children, Suku is not one of them. She values her self worth more than what the society will say. The level of her

maturity makes her different and one in a million. Forget about her she's gone and she will never ever look at you the same again. You disappointed her now try and rectify your mistakes through Nomzamo.” The pain of hearing such from his sister breaks him even more. He still has hope and his heart tells him everything will be fine once again.

“I can't give up that easily I love Suku--”

“Brother I'm telling you this truth because I love you. Keep dreaming of her coming back until you see her walking down the aisle to another better man. You failed to be what she wants let her try her luck somewhere else.” Once again she hugs him. A nurse comes out of the labour ward smiling.

Melisizwe's heart sinks looking at the nurse, he has seen that smile before. It was the same smile that brought the good news of his first born but now the same smile is about to deliver the news of doom to him.

“Congratulations--” A tear runs down his cheek and he walks out leaving the nurse confused. “Did I say something wrong?”

“Not really nurse he can not handle his emotions in public. He's happy and I'm sure he's going to get some fresh air.” Melisizwe's sister lies.

“Okay. It's a bouncing baby boy--” Melisizwe's parents walk in at the announcement of such great news, Mr Ncube smiles while Mrs Ncube ululates as they all rush to the ward where Nomzamo's has been moved to.

Nomzamo tearfully looks at her bouncing baby boy and smiles. This is the happiest day of her life, got married and now their son is here. It is a beautiful feeling to finally have that one thing she's always wished and prayed for. Only if her mother was here to share this joy with her. A tear runs down her cheek but she quickly dismisses the sad memories, it's a happy day so she ought to be happy.

“Congratulations and thank you so much daughter-in-law for finally giving our family an heir. We have waited for a grandchild for all our lives--” Says Mrs Ncube with the widest smile ever.

“Ma stop exaggerating. You do have a grandchild that you both act as if she doesn't exist. No matter what Amahle is and will always be your first grandchild--”

“Shut up!” Melisizwe's mother yells at her daughter.

“I will shut up but you all heard me. Can I hold him please?” Mr Ncube hands the baby over to his daughter.

“I was thinking we should name him after his father. Melisizwe Junior or Melokuhle--”

“Hell no!” Melisizwe mutters making his way inside the room.

“What do you mean?” Mr Ncube asks.

“Can I please talk with Nomzamo in private please?” They all look at one another. His sister tries to give him the baby but he refuses to hold him. They all quietly walk out sensing something wrong.

“What are you doing? Why are you refusing to hold our baby?” Nomzamo's voice is laced with pain.

“Zamo listen,” he takes her hand into his. “you are

beautiful, strong, successful, a go-getter and you can be a very good wife to a deserving somebody--”

“Meli what are you saying? We got married today--”

“I was forced to marry you. Dr PNNM threatened my life and given her history I had no choice but to agree to it. The truth is I never loved you Zamo and there were no problems or anything in my marital life. Suku and I were happy, she never disrespected me or all those lies I told you, she's a great woman and a one in a lifetime. Meeting you was not a coincidence but a well planned plot, my boys and I put a price tag on you and whoever was going to fuck you first was going to get the prize which was a Legend 45, yes a car.” He pauses and looks at Nomzamo who is silently weeping and pain and heartbreak written all over her face. “I'm sorry I really am but the truth is I can not love you, not now not ever.”

“You are joking, right? This is all a joke, please tell me it's a prank?” She asks with a shaky voice.

“I wish it was but it's not. This is the truth Zamo, I

can not love you nor can I be a father to this child. It will always remind me of the perfect family I lost while trying to fulfil my useless fantasies of fucking one of the best tough lawyers our beautiful country has ever produced. I'm really sorry but I will have to go, leave your life for good and you will never see me again. You can try and mend your friendship with that thug I heard he's now a widower.”

Nomzamo's heart sinks, her world collapse around her and now more than ever everything makes sense. She's nothing but a tough lawyer with a sexy body only good for booty calls not a wife material. Tshiamo, her ex husband, said the same and now her husband of hours is equating her to a Legend 45. Not even one of the expensive cars but a Legend 45! Melisizwe kisses her on the forehead as walks out without looking at their baby even for a second....

The following morning Sukoluhle wakes up early to make breakfast for her family. She enjoys doing this

while listening to her get up songs. She's busy chopping vegetables when a knock disturbs her. She wipes her hands to attend the knock but Charity says she will attend to it.

“Someone is being spoiled rotten these days? Hmm!” Says Charity holding a small gift basket. Sukoluhle looks at her and frowns.

“That is for me?”

“Yes who else got a rich boyfriend who affords fresh flowers in this house?” Charity says putting the basket on the kitchen counter.

“Honestly I don't know who is spoiling me. It's good to be spoiled but now I'm curious, I want to meet this secret admirer of mine. Whenever I receive gifts there's a card telling me to go to one of my favorite places for my favorite food, drink or movie and also says there I will see him/her but I haven't met the person.” Sukoluhle sighs tearing the plastic wrapper.

“Maybe the person is scared of you. You are not an ordinary somebody Sis whom anybody can walk up to and express his feelings.” Reasons Charity.

“I don't think my secret admirer is ordinary either otherwise he wouldn't know my personal physical address. Let's see what we got in here today?”

There are all kinds of her favorite fruits, pineapples, apples, pears, oranges, grapes and bananas. Not to forget her favorite flower but today it's not a bouquet, just one flower and a note.

***** Yesterday you looked good, before you get scared I'm not stalking you we happened to be in the same place. Eat those fruits and go nail that presentation. Have a day as vibrant as your smile.*****

Okay this sounds creepy but somehow she finds herself smiling. Whoever is stalking her surely knows her daily routine.

“So?” Charity asks.

“Apparently I should eat these and go kick some ass in the office.” They both laugh. “Please don't tell Lee and Princess about this else they will put on their Sherlock Holmes faces and start digging. If I feel the need to protect myself I will do that.”

“Your secret is safe with me.” Charity pledges her allegiance. Suku's everyday morning call ringing tone rings.

“Hello mama.” She says turning the tablet to her.

“My beautiful girl how are you?” Her mother smiles decorating the screen.

“I'm good as you can see mom. How are you?”

“I can't complain. I see you still know how to cook?”

“I'm your daughter after all. I will never forget what you taught me mom. How are the calves today?”

“The boys injected them yesterday and it looks promising. I want to start another business.” They continue chatting until Sukoluhle's other phone rings.

“Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa, hello?” She answers the unsaved number.

“Whatever portion you gave my son he's going to vomit it today! Are you happy now that he left his child because of you?” Mrs Ncube shouts.

“I'm lost here I honestly don't know what you are

talking about.” Suku humbly responds.

“You witch, a daughter of a slut--”

“Don't you dare insult my mother! Stop calling to insult me unless you want to see the other side of me!”.....

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This insert is dedicated to all the women who have been rejected by the men they love more than once, the ones who have been left standing at the alter, the ones who have been told that they are not marriage material, the ones who many times have been reduced to nothing but tangible goods and are still standing and smiling proudly. You are strong and you deserve a round of applause

THE BRIDE.

Insert 63.

[SPONSORED INSERT.]

SIX MONTHS LATER....

Nomzamo's POV.

I always believed in the old saying that a woman is only woman enough only when she has a ring on her finger marking her as someone's life but I guess I was wrong. After that talk with Melisizwe, he left and never came back, I cried until my blood pressure was abnormal, I died a million deaths, I rejected my own son, I was full of hate, resentment and vengeance until my brother and a special person Mntimande decided to help me. It was hard I won't lie I even got admitted at Ingutsheni Mental Hospital for three months, on top of my mental health pills I also had to take antidepressants. I was so skinny, good as dead but I'm grateful the sound

of my son's cry that my brother always recorded for me whenever he cried brought me back to my sanity. I spent three months without my son, my brother deferred his studies to come and help me with the baby. I lost my job at the law firm, I had no savings to pay for my medication but Mntimande stepped in and offered his help. I didn't know he was like really rich I always thought of him as a guy who can afford to buy expensive latest cars but now I know better. In all these months we lack nothing in this house and we even enjoy the foods I did not buy for myself when I was still working. Melisizwe's parents distanced themselves from me and their grandsons when the news of me going crazy hit the streets and I don't blame them I would do the same if I was in their shoes. Melisizwe's sister is the one who usually comes to visit and spends the weekend with her nephew. I hate Melisizwe but Mntimande advised me not to hate innocent people although I still hate Sukoluhle with all my being. Had Melisizwe not compared me to her maybe I would feel otherwise.

“Good morning beautiful sister.” My brother, Ethan, greets me while holding a bowl of porridge.

“Morning brother. You are up early today?” It's unlike him to wake up before 6.

“I had to give the maid a break. Zaine was crying a lot at night and I heard you two trying to shush him to sleep. You both should be resting.” My loving and caring brother! I emotionally look at him. “Don't start with the tears please I'm tired of wiping them off your face. You should smile a lot not cry every minute. Here. Eat up you really need to put on some weight because right now you look like a moving skeleton.” He jokes and runs outside. I really need to put on some weight and get my nice body back. Ethan comes back with Zaine's cerevita and starts feeding him. I never thought my brother will be mature so soon. He feeds my son, bathe him, puts him to sleep and sometimes sleep with him to give me a break because Zaine cries like no one's business at night you would swear he's bewitched.

“Thank you.” I mean it.

“For what?”

“For being a father to my son and taking care of me when I was losing it.”

“I thought Mntimande was the one playing the role of a father but anyway, I'm doing my duty as a brother. Mntimande called to remind you about the check up. The guy is doing a very great job of taking care of you and the baby. I approve of him Sis, he is no ordinary man but special.” Shit! I almost forgot about it. I have to go to Inguts heni every month to see a psychiatrist and Mntimande has to be there because he's the one who signed the forms as my next of kin otherwise they would not have discharged me.

“Thank you for reminding me I will have to get ready before he gets here. He's impatient and hates waiting for someone. As for your approval I didn't ask for it dear brother.”

“Yeah I have seen that. He also mentioned something about the meeting with the lawyer, tomorrow is Zinhle's court hearing date. You need

my approval because I'm the only family you have.”

“I will have to go there too. I know. I can not defend my friend at the moment as I'm listed as a mentally unfit mother and advocate but then my presence will mean a lot to her. Let me bath.” I ignore the last part of his sentence.

A few minutes later I hear Mntimande honking outside. I pick the diaper bag and rush downstairs. Ethan is done feeding and bathing Zaine and Sarah, our helper is also done with the baby formula preparation. I guess we are all used to Mntimande's impatience these days because he's now a constant visitor, more like the head of this house. I attempt to open the passenger door but Mntimande stops me.

“Ingane ayivumelekile lapho Zamo ngena emuva. Ithi ngimbone umfana wami.(A baby is not allowed in the front seat please get in the back. Let me see my boy.)” He says nicely taking Zaine from Ethan. He smiles at him.

“Sorry I forgot we are taking the baby with today.”

Ethan opens the back door for me and I get in.

“Bye Zaine see you later.” Says Ethan and Zaine smiles at his uncle.

“UEthan uthi ubekukhathaza uZaine ebusuku, yinindaba? (Ethan said he was crying the whole night what's wrong?)” He asks handing him back to me.

“I think he's just one of those babies who cry a lot. His temperature is normal and we can't say he was hungry because Ethan fed him before putting him to bed.”

“Ma ushonjalo. Namhla ngiyakushiya esibhedlela ngizobuya ngikulande kumele ngiphuthume ngiyebona ummeli kaZinhle naleya-therapist yakhe. (I'm going to leave you at the hospital I will come and pick you up later. I have to meet with Zinhle's lawyer and therapist.)”

“No problem. If you get stuck you can just tell Ethan to pick me up he will use my car it has enough fuel.”

“Kulungile. Ngizokunikeza icard las ebhanga umnikeze athele i-fuel nithenge nokudla noma yini

esiphelile endlini. (Alright. I will give you my bank card give it to Ethan to refuel his car and buy everything that's finished.)” He further tells me that he will come and spend the weekend with us and he will bring Ntsika with, Liqhawe doesn't like me and she doesn't even try to pretend to like me. I don't know why she hates me.

NARRATED.

Later the same day Mntimande paces up to catch up with Advocate Amanda Daniella Dlamini and Advocate Sizalobuhle.

“I really don't understand why you are hellbent in trying to help her out when she clearly wants none of it. I spoke to Zinhle she doesn't want to manipulate the law.” Says Advocate Dlamini.

“Her family wants her out--”

“That's being selfish! What about those families who lost their innocent daughters who were also

victims? Being rich shouldn't let people take advantage of the poor, I advocate for the poor for a reason, these rich people think they own the world.” Mntimande's heart sinks hearing this.

“Amanda ngicela umsize udadewethu-- (Please Amanda help her--)”

“Cha Sibangilizwe! Wena lomfowenu uZibusiso alingethusi umtshele lekele ukwenz' engani ngiyalokoloda. Angisesabi isibhami (No Sibangilizwe! You and Zibusiso should know that I'm not scared of you! Stop acting as if I owe you something. I'm not even scared of guns), I have killed before and I will kill you two if I have to. Just listen to Zinhle and let her wishes be! She wants to pay for her sins don't deny her this else she will never heal. Zinhle is a bitter and angry person and she needs to do this on her own if you keep overstepping your boundaries as brothers then you will lose her. She's old enough, respect her wishes. All the best in tomorrow's hearing I will be watching it live, I gave Siza here my two cents advice. I respect the person who gave you my contacts

please don't ever again insult my integrity by thinking that I defend guilt people. I'm a woman of honor, I only stand true by the law. Goodbye Sibangilizwe.” Advocate Dlamini turns to leave but Mntimande grabs her hand.

“Ngiyabonga MaDlamini. Bengingazi ukuthi UZibusiso uzamile ukukwes abisa, uxolo MaMlangeni. (Thank you Amanda. On behalf of my brother, I do apologize.)”

“It's okay. I have to go and hey, I really feel for you but a few years in jail are sometimes worth it. One day you will thank me for this.” She flashes a smile and gets in her car and drives off.

Mntimande and Advocate Sizalobuhle are allowed to meet Zinhle. They sit down and wait both their minds pondering on what to do next. Zinhle drags her swollen feet, it's been two months since Mntimande visited her because she fought with a police and stabbed him. The officers thought one of Zinhle's visitors brought a knife for her and

thereafter visitors were banned to see her.

Mntimande, Advocate Sizalobuhle and Dr PNNM who just joined them look at her and their jaws drop.

“Anithi ngiyavelelwa? ZakwaNgwenya? (Please tell me I'm dreaming?)” Mntimande can not believe his eyes.

“You are pregnant Zinhle--”.....

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ANNOUNCEMENT.

I will go live tomorrow by 1000 hours sharp. This will be my first ever live video, ask me anything about writing and personal stuff I will answer your questions honestly.

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This insert is sponsored by my IsiXhosa tutor, the admin of Being a Wife of A Prisoner.

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 64.

NARRATED.

“You are pregnant Zinhle!” Dr PNNM is surprised. Of all the surprises Zinhle has pulled in the short space of time this is the most shocking one. Zinhle ignores the shock on their faces and pulls the chair

and sits down.

“ZakwaNgwenya yini le? (What's this Zinhle?)”

Mntimande asks glaring at Zinhle.

“If you're asking about the pregnancy then yes I'm pregnant and thank you for your congratulations. And no I'm not faking it, my baby is real and very active.” Responds Zinhle.

“Ekabani ingane ZakwaNgwenya? (Whose child is it?)” Mntimande knows that if he also raises his voice then he might end up beating the hell out of Zinhle. She's very stubborn and doesn't like to be questioned most of the times.

“If you are insinuating that I slept with one of these ugly officers then you really don't know me brother.” Sizalobuhle and Dr PNNM look on as the siblings bicker back and forth. “Brother you should know me, I don't cheat but they cheat on me. When I was in hiding I was with my husband and yes, this is his child.” Mntimande heaves a huge sigh of relief.

“Kuyajabulis a ukuzwa lokho kodwa uzothini ma bekuphosela ejele? (I'm glad to hear that but I'm

worried about the baby what will you do if you get sentenced?)” The decisions his sister takes sometimes always leave him powerless.

“I’m definitely going to be sentenced. I’m looking at twenty five years minimum sentence--”

“What do you mean? We haven’t argued in court yet?” Says Advocate Sizalobuhle.

“Yes we can plead that you were not mentally stable at the time. We have the records and the medical prescription--” Dr PNNM says her piece. Zinhle angrily hits the table between them.

“I’m not crazy! I’m very much mentally stable and I was in my senses when I killed those people!” Zinhle is furious. Mntimande realizes exactly what Advocate Dlamini was talking about. Zinhle is determined to go through with this and the earlier he makes peace with it the better. Zibusiso did the same thing, he refused to be rescued even when the governor himself tried to save him. He said he wanted to pay for traumatizing people who saw him kill the minister in order to clear his conscience I’m

sure Zinhle feels the same way too.

“Ngiyakuzwa ZakwaNgwenya kodwa sothini ngengane? Uzoyiyeka ikhule ingena mama? (I hear you Zinhle but what about the child you are carrying? You will let him grow without a mother?)”

“My husband will take care of the child. Please brother don't make this hard for me I don't want to go in jail leaving you with a heavy heart you know I love you too much and that will break me. Don't you want your little sister to learn to differentiate from wrong and right? Don't you want me to learn how to control my emotions? To learn to let go of the pains of the past? I really need this, I really have to go to prison maybe we will apply for parole after some years but for now please let me pay for making innocent people cry. I already gave them all the evidence they need to throw me behind bars for a very long time and there will be no use for you to argue in court.” Zinhle adds.

“What evidence? Last time you said you have no evidence or whatsoever?” Says Sizalobuhle disappointment visible on her face. This case is

supposed to be her ladder to the top of the law world. Zinhle is trending all over the world and defending her will put Sizalobuhle's name on the map. How can Zinhle just throw all that away?

“I understand this was your first big case but please understand that if I wanted to win this case I would have gone for the likes of Advocate Dlamini who know their way in court not someone who is still learning the ropes. Keep learning and you will get all the money you charged. I just don't want to escape this. I want to face the law I'm sorry for disappointing you all.” Dr PNNM and Sizalobuhle look at each and sigh.

“I understand you Zinhle. The guilt of killing numerous people is not for the fainthearted I knew you would someday give up. You are tough but you still have a heart in your chest, all the best behind bars. I really wanted to help but I can not stand in your way and I completely understand you.”

“Thank you and while I'm in jail please don't try to be me by making stupid threats to people you almost killed my friend.” They all laugh. Mntimande

stands and hugs her tight fighting his tears.

“Banawe oNgwenya ngiyazi konke kuzolunga ekugcineni. Ngiyakuthanda ZakwaNgwenya uze ungakulibali lokho. (The ancestors are with you and I know everything will be fine at the end. I love you ZakwaNgwenya and don't ever forget that.” They tearfully look at each other.

“I love you too brother.”

Nomzamo's POV.

Mntimande called and informed me that Ethan was going to pick me up at the hospital. He said something about not feeling well after talking to Zinhle I'm she still wants to go ahead and pay for her sins. The session was not that bad at least the new doctor treats me like a normal person not a mad woman. We spoke about surviving with my condition and taking meds all the time. He says I'm

getting there and very soon I will be certified normal again. I don't know if I still want to continue with law after all the humiliation I went through after Melisizwe posted on Facebook that he got married yesterday and today he's a single man again. The comments were very bad and people couldn't stop comparing me to Sukoluhle! I wonder why everyone thinks she's some kind of an angel on earth.

“Zaine!” I'm brought back to reality by my brother tickling Zaine who giggles in turn.

“Hey brother.” I greet him as he takes his nephew.

“Hey Sis. By the look on your face I believe the session went well.” He gives me a Chicken Licken takeaway. The aroma has me salivating already.

“Thank you Ethan. But where did you get the money?”

“Your boyfriend gave me a bunch of hundred dollar notes yesterday.” I'm surprised. Mntimande, okay he's not my boyfriend yet but I know soon enough he will propose, seems to have a lot of this precious paper called money.

“Really? He gave me a debit card too. He said we should buy whatever we want--” Ethan whistles before I even finish my sentence startling Zaine who wails calling for the attention of the vendors sitting by the road.

“Okay okay I'm sorry Zaine.” He grabs potato chips and feeds him.

“You will kill my baby Ethan!” I playfully smack him.

“Your dear son here started eating adult food when he was four months old. It's the reason why he's so fit and strong.” I laugh shaking my head. When they told me that he can eat pap at the age of five months I almost died but then I later learned that food kills no child it's just a myth. He puts Zaine on his chair and buckle him. I also get in and relax myself enjoying my chicken and chips with Sprite.

“Let's go to town and do a little shopping I want to cook Mntimande's favorite meal today.” Zinhle always say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach and that's the way we are going to take. I know I'm being a little forward but men like

Mntimande won't really tell you if they love you or not they will just show with their actions. I also believe he's my last shot at happiness. I hope and pray I don't get another heartache.

“You really should keep him happy he's a good guy but I'm curious, I have never seen him in formal clothing or heard him saying he's going to work where does he get the money?”

“He works from home. He has businesses in South Africa and here he owns the taxis written 'Ums hini Wami'.” That's all I know about his businesses. He doesn't talk too much.

Sukoluhle's POV.

Today I didn't get my present as usual and I kind of feel sad. I have gotten used to being spoiled by my secret admirer and his/her short messages always get me through the day. I do have the money to buy

flowers, chocolates, fruits and all that for myself but it is always good to be spoiled by someone else. It makes one feel special and loved and we all want to be loved. Today mom's call was short too because she had to drive to one of her distant relative's funeral. I think I just have to go home maybe Charity will cheer me up and get me into the working mode. I have been doing nothing in this office, really. My office phone rings.

“Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa's office hello?” I'm really not in the mood for visitors today.

“Ma'am there's a handsome muscular cute guy here --”

“What?”

“Sorry ma'am his words not mine. He wants to see you.”

“Who is he?”

“He says his identity should be kept private else it will ruin the surprise. And oh ma'am, he's carrying your favorite flowers.” Trust this crazy girl to gossip about someone who is standing right in front of her.

“Have you seen him before?”

“Not really. He doesn't look like he's from the hood, he looks like he just landed from one of the developed countries--”

“Okay send him in.” I wonder who the stranger is. Maybe today is the day I will finally see the person who's been spoiling me. I put the phone down and drink some water patiently waiting for the cute stranger. After a few minutes there's a light knock on the door. “Come in--” A tall muscular.... HELL NO.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 65.

Sukoluhle's POV.

“Okay send him in.” I wonder who the stranger is. Maybe today is the day I will finally see the person who's been spoiling me. I put the phone down and drink some water patiently waiting for the cute stranger. After a few minutes there's a light knock on the door. “Come in--” A tall muscular.... HELL NO! I can feel my joints weakening, air leaving my lungs and urine about to flow down my legs. I'm trembling, my throat is now dry as I reach for the phone but he stops me. He's still the same handsome motherfucker who girls used to throw themselves at back in the days.

“Cupcake please don't do this. I don't want to hurt you and I hate that you are now scared of me. I'm sorry--” The last words triggers the memories of our last encounter years ago. I trusted him, I could follow him wherever he said we should go with my eyes closed but he chose to hold me hostage. He really hurt me... “Cupcake I'm sorry--”

“Leave me alone ZB I don't ever want to see you again! I trusted you but you ruined my life! Get the hell out of my office before I call the police!” He swallows hard looking at me and for the first time ever since I knew him he looks like he's out of words.

“I came to apologize for ruining the special thing we once had. I'm really sorry and it pains me to know that you are now scared of me. My intention was not to hurt you but to protect you and your name. I was in some deep shit and that night when I took you out to watch stars I received a message from my brother telling me that the army was after me and the only way out was to negotiate with them. I did some pretty bad things and I didn't want you to suffer because of me. I held you hostage so that no one would suspect that we were close because then everything you worked hard for would have gone down the drain. I'm sorry for putting you through all of that.” I know he really means every word because this motherfucker never says sorry to anyone he would rather kill you instead of apologizing to you.

“You really hurt me Zi and I'm not ready to talk or embrace you at the moment I'm still working on the nightmares you created in my head. Please if you have any tiny bit of humanity left in you just leave and never come back.” A tear runs down his cheek and he quickly wipes it.

“I will be going on a dangerous secret mission in Italy and I hope your wish will come true because I don't see myself coming out of it. I know you hate me but take this pendant, keep it safe and one day when you finally forgive me open the locket and see what is inside. I will forever cherish the priceless memories we created together and I will always picture you as the vibrant carefree girl not this scared woman you are now. I'm the one who have been spoiling you and I will continue doing so. If you don't receive anything from me and you don't see me then you should know the mission went wrong. Take care of yourself and the beautiful girls you have. I love you and I will forever keep the memories safe in my heart.” He puts the flowers and a huge wrapped box on the table and sadly

walks out. The moment he shuts the door I put my hands on my face and burst into tears.....

Mntimande's POV.

I understand where Zinhle is going with this mission of hers but my heart doesn't. I really wish there was a way to convince her otherwise. I just recently lost my wife and now Zinhle is going to jail. Nkululeko is busy with his studies, Zibusiso also said something about disappearing from the the face of the earth for some time and now I'm left alone with the kids. My parents are still giving us a fold shoulder after what Zibusiso did to mom and I'm okay with that because I'm also angry with them. I wish I was the kind of man who can meet any girl, take her out and keep her close just to pass time but I can't. When I decide to go into a relationship I want something special not these jokes people term as relationships these days.

“You have been playing with the glass but you are not drinking. Want something hotter perhaps?” Says the girl with the ridiculous pink coloured long hair, her makeup looks like she's a clown and her big boobs are on display for everyone to see. “Come on Prince Charming--” She tries to touch me but I block her hand.

“Angiwudli udoti! (I don't eat from the trash bins!)” I leave a \$20 note for the barman and exit the bar as all the bitches look at me like I have grown a horn on my forehead. Why don't women understand that not all men eat trash some of us have class! I don't and I will never hook up with a hoe I meet in the bar let alone a woman who walks around naked for the whole world to see her body. A woman should cover up, leave room for curiosity not to put everything out there.

I have been trying to call Zibusiso but his phone is off. He promised to call before today and I hope he doesn't forget. Lqhawe is calling me.

“Ndodakazi kababa (My daughter).” I answer the call and put it on loudspeaker, I'm driving and I'm not ready to die and leave my children alone.

“Ingane zakho ziyakudinga (Your children are looking for you.)” I laugh. I know who she's talking about.

“Okay ngiyeza. Ungakhathazi ingane zami-- (I'm coming. Don't trouble my children--)”

“Ngizozama (I will try).” She says and drops the call. Lqhawe is very unpredictable when it comes to liking and hating people. I was shocked to learn that she doesn't like Nomzamo. I tried asking the reason behind it and she asked me how can she like a woman who hurts innocent children.

I park my car and walk inside the house with takeaway bags I knew they were coming after school as promised. They all jump from the couches and run to me giving me hugs and kisses. Now this feels good. I know its selfish of me to make them lie to their mother but I like them and I

know their mother will hate me if she learns of my identity.

“We missed you!” Amahle pouts while Prudy jumps on my laps.

“I know and I'm sorry. I have been very busy with something but it will be fine soon.”

“Okay. How is your sister doing? Mom says jail is a bad place?” Amahle is too mature for her age and she doesn't forget. I tell them about Zinhle's case and they nod in turn.

“Do you want something to eat Amy and Prudy?” Liqhawe asks. This is surprising and it means Liqhawe likes them otherwise she wouldn't have offered them food.

“Umm yeah. What ever you will have is fine by us.” Says Prudy already playing a game in my phone.

“How did you get here? Does mommy know you are here with me?” They both shake their heads. “Amy--”

“Aunt Charity brought us here. We asked mom if we

could go out and she said yes without asking a lot of questions like always. She looked tired and sad and she just went upstairs.” That explains why she did not bother asking many questions. I wonder what's bothering her? Lqhawe brings food for everyone, Prudy says grace and we all start eating. I wasn't really feeling hungry but seeing my favorite people all in one place and happy just lifted my mood a little bit.

“Daddy why didn't you tell me that their mother is the famous author and movie director? I'm a big fan of hers!” Oh no! I hope she won't want to see the famous author. “I once went to see her in J o'burg when she came for book signings but the place was too crowded I didn't get a chance to see her. Please dad take me to her and buy her recent book for me please.” What kind of temptation is this one? How do I explain to them that if Sukoluhle sees me she might have a heart attack thinking I'm Zibusiso. My brother really messed up and now I'm paying for his sins because we look alike. We are of the same height, body, complexion, the only different thing is

our voices.

“I will see what I can do to have you meet her but forget about the book because it has a very strong theme and explicit language. You will read it when you are over eighteen.”

“Thank you daddy!” She hugs me and kisses me on the cheek. Nomzamo calls.

“Nomzamo?”

“I was wondering if you could join us for dinner I will prepare your favorite meal”

“Ngizozama ukuza, ngisematasa okwamanje sokhuluma ntambama. (I will try to come. I'm busy at the moment let's talk later)” I really care deeply for Nomzamo but I think I'm in love with these kids. I can't just drop them just because Nomzamo wants to have dinner with me.

“Okay.” She drops the call and I let out a sigh. I really have to talk to Nomzamo's doctor and understand a few things. After eating the girls go to the kitchen to wash dishes. This is the third time Amahle and Prudy visited. They always help

Liqhawe out when they come. They are very good kids with manners and I always wonder how they learned about the chores when they have a helper.

“Can we go for ice cream?” Asks Liqhawe..

“Yes!” They all jump up and down. I'm really tired but to prolong these smiles I will drive them.

“Okay let's go.” God why didn't you just let me enjoy my perfect family for a little longer? Imagine if there was a woman next to me with these happy souls? I dearly miss my wife and I'm sure she would have loved Amahle and Prudy the way I love them. We have always wanted to have four children but she was scared of labour pains and wanted no C Section. We were even planning to adopt. I'm about to unlock the car when they all drag me back.

“We will walk that's where the ice cream funny part is.” Okay this just got better. A walk with children will surely make my day if not my whole week. I will have to try and talk to Sukoluhle maybe then she can let Amahle and Prudy sleepover someday.

Zinhle's POV.

The first part of my mission has been completed now my brothers won't try to stop me. The second part of it begins now and this is the hardest. I drag my feet as I approach my husband who is sitting on the bed. I don't know where this special room came from because my husband and I always meet here in private.

“You look tired.” My husband says smiling.

“Thank you very much.” I pout as he helps me sit on the double bed with clean linen.

“You know I didn't mean it in a bad way but compassionate way. Don't be angry my love. I'm sorry, okay?” I nod. “Look at what I brought for you-”

“Fried fish! Oh my God!” I'm eating already. Fish is my favorite and my husband here has been making sure that I get it almost everyday for the past eight

months. I'm heavily pregnant and I can give birth any moment. Yes I was pregnant when I went after the King but I chose to keep the news to myself. He smiles looking at me as I eat.

“You look cute with your mouth full of food.” He laughs and his laugh stirs something down my abdomen. I stop eating and look at his old wrinkled face that has become my sanity and my definition of handsome. I really love my husband with my whole being and it hurts that our journey has to end. Tears trickle down my eyes remembering all the good memories. “Zie please don't cry baby.” He envelopes me in his arms, his warm body igniting my own insanely hot body. Hormones take over and I find myself kissing him. He moans into my mouth as my hand moves to his privates. This old man is not that old down there. My hands fumble with his belt as my clit throbs and #Removed.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 66.

BREAKING NEWS!!!

“Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya Ngwenya has finally been convicted. She pleaded guilty of all charges which are four first degree murders, attempted murder, abduction and being in possession of a very dangerous weapon. The whole world was shocked to learn that she is the one who gave the police the evidence because they had nothing to prove the accusations. When asked why she did that she said she's tired of running and carrying the guilty. Many wanted her to be sentenced to life imprisonment but the judges felt otherwise. Zinhle will spend twenty five years in prison with a right to apply for parole.” Says the reporter reporting live

from the court. The Ngwenyas walk out of the courtroom putting on their shades and making way to the parking lot. The reporters try to talk to them but Zibusiso tells them off.

“Now what?” Nkululeko asks sitting behind the steering wheel.

“Life goes on. A special woman I once had the privilege and luck to call a friend told me that God never gives us a burden that we can not handle. We are us and we will pull through. Even if we don't get to be together at the end of it all we will just keep the memories.” Says Zibusiso wiping his tears. He looks defeated and the future looks bleak for him.

“You sound like a dying man? What's going on? ”
Asks Nkululeko.

“I might as well throw myself in front of the speeding car and die--” His voice trails off and he finally breaks down. Mntimande pulls him in for a hug but says nothing. He feels his pain and for the first time in their entire lives he doesn't have a plan or strategy on how to recover from all of this and

move on.

“Kuzokunga mfanakithi ungalilah! ithemba. (It will be fine brother don't despair.)” Mntimande says encouraging Zibusiso.

“How? I just lost two important people in my life--” Zibusiso's lips tremble as he tries to fight his tears.

“What are you talking about Zi? I think I'm missing something here?” Nkululeko is confused.

“Kuyacaca uyile wayombona kodwa izinto azihambanga ngendlela. Mnikeze ithuba ehlixe umoya umoshile hayi kancane mfanekhaya-- (It's clear you went to see her but things didn't go accordingly. Give her time to heal brother--)”

“What are you guys talking about? Since when do you keep secrets?” Being in the dark frustrates Nkululeko.

“Since you started having a runny mouth.” They all lightly laugh amidst of sadness. “We are talking about Suku--”

“You? No way! No guys tell me you are joking? You

both chowing the same woman--”

“Ayi voets ek wena NK! Ungibheka kanjani kodwa? Ngiwadla kanjani amathe omfanami? Awushaye lelemota siphume lana--(Fuck off NK! What do you think of me? How can i eat my brother's leftovers? Drive and let us get out of here--)” They laugh as Nkululeko drives off.

Mr Ndabezinhle Mkhize's POV.

Watching my wife being escorted out of the court and to the back of the prisons van was the hardest part of all this. I tried to hold my tears in but I couldn't. The pain of knowing that she might never come out alive is killing me slowly. I understand she wants to do the right thing but I don't have all those years left in my lifespan. Even if I live for another twenty five years I will be nothing but just a shadow of what Mkhize used to be. I won't be able to make love to her or make her feel good. What will I tell our

child? She wants me to raise our child but I'm old and who will help me raise him when she will be in jail? Life is so unfair sometimes.

“Daddy?” Owami calls out trying yo unlock the door. I wipe my face and open for him.

“Hi son.” I say as we both sit on the bed.

“What did the judges say?”

“Mommy will be gone for a couple of years son. We will have to be strong so she can also be strong for us.” His small lips tremble as tears fall down his cheeks.

“But I need her--” My poor boy is really hurting. I engulf him in my arms and let him cry all his pain out.

“It will be fine son. Everything will be fine.” Seeing Owami like this makes me want to go back to my old ways. I can steal Zinhle from prison and no one will ever figure out what happened or where she went but then I will be breaking my promise. I promised not to go against her wishes. Oh Zinhle! Who will I be without you? My phone rings and it's a

government land line. I answer as my heart pounds in my chest imagining the worst case scenario.

“Mr Ndabezinhle Mkhize, hello.”

“Good afternoon Sir I'm calling from prison, would you mind coming here soon?”

“Is my wife alright? ”

“She's fine Sir and she just gave birth to a bouncing baby boy--”

“Yeeeessss! My boy? Let's go and get your little brother.”

Sukoluhle's POV.

His sister is trending, she just got sentenced and I know what he must be going through. Zibus is o loves only a few people and his love is too deep although he hurts the ones he loves too. I wish I can hug him and tell him that everything will be okay but

I'm still scared of him. The stunt he pulled almost sent me to my early grave and my mom had a minor heart attack seeing me on the national news with a gun on my head. I still have nightmares and I don't think they will ever go away. Princess have tried everything in her power and knowledge to help me but they won't stop. Zibusiso really did a great job turning me into a hardcore lady but he forgot to teach me how to deal with him and the fear he instilled in me.

Yesterday I cried myself to sleep. I woke up with Prudy and Amahle sleeping on my bed and hugging me tight. I didn't even ask them where they went but my guess is that friend of theirs who happens to be Zibusiso's brother took them out for ice cream because they brought some home. I really don't know how they met but from what my PI told me he's a dangerous harmless guy. I don't know if that makes sense. He loves my children like his own I always read their conversations although they think I don't know about their friendship. I spoke to my

mother and she advised me to let the kids be as long as the man won't harm them because they really need a male figure in their lives. She went on and on about why I should move on and introduce a stepfather to my children but I'm not ready for that. I just want to take a break from all of the love/relationship stuff.

“My beautiful daughter.” Mom answers the call and the waterworks starts again. “What's wrong my girl? Talk to mommy--”

“He-he's back mom.” I sniffle.

“I know my baby I know.” What? How does she know who I'm talking about?

“How do you know mom?”

“He came here before coming to you. He apologized for everything he did and I understand why he did what he had to do. He is really sorry try and hear him out.”

“But he hurt me mom! He's the only man I ever trusted with my life but he chose to hurt me!” How can mom take his side after everything he did?

“I know but will it give you peace to let him go with a broken heart? He told me about his dangerous mission, he even showed me the agreement forms and he might die out there. I don't wish death or anything bad upon him but the Italian mafias are dangerous and this is the price he has to pay in order to gain his freedom. Zibusiso is bad but not too bad. Don't forget the good things he did for you and the lengths he can go just to see you happy. Forgiving someone doesn't mean you have to forget but it liberates your soul and heart. Talk to him and hear him out. This might be the medication to your nightmares and fear. Like you said he's the only man you trust with your life and I know you really mean it, he also means it when he says he is sorry. I love you my girl and I will never lead you astray.”

“Okay mama I love you.”

“I love you too my angel.”

Do I really want to hear what he has to say? I guess I just need to give him a benefit of the doubt. I dial his number but it goes straight to voicemail. I throw my phone on the bed and sigh putting on my simple

dress. I don't feel like working today and Charity went to do her hair and nails I'm alone at home. Maybe I should cook lunch for everyone and bake for the children. They love muffins and cream doughnuts a lot. After switching my phone off I put on my head wrapper and push-ins.

Cooking, baking and listening to music has always been my therapy from childhood. When other kids would call me a poor fatherless child I would be hurt and mom would invite me to help her in the kitchen to lift my mood. I'm now busy putting marinated beef ribs on the tray and listening to one of my favorite songs "Girl On Fire" by Alicia Keys. He taught me the lyrics and he always played it for me whenever I felt down. I'm singing along when a familiar voice joins in.

Everybody stands, as she goes by
Cause they can see the flame that's in her eyes
Watch her when she's lighting up the night
Nobody knows that she's a lonely girl

And it's a lonely world

But she gon' let it burn, baby, burn, baby

He hugs me from behind as tears stream down both our faces. I missed him, God knows I miss him everyday and whenever I find myself sad I wish he was there to comfort me. He turns me around and envelopes me in his protective strong arms stroking my back as I sob. He still smells the same and nothing has changed.

“I wish I can erase that night, I wish I had done things a different way, I wish I had not gotten myself into trouble, I just wish we can go back to being innocent from one kids who knew nothing except excelling in their school work and competing for a pack of lays chips. I just wish things were different, I'm sorry cupcake.” I sob in his chest. We really had the best of times.

“I forgive you—” He scoops me up and spins me around kissing me all over the face. “Put me down!” I scream and he giggles. We stand there for a

moment just looking at one another saying nothing and hug each other once more. I know it's for a short time but it feels good to have my best friend back. The fear is gone just like that although he still has a lot of work to do winning my trust back.

“Thank you. I really didn't think you will forgive me I guess I owe that beautiful kindhearted woman a G-Wagon--” I smack him on the chest.

“Don't you dare!”

“Still jealousy much?”

“Some things just never change you know. How did you find me?”

“Really cupcake? I just typed your name in my laptop and voilà!”

“No wonder you will rot in prison. I'm just surprised they let you roam the streets like a free man. What do you have against them?”

“Nothing but they want something from me. My brains! But I will tell you about all of that some other time today let me celebrate having you back. I got

your call and I literally jumped out of the moving car leaving my brothers shocked. I knew there and then that I'm forgiven." He smiles taking me back to those innocent years.

"You are an idiot! So sorry about your sister I know you love that crazy sister of yours. When she trended the first time I didn't know she was the Zinhle you always told me about until my PI brought it to my attention--"

"You have been stalking me cupcake?" He raises his eyebrows.

"Don't flatter yourself I was stalking your brother not you--" He bursts into laughter.

"This is interesting! My brother likes you too but he thinks you and I tapped it you know?" I laugh out loud. Hell no! Zibusiso is my crazy best best friend, never ever have we looked at each other like that. He likes them crazy and feisty and I like them calm not this crazy friend of mine. "Dead serious. He's been protecting you ever since Nomzamo asked him to kill you--"

“What?” Nomzamo wanted to kill me? I'm not really shocked but I didn't know her hatred was this deep.

“Yeah. Don't you ever ask yourself where did he meet your kids and why he loves them so much?”
Now it makes sense. Amahle said something about a man rescuing her and Lerato said the same man took us to the hospital.

“Now it makes sense! Why is he hiding himself though?”

“Because you we going to faint thinking it's me. Okay, what are we cooking before the kids knock off. I must say that bastard gave you a cute girl. I saw him a few months back and I punched him on the face for hurting you...” We continue chatting while busy preparing food. I met Zibusiso when I was doing form one at MaKhandeni Secondary school, I had just lost the money to pay for my fees and that was the last money mom had. If I say I was crying it would be an understatement. He felt pity and helped me to look for it but in vain. He told me to go home then he will make a plan to help me. The next day he gave me a receipt stating I have paid for my

fees.... Someone is knocking.

“I will get it.” Zibusiso offers.

“Babe what is this thug doing here?”.....

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Your comments will determine how many inserts you get per day. If you motivate me then I will post twice. Let's not be lazy, okay? Typing a comment takes less than a minute and I spend hours typing an insert. Please do show a little appreciation. I still love you though.

My South African readers may you please help with airtime to repay the person who subscribed for me. Please help out where you can. The number is +27

63 891 9599.

Visionary writings and Wattpad readers I haven't forgotten about you darlings. I will try by all means to upload chapters for you tomorrow. I love you all and good night .

THE BRIDE.

Insert 67.

Sukoluhle's POV.

“Babe what is this thug doing here?” That's Melisizwe's voice. Before I can even respond Zibusiso has punched him twice on the face. “Are you gonna stand there and watch him doing this to me? ”

“Meli I'm not your babe, okay? The sooner you get

this through your thick skull the better. I'm getting tired of you coming to my house and trying to impose your orders on me. You lost that right when you chose to sleep with Zamo so now please leave me alone and in peace. If you want to see Amahle please do come when she is at home because right now you know she is at school--"

"Babe--"

"You heard her now fuck off!"

"You lied to me you dogs! I thought you were friends--"

"I respect you because you had the luck to be called her husband otherwise you would be dead by now. Keep coming here to disturb her peace then I swear on my ancestors for the first time ever ZBC (Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation) will report a live murder scene and there's nothing anyone will do about it! I'm Zibusiso but those who know me call me 'the big dog' don't test me boy. Get lost!" Melisizwe swallows hard and leaves with his tail between his legs. Zibusiso hugs me tight. "He won't

bother you ever again--” I spring off his arms looking spooked.

“You-you won't--”

“No he's not worth it besides if I wanted to kill him he would have gone missing by now. I respect you and your relationships and you know I can never do that to Amy. She's a good girl with all of your traits she deserves a father although that idiot doesn't see it that way.” I heave a huge sigh of relief. I don't feel anything for Melisizwe anymore but I don't want him to die because of me. Zibusiso has always respected my relationships. Back then before he messed up our friendship he used to call Melisizwe and ask permission to take me out from him. Because Melisizwe knew us from Secondary school he never had a problem with him. They were times when people thought Zibusiso and I were dating and the news spread like wildfire but my friends and mom were there to set the record straight. My college friends also questioned me at some point about my feelings for Zibusiso. The truth is I don't feel anything like that for Zibusiso not

even a thought has ever crossed my mind. My mother is a single mother, I have never seen her with a man and my brother on the other hand is the useless brother you just love because he is family then Zibusiso is the only male friend I have. The only guy who taught me how to survive in this jungle we live in and how to face the storms head on. He became a brother I always prayed and wished for, he filled that void I always had of not having a sibling and our bond got stronger with time. I'm single and horny but I still don't feel anything for my friend/ brother and I know he feels the same. He respects me like a sister. "You too young to be daydreaming don't you think?" He lightly punches me and we both laugh.

"I'm getting old my guy."

"I will be gone for at least two years," He poses and looks at me while mixing the vegetable salad. My eyes begin to water already. Why does he have to go there? "So you know I will need to get serviced, right?"

"Zi!" I slap him on the back. Don't mind the violence

that's how we play.

“Come on cupcake you have sexy friends--”

“Don't even think about it! They are married--”

“Lerato is not married. The girl sounds horny AF and she's single and searching. You can not lie to me cupcake because I have been part of your life from a distance. So now what's the deal? What is it that she likes? I wanna take her out for a couple of days.” Now I'm cornered like always. Zibusiso always does this with my friends and none of them are strong enough to resist him. He's one crazy guy and his hook ups are different. My college friends told me that he took them to a doctor for tests first before the deed. “Cupcake come on!”

“Why do you always want to sleep with my friends? It makes me look like a bad friend because you don't even check on them later. What if you have a child out there with one of my ex friends? This is not fair ZB how would you feel if your friends ask you to hook them up with me?” He clenches his jaw.

“I would kill them! But I wouldn't mind hooking you

up with one of my brothers. As for children out there, Cupcake I'm a man not a boy and I know where I leave my seeds.”

“You are impossible!” Just then Amahle and Prudy run inside carrying their backpacks.

“Uncle!” They are about to hug him but their faces fall as they realize he's not their friend. “Sorry.” Amahle is about to walk away but Zibusiso pulls her in for a hug.

“I'm uncle Zibusiso..” He whispers the rest of the sentence in their eyes and they jump in excitement.

“Pinky promise?”

“Pinky promise.” They hug once again and I'm finally recognized.

“Good afternoon mommy. We brought you chocolates because you were sad when we left.” They both kiss me on the cheeks handing me my favorite chocolate. My sweet babies.

“Thank you my sweet babies. Lunch will be ready in ten minutes--” I turn my head to the entrance as

Zibusiso whistles with his hands in his pockets.

“Yangen' intokazi emhlophe uphuma langa sikothe!
Hayi sukani madoda! Umuhle muntu wabanikazi
ngathi ngingadayisa okulutshwana enginakho
ngiyokucela kwabakini. Awu vuma siphalaphala
sentombi ngiyobikela oMntimande bazishaye zonke
ziphelele. Inhliziyo yami ngizoyinika wena qha!
Ndlunkulu. (Here comes the beautiful white skinned
maiden, rise our sun we lick you! You are beautiful
,allow me to sell the little that I have so that I ask
for your hand in marriage. Please agree, beautiful
so that I notify my family the Mntimandes to bring
the required cattle. My heart I will give only to you.
My Queen.)” He says in a poetic manner making my
friend Lerato blush. She's a fan of isiNdebele this
one and I know she's taken.

“Where have you been my Prince Charming?” She
asks seductively.

“Building a diamond castle for you my Queen.” I
shake my head and start dishing for the children
and Charity just walked in too. She looks at
Zibusiso and secretly admire him for a moment

before whispering in my ear.

“Isn't he your guardian angel? Amy's friend? Why are you letting Lee have him Sis?” I laugh. I know even Lerato thinks it's Mntimande because she's been dreaming about him ever since she saw him at the hospital.

“This is my friend Zibusiso a younger brother to Amy's friend.” I whisper back. The shock on Charity's face is Kodak perfect! She quickly recovers and washes her hands to start helping me. “Nice nails babes and the hair is on another level. Should I start searching for an engagement party dress?”

“Thank you Sis but stop mocking me. You know it's been years and the drought is slowly killing me.” I laugh at her. I don't know why she's single but I won't ask that.

“Cupcake can I use one of your spare bedrooms? I want to show something to my Queen here.”

“You can but remember they are all under surveillance.” He smiles his mischievous smile and

takes the blushing Lerato to one of the bedrooms.

“Wow! Lucky Lee. I wouldn't mind a few hours with him too. Damn Sis! Where do you get these hot guys in your life? I mean what's the secret? I'm tired of all the chimpanzees I meet everyday.”

NARRATED.

In a room used as a clinic in prison Zinhle has her baby in her arms and crying uncontrollably. The nurse looks at her and feels her pain. It's never easy to give birth and send your child away the next minute.

“You can still apply for parole. I read your story and I understand why you did all those horrible things you are not a bad person Zinhle.” The nurse's words fuel her pain as she sobs even more. “Please stop crying.”

“How do I stop? I just gave birth to him and I have to

let him go... I have to set all of them free! It hurts, it really hurts--” Zinhle's voice trails off as she cries even harder.

“You can still apply for parole after two years--”

“I can't! I have to pay for my sins. I don't want my children to pay for my sins the Bible says curses of the generations will befall the innocent generation, I don't want that for my children they are innocent.” The nurse hugs her as they both cry until the senior guard comes in.

“Uhm sorry she was a bit sad.” The nurse responds and walks out.

“Hey ZakwaNgwenya I don't know who you are but I just received orders from the top top to let you bond with your baby for at least two weeks--” Zinhle's eyes light up in excitement.

“Really?” The guard smiles amused by her sudden change of mood.

“Yeah and I was asked to give you this.” He says handing her a white envelope. “Congratulations he's such a cute boy.”

“Thank you so much.” The guard smiles and walks out as Zinhle tears the envelope open. There's a small Tiffany box and a note.

****Congratulations on the arrival of your baby boy I'm happy for you. I will forever protect you even from the grave. Keep the ring safe whenever you get tired of staying behind bars that ring is your ticket to freedom. Please behave yourself or you will get killed. I love you.*****

She looks at the ring and frowns. It looks exactly like the ring she had but handed over to the police for it contained all the evidence they needed to put her behind bars. It's not just a pure gold and diamond ring but a dangerous device that can bring the whole world to it's knees. She reads the letter again but something doesn't make sense. Only she knows how to design this ring because it's her unique design after all. Maybe Zibusiso hacked her laptop, yeah that makes sense.

Mr Mkhize walks in grinning from ear to ear tears of

joy running down his cheeks.

“Mrs Mkhize? Thank you so much my dear wife this is the best gift ever.” He says taking the baby and admiring him. Zinhle watches in silence as tears take over again. She will never be there to see the bond between the father and son but if that's the sacrifice she has to take, so be it.

“His name is Olweth'uthando.” Mkhize smiles looking at Zinhle and they emotionally hug celebrating their son....

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ONE MONTH LATER.....

THE BRIDE.

[Apologies for being a little late translating Mntimande's part is a serious task.]

Insert 68.

ONE MONTH LATER.....

Zinhle's POV.

I don't know who has all the powers in this jail because I'm receiving the first class treatment ever since I got here. I was given this secure room with a good bed and a cabinet, my linen gets changed every three days and I get to eat good and nicely prepared food. I have not been outside, I haven't even met the other inmates the constant faces I see daily are the nurse, the senior guard and the other female guard who usually brings food and toiletry for me. I'm allowed visitors anytime of the day and at some point they even sneaked Owami in here to spend a day with his little brother.

I still have my baby in here and when I asked the senior guard when will they send him away he said whenever I feel ready to let go. If I could, I would let him stay but I don't want my son to grow up in jail. At least I have been breastfeeding him and now he can drink milk. I have to be brave and let him go or else coming here will be the same as running away from my sins. I'm not really paying for my sins here it feels like I own this shitty place and that's not how things are supposed to be. I have to feel the pain I caused those people. My husband will be coming to get Olwethu today. It wasn't easy to convince him to get a nanny but he later agreed and tasked Nothabo to find a suitable one. They are probably conducting interviews as we speak and I know my boy will be in good hands. I trust my soon to be ex husband to keep them safe until I die or get out. To have peace in this hell I have to let Mkhize free, I love him but I can't bare to see the pain in his eyes everyday. I have to let him go so he can find someone to spend the rest of his days with. Twenty five years is not a joke and I wouldn't want to torture him that much. I love my husband enough to let him go and be with

someone else who will help him raise our children to be responsible men.

I look at the glowing ring for a minute, my mind is racing as I stare at it. Do I really need it? Maybe years later not now.

“ZakwaNgwenya?” I quickly hide the ring and innocently look at the female guard. “You have a visitor and a letter.”

“Thank you.” I take the letter and put it under the pillow before my husband walks in. He looks good in his black suit, one of his favorites and he smells good too. I don't know what happens as I find myself in his arms with tears running down my cheeks.

“What happened babe?”

“Nothing. I'm just happy to see you.”

“But I was here yesterday? Forget it, how is my boy?”

“Very strong and health and he's been behaving. I'm

sure he won't give you problems at night.”

“About that babe can't you change your mind? Our children need the both of us--”

“No you have to take them. I can not be selfish and think about my children only. Innocent people died because of me and I have to pay for my sins please don't make this harder for me.”

“Okay.” He sighs.

“My lawyer will contact you soon--”

“If you are planning to divorce me forget it Zinhle because I'm not going to sign those papers and you don't want me showing off my powers. You may be dangerous but you don't mess with Mkhize's feelings not in this lifetime honey. You are mine until death do us part. Save your lawyers some time and stress because if you dare send those papers to me then all hell will break loose. You are mine Zinhle!” I flinch. I have never seen him like this. “Say it! You are mine!”

“Yes I'm yours.”

“Good girl. Come here?” He envelopes me in his arms. “I love you Zinhle don't test my patience, okay?” I nod. “Good girl.” We continue chatting until it's time for him to leave with the baby. It's hard letting my child go but it's for best.

“I love you Olwethu.” I tearfully kiss him on the forehead.

“I will make sure he doesn't forget you. I will remind them everyday how much you love them. We love you.” He French kisses me and leaves as I burst into tears....

Nomzamo's POV.

I went to town alone today to do a little shopping and print my my documents. I want to start looking for a job before we empty Mntimande's pockets. He's been coming over but only maybe once or twice a week. When I asked why his visits were

scarce he said he's having tough time dealing with Zinhle being behind bars. I understand him as I'm also missing Zinhle a lot. I went to see her a couple of times with her baby and they looked really happy. Today in town I saw Mntimande with that bitch Sukoluhle chatting and laughing their lungs out. I tried calling him but his phone was off! How could he do this to me? How can he associate himself with the person I hate the most?

“Sister where are you going?” Asks the driver. Shit! I almost passed my stop.

“Thanks bro my mind is somewhere else.”

“I can tell. Please beware of the speeding cars.” He says as he watches me crossing the road with plastic bags. My house is on the other side of the road and a 2 minute walk from the main road.

To my surprise Mntimande is here playing with Zaine outside. Did I see a wrong person in town or his guilty sent him straight to my house. Bloody traitor! My anger rises from deep within and I pace

up to him and slap him hard making Zaine scream in fear. Mntimande blankly looks at me.

“Who the hell do you think you are? I saw you in town with that witch Sukoluhle and now you are here innocently playing with my son! What's your plan with your girlfriend--”

“Angazi ukhuluma ngani Zamo-- (I don't know what you are talking about Zamo--)”

“I'm not stupid! I saw you feeding her chocolate cupcakes and you were laughing out loud like idiots! What did she send you to do to my son? To kill him? What does she want from me she took Meli and now you too! You are all the same! You use women and spit on them like--”

“Ngikukhonzile Zamo kodwa lokho akush' ukuthi uzonginyela. Ukuthi ngigida nobani kuphi akusidoko eligayelwe wena lelo ngathi suyazikhohlwa ntombazana ubheke uz' ungayinyatheli inyoka emsileni ngoba uzolimala. Ngiyabonga ukuthi ucabanga ukuthi ngingazobulala ingane yakho emva kwayonke lento esengiyenzele yona? (I really

like you Zamo but that doesn't mean you have to
shit on me. Who I go out with and where is none of
your business. Be careful not to piss me off else
you will get hurt. I'm sad you think I will want to kill
your son after everything I've done for him? ” He
sadly looks at me getting in his car and drives off.

“And then?” Questions Ethan.

“I saw him in town with that bitch playing happy
couples but he just denied it.”

“Mntimande came here a few minutes after you left
the house I think you just accused him of
something he didn't do.”

“What? What have I done Ethan?”

Mntimande's POV.

The nerve of that woman! I haven't even met this
Sukoluhle but I'm being accused of the things I
don't even know! Why do people always hurt people

who care about them! Zibusiso will surely land in me jail one day. Why did we have to be like twins when I'm his older brother? My phone keeps ringing and my father really doesn't get it, I don't want to talk to him right now because I will end up telling him off. I'm really not in the mood. I have to see this Sukoluhle woman I can't be slapped for nothing.

“Boss?” My company manager answers her phone.

“Cancel my meetings something just came up. Schedule them for next week or video conference. I'm really not in the mood to be in the office.”

“But--”

“I don't pay you to question or analyze my orders. Just do as you are told for once!” I snap disconnecting the phone. Banjani kanti vele abesifazane? (What kind of creatures women are?)

I park in front of her beautiful house and I must comment her she really has classy. If you see a woman owning one of these houses then she's no ordinary woman. No wonder people are afraid of her.

I ring the intercom which is answered by Charity and she lets me in. I know Charity because she always bring the children to me whenever I ask. After taking a deep breath I make my way to the main entrance and Charity opens the door for me.

“Nice interior decor. Who did it?”

“I'm not sure. What do we owe this surprise to?” See? Being around people who speak English 24/7 is messing up my vocabulary. Now my children even chose to go to a school where everything including jokes is done the English way.

“Ngicel' ukubona uSuku ngiyazi ukhona. (May I please see Suku I know she's around.) ” I called her and office before coming here.

“She's outside with Lee.”

“Ngiyabonga. (Thank you.)” I don't need directions because I know every corner of this house. Prudy and Amahle took me on a virtual tour the other day.

“Sanibona.(Greetings)” Both the ladies turn their heads and the other lady charges to me and slaps me hard. “J ehova ongcwele yini lengaka engiyonile-

-- (Lord! What sin did I commit--)"

"Who do you think you are to sleep with me the whole week until I couldn't walk anymore just so you can ignore my calls afterwards? Huh?" She's about to punch me but I grab her and twist her arm.

"Angibathinti abesifazane abefana nawe sisi ungazongidakelwa, siyezwana? Angikwazi nokwazi-
- (I don't touch women like you don't insult me. I don't even know you--)"

"I'm going to report you for rape--"

"Lee? Lerato! Stop! This is not Zibusiso but his older brother--"

"No! Someone saw you with him in town you have been hiding him! Are you fucking the man who destroyed my pussy? Huh?" Ijo! When I thought Nomzamo was the crazy one now we have another mental case here. Now she's busy poking Sukoluhle.

"Lee stop! Yes I was with him but this is not the man you are looking for! Just calm down--" The crazy girl slaps Sukoluhle hard she staggers back and falls into the pool screaming her lungs out.

“My mom can't swim!” Prudy's voice echoes and I jump into the pool as Sukoluhle gasps trying to hold on to her dear life. I swim to the the other side with her and take her out as she vomits the water she swallowed.

“You let me sleep with him when you knew you two loved each other!” The girl is now pacing up and down. “I'm going to kill the both of you no one messes with Lerato's feelings. I love this man damn it! Suku I love you friend but not more than his dick-”

“Awuqoqeke sisi kunengane lana mfaz' onjani oziphathisa okwesigilamkhuba? Angazi ukuthi ukhuluma ngani njalo lomngane wakho kanacala bengize ukuzombona okwakuqala empilweni yami. Ngicela wehlise umoya umfanami ngizomdinga ma kuyikuthi le oyikhulumayo iliqinis o- (Can you please behave yourself what kind of a woman behaves like this? I don't know what you are talking about and your friend is innocent I haven't seen her before. Please calm down and if you are telling the truth I will find my brother and bring him--)”

“What the fuck?” Zibusiso runs and picks Sukoluhle up and runs back in to the house. After a few minutes he comes back to the pacing Lerato and smacks her hard on the face. “Don't mess with what's dear to me else I will make you disappear, do you hear me?” I'm not getting involved in this fight. Fuck buddies are not easy to deal with because they always fight.

“I'm going to report the two of you for sexual assault!”

“Go ahead sweetheart remember we had a signed agreement. In fact go now and let those officers fuck you too because you are nothing but just a loose pant! Hurt Suku again and I will kill your family alphabetically starting by your father who's a minister in your homeland Botswana--” Lerato's eyes pop out in horror and just like that my brother walks away and I take Amahle and Prudy with me to my house...

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 69.

UNEDITED.

Sukoluhle's POV.

Zibusiso always does this! I love and care deeply about him but he doesn't care about my social circle to him friends are replaceable and he always messes up my friendships. At least back in college those girls did not catch feelings unlike my friend Lerato. I don't even know what their agreement was but I'm paying for being the mutual friend.

“Sis are you okay?” Charity asks as I realize that I have tears streaming freely down my cheeks. She

hugs me tight and strokes my back. "It's not your fault Sis. Lee fell for him and even I got charmed by his looks and physique any girl can go crazy for him stop blaming yourself. Lee had a lot to drink I'm sure she will apologize tomorrow morning you know what she's like when she drinks a couple of glasses. Please stop crying." She comforts me. Charity has and will always be a blessing in my life.

"Thank you." I faintly smile. "Where are the kids and Zi?"

"Mntimande took the children with to his house and Zibusiso is smoking outside. He seems really pissed off."

"Okay."

"Are you not angry Mntimande took the kids without your permission? "

"I don't want to fight anymore today. If he really is a noble man like he thinks himself to be then he knows what to do. I'm tired of fighting old enough people who have brains to think." I'm honestly tired from all of this. First it was Melisizwe and

Nomzamo, now I have to deal with Lerato and Zibusiso too!

“You will be fine Sis. Let me go and bring your soup.” She exits the room. I'm still feeling cold but at least today I didn't had the panic attack. I'm not a fan of water and I can't swim to save my life.

Zibusiso walks in looking sad and sits next to me. He puts his hand around me and my head on his chest but says nothing. Only his heartbeats are audible and he's breathing heavily he's really angry. I feel his tears falling on my forehead I try to break free from his embrace but he holds me tight.

“When I saw you falling into the pool I froze. I remembered the day those guys at the party threw you in the pool and you had a panic attack whi CH landed you in hospital. After that you were even scared of using the bathtub and you had nightmares. I can't bare to see you in pain and I can not survive if anything happens to you. I'm sorry I chose the wrong friend of yours this time. We talked and we agreed on the terms and conditions which makes me wonder why she's going gaga all of a

sudden. Forgive me cupcake.” He sighs.

“Zi you are not a bad guy just that when it comes to romantic relationships you suck! Stop breaking other people's hearts it's not fair on them. She told me how you overused her although I didn't let her go into detail because I wouldn't want to know the filthy details about my brother. You should be considerate at least check on them afterwards.”

“I'm not married because I'm not ready to have some random girl dictating my life. I hurt commitment, I just want to have fun with consenting adults.”

“Lee seems to have fallen for you--”

“Nah Cupcake. Your friend doesn't love me maybe the sex yes. If she had feelings for me she should have rejected the 20K I transferred to her bank account--” I'm shocked.

“You paid her?”

“That was the deal. When I give a woman money after sex it means I'm breaking any connection we must have had during sex... Too much information

my little Cupcake I have to explain this to your crazy friend not you. I will be back in a few hours I have to sort out something.”

“Don't beat my friend. If she disappears I will personally hand you over to the police.”

“I'm the law sweetheart but I won't make her disappear. I'm going to talk to her nicely.” He kisses my forehead and leaves taking my car keys with.

“I'm taking your car your car and please eat something. I love you.” He blows me a kiss and exits. I'm about to call Princess and let her know what happened earlier but my phone rings, an unsaved number is calling.

“Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa, hello?” I can hear someone breathing on the other side but the person is not saying anything. “Hello?”

“Uhhh...uxolo mama kaAmahle bengis abheke okunye lapha. NguMntimande okhulumayo. (Uhm... I'm sorry I was doing something. It's Mntimande.)” Ooh so he decided to call.

“Okay?” There's an awkward silence.

“Bengingaqondile ukudelela ngokutheleka emzini wakho nginganxuswanga bengilesifiso sokukubona ngamehlo ngibekwazi lokuxolisa ngokunts hontsha ingane zakho. Angimazi lowa ntombazane obunaye angiyona indoda enjalo. Ngixolise ngakho konke okwenzekile. Uxolo ntombi yakwaMbathangwe. (I meant no disrespect by coming to your house uninvited I just wanted to see you and apologize for stealing your children. I don't know the lady you were with i'm not that kind of a man. I'm sorry for everything that happened.)” I find myself blushing. No one has ever called me with my clan names I just know them through research.

“No problem. About my friend you just got blamed for something you don't know she was looking for ZB. My children like you so I decided to let you guys be as long as you don't hurt my children I have no problem with you taking them. Just stop making my children lie to me.”

“Ngeke kuphinde kwenzekile. Ngingajabula kakhulu um' ungavuma baqede impelaviki belana. Ngiyancenga ngokukhulu ukuzithoba. (I won't let

that happen again. May you please allow them to spend the weekend over here? I'm humbly begging you.) ” He says leaving me with no choice but to agree.

“Okay. Charity will bring their clothes--”

“Ungazikhathazi ngakho lokho. Ngiyazi futhi nange allergy kaPrudy ngizobanakekela ngiyakuthembisa. (Dont worry about that. I also know about Prudy's allergy and I will take proper care of them, that's a promise.)”

“Okay then.”

“Usale kahle. (Thanks. Bye.)” He drops the call.

Mr Ndabezinhle Mkhize's POV.

I didn't mean to scare my wife but what she said got me worked up. Zinhle can not divorce me after everything we have been through together. Just like how we took our vows in front of God and all the

people present only death will do us part. Not even the twenty five years jail sentence will break our union.

“Grandpa!” Nothabo comes in carrying Olwethu. “Ncoow he's such a cute baby.” She says adoring him.

“You were shouting my name but now you are focusing on Olwethu? Are you for real?”

“Eish about that I wanted you to come down stairs and meet the nanny and the extra maid who will be washing Olwethu's clothes only. Many candidates came and I hope you won't be disappointed I really tried my best.” Children really grow up fast. My granddaughter can now interview and hire people.

“Okay let's go then.”

“Let me put my dear uncle down on his crib mom said it's not alright for him to be out there meeting different people. How is grandma?”

“She is trying to be strong I pray she changes her mind sooner. ”

“Me too.” We leave my room and go downstairs where two women are sitting on the couch fidgeting with their nails. There one with long hair on has an eagle's eye although she's pretending not to be looking around then the one light in complexion and has short hair looks decent. “Uhm...Ladies meet my super sweet grandpa Mr Mkhize and the man of this house. His word is final and no one questions him except grandma of course.” I smile, the ladies chuckle. “Grandpa this is Sanelisiwe she is a qualified nanny with three years experience and great references. She will be the one spending time with Olwethu 24/7.” Says Nothabo referring to the lady with short hair. “This is Gloria, she has a certificate in housekeeping and two years experience. She will be responsible of washing and organizing Olwethu's room.” Nothabo adds.

“I'm glad to meet you ladies.”

“As I said before ladies you only do the duties assigned to you nothing else. If you feel the need to help other maids you can do so on your free will but we will not pay you extra. Any questions?”

“Will we be living in the main house? Also, are there rooms we are not allowed to enter?” Questions Gloria.

“Yes there are rooms you are not allowed to enter starting by grandpa's room. That one is highly prohibited. You shouldn't enter any of the bedrooms we usually do our own cleaning in that department. As for your rooms, Sane you will be using a spare bedroom inside the main house in case something happens and we need your expertise at night. You won't be sleeping with the baby since grandpa prefers to spend the night with his children. Gloria you will be shown your room outside where all other workers stay. Anything else?” They shake their heads. “Fine then let me show you your rooms. They all stand and leave as I also make my way back to my room I need to make a few calls.

Zinhle's POV.

I asked the senior guard for another favor and he quickly gave in. I needed a hair cut and he brought in a guy who gave me the best haircut. I'm still sticking to my legends' haircut, Zozibini Tunzi's winner haircut. I just got moved from the luxurious room to the cells and yeah, the shit begins now. I miss my son but a wise woman told me if I become sad because of it he will fall sick so I'm going to be strong for my boys. The nurse gave me pills to help with my breasts and I couldn't thank her enough.

“Welcome to the real world.” Says the female guard who used to bring me food.

“Thanks hey. Where are others?”

“At the dining hall you can join them if you want to.”

“I'm not really hungry but a hello to my inmates will do.” She nods and leaves me alone. I remember the letter I received earlier and tear it open.

****I will be going undercover meet in Italy in two years time. I know your madness will be over by then. I love you and take care.***

I sigh and put the letter back in the envelope and

make my way out. As soon as I enter the hall everyone goes silent, some even have their mouths open. I scan all of them and take a seat on the bench at the far end.

“Ubuyil' usathane! (Satan is here!)” Screams a lady who has tattoos all over her body. “Awuzokuthi ola boss! (Come and say hello).” I just sit there in silence. There are three ladies feeding the tattooed lady, another lady is massaging her shoulders while the other rubs her feet. Realizing that I'm minding my business she springs up pushing the ladies aside. “Hayibo wenja ngikhuluma lawe uyathula uzenz' ubani wena? Yazizukhuluma lobani? Lodevuli ngokwakhe! Shona phansi ngobuso uzincengele. (I'm talking to you but you are ignoring me who do you think you are? Do you know who I am? I'm the devil herself. Get down and beg!)” How am I supposed to mind my business when people poke their noses in my business?

“I don't want trouble please--” Everyone bursts in laughter.

“Ukhuluma esikaQueen u girl! (She speaks

English!)” They laugh so loud I'm getting irritated. I leap to my feet and push the girl aside making my way out of the dining hall. The woman pulls me back and slaps me hard.....

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Darlings I'm concluding my other book on another platform please allow me to end it with a bang. And I also have to read for my exams. I will be back with Zinhle and her jailmates on Monday early in the morning. Thank you for understanding.

Have a great weekend and I love you all

THE BRIDE.

Insert 70.

Zinhle's POV.

“Ukhuluma esikaQueen u girl! (She speaks English!)” They laugh so loud I'm getting irritated. I leap to my feet and push the girl aside making my way out of the dining hall. The woman pulls me back and slaps me hard. I hold my cheek and smile looking at her and fold my hands in prayer.

“Dear God please lead me not into temptation I have serious things to worry about.” I look at her and exit leaving everyone dumfounded. A few minutes later I hear them murmuring and laughing. I really don't want trouble and I'm trying so very hard not to be a nightmare in these inmates' lives. I just want to refocus, introspect and reunite with my dreams. I want to be able to look myself in the mirror and see a bright future in my eyes. I spoke to Advocate Amanda Dlamini she told me if I behave myself for the first two years she might reconsider and fight for me. I know I messed up many people's lives but we all deserve second chances, right?

If I manage to get out of here I want to do all the things I couldn't do because I had to mature at a very young age in order to defend and protect myself. A few weeks in that room alone with my thoughts made me realize that I bypassed the teenage stage which messed up my already fucked up mind even more. I can not make a trip back to those years but I will surely live my life the way I always wanted to. I don't know how to feel about my husband threatening me but I will worry about that later. For now, Zinhle is on a mission and a victim card will surely add points to my name and I will get out. My children need me, it was a hard decision to throw myself under the bus but it is all for the good reasons. I don't want to keep running anymore.

“Hey.” An older lady greets me and passes me the joint.

“Nah I'm good.” She laughs.

“Clearly you are new here. No one ever says no to a joint it's what keeps us going in here. This place is rough and it sucks one's life away with every breath

you take. Why are you even here? So young and beautiful yet you are behind bars?” She says now looking straight into my eyes. There's pain, sadness and all the negative emotions written all over her face and her eyes are full of hate.

“I murdered a couple of people--” She laughs out loud this time drawing other inmates' attention.

“You joking, right? How can a tiny innocent thing like you murder someone? You were framed kid, killing someone is not as easy as sucking a dick so please stop joking with such.” I faintly smile. Clearly these people do not watch news.

“Why are you here?” I decided to change the subject.

“I have been here before you were born kid. I killed my husband, mom and sister--” My eyes widen in horror. I'm not afraid of killing but I would never kill my blood or that woman who carried me in her womb for nine months. I hate her more than the word itself but I would never kill her.

“W-why did you kill your own s sister?” I really don't understand why someone would kill their own sister.

“Have you ever been fucked so good that nothing matters except that dick?” She speaks in riddles.

“Passion killing?” I'm way smarter than riddles.

“Exactly! You are smart kid. I caught my sister and husband on our matrimonial bed while mom was sitting in living room pretending to not know what was going on in my room. I was shattered until my sister confessed that mom actually encouraged her to seduce my husband. I slit my mother's throat and sent her head to her family with a note, then I tortured my husband and sister for two weeks. Everyday I would cut something off their bodies until there was nothing left. I took the pieces to the police station and handed myself in.” Holy cow! That's some serious shit.

“Wow! Don't you feel any remorse?”

“No not even a tiny bit of it. Let me not corrupt your head kid you still have a lot more to do out there not here. Stay the fuck away from me and that tattooed girl if you still value your life. I'm bad news and that motherfucker right there feeds on blood. She can

slit your throat and drink your blood if you cross her. I would advise you to make use of the library and the play grounds if you want to survive in here. I don't know why but I like you that's why I'm warning you.” Just like that she stands up and leaves.

Mntimande's POV.

I have been sitting here video shooting the children as they compete for a slice of pizza. They are playing a game called “Name the face” they have like a million pictures of celebrities, heroes (dead and alive), soccer players, etc. I'm surprised they know almost all of these faces. If you get the name right you get a slice of pizza, if you get it wrong you sip Oros drink. For your information they all hate Oros like nobody's business. I find my mind drifting back to my own childhood. Being the first born I never got enough time to play because my parents always told me I had to be responsible and lead by

example. It was the toughest thing to always live by the book just so my siblings won't copy my behavior..... My thoughts are disturbed by a loud knock. It must be Zibusiso.

“Ngena! (Come in).” I can hear the clicking of the heels on the floor and I instantly know who it is. I have to think fast before she sees the children or the other way around. Prudy is still scared of Nomzamo. “Guys I will be back--” I turn to leave but Nomzamo is already standing in the living room looking at the children who are concentrating on their game. I drag her outside without saying a word and close the door. “Uzofunani lana Nomzamo? (Why are you here?)”

“I came to apologize but I see I almost wasted my apology. How could you do this to me Mntimande? I trusted you and you went behind my back to sleep with the woman who broke me? Are you also heartless just like them? Please tell me there's nothing going on between you and Sukoluhle?” Now she's crying. I sigh and pull her in for a hug until she calms down.

“Hlala phansi. (Sit down)” She does as told and I sit next to her. “I will say this using the language you will understand better. Please don't misinterpret me because this is my honest truth. I'm not sleeping with Sukoluhle I only saw her face to face yesterday after you slapped me. I have a brother who looks like my twin I know you don't believe me but I promise to clear that up soon. He's Sukoluhle's best friend and I'm guessing you saw him in town. I'm not a man who hides his feelings Zamo when I finally decide to have a woman by my side I will definitely get one for now I'm good and I won't sleep around I'm not that kind of a man--”

“Are you saying I should stop pestering you and wait?”

“No that's not what I'm saying. In you I see a sister, I see Zinhle and I doubt I will ever see you like a woman I can undress. I'm not saying you are not woman enough it's my honest feeling. I can never do that to you and I'm not going to lie. I'm helping you not because I want to sleep with you but because I want the best for you as any brother

would do for his little sister. I'm sorry if you misread my actions I'm really sorry." She blankly looks at me with tears running down her cheeks.

"You-you also think she's better than me--" Her voice trails as she cries breaking my heart. If I had Zibusiso's heart I would give in to her advances but that will only hurt her more. I don't love Zinhle, nothing is wrong with her it's just that I don't see her like that. She deserves true love not fantasy.

"I'm sorry Zamo you will find true love one day. Don't focus on finding a man but focus on reconnecting with the inner you, the stronger you and work on your self esteem. You shouldn't be comparing yourself to anyone, you are you and you are enough. Stop hurting, heal, love yourself, be positive and you will attract only good things. I'm here for you as a brother you can always turn to and I'm willing to help you back to your feet." She faintly smiles.

"You not dating her, right?"

"No I'm not. Her children are my friends ever

since...”

“You saved them from me.” She sadly looks down.

“It's okay you were sick. Stop with the self pity and start healing. Zaine needs a strong mother to raise him and eventually a step father will come but I would like you to know this. If a man doesn't come don't stop living your life because of that. Your happiness lies in you not in a man. A man is just a bonus.”

“Thank you for being honest with me. I'm sorry I misinterpreted your kindness. You are a good man Mntimande and whoever the luck lady will be she will be really blessed.” She hugs me.

NARRATED.

Zibusiso parks Sukoluhle's car in front of Lerato's house. He unlocks the door and walks in. Lerato is drowning her sorrows in a glass of dry white wine

and she jumps from the couch spilling the drink at the sight of Zibusiso standing in front of her.

“H-how did you get in?”

“I’m an ex convict, an award winning IT specialist and a hacker. Anymore clarifications?”

“Please leave before I call the police--”

“Next time if you want to frighten me please try something else. I’m the law darling, I’m not scared of the police, the army, the CIOs, FBI, you name it I just follow orders from two people only. My best friend and my brother. Use those two names next time. You said you love my dick more than your friend so I’m here to let you prove your words--”

“Please leave me alone! You are sleeping with my friend! I hurt her today because of you! I hate you! I hate you--” Zibusiso grabs her by the neck and his soft lips crashes with hers as she moans and grumbles at the same time. He pushes her back and they fall on the couch as his hand moves to her thighs then to her cookie.

“Fuck!” He mutters as his fingers touch her soft

shaved skin. He tears her short nightdress off and
.... #REMOVED.

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As per the readers requests now all the #REMOVED
inserts will be posted later around 8PM or 5AM. At
this hour most of us are at work and we can not
sneak in to the toilets for a quickie..... #REMOVED

5 more chapters of *LOVE, GREED AND DESIRE*
have been uploaded. I managed to upload one
insert on Wattpad for Precious Rosé then my
network had to misbehave. I will upload more on
Wattpad later.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 71.

UNEDITED.

Lerato's POV.

My head is throbbing and my body feels like I was hit by a truck. My cookie is hot and burning you would swear I have some sort of infection. Zibusiso had his way with my body the whole night, he f***ed every hole he could find on my body. My throat too is scratchy and my jaws are painful for taking his length in my mouth let's not talk about my swollen lips. He enjoy himself, no we both enjoyed until around 4 in the morning when he made sure I take a morning pill and left with an instruction that he will come later to give me another pill. He said he's not ready for kids and if I force myself to vomit the pill then he won't be held responsible for the baby I will

give birth to.

I try to open my heavy eyes but the light coming in from the window has me covering my face with a bedsheet. I turn away from the window, I feel fluids running down my thigh and I try to sit up but my back feels like it's broken into three separate parts.

“Fuck you Zibus is o!” I frustratedly cuss trying to reach for my phone. Fuck! It's 11 o'clock and my shift started two hours ago! God! What do I do now? I quickly call my colleague to stand in for me and lie that something urgent came up. Thank goodness he's already done that although he says I owe him. I will worry about his payment later.

“Crazy Lee?” Princess answers the phone.

“Please come to my house now I can't even get out of bed--”

“What are you talking about? Where is Suk--”

“Please don't mention this to her. Just get yourself here before I die.” I drop the call before she can

protest. I know she is at work but she's the boss and can leave anytime.

“What the fuck happened to you?” Princess asks as soon as she enters my bedroom. “What the hell? Your room smells like sex!” She opens the curtains and windows widely letting fresh air in. “I’m asking you something?”

“That bastard fucked me up I’m sure this time my pussy is really shredded. I can’t even sit up.” She laughs at me.

“Why do you love his dick then if you can’t take it like a big girl?”

“Let me answer that later please help me out of this stinking bed. I need a long warm bath then we will talk.” She shakes her head looking at me and goes into the bathroom where she prepares a bath for me. We are a crazy trio but we will always have each other’s backs. She helps me down the bed and I swear I feel like screaming. Walking is proving to be a difficult task with my pussy burning like never

before.

“Did he rape you?”

“Not really. He fucked me the whole night and left in the morning I guess she was punishing me for pushing Suku into the pool--”

“What do you mean?”

“I had a few glasses and I lost it when I mistook Zibusiso's brother for Zibusiso. I was craving the guy but I don't think I will ever crave for sex. I'm done with sex I swear.”

“I hope you mean that because the next guy you will sleep with will definitely kill you.” She says helping me into the tub. I slowly sit down and jump involuntarily as the warm water touch my sensitive burning part. I take a small mirror and look myself down there. He really fucked me up, my cookie is swollen.

When I come out of the bath feeling a bit better with a towel wrapped around me I find my bed done and

everything from the mattress and base covers have been changed. My dear friend just cleaned my mess. She comes in wearing latex gloves and a refuse bag.

“You didn't have to.”

“You are welcome.” We both laugh. A message comes through my phone and I quickly check it. It's a bank notification informing me that 50K has been deposited into my account. The phone slips and falls on the bed as I cover my mouth in shock.

“What is it?” Princess checks my phone and she too shocked. “Motherfucker got some real money. Wait? What does he do for a living?”

“From my research he is bad news don't even think of getting your claws into his personal life he is said to make people disappear or kill you live on the national TV news channel.” What the fuck is Zibusiso playing at? I'm about to call him when a message comes from him.

*****That money puts the end to whatever we must have shared. I wasn't joking yesterday, I don't do

relationships and I hope you won't ever misbehave. Take the morning pill or keep the baby at your own risk. Bye Lerato. ****

Wow! Just like that I have to forget about everything he did to me. Anyway, see you never Zibusiso.

Sanelisiwe's POV.

Olwethu is really a nice cute boy. He only cries when he is hungry or need a diaper change. I have noticed that he doesn't want to stay with a damp diaper. The whole Mkhize family are really nice people. Since I stay inside the house they invited me to always join them in the dining room for food. At first it felt awkward to sit with my employers on the same table but I guess I will get used to it. Nothabo loves the children like they are her own. You would never guess her age when you see her taking care of the children and what I love about her is that she loves all of them and she doesn't have a

favorite. Gugu too loves them and sometimes offers to help me prepare Olwethu's milk. Mr Mkhize spends most of his time with his children which makes me wonder why they even employed me when they can do it themselves. I feel like I'm not working and I don't deserve their huge amount as salary.

“Hey Sane. I brought you snacks.” Says Gugu looking good in her white uniform and makeup on.

“Thank you.”

“I'm going to work and I need a favor. Please attend to the twins when they come back from school their helper asked to go out for a few hours. Their food, clothes, toys and everything they might need is ready and they know where to get them. Please.”

“You don't have to beg me ma'am I will look after them.”

“Thank you. You are the best!” Her phone rings. “I have to go see you later.” She walks away answering her phone. Gloria comes and sits opposite me and helps herself with the snacks.

“Whatever you gave to these people I will make sure they vomit it because I didn't come here to be a maid but to win the old man's hearts. Enjoy this while it lasts!” She clicks her tongue leaving me shocked.

Zinhle's POV.

Today my heart is feeling heavy and my spirit is low. I don't know what is wrong because I called all the people I care about and they are fine. I drag myself to the dining hall for lunch although I'm not hungry. I'm still trying to think of what may be the problem when I'm attacked from behind and lose my balance almost falling face first on the floor but I land on my hands instead. I slowly scan around me and see seven pair of shoes and this means I'm surrounded. I'm about to take a first step when someone kicks my ribs repeatedly until I give in and lie down on the floor.

“Teach the bitch some manners!” Someone yells and I receive their merciless kicks. I feel a sharp pain on my abdomen. I try to protect the painful part but someone stomps on my arm and I feel it crashing and going numb.

“Who you think you are! Huh? Sleeping and eating like a King--” The person stomps on my back. I feel air leaving my lungs, I can't breathe and I lie there feeling my soul and my body separating blood oozing from my nose, mouth and ears. I'm trying to hold on to my dear life when I feel a stab on my back, I cough blood and everything goes dark...

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 72.

Sukoluhle's POV.

Zibusiso left and the goodbyes were sad. It felt like I would never see him again he gave me another locket to always hold on to whenever I miss him. I don't know if he will outsmart the Italian Mafias but I pray he does. My mother drove all the way from Matopo just to see him off. To my mother Zibusiso is a son she always wished my brother was. She never stopped supporting him even when he did wrong things. After he left my mother told me something that will haunt me forever if he doesn't return. Zibusiso stole the diamonds which is why the Zimbabwe Defence Force was after him when he staged the hostage situation. With the money he made from the diamonds he cleared my debt at Lupane State University although I was made to believe that an anonymous donor paid for it.

He sponsored my first anthology publication under

the Publishing House name and he bought my first ever book for a movie that went on to be a hit. The rest of the money he gave it to my mother and told her to keep it safe just in case he fails to take care of her in the future. I was shocked to learn there is a fortune hidden in one of the walls back home. In all of this I realized I'm the reason he ran away and started doing bad things in South Africa. He did everything for me, for my happiness but I couldn't see it. I was too blind to see the sacrifices he did for me. I should have known that he did all he could to see me smiling. I should have at least wondered why I never really lacked anything at college and why all of my sponsors chose to remain anonymous.

I will pray everyday every hour for him to return. I have a lot of surprises in store for him and dear God please answer my prayers and protect him.

“Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa's office?”

“Hi. I'm Cain Martins I have been trying to get hold

of you for the past two years--” That's strange! “Well thank you for taking my call today. I run a successful company called Martins Publications here in the United States and I would be honored to interview you. You are one of the successful women in Africa who defied the odds and emerged on top.”

“Well I'm flattered Mr Martins. With regards to the interview you can talk to my team on the Communication and Advertising department. I don't understand why it took you two years to contact me though?”

“You were always said to be busy or out on set. I'm glad I never lost hope and kept trying.”

“Okay I get it now. Our website have the contact details of the right people to talk to about the interview. All the best.”

“Thank you ma'am. Have a wonderful day.”

“You too.” Phew! An interview with a United States of America based publication house? I dial the IT and Investigation department. In all my companies

we do a thorough background check before accepting any proposal even a small interview with an ordinary reporter. People tend to change stories just to get more views and advance their careers. In my world loyalty, trust, honest and integrity are the most important things.

“Good morning ma'am. To what do we owe this surprise call today?” Lizzy, the department manager jokes.

“Morning to you too Lizzy. I need a thorough background check done on Cain Martins of the Martins Publications. Email the information to the S-Kay Books and Film Communication and Advertising department and another copy to me.”

“Consider it done ma'am.”

“Thank you Lizzy.” She drops the call. I don't know how many times I have to tell her to call me by my name not "ma'am". Sigh.

Lerato walks in carrying a box of muffins and a plastic bag. Ever since that incident in the pool she

has been avoiding me and my calls. I pretend not to care about her presence as I watch her offload all my favorite treats.

“Friend stop pretending you are the worst actor ever.” I fail to hold my laughter in and bursts in laughter leaping to my feet and hug her.

“It took you forever to come and apologize?”

“We don't apologize to our best friends now let's forget about that dickhead brother-friend of yours and move on with our lives, okay? ”

“Someone's heart was broken?”

“Sorry to disappoint, my heart is perfectly fine my pussy was shredded instead!” I almost choke on the muffin and she laughs. “Girl I know you don't want to hear this but your brother-friend is something else. I couldn't get out of bed--”

“Save the details please that's my brother we are talking about.” I really don't want to hear the secret stuff about Zibus so it doesn't feel right.

“Okay let me shut my mouth. So how have you been?”

Any aspiring boyfriend, hit and pass or any action?" Her eyes are begging like "Tswa letsone mogirl (Spill the beans girl)" only if she knew that there's no one she would stop bothering. "Don't tell me there's nothing interesting in your life?" I shrug. "I'm taking you to the club this Friday girl you have to get laid before you develop a secondary hymen down there!" She says stuffing a muffin in her mouth. We continue chatting while I eat and do my work.

Nomzamo's POV.

After that talk with Mntimande I took time to introspect and look deep inside me and I realized Melisizwe turned me into a bitter person with his lies. He sold me dreams that were all lies. I hated people based on what he told me and made me believe. I don't know if Sukoluhle will ever forgive me but one day I will swallow my pride and ask for

forgiveness. I know people keep saying I was sick but it's my fault I stopped taking medication just because I felt sane with Melisizwe around. I did so many terrible things that I regret and I'm ready to work on them. I went to see Zinhle and she too spoke some sense into my thick skull.

I have been cheerfully attending my therapy sessions and I always look forward to them. My psychiatrist together with Ethan have made me realize that my troubles, the voices I hear in my head sometimes all stem from the abuse I witnessed as a child. It was not really the abuse but being reminded with a slap everyday that women are nothing without men and marriage. I grew up thinking and believing that a man is the important piece of the puzzle of my life and that made me look and act desperate whenever a man came by. Now I know better and I believe I will be myself once again.

“Helllooo!” Ethan yells waving his hand on my face and bringing me back to earth.

“You were saying?” I sigh.

“No forget what I was saying. What is bothering you?” He sits next to me and snakes his arm around me.

“Nothing really I was thinking of how stupid I have been.”

“You are not stupid Sis. We all have a moment of weakness and in that moment we do crazy things. Please stop beating yourself about it and start thinking about the future. Zaine needs his strong mother back.” He smiles.

“You are the best brother in the whole world!” I hug him. “What were you saying?”

“Someone I know is looking for lawyer to defend his company. He's broke so he's offering 5% shares of his company to the lawyer who will help him.” He tells me more about this someone's company.

“Interesting case but what will I do with 5% shares of a bankrupt company?”

“The company is accused of food poisoning. Some

of their products are alleged to contain poison so retailers and wholesalers have stopped buying them and the investors pulled out. This is a big brand Sis and if you clear their name it will back on its feet in a few months then you both win. Please do consider it.”

“Okay since I'm dead broke myself maybe this is a start I need. Does this man know about my condition? ”

“Yes he does and he doesn't mind. I spoke to him on your behalf and told him I will try to set up a meeting.”

“How do you know him? He's way older than you?”

“He is my friend's dad.”

“Okay I will meet him then—” He screams jumping on me and we both fall on the carpet.

“Are you guys okay?” Asks Zaine's nanny. Yeah I'm dead broke but my son still has a nanny all thanks to Mntimande and his money.

“We are good this idiot made us fall.” She stifles a

laugh. Ethan always plays like a kid and it's not funny sometimes.

Nothabo's POV.

Sanelisiwe has been acting strange lately. I don't know if I'm looking too much into this I feel like something is wrong. Whenever grandpa asks about Okuhle's day she just give brief answers and leave in a hurry as if she is rushing somewhere. She looks unsettled and as her employer I'm concerned. Grandpa gave me this task because he believes in me and he taught me to always treat workers with respect and value them so they can give back through their work.

“Hi.” I greet her.

“Hi. I will give you time with Okuhle--” She says avoiding eye contact.

“No. I want to talk to you. Sit down.” She sits but

she is shaking already. “What did you do that makes you feel scared?”

“Nothing. I didn't do anything I swear on my mother's grave--”

“No need to swear. J ust tell me what's eating you.”

“I don't want enemies please. My whole family depends on me and I can't lose my job. Please understand this ma'am--” J ust then Gloria barges in and Sanelisiwe starts sweating as Gloria throws daggers at her.

“What are you doing here Gloria? I thought the rules were clear--”

“Uhm sorry ma'am I came to take Olwethu's dirty laundry.”

“Fine you can take it and go.”

“Can I speak with Sane in private for a sec please?”
She says.

“You must be kidding me! Privacy in my own house? What the fuck is wrong with you? Can't you see I'm busy with her at the moment? Is what you have to

say so important for you to even want to disturb an official meeting? ”

“I'm sorry ma'am.” She shamefully grabs an empty laundry basket and walks out.

“What the fuck is going on here?” I scream and Olwethu cries. I pick him up shushing him. “I'm sorry I didn't mean to shout or cuss. I'm sorry, okay?” He calms down and I turn to Sanelisiwe who is in tears already. Uncle Qhubekani walks in with his crutch. He did do everything Grandma suggested with the money and now he has a fake limb and arm and whatever they did with his lips. He looks good now.

“I heard you screaming is everything, okay?” He asks looking at Sanelisiwe. “Thabo how could you make your elders cry?” He quickly sits next to her and rubs her back.

“Sane are you gonna sit there and let him think I'm the reason you are crying or you going to tell us what is going on with you? It's Gloria, right?”

“Please I don't want to fight with anyone. I don't

know how to fight--” So I was right all this while. Gloria is threatening Sanelisiwe for whatever reason.

“Hey it's okay no one is going to fight you. We will protect you. Thabo you know how dad values his employees sort this out before he finds out and lose it.”

“Please don't fire her--”

“Worry about your job Sane let me worry about who gets fired and who doesn't, okay?” I hand her the baby and walk out.

Liqhawe's POV.

I don't know why dad won't agree to this dating thing. Loosing your dear wife hurts I know that but I'm sure mommy dearest is not happy seeing how lonely my father is. If he wasn't the principled man that I know too well I would believe him when he says he has someone whom he is spending time

with but I know better. My father is not the type to engage in no-strings attached relationships that's uncle Zibusiso's thing not him.

“Dad--”

“If it's about dating, blind dates or whatever that has to do with a woman please save it my baby I'm not interested. ”

“Dad I need a mother who will guide me in this life please stop being selfish.” The emotional blackmail card will have to work.

“How sure are you that there is a woman out there waiting for me to sweep off her feet, give her my surname then bring her here to take care of my troublesome children? What if she doesn't like you? What if she abuses you or your brother while I'm out there working? What if life changes for the worst if I bring a woman in here?” He has a point but I'm not giving up this easy.

“Dad I understand where your fears are coming from but we are grown up we will never let anyone bully us.” I try to reason with him.

“You have never been abused by anyone so you don't know what you are talking about. Maybe you can defend yourself but what about Ntsika? What if I bring a psycho as a wife who will rape my son?”

“Dad Ntsika won't get raped--”

“Sweetheart, boys get raped too. They usually don't talk about it because they also believe in the social norms that no man can be raped. I'm not being selfish as you say I'm trying to protect you.”

“Amy's mom will never do that to us--” He chokes on his saliva and I smile. It's working.

“W-what?” He is shocked.

“You like her dad and it's not a crime to fall for a successful woman--”

“Liqhawe!” He throws a cushion at me but I duck it and it hits the painting on the wall. Luckily it doesn't fall.

“Otherwise you wouldn't be cracking your mind daily on what excuse to give so you can have her children over here. Listen to your heart dad. I like

her for you too.”

“You know what? This conversation ends here and now!” He walks away. Sorry for frustrating you dad but I know you have needs too. You need a companion and as your children we can not give you that.

Zinhle's POV.

****You are on the right track keep up the performance. Don't fight back, remember we need you out of there soon. Sometimes it's okay to act weak just to emerge victorious when they least expect it. I'm proud of you. I love you and see you soon.***

This piece of paper keeps me going. It gives me hope and faith to hold on and to endure the pain those motherfuckers inflicted on me. They broke my rib, stabbed me at the back and broke my arm I

have a heavy cast on me as I speak. The guards have been protecting me ever since the incident and I'm playing this game very well. Wait until I get what I want then things will get messy and even the fat lady will sing because no one hurts Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya and lives to tell the tale.....

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TWO YEARS LATER.....

This long insert goes out to @Lebo Mosoma who asked for another insert yesterday but deleted the comment before I could respond to it. I tried my best to fulfill your wish by making today's insert longer than ever before. Enjoy

THE BRIDE.

Insert 73.

TWO YEARS LATER....

Nomzamo's POV.

I don't know if it's too early to say this but I'm finally back on my feet! Yes Nomzamo the tough lawyer is back and you wouldn't guess who helped me. Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa herself. The guilty that I felt when I found out she actually sent a high paying client my way was unexplainable. The case took over a year to be ruled and it was pretty intense. At the end I won the case and my client was over the moon that he decided to double our agreed payment and a BMW as a thank you gift. To him money meant nothing the only thing that mattered was protecting his artistic works from a greedy wife who had filed for divorce accusing him

of cheating. He invited me to dinner and told me Sukoluhle had sent him to me for help, they are friends actually. He told me what kind of a person Sukoluhle is and hearing all the good things about her made me think about all the bad things I did to her. It wasn't easy to master the courage to go and apologize to her but I'm glad I did apologize. She forgave me and I thanked her for not pressing charges.

“Mom! Mommy!” Zaine comes running and falling on the ground calling out my name.

“Hello baby.” He jumps on me and kisses me all over the face. It's his daily routine. He greets me with kisses then runs off to his uncle's room to do the same. The love and the bond I share with my son keeps me going and smiling all the time. My son is the biggest achievement of all times and I'm not going to let him down.

“Hey stranger.” I answer my phone.

“Ntokazi ukahle? (How are you?)” Mntimande responds.

“I'm fine and how are you?”

“Ngiyancenga. Unjani umfana wami? (I'm trying to cope. How is Zaine?)” Mntimande's voice is still laced with sadness. His brother, Zibusiso, disappeared a year after leaving the country till to date. Mntimande and Zinhle are not coping at all.

“He is fine. Do you want to talk about how you feel? I mean you sound sad.” I hear him sighing at the other end.

“Hayi okwamanje mhlawumbe ngoluny' usuku. (Not today maybe some other time.)” He sadly says.

“I understand. You will be fine.”

“Bengithe ngizwe ukuthi uqhuba njani sobuya sixoxe. Ube nosuk' oluhle. (I was just checking up on you. Have a great day.)” He says disconnecting the call. I pray they all find peace and healing soon.

“Morning Sis. I'm off to work see you later.” Ethan greets and says good bye at the same time. He got an internship in one of the big companies here through his well connected boyfriend. It was not easy to accept that my only brother is gay but

seeing how that boyfriend of his always put a smile on his face made me relax and accept their relationship and stop judging my brother too harshly. I'm also working and enjoying kicking some ass in the courtroom. I'm planning to start my own law firm soon.

Zinhle's POV.

I'm on the phone with Advocate Dlamini who tells me we will be going to court in two days time and things are looking good for me at the moment.

“Don't do anything stupid to ruin this.” She warns.

“I won't. I promise.” I lie. I have business to take care of before I get out of here.

“Better keep that promise.” She says and drops the call. I have a good feeling about this and things are about to get real. My brother Zibusiso went missing, brother Mpilo believes he is dead wherever he is

because he keeps seeing him in his dreams but I think otherwise. Whenever a bad thing happens to people I love I feel it. He is in a bad state wherever those Italians took him to but definitely not dead and I will not rest until I find him. Mntimande almost cracked the case of Zibusiso's disappearance but the bastards had to play dirty and kidnapped Liqhawe. That's when we realized they have associates keeping a close eye on us. Liqhawe's kidnapping sent Mntimande off the edge and for the first time in his entire life he pulled the trigger himself, got bloody and saved his daughter. Since then my brother is not okay and I can understand his pain. Some days he smiles, some days are hard and he can't stop his tears.

My children are growing. Nothabo and my husband always bring them to visit and I'm glad Olwethu knows I'm his mother and he loves me. Every time they bring me a different gift and lately Owami has been gifting me books. I don't really enjoy reading but for my children I now read to the end. Nothabo

told me about Gloria and I told her not to fire her but to give her a warning. I will deal with that fool when I get out of here. Sanelisiwe is said to be very good with children and even Owami likes her. I'm sure she is the type of women who reprimand children in a nice way not the harsh way. I can not wait to go out there and meet my whole family but then I doubt it will be soon because I have to find my brother.

I watched the security footage that was anonymously sent to my phone, yeah I do have a phone, and I know who attacked me although I haven't retaliated yet. I'm still thinking of the most horrific way to inflict pain on someone but not kill them. I don't usually kill my enemies death is too easy but pain is the best punishment you can give to anyone who messes with you.

“Morning.” The female guard who brings me food almost everyday says.

“Morning. You look different today?” She blushes.

She has a crush on me, so I have been told. “Holy Mary! You cut your long hair? Why though?” She had the most beautiful natural hair I have ever seen.

“I’m on a tight budget and taking care of my hair is a little expensive.”

“I understand hey. You still look beautiful and I’m sure guys can’t stop drooling.” Once again she blushes. Poor woman! I can not even imagine myself kissing another woman like all these jailbirds do. I haven’t had sex in two years but I still can not stand sex with another woman.

“I brought your toiletries.”

“Thank you. When I get out of here I’m going to show you how much I appreciate this.” She smiles and leaves. Time to go and introduce yourself girl. I know that tattooed ugly thing is in the bathrooms with her bootlickers and I’m going there. I pick my new bathing towel and put it around my neck before taking other things I will need.

“Wangen’ usathane! (Here comes the devil!)”

Announces one of the bootlickers. The tattooed

lady pushes the girls who are busy pleasing her away and glares at me. I have been avoiding her ever since the incident.

“Grew some balls, huh? What are you doing here? This is my private space?” She says with her fake intimidating gangster accent.

“The last time I checked this whole place and your ass included belonged to the government.” They all look at me like I have grown horns or something.

“What did you just say?” She charges towards me and I stand still ready for her. She swings a fist at me but I duck it and sends her crashing on the dirty floor with a back kick. Some of the girls charge towards me all ready to attack and I go for a killer move before they surround me. I stab one of the girls under the eye using the same knife they used to stab me and pull her eye out as she screams in agony and blood oozing. All of them stand back and watch in horror.

“Noo! Somebody please tell her stop--” I pull harder until I have her eye in my bloody hand and she falls

groaning in pain. The beauty of a corrupt system is that money can buy you anything you want and no one is going to come to their rescue. Their leader is sweating already as I make my way to her with the eye still in my hand.

“I’m hell itself not even the devil is a match of mine. I punish, destroy but I don’t kill something I don’t eat. You stepped on the wrong territory this time and you are about to meet your sanctifier. Zinhl’Intombi ZakwaNgwenya is the name.” I throw the eye down on her feet and wipe my hands with her jacket. Her face is now pale and the other girls have peed on themselves. I wink at her and get in the shower.....

Sukoluhle's POV.

Whenever the sun goes down the fear creeps in and anxiety takes over. The medication is not working, Zibusiso's words keep ringing in my mind “If you don't receive any gift, don't see me or hear from me

then you should know the mission went wrong” and tears start afresh. Part of me believes he is alive but there's the other part of me that believes I will never see him again. After everything he sacrificed for me I will never get to tell him how much I appreciate him, I will never get to see his children that he promised to bring so I can meet them I'm heartbroken, sad and scared at the same time.

When that Martins guy called I couldn't help but feel something was off because there was no way my PA would have not told me about his persistent calls. After a thorough background check we found nothing incriminating on him but that very same day I received a message from an Italian number. It read "Don't take that interview it's a trap. They need something to threaten Zibusiso with and if they get to you he will crack." I tried calling the number but with no luck. I started living in fear, everything now freaks me out and it doesn't help that he went missing after five months of rejecting that interview. What if I'm the cause of his disappearance? Maybe I should have agreed to the interview just to save him.

“Sis are you okay?” Charity asks. She knows I'm not okay she's just trying to start a conversation.

“I'm holding on but I'm afraid I might break anytime soon. I'm scared Char, scared for him, for me, my children, my mom, I'm scared--”

“Shh it's okay Sis. The Zibus is o I met a few times will do anything to protect you and the children. You have to be positive and strong for him. This thing of you always crying is badly affecting the children and your knew romantic relationship. He is a great, understanding guy and I think you should tell him how you feel he might be able to help you. Stop crying your life away live a little Sis. If not for yourself then for the kids and Zibus is o. He won't be happy if he walks through that door to find you like this. You are strong and you can do this.” She wipes away my tears. “Go ahead and call him over.” She says giving me the phone.

“It's late and he hates driving at night. I will call him tomorrow I promise.” I say with a faint smile.

“Good to hear that. Now you have to eat and go to

bed. Amy and Prudy helped me prepare your favorite meal. Let's go." She drags me to the kitchen where my children are anxiously waiting for me. I have been a very bad mother and I feel guilty for neglecting them. I tearfully hug them.

"I'm sorry guys--" They both wipe my tears and smile.

"It's okay we are not angry at you. You are still the best mommy ever!" They smile reassuringly.

"Okay enough with the tears. Let's have our nice dinner." They pull a chair for me and my stomach grumbles looking at the yummy food on the table. We say grace and start dishing for ourselves. We chat while enjoying our meals until there is a light knock on the door.

"I will get it." Charity offers and I wonder who is knocking at this hour. "Sis come and see this!" She screams her voice laced with fear. When I get to the door two toddlers who look like twins are standing by the door. As freaky as this maybe for some weird reasons I'm not scared today. I squat next to them

and they smile touching my face.

“Who are you and who left you here?” They hear Amy's laughter and the boys run past me going to the dining room. They jump on the chairs and start eating from the serving dishes.

“Sis what is going on? What if it's another trap? What happened to the guard and how did they get in.” Charity voices her fears. I dial the guard but the phone rings unanswered.

“Mommy who are they?” Amy asks. Now I'm panicking. What happened to the guard. I dial my boyfriend's number and he answers immediately.

“Hey.” He answers softly. I take a deep breath because I know I'm about to be lectured.

“Hi. Someone left two toddlers on my doorstep and the guard is not answerin--”

“What are you talking about babe? I'm on my way please stay inside I will let myself in.”

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PLEASE LIKE, COMMENT AND SHARE.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 74.

Sukoluhle's POV.

“Mommy who are they?” Amy asks once again.

“I have no idea baby.” She looks at them busy enjoying the food and the juice. They don't look like kids from the slums, they look like some Hotshot's sons instead. Their sneakers and the clothes they are wearing look expensive and definitely not from one of the Zimbabwe's shops. One of them looks at me and smiles revealing his perfect white teeth and dark gums. I have seen similar gums before. “Hey

kid is your father Zibusiso Ngwenya?”

“Dad? No.” He shakes his head. Now that I have studied them these are the Ngwenya genes. I may be wrong but they look exactly like the Ngwenya brothers.

“They are cute mommy. Can we keep them for ourselves?” Asks Prudy feeding one of the toddlers. The door springs open and the potential man of the house heaves a huge sigh of relief looking at all of us. His faces changes from scared to being calm as he steps closer to me and hugs me tight without saying a word. All the emotions I felt before come back terrorising my whole being and I crack. He pulls me even even closer rubbing my back.

“Kuzolunga Sthandwa sami. Mus' ukukhala MaKhwali wami konke kuzolunga ngiyakuthembisa. (Everything will be fine my love. Stop crying everything will be fine I promise.)” Hearing his deep yet soft filled with love and care voice makes me cry even more. “Hlis' umoya uphephile MaKhwali-- (Calm down you are safe--)”

“Ngiphephile? Njani nginabantwana engingabaziyo endlini yami. (Safe? How am I safe when I have toddlers delivered at my doorstep?) They are going to kill me and my children--” I think I raised my voice because all the children turn their attention to us and run to him.

“Daddy!” One of the toddlers scream as he trips and falls on his knees. Now I’m super confused and shocked even more when he picks them up and kisses them as they giggle. He realizes I have questions and puts the boys down and scoops me up. I’m stubborn at times and he knows I won’t move and the easy way is to carry me to wherever he wants to take me to.

“Char? Niphephile akukhonto embi unogada naye uphephile phandle ubethe ukuphuma kancane ngesikhathi kushiywa lezingane ningathuki ngizolichazela konke emva kokukhuluma nowakwami. (Char, you are safe guys there's nothing wrong and the guard is okay too. He had gone out for a few minutes when the children were dropped don't be scared I will explain everything

after talking to Suku.)” Charity nods. I'm so angry right now because it feels like I have been kept in the dark when he knows some serious stuff. He pushes my bedroom door with his foot and walks in. I try to say something but he silences me with a French kiss. What the hell is wrong with him. I can't push him away because I'm trapped here in his arms. He slowly puts me on the bed and smiles looking at me.

“Will you tell me what's going on should I force the truth out of you? Why are you behaving like everything is okay when it's not? Are you drunk Sibangilizwe?” Once again he smiles but says nothing. I hate it when he treats me like a lunatic. My blood boils and I raise hand to slap him but he stops me.

“Ungathabi uze weqe MaKhwali. Akabekwa isandla owelisisa ikakhulukazi lo ofuna ukumenza umyeni wakho. KuseAfrica lana yeka izinto zabelungu uzolimala. (Don't do that. You don't hit the man you are planning to marry it's disrespectful. Remember we are in Africa here leave such kind of behavior for the Europeans.)” He smiles, it's not really a smile

but a warning.

“You piss me off and threaten me simple because you are the man it's not fair!”

“Unokunginyanyisa nje nami kodwa akaze ngikufake isandla? (You always piss me off but I have never raised my hand to hit you?)” I hate to admit but he is right.

“Enough with the lectures who are those toddlers? You seem to know them very well?”

“Zingane zikamfowenu-- (They are your brother's--)”
Brother? Zibusiso?

“Huh? Are you serious right now?” It's hard to believe him. How did the children get here?

“Angiwathandi amahlanya njalo angidlali ngezinto eziqakathekileyo. Kunabantu bami engathi bayongifunela uZibusiso--(I don't like jokes moreover I don't joke with serious issues. I sent my boys to search for Zibusiso--)”

“And?” I don't know why but I feel like he has good news.

“Bafumene umkhondo wakhe kuyathembisa-- (It's promising they found a lead--)” I don't even listen to the rest of the sentence as I jump on him pinning my legs around his waist, my arms around his neck and kiss the living daylights out of him. He squeezes my butt as our tongues dance around each other our souls connecting and our bodies giving in. By the time I pull out we are both panting.

“I love you I love you I love you.” He smiles making my clit throb, his smile has that thing that's just hard to resist. He puts me on the bed lays beside me balancing on his elbow. He is looking at me but he is not saying anything. “What?”

“Uzoba yikufa kwami yazi? Bona ungenzani? Do you know you will be my death? Look at what you are doing to me.)” He puts my hand over his crotch, I gasp.

“Oh? Maybe we should take care if this?”

“Ngiyalingeka muntu wami kodwa ingane zilinde thina njalo bengingakaqedi. (I'm tempted my love but the children need explanations and I'm not done

talking.)” I nod for him to go on. He tells me everything from when the Italians trying to get to me, Liqhawe's abduction, Zibusiso's disappearance, the anonymous tips he's been getting, the minister's widow telling him about the instructions Zibusiso gave her before he left and finally the breakthrough but this sounds like it's getting more dangerous than it already was.

“Do you think your people will find him?”

“Ukuthola la akhona akuyon' inkinga ukumkhipha emlonyeni wesilwane kulapho okunzima khona. Ngicabang' ukuthi kuzomele ngiyekhona-- (Locating him is not an issue the almost impossible task is rescuing him. I think I have to go there myself--)” The frown on my face has him not finishing his sentence. “Ngiyadlala. (I'm joking)” He says tickling me.

“Better be a joke because I'm not ready to lose any of you.”

NARRATED.

Mkhize is sitting outside looking disturbed. Of late he's been feeling like something important to him is slipping away. He even went to Zinhle and asked a million times if she was planning on leaving him although she assured him that she is not going anywhere he still feels the same way. Khulekani makes his way to him with two cups of tea.

“Wanna share your problems?” Asks Khulekani handing his father a cup of tea.

“Not today maybe some other time. I just feel...I don't know what this feeling is.” Mkhize responds.

“Maybe you are anxious? I know how much you miss mom and how much you want her back and as the court date draws closer and closer you are becoming nervous. You ask yourself if the judge will grant her parole or will it be denied? It's okay to feel like that just don't lose hope dad everything will be fine.”

“Thank you. I spoke to Advocate Dlamini she

sounds optimistic and sure that Zinhle will be out. I want her back I need her.” Mkhize admits. Just then Sanelisiwe makes her way to them. After proving her loyalty to the family she's now allowed to talk to Mkhize directly if the need arises.

“Good evening Sir.” She says bending her knees showing respect.

“Evening Sane. Do you need something?” Mkhize responds.

“A minute of your time Sir.” The way she says "Sir" has Mkhize chuckling.

“Okay. Good night dad. Sane.” Khulekani leaves.

“Sit down.” Sanelisiwe looks at the two-seater couch and hesitantly sits at the far edge. The warnings from everyone about getting closer to the boss ring in her mind and starts shaking. “You might need to calm yourself down if you are going to tell me something important because right now you are shaking.”

“Umm... Sir- it- its--” She fails to put a sentence together.

“Sane? I don't bite, okay? Take this and calm your nerves.” He gives her a glass of lemonade he was having before Khulekani brought tea. Sane shakily holds the glass with both hands and try to drink as the glass hits her teeth repeatedly and spills some on her uniform until Mkhize shakes his head and helps her.

“I'm sorry.” She says looking down shamefully.

“It's okay. What did you want to tell me?”

“It's Owami. He bullies the twins and he admits to hating them and says their parents are the reason his mom is in jail.” Mkhize clenches his jaws. “I'm sorry for overstepping my boundaries. I always talk to Owami and he ended up opening up to me. He is an angry child and you have to find help for him soon. His temper is very dangerous for his age.”

“What kind of a father am I? How did I miss this? Am I a bad father to my children?” Mkhize sighs defeated.

“You are a good father Sir. It doesn't mean you are wrong or is it your fault that he's feeling the way he

feels. It's a stage, a very critical one and this is where you mould him into a better man--" Sane is shy but not when it comes to her line of work. She is not just a nanny but she also holds an honors degree in Psychology. She always hide the qualification when looking for jobs as a nanny because people always reject her applications saying she is overqualified. Mkhize watches her as she talks and for a moment she sees Zinhle in her. The way she talks and how everything she says makes perfect sense. He closes his eyes leaning closer to her and their lips crush.....

Zinhle's POV.

Today I received a message that left me with too many questions. I'm confused and angry at myself for not having the answers to my questions. The message came just after I left the shower, first came the senior guard who told me to play it safe

else Advocate Dlamini will pull out. I need her and she can not bail out on me. I can't stay in here forever but at the same time I can't let people walk all over my body as if I can't defend myself. I keep reading the message and pacing up in my cell. I don't share a cell with anyone and that gives me privacy.

****What the fuck Zinhle? Do you know how much money I have used to try and get you out of there and you want to ruin everything? Can you fucking stop with your madness you have serious issues to worry about! Like rescuing your brother, damn it Zinhle! Just pull yourself together your brother is in deep the lion's den not only him but the Italians are keeping a close eye on all your family members. You are getting out but you have to disappear before you meet your husband because that will lead the Italians to your children. They know you and once they learn about your parole they might panic and hurt Zibusiso. Just behave and let me deal with this. I'm super angry but I still love you anyway.*****

This is the message I'm trying to decipher. I'm super confused, who sent me that ring? Who is paying for my protection? Who is this person who knows so much about me? All along I thought the messages were from Zibusiso but now I don't know anymore. How do I save my brother and my children? Damn you Zibusiso for agreeing to this shit but either way I'm coming for you brother. Come thunder or sunshine the Ngwenyas are coming for you brother and the Italians just don't know who they are dealing with. For this mission we need the big gun. I type a message to Mntimande.

****Zibusiso is alive like I said before. Time to put on your big boots brother this mission needs you. I can't do it alone.****

He responds sooner than he always does.

****I'm with the lioness at the moment I will talk to you tomorrow. Good night I love you.***

The lioness? The nickname brings a smile to my face as I put my phone under the pillow and lie down the bed looking at the ceiling until I doze off.....

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Here is a challenge darlings. Those who love chest pains like me we are about to be served in big platters, action guys where are you? We are about to witness war like never before but since it's Friday all that will have to wait. BUT, you can still get inserts throughout the weekend through sponsorship (R50 per insert) or through commenting, liking and sharing. 800 Reactions, 70 comments and 100 shares will unlock the second insert of the day. We can do this, let's go!

THE BRIDE.

Insert 75.

[SPONSORED INSERT]

(Please forgive the typos and the insert is not edited.)

Mkhize's POV.

Fuck! What have I done? No no no! This is so totally wrong in many higher levels. Sane is crying and she has peed on herself already. I stop pacing and sit next to her she's shaking.

“I'm sorry I didn't mean to. I don't know what came over me please stop crying?” She sobs even harder. This is a mess. “Sane I'm sorry.”

“She-she will kill me. They warned me she warned me to--” She says so fast almost choking on her own words.

“She doesn't have to know. I know this is fucked up but it's for the best that no one gets to know about it. My wife is crazy that's why we should keep this a secret. The kiss didn't even last for two seconds please don't blame yourself and stop crying. I promise it won't happen again.” She nods. “I'm really sorry I miss my wife and I'm very nervous about her case.”

“O-okay.” She says standing up and I see a big stain

of blood. Fuck! She reacts badly to fear and she's on her periods already.

“Sane?” She slowly turns and walks back. “You can't go inside like that. You just stained your dress.” She looks down embarrassment and fidgeting with her fingers. “You know for a psychologist you are too shy and it's not even funny.” For the first time ever she looks into my eyes as her own eyes pop out in horror.

“H-how do you know that?” She stutters.

“I do a thorough background check on all my employees. I know everything about anyone who works for me. Try and use the advice you always give people when it comes to shyness and live a little. Life is too short to be shy. Use the fire escape to go to your room. Good night.”

“Thank you Sir.” She bends her knees with her head bowed down in respect and turns to leave. I don't know what is going on with me. This girl's shyness is turning me on so bad I can imagine myself fucking her so hard while she submits to my

commands. I know I'm old now but I still have it in me and two years is a very long time I have ever survive. My wife must come back before I mess up. Only she managed to tame me not even my late wife managed to do that. The reason I never got mad at Qhubekani or disown him is because Qhubekani is his father's son. If my own father tolerated me then I had to tolerate my own son. I have a crazy fucked up side, exactly how Qhubekani used to be but I used to be crazier than him because at some point I had a threesome with a mother and daughter.

I love Zinhle and I don't ever want to hurt her. I'm going to stay away from Sanelisiwe, stop myself from thinking about the things I did in the past and focus on my family. I'm too old to be chasing after skirts when I'm married. That was a moment of weakness that will never ever happen again. I take my phone and go to gallery to view my wife's photos. She once sent me her nude picture wearing black lingerie and a mask with a flogger in her hand.

Damn she looks so gorgeous and tempting. I receive a message from her.

*****I have been waiting for my good night kisses from the children but I figured you might have been busy today. Anyway, good night dear husband. I love you.*****

Shit! I forgot to call her now the children are sleeping! What came over me today?

NARRATED.

The following day early in the morning Sukoluhle is woken up by a ringing phone. She tries to break free from Mntimande who is holding her tight as their bodies are dripping sweat.

“Your phone is ringing babakhe.” Sukoluhle softly says.

“Akulamuntu olelungelo lokungivusa ngalesikhathi ngilele nomuntu wami yikudelela khonokho. (No

one has the right to wake me up at this hour when I'm sleeping with my woman that's disrespect.)” He says in between kisses on her neck and shoulder.

“It might be Liqhawe. Remember we didn't call her yesterday or your boys with vital information. Let me answer it for you.” The phone keeps ringing.

“Vele angitholi i-morning glory-nyana kumbe u-kiss nje kodwa lokhu ngenxa yocingo? (Today I'm not getting my morning glory or a simple good morning kiss because of the ringing phone?” Mntimande says disapprovingly. Sukoluhle ignores him and reaches for the phone. She answers it and puts it on loudspeaker.

“Finally! Do you know I haven't slept a wink thinking that something bad happened to you? Where are you dad? You just left without saying a thing yesterday what was I going to tell your girlfriend-- I mean mom if something happened to you? What about your children and aunt Zinhle? What you did is being selfish!” Liqhawe fumes. Sukoluhle looks at Mntimande who shrugs his shoulders in return.

“Dad? Are you there? Are you okay?” Now Liqhawe

is in panic mode.

“Good morning baby. Your father is perfectly fine. He will explain why he left so suddenly—”

“You too mom? You didn't even think of sending a simple SMS? This is so unfair now I wasted my tears because I thought something happened to him.”

“I'm sorry my baby. Something came up and I'm sure you will love the surprise please forgive us.”
Sukoluhle pacifies her.

“Fine I forgive you because I love you and now I know dad is not cheating on you. When am I seeing the surprise? Before that I think I need three hours of my beauty sleep.”

“We will bring the party to you my baby go to sleep. I love you too.” Sukoluhle says and Liqhawe cuts the call.

“Indlela uLiqhawe ane-drama ngakhona ungafunga uthi yingane yakho ngokwegazi-- (The way Liqhawe is so dramatic you would swear she's your biological daughter--)” Mntimande says and Suku

punches him on the chest. “Yeka udlame yimi omele abe nodlame hayi wena. Ukukhula noZibus is o kwakuphambanis a nguyey owakufundisa wonke lomsangano. (Stop being violent it's me who should be violent not you. Growing up with the likes of Zibus is o spoiled you I'm sure he's the one who taught you all this.)”

“But you provoke me that's the only way I know how to respond to provocation. I don't know any other way--” Mntimande silences her with a French kiss while he get he gets on top of her positioning himself between her thighs.....

In break time in jail and Zinhle is sitting down starrng at her food but not in the mood to eat. She woke up with a heavy heart and she doesn't know what is the meaning of it.

“Hey kiddo. You look like you are on another planet?”

“I'm fine o'lady. I'm just not hungry.” Zinhle

responds.

“Whenever he fucked her I would feel like shit! It took me time to learn to listen to my guts--”

“I don't understand?”

“You are way smarter than this kiddo. Figure it out. See you around.” The Lady leaves her with million questions running through her mind.

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 76.

[UNEDITED]

Zinhle's POV.

I don't know what this old lady is trying to say but this feeling is not entirely alien. I once felt like this and my heart was broken to the core the following day. I was young back then I couldn't fight him or her, he's the second man I'm scared of in this entire world yet his command voice always made me cum undone without him even touching me. He said he was going to marry me but someone better than me came along and he was gone just like that. Does this mean Mkhize is cheating on me after refusing divorce? Oh so help me dear Lord else rain fire will befall some people and it will smell like some grill party! Not after refusing my divorce old man, no!

“ZakwaNgwenya? ZakwaNgwenya?” Someone taps the table and I snap out of sighing. “You okay?” It's the female guard now I know her name its Lorraine.

“I'm good sweetheart.” She blushes. “What brings you here?”

“I saw you were not eating so I brought you your favorite fruits.” I peak inside the plastic bag. She brought apples and plums, she's very attentive to my dislikes and likes how I wish I can take her out

of her misery but I just can't see myself undressing another woman.

“Thank you. You have been good to me and I will never forget everything you did for me.”

“It's okay.” The senior guard comes and tells me I have a visitor in his office. I wonder who is this important somebody that I have to go and meet in private.

“Is he or she that important to the extent of ZakwaNgwenya going to her/him instead of the opposite?”

“The directive came from above. I can call them for you--” He looks scared.

“No need to. I'm right behind you.” It better be someone important I'm really not in a good mood. When I enter his office I'm met by a beautiful slim version of Anelisa! “Wow! You now the president's wife or what that I have to come to you?” I stand an inch away from her looking at her crutches.

“Zinhle please I'm not here to fight I came to apologize.” She is still scared of me.

“Well then I'm ears.” I say pulling a chair and sit. She really looks beautiful than when she was with Qhubekani. Maybe if Qhubekani had married her looking like this back then I wouldn't have felt offended. You know when someone cheats you he has to at least find something better not someone who will lower your standards.

“I'm sorry for coming between you and Qhu I should have stayed away and suppress my feelings for him. I'm really sorry and I have forgiven you too.” I laugh.

“I wasn't going to apologize honey because I still feel the same like that day when I tortured you. I'm still the same Zinhle who doesn't give a fuck about people.”

“I know deep down you care about people. Well, how are you? I'm surprised you didn't run after killing the whole kingdom.”

“Ane we still not friends so cut the crap and say what you came for and leave or I will leave.”

“Okay. Maqhawe died--” My heart skips a beat. “He managed to escape at first but he went back into

the burning house to save his brother's children. He sustained a few burns and he thought it was nothing serious and continued to save people. He inhaled a lot of smoke got admitted at the hospital and died two days later. He couldn't stop asking about you he wanted to apologize for betraying you. Since childhood Maqhawe would do anything for his brother. He was more concerned about you than about his health." I only knew him for a few months but this hurts the pain is tearing my heart apart and I feel my chest closing but tears won't come.

"Fuck!" I cuss rubbing my chest. It hurts deeply and I can smell the blood from my heart tearing apart. He helped me, he kept his promise but I turned on him because he was about to betray me. "Shit!" I cover my face with my hands and try to cry but tears won't come. Anelisa pushes her chair close to me and hugs me tight.

"It's okay Zie God allowed it to happen. It's always His will and stop blaming yourself--"

"I killed him! I fucking killed a man who his only sin was to love his brother beyond anything! I killed

him!” I punch the table cracking it and blood drips from my hand.

“Zinhle stop! Hurting yourself won't bring him back. Please hold yourself together.” She says struggling to get up and hugs me. I burst into tears, I played the role of God and ended up killing an innocent man! It hurts, it cuts deeper and the pain is not going away. “I believe God will heal you. If God reunited me with my family after years then he will surely heal you.”

“Wh-what do you mean?” I say in between hiccups.

“Before Maqhawe died he told me who my parents are and where they were. I went there and they were so happy to see me. My dad is a pastor in Ntabazinduna he's the one who taught me about God and together with my mother they helped me to heal. Now I can eat meat and not freak out--” We both laugh. “Yeah that's why I decided to come here and apologize to you. I'm also going to apologize to the Mkhizes. Maqhawe left this for you.” She gives me a memory card. Tears start afresh Maqhawe is really gone. He's the only person I feel guilty for

hurting.

“Thank you.” She hugs me once again.

“I will pray for you to be out on parole--”

“No! Fuck the parole I belong here--” I collapse on my knees screaming my lungs out...

Mntimande's POV.

I always saw Suku's photos and thought she was a decent girl even in the bedroom but I was wrong. This woman right here takes me to the places I have never been before. At first she was reserved, she told me her ex husband always wanted to take the lead so I gave her the confidence she needed to be herself. She's a beast in bed and I don't mind even if she wants to make love every minute of the day because everything with her is worthy it.

“Sibangilizwe?” Oh I zoned out and now she's her aggressive self.

“Sengeneni manje MaKhwali? (What have I done now?)” She smiles.

“Forget it. Get dressed we are going to your house to talk to the children and spend the day with all of them.” What I love most about her is that she is not afraid of me like my late wife. She's stubborn and a stubborn girl is always a turn on.

“Yebo mama wabantwana. (Okay mother of my kids).” I thought she would be angry or disapprove of Zibusiso's children coming to stay with us. She doesn't know yet but I want to marry her very soon I'm too old to be moving from one house to the other to be with my wife. I want to make it official and have her handed over to me so we can raise our football team. Six children in one house, it's crazy, right? I trust my choice though I know we will be great parents to our children. Just when we finish putting on our clothes the twins barge in giggling.

“No! No!” They shout hiding behind Suku.

“What now boys? Why are you running?”

“Mommy? They have to brush their teeth!” Amy calls from outside. They respect our privacy and I know Amy won't come in until she's told to.

“Okay baby. I will bring them.” Suku says. Hearing that the twins run to the bathroom and close the door.

“Lapha usazosebenza muntu wami. (The twins are a serious task)” I say.

“I can see that I wonder how it will be like to raise the mini Zibusiso. I just pray he comes back and watch them grow.”

“Uzobuya Sthandwa sami. (He will come my love.)” My phone rings. I sigh before answering it. I hope Zinhle didn't mess up.

“Mntimande?”

“Zinhle is losing it--”

“What do you mean losing it?” I'm confused.

“She learned of a friend's passing and she's turning her pain to violence. She's hurting herself--” I drop the call.

“UZinhle akekho kahle Sthandwa sami. Ngiyakufica emagcekeni kaMntimande? (Zinhle is not okay. I will find you at my house, right?” She nods.

“Drive safe. I love you.”

“Uthandwa yimi ntombi yakwaMdlongwa. (I love you more.)” I run to the parking lot....

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PLEASE LIKE, SHARE AND COMMENT!!!

GOOD NIGHT DARLINGS

THE BRIDE.

Insert 77.

[SPONSORED.]

NARRATED.

It takes Sukoluhle almost an hour to have the twins brush their teeth. They kept jumping, running and hiding behind the movable property.

“Siya?” The boys look at each and giggle. “Okay you boys we will have to talk, okay? Come and sit with me.” They hesitantly go to her. It looks like they know the consequences of their actions. Simphiwe starts crying and so does Siyamthanda.

“Sorry. Sorry mom--” They hug each other and cry.

“I'm not angry, okay? I'm not going to beat you come here.” They look her in the face and she smiles reassuringly. They run into her arms and she hugs them tight as they sob. “It's okay boys mommy won't hit her cute troublesome boys.”

“She-she will come and beat us--” Siyamthanda cries even harder.

“Who? Who will come and beat you?” Suku is confused.

“The other mommy--” Simphiwe says lifting his shirt.

Suku flinches looking at the belt marks all over his body. Her heart shatters as she hugs them even tighter.

“No one will ever hurt you again I'm going to protect you with everything I have.” Zibusiso protected her, he did everything for her and she will surely take care of his sons. Amahle comes running with the landline receiver.

“You have a call mommy.” Says Amy putting the receiver on her mother's ear.

“Suku, hello?”

“I bet you are happy now bitch! I don't know what you gave to Zibusiso for him to keep threatening me even beyond the grave so I can send my sons to you! I'm sure you are hiding him and I'm going to find you and kill you bloody whore!” A woman hisses.

“When you remember your manners do call me back. Bye.” Says Suku and Amy drops the call.

“She was swearing to me mommy. Are we in trouble because of these babies?” Amy asks.

“No baby. She's just a crazy person don't mind her.” Amy nods. “We are going to spend the weekend at your favorite place go and prepare--”

“We are going to dad's house?” Suku nods. “Yeey! I missed Liqhawe and Ntsika.” Amy jumps on her and they group hug. Sukoluhle wipes the boys' tears and kiss them as they smile with teary eyes.

“It's been a few days Amy stop exaggerating. Why do you call Mntimande dad?”

“You guys are dating so?” She shrugs her shoulders.

“Do you like him? Are you comfortable with him being daddy?”

“Yes I like him. I liked him before you guys dated. I kinda helped Liqhawe bring you closer together. I'm sorry I used to lie to you about my sickness even when I had a reaction and ended up in hospital it was all a plan--”

“Amy! How could you do that? You almost died for goodness sake!”

“I'm sorry we just wanted you to be closer to each

other and it worked.” Suku throws a cushion at Amy.
“Sorry mommy and I love you.” Says Amahle running off.

“Boys let's go and get you some food--” Her cellphone rings and she answers.

“They are my children! I carried them for nine months you can't just have everything that belongs to me! I want my man and children back.” The same woman shouts.

“Why did you even send them here if you didn't want to? What kind of a mother are you? Who beats her children black and blue like this and claim to love them?”

“Zibusiso stopped sending me because of you and his sons kept crying for food what was I supposed to do?”

“He never stopped sending money but you paid off your debts with the children's money. When you finally learn to behave like a mother that you are you know where to find your sons for now stop bothering me I'm too busy to keep hearing the same

nonsense.”

“He will dump you too!” Says the woman her voiced laced with bitterness

“Have you seen a brother dumping a sister before?”

“What?--” Sukoluhle drops the call.

At Prison Zinhle is covered in blood as Mntimande rushes in and almost faints looking at Zinhle holding a broken glass ready to slit her vein.

Mntimande flies and knocks the glass off her hand before slapping her hard. Zinhle gasps as a hot slap lands on her cheek and gets temporarily paralyzed in shock. Mntimande pulls her into his arms and fails to control his tears. They cry in each other's arms, their bond is so deep that they don't need to say the words out loud.

“It's okay. You will be fine little Sis. This too shall pass, it's okay to break down but suicide is unacceptable. You have me, my nephews, your

husband, Zibusiso, NK, Nomzamo, the list is endless and your life matters to us. Don't you ever be selfish like that I won't survive." Mntimande swallows a painful lump.

"I-I'm sorry--" Zinhle sobs.

"It's okay. Are you in pain?" He asks checking out her self inflicted wounds.

"A little." Mntimande asks the guards who look terrified to provide him with the first aid kit and he cleans and dresses Zinhle's wounds. After a couple of minutes he asks who is the friend that died.

"I killed a good man brother! His only sin was to love his brother--" Zinhle breaks once again.

"Maghawe didn't deserve to die."

"If he didn't then he wouldn't have died. Please stop blaming yourself, hurting yourself won't bring him back please don't do this to yourself." Zinhle nods. Mntimande is the first man Zinhle respects and can admit to being scared of.

"It hurts brother it really hurts--" She sobs.

“I know I know and the pain will go away soon just be strong.”

“He left something for me. I wanna see what it is maybe it might help me feel better.” Zinhle says giving him a memory card which Mntimande quickly inserts in his phone. The memory needs a password to be unlocked.

“It's locked.” Mntimande says.

“CrazyBeautifulZinhle is the password.” Mntimande frowns but pushes his suspicions to the back of his mind and types the password. Surprisingly it unlocks. There's a video of Zinhle playing at the beach while someone kept screaming “Come crazy girl live a little!” in the video Zinhle smiled shyly and started running after the bubbles. “Yes that's it! You are not a murderer but a child crying for help look at the child in you coming to play.” Zinhle threw sand at whoever was talking. “Come on in our African culture we don't hit men!” They laughed...

“Please switch it off--” Zinhle sniffs wiping her face with her bandaged hand. Mntimande stops the

video and plays the voice recording.

“Hi crazy girl. The doctors are saying I might die and I feel it too. Guess what? My mother is even smiling at me as I record this and it means I'm leaving. I'm sorry I betrayed you I just wanted to save my brother, he means everything to me. My father died you got your wish now please forgive and forget your past. Repent, go out there and do everything you told me you always wished for. You are still young Zinhle and you don't have to be tied down on something that's not worthy it.” He coughed and from his voice one can tell he was suffering.

“If you do get out of prison, go to my house in Alaska, use your technological expertise there's something in the safe. Give half of it to my brother take the other half and travel the world. Keep the diamonds until my son comes looking for you. Give them to him only if not I will deal with you from beyond the grave. We never had a chance to sit and talk I just wanted to tell you that I fell in love with you. Live this life for the both of us--” He coughed,

the machines beeped and the doctor's voice was heard chasing everyone out.

“I can't breathe.... Brother I'm dying... My spirit is separating with my body—”

“Zinhle look at me! Breathe baby sister, breathe sweetheart. You can't die we still have to go and save our brother.... Don't close your eyes Zie....”

“I-I....” Zinhle gasps for air, a tear runs down her eye and she closes her eyes holding Mntimande's hand.

“Zinhle!”.....

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Maqhawe is dead darlings like really dead and buried. He won't resurrect and now Zinhle “might” join him in heaven and they will live their happily ever after there.... Oh shit! I just spilled the beans.
Have a fantastic Saturday darlings

THE BRIDE.

Insert 78.

[SPONSORED.]

NARRATED.

“Zinhle look at me! Breathe baby sister, breathe sweetheart. You can't die we still have to go and save our brother.... Don't close your eyes Zie....”

“I-I....” Zinhle gasps for air, a tear runs down her eye and she closes her eyes holding Mntimande's hand.

“Zinhle!” Mntimande screams and the guards come in running. “ZakwaNgwenya you can't do this to me please wake up baby sister--” Mntimande tries waking Zinhle up but she's not responding.

“We have to take her to the hospital.” The senior guard is in panic mode. The orders came from above and they were loud and clear “If anything

happens to her consider you and your families dead!” the message read. The guards take Zinhle to the Prisons car and drive off with Mntimande on their tail.

Outside the Emergency Room Mntimande paces up and down trying to calm himself down. He loves Zinhle too much to let her die, he dials Nkululeko's number and tells him what just happened. Nkululeko tells him he's on his way to the airport and will be there soon.

“MaKhwali.” Mntimande says taking a deep breath.

“You don't sound okay, did she hurt herself too much?”

“NgiseMpilo esibhedlela uvele wathula emva kokulala i-voice recording evela kumngane wakhe. Ngithukile Sthandwa sami. (I'm at Mpilo hospital Zie fainted after listening to the voice recording from her friend. I'm really scared.)” Mntimande is a tough man but he never hides his true feelings to those he trusts.

“Okay I'm coming to fulfill my promise.”

“Ngingakujabulela lokho. Ngicela uze ne-T-shirt yami. (I would really appreciate that. Please bring a T-shirt for me.)”

“Okay. I'm taking a cab. I love you.”

“Ngiyakuthanda nami ntombi yami. (I love you too my girl.)”

Nomzamo's POV.

I'm meeting with a client at the Meikles hotel since he rejected my place of choosing saying it's too crowded and he prefers privacy. From his tone and the research I did about him and his company he is one of those top dogs.

“Hi.” I say as he opens the door for me.

“Hey. You look much more beautiful in person.” He says and sips his drink. His eyes never leaving mine

until I feel uncomfortable and look away. “Oh my manners. Please sit down.” He pulls a chair for me and I sit.

“Thank you.” I say and he nods.

“Malcom Xaba is the real name.” He says.

“I know that.”

“I like your smart ass. How did you figure out who I am? I thought I covered my tracks pretty well?” He flushes a smile that makes me chuckle. “Don't answer that. I want you to help me file for a private divorce because I don't want my name to be dragged in the mud. I worked very hard to be where I am today and I'm not willing to give in to a woman who thinks she owns me. I want her out of my life but I want my children to stay behind. They are grown up and they can make their own choices but I'm afraid if she leaves with them she might do something stupid just to spite me. Are you in?” I'm taking these divorce cases because I need money since I'm saving for my next big project.

“I can't say yes or no at the moment. I would like to

know more about how we got to this point.” His eyes are piercing through my skin it feels like he's reading my mind.

“Ask any questions you want to I just want to get out of this lie of a marriage.” Says Malcolm sitting back and ready to answer my questions.

“Do you love her?” He seems shocked by the question.

“That's the most stupid question I have ever been asked by a lawyer. How can you ask me that when I just told you that I want a divorce?” He says with a frown plastered on his forehead.

“Wanting a divorce and loving someone are two different things. Please answer my question and let's move on--”

“No!” He punches the table spilling his drink as the glass shatters on the floor and some of the drink splashes on my clothes. “I'm not going to answer that question, understand?” He's now standing too close to me and my heart is pounding I'm sure I'm also shaking.

“I’m sorry I have to go I can’t help you--” He grabs me by my arm and pulls me back before slapping me so hard the room starts spinning.

“No woman walks away from me Barbie, I dump women and I’m the one to walk away not you. Understand!” My cheek is burning as I look at the bottle of Scotch on top of the counter. I pick it and smash it on his head and run out as fast as I can. I’m shaking when I get to the car but I have to go before that idiot of a man comes after me.

Sanelisiwe's POV.

I can not stop thinking about the soft kiss Mr Mkhize gave to me. Every time I think about it my clit throbs and I become all smiles. No wonder his wife can kill anyone for him the old man looks like he knows how to touch a woman. I’m scared of Zinhle and I would never do anything to be on the wrong side of her I still have a child and my parents

to think of before I think with my clit. It's been a while since I had sex maybe that's why I'm feeling like this. I will have to call that useless baby daddy of mine and get laid after all sex is the only thing he's good at.

“Uhm... Hi Sane.” I jump off the bed and almost fall.

“S-sir--” I stutter.

“I didn't mean to startle you. How are you?”

“I'm fine Sir. Is there something you need done for you?” It's strange for him to come into my room when Olwethu is not here.

“No. I brought you painkillers I feel like I'm responsible for your--” I look down feeling embarrassed. “Hey it's okay I'm a gentleman and I'm not taunting you I just want to help. I have been with women and I know periods are uncomfortable. Please take them.”

“Thank you.” Now that he brought painkillers I realize how much I needed them.

“It's okay. You are taking care of my children and I

have to make sure you are fine.” He puts his finger under my chin and tilts my head up. Looking at him like this has my heart rate accelerating I feel so hot and I'm sure he knows exactly what he is doing as he leans down and baby kiss me. The kiss deepens making me moan as I taste vodka in his mouth. My father always say a real man tastes like his favorite drink. He runs his hand down my back to my butt pulling me closer to him. The evidence of this kiss is not to be missed in his about to burst trousers. His hand sneaks under my dress uniform and he touches my soft meat making me moan even more and for a moment I forget who he is. He gently rubs my clit with his thumb while his middle finger teases my folds.

“Fuck!” He cusses and puts my hand on his manhood. “It's been years please help me relieve myself--” He kisses the living daylights out of me before I can process what he just said and clothes start flying all over the place.....

Zinhle's POV.

[<<<This place is warm, peaceful and beyond beautiful. Butterflies are decorating the atmosphere and the scent of flowers is relaxing. Everything is extra beautiful and I can't help but walk around.

“Zinhle?” A voice calls. I look around but I don't see anyone.

“Who are you and where are you?” I ask.

“Queen Mother.” The voice responds.

“Why are you disturbing my peace?”

“You will enjoy your peace but not here. You have to go to your people they need you. My son is fine here and you don't need to feel guilty about anything. He died because the time had come--”

“Can I see him at least?”

“He is dead you are not. The dead and the living have nothing in common except when it's spiritual. I am here because I once borrowed your body and I could feel that you need me. There's someone

waiting for you on the other side of the world to give you everything you always prayed for when you still had faith. Go! Go back and live your life to the fullest.” She says and the place turns dark.

“No please don't leave--” I scream and someone touches my hand making me jump and just then I realize where I am. This is the second time I'm seeing her but I hug her tight like my life depends on it.

“Zie it's okay. You suffered great shock but you are okay now.” Suku says rubbing my back. She holds me until I finally calm down.

“I'm sorry.”

“No need to apologize. How are you feeling?”

“I have a mother-in-law of all headaches and I just saw a ghost--”

“What?” She's shocked. I'm about to tell her everything but Mntimande walks in wearing clean clothes.

“ZakwaNgwenya ucishe wangibulalis a ngenhliziyo!

(Zee you almost gave me a heart attack!)” He says hugging me.

“I’m sorry I don’t know what happened to me I couldn’t breathe.” I confess. No one’s death has ever hit me as hard as finding out that I killed Maqhawe. He asks how I feel and if I need something to eat. The prison guards are keeping a close eye on everything happening around me. If they knew that I have no intentions to run they would relax their asses. Just then my husband walks in looking panicked and hugs me and I smell a woman’s perfume coming from all over his body.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 79.

NARRATED.

Malcom parks his car in front of Nomzamo's house. He takes a bunch of red roses and a bag full of goodies and invites himself into the yard. Zaine is running outside while the nanny follows him and almost bumps into Malcom.

“Umm...sorry.” Says the nanny.

“It's okay. Is Zamo inside? ”

“Yes Sir.” Malcolm thanks her and makes his way inside.

“Zaine! Zaine come here--” Zamo turns and comes face to face with Malcom, she freezes.

“I'm not here to murder you like you almost did the other day. I came to apologize my behavior was uncalled for. I can not blame stress for my mistakes I'm really sorry.” He sincerely apologizes.

“Ho-how did you find me?” Zamo stutters.

“You are top easy to track darling. Forget how I found you please accept these as my apology.”

“I don't want your flowers please leave me alone before I call the police. Leave my house now!” Zamo yells as panic attack takes over. She holds her chest tight trying to do breathing exercises. Her knees buckle down and she almost falls but Malcom holds her.

“Breathe Zamo. Breathe.” She takes a deep breath and gets off his arms showing him the door. He hesitantly leaves as Zamo throws his flowers and the goodies at him. He smiles sadly and leaves. She gulps a glass of water and runs upstairs to prepare to go to court. A call comes through her phone.

“Mntimande?” She answers and for some weird reasons his voice still makes her blush.

“MaLanga uvukanjani? Uzob' ukhona enkantolo? UZinhle uthe ngikumbuze ngoba uyakudinga njengomngane wakhe. (Good morning Zamo. Will you be there at court? Zinhle asked me to remind you because she needs you.)”

“Yes I'm getting ready.”

“Kwakhle lokho. Ngiyambongela. (That's good and thank you on her behalf.)”

“No need to thank me. Are you on your way?”

“Ngisalinde uNK nomama wakwami. Ithi ngingakubambezeli sobonana khona. (I'm waiting for NK and Suku. Let me not disturb you see you there.)” The smile in his voice when he mentions Suku has Zamo feeling a little jealous and sad but then she promised to stay out of his personal business.

“Okay bye.” Zamo disconnects the call and wipes a stray tear. “He is happy with her that's all that matters. Get a grip on yourself Zamo you will get used to not being loved by anyone.” Says Zamo to herself.

A few hours later everyone walks out the court with smiles on their faces. Mntimande is the happiest of

them all. For the first time in his life he actually knelt down and prayed to God asking Him to give Zinhle a second chance. Mntimande and Mkhize hug in an emotional hug while others watch this beautiful celebration. NK joins in so does the rest of the Mkhize family but the more they celebrate the more nervous Mkhize becomes. He saw Zinhle's wrath and disappointment that day although she didn't say a single word about it. The Zinhle he knows won't let this slide and this makes him even more nervous. Advocate Dlamini and Suku approach the while laughing at their business talk.

“Thank you so much Advocate.” Says Mkhize.

“I was only doing my job. Put her on tight leash because the next time she messes up I'm not helping. And you Sibangilizwe, it's your duty as a brother to make sure she stays on the right lane. My job is done here have a good day you all.” Says Advocate Dlamini.

“We still waiting for the bill--”

“Don't worry yourselves it's been taken care of.”

Advocate Dlamini smiles and gets in her car and drives off.

“That's strange I did not pay for her services?” Mkhize is confused. Khulekani looks at Mntimande.

“I paid for it. I'm the one who brought advocate Dlamini into this and it was fair for me to cover all the bills.” Mntimande lies he is also in the dark about who paid the bill.

“Okay. When are they coming out?” Asks the anxious Nothabo.

“Zinhle said you guys should go home she will meet you there. Zamo will bring her home.” NK informs everyone and they nod getting in their cars. Mntimande watches them drive off and hugs Suku.

“You lied--” Says Suku looking straight into his eyes. He promised never to lie to her and knowing how good she is at being a lie detector he decides to shut her with a French kiss. “Arg! You taste...awful and stop trying to make me one of those girls whom their reasoning stop after being kissed. Why did you lie?”

“I'm sorry I just finished smoking and I didn't take water or mentos gums after that but sometimes I turn you on with my taste--” Suku glares at him.

“Okay sorry. Yes I lied because I feel like ZakwaNgwenya and Mkhize are hiding things from each other. The way they look at each other speaks louder than what their words express. I don't know maybe I'm being paranoid but at that moment lying felt right.” Suku looks at him and smiles amused.

“Yini? (What?)”

“You just spoke a whole paragraph using English yet you keep saying you don't know how to speak English? You are a crook!”

“MaKhwali 'ima kancane. Angiwona umgulukudu yebo ngiyazi ukukhuluma ngolwimi lwabemzini kodwa angithandi ukulusbenzisa. (Suku wait! I'm not a crook, yes I know how to speak English but I don't like using it.)”

“I know I have always known that you can speak English now let's go home.” Says Suku getting in the car.

“Ngiyaxolisa. (I'm sorry.)” Mntimande says now sitting behind the steering wheel.

“It's okay I'm not angry or hurt. Come here.” He leans over and kisses her. She pulls out of the kiss leaving a mentos gum in his mouth. They both smile looking at each other and he drives off.

It's around past three in the afternoon when Zamo's car finally pulls over at the Mkhize mansion.

“Friend are you okay? You seem lost.” Zamo asks and Zinhle snaps out of it.

“I'm good friend it's just.... Staying away from my children and only to come back after two years... I really feel sad.”

“You are back now Zie that's all that matters. Love them like it's your last day on earth and they will forget you ever left.”

“Thank you.” Says Zinhle smiling with teary eyes.

“Are you sure you will be fine by yourself?”

“I won't be entirely alone and I think I have to bond with my family. I will visit you soon so you can tell me more about this Malcom Xaba guy.” They laugh and Zinhle gets down the car.

Inside the mansion they are all busy preparing a grand welcome. They pause as shoe heels click on the tiled floor and they all turn to the entrance as Zinhle catwalks into the house looking stunning in her red dress with a slit that reveals her left leg. Mkhize looks at her in awe and she smiles as Owami and Olwethu run to her. She squats and hugs them tight and tears fall afresh down her cheeks. Her children rub the tears off her beautiful and smooth face.

“You will ruin your beautiful makeup mommy. You look gorgeous.” Owami says as they hug her once again.

“Welcome back home my beautiful wife.” Mkhize hugs her and she fights her tears. Sanelisiwe walks by and take the children away as their parents sob

in each other's arms.

“Grandma it's okay you are home now please stop with the tears. We are all waiting to properly welcome you back.” Says Nothabo seperating her grandparents and hugs Zinhle. The smell of the perfume Zinhle smelled the other day on Mkhize's clothes hits her nostrils nauseating her. She swallows her excess saliva and slowly pulls out of Nothabo's embrace turning her head to Sanelisiwe's direction. Zinhle's cold stare has Sanelisiwe shivering, Mkhize looks at Zinhle who now has her right hand in a fist trying to control whatever she is feeling.

“Mom are you okay?” Asks Khulekani who has been trying to get her attention.

“I will be right back...” Zinhle runs upstairs to the master bedroom.....

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PLEASE LIKE, COMMENT AND SHARE.

More chapters have been added to LOVE, GREED AND DESIRE on Visionary Writings. For Precious Rosé I'm really sorry for not adding more chapters my network always act up when I'm about to send. Click the WhatsApp button on the page and just type "Precious Rose" we will send the PDF copies. Thank you.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 80.

NARRATED.

Zinhle slams the door behind her and sits in the couch trying to control her temper. Her blood is boiling and her skin feels like it will peel off. She takes a glass of water and feels a little better.

“Zie? Babe?” Mkhize steps closer to her and tries to hug her but Zinhle pushes him away. “Zi--”

“Don't! Just leave me the hell alone before I do something I will forever regret. I need time to myself. Just get the hell out of here!” Zinhle yells and punches the wall hurting her hand. Blood drips down her hand, Mkhize tries to hold her but she violently pushes a vase and it shatters on the floor.

“Babe I can explain--”

“I asked for a divorce Mkhize! I fucking asked for a divorce but you threatened me you told me you were going to be faithful yet you saw it fit to sleep with your son's nanny! Have you guys been raising my children while planning your own family? Huh? What is it? What exactly do you want from me?” Zinhle shouts.

“I love you babe I'm sorry it was a moment of weakness--”

“A moment of weakness? You disrespected me! You didn't even bother to wash her off yourself before you came to see me at the hospital that's

utter disrespect!”

“Babe I'm sorry. Nothing happened--” Zinhle slaps him hard he feels a little dizzy.

“Utter that nonsense again I'm going to skin you alive I swear on my children's! What the fuck happened between you and her?” Mkhize looks at Zinhle in shock still trying to comprehend what just happened. “I'm listening and be quick before you infuriate me even more. I just came out of jail and I have serious things to do before I go back there for slaughtering you and your slut--”

“You don't threaten me Zinhle! I'm your husband!” Mkhize hisses and Zinhle raises her eyebrows.

“Oh really? So you still remember that you are my husband yet you go around sleeping with your employees?”

“What are you talking about?” Mkhize panics. Zinhle switches on the Smart LED television, removes her bracelet which she opens and removes a memory card inside. She inserts the memory card and Mkhize comes face to face with his dirty laundry.

His heart starts beating fast and he starts sweating. “So much for being a faithful husband. Now I know why you never reprimanded Qhubekani he's your son after all!” Tears stream down Zinhle's tears as she watches a girl with long lashes suck her husband's manhood while he moans and the other girl is busy running her hands on Mkhize's chest. “A threesome? A fucking threesome Mkhize?” Zinhle swallows a painful lump.

“Babe I'm sorry I was horny--”

“I don't know whether you mean that sorry or not but I think I need fresh air with my children--”

“You are not taking my sons away Zinhle! Over my dead body--” Mkhize fires back.

“Watch me. If you think you can outsmart me then you are delusional. I'm hell and when I start making my moves even the devil sits back, watches and learns. You don't want me as your enemy darling. Stay in your lane honey else this crazy girl that loves you so much will chew you up like a chewing gum before spitting you out into the next trashcan.

Don't dare me, I'm ZakwaNgwenya!” She pushes him aside and walks into the closet where she comes out wearing black jeans, black sneakers and a black hoodie.

“Zinhle please I'm sorry. ”

“I know you are sorry honey but I need time, okay?” She kisses him on the cheek and exits the room.

Everyone watches as Zinhle comes down the stairs. She smiles and sighs before speaking.

“Thank you my children for a grand welcome I really appreciate everything you did for me. I'm sorry I didn't react the way you all expected I'm just overwhelmed by everything. Staying behind bars for two years is not easy and I found myself learning to be alone and I never thought I would be around people. Please forgive me if I disappointed you at the moment I just want to bond with Owami and Olwethu. I know you all are big guys now and you don't really need me to be here to feel my presence. I need space--”

“Mother-in-law you don't sound okay? Did

something happen? Did we offend you in any way?"
Asks Gugu.

"Nothing of that sort my children I just feel overwhelmed and I will have to adjust back to normal life."

"I hear you mom. It's understandable please take your time we will wait for you I'm sure you and dad need this time to yourselves." Khulekani says.
Qhubekani looks at Zinhle's glossy eyes and realizes something might be wrong or something happened Zinhle looks hurt.

"Um yeah. Sane can we talk in your room before I leave? I want to thank you for taking care of my children." Sane just nods and follows Zinhle. In Sane's room Zinhle walks in and sits on the dressing table, Sane stands by the door shaking.
"You can stop pretending now I want to talk with the real you not this fake persona you are putting on."
Says Zinhle almost knocking air off Sane's chest.

"W-what do you mean?" She stammers.

"Lizbet Sanelisiwe Dube born on the 18th of August

1988 at Maphisa hospital. Parents' names Nomasonto and Mthandazo Dube. Daughter goes by the name Aisha and is autistic, your little brother is currently studying at Nkulumane High, you went to Bulawayo Poly for a diploma in Engineering but you didn't finish due to financial troubles then you went to South Africa where you met Nhlakanipho and he impregnated you which forced you to come back home and you started working as a maid while pursuing a Psychology degree with Zimbabwe Open University. Should I continue?”

“Who are you?” Sane is beyond shocked.

“Someone you don't want to mess with darling. I'm that person who will destroy your life and leave you alive and sane but on a wheelchair like your father who is suffering from stroke!” Sane swallows hard looking at Zinhle wondering how she got to know everything about her. “I don't care that you need this job for your autistic daughter or whatever shit you need money for but just don't cross your boundaries else you will burn.”

“I'm sorry I didn't mean to. It was a moment of

weakness and we didn't really have sex I was on my periods I gave him a blowjob instead--”

“It better be the last moment you ever feel weak. Whatever feeling you have for my husband you must flush it in the toilet. Are we clear?”

“Yes. Please don't fire me--”

“I won't but you better pray the one who hired you doesn't find out about your deceit else you will lose your job. Next time respect people's marriages especially mine because I'm not people I'm Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya.”

An couple of minutes later Zinhle stops the car in front of a big house that's looks very secure. She punches a few digits on her phone and the gate slowly opens to this beautiful house. Owami gasps and smiles looking at the house.

“Is this your house mommy?” He is so excited.

“Yes my boy.” She parks the car and Owami

unbuckles his little brother and gets down. They both run towards the door and grab the door handle trying to open but the alarm goes off startling them. Zinhle laughs at them while she punches her phone again and steps on the doorstep looking at the face recognition device. "Access granted" Says the automated voice. The boys run inside where they are met by two ladies.

"Boss." The girls bow for Zinhle.

"Yolly. Gloria. How are you girls?"

"We good boss and it's good to see you." Zinhle hugs them.

"Wami! Lwethu!" The boys come back running with a ball.

"Mommy you called?"

"Yes boy. This is aunt Yolanda and this is aunt Gloria. They will be staying with us and please do feel free around them."

"Okay mom. I have seen aunt Gloria before she's the mean aunt." They all laugh.

“I'm sorry boy I didn't mean to be like that. Please forgive me.” Gloria says with a smile.

“I don't hold grudges so we cool.” Says Owami and drags his brother outside to play.

“I'm coming to join you guys. What should I bring?” Zinhle asks.

“Snacks!” Owami shouts. Yolanda sees the pain behind Zinhle's smile and hugs her as she bursts into tears. Yolanda and Gloria hug her tight consoling her.

“I'm sorry boss I told you it was a bad idea to stalk him. We shouldn't have done that.” Gloria says rubbing Zinhle's back.

“I love him! I love Mkhize but he chose to betray me in the worst possible way ever! It really hurts--”

“It's okay it will be fine. Men cheat we forgive them and move on like nothing happened. At least you can console yourself by saying you were not around for two years. Please stop crying Zie.” Says Yolanda.

“I'm glad you thought of leaving instead of hurting any of them. Mkhize will come around for now

focus on your sons and the business. ”

“I have to go and find my brother sooner than later. I will nurse my heart but I won't sit idle while some bastards are busy torturing my brother.”

“I understand. The boys said they had something for you--”

“Not now girls for now I have to bond with my sons. See you later and please prepare something tasty for my boys. Clean their room too don't spray air freshner Olwethu is allergic to it.”

“Okay boss. Do you need a drink--”

“Not when I'm playing with my children. Let me go--”
Zinhle's phone beeps.

****You never listen do you? I told you not to meet with your children but now you even drove with them do you enjoy being in trouble? Anyway, congrats on your parole and I killed the guys who were after your car. Now tell me, is the big gun in or not? The Italians are panicking be quick. See you soon my Queen, your King loves you.***

Zinhle's phone slips from her hand.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 81.

Zinhle's POV.

My heart skips a beat. There's only one bastard who calls me his Queen but I doubt he's the one following me and sending anonymous messages.

“Boss are you okay?” Yolanda asks.

“I'm okay just a little startled. Let me not spoil this day for my sons.” I pick my phone up and go out. My sons are busy playing with the ball, I tap on the

video recording on my phone and capture the priceless moments. Olwethu falls on his knees I gasp thinking he will scream but instead Owami stops and makes him sit on his buttocks and inspects his knee.

“Is it painful?” Questions Owami blowing air on Olwethu's knee. Seeing my sons taking care of each other brings tears to my eyes. I'm not sad but happy that they care for each other.

“There is no blood.” Says Owami looking at his knee.

“Yes boy there's no blood that means it's not really painful, right?” Owami nods. “Good. Come on let's play—”

“Mommy!” Olwethi says when he sees me standing a few feet away from them. I save the video and start playing with them. My phone keeps ringing and I decide to turn it off. I'm not in the mood to talk to my husband right now. I just want to forget about my problems and enjoy this moment. It might be the last time I get to see my sons. As painful as it is, I have to go to war with the most dangerous

bastards I ever read about. The bloody Italians! I pray Zibusiso is still alive it's only a matter of few hours before we board that plane and go to rescue one of our own but before then I have to check how the business is doing.

“Mommy we are hungry!” My sons say in one go and I smile taking them back inside.

Mkhize's POV.

What have I done? How do I explain this to my children? I know they have a lot of questions which I don't have answers to. I messed up big time! I didn't know Zinhle had me bugged I thought everything I did would be swept under the carpet and we will all move on like nothing happened but no, my wife had to spy on me. I forgave her when she slept with my son why can't she forgive me now? I can't lose my sons because of five-minute pleasures. I dial her number one again but it's still

switched off I opt for a message.

Babe I'm sorry please come back home. I will never again cheat on you. I'm sorry.

The message is delivered and she calls back.

“Can you stop pestering me? I said I need fresh air and I understand you are sorry just stop apologizing countless times. I will come home when I'm ready to forgive you.” She says.

“But Zie I forgave you--”

“You should have told me that I should pay back one day but you didn't. If you really think you can use that against me then go ahead and tell your children what you did when you are done sign the damn divorce papers and continue having threesomes! I'm too young to be cheated on by an old man like you. I love you but not enough to be trampled on by you.”

“I'm sorry that sounded wrong. Please come back home I'm begging you.”

“Goodbye hubby.” Shit! Why do I keep messing up?

“You cheated on her, right?” Qhubekani's voice startles me.

“How long have you been standing there?”

“Long enough to know that you are also a piece of trash like me! I'm your son father and you always treated me like garbage when in reality you wanted the fucked up life I was living! At least I never had a threesome when she was still my girlfriend but you? Are you not afraid of suffering a heart attack at your age you are busy with girls young enough to be your granddaughters what the hell is wrong with you father?” My temper rises. No son of mine has the right to question my private activities.

“Enough!” I hiss.

“If you want to catch the attention of everyone in this house go ahead and shame yourself. At least switch off that nonsense on your television--” Fuck! How did I forget to switch it off.

“Son I can explain--”

“You don't owe me any of your loyalty dad but you owe it to your wife. Good luck winning her back the

Zinhle I know doesn't let things slide especially not cheating.” Qhubekani says and slams the door behind him. I'm in a total mess and I don't know how to get out of it.

NARRATED.

Mntimande is helping Suku prepare dinner for everyone while Charity and the children are watching television.

“The first time I saw you I never saw you as a cooking type?” Says Suku watching Mntimande as he removes the tray of grilled ribs from the oven just how the children love them.

“I grew up cooking for my siblings. Being the first born I had to learn to do all duties and make sure they were always taken care of.” He says in English this time. It's true what they say about women we love they have that power that tames any men and

make them do exactly what the women want.

“I see. Do you enjoy doing it?”

“I used to cook because it was my duty, now I only do it when I'm not forced into doing it. I don't like being told what to do or ordered to do something. I'm a man and it's important for me to keep feeling that I'm a man. If one day you decide to boss me around then you will be killing me and the man you fell in love with will slip through your fingers. I respect women and I expect to be respected too.”
He says with a smile.

“I won't boss you around I don't like a soft man either. I want a husband who respects me but is not afraid of me.” Suku says and Mntimande kisses her on the the cheek.

“Have you thought about what I said?” He asks.

“Do I have another choice?”

“No you don't. I trust you and I want you to do it.”

“Okay then I will sign it. But what if it doesn't go well with others? I'm just your girlfriend nothing more.

This might cause friction--” Mntimande reaches for his back jean pocket and pulls out a shiny diamond ring that he slides on Suku's finger. She is shell shocked.

“Now you are my fiance. Anything else I should do to convince you?”

“W-what? Are you asking me to marry you?” She still can not believe her eyes.

“No. I'm marking my territory and when I come back I will ask for your hand in marriage from your mother not you. Why do I have to ask you to marry me when you can kill for that--” Suku throws a dishtowel at him and he laughs.

“I'm not dreaming, right?” He picks her up and puts her on the kitchen counter. Standing between her legs he looks straight into her glossy eyes.

“No you not dreaming. I won't kneel down or do all that crazy shit kwelakithi indoda ayinguqeli owes imame laboMntimande bangavuka bame ngezinyawo emathuneni (in our culture we don't kneel down for women if I do that my ancestors will

surely wake up from their graves) only Nigerian men are that dramatic.” He smiles and kisses her tears of joy away. “I love you.”

“I love you Mntimande.” They hug each other until Liqhawe clears her throat.

“I thought you guys were cooking?”

“Can you mind your business Qhawe? You found a great woman for me now we should live as per your rules?” Says Mntimande shaking his head.

“Not...really..... Oh. My. Word! Mom?” Liqhawe screams and everyone comes running as she inspects Suku's hand. “Oh boy! My father is not bad after all--”

“Wow! You two are getting married?” Ntsika asks admiring the ring. They all marvel at the ring until Mntimande chases them away.

“You are all making my wife-to-be shy. Go back to watching your telenovelas.” They all laugh.

“Congratulations.”.....

“You know MaKhwali it saddens me that I'm leaving you behind but as you know I wouldn't be at ease and love you the way a man should love a woman because my mind will be on Zibusiso.” Mntimande says massaging Suku's feet,

“I know Mntimande how you feel about your family and I wouldn't want to be that selfish woman who only thinks about her happiness and forgets about her man's happiness, I know your happiness lies in Zibusiso and Zinhle, I will never try to compete with them so because of that I'm releasing you to go find him after all Zibusiso is also my brother and for me to show him my gratitude for what he did for me all those years, letting you go find him is a small prize to pay.” Suku says.

“You are not competing with anyone my love you are very special to me and it will always be like that. I know you won't be entirely happy if I don't try and bring Zibusiso back.”

“Hmmmmmm the way you are rubbing my feet right now will make me forget what I just said.” Suku says letting out a soft moan. Her moaning turns

Mntimande's lights on that he starts to massage the legs going up to her thighs.

“You like this MaKhwali or should I stop?” He has a mischievous smile plastered on his face and Suku with her eyes closed parts her legs to give him more access to each thigh but he has other plans besides massaging her thighs. He snakes his hands upto her butt cheeks and molds them like what a Potter does to clay. This sends shockwaves down Suku's body. The more he molds her butt the more electrifying it feels. He starts to massage her honeypot slowly and #REMOVED.....

THE BRIDE.

Insert 82.

Zinhle's POV.

The dinner went well and I'm glad my sons don't behave like they don't know me. My husband

messed up but he made sure my sons never forgot me and our relationship was not spoiled.

“Good night boys.” I kiss them on their foreheads and tuck them in. After dimming the lights I walk out leaving the door slightly open just in case they need something. When I come back to the living room Yolanda and Gloria are waiting for me with their specs and white coats on.

“Where are the boys?” I ask putting on my own white coat.

“In the warehouse boss.” I nod and inform Pamela the helper to keep an eye on my sons. If I’m going to leave for Italy then I have to leave my business in order.

“Yolly how is grandma I forgot to call her earlier I’m sure she hates me now.” I ask punching the security code on my phone and the door opens to the staircase that leads to the underground warehouse.

“She is fine just her blood pressure and eyes. She prayed for you day and night and would threaten the helper if they refused to give her sweet things

saying you will come and fire them.” I laugh. I met Yolanda and Gloria when I was pregnant with Owami. I was broke, heartbroken and lonely when I met these girls, they are blood sisters, but different mothers. They stayed with their grandmother and were hustlers like me. As my tummy grew bigger they would come and help me with washing and cleaning my apartment just so they can take my clothes, wear them and impress their blessers. I ended up feeling open around them until I find out where they stayed with their grandmother. I cried when I saw the house, no that wasn't a house. They were staying in Cowdry Park new stands in a house which had no roof over it yet the owner of that house collected money for rent every month end. I wondered how they dealt with cold nights, rainy nights and grandma told me whenever it rained they would just cover themselves with sacks or plastic bags and let it rain. I couldn't leave them there and I asked them to move into my flat. Qhubekani was all those bad things but one this he made sure of was that he actually buys a house and register it in my name. Since then they have been my second family

after my brothers but I kept that a secret. Only Zibusiso knows about them I think Mntimande knows too although he hasn't confronted me about it. Yes I was the one who sent Gloria to the Mkhize mansion I just wanted her to plant spy cameras in the house and leave hence her behavior. It was all my plan and I'm glad I did.

“Boss.” The boys bow.

“Boys. It's good to see you again.” We fist bump. “I heard the shipment arrived well with no problems in Afghanistan and United States and you did a good job covering our tracks for that I'm proud if you all and you will be rewarded accordingly. I want you to lay low on shipments at the moment I suspect I'm being followed by the people who took my brother. If they find out about our business they might use it against me and I will have no choice but to give in to their demands.”

“Does this mean we stop even the production?” Yolanda asks.

“No. We continue with the production but we don't

ship out orders. I will talk to our clients.”

“Okay boss. The earrings you asked for are ready. Just the way you designed them and we decided to add a watch for your brother since you mentioned him being part of the plan.” Rambo, one of the boys says handing me a sealed box.

“Thank you. That was very thoughtful of you.”

“The pleasure is all ours boss.”

“See you around 4 AM I have calls to make. In my absence, Yolly and Stix make sure my children are safe. Stay in the shadows I don't want my husband to know about you and our business. Glory, Ma11, my brother's family needs protection too. Make sure no one touches his children or his girlfriend you know family means everything to us. AK47, please make sure grandma and the helper are safe. Rambo, make sure everything goes accordingly and don't forget the boys on the streets and the orphanages. That's all for now.” Since most people with clean money don't care about others I decided that my illegal business will help the needy. Also taking care

of the boys on the streets help us with information whenever they see something dodgy on the streets they let us know.

“Sure boss.” They say in unison all taking seats behind their computers. I run a very successful dangerous illegal business. There's a bastard who taught me how to make small dangerous weapons using my technological knowledge. I researched more about it that's how I came with the idea of turning my wedding ring into a dangerous weapon. I can use it to hack into any system, it can be a spy camera, it records voices, it can control bombs, all I have to do is to set it before leaving for any task, touch it and let it sense my fingerprint then boom! With this ring I have the world on my fingertips, my business entails manufacturing these small dangerous weapons for high paying clients. I started it a few months after Owami was born. I visited the dark web and saw people looking for something similar to what I had in mind I took my chance and I got my first client. I told him I had the design but no materials to use he was desperate, he

paid serious cash and I worked my magic. He was happy with the product that he ordered for more with doubled prize that's how I got money to buy this house from a well-known business tycoon who seemed to have bitten more than he could chew at that time. I have been running my business undercover and not even my husband knows about it only Zibusiso knows that I have serious cash and dangerous weapons in my house.

Another damn message! "Tomorrow is the day I hope you are ready my Queen. Travel arrangements in your safe email. Good night I love you. King XXX." The day I'm going to meet this motherfucker I'm going to kill him. Now that I have briefed my team I have to see my main secret room. I step into my study room and walk around running my hand on the books on the shelf. I haven't really read these books but I need them to keep my secret safe. I remove the Bible from the shelf and press the button on the shelf as it slowly separates exposing my sanctuary. I walk in and press the button again

and the bookshelf comes back together. All my laptops are on and so is the desktop. Something catches my eye on the desktop. It's a video of Zibusiso being tortured.

“My family will find me and you will regret ever messing with the Ngwenyas!” Zibusiso spits on the man's face. All of the men torturing him's faces are covered with black balaclavas. “Zie! I know you are smart sis, 734ZN245–” A man stomps on his chest and he passes out and the video ends. Oh gosh brother! I feel my chest tightening with pain. Where are you my dear brother? 734ZN245? What does this mean?

“Sis?” NK answers on the first ring.

“I need you to do something for me I'm sending a message to your secure e-mail and make sure you don't open it using your phone.”

“Sounds serious?”

“Very serious. I will call you early tomorrow, good night.”

****Brother. I trust your things are in order, I found a

clue and we are leaving tomorrow. Be safe.***

After sending the message to brother Mntimande I sit behind my laptop desk and the ring I received from the anonymous person flashes red! Fuck! The ring has a tracker! Who the hell is tracking me? I was suspicious but a tracker? I disconnect the ring from my phone and deactivate it. If I try to check who might be sending me messages and gifts then the person might hack into my system, whoever it is he/she is my match. I make an important video call to Mr Einstein.

“Our very own gorgeous Queen is back. Welcome back my lady.” He smiles and sips his drink.

“It's good to see you too Mr Einstein. It's time to repay that favor.” I keep a straight face.

“On point always. What do I have to do Your Majesty?”

“I'm going after a dangerous Italian Mafia boss if I don't make it out alive please do use that bullet I gave you the other day and make sure my brothers are fine.”

“Sounds hard but I will honour your wish. I wish you all the best.”

“Thank you. I owe you one when I come back.”

“A diamond watch for my dear wife will do your majesty.”

“Noted Mr Einstein. Pass my greetings to your lovely wife, till we talk again.” I smile and he winks at me before disconnecting the call. I wonder if his wife knows she's under surveillance?

NARRATED.

Early in the morning Mntimande knocks on his son's bedroom door. Ntsika sits up rubbing his eyes.

“Good morning dad.”

“Morning son. The time I told you about has come. Take this bullet and keep it safe if I don't come back

avenge my death and take care of your siblings and my fiancé. I trust you son.”

“As you say dad. Travel safe Bhambolunye remember you left us here and keep fighting. I love you dad.”

“I love you too son.” They hug. Mntimande says his goodbyes to all the children before going back to the bedroom.

“I feel like I'm losing you.” Suku says feeling anxious.

“You won't ever lose me not even death can separate us I will always dwell in your heart. Allow me to leave MaKhwali. I know it's hard but we are doing this for us.” He tilts her head and kisses her as tears fall down her cheeks.

“Come back to me and bring my brother with you. I love you.”

“Uthandwa yimi ntombi yakwaMdlongwa. Ugcine imuli yethu (I love you too Suku. Take care of our family) and don't ever lose hope no matter what bad news you hear. Until you can feel my soul

separating from yours then don't ever believe news about my death and forever remain faithful to us. See you soon.” He kisses her on the forehead and picks his backpack and walks out.

“Mntimande?” He turns back, Suku runs to him and French kisses him. He smiles at her and walks out...

Zinhle parks at the Mkhize mansion, takes the boys in and cover them with their blankets since it's still cold.

“I'm leaving boys remember what I told you never forget that.”

“Yes mommy. We love you.” She tearfully hugs them.

“I love you more my boys.” She says kissing their foreheads and bids farewell to them. She goes to her husband's house and wakes him up with a kiss. He is startled. “Relax it's me. I brought the boys I'm leaving—”

“To where?”

“I'm going to save my brother--”

“But babe--”

“But nothing hubby. I'm going to rescue my brother and you won't stop me. You also need time to think about what you want in life. Be a good boy in my absence because if I come back and find out you cheated you won't like what I will do to you. I love you.” She French kisses him and leaves him shocked.

Zinhle gets into the car and speeds off. Just when she's about to hit the Harare road a black SUV appears from nowhere and blocks her way. She swerves the car avoiding a clash and tries to think faster but then now she's surrounded by three cars. She sighs and sits back as one of the guys walks towards her car. He motions for her to get down.

“Put your hands where I can see them and get down the car.” She does as told. Another guy comes and knocks her down as they take her into their car, the

other guy searches her car and takes every valuable thing out before pouring kerosene all over the car and sets it on fire. They get into their respective cars and speed off.....

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72 HOURS LATER...

An eye for an eye, blood sweat, flying bullets, dying souls and there can only be one King of the jungle. Who will it be?

THE BRIDE.

Insert 83.

Mntimande's POV.

When I got to R.G Mugabe International Airport I was welcomed by a woman who looked more like a secret agent instead of an ordinary worker. She said nothing to me, she just scanned the watch Zinhle gave me before I left and she beckoned for me to follow her. I was confused and my gut was working overtime when I received a message from Zinhle telling me to trust the lady.

“Misheck Moyo a trusted employee of Roberto Adriano G. Esposito.” The lady had said handing over a fake passport to be checked. The man behind the counter glanced at me once, then to the passport and stamped it. I was still confused when the lady led me to a private jet with the initials of the man she had just mentioned.

“Sorry but who are you?” I asked.

“My job is to protect you not to answer your questions. Your questions will be attended to in due time.” She said. I was led into the private jet where I met three men.

“Welcome on board Sir. You are safe please feel

free and you can trust us.” One of the men said. My gut relaxed but I still had questions, they saw that and they handed me a newspaper written in Italiano. What the fuck? On the front page was a picture of a man who had bulky dreadlocks, a dragon tattoo on the side of his neck, a few tattooed stars disappearing under his collar, bushy beard, studs on both his ears and I realized he loves accessories as he had diamond and gold rings on his fingers. I stared at the paper trying to understand who this man was until the jet took off and I was offered a glass of drink.

“I’m sorry but I only drink from a sealed bottle. Sealed water will do.” I said. I looked at the watch, Zinhle had told me it will flash red when danger looms which meant I was safe at the time.

“I see. Our boss did say that you are a tough and intelligent man.”

“Who is your boss?”

“The King of the Jungle.” The man responded leaving me confused. The King of the Jungle? I

sighed and continued reading the paper which praised the man as the prominent businessman until something clicked! The Dragons! The fucking Dragons! I clenched my fists and felt my blood boiling. I grabbed one of the men by the neck and pinned him on the seat.

“Who the fuck is your boss? Who is he?” The man gagged trying to free himself.

“Stop! Leave him alone or I will blow your brains off!” I was surrounded. They had guns on them and I was alone. “Stop it Sibangilizwe!” Hearing my name coming from the man's mouth almost knocked air out of me. They knew who I was but I didn't. The watch began to flash blue.

“That thing has your answers. Switch on your phone you will find the answers.” I did as they said but to my shock my phone was locked.

“ZakwaNgwenya#734*\$_GoddessOFfire is the password.” What? I wondered how they knew all of that but I typed the password anyway. I'm not good with tech but I trust my sister in that department. What I found in my phone paralyzed me and even

now I'm still shocked and I'm sitting here in a foreign land waiting for the “boss” to arrive with Zinhle.

Mkhize's POV.

The news of Zinhle's kidnapping are all over the news I don't know who to believe anymore because Zinhle sent a message from her phone telling me not to believe the news. I'm really confused, I'm trying to make sense of the whole thing but I'm failing. What makes me even more confused is what Owami said when he saw the news. “All the best mommy go and show them who is the boss.” are Owami's words and he went out and continued playing. I don't know what Zinhle told him I should ask him but then knowing my son he won't talk.

“Can I come in?” Really Sanelisisiwe Dube? Like are you for fucking real? I have been avoiding this girl ever since my wife came back and now she wants

to come into my bedroom? I'm being tested for real!

“No you can't come into my bedroom. What do you want?” I ask keeping a straight face.

“Are you going to ignore me after enjoying fucking my mouth--” I clench my jaws.

“What do you want? Do you want me to fuck your mouth again?” I'm so annoyed right now.

“Right now my p**sy is ready and I don't mind giving it to you--” I grab her by the neck and pin her on the wall.

“Don't you dare come here and try to seduce me with your sweet voice and pretending to be shy I'm married, get it?” Her eyes pop out as she struggles to breath. “I will make you disappear if you try and play dirt with me. I'm Mkhize uKhabazela and I'm sure you don't want to see the lengths I can go to protect my family. Know your story and stay out of the lion's territory or you will definitely be served for dinner. Get the hell out of my face!” I let her go and she gasps for air coughing repeatedly.

“You liked it--” I slap her hard she loses balance and

rolls down the stairs screaming. I really have no time for drama, I get back inside my room and lock the door.

Zinhle's POV.

My feet are feeling numb and these idiots blindfolded me. I fought with them until they showed me something that calmed me down. We boarded a private jet and now we are here in Positano, Italy. If this was a casual visit I would be happy to be in such a beautiful place but this is no casual visit. I'm still deep in my thoughts wondering where Mntimande is, they took my phone so I can't track him but my earrings haven't flashed red and that means he's safe, a black SUV pulls over. A tall, muscular guy with brackets to die for (you know what they say about men with brackets) steps down and puts on his black shades. His long hair is blown by the wind as he unbuttons his blazer. He is

wearing slim fit jeans, a white formal shirt, a black blazer and white sneakers. He takes a first step towards me and my heart rate accelerates, fear is taking over, the bastard looks familiar and I'm doomed if he's the one. My knees start to buckle down, I'm sweating and struggling to breathe as my body gives in. I close my eyes expecting to crash on the rocky ground but strong arms catch me.

“Breathe my Queen breathe.” Fuck! Where the hell is he coming from? Why is he here? I have so much words to say to him but my mind is not working hand in hand with my mouth at the moment. “Not a welcome I expected after six years. Can you open your eyes because I know you can hear me Your Majesty.” He hasn't changed. He still has that sexy voice yet intimidating and full of authority. I involuntarily slowly open my eyes until I'm face to face with his ocean blue eyes that haunted me for years after he disappeared.

“A-Alessandro?” My voice comes out as a whisper.

“Yes my Queen your one and only King, your Knight in shining armour in flesh and blood--” I remember

how he disappeared and what his sister told me about him getting married to one of the girls I went to school with and push him away. "What now?" I slap him hard, he touches his cheek and shake his head looking at me. "Really Zinhle? You are going to hit me in front of my workers? Are you nuts?" I'm about to punch him but he blocks my fist. "That's enough!" He hisses and I flinch. My eyes are closed already waiting for a tight slap but it doesn't come. "Open your eyes I'm not going to slap you." Tears start streaming down my cheeks? God why him of all people? Why should he be the one to help me in this mission? He's the only bastard who knows me like the back of his hand and has a hold on me. No matter how much I try I will never be able to defeat him should he also decide to betray me. "My Queen? I'm sorry, okay? You provoke me even when you know how I am. Please stop crying... Shit! My Queen we have to move, now!" He grabs my hand but I remain rooted on the ground. "Babe we are in danger I can't risk you getting hurt, okay? You will scold and hit me later for now put your hand around my waist there's a gift for you there and smile at

least.” How can someone disappear for good six years and come back expecting things to be as they used to be? Dude I moved on! Okay? I look around and see bikers coming for us from all ends. Fuck! I put my arm around him and feel three guns. “That’s right my Queen follow my lead.” One of the bikers who happens to be a young lady gets down and steps closer to us.

“So you are dining with the enemy now Alex? Huh? Does dad know about this?”

“I don’t answer to you Aurora!”

“You know what dad says about betrayal, right? This girl is the sister to our prisoner--” I charge towards the girl and punch her. I’m fuming and I feel like ripping her skin off. “What the fuck? Did you just punch me--” She pulls a gun.

“Back off Aurora! For my Queen I won’t hesitate to blow your brains off little sister.” What? Alessandro is a son to a man who has my brother captive? He signals his boys and they take the sister away. Aurora fires her bullet screaming and kicking in the

air, Alessandro pushes me down as the bullets grazes his arm. "Go to my car I'm going to cover you." Bullets are now flying right, left and center. I fire my own gun taking one of the bikers down. "I said go to the damn car!" He drags me while his free hand continue pulling the trigger. He opens the driver side. "Take the wheel and start the car we have to move." I do as he say and he jumps on the passenger seat. I look at the pile of bodies and back to him. "Those who live by the bullet die by the same bullet. We have serious issues to worry about, step on that pedal my boys will take care of this." I have no choice but to do as he says.

"Where is my brother?" I ask as I join the road to where, I don't know. My mind is now working overtime. Maybe I didn't hear him correctly about the man who has my brother.

"In my hotel room waiting for you. What took you so long to arrive don't you care about your brother anymore?"

"Alessandro you are missing the point. You don't just rock up in my life and expect to play the hero.

I'm married now and I don't need you--”

“Forget about your marriage to that old cheating bastard and think about your brother and the man you just stepped into his territory. Roberto Adriano Giovanni Esposito is a very dangerous mafia boss and you just stepped on his toes by coming here. Think about how you are going to save your skin we will talk about my disappearance later. Take a right turn.”

“How do you this Roberto?” I ask but he says nothing.

“Park in front of that white building.” He says pressing his phone.

“What are you doing?”

“Pausing the hotel monitors. Let's go.” He throws a hijab and shades at me. “Make yourself look different.” Getting inside his room gives us no problem. When I step inside I see Mntimande standing by the window looking outside. He turns and we look at each other and I run into his open arms.

“You are safe.” We say in unison and laugh.

“You will show affection to each other later.

Zibusiso was flown to the outskirts of Italy I'm not sure where but Roberto has three ranches I'm suspecting--”

“Wait dude? How do you know so much about this? Who are you?” Mntimande questions.

“Alessandro Giovanni Esposito a first born son of Roberto Adriano Giovanni Esposito--” As if we planned this both Mntimande and I pull our guns and point them at Alessandro.....

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LIKE, COMMENT AND SHARE.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 84.

[I apologize for the delay I was attending a church service.]

Zinhle's POV.

“Wait dude? How do you know so much about this? Who are you?” Mntimande questions.

“Alessandro Giovanni Esposito a first born son of Roberto Adriano Giovanni Esposito--” As if we planned this both Mntimande and I pull our guns and point them at Alessandro. “Really? Are you both gonna shoot the man who trusted you with those guns? Why would I give two intelligent people guns if I know I'm about to betray them? My Queen, you know I'm not stupid, right?” That's true. This bastard may be all things but definitely not a fool.

“Why should we trust an enemy's son?” Mntimande asks.

“Because the son also wants a piece of his father. This heir to the Esposito empire is enraged and

wants justice for everything his mother went through in the hands of his own father.” A tear escapes Alessandro's eye. Mntimande lowers his gun he knows a real man doesn't cry for no reason. “Roberto killed my mother, his own wife simply because she threatened to turn him in when he separated us after marrying a second wife. For now he doesn't know I hate him but when he ordered for Zibusiso to be kidnapped my hatred for him tripled. My Queen I left your life only physically but I have always been there--”

“Your story has a lot of loopholes boy? What are you hiding?”

“It's hard to tell the whole truth of why I'm here but I'm sure you are man enough to handle the truth. I love your sister, I love Zinhle so much that I'm still single even today--” I choke on my saliva.

Alessandro ignores my brother's presence and rubs my back. “I love you babe I meant every word back then when I said I was going to wife your crazy self. I still remember it was your 15th birthday... do I continue or we act quick and save your brother?”

Asks Alessandro looking at Mntimande who in turn looks deep into my eyes searching for answers. I'm confused too brother there are no answers in my eyes but my gut somehow tells me to trust this guy.

“What's your plan?” Mntimande finally asks him.

“Good. First we find out which of my father's ranches he was taken to. First ranch is located in the outskirts of this location we are in, Positano. The second one in Naples and the other in Florence.” He says pointing on the map rolled out on the bed. Now, my father's second wife loves the one in Naples and Roberto wouldn't want to risk his wife seeing him torture someone, for now let's take this out. In Florence there's a lot of anything you can find in a ranch and it's a perfect place to commit a perfect crime and get away with it and they need Zibusiso healthy and in his right state of mind because they need information from him. This is the map of the ranch--” His phone rings. “Talk to me.” He says putting the phone on speaker mode while showing us more photos.

“Aurora has a chip behind her ear--”

“Tell me something I don't know. Of course she's the daughter of the most dangerous criminal so that chip is a normal thing. Is that all?”

“No. Check your laptop we sent something.” He types a long complicated password and a video of Roberto is shown.

“This is not good. Thanks boy, Aurora shouldn't escape until I say so keep her sedated if you have to.”

“Sure boss.”

“What does this mean? Where is your father going? My gut tells me he is about to hurt my brother?” Mntimande says rubbing his head.

“This means he knows or suspects you are here and now we have to move before he gets to him. I will distract him with something to delay his travel arrangements. We need to buy time, 5 hours at least. Thank you for trusting me.” He says and flashes his rare smile.

I met Alessandro in South Africa, Zibusiso and his girlfriends threw a party for me. They booked the whole club, purchased all the alcohol and invited more guests. I was turning fifteen, alcohol, drugs and cigarettes were not my thing and I didn't want to get in trouble with brother Mntimande. He's always been the overprotective and strict brother. While people were busy dancing, the Dragons, a popular notorious gang in South Africa rocked up uninvited. Some called them the bikers because they are always on their bikes. They started a fight with Zibusiso and his friends, fists were swung and when they pulled guns Alessandro walked in and the place went dead silent while the Dragons saluted him. I was shit scared and he noticed that.

“Can I take you home baby girl?” He asked and signalled the dragons to leave. I was so frightened and I was about to call Mntimande, Zibusiso and his friends were drunk so I took his offer although I didn't trust him. I was shaking, he picked me up and took me to his car. None of the invited guests even realized I was gone because they were all drunk.

The drive was quiet until he spoke. “Alessandro Esposito is the name of your King my Queen.” He smiled and for the first time in my life I blushed.

“What's your government name my Queen? ”

“Zinhle Ngwenya.” I said as he parked at some fancy gate.

“I'm dropping this for my mother I will be back--”

“I will walk my house is a few meters--”

“I don't like a woman who opposes my orders sweetheart not especially the woman who is going to be the Queen in my kingdom in a few years to come. Keep still I will be back in a few seconds.”

His voice was filled with authority just like Mntimande's voice. He gave me his bracelet when he dropped me home.

“Thank you.” I smiled.

“No thank you my Queen. One day I'm going to marry you, you look fifteen so I'm going to give you ten years to mature then we will settle down.” I laughed his statement off. Since that day he became a constant nuisance in my life until he let

me in his life. He is the best when it comes to tech, and he is the one who taught me to manufacture dangerous small weapons. He is the only man who can read my mind like an open book and can defeat me in any dangerous game because he knows my weakness.

“My Queen? ”

“ZakwaNgwenya?”

“Hmm...” I'm startled. “Sorry I zoned out--”

“Not a good thing especially now that we are going to war. Can you focus?”

“I'm good. What's the plan?”

“I'm going there as his heir he called me over then I will check the status. Take these phones and use them. They are safe and Zee you can deactivate them using your ring I linked them. See you in a few hours.” Alessandro says, fist bumps with Mntimande before kissing me on the lips and walks out taking his jacket.

“Ushadiwe ZakwaNgwenya uzibambe dadewethu

yeka ukusinekela indoda ongayazi. (You are married Zinhle stop blushing for a man you don't even know.)” I didn't notice I was smiling.

“Mkhize cheated with a number of girls--”

“Yima lapho Zinhle khohlwa ngoMkhize nezifebe zakhe (Stop right there ZakwaNgwenya forget about your husband and his harlots) for now let's focus on finding our brother. We also need plan F, from where I'm standing blood is about to be spilled and it won't be easy.”

NARRATED.

Back at the Mkhize mansion Sane is groaning in pain as Gugu tries to care for her sprained ankle. She fell really bad and hit her head really hard and it's swollen right now.

“I'm going to sue the boss for doing this to me...”
Gugu presses her swollen ankle hard Sane groans

in agony.

“What was that?” Asks Gugu with a straight face.

“I didn't say anything I'm sorry.”

“Good. Keep your mouth shut else you will find yourself dancing with your ancestors very soon. The Mkhizes don't take threats lightly. You are too young to die and your daughter still needs you. Stay in your lane.” Gugu says and leaves the room. As soon as she leaves Sane watches a video of Mkhize having a threesome from a memory she stole. Her lips curve in a smile and opens WhatsApp and starts typing a loooong message....

AT ESPOSITO RANCH IN FLORENCE

Zibusiso is chained on a chair, his skin is pale and blood is dripping from his face and wrists.

Roberto's goons are torturing them.

“Talk! Where is our gold? Where is the South African

police keeping it?” One of the men dips Zibusiso's head into water, vinegar and spirit solution. He groans in pain as he tries to hold his breath. After a few minutes the men releases him and Zibusiso spits on his face.

“Go fuck your mother!” Zibusiso says through gritted teeth.

“You bloody--” The man is about to punch him but a strong hand blocks his fist.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 85.

[UNEDITED.]

NARRATED.

AT ESPOSITO'S RANCH IN FLORENCE

Zibusiso is chained on a chair, his skin is pale and blood is dripping from his face and wrists. Roberto's goons are torturing them.

“Talk! Where is our gold? Where is the South African police keeping it?” One of the men dips Zibusiso's head into water, vinegar and spirit solution. He groans in pain as he tries to hold his breath. After a few minutes the men releases him and Zibusiso spits on his face.

“Go fuck your mother!” Zibusiso says through gritted teeth.

“You bloody--” The man is about to punch him but a strong hand blocks his fist. The goon slowly turns looking at the direction of the person who blocked his fist. The goon's rage is replaced by an apologetic face. “Boss.” They all stand back and Zibusiso looks on confused. How can their boss be so young? How can a little boy go after the South

African police?

“What were the instructions?” Alessandro questions the goons.

“Get him to tell the truth and make sure he is not hurt or dead--” They sing.

“And this? Why is he bleeding?” Alessandro's cold stare sends shivers down their spines.

“We are sor--” Alessandro slits the man's throat open and he gags holding his neck and blood pours out, the goon who was torturing Zibusiso falls on the floor and breathes his last just like that.

“Untie him and get the hell out of here!” Hisses Alessandro while he wipes his knife with the dead man's T-shirt. The other goons run around bumping on each other and untie Zibusiso who is still confused. This is not the Roberto he saw on those photos.

“Who are you?” Zibusiso finally asks. Alessandro finally sits on the opposite chair as the goons close the door on their way out.

“Alessandro Giovanni Esposito, a son of the man who is keeping you here.”

“What do you want from me? Where is your father?”

“The question should be what do you want from Roberto? You came into his territory, the stupid South African police and their ministers threw you into a lion's den and you agreed, all for what? Freedom? You were already free in that jail because you run those streets but here you are going to die. Roberto doesn't take such things lightly and he is on his way here. What's your plan? Before you answer that my father is a very ruthless man with no conscience at all.”

“Why should I tell you my plan?”

“734ZN245--” Zibusiso's eyes pop out in shock.

“W-who are you?”

“I told you my name now I'm going to tell you my plan. Your people are here to rescue you and I'm helping you guys--”

“What do you mean my people?”

“Your brother Sbang-- whatever and my Queen Zinhle are a few meters away from you--”

“What have you done to my siblings?” Zibusiso fumes.

“You will need that fury for later now sit down and listen to me very carefully. Here is the plan...”

Zibusiso listens attentively, although he doesn't trust Alessandro he keeps nodding to what he says.

“What if you betray us?”

“Use plan F. That sounds familiar, right? I taught Zinhle everything she knows now let's clear your doubts by a simple phone call.” Says Alessandro dialing Zinhle. “My Queen talk to your brother.”

“ZB? Zibusiso brother?” Hearing her voice tears stream down Zibusiso's face.

“Sokuseduze ukusa qina Mthiyane sokusele kanncane uyingobe lempi. (Dawn is about to come be strong ZB it's only a matter of time till you sing victory praises.)” Says Mntimande. Just then there's a sound of screeching tyres and motorbikes raving outside.

“Shit! My father is here--” Alessandro plunges a long injection into Zibusiso's neck who clenches his teeth. He is about to breathe when a second, third, fourth and fifth injections make his body numb. “The injections are for you to take the pain like a man that you are. I know he will ask me to torture you, keep your mouth shut until he orders for you to be taken to his surgery. In there they will put you on a machine that is supposed to read your mind but Zinhle got that covered. Here.” Alessandro gives him two guns. “When the war starts shoot to kill if by mistake you kill me kiss my Queen on my behalf because I haven't had the chance to do that myself. If you get a chance get the hell out of this ranch and never look back.” They hear a sound of door knob turning and they both take deep breaths as the man of the moment, Roberto Adriano Giovanni Esposito finally makes an appearance. Alessandro steps back as Roberto's size 12 black boots hit the floor. Zibusiso looks at him and fear creeps into his body, the sight of this giant man standing in front of him sends shivers down his spine. He wonders why all of a sudden he is scared of another man and he

remembers the news about Roberto having the best card readers, fortune tellers, traditional herbalists and the lion meat he alleged ate makes him one of the most feared man on earth.

“Son.” Roberto greets Alessandro.

“Father. You are welcome.” Alessandro responds.

“I can't find your sister and her guards any idea where they went?” Roberto asks walking around Zibusiso.

“No father when was the last time you spoke to her?”

“Never mind.” He says stepping on Zibusiso's already swollen feet and grabbing his chin almost dislocating his jaws. “I'm the man you have been looking for, boy. Where is my gold?” Roberto calmly asks. He let's go of Zibusiso's chin and Zibusiso spits on his face.

“You will never find that gold you can go jump off the next cliff you find!” Zibusiso mutters and the Espositos laugh. A punch lands on Zibusiso's cheek and he groans. “Fuck you!”

“I see you still have the guts boy but my son here is going to cut you down to size. Get the truth out of him.” Roberto hands Alessandro a pliers which he proudly takes from his father and calls the goons to tie Zibusiso up....

Sukoluhle's POV.

Today I went to see Mntimande's office I thought his employees were going to give me trouble but it's clear they knew about the management changes. They briefed me on how they run the day to day business and I must applaud Mntimande for letting his employees take the lead in the day to day running of business. I don't know how I will manage to run three companies and do everything right.

“What do you think?” Nkululeko asks. He is the one who took me to his brother's office.

“All good I'm sure we won't be having problems.” I

say walking inside the house. I'm so tired today and all I want is to hear from Mntimande and go to bed. I really miss him and I'm praying for their safe return.

“Hi mom.” Ntsika greets me. He is sitting alone in the lounge.

“Hi son. Where are others?”

“Amy is bathing the twins while others are in the kitchen.” I'm glad they can take care of each other. Liqhawe brings me a glass of water.

“Hi mom. Sit down please--”

“Why are you all being too nice? What happened to my lazy children?”

“We are not lazy mom. Anyway dad told us to take extra care of his future wife now sit down and relax while we finish cooking.” Liqhawe smiles and the twins come running and jump on me. They are already in their pyjamas, all the children in this house enjoy having dinner in their pyjamas. We can say it's a trend in this house.

“Hi momma!” The twins say kissing me.

“How are my boys doing today?”

“We are hungry.” They are always hungry these two. Even when they are thirsty they claim to be hungry. Nkululeko excuses himself and goes to his room he's not comfortable around me I don't know why. My phone vibrates.

MaKhwali wam omhle (My beautiful fiancée) we arrived safe and we now know where your brother is. I will be scarce for the next hours it's that time my love. I love you and I will come back to you in one piece. Take care.*

I sigh after reading the message. The more he sends messages instead of calling the more I feel like he's drifting away from me. I don't know for how long I will manage to hold it together, the truth is I'm scared.

“Brother sent me a message--” Says Nkululeko.

“Me too!” Says Prudy. Everyone checks their phones and realize he sent messages to all of us. Dear God please protect them and bring them back

to us alive.

Sanelisiwe's POV.

Who does Mkhize thinks he is? He thinks he can outsmart a psychology graduate? I studied human brain and I will always be one step of everybody. I came here for a job but I couldn't help my feelings for the old man. He is charming, a gentleman and to top it off he is rich. Since Zinhle is busy out there doing God knows what I'm going to keep her husband company until he becomes mine.

“Hi mama.” I say on the phone.

“How are you my Princess. How is work?”

“Everything is fine here mom. How is everyone at home?”

“We are okay. I managed to take your father to the hospital yesterday. He was given medication to help with his constant headaches.”

“That's great mom. I'm going to send you more money for groceries.”

“Have you found yourself a rich old man? Where do you get all the money these days?”

“Let's just say our lucky is about to change mom. I have to go I will call later.” I drop the call as footsteps draw near. The door is swung open and Mkhize walks in.

“What the hell is this!” He throws his phone at me.

“Oh you mean this honey?” I run my nails on my cleavage while teasing my lips with my tongue.

“You can see for yourself darling.” I unbutton my uniform exposing my black lace bra and g-string. He is now frozen on the spot looking at me. I slowly throw my dress uniform down and step away from it. I bend holding on the bed and twerk for him. I see him unclasping his belt and my clit throbs. I'm already imagining how his cucumber will feel inside me... A stinging pain of the belt brings me back to my senses as Mkhize whips the hell out of me. I'm screaming for dear life, he shoves his handkerchief

in my mouth and beats the hell out of me with his belt.

“I AM MARRIED BITCH!” He hits me again and now my body is burning...

NARRATED.

Back at the ranch Alessandro has beaten Zibusiso black and blue but Zibusiso won't say anything.

“Take this man to the surgery! I want my gold!” Roberto hisses pacing up and down. Alessandro personally puts Zibusiso on the wheelchair making sure his guns are hidden and pushes the wheelchair to the surgery. Zibusiso's heart skips a beat when he sees scary species locked in glass boxes, looks like cross breeding of people and different kinds of animals. His body tenses as Alessandro puts him on the bed. Three men in white coats come in and are ready to do their work. Alessandro touches cuff

link and the glass wall on the opposite side slowly opens and two bikes fly inside.

“What the fuck? Boys--” Alessandro locks the doors before his father's goons can come in. “What is going on son?” Zinhle steps down the scooter removing his helmet, she flips her hair and Roberto can not believe the level of disrespect.

“There can be only one King of the J ungle and that's me, Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya is the name.” Roberto puts his gun on Zinhle's forehead while Alessandro points his at Mntimande. “You have something that belongs to us--” Bikes fly in shattering the glass wall as shots are fired.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 86.

NARRATED.

“There can be only one King of the J ungle and that's me, Zinhl'Intombi ZakwaNgwenya is the name.” Roberto puts his gun on Zinhle's forehead while Alessandro points his at Mntimande. “You have something that belongs to us—” Bikes fly in shattering the glass wall as shots are fired. “Fuck!” Zinhle cusses as she realizes they are surrounded and Roberto just ran away. Mntimande helps Zibusiso up, one of Roberto's goons fire his gun aiming at Zibusiso but Mntimande pushes Zibusiso away and the bullet hits Mntimande's arm. Blood oozes but that doesn't stop them from fighting. More goons fly inside the already shattered glass room and start firing their own guns targeting Roberto's goons.

“You all have to get out of here now!” Says Alessandro putting a bulletproof vest on Zibusiso's shoulders. His goons who are disguised as The

dragons are now calling the shots. “Get moving now!” Zibusiso looks at Zinhle who is shooting using both hands while Mntimande is slicing people's flesh with a sword and quickly takes three men down with his gun before taking a motorbike.

“245!” Zibusiso says and hops on the motorbike while Mntimande covers him. Alessandro shoots in the air and all the goons stop shooting.

“No one has to die the man we want is out there. Go after him now! Take his family and keep them hostage--” Roberto's goons surround Mntimande and Zinhle who now have their backs against each other. Alessandro moves backwards and presses a button on the wall turning the whole place dark and smokey. Everyone is sneezing, coughing and vomiting when Alessandro's younger brother walks in and puts a gun on Alessandro's head.

“I knew you you'd betray dad for that woman. But what you didn't know was that I'm also an Esposito, I'm smart too. Now you are going to go and play poker with your useless mother--” Alessandro knocks his brother down with a gun, another

Roberto trusted guy switches another button which clears the whole place and they realize Mntimande and Zinhle are gone.

“You snitch!” The guy swings a fist to Alessandro but he blocks it.

“Don't get too comfortable boy this is my father's house boy--” A different gunshot is heard as blood splashes on Alessandro's face. He wipes his face and is still shocked when he sees the Ngwenya siblings holding guns.

“We were about to leave but I heard your father ordering your death, he knows and you are not safe. Come with us.” Zinhle says throwing car keys at Alessandro.

“I can't leave my father is still alive--” Bullets rain over their heads.

“Plan E!” Zinhle covers her brothers as they hop on motorbikes with Zibusiso in charge of driving as the motorbike flies off. Roberto points his gun at his son, Alessandro and Zinhle hold hands walking backwards until their backs are on the wall.

“Ready?” Alessandro asks Zinhle and kisses her on the lips. “I love you--” A gun is fired and Alessandro protects Zinhle as the bullet hits him on the chest and he falls down. Now Roberto is standing next to them ready to blow their brains off.

“Noooo!” Zinhle cries and touches her earring blowing the whole place up in flames. Mntimande and Zibusiso are watching from a near distance holding their breaths.....

Nomzamo's POV.

“Hi gorgeous.” A voice I have become familiar with greets. Honestly, Malcom annoys the hell out of me and I don't like him even one bit. He's sexy, educated, have an attractive bank account but I just don't like him. He is a nuisance.

“You are starting to get under my skin why are you following me?” I ask keeping a straight face.

“Can you give me a minute to tell you something, please?” Today he sounds sincere and serious.

“Five seconds.”

“I never wanted a lawyer it was just an excuse to meet you. I'm sorry I lied, I'm not married, never was but I do have children. I'm sorry I lied I just wanted a chance to talk to you. I was sent by Melisizwe to break you beyond repair, he instructed me to push you over the edge make you lose it again so you can kill your child the only thing that is left of your relationship with him. He hates you, I don't know what you did exactly but he blames you for losing his family. I was crazy to accept helping him with that and I'm sorry for that slap. Thank you for your time and I promise to never bother you again nor will you ever see my face again.” He says as he stands and walks away leaving me dumbstruck. What just happened? I'm shocked to say the least why does Melisizwe wants me broken?

“Wait!” I pace behind him but he keeps walking away.

“Please let me go I'm sorry I even entertained the thought.” He says looking in my eyes.

“What changed your mind?”

“I watched you taking care of your son yesterday even when he was throwing tantrums causing a scene for you inside the supermarket you did not treat him like how some women treat their children in public. I saw you introducing Zaine to Amahle, I saw the respect you have for Melisizwe's first wife and how grateful you were that she let your son meet his sister. That scene alone made me realize you are not the problem but Meli is. You taught me something right there.” I can't believe he's been following me. What if he kidnapped me? Oh God!

“Thank you for not hurting me and telling me the truth. I appreciate your honesty.” I think I'm more mature now. A few minute talks with Suku whenever I feel like giving up are helping me a lot. I still find it hard to believe that I hated such a humble and compassionate soul.

“It's okay. I hope Meli won't come back and hurt you

himself. He's in a bad space right now and he's blaming everything on you. He lost his businesses and life has been rough for him of recently. You are a great woman Zamo don't let anyone tell you otherwise.” He walks away and I watch him still trying to process what he just said. How could Melisizwe be so evil?

“Uhm... Hello Nana.” I recollect myself answering Amahle's call.

“I bought something for my little brother I'm asking for your permission to give it to him.” Wow! Amy is making me emotional right now. I didn't think she would accept her brother but I was wrong she's an adorable young girl.

“He's your brother sweetheart you can buy him anything you wish to and I won't stop you.”

“Thank you. I will bring the gifts on Saturday.”

“Okay I will wait for you.”

“Can I ask you something?”

“Yes?”

“Do you still love my father? I saw him yesterday when we met at the restaurant and I wondered if you came with him--” What? My heart is now beating fast and I feel like like I'm going to faint. “Aunt Zamo?”

“I will call you later.” The ground is spinning....

Sanelisiwe's POV.

Owami comes into my room carrying a tray.

“Aunt Sane? Aunt? I was told you are not feeling well and you haven't eaten anything since yesterday I brought you food.” He says putting the tray on the bedside table. “Wake up and eat something.” He smiles revealing his teeth that look exactly like Mkhize's and that brings tears to my eyes. Mkhize did serious damage on my body I don't think I will ever be able to wear a string top or bums short his belt left lines on my body. Right now I'm in serious

pain and he didn't even bother to check on me after everything he did.

“Hi Owami. When did you arrive?”

“A a while ago. What's wrong? Why are you crying?”

“Something entered my eye.” I lie, he sighs.

“Sorry let me see.” This kid? Why is he being so nice to me? I cry harder as he blows air into my eye trying to help me. I pull him into my arms and burst into tears.

“I'm sorry Owami I'm sorry--”

“What's wrong?” He is now confused. I'm about to confess my sins to this kid when Mkhize walks in and gives me a deadly stare.

“Son let me talk to her.” He says coldly.

“Okay dad make sure she eats something and takes her medication.” Owami says and leaves. Mkhize locks the door and walks closer to the bed. He grabs my chin, the coldness in his eyes has me peeing on myself.

“Don't you even think of turning my son against me.

Try me and I will bury you alive.” He lets go of my chin.

“I’m sorry--” I sob.

“Sorry for your pathetic self!” He slams the door on his way out and I burst in tears sitting on a soaking wet bed.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 87.

[I know tempers are flaring high, I saw your messages but I chose not to respond to them because I was going to fuel your anger. I'm sorry for the delay my other duties called and you know I can't say no to the man behind my smile, the man who is kind enough to share me with all of you. I

apologize for the inconvenience caused.]

TWO DAYS LATER.

Zinhle's POV.

I met death face to face, I was in the most darkest place I have ever been to but I conquered. I broke the shackles of death and came out victorious.

After bombing the whole place something we were all never ready for happened, we escaped the fire and so did Roberto and some of his goons. We were about to leave but Roberto sent a leopard after us.

A whole freaking live and hungry leopard leaped towards us and Alessandro just let go of me and started shooting at it. Before we could think of a way out we were surrounded and there was no way we were going to escape alive. Roberto called his leopard back and we were taken to hostage.

Alessandro was given a first degree torture by his father while I watched in helplessness. Now we had no way out since the bastard had chosen to deal with us inside the kraal not the house where we had planted explosives. I had hope my brothers would come for us but then Roberto's people were way too many for two people with guns only without the technology. Now four of our plans were out and we needed a counter attack plan. Roberto grabbed my neck and he was ready to slit my throat with his sharp knife, at that moment I said a short prayer asking God to take care of my children. Alessandro tried to drag himself up but the goons restricted him. We heard a gunshot and while I was still trying to process everything Roberto was holding his neck groaning in agony with a knife stuck in his flesh and blood dripping. In a flash, while the goons were busy taking care of their boss Mntimande and Zibusiso rescued us and that's how survived.

Now we are sitting in the jungle trying to come up with a plan of fleeing this country.

“I think it's time I make a call to South Africa.”
Zibusiso suggests.

“Roberto can easily track that call. Your people are stupid and their servers ain't secure. We should call someone else who can help send the word to your people.” Says Alessandro and groans as he struggles to sit up straight. His wounds are still fresh and I wonder how he manages to take all the pain without faltering.

“We don't have time to be sending people. We have few bullets and only one gun each while Roberto has the whole of Italy. We have to move I have a family back home and they are waiting for me.”
Mntimande says rubbing his face frustratedly.

“I can still hack into Roberto's system and freeze everything. It might take a minute or two to recover their system so the call has to be quick.” They are now looking at me like I have something funny on my face.

“Why were you quiet all along?”

“I wasn't quiet I was waiting for the right time.” They

all agree to my plan. I quickly type a loong password on my phone, I still have my phone because I keep it in my tights pockets no one can suspect that I have my phone down there. It takes about 5 minutes to unlock the system and another ten minutes to log into Roberto's system. It's easier since we have their password. “Bingo! You can make a call now. Five minutes maximum.” Zibusiso has the minister on the line already.

“I need protection like you promised. My family saved me but now we are trapped.” Zibusiso informs them.

“We can not send a jet to Italy Roberto has the whole Italian government in his pockets--”

“I don't give a damn about all of that shit! Send a jet and make sure my siblings are protected too!” He drops the call and runs his hands over his head frustratedly.

“We need a back up plan. Your people don't sound convincing.” Mntimande has taken the lead of the whole operation.

“I can make a few calls--” I suggest.

“No ZakwaNgwenya you are a woman and all those hungry brutes out there will jump at the opportunity of being heroes only for you to pay back badly in the near future. I have a plan. The Mexicans!” We all look at him shocked. “I have been in the game long before you even learned how to flash a toilet.” Mntimande says dialing a number and puts the phone on loudspeaker.

“Long time my dear black friend--”

“How do you know it's me? ”

“I have been waiting for your call and the moment I saw an Italian number I knew it's you. How can I be of help and how much are you willing to pay? Roberto is not an easy target you know.”

“Name your price.” The guy on the other side takes forever to respond! Only if he knew we are working against the clock he would hurry up.

“I have three tough choices to make. One night with your future wife, with your feisty sister or your beautiful daughter--”

“I will feed you your balls motherfucker! Don't you even think about it--” Mntimande is fuming.

“Relax yourself buddy. I want Roberto's head on a silver platter--”

“I mean business Carlos!” Mntimande hisses.

“I mean it too. Americans are offering something big in exchange of his head and I can't miss the opportunity. All I need is a location then my boys will pick you up wherever you are.” Carlos makes his demand clear as day and Mntimande looks at Alessandro who nods.

“Fine. I'm sending you the GPS if your boys are not here in an hour I tip off Roberto. You know very well not double-cross me. See you soon.” Mntimande drops the call and I delete it from the network server.

“How do you know Carlos? The guy is into women trafficking and I would like to believe my imagination is misleading me?” Zibusiso's accusatory tone almost throws me off. Mntimande can not be involved in women trafficking my brother loves humans so very much he can sacrifice his

own life for any human being.

“I will pretend as if I didn't hear that--”

“I need answers!” Zibusiso hisses.

“Ungazikhohlwa ungubani nendawo yakho ngoba ngizokubulala mina emva kokusindisa impilo yakho. (Don't forget who you are and your place else I will murder you myself after saving your life.)” I swallow hard looking at the two of them. I dare not to say a word not when Mntimande is this pissed. I can control Zibusiso but not the big gun.

“I'm sorry but I'm curious.” Zibusiso humbles himself.

“I know him through you! You always put our lives in danger! You failed to deliver his goods and I had to do the job on your behalf. I'm not into trafficking, I'm not proud of what I did for you but what other choice did I have? Go to war with the Mexicans and loose my family in the process while you are sitting comfortable behind bars for a few days until they got to you? Tell me what I was supposed to do?” Zibusiso looks at Mntimande with his face a

definition of shock. “I love you boy I always do crazy things for you I hope one day you will stop taking stupid decisions because our fates are somehow intertwined.” I wipe a stray tear. My brothers hug each other as a loud sound of a helicopter is heard drawing closer. Alessandro is too quiet and this means he is in real pain.

“Are you okay?” I ask kneeling next to him. He has his hand pressed hard on his abdomen.

“I feel like throwing up, my abdomen really hurts but I will be fine.” I hug him and he hugs back.

“You will be fine. Have some water.” I give him our last bottle of water which he takes and gulps the water down in one go. There's a commotion in a near distance, we all look up and we are surrounded by men in military green clothing with their guns pointed at us...

Mkhize's POV.

Zinhle haven't called me not even once. The last message I received from her was the one telling me not to believe the news and since then she's been silent. I wonder if everything is okay over there or their plan backfired. What's more frustrating is that I don't even know what their plan was Zinhle never told me anything. I have been wondering if there's something wrong with my love? I love Zinhle with every fibre in me but one mistake only and she punishes me like this. I forgave her for sleeping with my son under my nose but she can not forgive a simple no-strings attached threesome? What happened to wives being forgiving, understanding and respecting their husbands enough not to punish them? I feel like I'm losing it, I'm angry I failed to cover my tracks, I'm sad Zinhle chose her brother over our family and most of all I'm horny and sexual frustrated! That Sanelisiwe being here everyday and loving my children like they are hers is not making things easier for me either.

“Is everything okay? You calling me out if the blue

are you dying Ndabe?” My long lost shagging partner says. She still has her sexy voice that used to drive me crazy but now all I see and hear is Zinhle unless I'm drunk.

“Hi Edith. I'm in a bad space and I need someone to talk to.” I really mean it. I need someone to talk to before I lose my mind.

“How much are you going to pay for my time?” This bitch still loves money.

“I have money Edith just be my listening ear and I will make it worthy your while.” After marrying Zinhle I cut ties with my old friends to protect her and now I have no one to share my problems with except my old friend Edith.

“Okay. Come to my house after 7PM at the moment I'm expecting clients.”

“Okay. I will be there.” She drops the call and I sigh leaning back on the headboard and my mind wanders.

Nomzamo's POV.

Today I'm feeling better today, I have been feeling jumpy and frightened since after that encounter with Malcom. When Amy told me she saw him I panicked thinking maybe he was watching me wherever I go.

“You look better today Sis Zamo.” Dorothy, Zaine's nanny says.

“Thank you for taking care of me when I was seeing things that don't exist.”

“It's okay Ethan and Mntimande told me everything I have to do when you feel like that.” She smiles and just then the devil walks through my door. Dorothy puts her hands over my shoulders and massages me.

“We have to talk.” Says Melisizwe sternly looking at me. I grab my phone but he takes it away and smashes it on the floor. I start shaking as he makes

his way to me. Dear God please let my son not come out of his playroom and see this. I witnessed my parents fighting and that messed me up please protect him from this. Melisizwe grabs me by the neck choking me.

“You are sleeping with my friend you slut!” A hot slap lands on my cheek. Dorothy runs out of the room and the monster standing in front of me slap me again. “You ruined my family and now you are moving on like nothing happened!”

“Meli I'm sorry! Please don't hurt me--” He is about to punch me when Dorothy stabs him with a kitchen knife and he groans as he falls on the floor painting the tiles bloody red....

Sukoluhle's POV.

Today I'm feeling down, really down. I feel like praying and pouring my heart to God. Mntimande

called earlier and told me they were headed to Mexico trying to run from their capture. I even spoke to Zibusiso, I was so overjoyed but now I don't know what happened to me.

“Mom are you okay?” Asks Liqhawe taking my handbag and laptop bag.

“I'm fine baby I just need a moment alone in my room.”

“Did dad call you? Sorry to say this but you look like you are dead already--” I force a smile and push her off my way.

“Your dad is okay so is your uncle.” She screams in joy as I make my way upstairs. Each step I take drains my energy. It gets harder and my body gets weaker and weaker as I force myself to reach the bedroom. As soon I touch the knob everything starts spinning, I hold on for my dear life. I'm drifting away, my soul is slowly separating from my body but there's a voice that keeps telling me to be strong. I fall on the ground and hit hard but I don't let the pain stop me as I crawl to where my prayer

items are. My vision is blur as I light the red, yellow and green candles just like how my mother taught me. My hands are shaking as I struggle to light the candles.

“Heavenly Father you know everything that is weighing me down even if I don't. Please don't let any harm befall the people I love. Protect my children, my mom and most of all Mntimande, Zibusiso and Zinhle bring them back to us unharmed--” My throat tightens as I mention Mntimande. Something must be wrong with him. “Please God he gave me a second chance to love protect him on my behalf--” From nowhere wind blows off the candles, once again the room spins and everything goes black.....

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Forgive typos my darlings. Good night I love you all

THE BRIDE.

Insert 88.

Nomzamo's POV.

“Is he dead?” I slowly move to Meliswe's body which is piled up on the bloody floor. I slightly kick him but he doesn't move. I slowly kneel down to feel his heart beat.

“Bad idea Sis he might be pretending--” Just then Meli grabs my neck with both his hands choking the life out of me. I gaggle trying to hold on to my dear life. Dorothy stomps on Meli's groin and he quickly lets go of my neck. I accidentally stumble on the broom and I thrash Meli bad with it. He groans in pain until he can not cry anymore and goes dead silent. I kick him but he is not moving and I start panicking.

“We killed him Dorothy? We- we--” I'm in panic mode.

“It serves him right if he is dead. It's men like him who taint the sacred meaning of love and marriage and they deserve to die.” I'm surprised she's not worried.

“What do we do with his body?”

“Dump it somewhere far from here--”

“A dead body is heavy we can not do it alone. God what have we done?” Another strange feeling is taking over my whole being and I'm struggling to control it. My joints are getting cold, it's almost the same feeling I felt when I saw my mother's dead body.

“Sis Zamo? Zamo relax, okay? Think about Ethan and Zaine, think about your bright future don't let this scumbag ruin that for you.” She's looking at me and it's like she talking to my soul. “You are strong Sis. We are doing this for Zaine, okay?” I nod.

“O-okay. Who do we call?” I'm shaking but we are doing this for Zaine, right? Yes it's for Zaine. “S-suku?”

“No! That lady is as pure as a lamb keep her out of

this. She might flip if she finds out that we killed the father of her daughter. Call Malcom.” Malcom?

“Okay. Okay.” I dial his number but he doesn't answer. I call again this time he answers. “I-I killed Meli--”

“Nomzamo? What are you talking about--” I feel judged already and I drop the call.

“What did he say?” Dorothy asks as Zaine bangs on the door. Oh God! What now? “I will take care of Zaine.” She runs to Zaine's playroom and I pace up and down looking at Meli's body. A few minutes later the door swings open and Malcom paces up to Meli's body.

“He is not dead.” Phew! I heave a huge sigh of relief. “Should I complete the task for you--”

“No! I don't want blood in my hands. Please help me take him to the hospital--”

“Just so you know he's still going to harass you like never before. I'm not a murderer so let us take him to the hospital.” Malcom says pulling the knife off Meli's shoulder, blood oozes out of the wound. My

body has goosebumps already as I watch Malcom bandaging Meli with a torn T-shirt. With great difficulty we finally put Meli in the car and drive to the hospital.

Mkhize's POV.

It's exactly 7:05PM when I knock on Edith's door. She opens the door wearing pink satin pyjamas without a gown revealing her big thighs. You are not here for sex Mkhize! My subconscious reminds me and I swallow hard calming myself down. At this age I should be getting this horny but with me it's the opposite. I don't know what is wrong with me I really need to see a doctor about it.

“Ndabe? Still as charming as ever.” She says leading me to the couch.

“It's good to see you are still fresh too.” I remark.

“This freshness brings food to the table so I have to

maintain it. So? What's eating you up? Little wifey giving you sleepless nights?" She smirks.

"Not really. My wife is not giving me problems but there's someone else driving me crazy. I hate her for making me feel like this, I wish I could fire her but she loves my children very much what do I do?"

"Where is wifey? This sounds like a sexually frustrated man." She says sipping her drink. "Sorry I forgot my manners. Anything to drink?" This woman is still crazy.

"Double scotch on the rocks--"

"Whoa? First of all you are too old for that drink I don't want you dying in my house. Secondly, this is my house not a bar where you find all those drinks."
"

"Okay what do you have?"

"I'm having sweet red wine."

"I'm not a woman. Keep your drinks if you don't want to serve me." Mxm! I'm getting annoyed already. Fuck! Where are you Zie I'm losing my mind

here? I'm lost in my thoughts when Edith moves closer to me and runs her manicured hand on my trousers. "I'm married Edith please don't do that you know my weaknesses don't use them against me." I really miss my wife, I need her so much.

"Okay then let's just talk. How exactly do you feel?"
Hold that thought let me get you a drink.

NARRATED.

Somewhere in the Lincoln National Forest in Mexico, three helicopters land a few meters away from each other and the men in military green clothing jump down looking around. After a few minutes Mntimande's big black boots step down followed by Zinhle and Zibusiso who is supporting Alessandro.

"Where is Carlos?" Asks Mntimande his eyes scanning through the thick forest. Mntimande always has a counter plan in case something goes wrong. Trust and loyalty are two important factors of business for the trafficking and drug lords yet

they don't even bat an eyelid before betraying you.

“He will be here soon. In the meantime can we attend to your boy's wounds?” Asks one of Carlos's men.

“Sure. Take care of him here where I can see you. You rescued us but I know better not to trust bloody Mexicans!” The man laughs.

“Our boss did say you are one hell of a man but you can relax, boss wants the same thing as you there's no need to kill each other.”

“If you believe your own words then go ahead and help him.” A very weak Alessandro is laid down on the grass and they start treating his wounds. He has a deep cut on his abdomen. The man cleaning him cringes at the sight of the wound and informs them that the cut needs to be stitched but they don't have anesthesia to put him to sleep.

“What happens if the wound is not stitched?” Zinhle asks.

“The wound might get infected and the infection will cause more harm to his body.” Carlos's doctor

responds. Zinhle looks at his brothers.

“I’m bad but not bad enough to stitch someone.”
Zibusiso says raising his hands up in surrender.

“I can do it. Do you guys have alcohol?” Asks
Mntimande rolling the sleeves of his jacket.

“You going to stitch him without numbing his
body?” Carlos's doctor is horrified.

“Clearly this is your first time in the jungle. Give me
the necessary tools and alcohol.” The tools are
availed to him in a matter of minutes then he tears
Alessandro's T-shirt off. “Dude it's going to hurt but
I know you can take the pain.” Mntimande says as
he washes his hands and starts stitching the
Alessandro's flesh together. Zinhle realises how
painful it must be for Alessandro to watch this and
sits on the grass taking Alessandro's head onto her
laps. She holds his hand while he clenches his jaws
taking the pain like a man that he is. Zinhle
massages his head and he relaxes. “We are done.”
Announces Mntimande and pours a reasonable
amount of alcohol on the wound.

“Take these.” Says the doctor giving Alessandro morphine pills.

“These are not painkillers but drugs doc?”
Alessandro declines them.

“You don't get hooked on them by taking them once. You need them drugs or not you need something to help you fight the pain.” The doctor says.

“Aaah---!” Mntimande cries out with his hand on his chest.

“What's the matter?” Everyone is confused.

“I need to make a call something is wrong with my wife-- Oh shit!” He squats and grunts as the pain increases by each passing second.

“What do you mean--”

“Just give me a damn phone ZakwaNgwenya!”
Zinhle fumbles with her pockets and quickly dials Suku but her phone rings unanswered. She calls again and this time it's answered by Charity.

“Hello?”

“Char uphi umfazi wami? Yinindaba ubamba ucingo

Iwakhe? Kwenzekani lapho? (Where is my wife? Why are you answering her phone? What's going on?)” Mntimande rains questions on Charity.

“She is not feeling well. I don't know what happened but she fainted--”

“Ushoni ma uthi uqulekile? Bekutheni? (What do you mean she fainted? What happened?)”

“I don't know she said she needed a moment to herself--”

“Mnikeze ucingo (Give her the phone).”

“She's sleeping--”

“Anginendaba ulele kumbe wenzani mnikeze ucingo ngikhulume naye. (I don't care she's asleep or what just give her the phone.)” Mntimande hisses. He's now pacing up and down waiting for his wife's voice on the phone.

“Mntimande.” Suku finally speaks.

“Kwenzekani Sthandwa sami? Ngiyakuzwa enyameni nemoyeni wami ukuthi awukho kahle? Yini 'nkinga MaKhwali? (What's wrong my love? I

can feel it in my blood and soul that you are not well. What's bothering you MaKhwali?)”

“I don't know what's wrong but it feels like I'm losing you. I tried praying for you but I collapsed something is wrong. Where are you?”

“Uyangethusa manje MaKhwali. NgiseMexico ngilinde omunye engike ngasebenzisana laye-- (You are scaring me now. I'm in Mexico waiting for a friend I once worked with--)”

“Please get out of that place as soon as you can. I can't lose you Mntimande, what will I do with our children? We need you back home safe and sound.”

“Ngiyakuzwa nkosikazi ngiyabonga ukuthi ungikhathalele ngaleyondlela. Ngizobuya ekhaya MaKhwali njalo ngiyakuthembisa sozikhulis a sobabili ingane zethu. Qina Sthandwa sami uhlale wazi ngiyakuthanda. (I hear you my love thank you for caring that much. I will be back and I promise we will raise our children together. Be strong my love.)”

“I love you too.”

“Kumele ngihambile ntombi yami. Uthandwa yimi. (I have to go. I love you)” Mntimande drops the call and sighs in relief.

“I'm surprised she's already your wife while I the brother haven't received lobola from you?” Says Zibusiso and they laugh.

“The boss says we should come to his ranch. Let's go!” Announces one of Carlos's men. They help Alessandro up, Zinhle stealthily removes an injection from her side pocket of her trousers and injects Alessandro.

“My gut tells me shit is about to hit the fan. I can feel it in my blood.” Zinhle whispers, Mntimande decides to hide his own gut feeling lest he induce fear on them. They jump on the helicopter and are all ready to fly but Zinhle remembers something she forgot down. “I forgot something down I will be back in a flash.” She jumps down and runs to where they were sitting. She bends to pick up a piece a of paper and just then sees a ball of fire headed to the helicopter. She swiftly stands and sees four men holding firearms.

“Mntimande! Alex! Zi!” She screams her lungs out as the fire blows the jet up in flames. “Noooo!” She collapses on the ground helplessly watching everything unfold before her eyes.....

Sukoluhle's POV.

[<<<“Come with me Makhwali wami. Ngifun ukukubonisa (I want to show you) something. Please wifey.” Mntimande begs but I'm feeling sleepy right now.

“Let me sleep a bit then we will go--” I respond with my eyes still closed.

“Asinaso isikhathi Sthandwa sami kumele ngihambe ngingakas hiywa yisikhathi. (We don't have time my love I have to leave before I miss my flight.)” He begs. I finally give in and he takes me out to a decorated garden. They decorated the whole place with my favorite flowers and the decor

is everything I always imagined for my simple stylish wedding. “Uyayithanda? (Do you like it?)”

“I love it!” We walk around marveling at the brilliant work of the decorators.

“I wanted to fulfill your wish before I leave. Ngiyakuthanda ntombi yami kodwa kumele ngihambile. (I love you Suku but I have to go.)” He let go of my hand, French kisses me and starts walking away.

“You can't leave me alone I need you, the children need you please don't do this to us.” I'm already in tears.

“They have you and I will always live in your heart--”
>>>]

“Nooo!” I'm jolted awake by a nightmare. I'm soaking wet with sweat and shaking. Mntimande cannot leave me alone. Please God please protect him for me. I reach for a glass of water and quench my thirst.

“Mama?”

“It's past midnight what's wrong my baby?” My mother answers back with a sleepy voice.

“I'm scared mama. I feel like I'm losing him.”

“Pray my child. Pray and fast if you can. Only prayer can defy fate and only God changes one's destiny. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you (Matthew 7: 7).”

“Thank you mama. You are my strength, my prayer warrior and you always give the best scriptures at the right time. Good night I love you.”

“I love you too my girl. Whenever the going gets tough, kneel down, call upon His holy name and look at the mountains where your help shall come from. God never disappoints. ” She drops the call. I put on my gown and start praying.

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TWO WEEKS LATER....

THE BRIDE.

Insert 89.

TWO WEEKS LATER...

Zinhle's POV.

I watched the most important people in my life burn to beyond recognition. I couldn't do anything, my body immediately became numb as I cried helplessly. When the fire finally died down I crawled to scene, the smell of roasted burnt meat hitting my nostrils I couldn't help but vomit. I sat there looking at the burnt bodies remembering how I treated Qhubekani and Anelisa surely God was punishing me for that. Tears blurred my vision, I cried until I couldn't cry anymore. After what felt like ages I felt a cold hand on my shoulder and slowly turned

looking at the person.

“I’m sorry I’m late.” Those were words his mouth could only utter. I had no power left in me to even ask who he was. He squatted next to me and wiped his own tears. “Carlos Martinez. I’m Carlos you brothers’ friends.” He sighed. I looked into the thick forest and my mind took me back to the old good times.

“I’m your brother ZakwaNgwenya and I know what’s good for you. I’m coming with you.” Mntimande said opening the door for me.

“But I’m old brother--”

“Ubani osho kanjalo? Suqomile ZakwaNgwenya? (Who said so? Are you now entertaining boys ZakwaNgwenya?)” His face changed from loving to being serious.

“Who said anything about boys brother? I said I’m old enough to go to Mall of Africa alone.” I retorted.

“I’m your brother and to me you will always be my little sister.” He didn’t take no for an an answer. He would rather miss a meeting than to let his younger

sisters go to the mall alone when it's month end. He would buy you anything you wanted and more but still be a tough brother who didn't take anyone's nonsense. He was my brother, my friend, a father figure and he even went as far as trying to be a mother. He was never ashamed of his duties, he would go to a supermarket and proudly pick a pack of sanitary pads from the shelves and he even knew which brand irritated whose skin and who used scented/unscented ones.

“Zinhle umfazi uyayinakekela thatha lento. Ngithi lena i-gyna guard nton nton (Zinhle as a woman you should take care of yourself take this thing. This one named gyna guard what what.)” Women turned their heads at Clicks and I bursted into laughter. I always wondered how he knew all that shit until I found out he actually was a big fan of uncle Google. He even googled how to deal with moody teenagers, how to be a good role model, how to be fair towards my siblings...

“Zinhle? Zee!” I was brought back to reality by someone shaking me. The whole place was now

filled with ambulances, paramedics, Mexican soldiers and a few men in suits just like Carlos. "You have to get checked by the nurses." In my head I wanted to decline but I was too weak to even argue. I didn't even have the energy to ask him who killed my brothers. Everything felt dull, I felt like I was walking on the crashed pieces of my own crumbled world and my future had never been so bleak like how it was at that moment.

Two days later we received the DNA results! It then dawned and registered in my hearts of hearts that they were gone. Gone to a land of no return and I was never ever going to see my brothers again. My support system was gone and I was left alone to face the cruel world. After ten years I reunited with my friend but just like that I lost him forever to death. Carlos then informed me that Roberto's men followed us to Mexico with one goal; burn everything that moves to ashes. On a normal day I would have fumed and vowed revenge but I don't have that in me anymore. They took my whole life

with them.

“Hey. We have landed.” The hostess says and I snap out of it. I have been in this plane for 18 hours 40 minutes but I still haven't slept a wink.

“Thank you.” I say and make my way down the plane. The moment the sun hits my forehead I realize the biggest task of them all starts now. How do I even break the news to Suku? The children? How do I tell them that my brothers are no more? How will Suku handle so much pain? Mntimande was her fiance, Zibusiso a brother she always counted on and they just left her at once with a cricket team to look after, alone! I wipe my tears handing over my passport to be stamped. Carlos pulled a fast stunt and got me a new passport delivered in Mexico in just a week. I don't know how he did that but I'm grateful. I pull my small suitcase and exit the airport. I look around and see Mpilo, my brother looking at his phone. He turns, sees me and walks towards me. I let go of the suitcase and run into his open arms.

“I'm sorry I couldn't save them.” I cry and he just

holds me tight without a word. "I failed them--"

"It's not your fault Zie the Lord gave and the Lord has taken. Be strong and courageous my dear sister for God will not leave us alone." He says as his tears fall on my shoulder.

"They didn't deserve such death--" A painful lump rises in my throat threatening to choke the life out of me.

"We will be fine yes we will be fine Sis." He pulls out of the hug and wipes my tears. "We have to call father and inform him about this. I know you hate our parents but they have to be there for this. This is above us and I don't think we can do it alone. I called Smilo, Sindiso and Zipho they are on their way here we are boarding a flight straight to Bulawayo." He says trying to hide his own pain.

"It's okay call them. I'm not worried about those two but I'm scared for Suku she won't survive this." The thought of breaking her pure heart with the news tears my own already broken heart into tiny pieces.

"NK knows but just like you he's still hasn't gathered

the strength and courage to break the news to Suku. I will do it, it will break her but there's no other option.” He sadly picks the small suitcase and a tear escapes his eye. I still can't believe my two strong brothers have been reduced to ashes that can fit in a 2 litre calabash and be stashed in a suitcase like useless clothes!

Nomzamo's POV.

Meli was discharged from the hospital a few days back. He came to my house and threatened to report me but Dorothy dealt with him. I don't know how she found out that Meli is bankrupt and running from loan sharks. The moment she mentioned that to him his face went pale. He apologized and left.

“You in a good mood today?” Dorothy who has become more of a guardian angel to me asks.

“I just feel good. Most of the days I don't get to feel this good allow me to enjoy this.” I really feel like enjoying myself today. I'm taking Dorothy and Zaine for lunch in one of the restaurants in time.

“It's good to see you this happy I'm sure Ethan is proud of you.”

“He is proud of his sister of course. Come on let's go guys. Zaine let's go and have icecream.”

“Yes!” Zaine jumps down the bed and runs outside. Is there someone else who has a super-hyper son like me? I don't think so. Zaine's energy levels are abnormal I wonder where he gets all the energy.

After placing our orders we eat while chatting and laughing.

“May I?” Malcom says pulling an empty chair.

“Are you stalking us?” I ask with a smile. After helping me about the Meli issue I agreed to chat with him from time to time. He enjoys chatting and video calling at night forcing me to watch some crime scene investigations movies. I always wondered why he liked such movies until he

showed me his work ID. I was shocked to the core! I couldn't believe I called a whole CIO to help me get rid of his friend's body. He later clarified why the internet says he's an actor and all of that. Yes he acted in two hit movies but his real job is dealing with high profile cases.

“Not really we happened to be in the same restaurant at the same time. I'm having much with workmates.” He points at the far table and I realize all the men in tuxedos are looking at me.

“What did you tell them about me?”

“Nothing I just excused myself and came here. Why?”

“If looks were bullets I would be dead by now.” I take a bite of my chicken.

“They haven't seen their boss leaving a meeting midway just to say hello to a beautiful lady. I'm very uptight when I'm at work and this is a shocker to them.” He takes my glass and sips. “Yuck! What are you drinking Zamo?”

“Next time don't hijack people's glasses.” I laugh at

him making faces.

“I will keep that in mind next time. Let me get back to my meeting. Zaine my man!” Zaine fist bumps with him and he leaves.

Sukoluhle's POV.

I fasted for a week I didn't even take water. I prayed, pleaded with God to give me a sign but everything is still blank. I can not even feel Mntimande, my spirit is low not even the red candle is helping. I lit it twice last week and put it in the northeast of the house to try and rid the house of the negative energy that is now affecting my children but it still didn't work. Ntsika is having nightmares, Liqhawe is an emotional wreck, the twins are having sleepless nights I really don't know what to do anymore. Last night I lit a green candle and pleaded with the angel of healthy to help restore my children's health. I may be feeling down but I can bare to see my

children suffering from something they don't even understand themselves.

It's Thursday today and the purple candle is to be lit if I want to reconnect with my fiancé. The purple candle is lit when one wants to awaken his/her third eye which reawakens intuition, visions and helps one connect with the spiritual world. I take a few minutes to try and clear all the negative energy in my mind and body while looking at the flame.

“Heavenly Father, I bow before you asking for your protection and healing. Protect Mntimande wherever he is, protect my children from all the negative energy engulfing their beings, protect Zinhle and Zibusiso in everything they do and bring them back home alive. Dear God please reconnect my spirit with Mntimande's. Please send me a sign, show me something, a simple sign dear God is all I'm asking for—” Before I can finish my prayer I sense people's presence. I turn to see Zinhle and the other Ngwenya siblings in tears. My joints get weak before they can even say a thing. Zinhle runs

to me and our bodies crash as she sobs.

“I'm sorry I'm really sorry Suku--” My world starts spinning.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 90.

Sukoluhle's POV.

I have a banging headache, sore throat, pale skin and I feel like I'm losing my mind. How can God take away two people I love with my entire being? How do I live without them after getting used to having them in my life? Where do I begin to live from here?

How do I tell my children that everything is going to be okay when nothing is okay? How do we move on without Mntimande? How? How God?

“Mommy they are lying, right? Dad promised to come back to us he's not dead. He can't be dead mom.... He can't be dead--”

“Come here my baby.” Liqhawe looks at my pale face and teary eyes, her lips tremble trying to fight the pain.

“No! No mom he can't be dead! He is strong my father is a tough man and he can do anything for his family. He promised to come back to us... No!” I hug her and she sobs in my arms. Every sob of hers crushes my heart into particles of dust leaving me with an empty chest.

“Shhhh... We will get past this my girl. We will try please stop crying.” My own tears stream down my cheeks but they are not helping my pain. My pain is deeper than what a river of tears can drown.

“Mom--” Liqhawe tries to say something but fails.

“Shhh... Breathe my baby.” Zinhle, Ntsika, Prudy and

Amy join in on the hug as we all cry.

“I need fresh air.” Amy says and sprints out of the house. She won't break down in front of me that I know for sure. In her mind she still remember the promise she made to me. She promised to be my strength when I'm at my lowest just like I'm always there for her.

“I will check on her.” Ntsika says avoiding eye contact with anyone. He hates crying, he hates tears because they render him helpless. Liqhawe silently walks away and goes to her room and Prudy also leaves. I can only imagine what they are going through. If I'm feeling this way then they are even in more pain.

“Come with me.” Zinhle drags me to the bedroom and locks it.

“What's going on?” I'm confused. She removes a big picture frame from the wall revealing a safe.

“Open this thing and be quick about it before my parents and uncles arrive here.”

“Why should I? Zee? Your brother just died and you

want to open his safe that I knew nothing about until now? What's wrong with you? I thought you loved him--" She steps closer to me and looks straight into my eyes.

"Do I look like a greedy sibling to you? Do you think I can do anything to hurt my brother's soul? My brothers meant everything to me and they will always do. Now listen to me and listen very carefully. If you really loved my brother like you claim you will have to listen to me, to NK or Mpilo and nobody else. I understand you are hurting I'm hurting too but the going just got tough. The Ngwenyas are going to chew you and spit you in a trash bin just so they can have everything Mntimande worked hard for. They won't even take care of those children, they don't know them, they hate them because their mother was a Xhosa. As for the twins it will be best if you don't even open your mouth and disclose their identity. My parents and my ignorant sisters don't know anything about the twins and that makes our job easier. My mother's hatred for Zibusiso runs deeper and I don't

trust that woman at all--” I’m shocked. How do I hide the identity of the twins?

“What are you saying Zinhle?”

“Focus Suku. Those twins are yours, okay?” I reluctantly nod. “You love Mntimande, the children love you and he left you with his children I’m sure you don’t want to disappoint him wherever his spirit is. You are a woman of substance, mask your pain with something else but don’t let my family know you are the vulnerable type. Now open this damn thing there’s something you have to take out.”

“I don’t know the code--”

“Did you ever open the briefcase Mntimande gave to you before leaving?”

“No.”

“You better do because you don’t have enough time.” I have so many questions to ask. How does she know about the briefcase? The safe? “I was there when Mntimande signed those properties to you. NK and I were witnesses and I’m simply doing what he instructed me to.” After unlocking the

briefcase my heart almost fall from it's ribcage.

“Zee!” My heart is pounding.

“Shhh! Don't make noise read that note and decode it fast.” How do I calm down when I'm looking at the pure gold that can buy the whole country and it's people if one decides to. The note reads,

“It was on the 18th of April when I first kissed you my love. You slapped me for it but I will never forget your love for me that I saw glittering in your teary eyes. Come with me let me take you to Paradise.”

Where is the secret code in this thing? I remember the day he kissed me. We were in the waiting room at the hospital, Amy was having a bad allergic reaction. I was so mad at him for neglecting the children when he promised to take care of them. I kept pacing up and down anxiously. He kept irritating me with his deep voice that made me feel things even though I was mad at him. He grabbed my hand and forced me to sit on his lap.

“Amy will be fine.” His hot breath hit my skin and my body reacted with goosebumps. I tried to stand

up but he held me in place. “Stop fighting me and your heart at the same time. I want you, you want me let's just cut the crap and act like the adults that we are.” He said.

“I don't want --- y.o.u” His lips were pressed against mine his tongue searching for mine in a deep, hungry and lustful way. My mind fought him off but my body gave in and I kissed back. After almost causing my orgasm with his kiss only he pulled out and smiled.

“Now you are mine. By the way I'm very stingy and I don't share--” I slapped him...

“Suku? Suku?” I snap out of it. Zinhle wipes my tears. “Please be strong if not for me do it for the love you both shared.” Someone knocks on the door, Zinhle peeps through the hole and unlocks the door. My mother walks in and I fly into her arms.

“Mama--” I weep.

“Be strong my girl. It's painful I know but don't break in front of the children. They need you to be strong for them you are the only parent they have right

now. Blood or not, they are your children now more than ever. We are here for you please stop crying.” She wipes my tears with her scarf. “It will get better with time.” She kisses my forehead. My mother is a very strong woman and her tears are rare. Will it really get better with time?

“Thanks for coming Ma. Can you please explain to her maybe she will understand you. I'm still waiting for her to open this thing.” I'm surprised they seem to know each other.

“You two have met before?”

“Yes my girl they came to visit me before they left to rescue Zi. We will talk about that later open it. Mntimande told me about it.” What? My mother met Mntimande behind my back? Did he feel his own death approaching or what? Why did he have to leave everything in my hands?

“I don't know how to decode a message.”

“It's okay I can do that.” Zinhle takes the note and starts punching numbers on the safe. “1-8-0-4-what's your birthday Suku?”

“19 December--”

“1-9- 2-1-9.” She punches the last number and the safe opens. I still don't know where she got those numbers but I don't care anyway. What's the point of asking something that means nothing to me without Mntimande? “Here. Take these papers to your house, the briefcase and the power of attorney agreement too--”

“But--”

“But nothing. These papers are Mntimande and Zibusiso's children's entire future and I'm putting their hopes, dreams, aspirations, inheritance and expectations on your hands don't disappoint the two people who had so much faith in you. Sneak through the back door I will ask NK to drive you to your house and be back in a minute.” She emotionally hugs me.

Zinhle's POV.

My chest is broken into two parts, I can smell blood in my nostrils and I can I feel my own blood dripping inside and I wonder if this pain will ever leave my body. Earlier I overheard my sisters Ziphozenkosi and Sindiso talking on the phone with mother. They were telling our parents that Sukoluhle moved in with her “rats” into Mntimande's house before marriage. They were saying bad things about her and what's worse they were even discussing how they are going to enjoy Mntimande's money now that he is gone. Those two holy sisters of mine always refused help from my brother saying he used muthi and killed people to be rich but now they want everything he owned. They are not even mourning our brothers but busy plotting useless drama. I pray and hope Suku is as strong as Mntimande said because shit is about to hit the fan. I know my parents and uncles will show her flames and they will want everything.

“All done. The coffins are on their way, your parents don't know we are talking about ashes not bodies.”

Mpilo informs me.

“I don't care about those people brother all I want is for someone to slap me out of this nightmare then I will be fine.” I mean it. It's still hard to believe that they are gone.

“This too shall pass my sister. Did you hide the children's documents too?”

“Yeah I did. I doubt Suku knows much about Mntimande his certificates were still in the safe. I really feel sorry for her.”

“She will be fine. She appears like a strong prayerful woman we will support her. I'm ready to take you to the Mkhize mansion.” Oh that? I had forgotten about. I also have to call Nomzamo and inform her.

It's quiet here as if no one is around I wonder what's going on. Mpilo waits for me in the car as I make my way into the house. I'm hopeful that a hug from my husband will heal a part of my heart maybe then I will see the reason to continue with this painful life. There's no one in the lounge, I go upstairs and as I

draw closer to our bedroom I hear moans and groans. Am I losing my mind or what? I close my eyes trying to figure out if I'm crazy or not but the sounds are still there even after opening my eyes. I bravely open the door to find a horrifying scene on our fucking matrimonial bed!

“Honey--” Mkhize says still panting. I look at them and my whole body goes weak as my lungs fail me. I hit the hard floor very hard, I gasp trying to hold on to dear painful life but there's a lump in my throat that sends me straight to a dark endless hole.....

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The next insert is sponsored/inspired by Palesa Mbalientle Plady's comment on Insert 89. Thank you so much for that comment you challenged my brain to work overnight think of more relatable scenes. Insert to be posted @2200 hours.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 91.

Mr Mkhize's POV.

What the fuck just happened here? I struggle to put on my clothes while Edith keeps running her long nails on my back.

“Calm down your wife is okay she just fainted.” She says irritating me.

“Zinhle? Zee babe?” I turn her head and her face is pale, blood is dripping from her nose. Her pulse is low, I scoop her up and rush outside to the car.

“What happened to her?” Her brother asks opening the back door of his car.

“She fell.” The drive to the hospital is so tense and her brother keeps wiping tears. I don't know if she told them about what I did maybe the tears are for the pain I caused his sister. Guilty overwhelms my body and I scold myself for getting tempted by

Edith. After our talk the other night I kept going back to offload the baggage off my chest until I walked in on her during one of her sessions with a client. At that moment I needed Zinhle so badly and that scene made everything worse I ended up sleeping with Edith. She's still exciting and adventurous in bed but she has nothing on my wife. I really don't know why today we ended in the master bedroom only for my wife to catch us.

“Doctor how is my sister doing?” Mpilo asks when the doctor comes out after about an hour.

“She's dehydrated. What happened to her?” Mpilo wipes his face.

“Doctor please help my sister I can't bare to see her in pain like this. Please she's dealing with a lot right now and there are people's lives depending on her. Please do everything possible for her to regain her consciousness.”

“I'm doing my best I promise.” The doctor pats Mpilo's shoulder and leaves.

“What's going on brother in-law? You look distant and you haven't said much to me.”

“Mntimande and Zibusiso passed on I'm sure Zinhle is failing to deal with the pain--” What? My eyes pop out in shock and my heart rate increases. What have I done? Zinhle probably came because she needed me! Oh God! Now I feel like I just killed Jesus Christ! Zinhle will never forgive me for this, not in this lifetime I just ruined my life because of sex!

“I'm so sorry I didn't know.” I hug him. I delete a message from Edith that just came through my phone and silently pray for Zinhle to be fine.

Sukoluhle's POV.

It's been hours since Zinhle left I don't know why she's not back yet. I tried giving my children food but they couldn't eat except for the twins who

doesn't understand what is going on. Lqhawe can not even utter a single word her voice has left her too. Ntsika is trying to be strong and Prudy and Amy are sad they just lost their friends. Mntimande was more of a trusted friend to them instead of a father.

“Nono!” Lerato's body crushes on mine and the flood gates of tears open wide. I weep in her arms until Princess arrives too. They console me telling me everything will be fine but I don't see the light at the end of the tunnel, the future is bleak.

“Hey you Mntimande's wife wannabe we are hungry!” Ziphozenkosi yells.

“Did I hear correctly?” Princess is already on her feet

“Please don't not when I'm mourning the people I love. Let me serve them--”

“Sit down Suku! You are not his legal wife and you don't owe these spoiled brats any respect. The only people you owe respect are Mntimande's soul, yourself and nobody else. Let them find their way

into the kitchen if they are hungry.” Lerato snaps.

“They will think I’m rude--” Just then there's commotion from the main gate. There's an older lady pushing her way into the yard followed by other women and men. The lady screams and the others do the same. I swear it's like one of the Nigerian movies. They are now rolling on the pavement like nobody's business.

“O-okay? I didn't know there are crazy people in the Ngwenya family?” Remarks Lerato.

“Me too hey. Wonders shall never end.” Adds Princess.

“What the hell mom?” Liqhawe wakes up from my laps rubbing her puffy eyes.

“I have no idea baby. How are you feeling--”

“Please don't ask that. Those people are my father's relatives that man in a blue worksuit is his father--” Huh? The parents are here and Mpilo, Nkululeko and Zinhle are all nowhere to be found. What do I do now?

“You mean that's your grandfather?”

“You could say that. I'm going to my room.”

Liqhawe stands up bit feels dizzy. Lerato offers to help her upstairs and tend to her. Mntimande what have you done? How can you leave me alone with such a huge responsibility? You broke my heart I'm really lost alone without you. Now what do I say to your parents? The said Ngwenya walks into the house leaving us outside and all the people they came with follow them. Now the two sisters are also screaming but they were laughing a while ago. They take minutes to all calm down and the noise dies down.

“Sister-in-law please come with me?” Nkululeko stretches his hand and helps me up.

“Where is Zinhle?” I whisper.

“She fainted, Mpilo took her to the hospital.” Poor Zinhle. Someone taps my shoulder, I turn to see a sobbing Nomzamo.

“Tell me it's not true?” She's really hurting.

“I'm sorry Zamo please get a grip on yourself.” I

wipe her tears and excuse myself. Three ladies are now seated on the mattresses we prepared earlier while others are seated on the chairs and couches. My mother taught me to offer my condolences the traditional way so I kneel down and shake all the women's hands before turning to men. I fold my hands and offer my condolences.

“Who is she?” The woman with a blanket over her asks.

“She is Mntimande's wife—” Nkululeko says and I almost choke on my saliva.

“What? When? How? Who validated the marriage because we don't know her?”

“Maybe if you had paid attention to what your children were going through you wouldn't be in the dark right now--”

“Mthiyane!” The man hisses.

“Don't hiss at me Ngwenya!” This is heading South very quickly. I have to stop Nkululeko I don't want people fighting in front of Zibusiso and Mntimande's ashes. To them they might be ashes

but to me they are two people I respect and will always love. I shake my head looking at Nkululeko and he sighs. “As I was saying her name is Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa Mntimande's legal wife. Why you were never told about it is not really my problem. Sister in-law, this is Ngwenya your father in-law, MaNgwenya is the one with a blanket,” he introduces all of them. I try to respectfully acknowledge MaNgwenya but she pushes me away if not for Nkululeko I would be lying flat on the floor right now. “What the hell mom?” Nkululeko is furious.

“She has bad luck I can sniff a witch from afar and she's one of them. My sons would still be alive had she not forced her way into their lives--”

“You don't know what you are talking about!”

“I know son I know. You are also under a spell you can't see her true self--” It's rude to walk out on the elderly but right now it is a good thing to do. I bump into my mother while running outside. She follows me and tries to comfort me.

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Today is the day to finally say goodbye to my brother and my fiancée. We are in Zhombe at the Ngwenya homestead. If not for Zinhle and Mpilo I wouldn't be here, Mntimande's parents hate everything about me. What I did to them exactly is still a mystery to me. If I say I'm ready for this then I will be lying, I'm not and never will be. Their friends from all corners of the world are here including the South African police, soldiers, the ministers Zibusiso had deals with and Carlos Martinez. Mntimande's employees in the taxi industry also came with the taxis and Zibusiso's team is also here. The whole place is packed to finally say their goodbyes.

“We will be going to the graveyard soon.” Mpilo informs me. “Do you need anything?”

“I'm fine, thank you.” He smiles and turns to leave. “Mpilo?”

“Huh?”

“Can I open his wardrobe?”

“He's your husband you don't need my permission. Go on.” I slowly open his wardrobe and his perfume is still smells from his clothes. I take one of his sweaters and sit on the bed hugging the sweater. Why my love? Why did you leave me so soon darling? What was the need for you to leave us when we still need you? I remember how he used to call me “MaKhwali wami” tears fall afresh.

“Why Sibangilizwe? Why?--” My chest tightens and the pain takes over once again.

“We will be fine mom. We have you, dad and uncle Zi will always be our guardian anges. Let's go and say goodbye to them.” Says Liqhawe giving me a head wrap.

Their graveyard is not far from the homestead. The gangsters who worked with Zibusiso are carrying the coffins while some of them are singing and dancing. The life of a gangster is celebrated by those who loved him when he passes away. Sindiso

pushes me when I'm about to sit on one of the chairs on the second row.

“Outsiders should stand right over there not here--”

“Say that again I will forget you are older to me and slap the shit out of you. You are not sitting here Suku these chairs are for close relatives, you are his wife and you should be seated on that couch with all the children.” Says Zinhle.

“You are right Ntombi. Come with us makoti.”

Zanele, Mntimande's aunt who has been good to me says. My mother said I must listen to them. Mother in-law is throwing daggers at me but I sit anyway. The MC reads the programme, Mpilo prays and preaches before the proceedings start. Their uncle read out both of their history and asks elders to bless their final home. Another uncle stands up and praises their clan names. After that the coffins are slowly lowered down.

Lay down my dear brother, lay down and take your rest

I want to lay your head upon your savior's breast

I love you, but Jesus loves you best

I bid you goodnight, goodnight, goodnight

I bid you goodnight, goodnight, goodnight

Watching the two coffins being slowly lowered down breaks me even further. The further they go down the more the pain sucks life out of me.

Liqhawe bursts into tears so does Amy and all I can do is hug them. The song Mpilo and his choir are singing is not helping either.

“May the parents followed by his wife and children make their way here to say their final goodbyes.”

Announces the MC as a young man stands next to their graves holding a shovel with sand. Mr

Ngwenya is the first one to pay his last respects followed by MaNgwenya. Now the choir is humming the song.

“I’m not ready to let you babakhe. I will never be ready my love, I have questions that need answers and only you can answer them. You may be physically gone as hard as it is to believe that you

are gone, good night Sthandwa sami. When you get enough rest, come back to me even as a ghost I will welcome you back. I love you and always will do.” I say and turn to Zibusiso's grave. “Brother, there are so many things we still needed to iron out. I know of all the sacrifices you did for me I so badly wanted to thank you face to face for everything but you decided to leave me, forever now--” Zinhle rubs my back. “I don't know what it's like over there I pray you get the rest you need. You are greatly missed ZB. Sleep well my dear brother, till we meet again.” I can't see clearly right now tears are blurring my vision. I ask Ntsika if he wants to say something but he shakes his head. Liqhawe kneels next to her father's grave.

“You always punished me by making me kneel on the floor for an hour. I'm right here kneeling next to what is supposed to be your grave and pleading with you. I don't believe the crap everyone is saying, my strong father has extra lives and I know you will come back. I won't say goodbye or good night because I don't want you to go yet. Come back to us

dad, mom needs you, we need you please come back dad--” Her voice trails off. “If you really love us, from dust you shall rise.” She turns to Zibusiso's grave. “If you are really dead then you are a traitor uncle. What about my love for you--” She breaks down.

“Come on baby be strong for your siblings get up.”

Nkululeko fails to say something to his brothers he cries until the uncles take him away. Zinhle pulls her gun out and squats between their graves.

“Brother Mntimande all I can say is thank you. The world lost a great honorable man but the heavens gained an angel. Shine on big gun and don't forget you left a whole family back here. ZB? Don't cause havoc up there behave yourself dude. I will forever miss you my dear brothers. BoMntimande, Mthiyane, Somuhle, good night guys.” She shoots twice in the air startling people.

Lay down my dear brother, lay down and take your rest

I want to lay your head upon your savior's breast

I love you, but jesus loves you best

I bid you goodnight, goodnight, goodnight

I bid you goodnight, goodnight, goodnight

One of these mornings bright and early and soon,
goodnight

Now they're pickin' up the spirit to the shore beyond,
goodnight

Go walking in the valley of the shadow of death,
goodnight

He's riding a staff, gonna comfort me, goodnight

Join the wise, there's a soul to find, goodnight

Lord send a fire, not a flood next time, goodnight

To leave for the ark, that wonderful boat, goodnight

She really loaded down, getting water to float,
goodnight

Now pray for the beast at the ending of the world,

goodnight

He loved the children that would not be good,
goodnight

I remember rather well, I remember right well,
goodnight

I went walking to jerusalem just like john

Goodnight, goodnight, goodnight

Lay down my dear brother, lay down and take your
rest

I wanna lay your head upon your saviors breast

I love you, but jesus loves you best

I bid you goodnight, goodnight, goodnight

I bid you goodnight, goodnight, goodnight.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 92.

Zinhle's POV.

What a day it has been! My brothers are gone but the pain is still there. They were strong, never broke down in tears in front of those who looked up to them and for that reason I will be strong for my brother's families.

“Hey mom.” Owami jumps on the chair.

“Hey son. What's up?”

“When are we going back to our house? These people are not nice at all.”

“Soon son. I have to fix a few things then we will be going back. Those people are my parents--”

“No way! You are nice they are not? My uncles were nice too.”

“Yeah I know son but they are grandparents either way. Where is Okuhle?”

“With dad somewhere around here.” The sight of Mkhize breaks my heart even more. I have been avoiding any thought of him and I will continue doing so until I'm ready to face him and his demons. I love my husband so much I can kill just to have him but right now I'm not in the mood to spill blood. I just lost my brothers, their children need me and for that I have to live by the book. I can not afford to go to jail and leave Sukoluhle alone to face the Ngwenyas.

“You guys ate something?” I ask him.

“Yes mommy. Can we go back home please I don't like it here.”

“Soon my boy. There are a few things I still have to take care of.” He nods and taps my phone's screen looking for a game to pass time with.

“Your presence is required inside.” Ziphozenkosi mutters. I silently follow her inside where all the Ngwenyas are seated and look deep into their discussion.

“Ntombi you were close to your brothers, we have a

few questions to ask.” My father says avoiding eye contact. I still hate you father and as for your wife, I despise her! “Did your brothers have wills drawn up?”

“Yes but why are you asking?” I don't understand this man right now.

“We would like to finish everything right now before everyone returns to their respective homes--”

“What are you talking about Ngwenya? Clarify please.” Nkululeko is also confused like me.

“What he means is we have to share their property and belongings now and then everyone can leave--” MaNgwenya utters rubbish!

“You are sharing their property you and who? I don't see brother Mntimande's wife in here? What bullshit are you planning you people--”

“Watch your words Zinhle! You are talking to our parents!” Sindiso fires.

“Parents? Are you still sure about that even after them forcing you to have a backyard abortion and

till now you are still childless--” Sindiso's eyes glow with fresh tears.

“ZakwaNgwenya!” Ngwenya hisses.

“Don't you ever hiss at me Ngwenya! I haven't put a bullet through your skull because my brothers thought you were going to repent but here you are not even mourning your first born but busy asking about his properties! What the hell is wrong with you people? Don't you see we just lost two sons of this family? Why are you acting as if you are not hurt at all?” My chest tightens as I feel my tears threatening to fall. How can they do this to my brothers' souls? Why are they not hurting like I am?

“Stop with your nonsense Zinhle! Give us their wills already!” This demon of a woman I call mother yells. I'm about to fire back but Mpilo shakes his head. I'm crazy yes but I will never disrespect my brothers. I message my brother's lawyer to come in.

“He is my brothers' lawyer.” I say wiping my tears.

“Before he reads the wills Mntimande's family has to be called in.” My sisters look at me making faces

but I'm determined to beat these greedy people in their own game. I will lay my life down for Suku and the children to have everything they deserve. I haven't spent much time with Suku but what I know for sure is that my brother loved her with everything in him. I could see his love for her glowing in his eyes every time he mentioned her name and kill me if I don't do right by her. She doesn't need all of Mntimande and Zibusiso's money, she's rich anyway but she's the only one who deserve all that money. I know, I can feel it deep inside me that my brothers' children will never lack anything if she gets their custody.

We are now all seated and waiting for the lawyer to read the will.

“Good afternoon elders and Mrs Mntimande. Sibangilizwe Ngwenya requested that his will be read only if his wife grants permission to do so. If Mrs Mntimande is not ready for it to be read then we wait for her until she's ready. Reading it against her will result in the will being nullified and she will

get everything as a sole beneficiary--”

“That's nonsense! How can my brother leave everything for someone he met recently? How are we even sure that she is the wife? My brother never introduced her to us!” Ziphozenkosi says. Suku is freaking out I can sense her discomfort but I rub her back. She has to relax else she will blow up the whole plan.

“Fortunately I have a copy of their marriage certificate. I'm sure Mrs Ngwenya won't mind providing us with the original copy.”

“Can't you all see that sister-in-law is grieving? What's the rush in all of this?” Welcome on board brother Mpilo. I'm glad you are still a Ngwenya deep down there brother. Pastor or not, you are a Ngwenya.

“We don't want this opportunist of a woman to run off with my son's money--”

“It's okay you can read the will.” Suku gives her permission.

“Before that here is the original marriage

certificate.” Sindiso is married and she knows exactly how an original marriage certificate looks like. Her eyes pop out in shock seeing their signatures on the certificate.

“She-she bewitched our brother! Our brother wouldn't marry her without our father's consent–”

“Mr Lawyer please read that damn will and let's get this done with!” Nkululeko's patience is running out.

“Okay. The will reads like this,”

1. DECLARATION.

I, Sibangilizwe Ngqabutho Ngwenya, a legal adult with an address at 1502 Bulawayo, being of competent and sound mind, do hereby declare this to be my last will and testament and do hereby revoke any and all wills and codicils heretofore made jointly or severally by me. I further declare that this Last Will & Testament reflects my personal wishes without any undue influence whatsoever.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

At the time of this Last Will & Testament, I am married to Sukoluhle Nontokozo Shantel Mdlongwa, and I have 7 (seven) children who are listed as follows:

1. Ngwenya Liqhawe born 19 July 2003
2. Ngwenya Ntsikayom'zi born 23 September 2007
3. Ncube Amahle born 8 June 2009
4. Mdlongwa Prudence born 14 August 2011
5. Ngwenya Siyamthanda born 15 March 2016
6. Ngwenya Simphiwe born 15 March 2016
7. Langa Zaine.....

“Wait Mr Lawyer where did all those other rats come from? My son has two children only!” My mother is fuming. Bravo Mntimande I salute you brother for not discriminating your children. Blood or not you will always be their father.

“I don't know all about ma'am I'm reading what my client drafted himself--”

“Who gets the property? Spare us the big English words and get straight to the point!” Ziphozenkosi hisses.

“His wife controls all his businesses till Ntsikayom'zi his son turns 21--”

“Bullshit!” Ziphozenkosi charges towards Suku but I block her.

“Not under my watch Sis.” I calmly say and she backs off.

“I said it! This woman bewitched my son--”

“I have heard enough of this nonsense! My father never wanted to see mom crying but here you are calling her a witch when you are the ones who are devils! Do you even know those two children you think he had? I bet not because you never wanted to see them! Ntsika, Amy, Prudy, Siya, and Phiwe let's get out of here. Uncle NK and Mpilo I trust you to bring my mom to the car in the next five seconds and let us get the hell out of this God forsaken home!” All the children walk out leaving the elders stunned...

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 93.

Nomzamo's POV.

I still can't believe Mntimande is gone. How can God be so unfair? Why not kill the likes of Melisizwe who are only existing and wasting oxygen? There are many people who deserve to die out here not hood people like Mntimande. In all my entire existence I have never met a noble man like Mntimande. He was the best and he will forever be missed.

“You okay Sis?” Asks Dorothy serving me food.

“Yeah I'm just sad he's gone. He didn't deserve all that. I wonder how Suku is holding up.” I sigh.

“I can't even imagine how she must be feeling. At least she got to marry him before he passed on.”

“I still don't understand why they got married in public. People love them they should have made it public for all of us to celebrate their union.”

“Suku is a public figure I'm sure she needed a little privacy since all her life is on internet.”

“I guess you are right.” Now that Mntimande is gone I will have to let Dorothy go. She's a very nice young lady but I can't keep her here only to pay her peanuts. Mntimande paid her a lot of money that I can not afford at the moment. I'm still working on starting my law firm and my budget is really tight. Even our diet will have to change from hereon.

“What are you thinking about?” Dorothy asks.

“That I have to let you go. I won't be able to pay you all the money Mntimande used to pay you. I'm sorry, you are a really a good person and it pains me to let you go. My son will miss you dear.”

“Mntimande paid me for the rest of the year before he left--” Huh? Did he know he was going to die out

there?

“Huh? Are you serious?”

“Yes Sis. He paid me so I will work for the rest of the year then leave.” How sweet is that? Dear God please thank Mntimande on my behalf.

“Thank you for your honesty. If you were not an honest person you could have left because I didn't know about the payment.”

“I was raised by a great woman who taught me never to bite the hand that feeds me.” She smiles.

Zinhle's POV.

It's been two days since we left that horrible place I used to call home. Mkhize tried to talk to me but I pushed him away. At the moment I'm not in the right state of mind to be making plans and decisions. I feel down and drained, the future is not promising at all.

“Boss.”

“Yolanda. What's up?”

“Your husband is here to see you.” What the fuck is wrong with this man? He goes around poking his dick in every hole he finds and expects me to forget everything and embrace him?

“Let him in.” I drag myself off the bed. I'm sure my face looks like I'm a street kid. After splashing water on my face I drag myself back to bed and sit waiting for him.

“My beautiful wife--”

“Please don't. What do you want Mkhize?”

“Babe I'm sorry for everything I did. It was a mistake --”

“A mistake? Are you for real Mkhize? A repeatable mistake is not a mistake! You knew what you were doing and please don't insult my intelligence by telling me you couldn't wait for me. Real men can wait even for 3 years and more but you failed to do that. You mocked our marriage but you know what?”

It's fine, my brother always told me that sometimes love hurt and now I know what he meant. I love you so much Mkhize but not enough to kill for you or fight for you. Losing my brothers taught me to choose my battles wisely. I'm not going to fight for you and I will never share you with the maids and whores. Go back to your house and continue fucking those people I'm fine with my children here.”

“I love you Zie please don't do this to us. Think about my whole family--”

“You made your bed go and lay on it. I'm tired of fighting and I'm too young to die of a heart attack. I really love you but taking you back is not in my plans for now. Give me some time and you should get your shit together because I don't want complications when I come back. Now please leave me alone I need to rest I have a serious headache.”

“Can I lay beside you just to hold I really miss you--”

“No. I want to be left alone please.” He leans forward and kisses my forehead.

“I love you.” He faintly smiles.

“I love you too.” As soon as he closes the door on his way out I burst into tears. I love him, I love Mkhize and now I'm helpless! I can't kill him nor punish him because I will be hurting myself. I love you Mkhize but why did you have to sleep with all those women? Oh God! What do I do to overcome this pain? Please bring Mntimande back to me only he knew how to comfort me. Please...

Sukoluhle's POV.

The bed seems too big without him, everything is not worth of my time anymore and my life just turned black. I'm struggling to put something in my mouth, I haven't taken a bath for two days and I haven't ate anything. The last time I was downstairs was the day we came back from that hell. I don't know what the Ngwanyas problem is and I'm not ready for the drama. I still don't know how and

when Zinhle pulled the marriage stunt I have been looking at the marriage certificate and it looks so real. Mntimande's sisters went to the registrar's office to inquire about the validity of the marriage and to my utter shock the marriage is valid. It says we got married five months after Mntimande lost his first wife.

“Makoti.” Zinhle answers her phone sounding really down.

“You sound sad, what's up?”

“I can say the same about you. Well, my husband was here and I don't know how to deal with him right now. I'm an emotional wreck and I'm afraid of making more mistakes. My brothers are not here anymore to give me the emotional support they always gave me, I feel alone and I'm scared if I act out of turn I might go on a one way trip to jail if not to hell.” She sighs. I understand exactly what she's talking about.

“We will be fine dear. I don't know when this will be but we have to keep it together, we have to make

them proud.”

“That's true. Did you need anything?”

“Yeah. What is real in all these papers? I'm confused right now.”

“Only the marriage certificate is fake. Not really fake because it is in the system. I hacked the system and got your signatures from your tablet phones you always sign on and voilà!”

“Zinhle!” I'm shocked she can do such a crime.

“Don't judge me Suku. I did what my brother could have done for me had he be in my shoes. Without that certificate the Ngwenyas will take those children away from you, they don't love them they just want their money. Tell me if you will survive knowing that Liqhawe is in Zhombe carrying a 20 litre bucket of water on her head, Ntsika having to take care of the livestock while my family is busy misusing their father's money? Will you sleep knowing that they are suffering? I did that because Mntimande trusted you with everything now don't disappoint my brother.” It's a crime but a crime

done for a good cause can be excused, right?

“I understand. Thank you for protecting the children.”

“They are my blood no need to thank me. Now you have to grow a thick skin, step into my brother's shoes and move on. With or without them life has to go on.”

“Okay thanks.” Do I really have to move on Sthandwa sami (my love)? What would you have done if you were me? I'm looking at his picture on the wall and Liqhawe comes in.

“He would have cried his heart out and moved on with those who care about him. It will be best if you also do the same mom. We love you and we are here, we will all deal with this pain as a family. You are the only parent we have left.” Her last statement brings tears to my eyes.

“She is right. I know it's painful but you have to live for your children. He left you with a one big happy family, don't let it scatter, instead bring these children together and continue to love them.” My

mother says.

“Where do I start mom?”

“Here. Sit down let me feed you this soup, then you take your bath and we discuss this issue when you are not smelling like a good rat.” My mother though? Do I really have a bad odour?

“Oh yes grandma. Let me prepare a bath for her.”

Okay. So I have gone through most of Mntimande's papers, most of them are work related. There's also a file in his laptop with names, bank accounts and the amount of money to deposited to their accounts. The folder is titled Mntimande, then on top of the list there's a title 345GANG. Now I'm confused what the hell does this mean? I dial the number on top of the list and a guy with a husky voice answers.

“Boss lady I have been waiting for your call.” Wow! He even knows me?

“Can I ask how you know me?”

“You were the boss's whole world he couldn't stop

talking about you and he told me he was going to leave everything under you should an unfortunate event like this happen. I'm sorry for your loss boss lady. ”

“Thank you. What is the 345GANG all about?”

“I can't tell you on the phone boss lady we will have to meet in private.”

“Okay. Come to the house tomorrow at 3PM.”

“Sure boss lady.” I drop the call. Mntimande what were you up to sweetheart? Was I in love with a gangster? A message interrupts my thoughts.

****I want my gold or you are going to watch your children die before your eyes.

Yours Faithfully. Roberto. ****

My phone slips and crashes on the floor. God no! Mntimande please come back I can't do this... Not my children....

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THREE MONTHS LATER.....

THE BRIDE.

Insert 94.

THREE MONTHS LATER...

Sukoluhle's POV.

I would be lying if I say the past three months were anywhere near better days of my life. I didn't even have enough time to mourn Mntimande, after receiving that message from the so called Roberto things took a turn for the worst. Two ministers from South Africa accompanied by South African Defense Force representatives paid me a visit. It was not a casual they meant business. Somehow they got the wind of the gold since Roberto called

them and told them where the gold was. They harassed my children, Prudy is still scared of the army uniform even today. After that visit I learned from Zinhle that the gold belongs to the South African government. It was stolen by Roberto's people but Zibusiso stole it from them and gave it to Mntimande to hold on to it until they let him out of jail. He was going to use the gold to clear his name.

Dr Princess hypnotized the twins because their nightmares were becoming worse and now they are fine. In honour of Mntimande and Zibusiso I didn't crack not even when I received countless hot slaps I told them I knew nothing about the gold. They turned the whole place upside down but they found nothing. They went as far as camping in our house for two days until the Ngwenyas decided to curse us with their presence in Mntimande's house. MaNgwenya kept fighting me, my children and I wanted to leave the house but leaving when those ministers were still around meant taking them straight to where the gold was. I endured their

torture until the ministers left and the Ngwenyas kicked us out of the house. Nkululeko and Mpilo are Ngwenyas yes but they are weak as compared to Mntimande and Zibusiso. They tried their best but it was not enough.

With bleeding hearts we left Mntimande's house, Zinhle was still at her weakest moments and she advised me to let them be for now until she gets her mojo back. I locked the bedroom with a code and no one will ever open it unless they bring in a tech savvy. Two days after the ministers left three guys in balaclavas paid us a visit, they tried to take Liqhawe and Amy by force but the 345 GANG came to the rescue. As if the torture wasn't enough my children had to see people being shot dead! Liqhawe managed to protect Amy from seeing all that but I'm still wondering how Liqhawe feels about it. She cries here and there but every time when I ask she says she's fine. Princess has tried to break through her with no success. I guess she will talk when she feels like letting it all out.

After the two ordeals, it didn't take a few hours to see the ministers and some members of SANDF on the news channel. They were shot dead just when they arrived back in South Africa. Their children were kidnapped, their wives' throats were slit open and even today no one knows who killed them. At that moment when I watched the news I realized how dangerous the man I fell in love with was. If he was the leader of people who were capable of such cruelty, how was his other side? The leader of the 345 GANG had promised to take care of everything but I didn't know he meant killing people. I still don't know how I feel about those missing children even today. My children suffered in the hands of those people but two wrongs don't make it right. Those children are innocent.

“Good morning mom.” Ntsika says putting a cup of coffee on the table.

“Hey son. Thank you I really needed this.” He kisses my forehead.

“What is that for?” Ntsika doesn't usually show his affection.

“From my dad. I know you miss him but I'm sure he's proud of you. Thank you for not leaving us I thought you were going to abandon us with all the things our grandparents are putting you through.”

“I am a mother and mother never abandon her children no matter how tough the going gets. I will struggle but I will never blame my problems on you. God knows why he took your dad away from us and we will never let the devil win by allowing outside forces to separate us. We are a family and we will always stick together.”

“You are the best!” He hugs me but he quickly frowns looking at my laptop screen. “What are you writing? Dear Soulmate? Mom are you dating someone just three months after my dad's demise? How could you--”

“Ntsika calm down, okay. I'm not dating someone this is my way of letting my emotions out. I'm writing this book in loving memory of your father.”

He heaves a huge sigh of relief.

“You almost gave me a heart attack. I won't allow you to date anyone mom, dad left a bullet with me to avenge his death but I will use it on any man who sees a girlfriend in my mother. I'm not ready to share you with a stranger and I'm sure my sisters will agree with me. No boyfriends fullstop!” What? Did Ntsika just go Mntimande on me? Who does this kid think he is? I'm not planning on dating someone but him threatening me just came as a shock.

“Don't threaten me boy. I'm still your mother.” He shyly smiles.

“Sorry but I meant every word.” He says picking a book from the table.

“Not for under 18 try something else leave those books for older people.”

“Why do you always write for older people though? I'm dying to read all of your books not that I love reading anyway but there's joy in boasting about your mother's books to your friends. Can you write

a book for teenagers? Teen fiction?”

“Give me a title and I will write the book for you.”

“Okay. Let me think about it. Your coffee is getting cold--” The contents of my stomach rise to my throat and I run to the bathroom emptying everything. After a few minutes I feel like I'm done vomiting and splash water on my face. My face looks pale and my eyes look like I'm about to breathe my last. I have been feeling sick for the past two weeks. I thought it was fatigue but now I'm vomiting. What's wrong with me?

“Mom are you okay?” I drag myself back into the bedroom where all my children are now standing looking at me.

“Mama? You okay?” Siyamthanda asks jumps on the bed hugging me.

“Mama is sick.” Simphiwe sadly says.

“Sorry mama I will buy you chocolate.” We all laugh.

“Thank you my boy.”

“I still think you are pregnant Sis go to the hospital.

Go to the hospital or do a home test--” Suggests Charity. The probability of me being pregnant is high but I'm scared of finding out the truth. What will I do with the baby? I have enough problems already and a baby will just.... I don't know how I will feel about that.

“Here. Do it and let's see if dad left us a mini Mntimande.” Huh? Liqhawe has test kits? “We bought them with Aunt Charity when you started saying goat stew smells bad but we were scared of asking you to do the tests. Sorry.” My children though? Now I'm cornered.

Mkhize's POV.

My wife hasn't contacted me in three months. I called her house phone several times but her maids kept telling me she didn't want to talk to me. I don't know how many months I have to wait for her to forgive me. I fired Sanelisiwe, cut communication

with Edith and every girl I slept with when Zinhle was in jail. I cleaned my mess and I'm hoping she will come through soon. I have been couped up in my room since yesterday I really don't feel like seeing or talking to anyone. Worst part is that Qhubekani knows my secret and I wonder if he will eventually tell everyone about it. I'm startled by a knock outside.

“Come in.” Zinhle walks in wearing a smile on her face. She looks breathtakingly beautiful and I can't help but stare at my beautiful wife. Her body hugging dress is showing her flat tummy which looks more defined than ever and I'm sure she's been taking her frustrations out in the gym.

“Hey husband.” She kisses me on the lips.

“You look beautiful dear wife.”

“Thank you. How have you been?”

“I missed you.” I try to pull her over me but she resists.

“We need to talk.” I hate that statement. Whenever a woman says we need to talk it means you are

doomed! “I have had time to think about everything that happened between us. I understand why you did everything you did you are a man after all. I think I have always looked for a man like my brother in every man I meet and that has ruined most of my relationships. He was not perfect but he was the only man I knew who could resist a kiss or sex from a woman who is not his wife or girlfriend. He respected women and worshipped his wife. I never wanted you to be perfect but to at least respect me and our vows. I forgave you for all the other things you did but bringing that old hag into our bedroom was the last nail on our marriage coffin. I have tried to clear that picture from my mind but I'm failing. I want out and I want nothing except my children. You can still have them we will draft a co-parenting agreement when you sign these papers--”

“I'm not signing the divorce papers. I love you Zie and I'm going to fight for us.”

“There's nothing left to fight for. You build us and you again destroyed us. I just want to pick up the pieces of my life and move on. If you don't sign

them I will have no choice but to go to the judge and show him all your misdeeds. I don't want to part on a wrong foot don't make this difficult for me. I will be waiting to hear from your lawyers. Have a good day Mr Mkhize.” She French kisses me and leaves me shell shocked.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 95.

Zinhle's POV.

Love alone isn't enough to keep a relationship going. Trust, loyalty and honesty also play a vital role in a relationship, I love my husband but it's best I love him from a distance to protect my now fragile heart.

I never thought I will be a vulnerable person but here I am feeling exposed like never before. My brothers were my shields and now they are gone. I glance at the Mkhize mansion once more and drive off.

“Zinhle on speaker phone, hello?”

“You are too relaxed young lady what's wrong? Roberto is still alive and he's still coming for that gold. Your brother's wife looks fragile and will never be able to handle Roberto alone. Get your shit together, dust yourself and move on. You still have a task to do. Alaska is waiting for you.” Carlos says with his ugly voice.

“What do you want me to do? I'm trying, okay?”

“Your trying is not good enough. I need you to help me protect those children, your brothers were the best business partners I ever had and I'm not letting Roberto win this. Are you game?”

“What do you want me to do? Just shoot I'm listening.”

“Check your secure email. By the way this call is not

protected for a reason. Get back to me when you read the e-mail.”

“Okay.” ZakwaNgwenya time to dust yourself and keep moving. Another call comes through.

“Zinhle, hello?”

“C-can you come to my house now?” Suku is crying.

“Why are you crying? What happened Suku?”

“Please come I will tell you.” I wonder what happened to her. Carlos's e-mail can wait my brother's wife needs me and she's important right now.

“Suku! Makoti!” Where are they? I run upstairs to find the children banging the bathroom door where she locked herself in. “What happened Char?”

“We were suspecting that she is pregnant and we gave her a home test kit to test but she just locked herself in there--” Shit! I hope this is not what I'm thinking.

“I'm here Suku please open up.” I can hear her

sniffling inside. It takes a few minutes for her to open the door.

“I can't do this Zinhle. I need Mntimande for all of this. How do I even explain my pregnancy to the public? Your family won't believe me--” She sobs handing me a pregnancy test stick with two vivid red lines.

“Hey look at me. You don't owe anyone your explanations except yourself and your children. You don't owe the Ngwenya people anything after everything they put you through. Be strong Suku and take this pregnancy as a blessing amidst your darkest times. God works in mysterious ways and He knows why he gave you this child. We will get through all this I'm sure the children will be happy to have another little sister or brother.” She nods and I hug her. This is hard for her but I'm sure she will be fine as time goes by.

“Okay I will try to be strong. Let's tell the children then so we can tell your family--”

“Tell the children and stay far away from my family

they don't wish any good for you and it will be good if you protect yourself and the children.” I don't trust my mother these days she's worse. Can you believe she still acts as if she doesn't know I have two children? She doesn't even know who amongst all these children is Mntimande's. I don't know what went wrong in that head of hers.

“Okay if you say so.” She washes her face once again. She walks out and all the children run to her squeezing her in a hug. I'm a badass lady but Suku is a hero. I respect this woman, she's everything Proverbs 31 explained to the world. Don't look at me like that I still remember the verses I learned when I was in Sunday school. How she manages all these children I really don't know and for that I will always respect her.

“Mom you scared us! Are you okay?” Liqhawe asks wiping her tears.

“I'm fine my baby. We are going to have a little one--” Suku informs them.

“Yeessss!” They all scream in joy.

“Let me call dad and let him know.” Amahle says reaching for the phone but her face turns sad as she remembers the sad reality. It seems for a moment right there the children forgot that their father is no more.

“It's okay little Sis he can hear us. Angels see everything and I'm sure he is looking down and smiling. Don't be sad, okay?” Liqhawe comforts Amahle.

“Congratulations Sisi.” Charity tearfully hugs Suku.

“Thank you.” Now that Suku is pregnant I have to work with Carlos and eliminate Roberto no harm should befall her. She's carrying a special child that will always remind all of us of how loving Mntimande was. I have to convince her to get two more maids since now Charity also works for Mntimande's company. I realized the work load was too much for Suku and I advised her to hire someone she trusts to work with Mntimande. Most of Mntimande's drivers belong to the 345GANG and I know they will never betray their boss even when he's dead. I need girls from the gang to come and

pose as maids and a driver too. That way I will sleep peacefully knowing that the children are protected.

“Makoti I was thinking you should hire two helpers. You will need all the rest you can get and you won't fully enjoy that if there's no one to help you with the twins during the day.” Suku has been working from home for the past three months and I hope she continues doing so.

“Won't the new helpers abuse us? Dad always told us scary stories about strangers.” Liqhawe asks.

“You are old Qhawe no one can abuse you unless you let them. I will find people I trust.”

“I don't know Zie but if you feel you can get us trustworthy people then I will appreciate that.”

“You are still good money wise, right? I can pay--”

“Money is not a problem don't worry yourself.”

That's better. I also have lots of that precious paper I'm planning on donating some of it.

“Okay. I have to rush somewhere, see you

tomorrow.”

Dorothy's POV.

I haven't been honest with Nomzamo. I'm not who she thinks I am, I'm a criminal and a gangster! Killing is what I do best, when I stabbed Melisizwe it was not my first time doing that and I actually wanted to kill him but the boss had advised against it.

“Sis Zamo can we talk?” She is busy applying make up.

“If it's something that won't spoil my mood let's talk.” She is in a good mood and spoiling this for her will be selfish.

“We will talk when you come back it can wait. So where are you going?” I change the subject.

“Dinner with new bae.” She smiles, clearly she's in love. I hope the guy involved won't break her heart

she is a type who loves too much and gets hurt in the process.

“That's great. You looking beautiful and happy.”

“Thank you. Do you mind if I sleep out? This dinner might lead to something and it's been a while since I got laid.”

“Only on one condition. ”

“I'm ears.”

“Don't invest your all before you see where this is going. You can have sex but don't get too attached and get hurt in the process. I want you to take your time.”

“For someone who's been single ever since I knew her you sure know how to advise someone. I will keep that in mind.”

“That's great then. Let me help you with your hair.”
Who am I? I'm not even Dorothy, my real name is Sharon Mlilo. My parents, well those two useless people I don't even know where they are. I ran from home when I was 15, lived in the streets for two

years until one guy took me out of the street. Frederick is his name but in the gang they call Silencer. He recruited me into the gang, it was hard vibing with men at first but later they introduced more girls. In the 345GANG blood or not we are all related and the boss, Mntimande, was not the type to take anyone's shit or mistakes.

When he needed a maid for Nomzamo he decided to kill two birds with one stone and find a helper who can also protect Nomzamo if the need arises. He chose me as the suitable candidate and brought me here. I adored my boss for everything he did for us in the gang and I will always respect him. I also lied about him paying me before leaving, Silencer told me not to leave since Mrs Mntimande decided she will not change her husband's plans. She's still paying us our money although it is rumoured that she doesn't want to interact with us for personal reasons. I don't blame her, gangsterism is not for everyone.

“Done.” I turn the chair so she can see herself in the

mirror.

“Wow! Thank you so much honey.”

At Mntimande's house Ziphozenkosi and MaMntimande are chatting over some tea and biscuits while sitting outside in the garden.

“What did Mntimande do for a living? ” Asks MaMntimande.

“He had a taxi business in South Africa and he opened one here as soon as he relocated.” Zipho answers.

“How much do you think he made per month? Do you think he left loads of cash for that witch?”

“In South Africa he was a well known respected business man and his taxis over 100 I'm sure he made lots of money. Some of them are registered under his children.”

“That means there's serious money he left behind. We have to get that money no matter at what cost.

If it means killing that witch and all the children so be it. I won't let her enjoy my son's money. I carried him for nine months and I deserve all that money.” MaNgwenya mutters.

“I have a better plan ma. Let's sell this house the move in with her that way we will gain access to brother's business. We chased her out of here but she's still living in luxury in one of my brother's houses. I also found out he had a house in Nkulumane 12 which has tenants for now.” The dou smiles. “Will dad agreee though? ”

“Worry not about that idiot he's under a spell. Talk to those people who evaluate property and let's get started.”

“We will need the property papers.”

“Don't worry that witch will give us the papers.” They toast and continue chatting...

NARRATED.

Somewhere in Cape Town, South Africa four men clad in suits are having a meeting in one of the top hotels.

“Gentlemen, what's the plan?” Asks a man in a white suit.

“We steal the tracker and find out where it is. I have a feeling minister Mooketsi knows something we don't.” Responds the one in a navy blue suit.

“What if it leads us to the wife in Zimbabwe? The people who tried before ended up dead.” The one in a brown suit says.

“Then we die trying. We are talking about a billion rands or more worthy of gold. The government knows it's missing already so we won't get in trouble.”

“If you say so. Last time she didn't talk how do we persuade her this time?”

“Slit her children's throats then she will crack...”

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THE RACE TO A GOLDEN BRIEFCASE THE BRIDE.

Insert 96.

THE RACE TO A GOLDEN BRIEFCASE NARRATED.

Roberto drives through the gate of his home in Positano. His mind is racing and somehow this mission has his heart beating fast and his gut is silent for the first time ever. He steps down his car not waiting for his guards to open for him.

“When is my daughter coming back?” His wife welcomes him with a question he's been avoiding.

“I'm not in the mood for questions dear wife--”

“What did you do to my daughter you piece of trash? You killed her just like how you killed your good for nothing son-of-a-bitch--” A hot slap sends the wife crashing on the floor. Roberto steps on her chest as she struggles to breathe.

“Don't you ever say that shit about my son! Alessandro was my son and because of you he turned against me, his own father! You are to blame for my family tearing apart don't push me woman else you will be dancing with your ancestors sooner than you can bat your ugly eye lashes!” He leaves her coughing blood and lying flat on the floor. He angrily pushes the door to his study and locks himself inside. He presses a button on his receiver to play messages.

“Boss. Her chip says she's still alive and the current location is Brazil.” Brazil? How? When? He thought he secured all the borders but maybe there's someone more powerful than him and that person is after him. His cellphone rings, he looks at the private call and decides against answering it. The

phone rings again this time with a Mexican number displayed on the screen.

“What do you want motherfucker?” Roberto hisses.

“Easy tiger. You have something that belongs to me --”

“I have never fucked you up Carlos Martinez! When I left the club I made it clear that I will never fuck you guys up and you also promised to do the same but you broke your promise! You came into my territory Carlos--”

“And you killed two people that meant something to me and my business. Without those Zimbabwean brothers my business is starting to crumble but I have a plan and you are the most important part of my plan. ”

“What do you want? ”

“Your head son-of-a-bitch!”

“What?”

“Check your computer dear Roberto. Every dog has it's day and your day has come. Remember, Carlos

Martinez doesn't make a mistake like amateurs like you.” Carlos drops the call as Roberto shakily punches a code on his laptop. Carlos Martinez still remains the most dangerous motherfucker although to the world he's the darling of everyone. Only a few people know that he owns the most expensive private clubs where only the elite know how the inside looks like. He is also into trafficking, his people kidnap girls from all over the world and those girls work for him in his clubs. There's one thing he hates the most though, drugs! He shoots to kill if you come anywhere near his workers with drugs. His beloved daughter tried drugs for the first time and she died of an overdose since then drugs and Carlos are sworn enemies.

“No no no! This can't be!” Roberto slams the laptop on the wall but all the computers in his study start playing the video. His daughter is wearing the most ridiculous make-up, her breasts are not covered as they keep clapping against her body while a man whose face is not shown fucks her mouth. She's cuffed and chained like a dog, tears are streaming

down her cheeks. “Nooooo!” He smashes the computer as rage takes over his body.

“Say hello dad.” A voice says in the video but Aurora, his daughter, keeps quiet. “Say hello dad you bitch!” Who ever is holding the chain pulls her back and she chokes.

“H-hello dad..” The video ends. Roberto picks up the call.

“What do you want? Why are you punishing my innocent daughter for my sins?” A tear runs down his cheek.

“Leave Mrs Mntimande alone and I will release your daughter--”

“What? Why do you care about her? Are you fucking her--”

“Infidelity is not one of my traits. What is it gonna be? Your daughter or the golden briefcase?”

Malcom's POV.

I'm waiting for Nomzamo outside her house. Last week I finally overcame my fears and expressed my feelings to her. We have been friends for the past three months and I realized how wonderful she is. I know this will look like I'm kicking my friend Melisizwe on the stomach while he is still down but what can I do? The heart wants what it wants. My jaw drops as I see her coming out of the house wearing a dress that is just above her knees which hugs her body perfectly! Her legs are so beautiful in those heels and she looks perfect.

“Hi.” She says looking down and clutching her purse.

“My angel. You look even more beautiful tonight.” I baby kiss her and open the passenger door for her.

“Thank you.” She says. I walk to the driver's side and get in.

“Ready to dine with me?” I ask starting the car.

“I'm nervous but let's go.” I can tell she's nervous. I don't blame her, I was a jerk the first time I met her

and it will take sometime for her to fully trust me. I take her soft hand in mine and put them on my thigh.

“Welcome Sir, Ma'am.” The manager welcomes us. I had a tough time booking for our dinner here so I had to talk to the manager directly. “This way please.” We silently follow her to private lounge on the second floor. They decorated it exactly the way I wanted it to be. I want this to be the memorable day of our lives. I'm not here to play with Nomzamo's feelings I'm here to build a future. “Everything is ready Sir just ring me if you want something else.”

“Thank you.” She nods and leaves us alone.

“Wow this is beautiful.”

“Do you like it?”

“I love it. Thank you Malcom.” She says with a smile. I help her sit down on the couch, pour her a drink and sit next to her. I don't know why I'm also feeling nervous. She takes a sip of her champagne and smiles. “You remembered my favorite?”

“A guy has to do everything he can to put a smile on his lady's face.” She blushes making me feel the need to kiss her sweet lips. I lean over and taste her lips. She wants to deepen the kiss but I pull away. I want this day to be special without us getting into each other's pants. I dish for us and start eating while chatting about little things until we are full. The temperature in the room is warm I don't have to worry about her getting cold.

“I'm scared Malcom.” She finally confesses.

“Of what babe?”

“Melisizwe. The last time I saw him he threatened my son.”

“Don't worry about him I will talk to him. Meli is going through tough times at the moment, he is my friend and I know how to handle him.”

“You sure you can handle him? I don't want you guys to kill each other because of me. People will say bad things about me if that happens. ”

“Nothing will happen to you babe.” I pull her closer to me. “I will protect you. I downloaded your song

for you.” I have to cheer her up.

“Really? Which one?”

“Wait.” I asked the hotel manager to play the song for us when the time is right. I send her a message and the angelic voice of her favorite artist Alicia Keys fills the room.

I just want you close
Where you can stay forever
You can be sure
That it will only get better
You and me together
Through the days and nights
I don't worry 'cause
Everything's gonna be alright
People keep talking, they can say what they like
But all I know is everything's gonna be alright
And no one, no one, no one
Can get in the way of what I'm feeling

No one, no one, no one

Can get in the way of what I feel for you, you, you

Can get in the way of what I feel for you....

Sukoluhle's POV.

“Mom can we go and visit grandma at home since schools are closed.” Liqhawe asks.

“Which grandma are we talking about my baby?”

“MaSibanda, your mother. She's the only grandma we have why would you think about someone else mom?”

“I was making sure we on the same page. Do you really want to go there to visit or you guys want something from her?” They all look at each other.
“Out with it.”

“We want to visit nothing more and a change of environment will do us good. Please don't say no

mom.” Amy adds.

“If you want to go then I can not say no. You are free to visit her but I will miss you guys.”

“Thank you mom. We will be back in one week's time. Love you!” They all hug me.

“Okay stop squeezing me you a killing me.” They laugh.

“We leaving tomorrow in the morning arrange a driver for us and a helper if you can just in case the twins give us too much work.”

“Sure. I will talk to them.” Zinhle brought us two new helpers. They are too quiet or it's because Charity talks a lot I don't know. One of them will have to go with the kids.

“Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa, hello?” I wonder what he wants now.

“Mrs Mntimande will do. Are you alone?”

“Yes why?”

“Open that golden briefcase--”

“What's going on?”

“There's a tracker inside remove it, go and buy a similar briefcase and put stones inside together with that tracker then put it in a safe place—”

“I don't understand Mr Martinez?”

“Mrs Mntimande? I'm sure you knew who your husband was now it's time to put on your big girl panties and stop feeling sorry for yourself. I know about your pregnancy and that should motivate you to end this gold issue once and for all. I set a trap, Roberto, four ministers from South Africa, the South African government are coming for that briefcase in two days time. Take your children to a safe place and stay behind nothing will happen to you I promise you are safe. Zinhle will tell you the rest of the details now start working. Remember we are doing this in loving memory of the two amazing brothers...”

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Things are heating up. Who will find the golden briefcase? Is Suku ready for this kind of a task?

THE BRIDE.

Insert 97.

NARRATED.

A car parks at MaSibanda's compound in Figtree. All the children quickly get down the car and run to her bedroom where they bang her door. This has been their sanctuary ever since their father passed away.

“Grandma open up!” Amy yells. MaSibanda opens the door and they all run to her giving the best group hug only they know how to give.

“You still sleeping grandma?” Asks Ntsika.

“Who agreed to drive you here at this time? I

thought you were going to arrive later.” She yawns.

“Mom sent a new driver and a new helper. There's something odd about that girl grandma. I can't put my finger on it but the way she's always pressing her phone and how her eyes run around makes me suspicious of her.” Says Liqhawe.

“We don't talk like that about people we don't know my girl. Maybe she's just not used to you guys yet let's give her some time.”

“If you say so grandma. Let's go and put on the fire and make breakfast.” The traditional food that their grandma serves is one of the things they love it here.

“Okay I will be with you in the kitchen in a minute.”

“Okay grandma. Let's go sisters, Ntsika take care of your little brothers.” Orders the big sister Liqhawe. Ntsika takes the twins to the kraal still in their white sneakers.

“Who will help us break the firewood?” Prudy asks looking at the pile of long logs of firewood.

“We will try to do it yourself. Last time mom taught us how to do it.” Responds Amy as the trio struggles but they finally manage at last, at the expense of Lqhawe's fake nail of course.

“Oh shit! My nail--” She cries out and the sisters check if she's hurt. “I'm not hurt little sisters. Prudy bring that tin we use to boil water I'm sure grandma will want to bath and our cousins too.” They run around preparing everything for breakfast.

“We preparing uphuthu, right?”

“Yes but we have to check if there's sour milk.” Just then Siyamthanda runs into the kitchen with a chick in his fist.

“Sis look I found a bird outside--”

“Siya that's not a bird put it down! Siya!” He runs back outside to join his twin who also has a chick in his hand. Ntsika chases after them and to the twins this is just an interesting game.

At the 345GANG warehouse, Zinhle walks in wearing her black boots she only wear when she means business. She claps her hands announcing her presence.

“Boss.” The gang members bow their heads.

“There's an idiot who is becoming a thorn in my flesh. He's well connected, has all the guns we can think of and he's ruthless but we will have to somehow outsmart him. He's coming after your boss's family and you know he wouldn't want any harm befall his family. We go out there and protect them like our lives depend on it and get out victorious. Are we all on the same page?”

“If you say die we perish boss. J ust fill us in on the plan and we are good to go.”

“Good. I brought more weapons and explosives in my car. Everything will go down in this location, study this map and come up with an attacking strategy. You will do your thing and I will do my own thing.” She gives them a map which shows a house in Esigodini.

“Sure boss. See you when you shout.” Zinhle walks out answering her phone.

“What do you want Mkhize?”

“Babe please--” She disconnects the call and gets into her car. She sits inside waiting for the gang to offload the weapons. Her divorce is weighing her down but this is not the time to be emotional.

Sukoluhle's POV.

I'm busy working in the lounge when the main entrance door swings open followed by rushed footsteps.

“You witch! Where are the papers of my brother's house?” Ziphozenkosi yells. I ignore her and continue working on my project. She gets pissed seeing this and spills water all over my papers on the table. I slowly put my laptop down and stand up.

“What do you think you are doing? Can't you see I'm

working?”

“Working my foot! Give me the damn papers--”

“Go to hell Zipho. No wonder your brother never mentioned you to me you are not worth mentioning. Some women are out there working and you are busy running after your brother's money that you will never ever get as long as I'm still alive--”

“You daughter of a bitch--” I punch her she staggers back touching her face.

“Not with my mother Zipho! Get the hell out of my house!” My blood is boiling.

“This is my brother's house!” She fires back.

“You wish.”

“We are auctioning that house whether you like it or not! It's my brother's house after all and I doubt you were even married to him! You are just an opportunist!”

“Try selling that house you will see what this woman standing in front of you is made of. My kindness doesn't mean I'm a toothless dog trust me

you don't want to mess with a Sagittarius queen with Mdlongwa blood.” She's taken aback. I also just shocked myself right there. She looks at me before walking out slamming the door behind her. I clean up the mess she made and continue with my work.

“I brought you something to eat ma'am.” Antoinette, the new helper says. I'm glad she didn't see that confrontation.

“Thanks but I'm not hungry. Heartburn is also killing me.”

“You have to eat something ma'am. Let me bring warm water I read on the internet that it helps.” She says and smiles for the first time ever since she came here.

“Why were you reading about pregnancy? Planning on being a mother soon?”

“This is funny but I started researching about pregnancy yesterday when Sis Char told us you are pregnant.” She looks down embarrassed.

“Thank you for caring about me. Your warm water is

kinda helping.”

“Do you want something else?”

“No I'm fine. Sit down and have your lunch I haven't seen you eating. You don't have to overwork yourself you should rest before my children return because they are demanding sometimes.”

“You are very kind. Thank you.” You are very kind? How I miss hearing that statement from Mntimande he used to say that every time he messed up and I forgave him with him even apologizing. I miss you Sthandwa sami.

“Thank you. Can I ask you something?” She nods.

“Is it normal to feel like someone is closer to you even when that person is dead and buried?”

“Yeah I believe in the spirits of those we love to be always with us. I sometimes feel my father's presence but he died seven years ago.”

“I'm sorry I didn't know.” Today I feel like Mntimande is closer to me. This feeling has me forgetting about the war brewing around me. His presence feels real, assuring and comforting. From

beyond the grave, I know he will never let any harm befall me. Also, God will protect me from any harm He promised to never leave me alone.

NARRATED.

TWO DAYS LATER...

At the Joshua Mqabuko Airport four men in expensive suits escorted by seven other men in black casual wear step on to the parking lot looking around. Someone is standing a few meters away from them clicking photos and talking on a hands free call. The men in their expensive cars get in the car and drive off headed to town.

“Silencer? Boss on the other side.” The guy who has been taking photos says.

“Boss I'm in my position.” Silencer responds.

“Good. Mrs Mntimande is your priority also protect Charity. I'm close I will take care of the rest.” A familiar voice says.

“Sure boss.” Silencer responds.

“Good. I trust you soldiers.”

“We have a problem boss. There's a third girl involved, there's also a strange car parking here--”

“Fuck! What is the other girl doing here? No problem we have three people to protect then. Copy that guys.”

Meanwhile the South African army steps into the compound where the tracker led them and so does Roberto and his men in black. Carlos is inside the house with a scared Suku, Lerato and Charity.

“Who is this woman and how the hell did she get here? My people know that there are two people to protect. Young lady what are you doing here?”

Lerato looks at Carlos's face and almost pees on herself.

“I-i--”

“Save it! Take this, all of you and lock yourselves inside the bedroom DO NOT GET OUT UNLESS I SAY SO. ARE WE CLEAR?”

“You are stepping your boundaries Carlos you don't hiss at my brother's wife! You will be fine Suku take this thing Zibus is o taught you how to shoot. If the need rises then shoot to kill--” Just then there's a gunshot outside. “Go in there. Go.” Suku drags Lerato in to the bedroom and locks the door.

“We all going to die here I swear. If I die please know I always love you Suku.” Says Lerato sweating.

Back in the lounge Zinhle slightly opens the window and positions her AK-47 w/ grenade launcher and checks her handguns. Bullets are flying outside and the yard is decorated with blood and dead bodies. Zinhle puts on her ring and blows a group of Roberto's men up in flames. Carlos is also raining his own bullets on the enemy's men.

“Oh shit!” Zinhle says noticing her ring has been disconnected. “Plan B my ring is of no use now. Time to go outside and do this ourselves.” Carlos nods and they step out taking a few men down until a bullet penetrates Zinhle's shoulder. She groans trying to keep moving but she's surrounded. From nowhere knives are thrown taking all those who are surrounding her down. She turns and comes face to face with death in the form of one of Roberto's men.

Meanwhile Roberto finds his way into the room where Suku is and gets in through the window.

“We finally meet Mrs Mntimande.” The ladies hug each other crying. “Just give me the briefcase then I will spare your life.” Suku looks at him but says nothing. “I'm talking to you woman!” The ladies flinch but Suku pulls out her gun standing up.

“Over my dead body!” She points the gun at him shocking Lerato and Charity.

“What? Are you threatening me?” He pulls out his own gun and is about to shoot her on the stomach

when the door is kicked open. Before Roberto can pull the trigger a tall figure beheads him with an Italian Royal shaped sword and his head falls on the floor followed by his heavy body blood splashing all over the face. Suku turns and

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 98.

NARRATED.

“What? Are you threatening me?” He pulls out his own gun and is about to shoot her on the stomach when the door is kicked open. Before Roberto can pull the trigger a tall figure beheads him with an

Italian Royal shaped sword and his head falls on the floor followed by his heavy body blood splashing all over the face. Suku turns and comes face to face with the shock of her lifetime. Lerato and Charity freeze seeing the scene before them.

“No no no! This can't be--” Says Suku walking backwards.

“Lalela inhliziyo yakho Sthandwa sami angilon' ithonga angikwazanga ukukushiya wedwa MaKhwali wami. Yimi mamakhe-- (Listen to your heart my love I'm not a ghost I couldn't leave you alone. It's me--” His voice seems real but then where has he been? Suku is conflicted whether to run into his arms or flee from the room? What if it's a ghost? Just then Zibusiso paces in calling for Suku.

“Cupcake thank heavens you are okay!” Suku is still shocked but can not resist the magnet pulling her into Mntimande's strong arms.

“You-you--”

“Shhhh... I just want to feel you close to me. We will talk later sweetheart.” Tears stream down their

cheeks as their emotions take over their whole beings. Zibusiso wipes his own tears, looks at the spooked ladies curled in the corner and wonders who to comfort first. He remembers what kept him going for the past three months and help Charity up comforting her with a warm tight hug.

“You are safe. Your sister is okay, stop crying now.” An explosion outside brings them back to reality.

“I have to take care of something I will be with you in a minute.” Mntimande says pulling out of the hug, picks up Roberto's head and goes outside carrying the bloody head and the bloody sword. He shoots in the air and the few men who are still alive look at him in shock.

“Noooo!” A few of Roberto's men who are still alive scream seeing their boss's head. Zibusiso blows their brains off. The SANDF looks on in awe, their general gives Zibusiso a thumbs up and orders everyone to put their weapons down and salute the Ngwenya brothers. Alessandro paces towards him supporting Zinhle.

“She got shot she's losing a lot of blood we have to help her. I'm taking her to the hospital--”

“Okay we are leaving anyway but as you know I can't put this sword as directed by your grandfather, the King--”

“We will do this later she's--”

“Carlos thanks man. Here is your prize, take care of these people we have to leave. Let's get out of here.” Mntimande runs back inside and comes back caring Suku covering her face not to see the mess that's on the ground. Zibusiso brings Charity and Lerato and they drive off.

“Mr Chifamba good afternoon.” Says Mntimande on the phone with his one hand around a very quiet Suku. It's understandable, this is all shocking.

“What do you have for me Ngwenya?”

“A yard full of dead bodies in Esigodini take care of it, delete my brother from the wanted list then you will get the location of the girls including your daughter. Double cross me they you will see what I'm made of. Don't broadcast the news of our return

yet I have to get my house in order first. Any rumors in the tabloids you will be in trouble. My children have to hear this from me not the internet.”

“Not even in my dreams will ever dribble you Mr Ngwenya. Thank you for everything.”

Mntimande's POV.

It wasn't easy playing dead when I could feel, hear and see the pain my family was going through. It was all my plan but at some point I almost called it off especially when I got to know Suku is pregnant. She just found out but I found out a week after my fake burial. She was supposed to be on her periods but they never came and she ignored it. She was in pain and her ignorance can be excused. I wanted to quit the plan but Carlos and Zibusiso were not letting me go when our plan was going perfectly well. They had to drug me for two weeks and kept me locked in the room just so I don't run off.

“Hey.” Finally she's awake. My girl cried herself to sleep yesterday, she couldn't even bring herself to speak.

“You are really alive? I'm not dreaming, right?” I French kiss her, she hates it when I kiss her before she can brush her teeth but I don't mind. She moans and starts running her hands on my chest. The kiss deepens and I feel my machine getting ready to work.

“Wait--” I pull out of the kiss. “Don't you want to know if I slept with someone else during the past three months--”

“Dead people don't have sex besides you are not that type.” She says with a smile.

“I missed your unfiltered words.”

“I missed you too.” I kiss her again this time I allow our bodies to communicate until we find ourselves breathless and sweating after the best ever sex I have ever had.

“Thank you MaKhwali.” I flip so she's on top of me. I don't want my weight to hurt the little one in there.

“What happened? Where were you?” She finally asks.

“After that call I made to you I realized what you were feeling was real. We were surrounded but I had to play it cool. I messaged Carlos to order his boys to come to him, I didn't want all of us dying right there and I knew he was close. I secretly showed Alessandro and Zibusiso what was going on but I couldn't tell Zinhle. My plan was going to work if Zinhle was to come back here. We got in the plane, fortunately Zinhle forgot something down and that was our chance to execute our plan. Alessandro jumped from the window followed by Zibusiso when Zinhle screamed the three of us were already off the plane and we rolled away from the fire. Those idiots ran off when they saw the plane catching fire giving us a chance to escape the scene without ZakwaNgwenya noticing. We were taken to Carlos's hideout and that's where we planned the rest of our revenge.”

“Zinhle didn't know?” I shake my head. “Do you understand the pain you caused us? Zinhle even

gave up on her marriage without fighting for it! I cried for you Mntimande, I mourned my brother but you were both alive! I hate you guys! I hate you for breaking my children's hearts, for making me go through hell--” Her voice trails off and she bursts in tears. Now I feel bad, I never meant to break her heart I wanted to protect them.

“I'm sorry MaKhwali please stop crying you are upsetting the baby--” She quickly sits up. Fuck! I'm doomed.

“What? How do you know that?” I have no choice but to come clean.

“You are bugged my love--” She slaps me so hard my cheek is burning. She repeatedly punches me until I manage to restrain her with my arms. “Calm down Mrs Me it was wrong of me but it was all for good intentions. I'm sorry I put you through all that trauma, I'm here now and I will fix everything.”

Charity's POV.

I couldn't sleep, I kept seeing that headless body and the blood we were swimming in. Surprisingly Zibusiso came and slept with me on my bed. I was so scared I couldn't resist his help.

“A thank you ZB will do and staring at someone who is asleep is rude.” He says with his eyes closed. He looks cute even in his sleep.

“Um-um--” All of a sudden I'm stuttering.

“You are welcome. How are you feeling now? Still scared--” Lerato pushes the door open and freezes seeing Zibusiso on my bed only in his boxer shorts.

“Lee it's not what you think--”

“Eish Char yek' ukphapha (stop being forward) why are we explaining our business right now? Lee? The door is there so people can knock before barging in. Go back outside, knock then we will decide if we want you in or not.” What the fuck is wrong with this guy? I'm trying to diffuse the fire burning in Lerato's eyes but he is fueling it.

“Um-- sorry I didn't know you had company Char.” She sadly walks away.

“What was that for?” I'm so angry at him right now.

“Eish sweetheart I didn't spend three months dreaming about you only for me to come back, have you in my arms for one night and you already feel the need to explain yourself to people, don't you trust yourself? ”

“What are you talking about?” He pushes me back on the bed and kiss the living daylights out of me. The kiss is so sweet and confusing at the same time. I can feel my clit throbbing and the evidence of my effect on him poking my stomach. He pulls out of the kiss and looks deep into my eyes.

“This is what I'm talking about. Figure it out what it is called then come back to me. I'm going to take a shower.” He leaves me confused.

Zinhle's POV.

I have a headache from hell! My body feels like I got

hit by a train and my eyelids are heavy. I force my eyes open and find Alessandro staring at me. The rage I felt when I saw the three of them back in Esigodini resurfaces and I start crying.

“I'm sorry. I'm really sorry my Queen. We never intended to hurt your feelings--”

“But you did! You did hurt my feelings, you broke me into tiny pieces!” Fuck! Where are these tears coming from? Why can't I stop crying?

“I'm sorry. Please stop crying my Queen.” He envelopes me in his arms and let me cry my heart out. I finally calm down, take a bath which he joins me in it because my right arm is as good as dead right now. I was shot, they managed to remove the bullet in my upper arm but the one in my shoulder I will have to live with it for the rest of my life.

After getting ready and changing the bandages he helps me strap my arm and we go downstairs where my brothers are now having breakfast. I run into Mntimande's arms and cry my heart out.

Zibusiso joins in the hug and the tears just won't stop. I'm happy and angry at the same time. They kept me in the dark...

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 99.

After getting ready and changing the bandages he helps me strap my arm and we go downstairs where my brothers are now having breakfast. I run into Mntimande's arms and cry my heart out.

Zibusiso joins in the hug and the tears just won't stop. I'm happy and angry at the same time. They kept me in the dark, why did they do this to me?

“I'm sorry ZakwaNgwenya I'm sorry little sister.”
Mntimande says and I snifle.

“You betrayed me--”

“It was for own good Sis. We are sorry, okay? To make it up to you I'm going to kill that old man for you--” Zibusiso says biting his t-bone.

“What do you mean kill him ZB?” No! Zibusiso can not lay his hand on my soon to be ex husband.

“He broke your heart--”

“Don't even think of confronting him because I will kill you myself! That man is the father of my children and no one is going to touch him--”

Mntimande clears his throat.

“Usalithanda nje ikhehla lakho ZakwaNgwenya pho yin' inkinga? Kungani ungabuyeli? (You still love your old man Zie what is the problem then? Why don't you just go back to him?)”

“Love alone is not enough brother. He's older than me but I deserve respect too. I don't want to feel like I'm being disrespected and I'm unable to delete the picture of him and that woman on our matrimonial bed. That picture will always haunt me.” Tears threaten to fall once again.

“Come on guys give my Queen a break she's been crying ever since--”

“You still have to respect me boy. This is my house--”

“I haven't forgotten that big boss. Anyway, what do we do with the sword? I lied to my grandfather I just wanted his blessings but I'm not going to accept that sword. Accepting it will mean I accept my responsibility and I'm not ready to be a King yet. I would suggest you return it to him.” I'm shocked. Alessandro is a Prince? A whole Royal Prince?

“Wait? You are a Prince? ”

“A King darling and you are my Queen but until you decide to let me in your heart I will keep postponing my crowning.” This is getting deeper. I thought the title was all a joke but this guy has royal blood running through his veins.

“Dude you don't ask a sister out in front of his brothers. This is Africa not Europe.” Zibusiso corrects him.

“Noted brother in-law.” We all laugh as Antoinette

brings my and Alessandro's food.

“Where is your wife Mntimande?” He laughs.

“That was a bold move ZakwaNgwenya but you will have to delete that marriage from the system I'm planning to marry her the right way. Starting from paying the lobola and everything. She's angry at me and I feel sorry for her brother here because she's really fuming.” Zibusiso chuckles.

“Good morning.” Says Charity who looks ready for work.

“Where are you going?” Zibusiso leaps to his feet.

“At work--”

“Cha muntuza awuyi lapho (You are not going anywhere). Go back and sleep, you didn't sleep well last night.”

“Wazi kanjani Mthiyane? (How do you know?)”
Thank you Mntimande for asking that question I'm also curious.

“I heard her screaming and I had to check on her.”
Just then there's commotion at the main entrance.

“Dad!” Amahle jumps on Mntimande almost knocking the plates down.

“How could you? How could you do this to mom? She was shattered! She mourned your death, she even wrote a book in your memory but here you are? What kind of a game are you playing dad? Do you know how much my tears cost? Do you know how your family treated us like trash? How could you hurt us so much--” Liqhawe breaks down.

Mntimande slowly stands up and hugs his crying daughter.

“I’m angry at you dad!” Prudy says and runs upstairs crying.

“Did mom forgive you for this?”

“She is angry--”

“You deserve it!” Liqhawe runs to the main bedroom.

“I’m doomed!” Mntimande sighs sadly. “Ntsika.”

“Welcome back dad. Thank for trusting me with your secret and keeping your promise.” They hug. Wait? Ntsika knew they were alive? “Uncle ZB.”

“Now I'm sure you are a Ngwenya boy!” The fist bump.

“Ntsika knew?”

“Yes. Ntsika, MaSibanda my future mother in-law and Silencer knew about it. I called them long before you return from Mexico with those ashes.” I don't know how to feel about this but at least they are fine.

“You owe me my tears wena Mntimande! ZB? We have to talk but not right now. I'm going to forgive you guys because Lqhawe won't forgive you unless I do.” Says Suku pulling a chair next to Mntimande but Mntimande pulls her on his laps and kisses her cheek.

“Thank you MaKhwali. I'm going to pay back all your tears.” He kisses her again and I smile wondering if there is a man out there who is at least half a man my brother is. I would really wish to at least walk down the isle for the last time with a man who can fit in his category.

“Tata!” The two troublemakers finally arrive.

Siyamthanda looks at my brothers and stops a few meters away from them. “Mama?”

“Show me who your father is? Which one of the two is Zibusiso?” They look at each other and run and jump on the chair on the left side of Mntimande snaking their arms around his neck.

“I can't believe these sperms of mine don't know they came from me--”

“ZB!” Suku scolds. Suku then stands up from Mntimande's laps to let him hold the twins.

“Dad? Mom was crying.” Simphiwe says.

“I'm sorry my boy she will never cry again. Never.” He kisses their foreheads. “Come on say hi to dad number two.” Zibusiso tearfully envelopes them in his arms. Tears stream down his cheeks, this might be really hard for him.

“I need fresh air.” He gets up and leaves with them still in his arms. I have to go and check on my children.

“My King can you drive me to my house?”

Alessandro smiles naughtily.

“Always a pleasure following your orders my Queen.” He stretches his hand and helps me up.

“Thanks for the food Antoinette.” I'm always grateful to people who help us effortlessly. “I will see you around brother we still have a lot more to talk about.” I say my goodbyes and leave.

Sukoluhle's POV.

It's been a really wonderful day. The brothers set up a picnic in the garden for the whole family with everyone's favorite snacks, chocolates, drinks and slices of cake available. Liqhawe couldn't resist her carrot cake and she had no choice but to warm to her father and uncle. I didn't know Mntimande and Zibusiso had a playful side but they played all games the children suggested and had fun. Now Mntimande is swimming with the children while I'm

sitting on the chairs with my brother. He has me in his laps like the good golden days.

“You are getting heavy Cupcake.” He says.

“Tell that to your brother he's responsible for this excess fat in my body.”

“You really love him, right? Never mind don't answer that I know you two are madly in love and I'm happy for you two. You both deserve to be happy and as long as you both are happy then I'm happy too.” He says.

“When will you also fall in love?”

“I'm already in love but I'm afraid you are going to kill me for this.”

“Spit it out.” I wonder who is the lucky that softened my brother's heart.

“Please don't kill me or harass her. I fell in love with Char--”

“What? Lerato will kill Charity! How could you do that? This won't work ZB and I don't want to pick sides when this escalates. You are my brother, Lee

is my best friend and Char is a sister I never had what do you want me to do with this mess you are creating? When did you fall in love with her?" This explains why he knows Charity was having nightmares and Lerato's message which sounded off earlier in the morning. She said she was switching her phone off because she needed time for herself. Lerato must have seen something that really hurt her.

"The first day I saw her. I was really taken by her innocence and beauty but my plan to sex Lee was already in motion when Char walked in and I couldn't stop myself. I really needed sex at the time and I didn't want to scare her. She looks innocent and I intend not to spoil her with my crazy activities."

"This is going to be one hell of a ride brother. Do you really love Char?"

"Ngingene nangamaphaphu Sis kanye namazwane (I love her with everything in me) and I'm not letting her go not for anything. Please don't make me choose between you and her. I will always choose

you but I won't be entirely happy without her.”

“Make sure this doesn't ruin my relationships.”

That's all I can say for now. He became a thief for me, compromising myself a little for him is nothing compared to what he has done for me. May Your will be done God.

“Thank you. I won't disappoint you I swear on your life.” He always swears with my life when he speaks from the heart.

“Bhambolunye, the ministers are in town. I informed Silencer to delay them a bit go and enjoy with the mystery girl while I have my girl to myself--”

“Okay stop right there. She's my sister and you will have to respect our relationship and don't get too excited and end up crossing the boundaries.”

“Understood brother/in-law.” Says Mntimande picking me up.

“You look edible when you are wet like this.” I say as he puts me on the couch in our bedroom.

“That's the point Mrs Me. I want you to eat me until

you are satisfied.” He tugs at them of his T-shirt and pulls it over his head flexing his defined muscles.

“Why do you always swim with a T-shirt on?”

“I’m sure my crazy December girlfriend won’t like it when her helpers start drooling over her husband. I’m eye-catching my love--”

“Good looking people don’t clap for themselves. I have to tell you something important babakhe.”

“I’m listening.” He says taking my feet onto his laps.

“Zipho was here demanding papers for the house. She said they want to auction it.”

“I know.”

“And?”

“And they will do no such thing because you my darling are going to stop that auction. I left my property in your hands and it wouldn’t be fair of you to return it with some properties missing.” My heart skips a beat! Is he serious right now?

“But--”

“But nothing. The auction is tomorrow at 1PM make sure you get our house back. Don't buy it because I know that's what you are thinking now. Stop my greed sister and mother from doing that. Be bold like how bold you were when she came here demanding papers. Don't look at me like that this is one of the pecks of being my future wife.”

“This is not fair--”

“Shhh!” He puts his cold finger on my lips. He then forces his finger into my mouth and orders me to suck. “I want you so badly my love.” He says running his cold hand on my exposed thighs. My body is now reacting to his touch and the coldness that comes with every contact of his hand. He slowly moves on top of me but I push him back.

“What now?”

“We doing this my way.” He smiles. “Put your hands under your head.” He obliges. I slowly pull down his shorts together with his boxer briefs my eyes not leaving his. I sit back and admires the marvelous sweet thing God ever gave our men. I lean forward and #REMOVED....

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I will post the #REMOVED around midnight or after midnight I still have to type it. Please bare with me.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

I won't be around to post tomorrow my other duties are calling. Our next insert will be on Monday in the morning unless someone sponsors during the weekend. Have a wonderful weekend. I love you all

THE BRIDE.

Insert 100.

UNEDITED.

Zinhle's POV.

“Good night Alex.” I say handing him a towel. He smiles and motions for me to sit down next to him on the bed. My heart is now throbbing in my throat, he has always had that effect on my body.

“When were you going to tell me that your husband broke your heart?”

“I wasn't going to tell you. I don't want people meddling in my business--”

“Correction my Queen I'm not people I'm your King. I allowed you to taste waters sweetheart but the deal was not to let your heart get broken. You even went to jail for a useless pig who didn't even love you--”

“We loved each other--”

“A man who loves you will never be a reason you shed tears unless they are of joy of course. You loved Qhubekani but he never loved you. You were his sanity pill, in you he found stability and the

reason to breathe. You gave your all and he did was to take and never gave anything back to you. That relationship was toxic and you know it even if you still don't want to admit it.”

“I moved on from Qhubekani so why are we talking about him right now?”

“Because he is the reason you married that old man, he is the reason you are still hurting even today. Had he gave you enough love you wouldn't have agreed to married an old man. You have to heal my Queen, heal and then you can move on. Stop hurting yourself because of your husband who failed to respect you. I'm not saying this because I want you for myself, I'm saying this because I care about you. Give yourself time to deal with your past demons in preparation of the bright future that awaits you.” I'm in tears already. How can a man I spent only two years close to know so much about me? It's like he has a connection with my heart, brain and soul.

“Thank you I will try and deal with my demons.”

“Good girl. Come here.” He envelopes me in his arms taking note of my fresh wounds.

“Why didn't you tell me you are a Prince?”

“Arg! You just ruined a beautiful moment. I told you the first day I met you that you were going to be the Queen of my kingdom but your dull mind couldn't think of the possibility of me being the Prince. I'm sure you thought I was trying to charm you.” I smile. I thought he was trying to lure me to his bed. “My Queen I don't need to lie to get any woman I want my face does the charming part for me and all I have to do is to give my all to her.” He says and kisses my cheek. “Go to bed you need to rest.”

“Okay. Good night then.” I stand up to leave but my mouth which sometimes disconnects from my brain betrays the honest woman in me. “How many girls have you slept with ever since you disappeared from my life--” He raises his eyebrows.

“Oh oh! My Queen has an issue with the women I sleep with?”

“No it's not that--”

“It's too late to try and deny everything now because jealous is written all over your face. Anyway I have lost count of no-strings attached moments I have had since then but I'm still not committed to anyone. I'm still waiting for you to tell me if we have a chance or I should move on.” I swallow hard. Why am I even jealous?

“Thanks for your honesty.” I turn to leave but he grabs my hand turning me to him and his lips crush with mine. In my head I'm screaming for him to let me go but my body is doing the opposite. I kiss back and moan at the same time. We have never kissed before and this feels heavenly. Why did God let me kiss all those frogs if there was a man who could make me feel like this? By the time he pulls off we are both panting and in tears. He pulls me to him and hugs me.

“Everything will be fine. I have hope and faith and the two have brought me this far. Just hold on and trust the universe and it's ruler. Now go to bed my Queen. I love you.”

Zibusiso's POV.

I push the door open to find her sleeping on top of the bed covers in her white lace panties with headphones on. Her body is perfect for my hands and she's portable. I can really enjoy playing around this temple of hers. My trousers are expanding already, fuck! Slow down Zibusiso. I quietly lock the door, remove my clothes and slowly climb on the bed making her jump almost falling over.

“It's me Mrs Ngwenya.” I say looking straight into her innocent eyes. She's frozen in my arms.

“Unfreeze, okay?” I kiss her lips. She tastes sweet just like how I imagined.

“W-what are you doing in my room?” She tries to push me off.

“Babe I live for violence but marrying a violent person is not in my plans. When I look at you I see peace, calm and love around you. Be my sanity, allow me to love you without us fighting or trying to

explain ourselves let's just follow our hearts. I know you want me to so why are you acting like a virgin?"

"I-i--" She stammers.

"I know babe now can we put the phones away and sleep? In my world cellphones are prohibited in our bedroom this is the space where we get time for us and shut everything else out. Speaking of our bedroom tomorrow you are coming with me to see our house. I don't want to live with my sister because I won't be able to fuck you. By the way I intend to make you scream like never before." She blushes. That's it! We are on the same page baby girl. You might not love me now but my intention is to make you fall in love with me and my imperfections. Forgive me for pushing too hard I have been dreaming about her ever since I set my eyes on her.

"What if I don't love you? " Now she's relaxing with her head on my chest and my hand around her.

"It's okay you will have to allow me to love you. Cheat and someone's son will kiss his life goodbye.

Are we clear Mrs Ngwenya?" She nods. "The last time I checked you had a mouth and a perfectly working tongue.

"Yes."

"Yes who?"

"Zibusiso--"

"No babe that won't work try something romantic."

"Yes Mthiyane." Oh gosh! Did she have to use my weakness? Clan names are a weakness of every man and right now I feel like ripping off her panties but my sister is next door, I kiss her instead.

"Tell me something interesting to divert my mind. I feel like ripping your pants off but--"

"But what?"

"My sister is upstairs and that doesn't allow me to be myself in the fucking department."

"Oh."

"Yeah babe I respect that woman more than I respect my own parents. So what's interesting in

your life?”

“Uhm--” A call from Lerato comes through her phone. Shit! What does she want from her now. She asks if she can answer it and her humbleness has me agreeing to her taking a call that might spell doom for our night. “Sis Lee--”

“Congratulations on winning the heart of a man who chose to lose 70k instead of giving me his heart. I don't know what you gave to him but I'm happy for you. I will always be your sister and I hope we won't let a man come between us. I would like to believe our bond is stronger than that--”

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 101.

Charity's POV.

Congratulations on winning the heart of a man who chose to lose 70k instead of giving me his heart. I don't know what you gave to him but I'm happy for you. I will always be your sister and I hope we won't let a man come between us. I would like to believe our bond is stronger than that--”

“What do you mean 70k?” I'm confused.

“Oh sorry. I thought he told you the amount he paid me for shredding my pussy--” Zibusiso tenses and his grip around me tightens.

“Sis Lee. I really don't know why to say, I'm sorry--” Zibusiso snatches the phone and switches it off.

“Listen here Mrs Ngwenya and listen very carefully. Loads of bitches are going to come after you and you better start practising not to apologize for the shit you know nothing about. There are many bad things I have done in the past and I don't want you

to carry my cross. I don't know how deep your bond with Lerato is but don't ever apologize on my behalf unless I offend my brother and big Sis Suku. Those two are the only people I apologize to the others can go jump off the nearest cliff." I sigh. This is going to be one hell of a ride! Am I even strong enough to try this relationship thing with him? I like him, I once fantasized about him and here he is offering himself to me but his sins are already catching up with us before the relationship kickstarts. "You are too quiet I prefer you shout, scream or cuss at me to you going mute. Women are dangerous species and I'm not ready to be a statistic of passion killings."

"Did you ever feel anything while you--"

"No no no! We are not discussing her in our bedroom. Not now not ever, we will never discuss anyone in here only us. This is our space. I know you have million questions but suck them up for now and let's continue where we left off before the interruption.

"I don't know what to talk about let's just go to sleep.

Good night--”

“I’m not sleepy. Let me do something to get you back in the mood.” He says getting on top of me and starts kissing me. He kisses me until I feel my body giving in to his touch and I want more of him. It seems many women are after him including my sister Lerato I might as well just seize this opportunity and grab it with both hands. “It’s getting harder down there Mrs Ngwenya--”

“It’s wet down there too--” He inserts his finger down there and I moan.

“Mmm so ready for me Mrs Ngwenya.” He says licking his finger. “I don’t want to upset you but I have to ask this before I trust you with my life. What’s your HIV status?” Huh? No man has ever asked me that question.

“I was negative the last time I tested.”

“And when was that my wife?” He says fondling my breasts.

“Last year in J anuary--”

“And we are in August this year. Why don't you take care of yourself? A person should go for regular checkups at least every three months. I'm not comfortable with not knowing your status dear wife. Anyway, tomorrow we will go and see the doctor.”

“Don't you trust me? I didn't have a boyfriend so I didn't have a reason to go for testing.”

“I love you Char but that doesn't mean I will stop being responsible. We will always have to be always cautious. I don't ever want us to be sick because of sex. I love you so much and I don't want you falling sick.”

“You talk too much do you know that? I'm now wondering if I'm the woman or you are--”

“What did you just say? Me a woman? I'm going to show you who is the man and who is a woman.” He rips my panties off and runs his hand over my soft meat. He leans down and separates my folds with his tongue making me to arch my back and moan. He removes his boxers his erection springing free and I gasp and swallow hard looking at his size. He

rolls a condom over his manhood and
#REMOVED.....

Sukoluhle's POV.

I wake up feeling a little bit tired. That session with Mntimande wore me off.

“Good morning Mrs Mntimande.” He says pulling me to him.

“Let me go I want to pee.” He laughs and let me go. When in the toilet I pee and start feeling nauseous. I start vomiting until Mntimande comes into the bathroom and starts rubbing my back.

“My baby is not treating you too well MaKhwali, I'm sorry my love.” He kisses my cheek and frowns looking at my sweaty face. “You are sweating babe-_-”

“I feel like I'm going to faint. It's hot in here--” He flashes the toilet and takes me into the shower and

opens the tap. Cold water hitting my skin feels heavenly. He comes and stands behind me with his hands around me. “You don't like cold water why are you in here?”

“My son is making you feel sick I think it's fair for me to feel some of the things you feel including bathing with cold water although it makes me sick.”

“Thank you for the support.”

“Always MaKhwali. Don't forget to call Zamo before they broadcast the news of my return. They will be announcing it during the 3PM news.”

“I invited her for breakfast I want to surprise her.”

“Even better. And remember you still have to go and get our house back. I'm not changing my mind not even after the mind blowing sex.”

When I go downstairs the girls are almost done with breakfast. My children may get almost everything they want but they are not spoiled. They do household chores like any other normal human

being.

“Morning mommy.” Lqhawe says pouring pancake mixture into the pan.

“Morning my girls. Aunt Zamo and Zaine are joining us for breakfast.”

“No problem there's enough food here. The only thing left is cooking pap for dad and uncle. Amy is done grilling their meat and their beer is in the fridge.” So here is a thing. Mntimande and Zibusiso don't drink tea, eat bread or cereals for breakfast they eat pap and meat instead. That's the only meal they can eat any time any day.

“Thank you my sweethearts. Let me prepare the pap.” Charity walks into the kitchen yawning. I don't even want to know why she's sleepy. I approve of their relationship but as I said to Lerato the last time I don't want to know my brother's bedroom business.

“Morning Sis.”

“Morning Char. Breakfast is almost ready.”

“Thanks Sis. Sorry I overslept--”

“It's okay you no longer work in the kitchen your job is in the office not here. Here you can sleep the whole day I won't trouble you. Soon I will be handing you guys back to your real boss I'm tired and I think I'm going to take an early maternity leave.”

“You sure deserve to rest.” She says with a smile. She's happy and she's glowing already. I'm happy for her, we have been through a lot together and she never left me in times of need. She deserves all the happiness God can shower her with.

“Sis Amy!” Zaine runs into the house tripping and falling followed by Zamo who is laughing at him. Amy meets him halfway and they kiss each other all over the faces. Their bond is amazing.

“Hey gal. You look better than the last time I saw you.” Says Zamo hugging me.

“I could say the same about you.” She blushes.

“There is a man, right?”

“You can say that. What about you? I hope you are

not cheating my brother's soul?" I smile.

"Your brother is alive he was never dead--" Her eyes pop out in shock.

"What do you mean? We buried him--"

"We buried ashes not him or his brother. They are all alive--"

"I don't believe you." Mntimande walks down the stairs looking yummy in his jeans and a black sweater.

"MaLanga--"

"You-you are dead--"

"No I'm alive."....

NARRATED.

At Mntimande's house the elite group is gathered waiting for the auction to start. MaNgwenya and

Ziphozenkosi are sitting in the front row wearing their best outfits. The auctioneer greets everyone, states the prize of the house which is pegged at \$650 000 according to the evaluators.

“\$700 000 going one two--”

“One million.” A man in a black tuxedo raises the bar.

“One million--” The auctioneer is about to call for more money but his mic is switched off.

“It's a crime to sell someone's house without the person's consent.” Suku says flipping her hair back.

“Ladies and gentlemen, as the owner of this house I did not approve of this auction. I don't know what's going on but I think you all should leave--”

“You witch--”

“Bowabala amagam' akho mfazi kaNgwenya
(Watch your words Mrs Ngwenya--)

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Good afternoon darlings. I won't be able to post two inserts per day this week I'm busy. Also our time slot for our inserts might not be consistent. Please bare with me.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 102.

[5K followers! Thank you so much darlings. It is your love and support that keeps me going.]

NARRATED.

“It's a crime to sell someone's house without the person's consent.” Suku says flipping her hair back. “Ladies and gentlemen, as the owner of this house I did not approve of this auction. I don't know what's going on but I think you all should leave--”

“You witch--”

“Bowabala amagam' akho mfazi kaNgwenya (Watch your words Mrs Ngwenya--)” Hearing the familiar voice and language Ziphozenkosi and MaNgwenya slowly turn their heads to come face to face with Mntimande. MaNgwenya staggers back not able to fathom what is going on. Ziphozenkosi is sweating already, the invited guests are all shocked to see Mntimande strong and alive.

“You-you are dead--” MaNgwenya stammers.

“I'm not dead! Maybe if you tried to be a mother and listen to your gut instead of letting greedy cloud your motherly instincts you would have known I was never dead--” Suku shakes her head and the fuming Mntimande stops talking rubbing his head frustratedly.

“Ladies and gentlemen thank you all for honoring the invitation. As you can see there are a few misunderstandings about the sale of this house. The house is not for sale, I humbly apologize for the inconvenience caused.” People mumble to

themselves. “Thank you for coming. Have a good day.” Suku concludes her announcement and steps down the podium in her high heels. Mntimande holds her hand helping her not to fall off the the steps. “Thank you.” She smiles.

“Anytime Mrs Mntimande.” MaNgwenya and her daughter are shooting daggers at Suku.

“Uyenza kanjani into enje mama? Uthengiselwani umuzi wabantwabami? Bakhuts helweni emzini wabo kanje abantwabami? (How could you do something mom? Why are you selling my children's home? Why were they cahased out in the first place?” Mntimande smasks his anger with a calm face.

“Ubufile Sibangilizwe! (You were dead!)”

“Manje? Ukufa kwami kuts ho ukuthi abantwabami ayiseyibo boNgwenya? (So? Does my death mean my children are no longer one of your own?”

“You left everything for this witch--” A backhand slaps registers on Ziphozenkosi's face and she gasps in shock.

“You are beating your sister for this girl--”

“Singafakani eyilingweni mfazi kaNgwenya. Ngifuna uthathe imts haqana yakho uphume uphele emzini wami ungaphinde ulubhade lana--”

“Mntimande--” Suku tries to calm him down.

“Phuma kiyo leyi mkami ayiyona eyakho. Lena iphakathi kwami nomama ongizalayo. (Don't involve yourself in this Suku. This is between me and my mother.) Go to the car.” Suku hesitates for a minute.

“Now!” Mntimande hisses. He waits for her to get into the car. “Be grateful I'm not ready to be cursed by your ancestors otherwise I would have beaten the crap out of you and your daughter. By the time I come back here tomorrow I don't want to see even your shadow in this house. But before you go I want you to know that I heard everything you told Zipho. My house is under surveillance, not only that but it is bugged with voice recording devices. The pool side, too.” MaNgwenya's face turns pale in a matter of a second. “I know what you did to Ngwenya please do right your wrongs before I let my siblings know what you did. When you rectify that mistake

of yours we will talk about all the nasty things you said to my wife.”

“Are you going to choose her over me your mother? I just wanted to taste the good life you boys are living. Please don't let this witch get between us--” Mntimande clenches his fists and pushes the glass table that shatters cutting his knuckles. Blood drips from the cuts as he angrily glares at his mother who staggers back. She has never seen her son this angry.

“You don't know me mother. You don't know the son you gave birth to and you definitely won't stand the truth about me. Stop trying to compare yourself with my wife, you are my mother she's the mother of my children and you both can never be compared. Call her a witch again and I swear I'm going to put a bullet through your skull.”

“Brother I'm sorry mom put me to it--” Mntimande picks a microphone stand and beats the hell out of Ziphozenkosi. She screams, so does her mother until Zibusiso runs into the yard. His heart almost stops looking at Mntimande whose veins are now

popping out, his eyes bloody ready and his lips trembling.

“Brother stop--” Zibusiso tries to stop Mntimande but he sends him flying in the air with only one fist. Ziphosenkosi is now lying flat on the lawn with no energy left in her to keep trying to begging for mercy. Zibusiso looks at Mntinande who now has his boot on Ziphosenkosi's throat and his whole body shaking in fury. He leaps to her feet and comes back with Suku who is now a crying mess. “Only you can stop him right now--” Suku remembers her mother's teachings and kneels down tears streaming down her cheeks.

“Mntimande, Bhambolunye zingambili zone zifuze ekhaya konyoko, Mthiyane, Somuhle-- (Ngwenya clan names)”

“Stop!” Mntimande screams with both his hands on his head as if trying to block something.

Ziphosenkosi coughs repeatedly and vomits blood.

“What has come over my son?” MaNgwenya cries watching her daughter. Suku runs to bring water but

Mntimande stops her.

“Fall and hurt my child while trying to save someone who was planning yours and my children's death then you will come face to face with the Mntimande you have never seen before. I said stay in the car! Is it that hard to listen to simple instructions?”

“Stop! You don't want to regret this later. Let's go, leave my sister alone for now.” Zibusiso reasons with Mntimande.

“They wanted to kill her! They were planning to kill my whole family! All for what? For money?” Zibusiso's own rage builds up but he decides to play it safe. A few minutes later their uncle (Mangwenya's brother) paces towards them.

“It's enough now my nephews--”

“Nxla!” Mntimande stares at his mother for a second and leaves. Zibusiso hugs Suku who is crying hysterically.

“You will upset the baby please stop crying. They pushed him too far and once he loses it it's hard to

control him. Please stop crying cupcake. Come on let me take you home--"

"Where is he going?"

"Somewhere quiet to cool off the steam--"

"What if he gets drunk ZB--"

"Don't worry the only thing he can't control is his anger but he can control the amount of alcohol he takes in."

Mkhize's POV.

Now I can say I ruined my own marriage with my own hands. Zinhle is not perfect but she loved me with her all. She even changed, she tried to be a good woman being for my sake but I ruined all of that.

"Are you really letting her go?" Qhubekani asks as he scans the signed divorce papers.

“I saw her yesterday. I wanted to beg her one more time but I didn't stand a chance. She looked happy, carefree and finally she was playing like her peers. She was with a foreign man, I don't know who he is but all I know is he brings the best out of her. The children looked happy and comfortable around him too. I want her to be happy and if that man is good enough to do so then I'm ready to let her go. I failed her, I deserve this pain and I will forever regret choosing five minute pleasures over a lifetime filled with love and happiness.” A tear runs down my cheek.

“Maybe you should try again if it hurts this much. ”

“No. She deserves better.” There's a light knock on the door and I quickly wipe my face. I asked Zinhle to come here so we can talk. “She's here.”

“Okay dad. Let me leave you then.” Qhubekani opens the door and her perfume fills the entire room. They briefly hug exchanging pleasantries. She walks in, she's wearing one of her favorite short red dress. When we were still married red meant a great romance filled night but now it's probably for

someone.

“Hi.” She says flashing a smile and kisses my cheek.

“Zinhle I--”

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"Beloved if there's any of you who has experienced life with an absent or toxic mother and doesn't mind to share their story please get in touch. You can inbox the page or WhatsApp me on +263775907564."

THE BRIDE.

Insert 103.

Mkhize's POV.

“Hi.” She says flashing a smile and kisses my cheek.

“Zinhle I'm sorry for everything.” My tears fall fresh. She hugs me, I cry until she can not take it anymore and she cries too. After minutes we both calm down.

“I really love you but I accept my mistakes and I'm not going to be selfish and keep you here. You deserve to be happy, go out there and live your life to the fullest. I will love you from a distance.”

“Thank you for trying to tame me. Thank you for making a better woman out of me and thank you for everything you did for me. I love you too, I just feel like we keep hurting each other which is not healthy for us. I'm sorry for everything I did to you.”

“It's okay Zinhle. I will forever cherish all the good memories. And thank you for the best gift ever, my children.”

“Yeah ey. I saw the divorce settlement you sent to my e-mail I really don't need the money and some of your assets I just want us to part peaceful that's all.

Please keep all the money.”

“I’m old now dear I can die anytime and I don’t want to leave my children with nothing. Please take the money for our children. I don’t want their lifestyle to falter because of our divorce. ”

“Okay then. Now we kiss and end this chapter with a smile.” She French kisses me. We kiss for a long time letting our emotions out. “Thank you and take care of yourself.” She says and stands up.

“Here are the papers we don’t really need our lawyers for this.” She takes the papers, sighs before signing them and puts them back in the brown envelope. “Let’s go downstairs and tell the children about it.” I told them last week, they understood but I know it will be hard to say goodbye to her. She was not only a good wife but the best mother to them too.

“You really leaving grandma?” Nothabo fights her tears.

“I will always be your grandmother. You can call or come to me whenever you need me.” Zinhle hugs all

of them. I watch my family trying so hard not to break but I can see how hard this is for them.

“I wish you all the best mom. You will always be our mother.” Khulekani rubs his eyes. Zinhle says her goodbyes and leaves. I watch her taking steps away from me, not temporarily but she's leaving forever. With every step she takes my body becomes numb and my heart is bleeding. “You okay dad?”

“I will be fine.” I excuse myself and disappear to my room. I lock the door and collapse on the cold floor screaming the pain out....

Nomzamo's POV.

I'm still shocked about Mntimande's return but I'm happy he's not dead. Suku was really sad without him.

“Hey honey. I didn't know you were coming today?”

“I'm here now stop thinking.” He kisses me on the

forehead.

“It smells nice in that bag you brought.” He smiles and sits down. I open the drawer, take out two plates and dish for us.

“I’m here to ask for something.”

“What?”

“I’m going to Harare tomorrow for a work meeting. Can you come with me, please?” Harare? I love it there and I can’t say no to such an offer. “Is that beautiful smile a yes?”

“A big YES!”

“Come here come and kiss daddy.” I walk around the table and sit on his lap and give him the best kiss ever. We look at each other for a long time until someone knocks at the door. I try to get up from his lap but he wraps his arms around my waist. “We not cheating anyone baby let’s stop behaving like teenagers. Tell whoever is knocking to come in.”

“Come in.” The moment he steps inside I almost faint.

“Uhm...sorry. I will come back later when you are alone.” Melisizwe says avoiding eye lock with Malcolm. He looks like someone who hasn't eaten for weeks.

“Are you okay dude? You look horrible--”

“Yeah all thanks to men like you who think because they have money they can get everything they set their eyes on including our women. What do you think of yourself man? Do you feel like a man when you are busy fucking my wife? Our divorce is not finalized yet and I'm not signing those papers.”

“Babe, I will see you at home. I really don't have time to argue with you mate but what I know is that I'm not sleeping with your wife. Your divorce was long finalised before you even lost all the money your rich ex wife gave to you. I don't like sounding insensitive boy but can you please respect my space?”

“I will get you for this!” Melisizwe walks out. Why is he after me anyway? He asked for the divorce and I gave it to him what's his problem then?

“He won't harm you as long as I still breathe. Okay?”
I nod. “Good girl. Let me go back to my work I will see you later. I love you.”

“I love you too.”

Sukoluhle's POV.

“Why are you not picking my calls?” My mother is yelling.

“Ma I have a serious headache right now and I really don't want to argue with you. ”

“Noni--”

“Ma? I'm angry at you is that what you want to hear? You knew they were alive but you watched me cry day and night!” The painful lump I have been swallowing rise to my throat threatening to choke me.

“Suku what's wrong? I know you are angry but it

feels like there's more--"

"Leave me alone mom. Bye." I'm not about to tell my mother about my boyfriend's temper. That's my problem to worry about. I throw my phone away and cry myself to sleep.

I don't know how many hours I have been sleeping. I try to move but I'm Mntimande has me in his arms. I don't even know when he came back and to my surprise he doesn't smell like a liquor shop as I imagined.

"Hey." He smiles and pushes my hair off my face. I raise an eyebrow at him. "I'm sorry I lost it back there. Forgive me Mrs Mntimande."

"You scared the shit out of me." I confess. I was so scared I almost peed on myself.

"I told you to stay in the car but you didn't listen next learn to listen to your husband. I have a serious temper I sometimes fail to control which is why I prefer to keep cool whenever someone pisses me off. When I told you to go the car I could feel my

mind failing to control my emotions. I didn't want to hurt you that's why I chased you away. When I'm angry and tell you to do something please listen to me. I will never forgive myself if I hurt you.”

“What's so hard in controlling your temper when you can control your sexual feelings?”

“I don't know but what I know is that my temper gets the best of me and creates a monster in me. I'm sorry I yelled at you.”

“Don't ever do that again to your family members. They are still your family.”

“Not now Mrs Me. I'm still in a state try lecturing me maybe tomorrow right now I'm hungry and I need a cold shower.”

“Okay let me go and find some food for you.”

“Can you please tell your helpers that I don't eat food that is cooked and kept in the fridge for hours. My stomach doesn't feel okay after eating the food they gave me when I came back. I even forced myself to vomit the food.”

“You should have refused the food instead of eating and getting sick.”

“I didn't want to sound rude or something like that. I prefer you prepare food for me because you know what I want.”

“Okay babakhe noted. Let me take a quick shower before going downstairs. Find a dress for me to wear.”

NARRATED.

Dear Zinhle.

You were all I lived for. My children are grown up now, they can take care of themselves and I trust you to always guide them when the need arises. I spoke to Alessandro and he promised to take care of you. I trust him to help you be the best version of yourself. Whenever you go remember to always be yourself don't change for anyone. Always keep

smiling, I will keep loving you from beyond the grave.

With love

N. Mkhize.

He neatly folds the letter and seals it in an envelope. He then loads his gun and locks himself in the bathroom. A gunshot sound is heard from the bathroom.....

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MORE chapters of LOVE, GREED AND DESIRE. have been uploaded.

<https://visionarywritings.com/author/5395>

THE BRIDE.

Insert 104.

NARRATED.

Dear Zinhle.

You were all I lived for. My children are grown up now, they can take care of themselves and I trust you to always guide them when the need arises. I spoke to Alessandro and he promised to take care of you. I trust him to help you be the best version of yourself. Whenever you go remember to always be yourself don't change for anyone. Always keep smiling, I will keep loving you from beyond the grave.

With love

N. Mkhize.

He neatly folds the letter and seals it in an envelope. He then loads his gun and locks himself in the bathroom. A gunshot sound is heard from the bathroom.

“Grandpa!” Nothabo pushes the bathroom door and finds her grandpa lying on the floor with blood oozing from his chest. “Dad! Mom! Dad! Grandpa wake up, wake up! Dad!” Nothabo screams pressing her hand on the bullet wound.

“Thabo? Thabo?”

“In here mom!” Gugu rushes in but quickly closes her eyes when she realizes that her father-in-law is shirtless. She quickly turns and looks away. “Mom grandpa shot himself! Do something!”

“I can't touch him let me call your father--”

Khulekani comes in running and struggles to pick his father up. Nothabo helps him and they rush to the car and drive off to the hospital...

Alessandro's POV.

“Your Majesty.” I answer the call with a smile.

“Our future King. How are you my son?” Grandpa calls me his son. I was also told that he's the one who forced my parents to accept his name as mine. Alessandro is my grandfather's name.

“I'm fine grandpa just that my Queen is going through a divorce. She's sad and I can't be fully happy because I know she shared a deep bond with the old man.”

“Be there for her. Don't be insensitive about the whole thing. You love this girl, you told me about her when she was underage and I believed you when you said you were going to make her the Queen of your kingdom. Love her, that's the only weapon you can use to win and heal a woman's heart.”

“I know Grandpa. Why did you call? I know you didn't talk to chitchat? ”

“I want my sword back kid. Elders do not know I gave the sword to someone who is not royalty. When are you bringing it back? You also have to be here for your father's burial don't make it too obvious that you killed him. Your Grandma doesn't know about this and she's shattered.” Poor grandma. Only if she knew how bad her son was she wouldn't be shedding a single tear for that monster.

“I haven't accepted the sword from Mntimande. My Queen hasn't said yes to my proposal. You know my conditions Grandpa--”

“Che cosa? Sei pazzo? Quella spada rappresenta il tuo regno e ti va bene che sia in possesso di uno sconosciuto? Cosa c'è che non van in te Giovanni? (What? Are you nuts? That sword represents your kingdom and you are okay with it being possessed by a stranger? Giovanni what's wrong with you?)” Now he's angry. Whenever he's angry he speaks his native language Italiano.

“I'm not crazy grandpa! That man saved my life, why can't I trust him with sword you yourself handed over to him? Or you have forgotten about it?”

“Sono tuo padre Alex, mi parlerai con rispetto! (I'm your father Alex you will talk to me with respect!)”

“Le mie scuse, Maestà. (My apologies your Majesty.)”

“That's better. Get your ass here before your father's burial. Bring the girl with you people are starting to think you are gay.” We laugh.

“Okay grandpa. You do know she's stubborn, right?”

“I can tell by the face I'm looking at on my table here.” I smile. My people love Zinhle so much although they haven't seen her. I have a wall full of her pictures back home and they always gave me peace when she wasn't with me.

“Okay grandpa my Queen is back I have to attend to her.”

“Good sex can heal a brokenhearted girl too. I trust you to represent us well, when you date a girl from

another culture or country always remember you are representing the whole nation.” I laugh and drop the call shaking my head.

“Here you are my Queen.” I can tell by her smile that all is not good.

“He shot himself--”

“Huh?”

“He tried to kill himself but the bullet missed the vital parts. I went to tell brother about the divorce, Khule called and told me to rush to the hospital. I went there to find Mkhize on the hospital bed with all kinds of tubes on him. I feel guilty right now maybe I should have stayed and tried to make things work.” She looks like she's carrying the burden of the whole universe on her shoulders. My poor Queen.

“Come here baby.” She hesitantly hug me.

“Not everything is your fault. You gave him an option but he chose his own way forward. Stop feeling guilty about things you don't have control over. He survived the bullet, right?” She nods.

“He's in a coma.”

“He will pull through. It's not your fault, we all have choices and he chose the bullet way. What can we do to make her majesty happy?”

“A massage and a glass of wine will do.” Alcohol and a massage? Zinhle really wants to kill me? Does she even know that it's been six months since I had sex? I'm head over heels for her and now she wants to torture me with her body?

“Okay let's go to then.”

This is going to be a long torturous massage I have ever given anyone. Not that I go around offering massages anyway, only my aunt and grandma know how my hands feel.

“Should I remove my clothes or you not comfortable your Majesty?”

“His Majesty is very well comfortable seeing your body my Queen. It's been a while since I saw you without your clothes.”

“You make it sound like you have seen me naked more than once.” I chuckle. I can't tell her that at some point in time I missed her so much that I bugged her house just so I can hear her voice and see her smiling.

“Yeah you are right.” I bite my lower lip as I watch her remove her dress and lays flat on her stomach giving me her back. She looks perfect in her own skin. I start working my magic from her feet up to her legs, thighs...

“Alex do you love me or you just attracted to me?” I'm thrown aback by her question.

“Attraction fades with time but my love for you have withstood the test of times. I wouldn't have risked my life and let my own father be killed if I didn't love you.”

“You are a future King, don't your people have some traditions like you should only marry someone from you kingdom? ”

“We do have traditions but I explained to my people that I only love you and I will marry only you. They

love you and they can't wait to meet you.”

“Then help me heal, take away my pain and give me the joy I have always wished and prayed for. Mend my broken heart, make an honest woman out of me, remind me how it feels like to love and be carefree. Love me, take me to the future that you promised me ten years ago.” Tears are pouring from her eyes. I lean over and kiss them away.

“Loving you is what I live for. I have always loved you but you were too busy to notice. It doesn't matter now you are here. Now that you are giving me permission to love you I promise you will never shed tears of sadness, ever.” I remove my jacket and throw it on the floor followed by my sneakers and join her on the bed. “Now that you are mine allow me to give you the best massage ever. I love you forever. ”

“I hope you mean that.” She presses her phone switching on the subwoofers and plays a song.

“Dolly Parton?” She nods.

“I have been waiting for my divorce to be finalized

to play this song for you and to give myself to you.

Take my hand and run with me out of the past
called yesterday

And walk with me into the future of tomorrow

Yesterday must be forgot no looking back no matter
what

There's nothing there but mem'ries that bring
sorrow

Yesterday is gone gone but tomorrow is forever

No more crying tears leave tracks and mem'ries find
their way back

Tomorrow's waking let's journey there together

Yesterday is gone gone gone but tomorrow is
forever

I care not for yesterday I love you as you are today

Yesterday just helped to pass the time while waiting

We must forget the passing time my love for you is
the real kind

The kind that won't hurt you no never

Yesterday is gone gone gone but tomorrow is
forever

Yesterday is gone gone gone but tomorrow is
forever

By the time the song comes to an end we are both
emotional. I have gone through some real shit too
whilst I was waiting for her but I will tell her all
about it some other time. I flip taking her on top of
me and she leans over and kisses the living
daylights out of me. I want to stop her but she's not
having any of it. Her touch is making me loose my
sense of reasoning. She impatiently help me strip
naked and #REMOVED.....

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Thanks for your messages of encouragement I'm feeling okay now. I guess there's nothing a chocolate can't fix. I love you all darlings.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 105.

Zinhle's POV.

I wake up my body feeling sore. I look around to find Alessandro staring at me.

“Staring is rude.”

“Only when you are staring at a stranger. Admiring my Queen when she's asleep is not a crime. How are you beautiful?”

“Tired and hungry. What time is it?”

“Past 4PM. The little ones were here?” What? My children saw me in bed with a man who is not their father?

“What have we done? I'm sure they hate me already-
-”

“Relax I was awake already. I was sitting on the bed but I had my clothes on. We should tell them dont you think?” I don't know about that. I know my children love their father like no one else does. I just hope my quest for happiness doesn't put a strain in my relationship with my children.

“I will talk to them. Let me go and find something edible.”

“My Queen?” When he says My Queen I feel everything south of my waist tightening. I thought butterflies in one's stomach were a fairytale but now I know they are real.

“My King.”

“You don't regret what we did or do you?”

“I don't regret anything. I enjoyed it and I'm ready to repeat the same everyday, anywhere in the world. I want us to live the dream you sold to me ten years ago.”

“I want that too. His Majesty, my grandfather wants us to be at my father’s burial. What do you say?”

“Does he know about us?”

“Yes. I told him when I first met you that I found my Queen. They are aware of everything. He's the one who gave your brothers permission to kill my father not that they weren't going to kill him anyway. As a prince, my father had to die by the royal sword. Grandpa gave Mntimande the sword and now we have to take it back to it's rightful place.”

“What kind of a man is your grandfather? ” I don't understand the old man. Why would he kill his own son?

“I'm the younger version of my grandfather. Looks, temper, taste, ruthlessness, everything. I'm like him that I sometimes wonder if I'm not his son.” We laugh.

“I see. You hungry?”

“For you, yes. On a serious note though, what we just did are we ready for the consequences? I'm ready to father my heir but he/she can not be an

heir unless he/she is born after our traditional marriage. You ready to be a mother again? I want you to make your own choices baby. I dont want to have a wife who feels oppressed. Love doesn't make one question his/her own decisions.”

“I'm ready to mother your heir my King. I waited for you to come back for a very long time and now I'm ready to give my all to you. I won't be a submissive wife though. J ust to be sure we have to get tested tomorrow.”

“I know and I can't wait to have a wife who challenges me. I have always played safe but we will go and test. When are we visiting the old man at the hospital?”

“I didn't think you would say that. Will you feel comfortable around him and his children?”

“Men who feel threatened by other men lack self-confidence. I'm confident in myself baby don't worry about me. I just want to be there for you, besides the old man called me before trying to kill himself--”

“Alex did you threaten him?”

“Why would I? If I wanted to do that I would have done it a long time ago. I love you enough to let you free and to let you decide on your own without pressuring you. He just told me to take care of you and not to separate you and the children.”

“Okay. We will go with the children tomorrow.”

THE FOLLOWING SCENE IS BASED ON THE WRITER'S REAL LIFE EXPERIENCES.

Mkhize's POV.

Suicide attempt? No. I wasn't attempting to kill myself, I didn't aim that gun to my chest to experiment something, I wasn't attempting I actually wanted to kill myself. The pain of seeing her walking out of my life is unbearable. Not only that, she's over me, my pain doesn't affect her

anymore and I'm no longer the reason her smile brightens the day. Someone better than me is giving her what makes her happy and it's a pity I'm not that man. I can't even compete with the young man. You see? I have no other reason to live for.

“Good morning Mr Mkhize.” A young lady greets me. I don't have anything to say to anyone I just want to be left alone with my pain. “I understand how you are feeling Mr Mkhize. I don't blame you for not wanting to talk about it but at some point you will have to talk about what is bothering you. I'm Nkosinothando Mhlanga, your therapist.” She flashes what she thinks is a smile but to me it's a depressing grin. It's a sight I'm trying to delete from my head and only hope that everyone can stop smiling when around me. “Mr Mkhize, suicide attempt doesn't just happen something is bothering you. Trust me I won't judge you.” You see? They all spend years studying lies. There's nothing called 'suicide attempt'! Maybe they should try another phrase, ‘failed suicide’? Perhaps that might sound realistic.

“Have you travelled the world?” She nods. “Have you been to the end of it?” She shakes her head. You see? Everyone keeps saying they understand but they don't! They all have been at a crossroads but never at the end of the road. No one understands my pain. No one knows how it feels like to travel to the end of the world where there's no way back or forward. No one understands how it feels like to lose that person you pledged your whole life upon. No one understands how it feels like to see the person who is your whole life happy with someone else! They all want to understand by they don't!

“Mr Mkhize--”

“Please leave me alone.”

“The doctors will want to see the report--”

“Just leave me the hell alone!” I yell hurting myself in the process. She hesitantly leaves and the river of my tears decides to overflow. I ruined my own life! I stabbed myself on the foot! The door slowly opens and my boys run in. I quickly wipe my tears

and put on a smile.

“Daddy!” The hug me and I fight my tears. Zinhle walks in followed by Alessandro, he's holding her hand. The way he looks at her, the way they are so perfect together, everything so beautiful about them reminds me how I lost a good woman because of temporary pleasures.

“Hi.” Zinhle greets me.

“Hi Zee.” I force a smile. I don't want her to feel guilty about her happiness.

“Mr Mkhize good morning. How are you feeling?” The guy is just perfect in every way.

“Feeling better thank you.” He nods.

“We came to check on you and the boys wanted to see you. We will give you guys your privacy I will come and pick them up later.” Zinhle says.

“I'm feeling a little drowsy please take them with I will see them when I get discharged.”

“Okay boys say bye to daddy he needs to rest.” My boys kiss me on both cheeks and walk out with

Alessandro. Zinhle waits for them to leave and she pulls a chair.

“Why do you want to die? Do you remember what you said to me the first time you saw me?” I nod tears flowing down cheeks. “It's time you take your own advice. I won't say I understand what you are going through because I don't know how deep your pain is. Stop being selfish, your children need you and by killing yourself you are not proving anything. You can still love another woman and move on. Stop and for once think about Owami and Olwethu. If this is your way to make people hate me for your sins then you are doing a great job at it. Your children now look at me differently. I have my own demons to fight please fight your own in a fair way. Don't be a coward.” She tearfully looks at me and leaves me swimming in my own tears.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 106.

THREE MONTHS LATER...

Mntimande's POV.

“I told you not to call them! Why did you search for them? Are you happy now? ” My girl is livid. Now I don't know if the hormones are getting the best of her or she's hot tempered with or without the pregnancy hormones.

“Uxolo Makhwali. (I'm sorry.)” That's all I can say for now. I have so much to explain to her but it will only have a difference when she calms down.

“You are sorry? Do you know how much my mother is hurt right now? Those people did nothing for me, they took everything my parents owned, they never

even one day checked on me, they couldn't care less whether I died or not and you go out there and look for them, for what? What did they do that qualifies them as the right people to receive my bride price? What right do they have over me? My mother deserves this not them! I don't want to see them, and if you dare give them anything that should be given to my mother be ready to marry their daughters not me!" She slams the door behind her, I'm defeated. How do I fix this?

When I sent my people to ask for her hand in marriage - from where I come from before asking the girl/woman to be your wife you should ask her parents first and her mother told my people to go to the Mdlongwas. I didn't understand why she would say so after Suku had told me that she knows no one from the Mdlongwa family. I asked my uncle who explained to me that it doesn't matter whether she knows them or not but that's where she comes from and they are rightful people to charge me the bride price. Messed up traditions, right? Yeah I also

feel the same but at the same time I want the Mdlongwas to know I'm their son-in-law, this is not fInsertose good for nothing uncles of hers but her wish is to take me to her parents' graves and that will only be possible if the Mdlongwas know who I am. I know she's angry, all I want is for her to calm down then I will explain myself. I love Suku but as long as I don't have her parents' blessings I will never be happy. I want to do things the right way but my super-angry woman won't give me the chance to explain. I have never seen her this angry.

“What did you do to my sister?” Zibusiso asks as soon as I answer the phone.

“She's angry I found her family. I know she hates them but she's not listening to my reasons.”

“Why did you do that anyway? Those people never wanted to see her when she was young. They deserve nothing--”

“Ubani othe ngizobanika inkomo zamalobolo? (Who said I'm going to give them the bride price?)”

“What are you doing then?”

“I want them to see the diamond they rejected while busy chasing after money. I want them to know that whatever they did to her never broke her, I want them to finally apologize to MaSibanda and thank her for raising their own blood like it's hers. Do you know what the best revenge is?”

“Nope. You tell me?”

“It's to let your enemies live, let them watch you soar higher like an eagle, kill them with kindness until they bow when you pass by. I'm not doing this to spite your sister as you call her, I'm doing this for her. She doesn't talk too much about them but deep down she has many unspoken words, emotions and questions buried there. She's hurting but her strong personality won't let her admit to it. I'm sorry if you also feel like I can hurt my girl intentionally.”

“No I'm sorry for sounding like that. You are my elder brother and I don't like it when you apologize. Just treat my sister well. Where is she?”

“She went outside. She's really pissed off man.”

“Buy her mint and top deck chocolates then you will

be forgiven.”

“What?” I'm laughing.

“Trust me that's your only way to her heart right now. Or try cupcakes but I'm worried about her weight man--”

“Stick to being her brother man I will worry about her weight, okay?”

“Sure man. Let me go I also have to meet the uncles. Are we still sticking to the initial plan, right?”

“Yep. A double wedding in two months time.”

“Suku will be eight months pregnant by then what if she goes in labour?”

“She won't. The point is to watch her walking down the aisle with my son in her belly.”

“I hope she agrees. I can't wait to get married man, to tap the pussy I paid for. The pride in doing that man.” This one is crazy. “Bro, I'm happy but not really happy because even now NK haven't forgiven us. I feel like his anger pushed him to the States it's not about school but being far away from the

brothers who betrayed his trust. ”

“He will be fine. He's angry but he will come around.”

Zinhle's POV.

Who knew I would one day travel the world just like how I dreamed about when I was young? Who knew I would be happy to a point of tilting my head back laughing out loud with not even a single thing bothering me at the back of my mind? I guess the God I believed in when I was young does really exists then. Here I am in Seychelles, leaving the five star life with a man who doesn't have to try too hard to put a smile on my face. Just one look into my eyes he will know what I want at that particular time and he makes it happen.

“Penny for your thoughts?” Alessandro hugs puts his hands around my waist.

“Nothing to share babes I'm just happy. I'm finally

free of all the negative energy. I want to buy something special for Suku. It's because of her I'm free of my past today. Without going back to where everything started I was never going to be okay and that conversation with my parents really helped me. I needed to let the pain and anger out of my chest. She's an angel that one." My brother is always blessed with good women. His first one was ghetto but she was a darling and now Suku is a rare gem.

"I know hey. What do you want to buy for her?"

"I don't know yet I will ask the girls to help me choose something that suit her style."

"Great idea." He kisses my neck.

"Mommy? Mommy?" My boys come running and shouting. Alessandro moves away from me, he respects my children a lot.

"What is it my boy?"

"Dad is calling." Owami gives me the phone.

"Hi." I answer the phone. My fiancé, yeah we engaged, he proposed after the burial of his father

and talking to his family about my children and them accepting my children. I was saying he doesn't mind me talking to Mkhize, we had a long serious talk with Mkhize when he got discharged from the hospital. I made him understand that even if I go back to him it will be out of pity not that I'm happy in our marriage. He finally understood and we parted on good terms.

“Hi. I was calling to remind you that your daughter is getting married next week and she personally begged me to call you.” Yeah Melissa is getting married. His children refused to cut ties with me. I was worried about Alessandro but he told me he doesn't mind as long as they don't come between us.

“I haven't forgotten and I will be there. I won't miss it for anything.”

“Thank you. There's also someone I want you to meet.”

“I can't wait already. We will be there.”

“Say hi to that boy who is taking care of you.”

“I will. Take care of yourself. ”

“You too.” Alessandro kisses me and scoops me up back to the bedroom. Our kiss deepens and our breathing accelerates.....

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 107.

SEASON 2 FINALE

Sukoluhle's POV.

I'm woken up by soft tiny hands and I know who it is. Siyamthanda doesn't like it when I'm sad and asleep

the whole day.

“Wake up mommy. I brought grapes for you.” I slowly sit up and tearfully hug him. I don't even know why I'm emotional I'm just an emotional wreck these days. He's so young yet he takes note of what I'm always eating these days.

“Thank you son. Where is Simphiwe?”

“Playing outside with others. Zaine is also here.” Siyamthanda prefers his own company to playing with many other kids. He's not shy, but introverted. He only talks a lot when he's alone with his father (Mntimande) or me. They know Zibusiso is their father and the two brothers agreed to let the twins call the both of them father.

“Okay son. Do you want to sleep?”

“No. I want to touch the baby.” This is all Mntimande's doing. They all know there's a baby in my belly.

“Okay.” He touches my belly and slowly moves his tiny hand over it. He looks lost in his own little world until Mntimande opens the door startling him.

“Sorry boy I didn't mean to startle you.” He kisses my forehead. I feel every contents of my stomach rising to my throat and I quickly get off the bed running to the toilet. Oh dear God. Why does this child hate me this much I was just enjoying my grapes and now this? Honestly speaking, my child hates his father. I haven't told him this but his perfume, his smile, the way he walks, his deep voice, everything about him makes me wanna puke these days. I don't know how he will feel if he ever finds out this is how I feel about him at the moment.

“If I didn't know better I would say he's not mine.” He laughs holding me from the back. “I know my son hates me MaKhwali it's not your fault. I know you love me and you are not pretending. The situation is beyond your control.” He kisses my neck. Unlike Melisizwe, Mntimande doesn't mind watching me puke in the bathroom. Even if I wake up in the middle of the night he will also wake up and make sure I'm fine.

“How do you know that?”

“I know babe. I'm a father already and I know the

stress you women go through. Can I talk about my late wife?" I smile and he smiles back and continues. I don't mind him talking about her, at first he was scared to mention her thinking that I'm also like many crazy women out there who hate a dead person who did nothing to them before her death. "She hated me when she was pregnant with Ntsika. At first she chased me out of our bedroom and I had to use the spare room. When she was four months pregnant she filed for divorce, I had done nothing wrong she just hated me for being me. I refused to sign the divorce papers and she went back to her family. Her mother understood what was going on and she let her stay until she gave birth. So I understand perfectly well what you are going through right now but I'm not going to leave our bedroom nor I'm going allow you to leave. We are in this together, it's okay we will be fine. You okay now?" I nod.

"Who taught you to be a good father and a husband?"

"Uncle Google did." He laughs. "I used to Google

things like how to keep a woman happy, how to be a best brother, how to be a good father and I read many books about all of it.”

“I'm proud of you.”

“Thank you MaKhwali. Let me take a shower to get rid of my perfume then we will talk. I'm sorry about earlier I didn't mean to upset you.”

“It's okay Sthandwa sami my emotions are skyrocketing these days. Can I join you?”

“You always welcome babe.”

Lerato's POV.

Let him go! Just accept that all he wanted from you was sex! He was not meant for you! He loves her not you! That's all they keep telling me but has anyone asked me how I feel about all of this? I met Mntimande first, Suku took him. I met Zibusiso I wasted no time and gave him what he asked for but

again someone came and took him away from me! What kind of friends/sisters does that? Why didn't they think about me before taking them? Why am I the one who is supposed to let Zibusiso go when Charity couldn't resist him when she knew exactly what happens between me and him?

I log in to my Facebook account to find loads of their pictures. It looks like they went to Filabusi(Charity's home) recently. One of the pictures is of Charity wearing a traditional dress and a head wrap with two young girls who look a lot like her captioned: My wives. The picture has the internet buzzing I don't even know what fuss is about? Charity is not even that beautiful.

Comment 1: Things do change for real! ZB uyashada mfana?

Comment 2: I remember how he used to be the it guy back in the days. Lupane State was run by him and girls couldn't stop wanting him no matter how much he shredded their pussies.

Comment 3: I was one of the girls. The guy knows his thing I don't blame the girls.

Comment 4: I salute @Char04 I don't know what you gave him but girl you are one lucky bitch! I used to hate him for breaking my heart but now I'm okay.

Zibusiso: You guys will make my wife decide otherwise I just paid the bride price for crying out loud! . @Melisa @Ruth @Monalisa @Ruvarashe I'm sorry ladies. I was young back then, I don't know where and how you misread my actions but today, here where everyone will see this; I'm really sorry and thank you for forgiving me. I love my wife and I'm going to treat her well to show everyone who thinks I'm a player who I have matured to be. On the other lighter news keep checking my sister/in-law's page for juicy news.

They all reply asking him to spill the beans but he keeps refusing to do so. He later responds.

Zibusiso: Don't you worry guys you all know my sister in-law very well and she's the reason I'm the

man I am today. FYI, she's famous!

Reply: I saw that super intelligent Lady, S-Kay and someone I mistook for you...does this mean? Oh my gosh! Suku is your sister in-law

Reply 2: You mean thee Suku? The pride of Lupane State university and Zimbabwe as a whole? His best friend we all thought they were fucking each other?"

When the comments keep buzzing Zibusiso decides to turn the commenting off. It must be nice being famous for breaking people's hearts. I go through the comments again until I stumble upon a comment of someone who is hurting as I am. I send a friend request to her and she accepts a few minutes later. I inbox her there and then. Let's see how you bitches I used to call my sisters will get your heavily ever afters!

Nomzamo's POV.

Today I'm feeling so tired all I want is sleep, the events if yesterday left me really tired. Malcolm proposed when we went to Harare. He had everything planned out, it was a very beautiful night I won't lie. I cried when he knelt on one knee and asked me the big question. For a moment I froze but I recovered and screamed yeessss! Yesterday we went to my uncle's house to finalize the lobola ceremony. He paid everything they charged him, he even paid two other cows for the family to allow him to legally adopt Zaine. Since Melisizwe didn't pay lobola my uncles said they don't know him but I'm worried about the court. I don't know if Melisizwe will let Malcolm adopt his son.

“Babe wake up. Zinhle is on the phone.”

“Really?” We have so much catching up to do with my friend. “My friend how are you? ”

“Super good. Congratulations girl Malcolm just told me that the lobola is done. Now when are we wearing our best outfits? ”

“We will see soon after Mntimande and Suku's wedding. I don't want it to be like I'm competing or trying to be an attention-seeker. I need those two when I get married they have been a family to me.”

“I understand babes. Listen, I will be landing in a few hours don't tell anyone I want to surprise them. When I arrive we have to go out and catch up.”

“I can't wait. ” I can't contain my excitement right now. My friend and I have been through a lot but now God has finally decided to bless us. Now I know that a blessing delayed is not a blessing denied. Who knew that my happiness will come in form of a man who is two years younger than me?

“Can you come back to me please. I need your attention, too.” I laugh at him.

“What now hubby-to-be?”

“I miss you. You have been sleeping forever. Did you even bath today?”

“You don't remember or you just making fun of me?”

“Well, Dorothy, Ethan and Zaine are not here can we use this time wisely?” I raise my eyebrows. “I chased them away for a reason I even gave my card today meaning I'm serious about this.”

“You gave Ethan your card?” He nods. “Consider yourself broke for the rest of the month.” He laughs.

“Leave my sister-brother-in-law alone!” I hit him with a pillow. “I like how he rocks heels and makeup better than most of the women out there.”

“Uncle hit him with a knobkerry when he was busy talking like a woman.” It's not a laughing matter really but the way my uncles hate homosexuals is just funny and out of this world. I don't know when will they accept that their own is who he is and nothing can change that.

“That's not fair. Anyway, come with me.” He scoops me up, I'm still wearing nothing but panties. He walks out of the house to the pool, by the way we are in his house. Malcolm is one of those men who will never stay in a woman's house. He told me this two days after we started dating. He says his pride

can not allow him to be in a live-in boyfriend. He didn't even want me to move in with him until he went to my uncles. He always talks about how us women let men use us then later we will be crying when we have the right to say no to things like cohabiting. He says once you agree to it chances are high your boyfriend will never think of marrying you the right way because already you are his unofficial wife.

“What are we doing here?”

“You will see.” He puts me down and jumps into the pool. He swims to the other side and comes back for me. “Hop in.” He gives me his hand which I gladly take. Once inside he starts kissing me caressing my breasts earning a moan in the process. “I want you babe, here inside the pool.” Huh? How will others swim afterwards? “I will drain the pool and have it cleaned. This is one of my fantasies.” He grabs my waist pulling me closer to him and French kisses me.....

NARRATED.

At the Mkhize mansion people are busy moving up and down preparing for Melissa's marriage. She's marrying a white guy from England.

“I wish mom was here. I saw her trending on social media. I didn't know the guy is a real Prince?” Khaya sips his beer.

“Yeah the dude is a legit Prince about to become a King. To think that guy once told me that I can toy with Zinhle all I want but when he comes into her life we will all bow our heads. I thought he was joking, you know?” Qhubekani laughs in disbelief.

“Yeah shit happens man. You still love Zinhle?” Khaya asks.

“Always. I hurt her a lot but I love her. I don't want her back but she will always have a special place in my heart.” Qhubekani smiles.

“I understand man. At least you have someone you

once loved, as for me, I'm unlucky when it comes to love. Girls want my money not love. I have given up on love.”

“You are too young to give up on love. Wait for the right time and the right girl will come.”

“True that. Where is Anelisa? Have you spoken to her ever since the... You know?”

“Yep. We chat a lot these days. She promised to visit soon--”

“And here I am.” In her long body hugging dress that reveals her beautiful curves, Anelisa stands before them. They are both dumbstruck, they have never seen her or her picture after the positive transformation.

“Whoa! I'm drunk, right?” Khaya can not believe his eyes.

“Ane?”

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Tomorrow early morning we have a sponsored insert, 5AM to be specific. The insert is sponsored by reader who said to me “You don't know how Suku and Mntimande's love story changed my life for the better. I was on the verge of giving up my marriage because I was never satisfied in our bedroom but when you wrote about connecting through sex I realized what our sex life lacked was a deep connection. Thank you for rekindling the spark of my marriage, I will forever be grateful.” Back to why the insert should be posted at that time, she paid extra for the insert to have a #REMOVED scene of Suku and Mntimande. In other words the insert will be a morning glory.

A Season finale doesn't mean it's the end of the book. For the first ever, a season finale will drag for about 3 to something inserts. Then we will have a whole book FINALE and lastly an EPILOGUE.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 108.

UNEDITED.

SEASON 2 FINALE.

“True that. Where is Anelisa? Have you spoken to her ever since the... You know?”

“Yep. We chat a lot these days. She promised to visit soon--”

“And here I am.” In her long body hugging dress that reveals her beautiful curves, Anelisa stands before them. They are both dumbstruck, they have never seen her or her picture after the positive transformation.

“Whoa! I'm drunk, right?” Khaya can not believe his eyes.

“Ane?” Qhubekani is also surprised.

“Qhu.” They emotionally hug each other. “How are you? ”

“I’m fine and you? ”

“I can’t complain. Khaya?” Anelisa hugs Khaya with her left arm while the right arm balances her crutches.

“Wow! I heard you are now a pastor’s daughter but I never knew you are now this hot? What’s the secret?”

” They all laugh. “On a serious not though, you look super fabulous.” Anelisa blushes.

“Dude leave the mother of my children alone. Go and bring a chair.”

“Let her use mine I will give you guys some privacy. I’m going to meet someone special at the airport.” Khaya leaves.

“How have you been?” Qhubekani asks.

“I’m good Qhu. I see you are also looking good. How are the girls?”

“Well, they are fine just missing their mother.”

“I know hey. I wanted to come and see them but the last time I was in Bulawayo some things happened and took me back to that day and I had a panic attack. Dad had to drive back home with me, I was really in a bad space.”

“I understand. Now you okay though?”

“Yeah. I went to see Zinhle in prison a few days before she got released. I apologized to her and she was shattered by the death of Maghawe. It was really sad seeing her like that. Where is she? I'm sure she's happy about Melissa's marriage.”

Anelisa smiles. Clearly she's in the dark about the recent events.

“Zinhle and my father got divorced a few months ago.”

“What? Why?” Qhubekani narrates the whole story.

“Wow. I salute her for walking away this time.

Zinhle has been through a lot and she deserves all the happiness.”

“Eish! Look at me keeping you here without asking if you would like some food or drink?”

“I'm good for now. I'm enjoying catching up with you. So? Any wedding bells from your side?”

“Nope. What will I do with a wife? I can't get it up and marrying someone will be putting that person under serious torture. I'm just living a bachelor's life.”

“I see.”

“Abd from your side?”

“I took a vow of celibacy after everything I went through because if love and sex I don't think I will ever love again. I'm just living my life as someone whose marriage failed and she had to return to her parent's house. I'm not complaining, I'm happy I just need you to allow me to have access to my children that's all I need to be complete.”

“I never refused to let you see the children dad is the one who did. We will talk to him now while he's still in a jovial mood. He's happy and even happier that Zinhle is coming for the wedding.”

“I thought they are divorced? ”

“Divorced not enemies. They actually chat now and then, Zinhle's fiance is a good man. He doesn't mind them talking. He's one bastard I know who is not afraid of another man stealing his girl because he's confident in himself. He's not like us who become jealous and insecure. Can you believe he loved Zinhle before me? I know the guy from back when I was in South Africa.” They continue chatting until Gugu comes outside to see for herself if what Khaya said is the truth.

Melisizwe's POV.

I have been sitting in this empty house trying to find a way out of my debt. I got tempted by poker games, I won one million the first round and lost the second round. I kept going back hoping to win another million or more but I kept losing and losing until I realized there was no money left in my bank account. I sold the Legend 45 to try and sustain my

bills but the universe and the stars conspired against me, my business started collapsing. It was later when the damage was already done that I found out workers were stealing from me. I tried to salvage the situation but I guess I was too late because before I knew it the ombudsmen were knocking on my door. I owed millions of taxes, my workers sued me for delayed payments and my business was auctioned by the court. The bank auctioned my house then I was left with nothing. Suku had stopped depositing money in our joint account and that is how I found myself homeless.

I stayed with Malcolm, I told him everything that happened between me and the women I had in my life. He sympathised with me only for him to stab me in the back and take Nomzamo as his wife. I saw their posts on Twitter, he paid lobola in full yet he won't borrow me money to buy bread. Just one loaf of bread to eat while sitting under the bridge that has become my home. Malcolm chased me out of his house after I threatened him and Nomzamo. I

know him very well and I won't dare try to cross his path. He's a dangerous trained man and he can make me disappear in daylight and no one will ever find out about about it. Maybe I should try and ask Suku for help. She's a good woman and I know she will help me.

“Hello?” Her voice brings tears to my eyes. “Hello?” I'm tongue-tied I don't know what to say to her right now. “Why did you call if you don't want to talk? Hello?”

“Who is troubling uMaKhwali wami right now?” I hear a male voice. His voice sounds familiar I'm sure it's Mntimande. I saw their happy family photos in Amahle's phone that I stole when she was at a restaurant with other kids. They were too distracted to notice anything.

“I don't know babakhe. Someone calls the he/she keeps quiet do they even know how irritated I always am these days?”

“Only if they knew that Mntimande pays for their sins.” They both laugh. She's happy, she sounds

happy with him I should stay away from her. But I need help. I drop the call and call again but this time Mntimande answers the phone. “Wifey's phone, hello?”

“Bro I need help please help me.”

“And you are?”

“Melisizwe.”

“Meli? Why do you need my help after everything you said to me? You said a mouthful dude.” He's mocking me right now.

“I know. I just need something to eat. I'm staying under the bridge--”

“Try another joke dude I'm not really fond of jokes anyway. What do you want?”

“I'm serious man! Why would a man beg another man for help if everything is okay? Why would I beg you of all people? I really need help. Please help me--” My voice trails off as tears pour out of my eyes. I once had it all but one mistake and it was all gone!

“Where are you?”

“Right now I'm at Centenary Park.”

“Okay let me send you something via ecocash to buy food then I will come and see you tomorrow. My wife doesn't know about this and don't you dare stress her about it. If I find out that you are lying I'm going to kill you.”

“Thank you.” I never thought he will be the one to help me. A few minutes later I receive a notification that he sent \$50. I fold my hands and thank God for this. A message comes through after the notification.

****I will pretend as if I didn't realize that's Amy's phone.*****

I don't know how he realized that but either way I'm thankful. A lady approaches me carrying a plastic bag. She stops in front of me and drops the plastic before removing her shades.

“How the mighty have fallen all because of a woman.” I look up using my hand to block the sun.

“Lerato?”

Mntimande's POV.

Life is a turning wheel for sure. Melisizwe is now down and out? I'm not rejoicing in his pain, no I'm not that kind of a man. I guess he can be helped, I wonder how my currently always angry girl will feel about this.

“Baba, ngingangena? (Father can I come in?)”

“Qhawe likababa kwenzenjani? Ukhalelani? (What happened Qhawe? Why are you crying?)”

“My abdomen hurts dad. Where is mama?”

“She's getting dressed. When did it start? Come here.” I move from the bed to the couch. My daughter is grown up now and it's inappropriate for her to sit on my bed. “Is it a stomach bug or something you are not familiar with?”

“I think I'm getting my first period. I noticed a stain when I went to the toilet.”

“Congratulations you are growing up my baby. You will be fine let me find painkillers and pads for you. I bought them a few months ago.” I walk into the closet and find my girl still in her birth suit standing in front of the mirror. If not that our daughter is in pain right now I would take her now and right here. She notices that I'm tempted. “Always looking delicious Makhwaki bu let me take care of our daughter first.”

“What's wrong with our daughter?” She's alerted.

“Nothing serious first period pains and all of that. She came looking for you but worry not daddy got this.”

“You bought pads already?”

“Yep. All the girls in my family had their first periods when they turned 18 and I knew Qhawe was to follow suit soon.”

“You deserve an award! I'm going to reward you for this. Go on.”

“Here Qhawe. I taught you how to use these and I'm sure they taught you at school and mama did too.”

You are grown up now my girl and it's time to be wise. One mistake and you will be pregnant. I don't raise grandchildren with unknown fathers, are we clear?" She faintly smiles.

"I'm in pain dad can you lecture me later?" She laughs taking the pads and painkillers. "Thanks. Tell mom I said thank you. "

"I will. Lie down a bit when you done taking a bath." My baby girl is growing up and very soon I will start worrying about her falling for a useless man after doing my best to raise her. "MaKhwali woza la (Suku come here.) Don't put on your clothes I know you don't feel like it anyway." She comes out wearing my gown. "Come and sit here I want to tell you something." I move up the bed and sit up straight opening my legs wider for her to come and sit between them.

"Sounds serious. Don't tell me you have a child that I don't know of because I will kill you."

"I don't go around sleeping with women. It's about the lobola negotiations." I explain to her why I went

to the Mdlongwas and why I want her to allow them to be part of the negotiations. After a long time of trying to convince her she finally understands my point.

“When are we getting married?”

“In two months time. Do you have your dress already?”

“I have a few to choose from but two months is a short period of time. The dress I want is not in Africa.”

“No problem wherever the dress is I will make sure you get it. In two days time we are going home for the negotiations then my uncles will ask for your hand in marriage. Only after that we will set the date for our wedding. Still on the lobola negotiations I would like to adopt Amy and Prudy is that permitted?”

“They will charge you for that.”

“I know. Don't worry about money and the cows I have lots of those.” She doesn't know that I actually own the plot I took them to last month. I have a plot in Somabhula and over 300 cattle. There are so

many things I still have to tell her before our wedding that she doesn't know about. I pray she won't freak.

“I'm feeling hot Mntimande.” I help her out of the gown and switch on the air conditioner. “Thank you.” I massage her belly and my boy starts kicking. She leans back and enjoys the movements in her belly. Still massaging her, I kiss her neck and she moans. The ways she's ways horny these days I'm afraid my son will be like his uncle Zibusiso who can't say no to a clean cookie. “Please don't stop.” She begs. I open her legs wider and #REMOVED.....

THE BRIDE.

SEASON 2 FINALE

Insert 109.

NARRATED.

Khaya steps down of his car and puts on his shades looking around. He looks at his wrist watch and leans against his car tapping on his phone. Two young girls pass by wearing matching crop tops and bum shorts revealing their butt cheeks. He looks at them and wonders how it feels like to have a threesome with twins? Must be nice, right? Right now he's not looking for love, it always end in tears whenever he gives his heart to anyone. He's about to pace behind them but a familiar voice calls out to him.

“Brother Khaya!” Olwethu runs stepping on his shoelaces and falls. Owami steps next to his younger brother and help him up before tying his shoe laces properly.

“Don't run with untied shoelaces you will get hurt.” Owami sweetly scolds his little brother. Khaya picks Olwethu up and they hug. He puts him down, squats and they share a group hug.

“I missed you boKhabazela.” Khaya smiles as Zinhle and Alessandro approach the car looking like the it couple that they have become. The smile on

Zinhle's face tells a greater story of how she's feeling and good life has been. "Mom." He hugs her and fist bump with Alessandro.

"Son. How are you?"

"I'm good. I needed a breather that's why I offered to come and meet you here. I really missed you guys and I'm glad you are all here."

"We will have to rest a bit before meeting everyone I'm really tired at the moment. What do you think My King?"

"I agree. I really need a nap myself but I can't say the same about the young men here. I'm sure they can't wait to meet everyone. Boys are you tired or you will go with brother Khaya?"

"We will go with him." Owami says grinning from ear to ear.

"It's settled then. I will come and meet everyone in 2 or 3 hours. Thank you for coming son I missed you too." They hug again as Zinhle becomes emotionally.

“You pregnant mom?”

Zinhle's POV.

Is it that obvious that I'm pregnant? Alessandro's grandfather also said so when we video called him. Have I gained too much weight? What makes everyone so sure of my pregnancy?

“No. I'm not.” I lie and Khaya laughs.

“Only a pregnant woman cries for no reason at all.”

“Fine. You got me right there maybe I'm pregnant—”

“Really?” His excitement is surprising. I thought they were all gonna distance themselves from me now that I'm carrying Alessandro's children but here Khaya is celebrating. After a few minutes of chatting he finally gets in his car and drives off with the children. Yolanda approaches us removing her shades.

“Boss.” She hugs me and shakes Alessandro's hand.

“Yolanda. How are you?”

“I can't complain boss. Please come this way I parked over there.”

After taking a bath, no after being bathed by my fiance I'm now lying in the bed in my bath suit. I'm really tired and sleepy at the same time.

“Wanna sleep?”

“Yeah but I need a massage my feet are killing me.” I know he won't say no despite how tired he might be. He starts massaging my feet, my legs up to my thighs. “Don't turn me on I'm really tired.” He laughs and lays beside me.

“Sleep then. I love you.” He kisses my forehead. He's been nothing but everything he promised to be. He hasn't broken any of his promises except one. He lied when we first met. He has a son with a woman who was his nanny growing up. The woman is twenty years older than him I didn't even ask who

asked who out. His son stays with his grandparents and is treated like a prince right there. He's adorable and we clicked, he even clicked with my sons. I wasn't angry to find out about his son I just punished him for lying. Other than that he's been half the man my brother Mntimande is and his family is loving and supportive although it felt like most of them had no say in the matter for it is said and believed that arguing with the King is a punishable sign of disrespect. After the introductions, they all wanted the traditional marriage to follow but Alessandro refused. He told them he wants to show me around the world first then he can accept his responsibility. "I thought you were supposed to get some sleep not stare at me like that. Are you planning my funeral?"

"Not yet." We laugh. I put my head on his chest and drift off to dreamland.

Melisizwe's POV.

“I thought you said Suku sent you to me? What are we doing in your house Lerato?” She smirks. “What game are you playing at?”

“Oh Meli stop already! You are homeless and hopeless the least you can do is to listen to me but first let's get you cleaned.” She tries to drag me but I remain rooted on the ground.

“No! I don't need your help because of the way you are going with this. What are you up to Lerato? I hope you are not planning to harm Suku?”

“What if that's exactly what I want to do and you will help me to do it? I want her to feel how it feels like to be like all of us! Why does she have everything when we have nothing but we also pray to the same God she prays to? What's so special about her? Zamo kidnapped her daughter, out of the blue Mntimande became the hero and the daughter came out unharmed. Prudy was kidnapped but once again Mntimande came to the rescue and now she's getting married to the man of her dreams after leaving you--”

“She didn't leave me, okay? I messed up and she walked away. Everything else you just said is nonsense because you don't really know Suku! She didn't have a lavish childhood! She didn't wake up one day and find herself rich! She didn't have a father who could make calls to the best hospitals then his daughter would be hired the next second, she worked hard to be where she is today. She sacrificed her youth, while some of us were busy partying she was busy shaping her future what is wrong in that? What did she ever do to you that you want to hurt her? She's been nothing but good to you! You ungrateful piece of trash--” She slaps me hard I can taste blood in my mouth.

“Don't you ever call me trash! I'm trying to help you here--”

“Go to hell Lerato. Stop whatever shit you are planning else you will get burnt. Don't ever come looking for me again.” I slam her door behind me and leave as my phone rings.

“I thought we agreed that I will see you in a few minutes? Are you playing me?” Mntimande is angry.

“Please wait for me someone lied to me. Please don't leave I'm coming.”

“Five minutes or I'm gone and you will never receive any help from me.” Luckily Lerato's house is just two minutes away from Centenary Park. I sprint going back to my spot and find Mntimande smoking a cigarette leaning against his car. I wonder how Suku manages a scary man like him. “You kept me waiting?” He throws his half-smoked cigarette on the ground and steps on it. He reaches for the bottle of what looks like sparkling water and drinks. “I lied to my wife to be here can you make it snappy? What happened to you? You look like crap.”

“Thank you.” He shakes his head as I swallow my tears and narrate my whole story.

“Why don't you go back to your parents' house?” He asks.

“I'm ashamed of myself. After everything I had and all the luxury I'm now left with the clothes I have on.”

“What if I help you and you come back and fvck me

off?”

“I won't. I have realized that jealous doesn't help anyone instead it kills. I really need help man.”

“Fine. For the sake of Amy I'm going to help you. She's the reason I'm happy right now. If she had not insisted on being my friend against her mother's wishes I wouldn't be happy with her right now. For that, I'm going to help you.” He takes the papers from the dashboard and shove them on my chest.

“Stop gambling with your life you are too young to be killed by people you owe. Gambling is bad--”

“These papers are for my house?” I'm shocked.

“I bought your house when it was auctioned. Amy asked me to. You are ignoring your children but they love you. Amy knows you are homeless, she knows you took her phone and she even knows you stay under that bridge. I was waiting for you to learn your lesson before I can help you. I don't want to raise a broken child, I want my children to enjoy their childhood not to be worried about their fathers who can not think for themselves. You are not only

breaking yourself, but Amy too. Get your house in order man. In life we fall, get up and dust ourselves then move on.” I can't stop my tears. The man I hated the most is the one helping me right now. “Let me drop you off before I'm late.”

“Thank you so much.” I attempt to hug him but he pushes me away.

“It's not the fact that you reek of sweat right now but I don't do hugs except when I'm hugging my wife and children. I find it creepy to hug another man, it's gay-ish.” For the first time ever since I met him he smiles. He's not ugly as I thought he is. Okay, maybe he's handsome.

“I understand.”

“Yeah. What were you doing with Lerato?” Huh? He saw me?

“She was trying to force me to do something sinister.” He raises his eyebrows. “She wants to ruin your wedding plans.”

“Really?” He has an amused smile on his face.

“You are smiling?”

“I love challenges. I want to see how far she can get just let her know that if she touches my wife or my children then her father will lick my shoes live on Btv and I'm not joking about it.”

Mkhize's POV.

There are things or people in life that you keep reminding yourself to get over but your heart just can't let go. You just have to learn to love from a distance or find a replacement that every time when you kiss or have s-ex with, in your mind you will be busy fantasizing about your soulmate but just after the sex is done you come back to reality and realize the love of your life is really gone. What can be done? Nothing except accepting the replacement.

“Dad? Can I come in? ” Melissa, my daughter knocks.

“Come in baby. You are sulking what's wrong?”

“Mom is still not here--”

“I'm here who is the other mother you are looking for?” The replacement says standing by the door.

“Dad I want to talk to you in private please--”

“Uh-uh. Not a chance Nana I'm tired of you kids treating me like an outsider. I'm the new wife and I'm not giving you any privacy. Talk.”

“Fine. Dad, you and mommy will both walk me down the aisle. I spoke to Alessandro he doesn't mind.”
Huh? Does this daughter of mine understand her own words? Zinhle is still my weakness how will this work out without me messing up her day?

“Heee imihlola! (Wonders never end!) You want my husband to walk you down the aisle with another woman when I'm here?”

“She's not another woman! She is our mother!” This won't end well.

“You mean the one who killed your biological mother--” Melissa gives her a backhand slap that

has her almost falling off the chair.

“Say that again I will kill you!” My daughter is fuming.

“She bewitched all of you—”

“Enough!” I bark the moment Nothabo runs in smiling.

“Aunt Lisa your mommy is here. Grandma is here!” They both run outside. I won't show my excitement but I'm happy that she came. I'm happy Alessandro doesn't mind her coming here I'm sure he knows she's over me because I know this too. The only thing that keeps us in contact are the children.

When I go downstairs to meet her everyone is in a jovial mood. Alessandro is chatting with Khulekani not minding the women talk. She looks good in her maxi dress and she's glowing. I knew she is pregnant when I video called her last month. I'm still admiring her when Maria clings to my arm. Zinhle looks up and smiles.

“Old man.” Alessandro greets me.

“Hey kid. I can see you are keeping your promise my children are happy.”

“I am a man of my word, Sir. Congratulations on your daughter's wedding.”

“Aren't you going to introduce me to your ex-wife?”
This woman is starting to get under my skin. I was happy to introduce her to Zinhle but now I don't know.

“Zie, meet my... I'm old to call her a girlfriend let's just say my partner Maria. Maria this is my ex wife Zinhle.”

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THREE WEEKS LATER.....

THE BRIDE

SEASON 2 FINALE.

Insert 110.

Mkhize's POV.

“Nice meeting you Maria. It's a pleasure to finally meet you, he couldn't wait to introduce me to you.” Zinhle said with a brightest smile on her face. At that moment it finally dawned on me that she is really over me. There was no jealousy, no questions, nothing in her eyes.

“Uhm... I think now that you know I'm here you should stop coming here. I don't feel okay having my husband's ex wife in my house. I don't mean this in a disrespectful manner but as a woman who is protecting what is hers.” Maria said. At the moment I prayed for the ground to open up and swallow me.

“You didn't have to say it. I understand where you

coming from and for your information I only came here to meet you since I was asked to stop by. But it's okay you will never see my face again. Not here not even on the streets rest easy Maria I'm not an ex who takes five steps forward then three back.” Zinhle smiled and I could see the pride in Alessandro's eyes.

“Why mom? You are our mother you can't leave us alone.” Khaya blurted out.

“You are grown up now son. You all don't really need me and if you need a mother, I'm sure you know where to find one. You have a new mother one, love her the same way you loved me and life will go on smoothly. I love you all and I always will. Lisa? I heard you request sweetheart but I will have to reject it. I will attend your wedding as a guest but I won't walk you down the aisle with your father as you asked. It's inappropriate especially now that I'm considered a wife from where my fiance comes from. I don't want people to talk negatively about me while dragging my fiance in it. I don't want drama, I'm done with the drama I hope you will

understand me baby.” My daughter sighed and tearfully hugged her.

“I understand thank you for coming.” That was the last time I saw Zinhle. She came to the wedding but I can't say I saw her through the crowd. I'm slowly accepting that she's happy wherever she is and I will try to be happy with Maria.

I met Maria at my therapist's office. She was also a patient there and you know what they say about two broken hearts. We connected, we drank alcohol together, we had nights out until one day we woke up both naked on her bed. We had sex the whole day, we didn't say anything about it but we kept going back to each other for more until last month when we decided to label our relationship. We are dating or whatever you want to call it but I don't see myself getting married ever again. I'm accepting that Zinhle is gone and at the same time accepting that happy endings are not for me. With Maria we will just continue having fun, if she wants to get married then I will gladly let her go.

My children haven't said anything about Maria but I can feel the tension in this house. It's so thick, many unspoken words are lingering in the air and I'm waiting for the day they will all explode.

“Good afternoon dad.” Qhubekani says putting down his laptop bag.

“Hi son. You look happy?”

“I got the deal dad. This is the happiest day of my life.”

“Congratulations son I'm so proud of you.” He's been working very hard to establish his company and I'm proud of him right now. He's outdone his self. “What's your next goal?”

“Getting my house in order. I know I'm no longer a man down there but I would like to raise my children with their mother around. I spoke to her, she's willing to come back but only if you forgive her.”

“What will you do when she's horny?”

“I will try the alternatives dad. She took a celibacy

vow.”

“If you are sure about it then I will not stand in your way.”

“Thank you dad. Let me freshen up.”

“Son?” He turns around. “Try finding out if there's a way you can be fixed down there.”

Sukoluhle's POV.

I don't feel anything, there's nothing connected to me in this house. Absolutely, nothing! They say the house belongs to my parents, I'm in what is said to be their bedroom I'm trying to connect or at least feel their presence but there's nothing.

“You okay?” One of my cousins, Sehlulelo, questions.

“I'm fine. Does your father perhaps have a picture of my parents?”

“You mean you haven't seen even their picture?” I shake my head. Yes I'm 34 and I still have no idea how my parents looked like. I don't even have an imagination in my mind, it's just blank. “I don't know if they have one because I once heard that most of their things were burned.”

“Why?”

“They say it's tradition.” Tradition my foot? Why would people burn the deceased's pictures in the name of tradition?

“Okay thanks. Can I be left alone please?” She silently walks out. I'm getting negative vibes from all of these people. The woman who is said to be my grandmother looks at me like I'm a piece of meat ready to be divulged in. Whenever she looks at me I feel the hairs behind my neck standing. The uncles look at me like lions studying their prey, I don't feel safe here. I don't even feel safe to bring my children here, what if they poison them? These people let me go with a woman who is not related to them and they never bothered to come and look for me, why would they care about me all of a sudden?

“Sthandwa sami.” I answer the call.

“MaKhwali what's wrong? You sound very low.”

“I'm not comfortable here Mntimande. Every time they look at me I feel like they are stabbing me. It's a feeling I can not explain but I'm don't feel safe here.”

“Wanna go back to your mother?”

“Yes.” I don't even know why I'm crying right now. Tears flow freely down my cheeks.

“Ungakhali Sthandwa sami (Don't cry my love) I will be there in a few minutes but what will I tell them? They told my uncles that I shouldn't meet you until the negotiations are over.”

“You see what I'm talking about? Why are they alienating me? What kind of tradition is this one? Normally, when you are done paying everything they asked for we are supposed to meet and talk but they banned you from coming here. Something is wrong with these people.”

“Okay I'm coming. I have something special for you

and I know you will like it. See you soon.”

“I love you.”

“I love you MaTshaka.” Something is definitely wrong with this family. Why are their own traditions different? Just when I'm still deep in thoughts I hear a familiar hushed voice in the other room.

“How do we do it? Did you get the poison?” Huh? Lerato and Sehlulelo? They keep whispering. What are they talking about? What poison are they talking about?

“Shouldn't we let the man fall in love with you first?” This is one of my uncles I wonder who he is referring to.

“The man is too faithful he won't love me as long as she is still around. I saw Mntimande first--” What? Lerato is planning to kill me with the help of people who are related to my father? I pick up my phone to call Mntimande but as I'm about to dial his number Lerato and Sehlulelo walk in followed by my uncle. Their faces are not the ones I'm used to.

“Lee--”

“Shut up!” She slaps me hard and my baby kicks repeatedly. “Who do you think you are? God's favorite daughter? Huh?” She charges towards me with a kitchen knife in her hands. “Suicide. You are going to commit suicide Suku. Let's say you couldn't handle to be in your parents' house for the first time ever since you were born--”

“No! I'm not killing myself and my baby! Lee you can't do this to me, I'm your friend.”

“Friend? What kind of a friend snatches men from a desperate friend? Huh?” She kicks me on the side of my belly and I feel weak already. Dear God please protect my son. Mama? Baba? I know you are dead but not asleep please save me, show me that you care about me. I can't die carrying this child. She grabs me with my hair and drags me on the floor while her companions standby watching.....

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ONE LAST RIDE.... A BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY....

THE BRIDE.

[I didn't have time to edit please forgive the errors.]

INSERT 111

ONE LAST RIDE. A BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY....

Sukoluhle's POV.

“Friend? What kind of a friend snatches men from a desperate friend? Huh?” She kicks me on the side of my belly and I feel weak already. Dear God please protect my son. Mama? Baba? I know you are dead but not asleep please save me, show me that you care about me. I can't die carrying this child. She grabs me with my hair and drags me on the floor while her companions standby watching. I'm lying flat don't the floor trying by all means to protect my

son. He ca not die, God please protect him. “You think you are the world's princess because you have money? You get everything you pray for but we don't! You have too much of everything and I hate you for it!” She stomps on my left breast and I gasp for air as the pain slashes through my heart.

“Uncle please I'm your brother's daughter--”

“Brother? Whose brother? Do you see your father here? Why did you come back after all these years when I thought I succeeded in getting rid of you and your arrogant parents? What makes you think you can come back here and start flaunting your expensive cars and clothes? Are you trying to boast? What are you trying to do?”

“What do you mean you got rid of my parents? What are you talking about?” Tears are streaming down my cheeks. I hope this doesn't mean what I'm thinking of. “You killed my parents?” His laugh echoes in the almost empty room making me sick in the stomach.

“Yes I did so what? I hated my brother, I hated him

with every fibre in me. Maybe no one hasn't told you this before but he was our father's favorite. He was clean and he always made father proud to a point where my very own father started comparing us. He always reminded me that your father was the best son and we were nothing. One day I found out that we had different mothers your father was a bastard child who was loved more than the legitimate children. My hate for him tripled. I hated him!" I don't have anything to say. No wonder I couldn't even feel them in here, they are not resting in peace. Someone killed them, my father's own brother killed him. I need to buy myself time Mntimande said he's on his way.

"Why do you want be dead then? I don't want anything from you."

"That's the thing! The thing is you have everything that all of us here don't have and that's your only sin!"

"And you took both my men away from me!" Lerato launches the knife straight to my belly but I roll to the side and she hits the floor face first. I try to get

up and run but Sehlulelo and my uncle hold my legs. My left hand land on a container under the bed which I recognize as doom spray and spray them on the faces.

“Fuck!” He cusses as I quickly summon my strength and run out of the room with Lerato on my trail. My allergy is also starting to make breathing difficult for me, my vision is becoming hazy and my chest is closing in.

“Stop or I will shoot!” Oh God no! Lerato has a gun. I have nowhere to run to, how do I defend myself from her when she's armed?

“Mntimande!” I collapse on my knees as a gunshot sound hits my ears and my body gives up.

“Stsy with me MaKhwali don't close your eyes do it for our baby--”

“Brinf her back kiss her--” A familiar female voice says. I can smell Mntimande's perfume very close to my nostrils and nausea is now taking over. I'm no longer scared, I know I'm safe in his arms.

“Shit!” Mntimande cusses as my vomit splashes

him on the face and he wipes his face using his hand sweater. “You okay?” He asks as I slowly open my eyes.

“My abdomen hurts--” He picks me up and rushes to the car not caring about the mess I just smeared him with. I catch a glimpse of my mother pointing a gun to someone who is lying down....

NARRATED.

IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA....

Zibusiso opens the car door for Charity who gracefully steps on the ground with her six inches black-studded stilettos.

“You look breathtaking.” Zibusiso says to her and kisses her lips.

“You don't look bad yourself hubby.” They both

smile.

“Well, we will explore this body later for now let's get down to business. This meeting will determine if you are ready to be called Mrs Ngwenya. I know you can do it, make me proud.”

“I will try my best Mr Ngwenya.” Zibusiso picks the briefcase from the backseat and puts his hand around Charity's waist.

Inside the building, on the 23rd floor about ten gentlemen are impatiently sipping their bottled water.

“This kid is really getting under my skin! We have waited for him for months and even today we still have to wait? Does he know who we are?” One of the men says frustratedly.

“Maybe his flight was delayed--”

“He arrived yesterday! He is doing this on purpose he knows he has us with our noses!--”

“I'm glad I'm not dealing with a bunch of stupid old

men.” Zibusiso says holding the door for Charity.

“What the fuck? When did we start dealing with women?”

“Not women! She's my friend show some respect dude!”

“What are you playing at Ngwenya? Why did you bring her here?”

“I won't be told what to do with my wife by you. Now that I'm here let's get down to business.” Zibusiso pulls a chair for Charity who smiles and sits down.

“Why is the president not here? Why am I not taken serious? I risked my life for a country that is not even my own while you were all busy fucking your wives! You didn't even help me when I needed help! Get him on the phone--”

“He is attending a meeting in Namibia--”

“Well I have time gentlemen. When he finally has time for me call me and better be quick about it because I will be going to my honeymoon soon. Let's go baby.” He stands up, helps Charity up and takes the briefcase. Within a blink of an eye,

soldiers are pointing guns at him.

“You are not leaving with that briefcase!” Minister Dlamini hisses.

“You kidding me, right?” They all laugh. “Fine. You can have the briefcase.” Zibusiso leaves the briefcase and leaves. The ministers smile and toast to their victory unaware that the biggest obstacle of their lives ever since the gold was stolen is about to show them stars in broad daylight.

“Let's open it and see I don't trust that boy.” They try their own security code but the briefcase doesn't open....

Mntimande's POV.

I'm so angry right now! How did I miss this? How did I not know that Suku's family hate her? And Lerato? Why the hell would she want to kill my wife?

“They are not fine. Look, the baby is perfectly fine.”

Seeing my healthy son on the screen brings a smile to my face. I'm angry but this moment right here is priceless.

“Thank you doctor.” My girl is in tears, I kiss her tears. “We are fine baby we are all fine.”

“Yes we are fine daddy. I thought I was going to die.”

“Not when I'm still alive MaKhwali, no one will ever take you away from me.”

“Can you take me home? I want to hug my children.”
Yeah trust her to think about all of our children when she should be worried about the one she's carrying.

“Okay. Doc can you give us a moment?” She nods and gives us space. “I'm so sorry baby I'm really sorry for bringing those people back into your lives-”

“I did it on purpose.” Mother in-law walks in shocking the both of us.

“What do you mean Ma? You knew they hate me but

you let me go there?”

“Yes. I wanted you to know the truth about your parents, your parents are not resting in peace and they are waiting for you to avenge their death. You always wondered why they never even visited you in your dreams. Now you have the answers, their spirits are wandering don't you want to free them?”

“I'm not a murderer mom.”

“Well, I also never thought I would one day pull a trigger until I saw you in danger today--”

“You shot someone?”

“No. I shot two people. Your crazy friend and your stupid uncle but relax yourself they are not dead yet. I want you to be the one to decide their fate. It's time to think about yourself and set the record straight! I did not raise a weak daughter! Whose daughter are you? Why are people walking all over your head? Huh? Since when are you the emotional type? What happened to the girl who fights for people's rights? Why can't you fight for your own rights?” That's a mouthful. I have never seen

MaSibanda this angry. I'm angry, she's livid.

“Ma I can't kill anyone--”

“I didn't say go around shooting people I said reintroduce yourself. Get justice for your parents and stop being a weakling. I don't like weak people. Princess took those idiots to a safe place she said you know where that is. I need fresh air.” With that said she walks away.

“Why me? Why?” My girl cries. Don't worry MaKhwali I'm going to do that job for you. They will wish they were never born, that I promise!

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THE BRIDE.

Insert 112.

IT IS DONE.

NARRATED.

Back in Cape Town Zibusiso and Charity wait patiently for the lift to come to a standstill but it seems like it's taking forever.

“I'm scared babe.” Charity confesses her fears.

“The building is fire protected. Only that room will be affected. Come on let's get out of here.” They pace to a helicopter which is ready to take off. Zibusiso helps Charity and then gets in.

“Sir. The President is on hold.” One of the man dressed in army uniform says giving Zibusiso a tablet.

“Mr Ngwenya.”

“Mr President--” BOOM! The 23rd floor goes up in flames and Zibusiso turns the video camera to the direction of the fire. “IT IS DONE Mr President. I jist git rid of all the South African corrupt men.” The

President smiles saluting Zibusiso. “You don't have to salute me Mr President I just want you to keep your promise. I feel like I have been fighting to save a country that is not even mine to begin with.”

“I understand where you are coming from Mr Ngwenya. My cabinet and I agreed that you can keep the gold--”

“I don't want gold Mr President.”

“What?” The President's cabinet join in on the conversation. They are all shocked to hear him say that.

“What kind of a man are you? How can you say no to gold worth billions.” High up in the sky, Zibusiso crosses his legs and unbuttons his jacket.

“I'm a man who knows what he wants. A man who has money to sustain his three next generations and your gold won't help me with anything you guys need the gold more than I do. If the opposition finds out that you gave away the country's resources then you will all be in trouble. We don't want your cabinet being dissolved Mr President, do we?” The

President shakes his head. “Good.”

“What do you want then Mr Ngwenya?”

“Diplomatic Immunity.” They all look at each other horrified.

“We can not protect a man who is into human trafficking.”

“Well then Mr President call me when you have something good to tell me else I'm going to sing. I'm no snitch but I will sing trust me.” Zibusiso disconnects the call and kisses Charity on the cheek. Surprisingly she doesn't react the way she always does. “What's the matter?”

“Nothing--”

“Please don't. I hate tantrums and mood swings don't push me.”

“You kill innocent children! You are a murderer--”

“Wow! Really now?”

Zinhle's POV.

Today I decided to come in my secret room ever since I came back from Mexico. I'm looking at these computers and laptops wondering what to do with them. I no longer want this kind of lifestyle, I want to be a good mother to my children and maybe try to be a good wife too. I know I'm hardheaded but I can not really disrespect the King of other people. I love Alessandro and I'm praying and hoping that this is the last time I get to be called a bride. I'm getting old to keep on running and doing bad things I have to settle down. I run my finger on my dangerous weapon I kept with me all the time yet people thought it was an expensive wedding ring.

“My Queen.” He kisses me on the cheek.

“Your Majesty. I thought you were asleep?”

“Not with the boys in the house. They woke me up asking for money to buy ice cream.”

“But we have like 5 litres of ice cream in the freezer?”

“They said they want the street one. Let them be.”

“Okay. How did you get in here?”

“What can stop me from getting in here when I can get into your head and between your legs--” I slap him and he laughs. His laugh always soothe my soul.

“You always stalked me, right?”

“Sometimes. Only when I missed you to a point of failing to control my emotions. I can break past any firewall and you know this.”

“I know. What do I do with the equipment? I don't want to continue with this anymore. I want us to start on a clean slate we have children and this world is dangerous. ”

“I understand My Queen. Give it to your loyal workers and let them continue but under their own name.” Great idea. I thought he would suggest something else.

“I also want to give Yolanda and Gloria this house and everything in it. I have a clean house in

Khumalo. I want to leave all this blood life behind me.”

“Okay babe. I will also stop meddling with wrong people but I'm keeping my people for protection. Grandpa knows I'm a gangster and he understands. I won't be involved in the gang's business they will be for protection only. You know life has a way of catching up with everyone, right?” I nod. “That's why we need them. What other loose end do we have to tie? ”

“I want to give the diamonds to Mntimande since we will be relocating. Maqhawe's son will come here in search of them then Mntimande will give them to him. I also have an important call to make.”

“Sounds serious?”

“It is. Sit down with me here.” I have been dreading to make this call but I have to do it. It will free my conscience.

“Zinhle?”

“Qhu. How are you?”

“I'm fine and you?”

“I'm good. I want to tell you something and if you hate me for it then I will understand.”

“You are scaring me.”

“I didn't castrate you I paid the doctor to lie--”

“Zie? What are you saying? I haven't had sex since then? It's not possible!”

“You haven't had sex since then because your mind accepted that. I'm really sorry for this.”

“I- I don't know what to say. Thank you, I guess.”

“I'm sorry and I hope you can still fix things with Ane and raise your children together. When Owami is eighteen I'm going to tell the truth about his father. Is that okay with you?”

“Yeah it's okay. Thank you for telling me this.” Phew! I feel relieved right now.

“Good job My Queen.” He kisses me and picks me up taking me outside for fresh air. He's so slim but he makes it look easy to carry me around like a small child when I'm carrying someone in my belly

and fat as F.

Sukoluhle's POV.

My mother's words are still ringing in my mind. I know she was not lying about anything but why do I have to be the one to kill those people? I'm not a murderer! I don't want blood on my hands in the name of justice. Justice doesn't mean the offender has to die but to be corrected. My mother knows I'm against killing and she can not expect me to kill right now. I wish I could say I feel any pain or connection to my parents but I feel nothing. The only pain I'm feeling right now is for trusting a snake disguised as a friend. I don't know what went wrong with Lerato. Before I said yes to Mntimande I asked her if she felt something for him since he saw him first but she said no. I asked Mntimande who told me he didn't even ask for her name then why would she be a problem? My relationship with Mntimande

didn't kick start as a secret. He told me straight up that he's too old to behaving like a teenager. We told the children about it, he had already spoken to Zibusiso about it and we loved each other openly. I don't know why Lerato would accuse me of having direct connections with God when I suffered from childhood up until 7 years ago? Is it a crime that I worked and prayed to be where I am today?

“Makhwali you are crying?” Mntimande removes his shoes and lays behind me pulling me closer to him. “Stop crying my love you are upsetting the baby. I also don't like seeing you like this.”

“How could Lerato do this to me?”

“I'm sorry I didn't warn you but I knew she was planning something. She tried to recruit Meli into her plans--”

“Kill her!”

“Huh?”

“I said kill her!”

Zibusiso's POV.

Here we go. I'm at that stage that the elders mean when they say it is not always rosy. My wife is livid, she slapped me twice and now she just chased me out of the bedroom. Mind you we are in a hotel, I can't even raise my voice at her right now. If I also get mad then we will kill each other in here. She's angry because of the phone call but she still doesn't know if I'm still into human trafficking.

“I'm not in the mood Mr President.”

“We agree.” What? That was quick!

“Well then what's my new identity? I hope you remember I have a wife who will always tag along.”

“Choose the name you want and pass by the office. Thank you for saving my country.”

“It was a pleasure Mr President. It was nice doing business with you.” Yes! Yes! I have always wanted immunity and I will definitely use it wisely.

Afghanistan here I come. New life. New business.
New beginnings.

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THE BRIDE.

INSERT 113.

[FORGIVE THE ERRORS I HAVE NO TIME TO EDIT.
BUSY BUSY BUSY...]

Zibusiso's POV.

“Baby? Char?”

“Leave me alone ZB! I don't want to talk to you! Go away!” She yells.

“Babe I'm knocking only because I respect the other guests otherwise I will break this for down it better

yet I will just shoot it open and trust me I don't like a wife locks me out whenever we have a small argument. You didn't even give me a chance to explain myself you just concluded in your mind that ZB is a human trafficker. Have you seen me kidnapping children or people and selling them? Let's not do this babe, our wedding is around the corner." I hate begging but I love her. Mntimande told me that if you love a woman then all the nonsense will make sense only to you. After a few minutes she opens the door with puffy eyes and tears on her cheeks. I hug her and let her cry in my arms.

"Tell me I heard it all wrong?" I lead her to the bed and sit down.

"I joined that world when I was bored in jail. I wanted something to keep me busy and to feel in charge. It was fun at first until my people messed up and the Mexicans came guns blazing for my blood. I was protected in jail because I had the government in the palm of my hands but I was worried about Mntimande. He looks like me and

people always confuse us. The Mexicans got to him but they couldn't harm him. You probably don't know this but I'm nothing compared to my brother when it comes to the gangster life. The Mexicans threatened my life and he had to do something to save me. Mntimande has always been our hero, he's tough and strict but his love for family surpasses all of that. He delivered the last shipment and told the Mexicans to never contact me again.”

“You mean Mntimande is also a gangster?”

“No he is not. He just did one heist and never again entertained any thought of going back there. He started his businesses and when the gang he was with during the heist came after him they all disappeared although I don't know what happened to them. My brother is a cool, calm and collected guy until someone steps on his toes.”

“Does Sis Suku know?”

“Yes. She understands besides we haven't done anything wrong ever since the last shipment. We only killed Roberto other than that we have been

good boys.” I smile and she faintly smiles back.

“I love you Hubby please don't hurt me or our children in the future.” I was going to tell her about the arms deal I'm planning to import from Afghanistan and sell them here in South Africa and maybe Mexico and Russia but that won't be a good idea. She's not tough to stand for the brutal truth.

“I won't hurt you not willingly and I will never let my past haunt you. Speaking of my past your friend just crossed the line with my sister.”

“I don't understand? ”

“Lerato tried to kill Suku--” She gasps in shock.

“What? Is Sis Suku okay? Please let's go back home we are done here. She's been there for me ever since I met her I'm sure right now she can use my shoulder. Can we go please? Is Lerato dead already?”

“Not yet dead but soon she will be dancing with her ancestors. Yes we are leaving babe but not before getting my apology. You accused me if something I'm no longer doing.” She raises her eyebrows. I

move closer to her, French kissing her until she's lying on the bed. Using my knee I separate her legs and touch her clean shaved soft meat. "Where are your panties baby?" She's ready wet. "I asked a question sweetheart? "

"They irritate my skin-- ah--" She softly moans as I insert my finger in my honeypot. I paid for this and it's mine and mine alone....

Mntimande's POV.

"I said kill her!" My girl yells.

"You don't mean that you are angry at the moment. Don't let her change you, you are good person baby and I will be very disappointed to see you being changed by circumstances and fake people. When we first had our serious talk and I told you about my other life I'm not proud of you told me we will work together not to sink deep in that dark world. It's not

easy to sleep at night knowing that you killed someone--”

“But you have killed before!”

“I know. I have killed but I have never killed a friend or a family member. I don't want this to haunt you which is why I want you to forget about Lerato, your uncle and cousin and focus on our big day. I will do what has to be done and it will be the best for all of us. Deal?” She nods. “Good girl. I promised to give you a surprise.” I give her a box tied with red ribbons. “Open it.” I know this will make her day. She picks the picture on top of all the contents in the box and tearfully looks at it running her hand over it.

“He-he looks like me--”

“Yes baby he looked like you. You are the female version of your father's image.” She puts the picture on her chest and for the first time ever she cries for her parents. I hold her close to me until she calms down. She goes through the entire box until she sees their wedding picture.

“They were happy.”

“So it seems. Are you happy?”

“Very happy. Now I feel like I know my parents. Where did you get them?”

“To answer that question come with me.”

“Another surprise?” I nod and pick her up. I don't want her walking down the stairs when she's having mixed emotions. “Where are going?”

“Outside.” She frowns but I'm not ruining this surprise for her.

“No guys you are cheating! Grandpa no! This is not how the game is played!” Lighawe complains.

“Accept defeat Sis we won! We won!” Prudy jumps up and down. Now my girl is frozen on the spot looking at the faces before.

“I-i- I thought he's dead?” Her voice breaks.

“He is. Your father was a triplet babe, he's your uncle, your aunt and your grandmother.”

Sukoluhle's POV.

I'm in his arms, they feel like that place I always yearned for as a child. His touch is that of a father and his unquestionable love I can feel without him trying to convince me of it. My tears are not that of sadness but I'm happy. In all this mess I still have sane blood relatives.

“Uncle?” I touch his face to be sure in not dreaming.

“MaTshaka Mbathangwe wena weLembe eleqa amanye ngokukhalipha, uDlongonyane lukaNdaba uNodum'ehlezi kaMenzi--” I can't stop my tears. I only heard my clan names when Mntimande once called me with all of them. It felt good then and now this is the best feeling. I never met my father but he left a replica of him and here I am in his arms. “Stop crying.” He wipes my tears while I wipe his. We stare at each other for a long time until my aunt clears her throat.

“Can we also hug her?” We all smile as I fly into her

arms. The feeling keeps getting better, by the time I hug grandma I'm a crying mess. I'm not sad, I'm okay, these tears are for happiness.

“MntakaMethembe (Methembe's daughter).”
Grandmother cries looking at me. “I'm sorry.”

“It's okay grandma. Where were you people? I yearned for a family for 34 good years, what happened? ” I deserve to know this, right?

“I was your grandfather's side chick.” I smile at the way she's putting it. “His wife found out about the affair when I was seven months pregnant and beat me up which led to premature labor. She told me that she was going to take my child away and keep it since it was her husband's child. The woman was very bitter. Back then there were no scans to know the baby gender or if you are carrying twins. I was rushed to the hospital where I gave birth to the three of them. They were healthy and the doctor told me I was going to take them home since I couldn't afford to pay for those glasses they keep premature babies in. I told my sister what your grandfather's wife told me and she decided that we

give her only one of them. It was bad I know but I had no powers to fight her. She comes from a well known family of witches.” My skin crawls at the mention of witches and remembering how she was looking at me, I believe whoever said they are witches. “She took my son but your grandfather kept bringing him to me to bond with him until the wife found out again and we had to run away from our village back in Gwanda. I didn't see him until when he was 17, he knew about his siblings and they bonded. They knew each other and we always met in private to catch up. Your grandfather was a good man, he died a year before you were born. I made it known to the Mdlongwa family that they had two other children and they accepted them but I guess that was my biggest mistake because my son and daughter-in-law had to pay the hefty price.” I hug her.

“It's okay grandma. We can not change the past I'm glad you are all here. Now you can all bless my marriage.”

“I'm sorry about what just happened. They have to

pay for it.” My aunt is angry.

“I’m just happy you are all here. You can do whatever you want to do to them but make sure I don’t lose you again in this process. You mean a lot to me and you are the only family that will make me connect with my family. I love you all.” If Mntimande brought them to me then he took his time to dig deeper about them so I can trust them. We hug and just then I realize Ntsika was filming the whole thing. “Ntsika!” He laughs and runs away with the camera.

“Leave my son alone I told him to do that.” Says Mntimande laughing.

“Thank you so much babakhe. I really appreciate this.”

NARRATED.

TWELVE HOURS LATER....

Mntimande parks the car in front of the building that looks highly secure. He calls someone on the phone and the gate opens. He walks into the yard and goes straight to the backroom where Leratoz the uncle and Sehlulelo are kept.

“Can I have honors of dealing with Lerato?” Princess asks.

“Yes but she's not dying today but after she watches the two weddings she tried to break taking place. Until then, keep her here. I'm here to take care of that stupid uncle.” Princess unlocks the door for him.

“Mntimande I'm sorry please let me out, I was shot I need a doctor--” Lerato cries. Mntimande ignores her and grabs the uncle's chin.

“If I wasn't busy preparing for my wedding I would have had fun torturing you but you are not worth it. Open your mouth--”

“Go to hel--” The uncle's brains splash on the wall as hit body hits the floor.

“Noo! Daddy! Dad wake up--” Mntimande knocks

Sehlulelo out with a gun.

“One of my boys will take care of the mess. I don't kill women, over to you Princess. I'm out. I don't want my wife to miss me.” He smiles looking at Princess.

“Now I believe you dude. Take extra care of her she means a lot to me, count me in on the family reunion celebrations. I will be there—” Charity pushes the door open and shoots Sehlulelo three times on the chest shocking everyone.

“Why is this snake still alive?”

“Char--”

“She is my sister damn it! Why did you think she will choose you over me? Huh?” Charity kicks Lerato on the bullet wound on her stomach.

“Charity stop!”

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THE BRIDE.

INSERT 114.

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER LET NO MAN
PUT ASUNDER.

Sukoluhle's POV.

Today is the day the Lord has prepared. Just like it is written in the books of Psalms 23, He prepares a table for me before my enemies. They came from all corners of the world some disguised as friends, business partners, family but God held my hand past all of it. At some point I lost hope but Mntimande held my hand and became my strength. After the death of my evil uncle, they tried to make it a big issue but my uncle (dad's twin) dealt with it. It is then that I got to know he's a prosecutor. They went to my parent's house and chased those people

out, we did a traditional ceremony for them to rest in peace. That very same day I saw my mother in my dreams, she was so happy and I felt her love for me. The lobola negotiations started afresh with Mntimande allowing those evil people to keep the money he had paid already. Luckily, they had not paid everything. My real family then accepted his bride price and they allowed him to adopt Amahle and Prudy.

I was surprised to see Melisizwe after the negotiations. He congratulated me and asked to be part of Amahle's life of which I agreed to. He's been trying to be a good father to his children. Guess what? My family made my dream come true without me having to ask them to do it. They gave everything Mntimande paid as the bride price to my mother, they said they don't have the right over the lobola since they were not part of my life when she struggled to raise me. My mother gave two cows to my useless brother. I really don't mean to call him useless but what kind of a man who has been

working ever since Prudy was a day old who can not afford to buy himself a ticket from Durban to Bulawayo? He is a big company's manager for crying out loud! My brother, Blessing, never not even one day did he buy a single pack of pampers or milk for Prudy but even so he's still broke. A man has to love a woman with her children, I agree but my problem is with him becoming a slave and a provider of his wife instead of being a husband. I booked a flight for my brother, I even bought a suit for him to wear today and yes, he can not even afford to buy his own cigarettes. Why are women so evil sometimes? Why treat your husband like a bank? Couldn't his wife give him R200 at least?

“Hey.” I say softly on the phone.

“Did I wake you up?” I can hear a shower running in the background.

“No babakhe. I have been awake for hours now, I couldn't sleep.”

“What's wrong? You know you have to rest before your big day.”

“I'm nervous.” This is not my first time getting married but with Melisizwe I was never this nervous.

“Why? You think I will be a runaway groom or my late wife will wake up from the grave and stop our wedding?”

“It's not funny Mntimande!” He laughs.

“I know baby but those are the only worst things that can happen and stop our wedding. Other than the two we are getting married come thunder or lightning we are doing this. It's 1AM at night you have to go back to sleep.”

“I'm not sleepy--”

“Should I come and put you to bed?”

“You're taking a shower or am I wrong?”

“We were drinking and enjoying our freedom for the last time. I was getting drunk that's why I'm showering.”

“How then will you come here? You are drunk and I don't want you to die a few hours before our wedding. ”

“I was going to ask Mpilo to drive me but then I can not put my brother into this. I will be breaking tradition rules and it will be a bad example. Let me think of something.”

“Okay. I can't wait to say I do.”

“My aunts and uncles gave me a lecture about you refusing to change your surname. I almost lost it but ZB came to my rescue. ”

“I hope you told them that even if they make a scene at the venue I'm not changing my surname. This doesn't mean I love you less, I love you a lot I just want to keep my name and we are keeping the children's surnames. ”

“You don't have to explain to me MaKhwali. I understand and I don't have a problem with you keeping your surname all I want from you is love, respect and more love.”

“I know hey.”

“Knock knock!” All my children are the door with a tray.

“You should be sleeping why are you all up?” They come in. Liqhawe is carrying a tray with my favorite food. “Mntimande?”

“Eat and go to sleep baby. I'm not there but they are there and I made a plan. I love you wifey. I can't wait to see you walk down the aisle.”

NARRATED.

Venue, check.

Sound system, check.

Decor, check.

The two couples' wishlist is done. Now we wait for the church service. Back at Mntimande's house the guys are getting dressed in their navy blue suits, white shirts and blush-pink bow-ties to match the bridesmaids' dresses. The grooms have their deep navy blue suits on. They wanted a different color but they ended up going with the navy blue theme

with different designs.

“I can't believe ZB you are getting married before me?” Mpilo says fixing Zibusiso's jacket.

“If you stop being scared of women then you will get married soon.” The guys laugh as Zibusiso blocks Mpilo's punch. “My wife is crazy brother. If you punch me right now she will think women beat me up then my marriage will be over before it starts.” They continue chatting and laughing out loud.

“Bro? Are you okay?” Nkululeko taps Mntimande's shoulder.

“Yeah. It's just... I'm finally marrying her. After all the struggles we went through she's finally going to be mine and mine alone.” Mntimande smiles defining his small hair curls with a brush.

“Yeah ey. You both deserve it.”

“Boys. Your freedom ends here right now, anyone who wants to change his mind?” Says their uncle who just walk in.

“I would never say no to unlimited sex uncle, never! Today I'm finally going to declare it mine and I'm so gonna make the Ngwenyas proud by representing you all very well and the results will speak for themselves.”

“Everything is okay with the both of you, right? No low sex drives, premature ejaculations and the stuff? I want to know this before we let those girls be sex starved. Love keeps a home but sex keeps a woman. Are we okay?” The uncle grabs Mntimande's balls feeling them.

“C'mon Mthiyane you are killing my children right there. I'm perfectly fine you can send your sisters to ask your daughter in-law I know how to make my woman sing in tongues--”

“Stop! You guys stop that's my sister. I don't want my brain to start playing tricks on me please.”

“I always thought you were going to marry Suku but then big brother happened--”

“Uncle no! I respect that woman I would never have asked her to be my girlfriend.” They laugh as the

aunt tells them that they should start going.

At Thembani's (Suku's uncle) house, the brides are almost ready. The bridesmaids are ready in their blush boob-tube dresses and gold shoes. They are all busy taking selfies outside.

“MaKhwali? Are you okay?” Sithembile, Suku's aunt asks.

“I'm fine aunt but if you don't stop calling me MaKhwali then we will need Mntimande here before I walk down the aisle.” Everyone in the room laughs.

“You really love sex Suku!” Princess says.

“Sex with the right man.”

“It's almost time be fast please. We don't want to be too late we might find the grooms gone.”

“Never aunt. Those two are whipped trust me.” Charity says as one of the bridesmaids helps her strap her shoes.

“I believe you.” Brenda Fassie's song 'Wedding day' starts playing outside. Some of the people in the room are dancing at it already.

“Mom? You have to eat this. Dad's orders, he said he can wait he's not in a rush.” Liqhawe says. “Can you excuse me bit please.” She says to the stylist.

“I'm not hungry Qhawe--” Liqhawe ignores her and stuffs pancakes in Suku's mouth. “Qhawe?”

“Mom I'm not stopping, okay? You may not be hungry but my brother is. Just let me feed you then we will be good.”

“You are just like your father!”

“His blood is in my veins after all!” Qhawe smiles.

Everyone is ready to go to church. MaSibanda will be the one to walk Suku down the aisle as initially discussed with the Mdlongwa family. Platform One songs are playing in the background, people are ululating and whistling as the brides make their way to the cars. Everyone thought they would go for a

limousine but they all agreed to go with bikes and BMWs. The DJ gets an instruction through his phone and changes the song to Brenda Fassie's song.

The cars parks in a long line by the church's driveway. The family and a few guests walk inside where a keyboard is being played. The wedding theme is blue, blush and gold. The church is nicely decorated with flowers and drapings. When everyone is seated and quiet, Ngwenya proudly escorts his sons in.

“Represent us well. I don't want embarrassments.”

“You can bank on us Mdala.” The piano plays and the Ngwenya brothers expectantly look at the entrance.....

Mntimande's POV.

Looking at her stepping on that doorstep, my heart

skips a beat. She looks breathtakingly beautiful, her dress covers her belly well. She's glowing, her cleavage on display has me chuckling. Not that I object but it's turning me on big time. I watch her slowly walk towards me, I'm glad they didn't cover her face so I can see her beautiful eyes.

“Take care of my daughter she means a lot to me.”
Mother-in-law says.

“I intend to. Thank you for raising a rare gem.” We make our way to the alter and wait for my brother and his wife. Charity has her veil on, does this mean she was a virgin? Fvck! She's as good as your daughter-in-law Mntimande what are you thinking about? When they are now standing with us the pastor starts with his verses that I'm not even listening to. I'm focusing on my beautiful sexy wife right now.

“Sibangilizwe Ngwenya, do you take Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa to be your lawfully wedded wife? To love, cherish, protect and support for the rest of your life? ”

“I do.” I smile at her and she blushes as I slid the ring on her finger.

“Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa, do you take Sibangilizwe Ngwenya to be your lawfully wedded husband, to love, respect, support and submit to him until death do you part?”

“No--” Huh? Everyone is shocked! “Can I say my own vows pastor?” Phew! She almost gave me a heart attack. “I, Sukoluhle Nontokozo Mdlongwa, take you Sibangilizwe Ngwenya to be my husband, to love, to support, to be your better half and respect you but forget the submission part--” Everyone bursts into laughter as she slides the ring. Trust her to say this in front of my parents and siblings. The pastor turns to the other couple.

“Pastor I also want to say my own vows please.” Zibusiso says, the pastor nods. “Okay. I talk too much but today I'm going to be short. Char, I love you babe I want us to grow old together. As we grow may we never get tired of each other and our tantrums. With your craziness babes I hereby declare you mine and mine alone.” He slides the ring

on her finger.

“Zibusiso Ngwenya, I will be yours till the end of time.” She also slides the ring.

“You many now kiss your brides.” The moment I have been waiting for. I gently grab her waist and bend a little French kissing her. People are cheering as I deepen the kiss. I'm kissing my wife for the first time it should be memorable. She pulls out and whispers in my ear.

“I'm horny already unless you want me to rape you right now and here.” I laugh. Zibusiso taps my shoulder and hugs me as the girls hug each other.

“Congrats brother, sister.”

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Well, I wanted this to be the last chapter but there's still a few details I have to put out which means we still have one more chapter to go then comes the epilogue.

THE BRIDE.

Insert 115.

NARRATED.

After the photo shooting session everyone heads to the reception venue. The couples booked the whole venue in order to accommodate everyone they invited. With Suku having a huge following, Mntimande with his employees, Zibusiso and his notorious friends, they really needed a big venue to accommodate at least 3000 people but as we speak the number of attendees is over 5000. Princess has been moving around as the maid of honour and Sindiso who is responsible of taking care of all the close relatives. They are both making sure VVIP guests are well taken care of with the help of the ushers and Mpilo's friends. To think even Mntimande's taxi drivers from South Africa came to witness the big day.

“One two. One two.” The MC's voice echoes from the sound system. “Ladies and gentlemen, mantombazane amahle nezintombi nto, bogogo nabomkhulu welcome to the wedding of the century. Indumezulu yomshado bogogo nabomkhulu. Please let's all settle down, settle down please our couples are ready to dazzle us with their entrance dance.” People mumble taking their seats. Zinhle makes her way to the where the MC is standing and requests the microphone.

“Hello everyone. My brothers sent me here to remind all of you that as stated on the invitation cards please do limit the use of your cellphone to take photos. We will share the professional photos after the wedding. Thank you.” She gives the microphone back as the DJ starts with the agenda of the day.

“Whaaaaaat!” People scream as Mr Chozen and DJ TPZ's song hits their eardrums. “No way! Mntimande can not dance to this song--” An already tipsy Smilo says.

Ngiyan'cela bo nuuh ningangibuki

Ngiyan'cela bo nuuh ninganaki

Angizanga ngedwa namhlanje nginomuntu wami

Angihambi ngedwa namhlanje nginomuntu wami

Ningangibuki ninganginaki ningangibizix2

Awnoma benginawe izolo unganginaki

Awnoma benginawe last week unganginaki

The bridegrooms and bridesmaids dance their way to their seats as people cheer and ululate. Now the moment everyone has been waiting for.

“Ready?” Suku nods. “Let's show the our young couple how we do this.” To everyone's surprise Mntimande can dance like really dance that everyone is in awe. The way he moves his waist in a slow motion and his steps are are lit. Suku is not really dancing, we don't know if it's the pregnancy or she just can't dance more than that. Either way, Mntimande is dancing for the two of them.

“I don't believe it!” Zibusiso is in awe too. They younger couple join them as they put the stage on fire. People are now cheering, whistling and

ululating.

“My wife is carrying a special child excuse us.”

Mntimande takes Suku to their seats as sweat drips down their faces. Princess offers them handkerchiefs to wipe their sweat. Mntimande takes them and wipes Suku's face making sure not to ruin her makeup. A few minutes later Zibusiso and his wife join them too. “You hungry babe?” Suku shakes her head.

“I want water only I'm still full. You fed me after the church service, remember?”

“Okay. Here.” He gives her a sealed bottle of water as the aunts start talking. They go on and on about how they should behave for their marriages to last longer. Loyalty, respect, trust and love is all they are all preaching. Ngwenya stands up and speaks.

“I have nothing more to say except I'm proud of you boMthiyane. Asikhule isibongo sakwaNgwenya.” He sits down. MaNgwenya says she has nothing to say to the newlyweds as they are all perfect.

“Brother Mntimande. After the death of your first

wife you were ready to give up on life but your daughter kept you alive. We all failed to help you with your emotions but she did. Today I'm proud to be part of this wonderful union. It's the proof that second chances exist. I wish you all the best guys. ZB, I'm proud of you little brother. I'm sure your friends learnt something from this. All the best little brother and I know you will represent us well.” Everyone who understands Mpilo's last statement laughs.

“I have a lot to say to the four of you but allow me to say congratulations. I'm so emotionally right now but I promised not to cry on your big day. I'm proud of you brothers.” Zinhle wipes her tears. Everyone says their piece but Princess is nowhere to be seen.

Meanwhile in the safe house Lerato watches with tears streaming down her face. It should have been her but luck was never on her side.

“I loved you Zibusiso but what did you do? I loved you damn it!” Lerato smashes the TV but even with

the cracked skin she can still see the happenings. They are now dancing to Ed Sheraan's Perfect as the couples. Many other couples join them circling the newlyweds and as the passionately kiss. The pain cuts deeper in Lerato's heart. She looks at the knife on the table, the gun and the pois on that was provided for her to choose her own weapon.

“I'm sorry dad, mom I came here to work but I fell in love instead. Without the love of my life there's no reason for me to live.” She takes the knife and plunges it in her chest. Blood drips as she hits the floor and someone cuts her suffering short by putting a bullet in her skull.

Back at the wedding venue many people are eating for the second time. We can't really blame them the food is scrumptious. Some are still calling for more desserts but half of the crowd is drunk. The brides give the cakes to their in-laws and so does the grooms. They then cut the cake and feed each other.

“Mommy I want a cake too.” Siyamthanda says

running to Suku and Simphiwe follows.

“There goes my wife. Boys this is my wife--”

“She is mommy!” Everyone laughs.....

Everything has been done and dusted now the only thing left is to throw the bouquets. Suku's own is caught by one of the quiet girls from Mpilo's church, Zodwa's lands on the laps of MaSibanda.

“What? Mama?” Suku is surprised. A man in his early 60s stands from the opposite table and kneels in front of MaSibanda.

“MaDawu, we have been doing this in private ever since your daughter lost her parents. You said you never wanted to confuse her, you wanted to give her your all even if it meant sacrificing your happiness. I stood by you my love, I didn't have much but with whatever I earned I helped you. Now she's grown up, happy with her family it's time for us to enjoy the little that is left of our lives.” MaSibanda looks at Suku then Blessing who are both tearfully looking back at her.

“Ma? You sacrificed everything for us please grab this opportunity and be happy. We are grown up now.” Blessing says and hugs his sister as they burst in tears. 34 years of sacrifice! What a mother Suku have in MaSibanda.

“I will marry you--”

“Lilililili!” People ululate and cheer as the new couple hugs. Mntimande helps Suku sits on the chair and gets under her dress to take out the garter. He teases her thick thighs with his lips making her jump a little. He comes out with a garter, throws it and Mpilo catches it. Mpilo smiles and proposes to his girlfriend, the one who caught Suku's bouquet. Zibusiso's own is caught by Melisizwe.

The Ngwenya uncle thanks everyone who attended the wedding. The newlyweds hug everyone as they make way to their respective cars straight to the airport.

“Where to?” Suku as Mntimande.

“It's a surprise wifey. J ust follow hubby's lead.”

They kiss.

In the other couple's car Charity asks where they are going.

“To that one place you always dream about. I'm here to make all your dreams come true babe. Zanzibar here we come.” Charity jumps on his laps and French kisses him.....

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TWO YEARS LATER.....

Zinhle's POV.

What a couple of years I have had. It's been the best years of my life, my bucket list is all ticked.

Alessandro took me to every country I pointed on the world map which resulted in me giving birth in

Russia. The King (Grandpa) was livid when he learned that the Royal heirs were born in a Russian government hospital. I gave birth to triplets, two boys Angelo and Alessio and our one and only girl in the family Eleanora Drusilla Nokukhanya. She has three names because as my only girl I wanted her to have a Ndebele name and she was named Drusilla by the Queen (grandma). They are troublesome but it's worthy it. Owami and Olwethu can now fluently speak Italiano and they blend so well with the Royal family.

Today is our traditional wedding and the coronation. We did the white small wedding last year just so we can be able to change my name and bring Owami and Olwethu here. They are still very much in contact with their father, Mkhize and this coparenting thing has been working.

“Good morning our beautiful bride.” Grandmother greets me.

“Good morning grandmother. You should be

sleeping?” She no longer allows anyone to call her the Queen. She wants us to call her grandmother or Queen mother.

“Not when the King is about to be crowned. I brought the Royal stylists to get you dressed. You should be ready in two hours and please ladies she should look like a Queen that she is.” She orders them. “And you dear bride you are not supposed to look yourself in the mirror until you are married, don't wear any gold jewelry except your wedding ring. Our son will provide a bouquet for you and he wanted it to be a surprise. The Royal family decided to dress you in a white dress with a little traditional design. ”

“Okay grandma. Can I talk to Alex before the wedding? ”

“No. You will see him when they hand you over to him.” That's bad. I really miss him but it's only a matter of hours.

“Okay grandma.”

“Mom Dad--” Drusilla means she wants her father.

They are inseparable.

“Okay come let's go to daddy.” One of the Royal maids takes her and I get ready. A few minutes later my mother walks in.

“Can we talk?” She looks sad. I nod, we have been walking on eggshells. We really haven't had a heart to heart talk after Suku helped us say what was in our hearts. “I'm sorry I failed you as a mother. Please forgive me my daughter I'm really sorry.” I long forgave my mother.

“It's okay mom I forgive you. I long forgave you I'm past all of that now.”

“Thank you.” We hug, after years of not talking let alone hugging we finally make up.

It's time for me to walk down the aisle for the third time and Mntimande will be handing me over to Alessandro. I chose him because he took over a role of a parent when I was very young and he raised me up. The place is packed, everyone wants to see their King getting married. They are all

excited that he finally agreed to take over his responsibilities.

“You ready?” Mntimande asks smiling at me. “You look beautiful. ”

“Thank you. I love you always remember that brother. ”

“I will always love you too. All the best on your great journey.” We hug and the band starts playing a song. My man looks yummy in his Royal traditional suit. Today he has his hair tied into a ponytail. “Take extra care of her she's precious to us.” Mntimande hands me over to My King.

“You look beautiful My Queen.” He whispers.

“You look yummy babe--” Something tells me to look sideways and I follow my gut. Aurora reaches for something in her purse and I scream. “Alex!” I push Alex away and the bullet hits me on the left side of my chest and everyone screams as my dress turns bloody red.

“Zi? My Queen? Open your eyes--” Everything is fading. I'm drifting and I can see the angels ready to

welcome me to my final destination.

“All I ever prayed for was to be THE BRIDE and God gave me three chances. I love you Alex, take care of our children and be a good King to your people--”

“ZakwaNgwenya!” Mntimande calls out.

“Zinhle!” Zibusiso's voice is breaking.

“I will forever love you my brothers. Be happy knowing that you gave me your all. My time is up, it's time for THE BRIDE to make way for the WIVES--
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THE BRIDE.

EPILOGUE

TWO WEEKS LATER.....

Alessandro's POV.

She's dead. My Queen left me on the very important day our lives why God? Why couldn't she get a happy ending like everyone else? Were her sins that much unforgivable? I have cried all my tears all I have left now is my shattered heart. I'm not ready to let her go but then she has to rest. As painful as it is, I have to let her go.

“Brother-in-law?” Mntimande taps my shoulder. His own eyes are a pool of sadness and pain. Looking at him I see all the love he had for his sister the love that maybe can amount to mine but mine is different. I loved Zinhle the very day I saw her and all I have been living for since that day is to love her.

“Hey. Are you okay?”

“How can one be okay? But I will be fine. I was checking how you are doing.” He says looking at

nothing but space.

“I will be fine. I have to be strong for our children.”

Mntimande's POV.

Words can not explain how I feel right now. My heart is broken and my soul is sinking in grief. Death is inevitable but it will never be friendly. Zinhle was young, she had a bright future ahead of her and she was just starting to live her life. Why then was she taken away from us? We promised each other we will never cry when one of us is gone but how else do I deal with the pain in my chest? Maybe my wife can help. My wife is in our temporary bedroom we have been using in this Castle ever since we came for the wedding which turned into a funeral.

“Babakhe—” I gently grab her neck and roughly kiss her. She's surprised but she quickly relaxes and let

me share my pain with her. When I pull out of the kiss we are both crying.

“Help me MaKhwali I don't know how to deal with this pain. I'm trying to accept that she's gone but it all feels like a dream. Can we share the pain my love? I can't do this on my own--” This time she kisses me while her hands go for my belt. I'm angry, emotional, I feel like shit, God help me control the beast in me for I don't want to hurt my wife. She pushes me on the bed and sits on my thighs playing with my manhood.

“I love you.” She says and lowers herself on my hard.....

Zibusiso's POV.

I never thought someday I will drown my sorrows in a glass of Scotch but today here I am sitting on the balcony looking at nothing but my bleak tomorrow.

Zinhle was and is always going to be that important puzzle of our lives. How are we going to survive without her? She was crazy but she never wanted to see her brothers fighting. She helped us take a vow to never disrespect each other as brothers. Until today, I'm 34, Mpilo is 36 but Mntimande can still beat the crap out of us and we will never fight back. That's what brotherhood mean to us.

“Mthiyane. It's time to let her go.” My father says.

“I can't do this Ngwenya--” I rub my tears.

“You can. She deserves it, she deserves to rest in peace.”

Here we are, in a foreign land far away from our own burying our very own sister. Can life be harsher than this? Her triplets are crying and calling out for her, Alessandro is shattered, MaNgwenya has fainted twice, Mntimande my brother and my hero is letting his emotions out in form of tears, Owami is trying to comfort Olwethu, the Royal family is all sad and Nomzamo looks like she's carrying

everyone's pain but that's the way it is. We are born, nurtured into human beings and sooner or later we answer the call to our final destination. My sister will be buried amongst the Royals. To them she was already their daughter-in-law and the future Queen. People are told to make way to see her for the last time.

“Zie. My Queen I don't have words to express how hurt I am. You left me alone and lost but I have to free you. Our children are crying but I will take care of them, go and fly high my angel. Till we meet again.” Alessandro bends and kisses her on the forehead.

“Mama! Mama!” Drusilla screams pointing at the coffin so does her brothers. Dear God do you see what You have done? I watch as my parents and Nomzamo say their final goodbyes. My wife rubs my shoulder and then I realize my face is decorated by tears. Mntimande looks at me, they are all waiting for me to say my final goodbyes.

“ZakwaNgwenya.” I run my fingers on her peaceful face. “I don't know if there's peace over there but

even if there isn't, there's nothing much I can do about it. Go on dear sister and never forget that you left a family behind.” I squeeze her cold hand and take my seat.

“ZakwaNgwenya dadewethu. I don't know what to say except thank you. I'm hurt I won't lie but then go and take your rest dear sister. Ntombi yakwaNgwenya Mthiyane Somuhle phumula ngoxolo dadewethu (Rest in peace dear Sister).”

TWO YEARS LATER....

Nomzamo's POV.

It's been hard to get over Zinhle's demise but I finally accepted it. She will forever live in my heart. Malcolm and I got married last year and we moved to Harare after he was promoted. I have my own law firm now with the headquarters in Bulawayo

and branches in Gweru and Harare where I'm staying right now. Life with Malcolm has been good I won't lie. The only issue is his daughter who hates me but it's nothing I can not handle.

“Mrs Me, you ready?” Malcolm kisses me on the neck as I put my earrings on.

“Always ready babe.”

“Well then let's go before we are late to our very own anniversary.”

Meliszwe's POV.

I did my many mistakes, lost my family but in all this I'm glad I learned something. Respect is earned not demanded. Once you sleep around disrespecting your wife don't expect her to forgive simple because she's a woman. You might be luck if you have a wife who can take your shit and swallow it but not all of them will do. Value and

respect your marriage if you really want death to be the only thing that will separate you from your wife. Mntimande taught me a good lesson and that is to never blame or hate a man who sees a diamond in what you classified as coal by your actions. I hated him but he came through for me when I was at my lowest. He even went as far as helping me find a job. My relationship with my children is stable now and I'm really grateful to Suku and Nomzamo for giving me precious gifts.

“Babe?” Oh yes my girl is here. I'm engaged and I have paid lobola now waiting for the wedding day.

Mkhize's POV.

When I learned of Zinhle's death I had a heart attack that almost claimed my life. I was hospitalized, the doctors said I was going to stroke but luckily their tests proved to be wrong. Maria left when the going got tough because I was as good as dead and

someone I never thought would come through for me came and took care of me. Today I'm marrying her, this time not to replace Zinhle but to enjoy the rest of my life with her. She makes me feel good and I'm glad to say she will be my last and forever wife. Sanelisiwe, my last home.

“Dad you are taking your time. A bride is the one who should be late for her wedding not the groom.” Qhubekani says fixing my tie. Him and Anelisa renewed their vows and they are happy together. They said they took vows of celibacy but as we speak Anelisa is pregnant with another set of twins. “And then? Why are you smiling?”

“Nothing. Where is Khule and Khaya?”

“We here father. Time for the big moment. ”

Mntimande's POV.

The past two years were rough but we sailed

through. On my side I could say it was a little more easier to heal because my children and my wife were there for me. Last time we didn't tell you guys a secret. Suku was carrying twins four years ago when we got married but we decided to keep it a secret. She gave birth to a boy Luyanda and our beautiful no nonsense taker Luthando. As young as she is her feistiness can not be measured to anything.

My brother Zibusiso on the other side, when he was about to accept Zinhle's death his wife slipped and fell from the stairs which led to her miscarriage. Ever since that incident Charity was never the same. She snaps, she cusses and most of all she hates every child she sets her eyes on. She blames everyone for her pain and their marriage is rocky already.

Today is my wife's birthday she's been on set for 6 weeks and today they are wrapping up the shoot.

The last scenes of the series are being shot in London. It is the S-Kay Productions Film but their sponsor is in America and they wanted every scene to be shot exactly where the script says. They came here last week and today we (me and the children) decided to surprise her. I'm sure she even forgot her birthday.

“Dad?” Siyamthanda calls me. We stay with them since Charity doesn't want any children near her. Zibusiso visits whenever he misses them.

“Yes my boy?”

“I love you and mama.” He knows, they are aware we are not their real parents.

“We love you too boy. Now it's time to surprise mom. Qhawe? We good?”

“Yes dad. Ntsika will take care of the video you requested.” With his unquestionable love of the camera, Ntsika blackmailed my wife until she agreed to take him with to the shoot. From his calls my boy is happy.

As I expected my wife is busy giving instructions to the cast. She's wearing blue jeans, a white T-shirts with the S-Kay Productions logo and the words 'Telling Your Untold Stories'. She looks super cute when she's this focused. Her crew let me in here without catching me on the camera or making her suspicious.

“Camera. Roll. Action.” She says and focuses on the screen in front of her.

“They blamed me for my childlessness, they cursed me, they threw me out in the streets, I ate in the dustbins, my own family became strangers for they also believed that I was a witch which is why God cursed my womb but what they did not know is that the God I walk with is never too late to answer prayers. I cried, I died a million times but at the end I conquered. Today I'm a mother to two beautiful children--”

“Cut!” Suku steps closer to the character. “I don't feel the script. I want your emotions make the audience understand how all this feels. Give me your best shot--” She feels my presence and turns

to my direction. “Guys take ten.” She smiles and runs into my arms. I hug her then French kiss her. I'm one guy who is never afraid to love his wife even in public. I can show my affection anywhere and anytime. “What are you doing here husband?” I lead her outside where everything is set.

“Happy birthday Mommy!” The children scream and she puts her hands on her face crying.

“Happy birthday Wifey, wishing you all the best. To more blessings, joy, laughter and orgasms--” She lightly hits me on the chest.

“And children--” She says. Not a chance! I'm done producing children.

“Hell no! Do you see this cricket team? I'm not going to impregnate you again not in this lifetime. I suffered during your pregnancy and now I still have to take care of your crazy children who when they are bit sleepy no one should sleep. No way MaKhwali we are tying your tubes tomorrow I'm not taking risks. It's time for us to enjoy our lives. Life begins on the fourth floor (40s). ” Once again we

kiss.

FIFTEEN YEARS LATER...

NARRATED.

“Hi mom.” Drusilla says putting flowers on Zinhle's grave. “I don't remember our life together but I miss you. I wish you were here when I need a hug, for my first period, for mother-daughter dates but it's okay. I know you were killed mama, aunt Aurora killed you and I'm still angry even though she's dead. Anyway forget that. Today is the burial of your husband, my father. I'm not sad because I saw how much of a struggle it was for him to wake up everyday hoping to see you appear from nowhere. He never remarried, he never loved anyone because for him it could only be you or nothing. I'm glad he didn't take his life and also glad God finally let you guys reunite

again. I hope you find your happily ever after over there. I love you mom.” She walks out of the graveyard and her maidens follow her.

“Princess.”

“Yes Grandpa.”

“This is my last task in this Royal house. I'm too old to keep postponing things. Come here.” Drusilla kneels before her great grandfather. “You are the chosen one. May you rule your people with love, care and respect. Just because you are Royalty doesn't mean you should disrespect your people. Live long our Queen.” The great grandfather hands over the Royal Sword to Drusilla.

“Live long Our Queen!” Chants the Royal elders. Queen Drusilla walks out out of the house, stands next to the statue of their first King and raise the sword. Rain starts falling and everyone celebrates as this is a sign that the ancestors agree. They are still celebrating when thunder roars and lightning strikes the statue.

THE END.

QUEEN DRUSILLA: The Ancestral Clash.
(Supernatural Thriller)

(This book will take us through Drusilla's life from birth to the end. It will feature characters from THE BRIDE.)

I chose to sideline Zibusiso and Charity's wedding for a reason. Charity is also a character in TEARS OF THE CHILDLESS MOTHER. Their story will be told there and we will feature surprise guests from Precious Rosé and BROKEN. Stay tuned for the new book release date.