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Introduction

Vuledzani, spent 90% of her time working. She was either at the office or somewhere in the library supervising a research student if not at her therapist gym or attending piano lessons. Statistic was her play ground and she made money out of it from post graduate students.

She has not opened to anyone about the gang rape when she was still at varsity except her therapist. Will she open up to someone and find a relationship too in the process? Yes she found someone special Themba Varoni and it got complicated along the way, she almost gave up on life until Otsile September rescued her.

1

She was and still considered reserved, but her best friend Josh knew her better. She was a shorter version of Kelly Rowland, that's how a lot of people described her. Turning thirty was not worth celebrating but celebrating a blessing called life was her achievement. She doesn't have friends, except her male friend Josh, her PA, who forced himself into her life, he was gay, very much gay. Josh and her colleagues managed to go behind her back and pulled a surprise party on her after work. She was driving back home with a big balloon at the back of her car and presents from her colleagues when her phone rang. It was her mother, she pressed the buetooth button to answer.

'Hallo mama.'

'Vuledzani, I hope you enjoyed your day. Happy birthday once again.' He mother said and sang to her. She sent a text message in the morning , however Vule had back to back meeting and did not get time to respond to all birthday text she received.

'I did mama

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thank you very much. How are you though?'

'I am good baby, I can't wait to retire. I am tired of standing in front of bunch of disrespectful students.' She laughed.

‘Patience mama, only one year left and you can stay home and enjoy your money.’ They went on talking until Vule parked at her house. In everything that had been happening in her life, she was still worried about her mother. Ever since a hectic divorce between her parents, her mother has never been the same and has never dated or attempted to date. She distanced herself from friends and family and focused on her studies as old as she was. She was about to turn 60 years but she was still studying, to keep herself preoccupied.

Being the only child from her mother, also became a challenge because she had to drive home at least once a month to visit her mother or when the school closes her mother came over for school holidays. She made peace with the fact that her father remarried and it was clear that Vuledzani and her older stepbrother Tendani were a non-factor since then, the old man cut them off financially after getting married again.

Luckily her brother got a scholarship to study human science overseas and years later after passing matric she got a bursary to study Statistics at Wits.

Life was not bad for them because their parents were self-sufficient and they had a special bond like they were biological siblings. Her brother Takalani stayed in the UK and made it clear that he was not planning on coming back anytime soon.

She got in bed with her laptop thinking about the drastic change that was about to happen in the company since the previous owner sold 80% of the stake to someone who was still anonymous. She enjoyed spending her weekends doing her part-time work as a statistician for post graduates students at both Wits and UNISA business schools unless Josh dragged her out for movies or for drinks.

2

The retrenchment had people walking on ice in the office, however the HR department released a newsletter encouraging people between the age of 50 years and 65 years to take early retirement or voluntary resignation. Within six months almost 30 people were gone, mostly white old people. It was a low key threat to the white minority that an anonymous black man owned 80% of the company.

She realized that she served that company for years and had become too comfortable and that was actually coming to bore her. She made up her mind that she was going to put her resignation letter as soon as the new CEO entered the premises. I mean she was making a lot of money from her side job and had managed to pay off her first car and apartment in Randburg and now she had few years left to finish paying her current house.

First week of March a board meeting was scheduled to introduce the new CEO and the CFO. There was also new board members the committee appointed at the end of February and Vhule knew very well that she was going to be part of that meeting as COO. The boardroom was set and ready and people were tense as they sat down. There were few new faces and

the current CEO who had to stay until the appointment of new management. The CEO stood in front and introduced a tall beautiful guy as Otsile Silas September who was going to be acting on that position until the appointed CEO lands in South Africa. The other two tall beautiful guys were Linda Mazibuko as the CFO and Legal Head as Katlo Ramarumo.

The acting CEO stood up and made a beautiful welcome speech which nobody expected because of the rumors they heard about new management.

His voice commanded respect and he had a bit of an accent which made sense after he indicated that he spend most of his time in UK. He was originally from Botswana but ended up here in South Africa with his mother who got married to a South African white man. Yes he wanted to be addressed as Otsile.

Tomorrow was a second board meeting where new management was going to be introduced to the committee members and visa versa. In the morning she took out her olive pants suit and floral platform heels, she would never risk wearing flat shoes because of her height.

She went through the presentation for the last time as requested by the previous CEO that as the COO she has to present the annual report to the board members to give them a summary of the strategies of the company, challenges and achievement.

She parked her Grand Cherokee on the disability parking after notifying the security guard. There was a white Range Rover sport which she assumed was one of new guys or board members who used her parking space. She was not in the mood to knock on the window and tell the person sitting in the car that they parked on her space. She fixed her dread locks and refreshed the lipstick, got out of the car and pulled her laptop bag going to the elevators.

To continue.....

3

She felt a strong masculine scent behind her and she reprimanded herself not to turn and look at the figure standing behind her.

‘Good morning.’ The heavy voice that commanded respect echoed.

‘Morning sir.’ She said without turning. The silence in the lift was loud, very loud. She pulled her laptop bag and the big guy was following her up until they reached Boardroom A, the biggest boardroom in the building. She walked around and assumed her sit next to the ex-CEO and connected her laptop. She could feel that there was someone watching her but she dared not to look at that direction.

Her hands were sweating when it was time for her presentation. It was not a first for her, like she could not comprehend why her confidence disappeared on her.

‘Thank you chairperson. Good day ladies and gentlemen, before we can proceed let me welcome back the familiar faces, Mr. Mfundo Xego, Dr. Rodney Rametsi and Advocate Thabo Moloj, and a warm welcome to our new board members, the CEO, Legal HOD and the CFO.

The vision, mission and priorities on the company are as follows.’ She went on with the presentation even though the

CEO's eyes were piecing through her. The strategic meeting went well with all questions answered, she packed her staff and went back to her office on the second floor, a management floor, where her office was located. She did not stay for coffee and her mind was not doing her justice trying to remember where she has seen Otsile Silas September's face because it looked familiar.

'So how was the meeting?' Josh was already sitting opposite her with two cups of coffee, their daily doze.

'Everything went well but now I feel like I don't want to be here anymore. I need something new.'

'And how long have you been feeling like that Miss.'

'Almost 2 years now, this new transformation with new board has opened my eyes and seating in long meetings don't do it for me anymore. It's exhausting.'

'Whatever you are planning or wherever you are going girl I am coming with.'

'Dude I am going to be home doing nothing for once.'

'Call me dude again, I dare you.' He said with a serious face and she raised her hands. 'But on a serious note, I am leaving soon. I am going to be here though, to watch the 1 quarter performance and from there I am out.'

‘Wow! Ok.’

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"serif"">‘You not taking me serious I see.’

‘Not that I am not taking you serious. Anyway, I heard the boardroom was oozing sexiness.’

‘My God! News travel fast in here. I am sure Loraine and Kat had already updated you I see. Londile is not going to be happy with this.’

‘Guilty, but I still want to hear it from you. I am this close to dumping that piece of sh*t.’ Londile was Joshua's boyfriend, he was a busy business man and Josh felt like he was too busy for him or for their relationship for that matter.

‘I am not saying anything Josh, get out.’

“Girl I run your diary, you have nothing lined up. So spill the beans.’

‘Girl, get out.’

‘Whatever, I am out.’ He said cat walking back to his sit.

And why was that beautiful man there speaking to Josh? She asked herself looking through the glass walls.

‘Mr. September here to see you.’ Josh said walking him in and left as soon as Vule said “Thank you Josh.”

'You may sit sir.' Vule said. His aura was heavy. He sat opposite Vule on the focus table diagonal to her office desk.

'Mr. Otsile September. Tea , coffee, anything to drink?'

'No, I am good. Please call me Otsile, just Otsile.'

'Cool then, how can I be of your assistance Otsile?'

'Thank you for the presentation, I could appreciate it if you could send all the strategic documents including three years performance to my secretary.'

'That can be arranged.'

'And I would like you to be part of change management strategic session next week. Invitation will send as soon as possible. We are trying to rework in incorporating new trends, technologies and aligning them to the mission and vision of this company.'

'I will be honored, is anything that you would like my section to do prior to the session?'

'Just bring your beautiful self mam.' He said. He stood up stretching his hand to Vule. 'Thank you for your time, see you next week.' They shake hands and he left. The smell of his cologne was left to torcher her inner peace.

4

Vuledzani was still struggling with letting go of her past and ever since she was gang raped she has never dated, it was not like she had a boyfriend before. She took a big turn, her focus was on her studies, consulting side job, piano lessons, gym, cooking and spending time locked up in her apartment. Life predicaments turned her into a reserved person, she only opened up to her psychologist no one else. She never imagined herself in a relationship and she was planning to stay that way. She has been thinking of adoption lately but shut the thought because she knows her mother won't be happy, her mother still had hope that Vule will find a man. Typical of parents.

Her life was somehow structured, she had a routine and stuck to it. The only time she deviated was when Josh invited himself unannounced.

She was still contemplating on going on a date with a guy she met at MediCenter after her therapy. She so badly wanted to try this dating out but she had no a picture in her mind being in a relationship, it was like she blocked that thought after the rape incident. Her therapist suggested she gave it try but her protective walls were on another level. She picked up the call eventually.

'Vule hallo.'

Are you always this formal woman?'

'Themba get to the point please.'

'When am I taking you out Miss busy?'

'Are you going to leave me alone after the date?'

'I am not promising anything.'

'Well forget about the date then.'

'Bona, I will back off after the date, like I will disappear like Casper the ghost.' Vule giggled.

'Did you just giggle?'

'When is the date? Where?' She ignored him.

'Your choice of place and time will do.'

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"serif"">'Cool, I will tell you when.'

'No Miss, I don't trust you. Tomorrow is Friday. I will pick you up for dinner at 7pm at work, take you back to work since you don't even want me to know where you stay.'

'Cool then.' She sighed.

Themba punched the air in excitement, he finally secured a date with Miss can't get. Little did Vele know that Themba knew a lot about her?

She made final reviews on the Quarterly Performance Plan document and send it to Loraine, Otsile's PA. The company was gradually taking a huge turn and it also took a toll on her. She was not having it and needed a week leave. She signed her emergency leave form and send it to the CEO for approval. Online leave applications were convenient and less direct contact with the CEO or direct boss was a relief.

It was approaching 6:20 when she started packing her laptop, taking her girly bag and heard to the ladies to freshen up before her date.

'I see you Miss sneaking in here.'

'And why aren't you home?'

'I came back for my phone charger. Why are fixing your face? Going somewhere?'

'I have a date.'

'Mary Magdalene, mother of Jesus Christ come back now.'

'Stop overacting. If you keep this to yourself I will tell you all about it on Monday. In fact you say a word about it I will move to another department'

'Monday is far woman. What's with threat? You know I am not like that'

'Your choice Josh. Now leave and stop using ladies restrooms'

'Monday it is, you such a bully Vule.' He came closer for hug.

'Bye boo, love you and take care.'

'Love you too Josh, keep your phone on just in case my date pisses me off so that you can come fetch me.' He laughed.

'Gosh!! Relax woman and live a little.'

'I will try.' She sighed

5

He was sitting at the back of his car when the chauffer opened the door for her. She sat next to him.

‘Vuledzani, Finally.’

‘Themba Varoni, Finally I guess. Where to?’

‘House of Stake, Parktown.’

‘How was your day besides work?’ He asked.

‘Ordinary day, just like the rest of my days. And yours?’

‘I will tell you all about it when we get there. But I still want to know more about your day.’ He said looking at Vule who was facing out the window. The date went well than expected. She was reluctant at first but happy about their next date. Themba Varoni was more fun in person than on the phone. She got to her office to pick up her laptop bag. She walked to the lift escorted by the security guard.

‘Hold the lift.’ Otsile came in smelling fresh.

‘Vuledzani Maanda.’

‘Otsile September.’

‘Long day I guess.’

‘You can say that again.’

'Why emergency leave, is everything ok at home?' Otsile asked.

'I need to recoup, I am tired. I need a week rest.'

'That's great, I do that sometimes when I feel overwhelmed at work.' Silence, she hated small talks because they turn to become awkward.

'Thank you sir, I will take it from here.' Otsile said to the security guard. He walked Vule to her car talking about nothing in particular. He watched her reversing, she watched him on the rare mirror watching her car disappear. "What a weired man" she mumbled toherself.

Vele kicked off her shoes first before removing her bra. She was relieved her leave was approved and she was going to catch up on her personal staff and side job.

Monday morning, she was still in bed when she heard her phone vibrates. She looked at it and ignored the call and dozed off again.

She was sitting watching food channel later on when her front door opened.

'You are going to hell for lying to me. I had to find a note on my desk that you will be on leave. Some friend you are. Move let me sit down.'

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"serif"">'Hallo Josh, how are you?'

'How was your date?'

'Do you even care how I am?'

'Frankly I don't, how was your date with Mr. Anonymous?' She sighed.

'It went well, in fact we are going out again this coming Friday.'

'Thank you Mary Magdalene for answering my prayers. I can't wait for you to get laid so that you can stop being mean.'

'You want me to get laid, on my second date. You are hurting me now.' She said holding heart. He laughed.

'Stop being dramatic, people do get laid on their first date.'

'Not me boo, I still need to observe him before I fall deep.'

'If you are going to a second date it is clear that you are considering dating him.'

'I don't know, I will see. Time will tell.'

'Can I see his picture?' Vule handed him her phone with opened WhatsApp profile pic.

'My God he is so dreamy.'

'What is dreamy?'

'Wow! Hold up. Isn't this Themba Varoni?'

'How do you know him?'

'The IT Guru, spokesperson of Intelligence Unit. You suppose to know him because he is friends with Mfundo Xego. Dr Rametsi and Advocate Moloji.'

'What? This is small world. I can't date a man who is friends with the board members.'

'Are you crazy? He is not a board member meisikie'

'No, don't you have work tomorrow.' Vule said standing up.

'Can I sleep here?'

'Bye Josh. Behave or I am going to take my keys back' He took his sling bag.

'Don't you dare miss the date on Friday?' He said walking out.

6

Friday morning she had meeting with two of her students, after that she went for piano lessons and went back home to get ready for her date with Mr Varoni. After Josh left on Monday she took out her phone and searched for Themba Varoni. Most of articles about him were work related, she was wondering about his personal life. She sat and thought about it, well it was time for her to get to know his personal life.

The therapist was positive about her new adventure and also prepared her to open space for disappointment there and there.

Communicating through phone calls and WhatsApp became a norm for them, and well she had been receiving good morning text and goodnight text since their first date. It was something new to her but she enjoyed it, even her therapist encouraged it.

The long bath was well deserved and she opted for a floral maxi dress and Nude Wedges. She had to keep high, Themba was very tall. Well, she took offence when people say something about her height.

She took a sling bag, her phone and car keys. When she opened the door Josh was there holding two coffees.

'You are not going anywhere with that busy bee dress. Move now.'

'I am going to run late Josh.'

'What happened to your fashion sense? Girl you are not going to a picnic. Come let's go upstairs.'

'This dress is exposing my hips and bum.'

'Shut up, you need to put those locks up in a bun. You know you're vertically challenged but you want to leave your locks hanging.' Vule rolled her eyes.

'Fotshek, are you done? Can I leave now?'

'Now pay me for my services.'

'Not happening, you just budged in my house unannounced and took over. I did not ask for your services now go.'

'Can you get laid already? Like I am over you.'

'I am out, you will see yourself out.' Vule took her hand bag and left Josh.

She was a little bit uncomfortable in that body hugging dress, however she took confident steps walking towards the restaurant. She could not rub off the thought of men looking at her like a thanksgiving turkey. Themba was sitting at far end of

the restaurant, immediately stood up when she was approaching him. He came around and gave a hug and a kiss on her cheek, pulled a chair for her and sat opposite her.

'You smell good

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as always.' He said.

'Thank you.'

'Anything to drink?'

'Any chardonnay will do for me'

'A bottle of dry chardonnay, African collection preferably.' He said to the waitress serving them.

'How are you, since last time I saw you?'

'Come on we talk every day, it's not like you know how I have been.'

'No, it's different when you are looking at someone telling you how they have been.'

'Themba please.'

'Vule you don't talk much about yourself. Look I feel like we have something in common, an untold story. I was shocked we go to the same therapist and I could not stop asking myself what could have led you to a therapist.'

'I want to have a peaceful dinner Themba, my personal life is off limit.'

'Ok, I will let it go. Let me not spoil this moment for us.'

'You are not an open book yourself too.' Vule said taking another sip from her wine glass.

'We need to have a one day out somewhere quiet and talk about our personal life.'

'Are you for real now.'

'You want to know me personally and I want to know you more, so it is settled then. I will find a suitable place and have our third date there.'

They had a peaceful dinner as per Vule's request. He gave her a long warm hug at the parking lot. She was driving back home when her thoughts went back to his lips on hers. He first short intimate kiss, the bubbles popping in her stomach made it worse.

She parked her car under the carport, she was overwhelmed by tonight events to park it in the garage.

'The hell are you still doing here?'

'Avoiding Londile, how was the date? Did you finally get some?'

'Go home Josh.'

'I am sleeping over, with you, in your bedroom. I don't want to be alone.' Vule looked at Josh and immediately understood. With no questions asked, she took her only friend hand and went to bed together lost in their personal space.

7

Back to work.

'Girl you are so lucky.' Said Josh holding white roses in a vase.

'And then?'

'Your daily schedule or read the card on the flowers first? Your choice madam.'

'The vase?' Vule asked.'

'I take it we are starting with reading the card.' Josh pulled out the sticker on the card and opened it. 'Here we go. "Be my sunshine every morning. Love TV." So short and sweet just like you.'

'The vase Josh.'

'The flowers came with a vase madam, how sweet.'

'My schedule now Mr. Nosey.' Josh sat opposite Vule and went through their schedule. Not much for a person who was on leave. Her office phone rang, it was Josh transferring it.

'Hallo.'

'So much for professionalism.'

'Did you have to buy the vase too?'

'You don't look like the type that kept fresh flowers in the office. No offence.'

'None taken, thank you for the flowers.'

'Anything for Miss Vuledzani Sunshine Maanda.'

'How did we get to sunshine?' She said smiling like a little girl.

'You give me hope to rise up in the morning Vule.' She kept quiet. 'Can I see you later?'

'I don't know, I have therapy session and gym later. Let's do it tomorrow.'

'Can I come over for a hug and a kiss at lunch time then?'

'Gosh, fine Themba.' They hung up and she started with her work, going through reports, liaising with legal section for updated policies and all. Lunch time Themba was standing at her office door looking at her. His cologne gave him away.

'Let's go out for lunch before your face wrinkle.' She looked at him and a smile crossed her face. She picked up her blazer and phone and followed him out. In the lift he turned her around and kissed her.

'I have been missing those lips the whole weekend.' Vule was still recovering from the kiss and words failed her. The lift opened and they walked to the Café opposite their building.

‘Themba I am a professional and I don’t want people to see me being all lovey lovey at my work place.’

‘Trust me I know and understand. I am a very private person too, so relax you won’t be seeing me going PDA on you. But, should I find you in a private space I will do no justice to those beautiful sweet lips.’ Vule was blushing, her dark skin did her good. After lunch, they part ways.

‘Josh I need you to do something for me.’ She was glued on her laptop.

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"serif"">‘Josh is not at his desk.’ I male voice said. She looked up and Dr. Rametsi was standing at her door.

‘Wa reng tsotsi ke wena?’

‘Josh told me you were out for lunch, so I was waiting for you at Otsile’s office.’

‘What brings you here Dr. Rametsi?’

‘Vule you need to come for HPV test. ‘

‘You came all the way here for that?’

'You know I care about you and I understand your situation more than anything. You should not take your health for granted.'

'I know, I will reschedule an appointment with your PA.'

'How is Duduetsang and the kids?'

'Still driving me crazy.' He said laughing.

'Any one special?'

'Nope, too soon.' She said grinning.

'Forever soon, see you around Vule and take care.' He said standing up.

'Thank you for checking up on me.' He left and she signed.

'What did the honorable Dr. Rametsi want?'

'Learn to knock woman.' Josh laughed, he liked it when Vule called him woman.

'Ok, how was lunch and all?'

'Yes Vuledzani, how was lunch?' A voice said behind Josh. They both turned around and Otsile was standing with a grin on his face.

'Ok, I am out. Josh said quickly leaving Vule with Mr. September.'

'I am not going to take much of your time, I have sent you a document with change management inputs. Since you are an analyst by nature please go through it for inputs and when you are done we can sit with Legal service for due diligence and we will deliberate further for finalization.

'Noted, any time frame, turnaround time?'

'Next week, I will be out of the office this whole week. You will be the acting CEO. An email communication will be send through the right channels.' He said.

'Ok! Anything else.' Otsile raised his eyebrows.

'This went well, I thought you were going to give me a hard time on the acting position.'

'I was until I saw your tired face.' She said laughing.

'I am out smart mouth.' He said laughing.

Vule was sitting in her study with a cup of green tea when the conversation she had with Dr. Rametsi invaded her thoughts. She was found by Dr. Rametsi the day she was gang raped. He took her to his hospital and looked after her until he was satisfied with her progress. The therapy and gym were his suggestions and he paid for them. The piano lessons were suggested by her therapist. She found peace in playing piano hence she has an antique piece at the far end of her study. When she graduated and started working, she thanked Dr. Rametsi and his wife for support and she started paying for all of that herself. Since then she started donating to the hospital and sometimes attended charity event with Advocate Moloi's wife, Tlhagoentle.

She hated everything that had to do with her reproduction system, the day her womb was declared damaged and traumatized, and she also shut the thought of dating and having kids. Dr. Rametsi has always been the one to remind her of annual checkups. It sometimes got to a point where he would drag her out of the office for checkups. Her phone rang.

'Mr Varoni.'

'I missed you woman.'

'I missed you too.' She said.

'I managed to book us somewhere around Johannesburg west in a quiet spar for a day. Are you ready?'

'I am not ready but I probably need that.'

'Saturday 9pm you better be ready I am coming to fetch you. And bring swim wear with you.'

'Yes sir. Hold up, swim wear for what?' She also wondered if he knew her home address.

'Try yes baby. Just do as told for once.'

'Bye Themba.' He laughed.

'Bye Vu waka Va.'

'What's that? "

'Vule waka Varoni.

'Get out of here, bye.' She said laughing.

They hung up and another call came through and it was her mother.

'Aah! Mama.'

'Ngwana wanga, how are you?'

'I am good mama and happy too.'

'I love the sound of that, but I have the bad news though.'
Vele's heart started beating fast.

'Are you ok mama?'

'I am good, I am fine. It's your father.'

'He vhathu vha mudzimu, do I have a father nne?'

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"serif"">'He has risen from the dead.' She said laughing at her daughters remarks.

'Come out with it already mama.' She said.

'Apparently he has been sick for long time and he send his lawyer to come speak to me, not only me your brother Tendanis' mother too.'

'And you gave him an opportunity to talk because?'

'Stop being negative Vule.'

'He left us mama, not the other way around. I made peace with his absence and I really don't need him now or ever.'

'Well, he wants to see his son and daughter.' I burst out laughing.

'Inwi ngwana, I am serious here stop being sarcastic about this.'

'That man can die I will still not feel anything for him and I will still have nothing to say to people about him.'

'You need to let go Vule.'

'I am 30yrs of age, almost 21 years without him. Mama I am over that man and I have no anger nor resentment towards him. I just don't want to be part of him.'

'Do this for me baby.'

'Why? I know Tendani won't take a flight from UK just because your highness daddy dearest has woken up from the dead.'

'Well, he is willing to even pay for his plane tickets.'

'Eboooo! This is serious.'

'I told you.'

'Mom I still remember your sad days after that man left us. You never moved on and you are still single.'

'Who said I was single all along?'

'Jesus of Nasareth my mama has been misbehaving.'

'Vule I am not your age mate. I will call when we have done all the arrangements of seeing your father.'

'Can't I at least think about it.'

‘What is there to think about, that man is sick and wants to see his only children.’

‘Ok mama, I will wait and thank you for bullying me into it.’ She laughed.

‘Goodnight baby, don’t forget to send me airtime and data.’

‘Will do, night.’

Vule’s mom was all calm and casual about her father’s new developments on the other hand she did not care. Now she was adamant to find out about her mother secret relationship. Could it be that man who used to drop her mother off now and then when she was in High School? “That sneaky old woman” She said to herself thinking about her mother.

9

Josh dragged her to the spar for hygiene waxing, that's what Josh called it.

Saturday morning she went to the gym first, she came back, took out her floral maxi dress as Josh suggested and placed it on the bed. Well he was not here but he made a point that she do as told or she will never hear the end of it. He still wanted Vule to get laid. She packed her casual sleep over bag which had swim wear and toiletry bag. After taking a shower she dressed up and tied her dreadlocks up in a bun. She took out her cellphone from the charger answering a call from Themba.

'Mr Varoni.'

'I am at the gate.' He said.

'What gate?'

'Your complex gate, tell your people to open up for me.' Vule kept quiet for a while.

'How did you...'

'We are getting late sunshine.' He cut her off.

She called the security and they opened for him. He drove in and parked right in front of her house. Creepy right, she thought to herself and she sore to never ask him how he knew her house or his work number for that matter. All she knew was

that IT Specialist were specialist hackers and in that department she doesn't trust him.

'He got out of the car and opened the boot. He came for her and kissed her cheeks. Took her bags to the boot.

'Come lets go sunshine and stop staring at me like that.'

'How am I starring at you?'

'Like you want say something but your mind is against it.'

'Whatever.' He opened the door for her and she settled in after he adjusted the sit belt for her. The drive to the spar was almost 30 minutes, not far.

He booked a private chalet that has a clear view the beauty of City of Johannesburg. Themba placed their luggage on the bed and breakfast was set on the balcony. She took off her wedges and wore flip flops. She sat opposite him fresh air hitting their faces.

'I did not know what to order for breakfast so I chose a lot of mixed breakfast from the menu.'

'I see you want me fat.' She said jokingly.

'I would still want you in any size. He said. She moved her eyes and started dishing up for herself. Breakfast was quiet with chat there and then.

‘Do you want us to do massages now or later?’

‘Do we have activities?’

‘Not really, its breakfast, massage, later lunch, we have aromatic oils 14 jet Jacuzzi prepared for us hence I said bring swimwear. If you want to swim, we can also do swimming, then there is supper. If you want us to sleep over we can also do that too, it’s all up to you sunshine.’

‘You got this figured out I see.’

‘I wanted this so bad

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I want to come out here with a clear picture of who Vuledzani Maanda is.’

‘You are talking as if you know absolutely nothing about me.’

‘I want you to tell me about you, your family, where you grew up and studied.’

They were laying on the bed facing up with her hand entwined to his. She told him almost everything, her upbringing, absent father, career, and charity work except the rape issue. Her mind totally became blank when the word rape registered in her head.

Themba also opened up about his life and how he lost his son, and has 8 year old daughter living with his parents after her mother abandoned her.

They are both graduates from Wits, two years apart, both with Cum Laude.

‘Any specific reason why you visit the therapist?’ He asked. They were facing each other and she looked down.

‘Unfortunate past circumstances forced me to, my past, absent father and all.’ She said and he nodded.

‘And why do you need to see the therapist?’

‘I have a past that is haunting me. I am ashamed to talk about it. I also have a heart chronic condition. Opening up to a therapist makes life worth living, including living for my only daughter and mother and now I have you sunshine.’ He smiled, a sad smile though. ‘Your presents makes me forget about a lot of things.’ She just nodded because she somehow understood how it was to carry a pain that kept popping up in your mind in most awkward moments.

She did not want to dwell much on his heart condition, she did not want to spoil the mood further but promised herself that one day she will revisit the topic.

'Lunch is ready sunshine.' They had their lunch at the balcony over a light conversation. The house keeper told them that the Jacuzzi was ready for them.

'Ok, get out I want to change to swimwear.'

'Do I really have to get out?' He stood there looking at her. He took off his vest unbutton his jeans and dropped them off. She immediately moved her eyes when he took of his underwear.

'Let me use the bathroom then.' She took her bag and left him smiling.

'I am done, you can come out.' He shouted. She came out with a towel around her.

'So how long are you going to hide from me?'

'I am not hiding from you.'

'Ok, remove that towel and wear this gown.' He said, he had a white gown on. She took a gown and went back to bathroom and changed. She was feeling flushed and disorientated. His penis was there and she saw it and she couldn't unsee it.

He was already in the tub sipping on wine, with his eyes glued on her. She slowly took off the gown and placed it on the garden couch next to his. She could feel his eyes on her as she walked towards the tub getting in. He had his eyes still glued on her. He always wondered what was behind the lady with formal suit pants. He once thought she was a lesbian. She sat next to him.

‘Wine?’

‘Thank you.’ He handed her the glass.’

‘Why are you hiding this breath taking body?’

‘I am not hiding it. I just don’t feel comfortable flaunting my body. My body, my secret place.’

‘I am cool with that, as long as you flaunt it for me. He said putting his hand around her going down to her waist. She felt his hands caressing her body. She had no choice but to swallow the whole glass of wine and asked him to fill it up again. She started to relax until her hand landed on his penis.’

‘My word, you not wearing anything.’

‘Yes mam. This is our private space.’ He grinned.

‘The hell Themba, you making me uncomfortable.’

'You need to learn to relax around me sunshine. I am your man.'

'You never told me I was your man.' He raised his eyebrows.

'Well, I am your man woman. All yours truly.' He pulled her closer. 'Come give your man a kiss.'

'Ok my man.' She said giggling. She was becoming relaxed and Themba also noticed.

He felt a little bit guilty for conducted a background check on her which also revealed about rape. She never opened a case but the medical background file indicated so. He knew that she was still holding on to that, going to the therapy too said a lot. He already prepared his mind to take thing easy with her.

'Do you want us to sleep over?'

'What a wise question after our second bottle of wine.' He laughed

'We can still take uber home.' She kept quiet

it was like he wanted her to confirm the sleeping over. They watched the sun set together also being cautious not to land her hand on his penis again. The Jacuzzi experience was beautiful, she felt like staying in there forever.

'I think dinner is ready let's get out of here.' He said getting out of the Jacuzzi with zero fucks given about his nakedness. He pulled her up and brought her closer to him.

'You still haven't said anything about sleep over.'

'I don't want to say anything about it. Let's get out of here' He lifted her head and kissed her again. They wore their gowns and went inside. She enjoyed her supper this time he was fully back to the funny Themba.

'Come let's go take a shower and get ready to get back home.'

'Go ahead I will take it after you.'

'No you are not sunshine. He lifted her up and went to the bathroom.'

'I can't Themba.' She said in almost a whisper.

'We are not going to do anything but shower. And I will steal kisses too' He said stealing a kiss giggling. He switched on the shower help her out of the gown and swim wear. Her firm breast had him feeling like taking them into his mouth and suck them. He composed himself and took off his gown too. He took her hand leading her inside the shower.

'Come look at me. She raised up her head to look at him.'

'It's just a shower relax sunshine. I wish you can be relaxed around me. Please take a deep breath and just let loose' He

said putting his lips on hers and his hands traveling to her firm round ass.

‘This is all mine. He said in between kisses. ‘I love you Vuledzani.’ They continued kissing and his penis was unavoidably woke in between them. He stopped and took a shower gel and sponge and started bathing her. He turned her around and his hands start traveling to her nipples and he earned himself an involuntarily moan. He liked that, he went down to her naval moving in circles around her naval whilst he had his mouth on her ears.

‘Do you want me to continue sunshine?’

‘Yeah!’ She whispered. He threw the sponge down and let his hands do the magic going down to her vagina. He massaged her clit until she started shaking. He turned her around and she just put her head on his chest tears filled her eyes as he increased the power of water from the shower. She held him and let it all out. He continued holding her tight. They eventually got out of the shower.

‘Come let me lotion your body.’ He said taking the lotion tub from her hands. He picked her up and put her in bed.

‘Do you want to talk about it?’ He asked her worried. She shook her head. Her body went to shock after that orgasm. She was still trying to comprehend what happened. He took off the

towel and start started putting body lotion. He slid next to her in bed and pulled her closer. She rested her head on his chest.

'I love you sunshine. Do you hear that?' She nodded as she fell into a deep sleep. He looked at her and asked himself how he got this lucky. A beautiful, brown skinned, not only educated but intelligent humbled woman. He looked up and mumbled "Livumile idlozi likaVaroni. Ngiyathokoza".

He did not plan a sleep over however he secured the private chalet until the following day. When she opened her eyes, she had this beautiful man looking at her smiling.

'Morning sunshine.' She was shy. 'Come breakfast is ready.' Let's get a shower and eat. Yes they took a shower in silent and they had their breakfast. He took her hand and led her back inside. He took off her gown and his and started kissing her again. Her body gave in as he laid her down on the bed. He opened her legs and shook her head reluctantly.

'I am not going to penetrate you.' She let loose as he went down on her. He ate her until he felt her body shaking. He moved up to her face and start kissing her again. He closed her legs and he started humping her thighs. He groaned as he released himself on her thighs. After a while he looked at her.

'I couldn't resist you sunshine. I had to let it all out.' He smiled and she giggled. Her giggles made him happy as they laid next to each other cuddling.

11

Monday morning, back to the office.

'Girl, the glow.'

'Shut up and get me coffee.'

'Coming right away.' He went back to his desk and ordered two tall coffee. He came back and sat opposite her.

'Today's schedule or the glow up.'

'What are you talking about?'

'Ok, how was it? How big is it, was he good?' Vule looked at her friend and laughed.

'You need to get out of my office woman.'

'Girl you got it all and guess what I am buying lunch. I want to hear all about it during lunch.'

'I really need to get laid more often so that I can get free lunch.'

'Hell to the no. Nonetheless I love the glow. After how many years again?' He said going to collect their coffees. He went back to her office and ran the daily schedule though her.

She was looking at Josh through the glass walls as guilt washed through her, she lied to him about her relationships. The only thing that Joshua knew was that she had a bad break up and

she was done with men. Maybe one day she will be able to open up to someone else other her therapist about rape.

She was walking to her therapist consulting room when she came head to head with Dr. Rametsi.

‘Thank you for coming I will be with you now.’

‘Haai maan Rodney, I am not here for you.’ She said laughing.

‘I was hoping to hi-jack you. On a serious note Vule you need to come for checkup.’ He said.

‘I will pass by your consulting room and set the appointment Is your wife in I want to drop off donations for charities.’

‘Yep, she is in.’

She had a lot to dish out to her therapist, mostly she had a lot of questions to ask him. She passed him opened her therapist door without knocking and threw herself on a couch.

‘You look fresh and beautiful.’

‘Stop it George.’

‘Ok, are you ready?’

‘I had this feeling I never had in my entire existence. The way he held me.’

'And the thoughts about rape.'

'They never came, we never went far though. We stopped at oral sex without penetration.'

'I am glad that you took this huge step. After 11 years damn woman.'

'I am still scared of penetration.'

'I suggested you start with masturbation so that your body can relax to the idea.'

'I still can't do it George, I tried but my mind won't let my hand touch me in that way.'

'Take your time, maybe your mystery man will unlock those rusty chains.' He said laughing.

'Don't at me, this girl right here know how orgasm feels like. So talk to the hand.'

'I think I like the new you.'

'I am leaving.' She said standing.

'Take one step at a time and enjoy this new adventure without limiting yourself. There is no harm in being vulnerable towards your partner. Try that.'

'Thank you George I will think about everything you suggested. Maybe when I come back I will have something new and juicy to share with you.'

'I am proud of you.' He gave her a warm hug and she left rushing to Duduetsang's office to drop off the charity donations. Passed at Dr. Rametsi's office to finally set the appointment. She spend 30 minutes at the gym and went home. A text came through.

'Should I come? I missed you.'

"Themba I spent the whole weekend with you."

'But I still misses you. How about you come over tomorrow for a sleep over?'

"I don't know, let me think about it then I will tell you tomorrow morning."

"Ok, can I come for a kiss then?"

"Themba I am tired and have too much work to do. I promise tomorrow I will come over." She wanted to say yes so bad but she had hold herself.

"If you don't keep your promise I am coming to your house for a sleep over. 24hrs is too much manje, angisakwazi nokuzibamba."

"Stop it.'

“Can I call you?”

“I am from the gym, let me take a quick shower and then we will talk.”

“Cool then. Love you.” He said and she kept quiet and hung up. She put both hands on her face and asked herself if she really loved him.

12

Three months down and she was still having butterflies in her stomach. They had oral sex many times but Vule was still scared to go to the next stage which was penetration. She spent her weekend at Themba's house unless when her mother came to visit. She still kept her relationship secret and Themba respected that.

She was sitting opposite Otsile discussing the outcome of the audit trying to address management action plans when her phone rang. She looked at Otsile.

'Can I quickly take this?'

'Sure' He said and she quickly ran out of his office.

'Hallo mama'

'Vule wee, your father was admitted to the hospital.'

'And?'

'Inwi ngwana.'

'Ok mama, I will call Tendani at get back at you.'

'You and your brother don't seem to be wanting to hear this man out.'

'Its fine mama, I will do it for you. I will call you back later after speaking to Tendani.'

'Ok bye.' They hung up and she went back to her office. They continue working, had lunch together and knock off late.

She sat on her bed drinking tea when her phone rang. Ok international number it must be Tendani.

'Hallo'

'What's with our mothers?' He sighed 'Kana vha khou luvheledza mini?'

'They are probably still in love with that old man.'

'Never, that man did them wrong.' He said.

'So when are you flying in?'

'I am landing Thursday evening, I will send you my flight detail so that you can fetch me at the airport. By Friday we should be in Venda and hear them out. Monday morning I am taking a flight back.'

'Any guest? '

'No, she is 7 months pregnant she cannot come.'

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"serif"">'Cool then, see you Thursday.' They hung up and she checked up on Themba and went to sleep.

Thursday morning.

'I hope my diary is not hectic and my leave was approved.'

'Don't worry, you don't have anything hectic except management meeting at 2:30.'

'Shoot me Josh, I am tired of meetings.'

'Your position comes with responsibilities.'

'Shut up.'

'Where is T Varoni?

'We are having lunch together today. I need to tell him about my leave and going home for a weekend.'

'All the best with seeing your old man'

'Do I need that?'

'I don't know but I feel like you need closure as to why he left you too and never made contact.'

'Isn't that too late?'

'It is, but I think it will do you and Tendani good. You have nothing to lose right.'

‘You are right, I have nothing to lose.’

She went for lunch with Themba and when she came back Josh reminded her of management meeting she was not looking forward to. She went to Boardroom A and almost everyone was there. She sat next to Katlo.

‘Afternoon colleagues, I am not going to waste time but to give you the heads up on new developments and innovation.’ He looked at Katlo. ‘Mrs Ramarumo, you have been scheduled for a conference in LA, choose one person to go with from your team. I will email the details and you are going to present on behalf of the company.’ He looked at her then at the far end of the boardroom. ‘Miss Maanda and Mr. Mazibuko, you will be attending conference in New Zealand. I will be going with you, I need presentation of our annual plan and 6 months performance outcome from you Vuledzani. Mr Mazibuko our financial lay out including financial performance should be tabled in the presentation. We will sit next week after Vuledzani come back from leave to finalise everything. I will also email the conference details. Acting letters will issued next week for protocol and sustainability. I ask for your support.’ He closed the file and looked at us. ‘Any questions?’ I unexpectedly raised my hand.

‘Yes mam’

‘When is the new CEO coming, we have been waiting for months now.’

‘You are tired of me already?’ He raised his eyebrows laughing. ‘You might be looking at him. Me.’ He said. ‘The new CEO will be announced after our year-end review. Anymore questions?’. The Boardroom went silent. ‘Meeting adjourned.’

13

When she knocked off she drove to Themba's house. Her brother was landing at 11:30 so she wanted to spend time with him because she was not going to see him the whole weekend. She parked at her usual spot and went in.

'Honey I am home.'

'You sound like 'I made it in life type of a wife.' She bursts out laughing.

'Do we even have such type of wives?'

'You will never know hey. I missed you. How was your day?' He came closer to her and kissed the living hell out of her.

'After this kiss, I forgot how my day was.' She said blushing.

'Come I cooked for you and your favourite desert.'

They had dinner and he took her hand led her upstairs to the bedroom. He undressed her and went for a shower. After drying up, he got between her legs and looked at her.

'I want to love your body like never before.' He said kissing her every sensitive part of her body. Today he planned to at least penetrate her with his finger and hoped she doesn't freak out. He made love to her body when she started screaming with pleasure he slowly invaded her vagina with his finger while sucking on her clitoris. She screamed with pleasure

uncontrollably. He went up to her face and looked at her. He started kissing her and he put his penis on her vagina and he tried pushing it in. She was tight and he did not want to risk wakening her past.

'Let's try it.' She whispered.

'I don't want to hurt you.'

'I want us to do it.'

'Are you sure sunshine?'

She pulled him for a kiss and opened he legs wide. It took him hell of a minutes before his penis could go in. He did not move but looked at her.

'I am inside, do you want me to move?' She nodded with yes in a whisper.

He started moving slowly until he felt that she was comfortable.

'Sunshine... I can't hold it... sunshine you are killing me.' He resealed himself inside her and felt his penis getting numb. He looked at her.

'Did I hurt you?'

'It was not that painful.'

'We did not use a condom and I released inside of you.'

'Ok'

'Ok? Aren't you supposed to be stressed that you might be pregnant? You women like freaking out to kind of things' He grinned

'Just shut up.' She said giggling. He slowly pulled out and looked at her.

'Don't worry about the blood on the sheets, I will get them removed.' He said making her not to feel embarrassed. 'That felt like home sunshine. I want to do this again when you come back. Do you want us to do it again?' She nodded hiding her face with her hands.

'It's a little bit uncomfortable down there.'

'Come let's go take a bath to ease the pain so that I can drive you to the airport to fetch your brother.'

'Cool, but you are not coming with me to the airport.'

'Are you hiding me?'

'No, not that, come on Themba. It's just that I haven't told my mom and brother about you or being in a relationship for that matter.'

'So for how long are you going to keep me a secret to your family?'

'I am planning to tell my brother about you this weekend and we will dine together on Sunday when we come back. As for my mom, I am not going to say anything. You know how mothers are, they will be planning marriage and seeing grandchildren.' He laughed. He was happy with her decisions and at least she was going to introduce him to the brother, which was progress. She was still on the pregnancy issue and the fact that she knew that she was not close to having kids. Will she ever have the guts to tell him that she was a barren? How will Themba takes it?

'Can I ask you something, it's too personal though?' Themba said out of nowhere.

'Oh! Ok ask.'

'What happened to your previous relationship? How long have you been single?' She looked at him and swore to pull the same lie she pulled on Joshua.

'He cheated, twice, hectic breakup. Five years single. Why?'

'You sure know how to keep it intact.' He winked at her.

'Stop it, it's just that I did not have anyone to have sex with.' She was satisfied with her lies. They took a bath and later he walked her to the car and she drove to the airport.

She was happy to see her brother after almost two years. Tendani came back home once a year.

'And how have you been?'

'I am a woman now and I have a man.' She said that and the discomfort of her vagina reminded her that she finally had a man inside her and the feeling was beautiful.

'Finally, I was starting to think that you are playing for the other team.'

'I was actually considering it.' They laughed. He put the bags in the boot and they drove to her house catching up on gossip.

They left early in the morning with Tendani driving, they arrived in Makhado at 11am Friday morning. They made separate groceries for their mother and drove to the village. Tendani was driving slowly admiring the beauty of his homeland, he missed home and if it went for his father wanting to see them, he would have stayed until Jennifer gave birth. They first went to Vule's house to greet her mother. He did not stay long, he left with Vule's car. Vule was now settled sitting on the sofa opposite her mother.

'Vho vuwa?'

'I am well baby and you? You look so beautiful and happy.'

'I am happy mama, very happy.'

'Ndo wana mukwasha kani?'

'How am I going to get a man when I am still waiting for my mother to get a boyfriend first?'

'Don't start I am not your friend.' They laughed.

'What time are we meeting Phadziri's family?'

'Tomorrow at 10:00.' She nodded.

'Any agenda?'

'We will hear everything tomorrow and your father is going to be there too because he was apparently discharged, that's what I heard from Tendani's mother.'

'When did you too become this close and gossip buddies?'

'Since the day your father wanted to see us.' She said laughing.

'Is he dying?'

'I don't know.'

'I won't feel bad if he died.'

'Vule!!!' She laughed. 'He is still your father.'

'I was just saying mama.'

'Me too.'

'You too what mama? You want him dead?' She laughed out loud and could swear the neighbours heard her.

'No, I won't feel bad if he died too. He was dead to me the day he left us.'

'Does that make us bad people?'

'No baby

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it make us human.' She nodded and continued with village gossip.

The following day Tendani came to fetch them and they drove to musanda (Royal House). They were expecting them by the looks of things. They were welcomed and Tendani sat next to Vule in the large meeting room.'

'Thank you for honoring this meeting, I will hand over to who Phadziri.' His royal wife was sitting next him, the woman he left Vule's mother for.

'Thank you family. I was not expecting your presents my children and I am glad that you are here.' Tendani and I looked at the old man motionless. He looked so much like Tendani than Vule. Everybody could see that they were Phadziri's cubs.

'I know that I have not been part of your life and I have no excuses. I have been feeling guilty for neglected you for so many years.

'You neglected me for 25 Years Vho Phadziri, and Vuledzani for 21 years. You are not feeling guilty the gods of Phadziri are punished you for neglecting the royal blood. That is why you never had other kids.' The whole house gasp in shock. What were they expecting, Tendani was a 35 years old man who was about to have a family of his own.

'Tendani ngwana wanga , calm down.' Tendani's mother said.

'Let him speak, let him let it all out.' Vho Phadziri said.

'I am done. You can continue.' Tendani said with serious face. Vule was just quiet looking at this whole situation.

'I am not at my best and I have been sick for a long time. I might die anytime from bone marrow cancer. I don't want sympathy because I have accepted my fate. I would like you my children to find it in your to forgive me for choosing everything over you, hurting you and your mothers. I want to leave this world in peace so that my ancestors may receive my soul. I don't want to force you into anything but I have to do a ceremony for you too and I was hoping to do it as soon as possible.'

'I am based in UK, I can't be going up and down between countries while my wife is pregnant.'

'No fhala, we will wait until your wife give birth if it's ok with you.' Tendani and Vuledzani knew how important tradition was in the villages especially in the royal family. Vuledzani was looking at her father asking herself how a humble soul like him got to a point where he neglects his children.

'I will give my mother feedback on my availability, I don't know about Vuledzani.'

'I will wait on Tendani and I will come back with him.' Vule said.

The meeting ended and Tendani dropped us at home. After the meeting, Vule realized that her brother was holding a lot of

pain. When their father cut them off he was almost 15yrs, he was old enough to see what was happening. On the other hand, Vule only saw pain through her mother and how she used not want to talk about her father. The drive was silent.

The following day she packed her stuff and waited for his brother so that they can drive back to Johannesburg. They had a quiet trip and he was distant, she told herself that she will find a way of reaching out to Tendani so they can attend counselling together regarding their father. She wanted to be there for her brother a moment he said "I don't want to talk about that man Vuledzani." with angry voice.

They had dinner at Themba's house as planned and they later went home to her house.

15

Monday morning at 3am, she dropped off Tendani at the airport and went straight to the gym. She drove back home and had started preparing for work. She was back to work after a hectic and tense weekend with her family.

After the finalisation of the presentation for international conferences meeting. She was walking back to her office and heard Otsile's behind her.

'Can I see you for few minutes in my office V? He had this tendency of calling Vuledzani "V" out of nowhere. She followed him to his office and sat across him.

'Did you have to attack me like that, you caught me off guard there woman.' He said laughing.

'What are you talking about now Otsile?'

'Last week at management meeting, about the appointment of the new CEO.'

'Hahahahaha, Come on man, I did not even plan that, It just came out of nowhere, I swear.'

'My mind went blank for a seconds there and I had to think fast and to say something because everyone was looking at me like "bua rra re eme ka wena".' He said laughing. He spoke deep

seTshwana from Botswana and Vule sometimes would take time to comprehend what he was saying.

‘Not that it was discussed but probably 80% of the staff had the same question but were reluctant to ask or they are probably comfortable with you being the CEO.’

‘Do you think I am doing justice to this position?’

‘What? Otsile you ooze leadership and I like your management style. You are making justice to this position and we appreciate you. No, I appreciate you. The last thing I need is working with a brat with entitlement mentality and no business sense.’ He was looking at her going on and he has never seen this bubbly talkative side of her. She almost made him blush with so many complement. It was the first time a woman complemented his business approach, intellect and also appreciation it. She was quite an observer and very intelligent, oh and beautiful, and that made her more sexy and attractive to him. He was lost in his thought when she clapped her hands.

‘Come back to life Otsile. I am here pouring my heart out to you so that you can keep the CEO position and you zoned out on me?’

‘You can talk woman. I like this side of you.’

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"serif"">‘The perks of having Joshua as my PA.’ She said laughing.

‘You are beautiful V.’ He said that out of nowhere. And the silence took over.

‘I will take that as a compliment Otsile and stop saying such remarks they are making me uncomfortable.’ She said.

‘My bad, noted. So are you ready for the conference?’ He asked.

‘I could do with an island, the only place I visited out of the country is UK, London. My brother stays there.’ She said and somehow Otsile picked up some sadness in her voice when she mentioned the brother.’

‘Are you close with your brother?’

‘We might not have shared the same womb but I know he’d kill for me. I love him, he gave me hope when I had none, and he pushed me to study hard so that I can have financial freedom and not depend on men.’ She said. ‘My God I am over sharing aren’t I?, I do this with Joshua or George. Sorry I got carried away.’ She said covering her face.

‘I don’t mind, being your George or Joshua for that matter.’ He said smiling.

‘Stop it Otsile, let me go back to work before you fire me.’

'Ok fine. Can I ask, who George is?'

'My imaginary friend bye.' She said walking out leaving him laughing.

He was looking at her asking himself who was her boyfriend, he must be lucky. It has been long since he sat with a woman over a casual chat after his divorce. He was more than aware that Vuledzani had no idea who he was, she doesn't remember that she was his statistician when he was doing doctorate at UNISA. He was not going to remind her about it and it he was fine that way. When he saw her at the boardroom that day he knew that it was probably fate that he bought this company. The performance behind it was impressive and the lady behind it was not given much credit. She started working for the company 7 years back when the company was 1year old as a financial analyst and then statistician, now Chief Operations Officer.

I wish you can get pregnant already.’ Themba said laying next to her circling his finger around her naval after a steamy raw love making.

‘Stop it already.’

‘I want my seed to bless this beautiful body. I love you sunshine.’ He said getting on top of her kissing her again. They spend the whole weekend indoor bonding in all levels. She never felt so strongly about a person the way she was with Themba. He was a gentle man with no drama. His first love and it scared her a little.

‘They were cooking Sunday lunch when his doorbell rang.’

‘Open up sunshine.’ Vule went to the door and opened. There stood two beautiful women, one looked older like maybe on her 60’s and the other was just adorable with unavoidable dimples.

‘Ukhona uThemba?’ She asked.

‘Yes he is here, come in.’ She said opening the door wide. The Queen and the princess walked passed and that was magic.

‘Dad, I missed you.’ The little girl ran to Themba hugging him.

‘Hi sunflower, hi mom.’ Themba said picking up his little girl and giving his mother a kiss. Vule was standing at the kitchen door looking at a beautiful picture of a perfect family.

‘Sunshine, come meet my mother and daughter.’ He said. Vule walked over and he pulled her closer.

‘Mom, this is your soon to be daughter in-law.’

‘And now we know why you have been a little bit scarce.’ She said and looked at Vule.

‘Unjani mntaman?’

‘I am good Mrs. Varoni.’

‘I am “ma” to you. I could do with a stiff one right now.’ She said that firmly. Vuledzani was looking at that beautiful woman who don’t even look her age leaving them walking to Themba’s study.

‘Wow!’

‘I know, trust me I know.’

‘Daddy who is this?’

‘Your new mommy, remember I told that I was going to get you a new mommy soon.’ The little girl nodded giggling. ‘That’s her.’

‘Sunshine meet my sunflower, Omolemo.’ He said.

‘Nice to meet you Omolemo.’

‘You can call me Omo, right dad? Or sunflower.’ She said with a captivation musical voice.

‘Yes sunflower.’

‘I would like to give you space with your mother and daughter.’ Vule said.

‘Who said we need space?’

‘Themba I need to go, we will talk.’ She kissed Omolemo on her chick and promise to visit her. She went upstairs took her hand bag and car keys.

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"serif"">‘Did I say or do something wrong?’

‘It’s not you Themba, I need some air, we will talk.’

‘What about lunch?’

‘Next time.’ She said walking out leaving Themba confused.

“She” by Babyface was playing on repeat as she curled up on a couch. Tears started streaming when thought about how she would never have kids of her own. Looking at Themba’s daughter brought a lot of sad events. Themba wanted to give her an opportunity to be a mother but she was scared. Every time he whispered in her ears that he can’t wait to get her

pregnant her soul died a little. How long was she going to keep all this barren issue to herself? It was Sunday but she needed someone to talk to, she called George and luckily he was available for her. She took her hand bag and drove to George house. She sat opposite him.'

'Are holding back again?'

'I am scared George, now and then he will be telling me how he can't wait to plant a seed in my womb. Do you know how many times I die every time he says that?'

'Do you want to tell him?'

'Why am I scared of rejection? I feel like this happiness would be of the past if I tell him. I want to tell him so bad but I never find the right time. I know there will never be a right to tell him.'

'You do know that you don't have to put yourself under pressure to tell him. You don't owe him anything but you owe yourself to be true to yourself before you can be true to him. How about you wait a little bit about this and enjoy your relationship? You haven't celebrated your 1 year anniversary yet.'

'George his intentions are clear and that scares me. That man has shown me countless time how much he loved me. Do you know that I saw a ring in his drawers and I have been sitting on

that thought with my big ass suffocating me? You don't get me do you?'

'Except the big ass part I get you. Let's start from the beginning. I want you to set a time frame for yourself, find an open day on your calendar, sit that man down and open up about rape and how it affected you.'

'Do you think I can be able to do that?'

'You managed to do a lot of thing this past months, you can't keep holding back. You need to beat this fear that you have been feeding since you were raped.'

'Thank you George, let me go home and sleep on our conversation.'

'You do know that procrastination is a disease right.'

'Are you going to let me leave?'

'Bye, thanks for coming.'

'Thanks again.' She drove back home and her stomach started groaning, hunger finally visited her. When she opened her door, Themba was sitting on a couch relaxed, watching TV. She sat next to him and he pulled her closer to cuddled.

'I am sorry, I feel like I have overwhelmed you with Omolemo. I should have spoken to you first about this whole mommy thing and daughter in-law thing.'

'I am sorry I left. I shouldn't have done that.'

'I love you.' He said lifting up her face kissing her.

'I am hungry.' He laughed.

'I dished up for you and it's in the micro oven.'

'Thank you. I love you too.' She said.

17

'I think I have packed everything necessary.' She said closing her luggage bag.

'No you haven't.' Josh said.

'Hell no boy, you made me pack a lot of unnecessary things. I am only going to be there for a week and what am I going to do with swimwear?

'You are such a bore.'

'I think I am done, now leave my house.'

'You forgot to pack Mr. TV.'

'It's going to be the first time I am going to be away from that man, for more than a week. I am sad.' She sighed.

'And I wish I was your luggage bag.' Josh said giggling.

'Get out of my house Josh.'

'Bye, I am going to miss your bullish fat ass.'

'You're still here?'

'Come give me a hug boo.' She stood up and gave him a hug and he left. She went down stairs and waited for Themba.

They were sitting in the lounge suit at the airport drinking tea waiting for their plane to be called. She felt restless but well that came with her job. Themba wanted to come with her and she bluntly refused. She called Themba and her mother notifying them that she arrived safely and enjoying the view of Pacific Ocean in Wellington.

After the first day of conference they went out for dinner together. She never sat over a casual conversation with Linda Mazibuko before. He was quiet an interesting man as for Otsile he was quiet a talker but his eyes had signs of sadness.

On their last day they went up to the roof top deck where the hotel staff prepared farewell meal for them. The conference went well, managed to benchmark and scooped potential investors.

‘Have you heard the sound of a saxophone for the past two days since we were here?’ Vule asked

‘I have heard it, I thought I was dreaming at first.’ Linda said.

‘I heard it too’ Otsile said.

‘I have never heard someone playing one song three time in a row with a saxophone. Quiet impressive I must say. I was this close to asking the hotel manager to find me that person. That song reminded me of something I never had but hoping I will one day find it.’

'I couldn't even recognize the song, you quiet have an ear for music Vule.' Linda said.

'It was a rendition of "somebody was you-Toni Braxton and Kenny G".'Vule said in excitement. Otsile was quiet drinking his gin.

'Otsile are you still with us?' She asked.

'I am still here V, enjoying this windy side of the world.' He said.

'I am going to the club opposite the hotel, do you guys want to come along?'

'Linda we have a morning flight tomorrow and you want to go clubbing? I can't believe you.' Vule said amused.

'Are you guys coming or not?'

'I will pass.' Vule and Otsile said in unison.

'I guess I am going to misbehave by myself.' They laughed watching him leave.

'I guess it is me and you V.'

'I guess so, now fill up my wine glass and tell me why you are wearing a sad face.'

'Stop analyzing me I am not your work'

'Ok then, do you have kids?'

'Yes two girls.'

'That is great right, where do they live?'

'UK with their mother.' Then some quiet. 'I am a divorcee V.'

'Oh! Sorry about that.'

'No need to be sorry. It has been 7 years now. After our youngest daughter drowned my wife was desperate to get pregnant again and told her that we needed to heal and mourn our daughter. She went on and got pregnant by another man. It was depression that led to all that. She started cutting me off her life and after she got better she divorced me because she was feeling guilty.'

'Wow! That is a lot to take.'

'Well we are good now, she remarried and my daughter chose to stay in the UK with her mother.'

'How old is she?'

'17 years, going to university next year.'

'O godisitse mos.'

'She is making me proud, mara o makgakga gore.' He said laughing. His beautiful smile was contagious.

'And you?'

'Me what?'

'Kids, man etc?'

'Etc...' He laughed.

'You are something else you know.'

'I have no kids, yes I have a loving boyfriend and etc.'

'Are you in love with him? Does he love you more than you love him?' He asked.

'All I know is that I love him and I am his priority. I could say his love is evident.'

'You deserve evident love.'

'Thank you Otsile. Now I want to go to bed.'

'Me too.' They stood up and walked back inside.

'See you tomorrow morning at breakfast, come give me a hug.'

'Oh! Ok.' She went under his broad shoulders and hugged him. He somehow held her for some time before letting her go. He kissed her forehead and left. Vule was shocked but played it cool. She went to her hotel room, changed to pajamas, called Themba and then slept to a soothing sound of a saxophone, but this time it was an unknown sad song.

18

Back home, she was cuddling on the couch watching TV with Themba waiting to collect Tendani at the airport.

‘I am horny.’ He said and she giggled.

‘Can I touch it?’

‘No!’ She giggled.

‘Now I want to touch it, just a little.’ He said moving his hands down to her sweat pants, putting his hand on it and started massaging it. ‘Sunshine.’ He said and she kept quiet with her eyes closed enjoying his hands on her vagina. They had a hot one on a couch, took a quick shower and then she left.

From airport they joined R21 and N1 North heading straight to Venda.

‘I might come back home next year.’ Tendani said.

‘Say what? Are you for real?’

‘They have opened a new brunch in Zambia and the research department has shortage of our skills.’

‘Those are good news right?’

‘Yes they are good news and the fact that it is based in Danielle’s home land.’

'Did they make you an offer?'

'I was actually recommended by my research supervisor.'

'We need to celebrate this one. How is my little nephew and Danielle?'

'Growing fast and Danielle is obsessed with losing weight.'

'She is fighting to get her model body back and you need to support her.'

'She gained some meat and I love that extra meat on her.'

'Men and meat.' She said changing music on her iPod.

'What?' She rolled her eyes.

He dropped her off and drove home. Her mother had cooked a warmly traditional meal. She was enjoying her food until her mother opened her mouth.

'You are eating like a pregnant woman. Should I be excited?'

'Mama wee, leave me alone.' She said smiling. She could never risk wearing a sad face because that will make her mother to ask more questions.

'I could do with grandkids Vule. I am about to retire and I want to be a full time grandmother.'

'Patience mama.'

‘Asizwino, career women are a problem.’ She said shaking her head laughing.

‘I need to find a man first, then I can have your grandchildren.’

‘I need to upgrade my prayers then, not that I cannot see that you have a man already. You are smiling whenever you touch your phone. You were smiling when you picked up a call and disappeared to your bedroom.’ Vule was looking at her mother like a little girl caught stealing spoon of sugar.

‘I am tired I need to rest.’ She said clearing up the table heading to the kitchen.

‘Na zwino go on run away.’ Her mother said.

They arrived at Phadziri royal house in the early hours of the morning. The ceremony was conducted, they were introduced to the family ancestors and given royalty beats to wear. They were called inside for a traditional feast and introduced to the other members of the family. I was not like they did not know some of them. They went to school with some of the kids from the royal family. Some faces were happy and some faces were full of pretense and as for Tendani, Vule and her mother could not wait to get out of there. The only thing that was keeping them there was Tendani’s mom who was trying by all means

not to be rude. She took the car keys from Tendani from earlier when he was threatening to leave and she hid them.

‘I should have taken my car.’ Vule’s mother said.

‘We would long been out of here.’ Tendani said.

‘Let’s just keep smiling people, in no time we will be out of here.’ Vule said.

After some time Tendani’s mother came saying that they should bid farewell and leave. They did so and in the car Tendani was not about to let her mother go.

‘Na vhone mama, what were you discussing with that old woman for that long?’

‘If you want family news, sit next to the grandmother you will hear more than your ear can bear.’ She said. Vule and her mother burst out laughing. Tendani just shook his head and turn to Vule’s house.

‘What time am I fetching you tomorrow morning?’

‘As early as possible, remember we have dinner with friends before your late plane back.’ She said. Tendani just looked at her like “Why don’t I know about dinner.””

19

Weeks later, she was sitting opposite George drinking green tea as his office.

‘The results came out and my womb is perfectly fine but reproduction system is dead.’

‘I am glad you went for tests after how long? You know I still have hope you will have kids. Take your time and think about IVF. Your womb can carry a baby, so you can talk to Themba about it and you can both take the IVF route.’

‘I know George, I really need to find a better approach and time to tell Themba about my situation.

‘Time frame Vule, procrastination is your middle name.’

‘You always find a way of chasing me out of your office.’ She said.

‘You always chase yourself, now get out.’

‘No need to be rude I am out.’

‘See you next week sweetheart.

‘Thank you again, bye.’ She said walking out.

She was woken by her mother’s call.

'Did you have to call me this early?'

'He died.'

'What? Who died?'

'Your father.'

'Oh!' She unexpectedly said that.

'Did you just hear what I said?'

'You said your ex-husband died mama.'

'You need to discuss with your brother and come home.' He mother said.

'Are you sad that he is gone?'

'We talked days after the ceremony, he apologized and told me that he never stopped loving me. He just told me everything.'

'I am sorry mama.'

'It's ok baby, it's just that I never thought that one day I will share a table with that man and get closure why he divorced me.'

'Did you love him still, you know after he left?'

'I learned to stop loving him and in that process I met a good man.'

'Will I ever meet the good man?'

‘When you get married baby, I will come with him to your wedding.’

‘I might as well forget about meeting him.’ She said and her mother laughed.

‘When are you coming down home?’

‘I will tell you as soon as I have spoken to Tendani. This is not fair to him, flying in and out of the country it is not only costly but tiring. He is a new father and he is supposed to bonding with his baby.’

‘I know baby, but this is beyond our control.’

‘Ok mama, we will talk then bye.’

‘Aren’t you sad?’ He mother asked

‘What? Bye mama’

‘Ok bye.’

She sat there for a while asking herself if she was sad? She tried to find a sad muscle in her body and there was none. Did she long for her father’s love? Yes she did. Was she mad at him that he left them? She was when things got harder when she was growing but outgrew the longing.

Tendani came back, this time with Danielle and their son. A cute little thing. They drove to Venda together. Their father was to be buried Sunday evening, that's how the royal family funeral are done, only men went Thavhani (royal burial place) to bury the old man and females stayed behind. Monday morning a family meeting was held with presence of the elders and the attorney. Surprisingly the will was read and 40% of the old man businesses were left to me and Tendani. The attorney handed the letters from vhoPhadziri to all relevant officials including their mothers and said that he will keep in touch. They went back home and later in the afternoon Tendani fetched Vule who had been ignoring her mother who wanted her to read the letter in her presence.

20

Months later she was cuddling with Themba in bed.

‘Baby are you on prevention and you are not telling me.’

‘Stop overthinking.’

‘I feel like you don’t want to have children and you don’t want to tell me because you don’t want to hurt me.’

‘Now you are over thinking.’

‘Ok fine, when you are ready to talk about it I will be here.’ He said kissing her forehead.

Yes he suspected that probably Vule was not ready to have kids, but how she never suggested a condom, emergency pills or always ignored the contraceptive topic got to him. He however made a vow to never push her into anything, when the time is right she will talk.

She has been on and off work due to personal family obligations. She just sat there looking at her laptop at work after typing her resignation letter. She decided to save it until she has gathered her exit plan.

‘Are we day dreaming?’ Otsile said.

‘Have you ever felt like you have given your all to something and it was time to let go.’

‘Yeah! I think I know what you talking about.’ He said.

‘The baby was crawling years back and now that baby in running and I have no use being the nanny anymore.’

‘What are you talking about now?’

‘Never mind Otsile, sometimes my mouth beat up my mind.’ She said smiling.

‘You better not be leaving me V, I will die.’ He said laughing.

Deep down she knew it was going to that direction and it was about time she took a break from the corporate world and start to digest everything that her father’s attorneys has send her about working together with Tendani to run Phadziri Legacy.

‘I am not going anywhere Otsile.’

‘You better V, I am serious I will die should you want to leave me.’ He was serous this time.

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serif">‘It’s settled then, ga ke ye gope.’ She said in his raw seTswana and they laughed. She watched him leave her office and she asked herself who was his girlfriend since he was divorced.

After work she drove to her therapist. There was someone inside so she waited outside. She saw Tlhagoentle and Duduetsang coming her way. She tried to hide her face when Tlhagoentle poked her.

‘You have been scarce at the charity events. All I get is checks from Duduetsang.’ They laughed.

‘Trust me, I do want to come but time is never favouring me.’

‘I understand Vule.’ Dudu said.

‘See you around.’ Tlhago said and they left.

Finally the door opened and Vule threw herself on George’s couch.

‘I am ready.’

‘Ready for?’

‘To tell him everything.’

‘What changed?’

‘I read a letter that my father wrote me. He was looking for me and he was ashamed to go ask information from my mother. He hired an investigator for my whereabouts including my personal life. He knew about the rape. I suspect that he told my mother too. Ever since our first meeting with my father my

mother became too close to me and she checks up on me like a little child.'

'That a lot to tackle, all at once.'

'He said that I need to forgive and let go, that my age mate have families and children and I should not dwell in the past, feed fear of loving someone and building a family.'

'He said a lot. Let's priorities and see which demon we want to tackle first.' George said.

'That is a summary of it all George, my old man left me a three page letter.'

'How do you feel about all this?'

'I think I allowed fear to stand in a way too long.' She sighed. 'If Themba loves me he will love me with my baggage and if he can't well I won't force him to stay.'

'When are you planning on telling him?'

'Soon, just know that this year won't end with me holding this information.'

21

They had a picnic with Omolemo during the day and took her back to Themba's mother house. They drove back to Themba's house.

'Are you still feeling nauseous?'

'I am better now.'

'I want us to go out of this province for a weekend. I could do with fresh air.'

'I would love that.' Themba planned the romantic getaway.

'I still don't mind staying indoors with you having sex like rabbits.'

'Stop it' She said laughing.

'You are the sweetest thing ever in bed.'

'And I can't get enough of you.' She said leaning over for a kiss. They were naked breathing heavily making love. They took a bath and got in bed.

'I don't have clean clothes here. I am going back to my place tomorrow.'

'Why don't you just move in? You literally live here.' He said.

'Nope, andizi.' She said and he laughed. He doesn't even recall how many times he asked Vule to move in with him and she would brush it off always.

'It's fine, I will pack my week clothes and camp at your house.'

'Cool with me. Let's sleep.'

'Good night.' He said pulling her closer and they slept.

She was sitting on the focus table in her office when Joshua budged in with white roses.

'Your weekly replacement is here.' He said replacing the old ones with the new ones.

'Thank you mlungu.' Vule said.

'Skambora ne.' He said.

'You need to stop sleeping with them black okies my friend.'

'I have a 3quire note book, as long as it still has empty pages I won't stop until I have collected all those dirty vernacular words.' He said laughing.

'My God you such a dick Josh.'

'And you such a pussy Vule.'

'Get out of my office.'

'I need money for coffee first.' He said. Vule took out her purse and gave to Josh to get them coffee and muffins.

Later when she arrived she found Themba sleeping on the couch in pajamas.

'Hi Mr. Varoni.' She said leaning over to kiss him. When he opened his eyes were red.

'Are you ok?'

He did not respond but stood up and went to bathroom, came back and sat opposite Vule.'

'I missed you sunshine. Come here.' He pulled her closer and started kissing her. He undressed her and laid her on the couch. He made sweet love to her. The love making was full of emotion which Vule could not read but in all she felt the love and connection. When they were done they had supper, took a bath and settled in front of the TV in the bedroom.

'Do you want to talk about it?' Vule asked.

'I spoke to my therapist and he wants me to deal with my demons.'

'Do you want to deal with them?'

'If I want to move on and start a new life in a clean slate with you I have to be open to you. I have been ignoring your questions about my nightmares and I think it's about time I tell you everything.'

'Don't put yourself under pressure Themba, when the time is right you will talk.'

'It's never a right time, I want to wife you Vule and soon. And me telling you all this it's part of starting things on a clean slate. You remember I told you about something I did in the past?'

'I remember.' She said

'This never ending nightmares are part of it.' Themba said. He narrated everything to Vule about the night it happened and how he wish he could find the person and apologize to them, yet to even get him arrested.

When Themba turned around tears were falling from Vule's eyes.

'Vule are you ok?'

'I am.' She said in between tears.

'What are you saying?'

'I am that person you violated 11 years ago.'

'No Vule, don't say...' He was all sweaty, shaking and crying.

'Get out of here Themba.' Vule said in a low voice.

'Tell me it is not true.'

'I said get the hell out of my house you rapist.' She screamed. She took her sleepers and started beating Themba. She opened her closet taking out his clothes throwing them at him. He was crying trying to stop Vule.

'I said the out of here you piss of shit.' She screamed.

'I want to tell you something.'

'Don't make me call the cops Themba get out.' She was screaming and Themba took his phone and car keys and left. He called the ambulance on his way out, he did that because he did not want to leave Vule alone in that condition.

Tuesday morning when she switched on her phone, messages flooded in from Themba. She went down stairs, took out her laptop and sent a notification to Otsile and copied Joshua. She made strong coffee and went back to bed.

Later on that day Josh drove to Vule's house, he slowly opened door and she was not there. He went upstairs and found her in bed fast asleep. He opened the curtains and windows.

'What did Themba Varoni do?'

'Can I just stay asleep so that I cannot feel this pain?'

'You need to stay awake to deal with it dear.'

'He doesn't look like a cheating type, what did he do?'

'I don't want to talk about him but I want to tell you something about me.'

'Ok.'

'I am broken, very broken. I was raped 11 years ago.' She narrated everything to Josh, by the time she was finished Joshua's face was red from crying.'

'My step father molested me, my mother still doesn't know.' When I passed matric I swore to never set a foot at home. My

step sister and mom visits me sometimes and I always promised to come visit but I never did, to date.'

They cuddled in bed crying. She has opened up to someone else other than George, she felt lite. Later Josh called in a doctor for Vule and went to his house to collect his clothes and went back to Vule's house.

'I need a fed up leave.'

'Who is going to approve it since I am here?'

'I asked your doctor to prepare a sick note for me too.'

'You do know that is fraud right.'

'I have what you have and it is contentious hence we used the same doctor. Brilliant right?'

'Not brilliant at all.' She said defeated.

Her phone kept ringing with constant notification.

'Aren't you going to answer that? Should I answer it?'

'Go ahead.' Josh took Vule's phone and answered it. After some time there was a knock at the door. Josh opened the door and Themba pushed himself inside.

'Can we talk sunshine?' He said and Josh was just standing there confused.

'I don't want to talk to you.'

'Please hear me out!'

'Joshua please call the police.' Josh was confused.

'I said call the police Josh, now' Vule screamed. 'You my friend, you will not talk to me but the police.'

'Please sunshine.' He was crying. There was a siren sound outside when Themba collapsed right in front of them. Vule screamed crying, she ran to him.

'Themba look at me, wake up please wake up Themba.' She said crying.

'What is happening here sir.' The female police asked looking at Josh.

'He collapsed, call the fucken ambulance.' Vule said screaming. The police called the ambulance.

After what seems forever the ambulance arrived and wheeled Themba out of the house. They told her that they were taking him to MediCentre. She said she will follow the ambulance and they left without her.

'Come take a bath so that we can go.'

'I am not going there, give me my cellphone.' Josh gave her the cellphone. She called Themba's mother and told her that Themba was admitted at MediCentre and she hung up.

'What wrong friend?'

'Not today Josh.' She said going upstairs. Josh let her be. He went to the kitchen and started cooking, from there he laid on the couch and fell asleep.

She woke up in the evening, she saw missed calls from Themba's mother and then a text that said "He is in the coma, talk later."

She did not know why she was feeling bad for a man that took part in violating her, the man that did not fight but let those thugs bully him into it. She asked herself if she was fair or just trying to blame Themba for everything that transpired that evening.

Vule started remembering everything that happened that night. She was going down the bridge that came from Wits Planetarium when two guys held a gun to her head the other one tried searching her. Another guy appeared from nowhere with a bag pack. He saw everything when he attempted to run away they tripped him and he fell. They put a gun on his head and forced him to undress and then the other one was forcing her to undress. They forced Themba to penetrate her. He felt that she was a virgin and he asked those guys to let her go and he would give them his laptop, money and phone. They did not care but put a gun back on his head and forced him to penetrate her. As hard as it was, he tried and tried until he was inside her. Unfortunately he did not move but he ejaculated crying probably ashamed of himself because he kept on whispering "I am sorry". The other guy pushed him aside still

pointing a gun at him and the other one started raping her and then after the other guy followed. When they were done they took their back packs and ran off. Themba realized that they never searched their clothes, he still had his wallet and phone in his jeans, Vele's phone rang , he took it, dropped the call and he dialed for ambulance reporting rape using Vule's phone and he hid a distance away and ran away when he saw the ambulance stopping where Vule was. He ran away with her phone. Vule was found by the paramedics and she was received by Dr. Rodney Rathabe Rametsi at MediCentre that night.

The bedroom door opened and Josh walked in with food on the tray. They ate in silence, she was too hungry that she asked Josh to add more.

'I am going back to work tomorrow.' She said.

'Don't you think you need to go to the hospital and hear him out?'

'No, I am not ready. Besides he is in the coma.'

'Oh!'

'Exactly Josh.'

'Can't you at least go see George?'

'I will go tomorrow after work.' She said.

'Can I sleep over then?'

'You don't look like you were going to leave even if I chased you away.' He smiled.

'Go take a bath and I will go do the dishes.' He took the tray and went downstairs to the kitchen. Vule took a bath, changed the bed sheets and they snuggled in bed over ice cream and light conversation.

When they arrived at the office the following day, asked Josh to cancel her scheduled meetings she did not want to be disturbed. She started working on the submissions of quarterly performance.

'You have been busy all day V and Joshua said that I should not disturb you.' Otsile said.

'And why didn't you listen to Joshua and stay away?'

'Because you forgot about our meeting with service providers.'

'Oh shit. How did I ...'

'Are you ok V? You don't look ok.'

'Are you my father now?' She snapped at him.

'Hey what's wrong?' He asked when he saw tears falling down her cheeks.

'Leave me alone please.' She said. Otsile did not budge, he went around her desk and kneel in front of her and she cried on his shoulders. After a while she asked him to excuse her and she ran to the ladies room and locked herself inside the toilet.

'Vule open up sweetheart.' Said Josh knocking on the toilet door.

'Is Otsile still in my office?'

'I don't know what happened but you had him worried that he wanted to call the ambulance and I stopped him.'

'Please tell him I am ok, go pack up my things I will find you at the parking lot.'

'Ok, then 15 minutes then.' Josh said going back to pack up. Vule got out of the toilet, washed her face but her eyes were red. She took the emergency stairs to the parking lot.

'Thank you Josh, I want to be by myself. I am going to see George and then gym.' She said and Josh nodded putting her belongings in the car boot.

She drove to the gym and then went home. She took a bath and had her take-outs supper. She was uneasy so she changed to sweat a pants and wore Themba's track top. She drove to the hospital and asked for Themba's ward. They told her he was at Cardiac Care Unit. Luckily Themba's mother put her on the list of visitors, so she went in trying hard not to be seen by Dr. Rametsi or George. She opened the door and went inside. She took a chair and sat there watching him breathing through machines.

'Themba you need to wake up, your mother and daughter need you. I am trying so hard to forgive the past but when it pops up like this it hurts. I know what happened was beyond your control but I am trying to rub off the image of you....' She stopped when she felt arms hugging her. It was Themba's mother.

'He told me everything about that night, little did I know it will be you, that what hurts the most. I read the text you send me and I am still shocked that things turn out like this. I understood and when you called me that night I knew he told you everything about his past. He knows he has a weak heart but he keeps on straining it. The night that you were raped, Themba came home trembling. He never went back to school that year because of trauma and guilt. His heart problems

escalated and depression took over. He slowly recovered and started going to therapy.’ She said. She was crying because Vule felt her tears on her hand. ‘He has your old phone and he did not open it until two years ago when he started looking for you. He did not know your name, he called people on your phone trying to find you and then he stopped saying he was scared. I guess fate led him to you.’

‘I was a virgin.’

‘He told me baby, that is something that was eating him all the time.’ She said. The machine started beeping making noise. She panicked and it was dark for her.

When she opened her eyes she was laying on the hospital bed. She looked around and Themba’s mother was sleeping on the couch. She saw her phone and watch on the side table, it was almost 12 o’clock.

‘You are awake.’ She said and she kept quiet.

‘Themba has woken up but he is not talking.’ Vule nodded.

‘I want to get out of here, I need to rest.’

‘The Dr. will discharge you tomorrow. In fact he is still here let me call him.’ She went out and came back with Dr. Moletsane.

'Hi mam, your blood pressure was high so we are going to monitor it overnight and we will discharge you tomorrow.'

'I can come back tomorrow for checkup.'

'I can't risk that when you are still less than 12 weeks pregnant.'

'Are you still talking about me?'

'Yes mam.'

'I can't be pregnant, I am a barren.'

'Then you have a miracle baby on the way. Let me leave you.'

He said and left.

'I can't be pregnant.' She said in a whisper.

'I asked them for a second opinion and yes you are pregnant. You need to take care of yourself because I can't have two sick people. Please call your mother because she has been trying to call you and Joshua Steenkamp too,'

'I need space.'

'I am living, I left my grandchild with our helper, I need to get going too. Please rest.' She said taking her hand back. Vule called her mother and lied that her phone was at the car and she asked Joshua to bring her changing clothes tomorrow morning.

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Josh arrived with her toiletry bag and she took a bath, they waited for the doctor with discharge forms and they left.

‘What did you come with?’

‘I took uber.’ He said taking the car keys from Vule going to the driver’s side.

‘I am hungry.’

‘What happened?’

‘I came to see Themba and I fainted. They said I am pregnant.’ Joshua parked on the side of the road and looked at Vule.

‘Those are good news right.’

‘Ten week pregnant, like I believe that doctor. He gave me prescription and I don’t have time for this.’

‘I know you told me that you can’t have kids but why are you doubting Mother Nature?’

‘Because mother nature failed me for years.’

‘Bitch you were not having sex then.’ Josh said and Vule laughed.

‘You are stupid.’

‘You have been having unprotected sex for more than ten months with Themba and you thought that would not make a difference in your womb? Oh please.’

‘Drop me off and leave please,’

‘Nope, we are going to the pharmacy, get your prescription and start drinking your pills or else I am going to call Dr. Rametsi on you.’

‘You wouldn’t dare Josh.’

‘Try me Ms. Maanda. I have had enough of you.’ Vule kept quiet because the face that Joshua was wearing was not a friendly face. They drove to the pharmacy, bought medication and left.

‘I am going to work, I will come see you later.’ He left with Vule’s car. Her phone rang and it was Temba’s mother. She ignored it.

She made a sandwich, sat on the couch and opened news channel. She tried to switch off the words of Dr. Moletsane “you have a miracle baby on the way”. She went to her bedroom and took the keys of her other car and left. She parked at the hospital and went straight to George consulting room. She did not give his secretary a chance

she passed through her and went in.'

'I don't have an appointment with you.' George said.

'Well you do now.'

'Ok, speak and get the fuck out of here.' She giggled leaning on the couch.

'I did not tell him but he told me.'

'What?'

'Themba was telling me about his deepest secret and I was his deepest secret.'

'Themba? Who is Themba again?'

'Themba Varoni, my boyfriend.'

'Wow! What? Are you his sunshine? Themba the one who is admitted in the hospital?'

'How do you know him?'

'And I did not figure this out ... fuck fuck' He punched the air.

'What George?'

'He is my clients, he has a chronic heart condition. No wonder he was admitted.'

'I chased him out of my place and came the following day and I called the police on him and he collapsed before they arrived.'

'How did I miss this out thou?'

'I wish I can say I hate him George.'

'Angry?' He asked her.

'None, they held a gun on his heard and he begged them to let me go and told them that I was a virgin but they forced him to penetrate me, he tried and he eventually went in, he did not even do much. I could feel his tears on my body as he released himself inside me.'

'That man is broken just like you Vule.'

'I know. I can't believe I fell in love with my rapist. I feel bad for calling him names and chasing him out.'

'Do you see him as a rapist? Will you ever forgive him?'

'I said he was a rapist out of anger, I was angry at him after he told me everything. I was angry that the man that violated me was the same man that healed me, he gave my womanhood back. I can't believe that I love him. The most complicating thing now is that I fainted yesterday and I was admitted and they told me I was 10 weeks pregnant.'

'It's a good thing right?'

'Joshua said the same. I think Dr. Moletsane made a mistake.'

'You need to go to Dr. Rametsi for confirmation.'

'I am not going to that man.'

'If you are pregnant and I have to put your health first as my patient I will write a recommendation letter for you to be checked.'

'What's wrong with you men?'

'You need to stop living in that little shell of yours and face the truth.'

'I am leaving.'

'When are you going to see Themba? He is awake and his speech is back. He could not speak last night'

'I don't know. When I am ready.'

'Ok, you can go now.'

'I was going anyway.' He rolled his eyes and she giggled.

'Do me a favour and pass by Dr. Rametsi's office and set an appointment.'

'Ok'

'Ms. Maanda don't test me.' He said and she left. She passed by Dr. Rametsi's office to set an appointment just to put George at ease.

Wednesday morning she went to the office, she was not looking forward to work. Josh had her coffee on a table and he came in to run the daily schedule. She has been contemplating on visiting Themba at the hospital. After she sat with Josh and told him that after gym she was going to see Themba at the hospital.

‘I am glad to see you back V.’ It was Otsile leaning on her office door. She was embarrassed all of a sudden.

‘Please don’t ask me about what happened days ago.’

‘As you wish V. Are you ok thou?’

‘I am better than days ago.’

‘Glad to hear that, don’t ever scare me like that. This company needs you and I need you.’ He said smiling.

‘I feel needed already.’ She said giggling. He left and she breathed in and out. The last thing she needed was breaking in front of him again.

She drove to the hospital and sat for a while in the car contemplating to go in. She finally gathered strength and went inside. He was still on machines but he was facing the window.’

'You are here sunshine.' It must have been her perfume that gave her away.

'How are you?' Vule said in a whisper.

'I am better that you are here.' He said. 'I want to tell you something come closer.'

'You don't have to explain anything Themba, we both know what happened that night.'

'I still hate myself and guilt is my middle name.'

'I don't hate you, I am not angry at you.'

'But I hurt you in a most despicable way

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I disgraced you.'

'You helped me heal, you made me love my body again. You were the first man to touch me in that way since the rape.' She said wiping her tears.

'I love you sunshine and my heart would have failed me more than this if you hated me.'

'Can you believe the doctor said I was pregnant?'

'I am going to be a father again. I saw all the signs but I did not want to push you.'

'I can't have children because of rape.'

'Please don't say that, I love you sunshine.'

'I need to go now.' He nodded still holding her hand without letting go.

'Please hold me for few seconds.' She moved closer to him and she laid next to him and he held her tight. He pulled up her face and their lips touched. The feeling was too strong as their tongue locked and kissed. She pulled out and looked at him.

'Please get better.'

'Promise to take care of my son and I promise to get out of here.' She nodded and stood up.

'I love you too Themba Varoni.'

'I love you more sunshine.' She wanted to go to the gym but she felt exhausted. She was starting to believe that she was pregnant. She passed by Mac Donald drive through which was first and she drove home. She ate and went to bed.

She felt a lot lighter that she has spoken to Themba. She still loved him, the man who broke her virginity in an unpleasant way.

She was woken by a call from Themba's mother. She picked up the call.

'Hallo ma.'

'Hallo my child. How is you and my grandchild?'

'I am not pregnant ma.'

'Please come to the hospital now.'

'Is everything ok?' She kept quiet.

'Please my child.'

'Ok, give me an hour.' She took a bath and took an apples to nibbled on her way.

She was craving for milkshake and she passed by Mac Donald. She finished up the milkshake in the car and went inside. She got to Themba's ward and found his mother sitting next to him and he was asleep.

'Morning ma.'

'You are here. Hallo baby.' She said. 'Pull that chair and sit here next to me.' Vule did as told sat down next to her.

'You see baby, Themba has always been a special child. He was born with heart problems and the doctors told me he might not see his 5th birthday. I lived my entire life scared that he would die until he was 10yrs and let loose because he was doing fine. When he was 23 years his heart started again after the rape incident and I started living in fear of losing him again. I let loose again on his 27th birthday. It was not easy because his heart was slowly failing him and he was full time dependent on medication. When he met you, he came home telling me he met his wife. He was happy and ever since has been happy. Today when I got here he was happy and told me that he can't wait for you to give birth. He said you are his first love and he was sorry about everything.'

'Why are you speaking as if he is dead ma?'

'Because he left us this morning.'

'Isn't he sleeping?'

'No my child, he is eternally sleeping.' Vule stood up and went around the bed and looked at him. She touched his face and came closer to kiss him. His lips were soft but cold.

'Mr. Varoni sir, your sunshine is here wake up.' Themba's mother went around to Vule and hugged her crying. They were crying together until the doctor and the porter came in.

'She is gone my child, come lets go.' She cried harder looking at the porter closing the sheet and pushing him out of the ward.

'Doctor please check her Bp before we leave.' She asked. She put her on the empty bed in the same ward and the nurse came over dragging a machine to check on Vule's Bp. Fortunately it was fine and she had been quiet all along. Themba's mother held her hand and they walked out of the hospital.

'They are taking him to the mortuary. I have done all the paper work and I will notify you of the funeral arrangements or when you are not busy you can help me with the funeral arrangements.' She said still holding her hand.

'I loved him ma

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he was my first boyfriend.'

'I know my child. Here, take this. A letter addressed to you and his unborn son.' The other letter was addressed Khuthadzo Themba Varoni (Comfort). She took the letter and put them in her hand bag.

'Should I get someone to drive you home?'

'No ma, I want to drive to his place now.' Themba's mother nodded and let her be.

'Let me leave you, take care and I shall be in touch.' She said hugging her and she left. Vule opened her car and sat there for a good 1 hour before driving out. She wanted to go back inside and speak to George but she changed her mind and drove to Themba's house. She drove inside and parked her car next to his car. She went inside and sat on the couch. She took out her phone and called her mother.

'Hallo mama.'

'Hallo baby, how are you?'

'I am good mama. I want to rest and I will call you later.'

'You don't sound good.'

'I am just tired mama. Ok bye.'

'Bye baby.'

She went up to his bedroom, took off her clothes, wore his round neck t-shirt and got in bed and slept. When she opened her eyes it was 4 in the afternoon with many missed calls from Joshua and George.

The following day she drove to her house and started packing all Themba's clothes, took them to his house and drove back home. She sat on the couch crying when there was a knock at the door and she ignored it, she kept quiet wiping her tears.

She took her laptop and search for houses. She found a perfect one at Copperleaf Golf and Country Estate and organised viewing with state agent. Joshua came over and she told him everything, he slept over and left for work in the morning after Vule forced him to go to work.

After breakfast she sat in her study and finalised her resignation letter and send it to Otsile. She closed the laptop and called her mom and Tendani. Unfortunately Tendani was in Brazil and her mother promised to come on Friday. She responded to George and Themba's mom messages. She took a bath and drove to Copperleaf to view the house. It was beautiful with unfinished pool. She drove back home and checked her emails, the state agent had sent the OTP as agreed and she printed it, signed, scanned and sent it back. She was hungry so she ordered Nando's. She took bottled water and sat on the couch holding a picture frame of him and Themba. Food arrived at same time

with Joshua, they ate and they stayed until late cuddling and went to bed.

The following day she was meeting Themba's mother to assist with funeral arrangements. After feasting on yesterday's left overs she took a bath and waited for 12pm to meet Themba's mother. She heard a door bell and she thought it must be the security people since she never had someone knocking at the door before. She looked at the door and kept quiet. The door opened, it was Joshua followed by Otsile.

'He bullied me into bringing him here since you have been ignoring his calls. So I will leave you two to it

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see you later.' He said leaving. I don't know what Otsile said to Joshua but he was not having it. He sat next to me. She was holding a picture frame of her and Themba, so placed it on the coffee table.

'Hi!'

'Hi Otsile.'

'Do you hate me this much?' He asked, Vule kept quiet, she reckon he received the resignation letter.

'I rejected your resignation letter. I can't lose you, the company needs you.'

'I transferred skill Otsile. There is Vusi, Lorraine and Kitso. They know that company in and out.'

'What about me and my request? You promised to never resign.'

'A lot happened and I need at least 6 months to myself.'

'How about I give you six months and the staff can consult when you are available?'

'How about you respect my decision?' She snapped. Tears started rolling down. Otsile pulled her into a hug and she cried. After a while she tried to move out of his hands and he tightened the hug.

'I don't know what is eating you but it is going to be ok.'

'How Otsile? I lost the love of my life. Tell me how do I recover from this?' He kept quiet. 'He promised to get better and come back to us, he lied to me. How am I going to raise his ... 'She kept quiet? Tell me how am I going to recover from this?'

'It will take time V, never rob yourself from crying over him. Recovery stage is hard give yourself time.'

'I loved him, he was my first in everything. He made me see love in a different angle and that was enough for me.' She

moved out of his hold and went to the kitchen and came back with two bottled water.

'I need to be somewhere. This Saturday we are burying him.'

'If you need anything I am a phone call away.' He said. He gave her a hug and kissed her forehead. 'Take care V. Bye' He said walking to the door.

'I will call the security to open for you.' He nodded and left. She drank water and picked up her hand bag and car keys went out to meet with Mrs. Varoni. The day went well and it was going to be memorial service tomorrow at his work place and the intimate funeral was to take place Saturday at 6h: 00. He opted for cremation.

Her mother arrived Friday afternoon, immediately after she came back from the memorial service. They sat on the couch eating home made meal that her mother came with. After she did the dishes and rested her head on her mother's lap.

'How is my grandchild treating you?'

'Who said I am pregnant?'

'Even a fool can see those full breast and small cute tummy.'

'He left me to raise his child by myself mama.'

'He trusted you with his child.'

'I have never imagined life like this. I was not ready for this.'

'We are not ready for anything baby, but we are given strength to face such situations.'

'He named him Khuthadzo, how he came out with this Venda name I don't know.'

'He knew that you needed comfort hence he named the child Khuthadzo.'

'He knew he was dying, he had all this planned out and I did not even know his condition was that bad. He was always happy and in a good mood and space.'

'He did not want to worry you. He wanted to spend his last days with you happy.'

'He told me several times about his heart but I was so in love that I did not notice anything.'

'That is what he wanted, not to worry you. Now I have a grandchild to look forward to and you have a child to live for.'

'I am not ready mama.'

'After giving birth I will be here, I have already sent my resignation.'

'You were serious about resigning. Thank you mama.'

'You are my one and only child, I need to be there for you. When you are ready to open up to me about the rape incident I will be here for you.' She nodded. She was not expecting her mother to bring it up and she sworn to never tell her that Themba was also a victim of it too, she was going keep Themba's memory as beautiful as it was the last day she visited him at the hospital.

'I wished I met the father of my grandchild.'

'I wish that too mama

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he was a good man and good father. to his daughter.'

They went to bed together.

They woke up early for the funeral, we drove to church where the ceremony was going to take place. She left with Mrs. Varoni to the parlour as they were half through cremation process. We waited for almost an hour for everything to be finalised and we drove back to church. There were less than 30 people there and people stood up as we entered the church.

The proceedings went well and then Themba's uncle invited people for tea at Themba's mother's house.

She spotted Mr. Mfundo Xego, Mr. Otsile September and Mr. Joshua Steenkamp. She went to them and greeted and she remembered the beautiful speech that was delivered by Mr. Xego about Themba, she didn't even know they worked together. She went back and sat with her mama and Joshua. Omolemo was following her everywhere calling her mama and it was overwhelming.

There was this lady sitting with a man and Mrs. Varoni told her that she was Omolemo's mother.

After 2pm a lot of people left and she was relieved because she could not stand Otsile's constant stares anymore.

'I am going girl, I will come for a sleep over when mama leaves, I don't want you to be alone. Bye mama' Josh said standing up giving me a hug.

She was about to go tell Mrs. Varoni that they were leaving when she saw her coming over. She greeted Vule's mother and asked to speak to Vule in private. She stood up and followed her to what seemed to be an office.

'Vule, in two weeks' time, I will confirm the date, Advocate Thabo Moloi will be here to read the will. You are part of people who were included in the will.'

'Oh! When did he do all these?'

'I don't know either. Did you read the letter he wrote you?'

'No, not yet. I can't bring myself to read it.' She said.

'Please be here for the will reading mntanam.' Vule nodded. 'I will be keeping Themba's ashes at his bedroom after the baby is

born he wanted you to go with his kids to scatter them at the sea and record the whole moment for the kids.'

'Ok.'

'Please read the letter he wrote you when you have time. Maybe you will find closure my child and you will be able to move on.'

'Thank you ma.' They went back to the living room. Omolemo was not happy that she was leaving.

Two weeks later she was lazing around in bed holding her baby bum still enjoying the magical movements that the baby was making when she received a call from the state agent telling her that the house was ready and she can move in anytime. She immediately hired interior designer and to start immediately since she already know what she wanted. She did not tell anyone about moving, she just wanted to disappear for a while.

She opened her dressing table drawer and looked at the white envelope. She was reluctant to open it, but she eventually opened it slowly.

My heart, Vuledzani “Sunshine” Maanda

I know you are angry at me for not disclosing my heart failure chronic condition to you. I did not want to spend the remaining happy moments with you worrying about my health. No one cheated death many times like me, even a cat life had nothing on me. I lived more than I should and I tried living a healthy lifestyle, through fear, hoping to meet the woman I disgraced years ago. When I met you, there was something special about you. I did a background check on you which was wrong in a 1st place. I found out about rape but there was no case opened, I

never in a million years thought that the rape would be linked to that night, to us. After the evening you told me about it I have never been ok, but somehow I was at peace that it happened because that was my wish to meet the woman I violated before I died. I loved you the 1st time I saw you at the hospital and you snubbed me for weeks and I made it a mission from that day that when I get you, I am going to marry you and get you pregnant with my son. I believe you are carrying a son and I know he will bring you comfort when I am gone to another world. I researched about the name and I was happy with “Khuthadzo” a beautiful Venda name to comfort you when I am gone, to bring peace and forgiveness to what happened between us in the past.

I have prepared adoption papers for Omolemo just in case my mother passed on. If you can't take her

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I have prepared equal custody between you and Lydia Sobukwe, her mother. As long as my mother is still alive she will take care of her and you will have full access to her.

I have appointed Advocate Thabo Moloji to handle my estate and please be present at the reading of the will for our children's sake.

I know you are curious why I have full custody of my daughter, Lydia chose a different life which is dangerous for Omolemo, she did not know who was the father because the guy that she is with now also thought he was a father. She used to take drugs when she was pregnant and I was scared that it was going to affect Omolemo. The baby was born dark skinned which was clear it was not her boyfriend child because the guy was coloured. The day I visited her after she insisted I come to the hospital, she bluntly said that she did not want Omolemo, she doesn't want Omolemo to know her as her mother but as aunt Lydia and she also said that her daughter will ruin her relationship with that gangster. She chose her gangster boyfriend over our daughter, I took her in, and she was 2 weeks old when my mother helped me to raise her. My lawyer drew up full custody documents since then and I have never denied her to call my mother if she wanted to see Omolemo. I trust you with my kids Vule, continue doing a good job with Omolemo and it will come natural with Khuthadzo. You have natural mother instinct.

Lastly, don't be scared to move on Vule, I know you have your own insecurities and you just don't open up to anyone. Never deny yourself an opportunity to feel the love I loved you with again. You will not search for him because your aura attract relevant people in your life. He will come unexpected just like me and he is going to be your peace. I laid down to deep sleep

with my heart at peace because I met my soul mate and she made me happy. I will always love you Vhuledzani Sunshine Maanda. Even after death you are my salvation.'

After reading the letter she wept and ended up dozing off.

'Wake up Sunshine.' Josh said waking Vule up.

'I want to stay in bed Josh.'

'Fine, but have food and medication then you can sleep all you want.'

'With you here? I don't see that happening.'

'Your mouth stink, go rinse it and lets feast, I have your favourite with extra hot source.' He said.

'I can still chase you out you know.' She said getting out of bed going to the bathroom. They stayed in bed eating and Josh updating her on office gossip

She woke up early and told George that she was going to pass by his office after her appointment with Dr. Rametsi, her gynecologist. Yes Dr. Rametsi was closely monitoring her pregnancy since it was unexpected and he did not want any surprises that may put the baby in danger.

She parked outside Mrs. Varoni's house. There were other two cars outside. She went inside and found Lydia, Mrs. Varoni, Omolemo, Themba's uncle, Mr. Xego and advocate Thabo Moloji. They all sat at the table as Thabo gave them non-disclosure contract. They all singed and he played the dvd player. Themba's face appeared and he was in a grey suite at his house office. He looked real, like he was going to walk out of the screen and touch her. He had all this planned, the way he was explaining how he wanted his estate to be shared and handled. How he wanted his children to be raised. He asked his mother and uncle to give Vuledzani support at all time when she needed them. He appointed Advocate Thabo Moloji to continue to be a legal advisor to his business. He asked Mr. Mfundo Xego to give Vule business support since she will holding 30% proxy of his children's shares in two of his businesses in which he owned with Mr. Xego. His last words

were that her mother was blessed with two grandchildren and he wished he had given her more grandchildren.

Advocate Moloji handed over the copies of the drafted will so that he can read it with everyone looking for transparency purposes. He left his houses to his kids and Vule was worried why he only left his cars for her mother. Lydia and Vule had 50% shared custody of Omolemo in cases where Mrs. Varoni is unable to take care of her or should she die. When he was done, he asked to see Vule before she leaves.

‘How are you holding up Ms. Maanda?’

‘Honestly I don’t know, I am just taking one step at a time.’

‘I have a disk that Mr. Varoni left for you. I don’t know when will it be the right time to give it to you?’

‘Anytime I am available.’

‘That’s great then, should you need clarity on anything do not hesitate to call me.’

‘Whist at it, why didn’t Themba leave anything property and business to his mother?’

‘Do you know Mrs. Varoni?’

‘Only that she is Themba’s mother other than that I know nothing.’

‘She is one of the best in the business. She and husband ran their businesses together with Themba before he was murdered, she was left with everything. He is one of the listed elite business woman in South Africa

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google her.’ Thabo said and Vule was shocked that her ignorance let her to be passed by such information. When she was googling Themba Varoni she remembered seeing an article about Mrs. Nonhlanhla Varoni but she never read that article in detail only that and that.

‘I will just do that, it’s just that I was feeling kind of guilty about the outcomes of the will.’

‘Don’t be, when Themba came to me and asked we revised the will he had already had future plans with you. To put you at ease, he had discussed it with me, he knew what he was doing and knew why he trusted you with his business and children’s shares.

‘Thank you for clarity advocate Moloji. I will engage with you soon.’ She said leaving.

‘Can I walk you out before you leave?’ Mr Xego said.

‘Wait for me here, let me see Mrs. Varoni quickly.’ She went to Mrs. Varoni who was with Omolemo.

‘Are you leaving already?’

‘Yes mam I have an appointment with my gynecologist.’

‘Mommy I want to go with you.’

‘Mommy is tired baby. She needs to rest she will come fetch you tomorrow.’

‘How about I come fetch you for a weekend, we will do girly stuff and paint our nails and do picnic. You must pack your babies too.’ Vule said, babies she was referring to her many dolls which she could not remember their names.

‘That is super cool sunshine.’ Vule and Mrs. Varoni laughed. She had this tendency of mimicking how her father called Vule.

‘Don’t forget to send me the scan.’ She said hugging Vule.

‘I won’t, bye.’ She left after giving Omolemo a hug.

‘Mr Xego, you wanted to see me out.’

‘Yes mam, I wanted to say that when you are ready please set up a meeting so that we can discuss the pending business ventures that me and Themba were working on. I don’t want to make decisions without communicating with you. Besides, I still need to introduce you to the board of directors.’

'Noted, I will make time and schedule a meeting with you.' She said trying to ignore his sharp eye contact.

'Thank you sisi. Bye.' He said shaking her hands leaving.'

After her doctor visit which was pleasant she went to her therapist.

'I haven't seen you in a while.' George said handing Vule a huge muffin from the cafeteria.

'Maybe it's because I was avoiding talking about Themba.'

'How have you been?'

'I miss him George. He would be sleeping in between my legs laying his big head on my tummy telling me about his day and insisting I tell him about my day. He would cook for me, he loved cooking. He be like "I am my mother's son and daughter so I know how to do all this duties." You know he did cooking lesson with his mother. Something that I am going to start doing after giving birth.'

'I am glad you are looking forwards to something after giving birth and having new activities.'

'Yes and I am moving to Copperleaf Estate and I haven't told anyone except you. I need space and peace of mind.'

'At least tell Josh incases of emergencies.'

'Nope, hence I am telling you. I will tell my mother and brother after giving birth because I am going to need my mother's help.' She said not even looking at him.

'I have a life you know?'

'I am part of that life George until then you are stuck with me.'

'I hate you sometimes.'

'Heard that before.' She said rolling her eyes. 'I have interviews tomorrow. The agency has organised 3 ladies to interview for housekeeping. I really need a helper. I am becoming lazy this days.'

'How far you?'

'16 weeks and I am still look like I have a small beer belly.'

'Your nose is telling me another story.' He said laughing.

'Shut up George.'

'Do you want me to share Themba's moments about you with you?'

'Is it a must that I should know? Like aren't you supposed to have signed confidentiality forms between patient and doctor?'

'Your case is different Vule and it is my responsibility to give you closure and clarity on certain things. You might think you are handling things but one day you will break asking yourself questions that I might have answers for.'

'Ok Mr. know it all

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I am listening'

'When I met him, he was a mess, a much traumatized young man. His mother was hurt and worried about his heart. He continued talking and Vule was crying leaning on his shoulder. She felt closer to him after her conversation with George. Themba lived with guilt most of his life and that made her sad.

Two week later, she went to work, to do proper handover of company assets and had already finalised quarterly performance and send everything to relevant officials. She was planning on have a sitting with Otsile to brief him on the delegation of work to the acting officials under her section.

Josh already knew she was on her way, so he bought their favourite lunch to indulge just before her meeting with Otsile.

‘Hi queen hoe.’ She said to Josh whispering.

‘Now I am a hoe?’ He said whispering too.

‘The day you went behind my back and slept with George you took the hoe trophy.’ Josh laughed.

‘Heal poopoo, you need to heal because I am planning to pay him a visit again as long as Londile is still acting like he own the gay pride.’ He said following Vule to the office.

‘No man Josh, you need to sit him down and tell him how you feel.’

‘I have tried Vule and he kept on cheating on me with the same person who has the audacity to send me his pictures in bed with him. He promised to change but his constant business trips made it obvious.’

‘Dump him then.’

'I love him.'

'Stop using my therapist, George is a nice guy Josh he doesn't deserve your aching soul. You are the one that need to heal Mr. Hoe.'

'I know hey.' He said opening food so that they can eat.

'Is he in his office?'

'Yes, he has a meeting now. You will see him later on.'

'Ok, cool.'

They sat eating

listening to Josh and his hoe-ring plans but she never heard him mentioning dumping Londile. Being friend with Josh made her realize that the struggle was real in LGBT, just like any other relationship.

'Are you still horny? The last time we talked you refused I buy you a dildo.'

'Do you even know what size I prefer?'

'Trust me I know your size.' He said and they laughed.

'I have been doing self-services but I missed a real thing'

'Mary Magdalene, I don't trust your fingers.' Vule laughed rolling her eyes.

Josh's office desk phone rang and he pulled it from Vule's office.

'He is ready for you.' Josh said.

'Ok, cool.' She said taking her laptop going to Mr. Otsile September's office.

'Otsile September, long time.'

'The beautiful Vuledzani. I have not seen you in while. How have you been? I wanted to call you several times but I thought maybe let me give you time to heal. I am glad you are here.'

'I had to come, I was tired of your emails flooding me.' She said laughing.

'You don't even look like you missed us, I see huh.'

'I don't have space for corporate world anymore. I need time to figure things out.'

'I see, I hope you can continue working from home until we can find your replacement.'

'But I sent you email of potential internal and external people with expects recommendations.'

'Maybe I have trust issues.'

'Maybe. Can we start?'

'If you say so.' He said in a foul mood. He could see that Vule has made up her mind long time ago. They went through quarterly performance reports, improved change management implementation report and lastly discussed her replacement.'

'You are leaving me V.'

'I am leaving you Otsile. I am going to stay for only one month to make up your mind about advertising my post. Beside you have a great team and they are doing just fine.'

'I want you.'

'I am out of here.' He laughed. 'I will bring the companies hard drive which have almost 7 yrs. company documents. You also need to sit with Mr. Xego for company information backup.'

'Ok, cool. Thank you.'

Two days later she was laying on a couch when the security called that Otsile was at the gate. She wondered what he wanted. After some minutes there was a knock at the door. She went to open for him.

‘It looks like you are enjoying doing nothing.’

‘Uninvited guest shall be tolerated for 30 minutes sir.’

‘You promised me a hard drive V, empty promises I see.’

‘Flip, I totally forgotten. I am getting old man.’ She said laughing.

It was obvious that he could not keep his eyes from Vule’s thighs and the little baggy short dress she was wearing was not making it easy. He noticed that there was something different about her, she looked more beautiful and her breast were fuller.

‘Make yourself comfortable I will be back.’ She said walking to her office to get the hard drive. She found him digging into her ice cream tub.

‘I am sorry.’ He said smiling. She sat next to him taking a tub from him.

‘Hence I told you that 30 minutes was enough for you to invade my space.’ She said taking a full spoon into her mouth. They sat

there for hours talking about a lot of things and she was glad he was not mentioning anything related to work.

‘Do you miss him?’

‘Every hour.’

‘I understand you.’ He put his hand around her and pulled her close for a side hug. ‘He is somewhere watching over you.’ She just nodded feeling hot flushes attacking her. Her hormones were not behaving around Otsile. She raised her head and found him looking at her. Their lips touched and he just pulled her up on top of him and they started kissing. It got heated.

‘No Vule, not like this.’

‘Please.’ She was shocked that she was begging.

‘Rebounds moments never ends well Vule. I don’t want to lose you because of this.’ He said.

She attacked him with a kiss again and he did not resist her. She pulled out her dress and she had no bra nor underwear on. She went to his pants to unbuttoned the jeans pulling his manhood out. She rubbed it but it was already up and hard and she inserted it inside. He was big and she did not care she started moving like a crazy woman enjoying every deep thrust. She came and Otsile groaned pounding here underneath coming inside her. She was leaning on him with her hands around his

neck and he still had his hand around her holding her tight. They stayed like that recouping.

‘We did not use a condom Vule.’ He said in a whisper. She got off him embarrassed with semen running down his legs which left wet stains on Otsile’s pants.

‘I need to rest, please leave.’ She said taking a fleece on the couch covering herself.

‘Vule please.’

‘I am kindly asking you to leave Otsile?’

‘Are we good? I don’t want to leave like this.’

‘Well I can’t cuddle and act all lovey lovey.’ She was not even keeping eye contact. She walked to the door.

‘Can I at least get you emergency pills?’

‘I am pregnant Otsile please leave.’ He nodded trying to act like she did not drop a granite on him. He took his car keys and external hard drive on the coffee table and walked towards the door. He leaned over and kissed her forehead.

‘For what it was worth, I like you, a lot. In fact I know I love you V. Tell security to open for me.’ He said leaving.

She closed the door and screamed like a mad woman throwing things around. Her thoughts were full of embarrassment,

playing in her head on repeat. When did she become such a person? She walked to the bathroom looked at the mirror and whispered “you are such a whore Vuledzani Maanda, what happened to you?” She swore she was going to go to the grave with this secret. She touched her tummy which looked visible out of nowhere and said “mommy is a whore baby.” She felt guilty for betraying her promise to herself but she could not ignore how beautiful it was having him inside her. After taking a shower she got in bed and slept.

In the morning she blocked Otsile’s number, he has been hounding her cellphone with calls and messages. She called the removal company to start with removal process. The cleaning company was also deployed and Security Company had already installed relevant cameras around her new house. Even though Copperleaf Estate was one of the estates with tight security she did not want to risk it. Her house keeper had already moved in.

The door opened and Joshua got in followed by Otsile.

'He said you were not taking his calls and you were not taking mine either. So we are here what's up with you?' Josh said with an attitude.

'Please leave my house keys behind when you leave with your friend Josh.'

'Ok V, I am not here to fight or upset you. I want to talk to you all I am asking it's you to listen.' Otsile said.

'Ok speak.'

'In private.' She walked to her study and he followed.

'I am listening.' She said closing the door.

'I am sorry about everything that happened yesterday. I should have not allowed it to get that far, my weakness put us here. I don't want to lose you as a friend. I know you are still mourning and what I did was pure disrespect. I should have known better, you were vulnerable'

'I was also wrong, can we, for peace sake forget that yesterday happened?'

'If that's what you want I will try. Please unblock me.'

'I will unblock you just get out of here.'

'Cool, congratulations on your pregnancy.' Vule just nodded and opened the study door for him.

She was law key embarrassed about yesterday even though Otsile took full responsibly she had fully contributed. She was now contemplating on taking Josh's offer for a dildo. When they went back to sitting room, Josh was lazing around like he owned the place if only he knew that sofa reeked semen.

'Take your friend and leave my house please and leave the key behind.'

'I am not leaving and forget about the keys.'

'Otsile please take him with.' I went to the door and opened.

'I am out, please tell security to open for me.' Otsile said going out leaving Mr. Hoe behind, that's what Vule called him, and she felt bad because she was just like him. Team Hoe. Otsile was the second man she voluntarily had inside her.

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A week later, she was glad she managed to take extra keys from Joshua with an excuse that his brother and wife will be here. He did not even buy her story but he let her be. He was also suspecting that something happened between Vule and Otsile because Otsile would now and then asked him if he has seen Vule or how she was and the baby, but he dared not to ask the unstable pregnant woman Vule has become.

They were sitting at the restaurant having lunch on a Saturday since Joshua insisted and if she refused he threatened to come to her house. To date Joshua was not aware that Vule moved out and there house was for sale. At least Vule was at ease that George kept it to himself about her new home. She just wishes he keeps it that way regardless the sweet pillow talk between him and Joshua.

‘You are glowing.’

‘Fuck you.’ Josh laughed.

‘I slept with him.’ Josh looked at her.

'Excuse me?'

'I slept with Otsile September, it was a moment of weakness.'

'Ms. Hoe, how big is he?'

'Did you just hear what I said? Aren't you going to judge me or something, call on Mary Magdalene for me?'

'I sin more than Satan woman? How was it?' Vule closed her eyes and covered her face with both her hands.

'You little witch. You such a beautiful little pregnant horny hoe'
He was excited like she did not do something hectic.

'I swear I don't want him nor love him. His dick had me going crazy that day. I feel guilty for using him like that. In honesty he made me forget my sorrows in that moment'

'Let me get us wine, this is definitely NEWS worth a bottle of wine woman.'

'You are acting like a white person right now, I am pregnant remember.'

'I know

non-alcoholic champagne for you.' He said calling the waitress with zero fucks given.

'Josh I am such a hoe, hoe, hoe.'

'True that mother hoe.' They laughed.

'Two days would not pass without him asking me about you. Now it makes sense you gave him your cookie.'

'And I received WhatsApp text from him every day asking about my day and I ignored them. I just want to stay away from anything men and please get me the dildo you promised me.'

'Should I make a direct delivery to your house?'

'No Josh I will come get it from you when we meet.' She said quickly, the last thing she needed was Josh finding out that she has moved.

'Consider it done. I am doing this because I don't want to look at your horny pregnant face. You can use him until you give birth you know'

'You are so white Josh, in our culture you are not supposed to sleep around with a man who is not the father whilst pregnant. Its bad luck.'

'You did and you still fine Vule.' He rolled his eyes.

They sat there sharing and gossiping and Josh was still sleeping with George behind Londile's back.

She drove back to her new home happy, even though she did not want to meet Josh, she ended up enjoying his crazy company.

She was sitting on the sleeper couch at her bedroom balcony Saturday evening when she heard a sound of saxophone again. The song did not make sense but she enjoyed listening to it. The person was talented because she would swear Kenny G was playing.

She had not been playing her piano in a while, like ever since she met Themba she somehow forgotten about her little hobby. She took out her phone and reminded Mrs. Varoni that she was coming to fetch Omolemo for a weekend.

The following day she went to fetch Omolemo and stayed indoors the whole weekend watching her favourite cartoons and baking. Yes, she came with her many babies and they had to share a bed with them. She asked Omolemo why she named a black wooly doll ‘Sunshine’ She said because her father called it sunshine because of the dreadlocks. It was the sweetest thing ever.

She was on her way to Dr. Ramtsi's consultation room and it became awkward when she saw Otsile's eyes piercing through her coming towards her.'

'Hi V.' He looked calm standing right in front of her.

'Hi.' She said trying to move aside. He was tall and broad and all sorts of yummy dark chocolate type of Denzel Washington. He held her hand looking at her.

'How long are you going to ignore my messages?' He asked, Vule looked down.

'I was not ignoring them, I was busy.'

'Good to see you, this pregnancy suites you.' She kept quiet.

'Ok, don't let what happened between us create such awkwardness. I missed the free spirited old you V. When can I take out for lunch as a friend?'

'I will reply to your messages.' She said that trying to get rid of him and he saw it too.

'I know you won't, its fine. See you around' He kissed her forehead let go of her hand and left.

She went to Dr. Rametsi's office feeling guilty for punishing Otsile because of her hoe-ness.

'I saw you and Otsile?'

'And?'

'He was holding your hand.'

'Your point Dr. Rametsi.'

'He told me you resigned and you shut him out completely.'

'And I thought women gossip more than men.' They laughed.

'You don't want to know Ms. Maanda, but man can talk and overshare.' He said smiling.

'You better be not gossiping about me with Otsile.'

'I am not saying anything.'

'You better.' She said laughing.

'The baby is growing beautifully, 20 weeks it is and your womb is friendly to the baby. See you next month.'

'My scans.'

'Collect them at reception, I have included the 16 weeks ones.'

'Thank you Dr.'

'Eat healthy and take care. Bye Ms. Mean.' He said laughing.

She was asking herself if there was a way she can shut the sex scene she had with Otsile. She passed by George's office and found him with Joshua. She played it cool.

'Now you are meeting my therapist behind my back.'

'I have problems of my own too you know.' Josh said.

'I want to talk, just to burb the guilt eating me.' Vule said

'Let me leave then.'

'No you can stay Josh.'

'Do you know that I am the one that came unto him?' She said looking at Josh.' Now I am beating myself up over it. I was wrong and I made it look like he was wrong and now I met him and he was just calm and I was a bit hostile. I was hostile because I was feeling guilty

guilty that I made the first move, guilty that I enjoyed every touch and stroke he gave me.'

'What are you talking about, you said a lot and I am still lost.' George said.

'Finally, I was tired of keeping your secret. She has been whoring George. Mother hoe this one.' Josh said laughing.

'Fotshek wena.' Vule said to Josh laughing.

'And who is the poor victim?' Vule and Josh kept quiet.

'If you two whores aren't prepared to say anything please leave I have clients to see, besides you don't even have appointments' He went to the door and opened the door for them to leave.

'I will tell you later when I come to your house.' Josh said winking at him.

They took their staff and left George's office and head straight to the hospital restaurant for lunch.

'I made a family album for Omolemo. Remember I told you about making customized family tree album of pictures of me, Omolemo and Themba from our picnics and movie dates. Well it is now finished I added Mrs. Varoni and her late husband, one picture of Lydia and scans of baby Khuthi.'

'Woman!!! That was a project and a half and very thoughtful.'

'Well Mrs. Varoni managed to get a picture of Lydia. I want to give it to Omolemo on Christmas day.'

'You have a good heart friend.'

'I know.'

'I know I have never thank you enough for putting a recommendation for an executive labour relations position. I am currently working under Karen before she leaves the company.'

'I know you won't disappoint Joshua, you know that company in and out. Human behaviour has always been your specialty, put that psychology degree at use.'

'Thank you sunshine.'

'You and Omolemo need to stop with this Sunshine name.' She said.

'It is catchy, find me a man then I will let it go.' He said winking at Vule.

'What man? You are still fucking my therapist, you little tramp.' They laughed.

There was a car following her since she was in Olifantsfontein road. She started panicking asking herself if she was driving a high risk car. When she got to the security gate at the estate she told the security guy that the car behind had been following her and the security officer said the person stayed in the estate too. She took a breath in and out in relieve. The turned left and the car went straight.

The following day when she came back from a walk with MmaNeo, her helper, her phone rang and it was from Mr. Xego's PA informing her about the scheduled meeting to introduce her to the board. She knew that she needed Josh more than ever to help her with the shopping for maternity formal wear. She mastered shopping for work clothes but when it came to casual clothes she needed Josh. All her formal suit pants were small and the dresses were either too tight of too short. The called Joshua to help with shopping, they met at Sandton City and bought two outfit for those two upcoming meetings.

She learnt at the meeting that Otsile was one of the board members in one of Themba's company. She made an apology in advance with pregnancy being an excuse to avoid all board meetings until she gave birth. She was running away from Otsile nothing else. She has been contemplating on calling him and official apologies for her behaviour, because she really was making a big deal out of it and guilt was the main enemy standing in between them.

Weeks later she took her dog for a walk, she was gifted that dog by Omolemo and Mrs. Varoni. She went up her street and sat by the bunch facing the golf course.

'Hi.' She thought she heard wrong. She turned her slowly to find a tall brown skin, handsome looking man in shorts with sweat on his face standing there with a lazy smile on his face.

'How did you find me this time?'

'I did not find you this time.' He said sitting next to her.

'How have you been?'

'I don't know, fine I guess.'

'I can see the baby is growing.'

'Are you indirectly saying I am fat?' She said smiling and he laughed.

'Even if I wanted to say it, I would never. I am scared of you lately.'

'Come on Otsile. What did I do?'

'You had me inside you for minutes and shut me out like I never existed.'

'I was feeling guilty

there I said it.'

'You used me Vule and I still feel used.' He said and guilt attacked her again.

'I am sorry Otsile. I was totally wrong. Like who the hell fuck their boss?' She said laughing hiding her face.

'Only a horny pregnant woman is capable of doing that.' He said laughing

'But still, I had no excuse and stop making me a monster.'

'You have been one hell of a pregnant monster. When I saw your car for the first time here I thought I was dreaming. I asked the security guy and he told me you moved in a month back. I have been reluctant to come to you or even sent a text that I saw you. Why do you hate me?'

'I don't hate you, I can never hate a person. I just don't have it in me. Josh can attest to that.'

'Then when are you going to invite me for dinner.'

'I don't know, soon.'

'I am giving you up until Friday, if I don't get your respond I am coming over with supper.'

'Deal then.' She said. He stood up.

'I like this little one, re mmita mang?'

'Omolemo named her Carry, don't ask more because I still don't know how she came up with such name'. He was amused.

'I better get going, see you around.'

'Ok, bye.' He left. I continue sitting there and I left after a sound of a saxophone stopped.

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She received a call from Josh asking to meet. They met at Monte Casino at some Italian restaurant.

'I want to tell you something, you are going to be a good girl and listen without judging me and be ready to bail me out.'

'Ok, shoot, but I am not going to bail you out.'

'Before that, bitch I found people I don't know at your house? They said you moved out months back, the hell Vule.'

'I was running away from Otsile not you.'

'And you still did not tell me.'

'Sorry, it turned out I ran from Otsile and moved 250m away from his house. I feel so stupid right now Josh. Yes I wanted to move but I ended up shooting myself on a foot.'

'Good, serves you right. So how did you know that you stayed at the same place?'

'Yesterday I was taking Carry for a walk and he found me by the golf course lake sitting there looking at the space like a lost lonely woman.'

'At least you know you are lonely, not only lonely honey and rude and a liar.'

'You and Otsile are making me look like some monster.'

'You turned out to be one, you must give birth already.'

'I wish, now tell me about your shenanigans.'

'Girl, ek is die grootste gamors ek se, trash bin nog. Last weekend I told Londile that I was coming to visit you for a weekend for some girls pampering. He gave me his credit card and I drove to George's house. I stayed there and left Sunday morning driving to your house that's when I find out you moved out you bitch.' He said rolling his eyes. 'So, I said fuck let me go to Londile's house. Guess what?' He said waiting for Vule to respond.

'You not waiting for me to say "what" right?' Vule said.

'You such a bore. Never mind. I found Londile's regular there in white gown occupying my spot holding a remote control. I greeted him and sat on the couch opposite him. I was about to cough shit with my mouth when the mighty Londile appeared wearing a gown too. He acted cool and that Satan said "Hi Josh, I was not expecting you.' I looked at him and said. "I am here honey, let me go cook Lunch for us." I was avoiding eye contact with his "regular". I stood up and went to the kitchen, wiped my tears looking for anything to cook just to calm my white ass down.'

'I don't trust the "calm" Josh.'

'You don't want to know, he came to the kitchen dressed up and said he was going out. I asked what time will he be back and he said later because he has a meeting with his acquaintance. Vule acquaintance on Sunday wearing shorts the nerve. I nodded and let him go.'

'Just like that? Josh that is unlike you. I am expecting drama.'

'Yes Vule, which was unlike me and Londile was too comfortable in cheating on me and I have forgiven him countless time.'

'I always thought you guys were fixing things and I was blaming you for whoring with George.'

'Now the interesting part. I switched off the stove and went upstairs to his closet. I took out all his designer suits, you can name them baby, from Armani, Boss, Gucci, Dolce, Versace, etc. I took them to boma-fire behind the house and went to my car to get that Fuel Bottle and my lighter.'

'No Joshua, tell me you did not.' He nodded.

'I burned them Vule, I was not satisfied so I went back and collected all his shirts and underwears and burn them too, and when the fire went down I went for the bloody gowns they were wearing.'

'And why are you still here not in jail?'

'I am still waiting for him to get me arrested.'

'You don't look bothered.'

'Yes, I don't because I switched off his house cameras before messing his closet up.'

'You are savage Josh.'

'I also broke all his perfumes.'

'I don't have money for bail.'

'You better, I am your baby's god father and I am too cute to sleep in jail.'

'Have you spoken to him since?'

'He sent a text that "I have messed up big time and I was going to pay for it.'

'You do know that Londile will get you right.'

'I am staying at George's house.'

'Until when? Stop using George, you are hurting him Josh.'

'I think I love him.'

'Hell to the no!!!!!! I don't believe you.' She sighed 'It is really hard in a gay relationship industry, you bloody human are all whores.'

'Yes boo, George is a better whore, I think I can built something with him.'

'I don't want to be part of it.'

'Just put money for bail aside just in case that whore open arson case against me.' He said taking a last sip from his wine glass.

Friday afternoon after taking a shower, she got in her usual baggy short dresses and sat at the patio behind her house. MmaNeo came and told her that there was someone at the door. She never had visitors except Mrs. Varoni and Omolemo. She followed MmaNeo to the front door and there stood Otsile with "explain" look.

‘I am a pregnant woman and I become forgetful now and then, please take note of that before you make me a monster again.’ She said giggling.

‘Yeah, I will ignore him and I will pull the pregnancy card on him.’ He said.

‘You are not fair.’

‘No, you are not fair. I cooked. Get into something comfortable we are going to my house.’

‘I am tired and my feet are swollen.’

‘No excuses, you got away with playing me V before and now I am not having it.’

‘Ok, come inside.’ She said opening the door for him. ‘Do I have to change?’

‘If you are comfortable in that then let’s go.’

'Let me get my phone.' She went to get her phone and told MmaNeo that she'd be back. She went back to find Otsile looking at her many pics of her and Themba on the side table, on top of the fire place, just everywhere around the house.

'You have a beautiful house and expensive taste. You must take me for a tour.'

'Thank you, I am hungry.' She said brushing her tummy.

'Let's go. 'He came with a quad bike.

'Are we going to your house with this? I don't want to fall.'

'It's big enough for both of us come.' He takes her hand and help her climb.

'Don't be scared to grip tight around me. I don't bite, beside I am carrying two lives and I will ride like a tortoise.' She wrapped her hands around him and take in that familiar smell. He parked on a mansion double hers and she was taken by the beauty.

'And you stay just across my house. How did you know my house?'

'I followed you the other day driving a different car.'

'That's weird

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stalking tendencies.'

'You were not talking to me woman so.'

'Water or juice?'

'Water and Juice.' She said. 'Don't look at me like that, just bring them. You said you were going to feed me, go on slave for me. You are not my boss anymore.' She said laughing.

'I miss that smile.'

'You have known me for how long? Please stop playing mind games.' A chef came pushing a trolley with hearty food.

'That little time I got to know you I can write a book.' He said sipping on something strong from his tumbler.

'I think I am going to have a doggy bag. These is too much food for two people.'

'Three people.' He corrected her.

'Yes, three people.' The food was placed in a buffet manner at the patio. She dished up for herself and sat next to him facing the lake opposite her house.

'So you have been spying on me?'

'Me? Never.'

'Why do you have telescope on the tripod and binoculars hanging there?'

'I love watching the moon and stars and if my view ended at your house it would be by mistake.' He said laughing. She did not find it funny until he said that he has dark room for his collection of pictures taken off from eclipses, half-moon, rainbow etc. 'I am a lover of the untouchable. I do self-study on celestial objects. My little hobby.' He said.

'I was never interested in Astronomy and those scientific things. After eating you must show me my house. I don't trust those two. I think David is sneaking around with MmaNeo'

'Are you that bored?' She looked at him and they laughed.

'I am trying to find use to your binoculars, besides I want to see how much you can see at my house.'

'And call me a stalker after.' They laughed.

The chef came to collect the trolley and Otsile told him to pack a doggy bag for her after choosing what she wanted. He went inside and came back with a lotion.

'Bring your feet let me massage them.'

'Are you sure?'

'I am trying to nice, take advantage madam.' She put her feet up and he started doing the magic.'

'Do you know how Josh get mad at me sometimes when I ask him to massage my feet at the restaurant under the table.'

'How did you even become friend with that multi-talented guy?'

'He forced himself into my life, just before I knew it, we were best buddies.'

'One busy guy and I like his professionalism.'

'A very special case that one and takes his work serious.'

They stayed there chatting and enjoying food massages, later she went to the ladies and Otsile pulled out a car and drove her home.

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'How have you been Ms. Maanda?' Dr. Rametsi asked.

'Have you forgiven my friend?'

'What are you talking about?'

'Ok, your Bp is fine, the baby is fine.' He said. She realised that Dr. Rametsi was enjoying her pregnancy more than her. It was just weird a family man who retired from practicing after he was involved in the accident to come back just to monitor her pregnancy. She made peace with fact that she was his little progressive project.

'I think he likes you, be his friend is that too much to do?' He said leaving the room. She wanted to respond so badly but he was already gone.

She was sitting opposite George eating junk, that was what she does every time she visited her therapist.

'I am still struggling George. I sometimes cringe when he moves. Is it normal to feel annoyed by this sometimes?'

'You need to unblock your mind before giving birth.'

'I am not doing this on purpose, I have tried. I am not connecting with this baby. I always hear people talking about strong bond and I am here trying to find it,'

'This is prenatal stress Vule and it may have negative impact on your baby.'

'How do you know?'

'I am your therapist and your life events have contributed to this. The absence of Themba should not make you overthink and doubt your maternal capabilities.'

'What if I fail? I get annoyed when someone wants to talk about my pregnancy.'

'Do you honestly believe you will fail?'

'I am scared, my father left my mother when I was young and she raised me without him. I think I can raised him without a father. I don't want to fail my child.'

'You are already doing well with Omolemo

besides your mother and Themba's mother will be there for you.'

'I guess so.'

'Stop being hard on yourself.'

'And you and Joshua?'

‘What about us?’

‘You do know he loves you right?’

‘He has a funny way of showing it for a Psychology Graduate.’

‘Be patient with him, he is dealing with a lot.’

‘I know, one mistake I will kick his balls and leave his unstable ass.’ He said and they laughed. ‘And are you still whoring?’ Vule burst out laughing.

‘Come on George, I told you not to listen to Joshua. You are becoming a gossip king now’

‘It is one of the STIs I got from Joshua.’

‘I have not been whoring. Can you believe he was the second man to make me feel like I was in heaven?’

‘You are definitely becoming a whore like Joshua.’ He said laughing ‘When did you start loving sex?’

‘Themba turned me into this. I was fine before him.’ She said with a sad face. ‘I missed him.’

‘I will be shocked if you did not miss the mighty Themba. He was a very big part of your life. He brought you back to the living.’

‘And yet he left me.’

‘I know Vule.’

'With a baby, like I must go figure.'

'Then woman up and go figure. You are doing well thus far, if only we can deal with self-doubt blanket you are wearing.'

'You always have a way of redirecting my thoughts'

'You pay me for that, service delivery Ms. Maanda.' She burst out laughing.

'Let me go, you are exhausting like Joshua, by the way I am meeting your whore and he will sure suck the last energy I have.'

'Good luck with that psycho.'

'You are sleeping with that psycho George. I am going to tell him that you call him a psycho' She said laughing and left.

Otsile became her regular visitor. They had a movie night at his house. He came to fetch her with a quad bike again.

‘Netflix it is.’

‘I guess so, but don’t be mad if I doze off. I am pregnant and pregnant woman do weird things sometimes.’

‘I have never seen a pregnant woman defending her weird behaviour like you.’

‘I need to take advantage Otsile.’ He stretched out the sleeper couch, went to the kitchen and came back with popcorns, goodies and bottled water for Vule.

‘I wish I could have what you are having.’

‘A wa tsenwa?’

‘Nyaa papa.’ She said smiling.

‘You want to kill our son.’ Otsile has been calling Vule’s baby his son and Vule managed to curve it all the time, thus far. She was not ready to talk to anyone about the pregnancy except George. The fact that she was still struggling to connect with the baby was a torcher on its own. She settled next to him with a bowl on Otsile’s lap since her tummy was making it impossible to hold it. He put his hand around her and watched

a movie. They had silly conversations in between and she has managed to avoid his questions about the baby.

‘Are we taking the next one or I should take you home?’

‘A last one will do, I just want to get home and sleep without struggling.’ She said.

‘Are you torturing me with romantic comedy again?’

‘You said I should take advantage, so let me be please.’ She said laughing.

‘Ok, you win.’ He said as they settle again with Vule munching on fruit salad. Otsile already took note of what Vule liked and also noticed her cravings. He met her halfway in that department trying not to be too much on her face. She was just comfortable enjoying being taken care of for once. If it was not Josh, Mrs. Varoni would just take her out or Otsile will rescue her on her most boring days. Yes, he still asked for her opinion on business now and then and she did not mind. Their unplanned sex scene was in the past and the awkwardness has vanished.

She woke up pressed and Otsile has his hand on her tummy.

‘Otsile, hey Mr., wake up.’

‘Let’s sleep.’

'I am pressed and why didn't you wake me up?' He was looking at her lost. She stood up and went to the bathroom, rinse her mouth, wash her hands and went back.

'I need to go.'

'Its late Vule, I will take you home tomorrow, come sleep.'

'I need to be on a bed at least. My back hurts.'

'Come let's go to bed.' He said getting off the couch switching off TV

taking Vule's hand. They walked down the passage until they reached an almost nonexistent door. The door was the same as the wall, she only noticed it when he slide it side ways to open. The bedroom was big with a big customized bed.

Otsile disappeared somewhere and came back in pajama pants without a top. She moved her eyes from looking at those Shaka Zulu abs exposing the v-live.

'Here, change to this. I will give you space.' He said handing her a big pajama top with buttons. She took off her leggings and a vest and wore the top, the fabric softener smell intoxicated her. He came back with 2 bottled water placing them on the side table. He open the sheets for her and she went in.

'Are you sleeping here?'

'It's my bedroom V, where else would I sleep?' He said getting in bed.

'Ok, 'she said in a whisper. He took a remote and the lights switched off and the curtain auto opened. The view of the sky was magical. She dozed off to the side of the universe staring at her.

She was woken up by the baby kicking. She adjusted and took a bottle of water and drank. She looked at her phone it was 3:30 in the morning.

'And why are you awake?'

'I feel weird sleeping in an unfamiliar place, beside I am pressed.' She got out of bed, went to the bathroom and came back to bed. He went to the bathroom too and settled next to her.

'Ga ona boroko mamago Champ?' He was stuck on calling Vule's son champ.

'Bo teng, it's just that Khuthadzo is playing.'

'Can I feel him?' She nodded and he placed his hand on her tummy.'

'I missed this moments when my ex-wife was pregnant with my daughter. I was hospitalized for 4 months and my ex-wife gave birth while I was in a comma.

'Wow! Sorry.'

'It fine man, dilo tsa bogolo tala.'

'Ag man, nte ke go zame foo.' She said and he laughed. Vule was slowly learning his deep seTswana. They cuddled until they dozed off again. She was woken again but his dick poking her ass and his hand slowly caressing her tummy.

'Stop me if you don't want me to.' He whispered in her ear.

'Tell me to stop if you don't want to V.' He whispered nibbling her earlobe. He turned her to face up and he started kissing her going down to cookie. Vule started moaning in pleasure. She had her hand on his head whilst enjoying every bite and sucking he was doing to her vagina. She was hit by orgasm and he went up and put her legs on his shoulders and his dick on the mouth of her vagina and slowly slid in looking at her.

'Fuck.' He roared. He started moving with Vule moaning feeling all of him inside. Yes, Themba had nothing on Otsile. She felt like he was poking the baby as pleasure hit her again. Otsile moved faster and he roared coming. He slowly pulled out and lay next to her.

'It's already 8 o'clock take me home.'

'Don't tell me we are going back to you using me for sex and living again.'

'I have visitors today. Josh is coming over.'

'I don't trust you, so I will let this slide. Let's go take a shower.'

'No Otsile, this was not supposed to happen.' She said getting out of bed going to get her clothes. Otsile was admiring her beautiful body, like how can a pregnant woman look sexy and worse complicated. The drive to her house was silent and Otsile knew that they were back to square one. They could not resist each other , he is the one who had to find a strategy to bring her back to him.

A week passed with casual short WhatsApp text between them. He felt the distance as much as she did. On the other hand, she was consumed by guilt of allowing him inside her again. The guilt of betraying the spirit of Themba like that. After taking a shower, she looked at herself in a mirror and whispered “if only his dick was not this good, mommy is back to whoring again and I don’t understand why you kick me and play like crazy when he is around. You are a traitor too Khuthadzo. Your father is probably turning in his grave”. There was a knock on her bedroom door.

‘Hi’ He said and she pulled up the towel to cover her breasts.

‘Hi’

‘MmaNeo let me in.’

‘Ok, cool. I need to get dressed I am meeting Joshua.’

‘I missed you, us and our movie & food dates.’

‘Please don’t say that. We ended up misbehaving on our dates.’

‘Fine, but I missed you and this champ.’ He said moving closer squatting in front of her touching her big sexy tummy.

‘This is the cutest tummy I have ever seen. I wanted to come see you before going to work today.’ She felt her vagina gets

wet as he kept on caressing her tummy. She moved her eyes and looked out the window.

'You are beautiful' He randomly said looking at her. He moved his hands to her nipples and put it in his mouth and she moan, he went up to her face and kissed her and she responded. In no time she was naked on top of him riding the living hell out of him and it was like she was under his spell enjoying everything. They lay on the bed in silent after their sex scene.

'We really need to stop this.' She whispered.

'I am not promising anything V'

'I am going to chase you when you come here.'

'Do you at least like me V? Like 0, 00% of like/love running in your vain for me?' She kept quiet for some time before responding.

'I don't think it's love

maybe I really really like you. I am lonely and mostly horny. I am sorry for using you for sex, it is weird that you are the second men I have had sex with since... never mind.' She got up pulling the bath towel heading to the bathroom.

'Since you don't love me but like me can I at least take a shower with you?' He followed her to the bathroom. They took a shower in silent and his dick was just up and unavoidable. She

pulled a clean towel for him in the bathroom closet and gave it to him. He dressed up and looked at Vule sitting on the bed giving him her back.

‘Do you still want me to come visit you, have movie and food dates?’

‘I don’t mind.’ She said still giving him her back.

‘At least you love my dick, it’s better than nothing right.’ He said and left. As soon as the door shut she started crying. She felt horrible all over again, she had no space to accommodate love anymore, she was struggling to love and connect with her baby, and she had resentment about motherhood because she was going to be a single parent. She took her phone and called Joshua and asked him to come over. Joshua promised to dodge at work and come over. She got dressed and went down stairs. She saw a box on the sideboard with a little card, she open the card and it read

“I am never too busy for you.

Enjoy the smell of Oud Wood aroma from the Arabic collection when you meditate.

Love.... S.S.S.”

She turned the card and there was an engraved picture of a saxophone. She opened the box and found home refresher

fragranced candle and diffusers. She took them and went outside looking for MmaNeo.

‘MmaNeo, who brought this?’

‘I don’t know, I found them at the door when I was opening a door for Mr. Otsile.’ She nodded and went back inside the house. She sat on the couch and send a thank you text to Otsile.

‘Thank you for what? My dick?’ She looked at the text and sighed. Probably the box was not from Otsile.

43

Later that afternoon Josh came in with the same junk she eats at George's office. He settled next to her.

'What is eating you?'

'Otsile is eating me.'

'He was in a foul mood when I left the office. He asked why I was leaving early which was unusual of him asking.'

'I told him that I was meeting with you today.' Vule said.

'Ok, how is he eating you now?'

'Physically and emotionally.'

'You too had sex again?'

'Three times including this morning.'

'I don't want to hear you talking about feeling guilty or you wouldn't have exposed little Khuthi to that man's dick.'

'And why is Khuthadzo part of this conversation?' Vule asked rolling her eyes.

'You are always hiding behind a match stick justifying your sexual behaviour. This is exhausting Vule.'

'Why are you angry at me Josh?'

'I mean, even blind disciples can see that Otsile would do anything for you and at this point my friend you are taking advantages of him and its uncool.'

'A kettle calling a pot black.'

'At least I am white.' He said laughing.

'You are stupid. You were sleeping with George behind Londile's back and I did not judge you one inch.'

'And I was in a bad space and you know it.'

'I am also in a bad space, lonely and horny.'

'Do you care for him, at least? I know you don't love him just don't play him like that, he looks like a good man.'

'I do care for him, very much. I just need to find myself after losing Themba'

'Then learn to love him from a distance and leave the poor guy and his dick alone whore. A pregnant whore, girl you are worse than Delilah.'

'You are judging me now.'

'With a hot fork from the devil himself.' He said pulling her feet up for a massage.

'The worst part is that he understand my body

I don't want to compare him to Themba but he has a way of reading my body, you know body language thing and I think he is taking advantage of that.'

'I don't want to give you whore advises, so I will pray you give birth soon because your hormones are not only messing with you, they are also messing with another person's feelings.'

'Since when are you on Otsile's side?'

'He pays my salary and gives me half days to come see you.'

'You don't even use those half days to come see me.' Vule said

'Can I use you without you being a rude pregnant woman?' He said laughing. 'Do you need a back massage too?'

'Yes sir, the royal mighty prince of whoring.' They laughed as Joshua massages her back.

'It's my mother's final year of work and she is so excited that she will be here to spend time with me.'

'That great right?'

'Yeah! It will probably help me stay away from that good damn dick.'

'I want to see that happening. You will be sneaking to his house for a dick. Like Vule, it's like I don't know you anymore.'

'Stop putting ideas in my head Josh.'

'You already had them. Please be considerate Vule I can see that he really likes you, in fact he really loves you.'

'So I must stop sleeping with him?'

'That will be a start if you care about him. Be considerate'

'Ok, fine. So God help me, he better stay away from me too.'

'Don't drag God into your shenanigans.' They laughed.

44

‘How have you been Ms. Maanda?’

‘I have been better.’

‘Is it Otsile's magic?’

‘What are you talking about Dr. Rametsi?’

‘I know.’

“Whatever, and stop talking about me with your friend.’

‘It slipped, I don’t think he was going to tell me about it, but it slipped so he ended up telling me everything.’

‘I don’t know how much you know, but I did not do anything. Are we done?’

‘We are done Vule, so when are you going to stop hurting my friend?’

‘I told you I did not do anything? And I am not doing anything.’

‘You could make a good lawyer.’ He said laughing. “You have grown Ms. Maanda and I am proud of the character you have become. Now you are going to be a great mother. God must really love you. I was scared you will never date ever.’

‘Well, Themba saved me.’

‘How are you coping without him?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘Don’t use Otsile to shut the absence of Themba.’

‘You sound like George right now.’

‘I guess Otsile is a big man he can handle you, he probably let you be because he wants you to mourn Themba in peace or else you’d be under his spell by now.’

‘How did you become friends with Otsile?’

‘We went to military training together, we served the nation for years together. That is where all this friendship started and we all left the military except Mfundo.’

‘I see, no wonder you up in my business about your friend. You aren’t getting anything from me sir.’

‘Ok, ok I was just making conversation.’ He said laughing. He was just stringing her along trying to check if she was going to say something.

‘Let me get out of here because this was not a conversation but some one-sided interrogation.’ Vule picked up her hand bag and prescription and walked out laughing.

‘Don’t forget to pick up your scans at reception.’ He shouted.

She walked down the passage when she came across Mrs. Tlhagoentle Moloji.

'Now I know why you have been scares at our fun raising functions.' Vule laughed hugging her. They have always been close because of the charity events and raising funds for old age homes. Community engagement got them close even though they hardly see each other. Duduetsang was also part of their community engagements projects that how they knew each other.

'You caught me right handed woman. How have you been?'

'Good hey, I guess I will be this big in the coming next months.'

'You are pregnant again?'

'I tried blaming Thabo and Dr. Rametsi but I failed. I was on keto diet and cleaned up all my contraceptives.' They laughed.

'I am happy for you.'

'No Vuledzani, I am happy for you. You might not remember but you once told me that you were struggling to conceive.'

'Well, Themba's soldiers did not give me a chance.' She said laughing.

'You need to come for aerobics at the gym.'

'I stopped going since you and Dudu were not coming anymore.'

‘And I also saw your piano instructor, Goitseone Malapile and she asked about you because you are nowhere to be found and you also moved.’

‘I have been avoiding her calls because I have not been attending my piano lessons and she send me a text asking me to stop making payments for the lessons until I am ready to come back. I need new hobbies.’

‘Your baby will be your new hobby, wait until you give birth.’ She said.

‘Let me run to George’s office.’

‘Of course. See you around Vule, don’t be scarce at the charity events.’

‘I will make time. Bye.’ She hurried off to George’s office and lay on the couch looking up.

‘What is eating you now?’

‘Every time someone mention the baby I cringe George.’ She sighed.

‘You need to stop doing that to yourself.’

‘I can’t do this George. I am trying but it still difficult to connect with my baby.’

‘And that does not take your motherly instinct and love away. Give yourself time, you might connect after giving birth. And you are still using "my baby" that means you are recognising his presence.’

‘And this baby get so excited when that forbidden fruit is around.’

‘Talking about the forbidden fruit, you need to stop using him to close Themba’s gap. Your hormones are all over I understand but someone is going to get hurt soon.’

‘Were you discussing me with George or Rametsi?’

‘I am your therapist Vule, you have said a lot about still being angry at Themba for leaving you pregnant for leaving you to raised your baby alone.’ ‘I am sorry George.’

‘Its fine Vule, I need you to let all emotions out so that you get open your heart to bond with the baby. As long as you are still holding on to the past, it will still be difficult to bond with the baby and it is not fair nor healthy for you and the baby.’

‘I need Gods intervention with this one.’

‘You need to let go and stop blocking emotions.’

‘I hear you.’

She left George office and drove home.

A weekend without Otsile was quiet boring and she felt it. She did not want to admit that she missed him or was it because she became too close and comfortable around him? Monday morning, she vowed to do what she has been postponing to do the whole weekend. She spend the whole day in her study responding to his father's business emails. She has been engaging with the company and working from Johannesburg. She could not wait for Tendani to come back to South Africa and take over. It has been one busy journey and finally Tendani resigned from his international job and will be running their fathers company. She doesn't want to get more involved because she still has Themba's company to run. After her afternoon snack she went to the living room and the smell of diffusers hit her nose and she was still trying to figure out who could have sent such expensive box of oud wood diffusers.

'Aren't we going for a walk today?'

'I am so lazy MmaNeo. I will do one of my video aerobics indoors.' MmaNeo nodded and left. She sat there feeling all the loneliness until she decided to take a shower and got in her regular comfortable baggy dress, took her car keys and drove to Otsile's house. She parked on the drive way ignoring the little voice in her head about staying away from his dick. She stayed in car for a while and switched on the ignition again. When she

looked at the rare mirror, a car she did not recognize was parking behind her. The nock on the window.

‘So you were waiting for me?’

‘I was leaving.’

‘You are here you might as well come in.’

‘I don’t know why I am here, move your car so that I can go.’

‘Not happening V, you are here so come.’ He opened the door and helped her out. They walked inside.

‘Let me go change this uncomfortable clothes I will be back. He was walking back, down the passage towards living room when Vule’s mouth beat up her mind.

‘I am so fucken horny.’

‘Did you say something V?’

‘No’ He sat next to her pulling her closer to him and kissed her forehead.

‘Tell me what did I do to deserve this visit?’

‘I thought I should come check up on you. You have been scarce.’

‘Work baby mama, work load. How is my son?’

'I don't know.' She sighed. She was not going to discuss the baby with him even though little man was playing hockey in her tummy.

'I like it when he moves, it's magical.'

'I don't want to talk about the baby.' She said with tears threatening her eyes.

'Why, what wrong? Are you ok V?'

'I am fine just hormones.' She said wiping them off.

'Hormones I see, now what wrong with us talking about my son?'

'I don't want you to ask me about the baby please.' She snapped. She stood up pulling her big ass and tummy to the door and great Otsile parked right behind her.

'I want to go home please move your car.'

'I am not moving my car until you tell me why are so angry? You are angry right now and I don't think it has anything to do with me.' He took her hand and walked her back inside.

'If you don't want to talk its fine with me come here.' He pulled her closer and they sat in silence.

'I can't connect with him.' She said after some time. 'I can't connect with my baby Otsile, the only time he gets this excited is when I am with you or eating.'

'Have you spoken to someone about this?'

'I did, my therapist. He said I am suffering from pre-natal stress.'

'I am sorry V, I wish I knew what to do. I will do a research about this and see what we can do.' He said kissing her forehead.

'I don't even know what to do anymore.'

'Don't be hard on yourself. Are you still horny?'

'I did not say I was horny Otsile.' She said giggling.

'Ok, I was asking just in case you need my services. I made peace with you not wanting me but my dick.' He said caressing her arm.

'Leave me alone or I will leave.'

'I doubt, going back to that lonely house while a full house meal is here.'

'Stop it man.' She said giggling.

'Come, I want to give you something.' He said taking her hand going down the passage to his bedroom. As soon as the door

auto closed. He picked her up and placed her on the bed carefully.

'I knew you were not wearing anything underneath this dress Vule.' He said pulling it up kissing her tummy going up to full cute breast. 'I could not let you leave while we both know very well we can't resist each other.' He went up to her mouth caving her trying not to put pressure on her tummy. She was moaning as he get off pulling down his sweat pants and taking off his t-shirt. He went down on her, opening up her vagina folds nibbling them.

'Oh Otsile, why are you doing this to me.'

'I want to make you feel good my baby mama.' He went on sucking her until she screamed with pleasure. He went up putting her one leg up and slid in. He was looking her in the eyes whilst thrusting, she saw that she was about come and he moved fast until they both groan in pleasure. He layed next to her, pulled her closer and whispered.

'I still love you even though you don't love me.'

'I am hungry.'

'I know, my chef is probably done cooking. Let's take a shower and go feed my champ.'

She has been doing sleep-overs at Otsile's house now and then, for months, she kept it to herself because she did not want to be judged by George and Joshua. She did not want to accept that she was enjoying every moment she spent with Otsile just like she avoids the non-connection between her and the baby.

Josh already crucified her that she must be the reason Otsile has been in a happy mood at work. She bluntly denied it but Josh told her that he could see through her hoe-ring big ass.

Everything was about to change because her mother arrived today, she drove all the way from Venda in her new whip, the famous female retired senior citizens car Creta Hyndai. Typical retired teachers with no taste in everything, she laughed to herself parking her mother's car in the garage.

'Your new house is beautiful baby.'

'Thank you mama.'

'And your beautiful nose is fighting with you. You still look beautiful baby, this pregnancy loves you.'

'Leave my nose alone.' She said sitting next to her mother.

'Ndo ni farela masondza na mukusule(I brought mopane worms and green leaves/morogo)' Her mother said.

'I can't wait to indulge. MmaNeo is done with supper. Rikho lela nga ngeno or we are eating that side?'

'Inwi ngwana, I don't have time for your formal eating settings. Bring my food here.' She said. They had dinner catching up on regular gossip from Tshisimani. Later on Mmaneo appeared from the foyer followed by Otsile.

'Mr. Otsile here to see you. MmaNeo said leaving Otsile with them.

'Dumelang mo lwapeng.'

'Hallo my son.' Vule's mother said.

'Hallo Otsile, you should have called.'

'I tried calling you but you did not answer.' He said. Vule's mother was looking at them waiting for introduction.

'Mama

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this is Otsile, my former colleague and boss. Otsile this is Ms. Maanda.' They exchanged greetings and he sat next to Vule.

'Where is your phone?'

'Honestly I don't even know, it's somewhere in the house.'

'Your feet are swollen, what have you been up to?'

'Busy around the house and I went for a walk with MmaNeo before mama arrived.'

He took her feet and placed them on his lap and started massaging them with zero fucks given. They talked with Vule's mother engaging there and there. Deep down Vule wanted Otsile gone and her mother's piercing eyes had her feeling anxious. He finally said he was leaving asking Vule to take him out.

'And you did not tell me that your mother was coming V.'

'I forgot Otsile, like it slipped my mind that it was today.'

'I see where you got this beauty and beautiful natural skin.' He said caressing her tummy kissing her forehead.

'What was that massaging my feet in front of my mother.'

'It happened automatically, I did not even see myself doing it. I mean I got used to it.'

'Now I have explaining to do, let me go deny you like Peter denied Jesus Christ 3 times.' She said and he burst out laughing.

'You are sick you know. See you around mami. Take care of yourself and my champ.' He said kissing her forehead and went straight to her lips and invaded her tongue. They only kissed when they were having sex, she was shocked when he did that, it was unusual and it left her confused watching Otsile getting

on his quadbike leaving. She went back inside avoiding her mother's direct eye contact.'

'It must be nice to have your former boss massaging your feet.'

'Not now mama.'

'Its fine, I am tired I need a bath and sleep.' Her mother said. She was relieved as her mother disappeared on the stairs going to the guest bedroom.

47

She had a spar date with Josh in the morning.

‘We have date this afternoon mami, I want to spoil you before you start looking uglier.’

‘Fotshek, I am not in the mood for you.’ They drove to Vule’s house and Josh forced her to change into a one hand yellow long body hugging dress which they bought today because George was was taking her for pregnancy photo shoot then dinner.

‘I want to drop off this file at Otsile’s house first.’ They drove there. ‘Otsile’s neighbours probably have a party why are cars parked on the road.’

‘I did not see a memo, in our estate you sign a memo if you want to do a party.’ Vule said.

‘Come let’s go inside.’

‘Nope.’

‘You said you have not seen him in a while, come just to say hi. Don’t be rude,’ Vule dragged herself out of the car with Josh on his phone.’

‘Isn’t that George’s car?’

‘What would George car be doing here?’

‘Probably with his side dish.’ She said laughing.

‘I’d kill him, he knows what I did to Londile.’ He took her hand and went inside.

‘SURPRISE...!!!!!!’ They shouted.

‘Before you accuse me of anything, Josh and your mother planned it, I just offered my house.’

‘You need to find yourself a new daughter mama and you need to find yourself a new sister.’ She said pointing at her brother. She gave hugs to everyone, a small crowd it was. Dr. Rametsi and wife, Mr. Mfundo Xego and probably his wife, Advocate Moloji and wife

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Goitseone Malapile(her piano teacher), Tendani and wife, Josh and George, Mrs. Varoni and Omolemo, her mother and Otsile and ... Otsile and no one. The theme was yellow with rich gold and black. She could not believe that Josh talked these man into wearing yellow bow ties. They took professional pictures with a bully of a photographer before anything. There were no activities just a massive dinner with all her favourite goodies. All her gifts were placed at the corner. Everything started adding up, Josh and her mother had been hounding her about making a list of the things she was going to need for the baby. They did

the list together and her mother said that she will take Josh along for that shopping since she said she was not going.

Dinner went well and the guest left even though Omolemo was acting up because she did not want to leave. It was Vule, her mother, Otsile, with Josh and George who were drunk.

‘I am tired mama take me home.’

‘Ok, I am also tired baby.’ She said getting up.

‘Josh and George I am leaving.’ Vule said and they were not even interested in her.

‘It is ok mama, I will bring her home. I am still waiting for my helper to put her shower gifts in the car.’

‘That’s fine, you will find me home then.’ Her mother said

‘I want to get out of this dress Otsile can we do this tomorrow?’

‘I will borrow you my shirt.’ Otsile walked her mother out and came back.

‘First bedroom upstairs facing the stairs off my couch now before I prepare a warning letter.’

‘You wouldn’t dare.’

‘Try me Joshua Steenkamp.’ He said.

'Such a bore.' He mumbles and walked toward Vule and whispered. "You look familiar with everything in this house hoe". He past her walking upstairs.

'I can talk Otsile into writing that warning letter you know.' She shouted after him and he turned around and showed her a middle finger. She wanted to spew insult at Josh so bad and she could see that he was taking advantage because he knew Vule would never do anything ratchet at the presence of Otsile.

'Come let's go.' Otsile said taking her hand leading her to the bedroom. 'Shower or sleep?'

'You lied to my mother about packing my gifts and now you dragged me into your bedroom.'

'I have been wanting to touch and kiss you but Omolemo was sitting in between us, a cock blocker of a cutie-pie.'

'I am not in the mood for anything Otsile. I am tired.'

'Let me help you out of this dress and bath you.' He said ignoring her, undressed her and picked her up to the shower. They took a short shower and went back to the bedroom. She took Otsile's pajama top she usually sleep in when she was sleeping over.

'Weeks without this.' He said caressing her ass. 'I missed being inside of you V.'

'Me too. My mama has been a good cock blocker.' She said giggling. He got on top of her kissing her.

'Since is almost impossible to be on top come on top.' She was a bit shy with her huge tummy getting on top of him. He slowly slid it in and he started moving from underneath. The uneasiness, avoiding eye contact while Otsile was watching her like an owl, they finally screamed and groan with pleasure.

Later on after their silent cuddle, he slowly adjusted the pillows taking it from behind with Vule's juicy vagina visible from behind driving him crazy. He thrust and enjoyed her until she started screaming "I love you" which slipped her mouth and Otsile continued thrusting until they came.

'Squirting I see and you said you love me that must have been a good sex.'

'I never squirted before and I did not say such words.'

'You enjoy lying to yourself.'

'If I did not squirt then what is that? Hell no Otsile my water broke.'

'What?' It was like he did not hear her. 'The fuck, Oh my God what to do?' He said getting off the bed.

Vule was looking at him going up and down searching his phone.

'Calm down man, no pain as yet. Help me take a shower.'

'Wa tsenwa ne Vule?' He said while trying to dial Dr. Rametsi with no luck. Vule got off the bed and went to take a shower

Otsile was right there acting tough, shit scared something might happened to her. After a shower with Vule dragging they drove to her house using his car with Josh driving, panicking and sober for that matter. They collected her pregnancy prep bag, and her mother and head to the hospital. George left with his car to his house.

She started having massive pains and the stand by gynea was there monitoring her as per Dr. Rametsi's instructions on his absence. She hated when she kept on putting her hand to check the baby's head. The staff was friendly, Otsile was irritating her and her mother was just calm. Josh went home to give Vule space. Otsile refused to leave, even when Dr. Rametsi and Mrs. Varoni arrived in the morning he stayed. Vule gave up on chasing him away.

Almost 48 hours of labour pains, a fat baby boy weighing 3.9 kg with big brown eyes was born. Yes she saw his eyes before falling into a deep sleep. Khuthadzo Themba Varoni, the one and only heir to the Varoni family, the first grandchild to Mrs. Maanda. It was a happy moments for everyone except Vule who looked lost after waking up from a deep sleep.

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Two days and Vule still refused to feed her son. Finally George went to her private ward to observe as per Dr. Rametsi's recommendation. The only people who understood her better.

'Hi Miss.'

'Hi'

'How are you feeling?'

'I don't know.' She said disorientated.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

'I can't bring myself to look at him, the only thing I saw is his father's eyes.'

'He is very handsome Vule, can I bring him to you?'

'No George I need space.'

'Ohk, tomorrow you are being discharged. I will come for our sessions at your house.'

'Its fine with me, can't I leave him behind?'

'No you can't.' He said with sadness on his face.

'Can we not talk about him?'

'He is here, we are going to have to talk about him soon.' He said and she kept quiet. 'Ok

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what do you want to talk about?’

‘I miss my piano lessons and my post graduate students. I miss work all together.’

‘When are you planning to go back to work?’

‘Even if its tomorrow I’d be fine.’

He could see that Vule was not herself, she was back to days after she was raped. Shutting everything and everyone out. That wall was hard to break but he was willing to help her because he believe she deserve a break and an opportunity to be a mother before it’s too late. Otsile came in and George called him outside and asked him not to talk about babies with Vule because it will raise some past issues and then he left.

Otsile went back to her ward and place fresh flowers on her side table and went straight to her lips and kissed her.

‘I missed you, I had too much work today.’

‘I miss working so bad?’

‘Aren’t you missing me?’

'Just leave me alone.' She said with a faint smile. That smile disappeared as soon as Vule's mother entered the ward with the nurse pushing Khuthadzo. Otsile noticed it and he went and picked up the little champ making baby talks ignoring Vule who was facing the window. It was frustrating to him and he called his friend Dr. Rametsi to make a plan.

George sat with Dr. Rametsi Snr. and Dr. Rametsi Jr. wife (Heard of Psychology). They worked on the programme to assist Vule which was also part of the research projects in improvement in reducing pre and post-natal stress disorder because they had 1 to none cases at MediCentre. They briefed Vule's mother and Mrs. Varoni on the symptoms, challenges that they will face with Vule and the treatment they have put in place for quick remedial which was antidepressants, they have been proven as effective treatment option.

Dr. Rametsi privately briefed Otsile because he insisted and he was not having it. Otsile was not interested in the medical remedies he went to extend of researching about other natural options such as boosting confidence, healthy diet, and exercises. He put his plan in motion and appointed an acting CEO on his skeleton presence at work.

Every morning Otsile would take his quad bike and go to Vule's house and force her for a walk since she was refusing to go out.. She has become stubborn but Otsile had his way of

dealing with her. The funny part, she was warming up to Otsile's constant kisses and it made her angry when he directed his attention to Khuthi. It was bad like that.

He made sure a qualified nanny moves in to assist Vule's mother and the Chef to prepare healthy diet meals. At least she was cooperative in taking medication which was something that brought all of them peace. She was a happy person until she hears Khuthadzo crying and see someone passing holding him. Otsile would go to her bedroom with Khuthi all the time and Vule's mood would change and that pissed Otsile off.

He was sitting opposite Vule after George left.

'I am going out of the country.'

'When? Can I come with?'

'In 3 or 4 months' time.'

'You are living me?'

'I want to see my daughter, I missed her. After speaking to her yesterday I have never been the same.'

'I see.'

'Family means a lot to me Vule and I have been feeling like I have neglected my daughter. Spending time with champ had me thinking.' She kept quiet. 'In honesty. How have you been? Maybe that is the real question I need to ask?'

'You know how I have been Otsile, you are always here.'

'No, I don't. All I know is that every time I come here I leave pained and depressed because you have shattered Khuthi out of your life.'

'I don't need another George in my life.'

'I also don't need to see your stinking attitude toward my son anymore. Anyway I am not here for you

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let me go see my son.' He said leaving Vule shocked.

Otsile has never been rude or angry at her before. She sunk in bed and she did not know why she was sad that he always chooses Khuthi over her all the time but today he spat out how he felt. She took her phone and called George. After an hour George was back. He found Vule roll up in bed crying. He moved close to her and got in bed and sat next to her.

'Do you want to tell me why you crying?'

'He hates me George, Otsile hate me.'

'He would never hate you Vule.'

'He always chooses Khuthi over me, even my own mom spend time with him than me. Am I a bad person?'

'Did you take your medication?'

'I am not crazy George.'

'I did not say you were crazy? How does that make you feel? Your mother and Otsile rather spend time with Khuthi than you.'

'It upset me George.'

'It also upset them that you rather lock yourself in your bedroom or office than spend time with Khuthi.'

'I was here on this earth before him and now You know what I don't care.'

'If you don't care why are you so messed up? You called me back because you are sad, you are still sad and your sadness is self-inflicted.'

'You are also blaming me.'

'I need to blame you sometimes, who do you want to blame? Khuthi again?' The door opened and Vule's mom came in holding Khuthi.

'I need to be in the study.' Vule said getting off bed walking out leaving George and her mother holding Khuthi there.

Not much has change in the last three months. Vule was still avoiding Khuthi and has shut Joshua and Otsile out since they were always in her house but never checked up on her. Mrs. Varoni came in the afternoon to see her grandson. She spend the whole day with him and Omolemo. Before leaving she asked Vule's mother to show her Vule's office. She knocked once and went inside.

'Hi.'

'Mrs. Varoni. How are you?'

'I am good.'

'I was thinking that you go on vacation.' She said placing a beautiful A4 navy blue book on the table.

'What is that?'

'It's a surprise, open it when I am gone. Back to vacation.'

'Do you think that I need a vacation?'

'Every new mother deserve that. Tell me the destination and I will sponsor you.'

'Why are you doing this?'

'I love you like my daughter Vule and I was once a new mother and had no idea where to start with raising Themba. My

husband found the best helpers, nanny to be by my side while I took a break and went on vacation.'

'Oh, I see.'

'You look upset what is wrong?'

'My mother, Otsile and Joshua are always angry at me.'

'All I know is that they love you a lot but they don't understand you. When you are ready to get out of this country call me.'

'It will be sooner that you know.' She gave Mrs. Varoni a faint smile and she left.

Mrs. Varoni was treating Vule different because she knew how she was feeling. She has been there before and it was never easy with people looking at you like you are selfish. The journey was hard but she had to soldier on for Themba's sake. The navy blue book she had was a story album of Themba with copy of Themba's disk when he was still a toddler, she did that album with her therapist to assist her to connect better with Themba spiritually before direct contact. After observing Vule for some time

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she sat with George, Vule's mother and Otsile and told them about Vule's state and her suggestion.

Yes Mrs Varoni and Vule's Mother made peace with the fact that there was another man who was in love with Vule, a man who would do anything to see Vule happy and comfortable. If that was what Themba wanted for Vule after his death then they have to help Vule by all means to be a better.

George's observation where clear that Vule blocked Themba's death and she was using anything and everyone to distract her from dealing with his death. In the process, she blocked Khuthi's existence too hence she was struggling to connect with him. She had everybody fooled but George was still working on finding a way to reach out to her, so was Mrs. Varoni.

Saturday morning Vule got out of bed tired because she spend almost the whole night working. After brushing her teeth she got in her running gear and went out for a run. When she faced

up she was by Otsile's house. She was breathing heavily when Otsile opened the door looking at her.

'What a surprise. What are you doing here?'

'I came to see you.'

'How is my son?' He asked and she kept quiet.

'Do you want to come inside?' She nodded and they went inside he went to the kitchen and brought two bottles of water and gave one to her.

'I was about to take a shower, I am from jogging too.' He said
'You can take a shower with me.'

'No Otsile.' She said. He picked her from the couch and went with her to the bedroom. He undressed and went and undressed Vule too. He could not avoid her perked breast and trimmed body it was like she never gave birth 3 and half months back. He pulled up her face and devour her lips, his manhood was up and ready. He picked her up and place her against the wall kissing her. It was Vule was ready for him when he slid in groaning with Vule moaning loud.

It could have been some other day but it was on that day that Otsile had Vule in all positions until he was satisfied. He buried himself inside her for hours before they took a shower. He later drove her home.

A week passed with Vule and Otsile behaving like rabbits, every day routine to jog, to Otsile's house for mind blowing sex. It was like they have just found each other after so many years, they automatically gelled. He knew Vule was his because he could see through her eyes that she loved him when they made love. Even though she was in denial he did not care because her actions where louder.

Everything was smooth until he decided to pass by Vule's house. It was on a weekend, the nanny was on leave. When he arrived he found MmaNeo holding screaming Khuthi trying to calm him down.

'Where is Mrs. Maanda? Vule?'

'She went out to the shops and Vule is in the study.' She said.

'Prepare a warm water bottle with gripe water and bring it here.' She did as told and brought the bottle.

'He took off his shirt as usual and took off Khuthi's romper and placed him on his chest. He peacefull sucked on the bottle, so calm on his chest like he was not screaming seconds ago. Vule appeared and tried to turn back when he saw Otsile with Khuthadzo.

'Not so quick miss, come here.' Vule came closer but sat on the couch far away from them.

‘Didn’t you hear the baby crying?’ She ignored him. ‘I am fucken speaking to you Vule.’ His voice scared lil’Khuthi a bit.

I did not Otsile.’

‘Listen here miss, in two days’ time I am leaving for London. I will be gone for two months. In these two months, I want you to go find yourself and in the process find Khuthadzo. If I come back and find that you have not found my son I will cut you off my life and move on like you never existed Vule. I would not introduce my daughter to a woman who act like they never had labour pains.’

‘You don’t understand Otsile. I need help.’ She said with tears in her eyes.

‘Make me understand.’ He said and she kept quiet. ‘Mrs. Varoni left you with a navy blue book and you have not opened it but you are here telling me you need help. Help is in that book Vule. You are going to open that book and follow all the instruction in it when I come back I want to find you breastfeeding my son and ready to be my wife. I don’t have time for your pettiness and treating my son like he does not exist. Pray your God help you or else I will make sure I lock you at a mental hospital.’ He said getting up. He walked toward Vule and placed babyKhuthi on Vule’s lap, put on his shirt back on and when he turned around Vule’s mother was looking at

them with a clear indication that she heard the whole conversation.

‘Hallo ma, bye ma.’ He said leaving.

‘Ni a zwi kona ngwananga. Now you are about to lose the only man that loves you and your son unconditionally. If you don’t get out of that hole and do as he asked, you will have yourself to blame. I tried reaching out to you but you shut me out and be impatient with me. I am glad that man had a talk with you, maybe you will wake up from that selfish hole. My grandson is being punished because of your anger towards Themba. You need to forgive the past and moved on. Themba loved you enough and trusted you enough with his son in the process of pain God blessed you with Otsile and Joshua, Mrs. Varoni love and support you but you don’t care, you just don’t care Vule. You are selfish.’

Little Khuti was still on her lap and she did not know what to do with him until her eyes landed on her son for the second time since he was born. She had tears flowing while looking at her son. Her mother was still standing there reluctant to move because she was scared that Vule might dropped the baby. Mrs. Maanda watched her daughter closely looking at her son and she knew that it was going to be a new dawn.

Two months later.....

A plane from London landed and Vule was waiting at arrivals with a sign written "Mr. Saxophone" paxed on the front of Khuthi's stroller. He saw a tall chocolate figure pushing luggage appearing. Otsile did not know that Vule was fetching him, he was expecting his chauffeur. He did not even notice Vule until he saw a cute baby holding a sign written "Mr. Saxophone", well it captured his eyes until his eyes met the mother.

'Daddy is here champ. Say Hi to daddy.' Vule said smiling anxiously. He looked at little Khuthi raising his little hands trying to reach to him. Khuthi was a bubbly baby who was not afraid of people. Otsile moved closer and took him. It was like little Khuthi knew his smell, the way he was so excited clinging up on him and touching his face. Otsile looked at him and kissed his soft cheeks he could not believe his champ has grown, 5 months he was a little bubbly boy. He looked at Vule who had tears in her eyes because Otsile whipped his tear of happiness from his eyes.

'Aren't I getting a hug too?' He leaned over and kissed her soft wet lips.

'I missed you V.' He could not avoid her appetizing cleavage. Her breast has grown and he thought maybe she had breast implants.

'I missed you too Otsile.' She said shyly.

They walked to the parking lot across the drop off zone at the hotel opposite airport in silent with Otsile talking to Khuthi and pushing his stroller and Vule pushing his luggage with a huge suitcase which she suspect has a saxophone inside. She opened a car boot and Otsile gave Vule the baby and he loaded the luggage at the back. She was using Otsile's car.

'I am going to sit with this one at the back while you drive.' He said opening the back door getting inside buckling up Khuthi. She could not believe she missed him so much bonding with Khuthi and it was clear the bond between Khuthi and Otsile was stronger than Vule and her son. It has been a long journey for her and she has worked hard to get where she was with her son.

The night that Otsile left that was the night she took Mrs. Varoni's navy blue book and started going through it. George was on board every day to help her, the transition face was overwhelming but the support she got from her mother, Josh and Mrs Varoni kept her going.

She has not fully recovered but she was glad her mother worked her old traditional remedy in resuscitating her breast to

produce milk again. It was a painful process but she held on until she adjusted. She could not stand looking at Khuthi sucking at her nipples before but now it was something magical, an opportunity for her and her son to bond.

serif">She has never seen her mother enjoy granny duties like that and the nanny was almost not doing anything except doing baby laundry, taking temperature, changing nappies once in a while and preparing baby meals.

By the time they parked in front of Otsile's house his butler was already waiting for them. Khuthi was sleeping peacefully on his car sit.

'He has grown V.'

'He has.'

'Come in and tell me why you are calling me Mr. Saxophone?'

He smiled.

'I am not saying anything, you owe a lot of explaining sir.'

'While at it, tell me why you came in my house with Khuthi and snooping around.'

'I was not snooping Otsile, one of the activities I had was to take a walk with Khuthi so I opted to walk to your house, rest and walk back home.'

'And what were you doing in my private room and office?'

'How did you know?'

'I am the one asking questions.'

'And you the one who kept dropping off oud wood diffusers at my house. And you the guy that always played a saxophone every evening except when I am with him. You are sneaky Otsile.'

'You look beautiful.' She looked down and he moved towards her and kissed her deeply. His hand went to her breasts cupping them and she winched.

'They are sometimes painful more especially when they are full.' She explained. Otsile grinned and took out his phone and sent a text to his friend Rodney. He remembered every time he had sex with Vule he prayed to get her pregnant and now he was sure she was pregnant and she did not know it.

A full months since Otsile came back and he has been a regular visitor at Vule's house. He was a full time dad enjoying every moment. Otsile and Vule had their moments but they have not been intimate as yet since he left. It was worrying Vule that he would sleep and bath with her, kiss and all but he would not even go there. Her breast were still painful which made Otsile be convinced that Vule was pregnant.

They were sitting at the veranda when her mother's phone rang and it was Tendani. It has not been 3 months since he came back from UK permanently but his mother was no more. She died in the car accident between Makhado and Musina, the truck lost control and hit other cars including Tendani's mother's car.

There was no time for waiting, the following morning they packed their bags and left for Venda with her mother. Otsile promised to come Saturday morning for the funeral. It was a sad moment because she was on the early stage of enjoying her moment with her son and grandchildren. She could not stay at the funeral because she had babysitting the kids. She was going through her phone when a text came through.

'How are you?'

'I am good just tired, I could do with a nap.'

'What are you up to?'

'Babysitting the kids.'

'Wow! That's just wow!'

'I am also puzzled, looking after 3 kids including two busy toddlers.'

'I need to get you pregnant soon, you can soma practice while at it.'

'Hell no, beside I have forgotten how it's like to... you know.'

'To do what?'

'You know what I mean Otsile.'

'I don't V, o di kgang akere.'

'I was just saying and beside we are not together.'

'O seke wa nkgafela, you were mine the first time you put my dick in your pussy because you could not restrained your hormones.'

'Can we not go there?'

'I miss the smell of your vagina.'

'Goodnight.'

serif">'I love you. Take care of my sons' He said and she did not respond.

'I know you love me too.' Another text came through, she looked at it and smile. Deep down she knew she loved him and she did not see it coming. She was not ready to utter those words to him. After the funeral she planned to do as Themba requested and then she will see what is next.

The following morning she took a bath and waited for Otsile who said was 10km away from her home. After giving Tendani's nanny last instructions she took an apple and packed her hand bag. She was kind of relieved that Otsile was coming over, she was not ready to explain her baby father issue since her mother was done bragging about her grandchild to the whole village. Her mother slept at Tendani's house so it was going to be her and Otsile. Her phone rang and Otsile said he was at some t-junction which was the end of the street as per GPS. She instructed him until she saw a grey Discovery 4 stops at her house. He jumped out of the car and hugged her and kissed her deeply.

'Only four days and it felt like forever.'

'Stop it man.'

'You are driving I am tired, as much as I wanted to explore I regretted it, it reminded me of long drives to Botswana when I was young with my parents.'

'No man, you should have prepared me.'

'And I am not ready to be directed the whole day, come drive, this is your township, you know it better.' He said.

Vule jumped in and they drove to Tendani's house and she wanted to see the deceased before they close the coffin. They sat next to each other at a tent for church procedures with few stares there and there. Yes she admitted that Otsile was a catch, dark chocolate black American and people will stare.

After the funeral, Tendani came to greet Otsile and Vule and she told him that she was leaving because his nanny won't cope with 3 children. She hugged him and told him they will talk later when everything is calm and people had subsided.

They drove back to Vule's house, Khuthi who was playing on a carpet crawled screaming with excitement when he saw Otsile.

Vule wished he would do the same with her but well, when the time is right it will happen automatically. He picked him up and also picked Tendani's cute daughter and sat on the couch. Whatever this man has on kids, must be big, Vule said to herself.

Since Tendani's mother passed on Vule's mother felt that she had to continue being a mother figure to Tendani. She stayed behind with them and promised to come visit every month because she won't survive not seeing her grandchild.

Vule left few days after the funeral. Otsile left his car for Vule and he hired a car back to Pretoria. She was still reluctant to leave since she was not used to having her mother around. The drive from Venda to Centurion was a work and a half, not because Khuthi was a problem because she was nervous of being left alone with her son. Otsile was mad at her for insisting on driving by herself instead of hiring a driver.

Khuthi slept 80% of 4 and half hours, stopped twice to feed him and check on his nappy. He was a sweet baby and loving baby who loved his grandparents, Josh and Otsile. A bubbly baby and guilt struck her when remembered how she missed all the experiences of bonding with her son. She played Sade –King of sorrow on repeat.

She found Otsile waiting for them. She was used to Otsile giving Khuthi attention first and then her. She was tired and hungry and Otsile was busy caressing her stomach.

“All I need is a long bath and an uninterrupted bath.”

‘Can I join you?’ He asked and she raised her eyebrows and shook her head.

‘Why?’

‘Monthly cycle.’

‘Is it heavy? Like really heavy?’

‘No, just droplets. My body will adjust and I will have my full 3 days cycle back.’

‘Is it painful, like period pains?’

‘Nope

what’s with hundred questions?’

‘Nothing wifey just feed champ and then you can go take your bath.’ He said handing her Khuthi. He watched her loosening her bra taking out her left breast and Khuthi taking it into his mouth. It was beautiful sight to watch. Her nipples were dark like the way Dr. Rametsi explained. He has been observing her change of body and it was magical for him.

‘I am hungry too.’

‘My chef is bringing supper, don’t worry. By the time you done bathing food will ready.’ He said.

‘Thank you Mr. September.’

‘Do you know how that makes me feel?’ He said and she raised her head. ‘You calling me Mr. September.’ She shook her head reluctantly. ‘It makes me want to undress you and have you on the office desk.’

‘Otsile stop it. What will my helper and nanny said if they hear saying that.’

‘Mind their business and let me have what is mine.’ He said smiling and she looked down. ‘And you are blushing.’

‘I am going to punish you for being a bad boy.’

‘I would love to see you do it.’ He said and they laughed. She handed Khuthi to his nanny and went to her bedroom. Few minutes in the shower Otsile was naked joining her.

‘I thought... never mind.’ He caressed her breast and she flinched again.

'Ne ke batla go go patreka mme ge. I wanted to do this.' He said cupping her face kissing her. Her nipples did the most when he started caressing her back going down to her ass squeezing it. 'You taste so sweet.' He murmured.

He stopped and started bathing her and then after a sweet quick back massage they went down stairs for supper. She did not want to touch the subject of sex with Otsile, he was doing all the duties of man except sex and this had made Vule upset.

'Come let me go feed you and my son.'

'Isn't he sleeping?'

'Not Khuthi the one you are carrying.' She rolled her eyes and wore her gown.

After dinner he went to get Khuthi from his nanny and stayed in the living room with little man playing before them on the carpet while they were cuddling on the couch talking business, market and politics. Later on after breastfeeding Khuthi they went to bed. Yes it was peaceful innocent sleep, cuddling naked in bed without sex. He was aroused but he never acted on it.

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‘Everything is booked.’ Mrs. Varoni said. ‘Should I send the chauffer?’”

‘No mama, Otsile will drop us off at the airport.’

‘Do you love him?’

‘He loves me that I know.’

‘Everybody can see that he loves you, the question is do you love him?’

‘I sometimes feel bad for betraying the spirit of Themba?’

‘Ukuphi uThemba mntanami?’ She asked and sighed. ‘As long as you keep holding on to the guilt of the past you will not be able to open your heart fully to someone. Themba loved you enough to give you blessing to move on with your life. Do me a favour mntanami, when we get to Durban, we are going to

finally lay Themba's ashes to rest. The ritual is going to be performed ekhaya Kwa-Ndengezi for you and Khuthadzo.' She said and gave Vule a hug. 'Everything will be fine, let go of guilt and open your heart to new beginnings. Omolemo and Khuthi deserve a healthy loving mother. Now go home.' She said escorting her out.

She was sitting opposite Otsile at her house, watching him playing with Khuthi. It was a tough journey for her but this man sitting in front of her was a blessing in disguised. A man who was patient with her and loved her son like his. What more can the universe offer when a whole green pasture was sitting in front of her. Was he a man that Themba was telling her about, a man that she will not see coming? The man that will love her effortlessly. She rubbed off the thought and went to sit next to him to feed Khuthi.

Friday morning, 7:45 flight, the shortest flight to King Shaka International Airport, the chauffer was already there even though he spelled the Varoni surname wrong with an e at the end. They drove to Umhlanga Rocks in one of Mrs. Varoni's house. Omolemo's nanny and her nanny came along, she knew she would not cope by myself.

Afternoon they sat by the veranda with a warm breeze coming from the sea. They were waiting for Themba's uncle to arrive so that he can prepare everything before leaving for Kwa-Ndengezi. It was a different environment all together peaceful and beautiful. Her phone vibrated and looked at the text smiling.

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serif">'I missed you.'

'I missed you too.'

'How is the little one?'

'Playing with Omolemo and her dog.'

'I missed him too.'

'He sure missed you too. What are you up to?'

'I am up to no good.'

'You better be not having woman in there.'

'The last time I checked you said we were not together so.'

'You are right, go on and misbehave.'

'How is my other son doing?'

'What son now?'

'The one you are carrying.'

'Mxm, you like imagining things ne.'

'Ohk, we will chat later.' He send a heart emoji and she responded with one and Otsile send a surprised face and she laughed.

Themba's uncle left and they later in the afternoon packed and left for the township. They were welcomed by the Varoni family. The meeting was held and they requested that Themba's ashes be buried at his father's tombstone. She did not feel cornered but she was somehow relieved because she did not understand Themba's decision to let his ashes be scattered at the sea.

The following day 3:30 in the wee hours of the morning the ceremony was held and Khuthi was introduced to the Varoni ancestors before heading to the cemetery. They put a goat skin

wring around his hand, they call it “iskhathi samaboya” in Jozi. The elders explained to Vule that she must never remove it until the skin fall off on its own, they further explained that it is to keep Khuthi at peace and should he grow up having unruly problem she must bring him home for another ceremony. She was also cleansed and they gave her blessings.

Was she ready to let go of Themba? Was she ready to open up her heart to next man, to Otsile? Was she deserving of that man, she might not have seen it coming but was she ready? Will she be able to love him as much as he loved her without feeling guilty?

Chapter 57

Later in the afternoon they drove back to Umhlanga Rocks, Vule was tired so was Mrs. Varoni. She took out her phone and called her mother and updated her about the ceremony. She was glad it was all done and she must learn to move on with her life without the father of her son. She was glad they have a lot of Themba's videos that will be useful when Khuthi is grown, it was important that he knows his father and his father's family like Omolemo.

Omolemo came and cuddled up next to Vule's sucking on her thumb. Khuthi was asleep which was another relief. She send Otsile a text that everything went well and then she switched off her phone. She was also overwhelmed by the whole situation, she just needed some quietness with Omo sleeping next to her she felt more closely to Themba, his first love.

She was woken by Mrs. Varoni handing her a phone.

'Hallo!'

'You got me worried V, why did you switch off your phone.'

'I was tired and needed to rest.'

'Should I come pick you up at the airport?'

'No, Mrs. Varoni's will drop us home.'

'Ok, talk later. Please switch on your phone.'

'Will do bye.'

'I love you.' He said and hung up.

She sat up straight and Mrs. Varoni was sitting on the floor with Khuthi and Omo playing. She was fond of her grandchildren and Vule somehow thought she was closing a gap of losing her husband and son until she heard that she was taken by Mr. Varoni's younger brother as a wife since he also lost his wife. It made sense now how she would find a man who had Themba's resemblance at Mrs. Varoni's house now and then.

'How are you feeling?' Mrs. Varoni asked.

'I am still tired.' She said with a faint smile.

'Aren't you hungry?'

'I am and inkomasi and phuthu will do.'

'You have been eating that a lot since you came here.'

'It's the only quickest and stress less meal that Themba taught me to prepare.'

'I will get the helper to warm it up for you.'

'Is it cooked already?'

'Yes, I reckon you enjoy it and I would not live with myself if you starve Otsile's baby.'

'What baby?'

'Look at you mntanam, you don't even know you are pregnant.'

'I am not pregnant.'

'Look at your breast, your flat stomach is not flat anymore.' She stood up and ran to the bedroom she was sleeping in. She took off her clothes and stand in front of the mirror. Her nipples were dark, her stomach indeed was not flat.

'How did that happen?' She whispered. She dressed up and went back to the living room.

'I don't know what happened.'

'You don't have to explain yourself Vule.'

'I am barely coping and working hard to catch up with the time I lost with Khuthi and this.'

'You should not be worrying about that, you are doing a great job with Khuthi and by the time you give birth Khuthi will be a grown ass boy.' She said smiling, she stood up holding Khuthi, sat next to Vule and embraced her.

'You will be fine mntanami, just don't be hard on yourself. Allow Otsile to love you, give him a chance to show you that we should never give up on love just because we lost the people that loved us unconditionally. I was not really into Thokozani when he took me as his wife, I agreed because I was scared to be alone. To my surprise, he loved me with the same love I longed for. He took me with my fears and make loving easy.'

'I know I love him but isn't it too soon.'

'Haaibo, you have been sleeping with that man and you are now carrying his child. What is too soon?'

'I don't know.' They laughed.

'Stop leaving in fear and start living again.'

'I will try. He got me pregnant on purpose.'

'It doesn't matter, and he knows you are pregnant.'

'He is so sneaky. He deserve a silent treatment.'

'Good luck with that. Angizingeni mina.' She said laughing.

'It means I will be heavily pregnant at Joshua and George's wedding.' She sighed.

'And I am still shocked by their theme and venue.'

'Josh love extra ordinary things, the last time we talked he said he is going to make sure that his wedding is going to appear on TV, how he does not know.' She said laughing.

'I fear to see that day and I feel sorry for the wedding planner.'

They sat there talking and it was the first time spending so much time with Themba's mother and she was as loving and kind like her son.

The most interesting thing happened since she came back from KZN. She did not say anything to Otsile about the pregnancy, it was business as usual until she finds Otsile breaking pills in her milk shake.

‘What are you doing?’ He got a little scared because he was not expecting her to come to the kitchen. She has been at his house since the day she landed.

‘I am adding supplements to our shakes.’

‘Can I see the supplements?’

‘It’s just vitamins nothing hectic.’

‘Can I see them?’ He handed them over and she laughed when she saw her name and Dr. Rametsi’s name. She has been planning to go see Dr. Rametsi but scared that he would confirm the pregnancy that she already knew about.

To Otsile’s surprise, Vule took her milk shake and Otsile’s hand and asked him to follow her. She sat down and asked him to sit down.

‘I know you don’t trust me and you are probably scared I may have the same effect like when I was pregnant with Khuthi. I know I have not been a good mother as first but now I am trying to be the best. I don’t know how I got pregnant and I

don't even want to know. I am still shocked and need time to adjust.'

'I am sorry I did not trust you. I was scared and I should have given you a benefit of a doubt and spoke to you.'

'And you must stop calling Josh and George whenever I lock myself in the study. I am fine Otsile.'

'I love you V, with everything in me and I don't think I will survive if you go back to that dark whole.'

'I have passed that stage, if I managed to fight depression after I was raped, after Themba passed on, after pre and post-natal depression I can sure be a better version of me.'

'Did you say rape?'

'Yes, I was raped when I was 19yrs old, I was still a virgin too. That's when I started piano lessons as part of activities recommended by George.' She said.

Otsile called for the nanny to take Khuthi with to the guest bedroom, that's where they slept when they were at Otsile's house. He took Vule's hand and went to his bedroom. They laid on the bed with his hand caressing her tummy.

‘How, how did it happen, how did you get over that. How are you still the bubbly loving person after all that?’ Vule narrated everything to him and she never shared about Themba being part of it. She loved Themba enough to understand that they were both victims, she sworn to herself that she was going to keep Themba’s memory as sweet and loving as he was.

‘I met Themba, he was my first in everything. He made me believe in love and made forget about my past.’

‘My younger sister committed suicide 7 months after the perpetrators were not found guilty. One of the perpetrators father was a powerful man in the military. His son used to work with us and he knew my sister very well because his family was doing business with my father.’

‘I still don’t know what happened to the people that raped me, that is one thing that ticks me off sometimes when I see rape on the news. Don’t get me wrong, they used to have a hold on me but not anymore.’

‘I killed them.’

‘What?’ Vule asked shocked.

‘I killed them one by one a year apart after they were not found guilty.’ Vule was still looking at him shocked. ‘I will do it again and I will not regret it.’

‘Otsile you are scaring me.’

‘When I left the military for good, I knew I will never set my foot there again. I opened a rape victim home with Rodney, Mfundo, Katlo and Sydney. We have made it a point that every victim got justice one way or the other because the justice system was controlled by big dogs with fat pockets. To this day no man lived to tell a tale and no rapist will breath in the same air as me as long as I, Mfundo, Rodney and Moletsane live.’ He said pulling her closer kissing her forehead.

‘I love you.’ He said and she kept quiet trying to digest what Otsile said. Did this man confess to killing? Her heart started pumping fast.

‘I want to go to my house.’

‘Did I scare you?’

‘No, I just want to be by myself.’

‘You not scared of me V, are you?’

‘No, I am not.’ She said and she was honest Otsile saw through her that she was telling the truth. She was a little been shocked but not scared of him.

‘Will you marry me?’

‘I have not told my mother that I am pregnant.’

‘She knows, she told me she suspect that you were pregnant and she said by the time she comes back for a visit she better see a ring on your finger.’

‘Who else knows? I feel like I have disappointed everyone to a point where you all thought I won’t take this pregnancy well.’

‘I am sorry V, it was never our intention. Ke buela nna hela kana. I was really scared and I thought you will hate me.’

‘I can never hate you.’

‘And yet you never told me you loved me.’

‘I love you, it’s just that....’ He was already in between her thighs taking her dress off.

‘Tell me you love me again.’ He said in between kisses going down to her full peach breasts.

‘I love you.’ He groaned loud sliding in into her wet tight vagina. He was thrusting slowly with every stroke assuring her that everything will be ok.

After their doctors appointment, they passed by the restaurant to collect their order. They drove home with Otsile's hand caressing her tummy and driving with the other.

'I asked you to marry me and you have not said anything?'

'Dude, you don't even have a ring. I would have said yes if you got on your knee and proposed like on movies' she said laughing.

He parked on the side of the road just under the e-toll on N1 North before Olifantsfontein ramp. He got out of the car and went around and open the door for Vule and helped her jump off. He took a box out of his track pans and got down on his knee.

'Nte ke go ntshe makgakga and constant excuses. I double dare you to say no.' He said. She had tears in her eyes.

'You are so bad in this proposing thing Mr. September.' She said handing him her hand

'I put this ring on your finger as a token that I am meeting your family next week for bogadi negotiations. I am here to stay V. I was never here to go anywhere I am in this to stay. So tell your little students that ba tlo go nyela sending you di WhatsApp tsa masepa.' He said laughing.

They drove back home with Vule speechless, she sent her mother and Joshua a pic with her engagement ring. Her mother said “finally” and Josh said “lucky bitch” and she laughed.

They were cuddling in bed at Vule’s house when he turned her to look at him.

‘Do you remember when we first met?’ Otsile asked Vule.

‘Yes, at the parking lot acting all bossy and intimidating. I was not scared of you though’

‘Wrong miss attitude.’

‘Where you spying on me?’

‘Nope, I was one of your students. You were my statistician when I was doing PhD.’

‘Why don’t I have a memory of you? Don’t play games with me Mr. September.’

‘Maybe because then I had dreadlocks.’

‘Dude, the annoying guy who overpaid me, always insisted on taking me out for lunch every session?’

‘Yes and stop calling me dude.’ They both laughed.

'I can't believe I am marrying my student.' She said smiling covering her face. 'You used to be so annoying Silas yes Silas September. When did you become Otsile?'

'I have always been Otsile you chose to call me Silas.' He said and she laughed.

'You are still annoying.'

'I only annoy you because you look cute and sexy and makes me horny when you are annoyed.' He said planting kisses on her forehead.

'This world is so small. Like really small. And I fell in love with a saxophone man I never met and it turned out to be you.'

'Really? Am I that good? I remember when we were in Australia you were asking about the man playing a saxophone and I acted dumb.'

'Why did you not say anything? I left that place regretting not asking the manager about the saxophone man.'

'That saxophone is my sanctuary, I started playing it after my divorce. Do you love it?'

'Are you kidding me? I would fall asleep peacefully listening to your favourite songs. I literally know all of them by now.' Vule said smiling.

'I fell in love with you when you used to call me Silas. And I was broken when I found out that you were dating T. Varoni.'

'Why do I feel like you were stalking me?'

'You don't believe in fate?'

'I don't know what I believe in anymore, right now I will believe in celestials, your type of things' they both laughed.

'I feel like I have known you forever V.'

'Maybe we were married in our previous life.'

'Maybe you were a nun in our previous life and I was a priest and we used to do hanky punky in the confession room.'

'My word, you have the wildest mind ever Otsile.'

'Now I want to make love to my fiancé.'

'Now I want to make love to Mr. Silas wa di Saxophone.'

'O thoma go phapha akere V. And you like acting like you don't love sex, you horny freak.'

'Kiss me here and here and here.' she said playfully whilst Otsile followed her finger to every spot she wanted to be kissed. They made sweet love with Otsile whispering sweet nothing to her, that's what the power of her pussy made him do.

A month later

Her mother took her hand walking her down the aisle, the private wedding with family and friends only, was all they wanted. Otsile's daughter was standing next to him and he was holding Khuthadzo. With every step walking towards him with Omolemo and junior Tendani's son walking before her and her mother. Mrs. Maanda took Khuthi from him and he took her hand and faced the priest.

Her short vows:

'All I know is that I wanted to do a lot things, but getting married was not on the list. You annoy me every chance you get and I sometimes feel sad when you not annoying me, I don't know when I fell in love with you but all I know is I am content, happy and ready to walk this journey called life with you.'

They opted for silver grey, white and gold. Otsile had a grey suite and Vule had a silk light grey long gown with a long slit on a side.

His short vows:

'I looked at you once and I knew that the universe loved me enough to bless me with a beautiful soul like you. You are my second chance in everything, my peace, my all in one, I want to annoy you every day because I know you love it. You make breathing in this world easy and I want to breathe the same air with you by my side, every day of my life.'

After they have taken their vows, the priest blessed the rings, the union and they went for photoshoot. The reception was so intimate with two big tables' accommodation 24 people, the kiddie's round table and the bride and groom table facing the guests.

There were beautiful speeches from family and friends, Josh went all out with jokes making people laugh, yes he was the self-appointed MC. Josh worked together with Tebatso, Katlo's wife to plan for this wedding ceremony. Thagoentle recommended Tebatso and there were no regrets or whatsoever because everything was top of the range.

'Nte ke e kgome nyana sephuthelwana se same fao.' Otsile said putting his hand in between Vule's thighs.

'We have people looking at us
lay off with your dirty mind.'

‘Remove my hand then. Warm and ready for daddy.’ He said spreading her legs, shifting the G-string to the side rubbing her clean shaved vagina. He sucked his middle finger and put it back under the table.

The loud jazz music, bunch of long and short organised flowers on their table and the long table cloth saved her. He put his finger inside her vagina and circled it making Vule open for him looking down defeated enjoying his finger inside her. Otsile could see that she was coming a moment she started clenching his finger with her vagina walls. He quickly inserted the second finger and finishes her. She breathed in and out still looking down. He took out his hand and sucked it, he leaned over and kissed her forehead and continue eating.

‘I can’t be believe I had orgasm in the reception on my wedding day.’

‘Phenomenal akere.’

‘You are wild and a risk taker.’

‘I own your soul baby.’

‘Wait until I have your balls in my mouth, we will see who owns whose soul.’

'I love you and I can't wait to get out of here and eat the living hell out of you. I will start in the car, in the plane and.....' He said and Vule gave him "shut up" look and she faced down laughing. 'Wa itse o monate thata jang when you are pregnant?' He said and Vule looked at him defeated. 'Kana ke serious Vule, akere you don't even wear underwear when you are pregnant, ke itseela phasela yame hela gongwe le gongwe ke batlang. Ke gore I can't wait to put my dick in your mouth, your ears, nose.... Wa bona ne....' Vule turned around and looked at him.

'My husband, Mr. Otsile Silas September.' She said softly.

'Yes my wife, Mrs. Vuledzani September.' He said.

'Just shut up please.' They both laughed.

Later on they said farewell and kissed their kids and left for airport. Maldives Island was never ready for Mr. and Mrs. Otsile Silas September

.....**The End**.....

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