

# Prologue

Umfelokazi:Nomvelo's story.

REALITY

“Ngasuke Khaya, ngithi ngizogana kanti ngizogana is'febe sendoda...”

The taxi driver increases the volume of the Maskandi music that he is playing after dropping off a passenger of the taxi. I have my head rested on the seat as I am looking out of the window for a moment before I turned my head back to the taxi. The reality of things that I was trying to escape. He has a plastic pocket filled with green grapes that he is indulging in. I have a love/hate relationship with front seat of the taxi. The love part is the part where I don't have to count any money and have time to think and enjoy the ride without interruptions. The hate part is the part where I am either told to shift and sit on the engine so that someone can get in or when I have to count money or pass it. Sitting at the back has its obstacles too and for a slim woman like me I go through being squeezed between two well fed people just so that they can add the last passenger.

I am holding onto the plastic that I have on my lap just so that the cake doesn't get the chance to even fall.

“Do you want some?”,The driver offers some grapes but I decline.

It's my husband's birthday today and I am going to visit him at the hospital. He has been there for over a month now and I have been going there everyday to see him. He was shot at work during work hours as a Security man at the bank. A heist gone wrong I should say because that day the money was being placed in the vaults for the machines to keep on working and people can withdraw some money. He is getting better by day, I believe because he has been talking to me since he woke up from his coma. We have been married for 6 years, preferably I should say or roughly and haven't been blessed with child yet. I don't work and have never worked a day in my life, well a proper job but I do wash people's laundry and blankets for money to put something on the table as well. The main reason why my

husband and I have never had a child yet it is because I am not ready to bring one on this earth. A child is a blessing yes but I don't want my child growing up living the life I had lived. Struggling.

“Erobothini”, I say to the driver and he lowers the volume before he slows the taxi down and stops.

I thank him and get out of the taxi and before I knew it, it was gone. I made my way through to the hospital and signed in for visiting. The security lady has gotten used to me now that we talk from time to time. Just simple greetings here and there. I get to the ward that my husband is in and I see a nurse with him asking him a few questions. He smiles faintly when he sees me and my heart swells at that sight. I return the smile and place the cake onto his bedside and wait for the nurse to finish before she leaves.

I pull a chair and sit next to him before placing my hand on his.

“How are you?”, I ask with a bit of worry on my face.

“I am good, good”, he says.

“That's good, what did the doctor say?”

“They said I will see him next week, he will come and check if my vitals are okay but everything else is okay”

“There is a problem?”, I ask.

“Yes but they stabilized them”, I close my eyes.

“Sthandwa Sami ungakhathazeki(My love don't worry)”, he says.

How can I not? I want him back home and to see him in this space laying on this bed sharing room with 6 more people is not what I want. I want him to come through that door in our rented backroom to find a warm cooked meal after a long day just to relax.

I open my eyes and look at him with a faint smile.

"I brought some cake for you", I say.

He smiles and I feel happy again. To make him smile in this state makes me happy.

"Really?, Why. What is special today?", He says in a mockery tone.

"Haibo it's your birthday", He chuckled and winced a bit.

"It's still sore?", he touched his bandage around his torso.

"A bit but it is not bad anymore", I just nod while pressing my lips.

"Let me see that cake", he says and gives off a faint smile.

I stand up and get the plastic. I open it and show off the cake that I bought from shopright. It's black current and I know he will love it.

"Happy birthday Myeni wami", I say.

"Please can you kiss me", He says with his glossy eyes and I place the cake and kiss him.

A test drops from his eye and I capture it with my thumb.

“Don't cry”,I say softly.

”Ngiyabonga Mkami, lapho othatha khona kwande futhi ubusiseke kakhulu ukudlula ukuqonda kwakho(Thank you my wife,Wherever you are taking from may it multiply and be blessed beyond your measure)”,He says.

“I am already blessed with you”,I say and he chuckled lightly.

“I am truly blessed.”,he says.

I love my husband so much and I am happy with our life. We stay together and he promises to share his cake with the other patients as well, I am happy that I made his birthday feel special. Visiting hours came to an end and I gave him a kiss before I said my goodbyes and promised to see him tomorrow. I left the ward and made my way out of the hospital. Before I even walked out of the gates of the place I was shouted for by a male nurse running towards me.

I stopped by the security wondering if I may have forgotten something.

“Sorry Sisi You are being asked for inside”

“Did I forget something?”,I ask.

“They didn't mention”,he says.

I look at the security person before I followed the nurse back to the hospital.

Maybe they don't allow the cake because patients need healthy food as they are recovering. Yes that is why, I did bring some yoghurt for My husband to indulge in while he is here and have something nice to eat as well. We get inside and I am shown to stay on the waiting benches and I sit there waiting for whatever that I am being called for. My bag is on my lap with the straps tightly being held by my hand. I wait and a nurse walks up to me.

“Hello”

“Hi”,She smiles and sits next to me.

“I am glad to finally see you again. I always see you here everyday to check on your husband”,I nod my head.

“He has no one here besides me and so as I”,She nods.

“Where are your family members? His family members?”,She asks.

“His family is back in KZN so as mine”,She nods.

“Mmmh”,She nods.

I keep quiet and watch her as she does the same for a moment.

“What is going on? Is there something wrong?”,I ask.

She looks at me with eyes filled with pity. Is that pity?

“I don't know how to tell you this”,She says.

“What?”,I ask.

“Just a few minutes after your left your husband shut down”,I keep quiet trying to understand what she means.

“Will he be okay?”,I ask looking at her with a bit of hope that he will be okay.

“I am sorry,his kidneys failed him. He didn't make it. There is nothing we can do”,She says and I feel my heart sinking. A sharp knife plunged through my heart.

I sit there for a few seconds and I look at her.

“Can I see him?”,She nods and stands up.

I do the same and follow after her, we get to the ward and I walk to my husband's bed. He is laid there and already covered as well. I place the bag on the bedside and she uncovers him and he looks peaceful. He was okay just a few minutes ago. Alive and I promised to see him tomorrow. I touched his hand and he is still warm. I hold his hand and look at him.

“Thank you”,I let go of his hand and then I move taking my bag and thank the nurse before leaving the hospital.

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“Ausi Mvelo! How are you? How is Malome?”,It's Rethabile. The little one, one of the other tenants daughter.

She is 9 and very smart as well, she loves mixing English, Setswana and Isizulu when she is speaking of which to me is fascinating how a young child can be multi lingual really. I love her personality and she always the one greeting you when you come back from wherever you went only after 2pm when she is back from school.

“He is fine.”,I say with faint smile and she nods before rushing off to play with other kids.

I get to my room and I open my bag and rummage through it and I search for my keys before I find them and unlock the door. I get inside and I make my way to the wardrobe and I open it. I pull out the bag I will need and I start with packing my clothes inside. I keep on heaving a sigh here and there and I then go back to the wardrobe to look for my black doek and I hear a knock on the door.

“Makhi! O kae?(Where are you?)”,I lift my head up.

“I am this side”,I say and turn to the door.

“Hawu uyapakisha, where are you going?” ,It's my neighbor by the room next door. She is Rethabile's mother and she is also multi lingual. I have gotten to learn few words here and there through them. They are Setswana by origin but staying in Johannesburg does garentee that you learn alot of languages.

“I am going home,KZN”,it is so sudden.

“Hawu why?” ,she seems confused.

I never understood her at times. Especially the way she dresses and all but she has a very good heart despite that and I have grown to like her. My husband had a problem with her though and thought she will teach me how to change men and wear ungodly. He didn't like me being associated with her much but he would try to hide it at times.

“My husband passed away today”,I say and it sinks in.

I sit on the bed and she walks in side with her hands over her mouth in shock.

“Haibo ntate Gwala is no more? Byang, I thought gore o sharp and everything is getting better? ”,She asks in disbelief.

I nod my head and tears burn my eyes and they slowly make their way down my cheeks. I quickly wipe them with the back of my hands and stand up from the bed.

“It is his birthday today”,I say and carry on with what I was doing and get done.

She is silent for a long time before she comes and gives me a hug.

“Askies hle,I don't know how much pain you are feeling the moment.”,I just nod.

“Thank you Mimi, I will call you when I get home”,I say.

“And the funeral? His body?”She asks.

“I will see when I get home”,she nods.

She fiddles with her boobs and takes out a R200 and places it on my palm and folds my hand, hers being over mine.

“I will pray for you”,I just nod.



“Thank you sisi”

I don't even know if she can pray but hey! I can't judge a book by its cover. She gives me a kiss on the forehead and tells me she will accompany me to get a taxi.

We walk out of the room when I am done and I lock the door. We make our way out of the gate.

“Thabile, I am coming back!”, Mimi says to her daughter who is playing and she nods.

My mind is all over but for now I don't know what to think. What's next?

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It was already dark when I arrived home, it has been some time since I came back here to ceremonies or anything of that sort and now I am coming to report to my in laws that their son is gone. The last time we talked was last week when they asked about the recovery of my husband and now, now I have to tell them that it was false hope. He didn't recover instead he left this earth. I see a car that I am not familiar with as I make my way inside the yards. My shoes have collected the dust since I got off the taxi and I am sure my feet are dirty now but at the moment that is not what I really care about. I get to the door and I knock on it placing my bag on the floor.

“Nomvelo!”, My mother in law says looking at me in shock.

“Mah”, my throat is dry.

“What are doing here late?”, she asks.

I look at her. I feel a lump forming in my throat.

"I...I",She looks at me.

"MaThusi let the child in",my father in law appears from behind her.

She moves out of the way and I grab my bag and walk inside.

My husband's younger brother is here. I thought he was in Capetown becoming something. The car must belong to him. There is his sister as well here.This is not easy at all.

"Why are you here at night?",The mother in law asks.

"I...",I still couldn't say it and tears formed in my eyes.

"How is Jabulani?"

they stream down my cheeks that moment.

"Usishiyile emhlabeni(He has passed on)",I finally say it.

"Ujabulani? My child? No!"The mother says.

There is silence in the room as she is screaming her lungs out crying for her son.

I muffled my cries. I have to be strong and get through this, I cannot break down now I have to comfort her, them.

"I am sorry mah"

“Oh God! My child!”,She was rushed to the couch before she could faint any moment. I wish I can bring him back, I want him back.

It's the following day, My father in law and Jabulani's brother were already on their way to Johannesburg to sort out the funeral arrangements and getting his body. I have been seated on this mattress since morning and every family member who could make it here on time. Made it. I haven't had time to call my mother and inform her of the passing of Jabulani and quiet frankly I wasn't in the state of mind to do so. I know these few days that I am going to be here will be tough. As much as my husband loved me but his family was not too happy about our marriage. Apparently I am a Leach who was ready to Leach all his money off him. I never had much luck in life really but I always got through it the best way I know how.

“You are just seated there when you know very well you sent thugs to kill Jabulani!”,It is my mother in law spitting venom as she walks out of the passage coming to the lounge with a family member by her side.

I swallowed.

“I would never”,I say.

“Shut up Mthakathi ndini! You killed my son!”,She screams even the people who are here to pass condolences hear it.

Tears stream down my cheeks and I cover my face muffling my cries. I am quickly roughly grabbed to remove my hands and a slap lands on my face before she tries to choke me.

“Haibo!”,People scream.

"I will kill you! You killed my son!"

They get her off me and my face is stained with tears.

"What is going on here? I could hear the screaming all the way from outside!", I wipe my tears and I look to the door.

I have never felt so relieved to see a person in my life. It's my mother, she looks around and makes her way towards me and she comes and kneels beside me.

"Ngizokuqoba iminwe Wena sgogwana uthinte ingane Yami futhi. Angizalanga ingane zami ukuthi zizothintwa ibozi ezinjengawe uyangizwa?!(I will chop off your fingers you wrinkled granny if you touch my child again. I didn't birth my children for them to be hit by low life's like you do you hear me?)", My mother says in rage.

"I don't want her or your family in my house!", the mother in law fights.

"Too bad we are staying and you keep yourself together if you want to live to see your son's send off", They pull the mother in law away.

My mother hugs me and I feel safe for a moment. I love my mother and she is the fighter shame. She always fought my battles in everything. I was never one to be able to fight and my father too as well unlike my sister Nomvula. She has the fighting spirit in her.

"Shh mom is here", I nod my head.

I wonder how she knew that I needed her but either way I am happy she is here. She wipes my tears from my face.

“Nomvula go and make tea for us, I don't trust these people”, I look up to see my sister and she looks at me and nods before walking away.

I stay in my mother's arms until I am more calm.

“Where is baba?”, I ask.

“He is still in Mooi river but he will be here on the day of the funeral”, I nod my head.

“How are you feeling?”, She asks.

“Kubuhlungu(It's painful)”

“Its okay my baby, nothing doesn't pass. It is God's will”, well it hurts.

”Keep on praying. I hope you are still spirtual”

“I do attend church every Sunday ”, I say

“Mmh Phela asazi ukuthi nenzani laphaya egoli(We don't know what you are doing there in the city)”, I keep quiet.

Nomvula comes back with the tea and my mom let's me go and takes it.

“Hello sisi”, I say to her.

I haven't seen her in a long time and I am happy to see her.

"Hi", She places everything down and walks away.

I feel bad. I don't know what happened between us but we used to be close growing up. It was only us and we had each other. My mother was blessed with daughters at the same time and to her surprise on the delivery day. The day we were born was rainy and during spring and so my mother named us Nomvelo and Nomvula. Mother of nature and rain. Nomvula had always been the lucky one in life. She was smarter in school, went to university through bursary and has a proper job at the office. Has a car everything you can think off that I don't have. Ever since I got married our relationship has been rocky and I don't know why.

"Don't mind her. Drink some tea to calm down" i just nod my head.

I take my tea and drink up.

I really wonder and want to know.

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My mother in law has locked herself in one of the bedrooms and more of the Gwala family has arrived. A call was received from my father in law that they have arrived in Johannesburg and indeed Jabulani is no more. I don't know how to feel, my mother has been encouraging me to let my emotions out and actually cry but I have cried and got tired and cried and got tired once more so now I am good. My mother is here by my side while people are coming in and out to pass their condolences and then go to MaThusi's bedroom to check up on her as well.

"Are you hungry?", my mother asks.

“No”

“Mmh okay but you have to eat some time Nomvelo. You cannot starve yourself”,she mentions.

Nomvula walks inside the house and she comes towards us and she stands in front of us while holding her phone.

“I have to leave mah, I will see you on the day of the funeral”,she mentions.

“Okay, travel safely”,she nods.

She turns and walks off after that.

“Let me see her out, I am coming back”,my mother says and gets up going after Nomvula.

I stay there on the mattress and soon my mother in law comes out of the bedroom with one of the aunts that has been cooped up with her in there since morning.

She looks at me and they pass going to the kitchen without saying anything and I sigh. My phone rings and I take it out of my bra and I look at it. I answer the call.

“Hello”

“Nomvelo how are you? Did you arrive safely? I forgot to call and ask yesterday”, she mentions.

“I am good Sisi. I am holding on”

“Shame, ke ya tlaolohana gore it's not easy mara re teng for wena and you don't have to carry the burden alone”,she mentions.

“Kuzolunga Sisi wami. Ngizofika lapho mangiceda Lana ngentozami(Everything will be okay my sister. I will come there when I am done here with my things)”,she continues.

“Thank you again Mimi”

“You don't have to. I have to go sokhuluma(we will talk)”,I nod.

“Okay bye”,I hang up after that.

I shove the phone back where it was.

“You are now calling your associates and informing them that my son has passed on”,it's my mother in law.

She is leaning by the door way.

“I love Jabulani, with my whole heart...”

“Uqamba manga sathane!(You are lying Sathane!)”,she says in much rage.

I keep quiet as my heart is beating off my chest.

My mother walks in and looks at my mother in law.



“Nomvelo get up come”,my mother says.

”Mah?”,I ask not sure. I am not supposed to move here.

“We are leaving, I won't stand this woman insulting you after marrying her son never!”,she says.

“My son is what?”,My mother in law asks in rage.

“we all know that your son's biggest success was marrying my daughter.!”

“This barren thing!”

“You are calling my child barren?”,My mother seems angry.

“She didn't produce not even a single Gwala child and hasn't worked a day in her life! All she did was suck my son's money”

“What money? Your son didn't have a profe...”

“That's enough mah! I will not have you both insulting my sister's marriage like that. Nobabili nibadala for that and Wena to be bickering like this when you should be honouring your son's memory!”,it's my sister. I thought that she had already left.

There was silence in the room.

“MaThusi suck it up! We are all at a loss here not only you! Stop insulting my sister she is not your child to insult like that. My mother didn't birth her for you to do that and mah please that is someone son you

shouldn't be insulting him. Uzibangela amabhadi ukhuluma Kabi ngomuntu odlulile(You are causing bad luck on yourself by saying bad things about a person who has passed on)",she clicks her tongue and walks out after

My mother in law turns around and walks away to the kitchen. My mother follows after Nomvula.

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The day of laying my husband came and everything was set properly. He had a funeral cover and so as his mother i guess. I am happy that he got to enjoy his last days on his earth with me and I am happy that I made him smile that day. It hurt but I can't do anything now. It is in God's hands

The whole week of waiting for his body to arrive and while his father and his brother were getting things in order in Johannesburg it was tough. The family fighting. Some siding with my mother in law's statement of me killing thier son and some disagreeing. It was that fight

Things got better with my mother there with me and I am grateful to have had her by my side. Today I am going back to Johannesburg. I have to try and piece my life together and also get my things from there and move back here. My mother offered for me to come back to Mooi river to live with them with my father since I have nothing left for me in Johannesburg and plus I will not be moving in with my in-laws, not under my mother's watch.

Mimi came to the funeral with a foreign man that I don't know and she stayed. Today I am leaving with her going back while getting a lift from them and the man she came with.

"Are you sure you don't want me to come with you?",my mother asks with worry all over her face.

"i will be okay.",I say.

"Don't worry my wife.Nomvelo is old she will be okay",my father says

“But she just lost her husband. She needs me”,She glances at me and I give her a hug

“I will call when I have arrived”,I say.

“Okay then”,she holds me back and we break the hug after some time.

I go to my father and he hugs me.

“Go well my child”,I nod and I walk away from them rushing to the car.

I get inside and close the door and I look out of the window for a moment before I greet the man.

“This is my friend Nomvelo,Mvelo this is Kabelo. A friend”,I nodded.

The drive started and away we leave this place I call home. Going to a city that I didn't know well when I came there 4 years ago. That I saw as foreign and is still foreign. After we have connected to the free way the guy takes out a cigarette and he starts smoking while rolling his window down. Mimi is in her phone doing whatever that she is doing with those smart phone.

“Mimi where is Rethabile?”,I ask after a long time of not asking about her.

“Oh she is at her friends house”,she mentions.

“Is it safe?”,I ask.

“Yes, I checked”,I just nodded.

She smiles and looks at me.

“She made me buy a dress last week for her. She said it's for church.”,I smile.

“I am sure she will look beautiful”,she just nods.

Mimi is not religious. In all the years I have known her she has never set her foot in church.

“So when you get home what are you going to do?”,Mimi asks before she discards her phone. The guy sis till smoking and keeps on wiping his sweat with his top off his forehead.

“I will pack my things and sell all the things I can't go back to KZN with”,she bawled her eyes when I mentioned KZN.

“You are coming back?”,she asks.

“Yes, I can't stay in Johannesburg anymore. I only came because of my husband and I have nothing to do there since he is no more”,I say.

“Job?”

“I don't have one, I can't pay for the rent Mimi”,she keeps quiet for a moment.

“I will pay for your rent for some time. You can't leave yet,atleast find something there and if all fails then go home and be with your parents”,she mentions.

The guy shoots his eyes at her as she mentions this. I will think about it but I can't let her pay for my rent. It's too much for her self as well. Also groceries have to be bought. I don't know what I will do but I will have to figure things out.

"I will think about it", I say and she smiles.

"Perfect!", she turns to face the front now.

I look out of the window thinking about everything. I don't know how I will do everything but surely there has to be a way of doing things right. I look out of the window as the car proceeded on the high way.

I miss him, my husband. It still has not sunken in well that he is gone. A part of me feels like this is a dream a dream that I will wake up from and I will be okay but it is not. I am in touch with reality and reality at the moment is giving me a bitter pill to swallow at this instant. I sigh, how will life go one without him?

# Chapter 1

SINK IN

I hang the wet bedding on the washing line and I finish and dip my hands into the rinsing water just to wash them off. I get done and I wipe my hands against my clothes and I take the basin and go away from the line to discard it away.

“Ausi Mvelo!”, I turn around and it is Rethabile.

She runs up to me followed by her little duo behind her. The next door neighbour's twins that she loves so dearly. She is always fascinated by them especially that they look alike and dress alike. She was confused at first how can there be two of the same person and did not understand why she was not double but I too could not explain it well to her so I just stuck with the “God Knows”.

They reach me and she looks proper so as her friends. Not dirty but much more clean just like she looks every Sunday when she wants to tag along to go to church with me.

“Hello”, I greet them.

Rethabile gives me a frown and folds her arms.

“Mama told me that you don't want to go to church today, why?”, She asks.

I haven't been to church for 3 weeks now and I am scared. Scared of the looks that the congregation will give me. They would say a demon attacked my marriage when in all fact God took him and it was my

husband's time to depart from this earth. Do not get me wrong I still do pray and my mother reminds me of that. I cannot shutter and shy away from the eyes of God not but I cannot seem to be able to face his people at the congregation.

"I am not well",I say.

"But you are washing, you seem okay",This smart mouth.

I cannot dodge this one can I? She is even wearing the dress she urged her mother to buy just so she could flaunt at church.

"Come I will get some juice for you",She seems to ease up and calls her duo to follow after her.

For a 9 year old sometimes I really cannot comprehend Rethabile but she is a sweetheart in her way too as much as she is bossy at times but she is a wonderful child.

We get into my room and I go and place the basin behind the door. She jumps on to sitting on the bed and her friends follow. I sigh and I go look through the cupboards for the juice that I have. I take out the jug and go and collect water from my little water drum.

"Ausi Mvelo Mama told me you are leaving. Is it true?",I stop that moment and stare at the jug that is in my hands.

I have my back against her.

"Yes, I am leaving"

"Why?"

“Because Malume Jabu is no more”, There is silence between us.

I hear her speaking to her friends meaningless things and I realise that she has let the thing go.

I cannot keep up with her asking me questions that I sometimes couldn't answer but the real reason why I am leaving Johannesburg it is because I have no job and that means I have no life here. When my husband found a job in this city. We were part of the newly wedded couple. He wanted us to move. Oh he believed that our lives would change drastically and we would live a very comfortable life that consist of a bit of luxury in it. I believed it and I knew that the life was coming our way once I saw the tall buildings of this place. I had always heard of if, the beauty of its fruits but never have I been told that your life can be normal even when you reach here.

Do not get me wrong. I love the life that I lived with my husband. It consisted of its peace and overall the fact that we had each other in our lives made things easy for us.

I love Jabu, still do. I do not think that I would love any other man the way I loved my husband. He brought joy into my life until the last day here on earth.

I get done with mixing and diluting the concertrated juice and I pour it for them in the cups and they thank me. They gulp it down feeling the satisfaction of having something go well down their throats. I smile when Rethabile their spokesman brings the cup down and says:

“Thank you Mvelo”, She licks her lips and goes back to drinking their juice.

She makes sure not to mess her beloved church dress.

They finish up and jump off the bed and they bring the cups to me and I place them in the dish basin.



“Bye”,The three of them wave and leave the room.

I wave to them and shake my head in thoughts while smiling.

My husband was very fond of Rethabile despite him not liking Mimi but he liked Rethabile and Rethabile enjoyed his company too.

I take the jug full of juice and I place it in the fridge and I turn to turn on the kettle so that I can take a bath and then get on finding ways to seek the bed and all these big things that I cannot go back to Kzn with. So far I have only one person who has been interested in buying the bed but beside that I have not found anyone who is interested in anything else.

This is quiet tough and I have only a week left before I have to move out. I cannot use the money my husband has left in his bank account because I have to use it to get back home.

The kettle starts to heat the water up and I clean away in the room and I get done in no time. I take out my clothes and lay them on the bed before I go and grab the bathing basin to pour the water inside.

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I run my fingers through the bible page and turn it over to the next as I am seated at the edge of the bed. I have bathed and already cooked food for the day and I thought I should take in the food of the thought.

“Makhi!!”,Mimi's voice calls out for me on the other side of the door.

I hear her knocking loudly on the door and I place my Bible next to me and I stand up and go to the door and open it. She leans against it.

“Why did you lock yourself in here? You will be depressed.”,She asks making her way inside.

“I was reading a Bible verse”,She looks on the bed.

“Vele why don't you go to church anymore?”

“I am scared”,I bite my bottom lip.

“Why?”

“I do not know how to face the congregation”

“I know church has judges that is why I do not go there but you love it so you shouldn't care.”,She mentions.

“I don't know”

“Akere wa morata modimo?(Isn't it you love God?)”,I nod.

“Then try to go only for him. I need your prayers in my life my friend”,She says and kicks off her heels.

“Thank you”,She smiles.

“Anyway I am not here for that.”,I give her my attention.

She lays down on my bed and I join her and sit next to her.

"I found a job for you at a pub",I frown.

"What is a pub?",She giggles.

"Oh I forgot about your innocence. It is like a chesanyama club thing, I don't know how to explain it"

"I do not drink Mimi"

"I know, but it serves as a restaurant during the day. They need a cleaner and I thought maybe you might need it",I frown.

"Thank you for considering me but I cannot do it.",I am scared.

"It has a really good pay. You won't touch any alcohol except when moving it to clean I promise and it is during the day. It's more calm",She says.

"I-"

"The pay is R 3500",I pop my eyes at her while playing my hands to cover my mouth.

"Mimi you are lying"

"I promise you. My friend pulled some strings for you and we can go tomorrow to town to get your CV done and get you to meet the manager for a little interview but the job is yours"

"Is that not corruption?",I ask.

“No baby it is connections. You can start your own life Mvelo think of that. What are you going to do in KZN?”,I shrug my shoulders.

“Just think about it”,She mentions.

I have never worked in a place like that before. Will they take me? I have never had a proper job so I do not know what is done.

“Let me go, I am tired”,She gets off the bed and picks up her shoes.

“Bye Makhi”,She waves her hand that has her usually long fake nails.

I stand up and go after her to walk her out. She goes out and I close the door. I do not know what to do but I feel like praying about this. I get my Bible and I close it before I get on my knees before my bed and pray about this situation.

After praying I get up and I go and dish up some food. If I move I might not gain this opportunity in my life once again. I am 27 years and I have never worked a proper job in those years, this could be my chance but with God in it he should direct me on what to really do.

“Oh Myeni wami ngaze ngakukhumbula(Oh my husband I miss you so much)”,He would know what to say now about this situation.

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It is the following day and the sun is out. Mimi and I are in town and she is walking a little bit faster than I though she is in those high shoes of her's.She is in the shortest short that you can find and a white vest.

She carries her bag with caution and so as I. We get to an internet cafe and she goes further inside and I follow her.

“Mimi my baby!”

One of the guys there greets her.

He has a weird accent and I notice that he is not from this country by origin. I am standing behind her feeling a bit hot in these black clothes of mine and my doek covering my hair but I love my doek very much. Mimi complained about my outfit when we left but I had to remind her that I am in mourning and that I should wear black in respecting and honouring my husband's last memory.

She takes out some paper with the information that we drafted for my CV this morning. It was quiet quick too.

“Please type this fast”,She says rather in a bored tone.

She is not entertaining the man in front of her but he takes the paper and gets on with going to the computer and getting whatever needs to be done fast.

I look at her and she turns to me and smiles.

“We will be out of here in no time. I asked Kabelo to come and fetch us and take us to your new work place. It is in the suburban area too so we need to know the taxi route too”,I swallow.

“Okay”,she takes out her phone and types away.

My phone rings in my bag and I take it out. I press the answer button and answer.

“Hello Mah”

“Unjani Mntanami?( How are you my child?)”,She worries too much.

She has been calling much more frequently than she has ever done before just to check up if I am still okay and alive.

“Yes I am well, I am going job hunting”,I mention and there is a pin drop of silence.

“I thought you were coming back”,She says.

“Yes but I got a job here and I am going to be interviewed. I have never worked a good job before Mah”

“You can find a job here in Mooi river or even Pietermaritzburg if you want to be a bit further from us”,Worry cannot be hidden in her voice.

“If all fails I will come down”,She sighs.

“I guess there is nothing I can do now”

I keep my silence and swallow.

“I will call you in the afternoon. ”

“Okay Mama”,She hangs up and I shove my phone back in my bag.

“You don't look good”,Mimi says.

I just give her a faint smile.

“That was my mother. She is not happy that I might stay here”

“Ohw”,I look at her.

I sigh and close my eyes before I open them again. The guy who Mimi gave a task comes back and hands over the new printed paper and Mimi takes it.

“I knew I can count on you. I will call you Neh?”,She says and pulls me out of the internet cafe without paying.

“Why did you not pay?”,I ask.

“He owes me”,I wonder what he owes her.

We get a taxi and now it takes us to the other side of town where Mimi said we will meet Kabelo, her friend. We get out of the taxi soon and we see Kabelo parked on the other side of the road smoking as he is outside his car. Mimi pulls my hand and we get to him. This man is always untidy or maybe I do not know the real definition of people being clean. Mimi hugs him and he hugs her back.

“Belo you remember my friend Mvelo”

“Yah, fede”,I just nod.

Mimi tells me to get inside the car and I do so. She goes around and gets in the front and the guy finishes his cigarette and gets inside and starts the car before driving off.

“Rethabile o Kae?”( where is Rethabile?)”,The man speaks to Mimi.

“ At her friends”

“I want to see her”,Mimi starts getting a bit irritated.

“You will see her”,She turns to face me.

“How are you feeling?”

“Nervous”

“Don’t be. You will do great”,I just nod my head.

After a while of driving around places that I have never been to in Johannesburg we arrive at a place. Mimi hops out of the car and I follow. We leave her friend behind and we enter the place. This place looks beautiful and has a what seems like a bar area. Workers can be identified from their black outfits and little white and red aprons. Mimi pulls me and she locates a man who is talking to someone else. He is in a red shirt and black pants.

“Hello”,Mimi greets and the man turns to us.

“Oh, you must be the ones for the job”,Mimi nods.

“Yes this is my friend for the job”,He looks at me.



“I see she has dressed the part already”,He mocks and they both laugh.

“Okay follow me”,He says and we follow after him. I am getting nervous of being here.

---

We are at Kfc and I am having the coke while Mimi is murdering her burger. I sometimes wonder if she forgets that she has a daughter that she left home alone or with other people she hardly interacts with and she seems fine with it. I sometimes wondered and asked myself does she not have a relative that she can leave with Rethabile so she can carry on with her life and do as she pleases until she is satisfied and ready to mother her daughter properly as she is growing and soon will need guidance in this world but Mimi is not prepared for that.

She wipes her hands and mouth and takes her cup and sips her drink.

“Yoh it has been an exhausted day. Ke lapile nou ( I am tired now)”,She mentions.

“We should go, Rethabile is alone”

“Ah don't worry about her. She is a big girl”,That is what worries me. She is not so big.

I just nod and she looks at me.

“Aren't you hungry?”,she asks.

“No, I will eat at home”,She nods.

“Don't worry you will get the job”

“I hope so”, Well now I am hopeful.

I was put onto perspective of what I will be doing and it is not bad and for the pay it is really good.

Could this be God opening doors for me. As little they may seem to someone else but they are a big achievement to me. We pack up our food and we then leave the place. I feel the urge to call my mother once I am home. I know that she is unhappy with the sudden changes that have occurred but I would love to give this a shot on its own.

“You seem to wonder off a lot Nomvelo”, Mimi mentions.

“I am just thinking about home”

“You miss everyone?”, I just lie and nod my head.

“Well you will see them soon”, She smiles.

I return the smile to her. I really hope that happens soon. I need to go and also check on the Gwala's and see how they are doing. They must be in a distraught situation like I am after the passing of Jabulani. I know my mother in law never liked me ever and she has never for once tried to hide it but I do worry about her at times. She is the mother that Jabulani gave to me. She is my mother too.

“I want to buy something from the shops quickly”, Mimi mentions.

“It is fine. We can go”, she smiles.

“Let’s go then”,We hurry off.

We should really be getting back home. I am worried about Rethabile the most in all of this.

## Chapter 2

I look at myself through the little mirror in front of me and I look at myself. I am nervous. I had tied the doek well making sure that it is properly secured. I sighed and I look at myself and I feel okay, ready but also at the same time I am nervous. I have never really done this before in my life but a job is a job right? Cleaning cannot be that difficult right?

A knock surfaces from the door and I quickly go and open the door and I find Rethabile standing in front of the door smiling ready in her school uniform with her back pack in her hands.

“Hello, Mama told me you are taking me to school”, She says making her way inside the room and I close the door.

She places her bag on the bed and opens it and takes out her school jersey.

“Yes”, I say

I had opted to accompany Rethabile to school today because I felt nervous and I thought maybe hearing her chatting self before I go to work would distract me a lot. I have never done this before too. Taking a child to school, what does she need? Does she have everything that she needs?

“Do you have everything you need?”, She takes her jersey and puts it on and I go to her and pull her to fix her hair, she smiles.

“How long are you going to wear these black clothes?”, She asks.

She has asked this question more than 3 times now.

“For a year”

“Why?”, See? The questions that she asks always have a follow up question with it.

“Because I married Malume and now he is gone so I have to remember him”, She just nods.

I think her questions have depleted but not for long that I know.

“Have you eaten?”

“Yes, Mama has cornflakes for me. Do you eat cornflakes Aunty Nomvelo?”, I place my hands on her shoulders.

“No”

“Okay”, She jumps into the bed and crosses her legs and I watch her.

“We will leave soon. Do you want a fruit?”

“Yes please”, I smile and I go and open the fridge and stare at it's almost emptiness. I sigh.

I grab the last fruit for her and close the fridge then give it to her.

She thanks me and she shoves it in her bag and zips it up.

I go and wear my shoes and I then take my bag. I look at myself for the last time before I turn to Rethabile.

“Come let's go”, She jumps off the bed and I fix it before we leave the room.

We see some of our fellow neighbour mates who live in the same yard as us ready to go to work.

“Good morning!”, Rethabile greets waving at them.

Everyone knows Rethabile. She is a bubbly child and does not shy away from talking.

We walk out of the yard and I hold her hand.

She has started talking, more about how difficult she is feeling grade 4 and I just listen. It has been years since I was last in that grade.

She tilts her head to the side when she asks a question and I answer her along the way and some I could not even answer.

I have never met Rethabile's father before but I have had her away gone to her grandmother's house.

We get to her school and I give her a hug before she runs off screaming “Bye Ausi Mvelo!”, I wave at her.

I look at her as she disappears with other children and I smile before I turn away and I go and catch a taxi going to town.

Today I will be starting my first day at work. Yes I got the job at that place we last went to with Mimi and I was really surprised. I did not think that they would get back to me but they did just as per Mimi's words.

The taxi arrives and I hop inside and pull my bag closer to me. I am nervous. I do not think this will subside down anytime soon but I try to keep myself calm through the journey.

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I have arrived! It looks quiet but there are not a lot of people here but the workers are moving around. I am following this man in a red shirt on, he is the manager that we met the last time. I scan my eyes around as I look at this place admiring its scenery.

"You are not the only cleaner we have here. There about 4 of you", I nod my head at him.

We get to another room and I find two ladies there dressed in a black and red cleaning attire.

"This is where staff change and they will show you the supplies. I have given you your schedule. Please stick to it"

"I will", The guy nods and he moves out of the room.

I greet the ladies and they greet back.

"I am Kay, I have been cleaning here for 3 years now", One says and she smiles coming towards me.

"This is my first time having a job", my mouth slips.

“I hope you going to enjoy the independence”,I hope so too.

They show me around and I get to wear the cleaning Attire. What I like is that it is black and I still to keep my mourning attire on.

We go and get cleaning supplies and we are to start with cleaning the front floor meaning the main part of this place where everyone comes in and goes out.

We start with putting the chairs up and then we get down into sweeping in different sections then we mop there after.

The whole morning we were cleaning different places of this place and then we had a break. Our break we could bring our lunch or we can buy here at our workplace and we get a discount.

The others went to buy some food ordering from the restaurant meal and I go to the bathroom. It looks quiet fancy. This place is fancy, I get inside and use the bathroom. When I need to flush I could not figure out where is the handle to flush. I pull anything I could get my hands on and finally I found the handle and flushed. Relief rushes through me and I sigh. I get out of the bathroom and I go and wash my hands. I look at myself through the mirror and smiled.

“Thank you”,I really should thank God and Mimi for actually getting here.

For God sending her into my life.

I get out of the bathroom and I go back to where our things are...

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I am starting to get the hang of this working thing I would say. Getting a taxi going to work can be a bit difficult when getting there but it is much difficult when I have to get a taxi going to town. It does not come that easy.

It is my third day today and I did work with the other ladies. I never buy lunch here and there is not even a close aunty here who I can get maybe a gwinya from.

Honestly I am low on cash. The money my husband left for me is not enough plus I used most of the money I had with travelling to see my Husband at the hospital everyday for a month and the money I have now I am using it for transport to work. Everyday I have to take 4 taxi's so I cannot spend it any how.

We get paid per end of the week. Our whole pay is split into 4 and we get paid like that. To be quiet honest I do not like that method because I will not be able to know the money I have well but I guess for this place it works well for them, even so I do not know well things that happen in a working system so I will have to reserve my thoughts to myself.

It is lunch time. Usually during this time the place is a but packed. Apparently it is much packed at night as people party and drink during that time, those who work here during those times know.

I am just glad that I work during the day and I knock off before I even witness all of that.

I am cleaning around the main floor. My schedule today has put me on main door cleaning twice and yesterday it was the other lady. It swaps around between us I guess.

I decided just to get onto it as I do not have lunch and just finish while at that.

As I was mopping my manager approaches me.

"Please can you come and help at the back quickly. I need some plastics taken out"

"Sure", I smile and follow after him.

He shows me the boxes and plastics that need to be taken out at the back to the back dumpster.

It wasn't much. Just two boxes and one plastic bag.

I get with it and take out the first box and plastic and throw it in the dumpster.

In the back there is like a reserve only parking by the look of things.

I move and go and inside and take the last box and I walk outside. This one seems a bit heavy.

I throw it inside the trash and then I dust my hands and then run my fingers over my uniform making sure I have not made myself any dirty.

Something catches the corner of my eye as I am still busy and I see someone's body peaking under one of the cars.

I go further and this person hasn't moved. Oh my god he must be dead or something.

"Oh my God", I go down and try to pull them out but the person's legs shake.

"Arg what...", I step back when I hear this deep baritone speaking.

He gets out from under the car and he dusts his top as he gets up.

"I am sorry, I...I thought you were dead",I say.

The man keeps quiet and looks at me. Well he has big eyes.

"It is fine.",He mentions with a slight frown on his face.

I nod my head.

"I am sorry again. What were you doing under the car?stealing it?",I raise my brow and he laughs.

"How could I steal something I own?",Ohw.

"Okay",I turn around and move away from him and I go back inside the place.

Really people shouldn't do things like that. I thought maybe he was dead but I am glad he is not.

I go and wash my hands and I get back with my work for the day.

The ladies finish their lunch and carry on with their work. The manager comes and announces that there is a meeting in the VIP section of which is upstairs of this place. As I have mentioned this place is quiet fancy.

We leave our duties for a moment and we make our way to the VIP section and wait. Our manager arrives and soon the man who was under the car follows after him. As he walks into the room his aura suddenly changes to something that is not light.

They stand in front of us and face us.

“Good day, I know we have not seen each other in a while. Well I had some things to sort out with my other businesses but I am glad that you are all holding the fort well”, The guy says.

We listen attentively as he speaks and it clicks to me that he might own this place maybe. We have updates and he mentions slight changes with the place that will be made and the routines too to suite this new venture idea and all of that. Most things I did not understand and some words were too difficult for me to understand but I will ask these ladies to explain things to me.

After the update we were told to be dismissed and we left the room and went back to our tasks.

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“Ausi Mvelo!”, Rethabile waves my way as I am walking home.

I wave to her and she turns and goes back to playing with the other children. I see Mimi sitting outside smoking as she is seated on one of her fancy chairs. She smiles when she sees me.

“Hey Sisi, how was your third day?”, She asks.

“It was okay. How was your day?”, I ask.

“Arg I just did some washing and sat around but I will be gone tonight”, She mentions and takes a puff off her cigarette.

“Oh and Rethabile?”, I ask.

"I will see,She is 9 years old she can go and sleep over at the twins house",She mentions.

"I can take her in. She can sleep with me, I will take her to school",She smiles.

"Thank you",She takes a puff off her cigarette.

I walk away from her and unlock the door of my little place and I get inside.

I dump my body on the bed as soon as I get inside and I rest a bit. I feel a bit tired. Standing up the whole day can be very tiring trust me.

I get up from the bed and I go and check for something to cook since Rethabile will be staying with me for the night.

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She runs her fingers on her arms and she dips her pink towel inside the bathing basin and she then squeezes the towel on her body just to get the soap off her skin. I watch as I have laid her pyjamas already on the bed. She picked them out and said she wanted the powder blue ones, they make her look good she mentioned.

"The water is getting cold Mvelo",Rethabile complains yet she is still in the water.

"Phuma khona uzogqoka(Get out so you can get dressed)",I mention.

She smiles and she then nods. When all the soap is off her body she wipes her body and gets out. I watch her as she gets her things and puts Vaseline over her body and gets dressed in her pyjamas. I help her tie her doek so she can keep her hair well.

“Mvelo”

“Mmmh?”

“Will you stay alone now that Malume is gone?”,She asks.

I do not think she has believed that Jabu is gone. She must be trying to process it as much as I am. I stop what I am doing and I sigh.

“Yes”

I finish doing her head and she smiles.

“Get in bed. I will go and discard the water okay?”,she nods and hops onto the bed.

I take the basin that she was using and I go and discard the water before I come back inside and I find her asleep already. She must be tired from playing, I put the basin away and I lock the door. I switch off the lights and I go into bed and sleep next to her. Silence is something that is far from being found in this place but atleast we can get some sleep for the night.

It is now morning, I made sure to get Rethabile ready for school and it is not as challenging as I thought because she can do majority of things for herself. I then took her to school and left her before going to work. I got there and started with my day. I am getting the hang of this place now and I really am enjoying having a stable thing for once though it has not been long but to me this is some form of stability.

I am cleaning the bar area today this morning while the other three are cleaning else where. Mimi did mention I would see alcohol but that does not mean I will drink it. I think that is what I am comfortable with my job it is because I don't witness alot of out of character things. I hum a gospel song while I am wiping the glasses that are in front of me, they were brought out from the kitchen after they were washed.

"Morning", I look up to hear this deep voice.

I look up to his face as he has a slight smug on his face. It is the man from yesterday. His scent does not leave the fact that it is want to be made known about its presence.

"Good morning Sir", I smile.

That is what you do right? You smile to give off a light atmosphere and also refer to your boss as Sir not just male teachers. Yes Nomvelo you have got this.

"Hi", He mentions.

O...kay. I look around to see if maybe he is speaking to someone else.

"Are you on the phone maybe sir?"

He chuckles and shows off his teeth with one dimple visible on his left cheek.

"No, I am speaking to you"

"Ohw, may I help you?"

"Have breakfast with me"

I bawl my eyes out on him and and clear my throat.

“For what reasons if I may ask and it doesn't seem appropriate for an employee to have breakfast with their employer.”

“We will just eat”,He mentions.

“No”

I turn away from him taking the glasses and place them on the shelf. After some time I turn and he is gone. I breathe out, I have heard of such stories that people around here in higher power take advantage of clueless women like me well not me. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke any of those spirits.

“Fire in the name of Jesus Christ I will not fall victim to that”,I say while my eyes are closed.

I open them, the audacity of some people!

I finish off the work and then I go to working in other sections of this area. Lunch comes and I offer to clean the main floor for the other lady while she is having lunch and she is okay with it but she will take one of my areas in exchange of that. I get on cleaning the main floor and I finish cleaning and I take the bucket and I go and discard the dirty water. I get back and go and grab the caution sign and I place it at the front.

“Nomvelo”,My manager calls me and I go to him.

“Sir”

“Go and grab your lunch on the counter”,He mentions.



"I didn't buy any lunch"

"The staff package has changed. It includes free lunch", I blink and look at him.

"I..."

"Please go and eat", I nod.

"Thank you so much", I say.

"You do not have to thank me", I just nod.

I go and get the food from the counter where it was placed.

I grab the plate and then I turn around to walk away when I heard a big thud.

"Arg", I turn around and see this man rising from under the counter rubbing his head.

I blink my eyes and look at him. He sure enjoys being under things.

"You should be careful when you get under things", I mention.

He looks at me.

"I will keep that in mind,thanks.",I just nod.

He removes his hand and there is a little cut with little blood coming out.

"You...are bleeding",He looks up like he can move his eyes to exam his head.

"What were you doing under there anyway?"

"I dropped my car keys",I just nod and press my lips.

He forgets about his little head pain and places his phone and keys on the counter. They look fancy. More than what Nomvula has.

I haven't talked to my sister in a while. I have to call her and find out how she is doing.

"I am sorry if I offended you a while back",He says.

"It is okay sir"

"I would like to get to know you outside of work though",he mentions.

"Why?",I tilt my head.

"I...I like your character"

"And?"

He chuckles and shakes his head a but and runs his fingers over his perfect face.

“I can't believe I am saying this”,I frown as he whispers to himself.

“I like you”,I frown.

“I am a married woman sir so please refrain from the things you are mentioning and they make me uncomfortable”,I then turn and walk away from him before he says anything. My heart is beating fast against my chest.

The devil is really testing me today and I will not succumb to this. He is a liar.

I go and have my lunch where the others have their lunch. I prayed before I could eat.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

My hands are sweaty and buried in my pants pockets yet I do not have an urge to take them out. I feel like an easy target at the moment, a nervous child that cannot figure out how and why the shapes look a certain way but for a man like me this is something that does not happen as often. I am standing in front of this the glass wall in my office and I am watching the outside of this place. I should be gone right now to have a meeting in Durban with some of my workers in construction. Yes I own a construction company but it is not as easy to maneuver in this industry to its success but I did it, I made it all possible to be where I am. I am not on this business alone but with the profits I was making I saw the need not to only venture and expand my construction company but also expand as a business man.

I will not lie and say that I had it rough growing up and J had nothing. My parents were poor and all of that, no. I had it easy, I would say. Pretty much easier. My father had a hardware business that did well for him back home and it is still doing well for him. My mother being a nurse too, I would say I grew up a comfortable life and I worked on my great foundation and I am here where I am.

I am a fiancé and my Fiancee and I have been engaged for over a month now. We have been together for two years and I love her so much, so I think. My mind lately has been all over the place and I cannot even comprehend what is going on but all I know is that a cleaner captured my heart and took it away.

I feel swept off my feet.

I do not know her well but I know well enough that I feel like a crazy person for even thinking of trying to fight her husband just to have her as mine and risk my engagement with Nonkozno.

I have been standing by this window for far too long.

What is special about her? If anyone asks me that question I would not know what to say. I do not know. Nothing, she is just like any other woman but that is the thing. This any other woman has something that draws me to her.

I fist my hands inside my pant pockets and I sigh while closing my eyes. This could be temptation and I have been through it enough but I do not crave her sexually but she does seem to make my heart cum at the sight of her.

A knock comes on the door and I tilt my head to the backwards then side ways.

“Come in!”

“It opens and my p.a walks in.”

“Mr Mzimela is here to see you”,She mentions.

I just nod and she walks out of the room. My brother walks in followed by the rest of them as I hear them talking.

“Wama engathi ushonelwe?(why are you standing there like you have lost someone to death?)”,Nqubeko asks.

I turn around to face them.

There are 4 of them.

My mother had a very blessed womb or should I say my father scores each time he had his shaft stuck inside my mother. She has 7 children, 5 boys and 2 girls and after that she made sure to never push a head ever again.

I am considered the middle youngest as I am the the 4th one from the young ones and the 4th one from the old ones. We have different professionals. Some are more successful than the others but we all are very tight and do not take any of our achievements as competition.

“What are you all doing here?”,They do not come together unless there is something important to know.

“We are here to see you”,Hlubi mentions and he gets onto sitting on my desk.

I am tired of telling him to not sit there.

"For what?", I ask.

They can't possibly leave their jobs for this. Some of them are not self employed.

"Well ubaba said we should check on you, you have not been answering his calls these past two days"

Well I have been occupied by this lady who wears all black everyday. Maybe it is her favourite colour.

"I have been busy"

"Mmmh", my older brother looks at me.

Honestly I haven't been able to face talking to my father about Amalobolo. I am supposed to go to Nonny's family by the end of next month and I have been delaying talking to my father. I am not sure. I am in a confused state.

"What is the problem, we are here talk to us"

I look at them and sigh rubbing my face.

"Ngibone enye intokazi(I saw another lady)", Silence prevails the room.

"I want her", I carry on mentioning.

"Are you sure about this?", I look at Hlubi and I nod.

“Yes”

“She mentioned that she is married kodwa”,I say.

“Has that ever stopped any man out there?”,My older brother Thulani asks.

“No”

“Then go for it”,He mentions.

“Hayi bandla ngiyaqala ukuzwa ukukhuluma kanje bafo(This is the first time I hear you speaking like this”,Gama mentions.

He is the 3rd oldest son and Hlubi being the last. Nqubeko is the second son.

Thulani never speaks about things out of context. He always wants things to be clear and also he is the level headed one between the 5 of us.

NOMVELO GWALA

I talked to my sister and though the call was cut very short as she mentioned that she has a lot of work but I am glad that I checked up on her. When I get paid I want to visit her and take some time for us to try and get back to the way we used to be before.

I haven't seen my boss in a while and I am glad about that. Apparently this is not the only place he owns. So I guess he has a thing of asking his employees for breakfast and he was not used to being told no. I told Mimi and she said that I am sleeping on a bag.

I do not know what she meant but she sounded disappointed that I did what I did. Well I do not care at all.

I was cleaning the tables after mopping the floor and I place everything that is on the table well.

"Gwala", I hear that deep baritone voice once more.

I turn around and face this man again. He is in a suit today.

"Sir"

"Please follow me", He walks off and I sigh.

I do a small prayer and I follow after him. We get to his office. I have never been in here. On the side of the room there is a shelf full of whiskey and the other side it is wine. He must be a heavy drinker.

"Please close the door", He mentions.

I close the door but I make sure to stand atleast closer to the exit.



I look at him and he looks at me. He is not smiling but keeps a face that I cannot read or comprehend.

“Is there a problem?” I ask breaking the ice and the awkwardness in the room.

I shy away from his gaze as I feel intimidated now.

“Why do you wear black clothes everyday? Are you gangster?” I swallow. Gangster? I cannot even hurt a fly.

“No, I do not steal that is against God's commandment.

I look up to him and he smirks a bit but removes it off his face.

“I am in mourning” I swallow after saying that.

He is quiet for a while.

“I...I did not know it is against the job” I say.

“No, it is not. I just...wondered why” he mentions.

I nod.

“You lost your child?”

“I have never had a child” He swallows.

“Ohw”

We stand there and he moves to my side.

“I don't mean any harm Nomvelo. Can we be friends?”

“I do not know...”,I do not want to mix business with pleasure or whatever the saying says.

“I promise you, I am engaged”,He smiles.

I sigh and close my eyes.

“Fine. Only off work. If you speak to me while I am here I will kick your butt”,He laughs and throws his head back placing his hand on his abdomen.

I don't find it funny.

“I promise”,He says after having a good laugh.

I just nod.

## Chapter 3

It has been two weeks of me being an employed person and in those two weeks I have been paid and I was able to get the things I need and also save some money. Mimi suggested that I go and open a bank account since I do not have one and that it will make my life a bit easier of which when she explained it, I understood what she meant. So this morning I am preparing to go to town and get to the bank and open an account. Mimi was initially going to accompany me but she left last night, so I have heard from Rethabile and she has not come back yet so I will just go with Rethabile to town. I cannot leave her alone and for my own sanity too.

We are in my room as I watch Rethabile wear her shoes and she finishes and looks up to me.

“I am done Mvelo”, She mentions and I pull her to me and I rub her face as it is oily.

“Now you look pretty”

“Just like Mama”, I smile.

I take my bag and we walk out of my room.

Today is my off day and it is a Friday. I get odd off days too. Sometimes it can be Monday or during the weekend.

As we are walking I hold Rethabile's hand and I see a car driving towards us and it stops next to us as we are walking to catch a taxi. The window rolls down and Mimi's face peaks out from the passenger seat.

“Haibo where are you going?”, She says.

“Ausi Mvelo and I are going to town”,Rethabile says.

“Oh, okay”,Mimi says and she smiles.

“I will see you guys when you come back”,Mimi waves at us and the window of the car rolls up.

The man who was driving seemed to be much older than her, I noticed from the grey hairs that he had on his face and hair.

“Come let's go and catch a taxi”

I never question what Mimi does and I never know but she seems to have money some days. Way too much money sometimes that I have never seen with my own two naked eyes.

“Can we get icecream in town Ausi Mvelo? It is hot”,Rethabile mentions.

“Yes baby”

She smiles. We get a taxi and it goes to town. We arrive there and we make our way to the bank. We enter and we get assisted quiet quickly than I had anticipated.

I tell Rethabile to sit by the waiting seats while I was assisted but I made sure to keep an eyes on her. She was looking around swinging her legs back and forth.

.

“Do you like it?”,I ask Rethabile.

We are at McDonald's. I have never been here before but Rethabile mentioned that her mother gets her a happy meal from there and she likes it.

She is now playing with her toy while I am eating. She has only touched her fries and has not touched her burger as she is eager to assemble her toy.

"Ausi Mvelo please assemble this for me. I want to go and play", She mentions and I nod taking her toy.

"Be careful"

"I am old", She giggles and runs off going to play.

I assemble her toy and it gets done within seconds.

I take my cold drink and take a sip before I take a bit off my big Mac and I enjoy my meal.

Where has this been all my life? I love it and it is quiet affordable too. I have only been used to Kfc alot from my husband and at home too. My parents are lovers of that franchise they always have been.

I wonder if I have been just as intelligent and did not struggle at school would I have been where my sister is in life? Would I have been married to my husband? I had always dreamed from a tender age of being a social worker but that dream never happened. I knew I wouldn't reach it when I barely pulled through my matric. I was never the smart one. I struggled quiet badly in my academics and when I put in alot of work I would be average or below average. My father thought I am illiterate and that I am slow learner and I should go to schools where struggling children go there but my mother refused. She believed in me and so as my teachers. I was good in one subject though and I loved it so very much. Mathematics, surprisingly even better than Nomvula. Anything related to numbers I was well good in it but when it came to reading and anything involving notes I was very terrible in it but those numbers got me no where. Trust me. I even regret not taking up on the offer of my father changing schools for me

but I accepted that maybe I may look more or less like my sister but we are very different people and have different paths to run.

I finish my burger and get on with my fries and wait for Rethabile to return once she feels burner out.

“Mvelo!”, I see her running towards me crying but she bumps into another man making him spill his coffee.

I stand up and rush to her and kneel in front of her.

“I am sorry about that”, I say to the man.

He check his white t-shirt and it is stained.

“It is fine”, He mentions. I turn my attention to Rethabile.

“They pushed me”, She mentions and I hug her.

“I am sorry baby, come let's go so you can eat then we can go home.

“Okay”, She sniffs and wipes her tears. I take her hand and stand up.

We go back to our seat and she sits in front of me.

You can see that her mood is somber now. I take her burger and open it for her and then open her juicebox for her.

“Here”,She takes it and starts eating.

I watch her eat but by bit but she doesn't finish her food.

“Don't mind those children okay?”,She nods and drinks her beverage.

I take her toy and give it to her.

“Thank you Mvelo”,She says with a little smile on her face and I smile too.

“Hello Sisi”,I look up and see this man who's coffee was spilt on him.

“Uhm Hi”

He has ice cream in his hands.

“I am sorry for scaring your daughter. I didn't see where I was going”,He mentions.

He had hot coffee spilt on his chest yet he did not flinch. I expected him to shout at us for messing his white top but he did not.

“It is fine.”

“I bought Ice cream to make her feel better”,He mentions and I look at Rethabile and her face lights up.

“For me?”,The dark skinned man laughs.

“Yes for you”.

He turns to me.

“May I?” ,I nod and he crouches in front of her and gives her the ice cream.

“Thank you Malome!” ,Rethabile says taking the ice cream and already eating it.

“Thank you”

The man stands up.

“You are welcome Ms...”

“Nomvelo” ,I just tell him my name.

“Thulani” ,I nod my head and he walks away.

“I got free ice cream Ausi Mvelo, do you want some?” ,She asks.

She is bobbling her head back and forth while swinging her legs as she keeps on kicking me. She is happy now and that somber feeling she had all forgotten.

“Let's go home now” ,She nods and gets off her seat.



I pack her things and we walk out of the franchise going home.

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It's the following day and back to work, I am getting the hang of how things are done here at work but mostly I am just happy about being able to work. I am planning on spending my leave home with my parents but I will start and check up on my in laws. They are my family too and Jabu gave them to me and made me part of their family. Aside from our differences I shouldn't turn my back away from them as I have been a Gwala for atleast 6 years and still running.

I am moping the main floor and I finish up quite early before my lunch break even begins. When that is done I go and help by the bar area to assemble the washed glasses for drinks when they are needed.

I wipe the glasses one by one and I place them on the shelf and get them on there one by one.

"Gwala", I look up and it is Mr boss himself.

He told me who his name is and it is Qophelo.

"Hello sir", He smiles.

He doesn't come as often to the place so I have heard but he has been much frequent here for a while.

"How are you?", He asks.

"I am well sir and yourself?"

"I am good. I see you are busy. Do you have plans after your shift?" He asks.

"No"

"I would like to take you out to eat as friends", He mentions.

I look around and then land my eyes on him.

I sigh and I just nod.

"Fine, does your fiancée know about this friendship? I don't want to impose..."

"Yes, I told her", I nod my head.

"Okay, let me leave you to work.", He mentions and flashes his smile before he disappears from my eyes.

I laugh on my own before I turn around and place the glasses on the shelf once more and carry on with my work, after a while I do the same and turn around and I get the fright of my life when there is a man staring at me.

"Oh my God!", I place my hand on my chest feeling my heart beating fast against my chest.

"I am sorry to fright you", It's the dark skinned man from that place.

"It is okay", I smile and he sits down on the high chair he places his hands in front of him and there is a silver band on his left finger.

“I would like a whiskey on the rocks”,Eh what does that mean?

“I don't drink, I don't do these rock things”,I mention.

He chuckles.

“Okay. How is your daughter”,daughter? Since when do I have a child?

He sees the confusion on my face.

“The little girl you were with”,Oh Rethabile. I smile wider.

“She is fine”

“She seemed upset that day ready to burst”

he mentions.

“She was just having a bad day”,He nods.

“I will just have water”,He mentions.

That I can do, I know there is a jug here.

I get a glass and pour some water and get some ice from the little bar fridge underneath the counter and I pour it in the drink and I search for a coaster and find it before I give it to him.

“Thank you”,He smirks and then takes a drink of half of the water and gets down from the chair.

“Usebenze Kahle Nomvelo(Work well Nomvelo)”

“Thank you”,He smiles and walks away.

God really has beautiful people out there. Even my boss is beautiful. I laugh once again. Mimi wouldn't have wasted any time with those men. She did once say I am sleeping on a bag of which is my boss but I am respectable lady. I have to act accordingly.

I take the glass of water and I go away from the bar area.

Lunch time arrives earlier than I had anticipated. Working really pushes time and next thing you know you are knocking off. I go and get my food before joining the other ladies and sit with them during lunch.

## NONKONZO MVELASE

I have been summoned by my mother today, I have not seen her in a while mainly because I have been very busy with work. I am a lawyer and work at a law firm, my parents? Well they are amazing people I should say. I grew up in Diepkloof my whole life, never knew any other place either than that place. I am one of those few in my family who made it through all odds. Having an unemployed father and a sole bread winner mother was what I was used to growing up. As other men get affected with the lack of not providing for their families and get frustrated leading to abuse. It never happened home. My father is the most appreciative man I know. I am more close to him as I feel like I was raised by him though my mother was in the picture. He was a...stay at home dad for me.

My parents have been together for years and were only blessed with two children, my older brother and myself but we also grew up with my cousin Ingi, she lost her parents at a young age and my parents took her in and we have been together ever since.

I arrive at home and I park the car on the drive way before I hop out and make my way towards the house. My mother opens the door before I can even come in. She has her baking apron on. Retirement must be making her discover new hobbies and talents.

“Mama”,I hug her.

She kisses my cheeks in the process.

“I am glad you came, come in”,She mentions and I follow her inside.

I find my father watching TV while wearing his glasses. He takes them off and stands up from the couch.

I rush to hug him.

“Nkosazane Yami(my princess)”

“How are you?”

“I am happy to see you”,I smile.

“I baked.Sit down I will get it”,my mother mentions.

I sit down next to my father.

“How is work?”

“It is okay”

“And umkhwenyana?(our son in law?)”,My father asks.

“Son in law?”,I have never told them that I am seeing someone and than someone is Qophelo.

“Yes, we recieved a letter today asking for your hand in marriage!”,my mother shouts from the kitchen.

“The Mzimela’s sent it.”

“Oh yes”,My mother comes back with the juice and her baked treats and she places them on the coffee table and she serves my father and I should serve my self.

“So who is the young man? We want the best for you”,My mother is eager to know.

I take a sip off my juice after pouring it and look at her.

“His name is Qophelo Mzimela.”

“Does he work?”,My mother asks.

“Yes. He owns multiple business in construction too”,I say and you can see the glimmer in her eyes.

“Tell us more about him”,My father encourages.

“Well he is a child of 7 but he is from Kzn. That is where his family is from but he lives here in Johannesburg”

“I am so happy for you Mntanami”,My mother mentions.

You cannot shy away from the happiness in her voice.

“Me too Nonkonzo wami”,My das mentions.

I am happy. I met Qophelo two years ago and instantly fell in love with him. I am so happy to be his fiancée.

I have these snacks with my parents while discussing the lobolo negotiations. They have not set the date yet but I am okay with it for now.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

She turns her head looking around. Well following her eyes with the waiter that has now disappeared after leaving our order on the table. She turns her eyes back onto the table and she looks at me and smiles. There it is again. That feeling of being swept away. I feel shy at the moment but I do not want to shy away for a moment.

"This place looks nice..." ,She mentions and I smile.

"You like it?" ,I ask.

"It is fancy, I wouldn't afford to just come here and eat but it is nice. I like it's decoration" ,She mentions.

She pulls the spoon from the table disregarding the fork and knife in front of her.

"Do you need help?" ,I ask her.

She shakes her head.

"No, I am fine Qophelo" ,The sir is disregarded and I am happy.

She takes her spoon and gets on with it on the pasta.

"You can use the fork alone. Let me help you" ,I mention and she pushes her food towards me and I show her how to do it.

"Ai ke"

She takes her food and smiles.

"Thank you" ,She mentions and starts eating and I do the same.



“Tell me more about you Nomvelo”,I say.

“What do you want to know?”,She asks.

I look at her.

“Anything?”

“I am 27, that is something”,I chuckle and then take my beverage to have sip.

“Well I am 3 years older than you. That is something”,She nods .

“I don't have a child. I am a twin”,I pop my eyes and smile.

“You mean there are two of you?”

“Yes”,She smiles and goes in for her food.

She eats and finishes before she carries on.

“Her name is Nomvula. I love her”,She mentions with joy inside her words.

“I am sure she is a sweet soul like you”,She giggles

“She is”,I watch her plastering her smile on her face as her eyes light up as she talks about her sister. My heart swells just by hearing her giggle at the tiniest thing ever.

“Nomvelo”,She stops talking and looks at me.

I hold her hands into mine and she looks at me.

“I love you”

Her eyes pop out before she contains herself and slowly pulls her hands off my hold.

“You cannot love me Qophelo. We are friends”,She says staring at her food before she looks at me.

“Well I do”

“You love your fiancée”

“I know. I think I love the both of you.”

“You are confused.”,She mentions.

“I am not. I know what I want”,She looks at me and shakes her head.

“Just, just give me a chance please. I promise that I am not here to play games but make an honest woman out of you and Nonkonzo”,Yes I said it.

I had to be honest with her about how I feel. I never thought I would love two women at the same time but I do and differently too. They both fill me and make me content in their presence differently. They complete me differently.

"I just lost my husband Qophelo. I am not looking to find another man at the moment and certainly I am not going to cause another woman a heart ache"

"I..I am sorry for bombarding you with this",I go back to eating.

Maybe I should've waited a while but I did not want to string along something that I did not want in the first place but I wanted to be honest with her.

"Can we still be friends?",I ask still realising that I might loose this personal interaction.

"Only if you stick to being friends",I sigh and nod my head.

"Yes",She nods and goes back to her food.

I will try again maybe when we have established our friendship well. Polygamy is on my mind at the moment and I want to head in that direction just to have these woman in my lives. I wish there was a way I could go around this more gently. Maybe I came on too much on Nomvelo.

I will give her some space for now.

## Chapter 4

I couldn't keep it to myself. I had to tell Mimi, she is the only person that I am free to talk to more than other tenants and she seems to know more about these things as she is young.

I was in her room today after work. I felt that I had to come and speak to her while I can still catch her when she is around.

I am seated on her little couch. Yes her room has alot of furnisher in here. From TV to radio to stand to everything and they seem pricey and some things I think that she should not have them as she hardly use them with the way they are still wrapped.

She takes out some beverage for her and brings apple juice for me and I thank her and she plops herself on the bed and looks at me.

“So what is wrong?” ,She asks.

I take another sip of my drink and look at her.

“My boss took me to eat yesterday afternoon” ,She pops her eyes and adjusts herself.

“What?! Wow Mvelo!”

“No, Not Wow Mimi. He said he loves me and that is not right” ,I shake my head and she pops her eyes again.

“You are lying”

"I swear on my husband's soul"

"Wow, God is with you. Don't you see?", I frown.

"How?"

"That he is setting you financially free from your troubles and giving you a man who has money and loves you", I shake my head.

"I do not care about money. I loved Jabu and he was never rich but I love him", She looks at me.

"I know it is not easy considering that you have just lost your husband in less than 2 months but one day you will get off these dark clothes and move on with your life Nomvelo. You are 27 years and you need to live and have children one day and live ", She mentions.

"I cannot. I vowed to love Jabulani until death does us apart"

"And death did", She mentions.

I sigh.

"I don't know", I say.

"This guy must like you"

"He is engaged", She gasps

“Bathong Kanti what is going on here?”

“I am confused. No he is confused he said he loves his fiancée and me”, I say and nod my head.

“Eh, this...this is polygamy mos but KZN men love it so I guess it is in his blood”

“Not all of them”

“Yeah Not all of them but I am just saying”, I just shake my head.

“But look see if he wants to be with you for long so you can benefit from him”

“No Mimi, I do not want to be involved with him in that way. I should not even be his friend anymore”, I mention.

“No, you can be friends just keep your boundaries until further notice”, Well this was not what I was looking for when I thought of talking to her.

“Where is Rethabile?”, I ask.

“She is sleeping over at the twins”, I nod my head.

“Okay, bye”, I stand up.

“Remember you are young Nomvelo just loosen up a bit. You don't have to do much but just have fun you know”

"I will keep that in mind Mimi",She nods.

"Good",I thank her and say my good byes before walking out of her room.

I go to mine and I take out my keys from my bag and I unlock the door and get inside. I close it and I lock my door before I drop my bag on the bed and prepare something to eat.

Qophelo was not at work today and I am glad I did not see him. I am not ready to face him in any way as yet. I do not even know where I would start with saying when I get to see him again.

#### NONKONZO MVELASE

I am at the kitchen in Qophelo's house. He called me and asked that I come over so we can discuss some things and I cleared and put some of my work back just so that I can come here and sleep over. I do not believe in co-habiting. My mother is a devoted Christian and I know that she would kill me if she was to find me living with a man that I am not married to. She has always been strict our whole lives but with old age she is loosening up a bit too.

I stir the stew in the pot and I close it and put the spoon aside and I wipe my hands with the dish cloth.

"Baby!",I hear his baritone voice calling out for me.

I had informed him that I knocked off early and he would find me already at his place.

"In the kitchen!", I mention.

He walks in and places his things on the counter and I smile going towards him. I make sure to loosen his tie around his neck before I give him a kiss on the lips.

"Hi baby", I say.

"How are you?"

"I am good and you?", I ask.

"Long day", He sighs after that.

It does sound like he had a long day.

"Well I am cooking and food will be ready in a minute. Why don't you go and take a shower then I will dish up for you", I say.

"I would love that", I smile and he gives me a perk before he takes his stuff off the counter and rushes out of the kitchen.

I go back to the pots and carry on with what I am cooking.

After a while I get done and dish up for the both of us. I take off my apron and then hang it over the kitchen hook.

Qophelo walks into the kitchen just on time fresh and he seems a bit better.



"You seem better"

"I feel better", I give him his food.

"Thank you Baby, we need to talk", I nod my head.

I get on the high chair and he does the same.

"What do you want to talk about?", I ask.

"It is alot. Concerning our relationship", I swallow.

"Okay", He sighs and closes his eyes for a moment before he opens them.

"How do you feel about polygamy?", My heart drops to my stomach.

"Qophelo what do you mean?"

"I am just asking a question"

"Do you want to marry someone else too?"

"Asilwi MaMvelase siyakhuluma(We are not fighting Mvelsa we are talking)", I breathe in and out.

"Okay",He nods.

"I don't know. I have never thought of it"

"Okay",He says.

"Do you want to be a polygamist Mzimela?"

I ask.

"Yes",My heart drops to my stomach.

"Who is she? Do you have a side chick?",I feel myself about to tear.

I am feeling hurt at the moment.

"No, you are the only woman I have been with since we started this relationship MaMvelsa but recently I met someone that I have an interest in too just like I have with you. You are both different bit I promise you that I have not done anything with that woman. I wanted to talk to you first and that you make your own decision",tears drop from my eyes and I quickly wipe them.

"What if I don't want this?",I ask.

He looks at me.

"I do not know",He answers.

I shake my head.

“And if I agree that will be opening a gate for you to bring every woman in our marriage”

“That is not true sthandwa Sami. You are indlovukazi Yami and that will never change. I will never bring another woman in our lives beside this one”

“What is special about her?” ,I look at him.

“It is unexplainable”,He mentions.

“You are hurting me Qophelo”,I get off the high chair and he holds me.

“Please don't leave”

“Let me go please. I want to cry in peace”,I say.

“I am sorry Nonkonzo. I wanted to be honest with you as I love you”,Why can't the love me alone?

“Do you love her?” ,I ask looking at him.

“No like you”,He says and I just nod.

“I need space”,I yank my hand from him and walk away.

I never thought this could happen to me. I love Qophelo so much, he fits the man I have always wished to have and now I have to share that man with another woman.

I got to the bedroom and I get inside and close the door before I bursted into tears and laid my body on the bed.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

I feel like I am doing something wrong yet so right. I am relieved that I told Nonkonzo the truth because I really have taken a huge liking into Nomvelo and the feeling does not seem to fade away but gets stronger and stronger everyday.

I wanted to tell Nonkonzo this so she can make her own decision. I do not want to hold her in this relationship when she does not want to with its terms too so I want her to have her own decision in all of this.

I am in my office and I have called Nqubeko and told him what had happened. He advised me that I give Nonkonzo some time before we carry on with the outcome. I love her and I do not wish to loose her as being part of my life but also if she wants to leave I will not hold her back but let her be to be happy.

I rest my head on my study desk and I sigh. This is the most complicated thing I have ever faced. Even difficult subjects and modules have nothing against what I am going through right now. I pick up my phone and scroll through my contacts and land on her number. I never got it from her but stole it from the files that are in my office and right now I would want to hear her voice and maybe I would feel a bit half better than I am feeling right now.

I call the number and it rings a few times before it is answered.

“Hello”

“Nomvelo”, I say

“Who is this?”

“Qophelo”

“Oh”

There is some silence between us.

“How may I help you? It is late at night”, She asks in her soft voice.

“I wanted to call and check how you are and if you are okay”, I say.

“Oh, that is nice of you. I am okay thank you, yourself?”, she asks.

“I am...trying but okay”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes”

“Mmmh”

Silence prevails between the both of us.

“Let me not keep you up. Good night Nomvelo”

“Good night to you too Qophelo. Ulale Kahle(Sleep well)”,She hangs up after that.

My heart swells and I smile.

I put my phone down and I shake my head while still having a smile plastered over my lips. This woman!

NOMVELO GWALA

“I do not understand. I am not a super model. I am not that beautiful, I don't out those nails and hairs that Mimi likes though they are nice or have the will to out those high shoes too so what is special about me? Maybe he is playing with me but then again Mimi said I should live”,I am speaking to myself as I look at myself through the mirror as I am preparing for work.

“No Nomvelo rebuke that evil spirit you have just lost your husband”,My brain seems to function once again.

I look at myself as I am now ready. I go and grab my handbag from the bed and I look at myself through the mirror before I feel satisfied with myself and I walk out of my room and I lock it. I shove my keys in bag and I walk out to go and catch a taxi to work.

I get to work and I have changed into my uniform and I walk out of the locker room and I go and start with the floor like I usually do every morning. After I was done with the floor today was my turn to fix up at the VIP and go and clean up there and I went there to clean. It was very empty and no one was there too. I started with doing my moping and it was already swept and clean too just needed some moping. I mop and while I was half way through my cleaning I heard a voice behind me.

“Hello Nomvelo”, I turn around and see dark skinned man.

“Hello”, He smiles a bit.

“I hope I am not disturbing you off your work”

“Well you kind off”, I mention and he nods.

He is quiet intimidating too.

“Well, I wanted to come and see you before I leave”

“See me?”

“Yes”, He nods his head.

“Well, Uhm thank you I guess”, I say and he chuckles.

He nods his head.

“Where are you going?”, I ask.

“To KZN. I do not live here. I visit”, He mentions.

“Oh where in KZN?”, I ask.

“I reside in Durban”, I just nod.

“Okay. Safe travel”, I smile.

He gives me a small smile too.

“Thank you. Usale Kahle Mvelo(Stay well Mvelo)”

“Go well”, He turns and walks away.

I go back to doing my work and I finish up the section just on time.

NONKONZO MVELASE



I woke up with a bit of a headache from all the crying that I did yesterday. I thought maybe this morning I will wake up hating Qophelo but no. I still love him the same way I have been loving him for the past 2 years we have been together.

I pull the covers off me and I get off the bed and I make my way out to the bathroom. I see that he slept next to me and woke up early too. I wonder if he is still inside the house. I pee and brush my teeth before I walk out of the bedroom and I go and find him. I find him in the kitchen and he is busy making food. I look at him and he turns to me.

“Good morning Pumpkin”, My heart melts.

I go towards him and he places the spatula aside and opens his arms for me to rest in them.

“I love you”, He mentions.

“I love you too”

“I am sorry for making you cry”

I keep my silence for a moment and we just stay like that with me in his arms. He kisses my forehead in that moment.

“I will agree only if she is the only woman in this thing”, I say and remove myself from him.

“Yes”

“And you cannot be in any love contact with her until we are married for 3 years then you can take her”,He breathes in and out.

“Can we all get along with her that way you get to know her too”,I close my eyes and breathe in and out.

“Sure”

“Thank you”,I gives me a kiss.

I love this man so much.

# Chapter 5

## FINDING HEALING

(NTAKA) MZIMELA.

“Baba!”, Mphokopheli shouts and runs towards me when he sees me leaving his friends behind.

He jumps into my arms and I catch him and chuckle at that moment as he holds me as tightly as he possibly can.

“Hello boy”

“I didn't think you would come. I missed you”, He mentions with sadness in his voice.

I sigh heavily and pull away from him and look down to him. He is getting taller by the day I see.

“I am sorry about that. I will ask your mother to see you more”, I mention.

“She will not agree I know”, I sigh.

“Don’t worry about that okay?”,He nods his head and I smile at him before I pull a wallet out of my pant pocket and I retrieve R500.

I hand the notes to him and wrap his hand around them.

“Keep them safe and don't tell your mother”

“I won't”,He mentions with a smile before I let go of his hand and he looks at the notes.

“Thank you baba”

“You are welcome.”,He gives me a hug and I hug him back.

We break our union after some time and I tell him that I have to go before his mother comes and picks him up from school and spots me. He understands, I leave him and I go to my car and get inside.

I wish that the DNA tests came back positive and indicated that Mphokopheli is mine and a true Mzimela by blood but they did not. I did everything in my marriage that made me be the best husband that I could be to Angela but I guess it was never enough for her and what was enough was what she had with my best friend.

I couldn't cope finding out about their affair behind my back. The man that I have known for over 12 years betrayed me by having an affair with my wife resulting in Mphokopheli.

I love that kid. How could I not when I had 7 years of bonding with him and having him call me ‘Dad’ but it was all a lie and I was the fool in all of it.

How did I find out that Mphokopheli is not mine? Well I guess Angela’s boyfriend was tired of being behind the scenes and spilled the beans. I didn't believe him at first and ignored him telling me that

Mphokopheli is not mine but his as they have been having an affair with Angela for years. I told Nqubeko about this and he advised me to gain my peace by doing the tests so I got them done and they came back Negative. I was not Mphokopheli's father.

He may have not come from me but the bond I grew on with the child is too painful for me to Unbreak though at times I try to keep my distance away from him.

Angela hates me now, for breaking our marriage and filing for a divorce. Though I loved that woman with my whole heart but I could not imagine her being sexual with another man especially a man that I trusted so much.

I have forgiven her but I haven't had a chance to move on properly but I am in a better space than I was before when I found out all of this.

I drive to my house and I drive in and park my car on the drive way and I get out of the car and make my way to the back and take out my bag and close it.

I drag myself to the house and it is empty. I look around and I throw my bag on the couch.

It does possess the loneliness as I am living alone. All that my life is revolving around now is my job and family.

NOMVELO GWALA

"Lungisa indaba yakho noJesu, Khona manje

Khona manje....”

I sing around while I am sweeping my room and it is just morning, I will be getting ready to prepare for work after I am done with cleaning. I love to leave my place as clean as possible so that I will be able to come back to this place and do not have to worry after work.

I miss going to church. I should go when I am off on a Sunday and take Rethabile with me. She has given up on asking me if we would go to church ever again and I think she is quiet fed up too of asking.

I sweep off the dust on the floor sweeping it outside and then I take my little carpet and I dust it outside and sweep it before I take it inside and place it properly on the floor.

I put away my cleaning supplies and I run the kettle and take my bathing basin and jug too. I pour the cold water first in the basin and wait for the hot water to be ready.

As I am doing that I go onto taking out what I will wear today and place it on my bed.

My phone rings disturbing me from these activities and I rush to take it and it has a number that is not saved on my phone.

I answer it.

“Hello”

“Nomvelo”, I hear the baritone voice on the other end.

“Oh Hi”, My mind is trying to register who it is.

"I hope I am not disturbing you this morning"

"I was preparing for work",I mention.

"Oh okay. I would like to fetch you and take you to work. I need us to speak",He mentions.

"About?"I ask.

"My fiancée would like to meet you and get to know you"

"I don't think I would like to for now. Please understand",I say.

"Oh, okay I do understand",He mentions.

"Okay,Thank you"

"Thank you for being honest"

"You are welcome"

"I will see you"

"Sure",The call ends and I save the number before I get any more surprises.

I put my phone down and I get on with what I was doing.

I do not think it is a good idea to be friends with my boss's fiancée even after what he said to me.

Maybe he told her what he said to me and now she wants to see me face to face before she strangles me. I do not know what to think at the moment or maybe I am just overthinking things and she just wants to know me and see if I am a threat in her relationship by being friends with her husband to be. Well she should know that I am not a threat and have no intention of coming in between their union for silly reasons or whatsoever.

The kettle finishes and I prepare to bath.

.

I would say that my work day went faster today than I had really anticipated or rather should I say that it went quickly than any of the other days. Some days I enjoy my job and some days I do not. I mean sometimes a person can get tired from cleaning the whole day.

It is lunch now and I decided to call back home and check how everyone is doing while at that. I got my food and went to the back side of the place outside and I sat there. I wanted a bit of privacy while at that.

I call my mother and her phone rings a couple of times before she answers the call.

"Nomvelo kamama", I smile.

"Mama, how are you?"

"I am good, how are you holding up my child?", I sigh.



“Ngiyancenga Kodwa akufani(I am trying but it is okay)”,She sighs on the other end.

“I am sorry, you do not deserve this”,No one does.

“My job keeps me active”

“How is it going so far?”

“It is not something glamorous but it is something that brings in money”,I say.

“It is a start my love. You will get somewhere one day. Why don't you start sewing again”,My mother mentions and my heart goes through a little heart ache.

Sewing. One thing that I used to love very much and was very good in it. I stopped because It didn't help me anyway at all. Nomvula bought a sewing machine for me when she saved enough of her bursary money. I made alot of things. Clothes, curtains, Cushion covers, beddings all of that and I mostly made things for my sister as she would go to university with them.

Yes some university students from her school helped here and there by supporting but it did not grow but was rather stationary.

I stopped when I got married and my mother in law never really wanted me to do my sewing in her house so I was limited and ended up stopping along the way.

I never went back. Never had the heart to do so and never thought of doing it again.

I do not even know if I am still as good as I was before.

"I do not know Mama",I say hesitant about her idea.

"You were very good in it Nomvelo plus you are in Johannesburg, who knows maybe just maybe you will grow your audience"

"But I have a job now. I do not think I will have time"

"Try it please",I sigh.

"Okay"

"Oh thank God!",I giggle at that.

"I will send some money for you to buy the things you need"

"You do not have to"

"You are my daughter Nomvelo. I want to",I smile.

"Thank you so much"

"I have to go, I will call you later"

"Okay Mama",the call ends and I look at the phone.

I smile at myself and shake my head. Knowing my mother she has been persistent about this for the past years and I have been hard headed that she gave up. I do not know why I gave in easily but maybe it can also help take my mind off things and keep me busy from the loneliness that lurkers in the room I live it.

I eat my food and I decide to call Nomvula and check how she is.

It rings a couple of times before it takes me to voicemail.

I try for the second time and it rings too and after some time it gets answered.

“Nomvelo”

“Sisi how are you?”

“I am okay Nomvelo”

“I am okay too, I wanted to check how you are it has been some time since we talked”

“Now you know that I am okay. I get busy at work Nomvelo”,She says a bit harshly.

“Hawu Nomvula I know.”

“Okay”,There is silence between us.

“Is there something I did in a way that I ever wronged you? If so please I please for forgiveness”

“Nomvelo I have work to do,bye”,She hangs up after that.

I breathe in and out and look up to the sky.

I am hurt, I wonder where it went wrong between us. We used to be the best of friends. Everything and anything we did together if not we supported each other. We were as thick as knives but ever since I moved from home and went to live with the Gwala's after I got married it was never the same. Things were not as good as they were between us.

I love my sister. She is the only sibling I have in this world and my mother always told me that we only have each other and we should stick together.

I poke my food with the spoon and I try to eat but I cannot even stomach the food well.

I send a message to Nomvula apologizing for any sins I have committed and maybe if I have ever stepped on her toes without acknowledging it.

“Why are you crying?”,I look up and wipe my tears away quickly.

It is my boss.

He sits down next to me in his suit and he brings his knees up and places his arms over his knees.

“Nothing”,I mention.

“Are you sure?”,I nod my head.

“Yes sir”,He smiles faintly.

“For a woman you do not know how to lie well”,He mentions.

“What does that mean?”

“That I can see that you are upset and not okay but I will not bombard you with asking”,I just nod my head.

I breathe in and out and inhale his perfumed scent in the process of it.

“Nomvelo”,He speaks after the long silence.

“Yes sir”

“Atleast call me Mzimela”,I lightly chuckle.

“I thought we agreed that I call you Sir at work Qophelo”,He smiles wider.

“Would you ever give a relationship another go after you husband?”,I stare at him for a moment before I look away.

“I-I don't not know. I am not thinking about at the moment but I still love my husband and I do not think that would change anytime soon. I spent great days with him and some bad days but I have great memories of us. I do not think I am ready to let go of those for now”,He nods his head.

Tears stream down my cheeks and I quickly stand up.

"I have to go",I say wiping them.

He stands up too as well.

"I am sorry for touching a sensitive topic",He mentions and pulls me into his arms for comfort.

I cry.

I miss my husband. Each and every passing day, at times I wish he was next to me when I lay asleep and sometimes I wait in anticipation that he would walk through that door at our place and tell me that he is here and that he loves me. I miss him, so much. Touching him and kissing him.

I wish I was never afraid of having children because I could not afford them, I wish I had atleast one child with him to remember him by but all I am left with are the memories and the last name he gave me.

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Today is my day off. I had nothing else to do but than to go to town and get the money my mother sent. Yes she sent some money that she had promised and I also promised to get the materials with that money. I cannot go against my word at this point. I wish that I had left with Rethabile. Her talking self helps me with not feeling alone when I am here in town but she has school and I am alone in this today.

Qophelo sent a good morning text and all it consisted off was wishing me a great day ahead.

I go and knock on Mimi's door and she opens it. She looks a mess today.

"Are you okay?",I ask.

“Yes

just hangover”,She mentions.

“Mmmh”,She has a sparkly dress on.

“Come in”,She moves aside and I get inside. Atleast it is clean in here.

“I wanted to ask you to accompany me to town to go buy a sewing machine but I can see you are not well”

“Sewing Machine for what?”,She asks and throws her body on the bed.

“For Sewing”

“Mmmh,well I wish I can go with you but I have a really bad headache”,She grunts after that holding her head.

“I can see that”

“Ask your boss friend to accompany you”,She mentions and slowly sits up.

“No, He is at work and I do not want to do that”

“He is your friend and a boss I am sure he can squeeze you in your schedule plus it is hot”,She mentions.

“No Mimi,Drink water you will be fine with the headache”

"Thanks for the advice",She mentions.

"Before you go can I borrow your phone for a second. I cannot find mine",She asks.

I take my phone out of my bag and give it to her.

"I do not know how much airtime I have left",I say.

She presses the little buttons.

"You need to change your phone. Who is Qophelo?",She asks.

"My boss",She looks up to me and smiles.

I hear the phone ring a couple of times and His voice booms through the room.

"Nomvelo",I rush to Mimi but she stands up and pushes me away.

"Hi, are you free today?",Mimi no!

I try to get my phone and we fight over it rolling over the bed.

"You want us to meet?",Qophelo's voice speaks.



“Mimi bring it back”,I mention.

“Yes!”,Mimi shouts loud enough.

“Okay, Where should we meet?”

“At the CBD.!",I take my phone from her hands.

“Okay then”,I hang up the call and I look at Mimi.

“I will talk to you once I am clam for now I am angry at you”,I say to her and get my bag.

“I am sorry Nomvelo”,I ignore her and walk out.

Mimi does not listen sometimes. I understand that she does things her way but sometimes I feel like she should respect my boundaries and when I say No I mean that it is a no.

I walk out and I go and catch a taxi to take me to town. I send a message to Qophelo as I had no airtime anymore stating that he should not come but it is not long before the phone rings.

“Nomvelo”

“We should not meet. It is not important do not come”,I say.

“No, I want to come”

“Qophelo”,I sigh after that while closing my eyes.

“I am not busy, what are you doing in town?”,He asks.

“Going to buy some things”

“It is fine. Let's meet and we can go together”,He mentions.

“Qophelo”,I sigh.

“Just as friends”,I sigh.

“Fine”,I will add in extra hours of being angry at Mimi.

“Okay thank you”,He hangs up.

I shove my phone in my bag.

NONKONZO MVELASE

I have told my mother about what Qophelo and I talked about regarding the wedding and the lobola negotiations will happen just by next month and after that we will have umembeso too in the following months.

“Why delay so long, why don't you just do umembeso and lobola together in one day?” My mother asks.

“Mah, I want it separate plus I have not talked to Qophelo about that”, I mention.

“You have to bring it up”

I spin my office chair around as I have my phone against my ear.

“Okay I will put it up with him and hear how he feels.”

“That is much better”.

“I have some work to do mom, I will call later”, I mention.

“Sure”, She hangs up. I place my phone on the desk and pull my chair in.

A knock comes through the office door and I tell the person to come in.

My personal assistant walks in with a bouquet of flowers.

“From your one and only”, she mentions and I smile.

“Thank you so much”,She nods and place them on my table before she walks out.

I take them and smile. Qophelo is such a sweet gentle man that men like him cannot be found easily. I have had my fair share of relationships that were not at my best and this one has to be the one top of my chart that is why I cannot walk away from him. I love him.

NOMVELO GWALA

I cannot believe it. He arrived and just on time as well, he is not in his suit today but rather in a semi formal wear. I started with the bank and got some money that my mother had sent and then he took me around to where I could get a sewing machine.

He asked the same question as Mimi about a sewing machine and I told him it is for sewing. I just settled for that and he just nodded. I do not want alot of people knowing what I will be doing in my spare time. Maybe I can make black dressed for myself that I can change and wear everyday instead of buying new clothes I just buy material.

I asked him if we can go and buy some material and he didn't mind at all.

He seemed too happy to be here for my liking too.

“You can drop me off here and I will take a taxi home when I am done”,I say unbuckling my belt as he is parked in front of the material store.

“I do not mind waiting for you and taking you home Nomvelo”,I look at him.

“Qophelo you are not on a day off like me”,I say.

“It does not mater”,I sigh.

“Okay”,I get off and rush to the store.

I get the things I need and after I was done I paid and went out and he got out of the car and helped me place it inside.

I thank him. I have to give him some petrol money because he really helped me today.

We got inside the car and he started the car before driving off.

“Now we are done”,He mentions.

“Yes”

“I wanted to ask something”,He mentions.

“Uhm okay”

“I am paying lobola soon and I wanted to ask if you can make it to umembeso. I would understand if you...”

“I would love to”,He smiles.

"Thank you"

"That is what friends are for", He smiles and nods.

I direct him to where I live and he parks the car out. I see Rethabile is back from school.

I hop out of the car and so as Qophelo.

"Hello Ausi Mvelo!", Rethabile shouts.

"Hello !", I wave at her.

She goes back to playing with her friends.

I take my things and go and out them inside my room and then I come back to Qophelo.

"Thank you for today", I take out R300 and hand it to him.

"Do not worry about that Nomvelo. I love helping you and taking time out of work" He smiles.

"Please..."

"Do not worry about it", He mentions.

“Uhm Okay”,I sigh.

“Bye, I will call you”,He mentions and he hesitates in hugging me but eventually he does and then breaks it before he gets inside his car and I wave before I go inside the yard and he drives off.

Qophelo is a nice person.

## Chapter 6

I pull the piece of cloth from under the sewing machine and I give in to a closer look and I smile. I didn't think that I still have it in me to make clothing again and that it would be great the way I have presented it. I need to work better with the stitching though but I think that I have outdid myself so far. I get up from the plastic chair and I quickly change out of the clothes that I am wearing and I change into this dress I have made and I turn around and look at myself through the mirror. I turn around and examine the dress and I am satisfied. I take it off and wear what I was wearing earlier and then I go back to the sewing machine to perfect the imperfections. My phone rings while I am still working and I quickly attend to it. I answer it.

"Hello"

"I sent money and then you keep quiet all of a sudden Nomvelo", I giggle at my mother's outburst.

"I was going to call and thank you. I did send a message and I wanted to show you what I did", I mention.

"Take a picture and send it to me", She mentions.

"I will"

"When are you coming home?", I sigh and sit on the bed.

"I don't know. I will ask for a leave and come down there"

"Your father would love to have you home"



I would also love to be home.

“I will let you know when I have gotten a few days off”

“Okay, I am proud of you guys both of my daughters.”,My mother mentions.

“Thank you for supporting us Mama”,I mention.

“I love you. I will call you later”

“Okay, I love you”,We end the call.

I put my phone away and I get back to the sewing I was doing.

I am glad my mother got me back into doing this, I feel like it is a good distraction for me and I do not get to feel the loneliness that creeps in this room.

I finish up with doing my dress and I lay it on the bed. I am still going to iron it before I put it away.

I clean up my room and place all my sewing things away.

I have been working on that dress everytime I came back home from work and sleep when I am tired.

I get done and I go and get some water from the tap outside and I come back inside my room. I am going to cook now and the sun is out too. I will just make something quick and light for myself then I will rest a bit.

I get down with making some food and I get done quickly. I then boil some water just to take a bath before I rest. I get some water from the bucket and then I pour it in the bathing basin. I wait for the kettle to click and then I pour the water inside the basin. I strip and get inside and I take a bath. After I am done I get out and I lotion then get dressed before I go and discard the water outside.

I go and take there after. I am a bit tired really.

.

I woke up later and it was dark outside. I got off the bed and I went to close the curtains and then I opened the lights, I went to dish up for myself and warm my food up. I look for some juice in the fridge and then I take it out and pour it in a glass. My phone rings and I leave what I am doing and I go and get my phone and it is Qophelo. He is such a regular caller now.

“Hello”

“Hello Nomvelo, how are you?”

“I am well and yourself?”, I ask.

“I am okay, just doing some work”, He mentions.

“At this hour?”

“Yes, a man never rests if he wants to provide a good life”, He mentions.

“I guess”

“I wanted to ask that...”

Silence prevails.

“I hope I didn't make you comfortable by asking you to be there at umembeso”,He mentions.

“Not at all. I am not uncomfortable at all and I cannot turn down an invite now”,He chuckles.

“Tell me”

“Mmh?”

I go and sit on the bed properly.

NONKONZO MVELASE

I am having a long days at work with this case and it has been draining and tormenting me mainly because I have never solved anything like it before but I am up for the challenge and my boss trusts me with this case and I will deliver. I grab some wine from the fridge in my apartment and I pour a glass and I take a sip from the wine glass. I then take my phone and I make a call to one of my friends. We haven't spoke in a while and we have some catching up to do with my friends.

We met in university and we haven't been separate ever since. There are 4 of us and we always do things together whether it is planned little trips around the country or we have to attend anything we do it together. That is how much of our friendship is like.

The phone rings and it gets answered quiet quickly. I take a sip of my wine as the phone is pressed on my ear.

"Friend!"

"Friend, How are you?", I ask.

"I am good. You do not sound good", She says.

"Well I am having a difficult time with a court case and also wedding rushes", I mention.

"Oh yes! How is that going?"

I sigh, I do not even know if I should tell her or not but I refrain from telling her what Qophelo mentioned.

"It is going okay, my mother suggested we have the Lobola and Umembeso together on the same day"

"Do you want that?", She asks.

"Yes, as long as I have a beautiful day that is all"

"And your man?", She asks.

“Qophelo is fine with anything” I mention.

“Well then I do not see a problem too”

“Yes”

I take another sip off my beverage.

“Have you set the date yet?” ,She asks.

“The lobola will be on the 2nd of next month” ,I mention.

“Haibo friend such short notice. I need to look good and I do not know where I will get a quick dress done!” ,Ntsiki mentions.

I laugh.

“Do not worry much about that. You being there would mean alot”

“I cannot believe you are getting married friend” ,I smile.

“Yes, to Qophelo too” ,we laugh.

I remember how I took interest in Qophelo before he can even notice who I am but I am happy with where we are now.

“Yes, who would've known honestly. We should do lunch together with the others”

“Yes please. This coming weekend”,I mention.

“Great! I am off anyway”

“Okay, we will plan it out then inform the others”

“Okay Friend I have to go”

“Bye”

We end the call and then I drink the rest of the content in my glass.

I go and open the fridge and I take out some fruits. I will just have some fruit salad, that would be enough for me.

I make a fruit salad and I take off my slippers as they make my feet feel hot. I walk bare footed on my tiles and I push them to the living room before I throw myself on the couch.

My phone rings as I grab the remote and I look at it. It is Qophelo. I answer.

“Hello baby”,I say.

“My love, how are you?”

"I am good, I just wish you were here"

"Just a few weeks left and we will live together", I smile.

I will not sell my apartment. I will rent it out.

"How was your day at work today? You mentioned that you will be going to Pretoria", I say .

"Yes, it went well. We got approval to start with the foundation of the building"

"That is great baby"

"Nonkonzo"

"Qophelo"

"I love you so much, please do not doubt that", He mentions.

"I love you too"

"I am coming there now, I will bring Pizza", He mentions.

"Pleeee bring pepperoni Pizza."

“Okay, I will. I will see you in a few minutes”, I smile.

“Okay baby”, We end the call and I quickly rush to the bedroom and I take out my pyjamas. I then take out my bathing salts that are scented and then I went to quickly go and take a bath. I know Qophelo will arrive here when he feels fresh and I also want to feel like that too.

NOMVELO GWALA

It has been over two weeks now and things have been quiet okay I would say. At work and also with my sewing being rediscovered as well. The holidays have approached for Rethabile and she was sent away to her grandmother's place with Mimi. She said she is going with her daughter and she will come back once schools open so I am all alone and have no one to talk to beside the people I work with when I am at work. In the next week or so Qophelo will be getting married I would say and I have not found anything that will be suitable for me to wear so I embarked on going to buy a cloth so I can sew a black and white dress maybe for the event and look well, atleast presentable. I will ask Mimi for her opinion of what to wear. I had informed her that I am going there and she asked me is it safe. Well I would think so, what could possibly happen at a wedding?

I get off the taxi and drag myself through town and go to where I will find the material I need for my dress too. I get to the shop and I am assisted. I choose a black and white Shwe Shwe fabric and I get a black one as well. I get a black organza too and I go and pay for the things I bought and I leave the store. I quickly go and catch a taxi going back home to the room. It is not long before I get home. I greet everyone on the yard before I disappear into my room. I then place my things on the bed and I go and get something to eat first before I do anything else. I eat and then there after I go and place my dishes away to be washed later. I wash my hands and grab my chair and I take the fabrics and lay them in the floor. I take off my shoes and then I take the cardboard cut outs of what I wanted. I had already envisioned what I really wanted and I wanted something a bit vintage too.



I was half way through finishing the shoulders and the arm parts of the dress but I was certainly not done as yet. I felt tired so I went to bath and then I got to get some rest that I needed for a while. Tomorrow is still another day so I will keep on going with it.

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It is morning and I wake up and quickly prepare for my day before I leave going to work. I catch the quickest taxi that I can find and it drives off to town before I get to take another one going to work. As I got off the taxi while I was still in town I made my way to the taxi rank that is going to work. I entered the taxi rank when I heard a car hoot and someone shouting my name.

I turned around and looked around. Who could be calling me? This might be a scheme and I might be robbed. This is Johannesburg you can never trust anything here.

As I was proceeding with my walk to the taxi I hear someone call me behind my back.

“Nomvelo”, Much softer now.

I turn around and face the dark skinned man I once met before.

“I have been calling you”, He mentions and he smiles while beads of sweat have formed on his forehead.

“I am sorry, I thought I was about to get robbed”, I mention and smile.

He chuckles throwing his bald head back and brings it back forth before he brushes his well trimmed beard lightly in laughter.

“Well, I can understand. Can I take you to work?”

He talks.

“You are back from KZN?”, I ask remembering he once mentioned staying there.

“Yes, my little brother is getting married”, He mentions.

“Oh that must be nice”, I say.

We stand there in silence for a moment and his gaze intensifies on me that I look away from him.

“I have to go”, I softly mention.

“Can I take you to work if you are only comfortable”, He mentions.

“No, I don't think your wife might appreciate that”, He has a slight frown on his face then it fades.

“Oh, the ring?”, I nod my head and look at his left hand. It is not there anymore.

Men!

“I am divorced. I just had a hard time of letting go of years of marriage”, I can hear a pinch of sadness in his voice.

I feel bad for him. To even think that he is being unfaithful to his wife too.

"I am sorry", I mention.

"It is okay, it is not your fault", He faintly smiles.

I then nod.

"You can take me to work", He smiles.

"Thank you", He says and then he directs the way to his car.

It is now I notice that he seems to be in gym clothes and as soon as we get in his car, his scent is the first thing that greets me so as the leather seats on my bum.

"May I?", He gestures the seat belt and I nod.

He helps put on my seat belt.

"There we go"

I giggle and shake my head.

"We have to get you safely to work"

"But I get there safely even without a seat belt in a taxi", I mention.

“This is German car Mvelo, Seat belts are important”, He mentions before he puts a seat belt on him and he starts the car and drives off.

“So tell me who is Nomvelo”, He mentions as his deep voice vibrates next to me.

He turns on the aircon to make him feel less hot as he has had an exercise from wherever he is coming from. I hold onto my bag tightly.

“A once was married woman. I lost my husband just recently”, I mention.

“I am sorry, it must be hard losing someone you love so much”, He mentions.

It is hard.

“Yes it is hard”

“I understand, At least your daughter has you”, He mentions.

“Rethabile is not my daughter. I do not have a child. She is my friend's daughter”, I mention.

“Oh, I thought that...I am sorry”, I giggle.

“It is okay. You did not know.”

“So you never thought of having a child?”, he asks and steals a glance off me.

"I have but not until I am stable enough to have one of which will take years for me to afford having one.",I mention.

He nods.

"I understand"

"You have been asking alot about me. You haven't spoken about yourself?"

"I am Divorced. My wife cheated on me and I do not have children too",He mentions.

"I am sorry",I say

"It is okay. I learnt"

"Do you regret marrying her or hate her?",I ask.

"No, I wouldn't have learnt if I didn't marry her",He smiles.

I do not know what I would've done if Jabu ever did that to me. I am glad that I have never encountered such.

We keep on talking and he makes a stop at the cafe near my work place. He tells me he will be back quickly and he leaves me in the car.

I stay in there listening to his Jazz music and before I knew it he came back with a little paper bag and two cups of coffee.

He takes the one coffee and hands the rest to me.

"I hope you like it",He mentions as he hands over the packaging to me.

I take it and look inside. There seems to be doughnuts inside.

"Thank you so much, you didn't have to"

"It is okay,You will need the coffee for work",it is like he knew I am about to have a hot day.

He drove to work and we got there. He helped me off my seat belt and I looked at him before looking away.

"Thank you so much for the lift and treats Thulani",I mention.

"It is a pleasure",I nod my

"I will still be by the neighbourhood when you knock off. Is it okay if I give you a lift back?",He asks nervously.

Am I imagining it? Maybe. A man like him cannot be a person of being nervous. He posses some intimidation.

"What is the catch sir?",I ask looking at him in the eyes and we maintain a stare.

He doesn't back down from it and I do not either. He breathes in and out and closes his eyes and looks away from me.

"There is no catch Mvelo if you are not okay with it, you do not have to agree to it", He mentions and smiles looking back at me and now I am the one looking away from him.

"Please look at me", He says softly.

I turn to look at him.

"Thulani I..."

"Please call me Ntaka, that is my clan name", he mentions.

I nod my head.

"You can fetch me. Thank you for the offer", He smiles.

"Thank you Mvelo", I just giggle.

I take out my phone and press the buttons and look at him. He looks a bit lost until I tell him that I need his numbers so that I can call him when I knock off.

He soon gets it and gives me his numbers and I thank him before I hop out of the car and say my goodbyes to him and leave.

I walk away with a little smile on my face before I shake my head. You love things Nomvelo. Just by getting food in which you will poop and pee later you are smiling. No it is not that. I like his aura and the atmosphere he presents.

NTAKA(THULANI)MZIMELA

It is beating aggressively against my chest. My heart that is, I was putting on the bravest look I can find in her presence but I was failing dismally. I think she saw right through me. As much as she is an interesting woman but I will respect her and keep my little distance in knowing her as a person. I just like her aura and maybe we could be really great friends and learn how to move on and find people out there in the world who would love us after being hurt like this. I can only imagine her pain and Wouldn't imagine being in her shoes. I respect her mourning and No I am not going after her or anything of that sort but really want a genuine friendship with her and Nomvelo seems like a nice woman of that calibre.

I hope she finds healing though in losing her husband and in that she finds herself too as well but the way she seems at the moment it is like she is holding it together well but I know. The ones who hold it together well in public are the ones who are dying at night. I know from experience.

My phone rings as I am driving to Hlubi's apartment. I arrived yesterday night and boy did I find a mess in his house. I hate messes especially if they involve alcoholic substances and behaving like a pig. I told him to clean it up and I hope that he did. I hate showering at the gym, I find it very unhygienic there so I would prefer to shower back home.

I go to the gym 3 times a week just to get my mind off things. I do it for some mental refreshment and to get my mind off things most times.

I answer it and the caller speaks through the car's Bluetooth.



“Wena Thulani yazi awungazi!(You don't know me Thulani!)”,I already know who it is.

Angela,I long blocked her numbers but she calls me with different ones everytime she wants to insult me or begs me to take her back and trust me I have well enough considered of taking her bag but my pride would not let me. To me she ruined my image more than anything. Some things I would've taken from her but this I wouldn't and could not at all.

“Angela what do you want?”

“Why are you seeing Mphokopheli behind my back? Isn't it you went and found out he is not your behind my back so why are you still after him?”,She asks.

“Legally I still have half custody to access him. You made me bond with him Angela!”,I am getting a bit angry now.

“Yazi you are a whole ass Ntaka!”,She says but it doesn't move me.

I cut the call while she is shouting and block her. This woman has given me enough headaches to last me a life time. I am well enough with them now. I get go the apartment and I take my gym bag and I rush up the stairs and get to Hlubi's place. I find it clean and it is quiet. He must be at work. I go to the bathroom and I quickly take a shower before I get out and I wrap a towel around my waist.

I wish I had Nomvelo's number. I enjoy talking to her but I will have to wait for her to call me. If she will ever call me that is.

I make my way to the kitchen to make something to eat.

# Chapter 7

I was knocking off a bit late today. Just by 30 minutes and I didn't even call Thulani. I was not sure if I should and it is getting late so I would not want him driving in an unfamiliar environment at night. Highjacking happens and it would be an unfortunate thing if it happened at my cost. I will just leave with the others and we will go together to catch a taxi to town.

I get to the locker after I have changed out of my uniform and I put it in the locker and I close it and take my bag. I take out my phone and I sit on the bench in the room and I go to my contacts and I dial his number and it rings a few times before it gets answered.

“NguNtaka Loh ngingakusiza ngani?(This is Ntaka, how may I help you?)”,the stern tone cannot be missed in there.

“H..H”,I clear my throat.

“It is Nomvelo”

“Mvelo”,his voice becomes a bit softer.

“I thought you wouldn't call and my number would decorate your phone”,I laugh.

“I thought I should let you know that you do not have to fetch me, it is getting late. I will just get a taxi”,I mention.

“Mvelo”

“Thulani”,I hear him let out a sigh.

"I offered to fetch you and I am not a man who goes against his word"

"Well I was just..".

"I will be there shortly",he mentions.

"Okay"

"Bye Mvelo",He hangs up and then I put my phone away in my bag.

I have to inform the others to leave without me.

I walk out of the locker room and I make my way out of my work place. I find some of my work mates waiting there.

"I didn't think you would come out",I laugh

"No, I had a phone call. Someone is fetching me, I won't go to the rank",I mention.

"Okay then, travel well.

They all leave together and I also follow suite and stand near the building though. In a matter of a few minutes I see a car driving in and stands just in front of me. He hops out of the car wearing tracksuit pants and a white t-shirt topped up.

"I am sorry for making you wait",He mentions.

“No it is fine. I did not stand for long”,I mention.

“We can go”,He mentions and he goes and opens the door for me and I get inside the car while he holds the door for me before he closes it.

He goes around the car and gets inside. His perfume cannot be missed inside the car but it feels cool too inside the car and the aircon is open. I take the seatbelt and he stops me.

“May I?”

“Why?”,I ask.

“Just”,He mentions and he takes the seat belt and he buckles me up.

I then thank him and he nods. He gets on with putting his seat belt on and he starts the car before he drives off. I hold onto my bag on my lap and I look around the outside as the car is moving.

“How was your day at work today?”,He asks.

I turn to him and I catch him glancing at me for a second.

“It was okay, I mean cleaning is cleaning. Nothing that different just different things to clean and places”,I say and he nods his head.

“I hear you but it also depends on the way you clean.”,He mentions.

“Yes, it does. I like clean spaces”,I mention.

He turns to me a bit.

“They are easy to work in”,I nod my head.

“So what do you do when you are this side?”,I ask.

“I work from home most of the time. ”

“What type of work? Like technology wise?”,I ask and he chuckles.

“No Mvelo but it does involve technology. I am work at the harbour in an import am export and foreign exchange”,He mentions.

“I will not lie and say I know what it deal with or it is but nice.”,He laughs and throws his head a bit back and it exposes his Adam's apple that keeps on moving up and down as he laughs.

“Really? Nice. I guess it is nice since I can afford the things I like”,He mentions.

“You see?”,He chuckles lightly.

The whole drive we were talking just about anything that popped from the top of our head to the tip of our tongues.

He passes by Nando's and he gets some food there through the drive through. He orders and turns to me.

“What would you like?” ,He asks looking into my direction.

“Anything. I am not picky”,I mention.

He looks at me and shakes his head chuckling.

“Ayi angisazi ke(I do not know anymore)”,He orders for me and then he goes and pays.

We get our meals and I thank him.

“I like food alot, I hope you are not annoyed by that”,He mentions.

“No,I am not.Thank you”,He smiles.

We keep on talking and he drives me to my home. I thank him for the ride and we depart after that.I walk inside the yard. I get inside my room after unlocking the door and I lock it before I throw myself onto the bed and rest there. I am dead tired.

.

It is the following day and today I have a day off. I now have two days off in a week and I am grateful for that. I wish I can have them on a Saturday and Sunday. It would've worked quiet well with that. I decided that I am going to do some washing today and then I will do some little cleaning. I do miss having Rethabile around and it is so quiet with some of the children gone around here. I get on with taking my washing out and then I go and quickly wash it before the sun has fully risen. I rinse it and get it on the washing line and then I go and clean my room and mop around as well. I pack well my sewing material and fabrics and my place looks much neat now. My phone rings in that moment and I go and get it and answer it then sit on the bed.

"Hello", I answer.

"Hi Mvelo, I hope I am not disturbing you", It is Thulani.

"No, you are not. I was just cleaning", I mention.

"Oh, I hope you had a great night"

"I did, I hope you did too"

"I did", There is some silence between the both of us but it is not uncomfortable.

"I-I need you help", He mentions.

"What help do you need?", I ask.

"My mother sent me around to get some things for my brother's thing and his fiancée is at work right now.", He mentions.

"Uhm, I do not mind helping"

"Are you sure?"

"Yes", I mention.

“Okay, I will fetch you in an hour, is that okay?”,He asks.

“Yes it is”

“Okay, bye”

We both hang up and I get off the bed. I go and prepare some bath water while I am still finishing up with cleaning. I go and ask one of the people here to watch my washing as it is still wet and they agree.

I go and quickly take a bath. I finish and I moisturize and decide to wear one of the dresses I had made with its matching black doek. It has some gold patterns on it so it will be okay. It is short sleeved but still covers my shoulders and below my knees too. I will pair it up with sandals.

I get done and then I find my phone ringing and I take it out.

“Hello”

“Nomvelo. How are you?”,It is Qophelo.

“I am good how are you?”

“I am good, I wanted to check up on you. We haven't talked in a while”,Yes we have not.

“You are busy with the wedding preparations so it is understandable”,I mention.

“Still. I would like it if you meet my finacee that day”,He mentions.



“Ohw”,I say.

I do not think I am comfortable with that.

“I have not know you for long Qophelo to be introduced”,I mention

“Oh, I am sorry about that”

“It is okay”

A knock comes through my door and I go and open. A child stands infront of me.

“There is someone asking for you outside”,The child mentions and I thank him.

I follow after him and I see Thulani by his car. He steps closer to the gate when he sees me and I wave.

“We will talk later”,I mention.

“Okay, I will call later.”,He hangs up and I shove my phone inside my dress pockets.

I then go quickly to grab my bag and lock the room. I finish and then make my way to where Thulani is standing and he smiles when I approach him.

“I feel like black was made to your perfection. You look beautiful”,he mentions.

“Thank you”,I smile.

He opens the door for me and helps me inside his car before closing the door. He goes around and gets inside. He does what he does best and soon we are on the road.

"I have never went shopping for these things before",He hands over the list to me and I take it.

I look through it and I know most of the things on here.

"I know these things. We will get them" I mention and I look up from the paper and I find him looking at me before he quickly and shyly turned away.

"That is great,are you hungry first?",he asks.

"I will eat when I get back home",Yes I left without eating but I am not here for that.

Instead he goes through a franchise's drive thru and gets me some food and some coffee for himself.

"Thank you, do you love coffee?",I ask and he looks at his cup.

"Yes",I nod my head.

I eat my food and I didn't realise how hungry I was until I ate. I got done and I thanked him once again.

We get to the shops and we go around with the shopping of what he needed and soon we got what we were here for. He offers that we go and buy some ice cream as we finished early and I do not protest. He goes to get us ice cream and we stay in the car with the aircon on hitting the corners of my skin well enough. I eat the ice cream and lick on the little spoon as the syrup tastes good.

“How long are you in mourning?”,He asks when there is silence.

“For a year”,I mention.

“Why is it a year?”

“It is tradition. My husband's family is traditional”

“And you are?”

“Christian”,he nods his head.

“I see”, he eats his ice cream and stops half way through it.

“This is too much sugar”,he mentions.

“Hawu but you bought it”

“I didn't want you to feel alone”,he mentions.

“Mmmh”, he starts the car.

“If you still have some time to spare we can go anywhere you want us to go”

“The park please”,I mention.

“Sure”

He starts the car and drives off.

.

I am slightly swinging on the swing while watching families having picnics and children playing around games. The man behind me stops pushing me a bit as I am staring around these families.

“They are beautiful huh?”

I nod my head.

“I wish I have a family of my own. A little one even”,he mentions. I tear my eyes away from the scene in front of me and I encourage him to push me again and he does.

“Me too but I guess God has other plans for us”,I say and he stops pushing me before he starts all over again.

“He will give you one day and wipe all your tears away. That is what he does right?”,I look at him.

“Right”,I nod my head.

He keeps on pushing me and I swing my legs. I feel young at the moment and care free.

“How many siblings do you have?”,I ask.

"6, my mother has 7 children",Wow!

"That is alot"

"I know",he says and keeps on pushing me.

"I have a twin",I say.

"Does your twin look like you?"

"Yes she does slightly though. You can tell the difference between us",I mention.

"Wow, your mother is lucky",He mentions.

"Yes".I keep on swinging.

"You are going too fast now Nomvelo",I giggle.

"I do not know how I should stop",I say.

He moves from behind me and he comes infront of me as I go back and forth. He stands infront and he opens his legs wide and he tries to stop and and I do come to a halt with me between his legs. His cologne up close that I can smell it's particles on the tip of my tongue. I close my eyes and take in his scent. He smells too darn good.

"Mvelo",I am brought back to life by him and he is looking down on me.

"Are you okay?",he asks and concern is writing on his face.

"Yes why?"

"You are crying"

I am ?

I quickly wipe my cheeks and indeed I am.

"I am sorry about that. I just felt free for a moment",I say.

"You don't need to apologize. I understand",he mentions. I look up to him.

"I need a hug",I say

He pulls me out of the swing and away from it so other children can play on it.

We get away from the swings and he hesitantly opens his arms before I could go in and embrace him. I inhale his scent and I close my eyes. He holds me and doesn't say anything. I wish that I can free the pain of loosing my husband away.

Tears stream down my cheeks and he lets me be. He does not say anything.

"He has been gone for almost 3months but it feels fresh"

“Things like these take time to heal Nomvelo. You do not need to rush it”

“It is hard coping at times. Being alone, I wish I had gone with him. I hate him sometimes for leaving me alone here because I do not know what I am doing with my life now”

“You will know. Don't worry”,He rubs my back.

“I am sorry”,He says.

He is apologizing for something he did not even do.

After crying we broke off the hug and he helps me wipe my tears.

“How do you feel?”,He asks.

“A bit better”,I say.

“I am glad that you are able to cry, it shows how hurt you are and how much you need help innhealing”,He mentions.

“Yeah”

“Let's take you home”,He mentions and I nod.

We leave the park and we go to the car. We get inside before he drives off going to drop me home. I unbuckle my belt when the car is parked.

“Go well”,I say

“You too”,He smiles.

I open the door and get out of the car. I make my way inside and I take out my keys and open the door. I get inside and lock the door. I feel tired. I just want to rest a bit. I remember that I have left the washing outside. I go and collect it before I come back and rest.

#### NONKONZO MVELASE

In a few days I have to be home and mother has been telling me to come home but I do not want to go there for now. Some of the relatives are already home and ready for next week of which I am nervous about and excited about as well. The decor and catering has been taken care off and I really hope that they pull through well enough for me on that day.

I met up with Qophelo today so that we can go and get our attire ready. It has already been done but we still need to fix some parts of our attire but it will be ready in a couple of days.

He is now driving me back to my apartment as I left my car there and he came to fetch me before we left.

He holds my hand I smile before he kisses the back of it.

“Has your family added anything on the gifting list?”,He asks.



“No, I think everything is fine”,He nods.

“Okay then, I will talk to Thulani about the rest of the things mom sent him to get.”

“When will your parents arrive?”,I ask.

“3 days from now”

“Okay, can you please and check if the photographer is ready. I don't want any mistakes”,I mention and he rubs his thumb against my skin.

“Do not worry much, everything will be perfect”,He mentions.

“I really hope so”,He clears his throat.

“What it?”,I ask.

“I-I invited Nomvelo to the ceremony”,Oh, that is the lady's name.

“Ohw”,He turns to look at me.

I want to see this woman and I hope she doesn't ruin my day.

“No it is fine. She will be a part of us one day”,I smile.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes”,I say.

“Thank you baby. I love you”

“I love you more”

I want to see this woman that Qophelo suddenly has and interest in.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

I had to meet up with my brothers and my sisters are going to fly in just two days before Umembeso. They live in Durban and they wanted to be far away as they can be from the rest of us but not from Thulani though. Gama lives in Pretoria but he comes as frequently here to visit us but mostly Nqubeko. He is obsessed with his children and they are one small things that are very demanding if they want to.

I go straight to Nqubeko's house as it is a bit bigger. His wife is there too. I reach his house and I am the late one. I get out of the car and make my way to the door and I knock and the door is opened by Nqubeko.

“Get inside”,he mentions and I get in.

I do not see his wife in sight so as the children so I assume they are in the bedrooms down the passage.

The rest of my brothers are seated on the couches sharing an alcoholic beverage.

“You are late”,Thulani mentions.

“Ngiyaxolisa Ntaka.(I am sorry Ntaka)I had just drop off Nonkonzo”,I mention.

“Mmmh”,He nods his head.

In my family, the oldest son is called by their clan name and automatically it falls as their second name. My father's oldest brother also has one too.

I sit down and grab a glass off this beverage and take a sip.

“You seem like you are having woman problems”,Hlubi mentions.

“No I am not”

“Where did it end with that lady you wanted?”,Gama asks.

“She is there but she is still not in the head space to get into a relationship”,I mention.

“Why?”

“She is a widow”,I mention.

“Oh”,Hlubi says and takes a sip off his drink.

“She hasn't healed and you cannot force her if she doesn't want to”

“I am thinking of polygamy when she is ready”,They all look at me.

“Will you be able to handle it?”

“I don't know. I will see along the way, I love Nonkonzo and Mam’Gwala too”,I say.

“That is hectic.”,I nod my head. .I turn to Thulani.

“Did you find the things needed?”

“Yes, Mvelo helped me”,He mentions.

“You have a friend now?”,Nqubeko asks surprised.

Thulani hardly has friends ever since his wife and best friend did what they did to him.

“Yes”

“Atleast ushimile (you are single)there is nothing that he can snatch from you”, Hlubi makes that comment and Thulani gives him a death stare and the rest of us laugh.

Yes we laugh about it now but if it was before we wouldn't be laughing at his pain.

"Let me go", He stands up.

"I am joking!", Hlubi says and Thulani ignores him.

NOMVELO GWALA

I swear that Thulani is going to make me fat from all the feeding he does to me. He really does love food I should say.

Today he is fetching me and he asked if he can take me to work and fetch me for the duration that he is here for his brother's wedding and I didn't mind at all. It was saving me a lot of money and for the days he will be taking me back and forth it will be more than R100 saved in my pocket.

"Coffee or Latté?", He asks turning off the ignition by the coffee shop.

"Coffee", I mention.

"Let's go together. Maybe you might find something else you like"

"You will make me fat", I mention.

“Food is good for the soul”,He mentions.

We get out of the car and I take my bag. We walk inside the cafe and we get to the front and I look at the menu.

“I will pay for the coffee”,I say and he gives me a look.

A lady comes to assist us and we get what we wanted. I pay for coffee leaving him displeased with the gesture but I am just being thankful and we walk out of the cafe and get inside the car.

“Thank you”,I mention.

“You don't have to thank me. How are you feeling today?”,He asks.

“Better. I cried last night and I felt much better.I thought of the good times we shared with my husband”

“Crying does help. I cry too at times when things get too much ”,I giggle. I cannot imagine him crying.

“You look like you make people cry with your look”,I say and he chuckles.

“How do I look then?”,He asks and turns to look at me for a brief moment.

“Intimidating”

“But I do not intimidate you”,He mentions.

“You do a bit”

“I am sorry”

“Do not be sorry. You are just yourself”,He shakes his head.

We get to my work place and I undo my seat belt.

“Call me if you need anything”,He mentions.

“Thank you”,He nods his head.

I get out of the car and I make my way inside the building. I see Qophelo seated on a empty table on his laptop. I just nod my head his direction when he sees me and he signals I should come to him.

I go towards him and I get to him and I stand infront of the table he is working on.

“Good morning Nomvelo”

“Good morning Sir”,He smiles.

“How did you sleep?”

“Well”,He nods.

“That is good. I wanted to share something with you but I will later”

“Okay”, I turn to walk away then I turn back to him.

“Qophelo”, He looks up to me.

“Why do you love me?”, I ask.

“What is there not go love about you Nomvelo?”, He tilts his head to the side.

I look around and there are hardly people on the floor.

“I am not rich or have a glamorous job and life like you”, I say.

“It doesn't matter all of that. I love you aura and given the opportunity to make you mine I would”, I swallow.

I just nod my head.

“But I respect your healing space”

“It won't just happen over night”

“I know”

I nod then I turn around and walk away from him.



## Chapter 8

I look at myself through the mirror and I seem to be ready. I finished the dress and it looks just like how I had imagined it. I made it into a crotchet top with a zip at the back and added the Organza under the black and white fabric I bought just to make it a bit puffed up and then made use of it to make something to cover up my shoulders. I did quite well. I wish that my phone can take photos at this point and send it to my mother. It looks quite nice. I took a black pin and attached the little black brochure that I made and I pin it on my dress and I look at myself. I am going to take a taxi going to where the ceremony will be held.

Today is the day Qophelo pays dowry for his fiancée and Umembeso too. I miss Rethabile and she called me last night telling me that she will be back soon with her mother. I take my bag and I go out of my room to go and catch a taxi going to a place that I have never been in.

The taxi dropped me off already and I am scared. I thought that maybe the taxi will leave with me or I would be dropped off on the wrong street but as soon as I saw a lot of cars and a tent I knew that it must be where I am supposed to be going. I make my way down the street to the house where there are people going in and out of the yard. Many expensive cars are parked outside too. They must be from Qophelo's family or the woman's friends too. I get inside and already there are people busy ululating and singing.

“Nomvelo”, I hear his voice behind me and I turn around and face him.

This man has a great favour done for him if clothes look good on him or he just knows how to dress.

“Ntaka”, He smiles and shy's away for a moment before he turns to look at me.

“What are you doing here? Are you friends with Nonkonzo?”, He asks.

“Who?”

“The bride”,He mentions.

“Oh no, I was invited by Qophelo”,I see his chest move faster than it did before he lets out a sigh.

“Oh, I didn't think you were friends with my brother”,He mentions.

“He is your brother?”

“Yes, my surname is Mzimela.”

“Nomvelo!”,I turn around and come face to face with Nomvula.

She looks beautiful and my heart feels so happy to see her.

“I am sorry, I will be back”,I tell Thulani and he nods before I walk away.

I go to Nomvula.

“Sisi”,I say.

“How are you? What are you doing here?”,She asks.

“I was invited, You? Aren't you supposed to be in East Rand?”, I ask.

“My friend is the one getting married”, I nod my head.

“Congratulations to her”, She just nods.

“Bye I have to go”, She moves away from me and walks away.

I turn around and find this man still in the same position looking at me.

I go towards him and he doesn't tear his eyes away from me.

“Nomvelo”, He says after the long silence.

“Thulani”

He places his hands in his pockets.

“You are a Gwala?”, He mentions.

“Yes, that is my husband's surname”, He closes his eyes.

“Okay, come let me show you where you can sit down for now”, He leads the way and we get to a little seating lounge that is set up outside. This decor looks expensive and much beautiful. There is even a bar area too at that.

I sit myself on the couch and he hovers over me and his scent hits my nostrils.

“I will get you something to drink”,He mentions.

“Thank you”,he smiles and he walks away.

He comes back after a while with the drinks and he hands it over to me and I thank him. He sits down next to me and leans back on the little couch.

We are too close to each other. I take a sip off my drink.

“I love your dress, you look beautiful”,he mentions.

I am flushed at the moment.

I shy away from his gaze.

“Thank you, you look handsome too”,He chuckles.

“Thank you Mvelo”,He mentions.

We sit together and talk until the ceremony started.

The festivities look beautiful and the future bride too, she looks like a very sophisticated woman and for that I knew that she has a really great life just like my sister has one. Thulani makes sure that I well taken care off during the ceremony and when everything was done it was now time to eat. We went to sit

back where we were seated and talked about anything that came into our thoughts. I spilled the beans of me being able to design and make my own dresses.

“Have you ever thought of starting selling your work?”,He mentions.

“My mother had suggested but then I do not have the courage to do so plus I do not have time to do it either than the little time I have off work”,I mention.

“You should try it”,He mentions and takes a sip of his brown liquor.

He has his arm on the head of the couch behind me. I look at this man as he is busy sipping on his drinks, he is really beautiful too. I look away from him when he turns to look my way.

I take a sip off my little juice as my heart is racing a bit. Some man comes and taps his shoulder and greets me and I reply.

“You are asked for inside. The in laws”,He mentions.

“Tell them I am outside. I cannot leave Mvelo alone”,He mentions.

“Kodwa Ntaka(But Ntaka)”

“Hlubi”,The boy sighs.

“Go, I will be fine here”,I mention and Thulani looks towards me.

“Let’s go”,He stands up and he takes my hand into his helping me up. The guy looks at us before he turns away and walks leading the way.I am just following behind. We get inside the house and there are people full in the dining room.

“Thulani Kade ukephi?(Where were you Thulani?)”,The old woman asks as she is seated on the couch.

I assume it is his mother as she looks like him a bit. She has a two piece on and she is making a statement with it.

I just greet the room and everyone responds.

“I was outside with Mvelo”,They bring a chair for Thulani and he takes it and He gestures that I sit on it.

“Is this your girlfriend. Sawubona Sisi I am Thulani’s mother. Come here and hug me”,She says shifting her bag aside to the man beside her and the man takes the bag.

I stand up hesitantly and go into her arms as she hugs me.

“Mama Nomvelo is married”,Thulani mentions.

“Oh

umuhle Kodwa(You are beautiful though)”

“Thank you”

“Ntaka”,One man stands up and he gestures for Thulani to follow him and they go outside.

“I love your dress.”

“Thank you mama”,She lets me go.

“Where is your husband?”,She asks and squeezes me next to her on the couch.

“MaKhunga Nkosi Yami”,The man next to her says.

“Baba please.”,she mentions.

It must be her husband.

“He recently passed on”,I mention and there is silence in the room. One of the guys stand up and he goes outside too.

“I am sorry about that. I shouldn't have asked. I didn't know”,the mother mentions and I nod.

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

Nqubeko has called me outside and I am now here in front of him away from the crowd and people. The look on his face is one I cannot comprehend at the moment.

“Who is that woman?”

“The woman Qophelo wants”,He looks at me intensely.

“What do the both of you want from her? And don't not tell me nothing because you seem to have known her for some time”

“I know her but not that well and I want nothing from her.We just get along”,I mention.

Qophelo makes his way towards us and stands with us.

“What is going on?”,He asks.

Nqubeko gives him a stare and then turns to me.

“Both of you stop acting childish. This is someone's child you are trying to toy”

“I am not toying anyone now the one you should be telling that bullshit is this one here!”,I mention pointing at Qophelo.

“What did I do?”

“Your girlfriend is inside and he came with your brother”,Nqubeko says and he clicks his tongue before he walks away.

He is pissed off at us.

“Nomvelo? What...How do you know her?”,He asks.



"I just happen to know her Qophelo" He gives me a look.

"Ntaka I know that you are older than me but Nomvelo is someone I want to marry and whatever you are trying to achieve with her you better stop it"

"Or what?", I ask.

"I won't be held responsible for this." He mentions and I just look at him.

I turn around and walk away from him and go back inside the house. They are having food and Nomvelo is giggling at whatever my mother is saying. My mother talks to much more than my father.

"Nomvelo we should get going", I mention.

"Oh...okay", She looks at me confused and she stands up and places her food on the table.

"It was nice meeting you all"

"Call me Nomvelo!", My sister mentions and she nods.

We walk out of the house and I lead the way to my car. I feel angry at Qophelo at the moment more than anything and I do not have a valid reason.

I help her inside and buckle her up and she does not say anything.

I drive off and I go on the road.

"Where are we going?",She asks.

I look at her.

"I am taking you home"

"Why?"

"I didn't want you to experience drama. My brother's fiancée is dramatic",I mention.

"Oh...he told you about me?",She mentions.

"Yes, in passing. I didn't know he meant you"

"I do not love him. I do not have an ounce of feelings for him",She mentions.

I look at her.

"Maybe you might, you never know. You guys seem close to be invited to his wedding",she keeps quiet.

I get her home and I take out my wallet and take out some notes and hand them over to her.

"For making you miss some food",I mention.

“It is okay. Thanks, bye Ntaka”,she mentions.

“Nomvelo”,She looks at me.

“I am sorry if I said anything offensive”,I mention

“You did not”,I lean in on closer to her that our face is inches away from each other. I can feel her breathing pattern changing. I open the door behind her and move backwards.

“Bye”

“B..bye”,She waves and hops out of the car.

I watch her until her image is there no longer. I place my head on the steering wheel. As much as I want to fight my brother concerning her. I do not want her to be in his mess but I cannot always save people who might be willing. I do not know at this point. I know Qophelo. I saw it in his face that he likes her so much and I do not want to be in a little squabble with my brother.

I remove my head from the steering wheel and drive off going back to Diepkloof.

NOMVELO GWALA

Why did I think that he was going to kiss me? I dump myself on the bed and lay on it on my back and look up the ceiling. I touch my abdomen and I feel little flutters in there. His scent is still lingering on the tip of my nose and it is as if he is still here.

My heart is still racing a bit fast just by playing the image of him leaning closer to me as our lips almost touched. I am convinced that we almost kissed. I...I don't know really what is happening with me. What is happening with you Nomvelo? I ask myself that.

Could it be that I find Thulani a bit attractive and that his presence poses some weakness in me. I shouldn't be feeling like that, I just lost my husband.

"Get that out of your head Nomvelo", I mention.

I roll over the bed and get off and I take the things I am wearing off.

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It has been two days since the little ceremony that I had went to and I have not heard from Thulani. Usually by this time he would've called at least twice and in that sense that I haven't seen him too as he used to take me to work and he would fetch me from work but Qophelo I had seen and he wanted to know what is going on between his brother and I and I told him we are nothing but friends. Friends huh? I don't even think we even asked to be each other's friends at all. I do not even know what it was but we just got along. Very well because we can understand the pain of losing people we love. I guess that is what made us get along well is that we share more or less the pain of losing people we loved so dear.

Today I decided to gather the courage and just call him and find out if he is okay.

I am at my lunch break at work and I make the call before I could eat. It rings a few times before it gets answered.

“Nomvelo”,He says and it sounds a bit coldish.

“Thulani, how are you?”

“I am okay”

“What is going on asisazwani? Khona engikwenzile?(are we not getting along or is there something I did?)”,I ask and I hear him sigh.

“No, it is not you Nomvelo. I have to stay away from you and respect my brother's wishes”,He mentions.

“Wishes of what?”,I ask.

“He is not comfortable with us knowing each other and I don't want to fight with my brother”,He mentions

I feel a ping of sadness.

“I do not understand this”,I mention.

“I am sorry Nomvelo”

“Are you still in town?”,I ask.

“No, I left the same day”,he mentions.

“Ohw”

“I wish things were different but I guess things happen. I wish you the best Nomvelo and that you find some love again. You are young and there is still life ahead even if it is with my brother in your life”

“You are really here to make me hate you”,I mention.

“Bye”,I hang up after that.

I cannot believe this. Qophelo has his fiancée. He cannot understand what I am going through and the way he is persistent in my life it is starting to really irritate me so much.

I understand where Thulani is coming from, I just wish he told me from that day his decision at that.

# Chapter 9

## REALISATION

All I wanted to do was respect my husband's memory even if it went against the context of how I do things but it is all that I wish to do for Jabu as the last honour for him but more especially I am in a moment where I am hurt about something that does not concern him even for once.

It has been about a few weeks and now it has been 4 months since I lost my husband and each day I cry for different things. If it is not the fact that I get angry that Jabu is not here with me it is the fact that Thulani cut all ties that had to do anything with me all because of his brother that I do not even love. I have been avoiding and ignoring Qophelo as much as I can but today I am going to see him and tell him all that I want to say before anything else.

I look at myself through the bathroom mirror at work and I breathe in and out really well. I have taken off my head wrap and I went even to church yesterday and I felt a bit better. Going to church revived my heart. I wash my hands and I move out of the rest rooms and I make my way to Qophelo's office. I know that he is in today as it is restocking day and he is here during those times the most. I get to his office and I knock on the door. I hear a come in and I open the door and he is in there with his fiancée. I swallow as they both stare at me.

“Come in”, I make my way inside the room.

“Good morning”, I say.

His wife looks at me.

“You look like Nomvula”, She mentions.

“She is my twin sister”,I say and she nods.

“Nomvelo?”,I nod my head and she looks at her fiancé.

“I will be at work”,She moves away from him and takes her bag.

She looks at me one more time before she walks out. I sigh as the door gets closed.

“Are you okay?”,Qophelo asks.

“No, I do not want you bothering me. I do not like you as a person anymore as you are bombarding me into your life. You are married Qophelo and you are taking advantage of my vulnerable time”,I say.

“No Nomvelo that is not my intention”,He mentions.

“Please just stay away from me. That is my only wish”

He keeps quiet and I do not wait for him before I walk out of the office and make my way going to the floor. His fiancée is still here. She sees me and she comes my way and I look at her as she stands in front of me.

“How much money do you want to stay away from him?”,She mentions.

“I do not want money”



“You should be ashamed of your self chasing a committed man when yours is rotting in the grave!” She is not shouting but her tone is very firm.

“I am not after Qophelo. He is after me now excuse me and talk to him not me”, I try moving away from her and she holds my arm tightly.

“Do not talk to me like that. I will wipe the floor with your illiterate self, nx”, she lets me go and I walk away.

I feel tears nearing my eyes but I push them back. I quickly go to the locker room and I get my bag and take out my phone and I call my mother. It rings a couple of times before it gets answered.

“Nono”

“Mama, I want to come home. I-I cannot do this anymore. ”, I say sobbing.

“What is wrong talk to me?”, she asks concerned.

“Mama a married man said he loves me and now his wife is complicating my life and I...I lost a friend because of him”, I say.

“Come home sizokhipha lezimvatho ozifakile. Ngasho kubaba wakho ukuthi izokubangela amabhadi buka manje ushelwa ovoco abangakwazi ukufaka amasende abo ephentini (So we can take off those things you are wearing. I told your father that they will cause bad luck for you look now you are being asked out by Useless men who can't keep their balls in their panty)”, My mother says.

She hated the idea of me being under mourning for a year. She believed I do not need it and it will only bring bad spirits and bad luck for me but my father convinced her other wise and mentioned that I have to respect my In laws.

“Okay”

“ Get a taxi now. I want you here”

“Okay mama”

“Don't cry. I will sort it out”,I smile.

We end the call and I wipe my tears after that. I guess I feel a bit better with talking to my mother.

My mother is very overprotective of me more than Nomvula because I am more fragile than her. Nomvula can stand up for herself while I cannot do so for myself. I fail to even if I try.

I get back to work after that. I will get the earlier taxi going home tomorrow.

.

I saw my mother in the yard sweeping her paved way and she has a sun hat on. I didn't realise how much I had missed being home and it has been a long time since I visited. She sees me as I enter the gate and she leaves the broom and rushes to me and pulls me into her arms.

“Thank you lord you are still in tact”,I sink into her arms.

“Hello mama”,She kisses my forehead.

“Come inside.”,She helps me inside and I go and sit down on the couch.

“It is so hot Nomvelo and you are wearing all these clothes. We need to burn them”

“Don’t I need to be cleansed before I can remove these clothes mama?”,I ask.

“You will be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Nomvelo. I hate that family for trying to lead you astray”,She mentions.

“I remained in God's presence mama”,She shakes her head.

She goes to the kitchen. This place has changed a lot, it must be Nomvula’s work. She comes back with some juice and food.

“These are left overs from yesterday”,She mentions.

“Thank you”,I say and take the food and eat it.

She looks at me with a smile.

“I am happy you are home”,she says.

“Me too”

“Tell me about that man that has been bothering you”,She mentions.

“Mama he is a nice person but he is just pushy. He wanted me as his second wife”

“Not with my child!”,My mother dislikes polygamy.

“Mmmh”,I take a spoon of the food and fill up my mouth.

“After you are done we are going to put your things away and then we are going to pray and shave that hair away. That is the only thing we will honour in this thing. Jabu knows you loved him dearly and he died knowing you do not have to do this and I doubt your mother in law will agree with cleansing you.You shouldn't tie your life around that family now Nomvelo. You need to move on my child”,She mentions.

“Even if it means having a boyfriend?”

“Eh angazi but you know what I mean. Just do not have sex your body is off Christ”,She mentions and I nod.

“Hawu mama”,I giggle.

She smiles then sighs.

“Have you talked to your sister?”,She asks.

I just look down.

“Yes but she seems angry at me for something”

“You guys should talk it out.”,I nod my head.

My mother leaves me to eat while she goes and finishes up sweeping her yard.

After some time I get done and I go and wash my dishes before I go to my mother. She tells me to get her bible and her anointing oil and she tells me to go to the bathroom. She goes and takes all my black clothes and she brings it to the bathroom and she tells me to strip. She spills some drops of her anointing oil in the water and she removes my doek and my hair falls onto my shoulders.

“Mmmh buka nje ubuhle lento ebufihlile. Angizalanga ingane ezingeke zivale lento Enhle kanje.(Mmh look at the beauty this thing is hiding. I didn't birth children that will hide all this beauty)”, I giggle.

She tells me to get inside the water and I do get inside.

My mother reads a scripture in the bible and she starts praying and she starts pouring the water over my body.

“Out satan. Out of my daughter's life and God be there for her and be her shield and bring healing into her life....!”, She continues and after a long time she stops with praying and she goes out of the bathroom leaving me in the water.

She comes back and tells me to get out of the water and I do. She hands a towel over to me and I wrap it around my body. She tells me to go and wear a dress that is on my bed. I go to the my bedroom and I find an old dress I used to wear before I got married. It is still in good shape and I was the one who made it. My mother loves it so much for some reason and I think it is because it is flowery. I finish getting dressed and I go to where my mother is and I find her outside and she has my black clothes on the floor. She takes them and throws them in a metal drum and starts to pour petrol on them before she sets them alight as I look there.

“Let go of him now and let him rest Nono. Start afresh now”, My mother mentions.

She tells me to get on my knees on the little mat in front of her feet and I do so. She starts with shaving my head. Tears stream down my cheeks.

I started breaking down as she did that. Seeing my hair fall it was like I lost a part of my life and it was going to be gone forever.

“It will be alright Nono”, My mother encourages.

“It hurts mama”

“I am sorry” she carries on and then when the hair is short she takes a battery powered hair cutter and she cuts my hair and it leaves me bald headed.

After my mother was done with doing my head I was done with crying. She comforted me and then she told me that I should go and sleep and she will clean up. I took that opportunity and I went to go and sleep in my room.

My heart is aching but I also feel some relief.

---

I woke up later and it was already dark outside. I got off the bed and I went to lounge and I found my mother and father seated on a one seater couch sharing a plate of food. It has been like that for years. My father does not eat from any plate beside a plate that my mother is eating from. I had always found it weird and it got to a point where Nomvula and I would share a place too and sit on the same place together.

I admire their love, it has always been this way and I have never witnessed it any different and I am I had the pleasure to witness it.

“Nkosanzana ka Baba(Daddy's princess)”,My father says as he disturbs me from my thoughts.

I make my way towards him and my mother gets off the couch.

“I am going to dish up for you”,She walks away.

I get to my father and he smiles.

“Your mother cut your hair?”,I nod my head.

“Come here”,I fall into his arms like a child.

“Everything will be okay”,I breathe in and out.

“Do you want me to tell you a story?”,he asks.

“If it is a love story about you and mom no thanks”,I mention.

“No, it is about you”,I look at him.

“When you were getting married I was scared much more scared than your sister going to university in another province.”

“Why?”

“You were 21 and I was scared that you wouldn't be able to handle it. I felt like you were too young but I had to trust you and let you go”,He mentions.

“But now I am more scared now that you have lost your husband. I am scared that you will put your life on a stand still. I want you to explore too Nomvelo. All your life you centered around other people and pleasing them just do yourself now even if you go against your mother”,He whispers the last part and I giggle.

“Will she not kill me?”

“I think she has done enough with cutting your hair”,He mentions.

“I like it”,I say.

He smiles.

“You are my last born”He smiles.

I giggle.

“Nomvula and I are born on the same day”

“But you came out last”,He mentions.

My mother comes back with my food.

“Now get off my husband and get a boyfriend of your own”,I gasp.



I get off my father and then thank her. I eat the food and she sits with my father. I look at them watching the TV together and it gets me thinking.

“I am leaving tomorrow”, I say and my mother shoots a look at me.

“Why?”

“I have to go back to work”

“Can’t you tell your boss and call in sick?”, I shake my head.

She is sad.

“I will visit I promise”

She sighs.

“It is fine Nomvelo”, I nod my head.

We sit together and I finish my food. I go and wash the dishes and then I come back and watch some TV with them up until they were tired and they went to sleep while I stayed and watched some TV. My phone rang and I look at it. It is Qophelo. He has been calling me since I left him yesterday in his office. He should leave me alone. I should ask Mimi to take me and get a new phone. The ones that have a touch on them and not buttons like mine.

.

It is the next day and I woke up early to catch a taxi that will take Me to Durban and soon I got it and then It drove off to Durban. I do not know what I will be doing there but I felt an urge to just go there as well before I go back to Johannesburg overrall I need to start new beginnings. I look different with my head bald and also with my shoulders not covered. My mother told me that I am young and shouldn't cover them and certainly I will not. She told me I should pray more too and I will do so.

It drove for some hours before I reached Durban and I took out my phone once I got there and found the nearest place I can sit in and I found Kfc. I go and order something to eat and then take a seat at the corner of the franchise while waiting for my food. I go to my call log and I get to the number I want to dial and I dial it.

It rings for a couple of time and it gets answered.

I didn't think it would happen and that maybe he blocked me.

"Mvelo",His voice comes through the end of the speaker.

"Thulani, how are you?",I ask.

"I am...okay",He mentions.

There is some silence between us for a while.

"I am in Durban and I don't know if you would like to talk to me. I will not bother you after",I mention.

"When did you arrive?",he asks.

“Just a few minutes ago”,I say.

“Where are you?”

“Kfc in town. I do not know the road”

“Okay, I will be there”,I nod my head.

The call gets cut and my order gets called out.

I quickly go and get it and I thank the lady. I go and sit down and I open my burger and I take a bite off it and start eating. I am hungry. I will call my mother later once I am okay just to get her off. I look around and see people walking in and out as I am eating. After 30 minutes I was done with eating and I cleaned up my space and went to throw away the things I was using and I went to sit down again.

I wait a bit before I see him enter the place. He looks around and it seems like he cannot spot me. I stand up and grab my bag and I go towards him and his eyes land on me. He does not move them away from me and I am feeling...nervous at the moment. I stand in front of him and he looks down on me.

“Mvelo”

“Hi”,He brings his hand forth to my head and touches it.

“I am sorry”,He says quickly retrenching his hand.

“It is okay”

“You cut your hair”

“Yes”,I say.

“You are wearing a blue dress”,I giggle.

“Yes”

“Lets go”,He mentions and I follow after him.

We get to the car and he helps me inside and buckles me up before he drives off. He keeps on stealing glances at me.

“I thought you were mourning for a year”,He mentions.

“My mother ended it”,He asks no further questions but he nods.

We get to a great neighbourhood and he gets to a gate and it opens automatically. He drives in and stops in front of a two door garage. The house is a single story.

We hop out and I admire his neat and clean yard. The grass is nicely cut. We get inside the house and it is nice as well. There is a kitchen that is an open plan area connected to the living room. I look around admiring his house.

“Your house is nice”,I mention. Thank you, my sisters decorated it.

It shows there is a work of a woman. He says he is going to get me something to drink but I decline.

"Can we talk?", He nods and we sit down on the couch. I move a bit closer to him to close the gap between us.

"I do not like the way things ended between us but I understand where you are coming from. You did not hear my side of the story concerning your brother and I understand you stand for family over anything else. I do not love your brother. He is married even so he wasn't I do not love him. He has a likable character that any human would interact with but that does not mean I like him. Yes I got along with your brother but getting along with you was different from him mainly because we understood what we both were going through making it easier to be in each other's presence. I do not want us hating each other in future I just want to clear that out"

I mention and he sighs.

"I could never hate you Nomvelo. I also didn't want you to think that I had an agenda in getting along with you that is why I stepped back. I do not want you to feel a certain way towards me and my family and have the wrong idea because you were getting along with myself and my brother", he mentions.

I just look at him before I lean in and capture his lips. My heart beating against the chest and I kiss him, he doesn't leave me hanging but kisses me back too. Placing his warm hand on my exposed knee and I feel flutters in my stomach. His perfume rests well in my nose as I smell it on him. It is a moment that lasts for a short while but leaves me with feelings that are mixed in me. I pull away and I stand up.

"I am sorry, I should get going", I mention and he stands up and I walk away.

"Nomvelo", I turn around and I look at him.

"Ntaka, I am sorry for what I just did and it won't happen again but for being honest before I leave, I developed feeling for you. They may seem off to you as something else and I do apologize. Bye", I say and I walk out of the house. I breathe in and out.

I cannot believe I did that! I...I like Thulani!

I had left him inside and I do not even know how to get out of this place and I am scared to go inside and ask for assistance after what I did. A part of me is beating itself up very badly and now I feel bad for what I did. I am forward and I feel like I just acted on impulsive decisions. I have stood outside his house waiting for any taxi to show up and I would get inside for a few minutes now and nothing has come by through this quiet neighbourhood either than cars from people around here passing by. I hold onto my bag tightly as I rethink my life choices. That was a bit slutty Nomvelo. My inner self says to myself.

“Are you done running away?” His voice comes from behind me.

I feel my insides knot and I do not turn.

“I am not running away”, I say softly.

“Turn around and face me Nomvelo”, He says firmly and I turn around and I face him.

His gaze is upon me. I maintain the stare for a few moments before I back away from it.

“I am sorry”

“What are you sorry for?”, I do not know what to say so I just keep quiet and look away.

“Let’s go inside we are not done talking”, He mentions and he walks off and I follow after him like a lost puppy.

He lets me inside the house and he follows after me and I go to the couch and I sit down. He remains standing but places his hands in his pockets and looks down onto my seated self.

“Nomvelo, I do not want to find myself being in a situation where I am taking advantage of you in a way because of the position you are in”

“Which is?”, I look at him and he closes his eyes and sighs.

“Look what I mean is that I don't want to be a person who is taking advantage of you”

“Look Thulani. My husband would never come back, that I have accepted but I cannot put my life on a stand still because of that. People never heal from loosing someone to death but rather they learn to live with the pain.”, I mention.

“What do you want then?”, He asks.

“I told you what I feel”, I say.

“Why me?”, He asks and I just giggle.

“I don't know. It happens I guess”

“What happens if maybe we give our friendship more than what it is and it doesn't work out. Do we go our seperate ways?”, He asks.

I keep quiet for a moment. I didn't realise that.

"I guess so",I mention.

"Come here please",He mentions softly and I leave my bag on the couch and I go towards him. He takes out one of his hands and he stretches it over to me and I take his hand and he pulls me closer to him and he dips his head closer to my face.

"You are an amazing woman Nomvelo",He mentions.

I look at him in the eyes.

"As much as I want to try this with you but I don't want to hurt you"

"Would you hurt me?",I ask.

"Not intentionally",He says as he stares at me.

"I am not like your husband Nomvelo",He mentions.

"You are not him",He nods his head.

There is some silence between the both of us.

"What do you want me to do?",He asks.

"What you want to do",He lightly chuckles.



He intertwines our fingers together and he wraps his arms around my waist and his face is close to mine. Our lips brush against each other.

“You are making me feel nervous”, He mentions softly before he captures my lips slowly pulling on the bottom one. I close my eyes and let our lips intertwine. Slowly to the pattern and rhythm of what we are feeling. I feel every inch of me intensifying slowly as the kiss commences and I feel a feeling I have never felt before. He takes out his other hand from his pocket and lets me place my hands on the side of his neck as he is taller than me. He places his free hand around my tiny neck holding it to his satisfaction. His hand with mine that are intertwined go to my lower back. We break the kiss and we catch our breaths while looking at each other.

“I wish this works out for us”

“If we want it to”, He smiles and chuckles.

“Let me go and make some food for you”, He says.

“I already ate before I came with you here”, I say.

“So you are my girlfriend now?”, I giggle.

“I thought you knew now Ntaka”, He laughs.

“I am slow”

“Seems so”, He picks me up and I squeel.

“Do not drop me”

“I will not”,he mentions.

He puts me down and we kiss once more and then we pull away.

He looks at me and smiles and I return it.

“When are you leaving?”,He asks.

“I do not know. I ran away from work to come home and I thought of coming here in the process”,I say.

I look down thinking about my impulsive decision.

“Don't worry, I will talk to my brother”,He mentions.

“Maybe it is time I moved back to Kzn and live with my family”,He looks at me.

“Are you sure about that?I don't want you quitting the life you are building Mvelo”

“I am sure, there is not much left for me there”

“You can think about this later”,I nod my head.

“Let's go and get some ice cream for you”,He mentions.

“Okay”.

He tells me to leave my bag and I do so. We get to his car and he helps me in before he drives out of the yard. He drives to the mall and we get there and we go and get some ice cream ofcause with him asking the service lady to reduce his portion just so he can finish it. We sit around the Ice cream shop and we talk, just talk about anything that comes into our minds but with me talking the most.

“You should continue with your sewing talent”,He mentions in the mist of the conversation.

“I do not know how I will find customers easily. My sister used to help me with that as she was advertising my work in University”

“The internet is a really big space”,He mentions.

“Well I can try the internet cafe once I am determined on working on it consistently”,I mention.

He looks at me.

“You look beautiful”,He mentions and I smile.

“Thank you”,I lick my ice cream.

We ended up going to watch a movie too and got food before we even left the mall quiet late.

NONKONZO MVELASE

I cannot let another woman come towards me and my husband and I thought that I should talk to Nomvula to tell her sister to back off or I will show her who I really am.

I am going to her house right now and I just parked my car as soon as I arrived. I got out of my car and made my way to her door and I knock before she opens.

“Come in”, I walk inside and go to the living room and I sit down.

“We need to talk”, I mention.

“You did say on the phone call”

“Your sister is after Qophelo. He wants to take her as his second wife”, I mention.

She frowns when she looks at me.

“Ohw what does Qophelo want from Nomvelo. She has just lost her husband”

“You should be asking your sister that. She is throwing herself at him and I will not be held accountable for what I will do to her if she tries me”, Nomvula frowns.

“Are you threatening me?”

“No your sister”

“That is like threatening me and don't you ever come for Nomvelo like that”

“What will she do?”

“Nomvelo is my sister and I will not have you threatening her. Go and sort out your sickening fiancé and tell him to stay away from vulnerable woman who lost their husbands just for his sick gains”, She clicks her tongue.

“Are you siding with her?”, I cannot believe this.

“Nomvelo is my sister after all”

“I thought you hate her”

“And why would you think that?”, I laugh.

“Yeah neh. I guess she you just had a hard time swallowing the bitter pill that she got married and you can't even get engaged all these men do is just use you”, I say.

“Get out!”, She says.

“Bitter pill to swallow huh?”

“Get out before I hurt you Nonkonzo!”, She raises her voice.

I jump up and take my bag and walk out.

“Next time choose your battles and your are better than your good for nothing sister,you need me”,I see her throwing a case towards me and it hits my shoulders. I scream.

“Get out Nonkonzo!”,I rush out.

I have never seen in all the years I have known Nomvula angry like that. Yes I know that once when we were in university that she was close to her sister. She was all she could talk about even wore clothes made by her but when she found out in 3rd year that her sister is getting married that stopped. The closeness. I always knew she envied the one thing that her twin got more than her having everything in her life and that is having a life time husband something she finds hard to find.

## NOMVULA ZUNGU

I sat down on the couch as tears ran down my cheeks and the words Nonkonzo said really hurt me. It is true, I only disliked and distanced myself from Nomvelo because she got married. My mother always told me when I went to university that I will have a greater opportunity to find a man who has a great life going on and he will marry me and I will have children. Trust me those men she mentioned came around but not all of them stayed. I hated the fact sometimes that I went to university and maybe that is the reason why they never saw me as someone to make their wife. I want to have my own family. I am 27 for goodness sake and almost all my friends are in stable relationships. I envy that.

I love Nomvelo I never hated her in my entire life but I envied the one thing she had and that is marriage and now it is gone and I am scared of being close with her.

We have always been close and I was scared, scared that now she will have a new best friend and a new family and all would be forgotten about me so I had to forget about our bond first.

I wipe my tears and stand up before I go to the kitchen to get cleaning supplies to clean up the broken vase.

NOMVELO GWALA

I cannot believe that I slept here in this man's house. We slept in different bedrooms as he felt a bit shy and didn't want to bombard me with everything. I understood very well and so we ended up sleeping in different rooms. I woke up and the sun was already out. I got off the bed and I opened the curtains and windows and I sat on the bed for a while before I made it and made my way to take his Tshirt and wore it as he lent it to me. I get out of the room and went through to the kitchen and I found him reading a news paper while seated on a high chair. He looks up to me. He is still in his pyjama pants and they are long but he has nothing on top. I look away from him.

"Good morning", He says and I look at him briefly.

"Good morning Ntaka"

"I ordered breakfast. It is in the microwave", He mentions.

"Are you not going to work?", I ask.

"No, I will work from home", I nod.

“Come here”,I quickly go to him and he pulls me into his arms and he kisses my neck.

“I am sorry, I just cannot believe that I am yours”,I smile and I look at him.

“Well believe it”

“What do you want us to do today?”,He asks.

“What do you have in mind?”,I run my fingers on his bald head.

“I am not sure but anything is fine with me”,I look at him.

“We are the same”,He laughs.

“Ngathi ngibambe elingadonsi uliyini Kule round(I think I got a loco one this round)”,I laugh and shake my head.

I lay my head on his chest.

“Don't worry about anything”,He mentions.

“I won't”,He wraps his arms around me.



# Chapter 10

What feels like a captured moment makes it last forever when it is really short lived in all honesty but what makes it last forever is the great feeling that comes with it that I can attest.

I am back in Johannesburg. I got here about an hour ago and I am prepared to go to work and actually send it my notice that I will be leaving work. It is official. I am moving back home and I will start with my sewing career more. Thulani gave me so much insight on it and encouraged me that I also attend those small business conferences so that I can grow as a brand. He says I will now be a brand and represent my work in the process of it as well.

Mimi told me that she will be gone tonight so I opted to baby sit Rethabile at that moment. I had missed sitting with her and having her ask me unnecessary questions that some I couldn't or didn't even know how I would be able to answer them.

I am standing outside of the building of my work place. I have been stationary outside it for a little while now and I have been gathering courage of how I would face my manager. After all he is the one who hired me.

I walk inside and I make my way in passing and greeting anyone who I know that we work together with. I ask about the Manager's whereabouts and they tell me he is by the bar and I go up to him. I find him busy talking to the barman and I get to them and I greet.

"Mrs Gwala nice to finally see you turn up for work",The manager mentions.

"Uhm yes sir",He folds his arms across his chest.

"What is your excuse ?",He asks.

I breathe in and out before I could answer him.

"I am here to ask to be let go from work",I mention and he looks at me before he turns to glance at the barman and then he looks at me again.

"I have never heard of this, why?" ,He asks.

"I am moving back home to my province in KZN. I cannot keep up with the life here as it is too much for me and my mother needs me",It always works.

"You know you have to serve a months notice",He mentions.

I keep my silence.

"Gwala",He shakes his head.

"You may go, I understand but next time in a job serve your notice early",He mentions.

"Thank you so much, I will keep that in mind",He nods.

I quickly rush out and I make my way out.

Thank God that I was able to inform them that I am going to stop working here. I am grateful to Mimi for getting me this job but I think it is now my time go actually let the experience go as nice as it was but hopefully by God's grace I will find another one.

I go to town and pass by Cash Crusaders and I go there to ask and know how much I would receive for my fridge and all the appliances that are still in good shape if I trade them in for cash and I get my

quotation before I leave and I go and take a taxi up going home. I should buy a smart phone and get to know how it works properly so that I would be able to do more work effectively.

I haven't told my mother that I am moving back home soon but I am well enough sure that she will be estatic with the idea of me going back home.

I get to the area I live in and I get off the taxi and I walk the rest of the little journey to where I live. It is still a bit quiet on the roads and the school children are no where to be seen at this moment but soon they will be running up and down the road all afternoon forgetting that they have some sort of homework to do when they get back home.

I get to my room and I take out the keys out of my bag. I paid my rent for the next month though I think by that time I will be gone back home but it does not really matter as it serves as a notice too.

I get inside and I put my bag on my bed and I go and take a plastic bag just to take it out side since it is full.

My phone rings and I go and take it and answer it there.

“Mancwane”

I find myself feeling a bit flushed.

“Ntaka, how are you?”,I ask.

“I am well,How are you?”,He asks.

“I am good”,I say.

"I miss you",I blush a little.

"I have not been gone for long",I mention.

"I know but I do. If I didn't have to be physically here I would be following you right now coming there",He mentions.

"Aren't we getting obsessed now there",I say

"It is not being obsessed but rather yearning to be in your presence",He mentions.

"I will visit before I go home",I mention.

"Tell me when you are leaving okay?",I nod my head.

"Okay"

"Mvelo?"

"Thulani",I reply.

He has a long pause before he answers.

"I love you",I feel something nudge in my stomach as softly as it can be.

“I hope I am not scaring you or I am being forward”,he continues to mention.

“Not at all”,I say softly.

He chuckles lightly on the other side.

“Have a great day MaZungu”, He mentions

“You too”,We end the call and I smile.

I go and throw away the trash bag and then I come back inside my room.

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

I keep on starring at the picture of her on my phone. It is like she has let loose and I am rediscovering sides that So far I am getting to learn about Nomvelo or is it the bald head. She is carefree in a way too and I have noticed that these past few days that we have been together too.

She asked me to take take some pictures of her as she wants to see how she looks with no hair in pictures and I did. I haven't deleted them like she asked me too for a bunch of them but I keep on looking at them and I find myself gliding my fingers over the screen of my phone and chuckling on my own like I have lost a few marbles.

I am parking at Mphokopheli's school and I know that in a few minutes he will be out.

As much as it will be difficult but I think I want to bury this part of my life now and finally let go of my old marriage. It didn't work out and there is no reason for me to hold onto it now.

I lock my phone and I step out of my car and I see children come out of the school. For a 10 year old he is getting taller and taller.

He spots me when he walks out and runs up to me and I smile. My heart swells just at the sight of seeing him and another sinks in pain.

"Baba, I thought I would never see you again!", He mentions.

"That can't happen", I say and we break the hug.

"What do you have for me today?", He asks with a huge smile on his face.

I return the favour of the smile.

"I have some news for you", I mention and he looks at me eagerly.

"You know that your mother and I used to love each other?", He nods.

"Well I have met someone, a nice lady and I love her", I mention.

"Just like how Mama loves Malume(uncle)", I sigh closing my eyes before I nod.

“Yes”

“Will that mean I cannot see you anymore?”,He asks.

“If I start a family with her not as much”,He is saddened by the news.

I pull him close to me.

“Malume is your dad. So as I too and I will always love you. I am not going to leave you”,I mention.

“You promise?”,He looks at me in the eyes.

“Yes I do”

We share a hug and I hold onto him. We hear a loud hoot behind us and we break the hug.

“Mpho! Come to the car now!”,I look back and it is Angela with what used to be my friend on the driver's seat of the car.

Angela gets out of the car and rushes towards us.

“Thulani how many times did I tell you to stay away from my son!?”,She is shouting pointing at me.

I do not like causing a scene especially in front of the child.

“Go to the car Mphokopheli”,I mention.

He listens and rushes to the car and Angela faces me.

“He is not your child. How many years will it take for you to realise that?”

She mentions.

“The 7 years you let me believe that I am his father”,I mention.

“You are confusing him just stay away from him”,She mentions.

“I love Mphokopheli. That is the most unfortunate part and that your slutty ways put an innocent child in this mess you created”,I mention.

“Mess I created. I wouldn't have cheated if you loved me more!”,She says

“What did you want from me Angela? Huh tell me? I worked hard for us, I came back home to sleep next to you every night and you never for once slept without knowing where I am if I am not home.I have never cheated on you and I did everything that I could and gave you everything you ever wanted but guess what?! That was not enough for you so do not come here with the bullshit that I never loved you enough because I did but now I don't”,I say and she has tears streaming down her cheeks. She covers her face, I shake my head and move away from her going to my car. If it was any other day I would be comforting her but now I have had enough and I am not holding on to something that was doomed to be there to begin with.

I feel myself getting a bit angry at the thought that I let myself commit to this done marriage years after the divorce. I do not know what I had hoped for but I know that I longed that all of it was not true. I take my phone and send a message to Nomvelo and it goes through asking her where she is and she calls.

“I saw your sms.I am home why?”



“I was just asking”

“Oh”

“Can I call you in a few, I am going onto the road”

“Okay, be safe”,she mentions.

“I will”,I drop the call and I drive off away from the school.

NOMVELO GWALA

“Ausi Mvelo Koko was feeding me a lot of porridge too”,Rethabile mentions telling me what she had for the holidays.

She seems to live visiting her grandmother and I have noticed everytime she comes back from there she has something to say or a story to tell about how she was playing with her friends.

“Finish up bathing Rethabile do you can get dressed”,I mentioned.

“Okay”,She carries on bathing and she finishes after some time.

I take the basin she was bathing in and I go outside to dump the water and then I come back inside and find her already moisturized. She gets dressed and then I pull her to rub the Vaseline properly on her face. And then I look at her and she smiles.

“Thank you Mvelo”

“Did you do your homework?”

“Yes I did it and I got done with it.”,I nod my head.

“Get in bed now”,I mention.

I am also in my pyjamas now.

“I want to cut my hair like you Mvelo”,She mentions pulling the covers to her torso.

“You will have to ask your mother and you have really nice hair”,I say.

“It is long but I want to look like you”,She mentions.

She is rather fascinated about me being bald. Mimi was surprised and even suggested I wear wigs to cover my head while my hair grows back. I do not want to and I love my head like this.

The crickets are heard from outside. I go and I lock the door and I get into bed and pull my Bible beside me.

I pull Rethabile next to me so that we can read it together before we pray and then sleep.

I get a scripture and I read it with understanding before I get on praying with Rethabile and after we were done I got off the bed to go and switch off the lights when there was a knock on the door.

“Who is it?”,I ask.

There is some silence. My heart is beating but I know that the gate might be locked so I open the door slowly and I spot a familiar person in front of me before I open the door a bit widely and I step out of the room.

“Hey”,I mention.

Thulani opens his arms and I fall into them before we are mounted in a long hug. I hear him heave a heavy sigh.

“Mvelo is there a burglar there?!”,little Rethabile asks.

I pull away from Thulani.

“No nana”,I say and turn to him.

“Are you okay? Why are you here?”I ask.

“I just need to be away from Durban for a while”,He mentions.

“Is there something wrong there?”,I ask.

“Yes”,I nod my head.

“You have a guest?” ,he mentions.

“Yes. I am babysitting Rethabile. Her mother is gone so I opted to stay with her”,I mention.

“Okay, I don't want to come in and have her see your boyfriend”,he says softly and I laugh.

“Okay.”

I move from him and I tell Rethabile that I will be back quickly and that she should lock the door and open for me only.

She nods and she comes and locks the door as I accompany Thulani.

“What is wrong?” ,I ask now clearly away from the child.

“I had a fight with my ex wife” ,He mentions and looks at me and I keep my silence just to give him the platform to carry on with his conversation.

“We were fighting about Mphokopheli” ,Yes he has told me who Mphokopheli is and I understand the love he has for the child. Just like me with Rethabile. I love her like she is of my own.

“What now?” ,I ask as we are about to near his car and he stops and turns to look at me.

“Now I kiss my girlfriend” ,He mentions and he pulls me by the waist and lands a soft perk on my lips.

“Ntaka”

“Mmmh?”,He looks at me giving me his undivided attention.

“You know I am a Christian woman right?”,I ask.

“Yes I do Themba lami”,I blush.

“You do know what that means?”,I ask.

“That I respect your beliefs yes”

“Yes and as in as much as we have been intimate before with people we were previously associated with but now I want to be a born again Christian”,I mention.

“Meaning?”,he looks a bit confused.

“Meaning being Celibate and staying pure until I am married”,I mention.

He slowly smirks.

“Is that your way of proposing? Well I am flattered MaZungu”,I lightly tap his torso.

“Thulani I am being serious”,I mention.

“I understand Baby and yes I will respect that.”

“Thank you. Now I have to go,I left Rethabile alone”,I mention.

“Can I get a kiss goodbye?”,He mentions.

I nod and we share a kiss and break it. We part ways promising that he will see me tomorrow morning. I go back and knock on the room door and call for Rethabile. She opens for me and I get inside and I lock the door.

“I am sorry about that”

She just nods and I go and switch off the lights before we get into bed together.

# Chapter 11

It is early hours of morning and I have prepared myself with Rethabile for school and I? Well I am still trying to get my things sold and also trying to find a suitcase for my clothes too that will be quiet big enough for my things. I informed Thulani about my day this morning when he called and he told me that he is going to come and help me for the day of which I appreciate as much.

I help Rethabile with tying her hair properly and she looks at me and blinks her eyes before she smiles.

“Mvelo?”,She says.

“Yes Rethabile”,I reply to her and then I turn her around and fix her uniform well.

“Are you leaving?”,she asks.

“Yes I am”,I cannot hide it. She has to know and adjust to that.

“Why? You don't love it here?”,She asks.

“I love it but I have to go home now”

She turns around and she looks at me.

“Who am I going to stay with when Mimi is not here?”,I look at her.

“You will stay with the twins”,I say with a little smile on my face.

“They are boring sometimes”,Haibo.

“Don’t worry I will visit okay?”,She nods.

“Now give me a kiss”,She smiles hiding her face with her hands before she leans in and gives me a light perk.

I take her bag and I go to the fridge and take out a fruit for her. I take my bag as well. We walk out and I lock the room and I take my hand into hers. I see Thulani's car parking outside. He steps out of the car as soon as he sees us approaching.

“That is the man that bought Ice cream for me”,She says.

“Yes baby”,We reach his car.

“Good morning”, he says.

“Morning Malome”,Rethabile says and sheilds herself behind me.

“Rethabile come”,She holds my hand and doesn't let me go.

“She seems shy”

“Are we going with him?”,Rethabile asks.

“Yes, We will take you to school”,Thulani mentions.



"If I get ice cream again",She mentions now smiling.

"Lets go to school Rethabile",Thulani chuckles.

I get her inside the car and Thulani opens the door for me and I get inside.

We put on our seat belts before he starts to drive off with me directing him to Rethabile's school. She is more talkative now than she was before and she is asking questions and alot of them that Thulani gladly answers. When we get to her school Thulani opts to help her out and she waves at me and says her goodbyes before they leave and he drops her off at the gate and stays a bit watching her go inside before he comes back and gets inside the car.

It is a bit chilly today so the heater was a bit on to make the car warm.

"I didn't get to greet you properly",He mentions stealing a glance at me.

"Morning Ntaka",I say and he smiles.

"Good morning MaZungu. Where are we going first?",He mentions.

"I want to buy a suitcase that I will put my stuff in to take home. I also want try other places that will take my things and buy them from me.",I mention.

"Why don't you take them home with you?",He asks.

"It will be pricey for me to get a truck that will take all of my stuff and go to Kzn with it",I mention.

“Mmmh,So you would take them home if you could?”,He asks.

“Yes”

I mention. He nods his head.

“I will make a plan then”,I frown slightly.

“What plan?”,I ask.

“Don’t worry about it. Let's go and get that suitcase you want”,I nod my head

“Okay then”

“Let’s start with Breakfast before anything else”

“You didn't eat?”

“No, I wanted to have breakfast with you”,I smile.

“Okay”

QOPHELO MZIMELA

I have been bothered. Bothered with what Nomvelo said to me the other day and I have had time to evaluate myself as a person. Had I come on hard on her? I thought being honest with how I feel on the get go will be best and also stating my intention of having her in my life than to play along with no intention of being that.

Here I was thinking that we are going some where and that I was taking things as slowly as possibly can be. Maybe just maybe I became too much and she thought that she will have a problem with Nonkonzo and all this polygamy thing in it but she has nothing to worry about because I will take care of everything.

She ran off and I haven't seen her since that day when she left and I haven't been to the pub since then so today I am hoping I get to catch her attention and also try to reason and apologize if it is necessary. I love her and I do not think that I would want to loose her for my silly mistakes that can be fixed in the end.

I just took a shower and now I am dressed. Nonkonzo is in the house downstairs preparing some breakfast for us as she woke up earlier than I did. She came back home the other day with a sore shoulder and I was concerned about what happened and she told me that her bones were just in pain but the swelling came and she went to the doctor but she seems better now.

I am still trying to plan a getaway for the both of us. We need it and I would love to show some appreciating that she is agreeing to atleast let Nomvelo be part of our lives some day and I want to show her that I love her for that.

I finish getting dressed up and I go out of the bedroom grabbing my things before I left and I went downstairs.

The sizzling sounds coming from the kitchen can be heard. I rush to the kitchen and I see her dressed up already in her work outfit without the subtle heels but she has slippers on.

I quickly go and wrap my arms around her waist and softly kiss her neck and she giggled lightly and turns around to me leaving the plates that she was setting up. She lands a kiss on my lips and holds the sides of my face.

“Food is almost ready”,she mentions.

“You look beautiful this morning”

“I am happy”,I smile and then give her a forehead kiss.

“Will you be at the office today?”,She asks as I move away from her going to the fridge to get some bottled water.

“No, I will be at the pub”

“Ohw,why?”,she asks.

I turn around to look at her.

“I need to talk to Nomvelo”,she looks at me blankly.

“Why?”

“She said something that disturbed me the last time so I just want to clear the air”

"You must love her don't you?"

She turns around and her back faces me.

"Nono please."

"I am just saying"

"Okay I will not talk to her",I will I just don't want to hurt her.

"Please don't ",I just nod my head.

"Okay, I am famished",I go and sit on the high right across her and drink my water as I wait for her.

NOMVELO GWALA

We got to Spur at the mall and we had a sit down there. We ordered some breakfast and now we are about to indulge in our food.

"Where did you go after last night?",I ask.

"I went to my brother's place", I look at him.

"Oh okay"

"Yeah, Hlubi does not ask a lot of questions and I prefer staying with him because I get to control him", I look at him.

"Hawu what if he had a lady with him there?", I ask.

"It is not my problem"

"Thulani", I shake my head as he laughs.

"I would've went away with you if you did not have to baby sit", He mentions.

"Well sorry"

I have a bite of my food and start eating.

"You adore children?", he asks.

"Not really. I just get along with Rethabile well", I mention

"Where is her mother?"

"She is there but sometimes she disappears at night"

“What does she do?”,He asks.

“I don't know. I have never asked but she does come back in different cars sometimes and she always looks pretty. I have never seen her in a uniform and I have known her for 4 years”,I mention.

“Has she tried to influence you into doing the kind of work you do?”,He asks.

“No she has not but she is the one who got me the job at your brother's place”,I mention

“Mmmh”

I look at him.

“What is it?”,I ask.

“Nothing”,he goes on to poking his food and he starts eating.

I eat my food as well and have a drink. We get done with eating and he calls for the server and the bill comes. He pays for everything and asks me if I do not need anything now and I tell him now. This all feels new to me. Having to date a man who just takes care of things randomly and does not seem to consult his pockets and how deep they can go.

We walk out of the restaurant and walk hand in hand heading to where I would possibly get a suitcase from.

“Thulani”,He turns to look at me on his side.

“Do you ever set a monthly budget for how you spend your finances?”, I ask.

“I used to in university, I still do but I spend more each month and it differs. Why do you ask?”

“Does it not worry you?”

I ask.

“No baby, I earn money that is great. Do not worry”, He mentions.

I cannot help but worry.

He takes my hand into his as we are walking.

“Do not worry Mvelo. I am not a reckless spender. Okay?”, He asks.

“Okay”

He tugs his fingers between mine and they intertwine together. I smile at him and he returns the favour.

We go to Game and we get what I need and there after I look around for some suitable phone that I can buy. I found one but when Thulani started asking questions concerning its performance, space and also its quality the lady who was helping us was very honest and that is when I saw that buying a good phone is quite expensive.

I sigh as I ask for a moment to just take in the news from the sales lady and she agrees.

“Are you okay?”, Thulani asks.



"Yes",I mention.

"Let's pay for the suitcase and then we can go to Other cellular stores and check out what they have"

"What if it is too expensive?",I ask.

"Don't worry you will find something you like",I nod my head.

We leave and go to pay and he pays. I feel unsettled with that. Yes he is being helpful but I do not want it to seem like he is going with me just to pay for my things. We soon leave the store and go to Cellular stores. We get there and we goanc check out the phone and I see some beautiful ones too that I seem to like as well.

We are soon helped out and we get to know which cell phones are the best range.

.

We are in his car now and we have long left the mall after we were done. I have been staring at my new phone for quiet some time now and I do not know how to behave honestly. When we left the mall I was a bit not okay but now I am good and I have let it settle in my heart that I would never go anywhere with paying for things as long as this man is there and wants to do it.

"You like it?",It is the second time he asks this.

I look up to him and place the phone in its box and close it.

"Yes I do",I smile while looking at him and he does the same.

"I am happy to see you happy",he mentions and my heart warms at that.

I place the box in its plastic and then I go onto wrapping my arms around him.

"Thank you so much", I say as I inhale his scent.

He holds me tightly close to his body.

"I love you",he mentions again for the second time I have heard him utter those words and I feel something tug in me and rests to warm my heart well.

"I love you Ntaka",I say it back and I hear him sigh.

We break the hug and I give him a perk and I giggle between it pulling away.

"What it? ",He asks with an amused smile on his face.

"It feels so easy to fall in love with you. Not because of the things you do for me but for just being yourself.",I mention.

"You are falling for me? ",He asks and I shy away.

"Yes",I say softly.

"Mmmh",He pulls me slowly and moves his seat back and let's me sit on his lap.

“Tell me if you are uncomfortable”,He mentions and I nod.

I get to nod my head. He kisses my shoulders and trails his kisses down to my collar bone before he moves to my neck and leaves kisses there. He moves his little kisses and reaches my lips and we end up kissing with our lips intertwining and moving in ways that they leave an intense feeling between the both of us. I find myself having a moan escape from my throat as I feel myself heating as his hand rests on my thigh.

I am close, too close to him for that matter but I do not stop the kiss not until I felt something growing from under me and he pulls away from the kiss gently and kisses my cheek.

“I think we should stop there”,He mentions as he opens his eyes slowly and looks at me.

“Mmmh”I say.

“I don't want us sinning”,He lightly chuckles and I laugh.

“Yes”,I try to move away from him to go back to my seat but he does not let me go.

“I promise I won't do anything”,He mentions and I nod my head.

To be quiet honest it would be weird to say but the way his hardening shaft is resting against my butt cheeks is making me feel hot flushes even though we are fully dressed but I can feel it. I shift a bit and he groans before I rest well on him.

“How long are we going to be seated like this?”,I ask.

"I don't know, you want to move?"

"No, I am just asking", I say.

"Nomvelo", I look at him.

"Yes?"

"Would you ever have a child with me even if you are not financially stable enough?", He asks and I keep quiet.

"I don't know"

"I can afford one", He mentions.

"You want to have a child?", I ask.

"One day, I am not getting any younger. I will be 38 soon", he mentions.

"If God sees it fit we might have one", I mention.

He nods his head.

"I want to kiss you so badly", He says trailing his fingers on my exposed arm.

"But I want to hold myself from doing that", He mentions.

"Maybe you should cool off first. Let me go and put the things away and I will come back once you have cooled off",I mention.

"Please bring me some water too",He mentions.

"Okay",He opens his side of the door and I jump out and I could see his print. I shy away and quickly go and grab the things at the back and I go and take my bag and rush off to go and place everything I got in my room. I see Mimi walk out of her room.

"Hey I haven't seen you today, were you in town?",She asks.

"Yes I was",I mention.

"Thank you for looking after Thabile.",she says.

"I don't mind"

"Did you find any buyers?",She asks.

"Not yet"

"Okay",Her phone rings.

"We will talk, I am coming",She moves away to answer her phone.

I get inside the house and then I put my things on the bed. I go to the fridge and I get the water and then walk out of the house and lock it. I quickly rush to Thulani's car before Mimi could see me. I got to his side and knock on the window and he opens the door and I give him some water.

"Thank you baby", He drinks the water.

"Are you feeling better?", I ask.

"Yes I am, I should get going now", he mentions.

"Okay, travel safely", We share a perk and I close the door before moving away from the car going inside the yard. I went inside to my room and then there my phone was ringing. I quickly go and take it. It is an unsaved number. I answer it.

"Hello"

"Nomvelo, it's Qophelo", I breathe in and out.

"Qophelo what Can I do for you?"

"I heard that you have quit. I didn't know", he mentions.

"Yes I told the manager"

"Is it about us?", He asks.

“There wasn't anything much about us Qophelo. You have a fiancée that you should be focused on not me”,I mention.

“I will respect your space for now but please don't cut me off in your life.”

“Please respect my space and do not call me, I don't want your wife to be on my case.”,I dropped the call and see that Thulani sent a message that he as arrived. That was quick.

A part of me wants to tell him that his brother called but I decided against it.

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

I got to Hlubi's place and I hop out of the car. I love spending some time with Nomvelo whether it is short lived but I do. I decided to leave before things got out of control. The last person I was intimate with was 3 years ago and it was Angela. While in pain I was more focused on consuming alcohol than anything else but I got better because I had to pull myself together as the eldest son in the family. Hlubi is at work during these hours so I know that I am alone. I got inside and I went to get more water. It has been so long since I found a woman that made my blood rush in a second just like Nomvelo does and she does not even do anything or much. Do not get me wrong. I have had times where I would be turned on by woman after Angela but never had the urge to sleep with them so I just out my head in work and also into my family.

I send a message to Nomvelo and tell her that I have arrived home okay. The baby talk, I didn't mean to overstep if I did but I will apologize if she feels uncomfortable about it. That is the last thing I want her experiencing and that is being uncomfortable with things.

## Chapter 12

Just a few hours after Thulani had left I receive a call from him and he asked if we can go out and have some super together. I have never went out at night before and this will surely be an experience. Knowing Thulani he loves food and has mentioned before that he loves food. Besides that when I am with him one way or the other I will come back full and fed too. I agreed to the super thing and so I took out a dress from the clothes that my mother packed for me when I left home. I got to bathing and Mimi was going to visit me but I told her that I am leaving in a few minutes and she told me she will ask questions when I come back. I am guessing she wants to know where I am going since I disappear alot these days. So here she is in my room with Rethabile doing her homework on the floor and her mother having a glass of wine in her mug while she is looking at me.

“Ai this dress is not it”,I run my fingers on it.

“Well I like it”

“You are going on your first date you need to look sexy and I have a dress in my room for that”,I turn to her.

“I do not want to show my thighs and wear something short”,I say.

“I have just the dress for you”,She mentions and she quickly goes out of the room. Rethabile looks at me.

“Are you going to have a date with Malome?”,She asks.

“He did not say it is a date”,I say.

“It is, Mama has been on alot of them before where men ask her for supper”,She mentions.



“How does that make you feel?”,I ask

She shrugs her shoulders.

“I wish Mama can have a man like you and Malome Jabu who can be my father”,she mentions.

“Do you want a dad?”,I ask.

“Yes, I know my dad but he is not a nice person”,she mentions.

I feel bad for her.

“Don’t worry you have us that love you”,She smiles widely.

Mimi comes back and she is holding a green long dress of which I did not expect from her.

“You can take it, I have never worn it and an ex of mine got it for me. I hated that it is long”,She says and places it on the bed.

It is simple and beautiful too. Has noodle straps and a side slit to it but the material is what I like too.

I take off my dress and then I try this one on and it sticks to my body a bit but I seem to like it, it is not as revealing as I thought it would. I wear my sandals and I look fine as well.

“You look beautiful Mvelo”,Rethabile mentions.

“Thank you Nana”,I smile at her.

My phone rings and I take it and answer it.

“Hello”

“I am outside. Should I come and get you inside? Do you need some little time to get ready?”,I lightly laugh.

“No, I am coming now”

“Okay you look beautiful by the way”,He mentions.

“You haven't seen me”,I mention

“I know you look beautiful”

“I am coming”

“Okay”,We end the call and I turn to look at Mimi and she has a smile on her face.

“You are blushing”

“I am not, I have to go”,I mention.

“Come Riri”,Rethabile packs her things and we all walk out together. I lock the door and then we go our separate ways. I walk out of the gate and I see him already standing outside the car. I get to him and we share a hug as I inhale his scent into my nostrils.

“Hi baby”,He says with his arms still wrapped around me.

I look up to him and I smile.

“Hi”

“I hope you left some space for food”,He mentions.

“I have learnt to when I am with you”,He chuckles.

“Come, let's go”,He then opens the door for me and I get inside with his help. He closes the door and goes around the car and gets inside.

He helps me with the seat belt even though I know how to put a seat belt on but he just likes doing that and I think it has become a habit too.

He starts the car and off we go to wherever he is taking me. We are having a conversation during the ride just talking about anything that comes into our minds. I get to know more about his family as he talks about his brothers and how they are as people.

“I know Qophelo will not be happy finding out that we are together”,He mentions.

“I do not care, it is not like I owed him something or he was my ex or something”,I mention.

“Yes”,I give him an assuring smile.

“Do not worry about it Ntaka”

“I won't mama”,I nod my head.

“When are you going to see Mphokopheli?”,I ask.

We have never really touched up on that topic before but I do know that he loves that child. You can tell with the way he talks about him if you pay attention.

He lets out a sigh and he runs his fingers over his bald head. Another thing I keep up with. He shaves his head every week.

“I am thinking of keeping my distance as much as it is hard but I don't want to confuse the child more further”,He mentions.

“He has known you all his life. I am sure he is confused now than before as he had known you to be his father and now to know that the only man he knew as his real father is not but another person must be very confusing for a 10 year old”,I mention.

“What do you think I should do?”,he asks.

“I don't know,do what makes you feel okay.”,I say.

He takes a glance up on me.

“Still, As much as I would love to be in his life but I cannot. I have to move on”,He says.

I feel for the little one the most. It must be difficult between them.

“Don’t worry everything will be okay”,I mention.

“Yeah”

The drive still commences and we talk about other things until we reach our destination.

It has been a few weeks just being with Thulani but it feels wonderful and I do not feel an ounce of doubt or guilt just by being with him. I think when I was removed from mourning I was letting Jabulani rest and with me carrying on with my life.

We are led inside the restaurant and we get to be seated. The menu comes and we get to look through it and I do find something that I think I might like. I place my Menu down and look at Thulani as he is focused on the menu. This man! It feels so surreal that I am in an actual relationship with a man like him. I am not half way through figuring my life well but here is this dark skinned creature like he was sculpted out of dark chocolate and with his neat beard that makes his facial features pop just because he has a bald head to it.

He looks up to me and catches me staring and I quickly look away at that moment.

“Have you found something that you like?”,he asks.

“Yes”

“Are you ready to order?”

“Yes”

“Please look at me”, I look up to him and he has a slight smirk on his face.

“What is it?”

“Nothing”, He chuckles lightly and I shake my head.

The waitress comes and takes our orders and our drinks are double. She leaves with the menus and we are back to focusing on us.

“Thulani”

“Nomvelo”, I fiddle with my fingers before I smile.

“Thank you for this”, I mention.

“You don't have to thank me.”

“Still, thank you”, I mention and he takes my hand into his.

“You are utmost welcome”, He mentions

We talk about anything and our drinks come and we take a sip on them while we wait for our food. He tells me that he has found a way for me to move my things back home but he will inform me further by

tomorrow if he gets a chance and I thank him. He really didn't have to go that extra. I could still find someone to buy my things before I leave.

I tell him that if that happens then I might move home sooner than I had anticipated.

“What if you move tomorrow?”, I look at him.

“I don't know, would it be that fast to find transport for everything?”, I ask.

“Yes”, He mentions.

“Oh, then I don't think I have a problem. I mean there would be nothing left here to do”, I mention.

He smiles and nod.

“We will leave together then”

“Okay”, I take a sip off my drink and then our food comes in no time wasted.

We enjoy the night with us in each other's company just laughing and being affectionate here and there. We even got desert and then we left the place. I enjoyed every moment I had with him in there too. Really I did.

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

My father has called me just when I drop off Nomvelo and I am now on my way to going back home. I want to talk to Nqubeko tomorrow and get him to lend me his Van and I will leave my car here and fetch it some other time. I don't know if he will agree as he loves his car so much for someone who is not even in an agricultural or construction field. I would've asked Qophelo but I do not want to bother him so Nqubeko is my option for now.

I answer my father's call waiting in anticipation of what he will say. I know already that is going to ask me questions regarding the woman I have put on my Whatsapp status. I am not an active person there but I do post from time to time when I feel like it. I didn't hide anyone when I posted the picture of Nomvelo and when I took a photo of her she wasn't facing me but her back was. I love this woman and sometimes I feel like it scares me how much I feel like my walls are breaking down just to be with her and have her in my life. I feel like a lucky bastard already.

"Mzimela", I answer the phone.

"Ndodana. Awusasho mese usunembali entsa(You don't mention when you have a new flower)", I can hear the happiness radiating in his voice.

My father does not talk much, not that he doesn't want to but he just a quiet man unlike my mother who talks too much.

"We have not been together for that long", I mention.

"It does not matter. Is it the lady you are friends with?", He asks.

I breathe in and out. I didn't think it would be that obvious.

"Yes, how do you know?", I ask.



"I just figured with how overprotective you were of her. She is off mourning now?" ,So everyone knows Nomvelo was a widow.

"Yes"

"Mmmh"

"I love her baba. I do but Qophelo is going to be a problem for us",I mention.

"Why?"

"He liked her first. He wanted to make her his second wife",I could hear the silence it was loud enough to make me feel somewhat.

"Wena what do you want from this girl?" ,he asks.

"I want to be with her baba. I genuinely have no bad intentions with being with her",I mention

"Then don't care about what your brother says. He has his own woman and if the girl didn't want you she would've been with him. Don't let Qophelo get over your head just because he always got what he wanted all of his life",Yes it is true.

The last born syndrome fell onto him the most as he is the middle child even our last born sister does not compare to how much of the attention Qophelo got as the middle child.

"I hear you"

“When am I getting grandchildren?” He asks.

“Baba I have to go, I am driving”

I mention.

“Okay”, He hangs up and I breathe in and out.

I place my phone away and I keep on driving.

My phone rings again and I quickly take it and it is Nqubeko. I answer the phone.

“Bafo”, I say.

“You don't say when you have moved on. I didn't think I would see this day soon”, he mentions.

“It is Nomvelo”, there is silence between us and I hear him shift.

“What?!”, He says lowly but in a stern tone.

“Its her”

“She chose the older one. Nice”, He mentions before I hear him laugh.

“Please don't say it like she jumped between Qophelo and I?”

“You know your bratty brother will have a fit”,He mentions.

“I know”

“So what are planning on doing?”,He asks.

“Nothing. Nomvelo doesn't really care how Qophelo receives the news because in her defense she doesn't owe Qophelo anything”,I mention.

“Damn!”

“I have a request”

“What is it?”,He asks.

“Can I borrow your car. Nomvelo is moving back to Kzn”,I mention

“Haah Kanti seniyokipita?(You are going to co-habit?)”

“No, she is going to her family”,I say.

“I mean it wouldn't be bad having a woman to live with you. I am sure you would want to have her everywhere in your house anytime”,He mentions.

“She is celibate”,I mention

“Haibo why?”

“She is Christian”

“That cherry has been popped already, I don't get why she has to hog it because she is missing out”,He mentions.

“Sex is spiritual to her.”

“Just marry her, it is not like you will commit to anyone else I know you this is the second woman you have ever been with in your life and you don't just commit”,He has got me thinking.

Yes Angela was my first in everything and I always told myself that I will only be with a woman if I will commit to her. Women threw themselves my way but I never even gave into bedding them as much as they were attractive but I didn't want to be one with many people. Sex is something I can't just toy around.

“I don't think she is ready for that”,I say.

I love Nomvelo, so much and I would love to have her as my wife one day but I don't think she is ready.

“Have you ever asked her? Just because she lost her husband doesn't mean that she is not ready she might be it is just that you don't know”,He mentions.

“I will revisit this topic some other time”

“When you plan on tying the knot with her just do it privately and show up as a married couple so you can have peace from your brother”,He mentions.

“I thought you supported Qophelo having a second wife”

“Uphathwa ukuqina,I thought it was all in his head until he called me and told me that Nomvelo is telling him where to get off and to stay away from her. I guess now I know why”,He starts laughing.

“So you are going to lend me your car?”

“Yes”

“Thank you”

“Isn’t it you are going to drop yours?”,He asks.

“Yes”

“Zasha!”,That must be the reason why he gave in so easily in giving me his car because he wants mine.

“Okay bye, I am driving”

“Sho”,He hangs up.

NOMVELO GWALA

I came back and Mimi was already asleep and I am glad. Thulani sent a message last night telling me that transport is ready and so I had to stay up and pack my clothes. I had some boxes ready already in my place so I packed my things well in there. I slept at about 4 am and he mentioned that he will be here when the sun has risen. I don't think we will leave here on time but hey anyway I am grateful for the help. A knock comes on my door as I am still resting. I get off the bed and I make my way to the door and I unlock it and open the door. I find him standing there wearing some black Nike shorts with a black Nike Tshirt too. He smells fresh.

"Did I wake you up?", He asks. Well certainly he did.

"I am sorry", He says.

I nod my head and rub my eyes.

"Did you sleep?", He asks.

"Not really, I was packing some things. I am not done", I mention.

"You shouldn't have. I brought some people to help", He mentions and I look at him.

"I am not fresh like you "

"Come, grab something that you will wear. You can take a shower at my brother's place while everyone else stays and packs up the rest of your things and don't worry I trust them", He mentions.

I nod my head and quickly grab my gown and wear my shoes. I give him the house keys and he takes them. We walk out and we meet a group of people more or less about 6 if I am not mistaken. He tells

them what to do and tells them that we will be back while they get to work. I think it is very unnecessary that he got people to pack my things. I would've done it.

“Ntaka do you think it is necessary to hire people to pack my things? They are not alot”,I mention.

“Yes it is, don't worry”,I just nod my head.

We get in the car and he drives off.

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I feel so fresh at the moment and I cannot comprehend. Thulani gave me some privacy and he told me that he will be in the kitchen and that I should use his room when I am done with bathing. I got to the room he uses and I took his lotion and got to smear it on my body and after that I got dressed and I realise then that I had forgotten to bring my underwear. I walk out of the bedroom and I find him in the kitchen and he is making some sandwiches. I get to him.

“You just came on time”,He turns to me and holds my waist.

“I forgot my underwear at home”,I say softly and he blinks his eyes and looks at me.

“Are you uncomfortable?”,He asks.

“A bit”,I said.

“We can go and buy some, there is a shopping centre close by”,He mentions.

"I don't think that is necessary to waste money on something I already have",I mention.

"Okay...so should we go and get it?",He asks.

"I just wanted to warn you",He smiles.

"Don't worry about me",He kisses my forehead and goes onto his sandwiches and he hands the food to me. He picks me up and places me on the counter and he gets on too.

"Are we suppose to even sit here?"

"The living room is a bit far",But I can literally see it.

I shake my head at him and get to eat my food.

"Themba lami",Something tugs in me when he says that.

"Yes?"

"Would you ever want to get married some day, to me if I am being specific",He mentions.

"As in being committed to you?",He nods his head slowly.

"Yes, I don't see a problem",I say and take a sip off my drink.

"Do you think is early if I asked you to marry me?",I look at him.



“What do you mean?”,I can feel my heart thudding against my chest.

“I mean that I love you and I am ready to commit and spend the rest of my days on this earth with you”,He mentions looking at me.

I move my eyes away from him and look at the food for a second.

“I am sorry if I am making you feel uncomfortable”,He mentions

“It is not that, I am just scared”,I say

“About?”

“The Gwala's.”

“I would handle them if I have to”

“I bring nothing to the table”,I say.

“Doesn't the bible state that a husband is the provider?”,He mentions and I smile and he does too.

“Yes in first Timothy chapter 5 verse 8”,I mention.

“Yes,that”,I giggle.

“I know I am not as Christian believing as you are but I can learn”,He mentions and I look at him.

“You will?”,He nods his head.

I feel tears pricking my eyes. I just feel so engulfed with being overwhelmed at the moment. I didn't think that someone would love me in a short space of time. Holding back to anything will be like I am hindering myself from seeing the great things in front of me. Thulani is gentle with me and what I like about him is that I know where I stand with him and that none of my time is being wasted or I am being taken for a ride. I look at him and he gives me an assuring smile.

“I will speak to my parents”,I say with a smile and he seems shocked with my answer.

“Are you sure?”,He asks.

“Yes”,I say softly looking away from him.

“Please look at me”,I do.

“I love you”,He mentions.

“I love you too”,He smiles and gets down from the counter and stands between my legs before he has his arms around me. I wrap mine around him for a short while before we share a kiss. We break the kiss.

“Thank you so much for trusting me in your life”,He says.

I cannot believe it!

## Chapter 13

It was a long trip going from Guateng to Kzn. I left some money with Mimi for her to get a gift for Rethabile since I left without saying goodbye and she promised that she will let Rethabile visit since she likes me and I would be delighted about that. Well I got home and my mother was more than happy to have me home and have me stay with them but I do not know how I would break the news of the fact that someone wants to have my hand in marriage. I need to tell her so that she can inform the Gwala's for me as I am still their child and they have to know. I know my mother in law will not be very happy and she will spew a few words making sure I get the message of how she feels. That is what I am scared of the most, MaThusi is going to be the issue here at hand.

I have settled a bit though it is late at night and Thulani said he will drive down to Pietermaritzburg and get some rest there then in the morning he will leave for Durban. I hope that he has arrived safely though he has not sent a message of his arrival so I think he is still on the road.

My mother has cooked and she tells me that I should come and eat. I walk out of my room after practicing ways to break the news. I want them to digest them as they fall asleep in that moment. A part of me is scared and I do not want to inform them and just wait but then again if Thulani is paying Lobolo to me then my parents won't receive the letter but the Gwala's will. I sigh and go to the living room and I find my father watching the news. I sit on the couch and greet him.

"I didn't expect you to come back home early. I thought you have started a life there in Gauteng"

"I thought I should come back home and start my life here", I say

"I thought you want to be independent"

"I will be dad", He nods and smiles.

I sigh and breathe in and out. My phone pings and I take it and see that it is a message from Thulani informing me that he has arrived safely. I sigh and I look at my father who is still focusing on the TV waiting upon my mother to come back from the kitchen.

“Baba”, He turns to look at me.

“I have something to tell you”, I say as I fiddle with my fingers.

“What is it Mvelo?”, I breathe in and out.

“I-I met someone”, I see him frown a bit.

“Okay...”

“No I didn't know him when I was with Jabulani but we have been seeing each other for some time and...”, I breathe in and out.

“Does he know that you were once married?”

“Yes he does.”

“How are you feeling? Do you feel rushed?”, He asks with concern laid in his voice.

“No, I haven't felt that way.”

He nods his head slowly and I keep on fiddling with my fingers.

"I-I am getting married",I say softly.

"Who is getting married?",My father goes into utter shock that moment.

My mother appears and places the food in front of us.

"What is going on?"

"Nomvelo",My father says softly.

"Baba"

He doesn't utter anything after that. I don't know if he is hurt or he is in disbelief.

"Nomvelo who is getting married?",My mother asks.

"I am mah",I don't even know how to say this.

I find myself crying in that very moment.

"I am sorry",I quickly say.

There is silence within the room and all that can be heard is the TV.

"Mvelo what...when did this happen who...?",my mother tries to talk but she cannot utter anything.

"I am sorry Mah", I say again.

"When did this happen? Were you with this man when Jabulani was sick?" she asks.

"No mama. I didn't know him before Jabulani passed on.", I say.

She sits next to me.

"The Gwala's won't be happy about this", She mentions.

"It all seems so sudden", She mentions and pulls me to her chest.

"I know mah"

"Are you ready for this? You just lost your husband"

"I just want to move on"

"Moving on doesn't mean bury your pain and get on with the next man. We are here if you are feeling lonely"

"How long should I stay single before I can commit to someone?", I ask.

My mother looks at my father and then she turns to me.

“We don't want you getting hurt”

“Mah”

“Let her be”,My father mentions after the long silence and we both look at him.

“Baba Nomvelo is still fragile. She cannot handle another marriage”,she says.

“Nomvelo is old enough for her decisions. If the kitchen gets hot she knows where home is”,I am shocked by my father's response.

“She hasn't figured out her life like Nomvula. She still needs to find her feet”

“And she will stopping her will not help us too but we learn the easy way or the hard way about things”,My father mentions and he grabs his food.

“I will talk to the Gwala's. I will pay back their lobola”,He mentions.

I am left in awe so as my mother. She is not happy about the decision made here. I expected it to take a wrong turn knowing my parents but I did not expect this at all.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

I was tired. More than anything in the world and I just need to be in my bed and just rest. I have not talked to Nomvelo in such a long time. Usually she is the one who calls and checks if I am fine, as much as sometimes I avoid talking to her but I like it when she calls and asks me if I am okay and some days I am not really okay but I wouldn't want to disclose that with her.

Nonkonzo came to apologize about the outburst we had and all is forgiven if my sister is not to be mentioned anything ill about her.

I have a boyfriend. We have been with each other for only a few months and it seems promising. Well that is what I think, we met through work and we work in different companies but we do almost the same thing.

I go to the bathroom and I open the bath water and I go and stand in front of the mirror and I look at myself and I run my fingers through my 26 inch HD weave and then I smile at myself. I am happy that from my mother's womb I was provided the will to not struggle in school when I am studying, Nomvelo always struggled with school but her strongest point was Mathematics. I never understood how that could happen as she wasn't doing well in all her subjects except mathematics.

I was never jealous of Nomvelo getting married when she did, her husband was struggling to make ends meet with her but she seemed to live him. What bothered me the most was why couldn't I get the same? Find a man who would love me enough to see me worthy of taking his surname? I asked myself that question

I walk out of the bathroom and I go and pick up my phone and I make a call. It rings a few times before it is answered.

"Hello"

"Nomvelo"

"Nomvula how are you?", You can hear from her voice that she seems happy.



I lightly smile.

"I am okay, how are you?", I ask.

"I am okay, I am sorry I left without seeing you", She mentions.

"Left where?"

"I am back home in Mooi river. I left Johannesburg", She mentions.

"Oh, why?"

"It was not for me. I struggled to keep up", she mentions.

"Or was it because of Qophelo?", I ask and she keeps quiet.

"How do you know about him?"

"He is my friend's husband to be"

"Oh yes"

"What was going on between the both of you?", I ask.

“Nothing”

“Mmmh okay”

“Yes”

“I have to go”,I say before I hang up.

I hold onto my phone tightly and I put away before I go and close the water.

NOMVELO GWALA

I woke up to help my mother with some chores before she went off to work with my father. They travel together every morning and my father has been driving my mother everywhere since we'll ever since I can remember. I got a call from Thulani while I was busy being lazy after cleaning the house and I was just doing some sewing on a piece I was working on.

“Good morning ”,I say.

“Good morning baby, how are you?”He asks.

“I am well and you?”

"I am okay, I am about to leave the road lodge",He says.

"Aren't you a bit tired. You drove long hours yesterday"

"I had some rest so do not worry",I say

"Okay..about yesterday I hope that I didn't put any pressure on you. If you feel like we are rushing and you want to wait then I will understand. We can go at your pace",He mentions.

"No I want this too",I mention with a smile.

"Are you sure?",I can hear the pinch of joy in his voice.

"Yes",I say.

"Thank you so much for this opportunity",I giggle.

"You sound so professional"

"Sorry, I just can't contain myself"

He says and I laugh.

"I promise to not hurt you",He says

"And I will support you in everything you do",He says. I let out a sigh.

“Thank you so much”

“Kubonga mina Mancwane(I am the one who is thankful)”,I giggle.

“My parents were shocked with the news. I already told them. My mother is concerned and my father said he will get me back from the Gwala’s first”

“So he is approving?”He asks.

“Yes”

“That is great”He mentions.

“Baby I need to check out. I will call you when I reach Durban”,he mentions.

“Okay”

“I love you ”

“I love too Ntaka”,We end the call and then I get up and I go to the kitchen to make some juice for myself.

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

At this point I don't know what to do, I feel so engulfed with a new emotion. It has been so long since I felt loved and appreciated in my life and Nomvelo makes me feel in that way making it easy to just please her and make her happy, they say a happy wife is equal to a happy home and when I start this journey with her I intend on setting a happy home with her as I want to make her as happy as she makes me.

I got to the mall as I feel the urge to atleast do something nice for her one way or the other. I get there and quickly make my way to the home shops and I look around. I do not even know what I am looking for but what I know is that I want to transform the outside building at the house into atleast a working studio for her. I want that to be my gift to her and to show some appreciation to her.

I find someone who works in the store to assist me. I greet and ask for some assistance.

“What would you like to get?”, The lady asks.

“I am getting married and I want to do something nice for my fiancée”, I say and she smiles.

“Wow Congratulations, what does she like?”, she asks.

“She likes sewing and I want to turn an outside cottage into her studio, so she can start somewhere”, I say.

“Can I see how the room looks like so we can get an idea. We don't sell sewing machines but I can refer you to a place where they sell great quality of them”, she mentions.

“Thank you”, I say and I show her a picture of the cottage.

It is just one big room with a bathroom indoors. She refers to me on what to get and I ask if I can get these things at the store in Durban and she makes a call. It would be more convenient. .she tells me that they have most of the things I want and I am happy. I get to pay for the Durban store and leave with a happy spirit.

She suggested that I get a wallpaper and paint the room in a more inspiring colour like maybe use peaches or yellow or very light pink.

I will see when I go and buy some paint and the type of wallpaper. I do not want to involve my sisters as I want to do this on my own and be proud of doing all of this on my own. I want her to achieve her dreams and actually persue her talent.

NOMVELO GWALA

It has been two weeks now since I had came home and I am still with Thulani, nothing would change and I get to love different sides of him everyday, I just feel lucky. He came down last weekend just to see me and I felt special. My father went to the Gwala's to talk. Babu'Gwala was the one who has a hard time with letting me go as his daughter but MaThusi was more than happy to get rid of me as his daughter in law. I told you that woman does not for once like me.

Rethabile is saddened that I left but I promised her that when schools close she will visit me and that was the only way she would accept and be okay with my departure. I am glad I left Johannesburg because I am experiencing peace right now.

My mother is off today so it is just the two of us at home right now. I have been sewing as I don't have anything else to do and now I am taking this a bit seriously than I was before and I get to do alot of dresses and get to perfect my things.

My mother knocks on my bedroom door as I am busy on my sewing machine and I remove the needle from my mouth between my lips and look at her.

She has a white envelope on her fingers.

“This came in today”, She mentions.

I swallow and she opens it and sits on my bed.

I leave what I was doing and turn to look at her and she tears the envelope open and she looks at it and opens the letter and reads it silently then she looks at me.

“It is a letter from the Mzimela's for your hand in marriage”, My heart beats against my chest.

“But baba hasn't finished with the Gwala's”, I mention.

“He is halfway through. Don't worry”, She says and folds the letter and she looks at me.

“Your father does not have to know about this, he will see upon their arrival we just have to prepare”, She mentions.

I know, it is culture. My father doesn't have to know when they are coming he will just see them here.

“When are they coming?”, I ask.

“A few weeks from now”, She does not mention the exact date.

"Okay",she stands up and looks at me.

"You and Nomvula are lucky in different ways"

"Meaning?"

"You in marriages and her in being an over achiever",I just giggle.

"Have you talked to her?",She asks.

"She called the other day",I smile.

"I am happy. I love you both. You are my babies", she mentions.

"I love you too mom"

She smiles and walks out of my room. I breathe in and out. This is really happening, I wish I could have Mimi here when I get to be with another family. She is the only friend I have.

Jabu didn't like me having friends who were not married just like I was as he felt that they would mislead me. I think that is one of the reasons why he didn't like Mimi too as he felt that when I get close to her she would mislead me so that is why I do not have much of friends.

I carry on with sewing my dress. I take my phone and decide to call Thulani not knowing if he is busy at work or not. It rings for a few minutes before it's answered.



“MaZungu”, I like it when he calls me by my maiden surname.

“Mzimela ukahle?(Are you okay?)”

“I am very well now that I am hearing from you”, I giggle and he chuckles.

“My mother recieved the letter.She didn't tell me the exact date”

“She most probably would”

“I thought you would tell me”,He laughs.

“I wouldn't as much as I wish too but if your mother doesn't want to tell you then I cannot baby”

“Okay then”

“What are you doing there?”,He asks.

“I am sewing a dress for my mother. She asked that I make one for her but I will head to town tomorrow to get some material because I am running out”,I mention.

“You should give me your bank account so I can transfer money randomly”

“Ah that would be too much Ntaka”

“Nothing is too much for me Mvelo”,I smile.

“Don’t send it unnecessarily”

“I promise”

“Okay, I will send my account number”

“Okay, I have to get back to work. I will call you later”

“Okay,bye work well and I love you”,I say it first.

I hear him breathe in and out.

“I love you so much Nomvelo. I hope I am not too much on you”,He mentions.

“Not at all”

“I love you”,We hang up.

I put my phone away and go back to my sewing.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

I think that I have overworked myself quiet too much that I need a break from working. I am thinking of taking Nonkonzo and I on a little trip away maybe to Capetown if not then Zambia. Anywhere that she would like to go to and just have some time away and get some fresh air before we start with the preparations for our wedding of which should be soon. I don't want us to stay engaged for a very long time and the reason why I asked Nonkonzo to marry me it is because I am ready to be her husband. I call my p.a and ask her to be in contact with a travelling agency that will take care of the bookings for us and I ask her to call Nonkonzo ask her where she would like to go.

Another thing too is that I noticed that Thulani seems to be seeing someone. I am happy for my brother. After Angela we didn't think she would let another woman into his life but it seems like he is and I am happy for him. I can't go q day without thinking of Nomvelo and seeing her sister at times when she is with Nonkonzo just triggers something in me. I long to be with her and have her in my life. Her calm aura that I like the most is what gets to me.

"Sir Miss Mvelase asked that you answer your ohone",My p.a appears from the door.

"Okay",She nods and walks out.

My phone rings and I take it and answer it.

"Baby"

"Your assistant called. How far are you willing to go around the world?",she asks.

"As far as your heart desires"

"Well can we go to Namibia. I have always wanted to go there",She says.

“Sure, anything you want”

“Thank you baby, I will pop by for lunch”

“I would love that, I love you”

“I love you more”

She hangs up after that and I get back to work.

NTAKA(THULANI)MZIMELA

I have started with clearing the outside room and I made sure that it is clean enough before I got to painting it. I decided to use grey as it is neutral and I got a very pleasing wall paper. It has bright colours that I feel like it will bring the artistic side of Nomvelo out. So far as the wall paper has been set up and the walls have been painted. I am happy with the progress of things.

I got off work and came home and went to change just so I can get on working on the room. I want everything to be as good as it can be.

Today I am setting up the cupboards and I have to assemble it up with the shelves. I will have a little built in rail station where she can hang her done clothes and also I want to set up a table for her to do

her work on with the clothes and all the cutting. I have watched some YouTube videos of how these places look and I have an idea of how things should be.

I hope she likes it, I really hope that she does.

# Chapter 14

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

I look at the room and there are just a few touch ups that are left but I am satisfied with how far I have come along with the room for the past few days I was dealing with the shelves and space that Nomvelo would use to store her things. I look around the room and though it is not really done but I am happy with the progress of it.

It is early hours of morning and I am preparing to go to work. I love my job and it gives me alot of flexibility to it, I can go to the office or work from home if I want to and get paid for it and the pay is good really.

My phone rings disturbing me from my thoughts and I take it out of my pants pocket and I walk out of the room and step outside. It is Nqubeko. I answer my phone.

"Hello"

"I got your message last night. I cannot believe it",He mentions.

"You were right, all I needed to do was just ask her"

"I am always right, I know that",I just shake my head.

"So you will have a wedding when ?",He asks.

“For now we are not in a rush and I don't want to take the spotlight from Qophelo”,I mention

“Yes he did mention that they are getting married soon with his girl",I nod my head.

“Yes, I am content with Nomvelo and I having something intimate for now.”,I say.

“Mmh okay, I will come down there and be by your side on the day of the negotiations”,He mentions.

He is the only brother who knows so far what is really going on.

“Thank you”

“I have to go,some of don't work big jobs that require us to work home",He mentions and I laugh.

“Bye”,I hang up and I check the time. I am sure that Nomvelo is up now.

I decide to call her and it rings a few times before she answers.

“Mmh Hello”,I can hear from how her voice is a bit raspy that she was asleep.

“Themba lami, I am sorry to wake you up.”,I mention

“It is okay Love,How are you?”

“I am good and yourself?”

"I am good too, I just miss you", I smile.

"I will come down this weekend to see you", I mention.

"I would love that", I bite my bottom lip.

"Go back to sleep, we will talk during the day okay?"

"Okay, I love you", she mentions and I smile.

"I love you too MaZungu"

We end the call and I go to the main house to prepare for the day ahead.

## NOMVELO GWALA

I woke up a little late today and I felt really tired too as it is hot but I made sure to get up at least early and get to do some chores. Late to me is waking up at 10 am if I may say. I got done with the chores and decide to make something to eat there after and went to put some water in the bathtub and let it cool for a while as I am eating. I sit in front of the TV and I watch some of the shows that were. I finish eating and I quickly go and take a bath and when I am done I get dressed quickly. I take the ironing board as I need to iron the hem of the dress that my mother wanted. I wonder where she will use it for but I didn't as much questions. I need to go to town too and get some material that I need but I am a bit lazy for now. Maybe I will go tomorrow when I have some energy.



My phone pings and I go and take it and take the dress and put it over my shoulder. I look at the phone and it is a bank notification that money came into my bank account. I look at the reference and it is from Thulani. He shouldn't have really, I go to my call log and I make a call. I hope that he is not that busy. He answers the phone that moment.

"Mama"

"I just saw the bank notification", I mention.

"Yes, it is for you to get what you needed"

"You did not have to", I mention.

"I wanted to", I smile.

"Thank you so much"

"I love you", I mention

"I love you too, I will call you", I nod my head.

We end the call and I go back to what I was doing.

I got to the kitchen to get some water and then I came back to my room to do some work.

I finish with the little ironing and I decide that I should go to town than delay and maybe I can get some fabric for the dress I will have to wear on the negotiations. I smile on my own just on the thoughts of it.

I really didn't think that I would be blessed with such a man this early but God did and I am rather grateful. It is a risk yes I know but we all take risks in life to have what we would love or desire to have in our lives. I put everything away and clean up my room before I change to something suitable and I took my bag and walk out of the house and I lock it.

I go and catch a taxi.

.

It is busy but not as much as I thought that it would be. I got to a shop that I trust in town. I used to buy my fabric from there while I was doing things for Nomvula for school purposes. I get a nice fabric for my dress and I get a shweshwe pattern too just to top off on what I am going to do. I can already envision the dress that I will wear when it is done.

I get some nice beads for my mother and I then make my way to go and pay for my things. I still have alot of money left and I have not touched the mkeny that Thulani had sent. I go to find imbadada and I found them,They look nice. I didn't even know if I should get one for myself only or would Thulani also like some too. I got the red with black and white straps around them. I took out my phone from my bag and I went to dial his number and it rang for a few times before it got answered.

“MaZungu”

“Ntaka, I saw some shoes that I was getting for myself and I wondered if maybe you would like them or you have them already”,I mention.

“What shoes?”,He asks.

“Imbadada”,I mention.

“I would love them.”,I smile.

“Okay, Please send your shoe size. I hope they fit you well”, I say.

“Thank you Baby”

We end the call and I get the shoes for us and then I leave to go to get a taxi going home. I am done for the day now.

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I have decided to go down to Durban just for two days and then I would come back home. That was much to my mother's dismay and she kept on emphasizing that I should keep my body pure until I am supposed to be one with another man meaning that I shouldn't sleep with Thulani once I get there. I had informed him prior that I am coming to Durban and he is expecting me to arrive today.

Trust me my mother was not that happy with me leaving but with the way my father is giving me free passes she has no choice but to keep some of her things to herself and let me go.

I arrive well in Durban and as soon as I get off at the taxi rank I see him already waiting for me. He has informed me that he will fetch me and we would leave together going to his work place before we depart to his home. I would be seeing where he works today, I am quiet excited to be quiet honest.

I quickly rush up to him and I wrap my arms around him and he does the same and lightly kisses my cheek as I reach him.

“Hey baby”.

“Hi”,I answer.

We break the hug after some time and I look at him with a smile.

“I was surely missed”,He teases.

“You were”,He chuckles.

He takes my little bag and he places it in the back seat before he opens the door for me and I get inside the car and he goes to his side and he gets in as well. The car moves through the city and I look outside the window before I look back inside the car.

“I bought your shoes, I hope you like them”,I say.

“I will like them I know”,He mentions.

“If you say so”,I giggle.

“What is that supposed to me Mvelo?”,He asks.

“I am just saying, don't mind me”,He chuckles and shakes his head.

“Your hair is growing”,He mentions and he places his one hand on my head and brushes it gently.

“I hope atleast by the time of the lobola negotiations I would be able to do some braids so my head wrap can stay properly”,I mention.

“Can I?”,He asks to pull my hair and I nod.

He does and it slips from his fingers.

“It is still short.The grip won't be there”

he mentions.

“We will see, I am sure it is weeks away though since you don't want to tell me the date”,I give him a look.

“I thought your mother told you”,He mentions.

“I think she has forgotten to inform me but she has been pressing me on doing her a dress”,I mention.

“Sorry then”,He mentions.

“You really will not tell me ? I mean I am the center of the day here”,He laughs and places his right hand on his chest.

“I thought we were both the center of attention”,I look at him.

“Yes but still like I am usingaye(Main person)”,He laughs.

“Wow”,He says through his laughing moment.

“Thulani please tell me, I don't want to be found not ready on the day”,I mention.

He tries to calm down from his laughing and he does with time.

“It is three weeks away from now”,He mentions.

“On the weekend ?”

“Yes”

“That wasn't hard to mention”,I say with a smile on my face.

“But baby it wasn't that deep either, you would've eventually knew about the day”,He mentions.

“I just want to be prepared”,I mention.

He goes through the drive thru of Nando's and he orders food. He pays up and then he goes and collect it before we are on the road once more. I get my food and thank him even though I am not that hungry but seeing the food just open up some space in my stomach.

I start with eating and I am not a person to make a mess either that much so I am allowed to eat inside the car.

“Are your siblings going to be there on the day?”,I ask.

“Not all of them, just a few. Nqubeko and Gama the most”,He mentions.

“Ohw”

“Qophelo will be away with his fiancée on that week”, I give him a look.

“That is why the negotiations are in that week?”

“Yes, I don't want anyone ruining the day for us”, He mentions.

“But he is still your brother. We cannot hide this forever from him”, I mention.

“We won't, I promise after them he will know”, He mentions.

“Please, I don't like secrets”

“Yes Ma'am”, I carry on with eating.

“Reminds me that I have to call Nomvula and let her know”, I say and put the food away before I reach to grab for my bag.

I take my phone out and I go through it and dial Nomvula's numbers.

“Nomvelo”, She answers.

“Hello Sisi how are you?”

“I am good, I am at work Nomvelo”

“Sorry I wanted to tell you something I am going to be...”, She disrupts me.

"I won't be available for whatever it is. Work is holding me down and I don't have leave dates since I was off when Jabu passed away. I am sorry I can't be there",She mentions.

"Nomvula I just wanted to tell you that I have...",She interrupts me again.

"I will call you later Nomvelo. My boss is here",She hangs up after that and I lower my phone.

Sadness covers over me. I put my phone in my bag.

"Are you okay?",Thulani asks.

"Nomvula and I used to be really close growing up and when I got married things changed",I say.

"Did she tell you why?",He asks.

"No, she never did. She is always busy to do anything",I mention.

"Calm down, don't feel sad maybe she is busy and will call later",I just lightly smile.

"Maybe",I say.

"Will you stomach seeing people?",He asks.

"No",He nods his head.



“Okay”, Silence consumes the car.

NONKONZO MVELASE

I am in serious need of this vacation and I am happy that Qophelo has initiated the idea. Our plane tickets are already bought and our passports are now ready for us to take a flight. Our trip is in three weeks time so I will be taking leave then. I really need this brake and just to connect more with my baby before the wedding fever comes in. While I am there I have to find a planner and actually get things for the wedding planning into order before we come back to the country and start the wedding preparations. I cannot wait to be Mrs Mzimela.

I am at work and I receive a call from my mother while I am busy with a case.

“Hello ma”, I answer.

“Nonkonzo you don't call anymore to check up on us and if we are fine”, She mentions.

“I am sorry ma”

“How are you and Qophelo?”, She asks.

“We are well, we are going on a holiday outside the country Soon”, I mention

“And the wedding?”

“We will do it after”

“You are just wasting money and time on that unnecessary trip when you could be getting married with the boy and stop this co-habiting”

“But traditionally I am his wife”

“Lawfully?”,I keep my silence.

“Nonkonzo ”

“Listen to me my baby”,She says.

“I know you mean well ma but the wedding will happen and we are not stopping this trip we need it to relax and reconnect. Qophelo is the one who wants us to take it”

“Are you having problems with each other?”,Beside that Nomvelo issue of which I haven't heard of in a while. No.

“No we are not”

“Oh good, whatever problems you have just fix them”

“I will”

“Okay bye”, She hangs up and I breathe out.

I put my phone on the desk and ran my hands over my face and breathe out before I carry on with some work.

NOMVELO GWALA

I am quiet saddened with the conversation I had with Nomvula but I will wait on her to call me back and I would be able to tell her that I am getting married. I want her to be there and be by my side, she is my sister after all. I called Mimi and told her of the news and she was quiet shocked and she mentioned that I like tying myself down but in all she congratulated me in the end of the conversation. She said she will come down for the negotiations and I really appreciate it. I don't have many friends and I would love to have people who I love to surround me during that time. A time where we are celebrating as we wipe our tears of pain away and only release that of joy.

Thulani drove us to his house and he stayed for a little while until I fell asleep before he left for work. I woke up and he was no where to be seen inside the house. I got off the bed in his bedroom and I made my way to the bathroom to pee as I was rather pressed. I get done and I go to get my bag and I send a message to my mother telling her that I have arrived safely and that I am okay.

I ask her to inform Nomvula about the negotiations too and she says she will. I sigh of relief. I hope that she really comes even if it is for that day only.

I go to the kitchen and find something that I can eat and maybe start with making some food for supper too.

# Chapter 15

NOMVULA ZUNGU

The loudest knock I have ever heard in my life was the one thing that woke me up in early hours of morning. I wonder why no one is complaining about this because it is annoying. Am wearing my gown while making my way to the door.

“I am coming !”,I shout hoping it is not my boyfriend.

Yesterday we had a bit of a misunderstanding. I was supposed to come and sleep over at his place but I ended up not going because I wasn't feeling well and ended up squabbling over that. Petty if you ask me. I get to the door and I unlock it before I open and there stands my mother staring at me. Doesn't she have work?

“Mah”

“Shifta ngingene(Shift so that I can get in)”,She mentions and I shift aside.

She walks in holding her bag and she goes and sits on the couch and I close the door.

“What brings you here?”

“Isn't it you only visit your father and I when we force you to or fetch you from here”,She mentions and I sigh.

“Mah I promised to visit in December”

“Izwani, Usulithanda kangaka igoli ukhohlwe nokuthi unabazali abaphilayo. Sohamba emhlabeni nesthandwa Sami(Listen,You love Johburg that much that you forget you have living parents. We will leave this world with my love)”

“Don't say that Mah”

“What do you want me to say?”,She shrugs her shoulders.

“Sit down, I want to talk to you”

“You could've called”

“Don't irritate me Nomvula. You ignore our calls sometimes”,It is true.I sometimes just want to be left alone.

I go and sit down and give her my ear.

“Nomvelo called me yesterday and she was upset. What is going on between the both of you and it has been going on for some time ngithe akengizwe ngawe(I thought I should hear from you)”,She looks at me.

“Nothing is going on Mah, I don't know why Nomvelo is Upset”,I mention.

“She wanted to share some news with you but you shut her down. What is wrong? Whatever it is fix your attitude towards your sister”,My mother says with a stern tone and I just nod.

“Angisatholi nokusajuce?(I don't even get some juice?)”,My mother mentions.

I get up from the couch and I go to the kitchen and I get some juice and biscuits for her. After that I go and serve her.

“I have to go and prepare for work”,I mention.

“Sit down I am not done talking”,She mentions.

I never disobey my mother. As old as I am she would show me who birthed who between the both of us. I sit down and watch her as she takes a sip off the juice and puts it down.

“Nomvelo is getting married”,My heart sinks to my stomach.

“Married? To Jabu's brother?”,That is the logical explanation.

She was in mourning not so long ago. Maybe they said since she didn't have children with Jabu she should have them with his brother in his place.

“No with someone else”

“And you agreed to this?”

“As much as I thought it is too early for your sister but she is old enough.”,She mentions.

I cannot believe this.

“Kanti uNomvelo yini athanda imishado kangaka?(Why does Nomvelo love marriages this much?)”

“She is favoured in them. I want you at the negotiations”,My mother tells me and it is not up to discussion.

“Why doesn't Nomvelo just focus on getting her life in track than getting married all the time?”,I say.

“We don't ask you why you are not getting married and always having your life in track. Nomvula as much as you and Nomvelo are twins but things will not be the same with the both of you. You both are very different and being different in that way you also will receive different things at different times”,My mother mentions.

“Is it because I am independent and she is not that is why she is seen as Wife material?”,I ask and tears stream down my cheeks.

I am hurt, utterly hurt. My mother comes towards me.

“It is not about that. There are many independent women in the world who find marriage too. If God gives it to you.”,My mother mentions.

“But mah....”,she interrupts me.

“Crying won't help. Wait for your time too and also support your sister and be the way you were with each other before”,She mentions.

She mentions. I just keep on crying, I cannot believe Nomvelo is getting married again!

NOMVELO GWALA

I woke up and the sun was already about to be out that much. I got off the bed and I went to take my silk gown and wear it. All I remember was Thulani and I watching some TV together after he came home and we had some supper that I made then I dozed off. I didn't know when I got into bed but it seems like I slept alone in this room. I walk out of the room and I rush to the bathroom to go and pee then I rinse my mouth after that. I wash my hands after flushing and I walk out of the bathroom and I get to the living room and I find him seated on the couch wearing his pyjama pants with a news paper in front of him. He looks up when he feels my presence in the room and smiles.

“Good morning”

“Good morning”, I reply.

“Are you okay?”, He asks and I nod.

He leaves the newspaper and folds it before he opens his arms and I go to him. He pulls me to his lap and I am seated there.

“You don't look that okay”, He mentions.

“I am worried about my sister. I think she hates me”, He is taken aback by what I am saying.

“Why would you think that?”



“She doesn't like talking to me anymore and when I try reaching out to her she doesn't seem interested. Maybe I should stop trying”, I say.

“I am sorry”, He says and wraps his arms around my waist and hugs me.

“Maybe you should ask her what the issue is. She seems to know”

“If she gives me a chance to ask”

“I don't like seeing you like this”, He mentions.

“Don't worry”, I smile and look at him.

“At what time do you have to go to work?”, I ask.

“At 10 am I will leave”, He mentions.

“Okay I will help you prepare”, I mention.

“Prepare how?”, He raises his brows with a smirk on his lips.

“Don't think too far ahead”, I say while laughing.

“I am just asking”

“Is that why we slept in separate rooms Ntaka?”, I ask.

"I didn't trust myself to behave around you",He mentions.

"So you do misbehave?"

"Yes",he says softly and he captures my lips as we share a kiss but got disturbed by my phone ringing in the bedroom.

"I am sorry",I quickly say and he loosens his hold and I get up and go and get my phone.

It is a call from Mimi. I answer the call.

"Hello"

"Ausi Mvelo!"

"Rethabile, how are you?",My heart swells just by hearing her voice.

"I am good. Mama told me that you are getting married and you have a new Malome now"

"Yes I am"

"Will you have children?",She asks and I laugh.

"One day yes",I mention.

“Okay don't forget about me.”,She says.

“I would never”

“I love you Mvelo”,She says.

“I love you more baby”

“Bye I have to go to school”,She mentions before she hangs up.

I am left with a smile on my face. I make my bed really quick before I go back to the living room and Thulani is not there but he is in the kitchen. I can see him. I go to the kitchen and it seems like he is making a fruit salad.

“It was Rethabile calling”,I say as I reach him.

“What did she say?”,She asks.

“She said she heard that I am getting married and said I shouldn't forget her when I have children”,He chuckles.

“She loved you”

“I love her too. She is a great child”

“She is”,He nodded.

“Let me go and clean”

I mention.

“Ha.a not so fast”,He turns to me and holds me by my waist.

“I didn't get my kiss properly”,he mentions.

I laugh shaking my head and I get on my toes and he lowers his head and we kiss. I wrap my arms around his neck and he automatically picks me up and places me onto the island of the kitchen. We break the kiss and I look at him.

“You are so beautiful”,he says softly.

“Thank you”,We share another kiss before we went on and did the things we need to do for the day.

NTAKA (THULANI) MZIMELA

We had some breakfast together and cleaned and then Nomvelo went to take a bath while at that. I went to my bedroom and went to open the shower water in the bathroom and got out of the bathroom and opened the wardrobe and took out what I am going to wear. My phone rings from the charger and I go and take it. I answer it.

“Hello”

“Bhuti”

“Hlubi”, I say

“I heard...that you are getting married. It is sad that I for one wasn't informed from you”, He mentions.

“I didn't want alot of people knowing now”, I mention

“But I am your sibling”, He mentions.

“I know”, There is silence between us.

“Is it the lady Qophelo wanted?”, He asks.

“Yes, they told you that too whoever informed you”, I say.

“Yes”

“Now you know why I don't want alot of people knowing”

“Qophelo will be upset you know this. Just be honest with him and not hide this from him”

“I won't hide it from him. He will know soon enough but for now I don't want him ruining my day”

“I am happy you are moving on.”, He mentions and I smile.

“Go to work or something”

“Hawu I am still talking nje”

“Better yet, I have been meaning to ask”

“Bye”, He hangs up after that and I just laugh.

I look at the phone after a while. Something in me tugs in at the thought of my brother. This is not how things should be done and we celebrate each other's wins but knowing Qophelo he will be much upset about this and the fact that Nomvelo turned him down and is now going to be with me but I am not the one who rejected him so I shouldn't feel obligated to hide this from him but also I don't want him ruining our day. I will let him know when he comes back from his trip.

“Ntaka please come here!”, I hear Nomvelo shouting and I go and place my phone in the charger before I walk out of the room and meet her at the passage as she has her gown on with her cosmetic bag in her hand.

“MaZungu”

“Mphokopheli is at the living room waiting for you”, I frown upon her saying that.

“What is he doing here?”, She looks at my face.

“He is a child. Don't be upset about it just talk to him and hear what he has to say”

“Id his mother with him?”, I ask. I don't want Angela in my house.

“No, he is alone. I think he came alone”,She moves away from me and disappears to her room and I go through the passage and find Mphokopheli seated on the couch.

He moves from it and rushes towards me and wraps his arms around my waist.

“Baba”,He mentions and I crouch in front of him.

“What are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be in school, where is your mother?”,I ask.

“Mama is at home, I left in the morning she doesn't know I am here”,He mentions looking at me.

“You could've been abducted Mphokopheli, do you know how dangerous it is out there?!”

“Ntaka no”, Nomvelo's soft voice comes from behind me.

She comes towards us all dressed up and she takes Mphokopheli'd hand.

“There is some food in the kitchen. Let's leave him to go and freshen up then he will talk to you”,She looks at me before she moves away with Mphokopheli who obliges to her request.

I get up and I leave the living room and I go to the bedroom. I take my phone and I unblock Angela and call her.

“Hello”

“Come and get Mphokopheli from my house”,I mention.

“You...”

I drop the call before she could say anything further. I go and take a shower and I come out after some minutes. I get dressed and then I get out of the bedroom. I find Mphokopheli eating while watching some TV and Nomvelo is cleaning up in the kitchen putting everything she was using away. I go to Nomvelo and she turns to me.

“You should watch your tone when you talking to the child Thulani”,She says and I know by her tone that she didn't like the way I shouted at him.

“I was just frustrated. What if he was killed while coming here alone?”

“We thank God that he is not.”,I just sigh.

“His mother is coming to fetch him”

“He is having a hard time accepting things”,She says looking at me.

“We don't have a choice. He had to start realising that I am not his biological father. I love him but I have to take a step back”,I mention.

She just keeps quiet.

Mphokopheli walks in the kitchen with his bowel empty.

“Thank you aunty”,Nomvelo smiles.



"You are welcome.",He nods and rushes off going back to the living room.

Nomvelo takes the bowel and goes to wash it.

"Mvelo",Nomvelo looks at me.

"I don't want Angela to be a problem in our lives. I have to let Mphokopheli go in the process of it",She sighs.

"I just feel bad for him",I do too.

I go towards her and pull her close to me and perk her lips.

"Don't worry, everything will be okay",I mention.

She nods.

We hear a knock on the door and she removes herself from me.

"You should get the door",She smiles.

I move from the kitchen and I go and open the door. Angela walks into the house followed by Cedric, her boyfriend. Someone who used to be my friend or so I thought.

"I will arrest you for Kidnapping Thulani!",She mentions.

"It is not my fault you both are irresponsible parents", I say.

"We just came to take what's ours", Cedric mentions.

I click my tongue because now I am starting to get irritated. We get to the living room and Mphokopheli is not too happy to see his parents.

"What are you doing here Mpho? I was so worried sick", Angela hugs her child.

"I wanted to see Baba", Cedric shifts in discomfort.

"He is not your father Mpho we spoke about this. You have your own father", Angela says.

It feels bitter to hear the sound of that. Nomvelo appears from the kitchen and she greets. Angela just stares at her.

"And who is this?", She mentions with a frown on her face.

"That is not your business now get your butts out of this house"

"Always getting the good ones I see", The boyfriend comments.

I feel myself getting angry. I charge towards him and I lay my hands on him that very instant.

"Thulani!", I hear the shouting but I am more focused on punching the day lights out of this one.

NOMVELO GWALA

While Mphokopheli's mother left her son and attended to these men I told him to go to the bedroom and close the door. He shouldn't be witnessing this violence. The lady is able to come between the both of them and I am just standing there not knowing what to do. The man has blood oozing out of his nose. I quickly run to the kitchen and get the first aid kit as I am about to hand it over to the lady Thulani stops me.

"They should get out of here before I kill anyone", He mentions and wrap his one arm around me.

He is still angry and bays to lay his hands on this man once more.

"But..."

"But nothing Mvelo"

"Mpho!", Mphokopheli appears from the passage.

His mother grabs him and soon enough they leave the house.

"I need to clean", I mention and Thulani looks at me before he slowly untangles his arm around me.

I move away from him and I go and get the mop to wipe away the blood that is on the floor in the living room. I get it and I go and wipe, he is no where to be seen and I think he has locked himself in one of the rooms. I sigh in the process of it.

I finish up and I go and put everything away before going to check up on him.

# Chapter 16

I knock on the bedroom door lightly and then I move the handle and the door opens. I see him lying ontop of the bed staring at the ceiling. I walk inside the room and I go closer to him and I sit on the bed beside him. We stay in silence for a while before I let out a sigh.

“Are you okay?” I ask.

He keeps quiet for a while.

“I am okay”, he turns his head to look at me and I give him an encouraging smile.

“Are you scared of me?”, He asks.

“Why would I be?” I ask

“I just, I was beating up a man not so long ago”, He mentions.

“I don't condone violence but I am not scared of you. You are not a monster”, He lightly smiles.

“I love you so much Mvelo”, He sits up and he comes closer to me and we are now seated closely to each other.

“I love you too Ntaka”

We look at each other and then we lightly laugh after that.

"Why are you laughing?" ,I ask.

"I am laughing because you are laughing" ,He mentions.

I hear my phone ringing and I get up from the bed and I walk out of the bedroom. I get it from the kitchen and I answer it.

"Hello"

"Nomvelo" ,It is Nomvula.

"Hi"

"Ma...Ma told me that you are getting married again" ,She mentions.

"Yes"

"Congratulations"

"Thank you" ,There is some silence between the both of us.

"I will come down for the negotiations. I hope you don't have a problem with that"

"Not at all, I would love that"

“Okay, see you then”

“Nomvula”

“Mmmh?”

“Do you hate me?”,I ask.

I hear her sigh on the other end of the phone.

“No I don't, why do you think so?”

“Ever since I was with Jabulani things changed between us”,I mention.

“I...I”,She sighs again.

“I guess I should come clean”,She mentions and I nod.

“Mvelo when you were getting married to me that meant that I am no longer your best friend anymore but your husband. That things will never be the same between us. Also the fact that mom always told me that if I work hard in University I will find my husband there. Someone who will appreciate and love me because I am intelligent but I never found that yet you did without even making it to University. I wish I also could find someone who will love me and see me worthy to be his supporter forever. I guess I was just jealous of not having everything I was promised”

“I am sorry”,I mention.

"It is not your fault. You just didn't know"

"Still, I didn't think for a second of neglecting you. You are my sister. We shared a womb together"

"I know. I am sorry"

"It is fine. I love you", I hear her lightly giggle on the other side of the line.

"I love you too, I have to go now", She mentions.

"Okay", We end the call and I am feeling happy.

I place my phone down and I go to the living room and Jump on Thulani's lap as he is seated on the couch watching some tv.

"Someone seems to be in a good mood", He says.

"Well aren't you supposed to be going to work what will your boss say with you not coming?", I ask.

"I am asset to the company baby plus I am ahead of my work. I will just work from here", He mentions.

"Okay if you say so but I don't want you getting into trouble"

"I won't trust me", I nod my head.

"So what has got you happy"



"I got a call from my sister"

"You really love your sister?" ,I nod my head.

"I am happy you are not feeling sad after the call",I nod my head and I lean in and give him a kiss on the lips before running my hands on his head.

"You need a hair cut baby",I mention.

"I am trying to grow some hair like you so that I can have braids",I frown and he laughs.

"I love you but I love you more with your bald head",I mention.

"I am joking, I will get the hair done tomorrow",He mentions and I nod.

He runs his hands along my thighs and it makes his hands feel warm against them.

"Your hands feel warm",I mention.

"That is because they are against your skin"

I just shake my head.

I perk his lips and rest my head on his shoulder.

"You haven't tried on the shoes I got for you Thulani",I say and look at him.

"I forgot, I am sorry", I get off him.

"Let me go and get them", He nods and I quickly go and get his sandals. I then come back with the plastic and I take the shoes out and I go on my knees in front of him.

"You are going to put them on me?"

"Yes", He nods his head and let's me be.

I take off the shoes that he is wearing and slide in his sandals and they fit perfectly on him.

"I like them", He says as he does an observation on them.

"Really?", He nods his head.

"Thank you baby, I want to wear them at the negotiations", I take his feet and take off the shoes and put on the ones he was wearing.

"Well you can", I say.

I put the shoes inside the plastic and then I look up to him and he smiles.

"What?", I ask.

"Nothing"

“Ayi ngathi ngibambe elingadonsi ulayini (I think I got a crazy one this time)”, I hit him with his line and he shakes his head.

“You are copying my words”

“I am not, simply it is from the originator”

“That originator is you?”, I nod my head.

“Wow Mvelo”, He laughs and shakes his head.

He gets up from the couch and he offers a hand for me and pulls me up.

“Come let's go and get lunch”

“There is food in the house”

“I want to sit across a table and look at you”

I smile. I end up agreeing and then I go and put my things away before I came back and we soon left the house.

I noticed that Thulani's house has an outside building but the last time I was here he told me that it is empty and he hardly uses it so it is always locked. I thought maybe he is renting it out and he has a tenant.

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Today I am leaving, I am quiet saddened about my departure from Thulani but knowing my mother well she would come down from Mooi river to fetch me personally if I don't bring myself back. I wish I could stay long and the weeks are just going by slowly in my defence. I have packed my bag and Thulani is ready to drop me off at the taxi rank just to get my transport. A light knock comes from the door and I look towards it and he is standing there.

"Don't be sad",He mentions and I look at him.

"How can I not?",He chuckles lightly.

"I will visit you soon I promise",He mentions.

"But our time in Mooi river is much limited than here"

"You are going to move in with me in the next few weeks. Don't worry",I smile.

"Okay",He chuckles.

"I didn't think I excite you that much"

"Argh please let's go",I take my bag and we make our way out of the room and he goes to the living room and takes his car keys from the coffee table.

I walk out of the house and he opens the car before locking the house. I put my things inside and I get inside too and then I wait for him to come inside the car. He gets inside and he starts the car before he reverses and the gate opens automatically. When he is on the road he drives off after the gate has closed.

I will really miss being here. I am all alone back home during the day while here he pops in much more.

NONKONZO MVELASE

I have to do some last minute shopping for the trip. I still need to get some things that I feel like are missing but I will get them when I knock off work. Today I am not driving myself to work instead Qophelo is taking me to work. Nomvula's sister is no where to be seen and I am happy about that. I have been to the Pub and I haven't seen her. I even asked the manager about her and he informed me that she moved back to Kzn. Good, she really did herself a favour before I did things to her. I have come a long way with this man to just have another woman have a bite of him.

I am at the dining room and I am placing my paper work inside my bag while I am waiting for Qophelo to come down from where he is. I finish up and I give him about 5 minutes to come down the stairs.

"Qophelo what is holding you up?!", I shout from down stairs.

"I can't find my Powder blue shirt baby!", He says.

"It is on the left side of the wardrobe babe!", I say and there is some silence and I wait for him.

After some time he comes down the stairs all dressed up in his powder blue shirt and navy formal pants. This man of mine is really good looking, at times I ask myself how did I get so lucky in getting him and he is the most successful sibling amongst his siblings too meaning I got the best pick out of them.

“You look amazing baby”, I mention and he reaches me and gives me a kiss on the cheek.

“Not like you”

“Come we are going to be late. Well I am”, I mention.

“Okay”, We go and take our things before we walk out of the house. We get inside the car and off on the road we go.

“Has your p.a settled everything that needs to be done?”, I ask

“Yes she has. Don't worry everything is ready for the trip”, He mentions.

“I cannot wait for the wedding the most”, I mention.

“Me too, I want everyone to see how lucky I am”, He mentions and I just laugh.

My phone rings and I take it out of my bag and It is one of my friends. I answer it that moment as the car drive commences.

NOMVELO GWALA

I departed from Thulani with food. He made sure that I have something along the way when I am hungry or feel like chewing something and having something in my stomach. If he was not a person who liked being in a gym from time to time or a person who was not very active and kept a look out on his weight I would get that he would be quiet bigger than he is right now but I have gotten used to the habit of eating. I do miss times when I used to be in Johannesburg because I had Rethabile to keep me company but also I do have some sewing waiting for me when I get home. I have to finish my mother's dress and my dress as well too. I cannot wait for the day of my negotiations, I just wonder how it will turn out but I do not have much of nerves and being scared because it will be done at home and not at the Gwala household where my mother in law would've tortured me. I wonder how Thulani's parents feel about all of this, Qophelo is the last person on my mind. He has his own issues and I have my own too. Even if he was not with his fiancée I would've chosen his brother over him any time. Thulani is such different air, his is much different from Jabu too. I am used to making collective decisions with someone who I am in a relationship with. Do not get me wrong that Thulani does not include me in decision making but what I mean is that he takes up the space of leading and being in charge where it needs to be and he makes things ease up when he ensures that everything will be okay. That gives me a little faith that things are going to be okay.

I look outside of the window as the taxi is moving.

I wonder what the future now has in store for me.

# Chapter 17

“Nomvelo here is Nomvula!”, My mother shouts for me as she is outside.

I leave my bedroom as I leave all that I was doing. I was just doing the final touches on an outfit that I am working on. Well it was requested for and I started working on that outfit after I was done with my dress and my mother's dress. I wear my shoes by the door and I see her car parked in front of the house on the driveway and they are hugging with my mother. I get out of the house and walk towards them and I look at Nomvula hesitant to come any closer but she gives me a warm smile and I relax a bit since this week had started. I walk towards her and she throws her arms around my body.

“Hey, how are you feeling?”, She asks.

“Surprisingly nervous”, I mention.

We break the hug and she looks at me.

“Don't be, you have got this”

“Tell her, she is scared that they might not come tomorrow”, My mother mentions.

Yes tomorrow is the lobola negotiations. The weeks were quiet dreading but now that the day is near I wish to go back to those dreading weeks. My father managed to get through the Gwala family and everything went smoothly and my mother in law could not wait to part ways with me. After all I am the “Witch” who killed her son in her eyes. I have been uneasy since the week started and I am just scared. Thulani's family is bigger than the Gwala family and he has a lot of siblings. I wonder how everyone will feel about me? How his mother would be towards me? All of this is going through my mind the whole time. I hardly eat even and I had been used to eating because of Thulani and now I can even digest anything.



“Don't worry, have any of the cousins came? Where are omalume?(uncle's?)”,Nomvula asks.

“Your father is going to fetch his brother in town”,My mother clarifies.

“Okay,Let me take my things”

“Let me help you”

“Don't worry,it's just one bag”,She mentions and I nod.

I go and close the gate while she takes her things out of the car and we make our way inside the house. We get inside and we rush to my room. Yes we started using separate rooms right after high school. My mother thought that we like different things of which we do but today she will be sleeping in my room and the guests will use her's. She places her bag on my bed and then goes to the sewing machine.

“You are almost done with my two piece?”,She asks and I nod my head.

I am happy with the way we are now. We are not exactly the way we were while growing up but we are getting better than we were these past few years.

“Yes I just needed to sew properly the hem of it then I am done”,I say.

“I will look pretty tomorrow”,She mentions in excitement.

“You will”,I mention.

“I bought something for you”,She mentions and goes to her bag and she takes out a gift bag.

“What is it?”, I ask.

“Open it”, I open it and it is a bag.

She encourages me to open it and I do, I pull out some lacy nets and I look at them looking at her.

“What is this for?”, She takes it into her hands and she spreads it a bit out and places it on my body.

“I knew you wouldn't have a clue dear sister. This is a lingerie now since you are getting married again you need to up your game in the bedroom and wear these type of clothes everyday”, She mentions.

“This is barely nothing”, I say.

“That is the point Mvelo. Your boyfriend would love this”, She says with a big smile.

I look at her.

“Is this Christian sanitary?”

“Yes Mvelo. Adam and Eve were naked in the garden of Eden so?”, I sigh.

“Okay try these ones and if you don't like them you can throw them away”, She takes 5 of them in different colours.

“I will try them”

“Good”,She smiles.

She sits on the bed opposite me.

“So what family are you marrying this time?”,She asks.

I put the things inside the bag.

“I am going to be your friend's sister in law”,I say and smile at her.

“Friend? Which one?”,She asks with a frown before she pops her eyes.

“You are marrying Qophelo?”,She asks.

“No why would I? His older brother”,She laughs

“Tell me you are joking Mvelo, Wow!”,She laughs and claps her hands.

“Yes”

“That boy will die”

“I don't care really”

“So you went for the heir, That is my sister!” ,She says and gives me a high five”

“This is not some game Mvula, I like Thulani so much” ,She has her mouth agape in amusement.

“I just didn't think you had it in you” ,She mentions.

“Yes”

“Wow, So does Qophelo know?”

“No, his brother is scared I don't know about what but soon he will know”

“He has to know to back away from you and Nonkonzo too needs to be set in check”

“This is not a game or something like that and I don't really care what they do or say”

“Still” ,there is a knock on my door. It opens and my mother pops her head inside.

“Come and eat the both of you” ,She mentions.

“Okay” ,Nomvula replies and my mother closes the door.

“We need some wine for this conversation” ,She mentions before standing up from the bed.

“I don't drink” ,I mention.

“Jesus turned water into wine Mvelo I am sure it is fine”,She laughs and I just shake my head.

“I cannot believe it either”

NONKONZO MVELASE

Today is the day we are leaving the country. I am so excited and mainly because I am about to take a break and from everything here in South Africa. I would be leaving it and forgetting about it for a moment before I come back here but most of all I am going to spend some time with Qophelo just the two of us.

We have our flight scheduled in just an hour and we have to leave and go to O.R Tambo just on time. We are still at the house and I am taking my things, Qophelo has already taken our bags down stairs for us.

“Baby we still have to check in!”,I hear Qophelo shouting from downstairs.

“I am coming!”,I get my bag and I walk out of the room and rush down the stairs.

I find him there having some bottled water while on his phone.

“I am here, I am ready”,I mention.

He looks up to me.

“You look lovely”, Argh that is nice of him to say.

“You just saw me a few minutes ago baby”, I lightly giggle and he comes close to me and kisses my cheek.

“Still you look lovely”, He mentions.

“Where are our bags?”

“In the car already”

“Okay let's go then”, I say.

I leave him and I go outside and get inside his car. He comes out after some time and he gets inside and starts the car before he drives us off to the airport.

“I have already started dress and Venue seeking. Do you think it is still early to plan the wedding?”, I ask.

“No it is not early.”, I smile.

“Well thank you but for now we will just think about our trip”, I say.

“And possibly having a Namibian made baby”, I look at him and lightly hit his shoulder.

“We are not ready for that”,I say

“Why not?”,He asks and slightly looks over to me.

“We work alot Qophelo,we have to schedule to have time for our child”,I mention.

“Why can't you be a stay at home mom? For the first few years?”,He says.

“Really are you hearing yourself? I studied so long for this degree and I have worked hard just to let my dream go”,I say.

“So what is your suggestion?”,He asks

“Hiring a nanny”,He chuckles lightly.

“A nanny? Someone to raise a child for us?”,He asks and he doesn't sound pleased.

“Lets not ruin this trip with the baby talk”,I mention

“Sooner or later we would have to revisit this topic. There is no running away from it”.

“Then we will consult it later then”,He keeps quiet.

I look outside the window.

I don't want to have a child now. I am still young and in my twenties. Yes late twenties but still I haven't reached my thirties. Maybe when I am 35 I will start having some children then and not a lot. Maybe one maximum 2, I don't want to have a lot of children. Children are work and even if we don't have them his brother's will have them already Nqubeko does have them so I don't get the point of us having children when there are a lot of his family members to grow his family name. They are not a luxury after all.

NTAKA(THULANI)MZIMELA

It's a full house and most of my uncles are here so is my father. My mother baked some cakes for us so that the old guys can have something to sip with tea while they are here. She is quiet excited more than anyone else but most of all she cannot wait to have her 3 daughter in law's in her yard. My mother is a lovely woman. She loved Angela the same way she loved our sisters and treated her like her own daughter, when things came into the light she was shattered but mostly people were more concerned about me the most. I may seem tough but I do break easily too at times that is why when they found out that I have found someone else they felt happy as they lost some hope that I would ever trust a woman. True but I also didn't think that I would be where I am right now ready to welcome a woman into my life once more.

I am in my room just for a moment to be alone and just sink things in me. A knock comes from the door and I tell the person to come in and they walk inside. It is my brothers, all of them are here except Qophelo of course. Gama was not pleased with the fact that Qophelo was not informed as my brother just to be there to support me but knowing him he wouldn't be as supportive as I would've done want him to be.

"Why are you locking yourself in here?" ,Hlubi asks before he sits down on the bed.

"Are you having second thoughts?" ,Gama asks.



“No”,I shake my head.

I wouldn't have second thoughts on having Nomvelo in my life.

“Is there something wrong?”,I just sigh.

“I am just worried”,I mention

“About?”

“Nomvelo”

“What did she do?”,They ask.

“Nothing much, I did something for her and I don't know if she will like it,she doesn't like money spent on things she doesn't see where they are going so sometimes it could be challenging to please her”

“She doesn't like money thrown at her”

Gama mentions.

“Mmmh my thoughts too”,Hlubi mentions.

“If it comes from the heart then it matters”,Nqubeko mentions.

All of a sudden as the married one he has become a love expert over night.

“Okay”,I just say.

“Be happy man, you are going to be laid after years”,Hlubi says putting his hand on my shoulder.

“I am not even thinking about that”,I say

“She will still be Celibate even in marriage?”,Nqubeko asks.

I just click my tongue and they all laugh.

“Lets go and have some drinks with those old men and make sure they sleep early”,Nqubeko mentions.

We just nod before we get up from my bed to leave the room.

NOMVELO GWALA

The day has finally arrived and I am feeling the utmost nerves. Nomvula woke me up early just so that we can bath and get ourselves ready,I got done with bathing and she got me dressed. My aunt is here helping my mother in the kitchen and we were told to relax in that moment and just wait for the Mzimela's to come and present themselves in front of our yard.

I slip on my dress and it fits me like a glove. I love how it looks on me. I go and stand in front of the mirror and look at myself as I run my fingers on my dress and Nomvula walks in holding tightly onto her towel.

“Yoh I needed that bath”,she mentions and looks at me.

“You look beautiful”,She mentions.

“Thank you so much”,I say and turn away from the mirror and I go and search for my shoes. I find them but I cannot find Thulani's pair.

“Have you see the bigger pair of the same shoes as these ones?”,I ask.

“No”,Nomvula shakes her head and goes onto lotioning.

My heart is beating fast. He entrusted me when I took them away from him. I quickly go and get my phone and I make a call and it rings for some time before it gets answered.

“Mancwane”

“Ntaka”

“Are you okay?”,He asks seeming concerned.

“No, did I take your shoes with me when I left there?”,I ask

“Yes you put them in a black plastic in your bag”,He mentions.

I quickly go to my travelling bag and I find the black plastic.

“Oh thank you. I forgot”,I mention.

“Don't panic”

“Don't bail out on me. I don't want to be embarrassed”,He laughs

“Kodwa Nomvelo out of all things you can think off you thought of that?”,He asks.

“Yes, it happens so I want to be clear”

“I wouldn't think of that”

“Okay, how far are you?”

“Less than an hour drive”

“Okay, Bye”

“Bye”,We hang up.

Nomvula gets done with getting dressed and she is wearing her two piece. It is pink and purple with orange patterned pants and with its matching top. She puts on sandals and styles her fancy hair at that moment and does her face.

“Don't you want to out on make up?”,She asks.

“No thank you”,I say.

“Okay”,She looks at her self through the mirror.

My mother comes into the room as I go and get a comb to comb my little hair

“Naze nabahle(You all look beautiful)”,She says

We thank her simultaneously.

“How far are they?”,My mother asks.

“Just an hour away”,I mention.

“Okay then, I was just checking”,I nod my head.

“Let me go ”,She leaves the room and I just sit on the bed and I wait for Nomvula to finish what she is doing.

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They came, I am quiet nervous and more especially that we would hear some voices every now and then. I have been pacing up and down in this room for some time and would sit down as well. This is actually happening and in another room too. I breathe in and out.

“Calm down”,Nomvula mentions.

“I am just scared”

“Don’t be.”,I just breathe in and out then I nod.

I sit down for a moment before I started moving up and down for a little while and then I stand up and start pacing up and down.

“Why don't you go on social media on your phone or play a game?”,Nomvula asks.

“I don't have those. I only have whatsapp”

“Chat to your friends”,She mentions.

A knock comes through the door and my aunt opens and she appears.

“Everything is done and it went well”,She mentions and she smiles.

I breathe out and heave a sigh.

“Thank you”,She smiles.

“You can come out now and help with serving”,She mentions.

“Okay”,I quickly take the shoes and we rush out of the room with Nomvula.

My mother and aunt are in the kitchen when we find them. I go and get a small basin and I go and pour some warm water from the bathroom and then I go and grab the little bath wash that I had gotten and I go to the kitchen. I ask my mother where the brothers are seated and she tells me that they are seated outside by the veranda. I thank her and I then go back to the bathroom and I take all that I need and a towel and I place it on my shoulder before I go outside with everything of mine.

I greet everyone whilst avoiding eye contact.

“MaNcwane Kuyaphileka?(Are you okay?)”,One of the brothers asks. I do not know their names as yet.

“Yebo Bhuti”,I mention.

I kneel down on my knees in front of this man and I glance up to him.

“May I?”,I gesture for his feet and he nods with a smile on his lips that I couldn't help to return it. Silence prevails amongst them seemingly watching what is happening here.

I slowly undo his shoes and take them off so as his socks and tuck them well in the shoes and then I take his feet one by one and place them in the water and I slowly pour the warm water against his feet. I then take the wash and pour it on his feet and I start massaging them and then after that process I took them out making sure to wipe them well and I moisturize his feet before slipping them in the sandals that I had gotten for him and after that I collected my things and got up.

“Ngiyabonga(Thank you )”,he says and I nod before rushing off.

“Wuuh Mvelo I see why marriage is fit for you. I would never be able to do that”,My sister mentions.

“That is what a true wife does”,One of these old men says.

I just smile through and we go to the kitchen and get some food to serve them. We go and serve everyone before we went to eat as well.

I am happy, surprisingly all the nerves are gone and replaced with happiness.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

The trip to Namibia has been great so far and I am enjoying our stay here so much, I am happy that we chose to do this. Yes we left South Africa on a sour note but as soon as we got here we made up and decided to just put everything behind us and enjoy our trip here.

We are at the hotel in preparation to go out and have some early dinner at that and just spend some time together with Nonkonzo. I love this woman and she is amazing to add to it. I mean there is nothing not to love about her.

I am waiting for her to come out of the bathroom as she was putting on her make up. She wants to look nice while we are out and make some memories that we would keep for forever.

I am not in a rush, I do not even mind waiting for her for that matter plus we still have time to get to the restaurant.

“Haibo baby you didn't mention that your brother is getting married”, I frown upon that as she walks out of the bathroom holding her phone in the hand and she has her make up bag on the other.

She goes and puts her things away.



“Brother? Which one? As far as I know none of them are getting married”, I mention.

“Well one of them surely paid lobola today”

“How do you know this?”, I ask

“On one of my friends statuses”, she mentions.

“Let me see”, She hands the phone over to me and I look through it and I see a picture of my brother seated down and it seemed like the one who is kneeling before him putting his shoes on is the one who he is marrying. Why would he hide this from me but Thulani wouldn't, we tell each other everything.

“This cannot be maybe it is for something else”, I mention.

“The caption says so and Nomvula doesn't lie.”, She mentions.

I give her the phone back and she takes it. I will have to ask Thulani though about this, it cannot be.

“Oh my God!”, She gasps and puts her hand over her mouth.

“What is it?”, I ask standing up ready for us to leave.

“Look who he paid for”, she mentions and gives me her phone.

I look at the photo and my heart comes to a little halt as I look at the picture. I blink my eyes a few times and I know these faces. It is my brother and Nomvelo, they...they look happy.

"Are you okay?", Nonkonzo asks.

"I need to make a call", She nods and takes her bag.

"You will find me outside", She mentions and then she walks out of the room.

I take my phone out and I make a call quickly. It rings unanswered and I curse under my breath. I try another call with another number and it rings for a few seconds before it is answered.

"Hello", Her soft voice erupts through the speaker and I feel betrayed that moment.

How could she? I had asked her to be mine first but she did me like this?

"Nomvelo how could you do this? How could you? Tell me that it is not true that you are with Thulani", I say as I can feel my heart tearing up.

"Yes I am with Thulani and the problem is where?", She asks.

"I told you that I love you. You know that I love you and you told me that you weren't ready but all along you were just lying to me", I say

"Listen here Qophelo I am not entitled to you or anyone for that matter and I don't owe you a thing. I was not ready and I don't love you. I never did and never will, you are a great person but you wouldn't fit in the category of me loving you"

"And my brother does? My older brother for that matter damnit!"

“Yes he does. You wouldn't understand. I don't have to explain myself to you right now”

“Where is he?”,I ask.

I feel like my heart has been ripped off my chest. I am angry more than anything betrayed by the people I love.

I hear some shuffling for a moment.

“Bafo”

“I cannot believe you. You just stabbed me in the back”

“We don't choose who to fall for”

“And you thought of hiding this for how long?”

“Not long”,I feel disgusted.

“You betrayed me, I don't know what to say to you. I don't want you anymore in my life, I cannot trust you”

“You can't say that”,Thulani mentions.

“Its either you choose. Me or her? Our brotherhood of her?”,There is some silence between the both of us.

“Okay”,I hear him say before the line goes off.

I scream and throw the phone across the room before I feel tears stream down my cheeks.

I quickly wipe them when the door opens.

“What is wrong?”, Nonkonzo comes in.

“He did get loboloa done without me there”,I mention.

“I am sorry”,She says and wraps her arms around me.

I hate that they both betrayed me. I don't want Thulani in my life anymore. I can never trust him again.

## Chapter 18

The silence that was within the car was thick to cut. I could see with the way that Thulani was when we left home that he was not feeling okay that moment. I know that they had a bit of an argument with his brother but he has not told me what they ended up saying. My mother had a hard time with letting me go and even begged my father to just ask them to let me stay for a while but I was more than happy to be away from home for a while and actually go to Durban, I will visit from time to time.

Mimi apologized about not making it and she told me that her mother is not well so she had to rush and see her but I don't have a problem with that. As long as her mother is getting better and she is taken care off then I can wait.

The street lights are the one thing that are providing the most light as he is driving. I am looking outside the window as he is driving. I feel him holding my hand into his and I look back to him.

"Ntaka are you okay?", I ask and he breathes in and out.

"Qophelo wants nothing to do with me", He mentions.

"He will come around", I mention.

"He told me not to come to his wedding when he gets married", He mentions and there is a pin drop of silence.

"But you are brother's this shouldn't be the case"

"He doesn't care really"

I feel so bad for him.

“I am sorry for all of this it is my fault”,I mention

“It is not your fault. No one is at fault here just that he needs to grow up”,He mentions.

There is some silence and he smiles and looks at me for a moment.

“I didn't know you were going to do what you did with the shoes”,He mentions and I am flushed.

“I thought it would be nice”

“I loved it”

“I am glad”,I mention.

“Are you hungry?”,He asks.

“No, I am too full”,He nods.

We get to his house just after some time and the gate opens and the garage too and he drives in and the gate closes and so as the garage. We get out of the car and I grab my bags. Yes Nomvula made sure I leave my pyjamas and carried her things but I put inside my gown in the bag.

We walk through the door connected to the kitchen and garage and we walk inside. He turns on the lights and I go to his bedroom and I stand by the door and he comes through the passage and looks at me.

“Are you scared to get in?”,He asks with a smirk on his lips.

“Why would I be?”

“Then get in”,He mentions and I get inside the room.

I place my bag on the bed and then I turn around to face him as he opens the lights and he rubs his hands together after that.

“I am so tired”,I mention before I sit on the bed.

He comes closer to me and he crouches in front of me and helps me take off my shoes. I thank him when he is done.

“Can I get a kiss?”,I nod my head and he stands up and leans down to capture my lips. I close my eyes and hold onto his top just so I don't tumble backwards and he breaks the kiss and slowly smiles looking at me.

“Let's get some rest”,I nod my head.

He pulls away and walks out of the room leaving me to get ready for bed.

NONKONZO MVELASE

We did go out to dinner but Qophelo was not happy at the fact that his brother would hide something like this from him but we enjoyed our time out and went back to the hotel once again. I do feel tired, so Nomvelo is more than just a widow now she is a bitch with strategy, she thought since she can't have Qophelo she should go for his brother. Wow that is really low of her and after Nomvula protected her, I was really right about her. She is after men and that Widow act was just for show.

"I am tired",Qophelo says and I nod as soon as he gets out of the bathroom.

I nod my head.

"Me too, I want to just rest but I need to make a call first ",He nods.

"So what are you going to do about your brother?",I ask.

"I don't want him near me"

"But he is your brother"

"He didn't think of that when he was thinking of getting married to..." ,He keeps quiet.

I just nod my head.

"Let me go and make that call then I will come to bed",He nods his head and comes to kiss my lips.

"You know that I love you right?",I nod my head.



"I love you too", He smiled and then I go and get my phone and I then wear my slippers and I go to the bathroom to make the call.

I quickly call Nomvula and it gets answered.

"Nkonzo"

"Wow I didn't know that your sister was getting hitched", I say.

"It was non of your business"

"But it is since that is my brother in law marrying your sister"

"Nonkonzo please just leave me alone. Ukuthi it is your brother in law I don't care. Why didn't he tell you and leave me out of this".

"Mxm"

She hangs up after that. Nomvula can be rude at times honestly.

I wash my face and I then get to tie my hair properly before I walk out of the bathroom. I find Qophelo asleep on bed. Really his brother helped me here also by taking that girl away but the disadvantage here is that I have to be somewhat related to her. Why did she have to surface out of the hole she was in wherever she comes from. I take off my clothes and then I just slip in bed next to Qophelo and he pulls me closer to him and kisses my cheek. I love this man and I am happy he is going to be only mine forever.

NOMVELO GWALA

Waking up this morning felt different, different in a way that I have not slept next to a man in months now and here I am sleeping next to one. It is not awkward or anything no but it just feels comforting to be in that position. I sat up from the bed and Thulani was still sleep. He must be tired from the drive he had from yesterday too and also heavy hearted by his brother's actions. I do not get why Qophelo is acting out of context like I even had something going on with him when I did not. I get off the bed and I quickly take my gown and put it over my body before I rush to the bathroom to pee and rinse my mouth and face and then I go to the kitchen. I love the quietness of this area. If I was still in Johburg where I used to live I would've heard all sorts of noise now at this hour. I go to the cupboards and I check for something to eat and I decide to make some porridge as it would be more easier to do and quicker way to make food. I boil some water and open the stove and take out a pot to make some porridge. The kettle clicks and soon I take it and pour the hot water into the pot that is on the stove and start with making the porridge.

I start to do a little clean up after while the food is busy on the stove and when I was done I went to watch some of the TV before I went to check on the stove and the food was ready. I dish up for the both of us and I let the porridge do some cooling off and I take the pot and wash the dishes that I was using before Thulani gets into the kitchen.

“Good morning baby”, He says and rubs his eyes before he runs his fingers over his clean head and sits on the high chair next to the island.

“Good morning, I made some porridge but it is still hot”, I smile.

“Thank you”

I look at him for a little while.

“How are you feeling?” ,I ask.

I am more concerned about him than his brother. Truly speaking I do not care how his brother feels at the moment.

“I am okay, don't worry about me” ,I just nod my head.

“I have something to show you later on when you are ready” ,He mentions.

“What is it?”

“You will just have to see it, I can't describe it”

“Well I wonder. I hope it is not something extreme and scary” ,I mention.

“Not scary at all” ,I nod my head.

Okay now I am feeling nervous and I wonder what is that Thulani wants to show to me.

I give him his bowl and then ask him what he likes his porridge with and he tells me that he likes it with butter. I go and take some for him and I put the quantity that he wants and then I hand over the food to him and he thanks me before he eats and I prepare my j,àaa hhhhhland go and sit next to him. We eat and get done then he opts to do the dishes while I go and take a bath. I went to prepare for my bath and I then took the things I needed before I went to go and bath. I relax in the bathtub for a while before I got out of the bathtub and I went to the bedroom to change and then I got out and found him in the kitchen steal cleaning up. He got done and then he told me that he is going to freshen up as well.

have to ask my mother if her church has a branch here because it didn't have one in Johburg but eventually I did find a church that was suitable for me and I found a home in it for the past 4 I think I should find a church here that would be suitable for me so that I can go every Sunday. I years I had been there.

He gets done and then he comes to me when he is done getting druyi ilkessed as well.

“Okay we can go now”,He mentions.

“Where are we going?”,I ask.

“The back yard”,Okay

“Oh okay”

I wear my shoes and we move through the sliding door that is by the living room and go to the back yard. I have never been here before but there is a nice looking outbuilding here.

“What is in there?”,I ask.

“You will see”,He mentions and I trust that my curioy will be fed at this point.

He opens the door of this place and we walk inside.

“This is beautiful”,I mention.

It is a nicely done room that has different sorts of colours that blend quiet well.

“Go in further and check it out”, I look at him with a smile and I go inside further and I see a sewing table with a sewing machine, a table that has a pad on it with different pencils and also I see a door and go to it and it leads to a bathroom that is nicely done.

“What is this room for?”, I ask turning to him as he is looking at me.

“It is for you, I did it for you. I want you to pursue your designing path and be creative in this room and do as much things as you like. I know that it is not much but I wanted it to be a start and have a space where you can have your artistic mind over”, I am left in astonishment.

“You mean this room is mine?”, I ask

“Yes”, I smile and I feel excitement and amazement engulf me.

“I-I- you didn't have to...Thank you so much Mzimela”, I go towards him and give him a hug and he hugs me back.

“Do you like it?”

“It is very beautiful”

“I did the room myself”, I look at him.

“Really?”, He nods with a smile on his face and I return it.

"I am so proud of you",I say and turn to look around the room.

I have never had someone do something so huge for me. This...this means so much

I don't even know what to do or say or how I should thank this man for this. I end up looking at him and smile just wider. I cannot believe all of this.

"I would like to take a picture and send it to my mother",I mention.

She has been also encouraging me to go back to designing and so I want to show her all of this.

"Let me take a picture of you",He mentions and I nod my head.

He takes out his phone and I stand in the middle of the room and he takes a few pictures and promises that he will send them to me.

"Lets go back inside. I will make anything that you want",I mention.

"Ohw anything?"

"Yes anything just have your pick"

"Well I have alot in my mind"

"Process it all then give me the final word"

"I love you Nomvelo",I smile and go towards him and wrap my arms around him before we share a kiss that leaves us lingering for me.

“Me too Mzimela”

“Thank you for choosing me”

“You don't have to thank me”

“But still I want to”,I smile.

This dark creature really came unexpectedly in my life.

“Come let's go inside the house”,He nods and I take his hand and we walk into the house together.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

The water fell well onto my back as I was standing over the shower head with my eyes closed. I want to let out the pain that I am feeling inside but it is not happening. All I can see as I have my eyes closed is that picture of them together that brings more pain upon me as I think about it. Even when I try to remove it from my head it does not happen. I didn't even know that Nomvelo was off mourning too. I have never felt hurt like this because I love that woman. I would have done anything for her, more than what Thulani would do and knowing myself I would've been able to handle two wives and my finances allow it.

I don't understand why, why she would fall for Thulani and actually agree to marry him in a short space of time. I understand if she made me wait, I would've waited 3 years just to take her as my wife but she did not even allow me to get that opportunity.

I fist my hand and place it against the cold tiles and I breathe in and out before I remove my head from under the shower head and I wipe my face with my hand and I get out of the shower after closing the water.

I find Nonkonzo busy in front of the mirror ready in her swim wear.

She wants to take a dip in the hotel pool I guess or she maybe wants to take some photos that she will post later on her social media.

She is not much of a social media fanatic but she does like posting from time to time.

“You are done?”

“Yes”

“Are we going to the pool together?” ,She turns around and looks at me.

“Yes we are, let me get dressed”

“You look good” ,She smiles.

I return the smile and go towards her.



“Should I go like this then to the pool”

“Hayi Qophelo, I don't want to kill anyone”,She mentions and I laugh.

“I am joking baby, let me go and get dressed”

“Can I help you get dressed?”,I nod my head and she gets excited.

“Okay come”

We go together out of the bathroom with me carrying her in my arms. I look at this woman in front of me and my heart just feels warm. I love Nonkonzo, the strong and resilience that she possesses just turns me on more than anything and makes me fall for her more than anything. Having a strong woman by my side is a great image but a strong man also needs a soft caring woman like Nomvelo who would bring out the softest side of a man. That is what I also needed from her.

NOMVELO GWALA

I decided to make something light and easy and Thulani wanted to help but I told him not to worry himself when I am in the kitchen and so he went to watch some music videos on the TV while I was busy, I got done quiet quickly and then I went to him in the living room and I sat on his lap and he places the remote next to him and wraps his arms around me.

“I like this”,He mentions and I just giggle.

"The food is ready, should I dish up now?", I ask

"Later, for now I want to spend some time with you", He mentions.

"That I can do"

He pulls me closer to him and his fingers lace onto my skin as part of my thighs are exposed because of the dress I am wearing. We watch some TV together and in between that moment he would lay a perk onto my neck from time to time and it would be an unconscious thing that he is doing. I turn my head from the TV and I look at him and run my hand over his bald head.

"I don't let a lot of people touch my head"

"Why not?"

"It feels weird", He mentions as he is staring at the TV.

"My sister bought a gift for me", I mention and he shifts his attention to me now.

"What is it?"

"She said you would like it so I am wondering if you would since I am the one who will wear it", I say.

"May I see it?", He mentions.

"It is small though", I mention.

“I would love to see it if it is okay with you”,He mentions.

I nod my head and I get up and I go to the bedroom and I shut the door, I quickly take the bag that Nomvula bought for me and take out the little nets she bought for me. I choose one that I think is much suitable and it is white in colour. I change into it and I look at myself through the mirror and I turn around a few times and my butt cheeks are all out there. How would a man love this baffles me but then Thulani is waiting for me.

I quickly take my gown and cover my bums and wrap it around there and it feels a bit better.

I then walk out of the room and go to the living room and he looks at me.

“It shows bums that why I covered it here”,I mention.

“May I?”,He gestures towards removing the gown.

I swallow before I nod my head and he stands up from the couch and comes towards me and removes the gown and holds it in his arms.

“Wow”,I look down.

“I like it”,He mentions.

“Why?”,I tilt my head to the side.

“It's called a lingerie right?”,he says.

“Yes! That is what she said this thing is”,He laughs launching his head backwards as he brings it forth once more.

“Baby you are too innocent”,He mentions.

“Well I never thought there would be a need for this.”,He pulls me towards him and I crash on his chest as he rests his hand on my lower back.

He talks softly at that moment.

“Your sister is saving you from being completely naked but I would much prefer us sleeping naked next to each other every night”,I swallow.

“Then what are pyjamas designed for Ntaka?”,I say

“For single people”,He mentions.

“Aren’t we singular like as one by one person?”

“When we are one with each other we wouldn't be”,He says and I feel the hot flushes run through me.

“I am feeling hot”,I mention.

“Why are you feeling hot Mkami?(my wife?)”,He rolls those words well out of his mouth.

I keep on inhaling his scent through my nose just to make sure I am still with him and not moving into another world of thoughts. I look up to him and he looks down on me.

“You are making me feel hot on a Sunday”, I say.

“How? It's only 25°C outside”, I look at this man.

He has a slight smirk on his lips.

“Is this the only outfit your sister got for you?”, he asks

“No”

“May I please see the others if you may?”, I nod my head involuntarily and he lets me go off his hold.

“I will keep the gown for now”, he hogs it in his hands.

I walk away from him and go to the bedroom. I sigh before I go and change into another one of these things and I go out of the bedroom and he is still standing in the same position. I get to him and he clips me with his arm again and rests his hand on my lower back.

“I like this one too”, He mentions.

“It seems like you will like all of them”

“I don't want to sound cheesy or whatever you call it but I like anything on you.”, He says.

“Even if I wear your clothes”

“Even so”,I nod my head.

“When can I take this off you?”,The hot flush comes rushing once again.

“I-I don't know”,I look away from him avoiding eye contact as now his gaze is intense on me.

“Please look at me”,I take a deep breath in and look at him.

“May I?”,I just nod not knowing what he wants.

He leans towards my face and our lips are just an inch away from each other. He moves his closer to mine letting them touch resting on his soft lips and so as mine. He captures my lips and I have already closed my eyes just to feel the texture and context this kiss will bring. His hand moves slowly away from my lower back to one of my exposed butt cheeks and he pulls me closer to his body in that moment. He slowly breaks the kiss and he turns me around and lays soft perks on my shoulders going to my neck and back to my shoulders.

I feel my stomach rumble in whatever that has erupted and has been ignited in me.

“I want to be one with you but I don't want to taint you on a Sunday I know how sacred it is for you”,He mentions.

He stops kissing me and rests my gown on my shoulders.

“You can go and change”,He mentions.

I give a brief glance at him before I walk away from him trying to steady my breath. I got to the bedroom and sat on the bed.

What...what is this man doing to me? Lord I apologize for any lustful thoughts I may have had that crossed my mind while in front of that man.

# Chapter 19

I came back from the bedroom from changing and I went to sit with Thulani and we watch some TV together. I really took my time being stuck in that room just to be able to get myself together before I come out and sit next to this man in front of me.

“At what time are you going to work tomorrow?”, I ask.

“I will be working from home tomorrow”, He mentions.

“Are you your own boss at work?”, I ask looking at him.

“I am not my own boss but I get to work flexibly at the comfort of where I want to work and when it is compulsory for me to be there. Working hard does get you those privileges”, He mentions.

“That's nice”

“What are you doing tomorrow?”, He asks and I smile and shrug my shoulders.

“I don't know yet”

“We can go out tomorrow together since it will be sunny”, He mentions.

“I want to buy some hair dye as well”, He touches my hair softly.

Honestly speaking I only allow him to touch my hair anyhow because I do the same with his head.



“What colour for you want to do?”,He asks.

“What do you think will be suitable for me?”,I ask.

“Maybe the orange one?”,he suggests and I giggle.

“We will see when we are in store together”,I say.

“Okay”

“Let me go and dish up, I am hungry”

I stand up and go to the kitchen. I dish up the food and then I warm it up for the both of us. I make some juice for the both of us and when the food is warm I go and serve him the food before I go back to the kitchen to get mine and I sit with him.

“I would like for you to construct a monthly list for the things you think are needed around the house”

“What do you usually do monthly?”,I ask.

He grabs the juice and he takes a sip and then puts it down and looks at me.

“I got what I thought I needed for the month food being included. I do have an alarm system set up around the house too but now you are here and might want to incorporate our needs together”

“I don't need much”

“Oh trust me baby you will need much”, I slightly frown.

“Meaning?”

“That you might need to add more of those things you showed me earlier”, He eats his food.

I am left with my mouth a little agape.

“I think those ones I have are enough”, I turn away from him feeling flushed.

“They won't be around for long”, He mentions casually and I look at this man.

What does he mean?

“What do you mean Ntaka?”

“You will find out soon”

“How soon?”, I ask.

“Let's finish eating and I will tell you”

“Okay”, We eat our food and we get done in no time.

I take the dishes to the kitchen and I quickly wash them. I don't like leaving dishes in the sink, they just pile up and it irks me a lot. I get done and I put them to dry on the dish rack and I wipe my hands before I go to the living room and sit next to Thulani and look at him waiting in anticipation for what he wants to say.

"May I ask you questions from your previous life?", He asks.

I nod my head.

"Yes you may", He nods his head.

"Have you experienced much in terms of sexual context with your late husband?", he asks.

"I have been sexual before"

"I know baby, I mean what do you know about sex. Let's place the biblical part of it aside"

"That it is enjoyable for two people when done okay", I say.

"Okay", He just nods his head.

"Why are you asking?"

"I just want to know what I am working with"

"Will it be a problem?", I ask and he pulls me to him.

“No baby it wouldn't be. We will learn from each other as a couple”,he mentions and I nod my head.

“Okay”

We stay in the position and watch some more tv.

.

It is the next day and I look at the outside of the car as some music is playing it is soft jazz and I am liking it and I have noticed this man loves it too.

“I need to learn this place quickly so I would be able to move around”,I say

“You will soon”,I nod my head.

We get to a supermarket in town and he finds some parking and we hop out of the car. He takes my hand into his before we make our way inside and go to where the hair dyes are being displayed. We get to the aisle and we look at the shelf as there are different colours.

“I want to try the grey one”,I mention and he looks at me then my head.

“Okay”,He takes 3 and pulls some shampoo and conditioner.

“I think you will need these too so that your hair doesn't break”

“Yeah this will be my first time dying my hair”,I say.

“Don't you want to do it at the salon?”,No I don't trust people with doing my hair. I only have selected people do my hair and only them.

“No thank you, I will read the instructions and try it out”,I say and he just nods.

We go to the paying till and he pays for my things and I thank him. This is something I am still getting used to. After that we leave the place and we go to the car and get inside before we drive off.

We go around town doing absolutely meaningless shopping but I did get some few things that I liked like the scented candles and Thulani didn't for once complain when he was paying for all the things I found a liking in them. We went to eat some brunch together and it was beautiful as we ate at a restaurant that is by the ocean view. Another thing Thulani couldn't stop doing is taking pictures of me. I think he likes doing that all the time but I am not complaining at all really. We left that place and decided to go home and do absolutely nothing or maybe we can just go to my sewing room and work there. I love it so very much and I cannot believe that he did something like that for me. It feels so surreal to be quiet honest.

“Today the sun is really out. I now feel sticky”,I mention.

Yes we have been going around and I have been sweating as we were going around but atleast there is airconditioning at the house.

That is what really cut our little trip short, well I am exaggerating a bit it is not that hot but you can feel the humidity around the clouds. I need to call my mother and see how she is and ask her for a church reference in this area. I want to start going to church and I will ask Thulani if he would like to join me too.

My phone rings that moment and I take it out of my bag and answer it.

“Hello”

“Hello Mvelo”,It is Rethabile.

“Hi Rethabile, how are you? How is school?”

“The year is almost ending I just want to be in grade 5 already”,She mentions.

I giggle.

“How is your Gogo?”,I ask.

“Koko is okay, she just talks alot. I miss you, can I visit during the holidays?”,I look at Thulani.

“I would love that but I have to talk to Malume about it”

Thulani looks at me for a brief moment before he stares back into the road.

“Okay, I miss you. You haven't had a baby yet right? I am only a few months away from being ready to be a big sister”,She says.

“No I have not.You will be the first to know”,I say.

“Okay, I have to go Mvelo. Bye I will pray for you and the new Malome”,She mentions.

“Thank you baby, I will pray for you and your family too”

“Okay bye”,She hangs up and I put the phone away.

"It is Rethabile, she is asking when am I going to visit her", I say.

He taps his fingers on the steering wheel to the rhythm of the music.

"Why doesn't she visit?", I look at him.

"Are you sure about that?", I ask.

"Yes, you like her and she can come during the holidays", He mentions.

"Thank you so much, this...means a lot to me"

It really does. I am very fond of Rethabile.

"Why doesn't her mother let her stay with a relative who can take care of her 24/7", He mentions.

"Mimi does not get along with her family mostly. She recently just got along with her mother but she doesn't let Rethabile visit her home without her being there", I say.

"Why? Something happened between them?", He asks.

"I think so and it seems to be very deep too as well because she has been hating her mother for long until a year ago"

"Maybe she still hates her", He mentions.

It could be because she never really seeks for help from her mother like I do but also Nomvula doesn't call my mother for help all the time like I do too but she does not hate our mother.

We get home and the car parks outside the garage. We get out of the car with our new things and We get inside the house.

“When are you going to dye your hair?”

“Later on during the day”,I mention.

He nods and goes to the kitchen while I take my things and I go to the bedroom and put them away. I quickly go to the bathroom and put some water in the bathtub and then I take off my dress in the process of it. I just need a cold bath at this point. I feel like taking one as well, I close the water when I am satisfied and I am done with taking off my clothes. I get inside the bathtub and I soak myself within the cold water and I relax inside.

“MaZungu!”

“I am in the bathroom”,I mention while inside laying there with my eyes closed.

“What are you doing?”,I can hear him from the other side of the door.

“I am taking a cold bath”

“Oh okay, can I join you in there?”,I shoot my eyes open.

“In the cold bath?”,I ask



I hear him laughing.

“Yes in the cold bath, isn't that what you are taking?”

“Okay”

“Is that a yes”, He mentions.

“Yes”, I say.

“Okay”, I hear the door being opened and I close my eyes quickly and lay there in the water. His presence is felt within the room.

I can hear him shuffling in the process of it all.

“May I get in?”, He says.

“Are you naked?”, He chuckles.

“Ofcourse I am naked Mvelo, I can't bath with clothes on. You are naked too”, He mention.

“I have never seen you naked before”, I say.

“Well you have to at some point”, he mentions and I open my eyes and look at him before I turn away from looking at him feeling hot flushes.

I never really took the time to actually realise how fine this man is. I never really did, Jabu was good looking, he has his looks and he was a bit lighter but Thulani is different. He something I sometimes see on TV or people who are not close to me or related of some sort to have a picture of how he is.

I shift and he gets in behind me and let's me rest on him.

“Are you uncomfortable?” ,He asks as I can feel his thing on my lower back.

“No”

It is not something new either but this is new. Bathing with a man in the same tub is new.

“Why did you opt for a cold bath?”

“I felt like one”

“Do you know how to swim?” ,he asks.

“Yes a bit. I have had my parents take me and my sister to swimming lessons before but it was years ago” ,I mention.

“Mmmh” ,He kisses my cheek.

We stay in that bathtub for some time before we get out of the bathtub and take a towel and wrap it around our bodies.

“Have you ever received head before?” ,He asks.

What is that?

“No,what is that?”,He smirks.

“Come let me show you”,He pulls me to the bedroom and tells me to get on the bed and lay on my back.

I do as I am told and before I know it my legs are on his shoulders.

He opens my towel and captures one of my small boobs and it fits into his hand and does with the other.

“Can I pleasure you?”,He says and I just nod to whatever he means.

He brings his face to mine and perks my lips before he goes and lays one on my neck and moves to between my boobs and lays one there before he leaves one of my boobs exposed and his tongue comes in contact with my nipple and he starts circulating his tongue sucking softly to the nipple and it feels nice for a moment. He moves his head to the other boob and he sucks on the nipple there and as I feel his warm breath against my skin and feel some of my hair standing. He stares at me and I feel his lustful and heavy aura accompanied with desire in that moment.

He goes to kissing between my boobs and lays perks going down in a linear motion until he reached my hairless valve. He kisses the exterior of my treasure and he takes my legs and places them back on his shoulders and my heart is beating quiet vigorously at that moment.

I feel it, his warm breath against the skin of my valve feeling it's sensitivity.

“Ntaka”,I say softly as he runs his fingers against my clitoris while face to face with my treasure and he is close to it.

His warm breath doesn't seize instead it intensifies my blood rushing body into a bit of foreign feelings and a but of discomfort as this is something I have never experienced.

"I won't do much just trust me",he says.

His voice almost gone in a meer second of touching me.

I swallow and nod my head slowly before he seperates my folds with his fingers. I am feeling aroused, bit by bit at the moment.

"I am about to go in, don't move much and don't be scared",He mentions and I nod.

I don't know what he means but I have to trust him.

His tongue comes in contact with my clitoris and I shift a bit but he holds me in place quiet quickly. He goes in again, now fully and his finger is rubbing against my clitoris while he is licking me down there and sucks on my nuna. I keep on taking light gasps here and there as he goes on and he slips his tongue inside me and circulates it and thrusts it.

I find myself holding onto the sheets for dear life as I feel this pleasure building up in my body.

I let out a little

"Ohw",When he makes my intestines twitch and turn from what I am feeling.

He stops and lifts his head for a moment but carries on with circulating his finger down there.

"Are you okay?",He asks.

"Ye..Yes",I mention.

"Okay",He says and he slips in the finger and he thrusts it inside of me.

"I will put in another finger okay?",He mentions and I nod my head.

"Mmmh Okay"

He puts in another and he thrust them inside and he starts picking up the pace of the thrusts quickening them.

"Ntaka",I found myself lowly moaning that.

"Are you okay?",he asks.

"Ye-Yes"

"How does it feel?"

"Nice"

I feel the pleasure intensifying and abdomen feels like it is going through something intense as I feel liquid run through down my butt.

“Your cunt is glistening beautiful”,he mentions.

I take a deep breath trying to collect myself as he has not stopped what he is doing but soon slows down and stops for a moment and kisses my belly.

“What is a cunt?”,I ask

“Its another name for your precious thing”,I nod my head.

“That was intense”, I say and look at him as he leans to kiss my lips and we share the kiss.

I move my hands and wrap them around his neck as we are kissing. I feel his tip at my entrance and he runs it up and down through my clitoris down to my entrance and it feels so good. He has one of my legs in his hand. He circulates his tip at my entrance as I feel him teasing me with it. I feel that intense pleasure again and I go through an orgasm that moment.

He leans in and kisses my lips again.

“I love you”,He mentions.

“I love you too Ntaka”,He smiles.

“Let me wipe you then get you cleaned up and dressed”,He mentions.

I thought... I thought he is going to put it in.

“Aren't we having sex?”,I ask.

“Later, we need to do your hair”,He says.

I give him a stare. Unbelievable!

“Are you serious?”,I am here hot and bothered and this man is not bothered at all. He just gave me orgasms without him even being inside of me and now I am craving more. More of what he has instore for me.

“Yes I am”

“Thulani”,He smirks

“Yes?”,He is enjoying this.

## Chapter 20

It has been a week since I left home and have been in Durban with this man here and I haven't taken well into the fact on what he did but one thing I have been doing the most is working and shame man Thulani has helped me alot with setting up a page on social media and advertising my work from the dress I wore on the negotiations to the latest designs I have done and I did get one order and I was really happy for that matter.

It is just after 12 pm and I am in my work office. I am waiting for this lady to come and I would be able to take her measurements and get started on the dress she wants plus she did send the type of design she wants for her dress. Yes I am not perfect but I am able to be honest if I cannot do something to the tee but the picture she sent of what she wants seems to be simple and a task that I would be able to tackle.

I am in the kitchen and I hear the intercom ringing and I go and press on it to hear what the other person needs.

“Hello, I am looking for Nomvelo I am here about the dress making enquire”,She mentions.

“Oh okay”,I press for the gate to open and I quickly make my way out to the front and watch as this lady's car drives in.

She parks and hops out of her car and so as her company.

“Hello,I am Nomvelo”,I greet her and she smiles.

“Hi, how are you?”

“I am well, please follow me”,I mention and they do as we walk to the back yard.



“Do you work with people?”,This lady asks.

“Not at the moment. I work alone”,I say.

“I have a special occasion to wear the dress at and I need it by nextweek”,She mentions.

“Worry not. It will be ready then”,She nods.

“Oh that is good, I am happy to hear that”,We walk into the space and I offer them seats on the little two seater couch that is there and I go and get my measuring tape and also my scrap book.

“Wow this place looks phenomenal”,The lady friend of this woman mentions.

I also like it, I get into awe when I step into this room and think about the man who made this all possible for me.

“Thank you, my husband did it all by himself”,I say and realise in that instant that I for the first time have referred to Thulani as my husband.

“This is beautiful”,she mentions and I just nod.

I work with the lady who is here for her measurements and I get her to stand as I take her measurements and jot them down. After I was done I go to my daily planner and diary and I jot down when she can come in for her dress fitting and the day she will collect her dress. She pays for the dress that moment and I generate her slip and then they leave afterwards.

I am left happy at that moment. My first ever real client I have this year.

“Wow, God is wonderful”,I say to myself and I feel happy too.

I put the money away and I then make my way inside the house to get the juice that I needed from the kitchen. I get some fruits as well and put them in a bowl. My phone rings and I take it out and it is Thulani.

“Myeni Ka Nomvelo( Nomvelo’s husband)”

“Awu Themba lami wangibiza kamnandi kanje namuhla(Oh my hope you are calling me so nicely today)”,I giggle at that.

“How are you feeling? You have been a bit grumpy lately but you seem better now”,he mentions.

“I am okay, I have not been grumpy”

“You have been Mvelo. You even try to avoid kissing me”,He mentions.

“I don't want to be left hanging”,I say.

“Baby..”

“Mmh?” ,I pop some grapes into my mouth.

“I am in Durban North now but I will be there in 30 minutes”

“Okay”

“I love you”

“I love you too”, He hangs up after that. I take my bowl and I go to my sewing room.

QOPHELO

We are back and it has been a really great trip going to Namibia and we should really do this often with Nkonzo. We are at the house and we are both working from home but mostly she has started with the wedding preparations as well and I am chipping in what I know and what I like too as well and so far so good.

We decided that we are going to have it in Capetown and she wants it to be in a church so that I do not mind at all. A Catholic church would be delightful to do the unity there, those are my thoughts.

I haven't forgotten, forgotten what is happening between Thulani and Nomvelo and it is like they are now rubbing their relationship in my face.

Yes I have been checking them quiet frequently especially Nomvelo and she has been posting about them and herself and it seems like they are living together that is why I just blocked her on WhatsApp so that I don't see her face slot as it brings heartache to me but what baffles me the most is the fact that Thulani did not for once hesitate to choose her over choosing my feelings. I don't understand why he would want to hurt me like that. In that manner.

“Baby your brother is here”, It is Nonkonzo and she is wearing an apron.

I am in my study inside the house and I was occupied by these thoughts.

"I am coming", She nods.

"There is no need", Nqubeko appears behind her wearing his work uniform.

He must be on a late lunch or he dodged work just to be here.

A part of me feels happy that he is here and I would be able to vent how I am feeling at the moment and the betrayal I am going through.

Nonkonzo moves out of the way for him so that he can walk in.

"I will be in the kitchen", She closes the door and Nqubeko walks in and he stands in front of my desk looking at me.

"How was Namibia?", He asks.

"It was good, well until your brother decided to betray me"

"Who?", He raises his brow.

"Ntaka ofcause", he just keeps quiet and stares at me.

"Oh", he says that after some time.

“Did you know that he just hitched the woman I wanted to marry”

“Isn't the one in the kitchen the one you want to marry?”,He asks

“Well I love two women”

“No you don't”

I frown upon hearing him say that.

“I do”

“You just love the idea of these women in your life more especially Thulani's wife”,He mentions.

“They are not even married yet to be his wife”,I say

“You know traditionally she is wife to your brother so as the one you have.”

“Who's side are you on?”,I ask in disbelief.

“I am on no one's side but the one who is happy. If the girl wanted you she would be here. Now stop this childish act before you loose even the woman that is here for you”,He mentions sternly.

I want to talk but I hold myself.

I cannot challenge Nqubeko nor Thulani especially in backchatting them unless I want to know who they really are.

“I will see you some other time. We will talk”,he mentions.

“Did he send you here?”

“No”,He mentions before he turns around and walks out of the room.

I punch the table in front of me. I hate this, I really hate it.

NOMVELO GWALA

I started with the designing and cutting out of the material that I need to start off the dress and I have pinned some pieces together. I have been working for a little while now and I am more than inspired to just carry on working and I am enjoying it too.

I smell his perfume before he can even place his hands around me. He wraps his arms around my waist from behind and he kisses my cheek.

“Hey”

“Hi,you got here early”,I say.

“There wasn't much traffic on the road”,I nod my head before I turn around to face him and he smiles.

“I see you are working”

“Yes I have my first client and she needs her stuff by next week”

“Will that be enough time to pull it off?”,He asks with concern.

“Yes, I will be done don't worry”,I mention.

“Okay, I bought some take away for you. I have already ate”,He mentions.

“Let me clean up here”,I say.

“Okay”,I clean up with his help and we go out of the room. I lock it and then we go inside to the main house.

“I want us to talk”,He mentions and I nod my head looking at him.

“Okay, about what?”

“Let's sit down”

We go and sit down on the couch and I give him the attention he needs.

“Between next week and the following week I have to go to the Northern Cape for work for at least 2 weeks”, I look at him.

“That is okay, it is work and it's important ”, I say.

“Would you like to come with me?”, He asks.

“Won't I disturb you from work?”, I ask.

“No you wouldn't”, He chuckles.

“I will book us in a place to stay for the time being.”, He mentions.

“But I have a client coming in next week for her stuff So I cannot leave before Friday”, I say and he runs his fingers on his bald head.

“Oh okay”

“Go, I will be fine alone”

“Are you chasing me away now?”, He asks with his brows slightly lifted.

“No, I am not hawu Mzimela who do you take me for?”, I smile and give him a perk and he lets out a groan.

“Can't I get a proper kiss?”, He asks.



“For what?” I ask softly.

“For being Umyeni ka Nomvelo”, I laugh.

“Oh please”

“Your words. Not mine”, He says.

“Okay”, I give him a kiss and he is appreciative of it.

We break the kiss and he looks at me.

“Come here”, He gets me to sit on his lap and he looks at me.

“Please part your legs a bit for me”, He mentions and I do as I am told.

He runs his hand in between my thighs and I feel slight shivers going through me. He reaches my underwear and he pushes it slightly aside and his finger rests on my clitoris and in between my folds. He runs it slightly up and down and circulates on my clitoris.

His middle finger stretches and sinks within me as soon as it slips in.

“Do you have a lube?”, I ask.

I am not wet enough I know and usually Jabu and I used a lubricant in order for us to have sex. I would get aroused along the way but he would make sure to lubricate me atleast before we had sex.

"I don't use that", He mentions looking at me and he thrusts his finger in slowly and I can feel the little tingles in my body. Pleasure is the word and it is at its basic mode at the moment.

"I thought lesbians use their fingers to pleasure each other", I mention softly in the mist of this movement.

He slips in another finger in me and starts to pick up the pace before he kisses my collar bones going to my neck

"It's called foreplay MaNcwane", He mentions softly near my ear.

"I- I have never heard of that", I say.

"I will teach you", I nod my head.

"Please", I mention softly as I slowly close my eyes feeling the pleasure this man is giving to me.

"You are getting wet", He mentions.

I am feeling it. I am feeling it quiet so much, he slowly lays me on the couch and I open my eyes and I look at him. He leans in to give me a kiss. This, this is what frustrates me, it is the fact that he gives me this pleasure and stops here.

"I want to take this off", He refers to my underwear and I gladly help him with taking it off.

He takes it and it is discarded on the couch somewhere.

“What if someone walks in?”,I ask as he parts my legs and he is face to face with my valve.

“I don't care, it is their problem”,He mentions before his tongue comes in contact with my clitoris and he is feasting on me.

I try, to grasp why I could as I feel the pleasure he is giving to me. He slips his tongue into my hole and his finger flickers on my clitoris and circulating creating more pleasure as he is quickening his tongue thrusts in me.

I find myself holding his bald head running my fingers on it as they slip. My abdomen goes through an intense pulsation and I let out a moan closing my eyes to savour the moment and my legs slightly shake in that moment. I gasp before I could calm down. I open my eyes when he has stopped and he is looking at me with the widest smile on his face.

“You look beautiful”,He mentions and kisses my forehead.

“Come let's take this off”,He refers to my top and skirt and I am pulled up and he takes off my clothes and leaves me rather naked and captures my boobs in his warm hands and slightly pinches my nipples before one of his hand slides down to my valve and cups it and kisses my neck.

“Are you okay?”,He asks.

“Yes I am”,I mention softly.

“Okay”

“Do you want to watch me undress or you want to look away?”,He add a chuckle at the end.

“I would like to look at you”,I say.

He lets me go and I turn around as I watch him undress himself and I feel flushes in me getting stronger. He gets done and gives me a convincing smirk that has my heart captured for a moment. He levels down to me and gives me a kiss and I get to taste a mixture of things and myself included in that. As I am on my knees he keeps on lowering his upper body and I find myself laying right back down on the couch and his chest against my nipples. It feels hard.

"I feel hot", I mention.

"Don't worry, it will be okay", I nod my head.

He pulls my body slightly to the edge of the couch and he parts my legs.

I feel it once more. His tip circulating on my valve, clitoris and my Nuna's hole. I let out a moan and he goes to rubbing my clitoris and picks up his pace and I am feeling the pleasure too much, something I have never felt before. I never thought it could get better than anything until this.

He pushes in his tip inside me and goes inside a little slowly slipping in.

"Are you okay?", He asks as his shaft is slipping inside of me.

"Yes"

"Okay", He pulls me closer to him and slips it fully in and I gasp before moaning.

He groans let's our the best of it from the depth of his throat.

He takes my legs and holds them in his arms and slowly starts thrusting.

“Are you still okay baby?”,He asks. I close my eyes slowly.

“Y-yes”

He starts picking up his pace and I pinch my nipples that very moment. He thrust deeply and I moan turning my head side ways and I feel him kiss my breasts.

“I love you so much MaZungu”,He mentions and lays kisses on my neck.

“Please look at me”,He pleads and I open my eyes and turn to look at him.

“How are you feeling?”

“G-Good”,My legs start to shake more intensely than I did before.

“Ntaka please hold me”,He does and picks me up and I hold onto him. He keeps on thrusting in and out of me through my intense orgasm and I dig my non existent nails onto his back.

“Fuck it Mvelo!”,he groans and this man is out to kill me with this pleasure that I am feeling. It is too good.

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

I left Mvelo and she seemed tired from that session we had and I had to get back to work and I have been feeling lighter and happy spirited after that. I want to take it slow on her but I do not think I can hold myself any longer but I will try.

I am sitting in front of my laptop working and I would find myself trying to reprimand myself from picking up my things and going back home and cuddle with her in bed.

I love that woman, it is something I cannot shy away from or hide from.

I just wonder what her husband has been doing to her all those years. He seemed to have not been touching the right places regarding her body but I do not mind doing that.

I haven't been with a lot of women too, I am learning as well but what I learned over the years with Angela is that we made and experienced in our sex life. We came up with new things to find pleasure in and we did.

A knock comes through my door and the CEO walks in. I am the COO of this establishment and I have been for the past year. I gained this position because of my work ethic and I love that this position comes with its flexibility as I need it to be because I don't think I will get enough of Nomvelo soon.

"Oh you are back, you seem happier"

"I just came from home my wife is happy", I mention.

"They do say that a happy wife is equal to a happy home", I nod my head.

He sits across me and places a file on my desk and we get down to business.

# Chapter 21

NONKONZO MVELASE

Planning a wedding is not all great all alone and I have atleast well I don't know the date yet of when I would love my wedding to be in but I would love a winter wedding hence I wanted the ceremony to be in a church. I have decided to get a planner that will help with the wedding preparations but I have to run it past Qophelo first.

I have just gotten out of the shower preparing for work. Yes I am going to work as much as I would love to overstay my leave but there is alot of work waiting for me to get to it. The trip brought some good for us as much as finding out that Nomvula's sister is now going to my sister in law but I am just happy that she is not going for Qophelo anymore.

The elevator pings and I step out of it and make my way to my office, I unlock the door and I walk inside and throw my bag onto the table before placing my laptop there. I go to the windows and I open them just to have some fresh air in the room. I got to my desk and I took out my phone and call my mother. It rings a few times before she answers.

"Nkonzo"

"Mama, how are you?"

"I am well and yourself?"

"I am okay, I just called to check up on you"

“Oh we are all okay, your brother is home”,She mentions.

“Oh”

“He said he will call you”

I wonder what does he want.

“Okay”,I mention.

“Wait here he is, talk to him”,I hear some shuffling and soon his deep voice booms through the other side of the phone.

“Nkonzo”,His voice comes through.

My older brother and I get along but he is more strict in a way. Always shielded me from things and at times I am grateful that it happened.

“Lange”

“I heard you got hitched”,He mentions.

Yes he was not there when Lobola was being paid and I was partially grateful as I know how he would've delayed the whole thing. Not because he doesn't want me to get married but because he does not trust any man near me that easily.



“Yes”

“I want to see the boy”

“He is only two years younger than you Lange”

“I don't care if he was 40 I want to see him”

“I will talk to Qophelo”

“Tomorrow at 3 pm is fine”,He hangs up after that.

I know that he was not asking if the day and time is fine but he was telling me. I cannot go against him, I sigh and I put my phone down and I open my laptop and I sit down and take out my things and prepare to work.

My phone rings that very moment and I take it. I look at the screen and it is Nomvula, I answer the call.

“Hey”

“Hi, I don't know who to call. I have a problem at my apartment my shower has been leaking and now it is flooding all over my apartment”,she mentions.

“Have you contacted the owner of the building?”,I ask.

“Yes it has been weeks since I did that and he told me that he will get a plumber for me and the plumber came but didn't solve the problem and now he is not answering my phone”,She mentions.

“Okay I will call someone I know who might help”

“Thank you”

“You are welcome”, We hang up and I quickly make a call to my brother and it rings a few times, knowing that he might or might not answer his phone.

“Nkonzo”, He says.

“Are you working?”, I ask.

“Why do you ask?”, I sometimes wonder how we are related.

“My friend has a bursted shower at her apartment and she needs help”, I mention.

I hear him heave a sigh.

“Send her address”, He mentions.

“Okay thank you”, I quickly hang up and send the address to him.

My brother has his small “Business”, he is very good with his hands. Though he never went to university to study but he got plumbing skills that bring money and food to the table to help him survive. I send Nomvula's address to him and then I tell Nomvula that someone is coming and she thanks me. I get back to work.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

I had to call in sick today at work as I can't leave my apartment like this. The water has reached my whole apartment and I finally found a place where I can turn off the water going into my apartment. I hope that the person Nonkonzo has sent really does solve the problem. I don't understand what is going on because when the last plumber came in here he said that my shower needs new pipes and he changed them so now I do not understand why this is happening.

I sigh frustrated at the moment and I try to get the water out of the apartment atleast to get the place dry. I open all windows in my place and the door when I am done even though it is still wet on the floor but I leave the burglar gate closed.

My boyfriend calls just when I was done and I tip toe to the kitchen to get my phone and I answer the call.

"Hey baby, I got your message", He mentions.

Yes I was calling everyone I know that could help me find a plumber ASAP.

"Nonkonzo has found one for me but I don't know if the job will be done", I mention.

"I am at work now but I will come later on to check if you are fine"

"I am okay", I sigh.

“Okay bye”

“Bye”,He hangs up and I put my phone away.

“Knock knock”,I hear a very deep voice by the burglar gate.

I tip toe making sure that I don't slip and fall towards the door and there stands a tall caramel skinned man in front of me wearing a cap that almost covers his eyes.

“Is this apartment 38?”,He asks looking at his phone before shoving it in his pocket and holds his tool box on the other hand.

“Yes it is,are you the one Nonkonzo called?”,I ask.

“Yes, I am her older brother”

I open the gate. I have never met Nonkonzo's brother before. Her cousin yes but her brother I have never met him though I have been to her place a couple of times.

He walks in and I direct him to the bathroom and he walks in and places his tool box down before he gets to the shower and he inspects it. I watch, watch my friend's brother inspecting what I cannot even figure out is the problem.

“How did the water stop flowing?”,He asks.

“I turned off the water”

"Can you go and open it?" ,I nod my head and move out of the room and quickly go and open the water.

I come back and stand by the door. He just seems to nod as he sees the water splashing all over seemingly wetting parts of him.

"You can turn it off"

I nod my head and turn to leave.

"I don't appreciate people who give me body signals when they can speak with their own mouth unless uyisimungulu(a person who cannot speak)",He mentions.

"I am sorry",I mention before I quickly walk away.

What? What did that man just say to me? Heeh imihlola Yami!

I turn off the water and go back to the bathroom and I find him already starting to be busy on the Pipe.

"What is wrong?"

"The new pipes are inserted wrong",He mentions.

"Ohw",He looks at me and then goes back to taking his tools.

"How long will this take?",I ask.

"It will depend on the way they are inserted"

“Okay”,I mention and turn to leave.

I walk out of the bathroom and go to the kitchen to make some food.

NOMVELO GWALA

I woke up this morning in the arms of this man feeling rather tired I would say. I have never felt this tired after having sex and he seemed to have knocked me off dead but I really slept like a baby.

I look outside the window and it seems that the sun has been up for some time now and I wonder why this man is not at work.I slowly tap him and he opens his eyes and looks at me before a light smile surfaces on his face.

“Sawubona Mama”,he pulls me in to him and gives me a light perk.

“Good morning love”,You surely slept, I thought you would be awake a long time ago”

“I felt tired”

“I know”

“Are you not going to work?”,I ask

"Later on during the day", I nod my head.

"I also need to work on the dress too", I mention.

"You will, how are you feeling?", He asks and runs his fingers on my skin.

"I enjoyed everything yesterday, I have never experienced what I did", I mention.

"There is more in store don't worry", He mentions.

"If we are not too careful I might fall pregnant", He smiled wider.

"I mean it wouldn't be a bad idea", He mentions.

"Yes it wouldn't be but I still want us go enjoy being together before our attention is split between us and a child", I say.

"That is a valid point. I still have a lot to do with you"

"Like what?"

"Like us getting married legally", He mentions.

"If it is intimate with friends and family but for now we shouldn't spend money on a one day occasion", I say.

"You like saving huh?"

"Yes Mzimela", I turn around and give him my back and he spoons me.

"Well baby you don't have to worry about anything that is money related", He says.

"If you say so", He kisses my shoulders.

"Don't worry", He cups my breasts and I feel tingles through me.

"Let's go and bath together", He mentions.

"Okay", He gets out of the bed and he pulls me to him and picks me up.

"Do not drop me"

"Trust me", I give him a smile and I nod.

We enter the bathroom and he puts me down. I rush to the toilet while he opens the bath water and I pee. After I was done I go and brush my teeth while he pee as well before he comes to brush his teeth. He goes and closes the water and we both get inside the bathtub to take a bath together.

I am starting to get the hang of this but I truly love it.



NOMVULA ZUNGU

It wasn't that long before he got done with doing my pipes and he asked if I can switch on the water again and I did and it was okay no leaking nothing. I never felt that relief in my life before. I quickly go and take my phone as I don't have any cash on me to transfer some money to him. I offer some water to him and he gladly takes the bottled water. He opens it and gulps down the content as we are between the kitchen and living room space.

"Please may I have your account to transfer the money",I mention.

"Give me your number I will send my account number later on",He mentions.

"I-Okay",he takes out his phone and I dial my numbers and save it on his phone. He takes his phone and looks at it.

"Nomvula, what is the purpose of having that name?",He asks.

"My twin sister and I were born during a rainy day in Spring",I mention and he is taken aback that I am a twin.

"Identical?"

"No feternal",I mention.

I wouldn't say Nomvelo and I are identical but we do look alike here and there.

“Oh, okay. Do call me if you have a problem with anything I do more than plumbing”,He mentions with a slight smirk on his lips. The first sight of a small smile I have seen from him all day.

“Like?”

“You might find out”,He takes his tool box.

“I will call you”,He says before he disappears from my eyes.

What does he mean he will call me? Why would he call me? Haibo this person.

I call Nonkonzo just to thank her for getting someone to come and fix my shower though it was her brother but I really appreciate it.

## Chapter 22

I run my fingers through the material and then run it under the sewing machine and then I pull it up once I am satisfied with the stitching. I look at it and take the pin from my pin cushion on my wrist and I pin together parts of the fabric so that I know where I should sew and how I should do it when I get to that part of this dress.

I get up from my chair and I quickly move to the table on the other side of the room and I lay the dress on there and then look at it for a moment. My phone rings and I quickly move to take it and it is an unsaved number. I take the call anyway and answer it.

“Hello”

“Hi, is this Nomvelo?”,The person asks.

“Yes this is she”

“Oh, I got your number from Facebook, I wanted to ask if you can be able to recreate one of the dresses you show cased on your page but with a different colour”,The lady mentions.

“Oh okay that is fine,I would need you to come for some measurements”,I say and quickly go and grab my diary.

“Okay that is fine. How about tomorrow?”,She asks.

“Tomorrow is fine”

“Okay,thank you. I will be in contact”

“Just send a message and I will send the address to you”

“Thank you so much”,she hangs up.

I put my phone down and I close my eyes pressing my hands together.

“Lord you are big”,I say and a light knock comes from my door and Thulani walks in the room.

“Taking a break?”,He asks.

“Not really, I have another client now”,I say with much excitement.

“That is great to hear”,He mentions.

“Yes I am happy, soon more people will be calling to get their dresses done”,I mention.

“You should widen your collection with time”,He says.

“I will, weren't you going to work?”,I ask.

“The meeting was cancelled so I am not leaving anymore”,He mentions.

“Okay”,He comes towards me and places his hands around my waist.

“If you weren't busy I would be bothering you right now”,He mentions.

“But the lady is busy”,I say and he chuckles there.

“How do you feel about us signing?”,He mentions.

My heart beats slowly for a moment. Nerves and also I do not know what to say at that particular moment.

“Uhm are you sure about that?”,I ask.

“Yes I am very sure about it but it does not mean I will not give you the wedding of your dreams”,He says and lightly kisses my forehead as I place my hands on his arms.

“Yes”,I say and we stay in that position.

“I love you so much Nomvelo, don't forget that”,How would I? I really do feel the same.

“Me too Mzimela”,I say.

There is silence between us , comfortable silence that we undergo through.

“Have you talked to your brother?”,I ask.

“He blocked me so I don't bother”,He mentions and I feel bad for him.

“Can't your brothers try and talk to him for you?”,I ask and look at him.

“No, Qophelo just wants to feel bratty about things and he will feel the heat of decisions. I will not chase after him for being selfish just like him”,He mentions.

“You are not selfish”,I say.

“I did choose to be with you than be in his delusional world and I chose best”,He smirks after that.

“But I hate that you guys are not getting along”

“Qophelo just needs to grow up. He is 30 years old”,He really is old enough to not act the way he is acting.

“How are things between you and your sister?”,He asks.

“They are okay, we talk from time.to time”,I mention

“That is good”

“Yeah it really is, I am just happy that we are getting along now”

“I am happy for you as well”

“I am hungry, let's go and eat now”,He mentions.

“Okay let's go”, I put some of my things away before we moved going to the main house leaving the cottage.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

I have already cooked and used the shower and I feel relief that the shower is not leaking anymore but I don't know for how long but I will trust that Nonkonzo's brother knows his work and that she would not refer someone who is bad at their work to me. I still haven't received a message from his brother stating his bank account but I hope by tonight he will send it so that I can pay him and see how much money I have left in order for me to survive the next following weeks until my pay day.

I get dressed and I finish up before I hear a knock on the door. I go and open the door quickly and my boyfriend stands there. Senzo is the name and I have mentioned that we have been dating for a few months. Yes we have our head buds here and there but this man is great and is able to handle me as I am with him. He is the person I have had the longest relationship so far. Usually by 3 to 4 months the relationship is exhausted and there is nothing left for it and we would go our separate ways but this time I am sure that we would work out at this little pace we are going. We are trying to understand each other in the process of it too though I am hard headed and stubborn at times that is one of the things I think chase these men away that I am not a soft ball like my sister that they can just push around if they want to.

“Hey baby”, He has wine in his hands and a take away paper bag with his overnight bag.

“Hey”, He kisses my cheek and walks past me as I close the door.

He heads to the kitchen counter and places the things there.

“The apartment doesn't look like the disaster you described”,He mentions

“The pipe got fixed and I am so happy now there is not even a sight of leakage”,I mention.

“That’s great. I thought I should come and check up on you”

“Thank you”,I go and wrap my arms around him and give him a perk on the lips.

“I haven't freshened up yet”

“You will”,I say before we kiss each other then a phone rings and we let go of each other.

“Let me get it”,I say as I realise that is my phone ringing.

“Okay I will go and put this in the bedroom so long”,I nod my head as he walks off.

I go and get my phone from the charger in the living room and it is an unsaved number.

I quickly answer it not sure if it is insurances but at this hour I highly doubt. I answer the call anyway.

“Hello”,I say.

“Is that how you answer calls after hours?”,a very deep voice rumbles through the other side of the phone.



“Who is this and why are you calling me after hours ke?”,I ask. This person is asking me rubbish at this moment you know.

“Its Langelihle”,He says.

“Angazani nalowo muntu mina(I don't know any person of that name)”

“Nonkonzo's brother and you wanted my account number isn't it so?”,He mentions.

“I don't think calling was ever necessary, a message would've been fine”

“I don't like messages calling is fine”,He mentions.

“Mmmh, I don't have a pen a paper near me.”,I say and quickly try to find one.

“I'll wait”

I get a little pad and a pen and I put the phone between my shoulder and ear as I press it against my ear with my shoulder.

“Okay Can I have the account?”,I mention.

He gives it to me and I thank him after that.

“How much will it be?”,I ask.

“R200”

I frown

“Hayi kanjani manje?(How so?)”,I am left in confusion

“Kahle”

“I didn't expect this amount honestly”,I say.

“Mmmh”,He says.

“I hope that you didn't do a sloppy job in my bathroom. Matter of fact I should be recording this”,He chuckles.

“Ungakhathazeki ntokazi I did a very good job trust me. I can work well with my hands”

“Okay”

“Bye”,He hangs up after that and I put my phone down and turn to find my boyfriend behind me looking at me intensely.

“Who was that?”,He asks.

“The plumber”

“He calls you at this hour?”,He raises his brow.

"I am also surprised as you are"

"Why is he calling you?"

"To give me his account number", He chuckles unhappily.

"Do I look stupid to you Nomvula?"

"Senzo I don't have time for this thatha okufuna( believe what you want) I am hungry"

"Angithi ulanjiswa ubufebe obenzayo(Isn't it you are hungry from this whoring you are doing)", His voice is going a bit higher as I have moved away from him.

"Don't you dare talk to me like that Wena I am not whoring and I don't even know the guy that well"

"But you gave him your number"

"I didn't have cash on me"

"Give me his number ningijwayela Kabi Nina( You are shitting on me the both of you)", He says aggressively grabbing the phone from my hands and I watch him.

I really don't have time for him.

He shoves my phone in his pocket.

“Lets go and eat”

“Nx”,I say and turn around.

“Are you clicking your tongue at me?”,He asks.

I just ignore him. Yoh one of the issues we have is Senzo’s temper. That is the only issue that I have.

“I am talking to you Nomvula”

“Please leave me alone”

“Fuck you for this okay?!”,He says.

“Okay Senzo”,I say and go and dish up my food. I won't even eat his food at all.

.

I woke up this morning and I went to take a bath and prepare for work. We slept last night angry at each other and no he did not bring back my phone of which I didn't even bother wanting at this point because I didn't want to entertain his insecurities.I love this man but ayi sometimes things nje take a turn that I do not know.

He was not in bed when I woke up but his stuff were still here. Well his bag but it was all packed up and I hope that he is leaving today, I need my own peace of mind. I look at myself through the mirror after I was done with getting ready and I walk out of the bedroom grabbing my hand bag and my laptop bag before I walk out of the room.

I hear some sizzling sounds and I get to the living room and I see him in the kitchen making breakfast. The one thing he is good in doing and that is making breakfast. He sees me walking in and he has a smile on his face.

“Good morning baby”,He says and I look at him and place my things on the counter.

“Morning”,I walk to the fridge and I open it and take out the little yohgurt and some fruits and I reach the top of my cupboard and grab my small lunch bag. I put in a breakfast bar and some biscuits I will have with coffee while working.

“Can we talk?”,He mentions and I turn to him and place my things on the counter before I start packing them up.

“Yeah”

“I am sorry last night about accusing you of cheating”,He says.

“Did you find what you wanted?”,I ask.

“No, there isn't even a trace of anything even if you deleted them I would've found them so I am sorry”,He says.

I look at this man.

Yes Senzo is very good in IT and hacking he works under that at his work place and he deals with the Computer system of things too.

“Mmmh”

“Don't be like that”

“Well I thought you trusted me but I was fooling myself”,He sighs and moves from the stove and comes towards me and wraps his arms around me.

“I know and I am sorry about that. I promise I will not be invading your privacy and giving you the benefit of a doubt”,He mentions.

“Can I have my phone back?”

“Sisakhuluma lah Nomvula(We are still talking Nomvula)”,I sigh.

“What else do you want to say?”,He sighs.

“I have made breakfast”

“I am not hungry plus I am late for work”,I say.

“Atleast pack it up in a container and take it to work”,He says.

I look at him and just nod. He goes and dishes up for me and gives me the lunch box.

“Thank you”,He gives me a perk on the lips.

“I love you”

"I love you too",He takes out my phone from his pocket and he gives it to me.

"I won't be here when you get back",He mentions. Music to my ear at the moment.

"Oh Okay",He nods and I take my things and car keys and leave the apartment.

I get to my car and get inside before I drive off to work listening to Metro FM. I change radio stations in the morning depends on how I am feeling that moment. I look through my phone from time to time and I decide I will look properly when I get to work.

I arrive there and I quickly hop out of the car and take my things and lock it before I make my way inside the building greeting everyone I come across. I quickly get to my work station and I settle and sit down to go through my phone trying to figure out what is going on with my phone. I see my co worker coming in.

"Miss Zungu how are you this morning, you are rather early",He mentions.

"Yes I am, Can you check if something is wrong with my phone?",I ask.

I wouldn't put it past Senzo if he did something. He places his stuff on my desk and takes my phone into his hand and he goes through it. We sit there for a while at that.

"It seems to be tempered with, all the messages and calls you receive will not be encrypted but will also be recieved by another party"

"How do you know this?",I ask as he gives me my phone.

“I studied this. Someone is tracking you”,He mentions and I smile.

“Thank you”

“Are you in danger?”,He asks with concern?

“No I am not”,He nods not convinced but he leaves there after.

I knew Senzo did something to my phone mainly because it doesn't look as much as it did yesterday. Some of my contents here on my phone are missing. I place my phone down and run my fingers over my thighs fisting my hands there after.

My phone pings and I take it and look at the message that just came in and it seems someone transferred R500 to me through cash send.

My phone rings there after and I quickly answer it.

“Hello who is this?”,I ask.

“Its Lange,My number seems to be blocked and...”,As soon as he said that I hung up on the call and quickly took the land line on my desk and dialled his number quickly.

It rang a few times before it got answered.

“Hello”

“It is Nomvula what can I do for you?”



“Why am I blocked?”,He asks.

“I don't know why,I thought I paid you”

“You did but I sent the money back. Did you receive some money?”,He asks.

I am taken aback by that.

“Yes R500 what is it for and why did you send it back?”

“I have my own reasons. Buy lunch with the R300, have a great day”,He hangs up after that and I put the phone down.

Lunch money? What is this man up to? But imali ayibuzwa so I will definitely buy something with it.

NOMVELO GWALA

I could hear him from the other room as he is speaking to his mother on the line. It is morning and I am in my sewing room while he is stuck in the bathroom having a private conversation with his mother, I am going to have a measurement session with another client today and I hope that everything goes well but I have a good feeling so far about the business as I should be feeling.

“Ngiyakuzwa( I hear you)”,Is what I hear him saying.

They seem to be talking about what is conspiring between him and Qophelo. I don't want them to fight, they are brothers after all and should make up and move but it seems Qophelo doesn't want to move away from this and so as Thulani. He doesn't care to humble himself before his brother where he sees that he did nothing wrong against Qophelo of which is the truth.

“Okay, we will come sometime when I get back in the province”,He mentions again

“Okay bye”,It seems like he hangs up before he surfaces out of the bathroom with his phone in his hands.

He comes and stands next to me as I am doing the dress and I stop for a moment and give him attention.

“Are you okay?”,I ask.

“I am okay”,He smiles and I nod my head.

“Do you want to sit next to me for a little while before you go?”,His smile widens with that.

“I would love that”,He grabs a chair and sits next to me and wraps his arms around my waist and I keep on working until I am done with this part of the dress and I take it from under the machine and look at it.

“It will look beautiful in the end”,He mentions and I look at him.

“I hope she likes it”,He kisses my neck.

“She will”,I nod my head and fold the dress for that moment.

“Baby”

“Mmmh?”,I answer while I put the dress in a plastic.

“Cela sihlabe noma amabili nje(Can we do two rounds atleast?)”,Two? People do that? That's alot.

“Mangingafanga nje(If I don't die)”,he chuckles and goes to kissing my neck.

A weakness in me surfaces. I didn't know that my neck would be a place where I crumble the most if he kisses me there so softly and tenderly.

“I wouldn't let that happen”,He mentions and I look at him.

To be honest I do not mind. He has introduced me something that I have never felt before and I think I like it. So much and wouldn't mind to feel what I felt more than ever again.

“Let's go before my client comes”,I say and he chuckles as we get up and leave the room in a hurry.

To the main house.

## Chapter 23

I stare into his eyes and he looks into mine as my chest is touching his, close to each other is what we are now and not even an inch away from each other. I wrap my fingers around his neck and that gives him a moment to dip his head down and give me a kiss that we indulge in that moment and he pulls away from the kiss and slowly slips inside of me. I keep my eyes on him as he keeps his on me before he captures my lips and fully slips inside of me leaving me in desire of something that is already inside of me. He slips out and thrusts in me going a bit deeper and I gasp that moment lightly.

“Are you okay?”,He asks and I nod my head.

“Yes I am”,I mention.

He thrusts in and out of me that moment still not moving his contact off me.

“Are you still good?”,He asks.

I felt like the first round had drained me and that I wouldn't feel aroused for this one but surprisingly here I am enjoying the feeling of being one with him like I have been missing some parts of this in my life before. I run my fingers down his shoulders going to his chest and finally wrap my arms around his body.

“Yes I am”,I slightly close my eyes and ended up closing them fully taking in the pleasure once more.

“I want to cum this inside of you this round but only if you are not on any contraceptive”,He mentions.

“Why?”I ask softly.

He has been pulling out the past few times we have been sexual together.

“I want to”,he hits my g-spot that very moment and I moan in thus pleasure.

“Ah Mzimela ufuna ukungimithisa Wena(You want to impregnant me)”,I say while opening my eyes to look at him and he smiles.

“It will look like you”,he says and kisses my nose.

“Mmmh”,I moan being distracted from this conversation for a moment.

“Are you okay?”,He always asks this question.

“Yes”,I say.

“Should I go harder?”,I nod my head and he takes my legs and puts them on his shoulders and he goes harder.

I feel myself going through an intense feeling of pleasure and then I go through an orgasm with my legs shaking whilst on his shoulders. My body shakes a bit and I calm down.

He moves his finger to my clitoris and he thrust through me while rubbing my clitoris.

“Mzimela”,I softly say.

“Sthandwa sami”,He says.

“I like that”,I mention as I feel the pleasure of what he is doing with his finger and while thrusting in me.

“You like it Mkami?(my wife?)”.

“Yes”,He perks my lips.

“I am glad you like it”,He mentions.

I arch my body a bit.

“Kodwa ungangi mithisi manje Mzimela(But don't impregnant me now Mzimela)”,He chuckles and kisses my lips.

“Ngeke sthandwa Sami(I won't my love)”,I look at him and lightly smile at him.

He turns me around and he puts a pillow under me and he places his hands on my lower back and he inserts himself and I hold onto the bed cover that moment. He kisses my back softly before he even thrusts still embedded in me.

“I love being inside of you”,He mentions.

This man will kill me one day and we will die from sex I tell you. He starts thrusting and I cross my legs and he separates them.

“Nomvelo don't do that”

“I am sorry”,I moan after that.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

Senzo called me just to check how I am and I told him that I am well and fine and he told me that he would check up on me once again during lunch. I haven't done much with my phone plus I have been a busy person today with work. I have deadlines that I have to meet that are pretty soon if I may say. I type away through my laptop and then I decide to go and make another cup of coffee as the one I had has finished. I will also go past the bathroom too to use the toilet. I got to the company kitchen and I wash my cup and out it near the sink while I get the water boiling in the kettle.

I rush to the bathroom and I quickly go into one of the stalls that were not occupied while the other stall seems to have someone there. I finish up and I try to flush the toilet but no water is coming out but water in the kitchen is there nje. I try again a few times trying to flush the toilet and find out where maybe the little water tap was closed and I found it but nothing.

"You are not supposed to be in there in the first place", I hear a manly voice say.

"Uhm says who?", I say.

"Get out of there before you do some damage. Doesn't this company warn it's workers not to use something when it is getting fixed?"

"Well I wasn't informed"

"Or you didn't listen", Who does he think he is in a woman's bathroom even.

“Leave the bathroom so that I can get back to work”,I get out of the bathroom and see this man standing in front of me wearing navy workers pants and a navy Tshirt on his body.

“MaZungu, I didn't know you work here”,His voice posses some calmness in it not the aggressive with a tint of rudeness that it carried earlier.

But weirdly something in me moves. Being called uMaZungu, when last have a heard someone refer to me in that manner even my father has stopped now he doesn't say it as often as he used to do it.

“I never told you where I work”,I say.

“Precisely”,He says and I move to the taps.

“There is no water in the bathroom remember”,Why is he still talking?

I look at him through the mirror and just turn to go to the door before he speaks.

“It is almost lunch”,he says and I turn to look at him.

“And?”,I say.

“Let's go and have lunch”,He mentions.

“You are my friend's brother and plus I have a boyfriend. I don't think that is appropriate”

“Angishongo ukuthi ngiyakushela(I didn't say I am asking you out)”,Ouch.



“No thank you I am fine”

“I wasn't really asking”,He bites his bottom lip as I raise my brow to look at him.

“Excuse me?”

I say.

“I am...I mean that please may we grab lunch together”,He mentions.

“Umthetho wakho vele uyathanda ukudelela?(You like to be rude?)”,I fold my arms across my chest.

“I don't think I am rude but honest and straight forward”

“It is not cute Langelihle”,I say.

He walks closer to me and he takes off his working gloves and holds them in one hand and stands in front of me just a few inches away that I can still inhale the scent from his body.

“I didn't know speaking has to be cute that is why women fall for cheesy dreams boys sell from words?”,He mentions and I feel my throat getting dry.

“I don't know about that”

“Would you rather want the truth from me or want me to sell you lies?”

“What are you implying?”

“I want to know you. More than just being my sister's friend as Nomvula and...” ,he says.

“And what?” ,I ask.

“And I want to make love to you until you have tears in your eyes and I will let you bite my shoulder if you feel too intense then fuck you senselessly making you scream as I devour your precious jewelery” ,He says and I feel hot blood rush through touching my valve and making it feel sensitive. I squirm at that without him even touching me but I already feel it though I shouldn't be even imagining what he is describing to me.

“I will insert my finger in your wet cunt and thrust it slowly just to feel the texture of your wetness while staring into your eyes” ,He continues and I close my eyes stepping back.

“Just keep quiet. Wena ufuna ukungidla nje( to have sex with me) my mother has warned me about such men and I won't fall for it”

“What kind of a man am I? The one who is no competition to your boyfriend by far?”

“What do you want from me Langelihle?” ,I ask feeling suddenly hot stuck in this bathroom.

“Lunch and a night with you then you will know what I want” ,I turn around and leave him there.

Kuyahlanya lokhu kwakubo kaNonkonzo Kahle Kahle kuyangigulela nx(This one is crazy, Nonkonzo's sibling is crazy infact he is shitting one me nx)

I feel my legs feeling a bit lighter and I stop for a moment to take a few breaths. That man has no effect on me that I know I just feel maybe dizzy from now having a solid thing to eat. I didn't even eat Senzo's breakfast. Yes it is that.

I quickly make my way to the kitchen to get my coffee done.

## NONKONZO MVELASE

I look at the pictures of the colour and design of my bridesmaids dress that I would want to have and I think that having a cream colour for my bridesmaids would be perfect. I don't want to go off a lot from the colour which is white and also I haven't decided with Qophelo the second colour of the day that we will have but for now I love what I am seeing. I look up and look at the wedding planner and the designer she took me to.

Yes I got a wedding planner and she is amazing and has gotten what I want so far. It makes things much more easier if you have a planner to do most of the work for you.

"So?", She asks.

"I love it", I say and they sigh of relief.

The designer stretches her hands over to the photos.

"They are really great designs, I have just never made cream dresses for bridesmaids but there is a first time for everything. How many bridesmaids are you having again?", she asks.

“4, my friends and my cousin. I don't want many and my husband has 4 brothers as well too so he might make them his groomsmen”,I say.

“That is perfect. I will get the quotation right now. I will be back.

She stands up and leaves the room and I turn to my wedding planner.

“Thank you so much for this.So far I love everything you have done for me”

“I am just doing my job”

“Still thank you”,My phone rings and I take it out of my bag.

I have to inform Qophelo about this meeting and the next one we will have it is cake finding and he has to be there whether he likes it or not.

I look at my phone and it is him. I quickly answer it.

“Baby”,I say.

“I just got some news from my P.A that she recieved some news from the wedding venue and they are cancelling our booking because it seems like they double booked”

“What!? Qophelo tell me you are jokubg”

“I wish I was”,Oh my God.

"I will see what I will do"

"I will tell my p.a to find something else",He mentions.

"No it fine. I will talk to the wedding planner"

"I am sorry baby"

"It is not your fault. "

"Our day will be perfect okay?",I nod my head.

"Yes I know."

"Okay bye I love you"

"I love you too",I hang up after that and I sigh and look at my wedding planner.

"Something wrong?"

"The venue I booked has cancelled because they double booked",I mention.

"What? How could they do that?",She asks.

"I am still baffled because we even paid the deposit"

“They have to refund you ”

“They will trust me”,I sigh at the moment. I think I will have energy for this situation later on.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

Lunch time came and I am placing my things away before I walk out of my office. I have an extra R300 so I think I would just go and spoil myself to some lunch and have some chocolate cake as well in the process. As I have my bag with me I get down the stairs and some of my colleagues are going out too. I walk towards my car before I hear a deep voice calling me. I turn around and find this man walking towards me holding his tool box and his working gloves hanging from his pocket.

“You are leaving already?”,He mentions.

“Its lunch time already”

“My car is that side”,he says.

“I don't remember agreeing to this”

“Please”,You can hear the humbleness in his voice then.

I sigh.

“Would you leave me alone after this?”

“I cannot promise you that”

“Do you find me attractive from my body or something?”

“I do find you attractive yes”,He mentions.

“Ohw”

He walks away and that means I have to follow him. We get to his car and he puts his things inside. It is a Ford Ranger too. We get inside and I quickly put on my seat belt trusting that this man won't kill me and dump me somewhere. I turn off my location from my phone and just decide to switch it off entirely.

He starts the car and drives off.

“Have you ever been Kwa Mai Mai.”,No I have never bothered myself.

“No, please don't tell me we are going there. I just want some nice table mannered food with chocolate cake for dessert”

“How long is your lunch?” ,He asks.

“An hour”,he nods his head.

He stops the car by the side of the road.

“Why are we stopping?” I ask.

He takes off my seat belt and pulls me to him before our lips collide and I feel my heart skip a beat for a moment.

We kiss, slowly but surely we kiss indulging on each others lips that moment. I break the kiss and move away from him.

“I am sorry, I cannot help myself”

“I just met you yesterday.”

“I know that. I will keep to myself from now on”, I nod my head and he starts the car and drives off.

I look out of the window and keep on stealing glances at him. I touch my lips that very moment.

This man.



## Chapter 24

Today Thulani is leaving for the duration of these two weeks and a part of me wish that I could go with him mainly because I will miss him. I guess I have got used to the fact that we spend majority of our time together or in each other's presence and now I will be all alone. Well not until later when Rethabile arrives. Yes she is coming down to Kzn and her mother is bringing her here and I am happy that Ntaka allowed that to happen so I wouldn't be totally all alone during the time he is away but client are coming in during this time and I have alot of work to do as well. I am in the kitchen and I have a lunch box with the cupcakes I have baked. I made sure to see a tutorial on how to do icing on YouTube and it turned well. The cupcakes are intended for Rethabile but there are alot so I think sharing some with him wouldn't hurt one bit. He comes through from the passage of the house rolling his little suitcase and I watch him place it near the couch and he comes towards me.

"I am ready to leave",He mentions and cones towards me and gives me a kiss.

"Don't be sad"

"I am going to miss you",I say honestly.

"I will too, I will try to come back as soon as I can"

"Be careful where you are going"

"I will be",He mentions.

"Come so you can drive me to the airport",He says.

"What if I crash the car. I haven't touched a car in years",I say.

“You will be fine baby just trust yourself”,He mentions.

I have a driver's licence that I got right after high school with Nomvula. Our father wanted us to go into the world knowing how to drive and well one of us has driven longer than the other. I go to his suitcase and I give him the lunch box with cupcakes.

“Those are some left over cakes”

“Thank you baby”,We walk out of the house and we got to the car. He hops inside the driver's side and I get inside the passenger side after we loaded his things at the back.

He reverses the car out of the drive way as soon as the gate opens and he drives off soon.

Through the drive it is not even long before we get to the airport and he parks the car and we look at each other. We get out of the car and just take his things before we make our way inside the airport When it was time for him to leave we hug and kiss for the last time before we departed from each other. I stand there for a moment watching him disappear from my eyes.

“Lord please protect him”,I softly say before I turn and leave the place. I go to the car and get inside. I am scared honestly but I tell myself that I can do this right? Yes I can.

I put on a seat belt before I start the car and start driving. What I love about this car it is the fact that it is automatic so I do not struggle as much as I thought I would. After some long minutes U get home safely and that is all I prayed for.

I go to prepare the room that Rethabile would be using when she arrives and so as the other bedroom that Mimi will be using. My phone rings and I quickly rush to take it and take it then answer it.

“Hello”

“Hello Mvelo, I am on way I will be there at night!” ,It is Rethabile.

“Okay Nana, where is your mother?” ,I ask.

I hear some shuffling and then Mimi’s voice comes through.

“Hey Nomvelo”

“Are you okay?” ,I ask.

“No I am not, I will tell you when I get there” ,She says before she sighs.

“Okay, I hope everything is alright” ,I mention and she sighs heavily.

It must be really heavy.

“I don't know but yeah”

“Thulani is not home he is gone away for work so you guys won't find him here”

“It is fine. How is marriage?” ,She asks.

“It is good. I didn't know some things seems like I was missing out”

“You will tell me all the details when I get there. I am in a taxi now I don't want to traumatize people”, I giggle.

“That is okay, I love you guys”

“We love you too”, we hang up from the call.

I hope that they are okay and that Mimi is fine. It is unlike her to be down spirited so I am just worried.

I get back to what I was doing, I will cook near dinner time then since they will arrive here a little bit late.

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I have done everything and it is night, I am waiting on them to call me that they have arrived at the gate. They did call and mention that they are in the city now but I am just worried now. Thulani also called me hours ago telling me that he has landed and he is safe. I was quiet worried but now I am more worried about these two ladies that are supposed to be here. I am watching some TV at the moment just to keep my mind busy so that I don't think much.

I hear the buzz from the gate and I quickly go to attend to it. I take the gate keys and I open the front door. I see a car parked in front of the drive way and the back door opens.

“Ausi Mvelo!”, relief washes over me when I see Rethabile and her mother hops out of the back.

“Hello!”, I wave my hand and press the remote to open the gate for them. She rushes inside leaving her mother by the car.

We quickly hug each other. I have missed her so very much.

“Oh my you have grown so big!” I say.

“That is because you don't see me everyday anymore”, she says and I smile.

Her mother comes in through the gate as the car reverses from the drive way with their bags in her hands. I close the gate and I go and hug Mimi.

“Hello, sisi”, She says as she hugs me.

“Hello, I have missed you guys so much”, I say.

“Akere Wena you wanted to get married and leave us”, She teases.

“Come inside, I am sure you guys are hungry”, I say leading them inside.

We get inside and I close the door as they go to the living room.

“Wow Mvelo this house is beautiful! You live alone here?”, Rethabile says.

“No I live with Malume Thulani”

“Is he here?”, She asks.

“No he is at work away”

“You have grown Nomvelo”,Mimi mentions and I just giggle.

“Argh man we haven't seen each other in a short space of time Mimi,how is your mother doing now?”,I ask.

“She is okay.”

“That is good,let me show you guys your rooms”,we all go to the bedrooms and they put their things down before Rethabile goes to the living room and watches TV while Mimi and I get up with dishing up.

“I want to move Rethabile away”,Mimi mentions.

“Away to where ?”,I ask.

“Boarding school but they are a bit pricey but I don't mind doing alot for my daughter”,She mentions and distress is all over her face.

I take the plates out and we dish up.

“Why? What is wrong?”

“I cannot take care of Rethabile and I have tried for the past few years but I am a bad mother. I know that”,She says.

“You are not a bad mother.You love Rethabile so much”,I say to her.

"I am an escort Nomvelo",She says.

"What is an escort?",I ask.

She sighs and calls Rethabile to come and take her food and I pour some juice for her from the fridge. She thanks me and goes away. I turn back to her confused on what an escort is.

"I sleep with rich men. I prostitute myself to make money that is why you always see me being dropped of by different men that is because I sleep with them to have money",my body goes into under utter shock.

"Why?",I just want to understand why she would do this to herself? Why would she resort to this kind of a life?

"I was raped by my father while growing up and my mother knew. Since I was 8 years up until I ran away from home with my boyfriend when I was 16 of which used to be Kabelo. He is Rethabile's father."

"Did he rape you too?",I ask feeling like my chest is closing in on me.

I can see the pain all over her face.

"No,I just used him to get out of my situation and still now I use him from time to time but that is not the point.",She says.

"That is why you used to hate your mother?",I ask.

"Yes, I hated her for years until my father got sick and departed from this earth. I felt like I should've been the one to take his life but I never had the guts to do so",I lightly gasp.

"I am sorry for this. All of this",I mention.

I could never imagine my father doing that to me. I feel the fear and pain in the pit of my stomach.

"It is okay,I can't leave prostitution because I am addicted to having sex. I love having sex and the only way I can feed all these sexual cravings is if I sleep with these men and what better way than to receive money in the process of it. I love Rethabile so much Mvelo but I seem like I am failing her like my mother did with me. Yesterday she was at the twins home and this morning she told me that the twins uncle has been touching her inappropriately alot. I felt scared and I feel like I have failed her as a result exposed her to something that I don't want her to be exposed to, I cannot take care of her as much as I want to and I have no one to do so for me that is why I want to find a boarding school for her and move her away. That way I know that she is okay",She mentions.

I keep quiet. I am tongue tied and I don't know what to say or how to digest these news. She is in tears and I pull her into a hug and wrap my arms around her body.

"Everything will be okay Sisi. God know what he is doing and he will fix everything",I don't know how to comfort her.

I don't know how she may be feeling but I sympathize with her pain.

"Everything is just a mess",She mentions.

"It is okay, we can solve this and everything will be okay",I say.

I don't know how we are going to try and Mendle these things but what I know is that I want to help her the best way I know how.



The heaviness in my heart and stomach is felt as I digest the news that she has told me about. I look at Rethabile who is seated in front of the TV on the couch eating innocently and happily. They do not deserve this. Certainly no one does.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

It has been over a week and I have not spoken or seen Lange since that lunch that we had and when we kissed each other. I got a new phone and one that looks much similar to the one I have at the moment and got a new SIM card as well. I am supposed to go to sleep over at Senzo's place but he had an emergency at work so he will be working until late and that helped me honestly.

I don't even know why I have found myself from time to time thinking about Lange. Maybe it is the embedded memory of how our lunch went.

It was okay, it didn't go as badly as I had thought it would but it also consisted of the times where he would put me in my place and I humbled myself before him.

I am watching some TV and my phone rings, I take it and it is Senzo on my old phone. I answer it quickly and put the phone over my ear.

"Hey baby, how are you?", He asks.

"I am okay, how are you?", I ask.

"I am good, I wish I was home with you. I had the whole night planned for us", He mentions.

"That is okay, there is still tomorrow"

"Yes, are you behaving yourself?",He asks.

"Yes, I am just watching some tv"

"You know I love you right?",He asks.

"I know, why are you speaking like that? Is there something wrong?"

he chuckles.

"No there is nothing wrong. Why would there be something wrong?",He asks.

"Oh, you were scaring me there for a second",He chuckles.

"I am sorry. Look I have to go okay?",He mentions.

"Okay",I say

A knock comes from the door and I hang up going to the door.

"Who is it?",I ask.

You cannot trust people at this hour.

"It's me",A voice says from the other side of the door.

I unlock the door slowly and peak my little head out.

"I am not a killer",He says with a smirk on his face and I open the door fully.

"What are you doing here anyway at this time?",I ask.

"I came to see you since you blocked me I cannot call you",He mentions.

"I have a boyfriend don't you remember me saying that?",I ask.

"I don't care about your boyfriend. I am not going to entertain him, it is rude to let a visitor stand outside like this you know",I move out of the way and let him inside and close the door behind me.

He goes and sits down on the couch moving my fleece to the side.

"Do you want anything to drink?",I ask before he asks for a drink himself.

"No I am fine"

"What do you want Lange yazi I am old for all of this"

"Me too Nomvula. I am not here to play games I told you what I want",I go to him and he removes the fleece from next to him and puts it on the arm rest of the couch.

“Come closer don't be scared”,He says and smiles.

He has a pretty smile so as Nonkonzo. I always think that is one thing that captured Qophelo's heart and that is Nonkonzo's smile.

I sit next to him.

“Where is the boyfriend you are always ranting about?”,He asks.

“He is at work”

“At this hour?”,He frowns.

“Yes, he is knocking off late”

“He is lacking. He should distinguish time between work and with his woman Kodwa phela ngikhona mina ngingambabela(But anyway I am here so I can be in his place)”,I laugh.

“Oh please”,I roll my eyes.

“I don't like that eye roll thing”,He mentions and I look at him for a moment.

“You sound cliché about things”,I say.

“How so?”,He asks with a slight frown on his face.

“How long are you staying here?” I ask.

“Chasing me away won't help Nomvula”, He mentions.

“Don't you have a girlfriend to bother either than me?” I ask

“I do have someone”, I am taken aback as I didn't expect that.

“Oh, Pho ufunani lah?(So what are you doing here?)”, I ask.

“i said what I wanted and doing here Nomvula but you are delaying things”, He says.

“All I remember you saying is that ungifuna ematrasini(You want to have sex with me)”, He chuckles.

“Wow is all that you heard me say?” I nod my head.

“Okay, let's have sex then you will know what I meant”, I cross my legs.

“Don't do that”

“Angithi that is what you heard me say?”, He says.

“You said a lot of other things?” I mention.

“Like what Mvula?”, The softness in his voice has surfaced.

“Nothing”, I say softly looking away from his intense gaze.

There is some silence between the both of us before he pulls me closer to me.

“Look at me”, I don't.

“Please”, He says and I turn to look at him.

“I am not everything in a desirable man and I am not going to try and be one for you. I am self employed, I have never been to university I have just a certificate from doing a plumbing program and other ones too. I am not rich if that is what you think but I can make things happen that is it. I am straight forward guy and don't like lies hence I do not like lying to someone when there is no necessity and it is never a necessity. Yes I want to have sex with you but I also want beyond that and I don't care about you rat faced boyfriend or whatever he is angizile ngaye lah angihlangani nokuthi wenzeni nokuthi uyini(I am not here for him and I don't care if he is doing what with who and who he is) I didn't just feel what I am feeling when I first saw you. Yes I was attracted to you based off your physical self and the little glimpse I got of you of which I know that I was lusting over you. Still is but after the lunch we had I knew what I had to know and that is I was not only lusting over you but It was deeper than that I could even try to explain.”, He says.

“That is a long speech”

“I want you to understand the context of things”, I just keep quiet not knowing what to say.

“I want to kiss you before I leave”, He mentions and I feel a wallow in my stomach.

He gets up from the couch and lays a little kiss on my forehead before he goes to the kitchen to pour some water for himself in a glass. I watch this man who just said a mouth full and I don't even know what to think this moment. Maybe just maybe I am being tested right now but why does it seem like I want to give him a benefit of a doubt or not?

He comes back from the kitchen.

“Walk me out”, I stand up from the couch and wear my shoes. His hand goes to my waist and he pulls me to him.

We are just inches away from each other.

“I will see you tomorrow okay?”, I just nod my head.

“You know I don't like that”

“Mmmh”, He lets it go.

He captures my lips and I find myself kissing him back as well. He breaks the kiss that moment.

“Break up with that boy or I will do it for you”, He says and smiles.

Does he know how Senzo is like?

“Mmmh”, I just say.

He goes to the door and I follow after him. He opens the door and steps out, turns to me and gives me his smile before he walks away after saying “Good night Ntokazi”, I close the door and lean against it that very moment.

NOMVELO GWALA

Morning came and I slept with a very heavy heart after what I had heard yesterday. I decided to go into fasting today after I prayed last night for Mimi and her daughter and that God intervenes into their lives. I made the bed and I cleaned up in the main bedroom and open the bedroom windows. I take my phone and call Thulani, I miss him now and I wish he was here.

“Mkami(My wife)”,He answers.

It seems like he just woke up from sleep.

“Hey, I am sorry to wake you up”,I say.

“Don't be sorry about that, I was about to wake up anyway”,He mentions.

I become silent in that moment.

“Are you okay baby?”,He asks.

“Yes I am okay”,I say.

“I know you are lying to me, did Rethabile come?”,He asks.

“Yes she did”



"Are you guys okay?",He asks concerned.

"We are don't worry",I mention.

"Okay"

"I love you so much",I say to him.

"I love you too baby, are you sure you are okay?"

"Yes"

"Can I video call you?",I nod my head.

"Yes"

"Okay",He hangs up and a few minutes later my phone rings and I accept the video call.

"Hey",I say.

"Your eyes are puffy, were you crying?",He asks.

"Yes"

“Why? Something hurt you?” He asks now seemingly feeling bad.

“Yes, I will tell you when you come back”, I say.

“Okay”

“The bed is cold without you here”, I say.

“I miss being next to you. I regret leaving when I arrived here”

“Is it bad?”, I ask.

“No it is not but I am so used to having you next to me”, I giggle.

“You will be strong”, I say.

“I have to”, We talk for a while and he makes me feel better than I did before. I told him I am going into fasting while he is away and he wished me luck on my journey. I really need it mostly I need to be in God's presence.

## Chapter 25

I watch as Rethabile plays with the sand while in her little bikini being care free with it. I think she is trying to build a sand castle as she has been at it with the bucket and water for quiet a while also with the little shovel that she is using to build her thing but it doesn't seem to come out the way it does on TV but she seems quite determined not to give up on what she is doing. Mimi is laying on the towel with shades on and she is feeling much better and looking like some weight is off her shoulders for a while. Maybe the change of scenery is needed when someone is going through something. Before we came here we had to get myself something I will wear and some Sun screen and also some snacks and food as well just so that we can enjoy our day out.

"I have been missing a beach my whole life", Mimi says and she sits up and pulls a bag that has some ice and she pulls some champagne that she bought and pours into a plastic glass.

"It is nice being out here.", I say and keep on watching Rethabile as she is now full of sand majority of her body.

"How are you feeling today?", I ask looking at Mimi.

"I am feeling better. I guess I just needed to be away from home a bit", she mentions.

I smile while looking at her.

"I am happy to hear that", She smiles and nods.

"When are you ending this fasting before you starve yourself to death?", She asks.

"After 3 days will be fine",I say.

"Ayi I wouldn't be able to do that shame. ",She mentions.

"It is wonderful when you feel so aligned with God during that duration. It feels peaceful",I say.

"Well we will stick to what we know,Rethabile!",We both look at her.

"Come back don't go near the water",Mimi mentions and Rethabile moves closer to us where we can keep an eye on her.

"When is your handsome husband coming back?",She says and I laugh.

"After 2 weeks",I say.

"Have you done it?",She asks.

"What?",I ask.

"Waitsi gore ke bua ka eng Mvelo(You know what I am talking about Mvelo)",She makes hand gestures.

"I am lost"

"I mean sex, have you guys had sex",I blush that very moment.

"Hayi Mimi",I shy away and she screams.

“You have done it with him, well expected mara I didn't think gore you would do it with your holy ass”,She pushes me lightly.

“Kana I thought gore wena le Jabu were boring in that thing. I have never heard you moan before”,she says.

“Haah Mimi you listen to other people having sex?”,I ask.

“No but I have to hear something”,I am in disbelief.

“So tell me how was it like?”,She continues.

“Normal”,I say and my cheeks feel red as I think of how Thulani makes me feel during that time.

He becomes so ever gentle and also he introduced me to brand new things I didn't know about. I didn't think sex without a lubricant could feel so wonderful.

“Look at you blushing”,She says and laughs.

“Please leave me alone”,she laughs.

My phone rings and I take it out of my bag and It is a video call from Thulani. I quickly answer it and his face displays on the screen.

“Oh this is interesting, hi sthandwa sami”,he says with a smile platered all over his face.

“Hi baby”,I say.

“You are at the beach without me there and it seems like you are having some fun”,He mentions.

“I am with Rethabile and Mimi. It is hot today so we thought we should go out”

“And sengiyaphuthelwa(And I am missing out)”,I giggle.

“Don’t worry you are not missing much”

“I wanted to check up on you and if you are still okay”

“I am okay”,I say

“Okay, I love you”

“I love you too bye”,I wave and we hang up.

“This is cute”,Mimi says shying away from her phone.

Rethabile discards her sand castle and comes to us running.

“Mama can I have some juice?”,Mimi takes out a juice box for her and she takes it and thanks her before rushing away to her sand castle.

I keep on looking at her as we are seated here.

NONKONZO MVELASE

“This dress looks beautiful and I like it”,I say as I look at my friend's fitting their bridesmaids dresses.

“They look wonderful Mngani”,I smile and look at my wedding planner.

“Now that the dresses are sorted out we can proceed to the hair styles and also the colour of the day”,She mentions and I nod.

“Yes”,I say and my friends go and change from their dresses. I sit with the designer and we speak up on how I want my dress designed and I want it to be a coffee cream colour. My dress that is, I don't want it to be white in that sense as well.

Nomvula's phone rings from her bag and I call out for her and she comes out of the dressing room all changed up with the dress in her hands.

“Your phone is ringing”,I say.

She quickly takes it out of her bag and she answers it shying away.

“Hello”,She answers.

She keeps quiet and the rest of our friends come out of the changing room with their dresses.

“I am coming”, Her tone has become much softer. She hangs up after that and shoves her phone in her hand bag.

“I have to go friend”

“Oh are you good?”

I ask her as she is avoiding eye contact with me.

“Yes I am, I have an emergency I will call you”, she mentions before disappearing.

My phone rings and I take mine out and it is my brother. I have been avoiding him with meeting up with Qophelo for a while now but he is starting to get impatient and when he retaliates I would not like it at all.

“Bhuti”

“Nkonzo angithandi lento oyenzayo(I don't like what you are doing)”, He mentions.

“I am sorry”, I say.

“Sigaxabaniswa ubala(let's not fight over nothing)”, I keep quiet.

“We will host dinner at his house tomorrow”, I say.

“I am not available tomorrow I have stuff to do”, Ayi Ke angazi (I don't know then)



“Okay”

“I will ca you be ready”

“Okay”,I roll my eyes.

“And drop that attitude”,he hangs up after that.

I take my phone and shove it in my bag.

“What is wrong friend?”

“My brother wants to meet Qophelo”

“That is not a problem”

“You don't know Lange, he is unfiltered and mean”,I say.

“He can't be that bad”,Oh he can be. I don't even know how my parents produced such a person.

I sigh frustrated. I don't want my brother making Qophelo uncomfortable and I know he can do that if he likes to and feels like he is not good enough for me when he is good enough for me.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

I left my friend's appointment quiet early but we were already done with the fitting and now I am here with this man in his suitable house. It does have a female touch indicating that he really has a female someone in his life that he would discard the second I let things be between the both of us.

I should be staying away from him mainly because I don't want to cheat on Senzo and secondly that he is my friend's brother and I wouldn't want to put our friendship in an uncomfortable position at the moment.

He fetched me from my place just we can go and "eat" and the eat has landed us at his place. I am seated on the couch looking at the TV and I want to leave. A part of me wants to because this all feels wrong. I don't see the need for dump mg boyfriend that I hardly know and have a garentee that things would work out for the best between the both of us. He appears from the kitchen. Already with some juice with him and he settles the glasses infront of me and I look at him as he sits down next to me and hands the glass over to me and I thank him. He takes his and has a sip and I do the same.

"You have to relax you know I don't bite",He mentions.

"Mmmh"

"I won't do anything to you, well if you don't want me to",He smirks.

This lightish thing seems to be in his element at the moment.

"Well I wouldn't want to do anything with you",I say.

He chuckles.

“Okay”,He takes a sip off his drink.

I am asking myself what am I doing here honestly.

“Have you dumped that boy?”,He asks placing his glass on the coffee table in front of us.

“Why would I dump my boyfriend?”,I ask.

“Mmmh”

There is some silence between us before he turns to look at me.

“Nomvula what are you doing here?”,I am taken aback by his question.

“What do you mean what am I doing here? You asked to see me”

“And you had a choice to decline. You being here means that you want to be here”,I am tongue tied.

Mainly because he is right, I could've not been here if I wanted to.

“I-I”,I put my drink down.

“Hlala phansi( Sit down)”

“I won't stand being in your presence”,I say.

“Ngokuthi ngikubuze umbuzo ngakutsela iqiniso elincane nje usuyalwa(Just because I asked you a question and told you a little truth you are now fighting)”,He mentions.

“I am not fighting you are just irritating me right now”

“Sit down Sengwayo”,I look at him.

“You don't even ask”

“Isn't it when we talk nicely you don't cooperate”

“To what? I am not some machine”

“When did we get here?”,He sighs and gets up from the couch and steps closer to me as I step back.

He quickly captures my waist in his arms and he looks at me.

“You love being dramatic and I will end that do you hear me?”,He says so ever softly.

I swallow my saliva.

“Uyezwa?(Do you hear me?)”,He asks.

“Yes”,I find myself answering.

“Let's go and eat before I fix you”,he mentions.

“Fix me how?”

“My own way”,he says and pulls me to the kitchen with him.

NOMVELO GWALA

We got back home after hours feeling tired and want nothing more than bathing and sleeping at this moment. Rethabile bathed and slept right after she was clean and I also took a bath and now I am getting some water from the kitchen and I will read a scripture and pray before I sleep.

I haven't talked to Thulani since during the day but I trust that he must be asleep where he is but even so I am just tired and right now all I want to do is sleep.

“Hey”,Mimi appear behind me.

“Hey, how are you?”,I ask.

“I am okay, I have some news”,She mentions.

“Okay”

"I found a school for Rethabile but it is in the Eastern Cape",She mentions and I feel the pit in my stomach.

"Isn't there one near Johannesburg or somewhere where there are people she knows in the same province to help where they can in times of emergencies?",I ask and she sighs before she sits on the high chair.

"I don't know anymore Mvelo",She says.

"Lets search schools in KZN and around Gauteng too",I say.

"I don't want her in Gauteng",She mentions and I understand that.

"Okay atleast here in kzn"

"I don't even know how I will get to pay for her school fees"

"God will provide. He always does",She looks at me and smiles.

"You have so much faith in God"

"He has never turned his back on me", Sadness washes over her face.

"He has turned his on mine"

"Never. If he did you wouldn't be this strong and alive.",I say.

“Mmmh”,I take a sip off my water and then she gets off the high chair.

“Thank you for loving Retha like this”

“She is a wonderful child”

“Thank you”,She mentions

“Good night”,She says and she goes away.

I finish drinking my water and I leave the room as well.

## Chapter 26

This has to be the hardest thing I have to do in my life but the worry that I am feeling is not subsiding even after the fasting I have done. It has been over a week and a few days since Rethabile came here and Mimi has already left. She will fetch her when schools are about to open of which will be another week added on this one.

I have told Thulani what has been going on and also in the mist of us having that conversation I raised the matter of us maybe taking in Rethabile during school days while her mother is still sorting her things out.

Trust me that is the most difficult thing I have had to ask. Yes if I was still all alone I would've taken her without any doubt but now I cannot do as I please more especially in my husband's house and he is the one who takes care of everything in the house too.

He didn't reply on that matter in fact he told me that we will talk about it which gave me a glimpse of hope for a few days then that hope dimmed down once I put more thought into things but I have to give this a benefit of a doubt.

So today he is coming back from his work trip and as someone who should be as excited I am quiet nervous about what we are going to talk about, the issue of Rethabile and all.

I am in the kitchen busy making some snacks for Rethabile as she is seated on the living room carpet watching some cartoons on the TV. She is quiet obsessed with watching them and I think it is the fact that all the channels on the dstv are open and paid for so she has a variety of what she wants to watch. I finish up and I go to the living room and I give her the snacks and she thanks me.

“Thank you Mvelo”

“You are welcome Nana”, She nods and I turn and go to the kitchen. I clean up the counter and I hear the intercomr buzzing.



I quickly go to it and I answer it and I hear who it is and I swallow.

It is him. I thought he would call when he has landed in the city but also maybe he called and I didn't hear it. My mind is all over the place at the moment. I take the gate keys and I go and open the gate and he pays for the Uber that has brought him here. I stand by the veranda shying away from the sun and wait for him. He comes in rolling his suitcase and a smile creeps up on his face and I return it as a result feeling much ease as he approaches me.

"Am I not getting a hug?" ,He asks and I rush to him and hug him as he leaves his bag to hold me.

"How are you?" ,I ask.

"I am okay, how are you?" ,He returns the question.

"I am happy to see you" ,He kisses my cheek and we let go of each other.

"I had to work alot just so that I can come back earlier and I am happy I am back. I have missed home" ,He says.

We walk inside the house and Rethabile turns her head towards us.

"Hello Malome" ,She says.

"Hi Rethabile how are you?"

"I am good Malome"

"I see you were keeping aunty Mvelo company"

"Yes",She smiles and goes back to eating and watching TV.

"She has been talking less and watching more of it",I say.

"I see",He mentions.

We move to the main bedroom and we get inside. He heaves a sigh and dumps his body onto the bed and lays on it. I take his suitcase and open it so that I can take out clothes that are dirty so that I can wash them.

I unpack his bag while he is still resting a bit on the bed before he turns to me.

"We need to talk, but not now. Later",He mentions.

"Why not now?"

"I just need to clear my mind for a moment",He mentions.

I just nod my head at that.

"Come here",He pulls me towards him leaving the suitcase and I am seated on his lap that very moment.

He hogs me in his arms and just keep the silence and so as I. I just missed being in his presence and I would want to be anywhere else at this moment.

“Qophelo is getting married soon and Mom asked me to fix the tension between us”,He says.

“And what are you going to do?”,he looks at me.

“Nothing”

“Has he ever called to try and say something?”

“No he has not and I will not bother even speaking to him if he wants to act this way”,I am heart broken on his behalf.

Siblings should be united not apart.

“I am sorry”,I softly whisper those words.

He perks my lips.

“Don't ever be sorry, you did nothing wrong”,He mentions.

“I know but still I feel for the both of you”

“We will get over it trust me”,I nod my head.

I give him a light kiss and then he rests on the bed with me laying on top of him.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

It is just a few more months before I get married and Nonkonzo has been pushing that this wedding has to be perfect and I wouldn't want anything less for my baby at any given time.

I am having a little groomsmen and bridesmaids get to gather with my friends and also my brother's. One of my friends will be in place for Thulani. A part of me misses him but another part of me just feels like he chose a woman over our brotherhood and I am reminded of that. It is Nonkonzo's idea and I think it is a great way for our Wedding team to familiarise themselves.

I am also meeting Nonkonzo's brother and she has been nervous since she heard that he is coming. I am not because I know that I love my woman and I am an honest guy at this point.

We are by the back yard having some drinks with the guys while the ladies are busy with the food set up. The catering team has been hired mainly because Nonkonzo wanted this to be a perfect day for all of us. She comes to me with a man that I have never met before she she is strutting her eat looking a bit nervous.

She has a weak smile when she reaches us and she turns to me.

"Baby, this is my brother Lange", I let out my hand.

"Oh nice to meet you", He looks at my hand and then he looks at me.

"We should have a talk soon", He mentions and turns to everyone else and greets.

Nonkonzo looks at me then her brother and lets her breath out.

“Baby can you help me with something inside the house?” ,She says and pulls me away from the guys.

“What is wrong?” ,We reach the inside of the house.

“What is wrong is that what my brother said doesn't sound good. Do you know how to fight fight?” ,She asks and I chuckle.

“Do not worry about me baby, I promise you that everything will be okay, okay?” ,She nods her head.

“Okay, give me a kiss” ,She perks my lips.

“Good”

“Let me go and check on the girls” ,She says.

“Okay” ,she gives me one last kiss before she walks away and I look at this woman. I love her and no one can tell me other wise.

I turn and walk back outside and Nqubeko looks at me and shakes his head before turning to the everyone who is having a conversation flowing. He has been pushing me to talk to Thulani but he is the one who wronged me here not the other way around. He knew that I loved Nomvelo and he had to pull his ex friend's move on me.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

I have gulped maybe a few glasses of wine since I have arrived here to this things and I want nothing than to go home and sleep but I am avoiding Senzo as much as I possibly can. Yesterday we had another fall out and it was draining me. The verbal part of it got intense to a point where it was physical between us. He hit me yes but I didn't stand there and watch him. I hit him back and he was astonished by it. That made him more angry and I left him in my apartment and went to sleep at one of my friends house.

We were fighting over one thing and one thing only and that is my phone. He found my doupe and he was angry thinking that I am making him a fool when he is the one who is stalking me. My mother would be very angry if I just let him hit me without hitting him back so I had to.

The side of my ribs is painful though. He sure did a number on me when he threw that cup on me while I was laying on the couch and I feel like ngimshaye kancane(I didn't hurt him enough)

We are seated around this decorated Gazebos that are in the back yard. Nonkonzo has always loved finer things in life and this is where the finer things in life is for her. I am just happy that she has a man who matches her standards something some of us cannot meet. Maybe I have a dark cloud over me attracting men who are as crazy as I am but at times I beg to differ. My mother is just like me but my father loves and adores her to death. They have been together for years and their love makes me so envious to have such even Nomvelo getting married does not affect me anymore because all I want is just to be loved and respected.

Everyone is talking around the table and there is laughter here and there over silly jokes like we don't have any problems in the world. I take a sip off my glass and there is nothing left and so I lift my hand up slightly to call the waiter to bring something for me to drink.

“Yes Ma'am”, He mentions.

“Bring me something stronger, no ice”, I say and smile just to be friendly.

“What would you like?”

“Mix some whiskey and vodka in a glass”, He is alarmed by my request but he nods.

“Yes Ma'am”, He walks away and I carry on with eating.

I have been drinking for quiet some time since we came here and I have only been speaking when spoken to.

“I hope that people will be taking their leaves during my wedding weekend.”, Nonkonzo mentions.

“We will, this year we are not spending time with our families during Christmas”, Hlubi says and everyone else laughs.

“I would understand Bhuti Nqubeko but the rest of you do not have even a girlfriend Hlubi”, Nonkonzo says.

“Hey you don't know maybe I might just come out married like Ntaka”

Everyone else laughs and Qophelo is not happy with the joke being made about his brother and my sister being together in secret and coming out like that.

My beverage arrives and I take it thanking the waiter. He places the water in front of me.

"I won't be needing it", I say and I quickly take a gulp off my drink and I feel a bit dizzy and I close my eyes then open them and drink up the content inside the glass and finish it.

I raise my hand again and the waiter comes back.

"Can you get me another drink? Bring the some bottle here", I say.

He just nods and walks away.

I listen in on the conversation that is being had here and everyone's glass is almost half full well expect for one person who seems to have not touched his drink.

The waiter brings a bottle of Hennessy and is about to place it in front of me when a deep voice speaks making everyone stop what they are doing.

"That is enough, take that bottle away", I look at Lange who is not pleased that moment.

I frown looking at him and grab the bottle from the waiter.

"Haibo we are here to have some fun", I say and he stands up.

"Lange let everyone have some fun", Nonkonzo mentions.

"Can't you see that she is drunk?", He asks.

"I am not drunk I am perfectly fine please. Nkonzo khuza ingane yakini(Nkonzo warn your sibling)", She stands up too. Lange struts towards me.



“Lange please just don't cause unnecessary drama”, Nonkonzo says.

Her brother doesn't listen. He grabs the bottle from my hand and slanders it to the ground and he makes me stand on my feet but the alcohol rushes through my blood quickly and before I knew it I felt my feet wobble and I was on the floor.

He picks me up and now everyone is watching the drunk me on the floor unable to get up on her own when the party hasn't even gotten far. Holds me by my rib area and I groan in pain.

“You are hurting me”, I say.

“Let me get her up”, Gama tries to intervene to help.

“It is fine”, He plumps me over his arms and he walks away from them with me in his arms.

Silence is between us and I have no will to be fighting over him.

“I am feeling nauseated”, I mention.

“Mmh?”

Nonkonzo follows after us and we get inside the house.

“All of that was really unnecessary you guys caused a scene”, Lange turns to his sister after he puts me on the couch.

“Show me a room so that I can lay her down”,She sighs and closes her eyes.

“There is one upstairs just make sure you guys don't come out to ruin my party”,She says and turns around leaving us.

Lange picks me up and he walks up the stairs and gets in the first room he finds.

He tries to touch me but I flinch and he pulls away and looks at me.

“Are you hurt?”,He asks.

“Yes”,I say softly.

“Mmmh”,I turn around and lay by my side.

“You didn't have to do that, I wasn't behaving unruly”,I say.

“You didn't have to you were drinking yourself to alcohol poisoning.”

“I can handle alcohol thank you”,He sits next to me.

“What is wrong?”,He asks calmly and all that intense tone he has is gone.

“Nothing”

“It cannot be nothing Mvula”,I keep quiet for a while.

"Fine", He is about to stand up when I speak.

"I had a fall out with my boyfriend yesterday and it didn't end up verbal but physical as well. He has been stalking my movements for a while", I say.

"He what?"

"Ungishayile nami ngamshaya(He hit me and I hit him back)", I say.

"I told you to leave that boy of yours"

"I don't need a lecture Lange", I say and he keeps quiet.

He stands up.

"Rest for a while"

"I will wake up with a massive headache. I need to drink some water atleast"

"That should be your punishment", He mentions.

"Cruel", He looks at me.

I shift on the bed.

“Stay and watch me sleep then”,I say.

He sits on the bed. I sit up and sit next to him and he pulls me to him and I rest my head on his lap. He plays with my weave and ear that moment.

Silence prevails between the both of us and I fall asleep with time.

NOMVELO GWALA

Rethabile has fallen asleep just before I could cook some late lunch and early dinner. Ntaka also rested that very moment and I have been up alone and also going to the cottage and working on my orders that I have and I am getting far with them. Customers are coming in their numbers. Not alot but they are many of them that are coming. I finish with cooking and I wash the dishes that I have been using and I wipe my sink after I am done. I turn and Thulani walks in the kitchen from the passage and he stretches his arms above his head.

“Finally”,I say and he comes towards me and grabs a glass from the drying rack.

“How long have I been resting?”,He asks as he pours water from the sink.

“For about 3 hours”

“Mmmh”,He drinks up the water and kisses my forehead cornering me against the sink.

“Where is Rethabile?”

“She is taking a nap too”

“It smells good in here”

“I cooked”

“We need to talk about what we spoke about on the phone”,I swallow and nod my head.

“Okay”

He sighs and bites his bottom lip.

“I know how much you love Rethabile and how much you would want us to take her in and that is from the goodness of your heart”,He mention.

“Yes”

“There is alot to think about here baby and also I have thought it through. It would be alot of responsibility for the both of us. Do you remember the reason why we haven't had a child yet or trying to have one even though we want one?”,I nod my head.

“Yes”

“She can visit I do not mind but she has to go to boarding school just like her mother had intended. We cannot save everyone but we can help where we can”,He mentions.

"I just feel sorry for them", I say.

"I know baby but we will be the ones raising her at the end of the day and I don't think we are ready to parent a grown child up until she is old enough. She will be our responsibility majority of the time.", He says.

"So what should we do?"

"Get her a boarding school that is within her mother's price range. She will visit during the holidays", He says.

I nod my head and sigh.

"I love you okay?", He says and kisses my lips.

"I love you too", I give him a light smile.

I really wish that I could take in Rethabile but I understand that also as much as I wish a certain things can be done a certain way that doesn't mean they will go a certain way.

"Let me dish up for you", I say.

"I want to eat you first"

"Haah Ntaka there is a child"

“We won't make noise”,I blush and he smirks.

“I don't know if I can do that”

“Come I will teach you”,He pulls me from the kitchen and we go through the passage to the bedroom side.

# Chapter 27

NOMVULA ZUNGU

The noise from outside was what woke me up from this rest. I felt like my body has went through the most extreme pain I have ever felt before but mostly my head felt that pain. I sat up and tumbled off the bed and I screech as I land on the floor. The door opens and Lange walsk in holding a t-shirt in his hand while he is shirtless. He comes by my side and he helps me up and places me on the bed.

“I feel awful”,I say.

I realise that moment that I don't have my dress on anymore but I am left in my bra and underwear.

“You should you were drinking like it is water”,He mentions.

“Where is my dress?”,I ask softly.

“You vomited on it and my top too”,He says and I notice the bed cover is gone.

“I don't remember doing that”

“You were out of it”,He mentions.

I keep my silence. I rest my head on the bed and shut my eyes tightly. This pain is really excruciating.



“Do you need water?”,He asks

“I need a concussion for this”,I say.

“What concussion?”,He asks.

I open my eyes and look at him.

“I don't drink so I don't know what you mean”,He says.

“You have never drank?”,I ask.

“Not even a drop”,He says.

“You are like my sister”,He keeps quiet and I sit up.

“Where is Nonkonzo?”,I ask.

“She was busy dancing on that boy's lap”,I lightly laugh at the tone.

He is not happy that he had witnessed his sister lap dancing for Qophelo.

“Just let her live a bit. She is old now”,I say.

“I still wouldn't be happy to see my sister doing that on another man while tipsy”,He mentions.

“Mmmh”

“I will get one of your friends to get what you wanted”

“Thank you”,He walks out of the room. I close my eyes and wait for him to come back.

I feel pressed to and I want to pee. I get off the bed and hold onto anything near me just so that I do not feel that nauseated. I get to the bathroom and I take a piss and I feel my bladder being lighter. I smile at that and I wipe myself and get off the toilet and take off my underwear and I go and wash it at the sink and hang it in the bathroom and I grab the towel hanging there and take off my bra and hang it too. I drink some water and I look at myself through the mirror. I look quiet awful please.

I sigh and move to the shower and I open the shower door and get inside and open the cold water. I scream as it touches my skin and I remove the towel off me just so it doesn't stick on me for a moment. I run my fingers on my skin just to get used to the cold water and I stay in there. I feel much better now that I am in this cold shower.

I can never get used to it when I take one after a night of drinking. I tie my weave into a bun and I run my fingers over my body for a while and stay in the shower for a long time.

I hear a knock on the door and I keep quiet.

“Nomvula”,It is this man.

“I am coming”,I say and switch off the water and hop out of the shower as my feet are wet. I get out and I look at myself through the mirror and I try to find another towel but I cannot see one.

“Is there a towel there?”,I ask.

“No there is not even one in sight”,He mentions.

“Close your eyes please”

“Why?”

“Don't ask just do it”,

Silence prevails between us. I open the door and find him with his eyes closed.

“Why am I closing my eyes?”,He asks.

“I am naked and wet”

“Mmmh”,I quickly rush to the bed and wrap myself with the sheet and tell him to open his eyes.

“Here is your concussion”,He hands the glass to me and I thank him.

I close my nose and I drink up the concussion.

“It doesn't seem to taste nice”

“It is not but it helps”

“You need to leave that man”

”I know, I will”,I say.

I finish up and stay on the bed and he takes off his shoes and gets in bed next to me. He pulls me closer to me just to lay on his chest.

“I love you Nomvula and I don't like it when you are like this”,I look at him.

“You are just saying so you can get between my legs”

“Do you always fight when someone says something you don't want to hear ?”,He asks.

“I am not fighting it is just I don't believe everything I hear”

“I am not a man who just talks too without meaning”,He says and I look at him.

“Well”,I shrug my shoulders.

“Can I kiss you since you are a bit sober now?”,He asks.

“Do you have to ask?”,I say.

“I have to before you bite my lips for trying without permission”

I giggle.

“I am not that bad”

“You hit a man back”,I giggle.

“I wouldn't watch him hit me and I am not satisfied with my work”,I say.

“Well it would never happen again”,He says and I look at him before he leans in and captures my lips.

“Your sister is downstairs”,I say through the kiss.

“I will lock the door”,He mentions and I nod my head.

He kisses my neck and goes to kissing my collar bone before he moves and goes to the door and he locks it and comes towards the bed and gets on it and he kisses my lips and I am wallowed in it at that moment. I place my hands on his neck and he slowly lowers me to lay on my back while he is hovering over me.

“We shouldn't go far. I want to do a lot to you but not under another man's roof”,He mentions.

“I won't do much either”,He raises his brow in confusion and I giggle.

“Don't be confused”

“I am not just questioning your statement”

“Mmmh”,He gets off me and lays next to me.

NOMVELO GWALA

I am laying on Thulani chest and I have been for the past few minutes and it has been of the most comfortable silence we have ever endured after having sex. I am loving it and everytime we are intimate the experience is just...magical for me.

“What are you thinking off?”,He asks and I look at him and smile.

“I am just thinking about us and how I am blessed to have you”

“I am the blessed one”,I smile and he does the same.

I sit up from the bed when I hear some gagging and he does the same.

“Did you hear that?”,I ask.

“Let's go and check on Rethabile”,He mentions and quickly wears some sweat pants and I get off the bed and put on a gown and follow after him.

We get to the bedroom that Rethabile is using and her eyes are glossy and her hands have a clot of blood with some blood saliva coming from her mouth.

“My vomit is red Mvelo”,She says and Thulani picks her up.

“We need to take her to the hospital”,He mentions and I nod quickly terrified at what is going on.

“What did you eat today Nana?”,Thulani asks and takes her to the bathroom and she says she wants to vomit and he lets her in the toilet before he cleans her up.

“I will get her dressed up go and get dressed”

He mentions and I nod.

I rush to the bedroom and I change and I take a top for him and so as the shoes.

I get to them at the bedroom and he is helping her get dressed. They finish.

The bed and her pillow has some blood.

She has been fine since she came so I do not understand what is going on.

“What did you eat today?”,Thulani asks and picks her up and we all walk out of the house.

“I had food Malome and took the sweets mama said I should take everyday”,She says.

“Okay”,He places her at the back and I get in next to her.

He rushes inside the house and comes back after a while and he starts the car and we drive off.

I take her into my arms, I don't even know what to say that moment at all and silence prevails the car more or less as the drive continues.

Rethabile starts gagging again and Thulani notices and stops the car by the side of the road. I open the back door for her and she vomits out of the car. I help her clean up and she lays on me. I close the door and brush her.

"I feel hot Mvelo",She says swallowing her saliva.

"I am sorry",I don't know what to do.

I feel like crying but I cannot cry in front of her. She was fine before she rested.

"Are you feeling anything Retha?",I manage to ask.

"My tummy hurts a bit Mvelo",She manages to say that and I nod.

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We got to the hospital on time and they took Rethabile away. I have been trying to call Mimi but I cannot get a hold of her as her phone goes straight to voicemail. I am worried about Rethabile and her mother needs to know what is going on and that Rethabile is sick.

"Sit down everything will be okay",Thulani says and I sit down next to him.

"I am worried"



“We will have to trust the doctors.”,I sigh and nod.

We wait for a while and an hour passes with no one coming to inform us about anything. A nurse comes towards us and we stand up waiting in anticipation.

“How is she?”,Thulani asks.

“The doctor wants to speak to her parents.”,She mentions.

“I am her aunt. Her mother cannot be found. She is in Gauteng”,I say.

She sighs and looks at us.

“Okay please wait here”,She walks away and we look at each other as we wait.

The doctor soon comes after some time and He greets us and we greet back.

“The packet you brought here with you isn't good for children consumption”,He mentions.

“What do you mean?”,Thulani asks frowning.

“She is suffering from Iron poisoning. She has been swallowing a large amount of iron supplements of which she shouldn't have been in the first place”,the doctor mentions.

“She mentioned that her mother gave her the supplements to take everyday”,Thulani says and I am just in shock that she is suffering poisoning.

“She was okay during the day”,I say.

“Well the side effects kicked in on the overdose of those suppliments. She is child she doesn't realise what she was doing and these supplements are not found in chemists. They seem to be from somewhere”

“Meaning?”

“They could be from an illegal place. We haven't ran much tests on them but we will. For now we are draining all that we can from her system”

“Will she be okay?”,I ask.

“Yes she will be”,I sigh and close my eyes thanking God.

“Thank you doctor”

“I will give you time to see her before you leave”,We thank him and he walks away.

I turn to Thulani and he hugs me.

“I am sorry”,I sigh and close my eyes fighting my tears.

“She doesn't deserve all of this”,I say.

“I know”,He says.

Silence prevails between us. My phone rings and I take it and it is Mimi. I quickly answer it.

“Hello”

“Mvelo I saw your missed calls”,She says.

“Rethabile is admitted at the hospital.”,She is silent before she speaks.

“How is she?”,She asks not that alarmed.

“They said it's poisoning...”

“I thought she would be gone by now”,I am alarmed by her response.

“What do you mean she would be gone by now?”,I ask.

“I did that on purpose.I am failing to take care of her so I thought it is best to...”My heart breaks that very moment.

“How could you Mimi?! This is your child for goodness sake!”,I feel angry more especially hurt.

Thulani is alarmed by my outburst.

“You don't understand what I am going through and have been going through for years Nomvelo”

“Ukhohlakele uyazi what would you gain from this?”

“Freedom, free from having to worry about another human in my life”

“You are no different from your mother. You are far much worse. The devil her self”,I say.

“Don’t say that you do not understand”,I hang up on her and I break down.

How can Mimi do such?

“Baby”,Thulani pulls me to him.

“She did it on purpose. She wanted her gone because she wants to be free from her responsibilities”,I say between the tears and he is silent.

My heart is beyond broken. I don't understand why would she want to do that to a innocent child.

I keep on sobbing on his chest as he comforts me without saying a word but let's me be.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

I look at this man resting next to me with his arm around my waist gently resting there. The noise has subsided from downstairs and I have heard it too and I am sure it is either they are tired now or they are well resting.

He has been sleeping for over 2 hours now and I have been stealing glances off him and now I am just plainly staring at him as he is sleeping. All that intense Ness he posses is gone and he looks like the most innocent person who cannot even hurt a fly and doesn't go around slandering bottles on the ground more or less a man who seems to be soft around his sister and doesn't intimidate her and call other men boys if they don't suite his calibre.

I am staring too much but I cannot find myself looking away from him instead I keep on looking at him just trying to find new things that can interest me more about his features. He slowly opens his eyes and looks at me and I look back at him not backing away and not even thinking of the fact that I have been caught staring at him. He blinks his eyes and he still looks at me not shying away. I back down first and his is wrapped more around my waist.

“You are looking at me I cannot even sleep well”,He says.

“I am bored”,I say.

“Sleep too”,He mentions.

“I don't have the will to do so”,He looks at me and I look at him.

“Come sleep ontop of me”,I don't hesitate but I do so. He covers my exposed body with the sheet and the places his hands just below my back.

“It is rude to stare at people when they are sleeping Sengwayo”,He mentions.

“Okay”,He closes his eyes and sleeps once more.

NOMVELO GWALA

The beeping sounds in the room and the sight of her having tubes stuck up her nose and mouth breaks my heart to a great extent. She is sleeping so ever peacefully like these things do not bother her at all. Thulani holds my hand as we walk inside the room and we look at her. I look at him too. What now? I feel like calling my mother at times like these. She knows what to say and do most of the time.

“Everything will be okay, she will be okay”,He mentions.

“I am hurt”,I say honestly.

“I know baby, I am sorry”,He hugs me and I feel tears prickling my eyes.

## Chapter 28

I close the little lunch box that has some fruits and also some little yohgurts packed up for Rethabile. Mimi has tried to call me and I am not really ready to talk to her but after like two to three tries she stopped and I am grateful that she did. I cannot believe that she would do such to her own daughter and most especially not even consider the fact that she would've died in my hands and I am the one who was going to take the blame.

I get a juice box from the fridge preferably about 3 of them and then I put them on top of the lunch box. Thulani comes in the kitchen from the passage and he places his car keys and phone on the island and he goes to the fridge and he grabs a fruit and some bottled water.

"Are you ready to go?", He asks and I nod.

"Yes, I have packed some food for her", I say.

"She will be okay", He says and I nod my head.

I told him what Mimi told me and we haven't talked about it since then. I also called my mother crying, I felt better after calling her and now I have a bit of a clear mind if I should say.

"I pray that she does", I say.

He places the things that are in his hands down and he holds me close to him. I sigh deeply, I don't know what to do really.

"Come let's go and see her", He says and we let go of each other and grab our things and then make our way out of the house.

I get inside the car while waiting for Thulani to make his way inside. He takes a bite off his apple and he places the water bottle on the cup holder. He starts the car and we wear our seat belt and then moves the car out of the drive way.

Silence prevails between us but the radio is keeping us company while we are in this drive to get to the hospital. We arrive there and get out of the car and make our way inside the hospital. When we arrive we are given permission to go and see Rethabile. We enter the room and she doesn't have the pipes she had yesterday but she seems to be asleep. I put the things I came with down and I look at her and I feel my heart breaking as I look at her. I grab a chair and I sit down on it and look at her for a while so as Thulani, he is just quiet and doesn't say anything. He does not even know what he would say in a situation like this. I sigh and a doctor walks in the room and he smiles when he sees us.

“Good morning”

“Mornining”

“The little princess will be fine. We were able to drain her well and with her responding to whatever we give her to help her recover well she will be fine”,I feel relief wash over me.

“Thank you doctor”,I say and he nods.

“May I ask a few questions about our patient?”,He asks and I look at Thulani before I agree.

“Yes”

“We did some tests done on her and we were able to get the results as soon as possible to gain some light on her condition at the moment and we found some things within those supplements that she took and these things are regarded illegal and could lead to quiet danger”,He says.

My heart sinks to my stomach.



“What does that mean?” ,I ask.

“The hospital has informed social workers regarding your daughter” ,She mentions.

“She is not our daughter, her mother is friends with my wife” ,Thulani says.

I am just numb with what I am hearing.

“Oh I do apologize. Then I think that police should also be involved in this investigation as a result of this child's life was set on danger”

“Listen here, I won't let you come and insult us like this,we knew nothing about those supplements and the child's mother is the one who gave the child and we were not aware of that as we should've been as she is visiting us” ,Thulani mentions and the doctor looks at the both of us.

“The social workers will be here during the day” ,He finish up and walks out.

I look at Thulani and he is not pleased.

“Don't worry okay, she will be fine” ,I say to him as I feel my heart aching and tears prickling my eyes.

Rethabile shifts on the bed and I stand up and get closer to her. She flutters her eyes open and she looks at the ceiling before she turns to look at me.

“Hello, how are you? I bought some food for you and the juice box you like” ,I say with a smile on my face.

“My throat hurts Mvelo”, Her voice is a bit raspy.

“It is okay, it will be better okay?”, she nods her head.

“I will be back, I am going to make some calls”, Thulani says and I nod before he leaves.

“How are you feeling?”, I ask.

“I want to go home, I don't like it here”, she says.

“You...you will okay? There is someone who is going to come and ask you questions and I want you to be honest for me okay?”, she nods her head.

I kiss her cheek.

“Do you want some juice?”

“Yes please”

I take her juicebox and I help open it and now I help her drink and she takes it in her hands and she drinks the juice. I smile while looking at her. I am happy that she is okay, as much as yesterday's events were scary but I am happy that she is doing fine.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

I woke up to this man who is not here. The bed is empty with only my body that is here. I get off the bed and I go to the ensuite bathroom and I go and I get to pee and rinse my mouth then I take my underwear and I wear it then I look for my dress from the washing basket but I cannot seem to find it in there. The towel too is no where to be found. I move out of the bathroom and I see a top laid on the floor and I quickly take it and put it on. I look for my phone and I think that I have left it down stairs. I am craving for anything that is spicy at the moment. I walk out of the room and I go down stairs and the house seems to be clean but I cannot seem to find anyone.

“Nkonzo”,I call out for her name.

“They are hungover and asleep”,I hear the deep voice coming from behind me and I look at him.

“Where are my things I need to leave?”,I say.

“They are in the laundry room somewhere. Nonkonzo knows where they are”,Argh.

I turn around and I search for my phone in the living room and I find it. I will request for an Uber to take me home. I just want to be in my space.

This man is silent and shirtless standing there just watching me while sipping whatever is in that cup that is in his hands.

“I am leaving, I will get my things later”,I say.

“And my shirt that you are wearing?”,He asks.

"I am keeping it",He chuckles.

"Mmmh"

"When did you wake up?"

I ask.

"2 hours ago",Haibo it is like 7 am in the morning.

"You are an early bird then",I say

I see missed calls from my mother and I decide to call her. I know she will bite my head for not calling as often as I should. It rings a couple of times before she answers.

"Umuntu uyoze afe ungalubambi ucingo(A person would die without you answering your phone)",She says.

"I am sorry mah I didn't hear my phone",I say.

"Mmh when are you visiting me. Your father has been asking about you. You don't call my husband why?",I sigh.

"I am sorry I will call your husband"

"Good"

We speak briefly before she hangs up after that and I get back to what I was doing on my phone.

“There are creepy people out there for you to leave the house half naked like that”,He says and sips on his drink. I look at him.

“What do you mean?”

“It is not hidden that some men out there are vile and think with their sexual needs”,He says.

“What a way to put it”

“If you want to leave that bad you should just ask and I will take you home”,He says.

“I just need to get my car from my friends place”,He nods.

“Let me first finish my drink”,He says and turns to go and sit on the couch as he relaxes there. I watch him.

NOMVELO GWALA

They would constantly check up on her and that gave me some sort of ease that she is atleast getting better and she is well taken care of here. The social worker had arrived earlier than the anticipated time and it didn't end well on my side. Mainly the fact that they will be taking Rethabile away and she will have to stay at the orphan age.

I am here thinking why I don't just take Mimi to court what she had done and get some compensation and maybe I would be able to take Rethabile to an affordable boarding school. I will take all the responsibilities but I do not want her ending up in another person's hand where she will not be well taken care off and she will not be as safe as I think that she would be.

I am lost in thoughts that I do not see Thulani walking in the room with a little stuffed animal and a plastic on his hands. He comes in and Rethabile shifts her eyes from the TV and she looks at him.

"Hello Malome",She says.

"Hello Rethabile",He says.

"Is that you for me? You know I am 9 right?",she says and he laughs nodding.

"Yes I know but I thought you would like it",He says and she takes the toy into her arms.

"I have never had a toy like this before",She says and brushes the grey animal.

"Thank you",She says.

"You are welcome",he turns to me and I have a light smile on my face. He puts the plastic on the front of her and she doesn't even mind it.

"How are you?",He asks.

"I am okay",I say softly.

“I managed to get a hold of her father”, I am alarmed by this.

“And?”, I swallow in the process.

“I told him everything, he said that he cannot take care of her as the court will see him unfit if he fights her mother and they will both loose but he suggested that she stays with his mother in Pretoria as she is the best candidate to look after her”

“How safe are we to know that she will be safe?”, I ask.

“I don't know yet that much but I had Nqubeko go and look into all of this while he is there and I will get confirmation from him”

“I really want what's best for her”

“And she will recieve the best.”, I smile.

“Thank you, I love you”, I say.

“I love you more Sthandwa sami”

As much as I am skeptical but I am happy that someone could possibly be able to take Rethabile in.”

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It has been quiet some time. Over a month and it has been a very rollercoaster of a ride. My little business is growing in customers. I do get orders and I am happy that there is positivity on that. We are

in Gauteng right now. The police were involved in this and Mimi was taken into questioning but she has not been charged at all for the attempted murder of her child. We as well, Thulani and I were taken into questioning and I answered everything as honest as I possibly could. Right now Rethabile was granted to be staying with her grandmother as she is seen that she is fit to take care of her and in a great environment with no harm. As of now we are driving to go and drop her off at her grandmother's house. It is still unbelievable that Mimi would do such to her child. Her reasons were understandable but her actions were not really. Removing Rethabile would've not solved most of her problems at all.

"You are quiet", Ntaka says.

"I am nervous", I say.

"About?"

"Dropping her off. I just want to see where she will be staying"

"Don't worry about that. The court approves", he says.

I nod my head and breathe in and out. The area is in a township so I am yet to know and see where she will be staying. He parks the car in front of a peach house that has a great garden done out. The grass is nicely cut and it is well fenced as well. My nerves ease up a bit when I see the type of environment that she will be staying in. I am yet to see the woman she will be staying with.

We look at each other and hop out of the car. Thulani goes to the back and carries Rethabile in his arms.

She likes it! Being babied by him she drops the whole I am 9 years old act when he is around and does it with me just so that I do not baby her. I take her bags and then close the door. We make our way through the gate and a fair older woman walks out of the house wearing an apron. She welcomes us with a huge smile on her face.



“Dumelang”,She greets us.

“Hello”,I say.

“I am Kabelo's mother.”

“I am Nomvelo and this is my husband Thulani”,I say.

She smiles and she breathes in and out.

She greets Rethabile stating that she is her grandmother. Rethabile shy's away a bit. We get invited inside the house and we get in. The house is neat and clean, there are 4 pictures hanging on the wall, one looks like it is her during her youth days getting married to I assume is Kabelo's father. The other two consist of one who is Kabelo in what seems to be a graduation gown during graduation and the other is off a young version of him sitting on his mother's lap.

“Yoh ke thabile byang kana kgale ke emetse letsatsi le( I am so happy, I have been waiting for this day)”

I do not understand majority of what she said but I just nod my head.

“Kujabule thina mah(We are the happy ones mah)”,I just keep on nodding my head with a smile.

I wish that I really took time to ask Rethabile to speak her home language often so that I would atleast understand more than just the 20 words that I know

“Sit down I will get something to drink”,She says and rushes to the kitchen.

We sit down and Rethabile is much quiet than she usually is. After some time she comes back serving us some cake and juice. We thank her and she sits down after that.

“My wife has known your granddaughter since she was very young at 5 years and they have built a bond over the years. All she is requesting is that may they visit each other from time to time”,Thulani says.

“Ofcourse. I want to thank you for what you are doing for my family. It means a lot. I never liked that girl and if my son focused on the good things in his life and not all the bad he wouldn't be where he is struggling with getting something stable when I did my best to get him through school”,She says.

“I am sorry”,I say feeling the pain in her words.

“I am happy he chose me to stay with my granddaughter that means alot and I will not break your trust”

“Certainly”,Thulani puts Rethabile down.

“Go to your grandmother and greet”,I say.

She slowly makes her way to her and her grandmother hugs her. It is a beautiful sight to see that moment.

My heart feels full.

## Chapter 29

Time has passed and the end of the year is soon approaching as it comes. Mimi and I well I haven't spoken to her in a while but I have been calling Rethabile's grandmother from time to time just to check up on her and she seems to be happy and that makes me happy that she is okay and well. I wonder why Mimi never associated herself with Kabelo's side of the family. Yes that man was shady but atleast he has some great family behind him that is for sure.

Alot has happened in the past two months. Beside my sewing career taking its course and being what it is now but also Thulani and I decided to take a step further in our relationship and seal it off with me changing my surname permanently from Gwala to Mzimela. Trust me that was the most hardest thing to do but I had to let go of it at some point and now I have. No we did not have a wedding of that sort we just agreed to do it in court and that was it. I am okay with that and I am the one who suggested that a wedding it is just a celebration more than anything else.

I am happy too, should I say.

Another thing Qophelo is getting married. The day for him to get married has finally come, well not yet but tomorrow he is getting married. I have been worried about Thulani more about him fixing his relationship with his brother but there hasn't been any movement made between the both of them and he is quiet about it and doesn't seem to care or mind if Qophelo calls him or not.

This is a big milestone for his brother and I wish that he wouldn't miss it for anyone in the world even if they do not get along now but they are still family after all.

Today he is working from home and so as I am working in the cottage. I have decided to take a break from doing my designs and actually go and check up on him as I haven't heard from him since early hours of morning when I made sure he is fed.

I move out of the cottage and make my way to the main house and I find him seated on the high chair on his laptop with some papers in front of him and a glass of water next to him. He seems too focused on what he is doing at the moment.

“Hey”, I say and he turns to me and gives me a moment.

“Themba lami”, I smile and blush at the same time.

He turns the chair around just so he can look at me properly and pulls me closer to him and kisses my lips.

“How are you baby?”, He asks.

“I am good, how are you?”, I ask.

“I am okay”, I look at him and I sigh.

“I am not okay with the fact that I will be making you miss a great milestone in your brother's life”

“It is not your fault. Don't you ever think that”

“Can you blame me?”

“You really shouldn't be. Qophelo made it clear that I shouldn't associate myself with him and that is exactly what I am doing MaZungu”, I sigh.

“Okay”, I close my eyes for a moment then look at him.

“Should I make something for you to eat?”, I ask.

"I will order some lunch for us", I nod my head.

He packs up his things and drinks the last content of his water.

He takes his phone and it starts vibrating in his hands and he sighs and declines the call. I look at him.

"My father has been calling the whole day so as mom"

"About?"

"Tomorrow", I feel twists in my stomach.

The fact that they might be thinking that I came to separate their sons would be such a big disadvantage for me to be well treated in the family and I am scared.

"You should answer them", I say.

"I will later on maybe", He says and proceeds to go on his phone.

"I will be back, I need to get my phone at the cottage"

He nods and I rush off to go and get my phone from the cottage. I get inside and I quickly take my phone but I stop that very moment in thoughts. I go through my blocked list and I see the number I am looking for. I unblock it and I breathe in for a moment before dialling it rings for a few seconds before it is answered.

“Hello”, His baritone voice vibrates from the other side of the phone.

My heart is beating fast mainly because I might be betraying my husband but also I want to help him and this needs to come to an end honestly.

“Qophelo, it's Nomvelo”, I say and there is silence and shifting there after.

“Nomvelo, how... how are you?”, His voice comes off soft and more gentle.

“I am not okay, this is not a social call to be exact”, I say.

“Oh... Okay”, I sigh.

“I called because I am genuinely concerned about you and your brother I...”

“I really do not want to talk about that”

“Just listen to me and let me finish”, He keeps quiet and I sigh.

“Qophelo I know you and I met each other first but that doesn't mean we had a thing going on. You told me what you wanted from me and I told you that I cannot give that to you, you have a fiancée of which you are going to marry tomorrow and you love her. If you didn't then I would assume that you wouldn't be getting married to her. We were both fair in this getting to know each other business because we clearly stated what we can and cannot offer to each other. I am not with your brother just to spite you or for him to do the same to you. The day of your lobola he gave up being friends with me just because you felt entitled to me which is also one of the reasons why I didn't want to be with you even in this life time because of the entitlement you had over having me in your life. I am with your brother, it may be a hard pill to swallow but it should be one you are forced to swallow. I love your brother and I don't want your selfish reasons to be the thing that holds him back from coming to share a great lifetime moment with you and your family and see his younger brother getting married. Thulani loves and cares

about but he has reached his limit of being pushed over by you just in the name of family. He wants to be happy too and you are not doing a great job at being a supportive brother in that knowing well what he has gone through in the past. It shows the type of character you are towards people that when you don't get things your way things should stop for others. In this life we don't get what we want but appreciate what we have. All I am asking for it is to release your heart from whatever grudge you have over your brother because you don't want him to keep on excluding you in his life the same way you are doing and miss out on great things you could've congratulated each other on and be there for each other.",I say and I hear him breathe in and out.

"I hear you",He says.

"Thank you, I have to go",I say.

"Okay",I hang up after that and let out a heavy sigh. I then get out of the cottage and I find Thulani making a smoothie in the kitchen I place my phone on the counter and he looks at me and smiles.

"I thought I should make smoothies while we are waiting for food"

"That is okay",He nods, he frowns a bit.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes I am.I learnt something that I want to show you",He smirks.

"What is it?"

"I can't tell you, I will have to show you"

"Atleast give me a hint",He says.

“If I do I will be giving it away”,He pours the smoothie into the glasses and takes the blender to the sink and he puts water in it.

He takes the mashed juice and puts it in the fridge.

“I am ready to see it now”,I laugh.

“Be patient.”,I go around the island entering the kitchen and I go to the fridge and grab a fruit. He looks at me displeased that I am making him wait.

“Mvelo you are really doing this to me?”

“Doing what?”

I ask with a smile on my face.

He looks at me and shakes his head.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

I am having a full house today and my parents are here. Nonkonzo went with her parents to the other side of the lodge that we have booked and everyone seems to be quiet excited about the wedding that is going to happen.



I have been outside in this beautiful garden having something to drink while I am deep in thoughts. Thoughts of what Nomvelo has said. It has dawned to me that my selfishness would cause me my brother of which I have known my whole life. It hits me the most thinking about what Angela had put him through in the manner of their relationship. My brother has always been a person who has put everyone in his life first before himself and I think what I couldn't swallow the most is the fact that he put his needs first before anyone else's for once and didn't care but to take care of himself.

I should be celebrating this moment with all of my family members but most of all I should be celebrating this moment with my siblings too.

I want to call him but I don't know what to say. What would I be able to say? That I am someone who was greedy to want something that he wouldn't have been able to handle. I guess what I loved or held onto with Nomvelo is what we could've been and what I wish we could've been but it never happened. I sigh and take a sip off my beverage and I take out my phone and make a call and it rings for a few moments and then it gets answered.

"Hello", Her sweet soft voice answers on the other side of the line.

"Nomvelo it's Qophelo"

"Oh, Uhm what is wrong?", I feel myself wallowing into a world of desire but I stop myself from this non-existent longing.

"I would like for you guys to come to the wedding", I say and sigh after.

There is some silence.

"I do not think we would be able to make it on time but I will inform you.", She says.

"Oh", Disappointment is what I felt.

“It is fine. I understand that it is short notice”

“Mmh”, I hang up and I turn around and see Gama approaching me.

“There you are, you have been hiding yourself here”, He says.

“Mmmh”

“What's wrong?”, He asks.

“I wish Thulani was here”, I made all my brother's except him part of my groomsmen.

“I understand. Maybe you should talk to him”

“I doubt he will give me an ear after what I did”

“I will talk to him”, I nod my head.

NTAKA(THULANI)MZIMELA.

Nomvelo is busy preparing the take away for us as it has arrived and now I am speaking on the phone with my mother and she is giving me an ear full for what Qophelo did but she is shifting it on me for not being the older brother.

“Angifuni ukuzwa lutho nibadala Kabi ukwenza lento(I don't want to hear anything your too old for this)”,she says.

“Mah nishadise Kahle angizi lapho noma engangicela Angeles ngize(Mah enjoy the wedding I am not coming there even if he asks me I will not come)”,Nomvelo lifts her head and looks at me then carries on with what she is doing.

“I have tried”,My mother hangs up after that.

I know that later on she will call and try to convince me of which I will not be changing my mind anytime soon.

“The food is ready”,she says.

“I am not hungry anymore”,I say and she sighs.

She comes towards me and she looks at me and smiles.

“You are a great man Ntaka and I know that you have a wonderful heart. Don't hold grudges on your brother but be there for him in this time even if you don't have to pretend like all is well but just being there.”

“Mvelo I...”

“Please do it for me sthandwa Sami”

“Only if you will show me what you said you will show me”,I say and she gasps lightly.

“Hawu Ntaka it is not perfect”

“It doesn't need to be”

“Mmmmh”,I raise my brow.

“I will think about it”,Here I am thinking she would agree.

“Baby”,She sighs.

“Okay I will but not now later on”

“Does it have to do anything with sex?”,I ask and she starts blushing and buries her face on my chest.

“Mmmh”

“Okay I won't ask further questions”,I chuckle and wrap my arms around her.

“Mmmh”

NOMVELO GWALA

I didn't show Thulani what I had learnt but we did have some yesterday with each other and I can't seem to get enough of this man at all. I woke up extra early today and we are going to that wedding whether he likes it or not. I was able to book tickets to fly us going there and then we will get a car to take us to the venue. I am not about to let him miss this precious moment for something so small and petty. I made breakfast for him and cleaned around the house before he could wake up. I took the food to him at the bedroom and I wake him up.

"Mzimela",he groans and flutters his eyes open.

"I only get in at work at 9",He says stretching himself.

"I called in at work. They have excused you here is breakfast",He frowns a bit.

"Okay what is the special occasion?"

"We are going to your brother's wedding whether you like it or not"

"I don't feel like going",he says and has some breakfast.

"Well it is either you eat and we go and bath together and get dressed then leave or you will sleep in this room on your own for the next two weeks with no kisses and having sex",He looks at me.

"You cannot be serious Nomvelo",He argues.

"I am, now it is your choice Mr",I stand up and I leave him in the room.

I go and get my food and I eat it in the kitchen just to leave him in thoughts. After a while he enters the kitchen silent and he places his things in the sink and turns to me.

"I don't like the ultimatum that you have presented",He sighs

"Okay fine we can go",I smile.

"Okay, thank you",He nods and kisses my lips.

"You are starting to be bossy and I like it",I smile at him.

"Well you needed a little push in the right direction"

"So you were going to do all that you said you would?"

"Yes"

"Mmmh"

"Let me wash the dishes then we can go and bath"

"Okay",He gives me the last kiss and then he leaves. I wash the dishes that are in the sink before I go to the bedroom to go and take a bath at the ensuite bathroom. The water is already opened and he has cleaned up the bedroom. I take off my clothes and I get in the bathtub and he joins me inside sitting behind me. I lay myself on his chest and he intertwines our fingers together.

One thing I love so much is my wedding ring. It is the most beautiful thing I have ever laid my eyes on and I will always cherish it.

He kisses my neck and I softly moan.

“Don’t do that Mvelo”,He says softly.

“Don’t kiss me there then”,He chuckles.

“This morning you woke up on another side”

“Indeed”,He chuckles.

“I love you so much Nomvelo”,I love him too.

## Chapter 30

I don't know if he is nervous or he is just being himself but ever since we landed he has been holding my hand in his. I wore one of the dresses that I made and comb my little afro well. Soon I would be able to do some braids just like other ladies do them. He is wearing semi-formally but he looks good. Everytime I pray I thank the Lord twice for the husband I have and I do feel much blessed to have him. We are in the car ubering our way to the wedding venue. I do not think any of his family members are expecting us to arrive but this would be a nice surprise too.

He keeps on rotating my ring on my finger back and forth. Yes it is not that well fitted but I like it a bit loose. I don't want to one day have it not come off my finger then I would have to chop my finger off. That is something I do not want to go through.

"Are you nervous?", I ask and he looks at me.

He heaves a sigh and just presses his lips and I know then to give him a moment just to collect himself and be okay before we reach the venue.

The drive is silent and so as the driver is silent. Soon enough we get to the venue and we hop out of the car and then leave the ride. Already the Uber has been paid for. I have never been here before, in the Western Cape. I am sure that the wedding would be something much finer.

As we enter we encounter his mother all dressed up in a nice two piece with a huge hat on her head almost covering her face but she doesn't seem to see it bothering her as she wants to make a statement with it.

"Isikhathi siyahamba Mani! Go and tell your brother's to finish up before I dress them up myself", She mentions to her daughter and the girl leaves.



She turns in frustration and she sees us approaching. My heart is beating very fast.

“Thulani, you finally arrived mntanami”, She soon falls dramatically in her child's hands and starts to fake cry.

“You almost killed me, what were people going to say about me heh?”, She is still making crying sounds.

Thulani looks at me and I shrug my shoulder. It is his mother he knows her best but most of all they are not too far apart in dramatic Ness with my mother.

“Mah you are embaressing yourself”, He says and makes her stand well. She wipes her imaginary tears.

“I am so happy to see you mfana wami. I am glad you changed your mind about coming”

“I didn't, Nomvelo is the one who forced me to come”, She turns to me and pulls me into a hug.

“I am so happy Mntanami. Thank you so much for bringing him here”

“You don't have to thank me mah”, I say.

“Come let's go and find your father then your brothers”, His mother says to us.

“We will see them later. We just want to settle down”, Thulani says.

I think he is avoiding seeing his brother.

“Oh, okay then”,She leads us to the church and it looks so beautiful. We find space and we settle down together.

“Don't worry the day will go by quickly”,I say.

“I hope it does”,He says.

I sigh.

“I need the bathroom. Can you hold my bag while I go and find one?”,I ask.

“Let's go together. I do not trust people here”

“No one will kidnap Md Mzimela”

“I do not trust people here”,I sigh and nod.

We get up and we go out of the church and we go and look for the bathroom. We find it and then he stands outside the bathroom door while I go inside and do what I want to do. Within some time I am done and I walk out of the room and I go and wash my hands before we leave. He wraps his arm around my waist.

“I love how you are gaining weight”,He says.

“Why?”

“It just makes me feel happy”,He says and kisses my neck.

“Thulani uzongiqhatha nabantu(You are going to get me into trouble)”,I say.

“Are you sure nothing is baking in there?”,He asks and his hand rests on my stomach.

“Nothing yet”

“Kumele sikulungise lokho maduze awuboni Mkami(We have to fix that soon my wife)”

“Let's go baby”,He turns me around and we stop he leans closer to me and he gives me a kiss.

“I love you okay?”,I nod my head.

“Yes”,He kisses my neck and nibbles on it for a little while before he kisses my forehead when he sees that I am running out of breath.

I cannot compose myself that moment.

“Mmmh”,We are in a public place to be doing this.

“Come let's go”,He wraps his arm around my waist and we walk off going to where we were seated. We sit down and we see that people have filled up the place. I am nervous for no reason at all. The pastor has arrived as well which is good usually that is the most stressful thing.

His mother and father walk in and they are hand in hand. They go and sit at the first row on the right side of the place.

The groomsmen follow walking in and his brothers look dapper. Eyes are on one person when Qophelo walks in the room too to go and stand with his groomsmen.

Thulani is much silent during this moment and he is not saying anything. I am not blaming him, we are all much silent.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

“You are running late manje Nkonzo!”, Her mother is really stressed right now.

Nonkonzo has been taking her sweet time to get ready and we have all been ready now. We are just waiting for her.

“Mah I am getting done I just need my shoes”

“Nx suka”, her mother walks out of the room and we are already waiting for her.

One of our friends assists her with wearing her shoes.

“Oh my God I don't want my wedding to start late”

“It might”, Her cousin Ingi says.

Yes she is telling the truth it might start late. A knock comes through the door and I go and quickly open and I come face to face with this man I have been avoiding since I broke things off with Senzo and his father. They look alike and the only difference is their skin colour. His father is a bit more darker than him.

I move out of the way and let them in.

“Dad I am glad you are here. Umah has been shouting at me all morning”, Nonkonzo says.

“Everyone is waiting for you and so as your husband. If you don't show up he might leave”, Lange says and Nkonzo gives him a look.

“Don't listen to him. Come”, Her father helps her up and we give her her flowers.

“Good luck friend”, We say before we leave her in the room with her family.

We make our way to the church and the brides maids get in first and I will after as the maid of honour.

I feel the hairs at the back of my neck standing up when I smell his perfume. I take it in inhaling it slowly into my nostrils.

“You have been avoiding me”, He says without any form of greeting to accompany his words.

“I haven't”, I say.

“If you haven't then you would let me walk you down the aisle”, I look at him.

“You know that is not allowed”

“Said who?”

“Lange what will people say?”

“I don't care what people say”,He says.

I shake my head and turn away from him. He steps closer to me.

“I will see you then”,He says and lays a kiss on my neck that leaves me with shivers going down my spine.

He leaves and walks in the church and I am left to catch my breath and composure.

I see Nkonzo making her way towards me with her father. That gives me a go ahead to make my way inside the church. I start to walk in going straight to the alter without even looking at anyone as I am nervous. Maybe it is because I know where ever this man is seated he is looking at me.

I get to the ladies and I stand next to them and then soon everyone stands up and some music starts playing. Nkonzo comes in with her hand over her father's hand. I cannot believe that my friend is getting married and the most fucked up thing is the fact that I might like her brother. My eyes wonder around and they land on his. Indeed he is looking at me and not moving his gaze even though our eyes are upon each other. I shy away after some time and focus on my beautiful friend in front of me.

NTAKA(THULANI)MZIMELA

As watching from the side lines as my brother gets married was a bitter picture to look at. Not the fact that he is getting married but I wasn't included in being part of this process. I thought that I am okay and I would do well but I was lying to myself. Deep down I am actually not okay that I couldn't share the intimacy of this moment. That I was not part of his bachelor party and all that is done before one weds. I stayed through the whole ceremony and they were now a married couple. I don't think I would want to stay and witness being side lined in this manner but my wife has brought me very far for me to act this way and as a grown man I have to swallow this pill that seems to be too big to swallow. We walk out of the church and it has been said that we are all going to the reception. Apparently they had a photo shoot for the wedding before this day which saves us time with the waiting.

"I think I need a moment", I say and Nomvelo turns and looks at me stopping us from walking off going towards where the reception will be.

"Are you okay?", she asks and I sigh and shake my head no.

She pulls me away from people's eyes and we stand together in a quiet place.

"I have never felt so out of place with my brothers like this before".

"I am sorry", I sigh.

"Do you need a hug?", She asks and I chuckle at how softly she is saying it.

I hold her close to my body and I feel myself easing up a bit.

"Atleast you were here. I am sorry you feel that way"

“Maybe I am just being dramatic”

“No I understand what you mean. You have this strong brotherhood bond with your siblings and now it seems like you guys have drifted apart”,I nod my head.

“What do you want us to do?”,I ask.

“To eat then we can leave”

“Okay”,She smiles and we move from where we are and go to where the reception is. We settle down and seems like most people have already settled to. I see Nqubeko making his way towards us and I stand up from my chair and we share a brotherly hug and he turns to Nomvelo.

“Sisi wami, I am happy to see you here”,He says sharing a hand shake with her.

“I am happy too Bhuti, I hope you are well and so as the kids”

“We are well.”,she nods.

“I am happy to see you here. You guys talked?”,He asks.

“No”,I say.

“Well as ubhuti omdala you have to say something during the speech”,I look at him then Nomvelo then I move my eyes back at him.



“Why don't you do the speech?” ,I ask.

“I was going to but since you are here might as well take up on your brotherly role” ,This is not what I expected from this trip.

I sigh and sit down next to my wife.

“I will see you Sisi wami” ,Nomvelo nods and he walks away.

“Don't worry everything will be fine” ,She says.

I sigh.

“We can leave soon, I can see how uncomfortable you are getting” ,She continues.

I would love that.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

I had hope that Nomvelo would get back to me but she did not which meant that they were not going to come. What did I expect honestly? I was in thoughts in what Nomvelo said and honestly speaking at times it felt weird to not have Thulani in most occasions. Starters have been served with their little

beverages and the speeches have started. They start with friends going onto siblings and ending with our parents. I had asked Nqubeko to stand in for Thulani and he agreed to do so.

Nomvelo's sister is the one doing a speech for Nkonzo and when I look at her I am reminded of Nomvelo. She does look like her like Nomvelo had stated before but Now they look more alike if my serves me right of remembering Nomvelo's face. She gets done and she hands over the microphone to the MC. My friends do the same and soon our siblings are the one doing the speeches. I am left in utter shock when I see Thulani. I am happy to see him genuinely and I didn't realise how much I have missed having him in my life like today. He speaks well and he wishes us luck before he is done and he goes to where he just have been seated. My eyes don't move away from him for a moment mainly because I am in disbelief that he is here. I see Nomvelo too as he approaches her and she gets up and I see them disappear from my eyes leaving a trail of sour taste in my mouth that they didn't stay for long.

## NOMVULA ZUNGU

The speeches stretched and they took so long to finish especially the older ones giving ancient advice that is not applicable this day and age. Whenever I looked around my eyes would land on Lange and we would maintain a stare and it has been setting me the whole time. The main course comes and music starts playing as well. My phone rings and I take it and it is an unknown number. I have been receiving these for atleast two weeks now and the person doesn't speak but breathes in and out. I quickly take it and make my way outside the reception and I answer the call.

“Hello”, Silence once more.

“Hello? Listen here whoever you are I am too old to be playing these games”, I say.

“Mmh”, That is all I hear before the person hangs up.

I hate this honestly I hate it so much. I make my way inside and now people are dancing and some are still enjoying their meals. I go towards this man and he is just minding his own while having his meal. I get to him and he looks up to me.

"Please come with me", I say.

"Going where?", He asks.

"Just please come you will see", I say.

"This better be good Nomvula", He stands up and I walk away and he follows after me.

We get to where the rooms of this place are and then we get into one of the rooms and I close the door and lock it.

"We can talk now. You can say what you wanted to say", I say.

"Couldn't this wait until the wedding is over?", He asks.

"No, I wouldn't be sober minded then", He raises his brow looking at me and then he just nods.

"So?"

I ask.

"You know I have always said my piece and I have said the same thing all over", He says.

I walk towards him and then I turn around and give him my back. I make a bun with my weave

“You van unzip the dress. I am ready to see where this goes”,I say.

“I don't like being disturbed and if someone knocks on this door I will not stop”,He says.

“I won't let you unless I want to”,I say .

He nods and he unzips my dress slowly and it gets undone and I take it off and it slips down my legs. I turn around go look at him and he places his hands around my waist and captures my lips.

“Are you sure of this?”,He asks through the kiss.

“Yes I am”,He breaks the kiss and goes to kissing my neck. I let light moans as he sucks there devouring me.

“Mmmh”

“There is no going back after this”,He says and I nod my head.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

We got a room that we will sleep in then tomorrow we are leaving. Right now I have my back against the shower tiles while my legs are wrapped around this man's torso and he keeps on thrusting in me slowly taking his time while playing with my boobs and kissing my neck and lips here and there.

I don't know how many times he has told me that he loves me since we have been at it and I didn't even ask any questions of what is going on instead taking in his words that he loves me. I know he does, he has proven to be the person who really does love me.

"I am glad our children will have a mother like you Themba lami",he says before sucking on my nipple.

"Mzimela that feels good"

"Should I go harder?",I nod my head before wrapping my arms around him and holding onto him as he gives me one of those great pleasures.

I wash my body thoroughly letting the water sooth onto my skin as it runs well down it. I breathe in and out that moment feeling the warmth upon my skin as the shower water feels so well and good on my skin. I am surprised that I can still stand on my feet after that intense thing I had gone through that knocked me to sleep after that and I only got time to take a proper shower now. I get out of the showed and I look at myself through the bathroom mirror all wet before I took the bathroom towel and wrap it around my body before I move out of the bathroom and find my husband still resting on the bed. I feel hungry mainly because we really didn't get the chance to eat at the wedding but I am not complaining. It is not my first time not eating at any of Qophelo's ceremonies so I am not complaining at all. We didn't plan on sleeping over here and I wish that we had packed atleast a light bag for this trip of ours. I didn't even get time to greet my sister and find out how she has been lately but she looked so beautiful today, my mother would be proud of what she would've seen.

I take my phone and sit on the edge of the bed and I dial Rethabile's grandmother wondering if she would let me talk to Rethabile and find out how she is. It rings for a few moments before it is answered.

"Hello mah"

"Dumela ngwanaka o kae?(Hello my child how are you?)"

"I am well, how are you?"

"Ke teng o batla go bua le setlogolwana saka?( I am well, you want to speak to my grandchild?)",she says.

"Yes please"

"Okay hold on a bit",she mentions.

I wait for her and then I hear some shouting before shuffling after that.

"Hello Mvelo"

"Hello Retha, how are you?"

"I am good, ke ya go gopola(I miss you)",She says.

"I am trying to understand but I seem to be failing."

She giggles.

“I am saying that ngiyakukhumbula Mvelo (I miss you Mvelo)”,She mentions.

She giggles there after.

“I miss you too Nana. Are you good?”,I ask.

“Yes I am, Koko and I went to town Maobane and we got some new dresses for me for church”

“You are going to church again now”

“Yes”

“I am happy you are fine”

“Mvelo”,She speaks.

“Yes Nana”

“Why hasn't Mama talked to me does she not love me?”,She says and my heart breaks at the sound of that.

“No, she loves you. She just have problems that she needs to deal with and she can't take care of you for now”

“But she doesn't call me like you do”

“Don't worry about that”,I say.

“Okay, I have to go I have homework”

“Bye”

“Bye Ausi Mvelo”,She hangs up after that.

I sigh and think about what she must be going through. She is so young for what Mimi is putting her through. I never thought she was a person who can be vile if she wants to be.

“Ngilokhu ngithi iside lakho lizofudumala Kanti lutho(I keep on thinking your side of the bed will get warm but nothing)”,I turn around and look at this man who is now wide awake.

“How long have you been awake?”,I ask.

“For a while now”,he says.

“Mmmh”,I crawl to his arms and I jump in them.

He catches me and wraps his arms around me.

“Why are you not asleep?”,I ask.



“I should be asking you that question”

I keep quiet and he kisses the side of my head.

“What are you thinking off?”

“Nothing much”,I reply.

“I see”,I keep my silence in much thoughts.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

We haven't really went into anything further than kissing. He has been kissing me in much hunger as I am doing so but would withdraw for a moment and go back to kissing me again awakening this arousal feeling. I am naked under him and so as he above me, ready for have me in any way possible thus I as well an ready to quench my thirst in that manner too. He shuts his eyes for a moment.

“What is wrong?”,I ask him now a bit irritated that I am not being scratched the way I was once promised I would be.

“As much as I want to do this with you...”

“But?”

"I don't want to have sex with you not knowing where I really stand in your life and complicate things already", I breathe in and out. Aren't I the one who is supposed to be saying such things?

"What do you need now?", I say.

"You know what I want Nomvula", He says.

"And you know what I want too"

"And that is?"

"I wouldn't be laying here like I am a chicken about to be devoured if I didn't know what I want"

"To be fucked", He says and I pull his face closer to mine and I kiss him.

"Yes and you", I say

He deepens the kiss.

"Push the tip a bit in", I say.

I want him to scratch a part of me. He places a tip inside of me and I am craving to feel more of him as he starts lightly thrusting the tip in and out of me teasing me.

"Lange", I moan softly.

“Mmmh?”,He says.

“Put it all in please”

“Be patient”,he thrust it all in going deeper and I moan holding onto his arms and he pulls it all out and goes back to the tip duty.

He does that again thrusting his shaft inside and he pulls it out again and keeps on doing that thing all over again teasing me craving to be flipped around by him and have him do what he had promised to be done unto me.

I wrap my legs around his waist and he stops the tip at my entrance and I look into his eyes and he does the same in mine and I push him inside of me gasping as I take him in and going to its deepest point and I cry out in a bit of pleasurable pain before he pulls back a little.

“Are you okay I know it can get too much”,He has a smirk over his lips.

“I can handle it thank you very much”,He pushes further in and I gasp and hold onto him.

“You are..”,he thrusts in and out of me slowly giving me feel strokes.

His body cowers over me and I place my hands on his upper body. His strokes are not rushed but leaves me lingering for more of what I am tasting inside of me.

“Fuck you feel so good inside of me”,I say whispering to him. He kisses my shoulder multiple times before he picks his head up and makes eye contact with me and then leans in to capture my lips of which yearning more to being one with him at that moment. He circulates his way in me and thrust in and out only going in a way that I only love.

My intestines twitch that very moment. Something in me builds up from that.

"You are nearing?",He asks when he pulls away from the kiss.

"Yes",I close my eyes.

This is not like me. He then thrusts deeper and he stays in that position for a while and I find myself shaking after some time. I moan out in that moment feeling the pleasure numbing my legs.

He lets me catch a young breath before he goes back to now increasing his thrusts.

"You remember what I said?",He says in between the thrusts and he now picks up my legs and out them over his shoulder.

He starts circulating his finger on my clitoris creating more pleasure through this.

"Mvula I am talking to you",He says.

"Ye...Yes I do",my mind is focused on what is happening now.

He increases his pace and now he is fucking me.

"What did I say?",He says.

He pulls out quickly and he inserts his fingers in me and he starts fingering me while his tongue is on my clitoris as he is muffing and fingering me.

“Oh shit!”

He picks up his head and keeps on finger fucking me.

“I am talking Nomvula”,He says and I have my eyes closed pinching my nipples.

“I am nearing”,I say.

He pulls out his fingers and slip in his shaft in me and thrust in and out testing me before he fully pushes it in and thrusts a few times.

“That is not what I said”

“Oh fuck”

I start an orgasm and I go through one hell of an intense one. He does not stop from there but takes out his dick and goes back to fingering me and muffing me. He stops fingering me and goes into muffing me.

“That...that feels so fucken good”,I say as I place my hands on his head pushing his head further in me.

He doesn't shy away from devouring me but keeps at it.

I moan greatly to the best of what I am feeling. I gasp for air as I feel like this is getting too good for me.

“Oh Lange”,I say.

He stops muffing me and goes back to being inside of me and he lays closely to me and lets me wrap my legs around his waist and he kisses my lips making me taste myself from them and it turns me on more.

“Oh fuck”,he curses and I kisses his cheek and lick it and he captures my lips and we kiss once again.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

The morning came and we have decided to check our early and leave going home so we can arrive there during the day and have the rest of the day to ourselves just so that we could lazy around.

We are now ready and we just want to go and have some breakfast before we leave. We left our room and went to the dining hall to have something we can munch on before we leave. We get a table and we are seated there and we get to order what we want.

“I wonder where Nomvula went”,I say.

“She might be still in this place”,He says and I nod.

He looks up and his gaze stays stationary.

“What is wrong?”,Before I could get a response his brother stands next to us. Qophelo that is.

“Good morning”,He says.

“Morning”, I reply

I look at Thulani and he responses to him.

“I hope that I am not disturbing anything. I didn't think I would find you guys still here”

“It’s okay if you want us gone”,Thulani says.

I shake my head.

“We were tired so we decided to stay over but after breakfast we are leaving”

“Oh”,You can hear the disappointment inside his voice.

“Can I speak to you when you are done before you leave?”,He says to Thulani.

Thulani looks at me before him then nods.

“Sure”

“Let me leave you to it then”,When he was about to leave Thulani spoke.

“Qophelo”

“Mmh?”

“Congratulations on your new marriage”,He says and I smile at that.

“You too bhuti”,He walks away after that.

“You are such a sweetheart”

“I know, I got one too”,I giggle.

Our beverages come as we wait for our food but soon it also arrives. We spend the morning with each other having an intimate breakfast together of which I love.



# Chapter 31

QOPHELO MZIMELA

He stood before me with hands deep in his pockets and I don't know what to say first because I have already greeted. We have never had a moment where it is this awkward instead we would either fall into comfortable silence or we would be talking about. There is a lot to talk about right now beside the tension between us but many other things too.

"I don't like the tension between us, this hate between us", I sigh as I spit those words out.

"I don't hate you, I don't know about you but I would hate you unless you would provoke me to an extent that I harbour hate in my heart", I say.

"Well, whatever it is that is going on between us"

Silence falls upon the both of us as we are standing wide by side looking into the beautiful garden.

"I didn't think you would come", I say.

"I didn't intend to do so.", I feel saddened by that. He turns to look at me.

"Nomvelo was the one who dragged me here", That. That is why we are here.

"I was hurt by the fact that you married Nomvelo behind my back"

"I wouldn't have went for Nomvelo if she as much wanted to be with you but she chose to be with me out of her own free will",I sigh.

"I know. Let us not fight over a woman"

"I am not going to fight you over my wife",I smile a little.

"I am happy that you gave love a chance"

"Nomvelo is an easy woman to love",She sure is.

He smiles and lets out a young chuckle before he composed himself.

"Let's bury this thing and be what we used to be",I say and he looks at me.

"Sure",We shake hands after that and he holds mine a bit firmly.

"Come after my wife in any way I will deal with you and not be easy as I have been these past few months",He says.

"Don't worry about it",He nods and let's go of my hand.

"Do visit with your wife.Nomvelo would be happy",He says.

"We will",He nods and walks off after that.

I breathe out not realising that I was actually holding in my breath. Maybe it is because of the way he looked at me that he meant every word that he said and I know that Thulani does not joke about anything when he looks at you in that manner so as the time accompanied by what he said.

I turn around and I walk off going to find Nonkonzo. Last time I checked her she was taking a shower just from waking up, we are going to have some breakfast with the whole family at around 11 am when everyone is atleast fully awake.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

I stayed at the lobby seated on the couch while keeping myself occupied with their magazines as I am waiting for Thulani. I really hope that the conversation between him and his brother go well, I would want all this travelling going to waste in any way. A lady comes towards me and she stands in front of me and I look up to her with a faint smile on my face waiting in anticipation for her to speak.

“Nomvelo right?”,She says.

“Yes I am”

“I am Zenelo with an X, Nqubeko's wife”,She says.

“Oh, Uhm nice to meet you Xenelo”,She smiles and sits down next to me.

“So you are married to Thulani?”

“Yes”

“Mmh must be nice. Atleast I have two new sister wives now. Holding this family alone for the past few years has not been easy”,I just nod my head.

“You know Angela right?”,I feel uncomfortable being in her presence.

“Yes”

“She was a gem in Thulani's eyes”,I faintly smile.

I close the magazine.

“I need the bathroom. I am pressed I will be back soon”,I say.

“Okay do come back soon we are going to have family breakfast. You are family now”,She says and I just move away from her going to find where this man is.

I don't think I am fond of that woman much. Maybe with time I will be but for now I am not. I find Thulani making his way back inside and we meet each other by the entrance.

“How did it go?”

“It went okay”,I smile.

“I am happy you guys talked”

“Yeah

we can leave now”

“And your parents?”

“We will just call them. I want us home now”,I sigh.

“Okay”

“Did you find your sister?”

“No I did not but I will call her”,He nods and kisses my forehead.

“Asambe manje akumele Abantu abashadile bahlale kakhulu endaweni( people who are married are not supposed to stay out alot)”,He smirks.

“Who said so?”

“It is a known theory”

“Well that theory is something else.”

“Let's go”,We turn to walk out of this place and go home to our comfort zone.

NOMVULA ZUNGU

I have been constantly groaning because of this man shifting now that he is awake. He was laying like he was dead when he was sleeping and now in his shifting he is making me feel utmost discomfort as well.

“Hayi Lange you are disturbing me”

“It is almost 10 am.”

“So?”,I speak with my eyes closed.

“We should be awake”,I open my eyes and I look at him.

“You are annoying me right now”

“Are you grumpy in the morning?”

“Yes I am”

“Okay I will give you some space”,he says and tries to get out of the bed but I roll over him and I am laying on top of him.

“Let's stay in bed for a little while”

He wraps his arms around my body and gives me a forehead kiss.

“How are you feeling right now?”,He asks.

“Numb, I am afraid of even going to pee”,I say.

“It cannot be that bad”,He says with a smile on his lips amused by this.

“It is, you were the one busy making me swallow my words”,I say.

“You enjoyed it though”,I smile.

I mean he knows how to satisfy a woman beyond her thinking of being satisfied

“I will take that smile as a yes”,We even left on the middle of the wedding for this but I do not regret it at all. There are many more weddings I will attend. This is not the first and last one.

He kisses my neck and I feel shivers go through my spine that moment.

NONKONZO MZIMELA

I wore a nice dress that is long enough as I am going to have some breakfast with my in laws and my family as well. Qophelo told me that he is going to find his brother. So he left me while I was getting ready to actually be taken and go to where breakfast is. The door open as I run my fingers on my dress and play with my ring. My husband walks in and I smile while looking at him and run upto him and wrap my arms around his neck before I lay a kiss on his lips.

“Hey baby ”

“Did you talk to your brother?”

“Yes we did talk and we are fine now. We got an invite to his house”,I don't really want to see Nomvelo.

“Oh okay”,He nods and kisses my lips.

“You smell so good Mrs Mzimela”,I blush.

“Stop it”,I say.

“You look wonderful too”,I giggle.

“Now you are just being cheesy. Let's go”,he nods and we leave the place.

We go to the lobby and we are escorted to the dining hall and majority of our family is there.



My mother in law comes to give me a hug and we share one before we let go and I hug my mother and greet everyone else before we sit down.

“Where is Thulani and his wife?”,my mother in law asks.

“They left early, he had to go back to Durban urgently”,Qophelo says and my mother in law just keeps her silence.

“Has anyone seen Langelihle. I haven't seen him since yesterday during church”,my mother says as well with a frown on her face.

No one answers her as we don't know where he is and where he disappeared off to in a province that he does not even know that well. Our breakfast buffet arrives and we get to dish up for ourselves that moment. I stand up and dish up for Qophelo as my in laws are here but if they were not here I would not be even bothering. I am asking him what he wants and what he likes and he tells me.what he likes and wants. I dish up for him and give him his plate and do my own plate too then I settle and have some breakfast. Nothing warms my heart than seeing this in front of me. It is beautiful to watch.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

We were quiet through out the whole ride going home until we arrived there and went home. When we got home I rushed to the bedroom and threw my body on the bed. I am feeling tired and I just need to take a moment and actually have some sleep with no disturbances at all or anything of that sort.

“For someone who didn't want to leave as yet you sure are glad to be home”

"I missed this bed",He chuckles and takes off his shoes and lays his body ontop of me and I let him be.

He does not have his entire weight on me so he is not that heavy to have on me.

"Now I understand why sometimes you like sleeping on me",he says.

"You see?",He nods.

He rolls off me and then rests next to me.

"I feel so tired",I say.

"Rest and sleep. I will cook",I nod my head.

He kisses my lips as I close my eyes and he gets off the bed, grabs a fleece and covers me with it before walking out of the room.

## Chapter 32

“Mrs Mzimela you are being called to join the runaway”, I turn from the models and look at Aneni as she is looking at me.

“Me?”, I ask.

“Yes, Miss Donatella is also here in the crowd.”, My heart beats on my throat.

“Go!”, One of the models encourage and I feel like I could vomit.

Aneni pulls me and pushes me through to walk out to the run away and I encounter the applause of people and also camera flashes. I find myself lightly waving as I am nervous and I scan my eyes through the people and that moment everything feels so surreal. I turn around and walk back stage and I breathe out. Aneni claps her hands and smiles.

“That was nerve wrecking”

“You have done your first biggest fashion show in France!”, She says excited.

She should be as she is fresh out of university and is experiencing this much. This is not opening doors for me only but for the people I am working with now.

“Thank you so much”, From doing local fashion shows to doing this big one.

I like to be behind the lime light and be known for my work without me taking the spotlight but in this it is a bit tricky and impossible as people would like to know the hands of the person who has created a beauty.

My sewing career has grown over the past 7 years and it has hugely opened doors for me.

I go to the cart and I get some bottled water and I drink up some of it as I am trying to calm down while more of the designers are out there with their models.

“You shouldn't be scared”, My assistant Aneni says.

She is from Zimbabwe and grew up in South Africa. I love her work ethic more than anything and she has only been working with me for at least 2 years now and I have never had a single complain about her.

“I can't get over this feeling. It is overwhelming”, I say.

“I understand”, I nod.

I see Thulani making his way towards me and I rush up to him. He catches me in his arms and kisses my cheek then my neck.

“Hey baby”

“Hey, I thought you were stuck in the Netherlands”, I say in excitement to seeing my husband.

“I couldn't miss this big moment for you”, He says and I break the hug and kiss him.

“Thank you so much baby”

“As we, the not married ones feel the heat”, Aneni says before she walks away and we just lightly laugh.

“That was great, I am so proud of you Mvelo”,Thulani says.

“I wouldn't have done it without you”

“You would've”,He says and I just smile.

I am happy he is here most of all.

Over the years we have grown, both in our career aspects. Thulani is now the CEO of the company he used to work for and at times he has to travel overseas too of which is why he was in the Netherlands. I too as well, well this is my first trip out of Africa.

“Let me go and grab my bag we are leaving”,I say.

“What about the show?”

“My team can wrap up with my stuff. I have missed my husband I want to be with you”,I say and he smiles.

“Let's go then”,I go and take my bag and then I tell Aneni I am leaving and do not even wait for her response.

I go out with Thulani and we get to the outside and get inside the taxi and we are gone after that.

This part of the world is very cold. I have never had this type of experience of winter back home so this is very much different than what I am used to.This place is pure beauty. We are in Paris. The city known for its biggest Fashion and Luxury life and also love.

I lay my head on Thulani's chest. He has grown and he is aging like fine wine too. My dark chocolate man.

“Rethabile called me asking to visit for 3 days before she goes back to her grandmother's home”, Thulani says and brushes my head.

“I do not mind”, I look at him.

“Mmmh”, He kisses my cheek.

We get to the hotel that I am staying in and we get out of the taxi after settling our fee and make our way inside.

“Where is your luggage?”, I ask.

“I left it with Sam”, I shake my head.

I do not know why this man hates travelling with his bags.

“You were hoping to leave early?”

“No I was hoping to stay in the room with you naked”, He whispers into my ear and I gasp lightly

“You can't say that”, I say.

“We might end up having a child this time”, He says and I feel my insides turn a little.

“Maybe we will”, We get inside the elevator and greet the lovely old couple. They look at us and greet back.

The elevator goes up and when it reaches my floor it pings and we get out of the elevator and make it down the passage to my room. I open the door and we get inside and I take off my coat and he closes the door and does the same placing it on the little couch inside the room.

“It has been 7 years Mvelo, we are not getting any younger now”, I breathe in and out and turn to Thulani.

“I know time is passing by, I know.”

“We have everything our child would need. Just, let's just have one child”, He wraps his arms around my waist.

“Or maybe 3”, He says and I smile.

“Or maybe 2 girls”

“A boy and a girl”, He says.

“Or sets of twins”, He smiles wider.

“I would kiss your swollen belly everyday and give you foot massages everytime your legs swell up”, he says and kisses my lips and we share a kiss that moment. He breaks it after that.

“And run craving errands for you”, He says.

"It will happen", I say.

"I know", I wrap my hands around his neck and kiss his lips.

"I need a warm shower", I say and move away from him.

"I will join you shortly I need to call Sam about my luggage "

"Okay", I go to the bathroom, I close the door and I breathe out.

I look at my hands and they are shaking. I try to compose myself. I open the shower water and I go to the mirror and I look at myself through the mirror and I close my eyes for a moment. Flash backs of the accident I was once involved in after a year in my marriage flashes back. My sister and I were on our way to buy some fabric for her dress that she wanted for her lobola negotiations. Finally she was going to get married to the man she was with who is Nonkonzo's brother. I can still hear the cars hooting ringing in my ear. I open my eyes and I lift up my top and I look at my scar that goes vertically from my belly button and starts curving through to my abdomen and go to my valve and stops there. The stitched scar is now swelled up like it was before but over the years it became better but I still feel pain from time to time when it is too cold or hot.

I was once insecure that my husband would see me in this manner but Thulani always kisses that part of my body the most.

"You have a 40% chance of getting pregnant from here onwards.", Those words ring in my ears as the doctor told me so.

I have never given up on prayer though. Thulani doesn't know that my ability of conceiving is low. Lower than 50%. I feel my heart beating vigorously against my chest.



“Mvelo! Oh my God!”, Nomvula's screams add in to the mix.

“Nomvelo”, I hear a faint deep voice behind me as I am staring into the mirror. Tears stream down my cheeks without me blinking as I am looking at myself.

“MaZungu”, Thulani's hands on my shoulders bring me back to life and hearing the sound of the shower waters again.

I wipe my tears and turn around to him.

“Ntaka”

“Are you okay? Is there something I did?”, He asks.

I shook my head.

“No, I just miss my nieces and nephews back home”, I say as I fall into his arms.

“We will be home soon. Don't worry”, He kisses my forehead.

“The water will turn cold soon. Do you still want to shower?”, He asks.

“Yes”

“Okay”, He kisses my forehead again.

May the Lord answer my prayers now.

NOMVULA ZUNGU(MVELASE)

I greet the receptionist stating my goodbyes. I cannot wait to get home and just cook for my husband and he can deal with me later. As much as I am tired but I can never be tired of how Lange makes me feel. Nonkonzo and It's relationship became Rocky after his brother and I came out with our relationship. He insisted and said he cannot marry me without his family knowing and that his sister will have to suck it up. We had a fall out about it more especially when she had to drag Nomvelo into the mix and say we are both whores after a certain people. Since then I do not want to associate myself with her even though she is my sister in law and I have for the past years intended on making her life a living hell as my sister in law for that.

I get inside my car and my phone rings.

"Hello", I say taking off my heels and placing them on the seat next to me.

"Mommy do not cook we bought take away", I groan.

"Give your father the phone", I say and I hear shuffling.

"Mama wakwami"

"Don't try and charm me. What is this take away business I am hearing about?", I ask.

“You had a presentation today. I thought I should be nice and let you relax today”

“Maybe learning how to cook dear husband would be an advantage”

“I look sexy in an apron baby but burning is not something I intent on doing”,I laugh.

“Dad what is sexy?”,I laugh.

“Answer your daughter. I am driving back now”,I say.

“Okay

I love you”,Something is placed on my neck and it strangles me.

“Arghhh....”

“Baby?”,I let go of my phone and try to move whatever that is strangling me. I hear some breathing.

“After all these years you think you can move on and love another person?”,I recognised that voice anywhere.

“No one can have you if I cannot”,He says.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

I am pacing up and down the room while on call with Aneni wearing the hotel gown after the shower that we just had and I now feel fresh more or less refreshed in a way.

“You left so soon the journalists wanted to have a word with you”,She says.

“You know I do not like being in the spotlight”

“I know but Mrs Mzimela this is great opportunity this will be published for the whole of France to know about you”,I sigh.

“I do know that”,I sigh.

“I will call back okay?”

“Okay bye have a great night”

“You too”,I hang up on the call and I sit on the bed. Soon after Thulani walks out of the bathroom with a towel around his waist. He looks at me for a brief moment.

“Are you okay?”,He asks.

“Yes, Aneni just called and told me that I was wanted for questioning about the designs from tonight”,I say.

"We shouldn't have left early"

"I wouldn't be able to do it anyway", I say.

"Why?"

"I am scared", He comes and crouches in front of me.

"Baby you don't have to be scared. Look how far you have come. Yes you may not be a big brand like all these luxury brands out there but you are climbing the ladder going there. This is a big achievement and I want you to stop fearing and look at how much you have conquered"

"I feel like once I open room for me to be known people will invade my private life"

"They wouldn't if you don't let them", I sigh.

He kisses my exposed thighs.

"You are the most blessed thing in the world", He kisses my thighs again.

"And I am the most blessed man to have you sthandwa sami", I smile.

"Me too", I give him a light kiss on the lips.

.

“Can I get dressed now?” ,I say looking at him.

“Get dressed before you catch a cold baby” ,I move from the bed and I go and take out some warm pyjamas from my bag and I wear them. After I am done I close my suitcase and I go and get inside the bed.

Thulani orders some room service and then after that he joins me in bed and I move closer to him and we sleep in each other's arms while waiting for our orders.

“We should watch some tv”

“There are some French shows we can watch” ,I say and he has a slight frown. I laugh.

“I know baby it is confusing but they seem interesting though I cannot hear anything”

“How about me hearing my wife talk about her work trip and how it has been and all of that?” ,I smile.

“I don't mind that.” ,He removes the little hairs from my face and tucks it behind my ear.

“Well I have something to tell you today” ,He says and I give him my attention.

“What is it?” ,I ask.

“I was thinking and I would love for us to have that wedding we put aside” ,He says.

“Are you sure?” ,I ask with a bit of a smile spread on my lips.

“I mean yes. It would be amazing to vow my commitments to you in front of family and friends”, He says.

“I would love that”, I feel a bit emotional.

It makes me happy, I don't even know what I envision my wedding to be like but it should be perfect right? Perfect for us.

LANGELIHLE MVELASE

Her phone just went silent after hearing her gag a few times and that has me worried. I have tried to call her again but it keeps on ringing with no intention of being answered. I then called her work place and still no one answered which means most people have left.

I look at my daughter through the review mirror as she is busy on her learning pad kicking her feet happily too.

“Baby, I will have to drop you off at Auntie Nkonzo's work place. I will fetch you later okay?”, I say.

She looks up to me from what she was watching.

“Why?”, She asks.

“I will tell you later”, I say.

“Okay”,I drive to Nonkonzo's work place as it is more or less near where Nomvula works.

I get there and I get out of the car with my daughter and we make our way inside the building. I ask the receptionist to call my sister and she does. I get impatient as the minutes pass by but soon she appears from the elevator and I make my way towards her and she looks at me with worry.

“What is it Lange?”

“Please take my daughter with, I have something to sort out. I will pick her up later”,She huffs.

She usually does this when she is really annoyed by me but cannot say anything back as she knows I will go off her.

“Fine,come Nana”,she takes my daughter's hand who waves at me and I wave back.

I then make my way out of this building going to my car to drive off to Nomvula's work place and check if she is okay. I try her again and it does not go through.

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

I felt the pain piercing through my neck and the feel of me fighting to have my breath was with me as I was trying to remove this things away from me.



“Stop fighting this and let fate take its course”, This bastard says.

I see the security guy making his way towards my car carrying my lunch bag with. This bastard let's go of me and slides for the other side of the back seat and opens the door.

“I am not done with you Mvula”, He says as he leaves me coughing and trying to gain the will to breathe. My eyes bawled out as tears stream down my cheeks unintentionally. The knock on my car door was confirmation of the security guy.

“Sisi”, He opens the door and he tries to help me in this state.

I try to speak but the burning sensation from my neck doesn't help.

He places my lunch bag down and takes out his operator and talks into it.

“There is an issue at the parking lot. I think Mrs Mvelase is choking and she needs medical care”, He says and then the other talks back.

He then puts his operator away.

“There...there is water...in...in my bag”, I say as much as I can.

He then opens my lunch bag and gets water out for me. He helps me drink up.

My phone starts ringing.

“Your neck is red and bleeding”,The security man says.

“Pl..please answer my phone”,I say.

He quickly takes it from the car floor and answers it.

“Hello...rra your wife is here and she does not seem okay. The ambulance is on its way here.”,the man says and his tone sounds shaken.

“Yes...Yes”,He hangs up after that.

“Your husband is on his way”,He helps me out of the car and I get to get more fresh air.

I cannot believe I almost died and left my daughter in this earth.

I am seated on the floor and this security guy is making sure that I am atleast still alive while the ambulance is on its way. After some time the ambulance arrives and so as Lange. The paramedics rush to me and they put me on the stretcher and provide an oxygen mask for me. Lange hops out of his car and rushes to me.

“It looks like she was being choked”,The paramedic says and tries to asses my bleeding neck.

“Choked by who?Nomvula who was choking you?”,Lange asks in rage.

“Se...Senzo”,I say as I feel a bit drowsy and my throat is burning. They take me away to the ambulance.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

He takes another bite off the food before he starts giving up on it there after. He dusts his hands and wipes them and his mouth before he turns to take his food and place it on the cart in the room.

"I am full now",I say seeing that he is also full.

"But you have not finished your food"

"So as yourself",He chuckles.

"Okay", I get off the bed and put the food where he did.

"We should explore Paris tomorrow before we leave",he says.

"That would be wonderful I would love that",I say.

"I love you so much Nomvelo",He holds my waist and pulls me to him.

"I love you so much more Ntaka"

"I am glad I stole you from Qophelo",I lightly hit his shoulder and he laughs.

"I am joking"

"You better be", He chuckles.

"I will have to get something for Omah. They wouldn't be happy knowing I was here and didn't bring anything", I say.

"They should understand that these are Euros not rands"

"Still baby", He picks me up and I wrap my legs around his waist.

"Mmmh okay let's get into bed I want to show you something"

"What is it?", He kisses my neck.

"Something"

"Ayi", We both laugh.

"I can't wait for our family to grow", He says with his eyes fixed on me.

"Me too", I swallow.

## Chapter 33

The coldness lingers through my skin as I have my gloves on and my coat as close as it can be on my body. My husband's hat is helping with dealing with this coldness, I should've bought one too that I can wear but I am glad that soon we are going to leave this place and go home. We make our way to Cafe and he opens the door for me and I get inside and after that he comes in behind me. We go and settle on a table and the waiter soon approaches us to our disposal.

“Bonjouré”, He says.

We greet back and ask to order and we do speaking in english. Kind of reminds me of back home where automatically when a Zulu person sees a black person they would assume that they are also Zulu. This place feels a bit warmer too. I turn to Thulani who is looking at me in admiration and I shy away.

“Before we go home I have something to tell you”, I say

“What is it?”, He asks with concern.

“We need to eat first before we can talk about anything else”, I say.

“Is it alarming?”, the curious him comes out.

He wants to know but he is trying to give me some time to come out with it when I feel ready to do so.

“I don't know about alarming, might be”, I shrug my shoulders.

He pulls my hands into his from across the table and takes off the glove from my left hand and he kisses it.

"Your hand is a bit cold",he chuckles.

"I am feeling cold. I miss home",I say.

"We should plan a trip somewhere warmer together",I smile.

"I would love that",He nods his head.

We wait until the our orders come and we thank the waiter as he leaves. I start with my coffee as he goes for his delicious pastry that he indulges in it while it is hot.

We carry on having a conversation and he tells me Sam has headed back with his things of which I overheard the conversation he was having while I was in the bathroom fixing myself to get ready for us to go out. I look at him for a moment and my heart bleeds a bit, the bit is the fact that I want to give this man the world that he has given me.

Not alot alot of people had expected us to stay together this long mainly because it seemed like I was rushing things after Jabu had passed away and that I will never find happiness through this man of which I did. He has went above and beyond for me to be here, where I am effortlessly as well and he has loved me effortlessly through those times. I am glad I chose the better brother"Laughs".

I feel a bit of my check closing in on me as I watch him wipe the chocolate from his choissant off his lips with his finger and he licks it.

"I can't get pregnant",I say softly in a sense that I thought it is inaudible but he lifts his eyes to look to me.

He stops indulging in his treat and he takes the little napkin and wipes his fingers slowly and then his mouth.

“Angizwanga(Come again)”, I swallow as his stare is now on me.

“I...I...”, Words fail me that very moment.

“Breathe in Mvelo and say what you said.”, He says.

I do as I was told then breathe out.

“After the accident I was told that I have low chances of conceiving”, my voice is a big Shakey.

“How long ago was the accident Nomvelo?”, He asks and his tone is firm.

I look away from his eyes.

“6 years ago”

“In all those 6 years why didn't you tell me as your husband?”, He is calm but his calmness doesn't calm me down instead I am more agitated and scared.

“I...I was...I was scared”, I say.

I fiddle with my fingers.

“Ngicela sibukane masikhuluma ( can we look at each other while we are talking?)”,he says and I move my eyes to look at him.

“What were you scared of? Have I ever given a reason to not trust me with anything? With something so important between us?”,He speaks.

Everyone else is minding their own business eating away and talking to whoever in French.

“I was scared of disappointing you”

“Mvelo”,He says softly and just swallows.

He sighs and he goes back to having his treat.

“I am sorry”,I say.

“We will talk about this when we get to the hotel”,I nod my head and go back to my meal.

My heart is sitting at the pit of my stomach. I do not know what really awaits me but a part of me is relieved that I told him the truth though I didn't intend on him really knowing this way.

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE



The sound of Lange speaking was what has woken me up from whatever that I am feeling right now. I open my eyes and I see him sitting on a chair next to me.on his phone.

“Mmmh”,the frown on his face cannot be hidden.

“Okay, I will swing by soon”,He says and he hangs up.

“Lange”

“How are you feeling?”,that is the first thing he asks.

“My throat is sore”

“What happened?”,his face is serious.

I swallow my spit which goes a bit difficultly down my throat.

“I...I was talking to you on the phone when Senzo was strangling me from behind my seat. I.. I don't know how he got inside my car.”,I say.

“You should've let me speak to him for you years ago after your break up”

I sigh.

“Senzo is a violent person”

“That you used to fight. I am not one to be messed with Nomvula more especially when it comes to my family.”,He says.

“You wouldn't be able to find him easily. Senzo is smart in this and I am just scared for our daughter's life”

“Mmmh”, He comes closer and runs his fingers through my weave.

“I would like to see your natural hair after this”, He says and I nod.

“Okay”, He smirks and I smile. He kisses my lips.

“Everything will be okay”, I nod my head.

“Can I have some juice?”

“What juice flavour do you want?”

“Any flavour”

“Okay I will get one from the cafeteria.”, he stands up and leaves the room.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

The way back home was too silent for me to comprehend. I was in utter silence and so as he. I didn't know what was running in his mind that moment and that makes me quiet nervous and scared that when we get to the hotel things are going to turn in a direction that I do not know. We reach the hotel and get inside. We go to the elevator and get inside there. I close my eyes for a moment just to take in some energy for what may come. The elevator pings and he takes my hand into his and we walk to our room. We get inside and I go and place my coat on the bed after taking off and he does the same then looks at me.

“Sit down Nomvelo”, I sit down and he joins me.

“I am hurt that you didn't trust me enough with this information.”, I keep quiet to give him the platform to talk.

“Why didn't you want to tell me?”

“I was scared because you have always wanted a child.”

“I know but it is almost a decade now we have been with each other and I have never put pressure on you”, he says.

“I know”, I look down.

“Look this is not the end of the world Mvelo. There are options out there to have our kids like surrogacy”, I give him a look and my eyes become glossy for a moment before I blink the tears.

“This is why I didn't want Ntaka”, I say.

“What do you want? adoption?”, He asks.

“No, I want none of that. I wish so strongly to have our child grow inside of me. Feeling the baby kick and having to endure beautiful pain of birthing a child. I pray to God every night to have that for the past 6 years.”, He pulls me to him and hugs me.

“It will happen baby”, He kisses my neck and I hold onto him.

“Please don't leave me”, I say as my voice is shaky.

“I would never”, he kisses my neck again.

“I love you so much”, He continues.

I hold onto him as tightly as I could.

NONKONZO MZIMELA

Lange hasn't called to tell me what is going on and he has not informed me that he is going to come and fetch my niece too. As much as I love her but I cannot juggle two children at the same time right now. My son and niece are asleep now and I have just dished up for Qophelo. He is running a little late home today but he did send a message stating that he will be a bit late.

The kitchen door opens that leads to the garage and he walks in and places his things on the counter as he finds me wiping the counter. He comes towards me and he kisses my neck.

“Hey baby”

“Hi, how was work?” ,I ask.

“It was hectic. We have a new project of building the mall” ,He says.

“That is big, I am so happy for you” ,he smiles.

“I am too, it smells good in here”

“I hope you didn't eat. I have some of you” ,He kisses my cheek.

“Let me go and freshen up” ,He says.

“Okay” ,He walks off after taking his things off the counter and I carry on with what I am doing. I get done and I move from the kitchen and I go to the bedroom upstairs. I find my phone ringing and I go and take it. It's Lange, relief washes over me.

“Lange where are you?” ,

“Musa ukukhuluma nami kanjalo(Don't talk to me like that)” ,I huff.

“Your daughter is asleep”

“Oh thank you. I won't be able to take her now. I will come during the morning to take her”

“What why?”

“Nomvula is at the hospital”

I am alarmed with what he just said.

“Why?”

“I will tell you tomorrow”

“Oh okay, may she get better”

“She will”,I nod.

“Pick up your child tomorrow”

“I will”,He hangs up after that.

I really have a brother shame.

## Chapter 34

We are back home. Back in South Africa. I had been told that Nomvula was admitted at the hospital and we first went to see her and then fetched Rethabile from her grandmother's house before we left with her to Durban. We arrived late at night and I was very tired from the whole trip so I rested.

I wake up and the sun is shining so brightly in the room. I push the covers off my bed and I wear my slippers and then I walk out of the bedroom and go to the bathroom to pee and also rinse my mouth before I made my way to the kitchen and I find Rethabile and Thulani making food while speaking.

“Good morning Mvelo”, She says with a smile.

She has grown so much that she is so much taller than me now.

“Good morning Nana”, I say and my husband makes his way to me and gives me a warm hug.

“Good morning Themba lami”, My heart warms.

“Good morning Ntaka”, We break the hug and I go around the counter and I reach Rethabile and kiss her cheek.

“What are you making?”, I ask.

“We are making pancakes”, Rethabile shows me the sets she has made.

“Since when do you guys know how to make pancakes?”, I ask.

“Since there has been a pancake mix sold in stores Ausi Mvelo”,She says and giggles.

“We ordered online for it to be delivered”,I shake my head when Thulani mentions that.

They are just lazy to go to the stores.

“I will make some breakfast for us then. What would you like?”,I ask Thulani.

“Eggs and a sausage. Not bacon”

“Okay and you young lady?”,I ask this one fiddling with the stove.

“I would like eggs too with sausage. Is the toaster working?”,She asks.

“Yes, check it at the lower cupboard”,She nods and finishes what she is doing and takes her pan to the sink to wash it.

“So tell me about school”,I say.

“I hope there are no boys you are interested in”,Thulani says and I give him a look.

“Baby she is 16”,He shoots a look back at me.

“Boys will impregnate you and leave you with a baby Rethabile. I don't want that for you at least not until you are working so you can take care of your child”,I lightly hit his arm.



“Ntaka!”

Rethabile laughs as her back is facing us while she is washing her pan.

“Don't worry Malume I am not interest in boys”,She says.

“Good”,I shake my head.

She gets done with the pan and she brings it to me all washed.

“Thank you, can you take out the eggs for me I will take our the rest”

“I am going to take a shower”,Thulani says and I nod my head.

“Okay”,He walks off.

Rethabile grabs some honey and chocolate syrup and sits on the high chair and faces me.

“I heard you went to Paris without me”,She says.

“Yes I did. For a fashion show”,Her eyes glimmer in excitement.

“How was?”

"It was good, I was nervous but it was good", I say.

"That is good. I want to see the pictures and everything", She says.

"I will show it to you", I open the stove and place the pan there and wait for it to get warm.

She decorates her pancakes and gets off the high chair and puts the honey and syrup away and takes out some ice cream and she puts some there too before she comes back and sits on the high chair.

I start with making the eggs as she carries on eating.

"I met up with mom", I look at her. I swallow as my heart is beating fast.

"Where?", I ask.

"In town"

"How...how did that make you feel?", I ask.

"Sad, I just don't understand why she just abandoned me one day", She says.

"She didn't"

"I know.", She sighs.

"She told stuff and they were hurtful stuff Mvelo", I feel bad for her.

I walk around the counter and go to her.

"I am sorry about that. Yes things aren't going as we plan them to go but look at you grown and looking beautiful. Koko loves you, your father loves you and we love you too", She smiles and wipes her falling tears.

"I know. I just didn't understand all these years. I was hopeful that she will come and take me as much as it is nice staying with Koko le papa mara my heart yearned for that"

"I know"

I hug her and she hugs me back.

"Thank you for loving me Mvelo. You are the closest thing to a mother that I have", My heart bleeds for her. I let her sink into my arms for a moment before we break the hug and I wipe her tears and then kiss her cheek.

"How about we go to the mall today?"

"I would love that", She smiles.

"Okay eat up then go and freshen up.

She nods and I go back to making breakfast. I look at her for a moment. I don't know what I would have done if she died that day.

Thulani tagged along with us to the mall and we decided to go to Pavillion mall. Rethabile has always wanted to go there just to see how it is like there for her. We get to the mall and we go to wherever Rethabile wants us to go first. She chooses to go to a clothing store and we just follow after her. She goes and gets what she loves and I just watch her with a smile. I had watched her grow these past 11 years and that I have been part of half of her life up to now makes me feel a certain way.

We wait for her as she gets the things that she needs.

“Watching her grow has been a remarkable thing to see”, Thulani says.

“Yes”, Rethabile comes back to us carrying 3 tops only.

“I am done”, She says.

“Okay let's go”, Thulani says already taking his wallet out.

I watch them together bonding well. Thulani is a great father figure in Rethabile's life though she has her own father but he does play the Malume part well too.

“Thulani, long time”, We bump into his ex wife.

“Angela”, We have now came into a stop.

She has a basket in her hands and seems to be doing a shopping of her own too.

“I see you are with your girlfriend and her child”, she says.

I do not get what her problem is and also I feel that Nqubeko's wife has been best buddies with this woman.

“You mean my wife?”

“Oh you upgraded”, She says.

“Rethabile go and wait in line”, I say and she nods moving away.

“Angela I do not appreciate your sky comments. You are lucky we are in public and drop the childish act it is for children not a grown woman like you”, He says calmly and he pulls me to him and we walk away.

I can tell that his mood has been ruined already.

“Don’t overthink about it”, I say.

“I just hate how she goes out her way just to ruin my mood”, He says.

“Don’t worry about her.”, He smiles and kisses the top of my head.

We go and join Rethabile then we get to pay for her things and leave the store. As we are walking someone moves past us leaving their scent lingering around. I frown and close my nose as it is not a pleasant smell and it is too strong.

“That person smells too funny”, I say covering my nose as I can still smell the scent off my nostrils even though he is gone.

"I like his perfume it smells nice",Thulani looks at Rethabile as she comments.

"It's an innocent comment Malome",She defends herself and decides to shut her mouth.

"Are you okay?",Thulani asks and I nod my head.

"Yes",I say and remove my hands from my nose.

We go to the next store all thank to Rethabile too.

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

I have been discharged from the hospital and I am not a person who lives in fear but ever since what happened with Senzo I don't know which move I should do next. Lange assured me that he will take care of it. As much as I would like to give my husband the benefit of a doubt but again Lange has no power in getting to Senzo like someone who knows how to get to him but I will give my husband a little benefit of a doubt.

I have been given 2 days off work just so that I can recover from what I went through and I have opened a case too against Senzo and the police are working on it but Lange feels that they are useless and wouldn't be able to get their job done of which is true. Again I am going to give them a benefit of the doubt.

The house is quiet and I know that they have already left when I woke up. I am glad that I am alive and that my daughter didn't lose me. I don't know what I would've done if she did lose me. Well what Lange would've done and losing a mother is something I wouldn't want my child going through that.

I am at the living room drinking a smoothie I made while watching some TV when the door opens from the living room and I stand up from my couch in fear but Lange walks in and I calm down and rush up to him. He takes me into his arms.

"Hey", He says and I rest my head on his chest.

"Hi, I thought you wouldn't come back until later", I say.

"I am taking a day off. I want to stay with you", I smile.

"Thank you"

"Your heart is beating fast", He says.

"I thought it was...", he pulls me away from him and cups my face.

"Look baby don't worry about him or anything okay? I promise you will never see him again"

"I can't help but be scared. I never thought this would come back to choke me", I say.

"Baby I know but trust me okay?", I nod my head.

"Okay", He kisses my lips.

“Can you make that sandwich for me?The one with Ham”,I say.

“Let's go to the kitchen together so you can learn how to do it”,I follow after him as we move to the kitchen.

We get there and he picks me up and places me on the counter and goes to take out the ingredients. His phone rings and he takes it out and looks at it.

“I have to answer this, I will be back”,I frown but let him be.

He walks out through the kitchen door to the back.

LANGELIHLE MVELASE

“Sho”,I say.

“We found him. SiseGomora mfanaka(We are in Alexandra)”,I sigh.

“Thank you mfwethu I owe you one”

“You sure do and you will pay up”,He says.



I hate this but I have to protect my family.

"Sure"

"What should we do with him?",He asks.

A part of me.wants to go there and face Senzo as I take his breath but another part of me wants to keep my hands clean as I have been for years now.

"Do whatever you want with him but I want him dead"

"Sho sho nja yam",He hangs up.

I curse after that. I hate that I have a debt lingering over my head.

I used to be trouble some and joined a group of guys that were considered not to be too good. I lived the fast life since I was 19. Learnt how to hold a gun and how to wire a car when you are stealing it. Learnt alot of stuff that are considered illegal but I left that life when I saw that as much as it was thrilling but I didn't want to have the life where I would constantly look over my shoulder so I left it and now I think I am going back there again and I don't want to put my family in jepordy because of my decisions.

## Chapter 35

I felt nauseated more as the day was carrying on and I do not know why and maybe it could be that I am a bit tired especially from working these past few months preparing for fashion week and I haven't fully rested well since then.

"Can we get some water somewhere?", I ask.

"What is wrong?", Rethabile asks.

"I feel nauseated and like something is stuck in my throat. Like it wants to come up but it is not coming up", I say.

"Let's sit you down", Thulani says.

We find a near restaurant I get to sit down and then Thulani goes to get some water for me ordering them from the till point.

He comes back with a cup full of cold water. He hands the cup to me and I thank him with a faint smile and I take the cup and drink up the cold water and it feels like it is getting better and whatever is in my throat is going down.

"How do you feel now?", Thulani asks as he looks at me worried.

"I feel a bit better I...", I unexpectedly vomited in front of me on the floor and Rethabile dramatically screamed.

I saw the water I had downed on the floor and some of my breakfast too. I felt like it was coming back up again. The lady from the restaurant came to us.

"Is she fine?", another followed after her with a bucket and mop ready to clean up my mess.

"Don.... don't worry I will clean..", I gag after saying those words.

"Where is the bathroom?", Thulani takes me into his arms.

"Far end left", He moves away from the table with me in his arms eyes over us that moment.

We get into the bathroom and the nearest was the handicapped bathroom and he puts me down and I get to vomit inside the toilet.

"Did you eat something bad?", He asks.

"No, I don't remember", I say after vomiting my left over breakfast in there.

"Should we go to the doctor just to make sure you are okay?", He asks.

"Yes please", I say and he lightly smiles.

"Should I get you more water?"

"I need to rinse my mouth", I say.

“Okay do you feel better?”

“Yes”,I do feel better.

He helps me up and then we get to flush the toilet and leave the handicapped bathroom and go to the sink so that I can wash my mouth and rinse it too. We got out of the bathroom and they have already cleaned up my mess and out a slippery warning sign. Rethabile was seated waiting for us. She stands up when she sees us approaching.

“Mvelo are you okay?”,She asks.

“I don't know. The doctor will tell us”,I say.

“It might be something minor”,She says.

“It might be”

“Let's go”,Thulani says and we leave the restaurant. As we are leaving he quickly passes by a supermarket and we wait for him a bit.

He comes back holding 6 Powerades and 3 energy bars of different flavours. He opens one for me and hands it to me and I thank him. We go to the car and leave our little day trip and now we are heading to our doctor. We get inside the car and Thulani helps me in like I am really sick and he even buckles me up too. This reminds me of when we first met and he used to do this almost everyday. He still does it but I would like to buckle myself from time to time thank you very much. He goes around the car and gets in and he checks Rethabile if he is buckled and then starts the car and we leave the mall soon.

The cold air from the air conditioner is keeping me from being as nauseated as I was before.

The wait as we didn't have an appointment was not as bad. Rethabile as reading magazines just to keep herself occupied and that she can also let time pass by faster.

"Nomvelo Mzimela", I lift my head up from Thulani's lap and I get up and I am led inside the room.

The doctor gives me a warm smile.

"Good day, thank you", he thanks the lady who has led me here.

"You may have a seat", He gestures in front of me.

"Thank you", I sit down.

"What seems to be the problem?", He asks.

"I felt sick today. I even vomited and I am worried that it might be something serious. I do clean my body and system as much as I can so I want to know if maybe I am catching something that I am not aware of and treat it early."

He chuckles.

"I see, let's see what we are working with here"

He asks me a few questions and he asks me to get on the bed and does some simple check up on me and he asks to poke my stomach and I nod. He does that for a few moments with a slight frown on his face and he then smiles.

“What is it?”, I ask.

“I think I have figured out what maybe causing your sickness”, I am so very confused but I am glad he found it.

—

I walk out of the doctor's room feeling a bit happy but somber at the same time. I do not really know how to feel at the moment and I have been in there for far too long too. My eyes are a bit puffy and red mainly because I had been crying since I discovered what is making me feel sick.

I am holding onto a prescription slip that is in my hands and also a little envelope too. Thulani stands up when he sees me and Rethabile puts down her magazine and they both stare at me.

“Mvelo are you okay?”, She asks. I nod my head and sniff a bit.

“Yes I am okay”

“Then why does it seem like you were crying? did the doctor say you are dying?”, She asks and my heart skips a beat but I giggle at her.

“No nana”, I am avoiding eye contact for a while with the waiting Thulani.

“Oh what did the doctor say then?”.

I finally set my eyes on him and he is waiting for whatever that was said inside with patience but you can see that he is a bit impatient and wants to know immediately what is wrong with me if there is something wrong with me.

“I’m...I’m”,The words seem to be stuck in my throat. I wallow.

“What is it Themba lami?” ,It soothes me when he says that.

He steps closer to me in a way to comfort me and be ready to do so.

“I’m pregnant” I say as my hands fiddle with the things that are in my hands.

“You...you are pregnant?” ,I nod my head as he asks me that.

“Oh my God Mvelo this is the best news!” ,Rethabile jumps off her seat.

I turn my attention back to Thulani who is still in disbelief.

“I..I can't believe this” ,he says and I hand the envelope to him and he takes it in his hands.

He opens it and then looks at the black and white photos of the little foetus. His hands become Shakey a bit and Rethabile asks to see and she gets to take the photos. He attacks me with a hug and lays kisses on my neck.

“Ngiyabonga Mkami...Ngiyabonga Kakhulu(Thank you my wife, thank you so much)” ,He says and I wrap my arms around him. Whatever that I had in mind all gone as I hear the happiness and joy radiating within my husband's voice.

“I am happy too”,I feel emotional at that moment as I say that.

He breaks the hug and picks me up and I squeel as he gives me kisses and waiting clients are cheering on us. I break the kiss.

“The people Ntaka”

“Cha mama angikaze ngijabule kanje empilweni Yami(I have never been this happy before in my life). You make me happy”,He says.

“We are going to be parents”,He chuckles and the disbelief in his voice is there. Like he cannot process the news and let it sink in within him.

“I will give you anything you want baby”,He says and I laugh.

“Let’s go home please”

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

I heard a knock on the door and I wouldn't have went to open it if Lange was not here. I open the door and Nkongo appears with her son and my daughter behind her.

“Mama!”,My little girl rushes to me and I take her into my arms.



I hold her a bit tightly as I take her in.

“Hello baby”,I say trying not to get emotional there.

“Daddy said you were sick”,She says.

“Yes I was but I am better now”,She gives me a kiss on the cheek and Nonkonzo's son is already waiting next to me for his turn of hugs and kisses and short conversations. He is not much of a talker of which is a character he did not get from either of his parents but I think he took it from his grandfather and Thulani. Thulani hardly speaks with people unless he knows you even so he speaks too much with Nomvelo and is silent with the rest of us which makes it not easy to get to know him well.

“Hey boy how are you?”,I ask.

He falls into my arms and I hug him too. Nonkonzo is silently watching us.

“Won't I be let in?”,She says with a hint of an attitude behind it.

I understand that she dislikes me because I am with her brother and we are married and have a child together. She should get over her childish act.

“Don't come into my house to disrespect my wife and before you get inside this place you better make sure that attitude stays outside the door”,Lange says.

Nonkonzo Huff's and I move out of the way to let her in and she walks inside.

I always wondered why she was able to get to other people but she has always felt intimidated by her brother more. I thought she respects her brother more than her husband but that is not the case. She fears her brother in a way.

“I am here to drop of the princess”,She says.

“Thank you so much”

“Mmmh, you are welcomd she is my niece”,She says.

“Would you like some juice?”,I ask trying to move to the kitchen. Lange is watching us.

“No thank you. We have to get going. I have to meet up with Qophelo”,she says.

“Oh okay”,She turns around.

“Good bye”,She leaves the house with her son quickly.

That was very awkward. Lange goes to close the door and I tell my daughter to go and change in her bedroom and she runs off down the passage and disappears there.

“Why is your sister always fearing you?”,I ask.

“I am older than her”,He says.

“No mam it cannot be that. Ingi fears you too the same way Nkonzo does and it is not out of respect. Nonkonzo respects your father and Qophelo and when it comes to you it is like you poses fear over them”,I say.

“I don't know then”,He shrugs his shoulders.

“Maybe unesinyama nje engingasazi(Maybe you have a dark cloud that I don't know)”,I say and he chuckles.

“You would know trust me”,He comes and places his hands around my waist and kisses my cheek.

“Don't overthink nothing”,He says.

I look at him. His phone rings and he takes it out of his sweat pants, he looks at it and he looks at me for a brief moment.

“I need to take this”,He says moving away from me.

“If by any chance that is your side chick tell her and yourself that you have a crazy wife who knows how to work a knife on human flesh”,I say moving from the living room.

“I will tell her that baby”,He chuckles and I look at him shaking my head.

Kucabanga ukuthi ngiyadlala lokhu(This one thinks that I am joking).

I go and check on my daughter.

## Chapter 36

I woke up this morning feeling about weary and tired. I cannot wait to get back to working and all I have to do is just wait for my team to come back soon. Yes I came back earlier than them mainly because I just wanted to be home and also Rethabile visiting us as well. I get out of the bed and I make my way to the bathroom as I am pressed. I get there and I do my business. After that I go and wash my hands and brush my teeth and wash my face before I make my way out of the bathroom. I am quiet hungry, my mind wouldn't let me eat as it was stuck in many thoughts mainly this newly discovered pregnancy being the alarm bell of everything in my head. I get to the living room and I find Thulani in the kitchen all fresh making some breakfast while whistling. He woke up on the right side of the bed this morning. The brighter side if I should say.

“Good morning”, I say and he looks at me and the smile on his face forms and it gets wider.

“Good morning my beautiful baby”, He moves from the island and he comes towards me and gives me a perk.

“How are you feeling this morning?”, he asks.

“Okay, just tired. You seem happier”, I say.

“I am and it is all because of you”, I giggle.

“What did I do?”, I ask.

“You came into my life that is what you did.”, He says and he stares into my eyes.

“Is Rethabile still asleep?”, I ask.

“Yes, I made some breakfast for you.”,He pulls me around the counter and he gets a high chair for me and helps me onto it and he comes and sits next to me.

“This looks so good”,I say.

“I didn't include eggs because I heard that some woman cannot take the smell of it”,I smile and look at him then lean to kiss his cheek.

“Thank you so much Ntaka. I love this”,I say.

We start eating and talking here and there in between. We get stuck in our little bubble and Rethabile to be forgotten that she is here as well. Well until she woke up and she had her breakfast while I cleaned. Thulani left for work after that, as much as he is now the CEO but he also has to be hands on at work that much though he is more flexible. Rethabile helps me with cleaning too then we go and take a bath in different bathrooms. I get done and I wear a dress and my slippers and I go to the living room and I sit myself on the couch and I open the TV and search for fashion shows and I watch them. I do aspire one day to be this well known. With years my dreams go bigger and bigger. Yes I persue them at a late stage in my life but I don't think now I can give up on them.

“Mvelo”,Rethabile sets herself next to me and she rests her head on my lap.

“Yes baby”.

“Since now you are pregnant how far are you and what did the doctor say the baby is?”,She looks at me and I giggle and run my fingers on her head.

“I am only 2 months and I can't tell the gender of the baby”,I say.

“Ah and I thought maybe this might be a baby you and Malume got in Paris”,She giggles and I hit her with a cushion.

"What do you know about that?"

"We learn it in Life orientation and I am 16 too"

"Your father will not like this"

"I know but one day he has to know I am growing",she says.

"Well for now you are still a child",She huffs.

"I wish the baby is a boy",She says.

"You want it to be a boy?",I ask.

"Yes, I have a sister from Dad's side and she is not a nice fella",She says.

"And if it is a girl?",I ask.

"I can train her to be nice",I laugh.

"Oh Well that can work as well"

We watch the TV together talking about meaningless things and it gets my mind off things too.

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

Just some time ago I discovered from my wife that the possibility of her being pregnant is less, I wouldn't lie and say that I didn't feel shattered. I did but also I saw that I love this woman beyond the desire of me wanting to have a child of our own. It hasn't been much of a problem with me not having a child since Mphokopheli. I needed the time to heal from the detachment I had to do with him and knowing Rethabile too made me feel like there is an important role I am playing in the life of a growing child.

Now my wife is pregnant with our first ever child.

Our child that is and I don't know how to feel. I feel like since I have heard of these news I have been engulfed with excitement and happiness. Yes I am have been through this experience before but this feels like a new thing to experience too.

I am now distracted from my work and I pick up my phone and dial my brother's number. Nqubeko and I have always been close, I guess it came with the fact that he is the second born and he is behind me before the mix came alone after. His phone rings a few times before he answers it.

“Ntaka”

“My wife is pregnant”, I say.

“What?”

"We are going to have a child, I am going to be a father",It feels good to say that.

"Wow! Congratulations, I am sure you are happy",he says.

"I am, I really am.",I say.

"How does your wife feel? You have to take care of her and you do know that depression after birth can occur and you need to be prepared for anything",he says.

"I will",I say.

"Buy baby books and research all that you can. She will go crazy after some time just understand that it is your child that is doing that to her",He says.

"Yes I know",I say.

"How far along is she?",he asks.

"She is about 2 months"

"I suggest you don't tell anyone until she starts showing",He says.

"Won't umah be on my head if I don't say anything"

"She will live

just let Nomvelo get through her first trimester"



“Okay I will”,I say.

“Congratulations again, welcome to fatherhood Ntaka”,I smile.

“This feels great”

“It will feel better with time. By baby number 2 you will feel the most heat”,He says.

“I am still on baby number 1 let me focus on that”,He chuckles.

“I am just saying. Keep scoring”

“Definetly”,We speak some more until we hang up from the call.

I call Nomvelo after and it rings a few times and she answers.

“Malome”,Rethabile asnwers.

“Where is...”,She cuts me.

“She is busy vomiting in the toilet. All your breakfast, it didn't sit well with her in her stomach. Your baby doesn't like it”,I don't know if I should feel worried or focus on what Rethabile said.

“I am coming back home”,I say.

“Oh here she is”,The is shuffling and I hear my wife's soft voice.

“Ntaka”

“Baby are you okay?”

“Yes I am, I just vomited. The doctor said it's normal”,She says.

“How are you feeling now?”,I ask.

“My throat is a bit sore but I will go and have some yohgurt maybe don't worry about me”

“I will be right there okay?”

“Ntaka, please don't worry about me. If I get worse I will drive myself to the doctor”,This doesn't sit well with me.

“Okay baby but at 11 I am coming”

“Okay, I love you”,She says.

“I love you too baby”,she hangs up after that. Maybe I shouldn't be worrying. I mean it is normal but I just want to make things a bit easy for Nomvelo too.

NONKONZO MVELASE

I don't want to lie. I really hate the fact that Nomvula is married to my brother. I have never wished for any of my friends to marry him. I love my brother, I wouldn't say I hate him no but I do have some fear over him. Growing up my mother was the breadwinner at home and when Lange was "grown" enough he started being involved firstly in smoking. It escalated to him doing bad things. My brother has been in jail before, he knows how it is like in there trust me.

He always seeked respect from anyone he associates himself to and he hates disrespect the most. That is why I can never project mostly how I am to him as he will eat my head off that I know. As married and a mother I am to my son he will eat me up if he wants too. One thing though I loved about his doings was the money, it got me through university at some point but then it placed trauma when police would come knocking wanting him. Being searched and having to go through those procedures being taken in for questioning because he went missing while he did a crime. He was wanted. Nomvula married the better version. The one who left that life and was now into doing his plumbing business. Over the years my brother's business hasn't grown as much as I thought it would be but baby steps I guess. Nomvula maybe my friend but she is not the type of woman I would want my brother to marry. She is rough around the edges and she is not wife material if you ask me. She fights and back chats and she is a ratchet version of my brother.

A knock on the door disturbs me from my thoughts and I look there and see Qophelo walking in with a bouquet of roses in his hands. I stand up and smile. My husband is the sweetest man I could ever ask for.

"Baby what are you doing here at this time?" I ask.

"I thought I should bring these for you myself", he says and I take the bouquet into my hands and I go around the desk and kiss his lips.

"Thank you Ntaka", I say.

“Ntaka is Thulani ”,He chuckles.

One thing I never understood is that why is his older brother the one who gets to be called by their clan name.

“I still don't understand this thing of yours”

“It is a sign of respect”,I so badly want to roll my eyes but I won't.

“Well...” ,I smile and smell my roses.

LANGELIHLE MVELASE

I step into the shack and the first thing I get to step on is his hand and I remove my shoe of his hand and walk further inside the shack. They are cleaning up the place now but you can see the blood splatter.

“Mtsengise Leh bhari(Show him this fool)”,Costa says behind me to one of his guys and the guy takes out his head from the bag and I smile.

I turn around and I face him. I give him a hand shake.

“Dankie nja yami”

“You know I am fond of you and would do anything for you”,He says.

“Now let's talk about the payment”,I say as I shove my hands in my pant pockets.

“Ima kancane angiyifuni imali(wait a bit, I don't want money)”,He says.

I knew that. I knew he wouldn't take that as payment.

“What do you want?”,I ask.

“Reserve bank”,He says and I clench my jaw.

“You know I cannot do that”,I say.

“You can, I know you. You are good in action and have the brains for it. Just this once we need the money and we haven't been able to execute a proper mission without you”,He says.

“I said I won't do it”

“R36 Million. That is the prize”,He says.

I keep quiet for a moment.

“I will see”,I say and I move past him and move out of the shack going to my car.

If I do this I am going to be putting myself in jepordy. Jail is the least of my worries. My wife is, she will kill me first before the police get to me.

My phone pins and it is her.

“Please bring some garlic rolls”,It says.

I sigh, I have subjected myself to this life. I owe them. I knew he would want something so extreme. I can excute this mission I just have to make sure I am not caught or Nomvula Zungu will kill me and cry at my funeral.

## Chapter 37

As to his words Thulani came and he has some fruits and everything that might be certified as being healthy. Rethabile has been asking me constantly of I don't feel like vomiting again and I told her not to worry. Well she is worrying of which I think that Thulani might have out the poor child up to that.

Rethabile went to take a nap as she said she felt "Tired" and needed some rest mainly because of school and how hectic it was for her of which I understood and let her be. Thulani is in the kitchen doing whatever that he is doing there and I am simply watching some TV while a little fleece is over my feet. He comes through from the kitchen carrying a bowel in his hands and he hands it over to me.

"What is this?", I ask taking it.

"Something you can down", He says and I thank him.

"You didn't have to drop work and rush for something that is normal", I say.

"I know but I want to Mvelo", I smile.

"Okay then Mzimela. I will not stop you"

"Please don't"

He takes my feet and puts them on his lap and starts massaging them gently.

He is happy, more than excited for this baby that is yet to come and I do not want him ever feeling less than what he is feeling right now.

"I was thinking",He says while focused on what he is doing.

"What is it?",I ask.

"That we tell everyone else's about the pregnancy when you are showing that way we can get through the first month's together",He says.

"I do not mind",He smiles.

"I love you Mbelo",He kisses my legs.

"I love you more Thulani",I say

"I like this",I say pointing to the bowel"

"Really?",I nod my head as I am eating.

It doesn't feel like I will vomit it back up any time so I really do like it honestly speaking.

I carry on eating as I watch TV while my husband is giving me a good massage.

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE



I need to get back to work very soon, this sitting at home and doing minimal work is absolutely not something I like doing. Yes some days I do feel like not showing up at work and just lock myself in my house but I just miss waking up in the morning and preparing everyone for their day while I too myself and preparing for mine as well and taking those innocent showers with my husband that sometimes do not turn out to be as innocent. Our daughter was an unexpected child. I will not lie and say we planned to have her, no we never did and she is a product of a wedding night I should say. That is why I say she is unexpected and unplanned. I have never to .have a child in such a manner but non the less we love our child whether she was planned or not that is why Langelihle do not have another. Child. We feel that our daughter is enough for us and we do not need more kids in our lives.

I just came from the nearest shopping centre. I needed to buy some lunch box ingredients as I have ran out of ideas and things on what I should do for my child's lunch box. That is also one of the things I would trade anything and anyone into doing it for me. It does get tiresome at some point and I feel like giving my daughter money to buy food at school but then I think of the enjoyment and love she must feel when I pack her one of her favourite things every once in a while. I get to the house and I park my car on the drive way. I don't know if I will still go out to fetch my child or Lange will fetch her. I will have to ask him. I take our the things I bought and I go inside the house and I head to the kitchen I can hear shower sounds and I quickly take a knife from the draw and have my phone out incase anything happens. My heart is beating very fast. I make my way through the passage and the bathing sounds are coming from the main bedroom. I feel like I am going to throw up my heart in any minute now.

I get closer and the water has stopped pouring. I stand near the door and it soon opens d u get frightened.

“Lange don't you ever do that again. I will stab you by mistake next time. What are you doing here at this time and why are you taking a bath?”,I ask all of this at once.

He holds onto the Navy blue towel around his waist as some beads of water are on his shoulders and part of his neck.

“Sorry, I was working and I got myself dirty”,He says and I frown.

“You have been acting suspicious lately.”,I say and he frowns and tilts his head to the side a bit while looking at me.

“Suspicious how?”

“Having weird calls”,I say.

“It is nothing you should worry about”,He says and steps forward to kiss my forehead and moves to the wardrobe.

“It better be”,I say and he ignores me for a while.

I watch him as he takes out shorts and he gets to lotion and dress himself after that. He turns to me after that.

“Don't you ever think I would cheat on you. I am not like that”,he says.

“Ngeke sazi phela when you think you know someone”,He chuckles.

“I have always told you this”,I just look at him.

He steps closer to me.

“You know I love you right?”,You cannot miss the coldness in his voice but the warmth displayed in his eyes calms me down.

“I know”, I say and he holds my cheek and gives me a kiss that I voluntarily return to him leaving me fuzzy, hot and bothered that moment.

He breaks the kiss slowly and he looks at me.

“Let’s never fight about this”, I find myself nodding to what he is saying.

“Stop behaving out of order nawe”, I say.

“I will not, I promise and I am not behaving out of order. You know I am a man who works with clients”.

“Yes I know”

“Are you scared?”, he asks as he caresses me.

“Yes”, I say softly.

“What are you scared of?”, he asks soothingly though his voice comes with its depth.

“A lot of things”, I say.

He nods and perks my lips.

“You shouldn’t be, you are Nomvula Mvelase”, My heart just melts at the sound of that.

I wrap my arms around his neck and he picks me up then kisses my neck. A part of me has always asked itself why didn't I meet Lange earlier but another part of me reminds me that timing. It could've been that the time we met was the perfect time for us.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

I didn't vomit and I was happy that I felt better and that I was able to eat. The day was just almost over and I have been taken care of like I am an egg that is about to break by Thulani. He even opted to cook supper too at that moment and forgot that he was here to see me just for a little while before going back to work but ended up staying here and taking care of me. I think of all the things he told me he wishes to do once I am pregnant and I just laugh on my own but when I set my eyes on that man I feel myself falling in love with him all over again.

"Mvelo, Malome is asking if you need anything?", Rethabile says bringing me out of my thoughts.

"No baby I am fine", I am going to be fat in no time.

"Oh okay then. Food will be served soon", She says and turns around and goes back to the kitchen.

She has been helping Thulani with the cooking and everything else in the kitchen while I was told to relax on the couch and lazy around.

My phone rings and I quickly take it from my feet and I answer it.

“Hello”

“Mrs Mzimela!”

“Aneni how are you? When are you guys coming back?”,I ask.

“Tomorrow we will be in Johannesburg so do not worry”,She giggles.

“I am sure you guys are having a blast there”

“We sure are but time for fun has come to an end now.”

“Don’t worry once we get back to work we might be invited to be part of another great show”,I say.

“Yes that will be soon even”,I see Rethabile walking ahead of me.carrying a damp cloth on a plate and Thulani comes after her with a tray.

“I was just checking up on you Ma'am ”

“Thank you Aneni I am fine. Do call when you land”

“I will, bye”,I hang up and Rethabile gives me the warm cloth to wipe my hands then she moves after I am done and.i am served food.

“This is some 5 star treatment”,I say.

“Only the best for you”,I giggle.

I take my food and I wait for a perk and he lands one on my lips.

“Thank you baby”,I say.

“You are welcome Sthandwa sami”,His phone rings and he asks Rethabile to take the tray from him and she does.

He answers the call there and there.

“Hello”

I carry on watching my TV. Soon Rethabile joins me and Thulani moves away as he is still on call.

I let Rethabile change to what she wants to watch and we watch that. After some time Thulani comes back and he finds a spot on another couch.

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I have had my fair share of family drama especially from the Gwala's before but one thing I am not looking forward to right now is being in the presence of my sister in law's. The sister wives one. Yes those ones. My husband's sisters are an amazing duo.Both of them it is just the ones married into the family. You would swear they were born into the Mzimela family when they are not.

It has been over 2 weeks since I found out that I am pregnant and everything else that came with it and two weeks that my husband has displayed nothing but overjoy in his mood.if it was up to him I would be sitting the whole day doing nothing but waiting to receive anything I get and I am sure when I start to show it is either he will start working from home and so do I or he will hire someone to take care of me just me.

We are heading over to his family home. His mother is the one who invited the whole clan mainly for her 60 something birthday party that her husband has planned for her. She is not the one who's pocket is getting damaged but she is the one who is inviting and ordering everyone to be present or all hell will break loose.

Considering the fact that I am from a township and Thulani grew up in a more rural type of homestead if I may say though it was quite a challenge to adjust to his family way of doing though they are modernised but still it was challenging but now I have the hang of things over the years.

The car moves inside the yard as the gate is automatically opened and Thulani drives in. My heart is just beating fast for no apparent reason and I see that already some of his brother's have arrived that means that they left early from where they come from.

He parks the car and I take off the seat belt. He hops out of the car and he comes towards my side and opens the door for me and helps me out of the car. That is another thing that Thulani has assigned himself into doing. Something's I do not find them necessary but to him they are so I will just let him be. Rethabile went back home and I would say that we had a very well stay with her but the house does get lonely at times.

He closes the door behind me and we make our way towards the house hand in hand.

"Are you okay?", Thulani asks.

"Yes I am fine Ntaka", He smiles.

He knocks on the door and we get inside the house. I see that Nqubeko and Qophelo are already here meaning their wives are here.

"Bafo", His brother's greet him.

My mother in law appears.

“Nomvelo come here my child!”,She says and I go to her leaving my husband with his siblings. She squeezes me into a hug.

“Ngizwile ukuthi ubuya phesheya manje usumkhulu Leh(I heard that you come back from overseas and that you are big there)”,I giggle.

“I am not that big yet”,I say.

“Well I told the ladies that I have a stokvel with that my daughter is a big fashion designer in Paris,they are jealous of me always have been futhi”,She says and pulls me away from these men.

“You are glowing mmmh”,She says and give me an eye as we are heading towards the bedrooms.

“Things are okay”,I say.

“Or something might be okay in there”,she points at my stomach.

I just giggle. I am not showing yet so no one should be knowing.

“Yazi I bought something for you”,she says.

“I also have your outfit in the car”,She smiles widely.

“You are such a star. That is why you are my favourite”,She finally says it.



I have always knew she liked me more than my other sister wives. Yes she likes the others but everytime she sees me or I am visiting and everyone else is here she attends to me first before the rest or even longer and gets to steal me away from Thulani using the line "You sleep next to Nomvelo I do not", As her way for Thulani to let her be and take me away.

I love my mother in law though. As much as she talks too much at times but she is a wonderful sweet woman too.

We get to one of the spare rooms and she opens the door and there is a box on the bed and she quickly attends to it.

"Close the door behind you", She says and I do so.

I go towards her and she opens the box and it has some nice shoes.

"I saw this the other day and I thought about buying this for you to wear with one of your amazing dresses", She mentions.

"These shoes are beautiful mah", I say.

"I know. That's why I bought them", I smile warmly.

Makuthiwa ngiphethwe Kahle (when they say I am taken care of) in this family I am.

"Thank you so much mah. May God bless you", I say.

"He already did. He has blessed me greatly", she says.

“You know Nomvelo”,She sits me down on the bed and we look at each other.

“Yes mah”

“There was a time I thought I would loose Thulani, I heard about the squabble between him and Qophelo about you but I have you the benefit of a doubt and since then I see how much you have been treating my son and it absolutely brings warmth into my heart so as the way he treats you. I trust you more than I trust anyone here as you have been able to safe guard his heart. Thulani is a softie when it comes to love he doesn't seem that tough anymore when he is like that and Mntanami I want to thank you for being with him and bringing some sort of meaning to his life. You are all that he talks about well I am guilty of doing that too”,We both laugh.

“Kubonga mina mah(I am thank full)”,I say.

“Now rest here a bit. I will bring you something to eat you need to be filled. Don't take any food from anyone else beside me and Thulani okay?”,I nod my head.

“Yes mah”,She kisses my hand and she stands up and walks out of the room.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

It had been torture for the last few years seeing my brother and his wife. Yes as promised I had stayed away but with time I learnt to remove the feelings I have for Nomvelo and it has never been the same for me ever again. Nonkonzo and I have been soldiering on in our marriage though we may have our

days but we are trying our best to pull through in our marriage too and sometimes it has been draining and straining as well. After we got married I wanted us to have a child of which Nonkonzo was not happy to hear about but she did it and made it all possible in her books to have a child. To her it was a bonus when we had our son as she felt that there will never be a need to have another child as I already have an heir now. A male one for that matter. I love my child but still a part of me wishes to have more children too. You may never know with Nonkonzo for all we know she might have removed her womb without me knowing too just so she wouldn't get pregnant.

My mother asked for me to go to my father supermarket to get something's she wants and as the young one who is here I have to run some errands though I am a whole 37 year old married man. I grab my car keys and I make my way out going to my car. I hop in and the gate is opened and I start the car and drive off. The gravel road is not so gravel anymore but I think my father has something to do with it too. He was once a councillor for this very place and there are alot of things he improved too.

In just a matter of time I get to the supermarket and I hop out of my car. I make my way inside and I go to get what my mother needs.

I see a familiar face that I have not seen in years.

“Bonga”,I found myself saying that name.

She turns around and looks at me and her eyes lay upon me in shock to seeing me.

“Qophelo?”,She hasn't changed one bit.

Her voice is still that low temper that seems to be hoarse when it is not. I move from where I am and I reach her and she is just below my shoulder. She is still that short woman who was chubby enough for her small framed body. Her yellowish cheeks are still plump and her lips a bit dark but that is what completes her look with her beaded big eyes too.

She has always been mistaken for being mixed race when both of her parents were pure black people. They are both dark skinned even but I guess she took after her grandmother as she was the same as her from what I remember.

She still has that sweet powdery scent that she used to have while we were young.

“How are you?” I clear my throat after that.

“I am g..good”, She shyly smiles.

She has not changed one bit.

“I have not seen you in...” She cuts through my sentence.

“15 years”, She says softly and bites her bottom lip softly.

“Yes, when you left this place”, I chuckle.

That pain I felt before comes back rushing and strikes like the thunder. Something I didn't think I would be feeling at this moment as I thought I have “moved on”.

“Well I heard you got married. Congratulations”, She says holding tightly onto her basket as her fingers have turned pale”

“Yes”

“I am happy for you”, I don't want her to be. A part of me do not want her to be happy for me.

"And you?", I ask.

"I am divorced. That's why I am here", She says.

"Mmmh", I nod my head.

I won't lie, that sounded like music to my ears.

"Can I have your number?", I ask.

"What for?", She asks.

"To call you Bonga, what are number's for?", She giggles.

She does give it to me and I save it.

"Don't call too much. I don't want to be in trouble with your wife", She says.

"I won't", I definitely will be.

"Bye", She walks away from me and I watch her disappear once again.

I just shake my head and move to take what I am here for and then I go and pay for it. My father appears behind me.

“I saw Bonga today”,He says.

By the way he is mentioning it, I think he knows that I saw her.

“I saw her too”,He smiles.

“Mmmh”,He pats my shoulder and moves away.

# Chapter 38

BONGANI ZONDI

I have always been one to be different from my family especially when it came to everyone else. I was to be much fairer in skin colour and my hair would be much softer and most probably looking like a plump short smurf in the process expect being blue. Even my name. It was meant to be for a boy. Well I was expected to be one but when my mother gave birth to me I came out this yellow big eyed girl with the darkest lips they have ever seen. Well you would assume that I smoke when I have never smoked ever in my whole entire life.

Growing up I behaved more masculine than feminine hence why I had a fair number of guy friends.

I got along with everyone, I wasn't much out and about but people just loved knowing me and I didn't mind at all. I even got along with the Mzimela sisters and that is how I got to know about their brother's more especially Qophelo and Hlubi as I was more close to them. Well I would say I was closer to Qophelo and we squabbled a lot with Hlubi, at some point I thought we didn't like each other but stayed being friends too.

Qophelo is a nice person once you get to know him. The bratty him is gone and you get to know him well. He liked me once, should I say but I never liked him in that way. We sorted out our difference and we stayed true friends. We have never been in a relationship nor tried anything romantic nothing at all we were just good friends and up until I left and so did he to pursue his dream of being a business man like his father ways of which he did like his father did.

I left this place at a very young age. Around 18 if I am not mistaken and that time I was going to be part of another family. No one knew that I was getting married. So did I until the negotiations came. It was a mandatory and traditional thing that happened in our family that arranged marriages were a thing in our family. Little did I know when I got married that I was already pregnant. My husband and I knew that

Sqalo was not his child but he put himself in a position where he father's him and claim to be his father and it didn't turn out the way I thought it would be. That is why I am here. Back home with my son.

It breaks my heart to see him the way he is at times and I would say it took me a while to get out of that toxic marriage.

I have dished up the food that I cooked for my son and also my parents. My father was the most unhappy one about our return and my mother chose to not speak about it and just keep to herself and not say anything to me. I have not been home in years but surely they benefited from me being away for all these years. I mean I got married to my mother's ex boss's son who thought that if their son married a rural woman then he would have someone to control which was true. It turned out to be that. If I didn't get out of that marriage I do not think I would've survived any longer staying there.

My mother makes her way inside the kitchen and she looks at me.

“Your child has been making noise since morning”,She says like he is some new born.

“I know mah he just needs time”

“This is not a rehabilitation centre Bonga I do not understand why did you leave your husband to be here?!”

“Mah I was abused emotionally everyday and when it started getting physical I had to get out of there. Sqalo is too young to loose me”

“Young?he is 15 years old and you like babying him that is why he will never grow up!”,She throws her hands in the air and I look at her.

“Go back to that man already he had accepted your bustard child!”,She says with anger laced in her voice and I flinch at the word “Bustard”.



I swallow as I look at my mother feeling my eyes getting glossy.

“Mama Sqalo is not a bustard child”, I say softly feeling the pain of my mother saying that about my child.

“That is not Zondi's child and he doesn't look like him. What were you hoping for these years?”, she asks.

I was hoping that this never comes out and Sqalo looks like me the most but he turned out to look like his father the most.

He was just a one night mistake that I didn't think I would be left with. A result of me falling into temptation with his biological father. He doesn't know, he never knew that after that night before he left for university he left something in me that grew to a 15 year old version of him.

We hear noises that are coming from my bedroom.

“Nx”, She says and moves away from me.

That is the longest conversation we have held since I came back here over 2 months ago.

I rush to my bedroom and I get inside and I find him looking at me as he is laid on the bed. Tied to it as possibly can so that he cannot escape. I have had my fare share of days where I wanted to let him go from this hold but also I thought of saving him from being a stastic from drug use.

I get get to one of the bed side and he turns his head to look at me.

“Mah please let me go”, His voice breaks my heart. His plea is not as aggressive as it was when he was hooked into these drugs.

I can't afford to take him to rehab, I always depended on My husband for years. I didn't even get the chance to sore and go to university. He hated that idea and reminded me that I had to take care of Sqalo of which I have been.

“How are you feeling today?”, I ask.

“I am not feeling itchy today”, He says and I nod.

“I will let one of your hands free”, I say and I do so. Seeing the red marks on his pale(ish) skin breaks my heart. I quickly remove the other hand from its chain and let him go from the rest of his body.

I take his food and he offers to feed himself. His hands are shaking as he takes the plate from my hands.

“I am doing all of this because I love you Sqalo”, I say.

“I know Bonga”, He says and I nod.

He tries to feed himself but with the way his hands are shaking he seems to be failing.

“Let me feed you”, I take the plate and take a spoon full of for him and sigh before I try to feed him.

He obliges and does not even give me a hard time in doing it. He hasn't asked for a fix in the past two weeks of which I think is progress.

My ex husband is the one who got him hooked on drugs purposely mainly because Sqalo was starting to fight for me and “Filling ideas” of me leaving him of which he didn't want me to do but I ended up doing it. I might have thrown my life away but I do not want my child to do that and I had to put him first.

He chews on the tiny rice and beef that I have cooked and I smile looking at him. I run my fingers on his grown hair and I giggle.

“You look all grown now. You should cut your hair”,I say.

“I will”,I nod my head.

“Gogo has been saying some things when she comes in here”,my heart skips a beat.

What has my mother been saying to him?

“Let's finish this food”,I stare back that the plate trying to get some food for me to feed him.

“Bonga is Dad my dad?”,My heart comes to an honest stand still for a moment. I feel tears prickling my eyes but I look up to push them back before I stare at him.

“No, I am sorry”,I say softly.

I cannot lie to him.

Silence prevails the room. I put the plate next to him.

“I will go and make some juice for you”,I lightly smile before I make my way out of the room.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

I woke up to my husband holding onto me. When I rested I was done with eating after my mother in law fed me and told me to sleep as much as I want to and I didn't even shy away from that pass. I was alone in this room and now this man is next to me slightly snoring and seems to be enjoying his sleep rather too much. I try to remove myself from him and he holds me a bit tightly and brings me closer to him.

“Don't leave me”,He says.

“You are sleeping”

“Let's sleep together”

“I am tired of sleeping now baby”,He kisses my neck and let's me go.

I get off the bed and I wear my shoes.

“You are leaving me Mvelo?”,Argh this man.

“I want to interact with people Ntaka”

“I am one of the people, you can interact with me”,He says and I giggle.

“You know what I mean”

“Mmmmh”, I leave him in the room and find the bathroom.

I get there and I pee then I finish and flush the toilet before I go and wash my hands and rinse my mouth. I get out of the bathroom and I make my way to where I hear the noise from and it seems to be laughter and people talking I am sure that some of them have arrived as well.

“Oh Sis Mvelo how are you? I didn't see you”, Hlubi says and jumps to come and give me a hug.

“Hi Bhuti. How are you?”, I say.

“I am good, your husband doesn't visit me anymore ever since y'all took trips overseas”, Oh this overseas thing is a problem. First it was Rethabile then Mrs Mzimela and now this one.

“We will take you with next time”, I say.

“Yes you should. Vele he is single”, Gama comments and the brothers laugh.

“We will”, I then finish greeting everyone before I move to the kitchen and Nonkonzo and Xa what ever her name is and some of Thulani's sisters are in the kitchen seemingly sharing some wine.

“Hey sis Nomvelo. I didn't see you arrive”, I like Thulani's sisters. They are wonderful people.

“I was tired and I went to sleep”

“Noma ubuzitsela ngathi(Or you didn't like sitting with us)”,Nonkonzo says as she smiles.

“Mmmh no”,I go and get some food.

They carry on talking with each other and then I make some for Thulani as well before I take our food and turn to walk out of the kitchen. I would love to sit with them but the other two make me quiet uncomfortable especially Nonkonzo. It got worse ever since Nomvula got married, apparently to her brother so yeah. I got to the bedroom that Thulani is in and I open the lights and I go and sit next to him.

“Baby wake up and let's eat, I am tired of the people”,I say

“You left me Mvelo I am sleeping”,I shake him a bit.

“Please Ntaka we need to eat. I got food”,I say.

He sits up.

“Who made this food for you?”,He asks.

“I did”,He seems to relax.

“Why? What is wrong?”

I ask

“Nothing, it's just I don't trust my brother's wives”,He says.

“They cannot be that vile”

“In your situation we cannot take my risks”

“Does mah know that I am pregnant?”,I ask and he looks at me.

“No, I didn't tell her why?”,he asks.

“She said something is growing inside of me. Like she knows”,He looks at me.

“I will ask her what she knows”

“Older people know Ntaka they always do, I would be surprised. She knows a pregnant woman too well. I mean she has had 7 children and a few grand children”,I say.

“You might be right”,I nod my head.

I take his food first.

“Let's share your food first then we will share mine”

“Okay”,We start eating together.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

Seeing Bonga really made me happy. It brought back all the memories that we used to share. Yes she is a few years younger than us, my sisters and Hlubi but that didn't stop us from getting along with her. Something just draws you to her just to love her as a person. I tried once or twice to shoot my shot at her but I missed a couple of times and now thinking back to that I realise that I really was not into liking her romantically that much but much being infatuated by her. I went to the kitchen to check on my wife and she was having a conversation with the ladies in there. I went to her and kissed her cheek.

"Baby", She shyly says.

"Bhuti we know you are married but please go and spend some time with your other siblings", One of my sister's says.

"I can kiss my wife at anytime", Hlubi walks into the kitchen.

"Is there any cold water?", He asks.

"Check the fridge", Nqubeko's wife directs him and he gets them.

He pours the water in a glass and he drinks up.

"Bhuti please take your brother here he is disturbing us"

"I will leave relax.", I say.

"Guess who I saw today, I saw Bonga", I say and the three of them turn to me, Hlubi forgetting to leave the room but has a frown on his face.



“Bonga? I thought she left years ago”, Nonkonzo turns to one of my sister's.

“Who is she?”, She asks.

“It used to be a friend of ours”, I quickly clarify her.

She keeps quiet.

“Oh my god where did you see her?”, They ask.

“The super market. Dad's supermarket”

“I cannot believe it. I thought she was never coming back”, Hlubi leaves the room.

I kiss my wife's cheek.

“Ah nakhoke!”, They complain while she giggles.

“Okay let me leave you”, I say and I move away from them.

I go and join my brother's. Thulani has been locked up with Nomvelo since he heard that she is sleeping. He loves her more than I ever could.

“Where is Hlubi and Nqubeko?”, I ask.

“They both went outside.”, Nqubeko comes inside.

“Baba says that the goat has arrived”,My mother wants to make this birthday celebration bigger than it already is.

BONGANI ZONDI

The house already is in its darkest now and I am sure that my parents will retire early to bed. They always do so. I am reading a magazine while my son is sleeping next to me. I have treated his rope burns and I hope that in a few days it gets better. He is sound asleep as well.

A knock comes from my door and then it opens. I put my magazine aside.

“The gate is not locked”,My mother says.

“Didn't ubaba lock it when he came in?”,I ask.

“Are you talking back to me Bongani?”,I shake my head.

“No”,She scoffs and closes the door. I groan and Sqalo opens his eyes.

“Should I accompany you to close the gate?”,he asks.

“No it is fine. Rest”,He jumps off the bed and pulls his hoodie and wears it.

“Let's go”,I nod my head and get off the bed as well.

I wear my shoes and we go to the kitchen to take the gate key and lock then we walk outside. I get to the gate and this man didn't even bother closing it. I see a car across the street at a distance parked there. What made it more suspicious was the fact that it was in a distance, it starts and reverses slowly.

“Sqalo run to the house”,I say.

“Mah I can't leave you here”

“Now Sqalo”,I say and I pull the gate quickly while he rushes to stand near the door.

I close the gate and someone hops out of the car. I quickly try to lock the gate.

“Bonga”,Hearing his voice made me stop for a moment and look up.

He steps closer to the gate.

“Stand there, please”,I say and he does as told. He listens for the first time I have ever known him.

I turn to check on Sqalo and it seems that he has disappeared inside the house. my heart is beating fast from that scare.

He disobeys my order and comes closer. I lock the gate and move back.

“Please don't leave”

“What are you doing here?”,I ask.

“I just wanted to see you,I...I am sorry”,He says.

Something I have been waiting for years to hear yet he didn't have to utter those words in his life. He never wronged me.

“I have to go, my parents wouldn't want me standing here”,He buries his hands deep in his pockets and let's out sigh.

“Sure. I will call you”,He says and I move away from him and make my way inside the house.

I didn't expect this. I didn't expect to see him so soon.

## Chapter 39

Waking up to the noise inside the yard more especially the goat being slaughtered told me that it was time that I got up. My mother in law never expects us to wake up at a specific time. All of us for that matter and also she does not expect us wives to do duties alone. Everyone is involved even our husbands. She orders her children around more than she does to us and sometimes that is why Thulani doesn't like being home much because he knows that there are a lot of chores waiting for him more than me but when we are home with my family it is the other way around. I am the one slaving around and he gets to relax.

He is not here next to me so I get off the bed and I pull a gown and wear it over my night dress. I make the bed and I go and open the windows and curtains and then I pack everything away that was out of order. I then moved out of the bathroom and greeted a face that I am not so familiar with before moving to the bathroom and getting to pee before I wash my face and brush my teeth. I make it out of there and I bump into my mother in law when I am by the kitchen. The smell of the insides being cooked got to me today more than it has ever did before.

"Mvelo Mntanami good morning", She says.

"Good morning mah How did you...", I didn't finish my sentence as I started gagging.

"Are you okay?", She asks with concern.

"Yes I am okay...", I feel the vomit come up my mouth and I rush to the bathroom.

She follows behind me and luckily there was no one in the bathroom. I vomit inside and more comes from my throat. She comes and brushes my back.

"Take it all out. It's normal don't worry", She says so soothingly.

I get done and I pick up my head from the toilet and she flushes it for me and closes it. I get up from the floor and I go and rinse my mouth before I brush my teeth again.

“When were you and Thulani planning on letting us know of these big news?” ,She asks and I freeze there.

“Mah?”

“Don’t mah me Nomvelo. Were you guys even going to tell us that you are expecting?” ,she is calm but a pinch of hurt is there.

“Yes we were when I start showing mah. We just wanted to get through the first three months well” ,I say.

There is no use denying it anymore. She knows, I knew she knows.

“I hear you, I am happy that you guys are giving me more grandchildren” ,I faintly smile.

“I am happy too” ,She then has a slight frown on her face.

“What is wrong? You are not that ecstatic as I thought you would be?” ,She asks.

“I am happy mah it's just that something the doctor told me and it has me feeling fear ful for a moment.” ,I say.

“What it?” ,She goes and closes the door.

I sigh.

“When I got in that car accident with my twin sister I was told that the possibilities for me conceiving are low, below 50% chances.”,I sigh and she has sadness over her face.

“But God has given you the gift no doctor can predict”,She says.

“I know mah”,Tears prickle my eyes.

“Since I conceived I...I was given the option to do an abortion...”,she gasps and puts her hands over her mouth

“Or I will not make it after giving birth”,my voice is left shaking.

“Hayi Nomvelo! I...I don't know what to say”,She says.

“What is Thulani saying?”,She asks.

“I didn't tell him”,I say.

“You don't intend on doing so?”,she asks.

“To be quiet honest no mah. I know that it is wrong but this is the one thing I have been wanting to give to Thulani. The way he has been so happy ever since the news I don't want him to be put in a tight position where he chooses his blood or me”

“You may not be his blood Nomvelo but he will be left shattered”,Tears stream down our cheeks. She pulls me close to her.

“Please pray about this. Find a way to tell him, he needs to know”,She says.

“Please don't tell him.”,I say.

“I will not”,She says.

“I want to protect him mah, I want him to be happy. This is a gift I can give to him where we will experience something together”,I say.

“Is it worth it Nomvelo?Keeping secrets is not good.”she asks softly.

“For your son it always is worth it.”,I say and she sighs.

“I am sorry you are going through this”,I wish things were different but wishing would not help. Only God can help me at this point.

BONGANI ZONDI

I have always been a person who loves the kitchen mainly cooking I felt like I can get as creative as I possible van with food and I do love some food sometimes. I do not mind cooking,well here my mother



had assigned me to a lot of things to do as I cannot just sit and do nothing. I have not expected anything less. To them I have disappointed them so much in that manner. I do not know where my father has went but my mother is here. Sqalo walks inside the kitchen as I am washing the dishes and he looks a bit better than he did and that makes me smile. His tall self stands next to me and he hands his bowl to me as I take it.

“How are you feeling today?” I ask.

“Much better”, I smile.

“Now what will make you better is cutting that hair. I will go and buy a razor so that it can be done today”, I say.

“But it would look cool if I..”, I give him a look.

“Sure let's get me bald.”, I carry on washing the dishes.

“Mah”, I look up to him.

“Thank you, for taking care of me and running away from there”, My heart warms.

“You are my boy, I would do anything for you”, I say.

“Even get me that...”

“Now you are pushing it”, He laughs.

“Do you know why I named you Sqalosethu?” I ask.

“Because I was your beginning?” I pause for a moment.

“Yes and your father's too” I say.

“Which one? My step dad or real dad” He says.

“Sqalo!” I warn.

“Bonga you cannot avoid this” He says.

“Sqalo I am older than you”

“I need to know. I have to know about my real dad” He says and I sigh.

“He is one out of 6 children. He...he looks just like you. Talks without thinking sometimes just like you and...” I look up to him.

“You are tall just like him. The only thing you took from me was my fair skin colour and the hair texture, the rest is all him so if you want to know how he looks like just look at yourself through the mirror and you will know then. Your father and I used to be friends before we...” I pause.

“Before you broke the friendship” I nod my head.

“Yes” I put the last dish on the dish rack.

“What does he think about me?”,He asks.

“He...He doesn't know we have a child together. He left and so did I and I only found out about you when I was already married with Dad”,I say.

I turn to him.

“I am sorry”,I say.

“Would you allow me to meet him?”,he asks and I smile.

“Ofcourse I would. He is your father Sqalo”,He smiles.

“Thank you for this. I don't want to ask too much in one day”,I nod my head.

“That is fine”,I say.

“I am going outside to get some fresh air”,I nod my head and he walks out of the house using the kitchen door.

I drain the water in the sink and then I clean the sink before I can wipe it and leave it dry.

My mother walks inside the kitchen and she looks at me.

“Sawubona mah”,I say.

“The Zondi’s called. There will be a meeting in two weeks about you and your husband”,she says.

“Kodwa mah...”

“Are you protesting?”

“Yes I am. Think about me your daughter and Sqalo”

“You just have to obey your husband and the Mzimela looking child should be the least of your problems”,She says.

I huff, she is really getting on my nerves right now.

“Tomorrow we are going to Mamu’ Mzimela's 65th birthday and everyone is going”,She says.

“Do you hate me that much?”

“I don't hate you. Don't deny Sqalo in knowing his family”,She says.

“You know very well his father will fight me with him or either take him away from me and that is what you want so I can go back to your precious son in law!”,I throw my hands in the air and walk away from here.

“Yeyi Wena Bongani! That bastard child of yours is what is ruining your marriage!”,I stop my tracks and turn towards her.

“Mah refrain from calling my child a bastard otherwise you will know me”,I say.

"Are you threatening me?", I move away from her ignoring her and I go to my room.

I get inside and I start crying while seated on my bed. I hate that my son has endured such treatment not only from my own family but also my in laws and I hate that. I never wanted him to feel like he didn't need to be loved because he doesn't know who his real father is. I wipe my tears really quickly and I get off the bed and I make my way to my bag and I take out the Last R200 I have in my bag. I am going to use it to buy those razors. I have to find a plan to atleast leave this place okay with Sqalo. This is not the life he should be living. He should be like every other child. He should be in school right now but he is outside recovering from being a drug addict while his mother is on the run from her own abusive marriage. This is not the life he should be living.

I get outside the room and I leave the house. I see Sqalo seated under the tree eating a mango from one of my father's fruit trees.

"I am going to buy a razor I will be back", I say.

"Okay", he says and I get out of the gate and make my way to the nearest shop that I could possibly find and I do find one just about a few houses away from my home. I get to the shop and I ask for 4 razors and they give them to me and I give them the money.

They hand back the change and I thank them.

"Can I have also a slab of chocolate?", I ask. They give it to me and I pay for it. I thank them and I move away from the shop.

I put the coins inside of the paper money then I wrap it so that I do not lose the change.

I move from there and start walking home. A car comes and it slows down next to me before it speeds up a bit and stops a distance from me. A part of me recognise this car but another part of me is saying

that cars are the same. He hops out of the car and I swallow. His eyes set on me and they do not move as he makes his way towards me. I shy away from him and carry on walking.

“Sawubona Bonga(Hello Bonga)”,He says and places his hands in his short pockets.

“Hi”,I say.

“Can we talk?”,I stop my tracks and turn to him.

“Talk about what?”,I ask.

He keeps quiet for a moment. He does not know what he wants to talk about.

He comes towards me and I stand in the same position until he hovers over me like Sqalo does. You cannot miss the resemblance they have. Well he does look like his brothers too but as I am looking at him right now he is a spitting image of Sqalo.

“Can I take you home so we can talk?”,He asks.

“What do you want to talk about?”,I ask softly.

“About everything. You have not changed”,He says and I look away from him.

“I didn't know I was supposed to change”,He sighs.

“I know that you hate me right now Bonga but...”

"I do not hate you Hlubi, not at all. I just didn't imagine that we would meet this way or I would ever see your family ever again", I say.

"I heard you that left"

"Yes I did leave", He presses his lips.

"I have to go", I say and faintly give him a smile.

"Bonga", He steps closer to me and I lift my head up a bit to look at him and his cologne hits my nostrils that very moment.

He lifts my chin with his finger and he looks down on me before he captures my lips and I involuntarily close my eyes that moment. He kisses me in broad daylight where everyone who deems to pass by us will see these two grown 30 something year olds kissing in the middle of the road like silly young teenagers. It brings back so much. Memories, a lot of them that I cannot comprehend much. It brings back the night he gave me my first heart felt kiss and all that fighting we always did was for nothing. At some point I thought he just tolerated me for his siblings of which his older siblings didn't even get along with me so I wondered why he hung out where I was. I never got the answer to that. He is not kissing me like his 19 year old self no, but he is giving more into this than it should.

I break the kiss and I open my eyes and touch my lips.

"Don't do that Hlubi, you don't know how much baggage you have lead me to", I say and my heart winces at the thought of Sqalo being referred to baggage and I feel guilty of thinking of such but my youth was stolen away from me.

"I am sorry"

"Don't be. We were never lovers to begin with. Good bye"

I say and walk away from him.

I am unhappy that I kissed him. I am not one to do so and I shouldn't have done that but it seems like I just become this weak thing towards him and I really do not like it!

I feel a prick of pain surfacing through my heart.

NONKONZO MZIMELA

It didn't sit well with me that my husband suddenly met up with a female friend that I didn't even know he once had and she has a boy name for that matter. My mind keeps on telling me that maybe she is lesbian and I shouldn't be worrying about anything. Yes I shouldn't be.

I am in the room were were sleeping in and I am just tying a doek around my head just so I can look pretty while assisting in the kitchen. I put on some earrings and Qophelo walks in the room and he closes the bedroom door behind him and I turn to him.

"Nomvelo has been resting for far too long while we are moving around the house",I say.

"You can't go against my mother",he says.

Well she has been gaining special treatment ever since she arrived. I think that woman likes her more than us.



“Mmmh”

“Can we talk?”,I turn to him.

“What is wrong baby?”,I ask.

“Nkonzo why can't we have more kids?”,he asks.

“We have a child Qophelo”,I say.

“Yes a child. I want more children not just one child”,He says.

“Already one child is too much if we have two or more it will be too much of a job baby and we are building our careers”

“Our careers are already at the peak. Everything is going well we can afford more children that has never stopped us”,He says.

“Whefe is this coming from? Is Nqubeko feeding you this?”,He sighs.

“Baby I love you so much but this not compromising thing is too much for me. I want us to have more children whether you push them or we get a surrogate it is fine”,he says.

“I don't want another woman carrying our child”,I say.

He sighs and runs his hands on his face. He then stands up.

“Think about this please. In the end love is not enough alone”,he says and goes towards the door.

“What do you mean Qophelo?”,I ask, alarmed by what he is saying.

“I mean I will be forced to be with someone else who can atleast meet me halfway in a relationship”,What!?

He walks out of the room banging the door. He does not mean that? Does he mean that he will divorce me just because I don't want to give him babies? No he cannot do that to me.

I sit on the bed and my heart is beating fast against my chest.

I grab my phone and I call my mother quickly and it rings a few times before it is answered. She answers.

“Hello”

“Mama Qophelo said he will divorce me because he says I amnot meeting him halfway by having more kids. He wants more children”,I say.

“Kodwa nawe Nkonzo men want heirs not just an heir”,She says.

“Mah don't say that. I cannot be a mother,I don't know how to be one”I say.

“I didn't know how to be one too and you and your brother turned out different but fine in the end”,Tears stream down my cheeks.

“Mama I love Qophelo so much. I don't want to loose him.”

“Then give him babies simple. Haibo sodlala Wena Nonkonzo uzenza umlungu lah!” ,My mother hangs up after.

I cry on the bed. I can't imagine my life without Qophelo.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

My mother in law out on bed rest as I am “sick”, Well in her terms I do not need to strain my body and the baby too so I need to rest as much as possible and if I want to go to the toilet I should call Thulani to carry me there of which I laughed about the idea. That is very dramatic but sitting in here is kind of depressing especially without Thulani. Maybe it would've been better if he was here to sit with me you know. I grab my phone and I call him hoping that his phone is with him and not lying somewhere around the house. It gets answered.

“Themba lami” ,His voice comes through. I smile.

“Baby I am not feeling too well, can you come and check on me?” ,I ask.

“Okay I am coming right now don't worry” ,I can hear the panic in his voice but he is trying not to show it.

“Please hurry” ,he drops the call after that and I giggle and get off the bed. I go and look at myself through the mirror quickly before I stuff myself under a fleece and wait for my dear husband to come. In no time the door opens and he walks inside.

"Baby are you okay?" he closes the door behind him.

"Yes, I am sick of missing you", He smiles widely.

"Thank you for calling, I needed to get out of there", He says.

"Come", I say next to me and he sits next to me and I kiss his lips.

"I love you", I say.

"Are you okay?" He asks.

"Yes I am okay, can't I say I love you?" He chuckles.

"I am joking baby you can"

"Your mother knows", I say.

"I know. She scolded me for not telling her", I nod my head.

I run my fingers on his head.

"Are you trying to grow your hair?" He nods.

"Well I like it. I have never seen you with hair before", I say.

I perk his lips.

“But you are the sexiest bald”

“Who are you and what happened to my innocent wife?” ,I giggle.

God really blessed me with this man.

BONGANI ZONDI

It is the next day. The day where we are going to the Mzimela's house hold for no apparent reason at all. I am not ready for Sqalo to meet his father and not because I don't want him to meet his dad but I do not think that we are ready for it.

We are at the back of my father's car. A car he bought from the money he has been receiving from my ex husband all these years. The drive there is rather silent. There is nothing we can really say to each other. Sqalo is also silent clueless of what is about to unfold. We get to the Mzimela house hold and I hold his hand and he looks at me and I smile at him.

“Are you okay mah?” ,he asks.

“Yes I am” ,We hop out of the car. I do a few breathing exercises before I go around the car and there are already alot of cars there and the big tent is there. The decor already done. I have always know Mrs

Mzimela for being a Go big or go home type of woman. She likes to stand out from everything else and also everyone. I guess that is why she had 7 children.

Sqalo wouldn't be the only child I have if I didn't keep on having miscarriages whenever I got pregnant but a part of me is glad I have nothing that ties me to that man.

"Hold me", I say to Sqalo and my sweet boy does. I feel like I am going to faint any minute now.

"Let us go and greet in the main house?", My mother suggests. I swear she is here sent to be against me today.

We follow after her and get to the main house. We are greeted as soon as we get in and we get to sit on the couches. I am anxious and I don't feel like I should be. I am not hiding Sqalo but I do not think this type of setting is the right setting to meet his family.

I stand up.

"Where are you going?", My mother asks.

"Home mah, Sqalo is not ready for this", I say.

"Sit down Bonga"

"Sanibonani", I turn around and face the eldest son of this family. He frowns as soon as he sets his eyes on Sqalo.

"Sawubona ndodana. I haven't seen you in a long time, where is your mother?", My father speaks.

“Eh, she is getting ready. Can I ask what you are here for?”, he asks.

I swallow and look at the madame who forced us here or we would stay outside her yard while they were here.

“We are here for your mother's party like everyone else”, My mother says.

I look at Sqalo who is rather too quiet.

“Oh, okay. I will get someone to bring some refreshments for you”, He says and quickly moves away. I look at my mother and she doesn't give me a second glance. I hold Sqalo's hand as I sit next to him.

“Don't worry okay?”, I say.

“Is that him?”, He says softly.

“No, it is not him. That's your father's older brother”, I say.

He nods his head slowly.

I cannot comprehend his face at this moment.

Another one makes his way to the living room as I am busy getting Sqalo's mind off things and Qophelo follows with their mother and the rest of them too.

“Maka Bonga. It is so great to see you!”, Mrs Mzimela says.

The rest of them are quiet looking at Sqalo that he shy's away from their eyes.

I can feel their looks too. They are too much.

"It has been. Happy birthday Makhelwane", My mother says.

"I see Bonga has grown. Hello", She says

"Hi", I say. I am scared go even look at her. It is like I am about to be crucified.

Mrs Mzimela is about to speak when one of her son's speak behind her. Stepping closer to where we are while the rest have their eyes on my son.

"Bonga...is he...is he mine?", He asks a rhetorical question of which it is obvious that Sqalo looks like the 5 of these makes right in front of me.

I stand up.

"I was going to tell you some day", I say softly.

"Some day? Bonga you mean some day is 15 years later?!"

"Yehlisa ulaka ndodana(Calm down son)", His mother says.

"Mah she hid my child away from me!"



"I didn't hide him. You left and went to pursue your dreams while I didn't!", I say.

"Don't make this my fault Bonga don't you do that. You didn't even give me the chance to make a choice here!", He says.

He is shouting. Sqalo stands up and grabs my hand.

"Mah asambe we are leaving"

"Sqalo wait", I say.

"No one is going anywhere until we have this sorted out somehow", His older brother says.

"Welk we are, I won't look at this man shouting at my mother", Sqalo says.

He is now feeling angry and I can see it by the way his chest is moving just like the man who is in front of him.

Tears prickle my eyes, his eyes are blood shot red as well.

"I am sorry", I say.

"Oh mntanami", His mother moves to comfort me.

"You didn't know. Abafana vele banjalo mabebaleka(Boys are like that when they run away)", she says.

“Mah!”

“Leave me alone wena”, She comforts me for a while and then I calm down.

“You two please go and speak about this right now”, His mother says.

“Mvelo where is Mvelo?”

“She is getting dressed mah”

“Okay, you two go right now and talk this out”, He turns around and walks away and I look at everyone and look at Sqalo who holds onto my arm.

“I will be fine”, I smile faintly

“If he does something to you tell me”

I nod my head and I move away from everyone and follow where this man disappeared to. I reach a bedroom and I get inside and I close the door behind me slowly.

“What story did you tell him about me?”, That is the first thing he asks.

“Nothing”, He turns to look at me.

“I never told him anything. I didn't know which parts of the world I would find you. I was away marrying a man I didn't even know. I was young and he was willing to raise him as our child just to he can bury my

shame that I got pregnant before being with him as I was supposed to be a virgin but I was not. It didn't go as well as I thought it would"

"So you are going to deny me a chance of ever knowing him?",He asks.

"No,I wished to tell you but didn't know where to find you so I just left things as they are. I am not some spy or whatever that can find you anywhere in the world and I have never been home in 15 years",I say.

"I can't believe this",He says.

"He needs you, he has been through so much",I say.

"Why didn't you tell me this yesterday?",He asks.

"How could I Hlubi? He needed to be ready to meet you and that should come from him not me pushing you down his throat",I say. I wipe the falling tears from my face.

"I am sorry",I say softly.

He moves towards me and holds me into his arms.

"I am sorry for shouting",He says.

I keep quiet.

"I want to be in his life",He says softly and rubs my back.

# Chapter 40

BONGANI ZONDI

I remove myself from him and I wipe my face and I take a deep breath in and look at him as he stares at me.

“I will not stop you from knowing Sqalo”,I say softly.

“Thank you”,He keeps on staring at me.

“I have to go now”,I turn around as I feel that this is now turning very much awkward.

“Bonga”,I turn to look at him.

“Yes”

“I...I never hated you”,He says.

“I have always loved you”,he says and I close my eyes.

“Hlubi,we were young kids and didn't know what we were doing. I don't think that it is love”,I say.

"It is, because you don't know how I felt all those years separated from you. I always thought that maybe you would follow after me"

"I got married. I am still married", I say.

"I am not talking about your marriage here Bonga but I am telling you what I told you that night"

I close my eyes holding onto my bag as tightly as I can while I can hear his voice in my head. The one that is from his 19 year old voice box. Where he held me close to his body and kissed me and told me that he loves me and for the first time I was in shock from what he said. I have always told myself that it must have been from the sexual desire that is where those words came from and never really took them seriously.

I open my eyes and look at him as he is staring at me waiting for me to say something but I have nothing to mention.

There is a knock on the door and he stands for a while staring at me before he moves going behind me to open the door and I hear his brother's voice behind me and I turn around.

"Are you guys okay?", he asks staring in between the both of us.

"Yes...yes we are", Hlubi says.

"Okay, are you guys done?", He asks.

I was about to reply with a yes when Hlubi spoke over me.

"No we are not", he says.

“Okay”,His brother moves from the door and he closes it.

“Why did you say that?”,I ask.

“We are not done talking Bonga.”

“What do you want to talk about Hlubi?”

He walks closer to me and stands in front of me towering my short self.

“You really have not changed”,Was I supposed to change?

“I know”

“I mean what I said Bonga”

“Thank you”,I say.

He keeps quiet.

“Can I kiss you?”,He says and brushes my chin before his lips capture mine and I am paralysed in his presence.

One, two,three, strokes in this kiss before I pull away trying to get out his trans and I look at him.

“We should stop this...this kissing behaviour”,I say.

“Okay”,He says coolly.

I nod my head and I move away from him. I get to the door and stop a bit before I open the door and I walk out of it going to the living room. I do not find my parents there but Sqalo is sitting on the same couch that we sat on when we arrived here.

“Where are your grand parents?”,I ask.

“Talking to Mr Mzimela”,He says.

“Okay”,he stands up from the couch and looks at me.

“Did he do anything to you?,he asks checking me.

“No, he did not.”

“I am not a woman beater. I am better than that”,Hlubi says behind me.

“Mmmh”,Sqalo holds onto my hand.

“I...I..”,I decide to shut my mouth as I do not know what to say.

This is a very awkward position that we are in and I do not even know I should dissolve this situation.

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

I am so glad that I have been cleared to go back to work on Monday and sitting here at home has been driving me crazier than I thought it would be. Maybe it is because I hardly take some time off unless I am burner out then I would. My daughter was invited to a birthday party so that is why it is so quiet in the house. Well unless you can say Lange's car racing sports thing is being quiet then you could say that. I am making a few snacks before I go and join him on the couch. It is weird that as all the men I know that love soccer as their favourite sport to watch for husband that is not the case. It is this sport racing thing and he seems so much facinated by it. I have tried my best to understand it but I never got the chance to so I just told myself that I would never get it and I never will anyway. I finish up in the kitchen and I go to the living room and I find him on his feet. There he is, he is understanding this thing and just like soccer players when they either miss a goal or about to get a goal and people wait in anticipation by standing up. He is doing the same in this sport.

"Are we winning?",I ask.

All I know is he likes Lewis Hamilton. I mean he is appeasing to the eye.

"Yes baby" „He says.

I sit back and fold my legs and watch him as he sits back down and turns to me.

"You can change the chanel" I didn't even ask twice.

I quickly grab the remote and change the Chanel.



"Tomorrow I might come back home a bit late", He mentions.

"Oh".

"Mmmh"

"That's fine, at least you told me", I smile.

He gets a bit weirded by my response but quickly masks it.

I turn around and watch the Tv. I will not entertain that. For all I know maybe I saw nothing.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

The party is beautiful. For a 65 year old woman, Thulani's mother really went all out for this. Well her husband went all out in paying but she went all out in selecting what she wanted for her birthday party. It is so beautiful for people to come together to celebrate these beautiful moment. I heard about the drama that occurred this morning. Well my husband told me, he walked into the bedroom while I was still getting ready when shock was on his face. That's when he told me that he just saw a young boy that looks like him and his brothers who is roughly a teenager. Boy was he sweating and I do not know why. I told him to go back and look again, maybe inform his mother or father.

He walked out after that statement. It seems like he had lost his thinking then so I just let him be. After some time he came back and the first thing he uttered was "He is not mine", He says.

I guess it is the child that he saw.

I was consumed in my own thoughts that I didn't even give much thought into the situation but he did give me the full details of what happened. The old friends possibly lovers type of thing having a child who is round about Rethabile's age who is a boy and for a brother I didn't expect. Hlubi, yes I have never seen him introduce a woman as atleast his girlfriend to the family or something he is just always keeping things low. That has always been him. Having a girlfriend was something he had I am sure he just didn't display it much or maybe he just pretended to have one. His brother's never questioned him if maybe he likes his same kind of a gender since they hardly saw him with a woman or something. That never happened so I also assumed that maybe they are either waiting for him to announce that he is gay possibly or maybe he is not interested in love or long term commitment or something atleast.

He is 34 years. Something should be giving right?

So here I am seated next to my husband already indulging in the celebratory food that is in front of me. I have seen the baby mama and boy does she look exotic. She is beautiful and much to Nonkonzo having a very foul mood after discovering who Bonga is. It is interesting that she has a boy name too, Yes I heard about it. My mother in law didn't let the news lie down when she saw me. She dished them out like got cakes.

She is beautiful and very short too, shorter than I am but just a little. This day is when I realised that I am actually a short human being too. I just thought I am tall and my husband is taller than me but I was lying to myself all of those years.

I see some desert circling around and my mouth waters. I feel myself craving for something chocolatey in my mouth.

I turn to Thulani who is already done with his meal and he is speaking to his brother Qophelo.

They are laughing and having a blast in this conversation that they are upholding.

I lightly tap his knee and immediately his attention shifts from his brother to me.

“Baby”,He says.

I lean by his ear.

“I am have a desire urge to eat chocolate. Is that normal?”,He smiles as I move away to look at him.

“Yes baby it is normal.Do you want me to go and get some for you?”,He asks and I nod my head.

“Please”

“Okay I will be back”

He turns to his brother.

“Husband duties. I will be back”,He says.

“Sure”,He stands up and leaves.

I carry on with eating my food.

“We don't have to be awkward around each other”,Qophelo says and his wife looks at him.

“Mmmh”

“How was Paris, I heard that it was a success”,He says.

“It was, thank you. I enjoyed it but I do not like the winter weather”,He chuckles.

“I know, Nonkonzo and I took our honeymoon trip there and that's how our son came about”,He says and I laugh.

“That is so beautiful”

“It is, how about you? Are we going to expect a Paris baby from you guys too?”,He asks.

“No”,I say.

We keep on talking and it is not even that awkward anymore. We are just speaking like everyone else would. Nonkonzo has been quiet through out the conversation. She doesn't like me and that I have known a long time ago and it got much worse when my sister married his brother. She didn't like me at all and still does not.

Thulani comes back carrying two slabs of chocolate in his hand and he sits down.

“Here you go”,I smile.

“Thank you so much”,He smiles.

“Anything for you”

I open the first bar and offer to share it with those around me but they all decline the offer and then I eat it all alone of which makes me happy. Don't get me wrong I love sharing but I want to eat as much chocolate as I want.

BONGANI ZONDI

My parents allowed us to go back home provided that they gave us the house keys. They were too happy in that party that I think they are even more happy about the discovery of Sqalo in the Mzimela family. I am happy for him, that he has found his father and I hope that from here onwards things get better for my son.

Hlubi offered to take us back home and much to my attempt to discard the offer. Not that I didn't want to allow him but for the fact that I wanted to talk to Sqalo and find out how he feels really. I did ask briefly and all he said was "I am okay Bonga", I kept quiet there after.

The car parks right in front of our yard and I take off the seat belt and Hlubi turns to look at Sqalo.

"I would like to see you tomorrow just to get to know you if that is okay with you", he says.

"It is okay", I smile.

"Thank you", I say.

"You are welcome", We all hop out of the car and soon I am in the middle of these two creatures that are overshadowing me.

"I will communicate with you then",He says.

"Okay",He looks at Sqalo and breathes in and out before he steps closer to him and they share a hug.

"I am sorry",I hear him whisper that to him and my heart breaks.

"It's okay",Sqalo replies.

They break the embrace and I give Sqalo the house keys and tell him to go inside. He follows instructions and goes inside. I stand there looking at Hlubi as he looks at me. We wait until Sqalo is a bit out of sight.

"Mzimela...",I take a breath in and he steps closer.

Once he steps closer it is like I am lured into a trap with him.

"Maka Sqalo",I breathe out.

"Please don't hurt him.He is the most important thing to me and I do not want to see him hurt. He has been through so much for his age",I say.

"What has he been through?",He asks.

"He will tell you himself",He nods his head.

"Will I see you tomorrow?",He says while putting his hands in his pockets.

This habit. He still has it and it annoyed me once for no reason at all. I guess I was still on the hate drive.

“To meet up with Sqalo no.”,I say.

“I would love to see you”

“When are you leaving?”,I ask.

“You want me to leave?”

“No, I am just asking”

“I don't know for now”,I nod my head.

“I will see you guys tomorrow then”,He says and we stand there as he stares at me until I shy away before he moves from me and I turn and walk away from him leaving him there.

I get inside the house and I go to my room and I find Sqalo standing by the window.

“Are you watching us?”,I ask.

“Yes and the way he was stepping closer to you I thought he was going to kiss you”,he says.

I lightly hit his back.

“Move from the curtains and stop looking at older people through the windows”,I say.

“How are you feeling?”,I ask him.

“Overwhelmed but I just hope that we get along”,He says.

“You will, don't worry”,He nods his head.

“Come do you want me to make something for you or are you full?”

“I am full”,He says.

I nod my head.

“Mah”

“Mmmh?”,He presses his lips together for a moment before he speaks.

“Would you and dad get back?”,He asks.

“No”,I say.

“Why? Aren't you guys like high school sweethearts or something?”,He asks.

“We are not and your father and I were never in love to begin with”,I say and he nods. I sit down next to him and run my fingers on his head.



“But we sure live you okay?”,He nods.

“I love you so much Sqalo”,I hug him and he lays his head on my chest. I breathe in and out as I slowly brush him. I hope that God protects this boy more than anything, I hope Hlubi does not disappoint me with him.

# Chapter 41

I was woken up by cramps in my stomach, I sat up from the bed and I held onto my stomach while making sure not to wake my husband up. I got off the bed and I felt like my abdomen was burning a bit. I made my way to the bathroom and I got inside closing the door and quickly sitting down on the toilet seat. I grab the tissue and wipe myself and there is some blood on the tissue that moment. I feel like crying because one thing is setting alarm bells in my head and one thing only.

I quickly close my eyes and do a short prayer before I take another tissue and I wipe again and this time it is not as much as before but blood is still there. I get up from the toilet seat and flush before I go and wash my hands. I look at myself through the little mirror that is the bathroom for a moment fore I walk out of the bathroom and switch off the light. I got to the bedroom we are using and I get to find a quick dress that I can wear before I go and wake my husband up.

“Mmh”,He must be tired but the fear that I am feeling right now. I do not want to take any chances.

“Ntaka”,I say and he opens his eyes.

“Mvelo, come and sleep baby”,He says in a drowsy tone.

“Wake up please”,My voice is breaking at the moment.

I can feel something sliding down my legs.

“Baby what is wrong?”,He asks as he sits up and stretches himself.

“I am bleeding”,not knowing if I am really making any sense to him as now I am crying and thinking of the being that I am supposed to be carrying in my body.

He gets out of the bed quickly and goes to open the lights.

He looks at me for a moment and I realise what I was feeling was some blood coming down my legs.

He quickly grabs pants and wears some and grabs his car keys and wears his slides.

“Come let's go”

“I am scared to move. What if more blood comes out?”,I say.

“It won't baby”,He says calmly yet I can see the panic in his face.

A knock surfaces from the door as he carries me into his arms.

“Thulani,Nomvelo are you okay?”,It is his mother.

He opens the door and walks out with me.

“What is wrong?”,She asks pulling her gown together in concern.

“I am taking Nomvelo to the hospital”,He says.

“What is going on?”,She asks once more.

We get to the door and his mother unlocks the door for us as others come out of their rooms.

I feel the cramps surfacing again.

“Ma kwenzakalani?(Ma what is going on?)”,One of Thulani's siblings asks.

No response from us. She opens the door and Thulani quickly rushes to the car and puts me inside and his mother hops in as well too.

We do not mind her instead we are thinking of the journey going to the hospital.

Thulani starts the car and drives out of the yard.

“Just breathe in Mvelo, konke kuzolunga(Everything will be well)”,His mother says.

“Kubuhlungu(It's painful)”,I say. Yes it is painful that I am failing one thing only and that is to keep God's blessing at this moment. My heart is feeling pain right now as it is.

.

I got admitted as soon as I got here at the hospital and I passed out for atleast some hours. I haven't seen Thulani since then nor my mother in law and I am scared to hear from the doctor about what is going on.

The sun has risen and it is early morning. I have been praying since I woke up but it feels like all my prayers this time are not reaching where they are supposed to be reaching. I wipe my tears and lay there on the bed looking at the ceiling.

“Good morning”, I look to the side and a doctor walks in followed by Thulani and my mother in law. She rushes to my side.

“How are you feeling?”, She asks.

“I don't know”, I really do not know.

I look at Thulani and I cannot read his facial expression. I turn to his mother too and I can't do the same. I look at the doctor as I swallow.

“It's gone Isn't it? The baby...the baby is gone?”, I say softly.

“Fortunately the baby is still there but your pregnancy is very critical. Do you know that?”, He asks.

“I do”, I swallow.

“I suggest you refrain from doing any hard labour. For cleaning maybe around the house get someone who can help you with the load. If this happens again you will have to be admitted in the hospital until you give birth”, He says.

“That means she can't work?”, Thulani asks.

“Yes”, He says.

I nod my head.

“Thank you doctor”, My mother in law says.

He smiles and checks on me before he leaves the room. I open my arms and Thulani falls into them.

“I am sorry”,I say.

“It is not your fault”

We break the hug and he kisses my forehead.

“I am glad that everything is alright”,My mother in law says.

“Me too ma”,I smile.

BONGANI ZONDI

“Mama ukephi uSqalo?”,I ask.

“He is outside. Ngimthume ukuthi ayothenga isinkwa(I sent him to go and buy bread)”,I nod my head and watch my mother make some breakfast for her husband.

She lowers the stove and she turns to me and looks at me.

“You know we love you Bonga”,She says.

I do not even know where that comes from because she is not one to just throw those words around but she is throwing them carelessly.

“I do”,I say.

“The Zondi's have talked to their son about his behaviour and he is a changed man”

“Mah he can't just change over night”

“I know but give your marriage a last try Bonga. You can't just give up now after 15 years.”,She says.

“Mah...”

“Sqalo is meeting his real father. All problems are solved now focus on your marriage instead and leave that Mzimela baby you have to that Mzimela dog and let them do whatever”,I know my mother cannot b nice even for a second.

I move away from the kitchen and make my way outside hoping to see Sqalo coming back.

“Your phone is making noise here!”,My mother shouts and I make my way inside and I go and get my phone quickly.

I take it and move outside to answer it.

“Hello”,the nice cold morning air hits my skin well.

"Bonga,how are you? It's Hlubi",He says.

"Hi, I am well and yourself?",I ask.

"I am okay",there is some silence between us for a moment.

"What time is suitable for you guys?",He asks.

"Anytime I think it is fine",I say.

"Okay

I will let you know when I will come",He says.

"Okay then",

We end the call and I wait for Sqalo to come back after some time he does come back and he walks inside the yard carrying the bread my mother had sent him to go and buy.

"I was worried that you might have gotten lost",I say.

"No I am fine, I found my way"

"I see, Uhm someone called today",I say.

"I hope it is not Zondi",He says.



“No, it is a Mzimela”, I say and he smiles.

“That smile”

“Well it means nothing”

“It does mean something as it seems.

He shakes his head and moves past me and leaves me standing there. Is it that he might be warming up to him.

I follow as well and make my way inside the house.

LANGELIHLE MVELASE

I just want to get this over and done with and go back to my home safe and sound. It would be best if no one ever finds out about this not my wife to be precise to as she will blow the roof of me.

I sent our daughter to my home as my mother wanted her to visit before tomorrow and I will fetch her tomorrow morning and take her to scho. I expected Nomvula to ask alot of questions when I mentioned that I will be coming back home a little late but she did not say much instead she just let me be much to my surprise as well. I mean you can misinterpret a person wrong sometimes do I guess this is one of those moments. I didn't work with most of my client today and I have shifted them some for atleast the day after tomorrow when I can work properly then. I had to go and meet up with everyone be ready and equipped by the time we have to excute this taski at hand. It is quiet a hefty one but there is nothing

that we can do but to do it. The greater the fruit the greater the risk. That I always knew. We all know it and that is why we are here. The fruit is greater.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

That was a scare, for the both of us that we did not expect. Thulani did offer to let his mother take his car back going home as she just left the house without even changing but she has refused to leave my side. So as he as well even though I am fine now and I feel better that I still have the baby in me. I thank God for that and that he still sees me worthy to carry such a blessing in me.

So he left a bit while I stay with my mother in law in the ward and wait for him to return. She looks at me and gives me the biggest smile she could ever find.

“I am so happy you are okay Mvelo. ”

“Me too mah”

“How are you feeling right now?”,She asks.

“Better, I feel very much better”

“You know that God works in wonderful ways”,she smiles.

“Yes”

“I know that my kids are not familiar with religious ways or paths that is because I wanted to give them the freedom to learn and have a religion of their own interest without any type of subjection for them to follow a certain religion based on what I and my husband believe.”,she says.

“Mmhh”

“Rest a bit, I will check where Thulani is and come back okay?”

“Okay”,She stands up from the chair and she walks out of the room.

I look at the ceiling and just sink into thoughts, many run in my mind but others are overpowering the rest. I seem to try and figure how things would work out. If they will work out well in the end. I do not even know how that would happen or appear to happen but something has to happen at this point right? I do not know as yet.

I give in the drowsiness that I am feeling a bit and I get to sleep right then and there.

BONGANI ZONDI

He is the first person to say that he is here. That Hlubi is here. He seems a bit excited and I am happy for him. I would love for them to have a good relationship for also for them to just get along quiet well too. It would bring great joy to my heart knowing that he is loved by both of his parents. Yes I might have 15

years of experience from this but I am not perfect so I do not expect Hlubi to also be perfect too in this thing.

“Mama let's go”,Sqalo says that as he pulls me to wear my shoes.

“I would swear you are a 7 year old child”,he frowns as he looks at me.

Hlubi's face has been following me around for the past years and I have gotten used to it.

“He might turn back if he waits for long”,Sqalo mentions.

“No he would not”

“You don't know that Ma”

“I do Sqalo”

He frowns again.

I wear my shoes and we walk together going outside. I do not know why I am here as he should be the one going outside. The man is here for him, not me. I stand by the gate as I watch him cross the road going to his look alike who is standing there waiting for him. They seem to greet each other before I see Sqalo's tall self getting in the front seat of the car without even turning back to me and saying good bye.

Hlubi stands in the same position that he is in and looks at me at a distant before he asks for me to come closer to him of which I do as I want to hear what he wants to say. I get to him and I greet him.

"How are you?",He asks.

"I am fine and you?"

"I am good",I nod my head.

"I want to go around with Sqalo if that is okay with you",,he asks.

"If he is fine with it, I don't see a problem",he nods.

Silence prevails between the both of us.

"I was thinking...of the damages. When can my family be expected to come that's the first thing I would like to do right by you and Sqalo"

"I will have to speak to my parents about that but I will inform you",I say.

"Okay,can I say good bye to him?"

"Yes",I move away from him and he follows after me.

I get to the front seat and knock on the door before this one opens and looks at me.

"You didn't even turn to say good bye.You want to leave that bad",I say before I give him a hug and kiss his cheek.

“Mah the kiss was unnecessary”,He says.

“Hayi suka. Behave yourself okay?”

“I will”

“Okay bye”,I close the door.

“Can’t I also get a hug and kiss?”,Hlubi says with a slight mirk over his face.

“A hug yes, a kiss I don't know”

“Wazini mama?(what do you know mama?)”,he asks.

“I don't know”,he chuckles.

We hug each other then pull out.

“I will call you when I bring him back”,He says.

“Okay, that is fine”

He looks at me for a moment before I turn away from him and I leave him standing there and enter the yard.

HLUBI MZIMELA

I don't know what to do in this fathering thing. A new role that I did not expect but also a role to play for a teenage boy rather than a new born baby. I couldn't sleep last night thinking that I have a child, with Bonga and a grown one for that matter. A part of me was scared that maybe he might not like the type of person that I am or maybe he might not give in to the efforts I will be putting in trying to getting to know him and having to know the real him and try to make up for the lost years. I can't make up for them but what I can do is I can be there for the rest of the years he has on this earth as much as I can.

I have a son.

It's surreal more especially one that is a carbon copy of me. The only thing that he didn't take from me is his skin colour. It is more or less just like his mother's. I keep on stealing a glance at him as I am driving and I would look back onto the road.

"So how is school going?" I ask. It is a conversation starter right?

"I don't school", I frown.

"Why?", Why is he not in school?

"It is because I was on...on drugs and needed rehabilitation so I stopped schooling", He says.

That gets me frowning even more.

“Why were you taking drugs?”, peer pressure could be the answer. It always is.

“Zondi was the one forcing drugs into me because he thought I was giving mom ideas on ways to leave him. He abuses her and I thought we should leave. That is why”, I cringe as he says that so coolly.

The thought of this happening. The thought that my sweet soft, short marshmallow Bonga being laid hands on brings in so much anger in me. I failed her...that is what I thought. I failed them both. I should've not let things go but I should've tried to search for her non of this would've happened to the both of them if I was there. Zondi must be the bastard husband, the husband she still considered her self married to.

I don't know what to say to him after that but being pissed off is one of the things that I am feeling at the moment.

So I decided to keep my silence as I am driving.



# Chapter 42

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

I was restless more or less I could not sleep without Lange in bed next to me. I am not used to it, I would be sleeping with my daughter but she went to visit her grandparents and I do not mind at all. My mother in law loves her so much and I expected her to not like me as well considering the fact that I am not her daughter's favourite anymore but still she loves me and that is all that I am grateful for. I haven't called my twin sister in a while and I have to check how Nomvelo is doing but last time we spoke she was making her way overseas. I am happy for her, it is like my face is also going to be overseas on what achievement she makes. I try to call Lange and it just rings unanswered. Which is strange a bit but I do not dwell in it.

I am just happy that I have not been bothered by Senzo in a while but also I feel like I am starting to feel a bit scared that he might surface again. I go to the kitchen and I get myself some water and check the time and it is past midnight now. I am really worried that he is not back and I wonder what has happened to him. This cold feeling that I am feeling doesn't want to go away from me and it bothers me.

I drink up the water and rinse the glass and I hear the door unlocking and I go to the door and I see him walking in wearing a hoodie that I do not have any knowledge off.

"Baby, you are still up", He says.

"I could sleep, the bed felt cold", I say looking at him.

"I am back now"

"I was worried"

"Don't worry", I just nod my head.

I have a lot of questions but I will ask them in the morning when we have a fresh mind. I don't want us fighting in the middle of the night as to why he came back home this late but I am not letting this go.

He closes the door and moves from it. I notice the little limp and he is trying so hard not to make it noticeable but I can see it as he seems to be in some sort of pain.

"Why are you limping?", I say.

"Nginyelile(I sprained my ankle)", He says.

"Don't lie and the change of clothes where did you get them?", I ask.

"Why are we having such Conversations at this time. Can we sleep and we can talk in the morning I am a bit tired",

"If you were really tired you were going to come back home early now you are going to sleep here until you answer my simple question with honesty", I say.

"Baby the couch is not made for someone to lay on it comfortably", He says in a begging tone.

"Are you going to answer my question?", I fold my arms.

"Seriously?"

“Ngabe ulele manje ( You could be sleeping now)”,I say.

“I just cut myself during work”,He says.

“Good night”,I say and walk away and he follows after me.

Now he is limping after me. I get to the bedroom door and I turn to him.

“Are you ready to talk?”,I ask.

“Baby it's nothing”,He says.

I step closer to him and take in his scent and he smells fresh too with a manly shower gel.

“I don't want to jump conclusions here Lange just answer the questions honestly”,I say.

He sighs and closes his eyes.

“Promise you will not get angry”,He says looking at me and I squint my eyes.

“I cannot promise that”,I say.

“I can't tell you then”,He says.

“Ungangidini( don't irritate me) already you chose to stay up late this is not what I thought about staying up late”

"Baby just promise me", I sigh.

"Okay I promise", I say.

"I was shot", I widen my eyes.

"By who? Did you report this to the police?", I ask.

"No I didn't"

"Why? Wh...", He interrupts me by giving me a perk on my lips.

"Can we go and sleep now?", He asks.

I sigh and just nod my head.

I turn around and get inside the bedroom and he follows after me. A lot is running through my mind. Who shot him and why was he shot? We should report this to the police.

I take off my summer gown and I slip into bed and he takes off the pants and not the hoodie. He goes to the wardrobe and takes out a vest. I can see the bandage around his leg. I cringe, how was he going to hide that? He goes to the ensuite bathroom and comes out dressed in boxers and a vest which he hardly does but I let him be. He gets in bed and sleeps on his side and lays his hand on my waist. My husband is acting strange and it is hurting me at the moment. He is not like this most of the time. I don't want to think a lot into this but he has been acting very strange lately and it does not sit well with me. I wish that I had someone to talk to about this but also I don't want to discuss my marital problems to people. I close my eyes and sleep with worry in me.

BONGANI ZONDI

He came back in the afternoon all happy mostly that his father got him what he has been wanting for the longest time and that is a PS5. I asked him about his day and he told me how it went and it seems like they had a great time.

He is asleep now and I am watching him, I cannot sleep as I am thinking of what lies for me in the end of two weeks. I hope that by then something would've came up. A part of me wants to ask Hlubi to take Sqalo and keep him for some time until I find my feet but I do not think they would be that comfortable around each other.

It is going to be difficult to separate myself from him but for now I do not have means to go anywhere with Sqalo unless his father takes him for a moment.

I look at him laying next to me and I run my fingers on his bald head and I lightly smile. I love my child, more than anything and I would do anything to see him happy and okay too. It hurts me of what has turned of his life right now but I hope that things get better.

I take my phone and I go through my contacts. It's past midnight too and I do not know when Hlubi is leaving but it will be soon as he has to go back to where ever he lives at. I contemplate with myself for a moment but eventually I end up dialling his number and calling him. It rings a few times before it is answered.

"Mama", I can hear that he must have been asleep.

"Hi, I am sorry to disturb your sleep", I say.

"It is okay, is there something wrong? Are you and Sqalo okay?",He asks.

"For now we are okay but I would like to talk to you about something regarding Sqalo",I say.

"Okay, I will be there just now",he says.

"I didn't mean that..." ,he has already hung up.

I huff and look at Sqalo. How will this man even get here? Why would he drive this late? I shouldn't have called and waited but this has been eating me up for some time now.

I sit there and occupy myself. The next thing I know I see head lights shining through the window on and off and my phone rings. It's him.

That must be quick. I answer it.

"Hello"

"I am outside",He says and I breathe in and out.

"I am coming"

"Okay",I hang up and get off the bed and wore my shoes. I went to change out of the night dress I am wearing and wear a dress. I get out of the bedroom and tip toe my way to the bathroom to rinse my face and mouth then I was done. I am feeling hot too. I then went through the kitchen door and got out. I couldn't open the gate because it would make noise so I had to jump over. I took off my slippers and he got out of the car and I threw them over the fencing wall and then I got on and he came closer.

“Jump I will catch you”,He says with his arms open to receive me.

I jump off and he catches me and puts me down.

“I don't think my bones would've survived being broken. Sengimdala manje(I am old now)”,He chuckles as I get my shoes and wear them.

“If you can still jump walls like that then I do not think you are that old”

I push him.

We get to his car and we get inside and then he starts the car and drives away from home. The streets are clear and quiet. He drives a few houses away from my home and parks there.

“So what is that you wanted to talk about?”,He asks.

“I don't know where to start.”,I say.

“You can start anywhere”,He says and I sigh.

“This might be a huge favour but I want to ask if...if you can take Sqalo for a few weeks. I know it is too much to ask and I know that you have just recently known him and all...”,He cuts through me.

“I would not mind at all”,he says and I sigh.

“Thank you”

"May I ask what is happening during those weeks?",He says.

"I have some things go sort out",I say.

He nods his head and sighs leaning back on his seat.

"He..told me. Sqalo told me everything",I feel a cold shiver go down my spine.

He looks at me.

"Where does your husband stay?",he asks.

"I don't want to disclose that information"

"Its fine. Sqalo will direct me"

"Don't do anything stupid Hlubi, don't act off anger please",He says.

"It would be hard not too",he says coldly.

I swallow and just nod. I really hope he does nothing stupid.

"He couldn't appreciate you",He says and chuckles lightly.

"I am sorry I left. Non of this would've happened",He says.



“We don't know what the future holds for us”,I say.

“Why don't you both come with me to Johannesburg”,he says.

I look away.

“I...I don't think that's a good idea”,I say.

He makes me look at him and his face is just inches away from mine.

“Why?Do you feel like things will escalate?”,I nod my head.

“Yes”,my heart is thudding again my chest.

“You know I love you so much Bonga and I want nothing than to protect you and Sqalo”,he says.

“I...I know”.

“Then let me mama”,He kisses my lips and I kiss him back too.

We are slowly kissing each other and with each kiss more is ignited at the moment. He pulls me closer to him and I find myself resting my hands around his neck. He breaks the kiss from the lips and moves it to my chin laying soft kisses trailing to my neck as well and he kisses me there.

“Hlubi”,I say softly.

I am becoming weak, weak for this man. This should not be happening.

“Mama”, He says and I am tongue tied to say anything further.

“I want to take this dress off a bit”, he says as he slowly removes it from me and it rests on my waist and my boobs are exposed. He captures one nipple with mouth while he plays with the other.

“Mzimela”, I say softly.

He doesn't stop but sucks my nipple perfectly and interchanges through them he kisses the space between my breasts and he then kisses my lips and breaks it.

“You are so perfect for me”, he says.

This man! God this man!

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

The news Channel is on and I had a tendency of watching it sometimes more especially on Mondays as there are great updates from the weekend and things that have been happening for a while. I woke up before Lange and I bathed and I then went to make some breakfast in the kitchen just to get my mind off things. He should be awake right now getting ready to fetch our daughter and take her to school. I even made some lunch for her and her grandmother just called that she just woke up.

I watch the TV as it is visible from here I am while humming around the kitchen assembling this breakfast.

“A money heist worth R29 Million rands was pulled at the Reserve Bank yesterday around midnight. The police arrived on time to utilise the crime, only 5 people were dead on scene as the criminals were heavily armed so as the police. Bullets were exchanged at the scene”, I hear the reporter mention.

People really do these type of things and get away with them.

I turn off the stove and take the pan to the sink and let it soak in water with soap while I clean up and pack my baby's lunch box in her lunch bag.

The police reports the case on this crime.

“A lot was happening then, eh these criminals seem to be master minds as they managed to get away with that kind of money. There weren't a lot of them. As the police tried to utilise the situation they fired and so the police fired back resulting in our police men injured but some of those criminals died at the scene and two of the remaining criminals managed to get away one of which was already injured from the gun wounds surfaced mostly on the leg as we didn't want them to escape but they managed to do so. We are trying the best we can to find them and we will ensure that we do...”, I frown upon hearing that. I leave the kitchen and take my phone and search up on this heist and I read up on it a bit before I go to the bedroom and I find the bed made and I hear the shower water.

I wait for him to come out and he does eventually all dressed up now which never happens.

“Good morning baby”

“Kwenzakaleni izolo?(What happened yesterday?)”, I ask.

“We spoke about this yesterday”

“Langelihle awushadanga isphukuphuku angisona isilima mina(Langelihle you didn't marry a fool.I am not a fool)",I say.

“I didn't say you are”

“What happened?”,I ask.

“You have lost me”,I lightly chuckle. Actually I am feeling a bit pissed.

“The heist at the Reserve Bank that is all over the news for fucken Millions. Were you part of it? It happened around the time you were not home and not to mention the police shooting you at the leg and you coming home shot on the leg what a coincidence don't you think?”,I tilt my head to the side while raising my eyes brows waiting for him to answer me.

“Baby I can explain...”,I throw my phone at him and he ducks quickly.

“Nomvula calm down”,he says stepping backwards.

“Calm down? Isn't it you want to be arrested and die and leave us here. I will do it myself ngoba amapoyisa ahlulekile(because the police failed)”,I go after him and he goes around the bed and I go towards him and he rolls on the bed and lands on the other side.

“Why are you running away?”

“Baby calm down I will explain”,He says.

“How could you do this Lange? Do you know what you have done?”,I say.

Now I am trying to be calm but I am very much angry and I what to wrap my hands around his neck right this moment.

“I know. I had to return the favour”

“A favour that costs our family. What now? You are the most wanted man in the whole of South Africa”,I say.

“They won't find me. I don't leave any traces. I do a clean job”,He says.

“And your friend?”,I give him a look.

“I will sort it out”,He says.

“Go and fetch our daughter and take her to school before I kill you right now”

“Yes ma'am”,I turn and walk out of the room.

What kind of man did I marry? I need answers.

## Chapter 43

I have always been the one soft child who mother saw the need to shield. The only person who I have so far has the opportunity to try and shield and bet there for her is Rethabile and I would say with Thulani by my side it was never a difficult for me to do so as I had support behind me but with regards to this pregnancy I feel like I am failing at the jobm that I cannot protect the child that me and my husband have been blessed with and entrusted with.

It has been a while since I cried. Probably the last time I really cried was the day I almost lost Rethabile and I was too angry at Mimi for what she wanted to put her child through. To me it felt like I was being stabbed as I love that child so much.

I was not blessed with a child in my previous marriage and I was partially to blame with my ex husband and also with that God didn't see the need to entrust me with one then but I now believe that he does want to put us into test but this test seems to be so difficult to be tasked with. Very difficult one for that matter. I turn to look at my husband who is rested his head next to me while seated on the chair. His brother's came here but they were not allowed in as we asked for a moment between the both of us and to be left in peace for a moment as we deal with this. It saddens me to see him like this, laying here and probably in thoughts of how he can unfold things well for all of us.

I run my fingers on his bald head. One thing I know is that he will be a great father and if God decides to take me from this earth then I wish that he gives strength to him that will fill the void of me in his heart with the baby. That my child grows up to be something wonderful in this world.

He shifts a bit indicating that he is waking up and I remove my hand from his head and he lifts his head from his arms and looks at me with a faint smile.

"Hello baby", He says.

"Hello, why didn't you join me in bed?", I ask.

"I didn't want to impose",He says.

"You never impose, you are my husband",He smiles.

"How are you feeling?",He asks.

"I feel okay"

"Are you sure?",he asks.

"Yes,the doctor did say that I am okay too. Don't worry",He says.

"I will not worry only if you are okay",He says.

"When am I leaving?",He asks.

"I will have to ask the doctor but if you are okay and he checks you out then I think today",He says.

"Okay, I want to take a bath",I say.

"Let me help you out of bed.",He says.

"I can walk Ntaka",I giggle.

"You can I know baby but the doctor said you shouldn't strain yourself. I will have to get a driver for you and someone to help you around the house. Also hire an in house nurse too",I pop my eyes out.

"That is too much Ntaka."

"Baby we have to do this to make the pregnancy smooth for you and I want you to have the best pregnancy for our first child",I smile.

"The nurse is a bit extreme and driver too",I say.

"We should keep one between the two",He says.

"Uhm I think the driver is better than the nurse",I say.

"Okay then",He stands up from his chair and he kisses my cheek. I pull the little cover off me and he goes around the bed and he helps me out of it. We got to the bathroom and things have already been brought in for us by his sisters as they came here to check up on us of which I appreciate. Right now we are deciding that we will tell our families about the child that we will have very soon and it scares me. The pregnancy does.

"How are you feeling?",I ask Thulani as we go into the bathroom and he helps me to the toilet.

"A part of me is scared but another part of me is happy that you and the baby are okay. That I am very happy about and I cannot wait to see your belly grow into this big swollen thing",He says.

"Okay",I say

"Let me go and get the bag ",He walks away from me and out of the bathroom.



I get down with using the toilet then I get done after that I go to the shower/bath and he comes inside the bathroom with my toiletry bag.

BONGANI ZONDI

The silence within the car as his warm breath hits the back of my neck as we are laying on these leather seats seems to be comfortable. His hand is rested well on the nape of my stomach as my back is against his bare chest. It's still dark outside and probably the Sun will be rising anytime soon from now onwards and so I breathe a bit slowly now and not as heavily as I was breathing just over a few minutes ago. I have calmed down too. He lays a soft kiss on my neck and my breathing hitched for a bit while the rumbling of butterflies are causing something in my stomach. It makes me feel flushed hot and very much bothered.

It's the effect he has on me that I for one did not think that 15 years later would be causing this much discomfort in me and that I felt weird things from it.

"Are you okay?" He asks for the second time minutes after his sperms have made a home in me.

"Y-Yes", I say even though I still feel like I cannot feel my legs.

He made sure that I felt him in me. That I felt that I am not just dreaming or having a fantasy of us being intimate but he made sure that I felt the pleasures and body shaking thrusts with him and I did all in his car.

I have never had sex in a car before. In a shower yes I have had a fair share of experience from that but I never expected car sex to be excited so well that I for one wished I could rewind and feel every type of feeling that I felt during that time and I shouldn't be wanting that.

He moved his hand from my stomach and goes a bit lower than it.

"Your stomach is so flat",It happened. I didn't even try to get it flat after I had Sqalo but it just went back to its normal state.

"It might get ruined if I have another child",I say softly.

"Do you want one?",he asks.

"I have Sqalo",I say and he kisses my neck and that brings me in most discomfort as I feel heated.

"I love you Bonga",He says.

I feel my throat being dry when He mentions that. He keeps on kissing my neck as I am gathering some time and thought to answer him.

"I wish....I wish things were different",I really do.

I wonder that if we actually did this together from the very start without me getting married where would we be together in life? Would we be far from each other now or have stayed together. That gets me in thoughts.

"They can be different",He says.

“How?”,I ask.

“Just move with me and I will take care of the rest.”,he says.

“My parents are benefitting from my husband's family if I just run away with you they.. they will disown me”,I say.

As much as I hate what my parents are doing to me but I want to have a moment where I think about where I could run to when things get tough. I need to run back home at the end of the day.

“I know but think about Sqalo and yourself the most”,He says.

He sits up and I do the same from these leather seats and look at him through this darkness that has little light shining for us to see.

“I am not saying that you should do what I say but you were able to choose Sqalo, do it again”,He says.

“This is a difficult choice”,I sigh. I turn and search for my clothes. I should be going back now.

“Have you seen my clothes?”,I ask.

“They are at the front seat”,he says.

“Is this normal?”,I ask.

“What is normal?”

He asks.

"Us, having sex in a car is it normal?", He chuckles.

"It is I guess", I frown and then move over him and get to the front seat and look for my dress. I don't even search for my bra and underwear as it is dark too. He gets dressed at the back and he climbs to the front and gets into the driver's seat.

The sun was already starting to rise.

"Please look for my underwear once it gets lighter and bring it back", I say.

"Okay I will", I nod my head.

"Should I take you home?", He asks.

"Yes please", he nods his head and he starts the car.

There is no time to wallow in regret because I do not regret anything right now.

HLUBI MZIMELA

It's morning already and when I arrived home already people were up and moving around. I found her underwear that she was referring to and I do not think I will give it back for now as I want to stay with

her scent a bit. I was still stuck instead the car holding onto her small bra that could be mistaken for a teenagers bra but it is not but of a grown woman. I stay in the car for a moment trying to reminisce on the events that happened yesterday before I hear a knock on my car window and I turn to see that it is Nqubeko. I open the door and he looks at me.

“Where do you come from?” ,He asks.

“From somewhere” ,He looks at me.

“I don't remember you having a village bimbo or something” ,he says and I feel like clicking my tongue at him but I refrain from that.

“I do have one and it is not a bimbo. Give some respect to a woman” ,I say.

I hope out of the car and push him out of the way and he steps back.

“Mmh, I hope that you do not have mysterious children around here” ,This guy.

“I only know of one thank you”

“When did Maka Sqalo say that the family can go over to pay the damages?” ,He asks.

“She said she will talk to her parents”

“Sqalo is a Mzimela. He needs to use his original surname” ,I know that.

“I know”

"Then this should happen ASAP. Nothing should go wrong"

"Nothing will go wrong", He nods his head.

"Come my wife made porridge"

"Is Thulani and Nomvelo back?"

"No they are not. We are not allowed to go in and see them"

"Why? What is wrong with Nomvelo?", I ask.

"I don't know", He says and turns around walking away.

He has to know. Thulani wouldn't not tell him and I know that he knows what is going on but I will not ask.

I make my way inside the house. I need to leave this place with my new family soon and soon has to be very soon.

LANGELIHLE MVELASE

My daughter keeps on blabbering and talking about her stay at her grandmother's house and I have been just nodding my head and giving little "mmmh's " here and there. I knew that my wife would question me and lying to Nomvula it is like putting petrol on an already there fire. I didn't think she would catch on so early for that matter and I had hoped by the time she wanted to kill me that I would have atleast lived a bit with them and enjoy my last days on earth. I get to her school and I hop out of the car wincing in pain. It is hard driving more or less also sitting up as my abdomen suffered a bullet but she does not know and if she does she will definitely kill me before I can even explain what had happened. What she has has me thinking and I really have to find a way to get rid of that guy whether I want my hands tainted or not but anyway I am in the crime life again, I might as well do a proper clean up. This not just some heist that we pulled off but it is one that will be remembered for the record books and it was all through me.

I have to launder the money and into some businesses. I don't know where to start but I do know one person that I have not long had a conversation with who will help me through the company he is in. A long time friend for that matter.

I get my daughter's back pack and help her out of the car and I give it to her. I crouch to her level and she gives me a cheek kiss though I am feeling some pain.

"I love you daddy!"

"I love you baby", I say and I get up and my top is blooded a bit. She runs off and I get inside the car and I decide to call Nomvula. I need her right now. She answers after some time.

"Have you taken our child to school?"

"Yes Ma'am", You can sense the anger in her voice.

"Babe can you Uber to her school. I am there and I can't drive back I am in pain", I say.

“Khona uyogcina ukuzenza iSuper Spy lah(So you can stop being a super spy here)”,She says.

“Are you coming?”

“I will leave you alone Langelihle don't rush me”

“Okay”,She hangs up after that.

I sigh and scroll through my contacts and land on the name Ntaka.

I click on it and it rings a few times before it is answered.

“Ndoda”,He says through the other side. .

“Skhulu I need your help”,I say.

“What is it? What did you do?”,He asks immediately.

“I just got off doing a favour for you know who and it was robbing the reserve Bank. It's R29 Million rands. It got messy and I am the only one who got away the others died on scene”,He whistles.

“Light I thought we left that life years ago”,He says.

“My wife is ready to kill me, she already knows”,I say.

“What do you want me to do?”



"I want to use the company you work in to clean the money",I say.

He is silent for a moment.

"I could be arrested for that. The company is not mine to begin with",He says.

"What now?"

"Give me atleast some I will start a company then we can reinvest the money that way we can clean it",He says.

"I get a 50% share"

"Obviously",he says.

"Okay"

"I don't want this affecting my wife too. So make sure you bring your mess a bit clean",He says.

"I knew I could count on you",I say.

"I don't understand your thinking at times",He says.

"You wouldn't so do I with yours"

“I have to go”,he hangs up after that.

I feel like some weight is off my shoulders at the moment.

I wait for Nomvula to come and drive us back home.

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

Receiving a call from the man I haven't spoken to in years. We got to know each other through a mutual person who introduced us to the fast life, the fast moment that we could live in of which brought back so many memories that I have of that life. We were not close never was but we knew how to help each other and cleaning up each other's mess. Well I was the one good in cleaning up messes but I left that life but with how things are going now with Nomvelo and the pregnancy I need all the money I can get and I have to make sure that I can't provide the smoothest pregnancy that Nomvelo can have without any financial stress of some sort.

I walk back into the ward after the conversation and I watch her as she is sleeping peacefully. I love my wife, so much. I never knew that meeting her would have such a great impact in my life. I would give anything in the world for her just to make this innocent woman happy. This God fearing woman of mine that prays for me and loves me like no other. I thank Angela for the pain she has put me through because it has taught me how love can be for a person when loved the right way.

She turns and she bats her eyes open and she looks at me.

“Ntaka”,I smile making my way closer to her.

“Sthandwa sami”,I say.

"I don't like being here anymore", I see tears forming in her eyes.

Nomvelo is not one to cry a lot but this sight always breaks my heart.

"We will leave tomorrow", I say.

"Okay", She sniffs.

"Don't cry"

"I want to cry", She says.

"Okay cry and I will comfort you", she starts crying and I hold her in my arms and let her cry.

I have to make a way for that money to not be traced and I know how.

## Chapter 44

It has been 4 full months since I have known that I am pregnant and in these months I would say I have had my ups and downs during this pregnancy but what I could say is that I have enjoyed much of it so much that it made it feel so much memorable too though I had some complications through the pregnancy but I have been enjoying it much blissfully too.

I have been closer to God too. That I pray he gives strength to my husband and our unborn child for when I am God. That he comforts them and gives them strength to carry through. As my due date nears soon I feel scared, scared that I will part from this earth leaving the man I love with my whole heart here on his own to look after a child we have been wanting for some time. I would say still this little blessing will bring light into his world that I can guarantee and I will be an angle looking after them from above.

My mother in law has let me be with my decision as to not telling Thulani about the possibilities of what is going to happen and I am glad that I never uttered that before as he wouldn't have had the proper chance to enjoy this pregnancy as fully as he would want to. Another thing is that Thulani has resigned at work and it got me worried about his sudden resignation as the fact that he loves his job so very much and he got this position through his hard working and dedication to the company but all I got was a "Do not worry, I want to spread my own wings", of which I got an idea that spreading his own wings means that he wants to start his own legacy and company.

I didn't know that the pay out from his resignation could be that much because he was able to do a lot in just a few months to be able to get a head start with his company of which will be very much fully functional in the next few months.

Well today we are in Johannesburg going to visit Nomvula and her husband. He insisted that we should visit them as it has been some time since I had seen my sister and my niece as well and I agreed because I need to spend as much time with family as possible. The drive to their house is filled with a bit of silence as he is working on whatever it is on his laptop that is on his lap. I rub my belly slowly waiting in anticipation for this child to kick and make me feel whole in this cold day. The kick comes and it is just right under my hand and I smile. Thulani turns to me and he closes the laptop and places his hand above my swollen belly.

“He just kicked”,Yes I wanted to know what gender we were going to have and it is a boy. My little Ntaka to be exact.

“I think he likes it in there”,he says.

“He might”,he kisses my cheek.

“What do you want to eat?”,He asks.

I don't eat as much and he tries by all means to make me eat. The only cravings I had that were much dominant than the rest were chocolates. I was obsessed with them but now I just feel sick by just the look of them.

“I will have chicken”,I say.

,”Okay baby”,he perks my lips and the driver looks at us through the review mirror.

I shy away from him and he chuckles lightly.

We get to where my sister and her husband live and the car gets parked on the driveway. Thulani hops out from the back and he comes to my door and he helps me out gently and holds my waist before closing the door behind me. I thank him and I see my sister rushing out of the house wearing an apron.

“My favourite couple!”,She says and rushes to me and pulls me into a hug.

“I missed you so much Mvelo. Look at you with a baby in your stomach!”,She says and I giggle.

“Yes I have a baby in here”

“I cannot believe it. Phela Wena you liked other people's children just not having your own yet”,She says.

True that is true. I just couldn't imagine myself being a full-time mother back then.

“Now I can be a mom”,,she giggles.

“Ngiyaxolisa Shari Kodwa unjani?(I am sorry brother in law but how are you?)”she asks.

“I am good Sisi”,she nods.

“Come inside, come inside”,We make our way inside the house and her daughter comes towards us and gives us a hug. She rubs my belly in the process.

“It is so big!”

“It is”,I reply.

“Mommy told me there is a baby in you where is the baby?”,she asks.

I laugh.

“In here”,I point at my belly.

She does not get it so she just moves away from me and leaves me hanging there.

I am taken to the couch and I am seated soon. Thulani takes off my sandals and he gives me a young massage on my swollen feet and then he stands up and moved my shoes.

“Langelihle baby our guests are here!” ,Nomvula calls out for her husband as she goes to the kitchen.

Soon enough her husband walks in. This man is much intimidating and has some darkness about him but he proves to be Nomvula's match with her crazy self that neither I her twin sister can handle at times.

“Ndoda” ,They greet each other first.

“Sisi wami” ,He greets me and I greet back.

Nomvula comes back with refreshments and already I find myself being thirsty and so I grab a glass and I get onto drinking the cold juice and it goes down so well down my throat.

“This is nice,can I have more ice?” ,I ask.

“You will get sick baby” ,,He mentions.

“I won't please” ,I beg.

But he ignores my plea and I keep my silence as I will ask Nomvula to steal some for me. Another thing that has been an issue is my addiction to more ice or anything a whole lot cold that the doctor has warned me before.

“So what are you planning on naming the baby?”

Nomvula asks as she prepares for her husband too.

“We don't know as yet what we are planning on naming our child.

“It will be something beautiful”,Thulani says.

“It sure will be”,I smile at him. He sure will name our child the best name he knows

BONGANI ZONDI

“Sqalo,where are you?”,I say walking around the house looking for him.

He is seated by the tree outside the garden while he is playing some music through his speaker and he is laying on his back on a towel on the ground as his face looks up to the sky.

He is smoking, smoking something that it's smell irritates me the most more than anything. Weed! I have never thought that he was a smoking person and I though this drug addiction ended some time ago when we did that rehabilitation and he has been doing so well since then. I go and hover over him blocking the sun and he opens his eyes and looks at me before he quickly sits up.

“Mah”,He coughs and throws the weed on the ground.



“You are breaking my heart Sqalo. Where did you get this weed?”,I ask because he hasn't started school yet until in 3 months time.

“I am sorry mah”,He says.

“Why didn't you tell me you are still addicted to drugs?”,I ask.

“They make me feel high and escape this world and be on cloud 9 for a moment ”,He says as I look at him while his eyes are small.

I sigh and turn around from him and walk away. I don't say anything, I do not even know how I should deal with him should I have to deal with him.

I thought that moving in with his father would be much of a great impact and that fact that Hlubi kept his promise of finding Zondi's address and showed him who is man between them that maybe Sqalo would feel some sort of closure like I did but I guess we are still back there. Back in that little black tunnel.

My eyes stream tears down through my cheeks and they touch my chin. I am hurt, I do not want to lie. I never wish the worst for my child but only the best. I may have had him at a young age but I love him so dearly to watch him try and destroy his life in this manner. I get my phone and I call his father who picks up in no time at all.

“Maka Sqalo”,I sniff.

“What is wrong?”,He asks.

“I...I...Sqalo was ....I am hurt”,I say.

I do not even make sense as I am talking to him.

“Tell me what has Sqalo done mama”,He says.

I take a deep breath.

“I will talk when I can utter words well”,I say and hang up after.

I go to the main bedroom and I rest my body on the bed and I cry my lungs out. I ruined my child and it is all my fault. I am the one go blame here. Maybe I shouldn't have insisted on him being moved with his father first. I would be here if Hlubi shot blanks and that home remedy worked. Now I couldn't hide this pregnancy from him. There was no reason too. My parents were quiet angry that they let me go out of their house just because I “Cheated”on my ex husband. To them I lead them to a disgrace they they do not even know they would be able to fix as I have never been a child for my husband but for other men beside him. That is what my mother has mentioned.

I hear a knock on the door and I do not lift my head up to look up to whoever is knocking. Another one comes on and I lift my head and see Sqalo by the door with his head slightly faced down.

“I am sorry”,He says.

I can't even utter a word so I keep quiet.

“I am sorry that I have made you cry. I am sorry that I doing this to you.”,He says.

I am scared to utter anything so I keep quiet.

"Mah", He says

"Mmmh?"

That is all I manage to say.

He sighs.

"Ca...can I have some alone time?", I ask softly.

He is hesitant but he nods. he turns and walks back out and I lay back on the bed and let the little tears fall.

Love hurts sometimes and it hurts badly.

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

It is so great to see my sister after so long. I really am grateful that I have a sibling just like Nomvelo who is calm and always forgiving. After what I have out her through before I do not think anyone can just forgive their sibling and wholeheartedly love them once again even when they mistreat you. I am happy that she is happy and I also I am happy in my marriage though my husband has made a stupid huge decision and mistake before but I am happy.

I am in constant fear than this man is. He is too relaxed about this case and as much as it is starting to die down a bit but investigations are still being done. He told me that I shouldn't worry but I cannot help but worry as I am now in this mess as what is his is mine and this luggage is mine too.

I look at him and Thulani and him getting along very well and it makes me happy kind of like they are old friend though they have met a couple of times before at family gatherings too between his sister and us too.

“Why are you not having a baby shower?”, I ask Nomvelo.

“I just want to have it maybe after the baby is born”, she says.

“Oh that's a great idea too”, she nods.

“I will plan it”, she smiles.

“Thank you”, She says.

“Let's leave you ladies to talk”, Lange says and he takes Thulani with him to whoever they are going.

“Your husband loves you Mvelo”, I say. I admire their relationship.

“So as your husband Mvula. He appreciates you so much”, she says.

“You think,?” I ask.

“I know. That man loves you trust me and don't doubt it”, I smile.

I go and join her on the couch and I rub her belly while asking her a lot of questions that I know some she cannot answer but will just simply laugh while at it.

“You are going to ask to many things now”

“I know just bare with me”,she giggles and nods.

LANGELIHLE MVELASE

We walk out the back yard and the sound of the grass cutter is to be heard from neighbours. I had to get my hands dirty when I had to tire loose ends to this. A part of me regrets this mainly because I know how my wife is feeling about this and still 4 months later she is still angry and agitated about it. I am still surprised that she hasn't poisoned me to death or have killed me.in my sleep just to teach me a lesson for another life but the most important thing here is her family mostly. She would kill me without hesitation once she discovers what Thulani and I are up to.

“I have set up and offshore account that cannot be traceable”,He says.

“That is good,I knew I could trust you”,I say.

“What did you say to your wife?”he ask.

“Nothing, Nomvula will kill the both of us for Nomvelo once she finds out our plans”,I say.

“I know, she does seem fiesty”,He says.

“You don't know the torture she put me through while recovering just so I can learn a lesson”

“Did you?” ,He asks.

“Yes, to never anger a Zungu woman”,He laughs.

“I wouldn't say that about my innocent Mvelo”,He says.

“Get her angry you will see”,he chuckles.

“Let's see if you can pull this off for years”,I turn to look at him.

“I will try”,We do a hand shake and then carry on conversing about other things.

HLUBI MZIMELA

I got off work just so that I can rush home and see what is going on with Bonga. She moved in with me just a month ago and I would say that I am happy that she did. At first she was being all hard to get but eventually we ended up sharing a room very soon and she is clingy too these days. I am happy that she is pregnant because I get the chance to be there for her the proper way now and get a do over. Sqalo has been paid for a is rightfully and fully a Mzimela boy now. I decide to pass by a cake shop and get her some cake and then I pay up before I leave and get on with driving back home. I love how yellow she is now, she looks much cuter and also plump now that she is pregnant and it is making her look more

younger than she is. I get home and hop out of the car and make my way inside finding her seated on the couch having some ice cream while Sqalo is rested on her lap. You wouldn't say she was crying just a few minutes ago.

"I am here baby", I say.

"Hey", she smiles making my knees feel weak. I love this woman. I have always loved her and wish she would give us a full try.

"I got you some cake. You were crying", I say.

"Hormones", She smiles.

I just watch her as she looks at me.

"I know that it is not hormones but we will talk later", I say.

"Okay", She smiles.

She knows how much I love her and how much she makes me feel weak to my knees.

"Sqalo", she shakes him up a bit and he wakes up and opens his eyes. They are very red of which makes me frown.

"He looks high", I say.

“Go and sleep in your bedroom”,She says ignoring me and he stands up and goes to the bedroom rubbing his eyes.

“He is high isn't he?”,she looks away from my eyes.

“I...yes”,She can't lie even if she tried.

“That boy will know me”,She takes my hand and pulls me to the couch.

“Calm down Mzimela, we just need to talk to him”

“He needs rehab”

”I know”,She looks away and I sigh pulling her to me.

“Do not stress about anything okay?”,She nods.

“I love you yezwa?”

“You tell me that everyday”,She giggles.

“Don't you love it?”,I ask.

“I love it”,She giggles.

“Then I love you”,She sighs.



“I love you too Mzimela”,my heart skips a beat hearing her say that.

“Can you repeat that again?”,I smile widely. She giggles.

“I said I love you too Mzimela”. I kiss her nose.

“You make me happy”,I say holding her close to my body.

## Chapter 45

In all honesty the presence of God can never be defined as anything that is short of being greatness and pure. I would say that my relationship with God got stronger as the months passed by and I would say that it has never been like this before. Nomvula is not a firm believer. She never was and she never will be. My mother has tried so many ways to get her in the oath where God is the tool to all doors and problems and also joy and she does not seem to have put her head in that not even once.

I move towards my husband who is lying in bed while reading something off his phone. He does that and I bet a thousand rands that he is reading up on some pregnancy article. He does that as he wants to "educate" himself more on this pregnancy as I am not alone.

And I have never felt alone in this pregnancy ever since I started to be pregnant I have had the biggest support that you could find. From him, my mother and also his mother the most. When I look at Thulani I just get reminded that this man is a man I didn't ask for from God but he provided me with him and he made him love me the way he loves me. Thulani does love me very much and we have been with each other for almost a decade and I have never thought that my relationship with him is going into its downfall, no. We have had our arguments here and there as a couple and I love how we resolve issues as to when there are issues in the relationship then we talk through it and that we get to be given the opportunity to rectify our mistakes and try again. We are not perfect definitely not perfect but I would say this marriage is worth it in every single way.

"Baby are you okay?", Thulani asks as he sees me rubbing my tummy while coming from the bathroom through the passage.

Okay one thing I miss about home right now is our bedroom where everything I need is possibly there and that near bathroom is everything.

"Yes, the bathroom is a bit far", I say.

"Do you want me to carry you to the bathroom when you go there?", He asks.

“No thank you. I need to exercise baby so that I will not be lazy to give birth”

“Does that happen?”

“I have heard of that and I don't want it happening”,I say.

“I should put it for tomorrow's list of what I should read about.

I shake my head and I open the bed covers and he fluffs my pillow well before I climb onto the bed and then I sit next to him and look at him.

“Are you done reading?”,I ask.

“What do you need baby?”,he asks as he runs my stomach.

“Nothing, I was just asking”,I say.

He kisses my stomach gently and he smiles widely.

“Hey boy, we can't wait to see you and how you look like as well”,He says softly and kissed my belly again.

“Thank Mvelo”

“You don't have to thank me Ntaka, it's all God”,I say.

“I know and I have learnt the beauty of that from you but I feel like you also deserve my thank yous as a husband to his wife”

“You know what can make me happy?”, I ask.

“What?”

“If I got that yoghurt I did the last time tomorrow”, I say.

“You are craving it?”, I nod my head.

“Its not a pressing matter though”

“Okay I will get you as much as you like flavours.

“I just want Vanilla flavour”, He perks my lips.

“Okay baby”, I then lay my head on his shoulder and we keep on talking amongst ourselves.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

My wife, has been...how can I put it? Trying her level best to try and prove to be something in our marriage. We touched up on the matter of having another child again and she told me that she is willing to have another child with me as she is not ready to lose me. I love Nonkonzo and for the longest time I have loved her. I do not think that will change but the way she compromises in a relationship is affecting us as a married couple.

Bonga and Hlubi, something I never expected. I always knew that Bonga never liked me in that manner and she made it Christel clear that I do not stand a chance being with her though from then I would've loved to have taken our friendship to another level just as she did with Hlubi and see where it goes. Maybe Squalo would be my son and not his son and maybe we would be together even now but I know to be better than chasing over an old high school crush that I had when I was a bit younger though she has not changed but still it does not mean that years have not passed by and things have not changed as well.

I am in my office and I am going through some work. Thulani and Nomvelo are expecting. I didn't know how to react to that. It also got me questioning why they didn't start having a child of their own these years or they wanted to enjoy their marriage first and foremost before anything else maybe? It could be the case at this point and also I could be asking and answering myself at the same time as well that I could never really have the right answer unless I ask.

A knock surfaces from my door and I lift my head and shout a come in and the door opens revealing my personal assistant.

"Good day sir, your wife called asking that you get your son today from Sports as she will be stuck in court during that time", She says.

"Oh okay thank you so much, is there anything else?"

"No sir that will be all", I nod and thank her.

She closes the door and I go back to working. I really hope that Nonkonzo gets pregnant soon so that we don't have our kids this much years apart from each other but be off reasonable years between the age gaps.

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

I have prepared and made some breakfast for everyone and also prepared for my daughter and now that is left is for Lange to take her to school and well I have stopped working now. I fear being in an environment where I was almost killed by a man who I used to love. A man who I used to share something with and I almost took my last breath in my car. I am still traumatized by it though I have went to therapy to try and get help but I am still not up to being okay with what happened and Lange understands and doesn't mind about my sudden leave at work. Infact this man is a multi millionaire and I just wonder what he is doing with that man because he has been very silent about it and the police investigations are still on but the hype and fire about it on social media has been low. I won't lie, I am scared that one day police will invade this place and arrest him should they find out its him and I don't want that happening but I have to trust my husband. He has proven that he is not the man I thought he was. He is more than that, dangerous should I say but I cannot ever show him that I could be scared of him at some point. No that shouldn't be the case. What else does he have up on his sleeve? Who is he? Is the word I am looking for at this moment.

“Good morning sisi”,I am brought into thoughts by Nomvelo's voice.

“Good morning”

“Are you okay?”,I wish i can talk to someone about this but I don't want to drag my sister into the mess my husband created. Nomvelo is innocent and a church goer. She would encourage me to convince Lange that what he did is wrong and that would possibly lead him to being caught. I don't want that.

“Yes, yes I am okay. I am just tired”,I say.

“Ohw you didn't sleep huh?”,I giggle.

“I did Nomvelo, ngathi uThulani nje is tainting the innocent you”,she giggles.

“I don't know about that. Can I help?”,She asks.

“No, I am almost done. You can grab a plate”,I say.

She smiles and grabs one breakfast and in follows my daughter with Lange too.

“Hello aunty Mvelo!” ,my daughter greets.

“Hello Nana” ,She also greets Lange who greets back.

“Here is her lunch”,I hand it over.

“Come and eat some breakfast”I pull my daughter away from her father to go and feed her.

I know that she is old now and can feed herself but also I do not want her messing up herself in a way.

I got to sit her down at one of the dining tables. I take her food and start feeding her and she obliges well which happens once in a while because sometimes she is demanding and wants something else.

She finishes her food in no time and I get her off the chair and she rushes to wipe her face while I go and out her dish in the sink.

I walk inside the kitchen and I find Nomvelo eating and her husband is here too . I greet and he greets back. She is stuffing her face with food more or less should I say.

“Do you want to come with me to get what you want?”,He husband asks.

He is so gentle. I would say that the best marriage Mvelo has had in her life time is this one. I know she loved Jabulani and he loved juer dearly too and they lived a happy life together but this one is more different with their previous marriage.

She looks at her husband.

“I think I need to go to the hospital”,I frown. Now more alarmed.

“Are you okay?”

“I peed on myself early this morning and now I am in pain”,She says so calmly.

“Was it clear?”,I ask.

“Yes,it didn't stain my pyjamas”,She says.

“Your water broke, she might be going into labour”I say as Thulani takes his wife into her hands.

“She is not fully done with her gestation period”Thuoani says.

“It happens.”



"I love you Nomvula. I will see you", she says.

That...that just didn't sit well with me. The way she said it didn't sit well with me. They left and now I am cleaning up this place quickly so that I can join them at the hospital. I want to be there when she gives birth. I quickly call my mother even though I know it might take her hours to get here.

"Hello"

"Mah, Nomvelo is about to give birth", I say.

"I knew she would go into labour early"

"She said something that didn't sit well with me", I said.

"What did she say?"

"She said she loves me and she will see me", I say.

"I don't know what that is but it seems straight forward", Yeah maybe I am over reacting. "

"She is there with you?"

she asks.

"Yes, they are visiting with her husband"

"Okay, I will try to find a way to come there as soon as possible"

“Okay, bye”,we hang up.

Lange walks in the kitchen.

“Where is everyone else?”

“The hospital”

“Oh,we should get going”,He says.

I clear up everything before I quickly go and wear proper shoes before we leave.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

I would say that this day came quicker than I had anticipated it to come but with God's timing I guess we can never be able to anticipate when he will call his children home. I am not nervous and as scared as I would be from all of those months ago but more or less prepared for everything. I touch Thulani's hand as he seems to be in dire panic and I smile even though I can feel the pain.

“Everything will be okay”,I say.

“Are you still okay?”,He asks.

“Yes I am”,I then rub my stomach.

He nods his head as the car still moves to the hospital. We arrive in no time and he takes me from the car and makes his way inside the hospital with me. Help is called for and I am attended to in no time while I get taken away in a stretcher.

“I want to see my husband for a moment”,I say and the nurse nods and rushes to call him.

I get to the labour ward and I am placed there.

“Is it Natural or C-section?”,I hear the doctor ask as he walks inside the room.

“Natural”,One replies.

Thulani walks in and comes towards me.

“I am here baby”

“We are going to have a baby”,I say and he smiles.

“Yes we are”

“Would the father love to be in here during the whole process?”,The doctor asks.

“Yes”,Thulani says quickly and I smile.

“Okay get him equipped while we deal with the mother and see how far she is”,The doctor says and then Thulani is escorted out of the ward.

They get a contact of my doctor and I am to be stripped off my clothes and put on a hospital gown, now the pain is getting a bit bad and I feel a bit weak from these pains that I am tolerating at the moment.

I close my eyes for a moment and say some prayers.

THULANI MZIMELA

My mother just called me telling me that she and Nomvelo's parents are coming to be here with me. My brother's have arrived quite quickly and Nomvula is sitting in anticipation. We are all excited that this baby is coming and I feel overwhelmed at the moment. I am not all dressed up to go to the labour ward and hold my wife's hand while she is in the process of bringing life onto this earth.

“How are you feeling?” ,Gama is the one to ask.

“I am excited”

“Wait until you hold him in your arms” ,Nomvula says.

“I cannot wait” ,I say.

Even though this is not the first time I am being here but this feels so different. I left them there and I go to where Nomvelo is. I find her laid on the bed and she looks a bit drained.

“Are you okay?”,I ask.

“I am fine”,She smiles faintly.

A nurse walks in the room pushing a ventilator.She hooks up the machine to Nomvelo.

“What us going on?”,I ask.

“The doctor will be able to explain everything to you.”,The nurse replies.

I frown at that but I believe that it is not something drastic and so I wait for the doctor with Nomvelo.

The doctor walks in the room and he sees me.

“Mr Mzimela. May I speak to you?”,I nod my head.

“I will be back okay?”,I say to Nomvelo.

“Okay”,She says.

I go outside and we stand by the corridor with the doctor.

"I have contacted your wife's gynaecologist and he told me that your wife's pregnancy is in a critical state.",he says.

"Yes I know. My wife's doctor has mentioned that"

"So you do know that between your wife and your born child will not be able to make it. We need to save one of them."

"What?","I don't think I hear him properly"

"I said if we save the baby your wife will have low chances of making it after birth and if you want us to save your wife , she will make it and the child wouldn't.",He says.

"Whatever you do make sure my wife comes out there alive. I cannot loose her",I say as I feel like air is now being taken out of me.

"Ofcourse",he says and walks inside the room. I take some time to process everything before I walk into the room and I find Nomvelo crying.

"Your husband has made his decision of saving you than the child",The doctor says.

"But...I...",She keeps on crying. I go towards her and pull her into my arms.

"Everything will be okay. We will have another child one day",I say.

This is a tough decision but one I cannot risk to loosing the woman I love for.

She groans in pain.

“We have to go into the theatre and get through with the procedure”,The doctor says.

They prepare to take her and we leave going to the theatre room. We get in there and everyone gets busy while I am still by Nomvelo's side. I am praying that she is okay despite anything else.

They numb her lower body and they cover it up. She looks at me and smiles and I do the same and she holds my hand.

“You are going to be okay, okay?”,She nods her head.

They take out the baby from her and it is silent. Not crying or moving, the sigh breaks my heart.

“Do you want to see the baby?”,They ask Nomvelo and she shakes her head no.

I can see the pain in her eyes.

“Everything will be okay I promise.”,she nods her head.

I kiss her forehead and she closes her eyes and the grip around my hand lightens.

“Mvelo”,I say and I hear some beeping sounds.

“Sir you need to leave the room right now”

“What is going on with my wife?” I ask.

“We will give you an update later”, The nurse is the one who escorts me out.

My heart is beating fast right now. I hope that everything is fine.

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

Thulani told us what the doctor has mentioned and I cannot lose Nomvelo. I have never mentioned life without her and the fact that they don't have a child anymore pains my heart.

It has been over 2 hours and no one has come out to tell us what is going on or what is happening and it has us agitated.

“When are they coming out to give us an update?” I ask.

“They will come baby”, Lange says and kisses my head.

I keep my silence and wait. Thulani is silent and has had his head in between his arms since he came out of that room.

A doctor comes out.



“Can I see Mr Mzimela please”,The doctor says and Thulani lifts his head and stands up going to the doctor.

“How...how is she?”,He asks as his voice is breaking.

“I think that matter we should discuss in my office”

“They are all family. You can say anything with them here”,He says.

“We made a discovery from your wife. It seems like she was not pregnant with one child but we found two more. Your son was the biggest one of them all and in the forefront and I think that is how the doctor missed the others”

“What do you mean?”,He asks.

“You are a father to 3 newborn babies”,Joy engulfs me.

“And my wife?”,He asks.

“We tried all that we can but...”Before he can even finish his sentence he is disturbed by a nurse who runs into the room.

“Doctor you have got to see this. She is reviving”,They rush out and Thulani follows after them.

We all stay in this room looking at each other wondering what is happening.

# Chapter 46

NTAKA(THULANI) MZIMELA

I haven't been able to function with Nomvelo not waking up. I am not functioning well and I have not had the time to go and see the little ones that are born. My parents are here as well so as Nomvelo's mother and they have been praying like no one's business and I just want my wife more than anything. How will I raise these kids if Mvelo is not here. They need her and I need her the most more than they do.

I am seated next to her. Paid for this room so that I can access it at anytime with my family since yesterday. Nomvula and Bonga made it their mission to go and get clothes for the babies as we have never really taken the time to shop prior the birth.

"She will wake up",I look up and see Nomvelo's mother by the door.

She walks in further and she smiles while looking at me.

"I have always knew that Nomvelo is a fighter and she fought for what she wants",She says.

I keep quiet. I don't know what to say.

"She is a prayerful woman anda God doesn't fail"

"I don't know where to begin",She walks in further.

“It has only been a day. There is no need to worry”,I sigh.

How can I not worry.

I look at my wife who looks so peaceful and beautiful. I smile at her and kiss her hands. Her fingers move and I watch her as she does that.

Her eye lids are moving a bit but she hasn't opened her eyes and she does open her eyes and I stand up from my chair and I hold her hand.

“Mvelo sthandwa samama”,Her mother says as she comes closer.

“Where? Where am I?”

“You are the hospital”,I say.

“The baby, we lost the baby”,She says.

“Let me give you some space Ndodana”,Her mother says and I nod.

She walks out of the ward and I kiss Mvelo on her forehead.

“I am so glad you are okay. I was worried”,she looks at me with pain in her eyes.

“You...you have wanted a child for so long and I am sorry that I didn't protect our child”

“You did more than that. We have 3 beautiful children”,I say.

Confusion is hung over her.

“Do you want to see them?”,She nods her head and she cries.

“We have more babies?”,

“Yes”,I say.

The door opens and a nurse walks in.

“Good day Mr and Mrs Mzimela. I am so glad you are awake. The doctor will come in the afternoon to check how you are doing but you are a very strong woman”

“Can I see my children?”,she asks softly.

The nurse smiles.

“I will bring them over”,she checks on Nomvelo before she leaves and I stay with Mvelo in the ward. After some time 2 nurses walk in pushing 3 little cots in the room.

“Here are your little boys”,For the first time today I feel happy.

I help my wife sit up and then they take the first child and hand it to her and so as the second child and then she hands the other to me. They look so small and tiny.

“These ones look the same”,She says.

“This one doesn't”,she giggles.

“They are beautiful”,she sniffs.

They are, they are really beautiful. I sit on the bed and we rock the babies in our arms.

“How are you feeling?”,I ask.

“I am still in pain”,She says.

“There is something I need to tell you”,I say.

She looks at me.

“What is wrong?”

“Yesterday they had to remove your womb, it was too damaged to survive. I am sorry”,She smiles.

“That is okay. We have these wonderful blessings. They soothe my heart and I am alive too”,I smile.

“I love you Nomvelo Mzimela”,She giggles.

“I love you more Thulani, for making me a mother.”,She says.

BONGANI ZONDI

I have met Nomvelo once. I never really interacted with her during that time so I really don't know the kind of person she is but also I didn't know that she is a twin. You can tell the difference between them and it would've been very highly of her to have twin children in anyway as she has those genes.

We are here in baby stores with her sister. The other wives have said to have work and we understood since the both of us do not work. Her sister is much of a talker though as she has been conversing with every outfit she could find and shopping like this makes me think of the life that is growing within me.

"Hey what's wrong?",She asks.

"I...nothing",I say.

"I may not be the best person to approach when talking but I know a few things.

"Its just that doing this shopping takes me back to when I had my first child",I smile thinking of the day I held Sqalo in my arms. I knew then that I had a purpose in life.

"Thats how I felt when I held my daughter 7 years ago. You know she was unplanned and her father and I didn't know if we were together or not but we knew that we loved her the moment she was there. We got married right after her",I say.

“That is beautiful”,She fills the trolley.

“How old is your son?”

“15 years old”

“Wow he has grown. You should have another one soon with the father”,I giggle at the thought that I am already pregnant with his child.”

“I will”,She nods.

“Do you think this is enough for 3 babies?”

“They have to get to Durban as well”,I say.

“Yes you are right. Let me stop here”,She smiles.

“We should have some lunch. I am hungry”,She says.

“Okay”,We go and pay for everything that she bought and she seems rather happy about her sister having children. Quiet excited if you ask me.

We finish up and down we go to eat. My phone rings and I take it out to answer it. Hlubi went to work with Sqalo and that is why I have a free afternoon without worrying about him.

“Hello”

"Baby are okay?",He asks.

"I am okay, I am with Nomvelo's sister at the mall we are buying clothes for the babies",I say.

"Okay then. I will send some money for you to have in handy"

"You don't need to"

"I know",He chuckles.

"Is Sqalo bothering you?"

"He is working. I have him a task"

"I hope he is behaving"

"He is"

"Okay that's good then",I say.

"I have to go baby call me if you need anything"

"Okay thank you so much"

"I love you",I blush after that.



"I know Mzimela", He chuckles.

We hang up and Nomvula smiles raising her eye brows on me.

"Young love", I laugh.

She is only a year older than me.

"I wouldn't say that", I say.

"Well it is", My phone pings and I look at it. It's a transaction of R3000. A message follows from Hlubi.

"I hope that is enough. Do call me if it is not", he says.

That is more than enough.

"Thank you", I reply to his message.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

I got to bath and my mother and my mother in law were in the room with us while they covered over the babies that were in the room. I am just happy, content is the word and I thank God that I have made it. Thulani went out and said he is going to meet my sister half way. I am seated on the bed and I just feel emotional as I watch them suck on my breasts. I think these two that look alike shared a sack and the other one didn't. Either way I didn't think this was all possible even having one child. They look so yellow and pink too.

"Aren't you feeling tired?", My mother in law asks.

"No", She smiles.

"This is God"

she says.

I thank my mother for teaching me that God is there and he does all that you ask from him.

"I am happy. I don't know what to say"

The door opens and my sister and supposedly Hlubi's baby mama walk in with Thulani carrying plastics.

"Kanti Nomvula nithenge istolo sonke yini?(Did you buy the whole store Nomvula?)", mother asks.

"No mah this is not even half of the things and besides there are 3 boys here", she says.

"They look so cute. Your boobs will not be small anymore Mvelo", She says.

"I know", We laugh.

“This one looks different than these ones and he has his father's nose too”,She takes the one on my left and picks her up”

“Nomvula don't drop the child”,I remove the other baby and hand her to Hlubi's baby mama and she holds him.

“Mvelo can I have one?”,Nomvula says.

“You have a husband for that Mvula.”,My mother says.

“Mah did you have to say so?”

“You talk too much today”,I laugh.

We all stay together and the babies are exchanged through everyone in the room.

QOPHELO MZIMELA

“How are you feeling?”,I look up from my work and see my wife by the door.

She walks inside.

"I am okay, how are you?", I ask.

She slightly smiles and she comes towards my table.

"You know what I mean", She says and I frown.

"What do you mean?"

"Nomvelo, having a child with your brother. Something you want so dear", She says.

"It's children and I am okay with it. I am happy for them", I say.

She sighs.

"I know I have not been the best wife so far", She says.

"Neither am I the best husband"

"I know we are not perfect but I love you Qophelo and I wouldn't want us to give up on this marriage", I stand from my seat q I go to her and pull her close to me.

"That won't happen, baby", I say.

"I want us to have a baby too", She says.

“We will, we don't need to rush now. Hlubi is going to have a baby soon and Thulani and Nomvelo just had a baby. Let's keep the attention on them for now. They never had that attention before then maybe in 6 months we can try for one”,She smiles.

“I love you so much”,She says and holds the side of my face and she kisses me.

“I think I want to start afresh with everyone”

“Including your brother's wife?”,I ask raising my brow and she nods.

“Yes, I miss how our friend group was like. I just...I just never thought that one of my friends would end up with uLange off all people”,she says.

“You never know why people end up with someone and it would only be the best or the worst for them”,I say

“How about we host a small welcome party for the little nephews maybe?”,I smile.

“I think they would appreciate that”,,She nods and I kiss her lips.

“I think I should leave now”,She says softly.

“Not so fast”,She giggles.

I love Nonkonzo. Yes our relationship hasn't been a bed of roses but every marriage has its challenges.

HLUBI MZIMELA

I look up from my work space and watch as Sqalo goes through some files arranging them as he is busy bobbling his head back and forth like there is some music to listen to when there is nothing. I look at him and he finishes what he is doing and grabs the box of files and brings them forth to me and places them on my table.

“I have done this batch. You can check how it is arranged and see if I did well”,he says.

“Sit down on the chair for a moment”,I gesture with my hand and he sits down in front of my desk and looks at me.

“I know it has been only a few months since we discovered about each other and I know that we have not known each other that well enough”,I say.

“Yes I know but there is time for that”,I smile.

“I know”,I say.

I sigh after that.

“You know your mother loves you so much and she worries about you a lot and you were the only person she had to be responsible for all these years the most ”

“I know ”

“Then what is wrong? Tell me if you are scared of talking to her about what is brothering you”,I am trying my best to be as calm as I can he.

He sighs.

“Its nothing”

“It cannot be nothing when you get hooked on drugs and wasting your life away, you are slowly destroying it”,He sighs.

“I just feel like I cope better with drugs. They help me face every day well enough and not think of taking my life away”,I flinch as he says that but I try to compose myself.

“I will book you into therapy and hopefully you can be taken to a center to see other children who are dealing with the same problems as you are”,I say.

“I don't want to go away for long”,He says.

“You won't be gone for long. I want you better for your mother. She loves you so much and would do anything for you. So as I”,He laughs.

“Okay I will try this therapy thing”,He says and I nod my head.

“Lunch will be here soon you should finish up”,He nods and gets up from the chair and goes to doing what he was busy with.

BONGANI ZONDI

The little one in my arms just reminds me of Sqalo as he looks like him when he was young. Small and so fragile that I didn't want anything to come into harm's way for my son. I always protected Sqalo from my ex husband mainly took all the blame and punishments so that he would grow up as a normal child but that all changed when he got him in the way he is. I hate it, it hurts my heart to see the fruit of my womb turning into something that I have never imagined or envisioned for him ever. I would rather say that I never ever wanted that for him with my whole heart.

But this one with his closed eyes and a bit hairy over his head with the pink tiny fingers that have curled to form fists brings warmth to my heart and also revives the love I have for children.

A part of me was scared of having my second child but another told me that I shouldn't worry and let things unfold as they are.

"He is so quiet", I am interrupted from my thoughts by Nomvula.

She is hovering over my shoulder while looking at the sleeping baby in my arms.

"He is beautiful", I say.

He indeed is beautiful. All babies are beautiful.

I feel something from my eye and I blink, the tear away. It drops and I quickly wipe it.



“What is wrong?”,I look up to see Nomvelo looking at me with worry on her face.

“I have been scared of being pregnant again but seeing this little one makes me yearn for my little one rather so soon”,I say and she smiles.

“I know how you feel but you will have your baby in your arms soon”,I really hope so.

“When are you getting married?”,Nomvula asks.

I look at her.

“I don't think I will be doing that anytime soon”,She nods.

“Okay then”,We stare at this little creature in my arms. It is fascinating how a child can come into being like this. From nothing to something.

## Chapter 47

Whom ever was supposed to come did arrive with the baby cot for the triplets big enough for them. Thulani just stepped outside to take a call while these people got busy in our bedroom and I have moved the triplets with me to the living room as they are all now awake and I have them in this little small portable rocking bed and we are all watching some TV. Well I am watching the fashion police at the moment and I quiet enjoy the show. I miss doing a piece and it has been some time since I did. Aneni is still there and they are still holding the fort with all my other co-workers with the little that I have and I am so grateful to have them because I do not know what I would have done to get to what things to be done as yet.

My phone rings and I quickly take it removing my eyes from these three that are laying there in a still position with their eyes wandering around.

It's my mother. I know a part of her wants to be here in a flash to assist me and I appreciate it also with my mother in law but also they have husband's and they cannot leave their homes just for me. Thulani and I will figure out the issue with the triplets. I answer it.

"Hello ma",I answer.

"Nomvelo my baby. How are you? How are the kids? Did you arrive at home well? You didn't tell me that",I want to laugh with the way she is speaking.

"Yes we arrived well Mah and the kids are okay so as Thulani and I",I say.

"Okay, are you still okay?"

"Yes ma. Don't worry I will call when I need help"

“Okay don't hesitate to do so. Do not let some girl be hands on with your kids. Those things are dangerous”,she is warning me about Nannies.

“Yes I will do so mah.”

“Okay I love you”

“I love you too”,She hangs up.

Even when I am married for the second time my mother still worries about me but also I am her fragile daughter so I understand her worry about me. She was also worried like this when Nomvula had her daughter.That is what I know.

I sit with my boys for a while before I stand up and I quickly go to the kitchen to get some fruits to eat.

I get back from there and I sit down with them. Thulani appears from the bedrooms and he comes to us.

“They are almost done in the bedroom”,he says.

“That is quick”

“They are quick”,He says.

“How are things with starting the company?”,I ask.

“They are going well,soon the company will be open baby and I have it registered already”,I remember.

Even the space for where the company will be is already there.

“You should start car looking”,He says as he gets busy on his phone.

“Car? What type of car?”,I ask.

“Anything suitable for you”,He says.

Well, I haven't been a person who likes driving themselves places. Thulani has been doing it but when I needed to drive I did. I can afford to buy my own car but I just never saw the use to do so.

“I don't know with the triplets here a big car is nice”,He looks at me and smiles.

“You want one?”, I nod my head and smile.

“Yes”

“Finally”

“The boys will rely on me too to take them somewhere.”,I say.

“I am glad you want a car now”,He says.

Me too, it has been long overdue as well.

BONGANI ZONDI

I breathe in and out as I am seated on Hlubi's chair in the office. Sqalo has been looking at me since I have been seated on this chair and worry was on his face but I kept on giving him a little assuring smile so that he does not have to worry about me as I am not fine. I just didn't expect to see him this soon. Yes my ex husband was a business mogul. I had everything I wanted just not the husband I wished to have in my life and he was not the best. Well starting out it was the best but with time it didn't end in that way and I should have known sooner that he was not the man that I thought he was.

Hlubi comes back into the office as he was called away for a moment and I look at him and he looks at me.

"Are you okay?" He asks.

I nod my head and find myself placing my hand on my stomach and I breathe in and out while slowly rubbing it.

"Are you okay?" I ask.

"Yes, it was something minor" He says and looks at Sqalo.

"I need the bathroom" Sqalo says and he quickly moves away from us.

Hlubi moves closer to me and he leans in closer to me.

“Can I take matters into my own hands?”, He asks.

“What do you mean by that?”, I ask.

“I mean just that”, He says.

“Uhm yes...I guess”

“Okay”, He caresses my cheek and he gives me a light perk.

“Lets take you home”

“And work?”

“I will finish it later on. I am free to go”, I smile.

I am happy to hear that. I don't want to be here anymore and see more of that man again.

“Okay”, Sqalo comes back from the bathroom.

Hlubi helps me off the chair even though I can do that by myself and then they pack up with Sqalo. I cannot wait for Sqalo to start attending school yet again. That is what I want for him.

LUNGISANI ZONDI

I was trying by all means to be as calm as possible but nothing was really working here and most of all is that I had always had my suspicions of who Sqalo looks like. Someone I know very well in the past and the face kept being familiar over the years but I loved him as my own.

We as people make mistakes from time to time. My mother being influential in my marriage and here I am without Bonga in this big house.

I drink the brown liquor content from my glass and I end up throwing the glass and the rest of its content to the wall and the glass breaks.

Her parents told me that she is pregnant again yet for that man again. I think back at the times she was pregnant too with my children but they didn't make it because of me. I am the one to blame but we have been in this marriage for God damn 15 years!

This is a phase that she might be going through is what I thought and let her be without fetching her and dragging her back to this house.

She knows quiet well that her and I are bound until death and that will only separate us.

I am willing to take her back with her child. I do have a spot for children. That is my weakness at times.

Sqalo being into drugs was never my intention. My mother was the one who orchestra'd the plan and I went with it as I desperately didn't want my wife leaving me but where am I now? In this big house without her being here.

I quickly take my phone and I call my father and it rings a few times and he answers.

"Hello"

"Baba,I need you to help me here"

"With what?",He asks.

"I want the number of your the CEO of your harbour company in Durban",I say.

"Marvin?",he asks.

"No,the Mzimela one"

I say.

"What do you want from him?",he asks.

"I need to talk to him"

"Mmmh, don't do anything stupid",I would not.

He hangs up after that and I pace up and down the room. I quickly take my phone and try Bonga but it does not go through.

"Damnit!",She has blocked me.



I go to the land line and I call her and it rings a few times before it is answered.

“Hello”, Her sweet voice comes through the other side.

All that I am feeling was replaced with emotion of being calm for a moment. I love this woman and I miss seeing her short self busy in the kitchen of our house while I come back from work to work at home just to see her move around the house.

“Don't drop the call, You know what you are doing is not supposed to be done and that boy is going to pay for getting your pregnant. Come back home, I promise I will do everything I can to prove that I am a changed man and I will get Sqalo into boarding school again and we will take care of that child if you want to. I don't want to have your boyfriend's blood in my hands just to make a statement of him touching my wife. I love you Bonga and you know that. Just come home, I am not arguing with you.”, I say.

She drops the call right after and I look at my telephone and put it down. My phone pings and I quickly take it. My father has sent the contacts.

I quickly get on calling the man and it rings a few times before it is answered.

“Hello”

“Mzimela. This is Lungisani Zondi, I need to talk to you about something”, I say.

“How can I help you?”

“I believe one of your family members is messing with my wife and I am trying to be peaceful about it. I understand that they have a child together but that doesn't make it okay that he steps on my territory”, I say.

"I am lost on who you are talking about",He says.

"My wife Bonga",I say.

He is silent for a moment.

"Don't you think you should be talking to your wife about that?"

"I just wanted to send a warning"

"Don't waste my time. Just because I worked for your father's company doesn't mean you should piss me off and try me you wouldn't want to start something you wouldn't finish"

"Or is it?",I raise my brow.

"Just a friendly warning.sho",He hangs up after that.

"Damn it!",I bang my hand on the table.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

It is the next day, I woke up quiet early. My children are not the sweetest when it is night time. Instead they become this loud thing that I do not even know how to comprehend. The only thing that helped was the fact that we slept with the side lamp on and I think that is why they kept crying much was the fact that it was dark in the room.

Is this what my mother went through with me and Nomvula? It is not the best thing to experience at this point.

I am making some food for the babies in the kitchen and Thulani makes his way in dragging his slippers while he has all three of them in his arms laid in his chest. I go and take one from him.

“How did you get all three of them in your arms?”, I ask

“I can nje”, He smiles.

“You slept upset yesterday”, I say and he scoffs.

“Hlubi’s mess is going to annoy me”, He says.

“What happened?”, he asks.

“His girlfriend is married and now her husband wants his wife.”, He says.

“Oh, why did she leave? There has to be a reason”, I say.

“I don't even want to know the reason. I shouldn't be taking care of their business”, He says.

I nod my head.

“Well talk to him and tell him of this then let him deal with it”,He nods.

“I will,what are we doing today?”

“We are being lazy today”,he says.

“How does your stitching feel?”,He asks.

“I don't know. Mild”,He chuckles.

“Okay”

“Why do you ask?”

“I want to know when can I put your legs on my shoulders”,I swallow.

“Children are here Mzimela”,he chuckles.

“They would not even remember this”,I shake my head.

“Still”

“I know you like it”,Haibo this man.

I quickly take one bottle and rush out of the kitchen while he laughs at me.

## Chapter 48

Grateful, I am so always grateful for everything that the Lord has done for me in my life. He can wipe people's pain away and he shows off in doing that. In times of need he comes at the perfect time to be the saviour. I will always love and praise him and I am thankful that my mother taught me not to give up praising him and having faith in him.

My birthday is here and I have been given yet another year of life.

Thulani well he told Hlubi what is going on and he stopped there and there has not been any feed back from him yet.

It has been a month should I say since the triplets have been born. It has been a tough month learning parent hood and at this point I am grateful that we waited to have a child because I don't think back then I would've been fit enough to take having to take care of the children right now.

All our family member's are coming down for my birthday. Thulani took the matters of making my birthday special into his hands though it would've still been a great birthday even if we stayed at home and bought some cake and had that with the 5 of us here.

So today it is my birthday and my close family members are coming and so as my in laws. All of them I would say. My mother and father in law came here early because of the triplets.

The house is a buzz now and there are people busy setting up outside the house. I see letter lights and they spell out my name. There is even a bar area. Thulani is going above and beyond for this birthday. I am just only turning 35 nothing extreme.

I was just done pumping some milk for the triplets and they are with their grandparents right now. I am just standing by the window watching these strange people setting up the decor and stations that are around my backyard and stretching out through there.

I feel hands wrap around my waist and he lays a kiss on my neck.

“Are you okay?”,He asks.

“Yes, it looks like a festival more than a birthday party”,I say and he chuckles.

“What do they say on TV when they do big things?”,He says.

“I am not too sure”

“They say go big or go home baby”,He kisses my neck again.

You should be getting ready.The hair and make up is here”,He says and I turn around to him.

“And what about this beard and head. What will we do with it?”,I ask.

“Nothing baby”,He says and I giggle before we share a kiss.

“I love you so much Mkami. You have been nothing but the best thing in my life Nomvelo. I am glad you kissed me that day and left your job just to come to me”,I giggle as he chuckles.

“I am glad I took that risk, You didn't seem like you were going to do it”„He laughs.

“I love you with my whole heart”

“I love you so much Ntaka and thank you for being an amazing husband for all these years”

I wrap my arms around him and lay my head on his chest and he holds me in his arms.

We stay in comfortable silence for a moment appreciating each other's presence right now. We hear a knock on the door and we knew then our little bubble has been bursted.

We move from each other and he goes to open the door and Nomvula appears.

“Happy birthday!!”,She screams and runs to me and hugs me.

“Happy birthday to you too”,I say.

“Did you see the outside. It looks so amazing”,she says.

“Its for us”,I say and she hugs me.

I love that our relationship has improved so much over the years and we are now close like before.

We break the hug and she turns to Thulani.

“Sbari, I hope you are well”

“I am good, I will leave you guys for now”,He says and leaves the room



"You look so good. I like the way you are thick, the baby fat went to right places"

"I have been wanting to loose weight but Thulani says I am perfect the way I am"

"That man loves you",She says.

We sit together for a little while. Sometimes I can't believe that there is a living person with the same face as I have. Atleast one of the triplets has their own unique face I believed but now that they are growing I can't tell who is who so I just got them little bracelets with their names to tell the difference for now because they confuse us so much now.

Thulani comes to fetch us and we go to the living room and it is very busy. There are some ladies there and they greet us. We are told to sit down and we are getting ready.

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I look so beautiful that I am in awe of myself as well with my hair and face done. I did a dress for myself and Nomvula the way she wanted it as well and we look so beautiful. My mother comes into the room that we were in and she looks at us.

"The fruit of my womb look so beautiful!",I laugh.

She hugs us.

"I am so happy to see you both. Where is Langelihle?",My mother asks.

"He is outside probably."

“Okay, come the party has started”,She pulls us out and we walk out of the bedrooms going to join everyone else.

We got outside and it looks beautiful. There is even a play area for children music was playing and everyone seems to be having a great time. When we walk in they start singing for us and we giggle. This is nice, very nice and I feel like God is showing off with me at this point.

I see Rethabile and she comes towards me and I hug her.

“I didn't know you were coming”,I say.

“I came with Koko, she is inside with Gog'Mzimela with the babies”,She says.

I smile.

“You look so grown”,She giggles.

“You last saw me yesterday Mvelo”,She says.

“On the phone though not face to face.”,She laughs.

She turns to Nomvula and she greets her.

“You both look the same”,We laugh.

My mother always told us we are not the same and we have always said we look alike but we are not much alike at this point.

We go around and I greet everyone I see. The kids are all over me when they see me and I am here hugging their sweating selves from all the playing. I move from them and there are waiters moving around serving platters to everyone.

This looks like a high class party to be honest. I end up searching for Thulani too and I find him inside the house. I rush up to him.

“You look good”,I say to him.

He has his hair cut and beard trimmed.

“You like it?”,I nod my head and he gives me a perk.

“Hayi kumele engabe anikho lah nijaiva nentanga zenu(You are not supposed to be here but dancing with your mates)”,My mother in law says as she appears holding one of the twins.

“Sawubona mah”,I say shying away.

“Mvelo don't let this one take you away from fun”,She says and walks off.

Oh my God.

BONGANI ZONDI

We are on the road and there is silence in the car. Lately Hlubi has been off or am I imagining things. Ever since he got that call from his brother he has been this man with a drive of some sort. Also behaviour wise he has been acting strange. Going to work and coming back late as well and he has been having some sneaky calls as well too.

Well we are late for Nomvelo's birthday with her twin sister. They decided to do it in Durban because Nomvelo can't travel much with the babies being there. I too will soon not be able to travel much. My stomach is quiet visible and I have been dealing with swollen legs for a while now. We have already entered Durban and I guess Hlubi is navigating his way to his brother's house.

"I feel pressed", I say softly and he turns to me.

"Mmmh?"

"I need to pee", I say.

"Do you need the bathroom now?", Hlubi asks.

Sqalo is busy on his phone at the back.

"I can wait if we are not far now"

"No we are just a street away", He says.

Oh that is better to hear atleast.

We soon get to the place and he parks the car. We all hop out and you can see all kinds of things as well. This....this is an over the top birthday party. It must have costed so much money. I hear that Nomvelo's Husband used to be CEO of a harbour company and now he is having his own company. With that I think he will have clients quicker than he thinks because he has worked in that industry for long.

We make our way in there and I ask Hlubi to accompany me to the bathroom and he doesn't mind at all. We make our way to the bathroom and he stands in there and I pee. When I am done I feel relieved as I stand up and wipe myself before I flush and wash my hands.

There is a little mirror in the bathroom. I check myself and fix my dress and he stands behind me and kisses my cheek.

"You know I love you",He says.

"I love you too",I say.

"And I will do anything for you and when provoked about you I will retaliate you know that",I swallow.

"Ye...yes",That sounded so scary.

He kisses my cheek again and runs his hands on my stomach gently.

"Good,come let's go",We move out of the bathroom and we run into a girl holding one of the twins. She greets before she walks away.

Those children make me child sick whenever I see them.

We go outside and now I see it, the beauty of this event.

I find a chair and I sit down. A waiter comes and offers some finger foods to me and I take up on the offer and thank think there after. I start eating and this food tastes rather too good as well. I didn't realise how I wanted to eat so badly. I get done with my first snack and I get a drink too. The music is loud enough and the people here are enjoying themselves. Even the kids.

My phone starts ringing in my bag and I take it out. It is my mother. She hasn't talked to me in months. What does she want now? I answer the phone anyway.

"Hello",I say.

"Bonga my child how are you?",She asks.

"I am okay mah",I say.

She heaves a deep sigh.

"I have some bad news",She says.

"Ohw what is wrong?",I ask.

"ULungisani usesishiyile emhlabeni(Lungisani is no more)",I frown.

"How come?"

"His body was found in his house this morning. Some of his body parts were not attached to him",She says andshe then starts crying.

"You have to come and pay your respects you are still married to him",I hang up when she says that.

I find myself rubbing my stomach rather too frequently.

Sqalo comes and he stands infront of me.

"Do you want something to eat?",He asks.

"No, thank you",He asks.

"Are you okay?",He asks.

"Uhm Uhm Zondi is no more",I say and he frowns.

"Ohw",I nod my head.

"How are you feeling?"

"I don't know this is another mess on its own too",I say closing my eyes.

"What is a mess mah? He grabs a chair and sits next to me.

"I am pregnant and now I have to sit for that man while I have your father",He frowns.

"It is not your fault that he refused to ever wanting divorce from you",He says and I smile.

"You are child. I shouldn't be talking about these things to you. Go and join the others" I say.

"Are you going to be okay?",I nod my head.

"Yes, I am okay"

"Okay then",He stands up and I walk away.

This...this will make the news and I know it. Lungisani didn't come just from a family but he came from a strong family and I will be trending in the mist of it all.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

The birthday celebration is something I did not quiet expect. I am enjoying my time here though with the festivities that are going on here I am able to get around with seeing my family here all together and it makes me happy to see them. Nomvula and I have already gotten our presents and I am happy about them. The thought and money put to them makes me feel happy about them.

Thulani comes to take me away from the kids area and he brings me forth to where people are.



"I want to show you your present.",He says.

"Oh okay",I say.

"Where is it?",I find myself asking.

"Its on the drive way"

"Its a car?",I ask and he nods his head.

I hug him.

"Thank you so much. Come let's go and see it",I say.

We make our way to the drive way and we find the car there. Just the one I have been eying for the boys and I.

I didn't think it would come this early but with my husband I guess things come early.

"Thank you Ntaka",I hug him again and give him a kiss.

Just the colour I wanted too. White.

# Chapter 49

BONGANI ZONDI

I was still rooted to the chair while everyone went to congratulate Nomvelo on her new car by the drive way and I hear other cheers again. Sqalo joined the crowd as well. My feet are swollen already and I haven't even gotten up that much and moved around. Hlubi makes his way to me and he crouches in front of me placing his glass next to my feet.

"Are you okay?", He asks.

"Yes...my feet are just swollen", I say.

"Do you want me to massage them?"

"Later maybe", I say and he looks at me.

"Are you sure you are okay?"

"My mother called", He stands up.

"Oh she did? What did she say?"

"She told me that Lungisani is no more"

“Shame”,The coldness that is in his voice scares me.

“Mmmh”

“So you are sad about it?”,I frown.

“I never want to wish cruelty unto other people even if they do me wrong. I am just put by the fact that Lungisani was part of a big family and him dying like the way he did will put eyes on me as well”,I say.

“How so?”,He asks.

“We didn't go through the divorce process remember? We just seperated because he didn't want to give me one and they will expect me to mourn for him. I am pregnant and the media will be on my back as well. It is just a mess”,I say.

I close my eyes.

I don't want Sqalo to be dragged in this too.

“I killed him”,I shoot my eyes open and look at him.

“Excuse me?”,Did I hear him right?

He keeps quiet.

“Hlubi what did you do?”,I ask.

"I am the last thing he saw before he took his last breath",He says.

No, Hlubi is not a killer. He can never do that.

"No, you are lying you can't do that",He lifts his shirt up and there is a scar.

"We fought that and he gave me this",He says.

I feel my eyes getting glossy. Who is this man?

"Why...why are you telling me this?",My voice is cracking.

No it can't be. I look at him and the coldness that is posses in him cannot be missed.

"Because I want you to know that I will do anything for you and Sqalo",I feel a sharp pain surfacing from my stomach and I scream holding it.

He steps closer to try and take me.

"Please step away from me",I say and the baby starts kicking vigorously.

"Calm down Bonga please",He says.

"Leave me alone please",I stand up and move away from him. He follows after me.

“Bonga wait”,I try moving much faster away from him.

I get inside the house and I wipe my tears.

How....what have I done? What have I created?

I find myself crying and thinking about the whole mess that I am in at the moment. The monster I have just created.

I scream as pain surfaced in me and I cried more. I felt something slide down my legs. Hlubi's mother showed up holding one of the triplets again.

“What is going on?”,She says.

I crouch and go onto my knees.

“Bonga what is wrong?”,She asks.

“I...I...”,The lain surfaces again.

She tries to help me up and she sees something.

“Did you pee here?”,She asks.

“It...it just came out”,I say.

“How far are you?”

“I think 6 to 7 months if I am not mistaken”, I say.

I hold onto my stomach. My back is starting to burn.

“Let me call Hlubi”

“No please don't!”, I don't want to see him.

She ignores me and rushes out to call Hlubi.

HLUBI MZIMELA

I couldn't look at her and lie. I didn't mention that Nqubeko helped me in getting rid of that man, I would be putting him in the fire line. I could see the worry on her face and I couldn't hold myself from telling her. I left her like she wanted me to even though I am worried about her and went to search for Nqubeko. Thulani told me to sort the matter on my own and didn't want to help me in this and Nqubeko was just there to be my look out while I did what I needed to do there.

It is funny how a man like him didn't have security with him that day.

He is the first person that I have killed in my entire life. Yes I used to fight here and there but taking a life is something that could be very far fetched for me. I find Nqubeko with everyone surrounding Nomvelo and two cars on the drive way which have ribbons on them. Different sizes for the both of them. I pull him aside.

“What is wrong?”

“I told her, I did it”,He frowns.

“Told who?”

“Bonga”,He widens his eyes and pushes me away from the crowd.

“What?!”

“I couldn't watch and lie to her”

“Do you know what you have done? You should've kept it inside like a man if it's eating you. You wanted this right and found this as the only solution”

“I couldn't frame him. He has connections everywhere he would've been Scott free”

”I don't get you sometimes I...”My mother shouts for me.

“Hlubi hurry up!”,I turn to her.

I move away from Nqubeko and go to her.

"Ma"

"Bonga is not okay inside the house. I think you should take her to the hospital",She says.

"Okay",My heart is beating vigorously against my chest.

I rush off going inside the house where she disappeared off to and then I find another granny kneeling in front of her while she has a cover over her lower body. She is sweating.

"Baby...",The granny disturbs me.

"Rethabile hurry!",the granny says.

A girl appears with a little bowl and towel.

"What is going on?"

"Okay ngwanaka bare with me",Bonga cries in pain.

"We need to go to the hospital",I say.

The granny has ignored me and pushed her head under the cover before she looks up to Bonga.

"Okay when I tap your thighs you push okay?"



What?!

“What is going on?”, I ask.

“I think she is about to give birth”,The little girl informs me.

“Let me call an ambulance”,I take out my phone and quickly dial the ambulance.

I go a bit outside to call the ambulance. After some time as I was being answered I hear Bonga's screams and I drop the call and rush back inside the house.

I get inside and she is now quiet and has her head rested on the little cushion.

I am in trauma of what I saw. A pale tiny baby in the hands of this old woman.

NOMVELO MZIMELA

The party has been cut short once Bonga needed medical attention. She still had a few months ahead before giving birth. Maybe the death of her ex husband triggered her into giving birth. I mean it is all over social media at this point. The intimidate family is here and Koko wanted to stay with the triplets with my parents too and Rethabile. We are here at the waiting room waiting for some feed back from the doctor about the baby and Bonga since she didn't respond after pushing the baby but the pulse was there when we checked.

It is worrying to be quiet honest.

“What is taking them so long?”, My mother in law asks.

I also wonder what is taking them so long.

Hlubi appears from where he was and walks into the room and scan his eyes on all of us.

“How is she?”, His mother asks.

“She is asleep. She is okay”, He says.

“And the baby?”, His mother asks.

“Its a she, she is okay”, That is some relief.

“That is wonderful!”, We say.

“She doesn't want company for now”, the sadness in his voice cannot be missed.

He looks over to his son who is seated just by the door.

“There are bedrooms home that I will prepare so you can rest”, I say.

“Thank you Mvelo but I will stay here. Sqalo will go with you”, He says and I nod.

I look at Thulani and he slight shrugs his shoulders.

“Okay”

“Can we see the baby?”,I ask and he nods with a slight smile.

He walks out and we end up following after him.

We are walking through the hospital passages and it reminds me of when I have birth to Thando, Ntando and Musa. It reminded me that it has been God's will and love and Grace that I am here with my children and they are all here, I think that is why their names bring so much fitting to how grateful I am to have them. Kungumsa, uThando nentando ka Jehova that we are in the positions that we are at times.

We get to the maternity wards and get to where the baby is and we get to stand by the glass window watching those little new borns in there with nurses. I feel like hugging all those little creatures at once.

Hlubi is let in while we have to wait outside. The nurse assists him in giving his child and he holds her in his arms before he comes to the glass window and we watch the little baby. She looks just like her mother that is for sure.

She is beautiful and looks strong too.

“She looks nothing like Hlubi”,One of his siblings says and they laugh.

“It would've been a disaster”

“A big one”,They laugh among themselves.

I turn to look at Thulani and smile.

“She is pretty”

“Very much”,He returns the smile.

We stand there for a while watching the baby before we had to leave the place and we will come back some other time.

BONGANI ZONDI

The burning sensation is felt between my legs and the panic when I felt my stomach being flat got to me until I realised that I have already given birth. I feel tired mostly at this moment but I want to see Sqalo too. Hlubi, I don't know how I would look at him or what to say to him at this moment. I don't want to have visitors for now I just want to be alone.

I lay there staring onto the ceiling and the door opens and I look towards it and see Sqalo walking into the room. I smile while looking at him.

“Hey ma”

"Hey, come here", he makes his way towards me.

"How are you?", He asks.

"I am okay, how is the baby?", I ask.

"She is tiny", he says

"It's a girl?", he nods his head and I smile.

"You have big brother duties to fill now", I lightly laugh.

"I hope this is the last baby you have. I can't be more than 10 years older than another baby too. It will seem like it is my child", He says and I laugh.

"Haibo I am young too. I haven't reached 35 so I will have more children", He nods his head.

Silence prevails between us.

"I saw the news. That Da... Yeah", He says.

"How do you feel?", I ask.

"Relieved", I look at him.

"He raised you, he played a part too"

"He failed to execute it well. I wish that I knew my dad sooner and maybe grew up under his care", He says.

I feel my heart breaking.

"I am sorry", I softly say and look away from him.

The silence continues between us.

"I have to go", He stands up. I nod my head.

The door opens and I turn and look at the man who told me shocking news about him.

Looking at him I cannot see the evil deed that he has done instead I see the highschool Hlubi who I have known for so long.

Sqalo walks out of the room and Hlubi steps closer inside the room.

"I am sorry", He says and looks at me.

"Why?"

"I would do it again Bonga, it was either him or us", He says.

"I...I am just scared", I say.

He comes towards me and sits next to me.

"Don't be", I just nod my head.

"How are you feeling?"

"Okay".

He nods his head.

## Chapter 50

When I woke up I found my mother in law and father in law in the living room with her by the kitchen island fixing some breakfast. The triplets were asleep and seem to have been taken care off already. I greet as I walk in and my mother in law turns to me and smiles.

“Good morning Mvelo. How are you?” ,She asks.

“I am well”

“I have made some breakfast and cleaned the house. I want you to rest, taking care of those three babies is not easy” ,She says.

“You didn't have to mah”

“Nonsense,Where is Thulani?” ,She asks.

“He is still asleep”

“Go and wake him up, ngeke phela alale ilanga lize lingene enqeni(He can't sleep until the sun is in his butt)” ,I giggle.

“Okay” ,I go and drink some water first before I go to the bedroom.

I get in and he is still asleep holding onto the pillow I was resting on. I get to him and kiss his back before shaking him.



"Baby wake up"

"Mmmh?"

"Your mother said I should wake you up", I say.

"Mvelo come and sleep this pillow is not something I should be cuddling with"

"Did you hear what I said?", I ask.

"Yes, I am sure the triplets are okay", He says and turns to look at me.

I place my hands on my hips and look at this man.

"Baby we should be awake. The sun is already out now"

"Baby can we atleast sleep for a hour?", I give him an hour.

"Tell you what, we will take a nap during the day with the triplets when it is their nap time. How about that?"

"Not a great deal but okay", Haibo this man.

"I swear it's like you are on some menstruation or something", I say.

He sits up.

"Maybe you are the one who is nearing her cycle",He sits up and gets off the bed.

I grab the pillow and throw it at him and it hits his back he turns to look at me and places his hands on his waist.

"And then?",I shrug my shoulders.

"You know you wouldn't finish this right?",He asks.

"Well I did",He takes a pillow and throws it and me and it hits my chest.

"You are the one bullying me",I say.

"I am not",I take the pillow and get on the bed and hit him with it.

"Nomvelo"

"I will tell your mother what you are doing to me",I smile at home and he frowns.

"Mxm",I giggle and crawl closer to him and wrap my arms around his neck and give him a perk.

"You don't have to look this grumpy in the morning while you have a wife like me and kids that look like you",I say and he smirks.

"I really have that?",I nod my head.

“Yes and soon you will be a whole company owner”,I say.

“Aren’t I the lucky one?”,he says.

“You are”,He chuckles and I laugh.

I give him a perk and he turns it into a kiss. I break the kiss and look at him.

“While I go and take a bath, listen to Karyn White, can I stay with you”,He smiles.

I squint my eyes.

“Okay I will”,He kisses my forehead and walks away to the bathroom.

I get off the bed and I make it.

I clean up the bedroom a bit before I go out and get a broom to sweep the room.

“Where is he?”

“He is still taking a bath”

“oThulani nokugeza ekuseni”,I giggle.

I get the broom and go to the bedroom. I sweep the room and when I am done I collect the dirt and then go and throw it away. I quickly get my phone and some ear pods and put them on just to listen to the song and I sit down on the bed and search it up on YouTube before I get it and listen to it.

He comes out after some time while I was listening to the music. I look at him as he has my lavender towel in his hands wiping his head and neck with it while his navy towel is wrapped around his torso.

Loving someone makes you see the person in front of you for the beauty they pose inside and out. Thulani is beautiful inside and out, a husband that I never thought I would love having but got to have.

A father for our children that look like him too very much but have parts of me blended there. I love this man, I don't know how life would've turned out have I not been a widow. Well I am not saying that I am happy that my ex husband died but I guess things happen for a reason comes in from this.

He waves his hand in front of me and I remove what is in my ears and look at him.

"Mmh?"

"Can you lotion me?", He asks.

"You are lazy today baby"

"I am still going to do some work trust me", I giggle.

His mother likes shoving her kids around everywhere.

I go to the wardrobe and get his cosmetics and he sits on the bed.

I start lotioning him and start with his legs.

I go down on my knees and lotion his feet going up his legs.

“You know what this reminds me off?” ,I look up to him.

“No” ,He smiles.

“The day I came to ask for you hand in marriage” ,I shy away from him while blushing.

“You put everyone in their place and showed them what a gem I am having” ,He says.

“Stop it please”

“I am being serious MaSengwayo” ,I look at him.

“I know”

“I love you Nomvelo, never forget that” ,I stop and look at him.

“I won't”

NOMVULA ZUNGU-MVELASE

This has been a hectic set of two days as they have passed and the fact that we are back home has just made me happy than I am really. I just love the fact that we are home already. My parents left the same day and I am glad that they have also made it home.

It's morning and I woke up to an empty bed. The holidays are here and my little girl is with her grandparents. She visits between both of her grand parents from time to time so today it is just me and my husband.

I get out of the bedroom and make my way to the living room and I see 3 vases with red and white roses and an envelope that is between them. I get to them and open the envelope and it has money, I don't even know how much is the money. I search for a card on the roses and I find it.

"Good morning baby, I see you have found my little gift. I just want to thank you for being this person that you are, loving you it is like a refreshing thing for my soul and I will not stop loving you even if you kill me one day for the stupid decisions that I make. I love you Mvula and I got you your favourite pair of shoes too, the package is by the kitchen island", The note says.

I feel a bit emotional for a moment. I wipe the lone tear that is trying to make its way down my cheek.

I close the envelope and go around the house. I am trying to find this man but I can't see him. I will have to call him, I go to the island and I find a Gucci green package there. I quickly open it and I encounter the GG leather thong sandals.

I scream that moment! I have been wanting these sandals but I am not about to cough thousands of rands for ophaqa (Sandals/flops). Oh my god, I can't believe this. I hold them close to my body and I quickly leave them and rush to the bedroom to get my phone. I quickly dial his number when I get my phone and it rings a couple of times before it is answered.

"Baby"

"You got the Sandals for me?!", I say in excitement.

"Yes, do you like them?"

"Like them? I love them so much!"

"I thought you were going to kill me"

"Where are you?"

"I am driving around the neighbourhood, I didn't know how you would react"

"Come back please"

"Okay give me a minute", we hang up and I rush to the kitchen and take the shoes. Even the money doesn't amount to me wanting these for so long. I have been keeping my eyes on them online and now I own a pair!!!!

After some time of me cowering over these shoes then I hear the car pulling up the driveway.

I rush out of the house and go to the car. He opens the door and I wrap my arms around him and jump up for him to catch me in his arms and he does.

I kiss his lips.

"I love you"

I say.

"If I knew this was your reaction I would've bought half of the store",he says.

"Well you still can, I like the head wrap and maybe we can fly and get some Fendi overseas or maybe some Hermes you know",,he smiles.

"I didn't know you like things like this"

"You are a millionaire ofcase I will start liking things and maybe get some for Mvelo and little hats for the little ones",He laughs and I join him.

"Can I get some bums?",He asks.

"You can get anything you want, even baby number 2",He smirks.

"Let's first spoil you then baby number 2",He is right.

"Yes that is a really great idea",He seems amused with my reaction.

Argh God I feel so alive!!

BONGANI ZONDI



The nurse has brought my daughter here and she has been on my chest and looking at her makes me feel so good. She looks more like me than Hlubi and that makes me happy. Atleast from the kids we have together. She has her eyes closed and being hairy too is the part where I have been looking at her. I thought that maybe she would be unhealthy as she is pre mature but they told me that she is fine and the healthiest baby they have had in the hospital.

I smile and look at this hairy thing sleeping ontop of me. It warms my heart.

I am a mother once again! Being entrusted with a life that I do not know what I would do if I would not do a proper job and I hope this time I have grown and learnt from my first child and what to do to be a better parent to this little one and the older one too.

The door opens and I look towards him and watch as he stands by the door for a moment. We maintain the stare before he comes towards us and he closes the door. He walks to the side of the bed and I rest my stare on the baby.

“She is still asleep”,I say.

“How are you?”,He asks.

I keep quiet for a moment before I sigh.

“I don't know what to do or say at the moment ”

“Is it about your ex husband?”,He asks.

"Its not about him Hlubi it's about you. I never thought you would do something like this, something I have never expected",I say.

"I am not like him, I would never out you through pain intentionally and I do apologize if I did that",He says.

"I am not angry at you, just shocked",I manage to look at him and he looks at me.

"Do you love me?",He asks.

I am taken aback by his question a bit.

"Yes, I do",I say and he nods.

"You know I love you Bonga, I have never stopped loving you.",I smile.

"You say it like you have been in love with me for eteenity""",I tease.

"I might as well love you for the rest of my life",he says.

"Meaning?"

"That I would love to marry you one day and complete us",he says and I shy away from him.

"I...I don't know",Marriage has traumatized me for a life time.

"It's okay, I am not rushing you. Take your time just be beside me", He says.

I nod my head and he offers to take the baby and I allow him.

He holds her in his arms and he smiles.

"She looks like you", he says.

"I have noticed. At least someone looks like me", He chuckles.

"She is beautiful just like her mother", I smile and blush while looking away from him.

I love the relationship that I have with Hlubi, it's much refreshing.

NONKONZO MVELASE

I have already done with the tasks for this morning at hand and I am just waiting for Qophelo to make his way out of the house so that we can leave. I don't want to be late as yet and today I have a very big case to get too. I open the door to the car and sit inside waiting for this man to wrap up what needs to be wrapped up.

We may have our ups and downs but one thing I want it is to make this marriage work more than anything. It is part of my life and should be part of my life. He comes out of the house all dressed and he gets inside the car and places his things at the back.

"I am sorry, baby", He kisses my cheek.

"You are lucky I am in a good mood today", He chuckles.

"The mood swings have gone down now?", He asks.

"I don't know. Maybe", He chuckles.

He starts the car and drives off. I open the radio and let us listen to the morning News.

He takes a glance at my feet and looks at the road and glances on them again and looks at the road.

"I didn't notice you are wearing these shoes. Don't you have a court case today?", He asks.

"I do, why?"

"You hate baby heels, Especially the ones your brother got for you", He says and I look at my feet.

"I mean I don't see anything wrong with them. Besides I get tired when wearing heels. Two hours in and already my feet look like a balloon", I complain.

"They suite you though", I smile.

“Thank you, I didn't have a choice though”

“Do you want to buy more comfortable shoes?” ,He asks.

“Yes please”

“Okay we will after work if you are not tired” ,I smile and kiss his cheek.

“You are such a great husband, do you know that?”

“I do now” ,I smile.

“Well I will buy a cake for you to thank you” ,He laughs.

“Okay”

“What?”

“We both know who will end up eating it” ,I know it is me but he didn't have to say it out loud.

“I know it's me but it's the thought that counts baby”

“Just buy 4 so that I can get one” ,He says.

“Ayi that's too much”

“The way you are behaving lately I would assume that something might be baking but who knows”,He shrugs his shoulders.

“I don't think so yet, I would know my body”,I say.

“I was just assuming”,He whistles and then gets the volume up.

He smiles while bobblibg his head back and forth.

I run my fingers on my stomach.

Could I be pregnant?

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The end.